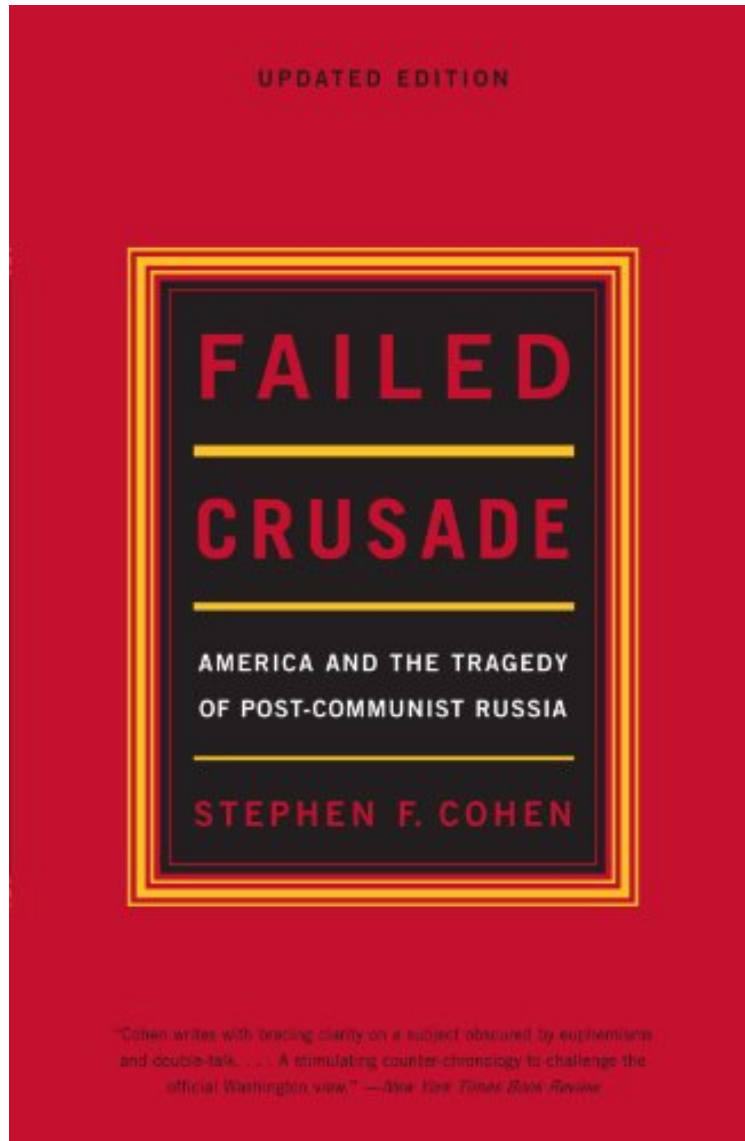


[FREE] Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia

Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia

Stephen F. Cohen Ph.D.

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Stephen F. Cohen Ph.D. : Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great SummaryBy Terrence CrimminsCogent arguments, backed up by statistics. This book is a must read for anyone who really wants to understand America's foreign policy relationship with Russia.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CustomerBook in good condition, okay read.6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Some good points but accusatory focus gets a bit tiresomeBy faringtonThere's been a lot of commentary on the failures of the economic "shock therapy" attempted in Russia in the '90s. I share Cohen's view that it was a disaster. But that doesn't mean I enjoyed this book. It's less about economics and more about moral turpitude: Cohen delivers a scandalized recounting of how everyone in the West (except him, I guess) was deluded by the notion that Russia should be remade in the image of the U.S. for no reason other than American exceptionalism and triumphalism. The real focus of the book is not on why policies failed (that they failed, and were destined to fail, is taken almost as a given); instead it's an account of the folly of U.S. policymakers and media figures in going along with them. What you get is a pretty repetitive narrative which quickly turns to monotonous harping on the shameful attitude of the West in its treatment of Russia.Cohen pauses from this, at least for a little while, to offer some proposals for fixing the situation. Basically he calls for a Marshall Plan/New Deal for Russia, with the bill footed by the U.S. Some of his proposals would be anathema to his hated IMF/World Bank: in particular, the renationalization of certain industries and forgiveness of debt. But interestingly, some of his recommendations are straight from the IMF/World Bank playbook: improved regulation of the banking sector, development of small-to-medium enterprises, and stemming capital flight. But he should know that a lot of what he proposes is more easily proposed than achieved: attempts by the Central Bank of Russia to crack down on insolvent banks resulted in the assassination of the CBR's chairman in 2006 by the owners of one of those banks. And the Russian government has been mostly uninterested in developing small business, preferring to focus on big players in big industries, like Gazprom.That's another issue I have with Cohen's book: while being okay as far as it goes, it doesn't address a lot of the homegrown Russian factors that contributed to the economic disaster of the '90s. He says we should "let Russians be Russians" (quoting George Kennan) without acknowledging the corruption and crime which Russian elites have managed to perfect without the assistance of crusading Westerners. I dare say that the reason government officials are more interested in large industries than small and medium enterprises is that their take from industry kickbacks is more lucrative.Ultimately, I may be more cynical about the West's intentions than Cohen: my view is that the "American way" was being pushed on Russia, not as part of an ideological "crusade", but in order to create a suitable environment for Western businesses so they could invade the place, set up shop, get a competitive advantage over Russian businesses, and profit from Russia's "new frontier".Anyway, Cohen is on the mark on a number of points, but I found his emphasis on moral indignation at the "crusade" of the West to be tiresome after a while, and not very informative.

What really happened in Russia after the end of the Soviet Union, and how badly experts and the media misjudged it.Failed Crusade is a deeply informed and passionate call for a fundamentally different American-Russian relationship in the post-Yeltsin era. Author Stephen Cohen shows that what US officials and other experts call "reform" has for most Russians been a catastrophic development?namely the unprecedented demodernization of a twentieth-century country?and for the United States the worst foreign policy disaster since Vietnam. What emerges is an alarming analysis of nuclear-laden Russia after 1991, representing an even greater threat to our national security than during the Cold War, and an indictment of American journalists and policy makers who failed to see or report the truth about the complicity of U.S. policy in a great human tragedy. This paperback edition has been updated to reflect the events of the last year. "Cohen writes with bracing clarity on a subject obscured by euphemisms and double talk."?Robert D. Kaplan, New York Times Book Review

From Publishers WeeklyWhen the Soviet Union collapsed nearly a decade ago, the U.S. adopted a policy of activist support for the successor regime of Boris Yeltsin and rarely questioned that strategy. Today, Russia is burdened with an economy in shambles, an alarming national health crisis and, many fear, nuclear insecurity. Anti-Americanism is on the rise and a career secret policeman heads the Kremlin, yet Washington has still not re-assessed its Russia policy. That worries Cohen, a Russia scholar with a track record for contrarian views. The end of the Cold War, he argues, exacted a harsher penalty on the Russian people than any military loss could have, and the "aid" proffered by the U.S., in the form of technocratic blueprints for free markets, is much to blame. In a chilling analogy, Cohen notes that the traditional role of the U.S. as ally to Russia is one in which Washington "pressured a collapsing Russia to remain in the carnage." Russia survived the allied blood-lettings of two World Wars, but Cohen sees the U.S.-prescribed "shock-therapy" as fatal. The result: societal and economic devastation so severe that it warrants a new Marshall Plan and threatens U.S. national security more than the Cold War ever did. Cohen's criticism is sharp and angry. He targets policy-makers and economic advisers for their ignorance of Russian history; he lambastes scholars for their misguided prognosis of Russia's progress; and he scorns foreign journalists for a more unforgivable sinAtouting the "Washington Consensus" in spite of the growing catastrophe surrounding them. (Sept.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalCohen (Russian studies and history, New York Univ.) here presents an opinion not held by

most U.S. officials and Russian "experts": that the so-called democratization of post-Soviet Russia has been a failure. The author lays out his theories in three parts: he describes how these experts crusaded for a Russia they wanted and, in doing so, managed to overlook what was really taking place in the country. Next, he includes a series of articles he has written since 1992, which further describes the actual political and economic upheaval that has been taking place there. Finally, he presents solutions to remedy Russia's woes and help bring it into the 21st century. Although Cohen is an accomplished author (*Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*; *Sovieticus: American Perceptions and Soviet Realities*), his style tends to be gloating and melodramatic. However, this is a good collection that offers varying opinions of modern Russian history. For academic libraries. AJill Jaracz, Chicago Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist As a CBS News consultant, New York University professor Cohen is among the more visible Russia watchers. He is also an unapologetic critic of U.S. policy; the disastrous results of that policy are Failed Crusade's subject. In part 1, Cohen describes the arrogant missionary crusade to impose U.S. political and economic institutions on the former Soviet Union--a crusade led by American policy makers, with journalists and academics as cheerleaders--and the desperate consequences for the Russian people of their elected leaders' acceptance of this program. Part 2 gathers 10 Cohen critiques of this American crusade published between 1992 and 1998; postscripts update each article. In part 3, Cohen urges that the goal of U.S. policy should be to reduce the risk of nuclear disaster by stabilizing this giant nuclear power. This can be accomplished, he argues, only by acknowledging our crusade's failure, providing massive aid and debt relief to allow the Russian people to develop political and economic institutions that serve their needs, and truly cooperating with Russia in its efforts to define its future. Mary Carroll Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved