Totalitarianism

Defintion: a government system in which the state has absolute or total authority and regulates every aspect of its citizen’s life (public and private).

Characteristics:

1. Dictatorship- a single political party establishes complete control of all aspects life (political, military, economy, social, and cultural).
   * State demands loyalty and denies basic liberties
2. Strong, dynamic leader at the head of the government
   * Often very charismatic
   * A symbol of government
3. Highly nationalistic
   * Flags, salutes, rallies, and uniforms
4. Common ideology- a common set of beliefs the people are expected to follow
   * total conformity of people to goals and ideas of the state and the leader
   * used to justify government actions
5. Employees methods of control
   * Police Terror: the government uses police to spy on, intimidate people, use brutal force or even murder people to inforce the will of the state
   * Indoctrination: the government shapes people’s minds through slanted education (uses schools and youth organizations)
   * Media Control: the government controls all mass media (newspapers, radio)
     + Propaganda- the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person
       - crushes opposing views and uses the arts to promote views
     + Censorship: an official reads communications and deletes material considered sensitive or harmful
       - Blocks opposing views or messages that would damage the image of the state from the public
       - No form of speaking out against the government is allowed
   * Religious or Ethnic Persecution:
     + Leaders of various religious, ethnic minorities “enemies of the state” -exiled or killed
     + Churches are destroyed
     + In extreme cases this could lead to genocide

Examples:

* Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler
* Soviet Russia under Joseph Stalin
* Fascist Italy under Benito Mussolini
* North Korea under the Kim dynasty