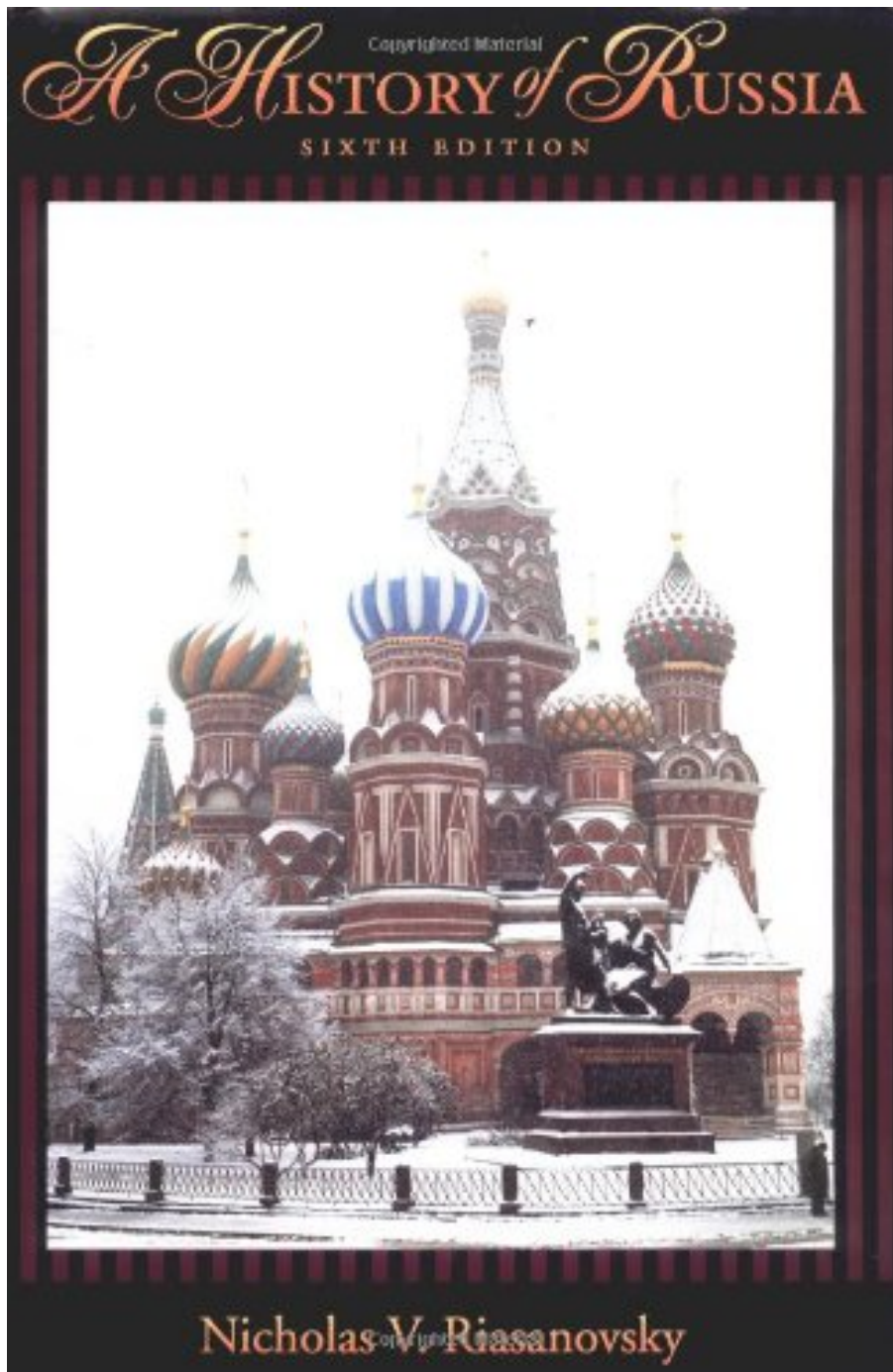


A HISTORY OF RUSSIA, 5TH ED. BY NICHOLAS V. RIASANOVSKY



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About the Author

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Widely acclaimed as the best one-volume survey text available, A History of Russia presents the whole span of Russia's history, from the origins of the Kievan state and the building of an empire, to Soviet Russia, the successor states, and beyond. Drawing on both primary sources and major interpretive works, this sixth edition updates its existing coverage of the social, economic, cultural, political and military events of Russia's past and includes a new chapter on the post-Gorbachev era as well as helpful updated bibliographies and reading source lists.

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Most helpful customer reviews

55 of 56 people found the following review helpful.

A Thorough, No-Frills Text

By ransome22

Do not expect gripping dramatic prose from this detailed history. This is an adequate text and reference but not likely suited for the information-seeking, recreational reader. Despite studying international relations for several years, my knowledge of Russian history exhibited glaring weaknesses. Riasanovsky's work continued to appear as I researched texts with which to fortify my deficiencies. All indications show it to be a classic work of Russian history, used in university courses for decades, and perhaps the most detailed one-volume work suited for a general audience. I found "A History of Russia" (Sixth Edition) to be informative, detailed, and faithfully updated (now encapsulating the fall of the Soviet Union and Russia under Yeltsin). Although a solid text, it is a difficult tome to conquer cover-to-cover as it fails to capture the literary senses of the reader. Riasanovsky takes the reader mechanically through the development of the Russian state. He begins with the geopolitical landscape as it existed prior to the Russians then examines in detail the flowering of Kiev, the appanage system, and the Muscovite, imperialist, revolutionary, and Soviet eras. Riasanovsky's painstaking attention to detail and thorough familiarity with other historiographies provide the reader with a comprehensive evolutionary picture. For example, his illustration of the early appanage system and the continuation of class disparities well into the 20th century shed ample light on the fertile ground into which Vladimir Lenin was able to sow the communist theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. His verbal portraits of leaders such as Ivan the Terrible and Catherine the Great give meaningful context to the power struggles and political imbroglios which characterized specific reigns. The addenda which have accompanied each new edition are less detailed and necessarily superficial. They provide sufficient material to update the reader on Russia's current state of affairs but beg for additional research by the more serious student.

65 of 69 people found the following review helpful.

Solid history textbook - 4.5 stars

By Terminal Salvation

I couldn't help but address the comments of the reader that gave this work 1 star. It's interesting that he cites the territories annexed by Russia as Chinese / Japanese / etc. Where do you think Japan / China / etc. got those territories? Did he ever stop to think that at one point in time Japan, China, and any other country didn't have statehood, and the latter is always achieved through a painful process of unification by both diplomatic and military means? If same logic of denying a country its legitimacy based on forceful means of expansion is used consistently, then our great country of the USA should also be considered an illegitimate occupant of native American lands. Please let us adhere to commonly accepted methods of historical research and exposition, instead of expressing one's ill attitude toward a country using flawed reasoning.

The book at hand does indeed present a comprehensive coverage of Russian history, albeit in a somewhat dry fashion. Do not expect to finish this book and be left with crisp and colorful images of Russia's history. But what you can expect is a comprehensive coverage of every period of Russian history, complete with dates, names, and places. After a once-over, this book can be used as a reference, or a refresher on a particular timeframe in the history of the country. I am still looking for a more captivating work on Russian history, so anyone knows of any - please recommend.

44 of 47 people found the following review helpful.

This history is a necessary read

By A Customer

I just read a "one star review" of this book, and it galled me. So I write this.

This book is a STANDARD history of Russia, used by many, including my, college courses on the subject. It is generally considered a classic.

If you want, or profess, to understand Russian history, this book is a must. Absolutely. First rate. NO, not without the author's personal input.

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