



The Great Terror: A Reassessment

Robert Conquest

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The definitive work on Stalin's purges, Robert Conquest's *The Great Terror* was universally acclaimed when it first appeared in 1968. Edmund Wilson hailed it as "the only scrupulous, non-partisan, and adequate book on the subject." George F. Kennan, writing in *The New York Times Book Review*, noted that "one comes away filled with a sense of the relevance and immediacy of old questions." And Harrison Salisbury called it "brilliant...not only an odyssey of madness, tragedy, and sadism, but a work of scholarship and literary craftsmanship." And in recent years it has received equally high praise in the Soviet Union, where it is now considered *the* authority on the period, and has been serialized in *Neva*, one of their leading periodicals. Of course, when Conquest wrote the original volume two decades ago, he relied heavily on unofficial sources. Now, with the advent of glasnost, an avalanche of new material is available, and Conquest has mined this enormous cache to write a substantially new edition of his classic work. It is remarkable how many of Conquest's most disturbing conclusions have born up under the light of fresh evidence. But Conquest has added enormously to the detail, including hitherto secret information on the three great "Moscow Trials," on the fate of the executed generals, on the methods of obtaining confessions, on the purge of writers and other members of the intelligentsia, on life in the labor camps, and many other key matters. Both a leading Sovietologist and a highly respected poet, Conquest here blends profound research with evocative prose, providing not only an authoritative account of Stalin's purges, but also a compelling and eloquent chronicle of one of this century's most tragic events. A timely revision of a book long out of print, this updated version of Conquest's classic work will interest both readers of the earlier volume and an entirely new generation of readers for whom it has not been readily available.

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