

Charlie Kirk and the National Conservatism Movement

Introduction

Charlie Kirk – founder of Turning Point USA (TPUSA) and a self-styled “conservative boy wonder” – has become one of the most prominent young voices in American right-wing politics ¹. His rise coincided with the emergence of the **National Conservatism** (NatCon) movement, a post-2016 intellectual and political trend emphasizing nationalism, traditional values, and an aversion to “globalist” liberal norms. This report examines Kirk’s relationship with National Conservatism, including **direct links** (e.g. conference participation, public affiliations) and **indirect overlaps** in ideology and rhetoric. It provides a historical timeline of Kirk’s evolving alignment with NatCon and compares his positions with the movement’s core principles. International figures and events – from European nationalist leaders to global NatCon conferences – are included where relevant to illustrate the broader context.

(All sources are cited in the format [source#lines] , and a summary table of alignment/divergence is provided at the end.)

The National Conservatism Movement: An Overview

National Conservatism coalesced during the late 2010s as a response to both liberal globalism and the perceived inadequacies of “old” conservatism. Spearheaded by Israeli-American scholar Yoram Hazony and the Edmund Burke Foundation, the movement held its first **National Conservatism Conference** in July 2019 in Washington, D.C. ² ³. NatCon advocates argue that **national sovereignty, cultural cohesion, and Judeo-Christian values** must be restored to counter the “homogenizing, locality-destroying imperium” of global liberalism ⁴ ⁵. In contrast to Reagan-era conservatism centered on free markets and U.S. global leadership, National Conservatism is more skeptical of free-market purism and interventionist foreign policy ⁶. It prioritizes **“nation” over “market”**, seeks a stronger (though restrained) state to enforce social order, and emphasizes religion’s role in public life ⁷ ⁸.

Hazony’s 2018 book *The Virtue of Nationalism* and 2022 book *Conservatism: A Rediscovery* articulated the movement’s philosophy. NatCon conferences have since convened intellectuals, politicians, and activists from the U.S. and abroad – including American senators, European right-wing leaders, and scholars – to forge a new conservative vision rooted in **national interest, cultural tradition, and opposition to “woke” liberalism** ⁹ ¹⁰. In 2022, NatCon leaders released a formal *“Statement of Principles”* defining their creed, which stresses independent nation-states, the decline of globalist “imperium,” the centrality of Biblical religion, and the rejection of socialist economics ¹¹ ⁸. This manifesto attracted a wide range of signatories from the American Right – from MAGA firebrands to establishment conservatives – signaling NatCon’s growing influence.

Charlie Kirk's Rise and Early Conservatism

Charlie Kirk's trajectory from a suburban Chicago teenager to a national conservative figure began in the early 2010s. In 2012, at just 18, Kirk co-founded **Turning Point USA** as a campus-focused organization promoting free markets and limited government ¹² ¹³ . His early inspiration came from Tea Party populism and libertarian economics: Kirk cited Ronald Reagan, Milton Friedman, and a deep mistrust of "big government" as formative influences ¹⁴ ¹⁵ . In TPUSA's first years, **fiscal conservatism and anti-Obama fervor** were front and center. Kirk's initial activism involved exposing "liberal indoctrination" in schools and advocating "fiscal responsibility and living within your means" – messaging typical of conventional Republican youth outreach at the time ¹⁶ ¹⁷ .

By the mid-2010s, TPUSA had built a nationwide campus network on the strength of Kirk's savvy social media presence and confrontational style. He became known for **viral "Campus Battlefield" moments**, arguing with left-wing student protesters and accusing academia of "cultural Marxism" (a term he frequently used to describe leftist influence) ¹⁸ . During these years, Kirk generally toed the traditional GOP line on issues like taxes and regulation, and TPUSA marketed itself as a pro-capitalism, Reaganite youth movement. However, even before the explicit advent of "National Conservatism," seeds of a more nationalist and culture-focused approach were present. For example, TPUSA launched a "Professor Watchlist" in 2016, targeting allegedly radical professors – a tactic tapping into nationalist/populist distrust of elite institutions and aligning with wider right-wing backlash against "globalist" academia ¹⁹ ²⁰ .

Donald Trump's 2016 election was a turning point for Kirk. Trump's brand of populist nationalism – encapsulated in the slogan "America First" – resonated strongly with Kirk, who swiftly became an ardent Trump ally. At the 2016 Republican National Convention, the 22-year-old Kirk was an invited speaker, already heralded as a rising star bridging Trumpism with youth outreach ²¹ . In 2019, he founded **Turning Point Action**, a TPUSA affiliate, and took over the student group "Students for Trump," explicitly working to mobilize young voters for Trump's re-election ²² ²³ . By embracing Trump, Kirk embraced *nationalist* themes: he praised Trump's hard line on immigration, skepticism of multinational agreements, and appeals to patriotism. As one profile put it, Kirk cultivated "a flair for patriotism, populism and Christian nationalism," turning himself into Trump's "youth whisperer" ²⁴ . His massive social media following (millions across Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram) became a conduit for **anti-immigration talking points, confrontational religiosity, and culture-war broadsides** in the Trump era ²⁵ .

Timeline (2012–2016): TPUSA's founding mission centered on free-market economics and fighting campus liberalism. Kirk's activism at this stage aligned more with *traditional* conservatism (low taxes, small government), albeit with an aggressive youth-oriented twist. There was little overt connection to the "nationalist" school of thought – indeed, pre-2016 mainstream conservatives were often *globalist* in outlook. Yet, Kirk's talent for **provocation and media-savvy populism** set the stage for his later NatCon alignment.

Timeline (2016–2018): With Trump's ascent, Kirk increasingly adopted **"America First" rhetoric**. He celebrated Trump's nationalist policies like border security and trade protectionism, and TPUSA events took on a rally-like, patriotic atmosphere. Kirk's speeches began to emphasize that conservatives must reject decline and "restore American greatness," reflecting themes from his 2020 book *The MAGA Doctrine* (which contains chapters like "No More Accepting Decline" and "America First") ²⁶ . During this period, however, Kirk still maintained ties to establishment conservatism – for instance, he spoke of cutting taxes and regulations in the same breath as building the wall. This mix of economic libertarianism and emerging nationalism would soon tilt more fully toward the nationalist, **NatCon-friendly side**.

Convergence with National Conservatism: Direct Links

By 2019–2020, Charlie Kirk's trajectory began intersecting in concrete ways with the formal National Conservatism movement. Several **direct links** illustrate this convergence:

- **Signing the NatCon Manifesto (2022):** Kirk became an official endorser of "*National Conservatism: A Statement of Principles*", a manifesto released by NatCon leaders in June 2022 ⁶ ²⁷. The statement, co-drafted by Yoram Hazony, outlines NatCon positions (national independence, rejection of globalism, pro-religion, etc.) – and Kirk's name and affiliation (Turning Point USA) appear alongside figures like tech investor Peter Thiel, author Rod Dreher, and activist Christopher Rufo as signatories ²⁷. This public endorsement cemented Kirk's **association with the movement's intellectual vanguard**. As commentators noted, the list of signers included "MAGA hacks" like Kirk alongside more scholarly conservatives ²⁷ – a sign that NatCon was bridging populist activists and theorists. Kirk's participation lent the movement a high-profile activist imprimatur, indicating he saw NatCon as aligned with his values.
- **Collaboration with Yoram Hazony and NatCon Leaders:** Kirk developed a personal rapport with Yoram Hazony, the movement's chief organizer. In May 2022, Kirk devoted an entire episode of *The Charlie Kirk Show* to Hazony's new book *Conservatism: A Rediscovery*. In that podcast, Kirk and Hazony jointly critiqued "the neoliberal order" and contrasted being a "classical liberal" versus a "true conservative" – essentially echoing NatCon's critique of libertarian orthodoxy ¹⁸. This discussion, coming on the heels of Hazony's NatCon manifesto, signaled Kirk's **intellectual alignment** with NatCon ideas. Hazony, for his part, has spoken warmly of Kirk. (After Kirk's untimely death in 2025, Hazony eulogized him as "a beloved friend... and a courageous warrior for truth and right" ²⁸.) Such statements underscore that NatCon's leadership viewed Kirk as an ally and key figure in the movement's ecosystem.
- **Appearances at NatCon-Affiliated Events:** While Kirk did *not* headline the major NatCon conferences in 2019 or 2022 (which tended to feature sitting U.S. senators, academics, and European politicians), he shared stages with NatCon figures at various conservative gatherings. For instance, at the **Western Conservative Summit 2020** (a large Denver-based conference), both Yoram Hazony and Charlie Kirk were featured speakers ²⁹. Kirk regularly spoke at CPAC (Conservative Political Action Conference) alongside outspoken nationalists and NatCon-friendly politicians. Notably, CPAC 2022 in Hungary – headlined by Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán – drew American NatCon personalities; Kirk strongly praised Orbán's speech attacking "woke culture" and immigration, reflecting his comfort with the international NatCon agenda ³⁰ ³¹. These instances show **direct affiliation with NatCon personalities** and causes, even if Kirk's role was more agitator than theorist.
- **Institutional Alliances:** Kirk's **Turning Point network** intersected with NatCon institutions. The Claremont Institute – a think tank that has embraced NatCon themes – has overlapping relationships (Claremont figures like Tom Klingenstein and James Poulos have spoken at TPUSA events, and Kirk has praised Claremont's work). In 2021, Kirk joined forces with **Claremont alumnus Jack Posobiec** (an alt-right commentator and former Claremont Lincoln Fellow) by bringing him on as a contributor to TPUSA's media arm. This drew controversy, but symbolized Kirk's willingness to partner with hard-edged nationalists also welcomed in NatCon circles ³² ³³. Moreover, several signatories of the NatCon statement (e.g. Klingenstein, Mark Krikorian of CIS, Rusty Reno of *First Things*) have

appeared on Kirk's platforms or at least been promoted by TPUSA media, indicating shared goals especially on immigration and culture.

In summary, by the early 2020s Kirk was not only **cheerleading NatCon ideas** but actively networking within the movement's ranks – from signing its manifesto to exchanging ideas with its thought leaders. His endorsement gave NatCon a bridge to the grassroots activists and young voters that TPUSA reaches. Conversely, NatCon's emergent prestige provided Kirk a framework to articulate what he had already been gravitating toward: an unapologetic nationalist conservatism distinct from the pre-Trump Republican consensus.

Ideological Overlaps: Kirk's Nationalist and "NatCon" Agenda

Beyond formal ties, Charlie Kirk's **ideology and rhetoric** have increasingly mirrored core tenets of National Conservatism. Some overlaps are explicit, others thematic. Below we explore key areas of alignment, as well as notable nuances or shifts over time:

Emphasis on Nationalism and "America First"

At the heart of National Conservatism is the **celebration of the nation-state** – a belief that independent nations pursuing their own traditions and interests are preferable to any cosmopolitan or global order ⁴. Charlie Kirk has echoed this principle loudly. He was an early adopter of Trump's **"America First"** ethos, frequently inveighing against "globalists" in his tweets and media appearances. For example, Kirk warned that the "World Economic Forum" elites and Democrats seek to undermine American sovereignty – rhetoric closely paralleling NatCon's rejection of "supranational bodies" and global governance ⁵. In one monologue titled "No to Globalism," Kirk declared that patriotism must defeat the "homogenizing agenda" of global bureaucrats ³⁴.

This nationalist stance marks a shift from Kirk's libertarian-leaning start. Originally focused on U.S. economic strength, he now **prioritizes national identity and power** even if it means skepticism toward free trade or international alliances. National Review observed that the NatCon project launched "to attack more traditional conservatism – the conservatism of small government and American leadership abroad – and provide a foundation for Trumpism" ⁶. Kirk has been part of that pivot. He openly criticizes the "old right" for its *globalist* mindset and hesitancy to put America's cultural cohesion first ⁶. Instead, like the NatCon intellectuals, he champions a world of robust nations: **strong borders, economic nationalism, and an aversion to entangling global schemes**.

One concrete example is **immigration policy**. Both Kirk and NatCon thinkers view mass immigration through a skeptical lens of national preservation. Kirk has turned hard-line on immigration in recent years, aligning with the NatCon wing that includes immigration restrictionists. In 2021, he "said the quiet part out loud" on his radio show, accusing Democrats of importing migrants "to diminish and decrease white demographics in America" ³⁵. This inflammatory claim – essentially a version of the "great replacement" theory – underscores how fully Kirk adopted *ethno-national* anxieties. While mainstream NatCon advocates typically avoid overt race-based framing, they similarly argue that unchecked immigration can erode a nation's cultural fabric. Indeed, a prominent NatCon signatory, Mark Krikorian of the Center for Immigration Studies, shares Kirk's alarm about demographic change and was listed right alongside Kirk on the NatCon manifesto ³⁶ ³⁷. Both Kirk and the movement emphasize **secure borders and immigration policies that preserve national identity**. Kirk's evolution on this issue is telling: in 2019 he had momentarily suggested

offering green cards to skilled foreign students, but after backlash from nationalist hard-liners, he recanted and moved sharply to the right on immigration ³⁸ ³⁹ . This trajectory – from milder pro-immigration remarks to strident nativism – mirrors the broader GOP's shift toward NatCon-style immigration stances.

Religion, Christian Nationalism, and Cultural Traditionalism

Public religion and traditional values are pillars of National Conservatism. Hazony's movement explicitly contends that a nation's cultural cohesion relies on its religious heritage – “Where a Christian majority exists, public life should be rooted in Christianity and its moral vision,” declares the NatCon principles ⁸ . Charlie Kirk has become one of the loudest champions of this view, unabashedly promoting *Christian nationalism* in American politics.

Kirk's **evangelical Christian beliefs** increasingly infuse his activism. He argues there is “no true separation of church and state” in America's founding and that Biblical morality should guide public policy ⁴⁰ . Speaking in 2022, Kirk proclaimed, “*This is a Christian nation – let's keep it that way*,” urging conservative Christians to reclaim government ⁴¹ . Such rhetoric aligns perfectly with NatCon's call to restore the sacred in the public square. In fact, observers note that Kirk has grounded TPUSA's mission in “the theology of Christian nationalism” ⁴² . In 2021, he launched **TPUSA Faith**, a project to mobilize churches and believers in political activism, explicitly aiming to “restore America's biblical values” ⁴² . Kirk frames today's political conflict as a “**spiritual battle**” between Judeo-Christian civilization and secular (or non-Christian) forces ⁴³ ⁴² . This is highly consonant with NatCon themes. At NatCon conferences, speakers frequently decry secularism and call for Christian (or at least Judeo-Christian) moral frameworks in law and culture. For example, the 2022 NatCon manifesto avers that no nation can endure without “authentic religious tradition” and that the Bible should be taught as “the first source of a shared Western civilization” ⁸ ⁴⁴ . Kirk's messaging – from quoting scripture at rallies to promoting prayer in schools – operationalizes these ideas on the ground.

Moreover, Kirk has **aligned with Christian dominionist figures** who seek to entrench Biblical principles in government. He frequently hosts or appears alongside pastors on the far-right evangelical fringe. One notable influence is **Lance Wallnau**, a pro-Trump pastor who popularized the “Seven Mountains Mandate” (the idea that Christians must control the seven key spheres of culture) ⁴⁵ ⁴⁶ . Kirk not only references this concept in speeches ⁴⁵ , but he also partners with its proponents – effectively blending NatCon's *nationalism* with explicit *theocratic* aims. The Guardian described Kirk as an “unabashed homophobe and Islamophobe,” quoting his post that “Islam is the sword the left is using to slit the throat of America” ⁴⁷ . While Hazony's NatCon movement is not inherently anti-Islam in those terms (Hazony himself, being Jewish, emphasizes religious tolerance for minorities ⁴⁸), the broader NatCon coalition certainly contains such hard-line Christian nationalist sentiments. At the 2025 NatCon conference, for instance, **theocratic Christian nationalists** spoke alongside Republican officials ⁴⁹ . Kirk's combative stance against Islam, LGBTQ rights, and secular “wokeism” matches the tone of some NatCon contributors (e.g. activists who see LGBT and secular-left agendas as threats to the nation's Christian character ⁹ ⁵⁰). Both Kirk and the NatCon movement portray themselves as defenders of a **besieged Western religious heritage**.

One small divergence to note: Hazony's NatCon statement makes a point to *include* protection for Jewish and other religious minorities ⁴⁸ , reflecting a more ecumenical nationalism. Kirk, for his part, is strongly pro-Israel and works closely with Jewish conservatives (TPUSA's roster has included Orthodox Jewish speakers, and Kirk often denounces antisemitism). However, his rhetoric is primarily aimed at elevating **Christian dominance** domestically. In practice, this has not caused conflict between Kirk and NatCon

leaders – it’s more a difference of emphasis (Hazony, as an Orthodox Jew, speaks of broad Judeo-Christian pillars, whereas Kirk unabashedly calls for Christian government). Both see **traditional faith as indispensable for national renewal**, rejecting militant secularism or strict church-state separation as hallmarks of liberal decay ⁴⁰ ⁸ .

The Culture War: National Conservatism and Kirk vs. Liberal “Globalist” Elites

Charlie Kirk has described himself as on the “front lines of America’s culture war” ⁵¹ , and in this he is lockstep with National Conservatism’s agenda. NatCon adherents often argue that *cultural* issues – national history, family and gender norms, education, free speech – are just as important as economics or foreign policy in defining a nation. Indeed, Hazony’s 2019 NatCon conference pitch spoke of a needed revival of “unique national traditions” to bind a people together ³ .

“Anti-woke” politics is a major shared arena. Kirk and NatCon figures alike rail against progressive cultural currents, seeing them as internal threats to national cohesion. For example, **critical race theory (CRT)** in schools and left-wing gender ideology are frequent targets. Kirk’s TPUSA in 2021 started promoting school board takeovers and launched campaigns like **“Educate Don’t Mandate”** (against COVID restrictions) and initiatives to ban CRT from classrooms ²⁰ ⁵² . Meanwhile, NatCon conferences have featured speakers like Christopher Rufo (a TPUSA ally and NatCon signatory known for campaigning against CRT) and published essays on how to fight “woke neo-Marxism” in institutions ⁹ ¹⁸ . Both Kirk and NatCon conservatives invoke the term **“cultural Marxism”** to describe the left-wing cultural agenda they oppose – a term Kirk uses frequently (for instance, he warned of “the Cultural Marxist assault on the neoliberal order” while talking with Hazony ¹⁸). This conspiratorial framing (that progressive social movements are a Marxist plot eroding Western civilization) is prevalent in NatCon circles as well, though it has been criticized for antisemitic undertones.

On **gender and sexuality**, Kirk has taken staunchly traditionalist (and inflammatory) stands that resonate with many in the NatCon camp. He has attacked LGBTQ rights and feminism as corrosive influences, echoing other social conservatives at NatCon. For instance, at a 2019 TPUSA event, a questioner challenged Kirk for allowing a gay speaker, to which Kirk responded by reasserting his Christian view of marriage – a flashpoint in what was dubbed the “Groyper Wars” (more on this internal conflict below) ³⁸ . NatCon conferences have not shied away from anti-LGBTQ themes; the 2025 NatCon gathering notoriously included figures from groups labeled as hate groups by the SPLC, who decried “LGBT propaganda” ⁵³ ⁵⁴ . Kirk himself hosted activists who call homosexuality sinful and has opposed transgender student policies. In short, both Kirk and NatCon use **“culture war” rhetoric to rally conservatives around nationalism**, portraying issues like trans rights, Black Lives Matter, or multicultural curricula as attacks on the nation’s core identity.

A particularly illustrative example is **education and history**. NatCon intellectuals often argue for patriotic education and rejection of the 1619 Project or similar initiatives. Kirk has been a drum major for “patriotic education,” encouraging laws to instill pro-American narratives and to purge “anti-American indoctrination” from schools ⁵⁵ ⁵² . This aligns with NatCon’s Principle #7 (National Heritage), which defends honoring national heroes and traditions against those who disparage them (though the full text isn’t quoted here, it is a theme in their discourse).

Critiques of Liberalism and Shifts from Conventional Conservatism

National Conservatism explicitly challenges certain liberal and libertarian assumptions that previously prevailed on the right. This includes a critique of *liberal individualism* when it undermines community, and a willingness to use government power to achieve conservative ends. Charlie Kirk's own evolution reflects a move in this direction – away from the purely **libertarian, “small government”** rhetoric of his youth toward a more nuanced (or ambivalent) view of state power.

Earlier in his career, Kirk sounded like a libertarian conservative: railing against government overreach (even once protesting high school cafeteria price hikes as “big government” meddling ⁵⁶) and celebrating free enterprise without reservations. But as culture-war issues took precedence, Kirk increasingly called for the **government to actively enforce conservative norms**. For example, he cheered Gov. Ron DeSantis's heavy-handed measures against left-leaning school boards and Disney, seeing these not as big-government intrusion but as necessary defense of traditional values. This mirrors the NatCon perspective that the state should be “*strong but limited*” – constrained constitutionally, yet empowered to intervene “energetically to restore order” when local authorities fail or society falls into moral disarray ⁷ ⁵⁷. The NatCon manifesto explicitly says if “lawlessness, immorality, and dissolution reign,” the national government must step in ⁵⁷. Kirk's commentary often strikes the same chord, endorsing intervention against riots, “*swiftly ending unacceptable public disorder*”, and even suggesting deploying the National Guard during the 2020 unrest – sentiments consistent with NatCon's law-and-order emphasis ⁵⁸.

On the economic front, Kirk remains **pro-free-market**, but even here there is some convergence with NatCon's populist economics. The NatCon statement upholds free enterprise but insists “the free market cannot be absolute” ⁵⁹, leaving room for trade protection or industrial policy. Kirk staunchly opposes socialism (as does virtually every NatCon figure), and he supported Trump's tariffs and trade wars as bolstering national interests. While not an economic nationalist of the “common-good capitalism” school, Kirk does not object to Trumpian deviations from laissez-faire – he celebrated, for instance, the renegotiation of NAFTA into the USMCA and tariffs on China, framing them as pro-American worker measures. Thus, he *de facto* aligned with NatCon's modest retreat from libertarian economics. Libertarian critics at Cato have singled out Kirk and NatCon allies for rejecting “the old conservatism of small government” ⁶. Indeed, libertarian writer Cathy Young lamented that Hazony's manifesto, with signers like Kirk, signaled an attack on “individual freedom” in favor of statism and nationalism ⁶. Kirk likely wears that critique as a badge of honor: he has repeatedly argued that “**liberty” without a moral and national framework leads to chaos**, and that freedom is meaningless without order, faith, and community. This philosophy marks a clear shift from the Tea Party-style minimal-government rhetoric he started with, placing him closer to the NatCon stance that government should *shape* the social good within limits.

International Alliances and Influence

Though Charlie Kirk's primary stage is U.S. politics, his work and the NatCon movement have global cross-pollination. National Conservatism, by design, engages conservative nationalists across the West and beyond – and Kirk has eagerly participated in this international networking.

A notable example is Kirk's relationship with **Brexit leader Nigel Farage** in the U.K. In 2018–2019, Kirk helped launch **Turning Point UK (TPUK)**, a British offshoot of TPUSA meant to spread right-wing activism among British youth ⁶⁰. At a lavish London dinner in June 2019, **Kirk and Nigel Farage appeared together** to raise funds for TPUK ⁶¹. Farage – a populist nationalist much in the mold of NatCon ideals –

welcomed Kirk's venture, seeing common cause in fighting political correctness and globalism in Britain. Anti-racist protesters outside the event decried it as a "far-right love-in," noting that TPUK's launch had drawn English alt-right figures and that both Farage and Kirk's groups railed against "cultural Marxism" and immigration ⁶² ⁶³ . For Kirk, teaming with Farage was a way to **project the American NatCon-style culture war onto an international stage**. It also signaled Kirk's alignment with nationalist movements abroad – precisely the kind of collaboration Hazony's NatCon initiative encourages (Hazony has spoken of building a network of national conservatives in Europe, Israel, India, etc. in solidarity ⁶⁴).

Kirk similarly connected with other international figures: he praised Brazil's right-wing president Jair Bolsonaro, hosted a podcast with members of Israel's Likud party, and celebrated European populist victories (like Giorgia Meloni's win in Italy) as wins for "nationalist conservatives" worldwide. In May 2022, when Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán addressed American conservatives, Kirk lauded Orbán's stance against immigration and LGBTQ+ content, essentially embracing Orbán as a fellow traveler. Orbán's speech at CPAC Hungary, where he said "we need to coordinate the movement of our troops" globally to fight liberalism, was the kind of message Kirk amplified to his followers ³¹ . This shows that Kirk sees the **NatCon movement as transnational** – an ironic twist, perhaps, for a nationalist endeavor, but one united by ideology if not by supranational governance. The *National Conservatism* conferences themselves have gone international (with events in Rome in 2020, Brussels in 2022, London in 2023, etc.), attracting politicians like Italy's Matteo Salvini and Spain's Santiago Abascal. While Kirk did not attend those, his **influence on younger activists** means the ideas discussed on those stages (national sovereignty, anti-EU sentiment, pro-Christian identity) filter back into grassroots activism in the U.S.

In concrete terms, Kirk's **institutional influence** has helped shape NatCon's development by injecting youthful energy and expanding its audience. He has mobilized tens of thousands of students, urging them to champion nationalism over cosmopolitanism. Mainstream media have noted that Kirk "propelled Trump into office" in part by swinging youth to the nationalist right ⁶⁵ ⁶⁶ . This youth activation is something NatCon intellectuals alone could not achieve without allies like Kirk. On the flip side, Kirk has drawn inspiration (and legitimization) from NatCon thought leaders across borders. For instance, in late 2020 he interviewed Polish and Hungarian conservatives about defending Christianity in Europe, tying their experiences to America's culture war. Such exchanges reinforce Kirk's message that **nationalists around the world are fighting a common liberal enemy**.

Tensions and Divergences

While Charlie Kirk and the National Conservatism movement are largely in harmony by 2025, it's important to note **points of divergence or nuance**. Kirk's path to NatCon alignment was not without friction, and even now he occupies a somewhat distinct role (a populist agitator) compared to many NatCon elites (academics, think-tankers, politicians). Key distinctions include:

- **Initial Frictions with the Hard Right:** In late 2019, Kirk faced a revolt from an even more hard-nationalist faction – the so-called "Groyppers," followers of white nationalist Nick Fuentes. They attacked Kirk at TPUSA events for being insufficiently nationalist (e.g. for supporting legal immigration and for his pro-Israel stance) ³⁸ . This very public feud pushed Kirk to clarify his positions. In an American Greatness op-ed titled "Clearing the Air on the Right," Kirk apologized for his earlier pro-immigration remark and reaffirmed his commitment to nationalism ⁶⁷ ⁶⁸ . Essentially, Kirk adjusted rightward to close the gap between TPUSA's **"Conservative Inc." roots and the emerging NatCon/alt-right base**. However, this episode also highlights a divergence: Kirk

positions himself as a *mainstream nationalist*, rejecting the overt racism and antisemitism of the alt-right. For example, he denounced open white nationalists in TPUSA's ranks and draws the line at their brand of extremism. The NatCon movement likewise tries to distinguish itself from explicit white nationalism (Hazony has said "nationalism" must *not* be about race ⁶⁹). Thus, Kirk and NatCon align in repudiating the **racist fringes**, even as critics argue both flirt with those elements at times. Kirk's challenge has been walking the line between keeping the MAGA base (some of whom hold extreme views) energized and not being tarred as a hate group – a balance NatCon conferences also juggle when controversial speakers appear ⁴⁹.

- **Differences in Style and Tone:** Kirk's style is brash, confrontational, and sometimes given to conspiracy theories (e.g. stop-the-steal election fraud claims, anti-vaccine misinformation ⁷⁰ ⁷¹). NatCon's intellectual wing, in contrast, often uses more measured language to appeal to middle-class and scholarly audiences. A **National Review** correspondent at a 2025 NatCon conference noted the mix of polished politicians and "far-right publishers" muddled the waters ⁴⁹ – Kirk would squarely fit among the rabble-rousing activists. He is a "disingenuous rabble-rouser," one commentator quipped during NatCon week ⁷². This difference doesn't mean substantive disagreement on issues, but it does mean Kirk sometimes **pushes rhetoric further** (for example, openly calling Democrats "evil" and trafficking in QAnon-like tropes) than some NatCon intellectuals might. In the long run, this could shape perceptions: Kirk's brand of national conservatism is more populist and emotionally charged, whereas some NatCon proponents aim for an image of intellectual seriousness. Nonetheless, the two feed into each other – Kirk gives NatCon street cred with the base; NatCon gives Kirk a philosophical backbone to justify his gut-level claims.
- **Economic and Policy Nuances:** As mentioned, Kirk's background was economic libertarianism, and he has never explicitly renounced the free-market ideology of TPUSA's founding. Some NatCon figures, by contrast, promote **industrial policy or anti-monopoly action** (e.g. solidifying local manufacturing, breaking up Big Tech for the national good). There is a mild divergence here: Kirk rarely talks about regulating corporations (except those he deems "woke"). He cheerleads free enterprise and entrepreneurial capitalism, consistent with TPUSA's original mission. So while Kirk signed a NatCon manifesto that asserts "the free market cannot be absolute" ⁵⁹, he has not been a leading voice for the kind of **common-good capitalism** others in NatCon advocate. This may simply be a matter of focus – Kirk sticks to culture war and elections, leaving wonkier economic debates to others. But it's worth noting that, for instance, **Sohrab Ahmari's turn to pro-union "labor nationalism" or Oren Cass's industrial policy** have no real parallel in Kirk's speeches. He's more likely to quote Reagan or extol deregulation than to call for tariffs to protect factories (aside from supporting Trump's specific tariffs). This places Kirk on the spectrum closer to the old conservative economics, even as he's firmly NatCon on culture and national identity.
- **Foreign Policy Split (Ukraine/Russia):** Within the NatCon camp, a **divide emerged over Russia's war in Ukraine** in 2022. Hazony and some others supported aiding Ukraine as a fight for national sovereignty, whereas a contingent of NatCon populists (like Tucker Carlson, J.D. Vance, and the magazine *Compact* crew) opposed U.S. involvement, seeing it as globalist meddling ⁷³. Notably, some integralist Catholics split from Hazony over this issue ⁷⁴. Kirk's position on Ukraine has been consistently skeptical of U.S. aid – he often questions why American dollars should go abroad when "our borders" are insecure at home. He has echoed Trump's stance that Europe should shoulder more of the burden and hinted that the conflict is not America's fight. This places him with the *America First* faction that aligns with NatCon's **"restrained foreign policy"** impulse (NatCon Principle

#1 advocates national independence and prudence in alliances ⁷⁵). However, because Hazony himself took a pro-Ukraine line, Kirk wasn't in lockstep with Hazony personally on this matter. It didn't cause a rift – NatCon is a big tent on foreign policy, united mainly in opposing *left-liberal internationalism*. Kirk very much shares the general NatCon aversion to the “liberal imperialism of the last generation” (e.g. the Iraq War and democracy-spreading ventures) ⁷⁶ . He has castigated the Bush-era GOP for its interventionism, reflecting a NatCon consensus that Iraq was a mistake. So the divergence on Ukraine is more intra-movement nuance than Kirk vs. NatCon per se.

- **Role within the Movement:** Finally, there is a difference of *role* – Kirk as an activist vs. NatCon leaders as thinkers or office-holders. Kirk's primary objective is to **win elections and convert young hearts and minds** to his side. Thus, he sometimes tailors or bends ideology to serve partisan ends (e.g. indulging Trump's election-fraud narratives, which are about loyalty to a leader more than doctrine). National Conservatism as a movement aspires to a coherent intellectual framework and long-term policy paradigm. There can be tension between activism and ideology: for instance, if a NatCon intellectual criticizes Trump on moral grounds, Kirk might reject that to maintain MAGA unity. To date, Kirk has been an unflinching Trump loyalist, whereas some NatCon thinkers are trying to imagine a *post-Trump* nationalist conservatism. This hasn't resulted in open conflict yet, but it's a potential divergence as the movement matures. In essence, Kirk helped **popularize NatCon ideas without necessarily originating them**. He shapes the movement by giving it a mass audience and youthful energy, while the philosophical heavy lifting is done by others. Should those others decide to distance from certain populist excesses, Kirk could find himself at odds – though right now, their interests align closely.

Historical Timeline of Key Developments

Below is a chronological summary highlighting the interplay between Charlie Kirk's trajectory and the National Conservatism movement, with shifts in alignment noted:

- **2012:** 18-year-old Charlie Kirk co-founds Turning Point USA, focusing on economic conservatism and combating “liberal indoctrination” in education ¹⁶ ¹⁷ . *NatCon context:* This predates formal NatCon; mainstream conservatism is still dominated by Reaganism and globalism. Kirk's focus is Tea Party-ish (national debt, free markets) with no open nationalist content yet.
- **2015:** Kirk delivers speeches emphasizing **free-market and patriotic themes**, railing against Obama-era policies. He also pens a Breitbart op-ed attacking a textbook for criticizing Reagan, solidifying his rep as a young conservative firebrand ⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ . *NatCon:* Meanwhile, early rumblings of nationalist discontent in the GOP are growing (Trump's campaign begins in mid-2015).
- **2016:** Donald Trump's presidential victory on a nationalist platform. Kirk enthusiastically supports Trump; TPUSA's profile soars. Kirk speaks at the RNC as one of its youngest speakers ²¹ . He quickly embraces Trump's “**America First**” framing – e.g. praising the travel ban and America's withdrawal from the Paris climate accord. *Alignment:* Kirk's rhetoric shifts to prioritize national sovereignty and pride, reflecting NatCon's core focus on independent nations ⁴ . Still, Kirk maintains standard GOP economic stances alongside Trumpism at this point.
- **2017–2018:** TPUSA becomes ubiquitous on college campuses. Kirk launches the “**Culture War**” **campus tour**, taking on political correctness. His themes include denouncing “cultural Marxism,”

defending Western civilization, and promoting patriotism among students. *NatCon*: These themes overlap with nascent NatCon ideas (the importance of national heritage and anti-PC sentiment). In 2018, Yoram Hazony's *The Virtue of Nationalism* is published, giving intellectual heft to arguments Kirk makes instinctively. No direct link yet, but ideological paths converge.

- **2019:** A pivotal year. Kirk founds **Turning Point Action** and absorbs Students for Trump, explicitly tying his network to Trump's re-election ²² ²³. Kirk increasingly speaks of an existential fight for America's soul, using religious and nationalist language. In July 2019, Hazony convenes the **first National Conservatism Conference** in D.C., drawing figures like Tucker Carlson, Peter Thiel, Josh Hawley ⁷⁹ ⁸⁰. Kirk does not attend, but only a few months later he faces the Groyper uproar (Oct-Nov 2019). Under fire from ultra-nationalists, Kirk publishes an op-ed in *American Greatness* (a NatCon-leaning publication) affirming stricter immigration views ³⁸ ⁶⁷. *Shift*: Kirk aligns more closely with nationalist hard-liners, jettisoning his earlier openness to high-skilled immigration. This episode demonstrates Kirk moving **closer to NatCon's nativist stance** – effectively closing any gap to the movement's position on immigration and national identity.
- **2020:** Kirk releases *The MAGA Doctrine*, outlining the ideas that define Trump's movement (nationalism, populism, anti-globalism). He is an opening speaker at the scaled-down, pandemic-affected RNC 2020, declaring that Democrats and the left “want to punish you, destroy you, and make you dependent on the state” – a fiery culture-war populist message. When COVID-19 hits, Kirk opposes lockdowns vehemently, framing them as tyranny and urging “**rebellion**” by young conservatives ⁸¹ ⁸². *NatCon*: The second National Conservatism Conference (NatCon 2) is held in late 2021 (delayed by COVID), featuring many figures aligned with Trumpism. The ideological fusion of nationalist thought and MAGA populism is well underway. Though Kirk isn't formally in NatCon circles yet, his **priorities (borders, culture, faith, anti-socialism)** are virtually indistinguishable from NatCon's public platform.
- **2021:** In the post-Trump, Biden era, Kirk doubles down on **Christian nationalism** and election denial. He launches TPUSA's **Faith initiative (2021)**, partnering with ultraconservative pastors to rally churches into politics ⁴². He tours megachurches, claiming America is in a spiritual war and urging congregants to “take back the nation” for Christ. He also amplifies the stolen-election narrative from 2020 and flirts with anti-vaccine conspiracy, aligning with the far-right populist wing. *NatCon*: In 2021, NatCon 2 (Orlando) brings together the nationalist wing of the GOP; overlapping initiatives include *NatCon Squad* (a podcast with young NatCon commentators) and outreach to religious conservatives. Kirk's work with TPUSA Faith shows **indirect NatCon alignment**, channeling the same religious-nationalist energy that NatCon intellectuals view as essential for cultural renewal ⁸. By late 2021, Kirk's comments (e.g. the “white demographics” remark in September) place him firmly in the camp that sees demographic change as a threat ³⁵ – a stance many NatCon adherents share, albeit more subtly expressed.
- **2022:** Formal convergence. Kirk signs the **NatCon Statement of Principles (June 2022)**, publicly endorsing the movement ²⁷. In September, the third NatCon Conference (Miami) features an array of MAGA-aligned speakers (Ron DeSantis, J.D. Vance, etc.), solidifying that NatCon is the intellectual arm of Trumpism. Kirk's daily rhetoric – attacking “globalists” and celebrating the Supreme Court's reversal of *Roe v. Wade* as a return to God's law – is what conference attendees cheer for. In May, Kirk hosts Hazony on his show for a deep dive into conservative philosophy ¹⁸. This is essentially Kirk's **endorsement of NatCon ideas to his large audience**. By the end of 2022, Kirk and NatCon are, for

practical purposes, allied in shaping the GOP's future. Any remaining divergence is mainly stylistic (Kirk's bombast vs. NatCon's more high-brow tone in certain outlets).

- **2023–2024:** Kirk continues to expand TPUSA's reach (with projects like Turning Point Academy for school curricula and civic education reflecting nationalist principles). He supports NatCon-aligned candidates in the 2022 midterms and 2024 GOP primaries – for instance, backing J.D. Vance (an outspoken national conservative) in Ohio's Senate race ²⁷ and promoting Florida's legislative moves against DEI (diversity/equity/inclusion) in universities, which parallel NatCon's calls to "de-wokeify" academia. Internationally, Kirk speaks at a CPAC Mexico event and networks with rightist youth leaders in Spain and Brazil. The **NatCon 4 conference (2024)** and NatCon's growing influence in think tanks (e.g. Heritage Foundation's new nationalist streak) provide forums that reinforce Kirk's messaging. Essentially, by 2024 Kirk is both a product and a driver of the NatCon trend: his popularity among the base helps *NatCon ideas dominate the Republican narrative*, and the movement's intellectual framework helps Kirk articulate a coherent worldview beyond just adoration of Trump.
- **September 2025:** Tragically, Charlie Kirk is killed after an on-campus shooting (an event which, though beyond the scope of this analysis, led to an outpouring of tributes from across the right). Yoram Hazony and other NatCon figures mourned Kirk as a martyr for the cause ²⁸. The **NatCon 5 conference (Sept 2025)** in D.C. occurred just days later, and while Kirk was not there to speak, his influence was palpable: speakers echoed the *youthful energy and combative style* Kirk brought, and many attendees were young activists whom Kirk had inspired. The movement's challenge moving forward, as some noted, is maintaining a balance between **intellectual seriousness and Kirk-style populist activism** ⁸³. But there is no doubt that Charlie Kirk's legacy is intertwined with National Conservatism's ascendancy – he helped tether a generation's political identity to nationalist and traditionalist ideas, shaping the GOP and conservative movement in a way few others his age have.

Alignment vs. Divergence: Kirk and NatCon at a Glance

The following table summarizes how Charlie Kirk's positions and actions **align with or diverge from the National Conservatism movement** on key dimensions:

Aspect	Alignment with NatCon	Divergence or Nuance
Patriotism & Nationalism	<p>Strong alignment: Kirk and NatCon both champion an "America First" or nation-first ethos. Kirk echoes NatCon's call for national independence, praising sovereign nation-states over global governance ⁴ ⁶. He rejects "globalist" ideologies and supports policies (e.g. trade protection, border control) that prioritize national interests, mirroring NatCon's core tenets. ⁶ ¹⁸</p>	<p>Nuance: Kirk's nationalism is packaged in populist rhetoric and partisan activism. NatCon intellectuals agree on principle, though some avoid Kirk's more conspiratorial flourishes (e.g. "coastal billionaires" plotting against America). Essentially no major ideological divergence; only a tonal one where Kirk is more combative.</p>

Aspect	Alignment with NatCon	Divergence or Nuance
National Identity & Immigration	<p>Strong alignment: Both are critical of mass immigration and multiculturalism that dilute national identity. Kirk's hardline stance – warning of migrants “replacing” the current population – resonates with NatCon's emphasis on cultural cohesion and controlled borders ³⁵ ³⁹. Both endorse strict border enforcement and oppose liberal immigration policies, framing them as threats to the nation's fabric. ³⁸ ⁸⁴</p>	<p>Shift over time: Early in his career, Kirk was more open to legal immigration (especially skilled immigrants) in line with business-friendly conservatism. Under pressure from nationalist activists, he reversed this in 2019 ³⁸. This marked a convergence with NatCon. Now, divergence is minimal – if anything, Kirk's rhetoric is even more blunt than some NatCon statements on demographic change, but the substantive positions are aligned.</p>
Religion in Public Life	<p>Full alignment: Both Kirk and NatCon assert the primacy of Judeo-Christian values in society. Kirk explicitly advocates Christian nationalism (calling America a Christian nation and rejecting strict church-state separation) ⁴⁰. The NatCon manifesto likewise declares that where Christianity is the majority faith, public life should reflect Christian moral principles ⁸. Both emphasize the Bible's importance in education and law, and both partner with religious traditionalists. ⁴⁰ ⁸</p>	<p>Nuance: Kirk's approach is often through evangelical populism and alliances with dominionist pastors, while NatCon includes Catholics, Jews, and others in a broader religious coalition. Kirk's rhetoric can be more theologically aggressive (e.g. saying Democrats stand for “everything God hates” ⁴⁰). Hazony's NatCon circles tolerate this but use somewhat more inclusive language regarding religious minorities ⁴⁸. No direct conflict – just a difference in emphasis.</p>
“Culture War” Issues	<p>Very strong alignment: Both see the left's “woke” agenda as an existential threat to national culture. Kirk's TPUSA and NatCon both fight critical race theory in schools, radical gender ideology, and other progressive cultural trends ¹⁸ ⁹. They promote patriotic education, traditional family values, and free speech (especially for conservative viewpoints) on campuses. Kirk's aggressive stance against abortion, transgender rights, and political correctness is mirrored by many NatCon speakers/writers who decry the same “cultural Marxism.” ¹⁸ ⁹</p>	<p>Nuance: There's virtually no daylight on goals; any divergence is stylistic. For instance, Kirk might use more inflammatory language (“The Left hates America and wants to destroy the family”) whereas a NatCon writer might pen a treatise on how feminism or critical theory undermines the family – but both agree on the underlying point. One small divergence: Kirk sometimes amplifies unproven conspiracy claims in culture-war contexts (e.g. about school officials “grooming” children) that more scholarly NatCons avoid. Overall, alignment on culture war is extremely high.</p>

Aspect	Alignment with NatCon	Divergence or Nuance
Economic Policy	<p>General alignment: Both endorse free enterprise and oppose socialism ⁵⁹. Kirk remains a vocal capitalist, as does the NatCon manifesto (which champions private property and markets). Both supported Trump's tax cuts and deregulation. Additionally, both recognize that "markets are not absolute" – NatCon allows for curbing big tech or shielding key industries, and Kirk supported Trump's tariffs and has blasted Big Tech for censoring conservatives. ⁵⁹ ⁶</p>	<p>Divergence: Kirk's roots are in libertarian economics, and he rarely advocates the active economic nationalism (e.g. tariffs for rust belt revival, industrial policy) that some NatCon figures do. NatCon has an intellectual strand critical of "market fundamentalism," whereas Kirk mostly criticizes regulations and socialist policies, not the free market itself. He hasn't opposed ideas like family tax credits or tech regulation, but he's not leading those charges either. Thus, Kirk skews a bit more laissez-faire than the average NatCon populist, though in practice he supported Trumpist deviations like protectionism.</p>
Role of Government	<p>Alignment in principle: Both favor a "strong but limited" government ⁷. They agree on reducing the administrative state and judiciary overreach, while empowering elected bodies to act for the common good. Kirk applauds using state power to crack down on riots, ban CRT in schools, and punish companies that go "woke," which aligns with NatCon's willingness to wield government authority in defense of national values ⁵⁷ ⁵⁸. Both reject the libertarian idea that government should always stay completely out of social and economic matters if vital national/cultural interests are at stake.</p>	<p>Shift from past: Early TPUSA preached minimal government in almost all areas. Kirk still rhetorically opposes "big government," but he now supports muscular government action on social issues. This matches NatCon's position and is a change from movement conservatism. There isn't a clear policy that Kirk opposes which NatCon supports (or vice versa) on government scope – it's more that Kirk's tone on limited government is softer now. He prioritizes outcomes (saving the nation) over abstract small-government purity, just as NatCons do ⁶.</p>

Aspect	Alignment with NatCon	Divergence or Nuance
Foreign Policy & National Security	<p>Alignment on core ideas: Both are skeptical of global military interventions and “liberal imperialism.” Kirk and NatCon thinkers alike criticized the Iraq War and nation-building abroad ⁷⁶ . Both prioritize confronting China’s rise (economically and culturally) as a nationalist imperative – Kirk often warns of Chinese Communist Party influence, and NatCon includes many China hawks. Both also oppose unlimited commitments to institutions like the UN or WHO, seeing them as eroding sovereignty.</p>	<p>Nuance/Divergence: Within NatCon, opinions vary on specific issues like Russia/Ukraine. Kirk tended toward the non-interventionist side (against heavy US involvement in Ukraine), aligning with NatCon populists. Hazony and some NatCon others supported arming Ukraine, so Kirk wasn’t aligned with <i>them</i> on that policy ⁷⁴ . But this reflects an internal split, not a Kirk vs. NatCon rift. On confronting authoritarian adversaries: Kirk is hawkish on China <i>and</i> critical of Putin, whereas a few NatCon voices are more accommodating to Russia. Overall, Kirk’s views fall within NatCon’s spectrum and mostly match its <i>America-focused realism</i>.</p>
Alliances & Networks	<p>Direct alignment: Kirk actively collaborates with NatCon-associated figures and organizations. He signed NatCon’s manifesto and hosted its leaders ²⁷ ¹⁸ . Internationally, he forged ties with fellow nationalists like Nigel Farage, boosting the movement’s transatlantic profile ⁶¹ . Many NatCon politicians (e.g. Senators Josh Hawley and J.D. Vance) have been supported or promoted by Kirk’s TPUSA, indicating a shared cause.</p>	<p>Difference in role: Kirk is not a scholarly figure or office-holder; he’s an activist/organizer. Thus, while he is aligned with NatCon, he doesn’t sit on think-tank boards or write white papers. He shapes the movement from the grassroots, which sometimes means prioritizing partisan wins over purity. For instance, if a NatCon intellectual critiques Trump or GOP leaders, Kirk might still back those leaders for strategic reasons. But these are tactical differences. Institutionally, Kirk sometimes faces scrutiny (TPUSA has had its share of PR controversies) that NatCon conferences might avoid. Yet fundamentally, he’s considered “one of them” – even hailed as a hero by NatCon allies for galvanizing youth ¹ ²⁸ .</p>

Aspect	Alignment with NatCon	Divergence or Nuance
Rhetoric & Tone	<p>Alignment in message: Both Kirk and NatCon use alarmist tones about the West’s decline and the need for renewal of national spirit. They decry “decadence” in modern liberal culture and call for bold action. The sense of civilizational urgency (“save our country now or lose it forever”) is a hallmark of both Kirk’s speeches and NatCon writings ²⁴ ⁶ .</p>	<p>Divergence in style: Kirk’s rhetoric is often more incendiary and colloquial – e.g. blunt attacks on individuals (“crooked Hillary,” etc.), social media memes, and occasionally unverified claims. NatCon intellectuals, writing for journals or speaking at conferences, typically use more measured language and logical argument (even as they convey similar dire warnings). Some moderate conservatives critique Kirk for divisive or factually dubious statements ⁷⁰ , a criticism that often extends to the NatCon milieu as well. However, NatCon leaders might distance themselves from a particularly toxic remark faster than Kirk would. Still, these stylistic differences have not prevented collaboration.</p>

Sources: The alignment and divergence points above are drawn from a synthesis of Kirk’s public statements and activities ²⁴ ⁴⁰ , the NatCon Statement of Principles and related commentary ⁸ ²⁷ , and observations by analysts across the political spectrum ⁸⁵ ⁶ .

Conclusion

Charlie Kirk’s journey from a young libertarian-leaning activist to a flag-bearer of National Conservatism reflects the broader transformation of American conservatism in the Trump era. Initially, Kirk occupied a more traditional Reaganite space with a millennial twist; over time, he gravitated toward and eventually **merged with the NatCon movement**, both influencing it and drawing strength from it. Today, Kirk’s worldview – **fiercely nationalist, avowedly Christian, anti-globalist, and aggressively culture-war oriented** – is largely indistinguishable from the platform of National Conservatism as articulated by its leading proponents ²⁴ ²⁷ .

This relationship has been mutually reinforcing. Kirk provided NatCon with a powerful grassroots organizer and media-savvy promoter who could package philosophical ideas into fiery soundbites for mass consumption. In turn, the NatCon movement gave Kirk’s instinctive populism a more **coherent intellectual framework and network**. Through direct links like conference partnerships and manifesto signings, as well as indirect links like shared ideology and common enemies, Kirk became both a face of National Conservatism and a force in shaping its trajectory – especially among young conservatives. Internationally, his collaborations with figures like Farage illustrate how the **NatCon impulse transcends borders**, uniting disparate nationalists in a loose coalition that shares strategies and support ⁶¹ .

Over the past decade, Kirk’s rhetoric shifted from primarily economic grievances (debt, taxes, campus free speech) to a full-spectrum nationalist narrative: *America is a nation under siege from within and without – by secularism, multicultural globalism, uncontrolled migration, and left-wing radicalism – and must reassert its traditional national identity to survive*. This narrative is precisely what the National Conservatism movement

propagates in scholarly journals and political forums. Kirk's talent was to broadcast it in plain language to millions of young Americans, recruiting them to the cause. As a result, Kirk helped ensure that the GOP's next generation is, to a significant extent, a **NatCon generation**.

It is important to acknowledge nuances and internal debates, of course. Kirk's alignment with National Conservatism does not mean absolute uniformity or that he played a formal role in NatCon's intellectual development. He sometimes skirted the edges of conspiracism or partisan excess in ways that made even allies cringe ⁷⁰. Yet, the overall arc is clear: Kirk and NatCon converged on a vision of American conservatism that is more nationalist, more religious, and more combative against liberal modernity than what came before. Together, they represent a powerful force that has redefined the American right in the 2020s.

As the **National Conservatism movement** continues to evolve – grappling with questions like balancing populism and principle, or forging alliances abroad – the influence of figures like Charlie Kirk will remain integral. Even after his death, Kirk's legacy lives on in TPUSA's army of activists and the politicians who rose with his help. These foot soldiers and leaders will likely carry forward the NatCon banner, blending Kirk's **pugnacious activism with Hazony's ideological blueprint**. In sum, Charlie Kirk's relationship with National Conservatism has been one of synergy: directly through collaboration and indirectly through shared ideology, he both reflected and shaped a historic shift in conservatism, in America and beyond.

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