

Fifty Shades of Evil

By Hans Vogel – Substack / Unz Review, March 23, 2025

Some questions concerning the currently prevailing “hitparade of evildoers,” arguing that it is historically impossible to qualify or quantify evil.

Who would you say is the most evil person in World History? Most people would answer immediately: Hitler. Many would say Stalin and a few others might perhaps come up with Genghis Khan, the Mongol leader who lived about eight centuries ago, or with another historical character from a distant past and a faraway place.

So far, so good, because there appears to be somewhat of a consensus. And don't we all just love democracy? After all, democracy, in the guise of consensus, has come to dominate even science, where “scientific consensus” today equals truth, as is evident from “climate science.” **Dissenting opinions are easily swept off the table and labelled as “fake science” or even “disinformation.”** In the historical discipline, where hard evidence is a rarity, this practice has existed even longer. That is how the world turns today.

Thus, back to evil and its perpetrators, how should it be defined? Unfortunately, evil has many faces, or many shades. All are ugly, yet some are well-disguised and might even seem pretty, yet most would agree that the most evil deed than can be committed is to take the life of a fellow human being. In other words, killing is evil, but there are some nuances and attenuating circumstances here. For instance, if you kill someone who is trying to kill you, that is self-defense. And while killing is normally prohibited in most societies, in war it is allowed on a massive scale, but civilians ought to be left unharmed. There are special laws and conventions prohibiting that, but many political and military leaders as well as soldiers don't seem to bother.

It may safely be assumed that all national political leaders, politicians in high office, save those who remain in power but briefly, are guilty of committing the supreme evil. That is because during their watch people are always killed, either intentionally or by accident, and then of course the leader must be held responsible. That's right: just about all political leaders everywhere who remain in power for more than, say, half a year, are guilty of killing.

Victims may include anyone from foreign spies and underworld figures interacting in some way with government services (a universal phenomenon), to unwelcome witnesses and sometimes even political adversaries. Victims may be fellow citizens or foreigners, even in other countries. Nevertheless, political leaders may enjoy wide popularity and be very kind and decent people, but somehow or other, their hands are always stained.

If killing people is the supreme evil, can one draw up a list of worst evildoers from the earliest times to the present? Simply put, one can't, because reliable numbers and figures in history are elusive and generally just impossible to establish. All we have are rough estimates, that are in themselves woefully unreliable. This does not prevent people from considering Stalin to be the worst evildoer in history, because he is responsible for the deaths of an alleged twenty million people. Those who say Genghis Khan is more evil, do so in the belief that he killed double that number. From this point of view Hitler is definitely not the epitome of evil, since he is credited with the deaths of only six million people.

Nevertheless, most people today, especially in the "West" would consider Hitler as the worst evildoer in all of World History, as pure evil incarnate. In their eyes, he is the World Champion of evil and destined to hold that position until the end of time. Mind you, although he reputedly killed less people than Stalin and Genghis Khan! Apparently, in this case, numbers carry only relative weight.

The reason is that Hitler is charged with committing *genocide*, a term specifically coined to qualify what he is accused of. Now what would that be, genocide? Literally it means the killing of an entire people, or tribe. If, like the term "murder," which means the killing of a person, "genocide" would be used correctly, it cannot be applied for the act of killing only part of a tribe or people. After all, chopping off someone's arm or leg is not murder, unless it ultimately leads to the death of that individual. So, did Hitler kill an entire people, or tribe? No he did not. The tribe he is imputed of killing is thriving, while its political leaders are today themselves committing mass murder. Some might even call that "genocide," because out of the two million inhabitants of Gaza, allegedly between 70,000 and 250,000 have been killed since 7 October, 2023. One can only conclude that genocide is a weaponized term denoting mass murder. However, since mass murder is far from being a rare event in history, it sounds less sinister than genocide.

Since genocide means the killing of an entire people, it is safe to say that during the last few centuries it has only been committed in the Americas and perhaps in Oceania. Until the late 1800s, on several occasions, the last survivors of a number of tribes or peoples (ranging from a handful to a few dozen) have been wiped out by European settlers. Now, that is *genocide*, and nothing else can be identified as such.

The significance of the numbers also needs clarification. Given the fact that world population around 1900 was less than two billion, a century earlier less than one billion and in around 1700 a little over half a billion, one might also need to give certain relative weight to the numbers of killed by evildoers. For instance, one could say one million killed during the twentieth century would be the equivalent of half a million killed a century earlier. Such criteria should also be taken into consideration when establishing a "hit parade" of evildoers.

In this light, the more one thinks about it, the less it seems justified to call Hitler or Stalin the epitome of evil, without equal in history. Actually, if the numbers given are correct (which is highly doubtful), Genghis Khan would be in pole

position. With the degrees and extent of evil so hard to define and establish, it is obviously impossible to make a reliable, significant list of evildoers, let alone to indicate any one figure as evil incarnate.

In making an effort to look at Hitler in a more dispassionate way, as any conscientious historian should do, one might ask oneself if he has also done good things? Actually, he did.

The bad things he is imputed with include: 1) the holocaust (as the “genocide” he is charged with is usually known), 2) having started World War II (actually the English and the French did, by declaring war on Germany on 3 September 1939), 3) racial ideology (keep in mind that racial and ethnic ideologies, whether openly or implicitly, are almost universally in force, and always have been), 4) being totalitarian (please note that today’s EU regimes are also totalitarian, just look at what happened recently with respect to the electoral process in Romania), 5) war crimes (a weaponized term invented by the US, England and France during World War I, in order to punish and humiliate a defeated enemy).

The good things Hitler did include presiding over Germany’s economic recovery, reducing thirty percent unemployment in 1933 to just one percent six years later in 1939. None of today’s “Western” leaders can point to a comparable economic feat. He created the conditions for industrial growth, initiated highly effective affordable housing projects, and organized highly popular leisure schemes for workers and popular youth programs. The policies of current EU leaders apparently intend (perhaps out of spite) to achieve the very opposite of all those beneficial policies, by destroying what is still left in those areas.

Nevertheless, Hitler is so proverbially evil that his name has become some sort of a standard term denoting sheer evil. Since 1945, we have seen some referred to as “a (fill in the blank with a nationality) Hitler,” or even “the new Hitler”. The latter distinction is today reserved for Vladimir Putin, who has even been distastefully called “*Putler*” by some in the “West.” Most leading EU politicians, both in the EU Commission and in member state governments, actually seem to consider Putin to be some reincarnation of Hitler. Many also consider Donald Trump to be something of a new Hitler. Other “new Hitlers” include Slobodan Milosevic, Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, Robert Mugabe and Rodrigo Duterte, now thrown into a dungeon in The Hague, the “International City of Peace and Justice.” Actually, none of these “new Hitlers” is in any way morally inferior to any of their Western contemporary equivalents.

It would seem this variety automatically disqualifies Hitler and Stalin from being considered the very incarnation of evil.

Actually, there are fifty shades of evil. Maybe, even more.