

by Taki Theodoracopulos

Putin and the Polish Gesture

In 2002, Vladimir Putin told a French reporter who asked about “innocent civilians” killed in Chechnya that—since the journalist evidently sympathized with Muslims—he would arrange to have him circumcised, adding: “I will recommend that they conduct the operation in such a way so that afterwards nothing else will grow.” People of the pompous persuasion were shocked to hear the president of Russia speak, well, the way most normal souls would answer some wise guy trying to score points for his ten seconds of fame. Bravo Vladimir, I cheered at the time. If only more heads of state spoke like that to self-important, busy-body reporters.

Putin happens to be the favorite politician of one of my closest friends. “It’s because he doesn’t sound like the rest of them, and he’s done a hell of a lot for my country,” says his Royal Highness Prince Nicola Romanov, the direct descendant of the last czar and titular head of that tragic family. Romanov is my neighbor in Switzerland, a very tall, extremely well-read gentleman in his mid-80’s, who until recently was president of our ski club in Gstaad. A bit of a comedown, I admit, but Nicola could not have cared less. We elected him in order to chop the heads off the entrenched oligarchy ruining the club, and he did just that. In a very noble manner, that is. “My ancestors must be turning over,” he joked at the time. But back to Putin.

As everyone who doesn’t watch MTV all day knows by now, an important oil pipeline passes through Georgia. For all the idealistic blather about the rights of small nations and ethnic minorities, cynical Realpolitik suggests that neither Moscow nor Washington nor London would be so concerned about the region if oil and gas were not at stake. Behind the scenes, all Russia has to do is threaten the West with an attack on the pipeline if it backs Georgia too much. This

fact does not seem to bother such sofa samurais as the hideous William Kristol, who twins Putin with the leaders of Sudan, Rhodesia, Burma, and North Korea in his urging for Uncle Sam to take a hard line. The trouble is Kristol, as always, has it the wrong way round. There is nothing America can do in that part of the world, Putin not being a weak Milosevic, and Russia not a small country like Serbia. Kristol urges the “civilized world” not to repeat the mistakes of the 30’s, as “delay and irresolution simply invite future threats.”

What a clown this man is. Imagine if Georgia were in the Middle East. He might even consider asking his brood to enlist. (No way.) The only answer to his drivel is Pat Buchanan’s: “Is it better to be a saved Pole, with 7 million dead, or a betrayed Czech with 100,000 dead?” Ironically, parallels between Kosovo and South Ossetia are striking. The Western powers supported the Kosovo separatists with the use of force, including bombing Belgrade. Russia supported South Ossetian separatists with the use of force, including bombing Tbilisi. All Russia has done is follow the lead set by the West in resolving separatist disputes. So why are the usual suspects screaming bloody murder?

My friend Radek Sikorski, Poland’s foreign minister and an ex-*Spectator* writer and colleague, is skating on thin ice by welcoming American weapons to his country. Radek can be excused because he’s a Pole, his country having suffered terribly under Russia and the Soviet Union since time immemorial. But the Kremlin’s reaction to the Polish gesture to Washington was immediate, and its nukes will certainly know how to target their old bases across the border.

Let’s face it. During the Cold War, neither Washington nor Moscow let its satellites get out of hand. In today’s post-Cold War world, small states have



the potential to trigger bigger crises between nuclear-armed powers. The Russians believe that a Polish missile shield has the Russian Federation as its target. Ditto for the Czech Republic, Georgia, and Ukraine. Yet as everyone with an ounce of history knows, the fear of encirclement has characterized Russia for centuries. NATO lost its principal purpose with the collapse of communism. It now serves only Washington’s expansionist instincts. The expansionist urge gained impetus from the neocons in the 1990’s with their Project for the New American Century. But as I said before, the neocons have a Masada complex—as long as others do the dying. Russia and China are not patsies; they are not Iraq or Syria. Uncle Sam can push around the Philippines, Cuba, Mexico, Grenada, Lebanon, and Serbia, but Russia was around long before we were, and has seen it all. Both Napoleon and Hitler failed, and for some strange reason I think Mr. W would be well advised to look into Russian eyes and back off.

Putin is not Hitler or Stalin. He was provoked into invading by a Washington shill. In Russian eyes, the invaders were defending kith and kin. The Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003 was doing nothing of the sort. It was simply following orders from the neocons in order to make the Middle East safer for Israel. What Putin should have done is use Bush’s words. Call for regime change and suggest that Georgian gangsters had contacts with Al Qaeda. The Russians know where their interests lie, and we in America should not waste time lecturing them. ◊

True—or New?

by W. James Antle III

"My opinion with respect to immigration is that, except of useful mechanics and some particular descriptions of men or professions, there is no need of encouragement . . ."

—George Washington

The New Case Against Immigration: Both Legal and Illegal

by Mark Krikorian

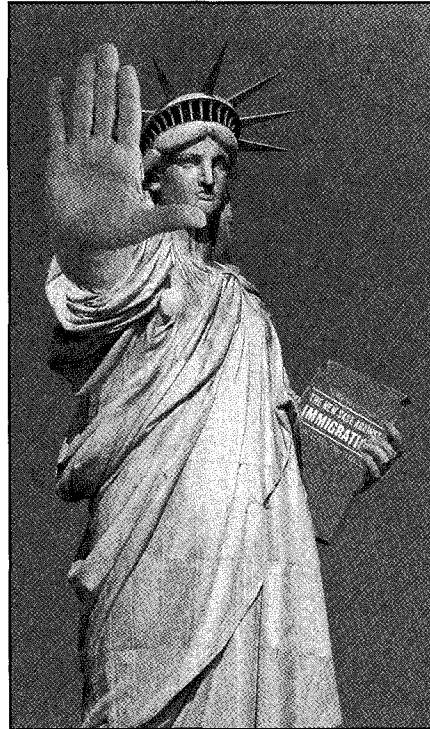
New York: Sentinel; 304 pp., \$25.95



"It's not you, it's me" has become a popular phrase with which to terminate a romantic relationship. It is considered a more polite and, above all, more sensitive way of saying good riddance to an unwanted suitor than rehearsing whatever grievances actually prompted the breakup. But the phrase carries an air of insincerity that prevents it from really lessening the blow. Urban Dictionary, which is to pop-culture trash as the Oxford English Dictionary is to the English language, translates it as follows: "I no longer find you attractive, but I can't say that because then I'll feel guilty."

Mark Krikorian begins *The New Case Against Immigration: Both Legal and Illegal* with a sentiment that sounds suspiciously similar. "What's different about immigration today as opposed to a century ago," he writes, "is not the characteristics of the newcomers but the characteristics of our society." A paragraph later, Krikorian explains, "We've all heard the laments: 'My grandpa from Sicily learned English, and my grandma from Minsk got by without welfare—what's the prob-

W. James Antle III is associate editor of *The American Spectator*.



Melanie Anderson

lem with immigrants today?" His answer to this question is instructive: "The problem is that the America your grandparents immigrated to a century ago no longer exists."

Krikorian is executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, one of the most prominent think tanks advocating a more realistic immigration policy. He has been a vocal proponent of the attrition-through-enforcement strategy of reducing illegal immigration, which is already showing limited signs of success. His new book is a masterful, comprehensive presentation of the technical arguments against continuous mass immigration in the tradition of Roy Beck's *The Case Against Immigration* and Peter Brimelow's *Alien Nation*. So let us assume that Krikorian's opening line

is sincere. Is his argument correct? In other words, is the problem with millions of legal and illegal immigrants pouring into the United States not them, but us?

In fact, as is often the case in a failed relationship, there is plenty of blame to go around. Not only do Americans today lack the cultural self-confidence and political will to demand that immigrants enter the country legally, much less assimilate, but we lack the strong common culture and national identity that allowed us, with greater difficulty, to "Americanize" newcomers to our shores during the last period of mass immigration. American schoolchildren are fed a dog's breakfast of multiculturalism and political correctness, in which they learn that the people who settled and founded our country were genocidal and irredeemably racist. This is as damaging as any bilingual-education program for the children of immigrants.

It is frankly more normal and natural for Mexican immigrants to want to cling to their own languages and family ties than for our own country to permit a sustained assault on its national myths, heroes, and customs. Even apart from mass immigration, Americans are divided about who we are as a people, about moral values, about our national sense of self. We no longer require immigrants to assimilate and no longer provide much for them to assimilate to.

Krikorian does not state things