

only institution able to initiate desired change.

This rather routine discussion of government shortcomings, however, should not be allowed to overshadow the main value of the book. Obviously, the ability of the less-developed countries to raise themselves to a better life is not yet proven. Technological advances in health, it may be argued, could reinforce the validity of the Malthusian argument that increases in population will eventually outrun improvements in the world's food supply and negate any attempt to raise living standards above subsistence level. But the picture Professor Schultz draws of the new nations making use of their human capital to achieve better lives for their people gives us cause for hope. [WV]

**THE NAZI QUESTION: AN ESSAY
ON THE INTERPRETATIONS
OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM
(1922-1975)**

by **Pierre Ayçoberry**

(Pantheon; xiv + 257 pp.; \$6.95 [paper])

Anthony James Jones

Hitler and nazism intrigue us, generating an endless progeny of books that Pierre Ayçoberry seeks to put in order. "My aim was to write a history of the images of nazism, constructed at first by itself, its sympathizers and adversaries, then by the practitioners of the different social sciences who found in it a point of application of their methods." The scholarship—analyses of dozens of major works in French, German, and English—is impressive.

The first thing to strike the reader is the poverty of standard Marxist, and especially Communist, analyses of nazism. In the 1930s the Communists insisted on forcing the Nazis into the crudest Procrustean bed of economic determinism. Their mechanistic insistence that Hitler was nothing but a puppet of the Krupps was complemented by an explanation of the concentration camps as nothing but a more efficient way for big business to exploit labor.

But economics failed to explain why the Nazis turned these camps of exploitation into camps of extermination; and Stalin's much vaster system of camps leaves communism wide open to the

charge of being nothing but a machine for exploiting labor. Even the Communists could not escape certain unpleasant facts, such as that 53 per cent of the storm troopers in 1932 were made up of working-class members. This helps account for the otherwise incredible Communist tactic of lumping the Socialists with the Nazis ("Social Fascism"). It was necessary to blame the social democrats for Hitler, "the better to excuse the proletariat."

Communist writing on nazism, crowned by the confident prediction that a short-lived Nazi-capitalist regime would be followed by the inevitable proletarian revolution, is embarrassing.

The Communists paid for their ritualized ignorance with total defeat, and often with their lives. Marxists like to tell one another that "environment determines consciousness." Good; can we therefore assume that ugly events in the real world have forced a revision of the hallowed but demonstrably inadequate categories of thought? Alas, as Ayçoberry shows, contemporary studies of nazism by East German historians are still based on the crudest of class-war assumptions: "that those who later profited from nazism must have been its accomplices at the start"; that "the one who paid was the one who commanded"; and that "the one who did

**Robert Aldridge, Norman Birnbaum, Blair Clark,
Ramsey Clark, Fred Cook, E.L. Doctorow,
Robert Engler, Richard Falk, Jules Feiffer,
Tom Ferguson & Joel Rogers, Frances FitzGerald,
Philip Green, Bertram Gross, Fred Halliday,
Christopher Hitchens, Michael Klare,
Robert Lekachman, Richard Lingeman,
Aryeh Neier, Marcus Raskin, Nora Sayre,
Robert Sherrill, Calvin Trillin, Kurt Vonnegut,
Roger Wilkins, Alan Wolfe write it.**

**John Alcorn, Marshall Arisman, Tony Auth,
Seymour Chwast, Robert Grossman,
Frances Jetter, Ed Koren, David Levine,
Lou Myers, Ed Sorel illustrate it.**

Victor Navasky edits it.

We've changed the face of *The Nation*. The new *Nation* is something to see.

Why is today's *Nation*, from editorial to the arts, wiser and wittier than anything in the field? The answer is in the people who write it, illustrate it, and edit it.

Join them. Say "yes" to our enticing offer in the coupon.

The Nation.

P.O. Box 1953, Marion, OH 43305

YES!!! Send me 16 issues of *The Nation* for \$11.95, a savings of 40% off the newsstand price. I understand that I may cancel at any time and receive a refund for all unmailed copies.

☐ My payment is enclosed — reward me with **FOUR FREE ADDITIONAL ISSUES!**

☐ Please bill me later.

NAME _____ (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Add \$3 postage for each foreign subscription. Subscriptions payable in equivalent U.S. funds.

D3106

not pay was innocent." If at first you don't succeed, fail, fail again.

The West's response to Hitler was hardly more impressive. Most British leaders, with Churchill the one magnificent exception, were completely incapable of realizing what the Nazis were about. Hitler's plans as laid out in *Mein Kampf* were too weird for their comprehension, and so the Conservatives sought to make sense out of the Nazis by turning Hitler into "a successor of Bismarck." They wanted to be reasonable, to satisfy Germany's legitimate demands, and to avoid "provocation." Solzhenitsyn, of course, has warned us against the seductive complacency that reduces communism to hardly more than a new mask for traditional Russian expansionism.

The British Marxists, men like Laski, armed with their one-tool-does-all concept—nazism=capitalism—saw in the rise of Hitler, not the signal for British rearmament, but the justification for social revolution at home in order to head off an otherwise inevitable British nazism!

Among the French, the only group

that correctly perceived the Nazi character was *Action française*, whose warnings were ignored by radicals and conservatives alike. Ayçoberry reminds those who think "misunderstanding is the root of war" that Hitler scheduled a war against the Anglo-Saxon powers for no later than 1946, when the great German fleet would be ready. Japan messed things up by attacking Pearl Harbor ahead of schedule.

To summarize briefly a few of Ayçoberry's other interesting points. First, the West German effort to come to grips with the Nazi past is carried on as a debate between those who consider nazism an aberration of German development and those who consider it its inevitable poisonous fruit. This latter—the "from Luther to Hitler" thesis—is popular with Marxists and Germanophobes but is complicated by certain empirical findings: the fact, for example, that the great increase in the Nazi vote in the early '30s came overwhelmingly from young voters or previous abstainers. To the very end of Weimar, Catholics and Socialists resisted the blandishments of the Nazis.

Second, one is pleased to relate that, at least according to Ayçoberry, the insolent dogmatism of the "psychiatric" school of politico-historical analysis have been consigned to the dustbin. "The era of trenchant assertions is finished. Things like 'an anti-Semite is a man who in his youth...' are no longer said." Thank goodness.

Third, a consensus seems to have been reached on Nazism's structural disorder. Far from being monolithic or totalitarian, the Nazi state begat a "cancerous proliferation" of overlapping and competing jurisdictions that undermined the war effort. Ayçoberry warns us, however, not to let our notion of administrative anarchy suggest that Hitler was less than totally responsible for expansion and extermination, the two fundamental policies of Nazi Germany.

My criticisms of the book can be reduced to three: (1) Ayçoberry falls into the common but colossal error of writing as if those who voted for the Nazis in the early '30s were, in effect, voting for the Holocaust or World War II. (2) For forty years before Hitler came to power German Socialists were "explaining the Jewish Problem" by identifying the Jews as representative of the worst aspects of capitalism; they insisted that, come the proletarian revolution and an "infusion of fresh blood," Judaism would totally disappear. Yet Ayçoberry makes hardly an allusion to the Socialists' contribution to German anti-Semitism. (3) Finally, like all enlightened, humanitarian intellectuals, Ayçoberry automatically adopts the supposedly self-evident proposition (really a tautology) that Hitler was insane. Thus another proposition, that Hitler was evil—with all its disturbing and "reactionary" implications—is never faced.

At the end Ayçoberry states the important truth: "We still have not settled with the past." **[WV]**

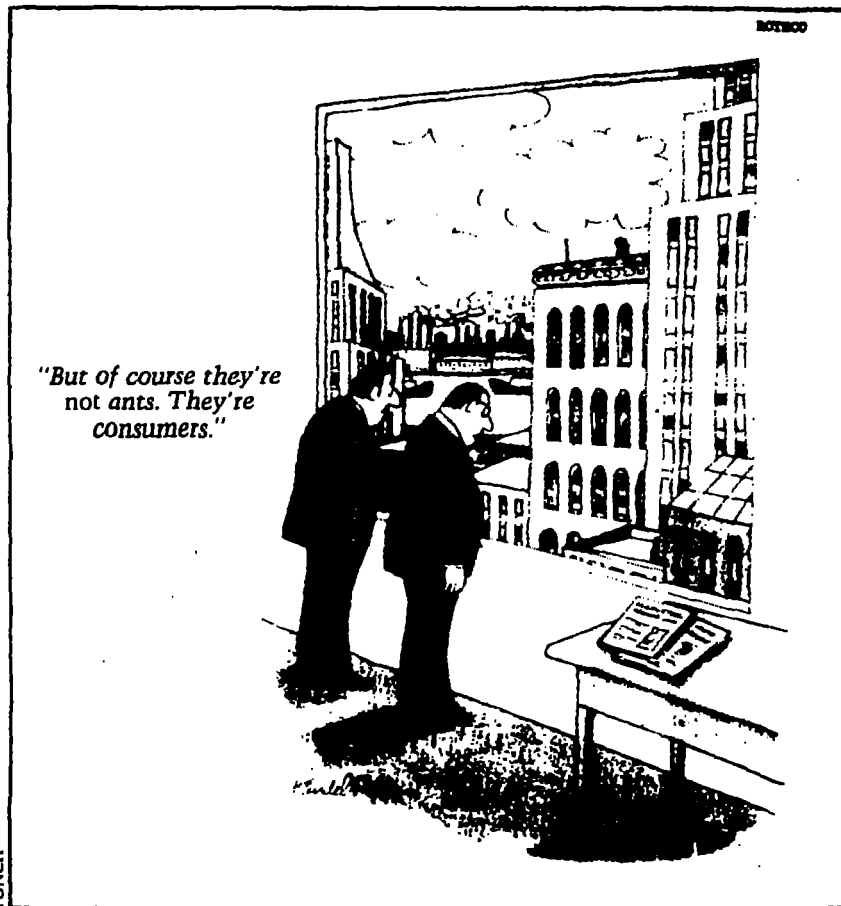
Briefly Noted

THE RIDDLE OF VIOLENCE

by Kenneth Kaunda

(Harper and Row; 184 pp., \$9.95)

Kenneth Kaunda, president of Zambia, has long been lauded as the only thorough believer in nonviolence to head a contemporary state. Much to the dis-



stress of his pacifist admirers, however, Kaunda gave his active support to guerrilla forces fighting for majority rule in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. In these diary-like reflections put together by his friend and mentor, Canon Colin Morris, Kaunda presents his apologia to his former admirers. The tone is sometimes more polemical than apologetic as Kaunda makes his basic point that politics of necessity involves violence or the threat of violence, that nonresistance in the face of great evil is immoral. Although he does not cite Reinhold Niebuhr, Kaunda is Niebuhrian in emphasizing that the personal ethics of Jesus and the responsibilities of political leadership cannot be reconciled. With special reference to continuing conflict with South Africa, Kaunda concludes: "My enemy and I have many differences, some of which have brought us to the point of conflict; the one thing we share is the need to be forgiven."

This is an affecting and frequently persuasive statement. He tries to be nuanced in understanding the views of his opponents, but his analysis of the moral stakes involved in Zimbabwe and South Africa are nonetheless very one-sided—and he is not above slipping into clichés about God's being one-sided on the side of the poor. The meaning of justice is never closely examined, aside from appeals to a rather simple egalitarianism and to the imperative of majority rule. But this remains a compelling statement of painful sincerity from a leader who acts in salutary awareness that he will face an ultimate judgment that transcends the short-term wins and losses of his fallible decisions.

—Richard John Neuhaus

**THE HUMAN CONDITION:
AN ECOLOGICAL
AND HISTORICAL VIEW**
by William H. McNeill

(Princeton University Press; 81 pp.; \$8.50)

William H. McNeill, professor of history at the University of Chicago, offers the reader a slim volume with an ambitious title. The work consists of revised versions of two lectures delivered at Clark University in 1978. McNeill acknowledges in his opening paragraph that it is "absurd to try to distill the

Henry Holmes Smith has been making photographs since the early '20s and color photographs since 1936. He taught photography at The New Bauhaus in Chicago and, from the end of World War II to 1977, in the Art Department of Indiana University. His writings on photography aesthetics and appreciation have appeared widely in the United States.

Edith Kurzweil, author of The Age of Structuralism (1980), teaches sociology at Rutgers University and is Associate Editor at Partisan Review.

Charles Bloomstein has retired after years of editing Intercom, a quarterly for elementary and secondary school teachers that is devoted to global perspectives in education.

Kalman Goldstein is a member of the

CONTRIBUTORS

Department of History and Political Science at Fairleigh Dickinson University, New Jersey.

Gary Prevost is Assistant Professor of Government at St. John's University, Minnesota. He has written on Spain's Communists for West European Politics and The College.

Walter E. Ashley is an oil company executive, formerly with the Ford Foundation and author of two Ford Foundation studies on agricultural problems in the Third World.

Anthony James Joes teaches politics at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. He is author of Fascism in the Contemporary World (1978) and Mussolini: A Political Portrait (forthcoming from Franklin Watts).

human adventure" into two brief lectures, but nonetheless proceeds on the assumption that "any intellectual discipline—not least history—needs every so often to examine the framework of understanding within which detailed researches and ordinary teaching are conducted." What McNeill provides, however, rather than an exploration of the framework(s) of understanding within which historical specialists work, is a thematic analysis of world history organized around the concept of parasitism. He depicts mankind as suffering from the parallel depredations of microparasitism, those biological organisms that compete for food and sap energy, and macroparasitism, those exploitative relationships that are established by certain groups of people over other groups.

McNeill's overview of seven thousand years of history from the interpretive perspective of parasitism yields a variety of striking insights on such disparate topics as the development of market-regulated economies, the evolution of bureaucracy, and the relationship between infectious disease and demography. His angle of vision lends clarity to the emergence of certain patterns of social organization over a vast geographical and territorial span. Despite the illumination McNeill's volume brings to several key aspects of the human condition, its focus is far too

narrow to justify the promise of its title. But at a time when the professional interest of most historians has become so constrained and fragmented, McNeill's integrative approach to a global historical perspective is a refreshing and welcome contribution.

—John O'Sullivan

**LAMBERT'S WORLDWIDE
GOVERNMENT DIRECTORY
WITH INTER-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS: 1981**

edited by Diane E. Hrabak

(Lambert Publications [Washington, D.C.]; x + 779 pp.; \$125.00)

People who need to know names of ministries and ministers and heads of state; people who need to know addresses, telephone numbers, and the precise names of the nations will find them here. There are 40,000 entries for 168 nations and 108 intergovernmental organizations. Also included is the date the information for a particular country was last corroborated. At the end of each nation's entry are the appropriate forms of address for the various officers. A valuable book. Paging through it, however, we—like the "late consumptive usher to a grammar school" of *Moby Dick*—are somehow mildly reminded of our mortality.

—John E. Becker