



AP[®] European History (Operational) 2004 Sample Student Responses

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QUESTION 3

In the 1920's and 1930's, the rise of dictators was greatly aided by new developments in technology as well as changes in mass culture. The ~~the~~ success of such dictators as Adolf Hitler of Germany and Benito Mussolini of Italy depended on the use of these new means ~~to~~ to insure ~~the~~ greatness of the state under their rule.

A great impact upon citizens of Germany and Italy was the Great Depression. A drop of support for existing institutions of these nations was evident among citizens. The people saw the inability of the state, for example, the Weimer Republic of Germany, to resolve issues within the country. This growing discontent led to an increase in support for an extreme governmental change. ~~consequently~~ The people looked toward the charismatic Adolf Hitler and the ~~optimistic~~ optimistic Benito Mussolini for guidance.

Adolf Hitler used the concept of an Aryan race, superior to all others, to gain support of the Germans. He blamed ~~the~~ ~~others~~ others for problems of the nation. ~~He~~ most commonly used as scapegoats were Jews, homosexuals,

3

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

the mentally disabled and the gypsies. Through public speeches, which could be transmitted by radio ~~of~~ across ~~the~~ Hitler's Reich, the Nazi ~~party~~ views were spread. Images of the leader could be projected onto screens for those who had never seen ~~Hitler~~ Hitler. In these images he could be portrayed as he wished to win popular support.

^{In} Benito Mussolini's quest for power, ^{he} also emphasized the superiority of the nation as a whole. His March on Rome in 1922 was unopposed and Mussolini began to implement huge changes throughout his new Fascist Italy. Through radio and in speeches amplified by microphone, Mussolini emphasized the essential aspects of fascism. Nationalism, militarism, the state of the nation considered above that of the individual, and the strict limitation of individual rights were enforced through propaganda, ~~the~~

The people ruled by Adolf Hitler lived in a time between two major wars. They were willing to sacrifice their rights if the security of the nation would be guaranteed. Germany violated the Versailles Treaty and made

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

3

technological advances to increase the power and size of its military. Areas surrounding Hitler's Reich could not easily resist the great tanks and warplanes that would later attack Poland in a Blitzkrieg, or "lightening war."

inspired speeches made by these leaders which would be heard throughout their countries ~~inspired~~ the citizens who felt strongly impacted by these confident words. Mussolini told the Italians that he would make the Mediterranean sea an "Italian Lake." ~~the~~ claims such as this boosted a sense of nationalism. This national pride supported militarism ~~used~~ by both dictators.

The citizen had ~~no~~ no ~~guaranteed~~ rights that could be guaranteed. It was only for the sake of national security that these policies were not frequently challenged. The propoganda of the time was apparent in radio broadcasts, fiery speeches, and on screen images. The masses, ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~seen~~ unhappy with pre-existing institutions, were easily convinced ~~to~~ and brainwashed.

The rise of ~~the~~ dictators in the 1920's

3

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

and 1940's would not have been ~~possible~~^{as} successful without the ~~people's~~ willingness of the people in Germany and Italy to allow the state to ~~do~~ intrude upon their rights. Seen as a necessity for security, dictators Benito Mussolini ~~of~~ of Italy and Adolf Hitler of Germany, gained popular support from these people and established fascist dictatorships. Their rise to power was aided by the new technologies of the radio, microphone, and film, as well as this mass culture.

3

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

The technological developments of the late 19th and early 20th century facilitated the reign of some of humanity's strongest dictators during the 1920's and 30's.

Of all the developments which made consolidation of power easier for despots to accomplish, it was media. Wide availability of newspapers and literacy made the written propaganda capable of reaching a wider audience than ever. Radio it easier for industrialized nations to indoctrinate their subjects.

Mastery of propaganda by means of technology was evident in all three of the great dictatorial regimes of the inter-war era: Fascist Italy and Germany as well as the USSR.

In all three states, leaders used propaganda to create "cults of personalities". Cult of personality idealized the leader and played upon history and nationalism to enhance the loyalty of citizens. Though glorification of leaders was not a new development, when one looks back upon leaders such as Louis XIV and Napoleon III, their efforts were nowhere near as successful. This is due to their technological

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

3

disadvantage. Though equally as determined as any, they did not have the means that Stalin, Hitler or Mussolini did. Both had only the primitive printing press and skilled artists.

In the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin used primarily print to get his message across. Workers were to be inspired by the ideal worker who met over 140% of his quota. Stalin was portrayed as a wise leader defending against all enemies. 5 year plans were heralded as efforts to bring about prosperity for all.

Finally, in Russia technology in armaments was a vital factor. When many peasants opposed collectivization, they were helpless against the well armed Red army. Millions died opposing, but in vain, because the traditional peasant revolt was made obsolete by weapons superiority.

Similarly in Germany and Italy, mass media was used to glorify the leader. Be it Hitler "Der Fuher" or Mussolini "Il Duce", propaganda prevailed. In Italy, Mussolini's Fascist government was compared

3

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to the glories of the Roman Empire. Similarly, figures from Italian history, from Mazzini to Garibaldi were used to justify his regime. All this appealed to mass culture, in that it played upon all that Italians had been reared to honor.

In Germany, Hitler also drew upon mass culture to solidify his regime. He drew upon ancient legends as well as the pseudo-science of Nietzsche to justify his policies, most notoriously his "final solution" for the Jews. Again, mass culture was taken advantage of as popular images were exploited.

Dictatorial regimes of the inter-war era used technology and mass media to their tremendous advantage. Though this was not new, advances over the previous fifty years had given them an almost unbeatable advantage over the masses. Consequently, these regimes were some of the most powerful and centralized the world has ever seen.