

Mischa Gabowitsch

Putting Out Putin - Russia's New Protest Movement



(German title: Putin kaputt!?)
ca. 438 pages
Paperback
2013



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Mischa Gabowitsch, born in 1977, is a historian and sociologist. He studied in Oxford and Paris and holds a PhD from the School of Advanced Social Research (EHESS) in Paris. He has taught at Princeton University and is currently a research fellow at the Einstein Forum in Potsdam, Germany.

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About

The Russian parliamentary elections of December 2011 gave rise to a massive protest movement.

Turnout for the demonstrations against electoral fraud, Vladimir Putin, and the ruling United Russia party was unprecedented in Russia's post-Soviet history. While the protests did not prevent Putin's return to the presidency or force new elections, they have fundamentally altered Russia's protest repertoire and generated a plethora of new self-organized groups and networks across the country.

Mischa Gabowitsch's study is the first booklength account of the movement. In addition to hundreds of interviews with activists and regular protest participants, he draws on numerous written eyewitness accounts, blog posts, and videos of protest events from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok and from Paris to Seoul, many of them collected in a systematic database that documents the movement's evolution. Gabowitsch provides a vivid narrative of the movement's emergence, scope, and internal conflicts, but also explains its wider social, political and emotional context.

He links it to the local protest initiatives that have sprung up everywhere in Russia over the past decade or so, and shows how the movement is as much about new forms of social curiosity and the conquest of urban space as it is about politics and elections.

While informed by the academic literature on social movements and Russian history and politics, the book is written with a large international audience in mind and omits jargon or lengthy theoretical discussions from the main body of the text. Gabowitsch's discussions of violence and nonviolence in Russia, domestic election observation as a social movement, and the emergence of new political diasporas is embedded in comparisons with countries ranging from Senegal to the United States, and from Argentina to Georgia.

Praise

»A study completed in an impressively short time, which succeeds in developing a snapshot into a compelling contemporary historical panorama.« *Jens Mühlhng, Tagesspiegel*

»With his appraisals Gabowitsch draws a multifaceted picture of the different forces vying for authority over the interpretation of society. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in contemporary Russian culture.« *Ulrich M. Schmid, NZZ*

»His book could go on to become one of the key works about the largest protests in the history of post-Soviet Russia. His obvious sympathy for the protesters does not prevent his writing from being soberly analytic and reflective.« *Reinhard Veser, FAZ*

»The most comprehensive report so far on this new Russian protest movement.« *Maximilian Grosser, WDR5*

»Gabowitsch's *Putting Out Putin* subtly dissects the ongoing, long-lasting transformation of Russia. And in the process delivers the most comprehensive report on the protest movement against the Putin system.« *SRF 4 News*

»Because all of this is imbedded in a broad historical and cultural background and moreover because it is so well written, this book is easily accessible even for readers without any significant prior knowledge of the subject.« *FAZ*