

Totalitarianism

Background

Ideology is important in History 12 because it is a guiding principle for political action.

Reflecting on your study of the Soviet Union, you can clearly see how Communism steers the action of Lenin and Stalin.

Communism is the official ideology of the Soviet Union, but totalitarianism is its chosen form of government.

Remember . . . totalitarianism is a form of government.

Soon we will study the ideology of Fascism, which is philosophically opposed to Communism.

Fascism will steer the actions of both Mussolini and Hitler.

Like Lenin and Stalin, however, Mussolini and Hitler will also pick totalitarianism as their form of government.

What makes totalitarianism special?

Totalitarianism is a new form of government.

While past monarchs ruled with absolute power, they could never control all aspects of public and private life.

The power of monarchy was limited by the technology of the day, especially regarding communication.

Things changed in the Twentieth Century.

The most important changes were: 1) dictators applied modern technology, and 2) dictators were more ruthless than anything previously imagined.

Totalitarianism was born, and it unfortunately became a way of life for millions!

Assignment

1) Why is totalitarianism a form of government, not an ideology?

2) List the characteristics of a totalitarian government.

3) Explain why totalitarianism only developed in the Twentieth Century.
