

**THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION,  
1900–1927**

## **Studies in European History**

Series Editors:                   Richard Overy  
  John Breuilly  
  Peter Wilson

### *Published Titles*

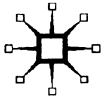
- Jeremy Black *A Military Revolution? Military Change and European Society, 1550-1800*
- T.C.W. Blanning *The French Revolution: Class War or Culture Clash?*  
(2nd edn)
- John Breuilly *The Formation of the First German Nation-State, 1800-1871*
- Peter Burke *The Renaissance* (2nd edn)
- Michael Dockrill *The Cold War 1945-1963*
- William Doyle *The Ancien Régime* (2nd edn)
- William Doyle *Jansenism*
- Geoffrey Ellis *The Napoleonic Empire*
- Donald A. Filtzer *The Krushchev Era*
- Mary Fulbrook *Interpretations of the Two Germanies, 1945-1990*  
(2nd edn)
- R.G. Geary *European Labour Politics from 1900 to the Depression*
- Graeme Gill *Stalinism* (2nd edn)
- Hugh Gough *The Terror in the French Revolution*
- John Henry *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science*  
(2nd edn)
- Richard Mackenney *The City-State, 1500-1700*
- Andrew Porter *European Imperialism, 1860-1914*
- Roy Porter *The Enlightenment* (2nd edn)
- Roger Price *The Revolutions of 1848*
- James Retallack *Germany in the Age of Kaiser Wilhelm II*
- Geoffrey Scarre and John Callan *Witchcraft and Magic in 16th- and 17th-Century Europe* (2nd edn)
- R.W. Scribner *The German Reformation*
- Robert Service *The Russian Revolution, 1900-1927* (3rd edn)
- David Stevenson *The Outbreak of the First World War*
- Peter H. Wilson *The Holy Roman Empire, 1495-1806*

# **The Russian Revolution 1900–1927**

Third Edition

Robert Service

palgrave



© Robert Service 1986, 1991, 1999

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Published by  
PALGRAVE

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and  
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10010

Companies and representatives throughout the world

PALGRAVE is the new global academic imprint of  
St. Martin's Press LLC Scholarly and Reference Division and  
Palgrave Publishers Ltd (formerly Macmillan Press Ltd).

First edition 1986

Second edition 1991

Third edition 1999

ISBN 978-0-333-73781-1

ISBN 978-1-349-27651-6 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-27651-6

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and  
made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available  
from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Service, Robert.

The Russian revolution, 1900–1927 / Robert Service. —3rd ed.  
p. cm. — (Studies in European history)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-312-22361-8 (pbk.)

1. Russia—History—1904–1914. 2. Soviet Union—History—  
—Revolution, 1917–1921. I. Title. II. Title: Russian revolution.

III. Series: Studies in European history (New York, N.Y.)

DK262.S455 1999

947.08'3—dc21

99-18811

CIP

10 9 8 7 6 5 4  
08 07 06 05 04 03 02

# CONTENTS

---

<i>Editor's Preface</i>	vii
<i>Cartoons</i>	viii
<i>Introduction</i>	ix
<b>1 The Unstable Structure, 1900–1914</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>St Petersburg and the world in 1900</i>	4
<i>The Romanov monarchy before 1905</i>	5
<i>Economic progress</i>	9
<i>The transforming of Russian society</i>	11
<i>Social discontents</i>	13
<i>Political upheaval: 1905–6</i>	15
<i>The limits of the regime's adaptiveness</i>	18
<i>Social resilience and institutional growth</i>	20
<i>Economic problems before 1914</i>	22
<i>Political instability</i>	24
<b>2 Demolition, 1915–1917</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>War and the gathering economic crisis</i>	29
<i>Social commotion</i>	31
<i>The February Revolution of 1917</i>	33
<i>Aspirations in society</i>	36
<i>'Dual power'</i>	38
<i>Economic breakdown and social reactions</i>	40
<i>Mass organisations</i>	42
<i>The Bolshevik party</i>	45
<i>The disintegration of the state</i>	48
<i>The October Revolution of 1917</i>	50
<b>3 The Limits of Experiment, 1917–1927</b>	<b>52</b>
<i>Political euphoria</i>	55
<i>Economic and military prostration: 1917–1918</i>	57

<i>Social reforms and mass participation</i>	58
<i>Repression</i>	61
<i>Civil War: 1917–1921</i>	63
<i>Resistance to Bolshevism</i>	68
<i>The NEP and economic recovery: 1921–1927</i>	71
<i>The recuperation of society</i>	73
<i>The party and the political system</i>	75
<i>Moscow and the world in 1927</i>	80
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>84</b>
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	87
<i>Chronology of Events</i>	98
<i>Index</i>	103

# EDITOR'S PREFACE

---

The main purpose of this series of Macmillan studies is to make available to teacher and student alike developments in the field of history that has become increasingly specialised with the sheer volume of new research and literature now produced. These studies are designed to present the 'state of the debate' on important themes and episodes in European history since the sixteenth century, presented in a clear and critical way by someone who is closely involved with the debate in question.

The studies are not intended to be read as extended bibliographical essays, though each will contain a detailed guide to further reading to lead students and the general reader quickly to key publications. Each book carries its own interpretation and conclusions, while locating the discussion firmly in the centre of the current issues as historians see them. It is intended that the series will introduce students to historical approaches which are in some cases very new and which, in the normal course of things, would take many years to filter down into the textbooks and school histories. I hope it will demonstrate some of the excitement historians, like scientists, feel as they work away in the vanguard of their subject.

The format of the series conforms closely with that of the companion volumes of studies in economic and social history which has already established a major reputation since its inception in 1968. Both series have an important contribution to make in publicising what it is that historians are doing and in making history more accessible. It is vital for history to communicate if it is to survive.

R. J. Overy

# CARTOONS

---

1	'They dispose of our money' The structure of power in the Russian Empire	6
2	'The lion, the bear and the rabbit' (M. Chemodanov) Satire on the ineffectualness of the Russian liberals in 1905	17
3	'Citizen, take your crown along with you.' (D. Moor) Revolutionary soldier addresses Nicholas II	34
4	'N. Ulyanov (Lenin)' (A. Strakhov) Stylised portrait of the Bolshevik leader	47
5	'Help!' (D. Moor) Appeal for famine relief	70
6	'Hasn't the meeting finished yet?' (B. Uspenski) Satire on Bolshevik disrespect for democratic procedure	79



# INTRODUCTION

---

When this book appeared in its first edition in 1986, two objectives were to the fore. Studies of the Russian Revolution had become uneven. A mountain of attention was piled upon the year 1917 while the decades on either side attracted only hillocks. By covering the period from 1900 to 1927, the chapters were designed to broaden the chronological range. At that time, too, the fashion was to write about politics, economics and society as if they were separate from each other. The pressing need was to put things back together. After 1986, moreover, much new information became available in the USSR after the Soviet communist leadership somewhat relaxed its control over historical documentation and commentary. The second edition of the book incorporated such material. In this third edition I have retained the basic text, but have also modified it in the light of yet further information and thought. The opportunity is taken, too, to start each chapter with a description of the contending general analyses and to explain the line of interpretation taken in this book. The Russian Revolution is as contentious around the end of the twentieth century as it was when it happened. This is one thing about it that is not going to change.

I remain indebted to friends who suggested improvements to the first two editions: Roger Bartlett, Adele Biagi, John Channon, Olga Crisp, Bob Davies, Israel Getzler, Graeme Gill, Alan Hall, Jill Hall, Geoffrey Hosking, Evan Mawdsley, Richard Overy, Arfon Rees and Steve Wheatcroft.

Technical vocabulary has been minimised throughout the book, and dates are given according to the calendar in official contemporary use in Russia. A simplified version of the Slavonic and East European Review transliterating code is used; but well known names like Witte are given in their customary English form. Since Russian quantitative data are controversial, I have tried to limit the book to numerical data not subject to fundamental dispute. As regards terminology, I have kept to

the early twentieth-century Russian definition of large factories as being those employing at least 16 workers with some motor-power or at least 30 without. A chronological table is attached with reference to the period covered by the book. References are cited in brackets according to the numbering in the bibliography, with page references being indicated by a colon after the bibliography number. A brief indication of the contents of general works on the Revolution is included in the bibliography's first section.

Robert Service  
*October 1998*