Tools of Dictatorship

How Nazi organizations helped Hitler gain and hold power

TOT.C.4.5.A "efforts of the Sturmabteilung (SA), the Schutzstaffel (SS), the Wehrmacht, and the Gestapo to assist Hitler in gaining and maintaining power"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each organization's name and underline what it did. Write 1 beside actions that helped Hitler gain power, 2 beside actions that helped him maintain power, or both numbers if an action did both.

Four Organizations, Different Methods

(1) In early 1933, a voter walking to a polling place in Germany might have passed men wearing brown shirts. They belonged to the Sturmabteilung, or SA, a Nazi paramilitary group. SA members assaulted political opponents, disrupted rival meetings, and intimidated voters as Hitler's movement sought power. After Hitler became chancellor in January 1933, SA violence also helped silence resistance. The SA did not act alone: the Schutzstaffel, or SS, had begun as a small Nazi bodyguard unit. Under Heinrich Himmler, it grew into a force Hitler could use against enemies, including people within his own movement.

(2) By 1934, Hitler viewed SA leader Ernst Röhm and his large organization as a threat to his control and to support from army leaders. During a purge in June 1934, SS members arrested and killed Röhm and other perceived opponents on Hitler's orders. The SA lost much of its influence, while the SS gained power. SS units also ran concentration camps and directed terror against people the regime targeted, including Jews. The Gestapo, the regime's secret state police, investigated suspected opponents, used informants, and sent people to camps without trial. It worked within a security system led by SS chiefs.

(3) The Wehrmacht, Germany's armed forces from 1935, served a different role. After President Paul von Hindenburg died in 1934, soldiers in its predecessor forces swore a personal oath to Hitler, not just to Germany. As Hitler rearmed and expanded German territory, the Wehrmacht provided the military force behind his demands. Its invasions during World War II brought vast areas under Nazi control. In occupied lands, some Wehrmacht units took part in crimes against civilians, while SS forces carried out mass murder and Gestapo officers pursued resistance. Together, military conquest and police terror made it harder for opponents to challenge the dictatorship.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the SA's actions help Hitler gain power, and how did its actions help him hold power after January 1933?

2. How did the SS help Hitler tighten his control during the 1934 purge?

3. What methods did the Gestapo use to help the regime maintain power?

4. How did the Wehrmacht's role in maintaining Nazi power differ from the Gestapo's role?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 90 word museum label explaining how at least three of these organizations used different methods to help Hitler gain or maintain power. Describe one shift in power among the organizations, and distinguish political repression from military force.

ANSWER KEY

Tools of Dictatorship

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.4.5.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each organization's name and underline what it did. Write 1 beside actions that helped Hitler gain power, 2 beside actions that helped him maintain power, or both numbers if an action did both. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the SA's actions help Hitler gain power, and how did its actions help him hold power after January 1933?	**The SA assaulted opponents, disrupted meetings, and intimidated voters as Hitler sought power. After he became chancellor, its violence helped silence resistance.**
2	How did the SS help Hitler tighten his control during the 1934 purge?	**SS members arrested and killed Röhm and other perceived opponents on Hitler's orders. The SA then lost influence while the SS gained power.**
3	What methods did the Gestapo use to help the regime maintain power?	**It investigated suspected opponents, used informants, and sent people to concentration camps without trial.**
4	How did the Wehrmacht's role in maintaining Nazi power differ from the Gestapo's role?	**The Wehrmacht used military force to support expansion and conquer territory. The Gestapo used investigation, informants, and detention to pursue suspected opponents.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Hitler's dictatorship depended on different forms of force at different times. The SA's attacks on rivals helped clear a path to power, but its size later worried Hitler and army leaders. In 1934, SS members killed SA leader Ernst Röhm during a purge, showing that violence could also reshape the Nazi movement. The Gestapo tracked suspected opponents and sent people to camps without trial. The Wehrmacht supplied military force for expansion. Conquest widened Nazi control, while police terror punished those who resisted it.

Accept accurate explanations that connect each organization's methods to gaining or maintaining power. For the museum label, look for at least three organizations, the SA-to-SS shift or another supported shift, and a clear distinction between political repression and military force.