

MODERN HISTORY: *ALBERT SPEER*

Question 1 – Describe the personal background and the historical context of the personality you have studied.

Albert Speer was born on 19 March 1905 into an haute bourgeois German family. He was the least favoured middle child of three and constantly put down by his parents and abused by his brothers. He constantly sought to prove himself to his parents, particularly his father, and reconcile their relationship – a trend that continued until their death. Speer was an academic; he sat his Abitur a year early with a high average, excelling in mathematics and German. He wanted to pursue a career in mathematics, but his father disapproved and wanted him to continue the family tradition of architecture, where there was more money. Speer attended a technical university in Karlsruhe, but later transferred to the more reputed Technical University of Berlin. During his tertiary education, he began to woo a woman by the name of Margret, who he referred to as Gretel throughout his life. It was seven years after their marriage before Speer's mother met her, primarily due to Margret's lower class. Speer was raised during WWI and although lost no family members to the war, he remembered the food shortages. He, like many others, became intrigued by the charisma of Hitler. Although Speer said that he had no interest in politics as it was 'vulgarity', he attended a speech by Hitler at a beer hall where he was blown away by Hitler's control of the crowd and how he could start slowly and build into a huge climax at the end. A few weeks later, he attended a large rally and, after much consideration, joined the party – membership number 447481. His joining the party gave him the ability to become a position of prominence later in his life.