

《The Rise and Fall of》

图书基本信息

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内容概要

The Russian Revolution of 1917, although sparked by the ravages of World War I, was the culmination of years of social unrest and often brutal repression. The people's feelings of despair were manipulated by political activists who were opposed to the autocratic rule of the czar. Soviet Communism, founded on the works of Karl Marx, was developed by Lenin and his co-revolutionaries and, following the momentous events of 1917 and the subsequent civil war, was imposed on the rest of Russia. In the wake of World War II, Stalin, Lenin's brutal successor, imposed his own brand of Communism on Eastern Europe, drawing the so-called Iron Curtain across the map of Europe.

Despite the 1956 uprising in Hungary and the Prague Spring of 1968, Stalin's iron grip, maintained by later Soviet leaders, seemed unbreakable, and the Cold War with the West appeared unlikely to thaw. However, the early 1980s saw glimpses of what was to follow, with the growth of pro-democracy movements in the Warsaw Pact countries. Suddenly, in 1989, against a backdrop of economic chaos, growing political unrest and the reforming regime of Mikhail Gorbachev, the Eastern bloc began to crumble. The Berlin Wall, a symbol of the Cold War, fell, re-uniting East and West Germany. A series of successful revolutions, some bloodier than others, was sparked off in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania.

The collapse of the Warsaw Pact prompted greater unrest in the Soviet Union, particularly in the Baltic states and in non-Russian republics in the Soviet Union. Undeclared civil wars between different ethnic groups broke out, Gorbachev was ousted, and the economic and social stability of Russia itself seemed in doubt. The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire recounts the history of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the present day. An authoritative text and scores of revealing photographs have been combined to produce an account of turbulent times that is both illuminating and thought provoking.

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