A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to Its Legacy

Third Edition

This concise yet comprehensive textbook examines political, social, and cultural developments in the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet period. It begins by identifying the social tensions and political inconsistencies that spurred radical change in Russia’s government, from the turn of the century to the revolution of 1917. Peter Kenez presents this revolution as a crisis of authority that the creation of the Soviet Union resolved. The text traces the progress of the Soviet Union through the 1920s, the years of the New Economic Policies, and into the Stalinist order. It illustrates how post-Stalin Soviet leaders struggled to find ways to rule the country without using Stalin’s methods – but also without openly repudiating the past – and to negotiate a peaceful but antipathetic coexistence with the capitalist West. This updated third edition includes substantial new material, discussing the challenges Russia currently faces in the era of Putin.

Peter Kenez is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is the author of numerous articles and books, including The Coming of the Holocaust: From Antisemitism to Genocide (Cambridge University Press) and Hungary from the Nazis to the Soviets: The Establishment of the Communist Regime in Hungary, 1944–1948 (Cambridge University Press).
A History of the Soviet Union
from the Beginning to Its Legacy

Third Edition

PETER KENEZ
University of California, Santa Cruz
To P.K., as always
## Contents

*Acknowledgments*  

1 Introduction  
2 The Revolution, 1917–1921  
3 New Economic Policies, 1921–1929  
4 The First Five-Year Plan  
5 High Stalinism  
6 A Great and Patriotic War  
7 The Nadir: 1945–1953  
8 The Age of Khrushchev  
9 Real, Existing Socialism  
10 Failed Reforms  
11 Leap into the Unknown  
12 Illiberal Democracy  
13 Putin Returns  

*Chronology*  

*Soviet History: A Bibliography*  

*Notes*  

*Index*
Acknowledgments

I am grateful to my friends Professors Norman Pereira, Denise Youngblood, and Hugh Ragsdale, who read the entire manuscript and made helpful comments.