

Q13.

a) Outline the main features in the background and rise to prominence of the twentieth-century personality you have studied.

Albert Speer was born into quite a well off family and ~~that~~ is apparently to have said that he felt no love from his parents and only felt affection from his governess. Originally he wanted to be a Mathematician but it was his father who persuaded him to pursue a career as ~~an~~ an architect. During Speer's studies of architecture he changed universities and came under the influence of professor Tessenow. Tessenow very much influenced Speer's interpretations of architecture and what Tessenow taught him is reflected in his work.

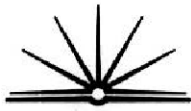
Speer soon became a professor at a university himself and his students, who were obsessed with the Nazi party, encouraged him to go along to a rally. After some persuasion he was convinced to attend and was mesmerized by the way Hitler captivated his audience. After attending the rally Speer wanted to join up with the

Nazi party and was soon attending many meetings and rallies

Speer continued with his work as an ~~an~~ architect and was quickly recognised by another party member who got Speer to do some work for him. Speer proved himself as a hard and efficient worker who could get the job done on time and to a high standard. More and more people became aware of his great work.

Hitler soon became aware of him too and set him to work and was intrigued by his enthusiasm and his 'foot in the door' attitude to getting his ideas heard. Speer was invited to become a part of Hitler's inner circle and the two men became great friends. Speer was appointed to oversee an architectural job for Hitler and Hitler was more than pleased when he kept all his promises and got the work done on time.

One of his greatest works was designing the eagle for the Nazi party and creating the 'cathedral of ice'

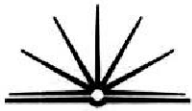


at the site of the Nazi rallies - Speer had a great awareness of propaganda and ~~he~~ knew exactly how to use it. Hitler was also impressed with this.

Hitler came up with the idea of a new Berlin called Germania and appointed Speer to do this, sure ~~enough~~ enough it was done. The idea behind it was that in a thousand years time the people of Germany could look back and think about the great men who were responsible for all of it. It was to be a thousand year reich.

Before long Speer was made minister of armaments and carried out further duties for Hitler and the Nazi party. His work as minister of armaments has created much controversy about his involvement in the treatment of the Jews.

As can be seen, Speer had a steady rise to prominence and through his work got some significant jobs within the Nazi party. He did some great architectural work



for Hitler and the Nazi party and his works left a
lasting impression on Germany.

b

b) To what extent does history present us with a balanced interpretation of this personality?

History presents us with quite a balanced interpretation of Albert Speer. Many different views have been presented about Speer, especially on the topic of his involvement in war crimes, the Holocaust and the treatment of the Jews.

Most sources from this time, the time that Speer was in a prominent position, and sources that have been written by historians more recently tell us that Speer in fact had a great involvement with the treatment of the Jews and the Holocaust. These sources tell us that he had to have been aware of what was going on as he was there amongst all of it.

Speer has defended himself from all allegations made about him and his actions. He tells us that he was never aware of what was going on and that he just went about his own duties. But his own duties would have

meant that he would of come in contact with people in the concentration camps, ghettos and with workers.

Some historians have supported Speer in saying that he was innocent of these crimes, that he was never there when these topics were talked about, even though he was supposedly ~~was~~ Hitler's good friend.

Like anyone throughout history, historians and historical facts are going to present us with different interpretations on what they think is correct. To truly understand a personality both the good and bad sides of their actions and personality need to be studied. If only one side of the personality is looked at then you are only getting one opinion, therefore it is a biased opinion. So that is why it is important to look at both sides of an argument and read supporting material for each side. As mentioned before, Albert Speer has created a fair amount of controversy and has caused a split within the ~~the~~ historians who have

studied him. Different historians will have very different backgrounds and influences and therefore will formulate very different thoughts and ideas about Speer and other personalities throughout history.

Therefore it can be said that history presents us with a balanced interpretation of Albert Speer to a quite a significant extent. When looking at his career, life, ~~and~~ personality and actions many historians are split especially when it comes to his actions and involvement in certain debated areas.