

A Concise History of Russia (Cambridge Concise Histories)

By Paul Bushkovitch

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Accessible to students, tourists, and general readers alike, this book provides a broad overview of Russian history since the ninth century. Paul Bushkovitch emphasizes the enormous changes in the understanding of Russian history resulting from the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, new material has come to light on the history of the Soviet era, providing new conceptions of Russia's pre-revolutionary past. The book traces not only the political history of Russia, but also developments in its literature, art, and science. Bushkovitch describes well-known cultural figures, such as Chekhov, Tolstoy, and Mendeleev in their institutional and historical contexts. Though the 1917 revolution, the resulting Soviet system, and the Cold War were a crucial part of Russian and world history, Bushkovitch presents earlier developments as more than just a prelude to Bolshevik power.

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Editorial Review

Review
"For any student trying to get a grasp of the essentials of Russian history this book is the place to start. To cover everything from the origins of the Russian people to the collapse of the Soviet Union in one short book requires great skill, but Paul Bushkovitch is one of the leading experts on Russian history in the world and he manages this task with great insight and panache."
Dominic Lieven, Trinity College, Cambridge University

"This is a lively and readable account, covering more than a thousand years of Russian history in an authoritative narrative. The author deals perceptively not only with political developments, but also with those aspects of modern Russian culture and science that have had an international impact."
Maureen Perrie, University of Birmingham

"If you want to understand Russia, and the story of the Russians, you can do no better than Paul Bushkovitch's A Concise History of Russia. Bushkovitch has performed a minor miracle: he's told the remarkably complicated, convoluted, and controversial tale of Russian history simply, directly, and even-handedly. He doesn't get mired in the details, lost in the twists and turns, or sidetracked by axe grinding. He tells you what happened and why, full stop. So if you want to know what happened and why in Russian history, you be advised to begin with Bushkovitch's masterful introduction."
Marshall Poe, University of Iowa

"Both learned and accessible, this short history of Russia's troubled passage to the present tells a story of a state and a people who created an empire that much of the world saw as a threat. Whether as the 'Gendarme of Europe' or the 'Red Menace,' Russia and its Soviet successor (even Putin's Russia today!) have been as much misunderstood as they have been feared. Paul Bushkovitch brings us a sober reading of Russia's difficult rises and falls, expansions and contractions, reforms and revolutions. Rather than seeing the preceding millennium as a prelude to the seventy years of the Soviet Union, he gives us a rounded portrait of a country hobbled and humbled by its own geography, institutions like autocracy and serfdom, and grandiose plans to create utopia. Judicious in its judgments, this gracefully written work ranges from high politics to music and literature to open a window through which a reader might begin or renew an acquaintance with the enigmas that were Russia."
Ronald Grigor Suny, University of Michigan

"Bushkovitch avoids the pitfalls of generalization, giving a neat and succinct overview of many different areas that manages to be clear and concise without sacrificing too much detail."
George Gilbert, European History Quarterly

About the Author
Paul Bushkovitch is a Professor of History at Yale University, where he has taught for the past 36 years. He is the author of Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671-1725 (Cambridge University Press, 2001), Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (1991) and The Merchants of Moscow, 1580-1650 (Cambridge University Press, 1980). His articles have appeared in the Slavic Review, the Russian Review, Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteruopas and Kritika. He is a member of the editorial board for the Cahier du Monde Russe.

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