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Oliver Bullough

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Oliver Bullough : The Last Man in Russia: The Struggle to Save a Dying Nation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Last Man in Russia: The Struggle to Save a Dying Nation:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Incredibly informative about Russia By Lucyna In light of the recent events in Ukraine, that to date have involved the annexing of Crimea by Russia and the potential military invasion of eastern Ukraine, I found this book an informative background to the mentality of the Russian state and the people who live there. Oliver Bullough takes a journey through Russia to trace the footsteps of one Russia's most influential

dissident priests, Father Dmitry Dudko, who was unfortunately turned by the KGB. In doing so he talks to a number of Russians who knew him. Oliver reads Fr Dmitry's writings and quotes some of them in the book. He seems to get a real feel for the priest before the KGB turning, and then how he was after, which he believed mirrored the experience of the whole country. Oliver writes, "As a Russian, he wanted to support Russia. As a Christian, he wanted to oppose the Soviet Union, But, if he opposed the Soviet Union, he was allying with foreigners and thus fighting against Russia. He had to choose, therefore, between his religion and his country and he chose his country. That was how he himself justified his choice." The result of that choice was "irreparable damage to his soul", which turned a "happy and confident man" to a "miserable racist". I would have liked to have given this book more than the four stars I have decided upon, but, because of how it skipped from quotes, to what was happening at the time, to other stuff that had happened at other times without clear indication that the context was being changed (thus leading to quite a bit of confusion on my part as I was reading it), the 4 stars is the most I can give it. It's a very worthwhile read despite the jumping around if you stop caring about what is going on and just stick to absorbing the information. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. important information By Mary Stone this book had important information about what has been going on in Russian culture for the past 60 years or so. It was very thoroughly researched. It did not come across like the propaganda that we get from the main stream media. People who think they want socialism or communism need to read this book to see what it is really like. I had no idea that so many political prisoners had died in Russia. If you are interested in History or Sociology, you will appreciate this book. Also gives you a good look at what a culture with heavy use of alcohol looks like. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent, a must read. By Christine Lewis For anyone interested in the recent history of the Soviet Union and the successor states of the Former Soviet Union, this is a must read. Simply the best book on this topic I have ever read, with the possible exception of Catherine Merridale's *Night of Stone, Death and Memory in Russia*. One of a new breed of history and personal experience mixed, Oliver Bullough tells us his time in Russia and his mission, to track down an independent minded Orthodox priest who bore witness to many of the tragedies and disasters of the Soviet period. The book gives an indication of the problems that Russians faced in post 1991 reconstruction, and should be required reading for anyone dealing with Russian affairs today, or interested in Russian motives and psychology.

Russia is dying from within. Oligarchs and oil barons may still dominate international news coverage, but their prosperity masks a deep-rooted demographic tragedy. Faced with staggering population decline and near-certain economic collapse driven by toxic levels of alcohol abuse, Russia is also battling a deeper sickness: a spiritual one, born out of the country's long totalitarian experiment. In "The Last Man in Russia," award-winning journalist Oliver Bullough uses the tale of a lone priest to give life to this national crisis. Father Dmitry Dudko, a dissident Orthodox Christian, was thrown into a Stalinist labor camp for writing poetry. Undaunted, on his release in the mid-1950s he began to preach to congregations across Russia with little concern for his own safety. At a time when the Soviet government denied its subjects the prospect of advancement, and turned friend against friend and brother against brother, Dudko urged his followers to cling to hope. He maintained a circle of sacred trust at the heart of one of history's most deceitful systems. But as Bullough reveals, this courageous group of believers was eventually shattered by a terrible act of betrayal that exposes the full extent of the Communist tragedy. Still, Dudko's dream endures. Although most Russians have forgotten the man himself, the embers of hope that survived the darkness are once more beginning to burn. Leading readers from a churchyard in Moscow to the snow-blanketed ghost towns of rural Russia, and from the forgotten graves of Stalin's victims to a rock festival in an old gulag camp, "The Last Man in Russia" is at once a travelogue, a sociological study, a biography, and a "cri de coeur" for a dying nation. One that, Bullough shows, might yet be saved."

From Booklist Russia's population is plummeting for various reasons, alcohol abuse among them. Statistics on the problem sprinkle this work, and Bullough seeks out explanations that he develops through recent travels in Russia in biographical pursuit of one man, Dmitry Dudko (1922–2004). He was an Orthodox priest whose life span and experiences roughly reflected major events of the Soviet era: collectivization, WWII, the gulag, and the dissident movement. As Bullough journeys to Dudko's birthplace, seminary, churches, and gravesite in Moscow, and the Arctic sites of his gulag, he portrays Dudko's character through recollections of acquaintances and Dudko's underground writings. Able to attract and inspire congregations, Dudko offered hope and mutual trust through an anti-alcohol message. Unfortunately, Dudko's popularity also attracted the KGB, which harassed Dudko until he did its bidding. Though not sympathetic to Dudko's collapse, which he contrasts with the stories of dissidents who went to prison in the 1970s, Bullough portrays it as a result of the way the Soviet state atomized society and drove it to drink. An inquisitive traveler, Bullough conveys a vividly descriptive impression of contemporary Russia. --Gilbert Taylor "PRI's" "The World" Best Books of 2014 Bullough is a great writer, and anyone who's traveled in Russia will appreciate his deft handling of the surreal scenes one sometimes encounters in the world's largest country. "New York Times Book" Bullough is a wonderful companion as he traces the course of Father Dudko's life, visiting the miserable settlements and prisons he left behind.... By the end of the book, you, too, will want to drink shots of vodka with him.

These are the chronicles of a writer who truly knows Russia, and who is not beyond having his heart broken. Amid the reams of writing coming from experts in the offices of distant research organizations, there are too few accounts like Bullough's, which convey the deep stories in the lives of Russians. He has unearthed a story of remarkable relevance for today: about the man who walked out of Lefortovo Prison with his hatred of a disintegrating system transformed into a hatred of us. "The Economist" Bullough has a good sense of how the traumas of Russia's past affect its present. His new book is a mixture of travelogue and biography, as he traces the life of Father Dmitry Dudko, an Orthodox priest who exemplified both resistance to Soviet rule and defeat at its hands.... He weaves the woes of past decades into his journeys to wretched villages, along with the lies and greed in the metropolis. Father Dmitry may be all but forgotten in modern Russia, but his old self would have plenty to say about it. "Financial Times" "The Last Man in Russia" is a complex interweaving of two stories: alcoholism in Russia, and the destruction of a moral crusader and opposition figure at the hands of a brutal regime.... Bullough has quite a gift for presenting his material in simple and readable prose.... While "The Last Man in Russia" is more complex than Bullough's previous work, it is also a broader and more fulfilling read. "Newsweek" In Oliver Bullough's bleak, beautiful "The Last Man in Russia," a mix of biography and reportage, Dudko's journey from defiance to submission to self-destruction becomes the archetypal Russian story: a broken man representing a broken nation. "Telegraph," UK A gritty, deeply embedded travelogue that investigates the culture of drinking, the decline of the Russian family and the experience of trying to remain a man in the Soviet system through a sleuth-like hunt for the real story behind Father Dmitry Dudko. "Sunday Times" (London)"As he follows the locations of the priest's life, Bullough mixes his own research into Russia's modern history with stories of encounters on the road, a combination as potent as the vodka that is bringing down the nation.... Out of the story of Father Dmitry's life and the reality of a nation drowning in drink, Bullough draws an extraordinary portrait of a nation struggling to shed its past and find peace with itself. "Sunday Telegraph" (London)"Part biography, part history, Oliver Bullough's book is also an attempt to demarcate the front lines of the battle for the Russian soul.... The subject matter is rendered palatable by Bullough's brisk, lucid style and his skilful interweaving of historical context with his own rich experience of Russia. He has a talent for sketching the people he meets, often administering a welcome dose of humour, and he appreciates the absurd, in the best Russian tradition. Bullough's questing, roving spirit is admirable.... An ambitious and wide-ranging journey into the heart of a great, sad country." "The Guardian" "More than a thesis on the economics of grain distillation, "The Last Man in Russia" is a contemporary history refracted through the story of one extraordinary man.... Weaving together the narrative strands...and bolstering them with solid research, [Bullough] charts the decline of the Russian nation. He is particularly good at conjuring key moments, vivid characters and credible dialogue, and at flipping between the small incident and the big picture.... Imagining is a whole lot easier with such a lively, well-written and commanding narrative to guide us." "The Christian Science Monitor" Bullough has tracked down some of those past and present brave souls who have stood up to the monstrous pressures and violence; doing so, Bullough has renewed his own and our faith in the tradition of Russian dissidents remarkable integrity. The writing is sparkling and his appreciation for the real heroism of so many Russians is enough to give us hope against hope that the people will free themselves from their increasingly corrupt and incompetent government. The unreasonable and wonderful faith that Bullough, Navalny, and the persecuted rock band Pussy Riot seem to share is that as bad as Russia is now, as locked down as it is now, it can't stay locked. There are too many keys in circulation that will open the door to Mother Russia's revival. "Daily Telegraph" (London)"In this superb hybrid of travel and social analysis, "The Last Man in Russia," Bullough casts a despairing eye on a nation's death through alcohol.... In pages of raw, poetic prose, Bullough travels to Father Dmitry's birthplace in western Russia and on to his prison-Gulag, 1,250 miles from Moscow. Throughout, he dilates sorrowfully on the self-denial of vodka drinkers.... "The Last Man in Russia" is distinguished by the excellence of its writing and its lucid, unsparing gaze. "Literary" "Eccentric but beguiling.... [Bullough] has a fine eye for telling, classically Russian scenes and moments." "Times Literary Supplement," UK A very engaging travelogue-cum-biography. "Kirkus's" In a vivid, colorful account of his journeys, Bullough starkly chronicles the visible evidence of Russia's despair in abandoned villages, ruined farms, shuttered factories and ubiquitous drunkenness. Part biography, part travelogue, a perceptive, sad and very personal analysis of the decline of a once-great nation. "Publishers Weekly" "Pursuing Father Dmitry's story takes Bullough on a crisscross journey of modern day Russia, affording glimpses into the lives of Russians, which is rich with vodka but little else, least of all hope.... While most of what Bullough finds in the past and the present shows why one Russian priest told him, I look at the future with pessimism, the book does end with a glimmer of hope, which is a fitting tribute to Father Dmitry and to Bullough's ability to find and illuminate a story worth telling." "Library Journal" A compelling read, Bullough's book is a must for anyone interested in the sociological, psychological, or personal effects of faith and political change on a nation struggling to find its identity and sustain hope. "Russian Life Magazine" Dudko's story is indeed a fascinating one and worthy of the space and time that Bullough gives it. And the manner of his telling - as much a modern travelogue far off beaten Russian paths as a biography - is both unusual and engaging. For in understanding Dudko, we better understand all that Russians have been through. The book ends on a high note, with the nascent hope that filled 2011's winter demonstrations. "Booklist" "An inquisitive traveler, Bullough conveys a vividly descriptive impression of contemporary Russia."

Andrew Meier, author of "The Lost Spy: An American in Stalin's Secret Service" Few in the West dare take note of the Russian cross: the birth and death rates that head in opposite directions and forecast a grim future for the world's largest country. But Oliver Bullough travels Russia with eyes wide open. "The Last Man in Russia" is an archeological dig in search of a moral compass. Tracing the life of a single priest from believer to dissident to apologist for the state and even Stalin he lays bare the troubles haunting the new Russia. "About the Author" Oliver Bullough is Caucasus editor for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting and author of "Let Our Fame Be Great," which won the Overseas Press Club Cornelius Ryan Award. He lives in London.