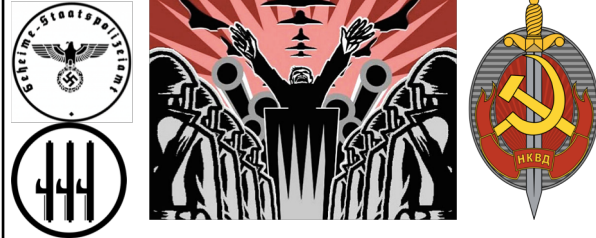


**SSWH18: EXAMINE THE MAJOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT SHAPED THE WORLD SOCIETIES BETWEEN WWI AND WWII**



*Element C: Describe the nature of totalitarianism and the police state that existed in the Soviet Union, Germany, and Italy and how they differ from authoritarian governments.*

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**Totalitarianism**

- The totalitarian regimes of the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy utilized three tools to exert control over both the state and the population. These tools include:
  1. extensive networks of police that operated both publicly and in secret
  2. state run propaganda networks that controlled the flow of information and built powerful cults of personality around the leader
  3. complex layers of legislation that legalized the dictatorial rule of the head of state and limited the civil liberties of the rest of the population.
- The NKVD in the Soviet Union, the Gestapo and SS in Germany, and the OVRA in Italy served as the eyes and ears of Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini respectively.
  - Each dictator maintained an extensive network of police that had the authority to use covert methods to monitor the civilian population.
    - These police networks benefited from a truncated judicial system that allowed for swift punishments that included death, prison, forced labor, and exile.
  - While all three used internment camps to house political dissidents, Germany and the Soviet Union interned dissidents at levels unprecedented in human history.
    - German concentration camps and Soviet gulags housed millions of German and Soviet citizens who challenged or were simply accused of challenging the authority of the regime.




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**Totalitarianism v. Authoritarianism**

- State run propaganda networks like the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in Nazi Germany controlled the flow of information to the population.
  - Soviet, German, and Italian propaganda departments censored foreign and domestic media, eliminating anything deemed unfit or dangerous to the regime.
    - State agencies in all three countries produced print, audio, and film media designed to indoctrinate the population and glorify the leader.
  - In the Soviet Union, the glorification of Stalin was so successful that inmates sentenced to years of forced labor in Siberian gulags often wrote letters to Stalin asking for help, falsely believing that their misfortune was the product of a mistake not the policies of the leader.
- The Communist, Nazi, and Fascist Parties in each country utilized the legislative bodies of each state to pass legislation that transferred massive power to the leader and severely limited the civil liberties of the population.
  - Freedoms of speech, assembly, and the press were severely reduced in each country.
- The extent of power wielded by these totalitarian regimes far surpassed the scope of power held by other authoritarian regimes.
  - While authoritarian monarchs and dictators have managed to take almost complete control over government in most phases of human history, there are few examples of states like Nazi Germany, the Stalinist Soviet Union, and Fascist Italy in which the leader was able to wield extensive power over both the government and the population.




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