



Written by [Staff](#) on September 17, 2018

Published in the September 17, 2018 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 34, No. 18

Letters to the Editor

Riled by Russia Claims

The piece by Tatiana Christy in reference to the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church as Putin's weapon of influence paints a rather one-sided picture of the Russian Orthodox religion ("The Russian Church as Putin's Weapon of Influence," August 6 issue). The focus on Russia as an enemy to our country is also a bit far-fetched.

I grant that Christy's basic facts about the past are not in dispute: During the Soviet era, the KGB actually selected the Russian Orthodox patriarchs, based on the KGB's assessment of the intelligence of the men, as well as its assessment of their loyalty to the government.

But Christy impugns Putin, omitting a rather pertinent fact about Vladimir Putin, which is his strong faith in Christianity and his actual practice of his faith. His mother (after losing two children prior to his birth) had him baptized in the faith and brought him up according to strict Orthodox religious doctrine. Putin's father was a Russian war hero but had no say in the matter.

The slant of the article is that Russia uses the Orthodox churchmen to exert influence in foreign affairs. Yes, indeed, the churchmen were artifacts of a "Soviet Potemkin Village" that was on display to illustrate to the West "religious freedom" under the Soviet regime. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was the influence of Patriarch Aleksey the Second that prevented the remnants of the Soviet leadership from destroying the Yeltsin government. Also, the influence and helpfulness of the Russian Orthodox Church (for years) among the Russian troops and their families cannot be overstated. The troops listened to the patriarch, not to orders from the KGB. The KGB at that time did not understand that this patriarch was a Russian nationalist, as well as a religious leader. Too, after the fall of the Soviet Union, *only* the Russian Orthodox Church admitted being complicit in the oppression of the Russian people. The Roman Catholic churchmen and leaders of Protestant sects in other Iron Curtain countries have yet to admit their complicity in the oppression of people in their own countries.

The gist of this article continues the drumbeat of Bad Russia — the threat of Russia — versus the innocent Western countries. Any intelligent assessment of Russia today — in comparison to the moral and economic situation in Western nations — would lead to the conclusion that Russia has emerged from more than 70 years of Hell, while the Western nations are just beginning their movement toward Perdition.

The idea that Russia wants or needs anything from Western nations is too silly to even consider. Does Russia want a bankrupt Western financial system? Does Russia want GMO foods? Does Russia want to embrace "surgical cross dressing," meaning transgenders? Does Russia need energy supplies? Minerals? Scientific expertise? Does Russia foster homosexuality? Does Russia need more land? I believe that the only thing Russia needs is a much larger population in order to develop its large land mass.

I trust The New American is not joining in the chorus of irresponsible accusations against a nation whose people suffered for many decades because of having communism inflicted upon them. I am surprised that your magazine published this rather slanted and biased article.

Francis M. Reps



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Smoot, Wyoming

We appreciate Francis Reps' acknowledgment that author Tatiana Christy's "basic facts about the past are not in dispute," but disagree that the statist influence once exercised through the KGB has ended or that Putin (former KGB) is genuinely committed to Christianity, based on the evidence. Nor do we believe our own assessment is in any way an indictment of the Russian people or their Orthodox religion. — The Editors



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