

Contemporary Russian liberalism

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This article analyzes contemporary Russian liberalism through the prism of competing trends of moderate pluralist and monistic radical thought. The author focuses particularly on the pluralist trend, less well known in the West, arguing that its prospects are more promising over the long term. Ideological and tactical differences within the liberal camp in Russia are compared with those in the West, both for the purpose of emphasizing that such differences are not unique to Russia and to show the connections between Russian and Western strands of liberal political thought.

Keywords: liberalism; Russia; value pluralism; liberal universalism; Western liberal tradition

Introduction

Russian liberalism is often studied, understood, and presented through the prism of the radical liberal opposition, whose views may be equally appealing and disturbing to commentators, depending on their political preferences. Yet, activists and thinkers of the radical liberal opposition, though espousing liberal ideas, cannot meaningfully claim the right to speak on behalf of Russia's liberal school of thought. This paper argues that contemporary Russian liberalism must be studied through the prism of two competing trends – moderate pluralist and monistic radical. The discussion will briefly cover some of the main aspects of the monistic tradition, but will mainly focus on the pluralist trend of Russian liberalism, as this intellectual current is under-represented in Western media and academic debate. The essay will suggest that, due to political temperance and a nuanced approach to Russia's socio-political realities, this trend of Russia's

liberalism is more promising and conducive to the entrenchment of the liberal idea in Russia.

Before going any further, it is important to note that the division of liberalism into different groupings is not unique to Russia. Ideological and tactical disagreements within liberal practice are also significant in the West. Bearing in mind that Russian political thought is highly derivative from its Western counterpart, it seems feasible to discuss the main divisions within the Western liberal trend and then search for echoes of these debates in Russia. This approach will determine the paper's structure. The first section discusses the two competing

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faces of the Western liberal tradition, while the following two sections examine the nature of ideological discourse within the Russian moderate pluralist and radical monistic liberal trends, with a particular emphasis on the pluralist tradition.

Liberalism as a family of ideologies

It has long been observed that liberalism is not a unified ideology but rather a family of concepts, debates, values, institutional arrangements, and practices (Weinstock 2007, 244; see also Appiah 2005). John Gray (2000, 44) writes: just as liberal regimes cannot be identified by a range of essential properties, so liberal theorists and thinkers are not alike in having common ideas. It is a basic error to search for the essence of something as heterogeneous and discontinuous as the liberal tradition.

Hence, we can treat liberalism as a family of metaphysical and practical proposals directed toward achieving the good life, which shares the common principle of

individual liberty and a belief in the existence of competing human interests. From this point, liberalism roughly splits into two separate broad directions. The first direction represents the philosophy of a rational consensus built on the universal primacy of liberty; it defends the possibility of discovering one true way for humans to flourish. The second direction represents the philosophy of value pluralism, which is driven by the recognition of diversity and multiplicity of incommensurable and conflicting models of ethical human life. Pondering the nature of modernity – the socio-political framework within which liberalism was born and flourished – Eisenstadt (2002) observes that it (modernity) was permeated with two contradicting forces. Some were leaning toward generalizations and universality, whereas others resisted that universal push, thus recognizing an intricate pattern of different forms of modern socio-political organization.

The first, universalizing ‘monistic’ (Parekh 2006) tradition was chiefly inaugurated by John Locke and Immanuel Kant, and inspired earlier by Aristotle, who thought that the right answer rests on a correct premise and cannot contain errors (MacIntyre 1998, 142). It was developed in the twentieth century by the liberal consensus politics of John Rawls, Brian Barry, Friedrich Hayek, Western modernity champions led by Talcott Parsons, and followed loosely by liberal multiculturalists such as Kymlicka (1995) and Joseph Raz (1986). These twentieth-century proponents of the monistic tradition advocated the establishment of a liberal basic framework that could host the diversity of various lifestyles, whose flavor and essence will generally reflect the liberal nature of the consensus. This line of thought considers liberalism as a general recipe, ‘universal in authority and application,’ and views liberty as the primary value (Gray 2000, 117–121; Parekh 2006, 81–84). The problem of social stability and justice is resolved by ‘ensuring equal access to the maximum possible number of liberties to all

members of the community and making sure that people act in accordance to their will without interference from others' (Skinner 2002, 165). It is also often believed

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that this liberal consensus represents a genuine 'breakthrough' of humanity and has a 'genuine normative-functional superiority' over other forms of political organization (Wagner 2012, 6–7). Hence, it is argued that progress and modernization would invariably place demands of liberty on societies, and, as societies become more modernized, they will move politically toward this rational Euro-American consensus (see Lipset 1960; Diamond and Marks 1992 as examples).

The second tradition was partly a legacy of such non-liberal thinkers as Thomas Hobbes and David Hume, who recognized the multiplicity of competing and conflicting individual lifestyles and searched for a pattern of coexistence of such individuals within a society that is not bound by ideological commitments. It also inherited the ideas of J. S. Mill, who implicitly regretted the universalizing push of his time and believed that various societies were as unique as individuals. Therefore, universal philosophy, though possible, must be mediated by a 'philosophy of national character' (Parekh 2006, 42; Gray 1995, 2000; Berlin 2006). Moreover, this tradition chiefly represents the intellectual outcome of the Enlightenment's critics, led by thinkers such as Vico and Herder. Herder, in particular, replaced the global notion of universal 'civilization' with a particular idea of 'culture' (Clark 1969; Gray 2000, 47–50; Berlin 2006, 223–236; Parekh 2006, 67–76).

In the twentieth century, pluralist liberal thought developed and advanced in various directions, often going beyond the strict limits of liberalism yet retaining its underlying liberal nature. This thought was espoused and promoted by value pluralist liberals such as Berlin (2006), Gray (2000), Parekh (2006), and Rorty

(1983): moral realists such as Williams (2005); communitarian liberals such as Taylor (1994); numerous historians of modernity and theoreticians of the multiple modernity thesis such as Lyotard (1984), Wagner (1994, 2012), Huntington (1996), Bauman (2000), Eisenstadt (2002), Huntington (2006), and Hobson (2012); as well as post-Marxist champions of radical democracy such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Mouffe (1988), and Daly (1999). All these thinkers claim, in one form or another, that modern life could flourish in different patterns, sharing a very loose underlying background. This, as Berlin argues, requires a peaceful coexistence among different cultures, not their merging into a universal civilization, as Locke and Kant envisaged earlier (Gray 2000, 52–54; Wagner 2012, 4–5). Hence, liberalism, as these thinkers argue, is preoccupied, alongside other ideologies, with the development of a model of ethical life for humanity, and the liberal project is just one of many conflicting and incommensurable paradigms that could suggest a path for achieving such a life (Williams 2005, 22–23).

In many ways, these two faces of liberalism echo the dual approach to the concept of freedom advanced by Isaiah Berlin. The positive idea of freedom, according to Berlin, has grown out of the tradition of German idealism represented by Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. This thought believes in the ‘inviolable inner self’ and places human beings at the center of the universe as an ultimate creator and author of one’s life. This inevitably results in claims that people are solely responsible for the construction of everyday morals, values, ideas, and the entire structure of the Post-Soviet Affairs 3

world around them (Berlin 2006, 193; see also Pinkard 2002). Therefore, this pattern treats freedom, in Spinoza’s lexicon, as a recognized necessity, which is required for self-creation and the building of the outer world. It follows that, when the liberating nature of the self-creationist model becomes evident to all, society would be able to form an organic orchestra in which each will play his/her chosen

instrument to the best of his/her abilities (see Berlin's [2006] critique of Fichte). Therefore, freedom in this particular type of society becomes a 'fact of life' (Raz 1986, 369–370, 394), a universal condition binding such a society with the principle of personal autonomy.

Another competing interpretation of freedom is a negative one. Here we speak merely of the absence of constraints on the agent who can choose among meaningful alternatives of the good life (MacCallum 1967; Gray 1995; Skinner 2002; Berlin 2006). And it is in this idea that the origins of value pluralism lie, in that value pluralism assumes that the fate of humanity is not determined and not bound by the necessity of freedom wrapped in a particular narrative of an ideal community. Rather, freedom comes across as an opportunity to make a 'meaningful choice' among conflicting and incommensurable alternatives (Gray 1995). At times, such a choice may entail opting for a set of alternative social benefits that might be viewed as superior to individual freedom (Gray 1996, 154–155; Huntington 2006) – much like Aristotle's claim that ideal forms of government may change over time depending on varying circumstances (see Skinner 2002, 67). Hence, the two competing interpretative forces tear the idea of freedom in two separate directions. The first force stands for personal autonomy and views freedom as a necessary condition that enables humans to achieve their ends. The second advocates a mere non-interference in the process of choicemaking.

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These competing traditions of liberal thought fuel competing trends within the realms of policy-making, political rhetoric, and activism, as well as political practice. In Russia, these trends split liberal thought into two rival groups: pluralistic moderate and monistic radical. Both trends share their commitment to freedom, constitutionalism, rule of law, and equality of opportunity, yet they differ in their attitudes toward the nature of truth, knowledge, and progress. One side

admits that life can flourish in differing forms that should be taken into account, while the other defends the Eurocentric political path toward freedom as an ultimate destiny. This disagreement, which may come across as minor at first glance, becomes consequential to their subsequent answers to the host of existential questions that concern Russia's place in history, international relations, pace of reforms, attitude toward society, Russia's identity, and finally, tasks for the future.

Monistic radical liberalism is geared toward a radical reconstruction of the Russian state and society, aiming for the full convergence of Russian and Western political and socio-cultural patterns on the basis of the Western liberal consensus. This goal determines their domestic and foreign policy proposals, as well as accompanying political rhetoric. The pluralistic moderate group views liberalism as a family of ideologies, and similar to its Western counterpart, claims that the

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European version of liberalism has no privileged place among other doctrines and paths toward achieving an ethical life. These thinkers argue that, if the Russian people were to reject liberalism, it would be 'regrettable' (Pivovarov in Strizhak et al. 2011) but should be countered through discourse, persuasion, and discussion rather than through the imposition of the liberal truth, the 'ideological war on conservatism' (Yanov 2003), or nihilistic offense. Hence, this branch of thought also aims to achieve European liberal values, albeit through accounting for various factors and realities that influence and shape domestic and international debates and not through the radical recasting of Russia's society. In what follows, I will briefly account for the central aspects of the monistic idea and will move on to a thorough treatment of the pluralist trend, with a view toward bringing it out of the media/information shadows.

Radical monistic liberalism

Arguably, Russian monistic liberalism originates in the nineteenth-century ideas of Peter Chaadaev (Yanov 2003), who thought that Russia will have no tradition of her own, no past, no future, no history, unless it chooses to learn and integrate with Europe (Copleston 1986). Chaadaev also argued, in line with the monistic fashion, that human history represents a single unified enterprise that has a sole purpose of creating a Kingdom of God on earth. The West, due to its adherence to Catholicism, has already embarked on this project and is on the way toward creating a just society.² Thus, Chaadaev warned that Russia's future lies solely and squarely in her movement toward the family of fraternal European peoples and argued that this movement corresponds with Russia's geostrategic interests (Yanov 2003).

Today this trend accords with the view that there is a universal path of societal development, which lies in the Western/Euro/America-centric version of liberal democracy and the market economy, and sooner or later the world will be built on the basis of the Western political system. Proponents of this view argue that Russia represents a distorted replica of Europe (*isporchennaya Yevropa*; Yanov 2003) and that the aim is to overcome this distortion sooner rather than later for the purpose of altering the course of Russia's history toward full convergence with 'proper' Europe. Many such critics aim to subvert the stable reproduction of the 'Russian matrix' as the historic existential pattern, which, in their view, forbids Russia's convergence with the political paradigm of the West. These authors appeal to the West, who in their mind should not accept Russia patiently 'as it is.' Rather, the task of the West, they argue, is to understand Russia's difference and engage it with for the purpose of helping it along the path of compliance with the political norms adopted and practiced in the West (Shevtsova 2008).

Hence, in the foreign policy realm, monistic liberals come across as unit-level constructivists (led by Peter Katzenstein) who claim that domestic challenges

determine countries' international identity. Because the construction of European liberal society at home remains a priority for these thinkers, they argue that Russia must move away from her traditional geopolitical constraints, seen in the need to Post-Soviet Affairs 5

assume responsibility for an immense territory occupied by culturally diverse ethnic groups and endowed with vast natural resources. Yanov (2003) calls on Russia to abandon her extant geostrategic ambitions and look at the example of Europe, which is now composed of smaller states that have long since forgotten their moments of 'geopolitical glory.' Only through revising her place in the world's arena, he argues, could Russia fully merge with Europe and adopt the European course of development, which, in his mind, represents Russia's genuine historic goal.

At this juncture, radical liberalism meets with Russian ethnic nationalism, which also has a monistic liberal nature.³ These activists propose to reconsider Russia's territorial integrity for the sake of implementing the model of a 'cosy European home' (Shevchenko and Belkovskiy 2012). They claim that Russia must focus on constructing her European identity, which stands at odds with the culture and civilization of the North Caucasus regions, and from that point of view such regions could be territorially sacrificed for the sake of implementing the European choice to the full. These authors appeal to Russian ethnic nationalism, which is opposed to Russian civic patriotism and traditionalist multiculturalism (Chebankova 2012a), and hopes to access the European space as a Europeanized, territorially reduced, but 'civilized' region. Konstantin Krylov, the leader of the National Democratic Party, and, with some exceptions, Stanislav Belkovskiy, are the most notable intellectuals within this wing (Krylov 2012).

Monistic liberals lament the situation whereby the Russian public consistently reject their advocacy of the Euro-centric liberal consensus, and forgoe it in favor

of the country's traditional thinking, in which Russia's geopolitical constraints determine domestic debates. These thinkers view Russia's conservative traditionalism as a historical dead-end, and using harsher language, a 'cancerous tumor on the body of Russia.' Boris Makarenko claims that when this cancer becomes metastatic and threatens Russia with imminent death, society calls a liberal doctor to save its life. The doctor does his job and when the patient recovers, it chases the doctor out, accusing him of all mortal sins, including state betrayal.⁴

Disappointment with the consistent failures of liberal normalization projects often fuels the radicalization of the monistic discourse. While some monistic liberals adhere to the production of balanced, intellectual, and logical critique, some resort to ideological reductions, simplifications, explicit self-diminution, and subversive rhetoric.

In such cases, the literature, journalism, and social media of this segment rebel against the norm-giving elements of the Russian tradition and target the 'Russian matrix' from all possible directions. These concern stable collective identities such as the nation-state, attitudes toward the Great Patriotic War, the issues of Church and religion, and matters concerning traditional family and gender. A host of writers – including Novodvorskaya (2012), with her notorious branding of Russians as a 'cancer of humankind,' Alfred Kokh, Artemiy Troitsky, Yuliya Latynina, Yevgeniya Albatz, Rynska (2013) and many others – often act as a

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radical subversive force that seeks, through profanation and fascinating literary expressions, to target the very heart of Russia's traditional lifeworld.⁵ It is debatable whether these expressions of political nihilism are a temporary trend or a stable identity internalized by Russia's monistic thinkers. In many ways, it is too early to draw such conclusions, at least in Russia's post-Soviet political context.

What is clear, however, is that nihilistic rhetoric has been a stable literary and political style of many monistic liberals since the 1990s, which has been well documented by researchers (Lukin 2000; Garadzha 2006; Khakamada 2008).

Moderate pluralist liberalism

Why pluralist?

Now I shall turn to the discussion of the moderate pluralist tradition of Russian liberalism, which will compose the rest of this essay. Before proceeding to the discussion of the main tenets of this intellectual trend, we must contextualize it within the history of ideas and understand why thinkers of this tradition fall under the entire rubric of liberal value pluralism. This strand of contemporary liberal thought can be viewed as an intellectual continuation of a wide variety of trends, both Western and Russian. In many ways, representatives of this line could cumulatively reflect the image of a middle-ground Russian liberal intellectual of the nineteenth century, Ivan Turgenev, championed by the historian of ideas, Isaiah Berlin. Berlin (1994, 302) colorfully paints this liberal as a 'well-meaning, troubled, self-questioning' moral being, bearing 'witness to the complex truth' painfully torn between revolutionary radicalism and support of state tyranny and despotism.

Apart from these middle-ground liberal figures, pluralist liberals also somewhat inherit, with some exceptions and exclusions, the tradition of the nineteenth century *pochvenniki*, who as opposed to much of Russia's radical intellectual scene of that period, studied, admired, and respected Turgenev's texts. The *pochvenniki* group championed a distinct Russian culture and socio-political tradition and were critical of Western consensus rationalism. At the same time, they tried to avoid the idealization of ancient Russia – a trend that was characteristic of the original Slavophiles – and pressed for 'the development of a Russian culture enriched with what was believed to be of value in Western life and

civilization' (Copleston 1986, 153).

More importantly, most of the nineteenth-century liberal intellectuals echo the German Romantic tradition and believed that there is no predetermined course of history, no stable pattern to life, and no laws of nature that could fully capture and explain the functioning of human society. As Berlin (1994, 295) notes, they saw 'tendencies and political attitudes as functions of human beings, not human beings as function of social tendencies.' This perception would subsequently help many pluralist liberal thinkers to cast aside the idea of an inevitable arrival of one single model of societal harmony applicable to the entirety of humanity (Filatov 2006; Inozemtsev 2013, 29) – an idea that appears today in the guise of the global promotion of democracy and liberal capitalism and an idea that, within the Russian Post-Soviet Affairs 7

scene, is realized through the push of monistic radical liberals toward the rigid and fervent compliance with and idolization of all Western norms.

Clearly, this nineteenth-century influence represents the forerunner of Russia's contemporary liberal-pluralist idea that Western modernity should serve as a mere procedural framework, which must be filled with Russian cultural substance.

Pluralist liberals admit some universal significance of the model couched in Western notions of freedom, reason, and unhampered economic activity. Hence, they claim, much in the fashion of their pluralist counterparts in the West, that the world cannot expect a mere diffusion of the Western political and economic model on a global scale without it being enriched with particular cultural, historic, and economic patterns of the hosting localities. As Igor Bunin observes, we cannot deny that Europe will always be a building block of Russia's liberal identity; and therefore we cannot completely reject the historic experience of European countries. On the other hand, we must understand that Russia is building her own country, her own system, and resolving her own particular problems. (Bunin

in Tretyakov et al. 2008)

Thus, if history does not have a rigid, predetermined pattern, or if this pattern has only a very loose nature, it is up to individuals and societies to be the authors and creators of their own paths (Mezhuyev in Tretyakov et al. 2005; Prokhorova in Tretyakov et al. 2005; Inozemtsev 2013, 29). On this path, such thinkers argue that peoples and nations are entitled to make mistakes, sometimes tragic and unforgettable. Yet, they are also entitled to have the chance to rise, reassess their alternatives, and learn from the past without pathos or abstract rhetoric, without the digression to ideological dogmatism, but in a rational manner of gradualism, education, and critical deliberation. Pivovarov (in Strizhak et al. 2011), Professor of History at the Moscow State University, being repelled by the Soviet experience, patiently states:

this was a mistake made by my people at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet, I believe that many other peoples in the world made analogous mistakes. More importantly, I believe that my people will find the inner strengths to recover from those mistakes, reassess their destructive potential, and find, through rational analysis and discussion, an alternative that could correct the wrongdoing.

This dispassionate debate, in his mind, should take into account various aspects of Russia's past, and focus on future ways of assuring individual liberty, creating civilized and cultured life devoid of despotism, barbarism, suffering, injustice, and oppression.

Finally, the ideas of pluralist liberals also intersect, at some points, with contemporary Russian conservatism, which argues that both Russia and Europe represent two streams of one European civilization and share one common cradle. Conservative publicist Narochnitskaya (2011) writes that both Russian and European traditions

gave the world glorious examples of Latin and Orthodox spirituality. These remarkable

trends expressed two different methods of finding God, as well as the two different forms of apostasy. Goethe's Faust became the epitome of an inquisitive and independent Western mind, which does not tolerate any higher judge above him, while

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Ivan Karamazov of Dostoyevskiy demonstrated a daring challenge of the Russian pride, which does not want to put up with the connivance of evil on earth.

This is not the place to discuss particularities of the conservative intellectual trend.

It simply bears repeating that the nerve of Russia's moderate contemporary conservatism runs through appeals for a dialog between the two great cultures, Europe and Russia, their mutual complementarity, and mutual enrichment through argument, debate, and discussion. The fates of both Russia and Europe are entangled and intersected, conservatives argue. Yet, being two parallel subcivilizations, they must reflect on their common history, and not speak of another universalist project that could push European borders toward the Russian heartland, assimilating her to the new norms and morals, and 'entrusting the Council of Europe to be the judge of Russia's civilizational maturity' (Narochnitskaya 2011).

It is also important, however, that, while echoing some aspects of Russia's conservative thought, the heart of pluralist liberals still lies with those who stand for defending the values of individual liberty and the West as the forerunner and champion of these values. They ache when the advocacy of Western liberalism takes ugly forms of revolutionary radicalism, political nihilism, and national self-denial (Lukin 2000; Chebankova 2013b, 77–79), yet they would not explicitly distance themselves from those radicals, in particular if this would mean helping the cause of fundamental conservatism, state tyranny, and presumptuous bureaucracy (Ryzhkov 2013).⁶ Just like conservatives, they argue passionately that Russia is an integral part of the great European culture, they feel European,

but they go a step further than their conservative colleagues to claim that it is with Europe that Russia should bond and travel (Polyakov 2004; Remchukov in Tretyakov et al. 2008; Prokhorov 2012; Inozemtsev 2013; full analysis in Bunin in Tretyakov et al. 2008; White 2011, 308). As opposed to fundamental conservatives, who think that Russia is European but not Western (Gvosdev 2007; Chebankova 2013b), these thinkers become the proponents of European liberal thought at home, hoping that it could gradually take root and secure a stable and genuine following. They observe with some sadness (Kara-Murza and Pivovarov in Tretyakov et al. 2011) that Russia has a 'turbulent love affair with Western liberalism,' and claim that the goal of Russian society is to make this volatile relationship of extreme passion and ensuing suffering more harmonious and 'stable akin to an old, and perhaps slightly boring, marriage' (Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2011).

These themes run through the entire thought of Russia's pluralistic liberalism.

Yet, the latter can be best summarized and investigated through four main propositions of a practical and metaphysical nature. First, moderate pluralistic liberals are convinced that Russian liberalism is a home-grown, indigenous phenomenon that has a long history and tradition, and not a distorted copy from the West, which may seem the case to some casual observers. Second, they claim that the main purpose of Russian liberalism is to contain social chaos through limiting both the state and the mob. This determines that the relationship of these liberals

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with the state has the character of opportunistic co-operation. Third, and partly following from the second, these liberals are focused on the problem of the progressive economic development of Russia. On this basis, they argue (Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2008) that Russian liberalism has a primarily legal, rather than metaphysical or political, character. This marks in part its

distinction from Western liberal thought, which is represented by all dimensions of the metaphysical, legal, and political. Fourth, they claim that the idiosyncratic nature of Russian liberalism is also a reflection of the immanent duality of Russia's identity – an identity that is being torn between geopolitical and cultural/normative aspects of being. These proposals deserve further investigation.

Genesis of Russian liberalism

One could not fail to notice that Russian philosophy, and in particular Russian liberalism, has been derived from and is dependent on Western thought, and evolved mostly in response to the preceding Western tradition. This situation, however, is neither surprising nor unique. Porter and Gleason (1998, 62) rightly observe that the history of Russia cannot be 'viewed as *sui generis*, but instead as being in the context of European history.' Malia (1994, 6–10, 28–30; Kotsonis 1999, 125) also views Russian political thought of all eras through the prism of a European history of ideas. In particular, he analyzes Russian Communism as a strand of European thought that harks back to Rousseau's radical advocacy of democracy and equality, German idealism with its faith in dialectic and self-development, and Marxism that combines these two trends with the idea of progress toward a classless society with full equality.

On a more general note, political ideas always develop in a dialogical fashion. The evolution of the Western philosophical tradition, for example, is heavily indebted to the Greek and subsequent Roman thought. As Bernard Williams (2006, 3) notes, 'the legacy of Greece to Western philosophy is Western philosophy' and further observes that Western philosophy 'not only started with Plato but spent most of its life in his company' (2006, 148). By using the same analogy, one could claim that the legacy of Western thought to Russian philosophy is Russian philosophy and that the Russian philosophical tradition was born, bred, and spent most of its time in the company of Western philosophy.

From this follows the confidence of pluralist liberals that, although developing in dialog with Western thought, the Russian liberal tradition is still a viable, potent, and self-sufficient branch of the liberal family of philosophies and practices. Different thinkers cite relatively close dates from which Russia could start citing the history of her liberalism. Kara-Murza (2007), Professor of Philosophy at the Moscow Institute of Philosophy, names the 1762 coronation of Catherine II as the birth of Russia's liberal tradition. Pivovarov (in Tretyakov et al. 2008) claims that Russian liberalism dates back to 18 February 1762, when Peter III issued a decree that relieved nobility from compulsory state military service. From this time on, both Kara-Murza and Pivovarov argue (see Kara-Murza and Pivovarov in Tretyakov et al. 2011) that the liberal idea was on the steady rise in Russian socio-political and cultural life.

Pivovarov, Kara-Murza, and many other pluralist liberals, such as Vladimir Pligin and Valeriy Fadeyev, trace a chain of continuous episodes in Russia's history, during which the liberal tradition developed, evolved, and gained ground in both institutional and societal dimensions. Of particular importance were Catherine the Great's consultations with one of Russia's first liberals, Count Nikita Panin, the reliance on liberals during the Patriotic War of 1812 by Alexander I, and the Decembrist revolt of 1825. To continue, liberal reforms under Alexander II (Filatov 2006; Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2011) represented a milestone in the evolution of the liberal practice in Russia, while Peter Stolypin's reforms reflected the time when the demand for the liberal idea and reforms had become evident both for the state and society (see Kara-Murza and Pivovarov in Tretyakov et al. 2011). Furthermore, in a debate with their Western colleagues (Starr 1982, 25; Robbins 1987, 16–19; Petro 1995, 44–47; Dahlmann 1998; Porter and Gleason 1998), Russian liberals (Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2008) claimed that the

history of the zemstvo contributed a great deal to the theory and practice of Russian liberalism.⁷

Against the backdrop of historic evidence, Pivovarov (in Tretyakov et al. 2011) concludes that 'Russia has very strong traditions of liberalism. She is permeated with liberalism, and the tradition of Russian liberalism is reinforced with people, ideas and institutions.' Liberalism, Pivovarov (in Tretyakov et al. 2011) continues, represents a very strong driving force of Russian history, even though it has been partially defeated by other competing trends. Pivovarov (in Strizhak et al. 2011) laments that liberalism 'experienced an unfortunate setback during the events of the 1917 Revolution and Civil War.' However, he follows, 'it has resurfaced from the 1950s onwards,' when the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years witnessed, among other trends, a new resurgence of liberal thought.

The Soviet era, therefore, was not devoid of the liberal idea (see English 2000 and Timofeyev 2004 as examples of Western analysis that sustain similar claims). Moreover, Pivovarov (in Tretyakov et al. 2011; see also Filatov 2006) goes so far as to claim that anything good that has been conducted in Russia during the past 300 years was initiated, developed, and led by the liberals. Kara-Murza, Bunin, and Remchukov (all in Tretyakov et al. 2008) and Fadeyev (2013) partly agree with this by arguing that liberals have always been 'on duty for Russia' and have always been needed 'during her darkest days' in order to lead her, through reforms, stabilization, and progressive political-economic remedy, to 'better days and new accomplishments' (Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2008).

Chaos and alternatives

From this it follows that the principal task of pluralist liberalism is seen as the need to achieve societal stability and progressive development and to contain chaos and 'barbarism' (Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2008). Yet, in order to meet such challenges successfully, these thinkers advance a specific liberal recipe that rests

on the principles of individual liberty, restriction of power by civil society, justice, and economic development (Kara-Murza 1995, 413). The demands for individual liberty and societal involvement in governance are often in conflict with the need to ensure political order and societal stability (Huntington 2006). Hence, pluralist liberals strive to establish the most suitable way of navigating between the Scylla of statism, personalized and expanded government, micro-managed control of society, selected application of laws and inherent censorship, the suffocating hypocrisy of state propaganda and the Charybdis of individualistic atomization of society, the loss of historic ground and narrative, territorial disintegration, in which Russia could join Europe only as a set of separate independent liberal region-states, and the self-destruction of the Russian civilization, which has long been seen in the integrative momentum of Russia's peoples to coexist, cohabit, and share the destiny of their common historic and geographic space.

Based on these considerations, moderate pluralist liberals identify three main threats to social stability. The first threat is the state, which through tyranny, despotism, elitism, exclusion, and corruption could become a source of social chaos and destabilization. The second enemy is the mob, which is, in their view, easily persuadable, excitable, radically destructive at the height of its dissatisfaction, but deeply conservative at the time of reaction. The last, and by no means least, enemy of stability is radical monistic liberalism, which may seem surprising to some casual observers, but logical to Russia's pluralist liberals who hold this ideological strand as one main cause of the defeat of the liberal idea in their country. Talking about these threats, Kara-Murza (1994, 1995, 2007) often draws on the thought of Aristotle, for whom social chaos stems from the unimpeded rule of the majority masses (seen in the Aristotelian political form of democracy), as well as from despotism of an elitist and self-seeking state (seen in

the Aristotelian political forms of tyranny or oligarchy).

In both cases, unethical life and chaos occur through the digression of these respective ruling factions toward the promotion of various sectional interests, instead of the promotion of the common good (Taylor 1995, 243–248; Skinner 2002, 32–33). These ideas are also found in late medieval and Renaissance thought, which gave rise to modern republicanism. Machiavelli pondered a similar dilemma and claimed that the threat to peace and stability can emanate from the masses, as well as from the ‘powerful individual or faction’ within the state that could capture power, reduce community to servitude, and rule in their ‘selfish interests instead of promoting the common good’ (Skinner 2002, 129, 143, 200–203).

In many ways, the appeals of Russia’s liberals to classical Western thought in an attempt to curb chaos are not surprising. The evident oscillation between the state and the crowd as potential sources of social instability runs across much of Western critique of the modern age. To some, the contradiction that arises between the need to assure personal autonomy and sustain institutions of social management and control represents the central problem of ‘early liberal modernity’ (Simmel 1971; Foucault 1977; Wagner 1994; Eisenstadt 2002; Le Bon 2002). This dilemma is well in line with fears of majorities held by early constitutionalists in the US (Dahl 1956). In a more general tone, Malia (1994, 31)

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claims that ‘democracy has carried a negative charge of mob-rule and anarchy’ for much of the history of human thought, and only obtained positive connotations with the introduction of universal suffrage in America and France during the 1820s and 1830s, and 1830s and 1840s, respectively.⁸

In this light, we have to examine the attitudes of Russia’s liberals toward both the state and society. To capture the essence of pluralist thought on society, we have to turn to the classical modernist idea of progressivism (Giddens 1990;

Wagner 1994). The speeches and texts of Russia's pluralist liberals are permeated with the echoes of J.S. Mill, who claimed that liberalism, and the Doctrine of Liberty, can only be applied to a culturally mature society – a society in which an individual understands that rights come with responsibilities, that liberty can and should be deployed for the purpose of human self-flourishing, for pursuing meaningful goals and tasks, for choosing between varying alternative lifestyles, which would help reflect and realize a person's talents to the best possible degree (Gray 1996, 85, 120; Inozemtsev 2013, 36). This also resembles Huntington's (2006, 5) concern that the 'equality of political participation' must be matched by the 'art of associating together,' – i.e., that freedom of participation must be practiced in civilized and progressive societies and within a particular institutional context.

Mature communities, Russia's pluralist liberals (Kara-Murza 1994, 1995, 415) argue, could sustain their stability by deploying the Lockean recipe of state and civil society (Keane 1988; Cohen and Arato 1992; Taylor 1995; Ehrenberg 1999). Here, society is pre-political and it builds up the state from below.⁹ Yet they stress that to achieve such a result we must be dealing with a particular type of society. Building on the claim that not all societies, which merely assure individual autonomy, could be called civil, these thinkers argue against the premature imposition of the liberal idea upon a nation that is not ready to embrace this social paradigm. Kara-Murza (1994; see also Inozemtsev 2013, 33) states that 'archaic society built on the principles of normative redistribution does not require liberalism, or democracy and freedom as such.' He proceeds to argue that 'liberalism which was imposed "from outside" of its indigenous and organic context into the context, in which it is not required, could quickly digress to the destructive atomization of society and the ensuing social chaos.'

Kapustin (1994, 2004a, 2004b; see also critique of Kara-Murza 1994)

formulates his vision of the central question of liberalism as ‘how to ensure a stable social order if an individual has been let free’ – a formulation that invariably raises a question about the nature and maturity of such an individual. This sentiment does not only feed from J.S. Mill but also stretches back to the thoughts of nineteenth-century Russian liberal thinkers, who made a clear distinction between the concepts of freedom (svoboda) and volition/whim (volya). The former is associated with responsibilities and virtues that must accompany rights and autonomy, and the latter with unrestrained rebellion, which could have devastating consequences, in particular in its Russian interpretation.

These liberals’ fear of the mob extends to the fear of an ‘individuated’ mass consumer – self-focused, preoccupied with abominable interests, gullible, and

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what is worse, easily manipulated and radicalized (Durkheim 1972, 115; Sennet 1978; Lasch 1979; Dodd 2005, 20–21; Inozemtsev 2013). To these ends, Kara-Murza (1994), Vadim Mezhuyev (in Tretyakov et al. 2005) and other liberal thinkers are rather apprehensive of post-modern liberal trends that ‘leave an individual in the vacuum of stable values and draw him into the mass consumption of popular culture, politics, and norms.’¹⁰ Inozemtsev (2013, 30–31), a professor at the Higher School of Economics, views the process of individuation as capable of questioning the demand for democracy in contemporary societies.¹¹

Kara-Murza (1994) refers to the past and sides with Simeon Frank and Alexander Izgoyev, who both claim that the October Revolution was the triumph of ‘individuation’ (Durkheim 1972, 115),¹² and not ‘Russia’s innate collectivism,’ as it is usually perceived. This individuation was wrapped in the collectivist rhetoric of Bolshevism, which targeted all stable values of the past and promised freedom and prosperity in some brighter future. Yet, when the time came to share power, resources, and influence of the present, those collectivists soon revealed

their individuated nature, and social interaction took place much in the Hobbesian fashion of war of all against all for most of the 1920s, until the Leviathan settled the score closer to the 1930s.

The fastidiousness of these liberals toward the type of society they seek could partly explain the gulf that exists between these thinkers and the Russian public at large. As Vitaly Tretyakov argues, 'many in Russian society feel that our liberals want to create liberalism and the liberal state only for their own kind' (Tretyakov et al. 2013) and that 'inherent snobbism, intellectual arrogance, and the genuine dislike of Russia creates a bad reputation for our liberals' (Tretyakov et al. 2011). Yet, pluralist liberals, while talking about the need for constructing liberal values at home, are careful about placing the blame for their elusion squarely on society's shortcomings – this is the job they largely leave to the radicals and when the battle gets too hot, quickly distancing themselves from this group. Pluralistic liberals claim that, while society needs to be progressive enough to embrace liberal values, the process of constructing a liberal culture should be incessant and persistent (Khakamada 2008; Ryzhkov 2011). In some ways, they deploy the Kantian model of transcendental reason, and hope that at some point, the political culture of Russian society could entrench itself in the climate of liberalism, and that it is at that point that every member of society would realize the necessity of liberty as a major factor in sustaining order and harmony (Filatov 2006; Khakamada 2008; Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2008; Ekspert 2013; Fadeyev 2013). They stress that the patient's attempts to promote liberal values should never cease and highlight the significance of this task in potential political situations of the future. Kara-Murza (1994) warns that, if the old order cannot ensure stability and further restrictions do not yield positive results, but the liberal safety net at the same time has not been prepared, this situation could lead to the worst outcome of a "new barbarism".

Pivovarov (in Tretyakov et al. 2005) similarly argues that it could be rather tragic to overlook the moment at which society could take a leap into liberal politics. In 14 E. Chebankova

this situation, the consequences could be equally destructive, as in the case of introducing liberalism from the outside and imposing it in a forceful manner too early. Pluralist liberals argue that Russia was ready to embrace the liberal political system as early as at the end of the nineteenth century, and yet rejected this path due to individuation, chaos, and radicalism that eventually resulted in the step toward Bolshevism in 1917 (Tretyakov et al. 2005).

Now, what is their attitude toward the state? Historically, Russian liberalism viewed the state as its dialogical partner, and, if managed properly, virtuously, and progressively, the source of social stability. Kara-Murza (in Tretyakov et al. 2008) argues that 'classical Russian liberalism' – by which he assumes its moderate pluralist wing of the nineteenth century – 'has never been an enemy of the state or Russian statehood.' He continues, that these liberals were awed by the results of the French Revolution, which to their mind stemmed from the degradation of the state. Therefore, Russian liberalism always sought to save the state from slipping into self-seeking destructive policies, whose results may lead to popular protest of that magnitude. When they persisted, they have always succeeded. More importantly, they have always saved Russia, and Russian statehood, from collapse, economic decline, and defeat in the international arena. (Tretyakov et al. 2008)

Many Western observers also note that the relationship of pluralist liberals with the state has always had, in the words of Balzer (1991), an air of 'reciprocal ambivalence.' Porter and Gleason (1998, 62) claim that in the nineteenth century, the liberal class had a 'Janus-like relationship with the regime; that it accepted the legitimacy of the state as the motor force of development while simultaneously

seeking to free itself from the government's overweening nature.' Some observers (Porter and Gleason 1998) lament this situation and claim that due to this predicament, Russia's civil society remained immature and incomplete.

Yet, it could be argued that such an attitude toward the state fits well with the liberal Lockean West European tradition. If we view civil society as an antagonist/negation of the state, much in the Marxian fashion (Keane 1988; Cohen and Arato 1992; Lewis 1992, 1–16; Seligman 1992, 7–8; see examples of this approach in Schmitter 1985, 96–100; Diamond 1996, 236–237), then we can sustain this critical charge against Russian liberalism. If we, however, accept civil society as an entity partly coterminous with the state, in either the Hegelian, Lockean, or even Hobbesian trend, then this claim could come across as somewhat more dubious. For parts of civil society in this trend are actively co-operating with the state in various aspects of social life (Keane 1988; Lewis 1992; Inoguchi 2002; Chebankova 2012b, 2013a) and have the dual goal of curbing the state's influence and assisting it in the prevention of social chaos.

It is on that basis that Kara-Murza argues that the main enemy of Russia's contemporary liberalism remains social chaos, and from that point of view, liberals 'do not want to demolish the state. Rather, they want to improve it with the view of ensuring harmony, prosperity, and stable development' (in Tretyakov et al., 2008). Konstantin Remchukov also notes that 'as a liberal, I am not willing to make myself an enemy of Russian statehood. Rather, I merely disagree with Post-Soviet Affairs 15

some of the policies of the extant government and offer different recipes of doing things in various spheres' (in Tretyakov et al., 2008). With this in mind, Russian moderate pluralist liberalism proposes 'reformism from above,' which assumes gradualism, opportunism, and co-operation with various social forces, including the state, and systematic distribution of the liberal idea among the

general public.

Legalism and progress

When the position of these liberals on the state and society becomes clear, some issues still remain. Listening to their deliberations on containing societal chaos, one cannot help but wonder where the borders of this chaos are and which particular social conditions could be defined as chaos. Would these thinkers consider the post-modern process of redefining collective identities as chaos? At the end of the day, they primarily target the national identity and affiliation with the nation-state, creating in their stead global–local alliances of similar-minded individuals (Eisenstadt 2002; Tretyakov et al. 2009a, 2009b). Could the new social movements that redefine the borders of state control and the entire process of social interaction be considered as chaos? This dynamic also introduces new lifestyles, sometimes shocking, sometimes radical and conflicting, and from that point of view uncontrolled, chaotic, and presenting a challenge to stable identities. In other words, the question one might ask these liberals is how do they define the borders of the political?

It is interesting that, while being aware of this intellectual challenge, Russian pluralist liberals do not give concrete answers to these questions. They would debate some or most of these problems on different occasions with different effect (Tretyakov et al. 2005, 2009a, 2009b, 2011). They avoid providing a systematic definition of chaos and refuse to draw the borders of the political in the contemporary Russian context. Bearing this omission in mind, they claim that Russian liberalism, as a tradition and practice, has always somewhat ignored the political dimension of social life and focused rather on its legal aspects (Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2005; Kara-Murza 2007). Boris Chicherin and Peter Struve – the leading liberals of the early twentieth century – were lawyers and contributed much to the development of the legal thought and tradition in Russia (Filatov 2006).

Contemporary pluralist liberals, though not professional lawyers, stress the primary significance of reforms within the legal dimensions of the political system. Nikolay Svanidze, Russia's liberal historian, claims that 'first and foremost I want to achieve equality of all citizens before the law. I want to create a situation in which we will not have first- and second-class citizens, regardless of their religion, political attitudes, and professions' (in Solov'yov 2012). Similarly, the leaders of Russia's oldest liberal party, Yabloko, mostly stress the need for judicial reform, for they consider it as the immediate remedy to the social problems facing Russia today. In their view, the rule of law, equality of all before the law, and real independence of the courts are needed before Russia will be able to proceed to more complex questions of defining the borders of the political and

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determining the interplay between individual freedom and social control, as well as the nature of social chaos.¹³

Another important observation concerns the fact that the legal argument is often geared to defend private property rights and economic activity. The logic behind these claims is that, in conditions of fair play, a legal economic order will lead to prosperity and the establishment of a solid middle class that could fuel the demand for greater political inclusiveness and be mature enough to foster appropriate institutions of political participation. Valery Fadeyev (2013; and in Tretyakov et al. 2013), the editor-in-chief of the influential journal *Ekspert*, invokes a classical understanding of liberalism as a 'doctrine capable of sustaining nation-state capitalism, stable economic growth and development, as well as an efficient bureaucracy capable of providing an administrative framework to these dynamics.' He also sees the idea of personal autonomy, in which each individual is free to pursue a meaningful project of self-realization, as vital to the realization of progressive economic needs. To these ends, he is determined to create a system of

protecting property rights, in which judicial decisions will be impartial and balanced, and medium-sized, large, and small businesses will be enabled to develop in a stable way.

In many ways, the emphasis on the legal dimension of social life becomes entirely logical if we were to treat Russia squarely in terms of European history. Indeed, legal and constitutional order emerged and entrenched itself in leading European countries well before the fully fledged democracy. Legalism represented the first building block of 'civil society,' which was seen essentially as 'economic society' and called upon to protect economic activity and property rights (Malia 1994). Development of the 'economic society,' in the absence of other social benefits, involved significant brutality and invoked serious human costs during the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries (Engels's gripping account of the condition of working-class Britain provides revealing evidence). Nevertheless, this was a gradual process, leading to the formation of a comprehensive system of rights and freedoms and more inclusive democratic governance with which we are familiar today. Marshall's (1949) account of the evolution of rights in Europe systematizes this sequence of events. Marshall argues that 'civil rights' first appeared in the eighteenth century to signify the rights to free economic activity and protection of private property; political rights, seen as the ability to take part in the political process through voting and forming political associations, emerged later in the nineteenth century, while social rights, viewed as the minimum entitlement to social benefits, socio-political equality, and the subsequent ideological empowerment of the societal periphery, accelerated throughout the twentieth century.

Hence, with this historic perspective in mind, the legal economic lenience of Russian pluralist liberalism can be seen more as a sign of political temperance rather than a philosophic omission. Such thinkers realize that Russia, having

eliminated her 'economic civil society' throughout the Soviet decades, will invariably require time to resolve this predicament before it is able to develop other aspects of political democratic governance. They also realize that the legal dimension must come first in the sequence of rights evolution; only when this aspect is implemented in full can Russia focus on other sectors of her sociopolitical development. In this light, Kara-Murza claims that any modernization of Russia must begin with the modernization of her legal institutions, which would subsequently enable the harmonious functioning of economic, political, and social sectors of life (Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2007).

Some Western authors echo this idea from different perspectives. While disagreeing on the priority and causality between economic market and political legal order, many Western authors agree that political democracy must be attempted only after the state has confirmed its capability to effectively govern society and navigate the networks of a market economy through a host of legal institutions. Huntington (2006, 7–9), for example, argues that, in order to achieve a more inclusive and democratic government, societies must first establish a capable legal order that can provide stable governance (2). For him effective and legitimate institutions serve as a precondition for subsequent development in the economic, political, and social spheres. Huntington (2006, 7–8) claims that we 'can have order without liberty' but we cannot have 'liberty without order.'

Malia (1994, 506–508) is more focused on the economy. He claims that the main problem of post-Soviet Russia is to build 'a liberal economic order while simultaneously developing a democratic polity.' Yet, he also argues that 'it is a much more arduous task to create the myriad institutions that make a mature market economy than it is to fashion a political democracy' (507) and that 'there are no examples of political democracies without a market-driven economy' (508).

One potential caveat is that such emphasis on legality may lead to a situation in which the law is used to defend the interests of the privileged economic class or the state, neutralize political activity of society, and subsequently produce a deficit of legitimacy. This problem could be investigated through the Western debate on juridification initiated by Otto Kirchheimer and continued by Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault (Teubner 1987, 9–12; Ashenden and Owen 1999; Anders 2012, 97–99). Juridification is understood in terms of the gradual increase of rules, laws, and regulations that, on the one hand, proclaim rights and freedoms and, on the other, strictly define the areas and procedures within which such freedoms can be applied, thereby restricting the lifeworld and depoliticizing social processes. This somewhat brings us back to the idea that most Western states had established their extant political systems through expanding rights, on the one hand, but using force to entrench such a system on the other. Habermas (1987, 522–547) in his Theory of Communicative Action traces these processes through the ‘waves of juridification’ that began with the establishment of the early absolutist state and ended with the emergence of a global human rights system, which has both empowering and constraining effects on individuals. If we were to think about the situation in Russia in these terms, we could first suggest that the legal emphasis echoes a distinct path of European civilization, of which Russia is a part; and second that juridification is an ambivalent phenomenon that led overall to the expansion of rights and participation rather than to their limitation.

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The duality of Russia’s identity

Moderate pluralist liberals further reveal their political temperance in the debates surrounding Russia’s international identity and its impact on the evolution of values, norms, behavioral patterns, and political goals at home. In this area, their thought echoes, though not explicitly articulated theoretical terms, the systemic

constructivist school led by Alexander Wendt. Wendt (1992, 1994) argues that, much like the interpersonal communication of humans shapes their acts and identity in everyday life (Goffman 1959; Mead 1967), the nature of geopolitical discourse determines states' identities and behavior in the domestic and foreign arenas. I raised this point earlier in the framework of pluralist liberals' distinction from their monistic counterparts, with the former espousing a unit-level constructivist approach, which claims that domestic debate determines foreign identity. From this point of view, pluralist liberals argue, Russia's international standing sets the country's goals, objectives, and commitments and compel her to behave in a certain manner at home and abroad. Following Vladimir Solov'yov on the one hand, and Lev Gumilev on the other, these thinkers observe that Russia has both civilizational (European) and geopolitical (Eurasian) identities (Kara-Murza 1998).

Geopolitical struggles in the Eurasian space, as well as Russia's geographic location on both continents, shape her Eurasian geopolitical identity as a large state with interests in both Europe and Asia. Russia's historic striving to become a European power since the time of Peter the Great, and perhaps even earlier when her uneasy relationship with the European West was shaped in the medieval climate of religious and cultural rivalry – with Poland and Lithuania representing the most meaningful historical-existential alternatives – shape her European identity. With Peter, Russia's European identity obtained clearly civilizational existential tones, for it was in Europe where Russia's main battles for power and influence took place, and it is with Europe that Russia held most of her cultural dialog during the past 300 years (Schmemmann 1979; Filatov 2006).

This situation fuels the duality of Russia's domestic and international discourse. The European civilizational identity drives domestic debates on liberalization and progress toward European norms, forms, and values, as well as

sustaining international discourse on Russia's commitments to the ideals of democracy. The Eurasian component fosters arguments on Russia's separate historical path, which from this geostrategic point of view stems from a far broader range of factors than the mere failings to modernize the country's economy and technological potential, as some monistic thinkers would claim (Dubin 2004, 305–306, 316; see also Filatov 2006). The perceived need to follow this separate civilizational path somewhat sustains Russia's ardent advocacy of international law and UN institutions that could guarantee, secure, and preserve the country's cultural sovereignty and political distinctness within the extant Westphalian system.

Hence, both European and Eurasian discourses are lodged in the parallel and equally legitimate aspects of Russia's history, and both are the rightful occupants

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of the country's ideological scene. Kara-Murza (1998) observes that the state usually assumes responsibility for the geopolitical Eurasian dimension of Russia's identity and does the job of honoring Russia's commitments in her vast geographic space. The liberal opposition, on the other hand, feels responsible for the civilizational aspect of Russia's identity that is geared toward popularization of European norms and values in the cultural, political, and social spheres.

Understanding the immanent duality of the Russian identity, Kara-Murza (1998, 2009) argues, could become a cue to shaping a harmonious approach to Russian politics and society and constructing the civic nation that will be able to transcend the seemingly unbridgeable epistemic division between the traditionalist (Eurasian) and liberal (European) discourse (Byzov 2006; Gorshkov 2007, 2009, 17–18).

Instead of building a consensus on either a liberal or Eurasian foundation, whose formation will invariably involve a zero sum game for both parties, pluralistic liberalism calls for coexistence between these identities. Such

coexistence, however, is not seen in merely leaving each competing discourse to its own devices. This would lead to radicalization of both epistemes, simplification of the debate, the eventual annihilation of one side by another, and the subsequent reconstruction of the hegemonic discourse, which would take place through consensus around the winning discourse and invariably possess indoctrinating overtones. Instead, Kara-Murza (2009), following Russia's twentieth-century liberal philosophers Georgiy Fedotov, Fedor Stepun, and Vladimir Veidle, calls for the open recognition of Russia's epistemic duality of identities, gradual deconstruction of each competing discourse, finding the rational ground in each of these strands, cutting out the radical components, and reconstructing both doctrines on the basis of their mutual understanding. These proposals somehow echo Wittgenstein's suggestion that we cannot disagree unless there is a lot on which our thoughts agree. Therefore, Kara-Murza (2009) argues that the task of contemporary Russian liberalism is neither a slavish idolization of the state, nor the perpetual mimicking of oppositionist sentiment or an ardent attempt to uproot the government; and it is certainly not a radicalization of the liberal discourse with the view of imposing liberalism forcefully upon the reluctant population. Rather, the task is viewed as resetting (*perezagruzka*) liberalism so that it could occupy a rightful place in the debate that takes place over the construction of Russia's new civic identity.

Conclusion

This essay has argued that Russian liberalism is composed of two main trends, moderate pluralist and monistic radical. Both represent rightful and essential parts of the country's liberal discourse. The paper claimed that, while monistic radical liberalism is geared toward the comprehensive restructuring of Russian society with the view to achieving its full compliance with European norms, the pluralistic side is focused on resolving the problems of social chaos and order through

achieving a particularly stable, liberal, form of governance, which would invariably take into account some distinct Russian realities. The essay suggested
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that the pluralistic trend is a more promising branch of Russia's liberalism, which is capable of capturing the hearts of the Russian people.

These liberals could, in the view of the author, present a meaningful alternative path for Russia that is opposed to conservatism and tradition that are invariably based on some religious, abstractly spiritual, autocratic, imperial, and statepatriotic notions. Yet it is also opposed to liberal radicalism that often threatens, through political nihilism and an 'ideological war,' to inflict irreparable and deadly wounds to Russia's dignity, self-awareness, and civic integrity. Policy developers, public opinion makers, and those merely interested in bridging socio-cultural gaps between Russia and the West must be more attuned to engaging representatives of the pluralist liberal tradition (a trend that is slowly gaining ground, see Dutkiewicz and Inozemtsev 2013). I am not suggesting that this must take place at the expense of their intellectual exchange with the radicals. It is merely a thought that the uncritical playing to the whims of the radicals not only prevents Russia from building democracy but also creates a bitter feeling on the part of Russian society that sees Western agency in promoting dogmatic and radical ideas, which are alien to both Russia and the West.

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Notes

1. Despite giving rise to competing policies and interpretations, both negative and

positive aspects of freedom could be combined, and represent mutually reinforcing and interdependent interpretations. MacCallum (1967, 319), in particular, argues for the combination of the two aspects of freedom: 'in recognizing that freedom is always both freedom from something and freedom to do or to become something, one is provided with a means of making sense out of interminable and poorly defined controversies.' Nevertheless, the division serves as a useful analytical tool on many occasions. More recently, a similar argument has been advanced by Swift (2001).

2. Chaadaev granted Catholicism a special role in achieving this goal, due to the distinctly political nature of the Catholic Church. Indeed, Russian thinkers of that period saw the political nature of Catholicism in the perceived movement of the Catholic Church toward the state, with a view toward assuming state functions. This project of Catholicism spawned debates within Russian society and gave rise to the conservative 'Dostoyevskiy project.' The latter proposed to achieve God's Kingdom on earth through the opposite dynamic – i.e., the movement of state and society toward the Church, reification of Man, and constructing all terrains of human life on the basis of the New Testament. Thus, while the Catholic Church moves toward the state and becomes distinctly political, the Orthodox Church invites the state and society to move toward it and thus become distinctly religious. The corresponding perceptions of law, freedom, and authority therefore become distinctly different in the two cases. These issues were a subject of debate between Westerners and

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Slavophiles of that period (Pelikan 1974, 10–11; Meyendorff 1975, 21; Shmemann 1979, 58–64; Kharkhordin 2005, 48–51; Chebankova 2009, 318–319).

3. This intellectual alliance is not a surprise, given the academic research on theoretical compatibility between nationalism and liberalism (Kymlicka 1997).

4. Boris Mararenko in Tretyakov et al. (2011).

5. For, example, Panyushkin (2005) claims:

it would be easier for everyone if the Russian nation would cease to exist.

Even Russians would feel better, if they no longer had to work on their nationstate but rather turned into a small ethnos like Avars or Khanty.

Romanova (2013), Russia's radical liberal journalist, targets war memories by branding the new national cemetery for military veterans as a 'graveyard for pets.'

Rynska (2013) makes disrespectful remarks about Russian pensioners, and Troitskiy (2010) brands Russian men as a type that 'must become extinct.'

6. This could explain the uneasy but functioning alliances among various strands of Russian liberalism and the inclusion of radically different representatives of liberal thought into unified political organizations.

7. The extent to which the zemstvo (local elected council) influenced Russia's political life represents a matter of academic debate. Suffice it to say that the authors cited here hold somewhat differing views of the relative importance of the zemstvo in the Russian political scene, with some arguing that the local councils faced significant restrictions on their functioning, and some citing the increase in the zemstvo budgets toward the end of the Imperial era. Despite the disagreements, however, it is clear that the zemstvo system represented an important political development and fueled the evolution of liberal thought and practice in Russia.

8. Notwithstanding such historical dilemmas, contemporary Western liberalism is increasingly leaning toward deliberative aspects of democracy, advanced by Ackerman (1998), Habermas (1989), and their numerous intellectual allies (Held 1988; Nino 1996; Guttman and Thompson 2004), and the left, which gains prominence with the evolution of post-modernist trends and the increasing political significance of new social movements that invariably represent subaltern and disadvantaged segments of the societal periphery. This aspect creates a dividing line between Western left-leaning liberalism and the Russian liberal trend that, by following the intellectual chain from Aristotle to the Renaissance and reiterating the fears of early constitutionalists,

gravitates toward the right side of the political spectrum. Indeed, many Russian liberals (Kara-Murza in Tretyakov et al. 2008, 2011; Pivovarov in Tretyakov et al. 2011) admit the conservative overtones of their thought, and often include the supposedly conservative early nineteenth century Slavophile movement into Russia's liberal tradition. Professor Pivovarov claims that, while disagreeing with many of its premises, he admires Russian conservatism. Conservatism, in his mind, also has a strong tradition and raises questions of immediate philosophical and political significance to Russia (Pivovarov in Tretyakov et al. 2011).

9. Deploying Kant and Locke somewhat links these thinkers with monistic liberalism, for both Kant and Locke, as mentioned above, gave rise to the universalist drive of liberalism and modernity. Nevertheless, intellectual encounters of various strands do not detract from the general pluralistic flavor of this thought. Moreover, the division of liberal thought should be considered for schematic illustrative purposes only, and is not always rigidly strict.

10. Mezhuyev later somewhat changed his approach to post-modernity, beginning to view it as a positive development and a logical continuation of the modernity project. He then claimed that Russia must first achieve modernity at home – through building institutions of law, order, and equality of opportunity for all, and then proceed to the progressively superior post-modern stage. 'Because I live in Russia' claimed

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Mezhuyev in later debates, 'I am a devout modernist, but if I were to live in the United States, I would have stood for the post-modernist positions' (Mezhuyev in Tretyakov et al. 2009a).

11. He also, however, ponders the aporia of highly segmented multiculturalism that somewhat questions liberalism and democracy in the West. Inozemtsev (2013, 31–32) claims that the future of democracy depends far more on 'the answer to this question than it is on the pace of democratic transformations in Niger or on the level

of economic success of the liberal autocracies of South-East Asia.’

12. Emile Durkheim (1972, 115) draws a fine distinction between individualism and individuation. Individualism is a moral condition that demands a person to live and work as a specialist and to feel as a responsible citizen. Individuation, on the other hand, urges people to ‘fend for themselves’ and entails atomization of society.

13. Material from public speeches by Sergey Mitrokhin and Grigoriy Yavlinsky on various occasions.

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