

Why did Hitler order the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22nd June 1941?

In 1939 Hitler had signed the Nazi- Soviet pact with Stalin but he had always planned to invade Russia.

There are several reasons that Hitler sought to take Russia, Firstly there was his belief that Russia was an inferior nation and this was mostly because it was a communist state. Secondly, there was a lot of land that Germany could benefit from; he called it Lebensraum (German living space). As well as this the USSR had just been through a colossal industrial revolution and had masses of natural resources that Hitler hoped would aid him in his conquest over the world, starting with Europe. The romance of conquering the Soviets also made up a large part of Hitler's determination to conquer the USSR as had not been invaded since 1812 by Napoleon Bonaparte.

By June 1941, Hitler had already conquered most of Western Europe, when he failed at occupying Britain, he looked to the Soviet Union because he saw them as a substandard Nation (although he believed that all races and were inferior to the German Arian Race). However he specifies Russian inferiority in his book, Mien Kampf. The particular reason for his belief was that Russia's population was made up of many different races and was an extreme communist country. Hitler and the Nazis were extreme fascists which puts the two countries on opposite ends of a political spectrum. This means that they both politically opposed and thought that each would be rid of by conquering the other and Hitler was viciously determined to wipe out communism altogether. By conquering Russia, Hitler would essentially be killing two birds with one stone that's getting rid of substandard races and communism. This was just one of the reasons Hitler chose to invade the Soviet Union.

Russia consists of 17,075,400 square kilometers of land, making it the largest country in the world. It see-saws between extreme climates due to its enormous size and mountains that stop warm air flowing from the sea. Hitler saw all of this as lebensraum for the German people. He saw Russia as a land of endless bounty and riches that was being used in an unsatisfactory manor, in other words, by the Russian people.

Because Russia is so large it is home to enormous amounts of natural resources; including oil, coal, lumber, steel, copper, lead and medicinal plants and herbs like opium. The USSR had just been through a major industrial revolution just before the war that had led to huge death and famine but the results were astounding. Industry in materials such as coal and oil had more than tripled what it had been at the start of the revolution and Hitler saw this as a gold mine. Germany needed these natural resources to supply their army if they were going to make certain their success, it would have given Germany the means to easily defeat every nation of the world. This made invasion almost impossible to resist.

On top of this, the last invasion on the Soviet Union had been made by Napoleon Bonaparte the Emperor of France in 1812. It had been a huge defeat and this made Hitler determined to prove how powerful he was by defeating what 1000,000 soldiers had failed to. He felt that this made him a even greater leader in the eyes of his public.