

***On Stalin's Team: The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics.*** By Sheila Fitzpatrick. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. xi, 375 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Plates. \$35.00, hard bound.  
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The eminent Russian historian, Sheila Fitzpatrick, has set herself a difficult task: to write an account of the inner workings of the Kremlin focusing on the dynamics of Stalin's inner circle. Managing the Soviet economic, military, and political system was a huge job, too massive for the man at the top and the same for his relatively small inner circle. Soviet-planned socialism, managed by a dictatorship of the proletariat, whose tasks and makeup were left undefined by Marx, was the most important experiment of the twentieth century. Contrary to the predictions of skeptics like F.A. Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, the system that Stalin erected in the late 1920s and early 1930s survived for sixty years before its collapse under Mikhail Gorbachev. The regime's durability is explained in great part by the remarkable collection of those who constituted "Team Stalin."

Fitzpatrick has given us a portrait, not of Stalin, but of the team he built, cultivated, bullied, charmed, and murdered. Her book is in good company with Oleg Khlevniuk's *Master of the House: Stalin and His Inner Circle* (2009). Although intended for a general audience, specialists will learn much about the inner workings of Stalin's team from the early days of the interregnum after Lenin's death to its search for a new collective leadership after Stalin's death.

Fitzpatrick begins with the tight-knit Old Bolsheviks, an exclusive revolutionary party who knew each. Fitzpatrick's is the story of people and families caught up in the cauldron of the October Revolution, the power struggle following Lenin's death, and the Great Terror, which wiped out many of their ranks. It is a story of exhausting work, in which the leader demanded no less of his subordinates than of himself. The team's working schedule even adapted to that of the leader. When Stalin began to work and socialize into the early hours of the morning, his team followed his nocturnal habits.

Fitzpatrick dubs Stalin's mastery of manipulation "dosage," by which she means Stalin's destruction of opponents cautiously, gradually, and in predictable phases. In the early battles with the Trotsky-Kamenev-Zinoviev opposition and then with Nikolai Bukharin and Aleksei Rykov, he allowed the Left Opposition to remain at first on the Politburo and then kept Rykov on as prime minister after the Bukharin-Rykov-Tomsky group had been discredited. Stalin would rarely fire an out-of-favor team member directly. Rather, they would be moved to another job, out of the friendly confines of the team of supporters they had put together, from which they were later removed and arrested.

From Fitzpatrick's account, one gets the impression that Stalin spared those most useful to him, such as Viacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, Kliment Voroshilov, and Anastas Mikoian. Indispensability may have been a ticket to survival. Those on the periphery of power were least likely to survive. Stalin did not allow personal relations to get in the way of purges. The inner circle was shocked, as was the victim, when Stalin ordered the execution of his childhood friend, Avel Enukidze, on trumped up charges of a coup plot. Stalin also did not hesitate to execute Alyosha Svanidze, his brother-in-law and the person closest to Stalin. Fitzpatrick concludes that Stalin did not execute his childhood friends out of any personal animosity. There was a more practical side. Stalin understood that he could not expect the betrayal of close associates by his inner circle if he did not do the same with his small personal inner circle. Failing to liquidate close associates was taken as a sign of disloyalty. Similarly, Stalin made no exceptions for the sons of the inner circle. They,

like his own son, were expected to serve on the front lines and there would be no trades if captured.

It is difficult to put together an account of the inner circle from the limited official material we have on hand. Fitzpatrick uses the copious correspondence of Stalin with Molotov and Kaganovich as a primary source, as well as post-Stalin memoirs of principals such as Mikoian, Molotov and Kaganovich. Mikoian's memoir largely avoids discussion of purges and focuses instead on mundane issues of economic, trade, and foreign policy. Molotov and Kaganovich's memoirs are devoted to justification of their own actions and support for Stalinism. Fitzpatrick also uses the memoirs of children of the Kremlin, such as the sons of Mikoian and Beria, understanding that they were written with a slant towards rehabilitating their fathers.

Fitzpatrick remains cautious on some of the more controversial stories concerning Stalin's Russia. She does not subscribe to the Stalin-killed-Kirov school. She believes Stalin's affection for Kirov was genuine and seemed content to let him run his show from distant Leningrad. Fitzpatrick writes that Stalin did not hesitate to remove his enemies on the pretext of solving Kirov's murder, however. She does not subscribe to the sensational story that Stalin expected to be arrested by the Politburo for his failure to anticipate the German invasion. Instead, the Politburo came to the dacha to ask him to carry on, although some hints from the Mikoian side suggest otherwise. She raises doubt about the depth of Lavrenty Beria's sexual perversions, suggesting they may have been exaggerated for his trial. Fitzpatrick doubts that Stalin was murdered by someone in his inner circle. It would have had to be "a joint action," (222) which none of them ever disclosed. The removal of Stalin's personal secretary and personal bodyguard shortly before Stalin's death, however, does raise certain suspicion.

Fitzpatrick's book summarizes a broad range of literature. It does not change in a fundamental way our understanding of how Russia was ruled. Its contribution rather is to take the reader, as much as is possible, inside the Kremlin walls, inside the Near Dacha, or to a family dinner in a cramped Kremlin apartment to give a sense of time and place that is lacking from most accounts.

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***Barbarossa 1941: Reframing Hitler's Invasion of Stalin's Soviet Empire.*** By Frank Ellis. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2015. xxviii, 568 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Figures. Tables. \$39.95, hard bound.

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There are few events as significant in Soviet history as the launching of Operation Barbarossa. The German invasion, beginning June 22, 1941, dragged the Soviet Union into a devastating total war that wreaked havoc and mass destruction across Soviet state and society, the effects of which continue to shape Russia today. For this reason, Barbarossa and the ensuing conflict on the eastern front have been the focus of numerous studies. Frank Ellis seeks to add to this voluminous literature by reframing the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

*Barbarossa 1941* is structured as a series of discreet essays focusing on different aspects of the invasion. Among others, the book covers German planning and Soviet military doctrine; the notorious Nazi Commissar Order; diplomatic relations and