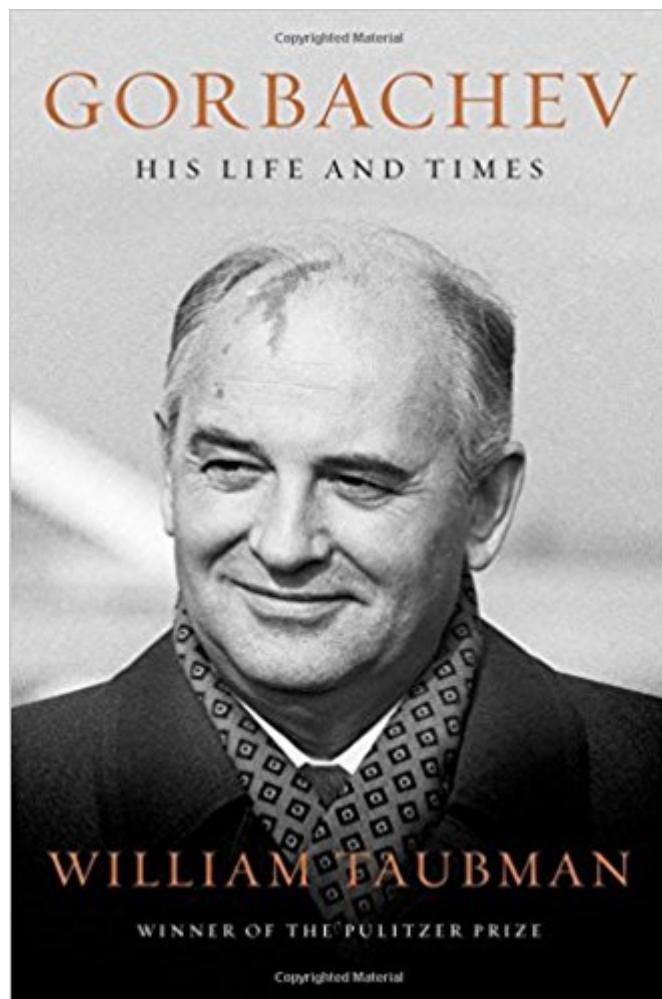


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Gorbachev: His Life And Times



Synopsis

The definitive biography of the transformational world leader by the Pulitzer Prizeâ “winning author of Khrushchev. When Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985, the USSR was one of the worldâ ™s two superpowers. By 1989, his liberal policies of perestroika and glasnost had permanently transformed Soviet Communism, and had made enemies of radicals on the right and left. By 1990 he, more than anyone else, had ended the Cold War, and in 1991, after barely escaping from a coup attempt, he unintentionally presided over the collapse of the Soviet Union he had tried to save. In the first comprehensive biography of the final Soviet leader, William Taubman shows how a peasant boy became the Soviet systemâ ™s gravedigger, how he clambered to the top of a system designed to keep people like him down, how he found common ground with Americaâ ™s arch-conservative president Ronald Reagan, and how he permitted the USSR and its East European empire to break apart without using force to preserve them. Throughout, Taubman portrays the many sides of Gorbachevâ ™s unique character that, by Gorbachevâ ™s own admission, make him â œdifficult to understand.â • Was he in fact a truly great leader, or was he brought low in the end by his own shortcomings, as well as by the unyielding forces he faced? Drawing on interviews with Gorbachev himself, transcripts and documents from the Russian archives, and interviews with Kremlin aides and adversaries, as well as foreign leaders, Taubmanâ ™s intensely personal portrait extends to Gorbachevâ ™s remarkable marriage to a woman he deeply loved, and to the family that they raised together. Nuanced and poignant, yet unsparing and honest, this sweeping account has all the amplitude of a great Russian novel. 90 illustrations

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Customer Reviews

âœMasterly....[This] richly layered portrait....will surely stand as the definitive English-language chronicle of this most intriguing figure for many years to come.â • - Peter Baker, New York Times Book Reviewâœ[A] deeply penetrating history and engrossing psychological study....Taubman draws on a wide range of sources and interviews...to render every major development of the former Soviet leaderâ™s six-year tenure with depth and completeness.â • - Robert Legvold, Foreign AffairsâœWilliam Taubman has now done for Gorbachev what he had previously done for Khrushchev, giving us the full life deeply grounded in the Soviet and Russian archives, here with the added benefit of Gorbachevâ™s complete cooperation. Perhaps a hundred years from now, when our perspective on Russiaâ™s role in the world has further clarified, another biography will be needed. For now, however, Gorbachev is the closest thing to the final word that history allows.â • - Joseph Ellis, author of *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*âœThis is a meticulously researched, carefully nuanced, and immensely readable biography of a remarkable, but insufficiently understood, twentieth-century political leader. Taubmanâ™s book is destined to remain the fullest and most authoritative life of Gorbachev for years to come.â • - Archie Brown, author of *The Myth of the Strong Leader* and *The Rise and Fall of Communism*âœComprehensive, judicious, utterly absorbing, William Taubmanâ™s *Gorbachev: His Life and Times* gives us rare insight into the man who changed his country and world politics. A model of careful research and compelling narrative skill, this biography is destined to become a modern classic.â • - Jack F. Matlock, Jr., author of *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended*âœI have had the privilege of knowing many of the great men and women who brought momentous change to the last part of the twentieth century. My friend Mikhail Gorbachev was outstanding among them. So this biography, especially with its attention to his early formative years, is a great addition to our understanding of a key historical period.â • - George P. ShultzâœWilliam Taubman has written a remarkable book. He has, at once, captured the complexity of the man, while making Gorbachevâ™s timesâ• both frightening and hopefulâ• come alive. The history of the USSR and the world would have been far different if Mikhail Gorbachev had not come to power.â • - Susan EisenhowerâœA rich and revealing portrait and a thoroughly engrossing read, Taubmanâ™s penetrating examination of Gorbachevâ™s rise and fall undermines the argument that Russia can be ruled only by dictators and autocrats--while also exposing how steeply the odds are stacked against any efforts at real reform.â • - John Beyrle, Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia,

2008-2011â œRemarkably, the two most memorable leaders of the Soviet Union in the last half of its existence now have the same superb biographer. William Taubman's Gorbachev, like his Khrushchev, is an extraordinary achievement, full of new information, filled with shrewd judgments, a two-in-a-row triumph in the writing of great lives.â • - John Lewis Gaddis, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *George F. Kennan: An American Life*â œWilliam Taubmanâ ™s biography of Mikhail Gorbachev is a much needed, uniquely sourced account of the life, work, and times of the man who critically shaped a peaceful end to the Cold War and great Soviet experiment. Based on a unique blend of archival sources, personal memoirs, and a not-to-be-repeated set of interviews with key actors, Taubmanâ ™s superbly written portrait will become the essential and standard work on his subject and a primary source for any future historians of this period.â • - James F. Collins, Former U.S. Ambassador to Moscow, 1997-2001

William Taubman is the Bertrand Snell Professor of Political Science Emeritus at Amherst College. His biography, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*, won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. He lives in Amherst, Massachusetts.

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