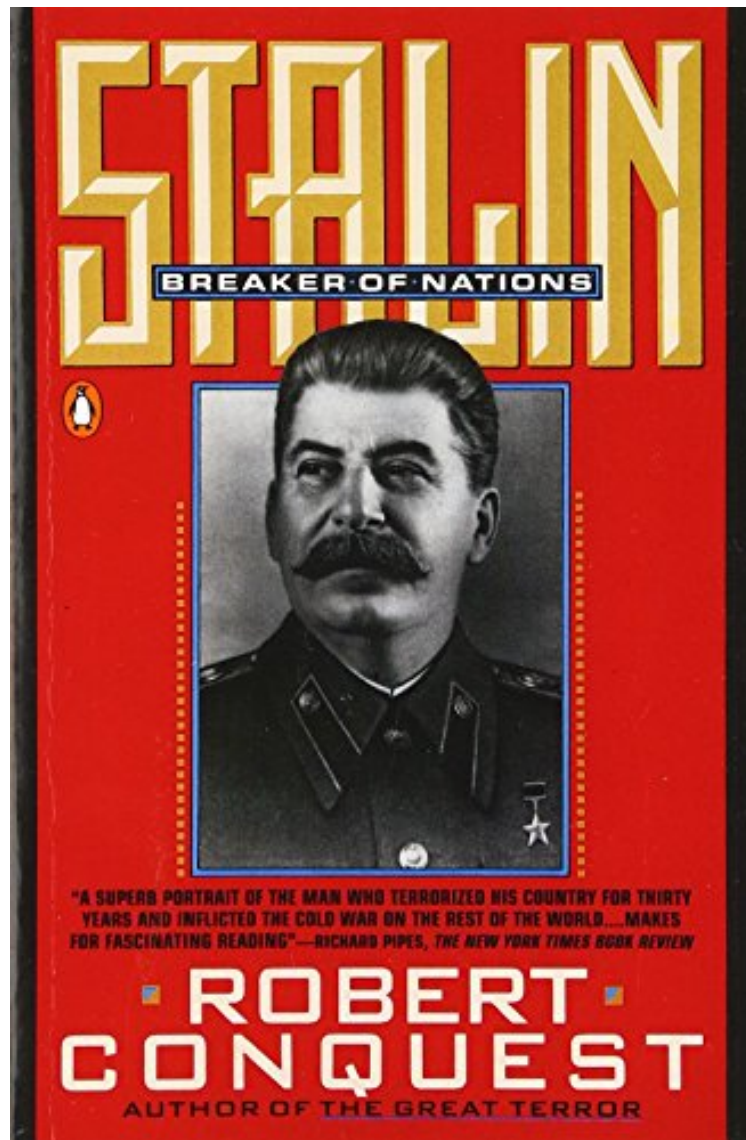


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Stalin: Breaker of Nations

Robert Conquest

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#198184 in Books Robert Conquest 1992-11-01 1992-11-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.68 x .83 x 5.141, .58 #File Name: 0140169539384 pages Stalin Breaker of Nations | File size: 58.Mb

Robert Conquest : Stalin: Breaker of Nations before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stalin: Breaker of Nations:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Socialist terror incarnate! By Dr. Miguel A. Faria This book covers the life of Joseph Stalin, from his childhood in Gori to his death at his Nearer dacha (Kuntsevo) near Moscow on March 5, 1953. This book is 346 pages, including Bibliographical Notes an Index. The book is easy to read, well-organized, and ideal for the beginning student of Soviet history and Stalinism. It contains two sets of photographs that

puts faces on the victims of Stalin, adding tangible personification to the almost surreal sense of totalitarian horror. Consider the photograph in the book of the seven Bolsheviks elected to the Politburo in 1924 after Lenin's death; six -- i.e., Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Trotsky (killed with pick axe), Rykov, and Tomsky (possible suicide) would be killed (four shot) by the remaining one, the strongest hyena of them all, Stalin. Through the sequential Congresses of the Party, we can follow Stalin's career as he ascend the levels of power with words and deeds, until he reaches the zenith of despotic, autocratic, and absolute power, and then the Congresses cease convening. Stalin rules with his inner circle, his minions who cajoled but also feared him. After the Party Congress of 1934, "the Congress of Victors," his triumph was complete. He then used the assassination of Georgi Kirov in Leningrad as an excuse to launch the Great Terror of 1936-1938, despite the fact his power was now unchallenged. Millions perished, starved to death in government planned famines, shot, or worked to death in the gulag labor camps. Conquest writes, " In the early summer of 1918, the Bolsheviks moved into a 'socialist phase,' with nationalization, food requisitioning and all the other dictatorial measures later described as "War Communism" -- though at the time clearly presented as the fulfillment of the party's long term aims." Only popular opposition and peasant rebellions forced Lenin to temporarily change course with the New Economic Policy. Without exception all of the Bolsheviks -- i.e., Lenin himself, Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Sverdlov, Ordzhonikidze, etc., had condoned violence and terror against the enemies of the Revolution, real or imagined. What separated Stalin from the rest was that Stalin would use terror indiscriminately, as a matter of course, against the population, not sparing the families of his political opponents (not even his own), but most ominously against his former comrades without flinching. Joseph Conrad's observation is valid: "Hopes grotesquely betrayed, ideals caricatured -- that is the definition of revolutionary success," for all of Soviet history: Stalinism was only worse. And yet, there were other examples of socialist and communist horrors -- e.g., Red China under Mao Zedong and Cambodia under Pol Pot, and there were others. But the caricature worsens, and desolation, cruelty, and death follow in the path of "building socialism," a path that began, not with Stalin but with Lenin, and was asserted at various points of the revolution by Trotsky (who crushed the Kronstadt rebellion without mercy) and most of the other Bolsheviks, including "the darling of the party," Nikolai Bukharin. A very critical stage for Stalin's career, even his political survival, took place in the years 1922 to 1924, when Lenin very ill and partially incapacitated finally recognized Stalin's boundless cruelty and unquenchable thirst for personal, political power. Stalin had even insulted Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin's devoted wife, but it was too late. After Lenin's stroke of March 7, 1923 until his death in January 21, 1924, Stalin's career was in the balance, but his political opponents, like Lenin, had underestimated him. After the Party Congress of 1924, and despite the implied suggestion of what Bukharin called "the theory of sweet revenge," as we have seen, Stalin did not relax. He admitted to his Cheka Chief, Feliks Dzerzhinsky, and Politburo member, Lev Kamenev, " To choose one's victims, to prepare one's plans minutely, to slake an implacable vengeance, and then go to bed...there is nothing sweeter in the world." And he was able to do this repeatedly and with tremendous precision, through to his anti-semitic campaign against alleged "Cosmopolitanism," and the Doctors' Plot Affair, two decades later up to the eve of his death in 1953. This book tells you all about it. Miguel A. Faria Jr., M.D. is the author of *Cuba in Revolution - Escape from a Lost Paradise* (2002) and the essays, "Stalin's Mysterious Death" (2011) and "Stalin, Communists and Fatal Statistics" (2011). 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Stalin's Rise to Power By Carolyn This is a very interesting book about Stalin's private life, his relations with his wives and his rise to power. It describes how he played off his former comrades against each other until he finally destroyed them all. Stalin was merciless in the style of Ivan the Terrible. In all but name, he was a Tsar. One thing that I have never read in other books about Stalin is that his first language was Georgian and that he didn't learn Russian until he was 8 or 9 years old. This book states that Stalin always spoke with a strong Georgian accent and that in public he "always spoke Russian slowly, in measured and carefully developed phrasing." This is a very readable book. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Shining light on a dark corner of history By D. Fleeger It has been more than two decades since the breakup of the Soviet Union, yet the West in general (and the United States in particular) is still loathe to confront the horrors of communism. Robert Conquest's book is a small yet important step in a long-overdue shaking off of moral cobwebs and seeing history as it really happened. In clear, precise language Conquest documents the rise of Stalin from obscure party functionary to perhaps history's most prolific mass-murderer. Conquest also details how Stalin's political enemies in the Soviet Union, and Western leaders such as Roosevelt, failed to truly understand what a paranoid monster Stalin was. Revisionist historians - those who believe that America is the Evil Empire and that Stalin is a tragic, misunderstood figure - will detest this book. Those who care about the truth will feel otherwise.

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

From Publishers WeeklyDrawing 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. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.From School Library JournalYA-- 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, VACopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalJoseph 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., MarquetteCopyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.