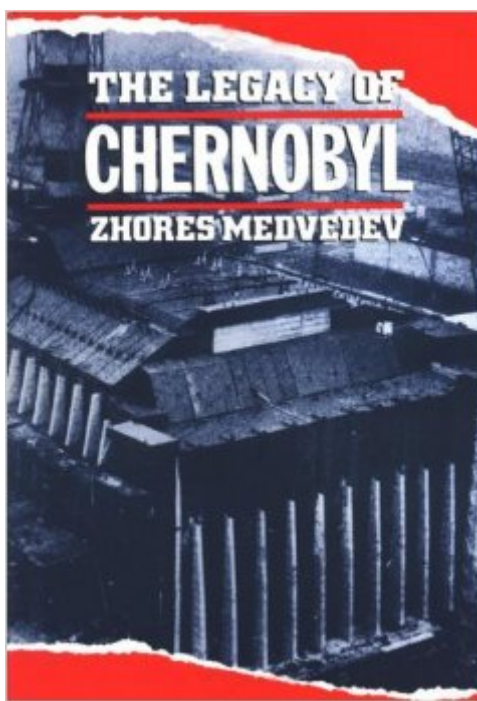


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# The Legacy Of Chernobyl



## Synopsis

"A damning history of the Chernobyl affair, from its origins in the plant's primitive design and careless management to the economic and political crisis the accident precipitated." —Clenn Garelik, *New York Times Book Review* On the morning of April 26, 1986, a Soviet nuclear plant at Chernobyl (near Kiev) exploded, pouring radioactivity into the environment and setting off the worst disaster in the history of nuclear energy. Now a former Soviet scientist gives a comprehensive account of the catastrophe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Many of the other reviewers have stated that it starts out with a bang (pun intended) and then gets bogged down in trivia. My reading of the book matches these criticisms. So, what's good, what's missing, & what's Bad? The Good: The story walks the reader through the accident, its causes, and its immediate consequences. This is both a writeup of the event, but the reason for performing the "test" which caused the accident. The Missing: The details and personal recollections of those principals involved in the original accident and the firemen, helicopter pilots, and workers on the

ground who worked to put the graphite fire out and quell the release of radioactivity. Some details and personal recollections are in the book, but way too few. (Note many of the firemen, helicopter pilots, and ground workers during the initial emergency days died of radiation poisoning. They went in and performed their jobs at great hazard to themselves, many without knowledge of what they were up against.) The Bad: After the initial reporting, the book bogs down in the details of the evacuations and radioactive poisoning of the land without a clear writeup on what really happened. It tries, but just doesn't quite make it. Some reviews mention that the book also throws out many technical terms without a clear explanation of what they really mean. Here are a few quick & dirty definitions that may help: Radiological terms: Many of these are thrown about without a clear definition of what they really mean. Here are some quick clarifications: A) REM = a dose of absorbed radiation over time by a person. 100 REM in a short exposure time-frame is basically fatal.

This book started off very insightful giving us details about the Soviet Nuclear reactors and how they came to be. The book did a great job of sharing how the Soviet System itself built the foundation for the disaster that was Chernobyl. The Legacy of Chernobyl is a good book but again not a great book. One reviewer says you must be a nuclear engineer to enjoy the book. I actually found the engineering aspects of the book fantastic. Where I felt The Legacy of Chernobyl lost its mojo was when it started talking about the effects of the disaster on the eco-system. The Legacy of Chernobyl goes deep into the public health effects of the radiation and how its plume dispersed toxins all over the USSR and Europe. When The Legacy of Chernobyl talks about the reactors it was fine. When The Legacy of Chernobyl talked of how the Soviet system failed to create the kinds of free fearless openness needed to take decisions early on that would have lessened this disaster. In its own way this book chronicles the heroic exploits of those firemen, control room operators and others who died making sure the reactor did not explode after falling into the water filled bubbling pool below. The Legacy of Chernobyl is well worth its price for the awesome insights into "Soviet Culture & Technology" it shares mostly in the beginning to middle of the book. The saddest thing is for all its failings The Legacy of Chernobyl reveals the RBMK 1000 reactor was not entirely bad.

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