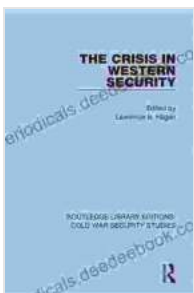


Soviet Nationalities in Strategic Perspective: Resolving Nationalism, Revolution, and Empire

The Soviet Union was a multinational state, comprising over 100 different ethnic groups. The relationship between the Soviet state and its constituent nationalities was complex and often fraught with tension. This book examines the Soviet nationalities question from a strategic perspective, arguing that the Soviet state sought to resolve the tensions between nationalism, revolution, and empire by adopting a policy of "divide and rule." This policy involved pitting different nationalities against each other, and playing off their competing interests to maintain control.



Soviet Nationalities in Strategic Perspective (Routledge Library Editions: Cold War Security Studies Book 52)

by S. Enders Wimbush

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 127257 KB

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Print length : 284 pages



The book provides a detailed analysis of the Soviet nationalities policy, and its impact on the development of the Soviet Union. It begins by examining the origins of the Soviet nationalities policy, in the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. It then traces the development of the policy under Stalin,

Khrushchev, and Brezhnev. Finally, it assesses the impact of the nationalities policy on the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The book argues that the Soviet nationalities policy was a fundamentally flawed attempt to resolve the tensions between nationalism, revolution, and empire. It argues that the policy failed to address the legitimate aspirations of the Soviet nationalities, and instead served to alienate them from the Soviet state. Ultimately, the book concludes that the Soviet nationalities policy was a major contributing factor to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Origins of the Soviet Nationalities Policy

The origins of the Soviet nationalities policy can be traced back to the writings of Marx and Engels. Marx and Engels believed that the nation-state was a product of capitalism, and that it would eventually be superseded by a classless, stateless society. They argued that the national question was a secondary issue, which would be resolved as part of the broader socialist revolution.

Lenin developed Marx and Engels' ideas on the national question. He argued that the national question was a complex and multifaceted issue, which could not be reduced to a simple class struggle. He recognized the importance of national self-determination, but he also argued that it was necessary to balance the rights of nations with the interests of the working class as a whole.

The Soviet nationalities policy was developed in the early years of the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Lenin. The policy was based on the principle of self-determination for all nations. This principle was enshrined in the Soviet constitution, which guaranteed the right of all nations to secede from the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet government also

recognized the need to maintain a strong and unified state. In order to achieve this, the government adopted a policy of "divide and rule." This policy involved pitting different nationalities against each other, and playing off their competing interests to maintain control.

The Soviet Nationalities Policy under Stalin

The Soviet nationalities policy underwent a significant change under Stalin. Stalin was a strong believer in the importance of a centralized state, and he saw the national question as a threat to Soviet unity. He argued that the Soviet Union was a "multinational state," and that the interests of the Soviet state as a whole should take precedence over the interests of individual nationalities.

Under Stalin, the Soviet government adopted a policy of Russification. This policy involved promoting the Russian language and culture at the expense of other national cultures. The government also suppressed nationalist movements and deported entire nationalities to Siberia and Central Asia. Stalin's policies led to widespread resentment among the Soviet nationalities, and played a major role in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Nationalities Policy under Khrushchev and Brezhnev

After Stalin's death, the Soviet nationalities policy underwent a slight thaw under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Khrushchev and Brezhnev recognized the need to address the concerns of the Soviet nationalities, and they adopted a policy of "national harmony." This policy involved promoting economic and cultural development in the non-Russian republics. However, the Soviet government continued to suppress nationalist movements, and the Russification policy remained in place.

Despite the Soviet government's efforts to promote national harmony, tensions between the nationalities continued to simmer. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were a number of nationalist uprisings in the non-Russian republics. These uprisings were suppressed by the Soviet government, but they demonstrated the growing dissatisfaction with the Soviet nationalities policy.

The Impact of the Soviet Nationalities Policy on the Collapse of the Soviet Union

The Soviet nationalities policy played a major role in the collapse of the Soviet Union. The policy failed to address the legitimate aspirations of the Soviet nationalities, and instead served to alienate them from the Soviet state. The Russification policy, in particular, created a deep sense of resentment among the non-Russian nationalities.

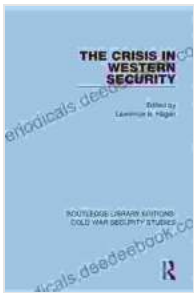
In the late 1980s, the Soviet Union began to experience a wave of nationalist uprisings. These uprisings were led by nationalist movements that had been repressed by the Soviet government for decades. The Soviet government was unable to suppress these uprisings, and the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

The Soviet nationalities policy was a fundamentally flawed attempt to resolve the tensions between nationalism, revolution, and empire. The policy failed to address the legitimate aspirations of the Soviet nationalities, and instead served to alienate them from the Soviet state. Ultimately, the Soviet nationalities policy was a major contributing factor to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union's experience with the national question provides a cautionary tale for other multinational states. It demonstrates the dangers

of trying to suppress nationalism, and the importance of respecting the rights of all nations.

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