



Russian Legends: The Life and Legacy of Joseph Stalin

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures of Stalin and important people, places, and events in his life.

*Discusses conspiracy theories surrounding Stalin's death

*Includes a Table of Contents

“It is time to finish retreating. Not one step back! Such should now be our main slogan.” – Joseph Stalin
A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history’s most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors’ Russian Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of Russia's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

If Adolf Hitler had not inflicted the devastation of World War II upon Europe, it’s quite likely that the West would consider Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) the 20th century’s greatest tyrant. A Bolshevik revolutionary who played a crucial role in the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the establishment of the Soviet Union, Stalin was one of the Communist regime’s earliest leaders and went about consolidating power after the death of Vladimir Lenin, whose final wishes were that Stalin be removed from his post as General Secretary of the Communist Party and not be given the ability to take power.

Of course, Stalin managed to do just that, modernizing the Soviet Union at a breakneck pace on the backs of millions of poor laborers and prisoners. Before World War II, Stalin consolidated his position by frequently purging party leaders (most famously Leon Trotsky) and Red Army leaders, executing hundreds of thousands of people at the least. In one of history’s greatest textbook examples of the idea that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, Stalin’s Soviet Union allied with Britain and the United States to defeat Hitler in Europe, with the worst of the war’s carnage coming on the eastern front during Germany’s invasion of Russia. Nevertheless, the victory in World War II established the Soviet Union as of the world’s two superpowers for nearly 50 years, in addition to being the West’s Cold War adversary.

By the time Stalin died in 1953, it was written that he “had found Russia working with wooden ploughs and [is] leaving it equipped with atomic piles.” Of course, he was reviled in the West, where it was written, “The names of Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler will forever be linked to the tragic course of European history in the first half of the twentieth century.” Russian Legends: The Life and Legacy of Joseph Stalin explores Stalin’s life and work before the Bolshevik Revolution, as well as the crucial role he played in establishing the Soviet Union and turning it into a modern superpower. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Stalin like you never have before, in no time at all.

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