

Stalin & D-Day

Michael Sean Winters | Jul. 26, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

There is great [controversy](#) [1] surrounding the placement of a bust of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia. Those who oppose the tribute note Stalin's atrocities while those who defend it note the critical role the Soviet Union played in the war and, indeed, in the success of D-Day.

Had there been no Eastern Front, the prospects for a successful D-Day invasion would have been grim indeed. Of course, Stalin did not choose to have an Eastern Front ? Hitler did! Still, once the Soviets were in the war, there was no question in the minds of either Winston Churchill or Franklin Roosevelt that the Western democracies must aid the Soviet effort to the hilt. There should be a way to honor the Soviet contribution to the war effort without memorializing one of the last century's great mass murderers.

There are two solutions. First, commission a statue of the Big Three ? Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. This is historically accurate and shows the complex, difficult moral compromises nations make when facing a common mortal threat. Second, erect a statue of an ordinary Soviet soldier. While there is no denying that Stalin directed the war effort, and that his brutality allowed him to make decisions that ultimately made the war easier for American and British troops, it was the sacrifice of the common troops ? and indeed the common citizenry ? that beat back the Nazis.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.roanoke.com/news/roanoke/wb/249022>