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### Exam focus

# AQA 20: Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918–1945

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This resource presents a sample answer and commentary to an AQA-style question for 20: Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918–1945.

## Question

Effective use of propaganda was the most important reason for the popularity of Hitler's regime in the years 1933 to 1940. Assess the validity of this view. (25 marks)

## Answer with commentary

Hitler's first position in the DAP was as propaganda chief, a role which he took very seriously. With this in mind he placed great emphasis on the use of propaganda to consolidate and maintain support for the regime, and ultimately continue to ensure that the Nazi party were popular. Arguably this was the most important reason for the maintenance of their popularity.

The candidate opens the paragraph with a clear link to the set question as well as a clear sense of where their judgement lies.

Hitler eventually appointed Joseph Goebbels as minister of propaganda. Hitler's theory was that all effective propaganda must be confined to a few bare necessities and expressed in some simple stereotypical ways. In ensuring electoral success they had used simple messages such as 'Work and Bread' and 'Make Germany Great'. Once the Nazis were in power they continued to focus on the simplicity of propaganda. The German people were deluded due to control of all means of communication. Propaganda was successful in that it cultivated the Hitler myth, portrayed the Nazi regime as a stabilising force and played on frustrated German nationalism. For many it was easier to believe the propaganda than question it, many also could push to one side their doubts because of the perceived successes of the regime, especially compared to Weimar.

The candidate shows their knowledge and understanding of the period, demonstrating the role that propaganda played in ensuring support for the regime. They have embedded key terms such as 'Hitler myth'.

Clearly propaganda played a crucial role in maintaining support for the regime, from the use of events such as the Reichstag fire to discredit opposition to effective deployment of posters with simple messages it pervaded everyone's lives.

The candidate again demonstrates the skill of analysis by linking the points made to the question set and evaluating the role played by the factor discussed.

The cult of the Führer was developed alongside the desire for national rebirth. Hitler was placed above the day-to-day hustle so that illegal actions could be attributed to subordinates. To sustain the widest possible audience the government introduced the 'people's radio' which cost a little more than a weekly wage. They allowed Hitler to command authority whilst establishing a fireside intimacy with his people, another effective form of propaganda. After 1933 the Nazis enforced communal listening in factories, schools, offices and shops. Loudspeaker pillars were erected in public places. The cinema offered an ideal medium to propagate its ideology and the excitement of the big screen was cleverly exploited. The film, *The Triumph of the Will* (1935) showed the Nuremburg Rally and *Olympia* (1938) showed the Olympic Games. Hitler only appeared sparingly to preserve his myth-like status and ensure that people always thought highly of him, as if he was untouchable.

The candidate continues to demonstrate their developed knowledge of the factor with further examples of the role played by film and cinema as well as the way propaganda was used to cultivate Hitler into a God-like figure, surrounded by a myth.

All of this evidence suggests that the use of propaganda was hugely important in maintaining the popularity of the regime from 1933 to 1940. From 1933 the regime skilfully managed the events of the Reichstag fire, condemning the Communists and projecting an image of a legal seizure of power, allaying conservative misgivings and using Potsdam Day to consolidate Hitler's alliances with the moderate conservatives. As the regime became more established propaganda continued to be used to spread messages of party policy and to create a strong sense of nationalism in preparation for war. Whilst other factors were important in maintaining the popularity of the regime, such as the economy, propaganda was present in every aspect of life and therefore its significance cannot be overstated.

The candidate ends the paragraph by again linking their points to the question and stating definitively the role played by the stated factor.

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