Live Not By Lies, But Turn Your Back on Reality

Accounts from individuals, many unknown to Americans, who gave their treasures and lives to defy totalitarianism fill Rod Dreher's latest book, *Live Not By Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents*. Their stories should inspire all of us in the age of fear and fraud we now inhabit.

But there's one problem—a huge problem—with Dreher's take on the battles now being waged in our public square.

The problem is not that Dreher tells readers that Americans are entering an age of soft totalitarianism, where social media and cancel culture restrict our freedoms. It's painfully true that Big Tech companies, corporations, and academia have forged an alliance with politicians and the mainstream media to push their "progressive" programs, many of which are antithetical to the Constitution and our free-enterprise system.

Nor can the problem be found in the fact that Dreher advises readers on how to oppose this coalition. In chapters like "Value Nothing More Than Truth," "Families Are Resistance Cells," and "Standing In Solidarity," he gives us encouragement and ways to fight against the powerful intrusions of government and corporations into our lives.

These ideas are supported with interviews from those who have lived under totalitarian governments, particularly those from Russia and Eastern Europe. Dreher has spoken with pastors and teachers, political dissidents and their grown children, thereby allowing them to offer readers practical advice on resisting tyrannical governments.

Dreher's references of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn are also praiseworthy, and he even takes the title of his bookfrom one

of the Russian's essays, "Live Not By Lies."He concludes by citing several paragraphs from that essay, including this grim reminder about the consequences of failing to oppose totalitarianism:

> *"But if we shrink away, then let us cease complaining that someone does not let us draw breath—we do it to ourselves! Let us then cower and hunker down, while our comrades bring us closer to the day when our thoughts can be read and our genes altered."*

No, these are not the problems with Dreher's book. Instead, the problem lies in his bitter opposition to former President Donald Trump and many of his supporters. This is easily discovered by a quick jaunt over to the website of *The American Conservative*, where Dreher is a senior editor, or by searchingon Google for "Rod Dreher Donald Trump."

In his Jan. 11 essay, for instance, Dreher refers to the Jan. 6 meleeat the Capitol as "an actual insurrection by a fanatical mob of Trump supporters." He states, "What I did not foresee is that Trump would normalize cult thinking on the Right." He apologizes to "Never Trumpers" for his doubts about their cause, calls for Trump's impeachment even after he leaves office, and adds "Congress should make it impossible for him ever again to run again for president." In the same essay, he points to a couple of nut-jobs who stormed the Capitol and uses them to smear Trump supporters. He also tells us he didn't vote for Trump, which likely means he either voted for Joe Biden or not at all.

We are now seeing the consequences of that election: a president and a Congress who are rapidly enacting the most radical agenda in the history of our nation.

In the last few weeks, Biden has signed nearly 50 executive orders, most of them aimed at destroying Trump's political and economic legacy. Among other things, Biden has crippled our

fossil fuel industry, reversed attempts to control illegal immigration, allowed American taxpayer money to fund abortions in developing countries, and swiftly moved to curtail various freedoms, all while operating behind barbed wire and several thousand federal troops in a largely deserted and shuttered Washington D.C.

Is this what Dreher prefers to Trump? When juxtaposed against the ideas of his book, his remarks in his Jan. 11 essay would be hilarious were the consequences not so dire. The troops, the barbed wire, and the torrent of orders pouring out from the Biden White House more closely resemble Dreher's descriptions of eastern European communist governments of days gone by than a free America.

And what about those Republicans whom Dreher would prefer in positions of power instead of the uncouth Trump? With a few exceptions, they have returned to their usual practices of caving to the Democrats, trying to play nice, and letting the American people take the punches.

The good news for Rod Dreher is that the radicalism and socialism now advocated by the administration and Congress, which he helped put into place, should increase the sales of *Live Not By Lies.*

For the rest of us, the bad news is already at hand.

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