

Heaven on earth : the rise and fall of socialism

Muravchik, Joshua. Encounter Books, 2002

- 417p, 1-893554-45-7 \$27.95
- **LC Call Number:** HX36

As much brilliant essay as historical narrative, this work traces the development of socialism from the "Conspiracy of Equals" in the French Revolution to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in our own time. Muravchik (American Enterprise Institute) moves from Babeuf to Owen, from Marx to Mao, and from Attlee to Blair. He considers the case of the US, where Gompers and Meany refused to embrace political socialism, and of Tanzania, where Nyerere did (with appalling consequences). At the end, Muravchik pays special attention to the reforms of Deng Xiaoping in China and the failure of the kibbutz movement in Israel. He sees socialism as having its wellsprings in a sense of social justice so strong that its intensity can only be described as religious. And yet, it led to disastrous results, most of all when authoritarian leaders had recourse to violence. Even in its milder forms it failed, as Muravchik shows with considerable insight when he examines the demise of socialism in Britain. This is contemporary history at its best. Muravchik has provided a new perspective on the most important ideological movement in the past two centuries. Highly recommended for all collections.

Summing Up:

- **Reviewer:** S. Bailey, Knox College
- **Recommendation:**
- **Readership Level:** All Readership Levels, General Readers, Lower-division Undergraduates, Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty, Two-Year Technical Program Students, Professionals/Practitioners
- **Interdisciplinary Subjects:**
- **Subject:** Social & Behavioral Sciences - History, Geography & Area Studies
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