

MARTIN HEIDEGGER AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Based on a talk given in Brecon, 9th May 2023 by Peter Brooke (<http://www.peterbrooke.org/>). The talk in particular looks at Heidegger's influence in Iran and in Russia.

"Heideggerian philosophy" — to the extent that such exists at all — is always only represented by other ones, i.e., embedded as a standpoint and assembled into a nullity.

Martin Heidegger

NEW WORLD ORDERS

I want to begin with some general remarks about world orders.

Prior to the First World War the world was broadly divided between two types of empire - land empires and sea empires. There were three great land empires, each of which could be said to be centred on a religious idea represented in the person of their rulers - the Austro-Hungarian Empire centred on Roman Catholicism, the Ottoman Empire, centred on Islam and the Russian Empire centred on Orthodox Christianity. They were geographically coherent, made up of geographically contiguous parts. A fourth great land empire - the Chinese - was in a state of collapse and the former Indian land empire was incorporated into the British Empire, greatest of the sea-based empires. The sea empires were centred on Europe, spread over large parts of the world, incorporating a number of widely varying cultures thrown together by the hazards of a process of conquest, usually for the purpose of facilitating what was called 'free trade'. A new type of 'empire' was emerging with the US defeat of the Spanish sea empire, the earliest of the sea empires. Whereas the earlier empires would themselves take on responsibility for governing parts of the world they had conquered, the Americans required the countries that came under their domination to form their own governments, solve their own problems, under the watchful eye and economic domination of the hegemon, ready to intervene militarily if things took a turn it didn't like.

The First World War could be represented as a war between the land empires and the sea empires, with Germany (which, only recently united could be represented as a land empire itself) fighting in support of the Austrian and Ottoman empires which, in the event, were carved up into a network of small nations, usually themselves incorporating smaller national minorities. Although the Russian empire was allied with the sea empires, it too collapsed but was put together again in the most astonishing, unpredictable, brutal manner, through the Communist revolution which could be said also to have asserted a new unifying 'religious' idea. The same could be said of Communist China after the Second World War.

The First World War was supposed to have instituted a world order based on independent sovereign nations which were supposed, legally, to have equal status, but the sea empires continued in existence and the arrangements in Europe itself proved to be very unstable, resulting in the Second World War which theoretically reaffirmed the order of independent, supposedly equal nation states as expressed in the Charter of the United Nations but in fact resulted in the division of the world between two great spheres of interest, American and Soviet, with China emerging as a third. Both these great powers contributed to the destruction of what was left of the sea empires. Both represented what could be called secular religious ideas - liberal democracy in the case of the US, Communism in the case of the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the Soviet Union it looked as if we were headed towards a unitary world order, a single world market united in a common idea as to how the economy should be organised and a unified set of legal and moral principles with a single power - the United States - capable of policing the

whole structure militarily. In 1990 the political commentator Charles Krauthammer called this 'the unipolar moment.'¹

I'd like to pause for a moment on this 'unipolar world' to recount something of how I experienced it personally.

Through the 1970s and 1980s I had been quite heavily involved in the political conflict that was raging in Northern Ireland but in 1987 I went to France thinking I could put politics behind me and concentrate on my real deepest interest in the joint fields of religion and art. In France I renewed an interest I had already had while at school in the Baha'i World Faith. The Baha'i World Faith had originated in Iran in the context of Shi'i Islam, but it now claimed to be an independent religion in its own right standing in relation to Islam in much the same way that Christianity claims to stand in relation to Judaism. The Baha'is argued that all the existing great religions were based on revelations of God given to particular parts of the world at particular moments in history, part of a process of what was called 'progressive revelation.' The Baha'i Faith was the revelation of God for the world which had now evolved to the point at which it could be considered as a single human community. They called this a 'New World Order' (they had for some time produced a journal under the title 'World Order') and they believed it would be achieved through two stages - the first an essentially secular system of international law which they called 'the Lesser Peace'. The second a genuine moral unity when the whole world accepted the revelation of their founder, Baha'u'llah and the authority of their own administrative centre, the 'Universal House of Justice', believed to be destined to become the centre of a new world government. This second stage was called the 'Most Great Peace', a term which, even in the period of my greatest sympathetic interest, always evoked in my mind the picture of a graveyard.

Given the belief that the world unified by religion would be preceded by the world unified in a secular system of law the Baha'is are keen supporters of the United Nations and for a system of law, outlined by Baha'u'llah, by which if any country behaved aggressively all the other countries would unite to restore order. In fact the structure of the United Nations under which both the world hegemony - the US and the USSR - had veto powers such a development was virtually impossible but with the collapse of the USSR and the state of moral and intellectual confusion into which Russia as its successor state had been plunged by the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev, it looked as if that problem had been resolved. The war on Iraq in the wake of the Iraqi seizure of Kuwait was, in the terms of the UN system, legal because none of the five permanent members of the Security Council vetoed it. The gathering together of the whole world in opposition to Iraq looked like a fulfilment of Baha'u'llah's prophecy and the Baha'is - in particular the Baha'i administrative centre, the Universal House of Justice - were very keen on it. I was not. I regarded it with horror especially when it reached its climax in the massacre on the road to Basra. When George Bush came out with the Baha'i catchphrase, 'New World Order', and this was welcomed by the Universal House of Justice with something resembling ecstasy, that was the end of my engagement with the Baha'i World Faith.

There is of course a lot more to be said about all that, about the rights and wrongs of the Kuwait war and of course about the Baha'i World Faith, for which I still have a great degree of respect. The main point I want to retain is the creation of a single world order - 'globalisation' if you like - and the spiritual 'progress' of humanity coincident with its scientific progress as a religious ideal. And there was a moment in the 1990s when it looked as if some sort of politically unified world order might be possible, the moment celebrated in Francis Fukuyama's famous book *The End of history* - though Fukuyama's end of history was the recognition that in liberal democracy the world had found the best system of government. The Baha'i end of history was that in the Baha'i World Faith the cycle of prophecy that began with Adam had reached its culmination.

¹ Charles Krauthammer: 'The Unipolar moment', *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 70, No. 1, America and the World (1990/1991), pp. 23-33, published 1st January 1990.

The 'unipolar moment', however, was based on the hegemony of the United States and its ability to project military power throughout the world. Also on its ability to exercise a cultural and indeed moral fascination throughout the world with its proclaimed values of individual freedom and democracy. But the world is proving to be recalcitrant to these apparently attractive ideals. Of the geopolitical visions developed in the US in the 1990s, Samuel Huntington's *Clash of civilisations* is looking to be more accurate than Fukuyama's *End of History*.

The 'new world order' of my title is the tendency at present apparent for countries throughout the world to detach themselves from the United States inspired 'international rules based order.' It is a process that has seemed to accelerate since the beginning of the Ukraine war. Countries which might have been thought to be allies of the US have disregarded the order to isolate Russia. The 'sanctions from Hell' imposed on Russia have backfired on, principally, Europe, which has enforced them, as Europe loses its access to cheap, easily accessible gas and oil while Russia has no or little difficulty finding a market in other parts of the world. As Europe and the US try to freeze, or even steal, some \$300 billion of Russian reserves, other countries begin to wonder if keeping their reserves in dollars in US and European banks is really a very safe option. Most remarkable has been the refusal of OPEC countries to break ranks with Russia and increase oil production to compensate for the Western refusal to buy Russian oil. Saudi Arabia, which has played such an important role in the projection of American power in the 'Middle East' (West Asia), has, apparently begun, under the auspices of China, to reconcile with Iran, disappointing the hopes that Israel had placed in the Trump supported 'Abraham accords' of forming an Arab-Israeli alliance against Iran. We may be able to hope that the US and UK supported war on Yemen could be coming to an end. Saudi Arabia has shown interest in joining Russia, China, India and Pakistan in the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation which has the potential to become a rival to NATO. The BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - claim to have overtaken the G7 in terms of 'purchasing power parity' GDP² and there are some nineteen countries wanting to be associated with it. The Chinese 'Belt and Road Initiative' is creating an impressive unity of interest throughout West Asia (a less eurocentric term to designate the 'Middle East'), Africa, Russia, the Indian subcontinent and the eastern part of the former USSR.

I've used the word 'apparently' several times because of course these developments are still in their early days and the US, which will do everything it can to sabotage them, is still a powerful force in the world. Much will depend on the development of the Ukraine war. There are those who think it could result in such a decisive defeat for Russia that the Russian Federation will collapse into anarchy something like what we have seen in Libya, Iraq and Syria. And then the US might be able to use Taiwan to do something similar to China. That would certainly weaken the forces that seem to be breaking away from the the US centred New World Order that seemed to be emerging (again I speak of seeming and appearances) in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. I think these developments are unlikely but there are certainly powerful forces at work - not least in our own country - trying to bring them about. For the moment, however, it looks as if another 'new world order' is emerging and the most commonly used description of that new world order, in contrast to the 'unipolar' US based order, is 'Multipolar World', a world divided into several different large civilisational spaces with maybe very different value systems but hopefully mutually respectful and treated as equals.

HEIDEGGER

It may seem odd to bring Heidegger into a discussion of the 'multipolar world' but I have a particular interest in the interaction of politics and religion and it is as a 'religious' thinker - albeit not working in the limits of any particular denominational framework - that Heidegger interests me. The different

² See eg 'MG Chandrakanth: How BRICS countries have overtaken the G7 in GDP based on PPPs', *Times of India*, April 9, 2023 (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/economic-policy/how-brics-countries-have-overtaken-the-g7-in-gdp-based-on-ppps/>)

'poles' of a multipolar world are, we suppose, civilisational, and civilisations are often, indeed usually, formed on the basis of religion. Heidegger has exercised a fascination that crosses religious boundaries. Among the translators of *Being and Time* into English are an Anglican clergyman (John McQuarrie) and Joan Stambaugh, who has a particular interest in Buddhism. In this article I want to discuss aspects of Heidegger's influence in Iran and in Russia but I'll begin with a necessarily superficial overview of those parts of Heidegger's thinking that may be relevant to the subject.

Heidegger argues that the whole trajectory of the intellectual life of the 'West' (Europe, with its extension in America, North and South) was determined by the debates that took place in Greece over the meaning of the word 'being'. The human being is, in Heidegger's view, 'the unrecognised guardian of the truth of being'³ - the only being capable of posing being as something to be thought about. Consequently there is a sense in which (my formulation not perhaps Heidegger's) 'being' is whatever we think it is. The quality of our own being and of our relation to the beings around us is determined by our conception of what being is, hence the importance of philosophy whose business it is to address the question of being. Though in Heidegger's view this isn't a matter of freedom to think whatever the philosophers like. What we think being is is dictated in some sense by 'the history of being' - the state that the concept of being has reached at any particular moment in history. The philosophers - at least the handful of philosophers Heidegger regards as important, don't say what they want to say but what they have to say, what being itself tells them to say.

The Greeks, beginning in the reflections of the so-called 'pre-socratics' - Parmenides, Heraclitus, Anaximander - conceived of being in terms of 'metaphysics', meaning some 'thing' analogous to physics, to *φυσικῆς*. Plato's 'ideas' are an obvious and highly influential example. Metaphysics has continued to underpin Western philosophy through to the nineteenth century when it reached its 'completion' in Nietzsche for whom being, reduced to nothing but the lowest common denominator of beings (the mere fact that they are beings), is replaced by power as the essential reality to which all beings have to bend.

Nietzsche's 'will to power' was not just a matter of political or military power. It was also manifested, most typically, in technology, in our ability to manipulate the world about us, to bend it to our own - usually rather frivolous - ends. Heidegger called this 'machination' (*die Mächenschaft*). I've talked about bending the world to our own ends but in Heidegger's view it was more that machination was bending us to its ends. We follow, and we have to follow, its own logic. The present discussion of Artificial Intelligence might serve as an example. Once we know we can do this we have to do it - we have no choice. Heidegger called this the 'devastation' and saw it spreading from us - the civilisation that was initiated by 'the Greeks' - through the entire world, leaving no space for, say, poetry, or for a real encounter with the divine. Heidegger, whose initial training was as a theologian in scholastic philosophy, doesn't talk about 'God' but he does talk about 'the God', 'the last God', or 'the gods'.

He attached huge importance to the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (youthful friend and companion of the philosophers Schelling and Hegel) whom he regarded as the man who, more than anyone else prior to himself, had the sense of what he called 'inceptual thinking' - the way in which the Greeks had seen the problem of being right at the beginning of Western philosophy.⁴ Heidegger took the view that the thinking of the Greeks has now become impenetrable to us because we do not understand the words they used (partly as a result of their translation into Latin) but that with the 'completion of metaphysics'

³ eg Martin Heidegger: *Mindfulness*, p.20 (in the Kindle version).

⁴ eg Martin Heidegger: *Hölderlin's hymns. "Germania" and "The Rhine"*, translated by William McNeill and Julia Ireland, Indiana University Press, 2014, p.112 (in the Kindle version): 'In all of this, that understanding of being that gained power at the commencement of Western philosophy - and in the meantime has, in genuine and non-genuine variations, dominated German thought and knowing, particularly since Meister Eckhart - lies near and is once again powerful. It is the conception of being that we find in a thinker with whom Hölderlin knew himself to have an affinity: Heraclitus.'

determining our present intellectual world we need to rethink the problem of being and this means recovering the problem as it had been experienced in the original, 'first', beginning.

That might serve, not so much as a bird's eye view of Heidegger's thinking but more like Heidegger as seen from the moon. However, since we are talking about the political implications of his thought we have to confront the embarrassing fact that when the Nazis took power in Germany in 1933, Heidegger, who already had connections with Conservative circles in Germany, joined the Nazi Party. At the same time he became Rector of the University of Freiburg and for a year he showed every sign of being an enthusiastic Nazi reformer. He clearly thought he could exercise an influence on Nazi thinking but he soon realised that he couldn't. He resigned as Rector and more or less retired from public life. But he continued to lecture and write and it was in this period - the 1930s - that he did what many people, myself included, consider his most important work.

The literature on the subject of Heidegger's engagement of the Nazis is huge but for the moment I will content myself with a comment by a friend of mine, John Minahane, the person who first persuaded me that Heidegger was worth getting to know. After quoting the Irish commentator Fintan O'Toole calling Heidegger a 'thoroughgoing Nazi', Minahane continues:

*'a thoroughgoing Nazi who was not a racist and who contemptuously rejected biological racism again and again. A thoroughgoing Nazi who could write at length about Bolshevism, and repeatedly, without once mentioning Jews! (This dog that did not bark in the night was not noticed not barking by the decontaminators; but then, they were not listening very closely.) A thoroughgoing Nazi who believed that Nazism was not, as it claimed to be, a solution to the modern political crisis, but merely that crisis in a more advanced stage; who thought that the Nazis were doing more damage to the German rural communities than any politicians before them; who regarded the war on Russia as an act of folly and a disaster; who believed that the great event most of all to be desired was a dynamic spiritual interaction between Germany and Russia. - Quite some thoroughgoing Nazi!'*⁵

Because of his engagement with the Nazis, he was for a while prevented from lecturing after the war. What might appear rather surprising is that his reputation as a major philosopher was restored after the war largely by the French existentialists whose political sympathies were generally left wing - most obviously Jean Paul Sartre, whose book *Being and nothingness* obviously follows on from Heidegger's *Being and time*.

However what concerns us here is Heidegger's reception in Iran and Russia and since in Iran we are dealing with supporters of the Iranian revolution and in Russia we are dealing with Alexander Dugin, himself often dismissed as a Fascist and *eminence grise* behind the currently very unpopular Vladimir Putin, you may feel I'm putting Heidegger back into the sinister category.

HEIDEGGER IN IRAN

Iran could be described as the antitype to us, the West, and the Iranian revolution in 1979 was a brutal challenge to our sense of the direction of history, the destiny of the world which we had assumed was headed in the direction of a secular democracy, whether 'democracy' was conceived as liberal or Communist in nature.⁶ It happens that one of the major Western interpreters of the Iranian philosophical tradition, the Frenchman Henry Corbin, was also the first person to translate Heidegger into French, beginning with a translation of Heidegger's *What is metaphysics?* published in 1930 (in a 'revue d'obédience dadaïste!') but going on to a collection of Heidegger's writings prepared in collaboration with Heidegger himself and published, also under the title *Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique?* in 1938. In the

⁵ John Minahane: 'An Invitation to think', *Heidegger Review*, No 1, July 2014, p.6.

⁶ Though it is worth noting that coincidentally with the Iranian revolution, the US was busy challenging the Communist view of the future by arming the tribal leaders of Afghanistan in opposition to the secularising reforms of the Afghan government.

1940s, while living in Istanbul, he was working on a full translation of *Being and time*, not in the event completed or published.⁷ Corbin insisted that his work on Iranian philosophy was continuous with his work on Heidegger: 'I am neither a Germanist nor an Orientalist, but a Philosopher pursuing his Quest wherever the Spirit guides him ... What I was looking for in Heidegger and that which I understood thanks to Heidegger, is precisely that which I was looking for and found in the metaphysics of Islamic Iran.'⁸

Corbin died in 1978 on the eve of the Islamic revolution. He was far from being a supporter of the forces that led to it. Ali Mirsepassi, in his very hostile account, refers to his 'nearly sycophantic relation to the Shah and his very close relation to Hossein Nasr (a high official of the royal court)⁹ But both Corbin and Hossein Nasr (himself a distinguished interpreter of Islamic culture) argued for 'an Iranian spiritual universe forming a totality with definite outlines, whose constant inner principle assures a unity amidst its many vicissitudes'¹⁰ and that this was to be found most particularly in the gnostic or esoteric tradition known in Iran as *'irfan*. Which is to say that aspect of Muslim thinking furthest removed from a Western rationalist secularist sense of the future. Although the emphasis of the Iranian revolution was on establishing Muslim jurisprudence (a matter of some indifference to Corbin) its leader, Ruhullah al-Musavi al-Khomeini, was himself also a specialist in *'irfan*. According to Hamid Algar (British-American emeritus professor of Persian Studies, University of California, Berkeley): 'It is ... legitimate - or at least inevitable - to speak of the Gnostic (*'irfani*) and political aspects of his life and to accord a certain primacy to the former, in terms of not only chronology but also significance.'¹¹

Despite the suitability of Corbin's apolitical and mystical Shi'ism for the needs of the Pahlavi régime, the Dutch specialist in Iran and Shi'ism, Matthijs van den Bos (currently a professor in Birkbeck College, London) can say: 'Since the Islamic Revolution of 1978-9, Corbin has paradoxically retained a presence in pro-régime representations of the self in the Islamic Republic.' In the circle round Corbin he mentions 'Allama Tabataba'i, author of a Persian language *Principles of Philosophy and the realistic method* described by another Iranian commentator (Hamid Dabashi) as 'the most serious intellectual challenge to Marxism and materialist philosophy within the Iranian context.' Van den Bos continues 'there is nothing in two renowned Shiite studies of Tabataba'i's ... that is reminiscent of Khomeynism and Corbin's explicit statement read: 'L'enseignement des Imams [...] n'est jamais un "programme politique"'¹² But according to Mirsepassi (p.137): 'Many of Tabataba'i's students were among the ideological founders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely Morteza Matahari, Dr Beheshti and Dr Mohammad Mofatteh.'

⁷ Sylvain Camilleri and Daniel Proulx: 'Martin Heidegger-Henry Corbin, Lettres et documents (1930-1941), *Bulletin Heideggérien*, Vol 4, 2014, esp pp.4-13. Corbin's 'nearly complete' translation of *Sein und Zeit*, pp.36-38.

⁸ Henry Corbin: *From Heidegger to Suhrawardi, an interview with Philippe Nemo*. Interview recorded for Radio France-Culture, 2/6/1976. Translation by Matthew Evans-Cooke. Obtained off the internet at www.amiscorbin.com The English translation seems to have disappeared from the site but the original French can be had at <https://www.amiscorbin.com/biographie/de-heidegger-a-sohravardi/>

⁹ Ali Mirsepassi: *Transnationalism in Iranian political thought - the life and times of Ahmad Fardid*, Cambridge University Press, 2017, p.142.

¹⁰ Henry Corbin: *The Voyage and the messenger - Iran and philosophy*, translated by Joseph Rowe, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California, 1998, pp.33-4.

¹¹ Hamid Algar: 'The Fusion of the gnostic and the political in the personality and life of Imam Khomeini (R.A.)', *al-Tawhid Islamic Journal*, n.d., accessible at <https://www.al-islam.org/organization/al-tawhid-islamic-journal> See also Alexander Knysh: "'Irfan" revisited: Khomeini and the legacy of Islamic mystical philosophy', *Middle East Journal*, Vol 46, No 4, Autumn 1992, pp.631-653.

¹² Matthijs van den Bos: 'Transcendental Orientalism: Henry Corbin in Iran', *Anthropos*, Bd.100, H.1 (2005), pp.113-120.

Corbin had been introduced to Iranian philosophy by Louis Massignon, whom he was later to replace as Director of Studies for Islam in the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris. Among Massignon's research assistants in a later period was 'Ali Shari'ati who could be described as the leading theorist on the left wing of the Islamic Revolution. Massignon, unlike Corbin, was a man of the left, a supporter of the Palestinian cause in Israel and of the Algerian revolution. Shari'ati died on the eve of the revolution, in 1977, but according to an account by the Iranian-American Marxist Ervand Abrahamian:

*'During the Islamic Revolution, Shari'ati emerged unchallenged as the most popular writer of modern Iran. Tapes of his lectures were widely circulated even among illiterates. His works were frequently republished. His slogans were often seen in street demonstrations. And his ideas were freely discussed by the revolutionaries, especially radical high school students. In fact his ideas were far better known than those of Ayatollah Khomeini. Shari'ati, therefore, can truly be characterised as the ideologue of the Islamic Revolution.'*¹³

Shari'ati believed that the social side of the revolution and the religious side were fully compatible. Abrahamian again (p.26): 'The Iranian intelligentsia ... was fortunate in that it lived in a society whose religious culture, Shi'ism, was intrinsically radical and therefore compatible with the aims of the dual [anti-imperialist and social - PB] revolution.' But Shari'ati was also influenced by Heidegger, seeing him as marking a radical change in the direction of Western philosophy. The Israeli commentator Elisheva Machlis, writing more specifically on Shari'ati's philosophical/theological views, quotes him as saying: 'Today in philosophy, Heidegger does not speak in the atheist terms of Hegel and Feuerbach [...] Heidegger is searching for Christ in humanity.' She continues: 'Relying on Heidegger's human-oriented religion, Shari'ati called for a return to a true primordial Islam, embodied in the figure of Imam 'Ali.'¹⁴ She says further (pp.196-7):

'In the post-World War II era, existentialism was an appealing philosophy in Europe and elsewhere as it reflected an overwhelming sense of pessimism but at the same time a claim to individual freedom and liberation. Human despair was particularly prevalent in the thought of Heidegger. Acknowledgement that past and present existence is limited and that being is finite, brings man to anguish as he realises that his being leads towards death and nothingness, Heidegger explained. Heidegger also lamented the loss of one's "authentic" self in the pursuit of everyday life, and man's anxiety in a world devoid of spiritualism and idealism. According to Heidegger, modern development only exacerbated man's existentialist anxiety, as existence was reduced to an effort to optimise meaningless resources. As a result, man has [been] overcome by a sense of loss and alienation [I would quarrel with this characterisation of Heidegger's thought but it may well reflect accurately how it was understood in post-war France in the circle round Sartre - PB].

'Shari'ati described a similar identity crisis in Iran during this period as a result of growing materialism, the quest for power, the loss of tradition, and a sense of alienation in a Western-dominated society. He captured here the feeling of despair and disaffection prevalent at the time among different social sectors in Iran as a result of rapid modernisation and forced secularisation under Rezā Shāh Pahlavī (r. 1925-41) and following the White Revolution undertaken by his son Muhammad Rezā Shāh (r. 1941-79) in the early 1960s. Oppression of individual freedoms during this period also created strong dissatisfaction among the Iranian middle class, the key target of Shari'ati's mobilisation efforts.

'In this state of existentialist pessimism, Sartre introduced a platform for action. Heidegger, on the other hand, provided Shari'ati with spiritual guidance, particularly through his interpretation by Ahmad Fardid (1912-94). The German philosopher was introduced to Iran by Fardid who transformed Heidegger's search for an "authentic existence" to a call for spiritual awakening and a renewal of an "Islamic self."

¹³ Ervand Abrahamian: 'Ali Shari'ati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution', *MERIP Reports*, no.102, Islam and politics, Jan 1982, p.28.

¹⁴ Elisheva Machlis: 'Ali Shari'ati and the notion of tawhid: Re-exploring the question of God's unity', *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol 54, Issue 2, 2014, p.197.

Fardid is a remarkable phenomenon - a man who had huge influence in Iran without ever writing anything apart from some essays in his younger days - on Bergson, on John Dewey, on Western philosophy 'from Kant to Heidegger' and on the French orientalist Gustave Le Bon. In 1946, the year in which Corbin arrived in Tehran from Istanbul, he translated his 'Zoroastrian motifs in the philosophy of Suhrawardi'. He then went to France to study in the Sorbonne, proposing for his graduate thesis: 'The problem of noetic inexistence in the philosophy of Islam.' But this was never completed and in 1951 he moved to Heidelberg, returning to Iran in 1955. According to Mirsepassi, who will be the main source for this account, virtually nothing is known about his time spent in Europe.

Despite his lack of academic qualifications, Hossein Nasr secured him a job teaching in Tehran University which he resigned in 1972 having gained a reputation for rudeness and arrogance. Thereafter he gave some public lectures, appeared on some TV debates and gathered a large but informal circle of young admirers. It was these who wrote the few books that exist purporting to give his mature thoughts. Yet with all that, Shari'ati's son Eshran, can say: 'I believe that Fardid was undoubtedly the most influential thinker in shaping the discourse of the Islamic Republic and its state ideological apparatus, especially after Ayatollah Khomeini's death' (Mirsepassi, p.271) and Mirsepassi himself can complain, in a book published in 2017, twenty three years after Fardid's death, that Fardid is 'a serious liability for Iran's future' (p.11).

Farid may be best known as inventor of the word, in Persian, *gharbzadegi*, a term that has several different English translations - 'Westoxication', 'Weststruckness', 'Westomania', 'Westernitis', 'Westamination' and 'Blighted by the West'.¹⁵ It was popularised in a book of that name published in 1962 by Jalal al-e Ahmad, who acknowledges Fardid's role in inventing it. It seems to have dominated political discussion in Iran in the 1960s and 70s and indeed made its way into the writings of Khomeini himself:

*'The imperialists began laying their plans three or four centuries ago; they started out with nothing, but see where they are now! We too will begin with nothing, and we will pay no attention to the uproar created by a few "xenomaniacs" and devoted servants of imperialism.'*¹⁶

There may, however, be a difference between Fardid's idea and al-e Ahmad's. Al-e Ahmad's emphasis is on contemporary affairs - the domination of the West and the reduction of the East: 'With the end of competition between cultures, the East with feelings of servitude, inferiority, backwardness and obsolescence, accepts the Western criteria of doing things' (Hanson, p.9). According to Mirsepassi, however (p.150), Fardid claimed that this was a vulgarisation of what he intended as essentially a philosophic term. In Fardid's view, and this is where we can see the influence of Heidegger, the problem goes back to 'the Greeks' and so, though we might assume that Fardid would agree about the degeneration of Iranian culture under Western influence, his primary concern is with the Western - chiefly Hellenic - influence on Muslim philosophy, including the great names of al-Farabi, 'Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and, a particular favourite in Iran, particularly admired by Ayatollah Khomeini, the seventeenth century philosopher Molla Sadr. For Fardid, the 'East' in general and Islam in particular, represented a possibility that had been smothered by the 'West' in the form of Greek philosophy:

'Now let's examine how the East has been concealed. The concealment of the East was the beginning of Hellenism and the West began with Hellenism. With the onset of Hellenism, thinking also acquires a new form. Divine books, that were inherently Eastern, are interpreted based on metaphysical thinking that itself is based on religious

¹⁵ Brad Hanson: 'The "Westoxication" of Iran: depictions and reactions of Behrangi, al'e Ahmad, and Shariati', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol 15, No 1, Feb. 1983. p.19, fn 1.

¹⁶ From 'Islamic government', taken from lectures given in Najaf, Iraq, in 1970, included in Imam Khomeini: *Islam and Revolution*, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar, Mizan Press, Berkeley, p.38. Algar explains in a footnote (p.152) that 'xenomaniacs' is a translation of a Persian term, *gharbzadaha*, popularised by Jalal Al-i Ahmad (d.1969) in his book *Gharbzadegi*.

thinking. That is, with the arrival of metaphysics as a form of thinking, the gods are gone, and God, for example, for Aristotle and even Plato, becomes "Cosmo-centric." Although, during the mediaeval period, God, instead of the universe, became an important topic, interpretations of scriptures were more or less based on Greek thought.' (Mirsepassi, p.158, quoting from 'Rejoinders to a few questions about Eastern culture', written by Reza Davari following Fardid's dictation, for the journal *Farhang va Zendegi*, Dey 1350 (AH), Jan 1972 (AD). We will encounter Reza Davari again shortly).

It's important to note that 'East' and 'West' aren't necessarily geographical categories. The terms 'East' and 'West' appear in the philosophy of Suhrawardi - one of the Muslim philosophers who Fardid saw, together with Ibn Arabi, as relatively free of Greek thought. In Suhrawardi's thinking, the East, where the Sun rises, represents light, while the West, where it sets, represents darkness. Consequently there can be an 'East' in the geographical West and a 'West' in the geographical East. So Fardid says:

'Today when East and West are discussed, often two distinct geographical entities are imagined. However, the geographical East is so much under the Western civilisation and influenced by its thoughts that it is no longer expedient to have recollection of what Eastern authenticity is. However, it is easy to distinguish between the appearance of East and West. But what is important is that the essence of the East, for the time being, is hidden.' (Mirsepassi, p.156).

Hence it is not as contradictory as it might seem that Fardid (like Shari'ati and, indeed, al-e Ahmad) should turn so much to Western thinkers since, after all, if the East is smothered under the West, it has become part of the history of the West. And for Fardid the person who understands most clearly the history of the West, at the most profound level, is Heidegger. As Fardid shares Heidegger's view that the cycle of Western philosophy that began with Plato and Aristotle now has to be overcome, so he agrees that it reached its completion in Nietzsche. Fardid talks about the difference between 'yesterday, today, tomorrow' - representing what Heidegger would call the history of metaphysics, from Plato to Nietzsche - and 'the day before yesterday and the day after tomorrow' which stand outside the cycle of Western philosophy, representing what Heidegger would see as the 'new beginning.' Referring to radio broadcasts by one of his leading ideological opponents, Abdolkarim Soroush, he says (Mirsepassi, p.236, quoting another compilation put together by Fardid's pupils - *Gharb va Gharbzadegi*):

'In the name of philosophy, the mainstream defends the Western god against "the day before yesterday's god." The god of these philosophical subjects broadcast by the radio is not the day before yesterday's god or the day after tomorrow's god. Its god is anti-revolution's god, not revolution's god.'

With regard to the day after tomorrow he comes out with this astonishing statement (p.237):

'Nietzsche did not have time to talk about the day after tomorrow's perpetual time and the Emam-e Montazer's perpetual time. In fact, Nietzsche's Zarathustra is Emam-e Montazer. Emam-e Montazer is a bridge to the day after tomorrow.'

'Emam-e Montazer' is the 'awaited Imam' destined, according to Shi'i eschatology, to finally restore legitimate government to the Muslim *'umma* and the world. To identify Nietzsche's Zarathustra with the Hidden Imam is surprising enough. But, following the little glimpses Mirsepassi gives us into Fardid's thought, we come to this even more astonishing remark (p.235):

'Hegel's thought is the last step of history and the end of "Being in the world." Nietzsche's thought is the end of history. Hegel's thought is the end of nihilism and self autonomy in Western philosophical thought. With Heidegger's thought, the day after tomorrow begins.'

This is quite in accordance with Heidegger's own view of the matter but placed in the context of what we have just read does it not seem to place Heidegger above the *Emam-e Montazer*? The *Emam-e Montazer* is a bridge to the day after tomorrow but with Heidegger the day after tomorrow begins.

Mirsepassi has it that the young people gathered round Fardid included some of the most hard-line supporters of the Iranian revolution and particularly of the 'cultural revolution', launched in 1980 when

the Universities were closed for three years, purged of any secular influence, then reopened under the control of a 'Supreme Cultural Revolution Council.' The successor body to the Supreme Council - the much larger High Council for the Revolution - includes among its members at least one prominent disciple of Fardid's - Reza Davari Ardakani, who also attaches great importance to Heidegger. In the 1980s there was a famous clash between Reza Davari and Abdolkarim Soroush, represented as a clash between 'Heideggerians' and 'Popperians' - referring to Karl Popper, author of *The Open Society and its enemies*, the enemies being Plato, Hegel and Marx, accused of advocating a closed, totalitarian society. George Soros's Open Society Foundation, dedicated to spreading liberal democratic ideas through the world, is named for Popper's book. Soroush (who incidentally was a member of the original 'Supreme Cultural Revolution Council') said of Fardid: 'I believe that the relationship of Fardid to [the conservative Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad's administration [2005-2013] is like the relation of Leo Strauss [said to be the intellectual inspiration behind the US Neo-Conservative movement - PB] to George Bush's administration.'

One of Fardid's former pupils, Mahmoud Sadri, complains that 'like his intellectual hero Heidegger (not to mention Hegel) Fardid was politically myopic enough to mistake a local tyrant for the bounty of destiny.' But he goes on to give a good idea of the appeal of Fardid to people like himself:

'It is said of Hegel, that when he taught, his students would be so absorbed in his lectures as to lose all awareness of their surroundings. Only when the philosopher fell silent would the students notice that stars had risen and the university was deserted. In my entire academic career I have experienced such a thrill only in Fardid's classes. Another anecdote concerning the impact of Hegel's words could be invoked concerning Fardid's instruction: students saw the world in a different light after each and every lecture. We felt the entire world budge a little and sundry pieces of it fall into place as Fardid, his unlit "homa baizi" cigarette in hand, wiggled his Archimedean lever under a world of thought. I fell in love with Heidegger through Fardid.

*The first book I bought and read upon coming to the United States was a collection of Heidegger's works. My interest and hope in Heidegger has since waned (though my enormous respect for him hasn't) but I owe it to him as well as his Iranian disciple to teach me that the business of thinking is not a myopic, humdrum, routine affair. It is said of the great Italian thinker Giambattista Vico, that he illustrated his thoughts with fireworks rather than charcoal. Fardid, I propose, dipped his pen in Vico's inkwell.'*¹⁷

HEIDEGGER IN RUSSIA

Sadri quotes Fardid as saying:

'Every spring I buy grass seed from the store across the street and cast it in my lawn, but what grows there is just quaint and curious weeds and not what I have put in the ground. The same is true of those who claim my legacy or oppose it. They bear no resemblance to what I have sown.'

We can perhaps understand why he couldn't write. We can imagine him as a man with a 'vision', full of thoughts he could express in spoken words, words that disappear as soon as uttered, but who would always feel that the same words set in the hard form of print fell short of his thought.

It is unlikely that Alexander Dugin would ever have had feelings of that sort. He has no difficulty with writing and never seems to suffer from anything resembling existential doubt. Dugin is very conscious of the Iranian case. In one of his books, published in 2001, he says:

*'To this insightful analysis [Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* - PB] can be added the consideration that the majority of outstanding "Westernized" intellectuals, cultural figures, and creative individuals were and are largely nonconformists, anti-system oriented people "of the East" who in studying the geniuses of the West*

¹⁷ Mahmoud Sadri: *Passionate, genuine & deeply flawed - thoughts on philosopher Ahmad Fardid*, June 8, 2003, <https://iranian.com/MahmoudSadri/2004/June/Fardid/>

strengthen their own critical positions. A characteristic example of such a path is that of Ali Shariati, the main theoretician of the Iranian Revolution. Shariati studied in Paris, mastered Heidegger and Guénon as well as several neo-Marxist authors, and gradually came to the conviction that a conservative-revolutionary synthesis between revolutionary Shiism, mystical Islam, socialism, and existentialism was needed. Shariati was then able to bring the Iranian intellectual elite and youth to revolution who otherwise would have hardly recognized their ideals in the gloomy traditionalism of the Mullahs. This example is especially important since we are dealing with a successful revolution which ended in the complete victory of an anti-mondialist, anti-Western, and conservative-revolutionary regime'.¹⁸

His is the obvious name to evoke when thinking of Heidegger's possible influence on politics in Russia. His enormous output of books, academic papers and journalistic articles includes four books on Heidegger. Michael Millerman, his translator and sympathetic English language interpreter, tells us that 'by his 2011 Heidegger book, the second of four, he is claiming that to master Heidegger's thought is "the main strategic task of the Russian people and Russian society," and indeed "the key to the Russian tomorrow"¹⁹

He is probably best known as the architect of what he calls the 'Fourth Political Theory'. The first political theory is Liberalism, the second is Communism and the third is Fascism. Communism and Fascism have, in his view, been defeated - definitively. Liberalism - with its values of democracy, freedom, equality, justice, human rights, enlightenment, progress, science, secularism, reason (all terms I've extracted from Dugin's *Theory of a multipolar world*²⁰) is triumphant. It monopolises our political discourse and we might think that is a good thing - better than Communism and Fascism, surely. But in his book *The Fourth Political Theory* Dugin says:

*'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.'*²¹

In this equation in terms of moral value of the force that triumphed with those it defeated, Dugin resembles Heidegger. I'm not here suggesting influence, just a similarity of outlook. Heidegger has been much criticised because he never apologised for having joined the Nazi Party. No-one who reads his 1930s writings, though, could doubt his progressive disillusionment with the Nazis and in particular the absolute contempt with which he regarded Nazi racial theory. His distress is particularly evident in his book *The History of being* when he comments on the invasion of Russia. There can be no doubt about his opposition to Communism, which probably goes far to explaining his initial support for the Nazis. His great hope was that Germany could again become the nation of thinkers and poets - of Meister Eckhart,

¹⁸ This is taken from an article under the heading 'Modernization without westernization' accessible at <http://www.4pt.su/en/content/modernization-without-westernization> It is a translation by Jafe [sic] Arnold of a passage from Chapter 7 of Dugin's *The Russian Thing* Vol 1 (Moscow, Arktogetya, 2001). Jafe Arnold, currently based in the University of Warsaw, is the founding editor in chief of the very Dugin-oriented Eurasianist Internet Archive: <https://eurasianist-archive.com/> He has his own website at <https://jafearnold.academia.edu/> Where Michael Millerman is the specialist on Dugin in relation to Heidegger, Arnold is the specialist on Dugin in relation to René Guénon.

¹⁹ Michael Millerman: *Inside Putin's Brain: The Political Philosophy of Alexander Dugin*, independently published, 2022, p.85 (in the Kindle version).

²⁰ Alexander Dugin: *The Theory of a multipolar world*, translated by Michael Millerman, Arktos, London 2021.

²¹ Alexander Dugin: *The Fourth political theory*, translated by Mark Sleboda and Michael Millerman, Arktos, London, 2012, p.65 (in the eBook - Amazon won't stock it).

Kant, Schiller, Hegel, Nietzsche, Hölderlin - and as such help Russia to recover its own cultural essence, liberating it from Bolshevism. Instead what was happening was:

'A great, precipitous, historiographical assault upon Russia, a limitless, ongoing exploitation of raw materials for the intricacies of the "machine." The danger is not "Bolshevism," but rather we ourselves in that we impose upon it its metaphysical essence (without comprehending it as such) intensified to the extreme—and deprive the Russian and German worlds of their history.' Thus to 'deprive it of its own concealed essence through renewed and radical implication in the machination to which we ourselves have fallen prey.'²²

The Nazis cannot overcome Bolshevism because they represent the same 'metaphysical essence' as Bolshevism - the Will to Power manifested in machination. And in Heidegger's view the same will to power/machination that drove Hitler and Stalin also drove Roosevelt and Churchill, leaders of the liberal democratic world. Heidegger after 1945 commented that the war, with all the death and destruction it brought about, had resolved nothing. Using Dugin's terms we might say that Hiroshima and the Gulag triumphed over Auschwitz. The core of the problem, however, was machination and in the victory of Liberalism and Communism over Fascism, machination remained untouched.

I don't think Dugin sees the problem in anything like the same way. Dugin, much more than Heidegger (or at least Heidegger after he accepted the failure of his engagement with the Nazis) is concerned with present-day politics, meaning necessarily politics within the metaphysical framework of machination. The war in Ukraine is a war of technologies, a war of sophisticated machines. We might compare Iran, a country in which the revolution which Fardid saw as the revolution of the day after tomorrow, has, necessarily for its own defence in the face of very powerful enemies, developed sophisticated missiles and drones. China's advance as the main rival to the United States is a triumph of machination. But 'machination' does not, so far as I can see, feature prominently in Dugin's thinking.

So where does Dugin see the problem?

It is difficult to be too precise as to the nature of the Fourth Political Theory given that the Multipolar world is central to it and what characterises the multipolar world in Dugin's eyes is the right of the poles to be different, even radically different. He quotes Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of civilisations* listing Western civilisation, Orthodox civilisation, Islamic civilisation, Hindu civilisation, Chinese civilisation, Japanese civilisation, Latin-American civilisation, Buddhist civilisation and African civilisation. All these have radically different histories and different value systems (and, we might add, huge differences within themselves) but where liberalism would like them all to subscribe to a common set of values (democracy, freedom, equality, justice, human rights), Dugin would rejoice in their differences.

Nonetheless there is one thing he might like them all to have in common and that is 'conservatism.' So what does Dugin mean by that?

The answer brings us back to Heidegger. In Dugin's understanding each of the 'political theories' has its own 'subject', its own key player. The subject of liberalism is the individual. The subject of Communism is the working class. The subject of Fascism is the state or, in the case of its Nazi variant, race. The subject of the Fourth Political Theory is *dasein*.

Dasein is a key term in Heidegger's philosophy and very difficult to translate. Corbin, with, we must suppose, Heidegger's approval, translated it as *réalité-humaine*. Fardid provided a rather intriguing Persian translation: *Havalat-e Tarikhi*. Mirsepassi (p.235) explains that *Havalat* means predestination, or calling; *Tarikhi* means historical. In its original German, and without what was to become the all important hyphen - *da-sein* - it has a simple dictionary meaning of 'existence' or 'presence'. '*Da*' means 'there', or 'here' and '*sein*' means 'being'. It refers in Heidegger (and in Heidegger's immediate predecessors in German philosophy) to the way in which we, as human beings, incorporate the world

²² Martin Heidegger: *The History of Beyng*, Indiana University Press (Studies in Continental Thought), 2015, translated by Jeffrey Powell and William McNeill, p.104 (Kindle version).

about us. Instead of the cartesian vision of ourselves as subjects (*res cogitans*) viewing a world that is essentially alien to us (*res extensa*) we become beings who are essentially situated. We can never be separated from our experience of the world. The world (*da*) is intrinsic to what we are (*sein*). And Fardid's Persian version situates us not just in our immediate spatial surroundings with a role to play (*havalat*) but also in time, in a particular moment in history (*tarakhi*).

On first encounter one might think that this resembles the liberal individual, though with added emphasis on the *Da*, the place in which we find ourselves. Dugin tries to draw the necessary distinction in a passage in *The Fourth Political Theory*:

'Freedom is the greatest value of the Fourth Political Theory, since it coincides with its centre and its dynamic, energetic core. The difference is that this freedom is conceived as human freedom, not as freedom for the individual — as the freedom given by ethnocentrism and the freedom of Dasein, the freedom of culture and the freedom of society, and the freedom for any form of subjectivity except for that of an individual.' (p.52, Kindle edition)

The 'human freedom ... given by ethnocentrism.' *Dasein*, unlike the individual of liberalism, is situated in the context of an 'ethnos'. The 'ethnos' is the world, or at least inseparably part of the world, that is intrinsic to what we are. In the *Theory of a Multipolar World* Dugin suggests that each people (*narod*) has its own *dasein*:

'In the Fourth Political Theory (4PT), the subject is outlined through precisely the existential dimension and is identified with Dasein. The plurality of Daseins corresponds to the plurality of civilisations ... Precisely this allows us to connect the 4PT and the TMW [Theory of the Multipolar World - PB] as two aspects of one and the same approach. Here, civilisation can be described through a set of existentials, each of which will be characteristic of only one civilisation ... The future of a civilisation will thus consist in its possibility of being authentically ...' (p.46).

In his book *Ethnos and Society*,²³ Dugin outlines a course of human history that passes from an original 'ethnos' (a society completely self sufficient to itself, an entire world incorporating the gods, the dead and the unborn) to a 'narod' (a people, an *ethnos* or assembly of *ethnoi* that is aware of and having to deal with forces outside itself - generator of religion, the state, civilisation) to a 'nation' (based on the 'rationalisation and optimisation of economic life') to 'civil society.' Civil society - an assemblage of individuals with no collective identity other than through voluntary associations based on common interests - is the point we have reached in the West. Its further development, through its emphasis on the rights of the individual, necessarily leads to 'globalisation' and the unipolar world:

'The concept of "human rights" is a concrete module of transition from the principle of citizenship in its linkage to the nation (citizenship as a fixed legal, juridical quality) to citizenship in the sense of membership in global civil society in which each person by the fact of his belonging to the human race possesses intrinsic civil rights ... Where there are human rights advocates, the processes of globalisation and the desovereignisation of nation states unfolds.' (*Ethnos and society*, pp.210-211, eBook version).

But this process is resisted in what he calls the 'semi-periphery'

'In the countries of the "semi-periphery," "traditional society", i.e. the narod, is preserved in one way or another ... structures of traditional society were preserved, together with a significant number of archaic, purely ethnic local groups, untouched by modernisation. So if these societies prove to be sound from an economic, military and political perspective, they can be models for a new phase of reversibility ... the process of the establishment of a global society will be set aside for an indeterminate period or removed altogether from the agenda. Instead of a unipolar West-centric world with the "rich North" at the centre, a multipolar world will be built with a few centres equally great in influence but organised differently. There will be neither a "World Government" nor a "United States of the World," nor "human rights." The world will be divided into distinct "large spaces" on the basis of civilisational markers.' (*ibid.*, pp.216-7).

²³ Alexander Dugin: *Ethnos and Society*, translated by Michael Millerman, London, Arktos, 2018

Dugin, then, wants to roll back the 'nation' and 'civil society' to get back to the *narod*, which he nonetheless presents as an unstable and tragic society, possessed of a nostalgia for the self sufficiency of the *ethnos*, projected towards a future (an 'eschatological' myth - return of the hidden imam, second coming of Christ) in which the intimate relation the *ethnos* had previously enjoyed with the divine can be restored. The guardians of this future are prophets and philosophers and the *narod* is preserved from the hostile forces that surround it by the hero. The 'meaning' of the *narod* is 'the hero's struggle with fate' (Ethnos and Society, p.152).

But how do we stand in relation to all that? We have undergone a historical evolution which has brought us to liberalism. We are all liberals in the sense that we take certain things for granted that are not taken for granted in other parts of the world: 'democracy, freedom (meaning individual freedom), equality, justice, human rights' for starters. Dugin, however, believes that it cannot stop there. He believes that we are passing from what he calls 'modernism' to what he calls 'post-modernism.' And in this he sees the influence of Heidegger:

'Through Sartre, one of the classic theorists of the New Leftists, the deep influence of Martin Heidegger and the existential problem penetrated into the Leftist movement ...

'This led to the reconsideration of the philosophical tradition of modernity with the unmasking of those mechanisms that concentrate the nodes of alienation in themselves. This practise received the name 'deconstruction' ...

'And so the New Leftists formulate a vast project of 'the correct' future, in which the central place is occupied by:

- *The rejection of reason (the call to the conscious adoption of schizophrenia by Deleuze and Guattari);*
- *The renunciation of man as the measure of all things ('the death of man' of Levi, 'the death of the author' of Barthes);*
- *The overcoming of all sexual taboos (freedom to choose one's orientation, renunciation of the prohibition on incest, a refusal to recognise perversion as perversion, and so on);*
- *The legalisation of all kinds of narcotics, including the hard ones;*
- *A move to new forms of spontaneous and sporadic being (the 'rhizome' of Deleuze);*
- *The destruction of structural society and government in the service of new, free and anarchical communes.*

The book Empire by Negri and Hardt, in which are given the theses of the New Leftists, can be read as a political manifesto of these tendencies, simplified to the point of primitiveness. Negri and Hardt call the global capitalistic system 'Empire' and identify it with globalism and American world government. In their opinion, globalism creates the conditions for a universal, planetary revolution of the masses, who, using the common character of globalism and its possibilities for communication and the wide, open spread of knowledge, create a network of world sabotage, for the shift from humanity (standing out as the subject and object of oppression, hierarchical relations, exploitation and disciplinarian strategies) to post-humanity (mutants, cyborgs, clones, and virtuality), and the free selection of gender, appearance and individual rationality according to one's arbitrary rule and for any space of time. Negri and Hardt think that this will lead to the freeing up of the creative potential of the masses and at the same time to the destruction of the global power of 'Empire'. This theme is endlessly repeated in the cinematography in such films as The Matrix, The Boys' Club, and so on.' (Fourth political theory, pp. 131-3)

But this is more than just an intellectual fashion. It reflects, we might say, the necessary 'end' of the evolving idea of freedom:

'the logic of the transformation from normal liberalism to the liberalism of postmodernity is neither arbitrary nor voluntary; it is written in the very structure of the liberal ideology: in the course of the gradual liberation of man from all that which is not himself (from all non-human and supra-individual values and ideals), one must sooner or later free a man from his own self.' (ibid., p.151)

And there is a part of Dugin which is really attracted by this line of development. After all his own project of turning the clock back to an earlier stage of development is open to a rather obvious objection

he himself has made in an earlier stage of the argument when elaborating the views of the 'Conservative Revolutionaries' in Germany in the 1920s:

'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...' (p.95)

Is it not tempting to suggest (as one of Dugin's heroes, Julius Evola, does in his book *Ride the Tiger*²⁴) putting one's foot on the accelerator? To bring about the end of the cycle that began with the domination of what Heidegger calls 'metaphysics' and Dugin (elaborating a Heideggerian theme) calls 'logos'? This helps to explain the emblem of the Fourth Political Theory - a vertical-horizontal St George's cross, combined with a diagonal St Andrew's Cross somewhat after the manner of the Union Jack but with each of its lines terminating in an arrowhead, hence pointing in eight different directions. This is the 'Chaos star' which, so far as I know, made its first appearance in Aleister Crowley's Thoth Tarot pack.²⁵ And then there are the final words of the book:

'Only chaos and the alternative philosophy based on inclusivity can save modern humanity and the world from the consequences of the degradation and decay of the exclusivist principle called logos. Logos has expired and we all will be buried under its ruins unless we make an appeal to chaos and its metaphysical principles, and use them as a basis for something new. Perhaps this is 'the other beginning' Heidegger spoke of.' (p.211)

TRADITIONAL VALUES

So we have a 'left Heidegger' tending towards post-humanity ('the free selection of gender, appearance and individual rationality according to one's arbitrary rule and for any space of time') and a 'right Heidegger' tending towards conservative values. Very conservative values, as it happens. In November 2022, in the context of the Ukraine war, Vladimir Putin issued a presidential decree: 'On approval of the fundamentals of state policy on preservation and strengthening of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values.'

'4. Traditional values are the moral precepts shaping Russian citizens' worldview, handed down from one generation to another and forming the foundation of Russia's national civic identity and the country's single cultural space, as well as reinforcing civic unity, and they are reflected in the unique and authentic spiritual, historical and cultural development path of Russia's multi-ethnic people.'

'5. Traditional values include life, dignity, human rights and freedoms, patriotism, civic consciousness, service to the Fatherland and responsibility for its destiny, high moral ideals, strong families, productive labour, the primacy of the spiritual over corporeal, humanism, charity, justice, collectivism, mutual assistance and mutual respect, historical memory and the continuity of generations, as well as the unity of Russia's peoples.'

Dugin has welcomed the document, particularly singling out the list of values outlined in point 5:

'These 14 points should be considered as the semantic nodes of the sovereign ideology. From now on, the state has assumed responsibility for the state of public consciousness, and the social model, alternative to the West, will be based on these 14 points. In a sense, they become sacred ...'

'A person becomes normative when he has all 14 properties that he accepts as a value. This means that rights and freedoms apply specifically to this full-fledged person. These rights and freedoms should be interpreted in the

²⁴ Julius Evola: *Ride the tiger - a survival manual for the aristocrats of the soul*, translated by Joscelyn Godwyn and Constance Fontana, Inner Traditions, Rochester, Vermont, 2003 (Italian original first published in in 1961).

²⁵ These points are developed in my article 'Third Rome, Third International, Third Reich', *Heidegger Review* No 1, July 2014. It is accessible in the Politics and Theology section of my website.

*context of Russian history - Russian law and Russian truth. And one should especially take into account here the Christian idea of life, dignity, law and freedom, which is harmoniously combined with ideas in other traditional denominations.'*²⁶

It is this 'full-fledged person', not the 'individual,' that corresponds to Dugin's notion of *dasein*, the subject of the Fourth Political Theory.

Dugin goes through the different points and, talking about point number 6 ('Strong Family'), he says:

'This sixth point is of particular importance precisely in the context of the spread of liberal ideology that denies sex, replaces it with an artificially constructed social gender, completely legitimizes homosexual marriages and other forms of perversion, and in fact, abolishes the institution of the family as such. Since the Constitution of the Russian Federation recognizes the family as such only in the case of the union of a man and a woman, and homosexual propaganda is legally enshrined [sic, machine translation. Homosexual propaganda in Russia is legally prohibited, following a law passed in the Russian parliament, unanimously, shortly before the present decree - PB], the declaration of a family cap [sic. Strong family? - PB] as a value already suggests that we are talking about the marriage of a man and a woman. At the same time, it is obvious that abortions and even divorces are morally condemned, since neither one nor the other is by any means a sign of a strong family. A real strong family includes both children and care for the older generation.

'And again, this point directly contradicts liberalism, which, on the contrary, relativizes the family in every possible way and focuses on its complete abolition.'

I single that out partly for personal reasons. I was quite involved with gay liberation back in the 1970s and 1980s - probably the only political movement I was ever part of that actually succeeded in realising its aims. But more importantly we should note that this whole programme, including the affirmation of 'traditional' sexual morality, will be very attractive to large numbers of people - notably in the US but also in the societies that are likely to be the poles in a multipolar world. Referring back to Samuel Huntington's list: 'Orthodox civilisation, Islamic civilisation, Hindu civilisation, Chinese civilisation, Japanese civilisation, Latin-American civilisation, Buddhist civilisation and African civilisation.'

Whether one likes it or not, Dugin does seem to have a very good - and very broad - sense of the direction in which things are headed.

AND HEIDEGGER IN ALL THAT?

A final word should be said about how all this relates to the 'real' Heidegger. Alas, it is a large question and I don't feel able to tackle it now as it deserves. But in broad outline I would suggest that Heidegger's project is totally - almost unrecognisably - different. Despite his flirtation with the Nazis it is not a political project and his writings are not addressed either to the public at large or to anyone with ambitions to join or to form a political élite. It is what he says it is - a discipline aimed at uncovering 'being', the ground of our existence. If Heidegger appears to arrogantly dismiss all other intellectual disciplines ('historiography' for example, or physics or even 'philosophy') it is because he wants to define clearly a discipline he calls 'thinking', which is concentrated on what he regards as the 'one thing needful'. The absolute rejection of 'machination' and the 'will to power' places it outside any immediate practical or political application. It is entirely oriented towards a future that is entirely unknown. It is in my view - together with the work of the painter, Albert Gleizes - the most important intellectual project of the twentieth century.

²⁶ Alexander Dugin: 'Decree no 809 - the foundation of a sovereign ideology is laid', posted on the 'Katehon' website, 29th November 2022 - <https://katehon.com/ru/article/ukaz-no-809-osnovanie-suverennoy-ideologii-polozheno> I discuss the Katehon website and Dugin's contributions to it in articles written for *Irish Foreign Affairs*, accessible on my website at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/katehon/>