
Reviewed by Dale R. Herspring, Kansas State University

It is hard to know where to begin when it comes to writing a review of a book that has long been a classic in the field. It is safe to say that John Erickson will go down in history as the person who almost single-handedly created the field of Soviet military studies. I cannot think of a single specialist in that field who does not owe a major debt to the late Professor Erickson for his pioneering work. I know that, in my own case, I relied heavily on *The Soviet High Command* when writing about issues such as political officers and commissars. Most important, I have yet to find an area where I could say he “goofed.” As previously secret documentation has become available, we have been able to elaborate or refine some of the points he made, but I doubt there will be many corrections to the incredible story told in this book.

Some may wonder why a book that is almost the same as the first two editions should be republished. To begin with, there is a preface by the series editor in which this book appears—Colonel David Glantz. Glantz himself has done more than anyone to bring to life the history of the Soviet Army, particularly the events of World War II. His preface is not only well written but enlightening as well. The book also includes a preface to the third edition by John Erickson. Writing shortly before his death in 2002, Erickson highlights major works published both in the West and in Russia on the founding and evolution of the Red Army. This preface alone will be invaluable for anyone interested in undertaking research on the Soviet military.

The publication of this third edition means that those who have not had a chance to read and own a copy of Erickson’s classic study will now have that opportunity. Erickson may have left us, but we are indeed lucky to have his major work available in this new edition. This is a book that should be in every university or college library, and one that anyone who is serious about studying the Soviet and Russian military should own.


Reviewed by Richard D. Anderson, Jr., University of California, Los Angeles

This exceptionally valuable study addresses a topic of crucial importance for understanding the Cold War. Had the USSR been a democracy, the democratic peace would presumably have prevailed in U.S.-Soviet relations, and the alliance forged against Nazi Germany would have persisted to this day. Dictatorships inevitably per-