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Bolivar and Napoleon were two revolutionary men who were considered militarily heroes and genius. Both had strong and impacting personalities that helped them reached the highest point of their careers, raised fame, and the realization of their personal dreams. They earned the respect and admiration of their troops, their country, and foreign peoples. These men had strongly earned the right to be remembered through the ages because of their uncountable contribution to history. However, both Napoleon and Bolivar showed weaknesses that many historians agree on. These men were arrogant and sometimes overly ambitious, causing them to move towards authoritarian inclinations. Once liberated from Spain, the various regions of South American began to fight amongst themselves, leading Bolivar to centralize power and to declare himself dictator. By taking power from the people and the legislature, he hoped to rule his people more effectively. This, however, would lead to his downfall.

Both Napoleon and Bolivar fought to spread the ideas of self-determination, democracy, and natural rights. But both men believed that only he was the best person to do the job. Is it ever better for a people to be ruled by a dictator than to have democracy? Why? Can one man make decisions more effectively than a legislative body? Why? Can tyrants and dictators successfully spread democratic ideas despite the fact that they do not “practice what they preach?” How? Can someone truly be a hero and a tyrant or must they sacrifice one for the other?