

Fascism Compared to Communism

Analyze the similarities and the differences between single party rule in Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia between 1933 and 1945. Answers should consider: methods of dealing with opposition, control of media and education, control of the economy, and war time planning.

Why is it that Germany's fascism lasted a relatively short time compared to Russia's communism? The regimes established under Hitler and Stalin were incredibly similar with respect to the rise and control of the state. Both systems were based on entirely different ideology and goals. Hitler's Mein Kampf established the superiority of the German race and the need to expand as wanted by God. Hitler wanted the world. The government in Russia established by Lenin was based on a book called Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx, a call to the proletariat to unite and rebel against their selfish employers. It is my belief that Lenin had entirely good reasons for doing as he did, and felt he was helping the world as apposed to Adolf Hitler. Immediately after Lenin's death, a man very much the same in nature as Hitler, Stalin, came to control the Bolsheviks and throw Russia in a civil war in a quest for power. You now have two men of equal aspirations soon to be in control of two very similar governments.

In any rise of power, there needs to be a period of careful planning requiring much thought. These two men had very little history with which to work with which to model their revolutions. Times had been changing rapidly, technological improvements in the fields of manufacturing, transportation, and communication made this period of time very different from any other. Hitler spent his time imprisoned writing his book, Mein Kampf, filling it full of warped ideas of conquest and superiority of one race over another. I think it is strange that such works would go unnoticed with nobody left to watch a man with such dangerous ideas. Lenin planned his revolution while in exile in Switzerland. Then he made a deal with the German government whereby he was hid on a train and passed through enemy Germany to Russia. The conclusions with respect to methods of acquiring power and controlling it when they did get it were very much the same.

Both rulers had full run of their respective governments. Stalin was already dictator of Russia with his power and loyalty of the people guaranteed by the secret police, the Cheka. This entity provided Stalin with an easy means of destroying the opposition and weeding out the undesirable to be sent to prison camps in Siberia, a virtual death sentence. For Hitler to ascend to that level of power he rammed the Enabling Act through the German Congress which gave him the power to enact laws. Under Article 1 of his new power, Hitler decreed the only existing party shall be the NSDAP. With Article 2 he declared all association of, collaboration with, and support of other parties would result in imprisonment in camps similar to Russia's labor camps. With Hitler's Gestapo, secret police, he enforced those rules and used existing policies to get rid of other unfit Germans. Political prisoners, homosexuals, Jews and other people sent to the concentration camps were given different colored symbols for easy identification. At this point, no one dared speak against their country even in the privacy of one's home lest their children let something slip at school.

If you control people's thoughts, you control them. Propaganda was an important tool used by both Germany and Russia. Hitler

appointed a man by the name of Joseph Goebbles to head the Ministry of Public Enlightenment in Germany. This man used newspapers, magazines, and radio to spread Nazism. Even if a man bathed in thoughts of discontent at home, he was bombarded with propaganda in public, and at the workplace. Banners hung from building, posters on almost every sign or lamppost. Anyone with a suspicious look on their face was first detained, and then sent to a prison camp. It was no longer just desirable to be a Nazi considering the benefits like government contracts or being able to stand first in line, but necessary for employment. Russia employed much the same tactics with much more emphasis on fear.

Education was virtually unheard of in the early years of Russia, but by 1933 children were guaranteed primary education. Huge problems resulted from the ignorance and illiteracy, workers usually did not intentionally break machines but did not know how to use them. In official reports the reason for failure was terrorism by the Kulaks, rich peasants persecuted in the same way Germany's Jews. German education was geared toward physical aspects and the fathering of children. Membership to the German Youth for boys was compulsory by 1936. Emphasis was placed on physical fitness and team sports in these youth groups. Outstanding youths went to Adolf Hitler schools for secondary education, and Order Castles for future party leaders.

Control of the economy and war time planning was a must for both nations. A story likened to the fact that with Communism you must give your cows to the government and they give you milk back. With fascism, you got to keep your cows and gave the milk to the government. Both systems were command economies and state controlled. Contingency plans were constantly drawn up and updated to fit new circumstances. Both nations were preparing for war. Germany was going to rule the world, Russia only wanted to defend herself from Capitalism.

The resulting governments evolving from the two different systems of thought were very similar. But as one can see, the aspirations were radically different. Hitler was a threat to everyone and needed to be dealt with. Russia kept to themselves and bothered no one. A Cold War ensued with Russia complete with the irrational fear of Communism, McCarthyism, and a peace time build up of weapons followed. Germany was crushed in battle and Russia's Iron Curtain is being pulled down as I write.