

# What happens when a state becomes totalitarian

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To discuss this in a rounded way we must first identify and understand what it means to take a state from one element of power such as a democracy or a monarchy and transform the way in which ideas are implemented. This is done through the passing of laws, campaigns of oppression and crimes against the people of the state to form a totalitarian society where fear and oppression is the key.

The most concise example of this form of government has to be the National Socialism (Nazism) doctrines of the 20th century under Adolf Hitler. The way in which he distorted the way people thought and lived and the absolute power he exulted resulted in the genocide of millions of Jews and formed the first part of his view that the Jews were to blame for the problems of the country. This ideology forms part of the totalitarian viewpoint with a scapegoat being to blame for the problems caused by poor government.

With the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, it effectively deprived Jews of German Citizenship, denied the rights of basic human nature and the denied right to associate or marry 'Aryan' citizens. Their personal liberty was restricted and their personal safety wholly unstable. Jews were blamed for the poor state of the German economy, with the rise of Nazism coming as it did during the Depression and as it did after German defeat in the Great War (WW1).

Here lies the seed for totalitarianism to be undertaken and wholeheartedly embraced by the Hitler regime. They did not need to create a false problem, the economy and the downturn in German good fortune was the readymade catalyst for change. Hitler offered to return national pride and set the stage for people to round on the Jewish people as the 'enemy of the state'. This

doctrine served to remove the blame from Hitler and his cohorts, deflecting all the fervour and hatred towards the Jewish people, a classic symptom of a totalitarian society.

Hitler used his mighty armies and police forces to enforce his new laws. The enemy that he had identified as Judaism had to be extinguished and he embarked on a campaign of genocide, terror and propaganda that is well documented now, but the terror campaigns were shielded by the police state. The SS, Hitler's elite bodyguard unit began to take control of the media and the outlets for news and information. The main instigator of the Nazi propaganda machine was Dr Joseph Goebbels. They took control of cinemas and radio stations, and began to brainwash the people into believing their lies. These plans and efforts to deceive are typical of a totalitarian state, create an element of fear and uncertainty.

With the power base shifting to Hitler and the gradual but widespread destruction of other political parties and the murder of any person or organisation that dared to speak up against the Nazi regime, the plan to control the people by fear and oppression began to form. The schools had all books that were not Nazi approved destroyed and they were replaced with books that promoted the Nazi way of life and ideology. This full manipulation of the media and of every organisation that supplied written or spoken material allowed the genocide and systematic erosion of the Jewish race to go unchallenged. Simply because people did not get to hear about it.

The way in which the messages were relayed suggested that far from being the one to blame for all the troubles, Hitler was actually a saviour of the

German race and should be applauded in such a way. We have all seen the massive public demonstrations of his support in archives; anyone who didn't actively support the Fuhrer was considered a Jewish sympathiser and afforded the same fate as them, death.

The messages were constructed in such a fashion as to ensure that public sympathy would be forthcoming for the Nazis. They were seen as a unifying force rather than the perpetrators of heinous crimes. Again, reflecting the true nature of the government is a totalitarian doctrine.

As I have already discussed, the nature of a totalitarian government is to deflect the fears of the rulers away from the people and try to identify the weaker elements of a society and use them as scapegoats. This was the case with certain Third Reich propaganda. A recital of poetry that was read out in kindergarten would further use the Jewish race as responsible for the German downfall with terms such as 'the evil devil, the evil devil that in every land is known as the evil plague'. The Nazi message was even forced upon infants. This was clear with formation of Hitler Youth, an organisation that taught the ways of National Socialism to 10-18 year old boys.

The most concise quote that I could find, with regards the spread of totalitarian states in Europe around the time of Nazism was from Benito Mussolini. The Italian fascist dictator came to power at around the same time as Hitler and used similar methods to create a 'fear society' based on the downturn in Italian wealth and prosperity. He sums up the doctrine of the totalitarian with this statement 'all within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state'. What he was meaning with that statement

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is that the state of control is all encompassing and that no organisation can overcome the power that these dictators have. This was true to a certain extent as the dictators I have discussed used their armies and powers to commit horrific acts of genocide over any person or group that tried to create an opposition.

The one party philosophy of a totalitarian state means that people are forced to live in oppressive conditions. Poor wages, low status employment within 'sweatshop' conditions mostly with government run companies or utilities. No freedom to choose or the right to free speech. These actions are met with responses that ultimately include death or the fear of death to family members. No real protection from the rich as most of the landed or wealthy classes would have a vested interest in the government, if not the government itself. Living under constant fear of itself, the outside world and the need to seek a scapegoat to apportion blame is the only way that a totalitarian state can survive.

This creates a government that attempts to legitimise itself through forceful practices and seeks to endow itself with the wealth of the nation without fairly distributing it or acknowledging the rights of the people that helped create that state. Albeit through fear, hatred and greed.