



A Red Boyhood: Growing Up Under Stalin

By Anatole Konstantin

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When the secret police came for his father in 1938, ten-year-old Konstantin saw his family plunged into a morass of fear. His memoir of growing up in Stalinist Russia re-creates the daily trials of people trapped in this regime before and during the repressive years of World War II--and the equally horrific struggles of refugees afterwards. Konstantin reflects on his formal education under harsh conditions and his growing awareness of the contradictions between propaganda and reality. He tells of life in a small Ukrainian town before the war and of how some citizens collaborated with the Nazi occupation. He also offers a look at everyday life in early postwar Poland and Germany, as well as one of the few firsthand accounts of life in postwar Displaced Persons camps.

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Editorial Review

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Lamentably, Konstantin's story is common to millions of Soviet children from the 1930s and 1940s. The NKVD executed his father in 1938. In 1941, the 13-year-old, his younger brother, and his mother fled before the German invasion and survived the war under desperate circumstances. Returning after the German retreat to their Ukrainian hometown, they discovered the grim fates of friends and neighbors who had stayed. What stands out in Konstantin's account of these terrible times, besides a matter-of-fact, descriptive tone, is the author's fondness for his mother, who kept the family safe while enduring dangerous and appalling physical conditions. A resourceful woman, she seems to have improvised a solution to recurring crises of housing, food, shelter, and transportation; she never gave up. With such support, Konstantin managed to experience his adolescence along the usual lines of schools, favorite books, chums, and bullies—though his anecdotes in these categories are anything but usual. Replete with the perils of living under communism and in wartime, Konstantin's lucid memoir contributes to the body of civilian witness to World War II. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

“Anatole Konstantin's informative and exciting memoir of his family's heart-rending struggle to survive the dismal years of Soviet communism is a fascinating page-turner that will appeal to a worldwide readership.”—**Jules Koslow**

“Konstantin's memoir is a gut-wrenching portrayal of his boyhood in Stalin's Soviet Union before and during World War II. It should be required reading for every high school student in the United States.”—**Elizabeth Fuller**

About the Author

In 1949, upon graduation from the Technical University of Munich in Germany, Anatole Konstantin immigrated to the United States and continued his study of engineering at Columbia University. He founded PDC International Corporation and lives in Connecticut.

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