The System: An Insiders Life In Soviet Politics

G. A Arbatov

Of the memoirs we have from Soviet leaders and prominent public figures, this is the most interesting and most useful; not because the reader comes away convinced that Arbatov has told all or that he has been utterly candid (even with himself), but because it is an earnest and thoughtful effort to explain to an outside audience what it was like to operate at a well-placed level within "the system." Because the book's unifying theme is what insiders did to reduce the excesses of a harsh and often hidebound order, there is more than a small element of self-justification or, at le This insider's memoir provides a penetrating analysis of late-Soviet and post-Soviet Russian politics that is pungent, pointed, witty, and accessible. It assesses the current dangerous status of Russian politics and society while illuminating the path to a more just and democratic future. Excerpt. Peter Reddaway.Â Then Putin quietly flooded the system with his colleagues from the secret police, thus infusing it with a Committee for State Security (KGB) mentality. In so doing, he took Russia back to a version of home plate, to a rootless, corrupt, authoritarian, de-ideologized version of the Soviet Union. Regarding the future, Kovalev sees little likelihood of change in the near term.