

## RUSSIA AND THE 'FOURTH POLITICAL THEORY'

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At the end of my article about the 'Katehon' website in the last issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*, I offered tentatively to 'descend more to particulars, the particular shape of Russia and its population(s).'

I still don't feel able to do this. 'Russia' - the Russian Federation - is an immensely complex network of different cultures. In some ways it occurs to me that Western notions of Russia have been greatly influenced by the part of 'Russia' closest to Europe, namely Ukraine. But how much do we know about the Republic of Adygea (population 452,000), the Republic of Bashkortostan (population 4,097,000), the Republic of Buryatia (population 1,003,000), the Kubardino-Balkar Republic (population 897,000), the Komi Republic (population 1,024,000) - to mention only five of the twenty one more or less autonomous republics among the eighty five administrative divisions which constitute what we gaily call 'Russia'?

For the moment, then, I'm going to continue along the lines I started in my 'Katehon' article, in particular looking at the thinking of one of its principle and best known (in the West at least) contributors, Alexander Dugin, posing the problem of how the relative success of Vladimir Putin in establishing a politically stable Russia able to withstand the pressures exercised by 'the West', following the collapse of the USSR, can be continued once Putin himself departs the scene. A question inseparable from the question of what 'Russia' is as a moral unit, given the immensity of its land and the variety of cultures it embraces.

## NATIONAL BOLSHEVISM

Dugin first came to public notice in the 1990s as the theorist of the 'National Bolshevik Party.' The flag of the National Bolshevik Party was a red base with a white circle but instead of the swastika one might expect to see in the white circle there was a hammer and sickle. It looked at first sight like a joke, the more so because the leader together with Dugin was Eduard Limonov, an exotic figure whose semi-autobiographical novel, *It's me, Eddie*, an account of his life in the punk subculture of New York, 'scandalised the Russian public with its many pornographic descriptions of homosexual acts involving the narrator.' I'm quoting the Wikipedia account. The cheapest copy of the English translation of *It's me, Eddie* I've found online costs £200.00. The party had a violent side to it and Limonov spent some time in prison for arms purchasing before eventually, to Dugin's disgust, teaming up with Gary Kasparov's pro-American 'Other Russia' party.<sup>1</sup>

But the term 'National Bolshevism' was not invented by Dugin and Limonov. There had in fact been two movements in the 1920s which were called, or called themselves, 'National Bolshevik' - one of them Russian, the other German. The Russian one, based in Paris or Berlin, whichever happened at the time to offer cheaper living accommodation to Russian emigrés, published a paper called 'Changing Landmarks'. The reference was to the collection of essays - 'Landmarks' - published in 1909 by a group of Marxist intellectuals who had been converted to a more traditionally Russian, or Russian Orthodox, political philosophy. The best known theorist of the *Changing Landmarks* group

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<sup>1</sup> I give a much fuller account of all this in Peter Brooke: 'Third Rome, Third International, Third Reich - A review of Alexander Dugin: *The Fourth Political Theory*, London (Arktos) 2012', *The Heidegger Review*, No 1, July 2014, accessible on my website at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/dugin-index/> Limonov, it should be said, himself Ukrainian, was very critical of Putin's failure after the Maidan coup of 2014, to take the Donbass as well as Crimea. I might add that since this was written a friend has lent me a copy of *It's me, Eddie* which I found rather tedious.

was Nikolai Ustrialov, though he was actually part of the Russian emigré community in Harbin, in China. Ustrialov memorably compared Russian Bolshevism to a radish - red on the outside, white on the inside. The great achievement of the Bolsheviks in his view was to restore the Russian state after it had collapsed through the liberal revolution in February 1917 and the subsequent civil wars. The movement was supported with Soviet government money and encouraged emigrés with skills needed in Russia to return. Ustrialov himself returned and I think was engaged in forestry projects<sup>2</sup>. Like many other interesting Russians, his life came to an end in 1937.<sup>3</sup>

There was so far as I know no connection between this Russian National Bolshevism - strongest in the early 1920s, the period of Lenin's New Economic Policy - and the German National Bolshevism, which came to the fore in the late 1920s. The leading figure here was Ernst Niekisch and we find ourselves in the exciting world of youth movements in the Weimar period, torn between the competing claims of Nationalism and Socialism. Niekisch's own background was initially, apparently at least, on the left. In 1919 he was President of the Central Committee of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Councils of Bavaria and as a result was imprisoned for two years for 'high treason'. After his release, however, two ideas were central to his thinking - the need for a strong German state and the recognition that Germany's worst enemies were Britain and America. Both of these convictions led him to sympathy with the USSR where the Bolsheviks had developed a strong state which stood in decided opposition to Britain and America. But he wasn't tempted to join the Communist Party. The Communist Party was 'internationalist', meaning in practice that it subordinated itself to the Russians. What Niekisch wanted to see was a strong German state in alliance with the USSR. As a German patriot he found himself in sympathy with the tendency known as the Conservative Revolution, in particular with the writer Ernst Junger. Niekisch was ferociously opposed to Hitler and the National Socialists whom he saw, not without some justification, as a weapon being prepared by the 'West' to be directed against the USSR. He identified with what he saw as a Prussian, Protestant, tradition in opposition to Hitler's Catholic and Latin-oriented Bavaria. I quote the account by the French right wing theorist, Alain de Benoist, a close associate of Dugin's:

*'Not only was Hitler not a true revolutionary anti-capitalist, his "socialism" only being a lure to use radicalised petit-bourgeois, but in searching for the good grace of Italy, England, and France – that Niekisch denounced under the name of "Brito-Germania," the Anglophilia of the "Hitler-Hess line" – it placed him "on the terrain of Versailles," which showed that he had taken the role of "the gendarme of the West" by launching a "crusade" against Bolshevism. And Niekisch risked this prophecy: If Germany misguidedly gives itself to Hitler, it will surely go towards disaster. "It will remain an exhausted people ... without hope, and the order of Versailles will only be stronger than ever."*<sup>4</sup>

Niekisch's weekly paper *Entscheidung* ('Decision') was banned by the Nazis soon after they took power and he himself was arrested in 1937, the same year in which Ustrialov was executed,

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<sup>2</sup> Dmitry Shlapentokh: 'Bolshevism as a Fedorovian regime', *Cahiers du monde russe*, October-December 1996, vol.37, no 4, p.447.

<sup>3</sup> Robert C. Williams: "'Changing Landmarks" in Russian Berlin, 1922-1924', *Slavic Review*, Dec 1986, Vol 227, No 4.

<sup>4</sup> Alain de Benoist: 'Preface to "Hitler: A German Fate" and Other National Bolshevik Writings', accessible at <https://niekischtranslationproject.wordpress.com/tag/alain-de-benoist/page/2/>

spending the war years in prison. Walking the tightrope between Nationalism and Bolshevism was a dangerous exercise.<sup>5</sup>

## THE FOURTH POLITICAL THEORY

From his involvement with the National Bolshevik Party, Dugin went on to elaborate what he calls the 'Fourth Political Theory.' The three previous political theories were Liberalism, Communism and Fascism. Communism and Fascism had been comprehensively defeated and only Liberalism, the ideology of the Anglo-Saxon world, was left. This of course was the thesis of Francis Fukuyama's famous book *The End of History*. Liberal Democracy was now established as the optimum form of government, the direction in which the whole of history had been headed. It was firmly established in the United States and Europe and what 'history' was left was simply a matter of the rest of the world catching up.

Fukuyama's thesis was, however, challenged by Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilisations*. Fukuyama's view was based on the notion of a common human nature - that basically all of us have the same needs and desires, in Fukuyama's view needs and desires that could be satisfied by all the good things that are available in the United States. Huntington however argued that there are essential differences between the human natures formed in the context of the different historically evolved civilisations of the world, and these cannot be easily dissolved and will result in conflict. As Pat Walsh has pointed out, *The Clash of Civilisations* includes a map showing the 'Eastern boundary of Western civilisations.' The line separating 'Western Christianity' on the one hand from 'Orthodox Christianity and Islam' on the other passes through the middle of Ukraine (and indeed also Belarus and Romania).

But the 'civilisations' Huntington evoked were larger than individual nation states. They relate to a concept developed by Carl Schmitt in the 1920s of the 'great space', which was, as it happens, adopted by Niekisch, living in East Germany after the war. And this is the idea taken up by Dugin with his 'multipolar world.'<sup>6</sup>

Although this term is central to Dugin's thinking I don't know to what extent he could be regarded as its originator or principle advocate back in the 1990s, but it has become central to the discourse of the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and is unquestionably a large part of the appeal Russia has for countries that, one way or another, find themselves at odds with the American unipolar 'rules based international order.' However, the terms 'civilisation', 'great space', 'pole' imply, as I've suggested, something other than the nation state, something more closely resembling 'empire', and, as we saw in my previous article on the 'Katehon', Dugin, who regards the 'nation' as an artificial construct corresponding to the needs of the rising bourgeoisie - a bourgeois 'invention' as argued by Benedict Anderson - isn't afraid to admit the fact. What he has in mind, however, is a land-based, contiguous empire along the lines of the old Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman Empires. These - based on a common religious idea - were quite different from the European - British, French, Dutch, Belgian, Spanish, Portuguese and, late in the game, German - empires, made up as they were of culturally very varied territories scattered throughout the world. The First World War could be interpreted as the triumph of the sea-based empires over the land-based empires. It was the great - indeed quite breathtaking - achievement of the Bolsheviks to preserve, and eventually to expand, the Russian land-based empire.

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<sup>5</sup> It happens that a self-professed 'National Bolshevik' party has recently been established in the UK. Called the 'National Peoples Party' its founder is Peter Wilberg, a name that may ring a bell with some readers of *Irish Foreign Affairs*. See <https://nationalpeoplesparty.wordpress.com/about/>

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Dugin: *The Theory of a multipolar world*, translated by Michael Milleran, London, Arktos, 2021.

'Russia' - the 'Russian Federation' which is essentially an empire - now finds itself in Dugin's eyes charged with the job of opposing what he sees as a unipolar American empire. The ideology of the American empire is triumphant liberalism but Dugin would argue that liberalism:

*'is an equally outdated, cruel, misanthropic ideology like the two previous ones. The term 'liberalism' should be equated with the terms fascism and Communism. Liberalism is responsible for no fewer historic crimes than fascism (Auschwitz) and Communism (the GULag): it is responsible for slavery, the destruction of the Native Americans in the United States, for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for the aggression in Serbia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, for the devastation and the economic exploitation of millions of people on the planet, and for the ignoble and cynical lies which whitewash this history. But, most important, we must reject the base upon which these three ideologies stand: the monotonic process in all its forms, that is, evolution, growth, modernisation, progress, development, and all that which seemed scientific in the Nineteenth century but was exposed as unscientific in the Twentieth century. We must also abandon the philosophy of development and propose the following slogan: life is more important than growth. Instead of the ideology of development, we must place our bets on the ideology of conservatism and conservation.'*<sup>7</sup>

Liberalism, he argues, based as it is on individual freedom, contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Nothing stays still and the process of the freeing of the individual ultimately leads to the freeing of the individual from everything that gives substance to human being - attachment to the soil, family, ethnos (identification with particular people or community which Dugin distinguishes sharply from the idea of nation), creative work with one's own hands, religion - especially religion of the sacramental, priestly, 'magical' type, 'Orthodoxy' for example. All that has, one might think, already gone, but Dugin does not accept the 'eschatological' view that history is headed in one particular direction. Time, in Dugin's view, can turn back on itself and what has been lost can be restored. That is, after all, what the Soviet Union experienced when it went back to capitalism, national conflicts and Orthodoxy as a national religion. This flexibility of time leads Dugin to express considerable interest in and sympathy for the German 'Conservative revolutionaries' - Niekisch, Moeller van den Bruck, Junger, Schmitt. One could suggest that Dugin's Fourth Theory, like 'National Bolshevism,' is made up of what he believes can still be discerned as valuable in the wider circle of thinking that surrounded both Fascism and Communism:

*'The second and third political theories [Fascism and Communism - PB] must be reconsidered, selecting in them that which must be discarded and that which has value in itself. As complete ideologies, trying to manifest themselves in a literal sense, they are entirely useless, either theoretically or practically. However, certain marginal elements which advocated ideas that were generally not implemented, and which remained on the periphery or in the shadows ... may, unexpectedly, turn out to be extremely valuable and saturated with meaning and intuition.'* (ibid., p.24)

But he distinguishes the Conservative Revolutionaries sharply from what he calls the Conservative Fundamentalists:

*'the Conservative Revolutionaries say to the conservative fundamentalists: 'You offer to return to a condition when man exhibited only the first symptoms of illness, when there first began the hacking cough. Today this man lies dying, but you speak of how good things were for him earlier. You contrast a coughing man with a dying one. But we want to dig down to discover from whence came the infection and why he started to cough. The fact that, in coughing, he does not die, but goes to work, does not convince us that he is whole and healthy. Somewhere that virus must have nested even earlier...' 'We believe', continue the Conservative Revolutionaries, 'that in the very Source, in*

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<sup>7</sup> Alexander Dugin: *The Fourth Political Theory*, translated by Mark Sleboda and Michael Millerman, London, Arktos, 2012, p.65,

*the very Deity, in the very First Cause, there is drawn up the intention of organising this eschatological drama.' In such a vision, the modern acquires a paradoxical character. It is not merely today's sickness (in the repudiated present), it is a disclosure in today's world of that which yesterday's world prepared for it (so precious for traditionalists). Modernity does not become better from this; and tradition, meanwhile, loses its unequivocal positivity.'* (p.95)

In Dugin's view the direction in which liberalism was heading, the true 'eschatology' of liberalism - 'post modernism' - was freedom from the last contact with the real world, a freedom that could be symbolised by 'virtual reality.' The individual enters into a world of his or her own making (or more likely chooses a world of someone else's making) and in that world he or she can be whatever they want to be at that particular moment.

Which brings me to Heidegger. Dugin says that each of the major political theories - Liberalism, Communism, Fascism and his own fourth theory - has its own 'subject'. In the case of Liberalism it is the individual, in Communism it is class, in Fascism he separates Italian Fascism from German National Socialism. For Italian Fascism it is the state and in National Socialism it is race. In the case of the Fourth Political Theory, it is 'dasein.'

The term 'dasein' was not of course invented or first introduced in philosophy by Heidegger but it is very closely associated with him. Henry Corbin, the specialist in Iranian philosophy who was the first person to translate Heidegger into French, rendered it as 'human reality.' Another translation that has been proposed is 'being in the world.' Being, in this case human being, that is situated in the world, I would say, using a term Heidegger would never use though I suspect he wouldn't have disagreed with it, created by God. Or the gods. Heidegger declared that to be an issue as yet undecided.<sup>8</sup>

But it is also of course the world as formed in a particular human collectivity, culture or civilisation - Islamic, Buddhist, animist, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Confucian or whatever. Even perhaps, as many of these tendencies would understand Western civilisation, Nihilist. While rejecting nationalism and racism (in its widest sense - 'the very ideology of progress is racist') Dugin enthusiastically advocates:

*'a positive attitude toward the ethnos, an ethnocentrism directed toward that type of existence which is formed within the structure of the ethnos itself, and which remains intact throughout a variety of stages, including the highly differentiated types of societies which a people may develop in the course of their history. This topic has found deep resonance in certain philosophical directions of the Conservative Revolution (for instance, Carl Schmitt and his theory of 'the rights of peoples', in Adam Müller, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, and so on) or the German school of ethnic sociology (Wilhelm Mühlmann, Richard Thurnwald, and others). Ethnos is the greatest value of the Fourth Political Theory as a cultural phenomenon; as a community of language, religious belief, daily life, and the sharing of resources and goals; as an organic entity written into an 'accommodating landscape' (Lev Gumilev); as a refined system for constructing models for married life; as an always-unique means of establishing a relationship with the outside world; as the matrix of the 'lifeworld' (Edmund Husserl); and as the source of all the 'language-games' (Ludwig Wittgenstein). Of course, ethnicity was not the focal point either in National Socialism, or in Fascism. Yet, liberalism as an ideology, calling for the liberation from all forms of collective identity*

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Heidegger: *Contributions to Philosophy - The event*, translated by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniella Vallega-Neu, Indiana University Press, 2012, p.345. I discuss the relation between Heidegger and Dugin in Peter Brooke: 'Absolute Beginner - A review of Alexander Dugin: Martin Heidegger - The Philosophy of Another Beginning, Arlington VA, Radix/Washington Summit, 2014', *Heidegger Review*, No. 3, October 2016, accessible on my website at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/heidegger/>

*in general, is entirely incompatible with the ethnos and ethnocentrism, and is an expression of a systemic theoretical and technological ethnocide.'* (p.46)<sup>9</sup>

The great advantage of 'Empire' over 'nation', of course, is that, as in the case of the Russian Federation, it can accommodate many different ethnic groups.

## RUSSIA AND THE 'HISTORY OF BEYNG'

I want to end with a little improvisation of my own which brings together Heidegger, some of the issues we've been looking at and the present conflict in Ukraine - a conflict which, whether or not it actually develops into a world war, I believe will have the historical importance of a world war.

Heidegger's theme, evoked in the word 'being', is the human sense of reality and he argues that this evolves through human thought, specifically the thought of the philosophers. The direction, we might say the eschatology, of our own sense of reality was set in his view by the questions posed and answers given by the Greek philosophers, starting with Anaximander, Parmenides and Heraclitus but taking a definite form in the work of Plato and Aristotle. What followed - including the whole course of Western Christianity - was a working out of the thoughts that had been developed at that time, culminating in the German philosophy of the nineteenth century and especially the work of Nietzsche. Nietzsche, in a great anguish that ended in madness, confronted the fact that all that was left to us of our sense of reality was the Will to Power, expressed not necessarily in the obvious form of political power but in our identification with 'machination' - in what could be done with technology. For Nietzsche, as for Heidegger, this was a devastation of the spirit and Heidegger saw his task as trying to bring about 'another beginning' - going back to and rethinking the original questioning of the Greeks.

What he is describing however is the evolution of European - and eventually American - "Western" - thought. Despite seeing its origin in Greece Heidegger shows no interest in what happened subsequently in Greek culture. His Christianity is entirely Western - Catholic and Protestant. He has no interest in Greek Orthodoxy. And yet it was in Constantinople that the actual writings of the Greek philosophers and poets were preserved.

They were preserved, so to speak, in amber - a precious cultural heritage, something to be proud of but nonetheless not particularly relevant to the needs of the day. The questions posed had now been answered through the Christian revelation and the understanding of that revelation gained by the Fathers of the Church. It was from Constantinople that the Kiev-based 'Kingdom of Rus' was converted. The Greeks gave the Slavs Christianity, but they didn't give them their own classical culture. Why, they would have reckoned, would the Slavs be interested in that?

So we have Greek Orthodoxy preserving classical culture as something to be proud of but safely installed in the past much as we might regard Anglo Saxon or early Celtic literature; Russian Orthodoxy ignorant of classical culture; and European Christianity, fascinated by classical culture, believing it to contain the means by which the world, including the Christian revelation, could be understood.

The Kiev-based Kingdom of Rus, made up of a number of more or less independent principalities, broke up definitively under the impact of the Mongols. One part came under the domination of Poland and Lithuania and the other became what we now call 'Russia'. The people who subsequently became known as Ukrainians are the people who maintained their commitment to Orthodoxy under Polish Catholic domination. The area round the Dnieper became a war zone in which an Orthodox population, as 'Cossacks', notionally under Polish rule but actually highly

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<sup>9</sup> We can note in this context his book *Ethnos and Society*, translated by Michael Millerman, London, Arktos, 2018.

independent, confronted the continuing Mongol population, the Tatars, who controlled the Black Sea coastline including Crimea, in alliance with the Ottomans who now controlled Constantinople.

It was in this area that, in the seventeenth century, a most extraordinary thing happened - the establishment of the first 'Russian' (if we can use that term) theological academy. It would be better to call it a Cossack academy. It was formed under Cossack patronage - at a time of very great violent confrontations, not just with Tatars but also with Poles and Jews - to defend Orthodoxy against the 'Uniates' in Galicia - the area with an Orthodox population that was more securely under Polish rule. The Uniates were Orthodox priests who, under pressure of persecution, accepted incorporation into the European Roman church, together with its theology, but were allowed to continue using the Greek/Slavonic liturgy.

Nonetheless the 'Kiev-Moghila Academy', as it came to be known, had undergone the influence both of the Catholic Church and of the Renaissance, with its renewed interest in classical culture - fuelled as it was by the great abundance of material that had become available since Constantinople had fallen to the Ottomans. The language of instruction was Latin, the case for Orthodoxy was argued in the terms of scholastic philosophy, the languages of culture were Latin and Polish and exotic subjects such as 'rhetoric' and 'poetics' were taught. It was, in other words, quite alien to Orthodox Christianity as understood in 'Great Russia' as it had emerged from under the domination of the Mongols.

But it was highly appreciated by Peter the Great in pursuit of his project of re-orientating Russia in a European direction. Peter in the eighteenth century suppressed the Moscow patriarchate. The Church was reorganised along Anglican or Lutheran lines as a government department under the direction of Theophan Prokopovich, a professor in the Kiev academy. Seminaries on Kievan lines were organised throughout Russia.<sup>10</sup> The twentieth century Russian Orthodox theologian Georges Florovsky refers to this as a 'ukrainisation' of the Russian Church and the overall process, starting in the seventeenth century, produced the schism between the official government sponsored church and the 'Old Believers', who wanted to keep to the old Russian ways. Dugin, incidentally, defines himself as an Old Believer and the Dugin family seem to have played a significant role in Old Believer history.

Without wishing to attribute everything to the Kiev academy, it is only in the nineteenth century that Russia, in the person of Pushkin, produced a literature that is readily comprehensible to the European mind. The point here is that Russia received the line of thought that Heidegger considers as originating with the Greeks quite late in the day, via Ukraine, and as something alien to itself. Its culture, then - and one feels this already with Pushkin, the most Renaissance orientated of Russian writers - combines that European tradition with something else. Maybe this could be illustrated with Pushkin's poem *The Bronze Horseman*.

It begins with a celebration of the beauty and elegance of St Petersburg and praise for Peter, using it 'to cut a window through to Europe/To stand with a firm foothold on the sea ... A hundred years have passed, and the young city/The grace and wonder of the northern lands/Out of the gloom of forests and the mud/Of marshes splendidly has risen.' It then tells us of the young, poor worker, Yevgeni, dreaming of the possibility of marrying the girl he loves, Parasha, while outside his window a storm is brewing. The storm swells up, the river Neva overflows its banks, Yevgeni is next seen sitting astride the marble statue of a lion in Peter's square with the water lapping at his feet, anxiously looking towards the obviously poor quarter where Parasha lives. Eventually the waters recede:

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<sup>10</sup> See e.g. my essay 'Solzhenitsyn and the 'Russian Question', Part 19 Who are the Ukrainians? - Part one, from Kievan Rus' to the Polish partitions' *Church and State*, No.148, April-June, 2022, accessible at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/solzhenitsyn/ukrainians-1/>

'Thus a marauder, bursting into a village with  
His savage band, smashes, slashes, shatters  
And robs, shrieks, gnashing of teeth, violence,  
Oaths, panic, howls! And weighed down by their plunder,  
Fearing pursuit, exhausted, the robbers leave  
For home, dropping their plunder on the way.'

Yevgeni desperately then gets a boatman to take him to Parasha's house while 'heavily the Neva  
breathed like a horse/Galloping home from battle' to find her house has been swept away. The  
revelation drives him mad and he takes to wandering the streets: 'He fed on scraps handed to him  
through windows/Tattered and mouldy grew his shabby clothes./Children threw stones at him.'  
Eventually he finds himself in Peter's square where the stone lions are and the huge bronze statue  
of Peter, erected on the order of Catherine II:

'His breast contracted, his brow was pressed against  
The cold railings, his eyes were sealed by mist,  
Flames ran through his heart, his blood boiled.  
Sombrely he stood before the statue;  
His teeth clenched, his hands tightened, trembling  
With wrath, possessed by a dark power, he whispered:  
"All right , then, wonder worker, just you wait!"<sup>11</sup>

And then he runs off, convinced that the statue, the bronze horseman is chasing after him. It is  
surely, already, the world of Dostoyevsky. Nicholas Berdyaev in his book *The Russian Idea* quotes,  
as fundamental to the Russian view of the world, the poet Fyodor Tyutchev saying that the world is

'A carpet flung over the abyss  
And we float, by the flaming abyss  
Surrounded on all sides.'<sup>12</sup>

The National Bolshevik argument was that Russia had received the essentially European idea of  
Marxism and turned it into something else. Perhaps that can be illustrated by an extract from Ernst  
Niekisch's *Considerations on a voyage to Russia* (1931):

*'The portraits of heroes of the revolution, the revolutionary literature, the figures of Russian  
production, the yield tables of the factory, the crews of boats, the kolkhozes are icons, holy books,  
religious signs of these modern places of spiritual elevation. This new myth shows its cohesive  
force, although it must make its proofs under the lighting of an awakened conscience. It culminates  
in the cult that vows to the body of Lenin. The mausoleum before the Kremlin, facing the  
extraordinary church of St Basil, dating from the epoch of Ivan the Terrible, is as functional as it is  
striking. Each day, thousands of people file before the embalmed corpse, resting in his glass coffin,  
illuminated by spotlights. In this place, one cannot shudder before the mystic secret floating in the  
air and immortally based in transcendence. The naive soul can be moved, but the cold scientific  
curiosity found there is also realized. The ambiance obliges no one to respect the embalmed  
corpse like a wonder worker and savior. The light there is so flooding that it nearly reduces him to a  
wax figure. The myth flowering here borders where scientific curiosity begins. But, despite all, the  
will to believe is strong enough to let it divert itself from the austerity of the environment; the  
rationalism of daily life cannot remove his confidence. The myth flourishes even under the same  
strong lighting of the factory rooms. "For us, the Russians", wrote a fervent communist, "things are*

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<sup>11</sup> Alexander Pushkin: *The Bronze horseman and other poems*, translated by D.M.Thomas,  
Penguin, 1982.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Nicolas Berdyaev: *The Russian Idea*, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1947, p.84.

*easier than for other peoples. When we are at an impasse, we consult our Lenin and there we find advice.*"<sup>13</sup>

Russia is not, or is only tentatively, a participant in what Heidegger sees as the most fundamental characteristic of the European sense of being. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the intervention in Ukraine, it represents for the foreseeable future a break with the integration into Europe that appeared as a real possibility in the Gorbachev years. But to quote Dugin (Fourth political theory, p.109): 'even this was not only an extrapolation of the bravado-based, propagandistic pretensions of the West itself and a result of the network of influence's induction, but also a form of Russian cargo-cults: the first McDonald's, private banks and clips of rock bands shown on Soviet television were perceived as "sacral objects".'<sup>14</sup>

Dugin, promoting his multipolar world, doesn't talk about a 'Russian' pole, even if he sees the pole as situated in Russia, but a 'Eurasian' pole. 'Eurasia' might ideally and eventually incorporate Western Europe but under present circumstances it represents a decisive turning away from Europe towards the East - another thought that has now become very central to government policy.

Russia's fate, if it loses the current confrontation with NATO, may well be the breakup of the Russian Federation into its constituent parts, or at least, as in the case of Ukraine and Georgia, its constituent parts within the boundaries established by the organisers of the Soviet Union. That is certainly what is envisaged in powerful circles in the US. If it survives, however, it may be that Russia is fated soon to become, to those of us living in Europe or the United States, a very strange and alien (and perhaps interesting) place indeed.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://niekischtranslationproject.wordpress.com/tag/considerations-on-a-voyage-to-russia/>

<sup>14</sup> The 'cargo cults', product of the encounter between a technologically advanced culture and a pretechnological culture, saw the advantages of technology in simple terms of cause and effect. The white invaders would clear a strip of land, for example, and a plane full of good things would then arrive from the sky. The native inhabitants thought if they cleared a strip of land in the form of a runway, a plane full of good things would arrive for them as well.