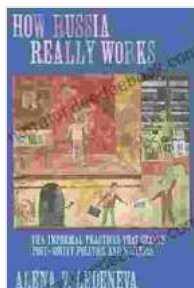


How Russia Really Works: A Long Tail Tale



How Russia Really Works: The Informal Practices That Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business (Culture and Society after Socialism) by Alena V. Ledeneva

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Russia is a vast and complex country, with a long and storied history. Its political system is no less complex, and has been shaped by a variety of factors, including its geography, history, and culture. To understand how Russia really works, it is necessary to take a closer look at these factors.

Geography

Russia is the largest country in the world, spanning eleven time zones and covering over 17 million square kilometers. It is bordered by fourteen countries and has a coastline on the Arctic, Pacific, and Black Seas. This vast size and geographic diversity have had a profound impact on Russian history and politics.

The vastness of Russia has made it difficult to govern. For centuries, the central government in Moscow has struggled to control the far-flung regions of the country. This has led to a tradition of regional autonomy, which continues to exist today.

Russia's location on the Eurasian landmass has also shaped its political development. Russia has been both a bridge and a barrier between Europe and Asia. This has led to a complex relationship with both East and West, which continues to influence Russian foreign policy today.

History

Russia has a long and rich history, which dates back to the 9th century. Over the centuries, Russia has been ruled by a variety of leaders, including tsars, emperors, and communists. These different leaders have left their mark on the country, and their legacies continue to influence Russian politics today.

One of the most important events in Russian history was the Mongol invasion of the 13th century. The Mongols ruled Russia for over two centuries, and their influence is still visible in Russian culture and politics today.

Another important event in Russian history was the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The Bolsheviks established a communist government in Russia, which lasted for over seventy years. The communist period had a profound impact on Russian society and politics, and its legacy continues to be debated today.

Culture

Russian culture is a complex and diverse mix of influences from East and West. Russian culture has been shaped by its Orthodox Christian heritage, its Slavic roots, and its long history of interaction with other cultures.

One of the most important aspects of Russian culture is its collectivism. Russians tend to value the group over the individual, and they are often more concerned with the interests of the community than with their own personal interests.

Another important aspect of Russian culture is its fatalism. Russians often believe that there is little they can do to change their circumstances, and they are often resigned to accept their fate.

Politics

The Russian political system is a complex and evolving mix of democracy and authoritarianism. Russia has a president, a parliament, and a judiciary, but the president has a great deal of power, and the parliament and judiciary are often subservient to him.

The current president of Russia is Vladimir Putin. Putin has been in power since 1999, and he has gradually consolidated his power over the years. Putin is a popular figure in Russia, but he has also been accused of authoritarianism and corruption.

The Russian parliament is called the Federal Assembly. The Federal Assembly is made up of two houses: the State Duma and the Federation Council. The State Duma is the lower house of parliament, and it is responsible for passing laws. The Federation Council is the upper house of

parliament, and it is responsible for representing the interests of the regions.

The Russian judiciary is a complex and often confusing system. The highest court in Russia is the Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court is responsible for interpreting the constitution and ensuring that laws are constitutional.

Foreign Policy

Russia's foreign policy is complex and evolving. Russia has a long history of involvement in international affairs, and it continues to play a major role in world politics today.

One of the most important aspects of Russian foreign policy is its relationship with the United States. Russia and the United States have a long and complex relationship, which has been marked by both cooperation and conflict.

Another important aspect of Russian foreign policy is its relationship with China. Russia and China have a long history of cooperation, and they have become increasingly close in recent years.

Russia is also a major player in the Middle East. Russia has been involved in the Syrian civil war, and it has also been accused of interfering in the 2016 US presidential election.

Military

The Russian military is one of the most powerful in the world. Russia has a large and well-equipped army, navy, and air force. Russia is also a nuclear

power, with the largest nuclear arsenal in the world.

The Russian military has been involved in a number of conflicts in recent years, including the Syrian civil war and the annexation of Crimea. Russia is also accused of interfering in the 2016 US presidential election.

Economy

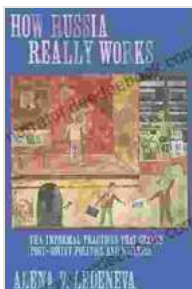
The Russian economy is the eleventh largest in the world. Russia is a major producer of oil and gas, and it is also a major exporter of other commodities, such as wheat and steel.

The Russian economy has been hit hard by Western sanctions in recent years. The sanctions were imposed in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea and its involvement in the Syrian civil war.

The Russian economy is expected to grow in the coming years, but it faces a number of challenges, including corruption, a lack of diversification, and a dependence on oil and gas exports.

Society

Russian society is diverse and complex. Russia is home to over 190 ethnic groups, and there is a great deal of linguistic and cultural



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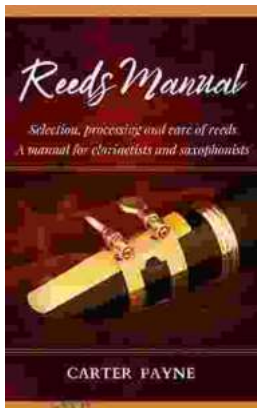
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