

The role of propaganda and terror in hitler and stalin essay sample



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Propaganda was considered vital in maintaining control and favour. The dictators who implemented terror and propaganda to their tyrannical regimes were Stalin & Hitler. Propaganda is the organized and controlled spreading of information to influence and control the views of people and how they think. This then leads them to behave in a certain way. This was a large part of both Stalin's USSR and Hitler's Third Reich. A wide range of methods were used to raise the profile of the leaders and attract support. This included rallies, speeches and posters. Terror and violence was also another huge part of their respective dictatorships. Hitler had a huge anti-Semitism policy and used force within the government to weaken any potential opposition to the Nazi policies. He, along with Stalin, developed a cult of personality around himself. Stalin ensured the Soviet Union became an absolute totalitarian state in which all areas of life were affected by his policies. Both achieved their aims at great human cost and were mass killers.

HITLER & PROPAGANDA

From 1933, the Nazis moved quickly to establish a dictatorship. To do this, they began to bring all aspects of government under the direct control. This was to ensure that Nazi policies were being followed. This would allow them to control all political, economic and social life within Germany. This policy was known as Gleichschaltung. Propaganda would play a vital role in the setting up and continuation of a Nazi dictatorship. Their aims included increasing support for the Nazi state and give priority to the indoctrination of youth. They gained control of all media and all forms of expression.

Censorship was extensively used, not just for news control but also for entertainment and culture. Anything that conflicted with Nazi ideology was

censored. Huge rallies were staged to create the image of order. The Berlin Olympics was a major propaganda exercise where the Third Reich was displayed to the World's media. Josef Goebbels was the Minister of Propaganda and he silenced the voices of opposition and this control of information showed that Nazi Germany became a totalitarian state. This was seen in 1939 when Hitler was able to begin a war without the slightest public protest. HITLER & TERROR

The use of terror as a deterrent against those who tried to counter Nazi propaganda was wide, and the Nazis were prepared to go to extreme lengths to maintain their hold on power. Nazi rule impacted on all control of the police and legal system and this was vital for them. " Terror is an effective political weapon," declared Hitler. The police were under Nazi control and the Brownshirts became an auxiliary police force. The Gestapo was used to terrorize those suspected of a disloyalty to the state. The SS had been set up as an elite paramilitary body. Concentration camps were established where many of those arrested were sent. By July 1933, 26, 000 prisoners were detained in these camps, e. g. Dachau. Torture was common practice and many died in the camps because of the brutality. Hitler declared " People will think twice before opposing us, if they know what awaits them in the camps." By 1939, 18 camps had been established with over 250, 000 prisoners. In 1936 Himmler was given overall control of security matters. The SS ran them. A climate of fear and terror was deliberately created in order to maintain control. NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES

This was the final stage in Hitler's consolidation of power. In 1934, his position was very strong but he did not have absolute power, which he <https://assignbuster.com/the-role-of-propaganda-and-terror-in-hitler-and-stalin-essay-sample/>

craved. The Brownshirts numbered 2 million and their leader Ernst Rohm openly criticized Hitler, " Adolf is a swine. He's betraying all of us". The army feared the power of the SA. Hitler feared that the army would use this as an excuse to overthrow him. He needed the army in order to achieve his foreign policy aims. He decided to purge the SA of members who were potential opponents. On June 30th 1934 the purge was carried out, with over 400 opponents, including Rohm, murdered. It had the double affect of tightening Hitler's grip on the Nazi party and gaining army loyalty. In August of 1934 President Hindenburg died and Hitler adopted the name Fuhrer. With this, he was the unchallenged dictator of Nazi Germany. All aspects of German life would be subjected to Nazi influence.

STALIN & PROPAGANDA

During the 1930's the Soviet Union became an absolute totalitarian state in which all aspects of life were directly affected by Stalin's policies.

Propaganda claimed that it was the perfect workers state. In 1936 a constitution was written up to show the USSR had become a proper socialist state and described as Stalin as ' the only true democratic constitution in the world" There was a cult of leadership around Stalin and he was an object of devotion. Propaganda was also used to justify Stalin's policies. People were told what they should believe. Opponents of Stalin were blamed for failures and misery. Censorship was widely used. Education was rapidly expanded and illiteracy virtually disappeared, though the content of education was controlled. Subjects such as History were rewritten to match communist values. The arts were used as a tool of Soviet propaganda and all artists, painters and musicians had to glorify Communist achievement. Individuality

was discouraged and led to arrest. Only Stalin and the party had control. The party became an elite ruling class with many privileges. It gave citizens little of the liberty it claimed to. Stalin offered the people a mixed diet of terror and illusion.

STALIN & THE PURGES

Stalin began a policy of repression that aimed to remove all possible opposition to his rule. He seemed to be increasingly paranoid and saw enemies everywhere. It was likely that he wanted to protect his position by removing rivals. He also still feared Trotsky's influence who claimed to have wide support within the USSR. Terror was already part of the system.

Oppression had been used during the collectivization and industrialization policies. Stalin was prepared to direct it upon the Communist Party itself. The purges would create fear and terror which would greater party discipline and loyalty. It began in 1934 when Sergei Kirov was murdered which was denounced as a Trotskyist plot and provided an excuse to begin a purge of the party.

Show trials were started for former leaders and they were charged with offences including spying for Hitler. Nearly all admitted to it after being tortured and brainwashed and the trials were used for propaganda. Finally, a purge of the party was carried out. The secret police, the NKVD, carried out the purges. After this, 90% of all generals of the Red Army were shot. By 1939, up to 7 million people had been sent to the numerous labour camps known as the Gulag Archipelago. Life there was very harsh and many died.

The effects of the purges were to transform the USSR - it became a brutal totalitarian state with a climate of terror that affected all citizens.

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CONCLUSION

Both Stalin and Hitler were now leaders of totalitarian states which had been purged of potential rivals. The citizens of Germany and the USSR had been indoctrinated to their respective regimes.