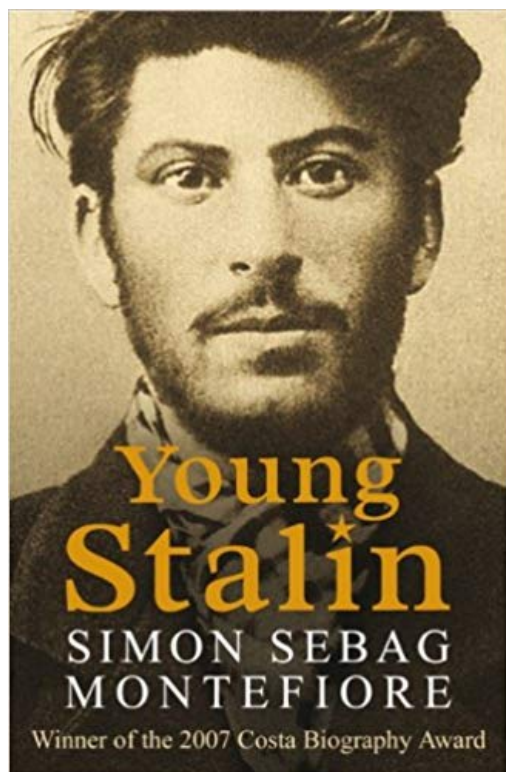


Young Stalin *by* Simon Monefiore



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Reviews of the *Young Stalin* by Simon Monefiore

Hiclerlsi

Having read and re-read Montefiore's "Stalin: The Court of the Red Czar" I couldn't resist this one. I wouldn't have thought he could have outdone his research successes in the latter book but I was wrong. This is one of the most important books to be written on the Russian Revolution, not just about Stalin but about the society and environment in which he grew up and operated. One of the major points made here is that much of what we know or thought we knew about Stalin comes from Trotsky's 1940 biography. In fact Stalin was not the unlettered bureaucrat that Trotsky would have us believe but a much more interesting and complex figure, and also far better educated (although self-educated). None of this can excuse the horrors of his rule, but that lies in the future of this book. (Trotsky probably would have been just as bloodthirsty had he succeeded to Lenin's rule, but that is just a personal opinion here). In "Young Stalin" you get a vivid picture of Georgia and Russia in the pre-revolutionary period, right down to the village level (and also the level of prisons and exile). A major triumph of historiography!

Risky Strong Dromedary

In high school or even college how much did we learn about Stalin? Purges, psycho, leader, Red, and madman....he is these things, but the book lends incredible insight into the complexities of a personality that became a cult of personality. How else can we understand someone or a part of history if we only take in the mainstream narrow view of those who write for reasons of persuasion. For one thing this book reminds of us is how critical parenting is. His mother and father had issues but also strengths. Seems the issues trumped the strengths in many ways. Stalin could have been one who contributed in good ways to the world but seems his track in life brought him to act without humanity or conscience. His genius was tilted in favor of paranoia and tyranny leaving us with the horror stories of history. I would think those who do historical psycho analysis would be hard pressed to find one so interesting and terrifying as this man who seems to have had more than 9 lives under his belt. Where is the next socio-path going to arise from....it might be from amongst our own tribes....teach your children well....and hopefully their father's hell will slowly go by....unfortunately it didn't for Mr. J Stalin.

One note....I think the author good have edited the starting chapters on Stalin's boyhood....kind of repetitive and cycling back and forth....a bit jarring....but still a great read.

Amarin

Montefiore's biography of the young Stalin is both humanizing and surprisingly fair-minded. Montefiore is not inclined to like Stalin and is fairly anti-Bolshevik overall, and yet, Montefiore does not continuance every conspiracy theory about Stalin's early life nor reveal only in the seedy details--although there are plenty. Montefiore is accessible, writing in short chapters, and explaining context without becoming exhaustive. This is one book, however, where it does really pay to read the chapter foot notes. Starting the book with his bank heist to fund the Bolsheviks in the early 1900s but almost cost him his relationship to either form of the SDs, and working to in the center was a brilliant structure to the book. This puts the wildness of Stalin's early years in perspective. There are a lot of names to keep up with--particularly since everyone goes by several aliases--but Montefiore does his best to keep all in perspective. Montefiore also does use a lot of secret archive memoirs and letters to construct a much more viable narrative that had be available on this period prior. An excellent introduction to not only Stalin but the tense political situation in the caucuses during the turn of the last century as well.

Fearlesshunter

I read about FDR and Churchill and their roles in WW2. I wanted to know about Stalin too. This book and "Stalin, The Court of the Red Tsar" provide amazing insight into Russian society and how it bumbled itself to victory against the Nazis. Stalin took "theory X" management practices to their ultimate conclusion. I am amazed at the terror and fear he used to control everyone. It did backfire in the end when he had all the Jewish doctors arrested and tortured, including his personal physician, and then he had a series of strokes, but that is in the second book. Young Stalin and Stalin the Court of the Red Tsar are must reading for WW2 aficionados.

Thetalas

This is an awesome book a never been told story of Stalin was he was young....a smart handsome revolutionary who was always on the go and always had a girl. He lived a romantic nomadic life and had many friends and lovers to hide him from the law. He was always on the go to complete more missions...and his young life was full and interesting. If I would have lived back in that time I would have fallen in love with him too....the handsome wild bad boy....the book was easy reading except for all the different names of people to remember...that is why I would recommend this book in print as opposed to Kindle because one could go back to the names and footnotes much more easily....This book gives you more information on Stalin's past and what made him what he was.

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