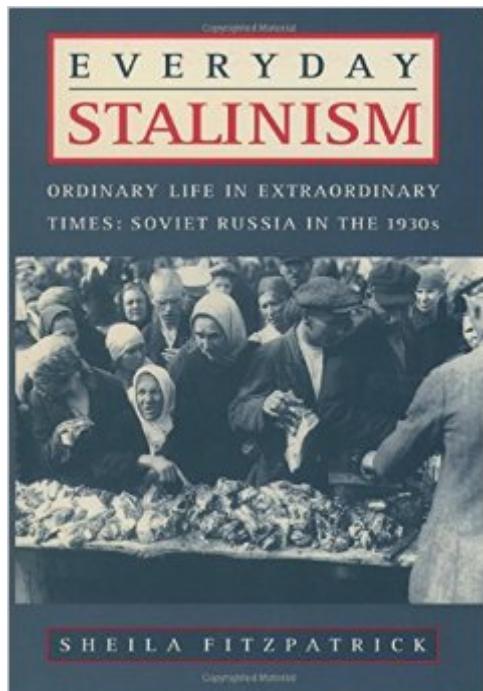


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Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life In Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia In The 1930s



Synopsis

Here is a pioneering account of everyday life under Stalin, written by a leading authority on modern Russian history. Focusing on the urban population, Fitzpatrick depicts a world of privation, overcrowding, endless lines, and broken homes, in which the regime's promises of future socialist abundance rang hollowly. We read of a government bureaucracy that often turned life into a nightmare, and of how ordinary citizens tried to circumvent it. We also read of the secret police, whose constant surveillance was endemic at this time, and the waves of terror, like the Great Purges of 1937, which periodically cast society into turmoil.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (37 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I've read several dozen works on the Soviet era between the October revolution and the Second World War, from Pipes to Conquest and including Solzeynitsin's "Gulag" trilogy. While Solzeynitsin focused on the impact of those who were swept up in the great terror of the '30s, "Everyday Stalinism" looks at the impact on the average individual's daily life in the cities of the USSR. Unlike the Pipes/Conquest

terror-as-a-psychopathic-spasm-and-if-you-don't-believe-that-you're-a-revisionist school, Fitzpatrick is more focused on Stalinism at the common level. How it was maintained and what its effects were. And, surprisingly, many people supported or benefited from it by filling the spaces of those "liquidated" or informing and denouncing rivals in love or work. The real fear wasn't always the KGB at 4am but a neighbor or acquaintance at work. The sad truth is that many were co-opted by the

system and worked within it to support the party. Addressed is the commonly held belief then that no matter what you may have done since the revolution, if you had been born into an "enemy class" then you were in a sense marked for life. The commonness of this view is highlighted in Fitzpatrick's account. The irony of this is that those who rose up to replace the liquidated were themselves given bourgeois rewards. Fitzpatrick does excellent work in guiding the reader through the bureaucratic, social and economic difficulties of the average Soviet citizen. Well researched and well written this can be read as an introduction to the era or especially as a valuable look at Stalinism from the perspective of the urban "masses".

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