



# Return to the NEP: The False Promise of Leninism and the Failure of Perestroika

*Oscar J. Bandelin*

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No scholar denies Mikhail S. Gorbachev's role in developing a new approach to Soviet socialism, but most writers emphasize the radical departure from traditional Soviet ideology that *perestroika* seemed to represent. This work presents *perestroika* as part of the continuum of European intellectual history. It examines the sources of Gorbachev's thinking and action in 19th-century thought, the development of Russian Marxism through the intellectual crisis at the turn of the 20th century, the pragmatic and philosophical challenges to the Marxist-Leninist paradigm, Stalinism and its critics, and reform Communism in post World War II Eastern Europe. Against this background, the book argues that the decline and fall of Soviet Communism was much more deeply connected with ideological issues than most scholars have realized.

Bandelin presents fresh analyses of the impacts of major works and ideas, such as Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, the neglected Marxian concept of the Asiatic mode of production, and the underlying relationship of East European reform Communism to *perestroika*. He analyzes the major intellectual trends of *perestroika* in terms of these and other currents. This study offers a perspective that challenges most of current scholarship on the issues it raises, suggests new avenues for research, and contributes to a broader overall understanding of the problems of Soviet socialism and Gorbachev's effort to solve them.

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