

Black

## Understanding Soviet Politics

The Perspective Of Russian History

To what extent did the Russian revolution of 1917 bring about the changes wanted by the Bolsheviks? Why did many of these changes fail to materialize? How has the Russian heritage adapted to the challenges facing all modernizing societies? What does Russia's past tell us about the present role of the USSR in world affairs? In this collection of essays, which includes new part and chapter introductions, Dr. Black discusses these questions, examining the major issues that shape our understanding of Soviet politics. Beginning with a general exploration of the ways the traditional heritage of the Russian empire has both helped and hindered the adaptation of Soviet society to the contemporary world, he illustrates the extent to which the Russian empire was already evolving into a modern society before World War I. The author analyzes the modernization of the USSR, emphasizing the interaction of tradition and modernity and the ways the Russian heritage of institutions and values has been adapted since 1861 to the needs of political development, economic growth, and social integration. Comparisons are made with a wide range of societies, first in 1967 the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian revolution and again in the 1980s. The book considers the past and present relations of Russia/USSR with the outside world in the context of universal societal changes. Dr. Black discusses such questions as the differences between the foreign policy objectives of Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union; the degree to which Russia/USSR has been able to influence other countries through means other than military power; and, drawing on his experience in Bulgaria, the origins of the cold war. The book concludes with Dr. Black's personal interview with Nikita Khrushchev, a discussion that provides rare insights into the thought processes of a leading Soviet statesman at the height of his power

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