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# The Future Is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia



## Synopsis

Putin's bestselling biographer reveals how, in the space of a generation, Russia surrendered to a more virulent and invincible new strain of autocracy. Hailed for her "fearless indictment of the most powerful man in Russia" (The Wall Street Journal), award-winning journalist Masha Gessen is unparalleled in her understanding of the events and forces that have wracked her native country in recent times. In *The Future Is History*, she follows the lives of four people born at what promised to be the dawn of democracy. Each of them came of age with unprecedented expectations, some as the children and grandchildren of the very architects of the new Russia, each with newfound aspirations of their own—as entrepreneurs, activists, thinkers, and writers, sexual and social beings. Gessen charts their paths against the machinations of the regime that would crush them all, and against the war it waged on understanding itself, which ensured the unobstructed reemergence of the old Soviet order in the form of today's terrifying and seemingly unstoppable mafia state. Powerful and urgent, *The Future Is History* is a cautionary tale for our time and for all time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A devastating, timely, and necessary reminder of the fragility and preciousness of all institutions of freedom." -Booklist (starred) "Masha Gessen is humbly erudite, deftly unconventional, and courageously honest. At this particular historical moment, when we must understand Russia to understand ourselves, we are all very lucky to have her." - Timothy Snyder, author of *On*

Tyranny – A fine example of journalism approximating art. Necessary reading for anyone trying to understand the earthshaking events of our time: how in one country after another individual aspirations for wealth and power mutated into collective cravings for strongmen.

– Pankaj Mishra, author of *An End to Suffering and Age of Anger*

– The Future is History is a beautifully-written, sensitively-argued and cleverly-structured journey through Russia’s failure to build democracy. The difficulty for any book about Russia is how to make the world’s biggest country human-sized, and she succeeds by building her story around the lives of a half-dozen people, whose fortunes wax and wane as the country opens up, then closes down once more. It is a story about hope and despair, trauma and treatment, ideals and betrayal, and above all about love and cynicism. If you want to truly understand why Vladimir Putin has been able to so dominate his country, this book will help you.

– Oliver Bullough, author of *Let Our Fame Be Great and The Last Man in Russia*

– Praise for *The Man Without a Face*: “Gessen has shown remarkable courage . . . [An] unflinching indictment of the most powerful man in Russia.”

– The Wall Street Journal

– “[Gessen] shines a piercing light into every dark corner of Putin’s story. . . . Fascinating, hard-hitting reading.”

– Foreign Affairs

– “Absorbing.”

– The New Yorker

– “Powerful and gracefully written.”

– San Francisco Chronicle

Masha Gessen is a Russian-American journalist and the author of several books, among them *The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin*. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Carnegie Fellowship, and her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, *Slate*, *Vanity Fair*, and many other publications. A longtime resident of Moscow, Gessen now lives in New York City.

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