

THE ÜMLAUT

Europe's Neoreaction Is Scarier Than You Think

By Dalibor Rohac
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Andrea's post on neoreaction—or 'Dark Enlightenment'—provides a good overview of this odd blogosphere- and Twitter-based intellectual phenomenon. But it would be a mistake to dismiss the views advanced by Mencius Moldbug and his followers as inconsequential, if quirky. The very same opinions, with slightly different labels, are making headway in Europe, already affecting lives of millions of people.

If that sounds like an exaggeration, you just haven't been following the news lately. Here's a report on last week's remarks by Hungary's Prime Minister's Viktor Orbán at a retreat of Hungarian political leaders in Romania:

"I don't think that our European Union membership precludes us from building an illiberal new state based on national foundations," Orbán said, according to the video of his speech on the government's website. He listed Russia, Turkey and China as examples of "successful" nations, "none of which is liberal and some of which aren't even democracies."

True, Orbán is more likely a populist than a committed neoreactionary ideologue. But his dismissal of liberal democracy is not accidental. It reflects a genuine intellectual undercurrent spreading not just through Hungary but through much of Europe.

The European neoreaction goes under different names, including 'European New Right', 'identitarianism', 'archofuturism' or 'Eurasianism'. Labels aside, here are the movement's key ideas, which make it a close relative of the American Internet neoreaction:

- 'ethnopluralism' and anti-immigration rhetoric,
- rejection of liberalism, both in its classical and modern form, and a distrust of democracy,
- rejection of egalitarianism,
- veneration of Vladimir Putin's leadership,
- 'Eurasianism' (i.e. building closer ties with Russia) as a substitute for fostering trans-Atlantic political ties,

- a distrust of capitalism, especially of the international variety, which is seen as corroding the tradition and sense of community,

European neoreactionaries may lack the interest in techno-futurism displayed by their American counterparts. They also emphasize Russia's role in the world more—although, interestingly, Moldbug has a poem about Slobodan Milošević, who is typically depicted as a martyr by the Kremlin. What is more, the Europeans come with a fair amount of esoteric baggage, such as 'traditionalism'—the idea, expounded by the French intellectual René Guénon, that the great world religions share a common root.

And what role is played in all this by Hungary? Well, it was in Hungary that “a principled, conservative and radically patriotic Christian party” has recently become the second most important political group in the country. So it is only fitting that Budapest will be the venue of this year's 'Identitarian Congress' (h/t).

The conference, with its sleek website, an optional walking tour of Budapest, and “evening cocktails and hors d'oeuvre,” is co-hosted by the white supremacist, Montana-based National Policy Institute, the Nordic 'identitarian' website Motpol, and the publishing house Arktos Media, which published not only Alain de Benoist's *The Problem Of Democracy* but also his book on the Nazi legal theorist Carl Schmitt, as well as tracts with such charming names as *The Northern Dawn*, *White Identity*, or *The Homo and the Negro*.

The speakers at the conference include Márton Gyöngyösi, the Jobbik MP who once demanded that lists of Jews who pose a national security threat be drawn, American 'racial realist' Jared Taylor—who also spoke (surprise!) at Hans-Hermann Hoppe's 'Property and Freedom Society' conference in Turkey last year—and Manuel Ochenreiter, a German journalist who works for Russia Today and defends German ethnic identity “against de-nazification” in his spare time.

But, most importantly, there will be Aleksandr Dugin, the guru of the 'Eurasianist' movement and an advisor to the Speaker of Russia's State Duma, Sergey Naryshkin. Using rather bizarre language, Dugin sees human history as a conflict between maritime civilizations (Carthage, Athens, Great Britain) and land-based ones (Rome, Sparta, Russia).

In more immediate terms, his agenda consists of a wholesale rejection of modernism, with its central element of decadence, liberalism. Because Marxism and fascism failed, liberalism is now “threatening to monopolize political discourse and drown the world in a universal sameness, destroying everything that makes the various cultures and peoples unique.” That's why we need, Dugin argues, a *Fourth Political Theory*, which will understand the individual primarily as part of a community, rooted in tradition, and will blend collectivism, authoritarianism, and religion. In order to achieve that, says Dugin, we need to connect “the Third Rome, the Third Reich and the Third International.”

Having taken over Russia and Hungary, neoreaction is a genuine political and ideological force to be reckoned with. And the West is not totally immune to it either—

just think of Nigel Farage’s professed admiration for Vladimir Putin, Nick Griffin’s infatuation with Russia’s democracy, Austria’s FPÖ’s defense of the annexation of Crimea, or Marine Le Pen’s red-carpet treatment during her recent visit to Moscow (note her picture with Dugin’s boss at the link).

Andrea concludes her assessment of American Internet neoreactionaries by saying that they “are mostly benign. Their numbers are small and their symbols are dense. Crazier individuals escape scrutiny by flying under mainstream ideological banners.” A look across the Atlantic may serve as antidote to such complacency. European neoreaction—with which the American variety shares much of its intellectual pedigree—is patently insane, well-resourced, and increasingly powerful. And that does not bode well for the future.

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