

THE GREAT TERROR Stalin's Purge of the Thirties by Robert Conquest  
(Macmillan Company, 1968)

While this is the most comprehensive book on the Moscow Trials, he does what every bourgeois does, trying to roll history backwards by claiming that the "roots of terror" is supposed to have originated in Lenin's time, though he admits that historic periods are totally different and that Lenin was no Stalin. Nevertheless, in trying to say that the origins for the purges had been laid in Lenin's time, he does also the usual misuse of Rosa Luxemburg's criticism of the Russian Revolution. Poor Rosa would turn in her grave to see what uses her criticisms have been put.

Nevertheless, to get factual information on the 1936-1938 period, not the 1917 to 1922 period, this has its value and ~~is~~ liked especially the Epilogue which exposes how the "West" was as much "misled" as was the Communist world, witness Feuchtwanger, Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Theodore Dreiser, Granville Hicks, Corliss Lamont, Max Lerner; also the ambivalence, to say the least of the New Statesman. (p. 503) (interestingly enough, the review of this book in the magazine just a few weeks back, a very favorable review, was disputed by that alleged innocent, Owen Lattimore, who had the gall to object to the review and the book insofar as he was mentioned as lending credence to the Stalinist pretense to having no forced labor camps, by claiming that he had to be "a good guest" since he had gone to those camps in the presence of Vice-President Wallace. On page 507, Conquest also exposes Sir Bernard Pares on the Tukhachevsky trial.

On page 521, there is important quotes from the new articles added to the Criminal Code in September, 1966. By no means have all of the evils of the Stalin period been eliminated with the elimination of the worst of the forced labor camps, which, in any case, had been eliminated because there were great revolts there. Surprisingly enough however, Conquest does not refer you to that magnificent book, Vorkuta by Dr. Joseph Schulmer. However, there are references from Beginning to End by Jozsef Lengyel, a Hungarian Communist, as well as the memoirs Margarete Buber-Neumann, a widow of a German Communist, and, of course, the work of Ivan Denisovich. Of course, the main references are not from memoirs but from official archives and those that unofficially came into the hands of the West like the Smolensk Archives. (the Swiss Belgian Communist Miss Eleanor Lipper is also referred to) but since the Selected Bibliography is so much less than the actual documentation used, I do not quite understand what guided him to use one as against another. For example, the only one by Trotsky is My Life, which does not have the Trials as it was written long before then. And, considering that the stenographic reports of these frame-up trials are, naturally, referred to, I cannot see that the Dewey Commissions' report, Not Guilty, should be the only one cited of the Trotsky documents on the question.