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Madonna Is a Stage Prop in Pussy Riot Trial

By Maxim Shevchenko

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Madonna came out in full support of Pussy Riot last week in both her seven-minute speech during her Moscow concert and in her interview with Oleg Kashin of Kommersant. She said, among other things, that President Vladimir Putin should free the three young female band members from prison and asserted that the Russian Orthodox Church is corrupt.

Madonna is a pop culture superstar whose every word is picked up by the leading global media outlets. This is precisely why Kashin scored big by getting the interview. He knew it would have a global impact.

Kashin is a clear example of liberal, anti-Putin journalism. His interview was reminiscent of a meeting between two old liars, each of them pretending that they know something that no one else does and that they don't know things that are obvious even to children.

Let's start with the lies of Madonna. "Pussy Riot is prohibited in Russia," she said. How can the group be prohibited if there's nothing to prohibit in the first place? The band doesn't have

any CDs. They aren't even musicians. They are publicity-seeking "performance artists" who make their living by creating scandals.

"I hope that President Putin will free these girls," Madonna said during her concert. This is rubbish. In essence, she was appealing to Putin to usurp judicial power and intervene directly in an independent court case.

Would Madonna even think of making the same appeal in the United States? Would she say during a concert in, say, Seattle that she hopes President Barack Obama will free three Americans being tried for a minor infraction?

In the United States, this statement would only be met with laughter. No U.S. president could intervene in an independent court decision even if he wanted to. Even an attempt at this would end his career.

As Madonna sees it, Putin controls everything in Russia, including its court decisions. This is a myth that is spread in nearly every article about Russia in the Western media.

In the United States, there is no shortage of scandalous court cases. Take, for example, the case of Leonard Peltier, a Native American activist who many believe was wrongfully convicted of murdering two FBI agents in 1975. Amnesty International placed the conviction of Peltier, who is serving two life sentences in a Florida high-security prison, in its "unfair trials" category. Native Americans believe that Peltier was prosecuted because he fought for their freedom against the "tyranny of the United States." But who besides Native Americans believes or supports Peltier in the United States? Does the Western media even mention this travesty of justice?

Madonna is absolutely certain that Putin put Pussy Riot in jail because the group's members criticized him. But she's not really to blame for this. Many in the West believe this nonsense, which has been propagandized by Russia's opposition movement and enthusiastically spread by Western media.

In reality, of course, Pussy Riot didn't actually say a word against Putin during their February "punk prayer" at Christ the Savior Cathedral. They just danced feverishly in the cathedral's solea, kicking up their legs, screaming "holy [expletive]!" and defiling a sacred place for Orthodox Christians.

Madonna said during her concert, "If Putin wants to correct the situation ... [he should] find a common language with those who disagree with him."

Using Madonna's logic, Obama should sit down with neo-Nazis and racists from the American South and discuss the clips that are all over the Internet of them asserting that "blacks and Jews have seized power in America."

Madonna is certain that the church in Russia is corrupt and that it's linked to the government. Where did she get this information? She told Kashin in the Kommersant interview that "a marriage between the church and state is a very dangerous thing." It seems as if Madonna were reading off a cheat sheet that someone else wrote for her. What does Madonna really understand about Russia?

But enough about Madonna. She is only a stage prop, a vivid symbol of everything superficial, deceitful and hateful that the West exhibits toward Russia.

But this bias is by no means limited to Western media. Take, for example, one of Kashin's questions posed to Madonna, which is a good example of anti-Russian propaganda masked as journalism:

Kashin: "This may be a strange question, but do you see a difference between how they listen to music in free countries and countries that are oppressed? Is there a difference? You do have fans in Syria and North Korea."

Madonna: "Yes, I do have fans there, but I don't go there, and so I never see them."

Kashin: "But you do come to Russia."

Kashin was implying that Russia is on the same level as Syria and North Korea. In this way, Kashin advanced the common Western false stereotype of Russia: that it is a tyranny, that nobody can criticize the government and that even punk music is banned.

Kashin wrote up the Madonna interview not for Russian readers but for the West. He knew that it would be translated into foreign languages and cited by leading Western media outlets. The interview shows that truth has no significance in the West. The simplistic and distorted views of Madonna — who doesn't understand anything about politics, the Orthodox Church or the history of Russia — is more authoritative in the West than the serious works about Russia published by academics, political scientists and historians whose balanced views, unfortunately, never make it into the mainstream media.

There is no shortage of people who sincerely believe the Western mainstream media is balanced, unbiased and independent. The overwhelming majority of people in the West are convinced that the mass media don't lie and that they "serve society" as part of the mythical Fourth Estate.

In reality, though, the Western mass media is dominated by propaganda and "informational totalitarianism." Madonna is a classic PR spokeswoman for this propaganda. In fact, she ceased to be a human being long ago. Madonna is the proverbial Greek "god from the machine" who descends from above onto the stage to spread the "indisputable truth." She performs her spectacular PR show for the masses, who are in complete awe of her theatrical talent. She then retreats from the stage and is forgotten — until the next performance.

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