

Free essay on hitler and stalin

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



People often compare Hitler and Stalin. It's an easy comparison to make, really. They both ruled during times that overlapped, they both were dictators, and they both had economies that relied a lot on slave labor (for Hitler, the concentration camps and forced workers from the occupied territories; for Stalin, the Gulag population). Both appear to have cared little about the importance of human life, and frequently executed or otherwise condemned their subjects for minor differences of agreement. They were both harsh rulers, in a time where harsh rule was still seen as commonplace in societies that were evolving from serf-based economies into industrial economies of massive scale, with the ability to execute massive destruction. Both also believed strongly in centralization of government power. Stalin introduced new policies after the death of Lenin to secure this. Hitler, in turn, consolidated power by effectively merging the offices of Chancellor and President into the concept of the " Fuehrer" after the death of President Hindenburg in 1934. Both also established camps to punish their political enemies, Hitler establishing Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1934, at first mainly for political enemies, and Stalin establishing a number of Gulags long before that.

They also both were keen on punishing their enemies, particularly in the military. One reason why the Russian military was so horribly unprepared for the launch of the German invasion of Russia was that most of the high-ranking Russian military staff had been arrested in the 1930's because of Stalin's distrust of the military. Many were given the option of suicide, executed, or forced into the Gulags. In a similar vein, Hitler grew to distrust his military as well. After the failed 20th of July plot, he executed many of the

higher-ranking military personnel on the assumption that they were involved or at least had known something about it. Even famous Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, the so-called ‘desert fox’, was a victim; he was given the option of suicide or execution, and chose suicide to spare his family.

But as similar as Hitler and Stalin were, they were also dissimilar. Hitler was from a rather middle class background in rural Austria, while Stalin had to fight his way up from a fairly ordinary but not prosperous background in the non-Russian state of Georgia (it’s worth noting, though, that both would go on to lead nations related to but not actually their country of origin). Both still fought tooth and nail for their beliefs, however erroneous.

It’s worth noting, in ending this comparison, that some believe that the reason Stalin failed to react to reports of, and in fact, the actual invasion of the Soviet Union by German troops was because he actually trusted Hitler and took him on his word that the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was an agreement Hitler would keep. This from a man who trusted no one. The argument that is made is that Stalin identified with Hitler because they were so similar, and since Stalin would not have invaded in Hitler’s position, he did not believe that Hitler would. There is much debate continuing on the topic, but it’s a great anecdote to emphasize the similarity of their tactics, even if they had other ideological disagreements that could never have been bridged.

Works Used:

Tedor, Richard. “Stalin’s Secret War Plans: Why Hitler Invaded the Soviet Union”. The

Barnes Review. Washington, D. C: Nov./Dec. 2000, pp. 27-33. Web.

<https://assignbuster.com/free-essay-on-hitler-and-stalin/>

“ The Heights of Evil”. The Economist. December 23rd, 1990. Web. Retrieved from

<http://www.economist.com/node/346857> on 2/21/2013.