



Stalin: Breaker of Nations

By Robert Conquest

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Of all the despots of our time, Joseph Stalin lasted the longest and wielded the greatest power, and his secrets have been the most jealously guarded—even after his death.

In this book, the first to draw from recently released archives, Robert Conquest gives us Stalin as a child and student; as a revolutionary and communist theoretician; as a political animal skilled in amassing power and absolutely ruthless in maintaining it. He presents the landmarks of Stalin's rule: the class with Lenin; collectivization; the Great Terror; the Nazi-Soviet pact and the Nazi-Soviet war; the anti-Semitic campaign that preceded his death; and the legacy he left behind.

Distilling a lifetime's study, weaving detail, analysis, and research, Conquest has given us an extraordinarily powerful narrative of this incredible figure.

“Thoughtful and thorough and shot through with insight.”—*The Washington Post Book World*

“Definitive . . . a magnificent, even poetic, act of historical retribution.”—*The New Leader*

“Brilliant . . . this book probably is the most cogent and readable account of Stalin's life yet published.”—*The San Diego Union*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Drawing on a wealth of new material from the former Soviet Union, Conquest presents a chilling portrait of the Soviet dictator as a mass murderer. Photos.

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From School Library Journal

YA-- Written in a fast-moving informative style, this absorbing biography charts Stalin's rise from obscure revolutionary flunky to power-mad dictator. Borrowing liberally from unsealed memoirs of survivors of the Stalinist era, Conquest offers psychological insights into the man who condemned millions of his countrymen to death in the purges of the 1930s and led his nation to become a leading world power. A compelling portrait for students and teachers of modern Russian and European history alike. --Richard Lisker, Fairfax County Public Library, VA

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From Library Journal

Joseph Stalin, a leader with many biographers, has become the subject of renewed study as a consequence of Soviet glasnost and the opening of formerly closed archives. Both of these books describe Stalin's development as a revolutionary, his rise to power upon Lenin's death, the Terror and consolidation of his control, his triumph in World War II, and his decline and death as the Cold War expanded. Conquest, a respected Western scholar, incorporates new details of Stalin's life and establishes a broad context for understanding his actions, highlighting how he was underestimated by both colleagues and foreign diplomats. Volkogonov, a Soviet researcher and the head of the Institute of Military History, sets forth a study of Stalin the man, centering upon his actions and thoughts. Reflecting new Soviet openness, he finds that Stalin rejected socialism and scorned freedom to the detriment of his nation. Greater access to records, such as those showing the depth of Stalin's control over military decision-making and the truth regarding the Katyn Forest massacre of Polish officers by the NKVD, will afford many opportunities for further study. These works are both carefully researched and well written (well edited and translated in the case of Volkogonov's book), offering new information and insights into Stalin's life and era. Volkogonov's work is noteworthy for the sense it conveys of the Soviet struggle to come to terms with the meaning of Stalin's rule. Conquest's work excels in its sophisticated portrayal of Stalin's life against the map of world politics and society. Both are of interest to general and specialist readers and are recommended for larger collections and those of Soviet studies. Conquest's book previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 7/91.--Ed.

- Rena Fowler, Northern Michigan Univ. Lib., Marquette

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