

Exemplar #1
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World History II

Omar al-Bashir vs Napoleon Bonaparte

There are many characteristics that make up a good leader, which is perhaps why there are so many different kinds of leaders and forms of leadership. While many forms exist, there are some characteristics that are common among all good leaders. These characteristics include strength, loyalty, ability to communicate, and the possession of a strong yet open mind. Today, the leader of Sudan is a man named Omar al-Bashir. He was born into poverty in small community just north of Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. He was educated at two military schools, both in Egypt and Sudan, and had a successful military career which concluded in 1989 when Bashir lead a successful military coup against the prime minister of Sudan at the time. Since then, Bashir has remained in power, doing whatever it takes to stay there. He has mercilessly crushed all attempts at rebellion, ousted political rivals, committed genocide, and taken political parties and freedom of religion away from his people. Comparing Bashir to another famous and powerful leader in history, Napoleon Bonaparte, one asks oneself who was better suited to the task of leading a country. Bonaparte began his road to leadership as a young officer when he began winning many battles. He went on a campaign to Egypt, and upon returning recognized an unstable political situation in France. He seized power in a coup and passed a new French constitution which gave him total power as First Consul. Napoleon Bonaparte was a better leader than Omar al-Bashir because Napoleon better understood what was required of him as a leader for France.

Napoleon Bonaparte had a better knowledge of the way his government and economy worked than Bashir has of his. This is evidenced by Napoleon's implementation of an incredibly efficient tax collection system and strengthening of the French government once he was put into

power. Upon becoming the First Consul of France, Napoleon immediately held a vote among the French people to put into power a new constitution, one which gave the First Consul, himself, all of the power in the French government. Although he had all of the political power, Napoleon made huge improvements to the French economy and government. He both established a national banking system and a more efficient taxing method which greatly strengthened the economy. He also took action to end corruption in the government, dismissing corrupt officials immediately. He then set up public schools, the brightest students of which were appointed to public office to replace the corrupt leaders. Bashir, on the other hand, seized power before dissolving the Sudanese congress and illegalized all political parties so that his power could not be challenged. He restricted the press severely against criticising his regime and enforced Sharia law, alienating non muslims in his country. In 1998 Bashir used military force to oust his opponent in the presidential election, and upon re-election in 2000 he disbanded his cabinet. While Bonaparte focused on fixing his economy and government to create a more stable France, Bashir was a source of corruption that used force and fear to stay in power and control his people. This led to Napoleon's government being far more stable than Bashir's because of economic security and lack of fear of its people. Napoleon was focused on rooting out corruption and giving political power to educated individuals with merit, whereas Bashir was constantly focused only on retaining as much power as possible himself. This imbalance of power is what has led to multiple rebellions against Bashir and Bashir having an inability to handle all of the power he had given himself. This all ties in to the fact that Napoleon understood his government and was able to use it to serve his people rather than himself, whereas Bashir was unfocused on a bigger plan for his government and more focused on retaining power.

Napoleon Bonaparte was also a stronger military leader than al-Bashir. Napoleon, a brilliant military strategist, led his country in defeating the armies of Sweden, Russia, and Austria. These were all countries that feared Napoleon's wish to conquer all of Europe, and so went to war with them. Between 1803 and 1815, Napoleon fought over 60 battles and lost only seven. Because of this, he created the largest empire the world had seen in many years. He led his country into battle, and had to win many hard-earned victories in order to accomplish this. Al-Bashir, on the other hand, has shown poor decision making in military situations in Sudan. When civil war broke out between his government and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army in southern Sudan, Bashir failed to prevent South Sudan from becoming independent, which deprived Sudan of all the land and resources in South Sudan. In addition, when the people of the western Sudanese region of Darfur began an armed rebellion because they were neglected by al-Bashir's regime, Bashir was only able to quell this rebellion by committing genocide of the non-Arab people of Darfur, killing around 300,000 of his own people. It is plainly seen that Napoleon's military leadership benefited his country whereas Bashir's lack thereof short-changed his. Napoleon gained massive amounts of land and resources which gave France more stability, but he was able to do this without utterly annihilating his enemies to the point where they could not help or trade with his country in the future. On the other hand, in the civil war with what is now South Sudan al-Bashir lost massive amounts of land and people, as well as all of the resources that came with this land. In Darfur, Bashir's total genocide of his people wasted many innocent lives and sowed unrest both in Sudan and within the UN, causing him to lose political allies. Comparing these two, it is plain to see that Napoleon's military leadership was a key factor in his improvement in France, where Bashir's poor military capability has hurt his country time and time again.

The greatest factor in determining that Napoleon was the better leader is that he cared about his people more than Bashir cares about his. Once in power, Napoleon focused on creating a government that worked for his people. He supported the goals of the revolution, such as equal rights for all and the people having inalienable freedoms, because he knew his people did, he created an empire with France at its heart because he believed his people were the best, and he set up public schooling and efficient tax collection to serve his people by strengthening the economy and giving them education. In the case of al-Bashir, his goals were far more selfish. He was willing to disband his congress and cabinet in order to stay in power, despite the fact that they helped his government run and serve its people. He committed genocide against his own people in Darfur for fear that they would overthrow his government or secede like South Sudan would end up doing later, and he disallowed others to be elected as president, though they may have been better for the people of Sudan than he was. This selfishness is truly what makes al-Bashir a poor leader for Sudan. Napoleon wished to serve his people because he loved his country, which resulted in him creating programs and fighting battles that improved his country and the lifestyle of his people. Al-Bashir's selfish behavior has caused him to put his people on the line time after time only because he wished to remain in power. Napoleon's love for his country is truly what made him a better leader than Omar al-Bashir.

In conclusion, Napoleon was more equipped to serve his people than Bashir was to serve his because Napoleon better understood his country and what was needed of him as a leader and was willing to do it. This leadership quality is important in leading any group or country, because decisions made by the leader need to make sense in reference to the problem. Leaders need to understand both the causes of issues that their country faces, as well as the effects of decisions they make. In order to do this, they must understand the way that

their government, economy and citizens work and think on an extremely deep level. If all leaders put into power understood their countries on this level, the world would see the end of many issues, including poverty, equal education, and hunger.