

From the Editor:

*Slavic Review* publishes letters to the editor with educational or research merit. Where the letter concerns a publication in *Slavic Review*, the author of the publication will be offered an opportunity to respond. Space limitations dictate that comment regarding a book review should be limited to one paragraph; comment on an article should not exceed 750 to 1,000 words. The editor encourages writers to refrain from ad hominem discourse.

D.P.K.

To the Editor:

Juliet Johnson's review of my book, *Capitalist Russia and the West* (*Slavic Review*, vol. 60, no. 4) is so full of omissions and inaccuracies that I feel compelled to set the record straight as best I can in one brief paragraph. Johnson claims, for example, that I made "selective use of sources" and "uncritically" used left-wing sources. In fact, of a total of 572 notes in five randomly selected chapters of my book, eight were from *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, four from *Pravda*, and two from *Trud*, all sources she identifies as "left." Johnson concludes her review by asserting that "those looking for a compelling leftist analysis of contemporary Russian foreign policy making will just have to wait a bit longer" (873). But given that the test of the validity of an analysis is its predictability, was not Vladimir Putin's move to align even more closely with the west post-9/11 rather smashing confirmation of my book's main thesis that, at least until 9/11, Russian leaders perpetrated a grand deception in collaboration with the leading western powers to make it appear that the former were "standing up" to an aggressive west, when in reality they have been almost unswervingly pro-western? Could Putin have made such a seemingly dramatic demarche on 9/11 if there were not already in place within the Russian government an ongoing tendency—and policy—of pro-westernism? How much more "compelling" could an analysis be? I ask my readers to read my book and judge for themselves.

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Professor Johnson replies:

Jeffrey Surovell and I agree that Russia conducted a more pro-western foreign policy in the 1990s than most observers assumed. As my review pointed out, "in many respects, this book is a necessary corrective to the prevailing assumption that in 1993 Russian foreign policy took a decidedly anti-western turn from which it never recovered" (872). The review also noted that the book aptly documents several instances of Russia's anti-western rhetoric followed by Russian capitulation to western policies. Where we part company is on the cause of this phenomenon. Surovell argues that Russian leaders happily and willingly sold Russia out to the west for personal enrichment and that their occasional anti-western statements aimed only to camouflage this venality. Unfortunately, the book does not adequately support this causal contention. In particular, it fails to address contradictory evidence (such as Russia's reluctance to sell key strategic enterprises to foreigners) or engage alternative explanations (such as Russia's profound post-Cold War military and economic weakness). One need not, for example, believe that Russia's leaders engaged in a conspiratorial "grand deception" to understand why they could not block the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Similarly, Vladimir Putin has embraced the "war on terror" led by the United States primarily as a post-hoc justification for his own ongoing war in Chechnia, not because of his innate pro-western tendencies. For these reasons, as

*Slavic Review* 62, no. 2 (Summer 2003)