



Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991: A History

Orlando Figes

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From the author of *A People's Tragedy*, an original reading of the Russian Revolution, examining it not as a single event but as a hundred-year cycle of violence in pursuit of utopian dreams

In this elegant and incisive account, Orlando Figes offers an illuminating new perspective on the Russian Revolution. While other historians have focused their examinations on the cataclysmic years immediately before and after 1917, Figes shows how the revolution, while it changed in form and character, nevertheless retained the same idealistic goals throughout, from its origins in the famine crisis of 1891 until its end with the collapse of the communist Soviet regime in 1991.

Figes traces three generational phases: Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who set the pattern of destruction and renewal until their demise in the terror of the 1930s; the Stalinist generation, promoted from the lower classes, who created the lasting structures of the Soviet regime and consolidated its legitimacy through victory in war; and the generation of 1956, shaped by the revelations of Stalin's crimes and committed to "making the Revolution work" to remedy economic decline and mass disaffection. Until the very end of the Soviet system, its leaders believed they were carrying out the revolution Lenin had begun.

With the authority and distinctive style that have marked his magisterial histories, Figes delivers an accessible and paradigm-shifting reconsideration of one of the defining events of the twentieth century.

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