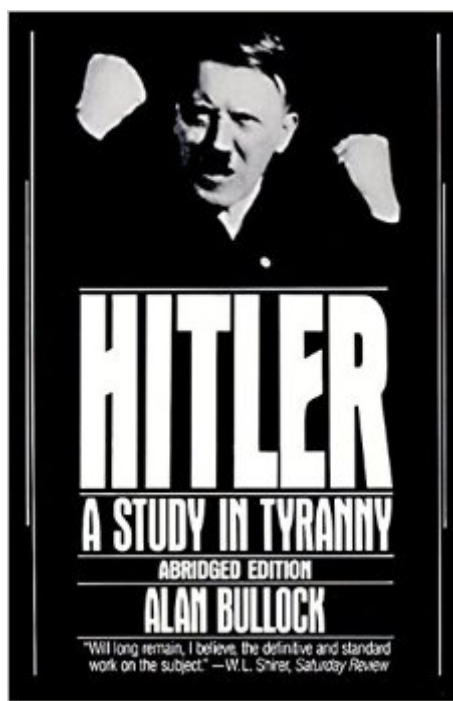


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Hitler: A Study In Tyranny



Synopsis

The classic biography of Hitler that remains, years after its publication, one of the most authoritative and readable accounts of his life. Here in an abridged edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I first read this book the best part of fifty years ago. It stands up remarkably well, even when read with a subsequent background of many books about World War II, several biographies of Hitler and other major war figures, plus smaller specialized studies. This is not a full biography, Hitler's early years receiving fairly brief treatment. It is precisely what its subtitle says of it, a study in tyranny, and I don't believe another book offers quite the same intense exploration of the subject. Allan Bullock writes as a genuine scholar, albeit an unusually articulate one. When Bullock is uncertain about the factors contributing to a certain event, he says so, along with giving readers a clear explanation of the alternatives. Bullock had studied the vast literature available in his time and little of substance escaped his analytical mind. Hitler surely represents three extraordinary historical phenomena. First, the outline of his rise is remarkable, almost unparalleled in history, rising from a tramp, would-be artist, a man with limited formal education, to become absolute leader of Europe's most important nation and then achieving a series of dazzling successes until megalomania struck, sending Europe into a ghastly spiral of horrors and destruction. One of the few comparable rises I can think of is that of a man who shared none of Hitler's dark obsessions and hatreds: I refer to Lincoln, a man who rose from life in a dirt-floor cabin and a year and half of formal education to become a successful corporate lawyer, president of the United States, and leader of what remains America's bloodiest

war.

In "Hitler: A Study in Tyranny," Alan Bullock stated that, as an author, he has no axe to grind. He adhered to that statement. Bullock offered a very balanced and plausible account of Hitler's life attempting to understand the dictator not as a demon but as a human being. Readers interested in tantalizing controversy will be disappointed with this book. Bullock chose not to assert blame for such things as the Reichstag fire. Bullock dismissed the popular claim that Hitler changed his name from Schicklgruber (man, I got tired of my teachers reiterating that bit of misinformation) and the myth that Hitler resorted to astrology in decision-making. As for Geli Raubel, Bullock finds her best to be left as "a mystery." Bullock took a conservative stance in his analysis focusing only on the known facts about Hitler's life. Bullock offers a thorough study of Hitler's days in Vienna before the First World War and the ways in which this experience formed his political views. Hitler is presented not as the originator of future Nazi principles but as a product of the anti-rational, anti-intellectual, and anti-Semitic ideas that had been circulating in Europe for the previous hundred years. His understanding of propaganda, oratory skills, and practical exposure to street politics helped Hitler gain a following. Ultimately, it was Hitler's determination that prompted him to turn down enticing offers of political position by Franz von Papen and Bruening that were less than what he sought: the Chancellory. During the Second World War, Hitler's "warlord" image was transformed: "the human being disappears, absorbed into the historical figure of the Fuehrer." Bullock also pointed out that this devotion to power led eventually to Hitler's downfall.

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