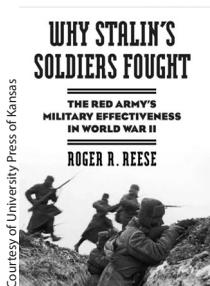


Book Reviews



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Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought: The Red Army's Military Effectiveness in World War II

by Roger R. Reese

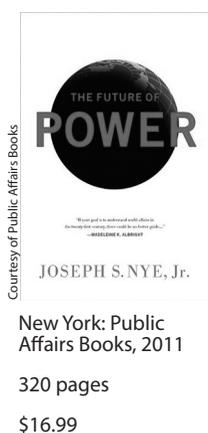
Reviewed by Stephen Blank, Strategic Studies
Institute, US Army War College

Roger Reese has already established himself as an outstanding historian of the Soviet Army. In this impressive book, Reese takes on one of the major questions of that army's history, namely the motivation of its fighting men and women in World War II or, as the Soviets and post-Soviet states still call it, the Great Fatherland War. It is no longer the case that we do not acknowledge this theater as the decisive one of the war in Europe, and that here as nowhere else in history we encounter all the terrors and awesome spectacle of total war.

Because this war was the greatest trial of the Soviet system, closely following the revolution and civil war of 1917-21, and because of the scope of the Soviet Union's victory and sacrifice, this war has become the object of a sustained and ongoing campaign by that government for historical memorialization. The Soviet Union and its successor states have deliberately fashioned a heroic narrative to explain the sacrifices of the war, the valor of the Soviet people, and the consequences of victory. This campaign of official mythmaking quickly attached itself to the question of why Soviet soldiers fought despite the terrible mismanagement of their commanders, the huge number of prisoners taken by the Nazis and their allies, and despite a generation of brutality by the Stalinist regime. Easy answers such as they fought for their homeland, for Stalin, for socialism, or it was the Nazi atrocities that drove people to fight all possess some element of truth; however, after reading Reese's description of the human dimension of the war, the reader will better understand it in all of its unadorned complexity.

Now that archives and memoirs have been opened, as was never the case under Soviet rule, it is possible for scholars like Reese to remind us that human motivations, whether we examine one man or the masses, never are simple or uniform. People who had every reason to resent and reject the regime volunteered or were mobilized as the case may be. Similarly, many who had reason to fight for the Soviet way of life sought other alternatives. Undoubtedly, the Soviet regime and its mass media missed no opportunity and spared little in its attempt to convince Soviet citizens of the rightness of its cause, resulting in a highly partisan and restricted information campaign to motivate its citizens. But even when allowing for the propaganda campaign and the influence such intangibles as Stalin's persona, socialism, or other more mundane motivations, it is clear the Soviet people were not an undifferentiated mass of heroic patriots as the nation's propaganda machine contended.

To be certain, heroic valor and endurance were abundant, tragically all too abundant given the nature of the regime for which people struggled. Nonetheless, they were and should remain to be seen as human beings not plaster saints. Reese goes a long way in addressing the question of the Red Army's motivation while revealing the genuine complexity that underlay the motives of its soldiers, sailors, and airmen (and women) in all their diversity and complexity. Similarly, the author effectively points to the diversity of motivation that sustained unit cohesion and military effectiveness in spite of all the disasters of 1941-42 and the associated suffering of all Soviets. In demythologizing the war, Reese gives back to the Soviet people something of which both Hitler and Stalin sought to rob them—their humanity and complexity. For this readers should be grateful.



The Future of Power

by Joseph S. Nye Jr.

Reviewed by Louis J. Nigro Jr., US Ambassador (Retired), author of *The New Diplomacy in Italy*

Anyone who tells you that America is in decline or that our influence has waned, doesn't know what they're talking about.
—President Barack Obama, 26 January 2012

This monograph presents Professor Nye's current reflections on the nature of power in international affairs and how states and nonstate actors will manage (or mismanage) the power available to them in the future. The author artfully blends theory and history, concept and concrete example to make his case. His conclusions are sensible, centrist, and unsurprising. Among other things, he makes an important contribution to our understanding of current trends, especially in his analysis of the debate over whether or not the United States is "in decline," either relatively or absolutely, in international affairs.

Joseph Nye has been making important contributions to American foreign and national security policy and policy debates for decades. As a University Distinguished Service Professor and former dean of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Security Assistance, Science, and Technology (1977-79), chair of the National Intelligence Council (1993-94), Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (1994-95), and the author of many influential books, he has been one of the most prominent and consequential of the nation's public policy intellectuals. His theory of "soft power" introduced a new and useful concept to the panoply of political science tools for understanding the international system.

With *The Future of Power*, Nye makes yet another important contribution to understanding how the international system works by updating his views on power while providing a refined version of his signature concept of soft power,