Chapter 21, Section 1 Notes

* Following WWI Germany’s economy was weak, and they could not afford to pay reparations.
* France sent troops to the Ruhr Valley to take the wealth from the valley’s mines and factories to make up for the unpaid reparations.
* Angry Germans went on strike, so the German government began printing money to pay the strikers’ wages. Too much money was printed and it lost its value causing inflation.
* During the 1930s, the world’s industrialized countries were hit by an economic depression – a period of low economic activity when many people lose their jobs.
* The 1930s depression was so severe that it became known as the Great Depression.
* One major cause of the Great Depression: crash of the U.S. stock market – fears of the economy grew, people were pressured to pay back loans; when they failed to pay, panic struck, stock prices tumbled and wiped out the fortunes of many investors. Banks collapsed causing many people to lose all their savings.
* The depression spread to Germany and other European countries.
* In the U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt set up a program known as the New Deal.
* With the New Deal, the federal government set up several different agencies to provide people with money to buy food and housing and to put them back to work.
* Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) gave jobs mostly to young people; they planted trees and built facilities in the nation’s parks.
* Works Progress Administration (WPA) paid jobless workers to build dams, roads, bridges, and hospitals. It also gave jobs to artists and writers.
* Social Security Act – a reform in which the government gave pensions, or payments, to citizens after they turned 65 and retired.
* The people of U.S., Britain, and France held onto democracy, but the Great Depression encouraged the rise of European dictators in countries such as Italy and Germany.
* Dictator – rulers who control their countries by force
* Under these dictators, a new form of government developed: a totalitarian state – where political leaders try to totally control the way citizens think and live.
* Totalitarian leaders used new technology, such as films and the radio to spread the government’s point of view. People who disagreed or voiced other ideas were punished severely.
* The first country to become totalitarian was Italy. Benito Mussolini created the Fascist Party and promised to restore order, fix Italy’s economy and make Italy a great nation
* Mussolini was appointed head of the Italian government and was known as *Il Duce* (eel Doo chay) or “The Leader”. He put an end to democratic rule in Italy.
* Germany became a totalitarian state under the rule of Adolf Hitler. He was the leader of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party or the Nazi Party.
* Hitler and the Nazi Party portrayed the German people to be better than all others.
* The Nazis were known for their anti-Semitism, or hatred of the Jews. They blamed the Jews for Germany’s problems.
* Once Hitler became dictator of Germany, he had books about democracy burned, took over the courts and set up a secret police, and took over radio and newspapers.
* Hitler took away Jews’ businesses, did not allow them to go to school or have medical care, and sent them to large concentration camps.
* Nazis also restricted women’s rights; they were meant to wives and mothers, not leaders.
* Harsh rule also came to Russia under the rule of Joseph Stalin. He wanted Russia to become an industrial power and introduced a series of Five-Year plans.
* Under the Five-Year plans mills and plants were built and kept under government control. Factory managers had to produce a certain amount of goods.
* The government also took control of farming. Stalin issued a plan called collectivization – where small farms were combined into large, factory-like farms run by the government. Farmers who resisted the plan were either shot or sent to prison camps deep in the vast forests of icy Siberia.