

Why Russia keeps on fighting

Land of the Great Dying

JORIS VAN BLADEL

Why is Russia continuing to fight a war that is costing so many lives? And why does the Russian army keep going despite heavy losses? In 'Land of the Great Dying', expert Joris Van Bladel investigates the complex relationship between the state, the army and society in Vladimir Putin's Russia. The invasion of Ukraine is, after all, no isolated event, but the product of deeply rooted military, political and social traditions. This book examines how Putin is building on a culture in which war, sacrifice and obedience occupy a central place. Death is not just a military risk but part of the social contract between citizen and state.

Drawing on historical analysis, military insights and eye-witness accounts from within the Russian army, Van Bladel shows that the Russian war mentality is all about the four Ps: pain, patriotism, patriarchy and patrimonialism. Together, these factors help to explain why the Russian army can act so ruthlessly, why criticism of the army is quickly seen as criticism of the state, and why the West keeps underestimating Russia. This is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of modern Russia.

An indispensable book for those trying to fathom the Russian war mentality and gain a better understanding of the war in Ukraine.

NRC



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Dr. Joris Van Bladel (b. 1966), who teaches at the Egmont Institute in Brussels, is a Slavist and military expert with more than thirty years of experience studying Russian civil-military relations.
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