

Vladimir Lenin and Adolf Hitler: Tyrants of Evil

What two men caused the largest holocaust of human life in the 20th century by murdering over 75 million people? One was totalitarian leader Vladimir Lenin, the other was the dictator Adolf Hitler. They were equally the heroes and villains of their time, possessing qualities of absolute, wanton evil, while possessing qualities of charm that enamored their nations. Both left their mark on history with a queer fetish for sadism and cruelty, and their innate ability to lead millions to do their dirty deeds. Though Lenin died over 75 years ago, and Hitler almost 60 years ago, the cult-like fanaticism they stirred in people then continues to this day. Both Vladimir Lenin and Adolf Hitler were strong leaders with a strong charismatic appeal, who used their charisma to gain power over his audiences, and in doing so, have taught me the devastating results of what hate can do when left unchecked.

Both Lenin and Hitler were strong leaders sharing an arcane charismatic appeal. Lenin was able to charm his audience and country, and he gained a reputation as being considerate and friendly. Hitler won over a nation known for being overtly refined. How did they do it? Neither man was good or kind, yet they captivated their nations and gained their support. One journalist attempts an explanation: "Lenin evidently possessed a magnetic influence over his contemporaries... his charisma is doubtless" (Agapova 1). Myths surround Lenin, announcing him as a decent fellow, and when he is compared to his successor, Stalin, he is referred to as "good Lenin," while Stalin is called "bad Stalin" (Remnick 2). It is ironic that "good" describes a man who murdered tens of millions of people. Similarly, Hitler is explained as "crazy, of course, a demagogic mystic sensitive to the aspirations of the German spirit" who created an appeal about himself by "promis[ing] strong leadership and a new beginning" for his people (Greely 1). To put it simply, each man used his nation's naïve hope for a brighter future to gain their confidences. Little did their nations know, they were following men who would collectively murder over 75 million of their fellow countrymen.

Each man had an incredible power over his country and audience, even while murdering millions. During his six years in control of Russia, Lenin "became the author of mass terror and the first concentration camps ever built on the European continent," commencing the killings of millions of innocent people (Remnick 1). Nearly ten years later, Adolf Hitler came into power and continued Lenin's bloody campaign. He caused the writing of some of the grizzliest pages in the history books by sadistically slaughtering millions of Jews in concentration camps whose names are now infamous: Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Belzec (Wiesel 3). Even while Hitler was horrifically murdering thousands of innocent civilians and "terroriz[ing] his adversaries, he knew how to please, impress and charm the very interlocutors from whom he wanted support" (Wiesel 1). However, beneath these men's benevolent camouflage, they were hardened, enthusiastic killers willing to stop at nothing to obtain their objectives. In doing so, they left a legacy the world would study for years to come.

The lessons of Lenin and Hitler are well known, and though I was born over thirty years after the end of their regimes, they have an effect on my life today. It would be easy to say I have nothing to learn from either of these men. On the contrary, Lenin and Hitler's hate and intolerance have taught me the exact opposite: to stick to what my mom calls my "belief in peace," and nonjudgmental attitude (Ann Gittens Interview). I have grown up in an age that does not hold back information, watching movies like *Shindler's List*, or the crude black and white images of the holocaust footage; it seems so distant from the world I knew growing up, but the travesty was real. An old saying states, "There is no great loss without some small gain." The small gain in this case is for people to realize that ill will and malice does exist. Lenin and Hitler are prime examples, and they teach us to look deeper than the surface, for faces can have many facets. While they preached intolerance, I have learned to maintain an attitude of tolerance toward every human being. Each person is different, and each person has a unique perspective based on his or her distinctive background. More to the point, the world would be a dull place if we tried to rid it of those who were different than ourselves, as Lenin and Hitler attempted to do.

Vladimir Lenin and Adolf Hitler were able to manipulate audiences in order to carry forth their evil plans. They tried to cleanse their nations of those they believed not worthy of life, but the rest of the world finally caught on to the evil lurking behind their masks of charm. One can only hope the people of this world use the mistakes of these two men to create a brighter future for tomorrow.

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