

What extent were Soviet and Nazi Regimes Similar?  
History Geography  
Capucine Gayot T°C

During the 1930s Hitler and Stalin <sup>became</sup> were two of the most <sup>well</sup> known dictators in history. During this time, the Nazi Party led by Hitler and <sup>under the sway of</sup> his ideology was the largest political group in Germany ruling with an iron fist over the entire country. Meanwhile, Stalin, head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was gaining popular support in Russia through his numerous revolutionary ideas which would build up Russia's power and influence. Hitler and Stalin both wished to expand their countries' influence in the world. Although they are comparable in quite a lot of aspects the two regimes are also different in many ways from how they got into power to how they controlled the public. ✓

Understanding how each regime first got into power is crucial. To start off, during 1923, Germany was hit with an economic crisis because enormous amounts of money were spent on war and Germany's inability to pay reparations installments to France. After the war the mark fell in value (20 marks to a dollar) and due to this the price of goods and services increased. For there to be a balance, wages started increasing but far slower than the inflation. The middle class and small capitalists were hit hard losing their savings making them look towards the Nazi for improvements. As for the Landowners and the industrialists, they tolerated the republic because they weren't affected greatly due to them owning land, mines, and factories. As time progressed, the currency stabilized and there was a boom in the coal, iron, steel, chemicals, and electrical industries. Germany was able to pay their reparations installments. However, in 1929 a world economic crisis occurred. The US canceled many of Germany's long and short term loans. In addition, many countries blocked trades to keep their money and economy protected because of this Germany, who had been going through an industrial boom lost huge amounts of profit and as a consequence factories closed and this led to Germany's unemployment reaching a new height of 6 million. ✓ <sup>Excellent research!</sup>

<sup>doubtful</sup> As a result of all these problems the government was criticised by the working class and the industrialists <sup>for</sup> for not improving the situation making the republic lose support and gave Hitler and the Nazi a chance to subdue the populace. The Nazi suggested new alternatives and solutions which attracted all levels of society. What made the Nazi party popular was the clear differences between them and the <sup>Weimar</sup> republic. One ✓

was dull and efficient while the other showed strong and decisive decision making and promised to restore Germany's pride. The Nazi party believed that they could fix Germany's problems by ridding Germany of

Jesuits, Freemasons, Jews, and Marxists, overthrowing the Versailles settlement and creating the Nazi private army which would give small wages and uniform to the soldiers helping solve unemployment. In addition to all these reforms, Hitler was a great politician that knew exactly what to say and how to portray his ideas to the masses. Because of fear of communism (which brought industrialists and landlords on his side because he was against communism) and socialism, unemployment, and misery, Hitler and the Nazi party were able to come into power by grabbing the attention of everyone with their ideas and notions. This wouldn't have been even remotely possible without the economic crisis. Hitler used this event to gain popular support and this allowed him in 1933 to become one of the most powerful dictators in the world ruling over Germany.

The communist party of the Soviet Union originated from the Bolsheviks (1903) who were led by Vladimir Lenin. This group was dedicated solely to achieving dictatorship of the proletariat. During 1917, they broke with Menshevik or the right wing of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party which started a revolution overthrowing the Provisional Government that had earlier replaced the monarchy of the Russian Empire. One year after the revolution, the Bolsheviks became the ruling party of Russia changing its name to the All Russian Communist Party later known as the Soviet Union. After Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin, Lenin's successor, became the leader of the ruling Communist Party and of the Soviet Union. Although Stalin came into power he could easily be replaced by another because he wasn't essential. After WW1, industrial production remained low but Stalin believed that it was vital for Russia to have a rapid rise in this domain for the future. Due to this idea the USSR became a modern industrial power providing jobs and gaining popular support from more urban workers. Stalin started to implement the five year plan with clear targets and successfully increased production in both iron, coal, and oil. This in turn helped build his reputation.

Additionally, the Nazi and Stalin regimes were both distinctly different in many aspects. Nazism for example came into being in an advanced industrial economy with a system of democracy whereas, Stalinism



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in an agrarian economy with no tradition of democracy. Hitler and Stalin, consequently, gained power in two different ways. Hitler created his party due to his mass appeal and his charisma whereas Stalin was only able to assume the role as the leader of his party because of his manipulation skills (his party was already created). Observing each regime's core and foundation is where striking opposition can be seen. While Nazism was fueled by Hitler's racist ideology, such as anti semitism, and blaming socialists and communists for Germany's flaws; Stalinism ideology described by Britannica "included rapid industrialization, the theory of socialism in one country, a totalitarian state, collectivization of agriculture, a cult of personality and subordination of the interests of foreign communist parties to those of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union", that existed independently of Stalin's ideas. Nazism was driven by segregation and levels of superiority; Stalinism was guided by hard work and equality. Furthermore, the Soviet Union used propaganda to demonise their enemies in order to proclaim themselves as defenders of peace, and denied that it was repressive. Meanwhile, the nazi party did the opposite and didn't hide the fact that they used violence instead they not only practised violent repression and war but advocated it in principle. Another striking example is how the ideals of superiority are seen in the two regimes. The Nazi Party believes that the German Aryan race are superior to everyone else indicating a struggle between nationalities. However, in the Soviet Union, superiority didn't exist and social classes didn't matter; they wanted to create an egalitarian communist society without class.

Although Stalin and Hitler controlled different regimes in different countries they had many resemblances. Both of these dictators ruled over a totalitarian regime <sup>which</sup> who sought to completely control all aspects of political, social, economic, and cultural life. Both came into power at around the same time. Both created a political police to enforce their control called "the Gestapo" for the Nazi Party and "NKVD: Secret Police" for the Soviet union. These organizations had unlimited power and could arrest, and even kill people who posed a threat to the regimes. Moreover, as a way to terrorise the population into submitting themselves to the regime the nazi regime created concentration camps and the soviet union created Gulag. People who went against the party's ideology were placed in these places. In order for the parties to stay in power they both adopted a very efficient tactic called propaganda and youth organizations

which were used to manipulate the masses into supporting their regime. These two leaders wanted to present a picture of a united people and they did this by censoring all books, movies, and information in order to control the population's thought process. Ina Kershaw (1997) wrote that Stalinism and Nazism are comparable in "the nature and extent of their inhumanity". A great example that portrays this idea would be how both regimes violently purged other political parties so that no oppositions were possible or how both Stalin and Hitler killed many innocent people through the "great terror" or killing sprees. Although a lot of harm was done the two dictators contributed many things to their country from better education, to a stable economy, and even a stronger military power. Most importantly they expanded their countries influence and power.

In conclusion, Nazism and Stalinism are very different from one another but see eye to eye in certain concepts. Understanding the way in which Hitler and Stalin gained power and maintained it is crucial in identifying their differences and similarities. Despite the inner differences between these two regimes, the way in which they gained control of the populus using propaganda, new organizations and violence are very similar. Both dictators reassembled their falling country and produced a united front with a strong economy and military.