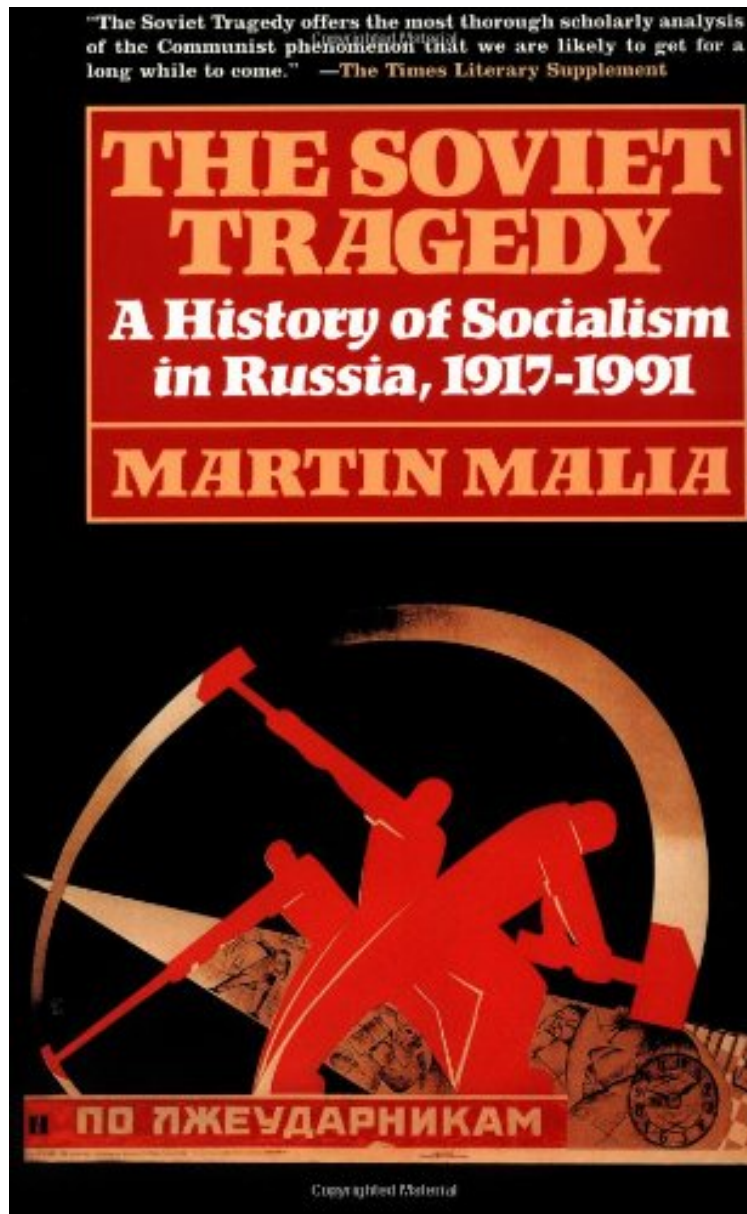


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The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991

Martin Malia

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Martin Malia : The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Stellar!By ToddThis is quite simply a stellar history of the USSR from the point that it was a twinkling in Lenin's eye to its downfall. It includes much interesting commentary that puts each step into perspective. If you're interested in the history of the USSR you must read this book. There is one thing about it that drove me absolutely nuts--the author's habit of using latin and russian words with no explanation of what they mean. Here's an example:"As a practical matter, therefore, socialism leads not to an assault on the specific abuses of "capitalism" but to an assault on reality tout court. It becomes, in effect, an effort to suppress the real world, and this is something that cannot succeed in the long run. But for a protracted period this effort can succeed in creating a surreal world, one defined by the paradox that inefficiency, poverty, and brutality can be officially presented as the summum bonum of society, and one where society is unable to challenge this fraud."I'd like to just smack him for that!1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Do not buy this book if you were expecting a general historyBy CustomerFirst off, this book is not a true history, but rather a political commentary. Instead of recounting events, discussing the effects, and analyzing the literature of the time, Malia focuses on concepts and ideas concerning the October revolution and the aftermath. If you want a true historical treatment of Russian history between 1917 and 1991, then might I suggest much more effective works such as "The Rise and Fall of Communism in Russia", and other works.It seems like Malia just wants to use as many words as he can find in a thesaurus. This book illustrates how modern intellectuals seem to be more concerned with speaking as R3 as possible, regardless of whether or not they can make a coherent point. I feel like the first 100 pages of this work could have been compressed into 50 or less, because half the time Malia is twisting himself into tighter and tighter theoretical and philosophical circles, instead of establishing needed information and make coherent points about it.This is not a bad book by any means, but the fact that after reading through hundreds of pages and never finding an actual history book is misleading. Many other authors who are just as intelligent and experienced with Communism in Russia can offer you the book you were looking for.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Extreme eloquenceBy Robert E. JohnsonMalia writes so well. He knows the history, but he isn't just writing academic history here. He announces his thesis in the introduction, and follows through with extreme eloquence.

"The Soviet Tragedy is an essential coda to the literature of Soviet studies...Insofar as [he] returns the power of ideology to its central place in Soviet history, Malia has made an enormous contribution. He has written the history of a utopian illusion and the tragic consequences it had for the people of the Soviet Union and the world." -- David Remnick, The New York Review of Books "In Martin Malia, the Soviet Union had one of its most acute observers. With this book, it may well have found the cornerstone of its history." -- Francois Furet, author of Interpreting the French Revolution "The Soviet Tragedy offers the most thorough scholarly analysis of the Communist phenomenon that we are likely to get for a long while to come...Malia states that his narrative is intended 'to substantiate the basic argument,' and this is certainly an argumentative book, which drives its thesis home with hammer blows. On this breathtaking journey, Malia is a witty and often brilliantly penetrating guide. He has much wisdom to impart." -- The Times Literary Supplement "This is history at the high level, well deployed factually, but particularly worthwhile in the philosophical and political context -- at once a view and an overview." -- The Washington Post

.com If the Bolshevik revolution shook the world, the 74-year reign of socialists in the former Soviet Union certainly changed it. Now that the rule is over--at least for the moment--historians are beginning the process of placing the experience into its political, social and global contexts. Martin Malia, a former history professor at the University of California, Berkeley, has contributed mightily to that process with this comprehensive look at the entire period of socialist rule, from its origins to the roots of its collapse. He leaves no conceptual stone unturned, providing lively insights to ideas and ideologies while offering a complete summary of the complex history.From Publishers WeeklyThis shrewd analysis of the failure of the Soviet experiment dismantles the view that the Soviet regime originated in a genuinely popular revolution rather than a conspiratorial coup and that the Bolsheviks' quest for democratic socialism was derailed by pressing circumstances. Malia traces a direct link between Lenin's monolithic one-party state and Stalin's purges, pulverization of civil society and institutionalization of terror. A former professor of history at UC Berkeley, the author contends that Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev oscillated between attempts to reform and to preserve Stalin's legacy, which aggravated Communism's systemic problems. This study closes with a look at post-Communist Russia in near-total economic chaos. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalMalia's lengthy postmortem scans the entire sweep of applied socialism in Russia--from the glory days of 1917 to high Stalinism and on to its recent collapse. In an almost archaeological sense, Malia (history, formerly Univ. of California-Berkeley) pokes at the various strata of socialism, noting small shifts and subtle changes that become obvious only when he explains them. Yet major observations emerge as well, e.g., that the Communist Party was able to act at will only because of an oppositional void shaped by the atomizing effects of World War I. Unfortunately, Malia energetically smashes and dispenses with any historiographical interpretations that aren't unabashedly anti-Communist. Interesting and frequently illuminating, but don't expect much balance or objectivity; for larger collections.- Mark R. Yerburgh, Fern Ridge Community Lib., Veneta, Ore.Copyright 1994 Reed Business

