**Summary Small Test 2.0-2.3**

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3. *Summaries*2.0 The Reichstag Fire:

When fire broke out in the Reichstag on February 27 1933, the German Parliament, Marinus van der Lubbe was arrested and he immediately confessed that he had done it. When they asked why he said “Aus Protest”. Van der Lubbe was a shy, young and blind man. He wanted to warn the German Nation for Hitler. Hitler was convinced that the fire was a starting signal for a communist revolt even though Van der Lubbe was acting alone. Hitler took away democratic rights and freedoms and the communist party was prohibited. Communists were taken to nazi basements and were tortured. Hitler (and his party NSDAP) used the Reichstag fire to get rid of communists even before the approaching elections of March 5, 1933. They didn’t win the absolute majority. But Hitler wouldn’t be stopped, through intimidation he managed to convince parliament to give him unlimited authority. Van der Lubbe was convicted and received Death penalty on the 23 of December 1933. He was beheaded with a guillotine on January 10 1934.

2.1 Prosperity and Crisis in the United States:
The first ten years of the interbellum, the period between the world wars, was a time of unprecedented prosperity or the Americans.
- Before war: Richest country in the world
- In World War I: Lead weakened over Europe
- After war: Lead increased even more
Both in industry and daily life it was a time of big changes. Industries experienced a boom. This had mainly to do with the rise of electricity and the more efficient way of organising work (e.g. the introduction of the assembly line). Production became cheaper so wages rose too. This led to an increase in demand for new products. Buying on credit became popular. “Live now, pay later” was the slogan. The US became a consumer society. Many Americans experienced the roaring twenties as a pleasant and exciting time. The mentality had changed. Thriftiness had made way for an urge to consume. Many different fashion trends developed. There were also people that were worried about the loss of traditional norms and values. Especially alcohol consumption was seen as a problem so in 1920 alcohol became prohibited. But in 1933 the prohibition was abolished because people started getting they’re alcohol illegally. On Thursday, October 24 1929, it was the day of the beurskrach, the stock market crash on Wall Street in New York. In the summer of 1929 it appeared that the economy was running into trouble. On the day of the beurskrach (this day was called black Thursday) stock prices dropped so a lot of people sold their stocks in order to save money and they took their losses. People weren’t able to pay back loans to the bank and a lot of banks and companies went bankrupt. The American Economy started sliding into a deep depression. Values dropped and the unemployment rate rose. Due to this crash a lot of other countries also suffered. The American crisis had become a real global crisis. The situation for people became very desperate. A lot of people were fired and had to live on small amounts of money every day and could not go on the dole. Very poor people started living in parks or dilapidated neighbourhoods at the edge of cities. These towns were mockingly called hoovervilles after president Herbert Hoover because he wanted to wait for the economy to be restored by itself. At the next election Hoover’s party was crushed and blamed for the crisis so he lost to Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932. Roosevelt decided to use a different approach: The New Deal. He started using government money to save banks and make dole available etc. Thanks to Roosevelt, America was slowly getting out of the crisis. He was re-elected three times. Roosevelt died in 1945 in office.

2.2 Fascism and Communism:
People felt cheated by their politicians. Their frustration increased due to the unemployment after the war. They became members of a group that fought socialist and communist workers. They were called Fascists. This name was made up by their leader Mussolini in 1919. Benito Mussolini was a socialist journalist. During the war he volunteered as a soldier but he became wounded in 1917 at the front of Austria. In 1919 he founded the fascism movement. The Roman Empire was his example. He wanted to rule over the Mediterranean Sea just as the Romans. Fascism became very popular. Mainly because of Mussolini’s talent for speaking. Fascists hated democracy and wanted the country to be ruled by one strong party and one leader, the duce, as Mussolini called himself. In October 1922, the fascists violently seized power in a number of cities. Mussolini threatened to take the capital if the government didn’t step down. Fearing a civil war, the king dismissed the government and made Mussolini, prime minister. Then the duce drew all the power to himself and they eliminated all their opponents. The economy was also in the hands of the duce. The fascists wanted a totalitarian state, which ruled the entire society, including daily life. The Italian people were indoctrinated with propaganda. Yet, church, army and business life partly remained independent. Mussolini conquered Ethiopia in 1936 but the revival of the Roman Empire was not accomplished.
During the Russian revolution, the communists had confiscated all banks and industrial companies. To make revival of the economy possible, Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy in 1921. The NEP became a success. Prosperity was created and the communist party held onto all power and Russia became a totalitarian state. Stalin came forward as the party leader after Lenin’s death in 1924. He was very tough and called himself ‘man of steel’. He eliminated his opponents. He wanted for the Soviet Union to become a superpower. So they created a planned economy. But the toll was high. Workers were exploited and lived in bad conditions. Cities grew fast so they wanted to eliminate small farms and create big modern ones. Agriculture was collectivised. The land and other possessions of the small farmers were given to agricultural companies called Kolkhozy. The yield of these farms had to be sold to the government for fixed prices. But the farmers started revolting and acting out of protest. Rich farmers, called Kulaks in the propaganda, were exterminated. Resistance was the fiercest in the Ukraine. Stalin closed off this area while no other planting nor harvesting was done. This led to a huge famine in which seven million people died in 1932-1933. This news didn’t reach the outside world. Propaganda depicted the Soviet Union as a country filled with happy workers. There were statues and images of Stalin everywhere. Stalin started cleansing of treacherous elements of the communist party in 1935. Trials were held against leaders, in which they confessed the most absurd crimes after they had been tortured. A lot of people were arrested, murdered and sent to labour camps. Between 1929 and 1938 millions of people became victims of Stalinism. Russia became a totalitarian state that tried to make the population into perfect communist citizens by indoctrination.

* 1. Germany from democracy to dictatorship:
	Germany became a democratic republic. Because there was unrest in Berlin, parliament initially convened in Weimar, here the constitution was written. For this reason the first German democracy was called the Weimar Republic. The first years of the republic were difficult and many blamed democracy. Democracy was also blamed for the Treaty of Versailles. Due to this treaty Germany had to stop fighting and sign the treaty. Due to this ‘dagger thrust legend‘ developed. “Germany wouldn’t have been defeated but democrats signed the scandalous peace” was said. From the tart, the republic had to deal with left-wing and right-wing violence. In 1919, the communists tried to seize power but their revolution was put down by the army. After a few years there was a lot of street violence between the right-wing volunteer corps and the left-wing commando groups. The right-wing extremists killed a lot of democratic politicians and they killed minister Rathenau in 1922. In 1923 the fall of the German Empire loomed. Because the Germans were behind paying reparations, the French took the Ruhr area. So the government called for strikes and to pay the strike workers and the employees. Extra money was printed. This caused in a very high inflation. People lost everything. After 1923, Germany recovered again with American loans. Then prosperity followed. The stock market crash of 1929 abruptly ended the pleasant years of the Weimar Republic. A lot of companies and banks went bankrupt and the unemployment rate rose. The democratic parties only seemed to be capable of quarrelling. The two anti-democratic parties benefited from this (the communist party and the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterspartei (NSDAP)).
	The leader of the NSDAP was the Austrian Adolf Hitler. In 1914, he volunteered for the army. He fought very hard for four years and his example was Mussolini. He became a corporal. Yet he didn’t have an education, friends or family. The defeat made him a bitter man that wanted vengeance. In 1920 he joined the NSDAP. Because of his talent for speaking he became the leader. National-socialism was similar to Fascism. Hitler had himself called führer, this was the German variation of the duce. But unlike the fascists, the Nazi supported a racial doctrine. At the end of 1923, the Nazi’s wanted to follow the example of Mussolini by first taking Hitler’s hometown Munich and then the capital and overthrow the government. But they were defeated in Munich and Hitler was arrested. He was only in jail for one year, and in this year he wrote a book called Mein Kampf. It was filled with hatred, especially against Jews. After Hitler’s release, the role of the NSDAP seemed to be played out. In 1928, they only got 12 seats from the 489. But the NSDAP started becoming more popular. Hitler made a lot of promises and erased the Treaty of Versailles. He blamed the democrats and the Jews. The NSDAP had two groups working for them, the Sturmabteilung (SA), which were dressed in brown and beat up Jews, socialists and communists and the Schutzstaffel (SS), who were dressed in black and under the leadership of Himmler, this organisation grew into a large, disciplined military organisation which was feared for its cruelty. In the elections of 1932, the NSDAP became the largest party with 37 percent of the votes. The conservative elite despised the Nazis and thought of Hitler as just an ordinary man. But on January 1933, they made him chancellor to end democracy. Helped by the Reichstag’s fire, he received 44 percent of the votes, yet this wasn’t enough for the two-thirds majority that was needed to change the constitution. However, through intimidation, two-thirds of the Reichstag did approve an ‘enabling act’ which gave Hitler all power for four years in March 1933. After this they started building a totalitarian state with high speed. All parties were prohibited except the NSDAP and they used a lot of propaganda. All boys and girls had to become members of the Hitlerjugend and the Bund Deutscher Mädel, where they were educated in national-socialism. After the death of president Hindenburg in 1934, Hitler took over his function. In violation of the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler started an enormous armaments programme. This lead to a decrease in unemployment. Hitler was very popular. Many didn’t know (or didn’t want to know) about the terror against the opponents and the Jewish citizens. Half of them were deported to concentration camps one year later.

*2. Dates*

1933 The Reichstag Fire (this was on 27th of February)
1934 Van der Lubbe was beheaded (this was on 10th of January)

1929 The Stock Market Crash in Wall Street called the Beurskrach (this was on Thursday 24th of October)
1933 President Roosevelt’s actions partially restored economy

1922 The Fascists came to power in Italy
1928, rapid industrialisation and forced collectivisation of agriculture took place under Stalin

1923 Period of Inflation
1933 Hitler was appointed as chancellor by the conservatives.