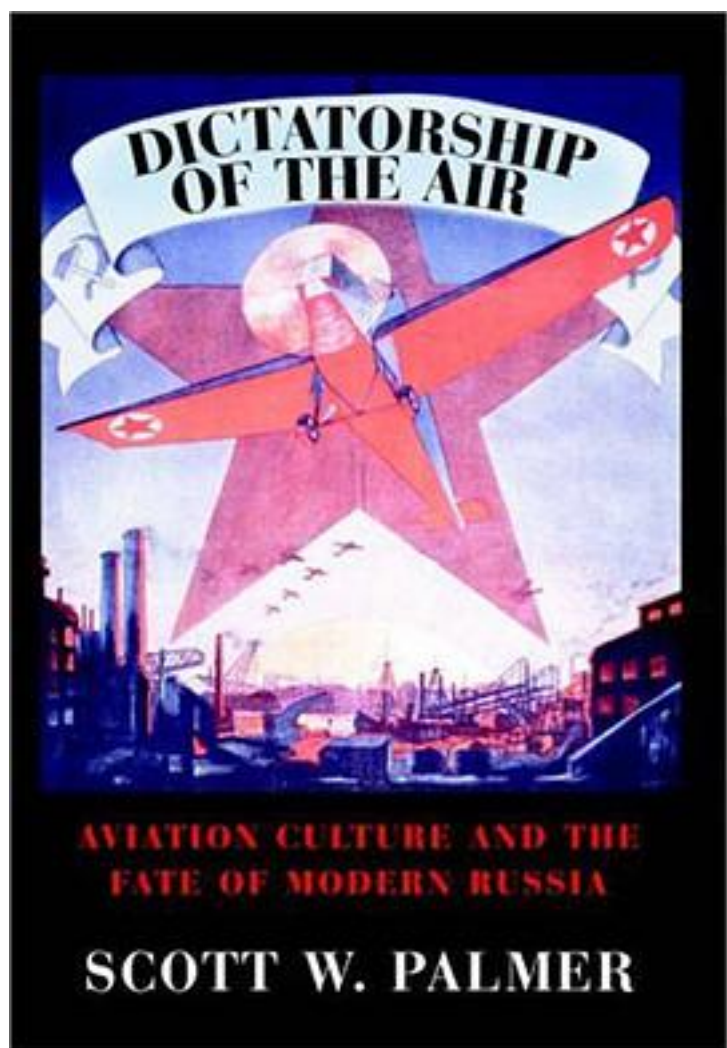


Dictatorship of the Air



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Focusing on one of the last untold chapters in the history of human flight, Dictatorship of the Air is the first book to explain the true story behind twentieth-century Russia's quest for aviation prominence. Based on nearly a decade of scholarly research, but written with general readers in mind, this is the only account to answer the question 'What is 'Russian' about Russian aviation?' From the 1909 arrival of machine-powered flight in the 'land of the tsars' to the USSR's victory over Hitler in 1945, Dictatorship of the Air describes why the airplane became the preeminent symbol of industrial progress and international power for generations of Russian statesmen and citizens. The book reveals how, behind a facade of daredevil pilots, record-setting flights, and gargantuan airplanes, Russia's long-standing legacies of industrial backwardness, cultural xenophobia, and state-directed modernization prolonged the nation's dependence on western technology and ultimately ensured the USSR's demise.

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