Senseless and Merciless: “The Russian World”

The Ideology of a Russian crusade

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1 For one section of Russian society, 2014 saw the triumphant reawakening of the Russian Empire as it “rebelled against the West”. For another section, it was a year when the state shamed itself, perfidiously attacking a neighbour and menacing the rest of the world with nuclear weapons, de facto unleashing a civil war in someone else’s country and a cold war against dissident citizens in its own.

As the battle cry for this new “crusade” against its closest kin, and against the Western world that supported that neighbour, it was decided to dig out of the lumber room of history the notion of “the Russian World”.

In March 2005, Colonel Vladimir Kvachkov of the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the General Staff of the Russian Federation’s Armed Forces was arrested in his Moscow apartment. He was charged with organizing an attempt to assassinate Anatoly Chubais, one of the main instigators of the economic reforms in Russia in the early 1990s. A bomb exploded on a suburban highway in broad daylight in front of Chubais’s car. No one was hurt and the armoured limousine suffered only superficial damage.

The arrest of a GRU colonel on such charges was sensational, but even more sensational were his political pronouncements in an interview which the right-wing newspaper Zavtra (“Tomorrow”) published under the heading of “Yes to a National Uprising!”

Kvachkov believed that agents of a murky global conspiracy had seized power in Russia. These included Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Putin. The liberal press portrayed him as Moscow’s very own village idiot but it was unclear how, if he was mentally unhinged, he could have been employed from 1994 by the military intelligence agency and subsequently given a research job as a Candidate of Military Science at the General Staff’s new Centre of Strategic Studies.

Twice acquitted in court, in December 2010, one day after the second acquittal, Kvachkov was arrested on a new charge of organizing armed rebellion.

According to the FSB investigators, the colonel had created a ramified, highly secretive organization that planned to seize power in Russia. This time he was sentenced to 13 years of penal servitude, reduced by the Supreme Court to 8 years. While in prison, Kvachkov wrote

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1 This paper was written for the Russian Service of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty. It can be accessed at, Abarinov, V. and Galina Sidorova. ‘“Russkiy mir”, bessmislenniy i besposhadniy’, svoboda.org, 15 February 2015, available at: http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/268135610.html?%C2%A0%C2%A0=all&page=all
two books, *Who Rules Russia?* and *Who Should Rule Russia?*

The truth is that Kvachkov made no secret of his organization. He announced its formation at a press conference in November 2010. It was called “The Minin and Pozharsky People’s Militia”, after the leaders of the seventeenth-century Russian liberation movement which put an end to the Time of Troubles and enthroned the first tsar of the Romanov dynasty. His organization included representatives of the Movement Against Illegal Immigration, the Left Front, the Imperial Russia Movement, the National Union of Russia, the Officers’ Association and the Military Union of Sovereign Russia.

10 million rubles that nobody won

Gorbachev’s perestroika and the subsequent collapse of the USSR were extremely painful for the Russian army. The policy of disarmament, abolition of the Warsaw Pact, and the “velvet” revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe led to withdrawal of Soviet troops from these countries and, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, also from the Baltic states. With Russia’s economy floundering, there was nowhere for them to live: no barracks for the soldiers, no apartments for the officers and their families, not even adequately equipped bases for the military hardware. The army had lost its traditional enemy and now did not know who it was supposed to be fighting, or whether the state even needed it. The government, for its part, used troops to suppress internal unrest. Not infrequently, it shielded itself by accusing them of exceeding their orders. Society began to view the army, not as its defender against external threats, but as an instrument of state coercion.

In search of the source of their misfortunes, many in the army, like Kvachkov, came to believe in a global conspiracy behind the scenes. Their mindset was encapsulated in a pamphlet titled *Dead Water*, anonymously published in 1992 by, it later transpired, a group of lecturers at the naval colleges in St Petersburg. Dead water is found only in Russian fairy tales. To revive a slain hero, in this case, Russia, his mortal wounds must first be treated with dead water and then, to bring him back to life, with alive water. The leader of the group was Major General Konstantin Petrov of the aerospace defence forces, formerly a leading figure at the Baikonur Cosmodrome, the mission control centre of the Russian space programme. He later lectured at the Mozhaisky Military Space Academy and was one of the fathers of the Soviet Buran space shuttle.

In November 1995, the State Duma had held public hearings on the concept of “public security” as expounded by the authors of *Dead Water*. 
In Kremlin offices, meanwhile, the search was on for a Russian National Idea. In the wake of his 1996 election victory, Boris Yeltsin suddenly talked about it at a reception for the members of his election team. Hot on his heels, the government’s Rossiyskaya Gazeta offered 10 million rubles to whichever reader wrote the best essay on the subject. Nothing came of that project, however. For want of any sufficiently deserving entry the newspaper ultimately cancelled the competition, and Yeltsin soon had more pressing concerns.

Despite this setback, a National Idea soon presented itself, even without a cash prize.

**TEMPLARS OF THE FIFTH DEGREE**

Eurasianism has been around for a long time, constructed by emigres in the 1920s on the ruins of the Russian Empire. It posits a special path for Russia as an independent civilization uniquely placed between Europe and Asia. It is associated also with the name of ethnographer and historian, Lev Gumilev. According to his theory of ethnogenesis and the role of “passionarity” (or appetite for conquest), which many consider pseudo-scientific, Russia never was under a Tatar-Mongol yoke. Instead there was an alliance between Russia and the Mongol Horde against their common enemy, the West. In the 1970s, a group of admirers formed round Gumilev. Among them was the philosopher, Yury Borodai who, in 1994 after the death of his teacher, advocated reunifying the empire. The main driving force would be Russians whom history had destined to live outside of Russia. Borodai declared it was crucial to the union that, “Russia cannot live without Belarus, eastern Ukraine and Novorossiya, without the Crimea and the Russian part of Kazakhstan.” This programme is today being implemented by his son, Alexander Borodai who, until August 2014, was chairman of the Council of Ministers of the self-proclaimed People’s Republic of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine, and is currently its deputy chairman.

Alexander Dugin became the leader of “neo-Eurasianism”. His career has been erratic but there is a logic to it. He was born in 1962 into the family of a GRU general, and expelled as a second-year student from the Moscow Aviation Institute (his detractors say, for poor academic performance, although he claims it was for anti-Soviet activities).

In 1980, the young Dugin became friendly with Heydar Jamal, future leader of the Islamic revival in Russia, who was almost twice his age. Jamal introduced the truth-seeking youth to the circle of Yevgeny Golovin, a poet and mystic who was popular with Moscow’s semi-underground occultists. Only “semi-underground” because the authorities did not bother persecuting them as rigorously as liberally inclined dissidents. A fascination with esotericism,
alchemy and the occult was considered a harmless intelligentsia fad. Talented, charming and witty, Golovin was a knowledgeable admirer of the Middle Ages who talked of the need to return to an updated version of the chivalric virtues of the past: hierarchy, military valour, and the service of ideals. The circle’s Nazi paraphernalia was more evidence of a desire to shock than of deep-seated conviction. Nevertheless, they called themselves the “Black Order of the SS”, and their Grand Master was the “Reichsführer”.

In 1988, Dugin and Jamal, on Golovin’s recommendation, joined the Pamyat’ (“Memory”) National-Patriotic Front, one of the first associations of Russian imperial nationalism. Their membership did not last long, and after a few months the pair were expelled for “occultist and satanist” views and disloyalty to the association’s leaders.

Dugin first visited the West in 1989 and met up with the European New Right, from whom he later borrowed the term “Conservative Revolution”. He also met the writer, Eduard Limonov, who was living in emigration in Paris.

In spring 1992, Dugin, making use of his military contacts, organized a roundtable discussion in Moscow for his new friends, Alain de Benoist from France and Robert Steuckers, leader of the Belgian New Right, with the participation of leading lecturers at the army’s General Staff Academy. The guests were bowled over. Occupying a marginal position in their own countries, in Russia they found themselves rubbing shoulders with the generals of a nuclear superpower. Their hosts were appreciative of the anti-Americanism of their guests and their commitment to conspiracy theory.

In August 1992, Dugin invited Jean-Francois Thiriart to visit Russia, and a year later Christian Boucher, Grand Master of the French branch of the Order of Eastern Templars. This occultist organization considers itself the principal guardian of the teachings of British Satanist Aleister Crowley. Dugin was greatly taken by his teaching. He posthumously enrolled Crowley in the list of founders of neo-Eurasianism, and himself as a Templar of the Fifth Degree. He gave himself the aura of a prophet initiated into esoteric knowledge by announcing that he had worked in the KGB archives with materials on the activities of occult institutions of the Third Reich.

In 1993, Dugin and Limonov were the inspirers and founders of the National Bolshevik Party. National Bolshevism, according to Dugin, “unites all that was most extreme in fascism and communism.” Under the pseudonym of “A. Kamennyi”, Dugin published in the NBP’s
newspaper *Limonka* ("The Hand Grenade"), simultaneously writing a textbook on geopolitics and working, as he put it, “behind closed doors”, at the General Staff Academy.

“Putin is absolute”

In 1998 Dugin parted company with the NBP but, due to a change of direction in Kremlin politics, the doors of Russia’s national television channels were opened to him. He lectured at the General Staff Academy and became an adviser to the State Duma’s speaker, Gennadiy Seleznev. This former member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had been instructed to try out a new plan from the Kremlin strategists, introducing a two-party system by creating a main “opposition” party uniting nationalist advocates of a strong Russian state. Dugin was their man, his outlook neatly combining nationalism and imperialism. After the general election, this party, vaingloriously called just “Russia”, vanished into thin air, but Dugin had now become a member of the establishment. In 2003, he organized and headed his own “International Eurasian Movement”. The members of its Supreme Council included Alexander Torshin, deputy speaker of the Federation Council; Mikhail Margelov, chairman of its International Affairs Committee; and other well-known faces. The chairman of the party’s Executive Committee was Colonel Pyotr Suslov of the Foreign Intelligence Service, also well known, albeit within a narrow professional circle. As a member of the Cascade special operations group, Suslov had engaged in intelligence activities in Afghanistan, later serving in Mozambique and Angola. These years of service correlate fairly closely with those of Igor Sechin, President of Rosneft and one of Vladimir Putin’s closest friends. In the late 1990s, Suslov retired to work within the State Duma bureaucracy as a security adviser.

Quite how close Dugin himself is to the Kremlin’s so-called power block faction, which in the mid-2000s felt a need for “enlightened nationalism”, is a matter for debate. What is known is that, in the heat of Putin’s third election campaign, it was Dugin who came out with a formulation, subsequently refined by Volodin. He told *Izvestiya*, “Putin is everywhere, Putin is everything, Putin is absolute, Putin is irreplaceable.”

When the Orange Revolution hit Kiev in 2004 and the Kremlin needed an antidote, Dugin was brought into play. In February 2005 he organized a “Eurasian Youth League”. Its founding congress was held in Alexandrov in Vladimir province where, in the sixteenth century, Ivan the Terrible established the Oprichnina, an emergency system of government implemented by the tsar’s personal praetorian guard. Dugin called his followers “neo-oprichniks”.

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“We are modern empire builders,” we read in the *Catechism of the EYL Member*, “and will settle for nothing less than world domination. We are the children and grandchildren of the lords of the earth. Peoples and nations bowed down before us, our reach extended over half the world, and our shoes trampled the mountains and valleys of the continents of the Earth. All this we shall restore.”

Vladislav Surkov, a “Russian by political outlook”, et al.

For all that, the Kremlin leaders evidently regarded Dugin’s neo-Eurasian excursions as overly exotic. The more so because they already had a court ideologist ruling the intellectual roost. Vladislav Surkov enjoyed the rank of deputy director of the Presidential Administration. The son of a Chechen father, in October 2012 he described himself in an interview with *Vedomosti* as, “Russian by political outlook.” In the mid-2000s Surkov had added “sovereign democracy” to the vocabulary of Russian politics. The concept hypothesised some specifically Russian mode of political existence, different from classical Western democracy, with a pyramid of power, “manual control” of the economy, the opposition, and indeed all society’s institutions. It was vigorously promoted. The foundation of Russia’s National Project was laid. History, in the person of Count Sergey Uvarov, Minister of Education under Tsar Nicholas I, was called to testify. The Count is remembered for his formulation of the three pillars of Russia, Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and National Identity, which he persistently attempted to dun into the head of his superior.

We should note, however, that Uvarov particularly insisted that Russia was European, if retaining “certain traditions of the East”, more specifically, the Byzantine understanding of religion and God. She was bringing that to the West, and the West should “reciprocate by paying due respect.” The Tsar’s minister, as his extant writings demonstrate, sought emancipation for Russia within Europe, not isolation from Europe. While Uvarov was minister, the Russian government strengthened its hold over universities and grammar schools but, on the other hand, it was Uvarov who persuaded the emperor of the need to send students and scholars abroad to gain practical experience.

Those close to the current regime who were interpreting Uvarov, in adapting his project to their political purposes, took from him only what suited them, omitting, most obviously, his European underpinning. Putin probably took little interest in the abstruse historical researches of his subordinates.

Writer Zakhar Prilepin recalls his first encounter with the president on 2 February 2007. He
and some fellow writers had been invited to meet him in Novo-Ogarevo, and Denis Gutsko asked about the National Idea. “You know, I really have thought a great deal about this matter,” the president said, “but have not come up with anything much good so far.”

“Nevertheless,” Prilepin continues, “Putin did reveal his thinking on the National Idea. ‘The main task,’ he said, ‘is to be competitive, in science, in the economy, and in culture.’”

It is worth noting that by this time Putin had already used the expression “the Russian World”. He did so in late 2006. Speaking at a meeting with members of the creative professions at Derzhavin House in St Petersburg on the eve of Russian Language Year, the president emphasized, “The Russian World can and should encompass all who cherish Russian literature and Russian culture, no matter whether they live in Russia or beyond her borders. Use that expression, ‘the Russian World’, often,” Putin enjoined these representatives of the artistic intelligentsia, who hung on his every word.

In association with his wish, in June 2007 a presidential decree established the Russian World Fund, charged with promoting Russian language and culture and strengthening ties with compatriots abroad. The theme was picked up also by the Russian Orthodox Church which, at activities popularizing the Russian World concept, came up with a slogan reminiscent of a football fans’ chant: “Belarus, Ukraine and Russia all are part of Holy Russia!” Patriarch Kirill went further, adding Kazakhstan and Moldova to the territories blessed with the common spiritual heritage of Holy Russia.

**National identity according to Putin**

Back in the Kremlin in 2012 after an enforced four-year break, Putin was annoyed and shocked by the “White Ribbon Revolt” over ballot rigging. By this time he was already confident that everything, or nearly everything, in the country was under his control, so he did what to him must have seemed perfectly natural and, in the Russian context, was entirely predictable: he introduced repressive measures. The Duma rubber stamped laws to rein in and intimidate malcontents and free-thinkers, NGOs, and independent journalists. At the same time, Putin was well aware that merely tightening the screws, even against a relatively small but increasingly active part of the population, would not be sufficient to earn him the people’s love.

In September 2013, Vladimir Putin spoke at a meeting of the Valdai Club, an annual meeting of foreign experts on Russia set up by the Kremlin. This was seen as the forum most suitable
for announcing the doctrine of the Russian World. Among the club’s honoured guests on this occasion were Volker Rühe, ex-Defence Minister of Germany; François Fillon, ex-Prime Minister of France; and Romano Prodi, ex-Prime Minister of Italy.

Putin spoke on a topic conventional for philosophers but unusual for a head of state: national identity. He offered Russia as a guiding star for mankind, capable of delivering it from the quagmire of error arising from the European Enlightenment. “We see many Euro-Atlantic countries actually repudiating their roots, including the Christian values on which Western civilization is founded. Moral principles and all traditional identities are spurned: national, cultural, religious, and even sexual. Policies are pursued that give equal value to a family with many children and same-sex partnerships, worship of God and worship of Satan.”

According to Putin, the West was mired in vice and all manner of abomination, and had abandoned its faith in favour of political correctness and multiculturalism. In April 2014, the president of Russia talked with satisfaction about a conservative revolution in Europe: “So-called conservative values are resonating differently, as I have said on more than one occasion. The victory, for instance, of Viktor Orbán in Hungary, the success there of more extreme forces in the recent elections, the success of Marine Le Pen in France (she came third in the municipal elections), the advance of these trends in other countries, is obvious. Glaringly obvious.”

Thus began the Conservative Revolution that Alexander Dugin and his associates had proclaimed was so necessary. Annexation of the Crimea and the Novorossiya project, which whipped up such euphoria among the general public, were to be the catalysts of this “revolution from above”.

**An ideologist without ideas**

In fact, however, in the opinion of almost all the experts with whom we talked, the annexation of Crimea was unplanned. It was just dealt to Putin like a royal flush in poker, and he instantly took advantage of it in order to resolve at a stroke problems within his country, which was starting to grumble, and also with the outside world, which he was finding more and more disagreeable. Dugin’s neo-oprichniks had grown up by now and marched at the forefront of the neo-imperial warriors of #Krymnash (“#CrimeaIsOurs”), and the motley host now had President Putin of Russia himself at its head. The Kremlin ideologists had to settle for the role of oprichniks, which is not so surprising. You can, after all, only have one Leader.
At the same time, the justification of Putin’s actions is a peculiar mix of what seem completely opposed concepts and ideals: the Russian World and Eurasianism. We discussed this with political analyst Stanislav Belkovsky and Vladimir Ryzhkov, chairman of the Russia’s Choice movement.

Ryzhkov believes that Putin’s interest in the Russian World idea is purely utilitarian, “because there is no other way of excusing Russia’s actions either in Crimea or in Ukraine. They violate all Russia’s international obligations within the framework of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the bilateral agreements between Russia and Ukraine, particularly the major Friendship Treaty of 1997.” “So they’ve come up with the excuse that they need to protect the Russian-speaking population,” the politician says. “But when at the same time the Eurasian Economic Community agreement is being signed in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, you cannot allow any mention of the ‘Russian World’ ideology. What is being served up has a completely different ideological complexion, Eurasianism. They are totally opposed. Eurasianism is all about the vast expanses of the steppes, Dugin, Slavs and Turks, Mongols and Buryats, and all this Eurasian integration has to be founded on harmony between them. The Kremlin takes one scalpel to use in Crimea: it is labelled ‘Russian World’. They take out a different scalpel in Astana, and it is labelled ‘Eurasian Union’. They take out a third scalpel in Beijing and use the BRIC concept, by which they mean, “anything that is not the West”. They are honing it for use against the West. These ideological concepts are simply incompatible. For each operating theatre he has a different set of instruments.”

In Belkovsky’s opinion, Putin is wholly against nationalism, and in fact simply cannot understand or accept ideological motivation of any description. Avarice is a different matter. “He is not afraid of greedy people,” Belkovsky says, “because he believes he can always buy them or threaten to move them away from the trough. Someone whose motivation is ideological, though, he can neither buy nor intimidate, so he puts them in prison. Incidentally, the largest number of political prisoners in present-day Russia, under the notorious Article 282 of the Criminal Code, are Russian nationalists.”

In things Putin has said in the course of his career, Belkovsky sees “the legacy of all the ideologies in the world.” Everything he believes about real politics, Belkovsky reminds us, Putin explained at a press conference about a year ago. Referring to Nikolai Berdyaev, he said that conservatism is the prevention of regression. So here he is, busily preventing it. He has convinced himself that he is the saviour of Russia, and that reforms are needed only when they
conduce to preserving the existing order, not to amending it, let alone abolishing it.

Stanislav Belkovsky sees the key to Putin’s motivation as primarily personal. “It is not the Russian World or the Soviet World: it is his world, Putin’s World, in which he must occupy the place befitting his ideas about his status. He has no interest in all the other stuff.” Putin, he says, is a russophobe: he has no faith in the creativity or capabilities of the Russian people, and is certain that democracy would merely bring adventurists with fascist inclinations to power in Russia, who would then ruin the country.

Crimea was not the goal, only the means

In his “Crimean speech” of 28 March 2014, in which Putin attempted to justify de facto annexation of the peninsula by turning the tables on the West, we hear the same refrain as in the “Valdai Club speech” of 2013, only with a marked strengthening of the truculent isolationist tone as a result of the Crimean “victory”: “The notorious policy of containment of Russia, pursued in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, continues to this day. There are constant attempts to drive us into a corner because we take an independent position, because we stand up for it, because we call a spade a spade and do not dissimulate. But everything has its limits, and in the case of Ukraine our Western partners crossed a line, behaved uncourteously, irresponsibly, and unprofessionally.”

Crimea essentially enabled him to present his accumulated personal grudges against Western leaders in a way more comprehensible to the population at large. In effect, he took advantage of Crimea. Crimea was not a goal. It was a means.

There was good reason why, in Putin’s December 2014 address to the Federal Assembly, the peninsula suddenly assumed a new significance as a kind of “sacred” territory for Russians.

Next, we see Zakhar Prilepin, 2014 winner of the main Russian literary award, the “Big Book Prize”, arguing that Russia is not European and ridiculing those who, in his opinion, give themselves airs over their supposed Europeanness. As represented by Prilepin, “It is a bizarre, paradoxical situation: 0.01% of the population impose their monkey discourse on 99.99% of the population.” “They live in some Russia of their own,” Prilepin fulminates against the liberals who have suddenly become so hateful to him, “bantam-sized, agreeable in every respect, civilized, which only has stuck on it, like a burr, everything Asiatic and those vast, cold, slanting expanses which, incidentally, you can’t even see in the distance from the Jean-Jacques restaurant in Moscow. The claim that Russia is part of Europe should be treated as a joke.
Nine out of ten people who want to make Russia part of Europe secretly (and sometimes not so secretly) consider Russia a freak, and believe that the best you can do is europeanize it at least a little.” The mission of the Russian World, in Prilepin’s view, is “to be the guardian of the Eurasian expanses”, “to be fruitful and multiply in order the more densely to populate them”; to escape from European civilization and its “infamous tolerance” to the countryside, back to the soil “in search of the heartbeat of our national life”.

Another young writer, Sergey Shargunov, defines the Russian World as “the Great Russian Dream”: “normal imperial ambitions” and “patriotism plus security, the cultural heritage, social justice plus real democracy and freedom.” Shargunov is, of course, aware that there is still work to be done on the bit about real democracy and freedom. He is certain, however, that for now something much more important is not to abandon “our people” (meaning the militias fighting in southeast Ukraine).

Stanislav Belkovsky sees the most prominent feature of Russian sensibility as an urge to overcome a sense of provincialism: “This is a major motivation for the Russian, and is most fully described by Anton Chekhov. Many Russians think that, having seized Crimea and again having global pretensions on the international stage, we are no longer the backwater we still were yesterday.”

According to Belkovsky, if you see the issue in its historical context, contemporary Russia’s main problem is that she has not reinvented herself. “Russia is an empire which has been neither fully dismantled nor fully defeated. She effectively ceased to exist as an empire in 1991, but did not transition to a normal nation state. She is still in transit, and that is made worse by a loss of identity. Because the transition led nowhere, and generated immense psychological confusion among Russian people and their elites, the idea that we are back where we started is something many people regard as good news.”

But those sky-high approval ratings “#CrimeaIsOurs” brought Putin came less from a feel-good factor among the elites than from “ordinary people”.

For them, according to Georgiy Yuriev, Doctor of Medical Science and specialist in the field of “Virtualistics”, senior research officer in the sector of humanitarian appraisal and bioethics of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, other mechanisms are operating. “Deception, elegant deception, is precisely what is currently going on,” the psychologist avers. “Our most important folk tale is the story of Ivan the Fool. He plays tricks,
he does nothing, and suddenly fame and riches shower down on him from nowhere. There you have it in a nutshell. The main thing is how you do the trickery. Why is Putin so popular? Because he tricks us elegantly. His trickery falls on ground made receptive by this tale, which is specific to us, the Russian public. The main mission of the intelligence services has always been to deceive. At whatever cost, they want to compel people to believe, to subjugate them, and push through their own programme.”

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In June last year, the Zurich Tages-Anzeiger reported a meeting of “the standard-bearers of the Russian Eurasian movement” with “right-wing European populists, aristocrats and entrepreneurs.” The event, held behind closed doors, was organized to mark the 200th anniversary of the Congress of Vienna. The participants discussed how to save Europe from liberalism and considered whether, for such a sacred cause, they ought not to bring back the Holy Alliance. France was represented by an Assemblée nationale deputy from the Front National, the granddaughter of its founding father, Marion Maréchal-Le Pen; Austria by the chairman of the Freiheitliche Partei, Heinz-Christian Strache; Bulgaria by Volen Siderov, leader of Ataka, perhaps the most extreme right-wing party in Europe; and the European aristocracy by Prince Sixtus Henry of Bourbon-Parma.

Russia was represented there by Alexander Dugin and Slavophile painter Ilya Glazunov. The organizer, sponsor and master of ceremonies was Russian Orthodox businessman Konstantin Malofeyev. Tages-Anzeiger recalled what Dugin had said in one of his television interviews: “We must win and unite Europe by peaceful means. We support the pro-Russian fifth column in Europe. These are European intellectuals eager to bolster their identity.” Italy’s La Repubblica called the Vienna meeting the “Black Internationale” and reported that these contacts had alarmed the intelligence services of democratic countries.

It seems likely that the international activities of the neo-Eurasians will soon take priority. As we see from his pronouncements, Vladimir Putin attaches great significance to the electoral successes of the right. Alexander Dugin himself is very active abroad, travelling a lot, and willingly and frequently giving interviews to the foreign press. One result of his exertions, together with massive amounts of propaganda from the Kremlin, has been volunteers from France, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Greece turning up to join in the fighting in eastern Ukraine on the side of the separatists.
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