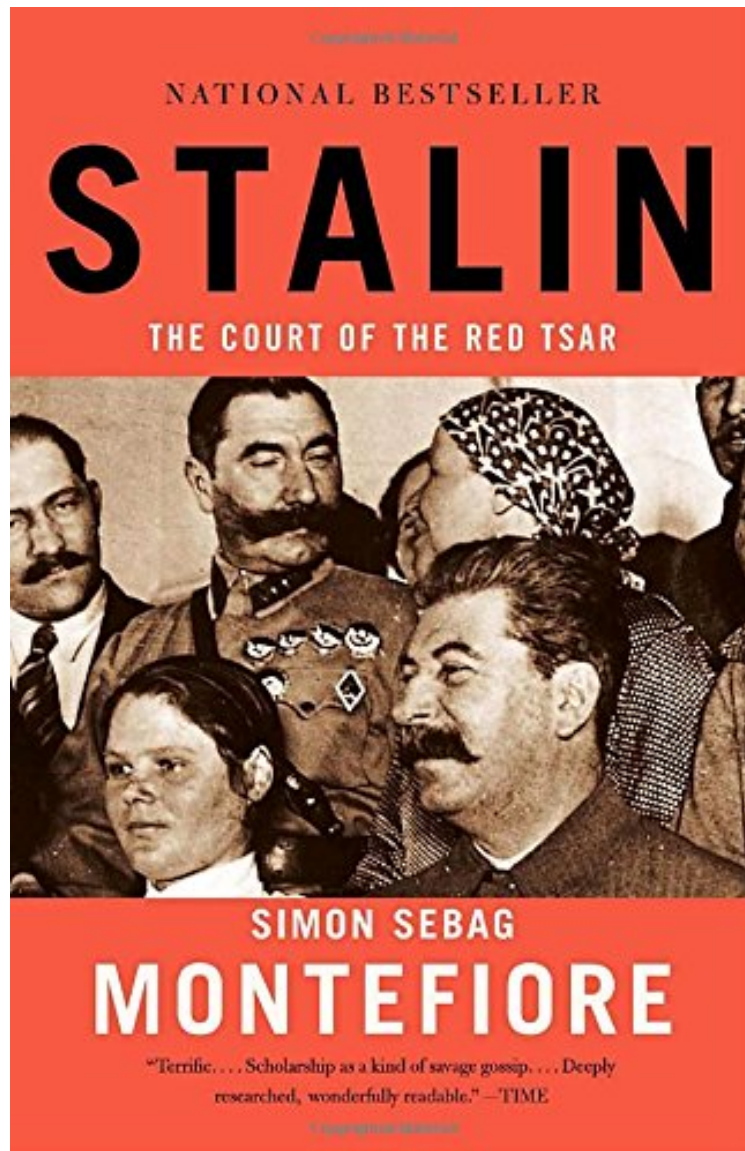


Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar

Simon Sebag Montefiore

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#187632 in Books Simon Sebag Montefiore 2005-09-13 2005-09-13 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.96 x 1.62 x 5.211, 1.81 #File Name: 1400076781848 pages Stalin The Court of the Red Tsar | File size: 32.Mb

Simon Sebag Montefiore : Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A great gift for those who have read all the standard history books By JohnGot this as a gift for my mother who loved it. She has read many Russian history books and said this one had a perspective she had never heard before. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Montefiore obviously put a great deal of time and effort in researching Stalin By Jordan L. Taylor Well written book but depressing. I had to put it

down 2/3rds of the way though. Mr. Montefiore obviously put a great deal of time and effort in researching Stalin. For this thank you and well done. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It is a good book but I would not call it a serious ... By Tornike It is a good book but I would not call it a serious historical work. Being a compatriot of Stalin I may know more about Stalin than most of non-Georgian readers do, so I may be too picky. But still I believe the book lacks depth. It is more like a good fiction, although very informative

This widely acclaimed biography of Stalin and his entourage during the terrifying decades of his supreme power transforms our understanding of Stalin as Soviet dictator, Marxist leader, and Russian tsar. Based on groundbreaking research, Simon Sebag Montefiore reveals the fear and betrayal, privilege and debauchery, family life and murderous cruelty of this secret world. Written with bracing narrative verve, this feat of scholarly research has become a classic of modern history writing. Showing how Stalin's triumphs and crimes were the product of his fanatical Marxism and his gifted but flawed character, this is an intimate portrait of a man as complicated and human as he was brutal and chilling.

From Publishers Weekly Montefiore (*The Prince of Princes: The Life of Potemkin*) is more interested in life at the top than at the bottom, so he includes hundreds of pages on Stalin's purges of top Communists, while devoting much less space to the forced collectivization of Soviet peasants that led to millions of deaths. In lively prose, he intersperses his mammoth account of Stalin's often-deadly political decisions with the personal lives of the Soviet dictator and those around him. As a result, the reader learns about sexual peccadilloes of the top Communists: Stalin's secret police chief Lavrenti Beria, for one, "craved athletic women, haunting the locker rooms of Soviet swimmers and basketball players." Stalin's own escapades after the death of his wife are also noted. There's also much detail about the food at parties and other meetings of Stalin's henchmen. The effect is paradoxical: Stalin and his cronies are humanized at the same time as their cruel misdeeds are recounted. Montefiore offers little help in answering some of the unsettled questions surrounding Stalin: how involved was he in the 1934 murder of rising official Sergei Kirov, for example. He also seems to leave open the question of Stalin's paranoia: he argues that the Georgian-born ruler was a charming man who used his people skills to get whatever he wanted. Montefiore mainly skirts the paranoia issue, noting that only after WWII, when Stalin launched his anti-Semitic campaigns, did he "become a vicious and obsessional anti-Semite." There are many Stalin biographies out there, but this fascinating work distinguishes itself by its extensive use of fresh archival material and its focus on Stalin's ever-changing coterie. Maps and 24 pages of photos not seen by PW. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From *The New Yorker* Any biography of a tyrant runs the risk of humanizing its subject to the point of appearing to mitigate his crimes. But Montefiore's intimate portrait actually throws the coldhearted murderousness with which Stalin pursued and defended power into sharper relief. The book—much of it based on fresh archival material—moves smoothly between detailed sketches of everyday life at the Kremlin and accounts of the paranoid and sanguinary scheming that determined Soviet politics. This juxtaposition captures the vertiginous quality of life in Stalin's court, where no allegiance was permanent. Just as strikingly, Montefiore shows how Stalin, a "master of friendships," used charm to win the support of members of the Party's inner circle (many of whom ended up regretting it). This haunting book gets us as close as we are likely to come to the man who believed that "the solution to every human problem was death." Copyright © 2005 *The New Yorker* From Booklist *Starred* Because of its extraordinary detail, this portrait of Joseph Stalin is as realistic as is currently historically possible. Relying on Stalin's personal correspondence with his family and his "magnates," as Montefiore terms the dictator's lieutenants, the author liberally quotes letters, memoirs, and interviews he conducted with survivors in his book chronicling the years 1929-53. Through vignettes of a typical vacation, night at the Kremlin office, or drunken party at the dacha, the author evokes the atmosphere of Stalin's entourage. Stalin could be charming, Montefiore reports. Magnates and their wives bantered with the leader; lesser lieges wisely aped his pronouncements. But beneath the bonhomie was a substrate of mortal danger. Montefiore emphasizes Stalin's feral suspiciousness throughout, his feigned modesty masking his megalomania, his patience in exacting sadistic revenge. Those traits are exhibited in the fatal fallout from this work's opening scene, the 1932 suicide of Stalin's wife, Nadya, and then metastasize in descriptions of Stalin's conspiratorial milestones, from the likely arranged 1934 assassination of Sergei Kirov to the Doctor's Plot of 1953. By illustrating how Stalin acted in private, Montefiore has produced a landmark work that rounds out political biographies of the tyrant. Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved