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Putinism: Russia and Its Future with the West

Walter Laqueur

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There is no question that tensions between Russia and American are on the rise. The forced annexation of Crimea, the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight 17, and the Russian government's treatment of homosexuals have created diplomatic standoffs and led to a volley of economic sanctions. Much of the blame for Russia's recent hostility towards the West has fallen on steely-eyed President Vladimir Putin and Americans have begun to wonder if they are witnessing the rebirth of Cold War-style dictatorship.

Not so fast, argues veteran historian Walter Laqueur.
For two decades, Laqueur has been ahead of the curve, predicting events in post-Soviet Russia with uncanny accuracy. In *Putinism*, he deftly demonstrates how three long-standing pillars of Russian ideology: a strong belief in the Orthodox Church, a sense of Eurasian "manifest destiny" and a fear of foreign enemies, continue to exert a powerful influence on the Russian populous. In fact, today's Russians have more in common with their counterparts from 1904 than 1954 and Putin is much more a servant of his people than we might think. Topical and provocative, *Putinism* contains much more than historical analysis. Looking to the future, Laqueur explains how America's tendency to see Russia as a Cold War relic is dangerous and premature. As the situation in Ukraine has already demonstrated, Russia can and will challenge the West and it is in our best interest to figure out exactly who it is we are facing—and what they want—before it is too late.

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