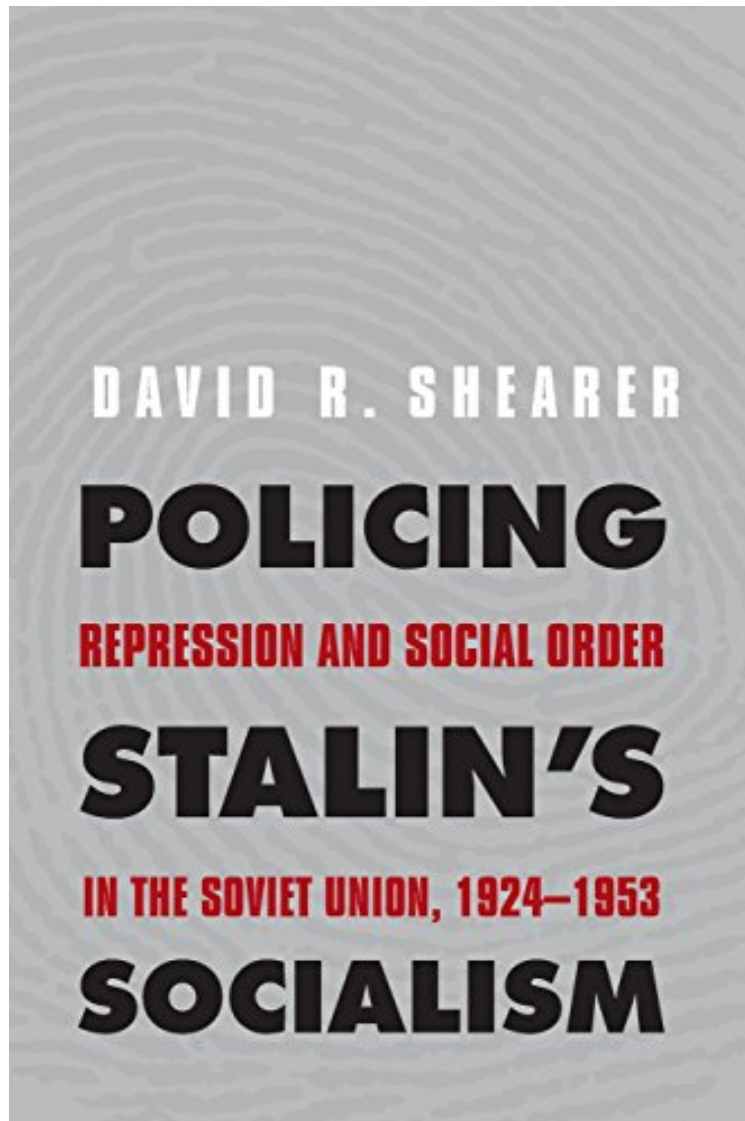


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Policing Stalin's Socialism: Repression and Social Order in the Soviet Union, 1924-1953 (Yale-Hoover Series on Authoritarian Regimes)

David R. Shearer

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David R. Shearer : Policing Stalin's Socialism: Repression and Social Order in the Soviet Union, 1924-1953 (Yale-Hoover Series on Authoritarian Regimes) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be

worth my time, and all praised *Policing Stalin's Socialism: Repression and Social Order in the Soviet Union, 1924-1953* (Yale-Hoover Series on Authoritarian Regimes):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A standard reference
By Gary Dickson
There are not too many books on the early Soviet police system, so we are lucky that Dr. Shearer's book is so good. As I read a serious work of history I often flip back and forth to the end notes to see where the author found the information, and judging from the many citations in Russian national and regional archives, he must have spent years on this book. And thank goodness he did. I've read a fair number of Russian doctoral dissertations on the same topic, and I have to say that this book makes better use of archival sources than anything else I've seen. And it's even more impressive because he did not write the book with a Russian co-author, which is a technique used by some writers to overcome the very real problems with working in Russian archives. If you're interested in how the Soviets established their power and the mechanisms they used to control the population, then this is the book for you. Dr. Shearer discusses how the Soviet police got started and their focus on controlling the population (the opposite of the "to protect and to serve" ethos that is the goal of police forces in many other countries). He goes into depth about how the Soviet police system evolved before WWII, the use of informants, the establishment of the passport system, the campaigns against unsupervised children and so-called marginals. The post-war period up to 1953 is discussed too briefly, but in a 400+ page book that is excusable. The only tiny complaint I have is that he did not get into the role played by judicial investigators (sledovатели) and the relationship between the police and prosecutors. All in all, this a first-class piece of scholarship. Well done, Dr. Shearer!
0 of 10 people found the following review helpful. not satisfied
By eric
the item is not as described- it has some signs of wear- a few pages have some highlighting
disappointing for the price...

Policing Stalin's Socialism is one of the first books to emphasize the importance of social order repression by Stalin's Soviet regime in contrast to the traditional emphasis of historians on political repression. Based on extensive examination of new archival materials, David Shearer finds that most repression during the Stalinist dictatorship of the 1930s was against marginal social groups such as petty criminals, deviant youth, sectarians, and the unemployed and unproductive. It was because Soviet leaders regarded social disorder as more of a danger to the state than political opposition that they instituted a new form of class war to defend themselves against this perceived threat. Despite the combined work of the political and civil police the efforts to cleanse society failed; this failure set the stage for the massive purges that decimated the country in the late 1930s.

"This is a pioneering work that radically revises traditional understandings of Stalin's terror of 1937-38. Based on a meticulous reconstruction of the dynamics and periodization of police campaigns of repression in the 1930s, Shearer demonstrates how social policing in the form of public-order campaigns determined the contour of the terror. State security and public order merged in the hunt for enemies, resulting in the massive social engineering of Soviet society. This is a major new conceptualization based on an unrivaled mastery of the sources."?Lynne Viola, University of Toronto