

The Post-intelligentsia and the Russian Catastrophe of the 21st Century

Andrei Piontkovsky*

*Andrey Piontkovsky (born in 1940) is a Russian academic, political writer, and analyst, and a member of the International PEN Club. He graduated from the Mathematics Department of Moscow State University, holds a PhD in applied mathematics, and is a member of the American Mathematical Society. He has been for many years a regular political commentator for the BBC World Service and Radio Liberty. Piontkovsky is the author of several books on the Putin presidency, including *Another Look into Putin's Soul* and *Russian Identity* published by the Hudson Institute. After Russia's General Prosecutor's Office found evidence of "extremism" in his writings, Piontkovsky had to leave Russia in 2016 to evade imminent arrest. Since June 2017, he has been a Senior Adviser of the Free Russia Foundation, and a Hudson Institute Visiting Fellow. The author wishes to express his gratitude to the Donner Foundation for providing support during his work on this project.

I

I've already had an occasion to note (Piontkovsky, 2009) that there is a certain pattern to how authoritarian regimes in Russia replace their predecessors – these governments don't fall from some external blows of fortune or the onslaught of opponents. Instead, they tend to collapse suddenly from some kind of strange, internal disease, from an insurmountable existential disgust with themselves (Sartre's *la nausée*), from the realization that they were used up. The Putin regime is ailing from this same disease, after having diligently paved over the entire living political landscape all around them.

The results of the post-Communist decades have been so deplorable in large part because the intelligentsia, or, as its former representatives now prefer to be called, "intellectuals," have betrayed the ideas of Sakharov. Many "reformers" in the 90s referenced Pinochet more often, and with greater reverence, than Sakharov.

The essential principle of the latter was forgotten – morality in politics. It was the country's "systemic liberals" that took Putin by the hand and led him and his KGB criminals to power, so that the regime would maintain the model of "bandit capitalism" they had created, thereby dooming Russia to an irreversible course of demodernization.

Sakharov understood democracy to be an honest contest in elections between different political forces. For Russian "systemic liberals," democracy is the preservation, by any means necessary, of the power and wealth of those declaring themselves "democrats." Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov would have vigorously refuted the idea of his people as ignorant sheep that needed self-proclaimed "progressors" to usher them into a brighter tomorrow. Yet this view prevails in the Russian political class, who are convinced that only 10-15% of the population is ready for modernization, and that Russia is therefore in need of their "enlightened" leadership.

When the Russian post-intelligentsia turned away from Sakharov's legacy upon achieving political power or serving those who held it, they committed moral and ideological suicide. Their stubborn, painfully endless repetition of those claims about the backwardness and savagery of the Russian people, of their unreadiness for democracy is not just an obedient recital of the Kremlin's talking points. It is also a desperate attempt by the former members of the intelligentsia to maintain their self-respect, to justify their betrayal in their own minds. The word "intelligentsia" is untranslatable in other languages. It signifies a purely Russian phenomenon – an amorphous social mini-group that emerged as a by-product of Peter the Great's attempted Europeanization of Russia, and miraculously survived three centuries in a position of double alienation, from both "the state" and "the people."

II

The modernizing tsar Peter did not fashion a "window onto Europe"; he only opened up a narrow crack that the "Russian political elite" managed to peer through. There have been two separate peoples in Russia since then, *barin* and *muzhik*, roughly approximated in English as "nobleman" and "peasant." Every country in the world has had and continues to have social

gradations, but nowhere else has this divide between “noble” and “peasant” been as deep and fundamental as in post-Petrine Russia. This isn’t a class divide, but a culturological, or perhaps even an anthropological one; these are actually two different peoples, who simply did not know or understand each other. This schism laid the foundation for Russia’s perpetual historical tragedy, dooming the country to its catastrophe after catastrophe.

To the peasants, it seemed that all its imperial institutions, including the church, were on the side of the nobles. That’s why they allowed the Bolsheviks to crucify the generals on their bayonets and tear down all the crosses. An explosion after centuries of tension was inevitable, and the fall of the Romanov empire in the 1917 revolution was historically foreordained. But the reins of the rebellion were seized by a quite small circle of people, who were not in any way the real leaders of what was essentially a Pugachev peasant revolution. But they were able to skillfully direct all that explosive energy.

Many different ethnic groups, justifiably feeling oppressed by the Russian empire, also did their part to hasten its collapse. But the international range, so to speak, of the Bolshevik leadership was not a significant factor here. The Russian Bukharin, Jewish Trotsky, Georgian Stalin, and Polish Dzerzhinsky were, to the majority of the Russian people (a population that was 90% peasants), all equally anthropologically alien figures. Not due to their nationalities or ethnicities, but because they were passionate proponents of a global ideological initiative. Marxism’s primitive interpretation of the world was so attractive and convincing, that it was fated to spark a deafening detonation at least once in the history of the mankind. But the Russian peasantry simply didn’t fit into its equations.

We study the history of the civil war through the lens of “Red” or “White,” but never through the viewpoint of the “*muzhik*.” That story is, therefore, still not understood. Its paradox is that the energy of that schism between noble and peasant was used by a force even more metaphysically antithetical to the peasant than the noble. These people in leather jackets and pince-nez were seemingly far more alien to the Russian peasants in civilization and culture than the noblemen living next door to their villages – why did they prevail?

Because the Russian peasant could not forgive the nobles what had gone on for centuries. The paradigm of the schism between the “elite” and the people was preserved in other incarnations of the Russian state. The Bolsheviks used the energy of protest that was born out of the rift initiated at the start of the 18th century, but they themselves went on to recreate the same enormous divide between the “elite” and the people. A system in which the regime viewed its people as an unlimited reservoir of powerless slaves for the implementation of its global imperial or ideological aims. The Communist *nomenklatura* was as distant from the people as the nobility had been. It wasn’t until the end of the 1970s that peasants were issued passports; they were the same slaves as they had been before.

Speaking of the Civil War, we usually forget about its second stage, crueler and bloodier than the first – collectivization. This was an undertaking unprecedented in world history. Collectivization was war waged by the new Communist elite against its unarmed people. While the Civil War of 1917-1920 had its own internal logic, collectivization’s sacrificial offering of millions was a purely ideological, almost mystical event.

The ancient Aztecs engaged in warfare with the sole intent of taking prisoners for their sacred human sacrifices. In the same way, during collectivization the Russian peasants were, without any apparent purpose, ritually sacrificed to the ruling Aztecs and their Marxist gods. After destroying first, the nobles, and then the peasants, the Aztec-Bolsheviks finally created a new historically fractured anti-community of Soviet citizens.

Eighty years later, the survivors voted Head Priest-Executioner Joseph Ahuizotl Stalin as one of the top three candidates for the title of “Name of Russia” in a national poll. This alone leads one to doubt the psychological health of this long-suffering nation and its televised post-intelligentsia spiritual leaders.

The rule of the Communist doctrine finally came to an end, at least externally. But the unsinkable *nomenklatura* remained, and the reality of the metaphysical divide between the elite and the people has grown even more visible. The existence of two Russias – the Russia of the unlovely poor villages and the Russia of Rublyovka’s gated communities – grimly watching each other on television screens – this is the same fundamental schism brought about by Peter the Great’s “modernization,” and then recreated by the “modernization” of the Bolsheviks. But unlike the Russian noblemen/intelligentsia of the 19th century, raised on classic Russian literature and possessed of a guilt complex about the peasantry, the post-intelligentsia in Rublyovka restrict themselves to easy reads by trendy names, and are therefore free of any such complexes.

III

Every grand dream the Communist-KGB *nomenklatura* devised in the mid-80s for *perestroika* has come true. What has it achieved as a result of this 30-year cycle? A complete concentration of political power, as before; enormous personal wealth, previously unthinkable; and a radically different style of life (whether in Courchevel or Florida). Most importantly, as leaders they have discarded all social and historical obligation. No longer must they wail in unison: “Our purpose in life is the happiness of the common people.” They can’t force that hypocrisy past their lips any longer. Now their dry refrain is that the purpose of their life is “the continuation of market reforms and the ‘glory of Russia’,” although none of them believe that line, nor could they even explain exactly what it is. The regime, through the lips of Putin No. 5, promises the people again the “unpopular measures” that presumably will bring long-term success in this 30th (!) year of reform in a row, measures that have been, in fact, quite popular and personally enriching for a narrow circle of that regime in that time.

The past 100 years of Russian history has seen the country stuck in a time loop. Generation after generation stubbornly repeats the systemic mistakes of our august modernizers. Dazzled by the technical and consumer goods of the eternally despised and ever-enticing West that they desperately wish to possess and reproduce (“integrate”) domestically, our Scythian rulers contemptuously reject the roots of Western civilization, the hated air of Freedom and Human Dignity.

That's why Putin is with us forever, whatever new name he may acquire in his next iteration. That's why these ill-fated modernizers end up back on square one after each attempt at mobilization, in a country with mountains of cast iron and steel per capita and rotting submarines and missiles, endlessly flying along an unpredictable trajectory (Putin, 2015).

Over nearly a hundred years, the great evildoers of the revolution (Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin) turned first into helpless, comical old men (Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko), and then, having drunk the "dead waters" of *nomenklatura* privatization, into young, athletic oil traders with sex appeal (Putin, Abramovich, Timchenko). These latter are the true heirs of October 1917, the last incarnation of its leaders, the logical and inevitable outcome of the evolution of the "new class." They've made it. The tens of millions of victims of this hundred-year experiment ("losers" in their terminology) have filled up the ground for their benefit. They have nothing left to wish for. Their personal Fukuyaman end of History has come to pass. They don't, and couldn't, have a plan for the future; they are already in this malformed eternal life. This ill-made Putin eternity is the black hole of Russian history collapsed upon itself, the Svidrigailov-style village banya, smoky and crawling with fat spiders in the corners – veterans of East German Cold War posts and the cooperative "Ozero" conjured up by Putin's buddies.

IV

The spring of 1993 was, for millions, the apex of painful losses and crashes in the post-Communist withdrawal period. In the referendum that April, the post-intelligentsia reformers were most afraid of the outcome, and reasonably so, of voting on the second question: "Do you approve of the government's economic policy?" But the answer: yes, we approve, did it come from the 10-15% "*the small, mobile group equivalent to the Western middle class*"? No, it came from the majority.

The "*rigid and ignorant*" people at that time had enormous trust in the "*liberal reformers*." That trust is now lost forever, but not due to some professional economic mistakes – mistakes could be forgiven and corrected. No, they lost that trust primarily due to their lifestyle. Mistaking themselves for aristocrats, nearly every single one of them discovered an unslakable plebeian passion for immediate (right from their Cabinet seats) and unprecedented enrichment. The "elite" categorically refused to be with its people where its people, sadly, were, as Akhmatova put it. Were, and remain. And now, trying to drown out the remnants of their own consciences, the systemic liberals, following the laws of psychoanalysis, levy accusations of every sin against the people who trusted them and who they deceived, robbed, and betrayed.

The air is heavy with the sense of catastrophe, an approaching third collapse of Russian government in less than a century. The Putin myth, this pitiful simulacrum of a grand ideological style, is dead, as dead as the imperial myth in 1917, and the Communist myth in 1991. The third fall of the Third Rome could surpass the previous two in its tragic consequences. Judgement Day for one particular country is at hand, and each person will have to come to terms with his or her degree of guilt. The privileged elite, now in ideological and logistical preparations for a humanitarian evacuation, very much wants to prove, primarily to themselves, that they didn't have anything to do with it, that it was once again Dostoyevsky's "*god-bearing*" people that

*f**ed everything up for them – that gray mass of drunks in villages and city outskirts that voted for Putin, just give those xenophobes the vote and they'll declare war on America.*

This isn't true. In the process of naming Putin Russian President for Life, all the boldest and most daring dreams of the opponents of universal suffrage came true. The president, as we all know, was not chosen by village drunks, but by six quite wealthy citizens of stainless libertarian conviction. Literally the crème de la crème of the nation: Roman Abramovich, Boris Berezovsky, Valentin Yumashev, Tatyana Dyachenko, Alexander Voloshin (nicknamed *Sanka-Obligatsii*, i.e., “Xander Bond” for some shady trading in the 90s), and Anatoly Chubais. The worthiest of Russians, naturally.

Any six convicts selected at random from the files of the Federal Penitentiary Service would possess a greater moral right to choose the president of Russia than this “cream of the nation” (as they like to call themselves), who underwent a rigorously strict monetary and ideological qualification process. The convicts would, moreover, have gone about it more responsibly. Professional criminals, self-respecting members of the Russian mafia, would never have approved mayhem and government overreach like Basayev's attack on Dagestan, the bombing of residential buildings in Moscow and Volgograd, the “training exercises” in Ryazan, or the war Russia lost in the Caucasus, in which tens of thousands died. This entire famous crew of super-elite electors, excluding the one who died by hanging, are all still in fine spirits, and don't seem to feel an ounce of guilt. They even arranged something of a public corporate retreat on the Atlantic coast, and invited the intellectual conscience of the nation along to play court jester – Russia's Voltaire in striped shorts.



Source: <https://echo.msk.ru/blog/echomsk/985438-echo/>

The powerful and their wide range of servitors (restaurant, taxis, girls, media leaders, fashion designers, priests, sommeliers, political scientists, PR managers, pedicurists, members of the Civic Chamber) are completely corrupt, not only in the strict criminal sense, but in a deeper manner as well – in their incredible lightness of being, the habit of exercising previously unthinkable financial capabilities now ingrained in their subconscious. Russia’s “golden million” live as no Russian “elite” ever has before. What’s more, with their style of aggressive consumerism, they have far outpaced the golden million of any other broken state. The Russian top million is a trustworthy pillar of the regime, which, in return for this fairy tale brought to life, asks only for a minimum membership fee – absolute political loyalty. In conditions like these, there will never be another “perestroika.” Or never in time to do any good.

And so the miraculous troika rushes along with a crooked head doctor at the reins, other peoples and nations scattering out of the way in shock and horror. Where it is rushing, nobody knows. No answer is forthcoming. But it’s clear that it’s not rushing off after Portugal or some such. We are not a petrostate, not a mere backwater supplying raw materials to the global economy. We are a Great Nuclear Power. We’re getting off our knees. Landing powerful blows against American diplomacy. Anti-western and anti-American complexes and passions rage most fiercely not in the Russian villages, but in those thin upper layers of the “elite,” among which it is customary to send wives to give birth in American clinics, and children to study in American

universities. The cream of the nation store did not “store up for themselves treasures in heaven,” nor do they store them in socially similar places like North Korea, Iran, or Venezuela, but in the hated U.S.A., for which they hate it even more.

The Kremlin’s current occupants, all these worn-out former sergeants or accountants in armbands from the St. Petersburg mayor’s office, who now find themselves at the head of an enormous country thanks to the winds of fortune and the furious energy of the late Boris Berezovsky, but remain plebes dreaming of crowing their amazing career with the legalization of their own little multimillion-dollar family business in the eternally beloved and eternally hated West. As Roman Abramovich, the keeper of Putin’s main slush fund, has already done.

The outskirts of cities are not the “*rebellious border regions of Russia*” (Kolesnikov, 2013), as one member of the post-intelligentsia sneered about an outlying district of Moscow. They are Russia, where generations of children are growing up who have forever lost out in the course of the “liberal” reforms carried out by the “cream of the nation.” With the unshakable snobbery and self-regard of ordained prophets, the same figures in power announce, year in and year out, their “unpopular reforms,” the lofty vision of which the backward rabble, stuck in a paternalistic mentality, are incapable of understanding or appreciating, and who should therefore be restricted in various ways from exercising their full right to vote.

“By their fruits you will know them. Do they gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles?” (Matthew 7:16).

The visible fruits of a quarter century of effort by this conglomeration of mafia cream are figs living according to the code of the criminal economy, unable to extract itself from the thistle of the oil trade. And after all, all this top elite know well, (from practical life experience and not academic theory), that any private property in Russia, from an oil company down to a vegetable stand, is not provisional, that its possession depends on loyalty to the feudal suzerains up the entire power vertical, that it is granted and withdrawn in strict accordance with the acquisition or loss by the provisional owner of administrative leverage. With sky-high oil prices, such a system can stagnate for a long time, but no meaningful development, no business initiatives, and no innovations are possible within it.

The lack of Russian economic development is not caused by the failure of all the parasitic pensioners to die off yet, or because the cream of the nation haven’t yet managed to institute a 60-hour work week, but because there can be no creative impulse in lifeless conditions as far from market ones as possible, an environment created by the elite, where the entire vertical from the alpha mobster of all of Rus’ to the neighborhood cop was stuffed with criminal funds, blocking off all avenues of social mobility. One of the most respected members of the “liberal” post-intelligentsia (Yasin, 2010) said in reference to the plebeian masses defeated, in his view, by the paternalistic philosophy: “No one stole anything from you. You didn’t have anything to steal.” This wonderful phrase could have come from the mouth of Marie Antoinette, and will, of course, go into all the history textbooks covering the catastrophic history of Russia’s 21st century. Truly, if a theft was committed, it was just petty cash – a trillion dollars of assets in Kremlin slush funds sitting in America (Piontkovsky, 2018). In the last 20 years a generation has

grown up, the children deprived of a future, born to those “from whom nothing was stolen.” That generation is just starting to present Putin with the bill.

The key task of the elite opposition from December 2011 has been to “take charge of” the protest movement and lead it in a direction safe for the state (*we must influence the state, not overthrow it*), and thereby increase their capital as effective troubleshooters inside the corporation they run jointly with the government’s security forces, JudoCo LLC. Their fear of being left alone with the country without Putin and his political police is stronger than their dislike of the former security officers who’ve made their way up the government ladder. It is Their State, which they have created, and that serves their interests, those of the highest caste to which they belong. These fashionable, self-serving rebels are overfed and cowardly, biting the hand of power and immediately falling to their knees to lick its boot, with weary faces after their long route around in a circle back to their stall in the system’s stable to get ready for the fateful “elections” of 2023 and 2030.

So the next wave of protest, if this country has any collective instinct for self-preservation remaining, will be not only more massive, but of a different social character. It will be led by completely different people, perhaps those that the former intelligentsia won’t care for at all. But they’ll have no one to blame.

V

The second fatal sin of the former intelligentsia was one that emerged from its world and was imposed on the country by the post-imperial madness. I categorically disagree with the view popular in the fashionable liberal crowd that the country is divided into the 15% forward-thinking “cream of the nation” standing in opposition to the 85% “imperial stooges.” Look at the odd characters raving daily on worthless foreign policy TV shows. Every single one of these “experts” spouting nonsense come from the social group mistakenly referring to themselves as the “cream of the nation.” This group is to blame for the Russian catastrophe of the 21st century.

The most important ideological component of the Russian foreign policy discourse, the foundation of its very structure, is the loving relish with which the “humiliation” suffered by Russia in the last quarter century as a result of the USSR’s loss in the Cold War is discussed (Shevtsova, 2015). This demonstrative tearing of sackcloth and exhibition of a geopolitical wound is the favorite pastime of the political “elite,” from the “Asiopeans” Prokhanov and Dugin to the pro-western Arbatov and Lukin.

The nature of this “humiliation” has been best and most expressively formulated in the language of cinematography, *the most famous art in our illiterate country next to the circus* (as one half-forgotten classic said.) From the caring hands of our own Riefenstahl, Balabanov, we got our very own “Triumph of the Will” twenty years ago: the ideal national hero and national idea in one – the killer Danilo with his rallying cry: “your America is done for.” The impact on the public was greater than Goethe’s *Faust* or even Putin’s famous threat to “take out [his enemies] in the outhouse.”

Which is unsurprising, because the mythology of *Brother-2*, well-crafted by the hand of a master, reaches deeper than aggression, down to the most sensitive erogenous zones of the collective unconscious. The bald prostitute, a modern Sonechka Marmeladova, is trusting, holy Rus', desecrated by soulless foreigners, and Danila the killer is St. George with an axe, striking down the money-lender crone America without stopping to ask himself foolish questions about whether he is a creature trembling in fear or he has the right.

We spent about half a century before that striking “powerful blows against American diplomacy” and, as Khrushchev phrased it, “putting hedgehogs down America’s pants” all over the world. Meanwhile, we ended up without pants of our own. The latter does not, however, apply to the elite who led us then and continue at the helm of the unsinkable political “elite,” who emerged from the loss in the Cold War wealthier than ever. But after ensuring that they and their descendants would be dining on caviar for generations to come, this elite turned its aims not towards the Constitution, but towards Asiopian glory – a new Golden Horde, unifying the peoples and nations dreaming of eating out of its palm.

The Russian political elite, thieving and untalented, sneaky and cowardly, scurrying between Courchevel and the seven hills of Moscow, simply can’t understand that they are utterly unwanted in the post-Soviet landscape as teachers of life or centers of gravity. Putin’s JudoCo doesn’t look like a haven to anyone – not the millions of Ukrainians desperately wishing to get rid of their own state gangsters, or for the Central Asian dictators who aren’t looking for a mob boss in the Kremlin to rule them. The Ukrainian 90% “yes” vote to Europe means a “no” to the post-Soviet model of gangster capitalism, and a “no” to the Taiga Union of the four bosses.

Russian might have found an ally, similar in society and mindset, among its neighbors, if the country’s elite, hoarse from shouting out their hatred of the West, had offered around the latest Great Anti-Western Ideological Initiative. But the whole world knows where this “elite” hides its treasures, where they go to the doctor, and where it sends its children to school.

Incidentally, today’s sworn enemies of the West, maniacally fixated on its destruction, and the idea of raising the black banner of the Global Caliphate over its ruins, view Russia as part of that corrupt West. Moreover, as the weakest and most vulnerable part, the first at risk of being split apart and consumed. Our foreign policy priests will sooner or later refer to each new leader of a neighboring country as “pro-Western” or “even more pro-Western,” without realizing that they have thereby condemned their own policies. Where are these “pro-Russian” leaders we built our sand castle empire for? Perhaps, after all, there is something wrong with us and our policies, and those presidents are simply pro-Ukrainian, pro-Georgian, pro-Belorussian? Moscow will never see the emergence of “pro-Russian,” as it understands the term, powers in the CIS.

The inability of the elite, wrapped in their narcissistic megalomaniacal fantasies, to truly comprehend psychologically, and not just as a paper formality, the independence of our “brother” countries, its stunning obliviousness to the potential reactions of its neighbors, its spiritual laziness and imperial arrogance that prevents it from attempting to see themselves as others might – all these wonderful qualities of the heads of the Russian kleptocracy have naturally led to a cycle of alienation and enmity throughout the post-Soviet space.

The permanent failure of all attempts at “domination” in their self-righteously proclaimed “zones of privileged interest” does indeed force those Kremlin players from the Forbes list experience frustration and the humiliation that is the non-stop topic of the psychiatric couch narrations by the foreign policy orators here and abroad. Material prosperity isn’t enough for them. They need greatness, glorious greatness, this Russian “elite,” who insist on their unique and elevated spirituality in opposition to the mercantilism of the decadent West. Alas, there are no objective signifiers of this greatness – neither in terms of Russia’s influence on global politics, nor in indicators of economic and technological development, nor in the quality of life, education, or health of the people led by this “elite.” The only way to change those very unfavorable parameters is through long, hard work, and, before that, by changing the irresponsible attitude of the ruling crowd to its country and its Putin-bearing people.

VI

But there’s a simpler route to “greatness,” to the sweet sensation of one’s own importance, to the overcoming one’s feelings of “humiliation.” All that’s necessary is to declare yourselves an Aryan tribe (Magarshak, 2014), descended from the Carpathian Mountains, your extra chromosomal spirituality proudly swinging between your legs, and boldly spreading halfway around the world to Fort Ross in California, besieged on all sides by the combined forces of globalism, Atlanticism, Judeo-masonry, and Satanism. Today, this tribe of cloned Brothers-2 has filled every screen in the country with their round-the-clock political hate-shows.

The crazy concept of the “Russian World” was borrowed by the leader of the “separate” tribe borrowed from the more experienced creators of Hitler’s foreign policy in the 1930s, and a shameful attempt was made at practical implementation in Ukraine, the apotheosis of the quarter-century orgy of this “cult of humiliation” (Vy khotite umeret, 2014). In Ukraine, Russia acted out the degrading role of the impotent rapist. The patient has, at last, provided an answer about the nature of his humiliation to those around him, long troubled by his inappropriate behavior. The Russian person on his rendezvous with History, is, it turns out, humiliated when he cannot trample and dismember with impunity his former allies in the construction of a Platonov Foundation Pit.

The golden pens of the post-intelligentsia have explained to city and world in endless articles over the decades that the people of Russia are wild, ignorant, unready to be entrusted with the power to choose their leaders independently, and if, God forbid, free elections did take place, then fearful fascists would come to power. Consequently, such elections must be prevented. The circular route of Russian history and Russian liberal thought has closed, returning after a hundred years to the original maxim of Mikhail Gershenzon: “We should bless the regime that protects us with its bayonets and prisons against the people’s fury.” Only now, we can replace “bayonets” with “television screens.”

“You wanted me to protect you from the people’s rage?” our Bare-Chested Horseman of the Apocalypse, cross swinging from his neck, might justifiably remark. *“Well, I defend you as best I know how. I channel that rage at our neighbors beyond our borders, where you and I, gentlemen, travel on vacation and where our wealth is stored, and against defenseless Tajiks,*

who clean our toilets on Rublyovka. Enough with the empty dreams, and don't try to take down a judo fighter. You'll get tired of ending up face down in the dirt."

Speaking out against the Gershenzon-Radzikhovskiy school of thought, I warned (Piontkovsky, 2010) that

"giving up free elections and preserving Putinism is a 100% guarantee of fascism ahead. Let us estimate the possibility of fascists coming to power through victory in free elections. For that to happen, they would have to solve a very difficult problem. Over three months of open, televised debates, where they would be facing some of the best that Russia has to offer (that being the whole point of "free elections"), these halfwits would have to convince over half the population of the righteousness of their point of view. We need to be a bit more optimistic about the mental capabilities of the majority of our fellow citizens.

It would be practically impossible for fascists to come to power in Russia by winning an absolute majority in truly free elections. Even the Nazis weren't able to do that, despite widespread misconceptions on that matter. In the last free elections in the Reichstag in 1932, the National Socialists were starting to lose ground. It wasn't the masses who brought Hitler to power in January 1932; it was a conspiracy of the elite.

And now let us ask ourselves what fascists would have to do in Russia to come to power, without a victory in free elections, but through the internal evolution of the Putin regime, a conspiracy by, if you'll excuse the term, the "elite." Is that an easier or more difficult endeavor? In my view, a much easier one. They wouldn't have to win over 50 million voters. They would just have to convince 3-4 scumbags in the inner circle of the national leader.

But they wouldn't need convincing. They have all long been fighting the "Jewish oligarchs who robbed the country," for their, as Dugin helpfully suggested, Eastern Orthodox equity stake. They simply need to be told that in a worsening systemic crisis and failing government, the only way to preserve their billion-dollar stakes is to embark on the path of openly fascist dictatorship. You don't need the support of the majority for that kind of dictatorship. The security forces, television, and a couple million enthusiastic implementers are quite sufficient. One, two, three, we've got them all. Under totalitarian rule, the majority would be at a loss, passive. All the more so, since they won't come for everyone all at once."

That academic discussion with colleagues ended on March 18, 2014. Fascism came triumphantly from above, imposing its extra chromosomal spirituality on us all. Putin's Crimea speech to the Federation Council was such an obvious remake of Hitler's Sudetenland speech to the Reichstag that the propagandist Migranyan had to "soften" the impression by proposing the "good Hitler" concept (Piontkovsky, 2014). Good Putin declared the Russian people to be divided, and announced not just his right, but his sacred duty to defend Russians all over the world – not citizens of Russia (every country is obligated to protect its citizens) but ethnic Russians, Russian-speaking people, and even, in the farthest possible stretch, descendants of Soviet citizens and citizens of the Russian Empire. It was an idea just like this one that lay at the foundation of Hitler's foreign policy, which led to the Second World War.

After the annexation of the Crimean, the next item on the agenda to implement the “Russian World” plan was to recover Novorossiia, unfairly given to Ukraine by the Bolsheviks (*let God judge them*). Anyone opposed to the plan was proclaimed a traitor to the nation (yet another calque from 1930s Germany). Before March 18, the goal was blocking the European vote in Ukraine, and the annexation of Crimea was one of the instruments used to achieve that. After March 18, the collection of Russian land, the “**Crimeanization**” of the entire territory of the former Soviet Union or even the Russian Empire became, in the narrative of the Kremlin’s mythmakers and PR men, the higher, almost mystical, purpose and true meaning of the existence of the Russian ethnos, who at last have got off their knees and acquired a worthy national idea. While at the same time legitimizing the lifetime rule of the man at the top, waving his cross and birch branch.

More than four years have passed since then. How is Putin’s fascist “Russian World” project going? It is a dismal failure. And that outcome was obvious pretty quickly. The still-ongoing televised hysteria, the pseudo-surveys of the population, which mean nothing in authoritarian structures, the senseless aerospace exercises in Syria, the overcompensating over-the-top victory celebrations every May 9 – all these are attempts to hide the failure, to extend life after death.

The failure is primarily in Ukraine, and, most importantly, in the hearts and minds of its Russian citizens. As it happens, in 10 of the 12 regions in Novorossiia they couldn’t even find enough extras to hold regular public protests with processional banners and icons of Putin. In two regions, several cities are held by a motley crew, armed to the teeth, of professional saboteurs, Motorola’s newly arrived degenerates, MMM deputies, Russian National Union fascists, dressed up as Cossacks, veterans of the 35-year Afghan-Caucasian colonial war. To keep them from getting tossed out of Donbass, regular Russian army units need to maintain a permanent presence there with tanks, armored personnel carriers equipped with rocket launchers, and anti-aircraft weapons systems. The radiant dream of “Novorossiia” has dwindled down to the measly territory of Lungandonia, run by bandits.

The fundamental political weakness of this movement of “native inhabitants driven to desperate measures,” which differentiates it from any other separatist fight in the world, was the absence of any living ideas, its inability to clearly articulate either the reasons for its “desperation” or the goal of its “protest.” The vast majority of Russians in Ukraine have rejected the core of the myths of “Novorossiia” and the “Russian World,” and remain loyal citizens of the Ukrainian state, and supporters of its European choice. Putin attempted to unleash an ethnic conflict, but the fight between the heirs of Kievan Rus and the Golden Horde didn’t take. The Kremlin’s aggression in Ukraine died down, and Ukraine at last freed itself from its Muscovy overlords.

But those who had recently “got off their knees” couldn’t admit that to themselves and blamed their failure on the damn Yankees. But the politicians who made it from St. Petersburg and their servants from the post-intelligentsia, intoxicated by unthinkable wealth, also wanted, like the old woman in Pushkin’s tale who wished to be a noble lady, “geopolitical greatness” for themselves and their dynasties, here and now. And they demanded from the American golden

fish not only the status of wealthy Westerners, but also a new “Yalta deal” recognizing them as the rulers of half the world and bringing entire peoples and states into their possession.

The U.S. was, in fact, prepared to quietly assign the business partners who had invested trillions into the American economy “Yalta status.” After all, in his controversial *Atlantic* interview, Obama’s position pretty much added up to, “*The Russians wanted to invade Ukraine more than we wanted to protect it, and we can’t do anything about it.*” (Goldberg, 2016) The inhabitants of the Kremlin are simply incapable of understanding that the problem with their geopsychological wish list isn’t the Americans, but the fact that none of Russia’s neighbors will ever go along meekly into their Yalta, that, well, no one wants them or their “Russian World.”

VII

The Golden Horde ideology of the “Russian World” suffered a defeat just as painful in Russia itself. That defeat, however, actually took place a quarter century in the past. Two Communist empires fell in 1991: first the smaller, Yugoslav one, and then the larger Soviet empire. The “spiritual bonds” of Communism had turned to dust, and nothing held the lesser brothers in place in orbit around their imperial brother (sister) – Russia and Serbia. The nature of the fall was determined by the relationship of their respective peoples to it. The charismatic leaders of both countries, Milosevic and Yeltsin, as natural populists, were guided in their policies by the mindset of the majority of their fellow citizens. The Serbs, infected by the virus of small-town imperialism and giving up on saving the entire empire, rushed to cut a “Serbian World” out of its body, setting off and losing half a dozen wars that took tens of thousands of lives.

There were proponents for a similar path towards dividing the Soviet empire in Russia, primarily among the political “elite.” In actuality, the putsch wasn’t a Communist attack, but an imperial one. And one of the leaders of the “victorious democracy,” G. Popov of the post-intelligentsia, urged then that Ukraine be cut up along the lines that Putin has drawn today. But these sentiments were not widespread. On the day the Belovezh Accords were signed, dividing the USSR strictly along the formal borders of its former republics, no more than 100 people came out to protest in Moscow their ratification by the Supreme Soviet. The residents of the former Soviet Union, and indeed the whole world, owes much to the wisdom and generosity of the Russian people, who were not tempted by calls from Popov and his ilk to “collect the ancestral Russian lands.”

The Yugoslav scenario in the post-Soviet landscape studded with nuclear weapons could have been a global catastrophe. Marginal imperial fanatics like today’s famous war criminal, Girkin, with a quarter century of experience, were sent to the Balkans as a consolation prize to kill Croats and Bosnians. The retired KGB major Putin was certainly not among them; in those days he was humbly carrying the briefcase of the mayor of St. Petersburg and absorbed in acquiring the first millions promised him in the “Metal for Food” scam.

The cartoonish chimera of the “Russian World” with its own sacred Khersones/Chersonesus is the mad attempt by an aging dictator to travel 25 years back in time, redo the collapse of the Soviet Union, this time in the Yugoslav manner, and extend the death

rattle of his decaying kleptocracy, decorating it with his ideocratic project in the Grand Style like the fascism of Hitler or Stalin's Communism. This attempt was doomed to fail, primarily because the Russian mentality hadn't changed in those years. The brief euphoric support of "Our Crimea" did not signify the people's approval for the "father of the nation" to wage endless hybrid warfare in "defense of ethnic Russians and Russian speakers" throughout the post-Soviet landscape. No wonder reports of our losses in Donbass became the country's most classified information, and the parents of the dead were forced to bury their children in secret.

"To us Russians, even death is beautiful out in the world," the Chief Commander announced for Russians in April 2014 (Putin, 2015). The "Russian World" died out in the world, but it was a shameful rather than beautiful end, through overexertion in an unsuccessful attempt at the fraternal rape of Ukraine.

By all laws governing the life and death of authoritarian regimes, the Putin simulacra should not survive the Ukrainian metaphysical catastrophe caused by the dictator's gross miscalculation. But the regime is trying to prolong its place at the table over the sweet pie of power and wealth by sharply increasing its stakes in the geopsychological confrontation with the West. "Good Hitler" has his very own **Wunderwaffe**. No, not the missile horror movies he showed at a recent Federation Council meeting. The West has a similar arsenal of horror, and in a better state of combat readiness. No, Putin's unique wonder-weapon is the psychological nuclear blackmail he employs, beginning with the annexation of Crimea, his insane declaration of preparedness to issue the first nuclear strike, and the absolute contempt for the value of human lives (Russian and foreign) that he has demonstrated more than once.

Recently, Putin has been frequently outlining apocalyptic scenarios of ordering a nuclear strike in speeches and interviews. One observant commentator also noted that he spoke about it with obvious desire. Judge for yourselves; watch his face carefully in the film "World Order 2018," in which he tells V. Soloviev (yet another member of the post-intelligentsia), that he doesn't want a world without Putin in power (Putin, 2018). Yes, specifically without Putin in power. Hess/Volodin told us, after all, that Russia today is Putin in power. And he needs the little people exclusively as a nuclear electorate and potential collective Shahid.

We see a bold man wandering around an icy wasteland, like 100 years before, but now waving a nuclear bomb instead of an axe.

P.S. The Syrian boy from Aleppo, who vowed to complain to Allah on his deathbed, was one of those thousands on whom new Russian weapon systems were tested (Yablochkin, 2018). A child threatening his tormentors with an appeal to God is an image straight out of Dostoyevsky, key to his art and his worldview. As an agnostic my entire conscious life, I never before wished so ardently that God did exist. So that boy from Aleppo could tell him everything. About the "testing," about Putin, Lavrov, Shoigu....About us all. For us there can be no sympathy, no forgiveness.

May we all be damned!

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