



Russia's War: A History of the Soviet Effort: 1941-1945

By Richard Overy

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"A penetrating and compassionate book on the most gigantic military struggle in world history."--*The New York Times Book Review*

"An extraordinary tale... Overy's engrossing book provides extensive details of the slaughter, brutality, bitterness and destruction on the massive front from the White Sea to the flank of Asia."--*Chicago Tribune*

The Russian war effort to defeat invading Axis powers, an effort that assembled the largest military force in recorded history and that cost the lives of more than 25 million Soviet soldiers and civilians, was the decisive factor for securing an Allied victory. Now with access to the wealth of film archives and interview material from Russia used to produce the ten-hour television documentary *Russia's War*, Richard Overy tackles the many persuasive questions surrounding this conflict. Was Stalin a military genius? Was the defense of Mother Russia a product of something greater than numbers of tanks and planes--of something deep within the Russian soul?

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

As German armies stampeded through the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, Nazi politicians and Western statesmen alike predicted the USSR's collapse. In *Russia's War*, a balanced and acute portrayal of a combat theater that claimed more than 40 million Soviet lives, Richard Overy tells the story of how Stalin and his commanders held off defeat and engineered the most significant military achievement of the Second World War: the destruction of the *Wehrmacht*.

Russia's War is far from a tale of triumph, as the Russian capacity for resourceful creativity, desperate courage, and raw endurance was matched, if not exceeded, by the brutal oppression of the Soviet system. Overy argues, however, that victory was the result of precisely this uneasy combination. Drawing from extensive archival sources made available in the wake of *glasnost*, he revises both our conception of the Red Army as a horde that overwhelmed the Germans and the accepted wisdom that Hitler's defeat was the result of strategic bungling and a logistical overreach of the Nazi forces. Perhaps his most poignant contribution is the discussion of the crisis that recent disclosures have provoked in the Russian understanding of the conflict. What was once viewed by the Soviets as the "Great Patriotic War" has become "a crucible of miserable and incomprehensible revelations." In spite of these confusions, *Russia's War* commences to find significance in a contest that repeatedly disquiets and humbles the historical imagination. --*James Highfill*

Review

Making excellent use of newly available Presidential archival material and K.G.B. film collections, Overy ... attributes the Soviet victory to the tough Russian spirit, which was hewn by the bitter climate, cruelly harsh working conditions and Stalin's heinous purges and farm collectivization programs.... [a] penetrating and compassionate book... -- *The New York Times Book Review*, Chris Patsilelis

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