

On Military Leadership

Leadership or Management
... during ...
the 2nd World War

Leader or Manager

The Allied side

There is no ideal (war) leader.

For all their many strengths, the coalition leaders (**Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin**) had their share of flaws.

What is striking, as the war effort went on, was **the ability of the wartime apparatus** to cope with those flaws.

The German side

Hitler was also the Supreme Commander of the German armed forces. He concentrated civilian and military power in his own hands.

He interfered ceaselessly in the conduct and planning of operations, as Stalin and Churchill did.

He was not happy with routine administration, and preferred the private interview to the large committee, like Roosevelt.

The Allied side

In each case, **the personal role of the leader moved from a deliberate prominence** at the start of the conflict to a more **subdued participation** by its end.

This was an inevitable product of the war, even for Stalin.

No one man could hope to master every area of activity.

The German side

But between Hitler and the three Allied leaders, **there was one very great difference.**

Hitler took his position as Supreme Commander literally.

The Allied side

Delegation was an absolute necessity.

The western war effort was run **by large committees** staffed by both Allies.

These committees formed the apex of a pyramid of staffs and officers where the routine work of the war effort was conducted.

The German side

Hitler alone devised strategy.

Hitler decided on all major operational questions.

The Allied side

The German side

- The war was not so much led as administered.
- What such systems needed managers, and it is to the credit of all three Allied leaders that this was quickly recognized.
- Behind each leader, there emerged a cohort of military managers and civilian officials who took on the real responsibility of running the war.

The delegation of responsibility in any meaningful sense of the term was quite foreign to him.

He had no sense of his own limitations.

The Allied side

In general, **these tasks were carried out by professionals**, whose experience and qualities singled them out for office.

The Allied wartime **administration was, on balance, surprisingly free of political stooges and dud appointments.**

Incompetence at the highest level was difficult to conceal.

Functional effectiveness rather than **political loyalty governed promotion** and resulted in a valuable degree of stability and continuity at the higher levels of leadership of all three states.

The German side

Indeed, as the war went on, Hitler became ever more convinced that he, the humble veteran, **knew more about the conduct of war than the generals.**

The Allied side

The German side

More Management than Leadership.

Only Leadership and no Management.

Thank You