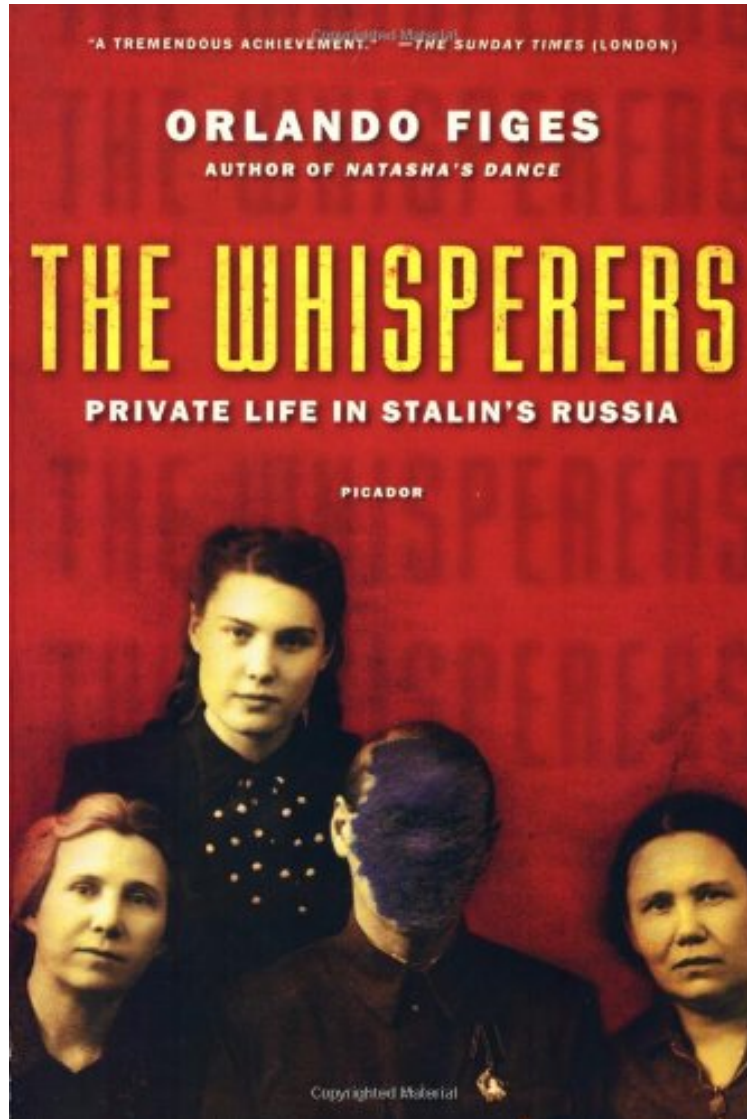


(Get free) The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia

The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia

Orlando Figes

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Orlando Figes : The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Essential to understand the social-psychological state of Russian society. By Paul V. KATCHALOV This is an essential reading for every researcher, who is interested in true understanding of the nowadays Russia. I am astonished how the author, having been not born in Russia, succeeded to understand the "whispering" atmosphere of the two generations ago. All this "whispers" soon became shameful family secrets of the fear and subjugation, and thus are not at all easy to explain for the generation of now living young

Russians. Though in mental afterwardness those repressed traumas are still well alive and acting. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Sobering
By Jeffrey Huntington
A homely history of the Soviet era from the point of view of the citizenry, from minor officials down to the educated peasants. A very large number of case studies, mostly centered on families and how they bore up or didn't under the paranoia, cruelty and seeming senselessness of the purges, trials, deportations, mass-starvations, denunciations, and executions. The general effect is horror, especially poignant when the victims believed the propaganda, worked for the success of the system, and were willing to make sacrifices to some good end. Many of the accounts are from Figes' own friends and relatives. The author is a serious historian, one of the best, and the tone is sober and objective. Not the most sensational or lurid history, but all the more depressing for its dryness. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A very detailed look at life in the Soviet Union.
By Alcapitan
This book is the culmination of a huge amount of research and scholarship in to the lives of Soviet citizens from the revolution through the Breshnev regime. The reading seemed a bit tedious at times, and the book is certainly not what you'd call entertaining. However it gives the most complete picture of individuals lives from the period covered that I've ever read. If this is an area of interest to you (as it is to me), then it is worth the read.

A New York Times Notable Book of 2007 "A tremendous achievement." --The Sunday Times (London)
The Whisperers is a triumphant act of recovery. In this powerful work of history, Orlando Figes chronicles the private history of family life during the violent and repressive reign of Josef Stalin. Drawing on a vast collection of interviews and archives, The Whisperers re-creates the anguish of family members turned against one another--of the paranoia, alienation, and treachery that poisoned private life in Russia for generations. A panoramic portrait of a society in which everyone spoke in whispers, The Whisperers is "rigorously compassionate. . . . A humbling monument to the evil and endurance of Russia's Soviet past and, implicitly, a guide to its present" (The Economist).

From Publishers Weekly
Starred . One in eight people in the Soviet Union were victims of Stalin's terror—virtually no family was untouched by purges, the gulag, forced collectivization and resettlement, says Figes in this nuanced, highly textured look at personal life under Soviet rule. Relying heavily on oral history, Figes, winner of an L.A. Times Book Prize for *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891–1924*, highlights how individuals attempted to maintain a sense of self even in the worst years of the Stalinist purges. More often than not, they learned to stay silent and conform, even after Khrushchev's thaw lifted the veil on some of Stalin's crimes. Figes shows how, beginning with the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, the Soviet experience radically changed personal and family life. People denied their experiences, roots and their condemned relatives in order to survive and, in some cases, thrive. At the same time, Soviet residents achieved great things, including the defeat of the Nazis in WWII, that Russians remember with pride. By seamlessly integrating the political, cultural and social with the stories of particular people and families, Figes retells all of Soviet history and enlarges our understanding of it. Photos. (Oct. 2) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Its importance cannot be overestimated. . . . This book should be made compulsory reading in Russia today." ?The Times (London) "Extraordinary . . . Victims do not always make good witnesses. But thanks to Figes, these survivors overcame their silence and have lifted their voices above a whisper." ?The New York Times Book "A profound service . . . Figes redeems the gloom by demonstrating compassion for flawed human beings and revealing compelling examples of moral courage and kindness." ?The Christian Science Monitor "An extraordinary work of synthesis and insight . . . an awfully good read . . . Figes is both a prodigious researcher and a gifted writer." ?St. Petersburg Times "Lucid, thorough, and essential to understanding Stalinist society . . . an exemplary study in mentalists." ?Kirkus s "Extraordinary." ?The New Yorker
About the Author
Orlando Figes is the author of *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* and *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891–1924*, which received the Wolfson Prize, the NCR Book Award, the W. H. Smith Literary Award, the Longman/History Today Book Prize, and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. He is a professor of history at Birkbeck College, University of London.