

ly to be effective in delivering social services. What is incontestably clear is that the Bush administration has reduced the barriers that stood in the way of some highly effective organizations that had religious affiliations. By all accounts, Bush himself remains committed to his faith-based initiative, even telling associates that, along with the war on terror, he expects “compassionate conservatism” to be the main theme of his presidential library.

Measured against the high expectations that accompanied the program’s launching, its accomplishments may seem modest to some of its supporters, including David Kuo. But politics rarely works miracles; more typically, it leads to an accumulation of incrementally useful steps. If some Christian voters failed to cast a ballot in November out of the belief that the White House did not deliver on “compassionate conservatism,” they were the ones who were duped.

### Russian Winter

Moscow 1941:  
A City and Its People at War  
by Rodric Braithwaite

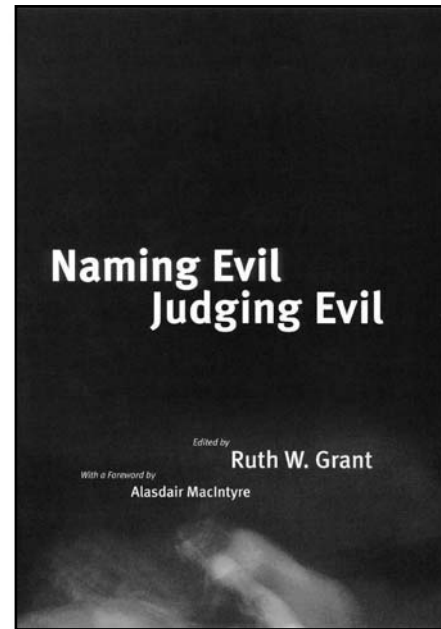
*Knopf. 416 pp. \$30.00*

Reviewed by  
Edward N. Luttwak

WHY DID the peoples of Stalin’s Soviet Union resist the German invasion in 1941? Nobody need ask why they resisted the 1942 offensive that almost reached the Caspian Sea. Or why they fought ferociously thereafter, from Stalingrad all the way to Berlin in the largest military campaign in human history. For by January, February,

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK is senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

## Moral Questions



### Naming Evil, Judging Evil

Edited by Ruth W. Grant  
With a Foreword by Alasdair MacIntyre

“After 9/11, the word ‘evil’ became more common in political, academic, and daily conversations—but so did questions about its meaning and use.

This collection of finely honed essays gives any reader real nuggets of wisdom about what people do and should mean when they call terrorists ‘evil’ and about the compatibility between the virtues of liberal tolerance and tough judgments about moral wrongness and rightness. Connecting historical and philosophical reflections, the book made me feel smarter, wiser, and better equipped to speak of and respond to grave problems.”

—Martha Minow, author of *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*

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### One Must Also Be Hungarian

Adam Biro  
Translated by Catherine Tihanyi

“Ironic, vehement at times, sober in the face of tragedy, playful in its digressions, lively in moments of grace and tenderness, this book is no dry chronicle. Adam Biro’s ancestors in all their exuberance and sadness swirl around in a heady atmosphere like fragments of a vanished past.

Scenery, sounds, colors, accents—the final echoes of a past that has become, for Adam Biro, a ‘foreign country.’”—*Livres Hebdo*

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The University of Chicago Press

www.press.uchicago.edu

and March 1942, Soviet forces had reconquered hundreds of villages and several towns in a wide arc around Moscow that had been in German hands for a few weeks or months, and soldiers and survivors soon spread the word of what had been found.

In place after place, there were Russian prisoners of war, dead by the thousands in open fields enclosed by coils of barbed wire; they had not been shot, but simply left to die of hunger. There were the frozen bodies of countless civilians, mostly old men, women, and children. German troops had seized their homes and forced them out after robbing them of furs, sheepskin jackets, or even humble rags; they died struggling through the waist-high snow in a vain attempt to find shelter in temperatures of minus 30 degrees centigrade. Then there were the horrific remains of hangings and

mass shootings of “Bolshevik commissars”—a category that could embrace any state or party official—as well as of Jews and of resisters, including those who had failed to obey commands only because they did not understand German.

By 1942, in short, the Germans had become monsters in human form, who had to be resisted at any cost. But that was not yet known in 1941. On the contrary, and especially in the Ukraine, the German army enjoyed an excellent reputation dating back to World War I, when invading German troops were known for their disciplined behavior. Besides, a great many of Stalin’s subjects had excellent reasons for refusing to defend the Soviet Union, whose economic strategy was based on the ruthless extraction of agricultural output to pay for industrial and military investment. In the 1930’s, in

order to break actual or potential resistance to forced collectivization, millions of supposedly richer peasants (“Kulaks”) had been deported to Siberia under atrocious conditions, and many more millions died of hunger in local famines caused by the forcible requisition of crops at gunpoint, plain administrative incompetence, and an ideological contempt for the peasantry that blinded urban party officials to the imperatives of rural life.

So it is not surprising that in 1941 many peasants ceremoniously received the first German invaders with bread and salt and high expectations of liberation. Nor is it surprising that, in towns and cities, the Nazis found natural collaborators among the surviving bourgeoisie or those, including the humblest shopkeepers, who had been persecuted as such by the regime. Even safely proletarian party members had grounds for refusing to defend Stalin’s regime, whose purges had first carried off the higher echelons of Old Bolsheviks and then continued down the line through every branch of the party apparatus and state bureaucracy.

Finally, the disaster of the German invasion of June 22, 1941 was itself demoralizing, especially within the ranks of the Red Army. Although not many knew that Stalin had been personally responsible for the failure to heed the sixty-odd warnings of the impending invasion, some dating back more than six months, the consequences of that failure were obvious to all. Soviet air and ground forces, kept in front-line deployments and advanced airfields instead of being pulled back for a counterblow from safer positions in the rear, were quickly overrun by the first thrust of the German offensive. The result was the immediate loss of thousands of aircraft, tanks, and artillery pieces (more than the Germans had on all fronts), leaving the remaining Soviet forces desperately weak in both armor and airpower.

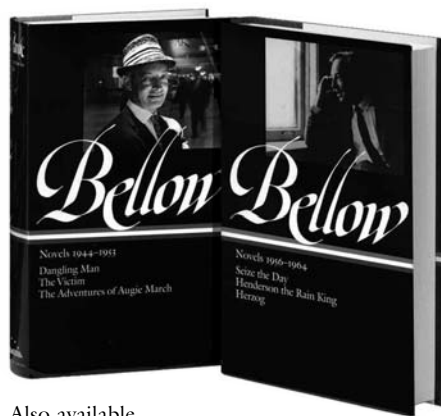
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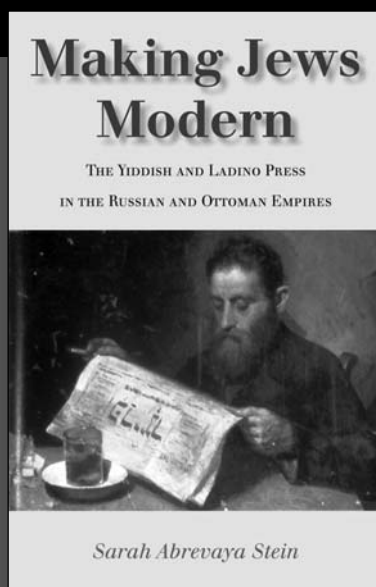
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That is why the Germans could advance in a series of great encirclements to reach the approaches to the Moscow region by October 1941, precipitating both the official evacuation of ministries and factories and the panicked flight of many officials. By then, it was by no means unreasonable for Hitler to consider his Russian campaign essentially won. British intelligence concurred, as did most other observers.

What happened next to save the day was not, as legend has it, the onset of the Russian winter—the German Panzers could advance swiftly on frozen ground—but an astonishing recovery by the Soviet army in the field and the population behind it. This defied all logic, and cannot be explained by appeal to German atrocities as yet unknown. And this is the mystery that Rodric Braithwaite addresses in *Moscow 1941*, a triumph of historical explanation.

IN ARRIVING at his answer, Braithwaite reviews and presents anew the controversies that have bedeviled conventional diplomatic and military histories of the Russian front. Why did Stalin ignore the excellent intelligence foretelling the invasion? (He expected an ultimatum with outrageous demands—which he meant to accept.) Would the Germans have done better by heading straight to Moscow instead of conquering the Ukraine first? (Probably not.) Had Stalin been planning a surprise attack of his own, which the German advance preempted? (A fashionable thesis for a while, but nonsense.) And so forth.

But the question on which this book is focused remains that of motivation. Why, instead of surrendering in what were obviously hopeless circumstances—as even the best British troops had done, and would do—did Soviet troops fight to the death? And that made a huge difference: some 100,000 Germans were killed by December 1941, mostly by little groups of leaderless Red Army stragglers



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whose units had fallen apart and which the Germans listed as destroyed. And why did *civilians* volunteer in such huge numbers, forming militia units that were mostly cut down in their first encounters with the enemy?

BRAITHWAITE's answer is that, after the colossal and humiliating defeats of the great battles of encirclement in which the Red Army had been easily outmaneuvered again and again, the war had become a fight for self-respect, and for national identity. For Russians, the national identity in question was Russian, an instinctive patriotic reflex. For those non-Russian nationalities that in one way or another had advanced under Soviet rule despite all its cruelties, that identity was Soviet.

These non-Russians included central Asians who had been emancipated from Islamic medievalism and Jews liberated from czarist anti-Semitism and not yet subjected to its late-Stalinist variety. It is not by chance that one hero of the battle for Moscow was the Khazak lieutenant Baurjan Momyshev-Uly, immortalized in Aleksandr Bek's factual novel, *The Volokolamsk Highway* (1944). Another was Lev Mikhailovich Dovator, the Jewish general in command of the Cossack cavalry corps of the Red Army—a fitting reversal of the historic relationship between Cossack and Jew. Thus, in the course of answering his own question, Braithwaite illuminates both an essential quality of Russian culture and the superimposed workings of the Soviet regime and Soviet institutions, including the army.

Braithwaite is obviously a talented historian, and one who knows how to write. He also knows Russian, not as a foreigner who has studied the language but as a highly cultured Russian might. He seems to have read everything of importance on his subject, including the latest crop of published diaries, sociological studies, and even

popular histories like Anthony Beevor's *Stalingrad* (1998) and its Russian equivalents.

But the success of this ambitious book also reflects a privileged access to information. Braithwaite has been to Russia countless times and lived in Moscow for prolonged periods, including a stint as British ambassador during the 1990's when the Soviet Union was giving way to Yeltsin's Russia. He made good use of his opportunities to find, cultivate, and interview significant participants and privileged observers of the Moscow events of 1941.

His sources are not ordinary people, whose slice-of-life anecdotes are the stuff of popular histories but whose long-ago impressions are often distorted by memory, that most creative of faculties. Instead, they are experts of one kind or another, soldiers and civilians alike, or intimates of the departed great; from their renditions of the past, Braithwaite distilled his own account of what happened and why.

The results are indeed a revelation. For the first time, one feels that one understands every stage of this story—from the strangely unreal start of a war whose reality Stalin denied for several hours even after the Germans had opened fire across the entire 1,000-kilometer front from the Baltic to the Black Sea, to the subsequent collapse of one Soviet front after another, to the unbelievably swift loss of the vast territories west of Moscow, through the great panic, all the way to the unexpected recovery, the astonishingly successful counterattack, and the first victory.

That victory proved ephemeral for the Soviet side because all the re-conquered lands were soon lost, and much more was lost in the following year. But it guaranteed the ultimate defeat of Nazi Germany, which could only have won the war by crushing all resistance in 1941, before the Americans were forced into the fight. The rest of the story is well known.

## Good News

### A Match Made in Heaven: American Jews, Christian Zionists, and One Man's Exploration of the Weird and Wonderful Judeo-Evangelical Alliance

by Zev Chafets

*HarperCollins. 240 pp. \$24.95*

Reviewed by  
Jonathan R. Cohen

EVANGELICAL Christians make up as much as a third of the U.S. population and a full quarter of voters in national elections. In addition to proclaiming their faith in Jesus and belief in the Bible as the true word of God, most evangelicals also oppose abortion, want to see more religion in public life, and strongly support Israel. All of this makes liberals anxious and unhappy, particularly Jewish liberals, who see the evangelical embrace of Israel as a kind of ruse to promote the conversion of Jewish souls and to ensure that Jews play their assigned role in the Christian script for Armageddon.

Indeed, in recent years, this unease has turned into active ill will, including public condemnation from prominent Jewish leaders. In November 2005, for example, Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), warned that the evangelical political agenda amounted to a "campaign to Christianize America." Soon thereafter, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, the head of the Reform movement, denounced the religious Right for its supposedly Nazi-like bigotry toward homosexuals and for claiming a "monopoly on God."

Why should American Jews, who seemingly would welcome whatever help they can get in supporting

JONATHAN R. COHEN has written essays and reviews for the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Forward*, the *New York Sun*, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.