

Contemporary Russian Conservatism

Problems, Paradoxes, and Perspectives

Edited by

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Cover illustration: Fragment of the monument to Grand Prince Vladimir in Moscow, photo by Dmitry Uzlaner. For more on this monument, see the contribution by Per-Arne Bodin in this volume.

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Mirror Games? Ideological Resonances between Russian and US Conservatism

Marlène Laruelle

In 2015, Aleksandr Prokhanov (b. 1938), one of Russia's oldest and most famous conservative ideologists, who has been writing since the 1970s, described the United States as an example to follow. He indicated that Russia should reconcile its "Red" and "White" factions the same way that the United States has united competing Northern and Southern narratives inherited from the Civil War under a metanarrative on American values.¹ Such an invitation to Russian citizens and leaders to look at the American model as worthy of emulation—even if only in this one respect—is rare enough to be noteworthy. From the other side, in summer 2017, American white supremacists were heard singing, "Russia is our friend" during the racist violence in Charlottesville,² an equally rare stance in American culture. There are other, similarly unexpected cases: Aleksandr Torshin (b. 1953), a former Russian senator and deputy speaker of the Russian parliament for more than a decade, is, for instance, a lifetime member of the US National Rifle Association (NRA), the ultrapowerful American gun lobby, and was an international election observer in Tennessee during the Obama-Romney presidential contest in 2012.³

These anecdotes point to the fact that there have been more resonances than one might expect between US and Russian conservative narratives. Some of these resonances have no direct links to each other but appear as two parallel discourses inspired by the same *Zeitgeist*. As Mark Bassin has noted, this was the case for Soviet semi-dissident figure Lev Gumilev (1912–92) and the European New Right, who found common ground on topics such as ethnopluralism and the rejection of an individual-centric liberalism, without engaging

1 Aleksandr Prokhanov, "Vvedenie," *Izborskii klub: Russkie strategii* 3 (2013): 53.

2 "Video: Neo-Nazis Chant 'Russia Is Our Friend! The South Will Rise Again!' and 'We Will Be Back!' in Cville," Blue Virginia, 8 October 2017, accessed 13 March 2018, <<https://bluevirginia.us/2017/10/video-neo-nazis-chant-russia-is-our-friend-the-south-will-rise-again-and-we-will-be-back-in-cville>>.

3 "Depth of Russian Politician's Cultivation of NRA Ties Revealed," *NPR*, 1 March 2018, accessed 13 March 2018, <<https://www.npr.org/2018/03/01/590076949/depth-of-russian-politicians-cultivation-of-nra-ties-revealed>>.

in any direct contacts.⁴ Other resonances can be explained by the shared inspiration that the US and Russia draw from European conservative thinking in all its permutations. Last but not least, some are founded on genuine mutual readings and cross-fertilization, sometimes followed by personal contacts.

Prokhanov's reference to US history is quite unique for a proponent of Russia's *Sonderweg* and messianic destiny who sees Russia as a fortress resisting assaults from the West. Yet his discourse harks back to an old framing of Russia's identity that positions Russia at the crossroads of East and West and identifies the West as the main threat to Russia's national uniqueness. This paradigm has been competing with a rising trend that calls for a European-style nationalism, and for Russia to lead the new wave of conservatism in the West. To supporters of the latter trend, a profound identity shift toward a pan-European/pan-Western identity is the only path to credible political solutions for Russia. This move from a nationalism centered on the country's uniqueness to a more pan-European one can be explained by the deep societal transformations that have been taking place since the collapse of the Soviet Union and Russia's encounter with "globalization." For the new waves of nationalists, reinventing a new Russia means diminishing the country's uniqueness and promoting the export of new values allowing for unprecedented dialogue between Russian, European, and American conservative groups.

This dialogue with Europe/the West can take several forms. One has been so-called "young conservatism" (*mladokonservatizm*), an intellectual movement including such key figures such as Boris Mezhuev (b. 1970) that emerged in the 2000s and deeply influenced the Russian leadership.⁵ Young conservatives have not only rediscovered and rehabilitated Russia's own conservative traditions—Konstantin Pobedonostsev, Konstantin Leont'ev, Lev Tikhomirov, the neo-Slavophiles—but have also crafted new forms of conservatism inspired by European and American narratives and adapted to the experiences of post-Soviet Russia. Some of these ideological experiments, such as the *Russian Doctrine* (*Ruskaia doktrina*)—which presents itself as the successor to the famous *Vekhi* (Signposts) of 1909, a manifesto against the ideology of the radical intelligentsia of the early 20th century, but which could equally well be compared to American neoconservatives' New American Century project—are insightful examples of this blending. An ideologically close yet independent phenomenon is the move by the Russian Orthodox Church to position itself as the leader of a new "moralist International" and therefore develop con-

4 Mark Bassin, "Lev Gumilev and the European New Right," *Nationalities Papers* 43, no. 6 (2015): 840–65.

5 See more on "young conservatism" in chapter 6 by Aleksandr Pavlov in this volume.

tacts with Catholic and Protestant movements in Europe and in the United States.

Another trend has been for the radical right or far right to look to the West for inspiration. One may question whether the radical right belongs to conservative trends: it refuses the status quo and advocates a revolution against the old world order. Despite this deep contradiction in goals, it makes sense to look at today's far right as part of conservatism more broadly: new ideologues in the 1990s and 2000s have made "radical thinking" quite innovative and brought it into line with the *Zeitgeist*, creating an increased tolerance that has allowed some ideas that originated at the radical fringes to integrate into the conservative mainstream. I label this trend, which has accelerated ideological permeability between the radical and classical rights, "radical conservatism."

Since the connections between Russian and European conservatisms have been quite well studied, this chapter focuses on the lesser-known realm of conservative US-Russian mutual inspiration. Although Russia is not part of the European Union and does not aspire to be, Russian culture has been built on its intimate relation to Europe and, since the Slavophiles, on presenting itself as the herald of authentic Europe.⁶ Its relationship to the US is far more distant and the "West"—in the sense of transatlantic institutions and liberal values—embodies what many Russian conservatives despise. Yet certain figures among them have gradually been breaking the taboo of looking at the US, reminding their readers that there is a conservative America that could serve as a model or at least an ally. In this chapter, I look at Russian and American conservatism's mutual resonances, from the most extreme factions of "radical conservatism" that justify racist violence to more intellectual ones in pursuit of respectability, such as the Identitarians and the Alt-Right. I also include two groups that are representative of a more mainstream conservatism: the proponents of an economic "Third Way" and the Christian Right. I exclude the case of "young conservatism," which deserves its own study. I use conservatism in the broad sense of a political doctrine that emphasizes the value of traditional institutions and practices and rejects "progressism." This is an etic definition (defined by an external actor, myself), and not an emic definition (from the perspective of the subject); some groups mentioned in this chapter may not recognize themselves as conservative and may use other self-definitions.

6 See Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought* (South Bend, IN: 1989) and Iver Neuman, *Russia and the Idea of Europe* (London: 2017).

1 Russian and American White Supremacists

The most extreme segment of the radical conservative kaleidoscope is composed of white supremacists. This tradition, which is rooted in US history and was long absent from Russia, insists on the need for segregationist policies that, though they sometimes refer to Nazi racial extermination policies, are typically more inspired by American slavery and segregation and South African apartheid. On the contemporary American political scene, white supremacy is a marginal movement, visible primarily in southern states. For more than a decade it has been reinventing itself as a “nativist” movement in order to capture a bigger ideological market; the enemy is no longer solely the African American population, but also the Hispanic one, and all non-white migrants trying to assimilate with American “white natives.”⁷ In Russia, the room for such an agenda is quite limited: if xenophobia has been one of the most striking consensual elements of the 2000s⁸—though it diminished with the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, which reframed the West (rather than migrants) as the enemy⁹—a straightforwardly racist and segregationist narrative is not widely accepted.

In the 1990s, the American white supremacy movement, searching for renewed inspiration, interpreted the Soviet collapse and the “rebirth” of Russia as a sign of the vitality of the “white race,” which had been able to defeat communism. Interviewed for Prokhanov’s newspaper *Den’*, former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan (and former Republican Louisiana state representative) David Duke (b. 1950) affirmed: “In my opinion, the destruction of White Russia would be a great explosion for all of Europe. It would be the end of the European blood heritage. If Russia is destroyed, all of us—including Americans—will be destroyed.”¹⁰ Duke made Russia his new darling, visiting the country at least three times between 1999 and 2001 to promote the Russian translation of

7 Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: 2002); Philip Lamy, *Millennium Rage: Survivalists, White Supremacists, and the Doomsday Prophecy* (New York: 1996).

8 Yoshiko M. Herrera and Nicole M. Butkovich Kraus, “Pride versus Prejudice: Ethnicity, National Identity, and Xenophobia in Russia,” *Comparative Politics* 48, no. 3 (2016): 293–312; Mikhail A. Alexseev, “Majority and Minority Xenophobia in Russia: The Importance of Being Titulars,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 26, no. 2 (2010): 89–120.

9 On post-Crimea trends, read Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud (eds.), *The New Russian Nationalism: Between Imperial and Ethnic* (Edinburgh: 2016); Kolstø and Blakkisrud (eds.), *Russia before and after Crimea: Nationalism and Identity, 2010–17* (Edinburgh: 2018).

10 Fen Montaigne, “David Duke Says He Backs a Powerful ‘White Russia,’” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 October 1992, accessed 12 March 2018, <http://articles.philly.com/1992-10-15/news/26001153_1_caucasus-david-duke-vladimir-bondarenko>.

his book *My Awakening: A Path to Racial Understanding* (translated into Russian as *Evreiskii vopros glazami amerikantsa* [The Jewish question through the eyes of an American]). In it, he claimed: "Russia is a white nation! ... In my opinion, Russia and other Eastern countries have the greatest chance of having racially aware parties achiev[e] political power."¹¹ Duke's book was reportedly available at the State Duma bookstore at a very affordable price, and the first printing of 5000 copies quickly sold out.¹² He also developed contacts with some skinhead groups. In 2004, Duke reiterated his belief that "Russia has a greater sense of racial understanding among its population than does any other predominantly White nation."¹³ In addition, he visited Ukraine several times in the mid-2000s on the invitation of the Interregional Academy of Personnel Management, a private higher educational institution that is known for hosting anti-Semitic personalities.¹⁴

The Russophile positioning of the former Ku Klux Klan leader, as well as of some other American white supremacy groups, allowed for a dialogue with their Russian counterparts. In the 1990s, only small radical groups such as Aleksei Vdovin (b. 1958) and Konstantin Kasimovsky (b. 1974)'s Russian National Union or Aleksandr Barkashov (b. 1953)'s more powerful Russian National Unity group were attracted to a racist narrative, but they referred to it more through the Nazi prism of Aryanism than through American White Power. In the second half of the 1990s, the structuring of a Russian skinhead movement that combined White Power ideology with provocative lifestyles and fashions and violent street actions opened the first direct dialogue with American groups.¹⁵ Though initially informal and decentralized, Russian skinheads organized themselves around three powerful associations: the Moscow Skin Legion, the Russian section of Blood and Honor, and 88 United Brigades (OB 88),¹⁶ which was born of the unification of several small movements in the Russian section

11 "David Duke, "To Russia With Hate," *CBS News*, 2 February 2001, accessed 12 March 2018, <<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/david-duke-to-russia-with-hate>>.

12 "David Duke in Russia," Anti-Defamation League, 2001, accessed 12 March 2018, <http://archive.adl.org/anti_semitism/duke_russia.html#.V_Yj_krLIV>.

13 David Duke, "Is Russia the Key to White Survival?," *DavidDuke.com*, 23 October 2004, accessed 12 March 2018, <<http://davidduke.com/is-russia-the-key-to-white-survival/>>.

14 Nathaniel Popper, "David Duke Offers 'Antisemitism 101' at a Ukrainian University," *The Forward*, 3 November 2006, accessed 12 March 2018, <<http://forward.com/news/7416/david-duke-offers-antisemitism-101-at-a-ukra>>.

15 For example, skinhead groups in Moscow have, with the support of Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, served to make immigrants flee. See Nikolai Mitrokhin, "Ot Pamiati k skinkhedam Luzhкова: Ideologiya russkogo natsionalizma v 1987–2003 gg.," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 31 (2003): 37–43.

16 The number 88 is code for "Heil Hitler," since "h" is the eighth letter of the alphabet.

of the international Hammerskin Organization. Each of these had links with some US and German counterparts. In the 2000s, Russia had more skinheads than any other European country (at around 50,000) and correspondingly high rates of hate speech and violence against migrants.¹⁷ Yet the movement faltered at the turn of the 2010s, for several internal reasons as well as a more repressive government policy.¹⁸

The skinheads, as well as the main institution trying to represent them and normalize them politically, the Movement against Illegal Immigration (DNPI, dismantled in 2011), led by Aleksandr Belov (b. 1976), contributed to spreading a vision of Russia as a white country fighting for its racial survival in the face of “migrant invasion.”¹⁹ The feeling of having common cause with the American radical right was illustrated by the presence of American White Power representatives in cowboy hats at the Russian March, a nationalist demonstration held on November 4 for the Day of National Unity.²⁰ With the help of David Duke, the American White Power activist Preston Wiginton (b. 1965) has been developing contacts with Russian skinheads since the 2000s, attending several DNPI meetings and Russian Marches, and organizing American hate rock bands in Russia in 2017.²¹

Contacts between American white supremacists and their Russian counterparts accelerated following the Ukrainian crisis of 2014, in which Putin was seen as the leader of global resistance to liberalism. Well-acquainted with Belov, Wiginton invited the geopolitician Aleksandr Dugin (b. 1962) to give a Skype lecture at Texas A&M University in 2015, although very few people

17 On skinheads, see Sergei Belikov, *Skinkhedy v Rossii* (Moscow: 2005); Viktor Shnirel'man, “Chistol'shchiki moskovskikh ulits”: *Skinkhedy, SMI i obshchestvenno mnenie* (Moscow: 2007).

18 Aleksandr Verkhovskii, “Dinamika nasiliia v russkom natsionalizme,” in *Rossia—ne Ukraina: Sovremennye aspekty natsionalizma*, ed. Aleksandr Verkhovskii (Moscow: 2014), 32–61.

19 Dennis Zuev, “The Movement against Illegal Immigration: Analysis of the Central Node in the Russian Extreme-Right Movement,” *Nations and Nationalism* 16, no. 2 (2010): 261–84; Sofia Tipaldou and Katrin Uba, “The Russian Radical Right Movement and Immigration Policy: Do They Just Make Noise or Have an Impact as Well?,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 66, no. 7 (2014): 1080–1101.

20 Dennis Zuev, “A Visual Dimension of Protest: An Analysis of Interactions during the Russian March,” *Visual Anthropology* 23, no. 3 (2010): 221–53.

21 David Holthouse, “Preston Wiginton Emerges in Russia Promoting Race Hate,” *Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report*, Summer 2008 (20 May 2008), accessed 4 March 2018, <<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2008/preston-wiginton-emerges-russia-promoting-race-hate>>.

showed up.²² Another example is Matthew Heimbach (b. 1991), leader of the self-proclaimed Traditionalist Worker Party, who has originated hashtags such as #HailPutin and #PutinForTsar. He stated: “I really believe that Russia is the leader of the free world right now. ... Putin is supporting nationalists around the world and building an anti-globalist alliance, while promoting traditional values and self-determination.”²³ Heimbach is said to have converted to Orthodoxy²⁴ and, at a conference in California last year, broadcast a video in which Dugin emphasized the “common struggle” of Americans and Russians.²⁵

2 Western Identitarians and Russian Raciologists

White supremacy is both a doctrinal trend and an organized grassroots movement that promotes racist violence. Connected to it yet independent from it are more intellectual trends such as the Identitarians. The Identitarians emerged in France in the 2000s as a way to reformulate a white nationalism focused primarily on fighting what its supporters see as a “Muslim invasion” and the “genocide” of the native population of Europe. Close to the European New Right, the Identitarians—who primarily target young people—developed in France and Belgium, then spread to Germany and Scandinavian countries.

The movement is inspired by Guillaume Faye (b. 1949), a former member of the GRECE—the European New Right’s main school for cadres—who moved away from the French New Right, deemed too leftist, to go back to a more traditional narrative based on the notion of *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil).²⁶

22 Matthew Watkins, “‘Strongest Skinhead’ Is behind White Nationalist’s Speech at Texas A&M,” *The Texas Tribune*, 1 December 2016, accessed 4 March 2018, <<https://www.texastribune.org/2016/12/01/meet-strongest-skinhead-who-keeps-bringing-white-n/>>.

23 Natasha Bertrand, “A Model for Civilization’: Putin’s Russia Has Emerged as ‘a Beacon for Nationalists’ and the American Alt-Right,” *Business Insider*, 10 December 2016, accessed 4 March 2018, <<http://www.businessinsider.com/russia-connections-to-the-alt-right-2016-11>>.

24 Ryan Hunter, “My Interview with Matthew Heimbach,” *Orthodox in the District* (blog), 26 June 2015, accessed 4 March 2018, <<https://ryanphunter.wordpress.com/2015/06/26/my-interview-with-matthew-heimbach/>>.

25 Justin Salhani, “The White Nationalist Movement’s Favorite Philosopher,” *ThinkProgress*, 19 December 2016, accessed 4 March 2018, <<https://thinkprogress.org/the-white-nationalist-movements-favorite-philosopher-42576bc50666/>>.

26 Stéphane François, “Les paganismes de la Nouvelle Droite (1980–2004)” (PhD diss., University of Lille, 2005), accessed 26 February 2018, <<https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00442649/document>>; Nicolas Lebourg, *Le Monde vu de la plus extrême droite: Du fascisme au nationalisme-révolutionnaire* (Perpignan: 2010).

Faye crafted the concept of a Eurosiberia spanning from Dublin to Vladivostok, that is, “the destiny space of European peoples eventually regrouped from the Atlantic to the Pacific, sealing the historical alliance of peninsular Europe, Central Europe and Russia.”²⁷ This white Eurosiberia excludes the non-Slavic regions of Russia and the former Soviet Union, and heavily criticizes the US and its supposedly pro-Muslim policy. Two of Faye’s books, *The Colonization of Europe* (2000) and *Why Do We fight? Manifesto of European Resistance* (2001),²⁸ became classic references for the Identitarian movement and were echoed politically on a larger stage by the Flemish nationalist Vlaams Blok.

The Identitarians emerged in the US under that label relatively late, around 2016, with Identity Evropa and the Traditionalist Youth Network.²⁹ Yet in many respects Jared Taylor (b. 1951) and his *American Renaissance* (published as a journal since 1990 and a daily webzine since 2012) have long represented the American equivalent. For the past three decades, Taylor has been working to move white supremacy theories away from Klansmen by offering a more intellectual construction that will help normalize white supremacy. Some of his theses penetrated Tea Party discourse through former-leftist David Horowitz’s *Frontpage*, among other avenues.³⁰ Taylor’s Council of Conservative Citizens (CoCC) remains among the most important “respectable racist” faces of the modern white nationalist movement. Referring to some controversial theories in evolutionary biology, Taylor states that races have different qualities that are based both on genes and on adaptation to climatic conditions, and that whites and Asians represent the higher orders. Author of the seminal tract *White Identity: Racial Consciousness in the 20th Century* (2011), he believes that states can prosper only if they are based on a racially homogenous population, and sees Japan, the country in which he spent his childhood, as the best example of a successful society based on racial homogeneity. According to him, the Confederate states were promoting race realism, a trend that has been destroyed by the egalitarianism and cosmopolitanism of American elites.³¹ He therefore considers it normal for whites to fight for their rights in the same way as blacks and Hispanics do. Taylor’s pro-Asian stance and his rejection of anti-Semitism

27 Guillaume Faye, *Pourquoi nous combattons: Manifeste de la Résistance européenne* (Paris: 2001), 123.

28 Ibid.

29 Eric D. Knowles and Linda R. Tropp, “Donald Trump and the Rise of White Identity in Politics,” *The Conversation*, 21 October 2016, accessed 4 March 2018, <<https://theconversation.com/donald-trump-and-the-rise-of-white-identity-in-politics-67037>>.

30 More in Alexander Reid Ross, *Against the Fascist Creep* (Oakland, CA: 2017).

31 Russell Nieli, “Jared Taylor and White Identity,” in *Key Thinkers of the Resurgent Right*, ed. Mark Sedgwick (Oxford: 2019).

place him, like Aleksandr Dugin, in quite a sophisticated position among white supremacist theorists.

Identitarians are represented in Russia by the “raciology” (*rasologiiia*) group.³² The founders of this racist movement include Aleksandr Sevastianov (b. 1954), a well-known neo-pagan, publicist, and chairman of the National Power Party of Russia; Pavel Tulaev (b. 1959), a journalist and advocate for a “Vedic Slavic-Russian civilization”; Vladimir Avdeev (b. 1962), a member of the pagan community in Moscow;³³ and Anatoly Ivanov, a member of the editorial committee of the nationalist weekly *Russkii vestnik*. They have been organized around the website *Belyi Mir* (white world) and have participated in Slavophile literary circles, particularly the International Fund for Writing and Slavic Culture³⁴ and the Writers’ Union of Russia.³⁵ In 1999, the raciology group launched a book series, the Library of Racial Thought (*Biblioteka rasovoi mysli*), which publishes the works of some contemporary Russian authors but focuses on 19th- and 20th-century Western authors who sought to use physical characteristics (craniology, phrenology, odontology, and serology) to typologize races.³⁶ The raciology group gained political visibility in the mid-2000s through one of its members, Andrei Savel’ev (b. 1962), vice-president of the Rodina party, who was a member of the Duma Committee for Constitutional Legislation and State-Building and vice-chairman of the Duma Committee for CIS Affairs and Compatriot Relations.³⁷

Many of the ideological references of the raciology group are to Nazi Germany and the European racist and eugenicist tradition. One of its first publications was the newspaper *Nasledie predkov* (The heritage of ancestors), a name that evoked Heinrich Himmler’s Ahnenerbe. It took very limited inspiration from American doctrines. Yet the movement developed international contacts with Guillaume Faye (even establishing a small Russian branch of his movement European Synergies), as well as with Terre et Peuple, led by Pierre Vial (b. 1942). In 2006, Guillaume Faye presented a paper on Russia’s major

32 Viktor Shnirel'man, “Rasologiiia v deistvii: Mechty deputata Savel'evam,” in *Verkhi i nizy russkogo natsionalizma*, ed. Aleksandr Verkhovskii (Moscow: 2007), 162–87. See also Viktor Shnirel'man, “Porog tolerantnosti”: *Ideologiiia i praktika novogo rasizma* (Moscow: 2011) and Shnirel'man, *Ariiskii mif v sovremennom mire* (Moscow: 2015).

33 “Krov' i pochva Vladimira Avdeeva,” *Spetsnaz* 3, no. 14 (March 2006), accessed 4 March 2018, <<http://www.specnaz.ru/article/?877>>.

34 See the website Obshchestvennyi Mezhdunarodnyi Fond Slavianskoi Pis'mennosti i Kultury, accessed 4 March 2018, <<http://www.slavfond.ru/about.htm>>.

35 See the website Soiuz Pisatelei, accessed 4 March 2018, <<http://soyuzpisateley.ru/>>.

36 See Vladimir Avdeev (ed.), *Russkaia rasovaia teoriia do 1917 g.* (Moscow: 2002).

37 More on Rodina and Savel'ev in Marlène Laruelle, *In the Name of the Nation: Nationalism and Politics in Contemporary Russia* (New York: 2009).

historical role in the Eurosiberian future at a conference organized by the White World association and website in Moscow.³⁸ In 2015, it was Jared Taylor's turn: he attended the Russian International Conservative Forum in Saint Petersburg, which brought together many leaders of European far-right parties. Faye was also invited to speak at American Renaissance in 2016.³⁹ As we can see, in the case of the Identitarians, direct connections between Russians and Americans are minimal; shared resonances are made possible because both sides read some of the same European thinkers.

3 The Alt-Right and Its Celebration of Russia

A new trend within radical conservatism took shape at the end of the 2000s: the Alt-Right, or alternative right (a term coined in 2008).⁴⁰ The term refers to a loose aggregation of white supremacists who are trying to refresh the movement's image in order to seem like a credible alternative to the Republican Party. The Alt-Right movement is embodied by websites such as Breitbart News and AlternativeRight.com, which have become the intellectual centers revamping white supremacy theories under more politically correct labels. Richard Spencer (b. 1978), the author of the Alt-Right Manifesto and of an edited volume, *The Uprooting of European Identity* (2016),⁴¹ personifies this trend. He has partly renewed the doctrinal stock of American white supremacy by moving away from the Klan's WASP-centric narrative to call for the defense of all white Americans (including Catholics) and by adding migrants and Muslims to the list of enemies. He invites white Americans to return to their ancestral identities and demonstrate racial solidarity by developing a "peaceful ethnic cleansing."⁴² Unlike Taylor, Spencer displays a virulent anti-Semitism

38 Guillaume Faye, "De la géopolitique à l'ethnopolitique: Le nouveau concept d'Eurosibérie; Le rôle historique majeur de la Russie," proceedings of the conference "The White World Future," Moscow, June 8–10, 2006, accessed 4 March 2018, <<http://www.ateney.ru/frans/froi8.htm>>.

39 "Guillaume Faye—'America and Europe: Brothers in Arms' (American Renaissance Conference, 2012)," YouTube video, 55:41, posted by "Jamal Jackson," 19 June 2016, accessed 4 March 2018, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYc-IEFVU2E>>.

40 "Radix Journal," AltRight.com, accessed 1 October 2017, <<https://altright.com/author/radix/>>.

41 Richard B. Spencer (ed.), *The Uprooting of European Identity* (Arlington, VA: 2016).

42 Tamir Bar-On, "Richard B. Spencer and the Alt Right," in *Key Thinkers of the Resurgent Right*, ed. Mark Sedgwick (Oxford: 2019).

and has been more open to other attempts to renew classic American conservatism, such as Pat Buchanan's paleo-conservatism.⁴³

Spencer leads the National Policy Institute (NPI), an organization launched in 2005 and described by the Southern Poverty Law Center as "a suit-and-tie version of the white supremacists of old, a kind of professional racist in khakis."⁴⁴ Largely inspired by the French New Right, Spencer believes in metapolitics and therefore considers Klan-like traditional white supremacism to be outdated: the conquest of politics happens not on the street but in the cultural realm and the marketplace of ideas. Trump's victory in the 2016 elections put wind in the sails of the Alt-Right, but its main public figure, Steve Bannon (b. 1953), former executive chairman of Breitbart News, rapidly resigned from his position as White House chief strategist, a departure that heralded the White House's turn toward a more classical Republican framing of domestic and foreign policy issues.⁴⁵

Many Alt-Right figures are big fans of Putin, whom they see as a beacon for the white world.⁴⁶ They are attracted to his rejection of "decadent" American liberalism and multiculturalism, hard line against Islamic radicalism, upholding of Christian values, criticism of Western political correctness, and support for the idea that global elites conspire against ordinary people. Steve Bannon, for instance, declared in 2014, "We, the Judeo-Christian West, really have to look at what [Putin] is talking about as far as traditionalism goes, particularly the sense of where it supports the underpinnings of nationalism."⁴⁷ Yet the honeymoon with Russia is far from total: though Bannon has referred to Dugin and Putin positively, he considers the Putin regime kleptocratic and Dugin too

43 Paleo-conservatism blends several trends of American conservatism: the "Old Right" opposed to the New Deal, and a social conservatism that includes not only conservative WASPs but also conservative Catholics. Paleo-conservatism opposes immigration, multiculturalism, and the power of the federal government, but advances an isolationist, or at least a non-interventionist stance in foreign policy, contrary to some other trends of American conservatism that are more messianist and interventionist.

44 Hannah Gais, "White Power Meets Business Casual: Inside the Effort to 'Make White Nationalism Great Again,'" *The Washington Spectator*, 2 May 2016, accessed 4 March 2018, <<https://washingtonspectator.org/white-nationalist-trump-election/>>.

45 David A. Graham, "Why Trump Turned on Steve Bannon," *The Atlantic*, 3 January 2018, accessed 26 February 2018, <<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/01/the-president-vs-steve-bannon/549617/>>.

46 Bertrand, "A Model for Civilization."

47 J. Lester Feder, "This Is How Steve Bannon Sees the Entire World," *BuzzFeed*, 16 November 2016, accessed 26 February 2018, <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/this-is-how-steve-bannon-sees-the-entire-world?utm_term=.ik19YdVvmM#.awaL381M70>.

open to the Islamic world.⁴⁸ He has also denounced “Putin’s cynical denial of responsibility” for the actions of his proxies in Crimea.⁴⁹ Very often, he mentions Dugin only to say that the Russian thinker has quoted Julius Evola (1898–1974), the Italian fascist ideologue who is one of Bannon’s key references.⁵⁰ For his part, Dugin was among the most vocal Russians in expressing support for Donald Trump, going so far as to call on him to take the lead on a “Nuremberg of liberalism.”⁵¹

Dugin’s *The Fourth Political Theory* (*Chetvertaia politicheskaiia teoriia*), quickly translated into several languages, including English and French, is probably the foreign doctrine that most influences American Alt-Right general thinking.⁵² In a 2014 interview, Dugin stated that he had definitively renounced what he calls the second and third political theories (communism and nationalism/fascism, the first one being liberalism) and announced that the fourth theory requires a full break with the first three because it no longer seeks to accommodate modernity, but rather denies it entirely. Whereas in the early 1990s, he claimed that Russia had tested liberalism and communism and had to turn to a third choice, fascism/nationalism, 20 years later he proclaimed, “Liberalism, communism, and fascism—ideologies of the twentieth century—have finished. That is why it is necessary to create a new, fourth political theory.”⁵³

Several Alt-Right websites—such as Open Revolt, Green Star, New Resistance, and AlternativeRight.com—regularly publish Dugin’s main texts in English for American audiences. This is the most dissemination a Russian thinker can hope for in the United States. Spencer’s Russian ex-wife, Nina Kouprianova, who published under the nom de plume Nina Byzantina, has translated Dugin’s two books on Martin Heidegger into English and published a blog on “meta- and geopolitics” inspired by him. An apologist of the Putin regime (and the Novorossiia project), she has distanced herself from her husband’s racist

48 Justin Salhani, “The Frightening Common Ground between a Trump Adviser and White Nationalism’s Favorite Philosopher,” *ThinkProgress*, 20 December 2016, accessed 26 February 2018, <<https://thinkprogress.org/dugin-trump-bannon-2758aeabo10/#.co8ed5qoi>>.

49 “Russian Anti-Liberals Love Donald Trump but It May Not Be Entirely Mutual,” *The Economist*, 20 November 2016, accessed 26 February 2018, <<http://www.economist.com/blogs/erasmus/2016/11/america-russia-and-new-right>>.

50 Jason Horowitz, “Steve Bannon Cited Italian Thinker Who Inspired Fascists,” *The New York Times*, 10 February 2017, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/10/world/europe/bannon-vatican-julius-evola-fascism.html>>; Joshua Green, *Devil’s Bargain: Steve Bannon, Donald Trump, and the Nationalist Uprising* (New York: 2017), 204–7.

51 “Donald Trump: The Swamp and Fire,” Katehon, 14 November 2016, accessed 26 February 2018, <<http://katehon.com/article/donald-trump-swamp-and-fire>>.

52 See the website *The Fourth Political Theory*, accessed 26 February 2018, <<http://4pt.su/>>.

53 Dugin, *Chetvertaia politicheskaiia teoriia* (Moscow: 2009), cover blurp.

theories.⁵⁴ Spencer himself published a pro-Trump text celebrating the approaching new world order on the Katehon website, of which Dugin is one of the main editors.⁵⁵ Dugin was also interviewed by American conspiracist Alex Jones (b. 1974) for his website Infowars in February 2017,⁵⁶ just a few months after Dugin interviewed Jones.⁵⁷ Lee Stranahan (b. 1965), a former journalist at Breitbart, began working for Sputnik's Washington, DC, bureau in early 2017.⁵⁸ To give a final example, Charles Bausman, editor of *Russia Insider*, which launched in 2014 during the Ukrainian crisis, is close to some pro-Church and anti-abortion networks in Russia and recently published an anti-Semitic manifesto accusing Jews of funding hostility toward Russia, an ideological move that won him the sympathies of the Alt-Right.⁵⁹ The Alt-Right has some direct, personal connections with Russia, mostly with Aleksandr Dugin, but they remain minimal.

4 The Economic “Third Way”: The Glaz’ev-LaRouche Connections

Another, quite obscure US-Russia conservative “resonance” is the long friendship between Sergei Glaz’ev (b. 1961) and Lyndon LaRouche (b. 1922). Glaz’ev,

- 54 Casey Michel, “Meet the Moscow Mouthpiece Married to a Racist Alt-Right Boss,” *The Daily Beast*, 20 December 2016, accessed 28 February 2018, <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/meet-the-moscow-mouthpiece-married-to-a-racist-alt-right-boss>>. See her interview at Diana Bruk, “Richard Spencer’s Russian Wife Talks Trump, Utopia: Full Interview,” *The Observer*, 19 September 2017, accessed 28 February 2018, <<http://observer.com/2017/09/interview-nina-kouprianova-wife-of-alt-right-leader-richard-spencer/>>.
- 55 “Ustanovit li Tramp novyi mirovoi poriadok?,” Katehon, 14 December 2016, accessed 4 February 2018, <<http://katehon.com/ru/article/ustanovit-li-tramp-novyy-mirovoy-poryadok>>.
- 56 “Dr. Aleksandr Dugin Interview with Alex Jones—Putin Advisor,” YouTube video, 56:22, posted by “The INFOWAR Armory,” 8 February 2017, accessed 4 February 2018, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9Wpprgd6aA>>.
- 57 “Alexander Dugin Interviews Alex Zionist Jones on Russian Television,” YouTube video, 55:47, posted by “Hamza—Slay Your Dragon,” 28 December 2016, accessed 4 February 2018, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxWGDp8VESY>>.
- 58 Justin Wm. Moyer, “From the Kremlin to K Street: Russia-Funded Radio Broadcasts Blocks from the White House,” *Washington Post*, 12 July 2017, accessed 4 February 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/im-sure-youve-heard-a-lot-about-us-russia-funded-radio-broadcasts-blocks-from-the-white-house/2017/07/12/a5813f1c-6660-11e7-a85a-668dfeaf231_story.html?utm_term=.81f24bo4dfe4>.
- 59 Anton Shekhovtsov, “How Vicious Anti-Semitism Quietly Aids Moscow’s Covert Influence Campaign in the U.S.,” *Haaretz*, 29 January 2018, accessed 4 February 2018, <<https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-pro-putin-trolls-court-u-s-alt-right-with-hardcore-anti-semitism-1.5770080>>.

an economist by training, backed then-prime minister Egor Gaidar's shock therapy in the 1990s. He subsequently reneged on his liberal principles, advocating interventionist economic policies that moved him closer to the communists. He has also long been a vocal supporter of the Orthodox Church—he was once vice-president of the Union of Orthodox Citizens. He progressively cemented his place in Putin's inner circle in the early 2010s as the leading advocate of the Eurasian Economic Union and has since been the president's advisor for regional integration issues.

LaRouche is the founder of an eponymous conservative movement that denounces the “world oligarchy” that allegedly controls state decisions and promotes neoliberal values in order to destroy world cultures. During the Cold War, the LaRouchites were highly critical of the Soviet Union, but they quickly rallied to the new Russia, seeing it as the bulwark against the American unilateral order. In 1992, LaRouche and his wife, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, established a Moscow branch of their Schiller Institute for Science and Culture, which started publishing Russian translations of LaRouche's essays.⁶⁰ They met Glaz'ev in 1994 and began promoting his economic theories in their weekly *Executive Intelligence Review*. They also translated Glaz'ev's book *Genocide* (*Genotsid*, 1999), which denounced the world oligarchy's policy of destroying Russia, into English.

The long-lasting Glaz'ev–LaRouche friendship is today founded on promoting Russia's “Eurasian” policy, that is positioning Russia as a continental land bridge between a rising Asia and a declining Europe. Glaz'ev insists on a classic definition of Russia as the pivotal state of Eurasia, which gives it a say in the affairs of its “near abroad,” while LaRouche combines this pro-Russian approach with admiration for China's new Silk Road initiative.⁶¹ Both advocate an agenda of “continentalism” between Europe-Russia/Eurasia-Asia that largely excludes the US, which is seen as the homeland of a destructive world oligarchy—with implicit anti-Semitic statements.

5 The Christian Right and the Russian Orthodox Church

Away from this radical conservative nebula and closer to mainstream conservatism are the resonances between the American Christian Right and the

60 Anton Shekhovtsov, “Sergey Glazyev and the American Fascist Cult,” *The Interpreter*, 8 June 2015, accessed 4 February 2018, <<http://www.interpretermag.com/sergey-glazyev-and-the-american-fascist-cult>>.

61 Michael Billington, Rachel Douglas, and Helga Zepp LaRouche, *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge* (Leesburg, VA: 2014).

Moscow Patriarchate. Although the Christian Right, a bastion of American messianism, the free market, and neoliberalism, has historically perceived Russia as the enemy, this attitude progressively began to change in the 2000s. This shift is due not only to Russia's new branding as a conservative power, but also—and more importantly—to changes on the American domestic political scene, with presidents Bill Clinton and then Barack Obama promoting social liberalism and particularly the recognition of sexual minorities' rights. The growing importance of LGBTQ issues in the American public space pushed the Christian Right to search for new allies with the same conservative reading of Christian values.

The Kremlin's "morality turn" took form in the first half of the 2000s, with prominent figures in the Moscow Patriarchate—such as Patriarch Kirill (b. 1946), Vsevolod Chaplin (b. 1968), and Hilarion Alfeev (b. 1966)—the driving force behind it. In a September 2013 Valdai Club speech, Russian president Vladimir Putin solemnly declared: "We can see how many of the Euro-Atlantic countries are actually rejecting their roots, including the Christian values that constitute the basis of Western civilization. They are denying moral principles and all traditional identities: national, cultural, religious, and even sexual."⁶² This official statement reached its full political expression with the Pussy Riot trials in 2012⁶³ and several legislative moves on social questions: anti-homosexuality laws, the reintroduction of the notion of "causing offense to religious feelings" into the penal code, debates on juvenile justice, attempts to reduce rights to divorce and abortion, and so on.⁶⁴

Russia's attempt to pose as the herald of the traditional family, warmly received by Catholic churches and the Holy See, also opened up new channels of communication with the United States. Former Republican presidential candidate Pat Buchanan (b. 1938), The Family Leader head Bob Vander Plaats (b. 1963), and spokesmen for such associations as Concerned Women for America, the American Family Association, Vision America, and Liberty Counsel have all loudly praised Putin for his stance on family values and invited the United States to follow his example.⁶⁵ The American Family Association's Bryan

62 See the transcript of the speech: "Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club," Website of the President of Russia, 19 September, 2013, accessed 18 March, 2018, <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243>>.

63 Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, "The Pussy Riot Affair and Putin's *Démarche* from Sovereign Democracy to Sovereign Morality," *Nationalities Papers* 42, no. 4 (2014): 615–21.

64 More on this can be found in chapters 4 by Dmitry Uzlaner and 15 by Caroline Hill in the present volume.

65 Miranda Blue, "Globalizing Homophobia, Part 1: How the American Right Came to Embrace Russia's Anti-Gay Crackdown," *Right Wing Watch*, 3 October 2013, accessed 18 March 2018, <<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/globalizing-homophobia-part-1>>.

Fischer called Putin a “Lion of Christianity,”⁶⁶ while National Organization for Marriage president Brian Brown went to Moscow to build support for anti-gay legislation.⁶⁷ Hilarion Alfeev, chairman of External Church Relations of the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate, met with representatives of American evangelists during a trip to Washington, DC, in 2010. He addressed thousands of members of the Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, putting forward the idea of “a strategic alliance of Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and traditional Protestants, of all those who defend the true Christian values,”⁶⁸ and had an hour-long meeting with former US president George W. Bush.⁶⁹

A key powerbroker between the Russian Orthodox Church and the American Christian Right is the World Congress of Families. Founded in 1997 in the US by an activist from the religious right (and former Reagan National Commission on Children appointee) Allan Carlson, it presents itself as a multi-faith, multinational coalition that endorses the militant defense of the “natural family,” combats legislation that normalizes same-sex marriage, and supports countries with anti-gay agendas. The World Congress of Families claims that its 2011 Moscow Demographic Summit “helped pass the first Russian laws to restrict abortion in modern history,”⁷⁰ referring to the 2011 law signed by then-president Dmitry Medvedev that requires abortion providers to devote 10 per cent of any advertising to describing the dangers of abortion to a woman’s health and makes it illegal to describe abortion as a safe medical procedure. Some consider this legislation the first step taken toward pro-life legislation in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union. The World Congress of Families was planning to organize its 2014 annual meeting, presented as the “Olympics of

how-american-right-came-embrace-russia-s-anti-gay-crackdown#sthash.Bu2BQQ5q.dpuf>.

66 Miranda Blue, “Fischer Praises Putin, Calls Him A ‘Lion of Christianity,’” Right Wing Watch, 10 October 2013, accessed 18 March 2018, <<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/fischer-praises-putin-calls-him-lion-christianity#sthash.eh7gWsS5.dpuf>>.

67 Miranda Blue, “Globalizing Homophobia, Part 2: Today the Whole World Is Looking at Russia,” Right Wing Watch, 3 October 2013, accessed 18 March 2018, <<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/globalizing-homophobia-part-2-today-whole-world-looking-russia#sthash.wdyrKObx.dpuf>>.

68 Gillian Kane, “What Does the ‘Traditional Family’ Have To Do with Pussy Riot?,” *Religion Dispatches*, 12 August 2012, accessed 18 March 2018, <http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/6300/what_does_the__traditional_family__have_to_do_with_pussy_riot_/1%20http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/sexandgender/6048/world_congress_of_families_meets,_seeks_a_new_dark_ages>.

69 “Uganda = Russia = Kansas = The Family or The Fellowship,” Thom Hartmann Forum, accessed 18 March 2018, <<http://www.thomhartmann.com/forum/2014/02/uganda-russia-kansas-family-or-fellowship#sthash.D6hfmH1o.dpuf>>.

70 The WCF held a follow-up Demographic Summit in Ulyanovsk in 2012.

the Pro-Life Movement,” in Moscow but it had to cancel following the Ukrainian crisis. Yet links remain strong: Aleksei Komov, the WFC representative for Russia, is heavily involved with the Duma Committee on Family, Women, and Children’s Affairs, is close to the pro-life movement in Russia, and works in the Church’s Department of External Relations under Hilarion, with “responsibilities includ[ing] Church relations with institutions in foreign countries.” The WCF also appointed FamilyPolicy.ru staffer Pavel Parfent’ev as its “ambassador to European institutions.”⁷¹

Not only the Moscow Patriarchate as an institution but also more autonomous ideological entrepreneurs develop relationships with America’s Christian Right, such as the Orthodox businessman Konstantin Malofeev (b. 1974), one of the main funders of the Donbas insurrection.⁷² His ultraconservative Internet television channel Tsargrad employs, for instance, former FOX News producer Jack Hanick, who converted to Orthodoxy.⁷³

6 Similarities and Differences between American and Russian Conservatism

As I indicated in the introduction, “resonances” may cover several realities: sharing a *Zeitgeist*, reading and borrowing from each other, and meeting individually and developing joint strategies. The third realm remains negligible. Among the radical conservative figures, only David Duke and Preston Wiginton for the US and Aleksandr Dugin and Aleksandr Belov for the Russian side have been developing direct and regular personal encounters over the years. Yet Duke does not seem to travel to Russia anymore, and Dugin is now banned from the US, on the list of Russian citizens sanctioned by the US Treasury Department.⁷⁴ Jared Taylor and Matthew Heimbach, as well as Ku Klux Klan attorney Sam Dickson, seem to have visited Russia only once or twice, at least once for the 2015 International Conservative Forum. Some more minor personalities, like Jack Hanick, now work in Russia. Richard Spencer, even if formerly

71 Blue, “Globalizing Homophobia, Part 2.”

72 Courtney Weaver, “Malofeev: The Russian Billionaire Linking Moscow to the Rebels,” *Financial Times*, 24 July 2014, accessed 18 March 2018, <<https://www.ft.com/content/84481538-1103-11e4-94f3-00144feabdco>>.

73 “Jack Hanick and His Family Have Been Received into Orthodoxy in Moscow,” Pravoslavie.ru (via Tsargrad), 10 May 2016, accessed 18 March 2018, <<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/93209.htm>>.

74 Marlène Laruelle, “Scared of Putin’s Shadow,” *Foreign Affairs*, 25 March 2015, accessed 18 March 2018, <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2015-03-25/scared-putins-shadow>>.

married to a Russian, “does not have any particular interest in Russia beyond this general knowledge base,” his ex-wife Nina Kouprianova has asserted.⁷⁵ The personal contacts between the Christian Right and the Russian Church are much more important and more institutionalized, with identifiable middlemen such as Aleksei Komov. The Glaz’ev-LaRouche tandem constitutes another category of contacts based on some apparent personal friendship.

Reading and borrowing from each other constitutes a more developed frame of “resonance”: Russian radical groups have translated and adapted a number of American theories to the Russian context, yet fewer than they have absorbed from the European New Right and the more classical European fascist doctrines. The Identitarian movement epitomizes this second layer of “resonances”: direct contacts between the Russian raciologists and Taylor’s American Renaissance seem nonexistent, but each knows about the other through shared European figures such as Guillaume Faye or Alain de Benoist.

Sharing the same *Zeitgeist* is probably the most widespread frame connecting American and Russian radical conservatism. It includes three main layers. Firstly, both sides read the same classical works: Friedrich Nietzsche, Carl Schmitt, Ernst Jünger, Martin Heidegger, Julius Evola, Francis Parker Yockey, and so on. Secondly, they share three main ideological ingredients: they believe in metapolitics and a Gramscian approach to politics through the conquest of ideas; they want to protect an endangered white European identity by advancing an agenda of ethnopluralism; they display a virulent hostility to globalist elites and the “establishment.” It is therefore only when the American radical right stops being too focused on US-centric narratives—slavery, the Confederacy, and so on—and opens up to larger themes that it easily resonates with its Russian counterpart. Spencer’s bold statement that “the decrepit values of Woodstock and Wall Street mean nothing to us,”⁷⁶ for instance, largely echoes the Russian perspective.

The two sides may have diverging views on two key issues: the relationship to the Jewish world and the relationship to Christianity. In both Russia and the US, the more radical section of this broad radical conservatism spectrum tends toward neo-paganism, while the more moderate one aligns itself with Christianity—yet both collaborate in defending so-called “traditional values.” Some continue historical anti-Semitism, while others tend to move away from it in order to attract a broader audience sensitive to nativism. In both cases,

75 Bruk, “Richard Spencer’s Russian Wife.”

76 Richard Spencer, “What It Means to Be Alt-Right,” *AltRight.com*, 11 August 2017, accessed 18 March 2018, <<https://altright.com/2017/08/11/what-it-means-to-be-alt-right/>>.

divisions are inside each national radical conservative realm, and not opposing each other.

Yet Russian and American conservatism differ in several ways. The first is when the American side advances a messianist narrative and celebrates “traditional” American values, such as free market ideology—this trend remains present among classic white supremacists but is challenged by new figures such as Taylor or Spencer, whose critiques of political and economic liberalism appear more in tune with the European New Right and the Russian perception. The second major ideological gap has appeared around issues of immigration and segregation. The Russian radical conservative spectrum is divided between skinheads and the raciology school, for whom ethnic Russians are at risk of genocide by Muslim migrants, on the one hand, and Dugin—and, to a lesser extent, Glaz’ev—who defend a more multinational Russia-Eurasia, on the other. In the latter conception, ethnopluralism would be maintained, without a melting-pot of nations, but also without an ideology of white supremacy or institutional segregation, much less ethnic cleansing. If figures such as former DNPI leader Aleksandr Belov embody the first trend, Dugin appears to be the main representative of the second reading. Indeed, like some parts of the European New Right such as Claudio Mutti (b. 1946) in Italy, Dugin advances a positive reading of Islam, which is seen as a force able to resist American unipolarism, a position that does not mesh with more simplistic Identitarian and nativist narratives. Hence the interplay of concepts between *Eurasia*, quite open to multinationality; *Eurosiberia*, its white nativist iteration; and their counter-model, *Eurabia*, a term coined by Bat Ye’or to depict the supposed Islamization of Europe and the US.

Dugin has proposed a well-crafted shortcut summarizing what unifies and divides Russian radical conservatism and its American counterpart:

When white nationalists reaffirm Tradition and the ancient culture of European peoples, they are right. But when they attack immigrants, Muslims, or the nationalists of other countries ... or when they defend the United States, Atlanticism, liberalism, or modernity, or when they consider the white race to be the highest and other races to be inferior, I disagree with them completely.⁷⁷

77 Aleksandr Dugin, “On ‘White Nationalism’ and Other Potential Allies in the Global Revolution,” *The Fourth Political Theory*, accessed 24 March 2018, <<http://www.4pt.su/en/content/white-nationalism-and-other-potential-allies-global-revolution>>.

Being a “chameleon” thinker, Aleksandr Dugin emerged as the main figure in this relationship, present in all the Russian versions of this radical conservatism: Dugin can speak to the classic white supremacist through his Aryan theories and violent anti-Semitic statements (even when criticizing racist violence), he invigorates the Alt-Right with his “Fourth Political Theory,” which rehabilitates principles of the Conservative Revolution, and his promotion of a less racial, more civilizational narrative on the world order; he can rally the Christian Right for his “conservative values” statements, and integrate the “Third Way” logic with his Eurasianist agenda.

7 Conclusion

The doctrinal coherence of a transnational conservatism has yet to be achieved. If one can identify several “resonances” between its Russian and American versions, these still remain quite marginal in their national context: for followers of Russian or American radical conservatism, the other country is largely absent from their worldview, which is typically centered on domestic issues, or even continues to embody geopolitical enmity. Moreover, the documented individual connections between Russian and American radical conservative figures are weak and minor compared to Russian-European ones, which are ideologically much more consistent and display a higher level of long-term personal connections and institutionalized cooperation.

At the doctrinal level, Russian-American resonances are built mostly on a common foundation—classic European works of conservative philosophy, as well as fascist and New Right thinkers. Mutual borrowings are slight. On the American side, generally all that is known of Russian conservatism is the skin-head violence of the 2000s, Putin’s posture on “conservative values,” and Dugin’s theories of Eurasia and of the “Fourth Political Theory”—the rest of Russia remains *terra incognita* for American radical conservatism. On the Russian side, reference to American thinkers is equally thin, perhaps even thinner—even Francis Parker Yockey (1917–60) is totally unknown to the majority of the Russian radical conservative realm. At most, they value the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacist narratives, and may know about David Duke’s and Richard Spencer’s Russophilic statements. Compared to the genuine fashion for European thinkers, American thought is still marginal on the Russian scene. Even the most radical groups, such as the raciologists, express more admiration for and borrowing from Nazism than for and from America’s tradition of segregation.

If radical conservatism's "resonances" have not led to larger structured or institutionalized associations, the more mainstream conservatism, especially Christian-based connections, is obviously more ideologically powerful and more politically influential. The Russian Orthodox Church has been quite successful in taking the lead of, or at least becoming a key actor in, a new transnational "moralist International" that will probably keep channels of communication open with the America's Christian Right beyond the current geopolitical tensions. Indeed, Christian/conservative values are emerging as an easy and consensual frame for developing collaboration, as they are anchored in the social fabric of both countries and do not necessitate any sophisticated doctrinal elaborations.

What is the level of blending and mutual borrowing between radical and mainstream conservatisms? While individual connections between them are limited—mainstream conservative figures with governmental positions or strategies to reach an official status try to avoid association with controversial individuals—there is certainly some ideational permeability. The emergence of American groups and figures with a pro-Russian position, even if located at the extreme of the political spectrum, has often been positively received by Russian officials. More important is probably the ideological continuum between radical and mainstream conservatisms: on issues such as preserving national identity against immigration, promoting societal conservatism especially under the slogan of "traditional values," defending Russia's place inside the pan-European/pan-Western world, both share the same worldview. They differ in their appreciation of current regimes—mainstream conservatism being satisfied with Putin's regime that embodies it, radical conservatism dreaming of a revolution against the status quo—as well as in their level of engagement for the defense of national identity—radical conservatism calls for segregationist public policies and may be supportive of some violence, while mainstream conservatism opposes it.

In recent years Russia has become a noticeable exporter of conservative doctrines to the West. Yet this export targets Europe more than the United States, and has had far more profound success in the former than in the latter. Doctrinally, Europe remains the middleman between Russia and the US—a metaphor for its geopolitical status. The ongoing reshaping of the Russian conservative realm, moving away from a discourse on the country's *Sonderweg* to foster a more inclusive vision of a Russia connected to the conservative West, offers new possibilities for dialogue between different doctrinal traditions. Yet the "Europeanization" of Russian conservatism is much more advanced and genuine than its "Westernization"—in the sense of direct emulation of the United States.

At a time when the media tends to hype Russia's influence on the American and European domestic scenes, it is worth arguing that, if the rise of far right and populist/nativist narratives and parties in Europe and the US is undisputable, the reasons are deeply domestic and embedded in their respective social fabrics. Russia plays a third-tier role: it takes advantage of these new voices, consorts with them, and often tries to amplify them, but it did not originate this homegrown dynamic and has no realistic influence over it. Russia acts not as a societal transformer, but as an echo chamber of European and American societies' own doubts and transformations.

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