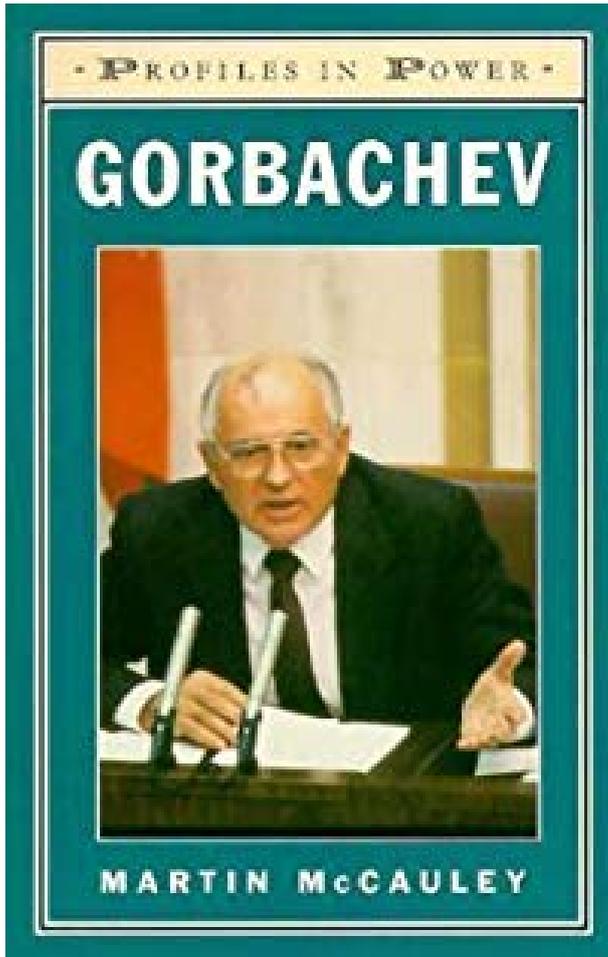


# Gorbachev



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Here is the first major study of Gorbachev to be written in the light of his own uniquely revealing (though self-serving) memoirs, with their startlingly intimate view of Kremlin life.

Martin McCauley, a leading authority on the Soviet era, uses these and other recent materials with an acute critical intelligence to provide both an objective account of what happened - and why - during the momentous period of Soviet reform, failure and collapse, and also an authoritative assessment of Gorbachev himself.

Born in 1931 to a peasant family - his mother, a devout Orthodox Christian who died in 1995, never learned to read or write - Gorbachev became one of the architects of the late twentieth-century world. Himself a communist, he moved gradually towards social democracy, and in so doing dismantled the dictatorship that had held Russia in a vice for over 70 years.

He effected this momentous change without civil war - in itself a breathtaking achievement. He was successful elsewhere. He attempted to re-introduce elements of a market economy, with reform from above (perestroika) and reform from below (glasnost); but only accelerated Russia's economic decline. However, it

was his failure to defuse the nationalist aspirations of Russia's subject peoples that eventually brought him down. Gorbachev's legacy to Russia has been decidedly mixed; but he nevertheless gave freedom to people who had not known it for three-quarters of a century. His wider reputation stands much higher, as befits the man who, more than anyone else, helped end the Cold War. But how much of what he achieved did he intend? How much of what he failed to achieve did he misjudge? These are questions which Martin McCauley addresses in this incisive study. It is a milestone in Soviet historiography; and - in its immediacy - as gripping as a Cold War thriller as it opens up the claustrophobic and intensely personal world of the Soviet leadership.