

# Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime

*By Richard Pipes*

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**Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime** By Richard Pipes

Pipes is a widely recognized authority on Russia and is currently Baird professor of History at Harvard University. This is the final volume in his magisterial history of the Russian Revolution, covering the period from the outbreak of the Civil War in 1918 to Lenin's death in 1924.

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A sequel to *The Russian Revolution*, this latest effort from Harvard historian Pipes traces the formation of the Bolshevik state from the Russian civil war to the death of Lenin.

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From Library Journal

This new volume further confirms the author's preeminence as a historian of Russia, already established by his now-classic *The Russian Revolution* (LJ 11/1/90) and earlier works. The Soviet Union's collapse lends a particular relevance to his work, which has benefited from access to long-closed archives. Covering the period from 1918 to Lenin's death in 1924, Pipes expands upon his indictment of the Soviet leader and his Bolsheviks with a mass of data and crushing evidence. Ending his narrative with the funeral of Lenin, he concludes with a judicious, fascinating essay, "Reflections on the Russian Revolution." This offers a reexamination of underlying trends and mythologies of the revolution, as well as a restatement of Pipes's belief in Russia's patrimonial legacy and its abiding influence. An important, valuable, passionate book for scholars and general readers. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 11/15/93.

- R.H. Johnston, McMaster Univ., Hamilton, Ontario

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From [Booklist](#)

Closing out his masterpiece trilogy on the Russian revolution (the last being *The Russian Revolution*, 1990), Pipes in this volume examines the character of the totalitarian state Lenin created. By the time of the founder's funeral in 1924--a weird, quasi-religious obsequy wholly at variance with Communist precepts--every attribute the future would label "Stalinism" existed, and Pipes' magnificent analytic narrative explains how that tyranny germinated under Lenin's care. For example, Lenin abominated religion--a fact generally known, yet not particularly favored by historians as worthy of study; therefore Pipes' most original chapter, "The Assault on Religion," reverses decades of scholarly neglect. With other matters, and with patient, cumulatively devastating persuasion, Pipes conclusively proves Lenin's personal responsibility (an angels-on-pinheads distinction that has pitted apologists against critics of Bolshevism) for all that followed. His decisions during the Civil War, and during his grim resolve to preserve the new regime's monopoly on power in the war's aftermath of revolts, famines, and show trials, have struck writers variously as necessary or perverse, but not so Pipes. He feels Lenin's penchant for "militarized politics" amounted to a Promethean quest to reduce human society into a technical machine. Well-written, and starkly laconic where need be (in descriptions of executions and the like), this challenging work culminates a great scholar's lifetime of study. No library should be without it. *Gilbert Taylor*

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