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978-0-521-84027-9 - Restructuring Post-Communist Russia

Edited by Yitzhak Brudny, Jonathan Frankel and Stefani Hoffman

Frontmatter

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Restructuring Post-Communist Russia

Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the question of “whither Russia?” has been the source of ceaseless speculation both at home and abroad. In search of answers, twelve highly qualified scholars examine the complex interplay between continuity and change that has marked developments in Russia under the leadership first of Boris Yeltsin and now of Vladimir Putin. Analyzing the recent past, they also peer into the country’s future. In his introduction to the volume, Peter Rutland asks whether we are witnessing the gradual entrenchment of parliamentary democracy, the slow return to autocracy, or mere political stagnation.

The Russian case appears in a relatively unflattering light when placed in the comparative context of post-communist transition studies (by authors Valerie Bunce, Alexander J. Motyl, and Anatoly M. Khazanov). On the other hand, a close look at the recent history of Ukraine by Ilya Prizel leads him to the implicit conclusion that the Russian state and society are, by comparison, well situated.

Marshall I. Goldman and Theodore H. Friedgut assess the massive upheavals that have transformed the Russian economy and society since 1991, and Vera Tolz traces the attempts made by politicians and intellectuals to define a new national identity for the Russian people. Politics – the parties, the electoral system and results, and the complexities of the federal system – are described and analyzed in detail by a number of prominent Russian scholars (Andrey Ryabov, Nikolai V. Petrov, and Oksana Oracheva), who add a Moscow-centered perspective to the volume. As for Russian foreign policy, Rajan Menon argues that the country’s turn toward rapprochement with the United States is not tactical as often thought, but deeply rooted in a strategic reorientation.

Restructuring Post-Communist Russia poses fundamental questions while providing the information and analysis needed to give the (at least, preliminary) answers.

Yitzhak Brudny is Senior Lecturer in Political Science and Russia Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. For the year 2003–4, he was Visiting Professor of Government at Wesleyan University. He is author of *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State* (1999), as well as of several journal articles and book chapters.

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Stefani Hoffman is Director of the Mayrock Center for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Research at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She was editor of *The Commonwealth of Independent States and the Middle East* from 1983 to 1997. She is the author of several journal articles and chapters in edited volumes.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

*To Theodore H. Friedgut
From his colleagues and friends*

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

Contributors	page ix
Preface	xi

INTRODUCTION

What comes after socialism? <i>Peter Rutland</i>	3
---	---

THE COMPARATIVE DIMENSION

What went wrong? Post-communist transformations in comparative perspective <i>Anatoly M. Khazanov</i>	21
Communist legacies and new trajectories: Democracy and dictatorship in the former Soviet Union and East Central Europe <i>Alexander J. Motyl</i>	52
Learning from post-socialism <i>Valerie Bunce</i>	68
Ukraine's hollow decade <i>Ilya Prizel</i>	97

RUSSIA IN FREE FALL? KEY CHALLENGES

The Russian transition to the market: Success or failure? <i>Marshall I. Goldman</i>	119
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
Potholes on the road to a flourishing Russia: Structural problems in the second decade		136
<i>Theodore H. Friedgut</i>		
The search for a national identity in the Russia of Yeltsin and Putin		160
<i>Vera Tolz</i>		
THE RUSSIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM: TOWARD STABILIZATION?		
The dilemmas of federalism: Moscow and the regions in the Russian Federation		181
<i>Oksana Oracheva</i>		
The evolution of the multiparty system		208
<i>Andrey Ryabov</i>		
The elections since 1989: The end of the chapter?		226
<i>Nikolai V. Petrov</i>		
Leaders, structural conditions, and Russia's foreign policy		250
<i>Rajan Menon</i>		
Index		271

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contributors

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

Contributors

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

In May 2001, the Marjorie Mayrock Center for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Research and the Department for Russian and Slavic Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem held a conference titled “The Fall of Communism in Europe: Ten Years On.” Most of the essays collected in this book were first presented in preliminary form at the conference. A few of the papers were solicited later to provide a more comprehensive overview of developments following the dissolution of the communist system in Europe. In this, its final form, updated through mid-2003, the book focuses primarily on the Russian Federation, although a number of its authors have adopted a strongly comparative approach. (Peter Rutland in his introductory essay briefly touches on events through the end of 2003).

The conference was organized as a tribute to Theodore (Ted) H. Friedgut, who had just retired from his professorial post in Russian history and Soviet/post-Soviet politics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Ted received a B.A. in political science and economics at the Hebrew University in 1965 and went on to take courses in the newly formed Department of Russian and Slavic Studies, then jointly led by Michael Confino and Leah Goldberg. After receiving his M.A. from the University in 1967, he took graduate studies at Columbia University, where his advisor was Seweryn Bialer. Awarded his doctorate in 1972, he returned to Jerusalem to join the faculty of the Russian Studies Department.

Over the following 30 years, he became a pivotal figure in the department, which he chaired for a number of terms. Ted’s fields of research turned out to be extremely varied, ranging from late tsarist and early Soviet history (particularly his two-volume book on the town of Yuzovka/Donetsk) via studies of post-Stalinist politics (his book on public organizations) and onto his many articles on contemporary Russian and Russian Jewish affairs. As a teacher and colleague, he was

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

Preface

everything that could be asked for – a man of true integrity – dedicated, efficient, and loyal through good times and bad. It is our privilege to have had him as our friend and colleague.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank at least some of the many people who were involved in planning and running the conference: Leah Even, Laura Bandz, and Rita Kotik from the Marjorie Mayrock Center for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Research and Rita Blechman of the Department of Russian and Slavic Studies. We also want to thank Zvi Volk for his part in editing the manuscript. Special thanks go to Sergei Baranovski and, above all, to Anastasia Zolotareva (who has been a pillar of strength throughout this complex process) for their help in preparing the text and index.

Finally, we are grateful for the funding received from the Hebrew University that has made this project possible, specifically The Tamara and Saveli Grinberg Chair for Russian Studies, The Marjorie Mayrock Endowment, The Jay and Leonie Darwin Fund, The Committee for Conferences, and The Department of Economics.

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