

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

with the Sandinista leadership in Managua, Brandt, then president of the Socialist International, emerged ever more convinced that the new Nicaragua was on the path to a just society. "If those are Marxist Leninists," Brandt said, "then I'm an anteater." Brandt's autobiography oozes with disdain for the West's "fixation on international Communism" and its lack of understanding for "national liberation movements." His "emotional" eight-hour visit with the Sandinista comandantes was an expression of "solidarity with the peoples of Central America."

Yes, Brandt was an unrepentant anti-anti-Communist. And his unconcealed distaste for the "mental shortcuts" of the Cold Warriors, "those Americans and others who saw things in a simple light," is on abundant display here. It's hard to imagine that he himself had once believed early in his career in what he called the West's "battle against Communist inhumanity." But in *My Life in Politics*, Brandt has only disparaging words for anti-Communism, particularly the American variety:

It would have been surprising if the missionary zeal woven into the fabric of the United States . . . had not had some startling political effects. . . . It would also have been surprising if so rich and powerful a country was not afflicted by a certain arrogance of power. American missionary spirit is seen in the long-standing tendency to divide the world into good and bad, equating Communism, or what is to be taken for Communism, with immutable evil, interpreting the idea of a free world in a characteristically American manner, promoting the American way of life even in inappropriate areas.

Brandt's great vision for the practice of foreign policy was to "aim for cooperation wherever confrontation could be avoided." This became the cornerstone of Ostpolitik—in the final analysis, the primacy of peace over freedom, or as Brandt puts it, the "subordination of ideological confrontation to the necessity of peace." Brandt and his close colleague Egon Bahr used the expression "change through rapprochement" to describe and justify their policy toward the Soviet empire, although in fact "rapprochement regardless of change" would have been appropriate.

Accommodation, appeasement, fatalism. "My Berlin experience had taught me," writes Brandt, "that there is no sense in running your head against a wall." In the fall of 1971, at the height of Brezhnev's repression—Andrei Sakharov had just fired off a letter appealing for the release of two dissidents being held in a psychiatric prison in Leningrad—Chancellor Brandt's foreign minister sanguinely declared that "structural changes inside the Soviet Union" were already providing the foundation for the further reduction of tensions between East and West. The crusade for peace at any price helped create among Ostpolitik's practitioners what Walter Laqueur called at the time the "climate of make-believe concerning Soviet intentions."

The Soviet Union's deployment in 1975 of a new medium-range missile, the SS-20, roused a few from their slumbers. In 1979, NATO, with the encouragement and support of Social Democratic chancellor Helmut Schmidt in Bonn, decided to counterdeploy American medium-range Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe and simultaneously offer arms control negotiations to Moscow. But Brandt, then chairman of the SPD, cowered. Brandt contended that "both superpowers [were] stronger than they have to be, stronger than is good for the world." Schmidt left office, and Helmut Kohl and Germany's conservatives held the line. But Brandt's Social Democrats drifted spastically. Brandt's unwillingness to center the debate on Soviet threats and coercion, his unrestrained rhetoric about "the self-annihilation of mankind," "humanity . . . arming itself to death," and the "deadly conflict" between the superpowers helped fuel the hysteria that corrupted much of the Euro-missile debate in Germany and endangered implementation of NATO's "two-track" decision.

Brezhnev's propaganda machine, pleading for "sanity" to save "Europeans from a nuclear Auschwitz," had in fact inched precariously close to success. Of course, Gorbachev's signing in 1987 of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement—a grudging acknowledgment of NATO's resolve—caught Brandt's camp off guard and vindicated the Cold Warriors. So, too, did the fall of East Germany and Communist Europe two years later. In 1987 Brandt had given

the nod to members of his party to embark on a joint commission with East Berlin's Communists to explore "common values" between the two sides. Again, Bahr was Brandt's point man. He had already "done much," writes Brandt, "outside the framework of government routine . . . to create the climate" in which Bonn and East Berlin could work "harmoniously together."

Indeed. One Social Democrat had told his Communist counterpart in discussions, according to documents from the party archives in east Berlin, that "the entire Ostpolitik of the SPD is driven by the desire to maintain stable conditions in the socialist countries. . . . One has to do everything to see that the GDR remains the most stable." In the name of greater détente, leading SPD functionaries called for the dismantling of West Germany's "unnecessary" Salzgitter center, the station that monitored human rights violations in East Germany. They also argued that East Germans should be deprived of their right to West German citizenship. Bahr even declared discussion of German unity to be "political environmental pollution."

No wonder a stunned and confused Walter Momper, the Social Democratic mayor of West Berlin, insisted that November 9, the day the Wall collapsed, was not a day of reunification, but rather a "day of seeing each other again." Brandt was relatively quick to catch on, declaring his pro-unity slogan, "what belongs together, will grow together," by Christmas of 1989. Still, it was not an easy time for him. He had, after all, accepted the premise of Gorbachev's design—intensifying cooperation in Europe between two distinct systems, one capitalist and one socialist. There would be "differences of taste," writes Brandt, "and of the ability of the occupants of rooms in the 'common European home' to furnish them. But conflicts arising from such factors were subordinate to the law of survival."

The Cold War is over, Germany is united, and the "doves," beams *Time's* Strobe Talbott, "were right all along." Arthur Schlesinger credits Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik: it "invigorated the forces of reason and reform within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe." You can also credit Willy Brandt's legacy for Germany's paralysis

on the world stage today. Remember during the Gulf crisis, the Germans finally agreed that Saddam had to be stopped—they just opposed their own involvement in Operation Desert Storm. Now as the cancerous conflict in former Yugoslavia threatens to spread in Europe's belly, the Germans have already said, if it comes to intervention, history and constitutional prohibition prevents them from sharing physical risk.

But there's far more to the story. Forty-two percent of Germans say their country has no need for a national defense. Only ten percent say they'd be willing to take up arms if their own country were attacked. This is not Germany learning the lessons of the past. This is still Willy Brandt's country, wanting to love and be loved, in a make-believe world where negotiations and freshly cut checks will make any problem go away. □

THE SYSTEM: AN INSIDER'S LIFE IN SOVIET POLITICS

Georgi Arbatov

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reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

Georgi Arbatov is bothered by his reputation as chief propagandist for Soviet global policies during the era of Brezhnevite decline. Though it flies in the face of the self-righteous excoriations he directed at Ronald Reagan's policies in the early 1980s, he much prefers the dual image of advocate for world peace and director of a prestigious think tank, something akin to Cyrus Vance as head of the American Enterprise Institute.

Like Vladimir Pozner, Arbatov used to appear frequently on American television, a symbol of Moscow's embrace of modern public relations. He spoke English well and displayed a certain grasp of the American political psychology. While maintaining the Soviet tradition of never admitting mistakes, he was a more reassuring presence than, say, Andrei Gromyko, the dour foreign minister whose unsmiling visage summoned up memories of Stalin, Molotov, and Vishinsky (and whom Arbatov now disparages as a coward and a toady).

Furthermore, Arbatov bore the credentials of director of the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, and thus

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qualified as the Soviet Union's leading expert on the United States. In *The System*, Arbatov writes with pride of his institute's role in educating the insular and "semi-educated" Kremlin leadership about realities of life and politics in America and elsewhere. He can barely conceal his disdain for Brezhnev and associates.

What he doesn't admit is that he rose to prominence by doing the bidding of this crude and narrow-minded group, and there is no reason to believe that he ever put forward anything less than full effort on the regime's behalf. He was not just a propagandist, but an architect of a strategy to appeal over the heads of Western governments, and especially the Reagan Administration, to sway potentially sympathetic constituencies: the peace movement, European social democrats, and journalists and academics of a détenteist inclination. When Ted Turner or John Kenneth Galbraith would return from Moscow whining about how Reagan hawks were undermining the doves in the Kremlin, it was safe to assume that the source for this "insight" was Arbatov or a subordinate at his institute.

Arbatov is the consummate cynic, a man who privately gave out hints that he shared Western democratic values while publicly advancing the cause of a thor-

oughly loathsome system. Arbatov, however, pleads guilty only to what he calls "conformism," which seems to mean having to say certain things as a "condition of survival" in the treacherous world of Soviet politics. His culpability, he adds, is mitigated by the lies higher-ups told him about such issues as the Kremlin's crash civil defense program (which Arbatov implausibly claims to have known nothing about), and by a personal code of honor that would not allow him to denounce associates fallen from grace or to defend the Soviet Union's more obviously criminal acts.

Yet even today Arbatov can't come entirely clean. He asserts, for instance, that he refused to defend Soviet aggression in Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, a claim directly contradicted by Arbatov's previous writings. Not only did Arbatov defend both actions, his arguments were indistinguishable from those advanced by Brezhnev, Sušlov, Chernenko, and the rest of the Politburo's primitives. In a volume written by Arbatov entitled *The War of Ideas in Contemporary International Relations*, published in the early 1970s, he crowed that the "imperial bourgeoisie" had been thwarted in its attempt to "wrest Czechoslovakia away from the socialist camp," and he trumpeted the "fraternal internationalist assistance" that the Warsaw Pact troops had rendered in 1968. Designed as a guide to those engaged in ideological work, the volume reminded the *aktiv* that détente, then in full bloom, did not signal the end of the international class struggle. The book was replete with the rankest kind of Commie-speak, phrases like "the expansionist aspirations of the leading imperialist powers," "rule of the monopoly bourgeoisie," and "imperialist vultures." It even advanced the notion that "imperialism" encouraged drug use to divert people's attention from the ideological struggle and claimed that nuclear war "remains an intrinsic component of imperialist foreign policy."

Arbatov defended the Afghanistan war in another book, *The Soviet Viewpoint*, published in the West in the early 1980s. For some reason, he remains extravagantly proud of this work, calling it "exceptional for its great frankness and self-criticism," and for its "higher-than-usual level of skill, professionalism, and argumentation." Yet his defense of