

UPF Bratislava, Slovakia examines Vladimir Putin's relationship with the West

Barbara Grabner
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Bratislava, Slovakia - Two speakers at a UPF event examined Russian President Vladimir Putin's relationship with the West.

The event, titled "Putin's Soul: On the Spiritual Roots of the Putin-West Conflict," was held at the UPF Peace Embassy on October 3, 2022, attracting an audience of 37 people.



The first lecture was given by Barbara Grabner, a journalist and historian who studied Eastern European history at the University of Vienna. In her introduction she shed light on the Russian Orthodox Church's influence on Vladimir Putin and vice versa.

Putin's turning to Orthodoxy has improved his reputation among the Russian population immensely. He approved the construction of the massive Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces. Located outside Moscow and inaugurated in 2020, the cathedral is decorated with many monumental images of angels guarding the armed forces. To replace the communist system, Putin has reinstalled the three pillars of the tsarist regime - Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Patriotism.

Reflecting on the influence of Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great and Joseph Stalin on present-day Russia, Mrs. Grabner asked, "The ghosts of the past - are they still with us?"

She quoted a German diplomat who wrote in 1718, "Everything in this empire will end in terror,

because the sighs of so many millions of souls against the tsar are rising to heaven."

The second speaker was Austrian philosopher Herbert Giller, who outlined overlooked aspects of Putin's

relationship with the West. Referring to Mrs. Grabner's book *Cain's Children*, he drew a comparison with the quarrel between the biblical brothers Esau and Jacob.

Mr. Giller analyzed changes in Putin since 2001 when the Russian leader gave an impressive speech in the German Bundestag. "Putin is no longer the same," Mr. Giller said, quoting the famous Austrian criminal psychologist Dr. Reinhard Haller, whose book *Die Macht der Kränkung* ("The Power of the Insult") described the destructive effects of a deep grudge.



Mr. Giller translated Dr. Haller's insights into the mind of Esau, who developed an outright hatred toward his brother after losing the birthright to him.

Among other points, Mr. Giller cited Barack Obama's bad treatment of Vladimir Putin during a Group of Eight summit. The U.S. president dealt a deadly blow to Putin's self-esteem by stating that Russia is "a smaller country, it's a weaker country. Its economy doesn't produce anything that anybody wants to buy."

Mr. Giller pointed out that if Jacob had been boastful when encountering Esau, it might have ended fatally, with both brothers lying on the ground bleeding. He asked the audience how the conflict between Russia, Ukraine and the West should be solved. Naturally, the audience had many questions and suggestions which could not all be answered because of shortage of time.

Mr. Giller's talk was interpreted by UPF-Slovakia President Miloš Klas, who moderated the event.

Both lectures were well received. One guest, a former president of a Slovak university, said that the lecture was "excellent" and that his friends also enjoyed it.

