



Nicholas II: Emperor of All the Russias

D.C.B. Lieven

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What is there new to say about Russia's last monarch? Almost everything. Previous biographies have told of the family man, the father of the haemophiliac heir, the victim of the infamous murder at Ekaterinburg in 1918. This book covers all these topics but it looks, above all, at Nicholas as political leader and emperor. It presents a view of him very different from the one generally held in the West, and portrays the old regime's collapse and the origins of Bolshevik Russia. Nicholas II was not stupid. Nor was he nearly as weak as is thought. But the dilemmas of ruling Russia were vast and contradictory, and it is an illusion to think that by putting on a top hat and becoming a constitutional monarch Nicholas could have preserved his dynasty and empire. This book draws on Dominic Lieven's 15-year study of Imperial Russia, using archives and other sources all over the world. It is, however, a study of more than Imperial Russia and its last ruler. The author looks also at monarchy in other countries during the same period, comparing Nicholas and Russia's regime with rulers and governments in Germany, Japan, Iran, Britain, Italy and elsewhere. The book's last chapter compares the downfall of the Imperial and the Soviet regimes, and explains how the era of Nicholas II fits into the pattern of modern Russian history. In so doing, it shows how very topical in today's Russia are most of the key issues and problems that beset Nicholas and his country.

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