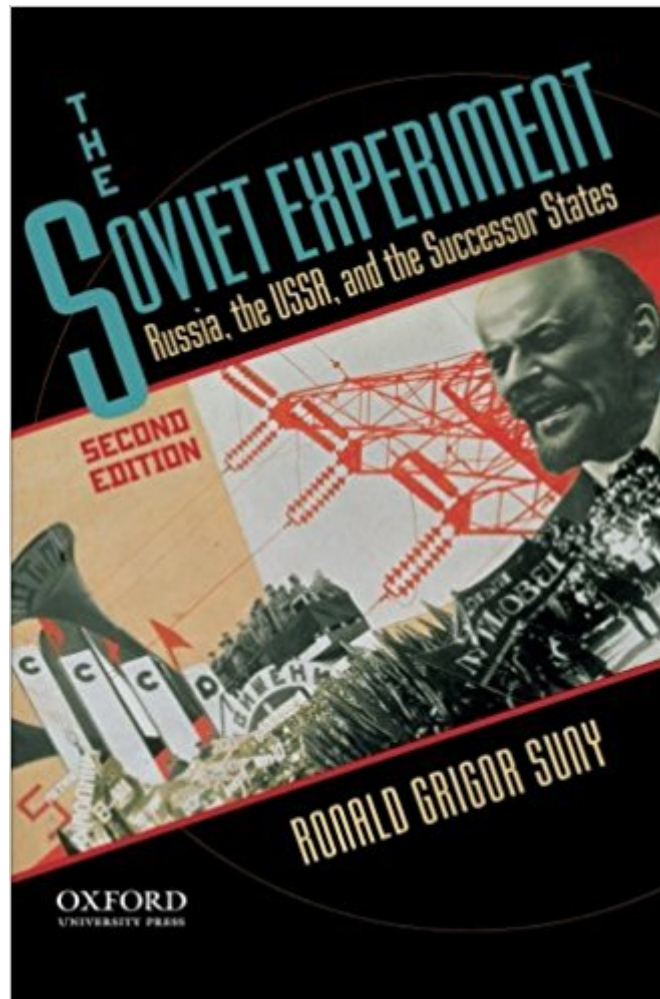


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# The Soviet Experiment: Russia, The USSR, And The Successor States



## Synopsis

Now thoroughly revised in its second edition, *The Soviet Experiment* examines the complex themes of Soviet history, ranging from the last tsar of the Russian empire to the first president of the Russian republic. Author Ronald Grigor Suny, one of the most eminent Soviet historians of our time, examines the legacies left by former Soviet leaders and explores successor states and the challenges they now face. He captures familiar as well as little-known events--the crowds on the streets during the February Revolution, Stalin's collapse into a near-catatonic state after Hitler's invasion, and Yeltsin's political maneuvering and public grandstanding--combining gripping detail with insightful analysis.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a good book for people just trying to get a grasp on what's going on. There are some "generalizations" as someone mentioned in an earlier review, but they are less unsubstantiated than they are just not always elaborated upon. I think it's a blessing, since Suny's other book on Soviet Essays & Documents is a lot more precise and, consequently, hard to get through. It's good information though, and especially in the Soviet Experiment his style of writing makes for an easy, fair-minded, fascinating read.

This is a very fine survey of Soviet history from the Russian Revolution to the collapse of the Soviet state. While this is a chronologically arranged account, Suny divides Soviet history into a set of

sensibly selected periods. These are the Russian Revolution and establishment of the Soviet state in the Civil War, the period of modest relaxation of state efforts at control that was the New Economic Policy (NEP), the Stalinist revolution from above and WWII, the efforts at reform after Stalin, the stagnation of the Brezhnev decades, and the final effort at reform that led to the fall of the Soviet state. Major political, social, economic, and to a lesser extent, intellectual developments are discussed for each period. Suny makes a very successful effort to balance narrative and analysis. Controversial issues are described as such and references given to appropriate further reading. The balance between sufficient detail and maintaining a good narrative flow within the limits of a moderate sized survey is excellent. Consistent themes are the discrepancies between Marxist doctrine and the social realities of Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, the enormous transformation of Soviet society that took place under the leadership of the Communist party, the brutality of Stalin, and the consistent Soviet suppression of civil society and democratic impulses. The bibliography is excellent. This book is an excellent entry into the complicated literature on the Soviet Union and recommended strongly.

It offers a rather impartial view of the history of the Soviet state. It is a very nice text. The only complaint I have about the text is the lack of maps to help readers get a better visual for the Soviet Union at different times.

This book was assigned in my Russian history class (Russia since 1917) and is thoroughly absorbing. I am keeping the book and plan to continue reading it (haven't finished) and the author (Suny) writes in a clear and explanatory manner, though there is just so much material covered, it will take some time to absorb it all. Excellent book on modern Russia (as far as I can tell) and though it requires a lot of time to get through it, it is excellent in detail and quite objective.

The Soviet Experiment gives an insight into the heart of the Soviet Union unlike any other work on the subject that I've ever encountered. The book covers the major players in the revolutions and their attitudes and manipulations toward the formation of the perfect state. The writing style is factual and enjoyable as it moves back and forth between time periods in order to explain in more detail the topic at hand. I recommend this book for anyone who is interested in understanding what the Soviet Union was, how it became, and how it came to an end.

Suny writes in an interesting, story-telling style that is easy to read. At the same time, he tackles a

complex subject with the authority you would expect from a historian of his calibre. A first rate book!

This book is very well written, and thorough. It's a little heavy at times, but if you are looking for a book detailing the rise of the communist party in Russia, this is the book to get!

Although slightly tedious, this is a great book to have if you are starting to learn Soviet history. It reads very well, presents global perspectives, and is well-researched.

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