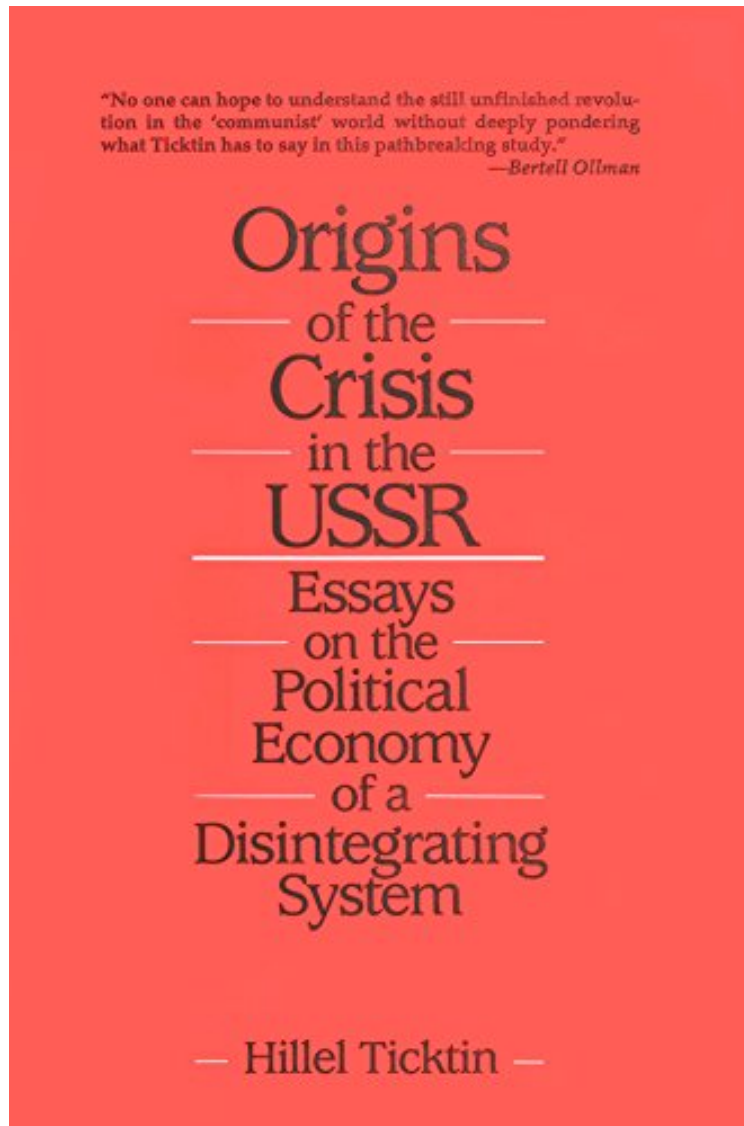


[E-BOOK] Origins of the Crisis in the U.S.S.R.: Essays on the Political Economy of a Disintegrating System: Essays on the Political Economy of a Disintegrating System

Origins of the Crisis in the U.S.S.R.: Essays on the Political Economy of a Disintegrating System: Essays on the Political Economy of a Disintegrating System

Hillel Ticktin

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The usual Marxist rubbish combined with some quite interesting insights into the USSR's collapse. By Bayard B. I give this book two stars for its poor Marxist readability (which seems to be typical for the genre) but would give it four stars for its analysis of the reasons for the economic decline (and ultimate collapse) of the USSR. The author has a typical hazy Marxist understanding of what economic competition is and how it works in an economic system. He also has a poor understanding of what the function of prices is, i.e., to allocate scarce goods / resources in an efficient manner. The following sentence from page 135 probably says it all : "... Firms like IBM see to it that their products are so differentiated that the out-of-date and less reliable models are designated for the less fortunate." The idea that products are differentiated by price with more advanced and capable products coating more than less sophisticated products evidently escapes him. And the idea that IBM or any other company can designate their products for anybody is ludicrous. Choice apparently does not enter into his economic world. To cite my own example: I drive a Mercedes Benz E 350 car; simultaneously, I choose to buy my shirts and socks at Costco. I voluntarily chose to make those kinds of purchases. I do not regard lower priced Costco shirts and socks as only being suitable for the less fortunate! Ignoring the Marxist rubbish, his Chapter 8 on "The Present Economic Crisis in the USSR" was quite interesting (the book was published in 1992).

Hillel Ticktin has been one of the most controversial figures in Soviet studies for 25 years. His assertions that the Soviet economy was hopelessly inefficient, that the ruble was a sham, and that the elite was desperate once sounded outrageous. Ticktin consistently argued that perestroika would fail. In his view the USSR was and remained inherently Stalinist. It might lurch back and forth between reformist and reactionary leadership factions but, the system could not evolve, nor could it be restructured. Ultimately, it could only disintegrate, and when it did, the workers would hold the balance. This collection of essays offers a thorough sample of his views.