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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.

The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB Details

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From Reader Review The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB for online ebook

Ivan Kapersky says

Every country has their secret police or agency with the sole duty of protecting and guaranteeing the state affairs. In the book *The Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB* by Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, both are Russian journalist that investigate in detail the transformation of the KGB into what is known today as the FSB or the Federal Security Service.

In the book, both authors narrated in detail how the KGB was transformed into the FSB. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the KGB was disorganized and murky with their objectives. The author explained how the agency, through a series of incidents such as: the Beslan school shooting, the seized of the theater and the 1999 apartment bombings, shape the role of the agency and how they would respond to security threats, organize crimes and political activities.

The author lacks explaining how FSB transformed their ideology or objectives, instead, the author investigates and explains numerous incidents involving the agency and how Putin administers(ed) the agency, thus creating multiple branches and new targets.

I recommend this book as a resource to explore the FSB world and organization, their "missions" and incidents.

Sasha says

This book is phenomenal. Soldatov and Borogan are heroes for doing the work that they do (covering the evolution of Russian state security services under Putin). It's surprising they are still alive, walking free, un-maimed, not in exile but actually living in Russia, and doing this. The number of times they have probably crossed the red line for the FSB is probably high, and yet people are still leaking to them and they're still writing! They're out here carefully describing how the FSB completely botched Nord-Ost and Beslan, carries out extra-judicial assassinations on foreign territory, and has still completely failed to put a definitive stop to terrorism--actually, really only exacerbated terrorism in Russia (though this is unknowable) and tried to spin some paper-thin PR lies to make it look the opposite (naturally, it's Russia). It's hard to read this and not be in awe of the authors on every page.

Aniek says

Interesting content, horrendous style. The writing was all over the place and lacked a clear narrative - obviously just a bunch of existing articles thrown together. And why, for the love of god, do the authors talk about themselves in third person? Very annoying.

Vladimir Boronenko says

Content good, writing poor. Sorry to say that, for it is important to know what is going on in this country.

Bou says

With the fall of Communism, the once great KGB disintegrated and was split up into smaller independent agencies. During the Yeltsin years the FSB (as the KGB became known) was a ghost of its former past, only to rise as the new great powerhouse during the Putin presidency, which it continues to this day. In this book, Andre Soldatov manages to give a good overview of how the FSB was able to rise from its ashes and managed to become the all powerfull Russian state agency..

E.A. Amant says

A manager at work—we were doing some idiotic back and forth trash talk—shushed me in public. Teasing him, I had said that the island of Malta had been first settled by English retards. He was Maltese. These days, no one likes to hear the word ‘retard’. It was lame, I know, but I retorted with a shout, “Shut up, this ain't Russia!” And standing directly behind me was a Russian emigrant, new to the country, who took offence at my reckless cliché. However, whether naive or not, he knew exactly to what I referred, that by worldwide reputation alone, even from the old USSR days, you couldn't any more voice your opinion in Russia than get a fresh loaf of bread from a government grocery store. I immediately apologized for my deleterious remark and offered my hand. Which he took. He seemed placated, if not bemused; no, I'm not saying he was an idiot, but the truth is, in Russia today, it is as dangerous to speak your mind as it was back in the USSR, maybe even more so, certainly more tricky. Where did he get the idea that I was misrepresenting the reputation of Russia's culture? Freedom of the press, the right to assembly, the liberty to political free speech and individual property rights are all gone. And my very own angry Russian emigrant was too dumb or illiterate to know it, or he had unfounded and inexcusable nationalistic pride in his unsuccessful society. Nationalism does that. It makes you think in racist requisites: Russian better than Georgian, straight better than gay, male better than female, Christian better than Muslim. This is what you are morally permitted to say about your genetic heritage, “I am proud that I am Somali, Syrian or whoever. We're the best people in the world!” Sure, and everybody has the greatest doctor. What is unacceptable to say as person from a failed country, is, “We're the best nation in the world!” That's like a Moslem or a Christian saying they're the only true religion. And BTW, Americans should stop saying it as well. Like England, France, Ghana, Costa Rica, or Japan, they can say something like, “We are one of the greatest nations in the world and have proof with verifiable statistical facts; the bonafides!” And they could even explain why, but stop bragging that you're the best; it's annoying, Any nation who has to keep saying that they're the best are not the best. American politicians actually mean, “We rule an empire and you don't. So shut up!”

Well, anyway, as regards Russia, it is not like those rights were ever there—Western liberties I mean—not for the Autocrats', Marxists' nor Reformists'. Russia has never known any real freedom or democracy. Indeed, it may well be the least democratic place in the world. Not the ghost of freedom exists today. As I will explain in the plainest language, Russia is little more than a Mafia state with the homophobic Putin as the not so likeable Tony Soprano, ruling like both the Tsar and a don, and you're not getting any special favours on the wedding day of his daughters; in fact, he's divorced and you're not invited!

Although not exactly book reviews, this article is chiefly concerned with six excellent and diverse books as sources: *Darkness at Dawn*, D Satter, *The Putin Mystique*, A Arutunyan, *Strongman*, A Roxburgh, *The Man Without a Face*, M Geesen, *The New Nobility*, A Soldatov and *Putin's Kleptocracy*, K Dawisha. These works, and others, are all in general accord: the Putin regime runs a criminal state.

One of the first jobs of thugs is to convince people that they aren't bandits, that they're marketers and their civil concerns are for the people—and that they're like regular folks, only with more testosterone. It's what philosophers say of the ethical disingenuous: "The appearance of morality is the price paid by hypocrites to look good to the ones they can fool." So, one of the first jobs of the gangster class is to corrupt the police while appearing to the public to root out corruption from this very source. You do this by destroying the whistle-blowers. In the old gulag system, you jailed the dissidents, (i.e. the moral leaders of the country), now in present day Russia you get the free marketers for tax evasion, throw them in prison and steal their property; it's win, win, win! Anybody who reports it, (journalists, accountants or lawyers), are going to prison for not having the paper work done for the paper-clips they claimed on their tax forms.

The World Bank publishes an annual survey in which it ranks 183 countries of the world according to 'ease of doing business'. In 2011 Russia came in at 123 – far behind other post-Soviet states such as Georgia (at 19) and Kyrgyzstan (at 44). In terms of 'dealing with construction permits' Russia sits in 182nd place, ahead only of Eritrea. Dahlgren—IKEA's Russia manager, Lennart Dahlgren, came to Moscow in 1998 and stayed for eight years, battling with the authorities to open the first IKEA stores and 'Mega malls'. He has since written his memoirs, *Despite Absurdity*—wanted to arrange a meeting for IKEA's owner – one of the wealthiest people in the world, and a man with great enthusiasm for doing business in Russia – with Putin. At first they palmed him off with meetings with a deputy prime minister. Then Dahlgren had an opportunity to discuss the proposal with someone from Putin's entourage, who told him they didn't think IKEA would really want to have a meeting with Putin. Dahlgren writes: 'I don't know whether they meant it seriously or as a joke, but they said: "IKEA is penny-pinching, and the going rate for a meeting with Putin is 5 to 10 million dollars, which you will never pay.'" (Quoted from, *Strongman*); see also the *Corruption Index*.

Today the lack of reliable contract law, unenforced and without an independent judiciary, has left Russia a complete gangster nation, and not like those American rappers sing about, but one that tens of millions of suffering Russians have to live with day in and out. (For this part see *Putin's Kleptocracy*)

The Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti, FSB—Federal Security Service—had grown out of the KGB, Yeltsin had broken the KGB up and pit tax, communicate and security divisions against each other to help dismantle it, or at least in part to lessen its totalitarian power, but after consolidating his control, Putin has reunited them into the general security framework under the FSB or other agencies with no independence but to the executive. (For this part, see, *Darkness at Dawn* and *The New Nobility*)

Perhaps the most obvious and reactionary of all of Putin's draconian measures, has been shutting down any and all independent news organizations. If this proved to be ineffective to shut up journalists, internal detractors or opposition politicians, he has had his critics imprisoned or permanently silenced. They don't really even much hide it. He is personally, but indirectly linked to the murders of Anna Politkovskaya, Yuri Shchekochikhin, Sergei Yushenkov, Anatoly Sobchak and Alexander Litvinenko. See, *List of Journalists killed/murdered in Russia*. Under Putin's rule there have been 30 to 35 (apparent) politically motivated murders of journalists. (For this part of the story see, *The Man Without a Face*).

Now as for the supreme leader with insatiable greed: "That is the biggest question. In a classical, absolutist monarchy, their chief patron would have been the sovereign, their king and country – which would have been the same thing. But Putin's Russia, which has many of the trappings of an absolutist monarchy, refuses

to see itself as such. The scholar Lilia Shevtsova has underlined the contradictions that this presents: Putin has preserved personified and undivided power, she writes. However, describing Yeltsin's rule as 'elected monarchy' she applies the same metaphor to Putin's rule, 'accenting the contradictions between personified power and the elective method of legitimizing it.' A maddening dissonance ensues: Putin had a theoretical option of 'building a responsible system of governance based not [my italics] on the irrational and mystic power embodied in the leader but on the rule of law.' But he either could not, or would not do so. Those words were written in 2004; by 2013 that dissonance has only grown, amid contradictory laws that fail to work and Putin's constant calls to fight corruption. Why, despite yearly orders from Putin – his personal orders, harsh, determined and ominous – does corruption only grow?" (Quoted from, *The Putin Mystique*).

Now, I am more than happy to answer this question for everyone. It isn't just Putin's hidden assets, no, not the 40 to 70 billion dollars, making him one of the richest people in the world, which it is claimed he has amassed through old-fashioned brass-knuckled theft. It's something that is hard for the North American or Western European democrat to really understand. It's the tragic fault in the Russians themselves. To them, liberty is license, a free market is usually dangerous/entirely unfeasible, the press are myth makers/even outright liberal liars, and having sacrosanct private property rights are downright impossible in a country like Russia. Justice is with the Tsar, the motherland, the state itself: uberman, Uncle Joe or Putin, the Boss. For example, here's some sense of how long in modern history there has been little perceived freedom: "...When it comes to this, [all men are created equal, except Negroes,] I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty – to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy." - Abraham Lincoln. 1855. (Quote taken from, *The Putin Mystique*).

So you see, they've been without freedom for some time, and in fact, the society itself does not give it the same value as in the West. Yes Marxist terrorists hijacked a thriving modern industrialized state, but the Tsarist regime was as ridiculous on its face with serfdom as the communist one was with their countrywide gulag slave system. People went marching to their sentences at the direction of a monarch's clerk or a Bolshevik's commissar like the Jews at the direction of a Nazi official. What's to say to this? Idea and Culture are intimately connected and some cultures are impeded compared to the top democracies, and many failed states call themselves democracies, but of course, this is pure piffle. Yes, you nationalists from failed or failing countries, like my very own angry Russian emigrant, it has got nothing to do with blood! It is brains alone that count; it's how one organizes society, the proper protection of human rights, an independent judicial branch of government, the separation of powers, free elections and all those splendid creations of the democracies throughout history, despite its many intellectual enemies like Putin, the KGB and the Marxists, (of course, the Religionists are right up there at the top as bitter foes to liberty as well).

In the decade of Putin, the FSB has portrayed themselves in propaganda films like *The Special Department* as they wanted themselves to be seen, (see, *The New Nobility*), just as the CIA does in America. Behind the FSB's rapid growth of power with the ascension of Putin, they have been just as ineffective at fighting terrorism as the CIA. And in regards to upholding an independent judiciary, curbing the mafia-state rising right underneath their feet or bringing real culprits to justice, they have utterly failed, as the KGB did before them. They are lap dogs, a whitewash to Putin's tarnished throne. They have become another arm of the bandit state, but don't say, "Poor pitiful Russia!" Nobody is free without effort. The Russian masses' romantic attraction to the state is deplorable and always has been. The people have quietly marched to their passing in absolutely frightening numbers, either with demise by alcoholism or death by authoritarianism. Shame on the Russian Orthodox Church, Russian Nationalists and the Russian Communists, all preaching against democracy like an Iranian Ayatollah. The Great Satan be damned! There is a person for this epithet and his name is Vladimir Putin, and never forget that germ of truth from that old Russian saw, "Half the population is behind bars and the other half are guarding them."

For the more than 50 links to sources, see, <http://eastamant.com/article.php?arti...>

Jeppe Haarsted says

A very thorough and interesting analysis of the role of the Russian security services. It's a very sober read. The author recognizes the need for a security service but points out some of the shortcomings and misdeeds of FSB and other services. Also includes interesting history about the services under Yeltsin's early years when KGB was dissolved and FSB was split up and generally in a state of shock.

D??r says

Most excellent!

Highly recommend that you also read the later published book: *The Red Web: The Struggle Between Russia's Digital Dictators and the New Online Revolutionaries*

John Carpenter says

I have just finished the book. It is excellent. The events of the last decade in Russia are very real, and cannot be dismissed or ignored by anyone who tries to be aware of the world situation or Russia in particular. This is not a book about "politics"; it delineates the real, important events between 1999 and 2015 with clarity, knowledge, and depth.

Russia has become a totalitarian police state with almost total media control; but it has relatively broad consent-- it appears-- of the governed. The inner circle of Putin, the "siloviki," are mostly KGB agents; it is tempting to call the current "Russia" a "KGB state" or use the current name of the Security Services as an "FSB State." As Soldatov and Borogan describe with convincing analysis, this is worse, in the most essential ways, than the old KGB of the USSR. The old KGB was controlled and overseen by a political party, the Communist party, when there were some checks to its actions. The new FSB is accountable to no political party. Only to itself.

Recent statements by people close to Putin show clearly that the current regime is expansionist-- even expansionist with a vengeance. Abroad it relies on its military, stealth, intimidation, propaganda and media control, also ethnic proxies. Russian expansionism today is much like Hitler in Europe in the 1930s.

Probably few Americans today know who Hacha was, or where the Sudetens are; but in speeches and "Mein Kampf" Hitler displayed expansionist aggressive intentions clearly for all to see, listen about, or read. Today Putin and his inner circle-- Konstantin Dolgov, Sechin plus a rogues' gallery of nationalists-- also display in unambiguous language expansionist war-like intentions. Parts of Georgia and the Crimea have already been seized, swaths of Ukraine have been effectively seized, no doubt irrevocably. The Putin circle has stated that they want to aid Russian ethnic minorities everywhere they happen to be: Latvia, Estonia, what remains of Ukraine. Russia has declared it is hostile to Europe as a whole, even to its cultural and economic influence on the smaller countries.

The mainstream English-language media-- NY Times, Washington Post and most others--have yet to realize what is happening. They are caught up in the shifts and feints of diplomacy, what Arianna Huffington has called "the media's obsession with balance" ("the pro and con con"). If only more journalists and writers read

Soldatov and Borogan's "The New Nobility," they would know more about our real world.

Grzegorz Bobrowski says

Ciekawe spojrzenie autorów na rozwój postsowieckiego spadku po KGB pod rządami Władimira Putina.

James Folan says

Very important book. Required reading for anyone interested in Russia today.

Jeremiah says

This book is for you if you listen to podcasts by FP or CSIS, or if you know things like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and have an interest in Russia in general or the FSB in particular. It's a fun little read.

Randa says

It's a great book in terms of telling you how the Kremlin works in the eyes of opposing views. You did get some great information. No surprise Russia is a mastermind at coverups.

The reason to why I'm giving it a 3 is the flow of the book. Sometimes it was too hard to understand where it was going. I think that this was translated, but I enjoyed the content, for what it's worth. However, I was happy when I finally finished the book.

Frank Kelly says

Communism's collapse caused the KGB to undergo a massive and wrenching restructuring (not a bad thing from where we sit in the West). But it has undergone a fascinating resurgence under the leadership of Vladimir Putin. Not all of it has gone well -- in fact, there have been breathtaking disasters as the authors detail in chapters covering the Chechen sieges of the schoolhouse in Beslan and the theater in Moscow (both of which ended with a staggering loss of life). Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan are Russian investigative journalists (and co-founders of the Website agentura.ru) and they have written a unique overview of the struggle of the KGB's successor organization, the FSB (Federal Security Service). What is particularly interesting is how the modern FSB sees themselves as not just a security service but as a defender of Russia's culture. The link to the Russian Orthodox Church is a good example of this focus. And as such, they have, in the words of FSB Director Nikolai Patrushev, become Russia's "new nobility."

Inessa Abramyan says

exclusive selection of materials about Russian security services, numerous interesting topics covered.
But the interpretation is too negative I believe
