



ILKKA RONKAINEN

Marxism Didn't Fail — Leninism Did —

*Lessons from the Paris Commune
and the Soviet Union*



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They told you Marxism failed. They were wrong.

The Soviet Union collapsed. The Paris Commune was massacred in a week. For decades, these failures have been used to bury the left's most powerful analytical tradition — to declare the case closed and the verdict final.

This book argues otherwise.

Ilkka Ronkainen has spent fifty years inside the story: studying Lenin in Finnish universities, working alongside Soviet managers during perestroika, standing in Moscow in August 1991 as the old world fell, and witnessing Armenia's velvet revolution in 2018. He writes not as an outside observer but as someone who believed, was disappointed, and kept asking.

His conclusion: Marxism didn't fail. Leninism did. The Paris Commune showed what genuine workers' democracy looked like — decentralized, transparent, and built from the human being outward. The Soviet Union showed what happens when a revolutionary movement replaces democracy with command, the class with the party, and truth with ideology.

Two experiments. Two failures. One lesson.

The next attempt will have to learn from both.

Sociologist Ilkka Ronkainen (born 1949) is a Finnish political thinker, public administration expert, and author of twenty-two books in Finnish and English. He is a citizen of Finland and Armenia. He closely followed the development and collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as developments in Russia.



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