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CONSERVATISM AND TRADITIONALISM**

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An Abstract of the Chapter, "Nationalism and Traditionalism"

This chapter describes the emergence and evolution of neo-Slavophilic and neo-conservative views as they become increasingly important in the Soviet intellectual landscape since the 1960's. In the West, the platform of moderate Russian nationalism is best known through the books of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, but the two sections of the chapter presented below focus on other tendencies in nationalist thought, which are much more influential in contemporary Russia because of their extremism. Lev Gumilev (1912-1990) is the leading theoretician of Eurasianism, a movement founded in 1918, immediately after the October Revolution, by Russian emigrants whose ideas both were influenced by and anticipated some theories of Italian and German fascists. Eurasianism argues for the specificity of Eurasia as a geographical and historical body distinct from both Europe and Asia. One of Eurasia's distinguishing features is its tradition of ideocracy, which subjects the individuality of a citizen to the 'symphonic,' totalizing personality of the State. In the Eurasian state of the future, the spiritual traditions of Orthodoxy will be integrated with the organizational principles of communism, which also illustrates the closeness of Eurasianism to National Socialism.

In his historical and geographical investigations, Gumilev attempts to substantiate the long-standing unity of Slavic and Turkish nations as the two major constituents of Eurasian identity. More importantly, he advances an original theory of ethnicity, which explains the rise and decline of ethnic formations by biological rather than social factors, that is by disproportionate infusions of cosmic energies into the biological mass of humankind. Gumilev's key concept is "drive," or "passionality" which accumulates in the "heroic personalities" of certain nations and accounts for their historical accomplishments. Ethnic mixing produces "chimeric" formations that, being devoid of moral traditions and psychological stability, are destructive to nature and rife with nihilistic impulses. The Soviet Union serves Gumilev as an implicit example of such a negative ethnic experiment and, although he is careful not to be overtly racist, his theory of ethnogenesis is sometimes used as a justification for racist views condemning mixed marriage.

Another movement close to Eurasianism, but based on occult rather than ethnographic premises, is called "radical traditionalism." It promotes the restoration of archaic cults and mysteries, in hopes of achieving a union of man with the

primordial elements of nature, and champions an esoteric caste system, in contrast with the democratic and egalitarian societies of the West. Traditionalists distinguish themselves from more moderate conservatives, like Solzhenitsyn, since they do not want to restore the pre-revolutionary past, but rather to implement a new, Rightist revolution. Also in contradistinction with Solzhenitsyn, their political strategy is not isolationist, but presupposes the consolidation of Rightist movements all over the world. They seek the rapprochement of Russia with Western Europe on the basis of a principle called "continentalism," which they oppose to English and American "atlanticism." The antagonism of these two principles is decisive for the traditionalist philosophy of geopolitics: atlanticism is peculiar to sea-oriented and extroverted nations which valorize international communication and mercantilism, whereas continentalism presupposes introversion, a strong tie to the soil, and fidelity to national tradition. According to traditionalist projections, the world will one day witness a war between Eurasian continentalism, championed by Russia, and global atlanticism, upheld by the United States. Radical traditionalism is the most extreme variety of Rightist Russian philosophy, challenging both liberalism and moderate, humanistic conservatism and attempting to make the twenty-first century the epoch of another worldwide revolution, spiritually opposed to the democratic and communist revolutions of recent history.

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### CHAPTER 3: THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATIONAL SPIRIT, CONSERVATISM AND TRADITIONALISM.

1. The Revival of the "Russian Idea" in the 1960's and Early 1970's. Vladimir Osipov, Mikhail Lobanov, Viktor Chalmaev.
2. Critique of Structuralism and of Traditional Humanism. Petr Palievskii.
3. Nationalist Approach to Literature and History. Vadim Kozhinov.
4. Utopian Conservatism. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.
5. Militant Nationalism. Igor Shafarevich.
- \*6. Philosophy of Ethnicity. Neo-Eurasianism. Lev Gumilev.
- \*7. Radical Traditionalism and Neo-Fascism. Alexander Dugin.

### PHILOSOPHY OF ETHNICITY. NEO-EUROASIANISM. LEV GUMILEV

The majority of nationalistic thinkers in contemporary Russia have emerged from literary fields, such as fiction, poetry, journalism, and criticism, and Lev Gumilev (1912-1990) stands out among them as one of the very few professional scholars. He never sunk into vulgar nationalism, but his theories of ethnogenesis provide a basis for ideological conclusions that sometimes border on racism. Lev Gumilev was born into one of the most celebrated Russian families: his father, Nikolai Gumilev, was the founder of acmeism, one of the most influential poetic movements of the Russian Silver Age; he was shot by the Soviet Cheka in 1921. His mother, Anna Akhmatova, even more celebrated as a poet, devoted one of her most penetrating long poems, "Requiem," to the tragic fate of her only son, Lev, who spent fifteen years in Stalin's concentration camps for the mere crime of being the son of "infamous" parents. After his return from exile, Gumilev emerged in Leningrad as one of the most renowned historians and ethnologists of the 1970's - 1980's. He is the author of many books, mostly dealing with the history and ethnography of Eurasia and with the interaction between Slavic and Turkish tribes in the vast region of the southern Russian and Mongolian Steppes.

The ideological model for these investigations was the teachings of "The Eurasians," a group of Russian intellectuals who, after the Bolshevik revolution, settled in Europe and, governed by patriotic motives, advanced a broadly discussed theory of Russia as a specific civilization belonging neither to Europe nor to Asia. As

distinct from Slavophiles of the 19th century, who connected Russia to Eastern Europe and identified her with the family of Slavonic nations, these theorists emphasized the Asian components of Russian identity. If for traditional historians oriented to the West, the early history of Russia appeared to be an incessant struggle against the Tartar-Mongol horde and other Turkish tribes and nomadic marauders, Gumilev stressed the productive interaction between Slavs and Turks as two major cohabitants of the great Eurasian expanse. For him, Russia is the general name for a synthetic civilization where Slavs are only one of the ethnic components. Gumilev's ethnological studies provoked a heated controversy: official Soviet scholarship accused him of overemphasizing the ethnological aspects of the historical process at the expense of social determinants, and of maintaining a simplistic understanding of ethnos as a natural phenomenon formed by geographical environment and by impulses of "biospheric" energy.

Indeed, contrary to convention, which situates ethnology within the humanities, Gumilev attempts to base his ethnological research on the methodologies of the natural sciences. His most significant influence is the work of Vladimir Vernadsky (1863-1945), the greatest 20th century Russian scientist in several interconnected fields, including geology and biochemistry. The core of Vernadsky's thought is his theory of "living matter," the organic substance of life which determines the formation of both the inorganic and super-organic (rational) layers of the global eco-system, including the biosphere and noosphere (the sphere of reason as a geological force). A variety of philosophical schools has made use of Vernadsky's legacy as a bridge between natural and humanistic phenomena. However, one can cross this bridge in two directions. First, one might make an "ascending" interpretation of the noosphere as the vector of spiritualization of matter, as in the evolutionary theology of divine cosmogenesis created by the French Catholic thinker Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). Conversely, the "descending" interpretation attempts to derive all forces engaged in historical evolution from sources of material energy. This descending interpretation, reducing the human element of ethnology to natural laws, is elaborated by Gumilev who argues for the priority of biological and chemical determinants in the historical process. Referring to Vernadsky's theory of the biosphere as a reservoir of energy penetrating and charging all living substances including the human body, Gumilev explains ethnogenesis by the influence and infusion of cosmic energy. "Ethnos as a form of existence of the species *homo sapiens*... preceded the creation of tools of production and social development... The

character of its development correlates with the fluctuation of biochemical energy in the living matter of the biosphere..."<sup>1</sup>

Gumilev's most important work, *Ethnogenesis and the Earth's Biosphere*,<sup>2</sup> is a philosophical and methodological summation of his more specialized historical investigations. This book, completed in the 1970's, could not be published until shortly before his death in 1990 because its method, though based on materialist assumptions, was suspicious from the standpoint of official Marxism as an example of "vulgar materialism," reducing the social form of materiality to its more primitive chemical and biological forms. The historical scope of this book may be compared to Arnold Toynbee's, *A Study of History* (1934-1939), though Gumilev rejects Toynbee's methodology, in particular, his principal conception of human civilization as a response to the challenge of a severe natural environment. Gumilev's book explores the fates of dozens of ethnoi, from Spanish and Italian to Egyptian, Arabic and Mongolian, and covers several millennia of their development and downfall. But it is not based only on empirical research; the author advances an original conception to account for ethnic processes all over the world, relying in particular on Hegel's and Marx's views of the role of passion in human history.<sup>3</sup> In his search for some decisive factor determining the seemingly variegated forms of ethnicity, Gumilev arrives at the concept of "passionate drive," or "passionality."<sup>4</sup> This neologism signifies the extent of passion, which for Gumilev is the key factor determining the historical activity of a given ethnos.<sup>5</sup>

"Passionality" is the energetic drive that generates the formation and activity of an ethnos. "The work done by an ethnic collective is directly proportional to the tension of drive."<sup>6</sup> Gumilev even proposes to calculate passionality as the quantity of the passionality contained in an ethnic system divided by the number of individuals in that system. This is, however, solely an abstract notion, since Gumilev never goes so far in his scientific claims as to provide a mathematic means for determining quantitatively the passionality in a given ethnos. Nevertheless, he does make use of charts which represent the cycles of solar activity to argue that the historic initiations of new ethnoi chronologically correspond to periods of minimal solar activity, when cosmic radiation is more readily admitted to earth's atmosphere, giving rise to a greater frequency of mutation, hence to new passionaries and, correspondingly, to new ethnoi.

Not all members of a given ethnos are equally charged with passionality; thus Gumilev singles out a specific category of persons who are its true founders and leaders, "passionaries." Whereas most people, both individually and collectively, are

motivated by a desire for self-preservation, and therefore behave reactively in the face of social and natural cataclysms, passionaries are people who devote their entire lives to the pursuit of a particular goal and are ready to give their lives for its attainment. "It must be an impulse strong enough to overcome the instinct of personal and even species self-preservation inherent in any organism, i.e. sacrifice that extends even to one's posterity, something, which is not observed in any animal species. But then there are no ethnoi among animals. Their communities lack the social form of the motion of matter and self-developing institutions."<sup>7</sup> As examples of passionaries, Gumilev points to Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Joan of Arc, John Huss, Avvakum, and Napoleon, among others. The decisive feature of the passionary is his or her capacity to charge other people with the energy of action ("passional induction"). Thus, for example, a given division of soldiers may be composed of varied individuals, but the presence of a few passionaries among them would raise their level of passionality and convert the unit into a passionate organism capable of decisive action.

The factor of passionality allows Gumilev to divide ethnic population into several categories. Inasmuch as passionality is measured in relation to the instinct of self-preservation, three relative proportions become possible: those people whose passionality exceeds the instinct for self-preservation are the passionaries, and Gumilev designates their "drive" as  $P > 1$ ; those whose passionality is equal to their survival instinct are called "harmonious" ( $P = 1$ ); those whose passionality is less than their instinct for self-preservation are named "sub-passionaries" ( $P < 1$ ).<sup>8</sup> In a given population, the harmonious personalities, who are diligent but not super-active, comprise a decided majority. Sub-passionaries are those persons whose only requirements for living are "bread and spectacles;" they are typically found among vagrant populations or are employed as soldiers of fortune who "do not change the world and do not preserve it, but exist at its expense."<sup>9</sup> The proportions of passionaries and sub-passionaries within a population fluctuates with the ascendancy or decline of a given ethnos. Thus, in Gumilev's view, "Ancient Rus' was ruined by destabilization, which appeared as consequence of a decrease in the passional tension of the ethnic system or, more simply put, an increase in the number of sub-passionaries--egoists not capable of sacrifice for the sake of selfless patriotism."<sup>10</sup> Notice that Gumilev cites patriotism as the most convincing form of passionality -- not artistic vision or philosophical meditation.

Gumilev does not connect passionality with any ethical norms. He recognizes that it can equally generate both heroic deeds and terrible crimes, creativity and

destruction; the only attitude that is excluded from passionality is indifference. He is also careful to distinguish between passionaries and successful "leaders of the pack," arguing that it is the passionality of the rank-and-file within the pack that often is the true impetus for the crucial action. For example, although Napoleon as a passionary had no rivals among the leaders of monarchic European coalition, it was the greater proportion of passionaries in the ranks of the opposing forces that led to the downfall of a less passionate French force composed of fresh recruits. Thus strong passionality does not necessarily correlate with social status.

According to Gumilev, passionality is a factor of an ethnos' neg-entropy, which resists the inevitable tendency toward entropy, dead equilibrium, present in all closed physical systems. However, ethnoi too are susceptible to the law of gradual exhaustion of their passionality. First of all, the tendency for untimely death among passionaries during times of war explains why they rarely reproduce and pass on their passionate genes. Moreover, during peacetime, passionaries are apt to miss their callings and are forced to marginal status, becoming alienated by societies where moderate and cautious people enjoy greater success. Thus the fate of every ethnos is a gradual loss of passionality and a multi-stage degradation into passivity and extinction.

More specifically, Gumilev identifies the following phases of ethnic evolution: ascension, acme, fracture, inertia, obscuration, regeneration, relic, and memorial phases, after which an ethnos dissolves into nothingness. In the stages of ascension and acme, the ideal of victory prevails; next, the ideal of success, followed by the ideals of knowledge and creativity; then the search for well-being without risk; and finally quiet conformity adapted to the local biocenosis. The average term of existence for each ethnos is 1000-1500 years, after which entropy vanquishes passionality and the death of this collective organism becomes inevitable. Gumilev charts the moral guidelines prevailing for each period of ethnic history: The phase of ethnic formation and ascension is inspired by such imperatives as, "It is necessary to correct the world because it is bad," or "Be what you should be." The next stage, the transition to acme, requires: "Be yourself!" The transition to inertia is expressed as "We are tired of the great," "Be like me," and later, in the phase of obscuration, "Be like us." The collapse dictates "Mine is the day!" The memorial phase may be summarized as "Remember how fine it was."<sup>11</sup> In the last phase of ethnogenesis people lose their memory of the past and even their sense of time. They enter the state of homeostasis, the equilibrium of energies with their natural environment, where their existence becomes almost identical to that of animals.

According to Gumilev, ethnos cannot preserve itself in the status quo; it is either developing or deteriorating. Thus the Chukchas, a northern Siberian ethnos, have lost the sense of time and do not even notice the change of seasons. Severe climate might be blamed for this exhaustion of spirit, but even the denizens of paradise are not immune to such entropy as evidenced by the people of the Ongkhi who are "too lazy to live. They sometimes prefer to starve than hunt for food."<sup>12</sup> Gumilev never considers the possibility that each ethnos may have its own criteria for growth and degradation, and that the same modes of time orientation may be "progressive," "regressive" or "neutral" for different ethnoi. On the one hand, Gumilev criticizes ethnic elitism which he ascribes, for example, to Kari Jaspers's concept of the "axis" time, according to which five great nations, the Greeks, Jews, Iranians, Chinese and Indians, produced the greatest prophets who, during the 8th - 2nd centuries B.C., gave spiritual birth to contemporary civilization. On the other hand, Gumilev finds an original justification for those ethnoi which are conventionally considered to be "backward," such as the native Americans, the black Australians, the Bushmen and Eskimos: they are "simply relics that have outlived their flourishing and decline."<sup>13</sup> Contrary to the "white chauvinist" view that these ethnoi are still too young and hence need the benefits of Western colonization to enter into historical development, Gumilev believes them to be "decrepit ethnoi" whose best time is in the past: they have come to the last phase of entropy, to homeostasis, "that is why their material culture is so poor, and their spiritual culture so fragmentary." This paradoxical "multiculturalism" does not recognize the values of different cultures, but tries to explain why some of them are devoid of any value at this time.

Gumilev pays considerable attention to the interaction among different ethnoi, and especially to the type of interaction that results in the formation of self-destructive ethnic complexes, which he calls anti-systems or "chimeras" (a combination of elements not organically united). When two ethnic systems interact, a kind of cacophonous disruption occurs instead of a seamless harmony. "Let both systems be positive, ecologically and culturally, but when combined they generate anti-system, an epiphenomenon which arises beyond the will of the participants."<sup>14</sup> With ethnic combination or transplantation, people begin to lose their sense of organic connection with their geographic environment and turn to abstract thinking which finally justifies their hatred of their natural milieu and life in general. "Then in the place of collision emerges either a symbiosis, when ethnoi exist in one region independently of each other, or a chimera, when the interaction changes the

structures and stereotypes of behavior. Then the development stops in chimeric formations and a complex of negative attitudes to nature, culture and even life as such arises."<sup>15</sup> As an example, Gumilev cites gnosticism which grew on the border between two prosperous ancient ethnoi, the Jews and the Greeks. The gnostic worldview considers life on earth to be a hardship which the human soul must shed. In the same way, the collision of Greece with Iran in the third century generated Manicheism, a powerful anti-system which also identified life with evil. Members of this religion destroyed temples, icons, even human bodies, since the visible world was created by an evil god and must be subjected to annihilation.

Gumilev traces the history of such chimeric concepts through Christian heresies and socialist utopias, hinting that the Russian Communist Revolution might also have been initiated by the interaction of two ethnoi, Jewish and Russian, leading to the chimeric Soviet ethnicity based on the ideological subjugation of the natural environment, which is self-ruinous for the ethnos. Notably, Gumilev's analysis of Christian heresies and early socialist movements<sup>16</sup> has affinities with that of Shafarevich (section), and both authors come to the same conclusion regarding the gravitation toward death underlying the protestant and socialist movements, whose background may be identified as a Manichean hatred for the world. Gumilev's metaphysics include the concept of the "infemal" vacuum as the opposite of life-generating nature. He dedicates his treatise to the great cause of defending the natural environment against anti-systems, which have millions of supporters all over the earth and consider the vacuum to be their ideal.

In these terms, however, Gumilev himself may be viewed as a Manichean, since he insists upon dividing the world into two opposing forces of energy and vacuum. In his eyes, the force of anti-system would be irresistible if not for the new impetuses of passionality, which pour energy into the deteriorating ethnic systems. "Given how long humans have existed on earth, all ethnoi must long ago have entered into contact; then it seems that anti-systems would have supplanted ethnoi and replaced them, would have annihilated all life in its natural habitat... But for some reason nothing of the kind has happened. ...It is the impetus, mutation, giving birth to passionality and imparting the original rhythm of the biological field to the newly arising ethnoi that destroys chimeras and their concurrent anti-systems."<sup>17</sup> Thus, Gumilev proposes, the passional impetus at the turn of the current era created Christianity which dissolved gnostic teachings, though, strangely enough, he seems to forget that Christianity itself arose on the same ethnical border (the Jews and Romans) that originally produced gnosticism. By the same token, Gumilev insists that a new

impetus of the 6th-7th century put an end to the Iranian anti-systems and created Islam. Both Christianity and Islam are positive systems for Gumilev, though he interprets Protestantism and Ismailitism as expressions of life denial. In general, his attitude toward religion is rather ambivalent; he celebrates the adoption of Orthodox Christianity in Russia, but simultaneously believes that theism may lead to the deterioration of ethnoi: "Anti-systems are often theistic while the ideals of ethnical cultures are atheistic."<sup>18</sup>

Here again Gumilev's thought converges with Shafarevich's allegiance to an ecological morality which condemns theism, and primarily Judaism, for the negligence of nature and the divinely justified assertion of human dominance. Gumilev's extensive discussion of Khazar history<sup>19</sup> leads him to the conclusion that this ethnos, comprised of many sub-ethnic groups who converted to Judaism, was not only chimeric in itself, but also threatened to "chimerize" Russian and other surrounding peoples. Although Jews themselves were averse to admitting anti-system into their own communities, Gumilev argues that they deliberately introduced gnostic and manichean doctrines to other ethnoi in order to destabilize them: "...they preferred to see Manicheans among their neighbors but not to admit them into their own domain. And since they, like metastases, penetrated into all civilized countries, they generally succeeded in achieving their goals, but not always."<sup>20</sup> Gumilev is also very close to Shafarevich's concept of "the small people" who spread nihilism to undermine the ethnic stability of larger peoples. The only difference is that Shafarevich explicitly blames Jews for the destruction of contemporary Russia, while Gumilev limits himself to a discussion of those dangers which the Judaic state of Khazars posed for ancient Russia. One can also find interesting parallels between Palievsky and Kozhinov's condemnation of avant-gardist art in favor of traditional realism and Gumilev's proposal that "ancient Jewish art became the prototype of abstractionism."<sup>21</sup> Jewish monotheism forbade the visual reproduction of God's creation, giving rise to non-realistic tendencies which prefigured the worldwide avant-gardist movement of the 20th century. Thus avant-gardism may also be explained in accordance with the terms of Nazi propaganda as a product of Jewish insidiousness, which infects European nations with a hatred for reality and the spirit of nihilism, thereby setting in motion a progressive dissolution of national spirit.

Gumilev takes his naturalist bias so far as to suspect all philosophical and religious teachings to be only epiphenomena of the vacuum which, like a black screen, repulses and distorts all biospheric impulses and hampers natural processes.

Even personal consciousness, in his terms, is nothing but a black hole which introduces the emanation of the vacuum into the world<sup>22</sup>. In the final analysis, only nature and its vital energetic impulses are considered positive in the system of Gumilev's thought, whose conclusive thesis is: "We are not lonely in this world! The near cosmic space participates in the defense of nature, and it is our task not to spoil nature. She is not only our home; she is ourselves."<sup>23</sup>

Gumilev's preference of a natural rather than historical approach to ethnicity is not purely methodological, but also reflects his metaphysical assumption that history is a waste of natural forces, a kind of cosmic illness. Central to Gumilev's philosophy is the problem of historic time, which he discusses as a function of entropy, the tendency for energy to dissipate into nothingness. According to this view, history has no creative potential in itself; only impulses which arise in the biosphere constitute the material impetus for creativity in arts, science, and politics, as well as for violence and destruction. "...[P]rocesses occurring in the course of time are entropic and inertial, but since now and then they are interrupted by creative flashes, producing new ethnoi and cultures, the end of the world does not arrive. Therefore, the history of culture is the struggle of the Creative force (energy) with Chronos (entropy); this is the manifestation of the second law of thermodynamics in the historical process."<sup>24</sup> The question is to what degree is Gumilev's "Creative force" actually creative. Although he certainly disdains entropy and praises energy, his theory does not suggest criteria for distinguishing destructive manifestations of energy from constructive ones. The consequences of passional action may be even more devastating than the decline of passionality. In Gumilev's book on ancient Russian history, Gumilev himself observes that "the explosion of passionality at first burns down the place where it emerges. In this conflagration, perish not just weak people who are only capable of admiring the masterpieces inherited from their ancestors, but also the masterpieces themselves."<sup>25</sup> This imparts a tragic dimension to Gumilev's theory, although the author himself does not always seem conscious of it. The same energy that creates culture arises to destroy it. Gumilev's passionality reminds one of Heraclitus' fire, a metaphor for the universe's self-creation and destruction by flaring up and burning itself away. It is not clear why Gumilev condemns entropy and indifference if the energy in his system is as indifferent to values as entropy. Why condemn gnostic and manichean theories denying the material world, if the passionality which Gumilev glorifies as the principle of life negates the world even more vehemently?

Another philosophical question underlying all of Gumilev's theorizing is the problem of free will. He distinguishes a hierarchy of levels of material organization ranging from the atom to the galaxy, and postulates a scale of determinism which correlates with the status of the material unit. Thus, on a galactic scale, the laws of material organization are absolutely predetermined, whereas the atom exists in a zone of indeterminacy. Ethnoi, in his view, are intermediate entities, which means that their processes are largely probabilistic.<sup>26</sup> (p. 336) Gumilev is careful to assert that a given ethnos' history leaves room for the freedom of human actions, which can change its fate; however, the principal assumptions of his theory ground personality in a genetic and biochemical predisposition, determined by mutation. What Gumilev really means by indeterminism is not free will but randomness: the chance of being born with passionality is not tantamount to freedom of choice, since one's capacity to choose is predetermined by biological mechanisms. Mutation, which is the engine of passionality in individuals<sup>27</sup>, is a random event, but by producing three specific genetic types (passionaries, harmonious and sub-passionaries), it determines completely the future behavior of the individual in each category. In Gumilev's world, a person does not choose to be a passionary or sub-passionary; it is not a matter of individual choice, but of nature. This is another contradiction within Gumilev's conception. He endows nature with a certain randomness (mutation, explosion), but the human subjects it produces become subordinated to these caprices as if to absolute laws. Like in paganist world view, Gumilev is inclined to animate nature and naturalize spiritual beings.

Though Gumilev deals less with contemporary national consciousness than with historical ethnoi, his ideas are easily extrapolated to the social issues facing Russia today. One can find striking parallels between his concept of chimeric ethnoi and the platforms of racial purity advanced by Nazi ideologists in Germany. He applies to historical reality what he calls the methodology of the natural sciences, and thus gives some quasi-scientific foundation to a paganist nature worship which poses a challenge of contemporary nationalism not only to Judaism but to Christianity as a kind of "Judaic conspiracy" against healthy national life in harmony with nature.

#### RADICAL TRADITIONALISM AND NEO-FASCISM. ALEKSANDR DUGIN.

Among the multiplicity of conservative movements that arose with the collapse of Soviet Marxism, one stands out as perhaps the most radical, both in political and metaphysical terms. Its radicalism is paradoxical because it calls for the

resurrection of ancient esoterism as the antithesis of contemporary rational and democratic convention; hence the movement often identifies itself as "radical traditionalism," though it goes by a number of other names, such as "continentalism," "anti-mondialism," "the third way," "revolutionary conservatism," etc. The closest historical analogue to this worldview would probably be the geopolitical mysticism of the Third Reich, though radical traditionalists claim equal distinction from the three dominant ideologies of the 20th century: communism, fascism and democracy.

The program of this movement is delineated most clearly in the journal, *Cherished Angel* (*Milyi angel*); in the magazine, *Elements*; and in the newspaper, "Day. The Paper of Spiritual Opposition." (*Den*) (after October 1993 was renamed "Tomorrow" - *Zavtra*). No other movement in Russia, except Marxism, has so thoroughly conflated political and philosophical issues, in such a way, for example, that even the commander of the military organization of Russian nationalists, Alexander Barkashov, constantly uses the terms "metaphysics" and "spirituality" in order to identify his political goals.

The two preeminent spokespersons of this movement are Alexander Prokhanov (born 1938) and Alexander Dugin. The first is a famous novelist who, in Brezhnev's time, was celebrated as the bard of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and was mocked by the liberal press as the "Nightingale of the General Staff." As the editor in chief of "Day," he served as one of the principal initiators of anti-Gorbachev, and later anti-Yeltsin, movements, and his ideology is a mixture of nativist, technocratic and mystical views usually expressed in a polemical journalistic manner. Alexander Dugin associated himself with the extreme nationalist factions: *Pamiat'* and *Natsional'noe edinstvo*. He is the editor in chief of *Cherished Angel* and *Elements* and the author of the books *Mysteries of Eurasia* (1991), *Hyperborean Theory* (1992), and *Conspirology* (1992). His writings betray a thorough acquaintance with esoteric and occult literature, but he is most intellectually indebted to Rene Guignon and Julius Evola (1898-1974), the leading theorists of the European extreme right before and after World War II, and Alain de Benoist, a theoretician of the French *Nouvelle Droite*. Further exposition of the ideology of radical traditionalism will rely principally on the work of Dugin, who remains the most philosophically oriented of all its representatives.<sup>28</sup>

The title *Elements* common to several neo-fascist periodicals in Western Europe and Russia, refers to the paganist foundations of this worldview, which sanctifies "the most stormy, the most cruel, the most powerful" forces in the

universe, everything that is endowed with "the potential for terrible power, capable of enacting both Great Creation and Great Destruction."<sup>29</sup> Radical traditionalism has affinities with Romanticism and Nietzschean Dionysianism and thus opposes itself "heroically," and sometimes tragically, to any rationally structured order. From its viewpoint, contemporary civilization, obsessed with ideas of comfort and profit, has abandoned the majestic mysteries of the past, and the task of traditionalists, therefore, is to restore these archaic rituals in the most revolutionary way, by antagonizing all existing systems. The conventional, "leftist" notion of revolution presupposes a radical rupture with Tradition (usually capitalized by its adherents) and an obsession with the new, a utopian vision of the future as superior to past and present. Traditionalists believe that after the American, French and Russian revolutions, which were all leftist and "democratic," the world abandoned Tradition and sold its soul to the devil of material prosperity. That is why a new revolution is needed, this time a rightist one, which is antithetical to the conventional revolutionary formula insofar as it pursues the restoration of the spiritual foundations of the world that were buried by decadent civilization in the guise of "progress." "On the whole, we stand for the Restoration of the fullness of Tradition in its supertemporal and superhistorical essence, for the Restoration of Eternal Order, Eternal Sacred Structure, against which the 'contemporary world' -- the world of materialism, skepticism, plutocracy, atheism, humanism, profanism, in one word, the world of Devil--has waged an irreconcilable fight for many centuries."<sup>30</sup>

The conception of Tradition, as propagated by Dugin, has several levels of meaning. On the deepest one, traditionalism presupposes esoterism, a direct knowledge of the Divine accessible only to a spiritual elite. Esoterism is not a purely theoretical discipline, but includes the practice of theosis, or deification, the mysterious transformation of the earthly into the heavenly. Dugin is anxious to distinguish the genuine traditionalist esoterism, which recognizes traditional religions and Church dogmas, from Satanic distortions of esoterism, which attack Christianity and Islam and attempt to destroy the dogmatic integrity of Tradition. That is why a second level of Tradition is exoterism, the sphere of sacred knowledge open to everyone, as long as they participate in the life of the Church. In this sense, traditionalism supports theocracy, "presupposes the restoration of the central position of the Church in the State"<sup>31</sup> where all aspects of social life must be subordinated to Church rule, as legislated by an ecclesiastical court. A third level of Tradition requires the spiritual stratification of society and the establishment of a hierarchy of estates or castes. The recognition of different types of people, according to their spiritual origin,

is a necessary condition of "truly sacred" civilization. A fourth level of Tradition mandates the restoration of sacred sciences and arts, as opposed to secularized disciplines based upon empirical knowledge. From this viewpoint, most contemporary sciences are examples of ignorance, because they reduce reality to its material surface; whereas true knowledge must be anagogical and lead to salvation. Hence Dugin seeks to restore "'rigorous,' sacred sciences--alchemy, astrology, sacred geography, sacred ethnography, symbolism, rituals of traditional professions, and so on."<sup>32</sup> Finally, Tradition is a totality, subordinating all aspects of culture and establishing strict rules and rituals of everyday conduct for all members of society.

The connection between metaphysics and politics is dictated by the very essence of total traditionalism, which denies the liberal principle of the separation of powers and specialization of knowledge. From a liberal perspective, spiritual, political, professional and economic spheres are governed by their own particular laws, and this limitation secures their relative freedom. For a traditionalist, even the most concrete and seemingly arbitrary facts in any of these spheres are conditioned by some underlying principles and therefore testify to an all-comprehensive determinism. In this way, the extreme right shares with the extreme left the hermeneutic suspicion of historical reality and the presumption of general laws governing even the most negligible events. But where Marxism, with its materialist assumptions, speaks about "laws," traditionalism, with its spiritual bias, identifies concealed "volitions" and "intentions." That is why the entirety of history is read and interpreted in terms of "conspirology," the science of conspiracies. The notion of conspiracy presupposes that history is designed according to some initial plan, so that all particular events--wars, revolutions, natural disasters--can be explained as part and parcel of a grand scheme. In a popular version of conspirology, the plot can be traced to an ancient Jewish and Masonic attempt to take over the world, and both Soviet Communism and American Capitalism are seen as participants in this conspiracy, whose antagonism is merely a simulation concealing their basic collaboration. On a more esoteric level, the upheavals in the contemporary world are derived from the competition between two prehistoric civilizations--Atlantis and Hyperborea, conventional "meta-geographical" terms in theosophy and other occult sciences.

The popularity of conspirological models in post-Soviet Russia can be explained as a legacy of long-standing habits of ideological thinking. In its spirit and method, conspirology has much in common with communist ideology: both relate to reality as to a book, a system of signs which needs decoding in order to determine the correct behavior of citizens. The difference is that ideology locates the cherished

signifieds of this all-encompassing book in the future, while conspirology relates them to the primordial past. Ideology attempts to mobilize the collective will of society for the construction of a deferred paradise, while conspirology mobilizes the nation to oppose the demonic plots which destroyed the original paradise. Both ideology and conspirology are obsessed with deciphering the coded messages concealed in the most ordinary and natural things. In Stalin's time, using a newspaper containing the leader's likeness for wrapping produce, could serve as evidence of subversive intent sufficient to provoke arrest and criminal prosecution. In Brezhnev's time, conspirologists argued that the use of asterisks to indicate textual breaks was a tool of Zionist propaganda, since the symbol resembles a Star of David; they succeeded to have this emblem changed to a five-pointed star in some periodicals, but this too was subsequently opposed by still more vigilant conspirologists as the Masonic Star of Solomon. Conspirology is ideology reoriented to the past and concerned with the contemporary political implications of ancient mysteries and rituals.

From Dugin's perspective, the variety of the world's political ideologies can be reduced to three global-metaphysical systems, whose conflict determines the geopolitical configurations of the contemporary world.

The first such system is the most ancient and presupposes an absolute unity between God and man which is personified in the figure of a "Divine Subject, Hero, Angelic Leader, Sacred Emperor." The entire world is the domain of his supernatural control. "...[T]he Subject of Divine nature stands in the center, on the Pole, in the middle of the sacred cosmos, which completely subordinates itself to him and is therefore paradise-like... This Divine Subject has nothing beyond himself (above himself, around himself, under himself), no higher metaphysical principle... and therefore, he is absolutely free and inseparable from God. God is within him."<sup>33</sup> This is an esoteric doctrine of immanence, which is based on gnosis, or the immediate knowledge of God as infused with earthly life. According to Dugin, this represents the noblest of all worldviews, historically realized in the sacred imperialism of the Ghibellines, in the "heresies" of Cathars and Albigenses, in the teachings of Rosicrucianism, and in German National Socialism.

The second worldview, developed in Judaism and partly in Christianity, is based on a transcendental relationship between the Creator and the creation. The identity of God and man is destroyed as God is elevated to a higher realm and man is expelled from paradise and doomed to dwell in a profane realm of earthly suffering. Instead of gnosis, this second worldview bases its religiosity on faith, which includes

the elements of uncertainty and heavenly aspiration. Therefore, this system is considered by Dugin to be inferior, since it presupposes the alienation of man and God, though the hope of their ultimate reunion still animates the activity of the Christian church. The paradise principle peculiar to traditionalism and the principle of transcendence prevailing in Judaism are irreconcilable. As for Christianity, it emerged originally in order to restore paradise on earth by merging God and man in the figure of Christ, but subsequently surrendered to Jewish transcendentalism and was transformed into a religion of sin and repentance. The gnostic teachings condemned by the Catholic church as Satanic and Luciferian, are viewed by Dugin as the true manifestations of original Christianity, since they conceive of man in terms of his divinity and celebrate esoteric knowledge. Therefore, what is needed is the struggle of authentic Christianity against its Judaic distortions. The Eastern Orthodox church, because of its closeness to an ancient, paganist worldview, is more faithful to original Christianity than Western churches. Dugin finds affinities between this transcendental worldview and the Christian democratic and social democratic conceptions that prevail in contemporary European politics, which promote a view of man as imperfect, sinful and hence reliant on socially organized charity and state support.

Dugin's last system, "magical materialism," is presented as the most recent, and thus the most ignoble, of the three worldviews. Within it, the subject is altogether divorced from God, both immanent and transcendent, and functions only as a particle of the material world. This view encompasses such different teachings as Soviet Marxism, American liberalism, and Fyodorovian cosmism. All these have in common a belief in progress as determined by the laws of the universe's material evolution. Instead of gnosis or faith, this worldview cultivates empirical knowledge, which is a form of agnosticism, since it denies the spiritual realm and establishes effectiveness as the only criterion of truth. Political applications of this worldview vary from North Korean and Kampuchean totalitarian communism to American and Swedish models of the society of consumption, where paradise is identified with purely material comfort and technological progress.

Dugin himself professes to the first worldview, which calls for a kind of paganist theocracy, a Sacred Empire headed by a Divine Subject or Absolute Leader. Such a society would be organized hierarchically, on the basis of esoteric privilege, with many degrees of mystical initiation. A primary division, however, is drawn between a caste of masters, designated to rule, and the rest of humanity, devoid of spiritual vision and thus treated as a herd. "For the bearers of a Polar Subject, all

people are divided into two categories: Man-Gods, Divine Subjects, Super-men (elite, spiritual aristocracy, higher people, "Sonnenmenschen," "Sons of Light" and so on) and human animals devoid of subjectivity (plebeians, lower people, underpeople, "Tiermenschen," "Sons of Darkness"). Hence caste, racial or intellectual differentiation in all purely esoteric teachings.<sup>34</sup>

In terms of their religious orientation, Russian traditionalists proclaim their commitment to Orthodox Christianity, to Islam, and to paganism. How do they justify such an exotic mixture of historically irreconcilable traditions? The immediate impulse for reconciliation of Christianity and Islam is the overwhelming influence of these two denominations in Eurasia, in the territory of the former Soviet Union, and the concurrent political necessity to unite them against "profanic" Western civilization. In a traditionalist interpretation, Orthodoxy proves to be closer to Islam than to other Christian denominations, since both privilege dogmatic tradition over innovation, are highly ritualistic, hostile to the spirit of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and ardently opposed to mixing the secular and the sacred, which is typical of a much more tolerant Western religiosity. Dugin also finds affinities between Orthodoxy and Islam on a theological level, since both of them are less transcendental than Judaism, which locates God beyond human perception and comprehension, and simultaneously less immanent than Western Christianity, which sanctifies worldly values, such as freedom, labor, professional achievement, education and profit. On the scale of transcendence-immanence, the three Abrahamic religions are distributed in the following way: Judaism represents the pole of transcendence, and Christianity, the pole of immanence, while Islam stands between them, with Eastern Orthodoxy as its closest neighbor. But in his further interpretation, Dugin collapses the Judaic and Christian poles by pointing to their shared emphasis on materialism: Judaism, in practical life, has a materialist orientation, precisely because its religious views are "too transcendental" and are alienated from earthly concerns; the profanic versions of Christianity prevailing in the West emphasize the human aspects of Christ and thus also fall into secularist temptations. In the final analysis, traditionalism polarizes world religions in such a way that a Judaeo-Christian civilization of the West is presented as being challenged by a united Islamic-Orthodox civilization of Eurasia. The metaphysical basis of the former is a break with Tradition, the secularization and profanation of religious mysteries; while the Islamic-Orthodox unity seeks to preserve the dominance of the Church over the State and the immutable order of the sacred Tradition.

As for paganism, Dugin praises it even more ardently than the religions of monotheism, which oppose immanent and transcendental worlds. Paganism, in its original tradition, transcends the very division between sacred and profane and identifies the entire universe as "a tissue of gnostic revelation, where each detail, each symbol is important and irreplaceable... [B]oth of them, Being and Non-being [by which Dugin understands transcendental world], are no longer separated but merge together... Immanentism actually becomes the manifestation of the highest and the most metaphysically convincing transcendentalism in which, however, the role of the Transcendent is filled not by a monotheistic Creator (Non-being) but by something transcendent in relation to the Creator Himself..."<sup>35</sup> Therefore Dugin, after Iury Mamleev (see Section on Religious Philosophy), posits the third, the most esoteric level of mystery beyond the God of monotheism. The truth of paganism lies deeper than the distinction between the creator and the creation. The root of things is not spirit distinct from matter, but Something transcending this very opposition. Paganism is a manifestation of this higher unity, since it worships the universe both in its smallest parts and in its all-embracing wholeness and finds the truth of the whole fully present in each of its parts.

It is not clear how this paganism, cherished by Dugin, is different from pantheism, which is furiously condemned by all traditionalists as the most cunning form of materialism. "Thus the pure atheist, or 'mystical materialist', actually endows the cosmos with a quality of divinity... This gives us reason to define the given ideology as pantheism--'everything divine', identification of everything (Cosmos, World) with God."<sup>36</sup> In Dugin's classification, pantheistic materialism is the lowest of the three worldviews, but his definition of paganism, which is the highest of the three, coincides almost verbatim with his formula of pantheism: "The 'paganist' universe is theomorphic, or more precisely, angelomorphic."<sup>37</sup> This is the principal weakness of traditionalist thought: it does not provide sufficiently clear concepts to distinguish between paganism, which makes the transcendent immanent, and mystical materialism, which deifies the material world. The extremes of the Left (pantheism, materialism) and the Right (paganism) easily coincide in traditionalist metaphysics, since both of them are hostile to Creationism, to the Judeo-Christian concept of the separation of man and God, which supports the ideology of moderately liberal and conservative movements. The first and the third worldviews in Dugin's classification are virtually identical and both are antagonistic to the second view, which prescribes tolerance and compassion, since man is weak and imperfect in his alienation from God. Paganism and materialism, on the other hand, both proclaim a

heroic vision of a human being who embodies the totality of divine qualities and is sinless and self-sufficient.

In the final analysis, the traditionalist project of complete identification, "homogenization," of God and man leads to the destruction of both of these entities, since man and God can be defined only in their distinction from one another. What traditionalists actually cherish is neither divine nor human, but a middle sphere of mighty spirits conventionally called "angels"--hence the title of their leading theoretical journal, *Cherished Angel*. In spite of their proclaimed allegiance to Christianity and Islam, traditionalists tend to privilege the angelic over the divine, since the multiplicity of angels more closely accommodates a paganist religiosity than the worship of a single God. "The gods of 'paganism'... are not so much self-sufficient and self-regulating principles (like the God of monotheism) as Angels in an etymological sense, 'messengers', 'spirits.'"<sup>38</sup> The metaphysics of angelism allows traditionalists to pursue an alternative path between polytheistic and monotheistic doctrines. Angels are more transcendent than corporeal polytheistic gods and at the same time more immanent than a monotheistic God. With a monotheistic worldview, angels are derivative in relation to God, but for traditionalism they become primary forces that reflect the multiplicity of nature in the multiplicity of spirits.

On the other hand, traditionalist angelism presupposes contempt for the "human, all too human" nature of the common man. In his programmatic introduction to the first issue of "Cherished Angel," Dugin writes: "We are not interested in the slightest degree in profane and humanistic problems, even in their most honest and critical existentialist versions. One can say that we, in general, do not address people as such. What is important to us is only the angelic dimension of being and therefore only those souls who are aware or at this stage at least have a intuition of their 'angelomorphism', their 'likeness to angels'.<sup>39</sup> Dugin's basic orientation is pure esoterism, or angelic elitism, as opposed to vulgar and democratic appeals to human dignity and human rights. However, the practical outcome of this angelic worldview, claiming to reconcile man and God, may in fact be the radical rejection of both, and ultimately the rejection of the world, which is, according to a recent statement of Dugin, "hopelessly bad." "The only way to get rid of it and its chimeras is its severe liquidation by any means. Total war declared against everyone who cooperates with the world, against all humanists, against anyone who is fearful or prefers American soup to spiritual values."<sup>40</sup> Thus the search for "spiritual

values," the angelization of the world, in its most radical extension, presupposes its utter destruction.

Traditionalist writings, though densely populated by occult terminology, should not be classified as religious philosophy since their ultimate goal is not to provide a path to God, but to establish a hierarchy of national and geopolitical values. Orthodoxy and Islam are advocated not for their intrinsic spirituality, but as a means to consolidate Eurasian nations. In the alliance of geopolitics and metaphysics typical for traditionalists, it is geopolitics that plays the leading part. The same symbiosis was established by Marxism in the relationship of philosophy and history. Leftist, Marxist metaphysics was interested in history as a vehicle for the transformation of the world, whereas traditionalists are obsessed with geography, since their values are radically prehistoric and anti-historic. Geopolitics, in Dugin's view, is "directly connected with symbolic geography, which regards the entire earth as a single Sacred Text, written with special signs and symbols."<sup>41</sup>

Using the insights of European geopoliticians, Dugin distinguishes two types of civilization: sea-oriented--"Atlantian"--and land-oriented--"Continental." The antagonism between Atlanticism and Continentalism constitutes the major tension of world history. Atlanticism, exemplified by the legendary Atlantis, by ancient Carthage and by contemporary England and the United States, is characterized by the spirit of trade, of profit, and internationalism. Continentalism, best represented by legendary Hyperborea, and by historical Roman, German and Russian Empires, emphasizes the organic unity of people in their spiritual bonds with the earth. Thus the very form of the land-mass supporting a people is thought to influence the character of their culture and philosophy. The openness of the seas surrounding island nations produces an extroverted character, inclined to mercantilism and intercourse with other nations, while the isolating expansiveness of continents engenders an introverted character focused on the preservation of tradition.

The specificity of radical traditionalism is determined by its antagonism toward liberalism and its criticism of conservatism. Liberalism is viewed by traditionalists as a combination of Rightist economic policies-- the absolute freedom of markets--and a Leftist political orientation--the absolute freedom of individuals ('all-permissiveness'). Traditionalism "also must combine in itself elements of 'Leftist' and 'Rightist' ideologies, but we must be 'Rightist' in a political sense (that is, 'nationalists', 'traditionalists', etc.) and 'Leftist' in an economic sense (that is, supporters of social justice, 'socialism', etc.)."<sup>42</sup> Therefore, there is an inverse relationship between liberalism and traditionalism on all ideological levels. If liberals

are oriented to the West, then traditionalists privilege a "unequivocal orientation to the East and solidarity with the most Eastern geopolitical sectors in the solution of territorial conflicts."<sup>43</sup> If liberals proclaim internationalist and cosmopolitan doctrines, traditionalists take an 'anti-mondialist' position and extoll national and racial allegiance. This inversion extends to every issue in the liberal program because traditionalists take great pains to contradict liberalism "on all fronts" of ideological struggle.

The distinction between traditionalism and other Russian conservative movements is more subtle because of the variety of correspondences between them. Traditionalists support the bulk of Slavophilic and neo-Slavophilic views, including the romantic allegiance to the the past and valorization of the soil, the criticism of Western rationalism and individualism, the equal rejection of Marxism and liberalism, the condemnation of the spiritual poverty of democratic societies with their loss of national identity and erosion of tradition, and so on. However, the conservative nationalism of Solzhenitsyn's type seems palliative to traditionalists, since it nostalgically appeals to Russia's prerevolutionary, Tsarist past. From a traditionalist perspective, even 19th century Russia was already perverted by the Enlightenment mentality that gave rise to Bolshevism; thus traditionalists "are striving to return to an order that preceded not only the Revolution but also the emergence of those causes that led to the Revolution."<sup>44</sup> They oppose the ideal world of Tradition to both the post-Revolutionary and pre-Revolutionary "worlds of crisis," which "makes absolutely inevitable not 'conservatism', not maintenance of the past, but precisely Revolution, total, all-renewing, radical, but in a direction completely opposite to the Revolution of the Left."<sup>45</sup> In other words, conservatism is not nostalgic or radical enough; it wants to preserve the legacy of a past and resists any innovation, which made sense before the communist revolution. Now that the world is already radically changed, "liberalized," conservatism is outmoded, naive and impotent; what is needed is not preservation of the past, but radical innovation, the restoration of a deeper layer of the past which was buried by the destructive forces of "progress."

Another distinction of traditionalists is their universal Rightist appeal, an almost paradoxical pan-nationalism or nationalist internationalism. Unlike other conservatives, with their exclusively Russian or Slavic nationalism, traditionalists attempt to unite the extreme Rights of the entire world. They are more indebted to German, French and Italian fascist or para-fascist ideologists than to the Russian Slavophiles of the 19th century. They cite Khomiakov and Kireevsky with sympathy,

but distance themselves from the patriarchal, conservative utopianism of idyllic pre-Petrine Russia. The traditionalist spirit is not meek and conciliatory but militant and unrelenting, which allies them more closely with the aesthetics of brutal heroism characteristic of National Socialism; and, like the Nazis, they desire to form an international coalition of Right-wing movements to oppose the decadence of the democratic West.

As compared with conservatives, who proclaim a nativist Orthodox faith, traditionalists are much more religiously eclectic. The range of their mystical interest is as 'cosmopolitan' as their political strategy. Although they praise Orthodoxy, they see in it only an external manifestation of a much deeper esoteric tradition, which unites paganists, Muslims, gnostics, Christian heretics and Indian holy men. Whereas conservatives like Solzhenitsyn extoll the Christian virtues of humility, self-limitation, and communality, traditionalists attribute these values to the insidious Judaization of Christianity, which infused the paganist essence of Christianity as a religion of God-man with the slave mentality and repentant religiosity of a creature cast out of paradise.

If the conservative ethics of self-limitation lead contemporary Slavophiles to a policy of isolationism, to the concentration and utilization of all native resources under the aegis of a monoethnic State, then traditionalists, with their militant mysticism, pursue imperialist and expansionist goals. "...We foresee the future Eurasian empire consisting of various ethnoi, peoples, denominations and political formations, but united around the Continental Idea."<sup>46</sup> That is why traditionalists, unlike Slavophiles, emphasize the historical affinities between Russia and Europe. Their goal is the unification of the entire continent of Eurasia for the struggle against the dominance of Anglo-American Atlanticism. Therefore, in contrast with conservative isolationists, traditionalists make overtures of alliance with Western Europe, especially Germany and France, in hopes of forming a powerful bloc of nations ready to surrender part of their political sovereignty to the Continental Idea.

Also, whereas conservatives, like Russian Village Writers, gravitate nostalgically to the values of a pre-industrial, agrarian civilization, traditionalists, like Prokhanov, are ardently dedicated to technological innovation and extoll the beauty of nuclear armaments and other advanced weapons of mass destruction. For them, technology, as a tool of power, is not opposed to nature, but improves and extends the majestic potential of nature's elemental forces.

To a great degree, traditionalist thinking follows the patterns of the Soviet ideological imagination with its exaltation of heroism, courage, technological and

political power, the cult of personality, and the revolutionary transformation of the world. It is as if the structures of Soviet rhetoric have merely changed their contents from Leftist to Rightist, like a reflection in a mirror. This is especially clear in the case of Prokhanov, who in the 70's and 80's distinguished himself in giving a mystical color to his glorification of Soviet military and technological expansion, as he now inevitably gives a Soviet color to his glorification of the militant and technological mysticism of the extreme Right.

Therefore, the Russian nationalist conservatism of the second half of the 20th century has undergone several modifications. The first stage was the promotion of organicism and the critique of structuralism in aesthetic theories. Second came a revitalization of the thinking of 19th century Slavophiles and an attempt to prioritize their legacy over the revolutionary-democratic and Marxist traditions of Russian thought. A third phase saw the rise of Rightist political dissidentism and the reevaluation of Russian history as having been degraded by the invasion of Marxist ideas from the West and now requiring the restoration of a pre-Revolutionary national identity. Next came the idea that capitalism and communism are two strategies of a single conspiracy, conceived by Zionists and Masons and designed to crush Russia as the world's last bastion of true Christian spirituality. At the same time, an alternative theory, under the influence of 1920's Eurasianism, asserted that Bolshevism was an organic extension of the Russian imperial tradition and so promoted a future synthesis of Orthodoxy and communism. Another aspect of Eurasianism found detailed biological and geographical elaboration in the theory of "ethnos" as a natural propensity governed by cosmic rather than social forces and destined to undergo a predictable cycle of development, from birth to extinction; the mixture of ethnoi dilutes their strength and leads to an untimely dissolution. Finally, two modifications of nationalism surfaced in post-communist Russia. One is moderate conservatism, claiming the timeless values of Orthodox Christianity as a specifically Russian legacy destined to introduce the spirit of national reconciliation into a society torn apart by militant pluralism and partisanship. The other is radical traditionalism, proclaiming the restoration of a paganist, esoteric legacy and the unification of Eurasia into one Empire under Russian guidance to wage spiritual war on the secularized and materialist West. Between these two extremes, conciliatory conservatism and militant traditionalism, fall the many other nuances of contemporary nationalist thought.

<sup>1</sup>L.N.Gumilev. Gumanitarnye i estestvennonauchnye aspekty istoricheskoi geografii. (Humanistic and Scientific Aspects of Historical Geography). In the collection: *Noosfera i khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo*. Moscow: Nauka, 1991, 62.

<sup>2</sup>L.N. Gumilev. *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli*. 3rd pr., Leningrad: Gidrometeoizdat, 1990. The abridged version of this book appeared in an English translation: Leo Gumilev. *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990. I will cite both editions, since they are not identical; in particular, the Russian one has 528 pages, 9 parts and extensive indexes; the English edition has 384 pages, 6 chapters and no indexes at all. For the reader who wants to use both editions, the page numbers for the Russian edition will be indicated parenthetically.

It is significant that the last (ninth) part of the Russian edition, "Ethnogenesis and culture," in which Gumilev's views on ethnic purity and his condemnation of "mixed," chimeric ethnoi are most directly expressed, is absent from "Progress"'s edition, probably to avoid offending a foreign reader. For those pages that are missing in the translation, I will cite directly from the original.

<sup>3</sup> "...Inasmuch as the whole individuality, to the neglect of all other actual or possible interests and claims, is devoted to an object with every fibre of volition, concentrating all its desires and powers upon it - we may affirm absolutely that nothing great in the World has been accomplished without passion."G.W.F.Hegel. *The Philosophy of History*. Transl. by J.Sibree. New York: Dover Publications, 1956, p.23.

<sup>4</sup> Russian "*passionarnost*". An anonymous Soviet translator of Gumilev's book uses the term "drive;" however, since Gumilev's term is a neologism in Russian, I prefer an English neologism derived from the same root: "passionality." Accordingly, Gumilev coins the term "*passionarii*" to signify those people who embody the ethnic "*passionarnost*" ; the English equivalent would be "passionaries," but in the Soviet edition, it is translated as "people with drive".

<sup>5</sup>The meaning of the term "passionality," as well as of other derivative terms, such as "passional infusion" and "passional overheating," can be located in "The Dictionary of Concepts and Terms of L. N. Gumilev's Theory of Ethnogenesis," compiled by V. A. Michurin, in the appendix to Gumilev's book *Ethnosphere. The History of People and the History of Nature*. In this same edition, one can find the author's account on the history of the creation of his theory of ethnogenesis, "The Biography of a Scientific Theory, or an Auto-Obituary."

<sup>6</sup>Leo Gumilev. *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990, p.217 (273).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.197 (253).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.269 (327).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.229 (285).

<sup>10</sup>L.N.Gumilev. *Drevniaia Rus' i Velikaia Step'*. Moscow: Mysl', 1989, p.682.

<sup>11</sup> Leo Gumilev. *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere*, Chart on p.379 (491).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.373 (450).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.283 (360).

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- 14 L.N. Gumilev. *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli*. 3rd pr., . Leningrad: Gidrometeoizdat, 1990, p.473.
- 15 *Noostera i khudozhestvennoe tvorchestva* Moscow: Nauka, 1991,p.63.
- 16 L.N. Gumilev. *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli*, pp.472-483.
- 17 Ibid., p.484.
- 18 Ibid., p.484.
- 19 Khazars - a people who inhabited the vast area in the lower reaches of Volga in the 7th-9th centuries. Khazars were defeated by the Russian Prince Sviatoslav in the 10th century and quickly dissipated.
- 20 *Drevniaia Rus'*, p.151.
- 21 Ibid., p.148.
- 22 L.N. Gumilev. *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli*, p.485.
- 23 Ibid., p.485.
- 24 L.N.Gumilev. *Drevniaia Rus' i Velikaia Step'*, p.590.
- 25 Ibid., p.590.
- 26 L.N. Gumilev. *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli*, p.336.
- 27 Leo Gumilev. *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere*, p.261 (341).
- 28 For a pioneering exposition of the their political ideology see Walter Laqueur. *Black Hundred. The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993, esp. pp.139-142.
- 29 [Editorial] *Probuzhdenie stikhii. Elementy. Evraziiskoe obozrenie*. No.1, Moscow, 1992,3.
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- 32 Ibid.,4.
- 33 A.Dugin. Metafizicheskie korni politicheskikh ideologii. *Milyi Angel. Ezotericheskoe reviu*. 1991, vol.1, 84.
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- 39 *Milyi Angel*, 4.
- 40 *Zavtra*. April 1994, No.14 (19),8. (exposition of Dugin's speech in the article of A.Kamennyi "Dukh i pochva").
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- 42 [Editorial].Ideologija mirovogo pravitel'stva *Elementy*, 1992, No.2, 2.
- 43 Ibid.,2.

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.,15.

<sup>46</sup>[Editorial] *Elementy*, No. 1, 4.

