

Eurasianism “Classical” and “Neo”: The Lines of Continuity

Mark BASSIN

Eurasianism, as Stephen Shenfield reminds us, means many things.¹ Indeed, this is if anything an understatement, for the term has emerged as one of the most popular keywords available in the volatile ideological arsenal of post-Soviet politics.² Popularity does not, however, necessarily enhance consistency, and this is certainly the case with Eurasianism. At the national level, a variety of very different Eurasian perspectives and doctrines have been articulated, by leading notables ranging from

1 Stephen D. Shenfield, “Official Eurasianism in Orenburg Province,” *Johnson’s Russia List: Research and Analytical Supplement*, no. 10 (July 12, 2002), [<http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6350-7.cfm>] (accessed October 13, 2006).

2 Mark Bassin, “Eurasianism and Geopolitics in Post-Soviet Russia,” in Jakub Godzimirski, ed., *Russia and Europe* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 1996), pp. 33–42; Boris Erasov, “Rossiia v evraziiskom prostranstve,” *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost’* 2 (1994), pp. 57–67; *Evraziiskii proekt modernizatsii Rossii: za i protiv*, (Moscow, 1995); N. N. Beliakov and V. A. Perov, eds., *Evraziiskii proekt: real’nosti, problemy, kontseptsii (materialy ‘kruglogo stola’)*, Klub ‘Realisty’: Informatsionno-analiticheskii biulleten’, no. 16 (Moscow, 1996); David Kerr, “The New Eurasianism: The Rise of Geopolitics in Russia’s Foreign Policy,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 47, no. 6 (1995), pp. 977–988; Christer Pursiainen, *Eurasianism and neo-Eurasianism: The Past, Present, and Postmodernity of a Russian Integration Ideology* (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, UPI Working Papers, vol. 5, 1998); Andrei P. Tsygankov, “Hard-Line Eurasianism and Russia’s Contending Geopolitical Perspectives,” *East European Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (1998), pp. 315–334.

Evgenii Primakov³ to Gennadii Ziuganov⁴ and of course the omnipresent Aleksandr Dugin.⁵ Increasingly, it is suggested that Vladimir Putin himself is a closet Eurasian.⁶ Outside of Russia's political center, moreover, versions of Eurasianism flourish across the post-Soviet space, fostered by local political elites both ethnically Russian (about whom Shenfield in this particular instance happened to be writing) as well as non-Russian. The latter include Kazakhstan,⁷ Tatarstan,⁸ and various indigenous

-
- 3 E.g., Iu. B. Tavrovskii, "Tri kruga novoi ideologii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta* (September 8, 1999), [<http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-09-08/trikruga.html>] (accessed October 24, 2006).
- 4 G. A. Ziuganov, "Evraziia: sud'ba i vyzov," in *Drama vlasti: stranitsy politicheskoi avtobiografii* (Moscow, 1993), pp. 173–179; G. A. Ziuganov, *Geografiia pobedy: osnovy rossiiskoi geopolitiki* (Moscow, 1998).
- 5 Aleksandr Dugin, *Proekt 'Evraziia'* (Moscow, 2004); Aleksandr Dugin, *Evraziiskii put' kak natsional'naia ideia* (Moscow, 2002); Aleksandr Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki. Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii: myslit' prostranstvom*, 4th ed. (Moscow, 2000); Aleksandr Dugin, "Teoriia evraziiskogo gosudarstva," in N. N. Alekseev, *Russkii narod i gosudarstvo* (Moscow, 1998), pp. 5–20.
- 6 Vladimir Putin, "Rossiia vseгда oshchushchala sebia evroaziatskoi stranoi," in *Evraziistvo: teoriia i praktika* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 3–6; Sebastian Alison, "Putin pushes for 'Eurasian Union,'" *Moscow Times* (October 10, 2000), [<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2000/10/10/011.html>] (accessed November 8, 2006); "Putin, Shaimiev hail Eurasianism," *RFE/RL Newline* 9, no. 163 (August 29, 2005), [<http://www.hri.org/news/balkans/rferl/2005/05-08-30.rferl.html#04>] (accessed October 17, 2006). The rightwing French journalist Jean Parvulesco's collection of essays, *Vladimir Poutine et l'Eurasie*, has been translated into Russian, under Dugin's supervision and with a rather more provocative title: Zhan Parvulesco, *Putin i evraziiskaia imperiia*, trans. V. I. Karpets (St. Petersburg, 2006).
- 7 The Nazarbaev regime has endorsed Eurasianism as what is effectively the official state ideology. Nursultan Nazarbaev, *Evraziistvo: ot idei k praktike* (Astana, 2004); Nursultan Nazarbaev, "Evraziiskii soiuz: strategiia integratsii," *Evraziia* 1 (1996), pp. 3–8; *Evraziistvo i Kazakhstan. Trudy Evraziiskogo nauchnogo foruma 'Gumilevskie chteniia'*, 2 vols. (Astana, 2003). Dugin himself has made a major statement in support of Kazakhstan's—or more accurately Nazarbaev's—"Eurasian mission." Aleksandr Dugin, *Evraziiskaia missiia Nursultana Nazarbaeva* (Moscow, 2004).
- 8 Rafael Khakim, "Russia and Tatarstan. At a Crossroads of History," *Anthropology and Archaeology of Eurasia* 37, no. 1 (1998), pp. 30–71; D. M. Iskhakov, "Kritika no-

groups in Siberia.⁹ And in addition to all of this, there remains the rich legacy of Eurasianism across the twentieth century: the “classical” period of the interwar years (itself a profoundly heterogeneous and ideologically fragmented movement)¹⁰ and the attempts to sustain Eurasianist perspectives in the Soviet Union itself, most importantly those of L. N. Gumilev.¹¹ All of these various incarnations were and are crafted to fit highly differing political contexts and advance fundamentally different political and ideological agendas, for which reason it is simply impossible to reduce Eurasianism in any meaningful way to a common set of doctrinal denominators, however limited and rudimentary. At the very most, only two elements may be said to be common to all these versions: Eurasianism everywhere claims to represent some unique synthesis of European and Asian principles, and in the present day, it claims everywhere to be the legitimate heir of the “classical” legacy.

voi evraziiskoi ideologii v sovremennom Tatarstane,” in *EvrAziistvo: problemy osmyleniia* (Ufa, 2002), pp. 24–29.

9 *EvrAziia: etnos, landshaft, kul'tura* (St. Petersburg, 2001).

10 Mark Bassin, “Classical Eurasianism and the Geopolitics of Russian Identity,” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2003), pp. 257–267; Marlène Laruelle, *L'idéologie eurasiiste russe, ou comment penser l'empire* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999). For sources of classical Eurasianism, see L. I. Novikova and I. N. Sizemskaiia, eds., *Rossiia mezhdru Evropoi i Aziei: Evraziiskii soblazn. Antologiiia* (Moscow, 1993); L. I. Novikova and I. N. Sizemskaiia, eds., *Mir Rossii – Evraziia. Antologiiia* (Moscow, 1995); P. N. Savitskii, *Kontinent Evraziia* (Moscow, 1997); Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoi, *Istoriia. Kul'tura. Iazyk* (Moscow, 1995); Nikolai Trubetskoi, *Nasledie Chingiskhana* (Moscow, 1999); Nikolai Nikolaevich Alekseev, *Russkii narod i gosudarstvo* (Moscow, 1998); G. V. Vernadskii, *Nachertanie russkoi istorii* (St. Petersburg, 2000); G. V. Vernadskii, *Opyt istorii Evrazii. Zven'ia russkoi kul'tury* (Moscow, 2005).

11 Boris Paramonov, “Sovetskoe Evraziistvo,” *Zvezda* 4 (1992), pp. 195–199. For Gumilev, see Lev Nikolaevich Gumilev, “Epokha kulikovskoi bitvy,” *Ogonek* 36 (1980), pp. 16–17; Lev Nikolaevich Gumilev, *Drevniaia Rus' i velikaia step'* (Moscow, 1989); L. N. Gumilev, *Iz istorii Evrazii* (Moscow, 1993); L. N. Gumilev, “Menia nazyvaiut evraziitsem...” *Nash Sovremennik* 1 (1991), pp. 132–141; L. N. Gumilev, “Skazhu Vam po sekretu, chto esli Rossiia budet spasena, to tol'ko kak evraziiskaia derzhava...” in *Ritmy Evrazii: epokhi i tsivilizatsii* (Moscow, 1993), pp. 25–32.

This paper seeks to begin to organize the jumbled ideological landscape of Eurasianism by considering a significant contemporary manifestation—the ideas of Aleksandr Dugin—in the light of the classical Eurasianism of the 1920s and 1930s. As suggested above, Dugin is a particularly notable representative of the Eurasian concept in post-Soviet Russia. He is without question the best-known and most prolific writer-commentator on the subject, and in addition, has succeeded in thrusting these ideas further than anyone else into the sphere of public politics, first through the organization of a so-called political movement and then ultimately, the formation of a Eurasian political party. For Dugin more than anyone else, the claim to represent the political-intellectual legacy of classical Eurasianism is a fundamental element of the overall message. He establishes this continuity in different ways: on the one hand, through a professed ideological fealty to the classical tradition in his own writings, and on the other, through the large-scale editing and republication of the essential texts of classical Eurasianism. Through this latter activity, Dugin has performed a genuine service in making the analyses of the interwar period now broadly available for inspection and study. At the same time, of course, this unsubtly serves his additional aim of putting his own stamp on this literature, thereby enhancing his claim to represent its genuine continuation. In light of this, the goal of this paper is to map out some of the more important resonances and dissonances between Dugin’s own ideas and the perspectives and priorities of the earlier period.

Dugin’s many books and essays have already been the subject of considerable scholarly attention.¹² The analysis in this paper will there-

12 On Dugin, see John B. Dunlop, “Aleksandr Dugin’s ‘Neo-Eurasian’ Textbook and Dmitrii Trenin’s Ambivalent Response,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 25, no. 1/2 (2001), pp. 91–127; Marlène Laruelle, “Alexandre Dugin: esquisse d’un eurasisme d’extrême-droite en Russie post-soviétique,” *Revue d’études comparatives Est-Ouest* 32, no. 3 (September, 2001), pp. 85–103; Laruelle, “The Two Faces of Contemporary Eurasianism: An Imperial Version of Russian Nationalism,” *Nationalities Papers* 32, no. 1 (March, 2004), pp. 115–136; Andreas Umland, “Classification, Julius Evola and the Nature of Dugin’s Ideology,” in Roger Griffin, Werner Loh, and Andreas Umland, eds.,

fore draw for the most part on a rather different source, namely a collection of position papers published in 2001–2002 under the title *A Eurasian Perspective*, which set out the ideology and program of the “Eurasian Movement” that he was launching at that moment.¹³ Although these documents were for the most part unsigned, Dugin’s authorship of them is obvious. They are particularly useful, I would argue, for two reasons. On the one hand, they cut through the complex, convoluted, and often obscure discussions in his other writings to make their points simply and succinctly. Beyond that, and again in contrast to his other writings, the emphasis is not on geo-philosophical rumination but rather on political mobilization, for which purposes Dugin’s actual program of action—his specific proposals for the political and geopolitical reconstruction of the former Soviet Union—are articulated with maximal clarity. My argument will be that his Eurasian vision betrays substantial divergences with his émigré precursors of the interwar period. These differences speak of the sharply different political environments of the two periods, naturally enough, but they also reflect fundamental divergences in the respective national visions and geopolitical ambitions of Russia. It becomes clear, moreover, that traditions other than classical Eurasianism have been instrumental—indeed arguably more instrumental—in shaping Dugin’s understanding and perspective.

In order to get the best sense of these divergences, however, we should begin the analysis in the opposite direction, and consider the affinities that, on the most general and superficial level, do indeed connect

Fascism: Past and Present, East and West (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2006), pp. 486–494; Markus Mathyl, “Grenzenloses Eurasien,” *Jungle World* 45 (October 30, 2002) [http://www.nadir.org/nadir/periodika/jungle_world/_2002/45/29a.htm] (accessed October 4, 2007); Dmitry Shlapentokh, “Russian Nationalism Today: The Views Of Alexander Dugin,” *Contemporary Review* (July, 2001) [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2242/is_1626_279/ai_77712793] (accessed October 4, 2007); Alan Ingram, “Alexander Dugin: Geopolitics and Neo-Fascism in Post-Soviet Russia,” *Political Geography* 20, no. 8 (2001), pp. 1029–1051.

13 *Evraziiskii vzgliad. Mirovozzrencheskaia platforma OPOD ‘Evraziia’* (Moscow, 2002).

the classical Eurasian tradition to Dugin's own neo-Eurasianism.¹⁴ Most straightforwardly, both share the view of Russia as single cohesive civilizational entity, encompassing the diverse peoples who occupy the broad spaces of the Eurasian landmass. This civilization is the result of centuries of coexistence and interaction, and because in this process it was shaped by social, political, and cultural forces coming in equal measure from Europe and Asia, it is given the name *Eurasia* or *Russia-Eurasia*.¹⁵ Continuing faithfully in the tradition of Russian nationalism from the nineteenth century, both classical and neo-Eurasianism define Russian-Eurasian civilization most basically in terms of its contrasts to that of the "West." These two worlds are seen as set apart by an incommensurability that is elemental and insurmountable. Across history, this divergence insured unceasing malevolence and hostility from the West, which the Eurasians believe has always sought to undermine the national welfare and geopolitical unity of Russia-Eurasia. And in the future, they are convinced, it will continue to represent Russia-Eurasia's greatest threat and challenge. Both classical and neo-Eurasianism depart from the Russo-centric nationalism of the nineteenth century, however, in their acknowledgment of and indeed insistence upon the need to recognize multiple layers of identity within Russia-Eurasia. In addition to the single "Eurasian" identity of Eurasia's consolidated totality—what Nikolai Trubetskoi called Russia-Eurasia's "upper level"—there is an elaborate mosaic of more localized identities at the lower levels as well.¹⁶ The specific nature and quality of the identity affinities differ according to level. At the lower levels, group identities derive more from ethno-national affinities, while at the overarching macro-level of Russia-Eurasia itself, the bonds are as noted civilizational, deriving from shared historical ex-

14 In this paper, "neo-Eurasianism" refers exclusively to Dugin's perspective.

15 Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoi, "Obshcheevraziiskii natsionalizm [1927]," in Trubetskoi, *Istoriia. Kul'tura. Iazyk*, pp. 417–427.

16 Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoi, "Verkhi i nizy russkoi kul'tury [1921]," in Trubetskoi, *Istoriia. Kul'tura. Iazyk*, pp. 126–140; "Evraziiskii vzgliad (Osnovnye printsipy doktrinal'noi evraziiskoi platformy)," in *Evraziiskii vzgliad*, pp. 19–61, esp. pp. 28–29.

perience, interethnic complementarity, and mutually acknowledged geopolitical benefit. These different articulations of personal identification and social belonging at different levels are all equally legitimate, and all have to be supported in the framework of the envisioned Eurasian state.

Finally, but by no means less significantly, classical and neo-Eurasianism both originated as a reaction to external circumstances that were in important respects similar, namely the political breakdown of an existing state structure accompanied by the geopolitical breakup of its territory into a collection of sovereign or quasi-sovereign entities.¹⁷ While both Eurasianisms could come to terms rather easily with the first of these transformations, it was utterly impossible for either to reconcile their vision of an organically cohesive civilizational zone with the process of territorial fragmentation. The result was a determination, shared by the two movements that provided and provides their most fundamental rationale and inspiration: the imperative to rescue out of the postrevolutionary chaos the traditional geopolitical cohesiveness of Eurasian space and reestablish thereby a unitary Eurasian state.

On the most general level, to repeat, these resonances between the Eurasianism of the interwar period and our own day are real enough. Dugin emphasizes them constantly, and he uses the classical Eurasian legacy in order to provide his work with an important stamp of legitimacy and depth. Yet if we probe deeper into precisely how all these points are made and what exactly they represent, apparent similarities begin to give way to quite fundamental divergences. This can be seen clearly in terms of four fundamental questions.

What is Eurasia?

This question is at once the simplest and most fundamental. For the classical Eurasians, the answer was obvious: Eurasia was the specific civili-

17 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, "The Emergence of Eurasianism," *California Slavic Studies* 4 (1967), pp. 39–72.

zational zone referred to above, the limits of which were congruent with a more or less clearly demarcated geographical region. The peoples inhabiting this zone shared a collection of common characteristics that marked them as Eurasian and, at the same time, set them logically in contrast with all other peoples and civilizations outside the zone.

For Dugin, on the other hand, the answer is much more complicated. As we have noted, he accepts the notion of Eurasia as a special geographical space and civilizational zone that represents the legacy of Russian imperial and then Soviet *gosudarstvennost'*. At the same time, however, he insists upon a categorically different basic definition, which identifies Eurasia in terms of neither a distinctive geographical region nor a singular civilization, but rather in terms of a political and ideological principle. This principle is the opposition to the grand global project of the United States after the Cold War, which is nothing less than to achieve global domination through the establishment of a unipolar New World Order. The opposition of Eurasians to the "Atlanticist" Americans is absolute, he insists, and it will "define the historical profile (*oblik*) of the twenty-first century."¹⁸ "The most important historical task of Eurasianism," he observes, is to provide the world with a common platform for the struggle against Atlanticism.¹⁹ As was the case during the Cold War, this opposition receives its greatest impetus and organizational drive from the (now reconsolidating) political spaces of the former Soviet Union, but in principle, Eurasia extends beyond these spaces to include any region and peoples of the globe that is also struggling against American hegemony.

Where is Eurasia?

The great novelty and radicalism of classical Eurasianism are related to its particular understanding of the political, national, and cultural charac-

18 *Evrasiiskii vzgliad*, p. 23.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

ter of Russia-Eurasia. It did not, however, try to reshape in any significant way the latter's geographical configuration. Very much to the contrary, their geographical vision was entirely straightforward and entirely traditional. The boundaries of Russia-Eurasia corresponded more or less faithfully to the spaces of Russian *gosudarstvennost'* at its greatest extent, that is to say, in its configuration at the beginning of the twentieth century. There were a few significant exceptions to this, most importantly the imperial "colonies" of Poland and Finland, which they saw as clearly external to Eurasia. These aberrations were, however, corrected by the boundaries of the USSR as they were formalized by the mid-1920s, and the Eurasians subsequently accepted these without question. They viewed the territory demarcated by these boundaries as a unitary and highly distinctive geographical region—a single "geographical individual" (*geograficheskii individuum*), as the geographer Petr Savitskii put it, organically integral and tightly cohesive. Its cohesiveness came from nature itself, the result of the special topographical affinities between what Savitskii referred to as its four internal "landscapes" of tundra, taiga, steppe, and desert.²⁰ The natural physical geographical unity of these four zones fostered the development of Eurasia's political, social, and cultural unity across the ages.

From Dugin's perspective, Eurasia is once again a vaguer and more complicated entity. To the extent that his attention is focused as it were domestically on the territories of the former Soviet Union, he deploys the term "Eurasia" in the classical sense as the traditional spaces of Russian *gosudarstvennost'*. In this spirit, he strongly endorses the post-Soviet project of reassembling these spaces into some sort of consolidated political entity. He is positive regarding the idea of the CIS, and warmly welcomes the recently founded "Eurasian Union" as a more likely geopolitical instrument for achieving the goal of reunification. Ultimately, he hopes it will evolve into an "analog to the USSR, on a new ideologi-

20 P. N. Savitskii, "Geograficheskii obzor Rossii-Evrazii [1926]," in Novikova and Sizemskaiia, eds., *Mir Rossii – Evraziia*, pp. 219–232.

cal, economic, and administrative basis.”²¹ At the same time, however, the geographical corpus of his Eurasia is not restricted to post-Soviet space. This can be seen quite clearly in the numerous maps that he has produced to accompany his texts and help illuminate his ideas. The maps are illuminating indeed, but only of the various and sundry ways in which he is prepared to press the boundaries of Eurasia beyond imperial Russian, Soviet, or post-Soviet space: westward into Europe, south into Central Asia, and eastwards into China and even the Pacific.²² As a result of this perceptual aggrandizement, Eurasia’s boundaries cease of necessity to correspond to familiar civilizational demarcations, and begin rather to fall in place in accordance with the priorities of the actual or potential international political alignment already noted. Ultimately, and most significantly, Dugin’s Eurasianism transcends geographical boundaries altogether to become a genuinely global project, as will be discussed below.

What is the West?

Although Eurasianism always defines Russia in terms of its elemental distinctions from the West, the specific character and indeed the very location of the latter is understood in very different ways. As was the case with their geographical vision, so too in their view of the West did the classical Eurasians remain entirely faithful to the tradition of prerevolutionary Russian nationalism, which after all had been grappling with the problem for well over a century before them. For them, the West was Europe, above all, Western Europe and there most importantly the leading industrial-imperial states of France, Germany, Britain, Italy, and Austro-Hungary. In the form of Nikolai Danilevskii’s notion of a Romano-Germanic “cultural-historical type,” Russian nationalism had already developed a notion of the European West as a single civiliza-

21 “Evraziia prezhde vsego,” in *Evraziiskii vzgliad*, pp. 3–17, here p. 14.

22 See for example the maps in Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki*, pp. 17, 45, 64, 70, 233.

tional zone by the mid-nineteenth century. This characterization was then echoed—albeit in very different terms—a half-century later in Oswald Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes*. The Eurasians were powerfully influenced by Danilevskii and Spengler in equal measure, and they simply adopted their characterization of Europe as their own. A belief in the implacable opposition between this Western European civilizational zone and Russia-Eurasia was at the very foundation of their thinking, as set forth trenchantly in what was to become the first Eurasian manifesto, Nikolai Trubetskoi's *Europe and Mankind* (written not coincidentally as a response to Spengler).²³ The attention of the classical Eurasians, as was the case for the Russian nationalist tradition in general, remained focused squarely on the Old World of continental Europe, and did not take any of its colonial offshoots very seriously.

In the view of the Eurasians, the elemental opposition between Europe and Russia was transcendent, and a fact of life for all time. In a very literal sense, the two were mutually antithetical, for Russia-Eurasia defined itself precisely in terms of its distinctions and differences from the West. Once again, the classical Eurasians described these differences in the familiar language of the Russian nationalist tradition, that is to say, in terms that were essentially moral, ethical, and civilizational: Russia's spirituality, tolerance, and social collectivity (now, to be sure, all given a distinctively Eurasian twist) *contra* the individuality, materialism, and colonial violence of Europe. Needless to say, there was no thought whatsoever that the two regions ever could or indeed should overcome their differences and seek to achieve a sort of higher reconciliation. Neither Danilevskii's nor Spengler's world-historical models provided any precedent for this sort of universalism, and the classical Eurasians saw no appeal in it. Very much to the contrary, the ultimate goal was to realize as thorough a disengagement as possible from Europe and develop Eurasia as a practical alternative to it.

23 Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoi, *Evropa i chelovechestvo* (Sofia: Rossiisko-Bolgarskoe knigoizdatel'stvo, 1921).

Dugin's perspective differs quite radically from this. While he accepts the historical reality of the Romano-Germanic cultural zone and the significance of its opposition to Russia, the Russia-Eurasia of today that he evokes faces an entirely different sort of challenge. Effectively, Dugin updates the Eurasian perspective to reflect the essential global shifts of the world after 1945 and 1991, and in so doing, shifts the center of gravity of the West across the Atlantic to North America. It is the United States that now represents Eurasia's antithesis and chief opponent. And this shift is not merely one of leadership in the Cold War sense, in which the United States provided the principal organizational and material drive for a broader Western alliance that also included the nations of the Old World. Very much to the contrary, in Dugin's view, the world's sole remaining superpower now stands alone, quite apart from and indeed in opposition—*de facto*, if not always recognized—to its former allies in Western and Central Europe. Significantly, Dugin no longer refers to this opponent as the West (*zapad*) but rather as the Atlantic world or, more simply, Atlanticism.

Two points of are significance here. On the one hand, the geographical shift across the Atlantic involves a shift in the characterization of the opposition between the two entities. In place of classical Eurasianism's sense of an unbridgeable moral and historical-civilizational divide, Dugin insists that Russia-Eurasia's opposition to the United States comes "objectively" from the principles of global geopolitics. Drawing widely—and highly tendentiously—from the theoretical arsenal of European geopolitics in the first half of the twentieth century, he insists that an essential conflict between land and sea powers has run throughout the course of history. In the present day, it conditions the most important global standoff, namely the confrontations between the United States and Eurasia. The United States is currently striving to consolidate its global domination, as indicated, and it is at once the geopolitical imperative and geopolitical destiny of Russia-Eurasia to lead the rest of the world in resistance to this. This logic is then developed as the basis for the second point, namely that continental Europe loses its traditional identity as Russia's antithesis and defining Other, and is seen rather as a potential

ally. Once again, the basis for this is geopolitics. Europe is as vulnerable as any other part of the world to America's hegemonic strivings, which means that it has natural "geopolitical affinities" with Russia-Eurasia that could be the basis for a future alliance.²⁴ This is expressed in the vision of a so-called Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis, which Dugin takes entirely seriously and discusses at great length in his other writings.

What is Eurasia's Place in the World?

Following the standard argumentation of nationalist discourses throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in Russia and elsewhere, the classical Eurasians used their vision of the natural-geographical unity of Eurasian space described above to insist on the absolute distinctiveness of Russia-Eurasia. On the one hand, this meant that it differed in a variety of fundamental ways from all of the other regions of the globe, in particular from those adjacent to it along its long boundary from Europe to Asia. On the other hand, the organic coherence of Russian-Eurasian space meant that it represented a closed geographical universe—a "*mir v sebe*" as Savitskii put it, completely self-contained and with all the physical and spiritual resources necessary to maintain a wholly autonomous and self-sufficient existence. All of this combined to make classical Eurasianism a radically isolationist doctrine, and this isolationism was one of its most significant political principles.²⁵ Among other things, it clearly betrays Eurasianism's roots in the fin-de-siècle determination of some Russian nationalists to integrate the far-flung territories of the empire into a consolidated national market in the spirit of Friedrich List—a determination that motivated leading imperial statesmen such as Witte and Struve and stimulated among other things the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway. At the same time, and more importantly, the

24 *Evraziiskii vzgliad*, pp. 52–53.

25 P. N. Savitskii, "Kontinent-Okean (Rossiia i mirovoi rynek) [1921]," in *Kontinent Evraziia* (Moscow, 1997), pp. 398–419; P. N. Savitskii, "Geograficheskie i geopoliticheskie osnovy evraziistva [1933]," in *Kontinent Evraziia*, pp. 295–303 RIE.

imperative of further integrating the spaces of Russia-Eurasia toward the goal of full national autonomy and self-sufficiency served to anchor classical Eurasianism firmly in the various etatist doctrines of interwar continental Europe, with their heavy emphasis on the principle of autarchy. Precisely this vision of national autarchy was shared in the USSR of their day, of course, where it inspired the frenetic activity of the five-year plans, and it was thus the source of a substantial ideological resonance between Soviet communism and classical Eurasianism. Indeed, this resonance convinced some Eurasians that their vision could be achieved via Soviet Bolshevism, leading them ultimately to attempt what turned out to be a fateful—and fatal—*rapprochement* with Stalinist Russia.

As the discussion up to this point clearly intimates, Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism advocates an entirely different vision of Russia's place in the world. It is to begin with a genuinely global perspective, which has at its center Dugin's own version of a Eurasian New World Order. This is a complex model for the future geopolitical reorganization of the entire world, based on the association of macro-regions that Dugin calls "gloeconomic belts" or "zones." These would be four in number: Euro-Africa, Asia-Pacific, America, and Eurasia.²⁶ Each of these belts, in turn, would be formed through the consolidation of a number of what he calls Big Spaces (*bol'shie prostranstva*, a literal, if awkward translation of the German *Großraum*) located in this particular part of the globe. Internally, Dugin's gloeconomic belts are based explicitly on the principle of hegemony of the stronger and more developed parts (for example, the United States or Western Europe) over the weaker (South America or Africa, respectively). At the global level, however, the association of the four zones would be balanced and based on the principles of equality and mutual recognition. Through this eventual *quarto-partite* arrangement, Dugin intends to establish polycentricity as the dominant mode of geopolitical power at the global level and thereby secure the overriding objective of his Eurasianism, namely the elimination of the threat of

26 *Evraziiskii vzgliad*, pp. 23–24, 41–57; maps 44–46.

American global hegemony. This will only be achieved, however, through an alliance of three of the macro-regions against the North American superpower. One important part of this is the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis that we have already noted, and Dugin has written enthusiastically about the creation of a "Euro-Asian Empire" from Dublin to Vladivostok. This would then be augmented and extended with vectors thrusting in other key directions: into Central Asia, with the creation of a Teheran-Moscow axis, and into East Asia with a Tokyo-Moscow axis.

Thus, in the final analysis, Dugin appears to subordinate, or at least relegate, his concern with Eurasia per se within a much more comprehensive and ambitious scheme for the rearrangement of geopolitical relations across the globe. The obfuscation that this involves is fully apparent in his highly ambiguous use of the term as he seeks to locate Eurasia within the global geopolitical matrix he has described. On the one hand, Eurasia is a *bol'shoe prostranstvo*. This, effectively, is the Russia-Eurasia of the classical Eurasians, today represented by the political space of the former Soviet Union. As already noted, the process of political-economic consolidation of this space has already begun, in the form of the Euro-Asian Union.²⁷ In addition to this "lesser" Eurasia, however, there is a "greater" Eurasia that represents one of the four geoeconomic belts in toto. This latter entity subsumes post-Soviet Russia-Eurasia but includes far more: the continental Islamic states, China, India, and *perhaps* even some states in Eastern Europe. Even a greater Eurasia, however, does not necessarily encompass Dugin's vision of its full global extent. Here, the full impact of Dugin's characterization of the essence of Eurasianism as anti-Americanism becomes apparent. To the extent that any country or region of the globe is consciously oriented against American hegemonic designs, then as far as he is concerned, it is de facto already a part of Eurasia.

To the extent that resistance to this unipolarity is objectively in the universal interest of everyone except the American imperialists, then

27 Ibid., pp. 43, 58–59.

Eurasia becomes a universal project, representing virtually the entire world. “Eurasianism historically and geographically [represents] the entire world, with the exception of the Western sector of world civilization.”²⁸ He carefully spells out the full implications of this later in the text:

In such a broad understanding, Eurasianism takes on a new and unprecedented significance. Now it is not only a sort of national idea for a new postcommunist Russia (as intended by the movement’s founding fathers...) but also a broad program of universal planetary significance, which goes far beyond the boundaries of Russia and the Eurasian continent itself. *In the same way that the concept of “Americanism” can today be applied to geographical regions located far beyond the limits of the North American continent, so “Eurasianism” indicates a special civilizational, cultural, philosophical, and strategic choice, which can be made by any member of the human race, regardless of what [specific] national and spiritual culture they may belong to.*²⁹

And Russia, of course, is destined to play its own special role in this. “Russia is simply destined (obrechena) to become the leader of a new planetary (Eurasian) alternative to the Western version of global relations (unipolar globalism).”³⁰ Naming the section of the manifesto in which these ideas are developed *Evraziia kak Planeta*—“Eurasia as the Planet”—Dugin could not have put the point any more explicitly.³¹ “Eurasianism implies not only a vision of the development of Russia of the countries of the SNG. It also proposes a common project of a new social-political organization for all peoples of the earth.”³²

28 Ibid., p. 20.

29 Ibid., pp. 36–37; emphasis in original.

30 Ibid., p. 41; emphasis in original.

31 Ibid., p. 35.

32 Ibid., p. 42.