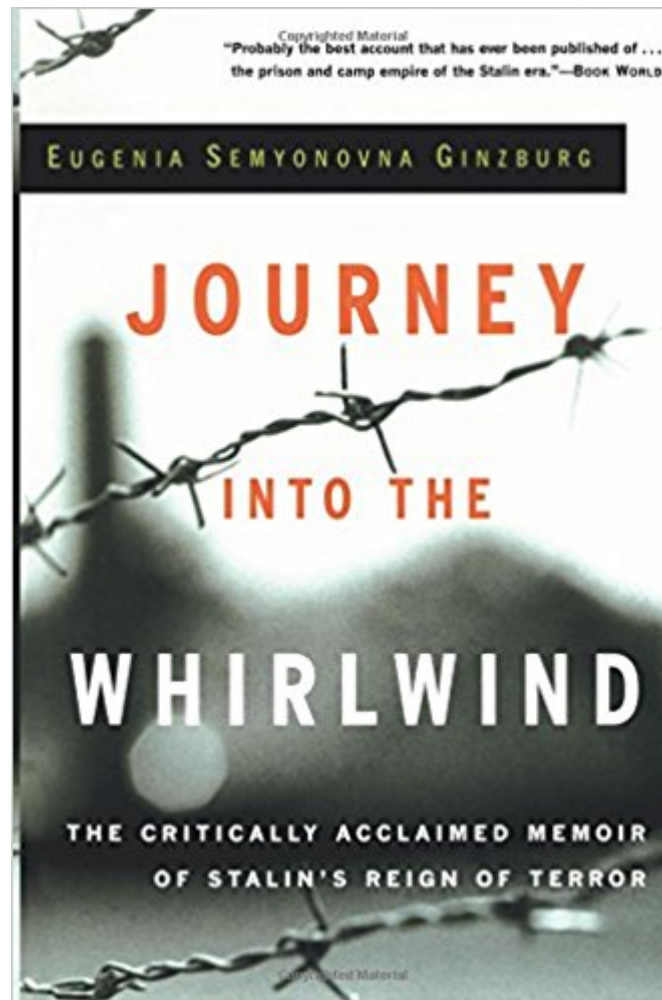




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# Journey Into The Whirlwind



## Synopsis

Eugenia Ginzburg's critically acclaimed memoir of the harrowing eighteen years she spent in prisons and labor camps under Stalin's rule. By the late 1930s, Eugenia Semyonovna Ginzburg had been a loyal and very active member of the Communist Party for many years. Yet like millions of others who suffered during Stalin's reign of terror, she was arrested on trumped-up charges of being a Trotskyist terrorist and counter-revolutionary and sentenced to prison. With an amazing eye for detail, profound strength, and an indefatigable spirit, Ginzburg recounts the years, days, and minutes she endured in prisons and labor camps, including two years of solitary confinement. A classic account of survival, *Journey into the Whirlwind* is considered one of the most important documents of Stalin's regime.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In 1989, the Sovremmenik Theatre in Moscow brought Eugenia Ginzburg's autobiography to the stage for the first time. When the curtain came down an emotional audience rose up and applauded for twenty-four minutes. The tragedy of an entire nation had finally been dramatized in one woman's poignant account. 1937, the year that Eugenia Ginzburg was arrested and falsely charged as a Trotskyist terrorist counterrevolutionary, was only the beginning of Stalin's purges. Nearly six million people were arrested on trumped up charges, and millions were executed or perished in prisons and camps. Eugenia Ginzburg, an historian and loyal Communist Party member, chronicles her own terrifying arrest, interrogation, and eighteen-year imprisonment. She speaks with brutal honesty; her ability to recount the minutes and hours of her internment is surpassed only by her extraordinary will

to survive. These memoirs are important for those who wish to understand Russian history and for anyone who has ever wondered how they might survive in a maelstrom, facing constant betrayals, overwhelming physical hardship, agonizing loneliness, and a longing for the past. Eugenia Ginzburg shows us "how thin the line is between high principles and blinkered intolerance" and yet she emerges from these pages as a compassionate woman with the "conviction that dignity and honor are not just empty words." -- For great reviews of books for girls, check out Let's Hear It for the Girls: 375 Great Books for Readers 2-14. -- From 500 Great Books by Women; review by Rebecca Sullivan --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Text: English, Russian (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

What a tragic life. The author had been snookered by Stalin and his buddies, the thugs, to the max. Surely good 'ole Joe had no idea just what the bad boys did when they locked up enemies of the state. Sadly, the memoir ends much too abruptly, giving me pause that she really had a difficult time coming to grips with the awful truths which became known after Stalin died. So unbelievable to read about the thousands upon thousands of intelligent, loyal citizens were torn from loved ones, tortured and killed. Only the author's extreme stoicism, her love of fellow inmates and her love of poetry kept her alive. If there is a Hell, Stalin gets first billing. Then Hitler. And to think, nobody believed what they heard about the Gulags or the concentration camps. Maybe Hell is a mine inside the Arctic Circle, or perhaps a camp guarded by some ghost SS men, aided by dogs of the animal and human variety.

Eugenia Ginzburg memoirs are not simply a testimony of the victim of Stalinist terror in the Soviet Union but also a talented literately description of her personal observations and experiences during this historic period of dictatorship by a single political party. What truly amazes me is how persistent could be "the utopian dream" for such honest and talented, educated individuals as was Eugenia and her comrades (prisoners of Gulag) that they never, even during their most difficult moments, perceived that the fundamental idea of "the dictatorship of proletariat" has a critical fundamental flaw. The concept of "dictatorship" has historically justified the tyranny (the Asian model in Soviet case). Tyranny whirls the humanity back into slavery masquerading it with the Hippocratic demagoguery of a progressive language its true intent of conquest over the world. Yes, not only in one country but over the world. Courageous and talented writer Eugenia Ginzburg delivers her

experiences in emotional form but without personal anger. I have different reaction when reading *Journey into the Whirlwind*. I see "the utopian dreamers" being the unwilling contributors to the drama created by the totalitarian dictatorships, despite its use of progressive language.

Over the last few days Eugenia Ginzburg's autobiography '*Journey into the Whirlwind*' has been a constant companion. Her book is one of the more well known biographies describing the insanity of the Stalin era as it follows her descent into a bureaucratic and inhumane machine of torture and imprisonment seemingly designed to devour the strength and humanity of an individual's existence. She starts out as a devoted journalist, communist, spouse and mother of two small children that innocently becomes accused of political crimes. She was arrested in 1937. From a modern perspective the situation is Kafkaesque in its surreal embrace. However, as the pages and hours pass Ginzburg's voice describes a dizzying array of psychological and physical horror ranging from her interrogation, isolation and transfer to the Gulag, where the book abruptly ends. It is a painting of inferno and human misery although the glow of hope glimmers constantly through the memories she evokes. Her humanity shines through every page as she describes the life she is forced to endure. There are numerous moments that are luminous in allowing us to appreciate the simple things in life. Ginzburg's love of poetry and literature in general permeates her memoirs as it is one of the strengths that lifts her above the situation she is immersed in and allows her to keep struggling through the ruthless inferno. I felt such an injustice in my heart that this woman had to be dealt such a fate. The horror is of course that millions of innocent people endured similar experiences as the ones Ginzburg describe. Beyond the human qualities in Ginzburg's writing a sense to explore the time of the Gulag is awakened. Ginzburg did indeed write a second part to her autobiography ("*In the Whirlwind*") that I am looking forward to read within the next few weeks. Of course, Solzhenitsyn's "*The First Circle*" and "*The Gulag Archipelago*" beckon in conjunction with Applebaum's study '*Gulag*'. The book was not translated into English until 1975, and is currently out of print in the UK. I am surprised that such a work has not received greater attention. Ginzburg's memoirs certainly makes one appreciate living in peace although it also makes one realize that such 'peace' cannot be taken for granted. Her voice and character lingers in my mind. Highly recommended!

The thing that stands out is Stalin was loved enough to lead his people to defeat the NAZIs.

This book is a classic, along with part two: "*Within the Whirlwind*". It's nice to have this in a kindle

edition, hopefully part two will join it there shortly. The only problem with the kindle edition is that no one proofread it. There are a lot of what look like typos, but are obviously OCR mis-reads when transferring the book to a digital format. A human looking at them would have caught them all. Hopefully, will have someone proofread this and update the digital version. Great Book - buy it anyway.

A heart-stopping memoir. I don't know how she got out alive. I'll never complain again about the inconveniences of modern life!

I decided to read this as it was on David Bowie's 100 recommended books. It's an interesting look into the political world of Russia during that time period and how average people are pulled under oppressive movements. The importance of literature and culture is also highlighted as a lifeline for these prisoners. The dynamic of the mainly Russian women in prison struck me as more communal than anticipated. I am enjoying the read and will finish it, but I'm not blown away by it. There are some unique insights I'm enjoying highlighting.

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