

The Totalitarian Temptation

*What led certain nations in the 20th century to adopt
the most authoritarian systems of rule in history?*



Debating the DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints
in Primary Source Documents

The Totalitarian Temptation

The 2017 World History Course and Exam Description of the College Board Advanced Placement Program* lists five themes that it urges teachers to use in organizing their teaching. Each World History *Debating the Documents* booklet focuses on one or two of these five themes.

The Five Themes

- 1. Interaction between humans and the environment.** (demography and disease; migration; patterns of settlement; technology)
- 2. Development and interaction of cultures.** (religions; belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies; science and technology; the arts and architecture)
- 3. State-building, expansion, and conflict.** (political structures and forms of governance; empires; nations and nationalism; revolts and revolutions; regional, transregional, and global structures and organizations)
- 4. Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems.** (agricultural and pastoral production; trade and commerce; labor systems; industrialization; capitalism and socialism)
- 5. Development and transformation of social structures.** (gender roles and relations; family and kinship; racial and ethnic constructions; social and economic classes)

This Booklet's Main Theme:

- 3** State-building, expansion, and conflict.

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MindSparks®

CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA



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Printed in the United States of America

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ISBN: 978-1-57596-301-3
Product Code: HS752 v2.0

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Teacher Introduction

★ Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their “secondary” accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it’s because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context. To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.



*“Multiple,
conflicting
perspectives are
among the truths
of history.
No single
objective or
universal account
could ever put an
end to this endless
creative dialogue
within and
between the past
and the present.”*

From the 2011 Statement on Standards
of Professional Conduct of the Council of
the American Historical Association.

★ *The Debating the Documents Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **Two Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. *Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way.* (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **One DBQ.** On page 20, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Have students read “Suggestions for the Student” and the Introductory Essay.

Give them copies of pages 5–7. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

2. Have students do the worksheets.

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources digitally.

NOTE: If you are using these materials with an AP world history class, an honors class, or some other group of advanced and/or more knowledgeable students, you may want to make more written sources available to them on this topic. Do a basic Internet search for sources that provide additional perspectives and then add to the sources provided here.

3. “Debate the documents” as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source’s point of view.

4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 20 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

The DBQ for this Booklet (see page 20):

What do you think the attractions of totalitarianism were for many people in the modern age? Do you think totalitarianism holds such attractions for some even now? Why or why not?

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay’s thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

★ *Complete DBQ Scoring Guide*

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in “laundry list” style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

Suggestions to the Student

★ *Using Primary Sources*

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This *Debating the Documents* lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Read the one-page introductory essay.

This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this *Debating the Documents* lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.



2. Study the primary source documents for this lesson.

For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals, others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image’s “content” (its subject matter) but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols, and other features that add to the image’s meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source’s author, that author’s reasons for writing, and the likely audience for the source. These considerations give you clues as to the source’s historical value.

3. Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.

For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the “Study the Document” worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the “Comparing the Documents” worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

4. As a class, debate the documents.

Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

5. Do the final DBQ.

“DBQ” means “document-based question.” A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge.

The Totalitarian Temptation

In the 1920s, Giovanni Amendola, a deputy in Italy's parliament, led those opposed to Benito Mussolini's new Fascist government. In 1926, he died from injuries inflicted by a gang of Fascist thugs. It was Amendola who in 1923 first coined the term "totalitarianism" to describe the regime Mussolini had created. Historians have debated the word every since. Yet Amendola's sense that something new and frightening had appeared is still shared by many who look back on the history of the twentieth century.

The term "totalitarian" has been applied mainly to Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, certain communist regimes (especially Stalin's Soviet Union and the Eastern European governments it controlled after World War II), North Korea, China under Mao Zedong, and Cambodia under Pol Pot, as well as to the Taliban and certain other radical Islamic states or terrorist groups.

The term came into use because other labels such as "dictatorship" did not seem to describe fully the kind of sweeping social, cultural, and political control some states in the twentieth century have sought. Perhaps only in the twentieth century have science and technology given the state the means to try to impose total control over all aspects of life. In any case, this goal is what the "total" in "totalitarianism" refers to. The term is applied to a state in which a single party rules absolutely and uses state power and a cult of personality centered on its leader to control the economy, the military, education, all cultural institutions, neighborhoods—even the family.

Two aspects of totalitarian regimes have received the most attention: the use of terror and surveillance to intimidate and the use of propaganda and the suppression of all dissent to maintain popular support—in fact, to alter individual consciousness itself.

The first of these aspects of totalitarianism took the form of terrifying police-state tactics and violence directed toward groups labeled "enemies of the state." In the case of the Nazis,

the Jews became the single-most important enemy, slaughtered by the millions in the death camps of the Holocaust.

The Nazis depicted Jews as a parasitical people who lived off the vital energies of other nations, particularly the German nation. Hitler and the Nazis also portrayed the Jews as both evil capitalists and the force behind Soviet communism. This is ironic, for Jews also suffered greatly at the hands of the Soviet Union during and after Hitler's time. Under Stalin, the "Gulag," a vast apparatus of thousands of slave-labor prison camps, was filled with millions of innocent people. Millions died in such camps. Jews were among them. But in the case of Stalin's Gulag, the imprisoned were defined mainly by "class," as enemies who supposedly tried to sabotage the effort to build a perfect communist society of equality, justice, and happiness.

Ideals such as "equality," "justice," "patriotism," "the master race," etc., gave totalitarianism its appeal for millions. This was especially so during times of deep stress and confusing change. Such times were common throughout the 20th century. The intense propaganda programs of totalitarian regimes worked, in part, because people willingly longed for the peace, order, and harmony they promised. This longing, this "totalitarian temptation," is a part of what gave these regimes life.

The nature of totalitarianism and the totalitarian temptation has been explored by some of the greatest writers of the century: Arthur Koestler, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and George Orwell. Orwell's 1949 novel *Nineteen Eighty Four* gave us a unique set of terms for thinking about totalitarian control (e.g., "Big Brother," "Newspeak," "doublethink," "thought police").

The sources here will help you explore and debate this aspect of twentieth-century history in order to better understand the meaning of totalitarianism and the totalitarian temptation.

Totalitarianism Time Line

1917–1923

Vladimir Lenin leads the Bolsheviks to power in Russia in 1917. During the civil war that follows, they seize factories and banks, outlaw other political parties, set up the secret police (the “Cheka”), force peasants to turn over food surpluses, and use terror on a mass scale. One official says, “We are not carrying out war against individuals. We are exterminating the bourgeoisie as a class.”

1922

In chaos after World War I, Italy turns to Benito Mussolini’s Fascists, whose black-shirted street fighters were fostering much turmoil. Censorship is imposed and by 1925, Italy is a one-party police state with Mussolini as the all-powerful “Il Duce.”

1925

In the book *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler describes in chilling terms his National Socialist (Nazi) ideology and his plans for the German nation he hopes to rule.

1929–1933

Joseph Stalin, now fully in control of the Soviet Union, begins a drive for the full collectivization of agriculture and, as he put it, “the liquidation of the *kulaks* as a class” (*Kulaks* are relatively wealthy peasants, but the term comes to mean anyone opposed to collectivization). Beginning in 1930, several million are deported or killed. At the same time, Stalin crushes the peasantry in the Ukraine by creating an artificial famine in which several million starve to death.

1933

At the height of the Great Depression, Hitler’s Nazi Party grows in popularity to become the largest party in Germany’s parliament. Hitler is named Chancellor and begins the total destruction of political democracy.

1937–1938

In the purges and Moscow show trials, Stalin eliminates all potential opponents among older Bolsheviks and current Communist Party officials. In this climate of terror, possibly two million others are sent to the Gulag. Arthur Koestler’s 1940 novel *Darkness at Noon* expresses the disillusionment with communism felt by many former supporters at this time.

1939

Hitler, with Mussolini and Japan’s military dictators as allies, invades Poland, plunging Europe into World War II. Some 50 million will die during the course of the war.

1942

In the midst of World War II, Hitler implements his plans to exterminate the Jews as a people. His policy of arrest, imprisonment in death camps, and the execution of millions, including six million Jews, comes to be known as the Holocaust.

1949

George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is published. In China, Mao Zedong’s Communists take power. During its “Great Leap Forward” (1958–1960) and its “Cultural Revolution” (1966–1969), many millions perish in turmoil generated by the plans and power of Mao’s totalitarian state.

1973

The Gulag Archipelago by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is published in the West, describing the Soviet concentration-camp system.

1975–1979

In Cambodia, the communist Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot create a totalitarian state and cause the deaths of two million people (a fifth of the country’s population) in one of the worst genocidal tragedies of the century.

1989–1991

After years of growing protests, the Soviet-controlled East European communist states collapse, as does the Soviet Union itself by 1991.

Visual Primary Source Documents 1 & 2

Document 1



TAOLMOR, Shutterstock Inc.

Document 2



TAOLMOR, Shutterstock Inc.

Information on Documents 1 & 2

Document 1. One common theme in the propaganda art of totalitarian societies seems to be a glorification of the leader as larger than life. Here in this Stalin-era Soviet poster, both Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin loom as giant figures, radiating confidence and firmness as they lead their society into an age of industrial triumph and communist social transformation.

Document 2 is a poster of Mao Zedong. As with the Soviet poster, the leader is portrayed as both huge and reassuring. Here, Mao is smiling as he rises with the sun and its rays to watch over and guide his joyous people. The masses are depicted as strong, hard-working, ordinary people, confident and totally united.

Visual Primary Source Documents 3 & 4

Document 3



Eugene Ivanov, Shutterstock Inc.

Document 4



Aaron Wood, Shutterstock Inc.

Information on Documents 3 & 4

Document 3. The totalitarian systems promised their people perfect societies that would overcome all conflict and strife and solve all the problems of modern life. Instead, they all seemed to result in mass imprisonment and slaughter on a monumental scale. This illustration is of a communist concentration camp in the Gulag. It is by Eugene Ivanov, who was born in Siberia in 1966 but who for years has lived and worked in Prague in the Czech Republic.

Document 4. The Soviet Gulag and other totalitarian systems of slave labor and mass punishment reached their hideous perfection under the Nazis during World War II. Auschwitz-Birkenau was the largest of the Nazi concentration camps (actually a group of camps). Some estimate that here the Nazis put to death well over one million people, of whom about 90 percent were Jews. Here the sign over the camp entrance reads "Work will set you free."

Study the Documents: Visual Sources 1 & 2

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Visual Features—Doc. 1 _____

What visual features in this poster could have fostered a reassuring and admiring attitude toward Lenin and Stalin?
Artwork like this is often labeled “socialist realism.” Looking at this poster, explain what you think this term means.

2 Visual Features—Doc. 2 _____

This poster seems to portray Mao as both all-powerful and yet also a non-threatening man of the people. How does it convey both of these things?

3 Compare & Contrast _____

In what ways do these two posters express the same ideas about leaders and their people? In what ways does the Soviet vision of a communist society seem to differ from the Chinese vision under Mao?

Study the Documents: Visual Sources 3 & 4

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Background Knowledge

Based on what you know about the Soviet Gulag and Nazi concentration camps like Auschwitz, make a list of key similarities and differences in the two labor-prison systems.

2 Visual Features—Doc. 3

How do you think that artist Eugene Ivanov felt about the Gulag slave-labor prison system? What features in his illustration help convey a sense of what life in such camps was like?

3 Compare & Contrast

Some historians might note that Visual Source Documents 1–4 show two completely opposite aspects of totalitarianism. Other historians might say that these two aspects actually fit together perfectly (i.e., that one aspect leads automatically to the other). What do you think they mean, and with which side do you agree? Why?

Comparing the Documents

★ *The Visual Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the Comparison Essay worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents—and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

Which of these primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand totalitarianism and its attractions for many people?

Document 1



TAOLMOR, Shutterstock Inc.

Document 2



TAOLMOR, Shutterstock Inc.

Document 3



Eugene Ivanov, Shutterstock Inc.

Document 4



Aaron Wood, Shutterstock Inc.

Documents 1 & 2

☐

Documents 3 & 4

☐

Comparison Essay

I chose Documents _____ because:

*I did **not** choose Documents _____.*

However, a historian still might use the documents in the following way:

Keep this in mind: Some sources are very biased. A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

Written Primary Source Document 1

Information on Document 1

These are excerpts from a long speech by Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Germany's Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, 1933–1945. He delivered the speech on February 18, 1943, before a large audience of party elites in Berlin. The battle of Stalingrad had just ended in defeat for Germany, a turning point after which Germany could no longer advance on its various fronts. Goebbels used this speech to goad Germans into working harder and making greater sacrifices for the war effort. The last half of the speech details further restrictions imposed by the Nazi regime, closing bars and restaurants and luxury clothing shops, demanding 14-hour work days, more labor performed by women, an end to vacations for most, etc.

Document 1

Behind the oncoming Soviet divisions we see the Jewish liquidation commandos, and behind them terror, the specter of mass starvation and complete anarchy. International Jewry is the devilish ferment of decomposition that finds cynical satisfaction in plunging the world into the deepest chaos and destroying ancient cultures that it played no role in building. We also know our historic responsibility. Two thousand years of Western civilization are in danger. One cannot overestimate the danger. It is indicative that when one names it as it is, International Jewry throughout the world protests loudly. Things have gone so far in Europe that one cannot call a danger a danger when it is caused by the Jews.

* * * * *

I am firmly convinced that the lamenting lords and archbishops in London have not the slightest intention of resisting the Bolshevik danger that would result were the Soviet army to enter Europe. Jewry has so deeply infected the Anglo-Saxon states both spiritually and politically that they no longer have the ability to see the

danger. It conceals itself as Bolshevism in the Soviet Union, and plutocratic-capitalism in the Anglo-Saxon states. The Jewish race is an expert at mimicry. They put their host peoples to sleep, paralyzing their defensive abilities. [Shouts from the crowd: "We have experienced it!"] Our insight into the matter led us to the early realization that cooperation between international plutocracy and international Bolshevism was not a contradiction, but rather a sign of deep commonalities. The hand of the pseudo-civilized Jewry of Western Europe shakes the hand of the Jewry of the Eastern ghettos over Germany. Europe is in deadly danger.

* * * * *

The people and leadership are determined to take the most radical measures. The broad working masses of our people are not unhappy because the government is too ruthless. If anything, they are unhappy because it is too considerate. Ask anyone in Germany, and he will say: The most radical is just radical enough, and the most total is just total enough to gain victory.

Written Primary Source Document 2

Information on Document 2

Russian writer Vassily Grossman's novel *Forever Flowing* tells the story of Ivan Grigoryevich, a Soviet political prisoner who is released in 1957 after 30 years of forced labor. Ivan later moves into the home of a widow, Anna Sergeyevna, who had lived through the forced famine that killed millions of *kulaks* in the Ukraine. Ivan and Anna begin to fall in love, and to share stories of the horrors they have witnessed. In this passage, Anna explains how it was possible to accept the destruction of the *kulaks*. Grossman finished his novel just before he died in 1964, but the KGB seized it. It was later smuggled out and published in the West in 1970.

Document 2

I asked you how the Germans could kill Jewish children in gas chambers, how they could go on living after that. Could it be that there would be no retribution, either from God or from other people? And you said: only one form of retribution is visited upon an executioner — the fact that he looks upon his victim as something other than a human being and thereby ceases to be a human being himself, and thereby executes himself as a human being. He is his own executioner. While the man who has been done in, has been executed, remains a human being for all eternity, no matter how he has been murdered. Do you remember that?

So now I understand why I came here to be a cook, why I did not want to be a collective farm chairman. Yes, I have spoken of this before.

And nowadays, I look back on the liquidation of the kulaks in a quite different light—I am no longer under a spell, and I can see the human beings there. But why had I been so benumbed? After all, I could see then

how people were being tortured and how badly they were being treated! But what I said to myself at the time was “They are not human beings, they are kulaks.” And so I remember, I remember and I think: Who thought up this word “kulak” anyway? Was it really Lenin? What torture was meted out to them! In order to massacre them, it was necessary to proclaim that kulaks are not human beings. Just as the Germans proclaimed that Jews were not really human beings. Thus did Lenin and Stalin: kulaks are not human beings. But that is a lie. They are people! They are human beings! That’s what I have finally come to understand. They are all human beings!

And so, at the beginning of 1930, they began to liquidate the kulak families. The height of the fever was in February and March. They expelled them from their home districts so that when it was time for sowing there would be no kulaks left, so that a new life could begin. That is what we all said it would be: “the first collective farm spring.”

Study the Document: Written Source 1

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Audience, Author, Purpose _____

Think about Goebbels' audience here and the immediate context or key events at the time of his speech. In what way do these things explain what Goebbels' purposes might have been in giving the speech? What parts of the speech reveal this purpose the most?

2 Interpreting Meanings _____

In speaking of "International Jewry," Goebbels talks of the "devilish ferment of decomposition" it causes. He also says it has "deeply infected the Anglo-Saxon states both spiritually and politically." What sort of enemy do these kinds of phrases make the Jews out to be?

3 What Else Can You Infer? _____

What does the source suggest or imply? For example, Goebbels insists the idea of "cooperation between international plutocracy and international Bolshevism was not a contradiction." What do you think he means, and what can you infer from this about the nature of the fears in Germany that Goebbels hoped to arouse?

Study the Document: Written Source 2

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Main Point or Topic

In a brief paragraph, explain why Vassily Grossman saw the Holocaust, the horrors of the Gulag, and the Ukrainian terror famine as similar. Do you think these events are similar or different in some basic way? Why?

2 Interpreting Meanings

At one point in this passage Anna tells Ivan, "So now I understand why I came here to be a cook, why I did not want to be a collective farm chairman." What do you think she means by this?

3 Compare & Contrast

Select a few key sentences from this passage that you would most like to have presented to the audience Goebbels was addressing in Written Source Document 1. Explain your choices.

Comparing the Documents

★ *The Written Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the Comparison Essay worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents—and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

Which of these primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand totalitarianism and its attractions for many people?

*Excerpts from a
speech by
Joseph Goebbels,
delivered
in Berlin on
February 18, 1943*

Document 1

☐

*A passage from
Russian writer
Vassily Grossman's novel
Forever Flowing*

Document 2

☐

Comparison Essay

I chose Documents _____ because:

*I did **not** choose Documents _____.*

However, a historian still might use the documents in the following way:

Keep this in mind: Some sources are very biased. A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

Document-Based Question

Your task is to answer a document-based question (DBQ) on totalitarianism and the totalitarian temptation. In a DBQ, you use your analysis of primary source documents and your knowledge of history to write a brief essay answering the question. Using all four sets of documents, answer this question. Below are two DBQs. The first is somewhat less demanding than the second. Use whichever DBQ your teacher assigns.

Document-Based Question

1

What do you think the attractions of totalitarianism were for many people in the modern age? Do you think totalitarianism has such attractions for some even now? Why or why not?

OR

2

How do these sources help illustrate the nature of “totalitarian” regimes as compared with other dictatorial or authoritarian regimes? Do you think the distinction between “totalitarian” and merely “authoritarian” is a valid one? Why or why not?

Below is a checklist of key suggestions for writing a DBQ essay. Next to each item, jot down a few notes to guide you in writing the DBQ. Use extra sheets to write a four- or five-paragraph essay.

- *Introductory Paragraph*
Does the paragraph clarify the DBQ itself? Does it present a clear thesis, or overall answer, to that DBQ?
- *The Internal Paragraphs—1*
Are these paragraphs organized around main points with details supporting those main ideas? Do all these main ideas support the thesis in the introductory paragraph?
- *The Internal Paragraphs—2*
Are all of your main ideas and key points linked in a logical way? That is, does each idea follow clearly from those that went before? Does it add something new and helpful in clarifying your thesis?
- *Use of Primary Source Documents*
Are they simply mentioned in a “laundry list” fashion? Or are they used thoughtfully to support main ideas and the thesis?
- *Concluding Paragraph*
Does it restate the DBQ and thesis in a way that sums up the main ideas without repeating old information or going into new details?

Worksheet Answers and Guidelines

Some worksheet questions call for specific answers to factual questions. In these cases, correct answers are provided here. Most worksheet questions are open-ended and call on students to offer their own interpretations and personal reactions. In those cases, we offer suggestions based on the purpose of the question and the sort of interpretive activity it calls for.

Worksheet 1

Visual Sources 1 & 2

1. The figures' large size, firm expressions, confident manner, etc. Socialist realism required images from daily life of strong, happy workers striving to achieve the goals of the state and society.
2. Mao is oversized and has a bright light shining from behind him, though he has a kindly smile; the masses beneath him appear joyous with Mao behind them.
3. Answers will vary, but students should related their conclusions to specific features in the images.

Worksheet 2

Visual Sources 3 & 4

1. Lists will vary but should show that both networks of camps were huge and were operated without any respect for human rights. Also, some of the Nazi camps were specifically designed to exterminate groups of people (death camps), not just work them to death or punish them as in the Gulag, etc.
2. Answers will vary. Discuss these in class.
3. The two aspects are a utopian vision of a perfectly happy and just society versus a prison system that destroys or dehumanizes masses of people. Answers to the question will vary and should be discussed in class.

Worksheet 3

Written Source 1

1. Germany had just suffered a major defeat by the Soviets. Goebbels's tries here to incite his audience into even greater effort to save the nation. He is playing on their fears and dramatizing the importance of the "crusade" they are in.
2. These metaphors portray the Jews as essentially a disease or as germs, which not only dehumanizes the Jews, but also stresses their hidden, parasitical destructiveness. Also, he hints that Jews are akin to the devil of the Christian religion, in that they infect "spiritually."
3. It suggests an appeal to class hatreds by relatively powerless individuals and to national resentment and distrust of Germany's powerful neighbors, etc.

Worksheet 4

Written Source 2

1. He stresses the way each needs a totally dehumanized enemy to justify such mass terror. Views as to how similar these episodes are will vary and should be discussed in class.
2. Anna likely means that she did not want to be in a position where she would have an active role in persecuting accused *kulaks*. She is responding to Ivan's view of the price that such a complicit person would pay.
3. Answers will vary.

Visual Primary Sources

First Group—Documents 1 & 2

Document 1



TAOLMOR, Shutterstock Inc.

Document 2



TAOLMOR, Shutterstock Inc.

First Group—Documents 3 & 4

Document 3



Eugene Ivanov, Shutterstock Inc.

Document 4



Aaron Wood, Shutterstock Inc.

