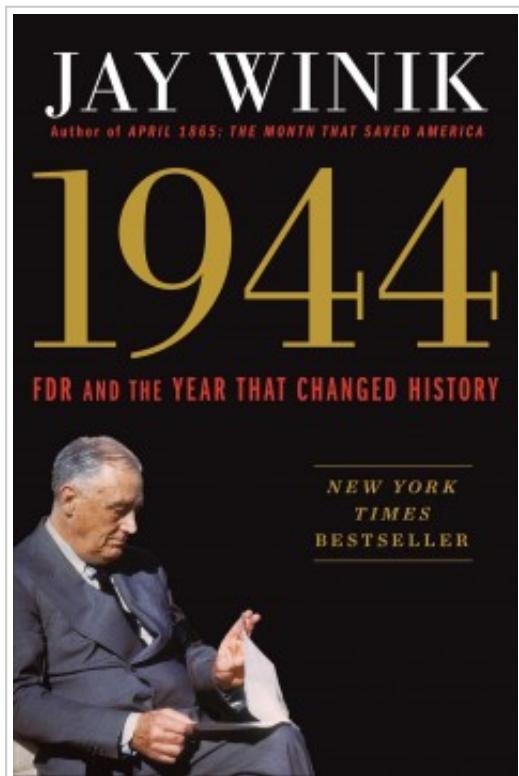


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1944

FDR and the Year That Changed History

by Jay Winik

Price: \$35.00(Hardcover)

Published: September 22, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: New York Times bestselling author Jay Winik brings to life in gripping detail the year 1944, which determined the outcome of World War II and put more pressure than any other on an ailing yet determined President Roosevelt.

It was not inevitable that World War II would end as it did, or that it would even end well. 1944 was a year that could have stymied the Allies and cemented Hitler's waning power. Instead, it saved those democracies—but with a fateful cost. Now, in a superbly told story, Jay Winik, the acclaimed author of April 1865 and The Great Upheaval, captures the epic images and extraordinary history as never before.

1944 witnessed a series of titanic events: FDR at the pinnacle of his wartime leadership as well as his reelection, the planning of Operation Overlord with Churchill and Stalin, the unprecedented D-Day invasion,...

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What We Say

The title of Jay Winik's new work of history is a feint. While the book pivots on the year 1944, it's not really about that penultimate year of World War II, not really. Winik has a more devastating focus than that. Many books have been written about WW II. Many more about the Holocaust. But few if any have told both stories in parallel to such dramatic and awful effect. Because of course they're not two stories; they are inextricably intertwined. So we have here Winik's assured overview of world war, deft portraits of FDR and Churchill and Stalin and Eisenhower and Hitler, battle plans, political machinations, Pearl Harbor, D-Day, the building of the atomic bomb, the imprisonment of Americans for the crime of being Japanese (while Americans of Italian and German descent remained unmolested) -- all in compelling detail and with a clear sense of how events seemed at the time. But again and again and again, Winik keeps alive the Holocaust. He shows what was happening, the build up of the death camps, the trickle of information and witnessing that turned into a flood and alongside that the moral failure of the free world. When tens of thousands of Jewish children might be rescued, excuses pour out. When tens of thousands of European children might be rescued, not a moment is lost. When prison camps can be bombed and war prisoners freed, no daring is too great. When death camps are bombed, it is only by accident because the bombs are meant for factories a few miles away. The US is not alone (though Churchill is the first to awake to the moral demands of this crime against humanity). Still, from 1942 on, we see a feckless State Department, foot-dragging bureaucrats and the tin-eared indifference of Franklin Delano Roosevelt who is given countless opportunities to act and fails to grasp them. The book is too nuanced to simply make a blistering case against FDR: his health was poor, the demands of war seemingly all consuming, etc. But no one can read this book and not agree with Winik that a great opportunity was lost. Lincoln transformed the Civil War into a war for freedom and against slavery. FDR might have made WWII about more than just winning; he might have transformed it into a war to defeat the Holocaust and similar crimes against humanity. Winik sees the decades since and their repeated timid failings in the face of genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda and elsewhere as the awful fruits of 1944, fruits that make the victory the West achieved a little more hollow.

-- Michael Giltz

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What Others Say

"To understand the 20th century, you need to understand 1944. With his usual great research and storytelling talent, Jay Winik makes that dramatic year come alive."

-Walter Isaacson, author of The Innovators and Steve Jobs -

"Posing as a book on President Roosevelt in 1944, this extraordinary book is in fact a compelling, comprehensive history of the Second World War told from FDR's point of view, certainly, but also featuring profound insights into Churchill, Hitler, the ordinary soldiers and civilians, and the monstrous suffering of Europe's Jews. The width of the canvas is astonishing. 1944 might have been, as Winik calls it, 'The year that changed history', but 1944 is a book that will change history-writing."

--Andrew Roberts, author of Masters and Commander: How Four Titans Won the War in the West, 1941-1945

"A gifted storyteller with a proven talent for finding universal meaning in particular historical moments, Jay Winik has