

The legitimization of “progressive” racism and the Conservative revolution.

The Left- Right war against liberalism.

*“Paper Presented at the 2019 ASN World Convention, Columbia University 2-4 May 2019” and “Do No Cite Without the Permission of the Author(s).”*

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Is the world in face of creeping fascism? And if it is, what does it mean in current times? A wide debate regarding this question has expanded in the last years among scholars increasingly worried by the weakness of liberal democracy, and the growing electoral power of national populist movements in Europe.

Several experts however, despite worries about the current situation are skeptical about introducing the concept of a post-1945 fascism.

Without the search for unlimited particular sovereignty, a relish for war, and a society based on violent exclusion, fascism probably is not fascism, (Nolte 421-3, James Gregor) and as Roger Eatwell remarks, the 'new fascists' .....lack fascism two important elements: an outright rejection of democracy and a harsher definition of order (Eatwell, 2017, p.25)

Other scholars however, not content with a limited and structural analysis of fascism, decidedly pinpoint the dangers of a limited perspective. Enzo Traverso for example suspects that we are in times of ‘post-fascism’ a concept that portrays a set of heterogeneous and transitional movements, suspended between an accomplished past still haunting our memories and an unknown future. (Traverso, 2019) To others, a fascism of the future if it emerges as a response to some still unimagined crisis, will not resemble classical fascism perfectly in its outward signs and

symbols. (Paxton, 2004, Eco 1995, Griffin 2011) Some of them such as Jason Stanley, go further in pinpointing what could be defined as a fascism of everyday's life, which is introduced into our language and perceptions and is daily normalized. (Jason Stanley, 2018) For the later scholars thus, there is no necessity for a breakdown of democracy in order, to have a creeping 'fascistization' of democracy.

In this sense, even if scholars such as *Agnes Cornell, Jørgen Møller, and Svend-Erik Skaaning* (2017, 15), correctly assess that the lessons of the interwar period are that crises as devastating as the Great Depression and the political success of totalitarian movements, did little to undermine the stability of established democratic systems, and even that W. Galston affirms that democratic institutions today are strong, in comparison to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Galston, 2018), still those assertions are hardly tranquilizing.

Indeed for several scholars the psychological effects of the Weimar period, the period that incubated Nazism are still here. (Bittner, 2016, Kirchick, 2018). Observers may question whether the new "politics of rage" in European societies may incubate what we have seen during the Weimar republic; namely not only a period of sociopolitical polarization but of a problematic ideological construction. Indeed the combined effects of the politics of rage and political radicalization in the past set a fertile ground for the raising up of a fascist intellectual sphere which had become influential for political elites, wishing to destroy political democracy and establish a new political order.

This raises a question about the importance of political ideas in shaping political elites beliefs and their influence in institutional design for evil and for good. If we take the past 30 years as an example for good, liberals felt comfortable with the fact that institutions in western societies

gave more expression to social and cultural pluralism. Undoubtedly, the influence of liberal and multicultural theories cannot be dismissed in the last decade

The question this article poses however, is whether nowadays under this current sociopolitical populist backlash, we should also pay attention to what we suggest is a growing intellectual backlash against the indisputable hegemony of liberal democratic values. All of a sudden unquestionable values of diversity, liberal tolerance, minority rights and scientific truth dear to liberals, are not only attacked by populist leaders, but they are also given a different and contradictory significance by intellectual and ideologues of the new conservative revolution.

This article thus, deals with the question of when and who started this intellectual development, and with why its political impact becomes relevant today.

Just a few historians and experts on the history of fascism, have paid attention that at the fringes of the political theory debates which since the 1990's on has focused on liberalism, human rights and cultural pluralism, a striking intellectual development surging in France since the 1960's, forecasted what at those times was unimaginable: a re-legitimization of old ideological sources of fascism, in order to recast them as an alternative political ideology to western liberalism. (Bar On, Eatwell, Griffin, Mammone, Spektorowski, Beiner)

Indeed, from the late 1960's the intellectuals of the *Nouvelle Droite* in France and Europe, not only identified the problem of globalization and the increasing power of liberal technocratic elites. They searched modes of overcoming them, through a theoretical elaboration which 1) disentangles between fascism ideology and the fascist totalitarian regime, 2) Synthesizes the intellectual contribution of the fascist Conservative Revolution of Weimar times, with post-modern politics of identity and post-colonial theories.

In this article I suggest that the current populist uprising in western societies, is the necessary setting for the transformation of what it looked as an esoteric meta-political campaign into an elaborated political strategy. The goal of the current conservative revolutionaries is hardly a revolutionary democratic breakdown, but a transformation of liberal democracy into a national exclusionist democracy, through a reformulation of the values of cultural diversity, identity politics, and nationalism. The final goal would be the resurrection of a whole European cultural 'exclusionism' which would paradoxically share with other non western cultural entities the same contempt against globalization, immigration, against liberal values and obviously against the liberal elites promoting them.

In order to delve with these questions, this work will focus in the complementary work of two ideologues and philosophers, the French Alain de Benoist and the Russian Alexander Dugin, and one political strategist, the American Steve Bannon.

This selection although incomplete, has a logic. Alain de Benoist the founder of the French and European New Right, had set since the 1980's, the *metapolitical* agenda of the French and European New Right. The goal was to re-legitimize the ideological sources of fascism while adapting them to a multicultural and post-Communist world. Alexander Dugin, appropriated and enhanced the Eurasia agenda, presenting it as an alternative to the liberal European Union. His ideas are gaining adepts among Europeans, and endorsed by Putin himself. Finally, the political strategist and ideologue S. Bannon ex leader of Breitbart, an important figure in Trump's political campaign team, has become a symbol-maker as a political organizer rather than as an intellectual. While this work does not address in deep the raising up of the Alt Right in America, yet the figure of Bannon becomes relevant precisely because of its embracing of Europe's nationalist cause. Despite that his strategic records has not always been successful, we cannot underestimate his

organizational and marketing efforts in raising a transatlantic populist Right as against global liberalism.

How threatening and challenging for liberals this intellectual development is? In the past, that was important because the Weimar and French conservative revolutionaries, set the basis for fascism, which finally led to total war, to fascist defeat and to the ensuing total delegitimization of fascism as a regime and as an ideological construction.

The question is why should we be nervous about such an ideological resurrection when current illiberal states are not foreseen as endorsing imperialist policies, and there is hardly a danger of totalitarianism in sight, (J Lind and W Wohlforth, 2019,77)

We suggest that we should pay attention to it because, it leads to something impossible to imagine a few years ago: an end to the hegemony of 'pluralist liberal democracy' values in western societies. A 'normalized' Populist Radical Right (Berezin, 2011) as well as the normalization of a new set of illiberal values, will become legitimate contenders of liberal pluralist values in western societies. For not few observers as noted, that implies a slippery slope into the end of democracy.

Although this article does not enter into the field of liberal strategies, still it may forecast that for liberalism this new scenario is also the start of a 'new beginning' in where they will have to focus on an 'old' 'banal' and forgotten work: Convincing again at a political and intellectual level rather than depending on constitutional constraints, whether in order to 'limit' 'hate and racist' speech or recurring to political vigilance against 'fascists'.

***Post democracy and post fascism. Is an institutional change possible?***

There is no question that for a long period of time the debate on Radical Right Wing parties challenges to democracy, as well as the debate on conservative-fascist political ideas remained at the fringes of political science debates.

Based on a liberal democratic consensus, in where human and minority rights stood in the front line of moral political debate, and in the convictions that the power of the majority should be controlled, European political leaders followed a complementary strategy; to achieve economic prosperity while relegating popular endorsement for the future. As Ian Müller remarked their approach reflected a liberal distrust of democracy in the wake of the rise of fascism prior to World War II (Müller 2011: 128) Demands for popular and national sovereignty were widely blamed by political elites as responsible for the catastrophes of the first half of the twentieth century. Under this spirit of times, the debate of ideas was dominated by liberalism, and the strategic question on how to make the values of liberal democracy more effective and more inclusive.

Other scholars, detected and stressed, that this triumphal liberalism expands especially in western post-industrial societies an epoch of apparent prosperity in where citizens no longer had to deal with their daily survival, and therefore become more open to new ideas. As was noted by R. Inglehart, post-materialist values, brought upon a greater emphasis on freedom of expression, environmental protection, gender equality, and tolerance of gays, handicapped people, and foreigners. (Inglehart, 1971) Multiculturalist ideas give expression to this new spirit, and during the 1990s, institutions reflected this. Observers, ideologues and politicians agree upon that the time of the “cultural nation” and the historical nation-state in Europe was over. (Kaelble, Hartmut. p. 208) and that the idea of a liberal European communitarian identity became hegemonic.(Risse and Grabowski, 2008, 9-11)

However, things started to change and rebalance at the early years of the new millennium. Even before the impact of mass immigration has shaken Europe, several observers understood that the appearance of identities based on religion or language and the extension of these identities into transnational loyalties have led to growing demands to re-nationalize citizenship regimes. For a wide variety of observers thus, it was clear that the triumphant cosmopolitanism of the 1980's and 1990's started to be backlashed by Right wing populists. (Checkel, Jeffrey T. and Katzenstein, Peter J.)<sup>1</sup>

Scholars like R. Inglehart have been peculiarly pungent in stressing the problematic transformation of liberalism within cosmopolitan multicultural and "post materialist" societies. On the one hand, the adoption of a post materialist agenda has been fruitful in boosting liberal values and tolerance. On the other hand it had opened the path for a backlash that was to bring a "retrogression toward authoritarian and xenophobic societies" (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 4; Inglehart, Norris, 2017, 13)

While Inglehart represents those that hoped that the populist 'retrogression' constitutes a short-term deviation from a developmental trajectory to which modern societies will eventually return, scholars like Bluhdorn and Butzlaff casted doubts on that hope. (Bluhdorn and Butzlaff, 2018) In reality there is no way back to the later traditional – liberal, democratic, inclusive, ecological, egalitarian debate. A shift from classical liberal modernization into a 'second-order emancipation' in where old concepts don't fit anymore to define new sociopolitical developments invites to redefine what are progressive or regressive agendas. This new setting thus, induces to question whether current times Right wing populist movements could be analyzed from a liberal

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<sup>1</sup>Checkel, Jeffrey T. and Katzenstein, Peter J. "The politicization of European identities" in: Checkel, Jeffrey T. and Katzenstein Peter J. (eds.) European Identity...op.cita, p.13

democratic standpoint for example. Liberal scholars indeed attempted to portray populism as a parasite of liberal democracy which grows in times of crisis to ultimately endanger its host (Müller 2016; Urbinati 2014). Others stress that they are an illiberal democratic attack against undemocratic liberalism (Mudde 2004), and others stressed the populist attempt to reset the unstable problematic balance between constitutionalism and popular sovereignty (Kaltwasser, 2012: 196–7). A more radical perspective is provided by Laclau, who would portray populism as a redemptive phenomenon, which placed new emphasis on the true core of democracy. In this sense it is a potential corrective of deformed representative democracies (Laclau, 2005)

While there is some true in these explanations, we agree with Bluhdorn and Butzlaff that Right wing populism signal a transformation of democratic values, hopes and expectations – which in the post-democratic constellation have evolved well beyond the emancipatory project. (Bluhdorn and Butzlaff, p.8) Equipped with a thin ideology (Mudde, 2004) or no ideology at all, it seems that the populist backlash both reflects and boosts the ‘politics of rage’ or ‘resentment’ in western societies, against the winners of globalization. On the one hand it is vertical and tackles the intellectual technocratic and self-righteous elites, (not necessarily the wealthy), and at the same time it is horizontal by defining the ‘people’ as against the foreign “others” (Brubaker, 2017, 12) who are perceived as necessary partners of the liberal elites

Through a rhetoric of ‘combat’ featured by hate and contempt populist leaders challenge norms, values and political constellations, refusing to enter into the consensual field of political liberalism. (Alain Duhamel, 2019, Brooks, 2019) In this new scenario, liberals find increasing difficulties in developing effective political responses to the pleas of populists. Liberals idea of civility relies on arguments and research, while decisions are made after evidence that corroborates theories. Yet liberals find tremendous difficult to perform in a world of warlike mobilization and



propaganda, into which populist thrive (Davis, William, 2019) Populist leaders articulate a disruptive discourse which hardly gives voice “to the will of the people” but as Laclau remarks, defines the people in a constitutive process, through a negative approach; namely the so called ‘constitutive outside’ which places certain groups out of the community. The excluded could be either the oligarchy or cultural or religious minorities.

In that sense while it is true that the socioeconomic background to the raise of current right wing populism is a downwardly mobile middle after being stripped of their well-being and self-respect by globalization and finance capitalism, (Schmitter, 2019),it is also true that populists don’t present real options to resolve that problem. The problem is that against liberal expectations it is doubtful that they might pay a political price for that future “failure”. The disruptive discursive and rhetoric of populism debunks rational choice.

The question at this point, is whether and how this non-ideological or ideological thin populist phenomenon is accompanied by a parallel but not disconnected ideological development, and whether that is important and in what sense.

We argue that precisely in the intersection between the politics of rage and an the politics of identity dominating the last decades, the new ideological frame would hardly be one of rejection of the politics of identity and multiculturalism, but a re-adaptation of it, for exclusionary principles. This is the ideology that is coming to the surface after years of meta-political work realized by the post war European conservative revolutionaries.

Indeed, while the politics of identity has been used by liberal and left democrats in the last 30 years in order to advance the interests of minorities and achieve sociocultural peace, the new conservative revolution brings the politics of identity to its modern origins, as an ideology of

exclusion. The question is whether, the politics of populist rage equipped by a new ideological setting may have an impact in an institutional redesign and how.

Skeptical observers, may question about the value of political ideas in shaping institutional change. Scholars such as Robert Liberman, Sh Berman, and R Smith among others understand the power of ideas. Indeed, institutional theories, can allow us to understand why political systems can be more receptive to particular changes. However, they hardly can provide explanations about the substantive content of the revolutionary change (Robert Liberman, 2002, 697-8 Berman 1998, 16-19). As Rogers Smith added, conducive conditions are... not enough to explain outcome (Smith,1999, 25).

Now more than ever, we may claim that the populist uprising and the crisis of representative democracy are conducive conditions, however, ideas might finally guide the new political setting. In short if political institutions had been open for the last twenty years to an increasing penetration of political correctness, identity politics, post colonialism, (even Macron denounced French colonialism as genocide) and post nationalism, an intellectual conservative revolution storming the intellectual field, is doing its best to reverse liberal hegemony in order be institutionalized. The question is how and whether institutions will respond to that. Will they be receptive to alternative nationalist, white supremacist perspectives competing or even complementing liberal, multicultural and intersectional postures?

***From fascist culture to the Nouvelle Droite. Identity in post fascist and post liberal times.***

It is of no doubt, that at the end of the Second World War led to a complete deligitimization of fascism. Still several fascists likes Maurice Bardèche and alike survived and committed themselves to rescue the ideological roots of what they would define as a revolutionary liberating ideology, that had been ghettoized and even imprisoned by a post-Nuremberg liberal political

establishment. The goal thus was to create a fascist cultural sphere, free from its totalitarian features.

Yet several scholars are reluctant to accept the very idea of a fascist intellectual sphere. Supposedly, proto-fascist intellectuals created a loose world view rather than a structured ideology. (M. Mann, p.10) As R. Paxton explains, the great "isms" of the 19<sup>th</sup> century relied upon notable rule characterize by deference to educated leaders and learned debates. Fascism instead is a practice appropriate to mass politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Paxton, 1998, 4) Basically thus, fascism should be characterized by its irrational appeal which found expression exclusively as a cluster of myths, emotions, instincts, and hatreds. Scholars such as Zeev Sternhell in opposition stressed precisely the ideological and cultural roots of fascism. The basic claim is that while the regime was destroyed its ideological corpus may flourish again under different political and social constellations. Sternhell sustained that fascist ideology evolved from the synthesis of two ideological trends, which coincide in France before the First world war. One is the revolutionary syndicalist trend associated to Georges Sorel, and the second the radical nationalist associated to the names of Charles Maurras M. Barres, Drumont, etc. Both trends rejected the liberal order, and especially the intellectual legacy of the Enlightenment, setting a third way to national modernization. More than that, it set fascism as a cultural revolution more than as a political one. (Sternhell, Sznajder, Asherri,1994)

The question however, is how this ideological frame might be expressed in the long run. What are the fascist core goals that can be preserve in time despite defeat in the world war? (Freedon) According to R. Griffin, the main goal of fascism was and is to rise up the community from the ashes of a decadent society ("palingenetic ultra-nationalism") (Griffin 1993, 2000). R. Eatwell stresses that generic fascism, transcending place and time, is identified as 'an ideology

that strives to forge social rebirth based on a holistic-national radical Third Way. (Eatwell, 2000)

The very idea of the "third way" lies between capital and labor and between right and left. It insinuates that fascism is a synthesis between different ideological worlds, between nationalism and socialism, between left-wing syndicalism and productive capitalism, between conservatism and revolution and between state totalitarianism and 'post national' communitarianism.

This last point was particularly developed by the intellectuals of the Weimar Conservative Revolution. Gathered around universities, political clubs, journals such as *Die Tat*, (The Deed), *Die Standarte*, *Das Gewissen* (The Conscience) an heterogeneous group of nationalist intellectuals such as Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Hans Freyer, Ernest Junger, Carl Schmitt, Werner Sombart, Martin Heidegger, Ernst Niekisch and Oswald Spengler among others were decided to transform the character of a defeated German nationalism.

Despite their differences, the main idea spearheaded by those intellectuals was to overcome German old romantic nationalism through a new type of modern mobilizing nationalism based in the Schmittian primacy of the political over morality and responsibility. The act of politics itself thus, represents the primacy of the politics of identity over reason. Echoing Heidegger they understood that they have to do a risky leap into a new beginning, challenging that way the old understanding of conservatism. As explained by A Mohler (the Swiss right wing historian who became a symbol maker within the European New Right) we have to consider breakthrough moments in history in order to redefine concepts. Every generation has its own conservatism, which is not readily adaptable in the next one. Therefore, even a conservative ideology is dynamic and requires continuous reflection. It has continuously to be rediscovered, so that it would be able to face challenges of modernity. During Weimar times the conservative revolutionaries conceived a synthesis between what appeared to be an anti-modern reactionary 'tribalist' identity,

complemented by an anti-Enlightened type of modernism. (Herf,3) In Italy, nationalists as the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio and syndicalist as Alcester De Ambris, wrote the Carnaro constitution, which preceded fascism, and could be considered as a progressive constitution advancing for example the rights of women. (Mario Sznajder,1989) Differently from Marxism this new socialism was rooted in a Sorelian and Nietzschean vitalism leading to a voluntarist view of politics, which might lead to totalitarianism. **However, at the same time this Sorelian and Nietzschean foundations was interpreted as a voice of liberation, ( Beiner, 2018, 16) against the mores of the Enlightenment. The attraction to this rebellion against the Enlightenment resonates today as in the past at the intellectual as at the political level. Indeed while conservative revolutionaries contributed to the raise of fascism and Nazism, several of its members opposed fascism, however, from a anti liberal national socialist perspective.**

Heidegger would hardly compromise with Nazi vulgar populism, and with racism. However, his anti-Semitism and his core national socialism put him as a classical example of what a national socialism should be. Some of them were prosecuted by the Nazis and other such as Ernst Jung were killed by the Nazis. Others such as Ernst Niekisch (23 May 1889 – 23 May 1967) one of the best exposers of National Bolshevism (synthesis of planned Soviet socialism and nationalism) who was an anti-Semitic himself, rejected Hitler for not being enough of a revolutionary.

This is a striking inspirational point for the process of elaboration of a new anti-liberal national socialism however, severed from its fascist totalitarian conclusions. Understanding this background allows us to place the New Right as the precursors of a new "new" regenerated fascism. (Bar-On, 2007; Mammone, 2015, Griffin, ). In the 1930s a totalitarian imperialist state

responded to the productivist and spiritual necessities of Italy. In current times however, a post state rooted ethnicity, may recover the exclusionist spirit of national socialism.

Similar to the German Conservative Revolution, we are also dealing with intellectuals coming from different nationalist groups such as *Europe-Action*, the *Federation of Nationalist Students* (FEN), the *National Movement of Progress* (MNP) and the *Rassemblement européen pour la liberté* (REL). Its indisputable leader Alain de Benoist together with the collaboration of intellectuals such as Guillaume Faye, Jean Haudry, Julien Freund, and others, who created in the 1960's GRECE, *Groupement de Recherche et d'Etude pour la Civilization Europe'enne*, had in mind a meta-political strategy rather than direct political action. Self-defined as a Gramscian of the Right (Venner,1993) the New Right intellectuals were convinced that only a metapolitical strategy could reshape the parameters of a new confrontation which he advanced already at the 1970's between a liberal global world and a new identitarian world. As A. de Benoist noted "Without a precise theory, there is no effective action.... . The French right is Leninist without having read Lenin. It hasn't realized the importance of Gramsci. It hasn't seen that cultural power threatens the apparatus of the state. (Alain de Benoist, 1979,19)

Following this criteria in Germany the "*Thule Seminar*", "*Neue Kultur*", and people like Armin Moeller, Pierre Krebs, and Wigbert Grabert. Michael Walker and his publication *Scorpion* in Britain. Robert Steuckers and his journal *Orientation* in Belgium. In Italy the New Right is related to people who are close to the Lega Nord such as Pino Rauti, Gianfranco Miglio and Claudio Mussi and to publications such as *La Destra* and *Elementi*. Most of these people and publications reproduce and analyzed the readings of Nietzsche, Oswald Spengler Julius Evola, Carl Schmitt and of less known post war ethno-regionalist and nationalist European thinkers such as Jean Mabire and Jean Thiriart .

At the early stages of their ideological development, de Benoist and friends were ultra-nationalist colonialists who defended the West and believed in scientific racism. Nonetheless, they learned that defending old-style racism was an outdated strategy. They understood that the era of the colonial empire had passed away and quickly adjusted its agenda by redefining the enemy as the universal “liberal empire” which sought to rule the world through a one dimensional liberalism, based in multiculturalism, free-market economics, and liberal rights. The idea thus, is that the "ex-colonized peoples" of the world should join forces with the new "fascists" as against liberal globalization. Just as the New Left, that in the 1960s had criticized Soviet Marxism in name of humanist Marxism, the New Right appeared to be a critic of old-style racial Nazism in the name of a libertarian ‘national socialism’ and pluralist ‘differentialism’. (Taguieff, 1994, Spektorowski , 2012 )

Since then thus, GRECE made great efforts in making fit old racist ideas with multiculturalism. In that sense it embarrassed the progressive left, that decidedly moved from old color blind egalitarianism, secularism and assimilation to cultural diversity communitarianism and federalism. (Camus, Labourg, 2017, 123-4)

Through differentialism thus, the New Right invents an idea of a Right wing post colonialism which implies a struggle for Europe’s cultural decolonization similar to the Third world struggle against cultural and homogenization which according to de Benoist is the logical outcome of egalitarianism and human rights ideology. Indeed the “gradual homogenization of the world, is advocated and realized by the 2,000-year-old discourse of egalitarian ideology, ”(Benoist, *Vu de Droite*). Echoing de Maistre, Maurras and Barres, Benoist also sustains that the very idea of a ‘natural man’ possessing rights independent of its community, is the weapon of powerful nation to dominate weaker states ( Benoist 2011) Indeed the West’s conversion to

universalism has been the main cause of its subsequent attempt to convert the rest of the world: in the past, to its religion (the Crusades)...nowadays through principles (human rights).” (de Benoist, Renaissance, 1999) In short, the homogenization of the world is both the work of liberalism and of the moral universal norms propounded by monotheistic religions, which are the basis of modernism.

In contrast to monotheistic religion the New Right defends traditionalism which is holistic and anti-modern. Traditionalism is projected in Indo-European paganism, in Europe medieval traditions as well as in Hindu or even Muslims societies. (Francosie, 2014, 87) In this sense and strikingly Benoist accepts that Muslim traditionalism should be equivalent to a resurgence of Europe's paganism.

Against all odds, for example, Benoist supported the ‘right of Muslim schoolgirls’ to wear a foulard (headscarf) during the second foulard affaire in 2004, a seeming incongruity for a racist. What de Benoist had in mind however, was not the defense of the Muslim girls, but a shaming of the ‘authentic French’. He demanded they wake up and celebrate their traditional identity as Muslim communities do. Benoist thus demands Europe to go back to its authentic traditional identities. Implicit indeed, is the idea that respect of the others identity is what we need in order to raise back our Europe’s exclusionist identity. As Benoist manifested “We have the right to be for Black Power, but on the condition of simultaneously being in favor of White Power, Yellow Power and Red Power.” (Benoist, 1979,p.156) In short, de Benoist is probably one of the first intellectuals of the modern post-war Right in understanding, that multiculturalism, specially group rights multiculturalism, works better for the exclusionary right than for the left. In his *Manifesto for an European Renaissance*” (1999), he presents himself as an advocate of cultural diversity in a way that an American political correct ear wants to hear “The true wealth of the world is first



and foremost the diversity of its cultures and peoples”(1999) However, a real cultural diversity can be propounded by reshaping a national-socialist tradition as a whole European resistance to neoliberal globalization, a European equivalent to Third World cultural anti-imperialism. .

*Post- national nationalism for a white Europe*

**Most liberals observing the current uprising of populist movements in Europe tend to understand the phenomenon as a nationalist attack against the liberal European Union. However, as we shall try to demonstrate the ideas advanced against the liberal cosmopolitan Union are based in a ‘Europeanist’ rather than narrow nationalism. More specifically the New Right rejects old style sovereign nationalism, and promotes an alliance of ethno-regional identities. Ethno-regional nations defined primarily in cultural, social, and anthropological terms are the basis for real democracy.**

De Benoist is clear that without cohesion there is no democracy, and that can be achieved at the local level.

“The proper functioning of both Greek and Icelandic democracy was the result of cultural cohesion and a sense of shared heritage. (Alain de Benoist, “Democracy Revisited,” *Telos*, no. 95 (Spring 1995): 75. Basques, Catalans, Flemish or Scottish, despite endorsing liberalism, are considered by Benoist as potential illiberal democracies. Moreover they constitute the basis for the emerging of an authentic nativist ideology which combined homogeneous ethnic communities (ethnos) and rule by the people (demos), (Bar-On, 2008: 340; Bar-On, 2007; Spektorowski, 2012, de Benoist, 1994b), The theoretical value of this position was also applauded by left wing intellectuals gathered at the journal *Telos*, who for a long time explore the idea of an anti-vanguardist ‘populism of the region’, presented as the antithesis of the top–down rule of a supposedly enlightened ‘New Class’ of intellectuals and bureaucrats.

For de Benoist however, there is a more important point which is his conviction erroneous or not, that despite the liberal characteristics of Europe ethnic regions, precisely their ethno-democratic cohesion, constitutes at least a theoretical barrier against immigration which for Benoist represents is the result of global capitalism and liberal multiculturalism, both foes of democratic cohesion.

In the ND manifesto, *“The French New Right for the Year 2000,”* De Benoist and Champetier wrote: “By reason of its rapid growth and its massive proportions, immigration such as one sees today in Europe constitutes an undeniably negative phenomenon.” “Immigration is not desirable for the immigrants, who are forced to abandon their native country for another where they are received as backups for economic needs. Nor is immigration beneficial for the host population receiving the immigrants...” (De Benoist- Champetier, 2000)

Adopting a left anti capitalist position, de Benoist adds, that “whoever criticizes capitalism while approving immigration whose working class is its first victim, had better shut up. Whoever criticizes immigration while remaining silent about capitalism should do the same ( Alain de Benoist “Immigration: the Army reserve of Capital” 2011) .

It is clear that de Benoist notion of national democracy is conceived as a partial solution to the acceptance and integration of foreigners. However, the problem is that while the ethnic region may resolve the problem of identity, it can hardly resolve the equation of survival in a world of big and populated entities.

The next question thus is how this ethnoregional nationalism fits an Europeanist ideology which is the principal factor of survival.

Benoist considers that a pan-European unity is “an absolute necessity”. However, a pan European unity should rely in “the peoples of Europe”—all born from the same “cultural and

historical matrix". Paradoxically, the idea elaborated by Benoist and a wide variety of racists Europeanists, is that state nationalism works against an European ethno-regional unity. In this sense Benoist, as well as a wide variety of Right wing intellectuals such as G. Miglio one of the ideological mentors of the Lega Nord considered those ethno-regional nations the harbingers of a whole European cultural renaissance against the ruins of the modern world (Mammonne, 2008: 230).

It is clear that this type of European confederation does not resemble Seyla Benhabib proposal of a Kantian cosmopolitan federalism of republics, which dialectically surpasses the Westphalian formula of national sovereignty. Neither the unity of the demos as a homogenous closed identity, nor the idea of a self-enclosed and autochthonous territory over which the demos governs, can be accepted by liberals.( Benhabib,2004, 27) These homogenous entities for de Benoist, are the source of a "diverse" ethno-regional Europe however, closed to non Europeans.

This trend was especially conceptualized by Armin Mohler whose main thesis was that the German tradition of the Reich ("realm") in central Europe (*Mitteleuropa*) includes two contradictory streams that at the end of the day complement each other. The first is the idea of *Mitteleuropa* constituted of a multiple decentralized European peoples identities, and the second an almost mythical view affirming the organic spiritual unity of the Reich and *Mitteleuropa*. This *völkisch* (folkish or nationalist) pluralism, stressing the unique origins and yet common roots of a European culture, were promoted in the 1920 by the "Thule society" and partially adapted by the Nazis.

In different ways neo fascist intellectuals from Heidegger, Julius Evola, Carl Schmitt to Jean Thiriart endorsed this view. Heidegger's hope was that an ultra-nationalism like Nazi national socialism will rescue the German being, from liberal banalization. However, for

Heidegger the Desein, namely metaphysical destiny of the German volk cannot be reduce to vulgar nationalism, or the predilection of nation to yours. ( Beiner, 218, 69) It should be of no coincidence also, that during the post-war period, esoteric "spiritualist" fascists such as Julius Evola also disassociates himself from nationalism and totalitarianism, preferring the concept of the "organic" state, which he put forth in his text *Men Among the Ruins*. He advocated the idea of pagan *Imperium*, which could take various forms according to local conditions, but should be "organic, hierarchical, anti-democratic, and anti-individual". Jean Thirirat an ex collaborationist with the Nazis who after the war founded the group Jeune Nation followed the same Imperial idea however, without emphasis being put on Europe ethnoregional components. In his testament book which was a leading document for the New Right *Un empire de 400 millions d'hommes: L'Europe* Thiriart fostered the idea of a new Europe led by an elitist and de-bureaucratized socialism. That would be an hyper-nation state that can compete with the new American Carthage and the billion-strong China and share a common struggle with the Third world. Finally nationalist like Carl Schmitt before the end of the war already devised the idea of the *Großraum*, which was actually fond in the Monroe Doctrine and the American domination of the Western hemisphere as inspiring. Schmitt defended the idea of *reich*, taking up a role as regional hegemony. In that case Germany would act as America did in consolidating Europe under its rule, protecting it from foreign interference and giving it a "political idea."

If we intersect the mentioned ideas, we might conclude that despite different emphasizes all pushed into the same direction. All of them opposed liberal internationalization, and the empty normativism of world human rights ideology. All of them transcended a vulgar defense of state-nationalism, however, as interpreted by G Faye one of the most radical members of the Nouvelle Droite, the basic idea for all, old or new rightists, is the fact that European nationalism must stand

in defense of “the native members of a people.” (Faye, 2010) **Nationality thus, cannot be defined by modern statecraft. The next question is how these views were interpreted in the Eastern front. Whether the idea of nationalism and regional confederation for the European New right fits the Russian alternative.**

*From 'Europe des peuples' to the Euro-Asian empire: From Benoist to Dugin.*

The especial links between Alain de Benoist, Faye and other members of the New Right with the Russian Alexander Dugin can be explained through the historical inspiration French right wing nationalists always found in Russia. They portrayed Russia, as the last beacon and stronghold of traditional values. For French nationalists Russia has a mission to oppose the decaying religions and societies of the West and regenerate Europe through its influence and model. (Y. Camus, 2015). Dugin, an ex member of the National Patriotic Front (Pamyat) the anti-Semitic organization of the perestroika era was defined as one of the 'most dangerous philosophers in the world', and the question is whether this label owes to his philosophical virtues; or rather to his influence over Putin himself, or to both. What is certain, is that Dugin, a sociology professor at Moscow State University, and a prolific writer has been much more than a political advisor. He was rather the articulator of a nationalist philosophy that suited and was adapted by Moscow.

After joining the underground Yuzhinsky literary circle led by Russian mystical writer, poet, and translator Evgenii Golovin, Dugin was introduced not only to western anti liberal thought, but also into a wide variety of esoteric trends in Russia such as occultism, esotericism, integral traditionalism, and fascist mysticism. (Shekhovtsov, 35)

**This was the background to a complementary philosophical ( Four Position) and geopolitical strategy, (Eurasia) which will put Dugin as a leading influential figure in Putin’s Russia.**

Dugin argues that his political philosophy defined as the 4<sup>th</sup> position is the result of the failure or semi failure of the three leading political theories that impacted the world in recent past - liberal capitalism, communism **and** fascism. “All three political theories took in the Twentieth century is no longer useful, effective, or relevant. They lack the ability to explain contemporary reality or to help us understand current events, and are incapable of responding to the new global challenges” (Dugin, p.19)

According to Dugin, even though liberalism has been the winning ideology so far, triumphing over fascism in 1945, and communism in 1991 (when the Soviet Union dissolved), now liberalism is nearing a dead end, mired currently in a “nihilistic post-modern stage”. At this point he proposes an alternative political model, which perceives the idea of progress in a different way than liberals or socialists. Surpassing what he supposes is liberal individualism, racism and nationalism, Dugin's philosophy calls for a root of a human being's self-awareness (called *dasein* by Heidegger).

Some would perceive in Dugin, a post modern critique of liberalism, but they are wrong. *The Fourth Political Theory* assumes precisely that Western Liberalism today is Postmodern. Dugin’s battle is no longer with Liberalism per se, but with postmodernity and with post-industrial society, with liberal thought in practice, and more importantly with globalism and the technological revolution that accompanied it.(Dugin.p.18) Postmodernism is globalization, it implies “transgender operations, unisexual marriage and clone production,” all combined with a television

advertising-style distort of reality, and shaky financial substitutions for solid economic principles.( Dugin,2015)

Dugin's alternative to post-modern deconstructionism is Traditionalism. He rejects the centrality of the individual and accepts Nietzsche's critique of progress. However he denies any suggestion that God is absent of an active role in guiding Creation - especially in the messiahship of the Third Rome. *The Fourth Political Theory* acknowledges an inheritance that prefers the covenantal bonds of the Third Rome, Sacred Space, and Traditionalism. Since this Dasein is different from person to person and from culture to culture, the world should feature a multipolar power division. Similarly to C. Schmitt and de Benoist, Dugin contrasts a theory of a multipolar world with what he (and conspiracy theorists worldwide) see as the movement towards a "world government," led by disingenuous "globalist elites". Finally Dugin repeats and adapts Schmitt's claim that maritime powers should be resisted by continental ones. This is the connecting point between the Four Position and the geopolitical strategy advanced by the idea of Eurasia.

The very idea of Eurasia for Russia nationalists was an expression of an specific proposal to dominate and transform Europe. This was part of an intellectual debate in the 1920's between *westernizers* and *slavophiles*. The former believed that Russia was backward and a revolution is needed to push Russia to the future which was singular. The later believed that progress was pure illusion and Russia was endowed with a particular genius relying in the Christian conversion in Kyiv.(Snyder, 84) The idea of Eurasia came as a synthesis of both trends.

The new supporters of Eurasia agree with the slavophiles in the idea that the West was decadent. However, they rejected the Christian foundational myth, while focusing rather on the Mongols heritage. In their vision the happy conventions of Mongol rule allowed for the

foundation of Moscow, in an environment safe from European corruption such as the classical heritage of Greece and Rome. Modern Russia's destiny was to turn Europe into Mongolia. The idea of Eurasia was adopted during Soviet rule by Lev Gumilev who added to it, his theory of ethno-genesis, which puts all the blame for the failures of Russia to the West and the Jews. It is of no doubt that Alexander Dugin absorbed this philosophical frame.

Eurasia represents geopolitics against globalization. While the later represents the axis of cooperation between Europe, U. States and Canada, all of them responding to the value of individuality and market economy, Eurasia, portrays the conservative philosophy of land-locked *continentalism*, namely values of hierarchical structure, law, order, and tradition. Dugin envisages a world of regional superpowers and in that game, Russia should wield control of the territory of the former Soviet Union. He is convinced that the Soviet Union never conquered independent states such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan or Azerbaidjan, since the later were only administrative units. Russia takeover of Crimea was a logical outcome of this thought. Indeed Putin appeared as doing what Dugin wrote already in his 1997 *Foundations of Geopolitics*, a book that has exerted a tremendous influence on Russia military, police and political elites

De Benoist praises Dugin, because apparently unlike mainstream nationalists and unlike Slavophiles, [he] looks at the Soviet legacy as the continuation of the Imperial idea in another form.” Benoist also applauds Dugin's culturalist idea and the principle of identity which applies to all people alike. For Dugin, traditional Islam is not only threatened by liberalism but also by the spread of “Wahhabism” which pairs American global liberalism in preaching universal principles. It is the Sunni Muslim world which have sold out to “Atlanticist” powers. Muslim fundamentalism was indeed financed by the West in its fight against the Soviet Union. (Laruelle, 2007) Precisely



an association of traditional Islam and Eurasia is the answer. Indeed, Dugin believes in a possible strategic Russo-Muslim partnership” especially with Shiite Iran.

In this sense it could be argued that both intellectuals, de Benoist and Dugin, consider that Europe can be revitalized only by a spiritual influx from civilizations that reject the decay of the West (Camus, 2015). Evola's inspiration could be directly felt in this point. As Julius Evola remarked, Islam is connected to a primordialist tradition and as such it is independent from both Judaism and Christianity, religions whose characteristic themes he rejects (original sin, redemption, sacerdotal meditation, etc.).”(Claudio Mutti, 2007) Evola portrayed the idea of the jihad as a “late rebirth of a primordial Aryan heritage,” (Evola, 2007,26) The relationship of Right wing traditionalists with Islam is not new. René Guénon an early French occultist and metaphysician, who was raised as a Roman Catholic and became later on into a Sufi Muslim, is a case in point. Claudio Mutti a follower of Guénon ideologue of the Lega Nord, and converted to Islam, also saw in Islam a pawn in the game against liberal universalism. Dugin however, carefully distinguishes from the fundamental conservatism or traditionalism of thinkers such as René Guénon and Julius Evola, who are portrayed as reactionary intellectuals wishing to return to a pre-modern world of values, and the conservative revolution he defends.

For Dugin the modern world, will rely upon a popular controlled technology, rather than a pre-technology world of peasants. The workers nationalist revolution is the new image of a right and left synthesis, in where the pagan and the traditionalists confront liberal modernity. Already in 1993 he founded with Eduard Limonov the National Bolshevik Party in line with the ideas of the Conservative Revolutionary Ernst Niekisch. For this reason as was remarked by R Beiner, while it is true that Dugin wants to overcome all the leading ideologies, still he prefers fascism, over all others (Beiner, 2015) Relying in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Dugin claims

“that man should be overcome” and following Heidegger, Dugin is totally concerned with the “other beginning” that becomes the most salient aspect of Heidegger’s intellectual legacy. The other beginning according to Dugin will start with Eurasia.

The question however, is whether the leading French Right wing nationalists would adopt Dugin’s view. In reality despite their admiration to him, still French right wing ideologues such as Gulliaume Faye, and Pierre Vial, who conform nowadays the *Bloc identitaire*, considered that Eurasia is not the response western Europe needs. The reason is that Eurasia includes Muslim people who according to Faye have no right whatsoever to claim any say in the future of Europe. Based in the same unifying concept of Europe and Asia they propose the idea of Euro-Siberia which means a white Europe that would include only the portion of Russia inhabited primarily by White people. Since the *Bloc Identitaire* is connected with Le Pen's National Front, and since one of the main goals of the Radical Right is to fight against the *Islamization* of Europe, we might be assumed that Dugin' Eurasia is difficult to be swallowed.

The next question is how the United States of America, especially after Trump election is included in this geopolitical and ideological formula. As Dugin himself remarked. “Anti-Americanism is over! Now the people of free America, free Russia, all anti-globalists of the world, should build a new world—a new architecture!” Dugin understood that some Americans, ( Bannon and the Alt right) belong to his own project.

***S. Bannon: The beauty of political incorrectness and the danger of war.***

The connections between Steve Bannon, the American Alt Right and the European New Right are direct. Some observers suggest that the French origins of “You( Jews, Muslims, Latinos) will not replace us” ( Th. Williams, 2017) is related to the popular figure of Renaud Camus, who popularized the idea. However, it is of no doubt, that it is the identity battle of GRECE and

Benoist and the *Manifesto for European Renaissance*, what has become important for Alt Right members such as Richard Spencer, Jared Taylor and Steve Bannon with whom Benoist maintained some direct and indirect contacts.

Through these conversations, we can perceive the common aspects and differences between the New Right, and the American Alt Right. As John Morgan writes, despite differences between the Alt Right and the European New Right, a common feature to both, is that both understand that the Nazi and fascist past is rejected. “Those that want to refight the second world war” have no place in the Alt Right.” **Both relied in intellectual activity conceived in order to create an alternative to “liberal” hegemony. As was written in Brietbart "A specter is haunting the dinner parties, fundraisers and think-tanks of the Establishment: the specter of the “alternative right” that is here to stay as political contenders in most Western democracies."(Milo Yiannopoulos Allum Bokhari, 2016)** The differences between the European and American Alt right however, are also notorious. As noted by Benoist himself, while for him the question of race is not as relevant, and he is fighting for ‘white’ and ‘black’ identities against a common enemy, which is the system that destroys identities”. (Williams Th. 2017) for the American Alt Right the white race is determinant. Despite their struggle against American exceptionalism, the Alt Right debate is hardly universal but local.

The main foe of the Alt Right appears to be the American constitution. “American constitutionalism and exceptionalism wont recue European Americans from multiculturalism and finally from replacement” (John Morgan 2017) The bankruptcy of American exceptionalism based in free markets, values and American exceptionalism is the point to stress. The conclusion of that basic thoughts were explicitly stressed by Jared Taylor the editor of the *American Renaissance* in

his “Open Letter to Cuckservastives”, (the insulting term used against old style American conservatives).

Accusing old conservatives for defending ‘principles’, Taylor demands a shift. Things “that you love about America ...are not rooted in principles, but... are rooted in certain people, namely white people”. (Taylor, 2015) As Th. Main concludes the “Alt Right is a form a radical Gnosticism as fundamental in its rejection of the American democratic tradition as the Communist party line of the 1960’s were” (Th. Main, 2018, p.7) However, while Communists aspired to overcome that set of values with economic and political revolution, Taylor wanted a racist response.

The question is to what extent S. Bannon, who personalize the transformation of an ideological framework into political strategy, is entrenched in this political thought, and to what extent his endorsement is tactical. It is clear to most members of the Alt Right, Bannon is not necessarily a man of them, but a fellow-traveler that contributes to the cause, as notes R. Spencer. Both have the same enemy, the liberal pro multicultural elites of Washington, and both, Bannon and the Alt Right have clear criticism against the global economic elites. However, they differ in the identity question. Bannon is a civic nationalist rather than an ethnic one. (Main, p. 213) Still, despite of coming from different background, there is no doubt that Bannon although not an intellectual of the scale of de Benoist and Dugin, he was also well versed in the “right” literature, and the members of the Alt Right knew it.

In a conference in the Vatican in 2014 in where he expounded on Islam, populism and capitalism he mentioned Julius Evola as one of his referents. This gives as a glimpse into Bannon's existential and ideological searches since his early young days as a Catholic. He was introduced into *Evola's* thought by William Strauss and Neil Howe, “The Fourth Turning” which depicts history in cycles of cataclysmic and order-obliterating change.

Critics of Bannon however, point out precisely the fact that Evola was a pagan and Bannon a Catholic defending Judeo Christian values as against Islam. As noted, however, Evola's followers were both pagan and religious. Pagan and religious invoke J. Evola's claim that the forces of history are led by two factions: "history's demolition squad" enslaved by blind faith in the future, and those individuals whose watchword is Tradition. The latter stand in this world of ruins at a higher level ready to rescue what is truly essential. It is difficult not to detect Bannon's apocalyptic view of politics in the western world without Evola's lens. That is why most of the American 'alt-right' ideologues consider Mr. Bannon the gate through which Evola's ideas of a hierarchical society run by a spiritually superior caste can be recovered during a period of crisis. (Beiner, p.11) Bannon himself, believes that Trump is the unconscious bearer of this necessarily clash with what remains of the Enlightenment.

However, if we must stress the real philosophical or post philosophical contribution of Steve Bannon is the power or the beauty of political incorrectness and the politics of us versus them. For those acquainted with Sorel's myth of violence, the Futurist insurgent art, and D'Annunzio theatricalization of the politics of violence and blood, we should be aware of the 'rationality' of mobilizing irrational instincts of hate.

It is of no doubt that when in 2013, Steve Bannon was turning Breitbart into the far right's dominant media outlet, he presented himself first and foremost as a Leninist supporter of economic nationalism. The intention was to challenge the most conservative members of the Republican party and American society with a new direct shocking non politically correct approach. When Steve Bannon stood as key note speaker in an audience of the French National Front he exposed one of central cultural aspects of fascism. "Let them call you racists, let them call you xenophobes." He went on: "Let them call you nativists. Wear it as a badge of honor." (Jason

Stanley, 2018, Berman 2018) If Benoist attempt is to clean up fascism from its violent connotations, or as Katherine Franke would argue ‘making White Supremacy Respectable Again’, Bannon understands that making white supremacy again does not need to make it respectable. At first glance as Jason Stanley notes, Bannon’s advice is strange. After all, by any normative understanding, “racist,” “xenophobe” and “nativist” are *negative* words from both a moral and rational point of view. It is a natural attitude to manufacture justification to justify racism, xenophobia and even violence. However, Bannon understands the new times, and urges to drop the façade, recommending to present irrationality moves as virtuous. (Jason Stanley, 2018) As a political strategist, rather than an intellectual, but still much more involved in the ideological frame exposed in this paper, Bannon understands that we are in times of 'political incorrectness'. However, he is not only aware of that, but also of what Angela Nagle describes as the grotesque online culture wars fueling populism. The once obscure call-out culture of the left emanating from Tumblr-style campus-based identity politics reached its peak during Obama's presidency. It is plausible to ponder that the 'on line populism' of today is a product of a strange period of ultra-Puritanism (Nagle, 2018) Bannon's identified the new times . That means that while the identity strategy is not new in American politics, and has been manipulated by the American Democratic Party’s in 1864, and also projected in the insurgent campaigns of Strom Thurmond and George Wallace in the 1960’s, nowadays its impact is considerably greater. In 2016, it reappears in a renewed crude form, precisely as a counter culture, precisely when the ideological space dominated by left social interpretations on the meaning of diversity and cultural rights of minorities has led to the current backlash.

The message that globalization and immigration is supported by a synthesis of liberal rational economists, and pro multicultural socio-liberals, who aspired to transformed national

societies into heterogeneous for the benefit of super capitalists socio-liberal "elites in transit" is contrasted by economic nationalism, and by the idea of a repressed white identity invaded by the forces of globalization. This is the perfect frame for inciting hate against elites much more than against immigrants themselves.

Since Bannon and Dugin differently from Benoist are men of political action, both are dangerous. Their perspective about the "era of definitions" and their intimacy with the most powerful political leaders contributes to growing uneasiness. Bannon places China as an enemy and sees China and Islam as expansionist threats. He advocates economic nationalism and also stated that the Judeo-Christian west is, "at the beginning stages of a global war against Islamic fascism". China will eventually overtake the US in economic terms but US supreme military dominance is unchallenged. **This probably implies that the US might be willing to use this military power to guarantee its economic prerogative**

This is indeed a significant point of concern. Despite the fact that Trump dismissed Bannon, he still holds a similar overview of the international table. These issues are of more immediate significance than Bannon's rush in coordinating a right wing parties campaigning in the 2019 European Parliament elections. The first point is urgent and dangerous, while the attempt to organize an 'International' of the Populist Right is secondary. In any case, at first glance this attempt is meeting silent opposition from his Right wing associates. Bannon's record as a political strategist was seriously harmed after his supported for the failed candidacy of Roy Moore in Alabama. That was a serious defeat for Donald Trump, but, above all, a defeat for Steve Bannon. His strategy of punching low, this time did not work out and probably for that reason the European Populist Right is rather dubitative about Bannon's potential contribution to them.

Indeed Bannon's strategic ideas that worked well for America, don't fit well for the European right, especially Eastern European countries. Indeed for Eastern Europe countries such as Hungary and Poland, China is an opportunity rather than a liability, while at the same time they are hardly interested in the dismantling of the European Union as Bannon want. They are hardly interested in economic nationalism. Furthermore also euroskeptical populist in western Europe are far from being united. Italy's Five Star Movement is part of the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy group, which also includes the only European Parliament member for the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). The Lega Nord instead is a member of Europe of Nations and Freedom together with France's *National Front* and the *Freedom Parties* of Austria and the Netherlands. (Bershidsky, 2018) Moreover, Salvini praise of the Russians contrasts with Poland's Jarosław Kaczyński and the Law and Justice Party. – Despite sharing Salvini's aim to break the 'Germany-France axis' in Europe –their roads are quite different, especially because of Poland's traditional suspicion of Russia.

All this makes Bannon's attempt a difficult one to accomplish in the meantime. However, despite inconsistencies between Bannon and Europe's Right Wing Populist parties there is still a basic common line that goes beyond punctual tactical debate and it is its cross-border pollination. Populism is not a new phenomenon, however, its recent incarnation, as a potent mixture of nationalism and hostility to globalism, against Islam and immigration, has breached borders. In short despite of shortcomings in finding a common goal the image of the enemy is the most powerful factor keeping them in search for a common goal.

***Conclusions. Fascism on the making or agonistic democracy.***

R. Beiner reminds us that prior to the election of Trump it would be unthinkable to imagine that a lunatic ideologue as Spencer would have any connections to the White House.



(Beiner, 2018, p11) Indeed this is not only a problematic and bizarre symbol in itself. However, the problem is bigger than that, because it is accompanied by the elaboration of a fascist intellectual public sphere which goes further than tactical moves. As noted, thus, liberal societies are under two corresponding threatening processes: a sociopolitical attack propounded by the politics of rage, and next the ensuing development of an intellectual public sphere, whose values entice enemies of liberal globalization from both left and right. The conclusion to this is that liberal democracy that was hegemonic for more than twenty years seems to be increasingly on the defensive.

What this article attempted to show through the three personages we deal with and their *entours*, is precisely the threat to liberal democracy coming from the world of ideas. The question however, what is wrong with re-legitimizing the underpinnings of the European conservative revolution? What is wrong with the proposal of an Europe of its peoples, which in its best case scenario might fit the best wishes of liberal nationalists in Scotland, Catalonia or Flanders. In more sense than one they might fit into a Rawlsian law of peoples, or to the liberal idea of non state nationalism. What might be wrong thus, with the plea to give a new role to Russia through the idea of Eurasia, and in general of a shift from full globalism to regionalist spheres of influence?

In his remarks on the German Conservative revolution, Fritz Stern gave a response that fit both for the past as for nowadays politics. While he praised the conservative revolution spiritual quality which led a lot of its intellectuals to the opposition of the Third Reich he remarked the problem. When we “ abjure reason, glorify force, prophesy the age of the imperial dictator, can one condemn all existing institutions, without preparing the triumph of irresponsibility?” (Stern,1974,298). In the same vein today, we may claim that by undermining the discourse of

individual and minority rights, and the global institutions that protect them, we might destroy the institutions preventing fascism.

What we attempted to prove through the connection of the New Right with the old conservative revolution, is that their idea of 'Europe of its peoples' contains a clear anti liberal message. European 'post national' pan-nationalism, is precisely the new face of post fascism or of a new regenerative fascism, which associates the right of peoples to discrimination and exclusion of 'others' however, applauds the 'others', Iran, Corea, the Third World to do exactly the same.

The question thus is what should liberals do? While this is an issue well beyond the limits of this article, still I summarize three tracks to be debated. The first option is to stand strong and defend principles at all costs, especially minority rights. Liberal democracy is not dead yet, and liberal parties of the center left and right, although seriously damaged are still important. What seems to be obvious however, is that if liberals will to survive they should understand that the debate of rights starts again and what has been assumed as a battle that has been won, is not anymore. For some scholars "the insistence that existing policies are always positive sum (win-win), and the unwillingness of liberal elites to acknowledge and discuss the destabilizing force of diversity and migration, are what make liberalism for so much synonymous with hypocrisy."(Krastev, 2017, 25) However, even if liberals cannot give up that certainty, the real picture is that they will have to do what is generally been done in democracies, and was left aside for a long time : convince at the political and intellectual level, of why liberal defense of minority rights should be an unalienable right and why that is good for all.

The second option leads to a non recommended strategy, appealing to liberals for a long time: the idea of 'militant democracy' strategy, namely using courts to ban Right wing exclusionist

free speech. In France the movement for an ideological vigilance against the New Right in the 1990's was a failure. That attitude is what populist New Rightist most expect in order to add a 'victim aura' to their appeal. Hiding in 'safe spaces' and banning the 'freedom to insult', is the best rewards populists could wait for.

Finally the third option is what Mabel Berezin defines as the 'normalization of the Right'. Parties of the center right in order to survive politically may endorse part of the Populist Right agenda. This is happening in Austria, in certain ways in Germany (multiculturalism has utterly failed announced Merkel) and might happen in other European countries, mostly harmed by the double challenge of cultural and economic pressures.

This might represent a partial triumph of the New Right however, without war, storm-troopers, and a fascist revolution. J M. Le Pen proclaimed on the evening of his defeat in the first round of the national elections of 2007, "We have won the battle of ideas: nation and patriotism, immigration and insecurity were put at the heart of the campaign of my adversaries..." (Berezin, 2011) Those words are a shortcut to the real meaning of what should be expected. Multiculturalism will go down to clandestinely, immigration will be stopped, and political incorrectness dressed as free speech will be on the march.

What is certain however, is that the first option despite shortcoming still should prevail for liberals. While standing for principles will hardly make populism disappear, at least liberals might retake a fight under a non-hegemonic situation, although with still a wide popular support.

To conclude, a realistic development of this new confrontation could be forecasted by Levitsky- Zimblatt claim about the loss of shared norms as a condition to a democratic breakdown. However, while democratic breakdown as shown by Levitsky would be the worst case scenario, still, we should consider by default also the possibility advanced by Ch. Moluffe: namely an

agonistic democracy, in where two competing (enemies) coexist in agony.( Mouffe, 2005 ) This is certainly a non-optimum outcome and even a bad one. However, a ‘cold’ civil war, in which enemies will have to survive and find a tactical modus vivendi, or statu quo, until new conjunctures allow for a definition might be what whether we like or not, is the world we will have to live in.

Indeed no shortcuts and no rose gardens for liberals anymore

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