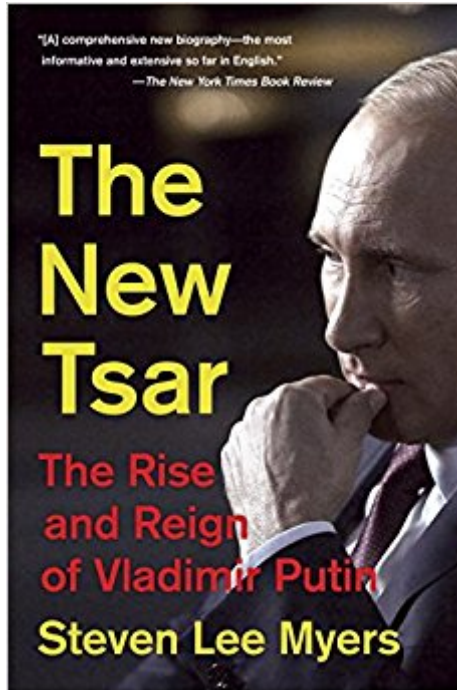


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The New Tsar: The Rise And Reign Of Vladimir Putin



Synopsis

In this gripping narrative of Putin's rise to power, Steven Lee Myers's recounts Putin's origins--from his childhood of abject poverty in Leningrad to his ascent through the ranks of the KGB, and his eventual consolidation of rule in the Kremlin. As the world struggles to confront a bolder Russia, the importance of understanding the formidable and ambitious Vladimir Putin has never been greater. On the one hand, Putin's many domestic reforms--from tax cuts to an expansion of property rights--have helped reshape the potential of millions of Russians whose only experience of democracy had been crime, poverty, and instability after the fall of the Soviet Union. On the other, Putin has ushered in a new authoritarianism--unyielding in its brutal repression of dissent and newly assertive politically and militarily in regions like Crimea and the Middle East. The New Tsar is a staggering achievement, a deeply researched and essential biography of one of the most important and destabilizing world leaders in recent history, a man whose merciless rule has become inextricably bound to Russia's foreseeable future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In "The New Tsar: The Rise and Reign of Vladimir Putin," Myers presents a comprehensive biography of Putin in a mostly neutral tone, focusing on the history and the facts. Myers follows Putin's rise from that of a child impressed with a spy movie, to a law school graduate, a KGB officer stationed in Germany, the number two man to St. Petersburg's mayor, a series of positions in Yeltsin's administration (helped by his contacts from St. Petersburg and the KGB who were already

a part of it), to his position as the FSB (the successor to the KGB) director, prime minister, and ultimately Yeltsin's successor to the presidency. According to Myers, what made Putin stand out was his honesty and loyalty in the sea of intrigues, backstabbing, and conniving that were a hallmark of the people surrounding Yeltsin in a never-ending battle for the president's favor and, more importantly, power. Between 1998 when Russia defaulted and Putin's 2000 presidency, Yeltsin has a steady stream of prime ministers--each of which keeps getting replaced for no other reasons than Yeltsin's whims. It doesn't help matters that Yeltsin feels threatened as the attorney general threatens to investigate Yeltsin and his family. Increasingly feeling like he has no one to trust, while knowing his presidency can't last any longer--not only because of the eroding support but his own health problems--Yeltsin secretly plots to appoint a successor, someone who he can not only trust with the country, but with his own fate. Someone who won't go after Yeltsin or his family as soon as the former is no longer president. Impressed with Putin's loyalty to his former boss--St.

The book, *The New Tsar* by Myers, is a well done bio of Vladimir Putin. To set my observation space regarding this work, I was in Russia from 1995 thru 2004, in Saint Petersburg and Moscow, starting my telecommunications company, and with partners who were from the same world as Putin. These folks knew me since in the 70s I had been part of the US Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty talks and had one on one contact with various Russians. I managed a bit of Russian language, adequate to get about, and even joke after a few vodkas. Thus I had been closely aware of Russia, the Russians, and the KGB world. Unlike most Americans I had no larger company backing and I needed in country partners, many of whom are covered in Myers tale. I saw Moscow via the Metro, the streets, the stores, the homes. I saw vodka used to brush teeth because the water is so infested it is barely adequate to flush toilets. Yet the streets looked like Tokyo at night, a change which occurred in less than ten years. Myers takes on a journey which has as its focus Putin, but for all purposes it is a journey on the change of Russia from Communism to what it is today. In a sense, the Orthodox Church has replaced the Communist Party for the masses, a milder means of establishing the mandated role of the rulers. This comes out in Myers work by the telling tale of Putin being baptized as a child. Myers did not really explore the depths of this ongoing cooperation but he does provide certain pieces. Myers follows Putin and attempts to give some depth to the man by his movement from young KGB employee, to the accidental head of the FSB (formerly the KGB) and then to President. In a sense Putin's life is almost *Forest Gump* like, just being there when the bus went by and getting on to see where it took him next.

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