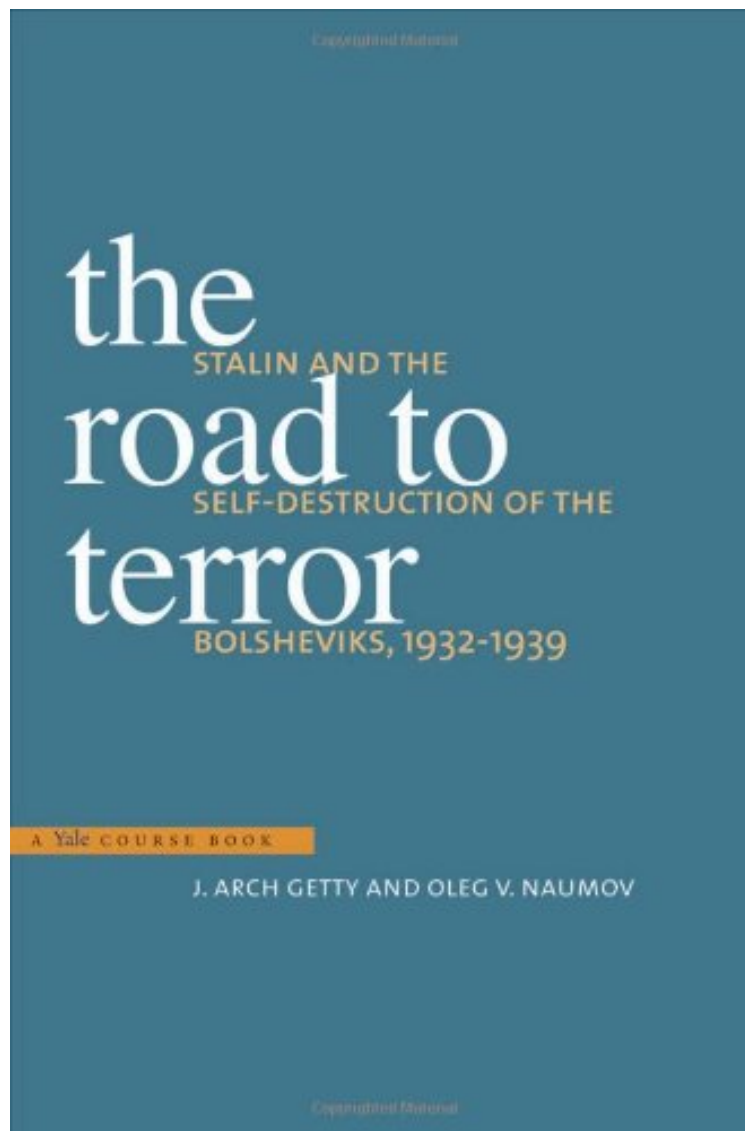


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The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939, Updated and Abridged Edition (Annals of Communism Series)

J. Arch Getty, Oleg V. Naumov
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J. Arch Getty, Oleg V. Naumov : The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939, Updated and Abridged Edition (Annals of Communism Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the

Bolsheviks, 1932-1939, Updated and Abridged Edition (Annals of Communism Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Neo-Marxist, Postmodernism Masquerading as History By Mary Wilbur I threw it into the recycling bin. 28 of 36 people found the following review helpful. Gives an exceptionally valuable insight into Stalin's purges By David Ljunggren This book is tremendously useful because it gives a hitherto unknown insight into exactly how Stalin and his closest cronies set in motion the purges of the 1930s. The heart of the book consists of around 200 secret Communist Party documents interspersed with commentary from the authors. The archival material suggests very strongly that the path to the terror was not planned meticulously from the start but consisted of a series of false starts and zigzags until Stalin decided in 1937 to crush all resistance to the party's rule. Of particular interest are a couple of documents which show how many members of the inner Politburo demanded stricter punishments for alleged wrong-doers than Stalin did himself. Barring the discovery of Stalin's diary many of the dictator's motives will remain unknown forever but the documents in this book do paint a largely convincing portrait of an unpopular regime in Moscow lurching from crisis to crisis, trying both to stabilise the internal situation and also to eliminate the possibility of serious internal resistance. What does come through very clearly is how arbitrary the terror was and how many of those charged with repressing alleged foreign spies and saboteurs were almost guaranteed to be shot themselves. First the Politburo lashed out at the secret police for not doing enough to stamp out centres of Trotskyite resistance and then issued orders demanding the execution and arrest of millions of people across the country. Later the secret police came under fire for allegedly indulging in indiscriminate terror and repressing too many people. I can understand the point of the Kirkus Reviews contributor who doubted the authors' explanation that the Politburo pushed ahead with the purges because they were indeed convinced enemies lay behind every corner and a coup was always possible. A sense of self-preservation and the need to show Stalin they were onside surely did partly explain their enthusiasm for spilling blood. But this is a minor quibble about an otherwise excellent book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A TRUE EXPERT By PATRICK I bought it while taking Professor Getty's class on Soviet Russia at UCLA. His knowledge of the subject is among the highest and most well regarded in the world.

Now updated with new facts, and abridged for use in Soviet history courses, this gripping book assembles top secret Soviet documents, translated into English, from the era of Stalin's purges. The dossiers, police reports, private letters, secret transcripts, and other documents expose the hidden inner workings of the Communist Party and the dark inhumanity of the purge process. "[This] book will be of great value to students of the Terror and . . . the material, such as Bukharin's last letter, is astounding."—Michael J. Ybarra, Wall Street Journal "It will be indispensable for all historians and researchers of communism, the USSR, and Stalinism for many decades to come."—Roy A. Medvedev, author of *Let History Judge*

From Booklist This documentary collection, continuing Yale's pioneering Annals of Communism series, tackles questions surrounding the paroxysm of the purges in 1937-38. One thing Stalin had was a long memory, and the hitherto mysterious Riutin Platform (the contents here at last seeing the light) must have rankled him. The platform was a 1932 call by Bolshevik veterans to remove him. The course culminating in the extirpation of all opposition was complex, and the authors' commentary underscores that a politics of sorts continued up to the point when full-blown terror was unleashed, a politics that pitted the central apparatus of Stalin and his associates in Moscow against the regional party bosses. The authors track one such Stalinist's fate in detail, as they do that of Bukharin, Stalin's opponent in the 1920s. The 200 documents here will astonish anyone familiar with the era, yet it is a specialized tome whose public library appeal could be checked against the circulation stats for the indubitably popular *Who Killed Kirov?* by Amy Knight. I Gilbert Taylor "'This book will be of great value to students of the Terror and... the material, such as Bukharin's last letter, is astounding.' Michael J. Ybarra, Wall Street Journal 'It will be indispensable for all historians and researchers of communism, the USSR, and Stalinism for many decades to come.' Roy A. Medvedev, author of *Let History Judge*" About the Author J. Arch Getty is professor of modern Russian history at the University of California, Los Angeles. Oleg V. Naumov is director of the Moscow archive RGASPI.