



1917: Vladimir Lenin, Woodrow Wilson, and the Year That Created the Modern Age

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From Reader Review 1917: Vladimir Lenin, Woodrow Wilson, and the Year That Created the Modern Age for online ebook

Chris Allen says

Saw this book at the library and picked it up because the subject fascinates me and because the author was obviously drawing, or attempting to draw parallels, between two of the pivotal figures in the 20th century in Wilson and Lenin. Sounded interesting. Turned it over, as I always do, to the "Advance Praise" section on the back cover and lost some of my enthusiasm almost immediately, as the first three blurbs come from Steve Forbes, Victor Davis Hanson and Robert Kagan, two of which are notable neo-cons who urged on terrible foreign policy during the Bush years. And Steve Forbes, who I'm not sure why would be the person you'd want as your first up on the list. Herman might as well of added Bill O'Reilly. Be that as it may, I checked it out anyways and got to reading it. While the author was largely spot on in his assessment of Lenin and the Bolshevik rise to power, I think his views on Wilson are way too simplistic. I've noticed it's become a thing in right-wing intellectual circles to bash Woodrow Wilson and this book seems to be an effort to put those criticisms to work. So a non-biased piece of history or biography it's definitely not. And that largely goes to his views on Lenin as well, although I found myself more or less agreeing with him there. To be sure, Wilson had his flaws. He could be arrogant, self-righteous and uncompromising. His racial views were appalling. But let's be honest here. Wilson's high-minded ideals won out in the long run. He may have not gotten the United States to join his creation, the League of Nations, but the formation of The League directly led to NATO and the United Nations. And while it's easy to pick apart decisions that were made and extrapolate them into the future as the causes of future events, such as World War II, it's highly simplistic (and problematic) to just say, "see, this is what led to Hitler and the start of the Second World War." Just as easily, one could say that the Balance of Power prism that Wilson's critics saw things led to the Second World War, as Europe was left with the same basic power structures (minus the monarchies) that they had before.

As for critics of Wilson, Herman curiously largely neglects to criticize Henry Cabot Lodge or Teddy Roosevelt in any way. It's almost as though he believes that Wilson committed mortal sins by not seeing the world in the same way that they saw it. Wilson deserves blame for being non-compromising and his political skills were dwarfed by his high-minded idealism. But let's be honest here. Lodge and Roosevelt (and I'm a big fan of TR) saw the world through a 19th century prism. That they wanted to jump right into the war was more problematic in my view than Wilson's wanting to sit it out and be the non- tarnished arbiter for peace when it was over. Not to mention that popular will was not in favor of jumping in. Roosevelt's very public criticism of Wilson was unbecoming in many ways. It's nothing more than speculation, but I believe that some of that stemmed from jealousy. Wilson and Roosevelt had much in common politically (although obviously not in foreign policy) and it almost seemed that Wilson was setting his mind to do things that he, Roosevelt, never did. Much of the change in the way that the federal government operated could be traced to Wilson's actions but Roosevelt was really where the modern ideas of the strong state started to germinate (although some go all the way back to Alexander Hamilton and others as well). And Lodge very much deserves some of the criticism that he and his party have long received from historians. If Wilson could come across as petty for not reaching out to his detractors in the GOP, then so should Lodge, for letting Wilson's cold shoulder color his actions as Senate Majority Leader.

In the end, even though my review is critical, it was still a good book. It was thoughtfully researched and the reader does come away with things that they might not have been very aware of, such as the secret German plan to get Lenin back to Russia to foment unrest and hopefully push the Russians out of the war. And Lenin's secret olive branch to the Americans to help modernize his backward country. But in the end, the

book could have been better by leaving out the authors opinions and biases and not holding up Wilson's critics, such as Lodge, as though they were guiltless actors. The biggest criticism is that, while the historical "meat" of the book is all there, Herman does make strong assertions and long leaps in logic to get to where he wants to go. Wilson made decisions, as did Lenin. But pointing to those decisions and then to events 20 or 30 years (sometimes more) down the road and extrapolating and connecting those decisions to other events needs more work. Because it looked like Herman had tunnel vision. He came in wanting to show that such and such led to such and such. Any scholar who is hell-bent on showing some special significance to past events is running the risk of missing other things.

Still, I gave the book a three. It adds to the canon of 20th century history and much of it is accurate. Mistakes made in the 1st World War led to the second. This can't be debated. But simplistically putting all of that on Woodrow Wilson's shoulders needs to be analyzed much more thoroughly.

Leah says

Save me from the exceptional...

In 1917, the USA finally entered World War I after years of pusillanimous dithering, and Russia threw its revolution after years of poverty and imperialist wars. In this book, Herman looks at the two men who led those events, Woodrow Wilson and Vladimir Lenin, and suggests that out of their respective philosophies of power grew the 20th century and all of its horrors.

Normally, when reviewing a major history book, I find that even though I might not like the style or may feel the author hasn't entirely convinced me with his or her arguments, I still feel at the end that I have gained enough from reading it to have made it worthwhile. Sadly, this is the exception. I have thoroughly enjoyed each of Arthur Herman's books which I've read to date. He is often biased, but usually openly, so that I feel the reader can allow for his bias in forming her own judgements. Here, however, his bias seeps into every analysis he makes and it seems as if he's perhaps not even aware of it. American capitalism is good, Russian communism is bad. Wilson is an idealist, Lenin is a cynic. America is a shining beacon on the hill, the USSR is a blot on the escutcheon of history. I realise these are standard viewpoints on the other side of the Atlantic, and some parts of them would be accepted over here too, though perhaps less so after the last couple of years. But a history book with this level of bias teaches nothing, except perhaps that history should never be written by those with a dogmatic belief in the superiority of one particular nation or form of government.

It's not that Herman is uncritical of Wilson and America – in fact, sometimes he's almost sneeringly contemptuous of Wilson. It's more in the language he uses. Some of his statements are simplistic and unnuanced in the extreme, and his facts are carefully selected to support his basic argument that both Wilson and Lenin were more interested in forcing their worldview on the rest of the world than in acting in their own nations' self-interest. He speaks of "American exceptionalism" with a straight face, clearly believing the propaganda which has done so much damage in convincing so many Americans (but not many other people) that they are somehow intrinsically superior to other races, nations, etc. And yet this is exactly the kind of propaganda he condemns in his despised USSR. His conclusion, broadly summarised, is that everything bad in the 20th century comes from Russia, while America could have done better in the world, but did pretty well. An arguable stance, and I'd have appreciated an argument about it rather than it being presented as if it were an indisputable statement of fact.

Please don't think I'm an apologist for the extreme communism of the USSR, nor the horrors carried out in

its name. But nor am I an apologist for the extreme capitalism of the USA, complete with its own murky history of horrors. Unfortunately Mr Herman is, and appears to believe that America must stay engaged with the world to save it by exporting its form of capitalism to the rest of us. Personally, I think the world needs to be saved from all nations who think they have the right to force their views on other people and from all extremists who believe they are "exceptional" in any way. I find it difficult to recommend this one – the overwhelming weight of bias prevents it from adding any real insight into the subject.

PS Yes, I'm aware my own biases show here, but I'm not writing a history book. Nor am I advocating that the world should submit to the intrinsic superiority of Scotland.

www.fictionfanblog.wordpress.com

Ted says

Herman is refreshingly critical of American global hegemony without dipping into the radical isolationism of Ron Paul or Pat Buchanan. The ultimate message at the end of the book is that America has a role to play in the international scene but cannot bear the weight of this role alone like Wilson thought it could. Removing America from the international scene like many isolationists want would only doom America to intervening in another conflict later likely with China. The American Hegemony needs to transition in the old-time balance of power that Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge preferred.

Wilson entered WW1 largely due to an almost messianic and secular millennial view of America as the arbiter of Hegel's end of history. A "shining light" and "beacon of hope" for humanity that was a product of his very Presbyterian upbringing. In addition to this seismic shift in America's role in the world he created the state capitalist economy that Eisenhower would likely call the "military-industrial complex" was created as a result of Wilsons' wartime progressive agenda for America.

Wilson bobbled about 3 opportunities to fundamentally change the history of Russian and Russia-American relations. First by abandoning Kuresnky after the Tsar had abdicated and missed Russia becoming a constitutional Republic in the vein of the West. The second was not intervening militarily in the Russian Civil War like France, Japan and Winston Churchill had wanted too, to the point that US and Japanese boots on the ground were already in Siberia to protect civilians and help the Whites in the Civil War, which would have stopped the Bolsheviks while still weak. The third time was when Lenin offered the US access to 3 million dollars worth of exports and infrastructure interests to repair and grow Russia after the war (American financial and engineering interests were shut out which stunted Russia for the interwar years).

The sections on the Treaty of Versailles and the circus around creating the League of Nations was fascinating if only because it turned into a who's-who of future world conflicts. The most crushing of all was Japans attempt to add a racial equality clause to the League's charter that Japan hoped would solidify it as a "great power" and the conscious of Aisa that was rejected by the League because it would've applied to Africa. This lead to the far right taking over japan and at the very least set the conditions for war with America in 1941. At the League was was a socialist/journalist and veteran of the war name Mussolini who resented the treatment of Italy at the conference and swore that Italy would never be humiliated at the international scene again. France's revenge against Germany sowed the seeds of the WW2 and above the scene was an almost naively idealist Wilson who was trying to create a liberal world order that required America to surrender some national sovereignty for the greater good (which was soundly rejected by the senate republicans and the general public) and who reputation was in shatters by the time he died. The interwar years of the 20's and

30's were almost a mockery of Wilson's dream with the League toothless, the allies had deferred on loans to America from the war during the depression and the Nazi's had openly started ignoring large segments of the Treaty of Versailles.

Herman is too preoccupied with Lenin's legacy as untainted by Stalin's terror.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlxpC...> Solzhenitsyn had mentioned Lenin's role in creating the political and prison system that Stalin would inherit after he died in the 70's and in general there are much better books about Lenin and his role the Soviet Union's crimes against the Russian people. His take on Wilson is infinitely more interesting and timely. Pairing the two men together only really serves some general comparisons. Lenin and Wilson were both Hegelians of a sort (Wilson the liberal internationalist and Lenin the communist internationalist), they were visionaries, and they set in motion the events that would create the world we exist in today.

Gwen - Chew & Digest Books - says

Honesty time, Not much of this was new to me and there were times that it read as slow as molasses, maybe because of that.

BUT, the conclusions about Wilson were insightful and in line with what I have always thought. They were the true golden nuggets Herman's work.

In a nutshell, his actions have always seemed noble; it was his stubbornness, the ideals of upbringing in the Protestant faith and bigotry that really failed him. They failed him and the believers in him then and they fail a deeper inspection now. You can't run around proclaiming that you stand for the people's of the world when you don't even count many of them as people, you can't get along in life without compromise, and newsflash, no one is always right.

Wilson was indeed caught between a rock and a hard place and near the end obviously in poor health. His 14 Points were good and eventually, they were one of the things that led to the concept of the United Nations. Still, United or League implies a group think that he was never going to be able to stomach. Every time I hear someone list Wilson as one of their favorite presidents, I either cringe and zip my lip or get on my soapbox, it depends on the audience.

If this is your first introduction into the Revolution of 1917, you can't go wrong. It was in no way smooth like many assume and Lenin was not guaranteed or even really involved in the beginning. Surprised? Then you need to read this....soon!

Marsa Terrell says

Overall, the book is an interesting and compelling look at the intersection and influence of Lenin's Bolshevik revolution and Wilson's ideas for the United States as a light/example to the world. The author maneuvers between Lenin, Wilson and their European counterparts in such a way as to demonstrate the interconnectedness of decisions made on all sides of events from 1917 on that still have ramifications to today.

The book comes across assuming the reader has more than cursory knowledge of WWI, its causes, and outcomes. More attention is paid to details around Wilson's and Lenin's thoughts, ideas, and actions than explaining reasons behind the actual war, yet throws some meaningful light on these details that enhance prior knowledge of the subject. What is especially compelling are the connections made between the events of 1917-1924 to the immediate future of the setting (1930s and 1940s and WWII) as well as connecting up to the present.

One distracting piece throughout the book is the somewhat constant interjection of the author's own opinions upon either the events themselves or how these events and decisions affected the future. These moments are more than drawing a conclusion based upon one's research, or even just expressing an opinion; rather, these moments come across as moral or value judgments that detract from the book's purpose and pull a reader out of the flow of the narrative. Where some may not notice or be particularly bothered by this, these statements uncomfortably border on an attempt to dictate how a reader ought to interpret and feel about a particular event or person.

This phenomenon is particularly noticeable when the author makes comparisons between Lenin's Russia and Wilson's United States. While expressing an opinion regarding these two people and / or countries is permissible, the author takes it one step further and - while not explicitly stating - appears to be extraordinarily critical of Lenin yet ends up pulling his punches when it comes time to turn the mirror on Wilson. It is as if the author can't quite bring himself to rise above the influence of decades of anti-Soviet and Cold War propaganda to set a truly equitable comparison and critique of both Lenin and Wilson. The author does a fair job at pointing to missed opportunities Wilson didn't take and his missteps with both Congress, Republicans, and the Allies/Entente forces, he ultimately doesn't hit as hard in the critique of Wilson and his legacy as he does with Lenin. Admittedly, this is hard to do when Lenin's legacy led to so much obvious death and destruction no one (even Lenin) could have truly foreseen.

All in all, this book is an important addition not only to the history of WWI but also to looking at the larger history of the Twentieth Century and the interconnectedness of Wilson, Lenin, and the rest of the world. For those looking for books that look at an important time in the history of the world, this is a book that should be added to one's reading list.

Ben House says

“Emerging from the forge of war in 1917 was the active role of government in every aspect of daily life, and the rising expectation that government can fix every problem and deal with every crisis from economic depression to childcare and climate change.” (Page 236)

This past year marked the 100th year anniversary of the Russian Revolutions. Most of the applauding and celebrating came from those who rejoiced in the fall, rather than the rise of Communist Russia. The Russian Revolution(s) is a story filled with all manner of drama, tragedy, near fulfillment of hopes, and unexpected turns of events. It might have been simply a sideshow to World War I, but it became something much bigger, more enduring, and more terrifying. The death count related to world-wide Communism has been listed as 100 million, and the count is not yet complete.

It is surprising that as 1917 was beginning, Woodrow Wilson and Vladimir Lenin were still sidelined on the cataclysmic war that was engulfing Europe. By the end of the year, they were the two prime movers and shakers in what was happening. There are, no doubt, plenty of books with plenty of positive things to say

about Wilson and Lenin. By no means are the two men just alike. Herman notes clear differences as well as gifts and strengths of each man. But as his subtitle indicates, the results of their tampering with the world, 1919 gave us a world recovering from war and preparing for decades of disorder and preparation for the next war.

The story of Woodrow Wilson is painful. Brilliant, no doubt, Wilson was insufferable. His idealism was matched by a theological bent that convinced him that he was or his vision was God's plan for the world. He imbibed much from his upbringing in a Presbyterian manse, but he did not seem to be grounded in sound doctrine. He did, for better or worse, want to avoid bringing the United States into World War I as a fighting power. At the same time, he wanted to rise above the powers of Europe and the older ways of war and diplomacy and craft a more perfect world. The key statement of his vision is found in the Fourteen Points.

Germany, reeling from the war by 1918, called for an armistice, hoping the 14 Points would work to their advantage. They didn't. Wilson was as vindictive as he was idealistic. But all that came out after the firing stopped. Prior to that, the United States entered a war that it was totally unprepared for in 1917. A year later, even with troops pouring into France, the U. S. was not producing equipment for its own still fresh men. As a manager and administrator over a war government, Wilson was a disaster.

Lenin had plenty of problems of his own. His return to Russia was financed and provided for by the German government. As a measure to produce chaos behind the lines in the east, it worked better than any could have imagined. Russia underwent its first revolution and toppled the Tsar in February. In October, revolutionary actions finished off the provisional government headed by Alexander Kerensky, and moved the soviets into positions of power.

With Leon Trotsky overseeing the military, and a young Stalin perfecting ways of eliminating enemies (broadly defined), a totalitarian state was being put into place. Everything that would, in time, characterize the Evil Empire (Ronald Reagan's term) was started during this time: acts of terror against the citizens, arrests right and left, establishment of the Gulag system, and the implementation of a secret police (forerunner to the KGB).

Russia gave up tremendous concessions and signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. This freed numbers of German divisions which were raced to the western front in a last attempt to end the war. It almost worked. But this part of history is chock-full of "almosts."

Arthur Herman, author of quite a few fine histories, has done a magnificent job in telling a terrible story in a way that is gripping. Full of insights, a few jabs at recent events, plenty of good narrative, this book will be a hard one to best in this upcoming year of reading.

Neil says

The historical narrative is well-researched and well-written, the conclusion is strange and it's unclear exactly what the author thinks should have been done in 1917 or what should be done going forward. Also his views of the Chinese government as agents of orthodox (and therefore revolutionary) Marxism-Leninism is a bit odd given the history of China since Mao's death. Also it's strange that the author insists that Wilson is at fault for the League of Nations bill failing and not Cabot Lodge but also concedes that Wilson going back to Paris with a list of changes requested by Lodge and the Senate (or any changes at that point) would have been ridiculous. Perhaps his point is that Wilson would have been well-served taking Lodge (or anyone else

skeptical of his vision) to Paris and perhaps avoided the Senate disaster altogether? His criticisms of Wilson are well-founded and correct, I just found his absolution of Lodge odd. Overall the narrative is compelling and the author is a fine writer, though, and if you can separate fact from opinion (it's fairly obvious here) it's an enjoyable book.

Joe Strnad says

Compelling and engaging historic non fiction. Arthur Herman provides historic context for Europe, Russia, and the US at the outbreak of WWI. Discussion of Woodrow Wilson's motivations for keeping the US out of the war, and then when finally pulled in, how his morality shaped US foreign policy going forward. We get loads of background on V.I. Lenin's life, (mis)understanding of Marx, early stabs at revolution, life in exile, return to Russia (once the Czar had already abdicated.) Herman argues that Lenin and Wilson were both leaders who not only felt arrogantly assured of their views, but also demonized anyone who disagreed with his vision. Their self-righteous attitudes created a new world order. One that most historians/economists claim began after WWII. Herman argues these orders began with US entry to WWI and the Bolshevik Revolution, both in 1917. He also presents information on key battles and campaigns on the Western Front, but does not bog the reader down with military minutiae. He keeps the reader engaged by providing an understanding of these two leaders beliefs and motivations. Recommended for fans of world history and political biography.

Gordon says

A must read for all interested in international relations and the history of the XX Century. Extremely well researched and written. Dr. Arthur Herman lays out how Lenin's and Wilson's powerful personalities and positions combined with their ideological views of societal forces and world order to shape the XX Century. Despite their lack of touch with reality and pragmatism these two leaders more than any others of their time influenced future events well into the late years of the XX Century, creating unrealizable dreams, unleashing forces of chaos, creating other forces of terror and disillusionment that continue to haunt the modern world of the XXI Century.

Lucas says

The history is fascinating, the most surprising details were about the WWI covert German support for Lenin and revolution within Russia- the radical aims of Lenin were irrelevant because chaos would make Russia a weak opponent in WWI, and those aims were irrelevant to Lenin because world-wide Marxist revolution would surely soon topple a victorious Kaiser anyhow. That has to be one of the most disastrous cases of blowback ever?

The central story of centuries of the multi-national 'great game' giving way to a century dominated by a bipolar ideologically fueled cold war is a decent one, but the policy analysis and recommendations, parallels between Lenin and Wilson, and the rest that go beyond the facts are muddled and weak. Reveal the history and let it speak for itself, leave out extraneous stuff that that can't be adequately backed up by the rest.

The Russian response to German invasion in WWI (which is told here) vs. WWII under Stalin (which isn't in this book) is especially interesting- the first destroying a state and giving a limited victory to Germany, the second hardening the successor into a brutal machine that would defend and retake territory at any cost.

I did like the exploration of possible alternate history- an earlier U.S. entry into WWI and substantial backing of Kerensky against Lenin could save a lot of lives. But it's not really possible to roll that scenario forward that far with any certainty of always better outcomes- maybe you get a 1950s Nazi-free WWII but now blitzkrieg mixed with battlefield atomic bombs.

Carl Palmateer says

An interesting look at Lenin and Wilson, their impacts, their interactions and especially their similarities. And as the author described the beginning and course of Wilson's progressive-ism and his personality I couldn't help thinking of President Obama some 100 years later for there are many overlaps with Wilson. Of course Wilson would have exploded/been mortified at the idea of being compared to a black man or having one in the White House.

Back to the book, which has 1917 as the first focal point, not the sum of the book, we find both men idealistic, often inflexible (or perhaps it is better to say determined?) and world changers. Wilson's missed chances with Kerensky, limitations as a war president, and sometimes crippling messianic outlook litter the landscape with what ifs. At the end with most of his actions lying in the dust he is left with his ideas and voice to be resurrected by a later generation. Lenin, with his ups and downs shows some of the same problems but seems to recognize them and acts with a ruthlessness Wilson could not have conceived. He accomplished the first part of his dreams but it ended decades later leaving his ideas discredited. Will they be revived by a later generation?

Daniel Sladek says

The book covers a fascinating period of history. I enjoyed the book, but found it off-putting that the author occasionally couldn't restrain his opinions. He sometimes seeks to make tenuous extrapolations from the period in question to current affairs. For example, suggesting that Russian society lags far behind the West, or that many contemporary problems arise from the fact that France still thinks of itself as a great power. He offers no substantiation for these assertions, and they are not germane to the discussion. Also, the narrative the author presents is not always easy to follow.

Brian Skinner says

This book shows how similar Vladimir Lenin and Woodrow Wilson were. They were both utopians who both in their own way messed up the future for their respective countries. Lenin was far more evil but Woodrow Wilson could be ruthless as well as evidenced by his mass jailing of citizens for exercising their freedom of speech. I liked a particular part where it talked about Wilson giving a speech in the Salt lake tabernacle. He quoted one of his rivals Henry Cabot lodge and instead of showing their disdain for Lodge the audience cheered very loudly and made Wilson angry. That night it was very hot in the tabernacle and it was putting a strain on his health. It was the next day when Wilson was in Colorado that he had his first big

stroke. Even though he was sick all he cared about was beating his enemies. Coincidentally Vladimir Lenin also had several strokes and eventually died from one just like Wilson did.

Carol Storm says

Fascinating history that covers an enormous amount of ground from bread riots in Czarist Russia to Woodrow Wilson's political infighting with Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge. The author's ultra-conservative viewpoint makes it slow-going at times, however. Dozens of references to "brutal" Lenin and "bloody" Trotsky, but Wilson's tacit support for lynching, murder and racial terror in the Jim Crow south is barely mentioned.

Victor Davis Hanson gave this book a fawning blurb, and that's never a good sign!

Lynn says

I was given a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review by Harper Collins.

Today's Nonfiction post is on 1917: Vladimir Lenin, Woodrow Wilson, and the Year that Created the Modern Age by Arthur Herman. It is 448 pages long and is published by Harper Collins. The cover has the eyes of the two leaders with the title below in red. The intended reader is someone interested in World War I history. There is some mild language, no sex, and talk of violence in this book. There Be Spoilers Ahead.

From the back of the book- In 1917, Arthur Herman examines one crucial year and the two figures at its center who would set the course of modern world history: Woodrow Wilson and Vladimir Lenin. Though they were men of very different backgrounds and experiences, Herman reveals how Wilson and Lenin were very much alike. Both rose to supreme power, one through a democratic election; the other through violent revolution. Both transformed their countries by the policies they implemented, and the crucial decisions they made. Woodrow Wilson, a champion of democracy, capitalism, and the international order, steered America's involvement in World War I. Lenin, a communist revolutionary and advocate for the proletariat, lead the Bolsheviks' overthrow of Russia's earlier democratic revolution that toppled the Czar, and the establishment of a totalitarian Soviet Union. Men of opposing ideals and actions, each was idolized by millions-and vilified and feared by millions more. Though they would never meet, these two world leaders came to see in the other the evils of the world each sought to eradicate. In so doing, both would unleash the forces that still dominate our world, and that continue to shape its future from nationalism and Communism to today's maps of the Middle East, Asia, and Eastern Europe. In this incisive, fast-paced history, Herman brilliantly explores the birth of a potent rivalry between two men who rewrote the rules of geopolitics-and the moment, one hundred years ago, when our contemporary world began.

Review- This is a very hard, dry read about a very interesting time in history. Herman does his research , which was excellent with notes about sources and other materials, but he forgot to make his book engaging. Reading this book was not easy. It was dry, it was overloaded with details that did not add to the overall narrative, and it was boring at times. Herman takes the reader from the begins of the First World War, briefly, then he get into the meat of his book which is how these two very different leaders shaped the war and the world after it. Herman gives so much information that I was lost at times about why one detail mattered so much in the sea of everything he deluged me with, sometimes I could not even tell which detail

he wanted to make more important. In the end I was very disappointed with this book because it sounds so interesting but Herman loses the power of his reading of history in all the details of that history.

I give this book a Two out of Five stars.
