



Restless Empire: A Historical Atlas of Russia

By Ian Barnes

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From the first Slavic migrations to the Romanovs' rise to the Putin era, Russia has endured for centuries as a nation whose sheer size and diversity have challenged its rulers and shaped its identity. *Restless Empire* illuminates the epic sweep of Russian history in a beautifully illustrated full-color atlas depicting the essential cultural, political, economic, and military developments of Russia's past.

Like the double-headed eagle that is its state emblem, Russia has always looked abroad to both the East and West, searching for secure trade routes, trustworthy allies, and defensible frontiers. Expansion beyond Muscovy's forested confines began in the fifteenth century, when Ivan III rejected Mongol rule and moved into the Russian steppe. The waterways linking the Baltic to the Black and Caspian seas were crucial to Russia's development from the Middle Ages onward. The age-old quest to acquire warm-water ports culminated in the construction of St. Petersburg in the eighteenth century, when imperial Russia began to rival Europe's Great Powers.

From Ivan the Terrible to Catherine the Great, Lenin and Stalin to Yeltsin and Putin, Russia's rulers have carved their nation's destiny into world history, sometimes bending Russia toward despotism or democracy, internationalism or brusque independence. Russia's titanic conflicts against the Tatars and Turks, Napoleon, Nazi Germany, and the United States and its political upheavals from the Time of Troubles to the Soviet Union's downfall, as well as ongoing strife in Chechnya and Crimea, are presented chronologically in accessible text accompanied by detailed maps and illustrations.

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Editorial Review

Review

[*Restless Empire*] uses dozens of maps to visualize a thousand years of geopolitical turbulence...Most powerful are [Barnes's] maps of the wars that repeatedly threatened to tear the empire apart, from Napoleon's doomed invasion in 1812 to Hitler's Operation Barbarossa in 1941. (Joshua Hammer *New York Times Book Review* 2015-12-06)

The word 'atlas' brings to mind a collection of geographic maps, but that image doesn't do justice to the richness, imagination, and comprehensiveness of this physically beautiful volume. Barnes has collected and painstakingly reproduced maps and texts that trace Russian history from the origins of the Slavs (800–200 BC) to Russian President Vladimir Putin's annexation of Crimea... The impact is visually stunning and gives this massive expanse of history a physical quality. (Robert Legvold *Foreign Affairs* 2015-09-01)

This beautiful book tells the story of Russia through maps, beginning with the Slavic migrations from 900 to 500 BCE and ending with what the author calls the 'Shadow Empire' of the Russian Federation and the assertions of Vladimir Putin that parts of Moldova and Ukraine constitute a 'New Russia.' In between, maps show the shifting boundaries of empires, the roles of serfs and Jews, and the wars that challenged and shaped Russian self-understanding. Barnes, who died just before finishing the manuscript, can't explain Russian thinking about the meaning of its territory and its menacing eye on its neighbors, nor can he predict how the story will end, but he superbly illuminates the complexity and the diversity of this mysterious country. (*Christian Century* 2015-06-24)

This historical atlas is timely, showing precisely the factors, patterns, and geography that led to present-day tensions with Russia. The book is richly illustrated and well written and, as with all great atlases, can be described as beautiful. Its strengths are the quality, number, breadth, and detail of the maps. Though it covers all historical eras, the book is particularly strong in its coverage of recent (postwar) Russian history... This will be a mandatory book for Russian history and geography collections. (R. W. Benfield *Choice* 2015-10-01)

[A] valuable reference source on the history of Russia in maps... This work enhances readers' knowledge of complicated geopolitic. (*Library Journal* 2016-03-01)

About the Author

Ian Barnes was Emeritus Chair of the Department of History at the University of Derby and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Dominic Lieven is a research professor at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of the British Academy.

Users Review

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