



RUSSIA, HUNGARY, AND THE QUEST FOR GRANDEUR

By John R. Haines



John R. Haines is a Senior Fellow of the Foreign Policy Research Institute and Executive Director of FPRI's Princeton Committee. Much of his current research is focused on Russia and its near abroad, with a special interest in nationalist and separatist movements. As a private investor and entrepreneur, he is currently focused on the question of nuclear smuggling and terrorism, and the development of technologies to discover, detect, and characterize concealed fissile material. He is also a Trustee of FPRI. The translation of all source material is by the author unless noted otherwise.

"Our grandeur and force consist only in our intransigence about the rights of France."¹

-Charles De Gaulle

Executive Summary

Grandeur is a term associated ineluctably with Charles de Gaulle, though interestingly, not one he ever explicitly defined. It is premised on a set of historical and political myths, which de Gaulle wrote compensate for France's military and geographical vulnerability. While the Gaullist conception of *grandeur* intended to reestablish and validate the image of national greatness, it is a two-edged sword. Some discern Gaullist undertones in Russian President Vladimir Putin's political rhetoric, filtered through traditional themes of Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationhood. This essay explores and tests that suggestion through the lens of Mr. Putin's narrative about Russia, which he once called "a destiny, not a project." Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán also promotes a characterizing national destiny. Mr. Orbán's critics dismiss his conception of *grandeur* — Hungarian exceptionalism — as owing more to classic fascism than to Gaullism. That caustic appraisal fails to account fully, however, for what Mr. Orbán's declaration, "We Hungarians are the Continent's Gaullists," signals to Hungarians and non-Hungarians alike.

"Knowledge," wrote Michel Foucault, "is formed by looking for signs and detecting correspondence." This is how Mr. Putin and Mr. Orbán form their respective political narratives, by drawing on familiar myths and identities to underpin a defining national *grandeur*. Philip Cerny wrote that General de Gaulle "built his 'certain idea of nationhood' out of a kind of *bricolage* of historical anecdotes and into a structured myth with direct relevance and application to contemporary problems." So, too, Messrs. Putin and Orbán. Cerny introduces Claude Lévi-Strauss' concept of *bricolage*, or the figurative cobbling together of seemingly disparate historic events and political myths. Its practitioner, the *bricoleur*, contextualizes events to structure national (sometimes expressed as ethnical) identity. These events are signs, and it is the *bricoleur* — here, both Mr. Putin and Mr. Orbán — who deals in them. Today's contention over borders, boundaries and migration is replete with perverted expressions of *grandeur* that signal the reemergence of belligerent national and ethnical identities and threaten Europe-wide contagion.

The translation of all source material is by the author unless noted otherwise.

¹ Charles De Gaulle (1954). *Mémoires de guerre, vol. 1, l'Appel 1940-1942*. (Paris: Librarie Plon), 175. Quoted in Richard Herr (1955). "The Memoirs of General de Gaulle." *Yale French Studies*. 15 (Social and Political France), 126.

Introduction

This essay began in part a reflection on two others, one a decade-old commentary and the other, a 1997 scholarly paper. "The Self-Pride Spigot" is a December 2005 commentary by Fyodor Lukyanov, editor-in-chief of the journal *Russia in Global Affairs*.² It begins:

"France's awareness of its own greatness — real or illusory—was crucial to the nation's survival at critical historic moments. The revival of French *grandeur* twice engaged the greatest of its 20th century leaders — Charles de Gaulle. Following France's defeat in 1940 and the collapse of its empire in the early 1960s, the General strove for his humbled nation to once feel great and mighty."

Notwithstanding the decline of French power and influence in the world, writes Lukyanov, "the people live with a sense of their moral superiority, by which French society and the nation as a whole maintain a balanced national identity."

The *spigot* of the commentary's title — literally, "the oil and gas valve"³ — is a metaphor for the release of Russia's "almost limitless energy resource potential," and figuratively, for the renewal of Russian national pride. Lukyanov warns this can be a dangerous illusion. Russia's energy sector may "restore its great power status," but at what price, he asks. "What about our great history, culture and science? Is all this outweighed by a mere pipeline?" He ends with a reflection:

"Perhaps to develop normally as a people, Russians, like the French, still need to feel part of a great nation. There are many different ways to achieve this, however. The realization that one's greatness is wholly dependent upon the energy spigot is not the best way, at least from the standpoint of Russia's national identity."

The second essay is a 1997 assessment of the condition of diaspora Russians in the former Soviet republics. Its authors focus on "two diasporic communities in what are often considered to be potential geopolitical hotspots," of which one is of particular interest — the "diaspora of the Donbas."⁴ There is "a powerful but ill-defined *sense of community*" among its "overlapping mixture of ethnic Russians, Russophones and Ukrainophones, a large proportion of whom have local roots going back generations"⁵ [emphasis in original].

Political tensions over perceived Ukrainian nationalizing policies have long simmered in the Donbass⁶ alongside agitation for political unification of one form or another with Russia.⁷ While Russian historiography tends to tailor the past to fit the present — justifying Russian dominion not in terms of conquered territory, but as rule over peoples with the same history, language, and cultures⁸ — Ukrainians after the Soviet Union's dissolution sought "to as much as possible and as far as possible separate from Russia."⁹ Kinship seems to have amplified this need:

"Ukraine's growing national self-identification is closely tied to differentiating itself from 'Others'. Russia is the closest in historical, cultural, linguistic and ethnic terms, and therefore there is a need to distance Ukraine even more from it than is the case for central Europeans."¹⁰

In the aftermath of Russia's annexation of Crimea, tensions in the Donbass erupted into armed conflict during April 2014, pitting the Ukrainian government against separatist forces of the self-declared Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. The former rightly feared wider contagion among the country's diaspora Russians:

² Fyodor Lukyanov (2005). "Sobstvennaya gordost' ventilya." *Gazeta.ru* [published online in Russian 29 December 2005]. <http://www.gazeta.ru/column/lukyanov/508590.shtml>. Last accessed 11 June 2015. The article's Russian title uses the word *ventilya*, for which the literal translation is "valve." It is an allusion to opening a valve on an energy pipeline to release its literal contents — Russian oil and natural gas — but metaphorically, Russian national pride. The author has therefore opted to use the more idiomatically suited English word *spigot*.

³ Russian transliteration: *neftegazovom ventile*.

⁴ Graham Smith & Andrew Wilson (1997). "Rethinking Russia's Post-Soviet Diaspora: The Potential for Political Mobilization in Eastern Ukraine and North-East Estonia." *Europe-Asia Studies*. 49:5, 845-864.

⁵ Smith & Wilson (1997), *op cit.*, 854, 847.

⁶ The author has elected to use the proper Russian transliteration *Donbass* rather than *Donbas*, which is the Ukrainian transliteration. It is a portmanteau formed from *Donetskij bassein* or "Donets Basin," a reference to the Donets River that divides the region into two provinces. The northern province is the Lugansk Oblast [Russian translit.: *Luganskaya oblast*, Ukrainian translit.: *Luhans'ka oblast*] and the southern one is the Donetsk Oblast [Russian translit.: *Donetskaya oblast*, Ukrainian translit.: *Donets'ka oblast*]. Also known in Ukrainian as *Donechchyna*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 861.

⁸ Taras Kuzio (2001). "Historiography and National Identity among the Eastern Slavs: Towards a New Framework." *National Identities*. 3:2, 112. http://www.taraskuzio.net/Nation%20and%20State%20Building_files/national-history.pdf. Last accessed 12 June 2015.

⁹ Volodymyr Hryn'iov (1995). *Nova Ukraïna: Yaku ya i Bachu* (Kyiv: Abrys), 81. The English language title is *The New Ukraine: How I See It*.

¹⁰ Taras Kuzio (2001). "Identity and nation-building in Ukraine." *Ethnicities*. 1:3, 349. <http://etn.sagepub.com/content/1/3/343.full.pdf+html>. Last accessed 13 June 2015.

"[I]n Ukraine there are some 11.4 million ethnic Russians and at least six million Ukrainians and members of various minorities who prefer to use Russian, most of whom are concentrated in the broad arc of Ukrainian territory stretching from Kharkiv to Odessa, of which the Donbas is only the south-eastern corner."¹¹

Russian actions toward Ukraine express "a national narrative based on victimhood and its remediation":

"[T]he exaltation of Russian greatness, the promotion of 'Russian' values against a decadent West, and the reconstitution of the Soviet space by means of economic cooperation or destabilization. The narrative mobilizes history, and idealizes the Soviet period."¹²

With this foundation in place, we move to consider whether the notion of Russian *grandeur* is a useful concept to illuminate Mr. Putin's vision for his country. Then we turn to the French philosopher Michel Foucault and a pair of concepts, *discursive history* and *governmentality*, as the pivot from Mr. Putin to the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán. Sometimes compared (by admirers and detractors alike) to Mr. Putin, Mr. Orbán has his own species of *grandeur*, "Hungarian exceptionalism".

Mr. Putin and General de Gaulle

*"Charles de Gaulle is not a man of mystery. The air of mystery is part of the character which he has created, by calculation as much as by inclination, because it allows him to feint, to maneuver in front of the obstacle and to withdraw, if need be, without losing face."*¹³

-Herbert Lüthy

*"Avenging the demise of the Soviet Union will keep us in power."*¹⁴

-Anonymous

It is interesting to ponder that General De Gaulle never explicitly defined *grandeur*. His pre-war writing nonetheless stressed that a commitment to *grandeur* was a practical imperative to compensate for France's military and geographical vulnerability.¹⁵ The Gaullist conception of *grandeur* was intended to reestablish and validate the image of national greatness, toward the twinned endpoints of domestic stability and a sense of national identity.¹⁶ As General de Gaulle wrote in his memoirs, "France is not herself except in the first rank...to my mind, France cannot be France without *le grandeur*."¹⁷ *Mutatis mutandis* Mr. Putin might well write the same of modern Russia.

Historic parallels are never exact, of course. They are intended to provide "contexts of similarity and difference that foster perspective and insight — and reassurance that nothing is ever quite new."¹⁸ Bearing that condition in mind, for Russia, like France, "the harness is provided by a unifying and galvanizing 'national ambition,' a 'great undertaking' — by *grandeur*, the 'choice of a great cause'.¹⁹ It is not necessarily one animated by grandiose thoughts, however:

"[O]ne cannot fail to be struck by the ideological emptiness of Gaullism. It is a stance, not a doctrine; an attitude, not a coherent set of dogmas; a style without much the service of France and French *grandeur*, itself never defined in its content, only by its context."²⁰

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 847.

¹² Gilles Lepasant (2014). "La Politique européenne de voisinage à l'épreuve de la crise ukrainienne." *Question d'Europe*. Published online in French by Fondation Robert Schuman, 6 October 2014. <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/fr/doc/questions-d-europe/qe-327-fr.pdf>. Last accessed 13 June 2015.

¹³ Herbert Lüthy (1965). "De Gaulle: Pose and Policy." *Foreign Affairs*. 43 (July 1965). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/1965-07-01/de-gaulle-pose-and-policy>. Last accessed 13 June 2015.

¹⁴ Unattributed quote in Mark Leonard & Nicu Popescu (2007) *A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations) 12. http://ecfr.3cdn.net/1ef82b3f011e075853_0fm6bphgw.pdf. Last accessed 1 June 2015.

¹⁵ For example, see: Charles De Gaulle (1934; 1941). *The Army of the Future*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1941), 15-21. In Daniel J. Mahoney (1997). "De Gaulle and the Death of Europe." *The National Interest*. Summer 1997, 48.

¹⁶ Philip G. Cerny (1980). *The Politics of Grandeur: Ideological Aspects of De Gaulle's Foreign Policy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 6, 61.

¹⁷ Charles De Gaulle (1971). *Memoirs of Hope*. (New York: Simon & Schuster), 178-179. Quoted in Herbert Lüthy (1965). "De Gaulle: Pose and Policy." *Foreign Affairs*. 43(July 1965). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/1965-07-01/de-gaulle-pose-and-policy>. Last accessed 13 June 2015.

¹⁸ See Editor's note to "Lassitude in the Legislature on Iran." *War on the Rocks* website [published online 27 July 2015]. <http://warontherocks.com/2015/07/lassitude-in-the-legislature-on-iran/>. Last accessed 27 July 2015.

¹⁹ Stanley Hoffmann & Inge Hoffmann (1968). "The Will to Grandeur: De Gaulle as Political Artist." *Daedalus*. 97:3 (Summer, 1968), 862.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 845.

Mr. Putin believes, much as General de Gaulle, that his country must recapture the unique sense of *la gloire et la grandeur* of its national culture and identity. For both men, themes of national strength and independence dominate their policy objectives. General de Gaulle challenged the fundamental rationale of NATO as it applied to French security. Mr. Putin — who in the lead-up to the March 2000 election offered that De Gaulle was his model in foreign policy matters²¹ — has challenged NATO enlargement as posing a direct threat to Russian national security interests.

"One can easily see the appeal of the French general who came to power in the wake of the failed Fourth Republic," writes Matthew Evangelista, "determined to revive France's *grandeur*, to 'restore state authority,' as he put it, and to create a strong, centralized, presidential republic. Putin from the start expressed similar aspirations for Russia."²² Mr. Putin's Russia insists (like France circa 1960) on its continuing *grandeur* even though much of the outside world regards it as pure self-indulgence. There are of course limits to the analogy. Dmitrii Trenin makes an important distinction between the two countries:

"Given that Russia is a continental rather than a maritime power, its 'colonies' were actually its borderlands, i.e., a direct continuation of its national territory."

Similarly, French de-colonization is no way analogous to Russia and Ukraine (nor for that matter, Belarus), the independence of which "is rather the result of self-determination within a family of ethnically and (for the most part) religiously very close groups of peoples." Trenin writes, "Once the imperial era was over, the Russians had no safe haven to return to. Instead, they had to draw new borders where there had been none for centuries."²³ We will return to the question of borders and boundaries later in this essay.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union left 25 million Russians in former Soviet territories, persons who, like the Algerian *piets-noirs*,²⁴ found themselves on the wrong side of a receding imperial border. Most particularly in the case of Ukraine, the presence of Russian *piets-noirs* exemplifies what Edward Keenan calls the Russian national unity myth (*narod*).²⁵ "We cannot," conceded Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in 1992, "send a military helicopter for every Russian-speaking boy or girl in a school in Moldova."

Russians did not abandon ideas of *grandeur*, however, even as the Soviet Union disintegrated.

"Many Russians hold that the loss of Russian status as a superpower is unnatural and temporary...A fallback emotional prop is their longstanding collective consciousness regarding their vast land and the concept of 'geopolitics.' Because Russia is a huge landmass with vast natural resources, Russians still have one source of confidence. In the Russian language, the term *geopolitics* means that geographical determinants are not subject to historical change and that a country's location and size guarantee its significance and influence. Therefore, Russia's claim to a role as a world power is viewed as guaranteed, irrespective of its internal state of affairs or military performance."²⁶

Aspirations of *grandeur* are one thing; reality often yields quite different results. Although France was no longer a great power, "de Gaulle's great game was to pretend that she still was, and to get her to punch above her military or economic weight in the Great Powers League."²⁷ Mr. Putin acts in an indisputably similar manner. While early in his presidency Mr. Putin rejected the proposition of constructing an official ideology and presented himself as, in his words, "a pragmatist" — going so far in his

²¹ Vladimir Putin (2000). *First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait by Russia's President*. (New York: Public Affairs), 194. Mr. Putin responds first with the name of Napoleon Bonaparte when journalists asked which political leaders he found "most interesting."

²² Matthew Evangelista (2005). "Is Putin the New de Gaulle? A Comparison of the Chechen and Algerian Wars." *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 21:4, 36. <http://falcon.arts.cornell.edu/mae10/Is-Putin-the-New-de-Gaulle.pdf>. Last accessed 8 June 2015.

²³ Dmitrii Trenin (2002). *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization*. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), 79-81.

²⁴ The slang term *Pied-Noir* ("Black-Foot") was used for white French settlers in Algeria, more than a million of which returned to France after the 1962 Algerian war of independence.

²⁵ Edward L. Keenan (1994). "On Certain Mythical Beliefs and Russian Behaviors." In Frederick S. Starr, ed. *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe), 36-37. The literal English translation of the Russian word *narod* is "people" but the German word *Volk* better approximates its meaning in context. Keenan describes the "startling incapacity" of Russians "to acknowledge the authenticity of Ukrainian claims to their national identity, not to mention what they take as their national territory." José Casanova wrote presciently in 1998, "Russophone Ukrainians hold the key to the emergence of a genuinely pluralistic, and not just plural, civil society in Ukraine...Being in the middle [between Ukrainophones and Russophones] they serve as a structural guarantee of the survival of Ukraine's independence. They can literally hold Ukraine together in a way in which neither of the other two poles can. Without them, both temptations, the nationalizing one on the part of the aggrieved Ukrainian nationalists and the colonial one of the part of alarmed Russian *piets-noirs*, and the concomitant danger of Russian-Ukrainian communal violence which could easily spill over into an international confrontation between Russia and Ukraine, would be much greater. See: José Casanova (1998). "Ethno-linguistic and religious pluralism and democratic construction in Ukraine." In Barnett R. Rubin & Jack Snyder, eds. *Post-Soviet Political Order*. (New York: Routledge) 89.

²⁶ Graham C. Cornwell (1998). *Nuclear Weapons and NATO-Russia Relations*. (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School), 49-50.

https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/32617/98Dec_Cornwell.pdf?sequence=1. Last accessed 8 June 2015.

²⁷ Pierre Hassner (2008). "Russia's Transition to Autocracy." *Journal of Democracy*. 19:2 (April 2008) 8.

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v019/19.2hassner.pdf. Last accessed 11 November 2015.

2007 Address to the Federation Council as to ridicule as "Russians' favorite pastime" the "tradition of searching for a national idea" — he has nevertheless maintained "a strong and essentially ideological desire to restore Russia's 'greatness'," one that lies "at the core of Putin's leadership."²⁸

Russian *grandeur* is undergirded by a state-centrism (*gosudarstvennost'*) that has less to do with Western conceptions of sovereignty than with the power of the state to shape the nation's destiny (*derzhavnost'*). State-centrism is a political construct, writes Pavel Baev, with three dimensions — Russia as, respectively, a Great Power, an Empire, and a Civilization — that are blended (sometimes imperfectly) in mainstream Russian political thinking. Each influenced the ideological evolution of Mr. Putin's presidency.²⁹ While Mr. Putin "arrived to power with a strong conviction that Russia was a European state,"³⁰ it is *derzhavnost'* that illuminates his political understanding, as Nicole Gallina writes:

"It implies a strong and paternalistic state, and goes hand-in-hand with a well-ordered police state. This expression unites patriotism with orthodoxy, includes commitment toward the fatherland, but also authoritarianism and faith in Russian grandeur..."³¹

Returning to sovereignty, *suverennost'* as understood by Russians is not "the sovereignty of Thomas Hobbes, Jeane Bodin, and Hans Morgenthau."³² It is instead closer to this understanding by the Russian author, Roman Nosikov:

"No matter how great our mistakes, defeats and failings, they are the mistakes, defeats and failings of a great, free and unique people who need nor have any intermediaries between themselves and God...All that belongs to our history belongs to us alone. Those were our decisions. We must answer for them only to ourselves and to God, certainly not to the 'civilized world', 'the West', or 'Europe'. Those...who judge our history by another's yardstick...are slaves, unworthy of the honor of being one of us."³³

Mr. Putin's conception of Russian *grandeur*, too, has weighty civilizational overtones, tracing to Count Sergey Uvarov's c.1830 triad *pravoslaviye—samoderzhaviye—narodnost'* (Orthodoxy—autocracy—nationhood). It is worth pausing momentarily to consider one element of that triad — *samoderzhaviye* (autocracy) — of which Uvarov wrote:

"A *colossus* (meaning empire) in which an imagined constitutional form of government accepts, in the European manner, the chimeras of restricting the monarch's authority and granting equal rights to all classes, would fail to last a fortnight. It will in fact collapse before completing these false transformations."³⁴

Thus autocracy is "a conservative principle, an instrument to preserve the empire in its current form." It is worth highlighting Uvarov's eventual substitution of the French word *nationalité* — "the quality of being French,"³⁵ as Olivier Von puts it — for the *narodnost'* of his original formulation.³⁶ It implies a basket of distinctly Russian traits, of "Russian-ness". It became in Vladimir Solovyov's later formulation "the Russian Idea"³⁷ (*Russkaya ideya*) — Alexander Yanov expands it to the "Russian hegemonic idea"³⁸ [emphasis added]. As Baev notes, the renowned scholar of Russian affairs Richard Pipes maintained that one of aforementioned dimensions — imperial expansionism — is an essential and irreducible feature of the Russian state.

"Pipes' diagnosis finds much corroborating evidence in the ratiocinations of such pro-Kremlin 'neo-imperialists' as Aleksandr Dugin and Mikhail Leotyevev. They express the widely held view that Russia could

²⁸ Pavel K. Baev (2008). "The East-West maneuvering in Russia's energy policy – Could oil and gas exports to China endanger Europe's energy security?" RUSSCASP Working Paper (August 2008), 3. <http://www.fni.no/russcasp/Russia-China-energy-Baev.pdf>. Last accessed 12 November 2015.

²⁹ This is a necessarily cryptic summation of a much more contoured argument developed in Pavel K. Baev (2012). *Russian Energy Policy and Military Power: Putin's Quest for Greatness* [Contemporary Security Studies]. (Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition) 33-34.

³⁰ Baev (2008), *op cit.*, 3.

³¹ Nicole Gallina (2007). *Law and Order in Russia: The Well-Arranged Police State*. (Zurich: Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule) 6.

³² Elena Chebankova (2015). "Competing Ideologies of Russia's Civil Society." *Europe-Asia Studies*. 67:2, 254.

³³ Nosikov (2013). "O svobodnykh lyudyakh i tekh, komu sredi nih ne mesto" ("Of a free people, and those who have no place among them"). *Odnako.org* [published online in Russian 26 June 2013]. <http://www.odnako.org/blogs/negriyanka-na-dvoih-kak-visshaya-cennost-o-svobodnih-lyudyah-i-teh-komu-sredi-nih-ne-mesto/>. Last accessed 13 November 2015. Chebankova (2015) also quotes (with some differences in translation) part of this text.

³⁴ Uvarov's Russian language text is reproduced in the transcript of a lecture titled "Count Uvarov's Triad" presented on 5 March 2007 by Professor Alexei Miller of Central European University in Budapest. See: *Polit.ru* [published in Russian 11 April 2007]. <http://www.polit.ru/article/2007/04/11/uvarov/>. Last accessed 12 November 2015. The translation is the author's own.

³⁵ Olivier W. Vonk (2012). *Dual Nationality in the European Union*. (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers), 16.

³⁶ Such Romantic era literary figures as Prince Pyotr Andreyevich Vyazemsky embraced the concept of *nationalité* for Russians as in Poland, for example, where a neologism, *narodowość*, was coined.

³⁷ Solovyov introduced the concept in an eponymous May 1888 lecture in Paris.

³⁸ Alexander Yanov (2013). "Putin and the 'Russian Idea'." Institute of Modern Russia [published online 1 July 2013]. <http://imrussia.org/en/society/504-putin-and-the-russian-idea>. Last accessed 12 November 2015.

'organically' exist only in the form of empire, and this implies asserting effective control over political development of neighboring states and accepting responsibility for their security. Energy is now perceived as a crucial bond holding the post-Soviet empire together and securing Russia's dominance, while also providing it with surplus income that could be converted into muscle and influence."³⁹

Reflecting on the revival of the Russian Idea, Vadim Volkov develops much the same argument. He wrote a decade ago that "Putin's recent visit to Mount Afon...can be viewed as a move away from the economist version of the National Idea to one appealing to religious and moral values."⁴⁰

"The imperialist motive worked before, hence the temptation to use it again. One way to imagine a new empire is as an energy network with nodal points in the Russian heartland. Chubais suggested electric lines, but pipelines, as recent events demonstrate, will do even better."⁴¹

Nikolay Gerasimovich Ustryalov⁴² (a rough contemporary of Uvanov) conceived Russian history as a national narrative.⁴³ The dissolution of the Soviet Union denied Russians their structuring narrative, and left them to fashion a new identity through the practice of *bricolage*,⁴⁴ a term borrowed from the French anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss. Likewise, General de Gaulle, Philip Cerny writes "built his 'certain idea of France' out of a kind of *bricolage* of historical anecdotes and into a structured myth with direct relevance and application to contemporary problems."⁴⁵

Reflecting on Ustryalov, Brian Baer writes, "Mythical thought is...a kind of intellectual 'bricolage,'" continuing that "the *bricoleur* creates structures by means of events."⁴⁶ It is suggested by some that Russia epitomizes what Levi-Strauss called a "frozen culture," one trapped in past structures:

"Hence 'we face the return of Russian history.' Numerous phenomena in today's Russia evoke comparison with either the Soviet or tsarist period."⁴⁷

As the aforementioned Aleksandr Dugin wrote:

"For us, the reigning idea is the Russian Idea, the idea of Great Russia, emerging from centuries of history and careening towards full and bright fulfillment in the future...To be Russian is to be a compatriot in the Russian Idea..."⁴⁸

The desire to re-empower and resurrect a *grandeur* reminiscent of the Tsars and the Soviet Union first formed in the economic and social turmoil of the late 1990s, amidst "widespread corruption, weak institutions, and the dependence on Western funds." Mr. Putin's emphasis on rejuvenating Russian hard power is a central piece in the making of the new Russian grandeur.⁴⁹

"During his tenure as prime minister and in the beginning of his presidency...was often mentioned as being a representative of 'the power structures.' This term refers both to the numerous Russian security services, the armed forces, and sometimes to the military-industrial complex (*Voенно-Промышленнii Kompleks*)."⁵⁰

³⁹ Baev (2012), *op cit.*, 32-32.

⁴⁰ Vadim Volkov (2005). "Will the Kremlin Revive the Russian Idea?" *PONARS Policy Memo No. 370* (December 2005). http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/pm_0370.pdf. Last accessed 12 November 2015. The observation is especially interesting read in parallel with a speech given that same year by Mr. Putin in which he said, "State power, wrote the great Russian philosopher Ivan Ilyin, 'has its own limits defined by the fact that it is authority that reaches people from outside...State power cannot oversee and dictate the creative states of the soul and mind, the inner states of love, freedom and goodwill. The state cannot demand from its citizens faith, prayer, love, goodness and conviction. It cannot regulate scientific, religious and artistic creation...It should not intervene in moral, family and daily private life, and only when extremely necessary should it impinge on people's economic initiative and creativity.' Let us not forget this."

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Not to be confused with the later Bolshevism theorist, Nikolay Vasilyevich Ustryalov

⁴³ Professor Miller makes this point in his March 2007 lecture, "Count Uvarov's Triad," *op cit.*

⁴⁴ Brian James Baer (2013). "Post-Soviet self-fashioning and the politics of representation." *Putin as Celebrity and Celebrity Icon*, Helena Goscilo, ed. (New York: Routledge), 160.

⁴⁵ Cerny (1980), *op cit.*, 87.

⁴⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962). *The Savage Mind*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 17, 22. The translator's note (p. 17) reads, "The French verb *bricoler* has no English equivalent, but refers to the kind of activities that are performed by a handy-man. The *bricoleur* performs his tasks with materials and tools that are at hand, from 'odds and ends'."

⁴⁷ Stephen Blank (1998). "Russian Democracy: From the Future to the Past." *Demokratizatsiya*. 6:3, 552. <https://www.questia.com/read/1G1-53223929/russian-democracy-from-the-future-to-the-past>. Last accessed 10 June 2015.

⁴⁸ Aleksandr Dugin (2014). *Putin vs. Putin: Vladimir Putin Viewed from the Right*. (London: Aktos), 250.

⁴⁹ Maxime Henri André Larivé & Roger E. Kanet (2013). "The Return to Europe and the Rise of EU-Russian Ideological Differences." *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*. 14:1, 130.

⁵⁰ Tor Bukkvoll (2003). "Putin's Strategic Partnership with the West: The Domestic Politics of Russian Foreign Policy." *Comparative Strategy*. 22:3, 225.

The question remains whether Russia has achieved de Gaulle-like *grandeur* or alternately, is a mere *folie de grandeur*. Dugin (writing in 2014) gives one answer, *viz.*, that "2012 should be considered a turning point." He speculated Mr. Putin "may be a historical figure who has finally accepted the mission to revive Russia as a great power. Otherwise, everything that he has said and done before would be pointless. Russia is waiting for a leader to help her regain her previous greatness."⁵¹ There is, of course, an alternate viewpoint:

"As long as Russia is unwilling to face its history, it will also be, in some sense, a threat to its neighbors, as the Baltic struggle indicates, and potentially vulnerable to a new authoritarian ideology. [...] These machinations are merely a repeat of past failures and validate Marx's observations that history repeats itself the first time as tragedy and the second time as farce. [...]his aspect of Putin's rule may well come to be remembered by historians as was Nicholas I's reign, for in its aftermath, one historian observed that the worst thing is that the whole thing was a mistake."⁵²

When in November 1999 *Izvestia* derided Mr. Putin as a "marionette of the military-industrial complex and the generals of the armed forces,"⁵³ its editors misapprehended the actual power relationship. It is the Russian security services, especially the Federal Security Service — more commonly called by its Russian language acronym, FSB (*Federalnaia Sluzhba Bezopasnosti*) — that represent the real foundation of Mr. Putin's political power. The more geopolitically oriented parts of the security services "see a viable VPK⁵⁴ as a necessity for Russian grandeur in world affairs, and as a valuable tool for increasing Russian influence in the world."⁵⁵

The "cult of the state"⁵⁶ that lies at the center of Mr. Putin's new Russian *grandeur* has cultural expressions as well. The intent, or so his critics claim, is to promote "a sanitized pseudo-history, a glossy remake that suggests the present's association with unchanging mythical grandeur."⁵⁷ Why, asks Ola Cichowlas, "is it important for the Russian regime to actively promote its version of history, instead of opening up the archives and encouraging honest scholarship? Because, as historian Robert Service observed, "controlling history, for the Kremlin, is a means of controlling the present"⁵⁸

Favored projects such as the restoration of Tsarist-era churches and estates unintentionally convey the "ambivalent message of Russian ruins," writes Russian cultural and literary scholar Andreas Schönle. They serve at one and the same time as "a reminder of Russian grandeur and an index of its frailty."⁵⁹ Mr. Putin's renovation of Soviet and Imperial symbols of state is evident in contemporary Moscow's many memorialization and reconstruction projects.⁶⁰ These, writes James Wertsch, are "quite familiar to Russians but do not easily resonate with members of other memory communities. With a bit of reflection, its meaning can be understood by outsiders, but it clearly lacks the familiarity and availability that it has for Russians."⁶¹

Discursive History to Biopolitical Power: From the Russian Putin to a Hungarian One

*"A sense in which history and the past are relevant to ethnicity and ethnic conflict is myth...in the anthropological sense of 'remote and unprovable history'..."*⁶²

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01495930390214794>. Last accessed 8 June 2015.

⁵¹ Dugin (2014), *op cit.*, 130.

⁵² "Russia Profile Weekly Experts Panel: Teaching Russia's History" 3 August 2007. http://russiaprofile.org/experts_panel/a1186143697.html. Last accessed 10 June 2015.

⁵³ Bukkvoll (2003), *op cit.*

⁵⁴ VPK is the acronym of *Voenno-Promyshlennii Kompleks* or "military-industrial complex".

⁵⁵ Bukkvoll (2003), *op cit.*

⁵⁶ The term belongs to the British-Polish journalist and Russian scholar, Ola Cichowlas. See: Cichowlas (2013). "In Russia, It Is Deja-Vu All over Again: How Russians Fell Back in Love with the KGB and Stalin." *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*. 22:2. <https://www.questia.com/read/1P3-3252499761/in-russia-it-is-deja-vu-all-over-again-how-russians>. Last accessed 8 June 2015.

⁵⁷ Andreas Schönle (2006). "Ruins and History: Observations on Russian Approaches to Destruction and Decay." *Slavic Review*. 65:4, 668.

⁵⁸ Cichowlas (2013), *op cit.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 657.

⁶⁰ Kevin M.F. Platt (2008). "The Post-Soviet is Over: On Reading the Ruins." *Republics of Letters*. 1:1. <http://arcade.stanford.edu/rofl/post-soviet-over-reading-ruins>. Last accessed 8 June 2015.

⁶¹ James V. Wertsch (2007). "National Narratives and the conservative Nature of Collective Memory." *Neobolicon*, 34:2, 32.

http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/596/art%253A10.1007%252Fs11059-007-2003-9.pdf?originUrl=http%3A%2F%2Flink.springer.com%2Farticle%2F10.1007%2Fs11059-007-2003-9&token2=exp=1433792203~acl=%2Fstatic%2Fpdf%2F596%2Fart%25253A10.1007%252Fs11059-007-2003-9.pdf%3ForiginUrl%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Flink.springer.com%252Farticle%252F10.1007%252Fs11059-007-2003-9*~hmac=e94b9291e957e9858d9bb9e4c8cb46bf37627d2e3aa5657b31a39a33d2f6b97. Last accessed 8 June 2015. Wertsch explores the subject of collective memory and

Russia's experience in World War II.

⁶² Ted Robert Gurr & Barbara Harff (1994). *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*. (Boulder: Westview Press), 12-13.

Michel Foucault remarked that the *series* — in simplest form, 'A follows B' — lies at the heart of how events are classically understood. Thus the historian's task: "defining the position of each element in relation to the other elements in the series." Foucault called his alternative a "discursive event," in which the historian's role is, in a manner of speaking, to "archaeologize" events and "to find out what is said."⁶³ His is a "special view of history," one in which what is *said* about what happened is given equal weight to the *truth* of what happened. History for Foucault, then, is about *truth* and *story*.⁶⁴ "Freed from the burden of continuity," he writes, the historian is free to construct "a *pure description of discursive events*," [emphasis in original] drawn from a "population of events."⁶⁵

The discursive method "does not connect events...according to causality, but compare[s] them based on their recurrent characteristics." So writes Péter Apor, who described its practitioners as analogous to "sixteenth-century scientists, who had contemplated the order of the world and discovered that things were connected by a system of correspondences, revealed by various signs." For Foucault, "knowledge, thus, is formed by looking for signs and detecting correspondence."⁶⁶

Elena Chebankova applies Foucault in her fine essay, "Vladimir Putin: Making of the National Hero":

"Ukraine and Crimea represented, using Foucault's terminology, a 'population of events in the space of discourse in general'...The secret of Putin's success, in the view of the author, is his attempt to recreate a narrative of the Russian structure in a new form...The Ukrainian crisis unmasked those hidden passions of Russian society and became the focal point for this long search for self-redemption within the broader context of Russia's history."⁶⁷

Consider now how Foucault's discursive construct is embedded in Mr. Putin's 2013 Valdai speech:

"For us (and I am talking about Russians and Russia), questions about who we are and who we want to be are increasingly prominent in our society. [...] Practice has shown that a new national idea does not simply appear...We need historical creativity, a synthesis of the best national practices and ideas, an understanding of our cultural, spiritual and political traditions from different points of view, and to understand that national identity is not a rigid thing that will last forever, but rather a living organism...Too often in our nation's history, instead of opposition to the government we have been faced with opponents of Russia itself. I have already mentioned this; Pushkin also talked about it. [...] We need to heal these wounds, and repair the tissues of our historic fabric."⁶⁸

As the wished-for synthesis has yet to come, what should Russia do today? Quoting Mr. Putin's own aphorism — "Russia is a destiny, not a project" — Mikhail Delyagin argues "Putin should revive Russian civilization based on our own particular identity, hidden and blurred for a generation...Russian civilization cannot be built on the basis of identities borrowed from outside."⁶⁹

Alexandr Kornilov suggests elements of a new Russian identity that echo Count Uvarov's triad. The first is a set of "red lines no one is allowed to cross," elaborated by Mr. Putin at Valda as Russia's unconditional sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. The balance of these elements is intertwined with ideas of state-centrism, and the state's power to shape national destiny. Mr. Putin explains it this way:

"Russia, as Konstantin Leontyev vividly put it, has always evolved in 'blossoming complexity' as a state-civilization, reinforced by the Russian people, Russian language, Russian culture, Russian Orthodox Church

⁶³ The term is from Louis Cabri (2004). "Discursive Events in the Electronic Archive of Postmodern and Contemporary Poetry." *English Studies in Canada (ESC)*. 30:1, 53. He uses the illustration of transcribing a tape-recorded speech, in which "writing intervenes in the double discovery."

⁶⁴ Charles Olson (1970). *The special view of history*. Ann Charters, ed. (Berkeley: Oyez).

⁶⁵ Michel Foucault (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, A.M. Sheridan Smith, transl. (New York: Pantheon Books), 27.

http://monoskop.org/images/9/90/Foucault_Michel_Archaeology_of_Knowledge.pdf. Last accessed 10 June 2015.

⁶⁶ Péter Apor (2015). *Fabricating Authenticity in Soviet Hungary. The Afterlife of the First Hungarian Soviet Republic in the Age of State Socialism*. (London: Anthem Press), 35.

⁶⁷ Elena Chebankova (2015). "Vladimir Putin: Making of the National Hero." *Ukraine and Russia: People, Politics, Propaganda and Perspectives*. Agnieszka Pikulicka-Wilczewska & Richard Sakwa, eds. (Bristol, UK: E-International Relations Publishing), 179. <http://www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Ukraine-and-Russia-E-IR.pdf>. Last accessed 10 June 2015.

⁶⁸ Transcript of President Vladimir Putin's speech before the Valdai International Discussion Club, 19 September 2013. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243>. Last accessed 123 November 2015.

⁶⁹ Mikhail Delyagin (2013). Speech delivered 26 September 2013 to the Forum of Hope (*Forum strannoy nadezhdy*). <http://zavtra.ru/content/view/forum-strannoj-nadezhdy/>. Last accessed 13 November 2015. The quoted text also appears in Elena Chebankova (2015). "Competing Ideologies of Russia's Civil society." *Europe-Asia Studies*. 67:2, 247.

and the country's other traditional religions..."⁷⁰

This conception has parallels in Foucault's idea of *governmentality*:

"This word [government] must be allowed the very broad meaning which it had in the sixteenth century. 'Government' did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather, it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed. [...] To govern, in this sense, is to control the possible field of action of others."⁷¹

Pierre Manent wrote two decades ago, "The sleepwalker's assurance with which 'Europe' pursues its indefinite extension is the result of its refusal to think about itself comprehensively, that is, to define itself politically."⁷² More recently he said Europeans "have taken such control over their own history that they no longer have any desire to act. They want innocence. And the only way to achieve innocence is by non-action."⁷³ Mr. Putin, like General de Gaulle before him, does not suffer from any such "paralyzing ambivalence."⁷⁴

Nor does for that matter Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, of whom Mitchell Orenstein, Péter Krekó, and Attila Juhász asked recently, is he "The Hungarian Putin?"⁷⁵ In Manent's view, "at present there is nothing in Europe that resembles the patriotism of nations...Invoking 'Europe' devalues national patriotism without creating a European patriotism in its stead." What Mr. Orbán has mastered, perhaps better than any other European political leader, is what Andrey Makarychev dubbed "biopolitical patriotism" (borrowing Foucault's *biopolitical*⁷⁶). Makarychev offers this explanation:

"[T]he exercise of biopolitical power is relatively insensitive to the geopolitical control of territorial lands. Biopolitics is more concerned with managing lives...Rather than stemming from a feeling of duty to a well-governed state, biopolitical patriotism is both created by and reinforces a nationalist discourse based on a sense of belonging to a constructed, symbolic community of like-minded compatriots."

This leads us to a question: is Mr. Orbán a Gaullist?

We Hungarians Are the Continent's Gaullists⁷⁷

*Mais le démon n'est jamais loin qui nous fait revenir à nos errements passés.*⁷⁸

Viktor Orbán is regularly compared — sometimes favorably, sometimes not — to General De Gaulle. Mr. Orbán should aspire to be "a new De Gaulle," writes Ágoston Sámuel Mráz, in a commentary published by the Fidesz-aligned portal *Weekly Response (Heti Válasznak)*. He is a "centrist" who adds a "cultural dimension" to the immigration debate, a "strong hand" who seeks "pragmatic cooperation" with Mr. Putin, much as General De Gaulle sought with Chancellor Adenauer.⁷⁹ Others go farther, hailing Mr. Orbán as a modern-day János Hunyadi for his resolute determination to halt the inflow of asylum-seekers and to check an emergent "Islamic conquest of Christian Europe."⁸⁰ The Hunyadi comparison goads Mr. Orbán's many critics,

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

⁷¹ Michel Foucault (1982). "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry*. 8:4, 789-790. <http://www.csun.edu/~snk1966/M.%20Foucault%20-%20The%20Subject%20and%20Power.pdf>. Last accessed 14 November 2015.

⁷² Pierre Manent (1996). "La démocratie sans la nation?" *Commentaire*. 1996/3:75, 571-572.

⁷³ Ariadne Lewanska & Pierre Manent (2011). "Migration, patriotism and the European agenda: An interview with historian of ideas Pierre Manent." *Eurozine* [published online 21 September 2011]. <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2011-09-21-manent-en.html>. Last accessed 14 November 2015.

⁷⁴ The quoted phrase is from Daniel J. Mahoney (1997). "De Gaulle and the Death of Europe." *The National Interest*. Summer 1997, 54.

⁷⁵ Mitchell A. Orenstein, Péter Krekó, & Attila Juhász (2015). "The Hungarian Putin?" *Foreign Affairs* [published online 8 February 2015].

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/hungary/2015-02-08/hungarian-putin>. Last accessed 14 November 2015.

⁷⁶ Foucault in essence reinvented the term "biopolitics," which was coined in the 1920s by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén (1864–1922), who also coined the term *geopolitics*.

⁷⁷ This phrase (Hungarian: *mi, magyarok a földrésze gaulle-istái*) is from Mr. Orbán's 27 July 2015 "Tusnádfürdő" speech before the 26th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp.

⁷⁸ "The demon that makes us repeat our past errors is never far away." From Dominique Strauss Kahn's July 2015 essay, *A mes amis allemands* ("To my German friends"). <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3BAHVwc7GNaSVJLZWZybjUycjg/view?pli=1>. Last accessed 28 October 2015.

⁷⁹ Sámuel Ágoston Mráz (2015). "Az új De Gaulle." *Mandiner* [published online in Hungarian 4 August 2015].

http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150804_mr_az_agoston_samuel_az_uj_de_gaulle. Last accessed 29 October 2015.

⁸⁰ Hunyadi is a Hungarian national hero who fought invading Ottoman armies during the 1440s and 1450s. Perhaps his greatest success was to repulse the army of Sultan Mohammed II at Belgrade in 1456. His contemporary, the French diplomat and writer Philippe de Commines, celebrated Hunyadi in his memoirs as the *Chevalier Blanc de Valaigne* (the "White Knight of Wallachia") for the color of his armor. Ákos Csúri suggests in a July 2015 blog post that Orbán is a modern-day Hunyadi whose stance on asylum-seekers "halted the Islamic conquest of Christian Europe." [Csúri (2015). "Hunyadi És Orbán." <http://atlagpolgar.blogstar.hu/2015/07/22/hunyadi-es-orban/19476/>. Last accessed 28 October 2015]. His suggestion was derided as "grotesque and tasteless" by Ákos Balogh in a blog post on the portal *Mandiner*. See: "Hunyadi

whom defenders dismiss as "screaming the loudest because they can, knowing that Hungarians are protecting their borders."⁸¹

When Mr. Orbán proclaimed, "We Hungarians are the Continent's Gaullists," he used "the royal we" when what he meant was "this Hungarian." This is the sardonic observation of the former leader of Hungary's Socialist Party, Ildikó Lendvai. "But just yesterday," she continued, Mr. Orbán told Hungarians we were "half-Asian descendants of the Golden Horde who found ourselves among strangers in Brussels." Now, it seems, "we are Europe's most effective Europeans. So, Mr. Orbán, just tell me who are the true Europeans and who are not?"⁸²

Péter Techet of the Leibniz Institute of European History⁸³ suggests Mr. Orbán's penchant for governing via referenda and for ignoring minority viewpoints makes Bonapartism, not Gaullism, the more apt analogy.⁸⁴ "Gaullism was a unifying national ideology" for the French, he writes, not one under which "De Gaulle came to believe, for example, that leftists were of a genus different from the French nation." Nor is the allusion wholly novel: a 2010 *Népszava* ("People's Voice") commentary is but one among many to criticize Mr. Orbán's putative ambition of a Hungarian Fifth Republic:

"De Gaulle was all the more significant since European political leaders could not think to compare themselves to him or to his life's work. And above all, to refrain from boasting about such a comparison while at the same time failing to understand the eleven years of the De Gaulle era. No, those political leaders were appropriately modest."⁸⁵

Tibor Várkonyi sarcastically dismissed Mr. Orbán's ambitions. "Way to go, *mon cher* Viktor, you sent a message to the heavenly Élysée Palace of Charles de Gaulle, who heard the Hungarian Prime Minister's emotional declaration."⁸⁶ Várkonyi's tone sharpened markedly two years hence, when he wrote under the title "Usurpation" (*Bitorlás*) that Mr. Orbán's Gaullist pretensions "were based on a simple falsification of history." Neither de Gaulle nor Adenauer "sought to concentrate power, given that both were convinced democrats."⁸⁷ Eschewing more extreme comparisons, Pesti Sándor of Budapest's Eötvös Loránd University suggests Mr. Orbán "is not the Führer's, but Il Duce's modern reincarnation."

"Orbán's *Duce*-aping is not only the perfect modern-day replica of the system that evolved in 1920s Italy, it is fascist in the classic sense of the word...Today, there is a fascist regime in Hungary."⁸⁸

The same suggestion has been made with respect to Mr. Putin.

"Those who try to compare Putin with Hitler are wrong. The Russian president does not dream of world domination and moreover, is not obsessed with racial superiority. Russia in the 2000s is not 1930s Germany. A fascist corporate state à la Mussolini in the 1920s and 1930s is the ideal of today's Russian elite. Putin is Il Duce, not the Führer."⁸⁹

Orbán De Gaulle Viktor – Ilyen ország pedig nincs CDVIII." *Mandiner.blog.hu* [published online in Hungarian 6 August 2015]. http://mandiner.blog.hu/2015/08/06/hunyadi_orban_de_gaulle_viktor_ilyen_orzag_pedig_nincs_cdviii. Last accessed 29 October 2015.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Ildikó Lendvai (2015). "A kettéűrésztelt De Gaulle." *Népszava Online* [published online in Hungarian 8 August 2015]. http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1065993-a-kettefureszelt-de-gaulle/?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201511. Last accessed 2 November 2015.

⁸³ More commonly known by its German language acronym "IEG" (Institut für Europäische Geschichte).

⁸⁴ Péter Techet (2015). "Orbán a magyar De Gaulle?" *hvg.hu* [published online 8 August 2015]. http://hvg.hu/velemeney/20150808_Orban_a_magyar_De_Gaulle. Last accessed 28 October 2015.

⁸⁵ "A magyar De Gaulle" (2010). *Népszava* [published online in Hungarian 1 June 2010].

http://nepszava.hu/articles/article.php?id=304282&utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201511. Last accessed 3 November 2015.

⁸⁶ Tibor Várkonyi (2012). "Victor d'Orban." *Népszava* [published online in Hungarian 20 January 2012].

http://nepszava.hu/articles/article.php?id=512521&utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201511. Last accessed 2 November 2015.

⁸⁷ Tibor Várkonyi (2014). "Bitorlás." *Népszava* [published online in Hungarian 14 October 2014]. http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1036486-bitorlas?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201511. Last accessed 2 November 2014.

⁸⁸ Pesti Sándor (2014). "Orbán és Hitler." *Népszava* [published online in Hungarian 28 April 2014]. http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1018707-orban-es-hitler?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201511. Last accessed 3 November 2015.

⁸⁹ Vladislav Inozemtsev (2015). *Obyknovenny fashizm. Pravda o Vladimire Putine. Novosti Vremya* [published online in Russian 14 July 2015].

<http://nv.ua/opinion/Inozemtsev/obyknovenny-fashizm-pravda-o-vladimire-putine-58980.html>. Last accessed 3 November 2015. The historian Jeremi Suri offers a similar thesis: "Putin is more of a 'classical' fascist, in the model of Benito Mussolini in early 20th-century Italy or Francisco Franco, who ruled Spain after the country's bloody civil war. Mussolini and Franco built their dictatorships on the promise of greatness, the display of force, and the myth of a savior who would carry a fallen people back to the top of the international pyramid of power. They asserted near-total control over their societies for the purpose of bringing complete transformation. Most of all, they exploited opportunities for attacking vulnerable citizens (especially Jews) and weaker neighbors (especially in North Africa). Conspicuous assertions of Italian and Spanish physical superiority served to galvanize followers and generate apparent greatness." Suri (2014). "A Certain Breed of Fascism: Jeremi Suri on Putin." *The Alcade* [published online 5 May 2014]. <http://alcalde.texasexes.org/2014/05/a-certain-breed-of-fascism-jeremi-suri-on-putin/>. Last accessed 5 November 2015.

Andrei Malgin calls Messrs. Putin and Orbán "two peas in a pod" in an eponymous *The Moscow Times* commentary.⁹⁰

Mr. Orbán was reviled for his July 2014 speech at the Bálványos Summer Free University in Băile Tușnad, Romania (known to Hungarians as Tusnádfürdő) in which he was widely — and erroneously — reported to advocate "illiberal democracy" (*illiberális demokrácia*).⁹¹ He elaborated the theme in a September 2014 speech commemorating the seventieth anniversary of Christian Democratic People's Party known by its Hungarian acronym, KDNP (*Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt*), notably invoking the name of De Gaulle's counterpart, Konrad Adenauer. Mr. Orbán explained that he meant to suggest a Christian Democratic vision of Europe in contrast to a "liberal democratic" one. A year hence, Mr. Orbán's tone softened to a denunciation of "political correctness" — while embracing "democracy, the version without the adjective."⁹²

Others, too, have discerned in Mr. Orbán a "Gaullist stance":

"[T]he will to break, once and for all, with the legacy of communism, a marked skepticism towards global capitalism, and a fierce attachment to national independence. These elements impart a Gaullist aspect to Viktor Orbán, along with similarities in the path taken by each man: resisting an occupier, and 'crossing the desert' to return triumphantly to power, led by a vision of national revival and an ambition to break with a discredited old order."⁹³

His critics will have none of this, however: the French online journal *Causeur* quickly countered the *Le Monde* commentary with one of its own, declaring "Hungary: Viktor Orbán, a new De Gaulle? A dwarf and a giant."⁹⁴

Mr. Orbán's variation on *grandeur* is often described as Hungarian exceptionalism (*kevételesség*).⁹⁵ During the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s (with echoes today), exceptionalism was said to animate efforts to find "a third road, an alternative to both the bourgeois liberal capitalism of the West and the Marxist-Stalinist absolutism of the East."⁹⁶

"[M]ost Hungarians trusted Hungarian exceptionalism to preserve their independence. Hungary was different, and Hungarians were proud of the differences. Their language was not related to any other European language, except for a few tenuous ties to Finnish or Turkish that only the linguistics professors discerned. Hungarian political and social development, the unique role of the nobility in Hungarian society, their history as part of the two-headed Austro-Hungarian Empire, even their ancient origins as a people and a nation had been different."⁹⁷

The *Bricolage* of Vladimir Putin and Viktor Orbán

*"Myths, like other memories, are not in simple and immediate correspondence with 'the truth' or 'the facts.' Rather, ethnic past-as-myth is a complex...amalgamation of remembering, forgetting, interpreting, and inventing."*⁹⁸

*"Europeans...want innocence. And the only way to achieve innocence is by immobility. Organized immobility."*⁹⁹

⁹⁰ <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/peas-in-a-pod-putin-s-russia-and-mussolini-s-italy/520276.html>. Last accessed 3 November 2015.

⁹¹ A June 2015 report by the German Council on Foreign Relations — known by its German acronym DGAP (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik*) — found that "much of the German and international press quoted him as referring to 'illiberal democracies,' whereas Orbán had in fact chosen the formulation 'illiberal states.' In doing so, the media made a connection to the political practices of these states that Orbán had not intended; his criticism of 'liberal states' was clearly meant to apply only to the shortcomings of free-market economies." See: DGAP (2015). *Hungary in the Media, 2010-2014. Critical Reflections on Coverage in the Press and Media. Final Report of the working Group on Hungary*, 3. <https://dgap.org/en/article/getFullPDF/26856>. Last accessed 5 November 2015.

⁹² Mr. Orbán's phrase reads in the original Hungarian "demokráciát, annak is a „jelzők nélküli" változatát". See: "Orbán Viktor: Esménk vezéricsillaga polgári Magyarország." *Mandiner.hu* [published online in Hungarian 27 February 2015]. http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150227_orban_viktor_eszmenk_vezericsillaga_a_polgari_magyarorszag. Last accessed 5 November 2015.

⁹³ Yves-Michel Riols (2013). "La posture gaullienne de Viktor Orban." *Le Monde* [published online in French 12 April 2013].

http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2013/04/12/la-posture-gaullienne-de-viktor-orban_3159069_3214.html?xtmc=orban&xtrc=2. Last accessed 5 November 2015.

⁹⁴ "Hongrie: Viktor Orbán, un nouveau De Gaulle ? Un nain face à un géant." *Causeur* [published online in French 17 April 2013].

⁹⁵ While "exceptionalism" is an admittedly American construct, Bertalan Pethő suggests that Japanese exceptionalism is worthy of emulation by Hungary. See: Pethő (2004). "Hungarian exceptionalism." *Magyar Szemle* [published online 19 October 2013]. http://www.magyar szemle.hu/cikk/20040101_hungarian_exceptionalism_. Last accessed 6 November 2015.

⁹⁶ András Boros-Kazai (2005). "Hungary." In Robert C. Frucht, ed. *Eastern Europe: an introduction to the people, lands, and culture*. Volume 1. (Oxford: ABC CLIO), 375.

⁹⁷ Ronald Florence (2010). *Emissary of the Doomed: Bargaining for Lives in the Holocaust*. (New York: Viking).

⁹⁸ Jack David Eller (1997). "Ethnicity, Culture, and 'The Past.'" *Michigan Quarterly Review*: XXXVI:4. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?cc=mqr;c=mqr;c=mqrarchive;idno=act2080.0036.411;view=text;rgn=main;xc=1;g=mqrq>. Last accessed 10 June 2015.

⁹⁹ Lewanska & Manent (2011), *op cit*.

While the term is ineluctably associated with him, it is interesting to consider that General De Gaulle never explicitly defined *grandeur*. He emphasized in his pre-war writing that a commitment to *grandeur* was a practical imperative to compensate for France's military and geographical vulnerability.¹⁰⁰ In one view, however, while "initially intended to maintain international stability and order, it ended by unleashing French nationalism which complicated the task of coalition formation with other nations for mutual solutions to international problems."¹⁰¹ Like many "hurrah-words," writes Philip Cerny, "*grandeur* was a two-edged sword."¹⁰²

Grandeur is premised on a set of historical and political myths. Elena Chebankova writes that political legitimacy — she defines the term as answering "the question, 'Why should I obey?'" — "often comes in the shape of new historic and political myths," ones that "reinterpret old conventions."¹⁰³ The *bricoleur*, writes Lévi-Strauss, "takes to pieces and reconstructs sets of events...and uses them alternately as means and ends." So, too, historic and political myths, which "build up structures by fitting together events, or rather the remains of events."¹⁰⁴

Such myths are signs that project cultural values and undergird cultural narratives. It is the *bricoleur* who deals in such signs, Lévi-Strauss continues:

"One way in which signs can be opposed to concepts is that signs allow, even require, the interposing and incorporation of a certain amount of human culture into reality. Signs, in Peirce's vigorous phrase 'address somebody'."¹⁰⁵

Boundaries are one such sign.

Masse argues that "ethnical [sic] identity is not the product of a frozen culture; it is not culturally isolated from other ones." It is instead "the consequence of links among diverse groups that have established boundaries in order to be...recognizable from outside."¹⁰⁶ Eller argues in a similar vein, "Not all nations are or start out as ethnic groups, although they may come to be draped in the ethnic rubric and discourse."¹⁰⁷ Russia and Hungary are paradigm examples of this, as Messrs. Putin and Orbán masterfully (if cynically) take to pieces and refit historic events to build political narratives.

Mr. Orbán is arguably the most outspoken leader in opposing the unchecked movement of asylum-seekers, unsurprising perhaps given Hungary's frontline status on the migrants' pathway into the European Union. He intends Hungary's borders to act as an unmistakable sign: in 2015, the Orbán government erected imposing physical barriers along its borders with Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Romania in an effort to stem the movement of asylum-seekers into the country.

Mr. Orbán is intent on making meaning with his border fences. He is unconcerned with the opinion of others. This is not without precedent — consider the century-old words of Count Mihály Károlyi, leader of the short-lived (1918-1919) Hungarian Democratic Republic:

"Let us not ask what [other] nationalities desire and what are the pretensions which we might be able to realize without injury to the national unity of the homogenous Magyar State or hinderance [sic] to national progress; that is not the question. The point is simply to know what we Magyars ought to wish and how we ought to proceed against the nationalities in the interest of the Magyar national State and the progress of the

¹⁰⁰ For example, see: Charles De Gaulle (1934; 1941). *The Army of the Future*. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1941), 15-21. In Daniel J. Mahoney (1997). "De Gaulle and the Death of Europe." *The National Interest*. Summer 1997, 48.

¹⁰¹ Patricia A. Kyle (1977). "Review: The Grandeur That Was Charles." *The Review of Politics*. 39:1, 110. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1406582?seq=2#page_scan_tab_contents. Last accessed 14 June 2015.

¹⁰² Cerny (1980), *op cit.*, 62.

¹⁰³ Elena Chebankova (2015). "Vladimir Putin: Making of the National Hero." *Ukraine and Russia: People, Politics, Propaganda and Perspectives*. Agnieszka Pikulicka-Wilczewska & Richard Sakwa, eds. (Bristol, UK: E-International Relations Publishing), 176. <http://www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Ukraine-and-Russia-E-IR.pdf>. Last accessed 10 June 2015.

¹⁰⁴ Lévi-Strauss (1962), *op cit.*, 14, 22. Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln elaborate that, "there is no one correct telling [of an]...event. Each telling, like light hitting a crystal, reflects a different perspective on [an] incident." [Denzin & Lincoln, eds. (1999). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications), 6. Quoted in Matt Rogers (2012). "Contextualizing Theories and Practices of Bricolage Research." *The Quantitative Report*. 17:7, 4. <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR17/rogers.pdf>. Last accessed 16 November 2015].

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

¹⁰⁶ Adapted from Cédric Bernard Masse (2013). "Especialidade: Sociologia das Desigualdades, das Minorias e dos Movimentos Sociais." *Doutoramento em Sociologia, Universidade de Lisboa Instituto de Ciências Sociais*. http://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/9804/1/ulsd067021_td_Cedric_Masse.pdf. Last accessed 10 June 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Jack David Eller (1997). "Ethnicity, Culture, and 'The Past'." *Michigan Quarterly Review*. XXXVI:4. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?cc=mqr;c=mqr;c=mqrarchive;idno=act2080.0036.411;view=text;rgn=main;xc=1;g=mqrq>. Last accessed 10 June 2015.

Magyar people."¹⁰⁸

Mr. Orbán he knows (at least believes he knows) what Hungarians ought to wish and how Hungarians ought to proceed, irrespective (often, defiantly so) of what his critics think they know about the same matters.

Here, Hungary may not be so exceptional. Two decades ago, German sociologists Meinhard Miegel and Stefanie Wahl warned that demographic trends might be sufficient to extinguish German cultural, religious and linguistic identity by the end of the century.¹⁰⁹ Now consider how the far right French journalist Guilame Faye cynically twists their assessment:

"Integration and assimilation have turned out to be complete failures. Only minorities can be assimilated, not mobs. The German people are disappearing before our very eyes. There is a *change of people*...When people cross the Rhine in 2030, will they pass from North Africa to Turkey?"¹¹⁰ [emphasis in original]

Even after the Paris terror attacks of 13 November, some were quick to dismiss statements of this sort as the rant of the political fringe. May so. But consider this warning by the late French historian Dominique Venner:

"The unthinkable, despite all expectations, can happen. As late as 1960, the unthinkable was the expulsion of a million French *piets-noirs* from Algeria. No one had imagined it would happen, not even General de Gaulle..."

"The unthinkable, in the decades following independence, was the arrival of millions of Algerians in France. The unthinkable today is, for example, the repatriation of these Algerians and other African immigrants. Let us learn from the past that the unthinkable can one day become reality."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in A.H.E. Taylor (1918). "The Entente and Austria." *The Fortnightly Review*. CIII:DCXVII (1 May 1918), 684.

¹⁰⁹ Meinhard Miegel & Stefanie Wahl (1993). *Das Ende des Individualismus, Die Kultur des Westens zerstört sich selbst*. (Munich: Bonn Aktuell).

¹¹⁰ Guilame Corvus (2004). *La Convergence des catastrophes*. (Paris: Diffusion International), 145-146. "Guilame Corvus" is the pseudonym of the French journalist Guilame Faye, who wrote that Russia, too, is threatened by a "demographic coma."

¹¹¹ Dominique Venner (2003). "Éditorial: L'histoire n'est jamais finie." *La Nouvelle Revue d'Histoire*. 8 (September-October 2003), 7.

FPRI, 1528 Walnut Street, Suite 610, Philadelphia, PA 19102-3684

For more information, contact Eli Gilman at 215-732-3774, ext. 103, email fpri@fpri.org, or visit us at www.fpri.org