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Nota di contenuto	Rokossovsky's Youth in Poland -- In the Trenches of the First World War -- The Civil War: Brother Against Brother -- The Interwar Period -- The Fiery Summer of 1941 -- The Battle for Moscow -- The Stalingrad Turning Point -- The Battle of Kursk -- The Liberation of Belorussia -- The Warsaw Tragedy -- The Final Battles in Germany -- Woe Be Unto the Vanquished! -- In Poland Again -- The Final Years.
Sommario/riassunto	The author Boris Sokolov offers this first objective and intriguing biography of Marshal Konstantin Konstantinovich Rokossovsky, who is widely considered one of the Red Army's top commanders in the Second World War. Yet even though he brilliantly served the harsh Stalinist system, Rokossovsky himself became a victim of it with his arrest, beatings and imprisonment between 1937 and 1940. The author analyzes all of Rokossovsky's military operations, in both the Russian Civil War and the Second World War, paying particular attention to the problem of establishing the real casualties suffered by both armies in the main battles where Rokossovsky took part, as well as on the Eastern Front as a whole. Rokossovsky played a prominent role in the battles for Smolensk, Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk, Belorussia, Poland, East Prussia and Pomerania. While praising Rokossovsky's masterful generalship, the author does not shy away from criticizing the nature of

Soviet military art and strategy, in which the guiding principle was "at all costs" and little value was placed on holding down casualties. This discussion extends to the painful topic of the many atrocities against civilians perpetrated by Soviet soldiers, including Rokossovsky's own troops. A highly private man, Rokossovsky disliked discussing his personal life. With the help of family records and interviews, including the original, uncensored draft of the Marshal's memoirs, the author reveals the numerous dualities in Rokossovsky's life. Despite his imprisonment and beatings he endured, Rokossovsky never wavered in his loyalty to Stalin, yet also never betrayed his colleagues. Though a Stalinist, he was also a gentleman widely admired for his courtesy and chivalry. A dedicated family man, women were drawn to him, and he took a 'campaign wife' during the war. Though born in 1894 in Poland, Rokossovsky maintained that he was really born in Russia in 1896. This Polish/Russian duality in Rokossovsky's identity hampered his career and became particularly acute during the Warsaw uprising in 1944 and his later service as Poland's Defense Minister.
