

The Prophet of the New Russian Empire

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On June 5, 2007, the Ukrainian government declared Russian intellectual Aleksandr Dugin persona non grata and banned him from entering the country for a period of five years. This exceptional decision was motivated by a series of inflammatory remarks made by Dugin and his followers about Russia's various pro-Western neighbors, the Ukraine foremost among them. It was not long, however, before Kiev retracted its decision, fearing further deterioration in its relationship with the superpower to the east. Dugin, after all, is not merely a philosopher. He has influential friends in the Russian presidential cabinet and is associated with many leading politicians, as well as prominent academics and celebrities. And indeed, Ukrainian apprehension was justified by the events that followed: That very evening, Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykola Zhulynsky and his family, who had arrived in St. Petersburg to visit the graves of their relatives, were deported by the Russian government. This retaliation had no mitigating effects on Dugin's aggressive public campaign against the Ukraine. On October 12, activists from Dugin's International Eurasian Movement sawed through the country's national emblem—a statue of a trident

situated on Mount Hoverla—and announced that they had thus “castrated” the Ukraine of its sovereignty. Following this ostentatious act of vandalism, Dugin was again banned from entering the Ukraine. This did not, however, prove to be the end of the affair. Authorities in Moscow were quick to show their support for the provocative thinker, and promptly deported Ukrainian political analyst Sergei Taran. The Russian Foreign Ministry left no doubt about Moscow’s motivations when it announced that Taran’s expulsion was a direct response to the Ukrainian ban.¹

If nothing else, this seemingly bizarre series of incidents demonstrates the enormous influence Aleksandr Dugin has come to wield in his native Russia. A gifted and charismatic intellectual, Dugin is the author of sixteen books on philosophy and politics that profess an extremist worldview which combines authoritarian politics with an imperialist strategic agenda and a nostalgic longing for the glory days of the Soviet Union.² Inspired by philosophers closely associated with fascism and Nazism, Dugin is an outspoken critic of capitalism, liberal democracy, and the bourgeois social order, which he identifies with his archenemy, the United States. Despite his radicalism—or perhaps because of it—Dugin is a favorite of the Russian establishment, a sought-after figure in the media, and a popular and oft-quoted political analyst.

Dugin was not always such a prestigious public figure. Barely a decade ago, he was at best a marginal player in Russian politics. During Boris Yeltsin’s presidency in the 1990s, Dugin was a relatively unknown intellectual who spread his doctrines among small circles of followers. His attempt to enter Russian politics and bring his ideas to the public through the National Bolshevik Party (NBP) ended in an embarrassing electoral defeat. It was only in the late 1990s that Dugin finally began to shed his image as a professional gadfly and mingle with senior government officials, finally emerging onto the national stage in the early 2000s. Not coincidentally, Dugin’s meteoric ascent from anonymity to fame took place alongside Vladimir Putin’s rise to power as Russia’s new strongman. Indeed, there is an undeniable connection between Dugin’s politics and the regime change

led by Putin, a former KGB officer who has put an end to democratization in Russia and subjected it to a centralized authoritarian regime.

Dugin and his philosophy cannot, therefore, be dismissed as an insignificant episode in Russian intellectual history. On the contrary, they reflect the dominant trend in current Russian politics and culture, and their influence over the general public and decisionmakers in the Kremlin is only going to become stronger. If we wish to understand the *zeitgeist* that prevails in Russia today, it is essential for us to acquaint ourselves with this thinker, who expresses the innermost feelings of many of his fellow countrymen and their leadership. Dugin's intellectual and political biography is, in many ways, a window into a nation and culture that many Western observers still regard as, in Churchill's famous phrase, "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

The strange rise of Aleksandr Dugin to the heights of intellectual and political prominence is inextricably linked to the recent history of Russia and the dramatic changes it has undergone since the collapse of communism. Unfortunately, these developments were, at least until very recently, of little interest to the rest of the world. The invasion of Georgia in August 2008, however, has now proven that the Russian bear, eulogized a mere two decades ago, was at best hibernating. During Putin's term of office, Russia has become a strong and proud country once again. Its coffers swollen by high gas and oil prices, its population enjoying relative security and economic stability (admittedly threatened by the current global economic meltdown), its army winning encouraging—if not unexpected—victories in Chechnya and Georgia, Russia is swiftly regaining its power and influence in the international community as American hegemony erodes. In light of these achievements, the Russian public is willing to accept, if not agree to, Putin's anti-democratic politics and the widespread corruption within his administration.

Things were entirely different in Russia a decade ago. Between 1991 and 1999, the Russian Federation was faced with the difficult, and perhaps insurmountable, challenges posed by democratization, an attempted transition to a market economy, the war on terror and organized crime, and the question of its new place in a unipolar world. Boris Yeltsin's presidency was beset by political and economic crises: In 1991, prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, senior members of the Communist Party attempted a coup and failed; in 1993, Yeltsin, backed by the military, suppressed an uprising in the Russian parliament; in 1994, the First Chechen War broke out, lasting three years and taking a heavy toll on Russia; and in 1998, following a financial collapse in Asian markets, the ruble severely depreciated, the banking system crashed, and the government was forced to declare bankruptcy.

The economic liberalization led by Yeltsin's administration was plagued by corruption throughout, and benefited two groups in particular: criminals, who flourished after years of living underground, and the handful of entrepreneurs generally known as the "oligarchs." These men, some of whom had been *apparatchiks* during the Soviet era, successfully navigated the transition from politics to the business world. Their sharp political instincts, honed by years of negotiating the impenetrable Soviet bureaucracy, and close ties to government officials allowed them to take advantage of the sweeping privatization of Communist Party assets and become fabulously rich almost overnight.

Outside of these privileged circles, however, the vast majority of the Russian people suffered greatly. Instead of enjoying the fruits of reform, they were faced with hyperinflation, skyrocketing unemployment, loss of public property, and rising crime. Media outlets freed from the grip of government censorship bombarded the public with unfiltered and often distressing information. Moreover, the dissolution of the Soviet empire prompted a massive influx of Russian and non-Russian refugees from the newly independent republics, which the Federation was ill-prepared to absorb. On top of it all, indiscriminate Chechen terrorism made Russia's already angry streets all the more dangerous.

Thus, the euphoria that followed the collapse of communism was quickly overtaken by disappointment, insecurity, and despair. The talented author Victor Pelevin described these sentiments in his novel, *Homo Zapivens*, published in 1999. The hero of the story, Babylen Tatarsky, a typical member of the Soviet liberal intelligentsia, drifts through a Russia marked by decline and decadence:

It was a very strange world. Externally it had not changed too much, except perhaps that there were more paupers on the streets, but everything in his surroundings—the houses, the trees, the benches on the streets—had somehow suddenly grown old and decrepit. It wasn't possible to say that the essential nature of the world had changed either, because now it no longer had any essential nature. A frighteningly vague uncertainty dominated everything. Despite that, however, the streets were flooded with Mercedes and Toyotas carrying brawny types possessed of absolute confidence in themselves and in what was happening, and there was even, if one could believe the newspapers, some kind of foreign policy.³

The malaise Pelevin describes was caused, to a large extent, by Russia's sense that it had lost the national greatness it once knew. The Soviet Union was not a worker's paradise—in fact, it was quite the opposite—but it did give the Russian people a sense of order and stability. For many of its citizens, the USSR's global reach and power were a source of pride. The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the political, social, and economic crises that swept through Russia in its wake changed all that. Russians went from being the subjects of an awe-inspiring superpower to the citizens of a defeated country plagued by domestic problems and lacking any substantial international influence.

This humiliation was most keenly felt by the Russian military. The army, whose prestige had already been greatly diminished by the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, was almost in shambles: naval vessels were rotting in their docks, nuclear missiles were rusting on their launch pads,

and fighter jets were grounded. Nonexistent morale, a shrunken budget, and a series of failures in Chechnya threatened to make Russia's military a laughingstock to those who had once trembled at the mention of its name. The situation in the arms industry was even worse. Since the end of the Cold War, weapons sales had dropped worldwide, particularly in the Middle East. The factories that had once armed the Soviet superpower and its satellites were on the brink of bankruptcy.⁴ Things were no better among law enforcement officials in the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and the police force. They felt betrayed by the Soviet collapse, and many of them resigned because of their minuscule salaries. Widespread corruption among those who stayed further lowered their prestige in the eyes of the general public, which had never held them in high regard. Tough times came even to the formerly omnipotent intelligence service: Between 1990 and 1995, its name and mission changed at least five times; it suffered from a brain drain, shrinking resources, and the loss of its deterrent power. Only after the creation of the Federal Security Service (FSB) in 1995 and its success in the war against Chechen terrorism was the service's reputation somewhat restored, though it has never reclaimed the stature it enjoyed during the Cold War.

Russia of the 1990s was, in short, a mere shadow of the "Evil Empire" it once had been. Its traditional rival, the NATO alliance led by the United States, was acting unimpeded, without any apparent regard for Russian interests or any fear of Moscow's response. The military actions of America and her allies in Serbia and Iraq conveyed a profound disrespect for the Kremlin, which could do nothing but voice its opposition. This ongoing humiliation inspired a surge of nationalist rage, directed mainly toward the Ukraine and the Baltic states, which had unequivocally rejected their Soviet past and expressed their desire to be incorporated into the West. This was seen by the Russian public as an attempt to "jump ship"—an unforgivable act of betrayal by those who had once been their closest compatriots.

Overtaken by confusion, frustration, and nostalgia for its former glory, Russia was a breeding ground for xenophobia and nationalist discontent. Such impulses, which had long been repressed or recast into “acceptable” form by the old Soviet regime, began to emerge as a genuine political movement as an ever-increasing number of activists took up the war cry of their dishonored nation.⁵ The most brilliant and talented of them all was Aleksandr Dugin.

Dugin was born in Moscow in 1962. His parents separated when he was three years old. His father, Geliy Aleksandrovitch, was a military intelligence officer who eventually rose to the rank of general. His mother, Galina, had been in her youth a close friend of the famous human rights activist Valeriya Novodvorskaya, the most outspoken opponent of the current Russian regime.

Young Dugin was accepted to the prestigious Moscow Aviation Institute, but was dismissed in his third year—according to him, for voicing anti-establishment opinions. As a result, he lost his student’s exemption from military service, but managed to avoid the draft because of “emotional problems.” He worked as a street cleaner and a private tutor of English and French, which he had taught himself. In later years, he spoke of his growing revulsion at the bleak conditions of life in the Soviet Union at the time. “In the late 1970s, when I was seventeen or eighteen, I awoke into a repulsing and entirely vacuous world,” he said. “Through my existential rejection of that world, I came to reject the paradigm that served as the basis of that world and embarked on the search for alternatives to the paradigm.”⁶

Dugin rejected “the paradigm that served as the basis of that world” in the most radical manner possible. In place of communist ideology, he chose fascism; instead of historical materialism and socialist realism, he turned to mysticism, esoteric philosophies, and fringe culture. He turned his back on what he considered to be a dull and provincial Russian Orthodox Church, and took up exotic religions and pagan rituals.

In 1980, Dugin joined the Yuzhinsky circle, a group of bohemians and mystics involved in witchcraft and magic.⁷ The group, which convened in the apartment of subversive author Yuri Mamleev, chose to “fight” the Soviet regime’s cultural oppression by devoting themselves to drugs, alcohol, black magic rituals, and orgies. Here, Dugin met Yevgeny Golovin, a poet and translator who served as something of a spiritual guru. A self-declared expert on Eastern philosophy and esoteria, Golovin was later to establish an underground cult named the SS Black Order, which subjected its newcomers to humiliating initiation ceremonies and demanded participation in orgies directed by its leader. Golovin, who continues to surround himself with faithful acolytes, accompanies Dugin to this day and even lectures at the educational institution the latter established, the New University.

In 1988, on Golovin’s advice, Dugin joined the National Patriotic Front, also known as the *Pamyat* (“Memory”) Society, then led by Dmitri Vasilyev. The society, sponsored by the KGB, was dedicated to spreading nationalist and antisemitic ideas. Nearly all the radical right-wing movements in Russia today can trace their lineage, in one way or another, back to it. The charismatic Dugin, already well versed in fascist ideology, was at first welcomed and treated as an important ideological asset to the society, even serving on its central committee for several months. It was not long, however, before the rising star who espoused independent opinions aroused Vasilyev’s jealousy and was dismissed from the organization.

Over the following decade, Dugin invested a significant amount of time and effort in trying to gain the recognition of the general public. The ideological platform he put forward was based on a variety of sources, all of which shared a deep loathing for the “impure” trinity of modernity, rationalism, and democracy. One of these was the esoteric doctrine of “Traditionalism,” developed by the French philosopher René Guénon between the two world wars. Dugin, who has described himself as “100 percent Guénonist,” enthusiastically took up the ideas of Traditionalism, most notably its rejection of progress and modernity.⁸ Generally speaking,

Guénon and his followers saw human history as a narrative of decline, claiming that the relationship between God and man reached its climax at the moment of creation, which has been followed by an ever-widening gulf between the two.⁹ In the process, the divine order, reflected in the fundamental doctrines of the great religions, has been abandoned and forgotten in favor of false idols and illusory ideals. Guénon perceived this divine order as naturally hierarchical: Just as there is a clear and natural distinction between God, his angels, and all other creatures in the heavens, so too is there a natural inequality among all created beings in the physical world and among men in particular. Therefore, in a perfect society, organized according to divine principles, there will be a strict division between social classes. Guénon praised the traditional Hindu *varna* system of social hierarchy (the accepted term, “caste,” is incorrect in this context), according to which the intellectuals or priests (*Brahmins*) stand at the top of the social pyramid, followed by the warriors (*Kshatriyas*) and, at the bottom, the merchants (*Vaishya*), a parasitic element that tries, throughout history, to subvert the sacred order.

Guénon saw history as a series of struggles between this primordial, sacred tradition and its enemies. He interpreted every clash between secular and religious forces as simply another battle in an ongoing historical war, including the decrees of the Confucian government in China against the Taoists during the Qing dynasty (1644-1912); the Kshatriya revolution against the Brahmins in India during the ascent of Buddhism in the third century B.C.E.; and the ongoing power struggle between the Catholic kings and popes during the Middle Ages. Not surprisingly, Guénon believed that the modern era represented the victory of the inferior classes over their betters. The Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, materialism and capitalism, Russian communism, etc., were all milestones in the subjugation of the world by the forces of darkness. Modernism, especially the scientific revolution and the development of individuality, represented the birth pangs of what Hindu mythology calls the

Kali Yuga, the Age of Discord, when humanity completes its tragic abandonment of the natural order.

Guénon ultimately concluded that the secular West had decisively turned its back on God, and thus was doomed to fail. The primordial and blessed order was preserved only in the East. Believing that Christianity had proven its weakness by submitting to anti-traditional ideas, Guénon converted to Islam and renamed himself Sheikh Abd al-Wahid Yahya.¹⁰ He moved to Egypt in 1930, where he lived until his death in 1951.¹¹

Though he tries to give this worldview a more “Russian” character, Aleksandr Dugin sees himself as the quintessential Traditionalist.¹² In this vein, he has called for the restoration of Russia’s medieval social hierarchy, with an aristocratic ruling class under religious patronage. He differs with Guénon only in that he believes the French philosopher was too quick to give up on Christianity. Unlike Catholicism and Protestantism, Dugin claims, Eastern Orthodox Christianity preserved its esoteric character and its ties with divine tradition.

Another profound influence on Dugin was the Conservative Revolutionary school of thought, which originated in 1920s Weimar Germany. Some of its most notable representatives include Oswald Spengler, author of the two-volume bestseller *The Decline of the West* (1918); Carl Schmitt, the controversial jurist and political theoretician; the historian Arthur Moeller van den Bruck; and the author Ernst Jünger.¹³ In many ways, the conservative revolutionary movement tried to formulate a “third way,” distinct from traditional right- and left-wing politics. Like the radical left, the conservative revolutionaries strongly rejected capitalism and the bourgeois social order, which they saw as the cause of social division, immorality, and decadence. Although they rejected Marxism, they leaned toward economic socialism. They were generally in favor of a state-controlled economy, and they glorified the heroic and pioneering worker over the selfish and greedy businessman. This was the extent, however, of their kinship with the left. Unlike socialists and Marxists, the conservative

revolutionaries vehemently rejected modernism and its progressive ideals. Their views were not wholly reactionary, in that they did not advocate a return to the pre-modern order, but they did long for a more organic and primordial social existence; one in which the individual is entirely assimilated within a closely knit, unified community. In contrast to the universalist vision upheld by the left, the conservative revolutionaries favored particulars such as culture, nation, and race. They believed in an eternal struggle between these forces, rejecting the desire for a unified humanity and world peace.

Such thinking appealed to Dugin, who had always seen himself as a rightist with respect to his nationalist views, and a leftist with respect to his economic positions. The ideological platform he developed based on this synthesis, under the name of “National Bolshevism,” was also indebted to the Nazi movement (especially to the left-wing socialist faction of the party). While Dugin passionately rejects Hitler’s ideology of biological racism, he does not hide his admiration for the romantic death cult fostered by Nazism, which forsakes life in service of a higher cause. He sees radical Islam, which he also takes as a model, in a similar way:

We need a new party. A party of death. A party of the total vertical. God’s party, the Russian analogue to the Hezbollah, which would act according to wholly different rules and contemplate completely different pictures. For the system, death is truly the end. For a normal person, it is only a beginning.¹⁴

This radical cocktail of Traditionalism and revolutionary conservatism brought Dugin to the attention of the “European New Right,” which shares many of the same influences.¹⁵ He discovered, however, that his ideological allies in the West did not share his disgust for the Soviet regime. Their proclaimed enemy was not the USSR, but her archrival, the United States, the most vigorous and aggressive exponent of the decadent bourgeois civilization they hated. The spiritual father of the European New Right, Belgian politician Jean Thiriart, so loathed capitalism that he openly flirted with Maoism and Stalinism. He envisioned a “Euro-Soviet

Empire extending from Vladivostok to Dublin,” and praised the authoritarian and cooperative aspects of the Soviet Union, which he compared unfavorably to the corrupted “utopian utilitarianism” of Western market economies.¹⁶ The movement he established, Young Europe, collapsed in 1970, largely as a result of his dramatic ideological transformation, although his influence on the New Right remained, especially through his outspoken anti-Americanism. Alain de Benoist, the leading French theorist of the New Right today, echoes Thiriart’s sentiments when he says it is “better to wear the helmet of a Red Army soldier than to live on a diet of hamburgers in Brooklyn.”¹⁷ Like Thiriart, de Benoist also underwent an intellectual journey that ended in his wholesale rejection of Americanized culture, Western capitalism, and globalization. He spoke in favor of the reorganization of Europe as a single, unified entity divided into tiny, culturally distinct ethno-political communities. Moreover, he preached a return to the pagan roots of the continent and the establishment of a neo-feudal order along the lines of “Indo-European, Nordic, Celtic, Greek, and Roman” models.¹⁸

In light of his allies’ sympathy toward the Soviet regime, Dugin was forced to reexamine some of his convictions. Due to the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, however, his intellectual shift did not appear so drastic. Support for the defeated empire against the liberal status quo suddenly took on an invigorating, avant-garde character, and while Dugin continued to reject Marxism and Leninism, he began to speak up in favor of “Sovietism.”

Dugin sought to translate his new red-brown ideology into real power and influence in Russian politics, albeit with little initial success. In 1991, he supported the failed Communist coup that tried to remove Mikhail Gorbachev from power and return the Soviet Union to its former glory. In 1993, he made another misstep, supporting the Russian parliament’s failed attempt to dismiss president Boris Yeltsin. It was during this period, however, that Dugin built his journalistic career. He joined the editorial team of the radical nationalist newspaper *Den’* (“Today”), which later changed

its name to *Zavtra* (“Tomorrow”). He also founded a monthly periodical, *Elementy* (“Elements”), the almanac *Milyi Angel* (“Dear Angel”), and appeared on various radio shows. Between 1990 and 1991, Dugin established a research center and a publishing house named Arctogea (“Northern Land”), where he published his books and translated the writings of his favorite Western thinkers, including René Guénon, Julius Evola, and Carl Schmitt, into Russian.

Throughout the 1990s, Dugin stood at the forefront of radical opposition to the Russian government. In 1994, he created the National Bolshevik Party in cooperation with the controversial author Eduard Limonov.¹⁹ At the same time, he improved his relations with sympathizers outside of Russia. He met frequently with leaders of the European New Right, such as Thiriart, de Benoist, the Flemish nationalist Robert Steukers, and others. He even arranged their participation in a roundtable discussion in Moscow in 1992. That same year, he met with Christian Bouchet, head of the French headquarters of the occult society Ordo Templi Orientis (“Order of the Temple of the East”), whose past leaders include the infamous “magician” Aleister Crowley.²⁰

Dugin’s political hopes, however, were soon dashed. In 1995, he ran for a seat in parliament as a representative for St. Petersburg and received less than 1 percent of the vote. Besides the fleeting publicity it received for various minor acts of political hooliganism, such as throwing food in the faces of hated politicians, the National Bolshevik Party failed to gain public recognition. In 1996, Dugin and Limonov had a falling out. Two years later, Dugin and his handful of followers left the party altogether. His public career was at its nadir, but he did not give up. The future would soon prove this to have been a wise decision.

Dugin’s failures as a politician throughout the 1990s led him to reevaluate some of his choices. He came to realize that his oppositional stance had led him to an impasse. His associations with esoteric, anti-Christian traditions and the European New Right had gained him nothing

and left him devoid of any significant power or influence. As a result, when he distanced himself from the National Bolshevik Party, he also made an ideological readjustment. Although he did not abandon his radical ideas, he began to express views more acceptable to the establishment. In 1997, for example, this former friend of the Satanists suddenly reemerged as a devout Russian Orthodox Christian. In the same year, he published *The Foundations of Geopolitics: Russia's Geopolitical Future, Thinking Spatially* in which he presented the fundamental concepts of Eurasianism, which later became the cornerstone of his ideology and public activities.²¹

Dugin's concept of Eurasia, it must be noted, is not his original creation. It was first contrived by a group of Russian exiles in Europe in the 1920s. Its founding father was Prince Nikolai Trubetskoy, who abandoned Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution and settled in the Bulgarian capital Sofia, which had a large population of "White" Russian exiles. In his book *Europe and Mankind*, published in 1920, Trubetskoy described Russia as an indispensable part of Eurasia.²² He held that Russia was a distinct entity, not only ethnically, but also religiously, morally, and politically. It was founded on the combined legacy of the Mongolian Empire and the Byzantine religious tradition, which had been assimilated by the Slavic race. Europe, on the other hand, was the cradle of Roman-Germanic culture. This civilization, said Trubetskoy, had undergone a comprehensive process of secularization and had now adopted a post-Christian value system that placed individualism, egoism, competition, materialism, and technological advancement over all other values. A destructive hubris, marked by subservience to material rather than spiritual values, gave European civilization a coarse and aggressive streak that manifested itself in, among other things, its determination to impose its ways on the entire world. Trubetskoy saw the dissemination of Western culture in the name of supposedly "universal" ideals as a spiritual epidemic that threatened both Russia and humanity as a whole. The Romanov dynasty, he claimed, had collapsed because it was a "westernizing" regime, in thrall to European ways. The two revolutions of 1917, argued the prince, were eruptions of the true, primordial Russia: the

Eurasian “Muscovite Kingdom” which had risen up against the Europeanized “St. Petersburg Empire.”

Trubetskoy and other exiles established the first Eurasian Movement, which preached a unique political vision: Russia’s destiny, they believed, depended on the country’s restoration as a Eurasian nation.²³ In the post-Bolshevik future, a new ruling elite would arise, based on a series of ideocratic values such as the return to Russian Orthodox religion, pan-Eurasian nationalism, collective responsibility, asceticism, and strong discipline. The Russian nation would then reconstitute itself in accordance with a system of government uniquely adapted to Eurasia—a Demotic regime (unlike the cursed democratic system) in which semi-autonomous community councils would govern under the unquestionable authority of the ruling elite. The Eurasianists believed that this was the only way Russia could regain its soul and resist the aggressive colonialism of Roman-Germanic culture.

The movement Trubetskoy established began to die as early as the 1930s, and its fate was sealed in 1938 with the death of the exiled prince. The concept of Eurasia, however, survived. In the 1980s, it was revived by Russian historian Lev Nikolayevich Gumilev, the son of renowned poets Nikolay Gumilev and Anna Akhmatova.

Like many of the thinkers already mentioned, Gumilev believed that nations are living organisms made up of individuals who share a blood relationship, a collective history, and a single fate. These organisms—which ought to be called “ethnoses” rather than “nations”—are born, mature, reproduce, fight for their existence, grow old, and die. Gumilev estimated that the entire process takes, on average, about 1,200 years. Every ethnos, he thought, is endowed with “passionarity,” an inner energy or source of vitality whose levels rise and fall in accordance with the developmental stage of the collective organism. When the ethnos’ “passionarity” is at its height, it causes revolutions, carves out new ideas and ingenious new technologies, and chooses a path of conquest and imperial glory. When its “passionarity” is at a low, however, it becomes mired in atrophy, passivity, and decadence.

Under certain circumstances, according to Gumilev's theory, ethnoes can join together in order to create a larger and more powerful entity. This is how the Russian "super-ethnos" was created from a synthesis of Slavic, Mongol, Tatar, Finno-Ugric, and other smaller ethnic groups. The marriage between the nomads of the steppes and the forest dwellers, the pagan Turkic tribes and the orthodox Christians, gave rise to a new nation that was greater than the sum of its parts: a relatively young (only 500 years old) and vital Eurasian power with an ethnic and cultural uniqueness that set it apart from its eastern and southern neighbors.²⁴ This super-ethnos had nothing in common (it was not "complementary," in Gumilev's words) with the European super-ethnos, which was conceived almost a thousand years earlier. Europe, according to Gumilev, had come to the end of its life cycle, but it aspired and still aspires to absorb the Russian super-ethnos into itself. Gumilev believed that this would be devastating to the younger and more vital Russia, which must fight for its right to make its own mark on the world. Indeed, like Trubetskoy, Gumilev continuously warned against the destructive influence of the old and rotting West on the Russian culture he regarded as essentially of the East.

Gumilev also warned against the Jews. Indeed, his antisemitism was overt and unmistakable. The Jewish people, he claimed, is an ancient ethnos that lost its homeland and has since been surviving as a parasite, feeding off its host nations. As a result, the Jews are not "complementary" with other ethnoes, and are also incompatible with their ecological surroundings, because they live without a land. In a similar fashion, Gumilev attacked America, which he believed was infected with Jewishness, thus rendering it a parasitic power that sustained itself only by looting the resources of other ethnoes.²⁵

In the eyes of his academic peers, Gumilev's ideas were embarrassing, and they were largely silenced. For the most part, scholars dismissed his theories as baseless speculations—an amalgam of exaggerated observations based on insufficient and occasionally imaginary data.²⁶ In 1988, however, Gumilev's reputation underwent an unexpected reversal. The death throes

of the communist bloc were accompanied by a renaissance in pseudo-scientific nationalist theories. The views of the controversial historian suddenly became popular.

Gumilev did not live long enough to enjoy his newfound fame. He died in 1992, and was quickly replaced by his intellectual successor: Aleksandr Dugin. Combining Gumilev's ideas with various other geopolitical theories, Dugin describes Russia as a rising Eurasian power that originated in a fusion of the Turkic and Slavic cultures.²⁷ Russian identity, he argues, stems from a combination of Northern-Nordic and Eastern elements, a marriage between the authoritarian characteristics of the "white men" and the esoteric heritage of the "yellow men." His positive view of this merger, however, sets him apart from other Russian nationalists, who tend to be extremely xenophobic. While Dugin often uses the terminology of race theory and the rhetoric of *blut und boden* ("blood and soil"), he nevertheless shuns biological interpretations of these terms and explicitly rejects antisemitism.²⁸ As he explains it, the identities of which he speaks are essentially cultural, and the nationalism he advocates—if one can even call it nationalism—is not rooted in blind loyalty to any one ethnic group, but to a state that is made up of a variety of such groups.

Dugin also differs from Gumilev in his choice of enemies. In his view, it is not Europe but "Atlantica," the Anglo-Saxon alliance led by the United States, which opposes Russia and seeks its demise. He believes that this confrontation is rooted in a natural rivalry between the two powers: Eurasian Russia is a land-based society (*tellurocratic* in Dugin's terminology), as opposed to Anglo-Saxon Atlantica, which is a sea-based empire (*thalassocratic*).²⁹ Dugin, following in the footsteps of other geopolitical theorists, claims that the ongoing struggle between continental and maritime civilizations is the driving force, the engine, of world history.³⁰ According to Dugin, land-based empires are inclined to respect cultural differences and variety, whereas sea-based powers aspire to control their surroundings through imposing political, economic, and cultural homogeneity upon them. Atlanticism, Dugin asserts, seeks to subject the entire world to the

American model, which it believes to be the greatest achievement of mankind. Dugin, however, sees it as all that is loathsome and contemptible:

There exists today a strong and grave force that stands in our way. It has dismembered our homeland and has overcast the continent with the cobwebs of its dark presence; this is the civilization of the far West at the other end of the ocean—the United States. In that country everything stands on its head—the mirror laws rule there: the weak and the sick are privileged, the distorted and the perverted are at the center of public attention. There, one is allowed to be weak, sickly, contemptible, and cowardly, and power, will, and reason are forbidden. Everything there can be exchanged for money... lies and deceit rule there, fake fast food... everything which originates in America is dipped in poison. Everything that is said there is lies and disease.... This will be the first step in the great war between the continents—Eurasia against America. Our alliance has an absolute enemy: the United States of America. This is the beginning and end of our hatred.³¹

In order to block Atlantica's cancerous influence from spreading, claims Dugin, Russia must reassert its dominance and power. Accordingly, his vision of Russia's rightful place on the Eurasian continent is unmistakably imperialist. Not only does he seek to rebuild the old Soviet empire, he also advocates the annexation of areas that never belonged to it in the past, including the Balkans, Tibet, and Mongolia. Moreover, he advocates a network of strategic alliances with powerful neighbors. Unlike his predecessors in the Eurasian movement, he sees continental Europe as a potential ally—especially Germany, the object of his genuine admiration. Looking east, he identifies Japan as a bulwark against the growing power of China, which he views as Russia's chief rival for dominance of Eurasia. To the south, Dugin looks mainly to Iran. He has high praise for the Shi'ia theocracy, which has bravely resisted the Americans, and supports its plans to obtain nuclear weapons.³² He even identifies Israel as a potential member of the Eurasian coalition—alongside the Arab countries—provided it severs its ties with its American patron.³³

Unquestionably, the ultimate purpose of Dugin's proposed annexations and alliances is war. He portrays America as an "absolute enemy," a contagious disease. For Dugin, the "clash of civilizations" is not merely a cultural and spiritual confrontation but a Manichaean war between the forces of light and the forces of darkness; a struggle which will also be waged on the battlefield. If Russia is to fulfill its divine mission, it cannot avoid this conflict. On the contrary, it must embrace it. The rising Eurasian juggernaut must decisively defeat the emaciated Atlantic giant, and demand for itself its rightful place at the top of the new order:

The Russian bear has undone its shackles, it has ripped off its strait-jacket, it has crawled out of its den into the open air, and now, just like a wandering beast, it will move throughout the Eurasian continent. And nobody will stop it now. Not the fifth column, not the agents of influence, not the experts, not the European value system, and not the protectors of human rights. Nothing can stop it now but its willpower. The Russians have arisen, everybody understands this... Once, we could have reached Paris this way. We could cross over half of Europe, looking over it peacefully, as a territory belonging to us. We may do this once again. I understand that this is an uncomfortable subject. But, on the other hand, what else can be done in the face of the escalating hostilities between the two superpowers?³⁴

The publication of *The Foundations of Geopolitics* in 1997 was received with great interest, and brought Dugin to the attention of powerful figures in the Russian government. He wisely befriended the oligarch Aleksandr Taranzev, who recommended him to the military general staff. His anti-American doctrine, calling for the restoration of Russian imperialism, naturally appealed to the frustrated generals, who had despaired of Yeltsin and his sycophancy toward the West. Dugin's book was incorporated into the curriculum of the Russian military academy and became required reading for the next generation of officers. One year later, Dugin was appointed senior political adviser to Gennadiy Seleznyov, a former member

of the Communist Party and chairman of the Russian parliament, who headed the Center for Geopolitical Analysis, a think tank dedicated to policy recommendations on internal security matters. By the time Seleznyov's power began to wane in early 2001, Dugin had already gained a reputation he could only have dreamt of a few years earlier.

The radical intellectual's stature reached new heights with the appointment of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency. Slowly but surely, Dugin succeeded in ingratiating himself with the new president's inner circle. He forged strong ties with a hawkish, security-oriented clique of insiders, mostly composed of ex-members of the military and the security services. First and foremost among them was Igor Sechin, a former KGB official who has served as Putin's closest adviser for the past fifteen years and is now deputy prime minister. Other members of this powerful faction include Security Council secretary and former head of the FSB Nikolai Patrushev; former deputy prime minister and Security Council member Sergei Ivanov; and Boris Gryzlov, the speaker of the lower house of parliament and chairman of Putin's ruling United Russia party.

Encouraged by the Putinists, Dugin took the next step in his flourishing public career. In April 2001, he created the Evraziia ("Eurasia") Movement. A year later, it became a political party, and in November it became the International Eurasian Movement.³⁵ Unlike other groups Dugin had been involved with, this was anything but a marginal organization. High-level officials were members of its steering committee, such as Aleksandr Sokolov, Russia's former minister of culture and communication; Aleksandr Torchin, deputy speaker of the upper house of the Russian parliament; Aslambek Aslakhonov, former candidate for the Chechen presidency, Putin's adviser on the Caucasus region, and now a member of the Duma; Talgat Tajuddin, the Russian mufti; Igor Panarin, dean of the foreign affairs department at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Lieutenant General Nikolai Klokov, head of the strategy department at the Russian General Staff Academy; and Mikhail Leontyev, a popular reporter who is reputed to be Putin's favorite journalist.

In order to gain acceptance into the prime minister's inner circle, Dugin has ceased to advocate the decentralization of political power, a position he held during his days with the New Right. Instead, he has turned to glorifying the idea of the great leader. During the founding session of his movement, Dugin announced that the Putin regime embodied the triumph of the Eurasian spirit: "We support the president in a total and radical manner," he said. "Therefore we are a total and radical center."³⁶ Toward the end of Putin's second term, when the question of his successor became a topic of public discussion, Dugin announced: "Putin is in everything, Putin is everything, Putin is absolute, Putin is irreplaceable."³⁷ It seems that the once-oppositional thinker has no problem glorifying the prime minister in terms taken directly from the vocabulary of totalitarianism. An unmistakably fascist tone is also present in Dugin's manifesto of the Eurasian Youth Movement:

Your purpose: to become a master; you must be handsome, proud, wise, and brave... you are more than just a man. You must become more than a man.... Our purpose—absolute rule; we are a brotherhood of masters, Eurasia's new commanders... discipline is the foundation of the Eurasian Youth Movement. This is the path to government and rule.... Without discipline, man is nothing, filth. When you learn how to obey, you will know how to command.³⁸

Dugin's infatuation with Putin has tempered somewhat in recent years. Occasionally, he has gone so far as to publicly criticize the prime minister, mainly for surrounding himself with pro-Western advisers and for not following a sufficiently tough policy against the United States and its Eurasian allies, such as the Ukraine, the Baltic states, and Georgia.³⁹ The recent crisis in the Caucasus, however, seems to have revived the philosopher's faith in the Russian leader. As expected, Dugin's stance on the Georgia crisis was extremely militant from the outset. In an August 8, 2008 interview with the Echo Moskyv radio station, he claimed that Georgia was committing genocide in the separatist region of South Ossetia and that it was

incumbent on Russia to respond with military force.⁴⁰ At a protest two days later outside the Ministry of Defense, activists and leaders of the Eurasian Movement shouted slogans like “Tanks to Tbilisi!” and “Glory to Russia! Glory to the empire!”⁴¹ On August 18, by which time it was clear that the Georgians had been defeated, Dugin demanded the establishment of military rule in Georgia. Since the cessation of hostilities, he has repeatedly called for Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili’s head, in order to try him in an international court for crimes against humanity.⁴² Dugin’s support for the Russian leadership has grown only stronger as its policies have become more aggressive: In a September 4, 2008 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, he explained that “Putin and Medvedev have passed the irreversible point. They have shown that the will and the decision to put the words into practice are in fact irreversible. So my support to Putin and Medvedev is now absolute.” For the benefit of anyone who may have forgotten what the future holds for Russia, Dugin made sure to remind them: “It is very far from the end. It is only the beginning of a real, and maybe very serious, and very dangerous for all of the sides, confrontation between us and Americans.”⁴³

Aleksandr Dugin, who was recently appointed head of the Center for Conservative Studies at Moscow State University, is not the Russian regime’s official ideologue.⁴⁴ His positions are too complex, his style too abrasive, and his character too rebellious and independent. His influence is nonetheless immense. The worldview he advocates has become part of mainstream thinking, both in the Russian political establishment and among the general public. Dugin himself is not shy about his accomplishments:

My thought prevails; my discourse reigns. Yes, the government does not disclose its sources.... Yes, there are whole circles that stand between me and the government... that add to the concentrated idea of Eurasian geopolitics, conservative Traditionalism, and the other ideologies I am

developing... and create a watered-down version. But in the end, this version reaches the government, which incorporates it as if it were something obvious. Therefore, in my opinion, Putin is becoming more and more like Dugin, or at least implementing the program I have been building my entire life.⁴⁵

This is not idle boasting. Today's Russia is indeed moving closer and closer to Dugin's vision. The current regime's authoritarian disposition, centralized economy, and increasingly imperialist foreign policy can only reinforce the radical thinker's hopes that his homeland is marching steadily toward the realization of its historic destiny.

Dugin can also be satisfied with the successful reversal of democratization in Russia, which so frustrated him during the 1990s. Under Putin's domestic policies, Russia has shed most of the characteristics of a "free society." Since 2005, the NGO Freedom House, which annually publishes rankings of states according to their level of democracy and freedom, has labeled the Russian Federation "not free," and ranked it below Yemen, Djibouti, and Uganda. It has done so for obvious reasons; Putin and his deputies do not hesitate to take extreme measures against any active domestic opposition.⁴⁶ This has included everything from obstructing rival political parties to hounding politicians and activists who have angered the Kremlin or never particularly endeared themselves to it.⁴⁷ Due to these tactics and the enormous popularity he enjoys, Putin has no real parliamentary opposition. Gennady Zyuganov's Communist party and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia together account for a mere 20 percent of the Duma, and are not viewed by anyone as a tangible threat to the powers that be.

The regime retains the full support of the judicial branch as well. The popular expression "Basmany justice"—named after the Basmany District in Moscow—refers to the court's overt bias toward the prosecutor general's office, which receives its orders from above.⁴⁸ The judiciary's deference to the government is widely recognized, but very few have the courage to speak about it in public. One of them is Yelena Valyavina, a senior judge in

the Federal Arbitration Court, who stated publicly that she was pressured by the Kremlin during a court testimony she gave in June 2008 and told outright that she would lose her job if she acted against state interests.⁴⁹ Other judges are less eager to show such public courage, and prefer to act as an executive arm of Putin's inner circle.

The Russian media has also seen better days. After years of intoxicating liberty, it has been reincorporated into the state. International organizations of journalists have publicly declared that Russia is one of the countries with the least freedom of the press in the world.⁵⁰ Indeed, the Russian government is unscrupulous in its efforts to tighten its grip on the media. It has taken control of major television stations, closed opposition newspapers by applying economic and judicial pressure, and arrested "recalcitrant" journalists on fabricated charges. This, however, is not the worst of it. During Putin's term in office 133 journalists have been murdered in highly suspicious circumstances. The most famous of them were Pavel Klebnikov and the human rights activist Anna Politkovskaya.

Having taken control of the print and broadcast media, Putin and his supporters have turned to a new and larger target: the Internet. In early 2008, Duma member Konstantin Rykov of Putin's United Russia party called for the creation of a sovereign Russian internet network in order to properly educate the country's youth in a patriotic spirit.⁵¹ And indeed, the new minister of communications, Igor Schegolev, declared last October that the creation of a Russian internet "that is protected from destructive external influences" was already underway.⁵²

Along with the de-democratization of Russia, Putin's economic policies have also largely echoed Dugin's vision. Russia's economy is centralized again: All of its important sectors—the arms industry, energy producers, and the corporations exploiting natural resources—are in the hands of government officials or their trusted associates. The oligarchs who have come out against Putin, such as Mikhail Khodorkovsky, former owner of the energy giant Yukos, have been crushed.⁵³ Dugin himself has justified such actions through his claim that the traditional social hierarchy always subjects the

merchants to the rule of the warrior class.⁵⁴ For its part, the Russian public has not objected to the new economic order. The rise in oil and natural gas prices and the end of the Chechen wars have granted Russia a measure of prosperity and stability it lacked in the past.

But the cause of Dugin's renewed patriotic and spiritual confidence is mainly the foreign and security policies enacted by the current Russian regime. Since Putin replaced Yeltsin as president, Moscow has abandoned the desire to integrate with the West, and adopted an unambiguously hawkish position. Between 2000 and 2007, Russia's security budget has grown more than fourfold.⁵⁵ Plans are now in place for a comprehensive modernization of the military at a total cost of five trillion rubles, which will include the acquisition of intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear submarines, and aircraft carriers.⁵⁶ All the while, Russia is doing its best to intimidate its pro-Western neighbors, and has proven the seriousness of its intentions by invading Georgia. Its declarations concerning the Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic states are even more aggressive than its old Cold War rhetoric. Kremlin spokesmen do not hesitate to raise the possibility of nuclear war in order to alert the arrogant West that Judgment Day, which appeared to have been delayed with the fall of the communist bloc, may still be right around the corner. Russia's decisions to renounce the CFE treaty, which limits the deployment of armed forces in the area between the Atlantic Ocean and the Urals, and to reinstitute long-range strategic bomber flights around the world, give the belligerent statements of its leaders a disturbing gravity.⁵⁷

It seems, in short, that Russia under Putinism has enthusiastically embraced the Eurasian vision. Putin himself publicly announced as much in an article he published toward the end of 2000, entitled "Russia Has Always Identified Itself as a Eurasian Country."⁵⁸ Putin also mentioned Gumilev in a speech he gave at a university in Kazakhstan that year:

Many consider Lev Nikolayevich Gumilev to be the "greatest Eurasianist of our era." He was a historian, ethnographer, poet, and a man of truly

encyclopedic knowledge. Lev Nikolayevich judged everything according to history's supreme measure... the instructive weight which his Eurasian ideas bear is particularly important today.⁵⁹

Eurasian ideas—developed by Gumilev and his disciple Dugin—are essential to any understanding of Moscow's intentions in the international arena. Russia's hostility toward the United States, its efforts to increase its influence in Europe (and particularly in Germany), its ties with Iran, and its attempts to regain its standing in the Middle East all demonstrate a determined effort by policymakers in the Kremlin to create an anti-American alliance—or an anti-Atlantic alliance, as Dugin would put it—in which Russia will play the leading role.⁶⁰

The Russian collective memory is also being fundamentally revised in line with the Eurasian vision. After years of rejecting its Soviet past, Russia is now overwhelmed with nostalgia for communist imperialism. This is clearly evident in Putin's public statements. In April 2005, he stated in his annual address to the Russian nation, "the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century."⁶¹ The course of action implied in Putin's words has already achieved concrete expression in the realm of education. New Russian history and social science textbooks teach an old-new historical narrative in which Stalin was a glorious leader; the wide-scale purges he conducted in the 1930s were necessary for "invigorating the ranks"; hardliner Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary from 1964 to 1982, ensured the Soviet Union's stability and prosperity, which was the "model of an ideal society in the eyes of millions around the world"; Gorbachev and Yeltsin brought destruction to the once-mighty superpower; and Putin, not surprisingly, is responsible for every advancement in Russian society since 2000.⁶²

Aleksandr Dugin has every reason to feel profoundly satisfied. Before his very eyes, the ideology which he developed under the names "Traditionalism," "National Bolshevism," and "Eurasianism" is becoming the official line of the Russian government. He is quite justified in proclaiming, "Putin

is becoming more and more like Dugin.” This once-obscure intellectual is now the chief philosopher of the “radical center.” And while the glorious Russian nation is marching to his tune, we would be wise to recall the words of Isaiah Berlin—a thinker who was Dugin’s opposite in almost every way—who warned us that ideas “nurtured in the stillness of a professor’s study” could destroy a civilization.⁶³

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Notes

1. These statements were made at a press conference held by Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin on February 5, 2008, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sp/17568BA16D3AB9CCC32573E600594626.

2. Many of Dugin’s books are published by his own publishing house, Arctogea, such as *Absolute Motherland: Ways of the Absolute* (Moscow: Arctogea, 1999) [Russian]; *The Knight Templars of the Proletariat: National Bolshevism and the Initiation* (Moscow, 1997) [Russian]; *The Conservative Revolution* (Moscow, 1994) [Russian]. Other works by Dugin include *Pop Culture and the Era’s Characteristics* (Moscow: Amphora, 2005) [Russian]; *Conspirology: The Science of Conspiracies, Secret Societies, and Occult War* (Moscow: Evraziia, 2005) [Russian]; *Geopolitics of Post-Modernity* (St. Petersburg: Amphora, 2007) [Russian]; *The Social Sciences for the Citizens of the New Russia* (Moscow: Amphora, 2007) [Russian].

3. Victor Pelevin, *Homo Zapiens*, trans. Andrew Bromfield (New York: Penguin, 2002), p. 6. The original title is *Generation ‘π’*.

4. For information about the Russian military budget, see www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/mo-budget.htm.

5. There are numerous nationalist movements in post-Soviet Russia, mainly due to endless schisms within their own ranks. The most radical nationalist party is, of course, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia. Notable extra-parliamentary movements that have adopted a nationalist ideology include the National Bolshevik Party of Eduard Limonov (for which Dugin served as deputy); Aleksandr (Potkin) Belov's Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI); and Aleksander Barkashov's Russian National Unity.

6. From an interview Dugin gave to the conservative website pravaya.ru, February 22, 2006, www.pravaya.ru/ludi/451/6742.

7. Yuzhinsky is the pre-revolutionary name of Bolshoi Palashevsky Lane, located in Northwest Moscow.

8. Aleksandr Dugin, "René Guénon: Traditionalism as a Language," in *Philosophy of Traditionalism: Lectures of the New University* (Moscow: Arctogea, 2002) [Russian].

9. Guénon (1886-1951) was fascinated with the esoteric tradition known as hermeticism, which emerged toward the end of the classical era and has been a subject of interest in mystical circles ever since the Renaissance. Hermeticism is based on a collection of metaphysical writings attributed to the mythological Greek deity Hermes Trismegistus ("Hermes the Thrice-Great"), also identified with the Egyptian god of wisdom, Thoth. One of the fundamental principles of this tradition, which Guénon incorporated into his own thinking, is the belief that the cosmos is ruled by a hierarchy of gods, angels, elements, demons, etc. Nevertheless, this plurality, like the world as a whole, is nothing but aspects of the one divine principle—the Nous. In this manner, hermeticism integrated pagan polytheism and mystical pantheism.

10. Guénon's opinion of the Jews is worthy of a separate discussion. As a rule, he displayed an attitude typical of classic antisemitism: He saw the Jews in the diaspora as representatives of a "perverse nomadism," and claimed that the Antichrist would eventually emerge from the tribe of Dan. Nonetheless, he reserved a prominent place in his thought for Kabbala and Orthodox Judaism. Guénon blamed the Jews' corruption on their exile and secularization, which made them—or at least the most famous among them, such as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Albert Einstein—into "agents of darkness."

11. For a biography of Guénon, see Robin Waterfield, *René Guénon and the Future of the West: The Life and Writings of a 20th-Century Metaphysician* (Wellingborough: Crucible, 1987).

12. Another figure from the Traditionalist school of thought who deeply influenced Dugin was the Italian philosopher and author Julius Evola (1898-1974). Dugin's attraction to fascism, militarism, and the ethos of heroic self-sacrifice can

be traced back to Evola, who was a close associate of Mussolini and openly admired Nazism, especially the SS.

13. For an account of the achievements and heritage of the conservative revolutionaries, see, for example, David Ohana, *The Order of the Nihilists: The Birth of Political Culture in Europe, 1870-1930* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1993) [Hebrew]; Roger Woods, *The Conservative Revolution in the Weimar Republic* (London: Macmillan, 1996); Martin Travers, *Critics of Modernity: The Literature of the Conservative Revolution in Germany, 1890-1933* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

14. Dugin, *Knight Templars of the Proletariat*, p. 128. Translation from Marlene Laruelle, "Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right?" *Occasional Papers Series 294* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Kennan Institute, 2006), p. 10, www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/OP294.pdf.

15. In this context, see the following essays from a special issue of the American journal *Telos* (126, Winter 2003) dedicated to the doctrines of the European New Right: Antonio Tonini, "The European New Right: From Nation to Empire and Federalism," pp. 101-112; Frank Adler, "On the French Right—New and Old: An Interview with Alain de Benoist," pp. 113-131; Alain de Benoist, "Schmitt in France," pp. 133-152.

16. For biographical details on Jean Thiriart and a detailed interview with him, see <http://home.alphalink.com.au/~radnat/thiriart/index.html>.

17. Robert Cottrell, "Paris Shrugs Off Mickey Mouse's Cultural Imperialism," *The Independent*, February 12, 1991.

18. "France's New Right in Search of Old European Roots," *The Economist*, September 1, 1979, p. 33.

19. Limonov, born in 1943, was exiled from the Soviet Union in the 1970s. He spent a few years in New York and then Paris before returning to his homeland in 1991 and embarking on a political career as a radical nationalist. He had already begun to express his abhorrence of the liberal and bourgeois order during his time in the West, where he fraternized with fringe characters on the punk scene.

20. Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) is among the most colorful and well-known figures in the modern history of mysticism and witchcraft. During his rich and eccentric career he was involved in both black and white magic, fertility rites, different practices aimed at achieving a "heightened consciousness," and unrelenting self-promotion, famously referring to himself as "the wickedest man in the world." He became the head of the Ordo Templi Orientis in 1925, and reorganized it according to his mystical doctrine of Thelema, whose golden rule was: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."

21. Aleksandr Dugin, *The Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia, Thinking Spatially* (Moscow: Arctogea, 1997) [Russian].

22. Nikolai Trubetzkoy, "Europe and Mankind," in Nikolai Trubetzkoy, *The Legacy of Ghengis Khan" and Other Essays on Russia's Identity* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic, 1991), pp. 1-64.

23. Other prominent members of the Eurasian movement include the geographer and economist Pyotr Savitsky, jurist Nikolai Alekseev, historian George Vernadsky, and philosopher Lev Karsavin. Many of the books by them and other Eurasian thinkers have been published by the Muscovite publishing house Agraf as part of a series on "New History" launched by Dugin. See Pyotr Savitsky, *The Eurasian Continent*, ed. Aleksandr Dugin (Moscow: Agraf, 1997) [Russian]; Nikolai Alekseev, *The Russian People and the State* (Moscow: Agraf, 1998) [Russian]; Alekseev, *Treatises on the General Theory of the State: Assumptions and Hypotheses of Political Science* (Moscow: Zertsalo, 2008) [Russian]; Georgii Vernadsky, *Russian Historiography* (Moscow: Agraf, 1998) [Russian], published in English as George Vernadsky, *Russian Historiography: A History*, ed. Nickolas Pushkarev (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1978); Lev Karsavin, *Saligia: Noctes Petropolitana* (Moscow: ACT, 2004).

24. A key date in this context is 1480. It signifies the decline in power of the Golden Horde and the rise of the Moscow principality of Ivan III, the grandfather of Czar Ivan IV ("Ivan the Terrible").

25. Gumilev's most important books are *History of the Hunnu Nation* (Moscow: ACT, 2004) [Russian]; and *Discovering the Khazar Kingdom* (Moscow: ACT, 2008) [Russian]. Two of his major works have been translated into English: *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom: The Legend of the Kingdom of Prester John*, trans. R.E.F. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988); and *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere* (Moscow: Progress, 1990).

26. See, for example, Alexander Yanov, "Gumilev's Philosophy," *Svobodnaya Mysl* 17 (1992), pp. 104-116; Boris Rybakov, "Triumphing Self-Deception," *Voprosi Istorii* 3 (1971), pp. 153-159; Yakov Lur'ye, "Ancient Russia in Lev Gumilev's Writings," *Zvezda* 10 (1994), pp. 167-177; Lev Klyan, "The Dismal Thoughts of a Petty Critic of Lev Gumilev's Philosophy," *Neva* 4 (1992), pp. 228-246.

27. The term "geopolitics" was coined by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén (1864-1922) at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a discipline, whose validity is contested, geopolitics is associated with German intellectuals Friedrich Ratzel, Erich Obst, and Karl Haushofer, as well as British thinkers Halford Mackinder and James Fairgrieve. It is founded on the claim that geographical location, along with related factors, is an important—perhaps even decisive— influence on the development of the identity and policies of a political entity. Karl Haushofer (1869-1946), whose thought greatly influenced Dugin, believed that nations are essentially organic entities that compete for territorial control.

Haushofer, who was also Rudolph Hess's teacher, coined the term *lebensraum* ("living space"), which became a key concept in Nazi imperialist ideology.

28. Dugin's attitude toward the Jews is complex and rife with internal contradictions. In a certain sense, he is a radical Zionist. He condemns the Jews of the diaspora, who have chosen to live an uprooted existence and tried to assimilate into their surroundings, and praises the Zionists who chose to return to their historic homeland. The former group, he claims, became alienated from nature, while the latter reestablished its ties with the land and is therefore worthy of being considered truly Eurasian. However, Dugin criticizes the closed ethnocentric nature of Jewish identity, with its reliance on biological categories, and draws a parallel between Zionism and Nazism. He also presents Judaism as the ultimate "other" of Aryan culture, which he identifies with Christianity, paganism, and Shi'ia Islam. Marlene Laruelle, who has studied Dugin's thought in detail, claims that his positions reveal a hidden antisemitism. See Laruelle, "Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right?"

29. *Tellurocracy*, meaning rule of land, originates in the pairing of *tellus* (the Latin word for land) and *cratia* (the Greek word for rule). *Thalassocracy*, meaning maritime rule, originates in the Greek word for sea, *thalassa*.

30. Dugin is particularly influenced by Halford Mackinder, Karl Haushofer, and Carl Schmitt. Mackinder (1861-1947) is particularly important, because as early as 1904 he proposed a distinction between the continental "island world" encompassing Eurasia and Africa, and the oceanic "periphery" encompassing the two Americas, the British Isles, and Oceania. Mackinder believed that a grand land-based empire could one day rise in the "heartland," and easily subdue its oceanic rivals. Though Mackinder was not a Nazi, German geopolitical theoreticians such as Haushofer and Schmitt adopted several of his ideas in service of Hitlerian ideology. See Halford John Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *The Geographical Journal* 170:4 (December 2004), pp. 298-321.

31. Aleksandr Dugin, "Being Eurasian: The Global Aspect," posted on the Eurasian Youth Alliance Web site, www.rossia3.ru/katehizis.html [Russian].

32. The impact of the Afghanistan War and Chechen terrorism on Russia has led Dugin to draw a distinction between Shi'ia Islam, which he views positively, and Sunni fundamentalism, which he denounces and links to the Atlantic civilization. His view is reinforced by United States support and funding for anti-Soviet radical Islamic movements during the Cold War. See Laruelle, "Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version," p. 8.

33. See Dmitry Shlapentokh, "Aleksandr Dugin's Views on the Middle East," *Space and Polity* 12:2 (August 2008), pp. 251-268.

34. Excerpts from an exclusive interview with the Russian portal www.km.ru, September 3, 2008, www.km.ru/magazin/view.asp?id=F8C55186A7D94839A14BEEC11F2F94CE.

35. In his most recent attempt to enter parliamentary politics, Dugin merged his Evraziia (“Eurasia”) party with Dmitry Rogozin’s Rodina (“Homeland”) party. Rogozin began his political career as an activist in communist youth organizations and quickly became one of the leading politicians in Russia. He supported Yeltsin during the August 1991 putsch and reaped the benefits: In 1993, he became the head of a relatively moderate nationalist-socialist political movement and was elected to the Duma in 1997. In the 2003 elections, Rogozin was already the head of a coalition of nationalist movements. It is not surprising that Dugin’s party found a place there. Nevertheless, Dugin soon announced his party’s resignation from Rogozin’s party list, which he accused of including racist, antisemitic, and neo-Nazi members from the Russian National Union. In fact, it appears that Dugin, who had no problems associating with such parties throughout his career, felt that Rodina had lost the backing of Putin’s government. Indeed, it had become the second-largest political bloc in the country, and thus a threat to the ruling party. Furthermore, the outrageous statements of Rogozin and his associates made them an easy target in the Russian government’s “war” against racism and fascist movements. Soon after Dugin’s resignation, Rodina found itself shunned by the state-controlled media, and the party was barred from running for election in most regions of the country. Rogozin was eventually forced to step down, and the party split up. The Russian government’s war against racism conveniently ended once the electoral threat was removed. The various factions of Rodina were incorporated into the Fair Russia party, which has close ties to the ruling United Russia party. Today, Rogozin serves as Russia’s ambassador to NATO.

36. Grigory Nekhoroshev, “Eurasianists Have Decided to Accept Vladimir Putin’s Support,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, April 24, 2001, www.ng.ru/events/2001-04-24/2_support.html.

37. A roundtable discussion in the news center of the *Izvestia* newspaper, September 13, 2007. See Viktor Shenderovich, “Putin Is All, Putin Is Absolute, Putin Is Indispensable,” *Echo Moskvy*, September, 26, 2007, www.inosmi.ru/translation/236828.html [Russian].

38. Aleksandr Dugin, “Eurasianism: The Personal Aspect,” Eurasian Youth Alliance Web site, www.rossia3.ru/katehizis.html [Russian].

39. In 2004, for example, Dugin lamented the fact that Putin’s “Atlantic-leaning” advisers were preventing him from making a “patriotic” decision in regard to South Ossetia. See Aleksandr Dugin, “The Bloody Chess Game in the Caucasus,” *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, August 6, 2004, www.kp.ru/daily/23334/31008 [Russian].

40. The full text of the interview appears on the Web site of the radio station *Echo Moskvy*, www.echo.msk.ru/programs/personalno/532383-echo [Russian].

41. Andrei Romanov, “Tanks at the Tbilisi! In Moscow, Calling for Destruction of Georgian Regime,” *Noviy Region*, August 11, 2008, www.nr2.ru/moscow/190499.html [Russian].

42. Megan Stack, “Russian Nationalist Advocates Eurasian Alliance Against the U.S.,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 4, 2008.

43. Stack, “Russian Nationalist Advocates Eurasian Alliance.”

44. This position, formally titled Head of the Ideological Directorate of the Political Department of United Russia’s Central Executive Committee, was filled in February 2008 by Ivan Demidov, a self-proclaimed follower of Dugin. See www.lenta.ru/news/2008/02/22/promote.

45. Excerpts from an interview aired on November 1, 2007, on a program called *The Secrets of Russian Politics*, on the rossia.ru online television channel. <http://rutube.ru/tracks/260804.html?v=cdeeb6bbd1342776835f55e14a3f500c>.

46. In 2008, Russia received a combined average rating of 5.5 from Freedom House’s annual *Freedom in the World* report—ranging between 1 (perfect freedom) and 7 (no freedom). See www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/Chart116File163.pdf.

47. Among the political opponents subject to persecution by the Russian government are Garry Kasparov, Mikhail Kasyanov, Boris Nemtsov, Eduard Limonov (Dugin’s partner in the creation of the National Bolshevik Party), and others, who are now organized in a non-parliamentary opposition bloc called “Other Russia.” Of these, Dmitry Rogozin, the leader of the Rodina party, was viewed by the establishment as a potential threat that needed to be blocked. These individuals were barred from running in the elections under legal pretexts, but they did not all experience the same fate: Some were persecuted, while others were merely weakened and then reincorporated into the establishment. See note 35.

48. Catherine Belton, “Shock and Then Boredom in Court,” *Moscow Times*, June 1, 2005.

49. Peter Finn, “Hopes for Court Reform Stir in Russia,” *Washington Post*, June 9, 2008.

50. In its worldwide press freedom index for 2008, the NGO Reporters Without Borders ranked Russia in 141st place with a rating of 47.5, after Chad, Sudan, and Bangladesh, www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=29031.

51. Vsevolod Yaguzhinsky, “Is a Law for a Sovereign Russian Internet Brewing in the Russian Parliament?” *Noviy Region*, January, 24, 2008, www.nr2.ru/policy/160614.html.

52. Vladislav Meshcheryakov, “Crisis: Minister Shchyogolev Asks the IT Sector Not to Panic,” *CNews*, October 23, 2008, www.cnews.ru/news/top/index.shtml?2008/10/23/324367 [Russian].

53. Mikhail Khodorkovsky was the wealthiest man in Russia up until five years ago due to his control of the oil company Yukos. His support for various opposition parties and his public stance against Putin led to his downfall. He was arrested in October 2003, charged with fraud, and sentenced to eight years in prison. During that period, the Russian government seized Yukos and took steps that caused a sharp drop in the company's value. There is wide consensus among Western observers that the arrest and conviction of Khodorkovsky was a political conspiracy that serves as decisive proof of the Kremlin's power over the Russian legal system.

54. See Dugin's interview, "The Secrets of Russian Politics" on rossia.ru.

55. Alexander Hramchihin, "On the Agenda: Creation of New Army," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, August 2, 2008, www.ng.ru/armament/2008-02-08/1_army.html [Russian].

56. Mark Tran, "Russia Plans Major Military Build-Up," *Guardian*, February 8, 2008.

57. See also Bruno Waterfield, "Russia Threatens Nuclear Attack on Ukraine," *Daily Telegraph*, February 17, 2008.

58. Vladimir Putin, "Russia has Always Identified Itself as a Eurasian Country," International Eurasian Movement Web site, November 13, 2000, <http://eurasia.com.ru/docs/putin1.html> [Russian].

59. Excerpt from a speech given by President Putin at the L.N. Gumilev Eurasian National University in Astana, Kazakhstan, October 10, 2000, <http://gumilevica.kulichki.net/matter/Article26.htm>.

60. Note, for instance, Gerhard Schröder's close relations with the Kremlin. The former German chancellor, who has developed a friendship with Putin, spoke in favor of a "strategic partnership" between the two countries, and showed enthusiastic support for laying a pipeline in the Baltic Sea to supply Germany with gas directly from Russia. After losing the 2005 German federal elections, Schröder was offered a senior position with the Russian oil giant Gazprom—an appointment that subjected him to vehement public criticism in both Germany and abroad.

61. "Putin Deplores Collapse of USSR," BBC News, April 25, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4480745.stm>.

62. Mudi Kreitman, "Ladies and Gentlemen, History Repeats Itself," *Yediot Aharonot*, August 1, 2007 [Hebrew].

63. Berlin is referring here to one of Heinrich Heine's insights. Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York: Oxford University, 1969), p. 119.