

1803

Irish patriots throughout the country rebel against Union with Great Britain.

1829

William A. Burt patents his “typographer,” an early typewriter.

1885

Ulysses S. Grant dies of throat cancer at the age of 63.



1995

Two astronomers, Alan Hale in New Mexico and Thomas Bopp in Arizona, almost simultaneously discover a comet.

Does a good news for Balkans?



has also worked closely with United States military officials; his political contortions include denouncing the Macedonia deal while remaining in the government.

The United States has been Greece's major ally since 1947, when Washington stepped to help a right-wing government defeat Communist forces in a civil war in 1946-49. In the years after, the Greek left opposed the United States while supporting closer ties with the Soviet Union. Russia is now, by default, the antithesis to the “imperialist alliance,” as Greece's small but unbending Communist Party calls the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Communists, echoing Russian officials, saw the expulsions as Tsipras' “gift” to NATO, timed to coincide with the recent NATO summit.

Support for Russia's positions goes beyond any effort to embarrass the government or oppose the Macedonia deal. President Vladimir Putin enjoys broad support among Greeks, more than in any other European country. Greece (along with Vietnam, the Philippines and Tanzania) was one of only four countries among 37 surveyed by the Pew Research Center last year in which Putin got more than 50 per cent approval for his international performance.

This could be because he projects the image of a powerful leader who is proud of his Eastern Orthodox heritage, visiting the monastic community of Mount Athos in northern Greece and playing on deep-rooted feelings in his own country and here. During the nearly four centuries of

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, visited Moscow for support in 2015, while threatening the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and other creditors that Greece would walk away from its bailout commitments.

subjugation to Ottoman rule, Greeks yearned for liberation and many saw Russia as their salvation. Although these expectations were usually disappointed, Russia has often played a crucial role in Greek history.

Major milestones included a 1774 treaty under which Russia assumed the right to protect all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. This allowed Greek merchants and shipowners to fly the Russian flag, thus escaping Ottoman taxes and expanding their wealth and influence. In 1821, when the Greek War of Independence broke out, the Greek Orthodox patriarch was hanged by the Turks and his body thrown into the Bosphorus; when it resurfaced unexpectedly, Greeks took it to Russia, to the city of Odessa, where it was afforded a grand funeral in the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1827, a combined British, French and Russian fleet destroyed an Ot-

toman-Egyptian fleet at Navarino, leading to the declaration of an independent Greece after years of struggle.

More recently, the relationship has been more complicated — with Soviet support and then abandonment of Communist forces in the civil war, with Russia's intricate economic and political relationship with Cyprus, with the current marriage of convenience between Moscow and Ankara. There is also a strong ethnic-religious current that influences politics in both Greece and Russia.

The question now is, what prompted a Greek government to take such drastic action? Was it because of fears of violence over the Macedonia issue, as suggested by the claims of Zaeu, the Macedonian prime minister? Was it because foreign meddling with the fires of nationalism in Greece could harm the government's prospects in elections that must be held by autumn 2019? Were the expulsions a way of declaring allegiance to the United States?

In any case, this unexpected turn of events could lead — despite Athens's protestations to the contrary — to a re-evaluation of Greece's relations with Russia. The result could be Athens playing a more prominent role in stabilizing the western Balkans, and aligning itself more fully with European Union policies rather than deferring to Russia's concerns and interests.

(Nikos Konstandaras, a columnist at the newspaper Kathimerini, is a contributing opinion writer.)

World while losing one's soul

Accommodating radical nationalists is a losing proposition



London...the government in turmoil.

disagreements within her own party, even that might not be enough.

The third approach takes this kind of support arrangement to the next level. Since the turn of the century, center-right parties in Italy and Austria have been periodically involved in full-blown coalition with populist radical-right parties, at least partly in the hope that doing so would expose the latter as blowhards incapable of delivering on their ramped-up rhetoric. The results? Policies on migration and multiculturalism have grown ever tougher without doing much — at least in the long term — to dent the standing of the populists.

Last year saw the Austrian People's Party, nominally Christian democrats, obliged to invite their radical competitors, the Freedom Party, into government for the second time. And the policy consequences are now becoming clear: The state has been empowered to seize cash and cellphones from asylum-seekers and is planning to reduce welfare benefits to migrants who don't pass language tests and to ban girls under 10 from wearing headscarves. In Italy, Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia finished this year's general election behind La Lega, whose leader, Matteo Salvini, is now the country's interior

The rise of anti-immigrant nationalist insurgencies claiming to represent “the people” against a corrupt and uncaring political establishment has deep economic, political, social and cultural roots.

minister and the man responsible for Italy's recent refusal to allow boats carrying desperate asylum-seekers to dock in its ports.

The fourth and last approach is the most radical of all. Rather than trying to isolate, borrow from or govern together with a populist radical-right insurgency, a center-right party actually turns itself into one. This is effectively what has happened in Hungary, where Viktor Orbán's Fidesz has over the past decade transmogrified from an apparently market-friendly mainstream party into an ultranationalist cham-

panion of closed borders and “illiberal democracy.”

Has it worked? Well, only up to a point. In Hungary, in spite of Orbán's efforts (or who knows, partly because it has shifted the system's center of gravity so far to the right) Jobbik, which is still very much a far-right party notwithstanding recent attempts to render itself more respectable, nonetheless took 19% of the vote in 2018 — down just 1% from its best ever showing four years previously. And there has been a pretty high price to pay.

So, trying to beat a radical right-wing populist insurgency by becoming one — or for that matter, by adopting its agenda and even inviting it into government — turns out to be a fool's errand. Just as important, it also has a huge ethical, as well as economic, cost. As the Bible puts it, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” That's a question that Europe's center-right politicians (and maybe their Republican counterparts in the United States, too) seriously need to ask themselves, and soon.

(Tim Bale is a professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London.)



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



I wish I could describe this feeling right now... What a day, true proof that you should never give up!! The team did such a great job as they always do, I can't thank them enough! I kept the belief and it came true. A big, big thanks to God.

@LewisHamilton

02



Democrats demand to read 1-7 MILLION pages of Kavanaugh's past documents before a hearing, but felt no need to read a few thousand pages before passing Obamacare? Logical? No, laughable.

@GovMikeHuckabee

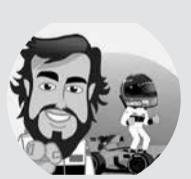
03



While I am glad that the Regional Cancer Centre in Thiruvananthapuram will be upgraded to a State Cancer Institute, the Govt failed to respond to my query on converting the RCC into a National Cancer Institute

@ShashiTharoor

04



We bet on the heavy rain that never came. Still good fun and battles on the first part of the race and now full focus on Budapest next week. Thanks Germany! Always a special GP

@alo_official

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