

“By what methods, and with what success, did Hitler establish a totalitarian regime?” Explain your answer.

Definitions of totalitarian regime:

- Presence of an all-powerful leader who controls the party, state and political institutions
- Deliberate use of censorship and propaganda
- Controlling all aspects of culture and indoctrinating all sections of society
- Systematic use of coercion and terror to ensure total compliance
- Absolute state control
- Coordination of the economy which is subordinated to the objectives of the political regime.

When did Hitler rise to power?

1933 – Chancellor of Germany

Political policies were introduced by Hitler to control political institutions

- SA – Ernst Rohm as general
- Formed to protect Nazi officials during Nazi rallies and assemblies, and to fight Nazi opponents (disrupting the meetings of opposing parties, fighting against the paramilitary units of the opposing parties and intimidating Slavic and Romani citizens, unionists, and Jews)
- By end of 1933 – manpower of 2.5 million men, but it increasingly generated resentment as it was increasingly violent towards Hitler’s political opponents and Jews.
- Overconfident – requested to combine the SA and the army so as to weaken the army and big business.
 - Could overwhelm him with the military power backing him up – threat to Hitler!
- Goering (another leading leader of the Nazi party and who resented Rohm), convinced Hitler Rohm was planning a coup – led to Night of Long Knives
- Night of Long Knives: 30 June 1934
 - Hitler executed Rohm, other SA leaders, Nazi and non-Nazi opponents without trial and justified the execution by claiming he was protecting Germany against the plot by Rohm and the homosexuals around him.
 - Significance: Loss of SA leader → SA members could not oppose Hitler. He also had the military swear oath to him → **direct control and loyalty of the military and presence of an all-powerful leader who controls the party, state and political institutions**
- Use of SS to persecute political opponents and Jews, political offenders were sent to concentration camps after their release from prison
 - **Coercion and force to suppress** potential threats → **total compliance**
- Judges also had to pledge an oath to the loyalty of the Nazi Party

- Significance: Nazi is above justice and law. Law is shaped to the Nazi's benefit → **control various political institutions** by ensuring undivided and unwavering loyalty for him

Limitations:

- Military
 - Some officers planned a coup, attempting to assassinate Hitler many times but ultimately failed.
- White Rose Resistance
 - Non-violent and intelligent resistance, notable members being Sophie Scholl.
 - Influenced by their Christian beliefs and humanist idealism, they aimed to free Germany from Hitler's clutches.
 - Eventually failed, members were executed in 1943
- Hitler did not have **absolute compliance and control over society** → not a perfect totalitarian regime. However, Hitler still managed to remove them from his regime by executing them.

Social policies were introduced by Hitler to indoctrinate all sections of society

- Jews
 - To Hitler – Jews were 'parasites' of the world, and Germans were supreme race
 - Reich Citizenship Law (15 September 1935)
 - § Jews no longer had the right to hold German citizenship, Jewish officials were dismissed.
 - Nuremberg Laws (1935)
 - § Jews were now 2nd class citizens, and were no longer recognised as humans → stripped of their human rights.
 - Night of Broken Glass (1929)
 - § Jews' places of worship were destroyed
 - § 30000 Jews were sent off to concentration camps.
 - Holocaust – killed 6 million Jews
 - **Use of force and coercion** to ensure **total compliance** of Jews
- Women
 - Women working in top civil service and medical jobs were dismissed in 1933.
 - Women enrolment into universities was limited to 10%.
 - Who they could marry, whether they should marry and bear children based on race – preserve the Aryan master race and prevent other races (especially the Jews) from reproducing
- Education

- Nazi influence over physical education, German literature and language, history and biology.
- Girls were taught to be good homemakers and mother and boys to be brave soldiers.
- Educated from young to be loyal – easily manipulated. When they grow up to be the leading generation of society, Hitler has absolute control over a major aspect of society
- Social policies affected almost, if not all, people in Germany → Hitler succeeded in establishing a totalitarian regime in terms of **controlling all aspects of culture and indoctrinating all sections of society**.

Limitations:

- Jews
 - Between 1942 and 1944, Jewish armed resistance units were established in 100 over ghettos in places like Lithuania and former Soviet territories.
 - Despite the dangerous situation and consequences by staying → chose to fight for Jewish rights.
- Women
 - Number of women in employment rose, and rose even further during the war despite the policies
- Hitler did not have **absolute compliance and control over society** → not a perfect totalitarian regime.

Economic policies were introduced by Hitler to have absolute state control and coordination of the economy which is subordinated to the objectives of the political regime

- Objective: Preparing Germany for war.
- From 1932, he tried to revive the economy by boosting state expenditure.
 - Worked on infrastructure like railways, telecommunications and buildings.
 - Increase in taxes which laid a strong foundation for rearmament.
- § Reduced unemployment, it gained support from the general population.
- In 1936, he introduced the Four-Year-Plan and made Hermann Goering the head of it.
- Aim of Plan: to prepare the economy and armed forces for war in 4 years.
- It succeeded by turning Germany into one of the most heavily armed states by 1940.
- In 1938, Hitler became supreme commander of armed forces, bringing economic and military policy much more firmly under his control → more control over political institutions and economy to achieve political objective
- He soon appointed Albert Speer as Armament Minister who would not be influenced by others → total control over Speer for him to achieve political objectives with little resistance

- In 1942, Speer set up Central Planning, recruiting engineers and industrialists. He was able to reorganise factories, improve productivity levels, and establish systems of distribution which made optimum use of resources.
 - Achieved **absolute control and coordination over the economy** to support the war effort by putting the right people in charge of planning.