

A Russian Diary by Anna Politkovskaya, with a Foreword by Jon Snow.
Harvill Secker 2007.

It is impossible to read this searing indictment of Putin's Russia without an awareness of the author's murder in October 2006 informing every page. Having completed the book it is impossible to deny the power, passion and courage that were Anna Politkovskaya's hallmarks as a journalist.

This is not an uplifting read in some ways, because the author is so clearly depressed and enraged, in almost equal measure, by the state of politics in Russia, by the corruption and brutality of Putin's rule, and by the lack of backbone in the opposition.

Her entries about Beslan and Chechnya in general are the most memorable of all but there is much else besides that grabs the reader's attention, not least her very personal pursuit of Vladimir Putin, his character and lifestyle.

No one who reads A Russian Diary will find it easy to forget, or to eradicate from their mind the haunting and haunted image of Anna Politkovskaya staring out from the cover.

This is a wonderful testimony to a brave woman, doomed by her own words and her unrelenting integrity.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh