

Killing Darya Dugina

By Gwynne Dyer

?I am a political observer of the International Eurasianist Movement and an expert in international relations.... In this capacity, I appear on Russian, Pakistani, Turkish, Chinese and Indian television channels....The situation in Ukraine is really an example of a clash of civilisations; it can be seen as a clash between globalist and Eurasian civilisation.?

That's how Darya Dugina, who was killed on Saturday evening outside Moscow by a car bomb, described herself last May in an interview with an obscure far-right Breton website, [Breizh-info.com](#). (?Globalist? in far-right Russian circles means the United States, NATO or ?the West'; ?Eurasian? is just a more expansive way of saying ?Russian'.)

The car-bomb that killed the 29-year-old philosopher and journalist was probably intended for her father Alexander Dugin, also a philosopher and sometimes called ?Putin's Brain' by the foreign media because of his alleged influence on the Russian president. They had driven together to an event supporting the Russian invasion of Ukraine where Dugin spoke. He took another car home and so escaped the bomb, but they were very close.

?I have the honour of being in the same boat as my father (on the same existential ship), being the daughter of a great scholar and author of the 24-volume work Noomachia ('wars of the mind'). The fact that we are under sanctions by the US, Canada, Australia and the UK is a symbol that we Dugins are on the path of truth in the fight against globalism.?

The ?path of truth' they were both on was Neo-Platonism, a style of early Christian mysticism so abstruse and absurd that I will not try to explain it here beyond saying it was big on ideal forms and not so keen on matter. It remained fashionable in parts of the Orthodox church, and has recently found favour with Russian ultra-nationalists.

But Darya Neoplatonova (Dugina's pseudonym as a writer) was not murdered for saying ?The main line of thought in late Neo-Platonist political philosophy is the development of the idea of a homology of the soul and the state and the existence of a similar threefold order in both.?' Her father was not targeted for his dangerous ideas either.

I never met Darya Dugina, but I did once interview her father about a dozen years ago, when he was still believed to be close to Vladimir Putin. (He certainly isn't now, and has even lost his job at Moscow State University.) My Russian was pretty rusty by then, so I took an interpreter along to the interview in his modest flat.

Alexander Dugin proceeded to expand in great detail on the wrongs inflicted on the Russian soul by wicked foreigners and the need for an ?existential politics? to counter them, but there were few concrete policy ideas amongst the shower of abstract nouns.

I also noticed that the translator was leaving out quite a lot of what he was saying. I thought he was just going too fast for her, but when I asked her afterwards she said she had been too embarrassed by some of what he said. He wasn't ranting, exactly, but the nationalist paranoia was unrelenting and overwhelming.

The point is that neither father nor daughter was an important target in terms of their influence on Russian policy, which pretty much rules out any Russian motive for killing either of them. Darya Dugina was an enthusiastic supporter of the attack on Ukraine ? she even visited the conquered city of Mariupol ? but she was just another cheerleader.

So who planted the bomb? Almost certainly somebody Ukrainian who was part of that country's extensive intelligence network in Russia, or some Russian underworld figure paid by the Ukrainians. (There are about two million Ukrainians living in Russia.)

Was either Alexander or Darya a legitimate target? Neither of them was an entirely innocent bystander in the conflict, but they were certainly unarmed civilians so most people would say that the bombing was a crime.

Was it terrorism? Yes, in the very specific sense that its motive must have been to show that Ukraine could strike anywhere in Russia with impunity, and thereby terrorise Russians into abandoning their invasion of Ukraine. (It probably won't have that effect, but that's the only plausible motive.)

Will it harm the Ukrainian cause in terms of public opinion elsewhere? A little bit, maybe, because blowing young women up is never a good look, but probably only for a short time. It's a war, and on the same day Russian shelling wounded twelve civilians, including four children, in the Ukrainian town of Vosnesensk.

What's the difference, apart from the fact that the Russian gunners didn't know the names of their victims, and the Ukrainian who planted the bomb that killed Darya Dugina didn't wear a uniform?