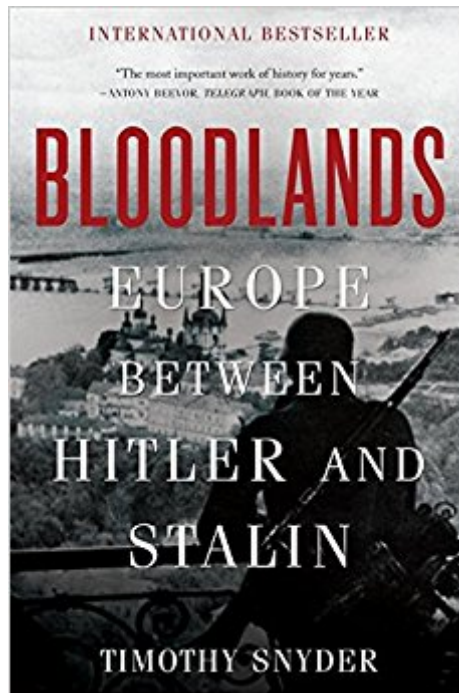




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Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler And Stalin



Synopsis

Americans call the Second World War 'The Good War.' But before it even began, America's wartime ally Josef Stalin had killed millions of his own citizens; and kept killing them during and after the war. Before Hitler was finally defeated, he had murdered six million Jews and nearly as many other Europeans. At war's end, both the German and the Soviet killing sites fell behind the iron curtain, leaving the history of mass killing in darkness. *Bloodlands* is a new kind of European history, presenting the mass murders committed by the Nazi and Stalinist regimes as two aspects of a single history, in the time and place where they occurred: between Germany and Russia, when Hitler and Stalin both held power. Assiduously researched, deeply humane, and utterly definitive, *Bloodlands* will be required reading for anyone seeking to understand the central tragedy of modern history.

Book Information

Paperback: 560 pages

Publisher: Basic Books; 1st Edition edition (October 2, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0465031471

ISBN-13: 978-0465031474

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.4 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 566 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #12,993 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Russian & Former Soviet Union #23 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > European #24 in Books > History > Europe > Germany

Customer Reviews

If there is an explanation for the political killing perpetrated in eastern Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, historian Snyder roots it in agriculture. Stalin wanted to collectivize farmers; Hitler wanted to eliminate them so Germans could colonize the land. The dictators wielded frightening power to advance such fantasies toward reality, and the despots totaled up about 14 million corpses between them, so stupefying a figure that Snyder sets himself three goals here: to break down the number into the various actions of murder that comprise it, from liquidation of the kulaks to the final solution; to restore humanity to the victims via surviving testimony to their fates; and to deny Hitler and Stalin

any historical justification for their policies, which at the time had legions of supporters and have some even today. Such scope may render Snyder's project too imposing to casual readers, but it would engage those exposed to the period's chronology and major interpretive issues, such as the extent to which the Nazi and Soviet systems may be compared. Solid and judicious scholarship for large WWII collections. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Istvan Deak, The New Republic;[A] genuinely shattering report on the ideology, the political strategy, and the daily horror of Soviet and Nazi rule in the region that Timothy Snyder calls the bloodlands.... Timothy Snyder did archival research in English, German, Yiddish, Czech, Slovak, Polish, Belorussian, Ukrainian, Russian, and French. His learning is extraordinary. His vivid imagination leads him to see combinations, similarities, and general trends where others would see only chaos and confusion.... This is an important book. I have never seen a book like it. --Fareed Zakaria GPS, Book of the Week;If you want to understand the real history of what is going on between Ukraine and Russia and the West, you have to read this harrowing history. Between 1943 and 1945, 14 million people died in Eastern Europe, killed by Stalin or Hitler. Snyder explains why and how this part of the world became the 20th century's hell hole. --New York Times Book Review;Timothy Snyder's compels us to look squarely at the full range of destruction committed first by Stalin's regime and then by Hitler's Reich. Each fashioned a terrifying orgy of deliberate mass killing.... Snyder punctuates his comprehensive and eloquent account with brief glimpses of individual victims, perpetrators and witnesses. --The New Republic, Editors' Picks: Best Books of 2010;Between 1933 and 1945, 14 million people were murdered in Eastern Europe. Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin catalogues how, where, and why these millions died. The cumulative effect makes you reconsider every aspect of modern Europe and World War II. Along the way, Snyder achieves something more vital: he wrests back some human dignity for those who died, without treating them solely as victims. --The Economist;[G]ripping and comprehensive.... Mr. Snyder's book is revisionist history of the best kind: in spare, closely argued prose, with meticulous use of statistics, he makes the reader rethink some of the best-known episodes in Europe's modern history. Even those who pride themselves on knowing their history will find themselves repeatedly brought up short by his insights, contrasts and comparisons.... Mr. Snyder's scrupulous and nuanced book steers clear of the sterile, sloganising exchanges about whether Stalin was as bad as Hitler, or whether Soviet mass murder in Ukraine or elsewhere

is a moral equivalent of the Nazis' extermination of the Jews. What it does do, admirably, is to explain and record. Both totalitarian empires turned human beings into statistics, and their deaths into a necessary step towards a better future. Mr. Snyder's book explains, with sympathy, fairness and insight, how that happened, and to whom.

—*Washington Post*; Snyder's research is careful and thorough, his narrative powerful.... By including Soviet with German mass atrocities in his purview, Timothy Snyder begins the necessary but as yet still taboo examination of the full depravity of total war as it was practiced in the 20th century, before the advent of nuclear weapons foreclosed it.

—*The Economist*, Books of the Year; How Stalin and Hitler enabled each other's crimes and killed 14m people between the Baltic and the Black Sea. A lifetime's work by a Yale University historian who deserves to be read and reread.

—*The Financial Times*; [A] superb and harrowing history.... Snyder presents material that is undeniably fresh & what's more, it comes from sources in languages with which very few western academics are familiar. The success of *Bloodlands* really lies in its effective presentation of cold, hard scholarship, which is in abundance.

—*Ian Thomson, Telegraph (UK)*; In this scrupulously researched history.... Snyder does not argue for a supposed moral equivalence between Hitler's extermination of the Jews and the earlier Stalinist extermination of the kulaks. On the contrary, the industrial exploitation of corpses and their ashes was a uniquely Hitlerian atrocity; a unique instance of human infamy. Nevertheless, this is the first book in English to explore both German and Soviet mass killings together. As a history of political mass murder, *Bloodlands* serves to illuminate the political sickness that reduced 14 million people to the status of non-persons.

—*Samuel Moyn, The Nation*; Snyder is perhaps the most talented younger historian of modern Europe working today. Astonishingly prolific, he grounds his work in authoritative mastery of the facts, mining tomes of information in multiple languages and brilliantly synthesizing his findings. At the very least, *Bloodlands* is valuable for its astounding narrative integration of a gruesome era of European history.... A preternaturally gifted prose stylist, [Snyder] strives for a moral urgency appropriate to his depressing topics, and he rarely succumbs to bathos.... [B]y any measure *Bloodlands* is a remarkable, even triumphant accomplishment.

—

This book is an amazing piece of research! It covers the period from the birth of the Soviet Union to after the End of World War II. It tells the story of the mass murders and millions of deaths that occurred in what the author calls the Blood Lands: the Baltic states, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland and the Crimea. These mass killings were carried out by both Hitler and Stalin, at times simultaneously

and at times for similar reasons. It discusses the national and ideological reasoning behind Stalin's Great Famine, purges and ethnic cleansing of the Soviet Union as well as Hitler's Final Solution and its relationship for his desire for "Living Space". This is a must read for anyone who wants to understand the Holocaust, the history of the Soviet Union and their relationship to World War II.

Powerful, forceful, like "Gulag Archipelago" (Solzhenitsyn), and compelling. Also eye-opening in putting the Holocaust in the broader context of atrocities committed by Stalin and Hitler, including the deliberate use of famine against "class enemies" and "inferior races". Surprising, too, especially the extent to which Poles, along with Ukrainians and Belorussians, were slaughtered by both the Nazis and the Soviets, to remove them as future obstacles. The Katyn Forest massacre was just one instance of Stalin's genocidal policies towards Poles. Not light reading, but essential to an understanding of the 20th century. (Good background on the origins of World War II in its predecessor, with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, punitive policies towards Germany, and the failure of the Versailles peace process to settle the eastern war zone--putting Poland squarely in the sights of both Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia.)

This is a brilliant book that is extremely well-researched, but not for the faint of heart. This history describes unimaginable brutality in east Europe, with savagery that begins with Stalin, continues with industrial efficiency by Hitler, but then is completed by Stalin again. It is a horror that so far surpasses that of any horror movie that it scarcely seems possible to have been carried out by human beings. It is not only an essential read to understand the events themselves, but to understand the extreme potential for darkness in the character of nations and their peoples, many of which still continue, that are being realized today and acted out right in front of our eyes. This should be a morality play, but instead holds a mirror up to humanity's biggest weakness, a reticence to act to stop mass destruction until it is too late.

Rarely have I encountered a history that is as enlightening and thought-provoking as Snyder's account of the impact of forced starvation, genocide, war, ethnic cleansing, and geographic re-location on the peoples of Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, the Baltic Republics, and the formerly German Reich over the two decades between 1933 and 1953, when Stalin died. Residents of the region of Europe he calls the Bloodlands experienced atrocities of an unprecedented nature and scope in this period. What is especially striking is how many people were victimized multiple times in this relatively brief period--first by the Soviet authorities, then by the Germans, and then again by

the Soviets as Stalin and Hitler imposed their insane doctrines on civilian populations. Snyder is an extremely skillful writer and holds the reader's attention throughout in what could easily have been a dry treatise on the demographic dimensions of human suffering. He skillfully weaves in the gripping stories of individual people caught in the maelstrom, giving a human face to the numbers. I have to disagree with one reviewer who alleges this is just another study of the similarities between Soviet and Nazi totalitarianism; Snyder is careful to compare and contrast these two tyrannical regimes. This is an engrossing book, but may be a bit too ambitious for people without some familiarity with modern European history. However, it is certainly worth reading and gives valuable new perspectives on the impact of the 30s, World War II, and the Postwar Era on residents of Eastern Europe. I recommend it highly to anyone interested in the history of the period.

This is an important book. It is a good study. It should be read by those interested in WWII history or Russia, and eastern Europe in that period, and how that period led to some of the issues of today. That said, it is not an easy read, not only because some of it is painful but because the author, probably very good in his field, could have used an editor. Parts of it drag on or are repetitious, and yet sometimes it is not clear what certain conclusions are because different concepts or different time periods get mixed up. So yes, read it - the review in the Economist that led me to it was right. But don't assume an easy read, and be prepared for mental moments of frustration (aside from being frustrated at human folly - on substance the book is very good if painful). This book would be tough for students who read only for class requirements, not interest. A good history professor would pull out sections and make those assigned reading.

This should be on the reading list for every history teacher, for HS students taking AP Global, for college students covering Europe-WWI, anyone interested in history, and anyone interested in understanding the far-reaching effects that WWII had. Why? Because history repeats itself. Because it is important to understand what happened. WHY? to make informed decisions and act on them. If we don't learn the history in the first place, how can we learn from it to avert the same mistakes. The material in this book is not taught at the high school level. The concepts are barely touched in today's HS Global textbooks. It's a challenging read -- jam packed with facts that were not available and/or made known before. Even those who thought they knew all about this era will find the stories unbearable and numbing. Killing Patton is another excellent resource.

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