



PUTINISM: BETWEEN RUSSOPHOBIA AND RUSSOPHILIA

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Putin the tyrant, Putin the satrap, Putin the murderer, Putin the genocidal, who has turned Russia into an authoritarian and anti-democratic country, who violates human rights and particularly those of sexual minorities, who violates freedom of expression, who intimidates his own officials, who persecutes his opponents. In short, Putin the Stalin of the 21st Century. This is the predominant vision today in the West as an obvious consequence of the Russian strategic intervention in Ukraine, typical of a demonization carried out by the so-called "Free Press" of the "Free World," the latter being the highest category of a quasi-lysological expression—that of "International Community;" quasi-lysological because it pretends to mean many things (in the narrative), but which in the end, (and in reality), is reduced to the United States and the Atlantic Alliance and their enormous geopolitical power.

If, for the West, Putin is something like the Third Antichrist—why is he still re-elected by the Russian population? And at this moment—how much support does this same population give to the decisions taken by the Russian government on the Ukrainian issue? These are questions that arise in the present context and that people who dance between pathological Russophobia and pathological Russophilia cannot answer objectively. We know that the reader will wonder why it is not better to speak of Putinophobia or Putinophilia, since Putin is not Louis XIV and Russia is not France of the XVII century. However, today we see that Putinophobia or Putinophilia has escalated by osmosis to Russophobia and Russophilia, since the extreme rejection or support, respectively, have spread to other extra-war spaces. For example, the attempt to cancel foods that have the denomination of being Russian (although they do not even have a Russian origin) for the purpose of symbolic support for Ukraine [AM750, 01.03.2022]; the attempted cancellation of authors, such as Dostoevsky, by a university in Italy, to show support for Ukraine [Telam Digital, 02.03.2022]; and the suspension of the flow of Russian tourists around the world as a result of sanctions [Europapress, 25.02.2022]—are some concrete examples of what is being pointed out here.

Putin has been in power for more than 20 years, re-elected for a total of four terms (2000-2004; 2004-2008; 2008-2012; and as Prime Minister: 2012-2018; 2018-2024), and with an overwhelming percentage of support compared to his opponents (52.94%, first term; 71.31%, second term; 63.60%, fourth term; 76.69%, fifth term). Except for the 2000 election, no other election has been questioned, and even the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), pointed out that the 2018 elections, despite the tight political control of the ruling party, were efficient and open [OSCE, 19.03.2018]. All this information is available for public consultation. At this point, it could also be argued: What about the law that allows Putin to run again for the presidency at the end of his 2024 term? Well, this law was passed by the State Duma

(Russian legislative branch), within the framework of constitutional amendments approved by referendum in July 2020, and which had an approval of 78.56% in favor—by the Russian population.

So, is Russia a dictatorship? Is Putin a dictator? A tyrant? And so on and so forth. We see that it is not and he is not. Another thing is that the Russian population in its vast majority—at least contingently—trusts Putin's governmental leadership of Russia. That is a matter of the merit of leadership, and the political and economic stability made viable by the Russian government, which has made the Human Development Index rise to 0.824 points in 2019, an HDI level catalogue as Very High. Putin's popularity in Russia (and outside Russia, principally in South America, as an example of leadership, the interest in learning Russian is also increasing in South America, according to Russian-Argentinian language teacher Dr. Tamara Yevtushenko (22.05.2020) with a tremendous increment during quarantine time in South America. Nowadays, according to *Forbes* (24.05.2022) despite having suffering a drop, Russian is still among the most relevant languages in online learning)—all of this is a fact that cannot be denied by the Putinophobes—and that has determined his reelection; nor is this an exaggeration by the Putinphiles, since Putin is also the subject of a series of questions that cannot be ignored, some most unlikely (typical of Western propaganda) and others worthy of attention (typical of citizen complaints). As far as that is concerned, for the sake of brevity, we will only make a note of such questions.

Apart from the bickering, in general terms, Russia is a democratic country, with separation of powers and an electoral system; and Putin came to power democratically, and has remained in power democratically and under the legal channels of the Russian legal system, until proven otherwise. Now it will be said here: What about the persecution of political opponents like Alexei Navalny, investigative journalists like Roman Dobrokhoto, NGOs like Memorial International, and collectives like Pussy Riot? With such management of the opposition any political leader will remain in power easily—is the first thought that comes to mind and may be readily stated. But the truth is that we have mixed information about all this, both from opponents and from panegyrists, which does not allow us to do an objective analysis.

The truth is that these practices, if being common currency, would not be exclusive to Russia (even Ukraine has its own “pearls” in regards to the harassment of pro-Russian citizens in their own society, in times previous to the Russian intervention, harassment which now in full conflict has escalated to public humiliation through those images of citizens tied to public posts); and the United States and the nations that are proud of their freedoms are the first to not hesitate to attack them for less than what Russia does, when they see that this affects national security, which was exposed in the controversial statements of Edward Snowden, a former NSA and CIA contractor [*The Diary*, 13.03.2016].

This situation also makes obvious that the so-called Free Press is just an illusion; there is no such thing as a “free press;” every press has a narrative line, and many US press conglomerates—better known as the Corporate Control of the Media—are promoted with the Seal of Approval of the Government of the United States, just as Twitter, Facebook or Instagram do with Russian or Chinese information platforms with the label “Controlled by.” This corporate control of the media is more visible in crisis (wars, pandemics) and electoral times; and we have already seen how it works, for example, in the US election of 2016, in a clear campaign of demonization of the figure of Donald Trump, and since then through the suggestion of him as a Neo-fascist, in the most aligid moments of the protest against him. Also, the truth is that opponents, journalists, non-governmental organizations, and groups are not oblivious to financing and external support; and Russia, like any sovereign nation, exercises reason of state and that should not surprise anyone these days. What can be criticized is the double standard of some sectors of opinion, which in their ignorance and under the logic of the lesser evil (for them), accept these repressive policies of the West, but not when Russia legitimately does the same under more coherent justifications than the Western ones, but no less open to criticism.

On the other hand, we have the issue of the human rights of sexual minorities, where the Russian position is not based on empty reactionism. For example, in 2012, the Russian judiciary banned the celebration of gay pride from that date until today [*The World*, 07.06.2012]. Why? A more than sufficient reason, but one that for current Western values is objectionable, in the sense of safeguarding the right of children not to be exposed to propaganda, namely:

Russian Federal Law No. 436-F3: on the protection of children against information harmful to their health and development: “...the purposely directed and uncontrolled activity of disseminating information that may cause harm to the moral and spiritual development or health of minors, leading them to form distorted perceptions that traditional marriage relationships and the non-traditional are socially equal, taking into account that minors due to their age cannot estimate such information critically and decently.

None of this has anything to do with a debate about the social status of sexual minorities and the great problems that concern them; but rather that children's rights always prevail over the rights of adults, and there is no point in discussing that. The Principle of the Best Interest of the Child always prevails. But naturally Russia's action horrified the West, when it is common knowledge concerning the degree of LGBT propaganda to which children are exposed during such events in most of the West where that day is celebrated.

Continuing with our analysis: What about Russia's authoritarianism? Here we believe that we can bring everything together. Indeed, Russia is an authoritarian country, because the Russian State, under the leadership of the Russian Government, represented by Vladimir Putin, exercises an iron authority for the fulfillment of national objectives. In my paper, "[Teoría General del Autoritarismo](#)" (The General Theory of Authoritarianism), I pointed out that the concept of authoritarianism has two equally valid interpretive meanings that flow from the very praxis in which the aforementioned category has developed: (i) a negative or spurious one and (ii) a positive or institutional one; and both meanings are aligned with the two classic meanings by the RAE (Spanish Royal Academy of Sciences). The first alludes to the experiences of governments (and the personalities in charge of them—the rulers) that abuse public authority; while the second refers to a regime or system based on the principle of authority. Thus, while in the first meaning the principle of authority is denaturalized, in the second it fulfills its structural function.

As far as the Russian government of Vladimir Putin is concerned, the Putinophobic view reaffirms that it would be in the first meaning; while the Putinophilic view could say that it is in the second meaning. The truth is that every authoritarian regime has a little of both. What makes it possible to differentiate between a strong democracy and a total tyranny is whether the principle of authority fulfills its structural function or whether it is distorted by abuse. In the case of Russia, it can be fully said that it is an institutional (positive) authoritarianism to a greater degree than a spurious (negative) one.

But isn't this some kind of convenient oxymoron? An authoritarian democracy? That is, a popularly backed authoritarian regime, a democratic caesarism. We do not hesitate to recognize that while in non-Western political societies, other forms of socio-political and economic praxes are manifesting themselves that the West doesn't like at all, this does not make them any less valid; on the contrary, this generates the need to broaden the spectrum of understanding of political phenomenology. Russia, in this sense, would fit perfectly into what is now known as *illiberal democracy* [Foreign Affairs, 2018]. Now, this has nothing to do with a relativism of contemporary political phenomenologies, in the sense of accepting a political regime only because there are cultural differences, but in recognizing that liberal democracy is not the final frontier, as Fukuyama believed, and that social, economic and cultural development can also take place outside the liberal sphere. This is why liberals hate Putin, and they are absolutely right in doing so, because of the following:

For liberals, the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict (where the United States and NATO endorse their strong logistical support for Ukraine) is the classic civilization (liberal order) and barbarism (authoritarian

disorder) dichotomy. However, this reductionist reading does not leave aside a liberal ideological narrative, when the reality they refuse to accept is the confrontation of two opposing civilizational orders (ideas, culture, traditions, mysticism, etc.) with particularized claims according to their own hermeneutical frameworks—the confrontation between a liberal order and a non-liberal or illiberal order. In this respect, liberals have every reason to fear Putin's Russia, because it represents all those values that, as a result of constant "liberalizations," their liberal societies have been losing under the tutelage of the idea of linear progress:

- Losing their religiosity (1st liberalization, via the process of secularization);
- Losing their nationalist identity (2nd liberalization, via globalization);
- Losing their sexual identity (3rd liberalization via gender theories);
- Losing their humanity—the final liberal frontier being post-humanity (4th great liberalization, the transhumanist utopia, the liberation of man from the weaknesses inherent in his biological body which belongs to him, through fusion with the machine or cyborg).

The unequivocal consequence of all these liberalizations is none other than the total control of the human being by emptying him of all transcendental identity so that it is easier to saturate the vacuum left with the identity of consumerism; and once again we return to the fact that those who boast of freedom are the first to trample it under the garb and the promise of greater freedoms.

Likewise, many in defense of the West, that is, of the so-called "Western values," end up being functional to the agenda of the liberal order; and this is because the classic sense of the expression "Western values" has been lost or is in clear decline because the societies that gave birth to those values are being deconstructed under the rule of political correctness and cancellation, twisting history to accommodate an ideological narrative that is more in line with the ideology of postmodernity.

Western values are liquefying in postmodernity, becoming increasingly identified with the liberal order, which is why the expression "Western values" is configured as a lysological expression, which can be used for many things, and which does duty for many things, and which as a catch-all can accommodate any discourse, from the already mentioned classical sense, in that it be used to defend

cultural traditions and axiologies of various peoples, their community lifestyle and thereby their art, music, architecture, as well as their development in gnoseological terms (religion, philosophy and science); that is to say, a civilizational golden age. In other words, from a civilizational golden age, to something more contemporary, such as the narratives of linear progress that admits no return, and ranging from such disparate fields as technological advances, to what some consider as sociopolitical advances, such as the emergence of liberalism and with it its processes of liberalization, and as a consequence, alleged legal advances, such as the legalization of abortion, some psychotropic drugs, euthanasia and the recognition of multiple rights for sexual minorities.

Contrary to all of this, Russia presents itself (in narrative and in reality, both in Russian society and in state policies) as Orthodox Christian religiosity that influences state policies; patriotism and nationalism that gives dynamism to economic, social and scientific developments; the social function of the family, and a heroic humanism in cosmism. In other words, as we said, everything that the West is progressively losing.

Finally, about the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which has confronted brotherly Slavic peoples, and where the United States and NATO have gained a lot of political benefits (not to mention the military logistic support to Ukraine), where for them Ukraine is nothing more than a piece in the geopolitical chessboard—we can say that there is a guilty party, and that is the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian oligarchy, since the conflict could have been avoided, if the Ukrainian government had complied with the Minsk Agreements of 2014, which it did not do. And the government of the United States (which has no moral authority to judge anyone, since for lesser reasons it has intervened in countries militarily and for issues of imperialist economic control and strategic resources (petroleum in the Middle East: oil war), instead of sending arms, to which is added the political support of NATO, in its logic of defending peace, should have been the guarantor of the fulfillment of that agreement.

However, the opposite happened. And since 2014 there have been thousands of ceasefire violations by the Ukrainian army, according to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE SMM, 22.12.2017], in addition to the savage harassment of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine (now the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics) during the 8 years of the conflict, thus creating a recipe for Russian intervention. After all this, can it be said that Russia is to blame for what is currently happening?

We believe that the question answers itself. Ukraine is a sovereign state. Yes, but so is Russia, with its

state and national security interests. And on this particular occasion, the Russian government has no shortage of justifying reasons to act as it has done already (currently the support of the Russian population for Putin's decisions on Ukraine is 68% [*Interfax*, 28.02.2022]). So, this proves that it is not only Putin's conflict as some liberal, or functionaries of the liberal narrative, believe. On the contrary, it proves that Putin's decisions are in line with the interest of all Russian people, since, in addition to the above, it is in Russia's national security interests that NATO (which for a long time now has not hesitated to show its defiant attitude near the Russian borders in numerous military exercises, e.g., in the Black Sea) does not expand further to the east. About all this, it is very infantile to say (as some liberals believe) that NATO has not the intention to expand to the East, because that is the first thing that happened after the retreat of Soviet troops in Germany. Gorbachev was deceived; any academic knows that. It is also true that it was a "gentlemen's pact"—the condition to accept Germanys' reunification—but precisely the very essence of treaties and international law is consuetudinary (based on the uses and ceremonies of states in international affairs which not always written in a document); any professional lawyer and even a first-year law school student know that.

In this context, contrary to the liberal narrative, China is playing a part that the US should have played in defense of the logic of peace, as an arbitrator (and not as an arms dealer, as the US is playing now)—calling Russia and Ukraine to return to the table of negotiations (*CGTN*, 09.03.2022). Plus, in the liberal narrative, China is seeking somehow the weakening of Russia. But this is totally false, because it is the opposite; in the sense that President Xi Jinping has reaffirmed his support of Russia in aspects of sovereignty and security (*The Vanguard*, 17.06.2022). So, this proves perfectly and totally that we are not living in a multipolar order, as some liberal narrative sustains to argue that all countries have equal relevance in the NATO alliance. Only an ideological liberal would think like that, because the truth is that the importance of the US in NATO is not only foundational in an idealist or symbolic sense of protecting common interest in the West, but the US is the neuralgic center in the economic foundation of NATO right up to today; for without the huge economic support of the US, NATO would have ceased to exist, or would face serious budgetary problems in financing joint activities which in turn that would have determined the extinction of the alliance. This was noted by President Emmanuel Macron in 2019 and also by President Trump in 2017; and that's why all the members of NATO were very afraid of Trump's statements at that time, because the US is responsible for 70% of the budget of NATO (*Swissinfo*, 16.12.2021).

Thus it is that the Theory of the Multipolar World of Russian political philosopher Alexander Dugin is gaining relevance in current events, because no country, not even China or Russia, has the strength on its own to counterpart the enormous geopolitical power of US through the Atlantic Alliance, the very

basis of the current unipolarity: "In the 21st century it is no longer enough to be a nation-state, to be a sovereign entity. In such circumstances, real sovereignty can only be achieved through a combination and coalition of states. The Westphalian system, which continues to exist in iure, no longer reflects the reality of the international relations system and requires revision" (Dugin, 2016).

A few words about the sanctions. We all know the consequences of that policies on Western economies. In contrast, Russia's economy is doing generally well, even in the absence of foreign enterprises. Now Russian McDonalds, which was the predilect first obelisk of the liberal capitalist revolution in Gorbachev's Russia, has now been replaced by "Vkusno i Tochka," a Russian fast food chain that hardly needs to be envious of McDonalds. The train of economic nationalism (choo-choo) is doing very well in Russia. In contrast, Western economies had a boomerang effect on monetary balances (e.g., the dollar and the euro fell in the context of more sanctions against Russia [*Euronews*, 25.02.2022; *Swissinfo*, 28.02.2022; *The Economist*, 02.03.2022; 03.03.2022]). So, only time will tell the fate of the current war events (political, geopolitical and economical). But at this point Putin's Russia is apparently winning the war—and all the indicators are pointing to that result.

The Ukrainian government by relying on the United States and NATO, and accepting their support, made a useful fool of itself. In the end, the Ukrainian population will have to hold its government accountable for the devastation.

Notwithstanding the above, it is our sincere wish that these military-strategic operations end as soon as possible for the sake of the brotherhood of peoples and the safety of the Ukrainian population.

The bloodshed of brotherly peoples must be stopped as soon as possible, and peace negotiations must be resumed. Peace will always be preferable to war—that is a universal maxim; and at this time, peace must be advocated. Our best wishes, greetings and respect to the brave Russian and Ukrainian peoples from this humble pulpit.

Finally, also in the present context, there has been talk of Russian imperialism. But Russia has only 9 military bases abroad—as opposed to the 800 bases that the United States has (of which 76 are in Latin America, 12 in Panama, 12 in Puerto Rico, 9 in Colombia, 8 in Peru, etc.) So, what kind of imperialism are we talking about? At least for the moment—and in a contingent manner of course—it is not possible to identify a correspondence between the current Russian foreign policy and an imperialist escalation.

We are no longer in the times of the USSR. There is an abysmal difference that is obvious; and the foreign policies of both nations (Russia and the United States) also make us see the difference between international aid (and/or very concrete geopolitical interests) and the pursuit of imperialist domination (understood as total military control and generalized socio-cultural influence for full economic domination).

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Featured: "At the Crossroads," by Hugo Sumberg; painted in 1896.

