Modern Populism

March 17, 2017

Author: Alexander Dugin

Translator: Jafe Arnold

Dugin’s Guideline –

As of late, European intellectuals are discussing a new political concept that is becoming increasingly relevant: the populist moment.

They are worried by left-wing Schmittians in the likes of Chantal Mouffe on the one hand and, on the other, the brilliant ideologist of European conservatives and the “New Right,” the most formidable and influential figure in intellectual Europe, the philosopher Alain de Benoist. Both right and left are publishing texts dedicated to the populist moment, each offering different interpretations, arguments, and predictions for the future.

What is the populist moment?

First of all, it is the emergence in politics of leaders who become extremely popular by appealing to the broad masses while not concerning themselves with the ideological coherence of their platforms and positions. These are first and foremost Putin and Trump, whose views are difficult to qualify in conventional categories of right, left, etc. Such leaders understand and feel society, what it genuinely wants, what it is striving for, what it thinks, what it fears, and they answer these expectations directly without bothering to couch such in some kind of system. And this is working better and better. Whether by accident or system failure, this is gradually becoming a trend. After Trump, this is already a global reality that cannot be ignored.

Secondly, liberal democracy is in blatant, complete crisis. Wherever it tries to act openly and directly insist on its ideological values – human rights, gender politics, cosmopolitanism, the open society, globalization, etc. – its representatives consistently suffer failure. Liberalism still controls many spheres such as global finance, the global corporate media, culture, education, and technology, but in society it is already essentially rejected. The end of history did not happen and Fukuyama himself, like a complete loser, is now muttering about how the United States is, you see, a failed state. Liberalism is dead. But it is not its old enemies, Communism and Fascism, that destroyed it, but something new. Populism. Any populist, whether right or left, can now beat any liberal.

Thirdly – and this is already becoming more serious – a new subject, a new phenomenon is emerging in the forefront of politics: the people, or populus, hence “populism”. The people is absent in the ideologies of modernity. There is no people in liberalism, whose main subject is the individual. There is no people in communism, where class is the most important. Nor is there the people in fascism, since the emphasis is on the state. All of this remains in the 20th century. Now from around the corner is being mobilized something forgotten or altogether never considered: the People. This is not simply the sum of individuals, classes, or citizens with passports and residence permits. It is something living, organic, whole, ever-changing, and avoiding strict definitions. The people lives longer than people. It has different cycles and different scales. It trusts in myth and is skeptical of science. Even if the people is cowardly, it is admired by fearless heroes. Even if it is crooked, it sincerely loves beauty. And now this People is coming into active contradiction with the existing political system.

The people is neither left nor right. The people stands all at once for order and for freedom, for a powerful state and for social justice, for strength and for continuous holiday. The people easily unites opposites without even noticing. The people lives according to a particular logic that has nothing to do with the norms of modern political science or sociology. The people is always not what others think about it. It does not lend itself to be calculated or counted. It proceeds from a different logic than that of the Enlightenment and societies of modernity. In some sense, the people is very ancient. It is nurtured by the juices of eternity.

The people as a political concept is appearing today in opposition to liberalism. The liberals are hollering about a fascist or communist-fascist threat, and they are incapable of understanding the essence of the populist moment, which they interpret through old clichés. Hence why they are losing. Hence why they are doomed.

And yet both left and right are unanimous in thinking that this is only a moment, a limited period of time, a kind of quantum in historical movement. Probably no one can say whether the People and consequently populism is a system, program, strategy, or merely a temporary correction on the path of liberal globalization. The globalists had their moment in the early ’90’s – the unipolar moment. They ruined everything they could over thirty years, turning globalization and the unipolar world into a hideous caricature. The reformers in Russia in the ’90’s did the same with democracy. Now a different moment is arriving. The people is appearing on the stage of world history. This is a chance, a risk, a responsibility, and a challenge. But it is our moment. Not utilizing it would be a real crime.

Yes, that’s right, not taking advantage of such a populist moment would be foolish and even criminal. But is there such a crime that we have not yet committed? Alas, everything rests on our shoulders. Nevertheless, this is a wonderful, open opportunity for a true alternative, a Russian alternative.