ALEXANDER DUGIN AND MOSCOW'S NEW RIGHT RADICAL INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES AT THE START OF PUTIN'S THIRD PRESIDENTIAL TERM 2012-2013: THE ANTI-ORANGE COMMITTEE, THE IZBORSK CLUB AND THE FLORIAN GEYER CLUB IN THEIR POLITICAL CONTEXT*

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Abstract
This paper contextualizes a brief moment in the development of Russian right-wing intellectualism in a volatile transition period of the Putin System. It briefly introduces three new far right circles the appearance of which, it is argued, signified a novel stage in the development of the Russian extreme right within the peculiar conditions of Russia's post-Soviet neopatrimonial regime. The paper focuses on the personae of Aleksandr Dugin – one of post-Soviet Russia's most prominent fascist ideologues and the prime proponent of "neo-Eurasianism." The paper also briefly touches upon the significance of the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine for the radicalization of Putin's authoritarian rule and its resulting rapprochement with the Russian extreme right.[1]

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Keywords
Dugin, Putin, Russia, Russian right-wing.

The relatively large attention that Aleksandr Dugin and his "neo-Eurasian" followers have received in international post-Sovietology and Russian right-wing extremism studies, over the last two decades, is unusual, but justified.[1] Dugin represents for both, analytical and political reasons, a more interesting case than his various ultra-nationalist competitors on the book market, in mass media, and within the public discourse of post-Soviet Russia. Not only has he distinguished himself by his bold incorporation of West European inter- and post-war right-wing extremist ideas – including classical German Nazism – into his post-Soviet Russian fascist ideology. By today, he is one of the few still active veterans of the Soviet Union's occult underground that made up the Iuzhinskii circle in the early 1980s (Menzel 2013, 195-228, Laruelle 2015b, 563-580). Later on, Dugin was, for a short period in 1988, a member of late Soviet Russia's first openly ultra-nationalist grouping, the infamous so-called *Pamiat'* (Memory) Society. Already in the early nineties, Dugin became a prolific post-Soviet publicist whose first articles, in particular his columns for Russia's leading ultra-nationalist weekly

[1] See also,, in this journal, on Dugin's ideology: Radu Cucută, "Flogging the Geopolitical Horse," *Europolity: Continuity and Change in European Governance,* vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, pp. 227-233.

[1] For several relevant comparative interpretations and empirical studies, on Aleksandr Dugin and his "neo-Eurasiansim," as well as extensive bibliographies, see the eleven 2009-2015 special sections "Anti-Western Ideological Trends in Post-Soviet Russia and Their Origins I-XI" of the Russian-language web journal *Forum for Contemporary East European History and Culture (Forum noveishei vostochnoevropeiskoi istorii i kul'tury*), vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 5-218; vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 5-174; vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 5-148; vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 7-186; vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 7-158; vol. 8, vol. 2, pp. 7-156; vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 7-142; vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 7-176; vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 233-360; vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 141-342; vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 75-182. at http://www1.ku-eichstaett.de/ZIMOS/forumruss.html. On Eurasianism and neo-Eurasianism in general, see lately: Marlene Laruelle, ed., *Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015); Mark Bassin, Sergei Glebov & Marlene Laruelle, eds, *Between Europe and Asia: The Origins, Theories and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015); Mark Bassin & Mikhail Suslov, eds, *Eurasia 2.0: Russian Geopolitics in the Age of New Media* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2016); Mark Bassin, *The Gumilev Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Charles Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow: The Rise of Russia's New Nationalism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016).

Den'/Zavtra (The Day/Tomorrow), helped to shape the overall world-view of the then emerging new Russian extreme right.

This paper will, first, outline the overall background, determinants, and context of various non-party activities that, among others, Dugin is engaged in. The argument focuses on both Dugin's specific strategy, on the side, and the general meaning of right-wing extremist activism outside the electoral realm, i.e. within so-called "uncivil society," on the other. The paper, secondly, illustrates these general observations by way of continuing Marlene Laruelle's (2009) and others' (including my own, Umland 2007) research on post-Soviet Russian right-wing extremist clubs and think-tanks. The focus here will be on three new such creations, in which Dugin has been taking an active part, and which came to prominence since the announcement of Putin's return to the Russian presidency after September 2011. In the conclusions, I argue that the development of Russian right-wing intellectualism may currently be entering a new stage, in terms of its consolidation as a movement, as well as of its penetration of the state and society.

1. SOURCES OF DUGIN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL RELEVANCE

While some prominent right-radical activists of the late 1980s – early 1990s have now been replaced by post-Soviet novices of right-wing radicalism, Dugin is still manifestly present, in Russian public life (Østbø 2015). Moreover, his social status and reach into the political mainstream are, perhaps, currently rising further. In 2012, he claimed for himself, not without justification, that he had "[…] been actively participating in Russian politics, for many years. I am one of the oldest Russian politicians. […] For the realization of my world view positions, I searched for different political milieus, and, wherever I went, I left a serious trace. Starting with the national-patriotic movement of the [nineteen] eighties, with the newspaper *The Day*, the left-right opposition, the National Salvation Front, and up to the formation of the ideology of the ideology of the C[ommunist] P[arty of the] R[ussian] F[ederation] (read the books and articles by

Gennadii Ziuganov – many passages [resemble mine] one by one);[1] from the *en passant* ideological project of National Bolshevism as presented by the Limonovites […] to the creation of the first version of the movement "Russia." By the way, my ideas were to considerable degree taken over by the L[iberal-]D[emocratic] P[arty of] R[ussia], and O[ur] H[ouse is] R[ussia] (in a brushed up form), F[atherland -] A[ll of] R[ussia] (I published two programmatic-conceptual articles in the Luzhkov journal *My Moscow*, the ideas of which Luzhkov, at one time, slightly changing them, repeated). Today, the Putin establishment minus – not for long – the liberals [within it] speak in my language. Yes, I am not widely known, but only because thieves never refer to the sources of their property. In my view, this is obvious. The Eurasian movement that I head is a kind of world view order, a scientific network. […] Slowly but constantly we are reaching our aim. The early Eurasian tendency in contemporary Russia was only represented by young intellectual non-conformists. Today, a weighty part of it [are] academic scholars, businessmen and industrialists, representatives of the power ministries and agencies, religious people (Old Believers, Muslims, mystic and others), administrators, journalists and oil traders, as well as and as always a broad range of the counter-culture – the [latter] is the traditionally [strong part]" (Dugin 2012, 23-25). Obviously, Dugin is inflating his impact here. Yet, he may be right, in principle, in so far as his traces are indeed noticeable in the rhetoric of many Russian politicians – whether within the executive and parliament, or outside the state institutions and in civil society.

The reasons for his relatively high impact are not only the longevity of his publicistic activity, the aggressiveness of his anti-Westernism, a presumed originality of his ideas, a certain literary talent, his considerable erudition, and the enormous amount of his printed and web publications, including frequent appearances in electronic media (TV, radio). These features have been extensively covered in previous research. They make Dugin only partially special, within the Russian right-wing extremist scene. More importantly, Dugin has distinguished himself from others, over the last quarter of a century, by the considerable energy he has invested in (a) the establishment of sustainable ties to like-minded foreign political activists and non-Russian publicists, particularly in

[1] More on Dugin's view of his impact on the CPRF, in: Aleksandr Dugin, "KPRF i evraziistvo," *Evraziiskoe obozrenie*, no. 6, 2002, http://www.eurasia.com.ru/eo/6-3.html.

Western Europe and Turkey (Shekhovtsov 2015),[1] and (b) the creation of various political, networking, propaganda and publishing organizations, inside Russia, that support the spread of his ideas in society.

While Russia has a whole number of publicists who are as belligerently anti-Western and similarly productive text producers as him, none of the widely known ultra-nationalist literati equals Dugin in terms of the range of her/his organizational improvisations and international activities. This concerns especially the closeness of his cooperation with Western neo-fascist intellectuals, as well as the impressive number and probable impact of the institutions (circles, publishing houses, parties, networks etc.) that Dugin created, co-founded or joined, in a leading position, over the last 30 years. The combination of these features distinguish Dugin from other prolific publicists of similar ilk like, to name three prominent examples, the renowned mathematician Igor' Shafarevich,[2] chemistry professor Sergei G. Kara-Murza,[3] or journalist Vladimir Kucherenko.[4]

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[1] For further explorations of some of these ties, see, for instance, Marlène Laruelle, "Russo-Turkish Rapprochement through the Idea of Eurasia: Alexander Dugin's Networks in Turkey," *The Jamestown Foundation Occasional Papers*, April 2008, http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Jamestown-LaruelleRussoTurkish.pdf, and Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017), forthcoming.

[2] On Shafarevich's earlier writings see, John B. Dunlop, "The 'Sad Case' of Igor Shafarevich," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 24, no. 1 (1994):19-30; Andrei A. Znamenski, "In Search of the Russian Idea: Igor Shafarevich's Traditional Orthodoxy," *European Studies Journal* 31, no. 1 (1996, pp. 33-48. Among his more recent books are Igor' Shafarevich, *Russkii narod v bitve tsivilizatsii* (Moskva: Eksmo-Press, 2004); *idem, Trëkhtysyachiletnyaya zgadka* (Moskva: Eksmo-Press, 2005); *idem, Zachem Rossii Zapad?* (Moskva: Eksmo-Press, 2005).

[3] Kara-Murza is affiliated with the *Fond natsional'noi i mezhdunarodnoi bezopastnosti* (Foundation of National and International Security). Among his many books are Sergei G. Kara-Murza, *Sovetskaya tsivilizatsiya* (Moskva: Algoritm, 2001); *idem, Evrei, dissidenty i evrokommunizm* (Moskva: Algoritm, 2002); *idem, Antisovetskii proekt* (Moskva: Algoritm, 2001); *idem, Manipulyatsiya soznaniem* (Moskva: Eksmo-Press, 2004); *idem, Poteryannyi razum* (Moskva: Eksmo-Press, 2005); *idem, Oppozitsiya kak tenevaya vlast'* (Moskva: Algoritm, 2006).

[4] E.g. Maksim Kalashnikov, *Vpered, v SSSR-2* (Moskva: Yauza, Eksmo-Press, 2003); *idem, Slomannyi mech' imperii* (Moskva: Krymskii Most, 9d—Paleia, 1998); *idem, Bitva za nebesa* (Moskva: AST, Astrel', 2002); *idem* and Yurii Krupnov, *Gnev orka* (Moskva: AST, Astrel', 2003); Maksim Kalashnikov, *Amerikanskoe igo: Zachem diade Semu russkie raby* (Moskva: Yauza, Presskom, 2005); *idem, Genotsid russkogo naroda: Chto mozhet nas spasti?* (Moskva: Yauza, Presskom, 2005). My list of authors is by no means complete, does, perhaps, not even include the, apart from Dugin, most important publicists,

The latter, for instance, is – to be sure – an equally active publicist, with an impressive CV. Kucherenko is a graduate of Moscow State University's Faculty of History, former editor for the popular Russian online magazine *Stringer* and correspondent for, among other periodicals, the Russian government's official daily *Rossiiskaya gazeta*. Kucherenko now writes books under the pseudonym of "Maksim Kalashnikov" (Yasmann 2004). He is, like Dugin (on whom he occasionally relies), not afraid of admitting an interest in elements of Nazism (Moroz 2003). Kucherenko-Kalashinkov is fond of comprehensively re-interpreting Russian as well as world history and of advising the Russian people, especially, the elites, on how to act in the future – again reminding Dugin's intentions. Going beyond Dugin, Kucherenko-Kalashnikov has proposed to make the infamous anti-Semitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* a part of the school curriculum (Moroz 2003). He dreams, in one of his books, *Forward to the USSR-2* (Kalashnikov 2003), of a "Neuroworld" which would be a "structure" combining the characteristics of a "church, huge media holding, as well as of a financial 'empire' added with a secret service." He would like to see in Russia a "secret [parallel] state," "new empire," "new species [*poroda*] of human beings," a "team of programmers and computer geniuses" who would, "on the other side of the ocean [i.e. in the US – A.U.]," cause "chaos and catastrophes." Kucherenko-Kalashnikov has proposed a "[s]ystem of development and application of neuro- and psychotechnology" for military means (Kalashnikov 2003, 380-388).

Not only seem Kucherenko-Kalashnikov's views thus hardly less radical than Dugin's. The 2003 book just quoted from is also noteworthy because it has a circulation number of 10,000. Yasmann wrote in August 2004 that the book, already, then had "gone through several editions […] and its popularity ha[d] become widespread." (Yasmann 2004). Dugin is thus neither the most radical, nor the only widely read representative of ultranationalist publicism in Russia today. However, in distinction to Shafarevich's, Kara-Murza's and Kucherenko-Kalashnikov's efforts, Dugin's enterprise is organizationally more sustained and better thought-through. It is an original and encompassing operation in terms of both, its contents and sophistication as well as infrastructure and networking.

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and could be extended with many more names like Yurii Petukhov, Aleksandr Sevast'yanov, Yurii Mukhin, Oleg Platonov, Mikhail Nazarov, etc.

Below, I will briefly highlight the background against which Russian "uncivil society" has been developing in 2011-2013, and three new platforms of Dugin's publishing and lecturing activities of that period, namely the Anti-Orange Committee, Izborsk Club, and Florian Geyer Club. While Dugin was or is not the official prime leader of any of these three new extremely right-wing intellectual circles, he played or plays in all of them a prominent part, and can be identified as one of the most important ideologues of all three of them. The guiding ideas of these clubs were principally informed, by the theories and interpretations that Dugin has introduced into Russian ultra-nationalist discourse, since the late 1980s. In late 2013, a new period in the development of Russian "uncivil society" began in connection with the Kremlin's burgeoning obsession with Ukrainian domestic events, its annexation of Crimea, "hybrid war" in Eastern Ukraine, and world-wide "information war." As a result of these developments, Russian public discourse and the role of ultra-nationalists in it transformed to a degree that would make necessary a separate treatment of the novel state of affairs that emerged by mid-2014. That is why I am limiting the below considerations to the brief period of mid-2011 to mid-2013.

2. THE NEW CONTEXT OF PUTIN'S THIRD TERM: A CHANGING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Since the announcement of Putin's return to the presidency and the start of large anti-government demonstrations in Moscow in the second half of 2011, the rise of radically anti-Western nationalist jingoism in the Russian public sphere – including high and local politics, mass media as well as intellectual discourse – has been accelerating. The Russian government's promotion of rabid anti-Americanism in the public rhetoric and politics can be easily identified as a PR maneuver, by the Kremlin, to distract the population from pressing domestic challenges such as wide-spread corruption, blatant electoral falsifications, rising economic imbalances, or an increasingly bloated government.

While Russian anti-Americanism has thus primarily political-technological origins, the societal impact of the bizarre TV campaigns, and the deeper effects of

the escalating demonization of the USA on Russian public discourse should not be neglected as merely temporal phenomena.[1] This has become clear from the long-term repercussions of similar, earlier instances of Russian anti-American media hysteria, for instance, in connection with the bombardment of Serbia by NATO in 1999, the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City in 2002, the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the Russian-Georgian Five-Day War in 2008. Following these campaigns, public opinion in the Russian Federation has become increasingly critical of the US and, to some extent, also of the EU.[2]

The renewed stimulation of anti-Western discourses through application of "political technologies" is accelerating the development of – what may be called – "uncivil society" in Russia (Umland 2007). The anti-democratic faction of the Russian Third Sector represents a network of, partly cooperative, partly competing, extremely anti-liberal groups, organizations, and publications that are politically active, yet do not constitute proper parties fighting for governmental posts. Many of them, to be sure, are currently distinguished by the support they receive from government agencies and through active advertising on Kremlin-controlled TV channels. They thus present GONGOs (Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organizations), rather than genuine civil society

[1] On the already worrying rise of Russian anti-Americanism during Putin's first two presidential terms, see, in chronological order, Vladimir Zvonovsky, "The New Russian Identity and the United States," *Demokratizatsiya,* vol. 13, no. 1, 2005, pp. 101–14; L. Sedov, "Aktual'nye problemy v obshchestvennom mnenii rossiian i amerikantsev (rezul'taty sovmestnogo rossiisko-amerikanskogo issledovaniia)," *Vestnik obshchestvennogo mneniia,* no. 3 (83), 2006, pp. 14–17; Aleksei Levinson, "Amerika kak znachimyi Drugoi," *Pro et Contra,* vol. 11, no. 2, 2007, pp. 65–69; Susan Richards, "Russians Don't Much Like the West," *Open Democracy,* 25 February 2009 (www.opendemocracy.net/article/email/russians-don-t-much-like-the-west); Alexei Levinson, "Russian Public Opinion and the Georgian War," *Open Democracy,* 14 August 2009 (www.opendemocracy.net/article/email/russian-public-opinion-and-the-georgia-war). A strange discussion about whether anti-Americanism was, already in the 2000s, really growing in Russian society is documented in "Has Russian Anti-Americanism Been Rising? A Debate on the Article 'The Unpopular Prospect of World War III: The Twentieth Century Is Not Over Yet'," *The Russian Nationalism Bulletin,* vol. 3, no. 5(47), 2009, appendix (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/russian_nationalism/messages/412?threaded=1&m=e&var=1&tidx=1).

[2] If have outlined this in some detail in the chapter: Andreas Umland, "Novyi 'osobyi put'' Rossii posle 'oranzhevoi revoliutsii': radikal'noe antizapadnichestvo i paratotalitarnyi neoavtoritarizm 2005–2008 godov," in: Emil A. Pain, ed., *Ideologiia "osobogo puti" v Rossii i Germanii: istoki, soderzhanie, posledstviia* (Moscow: Tri kvadrata, 2010), pp. 245–65.

initiatives. However, the accelerating media campaign of incitement against the US may have two deep, long-term repercussions. First, it will permanently establish a conspiracy-minded, paranoid worldview as a legitimate pattern for the interpretation of international events. And second, it will thus help to socially entrench and publicly establish the corresponding activists, authors, publishers, and clubs as legitimate participants of Russian political as well as intellectual – and, partly, even academic – discourse.

As a result of these and a number of other recent developments also furthering xenophobia and conspirology, an aggressively anti-Western right-wing extremism is taking shape, within Russian political and public life, as a stable third pole between the authoritarian regime and the democratic opposition.[1] While this ideological niche was earlier occupied primarily by Zhirinovskii and some other more or less stigmatized public figures, the recent promotion of a whole number ultra-nationalist publicists and politicians, through state-controlled mass media, gives this already existing camp a novel quality, weight and stature, within Russian politics. By actively supporting this reconfiguration of the Russian political landscape, the Kremlin appears to be aiming at a purposeful restructuring the semi-open public discourse. In that scenario, the increased incorporation of ultra-nationalists into mainstream political debates is designed to cause a comprehensive right-wing shift within Russia's ideological spectrum. Against this newly created background, the nationalism of Putin and his immediate associates, which is also quite virulent, comes across as relatively centrist when compared to the far more radical demands "from the grassroots", i.e., from the right-wing extremists which are provided with more and more presence, exposure and respect, in the state-controlled mass media (Umland 2009, 101-125).

[1] The Communists play a peculiarly hybrid role in Putin's Russia in that they are part of both, the regime and opposition, as well as also closely linked to Russian right-wing extremism, above all, through their radical anti-Americanism. On the development of the CPRF, in the 1990s, see Geir Flikke, "Patrioticheskii levotsentrizm: zigzagi Kommunisticheskoi partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii v 1990-kh godakh," *Forum noveishei vostochnoevropeiskoi istorii i kul'tury*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2012, pp. 70-99. While there are whole number of further investigations into the early post-Soviet Communist Party, there does not seem to exist yet an in-depth study of the CPRF's development and activities, under Putin. For a left-wing critique of Russian nationalism in the CPRF, see Ilia Fedoseev, "Nikitinshchina – smertel'naia bolezn' KPRF," *Levaia Politika*, no. 2, 2007, pp. 44-48.

As will be also illustrated in the below analysis of the right-wing extremist clubs, several ultra-nationalist groups and leaders have connections – sometimes through one and the same person – to both the government and the opposition within which an equally ultra-nationalist and, at least, implicitly anti-Western strain has also taken hold (Popescu 2012, 46-54). One example is the blogger and activist, Vladlen Kralin, known in right-wing extremist circles by his pseudonym "Vladimir Thor". Kralin-Thor has been a member of both, the Coordinating Council of the opposition and of two nationalist organizations led by Dmitri Rogozin, a current Deputy Prime Minister of the RF, namely, of "Rodina" and "Velikaya Rossiya" – "Motherland" and "Great Russia". Due to the way Putin's system of government and Russia's mass media operate, however, right-wing contacts in the government have a higher political significance than the ultra-nationalist participation in protests, which is controversial among Russian democrats anyway. Within the pro-democratic movement there is an eloquent minority that is explicitly opposed to any cooperation between the liberal opposition and radical nationalists. These voices are organized, for example, in the Facebook group "*Russia without Hitler! No to meetings with fascists, Nazis, and nationalists*".[1]

Amid the spectrum of ultra-nationalist associations which – though often promoted via Kremlin "political technologies" – are nevertheless not necessarily irrelevant social actors, right-wing extremist intellectuals and their clubs, publications, and media appearances deserve particular attention. They include more or less well-organized publicists, TV commentators, bloggers, and (self-styled) academics, who have an impact on the formation of public opinion through their influence especially on politically interested parts of society like university students, junior scholars and civic activists in particular, but also on civil society, in general. At least, for Dugin, it is clear that the cultural power to shape and interpret the basic concepts of civil society, especially of its epistemic communities and opinion makers, is – in line with the French's *Nouvelle Droite*'s right-wing Gramscianism – a precondition for acquiring political power.[2]

[1] See https://www.facebook.com/groups/knbor/permalink/458823157522279/

[2] See, for instance, his appendix (*prilozhenie*) "Counter-Hegemony and the Theory of the Multi-Polar Word" to the university text-book: Aleksandr Dugin, *Mezhdunarodny otnosheniia: paradigm, teorii, sotsiologiia* (Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, 2013), pp. 310-326.

3. A NEW CONSOLIDATION IN RUSSIA'S ULTRA-NATIONALIST MILIEU

The extremely right-wing Russian political spectrum went, in 2011-2013, through a certain polarization when it became increasingly divided by whether the respective groups fall into either the pro-Kremlin camp, or instead the anti-Putin movement. However, this dividing trend is not the only and may not be most important innovation in the Russian extreme right. Since the announcement of Putin's return to the presidential office in September 2011, two further new tendencies within the radically anti-Western intellectual milieu, which had already been present before, have intensified. Arguably, these are altogether politically more consequential than the partial cooperation of certain ultra-nationalist groups with the liberal-democratic protest movement of 2011-2012.

First, the extremely anti-Western literati milieu was, during the protests, not only dividing along its position towards Putin, but also experiencing a partial political consolidation. This means that formerly manifest ideological differentiations between similarly oriented, but separate intellectual clubs and their respective interpretations of Russian history and world politics are gradually losing significance. The rivalry among the various "Slavophiles" – for example, between those of the ethno-nationalist and the "Eurasian" orientations – which was still manifest in the 1990s, is decreasing against the background of the new confrontation between the increasingly anti-Western regime, on the one hand, and the largely pro-Western opposition, on the other.

This consolidating trend is illustrated by the intensified cooperation between two of the most influential theoreticians and TV commentators in this spectrum, Sergey Kurginyan and Aleksandr Dugin.[1] In the 1990s, acting as the

[1] On the rise of Kurginyan in the late 1980s-early 1990s, see Jeff Gleisner, "Russia's Post-Industrial Patriots," *Russia and the World*, no. 17 (1990, pp. 19-24; Yasmann, "Red Religion;" Alla Černych, "Sergej Kurginjan: Das siebente Szenarium," *Berliner Debatte: Initial*, no. 3, 1994, pp. 61-64; Alexander Yanov, *Weimar Russia – And What We Can Do About It* (New York: Slovo-Word, n.d.); John B. Dunlop, "Sergei Kurginyan," in his *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire,* 2nd edn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 165-169; Victor Yasmann, "Elite Think Tank Prepares 'Post-Perestroika' Strategy," *Report on the USSR*, 24 May 1991, pp. 1-6; Paul Bellis and Jeff Gleisner, "After Perestroika: A Neo-Conservative Manifesto," *Russia and the World*, no. 19, 1991, pp. 19-24; Umland, "Post-Soviet 'Uncivil Society'…," pp. 84-88.

propagandist for a reinstitution of the Soviet system under new auspices, Kurginyan had harshly criticized Dugin in Dugin's then capacity as an openly neo-fascist publicist.[1] In the meantime, however, Kurginyan, who had already been closely linked to the conservative establishment in the final phase of the Soviet era, has started to more closely and publicly co-operate with Dugin, who had once been marginalized politically as an *SS* admirer.

Second, there is increasing cooperation between extra-systemic ultra-nationalists, on the one side, and intra-systemic sympathizers of their conspiracy theories, on the other – a tendency that has been observable since the end of the 1990s, but has recently intensified. This includes a partial cooptation of marginal publicists, who used to be located on the outermost political fringes, into structures close to the Kremlin or sometimes even into governmental institutions. One example is the quick academic rise of Dugin, who has now been for several years teaching as a professor and acting Chair of the Sociology of International Relations at Moscow State University (*MGU*) named after Lomonosov, Russia's leading higher education institution.[2] Further examples of increasing contacts between the government and extreme right could be mentioned.

These tendencies of consolidation and of, what could be called, de-stigmatization among the extreme right-wing shall be illustrated on the basis of three new – partly abortive, partly growing – intellectual clubs, the Anti-Orange Committee, the Izborsk Club, and the Florian Geyer Club. These novel organizations were not yet in existence in 2009, when Marlene Laruelle (2009) published her seminal review of post-Soviet Russian nationalist think-tanks. All three of them have Dugin as one of their principal activists.

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[1] On Dugin's fascism, see Anton Shekhovtsov, "The Palingenetic Thrust of Russian Neo-Eurasianism: Ideas of Rebirth in Aleksandr Dugin's Worldview." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2008, pp. 491-506; Anton Shekhovtsov, "Aleksandr Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism: The New Right à la Russe," *Religion Compass*, vol. 3, no. 4, 2009, pp. 697-716.

[2] See http://www.socir.ru/. Andreas Umland, "Dugin i MGU: pravoradikal'nyi ideolog kak professor vedushhego VUZa Rossii," *Forum noveishei vostochnoevropeiskoi istorii i kul'tury*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2013, pp. 482-488.

4. KURGINYAN'S ANTI-ORANGE COMMITTEE

Created by Kurginyan on the basis of his "*Sut' vremeni*" (Essence of Time) movement, the *Anti-Orange Committee*[1] was an only ephemeral organization. Yet, it is nevertheless worth-mentioning here as a symptomatic phenomenon the composition, ideology and post-Soviet historical memory of which illustrate larger trends in the interpenetration of the Russian extreme right with Moscow's political establishment, and was a preview of the later anti-Maidan government-sponsored movement. The Committee included, amongst others and apart from Dugin, the prominent TV journalists Mikhail Leontiev and Maksim Shevchenko, the well-known neo-Stalinist publisher Nikolai Starikov, and Aleksandr Prokhanov, the editor of the most important extreme right-wing weekly journal *Zavtra* (Tomorrow) and veteran organizer of the post-Soviet Russian extreme right. The committee was a result of the pro-Putin counter-demonstration organized by Kurginyan on 4 February 2012 on Submission Hill (*Poklonnaya gora*) in Moscow, against the simultaneous opposition event on Bolotnaya Square. The name of the club refers to the 2004 Ukrainian so-called Orange Revolution, which is interpreted by extra-systemic right-wing extremists, as well as by many representatives and apologists of the Putin regime, as a conspiracy steered by the CIA. Why did Kurginian & Co. choose reference to a foreign development, i.e. the electoral uprising in Kyiv, to name their new ultra-nationalist structure?

As has been argued by various scholars, the Orange Revolution was not only closely watched by the Kremlin who unsuccessfully tried to influence the events in Kyiv in late 2004.[2] The repercussions of the Orange Revolution on domestic

[1] See http://anti-orange.ru

[2] On the direct reaction of the Kremlin, its representatives, and the Russian mass media to the Ukrainian events of 2004, see Taras Kuzio, "Russian Policy Toward Ukraine During the Elections," *Demokratizatsiya,* vol. 13, no. 4, 2005, pp. 491–517; Nikolai Petrov and Andrei Ryabov, "Russia's Role in the Orange Revolution," in *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough,* ed. Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), pp. 145–64; Ilya Khineyko, "The View from Russia: Russian Press Coverage of the 2004 Presidential Elections in Ukraine," in *Aspects of the Orange Revolution II: Information and Manipulation Strategies in the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Elections,* ed. Bohdan Harasymiw and Oleh S. Ilnytzkyj (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2007), pp. 107–39; Andrew Wilson,

Russian politics were also considerable, as noted, by among others, in important papers by Aleksandr Etkind/Andrei Shecherbak (2008), Vladimir Pastukhov (2011) and Robert Horvath (2011).[1] In his monograph *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian Resistance to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union*, Thomas Ambrosio (2009, 57–58, 60, 66) writes: "the result of the Ukrainian presidential elections [i.e. of 2004] fundamentally altered how the Kremlin perceived external democracy promotion in the [post-Soviet] region. […] Following the Orange Revolution, a role pattern emerged in which Russia inevitably responds to consistent Western complaints about the freeness or fairness of votes with accusations of hypocrisy. […] Regime opponents are [...] portrayed as fifth columnists who wish to trade Russia's independence for the importation of Western ideas. The external promotion of democracy in Russia is seen as a cover for a form of neocolonialism".

On 17 May 2005, less than four months after Viktor Yushchenko's inauguration as a result of the Orange Revolution, Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Vladislav Surkov, in a semiofficial speech to a session of the General Council of the entrepreneurs' association Business Russia in Moscow, first presented his theory of "sovereign democracy" (Melikova 2005). This concept subsequently became the unacknowledged guiding idea of the Russian authoritarian restoration (at least until the election of Dmitrii Medvedev as president in 2008) (Kazantsev 2007, Schulze 2007, Casula and Perovic 2009). In Ambrosio's opinion (2009, 72-76), "Surkov's speech should be seen as an ideological response to events in Georgia [i.e. the Rose Revolution of 2003] and Ukraine. His reference to the Orange Revolution was indicative of the Kremlin's fear that the overthrow of authoritarian regimes by popular revolts could spread further throughout the [post-Soviet] region, with perveived help and/or direction from the West. […] This concern that external criticism could lead to a

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"Foreign Intervention in the 2004 Elections: 'Political Technology' versus NGOs," in *Aspects of the Orange Revolution III: The Context and Dynamics of the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Elections,* ed. Ingmar Bredies, Andreas Umland, and Valentin Yakushik (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2007), pp. 200–235; and Jeanne L. Wilson, "Colour Revolutions: The View from Moscow and Beijing," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics,* vol. 25, nos. 2–3, 2009, pp. 369–95.

[1] See, also on this, Andreas Umland, "Russia's New 'Special Path' After the Orange Revolution: Radical Anti-Westernism and Paratotalitarian Neo-Authoritarianism in 2005-8," *Russian Politics and Law*, vol. 50, no. 6, 2012, pp. 19-40.

weakening of the Russian government, and therefore allow for external control, was based in part upon perceptions of the West's intervention in the Orange Revolution. The idea that the West might seek to replicate its earlier successes by undermining the Kremlin's legitimacy and fostering a popular revolt was widespread in Russian policy circles". By using the Orange Revolution as his reference point, Kurginian thus tapped into an already established conspirological pattern of thought in which the Ukrainian mass action of civic obedience of 2004 is seen as the proto-typical model for how the West – and, in particular, the US – would like to bring about regime change in Russia.

While the choice of the title of his Committee was thus appropriate, the initiative as such seems to have not developed into a sustainable communication platform of Russian anti-Americanism. According to its website, the Anti-Orange Committee has met only twice, in February 2012. Even though the website of the committee is still online and calls upon visitors to sign an "anti-Orange pact", it remains unclear whether the structure is still in operation today.

5. PROKHANOV'S IZBORSK CLUB

A comparable circle with a somewhat similar ideology and considerable personnel overlap with the Anti-Orange Committee, yet with a far more well-organized and sustainable organizational structure is the so-called *Izborskii klub*, founded in September 2012, i.e. half a year after the Anti-Orange Committee.[1] The Izborsk Club is named after the place of its first meeting, the provincial city of Izborsk in Pskov Oblast in northwestern Russia – a historically important region in the development of the Kyivan Rus, Muscovy principality, and Tsarist empire. This relatively big intellectual circle, brought to life by the grand seigneur of Russian right-wing extremism, Prokhanov, continues his project of the early 1990s of uniting the "Reds" (national Communists) and the "Whites" (anti-Soviet nationalists), and bringing as many rabidly anti-Western publicists, politicians and activists together as possible. The Club announces that it is based on the Institute of Dynamic Conservatism, a somewhat older ultra-nationalist think-tank founded in 2009.

[1] See http://dynacon.ru

The Izborsk Club is obviously intended to parallel, and compete with, the well-known Valdai International Discussion Club once created by RIA-Novosti. The latter was founded in 2004 in the city of Velikyi Novgorod near the lake Valdai. It consists of foreign experts and journalists working on Eastern Europe, as well as Russian politicians, scientists, and intellectuals. The club includes many of the most prominent Russian and Western political analysts with some influence on political decision makers, and in their countries' mass media. Although not a liberal and being rabidly anti-Western, Prokhanov is an active member of the Valdai Club.

I participated in the 7th Valdai Club meeting of August 31st – September 7th, 2010 "Russia's History and Future Development" in St. Petersburg, Kizhi, Valaam, Moscow and Sochi, and could observe first-hand Prokhanov's behavior during the first three days of the meeting, when the ultra-nationalist was present though somewhat isolated in the crowd of largely English-speaking Western and Russian experts. His behavior was restrained, his contributions to the discussion non-provocative and sometimes valuable, as well as his questions largely to the point. Altogether, he behaved, in that setting, rather differently than in the TV debates about Russia's future, in which he frequently participates. In the latter setting, Prokhanov often attacks his liberal opponents with emotional outbursts bordering on the hysterical – a strategy also heavily used by Kurginian and Dugin, on television (not to mention Vladimir Zhirinovskii's frequent TV scandals).

For his new anti-Western Izborsk Club, Prokhanov copied the Valdai Club's format of a geographical term as a name, the versatile composition of its membership, the practice of large meetings of prominent publicists, outside Moscow, as well as of providing various kinds of reports or expertise, on selected socio-political topics. However, in distinction to the Valdai Club where the entire ideological spectrum of Russian politics is, to one degree or another, represented, the Izborsk Club only unites discussants who may have differences on selected issues in the interpretation of Russia's past, present and future, but who are, in general, of a rather similar – i.e. radically anti-Western – persuasion. Similar names appear in Prokhanov's club and in the Anti-Orange Committee; for example, Dugin, Leontiev, Starikov, and Shevchenko. The Izborsk Club's spectrum of members is, however, more wide-spread and includes many other prominent anti-Western publicists, such as, in alphabetical order, Mikhail Deliagin (an anti-liberal economist), Sergei Glaz'ev (a Presidential Advisor),

Leonid Ivashov (a military man), the above introduced Maksym Kalashnikov (alias Vladimir Kucherenko), Valerii Korovin (a pupil and assistant of Dugin), Nataliya Narochnitskaya (also an active member of the Valdai Club), Oleg Platonov (an anti-Semitic publicist), Archimandrite Tikhon (a.k.a. Shevkunov), Yuri Polyakov (the editor of *Literaturnaia* gazeta), and Mikhail Khazin (an economist close to Dugin and frequently on TV).[1] Prokhanov's club seems to be well-funded and held its first meetings in the cities of Khimki, Yekaterinburg, Ulyanovsk and Volgograd. The Izborsk Club publishes an illustrated journal of the same name, with a run of 999 copies.

The group's connection to the Kremlin is closer and more obvious than in the case of Kuginyan's Committee which might have also had support from the government. Remarkable is, above all, the full membership, in the Izborsk Club, of Sergei Glaz'ev, Vladimir Putin's official Advisor (*Sovetnik Prezidenta RF*) on regional economic cooperation. Glaz'ev is also a notable public figure, and prolific commentator on the earlier Russian-Belarusian-Kazakh Customs Union, new Eurasian Economic Union, and on Ukraine's position between the European Union and Russia. The Izborsk Club's closeness to the government was also illustrated by the participation of the Russian Minister for Culture, Vladimir Medinsky (mostly known, in the academic public, for allegations of plagiarism in his doctoral dissertation), in the 2012 founding meeting of the club in Izborsk.

6. GEIDAR DZHEMAL'S FLORIAN GEYER CLUB

The most astonishing new foundation in the extreme right-wing intellectual milieu, however, is a small circle, which calls itself Conceptual Club "Florian Geyer."[2] This gathering was founded on 22 September 2011, and is officially led by the notorious Islamist and avowed anti-Western activist Geidar Dzhemal (1947-2016). What is particularly remarkable about this group is that its title uses the name of a figure from the German Peasants' War of the 16th century. The historical figure Geyer is entirely unknown in Russia, and unfamiliar even to many highly educated Germans. However, the name "Florian Geyer" is well

[1] See http://www.dynacon.ru/lpr/izborsk.php.
[2] See http://floriangeyer.ru/

known among experts on contemporary European history, as the byname of the Third Reich's 8th *SS* Cavalry Division, which was deployed on the Eastern front in 1943-44.

The founders of the Florian Geyer Club, Dzhemal, Dugin and the above-mentioned Maksim Shevchenko (also a member of the Anti-Orange Committee and Izborsk Club), claim to be referring to the former peasant warrior and not to the *SS* division. Dugin's past in particular, however, indicates that the club's founders are probably familiar with the use of the name in the Third Reich which indicates that the twofold historical significance of "Florian Geyer" is actually intended. From 1980 to 1990, Dzhemal and Dugin were members of a small occult circle in Moscow that called itself the "Black Order of the *SS*". During the 1990s, Dugin, both under his pseudonyms and under his own name, repeatedly expressed support for sympathizers, members, and divisions of the *SS*, for example

- the *Institut "Ahnenerbe"* (Institute "Ancestral Heritage") of the *SS* which Dugin described as an "intellectual oasis" within the Third Reich,
- the Italian fascist theorist and admirer of the *Waffen-SS* Julius Evola whose book *Pagan Imperialism* Dugin translated into Russian, at young age, and who had a formative impact on the formation of Dugin's word view,
- the *SS-Reichsführer* Heinrich Himmler whose resurrection Dugin, under his pseudonym "Aleksandr Shternberg," described in one of his poems of the early 1990s, and
- the *SS-Obergruppenführer* Reinhard Heydrich (the initial organizer of the Holocaust) whom Dugin singled out, within the Third Reich, as a "convinced Eurasian" and thus predecessor of his own movement (annotated quotations in: Umland 2009, 127-141).

The above-mentioned TV host Shevchenko – probably the best-known, to the larger Russian public, among the three founders – did, in his September 2011 opening speech of the new circle's foundation, not concede that the club's title "Florian Geyer" referred to the *SS* division of the same name. Oddly, in this speech, he nevertheless admitted: "This name was also used by those German National Socialists (the left wing), who were linked to National Bolshevism. And the Florian Geyer song, which the young generation is familiar with from the

work of the group *Rammstein*,[1] was very popular with those left- and right-wing circles that adopted an anti-elite and anti-liberal stance".[2]

What is also notable about this particular structure and what distinguishes it from the Anti-Orange Committee and Izborsk Club is that the participants of the club's meetings included not only well-known Russian ultra-nationalists, like above-mentioned Maksim Kalashnikov (Vladimir Kucherenko), but also some lesser known foreign political extremists. Among the various anti-American activists from abroad who were also invited to speak is, for instance, the notorious Italian "traditionalist" and supporter of terrorism Claudio Mutti, a long-time collaborator of Dugin.[3] Thus, it is all the more astonishing that – in addition to several further right-wing extremists – some well-known Russian intellectuals were participating in the club's round-table-talks who do not fit this context, among them historian Igor Chubais, legal scholar Mark Feygin, and sociologist Boris Kagarlitsky. In any way, as in the case of the Anti-Orange Committee and despite its continued internet presence, it is unclear whether the club is still fully alive. The last meeting documented on the Florian Geyer club's website under the title of "Ideology and the Meaning of Life" took place in June 2012.[4]

[1] The German musician and expert on modern German rock music Hella Streicher has remarked that Shevchenko's allegation that *Rammstein* used the Florian Geyer song is factually erroneous and conceptually misleading. She writes that indeed "the song is sometimes played by 'left-' and 'right-wing,' among them the Nazi metal bands 'Absurd' and 'Radical'." However, "in the entire officially and unofficially accessible repertoire of *Rammstein* no traces of the song can be found, not even in the form of a short text or musical quote." Streicher considers the entire connection of *Rammstein* to neo-Nazism, often found in popular comments on this group, as flimsy. Personal communication, 10 November 2013.

[2] See http://www.floriangeyer.ru/lectures/sovremennaya-demokratiya-kak-politicheskij-institut

[3] More on Mutti, in Shekhovtsov, "Aleksandr Dugin and the West European New Right, 1989-1994."

[4] www.floriangeyer.ru/video/ideologiya-i-smysl-zhizni.

7. CONCLUSIONS: A NEW QUALITY OF RUSSIAN EXTREMELY RIGHT-WING INTELLECTUALISM?

Since the announcement of Putin's return to the Presidency in September 2011, the following three novel characteristics of the theoretical, intellectual and publishing sector of Russia's post-Soviet "uncivil society" have emerged:

(a) the emergence of new umbrella organizations, above all the Izborsk Club, covering a larger range of extremely right-wing intellectuals than earlier, similarly oriented circles listed by myself, with regard to the 1990s (Umland 2002, 43),[1] and Laruelle (2009), with reference to the 2000s,

(b) a prominent incorporation or even leading role in these broad coalitions of as extreme a fascist theoretician as Dugin, and

(c) a link of the Izborsk Club, in particular, to the President and government of the Russian Federation, above all via the membership of Putin's prominent economic advisor Sergei Glaz'ev in the Club.

To be sure, there had been earlier attempts to create umbrella organizations for ultra-nationalist intellectuals, and occasional links between the extreme right and the highest echelons of power. Dugin himself, for instance, created in 2001 the Eurasia Movement, now called the International Eurasian Movement (IEM), that, since its foundation, mentioned in its list of Highest Council members certain other rabidly anti-Western publicists like, for instance, the above-mentioned Leont'ev, or army newspaper *Krasnaia zvezda* (Red Star) editor Nikolai Efimov. Notably, the Highest Council of Dugin's movement included also a number of non-extremist high-ranking officials of the Russian presidential apparatus, government and parliament, e.g. former RF Minister of Culture Aleksandr Sokolov, RF Presidential Advisor Aslambek Aslakhanov, RF Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Kaliuzhni, Ambassador and former Presidential Advisor Dmitrii Riurikov, Federation Council Deputy Speaker Aleksandr Torshin, Federation Council International Affairs Committee Head Mikhail Margelov, or RF Justice Ministry Department Head Aleksei Zhafiarov. In addition, there seems to be, as outlined earlier, a rather close link between Dugin and the Presidential

[1] A slightly extended list can be found in: Umland, "Post-Soviet 'Uncivil Society' and the Rise of Aleksandr Dugin."

Administration official Ivan Demidov, and there have been rumors about a long-term connection between Dugin and Putin's KGB buddy from Soviet times and current Russian government official, Viktor Cherkesov.[1]

However, while Leont'ev and Demidov probably comprehend well what kind of ideology Dugin propagates, Dugin's other temporary or permanent official affiliates within the IEM Highest Council may currently have or they earlier have had an only elusive understanding of what Dugin's "Eurasianism" actually implies. More importantly, Dugin's connections into the executive branch of the Russian state have been and are certainly impressive and multifarious. But, nevertheless, Dugin was, until recently, a relatively isolated figure within the right-wing extremist intellectual scene somewhat reminding Zhirinovskii's once similarly isolated position within Russian ultra-nationalist party politics. Mostly, Dugin's earlier collaborators with some public prominence, like Demidov, Leont'ev or Valerii Korovin, constituted pupils of the Chief "Eurasianist", or at least men whose ultra-nationalist outlook was principally informed by Dugin's writings. Most independent Russian ultra-nationalists had been keeping a distance to the SS admirer.

Against this background, the Izborsk Club, if it continues to exist, constitutes a new stage in the development of Dugin's position within the extreme right, in particular, and the evolution of Russian right-wing extremist intellectualism, in general. Dugin's prominent inclusion into this club as well as into Kurginian's Committee is marking a new level in (a) the consolidation of Russian extreme right, as a movement, and (b) its penetration of the Russian state and society. These developments can be seen as repercussions of the considerable increase of Dugin's prestige, in Russian society, as a result of his 2009 appointment as Moscow State University professor.[2] Via the Anti-Orange Committee and especially via the Izborsk Club as well as via other channels, Dugin has now found his way into the mainstream of Russian right-wing extremist

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[1] Umland, "Patologicheskie tendentsii v russkom 'neoevraziistve'"; *idem*, "Restauratives versus revolutionäres imperiales Denken im Elitendiskurs des postsowjetischen Rußlands."

[2] The acceptance problems that Dugin, as a widely publishing theoretician, had, before his MGU appointment, been extensively and sophistically theorized in: Mikhail Sokolov, "Novye Pravye intellektualy v Rossii. Strategii legitimatsii," *Ab Imperio,* no. 3, 2006, pp. 321-55; *idem*, "New Right-Wing Intellectuals: Strategies of Legitimization," *Russian Politics and Law,* vol. 47, no. 1, 2009, pp. 47-75.

intellectualism. As illustrated by the emergence of the Florian Geyer Club, he and his long-term collaborator as well as personal friend, late Geidar Dzhemal have been, at the same time, continuing their coded propagation of neo-Nazism. The combination of these features constitutes an explosive cocktail that had by 2013 created considerable risks for US-Russian relations in particular, and international security, in general. Arguably, the 2011-2013 tendencies in Russia's radical right contributed to the escalation of the Western-Russian confrontation and public legitimization of Russia's intervention in Ukraine in 2014.

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