

Lev Gumilev, Eurasianism and Khazaria

Lev Gumilev (1912–92) is perhaps the most controversial, and certainly the most celebrated, Russian historian of the post-communist era. Although most of his works were written long before the collapse of communism, his theories with regard to history and ethnicity have acquired considerable social and political significance only in the wake of *perestroika*, since when his books have been published in millions of copies and an avalanche of publications on his works has appeared in the Russian press.

In the former Soviet Union Gumilev has today become something of a cult figure. In Russia, a foundation has been established in his name, the Biblioteka Gumilevica, a series of books on topics in which he specialized, has been brought out by a publishing house, and conferences in his name are held annually. A memorial plaque has been placed over the house in St Petersburg where he lived and the apartment he occupied is to be turned into a museum. In Kazakhstan, a university has been named after him. In Tatarstan, a documentary film has been made about him and a detailed biography published.¹ Leaders of Tatarstan and a number of other Central Asian and Muslim republics invoke what they regard as Gumilev's historical insight and political sagacity. A website devoted to him describes him as the 'father of ethnology'.² Even President Putin has invoked his name.³ Many scholars consider Gumilev a Russian equivalent of Johann Gottfried Herder, Max Weber, Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee.

One obvious reason for Gumilev's current popularity is the revival of Eurasianism in Russian cultural and political life. Gumilev concentrated his research on ancient Turks and other nomadic peoples who had long been neglected in Russian and world historiography. A number of the theories he advanced were pioneering contributions to the field of Turkology. In the Soviet period, Gumilev's publications did not reveal his identification with Eurasianism, although his views were a matter of common knowledge. His thesis that the 'Tatar yoke' was, in reality, a military union of Russians and Tatars against a common enemy, his admiration for Genghis Khan, his ideas on the congruity of interests between the nomads of the Great Steppe and the Russians, and his dismissal of the 'black myth' of the aggressive nature of the

nomadic peoples – all these notions were clearly inspired by Eurasian thinking. With the advent of *perestroika*, Gumilev spelled out the Eurasian basis of his writings, acknowledging, among other things, that he had met and corresponded with the founder of Eurasianism, Pyotr Savitsky.⁴

This article focuses on the anti-Jewish element in Gumilev's works, the implications of which came to the surface only in the early 1990s. My purpose is to discuss the possible underlying causes of his anti-Semitism in the context of Russian and European intellectual history. In the first part of this article, I will discuss some of the basic assumptions of his theory of ethnicity. In the second part, I will show how these assumptions have been applied to his discussion of the role of Jews in the history of Eurasia, specifically to his interpretation of the history of Khazaria. In the third and final part, I will discuss some interpretations of his anti-Semitic views and their repercussions on debates in post-communist Russia.

Ethnogenesis and the Jews

Gumilev laid the foundations of his theory of ethnogenesis in his book 'Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere of Earth', first published in 1989.⁵ The reader of this book will find very little on Jewish history or the place of Jews in society *per se*. However, the invisible presence of the Jewish element is extremely important for an appreciation of the logic of the 'ethnogenetic' theory and its anti-Jewish agenda.

A major insight of Gumilev is that the landscape has a decisive influence on ethnicity, which is determined by the economic and emotional relationship between the landscape and the ethnic group in question.⁶ Gumilev also sees ethnicity as a biological, rather than social, phenomenon, attached to the landscape just as an animal is attached to its habitat. The central characteristic of ethnicity, according to Gumilev, is the 'stereotype of behaviour', which is 'the highest form of active adaptation to the terrain'.⁷

The concept of 'drive' (*passionarnost'*) is another major component of the theory of ethnogenesis.⁸ 'Drive' is the energy potential of ethnicity. Gumilev believed that a high level of drive promoted a sacrificial ethic. This sacrificial ethic enables nations and communities to conquer, or achieve superiority over, communities with a low level of drive. The number of 'driven' individuals in a community determines both the rise and decline of ethnicities as well as their creativity.

The heroic ethic is not merely a historical stage in the development of an ethnicity. In contradiction to his principle of historical development, Gumilev divides ethnicities into two groups: those which have a proclivity for the heroic ethic, and those which are unable to embrace this norm. He borrowed the distinction between nations of heroes and nations of tradesmen from Werner Sombart (1863–1941), the German social theorist who was one of the

founding fathers of historical and cultural sociology. Thus the Romans, Saxons and Franks are heroic, while Jews, Florentines and Scots are nations of tradesmen. In opposition to the 'heroic nations', the 'tradesmen' are inclined to a selfish and pragmatic utilitarian ethic.

Gumilev contends that the Jews changed the course of European history. Before the twelfth century individuals did not, he claims, pursue their own satisfaction at the expense of the community: 'The "craving for profit" was characteristic only of the Jews.'⁹ During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the drive of the Romano-Germanic super-ethnicity gradually dwindled, enabling the Jews to impose on it their characteristic commercial stereotype of behaviour.

Gumilev describes this period as one of crisis in which the European ethnicities lost their sense of morality and identity through engaging in dishonest commercial activity. The 'driven individuals' were displaced by 'various types of tradesmen – money-changers, complacent diplomats, intriguers and adventurers. These hucksters were complete strangers to the local ethnicities. They did not have any motherland. However, their lack of a motherland was beneficial for the monarchs.' Gumilev calls this the period of civilization. It was marked by vast waves of migration of the population from their organic communities and natural environments to urban centres. He observes that in this period the immigrants seized power in the civilized countries and provided advice to the aboriginal population. He ascribes the downfall of Babylon to the excessive amelioration of the area by the newly-arrived Jewish advisers of the king.¹⁰

Gumilev does not believe that contact between ethnicities necessarily leads to conflict. An ideologist of Eurasianism, he emphasizes the natural (organic) character of the Russo-Turanian union. He distinguishes three types of ethnic contact. The first two types ('xenia' and 'symbiosis') are harmonious and complimentary, while the third one ('chimera') involves the change or replacement of the original model of behaviour.¹¹

The chimeric type of contact occurs in periods of influx of strangers. Immigrants in very different parts of the world are described as the source of all evil. They treat the '[host] country with its nature and people' as 'no more than a field for their actions', which are invariably 'egoistic and selfish'.¹² Strangers, who tend to eradicate the heroic ethic of the founding fathers, are compared to 'parasites' and 'vampires sucking human blood'.¹³

The behaviour stereotype of strangers undermines the traditional moral code – notions of good and evil, honest and dishonest actions – of the given culture. The strangers' own moral code is highly flexible in so far as they themselves do not possess any stable tradition. Thus the 'immigrants' 'adapt very quickly to the changing circumstances'.¹⁴ So dangerous are strangers and immigrants that even their total assimilation cannot save a country from the

growth of chimeras. In order to assimilate, these people need 'to sacrifice their conscience'.¹⁵

Another significant element in the theory of ethnogenesis is the concept of the 'anti-system' – the mechanism by which the chimera realizes its destructive potential.¹⁶ In opposition to the life-asserting attitude characteristic of the driven ethnicities, the anti-system suggests a negative attitude towards life. Among anti-systems, Gumilev names diverse intellectual and religious movements such as Gnosticism, the Manichaeans, Ismaelism, the Cathars and existentialists. They are especially popular, he argues, in cosmopolitan environments.

The ideology of the anti-system may arise either as a combination of cultures (for instance, Gnosticism as a result of the synthesis of the Hellenic and Hebrew elements) or as a result of subversion. Strangers often employ an anti-system ideology in their political and ethnic struggle.

Jews are never mentioned explicitly in the discussion of types of ethnic contact. They are, however, present in the context of the discussion, and specific remarks suggest that what is said of the sinister strangers and immigrants could just as well have been said of the Jews.

The Jews are depicted as the architects and universal agents of anti-systems, which they employ to eliminate the original ethno-cultural stereotypes and pave the way for their own domination.¹⁷ Gumilev commonly attributes the creation of anti-systems to the Jews, who, he claims, created the Albigensian heresy and destroyed the original ideal of knighthood, as well as contributing to the development of Manichaeism.¹⁸ He stresses that Ubayd Allah, a founder of Ismailism, which is described as an anti-system, was a Jew. Also, he attributes to Jews the introduction of the anti-systemic ideas of Islam into Christian theology. In illustration of this contention, he claims that in the ninth to eleventh centuries – a crucial period in the formation of Christian theology in Western Europe – many Jews were invited to teach in religious academies, a situation which Jewish scholars turned to their own advantage.¹⁹ Aware of the destructive potential of such ideas, they introduced into these academies the notions of Qarmatianism (essentially the same as Ismailism) and Manichaeism: 'They did not share Qarmatian ideas, but were glad to communicate these ideas to Christians in accordance with their own interpretation.'²⁰

Judeo-Khazaria as history and metaphor

'Ancient Russia and the Great Steppe' (1992) is the first of Gumilev's books in which he addresses directly the issue of the historical influence of the Jews. He focuses on the historical interaction between the Turkic nomads and the Slavs and between the Forest and the Steppe of Eurasia. The thrust of the book is similar to that of his earlier publications. 'Notes of the Last Soviet Eurasian' repudiates the 'black myth' of European historiography, which

ascribes a barbaric character to the nomadic peoples, and the accepted wisdom about the ‘Tatar yoke’ (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries). Moreover, Gumilev’s conclusions with regard to the history of Khazaria go far beyond the brief historical period and geographical location in the book’s title, namely the interaction of the nomads and the Russian state between the tenth and fifteenth centuries roughly. Russians and nomads sharing a common experience on the same territory and economic and military co-operation are perfectly ‘complementary’. But this complementarity is revealed against the background of their opposition to the Jews, specifically the Jews of Khazaria. While the behaviour stereotypes of the nomads and the Slavs were similar, they had no social bonds or values in common with the Jews that could foster communication. Gumilev’s sole new contribution in ‘Ancient Russia and the Great Steppe’ is the theme of opposition to the ‘enemy’.

The Khazar empire occupied the south-east area of Russia ranging from the Caspian Sea and the Volga to the Dniepr. In the ninth century a large segment of the Khazars adopted the Jewish faith, having become acquainted with it from the Jews who had fled persecution from Emperor Leo of Byzantium. The paucity of reliable data on Khazaria contributes to the popularity of the topic among Russian nationalists and to the most fantastic speculations about Khazar history.²¹ Many of the nationalists credit Gumilev with having discovered the topic and elaborated its ‘correct’ interpretation.

However, Gumilev’s scholarly credentials and expertise in the history of the Khazars set him apart from most other nationalists. He played a role in archeological excavations connected with Khazar castles and studied under Mikhail Artamonov, the well-known historian of Khazaria. He also wrote a number of academic studies on the subject.²² Nevertheless, the methodology he uses and the sweeping generalizations he makes about very different historical epochs raise doubts as to the validity of his claims. Gumilev ‘reconstructs’ the history of Khazaria on the basis of his theory of ethnogenesis, so most of his ‘findings’ cannot be verified by conventional historical documentation. In fact, he disparages the available written sources with a view to ensuring that his historical narrative fits his theory of ethnogenesis. Furthermore – and despite claiming that his historical research is apolitical – Gumilev more often than not projects contemporary realities on to the historical periods he is considering. His ideological purpose would be clear enough even if the reader were not well versed in the subtleties of the medieval history of Russia and Eurasia.

Judaism against Christianity and Islam

Whereas Max Weber’s interest in world religions arose from the implications of their work ethic, Gumilev’s interest in these religions derives from his belief that they foster behaviour stereotypes. He regards religion as a

biological phenomenon and an important manifestation of an ethnicity's unconscious and genetic memory, reflecting the phase of ethnogenesis attained by a given ethnicity. For Marx, religious conflict was disguised class conflict; for Gumilev, it is essentially an ethnic conflict of behaviour stereotypes.²³ Gumilev's discussion of Judaism is based on these assumptions.

In his discussion Gumilev draws on centuries-old stereotypes of Christian anti-Semitism. He defines Judaism as a 'genotheistic' ethnic religion unlike Christianity. He compiles an extensive list of crimes of this ethnic god, including 'the persecution of innocent Egyptians, the cruel destruction of the original population of Palestine, including children'; this god also 'favoured the pogrom [*sic*] of the Macedonians and other rivals of the Jews',²⁴ and supported the ideology of the total destruction of the enemy. Talmudism, the post-exilic form of Judaism, is for Gumilev of an even more aggressive and cruel character. Given that xenophobia is a specific element of the Jewish behaviour stereotype, the Talmud allegedly encourages Jews to lie to gentiles, and advocates the 'teaching of predestination, which removes human responsibility for any crimes and misdeeds'. Gumilev alleges that these cruel aspects of the Talmud are not widely known because they were originally secret teachings by the rabbis.²⁵ Finally, according to Gumilev, the Talmud advocates the extermination of Christians, articulating anti-Christian principles absent from the original Judaic doctrine (Gumilev describes Christianity as a 'new young super-ethnicity').²⁶ Gumilev further asserts that the Jews initiated a war against the Christians, a conflict he defines as one of behaviour stereotypes. The Jews denounced Christians in Rome and the 'Judaic fanatics of Bar-Kokhba' carried out brutal murders and pogroms against them.²⁷ The Romans made no distinction between Jews and the Christians, and extended to the Christians their negative attitude to the Jews.²⁸ Gumilev also makes the ridiculous claim that Judaism was 'disseminated in Rome through women who had lost their traditional morals in the period of the empire'.

Gumilev contends that it is differences in dogma that account for the behaviour stereotypes of the two 'super-ethnicities'. In particular, he focuses on the conception of Satan in the two religions: in the Old Testament Satan is an associate of God, whereas in the New Testament he is depicted as the enemy of Jesus.²⁹ In support of his notion that the God of Judaism is the same figure as the Devil, Gumilev cites the biblical book of Job, in which God and Satan 'carry out an experiment with the helpless and innocent Job',³⁰ as well as the New Testament story of Christ's fasting in the desert. Gumilev asserts that in accordance with the Council of Nicaea's definition of the Trinity, Christians could no longer maintain their allegiance to the Old Testament scriptures, and refers to the teachings of Marcion, who similarly rejected the Jewish roots of Christianity.³¹

Gumilev considers it important to demonstrate the unity of the religious experiences of the Eurasian ethnicities. It is not by accident that he draws numerous parallels between Christianity and Islam with regard to their cultural traditions, customs and social relations. He points to a serious conflict between the Orthodox Muslim and Jewish cultures, arguing that ‘Jews were at odds with the Muslims more than with the Christians: they were in conflict with the Prophet himself.’³² Gumilev focuses on the supposedly subversive activities of the Jews within early Muslim civilization: Abdulla Ibn-Saba, ‘a Jew converted to Islam’, introduced Shia, which led to a split in Islam, thereby creating the ideological basis for the civil wars that led to the disintegration and collapse of the caliphate.³³

The theologies of Orthodoxy and Islam have, according to Gumilev, much in common, and are in opposition to Jewish theology:

In the tenth century, the two Eastern religions, Orthodoxy and Islam, differed greatly with respect to many of their tenets and ceremonies, but they were unanimous in contrasting God with the Devil and opposing their own positive principles to those of Judaism. It is not difficult to understand the difference. While Christians and Muslims prayed to one and the same God, albeit in a different way, the Judaists prayed to another God. This ruled out any confessional contacts with the Jews. Only business contacts with them remained a possibility.³⁴

It is important to bear in mind that these assumptions about the relationship between the three religions are the foundation of Gumilev’s history of Khazaria and many of his other narratives.

Judeo-Khazaria and Russia

With his history of Khazaria, Gumilev sets out to demonstrate the negative role of Judaism and the Jewish behaviour stereotype in the medieval history of Eurasia: Jews are, in fact, the historic enemies of the Eurasian ethnicities. The focus of his approach is the behaviour stereotype exhibited by the Jews in the course of their involvement in Eurasian history – a form of behaviour incompatible with the heroic ethos of the original Eurasian ethnicities, that is the Russians and nomads of the Great Steppe.

Gumilev sees the Khazars as victims of the Jews. The Khazars’ conversion to Judaism was the most tragic mistake in their entire history. It was facilitated by two waves of Jewish immigration to Khazaria. The first wave, in the fifth and sixth centuries, was relatively innocuous. The Jews arrived from Iran, where they had been persecuted for participating in the ‘socialist’ Mazdaq movement. These first Jewish arrivals did not trouble the local population and took part in conventional economic activity (agriculture and cattle-breeding). The second wave arrived from Byzantium in the ninth century, having fled persecution under Pope Leo III, who had attempted to convert them forcibly

to Christianity.³⁵ Just as in the seventeenth century Jews persecuted in Spain found shelter in Holland, so in the eighth century they enjoyed the hospitality of the Khazars and felt at home in the 'Caspian Netherlands'.³⁶

Gumilev distinguishes between the earlier wave of Jewish immigrants, Karaites (who rejected the Oral Tradition of Judaism), and the second wave, which was well-versed in the 'misanthropic principles of the Talmud'. The newcomers treated the earlier immigrants with contempt, despite the welcome they received and the assistance they were given in settling.³⁷

Khazaria attracted the Jews above all as an important trading area located at the very centre of international caravan routes. Jewish merchants played a crucial role in the rise of Khazaria; they were the so-called 'Radhanites'.³⁸ The 'Jewish Radhanites', Gumilev contends, 'constituted a super-ethnicity which preserved a very high level of drive. The dispersion did not bother them since they lived at the expense of the anthropogenic terrains, that is the towns.'³⁹ Gumilev depicts the 'Jewish Radhanites' as demons, noting that in the middle ages trade did not benefit the populace since the economy of natural exchange provided everything they needed. Commercial activity harmed the populations of both Khazaria and the external world:

The trade was incredibly profitable because it was not merchandise of wide consumption in which the 'Radhanites' traded, but luxury goods. If one were to render this into twentieth-century categories, this trade is comparable only to foreign currency deals and drug trafficking.⁴⁰

Gumilev also blames the so-called Radhanites for underground trade involving the purchase of stolen goods from the Vikings.

Gumilev's most serious charge, however, is that the Radhanites engaged in the slave trade, in particular Slavonian slaves, the most profitable business of the middle ages. Vikings and Hungarians supplied Khazaria with slaves and the merchants resold them to Muslim countries. Gumilev stresses that the slaves were for the most part Slavs, Rus and Guzes and that many of them were Christian: 'Like Africa in the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries, Slavic lands were the principal source of slaves for the Jews in the ninth and tenth centuries.'⁴¹

Gumilev is indignant not so much about the slavery itself, but because, as he sees it, the Jews purchased and resold slaves of Slavic origin as well as Christians.⁴² Not only that but the Jews sold Khazar idolaters, that is a people who gave them shelter during their own hard times – which he offers as evidence of the lack of gratitude supposedly characteristic of the Jewish behaviour stereotype.⁴³

As noted above, Gumilev ascribes racist and xenophobic attitudes to the Jewish behaviour stereotype. In order to replace the Turkic nobility, the Jews 'decided to use love as their weapon' and began to intermarry with Khazar women: 'The Jews ... received children from the Khazar ethnicity either as

full-fledged Jews or as bastards. In this way they impoverished the Khazar ethnicity as well as their ethnic system.⁴⁴

The Jews accepted unreservedly only the sons of Jewish mothers, treating the offspring of marriages between Khazar woman and Jewish men as aliens in line with the 'centuries-old Jewish xenophobic tradition'. The rejected children were not permitted to study the Talmud as full-fledged Jews, but were 'hidden away' in Crimea, where they professed Karaism.⁴⁵

There is a consensus among mainstream historians that the Khazars adopted Judaism in order to safeguard their political independence from their powerful Christian and Muslim neighbours. Gumilev, for his part, contends that Judaism was imposed on the population of Khazaria by means of a religious coup: Obadia, an influential Jew, seized power, transformed the khanate into a puppet regime and introduced rabbinic Judaism as the state religion, with Jews occupying all prominent positions within the state bureaucracy.⁴⁶ In this manner, according to Gumilev, was the Jewish ethnicity transformed into a social stratum of Khazaria. This 'combination of the amorphous masses of subjects with a ruling class alien to the majority of the population in blood and religion' paved the way for the formation of 'chimera'.⁴⁷ The accession to power of the new Jewish ruling elite marked the transformation of Khazaria into an 'evil empire': 'The period from the ninth to the tenth century was a disaster for the aboriginals of Eastern Europe. It was the culmination of Judeo-Khazar power. The aboriginals faced either slavery or death.'⁴⁸

While other historians stress that Khazaria was one of the few countries in the middle ages in which pagans, Christians, Muslims and Jews co-existed peacefully, Gumilev sees it as being driven by Jewish intolerance towards Christianity and Islam. He claims that the Jewish political elite destroyed Christian church organization, oppressed the Muslims, and carried out savage reprisals on religious dissenters. Judaism's intolerance was, he asserts, manifested in the military administration of Khazaria: failure to carry out a military task or order was punishable by death.⁴⁹ The Khazar army consisted of mercenaries: 'The Jewish community chief squeezed out of the Khazars the means for these mercenaries, who were supposed to suppress the same Khazars.'⁵⁰

Gumilev claims that changes in Khazaria's international relations following the adoption of Judaism were the result of the Jewish behaviour stereotype – specifically perfidy and lack of moral consideration for the country's neighbours. Foreign policy was determined by 'considerations of profit and not by those of loyalty and prowess'. Khazaria began to betray its former allies, the small nomadic ethnicities, and to establish friendly relations with the despotic regimes of medieval empires such as the Carolingians, Tan, Ottos and Abbasids. The alliance of Vikings and Jews, he contends, was

especially dangerous for the original Eurasian ethnicities: 'The two plunderers divided their gains.'⁵¹ The alliance enabled the Vikings to seize English and French cities, for the Jews helped them to acquire a navy and supposedly opened the gates of besieged cities from the inside. In turn, the Vikings helped Jewish merchants to control the credit operations of English kings and their vassals and to establish and maintain the entire world market of the middle ages.⁵²

Gumilev places special emphasis on the conflict between Khazaria and the Orthodox Christian tsardoms. He contends that Khazaria's rulers encouraged other countries to attack Byzantium, while Khazaria itself avoided open confrontation with that empire. The Varangian principedom of Kiev was a Khazar vassal, so the Jews had an opportunity to use Slavs in their campaigns against Byzantium and the Muslim countries. The Slavic people paid a 'tribute of blood' to the khanate of Khazaria. The Varangians 'sent their subordinate Slavo-Russes to die for the trade routes of the Radkhonites.'⁵³ Strikingly, Gumilev blames the Jews for the atrocities the Slavs committed in Byzantium. The Khazar tsar Joseph murdered some Christians and provoked a conflict with Byzantium. Then Pesakh, a Khazar military leader, went to Kiev and 'urged Helga [Prince Oleg] to fight Byzantium for the triumph of the commercial Jewish community.'⁵⁴ In this war, Gumilev observes, Russian soldiers 'committed atrocities dreadful and unusual even for this historical period':

Many of the Russian soldiers had already converted to Orthodoxy. However, they crucified the captives, hammered nails into their skulls, and burned churches and monasteries ... This war was very different from typical tenth-century wars. It seems that the Russian warriors had experienced and influential instructors [of warfare], and not only from Scandinavia.⁵⁵

Gumilev contends that only the Jews were capable of instructing the Russian warriors in this manner. The atrocities committed by the Slavs, he argues, were in line with the principles of 'total war' expounded in the Old Testament:

The notion of total war was an unusual novelty for the early medieval period. It used to be a common convention that when the resistance of the enemy had been broken, the victor imposed tribute and conscription ... But the total destruction of the population that had not taken part in the military operations was a heritage of very ancient times. During the siege of Canaan by Joshua, son of Nun, it was prohibited to take captives and permit them to live. It was even prescribed that domestic animals must be slaughtered ... Obadia, the ruler of Khazaria, revived this long-forgotten practice of antiquity.⁵⁶

Following the campaign against Byzantium, the rulers of Khazaria sent soldiers to fight the Muslims. Gumilev claims that Russian soldiers who were not killed in the battles were slaughtered by the Jews.

The reader can find the anti-Semitic sentiments of ‘The Last Eurasian’ in passing remarks such as the comment that commercialism and money-centredness are specifically Jewish traits of character. In one episode he recounts, Gumilev suggests that the peasants killed Prince Oleg because of his ‘Jewish psychology’, that is his greed in collecting tribute. Oleg ignored all agreements with his subjects: ‘This was a typically Jewish statement of a question, where the emotions of the other party are not taken into account.’⁵⁷ It is noteworthy that Gumilev exaggerates the amount of tribute the Russians were supposed to pay the Khazars, and even suggests the thesis of a ‘Khazar yoke’ in Russia – a thesis elaborated in greater detail by some of his students. Gumilev attributes the fact that Prince Svyatoslav demolished Khazaria in the second half of the tenth century to the decline of Oriental trade and the rise of Orthodox Russia. He claims that for the ethnic Khazars and other local ethnicities, this was emancipation from an alien power. Those of the Jews who remained, Gumilev claimed, became ‘relic’ ethnicities: the Crimean Karaites and the Caucasian Tats.

Gumilev regrets that the destruction of Khazaria did not bring to an end the subversive activities of the Jews against Russia. The Jewish community sought to monopolize commerce and handicrafts in Kiev and incited Russian princes to wage war against their neighbours. These wars created huge slave markets and brought fabulous fortunes to the Jewish slave traders, who were especially active in Kiev and Chersoneses.⁵⁸ Gumilev even adds fuel to the ritual murder charge: ‘They starved the captives. Just as in ancient times when the Jews bought Hellenic and Christian slaves only to kill them. One monster even crucified a Kiev Pecherska Lavra monk.’⁵⁹

In Kiev, Gumilev claims, activities such as this eventually led to pogroms as a popular response to the Jews’ subversive activities. Unable to carry on their destructive activity in Russia, the Jews moved to Western Europe:

The backbone of the Jews did not lose their will to victory. They found shelter in Western Europe ... The descendants of Khazar Jews forgot about the country in which they had lived and acted. It was only natural. The Lower Volga was not their motherland, but a stadium for their trial of strength.⁶⁰

The Jews, we are told, found a ‘new Khazaria’ in Spain, where they were given numerous privileges, including the right to settle in a ghetto, in which they had legal autonomy. Jews in the ghetto had immunity from punishment for their crimes against Christians, and Jewish scholars were free to introduce their anti-systems, which undermined Christian doctrine. Jewish crimes – Gumilev mentions perpetual betrayals, anti-Christian activity, feigned conversions to Christianity, and dissemination of ‘anti-system’ doctrines’ – were, he considers, justification enough for the atrocities committed by the Spanish Inquisition.⁶³

The notion of the Khazar origins of East European Jews

Arthur Koestler is perhaps the most famous recent advocate of the hypothesis of the supposed Khazar origin of East European Jews.⁶⁴ Gumilev's opposition to this hypothesis can best be understood against the background of the association between nomads and Jews in some trends of European intellectual history.

The thesis of the 'nomadic nature' of the Jewish mentality was prominent in Europe in the *fin-de-siècle* and interwar periods. The French Hebraist Ernest Renan (1823–92) wrote of the survival of 'nomadic instincts' and the 'nomadic nomos' of the Jews. The French metaphysician René Guénon wrote of the 'perverse nomadism' of the Jews. Helene Blavatsky, the founder of theosophy, suggested that the Jewish race was a mixture of Mongol-Turanians and Indo-Europeans.⁶⁵ In the nineteenth century the theme of Jewish nomadism was especially articulated by the German anti-Semite Adolf Wahrmund.⁶⁶ Wahrmund suggested that modernity was a modified type of nomadic life and that the ubiquity and success of the Jews in the modern period were attributable to nomadic instincts which they had preserved and were in demand in modern societies. The nomadic conditions of modernity were natural and advantageous to the Jews, whereas these same conditions were not to the liking of the Aryans, whose origins were agricultural. Since agriculture played no role in the life of the nomads, Wahrmund described the nomadic ethos as parasitic and spoke of their sordid moral qualities:

The Jews' association with barbaric nomads was manifest not only in the works of obscure intellectuals. Alfred Rosenberg described the Bolshevik Revolution as a revolt of barbaric nomadic elements under the leadership of the Jews. He compared the Jewish Bolsheviks with the Huns, Tatars and other nomadic invaders of Europe in ancient and medieval times. He explained the popularity of Bolshevism in Russia as an overdose of Tatar blood in Russian veins.⁶⁷

Gumilev's theory may be construed as a response to the persistent association of the Jews with nomads. His goal is to save the nomads from the *canard* of their barbaric nature and to stigmatize the Jews. In many of his works he suggests that there is no more than a superficial similarity between the nomadism of the Jews and that of true nomads for the attitudes of the nomads and the Jews to the landscape differ greatly. Whereas the nomads have a special relationship with the landscape, the Jews seek to evade any attachment to the land. They merely use the landscapes, but never become attached to them. The Jews are parasites; they consider the terrain only in pragmatic terms, and their attitude is thus the polar opposite of that of true nomads. In contrast to the Jews, the nomads are not 'rootless'.⁶⁸

In this sense, the Turanian nomads have much in common with traditional Russian farmers. The nomads have a 'positive complementarity' with the

Russian ethnicity and the Eurasian terrain. Farmer and nomad are perfectly compatible both in terms of their occupations and their behaviour stereotypes. The Jews, on the other hand, cannot co-operate peacefully and co-exist with the aboriginal Eurasian ethnicities. While Gumilev discounts the 'black legend' of European historiography of the barbarism of the nomads, he reinforces another black legend: that of the 'parasitic' Jews, which has even deeper roots in European historiography than that of the barbaric hordes of nomads.

To summarize Gumilev's views:

- The Jewish ethnicity has developed abnormally due to the Jews' detachment from their natural terrain. Unable to make use of resources that would have been available to them on their own natural territory, the Jews became a parasitic ethnicity exploiting other territories and their inhabitants.
- The Jewish behaviour stereotype includes disregard for the sacred norms of morality and tradition, a selfish in-group morality, a sense of ethnic superiority and exclusivity, and a willingness to betray others. In Gumilev's writings, the Jews come across as miserly, secretive, unscrupulous, mendacious and perfidious. They are greedy and mercenary by instinct, they slip easily into crime, and are engaged in the immoral pursuit of wealth. They have no qualms about betraying those who have helped them. They are hypocritical, secretive and cruel, and their perverse moral code makes them hostile to other Eurasian ethnicities, thus accounting for the hostility of these groups towards the Jews.
- The present state of the Western world is the result of the invasion of the Jewish behaviour stereotype. It is important to observe that for Gumilev the Russian encounter with Khazaria is not merely a local historical episode, but part of the global historical narrative. The history of the confrontation with the Jews shapes the national myth of the role of Russia in the world historical process. The Eurasian identity of Russia was shaped in the course of its opposition to Khazaria. The Jewish behaviour stereotype of the huckster is the reverse of the Russian identity.⁶⁹

Gumilev was clearly influenced by his teacher Mikhail Artamonov and his magnum opus 'The History of Khazaria'. While this is a serious academic work, it contains a largely biased characterization of Judaism. A number of its controversial ideas are certainly present in 'Ancient Russia and the Great Steppe', such as a reference to the decline of Khazaria as a result of the conversion of its people to Judaism and the exaggerated role assigned to the Khazars in Russian history. Gumilev and Artamonov also share an extremely negative attitude towards commerce and trade (which they see as parasitic occupations), as well as the view that a Jewish ruling elite mismanaged Khazar government and alienated the main body of its non-Jewish citizens.⁷⁰

Reception of Gumilev's theory by Russian nationalists

Gumilev has received a great deal of publicity in debates on historical and social issues in Russian periodicals. Liberal critics have been unanimous in criticizing him for his misreading of historical documentation, for the use of pseudo-scientific jargon, and for his racist and anti-Semitic leanings. Others have accused him of fabricating data and presenting an arbitrary interpretation of the documentation.⁷¹

Gumilev has provoked a surprisingly mixed reaction among Russian nationalist ideologists.⁷² Many have used his theories as legitimization for *their own political agenda, borrowing terminology from his theory of ethnogenesis and even incorporating his pseudo-scientific language into their political programmes.* Others have dismissed his theories or found 'Zionist leanings' in them.

The history of Khazaria has received special attention from Russian nationalists, some of whom consider it a metaphor of 'Jewish rule' in the early Soviet period. Thus, they speak of the early 'Soviet Khazaria', which imposed its Jewish Bolshevik faith on the country and suppressed indigenous political statement. Yury Sedykh-Bondarenko, for example, juxtaposes Khazar, Tatar-Mongol, Nazi and Judeo-Bolshevik yokes of Russia, in the face of which, he argues, Russians were forced to choose totalitarian systems.⁷³

Other nationalists go even further in their admiration of Gumilev. 'The History of Russia and Russian Literature' by Vadim Kozhinov (1930–2001), a well-known Russian literary critic, both elaborates and complements the anti-Semitic insight of his teacher Gumilev. Kozhinov claims that during the Soviet period, the Jews sought to impose a conspiracy of silence on the study of Khazaria, and that Russian historians who did study it were persecuted by the Central Control Committee (TsKK) and the State Political Administration (GPU), where Jews held prominent positions.⁷⁴ The Jews, fearing that knowledge of their shameful past might come to light, did everything they possibly could to conceal their history. Kozhinov credits Gumilev and other Soviet historians of Khazaria with the courage to study the subject, and he himself set out to demonstrate the influence of Khazar–Russian relations on the development of Russian literature. His analysis of Khazar history follows the outline provided by Gumilev, and claims to be indispensable for understanding a particular stage in the development of Russian literature.⁷⁵ However, many passages in his history of literature seem an exercise in anti-Semitic sentiment for its own sake.

Kozhinov's main thesis is that Russian resistance to the Khazar invaders is the central theme of the epic stage of Russian literature. The 'Khazar yoke' was thus more significant than the 'Tatar yoke'. He argues that the chronicles which describe the Tatars' atrocities may have described those of the Judeo-Khazars. The notion of the 'Khazar yoke' in the epic stories is clearly an

extrapolation of Gumilev's historical speculations in the sphere of literature. Kozhinov focuses repeatedly on the 'historical' episodes that demonstrate the Jews' alleged gratuitous cruelty. Among other things, he suggests that the Jews bought Christian captives from Iran solely for the pleasure of killing them.⁷⁶

Kozhinov revises parts of the story of Khazaria as presented by Gumilev and adds new, 'revolutionary' details. The Jews came to Khazaria, Kozhinov claims, from the Muslim East (Iran and Khoresm),⁷⁷ not from Byzantium. The Jewish community dominated Khoresm and attempted to seize political power in the country. The plot was directed by the 'local intelligentsia' (*habres*, derived from the Hebrew 'comrades'), whom he identifies with Jewish scholars (that is, rabbis).⁷⁸ He argues that in Khoresm the Judaists sustained the 'ideology of a powerful rebellious social movement' resembling Bolshevism.⁷⁹ Kozhinov aligns the ideology of the Jewish intelligentsia of Khoresm with Mazdakism – 'a socialist and communist movement in its inspiration ... whose members ... suggested introducing economic equality and socialization of property.'⁸⁰ In the eighth century the rulers of Khoresm called on the Arabs to help them in their struggle against the Jewish rebels, and the Jews then moved to Khazaria following the suppression of their subversive activity. Kozhinov points out that the Jews did not themselves believe in Mazdakism, but were using it as a subversive instrument with which to undermine the power of the state. It was not by accident that they abandoned this 'communist ideology' when they arrived in Khazaria.

Allusions to the political history of the twentieth century permeate Kozhinov's account of medieval Russian literature; he is even more interested in historical reconstructions and extrapolations than his mentor Gumilev. He claims that Zionist ideology and practice 'should help us to understand the distant historical realities of the Khazar "kaganate" – the official name for the institution of power in Khazaria, a word that may be derived from the Hebrew "kohen".' Mazdakites are described as rabid Bolsheviks and bigoted Zionists.⁸¹

According to Kozhinov, historians have neglected a major stage in the development of Russian literature. The only element of folklore, however, which Kozhinov could find to substantiate this thesis is the *bylina* (epic tale) 'Ilia Muromets and the Yid'.⁸² Kozhinov intimates that Jewish literary critics have sought to conceal this masterpiece of Russian folklore from the public and dropped it from collections published during the Soviet period. The *bylina* describes how Ilia Muromets, an epic Russian hero (*bogatyr*), fought a powerful Khazar warrior known only as 'Yid', whom he defeated after a long struggle. Kozhinov finds a symbolic meaning in the manner in which Muromets finally defeats the Jew: during the struggle the Jew (*zhidovin*) pins Muromets to the ground, but the Russian summons up energy from the earth and overpowers his enemy. Kozhinov concludes: 'It is the awareness of the

inseparable unity of Ilia with his native land that is epitomized in this Russian *bylina*. This unity is opposed to the “rootlessness” of his enemy.’⁸³

Paradoxically, a number of nationalists have criticized Gumilev’s theory of ethnogenesis as Zionist-inspired. The central thesis of the theory – the close connection between an ethnicity and its historic territory – is in accordance with the tenets of Zionism, and it is true that the theory of ethnogenesis lends itself to this interpretation, although Gumilev could hardly have had this in mind. Some Russian nationalists do accept the notion of Zionism and consider it an ally in the struggle against the ‘inauthentic’ Jews of the diaspora. Sergei Kosarenko, for example, has claimed that the establishment of the state of Israel restored the Jews’ connection with their native soil and transformed those Jews who moved to Palestine. while at the same time Jews in the diaspora failed the test of authenticity:

In terms of ethnogenesis, the Israelis are a normal ethnicity. However, the Jews of the diaspora have turned in their 2,000-year history into a unique group, which uses territory occupied by other ethnicities. With this, the Jews of the diaspora regard the local population as ... a kind of fauna. It is widely known that the Jewish intelligentsia played a significant role in the formation of the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia as the incubator and backbone of the anti-system. But ... [without the Jews] this anti-system could not seriously have affected Russia’s fate ... After the October upheaval state officials refused to collaborate with the Bolsheviks, and positions in the state institutions were occupied by Jews from the shtetls. This helped the government, but also gave birth to ethnic chimera similar to the one in Judeo-Khazaria.⁸⁴

Predictably enough, most other nationalists do not consider Zionism an ally. The historian Apollon Kuzmin condemns Zionism and Gumilev alike. In the first part of his article, he challenges the Eurasian ingredients in Gumilev’s writings and the historical lapses derived from it.⁸⁵ In the second part, promoting his own political agenda, he points out that both Gumilev and Kozhinov have misused credible historical documents. He contends that the Eurasian historian has played down the significance of the Tatar yoke and exaggerated the role of Khazaria in Russian and world history. He has also exaggerated the amount of the ‘Khazar tribute’, the Jewish presence in Khazaria and the role of Judaism in the religious life of the kingdom. For Kuzmin, the Khazars were Karaites and thus unfamiliar with the Talmud. He adds that Gumilev has exaggerated the level of technical development in Khazaria, arguing that his Eurasian bias has blinded him to the significance of many historical events.

In the ideological section of his critique, Kuzmin points to Zionist undercurrents in Gumilev’s theories and exposes his supposedly secret Jewish sympathies. The academic argumentation of the first part of his paper now gives way to an inflammatory style. Both Gumilev and Kozhinov, he claims, are obviously Zionists, as clearly indicated by their fantastic overstatement of

the role of Khazaria and the importance of the Jews in world history. Such a view, Kuzmin writes, can only benefit the Zionists: 'Gumilev's description of Jews as a people who have demonstrated inexhaustible drive for 2,000 years fuels the pride of the Zionist Nazis.'⁸⁶

Kuzmin further explains that the media attention given to Gumilev's theories results from their 'Zionist leanings'. He argues that the concept of ethnicity – specifically Gumilev's definition of ethnicity in terms of the behaviour stereotype – exposes the compatibility of these theories to Zionist doctrine.

I would like to make several observations about the link between neo-Eurasianism and Gumilev's theories. It should be acknowledged that the historian never addressed the problems of geopolitics explicitly, and did not employ conventional geopolitical distinctions, like that between Atlanticism and Eurasianism which figures so prominently in the works of the chief ideologist of neo-Eurasianism, Aleksandr Dugin. Except for passing remarks about the Varangians, Gumilev does not discuss maritime civilizations. Therefore, his discourse is in many ways closer to the paradigm of classical Eurasianism. He opposes Eurasia to the Romano-Germanic world and pays little attention to the United States. It is the anti-Semitic component of his theories that makes his works so acceptable to contemporary neo-Eurasians.

In the 1920s Nikolai Trubetskoi, the founder of the Eurasian movement, wrote of a group of Russian racists who sought to incorporate German racist theories (based on the classification of races of Egon von Eikstedt)⁸⁷ into Eurasianism in order to prove that the Jews were racially alien to Eurasia.⁸⁸ In some respects, Gumilev's theory is highly acceptable to these false friends of Eurasianism. Gumilev does not appeal directly to racial criteria, but his discussion of the racial composition of Eurasia alongside his views on 'harmless' and 'dangerous' ethnic contact could easily lend itself to interpretation in the spirit of racist doctrines. Thus Gumilev believes that cosmopolitan Jews are the enemies of Eurasia. His theory suggests that the relationship of the nomads and farmers to the Jews will never achieve a productive 'symbiosis' characteristic of organic co-operation. Gumilev effectively disqualifies the Jews from membership of the grand Eurasian family of ethnicities. According to him, they have a parasitic nature and perfidious habits that are incompatible with the mores of Eurasia and are using the territory of Eurasia as a 'mere field of action'.

Gumilev's conclusions regarding relations between Eurasian ethnicities are unconvincing. Surprisingly, there are many in Russia who still believe that the ideas of Gumilev and Eurasianism are a virtual recipe for the resolution of many ethnic and religious conflicts. Even more surprisingly, some liberal politicians and scholars (for example, the foreword to 'Ancient Rus and the Great Steppe' was written by Dmitrii Likhachev) have adopted his theories

but apparently failed to notice the contradiction between them and fundamental liberal ideas. The analysis in the article shows that Gumilev's 'enlightened' position reinforces the most primitive clichés of popular anti-Semitism, although his interpretations tend to camouflage these xenophobic postures in pseudo-scientific terminology. Some of the persistent stereotypes found in Gumilev's theories (for instance, his contempt for commercial activity) have their roots in primitive agricultural society. Once common, most of these stereotypes are today outdated in social science. However, these relics of traditional society contribute to the popularity of Gumilev's works.

Lev Klein, a historian and colleague of Gumilev, has provided an intriguing explanation of the origins of Gumilev's theories. The son of the great Russian poets Anna Akhmatova and Nikolai Gumilev, Gumilev spent many years in the *Gulag*. It was common, Klein says, for members of the Russian intelligentsia to survive and adapt to the criminal environment in the *Gulag* by becoming a *shaherezada* (story-teller). It was the role of the *shaherezada* in the concentration camps to entertain the criminals before they went to sleep. Several of Gumilev's stories from medieval histories recounted in the criminal jargon have even been published. Klein suggests that the secret of the tone and morals of Gumilev's theories and many of his historical accounts may lie in this 'dark' personal background of the historian:

The passages about desperately courageous people who cross the limits of the social system and do not recognize the laws are congenial to criminal folklore, which provides a heroic image of the criminals. They are convinced that some are destined to exhibit 'drive', while others are destined to have a pitiful existence; they have contempt for tradesmen and distrust and despise strangers.⁸⁹

However far-fetched this parallel may sound, it helps to explain the popularity of Gumilev's theories. Indeed, one of the secrets of his popularity may be related to the mentality of the post-communist Russian people, which has its roots in the ideals of the inhabitants of the *Gulag*. In many respects, the experiences of the post-Soviet period have made some of the criminal ideals and perceptions of life topical and mainstream. Gumilev's theories and their Nietzschean overtones appeal especially to those who have been shaken by the political and economic reforms and may be in some confusion about their identities. It is no accident that the stories recounted by Gumilev express attitudes congenial in many respects to the criminal environment.

Whatever the sources of Gumilev's theories, his fixation with the concepts of ethnicity and race certainly contributes to xenophobia, contrary to the beliefs of many of his admirers. An examination of his works shows that they are especially biased against the Jewish people and that he is largely responsible for the construction of the image of malicious Khazar Jews which has become so popular in academic and public debate. His version of Khazar

history has become a historical myth which governs the visions of many Russian nationalists and their perception of Russian Jews. It is regrettable that the vast knowledge of a historian who pioneered systematic research into nomadic history, and his 'historical imagination', which is a rare virtue for the historian, have provided support for the ideology of militant nationalism and anti-Semitism. His stories have contributed to the construction of the image of the Jews as the enemy of the Russian people.

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NOTES

- 1 S. Lavrov, *Sud'ba i idei* (Fate and Ideas) (Moscow, 2000).
- 2 See <http://gumilevica.kulichki.net>.
- 3 In October 2000 the leaders of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan signed in Astana an agreement on transforming the CIS customs union, comprising these five countries, into a Eurasian Economic Community. After the meeting, Putin spoke at Astana's Gumilev University.
- 4 See Gumilev, 'Menia nazivaiut evraziitsem' (They Call Me a Eurasian), *Nash sovremennik*, No. 1, 1991 and 'Zapiski poslednego evraziitsa' (Notes of the Last Eurasian), *Ritmi Evrazii* (Rhythms of Eurasia) (Moscow, 1993), 33–66. Gumilev has, however, had no decisive influence on the neo-Eurasians, although they do find some aspects of his works, such as his interest in geopolitical distinctions, in line with their thinking. Aleksandr Dugin, the chief ideologist of contemporary Russian neo-Eurasianism, is, however, sympathetic to much of Gumilev's thinking.
- 5 The book was completed in 1979. The first six chapters are available in English translation published by Progress Publishing House. See L. Gumilev, *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere* (Moscow, 1990). My account of Gumilev's theory in this chapter is based primarily on this early book.
- 6 L. Gumilev, *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli* (Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere) (Leningrad, 1989), 58.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 42.
- 8 The translation of this word as 'drive' was suggested by Gumilev himself. The Russian original is derived from the Latin word for passion.
- 9 L. Gumilev, *Tisiasheletie vokrug Kaspii* (A Thousand Years around Caspian) (Moscow, 1993), 406.
- 10 L. Gumilev, *Etnogenez*, 413, 415.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 143.
- 12 L. Gumilev, *Drevniaia Rus' i Velikaia Step'* (Ancient Rus and the Great Steppe) (Moscow, 1989), 371.
- 13 L. Gumilev, *Etnogenez*, 302.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 42.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 86.
- 16 The 'anti-system' has become a key concept of right-wing ideology. A number of nationalist ideologists identify it with *perestroika*, cosmopolitanism and 'Russophobia'. See, for instance, S. Kosarenko, 'Antisistema', *Den*, Nos. 8–10, 1993.
- 17 L. Gumilev, *Drevniaia Rus'*, 282.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 460.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 256, 354.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 261.
- 21 The fantastic myths about Khazaria are well-known outside Russia too, and derive in part from

- the lack of reliable information about the Khazar kingdom. The novel *Khazarian Diary* by the Serbian writer Milorad Pavić has become an international bestseller.
- 22 See the following works by Gumilev: *Otkritie Khazarii: Istoriko-etnograficheskii etuid* (The Discovery of Khazaria: An Historical-Ethnographic Study) (Moscow, 1966); 'Khazaria and Caspia (Landscape and Ethnos)', Part 1, *Soviet Geography*, Vol. 5, No. 6, 1964, 54–68; 'New Data on the History of the Khazars', *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, No. 19, 1967, 61–103; 'Khazaria i Kaspia' (Khazaria and Caspia), *Vestnik LGU*, No. 6, 1974, 83–95; 'Khazaria i Terek' (Khazaria and Terek), *Vestnik LGU*, No. 24, 1974, 14–26; 'Khazarskoe pogrebenie i mesto, gde stoial Itil' (The Khazar Burial Site and the Location of [the City of] Itil), *Soobshcheniia Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* (Reports of the State Hermitage) (Leningrad, 1962), Vol. 22, 56–58; 'Pamiatniki khazarской kulture v delte Volgi (Memorials to Khazar Culture in the Volga Delta), *Soobshcheniia Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* (Leningrad, 1965), Vol. 26, 49–51; 'Sosedii khazar' (Neighbours of the Khazars), *Strani i narodi Vostoka*, No. 14, 1965, 127–42.
 - 23 L. Gumilev, *Drevniaia Rus'*, 241, 104.
 - 24 *Ibid.*, 247, 96.
 - 25 *Ibid.*, 133, 141, 108–109.
 - 26 *Ibid.*, 96, 134.
 - 27 *Ibid.*, 98–99.
 - 28 *Ibid.*, 103.
 - 29 *Ibid.*, 256.
 - 30 *Ibid.*, 106, 227.
 - 31 *Ibid.*, 248, 105–106.
 - 32 *Ibid.*, 116.
 - 33 *Ibid.*
 - 34 *Ibid.*, 248.
 - 35 *Ibid.*, 114–15, 117–18. Gumilev justifies this persecution with the claim that the Jews always betrayed the Greeks in their wars with the Persians and that they provoked social instability and iconoclasm.
 - 36 *Ibid.*, 118.
 - 37 *Ibid.*, 124.
 - 38 The word *radhanit* is derived from the Persian *radh* (road) and *don* (to know).
 - 39 L. Gumilev, *Drevniaia Rus'*, 216.
 - 40 *Ibid.*, 127–28.
 - 41 *Ibid.*, 221.
 - 42 It is true that some Spanish Jews and Jewish 'Radhanite' traders in Persia were involved in the Slavonian slave trade (some of the slaves were Christian), whom the caliphs of Andalusia purchased for bodyguards. It should be noted, however, that in many cases Jews treated their slaves better. The Church did not object to slave-dealing by the Jews; it feared only that the Jews might convert Christian slaves to Judaism. See I. Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* (London, 1932), 114–15.
 - 43 *Ibid.*, 130, 146, 153, 313.
 - 44 *Ibid.*, 139.
 - 45 *Ibid.*, 133.
 - 46 *Ibid.*, 136.
 - 47 *Ibid.*, 137, 141. Some contemporary historians believe that a large number of the Khazar people, not just the rulers and nobility, converted to Judaism.
 - 48 *Ibid.*, 134.
 - 49 *Ibid.*, 143.
 - 50 *Ibid.*, 151.
 - 51 *Ibid.*, 165, 167.
 - 52 *Ibid.*, 171.
 - 53 *Ibid.*
 - 54 *Ibid.*, 187.
 - 55 *Ibid.*, 193.
 - 56 *Ibid.*, 195.

- 57 Ibid., 141.
- 58 Ibid., 203.
- 59 Ibid., 479, 314.
- 60 L. Gumilev, *Drevniaia Rus'*, 315.
- 61 Ibid., 212–14.
- 62 Ibid., 354.
- 63 Ibid., 327.
- 64 The French historian Ernst Renan suggested in 'Judaism as a Race and as a Religion' (1883) that East European Jews were of Khazar origin, a hypothesis supported by many other historians, including Tadeusz Czacki, Isaac Levinsohn and Hugo von Kutschera. See, for example, Hugo von Kutschera, *Die Chasaren: Historische Studie* (Vienna, 1910). Before Renan, this idea was also put forward by Abraham Elijah Harkavi, *O iazike evreev, zhivshikh v drevnee vremia na Rusi i o slavianskikh slovakh, vstrechaiushchikhsia u evreiskikh pisatelei* (The Language of the Jews Who Inhabited Rus in Ancient Times and Slavonic Words Used by Jewish Writers) (St Petersburg, 1869). Most recently, the hypothesis was elaborated by Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe: The Khazar Empire and its Heritage* (London, 1976), and supported by the historian Kevin Brook, *The Jews of Khazaria* (Northvale, NJ, 1999).
- 65 H. Blavatsky, *Tainaia doktrina* (The Secret Doctrine) (Riga, 1937), Vol. 1, 393.
- 66 A. Währmund, *Das Gesetz des Nomadentums und die Heutige Judenherrschaft* (Korlsruhe/Leipzig, 1887).
- 67 This idea was especially articulated in A. Rosenberg, 'The Plague in Russia' (1922). See W. Laqueur, *Russia and Germany: Hitler's Mentors* (Washington, 1991), 112. I quote the Russian edition of this book.
- 68 See L. Gumilev, *Chernaia legenda. Druziia i nedrugi Velikoi Stepi* (The Black Legend: Friends and Enemies of the Great Steppe) (Moscow, 1994), 305.
- 69 Ibid., 283: 'Judean propaganda played the role of catalyst in the conversion of the Slavs to Orthodoxy.'
- 70 See M. Artamonov, 'Khazari i Rus' (The Khazars and Rus), in *Mir L'va Gumileva. Arabeski istorii* (The World of Lev Gumilev: Arabesques of History), edited by A. Kurkchi (Moscow, 1994), 334–36. Artamonov influenced other Soviet historians of Khazaria too. Svetlana Pletneva, whose account of Khazar history is much better balanced, also blames the Khazars for the 'speculative resale of goods', 'commercial parasitism' and alleged domination of Jewish capital over the common people. See her *Khazari* (The Khazars) (Moscow, 1986), 70–71.
- 71 See I. Mirovich, 'Lev Gumilev i drugie' (Lev Gumilev and Others), *Strana i mir*, No. 2, 1991; I. Diakonov *et al.*, 'Etika etnogenetiki' (The Ethics of Ethnogenesis), *Neva*, No. 4, 1992, 223–46; A. Yanov, 'Uchenie L'va Gumileva' (The Teachings of Lev Gumilev), *Svobodnaia mysl*, No. 17, 1992.
- 72 See V. Kozhinov, 'Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova' (The History of Rus and Russian Literature), *Nash sovremennik*, No. 10–12, 1992 and 'Vot uzh deistvitel'no khazarskie strasti' (Khazar Passions Indeed), *Molodaia gvardiia*, No. 11–12, 1993; Metropolitan Ioann, 'Torzhestvo pravoslaviia' (The Triumph of Orthodoxy), *Nash sovremennik*, No. 4, 1993, 11–12. See also V. Kozhinov, *Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova. Sovremennii vzgliad* (The History of Rus and Russian Literature: A Contemporary View) (Moscow, 1997).
- 73 Y. Sedykh-Bondarenko, 'Vidali, kto prishel' (We Saw Who Came), *Den'*, No. 27, 1993.
- 74 V. Kozhinov, 'Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova', part 1, *Nash sovremennik*, No. 10, 1992, 167–69.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 V. Kozhinov, 'Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova', part 2, *Nash sovremennik*, No. 11, 1992, 169.
- 77 Khoresm (Khwarezm) was an ancient Central Asian state (now Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan). Part of the empire of Cyrus the Great (sixth century BC), Khoresm was conquered by the Arabs and converted to Islam in the seventh century AD. Briefly independent in the late twelfth century, it ruled from the Caspian Sea to Bukhara and Samarkand, but fell to Genghis Khan (1221), to Timur (late fourteenth century), and to the Uzbeks (early sixteenth century; they called it the khanate of Khiva).
- 78 Kozhinov claims that according to the Orientalist Bartold, the word *habr* is derived from the Hebrew *haver*, which is identical to the German *genosse* and the Russian *tovarishch*. The *haber-tovarishch*, he contends, ran from the eighth to the twentieth century.

- 79 V. Kozhinov, 'Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova', *Nash sovremennik*, No. 11, 1992, 173.
- 80 Ibid.
- 81 V. Kozhinov, 'Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova', *Nash sovremennik*, No. 12, 1992, 176.
- 82 *Iliia Muromets i zhidovin*. In colloquial Russian, the word *zhidovin* (*zhid*) has pronounced anti-Semitic implications (similar to the English *kike*). In old Slavonic languages, however, it did not necessarily have a pejorative meaning. It is believed that the word refers to a Khazar warrior.
- 83 V. Kozhinov, 'Istoriia Rusi i russkogo slova', *Nash sovremennik*, No. 12, 1992, 176.
- 84 S. Kosarenko, 'Antisistema', *Den*, No. 8, 1993.
- 85 A. Kuzmin, 'Khazarskie stradaniia' (Sufferings of the Khazars), *Molodaia gvardiia*, Nos. 5–6, 1993, 235, 245–50.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 E. von Eikstedt, *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit* (Leipzig, 1934).
- 88 N. Trubetskoi, 'O rasisme' (Racism), *Neva*, No. 7, 1994, 257.
- 89 L. Klein, 'Etika etnogenetiki', *Neva*, No. 4, 1992, 244–45.