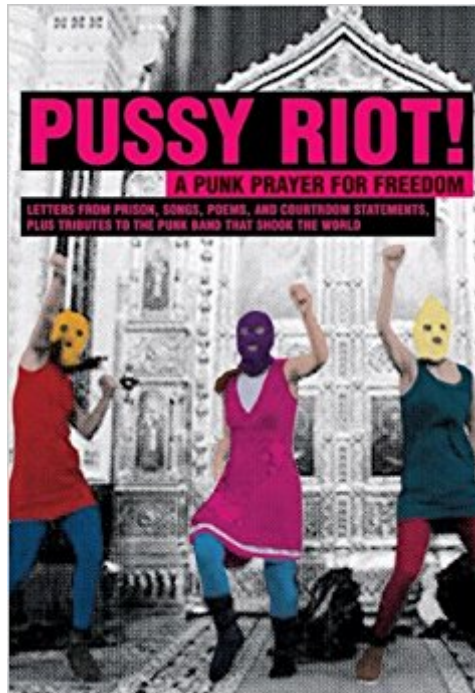




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# Pussy Riot!: A Punk Prayer For Freedom



## Synopsis

**SPECIAL TO THE PRINT EDITION:** New courtroom statements from October 10 appeal, and tributes by Bianca Jagger, Peaches & Simonne Jones, Tobi Vail, Barbara Browning, Vivien Goldman. On February 21, 2012, five members of a Russian feminist punk collective Pussy Riot staged a performance in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. Dressed in brightly colored tights and balaclavas, they performed their punk prayer, asking the Virgin Mary to drive out Russian president Vladimir Putin from the church. After just forty seconds, they were chased out by security. Three members of the collective, Maria Alyokhina, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, and Yekaterina Samutsevich, known as Masha, Nadya, and Katya, were later arrested and charged with felony hooliganism motivated by religious hatred. As their trial unfolded, these young women became global feminist icons, garnering the attention and support of activists and artists around the world. *Pussy Riot!* is an essential document of this galvanizing historical moment. It includes letters from prison, courtroom statements, defense attorney closing arguments, poems, the infamous punk prayer, and tributes by Yoko Ono, Johanna Fateman, Karen Finley, Justin Vivian Bond, Eileen Myles, and JD Samson.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Pussy Riot: PUSSY RIOT is a feminist punk performance collective based in Moscow. Founded in 2011, they perform public artistic responses to Russian politics. In February of 2012, three members of the group were arrested and charged with felony hooliganism after performing in the sanctuary of

the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Maria Alyokhina, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, and Yekaterina Samutsevich were sentenced to two years in prison.

Preface This compilation of texts has been put together by the Feminist Press within the month following the verdict delivered on August 17, 2012, in which three members of the feminist punk band Pussy Riot were sentenced to two years in a penal colony for felony hooliganism. The event that led to the conviction was a forty second performance by five women in a priests-only section of Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior. They call their song a punk prayer. It asks the Virgin Mary to become a feminist and "put Putin away." In the course of their detention, Maria Alyokhina, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, and Yekaterina Samutsevich (known as Masha, Nadya, and Katya) have been writing letters, preparing court statements, and making their poems and songs available to a wide audience. We at the Feminist Press, along with millions of people around the world, have been reading. These declarations are stunningly articulate about the plight of civil rights in Russia, and about the corruption at the core of the government there, which is in strategic alliance with a powerful religious institution. These texts are also brilliantly expansive about broader social issues of gender equality and human rights. There's a word that makes many people uncomfortable to say. It's often used as a euphemism for something that should be taken more seriously than it is. The euphemizing is usually a response based in fear or ignorance by people who just don't want to think about something as messy and possibly out of control in the human story. This word has been embraced by an increasingly populous subculture that wants to expand the demographics of who gets seen and heard. This appropriation of a term understood to be negative or diminutive is a sign of solidarity with those at the bottom of the world's power structure. Of course, the word I'm thinking of is riot. Call an uprising a riot, and you question the values of those in pursuit of change, without ever saying so. Through their performance, writings, and actions, Pussy Riot has accomplished something very important. In risking their own status as citizens, they have called into question the values and moral authority of those who have for so long abused power and dominance; what feminists have referred to as the patriarchy. I've been thinking about why this performance stirred such harshly punitive reaction from a government that must surely now regret the attention they have bestowed upon the band. And why we outside of Russia feel such affinity with the band. Pussy Riot's punk prayer creates a challenging juxtaposition. Is it possible for a punk to pray? Can a renegade, someone who believes in insurrection, also believe in a higher power? Isn't that what prayer is; a belief that something exists beyond the visible or material

world, to which or to whom we can appeal for justice or relief? I have always believed in the transformative power of music. When punk came along, it felt like the (im)perfect mix of my desire for pop music's hit of energy with a radically declarative form of expressing opposition. Opposition to what? Where to begin . . . It's the clarity and distillation of Pussy Riot's message and style of delivering that message which awes me and my colleagues at the Feminist Press and riot grrrls and rock stars and activists and journalists everywhere. Pussy Riot's message is articulated in the texts contained in this book. It's also expressed by their status now as political prisoners. We have thousands of people incarcerated in the US alone, simply for their oppositional views. If Pussy Riot draws attention to the plight of the world's unjustly incarcerated populations, their contribution will be immeasurable. Prayers might even be answered. It's exciting to imagine this: five masked women performing in a priests-only section of an Orthodox church, which has historically and systemically denied women equal rights and proselytized against homosexuality. This radical display of dissent, and the punitive response to it, has galvanized us to speak out for freedom; for Pussy Riot, and for everyone who suffers at the hands of corruption and a morally bankrupt system. Feminist Press wishes to amplify this message; we offer this book as a historical document as well as a call to action. As we publish, [freepussyriot.org](http://freepussyriot.org) is taking donations for Pussy Riot. Proceeds from the sale of this book will support this fund.

Court transcripts from the most significant art provocation in contemporary history.

I'm not a huge fan of e-books in general, but considering the relevance of the subject and the timeliness of the product (the band is up for appeal very very soon), it makes sense that this book couldn't wait to go through all of the usual processes of being printed, etc. Anyway, for anyone that considers themselves a political junkie, the Pussy Riot trial has probably been on your radar for a while now and plenty of news sources have been distributing the bare facts, but this compilation offers a vital insight into the deeper heart of the matter. Letters and court statements from the defendants especially reveal the inspiration and motivation behind what happened on the part of the band members, and transform the whole thing from merely an issue of civil rights and censorship into an issue that stirs up greater feeling on the question of living human life. Most current issues don't have this kind of depth or insight available to the greater public until much later, if ever.

Extremely interesting and well written.

This is an ongoing story of not just these women but of all Russians.

This short volume tells the story of the "crime" committed in protest against the Putin regime in Russia, the arrest, incarceration, and kangaroo trial of three members of the Pussy Riot punk group. It shows the lengths that Putin and his minions will go to suppress protest. This case has literally gone viral thanks to the internet.

The story of Pussy Riot goes beyond the confines of feminism, anarchy and the limitations of the orthodox church! In the poems one can take out Putin, Kremlin and put in Bush or Obama (any president of any country) and put in White House (or any political house) & it would carry the same meaning! A big problem is anything male dominated, have no trust in anything dominated by men! In it all it still seems a farce that Pussy Riot was lazily compared (by the Russian orthodox church) to the false revolutionaries known as the bolsheviks. That is the problem with the church nowadays whether Russian, Greek, Vatican... they have stepped so far away from Christ's message of love... especially with the closing of the churches door at sundown - no church, synagogue, mosque should close! Buy this book, write your own!

Awesome book! I loved it! It's a collection of testimonies and letters from some of the members and advocates of Pussy Riot. Great, fun, educational read.

Great book, I loved it but then I'm inspired by the courage and imagination of Pussy Riot

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