



## A History of Modern Russia: From Nicholas II to Vladimir Putin, Revised Edition

By Robert Service

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Russia had an extraordinary twentieth century, undergoing upheaval and transformation. Updating his acclaimed *History of Twentieth-Century Russia* through 2002, Robert Service provides a panoramic perspective on a country whose Soviet past encompassed revolution, civil war, mass terror, and two world wars. He shows how seven decades of communist rule, which penetrated every aspect of Soviet life, continue to influence Russia today. This new edition also discusses continuing economic and social difficulties at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the military campaign in Chechnya, and Russia's reduced role on the world stage.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Amazon.com Review

From the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 to the collapse of communism in 1991, from Lenin to Yeltsin, the history of Russia in the 20th century is a complex, tumultuous story of social, geographic, and political upheaval. Robert Service, a professor at the University of London's School of Slavonic and Eastern European studies, closely looks at this period in *A History of Twentieth-Century Russia*. Starting with the armed revolution between 1918 and 1921, Service examines the influence of Leninist philosophy on the Bolshevik movement, while at the same time analyzing the complex social dynamics taking place in the background. His intention is to understand the ingredients of "The Soviet Compound"--the synthesis of social and political Leninist techniques--and how it perpetuated the Soviet state for more than half a century.

Service is also keen to debunk the theory that it was merely fear and intimidation that explains the endurance of the state. He cites welfare reforms, education, and significant economic progress as a unifying force that brought a share of betterment into Russian society. Students of Russian history will find this book informative and surprisingly powerful, in particular, Service's narrative on the causes of the Soviet collapse, which he believes Gorbachev's radical social reforms brought about by inadvertently opening the door for dramatic change to take place. --*Jeremy Storey*

### From Publishers Weekly

Politics and political leaders are the main characters of this detailed, balanced trip through Russia's tumultuous century because, as Service says in his introduction, "[t]he economic, social and cultural order in Russia in the twentieth century is quite incomprehensible without sustained attention to political developments." Service covers his topic comprehensively, beginning with the final years of the tsarist regime and continuing through the rise of the Bolsheviks, the terror of the Stalinist years and the slow, uneven disintegration that culminated with the reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev and the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. He also includes an afterword that assesses the future of post-Communist Russia. A professor of Russian history and politics at the University of London and the author of a trilogy on Lenin, Service avoids the politicization that has plagued Soviet history of recent years. Indeed, one of his main triumphs lies in his ability to depict the totalitarian nature of the regime, while simultaneously illuminating the unwieldy, chaotic society that co-existed with that regime. At times, the author's attention to detail becomes excessive, and he pays only glancing attention to cultural trends that would have deepened his study. Nevertheless, this book, which is written cleanly and with a bit of humor, is sure to become a reference work that few libraries and students of 20th-century Russian politics will want to be without. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

### From Library Journal

Service (Russian history and politics, Sch. of Slavonic and East European Studies, Univ. of London) attempts to solve the problem raised by Winston Churchill when he observed that Russia is "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." His approach is fundamentally different from that of other contemporary authors such as Mark D. Steinberg and Vladimir Khustalev (*The Fall of the Romanovs*, LJ 10/15/95) and Valentin Berezhev (At Stalin's Side, LJ 9/1/94). Service treats the Russian Revolution as part of a whole history of the 20th century, not an isolated event. Instead of getting lost in the forest of revolutionary events, Service connects the revolution to the New Economic Policy of 1922-28, the five-year plans, and the Great Terror of 1937-38. He clearly explains competing revolutionary parties, shows the origins of Stalin's paranoia, and continues with a coherent story line through the implosion of the Soviet

empire. Recommended for academic libraries or public libraries with Russian history collections. Harry V. Willems, Southeast Kansas Lib. Sys., Iola  
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