

MODERN HISTORY: *GERMANY*

To what extent can Nazism in power be seen as Totalitarianism in the period 1933-1939?

The term totalitarianism refers to the way in which a country is governed. It is when the body in power takes control, is ruled by one party, whose leader is supreme dictator and has a party ideology that is almost like a religion. All aspects of society are controlled such as social, cultural and political life. Nazism in power in the period 1933-1939 can be seen as totalitarianism as it had total control over social, cultural and political aspects in Germany. In order for the Nazis to achieve this complete control over Germany, when they gained power in 1933, they aimed to create Volksgemeinschaft (people's community) and Gleichschaltung.

Gleichschaltung means the coordination of the community for one cause and in this case for the Nazis. It happened in all aspects of German life. Politically the Nazis used propaganda through many means such as the Volksempfänger (the radio) and print (newspaper) to preach their ideology and they used force if anyone opposed the Nazi Party. Force such as persecution, murdering, imprisonment in the concentration camps where physical labour was intense and also with Hitler making the army pledge their allegiance to him, enabling the army to use force on civilians under the instruction of a Hitler where forces used under Nazism in power. This force shows that Nazism in power can be seen as Totalitarianism as it is not allowing Germany people of their right, freedom of speech and Nazi's had full control over it.

Culturally, German society was significantly impacted under Nazism in power. Religion of both Catholicism and Protestants were persecuted. Catholicism was not to be preached in schools and churches of these religions were disintegrated. This occurred as the Nazi's believed the religions posed threat to the Nazi ideology. They provided an alternative form of belief, living and this to the Nazi's showed lack of respect and accordance of Hitler's speech, which was delivered in 1937- 'anyone or any organisation that didn't 'respect' the state will suffer the consequences'. This was also in the accordance with the persecution of priests, and other religious figures such as nuns. The implementation of the Nazi's churches with 'Mein Kampf' My struggle, written by Adolf Hitler, replacing the bible proves that Nazism in power is totalitarianism as the Nazi's sought to control all Germans' beliefs, religions and hence their way of life.

Socially, Nazism in power was totalitarianism as the control of women, the youth and education was indoctrinated for the main purpose of creating and preparing individuals for service to the state. Under Nazism in power everyone had a role in society and that was to be accepted without question, and for women this was of lesser role. For in Hitler's concept women were weaker and inferior. The Nazi's had control over the role of women, which was the belief that women should be centred on the homes as wives and mothers. Laws were made and financial incentives provided to help increase the birth rate of German society. After 1939 all children had to be compulsorily enrolled in Hitler's Youth. For the boys in Hitler's Youth they were taught to use fire arms, read maps and be physical fit whilst girls were taught the skills of their traditional role, such as household duties.

The Nazis regarded the aim of education as indoctrination and they opposed intellectual thought and free inquiry. Education in all aspects was directed to one dominant purpose- the ultimate subordination of all individuals to the will and guidance of the state as represented and expressed by the dictator Adolf Hitler. Social life in Germany can be seen a totalitarianism as women were under the control of the Nazis having laws placed upon them. Also from a young age, Youth were taught Nazism therefore did not develop conflicting views to oppose Nazism and hence achieving Gleichschaltung as they coordinated an entire generation to believe and act in a combined way.

Many historians have commented on the nature of the Nazi Regime and entered the debate over the extent to which the Nazi Regime was a Totalitarianism society. In November 1939 a conference

of historians meet and came to the conclusion that Hitler's Germany was a significant totalitarian regime.

Nazism in power can be seen as Totalitarianism in the period of 1933-1939 as all aspects of society were under the control of the Nazis. The Nazis aimed to achieve Volksgemeinschaft and for this to be achieved they coordinated the entire Germany society in all aspects of life such as social, cultural and political. This is Totalitarianism as it is ruled by one party, the Nazi party, whose leader is supreme dictator, Adolf Hitler and has a party ideology that is almost like a religion.