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# Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives

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perestroika) to develop a strategic "master plan," although he does acknowledge that doing so would require solving a long list of complex problems.

Pfaltzgraff, in a prescriptive essay that unfortunately focuses almost exclusively on the failings of Gorbachev, nonetheless offers some still-cogent reasons not to assume that a strategic threat to the U. S. can never again emanate from the territory of our former adversary.

Indeed, if there is a common theme among these essays, it is the need for the United States not to underestimate the potential challenges to Western security interests that may emerge from the current turmoil, whether in the form of: a resurgent, expansionist Russia; out-of-area threats to Nato interests; or of millions of refugees fleeing civil and economic chaos, straining, perhaps fatally, the fragile democratic infrastructures of Eastern Europe. For those charged with devising policies to meet these potential challenges, or simply with advancing public understanding of how they have arisen, this book is a useful tool.

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Bullock, Allan. *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*. New York: Knopf, 1992. 1,082pp. \$35

Notwithstanding the measured optimism to be found in the conclusion to this work, Bullock's weighty study

of the butchery unleashed by these two tyrants constitutes a *fin de siècle* examination of its main event—the battle between millenarian Nazi racism and chiliastic Soviet socialism. Bullock, long familiar with German sources (his *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* received critical acclaim in the early 1960s), appears current and well acquainted also with the secondary literature pertaining to Stalin. Consequently, what the reader finds in this book is a lengthy, sometimes pedestrian, but often engaging examination of "one of the blackest periods in Europe's history."

Both dictators were narcissists suffering from paranoia. Stalin trusted no one and was determined to avenge every wrong done to him, however minor. Hitler believed that the Jews and Bolsheviks were behind every problem. It was only later that his paranoia spread to include his fellow Nazis, and he attributed Germany's military reversals to internal enemies of the Third Reich. Nevertheless, each despot possessed a unique gift that permitted him to achieve great power over a dazed and dislocated people.

Stalin used his position as General Secretary and his organizational talents to place officials beholden to him into important positions, thereby assuring the necessary "votes" before he challenged other luminaries in the Party. He then utilized the support of the Right to destroy the "Left Opposition," then co-opted the policies of the Left and turned on his former allies. As Stalin's power increased, he

collectivized agriculture, accelerated the growth of heavy industry, and exterminated not only his opponents but those who appeared capable of spontaneous behavior—all in his quest to forge revolutionary credentials equal to those of Karl Marx and V.I. Lenin.

Hitler directed his oratorical gift at the increasingly large and enthusiastic crowds and ultimately captured a following that could not be ignored. Not only did he blame the Weimar Republic for the suffering of the German people, but he promised to restore German glory with the Thousand Year Reich, once the Nazis were in power. The Nazi party garnered only 800,000 votes in 1928, but the Depression of 1929 raised their total count to 6.4 million in 1930, and in 1932 their total rose to 13.75 million. In January 1933, Hitler was co-opted into the government as chancellor, and by July the Nazis held a monopoly on political power.

It was power that permitted Hitler to accelerate Germany's capability to bear arms again (*Wiederwehrhaftmachung*), which was a necessary precondition for the pursuit of his racial millennium. The latter could be achieved only after the Jewish question was solved and the *Untermenschen* (Slavs) in Eastern Europe were made slaves of the newly settled Germans.

On 22 June 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union. On 31 July Hermann Göring ordered SS General Reinhard Heydrich to make the necessary preparations for the "total solution of the Jewish question."

Bullock insists that "there was only one man among the Nazi leaders who could have conceived of so grandiose and bizarre a plan."

The Soviet Union's victory over Hitler's Germany ended one dreadful regime, only to allow Stalin's USSR to survive for almost forty years.

Bullock concludes that twentieth-century European history has been the story of Hitler and Stalin: the redefinition of boundaries in Europe; the massive scale of inhumanity; and the conflict of ideologies. Bullock states that when "war, revolution, or some other form of violent upheaval disrupts normality and continuity . . . it is possible for an individual to exert powerful, even a decisive influence on the way events develop." He is quite correct to conclude that, notwithstanding the social and economic dislocations that enabled these two tyrants to win power, "only later did it become clear how much difference it made who won."

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Keegan, John, ed. *Churchill's Generals*. New York: William Morrow, 1992. 368pp. \$13

Distinguished historian Martin Blumenson once described the U.S. commanders of World War II as the most formidable array of warriors in our history. The same can be said of Great Britain's military commanders. Ably edited by John Keegan, *Churchill's Generals* includes seventeen