

RUSSIA'S MISSION IN ALEKSANDR G. DUGIN'S EYES: THE IDEOLOGICAL WEAKNESSES OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE FUTURE IDEOLOGY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Marcin Skladanowski

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Abstract. This article aims to present the way in which the accomplishment of Russia's historic mission in the Soviet Union, as well as the reasons for the failure and fall of that state are viewed by Aleksandr G. Dugin. Part 1 shows the Soviet Union as an important stage in Russia's historic mission. Part 2 presents the main elements of Marxist ideology implemented in post-revolutionary Russia which stand in contradiction to the 'Russian logos' and, consequently, to Russia's civilisational mission, and which indicate the internal weakness of Marxism as an ideological foundation of the USSR. Part 3 is devoted to ideological conclusions which should be drawn by the authorities of the Russian Federation under the leadership of President Putin from the ideological weakness of the USSR in order not to repeat its fate and to enable Russia to play a crucial role in the modern world.

Keywords: Aleksandr G. Dugin, Russian ideology, Russian Marxism, Soviet Union, Russia's mission

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1. Introduction

The contemporary Russian neo-imperial thought supports President Putin's internal and foreign policy. However, it considers some aspects of this policy not radical enough and too slow at aiming to regain the rightful position of the superpower by the Russian Federation. In general, the reflection over the reasons for the fall of the Soviet Union occupies a significant place in this current of thought. It therefore develops the opinion of President Putin himself that the fall of the Soviet Union was "the greatest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century". Russian neo-imperialism,

although it does not support communist ideology and appeals more willingly to Russia's Orthodox heritage, views the fall of the Soviet Union as unfortunate; as one of the most serious crises in Russian history. It also indicates the destructive effects of this event in political, economic, military as well as social and cultural domains. At the same time, however, numerous representatives of Russian neo-imperial thought, in line with President Putin's suggestions, draw conclusions from the fall of the Soviet Union which can direct future development of the Russian Federation.

This article aims to present the way in which the accomplishment of Russia's historic mission in the Soviet Union, as well as the reasons for the failure and fall of that state are viewed by Aleksandr G. Dugin, one of the most controversial Russian conservatives. As a supporter of Eurasianism, which sees the roots of Russia both in Byzantine Orthodoxy as well as in Asian cultures (Dugin 2014b:258–259), he assumes that Russia has created its own separate civilisation (Dugin 2009:68) and, therefore, can in no way be considered a European state. Consequently, Russian culture should not be viewed as a part of European culture (Sakwa 2017: 123–124). Nationalism and anti-Occidentalism also determine his perception of the ideological foundations of the Soviet Union and the reasons behind its fall. Aside from such obvious factors as political and economic pressure from the West and the arms race that the Soviet Union lost, Dugin draws our attention to ideological, cultural or, according to his own terminology, 'civilizational' issues.

2. The USSR and Russia's historic mission

Despite noticing the ideological weakness of the USSR, which is discussed below, Dugin considers the state created by the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution to be an inseparable part of Russia's history. Currently, given the Russian–Ukrainian conflict, the Ukrainians raise some doubts as to whether identifying Rus' with Russia and acknowledging Russia as the only continuator of the national and religious traditions of the Kievan Rus' is justified. However, Dugin perceives Russia's history as one uninterrupted stream of events which builds Russia's historic mission; he even thinks that Russia has created its own 'Russian civilisation'. In such a historiosophic vision not only is Russia the only rightful heir of Kievan Rus' traditions, but its historic mission can also be realised in the Soviet Union despite the revolutionary circumstances of the fall of Tsarist Russia (Dugin 2014d:122–123).

2.1. *The USSR as a historic stage of Russian statehood*

Although Soviet ideology rejected geopolitics as 'bourgeois (pseudo)science' and as utterly worthless, in reality, according to Dugin, in its geopolitical dimension, the Soviet Union was one of the historic incarnations of Russia (Dugin 2014c: 21). It was so despite the multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of this state which was reflected both in its political structure, based on the federated republics that formally enjoyed a significant level of autonomy in internal policy, as well as in a versatile structure of the biggest republic—the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist

Republic—which also reflected the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity of its population (Dugin 2014b:728, Kara-Murza 2016:86).

While analysing the reasons for the fall of the Soviet Union, its role as a significant stage of Russia's history should be emphasised, but it should not be limited to its political, economic or military aspects. In Dugin's approach, one of the essential aspects of Russian civilisation is the constant expansion, spreading its influence over other nations and cultures. This expansiveness is one of the important features of the Russian spirit—the 'Russian logos'. This expansion is also multidimensional.

Firstly, it is expanding Russia's political and military influences including direct military and political control, which also means military interventions (Dugin 2014d:103). According to Dugin, war is permanently ingrained in Russian history and should be seen as a necessity or even an objective of Russia. Despite being typical of every war violence, it is perceived in this standpoint as definitely positive; not only does it serve to defend Russia as a political and cultural space, but it also strengthens its identity and separate civilisational character with respect to neighbouring nations and cultures. This is the reason why Dugin repeatedly states that war is a normal element of Russia's history and considers it a usual aspect of the national policy (Dugin 2015b: 10–12). Similarly, he considers the political subordination of other states as an expression of Russia's historic mission; he goes as far as denying the states which emerged after the fall of the USSR the right to full independence and calls them deficient or faulty (Dugin 2014a: 619). This is an important feature of Russian neo-imperial thought, particularly in the context of the Ukrainian war (Matsaberidze 2015, Verkhovsky 2016).

The expansion of the 'Russian logos', which became a reality in the USSR, is not limited to the political, military or economic domain but it also encompasses the issues of culture with particular emphasis on language. Language is not only an information carrier, but it also contains an established cultural code, which is externalised in the way thoughts are shaped and in the linguistic means of expression reaching to the roots of the independent existence of a particular ethnic and cultural group. The USSR, which was the space of expansion of the Russian language both in the federated republics and in the satellite states, contributed to the spreading of Russian culture (Dugin 2014b:711–715). It is important to note that in numerous cases this spreading assumed the form of interiorisation. Russian culture along with the language became the culture of many ethnic groups which allowed them to develop and to leave their tribal isolation. In such a way the 'Russian logos' extended its influence on those ethnic and religious groups that differed significantly in their traditions from the Slavic traditions of the Kievan Rus' and Russia. Extending Russian cultural influences at the time of the USSR was accompanied by the growth of range which the rules of life and social organisation, as well as values typical to the Russian tradition, reached. This last aspect, however, seems to be problematic given the national ideology adopted after the Bolshevik Revolution (Dugin 2014d:144). In particular, the rules which distinguish Russia from the West, such as the primacy of the community over an individual, sacrificing the interests of an individual for the common good (identified with the national good) and sacralisation of the state, its

institutions and its leader, could not have been fully accomplished in the USSR; even though the USSR ideology contained the elements of the personality cult as well as secular messianism and Gnosticism (Trepanier 2010: 140).

As Dugin considers this expansion to have multiple aspects as the fulfilment of Russia's historic mission, he judges negatively those Soviet (and later Russian) political activists who contributed to diminishing the Russian sphere of influence. He holds the least respect for M. S. Gorbachev and B. N. Yeltsin (Dugin 2014d:450–451). They betrayed the principles of Russia's mission by first allowing for the internal weakness of the USSR to develop and then by allowing for the independence of the countries belonging to the Warsaw Pact. Finally, they allowed the USSR to fall and the federated republics to achieve statehood. Meanwhile, the existence of formally independent states in the post-Soviet space which aim to appreciate their own culture, tradition or language by opposing Russian culture and language appears to be a form of destroying the accomplishments of the Russian Empire and the USSR as far as spreading the 'Russian logos' is concerned (Dugin 2015e: 145–147). It stems from the failure to comprehend the separate character of Russian culture as well as from more or less conscious adoption of western patterns of social and political organisation where individual rights are dominant and the community, including the state, is of relative value (Dugin 2015f: 308).

2.2. Ambivalent assessment of the USSR in Dugin's neo-imperialism

This perception of the USSR as an important stage of Russia's history and mission reveals characteristic features of neo-imperialism represented by Dugin and his supporters. On the one hand, there is no unequivocal acceptance of the communist ideology. On the other hand, however, the USSR is considered a historic embodiment of Russia both as a state structure and, which is more important, a carrier of a specific culture and tradition, which is capable of spreading them and, to a certain extent, defending them from foreign influences (Dugin 2014d:160). Although the communist ideology was not a result of the development of Russia's socio-cultural tradition, it was a powerful force which enabled the USSR to influence the fate of the world (Dugin 2015e: 118).

The whole history of Russia indicates that being an empire is its natural and proper state of affairs. 'The imperial rule' that constitutes Russia, expressed in the conviction as to the universality of Russian culture, the Russian concept of the human being and social organisation was far more important than the ethnic or religious unity (Parts 2015). It was this rule that enabled the expansion of Russia regardless of its current form of government (Dugin 2015e: 143–144). This is the reason why Dugin perceives Soviet politics as continuing the traditions of the Kievan Rus', the Moscow Rus' and the Russian Empire. He claims that territorial and cultural expansion is an inseparable element of the Russian identity (Dugin 2015c: 400). Despite noticing negative aspects of the creation, organisation, and functioning of the USSR, Dugin thinks that as far as geopolitical and historiosophic dimensions are concerned, Russia's civilisational potential was realised in the Soviet state. Russia deserves to occupy the position of the superpower not only because of the size of its

territory or military potential but also due to its Eurasian cultural heritage that can serve as foundations for opposing the West, which tries to dominate the rest of the world (Dugin 2015b: 39–40, Noordenbos 2011: 148).

While acknowledging the significance of the USSR as a phase in Russia's mission in the world, Dugin notices the weakness in the Soviet state which contributed to the failure of the Bolshevik project. This weakness was the reason why the USSR was eventually incapable of defending itself against the western military, political, economic, and – most of all – cultural pressure. This weakness is also evident in the fact that the USSR was based on the ideology, alien to the 'Russian logos', which was essentially Western. This alien ideology destroyed the Soviet state and society from within causing the ideological crisis of the 1980s and finally contributing to the fall and cultural colonisation of Russia and other post-Soviet states by the West in the 1990s (Dugin 2015b: 138).

2.3. Ideological factors among the reasons for the fall of the USSR

Dugin's analysis of the international situation of the USSR, its foreign and domestic policy as well as its ideological foundations does not exclude the issue of responsibility of the West for the fall of the Soviet Union, which is so frequently discussed in contemporary Russian conservative debate. In this perspective Western countries (in the interwar period these were Great Britain and France, and after WWII – the United States and other NATO members) are said to have aimed to destroy Soviet Russia and later the USSR since the beginning of the Bolshevik Revolution (Dugin 2014d:418–419, Dugin 2015a: 111).

The forms of this activity were versatile and dependent on historical circumstances. After the aggression of the Third Reich in the USSR, the political interest of the West demanded the suspension, even though only for a short period, of anti-Soviet actions and called for forming a great anti-Nazi coalition. Nonetheless, despite those short periods of enforced collaboration or at least a thaw in mutual relations, the main objectives of the West remained unchanged. They were expressed in limiting the political influence of the USSR and exerting military pressure thus intensifying the arms race which, in turn, led to the USSR and its satellite states intensifying their economic efforts. Those efforts exceeded their capabilities (Dugin 2014a: 592).

Explaining the attitude of the West towards the USSR, based on accusing the United States of planning to destroy the Soviet state, is not an original Dugin's input into the reflection on the contemporary Russian history. In line with President Putin's above-mentioned statement, the presented approach to the relations between the West and the USSR is dominant in current Russian geopolitical thought. Dugin, however, extends the interpretation of reasons for the fall of the USSR and the hostile western influence on the Soviet state by drawing our attention to the ideological factor. He points out that after the Bolshevik Revolution the foundations of Soviet statehood were formed with the help of Marxist ideology, which was the result of the Western school of thought and closely connected with the socio-political analysis representative for the 19th-century West. The West was at that time undergoing an industrial revolution and, therefore, was experiencing numerous problems related

to it (Dugin 2014b:451, 708). This transfer of foreign western Marxist thought onto Russia, while facing the political fall of the Russian Empire and clumsy attempts to create a republic in Russia similar to Western republics in the period from February to October 1917, weakened the foundations of the Bolshevik project at the very beginning.

What can be seen here is the internal inconsistencies of the USSR. On the one hand, as mentioned above, the USSR as an empire formed an important stage in the accomplishment of Russia's historic mission, which assigned the 'Russian civilisation' its rightful place in international relations (Tsygankov2008). The USSR also expressed a separate character of this culture by being a country that stretched across two continents and, consequently, incapable of being classified as either European or one of the Asian civilisations, but by creating its unique civilisation, the core of which was Russia's historic mission (Dugin 2014d:94–95, 127). On the other hand, choosing Marxism, which was foreign to the Russian spirit and imposed on the Russians and other ethnic groups of the Soviet state by the Western world deprived the USSR of the solid ideological – mainly axiological – foundation. Everything that proved Russia's sustainability as a cultural and civilisational unit was questioned: 'God-bearing', the 'Russian idea', the 'Russian logos', and unique political conditions of Russian Orthodoxy alongside the culture based on it.

3. The main aspects of foreign character of Marxism towards the 'Russian logos'

Dugin indicates three main elements of Marxist ideology which, being contradictory to the Russian identity and mission, contributed to the failure of the USSR: anti-theology, Western concept of the human being, and the cult of progress.

3.1. Anti-theology versus 'god-bearing'

Marxism, which was in principle atheist and even hostile towards religion, rejected a religious element as a positive and creative factor which could influence the fate of humanity, and the whole countries in particular – countries which are based on a religious community, religion-related philosophy and shared values (Dugin 2015d: 352). One should bear in mind, however, that Russia, since its political and cultural expansion crossed the borders of the Orthodox Slavic world, has definitely stopped being ethnically and religiously uniform (Dugin 2014d: 158). Nonetheless, despite the existing diversity, it has preserved the idea of 'God-bearing' (bogonosnost), so typical of Russian Orthodoxy (Dugin 2015c: 142).

This 'God-bearing' is expressed, on the one hand, in the conviction as to the sacral character of socio-political life, state institutions, and leadership in particular (Dugin 2014b:372–373). It makes the reduction of the sacrum to the strictly church-related space impossible. Consequently, the western idea of separation of church and state, stemming from the 16th-century Reformation and strengthened by the tendencies of the Enlightenment, is incomprehensible in Russian political and religious tradition

(Dugin 2015f: 473). At the same time, however, it means that the state cannot be deprived of its competences in religious and strictly church-related issues because the state itself is of sacral character (Dugin 2015c: 159–160, Kara-Murza 2013: 40).

The other side of Russian 'God-bearing' is uniquely understood messianism. It follows from the conviction about the sacral character of the state that there is the need to oppose any form of pressure to make Russia secular (Mitrofanova 2016). The strive intended to make Russia one of those countries which are structured according to the western rule of autonomy of secular and religious realities, and the separation of church and state has to be opposed. Therefore, it follows that Russia is considered unique, that it has been chosen and it has a mission (Dugin 2014d: 123, Dugin 2015f: 473). In the context of typical Russian religious tradition Manichaeism, which proclaims the fight between the good and evil, Russia becomes the centre of God's good, Third and Last Rome leading in a confrontation with the godless evil – the West (Dugin 2014b: 680–681, Dugin 2014g: 56–57). An expression of such a view on Russia's mission is Dugin's concept of the everlasting fight of Land (the world of tradition and justice, filled with God's order, represented by Rome in the past and now – by Russia) and Sea (the world of progress and injustice, full of chaos and domination, represented by Carthage in the past and now – by the United States and their allies) (Dugin 2014d: 47–54).

The rejection of the religious aspect and, consequently, sacralisation of the state, which took place in Marxism, was transferred and copied by the Bolsheviks to Russia (Dugin 2015c: 332–333). It was accompanied by the transformation of Marxist ideology which meant its mystic or quasi-religious interpretation, which moved away from the original thought that was mostly economy-oriented (Dugin 2014a: 92, Dugin 2015e: 168). Nonetheless, despite such an adaptation, Marxism deprived Russia's historic mission of its foundations and destroyed the sacred socio-religious order prevalent for centuries, and which was a contributing factor to the sustainability and development of Russia (Dugin 2014a: 463).

3.2. Collectivism versus the feeling of community

Another difficulty with Marxism is the concept of the human being; although, theoretically, one can notice significant similarities in this domain between Marxism and Russian social tradition (Dugin 2015e: 168). They both emphasise the primacy of the community over an individual, even as to negate the value of an individual unless it can be proved useful to the community. This sense is clearly expressed by the Soviet author Vladimir V. Majakovskij, who wrote in one of his poems devoted to Lenin: "The individual: who needs him? [...] The individual is nonsense. The Individual is nothing". ("Edinica! – Komu ona nužna?!... Edinica – vzdor, edinica – nol") (Majakovskij 1988:261–262). In this sense the collectivist Marxist anthropology agrees with the Orthodox concept of the human being, emphasised mainly in Russian Orthodoxy (Papanikolaou 2012: 93), in which the value of an individual has its roots in the community (Stoeckl 2014: 43–44). It also agrees with Dugin's anthropology for whom 'the true human being' is the community itself (Dugin 2014a: 225, Dugin 2014g: 111) and any individualism which stresses

dignity and the rights of an individual is considered Western contamination (Dugin 2014b:455–457). Nonetheless, despite these similarities, which contributed to the relatively easy adaptation of Marxism in its Leninist version to Russian reality, anthropological differences remain significant.

Marxist collectivism, implemented by the Bolsheviks, was built on the concept of class conflict, which in turn assumes the division of each society into classes as its theoretical foundation and explains social phenomena by referring to competing interests of every group (Dugin 2014g: 127, Dugin 2015f: 290, 297). Moreover, by conducting such a social analysis of class Marxism does not remain neutral; it consciously presents the working class as a better one (Dugin 2014b:451). In the conditions of post-revolutionary Russia, a country that was barely industrialised and did not therefore have a developed proletariat, the ideas of Marxism had to be significantly adapted (Dugin 2014e: 273, Kara-Murza 2016: 220), which meant that the alliance between the working class and peasantry was emphasised (Dugin 2014b:720). While extending in such a way the base for the revolution in the Soviet society, the basic problem – from the perspective of the unique character of the Russian society – was not removed. In this context Dugin's historiosophic reflection seems interesting. He thinks that the victory of Marxism in agricultural, traditionalist, and Eurasian Russia, contrary to the expectations of Marx himself, cannot be considered a mere historic accident (Dugin 2015e: 169, 177).

The Russian model of society-community makes it impossible to distinguish closed competing classes in Marxist understanding. Although there exist social groups in the Russian tradition, which Dugin compares to Hindu castes (Dugin 2015b: 68, Dugin 2015f: 419–421), the relation between them is not based on conflict, and they cannot be considered entirely closed either. Moreover, the fulcrum, the source of unity of all the social strata in traditional Russian society is the leadership that bears sacral features, and in particular the leaders themselves (Dugin 2014b:684). Meanwhile, the class division of a society in Marxist understanding transgresses the framework of division based on gathered wealth, social roles, assumed power or a lifestyle. It also possesses ideological content: assessment of classes and assigning social primacy to one of them, which leads to restricting or even eliminating the others (whether in a political and economic sense or, in the most tragic years of the USSR, in the sense of physical extermination).

Marxist analysis along with socio-economic policy excludes discussing the unity of the nation, its identity and makes the sacralisation of state impossible. Consequently, the search for a special mission of a particular nation-people is devoid of purpose. In a way, Soviet authorities noticed this problem and adapted Marxism to their situation by abandoning Trotsky's policy and the concept of international proletarian revolution in order to emphasise the unique role the USSR could play in the fight against world capitalism and imperialism (Dugin 2014e: 274–275). Nonetheless, the difficulties resulting from the discrepancies between Marxist social analysis and the Russian national and state tradition could not be eradicated, because they belonged to the very core of Marxist ideology.

3.3. Progress versus tradition

The third problematic area, in which the alien character of Marxism with respect to the Russian sociocultural tradition can be observed, is the clash between the Marxist ideology of progress, which has its roots in Hegelian philosophy and thus stems from the Western intellectual tradition and European Enlightenment, and Russian traditionalism, evident in social, religious or moral conservatism. This issue is of particular importance in Dugin's historiosophy (Shekhovtsov 2008, Shekhovtsov and Umland 2009).

Marxism assumed the inevitability of progress, which was understood not only as scientific and technical development but also as social change. The existing institutions and rules of social organisation do not have a fixed value and conservative attempts to preserve them, also by religious sacralisation, have to be rejected as conflicting with the spirit of progress (Dugin 2014b:705). In the conditions of the Soviet state, this Marxist cult of progress expressed itself not only through industrialisation, which Dugin is partially willing to accept (Dugin 2014b:725–726), but also in questioning the traditional Russian lifestyle and ethical norms; this, in turn, is the result of Western cultural aggression against the foundations of Russian state and society.

The cult of progress, which was promoted in the USSR, opposed typically Russian conservatism whose rules of social organisation are based on being faithful to the paradigm inherited from previous generations and which perceives the change as a negative, or at least ambiguous, fact (Dugin 2015c: 279). The 'Russian logos' rejected Western aspiration to change and reform, particularly as far as the areas crucial for the identity of the nation and stability of the state are concerned, such as religion, customs or values (Dugin 2015c: 97). This is the reason why the reforms carried out by Peter the Great, which aimed to make Russia European (to be exact, it was the Duchy of Moscow that was being called Russia during the reign of Peter the Great), had to be imposed violently by the tsar and his supporters (Dugin 2014b:694, Dugin 2014d: 313, 319). Similar changes after the Bolshevik Revolution had to be imposed in Russia by force because they stood in opposition to the entirety of intellectual and spiritual tradition which had shaped the country (Dugin 2015f: 176–177). Rejecting this tradition, including the aforementioned 'God-bearing' and the unity of a nation-community, was evident in promoting internationalism, which according to the Bolsheviks, was supposed to destroy Russian cultural unity based on religious heritage. In Dugin's opinion, attempts to build a new society, which completely abandons the old ways, in the USSR on the foundations of Marxist ideology proved unsuccessful. Outside the Marxist propagandistic façade, the Soviet state and society were mostly very traditional (Dugin 2014b:731).

In these three mentioned aspects one can see how Marxist ideology, being the fruit of Western thought, contributed to the erosion of the Soviet society and state. It happened despite the above-mentioned adaptations of Marxism to Russian conditions, which weakened those of its ideas that were most alien to the Russian socio-cultural tradition. Both the alien character of Marxism, as well as the failure to adapt it to Russian conditions contributed to the ideological crisis of the USSR, to

the disintegration of the Soviet society and, eventually, to the fall of the state itself (Dugin 2014b:736).

4. The fall of the USSR and the ideology of the Russian Federation

Dugin's reference to President Putin's statement as to the negative consequences of the fall of the USSR, both for the federated republics, as well as its global outcome, leads to demonstrating the weakness of the Soviet state. It also shows the process leading to the destruction of that state, which serves as an indicator of how to create the ideological foundations of the Russian Federation. The encouragement for Dugin comes from the policy of President Putin himself (Shlapentokh 2007, Varga 2008, Laruelle 2015), whose aim is to – as it was repeatedly commented upon in journalistic and scholarly publications – 'raise Russia from its knees' by regaining its political importance, economic and military strength, but even more so by ideologically uniting Russia into a multi-ethnic and multi-religious entity which shares moral values as well as views regarding the social and state organisation. As the failure of the USSR in confrontation with the West had not only economic and political aspects, but also much greater civilisational and cultural consequences, the Russian Federation has to, if it wishes to realise the Russian mission in the world, learn a lesson from the fate of the Soviet state; the lesson that is also an ideological one.

Based on the above analysis of the ideological aspects of the fall of the USSR, Dugin raises three main demands regarding the national ideology of the Russian Federation.

Firstly, foreign cultural and civilisational influences must be rejected. This rejection has to be accompanied by removing the supporters of these influences from the public domain. Dugin describes their supporters as 'Fifth' and 'Sixth Columnists' (Dugin 2015e: 56–60). The 'Fifth Column' he understands as the current pro-Western and pro-democratic opposition in Russia that objects to the system of government and the system of political and business connections, which were created during the period of Putin's and Medvedev's leadership. The fact remains, however, that faced with the enormous popularity of President Putin among the Russians, this opposition has no influence whatsoever on the future of the Russian Federation and as such does not pose, from Dugin's perspective, an ideological threat. The 'Sixth Column', on the other hand, is a far more serious issue for Dugin. It is understood as a group of people occupying important positions in the power structures of the Russian Federation and supporting President Putin's policy. This group, however, hopes to shape Russia according to Western standards (Dugin 2015e: 61). If Dugin thinks that using Western thought as the very foundations of the USSR was the reason for its fall, he also thinks that attempts to build the Russian Federation based on Western patterns will eventually lead to its destruction. It will separate Russia from its cultural foundations, and in the internal dimension it will lead to Western ideological colonisation, while in the international dimension, it will lead to the

marginalisation of Russia (Dugin 2014d: 163). For this reason, the 'Sixth Column' and the supporters of Russia's modernisation, crypto-Occidentalists, are particularly dangerous for Russia's mission or even its very existence and, therefore, have to be mercilessly combated (Dugin 2015d: 352, Dugin 2015e: 63–64).

Secondly, Dugin demands that the national ideology of the Russian Federation be based on patterns and values that define the Russian tradition, thus making it unique among European and Asian cultures; this uniqueness, consequently, justifies the concept of a separate 'Russian civilisation' (Dugin 2014d: 162–163). The Western concept of the human being, particularly the human rights and the relation between an individual and community, should be rejected. On the other hand, ethics and anthropology based on the primacy of a community, society and state, and recognising the value of every person depending on the way they contribute to the development of the community, should be promoted. The sacral dimension of state, the authorities, in particular, should not be overlooked here as it is the result of the influence of Orthodoxy on the Russian socio-political tradition (Dugin 2014b:391). Nonetheless, Dugin notices Russia's ethnic and religious diversity, and although inspired by Orthodoxy himself, he does not raise the demand to impose it as a state religion. He even considers overestimating the significance of the Orthodox culture and Russian ethnic identity can lead the Russian Federation to its fall due to individual ethnic and religious groups desiring emancipation. Russia is not a national state, in the European sense of the term, but an empire that transgresses ethnic and religious diversity (Dugin 2015e: 142–143). Nevertheless, Dugin perceives Orthodoxy as a foundation of the Russian imperial ideology of the state (Dugin 2015c: 131, Dugin 2015d: 352). This conviction gives rise to the demand that the West being the main and existential enemy of Russia should be considered an unchanging element of the Russian system of values, which determines the actions of the state as well as the way of thinking of every citizen. Thus, anti-Occidentalism should become one of the pillars of the new Russian ideology of the state (Dugin 2015c: 341–342, Laruelle 2016).

Thirdly, according to Dugin, the necessary conclusion drawn from the fall of the USSR should be the imperative for the Russian Federation to expand. Contrary to the denigrated expansion of the West, which is expressed in cultural, political, and economic aggression, and which aims for the world domination of the United States and their allies, the expansion of Russia should be of a different sort, in line with Russia's tradition and historic mission. With respect to post-Soviet states and their Russian-speaking inhabitants, this expansion should concentrate on actions aiming to politically, culturally, and economically reintegrate the post-Soviet area in order to build sociocultural unity, which is described in contemporary Russian debate as the 'Russian world' (*Russkij mir*) (Dugin 2014f: 103, Mitrofanova 2016). Dugin finds that using the means of military and economic pressure in this mission is utterly justified (Dugin 2014d: 459), especially with respect to those countries, such as post-Maidan Ukraine who wants to sever their ties with Russia and see their future built on Western paradigm (Dugin 2014a: 619–620). On the other hand, when it comes to the countries that do not belong to the Western Bloc, Dugin sees the

expansion of Russia as a mission to unite them around the idea of a multi-polar world opposing the hegemony of the United States (Dugin 2014d: 423, Dugin 2015b: 20). The role of Russia as the centre of world resistance against the West forms one of the key elements of its historic mission; the mission that extends far beyond either the borders of the Russian Federation or the post-Soviet area (Dugin 2014a: 552, 618).

5. Conclusions

Despite the fact that many of Dugin's statements are controversial, one can notice that his diagnosis of ideological aspects of the fall of the USSR is, for the most part, accurate. It does not ignore the fact that the Soviet state was an ideological amalgam in which attempts were made to combine the Marxist historic vision and social analysis with the Russian culture, tradition, and patterns of social organisation. This idea turned out to be a failure: the USSR fell, and the Russian society has been struggling with a significant axiological – or even identity – crisis ever since.

Dugin is using the reflection on the failure of the USSR to indicate the necessary, in his opinion, elements of state ideology of the Russian Federation to accomplish the historic mission of Russia. Although President Putin does not officially share the most radical anti-Western views of Dugin and his close circles of neo-imperialists, one cannot fail to notice that some of the aspects of the official policy of the state agree with Dugin's opinions.

In the context of current strained relations between Russia and the West, there is a lack of understanding in the Western countries of actions undertaken by the Russian Federation: of Russian anti-Occidentalism, imperialism, an instrumental and false reinterpretation of World War II, and the ease with which the decisions regarding military aggression are made. The argument about the impossibility to comprehend Russia is often raised in this context, according to the famous statement of Fyodor Tyutchev: "Russia cannot be understood with the mind alone" (*Umom Rossiju ne ponjat'*). Such an interpretation, however, would not be true. The failure of the USSR, which was an attempt to implement typically Western political and economic thought that is Marxism, demonstrates that Russia can be comprehended under one condition – one should not try to see it as a Western state or as a democracy of Western model. Under the façade of democratic structures and mechanisms, there is the society shaped by two factors: Byzantine Orthodoxy and Asian culture. The Western values such as the dignity of the human person, right to self-definition, and the importance of an individual in society are considered marginal or even non-values, in the Russian society.

The mission and fall of the USSR in Dugin's thought reveal Russia's uniqueness, which is based on the supremacy of a community (state) over an individual, on the subordination of citizens' interests to the interests of authorities, and on the cult of tradition. In this sense, Dugin's reflection, even in its most controversial aspects, seems extremely important to properly understand contemporary Russian Federation and the reasons and consequences of the strained relations between Russia and the West.

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Address:

Marcin Skladanowski
Department of the History of Dogmas and Historical Theology
The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin
Aleje Raclawickie 14,
20-950 Lublin, Poland

E-mail: skladanowski@kul.pl

Tel.: 0048 602880182

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