History for the IB Diploma
Authoritarian States (20th Century)

Allan Todd and Sally Waller
Series editor: Allan Todd
Dedication

In memory of 'Don' Houghton (1916–2008)
who first taught me to love History (AT).
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Introduction

This book is designed to prepare students taking the Paper 2 topic – World history topic 10: Authoritarian states (20th century) – in the IB History examination. It will examine the various aspects associated with four different authoritarian states, including the origins of such regimes, the role of leaders and of ideology and the nature of the states concerned. It will also look at how such regimes maintained and consolidated power, the treatment of opposition groups and the range of domestic policies that were followed.

For many, such a state is typified by Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler (1889–1945); while the Soviet Union under Stalin (1878–1953), though in many ways very different from Nazi Germany, was also clearly another authoritarian state. Especially during the early years of the Cold War (1945–91), some historians tried to argue that Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia were essentially similar regimes. Some even argued that Stalin’s regime was worse than Hitler’s. As well as considering Nazi Germany, this book also examines the regimes of Benito Mussolini in Italy, Mao Zedong in China and Fidel Castro in Cuba.

Themes

To help you prepare for your IB History exams, this book will cover the themes relating to authoritarian states as set out in the IB History Guide.

For ease of study, it will examine each state in terms of three major themes, in the following order:

• the emergence of authoritarian regimes and the role of leaders and ideologies in the rise to power
• the methods used to consolidate and maintain power in such states – including propaganda and foreign policy
• the domestic economic and social policies of such regimes, their impact and the success or failure of such policies.

Each of the four detailed case study chapters has units dealing with the three major themes, so that you will be able to focus on the main issues. This approach will help you to compare and contrast the roles of the individual leaders and parties, and the main developments in the various states covered – and so spot similarities and differences.