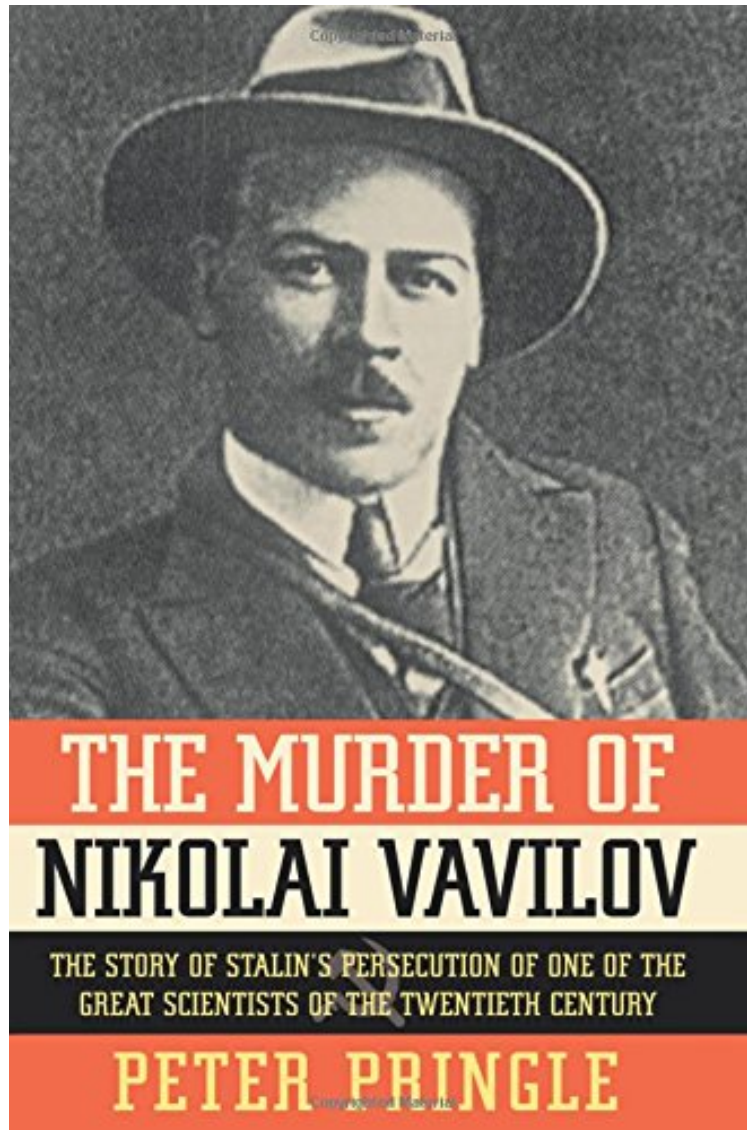


(Download free ebook) The Murder of Nikolai Vavilov: The Story of Stalin's Persecution of One of the Gr

The Murder of Nikolai Vavilov: The Story of Stalin's Persecution of One of the Gr

Peter Pringle

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1745492 in Books 2011-07-02 2011-07-02 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.20 x 6.00l, 1.00
#File Name: 1451656491384 pages | File size: 65.Mb

Peter Pringle : The Murder of Nikolai Vavilov: The Story of Stalin's Persecution of One of the Gr before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Murder of Nikolai Vavilov: The Story of Stalin's Persecution of One of the Gr:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. My favorite book - and a fun, rich, and informative historical NOVEL By Kyle Wilshusen My favorite book actually. A colorful history of a brilliant man that wanted to feed the

world and was in the wrong place at the wrong time. This is a story of adventure as we go along with Vavilov on seed hunting trips and meet the founders of genetics in Vavilov's time. This is a story of history, as we meet the scientists like Vavilov who controlled the wealth in the early 1900s, the poor farming researchers that had a magic physical touch for plants, and the soviet leaders that rose to prominence and had a snakelike nature that brought down people that were as earnest as Vavilov. And this is a story of heroism as Vavilov does not give up on the ideas, which he knows are true, even when it is clear to the reader that he must placate the people supervising soviet science to save his own skin. I have read this story many times and have every time enjoyed the voice and the facts from the author, and the general outline of Vavilov's adventurous life. Buy this book. 14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A Victim of Stalin's Purges By The Spinozanator Nikolai Vavilov was born in 1887, son of a prominent Moscow merchant. He was educated as a plant breeder, using the recently re-discovered work of Gregory Mendel about how inherited traits were passed from generation to generation - elevating plant breeding to the status of a science. By combining plants with desirable qualities, plant breeders could create superior seeds - seeds that were more resistant to disease, produced higher yields, consumed less water, and required shorter growing seasons. In order to do his work, Vavilov believed he needed easy access to a wide variety of seeds. He devoted his life to creating a seed bank, personally going on expeditions all over the world. In the process, he earned the reputation of being a tireless worker, brilliant organizer, and superb scientist. At a young age, he became the head of a major agency in Moscow, dedicated to improving and overhauling Russian agriculture. Then along came Stalin. Like many other accomplished citizens from Russia, Vavilov became a victim of one of Stalin's purges. He came from a wealthy family, was not a communist, and was friendly with some of Stalin's enemies. He was arrested in 1940, charged with serious crimes that were fabricated; then was tortured, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death by firing squad. Later, his sentence was commuted to 20 years in prison, but his jailors starved him to death in 1943. This book flows like a novel and documents his story and that of his nemesis, Lysenko, who captured Stalin's fancy but ruined Russian agriculture for a whole generation. Vavilov spent his whole life experimenting with seeds. His innovations brought about huge strides in knowledge that could, at least theoretically, eliminate world hunger. In reading this account, I was struck with the serendipity factor that causes one scientist to be remembered over another. The young Charles Darwin was captivated by the way species changed over time. Newton dealt with gravity, planetary motion, physics, and calculus. Einstein's theories refined and modified Newton's work. Maxwell discovered electromagnetic fields and documented them mathematically. Madame Curie made significant discoveries about radiation. Bohr and Schrodinger developed quantum theory. Each of these scientists has attracted biographers. The story in this book suggests they probably didn't work any harder or more intelligently than Vavilov, yet they are all much better known. What they (perhaps accidentally) spent their lives studying, for whatever reason, was deemed more worthy of renown than the science of improving agriculture through genetics. Also to his credit, Vavilov appears to have had more positive personality attributes than most, if not all, of the above. This is a guy you would like to be around. Anyway, "The Murder of Nikolai Vavilov" is a fascinating read about a remarkable man who stood out as one of the best scientists of his generation - highly recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A fascinating read By Sean Patterson This book truly shines a different light on a well-known historical event - Stalin's peculiar decision to appoint an almost complete unknown, Trofim Lysenko, to a high position in the Soviet scientific hierarchy. Behind this is the fascinating and tragic story of a scientist whose name genuinely belongs among the great of 20th Century biology, a man who anticipated the modern genetic revolution in crop management and travelled the world assembling an unprecedented seed bank of original crop strains. How political fanaticism and professional jealousies brought him low is not only a timeless tale of human weakness, but also a warning to modern propagandists of politically correct science.

In *The Murder of Nikolai Vavilov*, acclaimed journalist and author Peter Pringle recreates the extraordinary life and tragic end of one of the great scientists of the twentieth century. In a drama of love, revolution, and war that rivals Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*, Pringle tells the story of a young Russian scientist, Nikolai Vavilov, who had a dream of ending hunger and famine in the world. Vavilov's plan would use the emerging science of genetics to breed super plants that could grow anywhere, in any climate, in sandy deserts and freezing tundra, in drought and flood. He would launch botanical expeditions to find these vanishing genes, overlooked by early farmers ignorant of Mendel's laws of heredity. He called it a "mission for all humanity". To the leaders of the young Soviet state, Vavilov's dream fitted perfectly into their larger scheme for a socialist utopia. Lenin supported the adventurous Vavilov, a handsome and seductive young professor, as he became an Indiana Jones, hunting lost botanical treasures on five continents. In a former tsarist palace in what is now St. Petersburg, Vavilov built the world's first seed bank, a quarter of a million specimens, a magnificent living museum of plant diversity that was the envy of scientists everywhere and remains so today. But when Lenin died in 1924 and Stalin took over, Vavilov's dream turned into a nightmare. This son of science was from a bourgeois background, the class of society most despised and distrusted by the Bolsheviks. The new cadres of comrade scientists taunted and insulted him, and Stalin's dreaded secret police built up false charges of sabotage and espionage. Stalin's collectivization of farmland caused chaos in Soviet food production, and millions died in

widespread famine. Vavilov's master plan for improving Soviet crops was designed to work over decades, not a few years, and he could not meet Stalin's impossible demands for immediate results.

From Publishers Weekly Pringle (Food, Inc.), former Moscow bureau chief for the Independent, offers a well-researched and well-written study of the murder of an outstanding Soviet geneticist and the ideological perversion of science. Pringle details the life and career of Nikolai Vavilov (1887-1943) through his rise in the early Soviet scientific establishment and awarding of the Lenin Prize. Vavilov was a scientist's scientist, traveling the world to collect seeds and plants unavailable in Russia in order to transform Soviet and even world agriculture, and ensure the survival of humanity through an adequate food supply. He was one of the U.S.S.R.'s top scientists when Soviet authorities fell in love with the now-discredited notions of a rival scientist, Trofim Lysenko, who believed in the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Using recently opened archives, Pringle is able to detail Vavilov's arrest on trumped-up charges of sabotage and spying, his torture and death in prison. Pringle has added another page to the lengthy tale of the deadly workings of the Soviet bureaucracy and the toll of Stalin's terror on the world by turning science into propaganda. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist A biography of a prominent Russian scientist, Pringle's work pits his subject against one of science's most notorious frauds, Trofim Lysenko. Agronomist Lysenko argued in favor of the influence of the environment on heredity. This idea appealed to Communist precepts of remaking humanity and was personally backed by Stalin in the 1930s. Lysenko's antagonist was the leader of Soviet genetics, Nikolai Vavilov (1887-1943), a brilliant plant biologist of international scientific standing. In a readable and foreboding account of Vavilov's life, Pringle explains how Vavilov accepted the Soviet regime, which initially employed prerevolutionary bourgeois experts in all fields, such as Vavilov in agriculture. But such tolerance of the prerevolutionary past was ideologically repugnant, and the rise of a certifiable proletarian such as Lysenko was of a piece with Stalin's consolidation of power. Tracking the falling political temperature in Vavilov's secret police files, Pringle fluidly synthesizes that source with Vavilov's surviving letters and diaries to create a sympathetic portrait. For readers of Soviet and scientific history aware of Lysenko but, perhaps, not of Lysenko's principal victim. -- Gilbert Taylor "Even by the grim standards of the Stalinist era, Peter Pringle's story of the gifted geneticist Nikolai Vavilov stands out for its gut-wrenching absurdity and callous inhumanity. Pringle's book is an eloquent tribute to Vavilov -- and a chilling case study of Stalin's machinery of paranoia and terror." -- Andrew Nagorski, author of "The Greatest Battle: Stalin, Hitler, and the Desperate Struggle for Moscow That Changed the Course of World War II" "This is a fascinating tale of science, politics, and intrigue. It weaves together the birth of genetics, the life of an amazing scientist, and the horrors of Stalin's collectivization and gulags. Pringle has again produced a great narrative with sweeping historical insights." -- Walter Isaacson, author of "Einstein" "Nikolai Vavilov was in many ways the greatest and most courageous of the early Soviet geneticists who came under murderous attack by a quack, Trofim Lysenko, and his patron Joseph Stalin. Drawing expertly on archival sources and interviews, Peter Pringle provides a gripping account of Vavilov's brilliant rise and subsequent destruction." -- Matthew Meselson, Professor of Molecular Biology, Harvard University "Vividly written... Timely and important... Books such as "The Murder of Nikolai Vavilov" are becoming crucial for remembering Stalin's victims." -- "Nature Genetics" "This exciting and brilliantly written story about a great scientist is long overdue. Vavilov tried to launch a revolution in global agriculture three decades before America's so-called 'green revolution.' His extraordinary life, so full of adventures and brave expeditions, and his struggle for the survival of genetics in the Soviet Union make this book read like a thriller." -- Zhores Medvedev, author of "The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko, Soviet Science, and Soviet Agriculture" "[C]ompelling... tells the story of the Lysenko affair with verve and pace.... [A] timely reminder that public policies must be based on rational decisions drawn from the best data available." -- "Nature" "A revealing account of Vavilov's remarkable career and brutal downfall.... Original and important.... Pringle's account of the brutal politics of Lysenko's campaign against Vavilov is gripping." -- Daniel J. Kevles, "The New York Times Book Review"