

internationalist goals like human rights. (The most scathing pages of *Kissinger* are devoted to Senator Henry Jackson who; in linking U.S.-Soviet trade agreements with the exit of Soviet Jews, was precisely trying to add a moral dimension to American foreign policy.)

What liberals did not like about the Nixon Administration was that for all the modish rhetoric of "charting a new course," its actual foreign policy continued to be stubborn old "containment," updated to take into account the American elite's willingness to finish runner-up in the Cold War. To Kissinger, the SALT and ABM treaties were a way to prevent the Soviets from continuing with their missile buildup during the years in which the United States had no new missile program in the works and was reluctant to go ahead with ABM development. To Kissinger, granting the Soviet Union due acknowledgment as a superpower with its sphere of interest went hand-in-hand with the United States acting without guilt within its own sphere of interest. That is why Kissinger, unlike many in Washington at the time, was so alarmed at the prospect of Communists coming to power in France, Italy, Portugal, or Chile. Liberals always hated this aspect of détente. Isaacson haughtily dismisses Kissinger's "tendency to see complex local struggles in an East-West context." Kissinger saw détente as a means of continuing the struggle with Communism. Détente's enthusiasts, however, saw it as a means of ending it.

Isaacson rummages around in Kissinger's intellectual past in a vain attempt to understand him. Metternich, Spengler, Bismarck, Kant are all trotted out to no particular purpose, other than to suggest that Kissinger was somehow "European" or "pessimistic" or uninterested in noble goals like human rights. Kissinger's mind is rich and complex. He never followed the fashions of the times to question the very premises of American Cold War foreign policy. But what is truly remarkable about him is his worldliness. There are many intellectuals. But few of them would have the audacity and perseverance to negotiate the most esoteric issues with the most obdurate prevaricators in the world. One need only compare Isaacson's biography with Kissinger's own memoirs to realize the extent to which Kissinger towers over his contemporaries. □

## HITLER AND STALIN: PARALLEL LIVES

Alan Bullock

Alfred A. Knopf/1,081 pages/\$35

reviewed by JOSEPH SHATTAN

In thinking about Hitler and Stalin, perhaps the most important thing to bear in mind is that, under normal circumstances, neither man would have amounted to much. Stalin might have enjoyed a brief fling as a Caucasian bandit-chieftain; Hitler might have attained a certain notoriety in the political underworld of Central Europe. As the distinguished British historian Alan Bullock observes in his remarkable story of history's two pre-eminent geniuses of evil, "To anyone who came across either of them before the age of thirty, a suggestion that he would play a major role in twentieth century history would have appeared incredible."

Unfortunately, the times in which Stalin and Hitler came to maturity were not normal. Russia was ravaged by war and revolution, Germany by defeat and depression. And it was precisely because authority had crumbled and the future was up for grabs that misfits like Hitler and Stalin could scale the heights of power.

For Stalin, who was ten years older than Hitler, a career as a professional revolutionary seemed perfectly natural. Stalin had an intense hatred of authority, "not so much in principle," Bullock notes, "as in its exercise over him by others." Consumed by feelings of class hatred, convinced that he was destined for greatness, "Stalin emerged as a rough, coarse, difficult man whose original motivation as a revolutionary was colored far more by hatred and resentment than by idealism."

Just as he was a natural revolutionary, Stalin was a natural Bolshevik, and he came to regard the Bolshevik leader,

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Lenin, as a role model. As for Lenin's rivals in the Russian Social Democratic movement, the Mensheviks, Stalin's attitude is well illustrated in an address to Georgian workers that he delivered in 1905:

Lenin is outraged that God sent him such comrades as the Mensheviks! Who are these people anyway? Martov, Dan and Axelrod are circumcised Yids. And that old woman Zasulich! Try to work with them. You can't go into a fight with them, or have a feast with them. Cowards and peddlers!

Stalin's idolization of Lenin led him to see himself—and yearn to be seen by others—as Lenin's chief lieutenant and heir-apparent. But Stalin's failure to play a significant role in the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 inflicted a terrible, totally unacceptable blow to his self-esteem. Bullock argues that the "trauma" of being overshadowed by Trotsky and others at the decisive moment in the party's history is a "key to the understanding of Stalin's psychological development." It led him to embark on a long and tortuous campaign to eliminate his rivals, gain control of the party, launch a "Second Revolution" against the peasantry, and thus come to be seen, finally, as Lenin's equal—his rightful heir and legitimate successor.

Like Stalin, Hitler had an exalted sense of personal destiny. A pampered child of middle-class parents, he spent his formative years as a vagabond in Vienna, where he was forced to rub shoulders with all sorts of riffraff while pursuing an imaginary career as an artist. This career came to nothing, but the Vienna years were hardly wasted. For it

was in Vienna that Hitler finally recognized the hidden cause of both his personal plight and the plight of the German nation with which he identified so passionately: It was all a conspiracy directed by the Jews. What class was to Stalin, "race" became to Hitler: the key to unlocking the secrets of history. And once Hitler got hold of this key, he never let go. In his political testament, written in his Berlin bunker on the eve of his suicide in 1945, Hitler was still obsessed by race: "Above all," he declared, "I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race, to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry."

Before World War I, Hitler's ravings almost certainly would have been dismissed by most Germans. But in postwar Germany, they struck a responsive chord. To be sure, Hitler was not a polished speaker. As Bullock points out, "He spoke at too great length, was often repetitive and verbose, began awkwardly and ended too abruptly. But these shortcomings mattered little beside the force and immediacy of the passions, the intensity of the hatred, fury and menace conveyed by the sound of his voice alone." By 1932, Hitler's oratory, combined with his originality in creating a movement that appealed to Germans of every class, had transformed the tiny Nazi sect into the largest party in Germany's Reichstag.

In their struggle for supreme power, both Stalin and Hitler profited from the fact that their opponents seriously underestimated them. In Stalin's case, it was his lack of theoretical sophistication, his absorption in seemingly petty personnel issues, and his skill at masking his ambitions that prevented foes like Trotsky from taking him seriously until it was too late. None of them recognized that, in Bullock's words, "Deceit and treachery were second nature to him."

If Stalin was underestimated because he concealed his personality, Hitler was underestimated because he flaunted his. Hitler's rhetorical flamboyance and histrionic style convinced many sophisticated observers that, despite his large following, he was little more than a rabble-rouser. One of these observers was the former chancellor and perennial intriguer, Franz von Papen. In 1933 Papen persuaded Germany's aging president, Paul von Hindenburg, to offer

Hitler the chancellorship (Papen became vice-chancellor). When his conservative friends objected, Papen reassured them. "No danger at all," he said. "We've hired him for our act."

It took Stalin six years of maneuvering to eliminate his rivals and consolidate his leadership. Had he been interested solely in power for its own sake, Stalin's victory over left and right oppositions in 1929 would have been the moment to savor the fruits of victory. But this view of Stalin, Bullock contends, "fails to understand his need to prove himself, and to win the recognition of those he had defeated, that he was the successor and equal of Lenin."

To undo the trauma he suffered in 1917, Stalin launched what was in effect a war against 120 million peasants—depriving them of their farms, their food and their livestock, all in the name of "collectivization." This war lasted five years, and cost over 14 million lives—5 million in the Ukraine alone. But when it was all over and he had won, Stalin could plausibly claim that whereas Lenin had only carried out a political revolution, he had carried out a much more significant social and economic one. Stalin had become the co-author of the Russian Revolution.

Once chancellor, it didn't take Hitler nearly as long to consolidate his power. After only two months in office, he persuaded the right-wing majority of the Reichstag to pass the Enabling Law, which basically gave Hitler the authority to smash his opponents and establish a one-party dictatorship. When President von Hindenburg died in 1934, Hitler abolished the presidency and created his own title. Henceforth, officers, soldiers, and civil servants pledged "before God" a "personal oath" to "Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the German Reich and German People."

With his ascendancy established, Hitler's principal concern was to promote German rearmament without provoking French or British intervention. He knew that Germany would be most vulnerable in the early stages. Indeed, he even told his generals that they would soon discover whether or not France had any true statesmen. "If so," he predicted, "she will not leave us time but will attack us, presumably with eastern satellites." To forestall such an attack, Hitler camouflaged his intense rearmament campaign with an equally vigorous peace cam-

paign. If diplomacy is the art of saying "Nice doggie, nice doggie," while searching for a stick, then Hitler proved a masterful diplomat.

By 1938, Hitler was ready to use his stick. He genuinely looked forward to a war with Czechoslovakia, and, ironically, bitterly resented Chamberlain's capitulation at the Munich Conference. In 1939, Hitler got his war; in 1940, he reached the peak of his power. France was beaten, Britain was isolated, Russia was neutralized, and a Greater Germany dominated Europe. At this point, Hitler should have stopped—but he didn't. For just as Stalin was not interested in power for its own sake, neither did Hitler regard foreign policy successes as ends in themselves. Both men viewed their stunning victories merely as springboards to realize their personal obsessions—in Stalin's case, the determination to equal, and ultimately surpass, Lenin; in Hitler's case, the dream of founding a racist slave empire in the East, providing Germany with *Lebensraum* and solving the "Jewish Question" once and for all.

Bullock writes:

With the [June 1941] invasion of Russia, Hitler completed the departure from a nationalist program, with limited objectives, to embark on the racist-imperialist adventure with unlimited horizons, of which the extermination of the Jews was an integral part. The most likely month for this development to have crystallized in a decision is July 1941, the month during which news of the extraordinary early successes in Russia produced a mood of exaltation in Hitler in which anything appeared possible.

Of course, not everything was possible, not even for Hitler. The fact remains, however, that he came within a hair's-breadth of conquering the Soviet Union, murdering all the Jews of Europe, and making his racist fantasies come true. Why he failed, how cunningly Stalin turned Hitler's failure to Russia's advantage, and how the Grand Alliance that defeated Nazi Germany fell apart, are among the many issues illuminated by Bullock in his magnificent work. Yet when all is said and done, what the reader is left with after completing *Hitler and Stalin* is a sense of the sheer incredibility of it all. Never have so few done so much harm to so many.

To many Americans, alas, the subject matter of Lord Bullock's book is virtually ancient history. Now that Germany and Russia are both democracies, why dwell on the past? What difference can it make now what Hitler and Stalin thought and did during the first half of our century?

Unfortunately, it might make a greater difference than anyone realizes. For, unlikely as it seems, history could well be on the verge of repeating itself. As the lands of the former Stalinist empire lurch ever closer to the abyss, the same conditions that led to the rise of Hitler and Stalin have reappeared.

Once again, we are confronted by revolutionary political upheavals, profound economic and social dislocations, implacable ethnic hatreds, nostalgia for a vanished imperial glory, and pervasive anti-Semitism. Under these circumstances, is it really too far-fetched to assume that another Hitler or Stalin is lurking in the wings, awaiting the opportunity to pounce on an unsuspecting world? If not, what are we to do about it? *This* is the great question of the hour—far more important to America's well-being than the state of the economy, the size of the deficit, or a woman's right to choose. □

rather than in the conflict between freedom and dictatorship, that lured him toward the murky waters of moral equivalency. And it was Brandt's SPD that actively sought to legitimize East Germany's Communist rulers at the very same time Mikhail Gorbachev had begun to undermine Erich Honecker's hard-line regime.

Indeed, Brandt had been the best negotiating partner the Communists could ever have wished for. That's why Markus Wolf, East Germany's infamous espionage chief, expressed regret that the unmasking of master spy, Günter Guillaume, a senior aide to Brandt, had led to Brandt's resignation as West German chancellor in 1974. That's also why former East German leader Honecker had instructed his comrades "to do everything" in their power to "avoid damaging [Brandt's] Social Democrats," as recently released party papers in east Berlin reveal. *My Life in Politics*, published first in German in 1989 on the eve of Eastern Europe's upheaval, is a richly documented exposition of Brandt's worldview.

## MY LIFE IN POLITICS

Willy Brandt

Viking / 498 pages / \$35

reviewed by JEFFREY GEDMIN

When Willy Brandt died of cancer at 78 at his home south of Bonn in October, the *Washington Post* hailed the former West German leader as a man of "humanistic values" who had "played a giant role in . . . ending the Cold War." *Time* said Brandt had helped "end the cold war and [brought about] the restoration of a unified Germany to the family of nations." The German press declared that a "great patriot" had been lost: "Brandt defined the political climate of our country," opined one editorial; he "initiated the process which in the end brought freedom," said another. Even the conservative daily, *Die Welt*, usually Brandt's critic, paid homage: "Germany is poorer without him." The myth of Willy Brandt is already bigger in death than it was in life.

It's true, of course, as his autobiography recounts, that Brandt was a participant in much of the great drama of this

century. He fled Nazi Germany in 1933 and worked for the resistance in Scandinavia. He was mayor of West Berlin when the Communists erected their "anti-fascist defensive wall" in August 1961. A decade later, as West German chancellor, he received a Nobel Peace Prize for *Ostpolitik*, his policy of détente with the East. And when the Communists finally swapped white for red on the flagpole in 1989, *Der Spiegel* championed Brandt, then honorary chairman of the West German—and also the new East German—Social Democratic party, as the "new superstar on both sides of the shattered wall."

It's deeply ironic, though, to celebrate Brandt as the father of German unification and a mastermind behind the West's Cold War victory. It was Brandt who nudged his Social Democratic party (SPD) away from the objective of German unity that was enshrined in Bonn's constitution. In fact, Brandt once called unification "the living lie of the second German republic." It was Brandt's misguided belief that the source of East-West tensions lay in missiles,

Although he wrote a short preface to this English-language edition in September 1991, one wonders how Brandt might have edited parts of his manuscript had the book gone to press a year or two later. As it stands, the reader confronts an internationally acclaimed politician of vast experience, towering moral authority, and singularly bad judgment. In defense of a controversial meeting with Yasser Arafat in Vienna in the summer of 1979, Brandt insists that Arafat was a man "ready to negotiate peace." Years later, Brandt remained oblivious to the climate of that period. Arafat had been calling for "blood, blood, blood" in the PLO's campaign to reclaim all of Palestine. The *Economist* was reporting a "sharp rise" in PLO terrorist activities, while the Voice of Palestine openly heaped praise on the work of "Palestinian fighters . . . inside the occupied homeland." Shortly after the Brandt-Arafat Kaffeeeklatsch (hosted by Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky) guerrillas were machine-gunning Tel Aviv's ambassador in Lisbon, and the PLO was busy again slipping bombs onto buses in Jerusalem. It's hard to follow Brandt's logic that Arafat was ready to respect "the secure existence of the State of Israel."

In 1984, after an affectionate meeting