

Who do you think  
was the most  
important figure in  
russian history – lenin  
or stal...

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Both leaders play important roles in the Russian history. Lenin gave birth to Communism in Russia and helped it survive during its first critical years. He set up a one-party rule, his style of leadership was borrowed with only slight alterations by six consecutive leaders and command economy with Communism lasted till 1991. Stalin continued along Lenin's way, but took Russia more into 'extremes'. Out of the backward Russia he created an influential and industrialised totalitarian state feared by the West. He expanded the Soviet Unions' borders up to Eastern Europe and helped in the spread of Communism right 100 km from the most dominant capitalist state, the USA. He introduced Collectivisation, helped Russia win the 2nd World War, but at the same time killed millions of people, most of them during the Purges. But could all this have happened without Lenin?

It is possible that without Lenin Communism would have never emerged in Russia. If he wouldn't have returned from Finland twice, first to raise the Bolshevik's popularity - from a barely known Party to the third most influential one - and the second time to persuade other fellow party members to seize power, then the Bolsheviks might have never won enough support or might have failed to seize the right moment for the overthrow of the Provisional Government.

Considering that Communism lasted for more than 70 year in Russia, his importance in the Russian history seems to be enormous. Furthermore, Lenin helped Communism to survive in perhaps the most critical times of a new regime: right after it has been set up. He closed down the Constituent Assembly and made peace with Germany so he can concentrate on Russia's internal affairs. During the Civil War in 1918 he made some very tactful

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decisions, like letting Trotsky to lead the Red Army and introducing War Communism to supply the soldiers. From all these, we can easily see that Lenin's role in the set up of Communism is absolutely crucial, making him a very important figure in the Russian history.

Stalin had a huge impact on Russia as well.

After emerging as the new ruler in 1922, he had great plans for Russia, which mostly were fulfilled. He industrialised Russia at an incredible pace and introduced Collectivisation. Both of these new reforms were carried out by 5 of his successors. However, Lenin was the one who first introduced a state planned economy, and quite a strict one, especially during the Civil War. Therefore Stalin's ideas were 'borrowed' from Lenin, proving that without Lenin Stalin might have never introduced the same reforms and thus have the impact that it created.

Stalin had a great importance in Russia's history because he expanded greatly the boundaries of the country so they included 5 whole countries from Eastern Europe and the Baltic Countries up till 1990. With this he managed to increase the hostility between Russia and Western Capitalist Countries, who felt threatened by the rapidly expanding Communism throughout the world. Thus it can be seen that Stalin played an important role in the Cold War, especially in the early stages. However, this rivalry between Communist and Capitalist countries was commenced by Lenin, who with his idea of 'Permanent Revolution' induced fear in the mind of the capitalist countries' leaders. Also during the Russian Civil war in 1918, the Red Army fought against foreign troops as well, who were trying to restore

the old Tsarist rule. Therefore Stalin didn't start the rivalry between Capitalists and Russia (Communists); he simply carried on what Lenin started a longer time ago.

During the 1930s Stalin began the Cult of Personality, when all types of media and communication glorified Stalin and the achievements of the USSR as an influential Communist power. The result of these was that many generation's minds were indoctrinated by the extensive use of propaganda. However, even though Lenin didn't glorify himself as a God-like being, he introduced widespread propaganda much earlier in Russia during the Civil War.

Stalin introduced the Purges to eliminate any kind of opposition and to assure his place as an unquestionable leader. During his ruling period the secret police was very active, arresting, executing or sending to exile any people who opposed or might oppose the current government. In this way millions of lives were lost, and the remaining surviving ones lived in fear and terror. This style of ruling, by keeping the nation under a strict, tight control was introduced by Lenin, who also made use of the secret police to calm down any possible resistance against the new regime.

The same thing happened with religion as well. As a good Communist Lenin forbade the practice of religion, and Stalin - just like Lenin - continued the suppression of religious freedom.

Therefore we can see that Stalin had an important role in the Russian history, but if we look more closely, it is easy to spot that he just followed

Lenin's path. All this prove, that even thou Stalin might have had a greater impact on Russia, Lenin had a greater importance than him, because he was the one who was mostly involved in the set up of Communism and putting it into practice using different new reforms. Ultimately, Stalin might have never emerged as a leader if Lenin wouldn't have gave him the position as the general secretary of the Communist Party, which allowed Stalin to win the power struggle. Therefore his importance in the Russian history is less than Lenin's.