

Overtaken by the Night: One Russian's Journey through Peace, War, Revolution, and Terror

Richard G. Robbins Jr.

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Richard Robbins's *Overtaken by the Night* is an extremely detailed account of Vladimir Dzhunkovsky's life. His story spans not just one, but several of the most tumultuous periods in modern Russian history, and Robbins nicely positions Dzhunkovsky's life as a way to tell the story of the Soviet revolution from its inception to its bloody aftermath.

With the overthrow of the tsar hitting its centennial, the book is well timed, as Dzhunkovsky grew up and first came to prominence under the Romanovs. As a youth, he was at the Winter Palace when Alexander III arrived to take the place of his assassinated father. He grew close to members of the royal family, serving them in the imperial military and in administrative roles before becoming the governor of Moscow province.

As head of internal security for the tsar in 1915, he had the notorious Rasputin watched and wrote a key report against him, leading to his own dismissal from office. Despite this support for the monarchy and his own religious beliefs, he still at times earned the trust of post-revolution leaders. At other times, he was imprisoned, and was eventually executed in one of Joseph Stalin's mass killings in 1938.

Through all these phases, Dzhunkovsky witnessed and experienced some of Russia's most important history: World War I, the fall of the monarchy, the communist revolution, and Stalin's purges leading up to World War II.

Along with Dzhunkovsky's public life, Robbins uses his memoirs and other historical sources to describe his personal life, from his early love for a married woman to his private thoughts on key intelligence operations. *Overtaken by the Night* is a long and thorough tome, a well-researched biography of a consistently influential Russian leader.

JEFF FLEISCHER (November/December 2017)

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