



Putin is Right About America

As perhaps history's most famous atheist, Friedrich Nietzsche understood that the death of Christian morality would usher in moral relativism and social breakdown. This truth is now largely ignored in an increasingly atheistic West, but it has found an unlikely — and, some would say, incredible — ally in Russian president Vladimir Putin.

Making the traditional concept of virtue a recent but recurring theme of his presidency, Putin has of late criticized the West for being decadent and godless. As the *Washington Times* [reported](#) this past Tuesday, “Many Euro-Atlantic countries have moved away from their roots, including Christian values,’ Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a recent keynote speech. ‘Policies are being pursued that place on the same level a multi-child family and a same-sex partnership, a faith in God and a belief in Satan. This is the path to degradation.’”

Oh, how the worm has turned.

There was a time when avowed Marxists in the USSR would blather on about the “decadent” West. But this was merely propaganda from tyrants who needed to draw their people’s attention away from their hopeless, prison-camp-nation existences. The USSR was the godless empire.

And many find it hard to believe that it isn’t still propaganda. After all, ex-KGB man Putin was once a seamless part of the USSR’s Big Brother infrastructure and still clearly lusts for power. And something else that hasn’t changed is that any leader aiming to rally his people behind him finds having a Eurasia boogeyman to warn about quite convenient. But I’m not interested in whether or not Putin is sincere; that’s between him and God. The relevant point here is that sometimes even propaganda is correct.

Just consider Putin’s [remarks](#) in his December State of the Nation speech. He said, “Today, many nations are revising their moral values and ethical norms, eroding ethnic traditions and differences between peoples and cultures.”

This was clearly a criticism of multiculturalism.

In a condemnation of moral relativism, Putin continued, “Society is now required not only to recognise everyone’s right to the freedom of consciousness [conscience], political views and privacy, but also to accept without question the equality of good and evil, strange as it seems, concepts that are opposite in meaning.”



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Of course, what relativism truly holds is that there *is no* good and evil, just preferences. And while Western society trumpets freedom of conscience, it seems to propose the exception that one not be allowed to yell “Tradition!” in a crowded country; ergo, hate-speech laws. But Putin’s point is well taken.

The Russian leader then continued, “This destruction of traditional values from above not only leads to negative consequences for society, but is also essentially anti-democratic, since it is carried out on the basis of abstract, speculative ideas, contrary to the will of the majority, which does not accept the changes occurring or the proposed revision of values.”

While the majority allows this transformation through failures of omission — when good men “do nothing,” as Edmund Burke would say — activist judges and European Union bureaucracy nonetheless do impose from above social-engineering schemes for which citizens never directly vote.

Putin concluded this segment of his speech with a defense of conservatism, whose point he said “is not that it prevents movement forward and upward, but that it prevents movement backward and downward, into chaotic darkness and a return to a primitive state.”

No doubt. After all, what happens when civilization rejects thousands of years of accumulated wisdom and distilled-to-the-pure moral teaching? The same thing that would happen were it to reject all the technological triumphs of its forefathers: regression to primitiveness. The difference is that when discarding technology, you don’t have weapons of mass destruction. When discarding morality, you don’t have the wisdom to not use those weapons destructively.

Getting back to Putin’s possible motivations, the *Washington Times* points out that after 2011 and 2012 protests against his rule by liberal, pro-Western Russians, he has a vested interest in ratcheting up anti-Western sentiment. So it’s certainly not far-fetched to view his talk of traditionalism and his Christian faith as Machiavellian maneuvering. Even so, I’d rather have a phony in office that says the right things than a phony in office who says all the wrong things.

Putin’s passions aside, there certainly are Russians who recognize the folly of Marxist ways. For example, Patriarch Kirill I, head of the Orthodox Church, condemned Western governments for pursuing the “spiritual disarmament” of their citizenry and, wrote the *Times*:

In particular, Patriarch Kirill criticized laws in several European countries that prevent believers from displaying religious symbols, including crosses on necklaces, at work.

“The general political direction of the [Western political] elite bears, without doubt, an anti-Christian and anti-religious character,” the patriarch said in comments aired on state-controlled television.

“We have been through an epoch of atheism, and we know what it is to live without God,” Patriarch Kirill said. “We want to shout to the whole world, ‘Stop!’”

That’s good advice. If only Pope Francis exhibited such bold opposition to militant secularism.

As for Putin, one area where he likely matched Kirill in sincerity was indicated by his language. Note that in criticizing the West’s sexual Marxism — the claim that all sexual identities are equal (but some are more equal than others) — he mentioned the placing of “multi-child” families on par with same-sex relationships. This terminology was no accident. Putin knows that Russia faces demographic disaster, as its population has long been decreasing by approximately 700,000 a year. And since Russia isn’t crazy enough to compensate by importing millions of unassimilable foreigners (heck, who would do such a



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thing?), he realizes that encouraging fecundity is imperative.

Moreover, who would know better about the perils of sexual Marxism and all its related “isms” than an ex-KGB man? After all, the Soviets themselves encouraged these movements in America for the very purpose of undermining us.

Putin’s political pivot also creates an interesting situation. At a time when Western leaders are mostly or completely in bed with militant secularism and sexual Marxism, the Russian president may now be viewed, rightly or wrongly, as the political world’s premier defender of traditionalism. Consider as well that, just as countless black youths shun education and higher culture for fear of “acting white,” there was a time when Russia’s desire to oppose a Christian, free-market West kept it stuck in Marxism’s amber. But what will Russia be pushed toward as it opposes a post-Christian, increasingly socialist West? Should this dynamic continue, it will be interesting to see if Russia moves toward virtue and prospers as we descend into vice and wither.

And wither we will unless we do a pivot back toward traditionalism. Like the pathological adulterer who is dishonest in business but whose only New Year’s resolution is to work out more, civilizations rarely identify their true problems. Our hate-America-first crowd complains about national transgressions ranging from the illusory to the exaggerated to the extinct, but our real problem is that virtue in America is endangered, as we celebrate the victory of vice. And if we don’t, as Kirill I said, stop the ignorance-born “isms,” as they will stop the heart of the West — for good.



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