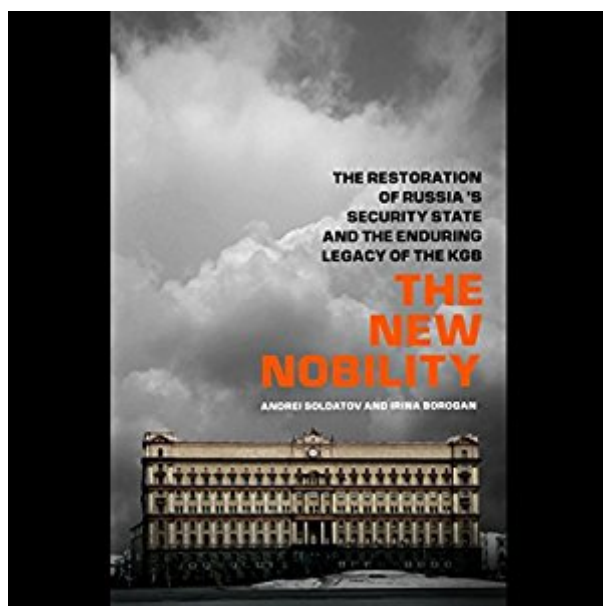


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The New Nobility: The Restoration Of Russia's Security State And The Enduring Legacy Of The KGB



Synopsis

In *The New Nobility*, two courageous Russian investigative journalists open up the closed and murky world of the Russian Federal Security Service. While Vladimir Putin has been president and prime minister of Russia, the Kremlin has deployed the security services to intimidate the political opposition, reassert the power of the state, and carry out assassinations overseas. At the same time, its agents and spies were put beyond public accountability and blessed with the prestige, benefits, and legitimacy lost since the Soviet collapse. The security services have played a central and often mysterious role at key turning points in Russia during these tumultuous years: from the Moscow apartment house bombings and theater siege, to the war in Chechnya and the Beslan massacre. The security services are not all-powerful; they have made clumsy and sometimes catastrophic blunders. But what is clear is that after the chaotic 1990s, when they were sidelined, they have made a remarkable return to power, abetted by their most famous alumnus, Putin.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With the late 1999 rise of Vladimir Putin to first Premier, then later president, of the Russian Federation, a new class of leadership took over the levers of power in Russia. What they faced was a country in chaos, reeling from a currency crisis, a long war in the Caucasus, and general malaise in the country. Putin and his siloviki ended the war in Chechnya, started reforming the military, and gave a much different public perception of Russian leadership than the drunken and overwhelmed Yeltsin. What he also brought was a state run to the benefit of his former KGB colleagues. He enriched his friends and destroyed anyone who challenged politically. He also took a much darker

view of world politics and relations with the west, especially the United States. Russian security services took to challenging Westerners operating in Russia, and there was probably a similar increase in Russian operations overseas. Russian journalists Soldatov and Borogan are brave to chronicle these topics and much more in this engrossing book. It will do wonders to fill in the picture of how Russian leadership views ongoing issues with the West over Ukraine, the expansion of NATO, and the need to make Russia appear at least to be among the world's great powers.

An excellent book if one is interested in modern Russian (Federation) history. I was amazed at similarities between the old KGB and the new FSB. How it managed to survive, then come back stronger, more powerful and more repressive than ever. This is not an easy read, it is quite involved and complex, like Russia herself. I suggest that people read appendix 1 and 2 first, it helps outline the events timeline. Then refer back to it as you progress through the chapters to keep from getting lost.

Not a slightest doubt: it is an extremely scary book, on the level with any well-detailed research about Inquisition, Gestapo, GULAG or StaSi. Paging through the horrors of the past, we always enjoy a happy soothing thought: thanks God for our lives in the present-day lawful democracies with no omnipotent henchmen around us! This book, however, denies us this enjoyment - its pages prove that even now, in our most democratic XXI century, we have no grounds for any soothing thoughts. In 2014, the Russian FSB is much more far from accountability than its KGB predecessor ever was. In fact, it owns the country entirely, ruling the Russian economy, industry, trade, banking, foreign relations, education - well, everything. The book shows, that, unlike KGB (which was driven by the Communist ideology, being accountable before the Party Politburo), the FSB is driven only by its own lust for unaccountable power and money, thus corrupting the nation with a speed of uncontrolled cancer, which devours greedily all the healthy cells of a human body. To judge from the book, actions of FSB (that is, of Service for Federal SECURITY) may be called "professional" only in the same sense as cancerous activities are professional in safeguarding the tumor's further growth. The activists of this cancerous progress were rewarded with a proud name of "The New Nobility". Just how could it happen in the democratic country, protected by the diligent copy of the U.S. Constitution, first, and by the common knowledge about millions of the old State Security's innocent victims, second?! Some two hundred years earlier Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in his introduction to "Democracy in America" that "In the eleventh century, nobility is beyond all price; in the thirteenth, it

might be purchased". It seems that in our century the nobility may be elected - and in the most democratic manner at that, without any machine-guns behind. The new nobility gives birth to a million-lives question: what kind of voters would voluntarily say "Yes!" to the representatives of the worst division in the totalitarian bureaucracy - the old State Security, whose iron "cadres" had proved long ago both their total amorality and their total absence of skills in anything but destruction? The authors give no answer, but readers are hardly expected to say the usual "Ah, those Russians!" Because approximately the same picture (of course, to the smaller extent, for the present) of careless voting for all clones of dangerous cancers is becoming more and more typical for many Western countries too. Numerous gifted authors analyze the weird phenomena of voters' nonchalance in the most convincingly documented studies of their countries' decline (like the American "Obama Zombies", the British "Not With a Bang", etc) - but, nevertheless, omnipresent cancers just continue their merry democratic growth, decline or not. "The New Nobility" supplies us with the timely warning about quite real chances for the ultimate decline: from the initial bright hopes of freedom and prosperity into a hopeless realm of totalitarian dictatorship. I believe, the book is an excellent food for our thoughts, - and, unfortunately, not about my Russia only. Rostislav, Saint-Petersburg.

If you want an inside look at what is happening in Russia today, this is the book to buy. It gives facts, details, and analysis of why Russia is becoming a lost opportunity for freedom-loving people. Liberty and domestic spying are polar opposites, as Americans are slowly discovering. Russians were promised by Western journalists and Russian liberals alike, far more than democratic elections, they were promised freedom. And for a few years, they got it, but as Putin's internal security services were strengthened, Russians have lost much of their freedom, particularly freedom of speech. It is risky now to demonstrate against the Putin government or even complain about some their policies. It is extremely risky to criticize local Russian officials in any form of media. State secrets seem to exist everywhere now. This may explain why some online Russian websites refuse to accept comments from readers in the West. Some, such as Pravda Online, seem to have closed down their forum permanently, while others have forums but Western IP addresses cannot register to comment. The FSB is watching everything, just as in America, the NSA is watching and listening and collecting data on everyone. And what good is all that information unless it is used? What is striking are the parallels between Russian internal security services and American internal security services, virtual clones of each other, and perhaps designed by the same people? Alternative news media reported that Homeland Security hired at least one former East German

Stazi official to design their structure and programs. Could it be possible that in the near future, the vast databases of U.S. citizens will merge with those of Germany, France, Canada, Australia, U.K., and Russia, into one world-wide control system? Will innocent U.S. citizens be hunted like Snowden for dissenting against the loss of freedom? Better read this book to see how bad things can get, because our government is on that exact path.

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