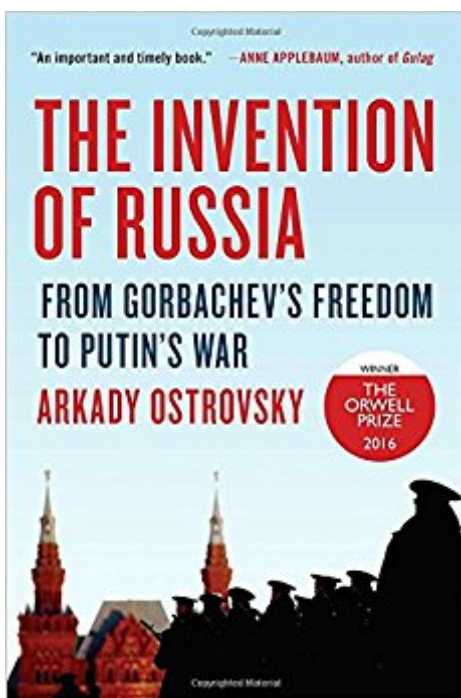


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# The Invention Of Russia: From Gorbachev's Freedom To Putin's War



## Synopsis

WINNER OF THE ORWELL PRIZE WINNER OF THE CORNELIUS RYAN AWARD FINALIST FOR THE LIONEL GELBER PRIZE FINANCIAL TIMES *Â* 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* The breakup of the Soviet Union was a time of optimism around the world, but Russia today is actively involved in subversive information warfare, manipulating the media to destabilize its enemies. How did a country that embraced freedom and market reform 25 years ago end up as an autocratic police state bent once again on confrontation with America? A winner of the Orwell Prize, *The Invention of Russia* reaches back to the darkest days of the cold war to tell the story of Russia’s stealthy and largely unchronicled counter revolution. *Â* *Â* A highly regarded Moscow correspondent for the Economist, Arkady Ostrovsky comes to this story both as a participant and a foreign correspondent. His knowledge of many of the key players allows him to explain the phenomenon of Vladimir Putin - his rise and astonishing longevity, his use of hybrid warfare 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 than its politicians. Putin pioneered a new form of demagogic populism --oblivious to facts and aggressively nationalistic - that has now been embraced by Donald Trump.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Anyone who has spent time in Russia over the past 30 years should be deeply grateful for Arkady Ostrovsky’s fast-paced and excellently written book. Too often, the story of post-Soviet Russia is presented through a Western prism as a clash of good Westernizers and evil reactionaries, or as a lamentation about what the West could, and should, have done once it won the cold war. Mr. Ostrovsky doesn’t waste time on that. A first class journalist who has spent many years covering Russia for The Financial Times and The Economist, he is also a native of the Soviet Union, with an instinctive understanding of how politics, ideas and daily life really work there. For better or for worse, Mr. Putin has forced the world to reckon with a surly and combative Russia again. Mr. Ostrovsky provides a much needed, dispassionate and eminently readable explanation of how it happened.”

— Serge Schmemmann, The New York Times

“A real insiders’ story of Russia’s post-Soviet counterrevolution—an important and timely book.”

— Anne Applebaum, author of Gulag

“This dazzling book flags up the conflicts over ideas, morality, and national destiny in Moscow politics from Gorbachev to Putin—a triumph of narrative skill and historical empathy based on personal experience and rigorous research.”

— Robert Service, author of Comrades! A History of World Communism

“Essential, timely, and always gripping with the narrative flair of a true chronicler of the mysteries of the Kremlin.”

— Simon Sebag-Montefiore, author of Stalin

“How did Putinism come to pervade the psyche of the nation? Ostrovsky’s sparkling prose and deep analysis provide a sweeping tour d’horizon of Russia’s malaise.”

— The Wall Street Journal

“Russia has always been a place where intellectuals, propagandists, viziers, and prophets have played a grand role. All the gangster-, KGB-, and oligarch-focused analyses of the country’s recent history have overlooked the men of ideas behind the tumultuous changes. Now comes Arkady Ostrovsky with a gripping intellectual history of the newspaper editors, ideologues, television gurus, and spin doctors who invented post-Soviet Russia.”

— Peter Pomerantsev, author of Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible

“Ostrovsky is particularly good at hearing the nuances and seeing how identity, ideology and personal experience undermined hopes for democracy and reform.”

— The Washington Post

“A clear-eyed and honest account—informed, insightful and highly readable.”

— The Dallas Morning News

“Arkady Ostrovsky traces the descent from the heady days of 1991 with deep local knowledge, a

journalist's fluent style and sharp eye for detail, and wit. He places much of the blame on those who owned and dominated the media in the fifteen years after the fall of the Soviet Union.

•Dominic Lieven, author of *The End of Tsarist Russia* "For a decade Arkady Ostrovsky has been the most insightful foreign correspondent in Moscow, and in *The Invention of Russia* he uses his deep understanding of the country he loves to tell the gripping, tragic story of its recent history. A brilliantly original, illuminating, and essential book."

•A. D. Miller, Booker short-listed author of *Snowdrops* "A focused, bracing look at how the control of the media has helped plot the Russian political trajectory from dictatorship and back again. . . astute, accessible, and illuminating"

•Kirkus Reviews (Starred)

Arkady Ostrovsky is a Russian-born journalist who has spent fifteen years reporting from Moscow, first for the *Financial Times* and then as bureau chief for *The Economist*. He studied Russian theater history in Moscow and holds a Ph.D. in English literature from Cambridge University. His translation of Tom Stoppard's trilogy *The Coast of Utopia* has been published and staged in Russia. He has appeared on morning edition, CNN, the BBC and Sky News. *The Invention of Russia* won the Orwell Prize and was a *Financial Times* Book of the Year.

One of the best political/historical analysis about the inner works of Russia. A completely different perspective of what our media portrays. It reads like a novel but is reality. Fascinating to those who are interested in history and how politics work. Perhaps boring to others and dreamers who view politics as a soap opera. However, it is written by an insider of the press, and a military expert, or economist might describe things differently. It is textbook literature for foreign policy and the CIA.

This was a well-written book by an authoritative source. Unless you follow Russian politics you may not understand his thesis. At times, I struggled with it, but at least I understand why Russia will never become a democracy. Putin works for the Russians because he is really their kind of guy.

Yelchin

This is a superb account of the culture, and the media in Russia in the period between the fall of communism and the present. To have any grasp of the events in contemporary Russia one needs much more than the evening news, and Ostrovsky's book is the best I've read.

Good, but not much new news. Probably worth the price, but I rate it as OK.

Overall a good book and one that is important for those trying to understand Putin to read. I just felt that the very end was the analysis I was looking for all along and was still incomplete. How does one deal with Putin? That question was really never answered and the book seemed to rush from 2000 to the present. I was particularly surprised at how the entire book was media centric. It seems like nothing in Russia doesn't happen without tv. This book has been compared to Age of Ambition by Osnos. While this is a good read I'm sorry to say it isn't quite in that class.

Exceptional book and very relevant in today's political climate. Many of the machinations described in Putin's rise are chilling in their resonance to the current administration.

A most interesting book. Should be a TV Series or long Motion picture.

Very interesting. It explains a lot of what was going on as I grew up! I am only about half way through it but it is well written and concise. It probably would be good reading for all Americans to see how important the press is - pro and con - and how it can affect the nation more than the politicians.

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