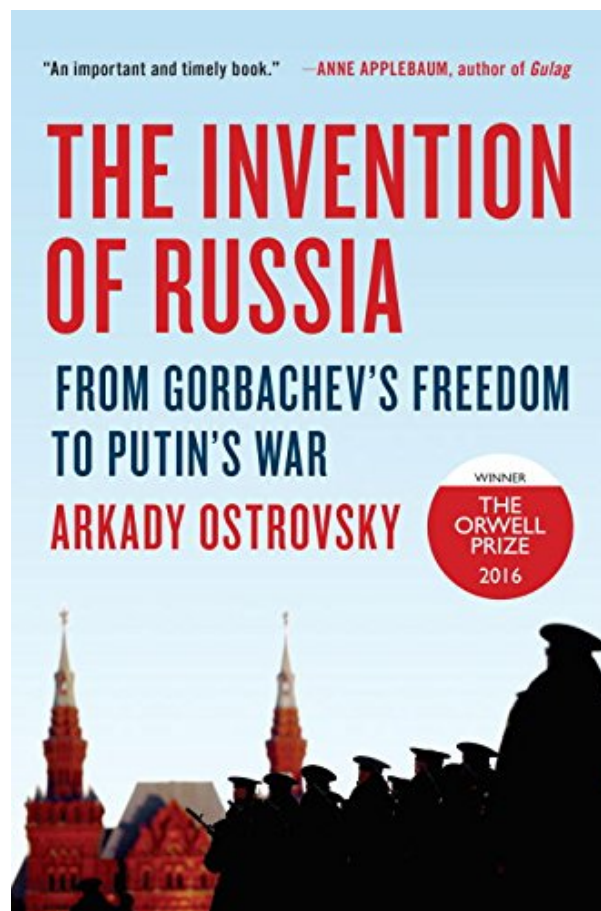


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FINANCIAL TIMES BOOK OF THE YEAR

“Fast-paced and excellently written...much needed, dispassionate and eminently readable.” —New York Times

“Filled with sparkling prose and deep analysis.” —The Wall Street Journal

How did a country that embraced freedom and market reform 25 years ago end up as an autocratic police state bent on confrontation with America? *The Invention of Russia* reaches back to the dark days of the cold war to tell the story of Russia's stealthy and largely unchronicled counter revolution.

A correspondent for the Economist who grew up in Moscow, Ostrovsky astutely explains the phenomenon of Vladimir Putin - his rise and impervious longevity, his use of hybrid warfare, sophisticated disinformation campaigns, and the alarming crescendo of his military interventions. One of Putin's first acts was to reverse Gorbachev's decision to end media censorship and Ostrovsky argues that the Russian media has done more to shape the fate of the country since the collapse of the Soviet Union than its politicians. The new Russia is a cynical operation, where perpetual fear and perpetual war are fueled by a web of lies as the media peddles myths to justify the invasion of Ukraine, cheers the bombing of Syria, and goads its new tsar to go nuclear. Putin pioneered a new and dangerously appealing form of demagogic populism --oblivious to facts and deceptively manipulative - that has now been embraced by an admiring Donald Trump.

Twenty five years after the Soviet flag came down over the Kremlin, Russia and America are again heading toward a confrontation, but this course was far from inevitable. With this riveting and essential account of how we got there – of the many mistakes and false steps along the way – Ostrovsky emerges as Russia's most gifted chronicler.

- Sales Rank: #43661 in Books
- Published on: 2016-06-07
- Released on: 2016-06-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.19" w x 6.38" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 384 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

A Facinating Explanation as to How We Got Here

By Marcus C. Dunn

The Wall fell at the beginning of my sophomore year at Purdue. A political science student, this was an amazing time to live. My now-wife and I made it to Check Point Charlie in less-than a year - was cool to get there: celebrate, speak with my new brothers.

It was reassuring that the US government had it right and due to the strong leadership of Ronald Reagan and the reasonable gentlemen from the USSR, everything was going to work out fine.

Well folks, there is always more to the story and this book, especially the final chapters, tells a roller coaster back story that all politicians can relate to. While horrifying to me, there is an appreciable quality in recognizing the Russian struggles in their climb to democracy (Gangs of NY come to mind).

I think I'm more optimistic than the author, as I put great faith in rational actors, but as the book capably paints, these guys are all over the map!

As a first-time reader of so many Russian names and terms, the "Dramatis personæ" was greatly appreciated.

If a reprint is requested, and I hope it is, some maps and pictures would be very helpful.

Five stars because I actually finished the book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

The counter-revolution nobody saw happen

By C. Anderson

The introduction says, in short: When I took a train from Moscow to London for the first time in 1992 I was proud to be part of a great, progressive country that had made human rights its #1 priority and granted enlightened freedoms to its people. In 2016, a KGB strongman was occupying Ukraine under false pretenses, and talking flippantly about using nuclear weapons if the West interfered there or in Syria. How did we get here?

As a recent visitor to Russia, I was astounded to find that a country with a 1000 years to grow cynical about totalitarian leaders nevertheless had genuine enthusiasm for their newest Moscow strongman. This book does an exceptional job explaining how the "aggressive obedience of the Russian people" interacted with a dangerously unprepared and unregulated free-market to create the current situation; he also does an exceptional job documenting the cold-blooded manipulation of TV and murder of journalists that have protected Putin's grip on power. This is not a neutral or balanced book, but it is exceptionally well-written and the most intelligible introduction to modern Russia for westerners I've seen.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent

By Csa5

Hard to put this one down. Excellent, clear, deep insights. The author synthesizes the personalities and dynamics in a novel fashion. Surprisingly entertaining.

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