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Reagan Fancher

The Red Warrior

U.S. Perceptions of Stalin's Strategic Role in the Allied Journey to Victory in The Second World War



by Reagan Fancher

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Before reading "The Red Warrior", I would never have considered the World War II-era Lend-Lease Program a fascinating topic. Reagan Fancher manages to make it just that, describing how American fears regarding a separate peace between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union compelled Roosevelt to drastically oversupply Stalin's military in its struggle to resist Hitler. While Lend-Lease enabled the Soviets to defeat a common enemy, it also gave America's duplicitous wartime ally the ability to transform itself into tyrannical superpower.

Dr. Jeffrey E Anderson

History Professor
University of Louisiana Monroe

About the author

Reagan Fancher earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees in History at the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) and his Ph.D. in European History at the University of North Texas (UNT). His passion is spreading knowledge in the classroom and teaching the World History and U.S. History survey courses. Shortly after being accepted into UNT's doctoral program in fall 2019, Fancher began researching the subject of U.S. Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union for his doctoral dissertation. In addition to 'The Red Warrior: U.S. Perceptions of Stalin's Strategic Role in the Allied Journey to Victory in the Second World War', Fancher is also the author of the book 'The Holy Warrior: Osama Bin Laden and His Jihadi Journey in the Soviet-Afghan War' which he expanded in a second edition that was published by Vernon Press in 2023. He currently teaches a variety of history courses at Texas Woman's University.

Summary

Through U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Lend-Lease program, American leaders sought to keep Joseph Stalin's Red Army in the field and fighting Adolf Hitler's forces in the Second World War from 1941 forward. Delivered by the Anglo-American Arctic naval convoys, overland through the Iranian deserts and mountains, and through the skies from Alaska to Siberia, this much-needed material aid helped Stalin's Red Army to continue fighting and thereby prevented a separate peace with Hitler's Germany and a mechanized repeat of the First World War's Brest-Litovsk fiasco. Yet Roosevelt and other U.S. officials, due to their severe underestimation of Stalin's character and his rigid and fanatical devotion to exporting Communism at gunpoint, gambled incorrectly that they could win the Soviet premier's heart and mind through several excessive wartime aid gestures, including the furnishing of atomic bomb materials to the Soviet regime. By 1945, American leaders had succeeded in their strategic goal of keeping Stalin and his Red Army in the war and hastening victory but failed in their efforts to purchase the Soviet premier's goodwill and commitment to postwar peace, heralding the global Cold War, and setting the stage for later U.S. martial aid programs to those resisting aggression abroad. In addition to its primary focus on the American leadership's perceptions of Stalin's strategic importance to the Allied war effort in the Second World War, this work also includes a detailed assessment of Roosevelt's Soviet Lend-Lease program alongside U.S. President Ronald Reagan's later support for the Afghan Islamic guerrillas resisting Soviet occupation during the Soviet-Afghan War of the 1980s and a comparison of both martial aid programs with Washington's recent revival of Lend-Lease aid for the Ukrainian war effort. It offers today's American leaders and policymakers a chance to consult the lessons of history and apply them in the present.

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