

Politics in the Olympics and Ukraine: Has the West Lost Its Soul and Feelings for Beauty and Fairness?

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Today, the dangers of military escalation are beyond description.

What is now happening in Ukraine has serious geopolitical implications. It could lead us into a World War III scenario.

It is important that a peace process be initiated with a view to preventing escalation.

Global Research condemns Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

A Bilateral Peace Agreement is required.

With a determination and cruelty reminiscent of the Roman Catholic Inquisition, the forces that have lined up to manufacture a sensationalist narrative about Russian figure skater Kamilia Valieva, and all of Russia’s athletes in general, have succeeded in destroying her as a human being on every knowable level of her identity. At least, for the present time. These forces brandishing their pitchforks impugned her personal integrity by accusing her of cheating, criticized her failure to withstand their unrelenting pressure and posting of humiliating photographs, shunned her as a legitimate Olympic athlete (Team USA walked out in protest as she was about to perform), and insulted both her coach Eteri Tutberidze and her native country of Russia.

So many aspects of this incident are beyond troubling in moral and ethical terms, but one

unexplored subject can reveal a deeper malaise suffered by the sports and political elites who engineered this fiasco. It is the two-headed monster of *self-perpetuating envy*, and the *loss of the feelings for beauty and innocence*. Common sense, reason, and the suspicious and unprofessional handling of the details of the possible doping by Valieva point to a carefully-timed set-up in order to manipulate the relative standings of the figure skaters. Kamila Valieva did nothing wrong and broke no rules; it is the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) that bent their own rules and guidelines for this type of situation.

But perhaps the loss of the feeling for beauty and innocence is not entirely disconnected from the lack of moral integrity in Western double standards when Russia is concerned. In Russian Orthodoxy religious understandings, national mentality, beauty, and the good are manifestations of each other. Attacks on all things Russian – from denying the Soviet Union’s contribution to the eradication of fascism to attributing to Russians an almost genetic propensity for cheating and lying,[i] to allegations of widespread doping in sports– are designed to strip Russia of any moral authority. These attacks aim to vilify the country and its people as eternally corrupt and unworthy. It would follow then that Russia does not deserve to be treated as an equal, and it cannot have legitimate security concerns and national interests. Readers can note how often “moral inequivalence” is cited when comparable actions on the part of the West and Russia are discussed. However, genuine ethics and beauty go hand in hand.

International actors have separated along predictable lines: those who demonize Russia at every turn opine that, of course Valieva “cheated” because she is Russian, while those taking a more reasonable approach argue to wait until all the evidence has been examined. This same divide is playing out in the immediate aftermath of Pres. Vladimir Putin’s recognition on February 21, 2022 of the independence of Donetsk and Lugansk: Russia’s detractors in the U.S. and European Union are already blaming Russia for a genocide playing out that Russia did not create, while those countries such as China and Serbia manifest an understanding of why Russia carefully made its decision: Draginja Vlk of the Belgrade City Parliament noted that the step Russia took “‘will help prevent further escalation of conflict and save the people from the danger they are in,’ referring to tens of thousands of refugees currently pouring into Russia.”[ii]

Image on the right: Valieva at the [2019-20 Junior Grand Prix Final](#) (Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0)



One does not have to be an expert on figure skating to recognize the artistic beauty, even fairy-tale-like otherworldliness of this youngest athlete in the Beijing Olympics of 2022 that suffuse each moment of Valieva's performances. Her breathtaking, seemingly effortless movements on the ice, combine with a childlike innocence free of the dirt of the world that the "experienced" among us have lost—these qualities have left her admirers spellbound. Valieva's artistry and light-as-a-feather physical skills are extraordinary: an NBC Sports commentator noted during Valieva's short program at the European Figure Skating Championships of 2022, "a talent like this comes along once in a lifetime."^[iii] The same commentator several seconds later called Valieva's performance "magical."^[iv]

Journalist Finian Cunningham, who refers to Valieva's skating skills as "sublime, balletic talent," also points out, "Kamila is a victim of Western media pushing a narrative to justify confrontation against Russia."^[v] Cunningham continues: "This is nothing short of a campaign to incite conflict in Ukraine against Russia, a conflict that would then serve to justify hitting Russia with economic sanctions, axing the Nord Stream 2 gas project and piling on international opprobrium. The United States is using the crisis over Ukraine to revive Cold War divisions between Russia and the rest of Europe."^[vi]

To be sure, the superb routines of medal-winners Anna Shcherbakova and Alexandra Trusova deserve all the recognition these fine athletes received. But their awards and accolades should not come at the expense of the ruination of their teammate Valieva. Just as the Ukrainian government's ongoing, yet empty promises of peace should not stop the rescuing of the population of Donetsk and Lugansk from the annihilation these people face.

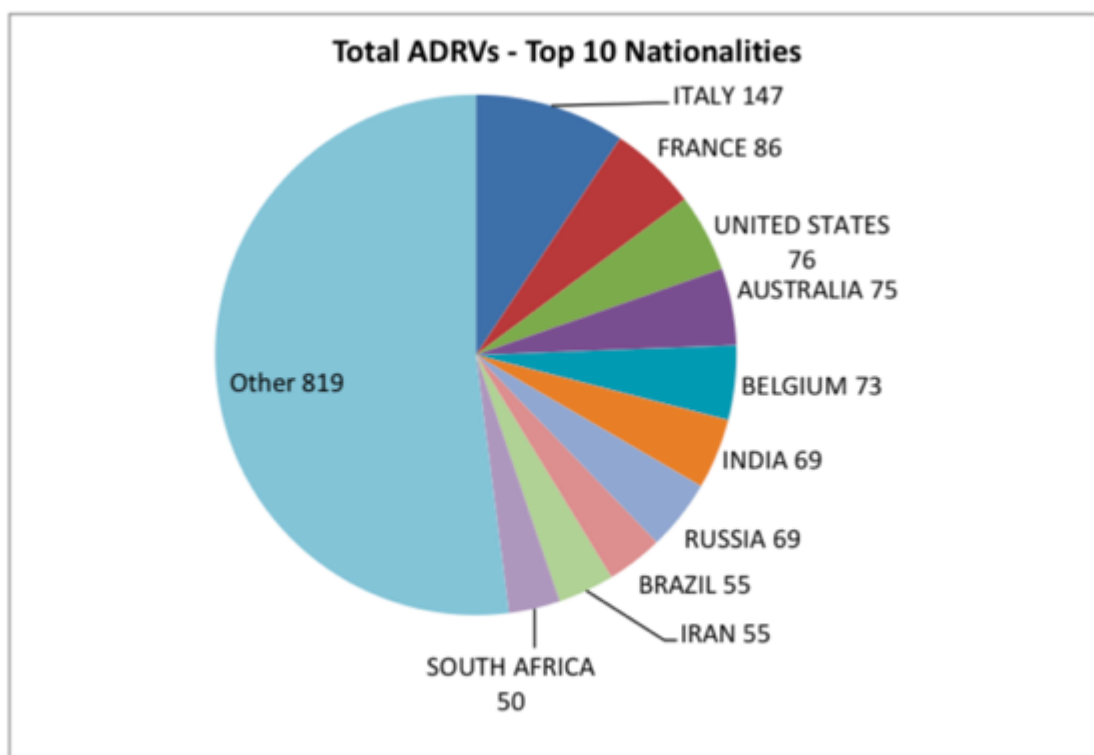
For the envious elites, it is precisely Valieva's otherworldly beauty and innocence, especially when connected with Russianness, that must be destroyed. Cunningham notes, "Such a beauty could not be tolerated for it destroyed the US media campaign to otherwise demonize Russia and instill enmity towards that nation."^[vii] They detest the Russianness that manifests sheer joy and freedom from their control, at the same time envying the culture that could provide such fertile soil for beauty to flourish. How, they say, can a nation of barbarians and *Untermenschen* grow such magnificent flowers? Ultimately, they want to

banish the “alien” country that dares to remind them of what they have lost—the feelings for beauty and innocence. Because beauty is both an aesthetic and spiritual category in which perception of something outside the self can resurrect the human being, it also encompasses feelings for one’s homeland, its flag, and its national anthem. Perhaps this tearing away of these sources of pride and inspiration for Russian Olympic athletes are part of the carefully curated humiliation imposed on Russia as a result of dubious charges of doping, both individual and institutional.

The circulation of suspicions about institutionalized doping in Russia began after the success of the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games. These were followed a documentary by Hajo Seppelt that exposed some Russian athletes who had used prohibited substances, which initiated two investigations of the matter led by Richard McLaren and later Denis Oswald. Seppelt’s documentary and McLaren’s report rely on the testimony of only three people: the former head of the Moscow Laboratory Grigory Rodchenkov (the chief culprit under investigation in Russia for providing athletes with doping cocktails) and two whistleblowers, Vitaly Stepanov (an official at the Russian Anti-Doping Agency-RUSADA) and his wife Yuliya (who was disqualified for using performance enhancing substances supplied by her husband). All three now reside in the US.

Many accusations and moral outrage followed in the media, resulting in various bans and restrictions on Russian athletes. While violations by some athletes did in fact occur, and Russian authorities admitted to serious flaws in the work of RUSADA (headed at that time by Grigory Rodchenkov), statistical data from WADA itself show that Russian violations are not exceptional, while relevant reports provide little evidence to justify the level of hysteria and unprecedented discrimination against clean Russian athletes.

WADA’s 2016 report (curiously removed from WADA’s page) discloses the ten nationalities with the highest number of Anti-Doping Rule Violations[viii]:



In the current doping accusation at the Beijing Olympic Games, the timing of the news of the banned substance found in Valieva's Sample A test is suspicious. One recalls that the U.S.-supported coup of Ukraine took place during the Sochi Olympics of 2014. Is the Valieva event being used as a distraction from the U.S. / NATO's attempts to better control Ukraine? Clearly one goal is to attempt to discredit Russia—Russia cheats in sports, Russia wants to invade Ukraine, etc. This discrediting matters to the U.S. for reasons of attaining economic dominance in oil and natural gas, and specifically concerning the Nordstream II pipeline connecting Russia and Germany. The project was initiated, not by Russia, but by German and European investors. The U.S. aims to block Nordstream because it will bring Germany /Europe and Russia closer together. Thus if Russia is made to look villainous enough, as the logic goes, the Europeans will be too embarrassed to continue Nordstream and will buy US natural gas (the U.S. Department of Energy's "molecules of freedom") instead.

The manufactured uproar over Russia's athletes may ultimately serve as a distraction from the U.S.-NATO / Russia disputes over global security concerns and Russia's demands that the West guarantee no further enlargement of NATO to the east. Surely this crisis supports the concepts of a more limited government (rather than the bloat accompanying systems with hundreds of military bases abroad and zeal for interfering in the affairs of foreign countries), disbandment of NATO, lowering of taxes on the American people, and attending to their healthcare, educational, and infrastructure-related needs?

The available evidence suggests that the anti-doping "system" does not work, allowing for politicization of competition and persecution of innocent athletes. Possible conclusions arise:

- Why not eliminate anti-doping protocols altogether? The playing field will never be totally level, since human beings are different. Allow athletes to make their own choices about their bodies and the drugs they use or don't use.
- Why not disqualify an athlete from the Olympics for life upon a verified (samples A and B) first test of drug use? Apply the principle of zero tolerance, with no exceptions.
- Have the Olympic Games run their course, and should they be ended? Should a new international sports structure be established to replace the current, clearly biased Olympic Games? The beauty, fairness, and innocence of the Games has been irretrievably lost.

Arguably the two most Russophobic geographical areas of the world are the U.S. and Western Europe (including the UK).[ix] In this regard, it is perhaps not surprising that just at the peak of Valieva's brilliance at the Beijing Olympics, "Two days later the teen's life was turned into a nightmare after she was unmasked by the little known British media outlet *Inside the Games*.[x] It is no coincidence that historically these parts of the world have coveted, often violently, Russia's natural resources and boundless expanses. Wealthy economically, they have nevertheless become impoverished culturally. If Europe is, as Dostoevsky famously put it, a "precious cemetery," how can the U.S. be described? In its drive for supremacy in all areas and utilitarian worldview, the U.S. privileges function over form. The concept of beauty and inspiration gained from beautiful things has been forgotten and almost lost.

In architecture, for example, typical schools and public buildings can resemble state prisons.[xi] Russian writer Vladimir Soloukhin remarked on the necessity for beauty for the health of a culture and civilization in a Nobel Symposium lecture titled "Civilization and

Landscape,” presented in Göteborg, Sweden on September 12, 1978. According to Soloukhin, and supported in the essay by his thorough research on the topic, a lack of inspiration can deaden a civilization’s feelings for beauty and understanding of beautiful things in general. He argues convincingly that “people preoccupied with only economic or political considerations may lack one simple criterion: “How will it look? How will it look today and, moreover, how will it look tomorrow?”[xii] Highly-esteemed medievalist and culturologist Dmitry Likhachev similarly devoted a large body of his writings to articulating connections among beauty, spirituality, and the moral-ethical values of a country.

What happens to a nation that has lost its understanding of beauty? Soloukhin notes in the lecture, “A feeling for one’s native surroundings has always entered and still enters into a concept as important as love for one’s homeland, along with a feeling for the history of one’s own country and people.”[xiii] We can imagine how distraught Team Russia at the Beijing Olympics felt at not being able to see their country’s flag or hear the Russian national anthem. These are deeply-rooted and significant symbols underscoring their team’s connection to a particular country and particular culture.

While not intending to tarnish all the people of these two areas of the world, we reasonably suggest that leaders in sports and politics do not arise in a vacuum. They are perfect products of their cultural environments—and media brainwashing. If persecution of others and twisting of narratives is how these individuals and groups approach competition, what does this indicate about their countries of origin? Soloukhin reminds us, “Beauty lives in a person’s soul and engenders his or her physical need for it, akin to that for eating and drinking.”[xiv] Have these countries lost their soul, their feelings for beauty and innocence?

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Notes

[i] See Stephen Cohen’s discussion, which includes a reference to former DNI James Clapper’s statement:

https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2017/06/27/stephen_f_cohen_us_intel_services_running_an_operation_to_destroy_trump_since_2015.html#:~:text=What%20Clapper%20said%20about%20Russians%2C%20that%20they%20are,%5Babout%20almost%20any%20other%20group%5D%2C%20and%20nobody%20protested

[ii]

<https://sputniknews.com/20220222/world-reacts-to-russia-recognizing-the-independence-of-donbass-republics-1093252130.html>

[iii] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFuxhi45ZbM&t=45s>

[iv] Ibid.

[v] <https://sputniknews.com/20220219/wests-war-propaganda-skating-on-thin-ice-1093179468.html>

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] Ibid.

[viii] <https://www.oyetimes.com/views/columns/214946-doping-in-athletics-falsely-vilifying-russia>. Consortium News also made use of this pie chart on WADA's website in an article dated August 11, 2016, but for some inexplicable reason the pie chart is no longer available on the WADA site. See <https://consortiumnews.com/2016/08/11/a-rush-to-judgment-on-russian-doping/>

[ix] See Guy Mettan's *Creating Russophobia: From the Great Religious Schism to Anti-Putin Hysteria* (Clarity Press, 2017).

[x] <https://sputniknews.com/20220217/observers-teenage-skater-valieva-came-under-unprecedented-pressure-of-hostility-wild-speculations-1093123491.html>. See also <https://sputniknews.com/20220216/physicist-claims-against-valieva-russia-null-until-b-sample-test-conducted-in-skaters-presence-1093082967.html>

[xi] See James Howard Kunstler, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1ZeXnmDZMQ&t=920s>

[xii] Vladimir Soloukhin, *A Time to Gather Stones* [Vremia sobirat' kamni], trans. Valerie Z. Nollan (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 233.

[xiii] Ibid., 230.

[xiv] Ibid., 232.

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