The Solar Hounds of Russia

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1. Terminus

The border circumscribes the State. It describes the State. In being its boundary, it determines the State.

Every thing is what it is thanks to its borders. After all, it is they that separate it from another thing. This distinction carries the most important meaning of the concept of the border not just for international law, defense doctrine, or the structuring of a country’s armed forces, but also for philosophy as such. The border is not just an instrument of philosophy, but its essence, seeing as the highest philosophical concept – transcendence -in Latin literally means “that what lies on the far side of the border”.

The border externally reflects that which lies inside it, while simultaneously confining the essence of the thing in its confrontation with other things. The border is something sacred. The ancient Greeks knew a special god, Terminus, whose name meant ‘limit’, ‘border’. This was not just the guardian-deity of borders, but a “border-deity”, a kind of special, sacred concept that played a central role in the worldviews of the ancient Indo-European peoples.

In magic, there also exists the important concept of the “Guardian of the Threshold”, a special being that is located at the intersection of two worlds: the beyond and the present, the vulgar and subtle, that of life and that of death, the waking world and the dreaming world. This is the very same ancient Terminus, with only slight modifications.

The hierarchy of the “guardians of the threshold” is described in particular detail in Tibetan tantric Buddhism. They are depicted as dakini, terrifying female creatures from the retinue of the goddess Kali or Tari. They throw themselves at a man the very moment he reaches a new level of existence: at the moment of completion of special rituals (especially the ritual of Chöd), during travels through abandoned places, immediately after death etc. It is as if the “guardians of the threshold” try to make sure that people and things remain themselves, to ensure that their inner “I” is preserved unmolested and steady. As soon as someone crosses a line, they are right there. The same could be said about the philosophical side of things. A thing exists through its concept, through a kind of awe-inspiring aureole of meaning and language that does not allow it to dissolve in the chaos of an unstructured, irrational reality. The border is adjoined to reason and reason’s secret nature. As an exclusively human and divine quality of the highest order, reason happens to manifest precisely through the erection of borders, definitions, confirmations of the essence of things and phenomena.

Thus, the border is the foundation of thought, the manifestation of the divine principle. God as such is limitless, ‘transcendental’; however, he reveals his divinity through the absence of those borders that He already affirms in being, in order to differentiate Himself from the not-Him and to ‘become known’ by the not-Him, even if partially.

If all of this is true, then the borders of the state and their defenders should be allocated an entirely distinct symbolism and execute a highly important, sacred mission that far and away transcends a purely utilitarian, administrative, military-strategic function.

Border guards are not just a type of soldier, but a kind of special, sacred quality. They are the modern adepts of the extremely ancient cult of the god Terminus.

2. Expansion: from tribe to Empire

The border as an index is not quantitative, but qualitative. The greater its volume and extension, the more universal and full-fledged the concept it expresses through itself. Therefore, as the concept (the definition, enclosure of space by the boundary) widens, it encompasses in itself a constantly growing number of individual aspects. In other words, everything that is included in the concept is comprehended by the mind as a part, while it could earlier have been erroneously taken as a whole. The widening of the border of things and concepts is a dynamic process of the development of a single essence that clearly demonstrates the common part of something that earlier was present in two (or several) different things before a certain moment. Thus, the concept “animal” includes tigers, rabbits, mice, turkeys, elephants etc. “Animalness”, “animality” lays bare its universality through the inclusion of all species and variants of living creatures, which themselves make the transition from the individual to the common.

The same happens in the state. A tribe or lineage has its territorial, cultural, linguistic etc. borders. These borders widen, stretching themselves out to the concepts ‘people’, ‘nation’, ‘state’. Finally, the highest form of a state is the Empire. Its borders are enormous, they include the maximum possible number of natural human organisations: it has a place for tribes, lineages, cultures, religions, nations, ethnoi, and, in some cases, it can even accommodate likenesses of independent states (provinces, dominions etc.). As a form of state, the Empire is the highest category, comparable to the most sacred and all-encompassing gnoseological concepts such as “God”, “Truth”, “Good” etc. This is why the concept of the “Sacred Empire” is so durable. The sanctity of the Empire flows forth from the quality of its borders, which should incorporate some kind of absolute, universal knowledge, some kind of global mission that constitutes the essence of the imperial state as a historical and national community. For this reason, the borders of the Empire are directly linked to its fundamental theological orientation. The Roman Empire and its borders carried within them one spirit; the Empire of Alexander the Great another; the Arab Caliphate a third; Byzantium yet another; Rus a fifth and so on and so forth. The axial mission of the Empire also dictated the quality of Its borders, be they maritime, riverine, overland, and located in mountain, steppe or desert… The highest idea of the Empire spilled out into the landscape and structure of the borders. Researching the transition from maritime to terrestrial borders allows us to trace the dynamics of the spiritual and social development of a society, and even to from time to time explain the most important religious, cultural, and economic transformations. Thus, only after the unification of all lands in a unitary state did England recognise itself as an Island, did it change its religion, transition to a maritime existence, and lay the foundation for capitalism and industrialisation (1). The movement from clan to Empire is not a political, but a spiritual process that is merely reflected in earthly reality. As borders expand and different landscapes, civilisations, religions, and ethnoses are included into a unified geopolitical space, the discovery of a new, more universal Idea, that had earlier hidden Itself under the kaleidoscopic manifold of the multitude, takes place.

3. Templars of the Great Wall

Based on the direct link between the sacred spirit of Empire and its borders, military units of border guards (warriors who were charged with the protection of the far reaches of the state) were formed in traditional civilisations. This link can be seen most clearly in the Knightly Order of the Temple, the Templars, warrior monks and bearers of a special, universal knowledge. This esoteric knowledge was concentrated in the secret of common ratios that were capable of unifying different regions of the feudal medieval West, including Near-Eastern lands. The symbolism of the Templars does not only contain very ancient pre-Christian elements related to the sacred geography of Europe, but also doctrines drawn from esoteric Islam, especially from Sufism and heterodox Shiism. It is not by chance that the overwhelming majority of Templar commanderies were located next to megalithic structures which had once belonged to civilisations of more ancient eras. The Templars united the North and the South, the past and the future. The warriors of the Order executed a most important function: the safekeeping of the secrets of Western unity. Simultaneously, their conception of Islam opened up an opportunity for a truly imperial expansion beyond the boundaries of Europe, towards the south and south-east. Growing their esoteric competencies, the members of the Order potentially laid the foundation for an expansion of the State, of the Western Roman Empire. Once more, it is not by chance that with the destruction of the Order by Philip the Fair, United Europe collapsed for all eternity. The line of the Ghibellines and the Hohenstaufens [1] was defeated by the Guelphs, the Vatican, and divided nation states modelled after the centralist and absolutist France.

The Templars, as well as their analogues in other cultures, were a shield against the intrusion of the forces of hell, Gogs and Magogs of the Bible, into the Empire [2]. They defended sacred civilisation from streams of decomposition and sickness. It was this that was the goal of Alexander the Great’s “iron wall”. The very same symbolism forms the foundation of the Great Wall of China, as well as the ancient fortifications on the northern borders of the Roman Empire. When the Orden of the border guards disintegrates, the foundations of imperial unity are undermined, the forces of chaos infiltrate civilisation, and, finally, a new collapse and Babylonian mixing of the tongues begin. The fall of the Empire is the catastrophe of the order of the border guards (in the physical as well as magical sense).

A brilliant illustration of the magical nature of border guard duty is given in the film “The Desert of the Tartars” [3]. In it, a mysterious, exclusively male collective (Mannerbund) of border guards awaits the advance of an enemy, an imaginary enemy, faith in the existence of which is seen by the border guards themselves as an obsessive, collective mania. One after the other, they fall to internal tension. Only the last of them, haggard from premonitions and visions, receives his reward: he becomes worthy of participating in a true miracle, during which the imagined enemy becomes a reality and its wild hordes attack the almost defenceless and abandoned fortress. The last templar against the hordes of Gogs and Magogs.

4. Cynocephalus

The Soviet Empire was an empire in the fullest sense. It was united by a common, universal idea: the idea of Socialism, in which the primordial Russian will to Truth and Justice manifested itself. The Soviet was a legitimate continuation of the Russian and the Orthodox, if only more universal, more common, more global. The archetype of border mysticism was entirely analogous to the traditional idea of the role of the Templars, the guardians of the threshold. The Soviet period was initially pregnant with a deep esotericism, which, however, was rarely expressed in a rational, open, and finished way.

To trace the trails of the Templar element in the concept of the Soviet Border Troops, we will turn to the most banal association possible: “the border guard and his trusty hound” [4]. The hound is not just an instrument of state security. It is something more: a symbol. The symbolism of the dog in the Tradition is tightly linked with the idea of the border in a wide sense, including in the metaphysical dimension. The dog guards the house, all the while located at the edge of the internal and the external. This animal is the incarnation of the “guardian of the threshold”, of an occult character, whose mission is the safekeeping of the selfsameness of the thing. Simultaneously, however, the dog also symbolised a crossing of borders, which is why it accompanied the soul of the deceased in shamanic rituals meant to help the dead travel to the other world. In other words, the dog is the animal manifestation of the god Terminus, the border deity. This is the origin of the very ancient myth about the origins of men and hounds. The Mongols and Turkic peoples state, that their ancestors were “yellow hounds”. The same belief remained among many North American Indians. The main hero of the Celtic national epos is Cú Chulainn, whose name means “the hound of Chulainn”. Even Christianity knows an image of the dog as a sacred symbol. For example, Dante uses the word veltro, “beagle”, to indicate a mysterious harbinger of the Second Coming, as well as the “Ghibelline emperor” (once again, a link with the Empire!). Monks of the Catholic Orden of Saint Dominicus deciphered their name as “Domin canes”, “hounds of the Lord”. The same symbolism is found among the Egyptian cynocephali, divinities with canine heads, especially Anubis, the “guide of the dead”. The Greek Cerberus stems from the same origin. This symbolism allows us to form the following image: the border guard (the modern analogue of the Templar) is not just the master of the hound that he uses, but, in the spiritual perspective, becomes a projection of the Sacred Hound, a manifestation of Anubis, cynocephalitic, a “yellow hound”. The animal and man “change places” as it were. Human individuality retreats in the face of a higher, magical function. Personality disintegrates in the mystery of the border.

Not the eagle, but the Hound’s Head should be the emblem of the border guards, the seal of a neo-Templar order, and, in turn, we involuntarily remember the attributes of Ivan the Terrible’s oprichniki…

5. Requiem

The fall of Empire is not just a socio-political catastrophe. It is a spiritual disaster. Along with the contraction of the borders, a collapse of the life-giving organic idea takes place. The highest philosophical spheres are struck. The parts lose their understanding of belonging to the whole, fall away from the life-giving centre, die off, and degenerate. The fall of the borders is the fall of concepts, ideas, a mental muddling. The fall signifies blood and the mixing of tongues. It is a deep catastrophe of the holy figure of the border guard. The forces of hell infiltrate the nation; the thief makes his way into the house; strife and numbness assault peoples. The cynocephalic god Terminus loses consciousness and distances himself. The chaos of spiritual night descends unto the Empire’s people.

Empire is the good made manifest into endless borders. The end of Empire is evil, manifesting itself in the destruction of borders. This is national, state treason, but it is also more. The warriors who fell at the border, the templars of the Soviet Idea are betrayed by their successors and descendants; however, their magical acts are primordially mated to the mystery of thought. The fall of the borders is directly provoking a crisis of philosophy. The chaos of the Gogs and Magogs penetrates the mind. Idiots head the country’s government.

The bastion of the spirit has fallen.

The gates of hell are open.

Hordes of enemies pour in through the crack in the great wall…

All is lost.

But the abandoned, betrayed, lonely and forgotten border guards of the Empire carry on their duty at far-flung posts. Islands of Orders lost in chaos, now meaningless guardians of the remains of a once truly Great Wall.

Forgotten on their half-smashed barriers, like Baudelaire’s sailors. However, for the time being, like the hound of saint Dominicus, they release fiery bursts of rage from their lungs. Tracer bullets into a light that has become darkness.

“Fiery air”. Ernst Jünger described it thus:

“Fiery air is necessary for the soul for it not to choke. This air makes a man die day and night in total solitude. The moment when youth feels that the soul is beginning to spread its wings, it is necessary that its view should be turned away from those mansards, away from those stores and bakeries, so that it can feel that there, deep below, on the edge of the unknown, in the no man’s land someone does not sleep, someone is guarding a banner, and that there is a watchman even at the farthest post.”

Dead or alive, with the head of a dog or a man, in a dream or in reality, “our men” are standing at the stumps of the border. They are the last who think for all of us. Guardians of a sold Idea. Watchmen of a no man’s land. Sentries of the farthest posts.

Within them is the beat of the pulse of the world, and of our Russia, which will rise again at the moment of the so very sweet, so very near Day of Judgement.

Footnotes:

\*(1) See Carl Schmitt. “The Planetary Tension between Orient and Occident and the Opposition Between Land and Sea”, accessible here.

Translator’s notes:

[1]: The Ghibellines and Guelphs were two warring factions in the Italian city-states during the 12th and 13th centuries; the former supported the Holy Roman Empire, while the latter defended the interests of the Papacy. The Hohenstaufens were a German noble lineage that produced several Holy Roman Emperors, the most famous of which was Frederick I Barbarossa. They were supporters of a strong Empire and involved themselves in the violence in Italy, until the destruction of the lineage in the 13th century. Further details on all parties listed above can be found in the excellent work by Julius Evola, The Mystery of the Grail: Initiation and Magic in the Quest for the Spirit (Inner Traditions: 1996).

[2]: Gog and Magog are two entities (which are sometimes collectives, and sometimes individual beings) that appear in several books of the Bible, as well as the Muslim tradition. They are always forces of violence, destruction, and chaos.

[3]: The film (based on the eponymous book by Dino Buzatti) can be found here (in Italian).