A History of Russia

Also by Paul Dukes

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October and the World

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The Last Great Game: USA versus USSR

World Order in History: Russia and the West

To my brothers and sisters,
their children and grandchildren

A History of Russia

Medieval, Modern, Contemporary
c. 882–1996

3rd Edition

PAUL DUKES

Professor of History, University of Aberdeen

palgrave
macmillan

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Arthur Ransome, *Six Weeks in Russia in 1919*, reprinted by permission of Mrs Arthur Ransome.

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Chronology of Key Events

RUSSIA		THE WEST		THE EAST	
882	Oleg conquers Kiev	800	Charlemagne becomes Holy Roman Emperor	c. 800	Uighur Empire
c. 988	Vladimir adopts Christianity	1066	Norman Conquest of England	c. 1000	Steppe peoples convert to Islam
1240	Mongols seize Kiev; Teutonic Knights defeated	1215	Magna Carta	1206–27	Rule of Genghis Khan
1380	Mongols defeated at Kulikovo	1348–50	Black Death	1360–1404	Tamerlane
1550	Code of Laws issued by Ivan IV, the Terrible	1588	The Spanish Armada	1520–66	Rule of Suleiman the Lawgiver
1655	Patriarch Nikon's church reform	1649	Execution of Charles I	1644	Manchus take Beijing
1704	Peter I, the Great founds St. Petersburg	1648–1715	Reign of Louis XIV	1689	Treaty of Nerchinsk
1767	Catherine II, the Great issues her <i>Instruction</i>	1776	Declaration of Independence	c. 1750	Chinese take control of Tibet, Mongolia, Turkestan

RUSSIA		THE WEST		THE EAST	
1825	The Decembrist Revolt	1815	Napoleon at Waterloo	1839–42	Opium War
1861	Alexander II emancipates the serfs	1863	Lincoln proclaims Emancipation of the Slaves	1860	Treaty of Beijing
1917	Russian Revolution under Lenin	1914–18	First World War	1911	Sun Yat-sen begins Guomintang Revolution
1929	The Stalin Revolution	1929	Wall Street Crash begins Depression	1927	Communist Rising in China
1941–5	The Great Fatherland War	1939–45	Second World War	1949	Communist Revolution in China
1962	Khrushchev provokes the Cuba Crisis	1964	U.S.A. enters Vietnam War	1965	Great Cultural Revolution in China
1991	Yeltsin elected Russian President; collapse of the Soviet Union	1989	Reunification of Germany and collapse of Soviet power in Eastern Europe	1989	Tiananmen Square

Preface to the First Edition

While this History of Russia does not claim to be any better than its many predecessors, it does aim at providing a distinctive interpretation, even if through change of emphasis rather than complete novelty. Its basic purposes may be placed in two main groups:

(1) Since the Revolution of 1917, and particularly since the death of Stalin, Soviet historians have produced an impressive amount of useful information and interpretation, which has still to receive the recognition it deserves in works produced primarily for those who do not read Russian. While all too obviously suffering from an imperfect acquaintance with Soviet historiography, I have tried to take coverage of it at least a little further. At the same time, with similar handicaps, I have attempted to make use of pre-revolutionary Russian historical writing and of the publications of Western scholars, old and new.

(2) Economic and cultural developments are sometimes considered as appendices to the mainstream of political analysis; this book aspires to inclusion in the number of those which have achieved thematic integration. Similarly, its division into three distinct sections – medieval, modern, contemporary – has been implemented as an expression of agreement with those who hold that history has a fundamental pattern rather than constituting a disconnected series of essentially unique events. Moreover, it attempts to reveal the limitations of an exclusively national approach to Russian history and to contribute to its analysis in a comparative framework. To put it briefly, my intention has been to adhere to the view of history put forward by E. H. Carr.

The errors and misunderstandings in the book are all my own work. For the rest, I have depended heavily on the published work of others, the principal debts being acknowledged in the Select Bibliography and References. Of those who have helped directly in the writing of the book, I owe most to Barry Hollingsworth of the University of Manchester. He has made penetrating comments on the entire manuscript, and his comprehensive

erudition tempered by a profound charity has been invaluable. Next I am pleased to record my gratitude to Rosie Mackay for her patient and careful reading of successive drafts; to Ron Grant for his incisive appraisal of most of the contemporary section; and to David Longley for giving me the benefit of his specialist understanding of the Russian Revolution. I have received generous advice from the History Department, King's College Library staff and others at the University of Aberdeen. These include Roy Bridges, John Hiden, Jean Houbert, Leslie Macfarlane, George Molland and Bill Scott, and all the members of the Russian Department – Jim Forsyth, Richard Hallet, John Murray, Jo Newcombe and Cor Schwenke. Maureen Carr, Lily Findlay, Ann Gordon, Christine Macleod and Ann Murray all helped prepare the typescript.

A more general debt is to the hundreds of students at the University of Aberdeen who have contributed to the unfinished process of my historical education. I consider myself more than lucky to have studied the subject under consideration with them in a locale which has many connections with it. Not many miles from here, an embassy from Ivan the Terrible was wrecked on the north-east coast of Scotland. Patrick Gordon and many other Russian mercenaries set sail from the local harbour. Aberdeen was a port en route from and to Petrograd during the momentous years of the Russian Revolution. There are Soviet fishing boats and timber ships at its docks today. A few technical matters need to be touched on. The system of transliteration used is a variation of that adopted by the *Slavic Review*. Final -ii is rendered thus rather than -y, and all hard and soft signs have been omitted. Russian names are strictly transliterated on their first major appearance, but are normally given in their most usual form, particularly when they are well known. The names of Western scholars of Russian descent are given as they themselves spell them, and the authors of books and articles given as on the title page. Measurements have been made metric: those used most frequently are the hectare – just under 2 1/2 acres; the kilometre – just over 3/5 mile; and the metric ton – a little less (36 lb) than the avoirdupois ton. Billions are American rather than British, that is a thousand million rather than a million million. The maps drawn by Lawrence Maclean are intended to give no more than location. For further geographical reference, the items listed in the Selected Bibliography should be consulted.

Dates from Chapter 5 to Chapter 10 inclusive are given Old Style: eleven days behind New Style in the eighteenth century, twelve in the nineteenth and thirteen in the twentieth.

King's College, Old Aberdeen
December 1973

PAUL DUKES

Preface to the Second Edition

The mostly positive response to *A History of Russia* on its first appearance and since have encouraged me to produce this Second Edition, adding two new chapters on the Brezhnev years and a fuller conclusion which takes in some of the developments since 1985, as well as revising the whole of the original text. As to the book's special features:

(1) As far as possible, I have attempted to illustrate recent developments in Soviet and Western historiography. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* have made a huge impact on the Soviet treatment of some periods, especially the 1930s, but have left others comparatively untouched: I have attempted to indicate differences between 'traditional' and 'new' thinking wherever they exist. In the past fifteen years or so, there has also been a vast flood of relevant publications in the U.K., U.S.A. and Canada, the Antipodes, everywhere in the English-speaking world. As much of this as possible has been noted either in the Notes or Select Bibliography. Certainly, as before, it would have seemed inappropriate to present a work, even of this general nature, without giving a clear indication of the sources of information and ideas.

(2) Equally, economic and cultural developments have appeared even more worthy of integration with the political narrative and analysis for each period, rather than being added without full regard for chronological sequence. I am also more convinced than before that the medieval, modern and contemporary division of Russian history has an intrinsic validity as well as making for a greater degree of clarity. In general, although his reputation has been under severe attack since his death, I continue to hold to the view that E. H. Carr made a greater contribution than any other Western academic analyst towards the establishment of the study of the Soviet Union on a sound, scholarly basis while giving as good an answer as any to the question *What Is History?*

I acknowledge with deep gratitude the comments and advice readily given by colleagues here and elsewhere: Lindsey Hughes, Roger Bartlett

and Bob Service, all of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London – the medieval, modern and contemporary sections respectively; Simon Franklin, Clare College, Cambridge – Chapter 1; David Saunders, Newcastle – Chapters 7 and 8; Peter Gatrell, Manchester – the economic sections of Chapters 8 and 9; Ray Pearson, Coleraine – Chapters 9 and 10; Bob Davies, of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies, Birmingham – Chapters 11 and 12; John Keep, formerly of Toronto – Chapters 15 to 17. Here in Aberdeen, David Longley rendered a similar service on Chapter 2, while Jim Forsyth made a number of useful observations on the text in general and on the maps. The errors and misunderstandings are again all my own work. Ann Gordon and Moira Buchan of the History Department and associates of the Arts Faculty Office all made indispensable contributions to the completion of the project. A succession of editors at Macmillan, most recently Vanessa Graham, must be saluted for their polite patience.

Back again at Aberdeen, I remain fortunate enough to attempt to teach and certainly to learn Russian history at an institution founded when Ivan III was tsar. In 1496, the year after Pope Alexander VI issued the Bull incorporating what became known later as the University of Aberdeen, a herald originating from this city if sent from Denmark, was received by Tsar Ivan in Moscow. Thus, in a somewhat indirect manner, began a chain of connections between Russia and north-east Scotland virtually unbroken from the sixteenth century onwards. If Soviet fishing boats and timber ships appear more rarely than in the early 1970s at the local docks, representatives of the Soviet oil and gas industry are often to be found here, while an academic exchange has been set up between the University of Aberdeen and the Institute of History of the U.S.S.R. of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. in Moscow.

The technical apparatus remains the same as in the First Edition, as does the dedication.

*King's College,
Old Aberdeen
February 1990*

PAUL DUKES

Preface to the Third Edition

Developments since the Second Edition have been so uncertain that I find it necessary not only to append a question mark to my additional chapter on the Gorbachev and Yeltsin years 'Reform or Ruin?' but also to revise my aims in general:

(1) Although I believe it more than ever necessary to recognise the achievements of Soviet historiography, since – to put it mildly – they are out of fashion, I attempt also to attain a measure of justice for publications since 1991 as well as before 1917. Already, however, I detect new continuities as well as discontinuities, a line of development transcending both the arrival of 'Marxist–Leninist' dogma and its departure. I have attempted to support such a view through an extensive revision of the text along with the Notes and Select Bibliography. Moreover, in the attempt to show what is new and what is not, especially for medieval and modern Russia, I have also made even more use than before of the 'classical' interpretation of V. O. Kliuchevskii, making it indeed the yardstick against which other interpretations, pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet, may be measured. At the same time, I have attempted to take note of new Western writing without forgetting the old.

(2) Is today's Russia capable of democracy, the free market and a pluralist ideology? Since these questions are closely interconnected, and the answers depend on Russia's similarities and differences with the West and other parts of the world, the case is strengthened for the consideration of political, economic and cultural history in parallel, as well as for the comparative approach as a whole. As ever, I continue to draw stimulation from E. H. Carr's *What Is History?*, although increasingly as a book to argue with rather than to accept uncritically. That response appears to be in line with the author's own reasoning.

In the preparation of this Third Edition, I have received indispensable help on sections of the Select Bibliography from Ray Scrivens at Cambridge University Library and Denis Shaw of Birmingham

University, and on parts of the text from Bob Davies, Sarah Davies (no relation), John Erickson and Stephen White of the Universities of Birmingham, Durham, Edinburgh and Glasgow respectively. Russian colleagues in Moscow and St Petersburg, and elsewhere from Archangel to Vladivostok, have also provided useful updates. Locally, a number of friends have given assistance and advice, especially Cathryn Brennan. While recording my thanks to all of the above, as confidently as ever I recognise the errors and misunderstandings that remain as all my own work.

My present location continues to provide inspiration. The University of Aberdeen's celebration of its quincentenary in 1995 has provided a boost to the contemplation of the past in general. The presence in Aberdeen harbour of *Neftigaz* (Oilandgas) and other supply ships is just one reminder of how priorities have changed, although Klondykers and other Russian fishing boats off the coast recall older connections.

While the technical apparatus remains unchanged, a new generation has been added to the dedication.

King's College
Old Aberdeen
28 February 1997

PAUL DUKES