Daniel Stambler Journal 5

Word Count: 375

Both Brooks and Khlevniuk depict the Great Patriotic War as costly for the Russian people. The war left many dead and the country in complete disrepair. Moreover, both authors agree that Stalin was directly responsible for the loss of so many lives in the war. However, the authors differ on Stalin’s contribution to the victory of the war.

Brooks argues that the press played an important role on the home front. He states (p 171) that the Press, under David Ortenberg, shifted focus from Stalin to patriotic generals and soldiers when Stalin wasn’t able to show strong leadership at the start of the war. In addition, Ortenberg countered the Nazi anti-sematic propaganda with tales of Jewish valor. Furthermore, the press urged the public to extract revenge on the Nazis. From this propaganda, the reader learns about the origins of the Red Army’s later atrocities against Germany.

Both authors agree that the war greatly empowered Stalin, who ended up assuming the title of Generalissimo.Brooks states (p 192) that by the end of the war, the press greatly enhanced Stalin’s personality cult. Khlevniuk states (p 202) that by focusing on Stalin, the reader will learn about the initial defeats that the USSR suffered and the costly victory that it ultimately achieved. At the start of the war, the military, which recently lost a lot of its talented officers due to Stalin’s purges, was poorly organized. Stalin also hurt the war effort by sending out war commissars to shoot deserters.

Beginning with the battle of Stalingrad, the tide began to shift in favor of the USSR. Brooks and Khlevniuk concur that Stalin learned from his mistakes and began to think more strategically. Khlevniuk’s history differs by focusing (p 205) on how Stalin fell into a state of depression at the start of the war. In addition, Khlevniuk gives more credit to Stalin for the victory than Brooks **(**p 228), who argues that Stalin stole the victory from the people.

Both authors largely agree that Stalin shared responsibility with the Nazis for the suffering of the Soviet people. However, Brooks gives the press a lot of credit for rallying Nationalistic sentiment against the Nazis. Khelvniuk, on the other hand, focuses solely on Stalin’s growth as a military strategist.