

The greatness of napoleon caesar or washington history essay

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ACTION BEING TAKEN. Leaders Beyond Time: Adolf Hitler & Abraham Lincoln
By: Rayomand Neville Anklesaria. When the question is put forth in this age as to name any leaders or people who inspire you, many popular names arise such as Mahatma Gandhi, Adolf Hitler, Barack Obama, Joseph Stalin, among others. If this same question is put forth to the young generation, they would also have influential celebrities, icons, sports players and even comedians, who are basically the trend setters of today. The way a leader impacts his followers is what makes all the difference. It may be through intelligence or sheer charisma, but being a leader, one must make a difference and set an example. Through the ages people have seen leaders of all sorts, charismatic and influential, autocratic and democratic, active and passive, violent and non-violent, and the list goes on. Each of these types shows a leadership style or trait and in order to portray how the same type of leadership is depicted in different ways, this essay is a comparative analysis of two such leaders, their contrasting views and leadership styles. On one hand, Abraham Lincoln, fondly remembered as Honest Abe. To describe him the words that come to mind are:-

Honest, Brave, Smart, Loyal and Self-Aware.

He is best described in the words of Leo Tolstoy:-

" The greatness of Napoleon, Caesar or Washington is only moonlight to the sun of Lincoln. His example is universal and will last a thousand years.... He was bigger than his country--bigger than all the Presidents together... and as a great character, he will live as long as the world lives."

(Tolstoy, 1909)

On the other hand we have a leader whose name goes hand in hand with the words ' World War'. He is none other than Adolf Hitler. Adjectives to describe him as a leader are as follows:-

Assertive, Proselytising, Opportunistic, Inspiring and Decisive.

Even though Hitler is thought to be one of the most immoral political leaders who ever lived, he was also one of the most inspiring leaders who has ever lived. The entire nation was brought together and followed his spectacular leadership.

How similar were Lincoln and Hitler as Leaders?

Each of these men had a different way in which they led their countries but still so similar in their approaches. In order to see what leadership qualities they had in contrast, one must first see the similarities in their leadership scenarios. Like Abraham, Adolf too led his country through one of the greatest wars of their time, namely the ' Civil War' and ' World War II'. Their work for the upliftment of their countries was also widely similar. Both undertook similar projects such as; nationalising railroads, nationalising banks, both wished to suspend the right of ' habeus corpus' (Hitler would have been successful if the Reich allowed such a thing). As we all know,

Adolf commanded as a dictator, but Abraham too has been said to have wielded executive power with the force of a dictator. On the surface, the similarities go even further. Both men micromanaged, what was in their time, the largest invasionary military force.

A Short Introduction to Lincoln and Hitler.

Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States and deemed by many scholars as the greatest President of the United States. He led the Republicans to defeat the Confederates who were challenging for a democratic United States. As President, his greatest achievements were; he built the Republican Party into a strong national organization, and abolished slavery within the Confederacy. He is the reason why the nation is called the 'United States of America'. Adolf Hitler was the dictator or absolute ruler of Germany from 1934 to 1945 and the leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, known as the Nazi Party. While Hitler was in control of Germany, he affected the world in many different ways, some evil, but also many good. This was because he was an exceptional leader. During his reign, Hitler helped Germany's economy reach prosperity along with helping to strengthen Germany's military. He helped expand the borders of Germany during his dictatorship. The national unity in Germany during Hitler's reign was also at its highest peak.

Comparison Between Lincoln and Hitler's Leadership, According to Leadership Theories.

There are numerous Leadership Theories that one can draw on to compare Abraham Lincoln and Adolf Hitler. The theories used to compare the leadership of Lincoln and Hitler here are: Trait Theory. Behaviour Theory. <https://assignbuster.com/the-greatness-of-napoleon-caesar-or-washington-history-essay/>

Transformational and Transactional Leadership. Contingency/Situational Theory.

Trait Theory:

Trait Theory holds that people are born with the "right" traits and are naturally great leaders. Lincoln had many innate traits. Working as a lawyer, businessman, and politician, he became known as "Honest Abe" (A nickname he earned when he promised to pay off all the debt from his failed business). Lincoln demonstrated this sense of integrity during his presidency too. During the war to reunite the nation, Lincoln appointed and replaced several army commanders, but defended each one's decisions against public attack. Lincoln was known for his humility and empathy toward others and also a unique identification with the common man, possibly this was all influenced by growing up poor. He remained close to the Union troops. Instead of just remaining at the White House and letting things happen, he went for regular inspections of the federal units that moved through Washington, D. C., and also frequently visited the Soldiers, working directly with their leaders. He would also often ride alongside the troops, talking to them and listening. It is clear from the reaction of all those around him that these traits came naturally to Lincoln and it is also seen that he was able to use them to further his political career. Lincoln's strengths were what the country needed and he knew that. Thus people responded to Lincoln as a natural leader. Specific character traits prevailed in Hitler's personality. Most of all, his rigidity, due to his failure or refusal to change in any significant way, was one feature of his life. He described this trait in Mein Kampf, maintaining that he had established all his rudimentary ideas in Vienna in his

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early adult life. His childhood comrade and Viennese mate August Kubizek also selected rigidity as Hitler's most notable trait. He said that his friend Hitler had an unparalleled consistency in everything. There was something inflexible and obstinately rigid in his nature which displayed itself in his profound seriousness and was behind of all his other characteristics. There are a number of examples of this inflexibility that were seen throughout Hitler's life. He continued to make the identical grammatical and spelling errors in his adult years just the same as he used to in his youth. His daily routine was also always the same, down to the tiniest detail. His daily walks when he was chancellor always followed the exact same path. He insisted on a staple seating order for all meals, and any irregularity resulted in a surge of anger. His post-dinner routine, which consisted of motion pictures and multi-hour Hitler monologues, quickly became monotonous for his regular guests. It was also noticed that Hitler did not allow others to know his feelings and desires and cautiously protected his private life. To preserve his privacy, Hitler disciplined his life in a very abnormal way. Even his eruptions of rage, giving the imprint of a man governed by his emotions, were often intended to produce certain effects.

Behaviour Theory:

According to the behaviour theory, a leader's actions, rather than personality traits, are what counts. The findings of behaviour theory are; that leaders tend to exhibit two main types of behaviours: i. Orientation toward People. ii. Orientation toward Tasks. How did Lincoln and Hitler rate as leaders in this model? Were they task oriented or people oriented? Were they a country club, middle-of-the-road, team manager, impoverished, or team leader?

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Taking a look at his political and military career, an aspect of Lincoln's leadership is apparent: He was constant in his values and behaviours. He held that building alliances and empowering the army leaders was the best approach. He worked extremely hard to build positive relations with his subordinates. To give an example; Lincoln overcame negative feelings toward him from one of his subordinates; Secretary of State William H. Seward. An abolitionist, Seward initially thought that Lincoln was incompetent to be president. Lincoln acknowledged Seward's leadership qualities, however, and appointed him to his cabinet. He worked hard to build Seward's faith in him. Most examples of Lincoln's leadership lean toward the fact that he was more Relationship Oriented. Although he was also extremely Task Oriented too but to a lesser extent. This would place him in the ' Team Leader' side of the leadership graph. Hitler, as anyone would suggest, was completely a task oriented leader. However, this is not true. He showed a lot of compassion towards his followers. He was driven by a force to make Germany the greatest country. He believed that Germans were the superior race of humans. He always showed compassion toward his army officials, but this is a widely disputed topic. One can thus safely say that Hitler was a Task Oriented Leader but was also Relationship Oriented in a way. Thus on the Leadership Graph, he would rate as ' Team Manager'.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership:

In transformational leadership, the leader inspires others by sharing a compelling vision, appealing to the " greater good" and to the values of others. A transactional leader oppositely is based on the basic assumption that people are motivated by rewards and punishment. Which were Hitler

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and Lincoln's approach? How did they motivate others to act? Lincoln was of the belief that you can "catch more flies with the honey" and he used his vast powers of influence to share his visions with all others. One of his central values was his empathy for people. He paid special attention to refining his speeches so they were clear, to the point, and directed toward the common man. Most of Lincoln's most famous speeches, like the Second Inaugural Address, explain his vision perfectly. However, most famously, Lincoln sets forth his vision of American unity in his 1863 Gettysburg Address. The result was that people perceived in him a strength of character that could command beyond what other leaders could muster. Hitler was able to gain followers due to his powerful statements, control his nation through persuasive means, and achieved supremacy with an immense amount of fortitude. Hitler had a precise vision and was determined when it came to achieving total authority over his people. Furthermore, due to his charismatic speeches, cunning strategies, and devoted attitude, Adolf Hitler became a great example of a transformational leader. Despite the fact that he was labelled as one of the most controversial leaders, he was definitely a successful one.

Contingency/Situational Theory:

Situational theory focuses on adjusting the leadership style to the situation and inclination of the followers. Lincoln evidently understood that effective leadership is about the results, that results do matter and are the measure of an effective leader. Abraham Lincoln grasped that leadership was more than giving orders or management of details. He knew that circumstances and people's outlooks change and that such changes call for a leader to answer

back in a different way. Lincoln tackled circumstances that no other American President has ever faced; a total civil war. To ensure the success of the federal forces and the effort to reunite the country, he was influential and exerted more power than any president before him. To give an example, because of the popular unrest, in areas close to Washington, Lincoln declared martial law and suspended the constitutional writ of 'habeas corpus', which allowed the military to make arrests without specific charges. He was quick to adapt to any situation and this made him a great Situational Leader. Adolf Hitler understood human nature very well. He knew how to use this human nature to his personal gain and with that knowledge, he assembled the whole nation behind him. One has to comprehend the thoughts, inclinations of human nature well to be an effective leader. This is often seen with leaders with a high level of EQ. A good leader can comprehend what he is dealing with in other people, for the simple reason, that he sees it in himself. From that perspective and understanding Hitler led his followers.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, the differences in leadership styles of Hitler and Lincoln were explained by the differences in their outlooks and conduct. Hitler had a task-related behaviour which led to form his autocratic leadership because an autocratic leader tends to have actions that primarily focus on getting tasks done. Conversely, Lincoln was seen as a relationship-oriented leader whose actions were based on his relationship with people. To be more specific, Lincoln had a democratic leadership; he tended to give final authority to the group, which was totally contradictory to the autocratic leadership of Hitler,

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who wished to retain most of the authority and did not want to share his power to anyone.