

# Red Religion: An Ideology of Neo-Messianic Russian Fundamentalism

Victor Yasmann\*

The collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union left an ideological vacuum, which is rapidly being filled by extremist and nationalist ideologies. Sadly, the democratic forces in the former Soviet Union have so far failed to meet this ideological challenge, in part because after the vanquishing of Communist ideology, liberal anticommunism itself began to experience a crisis. Certainly, democrats in Russia have managed to isolate such pro-fascist groups as Pamyat, or Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party. However, they have overlooked the much more dangerous and potentially powerful extremist ideology known as *Evraziistvo*, or "Eurasian concept."

The twin schools of "Eurasians" and "Russo-centrists" on the one hand, and "neo-internationalists" on the other, differ on important issues but are united by the messianic fundamentalist concept of a "Third Way" for Russia. They share the view that the historical cataclysm that occurred in Eurasia is more than a simple defeat of communism, but rather the beginning of far-reaching changes in the world order and the **first global revolution**. In that sense, Russia is the first country to suffer this trial by fire, which—in their view—awaits the other industrial nations. Through this ideological prism, Russia is not a cluster of backward nations needing Western assistance to catch up, but rather, a pioneer country, paving the way for a new, global order. In a transmuted context, this, of course, recapitulates the self-proclaimed vision of the founders of communism, of leading a new international order.

The main differences between the Russo-centrists and the neo-internationalists is tactical rather than strategic. Some background on the two schools of Eurasian ideology is necessary to make this distinction clear.

•The Russo-centrists stress the **fundamentalist** component of the Eurasian

---

\* *Victor Yasmann is a research associate at the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute in Munich.*

concept. They believe that the first priority should be the revival of the Great Russian ethnos. According to this view, only in such a way can a new statehood be rebuilt. They reject the traditional Russian imperialist drive for expansion into neighboring nations, arguing that the central geographic position in Eurasia and the general resources in a modern world economy will guarantee Russian dominance in the twenty-first century. The Russo-centrists maintain that those who control Eurasia will control the world (see discussion below).

- The neo-internationalists, however, emphasize the **neo-messianic** significance of the events in Eurasia. In this somewhat paranoid vision, the West will never "allow" Russia to achieve its true potential. It can also be said that the "new thinking" of Gorbachev, Yakovlev and Shevardnadze (after Gorbachev's book *Perestroika: New Thinking For the Soviet Union and the World*) also captures some messianic elements. This school of thought says that there is more socialism in the West than in the former USSR. The neo-internationalists argue that the Western countries utilize the "positive" potential of the October 1917 Revolution more constructively than the former Soviet rulers did, using it to reform the worst aspects of unbridled capitalism.
- The fledgling Soviet state in this view made grave miscalculations by transferring the class struggle into belligerence in foreign relations. In fact, the neo-internationalists state that the class struggle is carried on not between so-called capitalist and socialist states, but within every individual nation. They identify two ways of thinking: humanitarian-socialist, which they explicitly link to New Testament concepts, and technocratic-militarist, which in their view reflects the Old Testament's philosophy. Finally, in their view, it is the **cultural and scientific intelligentsia**, not the working class (as the Soviet leadership prior to Brezhnev dogmatically believed) that is the true moving force of progress and a bearer of scientific thinking.

### **Russo-Centrist Eurasians**

Eurasian ideology, *Evrasiistvo*, traces its roots to the so-called "first wave" of Russian émigrés who settled in Germany and France immediately after the Revolution and the Civil War. Its core was the group of intellectuals known as the League of Russian Culture.<sup>1</sup> Among its founders were the geopolitician and economist, Pyotr N. Savitsky; the linguist Count Nikolai S. Trubetskoi; the jurists Vladimir N. Ilin and Nikolai N. Aleksev; the religious philosophers Lev Krasavin and Georgy

Florovsky; and the historians Mikhail Shakhmatov and Gennady N. Vernadsky.

In contrast to the other parts of anti-Soviet or White Guard emigration, the Eurasians created an integrated political philosophy with economic, political, ideological and state-organizational dimensions, and in that sense became competitive with Marxism-Leninism.

The Russian Eurasians were strongly influenced by West European geopolitical thought, which stressed the dominant impact of the geographic and demographic factors on human history. Sir Halford Mackinder, the founder of this political theory, had contacts with White Russian ideologists that dated from his service as the British high commissioner in southern Russia in 1919. The Eurasians were also influenced by the school of Pan-German and pro-Nazi geopoliticians; in particular, Professors Karl Haushofer, Friedrich Ratzel, Carl Schmitt, Oswald Maull, and the Swede Rudolf Kjellén.

Following the Western geopoliticians, the Russian Eurasians believed that there is no natural border between the European and the Asian parts of the continent.<sup>2</sup> They accepted the geopolitical precept that Russia, as the central part of the continent, formed a natural bridge between East and West, North and South. According to this geopolitical formula, those who control the heartland also control Eurasia (or, to use their terminology, the "World Island"). Those who control the World Island dominate the world. The influence of the German geopoliticians on their Russian disciples was initially intellectual rather than ideological.

For obvious reasons, the Russian Eurasians tried to convert the postulates of geopolitics into a doctrine suitable to the Russian national ideals and history. Their starting point was that Russia belongs neither to the East nor to the West. In their view, Russia by itself constitutes a unique, self-sufficient civilization that grew out of two heritages: the Mongol and the Byzantine. In that sense, the 300-year dispute between "Westernizers" (*zapadniki*), who tried to adopt European political and economic norms, and "Slavophiles" (*pochvenniki*), who stressed the historical and religious roots of Slavic statehood, was pointless. Each group, by focusing on only one aspect of this civilization, failed to grasp the bipolar dimension that is its essential characteristic. Their perception is how the so-called "Third Way"—an attempt to synthesize both aspects—was born.

Because of its historical uniqueness, geopolitical position and enormous demographic, natural and energy resources, Russia belongs to that small number of self-sufficient "universe-civilizations" that have

dominated history. In this view, Russia is "by nature" superior to the western European or Roman-German civilizations. Accordingly, the Russian peoples did not so much conquer their enormous land mass as take possession of it, because their ethnic energy was naturally superior to that of the indigenous groups they found there. Thus, the local groups recognized this superiority and accepted a subordinate position in a harmonious process of assimilation.

The Eurasian vision of the future of post-Communist Russia has three key elements. The first is political rule by a self-perpetuating, enlightened, professional elite ("ideocracy"). The second, a syndicate-style economy (the "corporation state"). And thirdly, a social order based on dominance of talents (i.e. "ideocratic selection").<sup>3</sup>

The original Eurasians, as well as the current group, did not believe in democracy and in a multi-party system. They believed that the ruling elite must be molded not by election, but by selection from a pool of highly gifted and well-organized professional intellectuals united by the same general outlooks, moral standards and religion. The rulers emerge from this stratum and choose their successors from it. In short, a Platonic state of philosophers.

Clearly, such an ideology was very appealing to the existing Soviet ruling class, the *nomenklatura*. The Eurasian ideology allowed the *nomenklatura* a graceful way of abandoning the discredited Marxist-Leninist ideology. As newly minted nationalists and anticommunists, they can cite this doctrine to justify holding onto their jobs, prestige and power.

The economics of the Eurasian theory envisions a corporative state in the mode of the Italian syndicate-like fascism (or in line with the tradition of the Russian anarcho-sindicalists, Pyotr Kropotkin and Mikhail Bakunin). This vision is a so-called "people's capitalism"—working patriotically for the interests of the citizens, as opposed to those of foreign investors. One of this vision's amusing byproducts is its use as a justification by its current followers for converting vast amounts of state property for their personal benefit. Before the fall of communism, the *nomenklatura* (and its members' children) have been busy privatizing and commercializing state property formerly under their management.

The Eurasians have no use for a division of power in government. They despise the independent executive, legislative, legal and financial branches existing in the United States and other Western democracies. In their vision of a corporative state, a strict division of power makes no sense: the ruling creative elite is driven by higher national and spiritual interests superior to democratic procedures. For example, according to the

ethics of a democratic society, an elected or government official that has financial interests affected by official actions has a conflict of interest that may lead to actual corruption. In the ideocratic society, by contrast, this is a benefit since only the most talented and enlightened elite rule the nation, and their involvement in the economy would be most beneficial for society at large because of the purity of their motives and character. Looking at the overwhelming corruption among the present so-called democratic elite, one cannot help but think that apart from corrupt motives, many of the former *nomenklatura* believe they are merely following the accepted ideological norm; that their individual enrichment is better for society as well.

The secretary of state of the Russian presidency and former Marxist-Leninist philosopher Gennady Burbulis recently stated:

The problems we face today can be solved only by a spiritualized power. I am talking about the supreme form of power, the competent, spiritualized and moral one...Such [political power] must not be the subject of regulation or subordination, but to be a kind of integral activity corresponding to global needs.

When asked whether this means a move towards autocracy, he answered: "Perhaps. It will be a new autocratic order emanated from the word 'author, creator'." The former mayor of Moscow, Gavriil Popov, defended his business activities almost in the same words. Although Yeltsin, due to public pressure, eventually decided to forbid commercial activities by state officials, his proposal banning people's deputies and other elected officials from engaging in business is quite half-hearted.

### **Racist Origins of Marxism**

Even before perestroika, the Eurasian ideology was a secret religion of the initiated elite. A Soviet author wrote in September 1991 that "for a long time the slogan 'Evraziistvo' was subtly cultivated by the General Staff, the KGB and the Party apparatus." As will be discussed below, in the first years of perestroika there was a circle of Eurasian supporters in the CPSU International Department, the General Staff and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which dealt with geopolitics on a daily basis. Another group of Eurasians was based in the USSR Academy of Sciences. In a classic case of clientism, key members of the KGB who monitored the émigré community and also handled ethnic issues found themselves

persuaded by the ideology they were supposedly combatting.

It was, however, the historian and anthropologist Lev Gumilev, recently deceased, who drew a line of continuity between the philosophy of pre-war émigré Eurasians and modern Russian nationalists. Lev Gumilev presented his theories in two books published in 1989 which have been largely overlooked in the West.

The books significantly contributed to the gigantic intellectual counter-revolution that was taking place in the shadows of the collapse of communism and the disintegration of the USSR. Whether intentionally or by chance, the counter-revolution has remained almost unreported in the West. However, in Russia and other parts of the former Union, Gumilev has had an enormous intellectual impact, and, as will be later discussed, has enjoyed immeasurable support from key intellectual and political sectors.

Gumilev is the son of two brilliant representatives of the Russian cultural silver age, poets Anna Akhmatova and Nikolai Gumilev—the latter shot at an early age for anti-state activities. The young Gumilev was also a long-time prisoner in Stalin's gulag, mostly for being the son of an "enemy of the people."

According to Lev Gumilev, the life-energy of a people (ethnos) is determined by forces from outer space. Energy sent by cosmic sources supposedly generates a special active condition of biomass, turning it into a nation or ethnos. This historic moment which he terms a "passionary push" corresponds to a time of supreme state, military and economic activities of an ethnos. During this period, the nation conquers territory for itself, sets up the national statehood and dominates its region, and makes breakthroughs in science, technology and in the humanities.

Occasionally, two or several ethni united by natural genetic similarity and adjoined geographically can transform themselves into a single super-ethnos. Thus, the Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, together with Mongol-Turkish people, formed the Great Russian super-ethnos. Other examples of a super-ethnos are mistakenly considered as different peoples. He terms them a single German-Roman super-ethnos. Since every ethnos has its life span, which is about 1200-1500 years, Gumilev judges that the western European super-ethnos is spent. In historical terms, it is doomed to die out unless it gets a new passionary energy from a young super-ethnos—for example, from the Great Russian ethnos, which is only 500 years old.

Inter-ethnic contact might be fatal for a young and energetic ethnos if it enters into physical contact with an elder "relic" ethnos. Even worse

would be the contact with a so-called parasite ethnos, defined as one which lost its national energy and now exists on the energy of other ethni. Here, Gumilev shows his colors both as a crude and sophisticated anti-Semite. He labels the Jews as a parasite ethnos, which has ceased to exist as a separate ethnos. In fact, according to this view, the Jews are not a nation at all, but a specific way of thinking by a certain group of people having Jewish genetic heritage and/or sharing the moral norms of Judaism.

In Gumilev's view, every time a parasite ethnos dominated an indigenous ethnos, revolution, civil war, and the creation of what he calls a "chimera" statehood, followed. So it happened with French rationalists, who unleashed the Great French Revolution, and with British Puritans, who created a "chimera" state—the United States. He labels the U.S. a "parasite" state, established by dissidents and "drop outs" from the dying Anglo-Saxonian ethnos. In his view, this state can exist only by the exploitation of foreign mental, biological, and energy resources. Gumilev links the French and American states to Jews, with the explicit statement that both of their intellectual and spiritual foundations come from the Old Testament.

In the same way, the state of Israel was established by people of Jewish origin who were moved not by their own energy, but by the energy reflecting the passionary potential of the Slavic Belarusians and Poles. To support this proposition he cites the fact that the majority of founding Israeli leaders originated from the western regions of the Russian Empire, like for instance, Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir. They had absorbed the energy of indigenous peoples (in reality, Moshe Dayan was born in Israel and had never spent much time in the USSR, except for a few state visits; Golda Meir left the Russian Empire at the age of six).

All this leads up to Gumilev's analysis of Russian history from the perspective of the interplay between indigenous and parasite ethni.

He begins with an extensive description of another one of his chimera states, the so-called Khazar Khanate established by hypothetical Jewish emigrants from the Byzantine Empire in the ninth century. He says it was a horrible, corrupt entity that oppressed its neighbors. The source materials for Gumilev's view of the Khazar Khanate are not clear.

Gumilev and his followers use the example of the Khazar Khanate as a model for analyzing the history of the Soviet Union. According to Gumilev, the Soviet Union was created by Jewish revolutionaries. Lenin and Stalin bastardized the Russian people, turning them into Communist *Untermenschen* (*sovok*). They interrupted the harmonious development of Russian-Eurasian civilization by experimenting with Western

internationalist ideas; they created the corrupt Communist party and the monstrous party police, the KGB, to protect the Party's interests.

The Communists lost the Cold War, which led to a historical defeat for Russia and to the disintegration of the thousand-year-old statehood. Their foreign policy was wrong because it was based not on Russian geopolitical advantages, but on Western internationalist concepts. Preoccupied with the world revolution and class solidarity, the Communists challenged the United States all over the world, supporting "tropical socialism" and phantom Western Communist parties. They wasted resources and talent to create a cumbersome and obsolete army and a gigantic oceanic fleet, ignoring the fact that Russia is a continental power and has its mineral resources at home.

Eurasians see a possible salvation from the wreckage of communism: a reinvigoration of the gene pool of Great Russians by the artificial selection of a new elite and by emancipation from stranger ethnics mistakenly included by tsars and commissars into the composition of the Russian Empire. Among these are the peoples of Central Asia, who do not share the Great Russian cultural-religious heritage; and the peoples of the Baltic states, who belong to an alien super-ethnos. Importantly, the new Eurasians place the awakening of their passion energy and the creation of a new ethnos above the preservation of an empire. This point of view sheds new light on the hectic disbanding of the Soviet Union last December. The prominent philosopher Alexander Tsypko wrote:

In a broad sense, in the Ukraine the second Russian state is now being created. To take it seriously, Yeltsin's historical merit lies in the fact that his struggle with Gorbachev and the center has encouraged the dynamics and pluralism of the Russian Slavic statehood. The new stimuli for the continuation of Russian history have been generated, including the idea of the re-creation of the Belarusian and Ukrainian states. The passion of Great Russians to start new history was expressed in the best way by the essay of Alexander Solzhenitsyn. He spoke in essence not about the right of nations for self-determination, but how to push Asian nations out of Russia immediately and forcibly.

Thus, following the theoreticians of the Nazi Reich, Lev Gumilev gave a biological explanation to human history and its two main "evils": communism and capitalism. In contrast to primitive racist theory, Gumilev has introduced a more universal genetic-spiritual factor. In Gumilev's interpretation, the Bolsheviks were either genetically or



spiritually Jewish and had intentionally undermined the genetic pool of the Great Russian ethnos by eliminating the Russian aristocracy, intelligentsia, peasantry, entrepreneurs and officer corps. Regardless of their actual nationality, Lenin and Stalin were driven by a Marxist philosophy alien to the Russian historical-religious tradition, according to Gumilev and his school. And where did that Marxist ideology come from? Their answer is: from the Old Testament. In this view, the significant fact is that Karl Marx had Jewish ancestry, regardless that he was a baptized Christian. They state that Marx was unable to escape from his genetic code.

One of the most prominent advocates of the view that bolshevism had a non-Russian origin is the philosopher Alexander Tsytko. In a highly publicized essay that was published in 1989, Tsytko stressed the Marxist origin of bolshevism and the closeness of Vladimir Lenin's "national psyche" to that of Karl Marx's. "Lenin as a personality was very similar to his teacher, Marx," he wrote. Tsytko took pains to rebut Leon Trotsky, who in contrast to himself was personally familiar with Lenin (in a section damaging to Tsytko's argument however, Trotsky called Lenin a "typical Russian representative of Marxism").

Gumilev, Tsytko and others who are searching for the Judaic origins of Marxism have their predecessors in the Third Reich. One such predecessor is the Nazi poet Dietrich Eckart, one of Hitler's spiritual teachers, who in 1924 wrote a book called *Der Bolshevismus von Moses bis Lenin*. Alfred Rosenberg's contribution to this theme was his book *Unmoral in Talmud* (1920), while another Nazi ideologue, Herman Fehst, published *Bolschevismus und Judentum* (1934). More significant than the Nazis, perhaps, is the overlap between Tsytko's views and those of the CPSU Central Committee International Department. After the publication of his anti-Marxist-Leninist essay, which was a milestone in the semi-official anti-Bolshevik campaign, Tsytko was promoted from the position of deputy director of the Institute of World Socialist Systems, to a consultant of the International Department. The CPSU Central Committee handed him a luxury apartment in Moscow as a perk. Presently, Tsytko is one of the heads of the Center of Political Research at the Gorbachev Foundation.

### **Gumilev and the *Nomenklatura* Liberals**

"Perestroika is a gigantic social experiment, the results of which are unpredictable today," said in 1989 Alexander Yakovlev, perestroika's chief architect and the author of the concept of "the mobilization of

national intellectual potential."

In mid-1988, the gigantic Party publishing houses and central television suddenly stopped producing literature and films propagating Marxism-Leninism. Instead, they began to publish explicitly anticommunist historical and religious works of Russian pre-revolutionary and émigré philosophers, including Eurasians. It was Alexander Yakovlev who, in a memo to the Politburo, suggested redirecting the propaganda machine to a religious and philosophical line. One can assume that Yakovlev, who was once in charge of atheistic propaganda, was perfectly informed about the weapon he was about to use.

One of the first books published by a prestigious Party academic press was *The Ancient Rus and the Great Steppe* by Lev Gumilev with a foreword by academician Dmitri Likhachev. The intellectual impact of Gumilev's book was enormous, and comparable to *Untergang des Abendlandes* by Oswald Spengler. In fact, Gumilev borrowed from Spengler not only his thesis of confrontation between "culture" and "civilization"—but also compiled at the end of his book quasi-scientific mathematical tables about the decline of civilizations. It is a long-standing Russian cultural tradition to equate a talented intellectual to a "good man." Perhaps, this tradition did not allow the Russian democrats to see behind the "cult" figure of Lev Gumilev, a manifesto of mystic anti-Semitic paranoia. In contrast to the rather primitive proto-Nazi group Pamyat, which was practically isolated by the liberal media, Gumilev's sophisticated xenophobia met no rebuff.

During the last three years or so, his interviews were published, albeit without extreme statements, in *Voprosy Filosofii* (Questions of Philosophy), the former organ of the CPSU Central Committee *Sovetskaya Kultura*, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, and the prestigious intellectual magazine *Nashe Nasledie* (Our Heritage), issued in England by the late Robert Maxwell and the Soviet Cultural Foundation.

In line with Gumilev's book, the whole science, ethnography, was renamed ethnology; and the new Interbranch Council for Ethnological Problems, under the aegis of the Academy of Sciences, was created. Among the members of the Council was the Director of the Academy of Sciences Institute for Ethnology, Valery Tishkov.

The young academician Tishkov, for example, published an ethnological breakdown of the composition of the CPSU. His report indicates that among all Soviet nationalities, the Jews had a huge proportion of Party membership compared to their prevalence in the population—twice the Russian rate. Published without a proper interpretation, such quasi-

scientific statistics support the argument about the Jewish "natural inclination" toward communism and the Jewish responsibility for the Russian Revolution.

A group of Gumilev's strong supporters was in the former USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose official magazine, *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn* (International Life), became a podium for Eurasians. The former cultural counsellor for the Ministry and current Russian cultural attaché in Milan, Gennady Shevelev, wrote that Lev Gumilev's works on the development of ethni from cosmic energy made a bridge between the founders of *Evrasiistvo* and the modern understanding of the world.

A former staff member of the International Department, Igor Malashenko, stated the following in a 1990 article devoted to geopolitics and the Eurasian concept:

Today we have less grounds for pessimism than several years ago, when the country was in deadly immobility...Of course, those territories of the former empire, which never were and never became an organic part of Russia, are territories experiencing an irresistible yearning for foreign Western or Moslem super-ethni and will consistently strive for secession. However painful this process will be, it hardly can harm the power and security of a renewed federation....On the grounds of the separation of the regions...lays the activation of the ethnic-cultural process without which it is impossible to imagine the revival of Russia as a "state of states"....Russia and the empire have different fates. The defeat of the empire ends the Cold War. The defeat of the empire begins the reconstruction of Russia and a new geopolitical round.

If we look back on the mild reaction by the Gorbachev-Yakovlev-Shevardnadze leadership towards the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe; the emphatically scornful attitude towards the non-Slavic peoples in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Moldova and the Baltic states and finally; the process of disintegration in the USSR and the new configuration of the CIS, we might find that Moscow's retreat was not only the result of external and internal pressures. It also contains elements of Gumilev's ideology, especially when the Kremlin had fathomed its historical defeat in the Cold War.

Former KGB officer Oleg Gordievsky described in his book a certain fatalism in the KGB Center during the Polish crisis of 1979-80. KGB analysts had believed that the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe would be doomed by the end of the decade. They thought that Poland and

the other satellite states must be let go. Surprisingly, they included in this group the Baltic states, which are intrinsically hostile to the Russian people and exist at Russia's expense. The same mood gained momentum among the younger educated generation of the KGB, the Central Committee International Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Komsomol.

### **Quick Ways to Improve the National Gene Pool?**

It is scarcely surprising, in light of Gumilev's theory and the ideocratic doctrine of *Evraziistvo*, that there have been efforts to revive the racial practice of the Third Reich. The salvation of the Russian ethnic gene became a limelight topic of daily national newspapers. One of the latest contributions along this line appeared in *Svobodnaya Mysl* (Free Thought), formerly the journal *Kommunist*. In particular, the article concerned racial- supremacist and xenophobic programs of the Nazi regime such as (1) eugenics, the science of artificial breeding of an improved master race (2) euthanasia, the practice of killing incurably ill and mentally retarded people, and (3) forcible sterilization of drug addicts and alcoholics. The founder of eugenics, the British anthropologist and psychologist Francis Galton, belonged to the school of Social Darwinism and believed that society is governed by biological laws. It is well known that his theory was used by Nazis for the concept of the "SS State." But it is less known that until the 1920s, eugenic research was carried out by Russian geneticists, namely Nikolai Koltsov and Alexander Serebrovsky. When Stalin unleashed a program of Soviet genetics, the eugenics branch of this science was also banned. The works of Serebrovsky and Koltsov received new attention when the Interbranch Center of Human Studies was created in 1989. Gorbachev's close associate, the Party philosopher Ivan Frolov, was placed in charge of the project.

One notes with amusement the efforts of Academician Frolov to find arguments "proving" that in contrast to Nazi eugenics, Russian eugenics was "humanitarian." The works of Koltsov and Serebrovsky had nothing to do with "racial hygiene," the former editor-in-chief of *Pravda* declared, and numerous references to the papers of Koltsov and Serebrovsky in Nazi literature were merely "a provocation."

The theme of euthanasia was introduced in February 1992 by the corresponding member of the Russian Medical Sciences Academy, Professor Stanislav Boletsky. Appearing on the most popular television talk show in Russia, "Vzglyad," Boletsky argued on prime-time on

Channel One that euthanasia is not only a rescue from suffering for an incurably ill individual, but also has social significance. He said that one just has to think about how many young families must spend all their means and time for somebody who cannot be helped, and how many scarce medications are being wasted to prolong the suffering of the terminally ill. A Russian Orthodox priest replied that neither his church nor any other would ever accept this point of view as moral. Boletsky replied that the church's morality must be changed, that society is not ready for this problem, but must deal with it nonetheless. An article by Boletsky advocating euthanasia was also published by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, a sign that it was not an isolated appeal, but rather a public campaign.

There is a striking similarity between the arguments as well as methods of presentation supporting state-run euthanasia between Boletsky's approach and that of Hitler's propaganda minister, Josef Goebbels. To avoid church and popular resistance and in line with Goebbels' dictum that the "best propaganda works indirectly," Nazi propagandists made their point through feature films. A British commentator on Goebbels noted that:

Human interest stories would soften the stark reality of what was being done by occluding the issues in a mist of pseudo-moral dilemmas. Decisions being taken by the state in terms of cold global statistics were thrust back on to each individual film-goer through the agency of sentiment.

Indeed, in August 1941, the film *I Accuse* by Wolfgang Liebeneier was released with euthanasia as the main plot element. According to a report by the Nazi Secret Security Service, it was seen by 18 million people, certainly far less than the audience watching Boletsky on "Vzglyad."

There is another Third Reich population policies' echo in a legal act on forcible sterilization for alcoholics, drug addicts and the mentally ill which was drafted by the Russian Supreme Soviet Committee for Women Affairs in January 1992. Its proclaimed goal was to prevent "degeneration of the nation and deterioration of its gene." It was withdrawn as a legislative proposal. Only Radio Liberty and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* focused attention on its Nazi antecedents.

The above-mentioned cases are not the initiative of extremist hate groups, but the reflection of a mindset of a broader political spectrum, primarily the new quasi-democratic elite. Once again, we turn to Tsytko:

...12 to 17 percent [of the population] has a genotype ready for changes and...70 to 80 percent, just used to the old life. If we would like to create a normal civil society, the crucial problem is such: whether these progressive 12 to 17 percent can be held back by all the masses made unhappy by the changes.

In the same vein, it is a major mistake to think that the propaganda of Nazi and fascist ideology appears only in the fringe media, in ultra-nationalist and neo-Communist leaflets. Some mass media with a democratic and liberal orientation has published pro-fascist materials as regularly as their antagonists from the extreme right. The usual fig leaf is the expression that these materials are "published without comment for the mature reader."

Last year, the St. Petersburg newspaper *Chas Pik* printed a collection of publications from the Russian language newspapers published by Alfred Rosenberg's Ministry of the Eastern Occupied Territory in 1942-43. The City Procuracy issued a warning to the newspaper for disseminating fascist propaganda. Ignoring the warning, the newspaper published the article "The Jewish Ancestors of V. Lenin"—also borrowed from the Nazi archives.

When in 1990 the procommunist *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* (The Journal of Military History—*VIZ*) announced the publication on its pages of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, it caused a real uproar in the Soviet liberal media and in the West. Among those who protested was the liberal magazine *Ogonek*. In the summer of 1991, however, *Ogonek* itself serialized in two issues the diaries of Dr. Goebbels, "addressed without comments to a mature reader," an editorial comment said. *VIZ* has a circulation of 70 thousand copies, addressed mainly to historians and academicians. *Ogonek*, which has a large illustrated format, had then more than 2 million readers. Similar tactics have been used on several occasions by the upscale *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. This year, for example, the paper published an interview with the leader of the National-Socialist Party, Viktor Yakushev. A graduate of the prestigious Economics Faculty of Moscow State University, Yakushev stressed what he termed the positive elements of Hitler's thinking, but concluded that the Nazi dictator was "too romantic" in underestimating the strength of his opponents. The interview was published "without comments for a mature reader."

### **The Red Religion of the Neo-Internationalists**

There is no question that the proponents of the new "ideocratic" elite realize very well what they are talking about. One of them, the political analyst (and mathematician) Sergei Kurginyan wrote:

The hope of the country, the new emerging stratum, must realize that its role is not to be a revolutionary democracy which puts in power the criminal bourgeoisie. It itself is a cognitive stratum, a "cognitariat" coming to power...Yes, genetic engineering, accelerated evolution, in a word, everything we are going to do, is dangerous. But one can deal with this only after understanding that there are no good means. There is too little time and the goal is too complicated. But what is to be done? Only to perish or to break through.

Kurginyan, who is the author of the book *Post-Perestroika* and the founder of the multi-disciplinary Experimental Creative Center (ECC) belongs to the neo-internationalist branch of the Eurasian movement. In his book, Kurginyan says that Russia must reject all attempts to imitate the Western post-industrial world on the grounds that such a civilization is both unattainable and immoral. Russia cannot attain the living standards of the leading Western countries because, if it did so, the world ecological balance would be destroyed. Such a path would be immoral as well, because the prosperity of the West is based on the exploitation of the Third World.

Finally, he asserts that Russia cannot adopt the civilization "of Mickey Mouse and Rambo" and must confront it with the culture of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Friedrich Nietzsche. He sees Russia as the only place on Earth still unconquered by post-industrial imperialism. In the twenty-first century, it must be the place where a new meta-religion arises. Kurginyan leaves out little in this yet-to-be formulated credo. It attempts to somehow unite a kind of spiritual communism, Christianity, Islam, the "philosophical anthropology" of Lev Gumilev, and the teachings of the Russian scientist Vladimir Vernadsky and the French philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin about the integrity of mankind's spatial, biological and social activities.

The journalist Pavel Voshchanov, once Kurginyan's associate and also onetime Yeltsin's press secretary, was the first to make public the activities of the Experimental Creative Center and its links to the discredited Soviet governments of Nikolai Ryzhkov and Valentin Pavlov. It turns out that Kurginyan's institute has had strong support from former analysts and

ideologists of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department, the group of think tanks of the former USSR Academy of Sciences, prominent space and nuclear strategists from the defense sector and the KGB people from such front organizations as the Soviet Committee for Peace Defense, the Institute of the International Working Movement and the Council of General Trade Union Confederations. Together with these organizations, the ECC began to publish in 1991 an intellectual bi-monthly, *Polis*, which repeated his theme in a more sophisticated form. *Polis'* editorial board and contributors represent the whole constellation of the names from this realm. They include Alexander Galkin, former deputy rector of the Institute of Social Sciences of the CPSU Central Committee; Yuri Krasin, rector of the Academy of Social Sciences of the CPSU Central Committee; Alexander Weber, Timur Timofeev, Vsevolod Rybakov, Alexander Epstein, all career staffers at the Central Committee's International Department; and the leading experts of the Institutes of USA and Canada, Europe, and Oriental Studies.

For years, members of this group have studied "subversive" movements active in the West (sometimes in the hopes of manipulating them). In an odd turnabout, writings in *Polis* make it evident that the new political coloration of the ECC group reflects the thinking of groups that used to be their object of study: ideologies of the Western radical leftist and extreme rightist movements including the New Age and Lindon LaRouche philosophies.

After the coup, however, Kurginyan joined a group of Russian fundamentalists and national-Bolsheviks allied around the weekly *Den*, a militant fundamentalist Eurasian publication. The editorial staff of the weekly includes the so-called "song bird" of the General Staff, writer Alexander Prokhanov; the controversial television journalist Alexander Nevzorov; and the young historian Alexander Dugin. Contributors to *Den* include the former rector of Moscow State University, the director of the thermo-nuclear center in Protvino, academician Anatoly Logunov, and the director of the Institute of Socio-Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Gennady Osipov.

The Eurasian-internationalist group has advanced the platform of an "All-Continental Eurasian Resistance" to the "oceanic powers," i.e. the USA and England. Kurginyan and the Prokhanov group have established contacts with European "neo-rightists" such as the French Jean Marie Le Pen and Alain de Benoist, and the Flemish nationalist Robert Stoikers, as well as with Italian, Spanish, and German neo-Nazis, Indian nationalists from the Hindi Jhanati Bkhrati movement and Lebanese falangists.



Robert Stoikers, for example, recently wrote in *Den* that "the only genuine legitimacy for Europe is a German-Russian geopolitical union of an imperial type based on a corporative-socialist economic model. National Roots, Justice, and the Empire are the three components of the conservative revolution on which the future of Europe and of the whole Eurasian continent depends. It is important that the union of socialists and nationalists will be not only a pragmatic alliance against the forces of the Atlantic orientation, but a basis for the continental ideology of the Third Way. Alexander Dugin agreed with Stoikers:

The notion of *Nashi* ("ours") is identical to the entire network of supporters of the great continental block from Japan to Belgium, from China to France, from India to Spain, from Iran to Germany, from Russia to Italy. *Nashi* is a single invisible continental front of surface, the western province of which is Europe; the front which is confronting the West, i.e., the oceanic powers.

## Conclusion

1) It does not matter how many influential Russian elitists really share the belief in the elements of the Eurasian concept and how many of them simply are using it for opportunistic reasons. The threat is that the ideology in question is much more than the political platform of a party's program. This is already a *Weltanschauung*.

2) In today's "Weimar Russia" there is no political concept, nor political force, which can intellectually challenge the new Russian-Eurasian fundamentalism. I am afraid that there is no such ideology either in Europe or the United States. Democracy and a market economy are not ideologies at all. I wish I were mistaken, but I feel that the "mlado-Russian" democrats little by little have begun to absorb this ideology.

3) Among the relatively small number of genuine believers in the Eurasian concept are nuclear scientists, General Staff officers, members of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy, writers like Valentin Rasputin, Vasily Belov, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and, at least partly, Vladimir Maximov, painters such as Iliya Glasunov and Anatoly Klykov, film-maker Nikita Mikhalkov, new Russian multi-millionaires like Svyatoslav Federov, Sergei Kugushev and Sergei Nefedov (the last is the president of the People's Eurasian Oil Company Hermes). In contrast to Vitaly Korotych or the like, these people are never going to emigrate from Russia, and we will have to deal with them.

4) Today the ideology of *Evraziistvo* is still the domain of a nationalist elite, which is proliferating slowly through the liberal state television and printing media. The overwhelming corruption of state officials and the criminalization of political life will continue its pace, further weakening alternative authority. The explosive potential of *Evraziistvo* may reach out to the broader disparate groups like the technical intelligentsia, qualified workers, army officers, Slavic minorities in the CIS and Baltic republics, and to the young patriotic people who are looking for ideas that mirror their frustration.

### Notes

1. Although some critics are trying to compare the intellectual impact of the League of Russian Culture with that of proto-Nazi German historical society "Tule" in Munich, in 1920s, the resemblance appears superficial, except the fact that both societies had united displaced academicians, military officers and aristocrats.
2. For a more detailed discussion of the Eurasians, see Nikolai N. Alexeev: *Na Putyakh k Buduyushchemu Rossii* (Paris: Izdanie Evrositsev, 1927), and *Teoria Gosudarstva* (Paris: Izdanie Evrositsev, 1931); Peter N. Savitsky, *Rossia Osobyi Geograficheskii Mir* (Paris: Izdanie Evrositsev, 1927); Pyotr Savitsky, *V Borbe za Evroziistvo* (Paris: Izdanie Evrositsev, 1931); Nikolai S. Trubetskoi, *K Probleme Russkogo Samopoznania* (Paris: Izdanie Evrositsev, 1927); Gennady N. Vernadsky, *Nachalo Russkoi Istorii* (Paris: Izdanie Evrositsev, 1927); V. Zenkovsky, *Russkie Mysliteli i Evropa* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1955); Vladimir R. Varshavsky, *Nezamechennoe Pokolenie* (New York: Izdatelstvo Imeni Chekhova, 1956); Mikhail Agursky *National Bolshevism* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1980); Leonid K. Shkarenkov, *Agonia Beloi Emigratsii* (Moscow: Mysl, 1986).
3. The Greek word *eidos* means "idea/image." It originated in Plato's writings about a state of enlightened philosophers.
4. *Pravda*, 11 April 1992.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Argumenty i Fakty*, No. 14; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 21 January 1992.
7. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 7 April 1992.
8. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty *Daily Report*, 27 November 1991.
9. Pavel Tulaev in *Literaturnaya Rossia*, No. 39, 1991.
10. Lev S. Gumilev, *Drevnyaya Rus i Velikaya Step* (Moscow: Mysl, 1989). See also, *Etnogenez i Biosfera Zemli* (Leningrad: Izdatelstvo LGU, 1989).
11. «V gostyakh u Lva Gumileva,» *Den*, No. 12, 1992.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 14 January 1992. Tsypko refers to Alexander Solzhenitsyn's essay «Kak nam obustroit Rossiyu?» (How do We Rebuild Russia?).
14. *Nauka i Zhizn*, Nos. 11 and 12, 1988; Nos. 1 and 2, 1989.
15. Alexander Tsypko, «Khoroshi li nashi printsipy?» *Novy Mir*, No. 4, 1990, p.178.
16. *Argumenty i Fakty*, No. 37, 1990.
17. *Pravda*, 3 October 1989.

18. *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, No. 10, 1990.
19. Gumilev, *Drevnyaya Rus*.
20. *Voprosy Filosofii*, No. 5, 1989, pp. 157-160; *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 13 May 1987 and 3 June 1987; *Izvestiya*, 13 April 1988; *Moscow News* No. 20, 1990; *Chas Pik*, No. 2, 1991; *Nashe Nasledie*, No. 6, 1991; *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, No. 18, 1992.
21. *Polis*, No.1, 1991, pp. 32-44.
22. *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, No. 10, 1991, pp. 86-91; see also Georgy Derlugyan, «Byla li Rossiiskaya imperia kolonialnoi?» *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, No. 2, 1991, pp. 88-99; Andrei Zelensky, «Kosmos kultur,» *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, No. 10, 1990, pp. 151-152.
23. Igor Malashenko, «Rossia v serdtseviny zemli» (Russia is of the Earth), *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, No. 6, 1990, pp. 63-64. Presently, Malashenko is the director for political affairs of CIS Television, *Izvestiya*, 18 December 1991.
24. Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990) pp. 638-639.
25. See, for example, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, No. 47, 1991.
26. *Svobodnaya Mysl*, No. 2, 1992.
27. *Psikhologicheskii Zhurnal*, No 5, 1989, p. 75.
28. *Kvintessentsia: Filosofskii Almanakh* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1990) p. 13.
29. CIS Television First Channel, 21 February 1992.
30. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 24 March 1992 and 22 April 1992.
31. See, Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) pp.156-157.
32. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 18 January 1992.
33. Alexander Tsipko and Adrannik Migranyan, «V kakoi strane my bydem zhit?» *Octyabr*, No. 1, 1991.
34. *Chas Pik*, 21 June 1991 and 1 July 1991.
35. TASS, 1 August 1991.
36. *Voенно-Istoricheskii Zhurnal*, No. 11, 1991.
37. *Ogonek*, No. 32-33, 1991.
38. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 12 January 1992; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 8 February 1992.
39. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 13 August 1991.
40. For details about Kurginyan's ideology and the ESS' activities, see: "Elite Think Tank Prepares 'Post-Perestroika Strategy'," *Report on the USSR*, No. 21, 1991, pp. 1-6.
41. Sergei Kurginyan, Vladimir Ovchinskii, Gennady Avrekh, «Finansovaya voina,» *Nash Sovremennik*, No 5, 1991; *Moskovskaya Pravda*, 8 June 1991; Sergei Kurginyan, «Sedmoi szenarii,» *Moskva*, No.9, 1991, pp. 110-125; *Koza*, 2 October 1992; Sergei Kurginyan, «Rossia ne mozhet ostatcyia v storone ot borby za mirovoe gosподstvo,» *Narodnaya Pravda*, No. 2, 1992; *Den*, No. 2, 1992.
42. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 4 and 10 April, 1991.
43. For more details on Alexander Dugin see, Vera Tolz, "Archives Yield New Statistics on the Stalin Terror," *Report on the USSR*, No. 36, 1991.
44. *Den*, No. 6 and 13, 1992.
45. *Den*, No. 15, 1992.
46. *Den*, No. 14, 1992.