

To propaganda. the  
use of propaganda  
was however



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To what extent was the Third Reich a Totalitarian Dictatorship? To be able to answer this question it is important to define what is meant by totalitarian dictatorship'. Totalitarian means a form of government that does not allow rival political parties and demands total obedience from the people and, dictatorship means ruler who has complete power . The Nazi Party did have as its intention the creation of what we would see as a totalitarian dictatorship, but the important question is how far they achieved this goal.

The Third Reich was a totalitarian state in the sense that it was a one party state'. A law was passed making illegal any other political party other than the Nazi Party. All political parties other than the Nazi party were abolished; the Social Democratic Party was outlawed as hostile to the nation and state' and, smaller parties were persuaded' to dissolve themselves. The individual German states also lost their independence. Nazi governors were put in charge to replace the elected state governors, making the Third Reich a Nazi only state. This principal is further enforced by The Enabling Law', which gave Hitler the same authority to make decisions and pass laws as the Reichstag once had. The Enabling Law allowed Hitler a dictatorial position, as he no longer had to consult the Reichstag on matters arising, he could pass whatever policy he wished.

However, it can be argued that the Third Reich was not a totalitarian dictatorship as Hitler did not exercise his authority efficiently enough to become a totalitarian leader. Mommsen describes how he became much removed from day-to-day decision making and distanced himself from policies, either through laziness or through a fear of becoming associated with unpopular decisions e. g. the Euthanasia programme, which became

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unpopular and was officially withdrawn. By the later stages of the regime so many orders of the Fhrer were issued he must have had these brought to him by the government machine, orders which were then signed and issued as Hitler's direct will. Indeed Mommsen goes further, saying that Hitler's fanatical and irrational objectives could not have formed the basis for rational government. He remained a propagandist and much of what he said was nothing more than propaganda.

The use of propaganda was however a vital aspect to the indoctrination of the ordinary German people to follow Nazi ideology through censorship. The media was virtually taken over by the Nazi's. Two-thirds of the national newspapers were controlled by the Nazi's, material was vetted before it even got to the journalists.

Radio broadcasting stations were bought up by the Nazi's and radios were mass produced solely for the use of distribution amongst the German people. Loudspeakers were also installed in public places for the use of collective listening. Furthermore, 13% of broadcasting staff were dismissed on political and racial grounds, and their replacements were Nazi party members. Goebels who had been appointed Minister of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, told his broadcasters in 1933, we will place the radio in the service of our ideology and no other ideology.

.. By this instrument you are the creators of public opinion' . Further to this was the introduction of the Nazi salute, this strengthened the individual's identity with the regime, thus ensuring Nazi ideological conformity. The Nazi's employed control over social groups one of which being manipulated

was the young. Hitler was a firm believer in the need to indoctrinate Nazi ideology early and the power of young people in ensuring the continued vitality of the “ Thousand Year Reich.” The Hitler Youth was based on Hitler’s anti-intellectualism, focusing on military training in preparation for becoming a soldier at 18.

Young German women were indoctrinated with the values of obedience, duty, self-sacrifice, discipline and physical self-control. The goal of girls in the BDM was to prepare women for motherhood and raise children who would be educated in the ways of National Socialism . This would secure the continued obedience to the Nazi party and fulfil the Nazi aim of the one party state. The Third Reich was not a totalitarian state as there were other groups in Germany outside the direct control of the Nazis. The Elites continued to operate as an effective group with their