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East Europe Watches the Bear, Warily

By STEVEN ERLANGER

MOSCOW, Oct. 20 — For nearly 50 years, from the West German border to the Pacific Ocean, the Soviet Union held its impoverished republics and satellites with brutal, calculated imperialism backed by fearsome military strength.

But when the Soviet regime began to evaporate five years ago, in the biggest geopolitical event since the end of World War II, no one had planned for it — least of all Russia's small band of democrats.

For Russians, the humiliating collapse of their grand empire required almost instantaneous readjustment to their nationhood and the answer to two basic questions: Can Russia, its former satellites and the members of its former empire live together as independent, democratic and self-sufficient nations? And what must Russia do to assure its neighbors and the rest of the world that it wants to do so?

Whatever its politics today, Russia remains a nuclear Gulliver in a Lilliputian landscape: blustering, clumpy and still influential. In Eastern and Central Europe, there is considerable worry that the new Russia has not lost its old habits. In the historically watchful souls of its former satellites, there is an abiding skepticism about Moscow's ambitions, as it tries to save its humiliation, regather some of the scattered states of the former Soviet Union and reassert its claim to great power status.

In any of the new, former Soviet states, there is considerable ambivalence. An often fierce patriotic pride is at war with indisputable dependencies on Moscow for energy, transport, security and trade. And these are dependencies — from the 4.5 million Russians still living outside Russia to the centralized railroads and oil pipelines — that can be easily manipulated.

Fear of Russia is sharpest in Poland. Only 24 percent in a recent opinion poll think of Russia as a "trustworthy" state, and 81 percent want Poland to join NATO. Few believe that the collapse of the world's last real empire was inevitable and not some accident of weak leadership. Few can believe that the Russian bear is not simply in hibernation, waiting only for a good poke from some fire-breathing nationalist like Vladimir V. Zhirinovsky to come roaring back to expansive life.

The Polish Foreign Minister, Andrzej Olechowski, thinks that the West is "too optimistic about Russia," clanging not to see "the signals of imperial thinking." President Lech Walesa attacks "inertia" and "desertion" by the West for its willingness to postpone NATO expansion because of Russian opposition, instead inventing a palliative like "Partnership for Peace," a kind of associate status in NATO.

"There is no partnership yet," Mr. Walesa said. "There is Russia, which threatens, the West, which is frightened, and us, in the middle." The Hungarians and Czechs have been calmer, with the Czech President, Vaclav Havel, criticizing Partnership for Peace as "cautious" and "perhaps too pragmatic." To block or delay NATO's expansion is risky, he says, especially if Russian imperialism — "chaoplasms, Great Russian, crypto-Communist and crypto-totalitarian" — gains the upper hand.

But the simple reality is that Russia, now and for years to come, has neither the financial nor the military means to create a lasting new empire. Even Mr. Zhirinovsky expresses no goal to resubordinate Eastern Europe. In fact, Russia does not much think about Eastern Europe at all.

The emergence of independent states like Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova has separated Moscow from Eastern Europe. Mos-cow had provided a buffer zone of other, more compelling concerns. Most Russians want to follow Eastern Europe into the Europe proper, even though their wounded pride does not want NATO expanded to Russia's borders, which would seem to exclude Moscow from Europe altogether.

"My answer to any Polish concerns is pragmatic," Andrei V. Kozyrev, the Russian Foreign Minister, said in an interview. "There is a certain danger that Russia can be pulled back to totalitarianism under nationalist or Communist banners. That's a fact. But how do you react? The danger is to try to consolidate the outside world against Russia and strengthen Russia's sense of isolation.

It is this fear of isolation and irrelevance that drives Russian policy these days, together with the political and psychological need to be taken seriously by the West. Eastern Europe is no longer a subject of Western East-West rivalry.

Eastern Europe is a region to court, rather than pressure. It remains an important market, and Russia will seek to prevent what President François Mitterrand of France has called a "silver curtain" descending, to cut off Russia from Europe.

"Whatever the political or ideological considerations, Russia's interests are very similar to those of the European Community," says Alexander Pravda of St. Antony's College, Oxford, adding that "even those nationalists who favor "Russia first" policies" focus on the states of the former Soviet Union.

Moscow, after all, has just finished withdrawing 500,000 troops and their dependents, from Eastern Europe and the three Baltic nations, one of history's largest and most complex military retreats in several decades. In return, Moscow has asked for little, writes Stephen Sestanovich, a former Reagan Administration official.

"In Eastern Europe, there have been no demands for Warsaw Pact military bases, no extortion of economic privileges, no allegations of K.G.B. manipulation of Eastern European politics. In the Baltics, there was Russian bluster for delaying troop withdrawals, but they never stopped. It is important to understand Russia has changed," says the Russian Defense Minister, Gen. Pavel S. Grachev, arguing why Europeans should trust Moscow within the Partnership for Peace. "Russia has realized that it's impossible to live in isolation. Having lived in isolation from many states, we're now living decades behind some countries in living standards, and in the case of some developed countries, we'll probably be behind them for eternity."

Ah, the Pole's will say. But what happens if President Boris N. Yeltsin? Has Russia changed for good?

The Big Issue

What Relation

With Ex-Empire?

In Kharkov, in heavy Russian eastern Ukraine, Nina I. Lebedeva is trying to make a living at a bicycle factory on a salary of $15 a month, paid in Ukrainian coupons. Her work, only 30 miles away in Russia, brings $100 a month in the stronger Russian ruble. People like Mrs. Lebedeva voted in July for a new President, Leonid D. Kuchma, who promises closer ties to Russia.

In Dushanbe, Tajikistan, badly battered by tribal and religious war, Vladimir Chekan, an ethnic Russian, is caught in an outpost of empire, with nowhere to go. He has no Union Left in Russia. Tajikistan, a Russian client state defended by Russian troops against incursions from Afghanistan, has a war economy, full of corruption.

"No question, we'll get back to the empire," Mr. Chekan says firmly. "Whatever the political chaos, a union there will be. Everyone understands it."

Rather than Eastern Europe, this is the great drama of Russian foreign and domestic policy these days: what new relations will Moscow have with the newly independent states of the old Soviet Union, the states of the Commonwealth of Independent States?

It is a drama that will play out for years. But there is already an undeniable move toward the West, away from the result of Russian design. There is nothing wrong with economic ties: look at the European Union or at NafTa, the North American Free Trade Agreement, which America dominates.

But as usual with Russia, where no signal goes unmissed, there is the counter-argument, often expressed by Eastern Europeans and American conservatives. With new, more openly pro-Russian Presidents in both Belarus and Ukraine, a stronger nationalist tone to Russian foreign Policy and Russian troops deployed along the unstable southern periphery — from Georgia through the Caucasus to Central Asia — Russian neo-imperialism, still nuclear-armed, is on the march.

"It is predictable in the polls, the counter-argument continues, but there will be other, more plausible national-ist arguments. Before that, a new economic and political purpose, Moscow is maneuvering to divide Ukraine, split Kazakhstan and subvert Azerbaijan. Once Ukraine is suborned, Poland is next.
Giant Machine to Achieve Controlled Fusion

A $1.8 billion project would focus 192 lasers on a chamber holding a tiny fuel pellet. The resulting X-rays would compress and heat it to 200 million degrees Fahrenheit, releasing a great burst of fusion energy.

But at the last minute, the decision was put off till now, apparently because of a debate over whether the project might inadvertently foster the spread of nuclear weapons. Today’s announcement will be the first of many decisions that are expected in the next few years as the Government seeks to recast the role of its national complex of laboratories and nuclear-production plants, which was born half a century ago at the dawn of the nuclear age and now employs more than 100,000 people in 15 states.

The Energy Department safeguards the nation’s nuclear arsenal, dismantles weapons, conducts scientific research and is spending a trillion fiscal year on a vast cleanup meant to ameliorate some of the most deadly environmental legacies of the cold war.

If successful, the N.I.F. would be the world’s first device to control thermonuclear ignition, the phenomenon of fusion better known for lighting stars and powering hydrogen bombs. The process is known as fusion since hydrogen or isotopes of helium, releasing a burst of energy as a byproduct.

The machine would work by firing the dazzling light from 192 lasers down a labyrinth of mirrors, focusing a titanic bolt of energy — a thousand times the output of all the power stations in the United States onto a single tiny pellet of supercold hydrogen fuel, creating a miniature thermonuclear blast.

No lights in the United States would dim when it was fired. Energy for the machine’s discharge would be slowly stored up and then released in a fiery discharge lasting one-billionth of a second or so, its shortness giving it incredible strength.

In theory, the machine would be strong enough to go beyond the break-even point in the quest for controlled nuclear fusion, where the energy consumed in the effort equals the energy released. Instead, it would go into the realm of “ignition,” where sufficient heat is generated to make fusion reactions self-sustaining.

The National Ignition Facility is envisioned as a national resource, to be run jointly with the nation’s other two nuclear-weapons labs — Los Alamos and Sandia, both in New Mexico — and the University of Rochester, a pioneer in laser fusion.

The project’s $1.8 billion price tag includes operating costs over the laser’s projected lifetime of 15 years.

The Government’s current fiscal year, studies related to the project are getting about $8 million, Energy officials say. With the approval, the budget for the next fiscal year will swell to between $50 million and $60 million, and much greater in outlying years as construction gets underway.

Dr. Thomas B. Cochran, a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, has studied the laser project proposal and found it wanting. “They desperately need to address the nonproliferation issue,” he said. “They need to address whether N.I.F. is really the right strategy.”

Dr. Cochran acknowledged that the proposal was likely to sail through Congress next term, but that it might face trouble later on. “In effect,” he said, “this kicks the hard decision off another year or so, until you have to spend serious money for construction.”
Injured Pride
Many Regrets,
Little Rashness

Oleg Rumyantsev, a politician who has moved from a leftist democracy to a centrist nationalist, says Russia "retains psychological detritus of a superpower." Most Russians regret the breakup of the Soviet Union. In a recent opinion poll of 3,600 Russians, 68 percent said so, and the same percentage think a merger of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus is possible. But few—not even Mr. Zhirinovsky—favor using force, as the Abkhazians did the last time the empire was split apart. Only 29 percent think Russia should regain superpower status by reasserting the entire former Soviet Union. When Russians are told of the cost of even economic unity with Belarus, support drops considerably.

Sergei A. Karaganov, a presidential adviser and deputy director of the Institute of World Affairs, Europe, Russia and the Caucasus, says that border Eastern Europe, and is trying to slide into a new Cold War with the West, because it cannot afford either isolation or confrontation.

The paper was produced by the Council on Foreign Relations, which includes figures from First Deputy Foreign Minister Adan L. Abramson and the new Russian representative to the United Nations, Sergei V. Lavrov, to politicians like Deputy Prime Minister Sergei M. Shakrai and Grigory A. Yavlinsky, the liberal economist. It represents the closest blueprint available for Russian policy.

"Pro-integration sentiments are gaining momentum," the paper says. Except for the Baltics and gas-rich Turkmenistan, "it can be tentatively assumed that most of the countries that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union are proving their viability as fully independent states without close cooperation with Russia, without leaning on Russia and one another."

But Mr. Karaganov and the council recommend that all states keep their independence and not let Russia be cautious about new commitments.

"The big danger is that we could slide into a relationship we don't need or want, or even slide into a new cold war with the West," Mr. Karaganov says. Ukraine is the biggest danger. If Ukraine disintegrates, he thinks, Russia will not be because of Russian policy, but because of its own historical fault lines and its failure to reform the economy.

Mr. Yeltsin is considered a narrow nationalist, "imperialist," like Aleksandr A. Solzhenitsyn or the Prime Minister, Viktor S. Chernomyrdin; who want closer integration, beginning with a Slavic free trade area, and "realists," like former Prime Minister Yegor T. Gaidar, who think that Russia's problems are sufficient, and "imperial builders," like Mr. Zhirinovsky and former First Deputy Foreign Minister Vavilov, who want to see a new Soviet Union. When Russians are told of the burdens of empire, and many would favor a merger of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

The West has been firmest with Russia, which includes money, resources and policy and its former republics and especially Ukraine, where an implosion of that divided, economically weakened country is a danger to everyone. In Central Asia and the conflict zone in the Caucasus, including the embattled republics of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The West has been firmest with Russia about the Baltics. But the West is only beginning to try to draw Moscow lines of acceptable behavior in Moldova, Azerbaijan and especially Ukraine, since an implosion of that divided, economically weakened country is a danger to everyone. In Central Asia and the conflict zone in the Caucasus, however, the West tacitly supports a Russian sphere of influence. In Chechnya, part of Russia, the West takes no view at all. Even if the new states want multilateral peacekeepers, the West has refused to provide them, despite American efforts and repeated Russian requests.

"There are no alternatives," President Eduard A. Shevardnadze of Georgia said, after he grudgingly agreed to Russian peacekeepers to stop the war in Abkhazia that local Russian commanders helped to "kill, tell us what they are."

For Russian political cartoonists, the empire that was is very much a current topic. The illustration above depicts President Boris N. Yeltsin of Russia and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the former President of the Soviet Union, lined up for punishment as Peter the Great, who built the Russian empire, says, "But them— one hundred strokes for the ones who ruined the Russian empire!"

"Somewhere around here I lost my leading role," says a Russian at the lost-and-found.

Thomas P. Pickering, the American Ambassador to Moscow, agrees. "Imperial" issues, from monetary union with Belarus to Crimea and the use of Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia, have elicited more skepticism than passion.

"Many Russians certainly regret the loss of empire, and many would favor a resurgence of Russian hegemony if the price were right," Mr. Pickering says. "But most Russians doubt the price would be anything but prohibitive. They take a distinctly caveat-emptor attitude toward their neighbors."

In an influential paper that Mr. Karaganov and a group of powerful centrists produced, called "Strategy for Russia," there is praise for Russia's more assertive role. There is also recognition that Russia will remain weak for some time and must cooperate with the West, because it cannot afford either isolation or confrontation.
Clinton Finds Stride in Massachusetts

Overflow Crowd at a Town Hall Rally Cheers Him and Kennedy

By DOUGLAS JEHL
Special to The New York Times
FRAMINGHAM, Mass., Oct. 20 — By the standards of an ordinary political autumn, it would not have been an unusual sight. But in an angry election season when Bill Clinton has served more as punching bag than as President, his performance at a town hall rally in New England today, and the acclaim he found there, offered a hint that he had begun to discover his true campaign voice.

The rally, bursting with Democratic fervor, was something of a coming out for Mr. Clinton, who has devoted most of his political energy this fall to raising money at events in hotel ballrooms, largely because so many Democratic candidates would rather not be seen with him in public.

Today Mr. Clinton raised not a dime, but he found many admirers. There on the stage with him were Senator Edward M. Kennedy, the five-term Massachusetts Democrat who has trouble re-election bid was the main reason for the Presidential pilgrimage here; Representative Edward J. Markey, the Democrat who represents this liberal stronghold 20 miles west of Boston, and other Democratic candidates for every office from governor to state representative.

And packed into the hall before them, beneath an American flag the width of the stage, were hundreds of supporters who waved blue Kennedy signs and stamped their feet to the beat of a high school band that spilled out of the building and onto a Main Street crowded with even more well-wishers.

North Asserts President Made Illegal Offer to Aid Senator Robb

WASHINGTON, Oct. 20 — In a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, Oliver L. North, the Virginia Republican candidate for the Senate, asserted today that former Gov. Douglas Wilder was offered an ambassadorship in exchange for his endorsement of Mr. North’s opponent, Senator Charles S. Robb.

A White House official said that although Mr. Clinton and Mr. Wilder met for 20 minutes on Tuesday, an ambassadorship in exchange for his endorsement of Mr. North’s opponent, Senator Charles S. Robb.

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But his appearances on the two stops, his most prominent of the campaign season so far, were most of all celebrations of common cause that have become rare among Democratic candidates, who in many parts of the country have chosen to go it alone.

Before today’s raucous crowd, Senator Kennedy, who was first elected to his seat in 1962, even put forward a vision that few other Democrats have dared describe. “As soon as we re-elect old Kennedy to the United States Senate,” he declared, “we’re going to start on the 1996 campaign.”

Mr. Clinton is perhaps more popular in Massachusetts than anywhere else in the country. A poll by The Boston Globe last month found his approval rating in the state to be at 60 percent, nearly 20 points above what was then the national figure. That waveform has been largely generated by an exceptionally sharp decline — to 5.2 percent from 7.9 percent — in the state’s unemployment rate since he took office.

Even so, today’s midday rally was open only to ticket-holders, many of whom carried signs and wore buttons that identified themselves as Democratic faithful. And while the stage was crowded with more Democratic candidates than had been willing to share a platform with Mr. Clinton on any other occasion this fall, White House officials acknowledged that the back-to-back show of public zeal by Governor Cuomo and Senator Kennedy was likely to prove an exception.

Other Democratic senators struggling in their re-election bids this fall, including Jim Sasser of Tennessee and Harris Wofford of Pennsylvania, have demonstrated no interest in inviting Mr. Clinton to campaign with them, apparently out of concern that his lack of popularity will rub off. Others, including Charles S. Robb of Virginia and Dianne Feinstein of California, have proved willing to appear with him only at fund-raising events that are open only to generous donors and limited press coverage.

And although Mr. Clinton will end a weekend campaign trip in Ohio on Monday, his aides have said he will be appearing there only for two Democratic candidates, for the Governor and the Democratic lawyer who is trying to succeed his father-in-law, Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum, has apparently signaled that he has no interest in Presidential appearances on his behalf.
Wall of Resentment Now Divides Germany

BY STEPHEN KINZER
Special to The New York Times

LEIPZIG, Germany — If the peaceful revolution against East German Communism had a birthplace, it may well have been the Nikolai Church in Leipzig, where the Rev. Christian Führer organized weekly "prayers for peace" that grew into vast street demonstrations in which tens of thousands of protesters took part.

Today, Mr. Führer looks back with justifiable pride on the movement he helped lead, but like many of his neighbors he also lament some of what German unification has brought.

"People here feel a real schizophrenia," he mused one recent morning. "No one wants to go back to the days of dictatorship, but at the same time we're not really happy with the new system. It's a full of challenges for which we were totally unprepared."

"From a purely economic standpoint, things are definitely better than before, although far too many of our people have lost their jobs. But even those who have jobs and have cars and take nice vacations are worried about what is happening to our society."

Five Years Later

Eastern Europe, Post-Communism

A special report.

Brutal competition and the lust for money are destroying our sense of community. Almost everyone feels a level of fear or depression or insecurity.

On the eve of the second all-German election, life in the eastern part of the country is, by most objective measures, far better than it was during the Communist era. Nearly all easterners are happy that the Berlin wall is gone, that Communist rule has collapsed and that Germany has been unified. Yet many wish they had not been forced to give up their security, blanket social guarantees and other state-sponsored aspects of the lives they lived before 1989.

Discontent is likely to play a role in the all-German election on Oct. 5, the second since unification.

National public opinion polls continue to show Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government coalition ahead but not by much, with a total of between 46 and 50 percent of the vote for the center-left Social Democrats and Greens with a combined 43 to 45 percent.

The result could still hinge on how well the former Communists in the east, the Party of Democratic Socialism, capitalize on widespread discontent. If they manage to get into Parliament by winning a plurality in three eastern Berlin electoral districts, Mr. Kohl and his main opponent, Rudolf Schaarling of the Social Democrats, could end up in a standoff and even be forced into a grand coalition, the first since 1969.

What makes eastern Germany fundamentally different, however, from the rest of the former Communist world is that it has a wealthy patron, the Bonn Government, which is willing to spend whatever it takes to assure that the economic transformation under way here ultimately succeeds. But although success is on the horizon, the horizon still seems very far away, and for the moment many easterners are frustrated and angry.

Politicians and commentators agree that Germans have not managed to tear down the "wall in our heads," to achieve the elusive goal of "inner unity."

"No one on either side of the wall had any idea how far apart we had grown in 49 years," said the Mayor of Leipzig, Heinrich Lehmann-Grube, a Westerner who moved here in 1969. "Only now are we beginning to understand it. I can tell you that if West Germany had absorbed Italy or France, the problems would have been far less than they are with the absorption of East Germany."

"Imagine if the United States, overnight, had to adopt the entire Chinese bureaucratis, legal, political and economic system," Mr. Lehmann-Grube suggested. "That gives you an idea of how traumatic the change has been here over there."

The shock of the changes that eastern Germans have had to accept is compounded by their realization that Westerners have not had to change at all. While every detail of life in the east has changed radically, nothing whatsoever has changed in the West, except that people there must pay higher taxes to support the costs of unification. In fact, if Westerners had no access to newspapers or television or radio, many would probably not even notice that unification had happened.

This has led to a sense of bitterness in the east. Many easterners say that Germany was not really unified, because unification implies a blending or mixing that produces something new and different. They say that what happened in 1990 was not a unification but an anachus, the gobbling up of one small and weak state by another that was infinitely richer and more self-confident.

Travels throughout eastern Germany and conversations with scores of residents suggest that the mood here is not as negative as it is sometimes portrayed in the German press. Anger over the way unification was handled remains strong, but it is accompanied by a growing sense that slow progress is being made.

Although eastern Germans resent the fact that they remain far behind their western cousins by nearly every standard, they realize that they are the envy of people in virtually every other formerly Communist country. Caught between these two impulses, they feel what the renowned German-American scholar Fritz Stern has called "exuberant pessimism."

Five Years Later

Further reports on Eastern Europe after communism will examine the costs and benefits, and how the changes have affected the Balkans; the struggle to improve the environment; and the uneasy relationship between Russia and its former republics and Warsaw Pact allies. Previous articles explored the successes and pitfalls of introducing capitalism to countries long accustomed to state-run economies.
Making matters worse, the East German economy was based on about two dozen giant industrial complexes—from textiles to electric power to steel—each of which employed thousands or tens of thousands of people. Such complexes are dinosaurs in the modern world, and the process of dismantling them has been extremely painful.

The Treuhand agency, set up after unification to administer and sell off companies formerly owned by the East German state, has dramatically slashed the work force at many of these complexes and has shut others completely. In so doing, it has thrown tens of thousands of people out of work and onto welfare rolls, including many over 50 who have little hope of ever finding new jobs. As a result, it has become the most hated public agency in eastern Germany.

"Never in peacetime has so much social wealth been destroyed," proclaims a leaflet used by the Democratic Socialists, Party, successor to the East German Communists, in recent election campaigns. "With the goal of privatizing East German property in the shortest possible time, companies and property are being sold at far below their true value. The result is well known: de-industrialization and mass unemployment in the east."

In an interview, the head of the Treuhand, Birgit Breuel, an expert in public finance, insisted that her agency has sold its properties for the best possible price, and has sought commitments from buyers to maintain as many jobs as possible. "I understand that people who took to the streets in 1989 to demonstrate for freedom and are now unemployed don't feel very positive about what has happened," Mrs. Breuel acknowledged. "We know we're not popular in the east, and of course it bothers me," she said. "We think we're helping the development of the east, laying the groundwork for prosperity. But people in the east are constantly criticizing us and complaining about our work. They say we're driving them to unemployment and bankruptcy. It's not pleasant, but I understand it."

The unemployment rate in eastern Germany is officially put at 14.4 percent, compared with 8.8 percent in the west. It would be considerably higher if Bonn had not flooded the east with make-work projects which now employ hundreds of thousands of people.

Easterners who have jobs earn an average of just 65 percent of what westerners earn for comparable work. Officials in Bonn say the difference must be maintained because businesses and public employers cannot afford to pay more, and because productivity in the east is lower than in the west. In addition, they say, if wages rise too quickly in the east, employers will be tempted not to invest here at all, preferring to set up shop in countries further east where workers can be hired for much less money.

Despite these facts, the difference in wage scales for workers in eastern and western Germany is a source of great dissatisfaction in the east. Many people here take the difference as proof that westerners consider them second-class citizens.

The Costs
An Immense Bill That Still Rises

Since German unification in 1990, the Bonn Government has poured huge amounts of money into the east, between $80 billion and $100 billion per year. The Government recently announced that the 7.5 percent income tax surcharge that Chancellor Helmut Kohl introduced in 1991, promising that it would last only one year, will be reinstated in 1995 and remain in effect for at least five more years.

With Bonn as a wealthy patron, eastern Germany's economic transformation is the most successful in eastern Europe.

gardless of the level of economic progress in eastern countries, it would take two generations for easterners to recover psychologically from the effects of life under repressive rule. "You have to remember that people here lived under dictatorship without interruption for almost 60 years," Mr. Gauck said. "That experience turns people into subjects. It destroys their sense of what it means to be a citizen, an active participant in life and society. Only a minority of the people in eastern Germany understand what it is to design and be responsible for their own future."

"Germany has been a sick society," he said. "After 12 years of Nazism, the Allies arrived in West Germany, and they were the doctors who slowly cured people of their sickness by introducing democracy and free enterprise. Western Germany has recovered, and it is now healthy. Easterners have to learn under dictatorship without doctors who slowly cured people of their sickness by introducing democracy and free enterprise. Western Germany has recovered, and it is now healthy. Easterners have to learn under dictatorship without doctors who slowly cured people of their sickness by introducing democracy and free enterprise.

Western Germany has poured huge sums into eastern Germany, which some westerners consider second-class citizens. More hard currency flows into eastern Germany in the average week than some formerly Communist countries see in a year. This flow virtually guarantees that when the painful transition period finally ends, eastern Germany will be the most successful part of what was once the Communist world. It may also become one of the most modern regions in all of Europe, built almost from scratch to 21st-century standards at a cost of hundreds of billions. Most of the money which is supporting this vast reconstruction is coming from the pockets of western taxpayers, who grumble ever more loudly about the burden when they hear easterners complaining about their problems, they often explode in disagreement. Many of them think easterners should be showering them with gratitude.

Bonn's effort to promote investment in eastern Germany, which some westerners think is too expensive and many easterners consider too halfhearted, is showing results. Chancellor Kohl recently attended ground-breaking ceremonies for two major new projects which he described as evidence that the eastern states "are becoming high-modern centers of product development.

\[\text{The New York Times} \]

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research and production."

One of the new projects, a microchip factory backed by Siemens A.G. which will bring 1,200 new jobs to Dresden, was evidence that at least some important western companies are willing to invest in the region. The other, an oil refinery in Leuna which is to be the most modern in Europe when it opens in 1997, gave hope that the poisoned chemical region around Bitterfeld may not be dead after all.

Few easterners have any background in private enterprise, but some have launched small companies of their own, and although many of the companies have quickly gone bankrupt, more than a few have survived and are growing. But they often face problems doing business in the west.

For example, when the environmental organization Greenpeace offered a prize for the development of a refrigerator that did not produce dangerous chlorofluorocarbons, which erode the earth's protective ozone layer, a group of researchers in the east came up with the prize-winning design. Western companies like Siemens at first scoffed at the design, saying the new refrigerator was too heavy and used too much energy, but they soon copied it. Now many dealers in western Germany urge customers to buy western models rather than the easterners from Saxon town of Schafenstein.

"Don't take a chance on that stuff from the east," one western dealer told a customer recently. "You're much better off buying from Siemens or Bosch. Choose a company you know and trust."

The Outlook

Will Healing Take Decades?

Another factor inhibiting both economic growth and psychological peace in eastern Germany is the continuing battle over property rights. Under provisions of the 1990 Treaty of Unification, former owners of property in the east who were dispossessed by the Communist Government have the right not merely to seek compensation, but to reclaim their property, regardless of what has happened there in the intervening decades.

In almost every city and town in eastern Germany, potential investors have been scared away by the maze of claims on prime real estate. None will take the chance of building on land which may, at some point in the future, be awarded to the descendants of some former owner.

In Potsdam, most of the buildings on Helene-Lang-Strasse, potentially a prime development area, are the subject of property disputes. In the depressed industrial city of Halle, less than 15 percent of claims have been adjudicated. In Leipzig, the process of adjudication is expected to last until well into the next century. And in the town of Klein Machnow, near Berlin, more than half the homes have been claimed by former owners, so none of the current residents, many of whom have been there for decades, will spend a cent for renovation or maintenance.

What makes this a psychological as well as an economic problem is that few of the claimants want to come back and live in the homes or to revitalize the factories they once owned. In fact, many claimants have never even seen the properties and do not want to see them. They are simply people from western Germany or from abroad who, upon reading about the Government's position, have dug up long-forgotten deeds left behind by parents or grandparents and filed claims.

"I visit the Czech Republic quite often, and I'm struck by how much better the mood is there than it is here," said Lothar de Maiziere, who served in 1990 as East Germany's first and last non-Communist prime minister.

"That shouldn't be the case, because people here are doing much better economically. I think the reason is that the Czechs designed their new system themselves, and they feel personally responsible for both its failures and successes. Here it's different. Everything was imposed from Bonn. Even if the end result looks better on paper, people feel that once again, things were done for them by some big brother who is supposed to know better."

"Remember that Moses led his people through the desert for 40 years, and that after 20 years people began to complain," Mr. de Maiziere added. "They told Moses that life in the desert was too difficult, and at least when they were slaves they had food and water and places to sleep. Moses' friends asked him how long he thought people would be complaining like this, and he replied, 'Until the last person born under slavery has died.'"

"Our situation here is very similar, Mr. de Maiziere said. "The psychological gap between eastern and western Germany will last for at least a generation, or perhaps until the last person born under Communism passes away."
President To Enter Baseball Stalemate

Continued From Page B11

said, "Mostly that's right, but there are a lot of things he could do."
The introduction of a mediator remains the most palatable move by Washington for most baseball management officials. Owners sought vociferously and successfully against attempts by Congress this year to repeal part of the antitrust exemption sanctioned by a Supreme Court decision in 1922. And neither the players nor the owners have embraced a legislative initiative which calls for binding arbitration should the current dispute threaten spring training in Arizona and Florida in February.

The need for relief in the dispute was underscored yesterday when the central office of the major leagues announced it would reduce its payroll by 27 players, either through layoffs, retirement or attrition.

The affected employees are in the offices of the commissioner, the American and National leagues, the Baseball Network, Major League Baseball Properties and Major League Baseball International, Inc. The furloughs, the first ever in the central office, follow similar moves by more than half of the 28 teams. The President has had a mostly

Continued on Page B13, Column 1
Fast and Slow Lanes on the Capitalist Road

By JANE PERLEZ
Special to The New York Times

KONIN, Poland — As Jan Rusinski, a 42-year-old coal miner, sits in his wood-paneled living room admiring the fruits of his labor under Communism — a television set, comfortable furniture, a shiny, modern kitchen — he wonders why he is at home, jobless and dependent on welfare payments. Capitalism, he says, was supposed to bring him more, not less.

A few miles away in the heart of this industrial town, Elzbieta Leszczyńska creates wedding dresses in the airy basement of her two-story home. Amid the swirl of brocades and lace, and the clip of scissors and sewing machines, Ms. Leszczyńska, one of Poland’s new small entrepreneurs, runs a staff of 43 and sells glamarous gowns to boutiques and private hands. But, too, is not satisfied. Why can’t she expand her business faster? she asks.

The stories are different, but the frustrating reality is the same: in Eastern Europe, capitalism can’t be built overnight. And when it comes, it comes at a price few here expected.

Working habits and egalitarian attitudes drilled into minds by years of enforced Communism — a system that would transform Eastern Europe from within. But this is complete.

The Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies, which studies Eastern Europe, concluded in a new assessment in July that it would take well into the next decade before the three fast-track countries could match the economic strength of even the less well-off countries in the European Union, like Spain.

“The mechanisms of the command economy were dismantled everywhere with surging speed,” said Peter Havlík, the institute’s deputy director. “On the other hand, the formation of new institutions has turned out to be much more difficult, slower and more painful than most analysts had expected at the outset of reforms in 1990. It was thought that in five years they would reach German levels. But this is complete nonsense. Realistically there will be enormous differences between Eastern Europe and Western Europe for years to come.”

Using what he called very optimistic assumptions — 5 percent growth every year — Mr. Havlík said it would be 2010 before the Czech Republic would reach the per capita gross domestic product of Spain. Poland would have only a little more than half Spain’s per capita gross domestic product by then and Hungary about two-thirds.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter’s national security adviser, is even more pessimistic. He estimates it will take Poland till the middle of the next century to catch up to Germany’s per capita gross national product.

As these countries removed state subisides from industries and laid off bloated work forces, there have been severe social costs: a drop in living standards, long-term unemployment and the emergence of stark poverty.

Poland, where a “shock therapy” economic policy of removing subsidies and making the currency convertible was slammed into action in 1989, is the first country to show growth. Even so, by the end of this year, Poland will be producing only 90 percent of its pre-1989 gross domestic product, according to the Vienna Institute.

In the Czech Republic, despite what many consider careful management, the economy will only start to grow again this year. In the last five years, the Czech economy has shrunk by 20 percent, the Institute says. And in Hungary, the five year drop in gross domestic product is forecast at 16 percent.

Estimates everywhere real wages have dropped dramatically: in Poland, the buying power of wages has fallen by 28 percent since 1989; by 16 percent in the Czech Republic and by 16 percent in Hungary.

Societies accustomed to the notion that every three years, with equal economic standing are now riven by a sudden upsurge in poverty, a widening of the formerly narrow bell. In what once had been an attempt: a classless society. About 15 percent of Poles live below the poverty line compared to a steady 5 to 10 percent in West’s, according to findings published in July by the World Bank.

Unemployment has emerged as a permanent legacy as private sectors fail to expand fast enough to suck up those laid off from this year. And in the Czech Republic, the very low 3.1 percent unemployment rate is bound to increase when the inevitable removal of subsidies happens.

Even in the Czech Republic, the Labor Department worries about the creation of an entrenched underclass, and a new professional, job counselor, has emerged. Eva Miková, a counselor in the mining town of Ostrava, has been sent to England to learn how the British get jobs.

“People have to be taught to understand they must fight for themselves and can’t expect help,” said Ms. Miková, as she prepared a training session on self-assertiveness for a class of long-term unemployed ranging from a 32-year-old single mother to a 52-year-old mechanic. In Ostrava, the proud slogan used to be: “I am miner, who else is miner.” Today, as miners are laid off, the heroic paintings in the lobby of Ostrava’s Palace Hotel of workers hammering at underground coal look strangely out of place.

The Adjustment

Class Divisions Are Deepening

Beyond the economic realities, many people are overwhelmed by the mental adjustment. Poland’s former Communist leader, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, who has recently made a surprising comeback in public opinion polls, said: “The rising disparities between rich and poor are offensive in a society where people respect success. Here it arouses suspicion.”

According to different values after 40 years of Communism — initiative instead of passivity, stress on merit instead of party loyalty — is proving a substantial constraint on economic development. A lack of laws and lack of laws on economic development. A lack of laws that deal with such things as breach of contract adds to the problem.

“I have the distinct feeling that the concept of mentality is the real obstacle to change,” said Rudolf Andorka, the rector of the Catholic University of Lublin. “Lublin was the city to be used to be a sport to steal from the state. To steal from the state was a patriotic act.”

To counteract this, the university’s sociology department took a survey. “We asked the question: to achieve something in Poland, you have to break the rules? Mr. Andorka said. “Thirty nine percent said yes, 39 percent partly agreed, 20 percent are against, 9 percent high.” In fact I think it would be 10 percent and 16 percent.

The results prompted the university to introduce its first course on business ethics this year. “We’re seeing because of all the dishonesty how much ethics are missing,” Mr. Andorka said. “Half of the businessmen don’t even know what their partners. Businessmen don’t
Clinton Exults in Swift Success Of U.S. Military Force in Haiti

By DOUG JEHL Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 6 — As both houses of Congress debated resolutions that could set limits on operations in Haiti, President Clinton and his advisers presented an upbeat accounting today of the American military mission there. They said its swift success at establishing order meant that the United States now stood prepared to hand over authority soon to Haiti’s exiled President, the Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

“We’re at the point where the baton is ready to be passed,” a senior Administration official declared after Mr. Clinton met in person and by teleconference in Norfolk, Va., with the American military commanders in charge of the operation.

Administration officials cautioned that much remains to be done by American military forces, who they said would need to stay in place through early next year before a United Nations force takes over.

Even after Father Aristide takes power, they said American troops would remain in Haiti, manning roadblocks, providing security and even transporting supplies for the Haitian President in United States military helicopters.

But with Haiti’s army stripped of heavy weapons, its police forces reined in, its paramilitary forces being disarmed and the country’s democratically elected officials returning to their posts, Administration aides said Mr. Clinton was told that the American troops who came ashore 42 days ago have now removed the main obstacles to Father Aristide’s safe return.

Anthony Lake, Mr. Clinton’s national security adviser, met with Father Aristide to discuss the transfer of power, and Father Aristide was expected to sign an agreement providing formal authority for American troops to remain in Haiti after he returns to office.

As Mr. Clinton addressed sailors aboard the aircraft carrier Eisenhower, then interviewed an interview about Haiti to USA Today, a group of reporters and columnists were invited to a special White House briefing given by four high-level officials. The President and his aides emphasized how much progress has been made in such a short time on what had begun as an unpopular military operation.

Company News: Tuesday through Saturday, Business Day

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Oct. 1 (Reuters) — The owner of a Haitian food warehouse fired on a crowd, killing one person and wounding four others. United States military officials said.

American troops arrived on the scene to tend to the wounded and disperse the crowd. The shooting occurred at 4 A.M. outside a food depot containing bags of sugar and cans of powdered milk.

American soldiers later drove away, leaving the Haitian police to guard the warehouse with M-16 rifles and hold off a crowd of Haitian street dwellers.

The shooting at the warehouse took place on the day Haiti’s parliament was to resume debate on a draft amnesty law that could shield Lieut. Gen. Raoul Cedras and other military leaders from arrest.

The draft, presented Wednesday by the interim Justice Minister, Rene Prosper, covers only political crimes, but would allow the Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide to issue a decree broadening the amnesty.

President Aristide, ousted in a 1991 coup, has pledged to return to power, and Father Aristide was never directed by Fraph, we never had.

ByDOUGJEHL

Power, and Father Aristide was never directed by Fraph, we never had. I have no, I mean no. I'm not going to let it happen again. Mr. Francillon, aged 34 years old, stood guard inside the warehouse with relatives and private security guards armed with semi-automatic 12-gauge shotguns and 9-millimeter pistols.

"I'm not going to lose any more," Mr. Francillon said. "I will shoot to kill."

Col. Barry Willey, a United States military spokesman, said the military would not investigate the incident. "We don't do police investigations," he said. "We will not be doing any kind of investigation about whether this owner was in the right or not."
1980’s taxes are not a charade, in the sense that they pass those tax burdens through the roof” to pay for the lost assistance.

Mr. Cuomo’s comments seemed aimed partly at driving a wedge between Mr. Pataki, the Republican candidate for governor, and local political leaders, particularly New York City’s Mayor, Rudolph W. Giuliani, a Republican who has withheld any endorsement of Mr. Pataki.

Yesterday, Mr. Giuliani echoed the Democratic Governor’s concerns that deep tax cuts could force local governments to either raise local taxes or cut services. But he said he might support the tax cuts if Mr. Pataki could show him how the state would make up for the lost revenue by reducing its many demands on local governments, like housing the homeless and paying a part of the bill for health care for the poor.

In imposing that condition, Mr. Giuliani pushed any endorsement of Mr. Pataki even further into the future, since the Mayor quickly added that Mr. Pataki had yet to provide that explanation.

In presenting his tax cut plan, which includes reducing the top tax rate by 25 percent in four years, Mr. Pataki said the cuts could be paid for through a combination of revenue from a growing economy and what he portrayed as relatively easy belt-tightening by the state. No cuts in aid to local governments would be needed, he said.

But yesterday, Mr. Cuomo, joined by some economists and Wall Street financial analysts, greeted Mr. Pataki’s assumptions with deep skepticism. They said that even if his projections for economic growth proved correct, steep annual increases in an array of government programs would make a painless cut in spending impossible. They said deep cuts in aid to local governments, which makes up about 70 percent of the $14.2 billion state budget, would be virtually unavoidable if Mr. Pataki’s tax cuts occurred.

“The is a Republican by the name of George telling you to read my lips,” Mr. Cuomo said at a campaign stop in Buffalo. “I mean, how many times do they have to do it to you?”

And Felix G. Rohatyn, an ally of Mr. Cuomo and former chairman of the Municipal Assistance Corporation, said the Pataki plan “could have a truly devastating impact” on New York City’s precarious financial condition, as well as on the state’s.

Mr. Pataki said his cuts, which would reduce state revenues by $5.6 billion a year by 1998, could be financed by holding state spending to the rate of inflation, about 3 percent this year. Yesterday, officials in his campaign also released a list of spending reductions, including consolidating agencies, not filling vacant jobs and reducing supply purchases, which they said would save the state about $600 million a year.

But campaign aides acknowledged that their cuts and anticipated revenue growth would not quite reach $5.6 billion. They said that by 1998, either more cuts or more growth in the economy might be needed to break even.

Several economists and Wall Street analysts said that making cuts to the state bureaucracy alone could not pay for Mr. Pataki’s tax cuts because most of the state’s spending is aid to local governments for schools, Medicaid and welfare.

Those programs have risen at rates faster than 3 percent a year; Medicaid alone has been at double-digit rates for years.

“Most of the expenditures of the state simply get passed through, you know, as aid to localities, either for schools or for social services,” Peter D. Salama, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, said on New York 1 News on television last night. “So that unless some way is developed to not simply increase the local burden, what you’re going to have is a tax shifting from the state to localities. It will make the state look better, but it will make the localities look worse.”

Michael Brooks, senior municipal credit analyst for Safford C. Bernstein & Company, said Mr. Pataki’s plan, if approved by the State Legislature, might jeopardize the state’s ability to improve its bond rating, which is among the lowest in the nation. “If you make a tax cut of this magnitude, you’re going to adversely affect the credit of the state,” he said.

The proposal also came under fire from a group representing mayors, which said income tax cuts in the 1980’s led to cutbacks in state aid to local governments totaling $1.3 billion. The group said those aid reductions forced local governments to raise property taxes by an average of 18 percent each year for the last five years to cover their rising costs.

“One must not forget that the last cut in state income taxes was financed on the backs of local governments,” said Edward C. Farrell, executive director of the New York State Conference of Mayors.

Under attack, the Pataki camp found itself on the defensive yesterday in defending how it could finance the proposed tax cut. When the plan was announced on Wednesday, Mr. Pataki’s campaign aides produced a document that the $5.6 billion tax cut would be paid for out of $11 billion in future savings.

But yesterday, that cushion disappeared as the experts who worked on the plan conceded that their official projections for economic growth proved too low.

Democrats and outside fiscal analysts said there was little evidence supporting Mr. Pataki’s proposal. Frank Mauro, director of the Fiscal Policy Institute, a labor-supported group that often opposes tax cuts, said that the assumptions underlying Mr. Pataki’s plan were deeply flawed.

Mr. Mauro said that making the cuts because most of the state’s tax revenue is in growth would leave the state government at least $2 billion short if it were fully in effect in 1998.

There was bipartisan questioning of the plan yesterday. The Republican County Executives of Nassau and Suffolk, while saying they supported tax cuts, both raised concerns about the state’s ability to pay for it.

“I have to be cautious about my colleagues, that reductions in state taxes are not a charade, in the sense that they pass these tax burdens along to our local real-property-tax payers,” said Thomas S. Gulotta, the Nassau County executive.

Robert J. Gaffney, the Suffolk County Executive, said: “I’ve heard George Pataki’s plan. We’ve always said the state spends too much money.”

CLOSE-UP

What Pataki’s Tax Cut Would Mean

Thomas J. Marine, a partner at Price Waterhouse who heads the firm’s Multistate Tax Consulting Practice, compared what families at a number of income levels would save under Senator George E. Pataki’s tax cut proposals with what they pay now. The result would be an across-the-board tax cut, he said, because it is not a complex plan.

Senator Pataki is “basically dropping the rates” and going from five or six brackets to two, he said, and giving tax credits of $200 per dependent. That amounts to $120 to $160 of tax savings, compared with the current $1,000 deduction per dependent, he said, so big families would realize a substantial savings under the Pataki plan.

Credits reduce taxes dollar for dollar, while deductions reduce income and the actual dollar savings depend on the tax bracket. A person in the top New York bracket would save $78.75 with a $1,000 deduction.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gross Income</th>
<th>Tax payment now</th>
<th>Tax as already scheduled to drop</th>
<th>Tax under Pataki’s plan</th>
<th>Pataki’s % cut from existing tax</th>
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* Refunds † Increase in refund.
East Europe’s Hard Path to New Day

By CRAIG R. WHITNEY

BUDAPEST — The sleek new international airport terminal here is filled each day with tourists and business investors flashing passports at border guards who sit behind high-tech glass booths, watching as the travelers breeze past customs with a wave.

Only an hour’s flying time to the east, at the dilapidated Boryspil Airport in Kiev, the scene could not be more different, as weary passengers line up to purchase a piece of paper entitling them to stand in another line to buy a visa. Then they wait in still a third line to appear before cell-like booths containing immigration inspectors trained by the Soviet Union’s K.G.B., who then turn them out to face a gamut of customs forms and suitcase searches. The whole process routinely takes two hours, just like in the old Communist days.

Five years have passed since Communism disintegrated in Eastern Europe, when Hungary began dismantling the Iron Curtain on its Austrian border and Poland held its first free elections since World War II. Soon afterward, thousands of East Germans began streaming through the Berlin Wall.

... Continued From Page A1

... which clearly want to be in the Western camp, eager to join the community of capitalist Western democracies. With strong rates of economic growth and, more significantly, an almost palpable sense of self-confidence, all seem to be on a fast track to making it.

On the other side, Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria are not sure where their destiny lies, and seem stuck in a sort of post-Communist twilight zone, economically and politically far behind the Westernizers, falling farther behind with every passing year and maintaining some of the old suspicions of outsiders from the Communist era.

But even in the fast-track countries, there has been frustration and disappointment over the pace of change. A New York Times poll on hopes and attitudes conducted this summer in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland found that people were confronting their new freedom with some trepidation. Much of their reaction has to do with economic uncertainty.

Except for East Germany, which has been getting about $100 billion a year since reunification with West Germany in 1990, the prosperous West offered nothing like the Marshall Plan to help formerly Communist countries get started toward the market economy.

It also could not guarantee strategic stability while the region struggled with powerful and destructive forces of nationalism unleashed in Serbia, Bosnia, and outlying parts of the former Soviet Union after Communism collapsed.

And crime syndicates controlled by black marketers with powerful former Communist functionaries behind them — “the Mafia,” in universal Eastern European usage — sometimes seem to be a bigger threat to security than the now obsolete nuclear arsenals that criminals have recently been trying to plunder for profit.

But in the most advanced of the Western-oriented countries, good news mostly outweighs the bad.

The last of a half-million Russian troops and their dependents finished pulling out of the areas they occupied for half a century in eastern Germany and all the Baltic states on Aug. 31.

Despite the confusion and considerable nostalgia for the stability and predictability of the old days, people in most of Eastern Europe are not rushing to go back to Communism. Even the reformed “Socialist” leaders who have come back to power in recent elections in Poland and Hungary say they are as determined as their predecessors to press for membership in the NATO alliance. And they all remain determined to become members of the European Union by the end of the century.

“I don’t think that’s unrealistic,” said George Kopits, the senior resident official of the International Monetary Fund in Budapest, “but they will have to work hard to get there. They’re about midway through.”

Slovakia, Slovenia and the Baltic states are only a little behind them. Even Russia is moving toward a market economy, though it may be many years before it works, and President Boris N. Yeltsin was warmly welcomed by the leaders of major industrial democracies as a participant in this year’s economic summit in Naples.

Five Years Later

Eastern Europe, Post Communism

A special report.

... and Slovaks massed in Prague’s Wenceslas Square and forced their Communist leaders to resign, and Romanians rose up in armed rebellion against a brutal dictatorship.

Over the next two years, Moscow’s hold over the former Soviet Union weakened, until at the end of 1991 it was dissolved and its former constituent republics, such as Ukraine, became independent.

But since the heady days in late 1989, the Iron Curtain has been replaced by a new and less visible divide between haves and have-nots in the formerly Communist world, with distinctly different visions of the future in the countries on either side. On one side are Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

... Continued on Page A10, Column 1

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1994

After Communism: 3 Countries’ Views

| Looking ahead to the next few years, what do you think about your country’s economic situation? | Czech Republic | Hungary | Poland |
|________________________________________________________________________________________|________________|___________|___________|
| Problems will be solved | 3% | 3% | 3% |
| Expect more deterioration | 26 | 30 | 18 |
| Stay about the same | 28 | 30 | 26 |
| Gradually leave behind problems | 40 | 39 | 42 |

About your own future, would you say you are:

| Generally optimistic | 32 | 56 | 42 |
| Generally pessimistic | 39 | 44 | 36 |
| Uncertain | 17 | 22 | 18 |

Compared to 5 years ago, are you:

| Better off | 51 | 40 | 20 |
| Worse off | 30 | 57 | 60 |
| About as well off | 60 | 30 | 43 |

In individual freedom or equality more important?

| Freedom (everyone can develop without hindrance) | 36 | 36 | 36 |
| Equality (minimal class differences) | 20 | 20 | 20 |

Based on in-person interviews conducted for The Times by Gallup Hungary Ltd. Interviewing was conducted July 7 to 14 with 1,000 adults in the Czech Republic; July 8 to 12 with 1,000 adults in Hungary; and June 26 to July 3 with 1,004 in Poland.


The New York Times

Hardy Days of '89

JUNE 4 Polses overwhelmingly vote for candidates endorsed by the Solidarity opposition, sweeping out 44 years of Communist rule.

SEPT. 11 Hungarian Government removes barbed-wire barriers at Austrian border, opening the way for what becomes a flood of East Germans to the West.

NOV. 10 The Berlin wall is breached. The Communist Government in Bulgaria falls.

NOV. 28 Czechoslovakia's Communist Government cedes its monopoly on power to opposition leaders led by Vaclav Havel.

DEC. 23 After a week of increasingly violent protests against the Romanian dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu, he flees and his Government falls. After a brief trial, he is executed on Dec. 25.

"If you compare the current situation with our expectations in 1989-1990, I would say we are not satisfied, because we thought things would go faster," said the Polish Foreign Minister, Andrzej Olechowski, in an interview.

"If you press politicians in the West, they say yes, you can join us, at the turn of the century," he said, "but there is no agreement on a calendar to get there. Perhaps we were naive."

Polls conducted for The New York Times in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, in July also showed that many ordinary people felt vulnerable and confused.

Overwhelming majorties said that a secure job was far more important to them than the freedom to travel or the richness of consumer choice that they have enjoyed since communism collapsed - 73 percent in the Czech Republic, 81 percent in Hungary, 88 percent in Poland.

Only 12 percent of the Poles asked, and 32 percent of the Czechs.

These feelings may explain why Poles, with a vast majority of workers in the East, have a greater sense of what it means to be European than do the Czechs and Hungarians.

The Communists also outnumbered those who thought their future was "uncertain" - 56 to 32 percent in the Czech Republic, and 44 to 39 percent in Hungary.

In Poland, 36 percent said they were "optimistic, 22 percent pessimistic and 42 percent uncertain.

Disillusionment with the difficulty of transformation has also led to comebacks for formerly Communist parties in both Poland and Hungary, now called Socialists. But they have changed more than just their names in five years.

During the cold war, the Communist parties of Eastern Europe professed loyalty to Moscow and let the Red Army do their bidding. And in 1953, 1956 and 1968 in East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. The new socialist leaders all fear domination, and want quick membership in the NATO alliance to protect them from it.

And they say they are as dedicated to achieving a market economy as the conservatives they replaced. In Poland, however, the pace of privatization has slowed noticeably, and a recent decision by Marian W. Zacharski, convicted in the United States of being a Communist spy before he was exchanged in 1986, as head of the Polish intelligence service caused concern before the Government withdrew the nomination this summer.

The Hungarian coalition Government that took office under Prime Minister Gulya Horm this summer has warned that more painful adjustments lie ahead, with Government spending cuts on welfare programs that have made Hungary one of the most equal societies in Europe.

As his country's Communist Foreign Minister five summers earlier, Mr. Horn snipped the barbed wire marking the Iron Curtain at the Austro-Hungarian border, unleashing a flood of East German refugees and starting a chain reaction across Europe. Now, as Prime Minister, he says Hungary will press on with privatization.

"People didn't vote for us because they didn't want a market economy - they thought we would be more professional and efficient in bringing it about," said Imre Szekeres, his deputy as party leader.

Trade European Markets Hard to Crack

In five years, the European Union has replaced the Soviet Union as Eastern Europe's largest trading partner, but the Western countries sell more than they buy from the east.

Polish exports to the European Union rose by 83.3 percent between 1988 and 1992. Czech and Slovak exports rose by 116 percent, and Hungary's by 54 percent, but their imports from the West have also been faster giving them a combined trade deficit of $7.22 billion with Western Europe.

Alfred Grosser, a Freiburg-based scientific and expert on Germany, said that most Western European countries saw the easterners more as competitors than as long-lost compatriots. "We tell the Czechs and the Poles, 'Yes, we will help you,' but every barrowful of steel appears on our borders we try to keep it out," he said.

Eastern European officials complain that when their firms can produce goods more cheaply than Western competitors, Western European governments protect their industries by imposing tariffs or punitive quotas on them.

"I had to burn 26,000 cherry seedlings this spring, because there's no market for the fruit," said Janusz Bialy, a farmer in Nasek. "In this area, there are black currant plantations where the farmers didn't even bother to pick last summer - just..."
STATUS REPORT

New Economies in a New Europe

Of the countries freed from Soviet control in 1989, the Czech Republic and Poland are considered to be on the fast track to capitalism, though the transition has been uneven. Romania and Ukraine are among the laggards, slow to let the fruit rot on the vine.”

The reason, he said, was that traditional markets in the east had collapsed, but the European Union imposed such high minimum prices on imported fruit from Poland that farmers found themselves blocked from the Western market.

But this is slowly changing under the pressure of capitalist competition that has transformed the shelves of supermarkets all over the region. Eastern European consumers abandoned state brands for Western products like the Henkel company’s “Persil” laundry detergent, but now the soap is made locally in plants in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria.

“Sixty percent of the new food products on our markets three years ago were imported,” said Marian Brzoska, a Polish agricultural official. “Now, they are produced here.”

But, said Laszlo Bekesi, the Hungarian Finance Minister, Eastern European officials sometimes feel they are caught in a treadmill in dealing with the European Union. “Our aim is to catch up, but catching up is also the condition for joining,” he joked.

Security

West’s Protection Proves Uncertain

The Western institutions that were created to deal with the Soviet threat during the cold war alliance are back on offending.

Instead, N. called “Partnership” formerly Comm. in theory an equ. relations with NA countries accepted.

“The Partnership fo. because decision-makers wa. difficult decisions,” Mr. Ole. Polish Foreign Minister, said. wants full membership, as does

“In this region, either because ofic hardship or ethnic tensions, could break out, or an extremist poli. could get into power and become a milita threat,” said Defense Minister Gyorgy K. leti, acknowledging that it was Mr. Zhirnovsky he had in mind.

Both Hungarian and Polish officials interviewed for this article said that the withdrawal of the Red Army from Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact had left their own national armed forces in a technologically backward state, and cut off from many of their former sources of supply.

“We don’t even have a functioning air defense system at all,” a Polish diplomat said. The tactics, standard procedures, and logistics of both armies are all based on Soviet standards they would like to escape from for strategic as well as political reasons.

Officials in both countries hope that closer association with NATO would be the first step towards building truly independent functional military establishments.

Ukraine has no such intention, according to close observers there. “We understand the Russians will never permit us to join,” said Nikolai A. Kulinich, a Kiev political scientist. “And our military officers would never do anything to offend the Russians—they think the same way, and they understand them too well.”
AFTER THE FALL

The Pursuit of Democracy in Central Europe

JEFFREY C. GOLDFARB

BasicBooks
A Division of HarperCollinsPublishers
When I first traveled to Poland in June 1973, I believed the world of communism to be a fairly stable alternative modern order. I knew it wasn’t a good order, or in particularly good order, but I assumed its permanence. I was not unusual. Everyone then recognized a bipolar world consisting of the two superpowers. Some accepted the polarity as inevitable, while others imagined there would someday be a convergence of one sort or another. Still others imagined a cold- or hot-war victory; but even among these, few really expected the final showdown to happen in our times. Indeed, by the late seventies, with the oil shock and stagflation, it was not unreasonable to assume that the ascendant superpower was the Soviet Union. Henry Kissinger’s realpolitik seemed to be based on such a vision, as did Ronald Reagan’s anticommunist crusade. Obviously, we now live in a transformed geopolitical world.

Yet while the old order has disappeared, the new order has not yet fully formed. It would be foolish to predict with any pretense of certainty what will happen during this time of global change. Too many problems remain unresolved. As we have seen, political constitution and leadership, nation and religion, the political economy and culture—all present both democratic opportunities and prospects for fundamental failure. Even the idea of “Europe” is not without its downside.

But simply to declare that “only time will tell” is not appropriate either. Our present actions are necessarily based on mediations between our understanding of the past and our imaginations of the future. In less dynamic times, such mediations were facilitated by traditional beliefs and authority. In the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, on the other hand, ideologies supplied absolute guidance based on scientistic certainty. Now, without the help of either tradition or ideology, we must think consciously and steadfastly about “the chasm between past and future,” to use Hannah Arendt’s phrase. We must imagine what a desirable and possible future might be, remembering past accomplishments and problems, so that we may plot a sound course of action in the present. To do this, as I have attempted to reveal in these reflections, we must both avoid unfounded euphoria and the promises it suggests, and overcome despair and the resignation it demands. I believe this is both a practical necessity and a realistic strategy.

So what is likely to emerge after the fall of communism? We should first note that it is unlikely to be just one thing, or even to go in just one direction, whether dictatorship or democracy, presidential or parliamentary system, nationalism and fundamentalism or tolerance, economic breakdown or a robust economy, cultural repression or cultural freedom. It follows that we in the West, as well as the citizens of the old bloc, must be open to variations on democratic and not-so-democratic themes and be ready to improvise appropriately on these variations.

In assessing the situations of the previously existing socialist societies, we have observed some geopolitical regularities. The situation of Eastern and Central Europe is different from that of the Soviet Union, and in Eastern and Central Europe, there are important differences between the northern and southern areas. Roughly speaking, in terms of the extremes along a post-totalitarian continuum, democ...
cratic prospects are brightest in the northwestern sector of the old bloc and dimmest in the southeastern zone. Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia have the strongest grounds for hope, while Georgia and Azerbaijan, along with Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania, provide ample grounds for pessimism. Yet things are not so bad in the southeast that the problems cannot be overcome, nor are they so good in the northwest that the new governments cannot fail. Further, because of the growing interdependence of Europe, failure in one place increases the likelihood of failure elsewhere, and success as well may be contagious.

The looming danger facing the newly independent countries of Eastern and Central Europe is still the Soviet Union. Before it was a matter of domination, political infiltration, and military occupation. Now, economic collapse, political disintegration, and military dictatorship are the primary dangers it poses. The problems are immense, and the capacity of the citizenry and leadership to address them is not very great. The Bolshevik experience amounted to seventy-five years of miseducation for the tasks at hand. I believe that the consistency of Gorbachev most adequately reveals this difficulty.

A great deal has been written about the image and identity of Mikhail Gorbachev. No other leader of the Soviet Union has evoked so much admiring attention from the West. He has played a significant if not a key role in bringing the Cold War to an end and provoking the fall of communism in the former satellite countries. But the latter accomplishment, it seems to me, was inadvertent. Gorbachev has steadily asserted his identity as a communist. There is no evidence to suggest that it was ever his intention to oversee either the communist collapse or the dismantling of the Soviet empire. He wanted to restructure (through perestroika) and open (through glasnost) the political and economic orders so as to revitalize them, not destroy them. As a believing communist, Gorbachev seemed to expect reform of the Soviet empire to empower it. As a realist, he was able to accept the loss of Eastern Europe. But as a communist, and perhaps as a Great Russian, he was much more reluctant to accept similar losses within the Soviet boundaries.

Gorbachev’s way of thinking has interfered with his way of acting.
spread widely. And many people among both the leadership and the general population, lacking both long democratic traditions and recent experience with democratic opposition, seek easy solutions—often authoritarian ones. Those who want to be democratic are discovering the complexities of democratic deliberations and decision making. The ineffectiveness of the democrats and the impatience of the authoritarians make a volatile mixture. Added to the tensions and uncertainties of Eastern and Central Europe, this mixture constitutes a prescription for postcommunist despair.

Yet I do not think this response is appropriate to the present situation. Civility may be more infectious than chaos. Those factors which led to the fall of 1989 were, and continue to be, very powerful. The dream of a “normal Europe” may prevail.

I suspect that people will muddle their way along the path to democracy in the nations of Central Europe. The tensions of nationalism, economic weakness, emerging class conflicts, and problems of political constitution and leadership will not be definitively resolved in an unambiguously democratic or authoritarian direction. But I think the general situation will eventually be a democratic one, even if less than ideal.

From the point of view of principled secularism, for instance, the role of the church in Polish political affairs will seem to be much too great. The church will tend to dictate its political positions on abortion and other private issues, and it will do all it can to expand its political influence. Although there are, no doubt, dangers in this tendency, realistically we might note that the church’s role in Poland will probably be more like that of the church in Ireland than like that of the church in France.

In Hungary, it’s likely that nationalist rhetoric will be much more widespread than confirmed cosmopolitans would like. The large Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries will keep the national question very high on the political agenda. But if we recognize that German democracy can withstand this sort of concern, and I believe that the postwar experience clearly indicates it can, there is no reason that Hungary can’t withstand it as well.

The problems in Czechoslovakia seem to me much more serious.

Slovak nationalism does threaten the integrity of the multinational state. But how different is this situation from Canada’s? In both cases, the odds, in my judgment, are in favor of a liberal democracy.

To be sure, the Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, and Poles, along with their other Eastern and Central European neighbors, find themselves in a much more vulnerable situation than do the Canadians (French and English), the Germans, and the Irish. Politically constituting a democratic order is much more difficult than politically acting within already established democratic institutions. For this reason, I believe, the accomplishments of civil society, and the idea of Europe, play such important civilizing roles.

Xenophobia and personal insecurity have become Central European facts of life. Democracy does not automatically deliver the economic, political, and cultural goods, and a market economy does not only promise riches, it also creates unfathomable problems for those who don’t know how to work in it. A natural human response to such a situation is to blame someone other than oneself. We can hear such responses throughout the “other Europe.” Many people in that Europe (which was named “other” by Philip Roth in a series of books highlighting the accomplishments of Central European writers) are now looking for an “other” to blame for their present predicament. For some it is the “reds,” or anyone who collaborated with the former regime. For others it is the Jews, and in the grand tradition of European anti-Semitism, many identify the Jewish reds.

This on the lands of the Holocaust. I have never felt more revolted than when I observed anti-Semitic graffiti in Warsaw, heard anti-Semitic rhetoric in Bratislava, and, in the safety of my home in New York, read reports of neo-Nazi outrages in eastern Germany. Yet it is a great mistake to confuse marginal extremists with emerging political centers of gravity. Of course in times of uncertainty extremists have to be watched, but the mere existence of extremism does not define the political situation. Adam Michnik made this point graphically in a speech accepting the Shofar Award of the Central Synagogue of Manhattan in the spring of 1991. “Anti-Semitic pathology doesn’t define Poland, just as Le Pen doesn’t define France, the John Birch Society doesn’t define America, the Black Hundreds don’t define Russia, and extreme Israeli chauvinism doesn’t define the State of Israel.”
But how will Central Europe be centered? How can the citizens of the region act in a way to assure that the extremes will stay at the margins? I've argued here that the ideal of Europe and the practice of civil society are essential, and that this practice has broad theoretical and political significance that goes beyond the European continent in an age when ideology should end.

In the late seventies and early eighties, developments in Poland captured the world’s attention. Poland was viewed by confirmed conservative and liberal anticommunists as a valiant David up against the Soviet Goliath. But for me, and for some others in the Western democratic left, something even more exciting seemed to be involved. In the politics of Solidarity, we saw more than an interesting variant on the grand geopolitical drama of the Cold War. We saw a significant alternative to Cold War politics.

Solidarity demonstrated that one could be democratic, and even of the left, and reject communism without denying its connection to the socialist tradition. Polish anti-ideological rhetoric, along with a radical commitment to self-determination on the part of ordinary people, suggested a way to seek alternatives to Western social and political practices without succumbing to the recurrent political pathologies of the Western left. The Poles didn’t outline a new utopian vision, nor did they find it necessary to choose capitalism over socialism or vice versa. Instead, they struggled to take control over their lives as much as possible; they fought to establish a zone of social autonomy, requiring the party-state apparatus to recognize it and negotiate with it.

During this time, Lech Wałęsa became an international celebrity. His wit and irony had great appeal. When he stubbornly insisted on his apolitical orientation, his recognition of the Party as Poland’s leading social force, and his simple identity as a trade union leader, he seemed to have his tongue firmly in his cheek and at the same time to be deeply serious. His game appeared to be one of remarkable cunning. The communist bureaucracy had finally met its match.

Yet I perceived a greater political significance. The Solidarity strategy of a “self-limiting revolution” was more than a subtle instrument for the ultimate political end of overthrowing communist oppression. The strategy was a significant end in itself. Like other subjects of communist orders, the Poles were tired of having their lives defined for them. They wanted to take control of their own fates. They realized that no one else could take care of them if they didn’t act for themselves. They understood that their economic well-being was connected to their political freedom. They came to appreciate what Hannah Arendt called “the lost treasure of the revolutionary tradition.” The Poles came together, formed a public, spoke their minds, and acted in concert. That was what it meant to act “as if” they lived in a free society. And for people outside the communist bloc, it had a lot to recommend it.

In all her writings, but especially in On Revolution, her study of the French and American revolutions, Hannah Arendt defined political freedom with reference to people constituting and marking out an arena in which they could come together in their plurality and speak and act in the presence of others. The experience of such an activity, she said, brings public, as distinct from private, happiness. Arendt recognized this experience in fleeting moments of revolutionary periods: in the American committees of correspondence and town meetings; in the French political clubs; and in the Russian soviets of 1905 and 1917 (but not in Bolshevik party practices). In each case, however, a lack of appreciation for free politics led to its disappearance. In one of the postscripts to The Origins of Totalitarianism, Arendt pointed out the same experience in the Hungarian workers’ councils of 1956. As a political theorist, she made it her life’s project to name this experience of public freedom so that it could be remembered and supported, so that freedom could be achieved not through a grand design but through remembrance of and appreciation of human accomplishment.

The Polish events of 1980–1981, it seemed to me, called for such Arendtian appreciation. I started working on it in On Cultural Freedom, and continued in Beyond Glamost. In both studies, I grounded my arguments on the belief that the Polish events and subsequent Central European developments spoke to our situation in the West as well as to those in the East; not simply because of their potential for changing the sociopolitical balance, but because of the profound significance of public freedom.

Now these ruminations must be viewed in a somewhat different light. I have argued here that a central cause of the fall of communism
was the struggle to achieve public freedom in a besieged civil society. Further, I have maintained that overcoming the tensions and dilemmas of the postcommunist period requires a robust civil order, one that does not succumb to either the rationales of statism or the magical promises of the market. I made these judgments with the full awareness that they moved against the grain of ideological common sense. Now I feel that such a move is absolutely necessary.

But a problem emerges. My Central European colleagues, in their anti-ideological commitments, are appropriately skeptical of utopian dreams and social and political experiments. They have lived an experimental rather than a normal social existence. Now they seek normality. They want to be realistic, to turn away from attractively packaged political slogans and toward political realism: for them, no “socialism with a human face,” Marxist humanism, or so-called “third ways.” Politics and the economy, then, have become operationally defined: presidential or parliamentary democracy; laissez-faire liberalism or welfare-state capitalism. This approach is certainly understandable, and even wise, but some things are being overlooked: the social and cultural bases of the normal political and economic operations; the institutions of civil society.

The voluntary associations of civil society led Alexis de Tocqueville to believe in the early nineteenth century that Americans could overcome the special problems of democratic politics, and it was this same sector in the late twentieth century that played a significant role in the downfall of communism. But there is a danger that by ignoring this sector after the revolutions of 1989, we will witness another instance of “the lost revolutionary tradition.” The Central European capacity to constitute a sound new political and economic order could then be significantly undermined.

The civility of civil society is intimately connected with democratic renewal. While this has always been the case, the extreme incivility of communist practices makes the issue today much more pressing. Ironically, its distortion in Central Europe during the communist period once more revealed to the world the importance of civil society. The revelation of that truth is one thing I found so appealing in the Gdansk shipyard. But the imaginative appeal of struggling for civil and independent society, an appeal that can be used to criticize actually existing liberal democracies as well as previously existing socialist societies, can seem impractical, even utopian. There is a real danger that emerging civil societies can be overwhelmed by rationales of state and market. This is the institutional and cultural context in which political debate occurs after the fall.

Central political questions arise. Does it make sense to contrast capitalism with socialism? What’s left? What’s right? Has there been a new end to ideology? Do we live in a new world order? The first four questions I posed at the beginning of these reflections, and tried to address in a variety of ways by considering the specific problems facing the new democracies. And while I was composing my questions and proposing answers, George Bush raised the fifth question in justifying American policy in the Persian Gulf, the first major international crisis after the breakdown of the bipolar geopolitical world. His question is obviously related to my inquiry.

I do not feel adequately qualified to judge the merits or demerits of the Persian Gulf war, and I don’t intend to try here. Yet there is a long-term significance in the justifications of and reactions to the war that pertains directly to our inquiry. My initial reaction to the developing conflict tended to be more like that of my Eastern and Central European colleagues than like that of my compatriots on the American left: Saddam Hussein was a totalitarian dictator, and I couldn’t oppose a war against him. Yet when Bush started talking about a new world order, I became very uncomfortable, again drawing on my Central European sensibilities. Not only did I recall the fact that the phrase “the new world order” was first popularized by Hitler, but I noticed that from the lips of Bush, too, it had a totalitarian ring. For my taste it was a bit too grand and vague, was more connected to military might than to reason. It was unclear to me whether the so-called new world order meant anything more than American geopolitical hegemony. Further, it was a logical conclusion drawn from what seemed to me to be a misunderstanding of the implications of the end of the Cold War.

The meaning of the Cold War’s end for Bush, and other American celebrants, was clear and simple. The West won. The new world order, then, in view of the United States’ preeminent military power, meant American dominance. But this view didn’t take into account the way the anticommunist struggle undermined the foundations of our own
Cold War ideologies had. When human rights and democratic principles served ideological purposes, as they did when Bush was putting together the international coalition or while the war was under way, they were recognized. But without such purposes, people who continue to adhere to them are conveniently labeled "unrealistic" by those with Manichaean minds. Events both before and after the fall in Central Europe suggest that this position is incredibly ignorant politically.

Remember, totalitarian power was brought down by so-called impractical idealists who proved to be the genuine realists; people who were willing to act as if they lived in a free society, and often suffered the consequences—because in fact they didn't. But by living according to their ideals, they turned ideal into reality. My great hope is that they and we don't lose sight of the lessons of their actions. They should continue to move against ideology—not lose sight of the political principles that brought down the empire but instead develop those principles.

It will be hard to develop those principles. Problems of political constitution and leadership, nationalism, religious intolerance, and emerging class conflicts overshadow the commitment to civil society. It is here that the idea of Europe takes on its great importance—Europe not as a specific set of national characteristics or as the home of imperialism, world wars, totalitarianism, the Holocaust, and the gulag, but the Europe of democratic ideals, political tolerance, cultural accomplishment, and economic exchange. The attractiveness of Europe, and the popularity of the slogan "going back to Europe," gives me reason to hope.

Viewed from the larger political stage, the ideal of Europe raises some anxieties. To the Third World, Eurocentrism presents real and present dangers. In an international economy of limited resources, proposed Marshall Plans for Central Europe seem to be indifferent to the much more pressing poverty and human suffering of Africa, Asia, and Central and South America. Why is there increased debt relief for Poland and not for Zambia? Why is food aid being sent to the Soviet Union, where there is no starvation, while people in Somalia go hungry? When one tries to answer these questions, the idea of Europe may seem to lose its luster.

But the Europe of the Rights of Man, of democracy, of the ideals
coming out of the liberal, conservative, and indeed socialist traditions, is not really confined to one particular corner of the world. The Czech political journalist Jan Urban, as we observed, argued that these special European ideals emerged in opposition to the parochialism of specific European locations, and this opposition suggests that the notion of Europe in Europe has counterparts elsewhere. Thus in the United States a renewed appreciation of our national political culture, as it is enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the experience of making the Constitution, has played a recurrent role in political reform and renewal—most spectacularly during the postwar period in the civil rights movement.

As I have argued here, distinctive American political experiences also speak directly to those trying to constitute the new democracies in Europe. And both European and American democratic experiences are resources that can be used far beyond the North American and European orbits. Thus, with regard to Iraq, a dissident émigré maintains with considerable cogency that the coalition’s military might was ultimately directed not against the totalitarian leader and his regime but against the Iraqi people. American bombing destroyed the country’s infrastructure, and the ground forces killed tens if not hundreds of thousands of ill-fed and demoralized troops; but the dictatorship was allowed to continue. Most telling, from the point of view of this inquiry, is that Samir al-Khalil strongly argues for the possibility of pluralistic democracy in Iraq. He points to traditions of more benign rule in the recent Iraqi past, and, most significantly, to the fact that the ideal of tolerance in Europe emerged after a century of religious wars. He properly considers liberal and pluralistic ideals not as the possession of a certain group of people in a certain place and time, but as a practical basis for a modern civilized social order.

The tragedy of the first international conflict after the Cold War is that those who fought in the name of civilized liberal ideals betrayed those ideals even before the battle was over. I am reminded of very sad European facts: the railroad tracks and trains leading to Auschwitz, which went untouched by Allied bombs in World War II; the Warsaw uprising, which went unaided by Allied forces; the Yalta agreements, which sealed the fate of postwar Europe, leaving the continent to exist half free and half enslaved.

But to speak of tragedy in our historical moment is to leave out a crucial part of the story. In recent years, throughout the world, principled commitments to liberal democratic practices have been gaining even broader appeal. To be sure, with the virtual disappearance of communism, some of the most desperate have turned to one form of ideological fundamentalism or other—witness Saddam Hussein’s Pan-Arabist appeal in 1991. Yet, just as striking as the Arabist example, and much more promising, is the turn of former radical critics toward democratic practice around the world. In Nicaragua, Argentina, and Kenya, as well as China and Cuba, critical intellectuals and ordinary people have been coming to realize that democratic institutions and practices are primary, significant ends in themselves, aside from immediate economic interests and political dreams. Even more: democratic institutions and practices are preconditions for the fulfillment of such individual interests and dreams.

The dawning of this realization points to the end of ideology, and it constitutes a challenge to both the left and the right. Earlier in this century, the political aspirations of the ideological and totalitarian left and right were not directed toward parliamentary institutions at all; they were directed against them. But now, in situations like those of Eastern and Central Europe, there is a general awareness that political aspirations must be articulated through such institutions, if we are to avoid the horrors of the recent past.

Such an awareness has led people in Central European democratic oppositions to deny the saliency of left-right distinctions. For people like Adam Michnik and Václav Havel, commitment to a free public domain has taken precedence over the specific orientations and traditions of the left and the right. Yet, at this point, the relevance of Kostek Gebert’s joke should be clear. Before the fall of communism, it may have been the case in Central Europe—as Gebert’s joke goes—that the difference between left and right was revealed by the leftists’ insistence that there was no difference, while the rightists maintained that there was. After the fall, the differences are again appearing, not only in general, but with reference to the specific, pressing problems of the new democracies.

As we have seen, those who draw on the wisdoms of the right address the problems of politics, leadership, nation, religion, and the
economy, with special concern for order and community, tradition and belief. Those who draw on the ideals of the left focus more on change and rights, equality and reason. Even socialist ideals of egalitarianism and social justice have pressing salience now. But people are aware of the need to make a strong distinction between ideological socialism and its egalitarian ethos; between system-defining orientations backed by the coercive power of the state and socialism (at least in the socialist ideal) as it can be pursued within a modern economy.

Socialism is simply not the answer to all social ills. But neither are capitalism or nationalism. If one thinks in such ideological terms, today, after the fall of communism, euphoria and despair become inevitable. On the other democratic hand, between euphoria and despair lies the possibility for the deliberative resolution of complex human problems animated by principled ideals in a civil society. This is the less than utopian basis for a new civilized social order. Ideologies have promised much more, but have given us much less.

We should, therefore, appreciate what has happened in Eastern and Central Europe, and not be overwhelmed by the problems faced by Eastern and Central Europeans. These problems are very real, but they can be addressed. We should not substitute new ideological global visions (like “a new world order”) for the old visions of communism or myopic anticommunism.

History has not yet ended. But modern totalitarian ideologies may have come to an end—appropriately, on the European killing grounds. If we act wisely, and support the constitution of democratic politics, we may yet close the book on the horrors of the twentieth century.

In writing this book as a theoretical reflection upon the revolutionary developments coming after the fall of communism, I have drawn mostly upon what I saw and heard in the capitals of Eastern and Central Europe in 1990 and 1991. Interviews and participant observation provided my primary empirical sources. Yet, I did not go to Europe with a blank slate. I have been thinking, researching, and writing about the region for the past two decades. My books, *The Persistence of Freedom: The Sociological Implications of Polish Student Theater* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), *On Cultural Freedom: An Exploration of Public Life in Poland and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), and *Beyond Glasnost: The Post-Totalitarian Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), elaborate my developing position on the politics and culture of the region before the revolutionary changes of 1989 and also provide more systematic overviews of the scholarly literature on Soviet bloc affairs.
REINVENTING POLITICS

Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel

Vladimir Tismaneanu
When Haraszti wrote his book in the early 1980s, Hungary appeared the most advanced country in the Soviet bloc in terms of domestic liberalization. Compared with Romania, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia, dissidents were treated with kid gloves, although the state machine not spare efforts to thwart their efforts to get out of the political no and establish contacts with the larger society. The undergroundes were systematically ransacked by the police, dissidents were interrogated and even beaten up. The regime avoided, however, massive crackdowns. As the economic situation deteriorated and the changes in the USSR spurred higher political expectations, Kadar's Hungary ceased to be "the most joyful barrack in the socialist camp." Its youth radicalized, and the democratic opposition became a national force. Far from being assigned to eternal marginality, dissidents, Ha included, became the architects of the transition to postcommunism. Actually, in the postscript to his book, written in 1987, Haraszti noted that the changes introduced by Gorbachev in the functioning of the Soviet system and the new wave of de-Stalinization made some of his doomy predictions invalid. But, at the same time, he insisted that perestroika represented an adoption by the Soviet elite of the same techniques that had ensured the partial success of the "velvet prison" experiment undertaken by Hungary under Kadar.

I have called this model the "post-Stalinist" or "soft" or "civilian" version of Communist rule, in contradistinction to the "Stalinist" or "hard" or "military" style. Indeed, the Hungarian model might well represent a more rational, more normative, and more enduring version of directed culture. Mr. Gorbachev understands that in order to have a truly successful society with a modern economy he must boost the intelligentsia's sagging morale by giving it a stake in administering the future.

The Ethos of Civil Society

Antipolitics strives to put politics in its place and make sure that it stays there, never overstepping its proper office of defending and refining the rules of the game of civil society. Antipolitics is the ethos of civil society, and civil society is the antithesis of military society.

—György Konrad

The development of civil societies in the states of the Soviet bloc cannot be separated from the existence of autonomous centers of independent thought. Living within the truth, although often seen as a gesture of moral idealism with little social significance, has turned out to be the driving force behind the creation of alternative ways of thinking and acting. It is thus clear that the foundation stone of the countersociety is the individual's decision to proclaim his or her mental independence. In Havel's words: "What is this independent life of society? The spectrum of its expressions and activities is naturally very wide. It includes everything from self-education and thinking about the world, through free creative activity and its communication to others, to the most varied free, civic initiatives, including instances of independent social self-organization." The new politics, which relies on informal citizens' initiatives as an antidote to the paralyzing pressure of the bureaucratic Leviathan, which encourages the emergence of multifaceted experiments in grassroots activism, and which maintains that change comes from spontaneous move-
ments from below rather than from munificent concessions from above, resulted in the development of civil societies in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.

Initially, it seemed that there was no reason to believe that the governing colossus could be removed or forced to change, but as the situation evolved and more people embarked on such independent initiatives, it appeared that society had become a legitimate actor on the political stage. To the surprise of the communist bureaucrats, societies had found their spokesmen in precisely those long-harassed dissidents who had turned down the system's offer to cooperate. Because the whole strategy of the civil society is rooted in the belief that only the restoration of the independent life of society can guarantee the peaceful transition to a democratic order, such a strategy goes beyond the simplistic pragmatism of those who advocate the supremacy of traditional politics.

There are times when we must sink to the bottom of our misery to understand truth, just as we must descend to the bottom of a well to see the stars in broad daylight. It seems to me that today, this "provisional," "minimal," and "negative" programme—the "simple" defense of people—is in a particular sense (and not only in the circumstances in which we live) an optimal and most positive programme because it forces politics to return to its only proper starting point, proper that is, if all the old mistakes are to be avoided: individual people.

In countries like Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and even the more repressive GDR, dissident nuclei started as tiny communities of like-minded individuals. They included people who resented and decided to resist the system's encroachment on a citizen's inner life and protest any form of infringement on the universally recognized human rights. In Havel's words:

In the "dissident movements" of the Soviet bloc, the defense of human beings usually takes the form of a defense of human and civil rights as they are entrenched in various official documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, and the constitutions of individual states. These movements set out to defend anyone who is being prosecuted for acting in the spirit of those rights, and they in turn act in the same spirit in their work, by insisting over and over again that the regime recognize and respect human and civil rights, and by drawing attention to the areas of life where this is not the case.

The dissident movements made a clear point of their opposition to violence. They realized that the reconstruction of the independent life could not take place in the name of resentment and revenge, but precisely by emphasizing the values of human solidarity the system held in deep contempt. As Adam Michnik pointed out in an essay he wrote while in jail in 1982: "The essence of the programs put forward by the opposition groups . . . lay in the attempt to reconstruct society, to restore social bonds outside official institutions." The ethos of the dissident movements rejected the cult of violence as counterproductive and morally incompatible with the idealistic goals of those initiatives from below.

While the system contained violence in its own structure and in all its modalities of functioning, the opposition argued that its own moral superiority stemmed precisely from its refusal to share the same exclusive, militaristic logic with the rulers. Michnik luminously explained this concept in an essay he wrote in the Gdansk prison in 1985:

People who claim that the use of force in the struggle for freedom is necessary must first prove that, in a given situation, it will be effective, and that force, when it is used, will not transform the idea of liberty into its opposite. No one in Poland is able to prove today that violence will help us to dislodge Soviet troops from Poland and to remove the communists from power. The USSR has such enormous military power that confrontation is simply unthinkable. In other words: we have no guns. . . . In our reasoning, pragmatism is inseparably intertwined with idealism. Taught by history, we suspect that by using force to storm the existing Bastilles we shall unwittingly build new ones. It is true that social change is almost always accompanied by force. But it is not true that social change is merely a result of the violent collision of various forces. Above all, social changes follow from a confrontation of different moralities and visions of social order. Before the violence of rulers clashes with the violence of their subjects, values and systems of ethics clash inside human minds.

The civil society is strategically opposed to any dictatorial temptations. It is suspicious of those who claim to have ultimate answers to all human dilemmas and regards traditional ideological distinctions between right and left as irrelevant under the existing circumstances. Rereading Michnik's statement on this issue, especially in the light of post-1989 developments in Eastern Europe, one sees that the idealist ardor of the dissident movements included more than a grain of wishful thinking.

Totalitarian dictatorship suspended rather than annulled ideological divisions. Liberals and conservatives, secular humanists and radical nationalists had to freeze their disagreements because they had a common
enemy in the communist regime. That did not mean they had abandoned their creeds. But in 1985, when the system seemed more determined than ever to cling to its power, Michnik's thesis sounded quite convincing:

I think that in Poland the conflict between the right and the left belongs to the past. It used to divide a society that was torn by struggles for bourgeois freedoms, universal voting rights, land reform, secularization, the eight-hour workday, welfare, universal schooling, or the democratization of culture. A different distinction comes to the fore in the era of totalitarian dictatorships: one between the proponents of an open society and the proponents of a closed society. In the former, social order is based on self-government and collective agreements; in the latter, order is achieved through repression and discipline.

Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia symbolized that attempt to overcome ideological segregation through a new approach rooted in the consideration of human rights as the most important foundation of a free society. In its founding document, the Chartisters declared that the responsibility for preserving civil rights rests not only with the governments but also "with each and every individual." Precisely because they believed in the sharing of responsibility, the Charterists constituted themselves into an open association whose commitment to the defense of human rights transcended any ideological, religious, or political differences among the signatories:

"Charter 77 is a free, informal, and open community in which various convictions, religions, and professions coexist. Its members are linked by the desire to work individually and collectively for human and civil rights in Czechoslovakia and the whole world. These rights are guaranteed by the final agreements of the 1975 Helsinki Conference and other international treaties against war, violence, and repression. Thus Charter 77 is based on the solidarity and friendship of all people who share a concern for certain ideals."

The Charter's deliberate loose structure indicated the antihierarchal and anti-authoritarian orientation of the group. The founding document insisted that Charter was not an organization: "It has no statutes, permanent organs, or registered membership. Everyone who agrees with its ideas and works to realize them belongs to it."

Charter made clear that it did not constitute itself as an alternative to the existing power, as a political party interested in power and the pursuit of its own strategies. The denial of its political character was, of course, linked to the regime's obsession with any form of criticism. In the conditions of "normalized socialism" in Czechoslovakia, any form of independent political activism could be labeled "subversive" and could land its practitioners in jail. At the same time, the statement indicated Charter's broader understanding of the realm of politics as the sphere where citizens work together in the construction of the public good. It was a way of announcing to the rulers that, while the new movement would not interfere with the vitiated, deformed area of official politics, it would do its best to restore the dignity of autonomous initiatives. This statement is therefore emblematic for the philosophy of antipolitics, which should not be confused with escapism but should rather be understood as a reassertion of civic rights and a form of resistance to the degradation of politics in the post-totalitarian state:

"Charter 77 does not constitute an organized political opposition. It only supports the common good, as do many similar organizations that promote civic initiative in both the East and the West. It has no intention of outlining specific and radical programs for political and social reform but tries instead to initiate a constructive dialogue with political and state authorities, particularly by drawing attention to specific violations of civil and human rights—by documenting them, suggesting solutions, submitting general proposals to ensure that these rights are respected in the future, and acting as a mediator in disputes between citizens and the state."

Like the KOR or the Hungarian samizdat opposition, Charter 77 viewed violent opposition to the communist regime as a political dead end. Those movements considered that, hypocritical as they certainly were, the legal systems of the post-totalitarian regimes had to be exploited to further the cause of human rights. The civil society reemerged by using the loopholes in the system's structure by challenging the rulers to abide by their own promises and pledges. In the struggle new forms of association and new types of communities emerge, including the independent peace and ecological groups, the underground publishing houses, the flying universities, and all other expressions of what the Czechoslovak human rights activist called the "second culture." That those attempts met the repressive response of the system was not surprising. At the same time, those engaged in such activities knew that their efforts would not have any social meaning unless the parallel structures communicated, penetrated, and influenced the "official" ones. Havel warned against any elitism on the part of the emerging informal communities:

"It would be quite wrong to understand the parallel structures and the parallel polis as a retreat into a ghetto and as an act of isolation, addressing..."
itself only to the welfare of those who had decided on such a course, and who are indifferent to the rest. . . . Even the most highly mature form of the parallel polis can only exist—at least in post-totalitarian circumstances—when the individual is at the same time lodged in the “first,” official structure by a thousand different relationships, even though it may only be the fact that one buys what one needs in their stores, uses their money and obeys their laws. 10

The dissident, by the very fact that he or she challenged the prevailing universe of norms, habits, taboos, and prejudices, proposed a sense of human identity rooted in the notion of responsibility. If the system aimed to convince the individual that the existing reality was the only possible one, the new movements argued that there was nothing absolutely foreordained in human destiny, and that no mechanical determinism could compel the individual to accept the status quo slavishly. In one of the letters he sent from prison to his wife Olga, Vaclav Havel wrote:

The problem of human identity remains at the center of my thinking about human affairs. If I use the word “identity,” it is not because I believe it explains anything about the secret of human existence; I began using it when I was developing my plays, or thinking about them later, because it helped me clarify the ramifications of the theme that most attracted me: “the crisis of human identity.” All my plays in fact are variations on this theme, the disintegration of one’s oneness with himself and the loss of everything that gives human existence a meaningful order, continuity, and its unique solution. At the same time . . . the importance of the notion of human responsibility has grown in my meditations. It has begun to appear, with increasing clarity, as the fundamental point from which all identity grows and by which it stands or falls; it is the foundation, the root, the center of gravity, the constructional principle or axis of identity, something like the “idea” that determines its degree and type. It is the mortar binding it together, and when the mortar dries out, identity too begins irreversibly to crumble and fall apart.

From this rediscovery of the relationship between the integrity of personality and the ethos of civic duty, Havel could draw the following memorable conclusion: The “secret of man is the secret of his responsibility.” 11

Likewise, the new movements were exactly the opposite of the official vision of politics: While the communist elites were exclusive and intolerant, the civil society championed openness, dialogue, and tolerance. In 1986, responding to questions sent to him by the exiled Czech journalist Karel Hvizdala, Havel offered extensive answers pondering the meaning of his artistic and political experiences. The result of that exchange was a fascinating memoir, a book that shed revealing light on the significance of dissent as the first step in the reconstruction of a public sphere based on trust and solidarity. Referring to the deliberately nonideological nature of Charter 77, Havel wrote:

Perhaps I should say something more about plurality within the Charter. It was not easy for everyone—many had to suppress or overcome their ancient inner aversions—but everyone was able to do it, because we all felt that it was in a common cause, and because something had taken shape here that was historically quite new: the embryo of a genuine social tolerance (and not simply an agreement among some to exclude others, as was the case with the National Front government after the Second World War), a phenomenon which—no matter how the Charter turned out—would be impossible to wipe out the national memory. It would remain in that memory as a challenge that, at any time and in any new situation, could be responded to and drawn on. 12

The role of the new movements is to convince the average citizen, the greengrocers who support the system in an inertial way because they cannot envision any alternative to it, that change is indeed possible even under such abysmal conditions as those of the post-totalitarian state.

That hope should not be abandoned is the message conveyed by all people engaged in the rebuilding of civil societies in Eastern Europe:

Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but, rather, an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed. The more unpropitious the situation in which we demonstrate hope, the deeper that hope is. Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. In short, I think that the deepest and the most important form of hope, the only one that can keep us above water and urge us to do good works, and the only true source of the breathtaking dimension of the human spirit and its efforts, is something we get, as it were, from “elsewhere.” It is also this hope, above all, which gives us the strength to live and continually to try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now. 13

One should recollect the conditions in Eastern Europe in the first years after Gorbachev’s coming to power, when there were no indications that...
the new Soviet leader could engage in anything but a streamlining of the existing system. Most analysts of Soviet affairs could not predict the dramatic changes in the Soviet concept of intrabloc solidarity. The signals coming from Moscow were generally indicative of the Kremlin's interest in replacing the old East European leaders with new ones, recruited from the same communist elites. The most people could expect in terms of Soviet benevolence was support for communist reformers. People like Adam Michnik in Poland, Janos Kis in Hungary, and Havel in Czechoslovakia admitted that the changes in the Soviet Union and their impact on the local situation in each East European country were critically important. Yet those thinkers refused to pin all their hopes on the good will of an enlightened czar. Changes, if they were to be fundamental, had to go beyond the visible locus of power. Their source had to be in the reawakening of society, in the collective pressure exerted by autonomous groups and movements, including even certain wings within the ruling elite, on the power-holders to get out of the obsolete system and allow social innovation. Responding to those who pinned all their hopes on Gorbachev's intention to modernize the system and allow genuine reforms, Havel insisted that for the changes to be authentic, for them to result in the detotalization of society, society itself had to be involved in their initiation. More clearly, to those who saw the struggle between doves and hawks, or between liberals and conservatives in the communist Politburos as the generator of political pluralism, Havel and other East European thinkers counterposed the vision of the civil society and its slow but uncontainable growth. The good will of the best general secretary cannot replace the system—it can only make it more bearable. For politics to rediscover its emancipatory dimension, for the individual to cease being treated as a means by those who think they have been designated by history to rule and oppress others without any accountability, a resurrection of the society as a mature and conscious partner in the exercise of government was needed:

I leave to those more qualified to decide what can be expected from Gorbachev and, in general, "from above"—that is, from what is happening in the sphere of power. I have never fixed my hopes there; I've always been more interested in what was happening "below," in what could be expected "from below," what could be won there, and what defended. All power is power over someone, and it always somehow responds, usually unwittingly rather than deliberately, to the state of mind and the behavior of those it rules over. One can always find in the behavior of power a reflection of what is going on "below." No one can govern in a vacuum.

Civil society, although encountering the resistance of the entrenched apparatus, fills the vacuum and is the place where this new understanding of politics takes place. For example, in Czechoslovakia, where Husak and Jakes had gone out of their way to erase the memory of the Prague Spring and instill in the population the feeling of complete dereliction, the example of the Charter and civic actions contributed to society's reawakening. Not only dissidents, with their "islands of self-awareness and self-liberation," but also groups and associations that were not directly opposed to the system, the "gray area" between the government and the opposition, expressed the rise of the barely perceptible but extremely significant undercurrent of social activism: "Again and again, we were astonished at all the new things that were going on, the greater risk: people were taking, how much more freely they were behaving, how much greater and less hidden was their hunger for truth, for a truthful word, for genuine values." The myriad unauthorized publications, the formation of rock and jazz groups in defiance of official bans, the mass demonstrations in defense of religious freedoms—events characteristic of the second part of the 1980s—showed the erosion of the post-totalitarian state's capability to contain the increasing pressure from below. When an unofficial group called VONS (Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted) was created, the government labeled it an "antisemitic organization" and arrested its leaders, Havel included. The mushrooming independent activities demonstrated that the pseudo-consensus based on fear and desperation had exhausted its paralyzing power. All those forms of civil disobedience were showing that deep-seated social discontent smoldered underneath the apparent tranquility of the post-totalitarian state:

To outside observers, these changes may seem insignificant. Where are your ten-million-strong trade unions? Why does Husak not negotiate with you? Why is the government not considering your proposals and acting on them? But for someone from here who is not completely indifferent, these are far from insignificant changes; they are the main promise of the future since he has long ago learned not to expect it from anywhere else.

The civil society advanced faster and farther in Hungary and Poland than in countries like the GDR and Czechoslovakia. The case of East Germany, with its bureaucratic police state and rigid orthodoxy, deserves special attention. After all, one can barely understand the collapse of the Honecker regime in the fall of 1989 without reference to the history of democratic dissent and opposition in that country. Formed with Stalin
blessing in October 1949, the German Democratic Republic claimed to be the first German state of the workers and peasants. It was the only European country whose very existence was based on an ideological assumption, namely that a class principle could justify the separation of a nation into two states. In August 1961, to prevent a catastrophic demographic hemorrhage, Honecker's predecessor, the Stalinist hard-liner Walter Ulbricht, decided to erect the Berlin Wall. Following that action, the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) pursued a policy of Abgrenzung (demarcation) to preserve and enhance the differences between the two German states. To foster its legitimacy, the Communist state claimed to inherit the humanist ("progressive") traditions of German culture. The official propaganda insisted that the GDR was committed to the defense of peace, but that self-serving rhetoric failed to convince the people in the GDR. They could see with their own eyes that the regime was actually engaged in a militaristic course. At the same time, the rigid ideological stances favored by the party leaders resulted in continuous and systematic harassment of those critics who tried to offer an alternative to the official line. In their adamant opposition to reforms, the East German leaders were unmatched by any other Warsaw Pact leader, with the exception of Romania’s Nicolae Ceausescu. During his first years in power, after he succeeded Ulbricht in 1973, Erich Honecker seemed to embody a more flexible approach to social and international affairs. He even expressed interest in a dialogue with the party intellectuals, increasingly disaffected with the regime's dogmatism. Later, however, especially after 1980, Honecker rejected any tolerance for the opposition. East Germany party leaders had not forgotten the June 1953 working-class uprising.

To counter the proliferation of reformist-democratic ideas, the regime intensified its commitment to an utterly conservative vision of socialism. When Gorbachev came to power and launched his de-Stalinization campaign, the GDR leaders did not conceal their displeasure with what they perceived as a dangerous "adventurist" course. Ironically, for a country where almost 400,000 Soviet troops were stationed, the government banned certain Soviet publications that were outspokenly advocating the reformation of socialism. Relations between the Soviet and East German leaders grew increasingly sour and tense, especially after the Soviets made clear their intention to renounce the class approach in international relations. The Yakovlev-Shevardnadze doctrine of the preeminence of universal values like peace and human rights in international relations was particularly resented by the seasoned Stalinists within the East German Politburo. For example, speaking at a festive event to mark the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the KPD (Communist Party of Germany) in December 1988, Erich Honecker turned down suggestions to modify SED policies in accordance with the winds of change then blowing from Moscow:

[We] have no reason to copy the practice of this or that fraternal country, apart from the fact that this would be a gross contradiction of the fundamental teachings of Marxism. Peace...is served by our foreign policy, it is served by our military policy, it is served by the education of the younger generation, and it is served by the all-round strengthening of our socialist fatherland.  

In its efforts to insert itself into national life, the regime desperately tried to emphasize the East German national identity. First, it tried to gain popular prestige through the incorporation into the official ideology of certain symbols and ideas associated with important moments in the history of the German nation. Second, it insisted that the GDR represented a major pillar of the world communist system and insisted on the paramount significance of "socialist internationalism." That second argument tended to lose its significance after 1987, when Honecker and his associates looked increasingly askance at Gorbachev's new policies.

For a long time the SED managed to eradicate the shoots of political dissent, but, especially after 1980, it was confronted with growing autonomous, grassroots collective efforts to oppose its militaristic course. Initially apolitical, the East German independent peace movement—definitely the largest and most articulate in what used to be the Soviet bloc—realized that the totalitarian state would not enter into dialogue with the alternative forces. The new groups found a source of support and encouragement among members of the Evangelical Church. Because of its special, suprapolitical status, the church was able to provide the repressed with a more flexible approach to social and international affairs. It even expressed interest in a dialogue with the party intellectuals, increasingly disaffected with the regime's dogmatism. Later, however, especially after 1980, Honecker rejected any tolerance for the opposition. East Germany party leaders had not forgotten the June 1953 working-class uprising.

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gle against the Honecker regime in the fall of 1989. They seemed impervious to messages from below, to the voices of the younger generation, which found the whole ideological edifice of East German socialism a blatant lie. The poet and songwiter Sascha Anderson emigrated to the Federal Republic in August 1986. Born in 1953 into an intellectual family, he was typical of a generation that refused to consider the GDR a “motherland.” Anderson did not nourish any lyrical illusions about the humanist virtues of communism. In that respect, his views differed radically from those held by idealist Marxists like the late physics professor Robert Havemann, a former anti-Nazi resistance fighter who had become increasingly disappointed with the bureaucratic despotism practiced by the SED or even with those spelled out by the nonconformist balladeer Wolf Biermann, who had been expelled by the regime in the late 1970s. Anderson belonged to a deradicalized and totally disenchanted generation of critics. For them, the regime was just a fraud, an opportunity to redirect the political scoundrels to take advantage and exert unlimited power over their humiliated subjects. For Anderson and his peers, trying to improve the system looked like a sheer waste of time, or even an aberration. Their attitude was therefore bluntly and unequivocally system-rejective: “I have never taken an interest in the system...I never had an interest in undermining the system from inside. I did not even want to set myself in accordance with the demands of the system.”

Most of the dissidents, however, questioned not the existing social order but rather the “distortion” of Marxist principles in the SED’s behavior. In that respect the East German opposition was definitely lagging behind similar movements in Poland and Hungary, which had long since abandoned the revisionist hopes of intrasystemic change. The case of Havemann was emblematic. A resolute opponent of police dictatorship, he was convinced that Marxist criticism could decisively affect the politics of the totalitarian system. For Havemann and his supporters in the fledgling democratic opposition, the solution was to reassert the humanist potential of socialism. He identified imagining a communist Utopia based on real equality between citizens as a major task of our times: “There must be no privileged people, classes, or groups of any description, but everybody, every person must have exactly the same opportunities, the same chances, and must be equal with regard to each other.”

The regime reacted in a draconian way to the humanist challenge championed by intellectuals like Havemann. Dissident authors were harassed, prevented from publishing their books, kept under permanent police surveillance, and often forced to emigrate.

In those circumstances, a new opposition strategy had to be devised to take advantage of those areas not entirely permeated with the dominant ideas and values. A reconstruction of the critical discourse was required, and also a rethinking of the possibilities for autonomous social movements in a strongly authoritarian context. The only solution for those who wished to do something inside the GDR appeared to be to go beyond the merely intellectual opposition, altruistic and heroic but fatally marginal and isolated as it was, and address urgent public issues in accordance with public aspirations, expectations, and needs. In the view of East German critical intellectuals, vital issues included the state’s manipulation of the notion of peace and its blatant indifference to environmental degradation. In January 1982 Robert Havemann endorsed the “Berlin Appeal,” a document that marked the birth of the unofficial East German peace movement. The statement, whose main author was Reiner Eppelmann, an East Berlin Lutheran minister involved in youth work, was eventually signed by more than two thousand people. The main objective of the “Berlin Appeal” was to challenge the regime’s militaristic propaganda. A slogan frequently reproduced on official East German posters read: “The stronger the socialism, the more secure the peace.” To this, the signatories of the “Berlin Appeal” replied: “We propose holding a great debate on the questions of peace, in an atmosphere of tolerance and recognition of the right of free speech, and to permit and encourage every spontaneous public expression of the desire for peace.” The authors suggested a broad range of topics to be discussed in such a dialogue. Denying the moral validity of the militaristic course, they asked:

(a) Oughtn’t we to stop producing, selling, and importing so-called war toys?
(b) Oughtn’t we to introduce peace studies in our schools in place of military instruction?
(c) Oughtn’t we to allow social work for peace instead of the present alternative service for conscientious objectors?
(d) Oughtn’t we to stop all public displays of military might and instead use our ceremonies of state to give expression to the nation’s desire for peace?
(e) Oughtn’t we to stop the so-called civil-defense exercises? As no worthwhile civil defense is possible in nuclear war, these exercises merely make nuclear war seem more serious. Does it not perhaps amount to a kind of psychological preparation for war?

Apparently the GDR was a state immune to profound challenges from below: The morale of the population was not very high. To be
sured, but there was more dissatisfaction among the students and intellectuals than among the workers. The latter were not inclined toward labor unrest and preferred to accept the government’s offer of better living standards in exchange for social peace. On the other hand, as events were to show during 1989 and 1990, there was very little knowledge among GDR citizens of the extent of corruption among the ruling elite. Whatever people may have thought about such leaders as the party General Secretary Erich Honecker, the trade union chief Harry Tisch, and the security police boss Erich Mielke, no one would have suspected that the Spartan-looking, austerity-preaching East German communists, many of whom were survivors of Hitler’s jails and concentration camps, did not differ in their taste for luxury cars, sumptuous hunting lodges, and swimming pools from the Soviet leadership under Brezhnev. In the early 1980s those who dared to criticize the SED for its lack of concern for the real citizens were few and quite isolated. Had it not been for church support, they could have been more easily disband ed, and the movement could have been thwarted. The church’s support, however, was motivated by the widespread conviction that unless a social movement from below emerged to express the concerns and expectations of large strata of the population, there would be spontaneous eruptions of violence and rage. The church and the peace movement shared worries about the brutal interference of the state in private affairs. For young East German pacifists, the idea of turning “Swords into Plowshares” (Schwerter zu Pflugscharen) was more than a prophetic metaphor. It was the symbol of their decision to rebel against militarism, censorship, ideological manipulation, and police repression. It was the only way to resist the system’s attempt to integrate and deflect any form of idealistic behavior. The independent peace movement in the GDR was first and foremost an effect of the all-pervading moral crisis that affected large strata of East German youth, who were looking for stable values and were acutely dissatisfied with the government’s revolutionary demagogy.

The political changes in the Soviet Union and other East European countries after Gorbachev’s coming to power in 1985 further radicalized the independent peace and human rights activists in the GDR. Instead of deterring the pacifists, the official repression convinced them that a broader agenda was needed. Early in 1985 they decided to address the relation between peace and human rights in a systematic way. A group of leading activists, including such veterans of the unofficial peace movements as Reiner Eppelmann, Ralf Hirsch, and Wolfgang Templin, launched a human rights initiative. More than three hundred people signed a letter addressed to Honecker calling for the full implementation of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The letter called for the demilitarization of public life and the creation of an alternative civil service for conscientious objectors. It also condemned travel restrictions and demanded freedom of expression and the abolition of censorship. The government preferred to feign ignorance of the memorandum. In July 1985 a new appeal sent to the official youth organization declared a leading objective of the independent peace movement to be the revival of the civil society. Peaceful assembly and the founding of initiatives, organizations, associations, clubs and political parties, it stated, should not be dependent on political parties. The unrestricted work of independent groups would protect society from “petrifying in an inflexible administrative order that inhibits creativity among its citizens.” In this formulation, one recognizes the philosophy of the new evolutionism that inspired the struggles of the Polish opposition and became the common ideology of the democratic activists in East-Central Europe. At the same time, insistence on the organic relationship between peace and human rights was also part of the moral and intellectual treasury of the antitotalitarian movements that had developed in other Soviet-bloc countries. In this regard, mention should be made of Vaclav Havel’s celebrated essay “An Anatomy of Reticence,” written in April 1985. The Czech dissident discussed the principal disagreements between East European human rights activists and the representatives of the antinuclear movements in Western Europe and the United States. According to Havel, the cause of the arms race and wars was not the existence of weapons but their use for expansionist purposes. East Europeans do not deal with peace and human rights as two distinct, separate issues. They know from their own experience that governments that disparage the rights of their citizens cannot be trusted when it comes to their international commitments:

Without free, self-respecting, and autonomous citizens there can be no free and independent nations. Without internal peace, that is peace among citizens and between the citizens and the state, there can be no guarantee of external peace: a state that ignores the will and the rights of its citizens can offer no guarantee that it will respect the will and the rights of other peoples, nations, and states. A state that refuses its citizens their right to public supervision of the exercise of power will not be susceptible to international supervision. A state that denies its citizens their basic rights becomes a danger to its neighbors as well: internal arbitrary rule will be reflected in arbitrary external relations. . . . Unreliability in some areas arouses justifiable fear of unreliability in everything. A state that does not
hesitate to lie to its own people will not hesitate to lie to other states. All of this leads to the conclusion that respect for human rights is the fundamental condition and the sole, genuine guarantee of true peace. Suppressing the natural rights of citizens and peoples does not secure peace—quite the contrary, it endangers it.\textsuperscript{24}

Havel's views were actually a response to muted criticism and misunderstanding prevailing among Western pacifists about the skeptical attitudes of dissidents regarding international antiwar campaigns.

The new philosophy of the inseparability of peace and human rights had a strong impact on the Western antinuclear groups, which became increasingly involved in activities to support the cause of antitotalitarian movements in the Soviet bloc. Havel was right to state:

It has become evident that reflection on the bitter daily experience of the citizen in a totalitarian state always leads quite logically to the same point—a new appreciation of the importance of human rights, human dignity and civic freedom. This is the focus of my remarks, and the focus, with good reason, of all reflections about peace as well. It may be that this understanding of the fundamental preconditions of peace, purchased at a high price and marked by a new vehemence, is the most important contribution that independently thinking people in our part of the world can make to our common awareness today.\textsuperscript{25}

The inextricable connection between peace and human rights became a leitmotif in the appeals of the mounting East German independent peace movement. It became obvious that its most articulate spokespersons had realized the need to transcend the self-limited peace agenda and to tackle the issue of political change. That did not mean the East German pacifists had abandoned their original project, but rather that internal peace could not be attained without a genuine dialogue between the rulers and the citizens of different political persuasions. Political freedoms, particularly the right to free expression and association, had to be legally guaranteed. Emboldened by the changes in the Soviet Union and the new margins of political activism created by the policy of glasnost, East German oppositionists decided to join other East European dissidents and in October 1986 signed a "Joint Declaration from Eastern Europe" commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution. The document, signed by 123 activists from four Soviet-bloc countries—Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Poland—proclaimed the traditions and experiences of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 to be the common heritage and inspiration for their present efforts: "We proclaim our common deter-

The tremendous significance of the joint declaration—a watershed in the development of dissident cross-frontier cooperation—was not missed by the East German authorities. They resorted to threats and abuse against the signatories from their country. The official propagandists clung to the description of the Hungarian Revolution as a "fascist rebellion." But instead of declining, the pacifist and human rights activism continued to gather momentum. In November 1987 the government organized a police raid on the Church of Zion in East Berlin, where Grenzfall (borderline), a bulletin of the unofficial peace and human rights movement, was produced. In January 1988 new reprisals were organized against those who were calling for immediate reforms. Some of the most articulate critics, including the painter Barbel Böhley and the singer Stefan Krawczyk, were expelled, although the former was allowed to return after six months.

During the 1989 upheaval that overthrew the Honecker regime, Böhley emerged as one of the leaders of the New Forum, a political association dedicated to the defense of the civil society in East Germany. With their extremely insensitive and unimaginative treatment of reform-oriented groups, the authorities contributed to the disbandment of any potential force for the preservation of an East German state identity in case of genuine political opening. In a way, it was as if Honecker wanted to make sure that the GDR could not exist without him and his clique of pigheaded Stalinists. Prominent members of the independent peace and human rights movement acknowledged the disconcerting impact of the official assault on their nascent structures. By the end of 1988 most East Germans realized that no changes could be expected to come from the stiff and extremely conservative leadership headed by Erich Honecker. The brutal clampdown on dissent and the lack of prospects for the growth of an organic movement like Solidarity in Poland deepened the sense of political despair, especially among the youth. That explains the lack of popularity, after November 1989, of groups and parties that insisted on the preservation of a separate East German entity. One can say, however, that fragile and incipient as it was, the civil society contributed even in the GDR to the erosion of the pseudo-consensus imposed by authoritarian measures. Based on an ideological fiction, the East German state could not outlive the abandoning of naked physical terror. Once its citizens were allowed to choose between their homes in the GDR, with
the minimal social protection offered by the state, and the opportunity to leave, they massively opted for the second choice. The East German pacifist and human rights groups were the outgrowth of a certain stage in the decomposition of the East German regime. They contributed to the decline of the regime's spurious authority and became the principal mouthpiece for long-muted national and political grievances. Although they had a limited agenda, once the regime started to fall apart those groups enlarged their set of goals and eventually incorporated the calls for national reunification.

FROM CIVIL SOCIETY TO POLITICAL PLURALISM

This chapter cannot conclude without an attempt to define the role of civil society in the self-destruction of communist societies. Civil society emerges during a certain stage of decomposition of the bureaucratic-authoritarian system in all the countries of the Soviet bloc, including the Soviet Union itself. In some countries, because of political traditions and lack of permissiveness on the part of the ruling elites, the growth of the civil society proceeded more slowly than in others. In all these countries, however, the process of social differentiation and the formation of various interest groups have contributed decisively to the creation of a public sphere autonomous or semi-autonomous in its relation to the government. To be sure, the bureaucratic regimes did not welcome those developments and tried to arrest them, but their attempts were doomed to failure. What the historian Moshe Lewin wrote with regard to the Soviet system applies a fortiori to the East European states:

The political façade of monolithic uniformity can no longer be taken seriously by anyone. Complex urban networks shape individuals, filter official views, and create an infinite welter of spontaneities. Baffled, the conservative leaders were left with the choice of trying to control the uncontrollable or disregarding, and thereby mishandling, the spontaneous. Either recourse would inevitably produce great downturns and put the entire state system under crippling pressure. The coalescence of a civil society capable of extracurricular action and opinion making, independent of the wishes of the state, marks the start of a new age, from which there is no turning back.\dagger

Civil society can thus be defined as the ensemble of grassroots, spontaneous, nongovernmental (although not necessarily antigovernmental) ini-
The rise of the civil society cannot be separated from the decline of self-assertion.

Indeed, if the experience of reconstructing the civil society in East European communist states has taught us something, it is that no police state and no ideological universalism can forever annihilate the human need for autonomy and self-assertion.

The rise of the civil society cannot be separated from the decline of the authoritarian-ideological state. Since communist regimes are based on the fallacy of the ruling party's omniscience, once the belief system that underlies them is shattered the regimes enter a stage of deep crisis. They try to adjust their dogmas to reality but refuse to go beyond limited changes in the institutional system. Reforms are half-hearted and inconsistent. The paradigm for such experiments is presented by Khru­shchevism in the Soviet Union, with its most crystallized East European version, Kadarism in Hungary.31 The Hungarian writer Miklos Haraszti, who is now one of the leaders of the Alliance of Free Democrats and a member of Hungary's Parliament, offered an interesting classification of the stages in the evolution of civil society. The first phase coincides with the liberalization of the party-state and the beginning of isolated forms of dissident activities. In that stage the opposition remains inchoate, without an alternative platform to express the society's demands. Haraszti calls this phase post-Stalinist and sees its essential quality in the struggle against fear and the rise of independent initiatives, independent opinion, and social activity free from the party-state.

It is only during the second stage, which Haraszti calls post-totalitarian, that civil society in the full meaning of the term, as a collective effort to reduce the impositions and prerogatives of the authoritarian state, emerges. This phase was analyzed by Havel and Michnik in their writings about the creation of parallel structures and the "new evolutionism." The system has lost its self-confidence; the elites are demoralized, unable to cope with the growing popular dissatisfaction; and the economy is a shambles. The old political model is obviously falling apart, and the search for a new one starts at the level of the autonomous enclaves of social initiative. Ideology, the main underpinning of communist totalitarianism, is nothing but an empty ritual, and the prevailing symbols are not trusted by either rulers or ruled:

Democratization replaces liberalization as the central issue of politics; and while the latter was dictated by the will and the timetable of the party-state, democratization takes place under the pressure of the emerging public opinion. The regime is on the defensive. There is an attempt to put the economy on a pragmatic foundation, and therefore there is a struggle against the old structure even within the establishment. The life of society is characterized by legal and other battles—by conflicts in the areas of democratization of everyday life, individualism, pluralism, the principles of popular representation and minority rights. The fear of our own actions dissipates and large masses acquire the ability to accept conflict openly and also to manifest self-limitation in regard to these conflicts.
The third stage, which Haraszti defines as postcommunist, is marked by the complete breakdown of the party-state and the creation of a multiparty system. At the moment the Hungarian author wrote his essay in 1988, that was still a hypothesis, but one with strong justification in the developments taking place in countries where the civil society had evolved and reached a higher degree of maturity:

Having lost its rationale, the party-state must collapse in its macrostructure. True democracy emerges, which builds on the forms, energies, experiences and pluralization that were already given shape in civil society. It is a secondary issue whether this process takes place along the lines of Juan Carlos's Spain, as an orderly transition, or through smaller or larger revolutionary shocks. It is also immaterial whether this transition occurs in the context of a European reorganization or prior to it in a more hasty manner. What is significant is that without the evolution of civil society in the preceding two phases, this transition cannot be successful.\(^{15}\)

Indeed, in countries like Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, where the civil society had developed to a greater extent, the disintegration of the communist state proceeded in a smoother way than in Bulgaria and Romania, with their periodic flareups of violence even after the elimination of the old-style dictators Zhivkov and Ceausescu at the end of 1989.

For the countries of the “southern tier” the challenge of creating a lawful state based on the accountability of the government and the separation of powers is further aggravated by the relative weakness of political traditions of independent activism during the phase of the civil society. After the December 1989 revolution, Romanians often complained that their country was missing a historic personality like Vaclav Havel to embody national consensus. But the real issue is not the role of exceptional individuals but the absence of a political infrastructure comparable to that erected in Czechoslovakia on the basis of Charter 77. In other words, Romania under Ceausescu experienced not the transition to a post-totalitarian stage, but rather, especially after 1971, the strengthening of party-state controls and the return to a traditional version of totalitarianism, which included and carried to an extreme the cult of the leader and reprisals against any form of criticism and opposition. Romanians did not experience the luxury of Kadarist enlightened authoritarianism or even Jaruzelski’s militaristic regime’s experimentation with economic reforms. The strategy of civil society is predicated on gradualism, nonviolence, and social education through participation in nonregulated activities.

The causes of the East European upheaval and the collapse of the Soviet bloc cannot be reduced to one unique factor. For such a world-historical process to take place a multitude of causes had to interact and create a set of circumstances that made change both urgent and inevitable. One element was the disappearance of the Soviet scarecrow. For many years the clear and present danger of Soviet intervention to quell domestic unrest in the satellite countries was a serious obstacle to the rise of powerful mass movements. The widespread psychology of resignation to what many referred to as the legacy of Yalta—a feeling that the 1945 international arrangement between the superpowers had made any resistance movement in the Soviet bloc a quixotic struggle doomed to inevitable failure—stunted and made fragile the growth of a mass base for opposition movements. The Soviets’ realization that they could no longer dominate the East Europeans by using the obsolete Stalinist forms of intrabloc
Ten Thoughts on the New Europe

Timothy Garton Ash

1. The root cause of the epochal changes in Europe is the decline of the Russian empire. This decline will not stop neatly at the historically arbitrary frontiers of the Soviet Union. As the non-Russian peoples of the empire, the Caucasus, and Central Asia are already telling us, these frontiers only mark the line between external and internal empire. There may be good tactical reasons for Western leaders to be ambiguous in their support for the Baltic republics' declarations of independence at this particular moment; but it would be quite wrong for those leaders to base planning for Europe 2000 on the continued existence of the Soviet Union as a single unit. Morally wrong, but also analytically wrong. If history is any guide, the decline of empires does not stop halfway. Of course, a new, harmonious transitory period of the USSR in a democratic federation, confederation, or merely commonwealth would be preferable to a conflict-ridden, halting, sometimes violent dismantlement. But the latter is most probable.

2. There are many worse alternatives to Mr. Gorbachev in Russian politics. But there are also better alternatives, for example in the new, non-Communist political movements and parties which broadly embrace the principles of liberal democracy, the social market economy, and the rule of law. At the moment, the worse alternatives seem more likely to gain the upper hand than the better. Gorbachev is therefore a lesser evil. But what happened in Eastern Europe in 1989 should be a warning to those who would use our own principles and beliefs in the name of "realism." The impossible happened.

3. At the end of the eighteenth century Immanuel Kant suggested that the only possible development of military technology first allowed what Raymond Aron called the "eternal rivalry of states" to wreak untold carnage "in the century of internal machines." But its further development then put a matchless check to that rivalry. Since 1945 we have had wars outside Europe between, or against, states that do not possess credible deterrents. We have had military invasions in Europe of states that did not possess such deterrents-Hungary in 1956, for example-but the deterrent (whatever its precise size and shape) in the other. The former, for a vision of how people, and therefore states, can be good. The latter for when they are bad. The main present incar- nation of that latter principle happens to be called NATO. If one were starting from scratch, one might not call it NATO. One might, for example, call it DETO (Democ- rateic Europe Treaty Organization). One might also think that large, wealthy democracies should join this DETO. But for that, a deep political transformation inside Russia (and therefore also in its relations to the other peoples of the Soviet Union) is a sine qua non—and one that, at best, will take many years to achieve.

7. If, for European security, the starting point is NATO but the goal DETO, ties for the political and economic relations of the European democracies old and new, the starting point is the European Community, although the goal is also something larger. The EC as it stands is the worst possible Europe—apart from the European democracies that have been tried from time to time. Speaking in Oxford recently, the Polish foreign minister, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, reaffirmed the prevailing view of Eastern Europeans that the EC remains the central core of the larger process of European unification.

8. Looking back on the "pennaking" of 1999 during the Second World War, Harold Nicolson wrote: "We succeeded in Balkanising Europe, although we Europeans misunderstood the Balkans." In a broader sense, one might say that the choice today is between Balkanising Europe and Europeanizing the Balkans (where "the Balkans" is taken to mean an actual or potential state of affairs in parts of non-EC Europe, rather than a geographical location). Basic conditions for this Europeanization include the recogni- tion of existing state frontiers (and within the present Soviet Union, the frontiers of existing republics), however blurry and unjust, common, high standards of respect for the rights of minorities within those frontiers; and a longer-term perspective of ever-closer association with the existing EC, providing partners with internal democra- tization, marketization, and constitutionalization, and leading eventually to full membership.

9. The largest challenges in Europe over the next years. Europeans not lie at all in the relations between states, but rather in the relations between peoples within states. Racial tensions will almost cer- tainly be exacerbated by the social and economic consequences of European unifica- tion. This applies not only to the former Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but also to the rest of Europe and notably to Germany. What one might call civic leadership may be needed for as much as, perhaps even more than, statesmanship.

10. We should keep things in propor- tion. Most of the rest of humankind will (at least) say: "If only we had your problems...."
Vienna, March 11—Driving into town from the airport, I pass a café called the Espresso Lidlza. On the radio, a reporter discusses the arrangements in Austrian schools for teaching in Croatian. Then comes the weather forecast: for Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, and Northern Italy. I read the diminutive Neue Kronen Zeitung, clipped to its Zeitungshalter (newspaper stick) like a little flag. In a fighting interview, Frau Klesl, the jilted wife of Kurt Waldheim’s successor as president, tells us she is determined to remain Austria’s first lady. The operetta continues. I am back in Central Europe.

Later, at the editorial meeting of a more elevated journal, a German feminist exclaims: “Eastern men are such pushas.” Yes, a colleague agrees, they could do with some “re-education.” I glimpse a new Central Europe, where Polish men are to be “re-educated” by German feminists.

Then to the fellows’ meeting of the Institute for Human Sciences, a meeting place to rival even the Café Landtmann. Bronislaw Geremek, the Polish medievalist turned Solidarity adviser turned parliamentary, lectures on The Collapse of Communism and European Security. He makes a politician’s speech, mustering every argument for Poland to be admitted to NATO. Eloquent, as always, but some in the audience are disconcerted. Somehow they had expected him to speak as an intellectual to intellectuals. But times and roles have changed, and Geremek, unlike many from the anti-Communist oppositions of the 1970s and 1980s, has made a clear choice: while he is a politician he will be a politician.

I’m sure he’s right. All we’ve seen in Central European politics since 1989 confirms an old truth. You may, in the course of your life, be both intellectual and politician. Try to be both at once and you’ll be neither.

Bratislava—Before the war—second and cold—you went by tram from Vienna for an evening in the beautiful Slovakian capital of Bratislava, or vice versa. Now you could do so again, and if the authorities would only re-lay a few miles of track. Meanwhile, it is just over an hour by train, and you slide across the border as if the iron curtain had never been. Amid the seemingly endless, dusty allotments—small plots of land on which people grow vegetables—I spy garbagebage flying through the air. A woman, an Austrian, tells me that the Czechs have put up a huge suspension bridge, the “Bridge of the Slovak National Uprising” across the Danube all the way through the heart of the old town, destroying the synagoge and much of the old Jewish quarter. On a high wall they inscribed in large letters: “Bratislava, City of Peace.”

Alas, under Pressburg. Hansi Albrecht, the musician, argues that there has been some cultural gain—the effete, decadent bourgeois culture of the late Habsburg empire has been replaced by an injection of raw Slavonic folk spirit—but one feels an overwhelming sense of loss. Alma Mónzová, another charming survivor of old Pressburg, well-read, multilingual, soignée, gives me the text of a talk she recently delivered (in German) on the history of the city. In it, she quotes a wry old joke: “When will things finally get better?” “What do you mean? They already were!” In many ways, to propose multiculturism in Central Europe really is to suggest going forward to the past.

However, one must beware the sirens of nostalgia. The balance was never even. Before the Austro-Hungarian Austro-Hungarian, or compromise, of 1867, the Austro-German element dominated Pressburg life. After the Ausgleich, the Hungarians there launched a program of systematic Magyarization. At the end of the century, this was reinforced by the sympathy of visitors such as the historian R.W. Seton-Watson, who described it, under the pseudonym “Scots Visitor,” in the London Spectator. So at the end of the First World War he was among those who advocated that Slovakia—“Northern Hungary,” as it then was—should be taken away from Hungary and joined with the Czech lands, in the newly independent state of Czechoslovakia.

Journey to the Post-Communist East
Timothy Garton Ash

Prague in summer

On the evening television news, the chubby, avuncular president is shown sitting beside a carefully polished tile oven, with a large bunch of flowers in a vase on the table before him. At one side of the screen, you see a large microphone, held motionless by a female hand with brightly painted fingernails. The President talks about democracy, constitutionalism, civic engagement, and on and on, but the more he talks the less he convinces me—because of that painted hand. After about five minutes we briefly catch sight of the lady interviewer. Her feeble “question” gives the cue for another five-minute monologue delivered to the long-suffering painted hand. President Clinton, or President Mitterrand, or, for that matter, President Klesl, can only dream of such a complaisant medium; but then, they work in a fully fledged democracy.

My acquaintances are divided over whether Mečiar’s fall is a good thing. All sigh with relief that the vulgar, nationalist rabble-rouser has got the boot. But some fear this oyster gives him the perfect chance to bounce back—as self-styled victim—in the elections that are due to be held in September. After all, it did once before, in 1992, after being ousted by the parliament in 1991. Well, we shall see.

Meanwhile, I am in search of old Bratislava—that is, the German-Hungarian-Jewish-Slovak city of Pressburg, and before that the Hungarian royal capital of Pozsony. As I walk the dilapidated streets of the old town in the company of a local journalist, we meet an elderly gentleman in a black felt hat and formal gray coat, with a semi-precious stone on a ribbon round the collar of his slightly grubby white shirt. “Ah, here is the oldest Pressburger!” says my acquaintance, and makes the introduction. This is Jan, Hans, or “Hansi” Albrecht, a retired musician and son of a celebrated local composer.

Later, over coffee and cognac in the insipidly gloomy hall of his cluttered apartment, Albrecht tells tales of old Pressburg, while kids smash out the window glass from a derelict house across the road. (“Yes, that house belonged to the Esterházys,” he says; crash goes another window.) He shows me a program for one of his father’s concerts: printed in German, Hungarian, and Slovak. The Pressburg of his youth really was trilingual, he says. Someone would address you in Hungarian, you might reply in German, another would interrupt in Slovak.

Even after the first wave of Slovakization, which began with the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the statistics still show a population of some 15,000 Jewish, 20,000 Hungarian, and 30,000 German citizens of Pressburg, as well as 60,000 Slovaks. It was only the next two waves of Slovakization which effectually purged the city of all but a very few survivors of the other nationalities. First came the proclamation of Slovak independence under Hitler’s protection, in March 1939. (Outside the Slovak Philharmonic’s concert hall, a pathetic gaggle of old men in shabby suits and cheap ties can be seen gathering to celebrate the anniversary.) The ascendant puppet state of Father Josef Tiso got rid of the Jews, and made the Hungarians unwelcome too.

After 1945, the new Czechoslovak government got rid of the Germans. Finally, to celebrate the enhanced status of Slovakia, President Tiso announced in 1968, the Communist authorities drove a huge suspension bridge, the “Bridge of the Slovak National Uprising,” across the Danube all the way through the heart of the old town, destroying the synagoge and much of the old Jewish quarter. On a high wall they inscribed in large letters: “Bratislava, City of Peace.”

All this is just history. It has immediate political relevance. For, as a result of the post-1918 territorial settlement, reaffirmed after 1945, and again in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, some half a million Hungarians now live just inside the Slovak frontier, on the north bank of the Danube. In Czechoslovakia, they were a small minority: about one in thirty of the population. In Slovakia they are a much larger minority: about one in ten.

The Slovak government, under Mečiar, has been a model of nationalist stubbornness in resisting even the most reasonable demands for bilingual road signs, the restoration of the Hungarian forms of personal names, the criticism of him by the president, Michal Kováč. The Operetta continues. I am back in Prague in the company of a local journalist, we meet an elderly gentleman in a black felt hat and formal gray coat, with a semi-precious stone on a ribbon round the collar of his slightly grubby white shirt. “Ah, here is the oldest Pressburger!” says my acquaintance, and makes the introduction. This is Jan, Hans, or “Hansi” Albrecht, a retired musician and son of a celebrated local composer. Later, over coffee and cognac in the insipidly gloomy hall of his cluttered apartment, Albrecht tells tales of old Pressburg, while kids smash out the window glass from a derelict house across the road. (“Yes, that house belonged to the Esterházys,” he says; crash goes another window.) He shows me a program for one of his father’s concerts: printed in German, Hungarian, and Slovak. The Pressburg of his youth really was trilingual, he says. Someone would address you in Hungarian, you might reply in German, another would interrupt in Slovak. Even after the first wave of Slovakization, which began with the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the statistics still show a population of some 15,000 Jewish, 20,000 Hungarian, and 30,000 German citizens of Pressburg, as well as 60,000 Slovaks. It was only the next two waves of Slovakization which effectually purged the city of all but a very few survivors of the other nationalities. First came the proclamation of Slovak independence under Hitler’s protection, in March 1939. (Outside the Slovak Philharmonic’s concert hall, a pathetic gaggle of old men in shabby suits and cheap ties can be seen gathering to celebrate the anniversary.)
THE
UNREDEEMED
CAPTIVE

Historians and critics hail
JOHN DEMOS' stunning account of
one of 18th-century America's
"lost children"

"A masterpiece
... The historian's craft at its best... recovering for us the poignant story of lives and families shattered and then painfully knitted together again in the complex encounters between English, French, and Mohawk peoples in 18th-century America. There is nothing quite like it in our literature. A stunning achievement that should change forever how we write and tell stories about the American past."

—WILLIAM CRONON

"A great drama with a human face
... With profound empathy and imagination, [it reveals] aspects of a time and place that have long been shadowy."

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"He quickens small forgotten lives
and helps us make sense of an alien age... He seems to have unearthed every document, letter, eyewitness account and magazine article to tell the Williams story... As he tells us of John, Eunice and Stephen Williams, Demos fills in the rich social, political and physical world they knew."

—DAVID MEHEGAN, Boston Globe

"A lively introduction
to an authentically multicultural
Northern America... Demos offers us early American communities in which Indians are, somehow, always there: ...trading, negotiating, making war, making peace, taking captives, returning captives."

—LINDA K. KERBER
New York Times Book Review

"The real triumph
lies not only in Demos's ability to lead us from the microcosm of a family to the macrocosm of a regional culture, but in the sympathy he creates... It is the triumph of a vigorous narrative voice."

—PAGE STEGNER
Washington Post Book World

THE BOOK
With all the meticulous scholarship and narrative grace that won him a Bancroft Prize for his book on witchcraft in early New England, the Yale historian has written a new book resonant with implications for the American sensibility: a story of a New England child captured by Indians. Eunice Williams was seven when she and her family (her father was an eminent Puritan minister) were abducted to Canada by the French and Indian war party that devastated the Massachusetts village of Deerfield in 1704. Her father, sister, and three of her brothers were eventually ransomed. But despite her own family's impassioned efforts over the years to "redeem" her—Eunice committed her life to the Mohawk family who adopted her. Her Mohawk life, her own family's bewilderment, the culturally rich and complex world they all lived in are the matter of this extraordinary book, now rejoining extraordinary praise.

and so on, despite pressure from, among others, the Council of Europe. On the other hand, it was the now deceased Hungarian prime minister József Antall who famously declared that he wished to be the prime minister of 13 million Hungarians (that is, roughly 10 million inside Hungary's frontiers) plus a million beyond the border. When Czechoslovakia and Slovakia were splitting up, radical Hungarian nationalism even argued that what was laid down by the Allies in 1920, in the Treaty of Trianon, was the new frontier of Czechoslovakia, not of Slovakia—which would therefore have to be negotiated anew. Incredibly, though Slovakia and Hungary are both members of the Visegrád group, together with the Czech Republic and Poland, Slovakia currently has no ambassador in Budapest.

Slovakia's Hungarians are represented in the Slovak parliament, by their own Hungarian parties. Except on a few tactical votes (and to some extent, interestingly, in the collective party) they do not mix with the Slovak parties. Regrettably, the Hungarian and Slovak sides seem to be drifting even closer together. Further apart, I am told that in a recent poll, 35 percent of those asked thought that the Hungarian parties should not be represented in the Slovak parliament.

It is a worrying state of affairs.

Budapest—In cross the Slovak-Hungarian border on the so-called Balkan- Orient Express. Its Romans carriages provide a very credible setting for a murder. The old peasant woman sitting opposite me puts the Hungarian-Slovak conflict in its proper place. Then I realize that she means, "It's Slovak." To the Slovak passport officer she says, "Slovak, I'm Slovak." To the Hungarian passport officer she says, "Hungarian, I'm Hungarian." To neither does she show a passport. Maybe there's hope for Central Europe yet.

I tell the Hungarian friend that I'm staying at the Hotel Gellért, that splendid art nouveau blazonmace on the right bank of the Danube, with its majolica-walled thermal baths and granite-faced masseurs. "Oh," she says, looking disappointing, "it's a Forum hotel." Thinking of the (rather good) Forum Hotel on the Pest side of the river, I'm about to exclaim: "So has the Forum taken over the Gellért?" Then I realize that she means the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the conservative nationalist party which has been in power since 1990 and now faces an election in which the former Communists are favored to win. How out of touch can you get?

She's right too. I had forgotten how the tone, the décor, the very smell of the Gellért exude that particular aesthetic of populist Hungarianness. Even the "Do Not Disturb" signs hang out on your doorknob are done in the national colors of red, white, and green.

Meanwhile, the modern Forum Hotel on the Western bank, its couturier consultants, most of them waiting large sums of our (that is, Western taxpayers') money which is meant to be going to individuals the struggling new democracies of post-Communist Europe. In German, one talks of Staatsoptatkraft: expense account knights. How brave new world, that has such people in it.

This evening, however, something of the old world—almost a flashback—can be witnessed just along the embankment. A large crowd gathers at the invitation of the Democratic Charter, a liberal civic initiative, or anti-Forum forum, to protest the recent sacking of 129 state radio employees. This was the last act in the so-called "lawful revolution," Hungary's 14th of July. And tomorrow it will be celebrated as national holiday, with all sorts of events at which the Forum is capable. But this evening, the liberals have stolen a march on them. At the far end of the poet, free speeches are delivered by flaming torchlight: for democracy for civil rights! for the old world, that had such demics in it.

As we watch the march, a publisher friend explains to me his worry that Hungary is once again being polarized into two nations: "Our old Kármán. If someone talks of "structural problems," or "this country or" this agricultural country," you know at once that they come from the camp known before the war as urbanists. If someone talks of "the land, or" our homeland," they belong to the camp known before the war as populists. He fears history is repeating itself.

Another friend puts his personal dissatisfaction, frustration, melancholy, in a different way. He grew up, he says, in what I knew was an "abnormal" state. I thought that if the Communists and the Soviet Union went, Hungary would be normal. But it is, a Western country. Now they've gone and it isn't. We're governed by the Forum, and I have to accept that Hungary is in some ways an Eastern country.

Hegroes (in German) for an image, and finds it. There was a statue, covered by a heavy sheet. We believed it was beautiful. One day, miraculously, after forty long years, it was uncovered. Our hearts rose once more with hope. But then we found that the statue was chipped and dirty, and not so handsome after all.

Prague—The sleeping beauty of Central Europe has not merely been awakened by a prince's velvet kiss. She has put on black tights and gone off to the 1970s. That is, the country is now, officially, communist. One can see the changes all over the place. The sleeping beauty of Central Europe has not merely been awakened by a prince's velvet kiss. She has put on black tights and gone off to the 1970s. That is, the country is now, officially, communist. One can see the changes all over the place.

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beggars, junkies, Spesenritter of all countries, car alarms, trendy bars, gangsters, whores galore, Bierstuben, litter, graffiti, video shops, and Franz Kafka T-shirts.

I have mixed feelings about this transformation scene. But I am quite won over by walking the streets with my friend Jáchym Topol, a young poet, novelist, and editor of the (formerly samizdat) journal Revolver Revue. Jáchym, long-haired, chain-smoking, deeply Bohemian in both senses of the word, stalks along simply firing with enthusiasm for the way Prague has come alive. "Look at it, it's great!" he exclaims, as we are nearly run down by a speeding car. The rock groups now write their lyrics in English, he says. Street kids use the Albanian word for prison, because, he tells me, there is now a strong Albanian "mafia," besides the Russian and local ones. And there's a new kind of savory bread roll. It's called crazy chleba, a grammatically correct and same translatable roughly as "bread crazy."

Jáchym's new novel, out of Doblin and Joyce by way of Hrabal, is to be published next month, and he's detailing around trying to arrange publicity for it. But he has to do almost everything himself. The publicity department, so important a part of most Western publishers, is still almost unknown here.

The cliché is that the Czechs are the Prussians of the Slavs. Certainly the orderly, Western qualities of Bohemia, its prewar industrial record, the economic credibility of Premiér Václav Klaus, and, above all, its cheap skilled labor have combined to attract foreign, and especially German, investment. (An hour's skilled labor costs the employer about thirty-five Deutschmarks in Germany compared to just four Deutschmarks in Bohemia.) Yet even here there is the characteristic post-Communist mixture of enterprise and corruption: large kickbacks paid in the course of privatization, mysterious enhancement of party funds, the dubious involvement of ex-nomenklatura, criminal, semi-criminal, and corrupt official elements, all combining to give any ordinary people a slightly jaundiced view of both capitalism and the politicians who preach it.

The frequently encountered and uniformly steered term "mafia" points to the ubiquitous element of organized crime. The Russian word prikhvatizatsi­siya, that is, roughly, privatization seizure (khvatat' = seize, grab), catches another aspect of the post-Communist scene; as does the phrase "the privatization of the nomenklatura." Alfred Stepan, the American political scientist and new rector of George Soros's Central European University, reminds me of the term "kleptocracy," already used in Latin America and Africa. Today, states with different versions of Central Europe at the same time. His Mitteleuropa was all about the Germans and Austrians, with the others included only insofar as they were subjects of the German and Austrian empires.

One of the great questions of the new "New Europe" is whether this old tension between Mitteleuropa and Střední Evropa can finally be laid to rest. Very much with this in mind, Havel has invited seven presidents to an "informal" meeting in Litomyšl, the birthplace of the composer Smetana. Besides the presidents of the "Visegrád four" (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia), and the president of Slovenia, a country with which the Czech Republic has developed its own miniature

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In Lincoln at Gettysburg, Garry Wills reframed our understanding of Lincoln. The Leader, Now He Redefines the Nature of Leadership Itself.
special relationship (some make jokes about Czech-Slovenia), the "LT"—as Havel's foreign affairs adviser Pavel Seftner wryly christens it. "Why? With whom?"

Havel's good friend the outgoing German president, Richard von Weizsäcker, whose birthday will also be marked by the occasion.

Theinclination of Germany in the group may raise a few eyebrows, not least in France or Italy, but I think it is vital. Even if Germany only stands in Central Europe "with one leg," as Havel himself observes, it is the biggest leg in town. There is a lively debate about Germany inside East Central Europe: there is a lively debate inside Germany about East Central Europe; it is vital that the two debates should interweave.

At one point I ask Havel when he is going to write his fundamental essay about the intellectual and the politician. There is a breathless pause. "I'll write a book," he says. "A Life of Walker Percy.

slaokavia together, he now finds himself being invited to Belgium and Que­bec, to tell them how you make a vet­eran divorce.

On Sunday, I drive myself out, along poor roads, through poor, dusty vil­lages—no Prague transformation scenes here—to the nearby village of Ca­stolove, in northeastern Bohemia. Diana Phipps—née Sternberg—has had the castle returned to her, under the so­called "restitution" law. Not so many great families of this Bohemian vic­tory have in fact been eligible for this restitution, because the condition sine qua non is that they were still there at the time of the February 1948 Communist coup. Many, seeing the writing on the wall, had already left. Of those eligible, by no means all have reclaimed their property, which often requires a large investment for a very doubtful return. Diana has, with enor­mous difficulty, got back more than 3,000 hectares of the estate which originally sustained the castle, mainly for­est, with herds of white deer and grun­tles of wild boar. But, as for all but a very few country houses or castles in the Czech lands, the local people do not seem to depend on people coming to see it.

Castolovice will be well worth see­ing. There is the breathtaking Renais­sance Knight's Hall, the dining room adorned with portraits of all the kings of Bohemia, the library left virtually untouched for forty years, like Miss Havisham's boudoir in Great Expecta­tions, the rusty old weapons, the furni­ture (much of it "restituted" from other locations), the ancestral portraits—Diana's great-grandfather in the full splendor of a general in the service of Franz-Joseph, her father as a dashing droon galloping through some Russian hamlet in World War I, then the "English" park and the baro­filed woods; and all this restored with Diana Phipps's rare taste and imagina­tion. If you stand with eyes half-closed you can almost smell Lord Ponsonby's hunting party lined up in the great courtyard, waiting impa­tiently for the American ambassador to join them, as described in her mother Cecilia Sternberg's memorable "Crazy chleba, this is all part of the larger return to diversity, to history, and to freedom; with all the jealousies and conflicts that necessarily brings.

In the anteroom to the "museum" part of the castle, we contemplate a display, left over from the Communist period, listing the successive owners with their coats of arms. The Stern­berg arms show a star with the motto nescit occasum—"It will not set." Underneath, the Communist curators have written (in "Sternberg's familiar alpha­bet")—as if the star had set. We dis­cuss how this entry should be amended. Perhaps the simplest and most eloquent thing would be just to add: (1992—).

Warsaw—In the evening I fly, with a plane-load of screaming French teen-agers and wearily networking American, German, and British con­sultants, to Poland, where it is the ex­Communists' star that has risen again. For me, this is really just a stopover on the way to Lithuania, but there is time to see a few old friends.

Konstanty Gebert, who still some­times writes under his underground pen name of Dawid Warszawski, takes me out to lunch in an unexpected­ly good Chinese restaurant (culi­nary worlds apart from the old, state­owned Shanghai). He talks, vivaciously as ever, about Bosnia, where he now spends much of his time. But, I ask, what about Poland?

"Stuchaj, nadbudził!" he says. Boring! "Poland has become an ordinary provincial country with ordinary provincial problems." We both agree that this is a very great achievement indeed. After all, until 1989, boring, provincial normality was beyond all but the most far-fetched dreams. And the fact that this can more or less continue to be the case under a government dominated by the ex­Communists (or ex-ex-Communists) levered out only five years ago is a twist that nobody imagined. (Of course, things are not quite so secure and rosy as this sweeping judgment suggests, but the reservations must wait for another article.)

Everywhere jackets and ties, suits and ties—scarcely a trace of the old
underground sweaters and jeans. I feel almost underdressed.

Grzegorz Boguta, once the tyro of the underground publisher nowa and now the smartly suited head of Polish Life Publishers (PWN), gives me the 1992 supplement to their dictionary of the Polish language. It contains words that have entered the language since the dictionary was first published in 1979 and those that have been excluded for political reasons (including reasons of Communist prudery).

This is a fascinating semantic register of fifteen years in which so much has changed: from abońia (abortion, once outlawed and now a constitutional right), to basketball tournament (now only a political football), to yzdókomuha (a hateful new-old term for Communists of—or allegedly of—Jewish origin). The entries under "B," "H," and "pierścionek" (ringing to Communist Party hard-liners), bingi, biogr.energetyka, bogojczyżniany (one of my favorites, meaning literally "god-fatherlandized," and used to describe excessively patriotic persons), bolszewik, broj, and breaker. "V," a letter not generally used in Polish, has just three entries: video (explained as "vido"), video (as prefix), and votoj separatum.

Vilnius—Puttering along in yet another twin-propeller plane, across snow-covered fields, enchanting lakes, and enchanted woods, I arrive in Vilnius. Like Bratislava, this is a capital city which lies in one corner of its country and is in many ways quite untypical of it. Where Bratislava (Bratislava-Pozsony) was once German, Hungarian, and Jewish as well as Slovak, Vilnius (Wilno, Vilna) was once Polish and Jewish as well as Lithuanian. Memorably evoked in recent times by two of its native sons, the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas and the Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz and the Lithuanian poet Tomas Venclav, Vilnius is a wonderful irregular composition of Baroque churches, small palaces, town houses, courtyard leadings, and courtyards—a spectacle of clouds resembling baroque architecture and of baroque architecture like coagulated clouds, as Milosz puts it in his Native Realm.

However, Vilnius is Central Europe only from the knees up: the pavements and roads are full of Soviet-style pot-holes and slush. Near the university, I see a car with its rear wheel completely jammed in a three-foot-deep pot-hole. An acquaintance tells me you can actually get some modest compensation for the damage from the local authorities, but only if you land in a registered pot-hole.

A Lithuanian poet shows me around the Jewish museum, which goes by the curious name of the Jewish State Museum of Lithuania. The exhibition is striking because, even when you have seen it (which is not altogether easy, the museum is jammed), you see in New York scrolls and Hanukkah lamps, some prints ("Portrait of Sir Moses Montefiore, Lithograph, Warsaw"); that's about it. Fragments of fragments from the world. I ask the poet to tell us what he has, says the poet. In the visitors' book, a young German thanks the museum for its reminder of "our very, very bad history."

Not far away, on Gediminu Boulevard, there is another exhibition. In the basement of what until just three years ago was still the KGB headquarters, you can visit the cells. I am shown around by a former inmate, Stasys Katuskas. Speaking Polish with the rolled Lithuanian "l," he tells me how he was caught in 1946 after passing a radio set to the anti-Soviet partisans. Then he takes me through the cells as if I myself were being admitted—first the strip search; then locked up in a tiny, windowless cupboard; then the registration photographs and fingerprinting (the original equipment is still there); finally, into the cells. These were repainted by the KGB before they left, but the association of former inmates has paid a picture restorer to strip off the paint, layer by layer. On a small, two-foot-square patch you have twenty carefully numbered layers: so many despairing messages, so much filth, so much blood have these walls seen. Down the corridor there is the freezing solitary confinement cell, and, most horrible of all, a cell heavily padded with stuffed canvas, still bloodstained. The torture room.

West of the rivers, Lithuanian nationalism often sounds strident and crude. But if you walk through these cellars, contemplate the
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St. Petersburg—After a long, cold wait, the Lithuanian Airlines twin-prop just starts up and goes—no safety drill, no "This is your steward speaking." The emergency exit next to me rattles like a loose mudguard.

At St. Petersburg airport, however, I am met by a Volvo stretch limo, and swept into the Grand Hotel Europe—a Swedish-Russian joint venture and luxurious even by Western standards.

"No detail has been overlooked," says the room card, "in creating an authentic Russian environment with all the comforts and services of today." Above all, the Russian environment is my priority.

The contrast with the city just beyond the hotel doors is extreme. Here, poorly dressed crowds trudge grimly along the muddy pavements—although some stop to indulge in that curious Russian passion of eating ice cream in the snow. The façades look more grubby than when I was last in (then still) Leningrad, but perhaps it is just the season. What is certainly new is the proliferation of street-traders, hawkers, spivs, and beggars.

I am here for what turns out to be a fascinating conference, organized by the Hamburlg-based Bergedorfer Gesprichskreis with the participation of the German defense minister, Germany's ambassador to Russia, and the Russian deputy defense minister. Two things strike me particularly. One is that, whereas in Central Europe the central historical reference point is the partition of 1939, here it is the period before 1917. This extends even to details of dress and manner. The smart aide-de-camp to the Russian minister looks like an oil painting of a World War I officer. The German military men, by contrast, look like managers in uniform.

The other, more serious, thing is just how difficult even those whom I know to be very liberal Russians find it, especially as much as intellectually, to accept the loss of empire. Although the war came early, the Russian military men, by contrast, look like managers in uniform.

The crucial psychological test case is not the Baltic states—although Russia's relationship with them is difficult enough—especially because of the position of the Russian minorities there and the Russian military exclave of Kaliningrad. The test is Ukraine. With the best will in the world, most of the Russians I talk to find it difficult to accept the idea that Ukraine can really be an independent state.

One evening we are treated by Mayor Sobchak to a splendid reception at the extraordinary Yusupov Palace, with its rooms of onyx, marble, and tooled leather, its white and gold ballroom and its own small theater complete with plush stalls, circle, and dress circle box. After the usual banquet of zakuski, vodka, and stuffed cabbage, we are shown down to the room in which Prince Feliks Yusupov and his fellow-conspirators attempted to poison Rasputin. A wax model of the furious conspirators sits at a table, eating his favorite sweet wine and candy cakes, while the clean-shaven young prince looks on. A smartly dressed lady guide, exuding perfume and natural pride, tells us every last detail of the infamous night when the notion was not sufficient to fell the immensely strong Rasputin, how he staggered out into the courtyard, how the conspirators finished him off, how they disposed (or failed to dispose) of the body. His ghost, she tells us, still has not quite been laid to rest.

Oxford, March 28—I return with no great synthetic insights, no confident generalizations—let alone any predictions. For those, I shall turn to the volumes of Translology now piling up on my desk, and wish I could feel more like another another article. I turn to them with a number of reality tests in mind. Does the analysis of post-communism tally with and illuminate what I have seen? Does it, for example, show the unimportance of television and radio? Does it pay adequate attention to the controversial part played by the West in general, and Western consultants (including some Translologists) in particular?

Does it illuminate that peculiar post-Communist mixture of enterprise, organized crime, ex-nomenklatura, corruption, and politics?

Postscript, May 23—Three developments to report. In mid-April, the seven Central European presidents met in Liubliana. They had a televised debate, enlivened by Lech Walesa's spirited warning against the revival of Russian imperialism. Richard von Weizsäcker was the model of tact, although much good will was expressed by all. They agreed to meet the summit next year. The "LT" may not yet have established itself as a serious rival to the G7, but this was, as one German journalist commented, a great event in the history of Ljubliana.

The interim outcome of the first round of the Hungarian elections, in early May, suggests a great victory for the ex-Communist Socialists, who appear to have won a good third of the vote with the free Democrats in second place, the Young Democrats doing much more poorly than they had hoped, and the Democratic Forum soundly trounced. Only after the second round of voting, at the end of May, will we see the exact composition of the government. Will the Free Democrats go in with the ex-Communists? If so, will that sharpen or lessen the danger of a "Kulturkampf"?

Meanwhile, Edward Lucas writes from Viihnius:

"The center of Europe has been VANDALIZED—it looks as though someone tried to steal it, but found the stone too heavy to carry off. It now lies upside down, about a meter away from the plinth. Things fall apart, the center cannot hold—but back here I keep finding new centers of Europe. Besides a whole country, some of whose intellectuals now consider it to be again the center of Europe (Germany), I have, with only the most superficial knowledge, already collected four further claimants: one in the Bohemian woods, one in the Csepel district of Budapest, one—somewhat loosely documented—in the Ukraine and the City of Strasbourg. They surely could get together in an association, perhaps even a Center for Centers of Europe. Just the kind of project to win generous funding from the EU. But where would the bread come from?"
The Ingathering Storm of Nationalism

Isaiah Berlin, Carlos Fuentes, Yelena Bonner, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Federico Mayor

In only two short years, the hopes of Berlin's fallen wall have been transformed into the rubble of Babel by nationalist explosions.

Whence this ingathering storm? What kind of world order will be left in its wake?

We asked some of the world's most eminent thinkers and writers to respond to these questions.

Return of the Volksgeist


NPQ According to Harold Isaacs, author of Idols of the Tribe, today we are witnessing a "convulsive ingathering" of nations. Open ethnic warfare rages in Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union has been rent asunder by resurgent nationalist republics.

The new world order built from the rubble of the Berlin Wall has already gone the way of the Tower of Babel. What are the origins of nationalism? Whence this ingathering storm?

Isaiah Berlin The Tower of Babel was meant to be unitary in character; a single great building, reaching to the skies, with one language for everybody.

The Lord didn't like it.

There is, I have been told, an excellent Hebrew prayer to be uttered when seeing a monster: "Blessed be the Lord our God, who introduces variety amongst Thy creatures." We can only be happy to have seen the Soviet Tower of Babel collapse into ruin, dangerous as some of the consequences may turn out to be — I mean, a bitter clash of nationalisms. But, unfortunately, that would be nothing new.

In our modern age, nationalism is not resurgent; it never died. Neither did racism. They are the most powerful movements in the world today, cutting across many social systems.

None of the great thinkers of the nineteenth century predicted this. Saint-Simon predicted the importance of industrialists and bankers. Fourier, who understood that if glass was made unbreakable there could be no business for the glazier, grasped the contradictions of capitalism. Karl Burchhardt predicted the military-industrial complex. Not very much of what Marx predicted turned out to be true, but the vitally important insight that technology transforms culture. Big Business and class conflicts are among its results.

They all thought that the imperial regime of the great states was the central problem of the twentieth century. Once these tyrannical conglomerations — the British Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire — were, together with colonialism, destroyed, the peoples under their heels would live peacefully together and realize their destiny in a productive and creative manner. Well, they were mistaken.

Although most liberal philosophers of the nineteenth century opposed the cruel exploitation of the dark masses by imperialism, in no case did any of them think that black, Indian, or Asian men could ever have states, parliaments, or armies — they were completely Eurocentric.

That, I suspect, changed with the Russo-Japanese war of 1904. The fact that an Asiatic nation defeated a great European power must have produced an electric shock in the minds of many Indians, Africans, and others, and given a great fillip to the idea of anti-imperialist self-assertion and national independence. In the twentieth century, no left-wing movement succeeded in
Asia or Africa—in Indo-China, Egypt, Algeria, Syria, or Iraq—unless it went arm in arm with nationalist feeling.

Non-aggressive nationalism is another story entirely. I trace the beginning of that idea to the highly influential eighteenth-century German poet and philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder.

Herder virtually invented the idea of belonging. He believed that just as people need to eat and drink, to have security and freedom of movement, so too they need to belong to a group. Deprived of this, they felt cut off, lonely, diminished, unhappy. Nostalgia, Herder said, was the noblest of all pains. To be human meant to be able to feel at home somewhere, with your own kind.

Each group, according to Herder, has its own Volksgeist, or Nationalgeist—a set of customs and a lifestyle, a way of perceiving and behaving that is of value solely because it is their own. The whole of cultural life is shaped from within the particular stream of tradition that comes of collective historical experience shared only by members of the group.

Thus one could not, for example, fully understand the great Scandinavian sagas unless one had oneself experienced (as he did on his voyage to England) a great tempest in the North Sea.

Herder's idea of the nation was deeply non-aggressive. All he wanted was cultural self-determination. He denied the superiority of one people over another. Anyone who proclaimed it was saying something false. Herder believed in a variety of national cultures, all of which could, in his view, peacefully coexist.

Each culture was equal in value and deserved its place in the sun. The villains of history for Herder were the great conquerors such as Alexander the Great, Caesar, or Charlemagne, because they stamped out native cultures. He did not live to see the full effects of Napoleon's victories—but since they undermined the domination of the Holy Roman Empire, he might have forgiven him.

Only what was unique had true value. This is why Herder also opposed the French universalists of the Enlightenment. For him there were few timeless truths: time and place and social life—what came to be called civil society—were everything.

And today, the Serbian Volkgeist is at war with the Croatian Volkgeist, the Armenians and the Azeris have long been at it, and, among the Georgians and Russians—and even the Ukrainians and the Russians—passions are stirring.

What transforms the aspiration of cultural self-determination into nationalist aggression?

Berlin | I have written elsewhere that a wounded Volkgeist, so to speak, is like a bent twig, forced down so severely that when released, it lashes back with fury. Nationalism, at least in the West, is created by wounds inflicted by stress. As for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet empire, they seem today to be one vast, open wound. After years of oppression and humiliation, there is liable to occur a violent counter-reaction, an outburst of national pride, often aggressive self-assertion, by liberated nations and their leaders.

Although I am not allowed to say this to German historians, I believe that Louis XIV was principally responsible for the beginnings of German nationalism in the seventeenth century.

Nostalgia, Herder said, was the noblest of all pains. To be human meant to be able to feel at home somewhere, with your own kind.
Sooner or later, the backlash comes with irrepressible force. People tire of being spat upon, ordered about by a superior nation, a superior class, or a superior anyone. Sooner or later they ask the nationalist questions: "Why do we have to obey them?" "What right have they...?" "What about us?" "Why can't we...?"

**NPO** | All these bent twigs in revolt may have finally overturned the ideological world order. The explosion of the Soviet system may be the last act of deconstruction of the Enlightenment ideals of unity, universality, and liberal rationalism. That's all finito now.

**Berlin** | I think that that is true.

And Russia is an appropriate place to illuminate the misapprehensions of the lumières.

Most Russian westernizers who followed the eighteenth-century French thinkers admired them because they stood up to the church, stood up to reactionary tendencies, stood up to fate. Voltaire and Rousseau were heroes because they enlisted reason, and the right to freedom, against reaction.

But even the radical writer, Alexander Herzen, my hero, never accepted, for example, Condorcet's claims to knowable, timeless truths. He thought the idea of continuous progress an illusion, and protested against the new idolatries, the substitute for human sacrifice—abstractions, like the universal class, or the infallible party, or the march of history; the victimization of the present for the sake of an unknowable—future, that would lead to some harmonious solution.

Herzen regarded any dedication to abstract unity and universality with great suspicion. For him, England was England, France was France, Russia was Russia. The differences neither could nor should be flattened out. The ends of life were life itself.

For Herzen, as for Herder and the eighteenth-century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico, cultures were incommensurable. It follows, though they do not spell it out, that the pursuit of total harmony, or the perfect state, is a fallacy, and sometimes a fatal one.

Of course, nobody believed in universality more than the Marxists: Lenin, Trotsky, and the others who triumphed saw themselves as disciples of the Enlightenment thinkers, corrected and brought up to date by Marx.

If one were to defend the general record of communism, which neither you nor I would be willing to do, it would have to be defended on the basis that Stalin may have murdered forty million people—but at least he kept nationalism down and prevented the ethnic babel from anarchically asserting its ambitions. Of course,
Stalin did keep it—and everything else—down but he didn’t kill it. As soon as the stone was rolled away from the grave it rose again with a vengeance.

**NPQ** | Herder was a horizontal critic, if you will, of the French lumières because he believed in the singularity of all cultures. Giambattista Vico also opposed the Enlightenment idea of universality but from a vertical, or historical, perspective.

As you have written, he believed each successive culture was incommensurable with others.

**Berlin** | Both rejected the Enlightenment idea that man, in every country at every time, had identical values. For them, as for me, the plurality of cultures is irrecusable.

**NPQ** | Does the final breakup of communist totalitarianism, a creature of the ideal univerality, suggest that we are living out the final years of the last modern century?

**Berlin** | I accept that, almost. The idea of universality, so deeply perverted that it would utterly horify the eighteenth-century philosophers who expounded it, evidently lives on in some form in the remote reaches of Europe’s influence: China, Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba.

**NPQ** | One can only imagine how differently the twentieth century would have turned out had Vico and Herder prevailed rather than the French philosophers, or Hegel and Marx; if the local soul had not been overrun by the world soul. We might have had a century of cultural pluralism instead of totalitarianism.

**Berlin** | How could that have happened? Universalism in the eighteenth century was the doctrine of the top nation, France. So everyone tried to emulate its brilliant culture.

Perhaps it is much more the rise of the natural sciences, with the emphasis on universal laws, and nature as an organism or a machine, and the imitation of scientific methods in other spheres, which dominated all thinking.

Fuelled by these ideas, the nineteenth-century explosion of technology and economic development isolated the intellectual stream deriving from such non-quantitative—indeed, qualitative—thinkers as Vico and Herder.

The temper of the times is illustrated in a story told in one of Jacob Talmon’s books. He writes of two Czech schoolmasters talking with each other around the early 1800s. “We’re probably the last people in the world to speak Czech,” they said to each other. “Our language is at an end. Inevitably, we’ll all speak German here in Central Europe, and probably the Balkans. We’re the last survivors of our native culture.”

Of course, such survivors are today in the saddle in many lands.

**NPQ** | What political structure can possibly accommodate this new age of cultural self-determination, preserve liberty, and perhaps stem some of the impending bloodshed?

**Berlin** | Cultural self-determination without a political framework is precisely the issue now, and not only for the East. Spain has the Basques and Catalans; Britain has Northern Ireland; Canada the Quebecc; Belgium has the Flemings; Israel the Arabs, and soon. Whoever in the past would have dreamed of Breton nationalism or a Scottish national party?

Idealists like Herder evidently didn’t consider this problem. He merely hated the Austro-Hungarian Empire for politically welding together incompatible elements.

In Eastern Europe they really do seem to loath each other: Romanians hate the Hungarians and Hungarians have for years disliked the Czechs in a way the Bretons can’t pretend to hate the French. It is a phenomenon of a different order. Only the Irish are like that in the West.

Only in America have a variety of ethnic groups retained their own original cultures, and nobody seems to mind. The Italians, Poles, Jews, and Koreans have their own newspapers, books, and I am told, TV programs.

**NPQ** | Perhaps when immigrants forsake their soil, they leave behind the passionate edge of their Volksgeist as well.

Yet even in America, a new multicultural movement has emerged in academia that seeks to stress not what is common but what is not in the curriculum.

**Berlin** | Yes, I know. Black studies, Puerto Rican studies, and the rest.

I suppose this too is a bent twig revolt of minorities that feel disadvantaged in the context of American polyethnicity.

Polyethnicity was not Herder’s idea. He didn’t urge the Germans to study Dutch, or German students to study the culture of the Portuguese.

In Herder, there is nothing about race and nothing about blood. He only spoke about soil, language, common memories, and customs. His central point, as a Montenegrin friend once
said to me, is that loneliness is not just absence of others but far more living among people who do not understand what you are saying; they can truly understand only if they belong to a community where communication is effortless, almost instinctive.

Herder looked unkindly on the cultural friction generated in Vienna, where many nationalities were crammed into the same narrow space. It produced men of genius, but with a deeply neurotic element in a good many of them — one need only think of Gustav Mahler, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Kraus, Arnold Schoenberg, Stefan Zweig, and the birth of psychoanalysis in this largely Jewish — particularly defenseless — society.

All that tremendous collision of not very compatible cultures — Slavs, Italians, Germans, Jews — unleashed a great deal of creativity. This was a different kind of cultural expression from that of an earlier Vienna, that of Mozart or Haydn or Schubert.

NPQ | In grappling with the separatist Quebeccois, Pierre Trudeau often invoked Lord Acton. He felt that wherever political boundaries coincided with ethnic ones, chauvinism, xenophobia, and racism inevitably threatened liberty.

Only individual constitutional rights — equal citizenship rights for all, despite ethnicity — in a federal republic could protect minorities and individuals. "The theory of nationality," Trudeau quoted Acton as saying, "is a retrograde step in history."

Berlin | Lord Acton was a noble figure, and I agree with him. Yet we have to admit that, despite Trudeau's efforts, the Quebeccois are still seeking independence.

In the grand scale of things, one has to consider that, despite royal and clerical monopolies of power and authority, the Middle Ages were, in some ways, more civilized than the deeply disturbed nineteenth — and worse still, our own terrible century, with widespread violence, chauvinism, and in the end mass destruction in racial, and Stalin's political, holocausts. Of course, there were ethnic frictions in the Middle Ages, and persecution of Jews and heretics, but nationalism as such didn't exist. The wars were dynastic. What existed was the universal church and a common Latin language.

We can't turn history back. Yet I do not wish to abandon the belief that a world that is a reasonably peaceful coat of many colors, each portion of which develops its own distinct cultural identity and is tolerant of others, is not a utopian dream.

NPQ | But of what common thread can such a coat be spun?

In a universe of autonomous cultural worlds, each in its own orbit, where is the sun that keeps the various planets from colliding with the others?

Berlin | The idea of a center can lead to cultural imperialism again.

In Herder's universe, you didn't need a sun. His cultures were not planets, but stars that didn't collide. I admit that at the end of the twentieth century, there is little historical evidence for the realizability of such a vision.

At eighty-two, I've lived through virtually the entire century. I have no doubt that it is the worst century that Europe has ever had.

Nothing has been more horrible for our civilization. In my life, more dreadful things occurred than at any other time in history. Worse even than the days of the Huns.

One can only hope that after the peoples get exhausted from fighting, the bloody tide will subside. Unless tourniquets can be applied to stop the hemorrhaging, and bandages to the wounds so that they can slowly heal, even if they leave scars, we're in for the continuation of a very bad time.

The only nations about which one need not wring one's hands are the sated nations, un­wounded or healed, such as the liberal democracies of North America, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and one hopes, Japan.

NPQ | Perhaps the two futures will live, decoupled, side by side. A civilization of the soil, so to speak, and a civilization of the satellite.

Instead of the violent splintering of nations, the sated nations will become a small world after all, with the passions of blood and soil drained away by homogenizing consumerism and mass entertainment.

Perhaps that is the price of peaceful integration. As Milan Kundera has recently written, frivolous cultures are anthropologically incapable of war. But they are also incapable of producing Picassos.

Berlin | As for that, I don't believe that only tragic events and wounds can create genius. In Central Europe, Kafka and Rilke bore wounds.
But neither Racine nor Molière nor Pushkin nor Tolstoy — unlike Dostoyevsky — bore deep wounds. And Goethe seems completely free from them. The fate of the Russian poets of our apostles of cultural pluralism, are the philosophers of the future?

Without doubt, uniformity may increase under the pressure of technology, as is already affected by a variety of values to happen with the Americanization of Europe. A great many people hate it, but it clearly can’t be stopped.

As we discussed, it is possible, as in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to have political and economic uniformity, but cultural variety. That is what I ultimately visualize. A degree of uniformity in the sated nations, combined with a pleasing degree of peaceful variety in the rest of the world. I admit that the present trend is in the opposite direction: sharp, sometimes aggressive, self-assertion on the part of some very minor human groups.

What about the emergence of a new set of common values — ecological rights and human rights — that can to some degree unite all these erupting cultures without cramping their style?

At the present, there don’t seem to be accepted minimum values that can keep the world straight. Let us hope, one day, that a large minimum of common values, such as the ones you mention, will be accepted. Otherwise we are bound to go under.

Unless there is a minimum of shared values that can preserve the peace, no decent societies can survive.

The liberal dream of cosmopolitanism, even in the sated world, is not on the agenda as far as you are concerned?

Like Herder, I regard cosmopolitanism as empty. People can’t develop unless they belong to a culture. Even if they rebel against it and transform it entirely, they still belong to a stream of tradition. New streams can be created — in the West, by Christianity, or Luther, or the Renaissance, or the Romantic movement — but in the end they derive from a single river, an underlying central tradition, which, sometimes in radically altered forms, survives.

But if the streams dried up, as, for instance, where men and women are not products of a culture, where they don’t have kith and kin and feel closer to some people than others, where there is no native language — that would lead to a tremendous desiccation of everything that is human.

So, for you, Vico and Herder, the apostles of cultural pluralism, are the philosophers of the future?

Yes, in the sense that we are all affected by a variety of values to some degree. From the Greeks and the Hebrews to the Christian Middle Ages to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, unity was the great virtue. Truth is one, many is error.

Variety is a new virtue, brought to us by the Romantic movement, of which Herder and Vico, whom I regard as the prophets of variety, were an important part. After that, variety, pluralism (which entails the possibility of many incompatible ideals that attract human devotion), sincerity (not necessarily leading to truth or goodness) — all these are thought to be virtues. Once pluralism of ways of life is accepted, and there can be mutual esteem between different, uncombinable outlooks, it is difficult to suppose that all this can be flattened — gleichgeschaltet — by some huge, crushing jackboot.

On this score, let me make a prophecy for the twenty-fifth century.

Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World could perhaps be established, in part as an irresistible response to the endless ethnic violence and nationalist rivalry at the turn of the millennium.

Under this system everyone would be clothed and fed. All would live under one roof, following one single pattern of existence.

But, sooner or later, somebody will rebel, somebody will cry for room. Not only will people revolt against totalitarianism, but against an all-embracing, well-meaning, benign system as well.

The first terrible fellow to kick over the traces will be burned alive. But other trouble-makers will be sure to follow.

If there is anything I’m certain about, after living for so long, it is that people must sooner or later rebel against uniformity and attempts at global solutions of any sort.

The Reformation was such a rebellion against claims to universal authority. The domination of the vast territories of the Roman Empire collapsed in due course. So, too, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The sun set on the British Empire. And now the Soviet empire.

There is a Russian story about a sultan who...
The Decay of Nations

Carlos Fuentes | The acclaimed Mexican author whose most recent novel is Christopher Unborn,

Carlos Fuentes writes here about the decay of the nation and the rise of nationalism around the world. Translated from Spanish by Benita Allen.

There is a general tendency to use the term nation as if it were ancient, consecrated, unquestionable. This says a great deal about the legitimizing force of both the nation and its derivative, nationalism. All the contemporary theorists on the subject — Isaiah Berlin, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm — point out to us, however, that nation and nationalism are two very recent expressions, nonexistent and inconceivable in the ancient world or in the Middle Ages.

Nationalism and nation are terms of modernity, created to provide ideological justification and political legitimation to certain ideas of unity — territorial, political, cultural — which were necessary for the integration of the new European States born of the Renaissance, colonial expansion, and religious wars. This need produced nationalist ideology, which in turn created the nation itself. Ernest Gellner indicates that nationalism made nations, and not vice versa. Nationalism took preexisting cultures and converted them into nations. Culture precedes the nation, and culture can be organized in many different ways: as a clan, tribe, family, society, reign...

“What is a nation?” Ernest Renan asked himself half a century ago, in a famous lecture at the Sorbonne. His answer: “A daily plebiscite.” That is, day to day adherence to a certain territorial, political, and cultural unity, a sum of values which inform and justify the ideas of nation and nationalism.

But what is it that elicits the appearance of these notions? Emile Durkheim speaks of the loss of old centers of identification and adherence — precisely those I just mentioned: clan, tribe, family, etc. — and of the imperative need, when this
A Call for Sacrifice

The Co-Responsibility of the West

Václav Havel

Four years after the fall of communism, it can be said without much exaggeration that this momentous historical event has caused the democratic West some major headaches. For all we know, many a Western politician may occasionally wonder, in the privacy of his mind, whether it might not have been a mistake to support the struggles for self-liberation within the Soviet bloc (even though that support was mainly verbal and moral) and whether the West should not have done more to prolong the existence of communism. After all, the world used to be so simple: there was a single adversary who was more or less understandable, who was directed from a single center, and whose sole aim in its final years (not counting some predictable exceptions) was to maintain the status quo. At the same time, the existence of this adversary drew the West together as well, because faced with this global and clearly defined danger, it could always somehow agree on a common approach.

All that has vanished. The world has suddenly become unusually complex and far less intelligible. The old order has collapsed, but no one has yet created a new one. Meanwhile, the "postcommunist world" is constantly springing new surprises on the West: nations hitherto unheard of are awakening and want countries of their own. Highly improbable people from God knows where are winning elections. It is not even clear whether the very people who four years ago so astonishingly roused themselves from their torpor and overthrew communism do not actually miss that system today.

The unwitting nostalgia in the West for the old order may be discerned even in such superficial matters as how they refer to our countries. From the Czech Republic to Kazakhstan we are, and will no doubt remain for some time, "postcommunist countries" and "former members of the former Warsaw Pact." I am guilty of having used these expressions myself, but I must admit an increasing aversion to them. After all, we did not go through the trouble of getting rid of communism only to have it remain—even with a prefix—forever sewn to our

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clothing. Nor did we go through the trouble of liquidating the Warsaw Pact only to bear forever the stigma of our former membership in it. (Not long ago I observed, somewhat undiplomatically, that we do not refer to the United States as a "former British colony.")

These formulations betray both a need to categorize us and the inability to find a key to understanding us other than the old familiar one. Indeed, I sometimes feel sorry for Western statesmen when I observe the unease and surprise with which they listen to the widely divergent geopolitical and historical homilies delivered by various representatives of our part of Europe. The Pole still goes on about the 1941 division of Poland by Germany and Russia, almost as though he expected it to begin again tomorrow; the Hungarian refers to the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 as a historical wrong done to his people and how, as a consequence, an enormous number of Hungarians no longer live in Hungary proper; a Czech will complain about Munich and Yalta and the other betrayals of his poor country by the West; and a Slovak will talk about what a historical injustice it was that no one ever perceived the Slovaks as a separate nation. In such moments I realize how much easier it must have been for Western politicians when they were faced with a homogenous Soviet mass and didn't have to worry about distinguishing one nation from another.

WHOSE ORDER WILL IT BE?

I well understand the unease with which the West follows what, for it, are the strange problems of all of those "postcommunist countries," and I well understand all the real (though often unexpressed) reasons that lead the West to behave reticently toward them. Still, I am strongly persuaded that this reticence is extremely shortsighted and that over time it may even become quite dangerous, for it is not, as it may seem, a sign merely of sober judgment alone but also of an inability to comprehend the essence of the new situation, and a lack of imagination and courage in the search for new solutions commensurate with the new circumstances.

If the West, along with all the other democratic forces in the world, is incapable of rapidly engaging in the common creation of a new order in European and Euro-Asian affairs—a better order than the old bipolar one—then someone else might well begin to do the job, and the order thus created could well be far worse than the one preceding it. I am thinking not so much of a new Stalin, but rather of the "order" that could emerge from the violent clash of many different and impenetrable forces that the disorganized state of the world today may bring to life, not only in the East, but in the West as well.

Such an outcome would inevitably lead to new conflicts and new suffering, perhaps far greater than what came before. Not only that, it could ultimately demonstrate that the democratic West has lost its ability realistically to foster and cultivate the values it has always proclaimed and undertaken to safeguard, and to which end it has built its arsenal of weapons. Such a state of affairs would be far more than just a crisis of the East; it would also be a crisis of the West, a crisis of democracy, a crisis of Euro-American civilization itself. Let events in the former Yugoslavia stand as a warning: this is not just a Balkan predicament.
The inability of Europe and the United States to intervene effectively in defense of the basic values of civilization that are being so drastically destroyed in the Balkans (and, what is more, in an area that was always an integral part of Europe) tells us something about the democratic world as well.

If we in these "postcommunist" countries call for a new order, if we appeal to the West not to close itself off to us, and if we demand a radical reevaluation of the new situation, then this is not because we are concerned about our own security and stability, and not only because we feel that the security of the West itself is at stake. The reason is far deeper than that. We are concerned about the destiny of the values and principles that communism denied, and in whose name we resisted communism and ultimately brought it down.

I recognize that this rather bold claim calls for an explanation.

**THAT WORTH SACRIFICING FOR**

Well then: many years of living under communism gave us certain experiences that the noncommunist West (fortunately) did not have to go through. We came to understand (or to be precise some of us did) that the only genuine values are those for which one is capable, if necessary, of sacrificing something. (The Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, at the end of his life, devoted considerable thought to this question.) The traditional values of Western civilization—such as democracy, respect for human rights and for the order of nature, the freedom of the individual and the inviolability of his property, the feeling of co-responsibility for the world, which means the awareness that if freedom is threatened anywhere, it is threatened everywhere—all of these things become values with moral, and therefore metaphysical, underpinnings. Without intending to, the communists taught us to understand the truth of the world not as mere information about it, but as an attitude, a commitment, a moral imperative.

I have the impression that precisely this awareness is sadly lacking in the present-day West, the "non-postcommunist" West (but with increasing obviousness, in the "postcommunist" West as well). Naturally, all of us continue to pay lip service to democracy, human rights, the order of nature and responsibility for the world, but apparently only insofar as it does not require any sacrifice. By that, I do not mean, of course, merely sacrifice in the form of fallen soldiers. The West has made, and continues to make, such sacrifices (though some instances of it may be more meaningful than others). I have in mind, rather, sacrifice in a less conspicuous but infinitely broader sense, that is, a willingness to sacrifice for the common interest something of one's own particular interests, including even the quest for larger and larger domestic production and consumption. The pragmatism of politicians who want to win the next election, for whom the highest authority is therefore the will and the mood of a rather spoiled consumer society, makes it impossible for them to be aware of the moral, metaphysical and tragic dimensions of their own program.

Why has the West lost its ability to sacrifice? There are probably many reasons, some completely random political
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ones, others that might be called philosophical. One example of a random political reason would be a deceptive impression that has apparently gained wide currency in the United States. Since the fall of communism is considered by many an American victory, now that the Cold War is over, the impression is that the headaches it caused are over too. But the headaches are never over. If the West has indeed won the Cold War, then today it faces perhaps an even more difficult task: winning the peace as well. But there are also reasons, as I have said, that run considerably deeper. The economic advances of Euro-American civilization, based as they are on advances in scientific and technical knowledge, have gradually altered man's very value systems. Respect for the metaphysical horizons of his being is, to an increasing extent, pushed aside to make room for a new deity: the ideal of the perpetual growth of production and consumption. This is the source of that protectionism, that fear in the West of cheap Eastern goods, that fear of getting more deeply involved anywhere where there are no immediate gains, of that caution, that lack of imagination and courage, that love of the status quo that ultimately leads many to call the part of Europe that has freed itself from communism in the name of democracy—if not "current," then at least "former members of the Warsaw Pact," "former members of COMECON" "immature and unstable democracies" and, as far as possible, to lock them up in the world to which they have become accustomed.

A liberal market economy? Yes, but only for us. Security? Yes, but only for us. National interests? Yes, but only our own. No, I am not speaking out of a sense of injury or unrequited love: if you will pardon me for saying so, I know more about the immaturity of Czech democracy than anyone in the West. I am simply making some general observations. The Western way of affirming Western values, in short, seems to me to have seriously cooled off.

Is it any wonder that in more than one "postcommunist" country, "postcommunists" have done well in elections? This circumstance might even be attributable to the "non-postcommunist West," which is doing so much to make the "postcommunist West" or the "East" itself disappointed in the atmosphere of the world in which it placed so much hope during the time of resistance to communism.

Let me make myself clear: I do not think at all that the main role of the democratic West is to solve all the problems of the "postcommunist world." Our countries (whether those who declare themselves to be, and evidently are, a part of the Western European sphere of civilization, or others who belong to the "Central Asian" sphere of civilization, or to any other) must deal with their own immense problems themselves. The "non-postcommunist West," however, should not look on as though it were a mere visitor at a zoo or the audience at a horror movie, on edge to know how it will turn out. It should perceive these processes at the very least as something that intrinsically concerns it, and that somehow decides its own fate, that demands its own active involvement and challenges it to make sacrifices in the interests of a bearable future for us all.
'PARTNERS' TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

The creation of a new order can have dozens of variations. It is a matter of evolution and assumes great judgment and a profound capacity to understand. No one will get anywhere these days with the designation “former members of the former Warsaw Pact”; in fact, insisting on this formulation may only cause further damage. For instance: on the matter of security arrangements, the nature and substance of the “Partnership for Peace” project will be one thing if we are talking about the Central Asian republics that are today members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and something entirely different in the case of countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia or Slovenia. By virtue of their entire history, spiritual and intellectual traditions, culture, atmosphere and geopolitical position, the latter countries belong to the classical European West, and any separation of them from that West would be suicidal for the whole of Europe (something anyone with even rudimentary knowledge of European history should understand).

I am not criticizing the “Partnership for Peace” proposal. On the contrary, I consider it a very reasonable starting point. (If I can fault it for anything, it would only be for not having come into existence two or three years ago.) I am merely saying that everything now will depend on how it is carried out. This alone will be the proper test of the West’s resolve. Specifically, I imagine that in the case of the central European countries (and later other European countries) full membership should clearly and quickly become the goal. NATO would thus gradually outgrow its present role to become a genuinely pan-European security structure. But this expansion of NATO should take place against the background of a clearly defined and genuinely cooperative relationship with Russia (or the Commonwealth of Independent States) as a great Euro-Asian nuclear power that is, in all respects, in a radically different position than the small Central European countries. The “Partnership for Peace” proposal could also provide a starting point for this specific relationship.

At this moment, however, my concern is not with concrete proposals for a new architecture of Atlantic-European-Asian relations, even though I have my own specific opinions about them, but with something different: the very unwillingness of the “non-postcommunist West” even to join in the creation of such proposals, its unwillingness to hear the warning voices coming from our part of the world. My concern is that the West come to understand that the great task of self-defense against the communist menace has been supplanted today by an even more difficult task: to assume courageously, in its own interests and in the general interest, its share of the responsibility for the new organization of things in the entire northern hemisphere.

To make my point briefly and simply: it seems to me that the fate of the so-called West is today being decided in the so-called East. If the West does not find a key to us, who were once violently separated from the West (with no great resistance on its part), or to those who somewhere far away have likewise extricated themselves from communist domination, it will ultimately lose the key to
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itself. If, for instance, it looks passively on at "Eastern" or Balkan nationalism, it will give the green light to its own potential nationalism, which it was able to deal with so magnanimously in the era of the communist threat. If it closes its eyes to the postcommunist ecological catastrophe, it will sooner or later bring on its own ecological catastrophe, and ultimately a global one. If it does not learn from our experience about where human pride can lead, the hubris of people who invent a rational utopia for themselves and try to create a paradise on earth, if it persists in its anthropocentric understanding of the earth, it will bear the consequences itself, and so will the whole world. If its own consumer affluence remains more important for it than all the foundations of that affluence, it will soon forfeit that affluence.

Today, more than ever before in the history of mankind, everything is interrelated. Therefore the values and the prospects of contemporary civilization are everywhere subjected to great tests. Because of this, the future of the United States or the European Union is being decided in suffering Sarajevo or Mostar, in the plundered Brazilian rain forests, in the wretched poverty of Bangladesh or Somalia. Theoretically, almost everyone now knows this. But how does this knowledge find expression in practical policies? In the practical politics of each one of us?

People today know that they can only be saved by a new type of global responsibility. Only one small detail is missing: that responsibility must genuinely be assumed.

THE NEW SPAIN
From Isolation to Influence
KENNETH MAXWELL AND STEVEN SPIEGEL

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February 1994 / 0-87609-163-X / 120 pp. / Paperback / $14.95

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