Totalitarian Goverments Essay, Research Paper

Totalitarian Governments use the people in a total movement to achieve a goal. When this goal is finally met, the government finds a new goal to strive for to keep the population in check. This type of government sprang up during the 1930’s in Europe and Asia. Totalitarianism came into being for many reasons: class struggle, nationalism, and a need for a better way of life. However the biggest reason that totalitarian government came into play was because of the Great Depression. Three nations in particular were able to model this take over by using the lower classes as a boost to achieve power.

The Russian nation was in a state of distress. The country was being ruined by drought, fire, and the lack of industry. Russia was falling way behind the rest of the world, and with the death of Lenin they were looking for a new leader. The single party system made it easy for a totalitarian style leader to take hold of the reigns of power.

Trotsky and Stalin were the two candidates for the take over Russia’s government. They both used socialism to try to move into power, but Stalin used socialism on the home front to his advantage. Where Trotsky wanted to use the rest of the world for socialism, making the people think that they needed a crutch. This idea did not go over well and Stalin won increasing support. He used this support to banish and kill Trotsky and his opposition. After Trotsky was out of the way, Stalin killed his supporters and furthered his totalitarian role. With the introduction of his “Five Year Plan”, to increase industry by two hundred and fifty percent and agriculture by one hundred and fifty percent, he solidified his position and the birth of a totalitarian government through the goal of industry.

Earlier, in the nation of Italy, totalitarianism had been introduced before the grounds had been laid in Russia. There was a great hate that was rising between the upper and lower classes. The socialist movement was in full effect, and factory workers and peasant were taking over factories. And with the pope lifting the ban on Catholics, there were an increasing number of different opposing factions in government making an already unstable government worse.

Mussolini, a nationalist and fascist, steps in asking for a greater sense of nationalism. He helps this idea with promises of better benefits for the working class and land reform for the peasants. This gained him support from the lower and middle classes and directly attacked the socialist party. He used a growing number of followers to literally beat the socialists into submission and thwart an already unstable government. As the final straw, a group of fascist supporters stormed Rome and demanded that the King ask Mussolini to take power. The King gave in to their demands and granted Mussolini legal power, thus granting totalitarianism a hold on all of Italy.

Finally, the greatest emergence of totalitarian government happened in the beaten and torn country of Germany. After the First World War, Germany lay in ruins. Their defeat at the hands of the allied powers had left Germany without the right to bear arms, a stable economy, and the land that they had taken from many nations.

The economic crisis of the Great Depression is the event that ultimately let Hitler and totalitarianism take over Germany. Hitler won the support of women and the youth. He preached to the lower and middle classes offering better wages and social reform. Hitler was smart, he did not openly attack democracy and bring the direct scrutiny of its democratic oppressors, and he played the nationalism card, and used the Treaty of Versailles as the oppressor. This alone could not have brought the small Nazi party to power. However, with the communists worried about the social democrats, Hitler amassed a majority of the voting population and won the election. Hitler motivated the whole country into becoming a dominant world power again.

These three nations were the models for totalitarian governments across Europe and Asia. Their dictators all came into power legally and used the support of the lower classes as a basis for takeover and movement towards a common goal. In short, the common man wanting a bigger piece of the pie brought about totalitarianism, and in the end he received more but had less freedom.