



The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power (The Yale-Hoover Series on Stalin, Stalinism, and the Cold War)

Jan Plamper

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Between the late 1920s and the early 1950s, one of the most persuasive personality cults of all times saturated Soviet public space with images of Stalin. A torrent of portraits, posters, statues, films, plays, songs, and poems galvanized the Soviet population and inspired leftist activists around the world. In the first book to examine the cultural products and production methods of the Stalin cult, Jan Plamper reconstructs a hidden history linking artists, party patrons, state functionaries, and ultimately Stalin himself in the alchemical project that transformed a pock-marked Georgian into the embodiment of global communism. Departing from interpretations of the Stalin cult as an outgrowth of Russian mysticism or Stalin's psychopathology, Plamper establishes the cult's context within a broader international history of modern personality cults constructed around Napoleon III, Mussolini, Hitler, and Mao. Drawing upon evidence from previously inaccessible Russian archives, Plamper's lavishly illustrated and accessibly written study will appeal to anyone interested in twentieth-century history, visual studies, the politics of representation, dictator biography, socialist realism, and real socialism.

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