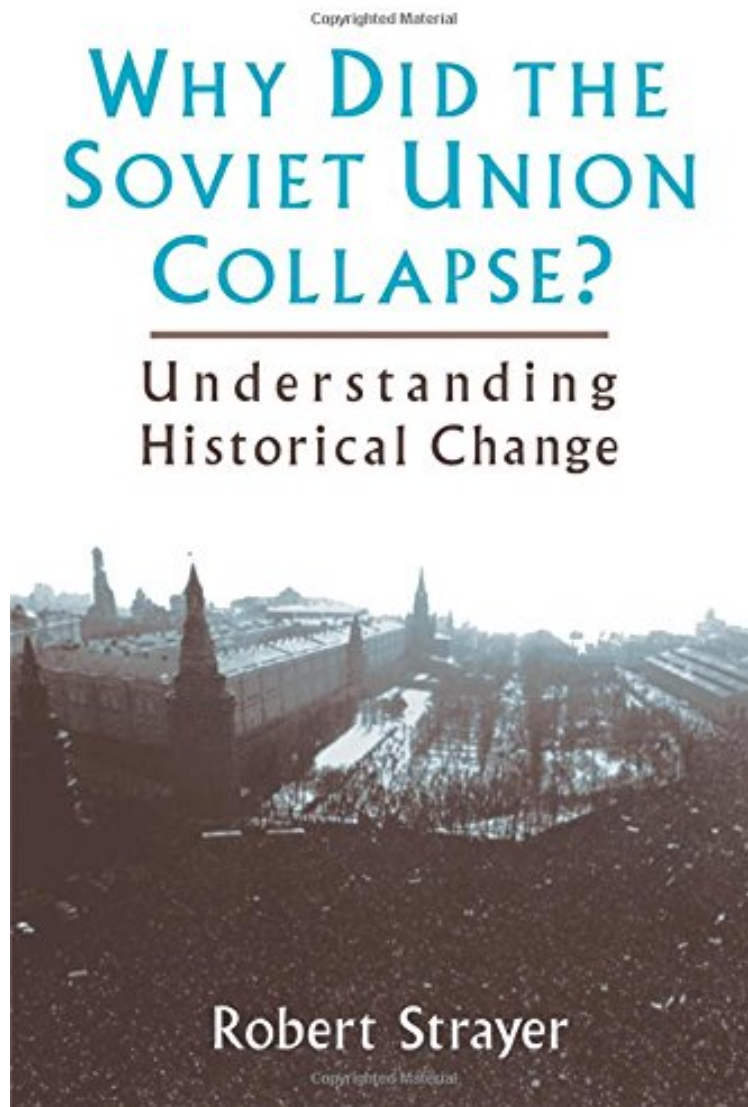


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Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?: Understanding Historical Change

Robert Strayer

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Robert Strayer : Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?: Understanding Historical Change before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?: Understanding Historical Change:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Excellent By Not really youI absolutely loved the book. It provides numbers, analysis, objective political and financial data and a very balanced presentation of the whole situation, in

depth of time. You don't need to be a financial or political specialist to "get" the book, but some background does help. It's 4 stars for me. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. WORST By Alexey Tuzikov I must reveal that I am Russian. I have never read a book more detached from reality. The author ABSOLUTELY doesn't understand Russia and its internal processes. False historical analogies, wrong conclusions, misinterpreted signals. If you want understand dissolution of USSR or modern Russia this should be your last book, or better don't read it at all. 12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Overview By Jonathon Lever Strayer's book is more than proposing one particular thesis as to why the USSR is no longer in existence. His book is more about using the events that happened between 1985 and 1991 (while keeping in mind the context of 1917-1985) to look at how a historian does his/her work. Rather than proposing one thesis and saying this is the reason for the collapse, Strayer examines a multitude of theses and discusses the pros and cons of each of them from a historians perspective. I would recommend this book for two reasons, one if you want to know what events influenced the collapse of the USSR, this book does a good job (well documented too) of providing an overview of those events. From the rise of Gorbachev to the failed coup attempt. The second reason I would recommend this book is that from the perspective of a history teacher, Strayer gives an excellent opportunity to look at how historians analyze events and try to develop a thesis to fit those events. This book would serve as an excellent way to look at the historian's trade. Overall, Strayer has given people several theses and the information to back those theses so that they can make up their own minds as to why the USSR is no longer around.

Taking the Soviet collapse - the most cataclysmic event of the recent past - as a case study, this text engages students in the exercise of historical analysis, interpretation and explanation. In exploring the question posed by the title, the author introduces and applies such organizing concepts as great power conflict, imperial decline, revolution, ethnic conflict, colonialism, economic development, totalitarian ideology, and transition to democracy in a most accessible way. Questions and controversies, and extracts from documentary and literary sources, anchor the text at key points. This book is intended for use in history and political science courses on the Soviet Union or more generally on the 20th century.

From Library Journal The reversion of the Soviet Union to Russia has generated a cottage industry of assessments. Strayer (SUNY at Brockport) has produced a nicely written college text on the subject that would be useful to both political science and history students. Narrower in focus than Michael Kort's recent *The Soviet Colossus* (M.E. Sharpe, 1996, 4th ed.) or Paul Dukes's *A History of Russia* (Duke Univ., 1998, 3d. ed.), and complementary to Fred Coleman's *The Decline and Fall of the Soviet Empire* (LJ 5/1/96), Strayer's study not only incorporates basic historical facts but also muses on how historians do their work. Two-thirds of his book deals with the period after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the mid-1980s, and Strayer thoroughly examines what Gorbachev tried to accomplish and why he failed. Those with a general curiosity about the denouement of the late, great Soviet Union will benefit from Strayer's intelligent survey. For most collections. Edward Goedeken, Iowa State Univ. Lib., Ames Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.