



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on June 20, 2015

Firing of Goldenzweig: Putin's Suppression of Journalists Continues

"I am truly ashamed of what I have been doing for the last year and a half," Konstantin Goldenzweig told the independent news site Meduza, soon after he was fired from his job as a foreign correspondent in Berlin for the NTV channel (Russian government television) apparently for reports critical of Russian President Vladimir Putin (shown).



The precipitating cause of Goldenzweig's termination was his interview with a German station in which he opined that Putin was prolonging the war in Ukraine to his advantage. As most political leaders understand, foreign conflicts tend to unite the populace behind them, at least in the beginning, and Goldenzweig attributed just such a motive to the Russian president's "well-known cynicism."

While "private" media exist in Russia, the state-run outlets dominate, producing stories highly favorable to the Russian strongman. (American realists might wonder if those stories could be any more slanted in favor of the regime than the pro-Obama reporting of the U.S. mainstream media.)

Goldenzweig's reports centered mainly on German culture, and he was able to get around the pro-Putin slant of most Russian "news" reports; however, recent orders to resort to what he considered propaganda led to his growing dissatisfaction with his career as a journalist. He was directed to report on demonstrations in Germany in support of the Russian military presence in eastern Ukraine.

Writing in *Human Events*, veteran author Lee Edwards noted, "The legacy of communism is evident in Russia's brazen seizure of the Crimea and its open support of pro-Russian militants in Eastern Ukraine." He explained that when the Soviet Union supposedly "collapsed" in the early 1990s, "There was dancing in the streets and champagne toasts on top of the wall, and most of the world got on with living, satisfied that was the end of Marxism-Leninism. But it wasn't and it isn't."

He lamented, "Professors in American colleges continue to teach that Marxism is just a good idea that has never been really tried."

As Goldenzweig was being dismissed, Edwards was at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in Washington, D.C., listening to Alexander Podrabinek, whom Edwards described as an "award-winning Russian journalist and author who was imprisoned during the Soviet era and continues to speak out against the denial of basic human rights in Russia."

Podrabinek told those at the event, "Russia is an example of a country that never learns from its history,



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and it is allowing itself to repeat its past.”

The Russian past is well known, with the ghosts of Lenin, Stalin, and Brezhnev still hanging over Russia. Edwards recalled the Gulag, the Katyn Forest Massacre from the Soviet era, and the evils of communist tyranny elsewhere, such as the Tiananmen Square massacre in China, the killing fields of Cambodia, and the boat people of Vietnam being forced to flee their country after the Vietnam War.

But is Putin’s suppression of the truth by the bullying and firing of Russian journalists just an aberration, or is it symptomatic of his rule?

Some conservatives, such as Pat Buchanan, seem to have good things to say about Putin. “In the culture war for the future of mankind,” he observed, “Putin is planting Russia’s flag firmly on the side of traditional Christianity.” Buchanan is understandably distressed with the growing paganism of American culture, such as the recent race to embrace same-sex “marriage,” which Putin has condemned.

Yet, as Senior Editor William F. Jasper [wrote last year in *The New American*](#), while Putin was a high-ranking KGB agent, the organization inflicted “murder, terror, and grand deception” on Russian citizens. Jasper painted a dark but accurate picture of the life of Christians under the KGB of Vladimir Putin: “It [the KGB] was the Soviet Communist Party’s tool for the brutal suppression of religion, including the persecution of Christians: denying them jobs and education; spying on and entrapping them; arrest and imprisoning them; torturing them in unspeakable ways; desecrating and demolishing their church buildings; infiltrating their agents into churches to subvert them.”

Jasper concluded: “The KGB destroyed thousands of Christian churches, monasteries, convents, and schools, and slaughtered millions of Christians.”

So what is behind Putin’s stated embrace of orthodox Christianity? In his 1984 book *New Lies for Old*, Soviet KGB defector Anatoly Golitsyn explained that the Soviet party bosses in the Kremlin were not above using Christians to further the objective of a one-world socialist state:

The Christian Peace Conference, composed of East European church leaders, dates from the period of the formulation of the long-range policy [this was in 1958]. It has played an active part in influencing Western churches in the interests of that policy.

An openly militant atheist likely will not influence Christians to support leftist, even communist goals. If the goal is to persuade Christians to some left-wing cause, then it is better to use a Christian leader for that purpose, or a politician seen as a Christian. A Baptist pastor such as Rick Warren, for instance, is more likely to win over undiscerning evangelicals to the idea that government must grow in power to combat so-called climate change, while undiscerning Catholics will pay more attention to their Pope on that same issue than either group will listen to a politician such as Al Gore.

George Orwell employed fiction in his classic novel *Animal Farm* to demonstrate how a tyrannical regime can use religion for its own nefarious purposes. After condemning religion in typical Marxist terms as the “opiate of the masses,” once in power, the Pigs in the story (who represented the Communist Party) found a use for the Raven (which represented the Russian Orthodox Church). In real life, Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin effectively controlled the “official” Russian Orthodox Church, while simultaneously persecuting true believers. And succeeding Soviet dictators Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Chernenko, and Andropov continued these same policies.

Today, Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church gives Putin the “Christian cover” he needs. Of



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course, Kirill — like Putin — is a “former” KGB agent. As Jasper noted of Kirill’s career as a churchman, “While the Christian brothers and sisters he betrayed were tortured and killed, or rotted away in the infamous Gulag Archipelago and psychiatric prisons, Kirill (a.k.a. Agent Mikhailov) enjoyed the high life of the Communist Party’s elite.”

So, the firing of Goldenzweig is demonstrably not out of character for Putin. Despite his carefully-crafted image of a Christian champion, throughout his years in power Putin has been behind the murders of not only Russian journalists, but also other whistleblowers and dissidents who have challenged his corrupt dictatorship. The organizations Reporters Without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists have cited dozens of cases of the suppression of reporters in Russia.

Writing on his Facebook page, Goldenzweig said, “I apologize for my shameful participation in this disgrace,” adding, “That’s it, I’m off for a disinfection.”



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