



Russia, France, and the Idea of Europe

Julie M. Newton

St Antony's Series



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Julie M. Newton

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*For my mother, Julie Harris Newton, 1925–1999,
and my father, Russell Brown Newton, Jr,
with gratitude for their love, support and example*

Acknowledgements

This book is the outcome of an enduring intellectual interest in the other side. As a Southern American raised in a Southern family, I deliberately studied in the North to explore customs and ideas that were as foreign to me as a different country. As an American student during the tense Cold War days of the first Reagan Administration, I set out to understand the Soviet Union to the greatest possible extent in the idealistic, if not naive, hope that better knowledge would bring the two sides together. And as a citizen of the leading country of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), I chose to pursue my doctorate in Europe in order to comprehend better why European and American approaches to the Soviet Union – if not the world – often diverged, and sometimes radically so. Along the way, I became particularly interested in the powerful triangular relationship between the United States, Europe and the Soviet Union, now Russia, which was and continues to be one of the most critical dynamics in international relations. From Moscow's viewpoint, France lay at the tactical crossroads of this triangle, and a study of Moscow's policies towards France's Fifth Republic provides one of the best vehicles for exploring it. For this inspiration, I am particularly grateful to my first of three intellectual gurus, Robert Legvold, the former Director of the Harriman Institute at Columbia University and my advisor and mentor at the time. He motivated me, and indeed all of us lucky enough to be in his classes, to dig beneath monolithic Soviet rhetoric in order to glean competing points of view and puzzle together a more complex story. His own interesting work on Franco-Soviet relations filled me with enthusiasm about this otherwise under explored subject, and his encouraging words gave me the confidence to cross the Atlantic for my DPhil.

Arriving at St Antony's College, Oxford in 1986, I did not have a specific hypothesis to test, and I wondered whether my findings would be considered systematic or even valid back on 'my' side of the Atlantic, where international relations studies strove to be scientific. Instead, I began with a batch of questions to explore, and was fortunate enough to be guided by the exceptional Professor Archie Brown, my second academic mentor, caring supervisor and now life-long friend. Basking in the rich and lively intellectual atmosphere of St Antony's College that encourages an appreciation of regional culture, history, politics and economics in the study of international relations, and taking cues from Archie's astute instincts about Mikhail Gorbachev and his profound knowledge of the Soviet Union, I felt glad that I was not tethered to some rigid hypothesis that I was forced to test. Indeed, as it dawned on me that Gorbachev's 'new thinking' had its roots in the Khrushchev 'spring', and as I realised that Soviet European specialists,

including those writing about *France*, had quietly promulgated over thirty years pro-Europeanist ideas that eventually helped transform the entire European continent, I was relieved to be in a programme that allowed me to pursue my hunches in the spontaneous, if sometimes chaotic, manner that learning often entails. With many thanks to the International Exchange Board (IREX) and to the US Fund for Peace (Compton scholarship), which gave me the additional association with USSR Academy of Sciences, I spent the heady year of 1989/90 in Moscow conducting some 100 interviews with Soviet specialists and officials. I am grateful to officials such as Gorbachev's advisor on Western Europe, Vadim Zagladin, the head of the Soviet/Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MID) department on Western Europe, Nikolai Afanasyevskii, the former MID expert on France, Anatolii Kovalev, and former Politburo members Pyotr Shelest and Gennadii Voronov. And I would particularly like to thank the numerous specialists and intellectuals who generously gave me their time and thoughts. Chief among them are: Vladimir Baranovskii, the late Daniil Melamid (Mel'nikov), Vyacheslav Dashichev, Sergei Karaganov, Andrei Grachev, Andrei Kortunov, Georgii Arbatov, Evgenii Ambartsumov, Igor' Malashenko, Vladislav Zubok, Andrei Zagorskii, Ivan Tyulin, German Diligenskii, Yurii Zamoshkin, Vladimir Lukin and Oleg Bykov among many others. I would also like to thank my Compton Scholarship co-winner, Robert English, whose intellectual comradeship, integrity, kindness and sense of humour deeply enriched my stay in Moscow. I feel fortunate to count Rob and his wife, Liza Tucker, among my dearest friends.

Upon my return to St Antony's, I had the added privilege of working with Dr Alex Pravda, my third mentor and treasured friend without whom I could have not written this book. Deeply thoughtful about structures and dynamics of international relations, Alex impelled me to think hard about the sources of international change as I strove to explain the extraordinary revolution in Soviet European policy. In his wisdom, he cautioned against placing excessive emphasis on any one source, while he gave me the tools and courage necessary to take a stand. Indeed, I strongly believe that ideas rank among *primary*, not secondary, forces of international change and should thus be given more burning attention than they have been throughout the Realist-dominated history of International Relations studies. This book offers a case in point. The fact is that Russia's historical and conceptual pull towards Europe, which burned in the minds of many Soviet intellectuals for decades and stands out in this history of Franco-Soviet/Russian relations, played a primary role in revolutionising Soviet foreign policy in the late 1980s. In addition, since 1991, Russia's abiding pull towards Europe, but also its fragile identification with Europe, its disillusionment and anger with the West as Russia failed to become a part of the West in any significant way, continue to affect the tone and content of Russian Westpolitik more than we may think.

As I researched the last, tumultuous decade in my quest to finish my story and make it current, both Archie and Alex were always there to help. Apart from the joy of discovery that writing such a book brings, the joy of working with both Archie and Alex, and the privilege of gaining their enduring friendship and intellectual comradeship, have made this project infinitely worthwhile.

Back in Paris where I had the good fortune of living while writing the majority of this book, I owe thanks to the late Maurice Couve de Murville, Dominique Moïsi, Isabelle Facon, Anne de Tinguy, Alexander Adler, André Bellon, among others, for their interviews and ideas. I also want to thank my editor, Alison Howson, for her professionalism and exemplary patience. I am grateful to Betty Faucon for her meticulous help in revising the bibliography, to Tanya Shilovskaya for her research assistance and to Paula and Dominique Dias for their daily support and irrepressible cheerfulness. To my wonderful children, Malcolm and Madeleine, I offer my deepest love and apologies. I hope they will forgive my prolonged absences – not to mention absent-mindedness. Joannie, Helen, Will, Rusty, Matt and, of course, my father and mother all deserve my deepest thanks. Finally, to my husband, Marc, I do not know how to express the extent of my gratitude for his help, patience and inspiration. I will take a lifetime to try.

JULIE MALCOLM NEWTON

List of Abbreviations

ABM	Antiballistic Missile Treaty
CEFD (or CFDP)	Common European Foreign and Defence Policy (the European Union)
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMEA/Comecon	Council on Mutual Economic Assistance
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ESDI	European Security and Defence Identity
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GCC	General Crisis of Capitalism (Soviet terminology)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
ID	International Department inside the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee
IMEMO	Russian acronym for the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Soviet/Russian Academy of Sciences
INF	Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces
ISKAN	Institute of USA and Canada of the Soviet/Russian Academy of Sciences
MBFR	Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions Talks
MGIMO	Russian acronym for the Moscow State Institute of International Relations
MID	Soviet/Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MLF	Multilateral Force (1960s)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NTV	Independent Television Channel
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCF	French Communist Party
PfP	Partnership for Peace Agreement
RAF	Rapid Action Force
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative ('Star Wars')
SVOP	Council on Foreign and Defence Policy
WEU	West European Union
WTO, Pre-1991	Warsaw Treaty Organisation
WTO, Post-1991	World Trade Organisation

Often the reader will find three quotation marks around a quote: a single mark accompanied by a double mark to indicate a quote within a quote. Though common editorial practice reduces the triple marks to one, it is necessary here to keep them all. Soviet writers often quoted a Western source when they wanted to make a controversial point. Thus, maintaining all the quotation marks is of important substance.

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Introduction: Looking Through a Prism of Russo-French Relations, 1958–2001: a View of Russian European Policy, Change and the Power of Ideas

If we want to say a small number of big and important things about world politics we would do better to focus first on states' ideas and the interests they constitute, and only then worry about who has how many guns.

(Alexander Wendt)

It is rewarding when a bilateral state relationship of tertiary strategic importance focuses our attention on fundamental questions of international relations. Russo-French relations do just that. An analysis of that relationship over the last four decades brings to light the course of change in Moscow's policy towards the West. It forces us to consider the causes of that change. And it leads us to the following thesis: ideas, beliefs and identity rank among the primary sources of change in international relations. This introduction sets the stage for a case-study approach to questions of causality in international change. It begins by sketching the evolution – and at one point, revolution – in Russian European policy, as seen through the prism of Russo-French relations. It then turns to the inevitable questions about the causes of that evolution. From there, these pages explain why and how this case study works. And in the end, they concern themselves with the central challenge of this book: to show that, more often than not, ideas represent pivotal forces explaining international relations behaviour.

Sketching the evolution of Moscow's policies towards Europe, 1958–2001

What a paradox that Russian policy towards Europe over the last four decades rarely focused on Europe first. In fact, over the vast swathe of the post-Stalin era to the present, most of Moscow's European policies have been more centrally concerned with the United States than with Europe itself. With only a couple exceptions, those policies boiled down to countering or

2 Introduction

balancing American power in Europe. Europe was thus reduced to the primary theatre for a Moscow–Washington *kto-kogo* [who will win?] power game. And Western Europe became a mere derivative object or instrumental tool in that game.

For decades during Soviet history, this kind of policy paid off for Moscow. It paid off largely because the Soviet Union took advantage of the lucky ace it got dealt in its balancing game with the United States. That ace, albeit an unintended one, was Gaullist France. As Fifth Republic France strived for greater independence and influence within the Atlantic Alliance, it inadvertently coincided with the Soviet Union's anti-coalition strategy towards the West. At those points of coincidence, Moscow exploited Gaullist foreign policy as a tactical policy 'instrument', a critical lever in the Soviet struggle to influence, corrode or enhance those East–West and West–West relationships of central Soviet concern. By making the most of such 'instruments' (however unintended on France's part), Moscow gained the leverage it needed over the United States and America's crucial European ally, the Federal Republic of Germany, to attain Soviet goals in Europe. Indeed, the USSR's active exploitation of the French 'instrument' throughout the 1960s paved the way for the achievement of Moscow's two greatest and connected foreign policy priorities by the early 1970s: formal Western acceptance of a divided Europe split along post-war borders, and US agreement to strategic military parity and political *détente*.

Even more significantly, the steady (albeit coincidental) existence of policy 'instruments' such as Gaullist and post-Gaullist France (for example, France remained the USSR's most unswerving supporter of *détente* even after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan) and Moscow's success in exploiting those instruments throughout the 1960s and 1970s, encouraged the Kremlin's belief in a vision of Europe that was fundamentally flawed and ultimately unsustainable. That vision upheld a rigidly divided Europe, whose division would be maintained *not* through any attractiveness of Communism's social system or the prestige of its economic might. Instead, Europe's division would be *enforced* through the coercive effects of excessive military might and political repression in the socialist camp. Thus armed, Soviet Moscow would then embark on *détente* – rather, 'armed *détente*' as it is called here – with Western Europe in order to generate economic rewards at home and diplomatic leverage abroad. This hard-lined conceptualisation of Europe underlay the long-lasting Soviet European policy that this book dubs mature 'instrumental Europeanism': a negatively US-centred policy that relied on available political 'instruments' in Europe, such as Gaullist France, in order to punch holes in the Atlantic Alliance through which the USSR could generate diplomatic leverage over American power in Europe, and thus deepen Europe's rigid political and military division.

But by the mid-1980s, it was clear that such a policy had hit a dead-end. The USSR's traditional policy 'instruments' in the West were gone. Western Europe, even including France, had all but ended its separate *détente* with the Kremlin. The Atlantic Alliance was tighter than ever. And European leaders, chief among them the socialist French President François Mitterrand, had enthusiastically embraced the 1983 American/NATO decision to install new intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe.

At this point, only the most quixotic predicted that the Cold War would end. But amazingly, only a few short years later, it did end. Playing the crucial role in that end was the Gorbachev leadership's revolutionary approach to Europe. Gorbachev's European policy – a genuinely Europe-first policy that accepted and even welcomed a strong American presence in Europe – represented only part of the broader revolution in Soviet foreign policy, but the salience of its role was like that of the heart. Based on a radically new vision of Europe, Gorbachev's approach towards Europe gave life to revolutionary changes in Soviet theories of international relations. That approach, called here 'integrative Europeanism', obliterated Europe's political and military division. It stressed integration into the West at the level of 'all-human' and 'democratic values'. And it created the basic conditions for Russia's inclusion in Europe. No longer was Europe viewed as an 'instrument' in or the derivative object of the US-Soviet competition. From the late Gorbachev era until late 1992/93, Europe was perceived as a distinct subject, partner and even future ally in Moscow's goal to construct a Greater Europe that included the entire West, including the United States. In other words, 'integrative Europeanism' altered Europe's role in Soviet Westpolitik from Europe the object to Europe the subject. This is what is meant by 'Europe-first' (or at least, 'Europe-equal'), and that factor was the keystone in 'integrative Europeanism'. In the same way, France's role in Russian European policy also changed: no longer the prized, if coincidental, 'instrument' in Moscow's rivalry with the United States, France became Gorbachev's launching pad for Moscow's radical new goal to build a 'Common European Home', with a room for the United States as well. Gorbachev understood that to be effective, Moscow's European policy could not be seen as 'instrumentalising' Europe as part of some power game with the United States. Partly to avoid that impression, but mostly because the 'game' had in fact changed, Gorbachev's policy now sought a strong American presence in Europe in order to build the new unified Europe which Moscow called 'Greater' or 'Big Europe' as the best means for Soviet economic renewal and political democratisation. After Gorbachev, the Yeltsin Administration in early 1992 chose a similar path of value-oriented 'integrative Europeanism', meaning that Moscow stressed integration into 'Greater Europe' in order to transform Russia into a Westernised society based on Western-style economic, democratic and juridical values. In this context, Yeltsin chose France in February 1992 as his

initial springboard to realise permanent, strategic partnership with the West at large.

But this phase of 'integrative Europeanism', a period when Europe was treated as a primary, or at least equal, subject in Soviet Westpolitik, began to wobble in 1992 and collapsed by 1993. At that point, Russian European policy reverted back to its detrimental 'instrumental' ways – including a Soviet-style fixation on countering American power in Europe – despite the fact that Russia's goal now was Europe's integration rather than its division, and without the intimidating tactics of military and political coercion. The idea of integrated Europe remained Russia's underlying focus and motivation, and yet ironically, Russian *policy* towards Europe obsessively centred on America. Consequently (for many Russian policy-makers), Western Europe once again slid into its old, Soviet-era position of mere 'instrument' in Russia's intensifying struggle to counter or moderate American hegemony in Europe, especially as the issue of NATO expansion heated up. In this new rendition of a US-centred European policy in the mid-1990s, called here 'neo-instrumental Europeanism', Moscow yet again turned to France – and preferably Germany whenever possible – for help against the United States. But this time, the 'French orientation' proved less effective for Moscow. It was less so largely because Paris' fundamental foreign policy goals no longer coincided in significant ways with those of Russia. Even less effective was the 'German orientation', since Berlin aligned itself, as usual, more closely with US/NATO policies than any other major European country besides Britain.

Without any meaningful 'instruments', therefore, 'neo-instrumental Europeanism' led to a dead-end, just like its distant Soviet cousin. NATO expanded anyway; America continued to monopolise the formation of European security architecture; and a diminished Russia felt increasingly apart from, not a part of, Europe. The final coup, NATO's bombing of Kosovo in 1999 against Russian will, consummated Russia's humiliating sense of insignificance and isolation on the European, and indeed, world stage.

Vladimir Putin set out to change all that. Picking up where Gorbachev left off – albeit in a very different manner – the Putin leadership in 2000 re-embraced a Europe-first policy that viewed Europe as a primary subject of Russian foreign policy rather than a derivative 'instrument' of US–Russian relations. From the beginning, Putin chose Europe first, notwithstanding Putin's broader foreign policy strategy aimed '*à tous azimuts*' [in all directions]. If Charles de Gaulle was clearly anchored in the West despite his tactical policy of '*à tous azimuts*', Vladimir Putin, too, chose the West, particularly Europe, despite his seemingly contradictory emphasis on Gaullist-like multi-directionalism. For both de Gaulle and Putin, a multi-directional policy responded to the needs of a diminished power to generate means of influence over the United States (and Germany); but for Putin, the Eastern dimension of '*à tous azimuts*' also responded to Russia's urgent security interests in the East. Even so, Putin's priority (after the Commonwealth of Independent

States, CIS) was unequivocally Europe. The goal remained Russian inclusion in Europe. And yet, the concept of inclusion had shifted. Inclusion was now defined less at the ideational level of values and more at the pragmatic level of multi-faceted interaction. Good relations with the United States were called a prerequisite – just as they were in Gorbachev's day. But Putin went further by redefining relations with the United States as *subsidiary* to relations with Europe. Put another way, US–Russian harmony represented a penultimate step to Moscow's ultimate goal of joining Russia to Europe in practice, and not just in theory. All this was the essence of a Europe-first policy that this book calls 'pragmatic Europeanism'. This policy was less interested in France as an 'instrument' in Moscow's conflict with America, than it was in France as a leader of European integration.

Events of 11 September 2001 created fortuitous new opportunities for that policy. Putin capitalised skilfully on those events to catapult US–Russian relations forward (in the autumn of 2001), with potentially positive spin offs for Russia. First, the new US–Russian honeymoon reassured European governments that they would not be used against the United States to create wedges inside the Atlantic Alliance; second, it vastly (if temporarily) ameliorated Russia's negotiating position *vis-à-vis* the West, giving Russia the levers of prestige and influence it so desperately sought; and finally, many thought it might even drive the European Union to respond more substantively to Russian initiatives so as not to be marginalised by a new US–Russian condominium. Building on that honeymoon, Putin's Europe-first strategy astutely sought to erect a triangular US–EU–Russian foundation on which to work towards Russia's greatest international goal (beyond the CIS): tangible Russian incorporation into the European economy and the EU's political/security institutions.¹

Given this background, it is safe to say that Putin's Kremlin has strived to consummate one of the critical changes in Russian foreign policy that Gorbachev initiated more than a decade earlier. If Gorbachev, after radically breaking with the orthodox Soviet idea of divided Europe, upheld Europe as a primary subject in a united Europe rather than an 'instrumental' object in the larger US–Soviet competition, then Putin has firmly embraced that legacy in his own fashion. Whether that change remains permanent, however, now depends largely on the West. As the French analyst François Heisbourg put it, 'The ball is now clearly in the West's court.'² If the West finally embraces Russia with actions and not just words – such as, first and foremost, including it in meaningful ways inside the most significant Western security organizations and processes, making concrete inroads towards an energy partnership, finding solutions for Russia's debt problems, creating new vehicles for EU–Russian security/defence cooperation, accepting compromise on the ABM treaty – then Putin's Western thrust could be institutionalised, adapted over time to fit Europe's democratic, economic and juridical standards and rendered harder to reverse, whatever the leadership in Moscow.