Twitter Thread by Keeper of Books

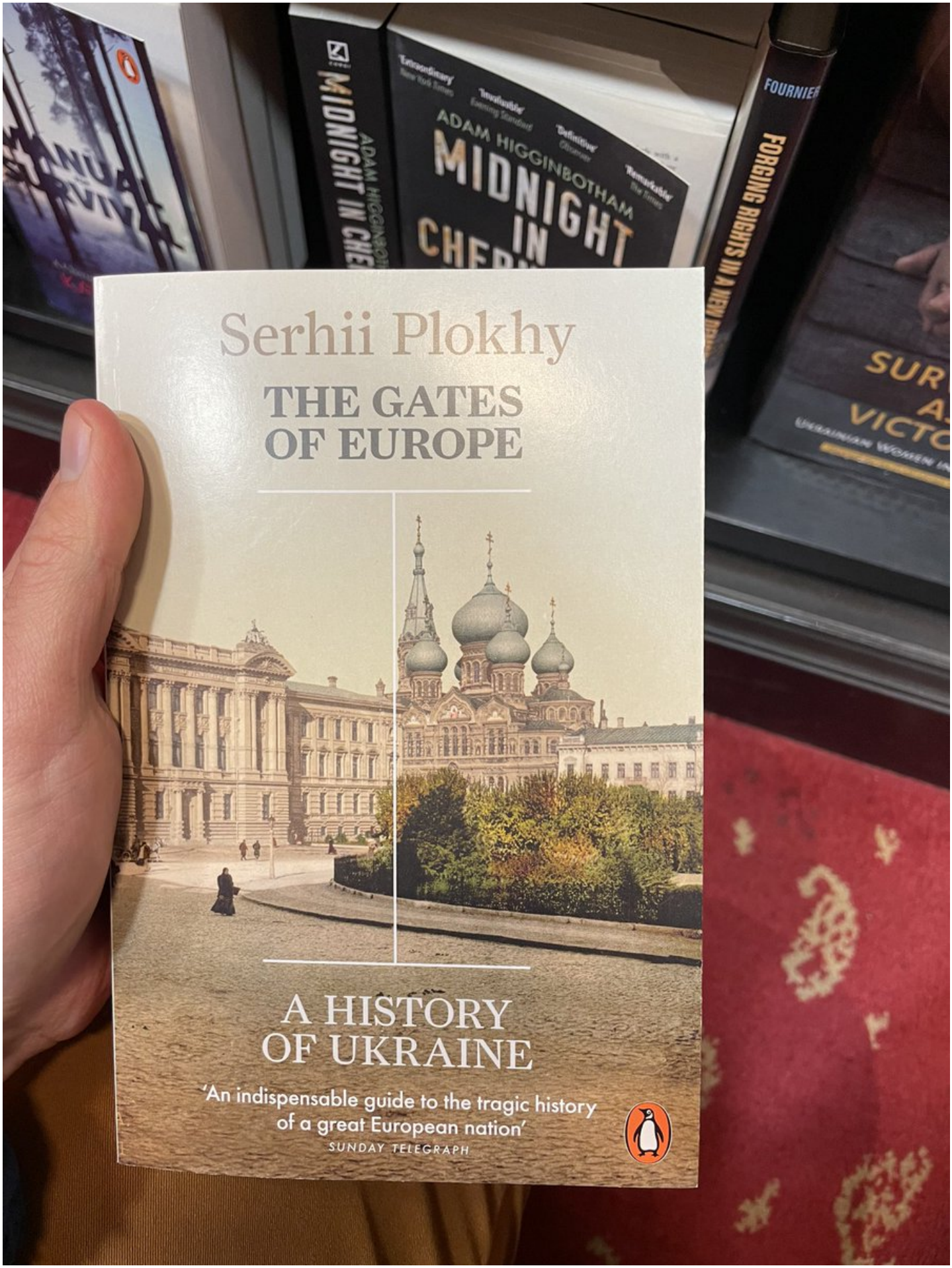
Keeper of Books
@happyhappyhenri

Hello All!

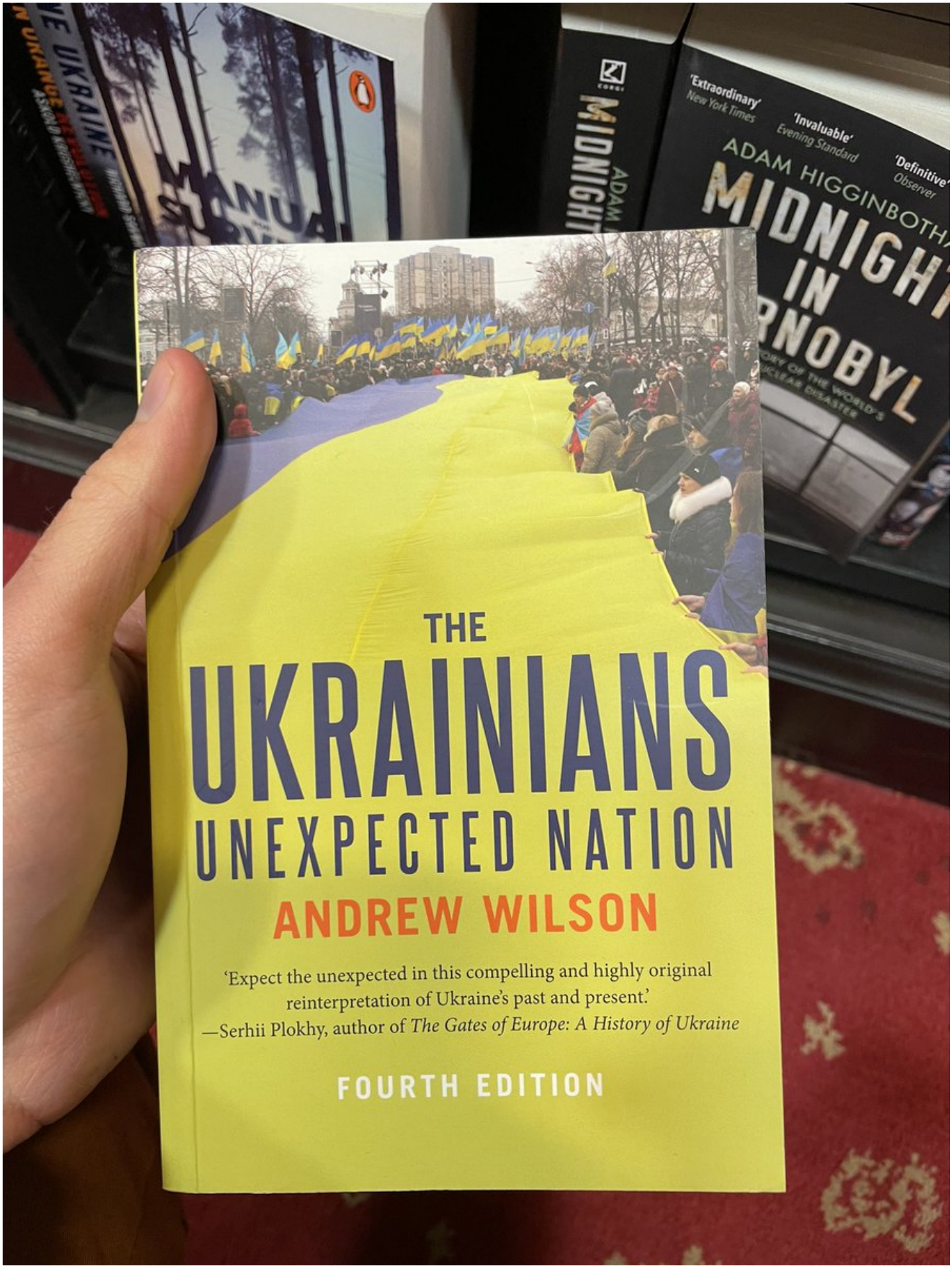
As some of you might know I am the buyer for the largest bookstore in the country and a Russia/Eastern Europe watcher. Sitting on the convergence of these two interests of mine, I feel it would be a good idea to share a few books about the situation in ■■ ■■

To make things a bit easy of course, all of the below should be available for purchase in the UK and bear in mind if you're based outside UK, there might be different editions etc. Please take your business to your local bookstore or waterstones, don't give money to big bad A!

Firstly, Ukraine. ■■
Probably the most commonly found book in British bookshops is 'The Gates of Europe' by @SPlokhy who is one of the most popular Ukraine scholars in the West, a professor at Harvard and director of Harvard Ukraine Inst. You'll see his books come up again

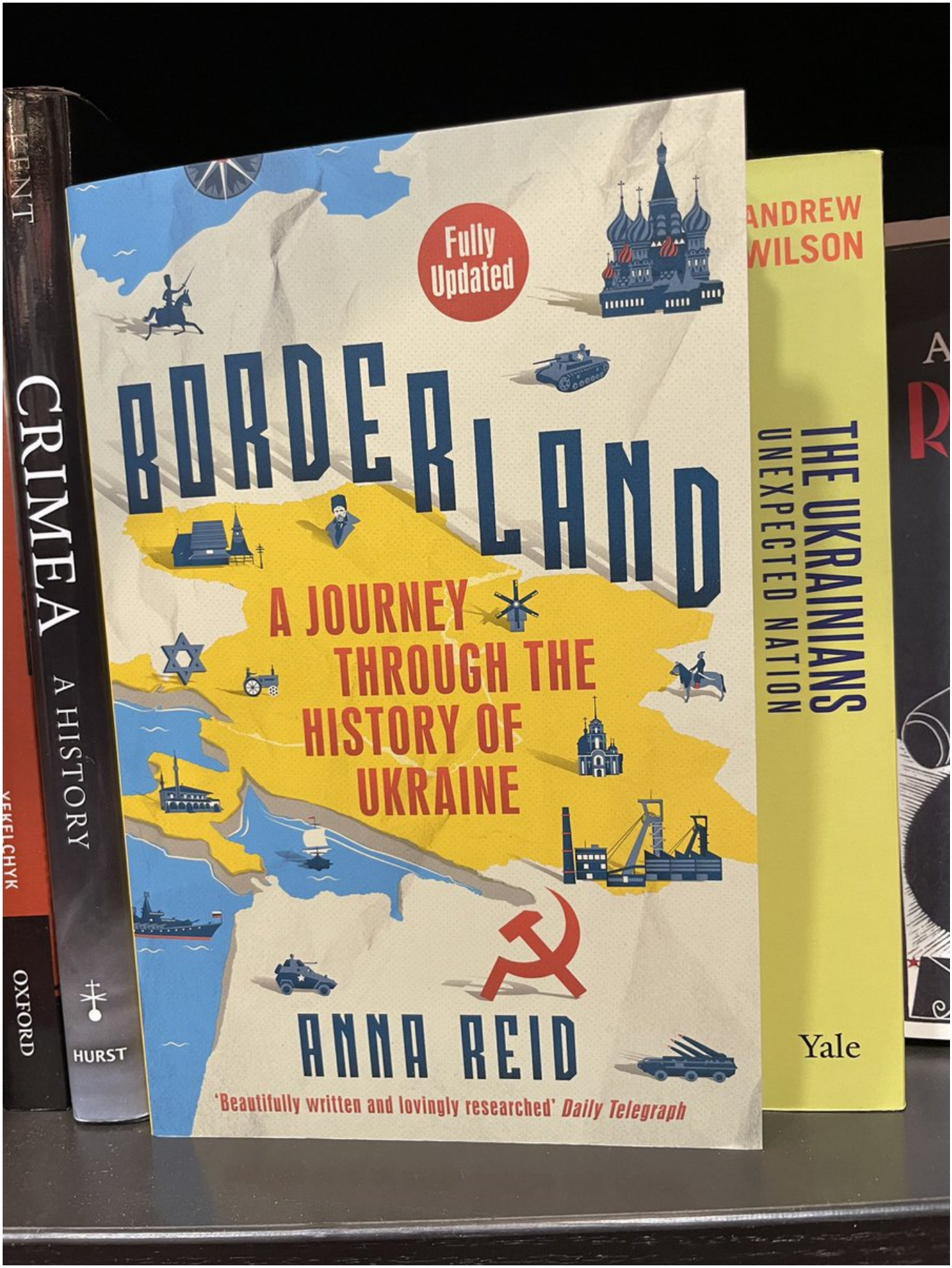


Next up is 'The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation' by prof. Andrew Wilson of the @UCLSSEES . Great general history of the country. Bear in mind it's from 2015 though so omits the most recent events.

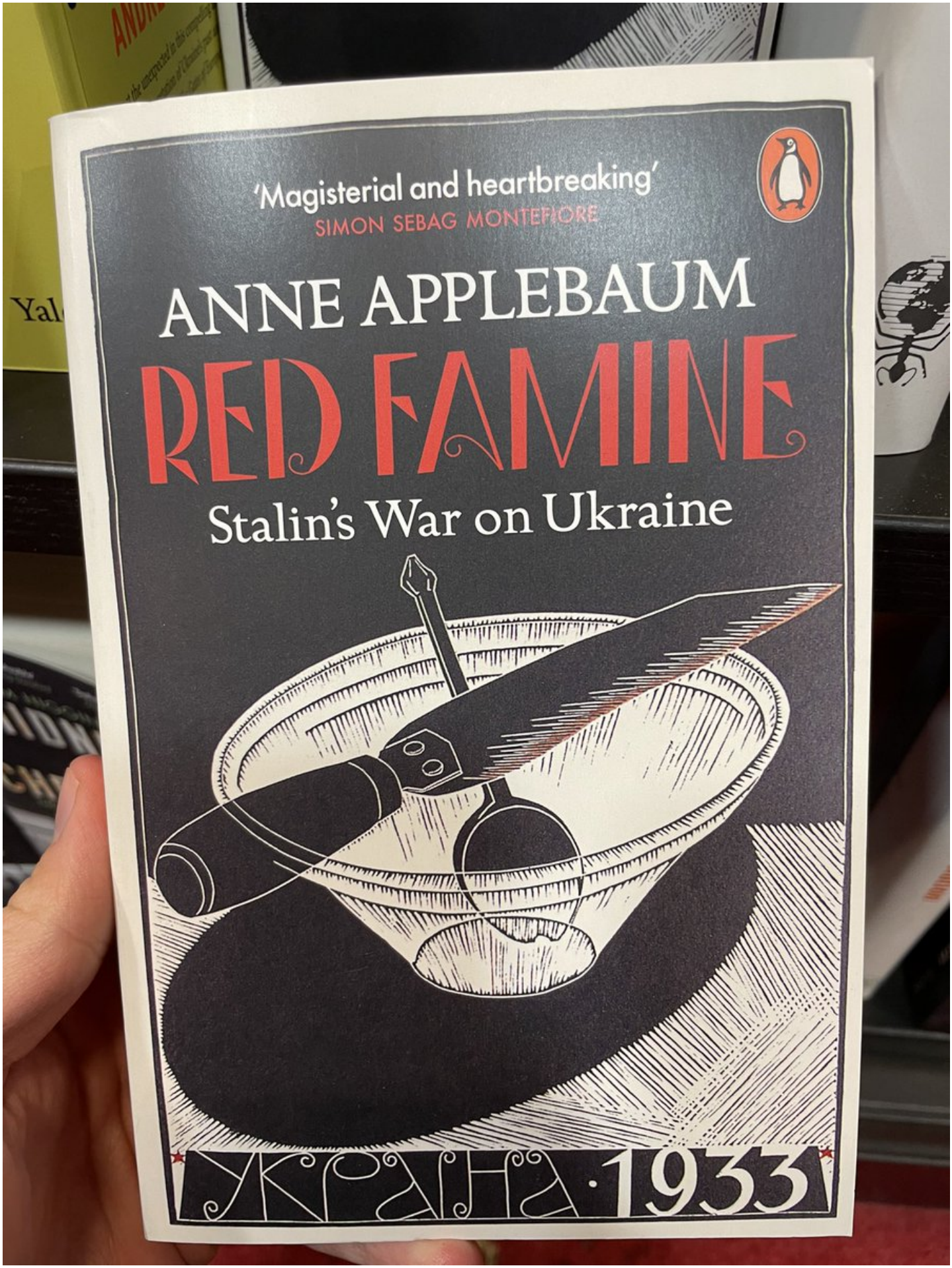


Another bestseller here is 'Borderland' by Anna Reid who was the Kiev correspondent for The Economist 1993-1995. This is an updated version of the 1997 book. I've read it pre-update so cannot be sure of how up-to-date it is, but I loved it. Some

shops even shelve this as travel

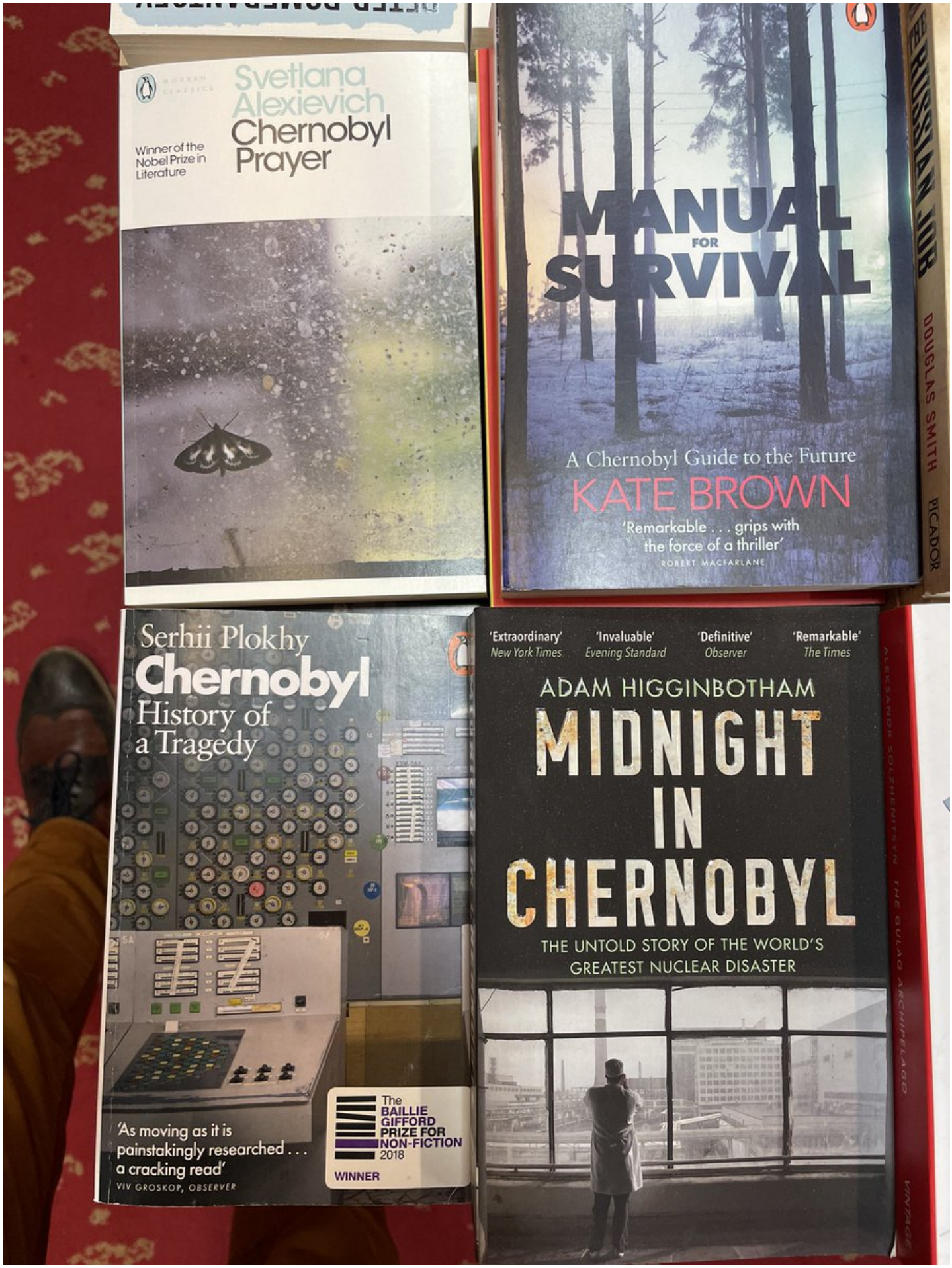


One of the best books I've read in the last few years is 'Red Famine' by the brilliant @anneapplebaum. It tells of Soviet-enforced collectivisation, famine and about the suppression of memory. Now more than ever, it shows how the present is shaped by the past. Will make you cry



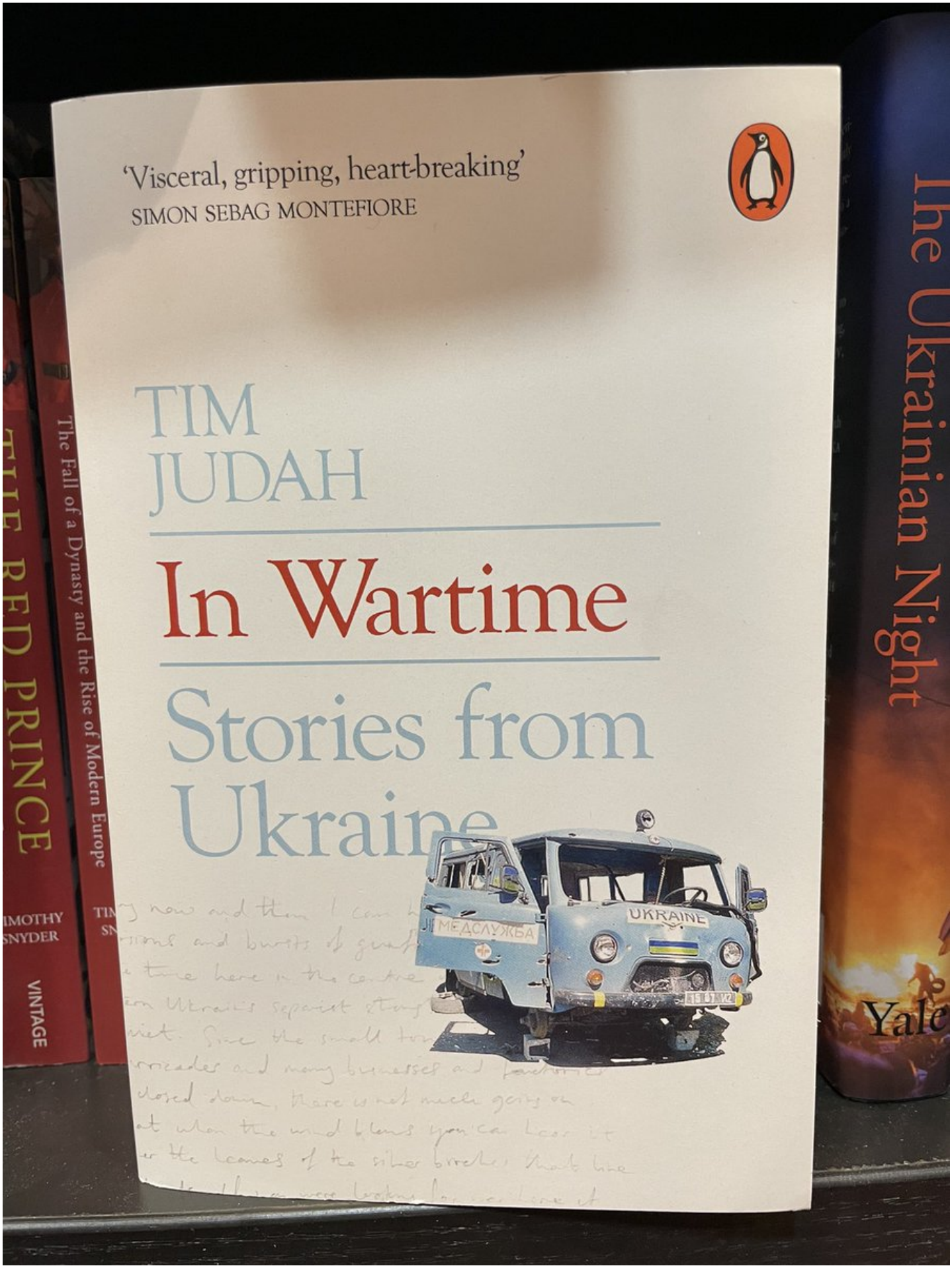
Another infamous moment in history of ■■ was the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant accident and it remains the most popular reason for people requesting the ■■ history section. Below the 4 most read books with Plokhy and Chernobyl prayer

winning awards but @HigginbothamA work my favourite.



Specifically on Maidan and E. Ukraine conflict 2014+.

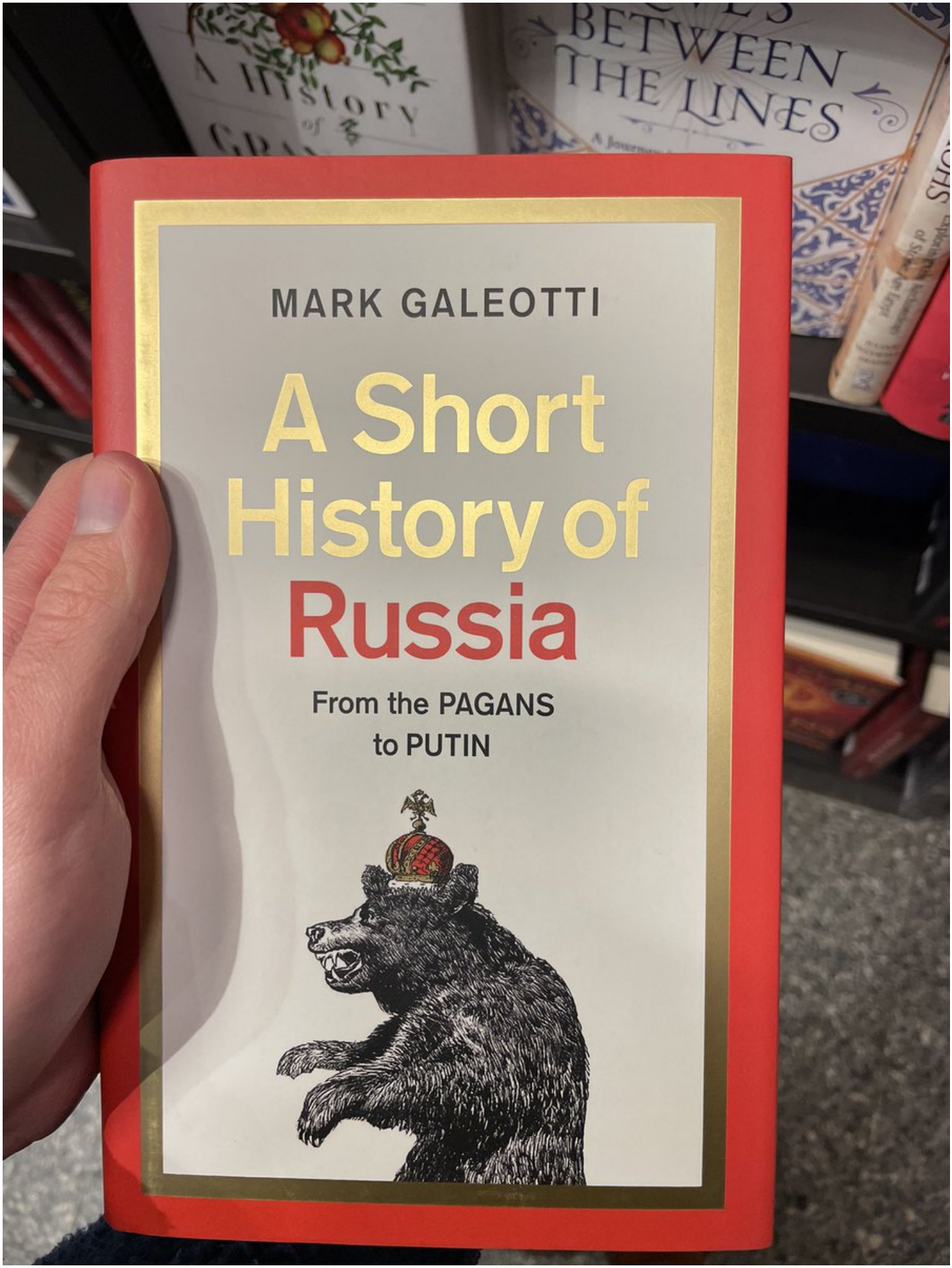
I've really enjoyed the @timjudah1 book 'In Wartime'. It's a beautiful portrait of the human side of the conflict. Life behind frontlines and the barricades. Really helps understanding what normal Ukrainians are living with.


'Visceral, gripping, heart-breaking'
SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE
TIM JUDAH
In Wartime
Stories from Ukraine
UKRAINE
МЕДСЛУЖБА
The Fall of a Dynasty and the Rise of Modern Europe
THE RED PRINCE
VINTAGE
The Ukrainian Night
Yale

Russia ■■

Obviously if I was to list all the best books on Russian history, this thread would never end so only adding a few relevant to the current crisis

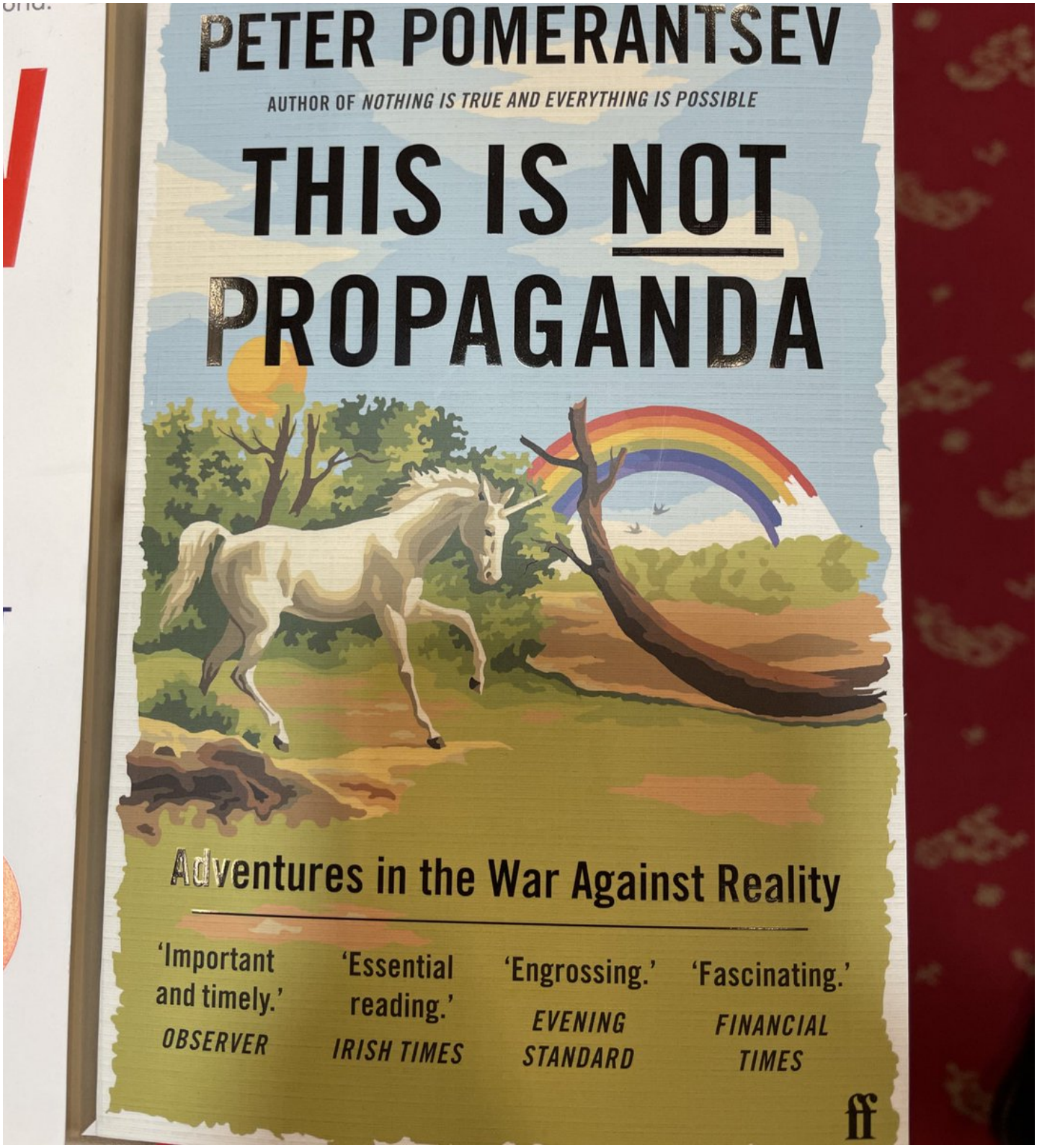
Starting with a general and short but no less impressive and fresh history of Russia by the one and only @MarkGaleotti



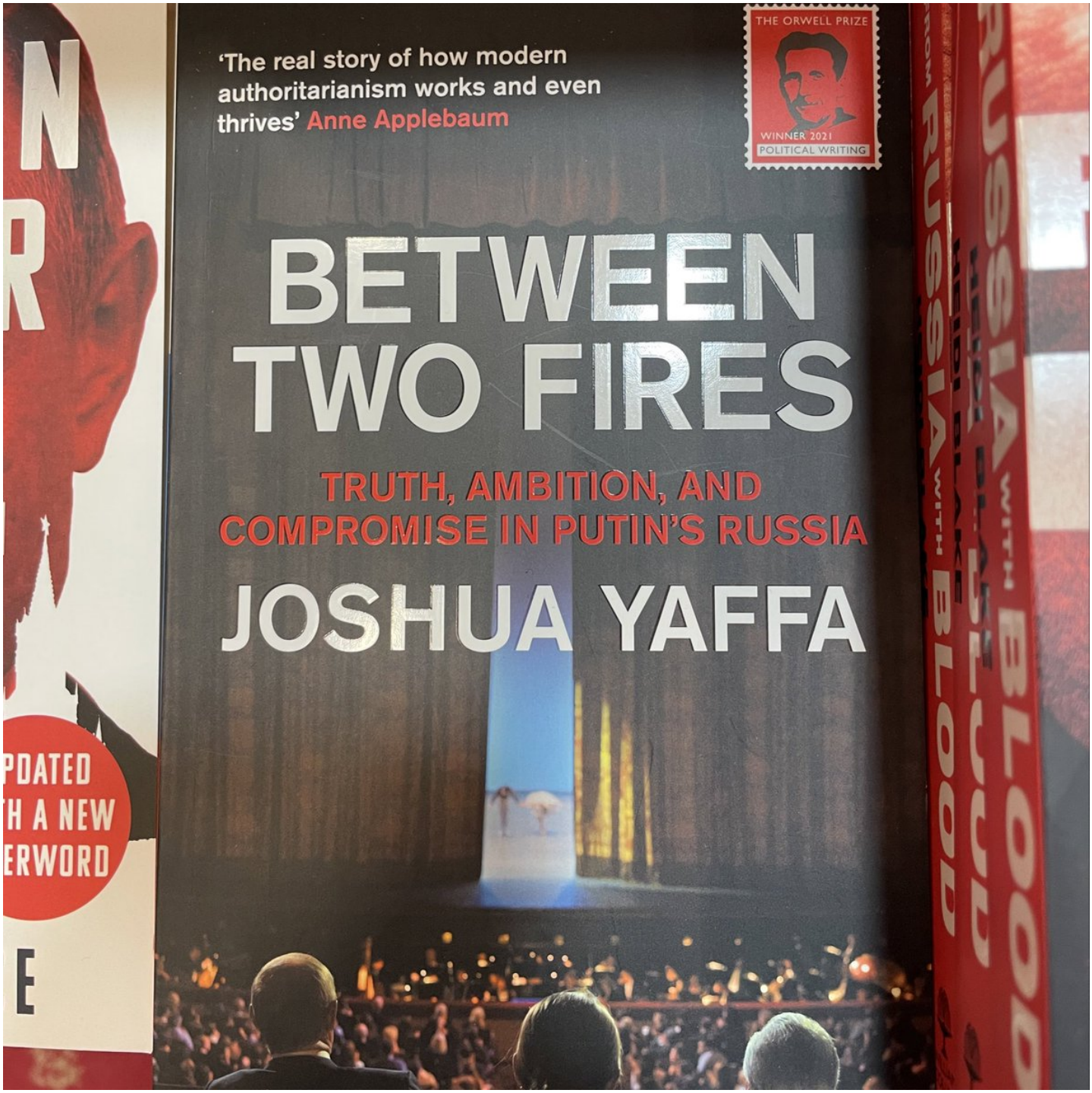
I'd say the most impressive and essential (also very recent) book on current Russia is 'Putin's People' by @CatherineBelton. In it you will learn about how the siloviki empire was built and consolidated and it's a must of a manual to the current

Russian state. 11/10

Another recent masterpiece is ‘This is NOT Propaganda’ by @peterpomeranzev. Brill insight into how alternate reality is built by the Kremlin and run from troll farms. I loved his previous too which is a riveting insight into Russia a few decades ago, the Russia I remember myself



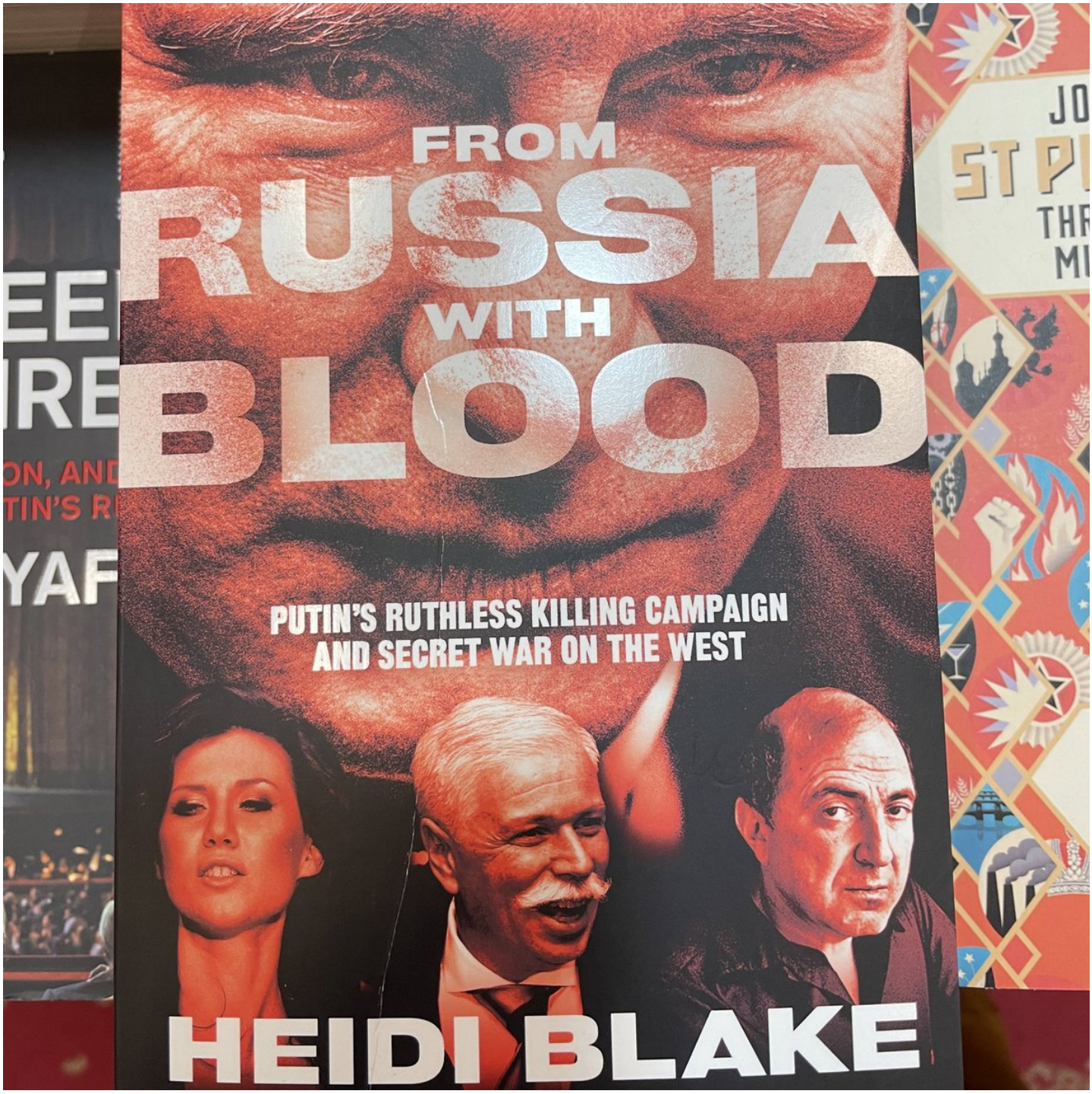
Another cracking read I enjoyed last year is 'Between Two Fires' by @yaffaesque which deservedly took an Orwell in 2021. Joshua is a Moscow writer for The New Yorker and his columns give me life. It's an interesting look at the intimate lives and compromises of ordinary Russians



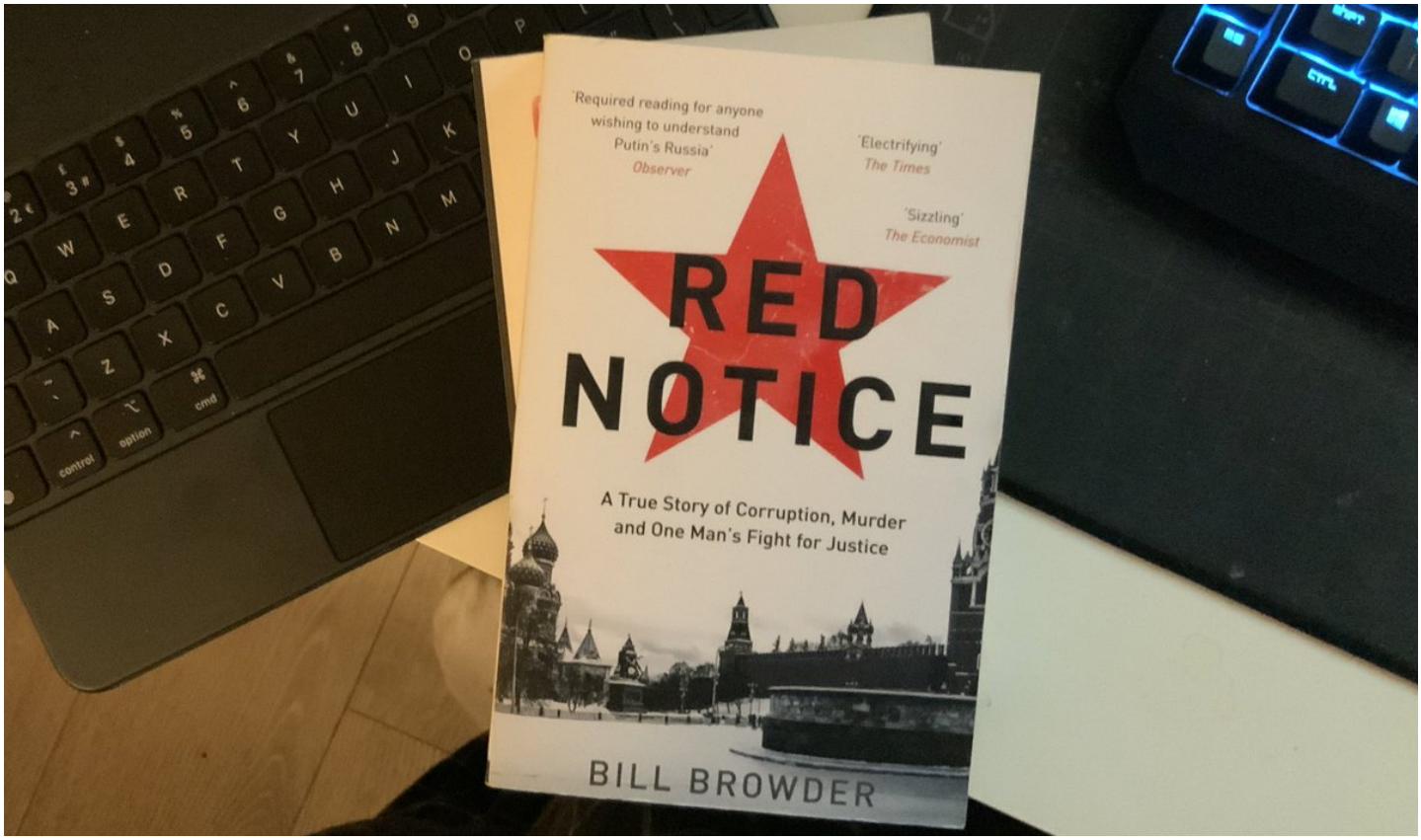
Today's crisis almost overshadowed the fact that another trial of Alexei Navalny, Russia's biggest oppositioner has begun, the trial after which he faces 15 more years behind bars. This is his first real bio and I loved having the authors of the book in store for an event!

Speaking about opposition. @HeidilBlake wrote one of the most unputdownable thrillers about all the sudden deaths of Kremlin's enemies in the west. I loved this book. The author - is an investigations editor at BuzzFeedNews, no wonder this

reads like true detective crime novel.



No list of books about Modern Russia is complete without @Billbrowder and his incredible true story 'Red Notice'. Another one of those books that is hard to believe is not fiction but very much is the painful truth.

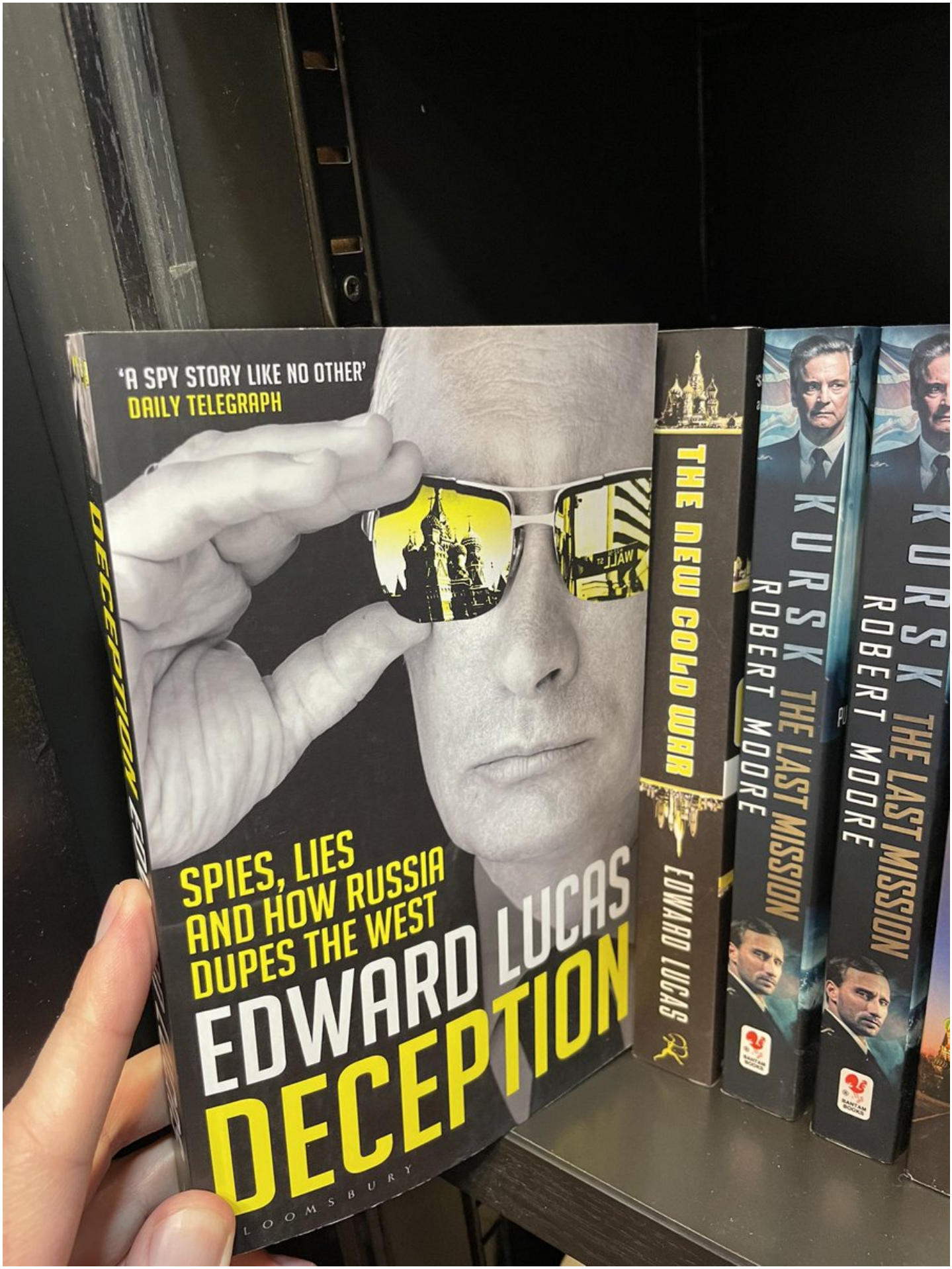


The Compatriots from @irinaborogan and @AndreiSoldatov is a wonderful collation of lives to all who worked for or fled Russia for abroad. I've also read their previous work The Red Web in original (■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■). I and A are very impressive journalists and their knowledge is ■

If you've read 'Putin's People' and want to learn more about the man's inner circle look no further than 'All the Kremlin's Men' by @zygaro, great introduction to a web of connections inside the court of Putin. More on oligarchs and their rise in

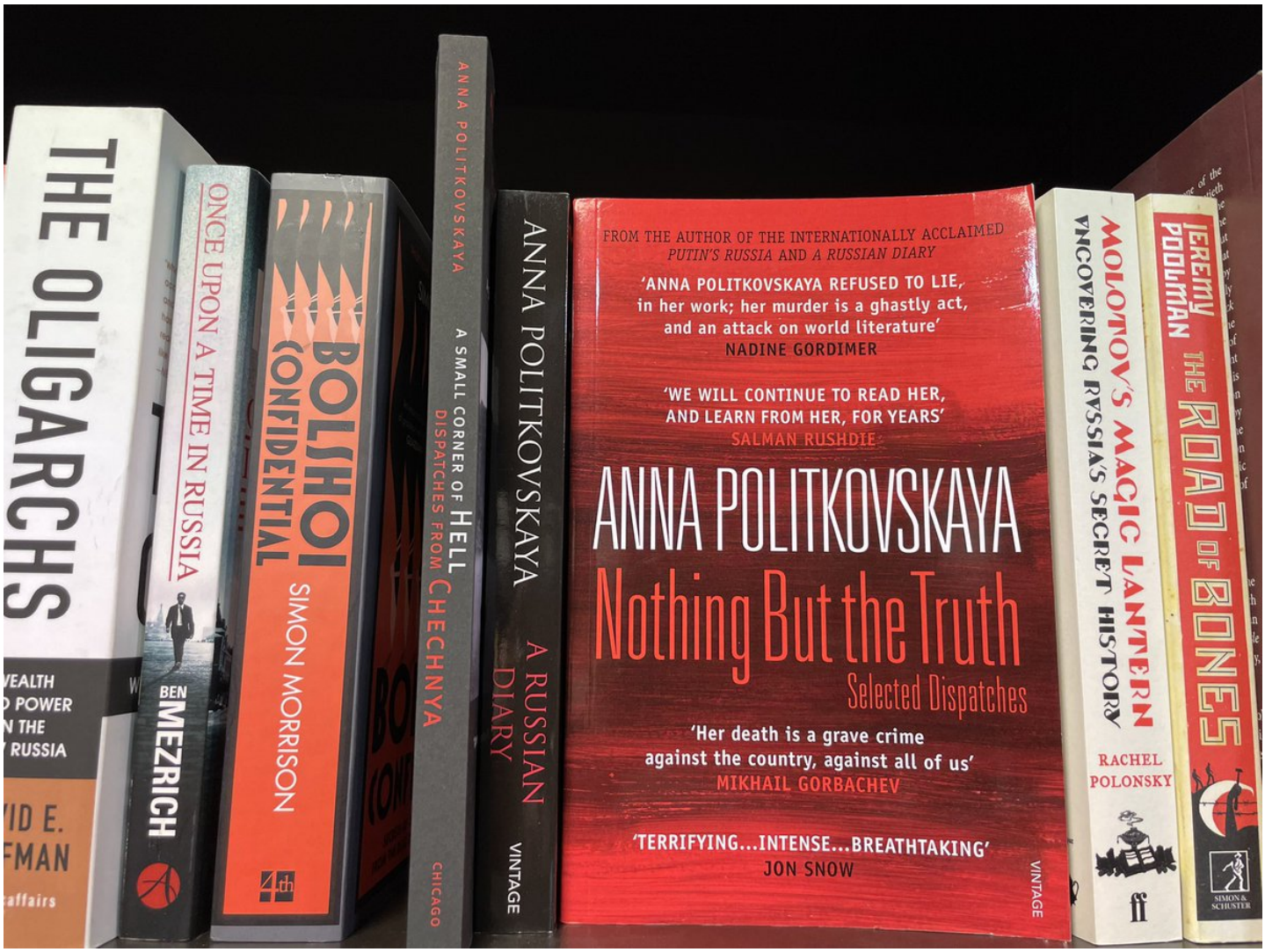
‘The Vory’ from @MarkGaleotti

Slightly older but no less fascinating entries here are from @edwardlucas . I've read 'Deception' and 'The New Cold War' all the way back and I must say some of this is pure prophecy.

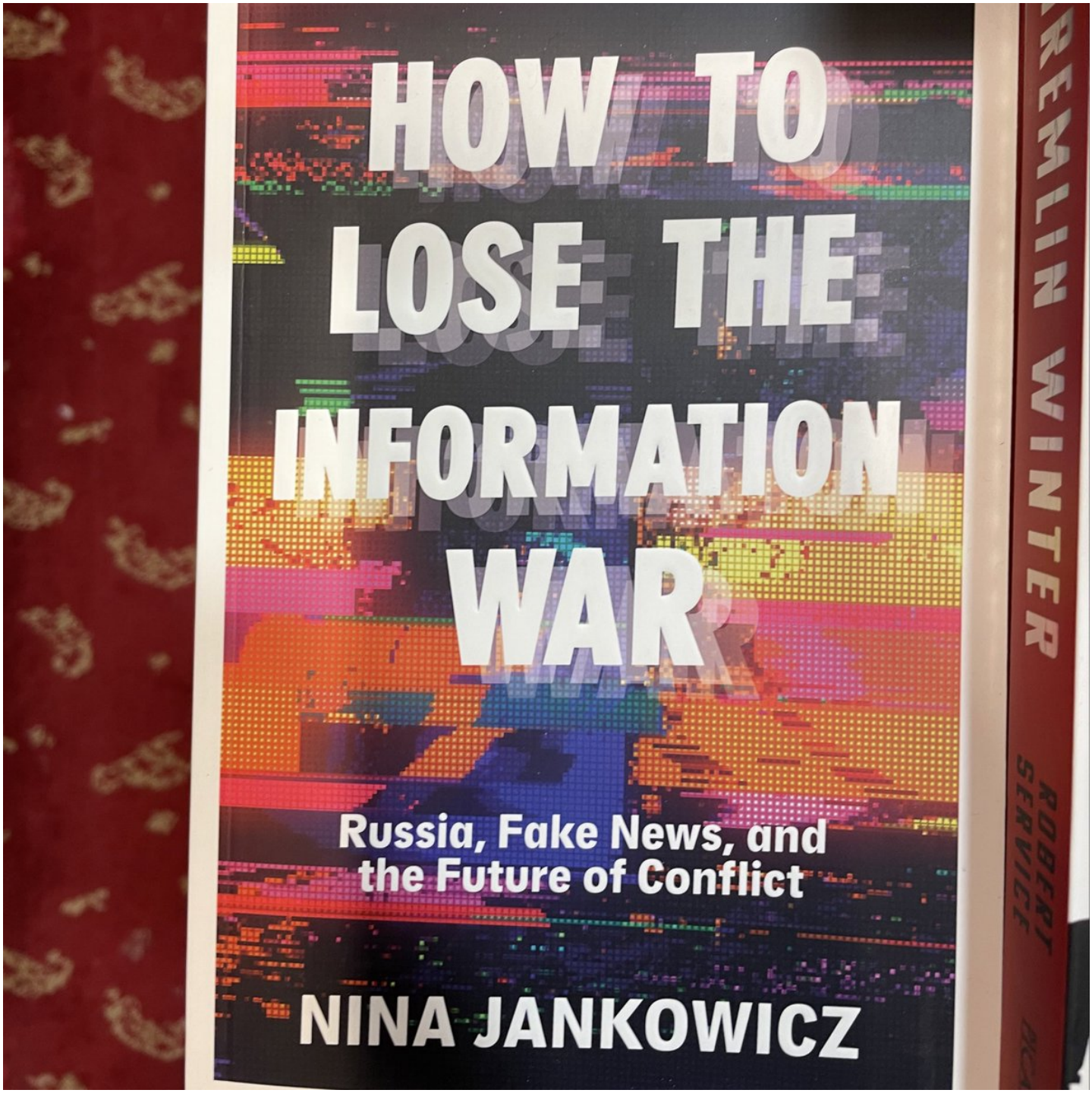


Speaking of prophecy.

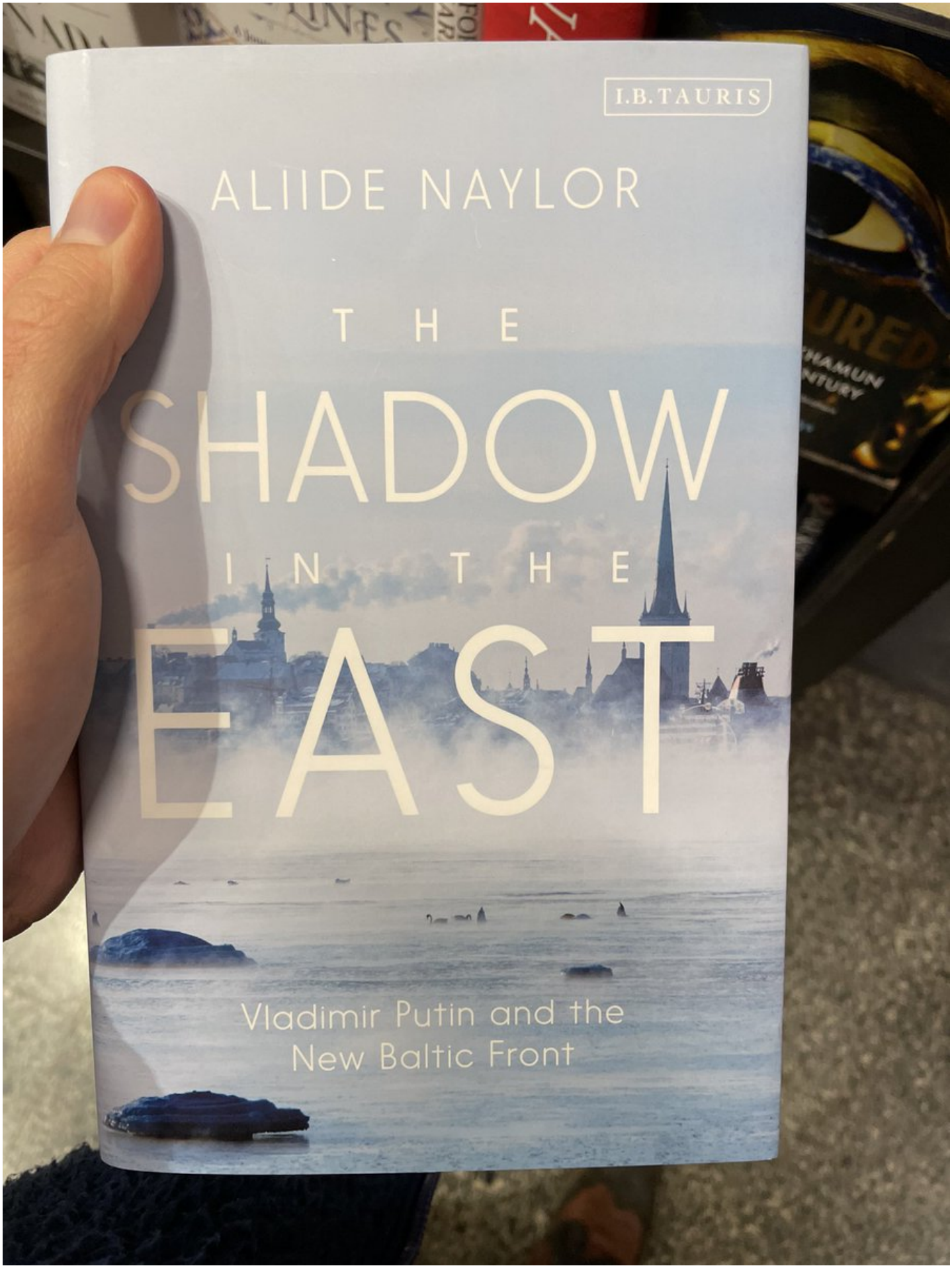
There is nothing more prophetic than the writing of Anna Politkovskaya . The reading of her books and articles formed my first opinions on Russia. She spoke Nothing but the Truth but paid the ultimate price…



From the more recent releases,
@wiczipedia published the brilliant investigation into the nature of Russian disinformation campaigns in US during the Trump times but also in Ukraine and Georgia (the latter chapter fascinating) so if you enjoyed Peter Pomerantsev you'll love this

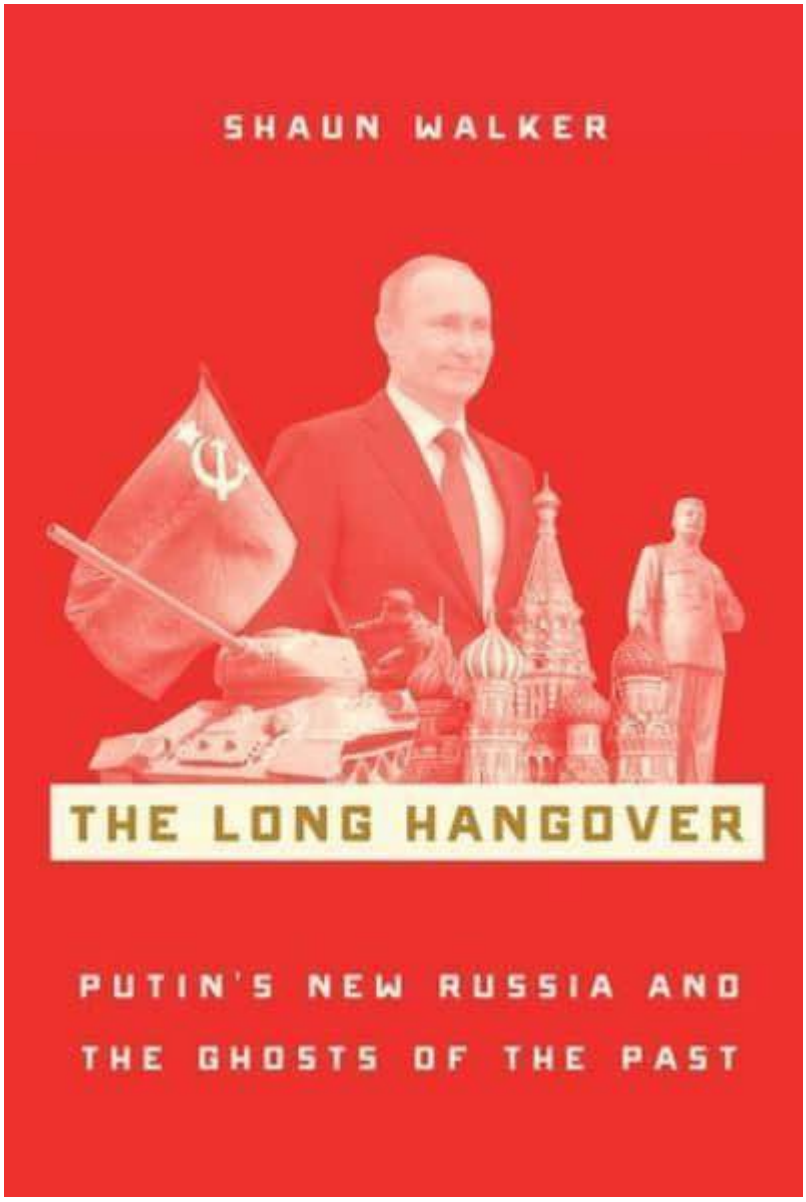


Being Lithuanian I naturally want to learn more and more about how Russia's thinking and behaviour will push the Baltic in the future. @Aliide_N released a brilliant study on this last year. Loved it ■■ ■■ ■■ ❤■

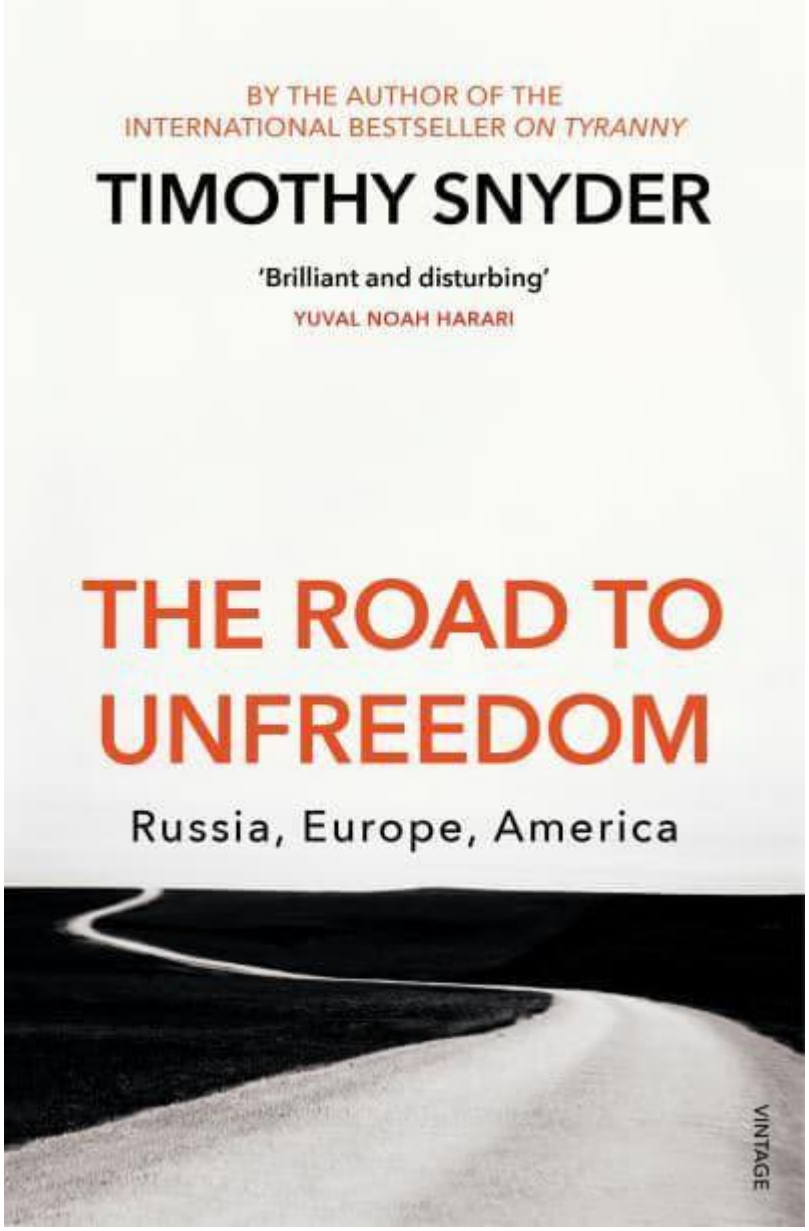


I make a habit of reading every single @lukeharding1968 release. The first, ‘Mafia State’ still in mind to this day. Very Expensive Poison also super duper good!

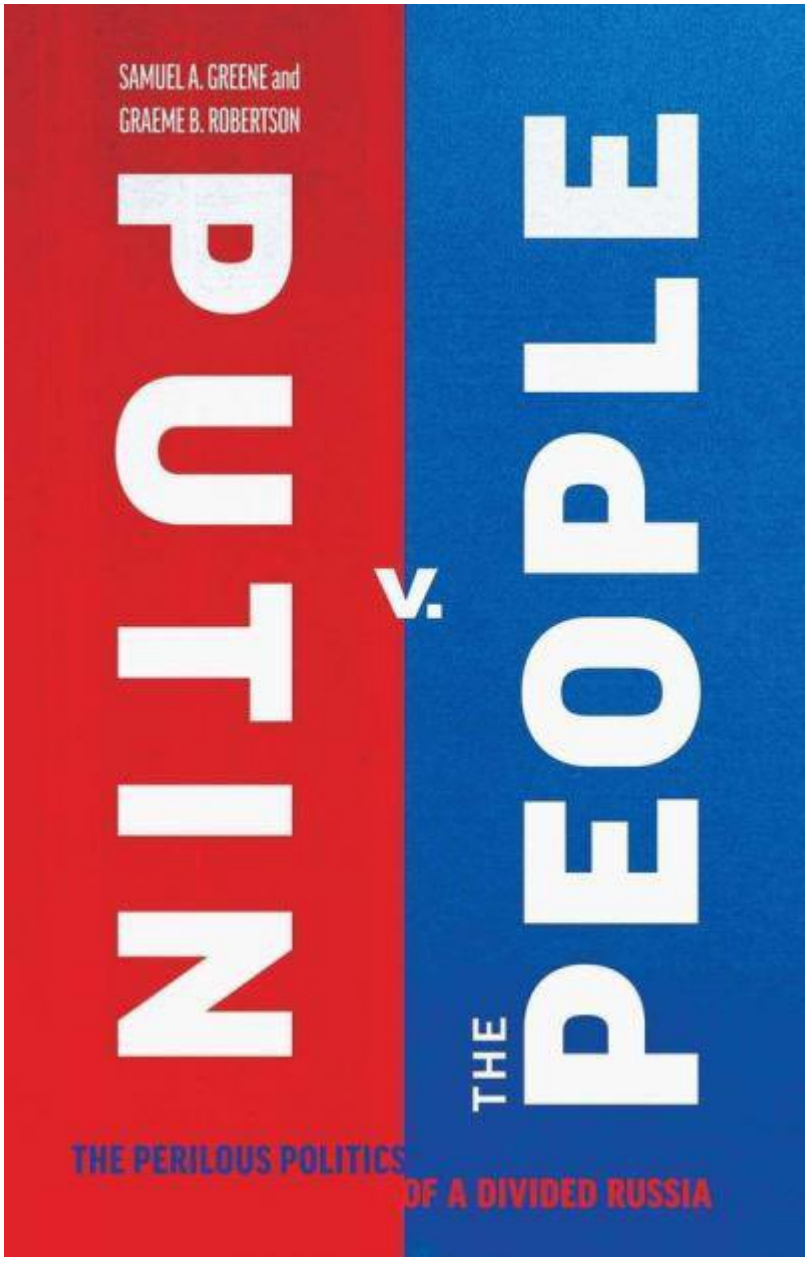
'The Long Hangover' by @shaunwalker7 is about the clever exploitation of memory and glories past by the current regime in it's quest for popularity and public support. I loved the investigation and am hoping for more from the author - the style is unique!



And finally the foundational text for my understanding of modern Russia and Putinism is @TimothyDSnyder and his book 'The Road To Unfreedom'. No space here for the synopsis, simply read the book. All I can say is that no westerner understands the region as well as TS.

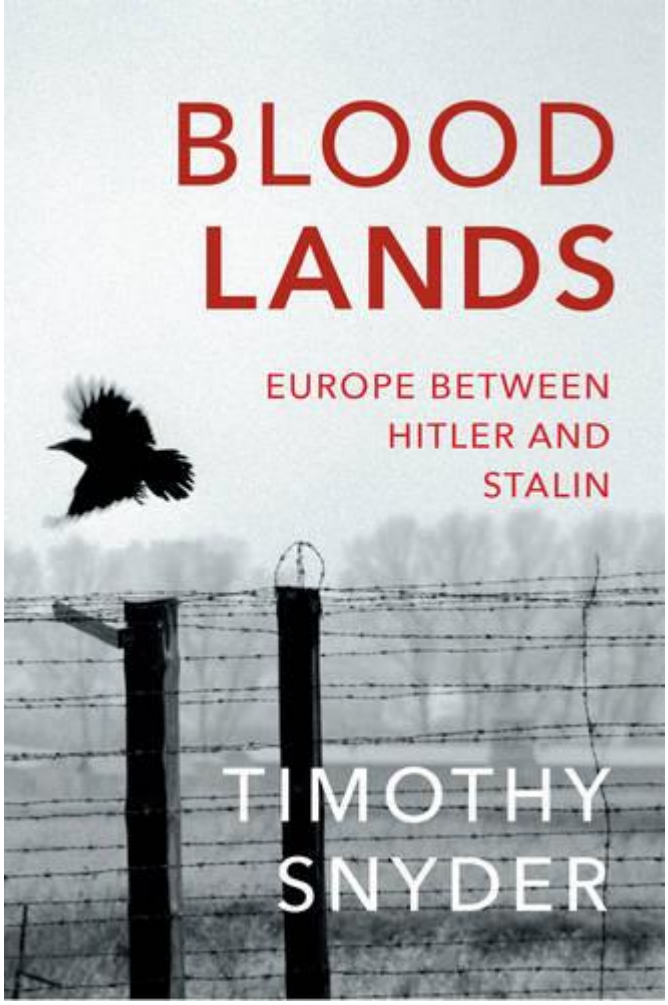


Finally I'd include Putin v People from prof. @samagreene. I've enjoyed the in-depth and bottom-up study of Putin and his support base as much as I enjoyed attending prof. Greene's lectures at @KingsRussia Institute.



There are 100s of books on this that I was unable to add to the thread (since when is there a cap on amount of tweets?) so please do not take omissions to heart. The goal was to introduce the very basics to peeps new to this.
Be nice to authors and ban the trolls.
Goodnight x

Note 1:
The above list is missing 'Bloodlands' by Timothy Snyder. It's my favourite book of all time and is about the fate of living between Russia and Europe. I've only not listed it because the author's more recent and Putin specific book is there. Bad omission by me. Read it.



Finally, this thread has been adapted for a feature by the wonderful folks at @lithub so if you would like to read it on a beautiful website, click here https://t.co/b57w3AQyMs