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On-Line

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Published by Chuck Hains & Sally Beer

ACT and ADC Endorsement Results!

ACT and Arroyo Democratic Club (ADC) members have endorsed the following local candidates and issues on this November's ballot:

Pasadena Unified School District:

- District 1: **Kimberly Kenne**
- District 3: **Michelle Richardson Bailey**
- District 5: **Patrice Marshall McKenzie**
- District 7: **Yarma Velazquez**

Los Angeles County Sheriff: **Robert Luna**

Local Ballot Measures:

- PCC Facilities Bond – Measure PCC – **YES**
- Pasadena Library Services – Measure L – **YES**
- Pasadena Rent Stabilization – Measure H -- **YES**



Check inside the Phoenix for a complete list of the candidates endorsed and recommended by ACT and ADC. (See page three.) If you haven't gotten your ballot by the time you receive this, and you live in LA County, call the Registrar of Voters (800-815-2666) for assistance.

ACT & ADC Campaign Contributions

Here are the **contributions we are making to endorsed candidates/campaigns** (voted at our October 6 ACT meeting).

LA County Sheriff - Robert Luna campaign - \$1,000.

PUSD Campaigns - Michelle Richardson Bailey
Seat 3 campaign - \$2,000.

Patrice Marshall McKenzie Seat 5 campaign - \$2,000.

Yarma Velazquez Seat 7 campaign - \$2,000.

(We made no contribution to the Seat 1 campaign of Kimberly Kenne as she is self-funding her campaign.)

PCC Facilities Bond - \$1,000.

Pasadena Library Services Continuation - \$1,000.

Pasadena Rent Stabilization/Just Cause Eviction - \$3,000.

Pasadena Area United Democratic Headquarters (UDH) - \$6,000.

We are also providing the monthly stipends for our Judy Boggs interns, Maylene Hughes and Nathan Castillo.



CADEM 2022 General Election Endorsements for Federal and State Offices

Federal Office

U.S. Senate (Full Term) - Alex Padilla

U.S. Senate (Partial Term) - Alex Padilla

State Offices

Governor - Gavin Newsom,

Lieutenant Governor - Eleni Kounalakis,

Secretary of State - Dr. Shirley N. Weber,

Attorney General - Rob Bonta,

Treasurer - Fiona Ma,

Controller - Malia Cohen,

Superintendent of Public Instruction - Tony Thurmond,

Insurance Commissioner - Ricardo Lara

Board of Equalization – Antonio Vazquez



Statewide Proposition Recommendations

SC = ACT Steering Committee, SP = State Party, TW = Tim Wendler, ALL = all three agree

Prop. 1 - Right to Reproductive Freedom – All -YES

Prop. 26 - Allows In-Person Roulette, Dice Games, Sports Wagering on Tribal Lands – TW – NO; SC & SP - Neutral

Prop. 27 – Allows Online and Mobile Sports Wagering Outside Tribal Lands – All - NO

Prop. 28 – Provides Additional Funding for Arts and Music Education in Public Schools – All -YES

Prop. 29 – Requires On-site Licensed Medical Professionals at Kidney Dialysis Clinics – SC & TW – NO; SP - YES

Prop. 30 – Provides Funding for Programs to Reduce Air Pollution and Prevent Wildfires by Increasing Tax on Personal Income over \$2 Million – SC & TW – NO; SP -YES

Prop. 31 – Referendum on 2020 Law that would Prohibit the Retail Sale of Certain Flavored Tobacco Products - ALL – YES



Special Thanks to Sustaining Members

George & Marilyn Brumder

Dave & Jacqueline Jacobs

Rick McKnight

Anita Pemstein

Special Thanks to Patrons

Janice Laruccia

Claire & Chris Tayback

ACTpasadena.org

Have you checked our website recently? You can always find the current *Phoenix* there, plus a *Phoenix* archive. Please share items of interest and online calendar items with website manager Bruce Wright.



Reach him at: brucewright@sbcglobal.net.

Complete Set of ACT and ADC Recommendations

Following is a full list of endorsements by ACT and the Arroyo Democratic Club (ADC). Not all of these may appear on your ballot, depending upon the district in which you live.

ACT and ADC Endorsements

Pasadena Unified School District:

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Los Angeles County Sheriff: **Robert Luna**

Local Ballot Measures:

- PCC Facilities Bond – Measure PCC – **YES**
- Pasadena Library Services – Measure L – **YES**
- Pasadena Rent Stabilization – Measure H – **YES**

ACT and ADC Recommendations

Federal and State-wide races:

U.S. Senator: Alex Padilla
 Governor: Gavin Newsom
 Lt. Governor: Elena Kounalakis
 Treasurer: Fiona Ma
 Attorney Gen: Rob Bonta
 Insurance Comm.: Ricardo Lara
 Superintendent of Schools: Tony Thurmond
 Secretary of State: Shirley Weber
 Controller: Malia Cohen
 Treasurer: Fiona Ma
 Board of Equalization: Tony Vazquez
 House of Representative: Judy Chu
 State Assembly: Chris Holden

State Ballot Measures:

1: YES	29: NO
26: No Recommendation	30: NO
27: NO	31: YES
28: YES	

Judicial Races:

For all Supreme Court and Court of Appeals races:

Vote YES to confirm the incumbents.

For Los Angeles County Superior Court Judges:

Seat 60: Abby Baron
 Seat 67: Elizabeth Lashley-Haynes
 Seat 70: Holly Hancock
 Seat 90: Melissa Lyons
 Seat 118: Melissa Hammond
 Seat 151: Patrick Hare



Thanks for Additional Contributions to ACT's Operating Account

Sue Basmajian
 Anita Pemstein

And Thanks for Additional Contributions to ACT's Political Account

Sue Basmajian
 Anita Pemstein



Political Notes

by Jon Fuhrman



Monday, October 10.

Barely four weeks to go, thank goodness, and then the verdict will be in. Until then, we'll be constantly assaulted by polls, with candidates up a point, down a point. But one thing to remember about all the polls – every single one depends upon a turnout projection. Each poll takes the raw data and weights the responses to fit their turnout model. Of course, turnout model is a fancy way of portraying their guess about who is going to vote. That guess may be based on historical trends, turnout over the last four years, scholarly analysis, adjustments for self-assessed enthusiasm, but in the end, it's just a pure guess.

My guess is still looking toward a Blue Tsunami – significant gains in the Senate, holding the House, flipping some state legislative chambers. At its core, my guess stems from the impact of the Dobbs decision. Everyone recalls how

Kansas voters – not exactly a blue hotspot – decisively rejected, by a 60% vote, an anti-choice state constitutional amendment. The magnitude of that victory was way beyond any expectation, locally or nationally. What intrigued me the most, though, were the results in a few of the cow counties in far western Kansas. These are small counties, with fifteen or twenty thousand voters each, which Donald Trump had carried by 80 or 85%. They voted in favor of the anti-choice amendment, but only by 60 – 65%. So fully one quarter of the Trump voters went the other way – they voted against the amendment and in favor of reproductive choice.

How do we explain that? There was no significant ground effort in that area. These counties were too small to bother with, too far out on the western side of the state. There was no door-knocking or person-to-person contact. These voters “organically” switched sides – they decided on their own to support reproductive rights.

I think we're seeing the exact same behavior in other parts of the country. It may not be a quarter of the Trump vote, but it doesn't have to be. Even 5 – 10% of the GOP vote in most areas would be enough to tilt competitive races well into Democratic territory, or to buttress Dem candidates in districts that Biden narrowly won in 2020. There were two intriguing sets of polls recently. One group, in Oklahoma, either showed the Democratic gubernatorial candidate 4% behind the incumbent GOP Governor or 4% ahead. A poll in North Dakota showed an independent candidate only a few points behind the GOP incumbent Congressman (the Democratic candidate withdrew from the race).

Now, I don't expect the challengers to win either of these races. We should have no reasonable expectation of winning in Oklahoma or North Dakota – unless a rather substantial number of traditional GOP voters are suddenly, “organically” switching sides, which is exactly what we saw in

Kansas and seem to be seeing nationwide. This issue of reproductive freedom, and the incessant news from GOP leadership talking about a nationwide ban on abortion with few or no exceptions, and constant GOP state legislative efforts to ban abortions at the state level, is becoming a touchstone issue for many voters and seems fully capable of upending decades of traditional voting patterns.

Along these lines, keep an eye on the Senate race in Kentucky. A Democrat, Charles Booker, is running against GOP incumbent Rand Paul. Booker had run state-wide in the Democratic Senate primary in 2020, losing narrowly to Amy McGrath, who then lost rather decisively to Mitch McConnell. Everyone rates the seat as a safe GOP win, and the last polling was done back in January.

But on the same ballot is State Constitutional Amendment 2, which would strip out any implicit State Constitutional protection for abortion. This is just like the Kansas anti-choice amendment, which went down 60 - 40. Kentucky is not too different from Kansas – basically a GOP stronghold, but with a Democratic governor and some Democratic heritage, and a mix of urban areas with Democratic concentrations and rural areas that go pretty strongly Republican. If Kentucky reacts as Kansas did toward the Constitutional Amendment, it's not too far a stretch to predict that those voters opposing the constitutional amendment might just also oppose the GOP candidate for Senate. And if the margin on the amendment vote is even close to what it was in Kansas, we could see the most surprising upset among the Senate races.

Before I wrap up with some clues to look for before and on Election Day, I just can't stop myself from commenting a little bit on the Georgia race.



As Mitch McConnell noted, “candidate quality matters.” Perhaps the saddest element of the whole story is how utterly and completely the evangelical community has prostituted itself in support of Herschel Walker. I can't discern even one redeeming moral quality in his candidacy. Yet that seems not to trouble any of these family value advocates who tout the righteousness of their cause. Perhaps there will be a lesson learned here somehow, but sadly that seems too much to expect.

So, are there clues to watch, either as we approach Election Day or on Election Day itself? Well, one of the most contested states right now is Nevada. Interestingly, Nevada has an early voting period from Saturday, October 22 to November 4, the Friday before Election Day. Nevada voting officials will be tracking

who cast early votes, and they report out the results, so we can tell how many Dems versus Reps are early voting. In the last few years, Dems have tended to do more early voting, and GOP voters predominate on Election Day. So we should expect more Dems on the early voting rolls, but the turnout level and raw majorities will give some important hints as to how close the

races might end up being. By the way, the Pasadena United Democratic Headquarters is organizing not only phone banks into Nevada but also caravans into Las Vegas (where 80% of Nevada voters live) on the last two weekends in October. So if you're so inclined, you can pitch in to help what is a huge battleground state, with a Senate seat, the gubernatorial race and three Congressional seats generally seen as Toss-Ups right now.

On Election Day, the earliest results will come from Indiana and Kentucky, whose polls close at 6:00 pm local time, but both states span the Eastern and Central time zones, so results will come

between 3:00 and 4:00 pm our time. In Kentucky, watch for the Senate race and the vote on Constitutional Amendment 2. Rural votes, particularly from the eastern side of the state, are likely to come in before urban areas, so if the early vote is close, or tilting against the Amendment, that's a very good sign.

North Carolina polls close at 7:30 pm local time (4:30 pm our time) and Georgia polls close between 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm (8:00 pm in the larger cities, like Atlanta). What is interesting about these states, though, is that they will report their absentee results much faster than other states. North Carolina, in particular, will be reporting faster. If Cheri Beasley wins the Senate seat, that pretty much guarantees that Dems will hold the Senate, and probably be able to abolish the filibuster. The state's 13th Congressional District is generally seen as a Toss-Up race (with Larry Sabato rating it as Lean Republican); the former GOP incumbent, Ted Budd, left to run for the Senate. If Democrat Wiley Nickel wins, that strongly suggests Democrats will hold the House. If he's losing by more than 3%, that's a bad sign for Dems and an early indicator we may lose the House.

New York polls are open until 9:00 pm locally, or 6:00 pm our time. This may be the best early indicator for our ability to hold the House. There are four Democratic Congressional seats (Districts 3, 17, 18, and 19) and four GOP seats (Districts 1, 2, 11 and 22) that are competitive. If even just one of the GOP seats is flipped, that's a pretty good sign for Dems. If more than 1 flips Democratic, we're off to the races. Conversely, if Dems lose even one of our own seats, we will likely lose the House.

Now that you know what to look for, plan for a long night. California results will likely not be very informative until after 11:00 pm our time, perhaps well after that, so put in an order for a night's worth of popcorn and get ready to settle

in. I'm betting we'll be pretty happy with the results.

~ Jon Fuhrman



UDH Update! Ballots Have Arrived!

Ballots have arrived and the United Democratic Headquarters (UDH) is humming along with weekly virtual phone banks, post carding, canvassing in Nevada, and a local door hanger Get Out the Vote operation planned for November 5 here in the Pasadena area. The time to act is now.

We have already made thousands of calls for Christy Smith, Will Rollins, Jay Chen and Asif Mahmood here in California. These Congressional seats can be flipped from red to blue. We are also active-calling into Nevada, having made thousands of calls to benefit Democrats running there.

You can help by signing up for one of our online phone banks at [Pasadenademocrats.com](https://pasadenademocrats.com). We call Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings from 6 pm till 8 pm. We provide an easy and quick training session, and you are off to the races. So, please sign up and make calls at least one night in the next month.

On Saturday, October 22, we are hosting a post-card palooza party in Sierra Madre. Bagels, donuts, coffee, and postcards! Have a bagel and fill out postcards that will be mailed to voters in swing states. This event will start at 9 am. The address will be provided upon your rsvp to billhacket2002@yahoo.com.

On November 5 at 9 am, we will meet and go out to hang door hangers to help get out the vote for Democratic candidates in Pasadena and Altadena. Let's boost the turnout among occasional

Democratic voters. This is a no-knock, easy opportunity to get some exercise and help remind Democrats to get out and vote.

We win when you help. Thanks for supporting the UDH. We appreciate you!

~ Bill Hackett, Campaign Coordinator

UDH Oktoberfest 2022 Awardees

We offer our enthusiastic congratulations to the special honorees at UDH's 2022 Oktoberfest. **Karen Wingard** received the Lifetime Leadership Award. **Senator Anthony Portantino** received the Legacy Sponsor Award. And the Friend of UDH award was granted posthumously to **John J. Kennedy**. The awards were given during the festivities at Oktoberfest 2022 on Sunday, October 16.

Pasadenademocrats.com

Always check Pasadenademocrats.com for the latest news from the Pasadena Area United Democratic Headquarters (UDH)!! You can volunteer to phone, write postcards, distribute get-out-the-vote doorhangers or help with funding. We need you!!



Upcoming ACT/ADC Meetings

November 10*, Thursday, 7 p.m. Program: Midterm Election analysis by Jon Fuhrman and Fred Register. Don't miss this always informative and entertaining presentation!

December 8, Thursday, 6:30 p.m.
Annual Holiday Potluck; location TBA.

*Meeting via Zoom. ACT and ADC meetings begin with socializing at 7 p.m. The program and business meeting follow at 7:30 p.m. (Except for our Potlucks, which begin at 6:30 p.m. followed by the meeting at 8 p.m.)

From
25th District
State Senator
Anthony
Portantino



Dear ACT members,

As we head toward the election finish line, I'm hopeful that we can hold on to the house and expand our numbers in the Senate. The number of anti-democratic election denying candidates on the ballot is disturbing, making this election even more important than usual. The mean-spirited bigoted legacy of Trump must be put in the rear-view mirror and not continue as we move forward. California is home to several of the most important House races and I'm grateful to the many activists who are walking, phoning and post-card writing in these districts. It is going to take all of us working together in the homestretch to maintain our democracy and defeat the MAGA movement.

I'm heading into the final two years of my Senate term - proud of what I have accomplished, but with much unfinished business. Education, mental health, environmental protection and gun safety will continue to be priorities. I was pleased that Governor Newsom signed several of my bills that will help children and families. Children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder will now be eligible for an IEP in school and water agencies will have a new tool to detect chemicals of emerging concern in our drinking water. Our streets, roads and communities will become safer for pedestrians and bikers as cities will be held more accountable to create safe streets and cancer facilities like our own City of Hope will now be able to serve a broader population of patients facing cancer.

I recently learned that I was nominated to receive

an award from our United Democratic Headquarters. This is a tremendous honor as the UDH is one of the finest and most dedicated group of activists in California. I hope to see everyone at Oktoberfest rallying to turn red districts blue. And I am thankful for this recognition along with many other local Democrats.

On the family front, we had Bella and Sofia home for the weekend, and it was great to just be a dad. I also celebrated my second-year anniversary of my bariatric surgery and continue to ride my bike almost every day and stay committed to a new healthier life. Thank you to everyone for their encouragement throughout this process.

Warmest, best and on to Democratic wins in November.

~ Anthony



**From
41st District
Assemblymember
Chris Holden**



Dear ACT Friends,

I am pleased to announce that Governor Newsom signed thirteen out of fifteen bills. The bills include:

AB 102 – Pupil attendance at community colleges: College and Career Access Pathways partnerships: county offices of education which would eliminate the 2027 sunset date for the College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) partnerships, indefinitely. The Governor also included funding for this program in the 2022 Budget through my previous bill, AB 2617 Pupil instruction: dual enrollment programs: competitive grants: College and Career Access Pathways partnerships: best practices: communication and marketing strategy.

AB 512 – State highways: relinquishment: infrastructural barriers, which would authorize the commission to relinquish a portion of a state highway that contains an infrastructural barrier, to a county or city, if the department and the applicable county or city have entered into an agreement providing for the relinquishment of the portion of the highway.

AB 676 – Franchises, which would create a more fair process where both parties have a say to determine the amount franchisee's owe when an agreement is being terminated. It also prevents franchisors from transferring all liability burden onto franchisees in exchange for financial help during a state of emergency.

AB 895 – Skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, and residential care facilities for the elderly: notice to prospective residents, would require skilled nursing facilities to facilitate the introduction of prospective residents and their caregivers to the local long-term care ombudsman representative.

AB 257 – Food Facilities and Employment, which enacts the Fast Food Accountability and Standards Recovery Act to, among other things, establish the Fast Food Council within the Department of Industrial Relations, with a sunset date of January 1, 2029, to develop sector-wide minimum standards on wages, working hours, and other working conditions related to the health, safety, and welfare of, and supply the necessary cost of proper living to, fast food restaurant workers.

AB 1604 – Civil Service: Upward Mobility Act of 2022, to modify state civil service examination and appointment practices to increase the diversity of applicant pools on employment lists, determine areas of compliance for non-merit-related audits; and promote the achievement of upward mobility goals for underrepresented state employees, as specified.

AB 1720 – Care Facilities: Criminal Background Checks which authorizes the California Department of Social Services to process a simplified criminal record exemption for an individual seeking a license to operate, be employed by, or otherwise have contact with clients in a community care facility or be registered as a home care aide if that individual meets specified criteria.

AB 2085 – Crimes: Mandated Reporters which redefines “general neglect” for the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act by excluding a person’s economic disadvantage, as specified. By clarifying that a parent’s economic disadvantage does trigger general neglect reporting requirements, it directs mandated reporters to connect families with community-based services.

AB 2446 – Embodied Carbon Emissions: Construction Materials which require the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to develop a framework for measuring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with new building construction. Requires CARB to develop, by July 1, 2025, a framework for measuring and reducing the carbon intensity of new building construction.

AB 2515 – Proprietary and Private Security Services which revises requirements for obtaining a baton permit and carrying a baton and requires a person registered as a proprietary private security employer to deliver a written report to DCA describing the circumstances surrounding any physical altercation with a member of the public by a registered proprietary private security officer (PSO) while on duty and while acting within the course and scope of their employment within seven business days after the qualifying incident. Exempts incidents when hospital staff requests a PSO for restraint for medical or mental health purposes.

AB 2644 – Custodial Interrogation which prohibits an officer from using threats, physical harm,

deception, or psychologically manipulative interrogation tactics when questioning a person 17 years of age or younger about the commission of a felony or misdemeanor. The bill becomes effective on July 1, 2024. AB 2644 closely follows newly enacted laws in Illinois, the first state to pass legislation prohibiting police officers from using deceptive interrogation tactics on youth, and a similar law passed in Oregon.

AB 2723 – Animals: Microchips which establishes additional requirements on animal shelters regarding the release of a dog or cat required to be microchipped to an owner. Specifies that the owner of a dog or cat, not the shelter or rescue agency, shall be registered with the microchip registry as the dog’s or cat’s primary owner.

AB 2773 – Stops: Notification by Police Officers, effective January 1, 2024, requires a peace officer making a traffic or pedestrian stop to state the reason for the stop before asking investigatory questions unless the officer reasonably believes that withholding the reason for the stop is necessary to protect life or property from an imminent threat. Adds information regarding this requirement to the DMV’s Driver’s Handbook and requires local law enforcement agencies to report additional stop information to the DOJ.

In the district, we were able to make a difference with these budget victories:

- \$5 million for the Pasadena Central Library Seismic Retrofit project - will require a seismic retrofit, structural upgrades, building systems upgrades, and improved ADA amenities for building access, inclusivity, and usage.
- \$3 million for the Rose Bowl Stadium - will ensure proper gas and water infrastructure improvements.
- \$1.5 million La Vina Trail Completion - will assist The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) in their pursuit of creating two new trails that will provide public access

for all to the Altadena Crest Trail, Chaney Trail, and the Angeles National Forest's extensive network of trails.

- \$10 million for Sierra Madre Library - will assist in infrastructure upgrades and accessibility compliance.
- \$2.7 million for Clara Oaks would provide a western entrance to the Claremont wilderness park. It would also help to create an open space corridor of 100 acres across the entire foothills in the region.
- \$1.9 million for the Rancho Cucamonga Wildfire Detection Initiative.

I look forward to keeping you up to date and welcome you reaching out to my office.

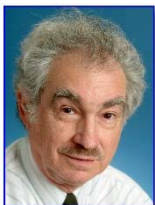
Sincerely,

~ Chris R. Holden



Book Review

By Robert V. Frampton



“The Invention of Russia: From Gorbachev’s Freedom to Putin’s War,” by Arkady Ostrovsky

Michael Sergeyevich Gorbachev began to initiate reform in the Soviet Union soon after becoming party leader on the death of Konstantin Chernenko in April 1985. These reforms were carried out by policies of perestroika (restructuring of the political and economic structure) and glasnost (easing of censorship, and providing transparency). However, these developments had a heritage, beginning with Nikita Khrushchev’s famous speech to the 20th Party Congress in February 1956, in which he denounced the cult of personality and reign of terror under Stalin. Ostrovsky describes how Khrushchev provided an

opening for arts and culture; and many previously banned works were published. This cultural opening shaped the consciousness of those who, thirty years later, would launch perestroika. An example was the launching of the literary journal *Novy Mir* (New World), edited by poet Alexander Tvardovsky. In November 1962, *Novy Mir* published the short novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by an unknown math teacher, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, which was an instantaneous hit and projected Solzhenitsyn to immediate fame. Another heritage was the Prague Spring (1967-68), led by Alexander Dubček, and also by Zdeněk Mlýnář, who had been a very close friend of Gorbachev during their student years at Moscow State University. The slogan of the Prague Spring was “Communism with a Human Face”; and Dubček promulgated a liberal press law. It was this press law, that led Brezhnev to send the tanks into Prague, over the opposition of many of his advisors. For the Prague Spring had generated a feeling of optimism among the Russian intelligentsia, including many party leaders. One of these sympathizers of Prague Spring was a Brezhnev speech writer, Alexander Yakovlev, who later became the chief architect of Perestroika as an assistant to Gorbachev. And Yakovlev defined perestroika as including a market economy, private ownership, democracy and openness.

After eighteen years of stagnation under Brezhnev, the advent of Gorbachev provided another cultural opening: Gorbachev was picking up from the point where Alexander Dubček had left off in 1968. The Spring air of 1985 was filled with enormous optimism and hope. There was an opening to the West, both diplomatic and cultural. However, with all the opening of perestroika and glasnost, the Soviet Union’s economy remained in the doldrums, and even worsened. As Ostrovsky explains, Gorbachev, as had Dubček, wanted to return to pre-Stalin economic ideas of Lenin’s New Economic Policy, and even

to the ideas of Nikola Bukharin (first editor of Pravda) – they regarded Stalin’s collectivization as a deviation from Leninism. Stalin had cancelled the New Economic Policy in 1922 and executed Bukharin in March 1938 as part of the purges. Glasnost allowed dissent to the economic malaise to be openly expressed and to grow. Then, in May 1989 Parliaments of the three Baltic Republics voted to succeed from the USSR. On November 9, 1989, the East German government allowed the Berlin Wall to come down.

Yeltsin, as a critic of Gorbachev, was elected president of the Russian Federation in May 1990, and, finally, On June 12, 1990, the Russian Parliament also voted to succeed.

The focus of Ostrovsky’s study is on the Russian media, both print and television, and how it evolved under Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Putin. A case study is the coup d’état that the KGB and old-guard Stalinists staged against Gorbachev in August 1991. The coup leaders placed Gorbachev under house arrest, took over the main TV channel and brought tanks into central Moscow. President Yeltsin opposed the coup by climbing onto one of the tanks, shaking hands with its crew, and reading an appeal to all citizens to resist the coup, all of which was broadcast live on TV. All the newspapers banded together to publish a common newspaper opposing the coup and calling the people into the streets. A million-fold turnout caused the coup leaders to backdown and Gorbachev was restored. However, four months later, on December 25, 1991, Gorbachev resigned as President of the USSR and the union dissolved.

Boris Yeltsin and Anatoly Chubais promulgated rather abrupt market reforms, privatizing state industries by giving all citizen vouchers of ownership of the industries that they did not understand what to do with. The resulting consolidation created the class of oligarch billionaires who ended

up owning these industries. Yeltsin also decentralized authority, devolving authority to regional managers. Vladimir Putin, after 2000, broke this promise of federalism made by Yeltsin and re-centralized authority.

Ostrovsky addresses the question: How did Russia get from 1992 to 2016 (when the book was published)? He addresses this by looking at the roles of the journalists, editors, television executives and people in charge of the message and the media, not just the political leaders. He writes: “From the time of Gorbachev’s perestroika onward, journalists have been more than transmitters of ideas and designs conceived elsewhere. They became the source of these designs and ideas, and as such, they are responsible both for Russia’s emergence from authoritarianism and for its decent back into it.” This book is the story of Russian media and of the country that they have invented.

~ Robert V Frampton

While Arkady Ostrovsky’s book, The Invention of Russia, is a study of Russian media (print and television) and its influence on shaping Russian opinion, next month’s review will be Putin’s Kleptocracy by Ohio State University professor Karen Dawisha, which delves into the intrigue of Putin’s takeover of Russia, a carefully hatched plan that he and KGB colleagues began developing in his early days as vice mayor of Leningrad. These two books describe the formation of Putin’s autocracy (and kleptocracy) from different perspectives.



