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Stephen Lovell, *The Shadow of War: Russia and the USSR, 1941 to the Present*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. x, 370. ISBN 978-1-4051-6959-2.

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Although Stephen Lovell (King's College London) deals with the significance of World War II for later Soviet/Russian history in chapter 1 of his new book, and aspects of it are included in many other chapters, he makes little further attempt to tie more than sixty years of postwar development to the wartime experiences. In fact, the war itself was already dealt with in an earlier volume<sup>1</sup> in the Blackwell History of Russia Series. Thus, those primarily interested in military history will not find much direct treatment of the topic here.

What Lovell's book does present, however, is a brief summary of why and how the "Great Patriotic War" was significant for later Soviet/Russian history and an excellent topical treatment of that history. Besides the introductory and concluding chapters, the other eight deal with government reforms and reactions, the economy, social structures, public and private spheres of life, Moscow's relations to the rest of the country, nationality questions, and (in two chapters) foreign affairs. Each of these main chapters also offers some introductory treatment of the war years, but seldom any discussion of battles or war strategy and tactics.

Chapter 1 masterfully delineates the World War II's lasting reverberations, beginning with the physical devastation—"between 24 and 27 million premature deaths," and the destruction or disabling of "close to 32,000 industrial enterprises, 65,000 kilometers of railway, and housing for 25 million people" (2). Then, "in 1946-7, acute postwar scarcity, compounded by harvest failure and the government's commitment to industrial reconstruction, brought what turned out to be the last Soviet famine, whose death toll was at least 1 million and possibly a good deal higher" (3). The war inflicted other hardships within the USSR and in Eastern Europe: changing governments, massive population movements, and shifting territorial boundaries. About 45 percent of the Soviet prewar population found itself occupied by enemy forces for various periods during the war. Some 3 million Soviet citizens left their country never to return, but more than 5 million POWs or forced laborers sent abroad did return, willingly or unwillingly. Many of them, like other individuals and peoples suspected of collaborating with the Nazi occupiers or otherwise being disloyal to the USSR, were sent to Siberia or Central Asia to be resettled or forced to labor in Stalin's vast Gulag. Some of these peoples, like the Crimean Tatars or Chechens, had been part of the USSR before the war; others, like many in the Baltic lands or eastern Poland, were absorbed as a result of Soviet territorial gains during the 1939-45 period—most of the wartime details regarding the nationalities are in chapter 7. Also on the move from 1945 to 1948 were 8.5 million demobilized veterans.

Lovell emphasizes what the Soviet government gained as well as lost from the war.

The war was not only destructive. It also brought the Soviet regime new opportunities. Internally, its hand was strengthened by the growth of Soviet patriotism and the consolidation of a loyal new elite. Internationally, it now had a large part of Europe (and in due course of the entire world) directly in its sights. The war also had ideological value: it could also be interpreted by the regime and its committed servants as the delayed culmination of the revolution (4).

The memory of the war was variously manipulated by succeeding rulers (including Putin) to bolster up the regime and their own powers.

Lovell consistently makes judicious use of statistics. For example, the information that "by summer 1943, there were 55 newspapers published for the front in non-Russian languages" (207) says much more

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1. Theodore Weeks, *Across the Revolutionary Divide: Russia and the USSR, 1861-1945* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

than some generalization about the USSR's various nationalities. Lovell's prose is clear, accurate, and very readable, and the book's maps and pictures are also assets. The forty pages of endnotes and a "Guide to Further Reading" reflect his thorough knowledge of current Russian and English sources. This scholarly acumen enables him to avoid mistakes sometimes made by less informed writers. For example, he acknowledges that the Soviet leadership had decided *not* to invade Poland to crush Solidarity in mid-1981, and that Soviet threats "were a bluff" (279).<sup>2</sup>

Particular strengths in the present book are the treatment of socioeconomic and national conditions and the post-Soviet period overall. Specific highlights are: the pages on the introduction and development of Russian-style capitalism under Yeltsin and Putin (96–106); the section on "Generation and Gender" (126–31); the whole of chapter 5 on "Public and Private" spheres of life, including family life; and the treatment of consumerism, consumer goods, and housing (chapter 5 and *passim*). Chapter 7, "National Questions," examines not only the identity concerns of the major Soviet nationalities, but also—in a section entitled "Being Soviet: A Viable Identity?"—efforts to create an all-union solidarity that would override, or at least supplement, self-identification as Ukrainian, Chechen, Estonian, etc.

Although no chapter is dedicated expressly to culture, sports, or major Soviet/Russian artists, composers, or writers—the names Shostakovich, Pasternak, and Solzhenitsyn, for example, do not appear in the index—Lovell does frequently mention films and radio and television programming, often presenting little known facts and insights about popular culture. For instance, from 1954 to 1991, over two hundred Indian films appeared on Soviet screens, of which "50 ... drew audiences of more than 20 million, which made Indian [not American] cinema the best performer among mass cultural imports" (301).

Another example of uncommon information in the book comes in Lovell's analysis of Soviet-era intermediary institutions between the central government/Communist Party and individuals and their families—places of work, local Soviets, branches of industry, etc. "Workplaces were centers of provisioning networks and sources of sociability.... Soviet people did not need to worry about being fired" (155). The following is especially enlightening:

Given the inadequacies of consumer goods production across the country as a whole, particular branches of industry made it their business to keep their own people supplied.... Enterprises were especially active in producing consumer gadgets that lay outside their ostensible competence. In 1980, for example, about one-third of all the vacuum cleaners in the Soviet Union were produced under the auspices of the Ministry of the Aviation Industry. The defense sector had a near-monopoly on production of television sets, radios, and video recorders.... By the late Brezhnev era, more than 50 different enterprises were making washing machines and 36 were making refrigerators.... Workers were obliged to "choose" the models made available in their branch of industry (86).

Lovell's short concluding chapter puts in historical perspective the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and its aftermath. His claim that "one of the most illuminating comparative frameworks to apply to twentieth-century Russia is that of empire and decolonialization" (316) rings true. As does his perception that Yeltsin and Putin faced "challenges that were truly unique." They had to wrestle with such questions as "How was the national to be detached from the imperial? What was to be done about the Russian minority populations outside the Russian Federation, and about the non-Russian populations within the country? How was such an enormous and diverse country, with a long history of imperial conquest but no experience of genuine federalism, to govern itself?" (319) Given all these problems, plus the simultaneous difficulties of transitioning to a less authoritarian government and more market-driven economy, Lovell is surely right to say "a certain amount of fudge and studied ambiguity is the least that should be expected" (319).

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2. The range of the author's erudition is apparent in his previous books: *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (NY: St. Martin's, 2000); *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710–2000* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U Pr, 2003); *Destitution in Doubt: Russia since 1989* (NY: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2006); and *The Soviet Union: A Very Short Introduction* (NY: Oxford U Pr, 2009).

In summary, *Shadow of War* is an astute topical approach to Soviet/Russian history from 1941 to the beginnings of the Medvedev presidency in 2008. Its clarity and first-rate scholarship make it exceptionally enlightening on major socioeconomic and national conditions and post-Soviet matters generally.