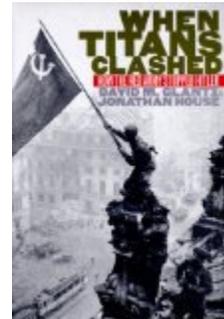


# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

David Glantz, Jonathan House. *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995. xiii + 414 pp. \$29.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7006-0717-4.

Reviewed by Howard D. Grier (Department of History, Erskine College)  
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David Glantz, America's foremost Soviet military historian, joins with Jonathan House, Associate Professor of History at Gordon College in Georgia, to bring us an important and long-needed study. *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* demolishes several myths and clarifies dozens of unanswered questions.

The book is divided into four sections. In the first part, the authors examine the Red Army from 1918 to 1941, and set forth their thesis that the Red Army did not achieve victory in the East simply by copying German tactics. In fact, Blitzkrieg-style, mobile tactics had been devised and employed by Russian troops during the Russian Civil War, decades prior to World War II. The authors also analyze the catastrophic effect of Stalin's purge of the military, and repeatedly demonstrate how it hampered Soviet military performance. A brief section on the Winter War provides additional information on that often neglected conflict.

The narrative then examines the first period of the Eastern Campaign, from the German invasion in June 1941 to the Soviet offensive at Stalingrad in November 1942. Here the authors depict a Red Army fighting two vicious foes – the Nazi juggernaut and Joseph Stalin himself. As German armies swept ever deeper into Soviet territory, Stalin repeatedly refused to heed his military advisers, usually with disastrous results. The third section deals with the turn of the tide from November 1942 to December 1943. Glantz and House show how the Red Army effectively responded to the Nazi threat as skilled commanders like Marshal Georgi Zhukov, Marshal Aleksandr Vasilevsky, and General Alexei Antonov planned and executed effective offensive operations of their own. Stalin began to show faith in his subordinates, although

he often times set goals that were still too ambitious. The final portion of the book concerns the period from January 1944 until May 1945, with a brief section included on the Soviet war against Japan in August 1945. The authors give a fine account of how the Red Army conquered eastern Europe and captured Berlin. Glantz and House conclude their work with five extremely useful appendices containing statistical data on relative troop strengths at various periods of the war, casualty tables, and information on Soviet arms production.

The authors provide answers to many nagging questions that remain unresolved a half-century after the war's end by shifting the emphasis from the German viewpoint to that of the Soviets. For example, this work refutes the notion, first advanced by the Nazi government, that Stalin was preparing an invasion of Europe when the Germans struck. The authors also convincingly demonstrate that the German drive on Moscow was not halted solely due to logistics and weather, but also by determined and persistent resistance by the Red Army. Furthermore, the narrative makes several points generally absent from German accounts of the war. Snow and mud, for instance, also existed on the Russian side of the front. Most German studies explain the problems the weather caused for the *Wehrmacht*, but do not explain how the Red Army continued to function in spite of the weather. Perhaps more important, we learn that the Red Army, like the *Wehrmacht*, suffered from personnel shortages. German accounts frequently refer to the supposedly inexhaustible flood of Soviet troops and equipment, but Glantz and House reveal that this actually reflects the Soviets' ability to strip troops and equipment from other sectors of the front in order to achieve crushing superiority at breakthrough sectors. Time after time

the Russians deceived the Germans regarding the site of upcoming Soviet offensives.

Besides providing correctives on topics such as these, the authors provide much that is new. For the first time historians have accurate numbers of Soviet troop strengths and casualties. In addition, Glantz and House reveal that when the Red Army launched its offensive at Stalingrad, an even larger operation (in terms of troops and resources allocated) occurred simultaneously. This operation, which previous Soviet accounts referred to as a feint, was designed to wipe out Germany's Army Group Center. Yet German defenses refused to budge in that sector; some revision to Marshal Zhukov's reputation of never having lost a battle is thus required. The authors also question the long-held assumption that General Friedrich von Paulus could have broken out of Stalingrad had Hitler permitted the attempt. Lack of fuel, ammunition, and transport space ruled out such a breakout. The book is also well documented; sixty pages of notes follow three hundred pages of text. Most notes refer the reader to Russian authors who had access to Soviet archives, but there are some references to interviews and archival material as well. Finally, there is a valuable discussion of materials in Soviet archives and an essay assessing information released to this point.

Despite these impressive contributions, there are some minor problems. The work suffers from poor editing. Marshal Leonid Govorov, for example, is once listed

as Govarov (192), and German General Lothar Rendulic is named correctly in the index, but referred to as Rendulac throughout the text. In addition, a chart listing the initial deployment of German forces participating in Operation *Barbarossa* omits Army Group South's *Panzergruppe* 1 (32). There are inconsistencies in the notes as well. Occasionally a work is cited by its subtitle, while full bibliographic references are sometimes given and sometimes not. The lack of a bibliography hampers easy access to the authors' sources. While the focus of this work is admittedly on the Soviet side of the war, the authors rely too heavily on the often misleading memoirs of Field Marshal Erich von Manstein and General Heinz Guderian. In addition, George Blau's 1955 study, *The German Campaign in Russia*, long superseded, is cited throughout. Some references, moreover, are quite confusing, such as the citation of Vasili Chuikov's memoirs for Hitler's dismissal of Guderian as Chief of the German General Staff (258, 373, n. 5).

Nonetheless, the merits of this work far outweigh its deficiencies. There is much in this monograph for anyone interested in the war in the East. This book belongs in every college library and on the shelves of all World War II historians.

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