

[PDF] Moscow 1941: A City And Its People At War (Vintage)

Rodric Braithwaite - pdf download free book



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Description:

From Publishers Weekly In 1941, Moscow was ruled by Stalin and besieged by Hitler's armies, so it teemed with disagreeable characters, tragic events and a great deal of unrewarded heroism. Although the siege was a miserable experience for Muscovites, readers will enjoy reading about it. Braithwaite (*Russia in Europe*) was British ambassador from 1988 to 1992, so he clearly knows Russia. Early 1941 was a modestly hopeful time: a short-lived decrease in arrests after the massive

purges of the '30s coincided with an increase in food in the stores. The official press had lavished praise on the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Friendship Pact, but by spring 1941 many Soviet leaders had seen enough evidence to convince them of an imminent German invasion. But the paranoid Stalin suspected an Allied plot to take the pressure off Britain, so Hitler's June 22 attack devastated Russia's unprepared troops. By autumn, Wehrmacht armies were threatening the capital, leading to the greatest battle in history, with more than 900,000 Russian deaths—more than all WWII British and American casualties combined. Most accounts emphasize the fighting, but Braithwaite mixes interviews, diaries, memoirs and letters to portray the reactions of dozens of individuals to that catastrophic year. This is an absorbing contribution to what he considers WWII's turning point. (Sept. 30)

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From As German troops approached Moscow in June, 1941, two million people were evacuated from the city, in seventy thousand trainloads, including forty carriages and thirty-five freight cars carrying the sets, staff, and props of the Bolshoi Theatre. But, after a brief spell during which Stalin seemed paralyzed—and despite his habit of having his own generals shot—the Russians turned and attacked. Braithwaite concludes that it was not, as the Germans liked to claim, the Russian winter that undid the Wehrmacht; rather, an unexpectedly strong Soviet counteroffensive delivered Hitler's first major defeat. The cost included almost a million Soviet soldiers dead. Braithwaite, who was Britain's Ambassador to Moscow from 1988 to 1992, interviewed a remarkable range of Muscovites for the book, from students and nurses who joined the fight to a metro worker who dug Stalin's secret bunker, and he has produced a symphonic evocation of a great city at war.

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