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# Could Putin's opponents be "The Traitors" of Russia? Research that shook Russian opposition



Who are the traitors that the research series *The Traitors* (Predateli) about lawlessness in Russia in the 1990s during the presidency of Boris Yeltsin deals with?

One of the late Alexei Navalny's closest associates, Maria Pevchikh, the author of the series, has severely shaken Russia's opposition circles and anti-Putin movement worldwide with her new research.

For the first time ever, the distinguished **Anti-Corruption Foundation** of the late Alexei Navalny refrained from a selective investigation of randomly picked members of the Russian government or Putin's inner circle.

Instead, Ms Pevchikh, who previously led this foundation, made a report and revealed the origin of Putin's regime and the reasons it has been successful so far in depriving Russia of democracy and liberalism.

*The Traitors* explained where Putin's Russia originated from: it was selected, bred, and cultivated by Yeltsin's Russia and those around Boris Yeltsin at that time.

The irony is that Russia's current prominent critics of Putin's regime are people from Yeltsin's era.

These are either oligarchs rejected by Putin's "rollercoaster of aggressive patriotism and unlimited corruption" or former politicians, such as former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov, unable to survive in Putin's environment.

## Yeltsin did the same thing that Putin has been doing

Some of Yeltsin's former associates and oligarchs, including Mikhail Khodorkovsky, openly opposed Putin's regime.

However, they were part of the establishment during Boris Yeltsin's rule—the time Russia started its deviation journey, which led to Putin's regime.

It reminded the audience of the level of corruption in Boris Yeltsin's family, his political entourage, and those around him, including many who now comprise the backbone of the Russian anti-Putin movement.

## Most of Yeltsin's people happily and comfortably adapted to Putin's order

Most of Yeltsin's people happily and comfortably adapted to Putin's order. These include a majority of oligarchs, government and public officials, actors, athletes, and other influencers and public figures.

Those people from the Yeltsin era who capitulated in one way or another and could not blend into Putin's environment for various reasons have been among the most noticeable, influential, and loud critics of his regime.

Maria Pevchikh, in her series "The Traitors", has overwhelmingly demonstrated that Boris Yeltsin did everything Vladimir Putin is doing now.

## Yeltsin was desirable to the elites

Boris Yeltsin did everything Vladimir Putin is doing, just on a smaller scale. Therefore, Maria Pevchikh legitimately suggested that those who helped Boris Yeltsin hold on to power in 1996 essentially facilitated Putin's presidency, which began in 1999.

The author made a convincing point by arguing that Russia is now under Putin's regime because, back then, during the 1990s, Russia's upper and political class tolerated and even encouraged Boris Yeltsin's corruption and deviation.

## A few oligarchs stole Russia's assets and injected an enormous amount of money into the re-election of Boris Yeltsin as compensation for the right to hold on to those stolen state assets

Moreover, The Traitors series reminds us that in the 1990s, a few oligarchs stole Russia's assets and injected an enormous amount of money into the re-election of Boris Yeltsin as compensation for the right to hold on to those stolen state assets.

Those Russian oligarchs helped Boris Yeltsin remain president in 1996. Some of these oligarchs at one point crossed over to Putin's side, and some were eventually victimised or even imprisoned by his regime and/or had to flee Russia.

## Why is the opposition dissatisfied?

For obvious reasons, a significant portion of the Russian opposition is now furiously criticising Maria Pevchikh, claiming she has shown a one-sided view of Yeltsin's era. Some are claiming that now is not the right time to divide the Russian opposition.

This makes perfect sense because these Russian opposition representatives had been focusing exclusively on Vladimir Putin for years, distorting the truth to give the impression that he had suddenly materialised out of thin air and had been the first to start poisoning Russia and its people. This, of course, is not true.

Boris Yeltsin's corruption made Vladimir Putin. He appointed him on the condition that he would not hold accountable the corruption syndicate of his predecessor and mentor.

One of the points of the research was that those close to Yeltsin in the 1990s had not only

stolen all of the country's assets but also a chance for Russia to be a democratic country.

Many disagree with this point. Before the release of The Traitors series, exiled people from the Yeltsin era stressed Putin's criminality, which was sufficient for them to announce their decency and normalcy to the Western public. It has all changed now.



*The traitors from Yeltsin's era had betrayed Russia and provided grounds that discouraged Russian people from embracing democracy and the rule of law*

The Traitors series explained that if you were around Boris Yeltsin at that time, or worse, if you have benefited from the corruption atmosphere created by Yeltsin, then just criticising Putin's regime is no longer enough for you to present yourself as someone who embraces democratic and liberal values.

Maria Pevchikh came to the very coherent and logical conclusion that these traitors from Yeltsin's era had betrayed Russia and provided grounds that discouraged Russian people from embracing democracy and the rule of law.

Those thieves and oligarchs around Boris Yeltsin discouraged people from believing in democracy, enabling Putin to build his public support around the fake idea that Russian people should reject the Western liberal democracy model as the wrong one for the authentic Russian way of life.

Ms Pevchikh's research is therefore a well-documented warning to advocates of democratic changes in Russia worldwide that they cannot have allies in people who had influence and gained wealth during Yeltsin's

period to carry out those changes.

It is quite understandable that people from Yeltsin's era who stole during his presidency would love to have another chance when Putin's regime crumbles one way or another. Maria Pevchikh, in her series, clearly said that Yeltsin's people could fail again.