Internationale Geschichte
International History

WOLFGANG MUELLER, MICHAEL GEHLER, ARNOLD SUPPAN, eds.

# The Revolutions of 1989

## A Handbook

Verlag der
Österreichischen Akademie
der Wissenschaften

ÖAW

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INSTITUT FÜR NEUZEIT- UND
ZEITGESCHICHTSFORSCHUNG

WOLFGANG MUELLER, MICHAEL GEHLER,
ARNOLD SUPPAN, EDS.

The Revolutions of 1989: A Handbook

ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
PHILOSOPHISCH-HISTORISCHE KLASSE
INSTITUT FÜR NEUZEIT- UND ZEITGESCHICHTSFORSCHUNG

# INTERNATIONALE GESCHICHTE/ INTERNATIONAL HISTORY

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON
MICHAEL GEHLER
UND
WOLFGANG MUELLER

BAND 2

Verlag der
Österreichischen Akademie
der Wissenschaften

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Wien 2015

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Vorgelegt von k. M. Michael Gehler
in der Sitzung am 27. Juni 2014

Dieses Forschungsprojekt wurde unterstützt von:

Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur
Gemeinde Wien, Kultur
Republik Österreich, Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration, Äußeres

Cover
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Wien
Satz: Hapra GmbH, Puchenau
Druck und Bindung: Prime Rate kft., Budapest
http://hw.oeaw.ac.at/7638-1
http://verlag.oeaw.ac.at

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors would like to thank: Mikhail Gorbachev, Václav Havel†, Helmut Kohl and Condolezza Rice for supporting this project; the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the Austrian Ministry of European and International Affairs, the City of Vienna, Austria, the Stiftung Aufarbeitung der Geschichte des SED-Regimes, Germany, for sponsoring the project conference and the editing of the volume; Jiři Dienstbier†, Rainer Eppelmann, Ferenc Glatz, Tadeusz Mazowiecki†, Vadim Medvedev, Horst Teltschik and Philip Zelikow for sharing their recollections at the conference; Cynthia Peck-Kubaczek and Stanley Hale for language editing; David Schriffl, Vera Machat, Ulrike Rack, Lisa Mayer, Alexandra Neubauer-Czettl and Clemens Reisner for editorial support; the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments, and all the authors for contributing to this volume.

Wolfgang Mueller

# THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1989: AN INTRODUCTION

In the May 1988 issue of *Szkola*, a Wrocław underground paper, an anonymous commentator wrote: “I think the end of our era is already close at hand.”[1] The unknown author with the pseudonym Nobelek Rusz-Czkash turned out to be among the few who correctly predicted the life expectancy of communist regimes in Eastern Europe. While since the 1920s there had been announcements of the end of Soviet communism,[2] neither the most prominent Eastern nor Western prophets had foreseen the sudden and momentous events that within weeks would wash away seemingly unshakable regimes in a number of countries and with them the postwar international order in Europe, thus bringing to a close what soon would be called the “short” twentieth century.[3]

This is not to say that there were no analysts who perceived the signs of the impending unrest. Among those who saw it coming was Georgii Shakhnazarov, Gorbachev’s advisor, who in October 1988 predicted a serious crisis in Eastern Europe caused “by concrete factors rooted in the underlying economic and political model of socialism that was first developed in our country.”[4] To be sure, in early 1988 US intelligence also forecasted “a moderate chance” for popular upheaval in Poland, Romania, and Hungary; however, “in extremis,” the intelligence estimate saw “no reason to doubt” Gorbachev’s willingness to “intervene to preserve party rule and decisive Soviet influence in the region.”[5]

Perhaps the younger generation of dissidents (to which the commentator Nobelek Rusz-Czkash supposedly belonged), those who distributed leaflets and

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1 The author would like to thank Maximilian Graf and Arnold Suppan for their comments. Quoted in Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 213.

2 Among the authors who predicted the downfall of Soviet communism, be it for political, economic, national, or demographic reasons, are thinkers as diverse as Ludwig von Mises, George Orwell, Andrei Amalrik, Marian Dziewanowski, Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Emmanuel Todd. Cf. Seymour Martin Lipset and Gyorgy Bence, “Anticipations of the Failure of Communism,” *Theory and Society* 23, no. 2 (April 1994): 169–210, 177–81.

3 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (New York: Vintage, 1994).

4 Quoted in Mark Kramer, “The Demise of the Soviet Bloc,” *Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 4 (December 2011): 788–854, 811.

5 Director of National Intelligence, “Soviet Policy Toward Eastern Europe Under Gorbachev,” National Intelligence Estimate 11/12-9-88, May 1988, in Benjamin B. Fischer, ed., *At Cold War’s End: US Intelligence on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1989–1991* ([Washington, DC]: Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), 151–77, 155, 171.

staged demonstrations, got it right by sheer luck. Perhaps they wanted to believe that their seemingly absurd and hopeless oppositional activities were not in vain. Perhaps people on the ground were more sensitive to societal dynamics and the shifts of popular sentiment than some of the more prominent dissidents—a phenomenon that became clear with regard to the East German oppositional elite's attitude toward German unity in early 1990. Historian Charles Maier was certainly correct in analyzing that the failure of many to predict the revolutions of 1989 and the collapse of state communism was, in some way, a "failure of democratic faith," a failure to believe that democracy was, in the long run, strong enough to topple a coercive system.[6]

There is no consensus among historians and social scientists about whether revolutions are per se predictable or not. Unpredictability and a sudden rupture in normal or familiar practices of politics and society are often quoted as features of revolutions. Whether the East European revolutions of 1989 qualify as such, depends, as Charles Tilly remarked, upon how broadly the term is defined.[7] More recent revolutionary theory defines a revolution as "an effort to transform the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in society, accompanied by formal or informal mass mobilization and non-institutionalized actions that undermine authorities."[8] In this sense, the East European upheavals of 1989 are acknowledged by political scientist Vladimir Tismaneanu as a "series of political revolutions that led to the decisive and irreversible transformation of the existing order. Instead of autocratic, one-party systems, the revolutions created emerging pluralist polities. The revolutions allowed the citizens of the former ideologically driven despotisms (closed societies) to recover their main human and civil rights and to engage in the building of open societies."[9]

In the political and social sciences it is said that as soon as a closed society starts to open, its leaders begin to lose control. More than a century before 1989, Alexis de Tocqueville had concluded from his studies on *L'Ancien* Régime *et la Révolution*: "Experience teaches that the most critical moment for bad governments is the one which witnesses their first steps toward reform."[10] As the con-

6 Charles S. Maier, "What Have We Learned since 1989?," *Contemporary European History* 18, no. 3 (2009): 253–69, 253.

7 Charles Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492–1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 4, 233–37. Tilly concluded that while the situation in 1989 and the resulting events were revolutionary almost everywhere in Eastern Europe, the events can be considered revolutions in only certain countries (in Czechoslovakia, the GDR, the USSR, and Yugoslavia). For a thoughtful analysis of predictability and history, see Arnold Suppan, "Prognose und Vorhersehbarkeit in Geschichte und Geschichtswissenschaft," lecture at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, 15 November 2013. I am grateful to Arnold Suppan for sharing his manuscript.

8 Jack Goldstone, "Towards a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (2001): 139–87.

9 Vladimir Tismaneanu, "The Revolutions of 1989: Causes, Meanings, Consequences," *Contemporary European History* 18, no. 3 (2009): 271–88, 277.

10 Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1856), 214.

tributions to this volume underscore, the unrest caught the communist bloc in a state of flux, with the struggle between reformers, anti-reformers, and dissidents still undecided. The upheavals of 1989 have, therefore, been aptly described as a "partnership of revolution from above and revolution from below."[11] In the various countries, the revolutions followed different patterns: national reaffirmation of the 1956 uprising combined with reforms from above in Hungary; long-term opposition and gradually eroding communism in Poland; unrest of the masses leading to the implosion of the rigid regimes of East Germany and Czechoslovakia; demonstrations met by palace revolts in Bulgaria and Romania. Most of them were peaceful and "self-limiting", with a negotiated transition of power. Still, popular participation and legitimacy was considered large enough to make them a "popular, genuine" revolution.[12] While some of the upheavals were interpreted afterward as steps toward political normalization after a successful modernization, others are seen by many as just another failed attempt to modernize.

The regimes that were toppled in 1989 had similar features: Their rule was autocratic, based on communist ideology, state-ownership of the economy, subordination of society under one political party, and tight control over political activity.[13] As they matured, these regimes reduced mass coercion and repression in favor of using nationalism and an implicit social contract. Many factors explain their downfall: economic stagnation, reducing their maneuvering space vis-à-vis their own population; the resulting crisis of legitimacy, with the regimes being less and less able to deliver the material improvements they had promised in return for their populations' political aquiescence; ideological bankruptcy, with the ideas of social equality increasingly pushed aside by human rights; the effects of reform-communist political and economic liberalization, culminating with and personified by Mikhail Gorbachev, which increased people's maneuvering space and information sources, but reduced the regimes' ability and resolution to bribe or coerce their people into submission; and courageous action by non-conformists. As in the case of the communist regimes' installation after World War I and II, intentionalist interpretations of their demise are pitted against structuralist ones. While intentionalists will stress the role of Lech Wałęsa, Pope John Paul II, and Mikhail Gorbachev, structuralists point to inherent flaws that were inscribed in the communist regimes from their beginning, societal disintegration, and economic imbalances.[14] Depending upon whether one chooses a systemic, society-based or

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[11] Karol Edward Sołtan, "Purposes of the Past," in Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob, eds., *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 69–108, 80–88.

[12] Kevin McDermott and Mattew Stibbe, eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: From Communism to Pluralism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 3.

[13] Stephen E. Smith, "Towards a Global History of Communism," in idem, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–34, 3.

[14] Ibid., 11–16.

regime-centered approach, 1989 can thus be told as a story of systemic failure, popular unrest, revolution from above or great-power politics.

Since 1990, historians and political scientists have told this story from a comparative and/or entangled perspective.[15] As archival materials were released they helped us to better understand events, backgrounds and interactions.[16] Bottom-up[17] and top-down[18] perspectives, intentionalist and structuralist explanations struggled against one another and, in the end, will perhaps complement one another. The more detailed the new insights are, the greater is the need to periodically synthesize new findings and reflect upon the larger picture.[19]

It is the aim of this book to give an overview over the various national revolutions of 1989 and the external reactions, thus combining both domestic and international perspectives. It is not concerned with postcommunist transition, although it includes some of the consequences of the revolutions into the spec-

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[15] Among the "first generation" of writings on 1989, cf. Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague* (New York: Random House, 1990); Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Eastern Europe* (New York: Random House, 1990); William Echikson, *Lighting in the Night: Revolution in Eastern Europe* (New York: W. Morrow, 1990); J.F. Brown, *Surge to Freedom: The End of Communist Rule in Eastern Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); Roger East, *Revolution in Eastern Europe* (London, New York: Pinter Publishers, 1992); Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1992); J. Elvert and M. Salewski, *Der Umbruch in Osteuropa* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1993); Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[16] Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997); Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Vladimir Tismaneanu, ed., *The Revolutions of 1989* (London, New York: Routledge, 1999); Steven Saxonberg, *The Fall: A Comparative Study of the End of Communism in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Poland* (London: Routledge, repr. 2003); Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, Vladislav Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010).

[17] Jiří Přibáň, *Disidenti práva: O revolucích roku 1989, fikcích legality a soudobé verzi společenské smlouvy* (Prague: Sociologické nakladatelství, 2001); Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[18] Stephen Kotkin with Jan T. Gross, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Modern Library, 2009).

[19] Mary E. Sarotte, *1989. The Struggle to Create Post–Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob, eds., *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009); Victor Sebestyen, *Revolution 1989: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2009); Bernd Florath, ed., *Das Revolutionsjahr 1989: Die demokratische Revolution in Osteuropa als eine transnationale Zäsur* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011); K.V. Nikiforov et al., eds., *Revolyutsii i reform v stranah Tsentral'noi i yugo-vostochnoi Evropy: 20 let spustya* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2011); Kevin McDermott and Mattew Stibbe, eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: From Communism to Pluralism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Mark Kramer and Vít Smetana, eds., *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain* (Lanham: Lexington, 2014).

trum of issues. The volume has three parts: the first examines the revolutionary events—from above and from below—in Eastern Europe and Beijing, starting with Gorbachev's perestroika and continuing with country studies from Poland to Romania. The second part deals with Soviet and Western perceptions of and responses to the 1989 crisis in a similar fashion by treating various countries' leaders' political responses to the challenges of 1989–90. The last part of this volume focuses on the aftermath of the momentous events, on societal transformations that followed, the acceptance of the new Central European democracies to NATO and the EU, and on the larger context of these changes. These chapters are complemented by country studies on the post-1989 "archival revolution" and the memory of 1989. The remainder of this chapter attempts to contextualize and link the various chapters of this volume by addressing transnational links and topics. It reflects the structure of this volume, albeit in a modified way.

## The Revolutions

In his groundbreaking study of *The Gorbachev Factor*, political scientist Archie Brown stated that the sudden collapse of 1989 "requires no elaborate explanation."[20] The communist regimes in Eastern Europe "existed because the Soviet Union had put them in place—by force of arms or threat of force—and had been ready to intervene to sustain them in power." While most authors would agree that while communism had been rejected by most East Europeans as a Soviet imposition[21] and that national communism was a double-edged sword with regard to bloc consistency, there remains disagreement about the share that long- and short-term factors such as the actions of individuals had in bringing down state communism. Stephen Kotkin has concluded that state communism's internal crisis was the main reason for the revolutions, and he has gone as far as to claim that the role of the civil society in 1989 is a myth.[22] Even if this is true, and there are many who doubt it, we need to ask (a) what made this crisis a successful revolution and (b) why it brought collapse in 1989 and not, say, in 1956, 1968 or 2050. Christoph Boyer has endeavored to develop a model to explain these questions by combining the birth defects of communism such as the absence of economic incentives, political

[20] Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 247.

[21] Cf. Brown, Kramer, Sebestyen. An exception seems to be Constantine Pleshakov, who claims the following: "If in 1945 communism hadn't exactly arrived at the point of a gun, 1989 was not really about throwing off Moscow […] Eastern Europeans were, naturally, very happy to see the Soviets go, but they were fighting not the empire […] but their own rulers." *There Is No Freedom Without Bread! 1989 and the Civil War That Brought Down Communism* (New York: Picador, 2009), 5–6, 236. Nonetheless, the experience of 1953, 1956 and 1968 shows that East Europeans had indeed fought the Soviet empire.

[22] Stephen Kotkin with Jan T. Gross, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Modern Library, 2009).

competition, and public correctives with later emerging flaws such as the suppression of reforms in Czechoslovakia and the GDR in 1968–70 and the inability to satisfy consumer demands or to implement the Third Industrial Revolution.[23] With the Eastern economies and societies being increasingly entangled with their Western counterparts,[24] comparisons could be drawn whereby the flaws became ever more visible for the normal citizen. Since modernization and social as well as economic superiority loomed large among the self-legitimizing factors of the communist regimes, the inability to achieve these things to the same extent as the West fatally undermined the regimes' prestige and legitimacy.

In general, top-down approaches underline the role of perestroika among the preconditions and decisive factors of 1989. While a number of studies have emerged that stress the role of other factors, in particular bottom-up impulses, many will agree that among the preconditions for the revolutions, "the changes in the Soviet Union are overwhelmingly the most important part."[25] The importance of what was labeled the "Gorbachev factor" stems from perestroika and glasnost', i.e. the attempt to dynamize the ailing Soviet economy and tackle corruption as well as lethargy. [26] This was to be achieved by stimulating political and economic participation and reducing the costs of the hypertrophic empire. This included, as a prerequisite, the relaxation of East-West tensions. As the economic crisis became more apparent, steps intensified toward reducing Soviet interference in the East European states as well as subsidies for them.

At the same time, the importance of Western partners for alleviating East European problems increased. In parallel, Gorbachev's calls for perestroika and his support for change in the non-Soviet member states of the Eastern bloc grew bolder. He "wanted East Europeans to emulate [perestroika] but hesitated to push them too hard since that went against the spirit of his politics."[27] Moreover, before spring 1988, his calls did not include a public disavowal of the Brezhnev Doctrine.[28]

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23 Christoph Boyer, "'1989' und die Wege dorthin," *Vierteljahrshefte* für Zeitgeschichte 59, no. 1 (2011): 101–18.

24 Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Raphael Lutz, *Nach dem Boom: Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; 2008).

25 Archie Brown, *Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 222.

26 It was an irony that the leader, who "aimed to rejuvenate communism, ended up destroying it." Peter Grieder, "'When Your Neighbour Changes His Wallpaper': The 'Gorbachev Factor' and the Collapse of the German Democratic Republic," in Kevin McDermott and Mattew Stibbe, eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: From Communism to Pluralism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 73–92, 73.

27 Mary Buckley, "The Multifaceted External Soviet Role in Processes towards Unanticipated Revolutions," in Kevin McDermott and Mattew Stibbe, eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: From Communism to Pluralism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 33–72.

28 Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 178–256, 183.

In his chapter to this volume, *Andrei Grachev* stresses the "new political thinking" as a non-Leninist and non-confrontational approach to international policy. It was based on disarmament, non-violence, and reform. Although Gorbachev did not order it, he encouraged the Polish communists to re-legalize *Solidarność*, acquiesced (in March 1989) to the subsequent (from May) Hungarian dismantling of the Iron Curtain, granted (in August) the opening of the Hungarian border for East German refugees (in September) and agreed (in January 1990) to Germany's reunification. He did not veto the emergence of non-communist parties, the holding of (semi-) free elections or the subsequent emergence of non-communist-led governments in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the Soviet leader had entirely abandoned the "outer empire" before 1991. When the first communist regimes began to collapse, the CPSU initially still considered immediate measures to provide their "fraternal parties" support, as *Mikhail Prozumenshchikov* shows. After the new non-communist governments were formed, steps were conceived for improving Soviet relations with them. In many instances, Gorbachev referred to the continuing Soviet responsibility as a *primus inter pares*, and even after the forming of a non-communist government in Poland, the Kremlin sought assurances that this country would remain in the Warsaw Pact.[29]

The question of why communist leaders agreed to give up their monopoly of power can be explained in several ways: Some intended to stabilize their position by co-opting parts of the non-communist spectrum or, as Polish opposition mastermind Bronisław Geremek said about the communist leadership, "to corrupt us, divide us, compromise us."[30] Others counted on confirming their own position and humiliating their contenders at the ballot box. In the round table talks, Polish communists insisted on quick elections, hoping to wrong-foot the opposition, which clearly lacked an apparatus or resources. Not only Polish, but also East German communists and even Gorbachev "did not realize how much they would be repudiated,"[31] overestimating their chances of winning the popular vote. In the end, it turned out that in 1989 state communism lacked not only popular support, but also the ability to readjust and, luckily, the resolution to fight for power. As an alternative explanation, historian Konrad Jarausch has pointed to the loss of utopian belief and self-confidence among the ruling communists[32] and Charles Maier has argued that in 1989 the communist leaders "understood that they had

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[29] Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 240.

[30] Quoted in Victor Sebestyen, *Revolution 1989: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2009), 221. Cf. ibid., 287.

[31] Maier, "What Have We Learned since 1989?," 261. Cf. Kramer, "The Collapse (Part 1)," 195.

[32] Konrad H. Jarausch, "Moderate Modernity and the Spirit of 1989," in Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob, eds., *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 109–26, 112. Cf. Tismaneanu, "The Revolutions of 1989," 279.

arrived at a dead end in terms of their own aspirations and policies."[33] In Maier's eyes, this disillusionment is part of what he calls "late communism," an "ageing" regime's era of growing complexity in which the central power loses control to its agents, the economy and official politics are less dynamic, and leaders are less prone to risk-taking.

In Poland 1989 bottom-up initiatives were most prominent: nowhere else in the Eastern bloc was the opposition so powerful, nowhere else did so many different oppositional initiatives emerge, nowhere else did they establish such a widespread network of transnational contacts and activities supporting oppositional groups in other East European countries. In his path-breaking study of grassroots opposition, historian Padraic Kenney has stated: "The regime did not agree to negotiate because this or that opposition leader showed indefatigable determination (nor, of course, simply due to economic decline and Western pressure, both of which had been the case for a long time). The catalyst to dialogue was the broad social unrest on dozens of stages."[34] As in Kenney's study, bottom-up approaches stress the importance of East European dissidents and opposition groups for bringing about the revolutions of 1989. While Stephen Kotkin as well as historian Tony Judt[35] have doubted the impact of dissidents, Kenney and Timothy Garton Ash argue that the "reassessment of the notion of citizenship" was launched by the example of intellectuals and their ideas.[36] Vladimir Tismaneanu has stated that the revolutions

> cannot be understood without an emphasis on the significance of civil society as a set of fundamental ideas, a political math, and a real, historical movement [...] those who took to the streets, the thousands and thousands who were ready to die because they wanted to be free, did not act as the puppets of uncivil society. They believed in civility, decency and humanity, and they succeeded in rehabilitating these values.[37]

Opposition comprised a wide range of interests and activities: While *Solidarność* and a few dissidents had held a virtual monopoly of the opposition in the early 1970s, in 1989 the groups ranged from human rights committees, religious and social groups, peace movements and conscientious objectors (e.g. Charter 77; Freedom and Peace, the first major opposition group in Poland since the founding of *Solidarność*; the Peace Group for Dialogue in Hungary; the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights in the GDR), to cultural- and nature-protection as well as anti-nuclear and ecological awareness groups. These included the Velehrad initiative

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33 Maier, "What Have We Learned since 1989?," 259; 267.

34 Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 300.

35 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Penguin, 2005), 576. The author refers to "immediate" impact in the 1970s.

36 Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern*, 131–56. Garton Ash dismisses Kotkin's interpretation. Timothy Garton Ash, "1989!," *The New York Review of Books*, 5 November 2009.

37 Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Rethinking 1989," in idem and Bogdan C. Iacob, eds., *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 15–32, 32.

of 1985; János Várgha's Danube Circle, which collected more than 10,000 signatures against the creation of the gigantic Nagymaros dam; and *Ekoglasnost*, which became famous for its protests in Sofia in October 1989 and whose crushing contributed to Todor Zhivkov's downfall.[38] Their activities comprised street theaters, summer camps, pilgrimages, student activism, raft expeditions, the collecting of signatures for petitions, street protests, hunger strikes, leaflet distribution, sit-ins and happenings, the cleaning and restoring of historical sites, the occupation of endangered natural sites, singing songs, forming human chains, the commemoration of historical dates, and campaigns against pollution or homelessness.

In many places, it was young people who were leading the protests. Since the nineteenth century (not in 1789), students had played a vanguard role in many, if not most, revolutions.[39] In the Eastern bloc, communist propaganda had contributed to keeping ideas of "revolution," "powerful demonstrations" and "meetings" popular.[40] As *Karsten Brüggemann* shows in this chapter on the revolution in the Baltics, opposition was conducted mainly by representatives of a generation that only knew about massive state violence through hearsay or personal family history. They therefore believed in the "possibility" of change. Music played a large role, not only in the Baltics, where the singing of songs became a major means of protest. Rock or punk music had always been perceived by communist authorities as potentially subversive. Indeed, in 1976, the arrest of the rock band Plastic People of the Universe became the trigger for formulating Charter 77; twelve years later, a rally in Czechoslovakia in the memory of the death of John Lennon turned into a demonstration for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country.[41]

In Bulgaria and Romania, as *Ulf Brunnbauer* and *Anneli Ute Gabanyi* show, political dissent was less significant in comparison to Poland or Czechoslovakia. Here opposition groups of ethnic minorities were remarkable: the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, which opposed the forceful assimilation campaign to which it had

[38] For a transnational survey of the role of churches before and in 1989, see Christian Halbrock, "Kirche und Kirchen im Vorfeld sowie in den Revolutionen: Handlungsvoraussetzungen, Einübung und Praxis des Widersprechens," in Bernd Florath, ed., *Das Revolutionsjahr 1989: Die demokratische Revolution in Osteuropa als eine transnationale Zäsur* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 149–64.

[39] Robin Okey, "Echoes and Precedents: 1989 in Historical Perspective," in Kevin McDermott and Mattew Stibbe, eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: From Communism to Pluralism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 33–52. Cf. idem, *The Demise of Communist East Europe: 1989 in Context* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).

[40] James Krapfl, "Afterword: The Discursive Constitution of Revolution and Revolution Envy," in Kevin McDermott and Mattew Stibbe, eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: From Communism to Pluralism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 271–84.

[41] Sebestyen, *Revolution*, 208. Cf. György Dalos, *Lebt wohl, Genossen! Der Untergang des sowjetischen Imperiums* (Munich: Beck 2011). On opposition in Czechoslovakia, cf. E.G. Zadorozhnyuk, *Ot kruzhneniya Prazhskoi vesny k triumfu "barhatnoi" revolyutsii: Iz istorii oppozitsionnogo dvizeniya v Chehoslovakii (Avgust 1968–Noyabr' 1989)* (Moscow: Indrik, 2008).

been subjected and which was supported from 1988 by Bulgarian intellectuals; in Romania, the Hungarian minority, which resisted the forceful razing of their villages and was inspired by their spokesman Pastor László Tőkés of Timişoara (Temesvár), whose arrest helped trigger the uprising in 1989.

Although created for collective action, most of these groups were "rooted in an individualistic concept of freedom, programmatically skeptical of all ideological blueprints for social engineering, […] liberal and non-utopian."[42] Jürgen Habermas has therefore labeled 1989 the "rectifying revolutions," revolutions that restored Eastern Europe to the "normal" liberal democratic trajectory.[43] By "living in truth," as Václav Havel put it, they strove to reject a system which they perceived as a lie.[44] Ideas in general, the ones of human and civil rights in particular, loomed large among their foundations.[45] They aimed at belonging to what they imagined as the free, independent, wealthy and happy mainstream of the West; "return to Europe," be it to a functioning economy and/or to civil society, was one of their mottos.[46] This may be one of the reasons why what political scientist Marie Elise Sarotte called "prefab" models prevailed in defining the post-1989 international order.[47]

In the early 1980s, the image of West European society being wealthier and happier than communist ones seems to have been widespread in the East, both among the masses and in the higher echelons. In the wake of détente, perestroika, and the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, intensified East-West entanglement,[48] the exchange of visitors, and the media had achieved a great deal in deconstructing enemy images and shaking ideological convictions. In his memoirs, Gorbachev wrote that simply by the West being able to provide a higher standard of living for its citizens and legitimacy for its governments, his own "faith in the advantages of socialist over bourgeois democracy was shaken."[49] Détente and

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[42] Vladimir Tismaneanu, "The Revolutions of 1989: Causes, Meanings, Consequences," *Contemporary European History* 18, no. 3 (2009): 271–88, 272.

[43] Jürgen Habermas, *Die nachholende Revolution*, Kleine Politische Schriften VII (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990); idem, "What Does Socialism Mean Today? The Rectifying Revolution and the Need for New Thinking on the Left," *New Left Review* I, no. 183 (September-October 1990), http://newleftreview.org/I/183/jurgen-habermas-what-does-socialism-mean-today-the-rectifying-revolution-and-the-need-for-new-thinking-on-the-left.

[44] Václav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless," in idem et al., *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens against the State in Central-Eastern Europe* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), 10–59, 20.

[45] Wolfgang Eichwede, "Don Quichottes Sieg: Die Bürgerrechtler und die Revolutionen von 1989," *Osteuropa* 59, no. 2–3 (2009): 61–84.

[46] Judt, *Postwar*, 630.

[47] Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1–10.

[48] Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965–1985* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010).

[49] M. Gorbachev, *Zhisn' i reformy* 1 (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), 169.

Ostpolitik had contributed to the Western image improving greatly. As memories of the war faded and West Germany emerged as an economic partner, anti-German propaganda which had been used for decades to keep the Eastern bloc together was toned down. The picture of Willy Brandt kneeling in front of the Warsaw uprising memorial did more to deconstruct the communist enemy image of West Germany than decades of Western counterpropaganda: "After the Berlin and German treaties were signed at the beginning of the 1970s only the most stubborn and hidebound state socialist leaders […] might still believe that a commonwealth of workers was menaced by an imperialist conspiracy."[50]

While Poland is often cited as a case in point for the importance of bottom-up initiatives, *Klaus Bachmann* underlines the emergence and temporary toleration of semi-legal non-communist political actors in Poland as well as of liberalizing steps taken by the late-communist regime. All the more, the story of Hungary in 1989 is often described as a top-down process, a "revolution from above," whereby reform communists participated in dismantling the one-party system, as shown by *Andreas Oplatka*. As in the Polish case, pre-1989 liberalization as well as round table negotiations loom large. After multicandidate elections had been held in the USSR in April 1989, Gorbachev neither vetoed the holding of partially free elections in Poland nor the subsequent emergence of a noncommunist-led government. However, in March 1989 he did not welcome Hungarian Premier Miklos Németh's proposal to hold multiparty elections in Hungary and he disapproved of the emerging Hungarian interpretation of 1956 as a popular uprising and not, as Soviet communism had preached, a "counterrevolution."[51] But it was to Gorbachev's credit that he stressed that such decisions were within the national responsibility and that he fulfilled Hungary's demand for a quick Soviet withdrawal of forces.

Doubtlessly, Gorbachev's greatest achievement was non-violence as a consequence of his and his East European colleagues' restraint. In twentieth-century Europe in general, political violence had played a large role;[52] in Eastern Europe and the communist bloc this role was particularly large.[53] The revolutions of 1789

[50] Maier, "What Have We Learned since 1989?," 261. Cf. Odd Arne Westad, "Beginnings of the End: How the Cold War Crumbled," in Silvio Pons and Federico Romero, eds., *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War: Issues, Interpretations, Periodizations* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 68–81, 69–71.

[51] Kramer, "The Demise of the Soviet Bloc," 818.

[52] Donald Bloxham and Roberst Gerwarth, eds., *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash, eds., *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Martin Sabrow, ed., *1989 und die Rolle der Gewalt (*Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009); Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Arnold Suppan, *Hitler—Beneš—Tito: Konflikt, Krieg und Völkermord in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013).

[53] Stephane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean–Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosek and Jean–Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge,

and 1848, both of which included large-scale violence, were followed by military interventions and wars. In contrast, many historians have pointed to the 1989 revolutions' surprisingly peaceful character. Timothy Garton Ash is certainly correct in assessing that "Where the guillotine is a symbol of 1789, the round table is a symbol of 1989."[54] In his groundbreaking study, Jacques Lévesque states that "the most surprising event of that fateful year was not, in itself, the collapse of the East European regimes […] The most remarkable and least expected event of 1989 was, in fact, the Soviet attitude."[55] Indeed, other uprisings and upheavals in Eastern Europe in 1953, 1956, 1968 had started peacefully before they were violently suppressed by Soviet forces. Mark Kramer has argued that three crucial events helped shape Gorbachev's rejection of force: the Afghanistan disaster, the Soviet crackdown on demonstrators in Tbilisi in April 1989 and the Chinese massacre of students on Tiananmen Square in June.[56] Even more importantly, humanitarian considerations spoke against the application of force. The Soviet leader was likely influenced by what historian James Sheehan has described as Europe's postwar transformation into a pacifist mainstream consensus.[57] In addition, from the cycle of liberalization, East European unrest, and Soviet hardline response as had emerged in 1953–56 and 1966–70, Gorbachev drew the conclusion that the use of force would not only discredit perestroika internationally but also wreck it domestically. In the end, the Soviet leader was remarkably successful in avoiding violence, as well as in safeguarding a peaceful but rapid transition to a new political order. Since communism had not taken roots in Eastern Europe, a civil war could be avoided.

Yet, when demonstrators took to the streets in 1989, none of them could know for sure what kind of response they might expect from the police, or even from the

Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999). Cf. Hermann Weber and Ulrich Mählert, eds., *Terror: Stalinistische Parteisäuberungen 1936–1953* (Paderborn: Schöningh, rev. exp. ed. 2001); Norman Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); David Svoboda and Coilin O'Connor, eds., *Crimes of the Communist Regimes* (Prague: Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, 2011); Kevin McDermott and Mattew Stibbe, eds., *Stalinist Terror in Eastern Europe: Elite Purges and Mass Repression* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

[54] Timothy Garton Ash, "Conclusions," in Sorin Antohi and Vladimir Tismaneanu, eds., *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and their Aftermath* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 395–402, 398.

[55] Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1.

[56] Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 3–64, 22–41; "The Collapse (Part 1)," 188, 191. Sergey Radchenko has argued that Gorbachev's rejection of the application of force did not prevent him from "utiliz[ing] Tiananmen to expand relations with Beijing at US expense." Sergey Radchenko, *Unwanted Visionaries: The Soviet Failure in Asia at the End of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7.

[57] James Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? The Transformation of Modern Europe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008).

Soviet forces. In earlier decades, the Kremlin had sent out seemingly arbitrarily freezes and thaws, and in 1989 nobody was able to tell when the next "climate change" was due. In contrast to earlier claims, no documentary evidence has hitherto emerged that Gorbachev had, prior to 1989, informed his East European comrades about his decision not to send troops should their people rise against them.[58] Except for public announcements of the freedom of choice, such as Gorbachev's 1988 address to the United Nations, the public knew very little about the leader's intentions.

Still, in 1989, thousands of people were intimidated, taken into custody, or beaten up by communist police. Force was never ruled out entirely. Padraic Kenney has shown that in 1989, it was still risky to demonstrate in the streets. Even in the most liberal parts of Poland, uncertainty remained; in October 1989, Soviet police organized a "pogrom" against opposition demonstrators in Ukraine[59] and in November demonstrating students in Prague were mercilessly beaten up by Czech police. Polish communist leaders seriously considered imposing martial law in August 1988 and after the elections of June 1989; Czechoslovak communists considered doing the same in November 1989.[60] In the GDR police vans were deliberately driven into the demonstrating crowd, Stasi boss Erich Mielke gave the order to "shoot troublemakers" and the East German Politburo discussed crushing the mass demonstrations. As the brief episode of Soviet force in the Baltics shows, until 1991 "no one could exclude the possibility of an attempted crackdown."[61]

The fact that appalling bloodshed happened on Tiananmen Square, many observers claim, is one of the reasons it did not happen in Europe. But the opposite chain of causality may hold true as well, as *Peter Vámos* suggests. From the developments in Eastern Europe, Chinese leaders drew the conclusion that ruthless action was needed in Beijing. While Gorbachev had started to tolerate public dissent, not the least in order to create momentum for his reforms, the Chinese party decided first to quell the student demonstrations on Tiananmen Square and then to return to their reforms. Afterward, again, fundamentally differing conclusions were drawn at the other end of the communist world: While members of the Polish

[58] Kramer, "The Demise of the Soviet Bloc," 788–854. In a contribution to the conference "The Revolutions of 1989" at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, on 2 October 2009, Vadim Medvedev stated that abandoning the Brezhnev Doctrine was "first announced at a working meeting of leaders of the Warsaw Treaty countries in Sofia in October 1985." Similarly, earlier literature claims that Gorbachev informed Eastern leaders in 1985 or 1986 about the abandoning of the Brezhnev Doctrine. In contrast, William Taubman and Svetlana Savranskaya argue that this happened at the July 1989 Warsaw Pact summit in Bucharest. However, this argument rests solely on memoirs. William Taubman and Svetlana Savranskaya, "If a Wall Fell in Berlin and Moscow Hardly Noticed, Would it Still Make a Noise?," in Jeffrey A. Engel, ed., *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 69–95, 85.

[59] Kenney, *A Carnival*, 273.

[60] Kramer, "The Collapse (Part 1)," 195; Sebestyen, *Revolution*, 375.

[61] Steven Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, updated edition 2008), 92.

and Hungarian opposition were among the fiercest critics of the bloody crackdown and in the Kremlin an appalled Gorbachev may have felt confirmed in his commitment to non-violence, in Bucharest and East Berlin, Nicolae Ceauşescu and Erich Honecker watched with interest how what their hardline advisors would soon recommend as "the Chinese solution" was being implemented.[62]

However, as *Anneli Ute Gabanyi* argues, it is far from clear who is responsible for most of the about 1,000 dead in Romania, when a group of people around Ion Iliescu seized power in a coup d'état following popular unrest in Timişoara. Ceauşescu's suppression of the uprising cost many lives, but many more people died in fighting after the dictator had been arrested. He was the only communist leader who was executed in 1989.

Police brutality did not rescue the communist GDR either. After a brief climax in October, the violence was toned down and, soon thereafter, the SED state disappeared. The mass exodus of East Germans through the recently opened Hungarian-Austrian border, ongoing demonstrations at home and quickly approaching bankruptcy had caused so much confusion in East Berlin that it unwillingly opened the Wall and, later, consented with round table talks and free elections. Interestingly, even as the GDR increasingly resembled an air mattress with a hole, some of its most prominent dissidents continued to believe in the existence of a reformed communist state. Yet, this idea was rejected among the masses and the emerging drive for German unity prevailed.

*Hans Hermann Hertle* stresses the role West German television (which could be seen anywhere in the GDR except in the so-called Valley of the Clueless) played in East Germany's "October Revolution" by reporting the opening, first, of the Hungarian Iron Curtain and, then, prematurely as it turned out, of the Berlin Wall. Indeed, the fall of the Wall is the first world-historic event to have become reality because it was announced by the media. When in the evening of 9 November 1989 West German television declared that "the gates of the Wall are wide open" this was not yet the case.[63] However it turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy, since it drew more and more crowds to the border. Even earlier, West German reports on the rigged GDR elections in May 1989 had helped spark demonstrations in the East. The transnational effects of the first "televised revolution in history" did not end here. Victor Sebestyen writes: "When people in Prague saw the Berlin Wall come down, they began to believe they too could overthrow their leaders. […] Nicolae Ceauşescu lost power the moment his face was seen on Romanian television looking first confused, then petrified and finally weak as crowds booed him at a Bucharest rally."[64] Similarly, media reports about the alleged death of student Martin Šmíd at the hands of Czechoslovak riot police on 17 November helped to swell the protesting crowd in the "Velvet Revolution." Further impulses for the uprising had been

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[62] Cf. Radchenko, *Unwanted Visionaries*, 307; Kramer, "The Demise of the Soviet Bloc," 826.

[63] Sarotte, *1989*, 38–41.

[64] Sebestyen, *Revolution 1989*, xx (quote), 278.

received by the presence of thousands of East German refugees in the West German embassy in Prague. After massive strikes and the emergence of opposition groups such as Václav Havel's Civic Forum, a coalition government with a non-communist majority was formed and it was agreed to hold free elections.

As *Jiří Suk* reminds us, many of the demonstrations of the "Velvet Revolution" were organized in commemoration of two crucial phases in Czechoslovakia's recent history: Nazi suppression (as signified by the death of Jan Opletal in 1939) and the Soviet and Warsaw Pact crackdown on the "Prague Spring" reform policies of 1968 (an invasion that was protested most tragically by the self-immolation of Jan Palach in 1969). Both historical events were understood as powerful symbols in the fight for national sovereignty and resistance against foreign domination. By the same token, in 1989 events commemorating the Czechoslovak declaration of independence 1918, the 1848 revolution and the 1956 uprising in Hungary (both suppressed by Russian forces), Ukrainian independence 1919, and the 1939 signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact as the stab in the back of Baltic statehood, were organized to create a "national" consensus against what was increasingly depicted and perceived as "foreign" (i.e. Soviet) communist regimes. These served as points of departure for the 1989 revolutions in these countries. It was no coincidence that the reburial of Hungary's 1956 leader Imre Nagy was used by an opposition activist, Viktor Orbán, for voicing a public call for a Soviet withdrawal from his country.

Gorbachev seems to have been aware of the risk that historical revelations might exacerbate national tensions. Until the final day of the USSR's existence, the Soviet leadership continued to consider the Hungarian revolution of 1956 "an anti-communist fascist coup." In the case of the Soviet massacre of the Polish elite near Katyń in 1940, Gorbachev continued to deny knowledge of the whereabouts of related documents about Stalin's responsibility, although according to *Mikhail Prozumenshchikov* he had known about them since the beginning of 1989.

In Yugoslavia, the "national" question emerged in a different way. Together with Albania, it was the only Eastern country that was never occupied by the Soviet army for a longer period of time. *Florian Bieber* and *Armina Galijaš* demonstrate that, at first glance, Yugoslavia's trajectory away from communist rule does not appear particularly different from the other Eastern countries: The communist party collapsed in January 1990 and multiparty elections were held. However, in contrast to other countries the anger of the large protest movement of 1988 was quickly channeled into ethnic conflict and the main cleavages within the ruling party opened along ethnic lines. Thus elections led to different results: While non-communist governments came to power in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the successors to communists won in Montenegro and Serbia. This division of Yugoslavia[65] reflects a larger division between two groups of countries:

[65] Cf. Norman M. Naimark and Holly Case, eds., *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

In Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR multiparty elections brought the victory of non-communist forces; in Bulgaria and Romania members of the (reform) communist elite took power in palace revolts and were then confirmed in elections.[66]

## Transnational links and external factors

Most authors agree that the revolutions of 1989 were not disconnected national phenomena, but were reinforced by inter- and transnational links and spillover effects. As can be seen by the American, French and Polish revolutions of 1776, 1789 and 1791/94 with their transatlantic repercussions, the upheavals from Latin America to the Mediterranean region and St. Petersburg from 1820 to 1825, the Russian and Central European revolutions in the aftermath of World War I as well as the de-Stalinization crises of 1953–56, this is certainly not a new phenomenon. The revolutions of 1830 and 1848 in particular were transnational events with far-reaching spillover effects ranging from Paris to Warsaw and from Palermo to Budapest.[67]

Before and during 1989, ideas of reform and democratic participation spread from Western Europe to the East, from Eastern Europe to Russia and vice versa, and from Eastern Europe to China. Among the dissident groups of the late 1980s, a widespread network of transnational links and interactions existed at the grassroots level. Later this reached up to the top: Collaboration between Polish activists and their Czechoslovak and Hungarian as well as Baltic and Ukrainian colleagues included students' contacts, the smuggling of hardware and know-how,[68] and protests against the Tiananmen massacre in front of the Chinese embassy buildings in Warsaw and Budapest. When Czech authorities arrested Hungarian activists who had supported anti-regime demonstrations in Prague on 21 August 1989, the Hungarian opposition organized a hunger strike in front of the Czechoslovak embassy in Budapest. Solidarity was active in promoting liberalization and self-determination in the USSR: Wałęsa wrote a letter to Gorbachev urging him to grant Lithuania the same right of choice as had been given Eastern Europe and later nominated the three Baltic republics for the Nobel Peace Prize.[69] In the Baltic states, students from Ukraine experienced the feeling of seeing the banned national flag waved on the streets and were taught how to layout their samizdat gazette. Polish opposition leader Adam Michnik joined the inaugural congress of Ukraine's *Rukh* move-

[66] Michael Meyer, *1989: The Year that Changed the World: The Untold Story Behind the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 190–91.

[67] Barbara Haider and Hans Peter Hye, eds., *1848: Ereignis und Erinnerung in den politischen Kulturen Mitteleuropas* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003). Cf. Hans Peter Hye, "Was blieb von 1848?," ibid., 9–30, 12.

[68] Kenney, *A Carnival*, 109; 268.

[69] Kramer, "The Collapse (Part 1)," 211.

ment in September 1989. While Padraic Kenney has demonstrated that dissident cooperation among East Europeans was much more active than expected, he has stressed the reticence of West Europeans (in contrast to Americans) with regard to Eastern dissidents; here the dilemma of the 1970s of whether to establish and maintain contact with communist semi-official peace and human-rights organizations or of trying to collaborate with the opposition was visible.

The transnational spillover of political reforms, as analyzed by *Ella Zadorozhnyuk*, ranged from round table negotiations, free multicandidate elections to the abolishment of the "leading role" of the communist party. Competitive multicandidate elections had been made mandatory in Poland and Hungary for the National Assembly and local councils from the early 1980s;[70] the Hungarian Parliament was relieved step-by-step from party tutelage. The Hungarian communists were also first in giving up their monopoly of power in January 1989[71] and announcing the transition to a multiparty system. The regulations created for the election of the Congress of People's Deputies in the USSR in March stipulated that candidates seek approval by local assemblies; many anti-establishment communists and independent candidates won such tickets and, then, congress seats. From here they created a pro-reform caucus. Later, they were among the first deputies to leave the CPSU. In the meantime, this new kind of election in the Soviet Union had made it easier to change the regulations for elections in Poland in June, with 35 percent of the Sejm and all seats of the Senate open for free contestation. Although Gorbachev had expressed his personal disapproval, Hungary was the first to introduce genuine multiparty elections, which were held shortly after similar elections in the GDR in March and April 1990; Czechoslovakia followed in June. Further spillover effects were seen with regard to border controls: the deconstruction of the Iron Curtain on the Hungarian-Soviet border was mirrored at the Hungarian-Austrian frontier and, subsequently, the opening of the border for East German refugees. While Hungary had joined the UN Convention on Refugees in order to accept Magyars fleeing from Romania, Budapest applied the stipulations to East Germans as well.

Spillover effects triggered not only reforms, but also unrest: The Hungarian demonstrations in solidarity with the Transylvanian Hungarian minority contributed to the revolution in Budapest; in a similar fashion, the presence of East German refugees in Czechoslovakia helped inspire the "Velvet Revolution" in Prague. Added to these triggers were the demonstration effect and copying the round table

[70] Multicandidate elections (with the list controlled by the Communist Party) had been permitted in countries like Poland and Hungary on the local level since the late 1950s–60s. Alex Pravda, "Elections in Communist Party States," in Stephen White and Daniel Nelson, eds., *Communist Politics: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 27–54. On Hungary, Hans-Georg Heinrich, *Hungary: Politics, Economics, and Society* (London: Pinter, 1986), 65–72.

[71] Michael Gehler, "Die Umsturzbewegungen 1989 in Mittel- und Osteuropa," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 41–42 (2004): 36–46. Cf. Andreas Oplatka, *Der erste Riss in der Mauer. September 1989—Ungarn öffnet die Grenze* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2009).

model; Hungary, the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria followed the Polish example of negotiations between the communists and non-communist forces.[72] The emerging transnational dynamic was reflected in assessments by people on the ground: When in September 1989, after state communism had ended in Poland, a Czechoslovak citizen went to a street festival there, she was greeted by a Pole with the words: "Oh, you are from Czechoslovakia! Don't worry, communism will fall there too!"[73] Mark Kramer has discovered that transnational spillovers were facilitated by the intensity of relations within the Eastern bloc.[74] While in 1986–88 reform impulses mainly came from the USSR (the Hungarian example still had not experienced any visible consequences), in 1989 the direction of spillovers started to change. From then they were mainly oriented from Central Europe toward the Soviet Union. After East European "fraternal" parties had given up their monopoly, the CPSU followed suit in 1990.

While the Soviet role before and in 1989 cannot be overestimated and Gorbachev became the "hero of retreat" (Hans Magnus Enzensberger),[75] Western behavior has been much less in the limelight. The peak of the Cold War in the early 1980s had contributed to differentiating between Western leaders who advocated continuing cooperation with communist governments and those who felt it necessary to increase support for opposition groups and demand the observation of human rights.[76] With regard to Western action and reaction, historians have not yet concurred whether this was conducive to the dismantling of communism at all and, if so, how and to what extent.

Many will agree that among Western leaders, "no person [did] more for the 1989 revolutions than the pope."[77] The election of a Polish pontiff had certainly galvanized Catholics in his homeland. To obtain permission to visit Poland, John Paul II, who had been identified by the KGB as a "danger" to Soviet rule, had been forced to agree not to criticize communism. This dovetailed with pleas by the Curia and the Polish primate, who had advocated moderation so that the status quo of Polish Catholics would not be endangered. In the final address of his 1979 trip to Poland, Karol Wojtyła told the largest public gathering ever held in this country: "I have come to

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72 Jerzy Holzer, "Der Runde Tisch: Internationale Geschichte eines politischen Möbels," in Bernd Florath, ed., *Das Revolutionsjahr 1989: Die demokratische Revolution in Osteuropa als eine transnationale Zäsur* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 225–232.

73 Quoted in Kenney, *A Carnival, 286.*

74 Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 178–256, in particular 180; (Part 2), 6, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 3–64, in particular 48–57; and (Part 3), 7, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 3–96, in particular 69.

75 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Die Helden des Rückzugs. Brouillon zu einer politischen Moral der Macht," *Sinn und Form,* no. 3 (1990): 579–84.

76 Cf. Leopoldo Nuti, ed., *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975–1985* (London: Routledge, 2009).

77 Pleshakov, *There is no Freedom,* 237. Some might add that this holds true for the democratization of Latin America as well.

you to talk about the dignity of man."[78] By addressing not only human rights but also values such as honesty, solidarity and empathy, the pope inspired people who were appalled by widespread dishonesty, corruption and oppression.[79]

While the pope had the advantage of being allowed to speak to the masses, even if in philosophical language, other measures in support of oppositional groups behind the Iron Curtain had to be implemented covertly. Under the Carter administration, the CIA had started secretly to support *Solidarność*. However, when the Agency discovered communist preparations for the implementation of martial law, it did nothing to warn the opposition.[80]

The Western responses to perestroika were ambivalent: While many agreed with Margaret Thatcher's assessment that "We are not in a Cold War now," Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney was no less correct in stating that Gorbachev's "new thinking" "may be a temporary aberration" in Soviet behavior only.[81] US presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush walked a middle line in welcoming perestroika and striking disarmament deals, at the same time taking the "new thinking" at its word by calling on Gorbachev to "tear down" the Berlin Wall (1987) and to allow a "Europe whole and free" (1989).

The Cold War had emerged, for the most part, as a struggle over the fate of Eastern Europe, whose Sovietization at the hands of Stalin would be one of the foremost triggers for this global conflict. It was thus logical that it would be brought to an end over this part of the continent as well. As of today, the end of the Cold War[82] has eclipsed the issue of Western involvement in the revolutions of 1989[83]—with the exception of the post-November developments in

78 Sebestyen, *Revolution*, 22–27, 46–47.

79 Agostino Giovanogli, "Karol Wojtyla and the End of the Cold War," in Silvio Pons and Federico Romero, eds., *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War: Issues, Interpretations, Periodizations* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 82–89; Bernd Schäfer, "The Catholic Church and the Cold War's End in Europe: Vatican Ostpolitik and Pope John Paul II, 1985–1989," in Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow, and Leopoldo Nuti, eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008), 64–77.

80 Sebestyen, *Revolution,* 53, 100–2.

81 Jeffrey A. Engel, "1989: An Introduction to an International History," in idem ed., *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1–35, 2.

82 See, e.g., Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington: Brookings Inst., 1994); Olav Njølstad, ed., *The Last Decade of the Cold War: From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004); Silvio Pons and Federico Romero, eds., *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War: Issues, Interpretations, Periodizations* (London: Frank Cass, 2005); Kiron Skinner, ed., *Turning Points in Ending the Cold War* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2008).

83 See, e.g. Gregory F. Domber, "Rumblings in Eastern Europe: Western Pressure on Poland's Moves Towards Democratic Transformation," in Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow, and Leopoldo Nuti, eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008), 51–63; Andrzej Paczkowski, "Playground of Superpowers, Poland, 1980–89: A View From Inside," in Olav Njølstad, ed., *The Last Decade of the Cold War: From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 372–401.

the GDR. While many analysts have explained this with an underestimation of Eastern unrest by Western observers, noninterference may also be seen as having been a deliberate strategy to make the changes easier to swallow for the USSR. Whether "Washington got it right because it got it wrong"[84] or because it assessed the situation correctly will continue to be debated. It seems that both long-term strategic aims, as they are analyzed by *Philip Zelikow*, as well as President Bush's short-term reaction "not to jump on the Wall" once it had been opened contributed to the peaceful yet fundamental changes. *Norman M. Naimark* supposes that the superpowers' main achievements in 1989 are "what they did not do rather than what they did." This may certainly be true, given the outcome a more heavy-handed Soviet or US reaction might have triggered. While Gorbachev struggled to combine liberalization in Central Europe with upholding the Warsaw Treaty Organization (at least until 1995 when his advisors expected the "elimination of the military structures of the two blocs"[85] and their merger in a security system comprising Europe, the USSR, and Northern America), he stuck to his policy of noninterference and nonviolence. The Reagan and Bush administrations, which were anxious to keep him in power, showed restraint while not forgetting long-term goals of dismantling communism and fostering Western democracy. Neither was a "superpower condominium" over Eastern Europe agreed upon, nor were the non-communist groups and new governments abandoned. In the face of the communist crisis, both sides earned respect for displaying remarkable ability to handle potentially explosive situations in a sensitive and responsible way.

Facing the upheavals of 1989, the smaller Western states shared the US goal of not destabilizing Gorbachev's position. Since her first meeting with the Soviet leader, British prime minister Margaret Thatcher had advocated "doing business" with him and had done a lot to convince the US president of her approach. In a conversation with Gorbachev on 23 September 1989, the "Iron Lady" characterized the Soviet leader's position as being "in favor of each country's choosing its own road of development so long as the Warsaw Treaty is intact."[86] Zbigniew Brzezinski, the former US security advisor, in 1989 even went as far as advocating Poland and Hungary remaining within the Warsaw Treaty Organization.[87] This was a widespread position among Western leaders, whose highest priority was not

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[84] Timothy Garton Ash, "1989!," *The New York Review of Books*, 5 November 2009.

[85] William Taubman and Svetlana Savranskaya, "If a Wall Fell in Berlin and Moscow Hardly Noticed, Would it Still Make a Noise?," in Jeffrey A. Engel, ed., *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 69–95, 80.

[86] Conversation Gorbachev with Thatcher, Soviet protocol, 23 September 1989, in Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe 1989* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), 530–32, 531.

[87] Conversation Yakovlev with Brzezinski, Soviet protocol, 31 October 1989, in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 563–68, 567.

to rock Gorbachev's boat or endanger the negotiations on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe. The tendency of many Western leaders toward at least temporarily upholding the international status quo was also visible with regard to the Baltic struggle for independence.[88] In contrast, even reform communists in 1989, and still more so the newly elected non-communist leaders of the Central European countries in 1990 voiced their interest in having the Soviet troops and nuclear weapons withdrawn from their soil, and, in 1991, in burying the Warsaw Pact altogether.

In international politics, the East European revolutions were soon overshadowed by the German Question, which rapidly gained urgency after the fall of the Berlin Wall. While West German chancellor Helmut Kohl embraced the opportunity for achieving the goal of two generations of Germans and President Bush told Gorbachev that no one could "expect us [i.e. the United States] not to approve of German reunification,"[89] Margaret Thatcher and, to a lesser extent, François Mitterrand feared the consequences of a possible German reunification. However, in contrast to the British prime minister, who furiously raised her handbag against that solution, the French president expected the Kremlin to do everything necessary for blocking it.[90] Historian Jeffrey Engel has stressed how much personality mattered in shaping the various international responses to 1989. This coincides with the conclusions of *Klaus Larres* who, in explaining Thatcher's rigid anti-German attitude, draws attention to her experiences as a child during the German air attacks on Britain in World War II. As a consequence of her intransigence, the prime minister was increasingly isolated from the more balanced approach of the Foreign Office.[91] In contrast the French president and the prime minister of Italy were, as *Georges Saunier* and *Antonio Varsori* underline, flexible enough to use their acquiescence with German reunification for tying it to European integration. It remains to be seen whether Mitterrand's earlier signals for upholding the GDR and blocking a quick unification process represented his true intentions, initiatives for sounding out the situation, or for appeasing Gorbachev.[92] In reading Gorbachev's conversations it appears that many European leaders shared the

88 Kristina Spohr Readman, *Germany and the Baltic Problem after the Cold War: The Development of a new Ostpolitik, 1989–2000* (London: Routledge, 2004).

89 Conversation Gorbachev with Bush, Malta, Soviet protocol, 2–3 December 1989, in Aleksandr Galkin and Anatolii Chernyaev, eds., *Mikhail Gorbachev i Germanskii vopros* (Moscow: Ves' mir, 2006), 268–72. For an English translation, see *Masterpieces*, 619–46, 634, 640.

90 Jeffrey A. Engel, "1989: An Introduction to an International History," in idem ed., *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1–35, 6.

91 Patrick Salmon, Keith Hamilton, Stephen Robert Twigge, eds., *Documents on British Policy Overseas III, vol. 7: German Unification 1989–1990* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009).

92 Cf. Maurice Vaïsse and Christian Wenkel, *La diplomatie française face à l'unification allemande* (Paris: Tallandier, 2011), 29. The editors state that "the idea of François Mitterrand being hostile or at least very reluctant vis-à-vis German unification is well established, while the archives, now open, do not confirm that."

intention of finding common ground with him—even at the cost of disavowing their own declarations in support of German unification. Yet, since Italian public opinion seemed to embrace reunification, the Italian government gave up resistance even quicker than did the French. The Austrian government, which had, as *Arnold Suppan* notes, intensified its relations with the East European states since the 1950s and closely monitored the dissident movement, was nevertheless taken by surprise in 1989. *Michael Gehler* stresses that, due to contradictions between the ruling parties, the governing coalition took a long time to make up its mind about how to react to the challenges of 1989.[93]

It was the Soviet leader who had to travel the longest road to make the reunification possible, taking the hurdles of approving the opening of the Berlin Wall, then consenting with self-determination regarding possible unification and finally, with a free choice of alliances. *Wolfgang Mueller's* chapter demonstrates that the Soviet leadership communicated acceptance of German reunification earlier than hitherto thought, namely on 20 January 1990, in a conversation between the Soviet and the East German foreign ministers. The 1989 revolution and the German reunification process merged into a highly complex situation, depicted by *Alexander von Plato*, that was characterized by the interaction of the upheaval and power struggle within the GDR, West German offers to help if the SED gave up its political monopoly, and external interference from the four powers as well as neighboring states.[94] The dynamic of the unrest in and exodus from the "German Demonstrating Republic" as well as this country's approaching bankruptcy increased the time pressure for the actors involved, a time pressure that was used by the West German government to capture the initiative for reunification. To make things even more complicated, the Soviet leader's attention was increasingly distracted by the worsening economic crisis in his own country and the Baltic struggle for independence.

## Context and aftermath

The East European revolutions of 1989 and their peaceful resolution were facilitated by a geopolitical sea change between the East and West that led to substantial changes in the global political architecture. Archie Brown has con-

[93] Prior to the forming of the coalition government in 1986, contradictions between the two parties had mainly emerged over the question how to deal with humanitarian issues and dissidents. In general, the respective opposition party was much more ready to openly criticize communist governments (and the government for being too soft on them) than the party in power.

[94] Hanns Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hoffmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit: Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998); Andreas Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie für die Deutsche Einheit: Dokumente des Auswärtigen Amtes zu den deutsch-sowjetischen Beziehungen 1989/1990* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011).

vincingly argued that the East European revolutions were not part of what Samuel Huntington has labeled the global "third wave" of democratization, which started with the end of the military dictatorship in Portugal in 1974 and continued on to Greece, Spain, Latin America and East Asia.[95] As interconnections between these revolutions on one hand and the end of state communism in Eastern Europe on the other are "marginal" or even "non-existent," Brown sees the latter rather as a distinct phenomenon, a fourth wave.[96] In contrast, all East European revolutions constituted an interconnected whole, which was affected by the changes in the Soviet Union. While the longing for "Europeanization" (be it a "normal" way of life in a liberal consumer society or, more concretely, the perspective of joining the European Community) loomed large in the East European states, the element of "marketization" was virtually absent in the southern countries where market economies already existed.

The years 1989–92 saw the collapse of not only a dozen communist and client regimes worldwide from East Berlin to Ulan Bator, Kabul, and Addis Ababa. Fred Halliday has also pointed to 1989's repercussions in "over a dozen other countries, located mainly in Southern Africa and Latin America, that had, with varying degrees of plausibility, justified their authoritarian systems by reference to the threat of 'international' communism."[97] With regard to the end of apartheid in South Africa, this relationship is often stressed. As Arne Westad reminds us, neither the Cold War nor the revolution of 1989 was simply a European affair. While, however, the Cold War had emerged primarily on this continent, it is less clear what the legacy of 1989 for the rest of the world will be.[98] Recent volumes by Steven Saxonberg and Martin Dimitrov try to explain why the communist regimes only collapsed in Soviet client states, but not in the People's Republic of China, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea, and Cuba—if they can be called communist at all.[99] They have pointed to the latter regimes' avoidance of combining economic with

[95] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); the first wave having taken place from 1826–1926, the second from 1943–62. For the events in Latin America and Eastern Europe in parallel, see Erhard Stackl, *1989: Sturz der Diktaturen* (Vienna: Czernin, 2009).

[96] Archie Brown, *Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 216–22, quote on 217.

[97] Fred Halliday, "Third World Socialism: 1989 and After," in George Lawson, Chris Armbruster, and Michael Cox, eds., *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010), 112– 34, 113.

[98] Odd Arne Westad, "Conclusion: Was there a Global 1989?," in George Lawson, Chris Armbruster, and Michael Cox, eds., *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010), 271–81; idem, *The Global Cold War: Third World Intervention and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[99] Martin K. Dimitrov, ed., *Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Cf. Steven Saxonberg, *Transitions and Non-Transitions from Communism: Regime Survival in China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

political reforms, their preservation of central tenets of their ideological claims and their reliance on nationalism and repression as stabilizing tools.[100]

Historian Pierre Grosser is certainly correct in stating that 1989 was unique not only in the geographical range of "world historical" events, but also with regard to the spectrum of developments it brought to the fore. These comprise the end of the Cold War, victories of freedom and pluralism in certain parts of the world and their suppression in others, the triumph of economic liberalism, and the re-emergence of nationalism and Islamism.[101] The end of the Cold War opened many eyes for challenges that had hitherto been dwarfed by the East-West conflict; after a brief euphoria, concern about growing unpredictability appeared.[102] However, although 1989 changed many things, continuity with the pre-1989 world (e.g. with regard to elites) and in some cases even the return to pre-1914 patterns (in international and economic thinking) are significant.[103] In contrast to widespread talk in the 1980s about the near end of the nation-state in Western Europe, a reaffirmation of national sovereignty in East-Central Europe was seen after forty years of Soviet control following1989.[104]

Whereas the revolutions of 1989 succeeded in reaching their most important aim of disbanding state communism and permitting citizens to try to shape their own destinies, the success of the following transition to democracy, stability and prosperity is not yet entirely clear. Charles Maier has argued that the disappointment marking many judgements about the developments in the decade after 1989 was, for the most part, unmerited and mostly stimulated by exaggerated expectations.[105] Some authors were optimistic that a quick world-wide transition to democracy and its sustaining could be achieved. This hope, as was aptly reflected in political scientist Francis Fukuyama's expectation of the *End of History*,[106] turned out to be elusive. At the other end of the spectrum stands Ralf Dahrendorf, who warned of a return of ethnic hatred and fascism, which he considered the greatest

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[100] Cf. Peter Nolan, *China's Rise, Russia's Fall: Politics, Economics, and Planning in the Transition from Stalinism* (London: Palgrave, 1995).

[101] Pierre Grosser, *1989. L'année où le monde a basculé* (Paris: Perrin, 2009).

[102] John Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War", *The Atlantic Monthly* (August 1990), http://www.theatlantic.com/past/politics/foreign/mearsh.htm; Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *The Atlantic Monthly* (February 1994), http://www.theatlantic.com/ magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). For a critical account of the US Cold-War discourse, see Jon Wiener, *How We Forgot the Cold War: A Historical Journey across America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[103] George Lawson, Chris Armbruster, and Michael Cox, eds., *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010).

[104] Matthias Middell "1989," in Stephen E. Smith, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 171–84, 176.

[105] Maier, "What Have We Learned since 1989?," 254.

[106] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

risk after the revolutions.[107] The war in Yugoslavia confirmed some of these expectations. Former dissident Adam Michnik belonged to those who tried to moderate these fears by arguing that achieving democratic normalcy was already a great success: “Democracy is gray […] That is why we say gray is beautiful.”[108]

Democracy still is, and will perhaps always be, endangered—not only in formerly communist countries, but globally and also in the “old” West. It needs to be regained every day. While in Central Asia, Russia and Belarus authoritarian regimes have emerged with old or new faces, in Western societies, as a consequence of economic neo-liberalism, unequal distribution of wealth and the economic precariousness of many citizens’ lives are described by many as threatening the essence of democratic participation and decision making.[109] That consumption serves as the main factor of political legitimization is perhaps one of the most visible continuities between late communist and postcommunist political discourses.[110] De-politization, consumerization and entertainmentalization of public life are mirrored by sinking political participation. The dogma of individualism has contributed not only to personal lives becoming less predictable, but also to social and political disintegration.[111] The same holds true for the emergence of parallel societies that harbor preferences at variance with Western political and social principles. In the former communist countries, the post-1989 recession, growing unemployment, inflation and changes in the welfare systems have contributed to disappointment and rising inequality, as analyzed by *Dieter Segert*. Liberal reforms were followed by an economic meltdown; by 1992, the GDP of Central Europe had shrunk to 77 percent from that of 1989. Between 1989 and 1995, the percentage of people living in relative poverty (earning less than 35–45 percent of the average) rose, e.g., from 14 to 54 percent in Bulgaria, from 4 to 35 percent in the Czech Republic, 10 to 30 percent in Hungary, 25 to 44 percent in Poland, and 34 to 52 percent in Romania.[112] In 2005 a recovery was

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[107] Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Eastern Europe* (New York: Random House, 1990), 111–12.

[108] Adam Michnik, “Gray is Beautiful,” in *Letters from Freedom: Post-Cold War Realities and Perspectives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 317–328, 326–27.

[109] Colin Crouch, *Post-democracy* (Malden: Polity, 2004); Serge Helimi, “Tyranny of the One Percent,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 5 (2013), http://mondediplo.com/2013/05/01tyranny (accessed 25 October 2013).

[110] Bradley Adams, “Buying Time: Consumption and Political Legitimization in Late Communist Czechoslovakia,” in Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob, eds., *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 399–421.

[111] Boyer, “1989,” 108.

[112] Kevin McDermott and Mattew Stibbe, “The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe: Origins, Processes, Outcomes,” in idem eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: From Communism to Pluralism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 1–29, 21. Cf. Günter Heydemann and Karel Vodička, eds., *Vom Ostblock zur EU: Systemtransformationen 1990–2012 im Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

noted, with growth rates of about 4 percent in the Central European countries, which, in terms of their average citizens' standard of living still lag behind Western Europe.

Voters have reacted with disappointment, volatility and, after a brief high, decreasing political participation. In Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Lithuania the former (reformed) communist parties were elected back into power in 1993–94. As the cases of Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Russia illustrate, conspiracy theories with regard to what happened in and after the revolutions of 1989 loom large in public discourse. The West European Left came out of 1989–90 with its subsequent triumph of market liberalism certainly equally disoriented, with many of central tenets shattered.[113] The rise of nationalism, as reflected in the wars in Yugoslavia, *Horst Möller* reminds us, has added to insecurity.

Despite these flaws of the 1990s and 2000s, most of which are rather global than specific postcommunist phenomena, in 2009 Ann Applebaum has drawn the following balance:

> Some truly awful things did happen: In Yugoslavia there was a bitter war. In Russia, revanchism has returned. Authoritarian dictators run several of the former Soviet republics. But the heart of Central Europe—Germany, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, the Baltic states, Romania and Bulgaria—is peaceful and democratic. More than that: The inhabitants of Central Europe are healthier, more prosperous and more integrated with the rest of the continent than they have been for centuries.[114]

One might add that their countries are more observant of human rights and transparency than other former parts of the Soviet empire. However, political instability and the rise of populist or authoritarian tendencies bedevil some of their states as well.

While only a few countries resorted to juridical means for dealing with their communist past, most of them, even Russia, the focus of *Mikhail Prozumenshchikov*'s case study, opened their communist-era archives at least partially. What started as part of the political struggle over glasnost and perestroika has since enabled historians and social scientist to better understand communism.

Indeed, the transformations were—given the systematic violation of social processes in the state communist societies—remarkably smooth. European and transatlantic integration, as analyzed by *Stanley R. Sloan* and *John O'Brennan*, have certainly contributed to safeguarding this development.[115] Sloan stresses that

[113] Patrick Outhwaite, "What is Left After 1989?," in George Lawson, Chris Armbruster, and Michael Cox, eds., *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010), 76–93.

[114] Ann Applebaum, "After the Wall fell," *Washington Post*, 9 November 2009, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2009-11-09/opinions/36902759_1_berlin-wall-invisible-walls-east-berlin (accessed 25 October 2013).

[115] Cf. Vojtech Mastny, "Eastern Europe and the Early Prospects for EC/EU and NATO Membership," in Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow, and Leopoldo Nuti, eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reapprisal* (London: Routledge, 2008), 235–45.

the Central European states' integration into NATO happened primarily because of their own, and not Western, initiative. Recent research and Gorbachev himself have refuted that Western non-enlargement pledges with regard to Central Europe ever existed.[116] Although the main instruments of Soviet control over Eastern Europe, the Warsaw Pact, and the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance were dissolved in 1991 as was the USSR, and although the Russian Army was withdrawn by 1994, protection against Russian pressure—as reflected by imperialist rumblings from Russia, the political use of economic dependence on Russian energy, and Russian involvement in the disintegration of neighboring states such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova—is still an overwhelming reason for legitimization of the alliance among newcomers,. The West had no justification for denying them entry into Western organizations and was interested in stabilizing these countries. The "Europeanization" of the former "people's democracies," one of the goals of 1989, seems to have been achieved. Almost overnight, Eastern Europe, which for forty years had been "excluded from West European developments but [...] not fully incorporated in the USSR,"[117] became East-Central Europe.[118] Yet, the consequences for Europe as a whole are at hand: Peter Graf Kielmansegg has argued that 1989 was, albeit limited to the East, a truly *European* revolution insofar as it reconstituted the continent.[119]

The revolutions of 1989 played an important part in making all this possible. The vast majority of the involved actors—from opposition groups and external actors to many communist leaders, above all Mikhail Gorbachev—managed to avoid widespread violence. Despite the flaws of the transition, their success in spreading Western political and economic structures and lifestyle as well as creating more open and freer societies is unquestionable. The "colored revolutions" of the early 2000s from Ukraine (where the opposition chose the same color as Polish dissident groups of 1989) to Central Asia and back to Ukraine demonstrate that their legacy lives on.[120]

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[116] Gorbachev stresses that negotiating NATO (non-) enlargement into Eastern Europe while the Warsaw Pact still existed would have been "absolute stupidity." Michail Gorbatschow, *Wie es war: Die deutsche Wiedervereinigung* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1999), 103. Cf. Mark Kramer, "The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement-Pledge to Russia," *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2009): 39–61 and Kristina Spohr, "Precluded or Precedent-Setting? The 'NATO Enlargement Question' in the Triangular Bonn-Washington-Moscow Diplomacy of 1990–1991," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 4 (2012): 4–54.

[117] R.J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century—and After*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1997), xi.

[118] Charles Gati, "East-Central Europe: The Morning After," *Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 5 (1990): 129–45.

[119] Peter Graf Kielmansegg, "Die zweite Oktoberrevolution," *Osteuropa* 59, no. 11 (2009): 5–13.

[120] Peter Voitsekhovsky, "In the Footsteps of 1989: Ukraine's Orange Revolution as a Carnival of Anti-Politics," in Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob, eds., *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 543–58.

Nonetheless, in many postcommunist societies, the memory of the revolutions is still contested between political parties and groups, as *Liliana Deyanova* illustrates with the example of Bulgaria. This is a general phenomenon: The revolutions of 1989 still mean different things to different people.[121] To some they signify the end of a "good old age" of modest economic security, a plot for undermining a powerful empire, the "greatest catastrophe of the twentieth century," or the beginning of a new and in fact strange type of "(n)ostalgia."[122] In some cases, they will be considered missed opportunities for achieving something better than was in the end implemented. To many others the revolutions of 1989 are and will always remain a "triumph of civic dignity and political morality over ideological monism, bureaucratic cynicism and police dictatorship."[123] It will be the task of future generations not to let them fall under the "veil of moral ambiguity."[124]

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[121] Jeffrey Isaac, "Conclusion: Shades of Gray: Revisiting the Meanings of 1989," in Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob, eds., *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 559–78. Cf. Volkhard Knigge, ed., *Kommunismusforschung und Erinnerungskulturen in Ostmittel- und Westeuropa* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2013).

[122] N. Ya. Laktionova, "Fenomen nostal'gii v stranah Tsentral'noi i Yugo-vostochnoi Evropy," in K.V. Nikiforov et al., eds., *Revolyutsii i reform v stranah Tsentral'noi i Yugo-vostochnoi Evropy: 20 let spustya* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2011), 163–73. For an in-depth study of the afterlife of communism in Eastern Europe, see Marci Shore, *The Taste of Ashes: The Afterlife of Totalitarianism in Eastern Europe* (London: Crown, 2013).

[123] Tismaneanu, "Rethinking 1989," 16.

[124] Judt, *Postwar*, 697.

# REVOLUTIONS

Andrei Grachev

# GORBACHEV AND THE "NEW POLITICAL THINKING"

The radical shift of Soviet foreign policy at the end of the 1980s and the subsequent chain of events that eventually led to the end of the Cold War are justly associated with the name Mikhail Gorbachev. Those who praise him (mostly abroad), like those who curse him (mostly in his own country), may disagree on many subjects, but nearly all recognize the significance of the changes he managed to bring about in the international political arena.

To explain the extraordinary results of his undertakings, one might cite his strategic vision, his tactical skill, his intellectual courage and his strong political will. And yet the principal lever which allowed him to "move the world" (to use as a metaphor the famous remark of Archimedes) was what he called the philosophy of "new political thinking," which became the foundation of his foreign policy achievements.

To avoid simplification we should not interpret the concept of "new political thinking" as a ready-made set of rules and principles carved into tablets that Gorbachev brought with him when he entered the office of the general secretary in March 1985. Analysts still debate today: Was it a utopian project unconnected from the divisive realities of the world and established traditions of international and interstate relations, or was it just a cover-up for a mandatory strategic retreat of the over-stretched Soviet empire, which was facing the impending terminal crisis of the world communist project? Was the "new political thinking" of Gorbachev dictated by his vision of the controversial but promising reality of an interdependent world, or, as believed by Robert Gates, at the time director of the CIA, was it motivated by the Soviet leaders' "need for breathing space"[1]to save the obsolete system? If seen in this light, the "new political thinking" was merely imposed on Gorbachev by the Soviet Union's defeat in the historic competition with its historic rival—the West—which then would have been the true driving force and secret godfather of the new Soviet foreign policy.

At the same time two important aspects of the subject have been ignored. First, the perception that for Gorbachev, establishing cooperative relations between the USSR and the outside world represented an integral part of a much broader project: the democratic transformation of the Soviet political system.[2]And second, the

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1 James A. Baker III and Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989–1992* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), 157.

2 Author's interview with Aleksandr Yakovlev, 16 August 1999.

evolution of both the future protagonist of the “new political thinking” and the real contents of this formula.

In contrast to Gates, the Soviet theorists and practitioners of the “new thinking” considered it a home-grown product, conditioned mostly by internal problems. If they referred to Western sources of influence and inspiration, they mentioned first of all ideas found in the Russell–Einstein Manifesto, the reports of the Palme Commission or the Club of Rome, or similar appeals calling for an end to the absurd logic of nuclear confrontation and demanding that the attention of world politics be turned to the global problems and challenges facing the human species. Moreover, if they admitted that the West was indeed effectively influencing developments in Soviet policy, it was not a question of military threats or politics of “containment,” but rather the example of successful economic development along with the attractiveness of ideas about political freedom, both features that were becoming, in fact, important factors in the internal evolution of Soviet society. Gorbachev himself, when speaking about the roots of “new thinking,” did not hesitate to mention Albert Einstein or Bertrand Russell as being among those whose ideas influenced his intellectual evolution.[3]

## The “old thinking” and the emergence of “new thinkers”

Before we analyze the factors that might explain the appearance of the “new political thinking” in the corridors of the Kremlin with the arrival of Gorbachev, I would like to say a few words about the “old political thinking,” which on a number of occasions at the beginning of the 1980s brought the confrontation between the Soviet Union and the West (above all the United States) to the brink of a third world conflict. Here again, if the Soviet leadership of the Brezhnev era had remained hostage to anti-Western complexes, convinced by its own propaganda about the “aggressive nature of imperialism” and its intention to resort to military force to destroy the socialist community, the ideological wrapping was less an explanation than a cover. There were strong political and corporate *internal* motives for adopting this line, since the Soviet regime used the bugaboo of the “external threat” as an indispensable psychological tool to support the totalitarian system.

This perverse expression of the survival instinct by a dying system pushed the Soviet leadership to finance its “family” of clients in Asia, Africa and Latin America, despite the tremendous cost of economic and military support already being provided to the other “socialist countries” and “progressive” regimes. The imperial foreign policy pursued by an ailing leadership that was totally cut off from the reality of the country inspired not only a rise in symbolic protest acts by political dissidents, but it also provoked concern and even resentment within the Soviet political elite. Seeing Soviet foreign policy evolving in an expansion-

[3] Author’s interview with Mikhail Gorbachev, 28 April 1999.

ist direction, a sort of "communist imperialism," many regime members were troubled by its apparent drift toward neo-Stalinist positions in domestic policy. The deepening international isolation of the Soviet Union destroyed their last hopes for a modernization of the country's economy, while the widening gap separating the country from the Western world meant the chance for a democratic renovation of the system would be postponed indefinitely.

Views of this kind, despite being shared by only a tiny fraction of the political elite, reflected the emergence of a kind of *alternative political culture* distinct from the official line. Although seldom overtly, a growing number of members of the Soviet political establishment were ready to question the traditional ideological approach to foreign policy.

After several assertive moves of the Soviet leadership on the world scene (the invasion of Afghanistan and the deployment of the new Soviet SS-20 missiles, which provoked the arrival of the US Pershing II and cruise missiles to Western Europe), the representatives of this alternative thinking were joined by prominent figures from the official Soviet scientific *nomenklatura*—the directors and leading experts of prestigious academic institutes who had direct access to the highest levels of the political hierarchy. Some of them served as speechwriters for Brezhnev and Andropov and later formed the basis of Gorbachev's intellectual reserve.

Without challenging the basic goal—consolidation of the Soviet state's position in its historic dispute with the capitalist world—at that time many experts, particularly those who were directly associated with the ruling elite, sincerely believed that Soviet socialism could become "competitive" on the international scene once it had been reformed, modernized and democratized. It would then, in order to assure its own survival, no longer be obliged to depend on coercion and repression inside the country, or need to use military threats as a tool in its foreign relations. Alongside the critical judgment of these professionals, such feelings of frustration were also reflected in the civic reaction of an important segment of the Soviet educated class. "The ranks of the (future) new thinkers," rightly remarks Robert D. English in his study *Russia and the Idea of the West*, "were not limited to a narrow group of security specialists but comprised a broad cohort of social and natural scientists, students of culture and the humanities, ranging from academics to *apparatchiki.*"[4]

Despite the fact that they were classified, the practical effect of the position papers prepared by these institutes and submitted to senior political leaders was little. This situation reduced the role of academic advisers to the status of marginal lobbyists, who could only seek to limit the damage of decisions they considered counterproductive. The situation began to change only when Mikhail Gorbachev became a member of the Politburo in 1979. Gorbachev regularly started to invite academics to his office in the Central Committee to brief him on

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[4] Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 5.

matters related to foreign policy, the world economy or the Soviet strategic situation, trying to build a sort of informal intellectual "think-tank" which hypothetically, in the future, could play the role of his "shadow" advisory cabinet.

By the beginning of the 1980s it had become clear for many that the course of superpower arrogance had left the USSR isolated and led its foreign policy into a blind alley. Yet it would be a serious exaggeration to describe most of the liberal-minded members of the Soviet elite as "Western-orientated." Few of them were prepared to admit that the source of their daily problems lay in the general inefficiency of the prevailing system. For the majority, the only acceptable explanation for the continuous deterioration of the economic situation of the country and of its evident backwardness in comparison to the prosperous Western world was the huge amount of Soviet defense spending. Without this, they believed, the system would be quite competitive on the international scene. According to Yevgenii Primakov, until 1985 director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, many of his colleagues shared his wish to put an end to the arms race, "not because they assumed it would be impossible for the Soviet economy to keep up with the United States in this competition, but simply in the hope of making better use of the national wealth."[5]

Belonging, on the whole, to the new generation of the Party *nomenklatura* and too young to have taken part in the war, they did not suffer from the "1941 syndrome" and consequently did not share the complexes of older generations obsessed with the fear of an invasion from without. For this reason, psychologically they were not ready to pay any price whatsoever to protect their country against a threat they considered quite hypothetical.

Whatever their motivation, a considerable number of these foreign policy experts did not expect to witness any radical changes at the top political levels in their own lifetime. Yet although condemned to an existence of dormancy, they constituted a sort of professional political army awaiting its leader. "We could write a lot of memos and speeches for our leaders that stated all these [new thinking] points, but it didn't matter until a leader appeared in the general secretary's chair who had come with these ideas beforehand," noted Georgii Shakhnazarov, a political scientist and, later, deputy head of the Central Committee's International Department and an advisor to Gorbachev.[6]

## Gorbachev reaches power

When Mikhail Gorbachev reached the position of supreme power in the Soviet Union, he was competent in dealing with domestic politics but virtually unprepared when it came to handling international affairs. Two specific areas of

[5] Author's interview with Yevgenii Primakov, 17 February 2000.

[6] Author's interview with Georgii Shakhnazarov, 30 March 1998.

international relations were part of Gorbachev's daily concerns, both closely related to the internal situation of the country: the economic burden of the arms race and the war in Afghanistan. Both issues threatened to hold back the radical internal reforms he was planning.

According to the recollections of Anatolii Chernyaev, in the hours following his election to the post of general secretary, Gorbachev noted several major foreign policy issues on a sheet of paper: "stop the arms race, withdraw troops from Afghanistan, change the spirit of the relationship with the US, restore cooperation with China."[7] In a later interview, Gorbachev confirmed this set of priorities, placing particular stress on the necessity of stopping the arms race: "without that, any plans for perestroika would have had to remain in the realm of fiction."[8]

It is not at all surprising that Gorbachev's first foreign policy agenda could be summed up in a few lines on a sheet of paper. At that time, Gorbachev's vision of desired change in the Soviet Union's relations with the West was limited to a general and vague set of intentions. The philosophy of the "new thinking" had not yet been drafted and even its vocabulary did not yet exist.

The new general secretary was impatient to start reducing the burden of the arms race, to begin the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, and to draw Western capital into the Soviet economy in order to provide the necessary financial assistance for his political reforms. Yet he could not start moving ahead in any of these directions without a qualitative shift in his relations with his Western partners. In July 1985 Gorbachev managed to solve the delicate problem of replacing Andrei Gromyko, who had occupied the post of foreign minister since 1957. Gorbachev's unexpected choice of Eduard Shevardnadze—someone ostensibly competent in any sphere of party or state activities except diplomacy—was proof of his determination to recruit a foreign minister who would undertake no policy other than that of the general secretary.

Next came the first trial for Gorbachev's exercise in great power diplomacy—his first meeting with Ronald Reagan during the US–Soviet summit in Geneva in November 1985. Despite the fact that the two leaders succeeded in establishing good personal relations, the final outcome of the Geneva summit did not live up to Gorbachev's initial hopes: achieving a qualitative breakthrough in Moscow's relations with the West. Nevertheless, it caused the Soviet leader to dismiss his illusion that ending the Cold War would be an easy enterprise, in which merely his statement of best intentions would be enough. He was also forced to accept the fact that exposing the absurdity of the arms race (as he did when talking to Margaret Thatcher, the British prime minister, in December 1984) was not enough to bring it to an end, and that the barrier of mistrust separating East and West was probably even more solid than the Iron Curtain dividing Europe. He began to

[7] Author's interview with Anatolii Chernyaev, 10 September 1998.

[8] Author's interview with Mikhail Gorbachev, 28 April 1999.

realize that a real breakthrough in the Soviet Union's relations with its Western partners would demand a major, long-term strategy.

As a result of the Geneva summit, Gorbachev also reached another important conclusion: he understood that establishing a new type of East-West relations implied not only a new level in the exchange of information about the other side's intentions, but also the need for internal political guarantees supporting official policy statements. It thus became clear for Gorbachev that there was an unavoidable interconnection between the new image he sought for Soviet foreign policy and the internal reforms he was planning to undertake within the country. This connection between the internal and external aspects of his reform plan could not be reduced merely to synchronizing his actions in the two spheres; rather it was a question of an organic political relationship that implied major revising of the established model of Soviet foreign policy.

The two key individuals who helped Gorbachev shape the new foreign policy line in the first months of 1986 were Aleksandr Yakovlev and Anatolii Chernyaev. The former was charged by Gorbachev to prepare the foreign policy section of his political report for the twenty-seventh party congress. The latter, who became Gorbachev's foreign policy aide on 1 February, prepared the draft of Gorbachev's speech at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 1986—an event that Gorbachev himself characterized as "a meeting that became the starting point for the full-scale implementation of the policy of 'new political thinking.'"[9]

The part of the report presenting the contours of the new Soviet foreign policy, despite still being drafted in the jargon of *Pravda* editorials, represented a striking contrast to the classic Bolshevik vision of the relations between the USSR and its historic enemy—the capitalist world. For the first time since 1917, the supreme leader of the Communist Party and Soviet state abandoned the "class approach," which condemned not only national societies but the entire world to antagonistic confrontation, declaring instead "the real dialectics" of modern development to be a combination of "the competition and struggle between the two systems with a growing tendency for *interdependence* among the states forming the world community."[10] Another important innovation of the report was its abandoning of what until that time had been the cornerstone of all political statements made by the Soviet leaders from the tribune of the party congress: the promise to do away with world imperialism and send it to the "scrap heap of history."

Having formally abandoned the official goal of constructing an alternative world model opposed to and hostile toward Western capitalist society, Gorbachev also renounced the ambition of his predecessors to mobilize and launch a heterogeneous army of the "progressive forces" against his Western rival. The new ideology of political pragmatism was obliged to sacrifice not only the "class approach" in the

[9] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), 8.

[10] *Political Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVIIth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Moscow: Novosti, 1986), 24. Emphasis by the author.

Soviet Union's relations with the West, but also the presenting of conflicts in the Third World as an integral component of a world revolution. An apparent semantic change introduced in the report—the replacement of the term "national liberation movements" by the ideologically neutral "regional conflicts"—served to eliminate the antagonistic opposition between "progressive" and "reactionary" forces, and in this way released the Soviet Union from its historic bondage, including the obligation to support self-proclaimed "revolutionaries" across the globe. The new de-ideologized presentation of conflicts in the Third World provided Soviet foreign policy with a salutary way out—inevitable setbacks in this area would no longer have to be interpreted as U-turns in the course of history.

An apparently low-profile approach toward the immediate tasks of practical foreign policy did not mean that the new Soviet leadership had renounced its grand ambitions. They were associated, this time, not with the prospect of an inevitable world revolution, but with world perestroika, which at times seems to have taken on a messianic quality. As Gorbachev wrote in his book *Perestroika and New Political Thinking for Our Country and the World*, first published in the autumn of 1987, he viewed perestroika as a kind of a universal lever capable of transforming not only Soviet reality but also the world situation in general. Declaring that the "new thinking" was necessary to save the world, Gorbachev was still convinced that it also could save the Soviet version of socialism.

## The evolution of the "new thinking"

Gorbachev's speech at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 1986, which was drafted by Chernyaev, went even further than the report. It was based on several apparently simple ideas. First, the revision of Soviet foreign policy was meant to become an efficient instrument of a major internal political project: a reform of the system that was necessary to assure its competitiveness on the international scene. Second, the national security of the USSR preferably should be assured by political means rather than by concentrating its society's military, economic and human resources on preparing for a highly improbable military conflict with a potential aggressor.

It so happened that another event that occurred in the spring of 1986 marked Gorbachev not only politically but psychologically, and influenced his evolution as a politician with a global vision of the world—Chernobyl. Before 26 April 1986—the date of the explosion of the reactor at the nuclear power station—his intention to propose a curb on the arms race along with a radical reduction of nuclear weapons was mostly based on economic and security concerns. After Chernobyl his attitude toward nuclear weapons transformed into a psychological aversion, a moral rejection, bringing him, in this respect, closer to Reagan. The fight for a non-nuclear world became a personal challenge.

This should explain how the idea of speeding up the whole process of nuclear disarmament emerged, disarmament that remained hostage both to the still unsettled relations with the US administration (despite the warm handshakes and smiles in Geneva) and the rusty machine of superpower negotiations. Thus, the idea of the Reykjavik summit appeared. "The leitmotiv should be the liquidation of nuclear weapons, with a political approach and not an arithmetical one prevailing. […] If Reagan does not make concessions, we shall make everything public." These were the terms Gorbachev used to present the design to the Politburo.[11] If they failed to reach an agreement, Gorbachev planned publicly to put all responsibility for the lack of success on the United States, making maximum propaganda use of the impasse. It was in fact based on this condition that he managed to get his colleagues in the Politburo to agree to the package of proposals he was to bring to Reykjavik, proposals that until that time were unprecedented.[12]

The Reykjavik summit is often qualified as a "failure." After all, the two leaders departed without having reached a historic agreement, an agreement that at certain moments seemed to be within the distance of a stretched hand. And yet for Gorbachev it represented a real leap in practicing the "new thinking." According to Chernyaev, Gorbachev's true rupture with the legacy of the past came not only in his offering a true deal to the Americans, but also in his refusal to exploit their rejection politically, to use it for propaganda purposes, thus de facto disregarding the mandate he had brought from Moscow.

Chernyaev considers the "failed summit" to be the crucial turning point in the further evolution of Gorbachev's approach not only to Soviet–American relations, but also to foreign policy issues in general. In his view, the main result of the Reykjavik summit was more a question of a psychological shift in the minds of the two superpower leaders than any concrete progress on agreements, including the strategic arms and "euro-missile" agreements that were then signed in the months that followed. This later progress would never have been possible without the new level of confidence and understanding reached in the Hofdi house.

In practice, for Gorbachev this meant unilaterally starting to apply the declared principles of the "new thinking" in his own daily practical activity, even without guaranteed reciprocity from his Western partners. At one of the Politburo sessions before Reykjavik he said:

> We all—myself, the Politburo and the MID [the Foreign Ministry, ed.]—should realize: if our proposals lead to diminishing US security, we shall obtain nothing. The Americans will never

[11] "Ustanovki Gorbacheva gruppe po podgotovke Reik'yavika," 4 October 1986, in A. Chernyaev, V. Medvedev, G. Shakhnazarov, eds., *V Politbyuro TsK KPSS… Po zapisam Anatoliya Chernyaeva, Vadima Medvedeva, Georgiya Shakhnazarova (1985–1991)* (Moscow: Alpina Bizness Buks, 2006), 72–75.

[12] Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i Reformy*, vol. 2, 26.

> buy it. That is why our guiding principle should be: stronger security for all through an equal decrease of the armaments level.[13]

Under Gorbachev's pressure, the Soviet General Staff reluctantly agreed to accept the total elimination of all intermediate-range nuclear missiles, despite this being extremely asymmetrical. Not only did the quantitative imbalance of the INF Treaty signed in Washington in December 1987 arouse an allergic reaction within the military lobby (the Soviet Union agreed to destroy more than twice as many intermediate range missiles as the US),[14] but also the extremely detailed character of various oversight measures, which included unprecedented possibilities of access by the other side's inspectors to supervise every stage of the missiles' destruction.

But in its conceptual form, the ideology of the "new thinking" was publicly presented by Gorbachev *urbi et orbi* a year later in his speech at the UN General Assembly on 7 December 1988. While working on its text, Gorbachev thought of it as an "anti-Fulton speech," an allusion to the occasion when Churchill first announced the existence of an "iron curtain." He later wrote: "I wanted to show the international community that we are entering an entirely new period of history where the former traditional principles of relations between states based on competition and the balance of power should yield their place to cooperation and solidarity."[15]

Gorbachev solemnly declared the Soviet leadership's intention to respect the "freedom of choice" for all peoples to determine their own political and economic systems, and he appealed to all members of the international community to renounce the use of force in settling international disputes. This statement of the new principles that would govern his country's relations with the outside world was accompanied by the announcement of concrete actions: deep unilateral troop cuts (half a million soldiers) and arms reductions, along with the withdrawal of six tank divisions from Eastern Europe. In this way Gorbachev publicly made it crystal clear that the Brezhnev Doctrine was dead.

While this speech was headline news throughout the world, its key elements had already been formulated by Gorbachev and formally endorsed in the summer of 1988 at the nineteenth party conference in June–July. When addressing its participants he was even more explicit: "A key factor in the 'new thinking' is the

[13] "Ustanovki Gorbacheva gruppe po podgotovke Reik'yavika," 4 October 1986, in Chernyaev, Medvedev, Shakhnazarov, eds., *V Politburo TsK KPSS*, 74.

[14] Within three years, by 31 May 1991, the Soviet Union and the United States had eliminated 2,692 intermediate- and shorter-range missiles with 4,000 warheads. Of these, 1,846 missiles were liquidated by the Soviet Union: 889 intermediate-range missiles, including 654 SS-20 missiles, as well as 957 shorter-range missiles, including 239 SS-23 "Oka" missiles. During the same period, the United States liquidated 234 Pershing-II, 443 cruise missiles and 169 Pershing-I missiles. V. Medvedev, "Uroki Dogovora o likvidatsii raket srednei i men'shei dal'nosti," *Yadernyi kontrol'* 6, no. 4 (July-August 2000): 67–74, 70.

[15] Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. 2, 132.

concept of freedom of choice. […] The imposition of a social system, a way of life or policies from outside by any means, let alone military force, are dangerous trappings of the past.”[16] He later wrote, “Having set for ourselves the course of freedom, we could not deny it to the others.”[17]

During the party conference, sensing the subversive potential of the philosophy of the “new thinking,” the conservatives launched an attack against one of its core propositions, an affirmation of the priority of “universal human values” over “class interests.” In the end, both terms were dropped from the final text of the “Theses” for the conference, which nevertheless kept a reference to “the primacy of law and common human morality.” This seemingly abstract debate over the postulates of “new thinking” barely concealed the deepening political conflict within the Soviet leadership with regard to the general orientation of the future reforms. Gorbachev’s speech at the UN did, in fact, become a “watershed,” although not exactly in the sense that he had intended.

## The “new thinking” and 1989

From the beginning of 1989, public debates inside the Soviet Union on questions of foreign policy ceased to be merely formal or ceremonial; they began to acquire an importance of their own, since the new approach in foreign policy began to affect the real interests of the Soviet *nomenklatura* and the military establishment. The first signs of embarrassing new problems were related to the unforeseen development of the situation in Eastern Europe.

In these countries, Gorbachev’s speech at the United Nations was interpreted above all as an announcement of a historic opportunity to be seized, a confirmation that the new Soviet leadership was in fact ready to ease its grip on this region. The proof came not so much from Gorbachev’s formal confirmation of every people’s sovereign “right to choose” the path of its own development, but with his announcement of a future unilateral withdrawal of troops stationed in Eastern Europe.

Already in one of the first debates inside the Politburo about Moscow’s relations with the East European countries in July 1986, Gorbachev stated: “It’s impossible to proceed as before. The methods that were applied with regard to Czechoslovakia [in 1968] and Hungary [in 1956] are unacceptable.”[18] In November 1986, Gorbachev convened a secret “working meeting” in Moscow for all the leaders of the CMEA member countries, which included ten full members. The main message that the Soviet leader wanted to convey was an advance warning—in the future each national party and its leadership would be totally accountable

[16] *The All-Union 19th Party Conference, Documents and Materials* (Moscow: Novosti, 1988), 37.

[17] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Razmyshleniya o proshlom i budushchem* (Moscow: Terra, 1998), 48.

[18] Politburo protocol, 3 July 1986, in Chernyaev, Medvedev, Shakhnazarov, eds., *V Politburo TsK KPSS*, 53.

to its own population. There would no longer be the possibility of relying on the protection of the Soviet presence or military might in order to maintain power.

The famous "freedom of choice" proclaimed to be a basic tenet of the "new thinking" philosophy, if applied to the countries of Eastern Europe, could only mean that the "choice" of Soviet-type socialism by these countries in the aftermath of World War II was in fact reversible. Thus, the "choice" of socialism, which until then had been presented as the fulfillment of historical destiny, was downgraded to a conventional political question which, taken away from the hands of history, was to be entrusted to the decisions of ordinary people.

Does this mean that Gorbachev was already prepared at this point in time to accept all the eventual consequences this radical change of Soviet policy would bring in a region that did, after all, represent a sphere of vital strategic interest for the USSR? There is no definitive answer to this hypothetical question. What is nevertheless clear is that at the moment of real choice, faced with the unexpected chain reaction of political turmoil in Eastern Europe largely provoked by his own actions, Gorbachev behaved in accordance with the principles he had formulated at a time when he still believed that he would be able to control the course of events.

With hindsight one might remark that his quasi-religious belief in the omnipotence of perestroika, a conviction that its triumph would transform not only the Soviet Union, but also the other East European countries, in the long run did him a disservice. It nourished a feeling of false security at the top of the Soviet political leadership, based on the assumption that the East European allies of the USSR had no alternative other than to follow their leader, especially one who was pointing the way to freedom and democracy.

However, for anyone who had closely observed the internal evolution of the East European countries during the preceding months, it was evident that the practical implementation of the principle of "freedom of choice" in the absence of any vigorous Soviet counteraction would result in their political defection to the West. Whatever the explanations, the results were obvious: contrary to the hopes or, indeed, the political calculations of Gorbachev, the dramatic political upheaval in the East European countries, somewhat unexpectedly, marked a transition from the triumphant advance of Gorbachev's diplomacy to a stage where he apparently was no longer the master of the processes he had unleashed.

By the second half of 1989, Gorbachev and his team were being carried along by the turbulent historic current they themselves had initiated. After more than forty years of imposed subsistence in the shadow of the Soviet big brother, Eastern Europe was waking up and, unexpectedly for Gorbachev, this led both to a breach in his frontline facing the West and the emergence of dangerous cracks in the monolithic wall of the Soviet people's "internationalist" unity.

But first the other Wall had to go – the one in Berlin. Some ask whether the Berlin Wall was torn down on 9 November following an order from Moscow or,

to the contrary, its fall took Gorbachev totally unprepared. Both statements are wrong. Gorbachev certainly did not choose the date "to tear down this wall," in response to Ronald Reagan's appeal of several years before. He had merely dug under its foundations, leaving it vulnerable, so that it would collapse at the first outburst of a political storm.

Once Gorbachev delivered his speech at the United Nations renouncing the use of force and, by implication, allowing people freely to choose their own social system, the Wall was already doomed. By the autumn of 1989, Gorbachev's statement had passed convincing tests, first in Poland, with the installation in August of a non-communist government headed by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, in accordance with the results of free elections, and after that in September in Hungary, where the opening of the Austrian border with the silent consent of Moscow, despite the ire of Berlin, allowed thousands of GDR citizens to flee to the West. With the removal of Honecker, several days after Gorbachev's hurried departure from Berlin before the end of the festivities on the occasion of the forty-year anniversary of the GDR, the fall of the Wall became just a matter of time.

Fleeing to Moscow from the German snow-slide that he had himself provoked, Gorbachev could not yet measure the scale of avalanche that was expecting him at home. The example of the Eastern Europe (even more than the prospect of German unity), which had transformed into an unexpected testing ground for the policies of "new thinking," became a stimulus for the national elites of the Soviet republics. From the Karabakh enclave in the Caucasus to the national elites of the Baltic republics, increasing numbers began to defiantly challenge the central power.

Gorbachev's political opponents logically interpreted the eruption of anti-Kremlin opposition at the periphery of the Soviet empire as the direct consequence of replacing the Brezhnev Doctrine with the principles of "new thinking." Quite naturally, most were concerned that the uncontrolled developments in Eastern Europe might be a forerunner of change that would threaten their own status; this troubled them even more than potential threats to the geo-strategic position of the world's second superpower.

During the last two years of Gorbachev's stay in power, the foreign policy of perestroika, no longer reflecting a consensus within the political class, suddenly intruded debates in the plenary sessions of the Central Committee. Not only Shevardnadze, but also the general secretary himself was subjected to increasingly aggressive criticism by the other members of the party leadership. The sad irony of the situation was confirmed by the fact that when, on 10 December 1990, the Nobel Committee announced its decision to award the Peace Prize to Gorbachev, he felt obliged (as in the case of the two other outstanding Nobel laureates from the Soviet Union, Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, although obviously for very different reasons) to decline the invitation to go to Oslo.

With the evident breakdown of the initial consensus on foreign policy, Gorbachev and his foreign policy team remained determined not to swerve from their

avowed political course, or fail to fulfill the obligations they had undertaken with regard to their Western partners. Thus, they had to seek ways to bypass the barrier of obtaining obligatory approval from the Politburo. "In 1989 when their commitment to the deeper democratic nexus of foreign policy was challenged in Eastern Europe the leaders of the new thinking chose principle over power. In 1991 this challenge visited the USSR itself. Gorbachev fighting resurgent Soviet reactionaries as well as his own deep allegiance to the Union hesitated but again chose the path of the new thinking," writes Robert English.[19]

At a certain stage, Gorbachev was faced with a paradoxical situation: because of the aggravation of internal tensions within Soviet society, the further application of the principles of "new thinking," instead of facilitating reforms, started to increase their political price. In this new political environment, the initial function of foreign policy was transformed: once Gorbachev's political trump card and the efficient but auxiliary instrument of internal reforms, it increasingly had become perestroika's last resort. At the same time, Gorbachev discovered that he could not count very much on the support of his foreign partners.

The London meeting of the G7 in July 1991 was a final chance for Gorbachev to strike a new strategic deal with the West. Gorbachev was then engaged in a much larger strategic proposal to the West as a whole, an appeal to invest in perestroika, not just politically but also economically and on a long-term basis. Yet it turned out that in the eyes of his Western partners, having wasted his trump cards and being overtaken by political crises at home, Gorbachev no longer possessed his previous value. In response to his request to set up a hard currency fund to stabilize the ruble through loans to purchase consumer goods when prices were freed, he merely received good wishes for success and promises of technical assistance.

Perestroika appeared to be an exhausted project that no longer promised attractive returns and therefore was no longer worth additional investment. Observing the accelerated weakening of Gorbachev's position at home, his Western partners quickly abandoned the projects of "castles in the air" promised by his "new thinking," rather than jointly answering the challenges of the future.

It was only three years since the optimistic initiator of perestroika had proclaimed his inspiring vision of a new world order before the General Assembly of the United Nations, a world order based on rationality, cooperation and the supremacy of international law. In the meantime his policy of "new thinking" had contributed to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the destruction of the Iron Curtain, but the boomerang of world perestroika launched by Gorbachev returned to the Soviet capital to crush the walls of the Kremlin. Gorbachev proved to be right: the "new political thinking" was indeed a formidable instrument for the transformation of world politics—East and West. But he had to pay for this triumph with his resignation.

[19] English, *Russia*, 228.

## Conclusion

In order to evaluate the footmark left by Gorbachev's attempt to apply the "new political thinking" on the international scene, let us try to establish a balance sheet of his action in foreign policy. This may help answer a question that is often asked when his name is mentioned: was this unusual politician a dilettante statesman, an idealist, or a visionary? Or putting it in different words, was it naïve on his part to believe that by proposing new rules of the game and putting the accent on common interests in the face of common challenges, he would be able to transform enemies into partners?

His legacy remains impressive. After less than seven years in power, Gorbachev left behind him a peacefully dismantled totalitarian system in the biggest country on the planet, and a different Russia that had become reconciled with the rest of the world. In a way he launched the first successful "Velvet Revolution" of the East. He encouraged the opening of the Iron Curtain that had descended after World War II, and allowed the reunification of Germany and of Europe after more than forty years of division. He succeeded in initiating, together with his Western partners, a disarmament process that, for the first time in postwar history, not only slowed down, but even turned back the arms race.

In fact, as manifested during the Malta summit, Gorbachev's "new political thinking" was not even very distant from President Bush's vision of the emerging "new world order"; both seemed to share the conviction that that a new international order should move from a "balance of forces" to a "balance of interests," and that this would be achieved through the strengthening of international organizations and the gradual transfer of national sovereignty to the United Nations.

Without any doubt Gorbachev's policies gave a powerful impetus to globalization. He did not hesitate to assist the birth of a new reality, however controversial, with all its as yet unknown dilemmas and contradictions. And whenever it came to a conflict between interests (including his own political survival) and principles, he invariably chose principles.

His extraordinary experience, with its historic achievements and dramatic setbacks, leaves us (in a world that is quite distant from his hopes) with an unanswered question: does the concept of the "new political thinking" belong to the past? Indeed, it seems as though it could not successfully stand the test of confrontation with reality. Or is it still waiting for us in the future?

Klaus Bachmann

# POLAND 1989: THE CONSTRAINED REVOLUTION

On the evening of 4 June 1989, the popular actress Joanna Szczepkowska responded to a TV reporter by saying that "communism has ended in Poland."[1] She was commenting on Poland's first free and open, albeit with restrictions, general elections after forty years of communism. In the eyes of many politically engaged citizens, her words reflected the atmosphere of the day. Later the statement became one of the most famous quotes referring to Poland's transition. While her statement was little more than a *bonmot*, the outcome of that election has been commonly regarded as a critical historical juncture, not only by political commentators and authors of memoirs[2] and popular accounts[3] of Poland's transition, but also by most historians who have dealt with this period. Regardless of whether they regard Poland's transition as a success or failure, they all agree that June 1989 was the decisive moment separating communist Poland from either "democratic Poland" (the affirmative version) or "postcommunist Poland" (the more critical version).

There is a wide consensus that the round table talks and June elections were a cornerstone in the Polish transition to democracy, but there is much less con-

[1] Her famous remark can still be watched: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgAiAKNfryg (accessed 9 July 2013).

[2] Wiesław Górnicki, *Teraz już można* (Wrocław: Wydawn. Dolnośląskie, 1994); Zbigniew Messner, Aleksander Perczyński, and Andrzej Żor, *Kuglarze i księgowi* (Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza "BGW", 1993); Mieczysław Rakowski, ed., *Polska pod rządami PZPR* (Warsaw: Profi, 2000); Mieczysław Rakowski, *Dzienniki polityczne 1987–1990* (Warsaw: Iskry, 2005); Lech Wałęsa and Arkadiusz Rybicki, *Droga do wolności* (Warsaw: Editions Spotkania, 1991).

[3] In Poland it has become a tradition to publish the memoirs of politicians. These memoirs generally consist in (book-length) interviews conducted by a journalist or an intellectual who is supportive of the respondent. Questions are asked about the politician's career, the decisions he made, and crucial moments in history upon which he or she left their imprint. This interview is usually recorded and then edited by the journalist. This convention, which eases a politician's burden of writing his or her own memoirs and enables editors to publish books a few months after an important political event, is called a "*wywiad-rzeka*," which can be imperfectly translated as "interview-stream" or "interview-river." Such rivers of questions and answers are available for some of the key 1989 actors: Jarosław Kaczyński, Michał Bichniewicz, and Piotr M Rudnicki, *Czas na zmiany. Z Jarosławiem Kaczyńskim rozmawiają Michał Bichniewicz i Piotr M. Rudnicki* (Warsaw: Editions Spotkania, 1992); Bronisław Geremek, and Jacek Żakowski, *Rok 1989. Bronisław Geremek opowiada, Jacek Żakowski pyta* (Warsaw: Plejada, 1990); Paweł Smoleński, *Szermierze Okrągłego Stołu. Zwątpienia i nadzieje* (Paris: Editions Spotkania, 1989); Jan Olszewski and Ewa Polak-Pałkiewicz, *Prosto w oczy* (Warsaw: Inicjatywa Wydawnicza ad astra, 1997).

sensus about when this transition actually started. According to the mainstream media's interpretation, the transition started with the round table talks and ended with the first entirely open election in 1991. This interpretation is even reflected in the official account of the events of the Sejm, the Lower House of Poland's parliament since 1989 (when the Senate was reintroduced as a second chamber). Here the June elections are counted as the last term of the People's Republic's parliament, whereas the new counting of the Third Republic starts with the 1991 election. But it is often argued that democratization started long before, especially by authors whose biographies are linked to the political and intellectual establishment of the People's Republic. Some of the authors linked to the anticommunist opposition point to the years 1980–81, when Poland experienced the emerging of the Solidarity movement, the first independent trade union movement in the Soviet bloc.

It is not a lack of sources, but rather the lack of competition of paradigms that is to blame for the blind spots in historical research on Poland's transition.[4] Some of these blind spots concern the international "embedding" of Poland's transition in the wider context of the decline of communist ideology, the rise of the national question in the Soviet sphere of power and the interaction of Poland's negotiated transition with perestroika and developments in other countries.[5] There is also a lack of recognition for how crucial actors in the transition process overcame their collective action dilemma and for the paradoxes that emerged in the process.[6] In the light of recently published documents, the timeframe for Poland's negotiated transition should also be given a much wider scale that it has received until now, since actual bargaining started already months before the round table talks began. The Church was involved in these talks from the beginning.[7] Most of the

[4] Important and extensive editions of archival sources include (among others): Włodzimierz Borodziej and Andrzej Garlicki, *Okrągły Stół: dokumenty i materiały*, 5 vols. (Warsaw: Zapol, 2004); Krzysztof Dubiński, *Magdalenka—Transakcja epoki. notatki z poufnych spotkań Kiszczak-Wałęsa* (Warsaw: Sylwa, 1990); John R. Davis, Gregory F. Domber, Mariusz Jastrząb, and Paweł Sowiński, *Ku zwycięstwu "Solidarności": korespondencja Ambasady USA w Warszawie z Departamentem Stanu: styczeń - wrzesień 1989* (Warsaw: ISP PAN, 2006); Inka Słodkowska, Magdalena Dołbakowska, and Ewa Wosik, *Wybory 1989. Dokumenty strony solidarnościowo-opozycyjnej*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: ISP PAN, 2009).

[5] Exceptions to this rule can be found in: Bodgan Góralczyk, Wojciech Kostecki, and Katarzyna Żukrowska, ed., *In Pursuit of Europe. Transformations of Post-Communist States* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych, 1995); Jan Kofman, and Wojciech Roszkowski, *Transformacja i postkomunizm* (Warsaw: ISP PAN, 1999); Radosław Markowski, and Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, ed., *Transformative Paths in Central and Eastern Europe* (Warsaw: ISP PAN, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2001); Jerzy J. Wiatr, *Europa postkomunistyczna. Przemiany państw i społeczeństw po 1989 roku* (Warsaw: Scholar, 2006).

[6] Timor Kuran, *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 261–88.

[7] Preparations for the negotiations were carried out long before they started. Surprisingly, many of the discussions on the government side were actually conducted in public, in small, but publicly available journals such as *Materialy, Studia analyzy* and in a newly created weekly called *Kon-*

literature about Poland's transition to democracy fails to put the events between 1988 and 1992 into a broader framework of transition by comparing them to similar events in other parts of the world. There are of course comparisons to other former members of the Soviet block[8] and there are theoretically informed articles and book chapters that situate the Polish transition within the wider framework of the third wave of democratization, but these are mostly political science approaches and do not refer to primary sources. This might improve once all the archives in Moscow, Washington, Bonn, Paris and London are open for historians, since this will render the possibility of more detailed comparisons.

## The path to the 1989 election

The "self-limiting revolution," as the emergence of the Solidarity movement is often referred to,[9] ended with the imposition of martial law in December 1981 by a military junta led by General Wojciech Jaruzelski. The introduction of martial law was accompanied by a multitude of activities lacking a legal basis as well as by many human rights violations.[10] The actions of Jaruzelski and his comrades amounted to a coup d'état. But despite the imprisonment of political opponents (among them also former *nomenklatura* members), the use of the army for internal affairs, and the de facto replacement of the communist Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) by a military government, it was not a total break with the past. The new regime did not touch the basic structure of the economy, it did not (as demanded by some economically liberal intellectuals in and outside the PUWP) use its power to introduce a radically market-oriented reform of the economy, nor did it touch the existing hierarchies in the administration and the economy. In the next years, the workers councils (*rady pracownicze*) in the state companies remained powerful and were occupied by worker representatives who officially appeared as non-partisan. Clandestinely, however, they remained loyal to the Solidarity structures in the political underground. The de-legalizing of the Soli-

*frontacje*, which printed long interviews with influential actors from both sides of the subsequent round table. For more details, see Borodziej and Garlicki, "Od redaktorów."

8 Jerzy J. Wiatr, *Europa pokomunistyczna: przemiany państw i społeczeństw po 1989 roku* (Warsaw: Wydawn. Naukowe Scholar, 2006).

9 Jadwiga Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). "Self-limiting" describes the reluctance of Solidarity to strive for power and use violence, which, of course, was also a reaction to the permanently present, but often implicit threat of a Soviet intervention in case the movement went too far.

10 Among other things, Poland was not in a state of war, which could have justified the imposing of martial law. And a law facilitating the imposition of a state of emergency had not been passed by the Sejm. Many measures were carried out against the opposition that were without a legal basis and that violated legislation already in force (as for example the internment of dissidents without the consent of a judge and without any formal charges). Also the main decision body of the junta was entirely unconstitutional.

darity movement deprived the trade union of its main assets as well as access to the media, but it also created a strong, vibrant, clandestine and decentralized illegal opposition movement. This was much more difficult for the state to control than Solidarity had been.

Confronted with an embargo by the Western world (the European Community and the United States) and weaker support from the Soviet Union (whose ability to support its allies was in decline due to the pressure from the arms race with the United States and the war in Afghanistan), Jaruzelski's generals faced a kind of state bankruptcy. Unable to serve even the interest payments on Poland's foreign debt, the government on one hand had to keep prices down in order to prevent workers and townspeople from rioting and, on the other, to subsidy agriculture in order to provide enough food to the population and prevent farmers from protesting. Caught between these constraints, the government increased the supply of money and caused hyperinflation. Every attempt to establish a new balance between demand and supply ended either with protests against higher prices or strikes against attempts to increase competitiveness. In 1987, the government even resorted to a referendum to discover whether the population preferred higher prices or the regulation of supply. But due to an exaggerated threshold, the result of the referendum had no legal relevance.[11]

During the years following the abolition of martial law (on 22 July 1983), Jaruzelski's regime undertook a number of attempts to co-opt moderate opposition members into state structures. These attempts followed a double strategy. They were officially labeled "agreement and struggle" (*porozumienie i walka*) and aimed on one hand at dividing the opposition and, on the other, to gain more legitimacy for the regime's inefficient reform policy. In 1986, all political prisoners were set free. In December of the same year, a Consultative Council at the President of the State Council (*Rada Konsultacyjna przy Przewodniczącym Rady Państwa*) was created, which aimed at including moderate members of the opposition and independent intellectuals. It was boycotted by almost all leading members of the political underground and became a discussion body for academics and Catholic activists.

The creation of the Council was one of a series of institutional innovations that changed the institutional landscape of the People's Republic. In the end, the institutions it created survived the later transition. In 1985 a constitutional court was founded and in 1988, the position of an ombudsman for citizens' rights was

[11] The government actually received a relative majority of the votes for its reform agenda. But since the threshold that the government had set for the validity of the referendum had not been reached, the result was not legally binding. See: Włodzimierz Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 2010); Antoni Dudek, *Reglamentowana Rewolucja. Rozkład dyktatury komunistycznej w Polsce 1988–1990* (Cracow: Arcana, 2004); Dariusz T. Grala, *Reformy gospodarcze w PRL (1982–1989): Próba uratowania socjalizmu* (Warsaw: TRIO, 2005); Sergiusz Kowalski, *Narodziny III Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1996).

created. In 1988, the elections to the so-called National Councils (*Rady Narodowe*) were liberalized, allowing independent candidates to run. Nonetheless, all of these steps proved too hesitant to overcome the impasse between the opposition and the regime. The more the government and the Sejm liberalized the election procedures for the National Councils and (in 1985) for the Sejm, the fewer voters showed up at the ballot boxes.

At the end of the decade, the regime was strong enough to prevent the opposition from overthrowing the government, but too weak to improve its legitimacy. On the other side, the opposition was strong enough to control every move of the regime, but too weak to take power.

## The international environment

The narrative concerning the "self-limiting revolution" and the strong inclination of the main strands of the opposition not to use violence are often presented as the result of normative considerations and were later presented as proof of the relative maturity of the opposition. In contrast to the tradition of armed uprising, which was frequent during the nineteenth century and led to the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, the stalemate in 1989 did not end in a violent confrontation between the regime and the opposition. But this was not only due to maturity on both sides of the conflict, but also a consequence of the international setting in which transition took place. By 1988, when a first wave of worker protests took place, the Soviet Union had engaged in a major endeavor of internal reform, which required the new leadership under Mikhail Gorbachev to concentrate resources within the country and to scale down the USSR's foreign engagements. Neither side of the Cold War was interested in a violent conflict in Central and Eastern Europe. The efforts of all—the United States, NATO, the EC, and the USSR and its East European allies—aimed at keeping the liberalization efforts in Poland peaceful. On different occasions, Gorbachev himself called upon Central and East European leaders to speed up their reforms, since the success of a reform policy in a bloc country could be used to strengthen the reform tendencies within the Soviet administration, the government and the Party. In contrast to earlier times, supporters of system liberalization within the opposition as well as within the ruling establishment were able to arouse Gorbachev's calls for reform. This mechanism strengthened the reform movement on one hand, and contained radical forces on the other. The messages from East and West that were sent to Poland during the late 1980s were extremely similar. Gorbachev paid a visit to Poland in July 1988 and George Bush, Sr. to the Polish capital in July 1989. Their messages on those occasions could be reduced to a common denominator: Poland needs more market-oriented reform and more democratization, and this should take place step by step, without any violent moves or revolutionary escalation. Both (!) stressed the

constructive role of General Jaruzelski during the transition and suggested that he run for president in the upcoming elections in the National Assembly.[12]

## The round table and the elections

The round table talks finally started in February 1989, after another round of grassroots strikes, which proved detrimental to the economy, but also weakened the position of the Solidarity leadership, which in many cases had tried to prevent them.[13] They had been prepared long before by certain Warsaw intellectuals connected to the opposition (Bronisław Geremek played an important role) and party intellectuals who knew each other through academic contacts. Public opinion had been prepared for the negotiations by a number of measures that were meant to demonstrate the government's commitment to reform. Among these steps were licenses to publish new media outlets run by moderate opposition figures,[14] a public debate in the mainstream media, decisions about who would or would not be a decent partner for the government to talk to about compromise and reform, the factual de-penalization of samizdat (whose products were sold openly on the streets of Warsaw) and of oppositional parties, which started to spread like mushrooms. However, due to the monopoly on information distribution that the government and the Polish United Workers' Party maintained, these measures were unable to attract public attention beyond the opposition circles.

The round table talks, in which the same number of participants from the PUWP, the government, and from the opposition took part (whose members were co-opted either by General Jaruzelski and his comrades or by Lech Wałęsa and

[12] Antoni Dudek, *Reglementowana rewolucja. Rozkład dyktatury komunistycznej w Polsce 1988–1990* (Cracow: Wydawn. Arcana, 2004), 363–64; Paweł Kowal, *Koniec systemu władzy: polityka ekipy gen. Wojciecha Jaruzelskiego w latach 1986–1989* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo TRIO, ISP PAN, 2012), 320.

[13] Many of these strikes, including the most spectacular one in the Gdansk shipyard, had been organized against the will of the leadership, which had planned to organize a disciplined and targeted one-time strike wave in the autumn that was hoped to coerce the government into concessions. While Lech Wałęsa and his advisors were unable to prevent small and dispersed protests, they also could also not afford to reject them and abandon the protesting workers.

[14] One of these steps was the launching of the newspaper *Konfrontacje* by a Warsaw businessman with good contacts to both sides. It served as a platform for a debate about the limits and ramifications of a so-called compromise. The first issue of *Konfrontacje* highlighted an interview with Geremek, who proposed an "anti-crisis pact" (*pakt antykryzysowy*) between the opposition and the government. The businessman who organized this new journal (together with the press-spokesman of the Ministry of the Interior, Wojciech Garstka, who regarded it as a private initiative) was Marek Goliszewski. He was not the only one who gained a concession to publish a new journal. Marcin Król, a professor at Warsaw University, was permitted to launch *Res Publica* (which, in contrast to Goliszewski's paper, survived the transition and is still published today. Kowal, *Koniec*, 110–12.

his advisors), ended late at night on 5 April. In the lengthy documents that had been produced, of which many were contradictory and resembled protocols of discrepancies rather than joint conclusions, both sides had agreed to a constitutional settlement aimed at giving the regime control over the legislative process and the state institutions while granting the opposition the power to control the government from the streets by reinstituting Solidarity as a mass movement and trade union independent from the government. This system of mutual checks and balances was refined by a complicated agreement concerning so-called non-confrontational elections to the parliament, which would guarantee the communists and their vassals, the "bloc parties," at least 65 percent of the seats in the Lower House, the Sejm, and open the newly created Senate to unrestricted competition. As an additional safeguard against offensive, non-consensual moves by one side, the position of a president was created, who would be elected by the National Assembly, which would comprise all the members of both the Sejm and the Senate.

There are strong indications that Jaruzelski and his aides thought they knew the outcome of the elections. According to opinion polls that were carried out during the weeks before the June elections (but were not published before the vote), the PUWP and her allies had every reason to believe that they would obtain about 25 percent of the mandates (Senate and Sejm) open to competition. Together with the guaranteed mandates, this would have given them the necessary power to veto any major opposition bill in parliament. On the other hand, it would have given the opposition enough influence to prevent constitutional changes (which required a two-thirds majority). Nonetheless, for the opposition, it was no problem to give the government control over these governmental institutions. With a strong and legal mass movement outside the parliament, the opposition knew it would be able to block any major move by resorting to strikes and popular protests. Thus, at this point in time the institutional part of the round table compromise was not much more than the institutionalization of the status quo ante.

As we now know, both sides underestimated the level of popular frustration with the status quo. Most probably, the media monopoly of the PUWP and the government had created a distorted picture of the population's mood—a picture that not only the opposition and regime leaders had believed to be true, but also the respondents in the opinion polls used by the government. But when voters arrived at the ballot boxes and cast their votes, it turned out that the general mood about the PUWP and the government was much worse than the opinion polls had indicated.[15] When the ballot boxes closed and the first exit poll results were shown

[15] More about the issue in Klaus Bachmann, "Pluralistic Ignorance in Action. The Puzzle of Unintended Consequences during Poland's Transition to Democracy," in Adriana Mica, Arkadiusz Peisert, and Jan Winczorek, eds., *Sociology and the Unintended. Robert Merton Revisited* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 219–36.

on television, it appeared that almost all of the seats open to competition had gone to the opposition. The PUWP and her allies, which had ruled the country since the late 1940s, had been defeated in the first competitive elections the People's Republic of Poland had seen since the war.[16]

**Tab. 1: The result of the 4 June Sejm elections in Poland[17]**

| | Mandates reserved according to the round table agreement (in absolute numbers) | Mandates reserved according to the round table agreement (in %) | Mandates obtained in the election | Mandates obtained as percentage of all mandates |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PUWP[1] | 299 | 65 % | 173 | 37.6 % |
| ZSL | | | 76 | 16.5 % |
| SD | | | 27 | 5.9 % |
| PAX | | | 10 | 2.1 % |
| UChS | | | 8 | 1.7 % |
| PZKS | | | 5 | 1 % |
| OKP | 161 | 35 % | 161 | 35 % |

[1] The PUWP had several smaller allies in the parliament, all of which had run in the elections prior to 1989 under a joint umbrella organization (whose name changed over time) and a joint election platform. These small parties, which recognized the PUWP's "leading role" (as enshrined in the Constitution) assured the symbolic representation of specific social and religious groups. These were: the United Peasants' Party (*Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe*, ZSL), the Democratic Party (*Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*, SD), which was meant to represent bourgeois interests, PAX, an authoritarian nationalist party rooted in the prewar Falanga movement whose leadership had decided to break with the Catholic hierarchy and to support the rule of the PUWP during Stalinism and whose task it was to organize pro-regime Catholics, the Christian Social Union (*Unia Chrzescijańsko-Społeczna*, UChS), which assembled Orthodox Christians and members of the Belorussian minority in Poland), the Polish Catholic-Social Union (*Polski Związek Katolicko-Społeczny*, PZKS, a small party of lay Catholics). The abbreviation OKP (*Obywatelski Klub Parlamentarny* or Civic Parliamentary Club) refers to the parliamentary representation of the Citizens' Committees, the joint platform of those who gathered behind Lech Wałęsa during the election campaign and used the symbols of the Solidarity movement when campaigning.

The results of the Senate election were even more devastating for the regime: Here, regime candidates did not obtain a single mandate. Of the 100 seats, 99 were won by candidates supported by the opposition, and one went to an independent businessman who had outfought both, the local candidate of Lech Wałę-

[16] Antoni Dudek, *Reglamentowana Rewolucja. Rozkład dyktatury komunistycznej w Polsce 1988–1990* (Cracow: Arcana, 2004); idem, *Zmierzch dyktatury* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej - Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2009).

[17] Data retrieved from the website of the State Election Commission, which is responsible for organizing the election process (*Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza*, PKW, www.pkw.gov.pl) and the Polish Parliament (www.sejm.gov.pl).

sa's Citizen Committee (*Komitet Obywatelski*) and the candidate supported by the government and the local PUWP structures. The first session of the National Assembly demonstrated how unpredictable the situation had become for the PUWP and its allies. Instead of a stable and solid majority for Jaruzelski (who ran for president without a competitor), when he was elected by the Polish Parliament on 19 July 1989 this was by the narrowest majority possible.

The landslide victory for the opposition was so huge that it shoved aside many of the previous calculations concerning checks and balances, mutual control and consensus-based legislation. After an unsuccessful attempt by General Czesław Kiszczak to form a government without the opposition (whose representatives had gathered in the Civic Parliamentary Club) in the summer of 1989, the leadership of the opposition managed to form an all-party government under the first non-communist Polish prime minister since the communist takeover in 1946, Tadeusz Mazowiecki. It formally included all the former PUWP allies and confined the PUWP fraction (which dissolved some months later) to the opposition, although three high ranking PUWP leaders (among them two generals) kept control of the Ministry of the Interior (General Czesław Kiszczak, who thus controlled the secret services and the police), the Ministry of Defense (General Florian Siwicki), and Marcin Święcicki (a member of the PUWP Central Committee), who became minister of foreign commerce and therefore kept control of the crucial sectors of the economy that dealt with external trade and foreign currency flows.

In parliament, the PUWP faced strong centrifugal tendencies—the leadership was less and less able to control the agenda of its members of parliament, who had often been elected against the will of the local party leadership and demonstrated strong social democratic tendencies and anti-establishment attitudes. January 1990 saw the PUWP's last party congress: one opposition fraction left the congress on the first day, others tried to assemble the remaining protesters who wanted to get rid of the old leadership. In the end the congress decided to abolish the PUWP, whereupon a new party was immediately created, the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (*Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, SdRP), whose new leader was the former president of the Polish Olympic Committee, Aleksander Kwaśniewski. The members of the former communist trade union umbrella organization[18] and the officers of the army, who, during the People's Republic, had almost automatically been party members, stayed away from the new party. The PUWP ministers in Mazowiecki's government and General Jaruzelski stepped down a few months later, which facilitated new presidential (25 November and 9 December 1990) and parliamentary (27 October 1991)

[18] The umbrella organization's name was All-Polish Federation of Trade Unions (*Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych*, OPZZ), which comprised all of the officially recognized trade unions in the different branches of the economy, which, in return, recognized the "leading role" of the PUWP in politics.

elections, elections that were now fully competitive. On 19 September 1990 Jaruzelski had initiated the legislation of a bill concerning the direct election of the president, which at the same time cut his presidential term short. The bill was accepted by parliament and new elections were held. Jaruzelski no longer participated as a candidate. After Lech Wałęsa had been sworn in, Jaruzelski's term expired automatically.

## The dispute about the causes and reasons of Poland's transition

From today's perspective, the round table talks and the June elections were only two of a number of important steps in the transition process from a mono-party system with a centrally planned economy to a liberal democratic market economy. Other important events had preceded it and others would follow, including Poland's radical economic reforms, which shifted the focus of Poland's economy from huge state-owned firms to small trade and services, and from its dependence on the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA, the Soviet version of a common market) to incremental integration into the European Community. Nevertheless, 4 June has been regarded as the most important break between the old and the new, comparable only to the significance of the fall of the Berlin Wall for Germans or the release of Nelson Mandela for South Africans.

This interpretation of history, which highlights 1989 as the end of communism in Poland, was never entirely uncontested however. Certain political scientists whose biographies are closely linked to the pre-transitional political establishment, as well as a number of economists from the liberal left have always pointed to those elements of continuity that one can identify when looking at the economic and social history of Poland during the period between the emergence of the Solidarity movement in 1981, the imposing of martial law, and the second half of the 1980s.[19] As Dariusz Rosati has shown, many elements of the economic and social reforms that were introduced between 1980 and 1981 were not abolished (although they often turned out to be quite problematic and uncomfortable for the governments after 1981). Indeed, in many cases these reforms were even reinforced by similar measures that the subsequent governments tried to implement during and after martial law.[20] Rosati has identified a number of measures that strengthened political and economic decentralization, and he points to

[19] Jerzy J. Wiatr, "Polska droga do demokracji," in idem, Jacek Raciborski, Jerzy Bartkowiak, Barbara Frątczak-Rudnicka, and Jarosław Kilias, eds., *Demokracja Polska 1989–2003* (Warsaw: Scholar, 2003), 13–56; idem, *Europa postkomunistyczna. Przemiany państw i społeczeństw po 1989 roku* (Warsaw: Scholar, 2006); Mieczysław Rakowski, ed., *Polska pod rządami PZPR* (Warsaw: Profi, 2000); Andrzej Antoszewski, ed., *Demokratyzacja w III Rzeczypospolitej* (Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2000).

[20] Dariusz K. Rosati, *Polska droga do rynku* (Warsaw: Polskie Wydaw. Ekonomiczne, 1998).

the slow, half-hearted democratization that makes the wave of social unrest, the round table talks and the elections of 1989 appear to be the culmination of a transition that actually started much earlier.

As widely found in popular accounts as well as in respected textbooks on Poland's recent history, the period following December 1981 is often described as one of political stagnation, economic crisis and general hopelessness that could not be overcome by either the subsequent governments or the attempts of the political opposition to coerce these governments into political liberalization.[21] The general deadlock was slowly removed by two mutually reinforcing factors. Within a relatively small sector of Polish society, one can detect a rise in political interest and readiness to engage in politics. This bottom-up trend coincided with the start of Mikhail Gorbachev's reform policy in the USSR that later became known as perestroika. Both—Gorbachev's top-down measures and the prudently developing trend toward more engagement in the politically interested segments of Polish society (whose precise characteristics still need a deeper analysis)—put increasing pressure on the Polish political system and its political establishment. The then-leadership of the Polish People's Republic responded to this challenge by introducing half-hearted, step-by-step reforms. While they failed to solve the basic problems of the country, they later facilitated the radical measures introduced by the governments after 1989.

Recent research, based on unpublished opinion polls carried out on behalf of the government, shows an increasing readiness of citizens for protest and political engagement during the second half of the 1980s.[22] The ruling political establishment responded to this tendency by increasing the scope of participation: At the election of (the rather powerless) municipal councilors in June 1988, citizens' committees were given the right to nominate their own candidates and voters were allowed to eliminate candidates from the lists of the Patriotic Front of National Recovery (PRON)[23], which was the joint election platform of the PUWP and her minor allies. Already during the elections to the Sejm before 1989,[24] when no competition to the PRON lists was possible, voters still had a choice between voting for or against it, or they could stay at home. As opinion polls show, only

[21] Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 360–82.

[22] Klaus Bachmann, *Repression, Protest, Toleranz. Wertewandel und Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Polen nach 1956* (Dresden: Neisse Verlag, 2010). For a contemporary account of the polling during the reign of General Jaruzelski, see Stanisław Kwiatkowski, "Aneks: PZPR w sondażach w latach 80," in Mieczysław Rakowski, ed., *Polska pod rządami PZPR* (Warsaw: Profi, 2000), 518–42.

[23] The Patriotic Front of National Recovery (*Patriotyczny Ruch Odrodzenia Narodowego*, PRON) was the overarching organization that united the PUWP and its allies and provided one list of candidates for the elections. Due to this, until the second half of the 1980s alliance voters could only vote for candidates from this list.

[24] Until the constitutional reform that was hammered out at the round table talks, the Sejm was the only chamber of the Polish parliament. The Senate, the Polish Upper House, which had existed during the Second Republic, had been abolished after a referendum in 1946.

a marginal percentage of respondents felt coerced to participate in the elections.[25] But the opinion surveys also show that many people regarded these steps of slow and reluctant democratization as insufficient. The consequence was paradoxical—the more options voters were given, the less they actually used them. Voter turnout decreased during the 1980s and finally plummeted, when voting no longer had any aspect of coercion or control. In 1989, when voters had the broadest choice they had ever had in the People's Republic of Poland, there was no pressure to vote, and the poll was free and secret, only slightly more than 40 percent of the eligible voters decided to cast their vote.

**Table 2: Participation in elections and the referendum during the 1980s[26]**

| | 1987 Referendum | 1988 National councils (municipal elections) | 1989 Parliament | 1990 Presidential election 1st round | 1990 Presidential elections 2nd round | 1991 parliamentary elections |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participation rate (percentage of participants compared to all eligible voters) | 67.32 | 55 | 62.32 | 60.6 | 53.4 | 43.2 |

None of the historians dealing with the events of 1989 denies these facts. But in Poland's post-1989 mainstream historiography, they show up not as elements of a gradual evolution between 1980 and 1989, but as half-hearted and unsuccessful attempts of "the authorities," "the party" or "the communists" to secure their power through tactical and symbolic concessions to "the nation," "society" or "the people."[27] According to this interpretation of Poland's recent past, the period between 1980 and 1989 was just the final phase of a process that had started with the de-Stalinization of the late 1950s, after which "the nation" incrementally extorted more and more concessions from "the communists" until the latter's collapse.[28] Among historians sympathizing with the democratic opposition in the late 1970s and the 1980s, 1989 was the last link in a kind of chain reaction that connected August 1944 (the Warsaw uprising), June 1956 (the workers' riots in Poznań), March 1968

[25] Krzysztof Jasiński, and Adam Przeworski, "1996. The Structure of Partisan Conflict in Poland." In: Aleksandra Jasińska-Kania, and Jacek Raciborski, ed., *Naród, władza, społeczeństwo. Księga dedykowana Jerzemu J. Wiatrowi* (Warsaw: Scholar, 1996), 185-206.

[26] Retrieved from www.sejm.gov.pl and www.pkw.org.pl.

[27] See, e.g., Andrzej Garlicki, *1815–2004: Historia Polska i Swiat* (Warsaw: Scholar, 2005), 650–60.

[28] Ibid., 649, Garlicki writes that protests were not organized by the opposition or clandestine organizations of the Solidarity trade union, but by "society."

(the protests of intellectuals and students), December 1970 (when the army crushed the strike movement in the coastal towns and shipyards), June 1976 (worker protests in Radom and Ursus) and 1980–81 (the emergence of the Solidarity movement).

According to this popular narrative, various social groups had stood up against communism during all of these dramatic events, but prior to 1981 they had never joined their efforts. In 1956 and 1970 workers had protested but the intellectuals remained silent. In 1968 intellectuals and students had raised their voices and then were silenced, while workers had either remained passive or even helped crush the protest. This changed only in 1976, when intellectuals from Warsaw organized legal and financial support for oppressed workers[29] whose demonstrations against increases in food prices had met a fierce reaction from anti-riot squads and the secret police. From then on, according to this narrative, workers and intellectuals stayed together and thus enabled the creation of the Solidarity movement a few years later.[30] In 1989 the communist establishment, deprived of any legitimacy, faced a united front of workers and intellectuals and thus finally surrendered. This chronology comprises all the elements of a great narrative whose aim is to create national self-affirmation and attribute meaning to a difficult and intricate past. It reduces complexity and channels contradictory, ambiguous events as well as scattered and often incomprehensible facts into a coherent story with a clear divide between good and bad, a narrative that leads from a bad past to a good present. Unsurprisingly, among historians, politicians and political commentators of the patriotic and conservative right, this narrative long remained very popular, even after 1989. The notion of an alleged conflict between a small and alienated group of communist oppressors and the overwhelming majority of the population, often described as "the nation" or "the society," who despised these oppressors, stems from a famous monograph by Jerzy Holzer about the Solidarity trade union.[31] Paradoxically, Holzer cannot be considered as belonging to the conservative patriotic strand of Polish historiography.

For historians who adhere to the patriotic strand of the discipline, it is no problem to regard the gradual liberalization of the late 1980s as another chapter

[29] These intellectuals created the Committee for the Defense of the Workers (*Komitet Obrony Robotników*, KOR), which later split up into a conservative and a liberal leftist part. The conservative anticommunist members mostly organized the Movement for the Defense of Human and Citizen Rights (*Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela*, ROPCiO), whereas the liberal left wing members renamed themselves KOR, the Committee for Social Self Defense (*Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej* KOR). For more details, see: Jan Józef Lipski, *Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej* (London: Aneks, 1983). The complicated relationship between the KSS, KOR and ROPCiO is explained in Andrzej Friszke, *Opozycja polityczna w PRL 1945–1980* (London: Aneks, 1994), 338–489.

[30] Adam Michnik, "Verteidigung der Freiheit. Reflexionen über 1989." *Osteuropa 59*, no. 2 (2009): 9–19.

[31] Jerzy Holzer, *Solidarność 1980–1981. Geneza i Historia* (Warsaw: Rytm, 1986). Cf. also his reflections on the divide from the perspective of 2009: idem, "Abschied von einer Illusion. Solidarność und die konfliktfreie Gesellschaft." *Osteuropa 59*, no. 2 (2009): 151–66.

in the everlasting fight between a good nation and a bad regime. From this point of view, there was no top-down decentralization, liberalization or democratization. All of these processes were merely episodes in the nation's fight for sovereignty, during which the regime made a few half-hearted and belated concessions. These only encouraged the politically conscious part of the nation, the democratic opposition, to increase its demands. Critics of this approach toward Poland's recent history may realize how much this dichotomist or even Manichean view of the past resembles its Marxist-Leninist counterpart: History is made by oppressed yet politically conscious workers, who are led by a small, enlightened intellectual elite of revolutionaries. At the beginning of the twenty-first century this narrative then bifurcates and Poland's right-wing populist milieu starts to reinterpret it in terms of an alleged betrayal of the righteous workers by arrogant and cosmopolitan (in other words, "alienated from the nation") elites, who "took power on the shoulders of the workers."[32] This is the origin of the counter-narrative to the optimistic version of Poland's transition.

The divide between followers of the "top-down" and of the "bottom-up" concepts of transition is rooted in dissenting interpretations of the intentions of both sides. Even if we leave aside the problem of how Polish society (or according to the popular narrative, "the nation") overcame its collective dilemmas concerning the events that occurred during the years between 1988 and 1992, we must nevertheless deal with the fact that the main actors in Poland at the time were the political leadership of the PUWP and the leadership of the clandestine Solidarity movement,[33] which had originally been a trade union. In most publications, both sides are described according to the labels they actually used during the conflict. There is the "Solidarity movement," the "Solidarity trade union" or "the opposition" on one side,[34] and "the regime," "the party" or "the commu-

[32] Many elements of this legend can be found in a famous sample of interviews with critics of the Mazowiecki government, of whom many also became (or had always been) critics of the round table talks. Jacek Kurski and Piotr Semka, *Lewy Czerwcowy* (Warsaw: Editions Spotkania, 1992.

[33] The Solidarity trade union had emerged from the various worker committees created during the big protest waves of 1980. In 1981 Solidarity was formally registered as a legal trade union (making Poland the only Soviet bloc country with two competing trade unions). However, it was then de-legalized in January 1982 as a consequence of martial law. After that, many of its leaders and activists who had escaped incarceration founded clandestine trade union cells, often as members of (legal) workers committees (*rady pracownicze*), which were entitled to participate in the management of state enterprises.

[34] For outsiders and readers not familiar with the internal Polish discussion, the absence of a "democratic vs. non-democratic" divide may come as a surprise. Actually it seems there is not a single publication in which the supporters of democracy during the 1980s are actually described as "democrats," despite the fact that the outcome of the transition process actually brought about democracy. In some Western media and popular accounts, the political opposition in Poland has been described as "democratic opposition." In Poland, labels pertaining to sovereignty and national independence actually prevail over political notions. According to them, the opposition fought for sovereignty and independence against a regime that had been imposed from outside.

nists"[35] on the other. Very few authors deviate from this scheme. One who does is Jerzy J. Wiatr, a party intellectual and member of the PUWP's Central Committee, who, during the 1980s, was a close associate of General Jaruzelski and defended the introduction of martial law and after 1989, became one of the leading figures of the postcommunist Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD). For him, the political regime of the 1980s was a military junta, not a one-party system and an ideological dictatorship.[36]

Wiatr's notion has not gained much popularity among Polish historians, despite increasing evidence supporting his claim that has come to the fore during recent years. It now seems as if the center of state power was indeed situated outside the official bodies of the government, namely, the state institutions and the PUWP. When, for example, in 1989 the Central Committee of the PUWP was deciding on the re-legalization of the Solidarity trade union, strategic decisions were taken by a core group of generals around Wojciech Jaruzelski, namely, Florian Siwicki (the then minister of defense) and Czesław Kiszczak (the minister of the interior, who effectively controlled the state security complex). These decisions were not made by the Central Committee's Politburo nor by the government, the State Council (*Rada Państwa*). These decision channels had been established in December 1981, when the generals had marginalized the PUWP's central organs, its Political Bureau, the State Council and even the newly established Military Council of National Salvation (WRON), all of which were only asked to give their assent to decisions that had been previously taken by the generals. During the second part of the decade, the generals even established a special task force whose job was to monitor and analyze the situation in Poland as well as to elaborate possible strategies to overcome the deadlock. This task force, which was never formalized, authored a number of risky and unorthodox proposals, all of which were kept confidential. They were transmitted to General Kiszczak, who forwarded them to Jaruzelski. Most of these proposals were never applied in practice. Astonishingly the members of this informal task force were people whom the generals trusted strongly but who came from outside the party and government hierarchy. One of them, Jerzy Urban, who became the government's spokesperson, was even outside the ranks of the PUWP.[37]

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For more about the "national" character (as opposed to political, social or pluralist notions) of Poland's transition, see Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymizacji, nacjonalizm. Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce* (Warsaw: Trio, 2005); Marcin Kula, *Narodowe i rewolucyjne* (London: Aneks, 1992); for a broader perspective, see Martin Mevius, ed., *The Communist Quest for National Legitimacy 1918–1989* (London: Routledge, 2010).

[35] Andrzej Garlicki, *Karuzela: Rzecz o Okrągłym Stole* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2003).

[36] Jerzy J.Wiatr, "Polska droga do demokracji," in idem, Jacek Raciborski, Jerzy Bartkowiak, Barbara Frątczak-Rudnicka, and Jarosław Kilias, *Demokracja Polska 1989–2003* (Warsaw: Scholar, 2003), 13–56.

[37] He joined the PUWP shortly before it dissolved in 1990. For more information about the task force, see Włodzimierz Borodziej, and Andrzej Garlicki, "Od redaktorów," in Włodzimierz

One of the most ardent supporters of top-down reform was Mieczysław Rakowski, the former head of Poland's famous weekly *Polityka*, who served as prime minister from September 1988 until August 1989. He had never belonged to the military's core group of rulers. Recently discovered sources, as well as his own memoirs and interviews with members of his entourage, confirm that his role in advocating power sharing with Solidarity was actually much more active than it was perceived by political commentators and opposition members at the time.[38] They mostly remembered his support for Jaruzelski's coup d'état in 1981. His promotion of economic reform and top-down changes as well as his contemptible remarks about the round table had aroused suspicion in opposition circles, who suspected him of trying to replace a compromise with the political opposition by symbolic concessions and superficial gestures, which would allow the PUWP to maintain control over the transition process. Some of these concessions, whose details have been elucidated in recent research, comprised the creation of a Consultative Committee (promoted by General Jaruzelski). Membership in this committee was rejected by almost all members of the political opposition, as was the invitation of non-party members from moderate opposition circles (not directly connected to Solidarity structures) to the cabinet. The latter attempt had been initiated by Rakowski himself.

Due to the opening of state archives and a flood of memoirs and interviews after 1989, every step of the preparations for the round table talks can now be traced. From this perspective, even the results of the secret talks with key actors of the round table negotiations in Magdalenka are no longer surprising. As Kowal has pointed out, the idea of a power sharing deal in the Sejm as a result of partially competitive elections had been discussed in oppositional circles and within Jaruzelski's entourage long before, as had the concept of resuscitating the Senate as a body that would allow the opposition to control a part of the legislative process. This concept can even be found in a document of the PUWP's Central Committee that was prepared prior to Gorbachev's visit to Poland.[39]

Most authors limit their analysis to these two sides of the round table talks—the opposition and what in Polish is usually called *władza*, which can be translated as power, authority, the authorities, the government (in a broader sense than only the cabinet) or the ruling elite. However, at least during the final phase of the negotiations, it is highly disputable whether there were only two sides. The official and—at that time only legal—OPZZ trade unions, which had a strong leverage over the Central Committee and about seven million members across the country, were

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Borodziej, and Andrzej Garlicki, *Okrągły Stół: dokumenty i materiały*, vol. 2. (Warsaw: Zapol, 2004), 6–40.

[38] For examples of Rakowski's active role in promoting power sharing with the opposition and advocating the legalization of the Solidarity trade union, see Garlicki, *Karuzela*, and Rakowski's own political diary: Mieczysław Rakowski, *Dzienniki polityczne 1987–1990* (Warsaw: Iskry, 2005).

[39] Kowal, *Koniec*, 394–95.

strongly disinclined to accept the crucial point of the talks—the introduction of "trade union pluralism," a euphemism used for the legalization of Solidarity. The OPZZ, headed by a choleric and self-confident Alfred Miodowicz, felt threatened by the potential emergence of another strong trade union in the factories, but it also regarded (rightly, as it would later turn out) the legalization of Solidarity as a material threat against its possessions. After the imposing of martial law and the subsequent de-legalization of Solidarity, all its assets (with the exception of cash, which some activists managed to withdraw from the trade union's bank accounts) had been handed over to the OPZZ. Under the conditions of "trade union pluralism" and a general trend toward the rule of law, the OPZZ could expect huge compensation claims from Solidarity. The role that the OPZZ played during the round table talks provided a good illustration of how "trade union pluralism" would later affect the economy. On more than one occasion, the OPZZ tried to sideline Solidarity by forwarding more radical requests than the opposition had presented.[40] Some members of the government delegation were aware of the risk that the competition between the two rival trade unions might bury radical economic reform and most likely to lead to a radicalization of the whole trade union movement. But for the two sides at the round table, the stake was much higher than that.

Authors sympathizing with the opposition tend to present the OPZZ merely as a sort of puppet that the government used to extort concessions from the opposition. Some authors even suspect Kiszczak and Jaruzelski of having manipulated the trade union in order to increase their bargaining power during the negotiations. However, until now no evidence for such a plot has been found. Nonetheless, under the pressure of a violent conflict, increasing pluralism within political camps that had until then been unified is a phenomenon well known from other transitions as well.

## Tracing back the key actors' intentions

At a large conference of historians, former political and opposition activists, and contemporary witnesses that was brought together in 1999 in a palace near

[40] When Solidarity requested an 80 percent wage compensation for inflation, the OPZZ demanded 100 percent. When the talks started, the OPZZ demanded the immediate abolition of press censorship, something that the opposition had not requested because opposition representatives were well aware of the consequences this might have for Polish–Soviet relations. During the final public closing ceremony, Alfred Miodowicz demanded to speak right after General Kiszczak and Lech Wałęsa, and threatened to leave the ceremony in protest if not granted this right. Piotr Osęka, "Okrągły Stół. Taktyki negocjacyjne władzy i opozycji," in Włodzimierz Borodziej, and Andrzej Garlicki, eds., *Okrągły Stół: dokumenty i materiały*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: Zapol, 2004), 5–22. There is more inside information to be found in Paweł Kowals impressive oral history project, which is based on material collected at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor: Pawel Kowal, "Dlaczego doszło do Okrągłego Stołu? Przyczyny zmian politycznych w Polsce w latach 1989–1990 w opiniach polityków, aktywnych uczestników tego okresu," in Tomasz Szarota, ed., *Komunizm: ideologia, system, ludzie* (Warsaw: Neriton, PAN 2001), 156–73.

Warsaw to examine these issues, no authoritative answers were found.[41] The perception of both sides is still biased by their most recent interests as well as by their ex-post perspective, which drives them to conceive past events in the light of today's knowledge about them. Therefore, members of the former political establishment tend to emphasize (and sometimes exaggerate) their own willingness to "overcome the system," their preference for further democratization and for the "social-democratization" of the PUWP, whereas former opposition members describe their counterparts' actions as half-hearted and driven by the intent to "preserve the core of the system" by making "tactical concessions." Former opponents of the communist leadership tend to overestimate their own clarity of mind in a situation in which no one could actually have known exactly where history was heading, not even the most influential and powerful actors, as for example Mikhail Gorbachev. In many of their presentations, Poland's history seems to have been written by strongly determined activists who fought for a liberal, pro-Western democracy, a capitalist market economy, and the full sovereignty of the country—despite the fact that many less well-known and less highlighted documents and quotes from 1989 and the preceding years contain little proof of the leading dissidents' alleged resolve to bring the system down. While the transition was still underway, the emphasis of both sides lay on compromise rather than fight and victory. This, however, may have been due to the "civilizing power of hypocrisy"[42] as much as to tactical considerations. Recent monographs and editions of sources have revealed strong incentives for a peaceful rather than revolutionary change. It was the absolute stalemate that not only prevented the opposition from openly confronting the regime but also stopped the regime from taking radical military options. By the second half of the 1980s, both sides were exhausted.[43] The breakdown of the strikes in May 1988 had shown the inability of the opposition to mount a decisive attack against the ruling establishment (protesters on the coast remained isolated and finally abandoned the strike without engaging in any negotiations); the outcome of the referendum in 1987 demonstrated the inability of the regime to obtain any legitimacy for economic reforms without political concessions. Without a politically legitimized reform agenda that

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[41] Paweł Machcewicz, Andrzej Paczkowski, Antoni Dudek, and Andrzej Friszke, *Polska 1986–1989. Koniec systemu. Materiały międzynarodowej konferencji. Miedzeszyn, 21–23 października 1999* (Warsaw: Trio, 2002).

[42] The "civilizing power of hypocrisy" describes the mechanism of moderating one's opinion, whereby a person is compelled (or feels it is fitting) to publicly declare opinions that he or she does not share in order to reduce cognitive dissonance, and subsequently adopts opinions that are closer to the publicly uttered ones, displacing the ones initially held privately. On this concept see: Jon Elster, "Strategic Uses of Argument," in Kenneth Joseph Arrow et al., eds., *Barriers to Conflict Resolution* (New York: Norton, 1995), 237–57; Jon Elster, "Deliberation and Constitution making," in idem, ed., *Deliberative Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 97–122.

[43] Borodziej and Garlicki, "Od redaktorów."

could be carried out without the threat of boycotts and strikes, the regime was unable to deliver an improvement in living standards, although this is something that might have strengthened its support among the population.

This vicious cycle probably would have embroiled the country in a spiral of protests, hyperinflation and economic decay had the internal balance of power not been altered by external influences. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev took power as the general secretary of the CPSU and launched perestroika, which encouraged both Poland's opposition and the reform-minded sections of the ruling establishment to embrace reforms. From this point in time onward, contrary to the conditions under Brezhnev and Andropov, the conservative opposition within the PUWP and the state administration could no longer mobilize support in Moscow to prevent changes in Poland. Both sides of the future transition negotiations, the opposition and the ruling leadership, could now count on Gorbachev's support and were able to marginalize the antagonists within their own ranks. At the same time, uncertainty about a possible Soviet reaction to radical measures, riots or civil war tamed the radicals in both camps and contributed to moderation and a sense of unity between the ruling elite and the opposition. Mutual trust as well as uncertainty about the consequences of radical measures drove both sides toward each other, incrementally isolating them from their radical edges. When in January 1990 the PUWP dissolved and its former leadership, new and now much younger, founded a new party, the climate of the congress was dominated by radical social democrats, reform-minded socialists and supporters of pluralism, market economy, democracy and human rights, rather than representatives of a conservative and revengeful party bureaucracy. On the other hand, the round table talks and the election campaign had also considerably weakened the radical ranks of the opposition who had sought revenge on Poland's *ancien regime* rather than compromise.

## Internal constraints and external influence

Seen against the background of the violent transitions in parts of the Soviet Union and in former Yugoslavia, Poland's power-sharing deal and democratization are often described as a kind of political miracle, facilitated by wise leaders on both sides and the moderation of a strong and temperate Catholic Church supported by the Polish pope (John Paul II) and Vatican diplomacy. Indeed—and in contrast to the Soviet transitions—no television towers were stormed by paratroopers (as 1990 in Lithuania) and no ethnic minorities were incited to fight each other (as between 1992 and 1994 in Nagornyi Karabakh). The Soviet leadership (and later Russian) as well as the United States and West European governments supported a peaceful transition, as did the Vatican. The pope and Vatican diplomacy were eager to stress their opposition to bloodshed and revo-

lution, even making this explicit during the round table talks.[44] Dubiński rightly states that the Catholic Church was far from being only a victim of the communist system. It acted as a moderator mainly (but not only) by means of its hierarchy. However, a factor that is often overlooked is that the Catholic hierarchy was also a party in the conflict. Until the trial of the Popieluszko assassins in 1985, the Catholic Church had been regarded as a moderator and a kind of neutral referee between the clandestine Solidarity movement and the state authorities.[45] The trial, which was used by the authorities to accuse the Church of political engagement, destabilization and hate propaganda, changed this perception, pushing the Church into the camp of the political opposition and weakening its ability to moderate. It was only during the first huge waves of protests in 1988 that the Church was pulled back into the limelight. In contrast to an ardently anti-communist pope, who had time and again publically denounced the alleged oppression of Catholics and Catholicism in Poland, the Polish episcopate was much more moderate and prudent in everyday politics and more than once outraged dissidents and radical priests, who pushed for more action against the authorities.[46]

The Catholic Church was not the only actor to contain revolutionary tendencies that opposed a peaceful transition. There were two external factors that strongly constrained the change of regime and prevented radical solutions and retributive measures after June 1989. The first was the Soviet Union, whose leadership was not interested in destabilization since such a course of events would have endangered perestroika and necessitated interference from Moscow. The second was the West, which feared any type of escalation along the frontlines of the Cold War as well as large scale migration in the event of a violent regime change. The governments in Washington and Bonn were also anxious to prevent any radical change that might threaten a peaceful and negotiated transition in the GDR and the planned merger of the two German states. Last but not least, after the GDR had acceded to the Federal Republic of Germany, negotiations about the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany started, creating a dangerous situation for Poland, which was also host to large garrisons of the Soviet army. The new Polish government was also eager to start negotiations on a withdrawal of these troops, but more specifically wanted to avoid a situation in which the withdrawing troops from Eastern Germany would station themselves in Poland and increase the number of soldiers in the garrisons on Polish soil. The last thing

44 Krzysztof Dubiński, *Wokół Okrągłego Stołu* (Warsaw: Krajowa Agencja Promocyjna, 1999), 32.

45 Jerzy Popieluszko was an oppositional and quite outspoken priest with close links to the clandestine Solidarity movement. In October 1984, he was abducted and killed by a death squad of overzealous officers of the Ministry of the Interior. Public outrage about the murder induced the government to order an investigation and to prosecute the perpetrators in a public trial in 1985. All were sentenced to relatively long prison terms.

46 On the role of the Catholic Church in Poland's transition see: Peter Raina, *Droga do "Okrągłego Stołu". Zakulisowe rozmowy przygotowawcze* (Warsaw: von Borowiecky, 1999).

the Polish government (or anyone interested in Poland's sovereignty) wished in a situation like this was destabilization and internal turmoil, because it would only delay the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

After the Soviet Union had lost its leadership role and pulled out as a constraining factor for radical regime change, the European Union and (to a lesser extent) NATO stepped in, promoting new values of stability, political compromise, human rights and the rule of law.[47] It is striking that—in contrast to the EU's policy concerning the Balkans—its human rights and rule-of-law discourse preferred forgiveness, unity and reconciliation over retribution, punishment and "dealing with the past." Hardly any research has been done about the link between EU policies and the preferences of its member states, or how the communist past was dealt with in Central and Eastern Europe. Only a few years later, after the violent breakup of Yugoslavia the EU favored punishment for the perpetrators there over reconciliation and unity, in the name of the human rights of the victims. In contrast, in the CEE countries after 1989, it was human rights that were usually invoked to prevent the punishment (in the form of vetting, screening and large-scale de-communization measures) and to guarantee fair (and therefore, under transitional conditions, lengthy and complicated) trials for former communist perpetrators. There, the concept of human rights was rarely used by victims to confront their torturers and reveal the truth about the past.[48]

All of these constraining elements also contributed strongly to the absence of any important retributive measures. Lustration as an issue of state policy was only introduced when the new order was stable and could no longer be threatened by proponents of the *ancien régime*.

The fact that Poland's transition was a peacefully negotiated compromise, moderated by the Catholic Church and closely monitored from outside, without any retributive measures against members of the old regime, had wide consequences. These consequences can be divided into those that were short term and others that were long term.

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[47] In 1988 Poland had begun negotiations on a trade agreement with the European Community. It was signed in September 1989. Almost immediately, Poland requested the start of negotiations for an Association Agreement (which would contain a full membership perspective). The request granted, Poland and the EC negotiated for another two years, and then ratified the Agreement despite strong opposition in the Polish Sejm. Poland then filed a request to start negotiations for full membership in the European Union (which had emerged after the ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht). For details, see Renata Duda, *Integracja Polski z Unią Europejską: Wybrane aspekty polityki integracyjnej w latach 1991–2004* (Wroclaw: Oficyna Wydawn. Arboretum, 2004), 5–16.

[48] The majority of the research dealing with this nexus comes from the disciplines of political science and law and is found in a new strand of literature called "Transitional Justice" (research that is almost non-existent in Poland): Lavinia Stan, ed., *Transitional Justice in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. Reckoning with the Communist Past* (London: Routledge, 2009); Monika Nalepa, *Skeletons in the Closet. Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

## Short-term consequences

During the months following the June 1989 parliamentary elections, many of the deputies of the former government proved their autonomy by demonstrating that they were far from being satellites or puppets of the PUWP leadership. The parties of the *ancien régime* began to come under huge pressure from Poland's blossoming pluralism. Party members contested their leadership, with PUWP members of parliament voting down proposals from their leaders and instead supporting motions from the Mazowiecki government. The striving for legitimacy that the elections had triggered brushed away the remnants of "democratic centralism" with which the PUWP had so long been associated.

The opposition's landslide victory on 4 June provided the transitional government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki a huge amount of public trust, which he was able to use for a radical economic reform program. This was supported by a strong majority in parliament, which included many PUWP members, who tried their best to obfuscate their political past through radical commitments to reform, democracy, a market economy and the rule of law. During the autumn of 1989 the government pushed an enormous number of highly sensitive and socially costly reform bills through the Sejm, whose members voted in endless night sessions and extraordinary procedures in order to make these bills law by 1 January 1990. Many of these laws were highly detrimental to the aging state industries, to the highly subsidized agricultural sector, and to the bureaucratic state banks. They all dominated an extremely consumer-unfriendly market that was driven by supply rather than demand.[49] Within a year, this had changed radically: Inflation fell from several hundred percent a year to a two-digit level, and the fixed currency exchange rate (sustained by a stabilization reserve, funded by Western creditors) caused a huge external trade deficit and put extreme pressure on Polish suppliers, forcing them to cut costs.

Poland's economy quickly became competitive, but the social cost was high: unemployment rates rose from 0 to 10 percent, charities started to offer free meals to homeless and unemployed people, and populist parties and politicians gained increasing support. Under the influence of the austerity measures of Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz, the parliamentary club of the Citizens' Committee disintegrated into a plethora of rival parties. After the elections in 1993 a coalition of the postcommunist Alliance of the Democratic Left and the United Peasants' Party, a former ally of the PUWP now refurbished as the Polish Peasants' Party, was able to form a cabinet.[50] Poland became a multiparty democracy with a very strong emphasis on "multiparty."

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[49] Hartmut Kühn, *Das Jahrzehnt der Solidarność. Die politische Geschichte Polens 1980–1990* (Berlin: Basisdruck, 1999).

[50] For a criticism of economic policy, elite approaches to reform and the social consequences of transition, see: David Ost, "Dlaczego polskie elity nie są zainteresowane resztą społeczeństwa?"

During the early 1990s, due to party fragmentation and a low threshold for entering the parliament, more than thirty parties held seats in the Sejm, and some of the short-lived multiparty coalitions consisted of up to eight different parties. At that time, the cleavage between supporters of national reconciliation and the partisans of "reckoning with communism" was already prominent, but the basic narrative of Poland's march from communism to the round table and then to freedom and sovereignty still remained largely uncontested. Mazowiecki's government was criticized for its reluctance to hold leading members of the *ancien régime* accountable for atrocities, for ruining the economy, and for depriving the country of sovereignty and dignity.[51] It was at the end of the 1990s when something new emerged, namely, "the black legend" of the round table talks. It had never been a secret that deadlocks at the relatively crowded and heterogeneous round table had been overcome by a smaller "core group" of representatives from both sides (as well as representatives of the Catholic episcopate, who acted as mediators). They met at a resort owned by the Ministry of the Interior in the village of Magdalenka on the outskirts of Warsaw. At these talks, leading figures of the opposition, including some trade unionists from Solidarity, met General Kiszczak and other members of the PUWP's Politburo. Kiszczak had taken care that the negotiations were filmed, including some potentially discrediting scenes showing opposition members drinking vodka with him. When these details were published during subsequent election campaigns, they quickly reinforced the rumors of an alleged "plot of the elites" and a "Magdalenka conspiracy." By then, the positive associations in the narrative about the round table had been gradually replaced by a negatively loaded "Magdalenka narrative," which involved secretive bargains between "communists and their former friends" who were "selling out national interests." According to this "black legend" about the round table talks in Magdalenka, the opposition leadership, in exchange for political power and control over the security forces, had granted the top level perpetrators of the old regime impunity as well as access to key sectors of the economy. "Magdalenka" became the codename for the cause of Poland's numerous transition problems, from corruption to political fragmentation, government instability and even organized crime.

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*Newsweek*, 6 January 2010, http://www.newsweek.pl/polska/dlaczego-polskie-elity-nie-sa-zainteresowane-reszta-spoleczenstwa,51248,5,1.html (accessed 8 July 2013); Stephen Crowley and David Ost, *Workers After Workers' States* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); David Ost and Hanna Jankowska, *Klęska 'Solidarności'. Gniew i polityka w postkomunistycznej Europie* (Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza, 2007).

[51] Jan Olszewski and Ewa Polak-Pałkiewicz, *Prosto w oczy* (Warsaw: Inicjatywa Wydawnicza "ad astra," 1997); Jarosław Kaczyński, Michał Bichniewicz, and Piotr M. Rudnicki, *Czas na zmiany* (Warsaw: Editions Spotkania, 1992). In the summer of 2010, 31 percent of the respondents polled by the pollster firm CBOS (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej) regarded the Magdalenka talks as "a conspiracy of the elites." http://biznes.onet.pl/polacy_o_magdalence_okraglym_stole_i_poczuciu_zdrady,18515,3779648,1,onet-wiadomosci-detal and www.cbos.org/archiwum.

In the intervening years, all of the sources about the round table talks and the Magdalenka negotiations have been published, including the minutes taken by Kiszczak's assistant Krzysztof Dubiński, who published several books on the topic.[52] None of these sources allows such far-reaching conclusions to be drawn, but paradoxically this has only reinforced the vigor of the "black legend." Whereas political anthropologists point to the lack of symbolic closure and catharsis in Poland's transition, a number of popular sociologists and political scientists go much further and interpret the Magdalenka talks as the trigger that led to the (alleged) emergence of secretive networks between former members of the security forces, Party members, members of the communist *nomenklatura*, organized crime and foreign secret services. These clandestine networks are suspected of having undermined Poland's transition, threatened the transparency of political decision making, and contributed to a specific kind of political system,[53] which Warsaw sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis labels "postcommunism." Postcommunism—a term whose popularity goes far beyond sociological analysis—is considered a compromised form of façade democracy, where all important decisions are made behind a curtain and then formally confirmed by official institutions.[54]

## Long-term consequences

As evidence from other transition countries shows, "reckoning with the past" in penal terms and punishing perpetrators of past atrocities often does not help root out the political legacy their rule has left behind. In many cases, it prompts supporters of the fallen regime to create their own parties and pressure groups and to seek rehabilitation, amnesty or even revenge. Meting out justice to former communists meets popular demands, but it also raises the costs of reconstruction and economic development and creates new and often lasting political splits that complicate democratic decision making.

In Poland's case, three distinct factors can be identified that contributed to a swift and ultimately successful political and economic transition. First, the rela-

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[52] Krzysztof Dubiński, *Wokół Okrągłego Stołu* (Warsaw: Krajowa Agencja Promocyjna, 1999), 31 (on his own role during the round table talks); idem, *Magdalenka. Transakcja Epoki. Notatki z poufnych rozmów Kiszczak-Wałęsa* (Warsaw: Sylwa, 1990). In 2000 the Hoover Institution Archives acquired 23 manuscript boxes of Krzysztof Dubiński: http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt3n39r64j/ (accessed 8 July 2013).

[53] Andrzej Zybertowicz, *W uścisku tajnych służb: upadek komunizmu i układ postnomenklaturowy* (Komorow: Antyk, 1993); Andrzej Zybertowicz, and Radosław Sojak, eds., *Transformacja podszyta przemocą: o nieformalnych mechanizmach przemian instytucjonalnych* (Torun: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2008).

[54] Jadwiga Staniszki, *Postkomunizm: próba* (Gdansk: Słowo, Obraz Terytoria, 2001); idem, *Post-communism: the emerging enigma* (Warsaw: IPS PAS, 1999); idem, *Postkomunistyczne państwo: w poszukiwaniu tożsamości. Instytut Spraw Publicznych* (Warsaw: ISP 2000).

tively early prospect of becoming an associate of the EC and then full EU and NATO membership helped prevent radical policy changes.[55] Second, the actual lack of retribution for members of the former establishment prevented them from creating any kind of "revenge" pressure group or party, and their political representation, the Alliance of the Democratic Left, quickly became a social democratic party that adopted a platform that was pro-Western, democratic, pluralistic and even pro-capitalist. After regaining power (together with the smaller Peasants' Party) in 1993, it never attempted to change the political system or reverse the transition process. Due to the introduction of radical pro-market reforms in 1990, many members of the former elite who had lost power were able to use their resources and social capital to make money and form new careers in business. This contributed to the social support of anti-communists, who demanded the imposition of retroactive punishment or wanted the government to confiscate "immorally" achieved wealth of former *nomenklatura* members, and at the same time prevented any radical left wing movement from gaining support. Anti-Western, anti-market and sometimes even anti-democratic and populist sentiments were mobilized by the radical right, whereas the left end of the political specter remained pro-capitalist, moderate and democratic.[56]

The third factor contributing to the success of transition was the strategic decision of the postcommunist left to base their legitimacy on former social democratic tendencies (from prewar times, emigration and internal PUWP opposition) and from their government record between 1993 and 1997 rather than on an ideological defense of the People's Republic and its alleged achievements. This decision was partly driven by the aforementioned lack of retribution and the new opportunities that the transition had provided for the former *nomenklatura*.

The lack of catharsis and the impossibility of holding the former leadership of the PUWP and of Jaruzelski's junta legally accountable have certainly contributed to the rise of populist tendencies in Poland at the beginning of the new century.[57] They are, however, not the only causes of these tendencies. The lack of a strong symbolic cut with the past has led to the emergence of several substitutes. An incremental inclusiveness of Poland's collective memory about the communist times, which has begun to see both communists and anti-communists

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[55] Such a perspective was lacking in parts of Europe and the post-Soviet space, where violent ethnic conflicts interrupted transition. Jerzy Wiatr, *Europa postkomunistyczna. Przemiany państw i społeczeństw po 1989 roku* (Warsaw: Scholar, 2006), 82–108.

[56] Klaus Bachmann, *Polens Uhren gehen anders. Warschau vor der Osterweiterung der EU* (Stuttgart: Hohenheim Verlag, 2001), 25–59.

[57] See David Ost, and Hanna Jankowska, *Klęska „Solidarności": gniew i polityka w postkomunistycznej Europie* (Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza, 2007); Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols against the Symbols of Power. The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism of Poland* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994). Ost identifies the lack of politicization of economic transition as the main source of populism, not the lack of retribution.

as “good patriots,”[58] is accompanied by an ever more exclusive historical policy, which idealizes the radical anti-communist opposition and individual extremists who favored armed fight over civil protest. At the same time, the legalist opposition of the late 1940s, such as the anti-communist part of the Peasants’ Party and the moderate Catholic opposition has been overlooked.

The attractiveness this patriotic narrative still has in Poland can be explained by the relative ease with which it can be used in political fights as well as for patriotic education. It is additionally reinforced by the historical policies of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), a huge and influential state institution that was created with clear and unambiguous political intentions. However, due to the complexities of the democratic process, the IPN is now largely insulated from direct party influence. The IPN was initially established to archive, administrate and analyze Poland’s secret police files, which survived the transition process and their mass destruction that was initiated by Poland’s last communist minister of the interior, General Czeslaw Kiszczak, who resigned in the summer of 1990. Due to extensive government funding, the IPN dominates large parts of Polish historiography concerning the postwar period, communism and the history of the democratic opposition. IPN publications include extensive editions of sources, monographs, edited volumes and many periodical series. These all share some common features. First, they advance the above-mentioned patriotic narrative by reducing the scope of their research to three actors: the anti-communist opposition, the regime, and the Catholic Church. Second, they rely largely on the secret service files, and either ignore other sources or deliberately refuse to compare them to the secret police archives. This results in historical accounts that are either anecdotal or strongly biased because of their focus on the relatively small minority of actors who actually took sides in the conflicts that tormented Poland under communist rule—the politically active part of the anti-communist opposition, priests and bishops, and the regime’s leaders and its security sector. [59] Despite a huge amount

[58] Actually General Jaruzelski became extremely popular after imposing martial law, and retained this popularity until the early 1990s. During the decades following 1989 a higher percentage of respondents have seen martial law as a “necessary measure” to avoid Soviet intervention than was the case when martial law was introduced—and this despite a huge amount of archival evidence that points to the contrary. This evidence shows that it was Jaruzelski in 1981 who asked his interlocutors in Moscow to increase public pressure on Poland in order to intimidate the opposition and reinforce his own position. The Soviet leadership refused to intervene militarily and made it clear, that “the Poles had to sort it out between themselves.” Andrzej Paczkowski, *Droga do “mniejszego zła”. Strategia i taktyka obozu władzy lipiec 1980–styczeń 1982* (Cracow: Wyd. Literackie, 2002), 206–10, 246–68.

[59] In 2010 the IPN organized a conference and invited its critics. The goal of the conference was to assess the quality and overall tendency of IPN public relations and book production. A summary can be found in Adam Leszczyński, “IPN bez taryfy ulgowej.” *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 9 Dec. 2010, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,8790004,IPN_bez_taryfy_ulgowej.html; idem, “Czy IPN może być zbawiony?” *Gazeta Wyborcza* 10 Jan. 2011, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,8922040,Czy_IPN_moze_byc_zbawiony_.html.

of edited sources and despite the accessibility of all government archives concerning state-church relations, the role of the Catholic Church is still one of the big enigmas in historical research on 1989. This is due to a lack of access to the Church archives, which are not subject to the regulations pertaining to the state and PUWP archives.[60] Another reason is the specific paradigm that most historians apply when delving into Church documents.[61] They treat the Church as a part of the opposition, an actor who, with a certain degree of independence, followed the same agenda as the opposition. In some cases, the Church hierarchy (the level of local priests is seldom a research topic) is presented as a kind of "honest broker" between "the authorities" and the opposition. But the Church is never regarded as an autonomous actor with own potentially "selfish" interests that may have differed from the objectives of the opposition.[62] According to this perspective, bishops intervened in order to accelerate the transition process, eliminate obstacles and ease tensions, but never in order to forward their own agenda.

The IPN's focus on the State Security police and the political opposition neglects the attitudes and activities of the majority of the population, which at all times refrained from direct political engagement. Actually, the IPN's narrative is much less a history of Poland or the Poles than a history of those who fought to support Poland and the Poles, and who claimed at the same time to represent either the majority or even "the whole nation." To the same extent, leading intellectuals of the political opposition during and after martial law also pretended to fight for the interests of the Polish nation as a whole, as was the claim of the protagonists of the PUWP, whose governments after 1981 declared that they represented the interest of "the nation" more than they claimed to fight for class interests, a world revolution or against reactionaries.

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[60] Except for the documents that were either burnt in 1990 by the Ministry of the Interior or were later handed over to the new secret services (because they contained information about informants who were still operational), all state archives relevant for research about 1989 are today publicly accessible. This is true for the government documents and the PUWP archives, which are stored at the Archiwum Akt Nowych, as well as for the secret police archives, held by the IPN.

[61] Many documents in the state archives have been published by Peter Raina and others. Peter K. Raina, *Droga do "Okrągłego Stołu": zakulisowe rozmowy przygotowawcze* (Warsaw: von Borowiecky, 1999); idem, *Kościół katolicki a państwo w świetle dokumentów 1945–1989,* vol. 3: *1975–1989* (Poznan: Pelplin, 1996); idem, *Rozmowy z władzami PRL. Arcybiskup Dąbrowski w służbie Kościoła i narodu* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo "Książka Polska," 1995). In the last monograph, the archbishop Dąbrowski acts "in the service of the Church and the nation," which suggests congruence between the interests of both.

[62] The title of Dudek's and Gryz' book is paradigmatic for this approach, where one finds "the communists" (non-capitalized) against "the Church" (capitalized). Antoni Dudek and Ryszard Gryz, k*omuniści i Kościół w Polsce 1945–1989* (Cracow: Znak, 2003). Elsewhere Dudek is much more critical about the policies of the Church hierarchy: idem, *Reglamentowana rewolucja: rozkład dyktatury komunistycznej w Polsce 1988–1990* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Arcana, 2004), 79–90.

In a fine, clearly structured and compelling analysis, Zaremba has shown why and how Poland's ruling elite during the People's Republic shifted from its failed internationalist strategy during the Stalinist period to a more and more national and even nationalist and chauvinist strategy during the following decades.[63] His book reveals how, in the end, the leadership of the ruling establishment, on one hand, and the political opposition, on the other, competed for national (rather than social) legitimacy. General Jaruzelski's speeches refer just as often to notions of "national salvation," "national unity" and patriotism as those of Lech Wałęsa when he addressed his supporters. Poland's post-transition discourse was dominated by notions of sovereignty, independence, national pride and honor, rather than by references to democracy, pluralism or human rights.

Neither the intentions of the protagonists nor the activities of the secret police decided the outcome of this struggle. It was rather the attitudes, convictions and the readiness for engagement of the largely undecided and hesitating bystanders, all factors that remain outside the popular patriotic narrative and the view of IPN researchers and their perpetrator/victim/hero paradigm. It must be mentioned that due to the specific materials and the methods applied by sociologists, this paradigm never prevailed in the sociological analyses of the People's Republic's everyday life. Even under censorship, sociological accounts of Poland's society during and after 1989 depict a much more nuanced and complex picture than the concept of an alleged conflict of "the regime against the nation" has ever suggested.[64]

It is probably not accidental that today younger authors are applying sociological viewpoints and methods as well as tools from social psychology and social history when beginning to delve more deeply into societal moods and fashions, everyday life, as well as the dreams and conflicts, convictions and attitudes of the "ordinary citizen."[65] Some examples include the economy of queuing[66] or the mechanisms governing the black market.[67] *Alltagsgeschichte*, the history of everyday life, has a long tradition in Polish historiography, as exemplified by the books of Tomasz Szarota about everyday life in occupied Warsaw[68] or even much

[63] Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm: nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce* (Warsaw: Wydawn. Trio, ISP PAN, 2001), 383–96.

[64] Władysław Adamski, Krzysztof Jasiewicz, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Andrzej Rychard, and Edward Wnuk-Lipiński, eds., *Polacy 88. Dynamika konfliktu a szanse reform. Raport z badania "Sprawy Polaków '87"* (Warsaw: Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii. Polska Akademia Nauk, 1989).

[65] Barbara Klich-Kluczewska, *Przez dziurkę od klucza. Życie prywatne w Krakowie (1945–1989)* (Warsaw: Trio, 2005).

[66] Małgorzata Mazurek, *Społeczeństwo kolejki. O doświadczeniach niedoboru 1945–1989* (Warsaw: Trio, 2010).

[67] Jerzy Kochanowski, *Tylnymi drzwiami. "Czarny rynek" w Polsce 1944–1989* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2010).

[68] Tomasz Szarota, *Okupowanej Warszawy dzien powszedni* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2010); idem, *Życie codzienne w stolicach okupowanej Europy. Szkice historyczne i kronika* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995).

earlier monographs dealing with peasants' life in interwar Poland. Not the approach itself is new, but the material on which it is based. The new wave of this strand of social history does not ignore the party archives and the secret police files, all of which are now accessible to the public, but also examines unpublished diaries, personal interviews, newspaper archives and archives of institutions that have been much less penetrated by historians than the party archives, the secret police files or the cellars of the army, the Ministry of the Interior, or Poland's Foreign Office.[69] Recent publications have been based on the archives of the Television and Radio Committee,[70] the Agency for the Control of Publications and Public Performances (which was responsible for the carrying out censorship)[71] and private documents in local archives.

Historians have always had an interest in debating the means and aims of censorship, but still today, Poland lacks a comprehensive theoretical and empirical account of its censorship mechanisms. Most articles and books on the subject are purely descriptive and often normative, seeing censorship as just another tool for regimes to oppress societies. The same is true regarding the media in the People's Republic. Romek's most recent book on censorship provides detailed stories about specific cases, including extensive quotes from the sources which show that censorship can also be regarded from a different perspective—as a place where compromises about interpretations of the past were negotiated.[72] During these negotiations, the state institution had initially more leverage than the other side—usually the author, who was often supported by his editor. Later, after the emergence of a strong and competitive second market that was beyond the scope of the censors' influence, the bargaining power of authors increased considerably. This point shows that at least in this respect, liberalization was actually imposed on the government from the bottom up, rather than granted by reform-minded rulers who had recognized the wind of change and adapted to it. This case contradicts the top-down version of gradually applied liberalization during and after martial law, but it is also not a case for the "society against the regime" paradigm, since the actors in the clandestine book market, the authors and their readers, constituted only a marginal section of the overall population.

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69 Krzysztof Dąbek, *PZPR. Retrospektywny portret własny* (Warsaw: Trio, 2006).

70 Klaus Bachmann, *Repression, Protest, Toleranz Wertewandel und Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Polen nach 1956* (Dresden: Neisse Verlag, 2010); Patryk Pleskot, *Wielki mały ekran. Telewizja a codzienność Polaków w Latach sześćdziesiątych* (Warsaw: Trio, 2007); and (for later periods) Lechosław Gawlikowski, and Yvette Meisser Moreno, "Audience to Western Broadcasts to Poland during the Cold War," in A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta, ed., *Cold War Broadcasting. Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A collection of studies and documents* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2010), 121–41.

71 Zbigniew Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce 1944–1970* (Warsaw: Neriton, IH PAN, 2010).

72 Ibid.

ANDREAS OPLATKA

# HUNGARY 1989: RENUNCIATION OF POWER AND POWER-SHARING

To some degree the course taken by the events in Hungary in 1989 was similar to that in the other communist countries, but it was also different. The similarities need no explanation. The differences do. They were based on two elements. First, Hungary was the only country in the Eastern bloc where self-liberation, as a major factor, included an important historical feature: rehabilitating the 1956 Hungarian revolution.[1] Second, Hungary made a significant contribution to the unification of Germany by dismantling the Iron Curtain and opening its border for citizens of the German Democratic Republic. This Hungarian decision marked the beginning of the GDR's collapse and helped end the Cold War.

The latter difference, the opening of the border, was made possible only within the framework of the political events in 1989 and was only one part of the process of transformation that took place in Hungary that year. In contrast, the impact of the 1956 Hungarian revolution had already left a profound mark on the country for four decades and thus, indeed, the history of 1989 started in Hungary in 1956. Therefore, before dealing with the period of transformation we must take a short look at the revolution and, specifically, at its aftermath.

The experience of the revolution was in many respects characteristic of a number of moments in Hungarian history. Resistance against foreign rulers, the use of force even in desperate situations and against mighty enemies, and the fight for independence are all components of the Hungarian historical heritage. In this respect, the movement in 1956 stood in a direct line with the revolution of 1848–49.

The popular uprising of 1956 is indisputably well documented. The Budapest Institute for the Study of the History of the Revolution has done the most thorough work in this area. Above all, the Institute's yearbooks should be mentioned, which contain articles about relevant new releases as well as the general research situation. A summit in this research was undoubtedly reached in 1996 on the oc-

[1] Czechoslovakia also had to rehabilitate a historic event, the "Prague Spring." But in contrast to Hungary's reassessment of its popular uprising, this rehabilitation did not occur at the beginning of the "Velvet Revolution"; unlike in Hungary, it was not a catalyst for the events nor did it even speed them up. In 1989 Prague, the ideas of 1968, again in contrast to the case in Hungary, were no longer popular, just as in 1989 Alexander Dubček played only a minor role. In other words: the "Prague Spring" was not a constituent part of the "Velvet Revolution." In contrast, in 1989 Hungary consciously referred to the 1956 rebellion and its ideas: the earlier demands for independence, rule of law and a multiparty system.

casion of the fortieth anniversary of the uprising. A number of Soviet documents that had become available as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union five years earlier enabled new insights to be gained. These findings were presented at a multi-day conference held by the Institute, in which Russian historians also participated. The corresponding contributions can be found in the *Yearbook 1996–97*.

The scholarly output on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary was much more modest, which implies that research on this topic had reached a certain saturation point. This probably also explains why several researchers at the Institute have focused on the Kádár era as their object of study.[2]

In addition to political, sociological and economic aspects, studies in Hungary on the Kádár era have mainly focused on the person János Kádár. This is not surprising, since Kádár stood at the tip of the power pyramid for over thirty years and shaped an epoch. Above all, his transformation is startling: from a hated puppet and the cruel executor of Moscow at the beginning of his career, to becoming the respected and sometimes even popular puritanical father of his country. Given this development, it can be said that in the twentieth century Kádár was one of Hungary's most enigmatic figures.[3]

Most of the works mentioned in this study are entirely or partly devoted to the change of system in 1989–90. They will not be mentioned individually here, but it should nonetheless be noted that their bibliographies also contain relevant

2 The director of the Institute, historian János M. Rainer, has published a biography of Imre Nagy, also available in German, and a collection of essays on various aspects of the period until 1989, including work on the development of the conditions that led to the events of 1989: János M. Rainer, *Ötvenhat után* (Budapest: 1956-os Intezet, 2003). In a book published in 2008, Rainer has also examined the early Kádár era. By examining intelligence archival materials he traces the spying conducted from 1957 to 1989 on József Antall, the first freely elected prime minister after 1989: János M. Rainer, *Jelentések hálójában* (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2008). Another researcher at the Institute who is particularly interested in the international context has published a collection of studies dealing with the postwar period, from the rise and seizure of power of the communist party until the collapse of single-party state: Csaba Békés, *Európából Európába. Magyarország konfliktusok kereszttüzében, 1945–1990* (Budapest: Gondolat, 2004). The last essay in the volume examines the international background of the 1989 changes in East-Central Europe. Békés' bibliography contains a long list of references to thematically related works in Hungarian, Russian and English.

3 There is also no lack of popular scholarly literature. Noteworthy, however, is the two-volume biography by Tibor Huszár, *Kádár János politikai életrajza* (Budapest: Szabadtér Kiadó and Kossuth Kiadó, 2001–03). A picture of Kádár that is scarcely known by the general population is found in László Varga, *Kádár János bírái előtt* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2006). With the help of a large number of contemporary documents contained in an appendix to this volume, the progression through the years 1949–56 of the ruthless, power-hungry Kádár can be seen: playing an evil role at the show trial of László Rajk, then he himself being sentenced in a court farce to life imprisonment by his comrades, and then after his early release from prison his prompt return to the party to continue his march to the top.

material.[4] The memoirs of some of the politicians who played a role in the system changes in 1989 have been published.[5]

Material about the recent past in Hungary and documents relating to the communist state period and its end are currently—not exclusively, but mainly—accessible in two places: at the National Archives and the Historical Archives of the State Security Services, both in Budapest. The law that governs these archives obliges public authorities and institutions to transfer their records to the relevant archives after no more than fifteen years. In the last two decades the law has often remained unobserved. For example, when in 2005–07 the author of this study was doing research on the political and diplomatic circumstances under which the western border of Hungary was opened for East German refugees in September 1989, he received special permission from the prime minister's office to see the minutes of the 1989 ministerial meetings. These documents should have been stored at the National Archives by the end of 2004.

In 2012, all of the applicable files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were available at the National Archives. But since some stocks are still closed, not everything is accessible. Nonetheless, at least in recent years there have been a number of cases in which ministerial experts have been granted access to material before the stipulated opening date. The same is true of the documents in the prime minister's office. Also the minutes of the Council of Ministers from 1989 are now available. With a few exceptions, for which access is expected soon, the entire inventory of the existing files of the ruling communist party up to 1989 is accessible.

In 1993 the National Archives published in two large volumes containing the minutes of the meetings held in 1989 by the Party's Central Committee. Another useful volume contains the minutes of the discussions between Hungarian

[4] In addition to those listed, two more books deal with the process leading to the dissolution of the single-party state: Zoltán Ripp, *Rendszerváltás Magyarországon 1987-1990* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2006) and Ignác Romsics: *Volt egyszer egy rendszerváltás* (Budapest: Rubicon-Ház, 2003); German: *Es war einmal: Ungarns Aufbruch zur Demokratie* (Herne: Gabriele Schäfer, 2006). The first volume (2006) is primarily analytical; the second, published in 2003, contains a chronological presentation of the facts together with a brief commentary.

[5] Gyula Horn, *Cölöpök* (Budapest: Zenit Könyvek, 1991), German: *Freiheit, die ich meine* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1991). From a scholarly-historical perspective, particularly Horn's remarks about the year 1989 must carry a number of question marks. In addition to the volume already mentioned, Imre Pozsgay published a second book of memoirs: *Koronatanú és tettestárs* (Budapest: Korona Kaidó, 1998). Political memoirs focusing on the 1989 upheaval were published in 1994 by the then minister of justice: Kálmán Kulcsár, *Két világ között. Rendszerváltás Magyarországon 1988-1990* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994), German: *Systemwechsel in Ungarn 1988–1990* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1997). Rezső Nyers was member of the leadership of the communist party, and in 1968 was considered one of the creators of the Hungarian economic reform. His memoirs were published in interview form in 2004: Huszár Tibor, *Beszélgetések Nyers Rezsővel* ([Budapest]: Kossuth, [2004]).

officials and the last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, found in the Soviet and Hungarian Party archives.[6]

Finally, there is a problem concerning the documents of the Ministry of the Interior from the period before 1989. In Hungarian professional circles, there is proof that during the transition period from late 1989 to early 1990, this ministry destroyed large numbers of files; it is thus today not possible to aim for completeness. In addition to this, until today only one part—and that, a very modest part—of the files of the communist secret services in Hungary are accessible, especially due to the rigid refusal of the post-1990 political elite. Twenty-two years after the democratic fresh start, a complete disclosure of the lists of agents and informants of the former State Security is still an unresolved issue. This puts a burden on public life and leads to many unproven suspicions. But individual historians continue to meticulously examine material held in the Historical Archives of the Secret Police and spectacular revelations appear regularly in the media.[7]

In view of this situation, if we ask what is needed in connection with the topic at hand, the answer is easy. And the need is very modest, at least from the scholarly point of view. Here we do not need several new works, a single one will do. Of course for this—and this is not such modest request—the government would have to release all of the records from the last years of the single-party state. On this basis, a comprehensive study could then be written with a title along the lines of: *The Role of the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior and its Executors at the Turn of 1989–90.*

## Defeat and compromise

After fierce battles, the occupation power—Soviet troops—crushed the 1956 uprising, with about 2,500 Hungarians and 700 Soviet soldiers losing their lives. By 1958, more than 14,000 people had been imprisoned and 229 executed.[8] The Soviet victory was absolute. The ruling communist Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party, now under the leadership of János Kádár, could be re-established in pow-

6 László Soós, ed., A Magyar *Szocialista Munkáspárt Központi Bizottságának 1989. évi jegyzőkönyvei*, 2 vols. (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 1993); Magdolna Baráth and János M. Rainer, eds., *Gorbacsov tárgyalásai magyar vezetőkkel : dokumentumok az egykori SZKP és MSZMP archívumaiból 1985–1991* (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2000).

7 Quite a lot of attention has been given to a comprehensive study written by two such specialists, despite the fact that of necessity it only presents examples: Gábor Tabajdi and Krisztián Ungváry, *Elhallgatott múlt. A pártállam és a belügy 1956-1990* (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2008). In a similar manner a stir was recently caused by the two-volume work: Tamás Szőnyei, *Titkos irás—Állambiztonsági szolgálat és irodalmi élet, 1956–1990* (Budapest: Noran Könyvesház, 2012).

8 For the Hungarian revolution in figures, see András B. Hegedűs, Tibor Beck, Pál Germuska, eds., *1956 kézikönyve*, vol. 3: Péter Kende and Attila Szakolczai, *Megtorlás és emlékezés* (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 1996), 303–12.

er, and any reference to the events in the autumn of 1956 henceforth had to use the term "counterrevolution." Nonetheless, the Hungarian experience also had a positive aspect. From the late 1960s it became evident that the resistance had paid a political dividend. The desperate use of force had made an impression on the Soviet side. After 1956 the Kremlin treated Hungary noticeably more carefully than it did its other satellite countries. In these circumstances, economic reforms became possible; small private enterprises in the services field and private entrepreneurship in agriculture were slowly introduced, despite this going against the communist dogma.[9] With a sort of dry humor, Hungarians gave this period the later well-known name "goulash communism."

Perhaps of greater importance than Hungary's relative economic wellbeing (albeit at the cost of a rapidly growing foreign debt, as will be examined below) was the easing of the political atmosphere. From the late 1960s the Kádár era, which lasted from 1956 to 1988–89, remains in the memory of the majority of the population in Hungary as a relatively tolerable, paternalistic dictatorship. And though it offered little, the minimalist welfare state nonetheless guaranteed a basic social security. Half a century later, the memory is rather faded of the first phase of Kádár's consolidation rule, whose terrorist methods only ended in 1962–63, especially with the comprehensive (but not absolute) amnesty for the convicted participants of the uprising. After this, political trials were gradually discontinued, and the party leadership stopped requiring celebrations and loud confessions of loyalty. The first passports for travelling to the West were issued in the spring of 1961, although the procedure was long associated with lengthy and often humiliating inspections. Trips to the West for whole families then became generally possible in the 1970s, and from 1 January 1988 Hungarian citizens were entitled to permanently possess a passport valid for all countries. Cultural life became richer from the late 1960s. The borders were gradually opened for Western books, artists and scientists. While the party continued to keep everyday life under control, it was now a sort of soft dictatorship, a silent compromise between the regime and the populace, not true totalitarian rule. Again with the same dry humor touched with bitterness, Hungarians described their country as "the most joyful barrack in the camp."[10]

The party, however, failed in its attempts to annihilate the revolution in everybody's memory. The country was silent, but the events of October and November 1956 remained an unsettled matter between the leadership and the people. Kádár, who was a mild dictator, might have acquired a certain popularity had it not been clear that the specific Hungarian situation in the 1970s and 80s was not due to

[9] Endre Antal, "Land- und Forstwirtschaft," in Klaus-Detlev Grothusen, ed., *Südosteuropa-Handbuch: Ungarn* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 355–82.

[10] On "goulash communism" and the "socialist consumer society," see Roger Gough, *A Good Comrade: János Kádár. Communism and Hungary* (London: Tauris, 2006), 150–61; Árpád von Klimó: *Ungarn seit 1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 152–57.

any unexpected humanitarian kindness of his regime. A better explanation for the "liberal" way Hungary was treated could be found in the anxiety of the Hungarian communists: They remembered 1956 and had learned their lesson during the revolution. They were convinced that a repetition of the revolution should be avoided at all costs.

## Transition through negotiation

This reform period—roughly seen, the last twenty years of communist rule before its collapse in 1989—gave Hungary a better starting position for reconstructing a pluralistic democracy and a market economy. The changes that Hungary underwent did not happen as brutally and suddenly, from one day to the next, as they did in the other Soviet satellite states. The contrast was especially striking between the behavior of the party leaders in those countries and the Hungarian politicians. Gustav Husák and Miloš Jakeš in Prague and Erich Honecker in East Berlin tried to maintain orthodox forms of communist power until the last minute, as did, clearly, the Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu in Bucharest. The majority of the Hungarian post-Kádárian leadership acted differently. While the transition to a pluralistic democracy in Hungary was a result of the general circumstances in Europe, the economic failure of the regime and, within this framework, popular pressure and the activities of the newly organized opposition, to an important extent, transformation also occurred with the collaboration of reform-minded communists. Many were wise enough to realize that their time was over. Thus they gave way, accepted negotiations about the instating of democratic institutions, and stepped down peacefully when their party lost the first free elections in the spring of 1990.[11]

It was thus the ruling elite who opened the Hungarian-Austrian border. The decision in February 1989 to create a crack in the Iron Curtain was taken by the Politburo of the party. In the following weeks, power gradually moved from the Politburo into the hands of the government. Consequently, it was Prime Minister Miklós Németh who accepted responsibility for the Hungarian authorities giving permission, in late August, to East German refugees on Hungarian soil to leave for Austria, thus enabling them to continue on to the Federal Republic.[12]

Which significant events preceded the big shift of 1989? One might look anywhere in the chronology, for instance 1985. This was the year that Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in Moscow. In the same year parliamentary und communal elections took place in Hungary. For the first time since 1947 and according to a

[11] Rudolf L. Tőkés, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution: Economic Reform, Social Change and Political Succession*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. 305–56.

[12] Andreas Oplatka, *Der erste Riss in der Mauer. September 1989—Ungarn öffnet die Grenze* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2009), esp. 170–84.

law passed by the Hungarian Parliament in 1983, the nomination of more than one candidate was obligatory. True, the attempts of oppositional groups to present their own candidates were prevented by the powers of the state. But despite of this sabotage, 10.5 percent of all candidates elected in June 1985 were supposedly independent. In the same month, a first general meeting of the various oppositional organizations took place. The delegates from these groups, at that time still united, debated the economic decline and presented their propositions for correction. State authorities did not prosecute the participants.

A year later, in 1986, the behavior of the authorities had changed. On 15 March, the anniversary of the outbreak of the liberal revolution in 1848, police in Budapest brutally attacked a demonstration of oppositional groups trying to conduct private celebrations. In the same year, the cultural journal *Tiszatáj* was not allowed to publish for six months. The reason was a reference that had been made to the "revolution" of 1956. However, in October the association of Hungarian writers revolted against this decision after a vote taken at its general assembly: All Stalinist figures were expelled from the association's presiding committee.

In 1987 several articles on economic reform appeared, some in official journals and others in illegal yet tolerated publications. Their authors—reform-minded economists—criticized the communist system severely and presented counter-propositions. Nonetheless, in the political sections of their analyses, even the most radical opponents of communism still declared that changes had to take place within the framework of the existing balance of power. For them, as they supposed in their "sober and realistic" manner, pluralistic democracy was but a dream.

Facts and actions, however, did not correspond to this pessimistic attitude. The Hungarian Democratic Forum was founded already in September 1987, and the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) and the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) followed a year later, as did the resurrection of the traditional Party of Smallholders. These political parties were finally granted a legal basis only after 1989. When they were founded, still under the communist-ruled state, they were considered movements. For their founding they used a strange loophole that existed due to negligence on the part of the state powers: Paragraph 65 of the Hungarian Constitution guaranteed the right to form organizations, adding that this would be regulated by law. This law was however never adopted.

## Kádár steps down

The long-term rule of János Kádár came to an end in May 1988. He lost his position, or rather was overthrown, within the communist party itself. In Budapest a month later, the first mass demonstration of the opposition that had the blessing of the authorities took place: a protest rally against Ceauşescu's plans to destroy six to

seven thousand villages in Romania, which presented a particular risk to the Hungarian minority and their still-cohesive settlements. This was the largest demonstration that had taken place in Budapest since the days of the revolution of 1956.

Politically, the year 1989 was introduced by Imre Pozsgay, who belonged to the Politburo of the ruling party. Since the mid-1980s he had distinguished himself as the leading reformist politician of the country. In an interview on Hungarian radio at the end of January, Pozsgay referred to the opinion of a commission of historians and stated that it was not a counterrevolution that had taken place in 1956, but a popular uprising. The legitimacy of communist rule was thus openly questioned. Two weeks later, the Central Committee of the communist party accepted the introduction of pluralistic democracy. Of course this meant the recognition of other political parties. It remained, however, uncertain when elections were to be held. Indeed, we have good reason to believe that many functionaries, above all Károly Grósz, the leader of the communist party at the time, still had strong mental reservations. In their minds, an arrangement had to be found that allowed the communist party to remain in power.[13]

On 15 March 1989—again the day commemorating the 1848 revolution—more than 100,000 people demonstrated in Budapest for political rights. Three months later, on 16 June, more than 200,000 persons gathered on Budapest's Heroes' Square to attend a funeral celebration. The mortal remains of Imre Nagy, the prime minister in the revolutionary government of 1956 who had been executed in 1958, were reburied. From 13 June until 18 September, following the example of Poland, round table negotiations were held between the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party and the oppositional parties. The subjects that were discussed included power sharing, preparation for elections, and the modification of the constitution. On 10 September, the government of Németh, as already mentioned, opened Hungary's western border for citizens of the German Democratic Republic to pass. On 23 October—the day the uprising of 1956 had started—Hungary was proclaimed a republic, replacing the Soviet term "people's republic." At the end of the same month, a new election law took effect. And on 1 January 1990, the newly created Constitutional Court began its activities. The elections in April 1990, which were entirely free, were won by József Antall's Democratic Forum. Antall formed a coalition government in which the former communists, now the Socialist Party, did not participate.

## Economic decline and debt

This brief overview of the main events taking place in the years leading up to 1989[14] needs to be augmented with some remarks on particular background elements. Today, it is common for Hungarian politicians from all parties to declare that

[13] Tőkés, *Negotiated revolution*, 301–3.

[14] Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században* (Budapest: Osiris, 1999), 361–98.

the 1956 revolution found its perfect fulfillment in 1989. Indeed, there is more truth to this statement than most speakers realize. Despite its defeat, the revolution, as we have seen, never ceased to influence the fate of the country. In the late 1960s and in the 1970s, Hungarians had to thank the street-fighters of 1956 for the better treatment given to the entire country. Indeed, in 1956 the Hungarian communists had learned their lesson—respect for their own people. Also the Kremlin recognized that in this country they could not expect the same material and political conditions to be accepted as did the population of the Soviet Union. As described above, in these years there was an easing of the planned economy and a petit bourgeoisie was established, which while modest had a certain degree of well-being. Kádár's policies were directed by the conviction that the living standards of the "working people," as low as they may have been, had to improve from year to year. The deep social dissatisfaction of the early 1950s was not to return and lead to a similar outburst of violence. However from the late 1970s, when the prices for crude oil and raw materials rose steeply and the terms of trade worsened for the communist countries, Hungary was no longer able to maintain Kádár's political guidelines.

The solution chosen by the Hungarian authorities consisted in borrowing money on the Western market. Living standards were henceforth maintained through foreign loans, but the country's debt grew dramatically. State bankruptcy could only be avoided in 1982 by Hungary joining the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Indeed, this was a courageous step, since Moscow disliked the IMF and called it an instrument of Western imperialists. The conditions imposed on Hungary by the IMF seemed to bring some improvement, but already two years later, in the spring of 1984, Kádár spoke out against the measures being enforced to cut expenses. In spite of continued borrowing, the regime was unable to stem the worsening of living conditions. Németh, who became prime minister in November 1988 and was therefore one of the leading figures during the transition period of 1989–90, was at this time a young economist. He describes his reaction to Kádár's interference in the following way: The moment the party leader vetoed economic reason, he realized that the system could not be reformed and was condemned to failure.[15] The late 1980s then saw the decline of Kádár, who, old and sick, had become an opponent of further reforms altogether.

There were numerous signs, particularly from the beginning of 1987, indicating that the Kremlin was no longer able or willing to keep his satellites under the same strict control as it had in the previous decades. The weakening of Soviet influence and the decline of Hungary's internal economic situation had a twofold effect, one supporting the other. Oppositional organizations grew stronger and could present their views more and more freely. In their journals, which were widely distributed, the names and addresses of the editors were printed openly, and the police practically ceased any persecution. The policy of human rights, emphasized above all by the United States, the effects of the Helsinki conference,

[15] Oplatka, *Der erste Riss*, 40.

and the consequences of Hungary's debt reduced the communist regime's room to move. As Kádár himself recognized most reluctantly, it was no longer possible to use "administrative measures" against the opposition, since the Western countries, which were Hungary's creditors, were carefully watching the developments in Hungary's domestic political scene. To sum up, one might say that communist Hungary had become dependent on the West.[16]

In the same years, a power struggle started at the top of the ruling party. At stake was the position of Kádár's successor, although the old party leader himself did not seem inclined to withdraw. Of the candidates taking part in the succession struggle, the majority represented the next younger generation. The main dividing line, however, was that separating orthodox functionaries from reform-minded politicians. Many of these reformers had both personal and political links to members of the opposition.

## The success and failure of a reform politician

The role played by Imre Pozsgay in this respect was of special importance. According to Kádár's suspicious judgment, Pozsgay was too liberal and therefore dangerous. Consequently, he had been banned from the party's first line and the government. In 1983 he was given the Patriotic Front to lead. This was a purely decorative body that structured and united the mass organizations. Yet, in the mid-1980s Pozsgay succeeded in making the Front a very active political force. Indeed, the group even took on the character of an independent political party. In particular, Pozsgay and the Front provided official authority and defense for radically reform-minded intellectuals. This enabled such intellectuals to publish critical articles or to write about sensitive political and economic topics.

One of these publications was titled *Fordulat és reform* (Shift and reform), written by several open-minded economists. It appeared in June 1987 and produced a political sensation.[17] The excitement was understandable. Among other things, the authors put up the question for discussion whether the concepts of planned economy and market economy should continue to be treated as contradictory. In the same publication, the opinion was expressed that the only chance for the country's economy to recover was under radically changed political conditions, with the government controlled by a pluralistic parliament representing all segments of the population. It is clear that ideas like this went against the basic communist dogma.

By this time, Pozsgay had become one of the most popular politicians in the country. With his assistance, the Hungarian Democratic Forum was established on 27 September 1987. Pozsgay accepted the invitation to the founding ceremony—a gathering of about two hundred opposition figures—and had the courage to

[16] Romsics, *Magyarország története*, 527.

[17] "Fordulat és reform", *Közgazdasági Szemle* 34 (June 1987): 642–708.

make the decisions taken by the Forum public in an interview with the Hungarian daily *Magyar Nemzet*. Nonetheless, his political career practically ended in autumn 1989, when the former communist party split. Pozsgay was abandoned by the opposition, even by the Democratic Forum, and became, so to speak, politically homeless. When at the end of November 1989 a referendum was held to determine how to organize the future presidential elections, Pozsgay suffered a very narrow defeat. Unlike Pozsgay, the Democratic Forum, despite its support for him, did not want a popular election for the head of state but an indirect election through the parliament, and thus the Forum advised Pozsgay's followers not to vote. The other major party in 1989, the Alliance of Free Democrats, campaigned against Pozsgay—officially on the grounds that the country did not need a president with a communist past, but also with the strong motivation (not openly mentioned) that Pozsgay stood too close to the Democratic Forum. While this example confirms the popular adage that gratefulness has no place in politics, it also shows that in the first half of 1989, even Pozsgay, one of the best-informed public figures, did not expect the collapse of communist rule and the transition to liberal democracy to take place in the remarkably short time that it actually happened.[18] Surprisingly, it seems that as late as the summer of 1989, Hungary's most important politicians still believed that the road to supreme power and through that, to the possibility of renewing the country, led through the position of the general secretary of the communist party. Had Pozsgay made up his mind earlier and left the party to join the Democratic Forum, he would have no doubt been elected president of the Hungarian Republic, exactly as he had wished.

The most remarkable success of the Hungarian opposition in the late 1980s, in its progress toward the changes that were to take place, was the rehabilitation of the popular uprising of 1956. Pozsgay, as already mentioned, had a part to play in this respect, but interestingly, also contributing to this process were Hungarians in exile in the United States. Kádár's successor, Károly Grósz, who at that time also occupied the post of prime minister, was to visit the United States in July 1988. As part of the visit, he also planned to meet Hungarians in American exile, although he was aware that this would certainly lead to a public confrontation over the problem of Imre Nagy. He knew that his countrymen would ask when the Hungarian leadership was planning to give permission for Nagy and the other executed victims of the 1956 revolution to be finally buried in a humane and dignified manner. In order to forestall sharp criticism in the United States, Grósz and his delegation, very much in need of Western help, yielded and allowed the opposition to organize a memorial for Imre Nagy and his friends. The party, however, insisted that the re-burial was to be seen as an act of piety, not as a political revision of the court sentence.[19]

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[18] Imre Pozsgay, *1989. Politikus pálya a pártállamban és a rendszerváltásban* (Budapest: Püski, 1993), 184–89

[19] Andrienne Molnár, „*88 egy furcsa év volt*", Oral History Archive 14 (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2008), 239–78.

However, it turned out that this insistence was only wishful thinking. The huge crowd showing up on Budapest's Heroes' Square on 16 June 1989 transformed the celebration into an impressive political demonstration. In the speeches of oppositional politicians the democratic revolution of the year 1956 was praised, and the president of the Fidesz party, Viktor Orbán, who at the time was 26 years old, demanded the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungarian soil. There was no interference by the police. Instead, the celebration was broadcast on Hungarian radio and television. This made it clear to the entire country that a turning point had been reached; the legitimacy of the communist party had been shaken in an irreversible way. After all, Kádár and his comrades had received their power in November 1956 from the Soviet Army, and they had claimed for more than three decades that they had saved the country threatened by a "counterrevolution." If now, after thirty-three years, the uprising was suddenly legitimized as a democratic revolution of the Hungarian people, then there could be only one conclusion: the power of the ruling communist party was illegitimate.

## Silence from Moscow

How did the Soviet Union react? What was the perception from the Hungarian side? What did Hungarian politicians know with regard to Moscow's real or possible behavior? To answer I will first relate a personal experience: In Mid-March of 1989 I had the opportunity to meet Pozsgay in Budapest. I asked him whether the Hungarians had received any signals from Moscow and Pozsgay's answer was: "There are none. They remain silent. It's a complete black-out." In the late 1980s, Western statesmen had tried to convince radical reformers in the Eastern bloc to avoid irritating Moscow by not proceeding too quickly. It was generally feared that Polish and Hungarian radicalism might undermine Gorbachev's position and bring hardliners back into power in the Kremlin. But Pozsgay and other Hungarian reform-politicians, due to their national interests, had a completely different point of view. The Soviet weakness, Pozsgay stated, must be used for quick changes; Hungary should move forward and go as far as possible to create a *fait accompli* before the Soviet Union recovered.

Soviet leadership, in fact, remained silent. Gorbachev assured Prime Minister Németh on 3 March 1989 that there would be "no new 1956" again as long as he held his post. Moscow agreed to negotiations concerning the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary and removed the nuclear warheads on Hungarian soil at the end of November 1989. No critical Soviet comment was heard with regard to the rehabilitation of the Hungarian revolution and the round table talks. The Soviet Union also refrained from criticizing the Hungarian decision to remove the Iron Curtain and open the western border for East German refu-

gees. While Gorbachev opposed the introduction of a multi-party system by the Hungarians, he did not take any measures against it.[20]

## Controversial questions

There are several important details in the Hungarian history of 1989 that remain unclear and disputed, and since today's discourse is highly political, this makes some of the answers extremely difficult. Who created the turn, the big political changes in 1989? Who acted, who fought in the first line: the reform-communists or the dissidents, the opposition? Did a revolution take place, or was it rather an evolutionary development and transformation? Did the attitude of the population play a role and thus, did the government act under popular pressure, or did it ignore the masses since they remained passive? Would not the term "revolution from above" be more appropriate when characterizing the events in Hungary in 1989?

It is unclear when exactly Hungary's communist rulers recognized and accepted the fact that giving up communism and transitioning to a Western-type democratic system and market economy were inevitable. While the former foreign minister Gyula Horn professed in a private conversation that he had seen the coming changes "in the second half of the 1980s,"[21] at the latest in 1989, some of the so-called reformers, for instance Prime Minister Németh, no longer were aiming at reforms or the transformation and improvement of the existing system, but at its abolishment and replacement. They considered their main task to be assuring a peaceful transition. This, however, was not everybody's aim. Károly Grósz, who had followed Kádár as the leader of the communist party, still believed at the beginning of 1989 that his party was facing a long-term struggle against the opposition and that the fight would last until the mid-1990s. In the spring of 1989, Grósz even deliberated whether he should opt for a military coup in order to save the communist system.[22]

What can be said about the attitude of the population and the role played by the opposition? Unpublished opinion polls that the ruling party used to gain information about the mood of the population show that in 1981, and to some extent still in 1986, the majority of Hungarians basically had accepted Kádár's "goulash communism." More did not seem possible. While freedom remained restricted, living conditions, though modest, were satisfactory. The economic decline in the second half of the 1980s, however, is reflected in a rapid change in opinion polls 1988. The numbers speak for themselves: the regime had been rejected.[23] Con-

[20] Oplatka, *Der erste Riss*, 53–70.
[21] Ibid., 83.
[22] Tőkés, *Negotiated revolution*, 297–98.
[23] Romsics, *Magyarország története*, 2nd ed. (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), 520–22.

sequently, there can be no doubt: A large majority of the population wished the system to be replaced. Later, it is clear that the opposition succeeded in mobilizing the masses. Hundreds of thousands took part in demonstrations, responding to political key-words like the fate of the Hungarian minority in Romania, or the rehabilitation of the Hungarian revolution of 1956.

The oppositional groups, formed above all by critical intellectuals, had begun to be active in the 1970s. For a long time they remained outsiders. While their activities irritated the regime and from time to time it reacted harshly, generally the party leadership believed that it could live with small groups of ineffective adversaries. In the second half of the 1980s, however, the opponents ceased to be outsiders. Without their insistence and pressure, the reburial of Imre Nagy and the other victims of the Hungarian uprising of 1956 would never have taken place. The same can be said about the round table negotiations, at which the representatives of the new parties were able to pass most of their political propositions. In these negotiations, which ended in September 1989, the basis of the constitutional state was laid down. The participants agreed on a legal framework that assured the transition to new democratic institutions.[24]

However, these round table negotiations did not deal with the transformation of the economic system. The lack of regulations in this area resulted in the so-called spontaneous privatization. This meant that in many cases, party functionaries, being the best informed, having the best access to credit, and using their still-existing positions, were able to acquire enterprises and other assets. The metamorphosis of certain communists into capitalist entrepreneurs, quickly and shamelessly, produced a conflict that marks Hungary's political life even today. At least some of the population remains convinced that the former leaders simply converted their political power into economic privileges.

Finally, some remarks need to be made about the foreign political context. The first is commonplace: As in every Soviet satellite country in Central Europe, the changes that took place in Hungary were only possible because of the new circumstances in Moscow. It is clear that Gorbachev was looking for reform-minded allies. He sought to establish new leaders and to bring the more orthodox countries like the GDR and Romania onto the road of his perestroika. Nonetheless, he did not have the creation of liberal-capitalist societies in mind.

## Discomfort in the West

More surprising is the fact that even the Western powers did not unanimously wish the communist countries to regain their independence and to introduce democracy. In the interim, quite a number of verbal and written statements have

[24] Andreas Schmidt-Schweizer, *Politische Geschichte Ungarns von 1985 bis 2002* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007), 156–68.

been found that confirm this attitude. This was not only due to anxiety about Gorbachev's position suffering because of Polish or Hungarian radicalism. As seen by certain Western politicians, maintaining the Warsaw Pact was still needed in 1989 in order to preserve the European balance of power. In certain Western capitals, the conviction also prevailed that reform-communists were better and more reliable partners than the uncertain and unknown newcomers in the ranks of the democratic opposition.

For instance, in mid-September 1989 Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the foreign minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, a democrat and liberal, declared to the Hungarian ambassador István Horváth that his government, as well as those of Italy, France and the United States, desired the upcoming free elections in Hungary in the spring of 1990 to be won not by the opposition, but by the reform-wing of the former communist party.[25] To answer the question why this was the attitude of Western leaders at the time, it is probably best to ask them directly. Of course, it is difficult some twenty years later to make them admit that in 1989–90 they preferred the continued rule of the reform communists in East Central Europe over a change of power favoring the democratic opposition. All told, however, it is probable that the main reason for their reaction was their fear that if the postwar order built by Moscow in 1945–48 were suddenly to collapse, Gorbachev's position would become untenable.

This finding is indeed strange, and from a historical point of view, even paradoxical. In Hungarian historiography, a unité de doctrine exists which states that the country lost its independence at the beginning of the sixteenth century and since then—with some short exceptions—has always had to bear foreign rule and abide by foreign interests. The opposite happened in 1989. Hungary, despite still being a satellite, a member of the Warsaw Pact and occupied by Soviet forces, Hungary, despite being admonished by the Western states to show patience and a low profile, acted independently. In doing so, it is clear that it proceeded both against Soviet and Western interests, with the result—Hungary's self-liberation—being attained without assistance.

[25] László Borhi, "Magyarország kötelessége a Varsói szerződésben maradni—az 1989-es átmenet nemzetközi összefüggései magyar források tükrében," *Külügyi Szemle*, no. 2–3 (2007): 255–72; Oplatka, *Der erste Riss*, 236–37.

Péter Vámos

# THE TIANANMEN SQUARE "INCIDENT" IN CHINA AND THE EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS[1]

Ever since the Chinese imperial court moved to the "Northern Capital" (Beijing) in the early fifteenth century, the area in front of the southern gate of the palace has held special importance. Tiananmen, the "Gate of Heavenly Peace," leads to the Temple of Heaven, the altar where the emperor, the son of heaven who ruled with heaven's mandate, prayed to heaven to maintain harmony between man and the universe. This was the place where imperial edicts were announced and the people could submit their complaints to the emperor.

The word *an* (安) does not only mean "peace" in Chinese, but it can also serve as a verb meaning "to pacify" or even "to subdue." In China, peace also means subservience to power.

The square south of the Forbidden City has witnessed much unrest, protest and violence. Throughout the last six centuries of the imperial period, it served as a site for public trials, tortures and executions. In 1900, during the Boxer Rebellion, the square became larger when the international forces of the eight allied nations damaged and burnt down the ministries located there. The first mass demonstration on the square took place on 4 May 1919, when Chinese students protested Japanese imperialism, official corruption and the Versailles Treaty, which planned to cede parts of China formerly under German control to Japan. The resulting political and cultural movement sought to create a Westernized culture as a solution to China's political, economic and social problems. This was the first time that students made history on the square. In December 1935, patriotic students demonstrated against Japanese imperialism and the weak policies of the Guomindang, which showed no willingness to resist the Japanese menace. Tiananmen gained new importance in 1949, when Mao Zedong announced the founding of the People's Republic (PRC) from its rostrum. During the Cultural Revolution it hosted mass rallies, with millions of young Red Guards arriving here from around the country. Today Tiananmen is one of the national symbols of the PRC, and its image occupies a central position on the country's national emblem. But for many Chinese families, this place represents

[1] Research for this paper was carried out with the support of the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA), Project no. 78484: "The Soviet Bloc and China, 1949–1989." The author would like to thank the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies, where he was an External Senior Fellow in 2010–11, for its support of research into relations between the Soviet Bloc and China.

the site where on 4 June 1989 the government harshly suppressed peaceful student demonstrations.[2]

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On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the peaceful transition in East Central Europe, numerous festive events and scholarly conferences took place around the world, with this episode being labeled one of the most significant developments in the second half of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, in China, the Chinese student movement that was centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square, the popular unrest in China's cities, and the military crackdown on demonstrators remain banned topics. It is essentially only the media outside of China that has kept the memory of the events alive. The images of students sitting on the square wearing headbands, the white statue of the "Goddess of Democracy," or the man in a white shirt who stopped the tanks rolling toward the square, before vanishing, never to be identified, are still fresh in our memories.

Similar to the changes in Europe, in China June Fourth (六四 *liu si*, the most common Chinese term for the events) also signifies a turning point. However, while the former led to the collapse of the "socialist world," the latter convinced China's leaders that political stability, even if achieved by dictatorial means, is essential for successful economic development. As a result, China's communists have not only managed to remain in power, but have even generated rapid economic growth while at the same time maintaining relative social stability.

## Economic and political reforms in China in the 1980s

Before we recount what happened in Beijing in the spring months of 1989, it is necessary to summarize the profound changes that occurred in Chinese domestic politics after the late 1970s. Following Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping opened China to the outside world, developing the Chinese model of a market economy presided over by an authoritarian government. Deng's reform program, initiated in December 1978, resulted in Maoist radicalism being replaced by pragmatic moderation, and correspondingly, the government's focal point shifted from politics to economics.

China's leaders took on the task of transforming a command-planned, highly centralized system under public ownership into a market-oriented, decentralized, mixed ownership system, improving incentive systems in order to increase production, and establishing an interrelated legal framework in order to reduce the

[2] On the history of Tiananmen Square, see Péter Polonyi, *Mi történt? Tienanmen tér, '89* (Budapest: Hírlapkiadó Vállalat, 1990), 9.

absolute dominance of the state over economic activity. In the 1980s, the overarching concern of the central leadership was how to maintain stability and avoid domestic chaos while proceeding with modernization and reform.

Similar to the reform efforts in the European Soviet-type economies, the reforms in China also lacked a clear goal model and guiding theory. Beijing proceeded with reforms without a concrete plan—in the words of Deng Xiaoping, "crossing the river by feeling for stones" (摸着石头过河 *mozhe shitou guo he*). This tendency resulted in trial-and-error procedures and frequent improvisation of the reform process. The leadership had to cope with a constant cycle of reform and readjustment, whereby each set of reforms triggered both expected and unexpected consequences. These, in turn, required readjustments and further reforms.[3] American political scientist Richard Baum has described the ambivalent pattern of Chinese reforms in the 1980s as a constant cycle of relaxation and control, "characterized by an initial increase in the scope of economic or political reform (in the form, e.g., of price deregulation or intellectual liberalization), followed by a rapid release of pent-up social demand (e.g., panic buying or student demonstrations); the resulting 'disorder' would set off a backlash among party traditionalists, who would then move to reassert control. A conservative retrenchment would follow, marked by an ideological assault on 'liberal' tendencies and an attempt to halt (or even to reverse) the initial reform. The ensuing freeze would serve, in turn, to exacerbate existing internal contradictions and stresses, leading to the generation of renewed pressures for relaxation and reform—and so on."[4] In the second half of the 1980s, the periods of readjustment were longer than those of effective reform. The first such period came in 1985, only a year after the introduction of the enterprise reform, and lasted for two years. The next reform period also lasted for only one year and was similarly followed by a readjustment period, this one lasting for about two to three years.

In contrast to the reforms in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union, China's economic reform strategy was more gradual and, institutionally, more innovative. The leadership agreed on the gradual introduction of market mechanisms into the operations of the centralized command economy and on China's integration into the global economy. Reformers both moderate and more radical found common ground in their shared conviction that the economy—especially the rural sector—needed "room to breathe."[5]

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[3] David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington D.C., Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and University of California Press, 2008), 4.

[4] Richard Baum, "The Road to Tiananmen: Chinese Politics in the 1980s," in Roderick MacFarquhar, ed., *The Politics of China*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 340–471, 341.

[5] Barry Naughton, "The Impact of the Tiananmen Crisis on China's Economic Transition," China Perspectives, no. 2 (2009): 63–78, 65.

During the initial period, from 1979 to 1984, the reforms focused on restructuring the farming system. People's communes were replaced with household farming and more consumption of self-generated products was allowed. As a result, households not only managed their own farming operations but also could keep the fruits of their labors.

In 1984, following these rural reforms, new nationwide reforms were initiated, the so-called urban economic reform. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee's resolution adopted in October 1984 declared that "the law of value must be consciously followed and applied."[6] The system of centrally fixed prices was revised and a price reform was introduced. Although the new system was designed to reflect the shifts in supply and demand more freely, not all prices were released to find their market level. While the prices of certain products were under strict government control, prices of most farm products were deregulated, and the prices of certain other goods were allowed to fluctuate within a certain range. Prices of raw materials under mandatory planning were fixed, whereas prices of extra-plan output could vary according to market conditions.[7] As part of the enterprise reform, a director responsibility system for state-owned enterprises was designed to separate ownership and management and reduce party and administrative intervention in enterprises. However, the reform failed to revitalize the enterprise system for several reasons, the most important being the lack of price reforms. The mixed price system and decentralization resulted in unprecedented inflation and corruption. Local authorities who controlled the supply and allocation of (inexpensive) fixed-price goods began investing in the more profitable light and consumer goods industries, and indulged in rounds of selling and reselling these goods at ever higher prices.[8]

In May 1988, the party leadership decided to push ahead with price reforms in the face of mounting inflation. This resulted in a wave of urban consumer panic, triggered by rumors of impending price decontrol and "rendered politically volatile by deepening public resentment over flagrant official profiteering."[9] As a consequence, in September of the same year, the central leadership reoriented its effort toward "improving the economic environment and rectifying the economic order," meaning essentially curbing inflation and corruption. This meant that price reforms and other reform measures were postponed.[10]

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[6] Yanqi Tong, *Transitions from State Socialism: Economic and Political Change in Hungary and China* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 77.

[7] Kathleen Hartford, "The political economy behind the Beijing spring," in Tony Saich, ed., *The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), 50–83, 61–63; Keith Crane and K.C. Yeh, *Economic Reform and the Military in Poland, Hungary and China* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1991), 87–91.

[8] Hartford, "Political economy," 63.

[9] Baum, "Road to Tiananmen," 344.

[10] Crane and Yeh, *Economic Reform*, 93.

Parallel to the uneven process of economic development was a sharp increase in the consumer price index, estimated at 18 to 20 percent. In early 1989, unofficial estimates mentioned an inflation rate that had become as high as 30 to 40 percent.[11] All this, particularly the sudden steep increase in food prices, further deteriorated living conditions and morale in the cities, especially among intellectuals, students and public servants. "China continued to suffer from the worst distortions of the old system without enjoying the anticipated benefits of the new."[12] In May 1989, summarizing the causes of the emerging political and leadership crisis in China, the report of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs referred to the inconsistency, discrepancy, and insufficiency of the reforms.[13] In sum, the political crisis that climaxed at Tiananmen was heightened, if not actually caused, by what American political scientist Lowell Dittmer has described as a crisis of incomplete reform.[14]

"Reform and opening up" (改革开放 *gaige kaifang*) was only one aspect of Deng Xiaoping's strategy. The other, equally important element of his plan to reform China was first formulated in his speech on 30 March 1979, in which Deng set the political limits of reform by establishing the "Four Cardinal Principles": adherence to the socialist road, dictatorship of the proletariat, the leading role of the communist party, and the supremacy of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought. At the core of these four principles was to be the leadership of the CCP, because whoever controlled the party, by definition, also represented the people and thus had the right to exercise dictatorship on behalf of the proletariat and the authority to interpret what Marxism really means.[15] By setting out this political framework, Deng, "the man of development under dictatorship," expressed his determination to take a firm stand against any political liberalization that might have challenged the ruling authority of the party.[16]

Similar to the situation in the Soviet Union, China's leaders understood that effective markets require a free flow of goods, people and information. They also saw their own version of glasnost spill over into the political sphere in the form of demands for political participation. However, the majority of Chinese leaders perceived these demands as a threat to the leadership role of the party, even to

11 Report of the Fourth Territorial Department of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, On the Domestic situation in China, Budapest, 26 May 1989, in Hungarian National Archives (HNA), XIX-J-1-j-Kína-2-001433/4-1989.

12 Baum, "Road to Tiananmen," 344.

13 Report of the Fourth Territorial Department of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, On the Domestic situation in China, Budapest, 26 May 1989, in HNA, XIX-J-1-j-Kína-2-001433/4-1989.

14 Lowell Dittmer, "China in 1989: The Crisis of Incomplete Reform," *Asian Survey* 30, no. 1 (January 1990): 25–41.

15 Crane and Yeh, Economic Reform, 95.

16 Michel Bonnin, "The Chinese Communist Party and June 4th: Or how to get out of it and get away with it," *China Perspectives*, no. 2 (2009): 52–61.

the very existence of the system, and as a result they suppressed all forms of organized opposition.[17]

From the outset of reforms in China, the leadership attempted to transform the political power-holders' style of wielding power, to control political interventions in economic management and the arbitrary use of power, and to separate economic management and political decision making. Separation of party and government, supervision of political power through checks and balances and through law and institutions, and participation of the masses were also among the issues in the Chinese leadership's discussions about political reform. There was only one point on which the leadership recognized no compromise: that all reforms had to strengthen the party's leadership. The Chinese leaders firmly rejected the tendency toward what they called "bourgeois liberalization," (资产阶级自由主义 *zichanjieji ziyouzhuyi*), a term that the authorities never clearly defined, but which can be interpreted as "wanton expression of individual freedom (individualism) that poses a threat to the stability and unity of the country."[18]

By 1987, the notion of pluralism also became a matter of consensus, in part because economic reform heightened socioeconomic differences. On the eve of the thirteenth party congress in 1987, reform-minded Acting General Secretary Zhao Ziyang argued before the Central Committee that in a socialist society "people of all kinds […] share common interests, but their special interests should not be overlooked. The conflicting interests should be reconciled."[19] As to the question of democratization, no agreement was made on how and how soon democracy should be achieved. Under the pressure of mounting social and political tensions generated by the economic reform, the majority of China's leaders increasingly embraced the opinion that reform required authority, not democracy.[20]

Official tolerance of opposition movements was always limited in China. The Confucian tradition justifies criticism of the government on moral grounds, but it does not guarantee the legality of opposition. By the late 1950s, no independent political organization existed in China, since the CCP did not allow any political organization outside its control to survive. Whenever popular criticism exceeded the framework that was still acceptable for the central leadership, independently organized political activities were ruthlessly suppressed.[21]

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[17] Andrew C. Janos, "Social Science, Communism, and the Dynamics of Political Change," *World Politics* 44, no. 1 (October 1991): 81–112, 102.

[18] Julia Kwong, "The 1986 Student Demonstrations in China: A Democratic Movement?" *Asian Survey* 28, no. 9 (September 1988): 970–85, 983.

[19] Zhao Ziyang, "On Separating Party from Government," *Beijing Review*, 14–20 December 1987, 20.

[20] Tong, *Transitions*, 157.

[21] The same is true today. The authorities know no mercy when dealing with attempts to organize groups that oppose the existing order, either in the form of human rights activities (Charter 2008), oppositional parties (the Democratic Party) or religious movements (Falun Gong).

Parallel to the cycles of reform and readjustment in the area of the economy, the CCP's policy towards intellectuals also "oscillated between periods of repression and […] periods of relative relaxation."[22] Encouraged by growing ideological openness, intellectuals started to organize collective activities and groups to voice their political demands right after the announcement of the new reform course in 1978–79. Neither the Democracy Wall Movement[23] nor the student demonstrations in 1986–87 confined themselves to the officially set boundaries.

In 1979, the term "democracy" (民主 *minzhu*) "primarily expressed a desire for rulers more prepared to listen to the people express their concerns."[24] The authorities tolerated the expressions of discontent in Beijing only to the point when Wei Jingsheng published his famous article entitled "Democracy: The Fifth Modernization."[25] Wei was arrested and sentenced to fifteen years in prison, allegedly for revealing military secrets.[26] Deng's proclamation of the four cardinal principles upon which debate was not allowed within the PRC was a response to the challenge that the intellectuals of the country had posed to the leadership.

The political reforms of the government served as a mobilizing factor for the 1986 student protests as well. Students of the Chinese University of Science and Technology in the eastern city of Hefei (Anhui Province) began to protest when authorities failed to implement direct elections as promised. Soon pro-democracy protests were held in several cities, including Shanghai and Beijing, there on Tiananmen Square. Compared to the Democracy Wall Movement, the student demonstrations in 1986–87 were significantly larger and better organized. In Shanghai, students even had opportunities to negotiate with local party and government officials, including Jiang Zemin, who was then serving as the mayor of the city. They demanded recognition of their movement as patriotic and correct, as well as no recrimination against students who participated. Contrary to official reports, the student movement was actually poorly organized. Although the students also raised issues that went beyond their personal interests, namely, major

[22] Merle Goldman, *China's Intellectuals* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 9.

[23] The Democracy Wall Movement started during the winter months of 1978–79 with the posting of large character posters, complaints and protests about the ills of China on a long brick wall to the west of the former Forbidden City, at the intersection of Chang'an Avenue and Xidan Street in Beijing. Kjeld Erik Brodsgaard, "The Democracy Movement in China, 1978–1979: Opposition Movements, Wall Poster Campaigns, and Underground Journals," *Asian Survey* 21, no. 7 (July 1981): 747–74, esp. 759–70.

[24] Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *China in the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 71.

[25] Wei's essay that he posted on the "Democracy Wall" in Beijing played on the official Chinese policy of "Four Modernizations" in the fields of agriculture, industry, technology, and defense. Published in William Theodore de Bary et al. eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 497–500.

[26] Wei Jingsheng (1950–) is one of the best-known Chinese political exiles. He now lives in the United States.

social concerns affecting society at large, including democracy, freedom of the press, bureaucratism, nepotism and corruption, Canadian sociologist Julia Kwong argues that it is misleading to call the student demonstrations in 1986–87 a democratic movement. This is because "most students were demonstrating primarily to show their concern over the social ills of the country and their impatience in resolving them," but their demands did not threaten the government since they were not asking for changes that challenged the fundamental structure of the political and social systems.[27] The term "democracy" was merely rhetorical, giving the movement the unity and flexibility to incorporate various grievances at the different university campuses. By complaining about campus facilities, inadequate dormitories and food services, as well as expressing their impatience with the slow pace of change, the students, in a way, affirmed their approval of the government's policy direction. It was the non-threatening nature of their demands that put the government off guard and kept it from taking prompt action. Action was only taken when the demonstrations became so large and so widespread that they attracted the world's attention.[28]

The official Chinese assessment of the 1986 demonstrations clearly mirrors the authorities' fear of uncontrolled, organized forms of discontent. The official version of events asserts that students initially complained only about their living conditions (the quality of food, the introduction of tuition fees, etc.). Later, however, allegedly under the influence of outside forces, the students took to the streets with exclusively political demands, especially in Beijing. They demanded the withdrawal of the party and the government from the economy, and practically rejected the Four Cardinal Principles. The leadership has asserted that it felt an urgent need to calm down the protests for two reasons. First, the ongoing discussions about the issue of political reform set forces into motion that dismissed the party's reform policy as being insufficient. These forces were subsequently attacked by the party leadership as "rightist." Secondly, the process of polarization did not find acceptance among the country's workers, who had been used to egalitarianism for decades. The Chinese authorities opined that street demonstrations were dangerous because they could have provided ground for these two forces, with their different motivations, to unite.[29]

Soon after the outbreak of the demonstrations on Tiananmen Square, the authorities launched a counter-attack. The campaign against "bourgeois liberalization," which followed the demonstrations in January, lasted a few months, with students receiving intensified ideological education after the campuses had quieted down. However, the participants in the demonstrations did not suffer any sort of recrimination.

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27 Kwong, "1986," 981.

28 Ibid., 985.

29 Conversation between Chinese diplomat Chen Zhiliu and Hungarian MFA head of department Bálint Gál, Budapest, 30 December 1986, in HNA, XIX-J-1-j-Kína-13-004915/1-1986.

The most significant consequence of the 1986–87 student demonstrations was the removal of Hu Yaobang from the post of Party General Secretary in January 1987.[30] According to Deng and the party elders, Hu's mistake was that he favored the introduction of more "democratization" or plurality into the political system and that he had not taken prompt action to contain the movement. The official position was that Hu called for more political reform than the system could bear, and, in effect, had gone beyond the consensus reached within the leadership concerning the pace and content of the reform agenda.[31] To the masses Hu became the symbol of a "liberal" leader, sympathetic to the rightful demands of the people.[32]

## The 1989 student democracy movement

In the spring of 1989, university students staged the largest anti-government demonstration since the founding of the PRC. The unexpected confluence of former Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang's death on 15 April, the seventieth anniversary of the 4 May 1919 student movement, and the summit meeting between Deng Xiaoping and Mikhail Gorbachev on 16 May resulted in the most serious political challenge faced by the CCP since it had come to power.

It was Hu Yaobang's death that sparked the Tiananmen demonstrations. In a highly symbolic show of support for reformist ideas, with "the dead being used to exert pressure on the living," (用死人压活人 *yong si ren ya huo ren*), mourners gathered on the square and commemorated the liberal leader who had been demoted for failing to crack down on the student protests of late 1986 and early 1987. The mourners demanded freedom of the press and to demonstrate, as well as an end to corruption. At first the events seemed quite similar to the 1976 Tiananmen Square Incident prompted by the death of Zhou Enlai, when the

[30] The army leadership resisted accepting Hu Yaobang as party leader and chairman of the Central Military Committee because of his allegedly weak character and lack of authority. This also contributed to his dismissal. See Hungarian ambassador's cable, Beijing, 12 January 1987, in HNA, XIX-J-1-j-Kína-25, 2-00210-1987.

[31] The Hungarian embassy in Beijing did not consider the dismissal of the general secretary as a sign of crisis within the CCP leadership. Ambassador Iván Németh concluded that the "CCP leadership shows unity and works effectively," and argued that the dismissal of Hu Yaobang was necessary in order "to prevent a crisis," proving the leadership's ability to renew its unity through compromises in the case of emergency. The Hungarian embassy's opinion on the Chinese domestic situation, Beijing, 17 April 1987, in HNA, XIX-J-1-j-Kína-200-001292/5-1987.

[32] After his dismissal as general secretary, Hu was allowed to retain his membership in the Politburo. This step shows the self-confidence of the new leadership toward conservatives at home and was meant as a gesture toward those foreign countries that were concerned about the future of Chinese reforms. Discussion with leading diplomats of the Chinese embassy in Budapest, 30 October 1987, in Historical Archive of the Hungarian State Security (Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára, ÁBTL), 1. 11. 4. S-II/2/87, 245.

memorial ceremony turned into a mass demonstration, the first large scale spontaneous movement in the capital since the establishment of the PRC. Paradoxically, that event was a demonstration in support of Deng Xiaoping, the person who thirteen years later, in 1989, was the key person who ordered the army units to crush the demonstrations.[33]

Hu Yaobang's funeral was scheduled for 22 April. Although demonstrators had been prohibited from entering the square when the memorial service was held, students arrived at Tiananmen Square in large numbers during the previous night and remained there despite the ban. A few party leaders attempted to persuade Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang to convene a Politburo meeting and discuss the situation before departing for Pyongyang on 23 April, but Zhao did not feel the necessity for such a meeting. Before his departure, Zhao suggested to his colleagues in the Politburo that while the authorities "should firmly prevent the students from demonstrating and should get them to return to classes immediately" and "should use legal procedures to punish severely all who engage in beating, smashing and robbing," "the main approach to students should be one of persuasion."[34]

On the next day, in the wake of renewed student demonstrations, the declaration of a boycott of classes, and the establishment of a national students' federation, Premier Li Peng convened a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Politburo.[35] The hard-liners, with Deng Xiaoping's support, decided that the country was facing "planned and organized political anti-Party and anti-socialist turmoil" and called on the people to "fight hard to rapidly quell the unrest." On 26 April, *People's Daily*, the party's central organ, published an editorial entitled

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[33] The events of 1976 were not entirely free of violence. On the afternoon of 5 April, five vehicles and a small building at the southeast corner of the square, where the joint command post of the armed forces was located, were set on fire. After some hesitation, the authorities emptied the square. Ironically, the events in 1976 led to the renewed sidelining of Deng Xiaoping. Zhang Chunqiao, who followed the developments from the window of the Great Hall of the People, compared the events on the square to the 1956 Hungarian uprising, and called Deng Xiaoping China's Imre Nagy. On 7 April, Mao endorsed Zhang Chunqiao's evaluation, and agreed "to throw him [Deng] out." On the same day, the Politburo accepted the appointment of Hua Guofeng to first vice-chairman of the CC and premier, and the dismissal of Deng from all his posts. On the 1976 Tiananmen Square demonstrations, see Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 424–28.

[34] Zhang Liang, Andrew J. Nathan, and Perry Link, eds., *The Tiananmen Papers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 50.

[35] One of the aims of Zhao's visit was to act as a mediator between Tokyo and Pyongyang. The Japanese had requested China to play such a role during Premier Li Peng's visit to Japan a few days earlier. The detailed proposals were carried to North Korea by Zhao Ziyang. Still in February, President Bush, during his visit to China, expressed his gratitude to the Chinese for their role as mediators, and the Americans expressed their hope that Zhao might persuade Kim Il-sung to soften its position toward American and Japanese proposals for negotiations. Ciphered telegram, Beijing, 5 May 1989, no. 168, Jász, in ÁBTL, 1. 11. 4. S—II/2/1989, 132.

"Take a Clear-cut Stand Against Turmoil" and condemned the student movement for seeking to "poison people's minds, create national turmoil, and sabotage the nation's stability and unity."[36] When in response tens of thousands of students marched through Beijing's streets into the square, huge crowds of Beijing residents cheered the peaceful demonstrations. The hard-liners issued a clear warning that "troops will be dispatched if necessary," but in the General Secretary's absence, they refrained from using military force to restore order.

The leadership had become polarized between hard-liners urging a crackdown and those favoring dialogue with the demonstrators. On 4 May, the students' march to commemorate the 4 May 1919 Movement attracted the growing participation of the city's population from all walks of life; even journalists from *People's Daily* and other state-run media joined the protest. While the students rallied in the square, Zhao Ziyang made a speech to delegates from the Asian Development Bank in which he set forth a soft line, calling the students well intentioned and patriotic, and declaring that "reasonable demands from the students should be met through democratic and legal means."[37]

During the following two weeks, Zhao's soft line stayed in effect. As a result of the General Secretary's permission for the official Chinese media to cover the protests, the press initially reported on the anti-government activities with significant accuracy and even sympathy.[38] As Mike Chinoy, CNN's Beijing bureau chief in 1989 observed, "an unprecedented wave of openness was sweeping through the Chinese media. CCTV [China Central Television] began to broadcast regular, balanced reports on the protest, while the *People's Daily* and other official newspapers ran sympathetic articles about the students, as well as photographs of the huge crowds in Tiananmen."[39]

It was Mikhail S. Gorbachev's visit to China that ultimately changed the course of events and led to the bloody crackdown on demonstrators. Before the visit, the Chinese authorities made an extraordinary move: they allowed representatives of the international media to cover the event. Originally, the summit meeting between Deng and Gorbachev was planned to be presented as one of the most important diplomatic achievements of the chief architect of China's foreign policy. However, as international television crews began their live coverage from Beijing, the students realized that the media gave them leverage. They intended to use it. As Chinoy noted, by mid-May the students "were far more sophisticated in handling the media than they had been just a few weeks

[36] 必须旗帜鲜明地反对动乱 [*Bixu qizhi xianming de fandui dongluan*] *People's Daily*, 26 April 1989, 1.

[37] "Students' Reasonable Demands to Be Met through Democratic, Legal Channels: Zhao," *Xinhua*, 4 May 1989, in Michel Oksenberg, Lawrence R. Sullivan, and Marc Lambert, eds., *Beijing Spring, 1989: Confrontation and Conflict. The Basic Documents* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), 254, Document 31.

[38] Dittmer, "China in 1989," 32.

[39] Mike Chinoy, *China Live* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 213.

earlier," preparing their signs and banners in English and in Russian for the cameras.[40]

Radical students decided to escalate tactics and start a hunger strike on the square. Their announcement and commitment ("Farewell moms and dads, please forgive us. Your children cannot have loyalty to our country and filial piety to you at the same time."[41]) stirred powerful emotions and attracted more widespread support from the public. The protest gathered momentum and an alliance between intellectuals, students, workers and ordinary citizens began to take shape. Even independent organizations such as the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union appeared and had an organized presence on the Square. American political scientist Andrew Walder argues that "the workers' unprecedented political response helped transform a vibrant student movement into the most severe popular challenge to Communist Party rule since 1949."[42]

The events surrounding Gorbachev's visit embarrassed the regime before the world and strengthened the position of hard-liners at home.[43] On 16 May, Yang Shangkun, one of the hard-line party elders argued that as a result of Zhao's strategy, "these last few days Beijing's been in something like anarchy."[44] As a consequence, the leadership finally decided to crack down hard on the protesters.

On the morning of 17 May, an extended Politburo Standing Committee meeting was held at Deng Xiaoping's residence. After a heated debate, Deng's conclusion was that "we should bring in the People's Liberation Army and declare martial law in Beijing" with the aim "to suppress the turmoil once and for all and to return things quickly to normal."[45] Although Zhao Ziyang expressed his

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[40] Ibid., 207.

[41] Hunger Strike Announcement, Originally Printed at Tiananmen Square in *Xinwen Daobao* [News Express], 12 May 1989, in Oksenberg, Sullivan, and Lambert, *Beijing Spring,* 260, Document 33.

[42] Andrew G. Walder, "Workers, Managers and the State: The Reform Era and the Political Crisis of 1989," *The China Quarterly*, no. 127, Special Issue: The Individual and State in China (September 1991): 467–92, 467. In 1989 we cannot yet speak of an organized civil society in China. Béja and Goldman have noted that "an embryo of organized civil society appeared to be taking shape in Tiananmen Square" (p. 22), but added that terms such as "pro-democracy movement" or "opposition movement" referred only to "the scattered individuals and groups interested in political reforms who attempted to establish informal networks of like-minded counterparts." Jean-Philippe Béja and Merle Goldman, "The Impact of the June 4th Massacre on the pro-Democracy Movement," *China Perspectives*, no. 2 (2009): 18–28, 25.

[43] In March 1989, Chinese reformists hoped that the success of Gorbachev's visit would result in the strengthening of Zhao's position. See: Ciphered telegram, Beijing, 13 March 1989, 102, Jász, in ÁBTL, 1. 11. 4. S—II/2/1989, 87–86. In connection to the demonstrations in Beijing, the Japanese ambassador in Beijing noted that Gorbachev's visit was successful at least in one aspect, namely that it proved that in China there was a great deal of support for Soviet-type democratization. Ambassador Iván Németh's cable no. 132, Our Ambassador's evaluation of the student demonstrations II, Beijing, 18 May 1989, in HNA, XIX-J-1-j-Kína-24-002064/5-1989.

[44] Zhang, Nathan, and Link, *Tiananmen Papers*, 178.

[45] Ibid., 189.

reserve concerning the use of military force, finally he too submitted to party discipline.[46] At dawn on 19 May, in a last desperate effort to persuade the students to leave, Zhao went to the square, accompanied by then head of the CCP CC General Office, Wen Jiabao, to meet personally with the students. It was his last public appearance before he was stripped of all his posts and placed under lifelong house arrest for aiding and abetting the “counter-revolutionary rebellion.”[47]

On 19 May, martial law was proclaimed in Beijing, but the leadership was too divided to resort to force until the night of 3–4 June.[48] During that night, tanks and tens of thousands of armed soldiers moved through the square and its adjacent streets in Central Beijing, killing hundreds or thousands of civilians. The exact death toll is not known, and will probably never be known.[49]

Immediately after the massacre, the student movement was renamed a “counter-revolutionary rebellion” (反革命暴乱 *fangeming baoluan*).[50] Deng Xiaoping formulated the official version of events five days after the massacre. In a speech to his officers justifying the suppression of the Beijing demonstrations, he explained that:

> “they [the demonstrators] were attempting to subvert our state and overthrow the Communist Party, which is the essence of the issue. If we do not understand the fundamental problem, it means we are not clear about the nature of the issue […] It all became clear once the incident broke out. They [the demonstrators] had only two key goals: one was to overthrow the Communist Party, the other was to topple the socialist system. Their aim was to establish a bourgeois republic totally dependent on the West.”[51]

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46 Ibid., 189–90.

47 Zhao’s name has been subject to official blackout since 1989. I experienced this effort to erase Zhao from public memory when I spent the 1989–90 academic year studying Chinese in Beijing. In one of our textbooks, which had been written and published in 1986, the language instructor blacked out Zhao’s name from the phrase “Premier Zhao Ziyang” each time it appeared.

48 It was the second time within three months that the government proclaimed martial law. Following outbreaks of nationalist unrest in Lhasa, martial law had been declared in the Tibetan capital in early March.

49 Official sources claim that thirty-six people died on 3–4 June, but the unofficial death toll provided by survivors and international observers is several hundred or more. Chen Jian, “China and the Cold War After Mao,” in Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), vol. 3, 181–200, 200. Ding Zilin, whose son was killed during the crackdown, recorded 92 deaths in her *4 June Death List*. Ding Zilin, *Liusi shounanzhe mingce* (Hong Kong: The Nineties Monthly, 1994). Quoted in: Dingxin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 203–4.

50 Later on the events were gradually downgraded to “disturbance” (动乱 *dongluan*), “incident” (事件 *shijian*), and finally to “skirmish” (风波 *fengbo*, i.e., “wind and waves”).

51 “Address to Officers at the Rank of General and above in Command of the Troops Enforcing Martial Law in Beijing,” 9 June 1989, in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, vol. 3 (1982–92)* ed. by *People’s Daily Online*, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/c1990.html (accessed 26 September 2009).

**China and Eastern Europe after 4 June**

As a result of seven weeks of demonstrations in Tiananmen Square and in cities throughout China, the party's internal cohesion and legitimacy were seriously undermined, just at a time when communism was in a state of turmoil in Eastern Europe and in the USSR.

It is a symbolic coincidence that on the same day the People's Liberation Army opened fire on peaceful demonstrators in Beijing, in Europe the first communist regime lost power, smoothly and peacefully, through democratic means. In Poland, the first "semi-free" elections were held, in accordance with an agreement reached at the roundtable talks, which resulted in the victory of Solidarity, the first independent trade union within the Soviet bloc.[52] It was probably the most pregnant manifestation of the rift within the socialist world between the orthodox hardliners and the reformists choosing the road of peaceful transition. British journalist and BBC Beijing Bureau Chief in 1989, James Miles, has noted that "if Tiananmen was a body blow to the Chinese communist structure, the elections in Poland and the rapid collapse of communism across the European continent in the months that followed were a series of debilitating follow-up punches."[53]

In Hungary, the first plenary session of the roundtable talks was held on 13 June, and three days later the system was symbolically buried at the reburial ceremony of Prime Minister Imre Nagy and his fellow martyrs on Heroes' Square in central Budapest. In November, the Hungarian ambassador concluded that "the contradiction between political changes in the majority of European socialist countries and the Chinese interpretation of 'socialist renewal' seems to be insuperable."[54]

In late 1989, the Chinese leadership followed the unfolding drama in the countries of the former Soviet bloc with great concern. Beijing had every right to consider the systemic changes in Eastern Europe as a direct challenge to both its rule at home and its international position. The developments in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, Bucharest and Sofia posed a challenge to the domestic status quo in China, encouraging pro-democracy forces and alarming Chinese leaders. The systemic changes and the abandonment of the socialist system claimed by the Chinese communists to be superior to capitalism further undermined the internal and external legitimacy of the Chinese leadership. Domestically, it proved to the Chinese masses that socialism was not necessarily the ultimate goal of social

[52] The Polish elections were only partly free: the ruling Polish United Workers' Party reserved a majority of seats in the main house of parliament and thus, Solidarity was able to win a majority of seats through free competition only in the senate.

[53] James Miles, *The Legacy of Tiananmen* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 41.

[54] Ambassador Iván Németh's cable no. 323, Beijing, 30 November 1989, in HNA, XIX-J-1-j-Kína-10-001419/5-1989.

development, and internationally, it further isolated Beijing, which could no longer count on the support of the region's regimes.[55]

China classified foreign countries into four categories based on their reactions to the Chinese events. Those countries that condemned China and introduced economic and political sanctions belonged to the first group, China's critics to the second, neutrals to the third, and China's supporters to the fourth. Although East Central European countries did not announce any "sanctions" against China, all high-level visits with China were canceled and even some working exchanges were postponed.[56] As a result, Beijing classified Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia to the second category and responded to dismissive Hungarian reactions with cutting back the number of economic and trade delegations.[57] China did not criticize these countries openly, but according to Hungarian intelligence sources, these governments and especially their official media were subject to harsh internal criticism within the apparatus in Beijing.[58] After 4 June, all news items concerning Poland and Hungary had to undergo political examination before publication. A CCP CC instruction prohibited the Chinese mass media to publish commentaries on or analyses of the developments in these two countries. Only short, factual news items were allowed to be released. The official consideration behind this decision was that criticism would have meant interference into the others' domestic affairs, and positively treating the events in these two countries might have resulted in undesired domestic consequences.[59]

When the East Central European regimes fell one after another, China's leaders were concerned over the possible consequences of the domino effect. Events in Romania, especially the execution of Ceauşescu and his wife, came closer to disturbing Beijing's uneasy calm than any other upheaval in Eastern Europe. The lifting of martial law, which was originally planned for 24 December, was postponed until 10 January, ostensibly because of the outright alarm of the Chinese leadership.

Internationally, the East Central European changes attracted strong positive attention from the developed countries of the West and Japan, as well as from international financial institutions and businesses. The Tiananmen crackdown and the accompanying Chinese economic retrenchment alienated the political, business and foreign assistance decision makers in non-communist developed countries and in international financial institutions, while the positive changes in East Central Europe offered the prospect of diverting their resources away from Chi-

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55 Czeslaw Tubilewicz, "Chinese Press Coverage of Political and Economic Restructuring of East Central Europe," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 10 (October 1997): 927–43, 927–28.

56 Alyson J. K. Bailes, "China and Eastern Europe: A Judgement on the 'Socialist Community'," *The Pacific Review* 3, no. 3 (1990): 222–42, 234.

57 Ciphered telegram, New York, 12 September 1989, 367, Kozák, in ÁBTL, 1. 11. 4. S–II/2/1989, 198.

58 Ciphered telegram, Beijing, 13 July 1989, 254, Bokor, in ÁBTL, 1. 11. 4. S—II/2/1989, 175.

59 Ciphered telegram, Beijing, 12 September 1989, 308, Jász, in ÁBTL, 1. 11. 4. S–II/2/1989, 197.

na. Chinese officials voiced their concern that this had come at the direct, or at least indirect, expense of China, since the amount of direct foreign investment in their economy was reduced.[60] The changes in East Central Europe also accelerated changes both in Sino-American relations and in the politics of Western governments, which pledged to reduce China's relative influence in world affairs.[61]

The Chinese were aware of the possible negative consequences of their decision to suppress the popular movement. But since the leadership of the CCP and the future of the whole system were at stake, they did not hesitate for a moment to proceed with the crackdown.

Developments in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union also provided positive opportunities for Chinese interests. The most important consequence was the marked decline of the perceived Soviet military threat to China.[62] Among other things, the decline of Soviet power provided Beijing opportunities to exert greater influence in areas at the country's periphery and sphere of interest, areas that historically had always been seen as extremely important to China's security and national pride, including the Korean peninsula and Southeast Asia.

The response of the Soviet bloc countries to 4 June was not uniform. In the East Central European states, the official views concerning the events were polarized, divided into pro-reform and anti-reform camps.[63] The Soviet Union declared the events a domestic issue, and was against any foreign pressure.

The GDR, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam supported the official Chinese "counter-revolutionary" version. The GDR published all relevant statements and declarations from the Chinese party and state leadership, "in order to make objective information available and counter Western horror stories."[64] On 5 June, the East German party newspaper *Neues Deutschland* labeled the demonstrations a "counter-revolutionary riot."[65] On 8 June, the East German *Volkskammer* (Parliament) issued a declaration which,

[60] Hungarian Ambassador Iván Németh's top secret cable: The Chinese evaluation of Eastern European changes, Beijing, 18 January 1990, in HNA, XIX-J-1-j-Kína-10-0021-1990.

[61] Robert G. Sutter, "Changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: The effects on China," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 33–45, 35.

[62] Since the late 1960s, Beijing has considered the USSR its main strategic adversary. Trends in the 1970s and 1980s prompted China to downgrade the immediate threat posed by the USSR, but Chinese military planners still saw a strong need for active military modernization and vigilance to prepare for threats from the north.

[63] Czeslaw Tubilewicz, "1989 in Sino-East Central European Relations Revisited," in Frank Columbus, ed., *Central and Eastern Europe in Transition* (Commack, NY: Nova Science, 1998), vol. 1, 145–61, 147.

[64] Joachim Herrmann on the Need to Stand Firm, 22–23 June 1989, in Konrad H. Jarausch and Volker Gransow, eds., *Uniting Germany: Documents and Debates, 1944–1993* (Providence, RI: Berghahn 1994), 35, Document 2.

[65] "Volksbefreiungsarmee Chinas schlug konterrevolutionären Aufruhr nieder," *Neues Deutschland*, 5 June 1989, 1.

while it did not mention "counter-revolution," emphasized that the Chinese party and state leadership's efforts to find a political solution to domestic problems "were hindered by violent, bloody incidents by anti-constitutional elements," and that the popular government had therefore been "forced to restore order and security through the use of armed force." According to the declaration, the *Volkskammer* "consider[ed] the events in Beijing exclusively the internal affair of the PRC and oppose[d] any foreign interference."[66] A few days later, the GDR foreign minister Fischer received his Chinese colleague Qian Qichen and expressed his solidarity with the PRC and the Chinese brother nation.[67]

Poland and Yugoslavia, like the Soviet Union, declared the events a domestic issue and took a basically neutral position. Public opinion, however, was different; the events were condemned in the press and demonstrations were staged. The governments of neither Poland nor Yugoslavia wished the situation to become sharper, as they were eager to preserve their carefully forged links with China. A brief Polish statement expressed sympathy to the families of those killed and stressed that "what happened in Beijing is a great drama of a friendly country." However, it added that "we treat this as an internal Chinese affair" and "believe that the conflicts which have arisen will be solved by the Chinese themselves by political means and that caution and realism [will] win."[68] The statement issued by the Yugoslav Party Presidium on 6 June expressed "great concern and regret."[69]

It was only Hungary that condemned the bloodbath at the official level. The Hungarian government issued a statement on 7 June 1989 that expressed its deepest concern about the "tragic events" which had resulted in the loss of "a score of innocent lives," and further declared that the repression of "fundamental human rights" could not be confined exclusively to the internal affairs of any single state.[70] The Hungarian party general secretary, Károly Grósz, speaking "on behalf of the leadership and members of the HSWP [Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party] […] deeply condemned the violence and fratricidal war," and added that "such methods have nothing to do with socialism."[71] In Poland and Hungary, the tragic events served as a point of reference for the reform-minded leaderships to strengthen their determination to continue with the reform process. The Polish authorities' conclusion was that political reform and dialogue must go even deep-

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66 "Erklärung der Volkskammer der DDR zu den aktuellen Ereignissen in der Volksrepublik China," *Neues Deutschland*, 9 June 1989, 1.

67 "Verbundenheit mit China," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 June 1989, 7.

68 Jeanne L. Wilson, "'The Polish Lesson:' China and Poland 1980–1990," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 23, no. 3–4, (Autumn–Winter 1990): 259–79, 275.

69 Alyson J. K. Bailes, "China and Eastern Europe: A Judgement on the 'Socialist Community,'" *The Pacific Review* 3, no. 3 (1990): 222–42, 234.

70 "A Magyar Népköztársaság kormányának nyilatkozata a Kínai Népköztársaság fővárosában lezajlott összecsapásokkal kapcsolatban," Budapest, 7 June 1989, *Külügyi Évkönyv* (1989): 241.

71 "Grósz Károly: Az MSZMP mélységesen elítéli az erőszakot, a testvérháborút," *Népszabadság*, 8 June 1989, 1.

er to keep up with economic change.[72] The reform-minded minister of state and Politburo member Imre Pozsgay stated that "to throw people into a meat grinder and wade knee deep in blood cannot be justified by power considerations," adding that "the bloody events in Beijing will not discourage the Hungarian reform forces" and that "we have to do our best to preclude any power from using such tools in order to conserve its governing position and oligarchy."[73]

Another domestic repercussion in East European countries of Tiananmen and the crackdown on student demonstrations was that it provided an opportunity for the opposition to launch a renewed anticommunist offensive. Referring to the ruthlessness of Chinese communists, the Hungarian opposition attempted to further destroy the prestige of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party by pointing out the inhuman nature of communism. The Alliance of Young Democrats (*Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége*, FIDESZ) organized several events to express their solidarity with the Chinese youth demanding democracy. On 25 May, they staged a sit-in in front of the Chinese embassy in Budapest. Although the opposition round table did not issue a joint declaration in response to the Chinese events, all of the participating organizations condemned the bloodbath. Thousands participated in a demonstration in front of the Chinese embassy on 7 June, where representatives of FIDESZ handed over their memorandum to the ambassador. There were demonstrations in Poland and even in the GDR, where demonstrators were arrested.

In foreign policy, the developments in Beijing provided an additional impetus for relations to be improved between the countries of the region and Taiwan. In the late 1980s, the Taiwanese government made repeated efforts to approach the Soviet Union and its European allies in order to break out of its diplomatic isolation and to diversify its export markets. Taipei's "flexible diplomacy," which aimed at expanding Taiwan's international space, was helped by the 4 June massacre and the strong anti-communist sentiments in Eastern Europe.[74] Immediately after the massacre, the Hungarian ambassador in Beijing proposed that Hungary accelerate its development of economic ties with Taiwan. Although he mentioned that "any kind of improvement in this respect would harm our relationship with the PRC," he also added that "if the harm to our relationship is unavoidable in any case, it serves our interests to take this risk now, during the period of the present Chinese line."[75] As a result, Hungary was the first former

[72] Bailes, "China and Eastern Europe," 234.

[73] "A pekingi véres események nem bátortalanítják el a magyar reformerőket," *Népszabadság*, 6 June 1989, 1.

[74] Czeslaw Tubilewicz, "Breaking the Ice: The Origins of Taiwan's Economic Diplomacy Towards the Soviet Union and its European Allies," *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no. 6 (September 2004): 891–906, 903.

[75] Hungarian ambassador Iván Németh's cable, The proposals of our ambassador in Beijing on how we should conduct Hungarian-Chinese relations in the future, no. 170, Beijing, 13 June 1989, in HNA, XIX-J-1-j-Kína-20-001433/18-1989.

Soviet bloc country to allow Taipei to open a trade office, which occurred on 1 January 1990.

## Conclusion

The year 1989 was critical for China and a turning point for Sino-East Central European relations. In the 1980s, the social and economic reform processes in China resembled those in East Central Europe, and as a result China and the European socialist states faced similar problems and dilemmas. Paradoxically, the same reform processes—which on both sides initially ran parallel, serving as a point of reference and contributing to the renormalization of relations—had, by 1989, led to diametrically opposite political solutions. The former binding force turned into a source for difference and separation.

The events in China helped stir up anti-socialist activism in East Central Europe, while the developments in East Central Europe alarmed the Chinese leadership to the extent that they did not hesitate to take action against any kind of organized opposition. Following the systemic changes in East Central Europe, the political foundations of bilateral relations collapsed. As a result of the dominant Western orientation in the foreign and economic policy of Eastern Europe, relations with China became of secondary importance. In Poland and Hungary, the possibility of breaking relations with the PRC was even raised.

After 4 June, the communist leadership in China launched a renewed political offensive to achieve control over its populace and win legitimacy for its autocratic regime. The policy of reform and opening to the outside world was reaffirmed at the fourth plenum of the thirteenth Central Committee, convened in late June 1989. Nonetheless, it took China three years before the reform process got back on track. In the early 1990s, the regime brought inflation under control, resumed economic growth, restored and broadened its relations with the outside world, and strengthened its influence worldwide. In the past two decades China has experienced unprecedented economic growth; in 2010 it had become the second largest economy in the world. During this process, the Chinese leadership has successfully controlled the speed and scope of market reform implementation, maintained political supremacy and a critical level of stability, and generated sufficient regime legitimacy.[76] Today, it does not seem possible for the system to change, either through revolution or through peaceful transition. Although the reform and modernization process has led to a capitalist transformation of the country's economy, China, in words at least, still adheres to socialism "with a Chinese character."

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[76] On the problem of regime legitimacy, see Thomas Heberer and Günter Schubert, eds., *Regime Legitimacy in Contemporary China* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).

Hans-Hermann Hertle

# THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION IN EAST GERMANY

## From Mass Exodus and Mass Protests to the Fall of the Wall and German Unification

As late as January 1989, the general secretary of East Germany's communist Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED), Erich Honecker, stated: "The Wall will remain as long as the conditions that led to its building have not changed." It would "still exist in fifty years and even in a hundred."[1] Even Zbigniew Brzeziński, one of the few who predicted the fall of the Soviet empire, was also still convinced that, of all the countries in the Soviet bloc, the situation in the German Democratic Republic and Bulgaria was not critical.[2] The GDR, he predicted, would remain a "communist Prussia" for some time to come, especially if "West Germany continued to give the East German economy such generous" support.[3]

It seems that both Honecker and Brzeziński were incapable of imagining not only how radically, and how quickly, East Germany's foreign affairs and living conditions would change, but also, as a result, how radically its internal political situation would be transformed. The same was inconceivable for the CPSU general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, US president George H.W. Bush and the West German federal chancellor Helmut Kohl, not to mention British prime minister Margaret Thatcher or French president François Mitterrand. Only months before

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[1] "Die Mauer wird [...] solange bleiben, wie die Bedingungen nicht geändert werden, die zu ihrer Errichtung geführt haben." [Sie werde] "in 50 und auch in 100 Jahren noch bestehen bleiben." Erich Honecker in *Neues Deutschland*, 20 January 1989. This statement of Honecker was an indirect dismissal of a remark made by Mikhail Gorbachev, who had been addressed by West German president Richard von Weizsäcker in Moscow on 7 July 1987 with regard to the unity of the German nation. Gorbachev responded by stressing that the double nation was the reality, but also added that history would decide what will be in a hundred years. This albeit vague acceptance of the structure of the German Question was later interpreted by the East German leadership as the beginning of the Soviet "betrayal of the GDR." Cf. Michail Gorbatschow, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1995), 701, as well as Richard von Weizsäcker, *Vier Zeiten. Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1997), 346.—The following article is based on: Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Chronik des Mauerfalls*, 12th ed. (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2009); idem, *Der Fall der Mauer. Die unbeabsichtigte Selbstauflösung des SED-Staates*, 2nd ed. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999).

[2] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Das gescheiterte Experiment. Der Untergang des kommunistischen Systems* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 1989), 265.

[3] Ibid., 283.

its demise, the GDR was considered an island of stability by nearly all domestic and international observers, both political and in the scholarly community.[4]

Twenty years after the fall of the GDR and the reunification of the two German states, the years 1989–90 have become one of the best-researched periods in modern German history.[5] This is primarily due to the opening of East German archives: The records of the SED, of the GDR Council of Ministers, as well as the records of the East German secret police have been freely accessible since the early 1990s, as has a great deal of material from the East German civil rights and opposition movements.[6] On the West German side, government files are usually subject to a thirty-year restricted access period before declassification, although critical documents have already been released in a special volume entitled *Deutsche Einheit*.[7] In addition, the authors of a four-volume history of German unity, published in 1998, were granted privileged access to files.[8] Russian,

[4] "Indeed, the 300 to 400 West German sociologists, political scientists, economists and educators who were spread all over the (old) Federal Republic working at 56 institutions did not foresee the revolutionary events of 1989. The specialists did not even notice signs of increasing discontent and unrest, nor did they take small signs of change seriously, or consider them worthy of scholarly analysis." Carola Becker, "Kläglich versagt," *Die Zeit* 22, 24 May 1991. Since 1990, the scholarly community hasn't given much thought to considering the reasons for the miscalculation of "hundreds of paid observers" from various disciplines.

[5] On the current state of research, see: Klaus-Dietmar Henke, ed., *Revolution und Vereinigung 1989/90* (Munich: DTV, 2009); Andreas Rödder, *Deutschland, einig Vaterland. Die Geschichte der Wiedervereinigung* (Munich: Beck, 2009); Mary E. Sarotte, *1989. The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Endspiel. Die Revolution von 1989 in der DDR* (Munich: Beck, 2009); Ehrhart Neubert, *Unsere Revolution. Die Geschichte der Jahre 1989/90* (Munich: Piper, 2008); Wolfgang Schuller, *Die deutsche Revolution 1989* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2009). A database of literature on the German reunification, with more than 53,000 entries (stand: December 2007), can be found on the internet under: http://www.wiedervereinigung.de (accessed 7 September 2012).

[6] The records of the SED leadership and the East German government are accessible at the Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorgansationen der DDR and Abteilung DDR), the archives of the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the Former State Security of the GDR (Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des ehemaligen Staatssicherheitsdienstes der DDR) and the Political Archives of the Foreign Ministry (Politischen Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes); written documents of the GDR opposition can be found at the Matthias Domaschk Archives of the Robert Havemann Foundation, as well as in the Grünen-Archiv of the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

[7] Hanns Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hoffmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit: Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998).

[8] Karl-Rudolf Korte, *Geschichte der deutschen Einheit 1: Deutschlandpolitik in Helmut Kohls Kanzlerschaft. Regierungsstil und Entscheidungen 1982–1989* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1998); Dieter Grosser, *Geschichte der deutschen Einheit 2: Das Wagnis der Wirtschafts-, Währungs- und Sozialunion. Politische Zwänge im Konflikt mit ökonomischen Regeln* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1998); Wolfgang Jäger, *Geschichte der deutschen Einheit 3: Die Überwindung der Teilung. Der innerdeutsche Prozess der Vereinigung 1989/90* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1998); Werner Weidenfeld, with Peter Wagner and Elke Bruck, *Geschichte der deutschen Einheit 4: Außenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit: Die Entscheidungsjahre 1989/90* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1998).

American, British and French records have also contributed to clarifying the events, as have, on the American side, the early studies by Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, both based on government records as well as accounts of eye witnesses.[9]

The publication of official documents has been augmented by the biographies and memoirs of a large number of the leaders and diplomats who were directly involved, as well as by the many valuable interviews conducted with them by journalists, documentary filmmakers and historians.[10] And finally, the media coverage at the time—press, radio and television—has been a major source of information about this period of history.[11]

## Internal and external crisis factors

In particular, analyzing East German archives has led to the general awareness that the symptoms of the internal structural crisis, which had gradually begun to undermine the GDR's existence as early as the 1980s and which significantly influenced the actions of the SED leadership in the final crisis of the autumn of 1989, were only slightly different than those in its "brother countries," the other states of the Soviet bloc. The economic situation in all of these countries was disastrous. Technical advances lagged far behind those in the West, and labor productivity was less than half as high. Many manufacturing plants were dilapidated, and in countless places, health, safety and environmental conditions were catastrophic. The infrastructure was derelict and urban areas were decaying. The

[9] Cf., for example: Patrick Salmon, Keith Hamilton, and Stephen Robert Twigge, eds., *Documents on British Policy Overseas III, vol. 7: German Unification 1989–1990* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009); Aleksandr Galkin and Anatolii Chernyaev, eds., Mikhail Gorbachev i Germanskii vopros (Moscow: Ves' mir, 2006); Philipp Zelikow/Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).—The following works are based on privileged access to documents in Moscow (The Gorbachev Foundation) and in Paris: Alexander von Plato, *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands—ein weltpolitisches Machtspiel* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2002), and Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froid et l'unification allemande. De Yalta à Maastricht* (Paris: O. Jacob, 2005). See also: Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, ed., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2010).—To embed the German events into the international context of the end of the Cold War, see: Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. III: *Endings 1975–1991*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), as well as the three-part study by Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 178–256 (Part 1); 6, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 3–64 (Part 2); and 7, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 3–96 (Part 3).

[10] On this, see the bibliographies in Rödder, *Deutschland,* 452–84; Sarotte, *1989*, 287–308.

[11] Cf. the two series *Deutschland 1989* and *Deutschland 1990. Dokumentation zu der Berichterstattung über die Ereignisse in der DDR und die deutschlandpolitische Entwicklung*, edited by the Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung.

accumulation of Western debt had reached a dramatic level—particularly in Poland, Hungary and East Germany. Spending on the military and (secret) police apparatuses devoured huge portions of the state budgets of all the communist states—in the Soviet Union alone it stood at 40 percent.[12]

The ideological erosion was obvious: the promise of a communist society that by 1981 was supposed to provide abundant material and cultural goods, as well as the highest living standards in the world[13]—as had been announced in October 1961 at the twenty-second CPSU party congress under party leader Nikita Khrushchev—had been quietly withdrawn. The twenty-fourth CPSU congress in April 1971 under Khrushchev's successor, Leonid Brezhnev, and subsequently the party congresses of all the "fraternal parties," set its new "main task" as "increasing the material and cultural living standards of the people."[14] In the GDR, the expression "unity of economic and social policy" had emerged out of this welfare proviso. The utopian communist society that was supposed to bring happiness to its citizens shriveled into the daily task of secular Socialist consumerism. Thus, the goal of socialism and fulfilling promises of prosperity became virtually the same thing—with the unavoidable result that breaches of these consumer promises could be held up to the communist leadership as proof of socialism's total failure.

The alleged "driving force" of the communist parties was exhausted, and the belief in the historical and legitimate victory of socialism over capitalism was shaken. The party leadership was demoralized by years of crisis management, much of the party cadre was worn out, and the party's nucleus, including the "armed forces," was demoralized and disoriented.

But despite the common symptoms of structural crisis, the case of East Germany differed considerably from its "brother countries." The communist German part-state was, on one hand, a forced and artificial product of the global political interests and imperial claims of the Soviet Union. As the "satrapy of Soviet hegemony,"[15] the existence of the East German state, from its founding in 1949 until 1990, depended directly on the military, economic and political support of the Soviet Union, and thus in a special way was also subject to its favors. On the

[12] Manfred Hildermeier, *Geschichte der Sowjetunion 1917–1991. Entstehung und Niedergang des ersten sozialistischen Staates* (Munich: Beck 1998), 1031; for an analysis of the fall of the Soviet Union, cf. Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch. Germany in Soviet Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998).

[13] See "Der Kommunismus ist die Hoffnung der Völker, die Garantie ihrer strahlenden Zukunft," "Rede von N.S. Chruschtschow über das neue Programm der KPdSU," as well as "Das Kommunistische Manifest der gegenwärtigen Epoche," *Neues Deutschland*, 20 October 1961.

[14] "Die Direktiven des XXIV. Parteitages der KPdSU zum Fünfjahrplan für die Entwicklung der Volkswirtschaft der UdSSR in den Jahren 1971–1975," *Neues Deutschland*, 7 April 1971; in addition, see Peter Hübner and Jürgen Danyel, "Soziale Argumente im politischen Machtkampf. Prag, Warschau, Berlin 1968–1971," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 50, no. 9 (2002): 804–32.

[15] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, vol.5: Bundesrepublik und DDR 1949–1990* (Munich: Beck 2008), 356.

other hand, the GDR was in direct competition with the Federal Republic, the other German state. All attempts to create a “socialist German nation” or even a “national GDR identity” had failed miserably. For over forty years, the SED leadership had been confronted by the expectations of large portions of the population for democracy and prosperity based on the West German model, as well as by their orientation toward a unified Germany.

Indeed, the relations between the two German states had become nearly “normal” in the course of détente and after the signing of the East-West German Basic Treaty in 1972. The GDR received financial sustenance allowances from the West German government for granting so-called humanitarian relief (improved travel opportunities, the opening of new border crossings, ransoming of prisoners, easement in postal, parcel and telephone communications, etc.), something envied by its “brother countries.” Beginning with 600 million deutsche mark (DM) in the second half of the 1970s, by the 1980s these payments had risen to approximately DM 1.5 billion annually.

The more destitute the GDR became—it stood on the brink of economic bankruptcy for the first time in 1981–82[16]—the more dependent it became on the economic assistance of the Federal Republic, and the greater the political concessions it made (de-mining on the inner-German border in 1983–84, granting of more exit visas in 1984, allowing more Western travel for GDR citizens from 1986).

But until the end, the West German government refused to recognize East German citizenship. According to its constitution, the “people of the GDR,” as they were called in the official rhetoric of the West, were also (potential) citizens of the Federal Republic, possessing the same rights to its social welfare. They merely had to manage to reach West German soil.

To keep more of the population from looking to the West, as well as to counteract the exodus between 1946 and mid-1961 to West Germany of about 3.5 million people from a total population of 18 million, the East German leadership did not know what to do other than sealing the inner-German border (May 1952) with mine fields, as well as constructing the Berlin Wall and installing military guards (August 1961). To prevent escape attempts, they even ended up accepting the killing of refugees. Hundreds of refugees lost their lives at the inner-German border, in the Baltic Sea, or during their flight via third countries. Alone at the Berlin Wall, from 1961 to 1989 at least 136 people were shot, died by accident, or committed suicide after failed escape attempts.[17]

And tens of thousands were arrested between 1961 and 1989 while in the process of planning their flight or on the way to the border. Statistics from the

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16 See Hans-Hermann Hertle, “Die DDR an die Sowjetunion verkaufen? Stasi-Analysen zum ökonomischen Niedergang der DDR,” *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 3 (2009): 476–95.

17 See Hans-Hermann Hertle and Maria Nooke, eds., *The Victims at the Berlin Wall, 1961–1989: A Biographical Handbook* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2011).

GDR General Attorney reveal about 110,000 cases of "escape from the Republic" or "illegal border crossing" from 1961 to 1988.[18] According to a study of political prisoners based on random samples of GDR crime statistics, between 1960 and 1988 imprisonment for "illegal emigration" was imposed across the GDR in more than 71,000 cases.[19] As a rule, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, citizens of the GDR who applied for an exit visa were marginalized, discriminated against, or criminalized. Tens of thousands of them were sentenced to prison—merely because they had claimed the right of freedom of movement.

The management of the border was continually modernized and perfected; at no point in the twenty-eight years after the Wall was built did the SED leadership waste even a thought on dismantling the border installations or creating a political system that would have made the Wall superfluous. Nonetheless, between the building of the Wall and its fall, a total of about 40,000 East Germans managed to escape through the barricades, taking daring paths and accepting risks that were life-threatening. About 5,000 of them escaped in Berlin. Mirroring Count Mirabeau's saying that Prussia was not a state with an army, but an army with a state, Stefan Wolle described the GDR in the following words: "This was not a state with a border, but a border with a state."[20] The segregation, detention, injury, or death of people who wanted to leave their country was part of a system that could not exist without walls.

In none of the Central and Eastern European states was it inevitable that the latent factors of their internal crises would lead to the upheavals and revolutions of 1989. For the GDR, the decisive impulse rather came from outside: from the changes in the Soviet Union and their military, political and economic repercussions, as well as the reform processes that had been initiated in Poland and Hungary at the time.

It must be emphasized that Mikhail Gorbachev's "new thinking" had not started with glasnost or perestroika but rather with "*uskorenie*," socio-economic acceleration. It was the economic plight of the Soviet Union that forced it to undertake reforms. In addition to the structural problems of the Soviet planned economy—low labor productivity, lack of innovative skills, declining investment rates, creeping deflation of capital assets, and inflated military spending—in the 1970s and early 1980s new problems developed, such as the depletion of stocks of raw materials in the western parts of the USSR, greatly increased development

[18] See the statistical material of the GDR attorney general in Johannes Raschka, *Justizpolitik im SED-Staat. Anpassung und Wandel des Strafrechts während der Amtszeit Honeckers* (Cologne et al.: Böhlau 2000), 314.

[19] Cf. Jürgen Wilke and Wilhelm Heinz Schröder, "Politische Gefangene in der DDR—eine quantitative Analyse: Wissenschaftliche Expertise für die Enquete-Kommission des Deutschen Bundestages 'Überwindung der Folgen der SED-Diktatur im Prozess der deutschen Einheit'" (Cologne: 1997), 92.

[20] Stefan Wolle, "Flucht als Widerstand?," in Klaus-Dietmar Henke, Peter Steinbach, Johannes Tuchel, eds., *Widerstand und Opposition in der DDR* (Cologne et al.: Böhlau, 1999), 309.

costs in Siberia, and a series of poor harvests. The Soviet leadership under Gorbachev was thus faced with a serious financial and supply crisis. To overcome this crisis, contributions from the "brother countries" were expected: already in 1987, the Soviet Union announced at the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) that from 1991, foreign trade prices were to be adjusted to world market prices. For the GDR this was to mean an additional expenditure of DM 184 billion annually, a number that caused sheer horror for party economists.[21]

Many scholars tend to underestimate the economic causes in the decline of communism. At least for the GDR, one of the more surprising archival findings after 1989 was the extent to which the innermost circles of power in the SED spoke openly, already in the mid-1970s, about the increasing structural and debt problems, finally even speculating in 1988–89 on the prospect of bankruptcy.[22] Nonetheless, at the same time, SED propaganda outside the GDR continued endlessly to claim that the country ranked tenth among the largest industrial nations in the world and never tired of extolling its alleged "political stability and dynamically rising economic development."[23] Already in June 1988, Honecker appealed to the Politburo that "we must prevent the collapse."[24] Günter Mittag, the Central Committee secretary responsible for economic affairs, expressed his gloomy prognosis for the future to a small group of financial experts in November 1988: "As it is now, we're driving straight into a tree: we'll be totaled!"[25] And in May 1989, Gerhard Schürer, Politburo candidate and chairman of the State Planning Commission, told the small group of members of the Politburo responsible for financial affairs that the GDR's debts in the West were increasing monthly by DM 500 million and "if this development continues, the GDR will be insolvent by 1991."[26] It was urgent to connect the cuts that had already been made "to a series of economic measures taken in the area of spending."[27] But no one in the inner circle of the SED leadership wanted to face the task of lim-

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[21] "Volkswirtschaftliche Berechnungen zum Warenaustausch DDR/UdSSR," n.d. [1986], in Bundesarchiv (BA), DE 1/56348, 3.

[22] The crisis discussions at the Politburo during the 1970s and 80s are portrayed in Hertle, *Der Fall der Mauer*, 17–73. In addition, see: Maria Haendcke-Hoppe-Arndt, "Der ökonomische Niedergang der DDR," *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 6 (1995): 588–602; as well as André Steiner, *Von Plan zu Plan, Eine Wirtschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Munich: DVA, 2004), 165–226.

[23] *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des XI. Parteitages der SED, 17. bis 21. April 1986* (Berlin: Dietz, 1986), 739.

[24] Quoted from Major Friedrich to Generalmajor Alfred Kleine, Information [about the Politburo session of 14 June 1988], 16 June 1988, in Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des ehemaligen Staatssicherheitsdienstes der DDR (BStU), MfS, HA XVIII Nr. 3376, 47.

[25] Quote based on Heinz Klopfer, "Persönliche Notizen über ein Gespräch beim Mitglied des Politbüros und Sekretär des ZK der SED, Genossen Dr. Günter Mittag," 23 November 1988, in BStU, MfS, HA XVIII Nr. 3374, 118.

[26] "Darlegungen Gerhard Schürers zur Zahlungsbilanz mit dem nichtsozialistischen Wirtschaftsgebiet," 16 May 1989, in BA, DE 1/56317.

[27] Ibid.

iting the population's standard of living. "What can we say to the people? How shall we then face the nation?" asked the president of the Trade Union Federation, Harry Tisch.[28] But Egon Krenz, responsible at the Politburo for security questions, declared the following motto for the future: "We should be looking forward now. For me, it is not a question whether the union of economic and social policies should be continued. It must be continued, since that is the GDR's socialism!"[29]

It was not only the ongoing economic decline that demoralized the SED leadership in the summer of 1989. Powerless, they had watched the attempts that had been made since 1987 between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic to improve their relations; these led in June 1989 to the signing of a "joint declaration" during a state visit of Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Bonn. In this declaration, both sides recognized the right of every state "to freely choose its own political and social system," and to consider the "respect of the self-determination of all nations" an incontestable principle.[30] Just three weeks later, in July 1989, on the initiative of the Soviet leadership, an official document was signed at the congress of the Political Consultative Committee in Bucharest in which the Warsaw Pact countries broke with the superiority and hegemonic claims of the Soviet Union, whereby they also broke with the "tank philosophy" of the limited sovereignty of the member states (the Brezhnev Doctrine). In the meeting's communiqué, the party and state leaders of the East bloc countries expressed that there is "no universal model of socialism whatsoever," and "no one" possesses "a monopoly on the truth." They stressed the need to develop relations with one another "on the basis of equality, independence and the right of each to formulate and develop their own independent political line, strategy, and tactics without outside interference."[31] Unlike their neighbors, the leaders of the East German part-state had difficulties understanding the right to self-determination and independence that were being granted to the "fraternal parties" as a "basis for a democratic renewal on the basis of national struggles for independence." Rather, just as they already saw the "joint Soviet-German declaration,"[32] such rights were simply

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[28] Heinz Klopfer, "Persönliche Notizen über die Beratung beim Generalsekretär des ZK der SED und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Erich Honecker, betreff Entwurf des Volkswirtschaftsplanes und des Staatshaushaltsplanes 1990," Berlin, 16 May 1989, in BA, DE 1/56317, 25.

[29] Ibid., 42.

[30] "Gemeinsame deutsch-sowjetische Erklärung," 13 June 1989, *Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung*, 15 June 1989, 543.

[31] "Kommuniqué der Tagung des Politisch-Beratenden Ausschusses der Mitgliedsstaaten des Warschauer Vertrags am 7. und 8. Juli 1989 in Bukarest," *Europa-Archiv*, no. 20 (1989): 599.

[32] Andreas Wirsching, "Die Mauer fällt. Das Ende des doppelten Deutschland," in Udo Wengst and Hermann Wentker, ed., *Das doppelte Deutschland. 40 Jahre Systemkonkurrenz* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2008), 357–74, 368.

considered a threat to their existence. If the Soviet guarantee of the SED regime's existence were suspended, then from now on the SED would be faced with the task of legitimizing their rule to "their people" themselves—and this in the face of a pending economic bankruptcy. The fact that SED chief Honecker suffered a gallstone colic during the Bucharest meeting and had to be flown to East Berlin before the signing of the final document was highly symbolic.

And finally, Moscow's foreign policy toward the United States had also shocked the SED leadership. In order to gain ground in disarmament negotiations with the United States, Gorbachev and the Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze declared the Soviet Union willing—without consulting its allies and, as the SED leadership saw it, primarily at their expense—to implement extensive concessions in human rights issues. In January 1989, the Soviet Union literally forced the East German government to sign the Vienna CSCE accords. The signing states pledged, among other things, to respect the right of all people "to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country with no restrictions."[33] Similar international agreements had already been signed several times, even by the GDR, but they had never been implemented legally. But in Vienna it was the first time that the GDR committed itself to guaranteeing this right—that is, unrestricted freedom to travel—by law, and to allow its compliance with this requirement to be monitored.

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union thus imposed domestic commitments onto its allies, particularly East Berlin. But they were commitments whose implementation not only threatened the political stability of the GDR, but also its existence: if the border became permeable, the state was endangered.

In Poland and Hungary, democratic reforms toward a multi-party system were introduced in the summer of 1989. While these reforms were forced from below, in contrast to the GDR, they were then pushed forward from above by party reformers. But the SED leadership stood with its back up against the wall, leading to its well-documented uncertainty as well as its resulting "speechlessness." While displeasure with the leadership had grown among the party's members, nonetheless, no significant pressure on the party leaders emerged, to say nothing of any sort of inner-party opposition.

In view of the later developments in 1989, one must look for conditions under which latent critical factors develop into governmental crises. And one must also examine how the symptoms of structural crisis can trigger a process that mobilizes the masses to protest a regime. And finally, there is the question of how the role of the media should be understood in this context.

Fundamental crises in political systems emerge, as Pierre Bourdieu has attempted to explain, through a "conjunction of independent causal chains" that

[33] "Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Abschließendes Dokument des Wiener KSZE-Folgetreffens. Wien, 15. Januar 1989," *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 4 (1989): 467–68.

first develop parallel to one another, and then, at a particular moment, interact.[34] When the perception of the actors in such local crises is synchronized, whereby these individual crises are driven to suddenly change into a general crisis or a revolution, is called a "critical moment" by Bourdieu.[35] In turn, this synchronization effect is generated by "critical events" that spread the latent crises to many different places, causing latent tensions to change abruptly into manifest acts.

The media, which Bourdieu does not include in his concept, can play an important role in this synchronization process by conveying what has happened, whereby it intensifies perceptions and creates a feedback effect—especially when the media intervenes directly in events and becomes an actor.[36] This augmentation of the concept provides a framework of analysis that is capable of combining, on both macro and micro levels, the history of structures and the history of events (structure and agency).

## The October Revolution

Until the autumn of 1989, the momentum for further developments in the GDR was less due to civil rights activists than due to people leaving the country—and the television coverage of them. This momentum was triggered by the more than 100,000 people who applied to leave the GDR, especially those demanding exit visas in the summer of 1989 who occupied embassies in East Berlin or the West German embassies in Warsaw, Prague and Budapest.[37]

It is true that in East Germany the number of opposition groups critical of the system had increased, especially since the mid-1980s.[38] Among the issues they focused on were peace and the environment, democracy, human rights, and especially the freedom to travel. Quite a few parish priests were involved; the

[34] Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo academicus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 254–303.

[35] Ibid., 274–92.

[36] See Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, "'Kritische Ereignisse' und 'kritischer Moment'. Pierre Bourdieus Modell der Vermittlung von Ereignis und Struktur," in Andreas Suter and Manfred Hettling, ed., *Struktur und Ereignis,* Geschichte und Gesellschaft Sonderheft 19 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 120–37, 135; see also idem, "Die Nacht der Barrikaden. Eine Fallstudie zur Dynamik sozialen Protests," in Friedhelm Neidhardt, ed., *Öffentlichkeit, Öffentliche Meinung, Soziale Bewegunge,* Sonderheft der Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), 375–92.

[37] For comprehensive portrayals of the GDR revolution, see: Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Endspiel* (Munich: Beck, 2009), esp. 301–469; Ehrhart Neubert, *Unsere Revolution* (Munich: Piper, 2008); Wolfgang Schuller, *Die deutsche Revolution 1989* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2009); another key work: Walter Süß, *Staatssicherheit am Ende. Warum es den Mächtigen nicht gelang 1989 eine Revolution zu verhindern* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1999).

[38] See Ehrhart Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR, 1949–1989* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1998).

Lutheran church gave shelter to many groups. It is possible to gain the impression that during 1989, the number of demonstrations organized by these independent and civil rights groups increased steadily: from protests against fraudulent local election results in May, to demonstrations against the violent suppression of the Chinese student uprising in June, the founding of the opposition movement New Forum (*Neues Forum*) on 9–10 September and then other groups, and finally the founding of the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei*, SDP) at the beginning of October 1989.

But this impression is deceptive. These opposition groups were primarily involved with their own concerns, and for the most part failed to involve broader sections of the populace.[39] Until late summer 1989, it was rare if a public protest attracted more than a few hundred people—this happened only a few times. Only after the New Forum and other groups, such as Democratic Awakening (*Demokratischer Aufbruch*) and Democracy Now (*Demokratie Jetzt*), were founded in September did they gain popular acceptance. Nonetheless, these newly organized civil rights groups also had little to do with the beginning of the protest movement; in the early stages, demonstrations were usually spontaneous and unplanned. The first time more than 1,000 people took part in a Leipzig Monday demonstration was on 18 September; on 25 September it was 5,000, on 2 October, 15,000, and finally on 9 October, 70,000—always following events at churches. The opening of the Hungarian-Austrian border for East Germans on 10–11 September was followed by a mass exodus. Only then, at the beginning of October, did open protest quickly begin to swell and move to many cities.[40]

This was because the opening of the Iron Curtain in Hungary had shifted the balance of power between the government and the population in East Germany in a decisive way.[41] The exodus generated expanding repercussions among people who wanted to remain in the GDR. For the first time since the uprising of 1953, they saw a chance to place demands on the regime: "We will stay, but only if things don't stay the same," was an early slogan at the Leipzig demonstrations. The new possibility of leaving via Hungary could be used as a means of pressure; in return for their remaining in the GDR, they could insist on a political price. No longer did fleeing or leaving the country weaken potential political resistance, it gave it social justification. The mass exodus via Hungary undermined,

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39 See Detlef Pollack, "'Wir sind das Volk!' Sozialstrukturelle und ereignisgeschichtliche Bedingungen des friedlichen Massenprotests," in Klaus-Dietmar Henke, ed., *Revolution und Vereinigung 1989/90* (Munich: DTV, 2009), 178–97.

40 On the earlier history and background of the Hungarian opening of the border, see: Andreas Oplatka, *Der erste Riss in der Mauer. September 1989—Ungarn öffnet die Grenze* (Vienna: Zsolnay, 2009).

41 See Detlef Pollack, "Das Ende einer Organisationsgesellschaft; systemtheoretische Überlegungen zum gesellschaftlichen Umbruch in der DDR," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 19, no. 4 (1990): 292–307, 300–1.

in an unprecedented manner, the authority of the state and was a prerequisite for the mass protests that were then to unfold.[42]

For the SED leadership, the "Hungarian betrayal," not to mention the Soviet Union's passive attitude, was terribly humiliating. Reduced to relying on their own authority, the first point of discussion at the Politburo meeting of 12 September 1989 was how to "close the hole in Hungary,"[43] since applications for travelling to Hungary had skyrocketed everywhere in the country. To avoid "heavy losses" in citizens, Mittag suggested that "leaving the country should not be carried out as globally as has been done until now. Why do the ambivalent candidates have to go? This internal regulation may not, however, affect our party or the majority of the population. We would upset them. The Stasi and the Ministry of the Interior should undertake these actions."[44] In this way, the SED leadership solved their own political dilemma by foisting it onto the employees of the security forces.

But the SED leadership still received some support from Prague. The Czechoslovak government tightened its controls for GDR citizens at its border with Hungary. As a result, by the end of September more than 10,000 East Germans were staying at the West German embassy in Prague in an attempt to force their exit to the Federal Republic. Honecker gave in on 30 September 1989, letting the embassy refugees travel in locked trains over GDR territory to the West. A commentary edited by Honecker and published in *Neue Deutschland* on 2 October hurled after them: "No tears should be shed over their like."[45] The statement sparked outrage and anger in the families of the refugees, and even met with protest from members of the SED. "With its cynical inflexibility," Pollack has commented, "the leadership of the SED itself contributed to the protests forming in the streets."[46]

The SED leadership's room for maneuvering shrank more and more, becoming limited to either initiating political reforms—with an uncertain outcome—or building a "second wall" at the Czechoslovak and Polish borders and, possibly, having to quell demonstrations with military force. The closing of the East German border to Czechoslovakia on 3 October 1989, and in some cases brute force being used against protesters during celebrations for the fortieth state anniversary of the GDR around 7 October, point to their having chosen the latter option—the use of force. More than 3,000 protesters were temporarily arrested in the GDR

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[42] Norman Naimark also emphasizes this causal link: "It is worth reiterating that those who left the country started the revolution, while those, who demonstrated maintained it." See Norman Naimark, "'Ich will hier raus.' Emigration and the Collapse of the German Democratic Republic," in Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 72–116.

[43] SED-Politburo meeting on 12 September 1989, in BA, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/77, 27.

[44] Ibid.

[45] *Neues Deutschland*, 2 October 1989.

[46] Pollack, "Wir sind das Volk!" 189.

and over 700 investigation proceedings were initiated. On the evening of 9 October, there was a threat that the "Chinese solution" would be used in Leipzig. Honecker and Stasi Minister Mielke had given the order to prevent "rioting" and "riots." But too many people had taken to the streets. In the end, the state power capitulated in the face of 70,000 peaceful demonstrators.[47] Footage of the demonstration was smuggled to the West, and on the following days it was broadcast on television news, becoming a beacon for the demonstrating to spread. As Pollack writes, "From 9 October, it was the people protesting in the streets who determined the pace and the direction of the political developments in the GDR."[48] On 16 October, there were already 120,000 people in Leipzig chanting "We are the people!" and demanding free elections, freedom of expression and the press, and freedom to travel. Tens of thousands took part in demonstrations on the same evening in other places, including Dresden, Magdeburg, Halle and Berlin.

The protests on the street drove the SED leadership to frantic activity. On 17 October 1989, SED general secretary Erich Honecker was toppled by an odd Politburo coalition consisting of both reformist and arch-conservative forces.[49] But instead of the expected stabilization of power under his successor, Egon Krenz, who announced a political "turning point," the rapid collapse of the communist dictatorship began. Increasingly, the main problem of the SED leadership was the economic situation. On 31 October 1989, an analysis of the economic situation in the GDR was presented to the Politburo. Its findings: production potential was exhausted, insolvency toward the West threatened, bankruptcy was imminent. An immediate reduction of living standards by 25 to 30 percent would be necessary, it stated. However, due to fears of an uprising, this was considered out of the question politically.

The proposed solution to save the GDR from bankruptcy was the following: in order to receive new loans to the sum of DM 12 to 13 billion, as well as improved economic backing from the West German government, the permeability of the Wall—in plain terms, easier travel opportunities for GDR citizens—should be offered as a final means of exchange. Not surprisingly, on 1 November 1989, Egon Krenz was told by Mikhail Gorbachev that economic assistance was no longer to be expected from Moscow. On behalf of the SED general secretary, on 6 November Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, as the GDR mediator, commenced secret negotiations in Bonn with Chancellery Minister Rudolf Seiters and Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble.

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[47] On the developments of the protest movement in Leipzig, see Tobias Hollitzer and Reinhard Bohse, ed., *Heute vor 10 Jahren. Leipzig auf dem Weg zur Friedlichen Revolution* (Bonn and New York: InnoVatio, 2000).

[48] Pollack, "Wir sind das Volk!" 194.

[49] See Hans-Hermann Hertle, "Der Sturz Erich Honeckers. Zur Rekonstruktion eines innerparteilichen Machtkampfes," in Klaus-Dietmar Henke, Peter Steinbach, Johannes Tuchel, eds., *Widerstand und Opposition in der DDR* (Cologne et al.: Böhlau, 1999), 327–46. On the references for the following section, see Hertle, *Chronik,* 92–202.

Unfazed by the change of leadership at the top of the SED, the exodus from the GDR continued; from 18 October, up to 2,000 East Germans crossed the Austro-Hungarian border daily. The continuous coverage by the Western media of the refugees' arrival in the West plainly exposed the SED regime's lack of legitimacy to the world public. At the same time, about 1,000 people a day applied for emigration; on 29 October the total number had risen to 188,180.[50]

Also the number of demonstrations had not waned. The protest movement did not regard Honecker's removal from office as reflecting the willingness of the party leadership to implement reforms, but saw it as the regime's running from the pressure on the streets, a victory that subsequently gave legitimacy and incentive to continue the demonstrations. As a result, pressure was intensified to push through even more demands. In the second half of October, the situation in the GDR had become explosive. Demonstrations against the SED spread across the country, reaching even small and mid-sized towns. While in the week from 16 to 22 October, the Stasi registered a total of 140,000 participants in 24 demonstrations, in the next week 540,000 people took part in 145 demonstrations, and from 30 October to 5 November there were 1.4 million participants in 210 demonstrations.[51] Ever more emphatic were the demands for free elections, permission to form opposition groups, and— over and over, and everywhere—the freedom to travel.

At the same time, despite the new secretary general and his vague promises of reforms, the party's members weren't letting themselves be mobilized simply at the drop of a hat. Attempts to convert opposition demonstrations into regime-friendly rallies failed, sometimes already in the planning stages. SED members' confidence that the party leadership could cope with the situation waned. The collapse of the SED regime's control in the face of the people had now expanded to the SED leadership losing authority and power over its own party base.

On 1 November, threatened by more demonstrations, the SED leadership lifted the ban on travel to Czechoslovakia. Prague immediately resembled a transit camp for East Germans wanting to emigrate. The Czechoslovak government registered a protest in East Berlin. The SED Politburo gave in, and from 4 November allowed East Germans to exit to West Germany via Czechoslovakia: after the one in Hungary, there was a second hole in the Curtain.

Within days, 50,000 East Germans had taken this new route. The Czechoslovak government feared this would spread instability in their own country, and in East Berlin strongly protested against the mass migration. It formally requested the SED to allow the exit of East German citizens to West Germany "directly, not over Czechoslovakia's territory." If this did not happen, they would have to close their border to East Germany.[52]

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[50] Cf. "Wochenübersicht" no. 44/89, 30 October 1989, in BStU, MfS, ZAIG Nr. 4599, 142.

[51] See Walter Süß, "Entmachtung und Verfall der Staatssicherheit," *BF informiert,* no. 5 (1994): 10.

[52] Cf. Telegram, Ziebart to Fischer, Ott and Schwiesau, 8 November 1989, in BStU, Sekretariat Neiber Nr. 553, 2.

On 8 November, Chancellor Kohl made the demands of the East German protesters his own: if the SED renounced its monopoly on power, permitting independent parties and guaranteeing mandatory free elections, he would be ready, he bluntly told Krenz as a condition for the requested loan, “to speak in completely new dimensions about our economic aid.”[53] The chancellor was quite sure that after free elections he would no longer need to discuss anything with the East German communists.

## The fall of the Berlin Wall

In the first week of November, as SED Politburo member Günter Schabowski summed up later, for the East German population that had been walled in for twenty-eight years, “the experience of respect or scorn for the individual” culminated in the issue of being allowed to travel.[54] Under the pressure of the mass demonstrations and alarmed by the Czechoslovakian protests, on 7 November the Politburo gave the Council of Ministers instructions to produce regulations for short-term trips. On the morning of 9 November, an inter-ministerial team produced a draft in accordance with the responsible department of the SED Central Committee.[55] The plan was to grant permanent departures—that is, moves to the Federal Republic—at GDR border crossings, although only after an appropriate application had been filed. Visits—also subject to application—would be approved up to thirty days a year, but were dependant on a visa being issued and holding a passport. Those who did not have a passport, as the plan went, would first have to apply for one and then wait again for at least four weeks. It was felt that in this way, the immediate departure of all citizens could be averted. The new travel regulations were to be revealed on 10 November at 4:00 a.m., in order to let the employees of the application authorities time overnight to prepare for the expected massive influx of people wanting to leave. Based on the application process and the passport requirement, it was calculated that the first wave of travel to the West would only occur in mid-December 1989.

The government draft, including a press release, was agreed upon at noon on 9 November by the Security Department of the Central Committee and the relevant ministries—the Ministry of State Security, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Central Committee, the highest decision-making body of the SED, had begun their meeting the day before. During

[53] Deutscher Bundestag, 11. Wahlperiode, 173. Sitzung, 8. November 1989, Stenographischer Bericht, 13017.

[54] Cf. Hans-Hermann Hertle, Theo Pirker, Rainer Weinert, eds., *“Der Honecker muss weg!” Protokoll eines Gesprächs mit Günter Schabowski am 24. April 1990 in Berlin-West,”* Berliner Arbeitshefte und Berichte zur sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschung 35 (Berlin: Zentralinstitut für Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, 1990), 39.

[55] On the following, cf. Hertle, *Chronik*, 118–23.

the meeting's continuation, or more precisely, during a "smoking break," a few members of the Politburo confirmed that the draft had been written.[56]

In the afternoon, it was placed before the Council of Ministers for a resolution by circulation so that a quick decision could be guaranteed—namely, by 6:00 p.m. A copy of the draft was given to Egon Krenz. At around 4:00 p.m., he read the proposed regulations to the 216 members of the Central Committee and explained its urgency as being due to pressure from the CSSR. The hopelessness into which the GDR felt itself forced was expressed by Krenz with the remark: "However we do it, we'll do it wrong!" But the Central Committee saw no other way and gave its consent. At this time the travel regulations were—as emphasized by Krenz—only a "proposal," a draft. A decision by the Council of Ministers had not yet been made.

Nevertheless, Krenz spontaneously commissioned the government spokesman to release it "at once," thus lifting, almost casually, the news embargo.

This decision could have been corrected, since the government spokesman, Wolfgang Meyer, was aware of the holding period and its background. But Krenz's next decision was irreversible: he handed the resolution together with the press release to Politburo member Günter Schabowski, who during these days was serving as the speaker of the party, and gave him the order to report on it at the international press conference already scheduled for 6:00 p.m. This interference of the party in the executive work of the government led to the unraveling of all the preparatory work that the Stasi and the Ministry of the Interior had done for the new travel regulations.

Schabowski hadn't been there when the Politburo confirmed the travel regulations at midday. He had also not been in the hall when Krenz read travel regulations to the Central Committee. Thus, he knew neither the wording of the paper, nor anything about a holding period.

At the end of the press conference, which was broadcast live on East German television, he read the travel regulations from the piece of paper he had received from Krenz. According to the regulations, GDR citizens would not only be granted permanent departures, with permission being issued within a short period of time, but also private trips would be approved. Permanent departures would be possible at all GDR border crossings to the Federal Republic and to West Berlin. "When does this take effect?" asked the journalists.[57] Schabowski looked helpless, because "that question," the Politburo member said later, "had not been discussed with me earlier."[58] He scratched his head and glanced at the paper.

[56] The proposed resolution is held in the records of the SED Politburo: Willi Stoph, "Vorlage für das Politbüro des Zentralkomitees der SED, Betreff: Zeitweilige Übergangsregelung für Reisen und ständige Ausreise aus der DDR," 9 November 1989, in BA, DY 30/J IV 2/2A/3256, 9–10.

[57] Cf. the transcript of the press conference text in Hertle, *Chronik*, 141–46.

[58] Hertle, Pirker, Weinert, eds., *"Der Honecker muss weg!"*, 40.

He overlooked the concluding sentence of the decision of the Council of Ministers, which stated that a press release would only be given on 10 November, and his eyes came to rest on the beginning section, on the words “immediately” and “without delay.” He thus formulated a terse response: “Straight away, with no delay!” A few minutes later, at 7:01 p.m., the press conference was over.

However, the storming of the border crossings was not a direct response to this press conference, as has often been incorrectly assumed, but it only began to occur on a massive scale—with a clear time gap—as a result of the subsequent press coverage, especially in the Western media. During the main evening news, which lasted until 8:15 p.m., Schabowski’s statement became the main topic under discussion. Lacking precise information, the Western media began to fill in what Schabowski had left open to interpretation, to condense the information in order to create a meaning and a context. Very quickly his contradictory statements had been interpreted as “the opening of the border.” Already at 7:05 p.m., the Associated Press headline was “GDR opens its border,” and at 7:41 p.m. the DPA spread the “sensational information:” “The East German border to West Germany and West Berlin *is* open.” At 8:00 p.m., the ARD “Tagesschau” made the travel regulations its top news item, superimposing the words: “GDR opens border.”

The high point of the Western television coverage was the ARD show “Tagesthemen” (Issues of the Day), which began slightly late that evening, at 10:42 p.m. An introductory clip showed the nearly deserted western side of the Brandenburg Gate. The news anchorman, Hanns Joachim Friedrichs, proclaimed: “Tonight at the Brandenburg Gate. It has ended its service as a symbol of the division of Berlin. So has the Wall, which for the last twenty-eight years has separated East and West. The GDR has yielded to the pressure of the people. They are now free to travel to the West.”

Friedrichs then came into the picture and ended his introduction with these words: “When dealing with superlatives, caution should taken, since they wear out easily. But this evening, it is possible to risk one: The ninth of November is a historic day. The GDR has announced that its borders are now open to everyone. The Wall’s gates are wide open.” But Friedrichs’ announcement had jumped ahead of the events: contrary to his assertion, the introductory clip, which had been filmed at around 10:00 p.m. by the Berlin office, showed that, at least at the border crossings at Heinrich-Heine-Straße and Checkpoint Charlie, absolute silence reigned.

It was actually the reporting of the supposed “open border” in the Western media—especially on television and the radio—that triggered the onslaught of East and West Berliners at the border crossings and the Brandenburg Gate. The fall of the Berlin Wall is the first world-historic event to have attained reality because it was announced by the media.

With no information or orders from their military commanders, the East German border guards on duty the evening of 9 November 1989 were apprehensive

about the growing masses of people, on both sides of the border crossings, who had come to see whether the news was true. Queries by border guards with their supervisors, asking how Schabowski's statement was to be understood, remained unanswered, as was the same question at the next level up in the ministries. In the evening hours, only deputies, or deputies of deputies, could be reached at all levels—and nobody knew the answer. The lines of communication to the top were blocked: that day's meeting of the Central Committee had been extended until 8:45 p.m., and therefore no ministers could be reached by their deputies. Thus, the entire party and state leadership did not yet realize what had happened at the press conference, and did not know about the media response or about the beginning rush of East and West to the checkpoints.

The run on the east side was strongest at the border crossing on Bornholmer Straße, located in the densely populated district of Prenzlauer Berg. At first the border guards reacted cautiously, telling people to come the next day. They then allowed individuals to leave, but stamped their identity cards as void. Without knowing it, the first East Berliners who ran across the Bornholm Bridge to West Berlin had been expatriated.

Finally the pressure behind the barrier bar became so strong that the passport inspectors and border guards began to fear for their lives. They made their own decision, and at around 11:30 p.m. stopped making any checks. "We're opening the floodgates now! We're opening everything!," announced the senior passport control officer, and the barriers were opened.

Also at Checkpoint Charlie, the only way the border officers knew how to prevent the storming of the crossing was by opening all the gates at midnight. At the Invalidenstraße border crossing, the passport inspectors initially were determined keep the West and East Berliners at bay. They brought in reinforcements: forty-five men with machine guns. But as the situation escalated, they made a decision: "We won't shoot at unarmed people." The soldiers retreated and the supervisor ordered: "Let them go!"[59]

At midnight, all of the border crossings in Berlin were open; a short time later, East and West Berliners also celebrated the fall of the Wall under the Brandenburg Gate.

## "We are one people!"—The path to German unity

The opening of the Wall on 9–10 November 1989 was more than an "opening of the border:" It was an act of self-liberation. The impact of the event, its form and symbolism, knocked the control of the borders out of the SED leadership's hands—and at the same time, their power over citizens who were no longer walled

[59] Hans-Hermann Hertle and Kathrin Elsner, eds., *Der Tag, an dem die Mauer fiel* (Berlin: Nicolai, 2009), 152.

in. Without the Wall, the SED leadership and the newly formed government under Prime Minister Hans Modrow also saw themselves stripped of their main collateral for negotiating about economic stabilization with West Germany; the GDR regime had lost its last creditworthy piece of property. "The people," as laconically stated by Schalck ten years later, "virtually pre-empted the leadership."[60]

At the same time, the pressure on the party and state continued to increase after the Wall had fallen. On one hand, migration to the West increased again sharply: from 10 November 1989 until the end of the year, over 120,000 people left the GDR (the total in 1989 was 343,854); from January to March 1990 more than 180,000 more left. On the other hand, the mass demonstrations continued in the second half of November. The chants of "We are *the* people" quickly changed to "We are *one* people"; within a short time, everywhere in the GDR banners with the slogan "Germany–one fatherland" and black, red and gold flags without the GDR emblem defined the image of the rallies. Many civil rights activists, writers, artists and intellectuals, who until then had seen themselves as the spokespersons and the vanguard of the demonstrations, distanced themselves from the demands for Germany's unification. Their attempts to stir up fears of a "sellout of our material and moral values" and to propagate the GDR's independence as a "socialist alternative" to the Federal Republic failed, and after the first free elections a few weeks later, they ended up being marginalized.[61]

But before this had happened, the new democratic movements and parties were able, based on the Polish model of a central "round table," to limit the SED's power, force the annulment in the GDR's constitution of the SED claim to leadership, and push through free elections.[62] Within weeks, the central party structures crumbled; the Politburo, the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and the Central Committee itself disbanded. Without the party's center of control, the state power structures crumbled; nearly imperceptibly, the National Defense Council simply ceased to exist due to lack of members. By mid-February 1990, the SED had lost 1.6 of their once 2.3 million members.[63] At the beginning of December 1989, district citizen committees occupied the state security buildings and prevented the destruction of files. On 15 January 1990 the Stasi headquarters

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[60] Conversation between Hans-Hermann Hertle and Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, 7 May 1999.

[61] Cf. the New Forum's description of 12 November 1989: "Die Mauer ist gefallen," in *Die ersten Texte des Neuen Forum*, hg. im Auftrag des Landessprecherrates des Neuen Forum (Berlin: Tribüne Druckerei, 1990), 20–21, as well as the proclamation "Für unser Land," 26 November 1989, *Neues Deutschland*, 29 November 1989.

[62] Uwe Thaysen, ed., *Der Zentrale Runde Tisch der DDR: Wortprotokoll und Dokumente*, 5 vols. (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2000); idem, *Der Runde Tisch. Oder: Wo blieb das Volk?* Der Weg der DDR in die Demokratie (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990).

[63] Cf. Günter Fischbach, ed., *DDR-Almanach '90. Daten, Informationen, Zahlen* (Stuttgart: Verlag Bonn Aktuell, 1990), 355.

in Berlin were stormed. The round table finally forced the Modrow government to dissolve the Stasi, the East German secret police.

After the fall of the Wall and the end of the old SED, the Soviet Union was the only remaining guarantor of the GDR's existence as a state. At first, the Soviet leadership categorically opposed any tendencies toward a unification of the two German states. But its own internal problems—increasing national conflicts, the profound financial and supply crisis, the threat of insolvency toward the West, and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact—together with the unstoppable dissolution of the SED's power in January 1990 hastened the realization at the Kremlin that the GDR could no longer be saved. On 10 February 1990, in Moscow, Chancellor Helmut Kohl received Gorbachev's basic acceptance of Germany's reunification.[64] The day before, the CPSU party boss had already discussed with US secretary of state James Baker that the external terms for German unity, including the withdrawal of troops and the security of the neighboring countries, should be part of negotiations between the two German states and the four victors of World War II, later labeled Two Plus Four.[65] At this point in time, all sides still assumed it was going to be a process that would take several years.

The vote at the first free parliamentary elections on 18 March 1990 was clearly for a quick route to national unity. The election winner, with 48.1% of the vote, was the Alliance for Germany (*Allianz für Deutschland*), made up of the former bloc party CDU (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*), the DSU (*Deutsche Soziale Union*), and the Democratic Awakening (*Demokratischer Aufbruch*). The SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) received 21.8% of the vote, the SED-PDS (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands–Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus*) 16.3%, and the Liberals 5.3%. Alliance 90 (*Bündnis 90*), the electoral alliance of the civil rights movements New Forum, Democracy Now, and the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights received only 2.9% of the vote. Under Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière, the "Alliance for Germany" formed a coalition government with the Social Democrats and the Liberals. The clear electoral mandate in this grand coalition was "the winding up of their own state and rapid union with the Federal Republic."[66] The East German and West German lower houses of parliament, the Volkskammer (People's Chamber) and the Bundestag, voted on 21 June 1990, with a two-thirds majority agreeing to a treaty for economic, monetary and social union. As a result, on 1 July, the West German mark was introduced as legal tender in the GDR. Financing the conversion costs was accomplished primarily through loans.

[64] Cf. Niederschrift des Gespräches des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Generalsekretär Gorbatschow, Moskau, 10. Februar 1990 in *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik. Deutsche Einheit*, 795–807, esp. 801. On Soviet policy in Germany's reunification, cf. Wolfgang Mueller, "The Soviet Union and the Reunification of Germany, 1989–90," in this volume, 321–53.

[65] On the discussions of US Secretary of State Baker in Moscow that began on 7 February 1990, see Sarotte, *1989*, 110–11.

[66] Rödder, *Deutschland,* 224.

The negotiations on the external aspects of reunification were the subject of the Two Plus Four conferences between the two German states and the victorious powers of World War II, as well as numerous bilateral talks. These negotiations were brought to completion on 12 September 1990, with the signing of the "Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany." In this treaty, the occupying powers renounced their rights and responsibilities connected with World War II, both in Berlin and Germany as a whole. Germany received sovereign rights over its internal and external affairs, confirmed the final form of its borders, and pledged, among other things, to abstain from offensive wars and to reduce its army to 370,000 troops. In addition, it was agreed that the 350,000 soldiers of the Western Group of the Soviet military would be withdrawn by 1994.

The most important political milestones on the path to internal unity were the following: The decision of the People's Chamber on 23 August to join, in accordance with Article 23, the constitution of the Federal Republic, and the Unification Treaty between the two German states, which created the legal basis for national reunification. When the two parliaments voted on 20 September 1990 for the treaty, their aim was also to create, after forty years of separation, unified living conditions in Germany. On 3 October 1990, the political unity of Germany was complete.

## Conclusion

The emergence, course and outcome of revolutions—and this applies to the radical changes that took place in all of the Central European countries—are unforeseeable due to contingent constellations of actions and series of events, even if there is an accumulation of structural crisis factors. Bourdieu's analytical concept, especially if it is extended to include the effects of the media, is a methodology that requires the combining of the history of structures and events. It is helpful for deciphering the "conjunction of independent causal series" and their moments of interaction. By using this methodology, a significant contribution can be made toward understanding the revolution in East Germany as well as in other places.

The opening of the Hungarian–Austrian border for East Germans on 10–11 September 1989 can be seen, in Bourdieu's sense, as a "critical event." And the Leipzig Monday demonstration on 9 October 1989, which ignited the East German October Revolution, can be interpreted as a "critical moment." The awareness of the two events was based largely on the media, whose reporting greatly enhanced the effect of both. Hungary's "hole in the wall" laid bare the SED regime's weaknesses and its loss of support from a formerly allied government and, in particular, the Soviet hegemon. Over and above the nucleus of the opposition movement, the opening of the Hungarian border gave new options to

much of the East German population—both those who wanted to emigrate and those who wanted to stay—while it narrowed those of the regime. The exodus continued to grow, while at the same time, protests against the regime exploded in the streets.

The Leipzig Monday demonstration on 9 October 1989 and the inaction of the ready police and military forces against 70,000 protesters made 9 October a symbol of hope. The peaceful course of events emboldened many to take part in demonstrations; by 9 November 1989, several million people all over the GDR had taken part in more than 600 demonstrations and rallies, protesting for their democratic rights and against the regime. In this situation, the resignations of, first, the SED general secretary, and then the Council of Ministers and the Politburo, as well as the announcement of reforms, were interpreted as a sign of weakness on the part of the country's leaders. Instead of saving the system, these acts intensified the protest movements and accelerated the breakdown of the party's rule.

The fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989—not intended by the SED and caused largely by the media—did not end the revolution as is believed by some. It rather changed its course.[67] The number of demonstrations in the three weeks after the Wall fell remained as high as in the three previous weeks.[68] No longer walled in—a fact that made the communist regime finally lose its power and control over the "state inmates" (Joachim Gauck)—the majority of the protesters unambiguously called for German unification and the end, not the reform, of the GDR.

One of the ironies of the October Revolution is that in the previous weeks, when faced by the state's impending bankruptcy, some of the SED leadership had already abandoned their belief in the survival of the GDR without West German assistance, and thus were ahead of "their" people. And it is part of the tragedy of the opposition that even after the fall of the Wall, some of the civil rights groups—also because they were ignorant of the real economic situation—dreamed of socialist reforms, distancing themselves from the demonstrations and the ever more energetically chanted slogan "Germany, united fatherland." "They promoted the right of self-determination for the society, but refused to tolerate the self-determination as it was then practiced by the bulk of the population."[69] Many civil rights activists marginalized themselves because of this contradiction. Increasingly, the advocate for the mass movement of the GDR population was the West German conservative-liberal government under Chancellor Kohl,

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67 See, for example, Stefan Bollinger, *1989—eine abgebrochene Revolution : verbaute Wege nicht nur zu einer besseren DDR?* (Berlin: Trafo, 1999).

68 Cf. Uwe Schwabe, "Der Herbst '89 in Zahlen—Demonstrationen und Kundgebungen vom August 1989 bis zum April 1990," in Eberhard Kuhrt et al. eds., *Opposition in der DDR von den 70er Jahren bis zum Zusammenbruch der SED-Herrschaft* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1999), 719–35, here 726–27.

69 Rödder, *Deutschland*, 124.

who with his Ten-Point Plan of 28 November 1989 was already heading for German reunification.

Crucial for the success of the East German revolution was ultimately the position of the Soviet Union. "Our troops are with you," CPSU general secretary Leonid Brezhnev had impressed upon Erich Honecker in August 1970 before the latter came to power. "Erich, I am telling you frankly, never forget: the GDR cannot exist without us, without the Soviet Union, its power and strength. Without us there is no GDR."[70] In January 1990, the dictum was the same as it had been nearly twenty years before, but the price of maintaining the GDR, economically or militarily, was too high for CPSU leader Mikhail Gorbachev and his closest advisers—and to pay it would have contradicted Gorbachev's "new thinking." When the Soviet Union released the way for German reunification after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the basis for the GDR's existence was extinguished. It is this subsequent self-dissolution of the SED state after the collapse of its ruling system which characterizes the special path taken by Germany among the communist systems in Central and Eastern Europe.

Translated from the German original by Cynthia Peck-Kubaczek

[70] Conversation Leonid I. Brezhnev with Erich Honecker, East German protocol, 28 July 1970, in BA, DY 30/J IV 2/2A/3196.

Jiří Suk

# CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1989: CAUSES, RESULTS, AND CONCEPTUAL CHANGES[1]

## Conceptual changes in the "miracle year"

The crucial events of the year 1989 were actively influenced by the Czechoslovak people. In November and December they rose up against the hegemony of the ruling Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická strana Československa*, KSČ) and, with their decisive actions, contributed to the fall of the communist dictatorship. The "Velvet Revolution" became the symbol of a peaceful takeover of power and the building of a democratic state on the basis of pragmatically conceived governmental and legal continuity. The grass-roots movement—represented in the Czech Republic by the Civic Forum (*Občanské fórum*, OF) and in the Slovak Republic by the Public Against Violence (*Verejnosť proti násiliu*, VPN)—reached an understanding with representatives of the communist elite to choose a conciliatory path toward a market economy and democracy. This model of historical compromise was different from that which occurred in Hungary and Poland, because the Czech communists were unwilling to engage in any sort of dialogue with the opposition until the last moment. In the end, their so-called normalizing regime collapsed due to the wide-spread protests in East Germany and the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November. The Czech compromise is quite significant if compared to the frightful example of the bloody drama that occurred in Romania in December 1989. While the emergence of latent anti-communism was nonetheless very energetic, the Czechs and Slovaks sobered up quickly from their revolutionary enthusiasm. The fact remains that they see their "peaceful," "velvet," or "gentle" revolution as a unique contribution to the history of modern revolutions since 1789—in the sense of stopping a chain of violence and endless revenge for the past wrongs. The world's ethos was represented by the dissident Václav Havel, who at the end of the "miracle year" was elected president of Czechoslovakia.

The fall of the communist dictatorships in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has been perceived as a revolutionary change in the world order, but these revolutions (or coups), as such, have not been thought to have offered anything innovative or inspiring. Jürgen Habermas has called them the "catching up" revo-

[1] This paper was written as part of a research project on the "Czechoslovak Federal Assembly 1989–1992: The Emancipation of Legislative Power" that has been supported by a grant from the Czech Science Foundation (GACR P410/11/0423).

lutions, revolutions that merely copied the ideas and methods of the modern period.[2] In a similar line, François Furet has argued that not a single original idea was born in the upheavals which took place in Eastern Europe in 1989.[3] The source of these civil movements has been defined in different ways, including the awakening of citizens' values or the longing for lost freedom.[4] But most importantly, they have been considered motivated by materialistic or consumer factors. One of the first slogans of the OF and the VPN was a call for the "return to Europe." This symbolized their common effort to join the free and economically more developed West. This is the atmosphere in which Francis Fukuyama's paradigmatic theory, the "end of history" concerning the historical victory of the liberal democratic order (and capitalism), was born.[5] Another American political scholar, Samuel Huntington, has created an impressive global picture of the democratic phases in which authoritarian regimes from South America to Eastern Europe have given way to democracies.[6] The last phase was initiated in 1974 with Portugal's "Carnation Revolution," which was followed by the people of the Soviet bloc fifteen years later. In this ideological-theoretical context, the theory of transformation to democracy or transitology, which had already been around for a while, began to thrive and developed a functional leveling typology.[7] This is how, at the beginning of the 1990s, "paradigms of transformation" were conceived, which were the result of the attraction toward human rights policies, liberal democracy, and a capitalist market economy that followed the neoliberal model of the so-called Washington Consensus of democracy and prosperity. This paradigm has been reinforced in liberal political debates and in specialized discourses in the social sciences, also in Czechoslovakia of the 1990s, where the view was held that liberal democracy had defeated "red totalitarianism." After the transition period in Czechoslovakia, the prevailing concept was that of return: return not only to Europe, but also to an idealized form of the country's own democratic and economic traditions. This created a new wave of historical optimism, negating earlier viewpoints in which history was the centerpiece of communism. Czechoslovakia's democracy was seen as predestined for prosperity.

A wide range of comparative analyses and approaches have explored theories regarding the end of history and the phases of democracy. In the 1990s, a number of comparative studies were undertaken that examined the fall of the dictatorships

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2 Jürgen Habermas, "Die nachholende Revolution," in *Kleine Politische Schriften VII* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990).

3 Quoted in Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* (New York: Time Books, 1990), 27.

4 Timothy Garton Ash, *We the People: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague* (London: Granta, 1990).

5 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: An Avon Book, 1993).

6 Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

7 Vladimíra Dvořáková and Jiří Kunc, *O přechodech k demokracii* (Prague: Sociologické nakladatelství, 1994), 157.

in the Soviet bloc countries.[8] For the most part, they have focused on the magnitude of the geo-political changes, the role of Gorbachev's perestroika, and the specific major economic and political shifts in the satellite states. Naturally, these studies did not provide an in-depth analysis of specific events and their history. It was only in the next decade that scholars began to deal with these topics. But in connecting the forms of these crucial events, they also changed the view of them accordingly. Priority was given to detailed examinations of the modalities of political change. It was seen that liberal and democratic processes are marked by the opposition not being prepared to take over power, and problems emerging regarding legalities in its continuity as well as the broad political consensus.[9] The French political scientist Magdaléna Hadjiisky has provided a detailed analysis of the conflicting pluralist political systems originating from engaged citizens within the OF.[10]

The American historian James Krapfl has dealt with the civic dimension of change and revolution from below, rejecting thereby the statements of Habermas and Furet concerning the non-originality of the Eastern European revolutions. He states that the "Velvet Revolution" was a unique example of a disciplined and goal orientated collective action, based on a special combination of modern and traditional values. According to him, democratic revolutions prefer a balanced combination of direct and representative elements.[11] Padraic Kenney has examined the power of the people, presenting numerous examples of spontaneity and creativity. He has described revolution as a theater performance, as a jolly carnival.[12] The Czech philosopher, sociologist and law specialist Jiří Přibáň has revealed a postmodern dimension in the Eastern European revolutions—their movement toward pluralistic public forums, and their rejection of there being only one legitimate framework (as, for example, popular sovereignty) in favor of "diversity in living

8 See, e.g., Roger East, *Revolution in Eastern Europe* (London, New York: Pinter Publishers, 1992); Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1992); J. Elvert and M. Salewski, *Der Umbruch in Osteuropa* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993); Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997); Vladimir Tismaneanu, ed., *The Revolutions of 1989* (London, New York: Routledge, 1999); Steven Saxonberg, *The Fall: A Comparative Study of the End of Communism in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Poland* (Uppsala, Virginia: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2001); Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, Vladislav Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2010).

9 Jiří Suk, *Labyrintem revoluce: Aktéři, zápletky a křižovatky jedné politické krize. Od listopadu 1989 do června 1990* (Prague: Prostor, 2003).

10 Magdaléna Hadjiisky, *De la mobilisation citoyenne a la démocratie de partis: Participation et délégation politiques dans la nouvelle démocratie tcheque, 1989–1996* (Paris: Institut d´Etudes Politique de Paris, 2004).

11 James Krapfl, *Revolúcia s ľudskou tvárou: Politika, kultúra a společenstvo v Československu po 17. novembri 1989* (Bratislava: Kalligram, 2009).

12 Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

styles."[13] This diversity has often been connected to an identity anchored in the past. This identity sprang from historical memory and resulted in the dependence of the political actors on numerous personal, family and collective traditions of the past, traditions that had often been interrupted by the dramatic events of the twentieth century. The past, however, was not only a positive source of strength and identity; it was also a burden due to the legacy of the totalitarian regime.[14]

In the Czech Republic, the "transformation paradigm" disintegrated not only because of different views of understanding as such, but also due to a gradual sobering regarding the "Czech path toward capitalism"[15] and the "barbarizing of Czech politics,"[16] especially during the political and economic crisis of 1996–97. Nevertheless, it took another decade before it was rejected as an ideological construct that gave unprecedented power to the expansion of global capitalism, thus threatening the plurality of cultures and values.[17] Different age groups and programs expressed the need to criticize the foundations of the neoliberal paradigm and to formulate a new concept of democracy. At the same time, anti-communism was rejected as a political tool of the Czech right in its struggle with the liberal left as a political alternative. Renewed democratic and socialist traditions are closely connected to the above-mentioned plurality of memory.[18]

Part 1 of this chapter depicts the establishment of communism in Czechoslovakia and analyzes the reasons for its fall. Following the "Velvet Revolution" as delineated in Part 2, the interparty struggle, political and economic measures as well as lustration in 1990–98 are analyzed in Parts 3–5. At the end of the chapter, an attempt will be made to draw premlinary conclusions about the changes achieved in Czech society.

## 1. Reasons for the fall of the dictatorship in Czechoslovakia

The "Velvet Revolution," the unexpected outburst of widespread discontent, was primarily caused by external influences—it was one of the last pieces in the

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[13] Jiří Přibáň, *Disidenti práva: O revolucích roku 1989, fikcích legality a soudobé verzi společenské smlouvy* (Prague: Sociologické nakladatelství, 2001).

[14] Francoise Mayer, *Les Tcheques et leur communisme: Mémoire et identités politiques* (Paris: Éditions EHESS, 2003); Adéla Gjuričová, Michal Kopeček, Petr Roubal, Jiří Suk, Tomáš Zahradníček, *Rozděleni minulostí: Vytváření politických identit v České republice po roce 1989* (Prague: Knihovna Václava Havla, 2011).

[15] Martin Myant, *The Rise and the Fall of Czech Capitalism: Economic Development in the Czech Republic since 1989* (Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003).

[16] Lubomír Kopeček, *Éra nevinnosti: Česká politika 1989–1997* (Brno: Barrister a Principal, 2010), 324.

[17] Václav Bělohradský, *Společnost nevolnosti: Eseje z pozdější doby* (Prague: Sociologické nakladatelství, 2007).

[18] Pavel Barša, Václav Bělohradský, Michael Hauser, Václav Magid, Petr Schnur, Ondřej Slačálek, Tereza Stöckelová, Martin Škabraha, Mirek Vodrážka, *Kritika depolitizovaného rozumu: Úvahy (nejen) o nové normalizaci* (Prague: Grimmus, 2010).

series of falling dominos of the regimes in Central Europe. A radical farewell to the past, it gave the impression of breaking continuity. However, while not evident on the surface, continuity with the "normalizing regime" was very deep. The key to understanding how the *ancien régime* fell is found in the character and the origins of the Czech communist dictatorship. Regretfully, not much research in this area has been done until now, and we thus can only draw a tentative and improvised picture.

After seizing power in February 1948, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia became an overwhelming political force. It did away with its competitors, and until 1956 ruled with terror and triumphant propaganda. Thus, only limited opposition could take place within the party and state structures. From time to time after 1956, a certain amount of criticism appeared from the cultural and intellectual elite, who expressed the need for more artistic autonomy and creative freedom,[19] for a different approach to reading Marx (and Marxist revisionism),[20] as well as the need for economic reform. The party's leadership eliminated such rebellious elements, a policy that was used both during periods of thaw and of repression.

The most critical moment for the dictatorship took place in 1968–69.[21] The "Prague Spring" of 1968, which started in December of the previous year as a "palace revolution," turned into an attempt to reform and to create a more attractive "socialism with a human face" that was adapted to domestic needs. The aroused civic society succeeded in gaining complete freedom of speech, which in the course of a few weeks dismantled the authority and discourse of the KSČ. The terror of the 1950s was openly criticized in the media, a number of previously suppressed political "citizens' groups" came to life, as did a number of different identities and traditions. However, the socialist structure as such was left untouched and not challenged; people wanted socialism without dictatorship, a better, non-authoritarian communist party that would rule thanks to its inherent authority. The reformed party's leadership declared that this was their goal; in practice, however, the former structures and power aspirations remained.[22] With approaching external threats from the USSR, hundreds of thousands citizens demanded independence and state sovereignty. But the awakened civil society was not given a chance to articulate its various emerging interests in discussions and debates. These spontaneous citizens' movements, accompanied by the disintegration of communist power, were interrupted by the Soviet-led invasion of

[19] Jan Mervart, *Naděje a iluze: Čeští a slovenští spisovatelé v reformním hnutí šedesátých let* (Brno: Host, 2010).

[20] Michal Kopeček, *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: Zrod a počátky marxistického revizionismu ve střední Evropě, 1953–1956* (Prague: Argo, 2009).

[21] Kieran Williams, *Prague Spring and its Aftermath: Czechoslovak Politics, 1968–1970* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[22] Jiří Hoppe, *Opozice ´68: Sociální demokracie, Klub angažovaných nestraníků a K231– Sdružení bývalých politických vězňů* (Prague: Prostor, 2009).

Czechoslovakia.[23] The leading communists who had supported reforms capitulated, and the overall result was a gradual resignation in the society and the striving for "consolidation" and "normalization" of relationships.

The post-August dictatorship caused a political, mental and moral decline, because it buried hopes for change and democratic socialism. The reinstated dictatorship, without the freedom of expression, undertook a huge wave of "cleansing," and in the 1970s, more than half a million party members who had expressed disagreement with the invasion were expelled from the KSČ ranks. This was followed by an active persecution of the revolutionary youth movement and the circles of independent socialists. The regime of the "restored order" made it clear that it would not tolerate any open opposition. Charter 77, which was established in 1977 as part of the Helsinki movement to defend human rights, considered itself a moral opposition. But the approximately two thousand people who joined Charter 77 were spied on until the fall of the regime by the secret police, and the group was unable to evolve into a political opposition. The Czech population was again forced to adapt itself to an authoritarian regime leaning toward the Soviet Union, the superpower in the east.

### *Structural changes and unsolved problems under communism*

After February 1948, the KSČ managed to destroy parliamentary democracy as well as the prewar economic order that, until World War II, had for centuries been developing in its own fashion. All private property was nationalized,[24] including the expropriation of small businesses from owners and farmers,[25] and the free market was replaced by a system of central planning and an economy focused on heavy industry. The society underwent a complete structural change. Severed were the traditional ties and social hierarchy of the rural and civic society. Communist egalitarianism veiled the real, or undeclared, inequality in economic status of the communist *nomenklatura*, which became a "new class" (Milovan Djilas). The citizens had to adapt themselves to the new conditions, make the best of the given situation, and find ways to realize their own vested interests.[26]

Parallel to the repeating crises of communist authority, the system also lived through economic crises, with the regime in the 1950s and 60s repeatedly react-

[23] Jan Pauer, *Prag 1968: Der Einmarsch des Warschauer Paktes. Hintergründe, Planung, Durchführung* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1995).

[24] Jan Kuklík, *Znárodněné Československo: Od znárodnění k privatizaci—státní zásahy do vlastnických a dalších majetkových práv v Československu a jinde v Evropě* (Prague: Auditorium, 2010), 450.

[25] Karel Jech, *Kolektivizace a vyhánění sedláků z půdy* (Prague: Vyšehrad, 2008), 336.

[26] Jiří Kabele, *Z kapitalismu do socialismu a zpět: Teoretické vyšetřování přerodů Československa a České republiky* (Prague: Karolinum, 2005).

ing to attempts to implement reforms. The regime was faced with the dilemma of how to incorporate elements of free market and competition (which would increase work productivity and motivation) into the rigid precepts of a centralized economic system, while at the same time holding on to the socialist system.[27]

The socialist economy, in its consumer phase in the 1970s and 80s, was marked by persistent shortages of consumer goods. The saying circulated during this period that “in spite of the fact that you can buy nothing, you can get everything.” One could get desired goods through unofficial distribution networks by providing favors or bribes. In practice, scarce goods were distributed at three levels. First at the state level; second, at regional warehouses accessible to the *nomenklatura* and their friends, namely, shop operators and those who gave them bribes. Third, what was left was distributed to sell in shops accessible to the public at large. Many citizens managed by doing extra work, including illegal activities and moonlighting without paying taxes. Small and large scale corruption reigned in this type of economy, with its shortage of goods. The folk proverb “he who does not steal is robbing his family” was an expression of the reality that stealing from the state was not unusual. The communist state was gradually populated by *nomenklatura* and family clans who owned social and cultural capital, as this compensated for their lack of financial capital and property ownership. This was one of the key reasons and motivational factors for the later property ownership transformation, which began immediately after the regime’s fall, even before official restitution or privatization processes began in the spirit of a transformation law.[28]

In the second half of the 1980s, it became evident that the rigid system was failing, both economically and intellectually, and had to reform. The contrast to the effectiveness and prosperity of the capitalist system was overwhelming. Even communist leaders became aware of this fact. One of the most important reasons for the dictatorship’s fall, as seen by the Czech sociologist Ivo Možný, was that the system it defended no longer satisfied anyone except the party *nomenklatura*. It appealed neither to the managers of government enterprises, nor to the general economic elite. And the general populace was dissatisfied because of the shortage of goods, sinking salaries, as well as the shortage or lack of available housing. But despite all this frustration, the situation was not critical and there was no threat of social unrest.[29] Furthermore, there was no realistic alternative to the existing system. The Czechs and Slovaks wanted to live in a more devel-

[27] Zdislav Šulc, *Stručné dějiny ekonomických reforem v Československu, České republice, 1945–1995* (Brno: Doplněk, 1998).

[28] Ivo Možný, *Proč tak snadno…: Některé rodinné důvody sametové revoluce* (Prague: Sociologické nakladatelství 1999).

[29] Otakar Turek, *Podíl ekonomiky na pádu komunismu v Československu* (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny, 1995).

oped and freer consumers' society, but not necessarily in a capitalist system. While they had specific wishes, they had only a vague notion about what kind of regime would fulfill their desires.

### *Late communism*

Soviet perestroika came too late; it was a futile attempt to make authoritarian communism an attractive alternative to liberal democratic capitalism.[30] In Czechoslovakia, any will to reform was inevitably associated with 1968. Post-occupation party leadership was right to fear a new crisis. It openly joined perestroika under the condition that the "reconstruction" would be carried out taking the local specificity into consideration. It made concessions, above all in the economic sphere ("reconstruction of economic mechanisms"),[31] and avoided political and cultural liberalization. The average citizen associated the "reconstruction" primarily with the idea of glasnost. However, the average citizen was still deprived of the freedom of speech. The communist authority waned, the Marxist-Leninist discourse of "real socialism" crumbled.[32] From 1987, the bureau of the KSČ Central Committee became increasingly more concerned about the development of the entire communist bloc due to glasnost in the Soviet Union.

The liberalization in the public and cultural domain did not satisfy the expectations and the demands of the citizens, especially the younger generation, which did not accept the official cultural conception and dogmatic socialist realism, which in the "restored order" or "normalization" period of 1969–89 had softened. Young people were no longer impressed by communist propaganda, and they were put off by censorship and the existence of forbidden books and "special films," which by the end of the 1980s had become an incomprehensible anachronism, not to mention the difficulties to travel to Western countries. They expressed their dissatisfaction at university meetings and elsewhere.[33] Another symptom of the decreasing authority of the KSČ manifested itself in an increase of violence among the people (football rowdies, bullying in student residences and the military, etc.).

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[30] Svetlana Savranskaya, "The Logic of 1989: The Soviet Peaceful Withdrawal from Eastern Europe," in Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, Vladislav Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2010), 1–47.

[31] Šulc, *Stručné dějiny ekonomických reforem*, 62–70.

[32] Michal Pullmann, *Konec experimentu: Přestavba a pád komunismu v Československu* (Prague: Scriptorium, 2011), 145–72.

[33] Milan Otáhal and Miroslav Vaněk, eds., *Sto studentských revolucí. Studenti v období pádu komunismu—životopisná vyprávění* (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny,1999).

The imaginary divisions between the dissident ghetto and the rest of society became a "grey zone"; it was here that excluded artists and intellectuals met and had discussions with once conformist colleagues. Several independent initiatives were started that dealt with culture, pacifist movements, and politics. At the end of 1988, foreign radio broadcasts were no longer interrupted. Millions of Czechs and Slovaks began to listen to Radio Free Europe and Voice of America.[34] The diminishing of the authority of the KSČ and its rigid official policies gave way to the activities of charismatic individuals who represented various values and traditions. Already in July 1985, during the traditional procession in Velehrad, many of the faithful openly demonstrated their discontent regarding the status of religious freedom. The churches were frequented by more and more young people. The regime felt threatened: In March 1988, the police in Bratislava used water cannons to disperse a peaceful "candle demonstration." Cardinal František Tomášek was a symbol of defiance for believers who explicitly demanded the independence of the church from the state, respect for religious freedom, and more democracy.[35] The symbol of 1968 was Alexander Dubček, who had become the hope of those who aspired to "democratic socialism." It was hoped that Mikhail Gorbachev would appreciate Dubček's merits and enable him to return to politics. Artistic freedom and civic courage was represented by Václav Havel, seen as the leading authority of Charter 77. In January 1989, he was arrested again and sentenced to nine months of imprisonment. After a huge wave of international solidarity (and his being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize), he was conditionally released mid-sentence. Several thousand until then conformist artists, scientists and other citizens gave Havel their unconditional support. However, there was no direct or simple connection between the first courageous acts of individual citizens and the massive collective act that would later shake the regime. A balance of fear ruled in the months before the unexpected fall of the regime: The population lived in terror of police violence, while at the same time the regime was afraid of compromises that would cause its downfall.

The above-mentioned individuals, Havel, Dubček and Tomášek, had a certain amount of influence as a moral example, but they did not stand for a political movement. They represented the different identities and traditions that had been suppressed or interrupted in critical years—1938–39, 1948, 1968–69—which all culminated in 1988–89, with the anti-regime student demonstrations on 17 November 1989 in Prague. During the "Velvet Revolution," the entire spectrum of national memory, with its emblems and symbols, flooded public spaces. Awakened was the memory of the prosperous democratic "first republic" (1918–38),

[34] Vilém Prečan, "'Vás lidé berou jakou hlavní svobodný, nezávislý sdělovací prostředek': Václav Havel a RSE v červenci 1989," in Marek Junek, ed., *Svobodně! Rádio Svobodná Evropa 1951–2011* (Prague: Radioservis, 2011), 207–47, 256.

[35] Stanislav Balík and Jiří Hanuš, *Katolická církev v Československu 1945–1989* (Brno: Centrum pro demokracii a kulturu, 2007).

of the citizens' spontaneity and unfulfilled dreams during the "Prague Spring," of modern humanistic and democratic values and human rights, as well as the memory of old religious and spiritual traditions.[36]

## 2. The "Velvet Revolution" (November and December 1989)

The brutal suppression by police forces of the peaceful student demonstrations on 17 November triggered an avalanche of developments. The university students contacted intellectuals, artists, and theater and film actors; together they created pockets of resistance. Strikes were declared. On 18 November almost all of the theaters in Prague went on strike; they were subsequently joined by artistic ensembles in other cities. The protest movement was accelerated by a false rumor of a student's death, Martin Šmíd.[37] Theaters across the country became forums for heated discussions. On Monday, 20 November, all the universities went on strike, joined by various organizations. In Prague and Bratislava, meetings took place at which hundreds of thousands of people participated. They were joined by thousands of other demonstrators in the major cities of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia.[38]

On Sunday, 19 November, the Civic Forum (OF) was born in the Prague Činoherni Club. The political movement was not only made up of dissident groups, but of disenchanted citizens, including some communists and members of the National Front.[39] At the same time, Václav Havel became a celebrity respected by large parts of society. In the Slovak capital of Bratislava, a similar movement was established, the Public Against Violence (VPN). The leaders of the VPN were the environmental activist Ján Budaj and the popular actor Milan Kňažko. The aim of both movements was to establish a dialogue with state authorities about liberalization and a process of democratization. The pressure of these citizens' movements culminated on 27 November, with a general strike that forced the communists, represented at that time by the federal prime minister, Ladislav Adamec, to initiate talks with the opposition.

Adamec launched discussions with the opposition on 26 November, one week after the revolution had started. As a result of these political negotiations, political prisoners were released, the constitutional articles giving the KSČ a leading

[36] Jiří Suk, "The Public—Space—Freedom", in Filip Blažek, ed., *Posters of Velvet Revolution: The Story of the Posters of November and December 1989* (Prague: XYZ, 2009), 105–28, 144.

[37] Vladimír Hanzel and Alena Müllerová, *Albertov 16:00: Příběhy sametové revoluce* (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2009), 45–57.

[38] For a detailed overview of the political events surrounding the "Velvet Revolution" and the main related OF documents, see the website of the Institute of Contemporary History (www.89.usd.cas.cz). The archives of the Coordination Center of the Civic Forum (November 1989—February 1991) are stored at the institute and are accessible there.

[39] Ivana Koutská, Vojtěch Ripka, Pavel Žáček, eds., *Občanské fórum: den první. Vznik OF v dokumentech a fotografiích* (Prague: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2009), 25–83.

role in society under the National Front political system were removed, and opposition groups were legalized and granted access to the media. Both the OF and VPN demanded fundamental changes in the composition and focus of the government, although they were not yet interested in participating in it. Both movements had only come into being after 17 November 1989 and needed time to organize themselves and formulate their programs. Prime Minister Adamec took advantage of this situation, and on 3 December he introduced a government dominated by communists, who kept fifteen positions of twenty.[40] This government was rejected by the people, but the renewed protests remained peaceful and did not become violent. After a few days, the OF (but not the VPN) realized that they would fail if they did not show their power and demand seats in the government. Prime Minister Adamec had resigned and the "government of national understanding," led by the communist Marián Čalfa, appointed seven ministers from the Civic Forum, excluding the minister of the interior and minister of defense, which were key positions. The VPN was not represented by any minister.[41]

On 10 December, the new federal government was appointed and the president, Gustáv Husák, a communist, resigned. The objective of the OF and VPN was for Václav Havel to take over the presidency. The Federal Assembly—the supreme legislative body of the Czechoslovak federation—possessed a comfortable communist majority, and thus decided to call direct presidential elections, expecting the victory of its candidate, ex-Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec. The candidacy of Havel caused complications in Slovakia, where political parties and social organizations had nominated Alexander Dubček, a 1968 political symbol, for the presidency. The communists and most political forces except OF, VPN and the small Czech bloc parties demanded direct elections. However, direct elections would result in a competition between the Czech and Slovak candidates and could cause the separation between the two republics. Thus, the OF and VPN found themselves in a paradoxical situation. The revolutionaries insisted on observing the existing constitution and having the president elected by the Federal Assembly, which was dominated by the communists. In contrast, the KSČ put forward a constitutional amendment establishing a presidential system. Democrats wanted to prevent direct elections, but during the "round table" debates which had started on 8 December, they failed to convince their opponents. A club of communist deputies in the Federal Assembly insisted on direct elections and appealed to the opinion of the general public. As the OF and VPN had no deputies in parliament, they could only mobilize the public. They were concerned, however, that the massive pressure on the communist deputies to elect Havel as president would cause the disintegration of the highest legislative body, which would result in a constitutional crisis.[42]

[40] Suk, *Labyrintem revoluce*, 37–64.

[41] Ibid., 110–54.

[42] Suk, *Labyrintem revoluce*, 188–211.

Čalfa offered a way out of the stalemate at a private meeting on 15 December in the office of the prime minister. Čalfa and Havel agreed on a coordinated process, aiming for Havel to be elected president. Čalfa intervened in parliament, and already at the next meeting of the Federal Assembly on 19 December, the communist deputies resigned their plans of having a direct election and supported Havel's candidacy.

At the time of the deputies' discussions, students were demonstrating in support of Havel's candidacy in front of the parliament building on a daily basis. The club of the KSČ was unable to resist the pressure from both sides, and gave up their fight to elect a president of their choice.[43] It was imperative that Czech–Slovak relations not break up during the presidential elections and thus, various measures were taken to lower the Czech and Slovak tensions regarding Havel and Dubček as candidates for the presidential post. The two men met a few times with this goal in mind. Complicated negotiations and subsequent round table meetings of the various political parties, organizations and movements culminated in an agreement on how to fill the highest state functions. On 29 December, Dubček was elected chairman of the Federal Assembly, and Václav Havel, a day later, became the president of Czechoslovakia. Both were unanimously elected. After the election ceremony at Prague Castle and a solemn *Te Deum* in St. Vitus' Cathedral, the university students, the moving force and symbol of the protest, ended their strike.[44]

The end of the "miracle year" culminated in a genuine democratic revolution, characterized by James Krapfl as a "saintly society" symbolizing human values and a combination of direct and representative democracy.[45] The fall of the communist dictatorships in Czechoslovakia was not preceded by political segregation, this having been hindered by the rigid Czechoslovak regime. In this sense it differed from the more liberal Polish and Hungarian regimes. The process of political and ideological differentiation began only in January 1990.

## 3. Division of power and political liberalization (December 1989–June 1990)

The elimination of the constitutional articles granting a leading role in the political system to the KSČ (29 November), the taking over of key ministries in the federal government by non-communists (10 December), and the election of Václav Havel as the president of the republic (29 December 1989) put an end to the KSČ's dominant position in the bodies of executive power. In January and February, the KSČ ceased to be the main power in the highest legal bodies (although it maintained its relatively strong position until the parliamentary elections

[43] Ibid., 212–29.
[44] Ibid., 230–49.
[45] Krapfl, *Revolúcia s ľudskou tvárou*, 55–100.

on 8 and 9 June 1990). A concrete view of the new balance of power in the first half of 1990 is provided by the basic figures documenting the results of the co-optation of new members into the highest legislative bodies. The decisive political forces came to an agreement at a round table in January 1990.[46] Small political groups had a relatively large amount of influence, although this did not match their social weight. The OF and VPN were forced to accept some compromises (in the areas of legislation, election law, etc.), which caused disagreements in both movements and created potential political splits.

Between late December 1989 and early February 1990 many of the 350 members of the Czechoslovakian Federal Assembly (FS) were removed or forced to resign. Of its 242 deputies, the KSČ was left with 136; the OF and VPN were given 129 seats (4 of them not occupied), non-party deputies were given 41 of their previous 64 seats, and the parties of the former National Front kept their previous number of mandates—the Czechoslovak People's Party and the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party each 18, and the Democratic Party and the Freedom Party each 4. In early February 1990, the parliaments of the republics—the Czech National Council (CNR) and the Slovak National Council (SNR)—were changed in the same fashion. A significant anomaly was that in the SNR, the VPN had only 21 co-opted members from the total number of 150, whereas the communists were left with 65 seats, despite the fact that one purpose of co-optation was to eliminate the absolute majority of the KSČ. In early February 1990, the political decision-making process shifted from round tables to reconstructed legal assemblies (and by the end of March, local and district councils were reinstated, as were national councils in the whole country). Thanks to these changes, parliamentary democracy was formally restored in Czechoslovakia. The dual state apparatus was based on three pillars, two republican and one federal, and represented democratic politics. These bodies, freshly liberated from an authoritarian system, formed a complicated matrix, since the Czechoslovak federal state, from its inception in 1968, had been governed by the centralized dictatorship of the KSČ.[47]

At the beginning of 1990, the government was represented by 50 ministries in three governments (Czech, Slovak and federal) and 700 deputies in the three legal councils (FS, CNR and SNR). The constitutional system didn't anticipate a systematic institutional cooperation between the national councils, or between the Czech, Slovak and federal governments. The status of the republics in the federation and the division of powers became a controversial issue. After twenty years of re-centralization, the historical demands of the Slovaks for national sovereignty gained momentum.[48]

[46] Suk, *Labyrintem revoluce*, 155–66.

[47] Eric Stein, *Czecho/Slovakia: Ethnic Conflict—Constitutional Fissure—Negotiated Breakup* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1997).

[48] Jan Rychlík, *Rozpad Československa: Česko-slovenské vztahy 1989–1992* (Bratislava: Academic Elektronic Press, 2002), 91–130.

### *The beginning of political fragmentation and conflicts over the communist past*

The latent conflicts manifested themselves in the "Hyphen War," which lasted from January to April 1990. The reason for this conflict between Czech and Slovak politicians and the public opinion in the two republics was the issue of the common state's name. On 23 January 1990, in the federal assembly, President Havel suggested omitting the word "Socialist" from the name. This would mean returning to the original name of Czechoslovak Republic. In Slovakia, this suggestion provoked a public uproar. Slovaks refused to accept any name that resembled the first republic's (1918–38) concept of a unified Czechoslovak nation. The Czech public considered the Hyphen War to be petty and minor. They were unable to understand that the Slovaks, after so many years of oppression, were looking for a name they considered appropriate, proposing names such as the Czech-Slovak's Republic, etc. The Hyphen War was the beginning of conflicts concerning patriotism, identity and distinct nationalism. After dramatic negotiations, which were often influenced and linked to passionate displays of public opinion, on 19 April 1990 the Federal Assembly accepted a compromise that resulted in a complicated name: the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (CSFR).[49] The Hyphen War was a prelude to equally dramatic conflicts regarding competence in the second part of the year 1990, and subsequent discussions between representatives of the two nations about the meaning of federal legislation.[50]

The OF and VPN respected the KSČ as an equal political entity. However, from the beginning of 1990 the ideals of reconciliation and harmonious relationships were pushed aside, and somewhat belatedly, the latent anti-communism that permeated the OF became an important disruptive factor and a key topic within the liberated public opinion. Crucial was the experience of the local and regional OF with "communist mafias" and "*nomenklatura* brotherhoods," which had begun to transfer state property and financial assets to private businesses.[51] In March 1990, the OF presented a request to nationalize all property belonging to the KSČ. The legislative procedure, however, was slow and laws were adopted only at the end of the year. "Wild privatization" took place, not

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[49] Milan Šútovec, *Semióza ako politikum alebo „Pomlčková vojna": Niektoré historické, politické a iné súvislosti jedného sporu, ktorý bol na začiatku zániku česko-slovenského štátu* (Bratislava: Kalligram, 1999), 360.

[50] See below, page 157.

[51] Krapfl, *Revolúcia s ludskou tvárou*, 197–231; Jiří Suk, "Politické hry s nedokončenou revolucí: Účtování s komunismem v čase Občanského fóra a po jeho rozpadu," in Adéla Gjuričová, Michal Kopeček, Petr Roubal, Jiří Suk, Tomáš Zahradníček, *Rozdělení minulostí: Vytváření politických identit po roce 1989* (Prague: Knihovna Václava Havla, 2011), 17–60.

only of the property owned by the KSČ, but also of state enterprises, offices, and other organizations.[52]

In mid-April 1990, the taboo of the "Velvet Revolution" was broken. Prague city prosecutor Tomáš Sokol (OF) contemplated the possibility of banning the KSČ. This idea provoked strong tensions between the national center of the OF, which represented the policy of compromise, and the radical regional OF, which adopted the idea as their leitmotiv. Even parties that for many decades had collaborated with the National Front demanded that the KSČ be banned.[53] Parallel to the demands of these parties, Czechoslovaks who had been political prisoners in the 1950s insisted on the KSČ being banned; they had not agreed with the policy of compromise from the beginning. On 22 April, the Federal Assembly adopted a law of extra-judiciary rehabilitation of these people, which resembled the spirit of 1968.[54] This law abolished, across the board, unfairly rendered judgments, and enabled compensation to be given to victims of judicial tyranny. However, the communist regime was not characterized as non-democratic and was not punished for its crimes. It was clear that this kind of "reconciliation with the communist past" would not suffice.

A problem closely related to the call for "decommunization" was the communist secret police or State Security. The OF and VPN did not control the Federal Ministry of the Interior. The new minister, Richard Sacher of the Czechoslovak People's Party, promoted the concept of gradual and cautious restructuring based on cooperation with certain ministers. This idea did not appeal to the OF, which demanded the immediate break up of "old structures" and the firing of all state secret agents.[55] Behind the doors of registries and archives, the links between ordinary citizens and State Security were examined. This process was limited by the fact that 15,000 files had been destroyed in December 1989. Certain powerful groups took advantage of their access to confidential files of the secret police. Fear spread of the vanished secret police and its network of 140,000 agents. This motivated an objective examination of political candidates and parties. The pre-election screening was nevertheless far from objective, as was revealed by scandals that were created by accusing, without conclusive evidence, two election leaders and candidates, Ján Budaj (VPN) and Josef Bartončik (People's Party), of having worked as informants and attempting to use their knowledge and networks for manipulating the political process. It satisfied no one, which is why pressure grew for further and deeper examination of public figures, resulting in the passage, in October 1991, of the screening law.[56]

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52 Suk, *Labyrintem revoluce*, 386–89.

53 Ibid., 389–400.

54 Joint Czech and Slovak Digital Parliamentary Library, Joint Session, Stenographic Protocol, 24 April 1990, http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1986fs/slsn/stenprot/027schuz/s027051.htm (accessed 1 July 2013).

55 Suk, *Labyrintem revoluce*, 355–80.

56 Vladimír Ondruš, *Atentát na nežnú revolúciu* (Bratislava: Ikar, 2009), 87–186.

## *Political liberalization and the democratic process*

On 23 January 1990, the Federal Assembly adopted laws regarding political parties in order to facilitate the pluralistic political system.[57] The established parties of the National Front that had existed before November (including the KSČ) found themselves in an advantageous position, because they became part of democratic politics. A new indefinite element was introduced, the fresh political parties, such as the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence. Along with these parliamentary bodies, other political parties were forming. The Election Act, adopted on 27 February,[58] established a system of proportional representation in twelve constituencies, with limiting clauses of 5 percent (in the Slovak National Council, 3 percent); it also stipulated that the election term would be two years, and that the main task of politicians was to adopt a new constitution and initiate economic change.

The laws adopted by the parliament at the end of March 1990 cemented civil liberties, including the rights of association, assembly and freedom of speech.[59] In the second half of April, the basic conditions for the upcoming changes in the economy were created, including laws on the equality of all kinds of property, joint stock companies, individual entrepreneurship, and state companies.[60] In early May, the Federal Assembly abolished the death penalty, and adopted a new law on higher education, giving academic institutions extensive autonomy.[61]

Czechoslovak foreign policy declared a "return to Europe." President Havel was enthusiastically welcomed by the US Congress when he visited the United States on 19–23 February 1990. Three days later, on 26 February, a Czechoslovak delegation reached an agreement in Moscow between the government of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union on the withdrawal of Soviet troops (in June 1991, the last soldier left).[62] The foreign policy of Czechoslovakia ambitiously assumed that the two military blocs—NATO and the Warsaw Pact—would gradually disappear and be replaced by the system of collective security within the framework of the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe. In Moscow, at a meeting on 6 June of the Warsaw Pact states, it was agreed that a gradual dissolution of the Soviet military alliance would take place. From the turn of 1990–91, however, Czechoslovak diplomacy oriented itself toward Czechoslovakia joining NATO.[63]

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[57] Joint Czech and Slovak Digital Parliamentary Library, Joint Session, Stenographic Protocol, 23 January 1990, http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1986fs/slsn/stenprot/022schuz/s022001.htm (accessed 1 July 2013).

[58] Ibid., http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1986fs/slsn/stenprot/024schuz/ (accessed 6 July 2012).

[59] Ibid., http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1986fs/slsn/stenprot/026schuz/ (accessed 6 July 2012).

[60] Ibid., http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1986fs/slsn/stenprot/027schuz/ (accessed 6 July 2012).

[61] Ibid., http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1986fs/slsn/stenprot/028schuz/ (accessed 6 July 2012).

[62] Jindřich Pecka, *Odsun sovětských vojsk z Československa, 1989–1991* (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1996), 352.

[63] Petr Luňák, *Západ. Spojené státy a Západní Evropa ve studené válce* (Prague: Libri, 1997), 364–77; Jiří Vykoukal, ed., *Visegrád: Možnosti a meze středoevropské spolupráce* (Prague: Dokořán, 2003).

## 4. Democratic elections, anti-communism, and economic liberalization (June 1990–May 1992)

*The electoral victory and the collapse of the OF and VPN*

On 8 and 9 June 1990, 90 % of the Czechs and Slovaks participated in parliamentary elections. For the first time in more than half a century, they could vote freely from a large number of political parties and movements. The Civic Forum won 53 % in the Chamber of Deputies and 50 % in the House of Nations of the Federal Assembly and 49.5 % in the Czech National Council. The Public Against Violence won 32.5 % in the Chamber of Deputies and 37 % in the House of Nations of the Federal Assembly and 29.3 % in the Slovak National Council. The political movements that been spontaneously born in November 1989 in the squares of Czech and Slovak cities won convincingly, the OF with a spectacular triumph. Considering the pre-election wave of anti-communism, 14 % of votes in favor of the communists was for them a success; however, in comparison to the pre-election period, the KSČ had considerably fewer parliamentarians. This significant outcome was strengthened by the results of the municipal elections in November 1990, when 17% voted in favor of the KSČ. This meant that it was politically impossible to dissolve the party legally, as this would have put the principle of free elections into question. Legislature seats also went to the Christian Democratic Party (Czech, Slovak and Hungarian minorities in the Slovak Republic), the party representing the interests of Moravia, and the Slovak National Party.[64] The largest groups in the Federal Assembly of Czechoslovakia, the Czech National Council, and the Slovak National Council were politically not yet differentiated, but the potential differences that increased from the beginning of 1990, above all regarding the very principles of these movements, moved to a higher political level after the election. The main political dividing line remained anti-communism and the operations of State Security agents within state structures.

The OF, the election winner representing the politics of compromise, had managed to suppress the anti-communist position before the election. After the election, however, anti-communist sentiments grew stronger. In September 1990, the Federal Assembly and the Czech National Council formed a strong Inter-parliamentary Club of the Democratic Right, representing radical economic reforms and more energetic dealing with the communist past. The pressure for decommunization measures from regional Civic Forums became stronger. However, forced decommunization measures proved ineffective, as were the legal measures to get rid of the *nomenklatura* cadres in charge of enterprises and ministries which were adopted through the intermediary of the Assembly on 30 August, as well as the law on property restitution to the KSČ of November 1990. Property transfers—

[64] Kopeček, *Éra nevinnosti*, 66–74.

both legal and illegal (according to the newly adopted laws on enterprises and business)—were occurring in great numbers. The goal was to get rich quickly, not through long-term business plans. In this atmosphere, on 21 August President Havel delivered a speech in which he stated that the November revolution "had not ended." From that moment, there was talk about the need of a "second revolution." The post-election anti-communist wave culminated in the autumn of 1990. District Civic Forums were under constant pressure, and so they supported the leadership of the OF who suggested the idea of a "moral tribunal" over the KSČ and its period, from which a systematic effort to punish specific crimes of communism was to follow. However, new conflicts arose at this time concerning the structure of the Civic Forum and related economic reforms. While the newly elected leader of the Civic Forum, Václav Klaus, had decided to transform the movement into a conservative party, the out-going collective leadership wanted to keep it a political activist movement. In the midst of the political battles, the will to deal systematically with the communist past was lost. In February 1991, the OF split into Klaus's right-of-center Civic Democratic Party (*Občanská demokratická strana*, ODS) and the Civic Movement (*Občanské Hnutí*) represented by the minister of foreign affairs, Jiří Dienstbier.[65] Shortly thereafter, the VPN also fell apart, becoming the liberal Civic Democratic Union (*Občianska demokratická únia*, ODÚ) and the populist Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (*Ľudová strana—Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko*, HZDS) under the leadership of Vladimír Mečiar. In Slovakia, the main dividing line was the status of the Slovak Republic vis-à-vis the federation; in the Czech Republic, the main question was decommunization.

### *Dealing with the communist past*

After the election, the parliament's political forces regrouped and continued crystallizing their ideological platforms. In April 1992, the Federal Assembly consisted of eighteen political groups (from the original eight). In spite of the crumbling of the right (for example, while the necessity of radical economic reforms was shared by all, the concept of lustration was not), left-wing opposition was practically non-existent, because the KSČ was no longer considered a democratic opposition, and the revived social democrats failed in the election.[66] Following the breakup of the OF, anti-communism was roughly channeled into two strategies: (1) Since it was considered impossible to legally ban the KSČ and too complicated to forbid communist businesses and former state secret agents to participate in the privatization process, there was no other choice than for the

[65] Suk, "Politické hry s nedokončenou revolucí: Účtování s komunismem v čase Občanského fóra a po jeho rozpadu," 30–48.

[66] Kopeček, *Éra nevinnosti*, 108–10.

party to purge its own ranks. This meant that pressure continued to increase to fire members of parliament, employees in government offices and institutions, as well as those people working for the State Security. (2) Economic transformation was seen as a way out of the political and economic chaos of the transition period, a means to end the critical interim "pre-privatization misery." Restitution (the return to the original owners or their descendants of tangible property nationalized by the communists after February 1948), public auctions of small businesses (shops, pubs and other enterprises), as well as the privatization of large companies and industrial conglomerates were seen as the most important methods of settling accounts with the communist past, both its ideology and its politics. Private owners for state assets were to be found as quickly as possible, the free market was to bring order concerning private ownership, and prosperous individuals were to be the foundation for the prosperity of all.

Attempts at a straightforward condemnation of the entire communist era (1948–89) and the pressure of more thorough lustration processes formed the agenda of settling accounts with the communist past. By the autumn of 1990, the rhetoric of "national understanding" was definitely over. The relationship between the new right wing and the KSČ remained bitter and showed the verbal and symbolic mobilization against everything communist. However, outlawing the KSČ was desired only by marginal extra-parliamentary parties and organizations. The communists moved away from the social democratic parties, fuelling their traditional anti-capitalist identity.[67] Narrow-minded anti-communism was accompanied by attempts to implement as many decommunization elements as possible into the legal system inherited from the communist era.

The more difficult it became to ban the KSČ, the more pressure was applied from the right to rid governmental institutions of "the old structures." Lustration continued in March 1991, with an official list being released with the names of ten members of the Federal Assembly whose names were in the registers of the State Security.[68] In October, the Assembly adopted a controversial lustration law,[69] which stated that functionaries of the past regime (party cadres, secret police, or militia) would in the future be not allowed to hold the above-mentioned state offices. The law was disputed, however, due to conflicts regarding the role and impact of the 1968 reform communists in contemporary politics. Right-wing politicians defeated the politicians of the weak liberal center and the left. According to the law, lustration was not to be publically known. However, public pressure for reckoning with the past was overwhelming, and thus it was entirely

67 Kopeček, *Éra nevinnosti*, 83–88.

68 Jiří Suk, "Prezident Václav Havel a břemeno (komunistické) minulosti. Lustrace jako politický a morální problém (1989–1992)," in Adéla Gjuričová, Michal Kopeček, Petr Roubal, Jiří Suk, Tomáš Zahradníček, *Rozděleni minulostí: Vytváření politických identit v České republice po roce 1989* (Prague: Knihovna Václava Havla, 2011), 176–81.

69 Joint Czech and Slovak Digital Parliamentary Library, Joint Session, Stenographic Protocol, http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1990fs/slsn/stenprot/017schuz/ (accessed 6 July 2012).

logical in the post-November development when in June 1992 a list appeared in the radically anti-communist *Necenzurované noviny* (*Uncensored News*) of 140,000 names of informants and potential informants of the State Security (an official registry of 75,000 agents appeared in 2003). From that moment, attention was shifted to these agents, who became the scapegoats for the sins of communism. At the same time, publicly it was said that the so-called big fish (KSČ and State Security functionaries, economic counter-intelligence, socialist foreign trade enterprises, etc.) had shifted their interests to the privatization process and big business.

### *The "Czech road to capitalism"*

In September 1990, a "scenario of radical economic reform" was adopted by the federal minister of finance Václav Klaus.[70] The fact that Klaus was elected chairman of the OF (and in April 1991, of the party's successor, the ODS), shows the importance given in that political mobilization period to "radical economic reform." This reform was designed, according to the so-called Washington Consensus, as "shock therapy." Restrictive macroeconomic politics were introduced and the Czech market was opened to the world. The devaluation of the Czechoslovak crown took place in three steps, in January, October and December of 1990, wiping out the savings of the population and devaluing the costs of labor and material capital by 54 percent. Reducing the exchange rate relative to its purchasing power parity favored domestic exporters, but also severely penalized domestic investors while preparing for privatization. From 1 January 1991, prices were deregulated. After these measures, consumer prices increased sharply. The government dealt with this inflation by strictly regulating wages and subsidies. This stalled development above all in education, science and culture. The people accepted "belt tightening," because they were promised rapid and widespread prosperity.

The belief in quick prosperity was embodied by the project of "voucher privatization," which became a national hit. In the "first wave," beginning on 1 November 1991, the government offered shares in 998 companies based in the Czech Republic, totaling almost 350 billion crowns. Six million Czechs (77 percent of the population), influenced by government propaganda and advertizing, purchased a "voucher's booklet" for a thousand Czech crowns. Starting on 18 May 1992, everyone could invest their thousand coupons directly into privatized businesses, or entrust it to investment funds. Three-fourths of the participants, hoping to become rich fast in the atmosphere of "popular capitalism," entrusted their vouchers in funds. In the "second wave," shares of 676 enterprises were distributed. This voucher privatization functioned as a widely spread mobilization of Klaus's "Czech road to capitalism." By 1997, 47 percent of the country's assets

[70] Ibid., http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1990fs/slsn/stenprot/006schuz/ (accessed 6 July 2012).

had been privatized through vouchers, 13 percent had been transferred (especially through restitution), and 12 percent had been sold through privatization to specific persons. National property was left at 27 percent.[71]

### 5. The rise and fall of "Czech capitalism" (June 1992–98)

The parliamentary elections in June 1992 resulted in a center-right coalition headed by Klaus's ODS. In Slovakia, a populist-nationalist coalition was formed, led by Mečiar. The winners of both elections agreed to a quick and peaceful division of the state, which had existed (with a break from 1939 to 1945) since 1918. The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic ceased to exist on 31 December 1992.[72] For Czech politics, this meant relief and a confirmation of the course of "the Czech path to capitalism," supported by the widely held belief in the high level of Czech industry and its capability of being competitive on the global market. The coalition ruled until the elections of 1996, followed by a political and economic crisis which culminated in the fall of the Klaus's second government in December 1997.

The voucher privatization caused a confusing and unproductive ownership structure. The government was aware of this, and began to promote business privatization, transferring property to Czech citizens who had ideas for business projects. Despite the initial impression that competitive capitalism involving Czech proprietors was experiencing great success, in the long run it failed to develop. Four large banks were capitalized, these becoming the major owners of industrial enterprises either through their own funds or through privatization funds. At the same time, they provided loans to businesses. These complicated ownership relationships prevented the formation of a healthy competitive and solvent environment. The result of the Czech version of capitalism was a crash in the mid-1990s of many companies and private banks. The "Czech path" lost its perspective and the total loss due to privatization came to around 600 billion crowns. Politics that was closely linked to business was often based on corruption and "tunneling" practices. The public discourse was full of expressions such as "clientelism" and "mafia capitalism,"[73] which moved those healthy businesses

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[71] Frank Fleischer, Kurt Hornschild, Martin Myant, Zdeněk Souček, Růžena Vintrová, Karel Zeman, *Successful Transformations? The Creation of Market Economies in Eastern Germany and the Czech Republic* (Cheltenham, Brookfield: Edward Elgar, 1997), 140–47.

[72] Rychlík, *Rozpad Československa*, 273–342.

[73] Quentin Reed, "Politická korupce v postkomunistické společnosti" and "Korupce v privatizaci českou cestou", in Pavol Frič, ed., *Korupce na český způsob* (Prague: G+G, 1999), 159–204, 304. Cf. idem, "Political Corruption, Privatisation and Control in the Czech Republic," PhD Thesis, Oxford University, 1996; idem, "Corruption in Czech Privatisation: The Dangers of 'Neo-liberal' Privatisation", in Steven Kotkin and András Sajó, eds., *Political Corruption in Transition: A Sceptic's Handbook* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2002), 261–85, 493.

that certainly existed to the background. Prosperous enterprises were mainly those that were foreign-owned, a model being Škoda in Mladá Boleslav, which was privatized and owned by the German Volkswagen concern.

After early elections in 1998, the Czech Social Democratic Party formed a government and then embarked on the privatization of all the remaining large banks and enterprises, selling them to foreign capital. Despite the neoliberal embracing of privatization in the early 1990s, the social and legal framework protecting the employed and enabling collective bargaining remained in place. However, due to the increasing dependence on foreign ownership, such laws gradually began to lose their importance.[74]

### *A permanently unfinished revolution?*

The question of "coming to terms" with the communist past maintained its ideological and political potential. The right made this its permanent mobilizing tool. In 1993, the Czech parliament passed a law making communism illegal and criminal, a confirmation of radical condemnation. However, the KSČ, which enjoyed the support of 10 percent or more of the voters, could not be outlawed. In 1995, an office for documenting and investigating communist crimes was created in order to document and investigate crimes that already at that time were considered crimes against humanity. However, the activities of this office did not meet original expectations; in the years from 1995 to 2008 thirty people were convicted, only eight of them unconditionally.[75]

In 1995 the validity of the lustration law was extended for another five years, and in 2000, for an indefinite period. So far, of nearly 460,000 requests, lustration certificates have been issued for over 10,000 persons who were found to be in the registry books of the State Security.[76] Some on the list, especially actors, singers and other celebrities, have denied their cooperation with State Security and the courts have usually believed their declarations. In connection with the corruption and patronage during the period of "wild privatization" and with "tunneling," however, discussions haven't stopped regarding the significant number of former communist cadres who created a corrupt business environment.

Since the year 2000, attention has focused on history and remembrance. The fight against communism has continued, particularly through rhetorical means.

[74] Martin Myant, "The Czech Republic—From 'Czech' Capitalism to 'European' Capitalism," in David Lane and Martin Myant, eds., *Varieties of Capitalism in Post-Communist Countries* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), 105–23.

[75] For an overview, see the website of the Office of Documentation and Investigation of Communist Crimes: http://aplikace.mvcr.cz/archiv2008/policie/udv/pripady/index.html (accessed 6 July 2012).

[76] Data taken from Czech TV in October 2011. See: http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/domaci/138390-lustrace-revolucni-norma-na-pet-let-plati-dodnes/ (accessed 6 July 2012).

Communism has been presented as a continuing danger to a free, democratic society and something that must be faced through historical research and the memory of its victims. Interest has increasingly turned to archives as key sources for rhetorical and symbolic reconciliation. The archives of the State Security were completely opened in the years 2002–04, but this has not led to a deeper understanding of the context, and the specific examination of individual cases has reduced the communist past to its repressive aspects. This trend has resulted in the founding of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in 2007, which was supported by the political right.[77] In the second half of the decade, intellectuals of the younger generation have begun more actively to protest such treatment of the past. Their protest is related to opposition to global capitalism accompanied by searching for alternatives to the neoliberal status quo.[78] The dream of the "end of history" has evaporated. Twenty years after the fall of the socialist dictatorship, the Czech society, in a time of economic crisis, is marked by conflicts, resentments and fears.

### *The Czech Republic as part of the "global village"*

The Czech society has undergone a great social change.[79] The geographic position of the Czech Republic in Central Europe holds undeniable benefits—it is not peripheral, but a transit country through which money, goods and labor pass. As a result it has become a postindustrial consumer country, despite the fact that the standard of living of an average Czech still lags behind that of an average German, Frenchman or Swede by a wide margin. It seems that this level will not be reached in the foreseeable future.[80] Psychological changes are mainly based on the country having opened, allowing possibilities to travel, study, or work abroad. These changes are also based on the technological and information revolution and the interconnection of the world.[81] Personal computers connected to the internet and mobile phones belong to the basic equipment of the average Czech. The banking revolution has also created changes: almost all Czechs have

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77 See the official site at: http://www.ustrcr.cz.

78 See, for example, the websites of the following left-wing think tanks: Socialist Circle, Association for Left-wing Theory (http://www.sok.bz); ProAlt: Initiative for criticism and reforms to promote alternatives (http://www.proalt.cz/); Internet Diary Referendum (http://www.denikreferendum.cz).

79 See, for example, the pre-socialism balance in: Jiří Večerník and Petr Matějů, *Zpráva o vývoji české společnosti 1989–1998* (Prague: Academia, 1998), 365.

80 Martin Myant, "Podoby kapitalismu v České republice", in Adéla Gjuričová and Michal Kopeček, eds., *Kapitoly z dějin české demokracie po roce 1989* (Prague, Litomyšl: Paseka, 2008), 265–87, 287.

81 Libor Prudký, *Inventura hodnot: Výsledky sociologických výzkumů hodnot ve společnosti České republiky* (Prague: Academia, 2009), 340.

a personal bank account and many take out loans and mortgages. Living in debt has become a social reality.

A revolutionary change has taken place in ownership structures. The state has ceased to have a decisive influence on ownership distribution or the control of property. There are large differences between the upper and the middle class; the situation of the latter is very unstable. The sectors of culture and education continue to be undervalued. The number of people educated at universities is increasing, but quantity has been won at the expense of quality. Corrupt practices include the purchasing of college degrees, which are still highly valued by many Czechs. There is a substantial pay gap between educated professionals, as for example, between teachers, economists, or lawyers. Among the most significant social changes has been the disappearance of the working class due to the influx of cheap labor from eastern countries. This trend has been accompanied by a decline in trades and apprenticeships, for which there is little interest. In times of global economic crisis, it seems that long-term social stability, which in principle is a constitutive element of the egalitarian Czech society, is threatened.

Translated from the Czech original by Michael Werbowski

Florian Bieber and Armina Galijaš

# YUGOSLAVIA 1989: THE REVOLUTIONS THAT DID (NOT) HAPPEN

During the 1980s, Yugoslavia was marked by contradictions. On one side, the citizens enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than in any other communist country in Europe, including largely unrestricted freedom of travel, a modest consumer society[1] and a vibrant cultural scene. On the other hand, of all the communist countries, Yugoslavia held the highest percentage of the population as political prisoners, the vast majority of them Kosovo Albanians accused of secessionism.[2] But instead of being dominated by the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia was the only communist country other than Albania that retained its autonomy and it forged close ties with the United States and Western Europe, including a cooperation agreement with the European Community.

Thus it seems a paradox not only that Yugoslavia dissolved violently in 1991—leading to a brief armed conflict in Slovenia in 1991, longer wars in Croatia from 1991 to 1995 and in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995, and finally to the war over Kosovo in 1998 and 1999—but also that there was a delay in fully democratic governments being established in a number of its successor states. At first glance, the trajectory away from single-party communist rule does not appear particularly different from the other communist countries: The League of Communists of Yugoslavia held its last congress in January 1990, leading to a collapse of the party, and in the same year multiparty elections were held. But in fundamental contrast to the other countries that experienced the end of communist rule in 1989–90, Yugoslavia did not take only one path away from communism, but multiple ones. Non-communist governments came to power in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The successors to the League of Communists won in Montenegro and Serbia. And in Macedonia the anti-communist opposition won the elections, but was unable to take power. Opposition emerged *within* the republics against local communist elites, but there was no successful Yugoslav-wide opposition and elections were never held at the state level. As a result, for the most part the end of communist rule did not reflect a move toward a democratic Yugoslavia, but toward competition and often mutually exclusive visions of the

[1] See Patrick Hyder Patterson, *Bought and Sold. Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor, eds., *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism* (1950s–1980s) (Budapest: CEU Press, 2010).

[2] Florian Bieber, *Nationalismus in Serbien vom Tode Titos zum Ende der Ära Milošević* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005).

country. This accelerated the crisis Yugoslavia had begun experiencing during the 1980s. The decentralized nature of the League of Communists and the federal state meant that political competition occurred less within the republics (and the provinces Kosovo and Vojvodina) but rather between them. The pluralization of politics in Yugoslavia was thus marked by disputes within each republic over how to reshape its role within Yugoslavia (or whether to leave the Yugoslav Federation altogether).

Due to the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia, this is what most scholarly attention has focused upon, seeking to identify its causes.[3] Also when the events in Yugoslavia are compared to the other transitions from communism, this has been the main focus: the large scale aggression.[4] Fewer scholars have explored the link between the country's dissolution and its democratization.[5]

While the crisis of the Yugoslav system coincided with the crisis of communism in Soviet-dominated areas of Europe, its causes were largely home-grown. In postwar Yugoslavia there had been no violent repression of the "Croatian Spring" democratic movement, as there had been in Hungary or Czechoslovakia, and the absence of the Red Army or Soviet influence meant that opposition against communist rule could not be (re-)directed toward external factors, namely the Soviet Union. There were various domestic sources of the crisis of communism. First was the inability of the system to allow for the liberal reforms that had been pursued by reformists in some of the republics in the early 1970s, before the repression of the "Croatian Spring." Thus, while the Yugoslav system was more open than in other communist countries, it had failed to liberalize sufficiently. Second, the economic system did not suffer from excessive formal state planning, but rather a lack thereof. A highly autonomous self-management economy had led to atomization and an excessively complicated system that made reform difficult. This type of economy was ill equipped to confront the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s. The broad decentralization of Yugoslavia, enshrined in the 1974 constitution, sought to "resolve" the national question and promote a Yugoslav approach to the "withering away" of the state.[6] Excessive centralization had undermined the legitimacy of the first Yugoslavia between the two world wars. The political fragmentation of

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[3] For good overviews of the different theories on Yugoslavia's dissolution, see Dejan Jović, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches," *European Journal of Social Theory* 4, no. 1 (2001): 101–20; Jasna Dragović-Soso, "Why Did Yugoslavia Disintegrate? An Overview of Contending Explanations," in Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragovic-Soso, eds., *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Disintegration* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2007), 1–39.

[4] Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[5] V.P. (Chip) Gagnon Jr., "Yugoslavia in 1989 and after," *Nationalities Papers* 38, no. 1 (2010): 23–39.

[6] See Dejan Jović, *Yugoslavia: A State That Withered Away* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008).

the "late socialist" Yugoslavia responded to the two demands of the early 1970s for political reforms and decentralization by denying the former and granting the latter in a manner that facilitated political competition, first along republican and later, national lines.[7]

There are few archives in the region that allow access to information about the crucial years following the death of Tito in 1980 and leading to the country's dissolution. However, due to the dispersion of the state and party archives to the various successor states and the division of the archives of the League of Communists between state and party archives, some materials have become available. The two most comprehensive and accessible archives on this period are the Open Society Archives and the Archives of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). For the topic in question, the Open Society Archives in Budapest,[8] some of whose holdings have begun to be available electronically, contain materials from Radio Free Europe, including catalogues, newspaper clip-

7 Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962–1991* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1992). Further literature about Yugoslavia and its disintegration: John Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst, 2000); Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country. Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919–1953* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); Dejan Djokic, ed., *Yugoslavism. Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992* (London: Hurst, 2003); John Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History. Twice there was a Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe: A Century of War and Transition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Norman Naimark and Holly Case, eds., *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Sabrina Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosevic*, 4th ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002); Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia. Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias. State-Building and Legitimation, 1918–2005* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: BBC, 1996); Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999); Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Laslo Sekelj, *Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration* (New York: East European Monographs, 1993); Susan L. Woodword, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995); Dunja Melcic, ed., *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg. Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte, Verlauf und Konsequenzen* (Opladen: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1999); Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia. Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić, *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991–1995* (London: Frank Cass, 2001); Ivo Žanić, *Flag on the Mountain. A Political Anthropology of the War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1990–1995* (London: Saqi, 2007); Marie-Janine Calic, *Der Krieg in Bosnien-Hercegovina. Ursachen, Konfliktstrukturen, internationale Lösungsversuche* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995); Holm Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien und seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943–2011. Eine ungewöhnliche Geschichte des Gewöhnlichen* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2012).

8 http://www.osaarchivum.org/

pings and RFE reports. The final location of the archives of the ICTY is yet to be decided, but the Court Records have been made available electronically.[9] Although they do not contain everything gathered by the prosecution in the various cases, they contain an impressive amount of relevant material. Although the court is only investigating crimes committed between 1991 and 2001 on the territory of Yugoslavia, the court records contain extensive and pertinent background materials, including excerpts from memoirs, records of party and state meetings, transcripts of witness statements, expert reports, as well as other sources that shed light on the years preceding the Yugoslav wars.

## Alternatives of the 1980s

Following the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, who had been president for life since 1963, the leadership of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) passed on to an eight-member Presidency comprised of representatives from the six republics and the two autonomous provinces.[10] The chairmanship rotated annually according to an established sequence. This further weakened the state with each passing year.[11] The mandate was too brief for programs or reforms to be implemented, and the changing Presidency chairs failed to share a uniform vision of Yugoslavia's future. The north–south divide became evident within both the Presidency and the party, and led to the dissolution of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at its fourteenth congress in January of 1990 over rifts between Serbian and Slovenian communists. Lost were both the political and ideological dominance of the communist system and the cohesive function of the communist ideology that had held Yugoslavia and its governmental institutions together. In the political struggle for the future of Yugoslavia, the Serbian side in particular, under Slobodan Milošević, steered toward recentralization, while the Croatian and Slovenian representatives advocated liberalizing the political and economic system. Internationally, the country also lost its former strategic position and significance for the West.

[9] http://icr.icty.org/default.aspx

[10] Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, as well the autonomous provinces Vojvodina and Kosovo.

[11] After Tito's death the mandate for the Presidency of Yugoslavia was held between 1980 and 1991 by Macedonia: Lazar Koliševski, 4 May 1980–15 May 1980; Bosnia and Herzegovina: Cvijetin Mijatović, 15 May 1980–15 May 1981; Slovenia: Sergej Kraigher, 15 May 1981–15 May 1982; Serbia: Petar Stambolić, 15 May 1982–15 May 1983; Croatia: Mika Špiljak, 15 May 1983–15 May 1984, Montenegro: Veselin Đuranović, 15 May 1984–15 May 1985; Vojvodina: Radovan Vlajković, 15 May 1985–15 May 1986; Kosovo: Sinan Hasani, 15 May 1986–15 May 1987; Macedonia: Lazar Mojsov, 15 May 1987–15 May 1988; Bosnia and Herzegovina: Raif Dizdarević, 15 May 1988–15 May 1989; Slovenia: Janez Drnovšek, 15 May 1989–15 May 1990; Serbia: Borislav Jović, 15 May 1990–15 May 1991; Croatia: Stjepan Mesić, 1 July 1991–October 1991.

Domestically, the Yugoslav system was based on the principle of the national brotherhood and unity (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*) of all Yugoslav nations. Upon this foundation, Tito and the party leadership had built a state promising its citizens a peaceful and prosperous future in accordance with the ideology of communism.[12] While this created a society that was able to achieve a certain degree of economic prosperity, it was also a society which was politically lethargic. Postwar generations had it better than those of the past. Rapid economic growth, at least during the first postwar decades, and a relatively liberal communism allowed a modest consumer society to develop, and by 1960 Yugoslav citizens were able to leave the country either as tourists and shoppers or to seek employment abroad. These opportunities, liberal in comparison with other communist states in Europe, mitigated social conflicts but also hindered the development of political alternatives for postwar generations. This contributed to the lack of a significant dissident movement in Yugoslavia.

Nevertheless, the 1960s were already marked by an economic and political crisis, to which the state and party responded with the 1974 constitution proclaiming the "federalization of the federation." The constitution devolved substantial power to Yugoslavia's six republics, giving each a central bank as well as separate police, educational and judicial systems. The result was an intensified drifting apart of the regional elites.[13] The relationship between the federation and its constituent republics became increasingly weakened by the extensive authority of the republics. The already precarious economic situation of the 1980s (north–south divide, unemployment, high inflation, currency devaluation, foreign debt)[14] continued to deteriorate. The GDP increased only slowly in the 1980s and population growth in the period from 1980 to 1985 also lagged. The number of unemployed rose to over a million and inflation skyrocketed, as did the foreign debt.[15] The question of how to share the economic burden between the poorer and richer republics left no side content. The unequal economic burden additionally heated the conflicts regarding distribution as well as the smoldering national question.[16]

[12] This ideology was the supporting column of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and touched all spheres. Especially following the tenth congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia from 27 to 30 May 1974, the party claimed leadership "in all areas and on all levels." Holm Sundhaussen, *Geschichte Jugoslawiens 1918–1980* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1982), 198.

[13] Gradually the League's authority became limited with respect to issues of foreign and security policy, uniformity of economic and social policy, and the legal system. Marie-Janine Calic, *Der Krieg in Bosnien-Herzegowina. Ursachen—Konfliktstrukturen—Internationale Lösungsversuche* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 32; Monika Beckmann-Petey, *Der jugoslawische Föderalismus* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1990).

[14] Here also Susan L. Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment. The Political Economy of Yugoslavia, 1945–1990* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[15] Holm Sundhaussen, *Geschichte Serbiens: 19.–21. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), 379; 379; see also Dušan Bilandžić, *Jugoslavija poslije Tita (1980–1985)* (Zagreb: Globus, 1986).

[16] For more on the economic aspects of the collapse of Yugoslavia, see Marijan Korošić, *Jugoslavenska kriza* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1988).

Dejan Jović has convincingly argued that the Yugoslav state, in the last phase of its existence, that is from the second half of the 1960s, was no longer based on the unity of the southern Slavs, but rather on a shared concept of communism. In other words, the idea of an ethnic "kinship" among the southern Slavic peoples was replaced by the idea of a "Yugoslavian exceptionalism" based on a "socialist market economy" and independence.[17] Holm Sundhaussen defines this "Yugoslavian exceptionalism" as "the pillar of identity upon which the mutually supportive society was based."[18] Among the pillars of identity were also the founding myths of the second Yugoslavia, which was defined as a model of independence from Soviet influence and of self-management, non-alignment and, in comparison to other communist societies, relative prosperity.[19] When these pillars of identity ceased to exist, the "Yugoslavs" lost the framework that had provided them with a firm structure, leading to the erosion of the state's governmental institutions. In this context and without security, shaken by crisis-laden discourse and without a shared vision for a common state, the citizens of Yugoslavia set out on competing routes toward democracy and a market economy. The loss of legitimacy of both the state and party enabled the emergence of autonomous and mutually conflictual authoritarian nationalisms.[20]

The national-political elite of the late 1980s and early 1990s utilized this context for ethnic mobilization, group cohesion and, accordingly, seizure of power. The old concept of community within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which had primarily been built upon social group identity, shifted to ethnicity.[21] Those who rose to power set themselves the task of forming a nation with a common will and national pride from the heterogeneous mass of "workers." They created a collective identity based on the "commitment to a set of shared values, the memory of a shared history and the orientation toward shared goals. Participation in this identity and commitment to specific values is what makes people into citizens, and in the case of armed conflict, citizens into soldiers."[22] Thus, while the criticism against the "old" communist system focused on the unsolved national question, it failed to offer any alternatives in the direction of a democratization of society.

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[17] Dejan Jović, *Jugoslavija: država koja je odumrla: uspon i pad Kardeljeve Jugoslavije (1974–1990)* (Zagreb: Prometej, 2003), 489.

[18] Holm Sundhaussen, "Staatsbildung und ethnisch-nationale Gegensätze in Südosteuropa," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte,* no. 10–11 (2003): 3–9, 8.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Laslo Sekelj, "Soziologie des Jugoslawismus und des serbischen Nationalismus," in Eggert Hardten, André Stanisavljević, and Dimitris Tsakiris, eds., *Der Balkan in Europa* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang 1996), 3–14, 9.

[21] Ivan Čolović, *Bordell der Krieger: Folklore, Politik und Krieg* (Osnabrück: Fibre, 1994), 140.

[22] Aleida Assmann, "Zum Problem der Identität aus kulturwissenschaftlicher Sicht," in Rolf Lindner, ed., *Die Wiederkehr des Regionalen. Über neue Formen kultureller Identität* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verlag 1994), 13–35, 22–23.

The journalist and political analyst Teofil Pančić has described postwar Yugoslav society as "tender totalitarianism" and the population as "spoiled slaves."[23] In Pančić's view, Yugoslav society longed for prosperity, security, freedom and its associated duties, yet at the same time was despised by the population. Yugoslav society had strong authoritarian tenants.[24] The older generation did not possess a democratic political culture and could not conceive of democracy in any concrete terms. Younger citizens were apolitical, since they had been raised in the belief that politics was for "adults" and that their impact was limited.[25] Both young people and their parents thought communism would be for eternity. Most Yugoslavs believed that the system of their country was fairer than that of others, and assured themselves that there was no need to strive toward alternatives or think independently, much less rebel against the established political system. When communism began to break apart, the youth expected their parents to resolve the situation. The parental generation however did not know how.[26] In this void of political and ideological alternatives, nationalism emerged as a potent force.

The large protest against the nationalist parties and "democratic" government which took place in Sarajevo on 4 April 1992 provides a good example for illustrating that, even three years after the overthrow of communist regimes elsewhere in Eastern Europe, there were still no alternatives to nationalism in the Yugoslav context. The protest was organized at a time when it was clear, even to the greatest optimists, that the policies of the national parties of Bosnia and Herzegovina, victorious in the 1990 elections, would lead to war. A large number of citizens assembled in the center of Sarajevo in front of the parliament building and protested against the Presidency,[27] the government, the national parties, the predominantly Muslim Party of Democratic Action (SDA) with Alija Izetbegović at its head, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) led by Radovan Karadžić, and Croat Democratic Union (HDZ). These three parties, which had come to power less than two years earlier, were taking the country to war. Examining photos of this protest in retrospect, one can recognize them as a sign of discontent and helplessness. The images of Tito, who had died in 1980, and the red flags that the protesters are waving signal their desire to return to the past. While this was an unrealistic path, there was no alternative offered. And since the protest movement was unable to present a different solution, it did not pose a serious threat to the national parties. Citizens were left without any formulated alternatives or a program that could have confronted the rising nationalism.

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[23] Teofil Pančić, *Urbani Bušmani* (Belgrade: Biblioteka XX Vek, 2001), 92.

[24] Ibid.

[25] The ineffectiveness of participatory mechanisms of the self-management system contributed to the sense of disempowerment of citizens.

[26] Slavenka Drakulić, "The Generation that Failed," *The Nation*, 16 November 2009.

[27] The members of the first "democratic" Bosnian Presidency were Alija Izetbegović, Fikret Abdić, Ejup Ganić, Nikola Koljević, Biljana Plavšić, Stjepan Kljuić and Franjo Boras.

## Protests and mass movements

The powerlessness to articulate disapproval with the communist system other than within a nationalist framework had already become apparent during the 1980s. While there had been protests and strikes directed against the economic situation, the only clear alternative to the existing political system was nationalism. During the 1980s, citizens had substantial grievances against the government of Yugoslavia as well as, more importantly, its republics and provinces, and they sought multiple avenues to express them.

The most common form of dissatisfaction was linked to the aforementioned worsening economic situation, including a large national debt, high unemployment, sinking living standards, high inflation and material shortages.[28] Strikes were not uncommon in "socialist" Yugoslavia, but due to the highly segmented economic system into decentralized "self-managed" enterprises, such strikes were often quite localized. Only in the late 1980s did countrywide strikes take place.[29] A second type of protest against the status quo emphasized national issues, that is, they confronted the status quo for disadvantaging particular ethnic communities. This included nationalist mass protests in Kosovo in 1968 and in Croatia during the "Croatian Spring" in the early 1970s. Student demonstrations in Belgrade in June 1968 spread to Kosovo in November of the same year and some of the students' demands from Kosovo, such as greater inclusion of Albanians in both Serbian and Yugoslav state bodies, and a higher level of recognition of the Albanian language, were approved.

In the period 1966–1971, there were visible signs of dissatisfaction and attempts to reform the communist society in Croatia. These did not come solely from non-communist lines, but were also articulated within the League of Communists of Croatia (SKH). During this period demands emerged for strengthening Croatian national interests in the cultural sphere (i.e., through the Croatian Cultural Centre *Matica Hrvatska,*[30] and the Croatian Association of Writers with Petar Segedin), the economy (Hrvoje Šošić, Šime Đodan and Marko Veselica) and politics (The League of Communists of Croatia—Savka Dabčević-Kučar and Miko Tripalo). These demands were accompanied by student demonstrations.

After Tito's death, new nationalist protests took place in Prishtina in 1981. These were led by Kosovo Albanian students demanding the recognition of Kosovo as a republic, demands that later escalated into calls for secession. These protests were violently repressed by the police with support from other federal institutions and led to the aforementioned high number of political prisoners from Kosovo. Five

[28] See Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment*.

[29] Marko Grdesic, "Mapping the Paths of the Yugoslav Model: Labour Strength and Weakness in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia," *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 14, no. 2 (2008), 133–51, 137–38.

[30] About the role of *Matica Hrvatska* see more in Berislav Jandrić, "Uloga Matice hrvatske u događajima 1971. Godine," in Hans-Georg Fleck and Igor Graovac, eds., *Dijalog povjesničara—istoričara*, vol. 7 (Zagreb: Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, 2003), 415–33.

years later a second protest wave originated in Kosovo, this time among Kosovo Serbs who felt marginalized in the province after having lost their political and economic dominant status in the 1970s. At first the dissatisfaction exhausted itself in petitions addressed to Serbian and Yugoslav authorities, but later took the shape of mass protests, especially in Serbia, Vojvodina and Montenegro. These protests coincided and converged with social and economic protests in Serbia and Montenegro, whereby the public agenda shifted from economic to national demands. An observer would later note during one of the large protests in 1988, when participants changed their demands from economic to national issues *during* the protests, that the demonstrators had "come as workers and went home as Serbs."[31] Although this movement was later co-opted by the Serbian party and the republican leadership of Slobodan Milošević, it would be wrong to downplay the grassroots origins of this movement and its resonance throughout the country.[32]

The main other republic in which a strong social movement emerged was Slovenia. It articulated itself less through mass rallies but as a network of activists, particularly in the sphere of media and culture, who challenged the Yugoslav system and the League of Communists. The art collective *Neue Slowenische Kunst* (New Slovenian Art), which included the iconoclastic band *Laibach*,[33] and media such as the youth magazine *Mladina* systematically sought to break Yugoslav and communist taboos, from criticizing the personality cult of Tito, to pointing out the similarities between communism and fascism and totalitarian ideologies, to condemning the role of the army and the party. In February 1987 the journal *Nova revija* (New Review) published a new Slovenian national program. These "Contributions to the Slovenian National Program" called for the closing of national ranks and argued that the Slovenes would be better off outside Yugoslavia. In the following years, many of the authors of these contributions became active in the anti-communist parties that formed the victorious DEMOS coalition after the first free nationwide elections in 1990.

Parallel to this, other media across Yugoslavia began in the 1980s to discuss topics that until then had been off limits, including placing religious communities into a more positive light and exposing some of the crimes committed during the early phase of communist Yugoslavia, in particular Goli Otok, the internment camp on the Adriatic island to which alleged supporters of Stalin were sent following the Cominform conflict between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1948.[34]

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[31] Jagoš Djuretić, cited from Slavoljub Djukić, *Između slave i anateme. Politička biografija Slobodana Miloševića* (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić 1994), 106. This shift is also well documented in Čolović, *Bordell*, 138–42.

[32] Nebojsa Vladisavljevic, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution: Milosevic, the Fall of Communism, and Nationalist Mobilization* (London: Palgrave, 2008).

[33] Alexei Monroe, *Interrogation Machine. Laibach and NSK* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005). The name Laibach is the German name for Slovenia's capital city, Ljubljana.

[34] Oskar Gruenwald, "Yugoslav Camp Literature: Rediscovering the Ghost of a Nation's Past-Present-Future," *Slavic Review* 46, no. 3–4 (1987): 513–28. The prison remained a taboo topic in

These challenges to the system also revealed the degree to which demands for democratization quickly turned against Yugoslavia itself and thus provided little basis for a cross-republican and cross-national social movement against communist rule. The absence of a strong Yugoslav public sphere would become even more visible when the first elections were held across the country.

## Elections

The disparities among the communist Yugoslav elite and the political constellation of Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s initially enabled the development of new ideological sources for legitimizing the state.

The parliaments of the republics of the SFRY passed new electoral laws and put a process toward "political pluralism" into motion. For example, in Bosnia-Herzegovina the electoral law initially prohibited political parties along national lines. After lengthy parliamentary discussion, however, and despite public opinion polls suggesting that the majority of the population was against the formation of ethno-national parties,[35] the republican Constitutional Court declared the law unconstitutional.[36] Once the amendments to the electoral law allowed the unrestricted establishing of national parties, so-called national parties, standing primarily for the "wellbeing of their nation," were rapidly founded. The very founding of these national parties was celebrated as their first victory. This dynamic was mirrored elsewhere across Yugoslavia.

In the new political circumstances, the nation became increasingly the focal point of political discourse: political legitimation followed national lines. Nationalism served as a substitute for communism in Yugoslavia, since the state had not only lost its founding ideology, but also the basis for its existence with the disintegration of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The infighting among the republican elites crippled the League of Communists as the pillar of the Yugoslav system, thereby putting an end to communism and threatening the very existence of Yugoslavia. In other words, communist rule collapsed not as the result of revolution or struggle by non-communist alternatives against it, but was rather the victim of diametrical conceptions of the future and wishes within the League of Communists itself. Non-communist parties and groups played only a marginal role in the collapse of the party. Thus grass-root nationalism was actually a consequence and not the cause of the changes that led to the state's decline, since "the ruin of the Yugoslavian

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Yugoslavia until the 1980s and was only discussed after Tito's death when the novel *Tren* (Moment) about Goli Otok by Antonije Isaković became an instant bestseller.

35 Krstan Malešević, *Ljudski trag*, vol. 3 (Banja Luka: Media Center Prelom, 2005), 87. The results of this public opinion survey paint a picture of a Bosnian society that was living in fear.

36 Suad Arnautović, *Izbori u Bosni i Hercegovini '90: Analiza izbornih procesa* (Sarajevo: Promocult, 1996), 11.

identity and state was not the result of a process inaugurated by the 'nation,' or rather 'nations.' The deconstruction was induced and desired from above, by the elites […]."[37] At the same time, it is important not to underestimate the salience of ethno-national identity. Even though ethno-national affiliation did not play a major role and stayed in the background during the communist period, national identity mattered and most citizens knew to which group they belonged. This fact, along with unresolved and competing national demands as well as the resurgence of religion and political participation, which had long been reduced to symbolic gestures, provided resources and potential for the ethno-national mobilization. The weakness of parties and groups that pursued a non-nationalist democratic agenda and the lack of a Yugoslav alternative facilitated the success of rival ethno-national parties in 1990, when multiparty elections took place for the first time in all Yugoslavian republics.[38]

Increasingly nationalistic propaganda, based on fear and perceived threats by other nations, thus fell on fertile ground. This dynamic, the "vertical" interplay between elites and the population, was initiated from above. The liberalization of the public sphere that had occurred in the early 1980s was used by ethno-national elites, through the media and the public domain, for homogenizing as well as radicalizing social life.[39] These processes were so dominant that there were only a few who were able, or wanted, to resist. At first people adapted to the new social structures and only as a second step did they influence one another. The rhetoric,

[37] Sundhaussen, "Staatsbildung," 8.

[38] The last congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in January 1990 marked the official end of communism in the SFRY. The first multiparty elections took place in April 1990 in Slovenia (presidential, 8 and 22 April) and Croatia (parliamentary, 22 April and 6 May) and in the period between November and December in Bosnia-Herzegovina (general, 18 November and 2 December), Macedonia (parliamentary, 11 and 25 November), Montenegro and Serbia (general and presidential, 9 and 23 December). In Slovenia the united opposition movement DEMOS (Democratic Opposition of Slovenia) led by Jože Pučnik won and Milan Kučan was elected as the first president of Slovenia. In Croatia the HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union) emerged victorious and Franjo Tuđman was elected president of Croatia. Victors of the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina were the three large ethno-national parties SDA (Party of Democratic Action) led by Alija Izetbegović, the SDS (Serb Democratic Party) of Radovan Karadžić and the HDZ (Croat Democratic Union) headed by Stjepan Klujić. The first president of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina was Alija Izetbegović. In Macedonia the anti-communist VMRO-DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) won the elections, but was unable form a government. The leading communist leader Kiro Gligorov was elected as new president. In Serbia and Montenegro the winners were the successors of the League of Communists. In Serbia Slobodan Milošević won the presidential elections and in Montenegro, Momir Bulatović.

[39] The pages of the prominent Serbian daily *Politika* served the agenda of Slobodan Milošević. A telling example is a series of attacks again the last Yugoslav prime minister, Ante Marković, written by the Serbian member of the State Presidency Borisav Jović under a pseudonym to give the impression that the critique reflected the "voice of the people." Borisav Jović, *Poslednji Dani SFRJ* (Kragujevac: Prizma, 1996), 173. This dynamic is presented in detail in Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, "Nationalism in the Marketplace of Ideas," in Michael E. Brown, ed., *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 61–96.

slogans, central ideas and tools of mobilization were very similar among the national parties; they differed only in their labeling of the respective ethnic groups in the parties' names and public appearances. The characteristics of all the important political parties and coalitions corresponded more to the features of a movement than to political parties per se. This also includes Slobodan Milošević's Socialist Party of Serbia, as he rose to power with nationalism and remained long in power by appealing to nationalist sentiments.

The election results in the individual republics only exacerbated an already tense political atmosphere. Political discourse was reduced to ethnic categorization and agreement was a priori eliminated between political representatives, with their diametrically opposed aims and visions. Nationally oriented parties, barely capable of consensus by virtue of their incompatible positions, claimed victory in the elections, resulting in intensified efforts toward federalization and separatism, thereby further weakening the federal state. As a consequence, no republican elites were interested in holding federal elections and the Yugoslav state was thus given no opportunity to legitimize itself through democratic elections. Despite multiparty elections, de facto single party systems continued to exist in most of the republics as well as in all parts of the newly-created Bosnian-Herzegovinian state. Instead of one single-party system, "multiple single-party systems" came into being on Yugoslavian territory. Although 43 parties registered for the November 1990 elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina,[40] there was no wealth of political ideas. The similarities between the new parties were significantly greater than their differences.[41] The three large ethno-national parties SDA, SDS and HDZ, which together were able to win 84 percent of the seats in the Bosnian parliament, were the clear victors of the elections in that republic.

Thus, the "democratic elections" paradoxically contributed more to the elimination of democracy, in the sense of pluralism and mutual respect, than to its establishment. Political factions and debates moved in the direction of ethnic autism. Ethnic groups increasingly shut themselves off by refusing exchange of information, and consequently no new or collective perspectives developed within the political discourse.

## The global context of Yugoslavia's failed revolution

While the primary sources of the Yugoslav shift from communism to ethno-nationalist politics were domestic, the international setting did not facilitate the country's democratization. In 1990, the US National Intelligence Estimate for

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[40] Rajka Tomić, ed., *BiH Izbori '90. Izborni zakon s potrebnim tumačenjima* (Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 1990), 141.

[41] Arnautović, *Izbori*, 40; Tomić, ed., *BiH Izbori*, 45–141; and *Izborni ABC* (Sarajevo: Oslobođenje 1990), 44–57.

Yugoslavia predicted that "Yugoslavia will cease to function as a Federal state within one year, and will probably dissolve within two" and "[t]here is little the United States and its European allies can do to preserve Yugoslav unity."[42] With the coming to power of Mikhail Gorbachev as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985 and the beginnings of perestroika and glasnost, the significance of Yugoslavia in the international system waned. It had played a pivotal role in the context of Cold War Europe by maintaining close ties yet also some distance to both blocs, best exemplified in its leading role in establishing the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. While Western governments paid at least lip service to democratization in communist countries in the Soviet sphere of influence and sought to weaken or at least contain the influence of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia's political system came under little scrutiny by Western governments.

With the end of the Cold War in 1989 Yugoslavia lost its strategic position, and the attention of the United States and the European Community focused on other countries of Eastern Europe. The end of the Cold War also removed the primary external threat to Yugoslavia, namely an invasion by the Soviet Union, a threat particularly pertinent in shaping Yugoslav policy in the years after the suppression of the "Prague Spring" in 1968. The leadership in different republics sought alliances with different countries as the country moved toward its collapse. Slovenia and Croatia pursued closer ties to Austria and Western Europe, whereas the Serbian leadership sought backing from the conservative wing of the Soviet leadership. But while some tried to portray the dissolution of the country as the work of foreign actors,[43] these tentative alliances had little impact on the trajectory of Yugoslavia before its dissolution in 1991.

By mid-1991 tensions had escalated to such a degree that external intervention could achieve little, at least in the form it was offered at the time.[44] Initially both the United States and the European Community supported a democratic and unified Yugoslavia. While this line made sense from an outsider perspective, there was no partner for such a project by 1991 except for the increasingly embattled prime minister Ante Marković.[45] Instead of being sinister destroyers of Yugoslavia, as some interpretations would have it, the countries of Western Europe and the United States were hapless bystanders whose primary role in the dissolution of the country and its flawed transition to democracy was their passivity.

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[42] National Intelligence Estimate, *Yugoslavia Transformed*, 18 October 1990, 656. http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000254259.pdf (accessed 2 July 2013).

[43] Most notoriously, the last Yugoslav minister of defense, Veljko Kadijević. See Veljko Kadijević, *Moje viđenje raspada. Vojska bez države* (Belgrade: Politika, 1993). He also notes his and the Serbian leadership's efforts to secure Soviet support.

[44] Josip Glaurdić, *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Break-up of Yugoslavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 69.

[45] Ibid., 97. Officially his title was the secretary of the Federal Executive Council.

## Conclusions

During the 1980s Yugoslavia lacked the close ties with the Soviet Union that strongly linked the other parts of Eastern Europe as communist rule declined. The Soviet experimentation with reform and its abandoning the Brezhnev Doctrine had little direct impact on Yugoslavia other than reducing the country's international significance. The domestic structural sources of the crisis resembled those of its northern and eastern neighbors: economic crisis coupled with declining legitimacy of communist rule and the inability of the system to successfully reform itself. The League of Communists had originally achieved greater legitimacy than other communist parties in power in Eastern Europe due to its central role in the World War II partisan movement, its differences with the Soviet Union, and the lesser degree of repression it practiced, especially in everyday life of most citizens. This relative liberalism also created high expectations from the party as well as the political system it had created and refined, expectations that over the decades it proved unable to live up to. In particular, it had been unable to address economic underdevelopment and regional inequalities. In addition, the weak federal structure produced a system with little political loyalty toward the center once the war-time generation of communists had largely died out by the late 1970s and early 1980s.

National grievances as well as demands for more democracy, economic reforms and job security were thus commonly directed toward the leadership of the republics or provinces, not the federal state. The republics became the main scene of political contestation, with the two main arenas of pluralism that emerged being within the republics and between the leadership of the republics (or the League of Communists). Political contestation did not occur within the Yugoslav public sphere at large, although scholars have argued that such a sphere began to emerge at this time. It was, however, often ignored by the political institutions and usually limited to culture.[46]

The social movements that emerged in Yugoslavia were mostly confined to single republics or to representing individual national groups. The few multinational groups to emerge were very late, after republican and national parties and groups had already largely monopolized the public discourse.[47] Thus by the late 1980s

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[46] Dusko Sekulic, Randy Hodson and Garth Massey, "Who were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in Former Yugoslavia," *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (1994): 83–97.

[47] One of the few groups was the Union of Reform Forces, founded in July 1990 by Yugoslav prime minister Ante Marković. However, the party was established very late and thus did not participate in the Slovene and Croat elections and was trumped by more nationalist parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. The Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative brought together intellectuals from a number of republics, but it too was founded relatively late, in early 1989, and remained ineffective as a political actor. See Branko Horvat, "Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative," in Dejan Djokić, ed., *Yugoslavism. Histories of a Failed Idea* (London: Hurst, 2003), 298–301.

Yugoslav institutions had not only become structurally weak, they had been delegitimized by the republics. When multiparty elections were scheduled in 1990, there was no interest in the republics to have these held at the Yugoslav level, nor was it possible for Yugoslav institutions to initiate such elections. As a result, the transition from single party rule—which had also varied among the republics—to a multiparty system differed from republic to republic.

Ulf Brunnbauer

# THE END OF COMMUNIST RULE IN BULGARIA: THE CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY AND POLITICAL CHANGE

On 15 February 1988, Tatiana Popova (name changed), a dentist in Sofia, sent a letter of complaint to the Fatherland Front (*Otechestven front*), the largest mass organization in communist Bulgaria.[1] Mrs. Popova wrote that although she was a trained dentist, for almost a year she had been unemployed. She had two children—one under the age of six—and as she was divorced, she received only 75 levs monthly child support from her former husband. She further explained that she had approached many medical centers for a job, but all of her requests had been turned down, even though the Labor Code stipulated that mothers of two children had an explicit right to a job. Requests sent to various authorities had not had any effect either. Her parents were in no state to help her because, as retirees, they received only very small old-age pensions. Mrs. Popova continued:

> To be honest, I sometimes ask myself how I could slide into such a situation in our socialist society. We show the whole world how proud we are of our constitution, which guarantees every citizen of the People's Republic of Bulgaria the right to a job. We are proud of our Labor Code, of the decisions of the thirteenth party congress, of the July and November plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party […]. These most handsome documents and decisions by the party are, unfortunately, circumvented by some and therefore not executed.[2]

A day later, Mrs. Popova also wrote to the general secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), Todor Zhivkov, informing him about her fruitless efforts to find a job in her profession. She informed him about her recently rejected application for a position at a clinic in Sofia, which had announced an open dentist post in the newspaper *Zdraven front*.[3] When she spoke with a doctor at the clinic, she was told that the position had already been filled six months before the job was advertised. Mrs. Popova used this example to make some general comments:

> All of the vacant jobs announced in the newspaper *Zdraven front* have actually been reserved for people whose appointment has been prearranged. These jobs are advertised in the papers only for formal reasons, with demagogic means, in order to invent and lie, to pretend that the jobs have been formally announced.

1 Petitioner to Fatherland Front, 15 February 1988, in Tsentralen Dărzhaven Arkhiv (TsDA), f. 28 (*Otechestven front*), op. 24, a.e. 377, l. 214.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 216.

> They feel bored by us; they hate us—stop with all these lies, demagoguery and deception!!!!! You should know that you are facing a developed socialist society, not mummies, stones or chopped trees!!!!!
> I am not a horse with blinkers so that I go and look only straight ahead, without seeing what happens in the country—I see the truth!!!! I have carried a heavy burden my whole life and I understood that what is reigning are lies, demagoguery and deception, but not truth!!!![4]

This vignette, despite its personal nature, is illustrative of the process of the de-legitimization of communist rule in Bulgaria. On one hand, Mrs. Popova's letters show that the citizens of the People's Republic of Bulgaria had learnt the ideological language of the regime and knew the relevant official structures. Mrs. Popova judges her immediate situation by referring to existing laws and uses official propaganda to substantiate her demands. Whether or not she truly believed the state's promises, whether she had internalized its ideology or not, is irrelevant here; important is rather her tactic of instrumentalizing official state and party proclamations for her individual claims and criticism. The party-state had been successful in making its intentions and ideology generally accepted frames of reference. Thereby it put a "weapon" into the hands of the weak, who then used state ideology as a means for subaltern protest. A statement of John Scott comes into mind: "The ideology formulated by the ruling class to justify its own rule provided much of the symbolic raw material from which the most damning critique could be derived and sustained."[5]

Mrs. Popova's plight, on the other hand, shows that the state had problems fulfilling its own promises. It could not live up to the constitutional guarantee of providing everyone a job, and it failed in many other important areas as well. The many thousand letters of complaint kept in the archives of the government and the Fatherland Front provide ample evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with the concrete shortcomings that affected everyday life—perennial lack of housing, experiences of injustice in court, low wages, irregular public transport, dirty neighborhoods, etc. "Real" life in communism emerges as significantly different than its ideological promises. Nonetheless, citizens took the assurances of the state literally and called on the authorities to come forward with solutions. At the same time, they realized through their experiences that the party and state would not do so.

A third feature is noteworthy in the dentist's letters. She clearly articulates a deep dissatisfaction with what was going on in the country at that time (the late 1980s). She links her individual fate of not finding a job to wider problems, especially clientelism. Hence, she finds three of the most important positions of the official ideology violated: the principles of equality, justice and meritocracy. In her eyes, the existing system could no longer claim moral superiority: it had lost its legitimacy. This chapter will argue that this loss of legitimacy was a central factor in the political revolutions of late 1989, when communist power also end-

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[4] Ibid.

[5] John Scott, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 339.

ed in Bulgaria. This implies that we must not only seek explanations for the end of communist rule in the realms of "high" politics, but also in the "lows" of mundane, everyday activities. The interrelation between state and society is especially important here, because communist rule had also been based on its legitimization within the social realm. Therefore, this chapter will argue that while structural forces, such as growing economic problems, provided the basis for revolutionary change, it was the loss of legitimacy that pushed the actors to perceive the economic and other problems as systemic. This instilled in them a belief in the need, and also the viability, of regime change.

The political developments of late communist and early postcommunist Bulgaria are well documented. The comprehensive overviews of modern Bulgarian history by Evgeniia Kalinova and Iskra Baeva[6] and by Richard Crampton[7] provide a quick navigation also through the important events and personalities of Bulgarian political life in the 1980s and 1990s. While the history of the socialist period did not attract much interest by Bulgarian historians for some time after 1989, recently a number of important works have appeared. The foremost institution to edit such books is the non-governmental Institute for Studies of the Recent Past (*Institut za izsledvane blizkoto minalo*) in Sofia.[8] It has published, for example, a study on the forced assimilation of the Muslims under communism[9] and a voluminous handbook on the People's Republic of Bulgaria "From the Beginning to the End."[10] The main social trends since 1960 have been documented by Nikolai Genov and Ana Krasteva using a great deal of quantitative data.[11]

The study of state communism in Bulgaria is facilitated by the relatively liberal access to archival documents. The archives of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and its many bodies, of the Fatherland Front (the largest mass-organization of communist Bulgaria), of the central government authorities (including the Council of Ministries) and of other important institutions are stored in the Central State Archives (*Tsentralen dărzhaven arhiv*) in Sofia. Documents in these collections dated until the end of the 1980s are generally accessible.[12] Since a law change in 2006, the Archives of the Ministry of

6 Evgeniia Kalinova and Iskra Baeva, *Bălgarskite prehodi 1939–2002* (Sofia: Paradigma, 2002); in an abbreviated German version: *Bulgarien von Ost nach West: Zeitgeschichte ab 1939* (Vienna: Braumüller, 2009).

7 Richard Crampton, *Bulgaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

8 See their webpage at www.minaloto.org (accessed 18 September 2012).

9 Mihail Gruev and Aleksei Kalionski, *Văzroditelniiat protses. Mjusjulmanskite obshtnosti i komunisticheskijat rezhim: politiki, reaktsii i poslednici* (Sofia: IIBM, 2008).

10 Ivan Znepolski, ed., *NRB. Ot nachaloto do kraia* (Sofia: IIBM, 2011).

11 Nikolai Genov and Ana Krasteva, eds., *Bulgaria 1960–1995. Trends of Social Development* (Sofia: National and Global Development, 1999).

12 For a helpful guide through Bulgarian archives and libraries see Iskra Baeva and Stefan Troebst, eds., *Vademecum. Contemporary History Bulgaria* (Berlin and Sofia: Stiftung Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur, 2007). Free download at www.stiftung-aufarbeitung.de/download.php?file= uploads/pdf_publikationen/vade_bul.pdf (accessed 18 September 2012).

the Interior are also available to researchers, although the procedure for gaining access to its documents is time consuming.

The events and developments of 1989 and 1990 have been well explained by journals such as *Südosteuropa* and the *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für Ostwissenschaftliche und Internationale Studien*, as well as through the broadcasts and newssheets of *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. Of course, one can also examine the extensive newspaper reporting of that time. In the early 1990s, a number of studies were published providing the first in-depth analyses of the changes in Bulgaria; the collection of essays *Parteienlandschaften in Osteuropa* is a case in point, in which the dynamics of party formation after the end of one-party rule are highlighted.[13] A number of memoirs by communist and postcommunist politicians, such as Zheliu Zhelev, have also appeared.[14]

Many features of the postcommunist developments are well researched. A good introduction into the first decade of transformation is provided by Emil Giatzidis, who documents the political, social and economic changes.[15] A volume edited by Hans Leo Krämer and Hristo Stojanov bringing together eminent Bulgarian social scientists has a comparable scope.[16] An original perspective on the transformations is provided by the ethnologist Milena Benovska-Săbkova, who analyses the manifold consequences that the political and economic changes had on everyday life.[17] The important problem of minority policies—in a country in which about 15 percent of the population belongs to an ethnic minority—has been comprehensively analyzed by Bernd Rechel.[18]

## The end of communist rule in Bulgaria: events

Before outlining the explanatory framework, this chapter will briefly recall the political events that mark the "change" in Bulgaria.[19] The most important single date is 10 November 1989, when the Central Committee of the Bulgarian

13 Magarditsch A. Hatschikjan and Peter Weilemann, eds., *Parteienlandschaften in Osteuropa. Politik, Parteien und Transformation in Ungarn, Polen, der Tschecho-Slowakei und Bulgarien, 1989–1992* (Paderborn and Munich: Schöningh, 1994).

14 Želju Želev, *V goliamata politika* (Sofia: Trud, 1998). Cf. Iliyana Marcheva, "Recollections as Alternative History," in Maria Todorova, ed., *Remembering Communism. Genres of Representation* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2010), 253–74.

15 Emil Giatzidis, *An introduction to post-communist Bulgaria: political, economic and social transformations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

16 Hans Leo Krämer and Christo Stojanov, eds., *Bulgarien im Übergang. Sozialwissenschaftliche Studien zur Transformation* (Bergisch Gladbach: Ferger, 1999).

17 Milena Benovska-Săbkova, *Politicheski prehod i vsekidnevna kultura* (Sofia: Prof. M. Drinov, 2001).

18 Bernd Rechel, *The long way back to Europe: minority protection in Bulgaria* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2008).

19 The following section is mainly based on: Evgeniia Kalinova and Iskra Baeva, *Bălgarskite prehodi 1939–2002* (Sofia: Paradigma, 2002), 242–79; Richard Crampton, *Bulgaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 381–94.

Communist Party accepted the resignation of Todor Zhivkov, who had dominated Bulgarian politics for more than thirty years, first as the general secretary of the party (from 1954) and then as the head of state (from 1971). Zhivkov was followed, as state and party leader, by the reformer Petăr Mladenov, who in October had denounced Zhivkov's methods of rule in an open letter to the Politburo and Central Committee and then had resigned as foreign minister.

After Zhivkov's replacement, which had the approval of the Kremlin, the political dynamics increased dramatically, pushing the BCP towards rapid liberalization. On 18 November 1989, the first big oppositional rally took place in the centre of Sofia in front of the Aleksandăr-Nevski cathedral. It was attended by approximately 100,000 people, who demanded an end to communist rule. Dissidents became more vocal, and "ordinary" citizens took to the streets to protest against the government. On 14 December, another mass rally near the parliament building demanded the immediate renunciation of the infamous first article in the constitution, which awarded the "leading role in society and politics," i.e. political monopoly, to the BCP.

Under pressure from within and without, the BCP made a number of decisions in order to shed some of its dictatorial past. The leadership called an extraordinary party congress for January 1990, suggested abolishing the first article of the constitution, and condemned the so-called rebirth process, the campaign in the 1980s of forced assimilation of the Turkish minority. The revocation of the forceful name changes of the Turkish minority at the end of 1989 had provoked nationalist demonstrations in January 1990 in Sofia and other towns, mainly in regions with a minority population. However, the nationalist tension soon evaporated and gave way to the re-establishment of basic minority rights. The fourteenth party congress from 30 January to 2 February 1990 accepted a manifesto for democratic socialism which denounced the Soviet model and voiced social-democratic ideas. The party congress also re-allocated the top positions in state and party: Andrei Lukanov became prime minister, Aleksandăr Lilov head of the party, while Mladenov remained head of the state. In April, the BCP changed its name to the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). The Politburo and Central Committee were abolished and replaced by more inclusive bodies.

In the meantime, opposition parties emerged that demanded free elections. The most important of these was the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), founded on 7 December 1989, which was headed by the best-known Bulgarian dissident, the philosopher Zheliu Zhelev. The UDF was a coalition of thirteen opposition groups, ranging from conservatives to social-democrats. Their union was primarily based on their opposition to the communists. The historical Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU), which had legally existed also during communism, broke with the communists and again became an independent party. Other "historical" parties, such as the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party, the Radical-Democratic Party, and the Democratic Party, were re-established. Another new party that was

to play a significant political role was established on 4 January 1990: the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, which was created effectively as the political representation of the Turkish minority under the leadership of Ahmed Dogan (who still presides over the party). In addition to these new political parties, the independent trade union *Podkrepa* (Support), which had been established in 1988 in the town of Plovdiv, became a driving force of democratic change. On 26 December 1989, *Podkrepa* called for a strike demanding free elections. Mass rallies in Sofia and other towns continued to put pressure on the government and provided momentum for rapid democratization.

An important next step to promote and, at the same time, channel political change was the establishment of round table negotiations on 3 January 1990. It was to meet until May 1990. At the round table, the BCP sat together with the main opposition parties and social organizations in order to work out a road map for Bulgaria's first free elections after World War II. The proceedings of the debates were broadcast live on radio and television, which had a huge impact on political consciousness in the country. The broadcasts made the UDF widely known in the country as the main challenger of communist (socialist) rule, also due to their reluctance to join the communists in a national unity government. The most important decisions of the round table concerned the de-ideologicalization of the constitution, the dissolution of BCP party cells in enterprises, the "de-partization" of state institutions, an agreement on democratic transformation, the abolition of the political police, the observance of the rule of law and human rights, and the holding of free elections, which were scheduled for mid-1990. The parties agreed, in a compromise, on a mixed election system of direct and representative vote, and on a 4 percent threshold for entering parliament. Elections were to be hold for a so-called Grand National Assembly, which would pass a new constitution.

The elections took place on 10 and 17 June 1990. In the election campaign, the BSP focused on the civic achievements of socialism, while the UDF denounced all aspects of communist rule and highlighted communist crimes. The UDF enjoyed the support of the West (especially the United States), but it was disadvantaged by its lack of a functioning party apparatus outside big towns. In contrast, the BSP was able to make use of its broad base. In the end, the socialists were more successful, gaining 47.25 percent of the vote and 211 (of 400) seats in the constituent assembly. The UDF won 36 percent of the vote and 144 seats. As the third largest faction in parliament, the "Turkish" party, Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), emerged with 23 deputies. The socialist victory was not only due to the better organization of their party, but also due to strong support in small towns and rural areas, where the populace was fearful of the privatization of land and had also been less exposed to political mobilization in the winter of 1989–90.[20] The UDF strongholds were Sofia and other large towns. The

[20] See Gerald Creed, "The politics of agriculture: identity and socialist sentiment in Bulgaria," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995): 843–68.

victorious BSP, under Prime Minister Andrei Lukanov, attempted to create a coalition government with the UDF, but this proved impossible and thus, they formed their own government in September 1990. The UDF resorted to radical rhetoric in parliament to fuel public protests, which took place in Sofia and other large towns after the elections. Nevertheless, the BSP and UDF eventually agreed to select the opposition leader Zheliu Zhelev for the office of president (1 August 1990), after Mladenov had been forced to step down. Public protests, however, continued on the streets, escalating in the night from 26 to 27 August 1990, when protesters set the Socialist Party headquarters in the center of Sofia on fire and looted the building. After these events, the public mood became more sober and political contestation continued mainly within parliament.

The debates in the parliament were especially intense with regard to two problems: the new constitution and economic policy. Regarding the latter, the land issue was probably most fiercely contested, that is, what to do with the collective farms. The main disagreement was the question to whom the collectivized land should be restituted: its former owners or those who were currently farming it. The UDF was able to push through the first option; the socialists only managed to include a passage that the restituted land should not be parceled out. The "Law on the Land" of 22 February 1991 was the start of a protracted and economically disastrous agricultural transformation, which resulted in the dissolution of collective farms and the reestablishment of the pre-communist pattern of small-scale farming. In general, economic policies were much contested until the big economic crash of 1996–97, when the neo-liberal consensus finally prevailed.

Lukanov's government failed to stop a rapid economic decline through the year 1990, and it was eventually forced to resign by a wave of strikes in November 1990, when the population was plagued by food shortages. In September 1990, food coupons even had to be introduced. Prices were finally liberalized in February 1991, which eased the shortages but led to sky-rocketing inflation, further impoverishing the population. In 1991 annual inflation reached almost 480 percent while the gross domestic product declined by more than 22 percent. Bulgaria's joining the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in September 1990 had yet to bring dividends.

After Lukanov's downfall, in December 1990 the leading parties agreed on a care-taker government headed by the non-party expert Dimităr Popov. The UDF joined the government and controlled the economic ministries. However, the UDF soon split into warring factions, when a group of its deputies left parliament in protest of the draft constitution and went on hunger-strike. The larger part of the UDF remained in parliament, but was split between a moderate and a more radical camp. The former took part in the elaboration of the constitution, which was passed on 12 July 1991 by 309 of the 400 members of parliament. The new constitution proclaimed Bulgaria a "democratic, constitutional and social state"

with a parliamentary democracy. It guaranteed democratic rights and freedoms, the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and the separation of powers. The economy was declared to be based on "free market initiative," and by law every citizen and juristic person was guaranteed the right to entrepreneurship. The constitution also prohibited the establishment of "autonomous territorial units" and declared "the defense of the national and state unity" to be a principle of state policy.[21]

After the constitution was passed, the way was cleared for new elections to be held for an ordinary parliament. These took place on 13 October 1991. The elections were distinguished by fierce controversy about the legality of the MRF. The new Bulgarian constitution prohibited the establishment of parties on "ethnic" or "religious" grounds. The MRF charter actually did not describe the party as representing a minority population, but rather emphasized human rights and liberal values; to most Bulgarians, however, the MRF was the "Turkish" party. The constitutional court eventually declared the MRF to be in accordance with the constitution by the narrowest of margins. Its parliamentary presence safeguarded, the MRF was to tip the scales after the elections resulted in a hung parliament: the UDF won the most votes (34.36 percent) but not an absolute majority (110 of 240 seats in parliament). The socialists (BSP) came a close second, with 33.14 percent of the vote and 106 deputies. The MRF achieved 7.55 percent and 24 seats, and thus its support was crucial for the forming of an UDF government under the new prime minister, Filip Dimitrov, who since December 1990 had been the leader of the UDF. However, the MRF did not join the government and a year later withdrew its support, because Dimitrov's economic policies negatively affected the MRF's constituency, the Turkish minority. Dimitrov's confrontational style and his zealous anti-communism also became a burden for the UDF, which consequently lost the next elections to the BSP, who won an absolute majority in 1994. Nevertheless, the first UDF government can be said to have represented the successful democratization of Bulgaria. Bulgaria's joining the Council of Europe in Mai 1992 and its application for association with the European Community were foreign policies that demonstrated the direction of the new democracy. And if the functioning of a democracy is judged by the ability to vote a government out of office, Bulgaria is unmatched, because no government was to be reelected in any election following 1990.

The economic record of transformation was less convincing, however.[22] After Dimitrov's government was overturned by a vote of non-confidence in October 1992 and especially after the socialists returned to power in 1994, the speed of economic reforms slowed down. Successive governments shied away from radical steps, such as the privatization or liquidation of loss-making state companies,

[21] *Konstitutsija na Republika Bălgarija* (Sofia: Sofija Press, 1991), preamble and article 2(1).

[22] See Ulf Brunnbauer, "Surviving Post-Socialism. The First Decade of Transformation in Bulgaria," *Sociologija* 43, no. 1 (2001): 1–26.

and rather pursued a policy of "soft budgetary constraints," which increased the state's burden of debt. The population paid the price, with the economy coming to the brink of catastrophe in the winter of 1996–97. Hyperinflation and severe shortages of basic consumer goods pushed the majority of the population into poverty. Only radical policy changes, together with international support, rescued Bulgaria from the abyss and led the country onto a path of sustained economic growth. Due to the influx of billions of US dollars in foreign investments, liberal economic policies and fiscal discipline, living standards have slowly risen (whether the new economic foundations are sound enough to weather the outfall of the 2009 global economic crisis remains to be seen). Bulgaria's membership in the European Union in 2007 can be considered its reward for transforming the country into a market economy and a functioning democracy.

## Legitimacy and revolution

The above-described chain of political events was the outcome of the loss of the regime's legitimacy, on one hand, and the path to creating legitimacy for a new political order on the other. It was the loss of legitimacy experienced by the communists that made the political change in 1989 not merely possible, but inevitable. Legitimacy, thus, provides the missing link between structural crisis and system-changing political mobilization.

Since Max Weber, legitimacy has been considered the salient aspect of political rule, because without it, citizens (or subjects) do not accept the political order. Weber's main point is that a legitimate political system is founded, at least in part, on its moral validity in the eyes of the citizens (subjects), and not only on their egoistic calculations, customs or traditions. Legitimacy should not be confounded with democracy, as also in the modern era, non-democratic regimes can become legitimate, although it tends to be more likely for democratic regimes to be legitimate than authoritarian ones.[23] Authoritarian systems can also successfully appeal to culturally embedded values and moralities. But their legitimacy is predicated mainly on their capacity to meet certain expectations of vital segments of the population and to fulfill their own promises. In exchange, the population is ready to forfeit democratic rights. The fact that authoritarian regimes are aware of the need to show their legitimacy is evinced by their great efforts to stage popular approval (as for example, by mass rallies or "elections"). However, the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes is less solid than that of a participatory system: if such a regime does not meet expectations, the population may no longer be ready to forgo its democratic rights.

[23] See Bruce Gilley, *The Right to Rule: How States Win and Lose Legitimacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

It is, of course, difficult to establish the level of legitimacy enjoyed by the communist rule in Bulgaria. However, there are some indicators that the Bulgarian communists were considered legitimate—at least among vital social groups—until the late 1970s or early 1980s. One indicator is the absence of a dissident movement. From oral history interviews, we know that many people accepted central aspects of the official ideology and credited the communists with welfare achievements. The repeated victories of the Socialist Party after 1989 might also be taken as an indicator for the popular support of certain core values of socialism. It should also be noted that communism in Bulgaria was not only a Soviet imposition, but had strong native roots: after World War I the "narrow" socialists—the predecessors of the communist party—were the second most successful party in the first elections.[24] When the communists took power in 1944, the political mood in the country was decidedly left-wing following the moral and political bankruptcy of the authoritarian war-time regime. Important ideological claims of the communists were also well connected with culturally embedded values, such as egalitarianism, the urge for education, and morality.

A further source of consent was the significant increase in living standards experienced in Bulgaria, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. Under communist guidance, Bulgaria became an industrial society with relatively decent levels of public welfare, and hundred of thousands of former smallholders experienced upward social mobility. The communist regime, furthermore, showed a certain amount of flexibility in dealing with social practices that did not conform to its political intentions. Collectivized peasants were granted small private plots and the regime often turned a blind eye to "ordinary" citizens' strategy of appropriating state property. These informal arrangements not only gave citizens a sense of autonomy and agency, but also led to what anthropologist Gerald Creed calls the "domestication of revolution."[25] People accommodated the system and modified it in their everyday actions to make it more tolerable. The downside, from the regime's point of view, of its accepting informal—and often illicit—arrangements was the emergence of citizens holding a rather cynical attitude toward the state. People feared the state to some extent, but also tried to trick it to their own benefit.

These ambiguous results of far-reaching informality qualify also Bulgaria for the paradox formulated by Alexei Yurchak regarding the end of communism in the Soviet Union: "Everything was forever, until it was no more."[26] Yurchak's telling phrase alludes to the fact that even a few years before communist rule came to an end, most citizens of the Soviet Union considered the communist

[24] On the emergence of the Bulgarian Communist Party, see Joseph Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria. Origins and Development 1883–1936* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

[25] Gerald W. Creed, *Domesticating Revolution. From Socialist Reform to Ambivalent Transition in a Bulgarian Village* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania University Press, 1998).

[26] Alexei Yurchak, "Soviet Hegemony of Form: Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 3 (2003): 480–510.

Soviet system as ever lasting and without alternative. Not only a few believed seriously in the core values of communism and its superiority. However, after the communist system and even the Soviet Union had been rapidly dismantled, almost no one was surprised. Hence, according to Yurchak, while there had been legitimacy, to some extent it was illusory and not real political capital that could be spent by the regime. A similar model can be applied to Bulgaria as well: until the 1980s, most people seem to have taken communist rule for granted and even subscribed to some of its ideological underpinnings. One-party rule, nevertheless, imploded rapidly: "real socialism" as a configuration of power left the stage almost noiselessly. The reason for this was the multi-dimensional loss of legitimacy, which culminated in the 1980s. This loss made the potential of revolution a real possibility upon which people could act.

Bruce Gilley has shown that legitimacy is the central variable to explain revolutions.[27] For a revolutionary movement to gain ground, the old regime must first experience "legitimation failure," wherein the state loses its *raison d'être* in the eyes of its population. If the political system is no longer considered legitimate, crisis phenomena—such as economic problems—can tip the public mood towards changing the regime. In such a situation, crisis is increasingly seen as the typical outcome of the existing system and thus, the elite loses faith in this system. Relevant social actors, based on such perceptions of reality, then look for political solutions outside the existing structures of power, because they believe incremental reforms will not be enough to salvage their own interests. In a revolutionary situation, oppositional groups provide alternative interpretations of the current situation and connect with the disaffected population. If legitimacy is lost and a certain revolutionary threshold is reached, change can come very quickly—if it is not stopped by violence (as what happened on Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989). The initial protesters participating in anti-regime activities are swiftly joined by an increasing number of fellow citizens. This creates, as has been noted by Stathis N. Kalyvas, the "dynamics of increasingly large and frequent mass demonstrations and the simultaneous process of fragmentation, defection, and loss of confidence within the regime."[28] The speed of revolutionary changes, therefore, is the result of a twofold negative feedback mechanism caused by the loss of legitimacy. On the one hand, the citizens demand change, criticize the government and support the opposition, which makes even more people doubt the morality of the current regime. On the other hand, the erosion of legitimacy undermines the state's capacities, which in turn increases popular dissatisfaction because of growing economic and social problems. It can be argued that the economic problems experienced by Bulgaria in the 1980s were, to some extent, not only the cause but also the consequence of a loss of legitimacy.

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[27] Gilley, *The right to rule*, 164–68.

[28] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The Decay and Breakdown of Communist One-Party Systems," *Annual Review of Political Science*, no. 2 (1999): 323–43, 336.

## Culminating legitimacy crises in the 1980s

In his book on the history of modern Bulgaria, Richard Crampton observes that "by the middle of the 1980s, few people regarded Zhivkov's regime as legitimate."[29] The dynamics of this loss of legitimacy can be illustrated by Sabrina Ramet's threefold model of increasing regime opposition that she developed to describe the case of the GDR: "dissatisfaction," "disaffection," and "dissent."[30] *Dissatisfaction* means the "discontent with certain ways in which certain parts of the system operate or with certain policies of the regime, without necessarily calling into question the legitimacy or optimality of the system."[31] *Disaffection* is defined "as discontent with the system itself without necessarily entailing a belief in one's ability to change the system, but possibly being expressed in social nonconformism or deviance."[32] *Dissent* goes a step further, being "discontent with the system, charged by belief in one's ability to effect change […] and implying an external standard by which the system's performance is evaluated."[33] Hence, there is not only a growth in political consciousness, but also a shift in the frame of reference, from within the system to without.

The Communist Party in Bulgaria considered all three forms of regime discontent as potentially dangerous. In the 1980s, party leaders seem to have been aware that one of their most important sources of power, legitimacy, was waning. At this time external changes were also negatively affecting their rule: Gorbachev's reform policies put pressure on the Bulgarian comrades from at least two angles. First, the Soviet Union began to charge higher prices for oil and other natural resources that were vital for the Bulgarian industry. The Soviets also became less tolerant of the poor quality of imports from Bulgaria. Second, perestroika and glasnost made Bulgarian old-style communism look increasingly awkward. It was quite obvious that the new Soviet leadership considered the Bulgarian party leader an "unwelcome survival of the brezhnevite 'years of stagnation'."[34] Zhivkov's differences with Gorbachev became a major embarrassment for the Bulgarian leader, who in the past had stressed his success in establishing cordial relations with the earlier Soviet leaders Khrushchev and Brezhnev. The changes in the Soviet Union thus are also part of the regime's loss of legitimacy. The unwillingness of Gorbachev to intervene militarily in order to keep the communists in the Warsaw Pact countries in power created the political space for change in the first place. And yet, the most important processes leading to the loss of legitimacy, which opened the gates for revolutionary change, must be seen

[29] Crampton, *Bulgaria*, 384.

[30] Sabrina Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe. The Sources and Consequences of the Great Transformation,* 2nd ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 55–83.

[31] Ibid., 55–56.

[32] Ibid., 56.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Crampton, *Bulgaria*, 382.

in domestic developments. These were, however, also linked to external conditions. Four main areas in which legitimacy evaporated can be defined: 1) everyday life, whose over-politicization led to alienation; 2) economic problems; 3) alienated youth; 4) dissent and political opposition.

### *1. Over-politicization and alienation*

The over-politicization of everyday life and the omnipresence of ideology was a structural reason for the crisis of legitimacy. The Bulgarian Communist Party fell victim to its own agenda of gaining total control: the party pretended to be in charge of everything (as can be seen by the notorious article 1 of the constitution) and developed ideological instructions for even the most mundane actions. Hence, for everything there was a clear template of the correct, "communist" way to act, which led to the political and ideological over-determination of everyday life. The Bulgarian communists, largely un-thwarted by any political opposition in the country, devoted particular effort to make life "socialist."[35] The envisioned "socialist way of life" would result in the internalization of the values of communism, so that people would act correctly in any situation without even thinking; individual aspirations and needs should conform appropriately to the system. The extensive propaganda about the "socialist way of life" thus made clear to everyone what the party-state considered the correct norm of legitimate behavior.[36]

The result of this policy was twofold: On one hand, the citizens held the party-state responsible for all difficulties and offensive behavior, such as shortages of housing and consumer goods, noisy taverns and smoke-filled hospitals, drunken drivers and humdrum cultural programs—to mention just some of the tribulations of daily life. These were some of the problems to which the party and public organizations (above all the Fatherland Front) paid significant attention.[37] But ironically, the party-state, through its propaganda and actions to address such problems, in the first place made them widely known and then showed the public that it was unable to solve them. On the other hand, the party-state's self-declared responsibility for everything and its concern for ideological purity created an exaggerated aversion to "deviant" behavior. Even if absolutely non-political and insignificant acts did not conform to the ideological instructions, they were seen by the party-state as a potential threat. There was no officially recognized space for social behavior outside socialism. An example of this is the nearly

[35] See Ulf Brunnbauer, *Die sozialistische Lebensweise. Ideologie, Politik und Alltag in Bulgarien, 1944–1989* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2007).

[36] Cf. Gilley, *The Right to Rule*, 80.

[37] Ulf Brunnbauer, "Making Bulgarians Socialist. The Fatherland Front in Communist Bulgaria, 1944–89," *East European Politics and Societies* 22, no. 1 (2008): 44–79.

paranoid concern about the "bad" influence of Western pop music, which at times led to attempts to repress its consumption, which in turn only alienated the youth. The interventionist disposition of the party and its obsession with ideological deviations ensured that, in the long run, social discontent became focused and politicized, turning against the party. Anthropologist Katherine Verdery, in an analysis of labor relations in communist Romania, observed,

> The very form of Party rule in the workplace, then, tended to focus, politicize, and turn against it the popular discontent that capitalist societies more successfully disperse, depoliticize, and deflect. In this way, socialism produced a split between 'us' and 'them,' workers and Party leaders, founded on a lively consciousness that 'they' are exploiting 'us.' This consciousness was yet another thing that undermined socialist regimes. To phrase it in Gramscian terms, the lived experience of people in socialism precluded its utopian discourse from becoming hegemonic—precluded, that is, the softening of coercion with consent.[38]

"Socialism" as it actually existed thus produced a consciousness of a divide between "us" (the people) and "them" (the party-state); "they" were exploiting us, so "we" have the right to trick "them." Dissidents could build their counter-ideology on this sentiment, which became deeply rooted in the popular consciousness.

In Bulgaria, there is interesting empirical evidence for the growing alienation of the workers in the one-party state. This was particularly significant, first because the BCP ruled in their name, and secondly, the party's welfare policies addressed the working class in particular. In the 1980s, the Scientific Research Institute for Trade Union Problems (*Nauchno-izsledovatelski institut po profsăjuzni problemi*), which was part of the trade unions, organized annual polls of approximately two thousand workers across the country. These polls asked about the workers' general mood, their attitudes towards the trade unions, and their opinions about current affairs. These reports were confidential and only for internal use. The results were disheartening for the trade unions and the party. Workers did not have a particularly high opinion of the trade unions: "There are no trade unions, they are parasites." "The trade unions in Bulgaria should be called 'Independence' because nothing at all depends on them."[39] In the 1987 poll 28 percent of the workers said they were a member of a trade union only because it was effectively obligatory, 14 percent were members because "everyone else" was, and 6 percent because of the vouchers that the trade unions distributed for vacation homes. The report stated that many trade union members took part in union activities "without enthusiasm" and "only to have their presence counted." Workers did not expect much help from their trade union: two thirds had never

[38] Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 23.

[39] Quoted in Petăr Petrov, "Lebenszufriedenheit bulgarischer Arbeitnehmer: Aussagen aus den 1980er Jahren und heutiges Erinnern," in Klaus Roth, ed., *Arbeitswelt—Lebenswelt. Facetten einer spannungsreichen Beziehung im östlichen Europa* (Berlin: LIT, 2006), 51–62, 52–53.

approached the union organization of their place of work.[40] The 1989 report produced even more sober results:

> There is massive distrust, sharp criticism and a negative evaluation of the trade unions: 'The trade unions exist external to and independent from the needs and interests of the people'; 'they are part of the bureaucratic elite.'[41]

### *2. Economic problems*

An important reason for the growth of discontent in the 1980s was increasing economic problems. Reliable data about economic growth in this period are hard to come by because of the irregularity of communist statistics and the use of the Net Material Product (NMP) to measure economic activity. According to calculations by John Bristow, the average annual growth rate of the NMP was about 3.7 percent in the first half of the decade and 3.0 percent in the period from 1985 to 1989 (which is close to the official figures).[42] But other Western estimates, which are based on GDP calculations, are significantly lower. Industry, which until the 1970s had expanded quickly, grew in the 1981–88 period by an average annual rate of only 4.4 percent. A US study on Bulgaria notes that, "By the late 1980s, Bulgarian industry had completely exhausted the advantages it had used in earlier decades to post impressive growth statistics."[43] The various reform attempts of the previous decades, notably the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) initiated by the Central Committee in 1979 and set in place in 1982, had obviously not achieved the intended goals of raising efficiency and quality. The Bulgarian economy did not succeed in shifting from extensive to intensive growth, while input factors (labor, natural resources, and capital) became increasingly scarce. Agriculture, which had always been neglected by the planners, fared even worse. Its output declined during the Eighth Five Year Plan (1981–85), mainly because of a severe drought in 1984 and 1985. The drought years also affected electricity production, and thus electricity had to be rationed. These "dark nights" had a strong effect on the public's state of mind and played an important role in the demoralization of society and the fading faith in communism.[44]

Not only was the party leadership aware of the ensuing economic crisis, but also the population, which suffered from increasing shortages. In the above-mentioned trade union reports, the share of workers who were dissatisfied with the

[40] Lilia Dimova, "Obshtestvenoto mnenie za profsăjuzite v usloviiata na preustroistvoto" (unpublished report, Nauchno-izsledovatelski institut po profsăjuzni problemi, Sofia, 1987), 10.

[41] Nauchno-izsledovatelski institut po profsăjuzni problemi, "Profsăjuzite prez pogleda na trudeštite se" (unpublished report, Sofia, 1989), 3.

[42] John A. Bristow, *The Bulgarian Economy in Transition* (Cheltenhem: Elgar, 1996), 19.

[43] Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Bulgaria: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), http://countrystudies.us/bulgaria/38.htm (accessed 2 June 2010).

[44] Kalinova and Baeva, *Bălgarskite prehodi*, 221–22.

development of the economy grew constantly. In 1984, 15.7 percent of the polled workers said that the economy was developing "well." In 1986, this had fallen to 9.2 percent. The opposite opinion was shared by 9.9 percent of the workers in 1984, and 29.2 percent in 1986.[45] The economic problems reduced the state's capacity to provide ample welfare benefits. This was also aggravated by the foreign debt (more than $ 4 billion at the beginning of the 1980s). In 1986, two-thirds of the workers expressed dissatisfaction with the slow solutions for vital social problems.[46] The overwhelming majority of workers considered their wages insufficient, and complained about rising prices and increasing wage inequality, because of the party's policy to provide material incentives to raise productivity. Hence, two central tenets of the social contract that were in exchange for the acceptance of communist rule were put into question: the provision of comprehensive welfare by the state and the official commitment to equality—traditionally a highly cherished value in Bulgaria. It is not surprising that trade union reports and the many letters of complaint sent to the authorities reveal a growing frustration of the citizens due to various difficulties encountered in daily life that were a result of the economic crisis.

The ailing economy undermined widely practiced accommodation strategies, such as the appropriation of social benefits and public property or the exploitation of informal economic resources, which had guaranteed a decent standard of living into the 1980s. The regime was also increasingly unable to furnish material privileges to important social groups on whose loyalty it depended. The party-state had to realize the long-term consequences of its promise to increase the material standard of living. The Pandora box of consumerism, which had been opened in the 1960s, could not be closed again.[47] On the contrary, consumer needs were also rising because of the ideological rehabilitation of consumption. The dysfunctional economy, whose light industry regularly received less investment than its capital goods industry, was in no shape to produce enough consumer goods to meet expectations. Party propaganda extolling the virtues of "harmonic, socialist" consumption in contrast to consumption that was "egoistic and capitalist" proved ineffective in limiting the needs. The population's horizon of expectations had widened and they were no longer satisfied with the existing system. People also began to judge their living standards by contemporaneous Western life styles—or what they believed life to be like in the West—rather than by the poverty of past generations. The increase in contacts with the West, on different levels and in different areas, as well as Western radio and TV broadcasts being jammed after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, proved to be a system-subverting force.

[45] Nauchno-izsledovatelski institut po profsăjuzni problemi, "Rabotnicheskoto obshtestveno mnenie v nachaloto na 1987g." (unpublished report, Sofia, 1987), 10.

[46] Ibid., 3.

[47] See Liliana Deianova, *Ochertaniia na mălchanieto. Istoricheska sotsiologiia na kolektivnata pamet* (Sofia: KKh., 2009), 354–55.

### *3. Alienated youth*

Another factor of the de-legitimation of party rule can be found in one of the salient results of the socio-cultural transformation which the party had helped to trigger. Especially in the cities, a new cohort of well-educated young people had emerged. The various life styles they had developed were often at odds with party ideology. This youth was rarely oppositional and often even communist, but their behavior and tastes (for instance, for Western rock music) frightened the party gerontocracy, who sensed "ideological deviations" in anyone listening to the Rolling Stones.[48] For these young people, the founding myths of communist rule were largely irrelevant; they had not experienced the terror of the 1940s. They compared their lives to their peers in the West, not to the generation of their grandparents or parents, who had experienced the poverty of the past. Sociological studies on Bulgarian youth in the 1980s did not reveal an overt orientation towards the West, but highlighted the fact that young people defined communism mainly by their consumer possibilities.[49] Young people generated new visions of individuality and autonomy that were at odds with the collectivist, ascetic morality preached—though often not practiced—by the party leadership. Attempts of the state to rein in the youth culture, such as the closing of discotheques in the 1980s, could not but increase the young people's estranged sentiments. The leading Bulgarian sociologist on youth at that time, Petăr-Emil Mitev, found a distinct alienation of the youth from politics.[50]

Alienation had grown not only out of new value systems, but also problems in the social stratification: young people often saw their chances of advancement limited by old communists who would not step down, or by people who had acquired good positions not due to qualifications but to their family or party networks. Sociological studies already in the 1970s revealed a decrease in social mobility; the social classes increasingly reproduced themselves. Especially the middle class, upon which the functioning of the system largely depended, developed strategies to barricade itself against worker and peasant upward movement. In the 1950s and 1960s, however, upward social mobility had been an important source of legitimacy, when hundreds of thousands of peasants moved to the towns and many workers were promoted to white collar jobs or rose in the party hierarchy. Internal reports and individual complaints in the 1980s reveal the widespread discontent of young people who could not find a job commensurate to their education. Citizens often criticized the allocation of jobs on the basis of nepotism and clientelism. Particularly worrying for the regime was the increasing frustration of the technical intelligentsia, as they were essential for managing the economy. Young technocrats were often faced by incompetent party-bureaucrats,

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[48] Cf. Karin Taylor, *Let's Twist Again. Youth and Leisure in Socialist Bulgaria* (Vienna: LIT, 2006).

[49] Andrei Raichev, *Mladata lichnost i malkata pravda* (Sofia: Narodna mladezh, 1985), 81.

[50] Quoted in Taylor, *Let's Twist Again*, 58.

which made them lose faith in the ability of the party to solve the problems of the country. In a confidential report of the trade unions in 1987, company directors were frank:

> We must admit that what we have created is not socialism. We have created a bureaucratic state. How should we fight the daily grind, the good connections [*vrăzki*], nepotism [*rodninstvoto*], the ruined economy? […] I have no idea how the leaders in the most important echelons of power struggle against each other and against others, and whether they will ever admit that they have erred.[51]

A growing number of people, especially younger ones—those who were supposed to "build communism"—were not only dissatisfied with the system, they also did not believe in the possibility of reform. This disaffected group rather looked towards system changes to fulfill their ambitions. Quite a number of young communists in the middle levels of the power hierarchy hoped that a radical transformation would allow them to translate political and symbolic capital into economic capital. It is therefore not surprising that a high percentage of the post-1989 Bulgarian elite stem from the former communist youth organization Komsomol or other party bodies. But while these disaffected young people provided the social base for anti-regime mass mobilization, they were not the first to demand an end to communist rule. This was carried out by the dissidents.

### *4. Political opposition and dissent*

Political dissent in communist Bulgaria was long insignificant, especially if compared to countries such as Poland or Czechoslovakia.[52] Nevertheless, active opposition played an important role in the end of communist rule in Bulgaria. The first to put up real resistance were members of the Turkish minority, who opposed—also by violent means—the forceful assimilation campaign that had started in 1984.[53] It appears that this campaign, in which Turks were required to take Bulgarian names and all symbols of Turkish (Muslim) culture were outlawed, did not even appeal to the majority of the population, despite the fact that the communists had quite successfully played the nationalist card to create consent in the previous two decades. The forced assimilation of the Turkish population and their increasing resistance also led to protests among Bulgarian intellectuals in 1988, who demanded that human rights be observed. The mass emigration of Turks from May to August 1989, when some 350,000 people left to Turkey,

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[51] Dimova, *Obshtestvenoto mnenie za profsăjuzite*, 7.

[52] Nataliia Hristova, "Spetsifika na bălgarskoto 'disidenstvo'," *Istoricheski pregled* 60, no. 3–4 (2004): 115–40.

[53] For more on the so-called rebirth process, see Mihail Gruev and Aleksei Kal'onski, *"Văzroditelniiat protses": Miusiulmanskite obshtnosti i komunisticheskiiat rezhim: politiki, reaktsii i posleditsi* (Sofia: Institut za izsledvane na blizkoto minalo, 2008).

showed the entire Bulgarian population that something had seriously gone wrong. It also caused severe labor shortages in the affected areas.

In 1988–89 the regime faced increasingly vocal opposition in parts of the intelligentsia. It began to lose the support of this crucial group, which for decades the party had incorporated into the system relatively successfully. It is very likely that the developments in the Soviet Union played an important role here, since Bulgarian intellectuals traditionally followed Russian media. In November 1988, the dissident organization Club for the Support of Glasnost and Perestroika in Bulgaria was founded by prominent intellectuals at the University of Sofia. Among its founding members were dissidents like the philosopher Zheliu Zhelev, but even more numerous were party members, who as a result were expelled from the party. Also in 1988, the first independent trade union, *Podkrepa*, was founded. As well, a number of other informal organizations for the protection of human rights were established in 1988, all of them very small and without much direct impact. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the disappearing fear and the emerging civil society.

Even more forceful were ecology protests, which started in the town of Ruse on the Danube River. For years Ruse had suffered from suffocating pollution emitted by a Romanian chemical plant on the other side of the river. The pollution had caused a dramatic increase in various diseases among the population of Ruse, especially its children. From the autumn of 1987 regular demonstrations were held, organized mainly by mothers, and petitions were sent by the citizens of Ruse calling on the authorities to act. Even a documentary film (*Dishai!* "Breath!") was made about the ecological disaster in Ruse. On the occasion of its premiere on 8 March 1988, the first Bulgarian dissident organization, the Social Committee for the Environmental Protection of Ruse, was founded. The events in Ruse inspired environmentalists in Sofia to establish the organization *Ekoglasnost* on 4 April 1989, which aimed at informing the public about environmental pollution in Bulgaria, much of it caused by industrial plants. *Ekoglasnost* became famous for its protests during the CSCE Meeting on the Protection of the Environment in Sofia from 16 October to 3 November 1989. The brutal suppression of this demonstration by the militia in the city center was a major embarrassment for Bulgaria, not only in front of the world media, but also domestically: it showed that the regime was ready to use violence against people who demonstrated for a goal that the party also propagated, that is, the protection of the environment. This made environmental protests even more dangerous in the eyes of the party, since these people could hardly be labeled "counterrevolutionaries," "anti-social elements," or "foreign agents." Their protest illustrated the collapse of faith in the ability of the regime to solve immediate problems, as well as the rise of a civil society. The demonstrations in Sofia in October marked the beginning of an opposition mobilization that would play an important role in pushing the regime for real change after Todor Zhivkov's exit on 10 November 1989. The "revolutionary threshold" in terms of the willingness to engage in anti-regime protests had been reached.

## Conclusion

The Bulgarian Communist Party was, of course, aware of the creeping loss of its legitimacy and what this meant for its claim to sole responsibility. The sociologist Evgenii Dainov expressed this succinctly:

> It is something completely different to have total control in the moment when your opponents get more vocal; conditions no longer allow the application of mass terror, and society no longer accepts your legitimacy because of your failure in all areas.[54]

As a consequence, the party tried to decrease its visibility in order to extract itself from the criticism frontline. The "July conception" of 1987, adopted by the Central Committee, reduced the responsibility of basic party committees and gave more flexibility to state authorities and enterprises, on paper at least. Reforms in the labor code and the economic organization also sought to increase the autonomy of companies. The self-management of workers was also to be expanded. For a few years, decentralization was in vogue. The party hoped that these reforms would reduce the alienation of workers and increase their willingness to put an effort into raising productivity. But the reforms went nowhere. First of all, the party was not ready to really relinquish power, so many reform measures were not even implemented, and others, especially those concerning decentralization, were revoked only a few years later. A last-minute attempt at economic liberalization in January 1989 (*ukaz* no. 56) was also not really implemented (although it did prepare the ground for managers and influential party members to appropriate state capital).[55] The only result of Bulgarian pseudo-perestroika was an increase in administrative chaos. The regime proved incapable of adapting to rapidly changing conditions.[56]

The reforms also failed because they met widespread skepticism among the people. Apathy and disillusionment had reached such proportions that only very few people were interested in getting actively involved in the party's program for change. The 1987 trade unions report on workers opinions portrays a deeply alienated society:

> Instances of the violation of labor discipline can be observed ever more frequently; there is a decrease in the labor effort by workers and an increase in labor turnover. Several information sources mention apathy and skepticism, the withdrawal into personal life and 'doubts that the ideas would become reality.' Among the working people—managers as well as workers—the standpoint of 'listening and waiting,' of 'the curious occasional observer' prevails. 'Those above have brought us into this mess, they should get it right again'—one hears such opinions often, if the conversation turns to the execution of the reconstruction [*preustrojstvo*].[57]

[54] Evgenii Dainov, "Reformirane na nereformiruemoto—Bălgarskata komunisticheska partiia i predizvikatelstva na 1980-te godini," in: Evgenii Dainov and Deian Kiuranov, eds., *Za promenite… Sbornik* (Sofia: Tsentur za liberalni strategii, 1997) 11–40, 25.

[55] Kalinova and Baeva, *Bălgarskite prehodi*, 232.

[56] Cf. Kalyvas, "The Decay and Breakdown of Communist One-Party Systems," 331–32.

[57] Dimova, *Obshtestvenoto mnenie za profsăjuzite,* 5.

Workers were not enthusiastic about self-management either, as they sensed that this was mere rhetoric. In a representative survey in 1988, only 20 percent of the workers showed a "strong willingness" to become involved in workers' self-management; 90 percent believed that they had no or only little influence on their company's management.[58] Even Todor Zhivkov complained in the Politburo about the party's loss of trust among the population and that almost no one was willing to get involved in the proclaimed changes.

The party's half-baked reform attempts made the inherent contradictions of the system only more obvious. Zhivkov's slogans—"individual initiative, self-management, rule of law, democracy, human rights"—revealed the shortcomings of "real socialism," which for more than four decades had propagated, but obviously not achieved, these goals. His slogans even pointed to a different order. The more the party imitated democracy and a market economy, the more citizens' expectations increased, but the party could not meet these expectations if they did not surrender their power, so frustration grew. In a way, the reforms—as limited as they were—undermined the party's dominant role. The party had lost both its monopoly on the interpretation of reality and the population's belief in its problem-solving capacity. The gulf between ideology and lived realities had become too wide to be bridged by policy adaptations, informal arrangements and concessions to the population. It had become clear to everyone that much of what happened did so not according to the party's plan, but rather despite it, or even against it.

At the end of the 1980s, the question was no longer whether communist rule would end, but when and how. Had the Bulgarian communists really read Marx, they would have seen the writing on the wall: the relations of production had clearly obstructed the development of the productive forces, and from the fold of "real socialism," its own negation had come into existence.

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[58] Derek C. Jones and Mieke Meurs, "Worker Participation and Worker Self Management in Bulgaria," *Comparative Economic Studies* 33, no. 4 (1991): 47–82.

Anneli Ute Gabanyi

# THE ROMANIAN REVOLUTION

More than twenty years after the events that led to the violent fall of the communist dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu on 22 December 1989, the Romanian revolution is still something of an enigma and shrouded in mystery and mystification. Although more than four hundred books[1] and innumerable articles have been written on this topic—by the actors involved, contemporary witnesses, as well as by Romanian and foreign historians—there are still profound disagreements between them about the actual events and how to interpret them. A major issue in the debate is whether what occurred in Romania was a revolution at all, and if so, what kind of revolution. Other divisive questions concern how or why violence was used during the various stages of the revolution, the goals pursued by the protagonists of the revolution, and last but not least, the role—if any—played by external actors in the process. A major divide continues to persist between the protagonists of the anti-communist protest movement and the anti-Ceauşescu dissidents who took power after the dictator's fall. The scholarly community examining the topic is split between researchers who question the reliability of Romanian sources and those who are principally not opposed to them.

Today, there is a broad archival basis available in Romania for research on the 1989 revolution. The results of the inquiries into the revolutionary events produced by two special committees of the Romanian Senate between 1990–92 and

[1] Here is a necessarily incomplete selection of books on the Romanian revolution: Michel Castex, *Un mensonge gros comme le siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990); Ruxandra Cesereanu, *Decembrie '89. Deconstrucţia unei revoluţii.* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2009); Emil Constantinescu, *Adevărul despre România (1989–2004)* (Bucharest: Editura Universalia, 2004); Dennis Deletant, *Ceauşescu and the Securitate. Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965–1989* (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1995); Daniela Veronica Guşă de Drăgan, *Condamnat la adevăr—General Ştefan Guşă* (Bucharest: RAO International Publishing Company, 2004); Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution. Rumänien zwischen Diktatur und Demokratie* (Munich: Piper, 1990); idem, *Systemwechsel in Rumänien. Von der Revolution zur Transformation* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998); Radu Portocala, *Autopsie du coup d'ètat roumain: au pays du mensonge triomphant* (Paris: Kalman Lévy, 1990); Dumitru Preda and Mihai Retegan, *1989. Principiul Dominoului. Prăbuşirea regimurilor comuniste europene* (Bucharest: Editura Fundaţiei Culturale Române, 2000); Peter Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005); Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Istoria loviturilor de stat în România, vol. 4, Revoluţia din decembrie 1989—o tragedie românească* (Bucharest: RAO International Publishing Company, 2005); Alex Mihai Stoenescu*, Cronologia evenimentelor din decembrie 1989* (Bucharest: RAO International Publishing House, 2009); Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

1992–96 have been published, as have a considerable number of documents from the archives of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Secret Services and the Ministry of Defense. The Institute of the Romanian Revolution of December 1989, set up in 2005, is conducting systematic research on the topic.[2]

## Collective memories of previous uprisings

Romania's history under communist rule is not marked by "eruptive" uprisings, but by a sort of societal "magma" involving a fundamental rejection of Marxist-Leninist ideology coupled with a historically based mistrust of the Soviet Union, whose armies had imposed the communist system in the country. Several factors account for this. One is language and culture—Romania is the only country of the former Soviet bloc where a Romanic language is spoken and whose culture is closely connected to the culture of Western Europe. During the first years of Soviet occupation, a partisan movement existed in the mountain areas of Romania; its final defeat came only after the suppression of the Hungarian uprising of 1956. There is, however, a tradition of socially motivated uprisings in communist Romania. These include the miners' strike of the Jiu Valley in 1977 and the 1987 workers' demonstration in Braşov, both put down without bloodshed. The Braşov demonstration in particular is thought to have served as a kind of dress rehearsal for the Timişoara uprising, which marked the beginning of the 1989 revolution. Whereas in November 1987,[3] the massive workers' protests in Braşov were quelled by the regime through a show of force and subsequent arrests, the Timişoara protests developed into a violent uprising after the first protesters were killed or wounded. And the Romanian collective memory recalls a number of historical coups d'état. Among the best known in a series of conspiracies is the coup that led to the deposition in 1866 of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the architect of the unification of the Romanian principalities, and the coup d'état of 23 August 1944, through which King Michael, supported by several political leaders, overthrew the head of state, Marshall Ion Antonescu.

But interestingly, the protagonists of the 1989 revolutionary coup did not call on this aspect of Romania's political tradition. Instead, they looked even further back, explicitly and insistently referring to the French revolution of 1789 in order to accredit the idea of the Romanian revolution of 1989 as being a classical popular uprising, and to support the political myth of the allegedly spontaneous "emanation" of its leaders from the "chaos" following Ceauşescu's arrest.

[2] For an excellent overview, see Ioan Scurtu, *La Révolution roumaine de 1989, dans le contexte international de l'époque* (Bucharest: Institut de la Révolution Roumaine, 2008), 7–22.

[3] Marius Oprea and Stejărel Olaru, *Ziua care nu se uită. 15 noiembrie 1987, Braşov* (Bukarest: Polirom, 2002), with a list of those taken into custody.

### The structural and long-term causes of the Romanian revolution

The East European revolutions of 1989 were revolutions of a historically new type. Their most exceptional feature was that they did not represent individual national phenomena, but they were links in a chain of processes that revolutionized the Soviet-dominated system in Eastern Europe. The revolution of the Soviet bloc, caused by a general crisis in the communist system, was part and parcel of a geopolitical revolution facilitated by the rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, which had led to substantial changes in the political architecture of the entire world.[4]

Despite a number of common features in the 1989 East European revolutions, their specific course was marked by historically, politically and socially determined differences. Whereas the transition of power in Poland and Hungary was negotiated between representatives of the communist rulers and the opposition in a manner reminiscent of the Spanish model of the so-called Moncloa Pact of 1978, or was a non-violent coup de parti, as in the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, the—in the end violent—overthrow of the Ceauşescu regime, which was originally envisaged to follow the non-violent example of the 1974 Portuguese revolution, makes it a singular case.[5] Only in Romania did a violent military coup d'état take place during which the communist head of state was executed.

In more than one respect, the unique mode of the transition of power in Romania was a direct consequence of the "Romanian deviation" in its relations with the Soviet Union, as had been pursued by Romania since the 1960s. The Soviet leadership became increasingly aware of the danger represented by Romania's autonomous course in economic and foreign policy, not only for the stability of the communist regime within Romania itself, but also for the coherence of the Soviet bloc as a whole. After having successfully negotiated the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in 1958, the Romanian communist leadership, at that time headed by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, began to oppose Soviet pressure for a larger degree of integration and specialization of the CMEA countries, and attempted to create closer economic ties to the developed Western countries. At the same time, Romania also embarked on a more autonomous policy in its foreign and security policy, trying to distance itself from the Soviet imperial power.

In an internal power struggle following the death of Gheorghiu-Dej in 1965, the supporters of Romania's autonomous course headed by Nicolae Ceauşescu gained the upper hand over those who supported a return to the Soviet fold. While

[4] See an excellent detailed analysis of these worldwide changes in: Pierre Grosser, *1989. L'année où le monde a basculé* (Paris: Perrin, 2009).

[5] In an interview with Alex Mihai Stoenescu, Victor Stănculescu pointed out that "the main scenario was patterned on the Portuguese model: i.e. a short-term military regime followed by a democratic regime supported by the army." Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *In sfârşit, Adevărul… Generalul Victor Atanasie Stănculescu în dialog cu Alex Mihai Stoenescu* (Bucharest: RAO International Publishing Company, 2009), 73.

trying to remove his pro-Soviet opponents from powerful party and state positions, Ceauşescu accelerated the independent foreign policy course inaugurated by his predecessor. In order to strengthen his hold on political power, Ceauşescu allowed a certain degree of de-Stalinization and de-Sovietization in the cultural field and liberalized contacts with the West. He also took steps to co-opt the young technocratic and cultural intelligentsia and to reconcile the old national-minded elites who had been imprisoned or discriminated against in the 1950s. With a speech held at a mass rally in Bucharest on 21 August 1968 criticizing the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, in which Romanian troops had not taken part, Ceauşescu achieved a degree of unanimity between the party, intellectuals and the population that was unknown in the other bloc countries, where de-Sovietization started only after 1989.

There are four main elements that led to the downfall of the Ceauşescu regime: the impact of the crisis of Soviet-style communism on Romania, the effects of the world economic crisis, Romania's loss of Western support, and the emergence of domestic opposition.

### *The restructuring of the Soviet bloc*

From the mid-1970s, the communist system, which had been imposed on the peoples of the Soviet Union and exported to the countries in Eastern Europe that had been occupied by the Red Army at the end of World War II, went through a deep crisis. The Soviet and East European economies were clearly unable to keep pace with the technological progress registered in the West. Moreover, they were deeply affected by the worldwide crisis in raw materials and on the financial markets. East European leaders expected the Soviet Union to help them overcome the economic and financial crises, whereby they asked for more deliveries of oil, gas and raw materials in exchange for products they were unable to sell on Western markets. The Soviet Union, however, was no longer able or willing to continue this traditional CMEA policy, and requested its partners to pay for such deliveries in hard currency and on the basis of world market prices. Because of the economic crisis, these regimes could thus no longer live up to their vigorous promises of economic welfare, and failed to honor the social contract that had been tacitly concluded with the populations of their respective countries. The Marxist-Leninist ideology had lost legitimacy and the grasp of the communist parties in power was no longer left unchallenged.

Yurii Andropov, a former KGB chief and CC secretary in charge of relations with the "fraternal" East European parties, who followed Leonid Brezhnev at the helm of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was well aware of the specter of a three-pronged revolt looming in the member countries of the Soviet economic and military bloc: revolts directed against the communist system, against the

respective political regimes, and against the Soviet imperial power. In order to prevent an outbreak of revolts or a systemic breakdown of the communist system in these countries, Andropov and Gorbachev were determined to implement a coordinated policy of restructuring the economies of the Soviet bloc in accordance with Soviet strategies, without, however, doing anything that would endanger the communist system.[6]

After his advent to power in 1985, Gorbachev pursued what was described as the "Gorbachev doctrine": politically supporting reformist forces in those countries where the communist rulers opposed Moscow's intra-bloc and domestic policies.[7] According to recently discovered Soviet documents, Gorbachev held a speech at the 6 October 1988 Politburo meeting in which he stated that socialism was in a profound crisis and thus that all the communist regimes had to introduce perestroika-style reforms in order to survive:

> A number of countries have followed our example, or even preceded us on the road of deep reforms. Others, such as the GDR, Romania or North Korea, still fail to recognize the need for such reforms—but the reasons for that are rather political, since the present leadership is unwilling to change anything. In reality, all these countries need change. We don't say this publicly, lest we are accused of an attempt to impose perestroika on friends, but the fact is: there are clear signs of a forthcoming crisis, and thus radical reforms are required all over the socialist world. In this sense, the factor of personalities becomes one of huge significance. [...] Those who stubbornly refuse to follow the call of the times only push the illness deep inside and greatly aggravate its future course. That concerns us very directly. We may have abandoned the rights of the "Big Brother" of the socialist world, but we cannot abandon our role as its leader. Objectively, it shall always belong to the Soviet Union, as the strongest country of socialism and the birthplace of the October Revolution.[8]

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[6] In a conversation in March 1989 with Károly Grósz, the secretary general of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Soviet leader emphasized that "we clearly have to draw boundaries, thinking about others and ourselves at the same time. Democracy is much needed, and interests have to be harmonized. The limit, however, is the safekeeping of socialism and assurance of stability." See the Report for the members of the Political Committee, 29 March 1989, MOL M-KS-288-11/4458o.e., in Csaba Békés, Malcolm Byrne, Melinda Kalmár, Zoltán Ripp, Miklós Vörös, eds., *Political Transition in Hungary, 1989–1990: A Compendium of Declassified Documents and Chronology of Events* (Washington and Budapest: National Security Archive, Cold War History Research Center, and 1956 Institute, 1999), 6.

[7] "Le nouveau leader du Kremlin visait à l'élimination des vieux dirigeants des pays socialistes et à leur remplacement par des personnes jeunes, prêtes à appliquer la perestroika. […] Le remplacement des leaders conservateurs, souhaité par Gorbachev, a été soutenu par les médias occidentaux." Ioan Scurtu, *La Révolution roumaine de 1989, dans le contexte international de l'époque* (Bucharest: Institut de la Révolution Roumaine, 2008), 6, 8. See also Anneli Ute Gabanyi, "Gorbačev in Bukarest: Rumänisch-sowjetische Differenzen treten offen zutage," *Südosteuropa* 36, no. 5 (1987): 267–75; idem, "Rumänien und Gorbačev," in Walter Althammer, ed., *Südosteuropa in der Ära Gorbačev. Auswirkungen der sowjetischen Reformpolitik auf die südosteuropäischen Länder* (Munich: Sagner, 1987), 75–82.

[8] Cf. Jamie Glazov, "Symposium: Secrets of Communism's "Collapse", 23 September 2010, http://frontpagemag.com/2010/jamie-glazov/symposium-secrets-of-communism%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Ccollapse%E2%80%9D/ (accessed 12 September 2013).

Two days before Ceauşescu's fall, Radio Moscow broadcast a statement in Romanian made by the Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, stating that "the internal processes in Romania are beginning to bear consequences for inter-state relations," bringing the potential of "tarnishing the socialist ideals."[9] On 21 December, the same radio station aired interviews of three deputies of the Soviet Supreme Soviet (in session at the time) charging Ceauşescu of "no longer being a socialist (having shot at his people) and of being an opponent of Soviet perestroika and of the inexorable process of democratization in Eastern Europe."[10] At a press conference during his visit early in January, just a few days after the new leaders had taken power in Bucharest, Shevardnadze referred to past Soviet-Romanian disagreements in the area of foreign policy and the Soviet reform process. Ceauşescu, he said, had isolated Romania from the East-European reform process, and in the end he had resorted to openly criticizing it. However, now that the last non-conformist regime in Eastern Europe had collapsed, Shevardnadze was hopeful "that the reconstruction and modernization of Comecon and the Warsaw Pact could start."

Already in 1983, Romania had been perceived as the weakest link in the Soviet imperial chain. It was the country where social revolt would most likely be directed against the communist system as such; indeed, it seemed possible for the country to leave the Soviet bloc and turn to the West.[11] In February 1989, an investigation under the aegis of the social scientist Oleg Bogomolov painted a pessimistic scenario for Romania. As stated in the report submitted by Gorbachev's advisor, if the financial means set free after the repayment of Romania's debts were not used to raise the living standards of the population, a

> social explosion cannot be excluded. At a moment when the renovating processes going on in the other socialist countries have not yet proved the feasibility of the reform policies, there is a danger that there will be a decisive turn toward the West (which also means its leaving the Warsaw Treaty) in this country, whose population has liberated itself from socialist values and been traditionally educated in the spirit of having a common fate with the Latin world.[12]

Even worse from the Soviet point of view, the Bogomolov commission did not exclude the possibility of an anti-Ceauşescu revolt of "the leading class" that would result in "changes from the top," a revolt, one is left to understand, which would lead to the same results.

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9 Radio Moscow in Romanian, 20 December 1989. Cf. Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution*, 121.

10 Radio Moscow in Romanian, 21 December 1989. Cf. Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution*, 122.

11 See Oleg Gordiewsky and Christopher Andrew, *KGB. Die Geschichte seiner Auslandsoperationen von Lenin bis Gorbatschow* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1990), 824.

12 See Dumitru Preda and Mihai Retegan, *1989. Principiul Dominoului: Prăbușirea regimurilor comuniste europene* (Bucharest: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 2000), 18–20.

### *The impact of the world economic crisis*

The crisis that rocked the world economy in the 1970s was another determining factor. Under its impact, the three fundamental pillars of Romania's economic and trade policy—avoidance of dependency on the Soviet Union, reliance on raw materials imported from Third World countries and financial support from developed Western countries—collapsed. The Romanian economy, which needed massive imports of crude oil for its oversized refinery capacities that had been built with Western loans, encountered difficulties after deliveries from its main providers stopped as a result of the Iran-Iraq war. The country could not expect to get Soviet support, since it had distanced itself from the CMEA mechanism of energy deliveries at sub-market prices in exchange for non-competitive goods. Last but not least, Romania could no longer consolidate its debts at Western banks, which had panicked as a result of the Polish crisis in 1980. After its Western creditors stopped granting or guaranteeing further loans, and after the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund for further loans had been rejected as unacceptable by the Romanian government, Romania—unlike other East European countries with considerably higher per capita indebtedness such as Hungary or Poland—was forced to repay its foreign debts.

The drastic cuts in crude oil and raw material imports led to a severe reduction of industrial production and hence in energy exports to Western countries. In order to procure the hard currency needed to repay its debt, Romania increased its exports of food to the detriment of domestic consumption, and reduced the imports of consumer goods, policies that severely affected the living standards of the population. The harsh austerity program imposed by the regime included food rationing, radical cuts in the private consumption of energy, and wage reductions. When Ceauşescu triumphantly announced the successful repayment of its hard currency debt in March 1989, the Romanian population had reached a degree of economic need, social misery and depression unknown anywhere else in the bloc. Any earlier support for Ceauşescu was gone, and the Romanian society as a whole wanted a change.

### *The loss of Western support*

The Soviet policy of reshaping its relations inside the Soviet bloc and implementing perestroika-style reforms in the East European states was possible only in the context of a redefinition of the relationship between the great powers in the East and the West. After having successfully negotiated a treaty in 1987 with Mikhail Gorbachev that would eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles, the United States signaled willingness to back the new Soviet leader and to respect Moscow's security interests as did other Western states such as Britain and France.

The repercussions of this Western policy change dealt a major blow to the Ceauşescu regime. During the Cold War era, Romania's foreign policy, which had obstructed the deeper integration of the Warsaw Pact, had been attributed a kind of "nuisance value" by the NATO countries. But in the light of Gorbachev's "new political thinking," Ceauşescu's deviations from the political and ideological positions of the Soviet Union were no longer relevant. Instead, Romania was increasingly perceived as a factor that disturbed the process of rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the Western powers. Western governments and financial institutions were no longer ready to grant Romania the trade privileges it had enjoyed earlier, and the European Community stalled negotiations with Romania on a new trade agreement. In 1989, Romania, once a forerunner in relations between the CMEA countries and the European Community, was now the only European CMEA state that had not yet applied to establish diplomatic relations with this body. Similarly, the US government was no longer ready to extend the Most Favored Nation's Clause to Romania's "repressive regime." In order to preempt the US decision, Romania unilaterally renounced the clause in 1988. Western media turned their focus on the low living standards of the population, the violation of human and nationality rights, and the treatment of regime opponents in the country. In the CSCE and at the United Nations, Romania's human rights and minority record came increasingly under fire from both East and West. The loss of Western support for Ceauşescu's policies dealt another heavy blow to his image at home.

### *The emergence of domestic opposition*

Ceauşescu's nationalist anti-Soviet rhetoric was the main reason why a dissident movement was late in developing in Romania, and also why so many dissident figures were connected to the pro-Soviet communist elites who had been removed from the center of power in the 1960s. Following Romania's 1968 criticism of the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union set in motion all the levers at its disposal to destabilize the restive Romanian leadership internally. In 1969, Moscow initiated the "Operation Dniester," whose goal was to win over Romanian officers to engage in an attempt to topple Ceauşescu, and "in case this coup was not successful by itself, to find a pretext for the Soviets to get involved."[13] Not surprisingly, the first signs of organized opposition against the Ceauşescu regime appeared in the armed forces. Although Romania had discontinued sending its leading party, military and security officials for training to the Soviet Union in the early 1960s—a common practice that the rest of the Warsaw Pact member states observed until 1990—there were

[13] Ion Mihai Pacepa, a high ranking defector from the Romanian Department of External Information, in a television interview on Hungarian Duna Television. *Jurnalul Național*, 3 March 2004.

still a large number of senior officers in Romania who had studied in the Soviet Union. In order to counteract the perceived threat to the country's foreign policy as well as to his own power, Ceauşescu undertook a thorough restructuring of Romania's defense system. After a first military coup attempt led by General Ioan Şerb had failed in 1971, a new defense law was adopted in 1972. In 1974, the new Romanian Constitution transferred the supreme command over the national armed forces to the newly created position of state president, i.e. to Ceauşescu. A new Romanian military doctrine based on the concept of the people's war marked another step in Romania distancing itself further from the Warsaw Pact. In the course of the army's reorganization, officers detected or suspected of conspiring against Ceauşescu, including those who were of Russian, Jewish or Hungarian origin, who had studied in the Soviet Union, or were married to Soviet wives, were removed from leadership positions in the army. Despite these precautionary measures, military coup attempts are reported to have taken place in 1971, 1976, 1983, 1984 and 1985. All, however, could be prevented. The officers involved in these attempts were removed from active service and dispatched for civil work.

With the onset of the debt crisis in Romania in the early 1980s, opposition to Ceauşescu's policies began to be voiced also by national-minded officers. They were antagonized by the regime's preferential treatment of the state police (Securitate) over the military, cuts in defense spending, and reductions in the higher technology needed for the national defense industry, and were against the massive use of army manpower in agriculture and infrastructure construction projects.[14]

Despite their preferential treatment, dissatisfaction was also brewing in the secret services, the external information services in particular. Following the defection to the United States in 1978 of Mihai Pacepa, a Soviet-trained old-standing Securitate official and deputy head of the Department for External Information (*Directia de Informatii a Armatei*), this department was reduced to complete disarray from which it never recovered. It is presumed that a considerable number of leading officials in this department were won over by foreign, mainly Western intelligence services. In the final phase of the Ceauşescu regime, when its collapse seemed unavoidable, even members of the internal Securitate service, well aware of the surge in dissatisfaction in the country, began distancing themselves from the regime.

Support for Ceauşescu was also dwindling within the Romanian Communist Party. Party activists were increasingly upset by reductions in their material privileges and by his policy of cadre rotation, which led to an unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of the "Ceauşescu clan," made up of Nicolae, his

[14] This author analyzed the conflict between Ceauşescu and the military at an early stage. Romanian Situation Report 5, Radio Free Europe research, 17 March 1983, reprinted in Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *The Ceauşescu Cult* (Bucharest: The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, 2000), 391–96.

wife Elena, their son Nicu and a small group of loyalists. As a result, the ranks of the old, pro-Soviet party cadres who had been marginalized by Ceauşescu were strengthened by dissatisfied members of the younger, technocratic party elites. A growing number of intellectuals and creative artists who had been won over by Ceauşescu's anti-Sovietism during the 1960s now raised their voice against the ideological hardening, the recourse to nationalist manipulation, and the excessive personality cult of Ceauşescu designed in the wake of his so-called cultural mini-revolution. A rapprochement took place between frustrated technocratic and cultural elites and disgruntled anti-Ceauşescu party activists, as well as army and secret service officers. Even a member of the CC Political Executive Committee and vice-chairman of the State Council, Gheorghe "Gogu" Rădulescu, supported a group of prominent dissident writers, who met regularly at his country house in Comana, south of Bucharest.[15]

## Chronology of events

The first attempt to begin a popular revolt occurred on 14 December 1989, but it ended in failure. Organized by an underground group called Romanian Popular Front (*Frontul Popular Roman*) in the north-eastern city of Iaşi, its leaders were immediately arrested.

The next day, 15 December, a Reformist pastor belonging to the Hungarian minority, László Tőkés,[16] who had gained quite a bit of notoriety after protesting, in a secret interview granted to a Canadian television station in August 1989, Ceauşescu's policies and plans of razing villages inhabited by mostly Hungarian- and German-speaking citizens, was to be evicted from his home in Timişoara. He called on his parishioners to demonstrate against his eviction on the square in front of his house. In order to defuse the situation, the Timişoara mayor assured Tőkés that the official order for his eviction had been revoked.

The next day, Tőkés tried to calm the people who had gathered in front of his house. However, when the number of persons on the square grew after some young demonstrators blocked a nearby streetcar line, the protests escalated and slogans against Ceauşescu's dictatorship could be heard. First acts of vandalism occurred, culminating in an attack on the county party headquarters.

[15] According to Virgil Măgureanu, the first head of the post-1989 Romanian Information Service, Gogu Rădulescu was a high-ranking KGB spy who had been infiltrated into Romania to assist the so-called cultural dissidence, which supported regime change in Romania. See "Măgureanu şi agenţii KGB," *Ziua*, 30 October 2006.

[16] László Tökés, born in 1952 to a family of ethnic Hungarians and a pastor of the Reformed Church, was known from the early 1980s as a dissident in the Ceauşescu regime. In his sermons and in interviews with Western media, he protested the official Romanian program of rural development and planning projects. Cf. Marius Mioc, *Revoluţia fără mistere. Începutul revoluţiei române; cazul László Tökés* (Timisoara: Editura Almanahul Banatului 2002).

On 17 December, Ceauşescu ordered the local party leaders to proceed with the eviction of Pastor Tőkés, illegally proclaimed a state of emergency in Timişoara, and dispatched the generals Stefan Guşă,[17] from the Ministry of Defense, and Emil Macri, from Securitate, to Timişoara to restore order in the city. On the same day, a meeting of the Political Executive Committee of the Romanian Communist Party took place in Bucharest. Party Secretary General Ceauşescu announced he was going to take over the command of the army himself. He accused Minister of Defense Vasile Milea, Minister of the Interior Tudor Postelnicu, and the commander of the Securitate troops of having disregarded his order to shoot the demonstrators, and threatened to put the three before a firing squad. When several members of the Committee voiced their disagreement with these drastic measures, Ceauşescu offered his resignation ("Elect another secretary general!"), but he was persuaded to stay. In the course of the violent clashes between demonstrators and the army in Timişoara, between 16 and 20 December, 72 persons died in Timişoara and 253 were wounded.[18]

The next day, 18 December, convinced that the situation in Timişoara was under control, Ceauşescu left for an official visit to Iran where he planned to sign an important economic contract on the delivery of a considerable quantity of crude oil to Romania. However, the popular uprising in Timişoara took a new turn, with workers from the large industrial plants[19] joining the protesters. In order to cover up the previous day's killings, Ceauşescu's wife Elena, together with Minister of the Interior Postelnicu and Party Secretary Emil Bobu, ordered most corpses to be flown to Bucharest, where they were cremated. Despite the nearly total isolation of Timişoara and the closing of the borders with Hungary and Yugoslavia, there were reports in international media that the clashes had resulted in thousands of victims. In contrast, the Romanian media kept silent about the events.

On 19 December, the protesting workers requested the military to withdraw from Timişoara's streets. Party officials as well as General Guşă attempted to persuade them to return to work. Confronted with a massive turnout of workers joining the

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[17] General lieutenant Stefan Guşă, 1940–94, first deputy minister of defense and chief of the general staff 1986–89. His role in the suppression of the Timişoara uprising is still unclear, although available evidence shows that he tried to prevent bloodshed there and ordered the withdrawal of the army into the barracks. Members of the pro-Soviet coalition suspect him of having tried to stage a countercoup of national-minded officers, which they prevented.

[18] Curtea Supremă de Justiţie (Înalta Curte de Casaţie şi Justiţie), *Procesele Revoluţiei din Timişoara (1989) documente istorice, adunate şi commentate* de Marius Mioc (Timişoara: ART-PRESS, 1992), 42. More recently, official figures have set the number of dead in Timişoara at 73 and the number of wounded at 296. http://www.ziare.com/stiri/eveniment/timisoara-primul-oras-liber-sirenele-au-sunat-la-23-de-ani-de-la-revolutie-1208385 (accessed 12 September 2013).

[19] Until 1989, Timişoara was one of Romania's most important industrial centers, with big plants for machine building, electronics, chemical and petrochemical manufacturing and food industries.

protesters in the streets, on 20 December, Guşă decided to withdraw the army to the barracks. A Democratic Forum was established in this city, which requested the resignation of the government and of Ceauşescu as party secretary, the release of those detained during the uprising, the opening of the borders and freedom of the press. Ceauşescu, who had returned from Iran, addressed the issue publicly for the first time in a speech broadcast live on state television. Far from giving in to the demands of Timişoara's Democratic Forum, he accused so-called terrorist anti-national groups of having joined hands with "reactionary, imperialistic and chauvinistic circles, as well as with secret services from various foreign states," who were waging an attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Romanian state.[20]

Western governments and the leaders of the Soviet Union as well as of the other Warsaw Pact countries, with the exception of the GDR, condemned the violent reprisals. Ceauşescu protested against what he alleged was "an action previously planned in the context of the Warsaw Pact," and charged the Soviet leadership with intending "to intervene militarily in Romania."[21]

Convinced that he could once more appeal to the patriotic feelings of the Romanian people, the next day, 21 December, Ceauşescu decided to hold a meeting on the same Bucharest square where he had protested the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. However, he had hardly started to speak when he was interrupted by loud shouts, clamor and yelling. After a short interruption, during which television broadcasts showed a panicking head of state, Ceauşescu resumed his speech by announcing that measures would be taken to raise the living standards of the population. After a few minutes, another outbreak of noise emerged from the audience, whereupon the meeting was broken off and the participants were dispersed. During that night, savage fighting broke out in Bucharest between demonstrators and the army, the Securitate and militia forces, and the Patriotic Guards, leaving many people dead or injured. Rioting also broke out in other cities in western and central Romania.

On the morning of 22 December, Ceauşescu pronounced a state of emergency in the entire country. Minister of Defense Milea was found dead after Ceauşescu had reprimanded him for not having brought troops to Bucharest from the provinces quickly enough. First Deputy Minister of Defense General Victor Atanasie Stănculescu[22] was then ordered to take over the command of the army. Contrary to Ceauşescu's orders to use force against the demonstrators, Stănculescu ordered the troops that were en route to Bucharest to return to their barracks. General Iulian Vlad, head of the Securitate, later reported to the Senate's investigative commission that early in the morning he had withdrawn the Securitate and militia troops defending the Central Committee building. The Ministry of Defense

[20] Scurtu, *La Révolution*, 188–90.

[21] Preda and Retegan, *1989. Principiul Dominoului*, 477.

[22] He acknowledged having been in contact prior to 1989 not only with Western, above all British secret services, but also with KGB officers via Hungary.

and the Ministry of the Interior dispatched orders to the troops across the country to stop firing at demonstrators.[23]

When the demonstrators reached the Central Committee building without meeting any resistance, Ceauşescu, his wife and two of their closest aides were persuaded by Stănculescu to leave Bucharest by helicopter. However, their hurried departure did not result in their rescue. They were held in a garrison in the city of Tîrgovişte, northwest of Bucharest.

After Ceauşescu's flight, Romanian television, renamed Free Romanian Television, proclaimed the victory of the revolution. While various political figures from the Ceauşescu party apparatus competed for the scraps of political power, the vacuum of power was filled by actors who had been associated for years in clandestine endeavors to topple Ceauşescu. The preordained political leader of this conspiratorial group was Ion Iliescu,[24] who had won for himself the image of a regime dissident and proponent of Gorbachev-style reforms in Romania. He presented General Nicolae Militaru on television as the future minister of defense.[25] The same day, 22 December, Iliescu also announced the setting up of a new provisional power structure called the Front of National Salvation (*Frontul Salvării Naționale*, FSN) and appointed a Council of the Front to govern the country until democratic elections could be held. The 39 members of the Council were selected from older anti-Ceauşescu groups, including members of the party, the military and the Securitate, as well as younger technocrats whose careers had been blocked during the Ceauşescu era, representatives of the Hungarian minority who had protested the previous regime's nationality policies and, last but not least, a number of intellectuals and writers. Iliescu was appointed chairman of this council.

As soon as demonstrators in Bucharest realized that the new leaders who had presented their program on television were in fact Soviet-loyal dissidents to the Ceauşescu regime and not opponents of the communist system, their attitude turned from anti-Ceauşescu to anti-communist. "Whereas the demonstrators in the street were shouting 'Down with Communism,' Ion Iliescu spoke about the

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[23] Şerban Săndulescu, *Decembrie '89. Lovitura de stat a confiscat revoluția română* (Bucharest: Omega Ziua Press, 1996), 195–98; Constantin Sava, Constantin Monac, *Adevăr despre Decembrie 1989. Conspirație, diversiune, revoluție. Documente din Arhivele armatei* (Bucharest: Editura Forum 1999), 114–15.

[24] Born in 1930, Iliescu was an engineer by profession and had studied in Bucharest and Moscow. The son of an illegal communist party member, Iliescu joined the party in 1953 and quickly rose in the party *nomenklatura*, becoming a member of the RCP Central Committee in 1965, then a minister of youth and the head of the CC propaganda department. In 1971, the presumptive heir apparent to Ceauşescu fell from the leader's grace, most probably because of his suspected anti-Ceauşescu position. He was progressively downgraded and released from the Central Committee, finally becoming the director of the Technical Publishing House. In the 1980s, there were rumors that he would become the new Romanian leader in a pro-Gorbachev Romania.

[25] Nicolae Militaru, 1925–94, was an army officer who had studied in Bucharest and Moscow. He was sent into the reserves in 1978 and appointed deputy minister of industrial constructions. He retired in 1986.

'noble ideas of communism' in his first speech on television. […] It is clear and obvious that Iliescu did not then conceive the fall of communism, something that was in flagrant contradiction with the demands of the people in the streets."[26] In his addresses to the demonstrators on 22 December whom he called "comrades," Iliescu eschewed the word "revolution," speaking of "change and transformation" instead.[27] In their "Timişoara Proclamation" issued on 11 March 1990, participants of the Timişoara uprising made it clear that the 1989 revolution "was categorically an anti-communist and not only an anti-Ceauşescu revolution."[28] They had not risked their lives, they wrote, "to help a group of anti-Ceauşescu dissidents inside the Romanian Communist Party accede to political power."

## The particularities of the Romanian revolution

Three major differences can be seen between the revolutionary course of events in Romania and the peaceful transition of power as it occurred elsewhere in the Warsaw Pact countries:

1. the use of force;
2. the execution of the communist head of party and state;
3. the active involvement of external actors in the process.

### *The use of force*

It should be noted that the use of force is neither a characteristic of Romanian political culture nor a defining trait in Romania's historical tradition.

Two questions have not been fully clarified to this day: why the initially peaceful uprising that started on 16 December 1989 in Timişoara and then in Bucharest turned violent and who is responsible for the outbreak of violence after 22 December.

One widespread interpretation claims that violence in the initial stage of the revolution was due exclusively to pro-Ceauşescu forces, whereas the violence that broke out after 22 December was due mainly if not exclusively to forces aiming, first, to suppress the uprising and, later, to liberate the dictator and start a counterrevolution.[29]

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[26] Mălin Bot, "Crimele nepedepsite ale lui Iliescu," *Evenimentul Zilei*, 15 June 2013, http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/crimele-nepedepsite-ale-lui-ion-iliescu-1042664.html (accessed 13 September 2013).

[27] Cf. Peter Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 109, 112–14.

[28] For the text of the Proclamation, see: http://proclamatia.wordpress.com (accessed 17 Oct. 2013).

[29] Ceauşescus's press secretary Eugen Florescu has reported a conversation he overheard between Nicolae Ceauşescu and his brother Ilie, the head of the Political Council of the army, which took

A second model claims that the outbreak of violence in the initial stages of the uprising was the result of covert operations by the Soviet Union[30] and possibly also other Warsaw Pact countries and Yugoslavia, as well as Romanian expatriates. According to this model, this was done in order to provoke the Romanian army and security forces to become aggressive. Later, a "terrorist diversion" after Ceauşescu's capture is thought to have been started by pro-Soviet forces centered around General Militaru. By 25 December, when the violence stopped after the execution of the dictator and his wife had been shown on Romanian television, 967 people had died and 2,587 injured.[31]

While there is no doubt that the army and security forces obeying Ceauşescu's orders tried to suppress the uprising by the use of force, there continues to be disagreement about the responsibility for the second wave of violence that started on 22 December after Ceauşescu had fled from Bucharest, becoming a de facto prisoner of the new leaders. The new leaders used television broadcasts, which they had monopolized, to charge so-called terrorists with attempting to liberate Ceauşescu and to restore the pre-revolutionary regime.[32] According to Stănculescu, 1,015 "terrorists," most of them Soviet citizens, were arrested by the Romanian army, but they were subsequently released by General Militaru.[33] This was accompanied by "a torrent of destabilizing actions, diversion and electronic war" on the entire territory of Romania, blocking military telecommunication channels and feeding false information into the Romanian army's radio-electronic reconnaissance systems.[34] The new leaders handed over an unknown number of weapons to civilians, which contributed to the ensuing chaos.

According to the second interpretation model, several goals may have prompted the use of force by the provisional new leadership in the period following Ceauşescu's imprisonment, the first and foremost being creating a pretext for eliminating Nicolae Ceauşescu.[35] His execution, they declared, was necessary in

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place at 6 a.m. on 22 December in the CC building. Ilie Ceauşescu had drawn Nicolae's attention to the great number of workers marching towards central Bucharest from industrial sites outside the capital, and Nicolae is quoted as saying: "Come on, there were a million people on Tiananmen Square and they let them have it." Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Cronologia evenimentelor din decembrie 1989* (Bucharest: RAO International Publishing Company, 2009), 162–63.

[30] The model does not provide evidence as to who ordered these operations.

[31] Cartianu, *Cartea Revoluţiei*, 980.

[32] After he took over as minister of defense, Stănculescu even called what had happened "psychological warfare." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 February 1990.

[33] For more details, see Gabanyi, *Systemwechsel*, 192–93.

[34] Sergiu Nicolaescu, *Cartea revoluţiei române decembrie '89* (Bucharest: Editura Ion Cristoiu, 1999), 477–78; Săndulescu, *Decembrie*, 73. Cf. Michel Castex, *Un mensonge gros comme le siècle. Roumanie: histoire d'une manipulation* (Paris: Michel Albin, 1990).

[35] "'Tensions were stirred up at the time to create reason to kill Ceauşescu,' says former General Stanculescu. By whom? 'You'd have to ask Iliescu.'" Iliescu admitted that "the widespread chaos in December 1989 was aggravated by made-up reports from the television headquarters controlled by the National Salvation Front leaders—reports that the drinking water had been

order to end the bloody turmoil created by the "terrorists." The terrorist attacks ended as soon as this goal had been attained on 25 December. As a second motive according to this line of interpretation, the pro-Soviet forces were intent on preventing nationalist minded army generals from taking power.[36] At the time of the revolution, rumors made their way into the Western press reporting that the Timişoara uprising had, in fact, gotten ahead of a revolt of a nationally minded segment of the army, which had planned to depose Ceauşescu due to the damage he had caused in Romania. They did not, however, plan to bring Romania back into the Warsaw Pact fold, but rather were determined to continue the autonomous course of Romania's foreign policy.[37] As early as 22 December, calls were heard for the "traitor Guşa" to be arrested.[38] On 29 December, Guşa was ousted as chief of staff of the Romanian army on the grounds of alleged incompetence, and was replaced by another pro-Soviet general. Three days before Guşa's release, the Soviet *Pravda* had pointed out that the regular army was obviously incapable of putting an end to the terrorist attacks.[39] A third goal, according to this interpretation, was to use the chaos and panic within the population as a pretext for calling on the Soviet Union for help in case their plans for takeover were in danger. In the end, it was possible to avert the outbreak of a civil war in Romania because the overwhelming majority of the army (and security) forces did not react to provocations.

### *Ceauşescu's execution*

The execution of the ruling head of state is perhaps the most striking feature of the Romanian revolution and a singular event in the context of the other former communist East European countries. Whereas elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the decisive military power lay with the (Soviet) commander of the Warsaw Pact in the respective capitals, in Romania was the president the supreme commander of

poisoned, the army was on its last legs and unknown 'terrorists' were in the pay of the counter-revolution." Walter Mayr, "'A Mission of Honor': Key Players Recall Romania's Bloody Revolution," *Der Spiegel International*, 20 October 2009, http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/a-mission-of-honor-key-players-recall-romania-s-bloody-revolution-a-655557-2.html (accessed 5 September 2013).

36 Cf. Săndulescu, *Decembrie,* 167. Western media at the time wrote about a civil war having broken out in Romania between army units loyal to the new provisional leadership on one hand and Securitate fighters together with Arab mercenaries on the other. ARD Tagesschau, 23 December 1989, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcPQlMNX_y4 (accessed 5 September 2013).

37 Mircea Dinescu, a Romanian dissident close to Gorbachev, has pointed out that Ion Iliescu was "the only alternative to a military coup" and "the only chance" to prevent it. *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 11 January 1990. See Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution*, 108; and *Systemwechsel*, 183–85.

38 Radio Bucharest, 22 December 1989.

39 See: Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution*, 114–15.

the national army and the members of the secret police. And only by having the supreme commander of the Romanian army executed—with the act shown on television—could the organizers of the coup expect loyal Romanian army and Securitate forces to change sides.

The decision to have Ceauşescu executed as soon as possible was made by the inner circle of the Front of National Salvation.[40] Only Iliescu insisted on the need to organize a brief, obviously bogus trial, before actually killing him. The exceptional military court of justice set up in Tîrgovişte organized a sort of revolutionary show tribunal, in which Ceauşescu was deposed politically before being hastily shot on 25 December. A videotape of the execution was broadcast on Romanian television on the evening of 26 December.

After the Front of National Salvation government had been founded,[41] Minister of Defense Militaru recalled eighteen generals who had been removed by Ceauşescu from the active service because of their cooperation with the Soviet secret services. One of these generals, Vasile Ionel, replaced General Guşă, who had as the head of the General Staff only days before refused the entry of Soviet troops into Romania. In addition, the first ordinance adopted by the newly constituted Council of the Front of National Salvation was to abolish the law concerning the functions of the Romanian Defense Council, which had been adopted in 1969 in reaction to the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. It was this act that had laid the basis for Romania's political and military autonomy within the Warsaw Pact.[42] And last but not least, Iliescu, the chairman of the council, went to see the Soviet ambassador in Romania to tell him that Romania was planning to remain within the Soviet sphere of influence.[43]

### *External involvement*

Another distinctive feature of the Romanian revolution concerns the external support from—and direct involvement of—foreign countries in Romania's process of power transition. The problem with external support is that it cannot be

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[40] Constantin Mitea, Ceauşescu's counselor who participated in the last meeting between Gorbachev and Ceauşescu held in Moscow on 4–5 December in the wake of the Bush–Gorbachev meeting in Malta, reported that Gorbachev took leave from Ceauşescu wishing him happy Christmas and a good New Year, adding the words, "if you live as long as that." Quoted by Ceauşescu's press secretary Eugen Florescu in Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Interviuri despre revoluţie* (Bucharest: Editura RAO, 2004), 81–82.

[41] Militaru was presented on TV as the future minister of defense as early as 23 December, and the high command of the Soviet army was informed about Militaru's "nomination" the same day. Săndulescu, *Decembrie*, 322.

[42] See Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution*, 117–18.

[43] Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Din culisele luptei pentru putere. Prima guvernare Petre Roman* (Bucharest: Editura RAO, 2006), 547, Annex 1.

precisely quantified due to the secret nature of many operations. Moreover, after events have occurred, external support is often denied both by those who granted it and those who received it. This is for reasons of political respectability on one side, and of legitimacy on the other.

The question of a Romanian call for Soviet and/or Warsaw Pact military aid to the provisional leadership and the Soviet response to this call is still one of the most controversial issues of the Romanian 1989 events. To this day, Ion Iliescu insists that he never called for Soviet help and that he contacted the Soviets no earlier than on 27 December.[44] However, according to Cornel Dinu, Iliescu's bodyguard, in the night from 22 to 23 December Iliescu spoke with a representative of the Soviet embassy and asked for the intervention of Soviet troops. The embassy official is quoted as having told Iliescu that the Soviets were not ready to use the OMON troops that had already landed in Romania.[45] By that time, Soviet ground troops stood at the Romanian-Soviet border ready to cross the frontier.[46] In a recently declassified message from the Polish embassy in Bucharest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, a Soviet diplomat is quoted as having said that Ion Iliescu and Silviu Brucan had asked for military aid and been promised any kind of support other than a military invasion. In the meantime, the Front of National Salvation announced on TV that the embassy had promised military aid.[47]

Talks between the new leadership and the Soviet military were confirmed in a report of the chief of the Special Office of the General Staff in the Operations Directorate given to the members of the parliamentary commission investigating the 1989 events. According to Dumitru Mircea, on 22 December, a message was received by the Romanian military leadership from Mikhail Moiseyev, head of the Soviet General Staff, and from the deputy chief of staff of the Warsaw Pact forces. They were "ready to grant support in any area."[48] This was confirmed by Romanian radio and TV on 23 December.[49]

By noon of 23 December, Mircea was ordered by the deputy chief of the Romanian General Staff, Nicolae Eftimescu, to call General Moiseyev to ask him "wheth-

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[44] Adam Burakowski, "O intervenție armată ar fi fost un dezastru," *Adevărul*, 7 March 2010, http://adevarul.ro/news/eveniment/adam-burakowski-o-interventie-armata-fost-dezastru-1_50ad20fe7c42d5a6638f3561/index.html (accessed 13 September 2013).

[45] "Cornel Dinu, Discuțiile purtate cu consilierul sovietic au avut loc în biroul de la etajul 11 al Televiziunii Române, în noaptea zilei de 22 spre 23 decembrie 1989, undeva în jurul orelor 3–4. El a spus că în încăpere se aflau mai multe persoane, dintre care i-a enumerat pe Petre Roman, Ion Iliescu, Silviu Brucan, Mihai Bujor, Petre Constantin (directorul Televiziunii la acel moment) şi Nina Iliescu 'Iliescu a cerut intervenția rușilor.' Şi-un tanc pentru Nina," http://stirea.wordpress.com/tag/cornel-dinu/ (accessed 9 September 2013). See also: Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution*, 186.

[46] Cf. Săndulescu, *Decembrie*, 327.

[47] Adam Burakowski, "În Decembrie 1989, Iliescu și Brucan au cerut ajutor militar de la sovietici," *Revista 22*, 21 February 2013, http://www.revista22.ro/n-decembrie-1989-iliescu-si-brucan-au-cerut-ajutor-militar-de-la-sovietici-7557.html (accessed 9 September 2013).

[48] Cf. Săndulescu, *Decembrie*, 321.

[49] Reuters, 23 December 1989. See also: Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution*, 123–24.

er it would be possible to count on Soviet military aid against the terrorists." Moiseyev referred him to the governmental level.[50] After the death of the minister of defense and in the absence of the head of state, the chief of staff of the Romanian army, General Ştefan Guşă, was the only person legally entitled to launch a call for foreign aid. When he arrived at the Ministry of Defense, he vetoed this initiative and ordered Romanian border guards not to permit the entry of Soviet army units into Romanian territory. He called his Soviet counterpart to tell him that "we did not ask for Soviet military aid and we will not ask for it."[51] The attitude of the Soviet Union was marked by ambivalence. On one hand, Gorbachev insisted that the Brezhnev Doctrine was no longer applicable. On the other hand, there is evidence that the Soviet military was prepared to send ground or airborne troops to Romania. While it is understandable that Gorbachev did not want to be seen as supporting an open Soviet military intervention in Romania, it is, however, quite improbable that he was not informed about such actions. Talking to the Congress of the People's Deputies of the Soviet Union on 23 December, Gorbachev confirmed that a call for help had been dispatched to Moscow by the Romanian Front of National Salvation. The Romanian chief of staff had, however, rejected help. Gorbachev announced that the Soviet leadership was going to get in contact with other Warsaw Pact member states "to cooperate and coordinate activities to support the Romanian people."[52] One of the measures he proposed was to set up a group of Warsaw Pact observers to monitor the events in Romania. The creation of this group was confirmed by Hungary's foreign minister Gyula Horn on Hungarian television. Although strong Warsaw Pact troops were in place on Hungarian territory close to the Romanian border, the Hungarian defense minister, Ferenc Kárpáti, ruled out an "immediate" intervention in the neighboring county.[53] Soviet commentators made it clear, however, that the decision to desist from an intervention in Romania was only provisional. If the page turned in favor of the Ceauşescu-friendly forces, "the Warsaw Pact could not and should not" desist from intervening. They even favored a military intervention that went beyond the Warsaw Pact, also including forces from other countries. In a meeting with the Soviet ambassador, Evgenii Tyazhelnikov, on 27 December, Iliescu said that an agreement had been made with Gorbachev that "this was not necessary because there would be unwanted interpretations that would coincide with Ceauşescu's statement at his trial that this was a coup d'état with foreign military support."[54]

The United States had signaled to the Soviet Union that it would not object to a Warsaw Pact or other intervention "if it becomes necessary to put down heavy

[50] Cf. Săndulescu, *Decembrie*, 317.

[51] Săndulescu, *Decembrie*, 317–18. See also: Guşă de Drăgan, *Condamnat*, 62–63; 350.

[52] TASS, 23 December 1989. Cf. Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution*, 124.

[53] *The Independent*, 24 December 1989. Cf. Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution*, 126.

[54] See the full text of the discussion with Tyazhelnikov http://stirea.wordpress.com/2010/03/09/ion-iliescu-catre-evgheni-tiajelnikov-noi-ne-am-bucurat-de-simpatia-acestor-mase-n-a-fost-o-campanie-anticomunista-avem-nevoie-de-sprijin-ca-aceasta-este-cea-mai-importanta-problema-acum/ (accessed 9 September 2013).

fighting by Romanian security troops still loyal [to Ceauşescu]."[55] France declared its readiness to join such an operation, either in conjunction with the Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces, or in the form of an international brigade.

There is only scanty evidence, and even less solid documentary proof, about covert actions undertaken by the West in the revolutionary process. However, a number of now-retired officials from France and the United States have acknowledged involvement in disinformation activities, the establishment of contacts with Ceauşescu opponents, the selection of and support for dissidents, as well as the training of refugees from Romania who, after their return, were used as *agents provocateurs*.[56]

More than the other East European revolutions of 1989, the Romanian revolution is difficult to imagine without the support of electronic media in the form of Western radio stations broadcasting to Romania, above all Radio Free Europe located in Munich. RFE broadcasts were extremely popular in Romania and were decisive in the anti-regime mobilization of the population, the de-legitimizing of the Ceauşescu leadership, and for "accrediting" and popularizing regime dissidents in the 1980s. From the mid-1980s, Radio Free Europe began to include former party and Securitate activists with questionable democratic credentials among their list of praiseworthy dissidents. In addition, with the broadcasting time of the local radio and TV stations sharply reduced due to electricity shortages, Romanian listeners and viewers increasingly turned to radio and TV stations located in the Soviet Union and in other neighboring communist countries such as Hungary, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Immediately after the departure of Ceauşescu on 22 December from Bucharest, the national television station took over the role of Western broadcasting and became the stage for a "tele-revolution" that was unique in the history of the medium.[57]

## The transformation: The long-term consequences of the revolution

The Romanian revolution took a heavy toll of human lives. In total, 1,116 people—civilians, officers and army conscripts—were killed and 4,069 injured. Whereas the popular uprising against Ceauşescu had cost the lives of 159 people

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[55] *The Washington Post*, 25 December 1989. Cf. Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution*, 129. See also Thomas Blanton, "When did the Cold War End?" *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 10 (1998): 183–91, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin10_p5.pdf (accessed 9 September 2013); Thomas L. Friedman, "US would favor use of Soviet troops in Romania, Baker says," *New York Times*, 25 December 1989. Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott have explained the attitude of the US administration as being guided by its desire to secure Soviet support for the intervention that the United States had just started in Panama to depose leader Manuel Antonio Noriega. Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 240.

[56] See the interviews in the documentary film *Schachmatt—Strategie einer Revolution* by Susanne Brandstätter, first shown on German and Austrian state television in 2003.

[57] See Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution,* 7–11.

and caused injuries to another 1,502, a much higher number of victims (957 dead and 2,587 injured) were recorded after December 22, the day Ceauşescu was flown out of Bucharest and arrested.[58] There is the widespread belief among Romanians that these victims died in vain, because the anti-communist uprising of the people had been "stolen" and "diverted." This has left a deep imprint on the Romanian collective memory and is considered "the original sin" of the Romanian transition. It continues to impact the country's course of political, social and economic transformation to this day. Moreover, it is felt that those who seized power in 1989 did everything they could to obstruct the criminal investigation, prosecution and condemnation of the true culprits for the bloodshed.

After December 1989, more than 5,000 people were investigated with regard to their responsibility for the crimes committed both before and after the fall of Ceauşescu. In total, 245 persons were put on trial, of them 18 generals from the armed forces and the Securitate troops, as well as 24 members of the highest party *nomenklatura*.[59] Most of those investigated were released at the beginning of 1990 or pardoned. However, due to the fact that the group around Iliescu, which had seized power in the military coup d'état following the popular uprising in Timişoara, succeeded in staying in power for so long, most of those who are thought responsible for the bloodshed have escaped condemnation. Despite the fact that organizations representing the victims of the revolution have pressured that they be prosecuted, the judiciary, acting on political orders, has done everything it can to delay prosecution in high-level cases. Documents have been confiscated (such as the files on the Ceauşescu trial), destroyed, forged, or are still being withheld by military or civilian prosecutors offices.

Investigations have also been hampered by the fact that many of the key figures from the Ceauşescu family, the military, the secret services, counter-espionage and the militia who were involved in the events committed suicide or died under mysterious circumstances, some of them in prison.[60] Together with General Mihai Chițac, in 1989, the head of the chemical arms division, General Stănculescu was the only major figure of the revolution to be tried and sentenced after 1989. Stănculescu is also the only major actor of the coup who still remains, in prison in 2013, where he has been held since October 2008 with a sentence of 15 years on charges of having executed Ceauşescu's repressive orders against the participants in the Timişoara uprising. This is why Stănculescu is the only high-level revolutionary figure who has chosen to break the ominous silence about some if not all of the riddles surrounding the still mysterious 1989 events,

[58] Cartianu, *Cartea Revoluției*, 980.

[59] "Greii dosarului 'Revolutiei', protejați de neglijența lui Voinea," *Evenimentul Zilei*, 21 December 2009.

[60] Teodor Marieș, "Generalul Puiu. Salvați-mă că ăștia vor să mă omoare," *Evenimentul Zilei*, 11 December 2005.

especially concerning the roles played by other top players as well as foreign involvement—both Eastern and Western—in the process.

In contrast to Stănculescu, Iliescu had a formidable political career in post-revolutionary Romania, despite being the target of persistent criticism. Some of the post-1989 electorate was won over by the populist measures he introduced immediately after the fall of Ceauşescu, and thus he was voted into presidential office in 1990, followed by reelection for two full terms, 1992–96 and 2000–04. However, another part of the population would like to see him put on trial, not only for the role he played during the revolution, but also during the incidents of violence by miners Iliescu had allegedly sent against anti-communist demonstrators in Bucharest in 1990, the so-called "mineriads." Iliescu is also seen as the main culprit for the misguided policy course followed in Romania in the early 1990s, which obstructed the genuine democratization of the society, the introduction of market-type reforms, as well as the country's progress toward membership in NATO and the EU. Only after Emil Constantinescu, a representative of the civil society, was elected president in 1996 was the country's foreign policy toward the West vigorously redirected and real, albeit painful, economic reforms were launched. Iliescu continued this path during his final term from 2000 to 2004. During these years Romania became a member of NATO and concluded accession negotiations with the EU.

Due to its violent character and the human lives lost in the process, the 1989 revolution left distinct traces on the collective memory as well as the mentality of the Romanians. The society is still strongly divided on the question of whether what happened in 1989 was a revolution or coup d'état, and whether the events were home-grown or engineered by forces from abroad. Despite the generational shift that has occurred over the past twenty years, demands for the criminal prosecution of the crimes committed in 1989 and the lustration of former regime activists are still high in the public interests.

Karsten Brüggemann

# "ONE DAY WE WILL WIN ANYWAY": THE "SINGING REVOLUTION" IN THE SOVIET BALTIC REPUBLICS

In 1989, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania did not experience revolutions comparable to the events in East Central Europe. At the end of this *annus mirabilis*, Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius were still the capitals of Soviet socialist republics bound in "eternal friendship" to the other twelve "brother republics" of the USSR, at least in the eyes of Moscow. The Kremlin leadership had made it perfectly clear that it had no intention of treating the non-Russian republics according to the principles of Mikhail Gorbachev's "new thinking." The new rules of Soviet foreign policy had nothing to do with the realm of inter-republican relations at home. Yet mentally, if compared to the situation only a few years earlier, nothing was the same in the Soviet Baltic republics. The notion of a "Singing Revolution," coined by the Estonian artist Heinz Valk in 1988 to describe a peaceful path of political change, had made its way into the hearts of many people, not only in these three republics, but also in other parts of the USSR. But in the Baltic region, mass demonstrations of hitherto unknown scale had fostered a sense of being different. Despite this area's having been annexed as a result of the Hitler-Stalin Pact and World War II, it had never become truly "Sovietized."[1]

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[1] This article was supported by the Estonian state with the targeted financed program SF0130038s09. The author would like to express his gratitude to Silke Berndsen (Berlin) for her bibliographical advice.
Literature on the process of annexation and Sovetization in the Baltic republics includes: Elena Yu. Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml' 1940–1953* (Moscow: ROSSPĖN, 2008); Olaf Mertelsmann, ed., *The Sovietization of the Baltic States, 1940–1956* (Tartu: Kleio, 2003); Mikhail I. Mel'tyukhov, *Upushchennyi shans Stalina. Sovetskii Soyuz i bor'ba za Evropu 1939–1941gg. (Dokumenty, fakty, suzhdeniya)* (Moscow: Veche, 2001); Arvydas Anušauskas, ed., *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States* (Vilnius: DuKa, 1999); John Hiden and Patrick Salmon, eds., *The Baltic Nations and Europe. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the Twentieth Century* (London: Longman, 1994); Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States. Years of Dependence, 1940–1990* (Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press, 1993); John Hiden and Thomas Lane, eds., *The Baltic and the Outbreak of the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Walter C. Clemens, *Baltic Independence and Russian Empire* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); Boris Meissner, ed., *Die baltischen Nationen. Estland, Lettland, Litauen* (Cologne: Markus, 1991); Georg von Rauch, *Geschichte der baltischen Staaten* (Munich: dtv, 1977). Cf. Olaf Mertelsmann, ed., *The Baltic States under Stalinist Rule* (Cologne: Böhlau, forthcoming).

The fall of the Berlin Wall gave the three republics reason to pose their question even more insistently: When will it be our turn?

Although a political revolution did not occur in the Baltic republics in 1989, one might speak of a mental revolution. This could even be seen on the streets: the old national colors of the pre-war independent republics, formerly banned by the authorities, had become a nearly everyday sight. The constitutionally guaranteed domination of the communist party became contested by various alternative organizations such as the Popular Fronts. These were initially founded by the Baltic communists themselves to support Gorbachev's perestroika, first in Estonia, and then in October 1988 in Latvia and Lithuania as well. Soviet cadres and Soviet security organs seemed to be retreating, despite the fact that this may have been a mere tactic. Local political power gradually shifted to reform communists or activists from the Popular Fronts. At the end of 1989, it had become clear that there was no way back to the years of "stagnation" under Leonid Brezhnev unless violence was used. All three countries had passed declarations of sovereignty, and in December the Lithuanian Communist Party (LiCP) split into two, on one side a large pro-independence fraction, and on the other, a tiny group of orthodox supporters of the hardliners in the Kremlin. Thus 1989 was a phase of transition, although no one could foresee where it would lead.

At the same time, conflict with Moscow was increasing. Nobody could be sure what the consequences might be of the Soviet loss of its satellite states in Eastern Europe. It was conceivable that in compensation, the grip around the necks of the non-Russian Soviet republics might become tightened. The increasingly aggressive tone of the Kremlin, criticizing the independence movements in the Baltic republics, signaled that the use of violence, at least rhetorically, was still an option for guaranteeing obedience. Even worse, Moscow's hardening position in regard to the Baltic question had not yet been challenged by the Western powers, which were interested first and foremost in Gorbachev remaining stable at home. The political aspirations of the Baltic republics would only harm the general secretary's position vis-à-vis his opponents in the party leadership. With the Baltic question considered an interior matter of the USSR, in a sense Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were hostages. No one was prepared to grant them the same right of self-determination that the Central European states had achieved.[2] Thus, if one is to make an adequate appraisal of the situation in the three republics in 1989, the fundamental difference between them and the countries of the Warsaw Pact must be taken into account. There was no Soviet round table in sight regarding the Baltic question, a fact that is only too easily forgotten if one thinks of the later

[2] Kristina Spohr-Readman, "Between Political Rhetoric and 'Realpolitik' Calculations. Western Diplomacy and the Baltic Independence in the Cold War Endgame," *Cold War History* 6, no. 1 (2006): 1–42; cf. John Hiden, Vahur Made, and David Smith, eds., *The Baltic Question during the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 2008).

smooth integration of these former Soviet republics into NATO and the EU in 2004. Back in 1989, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were still regarded internationally, at least de facto, as parts of the USSR, whose dissolution was simply not on the agenda. The fate of the perestroika project and peaceful change in Central Europe depended on the integrity of the Soviet state. Especially for West Germany, in late 1989 this was considered a real danger: without Gorbachev, the "German question" might be left unresolved.[3]

Unfortunately, research on the topic of the "Singing Revolution" in the Baltic states is still fragmentary. As a rule, historians in the three countries still have not taken their neighbors' fate into consideration.[4] Memoirs of the leading figures in this revolution appeared quite soon (and keep appearing), and a wave of life stories continues to enrich the shelves of bookshops in all three countries.[5] Nonetheless, not least due to language problems, international scholarship has

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[3] Kristina Spohr-Readman, *Germany and the Baltic Problem after the Cold War. The Development of a New Ostpolitik 1989–2000* (London: Routledge, 2004); Helge Dauchert, *"Anwalt der Balten" oder Anwalt in eigener Sache? Die deutsche Baltikumpolitik 1991–2004* (Berlin: BWV, 2008). For the interesting perspective of a German diplomat, cf. Henning von Wistinghausen, *Im freien Estland. Erinnerungen des ersten deutschen Botschafters 1991–1995* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004).

[4] An exception to this rule can be found in Mindaugas Jurkynas, *How Deep is your Love? The Baltic Brotherhood Re-examined* (Vilnius: Institute of International Relations and Political Science, 2007). The author deals primarily with the first stages of independent statehood after 1991. See also Jānis Škapars, *Baltijas brīvības ceļš. Baltijas valstu nevardarbīgas cīņas pieredze pasaules kontekstā* (Rīga: Zelta grauds, 2005). About the respective countries: Meldra Usenko, *Sarežģītais gājums: veltījums Latvijas Republikas neatkarības atjaunošanai* (Riga: Tautas Frontes Muzejs, 2002); Arvydas Anušauskas and Česlovas Bauza, *Lietuvos suvereniteto atkūrimas. 1988–1991 metais* (Vilnius: Diemedzio Leidykla, 2000); Valdis Blūzma, ed., *Latvijas valsts atjaunošana. 1986–1993* (Rīga: LU žurnāla "Latvijas Vēsture" fonds, 1998); Jüri Ant, ed., *Kaks algust. Eesti Vabariik, 1920 ja 1990 aastad. Eesti Vabariik—80* (Tallinn: Eesti Riigiarhiiv, 1998).

[5] Apart from memoirs, the following list also includes collections of documents: Kazimiera D. Prunskiene, *Leben für Litauen. Auf dem Weg in die Unabhängigkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1992); Algirdas Brazauskas, *Scheidung vom Kreml* (Vilnius: Danielius, 1993); Dainis Īvāns, *Gadījuma karakalps* (Riga: Vieda, 1995); Mart Laar, Urmas Ott, and Sirje Endre, *Teine Eesti 1. Eesti iseseisvuse taassünd 1986–1991. Intervjuud, dokumendid, kõned, artiklid; Teine Eesti 2. Eeslava. Intervjuud, dokumendid, kõned, artiklid* (Tallinn: SE&JS Meedia- ja Kirjastuskompanii, 1996); Edgar Savisaar, *Usun Eestisse* (Tallinn: TEA, 1999); Vytautas Landsbergis and Anthony Packer, *Lithuania, Independent again. The Autobiography of Vytautas Landsbergis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); Sandra Kalniete, *Es lauzu, tu lauzi, mēs lauzām, viņi lūza* (Riga: Jumava, 2000); Arnold Rüütel, *Estonia: Future Returned* (Tallinn: Ilo, 2003); Rafik Grigoryan and Igor Rosenfeld, eds., *Iseseisvuse anatoomia / Anatomiya nezavisimosti / The Anatomy of Independence* (Tartu: Kripta, St. Petersburg: Bazunov, 2004); Edgar Savisaar, *Peaminister. Eesti lähiajalugu 1990–1992* (Tartu: Kleio, 2004); Virgilijus Čepaitis, *Su Sąjūdžiu už Lietuvą. Nuo 1988.06.03. iki 1990.03.11.* (Vilnius: Tvermė, 2007); Marju Lauristin, *Punane ja sinine. Peatükke kirjutamata elulooraamatust. Valik artikleid ja intervjuud 1970–2009* (Tallinn: AS Eesti Ajalehed, 2010); Heinz Valk, *Pääsemine helgest tulevikust* (Tallinn: Kunst, 2010).

rarely considered all three countries evenly.[6] The best overviews are found in general publications from the 1990s.[7] Since this time, Baltic historians have mainly been concerned with describing and assessing the horrors of deportation and Sovietization.[8] Mentally, the present statehood of these countries is still closely connected to the story of regaining independence and thus, this story often provides a background for current political conflicts. Many of the (mainly young) leading protagonists of the late 1980s are still active politicians in their respective states today, and even now there are personal conflicts rooted in those years that have not been forgotten.[9]

From the Russian perspective, too, the topic of the Baltic states is very sensitive and still too politicized to be easily the subject of in-depth research. Primary sources concerning the Baltic role in the dissolution of the USSR have not been sufficiently examined.[10] It is thus fair to agree with the recent claim of Alexander von Plato that the Baltic share in this process has been "mostly underestimated."[11] In fact, in many respects the Baltic republics were, as

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6 The author of the present article is no exception. This explains the predominance in this chapter of Estonian examples and sources.

7 See the general works by Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993); Kristian Gerner and Stefan Hedlund, *The Baltic States and the End of the Soviet Empire* (London: Routledge, 1997); the edited volumes Jan A. Trapans, ed., *Toward Independence. The Baltic Popular Movements* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); Andrejs Urdze, ed., *Das Ende des Sowjetkolonialismus. Der baltische Weg* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1991). On the respective three countries, cf. Rein Taagepera, *Estonia. Return to Independence* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1993); Juris Dreifelds, *Latvia in Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); V. Stanley Vardys and Judith B. Sedaitis, *Lithuania—The Rebel Nation* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1997); Janis J. Penikis and Andrejs Penikis, *Latvia—Independence Renewed* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1997); David J. Smith, *Estonia. Independence and European Integration* (London: Routledge, 2001); Artis Pabriks and Aldis Purs, *Latvia. The Challenges of Change* (London: Routledge, 2001); Thomas Lane, *Lithuania. Stepping Westward* (London: Routledge, 2001).

8 See the respective articles by Alvydas Nikžentaitis (Lithuania), Ulrike von Hirschhausen (Latvia), and Karsten Brüggemann (Estonia) in Helmut Altrichter, ed., *GegenErinnerung. Geschichte als politisches Argument im Transformationsprozeß Ost-, Ostmittel- und Südosteuropas* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2006).

9 Mikko Lagerspetz and Henri Vogt, "Estonia," in Sten Berglund, Tomas Hellén, and Frank Aarebrot, eds., *Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998), 57–93.

10 See the early account on Estonia by Michael Brettin, *Das Scheitern eines unfreiwilligen Experiments. Die sowjetische Nationalitätenpolitik in der „Perestrojka" (1985/87–1991) dargestellt am Beispiel Estlands* (Hamburg: Dr. Kovač, 1996), and a broader study that repeatedly refers to the Baltic republics: Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State. A Tidal Approach to the Study of Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

11 Alexander von Plato, "Einige internationale Voraussetzungen der Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands," in *Tr@nsit online* (2009), http://www.iwm.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=167&Itemid=231 (accessed 17 June 2010).

Gorbachev wrote in his memoirs, "the weakest link of the union"[12] (and not the Islamic areas, as has been claimed by Hélène Carrère d'Encausse[13]), since here, in the "Soviet West," the legitimacy of Soviet territorial expansion was contested not least in terms of historical morals.[14] Nonetheless, in February 1987, while on visit to Latvia, the Soviet general secretary obviously did not yet consider the Baltic question particularly critical, since he claimed at that time that the events of June 1940 leading to annexation proved that nobody could "break the revolutionary will of the people."[15] But it was exactly this moral aspect of Stalin's annexation politics that later made the year 1989 so crucial for the Baltic republics' secession from the USSR because it marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Thus the circumstances of their original incorporation into the USSR were brought back onto the political agenda. The anniversary reminded capitals all over Europe of their own accountability in the fate of these three states, first due to the Hitler-Stalin Pact and later due to the Yalta conference.

## Why "Singing Revolution"?

In 1989, the Baltic republics' vision of their "return to Europe" seemed to lie in the far future; this dream obviously contradicted Gorbachev's vision of a "Common European Home." While Gorbachev saw the Baltic republics under the Soviet roof, from the viewpoint of the republics themselves, "Europe" was "available" only outside the USSR. Our knowledge of the processes that led to the secession of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania from the USSR is still quite superficial. The German weekly *Die Zeit* wrote in 2002 on the occasion of the Eurovision Song Contest, held that year in the Estonian capital Tallinn: "The year 1991 came, the revolution; hundreds of thousands sang their folk songs, loudly and again and again, until the communists left."[16] It wasn't that easy, though. The

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12 Mikhail Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy, vol. 1* (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), 510.

13 Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *Risse im roten Imperium. Das Nationalitätenproblem in der Sowjetunion* (Vienna: Molden, 1979).

14 See the comprehensive article by Serhy Yekelchyk, "The western republics: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and the Baltics," in Ronald Grigor Suny, ed., *The Cambridge History of Russia, vol. III, The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 522–48.

15 Mikhail Gorbachev, "Tverdo idti dorogoi perestroiki i uglubleniya demokratii. Rech' na vstreche s partiinym, sovetskim i khoziaistvennym aktivom Latviiskoi SSR 19 fevralya 1987 goda," in idem, *Izbrannye rechi i stati, t. 4: Iyul' 1986 g.—apr. 1987 g.* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987), 393–409. On Gorbachev's visit to Estonia, cf. Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, 511–12; Peeter Kaasik, Kaarel Piirimäe, "Hirvepargi kõnekoosolek ja Eesti vabanemine," in Tõnu Tannberg, ed., *Hirvepark 1987. 20 aastat kodanikualgatusest, mis muutis Eesti lähiajalugu* (Tallinn: MTÜ Kultuuriselts Hirvepark, 2007), 8–70, 25; Mati Graf, *Kalevipoja kojutulek. 1978. aasta poliitilisest pööripäevast 1988. aasta Suveräänsusdeklaratsioonini* (Tallinn: Argo, 2008), 202–10.

16 Frank Lenze, "Hier spielt die Musik. Zwei Gesichter der europäischen Schlagerstadt Tallinn," *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), no. 22, 23 May 2002, 65–66; similarly, this stereotypical idea is found in

"communists" did not leave simply because of the masses singing patriotic songs, as the idea of the "singing" revolution seems to suggest. Singing is a canonized part of national culture in the Baltic states, with an especially long tradition in Estonia and Latvia, where the first national singing festivals took place in 1869 and 1873, respectively. This tradition was continued even under Soviet power. Singing thus became an important element of popular resistance against the new Soviet regime, although in part this "resistance" was camouflaged by the ideology of singing being "national in form" (and supposedly "socialist in content"). And yet, the old and new patriotic songs that, from the 1960s, were gradually reintegrated into the song festivals' programs carried another vision of national reality. In the Soviet Baltic republics, a "national form" was (still) unthinkable without it having "national content," despite the Soviet education in schools, party sub-organizations and the media. Thus one might argue that an unconscious "Singing Revolution" had already started in 1960, when at the end of the Estonian Song Festival in Tallinn the audience demanded to sing "Mu isamaa on minu arm" (My fatherland is my love, written by Lydia Koidula), a song whose words date back to the 1860s and that was sung at the first Song Festival in 1869. The Estonian composer Gustav Ernesaks had written a new melody to these lines for the first Soviet Song Festival in 1948, whereupon the song immediately became extremely popular. It was banned, however, from the next festivals in 1950 and 1955, despite the fact that its composer, Ernesaks, had been awarded the Stalin Prize. In 1960 "Mu isamaa" was still banned, the idea of "fatherland" being substituted on the program with Isaak Dunaevskii's classic Soviet patriotic hymn "Pesnya o Rodine" (Song of the Motherland). However, despite the official programming, the choirs started to sing "Mu isamaa" at the end of the festival and Ernesaks came to the conductor's podium.[17] From this point in time onwards, his song was always part of the program of the song festivals, and thus the narrow ethnic concept of Koidula's "fatherland" superseded Dunaevskii's broader idea of a Soviet "motherland." In this way, "Mu isamaa" became a national alternative to the Soviet Estonian anthem, which incidentally was also composed by Ernesaks (with text by Johannes Semper).

The Baltic national past was difficult to assess for the Soviet authorities. While the independent republics and authoritarian regimes between the wars were condemned as having been "fascist," the peoples' existence under the thumb of Baltic German landlords and Russian authorities prior to 1917 fit the schemes of class struggle and anti-tsarist resistance very well. In at least one of its axioms, the Soviet version of history was easily compatible to the national narratives in the Baltic republics, especially in Estonia and Latvia: antagonism toward the

the book of the Finnish rock musician Harri Rinne, *Laulev revolutsioon. Eesti rockpõlvkona ime* (Tallinn: Varrak, 2008), 8.

[17] Cf. Toivo Ojaveski et al., eds., *130 aastat Eesti laulupidusid* (Tallinn: Talmar & Põhi, 2002), 148–49.

Germans.[18] In this context, singing songs from the era of the so-called national awakening in the second half of the nineteenth century could be presented in the Soviet discourse as praising the Estonian and Latvian peasants' fight against the Baltic German upper class. One had only to add the discursive element of the Russians' "brotherly help" to these small peoples and the idyllic picture of traditional Soviet "friendship of the peoples" was reaffirmed. Historians in the three republics often used this approach for researching their individual nation's past. Since every Soviet republic was charged with describing its own territory's past, according of course to ideological demands, it was even possible to redefine basic elements of the pre-Soviet national identity. During perestroika and in the early years of regained independence, historians continued to build on these national traditions.[19]

Thus, the cultural form of protest that was articulated during the perestroika years had its own decisively national tradition, but it was recreated and legitimatized anew in 1988. In the dialectic rhetoric of these years, singing patriotic songs meant supporting Gorbachev and the reformers' agenda in the Kremlin (naturally, with the minimal goal of gaining more autonomy from the center always in mind). In 1988, Estonia became the avant-garde of this particular type of Baltic support for perestroika, and thus it was here that the notion of "Singing Revolution" was created. Of course, at the beginning this metaphor used the powerful semantics of "revolution" dialectically, in the Soviet context. This "revolution," however, was socialist only in rhetoric; in form and content it was explicitly national.

A series of summer music festivals in Estonia helped create this powerful metaphor. In May 1988, the still-banned Estonian national colors were widely displayed at a music festival and the first national heritage days held in the university town of Tartu. Already in 1987, the rock musician Alo Mattiisen had played his song "Ei ole üksi ükski maa" (No single land is alone) in this town, a song that subsequently became very popular during the "Phosphorite War," as will be discussed below. The next year, he performed five "patriotic songs" based on poems written in the nineteenth century, among others "Eestlane olen ja eestlaseks jään" (I am and will be Estonian). But it was the Night Song Festivals in Tallinn in June that became the first significant event in this Estonian summer of music. These nights were initially a spontaneous continuation of the traditional Old Town Days, which were held in early June 1988. After the official program was over, people went to the song festival arena a few kilometers outside the

18 Toivo U. Raun, "The Image of the Baltic German Elites in Twentieth-century Estonian Historiography: The 1930s vs. the 1970s," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 30, no. 4 (1999): 338–51, 348.

19 Cf. the reflections of Jüri Kivimäe, "Re-writing Estonian History?" and Leo Dribins, "The historiography of Latvian nationalism in the twentieth century," in Michael Branch, ed., *National History and Identity. Approaches to the Writing of National History in the North-East Baltic Region. Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1999), 205–12, 245–55.

center to continue playing music during the "white nights." On 11 June, the final evening of the Old Town Days, more than 100,000 people took part in the night festival. Estonian flags were raised and Mattiisen's "Patriotic Songs" were sung repeatedly. These mass meetings continued during the following nights and marked on 14 June the anniversary of the mass deportations of Baltic people in June 1941, when the Soviet regime removed approximately 10,000 people from Estonia, 15,000 from Latvia and 18,000 from Lithuania.[20] A few days later, inspired by these singing nights, Heinz Valk wrote an article for the cultural weekly *Sirp ja vasar* (Sickle and hammer) under the headline "Laulev revolutsioon" (Singing revolution).[21] The movement now had a name, and it was a revolution, although Valk made it clear that its mission was above all to remain peaceful. During these nights of singing, a feeling of national unity was encountered by the masses, and after them, there was hardly any way to return to the Soviet past. Valk wrote that being part of these festivals "was worth suffering humiliation and self-denial for decades." He described the singing masses moving to the rhythms, waving dozens and dozens of national flags: "People were laughing and smiling, unanimous, with no malice, no hate, only one word in their hearts: Estonia!"[22] The national "Singing Revolution" was born.

## Political perestroika in the Soviet Baltic republics

In mid-June 1988 in Estonia, Soviet power gave in to the political demands being increasingly articulated in the media and supported by the singing masses. This was of utmost importance for the Baltic independence movement as a whole. Still in December 1987, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had harshly criticized, in a secret note, the Baltic republics' leaderships because they had not prevented "nationalist manifestations" like the demonstrations in all three capitals held on 23 August, the anniversary of the Hitler-Stalin Pact.[23] But a mere half year later, Estonia had become the avant-garde of perestroika in all of the USSR. On 16 June, the first secretary of the Estonian Communist Party (ECP), the Russian-born Estonian Karl Vaino, was replaced by the reform-minded Väino Väljas, who due to his ideas on national development under Soviet rule had been removed from the Central Committee of the ECP in 1980 and sent to Central America as a Soviet ambassador.[24]

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[20] Andres Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), 130–31; Andrejs Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 347–48.

[21] Heinz Valk, "Laulev revolutsioon," *Sirp ja Vasar*, 17 June 1988, 3.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Graf, *Kalevipoja kojutulek*, 240–41.

[24] Ibid., 325–33.

However, singing patriotic songs was only one factor that led to this decision. More decisive was the initiative in April of a group of Estonian communists to found the Popular Front in Support of Perestroika (*Rahvarinne Perestroika Toetuseks*). The Popular Front was supported enthusiastically in Estonia and the idea of forming such a front quickly spread to the neighboring republics. One of the initiators was Edgar Savisaar, who together with Siim Kallas, Tiit Made, and Mikk Titma, already in September 1987, had published a program for the economic autonomy of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic.[25] This still-informal movement had announced a demonstration to be held in the Song Festival Arena on 17 June 1988 in order to remind the Estonian delegates to the nineteenth party conference in Moscow of their responsibility for their republic's fate.[26] Obviously, the ECP feared the agitation of the Popular Front activists, and by removing Vaino they wanted to appease the critics in their own ranks who supported the Popular Front initiative.[27] The first step taken by the new First Secretary Väljas was to meet the national demands of the nascent Popular Front. On 23 June, the Supreme Soviet officially legalized the traditional national colors and the old anthem of the state, although it did not replace the Soviet Estonian symbols. The Estonian Popular Front held its official founding congress on 1 and 2 October.

In Latvia and Lithuania, changes in the leadership were only possible after a visit by Gorbachev's "troubleshooter" Aleksandr Yakovlev in August 1988, although in Latvia, despite the orthodox Communist leadership, a local Helsinki human rights group had already been founded in 1986. But in October 1988, following Aleksandr Yakovlev's visit, the hardliner Boris Pugo was removed as first secretary and the reform-Communist Anatoliis Gorbunovs became chairman of the Supreme Soviet.[28] Among the new leadership's first decisions was the re-legalization of Latvia's national symbols, just a few days before the Latvian Popular Front (*Latvijas Tautas Fronte*) held its founding congress on 8 and 9 October.[29] In this initial period, it seemed that the Popular Fronts founded to

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[25] In Estonian, this program was called *Isemajandav Eesti,* abbreviated as IME, which forms the Estonian word for "wonder." It was published in the daily *Edasi* on 26 September 1987.

[26] According to Heinz Valk, Vaino together with the Soviet minister of defense, Dmitrii Yazov, organized a military action to crush the meeting on 17 June. Reportedly, Gorbachev did not want to risk a possible bloodbath in Tallinn, not the least because of his reputation in the West. Valk, *Pääsemine*, 298–99.

[27] Seppo Zetterberg, *Eesti ajalugu* (Tallinn: Tänapäev, 2009), 580; Sulev Vahtre, ed., *Eesti ajalugu VI. Vabadussõjast taasiseseisvumiseni* (Tartu: Ilmamaa, 2005), 379–81.

[28] According to Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, 511, Yakovlev confirmed that most Balts were supporters of the reforms and the union. The Soviet leader claimed to have been concerned for the first time about the danger for the USSR coming from the Baltic republics at just this time. Cf. Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 317.

[29] Jānis Škapars, ed., *Latvijas Tautas fronte 1988–1991. Veltījums Trešajai Atmodai un Latvijas tautas frontes dibināšanas desmitgadei* (Riga: Apgāds Jāņa sēta, 1998); Andrejs Penikis, "The Third Awakening Begins: The Birth of the Latvian Popular Front, June 1988 to August 1988," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 27, no. 4 (1996): 261–90.

support Gorbachev were receiving assistance from the "center," i.e. Moscow, and thus the local parties were forced to make concessions. In Lithuania, the reform-communist Algirdas Brazauskas became the first secretary of the LiCP on 20 October. On 22 and 23 October, the Lithuanian Popular Front (*Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdis*, literally "Reform Movement of Lithuania") was officially founded, and in mid-November the Supreme Soviet declared the old flag and anthem to be the symbols of the republic. On 25 November *Sąjūdis* elected Vytautas Landsbergis as its chairman.[30] In all three republics, the "bourgeois" national holidays again became official.

To borrow from revolutionary history, we might call the Popular Fronts the "Soviets" of the "Singing Revolution," because they established a sort of "double power" as had been done in Russia in 1917. This time, however, the "Soviets" effectively paved the way for a multiparty system. It is difficult to say whether, from the outset, the initiative to establish independent societal organizations outside the party was meant to destroy the one-party system. At least according to their early rhetoric, the Popular Fronts aimed at providing independent support for Gorbachev's reforms and not necessarily at becoming an alternative to the Communist Party.[31] Initially, many members of the Popular Fronts remained party members. In the long run, however, the close cooperation between parts of the republican communist parties with the Popular Fronts, at least initially supported by Gorbachev, paved the way for the split of the parties into reformist and orthodox wings. Simultaneously, the new political center of the Popular Fronts encouraged more radical groups to emerge. These included *nationalist opposition* groups, which contested the legitimacy of all Soviet institutions and rejected any compromises with the communists, and *orthodox communist* opposition, which above all articulated the concerns of the non-indigenous population of predominantly Russian origin.

While in Lithuania and Latvia the first conflicts were carried out basically within the framework of the Popular Fronts,[32] in Estonia, nationalists and dissidents founded in August 1988 the Estonian National Independence Party (*Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei*, ERSP). This party later organized so-called Citizen Committees and in 1990 became the strongest group in the alternative parliament, the Estonian Congress. This body was designed to be the democratic

[30] Roman Batūra, ed., *Siekiant nepriklausomybės. Lietuvos sąjūdžio spauda. 1988–1991 m.* (Vilnius: "Valstybės Žinios", 2005).

[31] This has been confirmed by one of the leading figures of *Rahvarinne*, Edgar Savisaar, "Kalender 1988," in Edgar Savisaar, Rein Ruutsoo, Kadri Simson et al., *Rahvarinne 1988. (Kakskümmend aastat hiljem)* (Tallinn: Tallinna linnavalitsus, 2008), 162–210, 209, and by Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, 510.

[32] In Lithuania, the "Lithuanian Liberty League," founded already in the late 1970s as an underground organization, was the bearer of this conflict. Cf. Gintaras Šidlauskas, ed., *Lietuvos Laisvės Lyga. Nuo "Laisvės šauklio" iki nepriklausomybės. Dokumentai, konferencijos medžiaga, kalbos, straipsniai, bibliografija* (Vilnius: Leidykla "Naujoji Matrica", 2004).

bearer of continued Estonian statehood, with voting rights only being given to those registered for the Committees who could prove that they or their forebears had been citizens of the Estonian Republic in 1940 (including non-Estonians and exiles).[33] When on 24 February 1989 the Estonian tricolor officially replaced the flag of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR) with a ceremony carried out on Tallinn's castle tower "Tall Hermann," the national opposition did not take part, arguing that it was a humiliation of the Estonians' urge to freedom to show these colors on occupied territory; the opposition, therefore, had its own event on the Town Hall square.[34] However, this was a conflict of political tactics; by February 1990, 790,000 provisional citizens had been registered and the Popular Front became one of the parties represented in the Estonian Congress.

On the other extreme of the political spectrum, the national minorities in the Baltic republics, mostly Russian speakers, became increasingly concerned. In Estonia and Latvia they created local orthodox centrist movements known as Interfront (in Lithuania: *Edinstvo*), which supposedly were under the control of the Kremlin through the local trade unionist organizations. Any policy of fostering autonomous rights on a republican basis challenged the status of these non-indigenous populations, which had often been sent to the region as the working-force for centrally governed enterprises. Their migration to the Soviet Baltic republics had been a major concern for Estonians and Latvians, who in 1979 made up only 64 percent and 53 percent, respectively, of their republics' populations, and to a lesser extent for Lithuanians (80 percent). The pro-Soviet "internationalist" pressure groups undeniably introduced an ethnic aspect into the struggle, an aspect that the Popular Fronts had initially tried to avoid. In claiming to be the voice of the traditional Soviet "friendship of peoples," they blamed the national majorities of supporting ethnic separatism. In this respect, the Popular Fronts integrated reform-minded people not only from the ethnic majorities and the communist parties, but initially also from the local Russian-speaking communities.[35]

Thus, as always occurs during revolutions, radical fractions came to the surface that challenged pragmatic reformists. But during the aforementioned "summer of music" in Estonia, people became self-assured enough to think the hitherto unthinkable. The festival "Eestimaa laul" (Estonian Song) on 11 September 1988 was attended by an estimated 250,000 to 300,000 people in the presence of communist party leader Väljas. At this event, Trivimi Velliste, an activist from the Estonian Heritage Society founded in late 1987, openly demanded the re-establishment of Estonian independence for the first time. This was a bold step

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33 Eve Pärnaste, ed., *Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei. ERSP aeg. Kogumik* (Tallinn: MTÜ Magna Memoria, 2008); Eve Pärnaste, ed., *Eesti Kongress. Siis ja praegu* (Tallinn: Eesti Vabariigi Riigikantselei, 2000).

34 Mati Graf, *Impeeriumi lõpp ja Eesti taasiseseisvumine* 1988–1991 (Tallinn: Argo, 2012), 62–63.

35 The ethnic question is another aspect of the Singing Revolution that has not been subject of serious research. Cf. Grigorjan and Rosenfeld, *Iseseisvuse anatoomia*.

that was instantly criticized by leading members of the Popular Front initiative, such as Edgar Savisaar, since no one could foresee the reaction of the Kremlin. Nevertheless, on the same day Valk formulated his acclaimed sentence in front of the crowd: “One day we will win anyway,” which instantly became the credo of the Estonian “Singing Revolution.”[36] Even for the most hardnosed politicians among the crowd, it became clear that in time, autonomy would be not enough. At the end of the festival, the 80-year-old Ernesaks conducted the majestic choir singing his “Mu isamaa.” This time, there was no recollection of a “Soviet homeland” left. The mental secession from the USSR was already on its way.

When a few weeks later the founding congress of the Estonian Popular Front was held in Tallinn, the people demonstrated national unity with a torchlight procession through the Old Town, accompanied by patriotic songs. And again, the government gave in, with the Supreme Soviet declaring the republic’s sovereignty on 16 November 1988.[37] After this decision, which effectively placed republican law above union law, the nascent political change in the Soviet Baltic republics met fierce resistance in Moscow. It was the first time in Soviet history that a SSR had demanded its right of sovereignty, as granted by article 72 in the Soviet constitution.[38]

## Political stalemate in 1989

In late 1988, the Kremlin had to face the fact that “support for perestroika” in the Baltic republics did not necessarily mean unconditional loyalty to the union, but quite the opposite. Nonetheless, Estonia’s boldness in declaring sovereignty led to fruitless juridical debates with Moscow in the months to come, while Estonia was waiting for the other Baltic republics to follow. To some extent, the confrontation with radical groups like the ERSP was responsible for this stalemate in Estonian relations with the center. Lithuania eventually took the lead in the political movement while Latvia remained rather passive. Despite the wish of the Lithuanian *Sąjūdis* to support Estonia, in November 1988 the newly elected communist leadership in Vilnius, with Algirdas Brazauskas at the top, was not yet ready to pass a draft declaration of sovereignty. Lithuania finally took on the political movement on 16 February 1989, the anniversary of Lithuania’s independence in 1918, when *Sąjūdis* declared full independence as its goal. This was followed by an official declaration of sovereignty in May.[39] Latvia followed

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36 Valk, *Pääsemine*, 304–8.

37 Toivo U. Raun, “The Re-establishment of Estonian Independence,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 22, no. 3 (1991): 251–58; Gorbachev, *Zhizn’ i reformy*, 512.

38 Brettin, *Das Scheitern*, 241–55; Graf, *Kalevipoja kojutulek*, 355–403.

39 Zigmantas Kiaupa, *The History of Lithuania* (Vilnius: baltos lankos, 2004) 320; Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 317, 321.

only in late July. By then, this step did not stir up any trouble in Moscow. This was thanks to the Estonian leadership in the person of Arnold Rüütel, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR, having withstood challenging verbal pressure in the Kremlin, where he had been summoned on 18 November 1988, two days after the declaration of sovereignty was approved in Tallinn. In March 1989, the Popular Fronts of all three republics had won a majority of the Baltic republics' delegates elected to the USSR Congress of Peoples' Deputies, and by May, all three had passed laws declaring their indigenous languages as state languages.[40] In Lithuania, this led to a final split of the LiCP. An extraordinary party congress held in late December 1989 voted overwhelmingly for independence, whereupon the orthodox minority formed a LiCP leadership within the CPSU. Finally on 11 March 1990, the Lithuanian Supreme Council re-established independent statehood and abolished the Soviet Constitution.[41]

This represented the Baltic fall from grace in orthodox Soviet eyes. Newly elected President Gorbachev declared an economic blockade on Lithuania in April, while simultaneously offering Latvia and Estonia special status within the union. This approach, however, remained unsuccessful.[42] By then, multiparty elections in Estonia and Latvia to the local Supreme Soviets (soon to be renamed Supreme Councils) had given pro-independence parties a majority. In Lithuania, elections had been held in late February with a second ballot in early March. *Sąjūdis* gained around 100 seats out of 141, but on its list there were candidates from other newly founded parties such as the Social Democrats or Christian Democrats represented as well. The reform communists were represented by 40 deputies, 17 of them from the *Sąjūdis* list. The orthodox communists got only 5 seats in the Supreme Soviet. This was the body that declared independence on 11 March.[43] In Estonia and Latvia, where elections were held on 18 March, the pro-independence results were somewhat lower than in Lithuania due to these republics' large immigrant populations. In Estonia, the *Rahvarinne* got 40 seats out of 105, supporters of Moscow almost 30, and others, among them a group of reform communists called Free Estonia, more than 30 seats.[44] In Latvia, after run-off elections *Tautas Fronte* got more than 130 seats out of 201.[45] A period of transition to the restoration of independence was established in Tallinn on 30 March and in Riga on 4 May.

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40 Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 323; Rein Taagepera, "A Note on the March 1989 Elections in Estonia," *Soviet Studies* 42, no. 2 (1990): 329–39.

41 Alfred Erich Senn, "Lithuania's Path to Independence," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 22, no. 3 (1991): 245–50.

42 Kiaupa, *The History of Lithuania*, 322–24.

43 Kiaupa, *The History of Lithuania*, 324; V. Stanley Vardys, "Litauen unter der Sowjetherrschaft und auf dem Wege zur Unabhängigkeit," in Boris Meissner, ed., *Die baltischen Nationen. Estland. Lettland. Litauen* (Cologne: Markus Verlag, 1991), 223–68, 240–41.

44 Vahtre, ed., *Eesti ajalugu*, 286.

45 Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 331, claim that the "supporters of independence elected exceeded the necessary two-thirds (134) for control of the Latvian Supreme Soviet".

Nevertheless, in contrast to the Central European states, Soviet power in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania did not end despite unilaterally declared independence. Moscow tried to come to terms with the constitutional requirements for a Soviet republic to withdraw from the USSR. New rules, however, would have made the task "virtually impossible."[46] The resulting impasse could not hide the fact that, ultimately, the real power remained in Moscow's hand. In January 1991, first Vilnius and later Riga witnessed violent attempts to restore the old order. In Vilnius, after Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene had decided to raise food prices substantially, the government had to resign. Obviously using this moment of weakness in the Lithuanian Soviet Republic, on 10 January Gorbachev demanded the restoration of the Soviet constitution from the Supreme Council and refused to guarantee to refrain from using violence. On 11 January the Soviet army and internal troops of the Ministry of the Interior (OMON) stormed strategic places in Vilnius, including the Press House building and the railway station. Two days later, when in the early morning the special military unit "Alpha" along with the OMON troops attacked, among other facilities, the Vilnius TV tower, fourteen people died and over a hundred were injured. The following days, a parallel scenario developed in Riga, although Boris Yeltsin, the president of the RSFSR, in reaction to the events in Vilnius had come to Tallinn to sign agreements with Estonia and Latvia, thus establishing bilateral relations. As had been done in Vilnius, barricades were erected in Riga to protect strategic buildings. Nevertheless, on 20 January, when in Moscow a crowd of 100,000 people demonstrated its support for the Baltic republics, OMON troops stormed the Ministry of Interior in Riga, killing five people and injuring nine.[47]

As a result, not least thanks to international media coverage, Soviet power in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was finally discredited, although Moscow was only ready to negotiate a Union Treaty. By March 1991, all three Baltic republics had carried out referenda resulting in significant majorities for independence, which demonstrated the backing by large portions of the non-native populations as well.[48] Nevertheless, Soviet power collapsed only in August 1991, when the old *nomenklatura* of the regime dug their own graves with the ragged coup d'état of the State Committee of the State of Emergency. When in reaction, Estonia and Latvia finally followed Lithuania in declaring full independence, all other Soviet republics except Russia (which had, among others, issued a declaration of sovereignty in 1990) followed suit. The Soviet super power imploded and the State Committee eased the rebirth of the Baltic states, which were recognized almost immediately on the international arena.[49]

[46] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*, 396.

[47] Ainius Lasas, "Bloody Sunday. What did Gorbachev know about the January 1991 events in Vilnius and Riga?," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 38, no. 2 (2007): 179–94, 185–86.

[48] 90.5% in Lithuania (turnout of 84.7%), 73.7% in Latvia (87.5%), and 77.8% in Estonia (82.9%). Meissner, ed., *Die baltischen Nationen*, 405; slightly different numbers in Ruutsoo, "Tagasivaat-ed 'vabaduse teele'," 304.

[49] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*, 398–99.

It should be remembered that Soviet power was still present on Baltic territory even after the (re-)admission of the three states to the UN on 17 September 1991. The final units of the then Russian army left Estonia and Latvia only three years after the putsch, on 31 August 1994, exactly one year later than in Lithuania. Thus, the pathos of the day was revived, with World War II actually ending only in August 1994 on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea.

## The meaning of 1989 for the Baltic states

In this context, 1989 bears primarily symbolic relevance for the three Baltic states. For one triumphant moment, their independence movement became part of the European *annus mirabilis*, since a calendar of 1989 events is not complete without the "Baltic Chain" (also called the "Baltic Way"), a mass demonstration that took place just a few days after the famous Pan-European Picnic on the Austrian-Hungarian border. On 23 August, the fiftieth anniversary of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the People's Fronts of the three Baltic republics organized a human chain connecting the three capitals Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius, in order to peacefully remember the murderous consequences that this pact had held for them. It is estimated that between 1.2 and more than 2 million people joined the almost 600 kilometer long chain to protest Soviet domination. This powerful example of peaceful resistance not only caught the attention of the international media, it was also an almost singular demonstration of Baltic mutual consensus.[50] Thus, the political significance of 1989 for the Baltic countries was the fact that from then onward, neither Moscow nor the Western powers could completely ignore the political urgency of the Baltic question. Whoever wanted to end the Cold War had to provide a solution for this problem as well.

The West did not instantly support the goals of the Baltic republics, but nonetheless, the reaction of the Central Committee on 26 August 1989 felt disproportionately aggressive, revealing the Kremlin's helplessness in this regard. In the eyes of Moscow, the "Baltic Chain" had been nothing more than "nationalist hysteria." The pronouncement of the CC, read in the news program "Vremya,"

[50] Shortly before the 20th anniversary of this event the "Baltic Chain" has been registered in the UNESCO-list "Memory of the World": ttp://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-8/the-baltic-way-human-chain-linking-three-states-in-their-drive-for-freedom/ (accessed 25 September 2012); http://www.epl.ee/artikkel/474728 (accessed 9 August 2012). Cf. Vytautas Visockas, *Baltijos kelias. The Baltic way* (Vilnius: Mintis, 2000); Lembit Koik, *23. august 1989. Balti kett* (Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, 2004); Kalev Vilgats, "Külo Arjakas: Balti tee ehk Balti keti korraldamine otsustati kolmepoolse komisjoni kohtumisel Pärnus," *Pärnu Postimees*, 22 August 2009, http://www.parnupostimees.ee/ 154982/kullo-arjakas-balti-tee-ehk-balti-keti-korraldamine-otsustati-kolmepoolse-komisjoni-kohtumisel-parnus/ (accessed 25 September 2012).

even claimed: "Matters have gone too far. There is a serious threat to the fate of the Baltic peoples. People should know the abyss into which they are being pushed by their nationalistic leaders. Should they achieve their goals, the possible consequences could be catastrophic to these nations. A question could arise as to their very existence." According to this statement, the Popular Fronts were aiming at the destruction of the union and they "terrorized" those still loyal to socialism.[51] At this time, Soviet dominance was already history in Central Europe. However, the violent events in Vilnius and Riga in January 1991 proved that these words were not empty threats.

For the time being, the only victory won by the "Baltic Chain" for the Popular Fronts was a moral one, although at the diplomatic level, as Spohr-Readman has shown, the Baltic question became important from this point in time, not least thanks to the Chain's impressive impact. Nonetheless, the Western powers continued anxiously to avoid open support of the Baltic case, despite the Kremlin's aggressive tone. Especially West Germany was far from committing itself to a solution for the situation of the three countries, despite its historical responsibility. While claiming peaceful self-determination for the Germans, Chancellor Helmut Kohl simultaneously rejected this very right for the Baltic peoples, losing thereby a balanced European perspective. Germany only recognized the independence of the Baltic countries in the late summer of 1991, even later than Gorbachev had. And it is quite symbolic that Kohl paid his first visit to the three countries only in 1998, when he went to Riga to meet the prime minister of the Russian Federation, Viktor Chernomyrdin.[52]

## The mobilizing potential of historical memory

The significant event of the August 1989 "Baltic Chain" became a focal point for glasnost in the Soviet Baltic republics. At the same time, it reminded the rest of Europe of the forgotten victims of the allied victory in Eastern Europe, a victory that had been possible thanks to a dictator no less despicable than the common enemy Hitler. Despite the decision of the EU to commemorate 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, the Hitler-Stalin Pact was never a central European *lieu de mémoire*.[53] Nonetheless,

[51] Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 328; Rein Ruutsoo, "Tagasivaated 'vabaduse teele'—Rahvarinde roll Eesti ajaloos 1988-1993," *Rahvarinne* (1988): 234–321, 284; Seraina Gilly, *Der Nationalstaat im Wandel. Estland im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002) 341; Brettin, *Das Scheitern*, 192–201; Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, 517.

[52] Cf. Spohr-Readman, *Germany and the Baltic Problem after the Cold War*, *passim*.

[53] Stefan Troebst, "Der 23. August 1939—Ein europäischer lieu de mémoire?," *Osteuropa* 59, no. 7–8 (2009): 249–56, see URL: http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2009-08-11-troebst-de.html (accessed 12 July 2010). For the EU parliament's resolution, see http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0439+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN (accessed 25 September 2012).

the Western part of the anti-Hitler coalition, despite the US government's policy not to recognize the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states, de facto accepted the Pact's consequences and never actually questioned Stalin's territorial gains.[54] The feeling of having been abandoned and sacrificed by the Western democracies was very vivid in the Baltic republics during the early postwar years, and this was a crucial aspect that gave moral fuel to the Baltic opposition movements in the late 1980s. No doubt the mobilization of dissent based on historical legitimacy was above all an act of anti-Soviet sentiment. Between the lines, however, these common efforts in the Baltic independence movement were also an appeal to Western historical responsibility. The three countries were not only claiming their secession from the Kremlin, but were simultaneously demanding their moral right to "return to Europe" as approved by the West.

The date 23 August was always a focal point of Baltic dissent, as were the traditional independence days of the three interwar republics. While the former stood for the Baltic victimhood, the latter represented the continuation of an ideal mode of independent existence (something the people's democracies of Central Europe did not need to the same extent). Therefore, throughout the Soviet period "calendar demonstrations" expressed this national protest, although they were generally quite modest in form, such as wearing clothes or small arm ribbons of the national colors, or simply graffiti being written on the walls.[55] On 23 August 1979, forty-five Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians signed the "Baltic Appeal" to the general secretary of the UN, which demanded the public disclosure of the pact and its protocols, annulment of its consequences and restoration of the independent republics.[56] In the late 1980s, these anniversaries became popular to a much greater degree. With every year, people were less afraid of taking part in displaying non-Soviet identities. In less than three years, small local demonstrations of a few hundred people had transformed into large-scale political events that attracted the attention of a world-wide audience, the culmination being the "Baltic Chain." While on one hand, this demonstrated the decline of the central authority in the Soviet Baltic republics, on the other hand, it proved how effective history can be for mobilizing the masses.

The first protest meetings that attracted a significant number of people in all three capitals occurred on 23 August 1987. Sources speak of more than 5,000 people in Riga, in Tallinn of more than 2,000, and in Vilnius 200 to 300.[57] Displaying the

[54] Jonathan d'Hommedieu, "Roosevelt and the dictators: the origin of the US non-recognition policy of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states," in: Hiden and Made, eds., *The Baltic Question during Cold War*, 33–44.

[55] Basic information provided by Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 250–71.

[56] Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 270.

[57] Estimates vary. The numbers given here are from Ruutsoo, "Tagasivaated 'vabaduse teele'," 255. Cf. Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 308: Riga: "over 10,000"; Tallinn: "at least 5,000"; Vilnius: "over 1,000". For Tallinn, cf. Kaasik and Piirimäe, "Hirvepargi kõnekoosolek ja Eesti vabanemine"; Graf, *Kalevipoja kojutulek*, 216–28.

national colors was still a legal offence, and a number of people were later arrested. Just one year later, during the first summer of the "Singing Revolution," the situation had changed completely: Hundreds of thousands took part in the demonstrations on 23 August, and showing the national colors had become legal, at least in Estonia. The authorities limited their activities to close observation. By 1989, millions of people took part in the "Baltic Chain." The Baltic question had become decisively important for the fate of perestroika, since it gave the conservative Soviet opposition reason to be concerned about the integrity of the entire country.

In the international arena, it became increasingly hollow to declare the Baltic question simply an internal matter of the USSR. The Popular Fronts were clever to concentrate their propaganda on the secret protocols of the Hitler-Stalin Pact instead of the entire complex of occupation and annexation from June 1940. If they had emphasized the latter, they would never have been able to create the international commitment they received, not least because this would have annoyed the Kremlin even more. Moscow still held true to the Stalinist legend of the spontaneous "socialist revolutions" simultaneously occurring in all three countries in the summer of 1940.[58] In contrast to this orthodox Soviet view, according to Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian historical memory, there was only one common experience after 1940: occupation, annexation and deportation. Most decisively in this respect, the living memory of these crucial years still existed in many families, since many people who were allowed to return from Siberian exile after Stalin's death were still alive in the late 1980s. In these families, the younger generation was quite naturally acquainted with the differences between the history taught at school and private remembrance.[59] However, it was not only Stalinist terror that was remembered in the late 1980s and increasingly discussed in local media: The societies in all three countries still had a pre-Soviet memory of the independent republics, although this was unavoidably idealized. Almost half a century of Soviet indoctrination had not been able to extract these memories. Although the region became increasingly adapted to Soviet realities, at least on the surface, after open terror was no longer used in the USSR from the late 1950s, remembering the 23 August was a question of historical justice.

In the Soviet Baltic republics, history thus became the most important source of legitimacy of anti-Soviet protest. It is quite noteworthy that these anti-Soviet convictions were very powerful, especially among the younger generation. Politburo documents concerning the Baltic republics are full of discussions of anti-Soviet youth protests, and even record some cases of violence committed on

[58] Lauri Mälksoo, *Ilegal Annexation and State Continuity. Case of the Incorporation of the Baltic States by the USSR. A Study of the Tension between Normativity and Power in International Law* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003); Jan Lipinsky, *Das geheime Zusatzprotokoll zum deutsch-sowjetischen Nichtangriffsvertrag vom 23. August 1939 und seine Entstehungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von 1939 bis 1999* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004).

[59] Peeter Tulviste, "History Taught at School Versus History Discovered at Home: The Case of Estonia," *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 9, no. 2 (1994): 121–26.

ethnic grounds against Slavic "occupants."[60] According to Elena Zubkova, it was especially irritating for the regime that the youth were leading the protest in the Baltic republics.[61] Indeed, it had nothing to do with the Soviet historical narrative that history was a very popular subject at the University of Tartu.[62] It was history that legitimized the belief in an independent future, and it seemed to prove the three nation's roles as victims of dictators. Additionally, history during the years of perestroika provided motivation for establishing an active civil society in the three republics, a civil society that today is missed by certain veterans of the Popular Front.[63] Quite naturally, these successful years of political activity become idealized, especially by those whose personal reading of the past did not correspond to the hitherto established national narratives of the "fight for independence." At that time, history was used for "popular" vengeance as well: On 25 March 1988, the anniversary of mass deportations from the Baltic Soviet republics in March 1949, the Estonian Heritage Society demanded the names of all those deported to the interior of the USSR to be documented and published. It was thought that this select historical documentation, based on a victim narrative, would unite the ethnic community and could be used as a weapon against the foreign power.[64]

These initiatives for historical glasnost wanted to push the Soviet leadership into acknowledging that Stalin had been Hitler's accomplice in dividing Eastern Europe. How far would perestroika legally go? Shortly before the demonstrations in August 1987, a group was formed in Estonia with a single goal: The Estonian Group for the Publication of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (*Molotov-Ribbentropi Pakti Avalikustamise Eesti Grupp*). This group (which formed the core of the ERSP) organized a meeting in Tallinn's Hirve Park on 23 August.[65] One year later, on 10 August 1988, the Estonian historian Heino Arumäe published, for the first time in the USSR, the entire text of the pact, including the protocols in Estonian, in the daily *Rahva Hääl* (Voice of the People). The text was based on copies from German archives. A few days later, the Russian-language daily *Sovetskaya Estoniya* followed suit and published the text in Russian as well. Latvian and Lithuanian periodicals subsequently made the text available in their languages.[66]

[60] Here the author relies on his own work in the RGANI. He is currently preparing a study based on these sources.

[61] Elena Yu. Zubkova, "Vlast' i razvitie ėtnokonfliktnoi situatsii v SSSR 1953–1985 gody," *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, no. 4 (2004): 3–32, esp. 23–27; Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml'*, 42–43. According to Graf, *Kalevipoja kojutulek*, 240, still in late 1987 the official media asked why the youth was so eager to participate in anti-Soviet demonstrations.

[62] Cf. Anu Raudsepp, *Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eesti NSV eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides 1944–1985* (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2005).

[63] Ester Šank, "Valusad küsimused. Kuhu on kadunud kodanikuühiskond," *Rahvarinne 1988*, 323–26.

[64] Ruutsoo, "Tagasivaated 'vabaduse teele'," 259.

[65] Tannberg, *Hirvepark 1987*.

[66] The Latvian teacher's journal *Skolotāju Avīze* published part of the text already on 23 July 1988. Cf. Gert von Pistohlkors, "Der Hitler-Stalin-Pakt und die Baltischen Staaten," and the translation of Heino Arumäe's article in *Rahva hääl*, "Noch einmal zum sowjetisch-deutschen Nicht-

On 18 May 1989, the Estonian Supreme Soviet was the first administrative body of the USSR to declare the clauses of the Hitler-Stalin Pact null and void. Supported by *Sąjūdis*, it demanded the newly elected Congress of Peoples' Deputies to do the same. In Moscow, the Baltic deputies, mostly candidates supported by the Popular Fronts, sought tight cooperation with the "Interregional Group" established by reform-minded communists around Yurii Afanas'yev, Gavriil Popov and Boris Yeltsin.[67] On 2 June, they managed to be represented in a Commission for the Legal Assessment of the Pact, led by Gorbachev's close advisor Yakovlev and by Savisaar (among the members: Marju Lauristin from Estonia, Landsbergis and Kazimir Motieka from Lithuania, and Mavriks Vulfsons from Latvia).[68]

The decision of the congress of 24 December to recognize the existence of the secret protocols and to declare their clauses "legally unjustified and invalid from the moment of signing" is significant for the relationship between the Union and the Baltic Soviet Republics.[69] However, this decision had no practical consequences, since the annexation as such was not condemned. As late as 2010, this issue was still not resolved at an official level. And as mentioned above, the former status of the Baltic republics as parts of the Russian empire and the USSR sets them apart from the former people's democracies of Central Europe.[70]

## The Culture of the "Singing Revolution"

In assessing the "Singing Revolution," historians and political scientists have concentrated on official statements, elections and plebiscites, the conflict with the

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angriffspakt," in Erwin Oberländer, ed., *Der Hitler-Stalin-Pakt 1939. Das Ende Ostmitteleuropas?* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989), 75–97, 114–24. The text was published in Latvian ("Literatūra un māksla"; "Padomju jaunate") and in Lithuanian ("Sąjūdžio žinios"; "Literatūra ir menas"). Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 319.

[67] Denis M. Ablaev, *Mezhregional'naya deputatskaya gruppa: stanovlenie, razvitie i itogi* (Moskva: Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi oblastnoi universitet, 2008).

[68] Heiki Lindpere, *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Challenging Soviet History* (Tallinn: Estonian Foreign Policy Institute, 2009). Cf. also the DVD by Toomas Lepp, "Dokumentaarfilm: Eestlased Kremlis" (Tallinn: Eesti Kultuurfilm, 2006), which quite convincingly follows the narrative that it was the Baltic delegates who were responsible for the collapse of the USSR.

[69] Translation of the Resolution of 24 December signed by Gorbachev, in Lindpere, *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*, 173–75.

[70] Influential Russian commentators like the historian Nataliya Narochnitskaya, who is in charge of the Parisian branch of the governmental "Institute for Democracy and Cooperation," call the decision of December 1989 a "mistake" because they made it impossible for the Russian Federation to take a clear position in a future process of reparations with the Baltic republics. See "Rekomendatsii rossiiskikh istorikov: Rossiya i Pribaltika: kompetentnye otvety na istoricheskie pretenzii limitrofov," *Sootechestvennik. Informatsionnyi portal*, http://compatriot.su/ estonia/ news/51807.html (accessed 10 August 2007). For a general account, see Karsten Brüggemann, "Russia and the Baltic Countries: Recent Russian-language literature (Review Essay)," *Kritika. Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10, no. 4 (2009): 935–56.

center, and the Baltic countries' relations with the West. Historians of the USSR, looking traditionally from the center, refer first and foremost to the decline of the central power.[71] One of the main topics is the astonishing fact that, in general, the dissolution of the Soviet Union was a quite peaceful process, even in the Baltic region, despite the bloody events of January 1991. Concerning Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Walter C. Clemens has taken an unorthodox approach to the secession. According to him, the factor "culture," in a wider sense, is decisive for explaining the behavioral differences between the Soviet and national "cultures," whereby for him, a "societal fitness" of the peoples in the Baltic region was created not least by the long tradition of Protestant cultures of reading.[72] Heiko Pääbo has observed that the potential for violence based on ethnicity was rather low in Estonia in the crucial years 1988–90.[73]

In fact, there was indeed a moment of tension. On 15 May 1990, Interfront organized a meeting on Toompea Hill in the center of Tallinn to protest the recent decisions concerning a "transition period" towards independence (30 March) as well as the final abolition of the name "Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic" in favor of the traditional "Republic of Estonia" (8 May); this decision was preceded by a similar step in Latvia four days earlier, in reaction to Lithuania's declaration of independence in March. During the Interfront meeting, some of the demonstrators tried to break into government buildings in the castle on Toompea Hill. In reaction to the new prime minister Savisaar's call for help via radio, masses of Estonian supporters of the government came to Castle Square, pushing the mostly Russian demonstrators into the small area of the castle, with the Estonians outside the complex. Violence seemed to be at hand, since the Russians sat in a trap with no way out. According to then foreign minister and later president Lennart Meri, the situation was saved first by a Russian general and member of the Supreme Council, who managed to calm down the masses, and second by the Estonians on Castle Square, who slowly opened a narrow path for the demonstrators to leave the site.[74]

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[71] From the central perspective, see Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia. From Nicholas II to Putin* (London: Penguin, 2003), 485–507; Manfred Hildermeier, *Geschichte der Sowjetunion 1917–1991: Entstehung und Niedergang des ersten sozialistischen Staates* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998), 1052–60.

[72] Walter C. Clemens, "Culture and Symbols as Tools of Resistance," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 40, no. 2 (2009): 169–77, 172. See Walter C. Clemens, *The Baltic Transformed. Complexity Theory and European Security* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001). Cf. Guntis Smidchens, "National Heroic Narratives in the Baltics as a Source for Nonviolent Political Action," *Slavic Review* 66, no. 3 (2007): 484–508.

[73] Heiko Pääbo, "The Role of Non-Violent Resistance in Proclaiming Independence in Estonia," in Talavs Jundzis, ed., *Development of Democracy. Experience in the Baltic States and Taiwan* (Riga: Latvian Academy of Sciences, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, 2006), 126–36. According to him, opinion polls in 1988–89 "showed that the support of the Intermovement varied from 35–43% within non-Estonians."

[74] Andreas Oplatka, *Lennart Meri. Ein Leben für Estland. Dialog mit dem Präsidenten* (Zürich: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1999), 321–23; Graf, *Impeeriumi lõpp*, 163–65.

There is another major factor with regard to the culture of the "Singing Revolution," however, that is open for further research. Although many scholars often refer to the "mass movements" that reshaped the political landscapes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, we do not know very much about the people who took part in these movements. We do not know, for instance, exactly who went out into the streets. Social scientists like Henri Vogt have chosen to collect individual stories to give a portrait of the "revolutionary" generation, but even the limited number of respondents in his case only reveals how open the situation in 1989 was. According to Vogt, "collective utopias" mobilized individuals to go to the streets. His quite general claim about these common goals—one could "become more 'European' but simultaneously also more 'national'"—can hardly be disputed.[75] These public dispositions were so important because for half a century the communist dictatorship had been trying to suppress them with the single socialist utopia, which propagated quite a different form of collectivity. The year 1989 brought the individual note back into social consciousness. In the Baltic case, however, the "collective utopia" that mobilized the masses, regardless of generational differences, was merely a return to the cultural patterns that had been developed during the first half of the twentieth century.[76]

Apart from this general approach to these mass movements, I would like to examine the issue of youth participation here, which was of utmost importance for the "Singing Revolution," not the least because of the motivation music offered. Vogt discusses the memories of those born from 1964 to 1973, whereby he consciously concentrates on the generation of those who actively took part in the 1989 protests from the early stages onwards. However, if Zubkova is correct in stating that already in the 1960s, Moscow was alarmed by the predominance of the participation of the younger generation in smaller protest activities (especially at universities),[77] then perestroika in the Baltic republics was a logical continuation of this protest culture. From the beginning, the "Singing Revolution" was a youth movement in terms of activity on the streets. As has been stated above, the dissent did not only involve people singing traditional songs from the late nineteenth-century "national awakening" period. In all three Baltic republics, rock music played a decisive role in displaying anti-regime protest. Since the 1970s, local rock music that was "Western" in form but "national" in content motivated especially younger people, who thus were involved in a sort of continuous passive anti-regime protest, since the Kremlin always tried to fight the most recent waves of "decadent" Western culture. In this sense, the influence

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[75] Henri Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment. A Narrative of the Political Transformation in Eastern Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 240.

[76] Cf. for instance Toivo U. Raun, "National Identity in Finland and Estonia, 1905–1917," in Norbert Angermann, Michael Garleff, and Wilhelm Lenz, eds., *Ostseeprovinzen, Baltische Staaten und das Nationale. Festschrift für Gert von Pistohlkors zum 70. Geburtstag* (Münster: LIT, 2005), 343–56.

[77] Zubkova, "Vlast' i razvitie," 24–25.

that jazz had had on the informal movements of the 1960s was carried into the 1980s by rock and punk. Whereas in 1967, the concert of the Charles Lloyd Trio (featuring Keith Jarrett) during the "Tallinn-67" jazz festival fostered the image of Estonia as the Soviet Union's "window to Europe,"[78] the performance of John Lyndon's band Public Image Ltd. during the Tallinn "Rock Summer" in August 1988 prepared the Estonian capital for their "return to Europe."[79] Punk had been the trigger for protest already in 1980, the year Tallinn hosted the sailing competitions of the Moscow Olympic games. On 22 September 1980, the anniversary of Tallinn's "liberation" in 1944, a concert of the punk band Propeller, organized for the special occasion of a soccer match celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Estonian Television, was abruptly interrupted by officials, whereupon hundreds of young people marched toward the city center shouting anti-Russian slogans calling for the resignation of Brezhnev and the ESSR's minister of education, Elza Grechkina.[80] Since punk was an authentic anti-Soviet protest, it was punks who were among the first to display openly the old Estonian tricolor. Thus it came as no surprise when in 1988 a punk song figured among the iconic (and ironic) hits of the "Singing Revolution": J.M.K.E.'s "Tere Perestroika" (Hello Perestroika).[81]

However music was not the only medium for youth protest. The first mass demonstrations in all three republics were organized around the issue of environmental hazards. This issue had the advantage of being intrinsically apolitical, although in the Baltic republics, protest against pollution caused by state-run industrial plants also meant fighting against the immigration of more workers from the Soviet interior,[82] an issue that had already been openly addressed in 1979 by the aforementioned "Baltic Appeal." With a "green" agenda, the new possibilities for intense criticism under Gorbachev were tested. Environmental issues first came to the surface in autumn 1986 in Latvia, where the young

[78] Valter Ojakäär, *Sirp ja saksofoon. Eesti levimuusika ajaloost 3* (Tallinn: Ilo, 2008), 352–69; Rinne, *Laulev revolutsioon*, 56–57.

[79] Tony Blackplait and Cat Bloomfield, *Eesti punk 1976–1990. Anarhia ENSV-s* (Tallinn: Varrak, 2009), 282–91, 300–7, 310–15.

[80] Rinne, *Laulev revolutsioon*, 35–40, 65–73; Blackplait and Bloomfield, *Eesti punk*, 36–44; Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 253.

[81] About J.M.K.E. see Blackplait and Bloomfield, *Eesti punk*, *passim*; for a video of "Tere Perestroika," see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBt8qBdz0gA&feature=related (accessed 18 July 2010). The text reads: "The sky's cloudless, the sea's blue / Everybody's breathing free and deep / Hammer and sickle are no longer a threat / Now they symbolize joyful work / Hello perestroika, democracy / One country is becoming free of dictatorship / Hello perestroika, hello happiness / The red flag isn't so horrible anymore […] The uniform of militia no longer sickens / Now it's nearly beautiful / You'll see militia and punks / Shaking hands […] In Virumaa not a well remains dry / An airship lands in front of the mausoleum / Well what do you say? / The democracy is so great / That one can only wonder […]." Quoted from the CD "Külmale maale" (Helsinki: Stupido Twins, 1989).

[82] See to the following Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 304–7.

journalist Dainis Īvāns, later one of the organizers of the Popular Front, raised questions about a planned hydroelectric complex at Pļaviņas; later the planned construction of a subway in Riga came under the focus of critics as well. In the spring of 1987, the so-called Phosphorite War occurred in Estonia, during which especially the students in Tartu went onto the streets. Estonian specialists claimed that the planned expansion of open-pit phosphate mining in the north of the country would render the whole region infertile and possibly endanger the water supply of the entire republic. The Estonian environmentalists were also concerned about the development of the industrial port Maardu near Tallinn. But the phosphorus mining mobilized open protest: Accompanied by Mattiisen's aforementioned rock-hymn "Ei ole üksi ükski maa," on 1 May 1987 Tartu students "substituted green ecological banners for the standard red ones during the traditional May parade."[83] While ecology protests reached less industrialized Lithuania later—the first mass demonstration against the Chernobyl-style Ignalina nuclear power plant was held in autumn 1988—the success of the protest movements in Estonia and Latvia was decisive. First, in October 1987, the USSR Council of Ministers decided to stop phosphate mining projects in Estonia, and in November 1987 it also cancelled the building of the hydroelectric complex in Pļaviņas. In both cases, but especially crucial in Estonia, this demonstrated that the party was not omnipotent, and that even in the USSR, civic action could achieve something against bureaucratic resistance. Prominent members of the ECP, including Rüütel and Savisaar, joined the protests, and the republican Council of Ministers, led by Bruno Saul and Indrek Toome, promised not to sanction continued planning until all ecological concerns had been addressed. This showed that even the ECP leadership supported local concerns over central planning.

Still, the psychological aspect in 1987 of the gradual disappearance of fear may have been even more important. As one of Vogt's Estonian respondents remembered, this "was the first experience […] that you can go to the streets, you can demonstrate, and nothing happens, no repression follows."[84] This positive "first experience" was primarily shared by students, artists and representatives of the intelligentsia (in Estonia and Latvia alike). Thus it is no surprise that these were the groups that went out onto the streets again in the summer of 1988. The entire culture of protest changed with them. It seemed that there was no longer any need for violence, since the state apparatus, at least tactically, had pulled back its troops. In September 1980, when protesting students in Tallinn pulled down Soviet flags and pushed over streetcars,[85] violence seemed the appropriate expression of youth protest. Everyone who had seen the brilliant film "Vai viegli but jaunam?" (Is it easy to be young?), shot by the Lativan director Juris Podnieks

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[83] Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 306.
[84] Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment*, 23.
[85] Rinne, *Laulev revolutsioon*, 68.

and released in 1986, knew about the violent potential of the youth, a potential that had been fed by the social stagnation of the Brezhnev era. Podnieks' film opens with a concert of the band Pērkons in Ogre in 1985, with the scenes spliced with coverage of the trial of several teenagers who were charged with demolishing two train compartments after the concert. Podnieks then empathetically looks at the personal life of these young people, presenting ideas of self-realization that for the most part were completely foreign to Soviet clichés.

During the "Singing Revolution," the fact that intellectuals took the concerns of the youth seriously was important for the unity of the society. This already had a tradition: The issues raised indirectly by the youth riots in 1980 were supported by the famous "Letter of 40," signed in October 1980 by Estonian writers, scientists and artists, as well as by representatives of official cultural institutions.[86] In Latvia, Podnieks' acclaimed 1986 film had portrayed the needs and ideals of Latvian youth. This mutual understanding reached a new level after 1987, when the intelligentsia directed the vibrant protest energy of the youth into social activism. One aspect characterized both groups: they were relatively young. The reform movement was mainly conducted by representatives of a generation that only knew about massive state violence through hearsay or personal family history. As Vogt has stated, these people "were unaware of the 'impossibility' of a revolution," by which he refers to the Czech experience in 1968, and thus, "it was possible for them to make one."[87]

## Conclusion

Much like the other revolutions of 1989, the "Singing Revolution" in the Soviet Baltic republics was characterized by an unusual level of youth engagement. Due to their commitment to issues of national development in terms of the environment and industrial production, due to their collective past and the way history was taught in schools, and due to independent cultural expression, the movement gained momentum and visibility on the streets. The Kremlin's hands were tied: The new leadership did not want to risk damaging international relations by television footage covering violently suppressed demonstrations on the Baltic Sea coast. It is often claimed that the chain reaction leading to the dissolution of the USSR started in Gdańsk in September 1980 and ended in Moscow in August 1991. However, as Elena Zubkova has pointed out, anyone who would like to know the reasons for the collapse of the world's first socialist state must take into account what happened in the Soviet Baltic republics during the first ten years

[86] Misiunas and Taagepera, *The Baltic States*, 269; Sirje Kiin, Rein Ruutsoo, and Andres Tarand, *40 kirja lugu* (Tallinn: Olion, 1990).

[87] Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment*, 24.

after their annexation.[88] According to Zubkova, the Soviet experiment never had a chance there, even after Moscow decided to turn the "dangerous borderland" into a "show case" (*vitrina*) of Soviet success.[89] Thus the region played the role of a predetermined weak link in the construction of the Soviet Union, as expressed in the words of Valk: "One day we will win anyway." One might see the Baltic republics as a case of particular "imperial overstretch," if not in military and economic terms, then surely because the USSR extended itself beyond its abilities with respect to cultural needs.

The Estonian social scientists Peeter Vihalemm, Marju Lauristin and Ivar Tallo have insightfully suggested a differentiation for marking the various stages of social change during the "Singing Revolution." According to them, the "revolution" reached a "mythological phase" in 1988, and passed into an "ideological stage" in 1989.[90] The first period brought a historical rebirth and created an optimism that had hitherto been considered impossible in the near future. Today we might speak of a "Yes, we can" moment, a moment that produced the unity felt during those summer nights of music, a short period of euphoria all too easily mythologized today. The subsequent stage of ideological stalemates was then perceived as a time of outer tensions and internal conflicts concerning a single goal—independence.[91] Thus, while 1989 was in some respects a year of disappointment, the summer of 1988 has been encapsulated in collective memory as the "Singing Revolution." During the summer of 1988 a whole society changed, although the people in the Soviet Baltic republics had to wait another three years for this change to become political reality.

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88 Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml'*, 7, 43; for comparison see Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, 521.

89 Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml'*, 125, 337.

90 Peeter Vihalemm, Marju Lauristin and Ivar Tallo, "Development of Political Culture in Estonia," in Marju Lauristin and Peeter Vihalemm, eds., *Return to the Western World. Cultural and Political Perspectives on the Estonian Post-Communist Transition* (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 1997), 197–210.

91 Vogt, *Between Utopia and Disillusionment*, 28, quotes the Estonian poet Jaan Kaplinski (*Postimees*, 19 September 1991), who stated that in 1989, "those who kept on meeting joined different camps," the supporters of the Popular Front and the "national radicals."

# REACTIONS

Norman M. Naimark

# THE SUPERPOWERS AND 1989 IN EASTERN EUROPE

Given the sheer importance of the East European revolutions of 1989, there is understandably no shortage of scholarly and journalistic work on their history.[1] The many works that appeared in anticipation of the twentieth anniversary of the momentous events of that year compliment a rich literature of memoirs and analyses that appeared in the 1990s, as observers sought to understand the origins, course, and consequences of the *annus mirabilis*. Some of these works focus on the end of communism in individual countries. Some seek to explain the larger forces at work in the region that set off the domino-like collapse of old regimes and the birth of the new. Some pay more attention to Gorbachev and his role in undermining the stability of the region and the will of communist elites to maintain their antiquated political and economic systems intact. Others emphasize the dynamics of the international system and how they encouraged (or, in some cases, discouraged) the changes that swept over Eastern and East Central Europe in that year. In this connection, numerous studies focus on the superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and their influence on the events of 1989 and the recasting of the late Cold War world as a result.

All of the work on the superpower context of 1989 builds on the first-hand memoirs of participants in the events. On the American side, the memoirs of George Herbert Walker Bush and Brent Scowcroft, of James Baker III, and of Robert Gates present a more or less official take on the contribution of Washington to the peaceful outcome of the East European revolutions.[2] Particularly useful in understanding the thoughts and actions of American statesmen during this critical period are the memoirs/analyses of Robert Hutchings, who served in the

[1] I owe a special debt of gratitude to my research assistant, Valentin Bolotnyy, for his excellent work on this project. I would also like to thank Prof. Thomas W. Simons, Jr., for his helpful comments on the original draft.
For the East European revolutions, see Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: the Revolution of '89 witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

[2] George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); James A. Baker III, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989–1992* (New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1995); Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996). For a critical assessment of the first months, especially, of Bush administration policy from the perspective of the previous administration of Ronald Reagan, see George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993).

National Security Council, and Jack Matlock, US ambassador to Moscow.[3] Condoleezza Rice and Philip Zelikow, both of whom were in the White House at the time, were able to use classified documents to construct the story of the fall of the Wall and the unification of Germany in a more scholarly fashion.[4]

Especially since the Soviet Union collapsed soon after the 1989 events, Soviet officials were no less anxious than American ones to put their understanding of the events of 1989 in print, starting with Mikhail Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze.[5] Soviet policymaking in this period was confined to a small circle of advisors around Gorbachev, and their memoirs and diaries provide unusual insight into Moscow's understanding of what was taking place in Eastern Europe. Certainly, the most impressive and revealing are Anatolii Chernyaev's diaries, *Sovmestnyi iskhod*, which also appeared in abbreviated form in English.[6] Many of Gorbachev's advisors subsequently also gave long interviews and participated in conferences on 1989, where their interpretations of events were recorded and, in some cases, later published.[7]

The memoirs of Soviet and American leaders are complimented by those of Europeans who both participated in and observed the events of 1989 from the perspective of their own countries' interests. Particularly impressive in this con-

[3] Robert L. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: An Insider's Account of US Policy in Europe, 1989–1992* (Washington, DC: Wilson Center, 1997); Jack Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Fall of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Random House, 1995).

[4] Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[5] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1996). See also Mikhail Gorbachev and Zdenek Mlynar, *Conversations with Gorbachev: on Perestroika, the Prague Spring, and the Crossroads of Socialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

[6] A. Chernyaev, *Sovmestnyi iskhod: Dnevnik duvkh epokh 1972–1991 goda* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008). For briefer English language memoirs, see Anatoly Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). Among others in English, see, for example, Valery Boldin, *Ten Years That Shook the World: The Gorbachev Era as Witnessed by His Chief of Staff* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Pavel Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1997); Andrei Grachev, *Gorbachev's Gamble: Soviet Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008). For notes on Politburo meetings, see A. Chernyaev, A. Veber, and V. Medvedev, eds., *V Politbyuro TsK KPSS, 1985–91* (Moscow: Alpina, 2006).

[7] See, especially, Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe 1989* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010). Similarly, the National Security Archive's "End of the Cold War Collection" holds numerous documents on the superpowers' role in 1989. My thanks to Svetlana Savranskaya for sending me draft copies of these works and allowing me to cite them in the original paper. See also the Hoover Institution Archives (hereafter HIA), Hoover Institution-Gorbachev Foundation Collection (hereafter HIGFC), for a series of interviews with prominent Soviet and American officials about this period. The archives of the Gorbachev Foundation in Moscow hold many similar documents.

nection are the memoirs of Helmut Kohl and the diaries of his chief advisor, Horst Teltschik.[8] The views of Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand are also important to understanding the international politics of the period.[9]

There is surprisingly no shortage of available archival material on 1989. Part of the reason is that the ruling Communist Party of the Soviet Union was put on trial by the Yeltsin government and its archives were seized and placed in the hands of the Russian State Archives Administration. As a result, Central Committee and Politburo materials from 1989 are readily accessible for research and even available in published form.[10] The Gorbachev Foundation in Moscow and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University hold documents from and memoirs of the period that were in the personal hands of Gorbachev's team of advisors. Some historians have successfully used East European archives to reconstruct great-power motives and actions during the crisis year of 1989.[11] The East German archives are particularly useful for this purpose, since the East German state was dissolved as was the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED), leaving their archives fully available for research.[12] While Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Romanian, and Bulgarian successor states still protect some archives of the period, there is no GDR successor state to protect its former holdings. Its archives, including those of the SED and of the State Security Service (the *Staatssicherheitsdienst*, the Stasi), can be thought of as stored in a butcher shop, where various body parts are hung out for display and can be investigated pretty much at will. Of course, much was destroyed in the last months of the GDR, between the demonstrations

[8] Helmut Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1982–1990* (Munich: Droemer, 2005); Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage: Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991).

[9] Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: Harper Collins, 1993); David Bell, *Francois Mitterrand* (Cambridge: Polity 2005); Frederic Bozo, "Mitterrand's France, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification: A Reappraisal," *Cold War History* 7, no. 4 (2007): 455–78, 457–59; John Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher* (London: Pimlico, 2004).

[10] Interesting materials on 1989 are available on microfilm in fond 89 in the Hoover Institution Archives, as well as in other major repositories in the United States. Similarly, Central Committee materials are also available at Hoover in microfiche: "Plenumy Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941–1990. Iz fonda Rossiiskogo Gosudarstvennogo Arkhiva Noveishei Istorii." Politburo materials can be found in Chernyaev, Veber, Medvedev, eds., *V Politbyuro*.

[11] See especially Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 178–256. On Poland, see Gregory F. Domber, "Rumblings in Eastern Europe: Western Pressure on Poland's Moves Towards Democratic Transformation," in Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow, and Leopoldo Nuti, eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 58–61.

[12] For fruitful use of the East German archives, see Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create a Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), and Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Der Fall der Mauer: die unbeabsichtigte Selbstauflösung des SED-Staates*, 2nd ed. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999). See also Andreas Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland: Die Geschichte der Wiedervereinigung* (Munich: Beck, 2009).

of October 1989 and the election of a non-communist government in March 1990. Apparently, even Vladimir Putin, then a KGB operative in the GDR, was so hard at work burning documents in Dresden that his furnace broke down.[13]

Documentary material is also available on the policies of the US government in 1989, though with many restrictions. The National Security Archive in Washington, D.C. has done yeoman's work in submitting Freedom of Information Act petitions to declassify US materials from 1989, in particular those documents used by Rice and Zelikow in the study mentioned above.[14]

Many scholarly studies touch on the problems of the superpower relationship and the revolutions of 1989 that are broached in this chapter. Perhaps the most comprehensive is Melvyn Leffler's *For the Soul of Mankind*.[15] Mary Elise Sarotte has written an intriguing account of the international dynamics behind the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany.[16] There are a number of important scholarly books that tell the story of the fall of the Wall and the end of communism in Eastern Europe, including several interesting journalistic studies.[17] Several worthwhile collections of articles have appeared from conferences marking the twentieth anniversary of the fall of communist rule in Eastern Europe.[18] Focusing more on Gorbachev and his policies that led to the breakup of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe are Vladislav Zubok's *A Failed Empire*, Hannes Adomeit's *Imperial Overstretch*, and Archie Brown's *Seven Years that Changed the World*.[19] Stephen Kotkin and Jan Tomasz Gross have published a provocative

[13] Sarotte, *1989*, 93.

[14] NSA, George Washington University. The holdings include important CIA reports, Moscow summit files, ambassadorial cables, a "Solidarity" collection, and other things. See also the references in footnote 8 above.

[15] Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

[16] Sarotte, *1989*. See also Alexander von Plato, *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands: Ein weltpolitisches Machtspiel*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Links, 2003).

[17] See György Dalos, *Der Vorhang geht auf: Das Ende der Diktaturen in Osteuropa* (Munich: Beck, 2009); Michael Meyer, *The Year that Changed the World: The Untold Story Behind the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (New York: Scribner, 2009); Victor Sebestyen, *Revolution 1989: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Pantheon, 2009). I want to thank Timothy Garton Ash for referring me to these and other recent books. They are included in an insightful review essay by him about the literature on the revolutions of that year: "1989!" *The New York Review of Books* 56, no. 17 (2009).

[18] See, in particular, Jeffrey Engel, ed., *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Olaf Njolstad, ed., *The Last Decade of the Cold War: From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation* (London: Frank Cass, 2004). See also the special issue John Connelly and Amir Weiner, eds. "Revisiting 1989," *Contemporary European History* 18, no. 3 (2009).

[19] Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch: Germany in Soviet Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998); Archie Brown, *Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

study of 1989 that focuses on the weaknesses of Gorbachev and the communist elites in the East.[20] Using a different tack, Mark Kramer has published a series of articles that emphasize the ways in which these elites were undermined by Gorbachev's actions, as well as his policies.[21] The secondary literature is remarkably strong, in part because the singular importance of the fall of communism to the international system makes its analysis central to understanding the past and future of world politics.[22]

The basic argument of this paper is that the superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, were further behind the eight ball in 1989—the trajectory of events and their accurate analysis—and thus their potential influence on these events, than the scholarly literature and especially the memoirs lead us to believe. Both Moscow and Washington were attached to the post-World War II Cold War order, which had guaranteed their primacy in international affairs. The rapid changes in Eastern Europe in 1989 challenged their image of themselves and of their relationship with each other. The corollary of this argument is that the East Europeans were the primary initiators of the revolutions of 1989, both in the failures of their communist leaderships and the initiatives of civil society (and the crowds of demonstrators), while the superpowers tended to react to events rather than to lead them.[23]

I use the term "superpowers" here in both an ironic and heuristic way: ironic because the supposed freedom of action and ability to exert power at will that is inherent in the concept of a superpower was almost completely lacking on both the American and Soviet sides; heuristic because this very condition of helplessness in face of the force of events is instructive in helping us understand what it really meant to be a superpower in the late Cold War world. It is certainly true that until the very end of the Cold War the Soviet Union and the United States were capable of destroying each other and a good part of the world, not to mention Europe, in a full-scale military confrontation. But, at the same time, the superpowers were hamstrung by the East European crisis of 1989, in part unable, and in part unwilling to interfere in events beyond their control.

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[20] Stephen Kotkin, with a contribution from Jan T. Gross, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Random House, 2009).

[21] Kramer, "The Collapse (Part 1)," 178–256; (Part 2), *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 3–64; (Part 3), ibid. 7, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 3–96. On this issue, see also Jacques Levesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[22] Saki Ruth Dockrill, *The End of the Cold War Era: The Transformation of the Global Security Order* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005).

[23] See Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* and Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague* (New York: Random House, 1990). For similar arguments focusing on the East Europeans, cf. Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolutions: Central Europe in 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

In making this argument, it is important to note that there is plenty of evidence to support a different kind of picture of 1989, one that grants more foresight, understanding, and wisdom to both the Kremlin and the White House. Robert Hutchings and Condoleezza Rice and Philip Zelikow, for example, have written well-documented and convincing studies of American policy that underline its careful formulation and well-considered execution.[24] In excellent studies of Gorbachev's policies toward Eastern Europe, both Jacques Levesque and Mark Kramer emphasize a history of deep and ongoing Soviet involvement in Eastern Europe that was highly influential and consequential in the events of 1989.[25] Despite these convincing renditions of events, there is much in the documents that lead one to different conclusions; the purpose of this paper is to explore some of that evidence.

Twenty years after the events of 1989 in Eastern Europe is an excellent juncture to return to the *annus mirabilis* and to review the events of that year through the perspective of the documents and memoirs that have been made available since. Paradoxically, the sources for working on the superpowers and 1989 in Eastern Europe are much fuller and more detailed than those for working on similar questions regarding 1949, or, for that matter, 1939, certainly from the Soviet and East European side.

The major problem for any historian trying to deal with the revolutions of 1989 is not sources, but rather narrative. How does one reconstruct these events, place them in orderly chronological progression and appropriate context without taking away the surprises, contingencies, and anxiety built into the situation in Eastern Europe at the time? The post-hoc reconstruction of events tends to make matters too logical and too comprehensible. But this is not just a matter of subsequent historical accounts of 1989. If one reads the documents from the period, even those produced by the best of reporters, like Jack Matlock, US ambassador in Moscow, one is left with a genuinely bifurcated understanding of the perceptions of the day.[26] There is an awareness of profound upheaval in the spring and summer of 1989, but the bottom line of most analyses from the time was that the crisis would pass, or, more often, would take years to resolve, when in fact communism would fall to everyone's surprise within the year. This is true for both the American and Soviet sides of the superpower equation.

## The Americans

Given their superpower status, one might have thought that the Soviet Union and the United States at least knew what was going on in Eastern Europe through

[24] Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*; Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 8. Hutchings argues, for example, that it was a "myth" that "the world was caught unprepared for 1989."

[25] Kramer, "The Collapse (Part 1)," Levesque, *The Enigma*.

[26] See Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*.

their superannuated intelligence agencies. However, this does not appear to have been the case, at least not consistently so. The CIA, for example, routinely overestimated the economic strength of the GDR.[27] On the Soviet side, there was clearly shock and incredulity in the Kremlin as first Egon Krenz and then Hans Modrow brought to Moscow the real story of the completely hopeless condition of the East German economy.[28] While there was indeed a dissenting CIA report from September 1989 that predicted an imminent challenge to the stability of the Soviet Union, the National Intelligence Assessment of October 1989, a consensus intelligence document from the same period, predicted much more optimistically that Gorbachev would survive the coming economic crisis of 1990–91 and encouraged the Bush administration to embrace Gorbachev wholeheartedly at Malta in December 1989.[29] Even former Secretary of State George Shultz mentions with disdain the inability of the CIA to come up with a reliable analysis of Soviet strengths and weaknesses during the final years of the Reagan administration. "I think," he states, "the U.S. intelligence about the Soviet Union was very poor. It misjudged the size and strength of the Soviet economy."[30]

There is no reason for academics to gloat; many of their predictions and prescriptions were as behind the pace of events as those of government analysts.[31] Of course, the inability to understand what was at stake in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was not just about a failure in intelligence; on both sides, politicians heard and understood what they wanted to from their respective intelligence agencies.[32] One of Moscow's most experienced foreign policy analysts, Valentin Falin, states that he warned Gorbachev repeatedly that the countries of the Warsaw Pact alliance, including the GDR, were on the brink of collapse. Yet Gorbachev went about business as usual. "There was no reaction. Absolutely none."[33]

[27] Sarotte, *1989*, 36.

[28] Kohl, *Erinnerungen*, 961. Cf. Charles Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of the East German Regime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 223–24, 235–36.

[29] Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 522–23. See also: Director of Intelligence, CIA, "Moscow's 1989 Agenda for US-Soviet Relations," February 1989, in NSA, a substantial document that does not mention Eastern Europe at all, at least in those parts that were not excised.

[30] Shultz, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 3, 33. Shultz also felt that he had been "misled, lied to, and cut out" by the intelligence community, whose analysis, he concluded "was distorted by strong views about policy." Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 864.

[31] In a landmark volume edited by Arnold L. Horelick, intended to assess the impact of Gorbachev on world affairs, there is nary a word about Eastern Europe or the German Question. Arnold L. Horelick, ed., *U.S.-Soviet Relations: The Next Phase* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

[32] Douglas J. MacEachin defends the CIA's record in *CIA Assessments of the Soviet Union: The Record Versus the Charges: An Intelligence Monograph*, (Washington: Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1996), 99–101. Elsewhere, he notes how difficult it was to present "pure" intelligence to Congress, in particular, where political agendas trumped attempts at objectivity. See "Dialogue: The Musgrove Conference, May 1–3, 1998," in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 99–214, 110–11.

[33] Falin, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 1, 29.

The inability of American leaders to grasp the extent of the crisis and the immediacy of its effects, while claiming leadership of a superpower, is reflected in Robert Gates's *From the Shadows*. As a career intelligence analyst and former member of the Bush White House staff as Deputy National Security Advisor in 1989–91, Gates writes, quite appropriately, that the US government, including the CIA, "had no idea" in the beginning of 1989 "that the tidal wave of history was about to break upon us." "I know of *no one* in or out of government who predicted early in 1989 [at the beginning of the Bush administration] that before the next presidential election Eastern Europe would be free, Germany unified, in NATO, and the Soviet Union an artifact of history."[34] One might add that they didn't even come close. Yet Gates also talks about how Condoleezza Rice, Robert Blackwill, and Robert Zoellick—all in the Bush National Security Council—provided "intellectual and political imagination guiding administration policy toward Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union." This, combined with

> Bush's experience and instincts, Baker's political savvy and negotiating skill, Scowcroft's strategic and historical perspective, and my [Gates's] management of interagency process, would allow the United States to play a sure-footed leadership role in the liberation of Eastern Europe, the unification of Germany, and the final collapse of the Soviet Union.[35]

But then the image of sure-footed leadership disappears again when he writes: "From 1989 to 1991, we shot the rapids of history, and without a life jacket."[36]

As a result of this ambivalence and the inherent conservatism in the Bush administration's style and approach, Bush, Baker, Scowcroft and others developed a hands-off, wait-and-see attitude toward Eastern Europe. This very much reflected the policy of the Reagan White House, which showed, wrote Robert Blackwill, "no willingness [...] to challenge in any fundamental way the status quo in Eastern Europe."[37] In a May 1988 meeting between Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze during the Reagan-Gorbachev Moscow summit, Shultz said all one needed to say about regional issues was: "Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, Central America, Ethiopia, Cambodia and South Africa."[38]

Even more than the Reagan administration, the Bush White House team emphasized the central watchword of "stability," though this could not be publicly underlined, since, as Baker made clear to Shevardnadze in private discussions, "being for stability sounded too much like being for the status quo."[39] At the same

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[34] Gates, *From the Shadows*, 449.

[35] Ibid., 460–61.

[36] Ibid., 483.

[37] Robert D. Blackwill, "European Influences and Constraints on U. S. Policy toward the Soviet Union," in Arnold Horelick, *ed.*, *U.S.-Soviet Relations: The Next Phase* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 127–52, 144.

[38] The White House: Memorandum of Conversation, "Second Shultz-Shevardnadze Meeting," 31 May 1988, in NSA, 1988 Moscow Summit Files.

[39] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 140.

time, the dramatic arms-control initiatives and bilateral approaches to Gorbachev of Reagan and Shultz—the supposed genuine, conservative anti-communists—were abandoned by the Bush administration. Shultz worried for good reason that the "real momentum" in Soviet-US relations that President Reagan and he had handed over to the Bush administration might be "squandered."[40] As Robert Hutchings, former member of the Bush National Security Council points out, there was "no such thing as a 'Reagan-Bush' foreign policy. Before 1989 there was Reagan; afterwards there was Bush." He adds that an entirely new team was brought into the White House, "representing foreign policy approaches fundamentally at odds with those of the Reagan administration."[41] Indeed, the new White House initiated a lengthy series of policy reviews, the "pause," which frustrated Gorbachev, the European allies, and East European progressives. These policy reviews produced little more than "mush," wrote Baker, leading one to doubt whether they simply reflected a lack of direction about how to proceed.[42]

During the winter and spring of 1989, the White House grew increasingly anxious about the growing criticism in the American press about its passivity and lack of engagement. Meanwhile, splits within the administration—with some, like National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft and Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, urging caution about Gorbachev's motives and others, like Secretary of State James Baker, ready to be somewhat more exploratory—also made the White House seem inert. "There are those who want to declare the Cold War ended," stated Cheney at the time of his appointment. "But I believe caution is in order [...] We must guard against gambling our nation's security on what may be a temporary aberration in the behavior of our foremost adversary."[43]

In the end, it is not at all clear that the Bush White House took some initiatives in the great events of 1989 because they had come up with policy objectives that they sought to implement or because they were worried that their superpower status would be diminished by their perceived inactivity. They were particularly worried that Gorbachev had seized the initiative in Europe and appeared to gain strikingly in popularity at the expense of President Bush and the United States.[44] In the zero-sum game logic of superpower relations Gorbachev's burgeoning popularity in Europe meant that the president simply had to become more active and engaged on the continent. When US secretary of state James Baker came to Moscow in mid-May 1989, the Soviets took this as a sign that the Bush administration was at long last ready to renew Ronald Reagan's efforts to move "beyond containment."[45] But even then, the message was off-key, according to

[40] Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1138.
[41] Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 6.
[42] Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 68. Scowcroft also expressed his "disappointment" with the strategic review process. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 53.
[43] Cited in Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*, 425.
[44] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 43.
[45] Chernyaev, *Sovmestnyi iskhod*, 818.

Gorbachev. The Americans expressed worries that a stronger Soviet Union might be more ready to project military power, "which would cause concern in the United States."[46]

A number of younger scholars of 1989—Gregory F. Domber and Mary Elise Sarotte among them—suggest that the problem with the Bush administration was that it did not care all that much about the Poles or the East Germans and instead focused primarily on its attachment to NATO and the preservation of the status quo.[47] Neither taking Gorbachev's renunciation of the use of force in Eastern Europe at his word nor understanding the depth of Gorbachev's need for Western economic and political support, the Bush White House worried inordinately about a 1956 scenario that would see the Poles or Hungarians take any US encouragement as a sign to rise against their communist rulers and then expect American protection if the Soviets invaded. Even more they were concerned about a scenario like 1981 in Poland, where communist parties would crush internal opposition using military force and the United States would be left with no options except to protest. Therefore, in the first free election in the socialist bloc, scheduled in Poland for 4 June 1989, the American embassy in Warsaw worried excessively about a total victory for Solidarity.

> A more modest—but nevertheless solid—victory for Solidarity would enhance prospects for a stable process of democratization. Total victory or something close to it, including possible rejection of the national list, will threaten a sharp defensive reaction from the regime. The position of the leading party reformers would be endangered. Sharper, and even possibly military responses cannot be ruled out.[48]

At the least, the embassy sensed that "the historical force of a vast and powerful current is about to transform Poland's topography forever."

President Bush's much-heralded and long-awaited visit to Poland in July 1989 did not leave much of an impression of US determination to support democratization and the rule of law. Even worse, the president did not deliver on implicit promises of large-scale US economic aid in reward for the concrete measures of reform that had been undertaken. The Poles had high hopes for a grand Marshall Plan-style initiative on the part of the United States; both Solidarity chief Lech Wałęsa and party leader and premier Mieczysław Rakowski mentioned the figure of 10 billion dollars as critical to the survival of the country's economy. But Bush was only able to commit to the Polish Sejm a paltry 15 million dollars for environmental initiatives, while promising to ask Congress for an additional 100 million dollars for other purposes.[49] There would be some debt relief and support for IMF loans. To add insult to injury for the Poles, the

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[46] Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 501.

[47] Domber, "Rumblings in Eastern Europe," 58–61; Sarotte, *1989*.

[48] Amembassy Warsaw to Secstate, 2 June 1989, in NSA, "Solidarity," Doc. 2, (E 23).

[49] Even Scowcroft admits that the financial package was "embarrassingly meager." Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 114.

president's chief of staff, John Sununu, former governor of New Hampshire, touched a raw nerve when he talked about the dangers of providing generous credits; otherwise the Poles would behave like "a kid in a candy shop."[50]

President Bush spent more of his time in Warsaw with General Jaruzelski than expected, trying to convince him to run for president as a way to insure stability in the country. In fact, Jaruzelski later noted that he decided to run in good measure because he felt he had the backing of the Americans.[51] The US embassy was deeply fearful that "if Jaruzelski is not elected president, there is a genuine danger of civil war ending, in most scenarios, with a reluctant but brutal Soviet intervention."[52] Like Gorbachev, Bush was not interested in "poking a stick into an anthill" in Eastern Europe.[53] In Bush's words, "We followed closely but quietly, we could accomplish more by saying less."[54] No wonder his reception from the Polish people was less triumphant than he and Ambassador Davis had hoped.[55] His inadvertent statement in Poland that the Soviets might think about pulling their troops out of Poland led to such nervousness on Gorbachev's part that the American president (and his ambassador in Moscow) immediately tried to reassure Gorbachev that he really didn't mean it.[56]

Bush's visit to Budapest had a similar character, though his welcome there was much more enthusiastic than in Poland. Once again, he demonstrated his clear preference for the reformed communists in power than the dissidents who had struggled to bring about change. At a reception at Ambassador Mark Palmer's residence, he expressed concern when told by Imre Pozsgay that the communists would surely lose power in a free election. Palmer, who had cultivated good relations with dissidents and reform communists, was frustrated, he said, by "the extreme caution" of the president and secretary of state. "Bush and Baker kept cautioning these people [...] in my living room [... ] not to go too far too fast." Bush instructed the dissidents that the communist government "was moving in the right direction. Your country is taking things one step at a time. Surely that is prudent." When Bush was introduced to Janos Kis, the quintessential Central European intellectual and dissident, who enjoyed enormous respect throughout the region, he later told his aides: "These really aren't the right

50 Dalos, *Der Vorhang geht auf*, 57.

51 Ibid., 56.

52 Amembassy Warsaw to Secstate, 23 June 1989, in NSA, "Solidarity," Doc. 4, (E378).

53 Conversation Gorbachev with Kohl, 12 June 1989, in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 463–67, 465.

54 Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 135.

55 In a 27 June 1989 cable intended for the White House, entitled "Poland Looks to President Bush," Ambassador Davis writes: "[The president's visit] may even be one of those events where the convergence of historic trends, of national interests and of decisive individuals can bring about a moment in time which changes the direction of history." NSA, "Solidarity," Doc. 5, (E384).

56 Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, 198–99.

guys to be running the place. At least not yet. They're just not ready." He much preferred the rule of the communists in the government.[57]

Bush's reaction to the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 left a similar impression of disinterest and lack of understanding. The Bush and Scowcroft memoirs protest, perhaps too much, that the administration's restraint regarding the Wall, Poland, and Eastern Europe as a whole was a matter of being "prudent"—their favorite word.[58] Bush had promised Gorbachev that he would not "dance on the wall," and he most assuredly did not. James Baker notes that the President did not want it to appear that "we were sticking our thumb in their eye."[59] At the same time, it is not at all clear that he understood the important implications of the fall of the Wall for Germany and Europe. Perhaps more importantly, there seemed to be no recognition in his remarks of the role of the East German citizenry in bringing about one of the biggest moments in the collapse of communism. In mid-October, as the Leipzig demonstrations attracted the attention of the world, the Bush administration talked about "normalization" and "reconciliation," but not "unification" or "reunification," which were deemed too incendiary.[60] "What was wrong with a divided Germany," noted Brent Scowcroft, "as long as the situation was stable?"[61] What the Bush administration defended as prudence, its critics call a lack of imagination.

Helmut Kohl understood the dangers and promises of the East German situation perfectly. Once East German citizens began to pour out of the country to the West through Hungary in summer and crowded into West German embassies in Prague and Warsaw in September to get entry into the Federal Republic, Kohl quickly concluded that Bonn's long-time policies of propping up the East German regime in exchange for concessions on human rights and visitations had proven bankrupt. The East German regime was unwilling to engage in genuine reforms, and the Federal Republic could not afford to support a situation in which the huge number of GDR citizens who threatened to leave would end up in the FRG. With the demonstrations in Leipzig in the early fall and the breaching of the Wall in November, Kohl began to move decisively toward unification.

Kohl readily acknowledges his friendship for and the backing of George H. W. Bush during the crisis. In his memoirs, he repeatedly gives credit to Bush for supporting him and his policies, particularly in light of the furious opposition to German developments by British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the elusive

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57 Sebestyen, *Revolution 1989*, 304–5.

58 See for example, Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 40, 55. Baker is critical of American ambassador Vernon Walters's forthright approach to unification as undermining the White House's efforts for a "prudent evolution." Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 165. Hutchings writes that "the very prudence" with which the president made his policies "cause many to miss just how ambitious the central vision was." Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 38.

59 Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 164.

60 Ibid., 162–63.

61 Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 188–89.

reticence of French president François Mitterrand, and the last-minute attempts by Gorbachev, especially in the winter of 1989, to put a full stop to Kohl's plans.[62] Melvyn Leffler writes that "their [Kohl's and Bush's] friendship grew as they labored to transform the landscape of Europe."[63] It is also true, as Timothy Garton Ash points out, that the Germans needed the Americans, with Bush in the lead, to broker the "specific guarantees about united Germany's military and security position which enable Gorbachev to accept NATO membership."[64] Still, the leadership on the German Question during this period is unambiguous: Kohl managed the unification of Germany.

On the question of who was leading whom as a consequence of the fall of the Wall, there are telling passages in the Bush and Scowcroft memoirs complaining about the fact the Kohl did not check out his famous "Ten Points" of 28 November 1989 with the White House before actually presenting them to the Bundestag.[65] (Kohl also did not pass them by his coalition partner, Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher.) Kohl claims in his memoirs that he did indeed alert the president to what he was doing. He writes:

> I informed Bush of my intention to summarize the ideas of the West German government about the German Question in a kind of catalog [*Katalog*]. The American president assured me once again that the United States supported the demand of the Germans for self-determination and unity.[66]

Kohl notes that he decided not to share the Ten Points with his allies (or coalition partners) because inevitably the impact of the document would get watered down with their input. The allies would all receive it from their ambassadors in Bonn the morning of the presentation to the Bundestag, with one exception: "The American president, whom I had already earlier notified of the initiative, would receive the Ten Points personally."[67] However, the Germans intentionally sent the White House the Ten Points in the German original. By the time they could translate the document, Horst Teltschik noted in a recent talk, it would be too late for any potential intervention.[68] "We achieved our goal," he wrote in his diary for 29 November 1989: "the Bundeskanzler had taken over the opinion leadership [*Meinungsführerschaft*] of the German Question."[69]

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[62] Kohl, *Erinnerungen*, 871–72.

[63] Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*, 439.

[64] Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York: Random House, 1993), 349.

[65] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 194–95. At least in his memoirs, Scowcroft expresses more annoyance with Kohl's move than does Bush.

[66] Kohl, *Erinnerungen*, 989.

[67] Ibid., 996.

[68] Horst Teltschik, Plenary Session, Eyewitnesses, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Conference "The Revolutions of 1989," 2 October 2009.

[69] Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 54–58.

## The Soviets

Bush's restraint about Eastern Europe and the GDR and the changes going on there reflected those of Gorbachev, though the latter was clearly more agitated by and more garrulous regarding the remarkable events that were capturing the world's attention. Gorbachev's position and that of the Soviet Union was also more threatened by these changes than were Bush and the Americans, though it is not certain that he understood that fact. Almost from the very beginning, Gorbachev's attitude about the Soviets' empire in Eastern Europe was complicated and churlish. Often one gets the feeling from the internal conversations about developments in the region that he simply didn't want to hear about them. To start with, "new thinking" in foreign policy was mostly about arms control, relations with the United States, and, increasingly over time, relations with Europe, meaning Western Europe. His ideas about a "Common European Home" were meant to appeal to the West Europeans in particular. Even in his conversations with the Americans and Europeans, the East Europeans were barely mentioned.[70]

Gorbachev wanted the East European communists to follow his lead, engage in their own form of perestroika, and gain the allegiance of their societies themselves. The respective communist parties and the peoples of the "fraternal" countries had the right and duty to determine their own "political course" and "model of development."[71] Still, sometimes, he passed on more than gentle hints to his East European "friends" to abandon their old ways. Gorbachev worried that the presence of Soviet troops in parts of Eastern Europe might provoke anti-Soviet attacks of one sort or another which might force action on his part.[72] But under no circumstances should the East European communist parties expect the Soviet Union to intervene on their behalf against their own people. Their job was to get their own houses in order by engaging in extensive reforms. Eventually, in Gorbachev's words, "a synthesis of democracy and socialism" would take place.[73] But he was not sanguine about the willingness of the East European party bosses to follow his lead: "at first they did not take our intentions seriously but treated them with polite curiosity and even condescending irony." Once they realized he was indeed serious, Gorbachev writes, "they began to make clear their refusal to accept perestroika, especially when it came to democratization and glasnost."[74]

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70 See Palazchenko, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 2, 23.

71 Vadim Medvedev, as cited in Svetlana Savranskaya, "In the Name of Europe: Soviet Withdrawal from Eastern Europe," in Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow, and Leopoldo Nuti, eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 36–48, 38.

72 Kramer, "The Collapse (Part 1)," 189–92.

73 Gorbachev and Mlynar, *Conversations with Gorbachev*, 84.

74 Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 483.

Gorbachev was pleased with the fact that Jaruzelski had taken decisive leadership in the matter of reform in Poland, but he was annoyed with the rest of the East European party bosses.[75] In a 29 January 1987 Politburo plenum, Gorbachev stated:

> We notice the distancing from us of Honecker, Kadar, and Zhivkov. With Honecker we have differences of views [...] Our self-administration he equates with the Yugoslavs [...] He is dissatisfied with how we have proceeded with Sakharov [the lifting of his banishment in December 1986]. We have to stick firmly to the principle: every ruling communist party must answer for that which goes on in their country. Kadar and Honecker don't believe that the process [of perestroika] can no longer be reversed. Husák spreads compliments but comes out against everything new at home. Zhivkov talks about campaignism [*kampaneishchine*]: Your Khrushchev with his reforms started the 1956 [uprising] in Hungary. And now, supposedly, Gorbachev is destabilizing the socialist community.[76]

During his visit to Prague in April 1987, Gorbachev was thrilled as always by the wildly enthusiastic reception of the crowds, who looked to him as their savior. "The atmosphere reminded me of May 1945," he told his Politburo comrades on 16 April: "They shouted at me: 'stay here for just one year.'" But he also noted grimly that the Czechs showed no enthusiasm at all for their communist leader, Gustáv Husák. At the end of the visit, he told Husák: "We will not carry out our policy of perestroika at your cost. But you should not count on living at our cost."[77] By December, Husák was out of office.

Despite his lack of enthusiasm for most of the East European leaders, Gorbachev consistently refused to become involved their internal politics. He was utterly disdainful of Romanian communist leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, but chose silence when Romanian dissident communists asked for his support in removing the Romanian dictator. "We will not react [to this request]," Gorbachev told the Soviet ambassador, who had conveyed the appeal. "We do not mix into their affairs."[78] Contrary to the worries of the US government, Gorbachev took a benign view of the revolutionary changes that enveloped Poland in the summer of 1989. Ambassador Jack Matlock correctly assessed Moscow's attitude toward the Polish events. They would have liked the communist party to remain a major player in Polish politics, Matlock wrote.

> But in the final analysis, although Solidarity may be a bitter pill to swallow, our best guess is that the Soviets will do so, if it comes to that, after much gagging and gulping. Their essential interests in Poland will be satisfied by any regime, Solidarity-led or not, that can promote domestic stability and avoid anti-Soviet outbursts.[79]

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[75] Gorbachev writes: "He [Jaruzelski] and I had formed a very close and, I would say, amicable relationship." Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 485.

[76] Chernyaev, Veber, Medvedev, eds., *V Politbyuro*, 141.

[77] Ibid., 166.

[78] Medvedev, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 2, 35.

[79] NSA, "Solidarity."

Mark Kramer concludes that the Soviets were more activist than that: "Rather than trying to save the PZPR's [the Polish party's] 'leading role' in Polish society, the Soviet Union actively facilitated the demise of Communist rule in Poland."[80]

During his fateful visit to East Berlin on 6–7 October for the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the birth of the East German state, which he had tried very hard to avoid attending, Gorbachev again felt moved by the crowds. As they filed past him, even with Honecker at his side they cried out "Gorbachev, you are our hope!" "Perestroika! Gorbachev! Help us!" and "Gorby, Gorby!"[81] Honecker was a hopeless case, Gorbachev was convinced, but he would not himself intervene to remove him from his position. Still, he understood, as Egon Krenz had told Falin in Berlin, that if the SED did not remove "Erich," "the matter would quickly come to a storming of the Wall."[82] After Gorbachev's signals in Berlin that change would not be unwelcome in Moscow and some 70,000 people engaged in the first of a series of huge demonstrations in Leipzig on 9 October, Krenz and his allies in the SED leadership removed Honecker from power.[83]

Mirroring his superpower rivals in Washington, who focused on Soviet-American relations and arms control, Gorbachev did not seem to know or care much about what happened in the countries of Eastern Europe as long as they remained in the Warsaw Pact and NATO was confined to Western Europe. His closest confidant on policy matters, Anatolii Chernyaev, writes that: "He [Gorbachev] simply poorly understood the national situation in the allied states. Our policy towards them [...] was completely un-thought through. [...] We did not have a policy."[84]

The Central Committee plenum transcripts for 1989 and 1990, not to mention the diaries and available Soviet foreign ministry materials from that period, barely mention Eastern Europe and the events that were dramatically transforming the region. Instead, the Soviet party leaders, Gorbachev at their head, seemed fully occupied with the economy, the fate of perestroika, keeping control of domestic political opponents, and, eventually, the upheaval in the Caucasus and Baltic republics. Chernyaev notes that no more than 5–6 percent of their discussions were about foreign policy, and these were dominated primarily by arms control and ending the Cold War, not Eastern Europe.[85] Gorbachev's chief of staff,

80 Kramer, "The Collapse (Part 1)," 200.

81 Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 524.

82 Chernyaev, *Sovmestnyi iskhod*, 806.

83 See A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Unification* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 197.

84 Chernyaev, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 1, 65–66.

85 Chernyaev in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 146. "Foreign policy, even the most dramatic moments, even in the period of German unification, took up only five or six percent of the considerations of Gorbachev and the Politburo, of their time and their nerves."

Valerii Boldin, goes so far as to claim that: “The major changes in the countries of the former Socialist commonwealth were never discussed in any forums whatsoever, large or small.”[86] Meanwhile, in the Foreign Ministry, those officials who were in charge of Eastern Europe and the “fraternal” socialist countries were considered less interesting and less successful than the experts on US and West European affairs.[87] Even the foreign minister himself was preoccupied with the fate of perestroika. “Shevardnadze’s role and attention,” wrote James Baker, in reference to a November 1989 Paris meeting with the Soviet foreign minister, “are being diverted increasingly to domestic issues.”[88]

Initially, Gorbachev felt that the changes taking place in Eastern Europe could only help the Soviet cause by building internal stability and political consensus in these countries. He also did not think that Soviet security and internal stability would be affected by changes in Eastern Europe. He and his advisors repeatedly noted in internal conversations that the Soviet Union had been responsible in the late 1940s for the transfer of an unworkable Stalinist system to Eastern Europe. Now was the time for that system to be replaced. But even as Hungary, Poland, and eventually the GDR were hit by political crises, Gorbachev was neither willing to intervene by force nor to guide the course of events. The use of force would sink perestroika and encourage the conservatives at home, while bringing an end to good relations with the West. In his important December 1988 speech at the United Nations, Gorbachev assured the world that the Soviet Union would not interfere with the “radical and revolutionary changes that are taking place” and “that force and the threat of force can no longer be, and should not be instruments of foreign policy.”[89]

Even guidance implied responsibility, and he was not willing to take it on. Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl exchanged appropriate folk sayings in German and Russian for the delicate situation in Hungary. Kohl stated, “Let the church remain in the village [...] [meaning] the Hungarians should decide themselves what they want.” Gorbachev responded, “We have a similar proverb: do not go to another monastery with your own charter.”[90] In early October 1989 Chernyaev noted in his diary: “In a word, as a world phenomenon, socialism is undergoing a complete dismantling. [...] And probably, this is inevitable and good.”[91] By this point, Gorbachev himself says that he had become more of a social democrat than a Soviet

86 Boldin, *Ten Years*, 144.

87 A. L. Adamishin, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 1, 26.

88 Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 141. “It was obvious from his style of operation,” writes Baker later in his memoirs, “that Shevardnadze was preoccupied with domestic matters.” Ibid., 150.

89 Gorbachev’s Speech to the UN, 7 December 1988, CNN Cold War Series: Historical Documents, http://isc.temple.edu/hist249/course/Documents/gorbachev_speech_to_UN.htm (accessed 3 July 2013).

90 Conversation Gorbachev with Kohl, 12 June 1989, in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*,465.

91 Chernyaev, *Sovmestnyi iskhod*, 806.

socialist of the old stripe.[92] Some scholars have suggested that Gorbachev had begun to see the world through the eyes of European statesmen and political leaders.[93]

As superpower leaders, Bush repeatedly assured Gorbachev that he would not take advantage of the upheavals that were taking place in Eastern Europe one after the other, and Gorbachev assured Bush that he would not intervene militarily or politically, and would allow "history" to take its course. Both appreciated the other's demonstrations of restraint. Nevertheless, there were still powerful figures on both sides who continued to suspect the motivations of the other. No matter how often the end of the Cold War was pronounced by politicians and pundits in both countries, both sides sometimes continued to operate as if they were the superpowers of old locked in deadly competition. The KGB and CIA produced reports accusing the other, respectively, of trying to take advantage of the new situation for the purpose of undermining the other. As a KGB document from August 1989 put it:

> In the conditions of the revolutionary renewal of Soviet society, the spread of democracy and glasnost, the special services of the capitalist countries and the foreign, anti-Soviet centers tied with them [...] are transforming their underground activity against the USSR on a new strategic and tactical platform

with the goal of "forcibly overthrowing Soviet power."[94] Adam Ulam wrote nearly forty years ago: "For some time now, the United States and Russia have been struggling not so much against each other as against phantoms, their own fears of what each might become unless it scored points over the other or barred success to the other side."[95] This was as true of 1989 as it was earlier in the Cold War.

Gorbachev's German gambit at the end of 1989, the Soviet idea of exchanging German unification for this country's neutralization and demilitarization that surfaced periodically in the early postwar history of Soviet-German relations, worried the White House and encouraged the president to reinvigorate his close relationship with Kohl and Bonn. But Gorbachev had more important things on his mind. Already in 1986, he had told his advisors that the Federal Republic was key to the success of perestroika. As its major trading partner in the West and the most likely potential source of foreign capital, investment, and loans, the Soviet Union desperately needed a good relationship with Bonn. By the time the German unification issue became serious during the winter of 1989–90, it had become

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92 Gorbachev and Mlynar, *Conversations with Gorbachev*, 79.

93 James J. Sheehan, "The Transformation of Europe and the End of the Cold War," in Jeffrey A. Engel, ed., *The Fall of the Berlin Wall*: *The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 36–68.

94 "O sozdanii v KGB SSSR Upravleniya po zashchite sovetskogo konstitutsionnovo stroya," 4 August 1989, in HIA, fond 89, op. 18, d. 127, l. 1.

95 Adam B. Ulam, *The Rivals: America and Russia since World War II* (New York: Viking, 1971), 382.

increasingly clear that Gorbachev was the ruler of an extremely weak, if not failed, state. He urgently needed help. He reached out to the West Germans, hopeful that a close relationship with them would bring important political and, especially, economic gains. During Gorbachev's discussions with Kohl in Bonn in June 1989, the German Chancellor made no bones about the potential economic benefits of Soviet concessions on the German Question. Closer relations were impossible "as long as the division of Germany stands between us. It is the decisive impediment in our relationship."[96]

In the fall of 1989, there was considerable opposition in the ranks of Gorbachev's advisors, and especially among the "Germanisty" in the Foreign Ministry and Central Committee, to concessions on the German Question. Although some thought that the unification of Germany was inevitable and felt some sympathy for the Germans' frustrations with the division of their country, most could not admit to themselves that they were "losing Germany," and, as a result could not muster serious policy alternatives for Gorbachev, even if he would have entertained them.[97] Others, like Falin, did not oppose unification of Germany on principle, but were concerned that "we should 'sell' it at a higher price."[98] Gorbachev had been able to confine the actual decision-making process to such a narrow group of insiders that even the Politburo did not raise objections to the possibility of unification.[99] When the Politburo met on 9 November, the day of the breaching of the Wall, there was no discussion about the situation in Germany. Instead Gorbachev and the Soviet leaders were focused on the upheaval in the Baltic republics.[100] Even the Soviet ambassador in East Berlin, Vyacheslav Kochemasov, and the local Soviet intelligence station were poorly informed about the events surrounding the fall of the Wall.[101]

In the wake of the fall of the Wall, the opposition of Mitterrand and especially of Thatcher to unification was more annoying for Kohl than helpful to Gorbachev. "Twice we have defeated the Germans! And now they are here again!" the "Iron Lady" railed at the Strasbourg meeting of the European Community in December 1989.[102] Gorbachev had the uncomfortable feeling that Thatcher and Mitterrand (and even the Americans) were using him as way to hold up the process of unification and serve as a lightning rod for Bonn's ire. As he stated in a 3 November session of the Politburo: "The West doesn't want the unity of Ger-

[96] Kohl, *Erinnerungen*, 888–89.

[97] Adamishin, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 1, 23. See also Chernyaev, Box 1, 54.

[98] Falin, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 1, 29.

[99] G. M. Kornienko, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 2, 34. See also Chernyaev, Box 1, 60–61.

[100] William Taubman and Svetlana Savranskaya, "If a Wall Fell in Berlin and Moscow Hardly Noticed, Would it Still Make a Noise?" in Jeffrey A. Engel, ed., *Fall of the Berlin Wall*: *The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 69–95, 70.

[101] Angela Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 107.

[102] Kohl, *Erinnerungen*, 1013.

many, but wants us to deal with it, as a way to bring us into conflict with the FRG, as a way to prevent a deal between the USSR and Germany."[103] At the same time, he later admitted, he had no idea at the time what challenges the German Question would pose to Soviet foreign policy.[104]

As a result, by the beginning of 1990, despite intense opposition internally and from Mitterrand and especially Thatcher abroad, Gorbachev went so far to endorse the inevitability of German unification, something than even the wildest optimists in the White House about the German Question could not have predicted. Baker and Kohl laid out the conditions under which unification would take place. Neither Shevardnadze nor Gorbachev had much of an argument to make. Oleg Grinevskii, who took part in the February 1990 discussions in Moscow with James Baker, stated: "We had no position [...] no concrete line." As a result, given the united German-US position, Gorbachev conceded on the question of whether the new and united Germany could retain its ties with NATO.[105]

## Conclusions

While Thatcher and Mitterrand wanted Gorbachev to stop German unification, Gorbachev wanted them (and Kohl) to restrain the Americans from "interfering" in Eastern Europe, when that was pretty much the last thing on Washington's mind. In fact, the White House was anxious to keep Gorbachev in power and to maintain the balance in Europe, both of which could be disrupted by any upheaval in Eastern Europe.[106] Meanwhile, the Americans continued to worry that Gorbachev would take advantage of them by scoring points in Europe with arms control initiatives and tempting Kohl into a special relationship. Yet for both superpowers, the status quo was preferable to any changes, because—in some important senses—change challenged the position of the superpowers themselves.

The wait-and-see attitude of the superpowers toward Eastern Europe and the concomitant attachment of both to a static European reality that was changing more quickly and more dynamically than they themselves could absorb gave the East Europeans and the Germans the chance to shape their own destinies in 1989. Shevardnadze's answer to the Hungarians when they decided in May 1989 to pull down the barriers to East German flight to the West was typical: "This is an affair that concerns Hungary, the GDR, and the FRG."[107] When Kohl queried Gorbachev about the same issue, the general secretary simply answered: "The

[103] Dalos, *Der Vorhang geht auf*, 139.
[104] Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 516.
[105] O. A. Grinevskii, in HIA, HIFGC, Box 2, 33. See also Boldin, *Ten Years*, 143.
[106] Dockrill, *The End of the Cold War Era*, 71.
[107] Brown, *Seven Years that Changed the World*, 235.

Hungarians are a good people."[108] The Polish communists could make a deal with Solidarity about sharing power at the round table discussions of spring 1989, which was the first step toward the dismantling of communism in Poland, without Soviet interference. East German demonstrators in Leipzig could take to the streets with the confidence, if not assurance that Soviet troops would not interfere with their strivings for control of their own destiny. Helmut Kohl and his deputy Horst Teltschik could take advantage of the upheaval in East Germany and the fall of the Wall to drive the process of unification. Neither the Soviets nor the Americans would stop them. The self-induced paralysis of the superpowers helped Germans in the GDR and the FRG bring an end to the postwar order in Germany. Valentin Falin could have been speaking for both the Kremlin and White House when he noted: "We did not control the events, but the events controlled us."[109]

Of course, Gorbachev and his actions were critical to the outcome of the revolutions of 1989. His determination that his East European "friends" stand on their own feet and take responsibility for their own countries, without being able to count on Soviet backing or even instructions, accelerated the pace of change from 1985 onwards. The very example of perestroika also encouraged East European oppositionists to press forward their demands and took the sails of their communist opponents, who no longer had the backing of Moscow.[110] Gorbachev's repeated renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine—never explicit, but clear enough for all to understand—took away a crucial psychological, as well as real, undergirding for the communist regimes of Eastern Europe.

But the Soviet general secretary seemed no more focused on the German Question than he was on the Polish, where he naively thought Jaruzelski could forge a political alliance with the opposition that would keep Poland in the Warsaw Pact and as a Soviet strategic ally for a long time to come. Gorbachev's repeated response to the Poles, the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, and the others was that their political development was their business. They needed to deal with their problems and their crises. This answer was particularly inappropriate for the GDR, where there were nearly a half million Soviet troops and their dependents stationed around the country. So much of the Soviet self-image was wrapped up in the victory over Nazi Germany, symbolized by their military presence in the east. But, like so much else, Gorbachev simply did not have an answer to the German Question. Gorbachev did not have a German policy, and those who did, including the Germanists in the Foreign Ministry, and Valentin Falin, head of the Central Committee's International Department, were routinely shunted aside because of their "conservatism." As a result, with some twists and turns, Gorbachev was pulled along by Kohl. And Kohl's vision was based

[108] Adamishin, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 1, 26.
[109] Falin, in HIA, HIGFC, Box 1, 39.
[110] Kramer, "The Collapse (Part 1)," 180.

on an instinctive understanding of the East German population, those who sought to leave, those who demonstrated, and those who simply wanted to be done with the socialist experiment forever.

There is good reason for the superpowers to have congratulated themselves about 1989, but the story is mostly about what they did not do rather than what they did. There are also serious questions about what they understood and what they didn’t. But in their fascination with each other and their doctrinaire views of their own superpower influence they did not interfere with the revolutions of 1989, something that cannot be said of the European powers and the French Revolution, the Revolutions of 1848, or the Bolshevik Revolution. With the superpowers sitting on their hands, everything worked out reasonably well.

Ella Zadorozhnyuk

# THE USSR AND THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1989–90: QUESTIONS OF CAUSALITY

This chapter represents an attempt to provide an answer to a two-part question. Did Soviet perestroika stir revolutionary tendencies in the nations of the “Eastern bloc” at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, and to what extent did the intensity of these tendencies lead to the upheavals that occurred in the USSR? How did the interaction between these two phenomena twenty years ago result in the profound changes that have taken place in the political map of Europe?

Before answering these questions, a frame of reference must be established. Perestroika as it is commonly understood began in the USSR in June and July of 1988 on the occasion of the debate and approval of a resolution by the nineteenth party conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Perestroika ended with the breakup of the USSR in December of 1991. Within this period of history the fundamental revolutionary events in the European nations of the “socialist commonwealth” took place. The year of 1989 was pivotal and represents the transitional stage within the cited dates. This timeframe, during which revolutionary changes were taking place in Eastern Europe, coincides precisely with the period when analogous upheavals were taking place in the Soviet Union. To borrow a metaphor, these could be seen, as it were, as a smaller doll in a larger set of nesting (*matryoshka*) dolls.

Looking back it is clear that just as the processes of perestroika drove the revolutionary changes in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, at the same time these changes had an influence on the character of the processes taking place in the birthplace of perestroika: it was a situation of mutual conditionality. Hence the entire process of transition that was transpiring over the vast distance from Berlin to Vladivostok can be considered one of cause and effect.[1]

Thus, with the support of extant sources, the concept of cause and effect is essential for accurately determining the direction and fundamental nature of the factors involved in the revolutions referred to above in the nations of the “Eastern bloc” or in the “socialist commonwealth” (in Soviet parlance, part of the “international socialist system” to which, as is generally understood, also belonged countries in Asia and the Americas).

[1] It should be noted that the Russian expression used here for cause and effect, or causality, is “reciprocity” (*retsiproknost’*), a term rarely applied in Russian historiography and almost never used in scholarly Russian historical texts.

It is important to place the parameters of the causality in question into a historical context. Although it may be difficult to posit a single universal, unambiguous description of these factors, one can reasonably assume that two elements held a key role: the removal of the monopoly of one party, and the transformation (both as a process and an end result) of governmental and state structures. The most radical of these took place in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

An important push behind the upheavals in the socialist-communist European countries came with the resolution of the first congress of the people's deputies of the USSR on 25 May 1989. While this congress largely represented a continuation of the policies formulated at the aforementioned nineteenth party conference one year earlier, it was at this May congress that irrevocable reforms of the political system of the USSR were acknowledged as being inevitable. In the course of executing these reforms, institutional structures opposed to the status quo were formed, leading ultimately to the dismantling of the leadership of the USSR.

At about the same time—beginning in the spring of 1989—in the nations of the "socialist commonwealth," internal opposition was forming with the aim of grasping significant power from the current governments: in Hungary within the governing party and in Poland in the form of external opposition. At the same time the oppositional forces that were forming in the USSR were being influenced by the similar efforts in its neighboring countries. What is more, some members of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—most notably its head Mikhail S. Gorbachev—agreed with these reform movements, although they were unaware of the potential consequences they might have.

Clearly the countenance of these political reforms (with the frigid Kremlin winds rapidly subsiding) led to a further sharp intensification of the activities of the oppositional forces in the socialist nations of Europe. This is in turn evidence of the causality of the dynamics involved in the developing processes in all of the European nations of the "socialist commonwealth" as well as of the clear direction they were taking.

It is important to note that on 26 March 1989, the first round of elections for the USSR Congress of People's Deputies took place (with voter participation around 90 percent). A second round was held on 14 May. These secret-ballot elections were in part competitive. Yet the CPSU intended to retain its power, reserving one third of the seats for the party and its societal organizations. It was planned to merge the posts of the chairpersons of the soviets at all levels with those of the respective party secretaries, under the condition of their being elected into the soviets. In many ways the Soviet elections influenced the organization of the elections in Poland, although there, hopes were much lower than among the party elites in the USSR that the elections would be able to save socialism.

In June of 1989, as a result of the round table talks that had begun in April, elections under new precepts took place in Poland and brought the victory of "Solidarity." These elections can be seen as the starting point for a wave of fundamental transformations that were then to take place in the countries of the region, basically proceeding from north to south. While the forms these transformations assumed were different, there was no question about the direction they were taking.

In Hungary, from 22 March to 18 September rounds of talks between the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and a united opposition discussed various possibilities for reforming the state authority. In the end, the pro-Soviet powers resigned and on 23 October, the Hungarian People's Republic was renamed the Republic of Hungary. The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party became the Hungarian Socialist Party, with a clearly delineated social democratic agenda. The elimination of the modifiers "workers'" and "people's" was a bold step, and a significant segment of the population did not let this go by unnoticed.

Similar processes were taking place in the parties and regimes in many other countries of the region. On 9 November the Berlin Wall was breached, and with its fall the power structures of the German Democratic Republic also collapsed. In less than a year, on 3 October 1990, the two Germanys were united. It should be noted that today the complex issue of the transformation of the GDR is no longer a research focal point, at least among Russian experts: The dominating postulate of the inevitability of the GDR's reunion with the Federal Republic of Germany has obscured many issues and given rise to a number of contradictions. For instance, the claims at the time in the discussions about the German Question that there would be a transformation of the Warsaw Pact and NATO after German reunification have been insufficiently analyzed.

A similar idea was put forward, in fact, by Václav Havel, speaking during talks with Gorbachev on 26 February 1990 in Moscow:

> It is imperative to eliminate the schism in Europe and embrace a new security plan that will replace the present mutually competing structures, even if it requires finding successors to the Warsaw Pact and NATO […] This is the only basis for dealing with the fate of the Warsaw Pact. The Warsaw Pact and NATO as military alliances shall become political affiliations and ultimately represent a single system of general European security. In a word it is necessary to finally call an end to the Second World War and eliminate the situation in which Europe became a powerful arsenal of modern weaponry. This would be a victory for peace, not a setback for the USA or the USSR.[2]

On 17 November 1989 the "Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia began with vigorous student demonstrations. Its course and the outcome have been illuminated with all due comprehensiveness. The English historian Timothy Garton Ash has referred to the "Velvet Revolution" as a "peaceful, theatrical, negotiated re-

[2] Quoted in Grigorii Sevostyanov, *Revolyutsii 1989 goda v stranakh Tzentralnoi Evropy. Vzglad cherez desyatiletie* (Moscow: Nauka, 2001), 66.

gime change in a small Central European state." The term itself was introduced by Ash's Western colleagues, only to have the term adopted by Václav Havel. The oppositional Slovak leaders use the similar term "gentle."[3] While the expression "Velvet Revolution" is today usually used to refer to the ten days of events in November 1989 in former Czechoslovakia, it is possible to use the term in a broader context to characterize the changes that occurred during 1989 in the other countries in the East European region that can be defined as Central Europe.[4]

In Bulgaria, the process of removing Todor Zhivkov from all his posts and eventually ousting him began in November of the same year at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. On 18 November a one-hundred-thousand strong demonstration of the opposition took place in the center of Sofia. After this event, most of the pre-World War II political parties were reestablished.

On 22 December 1989 the insurgent populace in Romania toppled the regime of Nicolae Ceauşescu. A party belonging to the Front for National Liberation advanced to power and on 29 December, the Socialist Republic of Romania became simply Romania. This however was not achieved without bloodshed. In accordance with the last proclamation of the leader of the National Liberation Front at the time, ex-communist Ion Iliescu, it was unavoidable "to institute an emergency revolutionary court to try the Ceauşescu spouses. And, in fact, as soon as the death sentence was executed on 25 December, the guns fell silent."[5] According to a statement by the United States, "they had no opposition to a military intervention on the part of the USSR to restore order in Romania" or to support

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3 Timothy Garton Ash, "Velvet Revolution: The Prospects," *New York Times Review of Books*, no. 19 (3 December 2009), http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2009/dec/03/velvet-revolution-the-prospects/ (accessed 30 June 2013).

4 The term "Central Europe" derives from a historical geographical metaphor that is based on a geopolitical perception. It encompasses a range of nations stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea that share similar historical characteristics and a convergence of common perspectives. At the end of the last decade of the twentieth century, Central Europe emerged as a certain geopolitical formation distinct from the western European region and the states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (the former USSR), i.e. Eastern Europe. Among its main characteristics, a new regional identity has gradually developed which presumes that there is "a consciousness of belonging to a recognized entity as well as a similarity of common goals that form the basis of this identity of peoples and governments." "Problemy regional'noi identichnosti tsentral'noevropeiskikh stran ("Kruglyi stol")" *Slavyanovedenie* 3 (1997): 3–27; Yurii Novopashin, *Tsentral'naia Evropa v poiskakh novoj regional'noj identichnosti* (Moscow: Institut slavyanovedenya, 2000), 140–62; E. G. Zadorozhnyuk, "Lyubov'yu ili zhelezom dostigaetsya edinenie obshchestva?" *Vestnik Rossiiskoj Akademii nauk* 63, no. 12 (1993): 1103–8; idem, *Sotsial-demokratiya v Tsentral'noj Evrope* (Moscow: Akademiya, 2000); "Politicheskie protsessy v Tsentral'noi Evrope i stanovlenie novoi regional'noi identichnosti," *Rossiya i sovremennyi mir*, no. 3 (2000): 104–24.

5 *Vremya novostei*, 22 December 2009; *Chicago Tribune*, 25 December 1989, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1989-12-25/news/8903200733_1_warsaw-pact-soviet-troops-nicolae-ceausescu (accessed 10 July 2013).

pro-democracy forces in their struggle against troops loyal to Ceauşescu. As for the USSR, it adhered to its principal doctrine of not interfering in the affairs of a socialist nation.

Finally, beginning in the spring of 1990 communists suffered continuing losses at the polls in the republics of Yugoslavia, whereby here, to a lesser extent, there were similar waves of insurgency from north to south, from Slovenia and Croatia to Serbia and Macedonia.

An analysis of the progress of events in all of these countries is replete with speculation and questions that cannot be answered. Which resident of Prague was the first to take a bunch of keys out of his pocket and rattle them so loudly that his gesture caught the attention of more than 300,000 denizens of the city? Whose actions finally led to the shots in Bucharest? How was it possible that the confrontations with the law enforcement bodies in Leipzig in October 1989 and in Berlin in November remained peaceful, despite the fact that it seemed inevitable that they would become bloody?

Looking from "below" reveals a large number of riddles. But the view from "above" also leads to a great deal of ambiguity. Some twenty years down the road, these two perspectives yield insights only if they are both used to view the events, that is, when the events are not only seen on the basis of protocols of the political parties, of the governments or of the opposition, but also by means of other sources of information such as videos or first-hand accounts of participants.

It must be emphasized that the phenomenon of the power of monopolistic communist parties being removed came about in the various countries through different means: 1) in Poland, Czechoslovakia and, to a lesser extent, in Bulgaria, in the course of a dialog between the communist party and new political forces; 2) in Hungary, in the course of different leanings within the party itself, resulting in fractions that formed opposition parties; 3) in Yugoslavia, due to a general disaffection with the party; and finally 4) the active overthrow of party authority as occurred in Romania and to a lesser extent in the GDR.[6]

In general—presuming the principle of causality—the following postulate obtains: After accommodating the principles of political renewal issuing from the

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[6] Yurii Novopashin et al., eds., *Vostochnaya Evropa na istoricheskom perelome (Ocherki revolyutsionnykh preobrazovanii 1989–1990)* (Moscow: Institut slavyanovedeniya, 1991); G. N. Sevost'yanov et al., eds., *Revolyutsii 1989 goda v stranakh Tsentral'noi i Yugo-Vostochnoi Evropy: Vzglyad cherez desyatiletie* (Moscow: Nauka, 2001); E. Yu. Gus'kova, *Istoriya yugoslavskogo krizisa (1990–2000)* (Moscow: Russkoe pravo, 2001); *Strany Tsentral'no-Vostochnoi Evropy vo vtoroj polovone XX veka,* vol. 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 2002); *Vlast'—obshchestvo—reformy. Tsentral'naya i Yugo-Vostochnaya Evropa: Vtoraya polovina XX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 2006); Yurii Novopashin et al., eds., *Istoriya antikommunisticheskikh revolyutsii kontsa XX veka: Tsentral'naya i Yugo-Vostochnaya Evropa* (Moscow: Nauka, 2007); Konstantin Nikiforov et al., eds., *Revolyutsii i reformy v stranakh Tsentral'noi i Yugo-Vostochnoi Evropy: 20 let spustya* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011).

USSR, the countries in question were able to find various ways of resolving the issue of monopolistic communistic parties—both at home and in the USSR. In effect this is also how the process of reform proceeded under perestroika in the country where it was born.

Thus in many crucial ways, the change in the standing of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the amendment to the sixth article of the constitution of the USSR at the third congress of the people's deputies in March of 1990 came about, at least to some degree, as a reaction to similar developments in the various countries of Central Europe. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the demise of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was a result of powerful forces from within. It was not patterned on any of the courses of action taken in the countries of the region to dissolve the single party monopoly. In fact, the Party gave up a significant part of its legitimacy to the Supreme Soviet by amending the respective section of the constitution of the USSR, which greatly weakened the Party's position.

This decision in turn hastened the constitutional reforms in the Central European countries, each in its own way introducing new laws to reform their governmental structures.

In August 1991 an attempted return to the pre-perestroika power structures in the USSR ended in failure. By this time all of the former socialist countries west of Brest had divested themselves of their socialist moniker and—applying the principle of causality for fundamental political reforms—had rendered the dissolution of party monopoly a moot point.

Already in the course of the manifestations of change a new phenomenon was emerging—the radical reform of state structures, including the downfall of socialist federations. It must be noted that the many crises and the ultimate collapse of socialism were accompanied by a number of critical ethnic conflicts. The severe consequences of such conflicts became most evident in the impact on the federal structures of Yugoslavia, which in the overview had been the weakest link in the "socialist commonwealth." As the independence movements and the nationalist forces in the various Yugoslavian republics were pursuing their agendas, the republican communist parties progressively distanced themselves from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. At the same time, in Serbia aggressive nationalist forces were forming under the banner of an "anti-bureaucratic revolution" (remarkably similar to a campaign underway in the USSR) that aimed at rescinding the autonomy of not only of Kosovo and Vojvodina at the end of 1988, but even that of the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Disintegrative processes in the USSR proceeded almost simultaneously: Among them, at the end of 1988 the People's Front in the Baltic states began to raise the issue of independence from the USSR for Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and on 9 April 1989 the People's Front of Georgia organized a mass demonstration that was broken up with military force. Earlier, bloody skirmishes had taken

place within individual republics (Fergana) and between them (Karabakh), but these could be subdued.

These kinds of conflicts were instigated by party structures that were capable of sustaining them. As a result, a "parade of sovereignty" began. At the beginning of September 1991 the USSR recognized the independence of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and on 8 December the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, Boris Yeltsin, Leonid Kravchuk and Stanislav Shushkevich, signed the Belavezha accords, which declared the USSR dissolved. In its place the Commonwealth of Independent States was established. Just as in the ethnic conflicts, these constitutional reforms can be seen as causal links between the events in the USSR and in the countries of Central Europe.

Regarding a more fortunate outcome, namely that of the two federal socialistic republics of Czechoslovakia, the years 1988 to 1989 saw the beginning of a similar process of secession, albeit as a result of a complex process of diverse breakups both within the federal party structure and the opposition movement.

In January 1990 the fourteenth extraordinary congress of the League of Yugoslavian Communists took place, which also turned out to be its last. First the Slovene delegation and then the Croatian left the congress because their call for a reorganization of the party on the basis of a confederation was denied. This event in Yugoslavia was one of the first incidences in a process of disintegration that was taking place over an area reaching from Prague to Vladivostok. In Yugoslavia it soon became clear that this was only the first step on the path to the breakup of the federal state, whereby ethnic factors did not merely figure in the agreements but actually hastened them. On 23 December 1990, 88.5 percent of the Slovenian populace voted for independence, Croatia followed. On 25 June 1991 Slovenia and Croatia declared independence as sovereign states. On 17 November 1991, Macedonia adopted a constitution that declared its full independence, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina also declaring its independence on 6 April 1992. On 27 April 1992, Serbia and Montenegro declared their continuity with the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and founded the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

All of these steps were accompanied by declarations from the international community of nations that either supported or declined to acknowledge these states (as was also the case when Kosovo declared its independence in the new millennium). Understanding the evolution of these five national entities is a daunting task. Indeed, to appreciate some of conflicts in southeastern Europe, it might be important to remember that some people find it useful to have one or more boiling pots on their stove so that the soup can be poured onto the feet of their neighbors at an opportune moment.[7]

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[7] E. G. Zadorozhnyuk, "Balkanskii "klin": novye vyzovy ili rostki stabil'nosti," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, no. 10 (2008): 121–27.

The independence of these and subsequently other states in the territory of Yugoslavia was generally sanctioned by practically all countries of Europe (including Germany, despite the fact that there the opposite took place: its unification on 3 October 1990).

The breakup of these socialistic federations bore the following pattern: the emergence and rapid escalation of ethnic movements, the development of ruling parties with nationalist tendencies—focused on their "own" republics and the formation of a union or federation. The progression of events made it apparent that what had seemed at first secondary (the postulate of "all or nothing" regarding the cultural autonomy of ethnic groups in Yugoslavia and of demagogical claims of inflated "investments" in this or that federal republic, similar to conflicts in the USSR, not to the mention the "battle of the hyphen" in Czecho-Slovakia) emerged as a first priority in the context of the rapidly spreading turmoil.

The next stage of events in the posited algorithm took place in the USSR. Applying the concept of causality, of cause and effect, might be considered self-evident with regard to the experience of Yugoslavia, which was characterized by bloody military conflicts, ethnic cleansing, efforts to erect totalitarian regimes and the creation of unrecognized republics.

This was taken into account on the territory of the former USSR, where it aimed at avoiding bloody conflicts—an aim that was not reached entirely. In many ways the conflicts that occurred were akin to a smoldering peat bog, where flames are not visible on the surface but sudden flashes appear unpredictably at completely different places. Monitoring the course of these events and evaluating the data in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States is much more difficult than analyzing the events in the countries (republics) of the former Yugoslavia.

Under the prevailing conditions in the USSR from 1989 to August of 1991, what caused the various conflicts to break out? Perplexing is that fact that conflicts emerged whose intensity was unpredictable. The ethnic massacres of Azeris against Armenians in Sumgait in February 1988 and of Uzbeks against Meskhetian Turks in Fergana in June 1989 demonstrated that fierce outbursts of national protest cannot be predicted, nor are they subject to any form of regulation. At exactly the same time, sweeping government reform processes were developing in the Baltic republics.

In the given context it can be shown that the ethnic conflicts and the resulting destruction of established borders between republics and even within republics, following the pattern of the disintegration algorithm, each had their own unique dynamics. Even apparently analogous situations cannot serve as models. In Yugoslavia forces emerged that were focused on exploiting the breakup of the government to the maximum. In the USSR the crumbling of the government was accepted as a matter of course, however high the price.

Regarding Czechoslovakia, the "velvet" breakup of the country was essentially the result of confrontational and manipulative actions on the part of a political

elite of Czechs and Slovaks rather than an expression of the reformative will of two nations. Even though the situation in Yugoslavia proceeded in a different direction, it still affected the chain of events in the USSR, and the example of these two countries directly determined the character of many aspects in the breakup of Czechoslovakia. In an attempt to avoid unnecessary conflict as far as possible, almost no blood was shed in a region stretching from Prague to Vladivostok. In general it might be said that the circumstances of the breakup of the USSR represent a kind of halfway point between the circumstances that prevailed in Yugoslavia and in Czechoslovakia. The breakup of these three federations is testimony to the shared human desire of a people to actively form their own unique states—a desire that can only be thwarted by the formation of larger political entities. At least in the European Union it is somewhat easier to resist the demands of extremists.

If an attempt is made to formulate two parameters of the causality described at the beginning of this chapter, the following picture emerges: In north-central Europe the revolutionary processes usually took place against a backdrop of negotiations that avoided bloodshed. In the southern parts of the region it was necessary to resort to greater force to achieve the overthrow of their governments. In the course of the sweeping changes in the USSR the picture was similar: In the reform processes, negotiations were more actively pursued in the north than in the south.

There used to be a popularly held notion that a wave of stability had arrived on the European continent.[8] In many analyses in Central Europe this notion prevailed from the end of the 1980s, just as it did in Western Europe. The course of the revolutionary changes in Central Europe and their consequences tells us that this understanding of events also holds for Eastern Europe where the former republics of the USSR are located.

In 2002, I launched the hypothesis of this "wave of stability":

> The wave of stability moved inevitably from the north to the south, to France after the loss of Algeria, Italy after the "Red Brigades," the late-Franquist Spain, Salazar's Portugal, where in 1974 a democratic anti-Fascist revolution took place […], to Greece after the "Black Colonels": they were islands of instability then, even if not to the same extent as the Balkans today. Yet, the wave of stability solved many of the most pressing problems in Western Europe. The next are Central Europe and the bleeding Balkans […].[9]

The financial and economic crisis of the early twenty-first century showed that one must speak of "waves" rather than of one wave of stability. Stabilization processes follow various patterns: from economic confusion (e.g. Greece and

[8] E.G. Zadorozhnyuk, "Stanovlenie novykh regional'nykh identichnostei v Evrope: itogi per'vogo desyatiletiya 1989–1999 i perspektivy," in Vladimir Bol'shakov, ed., *Rossiya. Planetarnye protsessy* (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo Univerziteta, 2002), 510–11, 517.

[9] Ibid., 527–28.

Cyprus) to ethnic and confessional conflicts (e.g. the Kosovization, i.e. demands of political independence raised by small political entities).

The beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century has been characterized by new developments. The entry of new members into the European Union (Croatia in 2013) has not solved all their problems. Moreover, some sort of curtain still exists between the "old" and "new" members, albeit not an "iron" one. Within the former USSR, impulses for integration have increased through the creation of a customs union and, by 2015, of the Eurasian Economic Union. Ukraine is in a difficult situation, confronted with having to choose between European integration and the Eurasian Union.[10] The intensification of integration impulses can be treated as part of the model of mutual conditionality or causality.

In applying the concept of causality the question arises of whether the principle of such waves of stability can be applied to the countries of Eastern Europe? An unambiguous answer would have to be based on a series of complex phenomena, especially if one considers that since the Baltic nations have become members of NATO and the EU they are now part of Central Europe.

For instance, the stability of Belarus is provided by a structure that is not considered democratic. Nevertheless the arrangement is accepted by a large majority of Belorussians and is even acceptable to a majority of citizens of Russia.

In this context, Ukraine has by any measure an extremely unstable government for two reasons: its declared intention to generate an image of democracy competing with fierce internal struggles for ownership in formerly public enterprises.

While the secession of Kazakhstan from the USSR went relatively smoothly, from time to time other former Central Asian and Transcaucasian nations exhibit alarming levels of instability.

The expression "revolutions of the year 1989" intuitively triggers a search for the causal nature and the influences between the events in the USSR and the European members of the "socialist commonwealth." It can be argued that the revolutions could not have succeeded without the changes in the USSR, nor could the sequence of events in the USSR have remained uninfluenced by these revolutions—a mutual series of causes and effects that ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet model of socialism in an region reaching from Berlin to Vladivostok.

This process was accompanied by a desire to preserve order in international relations across a huge area: from Brest (in France, not Belarus) to Vladivostok—or even from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Expressions of hope, such as the vision of a "Common European Home" turned out in many ways to be utopian, but they have not been dispelled to this day. The ideas engendered by this twenty-year period of history have not lost their attractiveness. Moreover, the appeal to return to the basic tenants of socialist reform has taken on a new meaning as the world

[10] E.G. Zadorozhnyuk, "Ukraina 2013: Vybor novykh neopredelennostei," http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=1396#top (accessed 30 July 2013).

searches for a means to mobilize the resources of all nations to master the crises affecting the globe. It is likely that such aspirations will reflect the principle of cause and effect as is already evidenced by thinkers searching for new solutions.

## Conclusion

To conclude, when examining the political events that occurred from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s in the USSR and the other the countries considered here, primary attention should be given to the causal interaction between these events, that is, the fact that one event was usually the consequence of another. Once the political winds of reform blowing in the USSR were felt, the countries under discussion began to contemplate possible solutions to their problems of single-party authority. In turn, these political trends carried over to the USSR. Over time they assumed common features.

The final result was a transformation of all the European members of the so-called "socialist commonwealth." These former socialist entities returned, at least in some respects, to the fold of nations in the Central European region and not to the countries of Eastern Europe, especially Russia. This, however, is a topic for another discourse, one that will certainly require the principles of causality set forth here.

This chapter has attempted to provide an answer to a two-part question: Did Soviet perestroika stir revolutionary tendencies in the nations of the Eastern bloc in the years 1989 to 1990? And to what extent did the intensity of these tendencies lead to the ultimate consequences of perestroika in the USSR? It is clear that the links between the given events were of a causal nature: After becoming aware of the political renewal stirring in the USSR, the countries in question were able to contemplate various ways of resolving the issue of monopolistic communistic parties. In turn many of these options were adopted in the USSR. In the end, all of the members of the "socialist commonwealth" in Europe underwent processes of transformation, processes that even included the breakup of some former federative systems contained within them.

Philip Zelikow

# US STRATEGIC PLANNING IN 1989–90

## The generation of 1988

By the end of 1988, a generation of Americans (and Europeans) had grown up absorbing profound lessons from the collective experiences of the World Wars. The lessons were distilled to axioms. And these axioms were reduced to phrases, phrases that every US policymaker of the 1980s knew by heart: "NATO alliance," "forward defense," "flexible response."

As the years went by, most allied leaders also internalized, and even welcomed, their participation in a new kind of confederation, an "Atlantic community." Transnational links grew between political parties, legislators, and soldiers. The allies became proficient at working within each other's domestic political systems. German, British, and other European statesmen became especially adept at navigating the complex US political system, savvy to the concerns of congressional committee chairs or big-foot columnists. With all its fraternal quarrels and friendships, this confederation—"the alliance"—became a sort of extension of the American federal union itself. As the years passed, presidents knew and thought about other alliance leaders almost as much, and sometimes even more, than they knew or thought about their fellow political leaders in the United States.[1]

In the field, atop the watchtowers in Central Europe, several generations of soldiers, who over the years numbered in the millions, rotated in and out of the same casernes. A son might take up a duty station at the Fulda Gap, serving in the same armored cavalry regiment and manning the same observation post that his father had stood watch from.

Periodically, the sinews of the alliance came under strain. And, against this threat, generations of policymakers also stood watch. All of the men and women who led the US government in 1989 were conditioned to rebutting arguments against forward defense. They regarded such assaults as dangerously naïve isolationism and were ever ready to man the political ramparts to defend the alliance.

These instincts and ingrained concepts have not vanished from American public life, but their salience has receded. They were part of my own professional training, but I was part of the last generation of Americans in public life to be so trained and habituated.

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[1] See, e.g., Ernest May, "The American Commitment to Germany, 1949–55," *Diplomatic History* 13, no. 6 (Fall 1989): 431–60.

In 1989 these assumptions and habits of thought were still fresh, especially for the men and women who directed US foreign policy. The new president in January 1989, George H.W. Bush, had fought in World War II as a navy pilot in the Pacific. On one of his missions his plane was shot down. Bush was lucky to survive; his crewman did not. By 1989, whether as CIA director or as a presidential candidate or as Ronald Reagan's vice president for the past eight years, he had spent the previous twenty years immersed in the process and politics of standing watch.

Bush's key aides also felt they knew firsthand what terms like "forward defense" and "NATO" and "flexible response" meant. His national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, was finishing the United States Military Academy at West Point during World War II and, trained as a pilot, was injured in a crash and spent the rest of his air force career at desk jobs, earning three stars and a prior tour as national security adviser to President Gerald Ford before he returned to that office for President Bush. He had repeatedly worked on the management of nuclear weapons and spent years harmonizing US policies with NATO allies.

Bush's secretary of state, James Baker, had been a lieutenant in the marines during the next war, in Korea. Though his part in forward defense was an assignment in Europe working with comrades from NATO countries, some of his friends from basic training had gone to Korea, and some were killed there.

Bush's secretary of defense, Dick Cheney, had not served in the military. The issues were nonetheless deeply familiar to him, whether from his service as chief of staff to President Ford or his later years as a congressman from Wyoming, when he was the ranking Republican on both the House Intelligence Committee and the Intelligence Subcommittee of the powerful Appropriations Committee.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in early 1989 was a navy admiral, William Crowe. Crowe was a chairman more in the old mold, an envoy between the service chiefs and the rest of the government. In the first months of 1989, he would faithfully represent the received views of the army and air force. Crowe's successor, Colin Powell, was the first to grasp fully the independent power of the chairman conferred by the Goldwater-Nichols law of 1986, as *the* military advisor to the President with his own "Joint Staff." Powell had been part of forward defense on both sides of the world: two combat tours in Vietnam, a tour in Korea, and tours manning the frontlines in Germany.

As Bush took office in early 1989, the great question was whether the conflict and positions this group of men and women had known for their entire professional lives had come to an end. The arguments in late 1988 and early 1989 about this were complex. And certain historical accounts have added to the confusion.

### What did an "end" of the Cold War in Europe mean?

The historian Mary Sarotte argues that "At the beginning of 1989, the newly installed President Bush intentionally instituted a pause in the rapid dismantling

of Cold War weapons and attitudes." She portrays the Reagan administration as wanting to drop old assumptions and treat the Cold War as over, but finds that these beliefs were pushed aside by the new Bush team. She quotes a career civil servant who later joined Bush's National Security Council staff, Robert Hutchings, as saying that "'an entirely new team came in, representing foreign policy approaches fundamentally at odds with those of the Reagan administration.'"[2]

Sarotte quotes Hutchings accurately. But Hutchings, who summarizes this period quite ably in the book being quoted, does not think Bush "instituted a pause." In fact, Hutchings spends the entire chapter from which the quote was drawn, his chapter on "American Grand Strategy," making just the opposite point.[3] If a conscientious historian like Sarotte can get this wrong, then it is worth taking a closer look not only at the rhetoric, but at what people meant by it and the concrete policies that went with it.

By the end of 1988 Ronald Reagan's secretary of state, George Shultz, and Reagan's philosophical comrade-in-arms, British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, believed—and said publicly—that the Cold War was over.[4] They wanted the US government to declare victory and embrace Mikhail Gorbachev. Thatcher, like Shultz, considered the Cold War over *with the status quo of 1988 in place*. This is an essential point. It linked them with other European statesmen and American experts who believed the conditions of 1988 had ended the Cold War.

There were differences within this group. Some, like Thatcher, felt every aspect of that status quo should be carefully preserved—very much including its foundation in strong Western defenses. Others, like West German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, felt that the end of the Cold War already afforded scope for more rapid progress on disarmament. Where people like Thatcher, Shultz, or Genscher could all agree was that if any concrete, new initiatives were needed, they were on subjects like strategic nuclear arms control (the START talks).

Thatcher, for instance, gave little attention to reducing the conventional arms massed in Europe, and had no use at all for schemes that would go from the treaty eliminating intermediate-range nuclear missiles to new talks for reducing the shorter-range nuclear arms deployed in Europe as well. After all, these were the pillars of "forward defense," of "flexible response," and of NATO solidarity.

And none of the statesmen who believed the Cold War was over in 1988 were pushing ideas on how to help roll back communism in Eastern Europe. Neither

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2 Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 22.

3 Robert L. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 6–47. Hutchings was detailed from the National Intelligence Council to the NSC staff early in 1989.

4 Don Oberdorfer, "Thatcher: Gorbachev Has Ended Cold War," *Boston Globe*, 18 November 1988, 7; George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), 1131, 1138.

they, nor their key subordinates, favored any move to reopen the German Question. From their perspective, pressing such issues would only jeopardize the successful ending of the Cold War.

Leaders like Thatcher and Shultz (it is harder to be sure of Reagan's views at the end of 1988) had a plausible theory: The steadfastness in Western defense had proven its worth. Cold War had been replaced by a genuine relaxation of East-West tensions, a real détente. This more stable, beneficial status quo should be preserved. Solidarity in forward defense, flexible response, and NATO should, therefore, be stoutly maintained. If Gorbachev wished to reduce Soviet armaments, this was long overdue and good. But it was no reason for the West to abandon its position of strength by following suit.

An alternative view came to the same conclusions about not compromising Western defense, but with a somewhat different rationale. Both the new secretary of defense, Dick Cheney, and Scowcroft's deputy, the veteran CIA Soviet-watcher Bob Gates, gave more weight to the possibility that Gorbachev was trying to revitalize the Soviet empire, as Yurii Andropov, the late Soviet leader and former KGB chief, had hoped he would (Andropov had been a key patron in Gorbachev's rise to high office). Both Cheney and Gates, like some analysts of the Soviet Union at the time, also stressed the need to hedge against the imminent possibility that Gorbachev might be overthrown. Scowcroft's views were more reserved than those of Cheney and Gates, but at that moment were not very much different.[5]

Where was Bush on all this? He told his advisers, "We should dream big dreams." Bush himself is sometimes portrayed as a cautious, prudent "realist." A less schematic but more accurate assessment would find something different.

Bush was an intelligent and almost peripatetically restless man, a competitive baseball player in his younger days now reduced to tennis, golf, fishing, horseshoes, or anything else that came to hand. Unlike Reagan, who was a self-taught intellectual who loved thinking and writing about political ideas, Bush was more action-oriented than reflective. His was a politics of personal chemistry, driven very strongly by emotion, filtered through a deeply ingrained screen of courtesy and obligation. Words like "honor" cut deeply for him. Though he was conversant on issues, Bush's deeper judgments about basic direction tended to be instinctive,

[5] On Scowcroft, see George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 12–13. These Americans were not the only ones to think Gorbachev was trying to revitalize Soviet power, not reduce it. Such hopes had animated some of Gorbachev's key supporters within the Soviet military, like his security adviser, Sergei Akhromeyev. A leaner, reconfigured Soviet military—refocused and out of Afghanistan—made sense to some of these marshals in the mid-to-late 1980s. Gorbachev made choices that confronted the Soviet military more and more directly. This was becoming clearer only as Bush took office, when Gorbachev's landmark speech before the United Nations in December 1988 (which some analogized to Khrushchev's force cuts speech in 1960) was followed by other new steps, such as those in conventional arms control proposals I will discuss in the following, and the April 1989 purge from the Party's Central Committee of key military figures like former general staff chief Nikolai Ogarkov.

guided by his sense of duty or trust. His conversation and his correspondence (he was a frequent and faithful note and letter writer) are full of expressions like—explaining how he and Gorbachev came to be able to "go around the world on issues" —"I thought I had a feel for his heartbeat."[6]

In his first weeks in office, as in his transition, Bush still wanted "to dream big dreams." This turned into a belief that the status quo of 1988 was to be changed, not preserved. His "big dreams" would be a wave of further changes.

To make the picture still more complicated, advisers like Scowcroft were willing to countenance radical changes in Western defense posture. Scowcroft's main concern at this time was to preserve nuclear deterrence. Scowcroft himself did not think the Cold War was over. That was a statement "you can only say once," he would explain. And "the Reagan Administration's willingness to declare an end to the Cold War, without taking into consideration what that would require, disturbed me." Instead he thought "we should change our sights from managing the Cold War on the ground in Europe and stabilizing the situation to look beyond, to resolution of the basic issues."[7]

The desire to get at "the basic issues" preoccupied Scowcroft's staff. In early 1989, that group included advisers like former ambassador Robert Blackwill, the Stanford Sovietologist Condoleezza Rice, and a relatively junior foreign service officer detailed to the White House (me). Hutchings, who also joined the staff, accurately recalls that the policies "departed sharply from the Reagan administration, particularly in rebuilding support for nuclear deterrence and radically revising Soviet policy away from a narrow focus on arms control, toward a much more ambitious political agenda."[8]

This included arms control, as Hutchings rightly points out: "Above all, it meant shifting the prevailing logic away from nuclear arms control for its own sake and focusing on the massive conventional imbalance in Europe." The shift in focus to the conventional military dispositions was also very much a political agenda. The conventional arms talks with twenty-three participating states were "seen in political as much as military terms as a vehicle for relaxing Soviet pressure on its Warsaw Pact allies and so facilitating political liberalization in Europe."[9] After all, as 1989 began, Europe remained divided. More than a million

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[6] The Bush quote is from a transition memo, Ross to Baker, "Thoughts on the 'Grand Design,'" 16 December 1988. Unless otherwise noted, citations to any government documents from 1989–90 are from my review of the originals in the early 1990s for Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995, rev. ed. 1997). Bush explains his commitment to personal diplomacy in Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 60–61; his comment on Gorbachev is on page 10.

[7] Scowcroft's comment on "say only once" is from my interview with him, Washington, DC, June 1991; "disturbed me" from Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 12.

[8] Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 27. See also his description of the conventional wisdom for the US-Soviet agenda as of the end of 1988, detailed on 34–35.

[9] Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 27; Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 28.

soldiers confronted each other at its center. In February 1989 a young man trying to flee into West Berlin, Chris Gueffroy, was shot dead by East German border guards at close range at the Berlin Wall.

Scowcroft's old boss and mentor, Henry Kissinger, had proposed a US-Soviet understanding on *mutual* restraint in Eastern Europe, to "give the Soviets security guarantees (widely defined) while permitting the peoples of Eastern Europe to choose their own political future" and "conceive a drastic reduction of all outside forces in Europe—including those of the US—that might revolutionize present concepts of security." Kissinger discussed these ideas in Moscow and proposed creating a "back-channel" to work them some more. Beyond the process concerns that Kissinger's role might usurp his own, which bothered Baker, the substance was also objectionable to Baker. Though the language Kissinger had developed seemed reasonable, the framework of arriving at a US-Soviet agreement about the fate of Eastern Europe struck some others, like Hutchings, as a "Yalta II."[10]

In March 1989 Scowcroft's staff, looking for ways to promote even faster political change in Central and Eastern Europe, put forward a proposal, which Scowcroft endorsed to Bush, that the goal of US policy in Europe "should be to overcome the division of the continent through acceptance of common democratic values." As an alternative to Gorbachev's concept of a "Common European Home" divided into different rooms by social systems, alliance structures, and historical realities, the United States would propose a vision for a "commonwealth of free nations."[11]

This faction, especially Blackwill and I, also wanted Bush to put German unification back on the international agenda. In the same March memo to Bush, Scowcroft signed off on language that said the United States should do more to highlight possibilities for movement on German unification, to "send a clear signal to the Germans that we are ready to do more if the political climate allows it." This point of view clashed with the senior European advisors then still in office at the State Department. The assistant secretary for Europe, Rozanne Ridgway, had been a key adviser to Shultz and was a former ambassador to East Germany. Like many others deeply experienced in the *Ostpolitik* arguments of the 1970s and 1980s, she was uneasy, even scornful, about ideas to roll back the Cold War status

[10] On the Kissinger episode, see James A. Baker III with Thomas DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), 40–41; Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 27; Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 35–37. The "Yalta II" slur is itself a revealing misuse of history, reflecting the widely held belief that Yalta was a superpower deal to divide Europe. Though some writers allege such a deal was made, it was not. Indeed some other writers (including some eminent historians) wish that such a deal *had* been made, either then or later.

[11] Scowcroft to Bush, "The NATO Summit," 20 March 1989. On 26 March, Bush noted to Scowcroft that he had "read this with interest!" Bush marked up the memo, underscoring and checking the paragraph about the priority to be attached to policy toward Germany. Bush eventually used the "commonwealth of free nations" phrase in his Mainz speech of 31 May and elaborated on it in a speech on US relations with Europe delivered in Leiden on 17 July. He used a similar phrase, simplified as a "commonwealth of freedom" in another speech delivered to the Czech Federal Assembly in Prague on 17 November 1990.

quo. But Bush himself, as would later become even clearer, regarded himself (in his words) as “less of a Europeanist, not dominated by history.”[12]

At the top of the State Department, Secretary Baker and his chief aides, notably Robert Zoellick and Dennis Ross (who acted as Baker’s key adviser on Soviet policy) devoted their first weeks to two goals. The first was rebuilding a bipartisan coalition at home. This was accomplished through painstaking work to defuse the Central America issue, a signature feature of the “Reagan Doctrine” but a lightning rod for partisan argument. Their second initial goal was to strengthen alliance relationships with Europe.[13]

Meanwhile, as Baker and his people refocused hard on European issues and US-Soviet relations in the early spring of 1989 and encountered more formal policy reviews that had produced “mush,” they helped spur on a different approach, driven by the intense schedule of speeches and trips that the White House now planned in order to articulate the administration’s policies, especially toward Europe and the USSR. Baker regarded the arguments about Gorbachev’s prospects as “mainly academic theology,” with good and bad arguments on all sides.

In his memoir, Baker adds a point that is totally characteristic of him. *Real* strategy is about what you *do*. “What mattered to me were what actions we could take in the face of these two different possibilities [for Gorbachev’s future], in order to maximize our diplomatic gains while minimizing risks.” Baker was tuned into the dynamic opportunities in Eastern Europe, pressing the point with Bush in a meeting on 8 March. At high-level meetings in late March and early April, discussions began concerning new approaches toward Europe.[14]

## An agenda for Europe, an arms control move for Gorbachev

March and April 1989 were a catalytic period for the new Bush presidency. Only some of this had to do with the international situation. Much of the churn-

[12] See Scowcroft to Bush, “The NATO Summit,” 20 March 1989; see also the description of interagency differences in Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 25–26. The Bush comment is from my interview with him in Houston, January 1995.

[13] The Central America work is often ignored in the standard accounts. Turning the page on this issue strengthened the domestic foundation for Baker’s policy work everywhere. On this hot subject, Baker put a Democrat (Bernard Aronson) in charge and painstakingly negotiated a deal that preserved some humanitarian aid to the Nicaraguan resistance against the Soviet and Cuban-backed Sandinista government, but got this with a full-court press to implement a regionally negotiated deal for elections in Nicaragua (the Esquipulas accord). See Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 47–60. He won significant points with Moscow by working with the Soviets to make this process work; some of the notable irritants in US-Soviet relations during 1989 arose from Soviet or Cuban arms deliveries to Nicaragua. The gratifying result was the defeat of the Sandinista government led by Daniel Ortega when elections were finally held in February 1990.

[14] For “mush,” see Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 67–70; for more on the high-level deliberations beginning at the end of March, see Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 42–45.

ing was really about the new president deciding what he and his administration should become.

Every new administration, especially a new White House team, carries with it some of the zeal, camaraderie, and confidence from a victorious campaign. The outward energy and confidence naturally masks some measure of very private insecurity. Officials ask themselves, in effect, "Can I/we really handle this?" In foreign policy, Gorbachev was the toast of the world. Bush had not yet been defined as a president or as a statesman.

But Bush had ambitious instincts. He also had effective advisers and a competent staff. His chief national security aides, Scowcroft and Gates, hit the ground running. On European policy, Blackwill—who had spent formative years as a young diplomat working on Kissinger's staff—was a one-man think tank. Blackwill could generate ideas and then map out a choreography of trips, speeches, and other actions to carry them forward.

For Bush, and for his administration, the varying views on Gorbachev had coalesced on one core issue: how the Soviet leader would handle the prospect of change in Eastern Europe. By the end of 1988, Gorbachev had signaled unprecedented tolerance, an end to the Brezhnev Doctrine. During the transition, Bush had told his team that, at that moment in history, he thought Eastern Europe was the most exciting place in the world.

In his first policy address on Eastern Europe, in April 1989, Bush promised that "Help from the West will come in concert with liberalization." Arms, Bush added in a conscious echo of Czech dissident Vaclav Havel, "are a symptom, not a source of tension. The true source of tension is the imposed and unnatural division of Europe." The West, he said, "can now be bold in proposing a vision of the European future."[15]

In the same April 1989 address, Bush made it clear that Soviet tolerance of East European reforms was *the* litmus test for US attitudes toward Gorbachev. Quoting Timothy Garton Ash, Hutchings observes that: "At this crucial juncture, the United States linked the development of its relationship with the Soviet Union to Soviet conduct in East-Central Europe." Hutchings adds his own view that this linkage may have been "the single most important contribution the United States made to the events of 1989." Bush pressed this point in a delicate enough way

[15] Bush's transition comment is recounted by Zoellick in an interview with me, Washington, DC, January 1995. For the speech, see Bush address, Hamtramck, Michigan, 17 April 1989, *Public Papers of the Presidents: George Bush*, bk 1, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16935 (accessed on 25 Nov. 2012). Raymond Garthoff asserted that the timing of Bush's speech on the day Solidarity was legalized was a coincidence. Raymond Garthoff, *The Great Transition* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994), 606. It was not. The roundtable talks began in February 1989. Bush's speech on this topic was planned in advance and timed to follow the Warsaw announcement of the roundtable outcome. See Baker's notes from his meeting with Bush on Eastern Europe on 8 March. Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 67; see also Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 39–40.

to avoid embarrassing Gorbachev or undermining him at home: "[T]he very prudence with which the president pursued these aims caused many to miss just how ambitious the central vision was."[16]

In early 1989 Gorbachev's professed tolerance was tested, concretely, in the Polish roundtable agreement to hold limited elections. Gorbachev had already opted to allow a version of highly limited but still significant elections in the Soviet Union itself, for the Congress of People's Deputies, and so he let the Polish plans go forward for elections that would be held in the summer. Gorbachev's endorsement of political reform evoked a strong positive response from Bush and Baker, especially after Baker returned home from an important, encouraging trip to Moscow in early May 1989.

On the Soviet Union, Bush signed a national security directive that bypassed and largely ignored the just-concluded formal review. The new directive said that containment had been a successful strategy, but was not an end in itself. On 12 May, Bush announced that US policy toward the Soviet Union should go "beyond containment" and instead foster "the integration of the Soviet Union into the international system." He tested Gorbachev's new openness by reviving Eisenhower's Open Skies plan that would open both American and Soviet airspace to the surveillance of military sites. Bush also made it clear through Baker (in the secretary's visit to Moscow in early May) that he would bet on Gorbachev's success. And—with Bush's support—Baker stamped out an effort by Cheney to offer a seemingly different view. In October Baker would step even harder on what he perceived to be an analogous effort by Gates to voice a distinct view on US-Soviet policy.[17]

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16 Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 38.

17 Bush address, College Station, Texas, 12 May 1989, in *Public Papers*, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=17022 (accessed 22 Apr. 2013). The national security directive was crafted, as I remember it, mainly by Scowcroft, Gates, Blackwill and Rice at the White House, with some help from Ross at the State Department. On the conceptual move represented by Bush's 12 May speech, see Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 40–41. For a somewhat less generous appraisal, see Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 26–27. On Baker versus Cheney and Gates, see Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 70, 75, 156–58. Gates offers his own very useful perspective on these developments in *From the Shadows* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 427–71. The Open Skies initiative led to negotiations that began in Ottawa in February 1990 (a meeting best known for the side discussions on Germany) and later produced a 1992 treaty. The treaty now has 35 signatories. It entered into force in 2002, when Russia and the United States began conducting their first overflights. No territory could be placed off limits. At the time it was announced, this initiative was widely derided, even by key insiders like Scowcroft, as just a rehash of an old idea that had been no more than a rhetorical gesture even in 1955. For others, including the NSC staffers (Blackwill and I) who had developed this idea, the idea had been important and ahead of its time in 1955 and remained highly relevant in 1989. Though it is widely believed that the advent of satellites makes military openness from aerial surveillance moot, satellite surveillance has many limitations, including coverage and flexibility. On the significance of the original 1955 proposal, see the interesting summary from one of its originators, Walt Rostow, *Concept and Controversy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 137–71.

Bush then delivered another address aimed at Western Europe. This time, the attainment of a single European market and prospects of creating a single European currency were the issues in the foreground. At that time, officials spoke of realizing such plans in 1992, and this date was the shorthand term researchers will find in the documents that discuss these aspirations. In the Reagan years, the United States had been ambivalent about whether this huge step forward in European integration was a good thing.

Bush acknowledged the ambivalence, which was understandable since "the postwar order that began in 1945 is transforming into something very different." But, in language that was heard loud and clear on the other side of the Atlantic, and which Bush repeated a few days later when he met with French president François Mitterrand, the American president declared that, whatever others may say, "this administration is of one mind. We believe a strong, united Europe means a strong America."[18] One reason the US government supported this momentum, Bush explained, was because he understood that European integration was a powerful magnetic force "drawing Eastern Europe closer toward the commonwealth of free nations." The term "commonwealth of free nations" was one Bush would use in a couple of other speeches, linked to a powerful phrase Bush used in early June, that the United States sought a "Europe whole and free."

The same speech that declared US support for further European integration also emphasized the closeness of the United States with Germany, as "partners in leadership." That new partnership was tested in May 1989, as secret envoys crisscrossed the Atlantic trying to work through an arcane but essential ingredient in the new approach.

In the spring of 1989, Gorbachev was not looking for economic help from the United States. What he sought were reciprocal moves, especially on conventional arms control. Such moves could help him make the case at home that military confrontation was a thing of the past, whereby he could reallocate major resources and political authority away from the military-industrial complex that so dominated the Soviet Union's system of central economic planning. This was a pivotal issue for him at home and for the general direction of Soviet posture in Europe. At its core were issues of spending on the conventional, general purpose forces.

Military reformers in the USSR were not terribly troubled about the treaties limiting categories of nuclear arms. In both superpowers, nuclear weapons made up only a fraction of defense spending. In the Soviet Union as in the United States, though for different reasons, a large majority of defense spending was driven by conventional force requirements that required millions of men and tens of thou-

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[18] Bush address, Boston, Massachusetts, 21 May 1989, in *Public Papers*, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=17046 (accessed 22 Apr. 2013). On this address, see also Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 41–42, who notes the relationship of Bush's approach to what Baker would later outline as a "New Atlanticism."

sands of weapon systems. To take on *these* "requirements" meant a leader had to take on the core of the military establishment—whether in the Soviet Union or in the United States.

Meanwhile NATO was on track to consider a long-overdue modernization of its short-range nuclear forces, essential to the established notions of flexible response. If overwhelmed by the more numerous armies of the Soviet Union and its allies, NATO relied on short-range nuclear forces to display a credible "flexible response" capability to escalate to nuclear combat in Europe. In the spring of 1989, the alliance dispute over these plans bubbled into public view, as the British and Americans—leading the faction supporting modernization—encountered public West German calls not only to derail any update, but also to start negotiations to eliminate these nuclear systems altogether.

Confronting this sharp quarrel over short-range nuclear forces, Baker and Scowcroft arrived at a key insight. They fused two problems into one solution. They judged that a way to help Gorbachev, while also defusing this quarrel over the short-range nuclear force, was to push very hard for conventional arms control. Reductions in conventional forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact from the Atlantic to the Urals were to be negotiated in a forum called CFE (for Conventional armed Forces in Europe). The work on nuclear arms reductions would go on, but the more urgent priority was to help the momentum of Gorbachev's reforms and ease the Soviet military withdrawal from Europe.

The core idea was to put off *both* modernizing and negotiating about the short-range nuclear forces until the CFE treaty was done. These nuclear issues could be put aside, so the argument went, because the whole future of flexible response would look very different if the underlying imbalance of conventional forces could finally be addressed. Beliefs about such an imbalance of ground forces had fundamentally influenced every US and allied assessment of European security since 1943. If the conventional imbalance could be erased, the requirements for maintaining nuclear deterrence at the theater-level, in Europe, might then shrink too.

But that strategy meant the CFE treaty had to be concluded very soon. For this reason, a quick outcome would be promised. To make such a promise credible, the United States would agree to Gorbachev's framework for the talks. The Soviets and their allies had offered to go along with reductions to common ceilings in tanks, artillery, and armored fighting vehicles. But Moscow insisted that the NATO side reciprocate. The Soviets insisted on Western agreement to similar reductions in two categories of weaponry where the West had at least a qualitative edge: combat aircraft and helicopters. This Soviet proposal was quite controversial in Western capitals.

Bush decided he would agree to include the proposed ceilings on aircraft and helicopters, as the Soviets had proposed. He would lead the NATO alliance to agree to offer such a deal. Further, Bush resolved he would throw in a readiness to reduce US troop numbers in Europe (by about 50,000) as the Soviets drew

down their forces, to reach an equal ceiling that would be about 15 percent below the existing US number.[19]

Months earlier Baker and Scowcroft had started out from a very different place, with very different ideas on how to advance bold ideas for adapting forward defense. Now the package synthesizing a new move on conventional arms control became an approach they both liked. It was put together in great secrecy by Scowcroft's staff.[20]

The administration was split. Cheney and his Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Admiral Crowe, argued strongly against making these concessions. Crowe was especially outspoken, describing these as just "PR" moves that would put "forward defense" at risk.

President Bush sided with Baker and Scowcroft. Baker's deputy, Lawrence Eagleburger, and Scowcroft's deputy, Gates, were secretly dispatched to Europe to work on the issue with key allies, bracketed by presidential calls and more envoys exchanged with the Germans. Led by Thatcher, the British made no secret of their concerns about these moves, but they ultimately went along as Baker hammered out an agreed document at the NATO summit codifying the deal agreed to by sixteen allied presidents and prime ministers: a nuclear stall, linked to the new push to reduce and cap conventional forces.[21]

In effect, Bush was judging that, by showing that NATO and European institutions were supple enough to handle constructive change, the US could manage the risks from redefining the requirements for forward defense and flexible re-

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[19] To set the scene: "In late 1988 in many NATO capitals (Ankara, London, Rome, and Washington, for example) NATO forces were considered too thin to maintain a credible conventional deterrent. Thus NATO could not afford to reduce any of its own forces even if facing a leaner [Warsaw Pact] force." Jane M.O. Sharp, *Striving for Military Stability in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2005), 37 (for details on the aircraft and helicopters issue, see also 22, 52). On the insight about linking the conventional and nuclear arms control problems, in which the Dutch foreign minister and West German defense minister also played important roles, see Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 82–83, 89–91; Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 45–46, 71–73. For background on CFE issues as of the spring of 1989, see Barry Blechman, William Durch, and Kevin O'Prey, *Regaining the High Ground* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); Jonathan Dean, "Conventional Talks: A Good First Round," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 45, no. 8 (October 1989): 26–32, 26, 28; Richard Falkenrath, *Shaping Europe's Military Order* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 29–48.

[20] One reason the NSC staff role was so significant on these CFE issues was the backgrounds of the people involved. In 1985–86 Blackwill had been the ambassador to the long-running predecessor negotiation, known as MBFR, that had been limited to central Europe. I had worked for Blackwill on the MBFR delegation and stayed, in 1987, to be the political adviser to the new CFE ambassador, Stephen Ledogar, during the new negotiation's formative first year.

[21] Looking back after the treaty was concluded in 1990, it seemed evident that "by May 1989 the essential structural elements of the CFE treaty had been defined." Falkenrath, *Shaping Europe's Military Order*, 54. On the May 1989 debates in the US government, which were concentrated around the third week of that month, there are various illustrative but fragmentary accounts in the published literature. I have some notes from the time. See also Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 93–94; Don Oberdorfer, *The Turn* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1991), 347–51.

sponse. As far as he or his aides could see, the outcome turned out to be everything they had wanted.

Another point should be clear: Bush, Baker, and Scowcroft thought, and often said, that their maneuvers were designed to preserve US engagement overseas. "Forward defense" was, for them, a kind of synonym for the old post-1950 axiom of overseas engagement as the way to protect the United States. They thought that taking the initiative to adapt forward defense to a transformed international system was the wisest way to preserve this engagement.

What about Gorbachev and his risky and even more important agenda for change in Europe? The NATO moves helped him during the pivotal summer of 1989 to make the necessary arguments at home and with communist allies in Eastern Europe.[22] In a sense, both Bush and Gorbachev were now moving, in parallel and reciprocally, to tell their respective military leaders that they had to change the force posture they had followed for generations. All this, plus Baker's personal diplomacy, also helped ease Gorbachev's concerns about Bush's calls for a "Europe whole and free" when Bush visited Germany in late May and traveled to Poland and Hungary in July 1989.

Yet it was still Europeans who would have the initiative to decide how Europe would change. The older *Ostpolitik* consensus accepted the Cold War status quo as the basis for rapprochement. In early 1989, West German foreign minister Genscher affirmed that understanding. Gorbachev elaborated on it with an approach that would preserve the fundamental status quo while allowing for political reform within those structures. He called for a "Common European Home" that would accept differing social systems and preserve the existing alliance systems.

So there was a notable contrast when, in a speech in Mainz at the end of May 1989, Bush articulated the goal of a "Europe whole and free" (using a phrase coined by a speechwriter on Ross's staff at the State Department). This goal plainly regarded the Cold War status quo as questionable: "The Cold War began with the division of Europe. It can only end when Europe is whole." The Bush White House also planned to call attention to the German Question and the possibility of German unity. Separately, Baker and Zoellick had come to the same conclusion. Baker pressed the point directly with Bush, who was receptive. In late May 1989, Bush had told an interviewer that he would "love to see" Germany reunified. His explanation was from the heart: "Anybody who looks back over his shoulder and then looks at the present and sees a country ripped asunder by division, a people ripped asunder by political division, should say: 'If you can get reunification on a proper basis, fine.'"[23]

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[22] As Bush saw it at the time, meeting with Italian prime minister Ciriaco De Mita, "Some say we're cold warriors, that we don't want Gorbachev to succeed. I've made clear that's not the case." Personal notes from the meeting, 27 May 1989.

[23] Bush address, Mainz, Germany, 31 May 1989, in *Public Papers*, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=17085&st=&st1= (accessed 22 Apr. 2013). The "Europe whole and free"

Bush saw this German Question as a gut issue of trust. He had been deeply impressed when, as vice president, he had visited Germany during the height of the enormous protests over the NATO decision to deploy US intermediate-range missiles, the great alliance issue of the day. The then new chancellor, Helmut Kohl, had taken time to get to know his American visitor. Much later, Bush would still vividly recall demonstrators slinging rocks at his car without much security reaction ("Our Secret Service would have shot them!") and sitting in a garage with Kohl waiting for a route to clear. This, it struck him, was a society willing to pay the price for free speech. Though he would readily acknowledge that, "I can't claim to have understood everything that would happen in Europe from Day One," Bush had come to a conclusion about West Germany and the Germans—and their leader: "At some point you should let a guy up."[24]

On Scowcroft's staff, Blackwill and Zelikow wanted Bush to call out the unification issue in his Mainz speech and they put language to do this into the draft. Yet Scowcroft was uneasy about getting too far ahead of where the Germans themselves were on this issue. He worried about prematurely disturbing the *Ostpolitik* consensus. Finalizing the Mainz draft for Bush, Scowcroft muted the draft language to say only: "We seek self-determination for all of Germany and all of Eastern Europe."[25]

But there was no doubt about Bush's overall message. He was offering a clear objective of overcoming the division of Europe, one that contrasted sharply with the message Gorbachev offered a week later in Strasbourg. When Reagan had eloquently called on Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall, it was a speechwriter's phrase and there had been no serious follow-up. In a memoir of more than a thousand pages, Shultz does not even mention Reagan's Berlin remarks.

Bush returned to Reagan's theme. He hit it hard. "[T]here cannot be a common European home until all within it are free to move from room to room. […] Let Berlin be next."[26]

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phrase was in the initial State Department draft for the speech prepared by Harvey Sicherman, who had also worked for Shultz. See generally Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified,* 28–29, 31–32. On Baker and Zoellick's views, see Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 159 (publishing notes from Baker's meeting with Bush on 17 May). The May 1989 Bush interview was with *Washington Times* editor Arnaud de Borchgrave. De Borchgrave, "Bush 'Would Love' Reunited Germany," *Washington Times*, 16 May 1989, A-1.

[24] My interview with Bush, Houston, January 1995. In his memoir, Bush added additional anecdotes about a 1983 visit to the inter-German border. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 182–83.

[25] Earlier in May, Blackwill had sent Bush a memo pushing the unification issue again. Scowcroft sat on it for months, not sending it forward to Bush until August. Bush finally read it on 9 September. Ten days later, he found another chance to speak publicly about his support for unification. Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 380 n. 70.

[26] See Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 45–46. Hutchings concludes that: "At the beginning of 1989, there had been three competing visions of Europe's future—Gorbachev's, Bush's, and Genscher's. By the time of the May 1989 NATO summit […] there was one." After quoting the

Bush's initiatives on arms control, adopted at a meeting of NATO heads of state in May 1989, and his stance toward Europe were extremely well received. The NATO summit success, followed immediately by the strikingly positive reception Bush received in Germany, seems to have bewildered the new president a bit. Bush felt he had to remind reporters that, "I'm the same guy I was four days ago."[27]

## A period of transition: June–November 1989

Beyond the issues of the moment, which were soon forgotten outside of the professional community concerned with them, this early success had an effect on the president's team, affecting the way they thought of themselves. It solidified habits of thought and habits of action.

Historians sometimes do not pay enough attention to the inner rhythm, routines, and ways of doing things that mark leadership groups in all large institutions. Something is therefore often lost in describing their doings because the inhabitants of these little worlds are acutely aware of these characteristics. In the case of the Bush administration, the successes of the spring of 1989 cemented several ways of doing business, some in the realm of high policy and some more mundane. Among these were:

- the basic policy directions on the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, NATO, and Germany;
- the readiness to consider bold moves (that might override Defense Department preferences);
- the habit of especially trusting coordination with the West Germans (especially the Chancellery);
- a comfort and confidence in managing complex coalition diplomacy;
- the decision-making style relying on an informal set of principles and an entrepreneurial role for the top aides; and
- a synergy between Baker and Scowcroft in the way they helped Bush.

Perhaps most important was the way this episode, and the subsequent trips to Poland and Hungary, built up Bush's confidence in himself and his staff, his reliance on personal outreach to fellow leaders, and his trust in his own instincts.[28]

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NATO summit agreement on the common goal, Hutchings adds: "With that, the United States had reversed the logic of the international agenda and offered a Western vision of Europe's future that helped expose the limitations of Gorbachev's 'common European home' even as it sought to extend the potential of Soviet 'new thinking.'" Ibid., 46.

[27] On the "enthusiastic welcome" for Bush's initiatives from both the Bonn government and the opposition Social Democratic Party, see Dennis Bark and David Gress, *A History of West Germany*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 575–77. For the Bush quote, see Oberdorfer, *The Turn*, 351.

[28] Bush remarked on the significance of the 1989 NATO summit for his presidency in 1993 discussions with Condoleezza Rice as we were working on our book. For illustrative comments on the

For Eastern Europe, the US stance was to encourage self-determination and to intervene by promising support for countries that made a free choice about their destiny. That was Bush's offer in his April speech about Eastern Europe. The United States did not want to intervene in a way that unduly alarmed the Soviets or encouraged a coup against Gorbachev. Yet it also did not want to do anything that would prop up the existing communist governments. Between April and August, the United States scrambled to assemble modestly useful but mainly symbolic gestures of encouragement to go with the euphoria that accompanied Bush's visits to Warsaw and Budapest.

In August 1989 Poland put a non-communist-led coalition government in place for the first time since 1948, under Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Now Bush's promise of support faced a sterner test. If communist governments chose to transform, the United States had promised to help. The Poles looked to see if the United States would keep that promise. The battle was over economic support to help Poland in particular, but also Hungary (and later others) make the transition to a post-communist society. The most acute needs were for help in making their currencies convertible, access to credit for fiscal support and foreign exchange, and getting relief from the huge foreign debts the communist governments had barely been able to service.

From the start, even in April, the White House had encountered sharp resistance to contemplating large-scale assistance to these countries from both the Treasury Department and the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Having made control of the federal deficit a major part of the domestic political agenda and already facing large costs from cleaning up the savings and loan crisis of the late 1980s, the OMB could not find the money without cutting something else.

The Treasury Department's concern was different. Thanks in part to the hard money policies that cured endemic inflation in the developed countries, debt crises in developing countries had become a critical recurring problem since a near-default by Mexico in 1982. Having run for years from alarm to alarm, the US government had just fashioned (in March 1989) another major approach, named the "Brady plan" for Bush's Treasury secretary. It promised significant debt forgiveness (usually around a third of the debt) and rescheduling of other debts, securitized in US Treasury bonds ("Brady bonds") that were then bought by international institutions. All this was in exchange for domestic market-oriented reform, including restraints on public sector spending. The Brady plan was working (and continued to work, eventually getting agreements from eighteen

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contrast in process between the "witches' brew of intrigue" in the Reagan era, where "suspicion and mutual distrust was utterly out of control" and Bush's (and others') belief that the president had attained a process that worked "the way it was supposed to," see Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 31; Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy,* 26–27 (for the quoted language), 30–33.

countries).[29] But it was not a good fit for socialist countries seeking debt relief. Bush and Brady understandably wanted to maintain the integrity of their global approach.

The policy challenge was novel. Though suggestive, analogies to the Marshall Plan and to reform plans in East Asia (as, for example, South Korea) were not terribly useful. More useful was the experience already accumulated in coping with developing country debt crises during the 1980s, since Western experts were developing a paradigm for thinking about the reform of state economies. But the new cases in Eastern Europe, led by Poland, presented this challenge in an extreme form.

Poland broke through this policy logjam by presenting a plain choice to the West. The non-communist government developed (aided by Western advisers) a credible program for economic transition. Lacking any coherent alternative, it pioneered the development of a policy approach known, with good cause, as "shock therapy." It involved an immediate transition to a convertible currency, with the prompt elimination of price controls and nearly balanced public budgets.

In exchange, the new Polish government asked (in September 1989) for help from outside governments in several forms: a billion dollar stabilization fund to sustain a convertible currency, credit lines from the IMF and the World Bank, suspension of debt servicing, and a program of debt relief that would write-down and reschedule loans without damage to Poland's future access to credit markets. Poland also would need specific technical help and some targeted foreign money in working through structural adjustments.

The West, led by the United States, delivered on its part of the compact. As the Polish government adopted the internal plans by the end of 1989, the Stabilization Fund was created (with contributions from seventeen countries, 20 percent from the United States), the international financial institutions were playing their part, and the desired process of debt restructuring was underway. The United States helped organize new institutions, the G-24 and a European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to provide more varied, longer-term support. The subsequent transition in Poland's political economy was difficult, with very high inflation and great turmoil. But it was successful—at least measured against the original objectives of the Poles who led the program.[30]

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[29] See Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 49, 113–14. For positive contemporary assessments of the Brady plan, see, e.g., William Cline, *International Debt Reexamined* (Washington: Institute for International Economics, 1995); and Riordan Roett, "The Debt Crisis and Economic Development in Latin America," in Jonathan Hartlyn, Lars Schoultz, and Augusto Varas, eds., *The United States and Latin America in the 1990s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 131–51.

[30] A good appraisal is Simon Johnson and Marzena Kowalska, "Poland: The Political Economy of Shock Therapy," in Stephan Haggard and Steven Webb, eds., *Voting for Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, for the World Bank, 1994), 185–235, complemented by the brief material in Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 138–40; and Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*,

The next formative period for development of a Bush administration approach on Germany, and policy toward the Soviet Union, came in the autumn of 1989, after the onset of the successive East German refugee crises in Hungary, then Czechoslovakia. As these crises reverberated back into East Germany itself, sparking large domestic demonstrations, forward-looking officials in all the major capitals began speculating about Germany's future.

Beginning in August 1989, the West German government led by Kohl began turning away from the spirit of *Ostpolitik* and instead, as the weeks passed, began actively undermining the East German regime. It did this by linking West German promises of aid with calls that the GDR must permit more political freedom.[31]

Beginning in September, Bush again announced his openness to German unification. "I think there has been a dramatic change in post-World War II Germany. And so, I don't fear it […]. There is in some quarters a feeling—well, a reunified Germany would be detrimental to the peace of Europe, of Western Europe, some way; and I don't accept that at all, simply don't."[32] In October, as Kohl's pressure on the East Germans was being widely criticized, Kohl reached out to Bush for help. Though Kohl only asked for Bush to find a way to say publicly that Western solidarity was the key to continued change in the East, Bush called in the top *New York Times* reporter and gave him his front-page lead: "I don't share the concern that some European countries have about a reunified Germany."[33]

At this point, opinion within his administration was still somewhat unsettled. Baker was leaning toward a fulsome endorsement, encouraged by Zoellick and Ross and by the new leadership of the State Department's European bureau (Raymond Seitz and James Dobbins). But there were other views within the State Department. The National Security Council staff was also split. Blackwill and I had been pressing to support moves toward unification since March. But Scowcroft, as he himself recounts, "was skeptical about the wisdom of pursuing German reunification and, in that sense, was probably closer to the [former] State

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72–76. Allusions to Marshall Plan analogies were common in 1989; Lech Wałęsa urged aid on this scale in his address to a joint session of Congress in late 1989. But much of this rhetoric was based on poor analogies to a Marshall Plan program that was (and is) not very widely understood and, as in Wałęsa's case, there was no underlying proposal. The Mazowiecki government was working the plan that had been developed under the leadership of its economics chief, Leszek Balcerowicz. Among the most influential of the Western economic advisers to the Polish reformers in 1989 and 1990 were Jeffrey Sachs and David Lipton. In addition to their substantive expertise, these experts and a few others played a vital bridging role between the Poles, the US government, and the international institutions. Thus some of the important strategic planning by the governments occurred in this nongovernmental space.

31 See Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 63–81; Sarotte, *1989*, 28–33.

32 Quoted in Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 81. The statement was made on 18 September.

33 The *New York Times* story, by R.W. "Johnny" Apple, was published on 25 October. For context, see Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 81, 94, 398–99 notes 94 and 98.

position than that of my own staff." For Scowcroft, "what was wrong with a divided Germany as long as the situation was stable?"[34]

Bush's October statement settled the issue within his administration. The conflicting views among his advisers had an interesting effect. It freed Bush to feel he could just go ahead and vent his personal preferences. He had not been looking to force the issue. Indeed, he later wrote, "[i]f the NSC or State Department had argued it was a bad idea, I certainly would have been receptive. I was not about to impose my own view on this highly controversial matter." But the advice Bush had been getting was alternately encouraging or, at worst, conflicting. So he felt able to follow "a comfort level with it [leaning forward on German unification] that others did not yet have, just as I was more comfortable with trying to do more in terms of arms control with the Soviet Union than, say, was the Defense Department." In these circumstances Bush could "probably set a different tone for the Administration on the issue than it might otherwise have had."[35]

### A period of rapid maneuver: November 1989–November 1990

On 9–10 November the Berlin Wall opened through an unplanned administrative snafu by the newly formed "reform" communist government of the GDR. The popular ferment in East Germany bubbled over and swept away that government, and, by the end of the year, every other remaining Warsaw Pact government in Eastern Europe. An intense period of diplomatic negotiations followed, on which there are now several reliable accounts.[36]

Though the Bush administration, like other involved governments, had not anticipated the immediacy and tempo of what followed, its strategic planning for this period of tumultuous change was substantially in place before 9 November.

[34] For details on the internal administration discussions about unification in September and October, which included the development of a suggestive draft national security directive (useful more for the thinking that went into it than for the product), see Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 93–95, and especially 396–99 notes 90 and 93. For Scowcroft's quotes, Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 188–89.

[35] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 188. Blackwill, joined by Hutchings, actually wavered about fomenting German unification for a short time, later in December 1989. At that particular moment they were worried about the mischief the Soviet government might make at a German peace conference and they asked Scowcroft to consider ways to slow down the process. This time it was Scowcroft's turn to press the cause of going forward with unification. He knew Bush had already settled the issue. By January 1990 Blackwill was back to flooring the gas pedal. See Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 154–55, 159–60.

[36] Two excellent recent works are Sarotte, *1989;* and Frederic Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification* (Providence: Berghahn, 2009). For a broad overview of how the domestic German factors interacted with the international situation, Sarotte is good. See also the thoughtful review essay by Noel Cary, "'Farewell without Tears': Diplomats, Dissidents, and the Demise of East Germany," *Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 3 (September 2001): 617–51.

Both in style and substance, the team worked through the whirl of issues along the lines laid out earlier in 1989. Rather than provide a lengthy recapitulation, I offer this list of key policy elements:

- The United States proceeded to facilitate the transition of East European states toward political independence and internal transformation.
- The United States strongly encouraged Gorbachev to restrain from using force, even when the issue became whether Moscow would hold together all the components of the Soviet Union itself. For those choices, the fulcrum turned out to be Soviet policy toward Lithuania—especially during May 1990 and January 1991.
- In November and December 1989, the United States joined Kohl in pushing ahead with unification as the goal, with the unified Germany embedded firmly both in NATO and in the European Community.
- In early 1990, the United States joined Kohl in choosing to push German unification on the fastest possible timetable. This was done in order to gather the hay before the expected storm (the metaphor used by Kohl); in order to retain the initiative and keep the diplomacy of opponents off balance; and in order to build up the plausibility of a choice for unity on Western terms within the East German electorate (looking to their March 1990 election). This policy preferred the rapid absorption of the GDR into the FRG, rather than opt for the lengthy and painstaking construction of a new kind of German republic.
- To reciprocate Soviet moves, but also to put a floor under planned cuts, the United States enlarged its plans to cut forces in Europe and remove more than a third of the US forces that had been stationed in Europe when 1989 began.
- In February 1990 the United States firmed up first its own, and then the allied, position on just how a unified Germany would remain part of NATO—intact and fully integrated into NATO's military structure, with a special military status for eastern Germany.
- Also in February, the powers developed a process, the Two Plus Four, for negotiating the international aspects of German unification. The United States then led the way in choreographing how that process would work, allowing internal unification to rush ahead and subcontracting certain tasks—like the vital security negotiations and treatment of German troop limits—to the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) process, which itself was moving toward agreement at a linked and astonishingly fast pace, given the enormity of the contemplated cuts in armed forces across all of Europe.
- In the spring and summer of 1990, the United States led a program to preserve NATO and extend its appeal by redefining the alliance approach to forward defense and flexible response. Also, NATO would receive ambassadors from all the former Warsaw Pact countries, thus laying the groundwork for an enlarged vision of the alliance. All this culminated in another NATO summit

triumph for Bush, this one in July 1990.

- In late 1989, and again in the spring of 1990, the United States followed and welcomed moves, led by France and Germany, to complete the process of European monetary union and develop an agenda for European political union.
- In the spring and summer of 1990, the United States watched moves, led by Germany, to provide significant concessionary loans to the Soviet Union. These German loans were extended on a moderate scale in May 1990 and then the loans to the Soviets were made on a very large scale in September.

All these moves culminated in a set of three major international agreements (not counting the European Union moves). In September 1990, the two German states and the former four occupying powers signed the Final Settlement for Germany that was both the long-deferred peace treaty of World War II and a peace treaty for the Cold War.

In November 1990, all the states of NATO and the Warsaw Pact signed the CFE treaty. This erased the conventional military imbalance that had been a seemingly permanent feature of Europe's political landscape since 1944. The treaty led to the withdrawal and destruction of vast amounts of military equipment, and introduced a control regime with thousands of on-site inspections of bases across Europe.

Also in November 1990, all European states signed the Charter of Paris. They agreed on basic principles that would govern political and economic life, including provisions for the conduct of free elections.

As foreseen in 1989, the elimination of the older conventional military imbalance did transform the environment for considering the future of nuclear arms in Europe. With CFE being implemented, hoping to avoid another laborious arms control negotiation, in September 1991 Bush took the lead. He moved unilaterally to withdraw almost all US nuclear forces from Europe. Gorbachev promptly followed suit.

## Evolution, revolution, or something in between?

Reviewing the options available to the United States as a strategic goal in 1990, Sarotte observes that the United States consistently chose what she calls a "prefab" approach, relying on existing institutions. The notion of building on familiar, seemingly reassuring institutions is basically right. Bush and his team had not only developed a strong set of beliefs; they also felt comfortable with wielding known institutional settings for action. So when change became even more rapid, they felt prepared.

But the designs were not, in fact, prefabricated for the fall of communism. There was some innovation, especially for Eastern Europe. Even the established ideas and institutions had to be adapted and extended in various ways that excit-

ed occasional controversies within the US government and with close allies. In all of this work, Bush and his advisers were experimenting with ingredients they thought they understood. But they could not just think of themselves. They had to work, wanted to work, with ingredients their partners understood and would find comforting.

Fidelity to the alliance and "forward defense" were at least as important, and reassuring, to their European colleagues. In some accounts, the tone is one of Americans pressing the importance of NATO or the need for a continued American presence. It is perfectly true that the Americans felt this. In December 1989, speaking to European leaders, Bush solemnly pledged to keep US troops in Europe as long as their presence was desired and, he stated as bluntly as he could: "The United States will remain a European power."[37] The statement was released. His advisers who drafted this language wondered how Europeans and Americans would react to such a frank assertion. Yet there was no noticeable reaction at all, least of all from Europe. Most European leaders found reassurance in the same verities.

The "prefab" appearance of the 1990 settlements can make the strategic plans of the time seem conservative. Yet in the winter of 1989–90, the US approach on German unification and the associated issues hardly seemed to be conservative, in the sense of conserving a status quo. Nor was the US government following the conventional wisdom of leading commentators. Its position was more radical than almost any of the published ideas suggested by observers on either left or right, including such notable figures as Henry Kissinger or George Kennan.[38] Recalling one episode where Bush pushed through further US troop cuts over the objections of the rest of the government, Scowcroft remembered that Bush's "approach could hardly have been further from his public image of caution."[39]

By aiming so directly at the victory of its known and preferred concepts and institutions, the Bush administration deliberately courted high short-term risk in the hope of greatly reducing risk for the long haul. In one note to Scowcroft, Rice mused openly that if the proposed course was followed, "and this is a hunch," she "would spend a lot of time in church praying that I was right."[40] No new experimentation with how to create a healthy German republic. No new experimentation with how to keep Europe safe. If that meant a near-term confrontation with the Soviet Union, then so be it. And having a clear design put the burden on others to offer an alternative that was at least as plausible.

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[37] "Outline of Remarks, NATO Headquarters," 4 December 1989, in *Public Papers*, http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=1297&year=1989&month=12 (accessed 23 Apr. 2013).

[38] See, for example, the catalog of opinions in Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 407 note 45. Note also the catalog of expert opinion at the time reviewed in William Wohlforth, "How Did the Experts Do?," in Melvyn Leffler and Jeffrey Legro, eds., *In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy After the Berlin Wall and 9/11* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 163–78.

[39] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 208.

[40] Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 160.

In the period after the Berlin Wall fell, the US government faced a dilemma akin to that of a ship's captain in the age of sail. The ship is sailing toward a harbor. Ominous storm clouds gather and the seas get rough. The channel into the harbor is narrow, with rocks on each side. Navigating it would be hazardous even on a fair day. The alternative is to put out to sea, to ride out the storm or seek some other harbor. Seeing the reassuring lights of a safe harbor he trusted, Bush chose to shoot through the channel.

## Aftermath

Just as the European issues were coming together so well, on the evening of 1 August 1990, Bush was resting some aching muscles after relaxing in his usual hyperactive style, whacking too many golf balls on a practice range. That is when he learned that Iraq had just sent its tanks to overrun its practically unarmed neighbor, Kuwait. The president described his first reflection on what was at stake in this way:

> I was keenly aware that this would be the first post-Cold War test of the [UN] Security Council in crisis. I knew what had happened in the 1930s when a weak and leaderless League of Nations had failed to stand up to Japanese, Italian, and German aggression. The result was to encourage the ambitions of those regimes. The UN had been set up to correct the failings of the League, but the Cold War caused stalemate in the Security Council. Now, however our improving relations with Moscow and our satisfactory ones with China offered the possibility that we could get their cooperation for forging international unity to oppose Iraq.[41]

The next morning, having worked all night on immediate actions, Scowcroft was "frankly appalled" when many of the President's advisers (Baker was in Asia) did not seem to grasp the situation. "There was a huge gap between those who saw what was happening as the major crisis of our time and those who treated it as the crisis *du jour*." Bush and Scowcroft quickly reset the tone, with the help of others who supported them, like Eagleburger and Cheney.[42]

The positive developments in Europe strongly affected the way Bush saw the Iraq issue. He and Scowcroft felt they were at a moment when Franklin D. Roosevelt's unrealized dreams for the postwar world might at last be coming to fruition. For later generations who want to understand why Bush and some of his

[41] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 303. On American policy and the events immediately leading to the war, see ibid., 304–14; Zachary Karabell and Philip Zelikow with Ernest May, Kirsten Lundberg, and Robert Johnson, "Iraq, 1988–1990: Unexpectedly Heading toward War," in Ernest May and Philip Zelikow, eds., *Dealing with Dictators: Dilemmas of U.S. Diplomacy and Intelligence Analysis, 1945–1990* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 167–202; and Richard Haass, *War of Necessity War of Choice* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 25–31, 44–59.

[42] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 317–24 (quote from page 317). I accompanied Bush and Scowcroft on their 2 August trip to Aspen and had a little involvement in what followed. See also Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 222–38.

aides reacted so strongly to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, it is essential to sense—as they did—the startling juxtaposition of this moment of immense promise in the great European/global struggle with the kind of law of the jungle that seemed exemplified by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Partly inchoate, people of Bush's, Scowcroft's, and Baker's generation carried in their formative memories a conception and corollary hopes for a revitalized United Nations and a United States working with it, that echoed Roosevelt's influential vision of great power "policemen" who would stand up to the occasional rogue state in order to secure what Bush would later call a "new world order."[43] By August 1990 Bush and Scowcroft saw a new world emerging, full of hopes that Roosevelt would instantly have understood.

[43] FDR began using the "police" metaphor in envisioning a postwar world by August 1941, building it up by 1942 to a notion of four policemen ("the United States, England, and Russia and perhaps China") which he adhered to for the rest of his life. Warren Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 85–86. The "new world order" concept was mentioned in a November 1990 Bush address in Prague. The concept has antecedents, including Bush's "commonwealth of free nations" phrase that, in the Prague speech, is pared down to "commonwealth of freedom." It is no coincidence that Bush would choose newly liberated Prague as the venue for this policy address. For more on the elder Bush's "new world order" concept, see Hutchings, *American Diplomacy*, 143–49.

Alexander von Plato

# OPPOSITION MOVEMENTS AND BIG POLITICS IN THE REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY[1]

When Mikhail Gorbachev arrived for the celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the GDR on 6 October 1989, there was already some discord between the East German SED leadership under Erich Honecker and the Soviet leader. Honecker had criticized Gorbachev's approach to perestroika, the clearest expression of this being the GDR's ban in November 1988 on sales of the magazine *Sputnik*, a journal published by the Soviet news agency Novosti for foreign countries. But it was clear that the SED could not observe the state's anniversary without the Soviet leader; if he were absent at such a celebration it would have been a political scandal. After landing at Schönefeld Airport, Gorbachev's delegation was driven into the city in a car, encountering people shouting "Gorby, Gorby!" and holding up pro-Gorbachev signs. Only one man, a single person, was holding up a different sign which read "Keep it up, Erich." Gorbachev turned to his comrades: "There must be something we haven't noticed."[2]

Actually, with the intelligence apparatus of both the GDR and the Soviet Union, as well as the developments threatening in Poland, Hungary and above all the Baltic states,[3] it seems hardly possible that Moscow was unaware of the profound significance of the opposition and the change of attitude in the population, both in those places and in the GDR. The number of *Ausreiser*, the GDR refugees

1 This chapter is based on my book *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands—ein weltpolitisches Machtspiel,* 3rd ed. (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2009), which has also appeared in Russian and is planned to be published in English. During the last ten years, some of the state chancelleries and foreign ministries in different countries have published selections of their records concerning the reunification of Germany, as was already done by the German State Chancellery and Foreign Ministry. Publications of documents from British and French governmental institutions and the Gorbachev Foundation have followed. The most important statements of governments from the other involved countries have already appeared in these publications. These volumes of documents have essentially confirmed the picture as drawn in my book, which is based mainly on the records of the East and West German governments, the archives of the Gorbachev Foundation, as well as on interviews with politicians in East and West. Concerning the dissidents and oppositional movements, see e.g., Alexander von Plato and Tomas Vilimek with Piotr Filipkowski and Joanna Wawrzyniak (eds.), *Opposition als Lebensform. Lebensgeschichten von Dissidenten in der DDR, der ČSSR und in Polen* (Münster: Lit, 2012).

2 On these events, cf. Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 52–63.

3 The "Baltic Chain of Freedom and Independence" occurred on 23 August. On the revolution in the Baltic states, see Karsten Brüggemann, "'One Day We Will Win Anyway': The 'Singing Revolution' in the Soviet Baltic Republics," in this volume, 221–46.

taking refuge in West German embassies, had grown to such proportions that the Federal Republic's missions in East Berlin (8 August 1989), Budapest (14 August), Prague (23 August) and later in Warsaw (19 September) had to be closed because of sheer overcrowding. As had happened in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and 1971 and Poland in the 1970s and 80s, the communist party in the GDR—the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, Socialist Unity Party of Germany)—had also seen large parts of the society distancing themselves from the party. During the 1980s, contacts, networks and structures had emerged that went far beyond those that had formed in the 1960s and 70s, both within the Lutheran Church, which had become a refuge for dissent, and without. Just a month before the forty-year jubilee, the opposition movement New Forum (*Neues Forum*) had been established. In the group's inaugural proclamation of 10 September 1989,[4] a new direction was unmistakable: They wanted to emerge from the refuge of the church and its small opposition groups, and move into the mainstream of society—and with this, to fight for the legalization of free debate. This was one of the New Forum's greatest achievements. Within a few weeks, over 100,000 people had signed its proclamation, and by late 1989, a few months later, it had become a million, as has been asserted by one of the founders, Rolf Henrich,[5] although the number of supporters had become so many, he could no longer count them. He burned the lists, as he was still concerned for the signatories' safety. Soon after the New Forum was founded, a number of other groups, such as the Democratic Awakening (*Demokratischer Aufbruch*), were also formally established. Gorbachev himself had become a beacon of hope to which one could appeal.

While these new developments were probably known to the CPSU's general secretary, until then it did not appear they would shake the GDR to its foundations. At the anniversary celebrations, Erich Honecker did everything he could to present the GDR as a haven of political and economic stability.

But during the evening festivities on 7 October, when the GDR's official youth organization, the Free German Youth (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*, FDJ), conducted a torchlight parade past the tribune of the guests of honor, shouts of "Gorby, Gorby" could be heard from the FDJ columns, as well as calls of "perestroika." In his memoirs, Gorbachev recalled that Mieczysław Rakowski, Polish prime minister, even translated the words "Gorbachev, save us!" to him. Regarding these rows of FDJ members, Rakowski emphasized: "These are party activists. This is the end."[6] After Honecker's rather hostile reception, Gorbachev might well have been pleased to have become an inspiration to many people, but he was deeply troubled.

It is possible to conclude from these reactions that the oppositional streams, which had even reached the party youth, alarmed those in power in the East deeply; they began to sense what could threaten their rule. This was the case,

[4] The original document is in the collection of the Haus der Geschichte Bonn, 1990/6/104.
[5] Interview Alexander von Plato with Rolf Henrich, 9 August 2007.
[6] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 524.

despite the fact that they didn't even know about the protests being held in Berlin and other cities in the GDR, or the fact that they were being repressed.

Gorbachev's concern grew "when, after Honecker was replaced, a real picture of the situation came to light."[7] The newly installed SED leader, Egon Krenz, took a trip to Moscow on 31 October 1989—three weeks after the jubilee and two weeks after Honecker had been removed from office—carrying a quite blunt account of the economic and political situation in the GDR in his luggage. The concern was even greater since the Soviet Union had extreme economic difficulties: A crisis-ridden GDR would become a millstone around the Soviet neck, both financially and politically.[8] Gorbachev sent Krenz back to Berlin with this advice: He should become more internationally involved with the Soviet Union, since this will "help your political relations with the FRG." A little later, one of Gorbachev's key policies became the "Soviet Union, East and West Germany triangle."[9] Krenz left knowing that no economic aid could be expected from the Soviet big brother.

What is more, Krenz had asked the general secretary whether the Soviet Union still stood by its "paternity" relationship with the GDR. After all, the GDR was a child of the Soviet Union and, as it reads in the Soviet protocol of the meeting, "decent people support their children; they certainly allow them to carry the father's name. (Lively)."[10] Gorbachev is said to have replied:

> How can you even ask a question like that? Actually, I don't know any reasonable politician who wants German unity, including Chancellor Helmut Kohl [...] You must know that all serious politicians, including Thatcher and Mitterrand, Andreotti and Jaruzelski, even the Americans, although new shades are visible in their position—no one wants a reunification.[11]

When interviewed, Krenz offered a different version of the discussion. According to him, Gorbachev remained silent after being asked about the Soviet paternity, spoke quietly with his interpreter, and then quoted a Russian proverb: "Even a very long thread has an end."[12] Thus, even Krenz became aware of what lay ahead.

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7 In a letter he wrote to me dated 6 March 2001.

8 Gorbachev's shock is also clear in the German transcript of his conversation with Krenz, where it reads: "Is it really that bad?" and "I didn't think the situation was that precarious." Conversation Krenz with Gorbachev, East German protocol, 1 November 1989, in Bundesarchiv (BA), SAPMO, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, 128–69, here 142.

9 Only two days after the meeting with Krenz, Gorbachev used this expression. Politburo protocol, 3 November 1989, in A. Chernyaev, V. Medvedev, G. Shakhnazarov, eds., *V Politbyuro TsK KPSS… Po zapisam Anatoliya Chernyaeva, Vadima Medvedeva, Georgiya Shakhnazarova (1985–1991)* (Moscow: Alpina Bizness Buks, 2006), 448–51, 451. Later Gorbachev mentioned this triangle repeatedly.

10 Conversation Gorbachev with Krenz, Soviet protocol, 1 November 1989, in Gorbachev Foundation (GF), 89NOV01. The word "lively" is also recorded.

11 Ibid.

12 As based on an interview of Hans-Christoph Blumenberg with Egon Krenz 1999 as well as some of my interviews with international politicians. These interviews were made for Blumen-

The existence of two German states, as Gorbachev declared in his talk with Krenz and then repeated again and again in the following months, was the result and a condition "of our successful politics." Reunification was not on the agenda.

On 3 November 1989, shortly after Krenz's visit, the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee held a session. There, Gorbachev declared that "The GDR is living beyond its means by up to a third," and intelligence chief Vladimir Kryuchkov announced that the next day, 4 November 1989, one million protesters would go onto the streets in Berlin.[13] Foreign Minister Shevardnadze remarked: "It would be better if they [the Germans] got rid of the 'Wall' themselves." Perspicaciously, Gorbachev said: "They will sell out down to their guts. […] And when they step out onto the world market, their standard of living will drop immediately."

All this reveals the pressure that the Soviet leadership felt from the opposition (and from the economic decline). And this was not only felt by the Soviet government, but also by all the other governments involved in the process. Up to and including November 1989—and this is my first basic thesis—the key players in the rush of events were the opposition movements.

## International politics until December 1989

But international political protagonists, who until autumn 1989 had seemed only to be following the oppositional movements, were also active.

In March 1989, George H.W. Bush, the US president, who at that time was relatively fresh in office, urged that a new policy be followed by NATO and its member states in response to Gorbachev's compelling motto "Common European Home." The national security advisor at the time, General Brent Scowcroft, together with his assistant Philip Zelikow, was significantly involved in drafting the new policy.

In the so-called Scowcroft Memorandum, which was also written by Zelikow, it reads:

> Today, the top priority for American foreign policy in Europe should be the fate of the Federal Republic of Germany. […] Even if we make strides in overcoming the division of Europe through greater openness and pluralism, we cannot have a vision for Europe's future that does not include an approach to the "German question."[14]

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berg's TV documentary *Deutschlandspiel*, on German reunification. First broadcast on Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen on 29 September 2000.

[13] Politburo protocol, 3 November 1989, 589ff, GF. Gorbachev's remark on the deficit of the GDR is not mentioned in the published version and the following remark by Kryuchkov is reduced to 500,000. Chernyaev, Medvedev, Shakhnazarov, *V Politbyuro*, 450.

[14] Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 28.

As explained later by Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, the aim of this statement, which was controversial even among American strategists, was to put the "German question" back onto the agenda, even if it was contrary to Gorbachev's line.[15] Shortly after the fortieth anniversary celebration of NATO in Brussels, in May, Bush visited West Germany and gave a speech at the Rheingold Hall in Mainz:

> [L]et Europe be whole and free. To the founders of the Alliance, this aspiration was a distant dream, and now it's the new mission of NATO. […] The Cold War began with the division of Europe. It can only end when Europe is whole. […] there cannot be a common European home until all within it are free to move from room to room. […] We seek self-determination for all of Germany and all of Eastern Europe. […] Let Berlin be next.[16]

According to Scowcroft, this speech was actually supposed to have been even more direct, but they did not want to compromise Chancellor Kohl.[17]

West Germany was now to become, because of the needed unification policy, a "partner in leadership"—a role that until then had been held by Great Britain.[18] Horst Teltschik, the official responsible for foreign and security policy in the West German chancellery, does not believe that the Americans were the actual inaugurators of the new unification policy in Europe, but confirms that the German response to the US invitation in the direction of their being a "partner in leadership" should have been clearer.[19]

Central to this policy was the role of NATO. As stated by Condoleezza Rice:

> It is true that the United States had really only one concern—and that was that German unification not destroy NATO. Because NATO was the force for peace in Germany, it was America's anchor in Europe. And so the one concern was that German unification not destroy NATO. But there was absolutely no concern that somehow, by allowing Germany to unify—and the Americans, by the way, insisted that it unify with no new constraints on its power—that somehow this was going to be a bad thing for Europe, this simply wasn't in the American psyche.[20]

The United States, together with the Federal Republic of Germany, maintained this policy through the entire process. The policy met US and (West) German

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15 Scowcroft stated: "I think, fundamentally it was Gorbachev, who was speaking some wonderful words. But thus far in early '89 the words were not matched by actions, and the structures of the Cold War in Central and Eastern Europe were still in place. So what we wanted to see were actions which would start to dismantle those structures. And, of course, crucial to it all was Berlin and German reunification. That would be a clear signal that the Cold War was over." Interview Alexander von Plato with Brent Scowcroft, 14 September 1999.

16 For extracts from Bush's speech at the Rheingold-Halle, see Zelikow and Rice, *Germany*, 31.

17 Interview Alexander von Plato with Brent Scowcroft, 14 September 1999.

18 This formulation caused Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher "a bit of unintended disquiet […]. Thatcher took this as a challenge to the special relationship between the United States and Britain. In truth, she need not have worried." George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 83–84.

19 Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 21.

20 Interview Alexander von Plato with Condoleezza Rice, Stanford University, 17 September 1999.

interests, and these determined further diplomacy,[21] especially Helmut Kohl's Ten-Point Plan of 28 November 1989. Much of this plan was written by Teltschik after being visited by members of the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee[22] and, just a day later, being presented Bush's "four principles." A week later, on 4 December 1989, the president repeated these principles at the NATO summit in Brussels: self-determination; commitment to NATO; "peaceful and gradual reunification"; and confirmation "of the existing borders in Europe."[23]

From the end of November 1989—and this is my second basic thesis—the US State Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic took the reins into their own hands, supported only in part by the GDR opposition. Although not always consistent, the opposition in the East did not initially support reunification and even less, it being under NATO's umbrella.

For the United States, this American-German policy was to become its most successful program in Europe since the Marshall Plan of 1947.

## On military non-interference

Under General Secretary Gorbachev, Soviet troops had already been brought back from the war in Afghanistan between May 1988 and February 1989. From then on, the Soviet Union basically followed a policy of military non-intervention, also with regard to the Soviet satellite states. On 7 and 8 July 1989, after quite a long prologue, a doctrine that had never formally existed was officially carried to the grave in Bucharest: the Brezhnev Doctrine.[24] This doctrine had been understood as granting the option of interference and military intervention in other Warsaw Pact member states, as had been put into practice in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The significance for Germany's reunification of this shift to military non-intervention cannot be overestimated. Gorbachev's policies also aimed at disarma-

[21] As nice as it is, there is little I can agree with in Norman Naimark's picture of the Bush administration sitting on its hands and oversleeping with regard to the situation: the Bush administration was surely one of the most proactive in eliminating the division of Europe and Germany, especially during the initial period in 1989. Cf. Norman M. Naimark, "The Superpowers and 1989 in Eastern Europe," in this volume, 249–70.

[22] See my interviews with Horst Teltschik, 27 September 1999; and Nikolai Portugalov, 1 November 1999. Cf. Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage. Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991), 44; Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 113–19.

[23] Concerning Bush's four principles, see Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 145; Zelikow and Rice, *Germany*, 223.

[24] The declaration of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact of 7 July 1989 stressed the principle of non-interference in internal affairs as well as each state's right to self-determination and to choose its own path of social and political development. *Tagung des Politischen Beratenden Ausschusses der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages* (Berlin: Dietz, 1989), 14–26.

ment and reconciliation with the West, since defense costs were strangling the Soviet Union and the "military-industrial complex" dominated its politics.[25] The deeper political meaning of Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost can only be found if they are seen against the background of this head-on challenge, although from today's perspective, the theory and its details do not seem especially revolutionary.

It is particularly surprising that Gorbachev's generals did not intervene in the GDR during the entire year of 1989, although according to Heinz Kessler, the GDR's minister of defense, there was "not a single Soviet general" in the GDR who supported Gorbachev's policies.[26]

Kessler's deputy, army general Fritz Streletz, even reports that General Boris Snetkov, the supreme commander of the Soviet troops, gave him the following "offer": "Comrade Streletz, I stress again that if the National People's Army [of the GDR] needs help or support, the group [of Soviet Forces in Germany] is ready to give any kind of assistance to their brothers-in-arms, the NPA."[27] But the Soviet troops stayed in their barracks.

## Gorbachev's vacillating reactions

In early December 1989, a strategy emerged in Washington and Bonn: reunification under the umbrella of NATO. What remained unclear, however, was the question of time: How long was reunification expected to take? At that time, the government leaders Kohl and Bush also believed that reunification would be a long process taking years, if not decades. But the events developed their own dynamics, and these pushed for faster solutions.

How did Gorbachev's government in Moscow respond to the subsequent actions of the United States and West Germany?

At first, Gorbachev and his foreign minister Shevardnadze were outraged. During his visit in early December 1989 to Moscow, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the West German foreign minister, was given a taste of this indignation: It was thought that Kohl wanted to exploit the plight of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The Germans should remember where, in the past, a policy without rhyme or reason had led. And, according to the Soviet protocol of the meeting, Shevardnadze added: "Not even Hitler would have allowed such a thing."[28]

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[25] This expression was used within the closest circle of advisors. Georgi Schachnasarow, *Preis der Freiheit. Eine Bilanz von Gorbatschows Berater* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1996). This is confirmed by Aleksandr Yakovlev, who was also one of Gorbachev's advisors. Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 206.

[26] Interview Hans-Christoph Blumenberg with Heinz Keßler, 1999. Cf. Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 70.

[27] Interview Hans-Christoph Blumenberg with Fritz Streletz, 1999. Cf. Ibid.

[28] Conversation Gorbachev with Genscher, Soviet protocol, 5 December 1989, in GF, 89DEC05. In his memoirs, Genscher does not mention this sentence or other pointed remarks. This is understandable, since at the time this defused the situation. But why he still does not mention it,

Next, Gorbachev stressed the need of two German states for peace in Europe, with the GDR a guarantor of this peace, just as the two alliances, the Warsaw Pact and NATO, were needed. He repeated this view through all of December 1989 and until the end of January 1990, regardless of whether he was speaking to Bush, the Warsaw Pact, or at the 4 December 1989 meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact in Moscow.

This strategy was championed even during Mitterrand's visit to Gorbachev in Kiev on 6 December 1989, despite the fact that the French president hinted at a different strategy of his own. Mitterrand stated while there:

> The German question should not determine the European process, but vice versa. And: In the first place—I repeat—must stand European integration, East European development, the pan-European process, and the creation of a European peace order. If the United States participates, that would give us additional guarantees.[29]

This is one of the few moments in which Mitterrand's early hopes of a new European security system can be seen. Gorbachev did not respond and Mitterrand was disappointed.[30]

The Soviet leadership continued to stress that the existence of the GDR guaranteed peace in Europe. Then, from December until the end of January 1990, they began to advocate a neutral Germany, as the advisor to Gorbachev and Politburo member Aleksandr Yakovlev did at an important meeting on 25 January, at which the Soviet leadership decided, in principle, to agree to German reunification.[31] Nobody opposed. A few days later, this neutrality strategy was presented to the new East German prime minister, Hans Modrow, who had himself developed a similar strategy.[32]

US secretary of state Baker, during a visit to Moscow in early February 1990, tried to convince Gorbachev that Russia and the Soviet Union, after being subjected to Germany during two world wars, could not possibly be interested in leaving a united Germany neutral. He even guaranteed that NATO would not stretch "an inch" eastward.[33] This guarantee lasted only a day, whereupon it was revoked by the US president. But the Soviet leadership did not know this, and ten years later, Russian protagonists called it a pledge not kept. Baker, however, does not mention this "guarantee" in his memoirs.

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even years after reunification, is difficult to understand. It is possibly out of personal consideration for Gorbachev and Shevardnadze.

29 Conversation Gorbachev with Mitterrand, Soviet protocol, 6 December 1989, in GF, 89DEC06.

30 Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 138.

31 See the extended extracts of this meeting in Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 187–99. However, in my opinion it was not precisely declared that the Soviet Union would accept German unification. Nonetheless it was discussed.

32 Conversation Gorbachev with Modrow, Soviet protocol, 30 January 1990, in GF, 90JAN30.

33 Conversation Gorbachev with Baker, Soviet protocol, 9 February 1990, in GF, 90Feb9b. Cf. Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 240.

In February 1990, Gorbachev argued for the two Germanys to be members in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. And then he sounded out the idea, from March 1990, of a new structure for security in Europe, whereby NATO and the Warsaw Pact would be dissolved. The first time this idea turned up on the Soviet side was after Mitterrand's visit to Kiev on 6 December 1989, as Teltschik mentioned on 22 February 1990 in a paper for Chancellor Kohl before his meeting with President Bush: Gorbachev and Shevardnadze would "try to use the German question as a lever for an all-European security system."[34] Teltschik also reported a conversation on 28 March 1990 he had with Nikolai Portugalov, a member of the International Department of the Central Committee, during which Teltschik was given the impression that the Soviet leadership had already held this position even earlier.[35] This idea was again discussed during the first visit of the newly elected GDR prime minister Lothar de Maizière to Gorbachev on 28 April 1990,[36] again at a visit by Teltschik and German bankers to Moscow in mid-May 1990,[37] and during a conversation between Gorbachev and Mitterrand on 25 May 1990.[38] According to this new European security structure, the Warsaw Pact and NATO were to be dissolved in favor of a new European security system that included the United States and the Soviet Union.

After all this strategic maneuvering, it is all the more surprising that at the end of the Soviet-American summit in Washington in late May and early June, Gorbachev then agreed to the reunified Germany having a free choice of which alliance it would join. After the reunification this was to mean unified Germany

[34] "Vorlage des Ministerialdirektors Teltschik an Bundeskanzler Kohl, Bonn 22. Februar 1990," in Hanns Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hoffmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit: Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), 857–59.

[35] "Gespräch des Ministerialdirigenten Teltschik mit dem Berater der Abteilung für internationale Beziehungen des Zentralkomitees der KPdSU, Portugalow, Bonn, 28. März 1990," ibid., 981–83. This would mean that Portugalov still met Teltschik for talks, although at the conference in Vienna at which the present text was presented, a former member of the International Department of the Central Committee told me that Portugalov had been "withdrawn" after his appearance on 21 November 1989 in Bonn, and that he then was no longer allowed to participate in international meetings, and thus also not on 28 March 1990. But this does not seem correct; at least it does not match the protocol of the meeting. In addition, in his conversations with me Chernyaev confirmed the visit of Portugalov: The visits were arranged with his assent.

[36] Conversation de Maizière with Gorbachev, Soviet protocol, 29 April 1990, in GF, 90APR29. Cf. my interview with de Maizière, 1 November 2000, and Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 315.

[37] On 14 May 1990, Teltschik and two important German bankers held negotiations in Moscow with nearly the entire Soviet leadership, mainly about German loans. Soviet protocol, in GF, 90May14; Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 230; Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 337. Teltschik tried to tie up a deal that was to include the loans as well as the membership of the future united Germany in NATO. Interview Alexander von Plato with Horst Teltschik, 27 September 2000. By then, Gorbachev preferred a new security architecture in Europe that included both the United States and the Soviet Union.

[38] Conversation Gorbachev with Mitterrand, Soviet protocol, 25 May 1990, in GF, 90May25.

being a member of NATO. Accordingly, this was acted upon at the Two Plus Four negotiations, which had begun on 11 February 1990.

With regard to Gorbachev's approval, I have an open question and an unsatisfactory thesis. Was he still caught up in the belief that if given the choice of alliance, this could mean either NATO or a new security alliance in Europe, despite the fact that there was no talk of the latter in Washington? Leaving the option of the continued existence of the GDR and the Warsaw Pact open, and thus also the option of the future unified Germany joining the Warsaw Treaty Organization, would have been entirely unrealistic. It is more probable—and this is my unsatisfactory thesis—that Gorbachev realized the plan of a European security system had been tossed into the negotiations too late and that, in fact, probably the only way to control this new united Germany had become its membership in NATO. But the question remains why the Soviet leaders were so late in introducing a new European alliance system into their strategic considerations.

## Some European reactions to the reunification support

The British government under Margaret Thatcher responded by rejecting the possibility of reunification sharply, arguing that Gorbachev's position would be jeopardized. The stance of French president Mitterrand was different: He feared, as mentioned, that the reunification of Germany would interfere with the process of European integration, and therefore desired an agreement that included at least a monetary union. Kohl agreed to this, despite the fact that economically, he considered it unfavorable for Germany.

At the first meeting of the Open Skies conference on 11 February 1990 in Ottawa, Baker and Genscher presented the international conditions for reunification that had been worked out at the Two Plus Four negotiations. The fact that other Europeans were excluded from these negotiations angered especially the Italian and Dutch foreign ministers: The decisions being made did not only involve the four victorious powers of World War II (including France) and the two German states, but involved all Europeans. Uncharacteristically, Genscher's response was startlingly sharp, and even quite arrogant: "You are out of the game!"[39] Strangely enough, this power statement had its effect; the Two Plus Four negotiations clarifying the international framework of German reunification were conducted more or less without the involvement of other European governments. The Two Plus Four Treaty was signed on 12 September 1990.

The role of Lithuania and the other Baltic states in this process has, for the most part, been underestimated. Lithuania's declaration of independence on 11

[39] Interviews Alexander von Plato with James Baker, Houston, 19 September 1999, and with Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Lüdenscheid, 25 April 2001.

March 1990 elicited startled reactions, not only in Moscow, but also from the Western powers. It was feared that Gorbachev's position could be destabilized.

On 29 June, the French government under Mitterrand and the German government under Kohl convinced the Lithuanian government to temporarily rescind their declaration of independence,[40] whereupon Gorbachev lifted the embargo against Lithuania that had been instated on 17 April 1990 and discontinued his military threats.[41] Here, the Western governments acted against the interests of this Baltic government, although its objective, self-determination, was similar to what West Germany was claiming with regard to German unification. But at that time, the Baltic states were republics of the Soviet Union; the Gorbachev government and its military felt more threatened by their political independence than by the developments in the GDR, since their independence involved the constitutional existence of the Soviet Union. In the accessible Politburo protocols, the Baltic or the Lithuanian Question was on the agenda more often than the GDR or the issue of German reunification. And for their part, Kohl and Mitterrand were worried that if the Baltic states were to push through their independence "too early," Gorbachev's position in the Soviet Union would be weakened and the unification of Germany derailed.

A word needs to be said about the Oder–Neisse issue. Kohl vehemently opposed the Oder–Neisse line being fixed as the border prior to the possibility of an all-German parliament implementing this decision.[42] A long passage in the Soviet protocol of Kohl's meeting with Gorbachev on 10 February 1990 clearly shows his strong reservations about the Oder–Neisse line being recognized as the Polish–German border too soon.[43] In the West German protocol of Horst Teltschik, there is only one sentence: "The chancellor explained his position on the Oder–Neisse line."[44] Kohl maintained these reservations also later. The Polish government was concerned that the GDR would adopt its own declaration in the Volkskammer. The US government considered Kohl's attitude a "medium-sized PR disaster."[45]

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[40] Protocol of the meeting between the prime minister of Lithuania, Kazimira Prunskiene, and Chancellor Kohl, 11 May 1990, in Küsters and Hoffmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit*, 1103–5. The letter of Kohl and Mitterrand to President Landsbergis of 26 April 1990 is published in Tilo Schabert, "France and the Baltic States during the Presidency of Francois Mitterrand," *Baltic Worlds* 4, no. 2 (2011): 8–14 and http://balticworlds.com/during-the-presidency-of-francois-mitterrand (accessed 26 December 2012).

[41] Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 308–11 and 351–52.

[42] Werner Weidenfeld, with Peter Wagner and Elke Bruck, *Außenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit: Die Entscheidungsjahre 1989/90,* Geschichte der deutschen Einheit 4 (Stuttgart: DVA, 1998), 496ff; Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 362ff.

[43] Soviet protocol, in GF, 90FEB10A and B. As one reason for his attitude, Kohl mentioned his considerations regarding the associations of persons who had been expelled from the former German territories following World War II.

[44] Küsters and Hoffmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit*, 795–811.

[45] Interview Alexander von Plato with Condoleezza Rice, Stanford, 17 September 1999.

## A few open questions

Despite the many descriptions of the German reunification, there are a number of questions that have not yet been answered. The first has been prompted by the research I have done: Why did Gorbachev wait so long to introduce a plan to his governing councils about a possible new European security structure that dissolved NATO and the Warsaw Pact but included the Soviet Union and the United States? And why, only a week after his talk with Mitterrand on the subject, did he agree in Washington to letting united Germany freely choose its alliance—an agreement that meant reunification under the umbrella of NATO?[46]

For historians, questions that begin with "What if" are all but taboo, but nevertheless they can be found in varying contexts, if only implicitly. What would have happened if the response of the Gorbachev government to the clear strategy of the US and West German governments—"reunification under the umbrella of NATO"—had been different than the fluctuations described above? What would have happened if the response had not been neutrality for the united Germany, but "reunification yes, but under the umbrella of a new European security system and the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact"? If Gorbachev had done this in December 1989 or January 1990, and not in March or April 1990 when he no longer had anything to negotiate—the Warsaw Pact, in effect, no longer existed and the GDR was on the road to reunification—it would have given the entire international negotiations a new angle to their deliberations and created new alignments.

I believe it is evident that Secretary of State Baker, in his conversation with Gorbachev in early February 1990, brought a guarantee into play, but this "guarantee" was not binding by international law and, moreover, was repealed by Bush a day later. Contrary to Baker's statement of intent, today NATO has expanded to the borders of Belarus and Russia, which has been and is perceived by them as a threat. Why did NATO expand so rapidly?[47] A superficial answer might be because this extension lay in the interests of the former Western Cold War adversaries. But on second glance, it is not so simple, because it would be more in the interests of at least the European Western powers to integrate. Also they were not interested in alienating Moscow. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany, almost all Central European countries wanted to protect themselves against Russia as well as against Germany. And only NATO or the CSCE / OSCE with expanded competencies seemed able to do this. NATO was

[46] On Soviet policy in Germany's reunification, cf. Wolfgang Mueller, "The USSR and the Reunification of Germany, 1989–90," in this volume, 321–53.

[47] In 2012, the former Canadian minister of foreign affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, noted that in the 1990s he was afraid that this extension of NATO could cause "a smaller Cold War again" and argued against it or any of its forms. He could, however, not assert himself against Prime Minister Jean Chrétien because of the mood in the country among its Eastern European immigrants. Interview Alexander von Plato with Lloyd Axworthy, 2 November 2012.

quite successful politically and became the alliance of choice; it also remained the main anchor of the United States in Europe, although Mitterrand, for instance, had hoped that the process of European integration would reduce the influence in Europe of the United States and Russia, especially in military questions. Moreover, for some Central European governments, the United States seems to have been a major guarantor of security.

In this context, another issue needs to be clarified. Did the Oder–Neisse question or Kohl and Mitterrand's intrusion into the Lithuanian move toward independence fuel a distrust of Western Europe? Might this be a reason for the positive attitude of these Central and Eastern European governments toward the United States (even after the Iraq war)?

From the US and (West) German perspective, German reunification was an extraordinary political success: East Germany gained self-determination, freedom from Soviet and communist domination, Western-style democracy and a functioning economy. This was done while preserving the structures of NATO and the EC, maintaining peace in Europe, and creating a working relationship with the USSR. Also the fears of Germany's eastern neighbors were taken into account. European integration was boosted by the creation of the Euro, although the currency lacked, and still lacks in 2013, a universal economic and financial policy. From the Soviet perspective, the loss of its satellite GDR in its outer empire was often criticized, although not all of this criticism was entirely negative. And the alternative to Germany's remaining in NATO, namely, a new European security system including, with limited powers, North America and the Soviet Union (respectively Russia) that Gorbachev and Mitterrand temporarily considered, came up too late to then be realized in 1990.

Wolfgang Mueller

# THE USSR AND THE REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY, 1989–90

It has been said that the reunification of Germany was achieved “so smoothly and amiably that it is easy to impute a kind of inevitability to the outcome.”[1] But seeing the outcome as inevitable would be misleading. On the contrary, due to the particular interests of the numerous heads of state, governments and other political forces involved, it was a struggle to find a solution. Without dismissing the efforts of anyone, it seems fair to state that of all the heads of state, it was the Soviet leader who had to travel the longest road to make the reunification possible.[2]

It is the aim of this chapter, which is based on both Russian and Western edited sources, to analyze the crucial decisions that were made along this road and to point out the research lacunae that still exist. Although the state of research can be considered good, some questions still remain. By the mid-1990s, a few key documents[3] had been published as well as the memoirs of the leaders, advisors and experts who were most involved.[4] A number of milestone analyses were

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1 Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 2.

2 Ekkehard Kuhn, *Gorbatschow und die deutsche Einheit: Aussagen der wichtigsten russischen und deutschen Beteiligten* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1993), 8.

3 E.g., Michail S. Gorbatschow, *Gipfelgespräche: Geheime Protokolle meiner Amtszeit* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1993); Wjatscheslaw Daschitschew, “Aus den Anfängen der Revision der sowjetischen Deutschlandpolitik: Ein Dokument aus dem Jahre 1987,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 44, no. 14 (1994): 36–46; idem, “Die sowjetische Deutschlandpolitik in den achtziger Jahren,” *Deutschland Archiv* 28, no. 1 (1995): 54–67.

4 Eduard Schewardnadse, *Die Zukunft gehört der Freiheit* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1991); Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage: Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991); Frank Elbe, *Die Lösung der äußeren Aspekte der deutschen Frage* (Bonn: Europaunion 1993); Valentin Falin, *Politische Erinnerungen* (Munich: Droemer Knaur, 1993); Richard Kiessler and Frank Elbe, *Ein runder Tisch mit scharfen Ecken: Der diplomatische Weg zur deutschen Einheit* (Baden: Nomos 1993); Julij A. Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm: Erinnerungen eines Diplomaten* (Berlin: Siedler, 1993); Anatoli Tschernajew, *Die letzten Jahre einer Weltmacht: Der Kreml von innen* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1993); Wjatscheslaw Kotschemassow, *Meine letzte Mission: Fakten, Erinnerungen, Überlegungen* (Berlin: Dietz, 1994); V. A. Medvedev, *Raspad: Kak on nazreval v mirovoi sisteme sotsializma* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1994); idem, *V komande Gorbacheva: vzglyad iznutri* (Moscow: Bylina, 1994); James A. Baker, III. with Thomas M. Defrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace 1989– 1992* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1995); Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1995); Michail Gorbatschow, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1995); Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday,

quick to follow. Among the first, Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice analyzed hitherto unpublished US records, Rafael Biermann East German sources, and Mikhail Narinskii and Alexander von Plato, Soviet protocols.[5] Since the late 1990s, volumes have appeared containing documents from the West German Chancellery, the Gorbachev administration and the CPSU Politburo, and most recently from the British and the German Foreign Offices. Collections of GDR, Soviet and US sources have also been published.[6] Significant numbers of docu-

1996); Helmut Kohl with Kai Diekmann and Ralf Georg Reuth, *„Ich wollte Deutschlands Einheit."* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1996); Georgi Schachnasarow, *Der Preis der Freiheit: Bilanz von Gorbatschows Berater* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1996); Valentin Falin, *Konflikte im Kreml: zur Vorgeschichte der deutschen Einheit und der Auflösung der Sowjetunion* (Munich: Blessing, 1997); Pavel Palazhchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998); Michail Gorbatschow, *Wie es war: Die deutsche Wiedervereinigung* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1999). Among more recent publications, see Helmut Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1982–1990* (Munich: Droemer, 2005); A. Tschernjaew, *Mein deutsches Tagebuch: Die deutsche Frage im ZK der KPdSU 1972–1991*, ed. Rudi Meier (Klitschen: Elbe-Dnjepr-Verlag, 2005); A. Chernyaev, *Sovmestnyi iskhod: Dnevnik dvukh epoch 1972–1991 gody* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2008); Igor' Maksimychev, *Padenie Berlinskoi steny: iz zapisok sovetnika-poslannika posol'stva SSSR v Berline* (Moscow: Veche, 2011).

5 Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*; David H. Shumaker, *Gorbachev and the German Question: Soviet-West German Relations, 1985–1990* (Westport: Praeger, 1995); Nikolai Pawlow, *Die deutsche Vereinigung aus sowjetisch-russischer Perspektive* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996); Rafael Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt: Wie Moskau mit der deutschen Einheit rang* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1997); Angela Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Tanja Wagensohn, *Von Gorbatschow zu Jelzin: Moskaus Deutschlandpolitik 1985–1995 im Wandel* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2000); Alexander von Plato, *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands—ein weltpolitisches Machtspiel* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2002); M.M. Narinskii, "M.S. Gorbachev i ob"edinenie Germanii: Po novym materyalam," *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, no. 1 (2004): 14–30; A.A. Akhtamzyan, *Ob'edinenie Germanii: Obstoyatel'stva i posledstviya* (Moscow: MGIMO, 2008); A.M. Filitov, *Germaniya v Sovetskom vneshnepoliticheskom planirovanii, 1941–1990* (Moscow: Nauka, 2009); Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Peter Grieder, "'When your Neighbour Changes his Wallpaper': The 'Gorbachev Factor' and the Collapse of the German Democratic Republic," in Kevin McDermott and Mattew Stibbe, eds., *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: From Communism to Pluralism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 73–92.

6 Hanns Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hoffmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit: Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998); Aleksandr Galkin and Anatolii Chernyaev, eds., *Mikhail Gorbachev i Germanskii vopros* (hereafter *MGGV*) (Moscow: Ves' mir, 2006); A. Chernyaev, A. Veber, and V. Medvedev, eds., *V Politbyuro TsK KPSS, 1985–91* (Moscow: Alpina, 2006); Patrick Salmon, Keith Hamilton, Stephen Robert Twigge, eds., *Documents on British Policy Overseas III, vol. 7: German Unification 1989–1990* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009); M.S. Gorbachev, A.S. Chernyaev, A.B. Veber, eds., *Otvechaya na vyzov vremeni: Vneshnyaya politika perestroiki: dokumental'nye svidetel'stva* (Moscow: Ves' mir, 2010); Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, and Vladislav Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe 1989* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010); Ines Lehmann, ed., *Die Außenpolitik der*

ments have been made available online by the Cold War International History Project and the National Security Archives in Washington as well as other websites.[7] Most of the former East German records in the party archives and the German Foreign Ministry are available. At the Gorbachev Foundation, the Russian Foreign Ministry's Archive and the former CPSU archives some, albeit unsystematic, access is allowed to records from the 1980s. In the Russian State Archives, the papers of Aleksandr Yakovlev have been declassified. Further documents are due to be declassified and/or published in 2019–20.

## Soviet-German relations, 1985–89

Until 1989, Mikhail Gorbachev had not officially questioned the status quo in Germany or the continued existence of the Berlin Wall. While he had pondered the partition of Germany during his trips to the communist (East) German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1966 and to the (Western) Federal Republic of Germany in 1975, he had come to the conclusion that it was a natural consequence of World War II as well as *Western* Cold War policy[8] and destined to last for several more decades until "history" resolved the issue. In 1984, he launched the project of a future "Common European Home," which was expected to make it easier to move from one German room to the other.[9]

With regard to East Germany, Gorbachev did not seem to share his predecessors' conviction that the GDR was "unable to exist without Soviet support."[10] In

*DDR 1989/1990: Eine dokumentierte Rekonstruktion* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2010); Andreas Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie für die Deutsche Einheit: Dokumente des Auswärtigen Amtes zu den deutsch-sowjetischen Beziehungen 1989/1990* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011).

[7] http://www.2plus4.de; http://wiedervereinigung.de; http://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project; http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/index.html (accessed December 2012).

[8] Gorbatschow, *Erinnerungen*, 700–1; Andrei Grachev, *Gorbachev's Gamble: Soviet Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), 131. In the 1990s, Gorbachev still depicted the West as being responsible for the partition of Germany. Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 15–54.

[9] The "Common European Home" had been mentioned by Brezhnev in 1981 and was re-launched by Gorbachev on his visit to London in December 1984, without making clear what was actually meant. Marie-Pierre Rey, "'Europe is our Common Home': A Study of Gorbachev's Diplomatic Concept," *Cold War History* 4, no. 2 (2004): 33–65. Based on US evaluations, Tom Blanton characterized Gorbachev's vision as intended to stabilize the status quo in Europe by building a "semi-attached house, so to speak, with a wall down the middle, perhaps a common front porch for receiving visitors and a common back yard for barbeques and a garden, but you live on your side and we'll live on ours." Tom Blanton, "US Policy and the Revolutions of 1989," in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 49–98, 97.

[10] Cf. Brezhnev's statement to Honecker 1970: "The GDR is […] our achievement […] Erich, I'm telling you openly, never forget this: the GDR can't exist with its power and strength without us, without the Soviet Union. Without us, there is no GDR." Jochen Staadt, ed., *Auf höchster Stufe:*

contrast, the leader expressed "an almost naïve belief in the GDR's economic prowess."[11] Doubtlessly, the communist half-state could be seen as a jewel in the crown of the Soviet empire—a powerful symbol of the Soviet victory in World War II, the westernmost bulwark of the Soviet army in Europe, a model pupil in communist orthodoxy and rigidity, and the USSR's most important ally, trading partner and producer of technology. Nonetheless, Gorbachev must have been aware of the inherent weakness of the East German state and its communist regime. The CPSU's International Department had informed him in February 1989 that "the GDR was founded not on the national, but on the ideological—on a class basis; therefore, a rapid transition to democratization, openness, and free speech might be accompanied by special problems in this country."[12] Together with communist suppression and economic paucity, this flaw had led to a mass exodus out of the GDR from the late 1940s, the erection of the Berlin Wall, and countless shootings of people trying to flee. These weaknesses did not, however, prevent Gorbachev from demanding some sort of perestroika to be introduced into this country as well. Still, Erich Honecker rejected any calls for liberalization, suppressed publication of Soviet hints at perestroika in the GDR, and moved to correct Gorbachev, whom he privately regarded a "traitor."[13] The SED leader's stubborn refusal placed further tension on the bilateral relationship, which had already been strained by the GDR's rapprochement with West Germany. When from the 1970s Moscow had appeared less and less willing to subsidize the East German economy due to volatile energy prices and later due to its own economic troubles, Bonn had stepped in with large loans, which indirectly paid for improvements in the GDR authorities' treatment of their citizens.[14] This raised the suspicion in Moscow that its ally was becoming dependent on a capitalist country.

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*Gespräche mit Erich Honecker* (Berlin: Transit, 1995), 12–13. Honecker, in return, declared the GDR's alliance with the USSR being "irrevocable." Helga Haftendorn, "The Unification of Germany," in Melvin Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War III: Endings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 333–55, 334.

[11] Stent, *Russia*, 55.

[12] Memorandum CPSU International Department, "On a Strategy for Relations with the European Socialist Countries," February 1989, in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 353–64, 356. Another report mentions "authoritarianism and harsh control" in the GDR and forecasts that the reforms "may trigger a change in the status quo in the center of Europe […] Only in the long term, if détente and the construction of a 'common European home' progress sufficiently, will the issue of a unified German confederate state be possibly be put on the agenda. From the international angle, this will most likely end up in the neutralization of both parts of Germany." Ibid., 374–77. Cf. Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 103–9.

[13] Grieder, "When Your Neighbour Changes His Wallpaper", 76–81.

[14] Hans Hermann Hertle, "Die Diskussion der ökonomischen Krisen in der Führungsspitze der SED," in Theo Pirker et al. eds., *Der Plan als Befehl und Fiktion: Wirtschaftsführung in der DDR* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1995), 309–47, 319–22. Cf. André Steiner, *Von Plan zu Plan: Eine Wirtschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Munich: DVA, 2004), 191–203.

Regarding West Germany, Gorbachev, in his first two years at the helm of the CPSU, continued to steer the hard line inherited from his predecessors and aimed at weakening Bonn's Christian Democratic chancellor, who had proved himself a steadfast supporter of Western Europe's rearmament against Soviet SS-20 missiles.[15] In the Politburo, Gorbachev declared repeatedly that it was correct to "reduce the political dialogue" with Helmut Kohl and "teach him a lesson" about "what the USSR means for Germany."[16] In order not to give the chancellor any chance of exploiting an official visit during the German election campaigns, Gorbachev assured the oppositional social democrats that he would not travel to Bonn in 1986 and called on Honecker to do the same.[17] It was the East German communist who warned Gorbachev against isolating the West German Christian democrat. When Kohl, in an interview with *Newsweek* in October 1986, retaliated by likening the charismatic Soviet leader to the Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels, a bad situation only became worse.[18]

But during West German president Richard von Weizsäcker's trip to Moscow in July 1987 and Kohl's follow-up visit in October 1988, Soviet-West German relations began to thaw.[19] Several factors may have convinced the Soviet leader to change his stance. First, until then the building of the "Common European Home" had made little progress. This was at least in part due to Gorbachev focusing on stopping the arms race with the United States during his first two years in power. As this goal took into account the European theater as well, it also seemed wise to foster détente in Europe and, in particular, to improve relations with West Germany. As Gorbachev later stated in his memoirs, he had had this insight in 1987.[20] Indeed, at a Politburo session of July of that year, he declared

[15] Werner Weidenfeld, with Peter Wagner and Elke Bruck, *Außenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit: Die Entscheidungsjahre 1989/90,* Geschichte der deutschen Einheit 4 (Stuttgart: DVA, 1998), 46. When Helmut Kohl in March 1985 and Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher in July 1986 traveled to Moscow, they were confronted with Soviet attacks regarding the counter-deployment of US missiles in West Germany. After Genscher's visit, Gorbachev stated on 24 July 1986 in the Politburo that "We taught the Germans a lesson." *MGGV*, 16.

[16] Politburo protocols, 27 March, 26 May and 13 June 1986, in *MGGV*, 3; 5; 6. For an English version, see Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 227. A similar statement was made by Gorbachev in the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact on 11 June 1986. Text in Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, eds., *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005), 531–38, 534.

[17] In addition, Gorbachev told the SPD chancellor candidate Johannes Rau that he would welcome his victory in the elections. Conversation Gorbachev with Rau, Soviet protocol, 25 June 1986, in *MGGV*, 7–14, 13; Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch: Germany in Soviet Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998), 239–40. On Gorbachev's contact with SPD chairman Willy Brandt, see Stefan Creuzberger, *Willy Brandt und Michail Gorbatschow: Bemühungen um eine zweite "neue Ostpolitik"* (Berlin: BeBra, 2014).

[18] Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 245.

[19] Conversation Gorbachev with Weizsäcker, Soviet protocol, 7 July 1987; Politburo protocol, 16 July 1987, in *MGGV*, 44–54; 55–58.

[20] Gorbatschow, *Erinnerungen*, 702.

his intention to use improvements in Soviet relations with West Germany, the "main country of Western Europe," to create favorable conditions for his European policies.[21] Another reason for unfreezing relations with West Germany was this country's role as the USSR's most important Western trading partner. West German economic potency had been underlined by the offers of Lothar Späth and Franz Josef Strauss, the provincial governors of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, to foster bilateral economic cooperation with the USSR.[22] Last, but not least, after Kohl's reelection in March 1987, it was clear that Moscow would have to deal with him for another four years and therefore it seemed advisable to improve the personal relations between the two leaders.

Thus, perhaps as a consequence of or at least supported by internal expert advice,[23] in 1987–88 a Soviet reevaluation of its relations with West Germany was initiated. Significant progress in relaxing relations was made during Gorbachev's visit to Bonn on 12–15 June 1989. Kohl's declaration in April favoring negotiations on short-range missile disarmament and a postponement of the decision to modernize US missiles in Europe, which met Soviet proposals halfway, set the tone for warm talks, as did the enthusiastic reception of the Soviet leader in the West German capital.[24] At the same time, two changes in the international environment fostered a Soviet-West German rapprochement: The review of US foreign strategy, ordered by George H.W. Bush upon his inauguration,[25] led to some insecurity in the Kremlin and increased the importance of Bonn as a source of second-hand information about the new president's intentions. Also the deepening rift between Honecker and Gorbachev made Bonn ever more indispensable for the Kremlin in this triangular relationship. Gorbachev's visit reflected these developments. The Soviet-West German Joint Declaration explicitly confirming that all people should be free to choose their political and economic system[26] placed a time bomb under the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, including the GDR. Nonetheless, the Soviet refusal to accept the official German name of the FRG and the alleged Soviet "outrage" about a speech by Kohl in September 1989 at the CDU convention that dealt with the need to overcome Germany's status quo indicated that Soviet-West German relations were still far from problem-free.[27]

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[21] Politburo protocol, 16 July 1987, in *MGGV*, 55–58, 56–57.

[22] Conversation Gorbachev with Strauss, 29 December 1987; with Späth, 9 February 1988, in *MGGV*, 62–78; 81–82.

[23] Daschitschew, "Aus den Anfängen."

[24] Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 104–41. Translations of the Soviet protocols can be found in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 463–78.

[25] On the "pause," see Philip Zelikow, "US Strategic Planning in 1989–90," in this volume, 283–306.

[26] Text in Lawrence Freedman, ed., *Europe Transformed: Documents on the End of the Cold War* (London: Tri-Service Press, 1990), 317–21.

[27] West German report, "Antrittsbesuch Botschafter Dr. Blech bei 1. Stv. AM Kowaljow," 15 September 1989, in Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie*, 24–26.

None of these developments during the Soviet-West German thaw, however, brought a visible change in Gorbachev's position regarding the division of Germany. While a reunification was ruled out in his book *Perestroika*,[28] Gorbachev evaded a clear statement during the Weizsäcker visit of 1987. In public the Soviet leader philosophized that the partition of Germany was "reality," but might be reevaluated by "history" in the far future—a formulation Gorbachev would resort to many more times.[29] This future end is also what he seems to have meant when during his visit to Bonn he opined that the Berlin Wall had not been built "for eternity."[30] This was most likely formulated as a palliative to outwardly appease his West German trading partners. When Gorbachev's advisor Anatolii Chernyaev internally criticized the Soviet censoring of the West German president's reference to German unity, he was rebuffed by Gorbachev with these words: "This is the way to deal with Germans. They like order."[31] During Kohl's visit to Moscow in October 1988, Gorbachev cautioned against "saying that the question of [German] reunification is open."[32]

Despite such ambiguities, it would be premature to read a wish to get rid of the Wall or pave the way to German unity into any of the statements made by Gorbachev before the Wall's fall. Most probably the leader did not share Ambassador Yulii Kvitsinskii's assessment that the GDR would not be able to survive without the Wall and thus that the creation of a confederation of the two German states should be actively promoted.[33] Nor did he share the opinion voiced by Vyacheslav Dashichev, who in 1987–89 described the division of Germany as "abnormal," dangerous" and an impediment to the creation of the "Common European Home." This foreign-policy expert recommended that Soviet diplomacy actively tackle the problem of German reunification in order to remove this

[28] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 184–86.

[29] Similar statements were made by Gorbachev "practically every time the issue of German unification came up." Svetlana Savranskaya, "The Logic of 1989: The Soviet Peaceful Withdrawal from Eastern Europe," in idem, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 1–47, 32. In retrospect, Gorbachev characterized this as being "Gromyko's position, yet with a philosophical perspective," and as meant to reflect "that the partition was not normal" as well as to inspire hope among Germans. Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 64. For solving this problem, he gave history a hundred years. Gorbachev, *Perestroika* 186.

[30] He added that "the Wall can disappear when the preconditions that produced it disappear." Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 82. Cf. Shevardnadze's statement "The Wall will fall when the time is ripe." Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, West German protocol, 12 June 1989, in Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie*, 15–21, 19. An almost identical formulation was used by Dashichev in 1988. Daschitschew,"Die sowjetische Deutschlandpolitik," 61.

[31] Anatolii Cherniaev, "Gorbachev and the Reunification of Germany: Personal Recollections," in Gabriel Gorodetsky, ed., *Soviet Foreign Policy 1917–1991: A Retrospective* (London: Cass, 1994), 158–69, 160.

[32] Conversation Gorbachev with Kohl, Soviet protocol, 24 October 1988, in *MGGV*, 131–34, 133.

[33] Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm*, 13.

source of instability in the center of the continent (and in so doing to eliminate the US presence in Germany and thus the main basis for the existence of NATO as well).[34] Obviously these opinions did not reflect the assessment of the Soviet Ministry that the "existence of two German states was a basic precondition for security in Europe."[35] When on 3 November 1989, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze mused in the Politburo that it would be better if the new SED leader, Egon Krenz, removed the Berlin Wall, KGB boss Vladimir Kryuchkov prophesied: "If they remove it, it will be difficult for the East Germans."[36] If this meant the SED leadership, his prophecy was soon to come true.

## The opening of the Berlin Wall

Gorbachev's road toward German unity can be divided into three steps: 1) the retrospective approval of the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989; 2) his consent, expressed in January–February 1990, with the two Germanys' right for self-determination regarding possible unification; 3) his acquiescence in May–July 1990 with Germany's right for self-determination regarding a free choice of alliances. The available documents lead to the conclusion that the Soviet leader made each of these decisions separately. Breaking down the entire complex into several steps made each step easier to accept and, thus, influenced a final outcome that at the beginning had hardly been thinkable.

As of today, no evidence has become available which shows that the Soviet acceptance of the Hungarian decision to open its border with pro-Western but neutral Austria (a decision that increased the exodus from the GDR via Hungary) or of the Wall's opening had been prepared in any way. Nevertheless, in both cases, the GDR and Hungarian communist governments had sounded out whether Moscow would object to the reduction of travel restrictions for GDR citizens. The Soviet foreign ministry declared that the Hungarian choice did not affect Soviet interests and later instructed the Soviet ambassador to East Berlin to accept the new GDR travel regulations,[37] and thus Gorbachev's reaction to the opening of the Wall was somehow predetermined.

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34 Vyacheslav Dashichev, "On the Road to German Reunification: The View from Moscow," in Gabriel Gorodetsky, ed., *Soviet Foreign Policy 1917–1991: A Retrospective* (London: Cass, 1994), 170–82, 172; Daschitschew, "Aus den Anfängen"; Stent, *Russia*, 72, 85; Lévesque, *The Enigma*, 145.

35 Quoted in "Fernschreiben der Botschaft Moskau vom 5. Oktober 1989 über ein Gespräch mit dem amtierenden Leiter des Planungsstabes des sowjetischen Außenministeriums, Gvendzadze, am 4. Oktober 1989," in Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 39–41, 40.

36 Chernyaev, Veber, Medvedev, eds., *V Politbyuro*, 450–51.

37 Michael R Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* (Boston: Little Brown, 1993), 132; Kohl, *Erinnerungen*, 923; Stent, *Russia*, 94.

The increase in public discontent in the GDR and anti-SED demonstrations in the summer and fall of 1989[38] convinced some Soviet generals and East German party hawks, including Honecker, to advocate the application of force. Indeed, most of the 350,000 Soviet soldiers in the GDR seem to have been prepared to comply with such orders.[39] Yet it soon became clear that not only Gorbachev but also Soviet diplomats preferred to avoid repeating the Soviet bloodshed in cracking down on the East German unrest of 16–17 June 1953 and the further shooting of civilians. In one of their meetings in June 1989 in Moscow, the Soviet leader is said to have told Honecker that no Soviet forces would intervene on behalf of the SED in a conflict with its people.[40] When the demonstrations received increasing public support, the Soviet ambassador to East Berlin called on the commander of the Soviet troops in Germany to refrain from letting Soviet soldiers be involved in the events; in the following days, similar orders were received from Moscow.[41]

Gorbachev was informed about the unrest before and during his visit to East Berlin on 6–7 October 1989 and, some days later, of the plans in the SED leadership to replace Honecker. He signaled tacit support for the impending palace coup. Once the East German leader was replaced by Egon Krenz on 17–18 October, the Soviet strategy seemed to be aimed at creating and stabilizing a "Perestroika GDR" under the new Prime Minister Hans Modrow, who took over on 13 November. This was to be done with Soviet backing and West German funding.[42]

Regarding the Berlin Wall, while the Soviet side had been routinely informed about planned changes in the travel restrictions of GDR citizens, it learned of the Wall's opening only after the fact. Later, Gorbachev and his aides declared that they had been prepared for such an event. The reaction came within a few hours, with the Soviet leader welcoming the event. On 11 November *Pravda* praised it as a "courageous and wise step."[43] Perhaps Gorbachev felt some relief that this problem had been solved quickly and non-violently.

This did not mean, however, that the Soviet government had changed its attitude toward the fate of Germany. Although Gorbachev, in a brainstorming session with advisors, had warned the day before the Wall's fall that Honecker's removal might put the "topic of German reunification on the agenda,"[44] on 12 Novem-

[38] Cf. the chapter by Hans Hermann Hertle, "The October Revolution in East Germany," in this volume, 113–35.

[39] Frank Umbach, *Das rote Bündnis: Entwicklung und Zerfall des Warschauer Paktes 1955 bis 1991* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2005), 479, 496.

[40] Falin, *Konflikte*, 150.

[41] Kotschemassow, *Meine letzte Mission*, 169, 185.

[42] Dashichev, "On the Road to German Reunification," 173.

[43] Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Chronik des Mauerfalls: Die dramatischen Ereignisse um den 9. November 1989* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1996), 232. Cf. Jonathan Haslam, *Russia's Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Fall of the Wall* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 388–89.

[44] Quoted in Vladislav Zubok, "Die Krisen Gorbatschows und die Vereinigung Deutschlands," in Hans Hermann Hertle, Konrad Jarausch, and Christoph Kleßmann, eds., *Mauerbau und Mauerfall* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2002), 245–69, 256.

ber spokesman Gennadii Gerasimov made it clear that any discussion about the country's unification was "idle" talk. The GDR was to remain a member of the Warsaw Pact as well as a deployment area for Soviet troops and nuclear weapons.[45] A day earlier, Gorbachev had urged Kohl in a phone call to calm the situation down,[46] and a week later, he told Brian Mulroney, the Canadian prime minister, that the German issue was "not an issue to be solved today" and that the "new Europe […] would involve two German states."[47] This assessment did not appear unrealistic. One must keep in mind that at that time, neither Western leaders nor Eastern dissidents had expressed their favor of Germany's unification in the near future; the only thing the West had stipulated was that the country be granted the right to reunify. Moreover, in 1989 Gorbachev was not yet prepared to accept self-determination rights with all of the attached consequences. This held true not only for Germany. The Kremlin had demanded that the newly established democratic government of Poland promise to stay in the Warsaw Pact. With regard to the GDR, its freely choosing alliances seemed as far away as German unification itself.

## Gorbachev accepts Germany's right to self-determination

In the weeks following the opening of the Wall, the Gorbachev administration had four choices: They could (a) attempt to openly block the slowly emerging German inclination toward unification; (b) act in the background in order to slow it down; (c) do nothing; or (d) make the path to reunification free, perhaps using this as a concession to achieve other aims, such as the neutralization of Germany, the dismantling of NATO or economic benefits.[48] For some time,[49] Soviet foreign

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45 Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 240.

46 Telephone conversation between Kohl and Gorbachev, 11 November 1989, in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 590–92, 591.

47 Conversation Gorbachev with Mulroney, Soviet protocol, 21 November 1989, in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 598–601. The Soviet leader did not overlook the opportunity to peck at "the Americans" and their "itch to give everybody advice […] this is like an illness—AIDS. […] It is not an accident that they call the American ambassador in Hungary *Gauleiter*." One wonders, then, what the Soviet ambassador was called.

48 Cf. Fred Oldenburg, "Die Rekonstruktion sowjetischer Deutschlandpolitik," in Heiner Timmermann, ed., *Die DDR: Analysen eines aufgegebenen Staates* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), 745–88, 759–61. Zubok stresses that Gorbachev's list of options was much longer than is usually assumed, but does not elaborate what options he has in mind. Vladislav Zubok, "German Unification from the Soviet (Russian) Perspective," in Kiron Skinner, ed., *Turning Points in Ending the Cold War* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 255–72.

49 Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 329. The roots of the Soviet crisis predated Gorbachev's leadership. Whether a "Chinese model" would have saved the USSR and its foreign empire is, due to the increasing de-legitimization of communist and Soviet rule, more

policy vacillated between options *a* and *b*, sending out contradictory, albeit mostly negative signals. In the end, accused by his critics of having chosen option *c*, the Soviet leader finally shifted to option *d*.

While many of these critics charged Gorbachev with having been too soft on Germany, it was one of his conservative diplomats whose track-two diplomacy accelerated Germany's rush toward unification. An unauthorized message by the leader of the CPSU International Department, Valentin Falin, who was striving to discover the intentions of West Germany, was communicated via one of his aides, Nikolai Portugalov, to Kohl's security advisor Horst Teltschik. The message was mistaken in Bonn as a sign of Soviet consent to a possible unification of Germany[50] and the chancellor was thus encouraged to compose his Ten-Point Plan, which was presented to the Bundestag on 28 November. The plan took up a suggestion Modrow had made in a recent governmental declaration regarding intensified cooperation between the two German states and the creation of a "contractual community."[51] The Ten Points developed this into a strategy envisaging first a confederation and then the unification of the FRG and GDR.[52] The plan's aim was to stop the exodus of citizens from the GDR and to inspire public hopes for unity by capturing the unification initiative and presenting it as feasible.

While the GDR government, which hoped for further West German funding, criticized the Ten Points only mildly and declared them to be an "interesting

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than questionable. With regard to Zubok's claims that "Liberals use violence for liberal aims" and that Gorbachev's rejection of violence meant the loss of public order (ibid., 319), one must keep in mind that the rejection of violence is today a liberal principle as such, and massacres of peaceful civilians (e.g. Tbilisi 1989, Vilnius 1991) can never be justified as being necessary for upholding the public order.

[50] Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 43–44. Portugalov handed over two Soviet documents, among them Falin's unofficial message that explicitly refers to "reunification," with this option linked to leaving NATO and the EC. Soviet approval of some kind of "German confederation" was mentioned as being possible. These documents are published in *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit*, 616–18; for an English translation, see http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB296/doc06.pdf (accessed 31 October 2012). Chernyaev, who had been incompletely briefed by Falin, authorized the mission. Grachev, *Gorbachev's Gamble*, 145–47.

[51] "Regierungserklärung des Ministerpräsidenten Hans Modrow vor der Volkskammer," 17 November 1989, in Lehmann, *Die Außenpolitik*, 398–99.

[52] The Ten Points proposed: 1) West German emergency aid for the GDR population; 2) intensified cooperation with the GDR; 3) in case of a fundamental change of the GDR's political system, increased aid; 4) a positive response to Modrow's proposal of a "contractual community" between the two German states; 5) as soon as a democratic government emerged in the GDR, the creation of confederative structures between the two states; 6) integration into the all-European process; respect for international law, self-determination, and human rights; 7) openness of the EC for all states of Central and Eastern Europe; 8) progress in the CSCE; 9) disarmament and arms control; 10) "the attainment of freedom in Europe, whereby the German people can, via free self-determination, restore their unity." Text in Freedman, *Europe*, 376.

basis for negotiations,"[53] Gorbachev, who had not yet been informed about Falin's escapade, reacted furiously. In a conversation with Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the West German minister of foreign affairs, he and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze attacked the plan as a *diktat* that "not even Hitler" would have dared to proclaim.[54] The day before, the Soviet prime minister Nikolai Ryzhkov had ruled out a GDR-FRG confederation and some days later, on 9 December, Gorbachev emphasized in front of the Central Committee "that we will see to it that no harm comes to the GDR."[55]

The Soviet initiative to revive the four-power authority over Germany, an initiative that would capitalize on the traditional British and French mistrust of a quick transfer of power to Bonn, was considered a means for securing Soviet veto power against unwanted developments. This plan was implemented by the USSR convening a meeting of the Allied Control Council (ACC) on 11 December. At the meeting the Soviet representative denounced attempts at destabilizing the status quo in Europe and proposed reinstating regular sessions of this supervisory body consisting of the four victors of World War II. After its intensive operations from 1945 to 1948, the ACC had met only irregularly. At the same time, Soviet diplomats and media embarked on a campaign aimed at discrediting the opposition in the GDR and linking the German right to self-determination to certain conditions. Members of the General Staff advocated a hard line with regard to Germany.[56] On the other hand, foreign-policy expert Dashichev and Ambassador Kvitsinskii forecast a growing leaning in the German population toward unification, which they declared not at variance with Soviet interests, but rather a precondition for the "Common European Home." In internal memoranda in November, the advisors thus proposed that the GDR propose a scheme for creating a German confederation.[57]

In a speech in Brussels on 19 December, Shevardnadze tried to walk a fine line between Gorbachev's veto of unification and Kvitsinskii's demand of a confederation. In an interview with CBS in 10 December, the foreign minister had characterized the German wish for a unified state as "logical" and in a conversation with his interpreter he described reunification as inevitable.[58] As he was not inclined to modify the Soviet stance, he chose, after repeating Gorbachev's denouncement of unification, to pose questions that in his mind should be addressed

[53] Quoted in Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 337.

[54] Genscher, *Erinnerungen*, 683; Conversation Gorbachev with Genscher, Soviet protocol, 5 December 1989, in *MGGV*, 276–77. In the West German protocol, the reference to Hitler is missing. Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 73–80. In a more moderate tone: Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, West German protocol, 5 December 1989, ibid., 61–73, 64, 69, 71–72.

[55] Text in Freedman, *Europe*, 384–91, 385; Conversation Ryzhkov with Modrow, 4 December 1989, in Lehmann, *Die Außenpolitik*, 402–4.

[56] Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 375–78, 347–48.

[57] Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm*, 16–17; Daschitschew, "Die sowjetische Deutschlandpolitik," 64.

[58] Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 366; Palazchenko, *My Years*, 159.

before German unity was restored.[59] But the objective of demonstrating leadership was not reached, and Western politicians would later refer to this speech as "an expression of [his] understanding that unification is inevitable."[60]

In the end, it took Gorbachev several more weeks to accept Germany's right to self-determination. He continued to publicly insist, in contrast to his foreign minister, on the continued existence of two German states. It is not clear when the Soviet leader started to rethink his assessment or when he arrived at the position he communicated to Hans Modrow on 30 January and to Helmut Kohl on 10 February, when the Soviet leader said that the question of whether or not to unify Germany was up to the Germans.[61] Gorbachev has maneuvered around this question masterfully, obfuscating the answer to this day. It is a widely held opinion that the right of self-determination was granted on these two occasions. However it can be shown in East German documents that Shevardnadze indicated this outcome already much earlier, namely on 20 January, when he stated to Oskar Fischer, the East German foreign minister, "that the Soviet Union does not deny the German right to self-determination […] Their wish for closer cooperation and, if the Germans decide so, for national unity will be respected."[62]

In his memoirs, Gorbachev writes that during a conference with his advisors on 26 January, it was agreed that Germany's reunification "should be regarded as inevitable."[63] While the available protocol does not make this as explicit as one would expect, no one present expressed any doubts about the future unification of Germany. The chief of the General Staff was ordered to prepare for the full withdrawal of troops from the GDR. The conference was characterized by this calm approach as well as a critical assessment of the situation in the GDR. Gorbachev stated that there were "no real forces in the GDR," and Ryzhkov concluded: "We cannot preserve the GDR."[64] As a consequence, Gorbachev felt that the Kremlin

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59 The issues he mentioned included guarantees that German unity would not threaten peace in Europe; whether Germany would recognize its borders; its place in military alliances; the presence of foreign troops on its soil; its relation to the Helsinki process; and its relation to the unification of Europe. Text in *Europa Archiv* 45 (1990): D 127–36.

60 Conversation Gorbachev with Baker, Soviet protocol, 9 February 1990, in *MGGV*, 332–38, 333.

61 Conversation Gorbachev with Kohl, Soviet protocol, 10 February 1990, in *MGGV*, 339–55, 348; West German protocol, in Küsters and Hofmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit*, 795–807, 801. Kohl made this explicit in a press conference the same evening and TASS published it the next day. Texts in Freedman, *Europe,* 472–76.

62 Conversation Fischer with Shevardnadze, GDR protocol, 20 January 1990, in Lehmann, *Außenpolitik*, 441–43, 441.

63 Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 528. Some years later, he was more precise: "The question whether to agree with reunification was not raised." Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 97. The date of the meeting is not entirely clear.

64 Protocol of the discussion in the general secretary's cabinet, 26 January 1990, in *MGGV*, 307–11. While the protocol was published only in 2005, earlier memoirs hint at what was discussed, e.g. Tschernjaew, *Mein deutsches Tagebuch*, 248–55; Schachnasarow, *Der Preis der Freiheit* 150; Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 95–97.

would have to "act through the FRG." Kryuchkov, who later joined the putsch against Gorbachev, recommended "preparing our people for the unification," and Gorbachev agreed to hold an interview to publicize this. This sober assessment was interspersed, however, by absurd statements such as "we are now in the process of a second Brest[-Litovsk] treaty" (Gorbachev) or "[if we give Kohl everything] Germany will unleash the third world war in 20–30 years" (Ryzhkov).

Secondly, Gorbachev urged "procrastinating" the unification process, which would take at least "several years." He considered this the "main thing" that needed to be done. The rights of the four control powers in Germany and the creation of an international forum consisting of the two Germanys and the four powers (later the "Two Plus Four") would guarantee that the USSR retained its veto right over Germany's future; France and Britain were to be recruited as tactical allies in this game. In the discussions, Shevardnadze voiced his (correct, as it turned out) expectation that in a group based on the four powers, the USSR would be in a minority position. Thus he warned against forming a Two Plus Four forum. He did not however convince Gorbachev.

Thirdly, the gathering discussed which political forces could be relied upon in Germany: Kohl was to be told that in the upcoming elections the SPD had better chances. Modrow was to be convinced to join the SPD and to advocate unification, referring to Stalin's "commitment" to German unity (sic). Aleksandr Yakovlev recommended that the USSR "win the sympathy of the German people" by supporting Modrow's initiative for a confederation of the two Germanys. Nonetheless, the SED should not be "written off" entirely.

Fourth, German unification was to be used for achieving several other goals: Gorbachev wanted to make sure that "we don't just go home on the 50th anniversary of victory" or that "unified Germany escapes into NATO." According to him, Soviet forces "could be withdrawn if the Americans also withdraw their forces." Although he did not mention that eliminating US troops in Germany and the country's withdrawal from NATO would deal a heavy, perhaps fatal, blow to the Euro-Atlantic alliance, this was something Moscow had attempted to achieve since the Stalin era and perhaps in Gorbachev's eyes was something for which it was worth giving up the GDR. In addition, unification was to be tightly linked to and "synchronized" with other international processes, such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSCE) and the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations. This was something that Kohl's Ten Points had also signaled. From Gorbachev's perspective, linking these processes would not only be useful for slowing down and controlling the emergence of a unified Germany, but also for accelerating the creation of the "Common European Home," which he repeatedly proclaimed as one of his goals.

In retrospect, the Soviet leader has claimed that with regard to the German Question, he was guided by three principles: a moral one, not to "condemn Germans to partition forever"; a political one, not to put détente at risk by using force;

and a strategic one, not to strain German relations with the USSR by suppressing a democratic wish for unification.[65] Nonetheless, he was convinced that unification was not yet the order of the day. While redefining the Soviet strategy, the leader seems to have struggled to unite several aims. These have been extrapolated by Mikhail Narinskii as follows: to avoid violence and interference in the internal affairs of foreign countries; to keep the development in Germany under control; to avoid strain on Soviet-US and Soviet-German relations; and to promote the parallel dismantling of military alliances in Europe and the construction of the "Common European Home."[66] If one searches for the various factors motivating Gorbachev's gradual acceptance of German unity between November 1989 and January 1990, several steps can be recognized:

1) The project of building some sort of "Perestroika GDR," a reasonable choice for a Soviet leader who wanted to promote perestroika, to safeguard Soviet interests and who envisaged a "Common European Home" with two symmetrical German rooms in it, proved unfeasible. This was mainly for three reasons. First, the GDR, be it reformed or unreformed, became increasingly unacceptable for most East Germans. In contrast to many intellectuals and dissidents, the majority pinned their hopes not on a reform-socialist experiment, but on predictability and prosperity which they believed they would find by emigrating to the West or by supporting unification. This belief was confirmed for many citizens by the continued existence and machinations of Stasi, the infamous state security police, as well as the SED's failure to distance itself from its past.[67] Modrow's attempt to revitalize political surveillance and oppression and to turn them into a "stabilizing force in society" backfired. Thus, after the fall of the Wall the mass exodus continued and even grew. Those who remained at home demanded unification ever more often. Historian Hanns Jürgen Küsters has argued that it was after the Stasi's breakdown in January 1990 that Gorbachev recognized the impossibility of maintaining the GDR.[68] Second, as Krenz confessed in a conversation with Gorbachev, the GDR was in deep financial trouble, having accumulated a foreign debt of 26.5 billion dollars and a deficit of 12.1 billion. It was spending 62 percent of its export revenues to service its foreign debt and was rapidly approaching bankruptcy.[69] Its traditional sponsor, the FRG, proved un-

[65] Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 84, 88. Cf. Anatolii Cherniaev, "The Unification of Germany: Political Mechanisms and Psychological Stereotypes," *Russian Politics and Law* 36, no. 4 (1998): 23–38, 31.

[66] Narinskii, "M.S. Gorbachev i ob"edinenie Germanii," 17.

[67] Andreas Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland: Die Geschichte der Wiedervereinigung* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 95–98, 120–24; Sarotte, *1989*, 96 and 117. Modrow's quote is from his conversation with Nikolai Ryzhkov on 10 January 1990. Ibid., 96.

[68] Hanns Jürgen Küsters, "Entscheidung für die deutsche Einheit," in idem and Hofmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit,* 21–236, 233,

[69] Conversation Gorbachev with Krenz, Soviet protocol, 1 November 1989, in *MGGV*, 232–245, 237.

willing to grant additional financial support without fundamental political reforms being implemented in the GDR. Third, Modrow's project of a "contractual community" of two states, which had been conceived to take the wind out of the "unificationists'" sails, and the Modrow Plan with its plans for creating a confederation that was subsequently launched, signaled that even the SED was not convinced in the continued existence of an independent East German state. In a conversation with Gorbachev on 30 January, the East German leader presented his draft for "Germany, United Fatherland" which read: "We strive for the unification of the two German states."[70] This was to be achieved step by step in a process over years. It would include the neutralization of both states and the creation of a European Confederation. In the meantime, all the major political parties in the GDR had already voiced their demand for German unification. Once the entire political elite of the GDR, the SED prime minister included, was discussing unification schemes, the Soviet leader could not insist on blocking it without alienating the East Germans completely. In his talk with Modrow, Gorbachev approved the SED strategy, including, in his words, "in the long run, the merging [*srastanie*] of the two states into one."[71] Both the scheme and the Soviet leader's approval of it could be expected to improve the SED's chances in the upcoming elections. Publicly, the Soviet leader declared that "nobody had ever doubted, in principle, the unification of the Germans."[72] In a letter to Kohl on 2 February, Gorbachev described the emergence of a contractual community as realistic.[73]

2) In the international arena outside the GDR, Gorbachev, who had believed that most Western leaders opposed German unity, was gradually forced to accept the impossibility of forging a strong consensus against unity, as the failure of the ACC session in Berlin had indicated. The British prime minister had been most outspoken in her statements against German unity, statements that, due to the US-British "special relationship," were perhaps mistaken by the Soviet leader as reflecting US policy.[74] When former US security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski traveled to Moscow in October 1989, his statements had seemed to cor-

[70] Conversation Gorbachev with Modrow, Soviet protocol, 30 January 1990, in *MGGV*, 312–26, 324. Modrow had stated that "the idea of the existence of two German states is not supported by a growing part of the population of the GDR. Apparently it is not possible to uphold the idea." Ibid., 315.

[71] Ibid., 320. Gorbachev recalled that the conversation left the impression that Modrow was not the "master of the situation." Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 100.

[72] Quoted in Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 392.

[73] Gorbachev to Kohl, 2 February 1990, in Küsters and Hofmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit,* 748.

[74] "Britain and Western Europe are not interested in the unification of Germany. The words written in the NATO communiqué[s] may sound different, but disregard them. We do not want the unification of Germany." Conversation Gorbachev with Thatcher, Soviet protocol, 23 September 1989, in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 530–32. For Gorbachev's mistaken conclusion that this represented the US stance, see Savranskaya, "The Logic of 1989," 33.

roborate this impression.[75] In the Politburo, on 3 November, Gorbachev had forecast that "the West does not want the unification of Germany, but wants to disrupt it with our hands, to set us against the FRG in order to preclude a possible 'arrangement' between the USSR and Germany."[76] However, as became visible for the Soviet leader in December and January 1989–90, Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand, despite their shared opposition against unification, were not prepared to openly join a temporary alliance against German self-determination after it had been claimed by Kohl and endorsed by the United States.[77] At their meeting on 6 December, the French president had joined Gorbachev in criticizing Kohl's swiftness, and yet he had made it clear that he was not "afraid of Germany's reunification." Nonetheless it had to be preceded by European integration.[78] Giulio Andreotti, the Italian prime minister, who in a conversation with Gorbachev had "absolutely agreed" with the Soviet leader's claim that German unification was "not a current question,"[79] was neither willing to stick his head out nor did he carry enough weight to create a substantial barrier. On the contrary: Under the US aegis, a consensus grew among Western leaders not to block German unification. The US president not only repeated his endorsement of Germany's right to self-determination in a conversation with Gorbachev on Malta on 2–3 December,[80] but also endeavored to be considerate of the Soviet mood and to create incentives, including disarmament as well as reforms of NATO and the OSCE, to gain Gorbachev's consent. At a summit in Strasbourg on 9 December, the heads of all EC member states confirmed that they were committed to seeking "the strengthening of the state of peace in Europe in which the German people will regain their unity through free self-determination."[81]

[75] "[O]ne Germany, united and strong. This does not correspond to either your or our interests." Conversation Yakovlev with Brzezinski, Soviet protocol, 31 October 1989, in Savranskaya, Blanton and Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 563–68, 567.

[76] Chernyaev, Veber, Medvedev, eds., *V Politbyuro*, 450. The same formulation is used in Chernyaev's diary entry of 9 October. Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 547.

[77] Jacques Lévesque, "In the name of Europe's future: Soviet, French, and British qualms about Kohl's rush to German unification," in Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow, Leopoldo Nuti, eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 95–106. Mitterrand was quoted with the words: "I don't have to do anything to stop it; the Soviets will do it for me." Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 637.

[78] Conversation Gorbachev with Mitterrand, Soviet protocol, 6 December 1989, in *MGGV*, 286–91, 287–88.

[79] Conversation Gorbachev with Andreotti, Soviet protocol, 29 November 1989, in *MGGV*, 264–66.

[80] Bush said that despite some ambivalence among US allies in NATO, "you cannot expect us [i.e. the United States] not to approve of German reunification." Soviet protocol, in *MGGV*, 268–72. For an English translation, see *Masterpieces*, 619–46, 634, 640. Cf. Gorbatschow, *Gipfelgespräche*, 93–129.

[81] Quoted in Haftendorn, "The Unification," 343.

3) Not only his relations with the United States, France, Britain and Italy, but also with West Germany may have convinced the Soviet leader to acquiesce to German unification. Confronted with the choice between a consensual solution and straining his relations with Kohl, Gorbachev opted for the first—as Mitterrand did in a similar dilemma. The French president was held in high esteem by Gorbachev, and French-German reconciliation, as personified by Mitterrand and Kohl, was perhaps a model for the Soviet-German reconciliation. In addition, the German economic capacity and its goodwill, which was impressively demonstrated by a West German program in January 1990 of express deliveries of food rations, sponsored by the federal government with 220 million marks, created a strong incentive for acquiescing to unification.

4) When looking for Gorbachev's motives in the German Question, an ideological factor also needs to be taken into account. As an enlightened Marxist and guided by an idealist *Weltanschauung*, the Soviet leader aspired to turning theory into practice. Consenting with Germany's self-determination enabled him to solve two grave contradictions between theory and reality: first, the contradiction between the Soviet endorsement, in theory, of the principle of national self-determination and the denial of it to the German people; and second, the divergence between the Soviet claim of having advocated German unity and the Soviet two-state policy. By acquiescing to German unification, Gorbachev managed not only to resolve these two inconsistencies but also to legitimize this decision by referring to the Soviet tradition of propagating German self-determination and unity. In a well-considered distortion of the historical record, the Soviet leader claimed that "We never denied this right [of self-determination] to the Germans,"[82] whereby it was not necessary to modify the *official* Soviet stance. Such outward consistency enabled Gorbachev to receive the approval of German unity by the majority of the Soviet population; in an opinion poll in March, 60 percent approved of German unification.[83]

5) As Gorbachev's statements indicate, the leader seems to have expected to be able to use German unification to realize his project of a "Common European Home." This was to lead in the long run to some sort of security system involving the USSR and Europe and replacing NATO. Yet it soon became clear that it would not be easy to realize these expectations.

## Gorbachev accepts Germany's right to choose an alliance

When the Soviet leader acquiesced to Germany's self-determination with regard to unification, Gorbachev still felt that the developments could be controlled.

[82] Gorbachev's answers to questions posed by the Pravda correspondent, 21 February 1990 in *MGGV*, 371. Cf. Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 114. Stent, *Russia*, 109, calls Gorbachev a "prisoner of past pronouncements."

[83] Plato, *Die Vereinigung*, 173.

This outlook was fundamentally changed by the SED's defeat in the parliamentary elections on 18 March, the landslide victory of Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the East, and the creation of a non-communist coalition government under Lothar de Maizière (CDU). Not only was the election outcome perceived as a referendum favoring unification. In addition, the GDR had become even less manageable by Moscow than it had been under Honecker and Modrow. Since a non-communist government in Berlin could be expected at some point to terminate its alliance with the USSR, the GDR was—from a Bolshevik point of view—already lost for the Kremlin. The Soviet loss of control on developments concerning German reunification was fostered by the West German strategy, supported by the US administration, of deliberately downgrading and decelerating the Two Plus Four process while creating facts by speeding up the process of "inner" and economic unification. Thus the economic union of both German states was signed on 18 May; two months after the GDR elections, but four months ahead of the Two Plus Four treaty.[84]

In his conversations with Bush and with Mitterrand in December 1989 and on other occasions, Gorbachev had raised the question of whether the unified Germany was to be neutral, or a NATO or Warsaw Pact member. He did not propose an answer. In the brainstorming session with high officials and advisors on 26 January, Gorbachev had explicitly ruled out NATO membership[85] and repeated this statement in an interview with *Pravda* on 7 March and in the Politburo on 3 May.[86] In the same session, Shevardnadze's draft instructions for the Two Plus Four negotiations, a draft that provided for "the tacit [Soviet] approval of Germany remaining in NATO," were voted down.[87] Falin, who had proposed in several internal memos since December 1989 that the USSR bring forward its

[84] Hanns Jürgen Küsters, "Entscheidung für die deutsche Einheit," in idem and Hofmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit,* 21–236, 79, 89, 119.

[85] Protocol of a discussion in the general secretary's cabinet, 26 January 1990, in *MGGV*, 307–11, 308.

[86] According to Chernyaev's diary entry of 5 May, Gorbachev said in the Politburo session on 3 May: "[Do] not let Germany into NATO, that's it. I will risk bursting the Viennese negotiations [on conventional forces in Europe] if that happens." Chernyaev, *Sovmestnyi iskhod*, 855. Chernyaev criticized this stance in a memo to Gorbachev as contradicting the principles of the "new thinking" and having no chance of being maintained in practice. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB317/chernyaev_1990.pdf (accessed 8 August 2012). The memo of 4 May is published in Tschernjaew, *Mein deutsches Tagebuch*, 257–60; an abridged version is found in *MGGV*, 424–25.

[87] Tschernjaew, *Mein deutsches Tagebuch*, 257–58. Shevardnadze seems to have accepted the NATO membership of the unified Germany much earlier than Gorbachev. In a conversation on 10 February 1990, the same day Baker had left Moscow, Shevardnadze told Genscher: "The most complicated question is that of the unified Germany in NATO. What happens with the Soviet troops in the GDR? How should everything look in practice? Should the S[oviet] U[nion] withdraw all her forces from the GDR, while US forces remain in the Federal Republic of Germany?" West German protocol, in Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 98–105, 102.

demands in exchange for granting unification, had severely attacked the softer strategy. Shevardnadze was ordered to maintain the tough position. According to Falin's memoirs, some weeks later Gorbachev said that "we were both right not to listen to Eduard [Shevardnadze]."[88]

Shevardnadze duly repeated the mantra that the USSR wanted guarantees that the unified Germany would not become a NATO member in his conversation with Genscher and in his speech at the first ministerial meeting of the Two Plus Four in Bonn on 5 May.[89] He referred to the Soviet people, of which 97 to 98 percent were allegedly against such an outcome. As a solution he proposed the transformation of both alliances and their final replacement through the "Common European Home" of all CSCE states. Until this had been accomplished, Germany would be entitled to unify but not to regain full sovereignty. With regard to four-power control over Germany, Soviet diplomacy demanded postponing its dissolution until the end of a transition period of several years, during which foreign troops were to withdraw from Germany and a new security organization for Europe was to emerge.[90] As Shevardnadze had used his visit to Bonn to ask for West German loans, his position was considerably weakened.[91]

In the meantime, from January till May, the West was confronted with what Kvitsinskii has called a "tangled surrealist mess of ideas."[92] The Soviet side aired several proposals, sometimes even more than one at the same time: 1) the dissolution of the two military alliances and the creation of an all-European security system (with or without the United States and Canada[93]); 2) the ongoing existence

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[88] Falin, *Konflikte*, 179; the memos ibid., 153; 156–61; 165–78; 314–16. Falin's conditions included Germany's neutralization and demilitarization. If Germany would not comply with these demands, Soviet troops should remain in the GDR, and the USSR would consider reunification as an aggression against the GDR, which was a member of the Warsaw Pact. Obviously the diplomat wasted no time on ideas of self-determination or on the possibility that the GDR might withdraw from the Soviet alliance.

[89] Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, West German protocol, 4 May 1990, in Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 129–36, 131, 134; Shevardnadze's speech at the Two Plus Four, 5 May, ibid., 136–44. In the end, the Western partners of the Two Plus Four did not perceive the Soviet conditions as an obstacle. Entry, 7 May 1990, Chernyaev, *Diary*, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB317/chernyaev_1990.pdf (accessed 8 August 2012). On the Two Plus Four process, see Zelikow, Rice, *Germany Unified*, 243–63; Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 420–767; Rödder, *Deutschland*, 233–35.

[90] In contrast, Germany insisted on ending four-power control as soon as possible and granting a transition period only with regard to the Soviet military withdrawal from the GDR. Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, West German protocol, 18 June 1990, in Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 194–211, 204–5 and footnote 32.

[91] Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 220–27. Küsters and Hofmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit,* 1087.

[92] Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm*, 12.

[93] In his conversation with Bush, Gorbachev stated that US presence in Europe was "for the time being necessary." Second conversation Gorbachev with Bush, Soviet protocol, 31 May 1990, in *MGGV*, 466–76, 469. Cf. Conversation Gorbachev with Bush, Soviet protocol, 2–3 December

of the two alliances plus Germany's neutralization and demilitarization; 3) a double membership for Germany in NATO and the Warsaw Pact, either as a full or associated member, leading de facto to the same result as the country's neutralization; 4) the "French solution," i.e. Germany's membership in the political, but not military structures of NATO; 5) Germany's full membership in NATO under the condition of the USSR's entry into the Atlantic alliance, resulting de facto in the alliance's neutralization and/or transformation into a European-Soviet-North American security system; and 6) Germany's membership in the Warsaw Pact.[94]

The hectic creativity of the Soviet leadership aimed at circumventing Germany remaining a member of NATO—something that was, on top of the "loss of the GDR," likely to be perceived as a Soviet diplomatic defeat. If, however, Germany were to preserve its NATO membership, Gorbachev wanted to use his acquiescence to either dismantle or transform the alliance into a structure that included the USSR and thus make it controllable by the Kremlin. In April, Gorbachev told the British foreign secretary that a new system of this sort (be it instead of or superseding the two blocs[95]) was his favorite solution, and when Shevardnadze outlined various options to his West German colleague on 23 May, all of them envisaged this outcome in some form or another.[96] In contrast, the option of Germany's double membership in both alliances was quickly dismissed by the Soviet leader.[97]

The Soviet line of postponing German sovereignty and denying its self-determination with regard to security issues was maintained until the Soviet leader's summit with the US president on 31 May. At this meeting Gorbachev demanded

1989, in Savranskaya, Blanton, Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces*, 619–46, 640–41; Conversation Gorbachev with Baker, Soviet protocol, 18 May 1990, in *MGGV*, here 437 and 445. However in his conversation with the British foreign secretary, Gorbachev proposed a new security system for Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals," i.e. excluding the United States and Canada. Conversation Gorbachev with Hurd, Soviet protocol, 10 April 1990, ibid.,391–93.

94 Conversation Gorbachev with Baker, Soviet protocol, 18 May 1990, in *MGGV*, 437–45, 442. Option 6) was proposed in Gorbachev's conversation with Douglas Hurd on 10 April 1990, ibid., 391–93. Cf. Hannes Adomeit, "Gorbachev and German Unification," in Alexander Dallin and Gail Lapidus, eds., *The Soviet System: From Crisis to Collapse*, rev. ed. (Boulder: Westview, 1995), 465–92, 477.

95 Shevardnadze said: "The Soviet Union is sympathetic to the proposal to liquidate the [existing] alliances; however, this has no chance of being accepted and is therefore irrational." Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, West German protocol, 12 June 1989, in Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie*, 15–21, 17.

96 Conversation Gorbachev with Hurd, Soviet protocol, 10 April 1990, in *MGGV*, 391–93; Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, West German protocol, 23 May 1990, in Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 147–62, 153–54. The following options were mentioned: 1) Germany's withdrawal from both alliances; 2) neutrality; 3) not-alignment in combination with an all-European security system; 4) the dissolution of the alliances in combination with an all-European security system.

97 Conversation Kohl with Gorbachev, German protocol, 10 February 1990, in Küsters and Hofmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit,* 795–807, 804.

that a unified Germany be entitled to freely determine whether it be part of a military alliance. However, at the Two Plus Four session in Berlin on 22 June, Shevardnadze returned to the line of postponing German sovereignty and demanded that the four powers retain their rights for a five-year period after unification, a period in which the united Germany was to remain in both alliances.[98] This posture changed again on 15 July when Gorbachev, now in a conversation with the West German chancellor, conceded that with certain restrictions unified Germany could be entitled to remain part of the Atlantic alliance. Again, several factors can be identified that determined Gorbachev's rethinking of this issue, which had moved from outright rejection of unified Germany being a member of NATO to accepting this option.

1) From mid-February until mid-April, it became clear that not only Bonn advocated NATO membership, albeit under military restrictions for the GDR, the so-called Genscher Plan.[99] From a telephone conversation with the US president on 28 February, the Soviet leader drew the conclusion that Bush, too, was supportive of this idea.[100] Also Thatcher, Mitterrand and most of the leaders recently elected in the Central European states supported this solution—not so much due to trust in a unified Germany's self-restraint but rather out of the consideration that NATO should continue the mission it had had with regard to Germany from the beginning: to keep the Germans, if not "down," then at least under control. At the Open Skies conference in Ottawa in February, the new non-communist foreign ministers of Czechoslovakia and Poland, Jiří Dienstbier and Krzystof Skubiszewski, argued against Germany's neutralization; at the Warsaw Pact's conference of foreign ministers in Prague in March, this was also the majority opinion among the non-Soviet participants.[101] Within the GDR, resistance against NATO became weaker, while the discussion about the accession procedure according to Article 23 of the FRG's Basic Law (which did not envision the fusion of the two German states but merely the accession of the GDR's provinces to the FRG) strengthened the fortunes of the Genscher Plan advocates.[102] In a conversation with Gorbachev on 25 May, Mitterrand explained that the FRG, a NATO member, was preparing to "swallow" the GDR, which is why a unified Germany

98 "Zweites Treffen der Außenminister der Zwei plus Vier," 22 June 1990, in *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit*, 1249–56. Interestingly, Soviet diplomacy sent out signals that these proposals were not meant seriously. Kiessler and Elbe, *Ein runder Tisch*, 160–63; Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 205.

99 Text in Freedman, *Europe*, 436–45.

100 Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 119.

101 Adomeit, "Gorbachev and German Unification," 482; "Bericht über das Treffen der Außenminister der Staaten des Warschauer Vertrages," 19 March 1990, in Lehmann, *Außenpolitik*, 527.

102 In a conversation with Gorbachev on 29 April, de Maizière said that in the election campaign, he had advocated the Article 23 procedure; hence, he saw his victory as a clear mandate to proceed in this direction. Soviet protocol, 29 April 1990, in *MGGV*, 409–23, 419. Cf. Jack F. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1995), 383.

would remain in the Atlantic alliance.[103] As the Soviet leader wrote in his memoirs, this conversation, in which even the French president reacted unenthusiastically to Gorbachev's suggestion of a "French solution," i.e. political membership in the alliance without participation in its military structures, for Germany, made it clear that the USSR had no allies in its struggle against Germany's NATO membership.[104] Gorbachev's assistants later concluded from this that the Soviet leader had prepared himself for this outcome.

2) With respect to the conditions of the European framework, Gorbachev launched several attempts to use German unification as a lever for creating a new security system for Europe. A Soviet non-paper in April had declared a new security system as "the solution" for the German problem and, in late May, the Soviet envoy to East Berlin handed over a proposal for an all-European security institution, comprising all 35 signatories of the CSCE final act and including a "Greater European Council," a body of ambassadors, and a permanent secretariat.[105] Some weeks later, Shevardnadze and GDR foreign minister Markus Meckel agreed to set up "in the narrowest circle, with utmost confidence and without delay, a working group for […] developing common ideas for a European security structure."[106] While the Soviet leader was able to enlist a certain amount of support for his idea among East German leaders, including de Maizière, Meckel and Defense and Disarmament Minister Rainer Eppelmann,[107] it remained unclear whether the new organization would become more than, as the US secretary of state stated in a conversation with the Soviet leader in May, "a beautiful dream."[108] In this situation, three developments became relevant:

First, the Warsaw Pact's military organization, which according to some Soviet conceptions was envisaged as being one pillar of the new system, was showing signs of decay: Hungary and Czechoslovakia had demanded negotiations for a Soviet withdrawal from their territories, and in June 1990 the new non-communist Hungarian government declared that their country would not remain in the alliance under any circumstances.[109] In order to rescue the organization, at the Moscow session of the alliance's Political Consultative Committee, discussions were held concerning the possibility of transforming the Pact into a political alliance.

Secondly, under these conditions, it was promising for the Soviet side that the United States proposed transforming also NATO into a primarily political alliance

[103] Soviet protocol, in *MGGV*, 451, 461.

[104] Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 135–36; Tschernjaew, *Mein deutsches Tagebuch*, 268; Grachev, *Gorbachev's Gamble*, 158–59.

[105] Non-paper, Soviet government, 16 April 1990; "Notiz eines Besuchs des Gesandten der UdSSR," 25 May 1990, in Lehman, *Außenpolitik*, 542–45; 663–65.

[106] Conversation Meckel with Shevardnadze, GDR protocol, 7 June 1990, in Lehman, *Außenpolitik*, 696.

[107] Sarotte, *1989*, 152–53.

[108] Soviet protocol, 18 May 1990, in *MGGV*, 437–45, 438.

[109] Mastny and Byrne, *A Cardboard Castle*, 71.

and changed its strategy by declaring that the alliance would not consider the East European countries enemies. In February, Dashichev had proposed such a solution to the NATO leadership, and in Germany, historian Boris Meissner had launched a similar idea during a talk with Teltschik in April.[110] Ideas for a reorientation of NATO were integrated into US secretary of state James Baker's Nine Points, which were presented to Gorbachev on 18 May.[111] Chernyaev later said that this plan helped the leader to accept Germany's membership in the Atlantic alliance.[112] NATO's London declaration of 6 July (during the twenty-eighth session of the CPSU congress) offered reconciliation, friendship, cooperation and a renunciation of the first use of force to the former Cold War adversary.[113] Shevardnadze recalled that he perceived these guarantees as proof that NATO was moving toward a less military posture, which let the question of Germany's membership in the alliance appear "in an entirely different light."[114] From end of May, the media in the USSR began to depict NATO in less demonic colors than it had earlier done.[115] Nonetheless, transforming the Atlantic alliance into a security system for Europe by including the USSR (an idea that was repeatedly brought up by Gorbachev) turned out to be a goal that could not be reached.

And thirdly, the FRG and the United States (in the Nine Points) offered the transformation of the CSCE. If it was not to become a new security system, then at least it was to be bolstered with new competencies and institutionalized as the OSCE, the first security institution comprising North America, Europe and the Soviet Union. As Soviet leaders had repeatedly demanded the creation of such an institution, the Western proposals could be regarded as a sort of compensation.

3) In the area of arms reductions, further compensation and incentives were offered by the West. The Genscher Plan stipulated that no NATO structures were to be deployed on former GDR territory. Baker's Nine Points modified this pledge somewhat and reduced it to a limited transition period, during which Soviet forces would withdraw from the former GDR; in Gorbachev's meeting with Kohl on 15 July it was

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110 Dashichev, "On the Road to German Reunification," 178; Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 192.

111 Conversation Gorbachev with Baker, Soviet protocol, 18 May 1990, in *MGGV*, 439–40. The proposals comprised (1) the quantitative reduction of Germany's army in the CFE; (2) new negotiations on tactical arms reductions; (3) German abdication of ABC weapons; (4) no NATO troops on former GDR territory for a limited period; (5) the presence of Soviet forces on former GDR territory for a limited period; (6) the transformation of NATO into a more political organization; (7) a guarantee of Germany's borders; (8) the transformation of the CSCE into a permanent organization; (9) "due consideration" of Soviet economic interests. Cf. Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 263–64.

112 Hannes Adomeit, "Gorbachev's consent to united Germany's membership of NATO," in Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow and Leopoldo Nuti, eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 107–18, 107–8, 111–12, 115.

113 "Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance," 5–6 July 1990, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23693.htm (accessed 8 August 2012).

114 Schewardnadse, *Die Zukunft gehört der Freiheit*, 248, 251.

115 *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 29 May 1990.

confirmed and agreed upon that no foreign NATO personnel would be deployed in the former GDR during this transition period. Unified Germany would renounce the possession and use of ABC weaponry and it was conceded that its armed forces would comprise less than half of the FRG's and GDR's military manpower taken together; this was offered as a voluntary acceptance of self-restriction in the CFE negotiations. The United States agreed to withdraw nuclear short-range weapons from Germany.[116] In addition, a rapprochement between the USSR and the United States in the preparation of START was achieved between Baker and Shevardnadze.[117]

4) On the bilateral level, the entire process was accompanied by a further intensification of German-Soviet cooperation. One part of the German historian Meissner's package, which was designed to help the Kremlin bite the bullet, was concluding a "Grand Treaty" on good-neighborly relations and the renunciation of force. This was intended to symbolize the historic reconciliation of the former adversaries and build a basis for their future cooperation. Ambassador Kvitsinskii reacted "euphorically"[118] when Helmut Kohl aired corresponding thoughts. It seems unlikely that German unity and its NATO membership could have been achieved without this reconciliation. During the chancellor's and the Soviet president's joint visit to Gorbachev's native region of Stavropol in July 1990, this reconciliation was symbolically approved by Soviet World War II veterans.[119] The "Grand" Soviet-German Treaty on Neighborhood, Partnership and Cooperation of 9 November included a renouncement of force, and declared the two countries' aim of intensifying their cooperation in bilateral and multilateral matters, including arms reduction. The economic part of the new cooperation comprised compensation for former GDR obligations toward the USSR plus a state-guaranteed 5 billion mark loan. This is what Kohl had promised Gorbachev the previous June.[120] Later that month, Kohl had agreed to pay additional 1.25 billion marks in stationing costs for Soviet troops in the GDR in 1990; in July, he had proposed a German fund to compensate Soviet victims of Nazi slave labor and, after a meeting with Gorbachev, he was presented a Soviet bill for over 20 billion marks to support the Soviet troops in East Germany until 1994 as well as their housing and retraining upon their return to the USSR.[121]

[116] Weidenfeld, *Außenpolitik*, 554.

[117] Küsters, "Entscheidung für die deutsche Einheit," 169.

[118] Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 192, 205. Cf. Conversation Kohl with Kvitsinskii, 23 April 1990, in Küsters and Hofmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit,* 1026–30, 1028.

[119] Statement Gorbachev, Soviet-German press conference, 16 July 1990, in *MGGV*, 533.

[120] The USSR had demanded 11.5 to 17 billion. Already prior to this loan, the FRG was the USSR's largest single foreign creditor, with 6 of a total debt of 24 billion marks. Teltschik, whom the chancellor had secretly sent to Moscow with the directors of the Deutsche and Dresdner banks, insisted that this loan was part of a Western reward for the Kremlin's consent with the German solution. Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 232, 234–35.

[121] Sarotte, *1989*, 170; 179; 187–93; Rödder, *Deutschland*, 250–51; 261–62. The total costs of German payments and services to the USSR with regard to unification were calculated as amounting to 83.55 billion DM, of them about 50 billion in direct payments and credits. Oldenburg, "Die Rekonstruktion," 775–76.

After tough negotiations with Gorbachev threatening to abandon the reached agreement, the latter sum was reduced to 12 billion plus an interest-free credit line of 3 billion. In addition, the two sides reached the consensus that unified Germany would honor both the GDR's economic agreements with the USSR, as well as the latter's economic measures in the GDR.[122]

5) The minutes of many of Gorbachev's conversations indicate, again, that when discussing the issue of NATO, the leader often referred to the political idea of self-determination. As James Baker outlined to Gorbachev in a crucial conversation on 18 May, the United States argued that under international law and according to the Helsinki final act, it was Germany's right to choose which military alliance it wanted to adhere to. The secretary of state had been asked by Gorbachev whether the United States was prepared to tolerate united Germany's membership in the Warsaw Pact. While the United States advocated Germany's membership in NATO, it was also prepared to accept any other choice Germany would make, as long as it was taken in a free and sovereign manner.[123] The day before, Baker had discussed the issue with his West German colleague when Genscher referred to the CSCE document.[124] In his conversation with Gorbachev, Baker asked: "You say: if the USA trusts Germany, why include it in NATO? My answer is: if you trust [Germany], why not give the Germans the possibility of making their own choice?"[125] Gorbachev was evasive and did not give a clear response. Two weeks later, however, at a summit with the US president on 31 May, he had embraced this point and, after first demanding Germany's membership in both alliances, proactively insisted that Germany be given the freedom of choice.[126] The sudden disquiet within the Soviet delegation shows that this initiative had not been generally agreed upon.[127] In general, this part of the summit discussion repeats the

[122] Non-paper, Soviet government, 19 April 1990, in Küsters and Hofmann, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit,* 1023–24.

[123] Conversation Gorbachev with Baker, Soviet protocol, 18 May 1990, in *MGGV*, 437–45, 443.

[124] Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 239.

[125] Conversation Gorbachev with Baker, Soviet protocol, 18 May 1990, 438. Genscher raised this question again some days later in a conversation with Shevardnadze. He asked: "The first question is whether unified Germany has equal rights or not. If Germany has equal rights, then this means, according to the Helsinki Final Act, the right to belong or not belong to an alliance." Genscher offered the following assurances: peaceful intentions, no border changes, no extension of NATO with regard to the GDR, the acceptance of Soviet troops on GDR territory during a transition period, and no ABC weapons for Germany. Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, West German protocol, 23 May 1990, in Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 147–62, 158.

[126] Conversation Gorbachev with Bush, Soviet protocol, 31 May 1990, in *MGGV*, 466–76, 474–75.

[127] Adomeit, "Gorbachev's consent," 113–14; Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 607–11. A week later, the Soviet foreign minister claimed that at the Washington summit, both "the United States and the Soviet Union had been anxious, in their exchange of opinions about Germany, not to decide on anything." At least for the US side, this cannot be corroborated from the summit protocol. Nonetheless, Shevardnadze accepted Germany's right to choose an alliance and, thus, confirmed the main outcome of the summit with regard to Germany. Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, West German protocol, 7 June 1990, in Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 164–68, 164.

conversation between Gorbachev and Baker on 18 May—with the decisive difference that on 31 May, the Soviet president was proactive about the issue he had earlier been evasive about. It therefore seems likely that the point of self-determination had influenced Gorbachev's deliberations with regard to Germany's NATO membership, and that his consent at the 31 May meeting in Washington was a well-reasoned decision consistent with his "new thinking." As his closest advisor Chernyaev had stressed in a memorandum on 4 May, a permanent denial of the right to self-determination to Germany was inconsistent with these principles, had no real chance of success, and thus was unwise.[128] The Soviet leader perhaps expected self-determination to include a public referendum in Germany,[129] which seemed to be anything other than a safe bet for NATO membership. Indeed, on 25 May the French president had reminded Gorbachev that the ideas of both neutrality and a double membership in both blocs were highly popular among Germans.[130]

Instead of trumpeting that US-Soviet agreement had been reached about Germany's right to choose an alliance, on 31 May Bush shifted to the formulation that the United States preferred seeing Germany in NATO, yet was willing to accept if the Germans decided otherwise. Thus the US leader missed this opportunity for pocketing Gorbachev's agreement with military self-determination. Gorbachev subsequently obfuscated this consensus. This can be explained with the leader not wanting to give his critics at the twenty-eighth party congress another reason for discontent.[131] In addition, the Soviet government did not seem prepared to declare its full consent with Germany's NATO membership without seeing Baker's Nine Points implemented. In the weeks between the Washington and the Stavropol summits, Soviet diplomacy strove at postponing the issue by pushing that the GDR's responsibilities with regard to the Warsaw Pact be upheld for the entire transition period.[132]

The combination of the various decisions that had been reached by mid-July concerning reforms of NATO and the CSCE, arms reductions, German-Soviet cooperation, as well as the conclusion of the CPSU congress most likely allowed Gorbachev to adapt to the line advocated by Chernyaev and Shevardnadze. He casually mentioned in a conversation with Helmut Kohl on 15 July, "Membership

[128] See above, footnote 86.

[129] A referendum had been proposed in Falin's April memo to Gorbachev. Falin, *Konflikte*, 173. Cf. Gorbachev's own account of his conversation with Bush: "You claim to trust in Germany, yet you drag her into NATO […] Let us let Germany decide for itself." Gorbatschow, *Erinnerungen*, 722–23.

[130] Conversation Gorbachev with Mitterrand, Soviet protocol, 25 May 1990, in *MGGV*, 454–65, 461. According to West German opinion polls, the acceptance of neutrality rose from 33 percent 1978 to 55 in 1983. Daschitschew, "Aus den Anfängen," 42.

[131] See Gorbachev's speech at the Supreme Soviet on 12 June 1990, when he said: "I told President Bush: Instead of talking excessively about united Germany's NATO membership, we should think about bringing Europe's two dividing blocs together." http://www.2plus4.de/chronik.php3?date_value=12.06.90&sort=000-000 (accessed 31 December 2012).

[132] Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, West German protocol, 11 June 1990, in Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 172–88, 186.

in NATO will persist."[133] However, this statement cannot be found in the published Soviet protocol; officially, the Soviet leader did not mention this issue and merely repeated his opinion that NATO structures were not to extend eastward and Soviet troops would remain where they were during a transitional period. Kohl said that this meant NATO structures would not extend eastward *while* Soviet troops remained there. The chancellor offered that no foreign or ABC troops were to be stationed in the former GDR after the Soviet withdrawal. Then he pressed for a clear public statement from Gorbachev but did not get one. It is presumable that the president, in order not to cause new uproar among his imperialist critics, asked the chancellor not to mention the Atlantic alliance explicitly in his public statement, but only Germany's sovereignty and its right to freely choose an alliance.[134] Kohl recalled that in a previous conversation Gorbachev had placed him before the option of either leaving the alliance or losing the opportunity for unity.[135]

The major points in the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (the Two Plus Four Treaty) were: a declaration that the two Germanys' external borders would be the definitive borders of the united Germany; the two German governments' renouncement of ABC weapons; the reduction of Germany's armed forces to 370,000; the withdrawal of Soviet troops[136] by the end of 1994; the right of the united Germany to belong to alliances; and the termination of the rights of the Four Powers with regard to Germany and the latter acquiring full sovereignty. The Treaty was signed by the two Germanys and the Four Powers on 12 September 1990 in Moscow and entered into force after the last ratification document was deposited by the USSR on 15 March 1991, after contentious debates in the CPSU and the Supreme Soviet[137] were resolved and the Soviets ratified the treaty on 4 March.

## Interpretation, outlook, desiderata

In the German Question, Gorbachev had to move through several steps. Immediately after the opening of the Berlin Wall, the event was publicly accepted

[133] Conversation Kohl with Gorbachev, West German protocol, 15 July 1990, in Küsters and Hoffmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit*, 1346. Cf. the Soviet protocol, in *MGGV*, 501: "Regarding Germany's membership in NATO, the issue is clear […] Under legal membership in NATO, its [Germany's] eastern part will be, for the transition period, in the area of the Warsaw Pact [*Bei juridischer Mitgliedschaft Deutschlands in der NATO wird sein Ostteil in Übergangszustand im Bereich des Warschauer Paktes sein*]."

[134] Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 334; Sarotte, *1989*, 179–84.

[135] Küsters, "Entscheidung," 191.

[136] The details were outlined in a separate bilateral Soviet-German treaty of 12 October 1990, ratified on 2 April 1991.

[137] Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 3)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 3–96, 4– 67.

by the Soviet leadership. After rejecting Kohl's Ten Points, at the end of January 1990 Gorbachev publicly agreed on the two Germanys' right to self-determination with regard to a possible unification. It is possible that at that time the Soviet leadership still hoped to bolster the SED's chances in the upcoming elections. In any case, Gorbachev seemed to expect that the reunification of Germany would be a long-term process taking about ten years. The process would be a chance to dismantle the two alliances and to create a "Common European Home" that included the USSR. The control of the Four Powers over Germany, the ambivalence of Britain and France, and the linking of the reunification process with the deconstruction of the Cold War division of Europe appeared to offer means for controlling the developments.

In particular this referred to the question of the united Germany's future membership in an alliance. After the fall of the SED, this seemed to be the only strategic question of importance. Gorbachev, who in 1989 had accepted a non-communist government in Poland but insisted on the country remaining in the Warsaw Pact, did not envisage a united Germany continuing the NATO membership of West Germany. He rather hoped to keep the issue in limbo until a new security system for Europe, including the USSR, was in place. However, the crumbling of the communist regime in the GDR, including the swelling exodus of its citizens to the FRG (according to projections in February 1990, estimated at becoming one million for the entire year), and the ambivalence of Britain and France turned the projected timetable upside down. In this situation, the West German government, which was concerned with avoiding a collapse due to migration and interested in using the opportunity for unity as well as in stabilizing the perestroika in Moscow, offered the USSR a reliable partnership and relief for some of its towering economic problems. Additional German and US concessions (NATO and CSCE reform, disarmament), the principle of self-determination, and, last but not least, the prospect of the USSR's reconciliation with its World War II adversary convinced the Soviet leader to give his consent.

In the beginning, Soviet options had ranged from preserving the GDR to using reunification for achieving Germany's neutralization. In the end, however, the Soviet arsenal was reduced considerably by pressure from the streets, the opening of the Wall, the elections in the GDR, the economic crisis in both the GDR and the USSR, and both countries' increasing reliance on West German money. Since force or threat of force was ruled out by Gorbachev, only a consensual solution seemed feasible. On the balance, Gorbachev achieved neither Germany's neutralization nor the dissolution of NATO. Nonetheless, economic aid for the USSR, the reform of NATO, and the partnership treaty were rewards of historic size.

Declassified documents from the years before 1990 show that internally Gorbachev spoke much more critically about Kohl and the German Question than one would be led to expect by his allegedly pro-Western stance[138] and his later

[138] Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, 318.

policies. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the issues of the Berlin Wall, Germany's reunification, and NATO membership caused a deep change from November 1989 to July 1990 in Gorbachev's thinking, a change that was essential for Soviet policy in these matters. Rafael Biermann has written that "Reunification had not been possible without his [Gorbachev's] change of mind," and Angela Stent has stated that Gorbachev was not the motor, but an enabler of this process.[139]

Despite the newly available evidence, it is still not entirely clear when Gorbachev became convinced to take each step toward agreeing with the various phases of Germany's reunification, nor is it clear what his motives were. This may be due, on one hand, to some sort of "notorious conceptlessness"[140] and the deep divisions within the Soviet apparatus. It was an apparatus that understood the details but lacked vision, with a leader who had a vision, but did not care much for details. Deputy Foreign Minister Kvitsinskii, the ambassador to Bonn, recalled that "we needed a clear idea of our plan for solving the problem, which was to comprise all the main aspects of regulation and mainly take account of Soviet interests. But there was no such plan in Moscow even in May 1990."[141] On the other hand, the available documents simply do not yet allow Gorbachev's (or for that matter, Shevardnadze's and Chernyaev's) deliberations to be assessed more precisely. While many minutes of the president's conversations with foreign leaders are accessible as are a number of internal drafts of advisors like Dashichev, the number of accessible administration, Politburo (whose significance was sinking) and Foreign Ministry papers is still insufficient.

In addition, the role of Eduard Shevardnadze should be analyzed better (and honored more). The foreign minister did not follow a balancing act between the "new thinking" and the USSR's imperialist residue, but apparently—even before the president did—seemed ready to radically implement the former and give up the latter. From the sparsely available documentation, his position seems to have been closer to that of Chernyaev, as became clear in May when they both favored a "realist" approach that did not veto the reunified Germany's NATO membership. As the delegation leader at the Two Plus Four negotiations, Shevardnadze had to press for the tougher position that had been adopted in the Politburo against his wishes. But after his failure to change the direction of the negotiations (and after further Western concessions, such as Baker's Nine Points), the approach of Shevardnadze and Chernyaev was vindicated some weeks later. It is, however, not yet clear whether Gorbachev at the 3 May Politburo session refused Germany's NATO membership (a) out of conviction, (b) in order to appease the anti-NATO forces in his governmental apparatus and to win time, or (c) in order to gain further Western concessions.

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[139] Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 41; Stent, *Russia*, 75.

[140] Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland*, 260. Cf. Stent, *Russia*, 121; Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie,* 10.

[141] Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm*, 11.

Nonetheless, it is clear that a correct assessment of Gorbachev's (and Shevardnadze's) motives can only be made within the context of a highly complex national and international environment framed by the goals of (1) ending the Cold War, (2) implementing perestroika and the "new thinking," and (3) halting the disintegration of communist rule and Soviet control in the Eastern bloc, as well as an environment determined by an economic crisis, the fierce political struggle between the liberal and imperialist factions of the Soviet apparatus, and the beginning national disintegration of the USSR. While the Baltic states' striving for independence interfered with German unification and vice versa,[142] the factional struggle seems to have increasingly influenced Gorbachev's timetable: The leader was clearly reluctant to announce any major agreements prior to the Central Committee Plenum held from 5 to 8 February 1990, which brought "for the first time sharp criticism" of Gorbachev's foreign policy, or the CPSU congress in July.[143] The ratification of the Two Plus Four Treaty in the Supreme Soviet became an opportunity for a witch hunt of Shevardnadze by communist hardliners. Under these conditions, Gorbachev tried to avoid premature announcements that would destabilize his own position.

In this process, traditional imperialist claims (or "security interests," as they are sometimes labeled) were gradually given up by the Soviet Union. Gorbachev, in return for Soviet acquiescence with unification and NATO membership, clearly did not demand all that he could have from Germany. Some Russian critics and Western authors have wondered why the Kremlin neither "sold the Wall brick by brick"[144] for political or economic concessions, nor "make the Germans 'an offer they couldn't refuse,'"[145] such as German unification for the price of the country's neutralization when this was still possible, namely, until January 1990. Disregarding the fact that a similar offer (whether genuine or not) had been rejected in 1952, this question seems to contradict the timetable of the Soviet decision making. When Gorbachev decided to grant German self-determination, that is, in late January, he still believed it would be possible to tie this process to the creation of a new security system that included the USSR. When it became clear that this aim could not be achieved, in late May, it was too late to withdraw the earlier promises without upsetting the USSR's Western partners or his perestroika at home.

Russian critics of the "new thinking" claimed that this process involved a "sell-out of Soviet interests."[146] In contrast, Kvitsinskii perceived the solution as

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[142] Kristina Spohr Readman, *Germany and the Baltic Problem after the Cold War: The Development of a new Ostpolitik, 1989–2000* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[143] Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, 10 February 1990, in Hilger, *Diplomatie*, 98–108, 101, 108; Conversation Genscher with Shevardnadze, 4 May 1990, ibid., 129–36, 134.

[144] Oldenburg, "Die Rekonstruktion," 779.

[145] Stent, *Russia*, 121. See also Falin, *Konflikte*, and Alexander von Plato, "Opposition Movements and Big Politics in the Reunification of Germany," in this volume, 307–19.

[146] Akhtamzyan, *Ob'edinenie Germanii*, 127.

the "best way to safeguard our interests […] Combining the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (Two Plus Four) with the signing of a comprehensive political agreement and a far-reaching economic agreement doubtlessly reflected the interests of the USSR as well as Germany."[147] Rice and Zelikow have stated: "One could argue that the amicable settlement of the partition of Germany was a farsighted choice for the Soviet Union."[148] Indeed, a consensual solution better reflected Soviet interests than a renewed Cold War or, at the very least, tension in Soviet relations with its main Western trading partner, Germany. In addition, the West fulfilled a number of Soviet wishes, such as changing NATO's posture, advancing the CSCE, and offering financial loans and disarmament.[149] Therefore it would seem unfair to accuse Gorbachev and Shevardnadze of having gained nothing in return for their consent. That the "Common European Home" failed to be realized was a consequence of the Warsaw Pact's and the Soviet Union's demise. This did not happen because the West brought about their disintegration, but rather because Gorbachev's adherence to principles of nonviolence was stronger than his will to preserve Soviet domination abroad, centrifugal forces in the former Soviet empire overturned the centripetal ones and the cost for maintaining the empire exceeded Soviet capabilities. While the first reason was clearly a consequence of the "new thinking," the latter two processes had not been caused by it, as has been claimed by Gorbachev's critics, but by the past political and economic mortgage of Soviet and communist rule as well as its de-legitimization both at the periphery and in the center.

Second, the compromise that was achieved opened the way for a historical compromise with the West in general and with Germany in particular. It enabled the leader not only to reconcile theory (i.e. past Soviet lip-service to German self-determination and unity) with practice, as Marxism demanded, and thus to resolve one of the many "grand delusions" of Soviet policy. It also paved the way for reconciliation with Germany, which offered better conditions for the USSR's security and economy and for the country's relations with its most important Western trading partner than a continued Soviet blockade of German unity would have done. After the signing of the Two Plus Four Treaty, the Soviet media opined that the "time bomb" of the divided Germany had been "deactivated."[150] Andrei

[147] Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm*, 18, 20.

[148] Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, xi.

[149] Without, however, pledging a non-enlargement of NATO in Eastern Europe. The respective offers were made with respect to the former GDR. Mark Kramer, "The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement-Pledge to Russia," *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2009): 39–61 and Kristina Spohr, "Precluded or Precedent-Setting? The 'NATO Enlargement Question' in the Triangular Bonn-Washington-Moscow Diplomacy of 1990–1991," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 4 (2012): 4–54. Gorbachev stresses that negotiating NATO (non-) enlargement into Eastern Europe while the Warsaw Pact still existed would have been "absolute stupidity." Gorbatschow, *Wie es war*, 103.

[150] Quoted in Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt*, 754.

Grachev likened German-Soviet reconciliation with the German-French one after World War II.[151] Gorbachev stressed the new quality of relations with the "great [*velikii*] German people"[152] and later wrote in his memoirs: "Thus we drew a final line under the past and recent history of our nations, opening, I hope, a new, lasting period in relations between Germany and Russia, when all the positive common heritage built up over the centuries in German-Russian relations will finally bear fruit."[153]

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[151] Grachev, *Gorbachev's Gamble*, 224.

[152] Gorbachev in a Soviet-German press conference, 16 July 1990, in *MGGV*, 533.

[153] Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 535. The unification of Germany has not had a negative influence on Russian opinions about Germany. Tatiana Timofeeva, "Russische Reaktion auf den deutschen Einigungsprozess im Spiegel damaliger und heutiger Umfragen," *Forum für osteuropäische Ideen- und Zeitgeschichte* 14, no. 1 (2010): 85–98.

Klaus Larres

# MARGARET THATCHER AND GERMAN UNIFICATION REVISITED

The eventful years 1989–90 not only led to the breaching of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and German unification in October 1990, but also to a great deal of concern among European politicians. In particular, the British prime minister was greatly alarmed. While the United States supported the unification of the German nation, both Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and French president François Mitterrand were strongly opposed. Thatcher was never able to overcome her deep personal dislike and suspicion of the developments which by late 1990 had led to the end of the Cold War and a year later to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Although in early 1990 Mitterrand and, within a few weeks, also Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev reluctantly and conditionally gave their agreement to the unification of Germany, Thatcher would never warm to the re-creation of a unified German nation.[1]

In fact, the British prime minister, who had first entered Downing Street in May 1979, did not hesitate to make it repeatedly clear that for her, reunification was not on the agenda. Even after the fall of the Wall on 9 November and West German chancellor Helmut Kohl's cautious Ten-Point scheme for reunification of 28 November 1989, Thatcher continued to believe that tinkering with European frontiers was out of the question. Instead, she spoke in favor of maintaining the political independence of a democratized GDR.[2] While Thatcher had always

[1] For the best personal accounts, see Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: HarperCollins, 1993); George R. Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion at the Court of Margaret Thatcher: An Insider's View* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996); Percy Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests: Reflections on Foreign Policy under Margaret Thatcher and John Major* (London: John Murray, 1997).

[2] See Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 793–94; and also for one of the best accounts of German unification, Andreas Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland. Die Geschichte der Wiedervereinigung* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 158; Werner Weidenfeld with Peter Wagner and Elke Bruck, *Außenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit: Die Entscheidungsjahre 1989/90, Geschichte der deutschen Einheit 4* (Stuttgart: dtv, 1998), 131–32; Alexander von Plato, *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands—ein weltpolitisches Machtspiel: Bush, Kohl, Gorbachev und die geheimen Moskauer Protokolle* (Berlin: Links, 2002). An excellent survey is also provided by Hanns Jürgen Küster's introduction to the volume Hanns Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hoffmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit: Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998)*, 21–236. See also the articles in Frederic Bozo et al., eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008). Other good accounts are Elizabeth Pond, *Beyond the Wall: Germany's Road to Unification* (Washington, D.C., 1993); Angela Fischer, *Entscheidungsprozess zur deutschen Wiedervereinigung der au-*

shown a great deal of sympathy for the dissidents and liberation movements of Eastern Europe, she hardly ever mentioned their counterparts in the GDR. Instead, she publicly envisaged an extended period of transition of about ten to fifteen years and speculated on the difficulties of integrating the GDR into the European Community.[3] Thatcher also supported Gorbachev's November 1989 proposal for convening a second Helsinki summit conference. The cumbersome mechanism of the Helsinki process would have required the nigh-to-impossible consent of all thirty-five participating states. This had the advantage, as seen from London, of delaying reunification significantly, even though going down this road would have ignored the special responsibility of the four World War II victors for all questions concerning the whole of Germany and Berlin. During the entire postwar period Britain had been quite proud of this prerogative.[4]

Throughout her premiership Thatcher took it for granted that Germany was to remain partitioned for a long time to come. She always held strong anti-German sentiments. For instance, in 1984 she told George Urban, an occasional advisor who at times was rather close to her, that it was entirely wrong to claim that the Germans were the paymasters of Europe. "The Germans have been simply paying reparations for all the things they did during the war; we couldn't call it that, but that is what they have been doing."[5] Urban was alarmed. "The strength of the PM's views about Europe and Germany came as a surprise. I found them disturbing."[6]

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*ßen- und deutschlandpolitische Entscheidungsprozeß der Koalitionsregierung Kohl/Genscher in den Schicksalsjahren 1989/90* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Land, 1996). Specifically focused on Britain are Norbert Himmler, *Zwischen Macht und Mittelmaß. Großbritanniens Außenpolitik und das Ende des Kalten Krieges: Akteure, Interessen und Entscheidungsprozesse der britischen Regierung 1989/90* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001); Klaus-Rainer Jackisch, *Eisern gegen die Einheit: Margaret Thatcher und die deutsche Wiedervereinigung* (Frankfurt am Main: Societätsverlag, 2004). For an interesting MA thesis, see Sven Sochorik, *Die Rolle Großbritanniens beim Wiedervereinigungsprozeß Deutschlands 1989/90* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2003).

[3] Mallaby (Bonn) to Hurd (London), 5 Jan. 1990, in Patrick Salmon, Keith Hamilton, and Stephen Robert Twigge, eds., *Documents on British Policy Overseas III, vol. 7: German Unification 1989–1990* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009) (hereafter *DBPO*), 190.

[4] See George H.W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 236. For Thatcher's attitude toward both the German "problem" and European integration, see her memoirs, *Downing Street Years*, chapters 24–26. For one of the best articles on this issue, see Lothar Kettenacker, "Britain and German Unification, 1989/90," in Klaus Larres with Elizabeth Meehan, eds., *Uneasy Allies: British-German Relations and European Integration since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 99–123. See also Patrick Salmon, "The United Kingdom and German Unification," in Frederic Bozo et al., eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008), 177–90; Yvonne Klein, "Obstructive or Promoting? British Views of German Unification, 1989/90," *German Politics* 5, no. 3 (1996): 404–31. For the Helsinki idea, see Kettenacker, "Britain," 114. See also the pamphlet Gillian Staerk and Michael Kandiah, eds., *Anglo-German Reunification* (London: ICBH Witness Seminar Programme, 2003).

[5] Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion*, 82.

[6] Ibid., 87.

At this time, as well as toward the end of the decade, she believed that the "German problem" was deeply linked to flaws in the German national character, which had developed partially due to Germany's late unification in 1871. This had made Germany sway "unpredictably between aggression and self-doubt."[7] The creation of a more integrated Europe, she was convinced, would not overcome this dilemma but make matters worse, since Germany would undoubtedly dominate Western Europe. Germany's economic interests, moreover, would make the country continue to look west but also increasingly toward the east, as it had always done in the past. It could be expected, Thatcher reasoned, that Germany was "thus by its very nature a destabilizing rather than a stabilizing force in Europe." She was deeply convinced that reunification would make Germany "simply too big and powerful to be just another player within Europe." The "military and political engagement" of the United States on the European continent and close Anglo-American and Anglo-French relations were necessary, she believed, to contain and balance German power, "and nothing of the sort would be possible within a European super-state."[8]

Thatcher was not only deeply opposed to German reunification, she also never managed to find a bridge between her strong anti-European convictions and the importance with which the European project was seen on the continent. The statement quoted below from Thatcher's memoirs depicts particularly well her simultaneous bafflement about the latter and her own thinking along very traditional foreign policy lines.

> This desire among modern German politicians to merge their national identity in a wider European one is understandable enough, but it presents great difficulties to self-conscious nation-states in Europe. In effect, the Germans, because they are nervous of governing themselves, want to establish a European system in which no nation will govern itself. Such a system could be unstable in the long term and, because of Germany's size and preponderance, is bound to be lop-sided. Obsession with a European Germany risks producing a German Europe.[9]

Current literature on this topic reveals a certain re-evaluation of the attitude and role of the European actors in the process of German unification. This, in my view, has led to a more benign interpretation of the attitude and policy of both the French and the British foreign policy elite than is justified on the basis of the available documents and other primary and secondary sources.[10]

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[7] Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 791.

[8] Ibid. See also the insightful memoirs of her Foreign Policy Advisor Percy Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests*, 110; Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion* 81–87.

[9] Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 748.

[10] For a benign re-interpretation of Mitterrand's policy, see the otherwise excellent book by Frederic Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War and German Unification* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009); see also Frederic Bozo, "France, German unification and European integration," in idem et al., eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008), 148–60.

This chapter, however, is mostly concerned with Britain's foreign policy in 1989–90 and wishes to reassess this policy. This is because statements such as the following appear to distort the historical record: "Thatcher was not wholly opposed to German unity; the FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office] was not 100 per cent in favour."[11] This chapter will demonstrate that the first part is entirely mistaken, while the second part is perfectly correct. It also is questionable whether "Britain's policies on Germany were closely aligned with those of its allies."[12] It will be shown that at least until February–March 1990 this was clearly not the case. It also confuses the issue when British foreign policy in 1989–90 is justified as follows: "If the British expressed reservations they did not concern the principle but the timing of the process and the framework within which it was to take place."[13] In fact, the timing very much was identical with the principle. If Thatcher, as she said at one point, wanted to postpone and delay unification for ten to fifteen years (or even just for a few years), she essentially wished to prevent German unification for a considerable period of time. And this was exactly a continuation of the policy of the Western allies during the Cold War years, when the high-minded principle of German unification was never questioned although it was expected that unification would only occur far in the future. Moreover, once Gorbachev had left the political scene in the Soviet Union, it was by no means self-evident that his successor would also agree to let the GDR go its own way and merge with West Germany. In fact, this appeared to be questionable. Margaret Thatcher was well aware of all this.

## Margaret Thatcher and the influence of World War II

Behind Thatcher's deep mistrust of the German national character and her fears of the emergence of a fourth German Reich, there were profound personal and political convictions. These strongly held beliefs made Margaret Thatcher bold enough to do her best to prevent German unification, or at least try to delay the process as much as possible. Like many other problems in Anglo-German relations over the years, Thatcher's mistrust dated back to the Second World War.[14]

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[11] Salmon, "The United Kingdom and German Unification," 188. This is a good article on the whole, but Salmon is one of the British Foreign Office's most senior and respected historians and perhaps naturally he cannot approach the unification issue without a certain bias in favor of his employers, the British policy-making elite.

[12] Ibid., 177.

[13] Ibid.

[14] For recent general accounts on British-German relations since 1945, see Larres with Meehan, eds., *Uneasy Allies*; Sabine Lee, *Victory in Europe: Britain and Germany since 1945* (Harlow: Longman, 2001); Edward Foster and Peter Schmidt, *Anglo-German Relations in security and defence: taking stock* (London: RUSI, 1997).

When war broke out, Margaret Roberts was almost fourteen years old. Due to the proximity of a munitions factory and an airfield run by the Royal Air Force, her home town Grantham in Lincolnshire in the English Midlands was the target of twenty-one raids by Hitler's Luftwaffe. The town also suffered from recurring difficulties due to the lack of food and electricity supplies. Above all, however, it was her father's patriotic stories, his deep Methodist faith and the excruciating narratives of Edith, a seventeen-year-old Jewish girl from Austria, that influenced Margaret highly. Edith was the daughter of friends in Nazi-occupied Vienna and she lived with the Roberts family for a short while in 1938. The girl told them about the painful living conditions of the Jewish population under the Nazis which she had herself experienced. Edith also referred to the terrible events in the camps of which she had heard. Both left a deep mark upon the future Prime Minister.[15]

This also influenced Margaret Thatcher's thinking after the end of the war, the more so as almost a quarter of the voters in her later constituency in the London district of Finchley were of Jewish origin. Many of them had managed to flee Germany during the Nazi period. When Thatcher ran for the parliamentary seat of that constituency, she was repulsed by the openly anti-Semitic policy of the local Conservative Party. Her opposition to these prejudices was certainly influenced by electoral tactics, but Thatcher's personal convictions did not allow her to tolerate anti-Semitic sentiment. She was appalled, for instance, that in 1957 many of the leading lights of the party had agreed with the decision of the Finchley Golf Club to refuse membership to Jews.[16]

After her election to parliament in the general election of October 1959, Thatcher studiously nursed the Jewish vote in her constituency. This continued when her enormous energy and inclination for hard work had helped her eliminate former prime minister Edward Heath as leader of the Conservative Party by means of a party political coup in February 1975. Even when she finally became head of government in 1979, Thatcher never forgot to look after the Jewish vote in her constituency in Finchley. A corollary of this was the new prime minister being very well informed about the situation in the Middle East; she always displayed great understanding for Israel's policies. Disregarding the traditional pro-Arab tendencies of British foreign policy, Thatcher was the first British prime minister to pay Israel an official visit in 1986.[17]

Not surprisingly, throughout the 1980s Prime Minister Thatcher's views on Germany were strongly influenced by the Holocaust and her experiences with her constituency. On top of this was her over-developed patriotism, her profound belief in a close Anglo-American "special relationship," and the important role

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[15] Margaret Thatcher, *The Path to Power* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), 26–32. See also John Campbell's excellent biography, *Margaret Thatcher, Vol.1: The Grocer's Daughter* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), 38–39, and for her parents' influence on her, see ibid., 16–31, 34ff.

[16] See Thatcher, *Path to Power*, 98–99.

[17] Ibid., 372–80; Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 509–12.

which in her view Britain continued to play on the world scene. Thatcher's convictions regarding the European integration process further fuelled her mistrust of the Germans, who seemed determined to build a federal European super-state. Only close economic cooperation between the European states on the basis of a Europe of sovereign nations was considered desirable by Thatcher. In this sense she was a Gaullist. At the same time her deep convictions about the sovereignty of the nation state made her firmly reject a federal European political union in any form that went beyond the idea of an economic Common Market.[18]

While Thatcher's anti-European convictions had always caused speculation and a great deal of concern among the other EC member states, by 1988 her hostility to and frustration with the EC Commission in Brussels had reached new heights.[19] During her speech to the College of Bruges in Belgium on 20 September 1988, Thatcher made no secret of her sentiments. She explained in no uncertain terms that her government had "not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain only to see them re-imposed at a European level, with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels."[20] She lectured her pro-European audience that "the best way to build a successful European Community" consisted of "willing and active co-operation between independent sovereign states." Thatcher emphasized that Europe must look outward to the Atlantic Community. The prime minister did not hesitate to admonish her listeners to "let Europe be a family of nations" and relish "our national identity no less than our common European endeavour."

It was the North Atlantic alliance that represented Thatcher's ideal international organization. She tended to heap praise on NATO as, after all, NATO did not rest on a supranational foundation as did the EC. And instead of irritating Washington with competing trade and economic policies, the Alliance bound the United States to Europe in matters of security policy. Not surprisingly, in the UK the EC was regarded as of much lesser importance than the Atlantic alliance. Ever since Britain had joined the EEC in 1973, the country had nourished feelings of marginalization within the European Community. This did not help to create closer bonds with the other EC member states. During the 1980s Britain remained

[18] Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, chapters 24–25.

[19] Percy Cradock, Thatcher's loyal foreign affairs advisor, differentiates persuasively between three stages in her anti-Europeanism: between 1979 and 1984 her relations with Brussels were poor and dominated by her battles over the Community budget and a British rebate; the second much more positive stage lasted from 1984 to 1987, when Thatcher supported both the completion of the Single Market and the Single European Act; the third particularly dark phase covered her last three years in office (1988–90) when she strongly opposed the Delors' report on monetary union and when there existed severe differences of view about Europe in Thatcher's Cabinet and government. See Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests*, 125. See also Sharp, *Thatcher's Diplomacy*, 141ff., 160ff.

[20] Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 744–45. For the full text of the speech, see http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332 (accessed 3 June 2013).

an "awkward partner" within the EC. By contrast, within NATO Britain was able to play a superior role due to its nuclear status and its close cooperation with the United States.[21]

Fundamentally, Thatcher followed a Churchillian foreign policy which clung to the old concept of the necessity of a balance of power between the European great powers. A sub-heading introducing a brief but important section of her memoirs is entitled "The German Problem and the Balance of Power."[22] Thatcher's foreign policy was always greatly focused on continuing the old friendship with the United States, not least as she got on very well with US president Ronald Reagan. Thatcher and Reagan shared a common conservative outlook on the world's major problems and a deep and profound anti-communism. They both also greatly believed in the desirability of unrestricted free enterprise and the substantial reduction of government interference in a country's economic and social policies. The two politicians, and their spouses, managed to develop a genuine personal friendship.[23] This occurred despite the fact that this highly intelligent and dynamic prime minister was confronted with a president whose, in Roy Jenkins' words, "grasp of his marbles sometimes seems precarious."[24] Yet, as French president Mitterrand is said to have noted, "Mrs. Thatcher, who can be so tough when she talks to her European partners, is like a little girl of eight years old when she talks to the president of the United States. You have to cock your ear to hear, she's really touching."[25]

The close relations with Reagan survived a number of serious political disputes. For instance Thatcher was not impressed when the Reagan administration initially withheld support for Britain's position in the 1982 Falklands conflict. Eventually, however, the United States strongly supported Thatcher's war.[26] Reagan's unilateral disarmament deals with Gorbachev, which occurred without much consultation with the Europeans, also alarmed her a great deal. After all, the Americans hardly even bothered to consult Europe's two nuclear powers, Britain and France. Thatcher feared a bilateral deal between the superpowers and the gradual withdrawal of America's security umbrella from Europe. She always remained deeply convinced that the cultivation of bilateral links with the United

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21 See for example Stephen George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Larres with Meehan, eds., *Uneasy Allies*.

22 Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 790.

23 See for example Nicholas Wapshott, *Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher: a political marriage* (New York: Sentinel, 1997); Geoffrey Smith, *Reagan and Thatcher* (London: Bodley Head, 1990).

24 Quoted in Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion*, 66.

25 Quoted ibid., 95.

26 See Richard Thornton, *Falklands Sting: Reagan, Thatcher, and Argentinia's bomb* (Washington, D.C. and London: Brassey's, 1998); Lawrence Freedman and Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse, *The Signals of war: the Falklands conflict of 1982* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1990).

States was of crucial importance for the successful conduct of Britain's foreign policy. "We must never again," she proclaimed after having studied the disastrous Suez Crisis of 1956, "find ourselves on the opposite side to the United States in a major international crisis affecting Britain's interests."[27]

She was not amused, therefore, when during a visit to Mainz in late May 1989, new President George H.W. Bush, Reagan's successor, referred to the West Germans as "partners in leadership." This smacked of a downgrading of Britain's jealously guarded "special relationship" with the United States, not least as previously Bush appears to have indicated to her that her influence in the White House might be less than under his predecessor.[28] This did not go down well. Percy Cradock, Thatcher's foreign policy advisor, is quite correct when he observes that Anglo-American relations under President Bush "remained very close." However, "some of the special intimacy was lost and British influence declined from its high point. The principal factors were reduced East-West tension, the growing importance of Germany and the Bush Administration's interest in European integration."[29] After all, at this point in time Anglo-German relations were strained. The brewing dispute over the modernization of short-range nuclear missiles in Europe (SNF) had put the British and German leaders in opposing camps. True to form as Europe's last cold warrior, Thatcher favored the modernization of these so-called tactical nuclear missiles despite the internal and foreign policy consequences of Gorbachev's reform policies and the rapidly changing nature of the East-West conflict, which could already be discerned.[30]

The West German government led by Christian Democrat chancellor Helmut Kohl believed that the modernization of these expensive weapon systems, which directly targeted German territory, would waste resources and, above all, would pull the rug from under Gorbachev's reform policies and give out the wrong signals. Kohl also had to take the strong anti-militaristic feelings of German public opinion and the country's large peace movement into account (which unbeknown to the West, received significant financial support from the East). Bonn favored NATO negotiations with the Soviets, above all, perhaps, to make the modernization of these weapons systems unnecessary. In contrast, London dismissively talked about the West Germans as having been seduced by Gorbachev's charm offensive. Thatcher believed she had to toughen up the Kohl government. Chancellor Kohl, she feared, might well give in to the pressure coming from both "an always instinctively neutralist German public opinion" and "Gorbymania," the German public's enthusiasm for the reform and disarmament policies of the

[27] Quoted in Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests*, 53.

[28] See Herbert S. Parmet, *George Bush: The Life of a Lone Star Yankee* (New York: Scribner, 1997), 389–90; see also Michael Mandelbaum, "The Bush Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990): 5–22, 8.

[29] Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests*, 201.

[30] See for example Michael J. Turner, *Britain's International Role, 1970–1991* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), 128–30; Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 771–2, 784–9.

dynamic Soviet leader.[31] And indeed Gorbachev's 1989 visit to the Federal Republic was a huge success; wherever he went he was enthusiastically received, almost like a rock star.[32] Thatcher's anti-communist position in the SNF matter was curious, since she usually went out of her way to support Gorbachev. In fact, she was greatly afraid that pushing for German reunification would undermine Gorbachev's position in the USSR and lead to his downfall, which in turn would de-stabilize East-West relations. And for Thatcher international order and stability took precedence over the introduction of democracy and, certainly, the establishment of German unity. Moreover, Thatcher felt rather possessive about Gorbachev and believed she had "discovered" him (if not "invented" him), since she had asked him to visit London before he had even become secretary general.[33]

During Thatcher's visit to Deidesheim in late April 1989, Kohl's hometown, the two of them discussed the SNF matter for two hours. But soon, "behind the stage-managed friendliness" of the meeting, their talks "became quite heated" and "acrimonious."[34] At an Anglo-German summit in Frankfurt a short while later, the tone was even worse. Kohl got rather "agitated" and "worked up" and shouted that "he did not need any lectures about NATO" from Thatcher.[35] Another few weeks passed before on 19 May Thatcher was forced to realize that the American policy had also shifted. In view of the winding down of the Cold War, the United States, as well as almost all other NATO countries, now favored SNF negotiations, although a "zero option" was to be excluded.[36]

At the next NATO summit in late May 1989 Thatcher was "the odd man out", as she saw it. And indeed, she was essentially the only head of government present who was still arguing very much along traditional Cold War lines as if nothing had happened.[37] She never tired of emphasizing that the West needed to be in a much stronger position and pursue a policy of strength. This meant that rearming and modernizing were necessary prior to any negotiations with the Soviets.[38] In the course of the summit Thatcher managed with great effort to make SNF negotiations conditional on the implementation of reductions in conventional forces by both military blocs, but she had basically lost the main argument. Negotiations about the short-range nuclear missiles in Europe would be proposed

31 Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 747.

32 See Kettenacker, "Britain," 105–6. Gorbachev visited West Germany from 12 to 15 June 1989 and was received with unprecedented popular enthusiasm. See Helmut Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1982–1990* (Munich: Droemer, 2005), 885ff.; Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 520–22. For a good account, see von Plato, *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands*, 38ff.

33 Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests*, 200–1; see also Paul Sharp, *Thatcher's Diplomacy: The Revival of British Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 214–15.

34 See Kettenacker, "Britain," 104–05; Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 747, 786.

35 Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 787.

36 Ibid., 788–89.

37 For Kohl's view of the NATO meeting, see Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1982–1990*, 868ff.

38 Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 788.

to the Kremlin and a "zero" option could no longer be entirely excluded. Thatcher was greatly frustrated. She concluded that "the new American approach was to subordinate clear statements of intention about the alliance's defense to the political sensibilities of the Germans. I did not think that this boded well."[39]

The prime minister was not reassured when President Bush told her during his subsequent visit to London that not only the Germans, but "we too were partners in leadership."[40] It was perfectly understandable that Thatcher was not impressed by this condescending statement, which took no heed of Britain's much cherished "special relationship" with Washington. This greatly fanned Thatcher's jealousy of and rivalry with the German leader for the ear of both the Americans and the Soviets. This came on top of all her other suspicions and mistrust.

In his speech in Mainz in May 1989, Bush had also called for the removal of the Iron Curtain and explained that "we seek self-determination for all of Germany and all of Eastern Europe" to create a "Europe whole and free."[41] More direct references to unification, however, had been removed from the draft of the speech by Brent Scowcroft, the president's national security advisor and closest political confidant. Scowcroft had not thought it wise for the United States to overtake Chancellor Kohl on the fast lane with references to the German national question.[42]

## Lack of support for Thatcher's policies in 1989–90

Within a few months it became clear that Prime Minister Thatcher's policy, inspired by her deepest convictions, had failed to maintain the partition of Germany and thereby the Cold War status quo. Essentially, three factors proved decisive in this respect:

1. The lack of support that Thatcher found for her position in the British public opinion and from British parliamentarians.
2. The much more far-sighted policy of the United States, which eventually was also adopted by France and the USSR. This greatly undermined Thatcher's position.
3. Last but not least, the opposition of her foreign policy experts in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to their prime minister's policy in the German unification question had a profound impact. However, this opposition was perhaps less pronounced than has been claimed in the years since Thatcher's downfall.

In the following these three factors will be elaborated upon.

[39] Ibid., 789.

[40] Ibid., 799.

[41] See Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 83.

[42] See Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 31, 93.

*British public opinion and the Houses of Parliament*

By and large, public opinion in Britain was in favor of reunification. Despite a widespread mistrust of the Germans in large sectors of the population due to the experiences of the past, many Britons also had a great deal of understanding for the German desire to restore the unity of their nation. Impressed and astounded by the opening of the Wall on 9 November 1989, a full 71 percent of polled Britons supported reunification. In spite of the prime minister's anti-German warnings, on average an impressive 61 percent of the population in the United Kingdom welcomed reunification.[43] Simultaneously, however, almost half of all Britons (predominantly from the older generation) nourished apprehensions regarding the economic potential of a reunified Germany. Many (in fact 53 percent) also feared the return of Fascist tendencies in German politics.[44]

A similar acquiescence to reunification with a simultaneous uneasiness over its consequences for Britain characterized the debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The vast majority of British members of parliament (including a large number of older Members, who had been directly affected by the war) were convinced that a positive change in the political culture had taken place in the Federal Republic in the preceding decades. Most had no doubts about the well-anchored democratic character of the West German system. An impressive majority of MPs also believed that the three Western allies' repeated verbal assurances about their support for German unification during the last forty years should now be honored. Otherwise, Western credibility and friendly relations with the Germans would be put at risk.[45]

The time was long gone that statements such as the one made by British foreign minister Selwyn Lloyd in the context of the June 1953 anti-communist uprising in the GDR were acceptable. "Everyone—Dr Adenauer, the Russians, the Americans, the French and ourselves—feel in our hearts that a divided Germany is safer for the time being. But none of us dare say so openly because of the effect on German public opinion. Therefore we all publicly support a united Germany, each on his own terms."[46] Yet, this had been stated almost forty years previously. And most of those mentioned by Lloyd had changed their minds in the meantime—except No. 10 Downing Street. Here the concerns of yesteryear continued to exist in almost undiluted form.

Whereas there was a major consensus among MPs concerning the necessity to have a unified Germany remain in NATO, an intensification of the European

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43 See for the polls and for a good analysis Klein, "Obstructive or Promoting?," 422.

44 See Kettenacker, "Britain," 103.

45 Klein, "Obstructive or Promoting?," 417–21.

46 Lloyd to Churchill, PM/MS/53/224, 22 June 1953, in UK National Archives, FO371/103 665/C1071/56. See also Klaus Larres, *Churchill's Cold War: The Politics of Personal Diplomacy* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002), 177–80.

integration process was rejected. Only a small minority of British members of parliament were convinced that the expected huge economic strength of the new Germany could be neutralized by integrating the Germans even more closely into the European Community.[47]

Together with a reunified Germany remaining in NATO, which Thatcher strongly supported, the deepening of European integration by means of monetary union was precisely the instrument, however, that was seen as the solution in the West to make the re-creation of a united Germany acceptable. Both US president George H.W. Bush and French president Mitterrand supported this. In fact the idea had originated in France. West German chancellor Helmut Kohl was also in favor. This way, he believed, the danger of any potential destabilization of the postwar European order by German reunification would be removed and Germany's neighbors would be greatly reassured. In principle, the European Monetary Union had already been agreed upon in June 1989 during the EC summit meeting in Madrid, but not much had happened since to realize this lofty goal apart from the plan to convene an intergovernmental conference some time in 1990.[48] The dramatic developments in the second half of 1989 gave the EMU new impetus. The construction of a united Europe, including monetary union, was, according to EC Commission president Jacques Delors, a Frenchman, "the only satisfactory and acceptable response to the German question."[49]

### *Accepting German unification: The US, France, and the Soviet Union*

In the late 1980s, in the context of Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union, a number of position papers were written in Western capitals about the German Question and West Germany's role within Western politics. Still, unification was only referred to in rather cautious and hypothetical terms, although the de-stabilizing developments in the GDR were watched carefully and not without concern.[50]

### The beginning of the end for the GDR

The first hole in the Iron Curtain appeared on 2 May 1989 when in the context of its "preemptive course from above,"[51] Hungary began to dismantle its frontier fences with Austria, without however opening the border. Fuelled by a

[47] Klein, "Obstructive or Promoting?," 420–21, 432.

[48] See Michael J. Baun, "The Maastricht Treaty as High Politics: Germany, France and European Integration," *Political Science Quarterly* 110, no. 4 (Winter 1995-96), especially 608ff.

[49] Ibid., 609.

[50] See *DBPO*, xi–xii; also Salmon, "The UK and German Unification," 180–81.

[51] See Timothy Garton Ash. *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1993), 344.

great deal of anger about the manipulation of the local elections in the GDR on 7 May 1989 and the GDR government's public support for China's bloody crushing of the Tiananmen Square protests in June, public discontent about the poor and restrictive living conditions in East Germany became ever greater. Furthermore, during his visit to West Germany in June 1989, even Gorbachev had said in a speech "that it was the right of all peoples and states to determine freely their destiny" and that every state was fully entitled "to choose freely its own political and social system as well as unqualified adherence to the norms and principles of international law, especially respect for the right of peoples self-determination."[52] The Brezhnev Doctrine seemed to have been buried for good. Gorbachev had also hinted at the possibility of holding free elections in East Germany and dismantling the Wall if the circumstances that had created it were to disappear.[53]

It was in August 1989 that events spiraled out of control for the old men who ruled the GDR. In early August the massive Monday demonstrations in Leipzig began. In late August a new Social Democratic Party was founded, and soon the civil rights groups "New Forum" and "Democracy Now" were set up. While many of the regular Monday protesters still hoped that the GDR would embark on a more reform-oriented course and could be stabilized again, an even greater number had given up and only desired to leave the GDR as quickly as possible. An increasing number of young people travelled to Hungary to camp near the border with Austria or began occupying the West German embassy in Budapest. Soon thousands of East Germans were refusing to leave the West German embassies in Prague and Warsaw.

On 19 August Hungary allowed 600 East Germans to cross the border into Austria in the course of what was termed the "pan-European picnic." Soon their place was taken by newly arrived young East Germans. Hungary clearly did not want to use force to honor the 1969 trade agreement with the GDR, which obliged Budapest to return refugees to the East German government. After a secret visit of the prime minister and foreign minister of Hungary to Bonn on 25 August, the Hungarian government opened the border to Austria. An East German delegation that had tried to negotiate with the East Germans was thrown out of the camp. The Kohl government offered substantial financial and economic aid to Hungary and from 11 September 1989, all East Germans camping at the Hungarian-Austrian border were allowed to travel to the West. Within three days, 15,000 East Germans had gone to West Germany. By the end of the month, 7,000 young East Germans were occupying the West German embassy in Prague and also clamoring to go West.

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[52] Quoted in Klaus Larres, "Germany in 1989: the Development of a Revolution," in idem, ed., *Germany since Unification: The Development of the Berlin Republic*, 2n ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 33–59, 45.

[53] See ibid. 45–46. The following account is based on this article, 41ff.

Eventually West German foreign minister Genscher succeeded in negotiating a deal with the GDR authorities. Erich Honecker, the East German leader, wished to avoid any further embarrassment before the GDR's fortieth anniversary celebrations between 6 and 8 October. Honecker expected the visits of a great number of communist party leaders and heads of government, including Gorbachev. Honecker was suffering from cancer (though this wasn't admitted) and had only returned to work on 25 September, after an absence of some two months; the old and weakened leader was clearly unprepared for what awaited him in his country, which seemed to have changed radically overnight.

The East Germans were promised exit visas for West Germany, although the GDR government insisted on the face-saving device that the trains had to cross GDR territory to enable East Berlin to give the emigrants documents that released them from their GDR citizenship. Soon the embassy in Prague was again filled to capacity with East Germans. And once again Genscher negotiated the same solution as before. But this time the procedure turned into a debacle. Hundreds of people tried to jump onto the trains and join the emigrants when the trains passed through. On 4 October more than 3,000 people waited for the passing train at the railway station in Dresden with the desire to jump onto the train. Fierce battles with the police ensued. Throughout the GDR's anniversary celebrations a few days later, the protests continued, leading to pitched battles with the police.

During his visit to East Berlin Gorbachev was distinctly cool to Honecker, indicating indirectly that the latter's time in power was coming to an end. This further encouraged the demonstrators in East Berlin and other East German cities. During the mass demonstrations in Leipzig on 9 October, which brought more than 70,000 people to the streets, the state did not intervene to end the protest as had been expected, although an overwhelming police force had been assembled. The passivity of the state encouraged further mass demonstrations. Faced with widespread civil unrest, just over a week later, on 18 October 1989, Honecker was forced to resign all his leadership positions by his Politburo colleagues. He was replaced as secretary general of the SED Central Committee by Egon Krenz, his heir apparent. Krenz, however, was generally regarded as an orthodox, weak and opportunistic politician. He was a poor choice. Another mass protest took place on 4 November. Five days later, on 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall was unexpectedly opened. It was an event that changed world history and sounded the death knell for both the GDR and soon also the Soviet Union itself.

On 18 November, just over a week after the opening of the Wall, a new coalition government led by Politburo member Hans Modrow took over the reigns of power in East Berlin. Modrow was generally regarded as a reform-minded and more flexible communist. He did not hesitate to refer to his interest in talks about a "union by treaty" with West Germany. Throughout November and December he propagated a simple confederation of the two German states and the continuation of a separate East German government. This was also the hope secretly entertained by

the British prime minister and the French president. On 7 December 1989 Egon Krenz, the last head of state of the GDR and SED party leader, resigned his positions. He was succeeded de facto by Prime Minister Hans Modrow who remained in charge of the GDR government until the first and last democratic elections in the GDR on 18 March 1990. Election day had been put forward from May in view of the economic collapse and the huge number of people leaving the GDR. However, already by the time of Krenz's resignation in early December 1989 the course toward Germany unity had been set in motion, perhaps irreversibly so.[54]

## The Four Powers

In the course of September and October 1989, in the face of the increasing disintegration of the East German state, German unity had become an ever more distinct possibility. Western politicians, however, were careful not to approach the issue too openly or too directly. West German politicians also held back. Still, all three Western allies made positive albeit cautious and vague references about their support for reunification. The US government approached the issue carefully by means of a speech by Secretary of State James Baker on 16 October. Acting on the advice of Brent Scowcroft, Baker referred to "reconciliation" rather than "reunification."[55] This was interpreted as American backtracking by the media. Press reports also claimed that some Western countries were fearful about the likely emergence of a reunited and possibly neutralist Germany. A week later, on 24 October, President George H.W. Bush gave an interview to the *New York Times* in which he attempted to squash any rumors about US doubts regarding German reliability.[56] "I don't share the concern that some European countries have about a reunified Germany," he said. He was firmly convinced that "Germany's commitment to and recognition of the Alliance is unshakeable."[57] "With this interview," Zelikow and Rice write persuasively, "Bush showed sympathy for European concerns. But by taking the high road and reiterating support for German aspirations, he made it very difficult politically for any Western European leaders to give public voice to their private doubts and fears."[58]

Already on 20 September 1989 during a visit to Bonn, new British foreign secretary John Major, who had only been in office since July, had also made a somewhat positive though vague remark with regard to the evolving situation in the GDR. He reiterated the position which the UK had held for the previous thirty years about the desirability of German self-determination. Major added, however,

[54] Ibid.
[55] Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 93.
[56] See *DBPO*, xv.
[57] Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 94.
[58] Ibid.

"that there is likely to be some way to go before reunification can become a practical proposition."[59] This was a rather diplomatic way of expressing Britain's lack of enthusiasm about the developments in Germany. In the following weeks there were no major additional British announcements regarding the rapidly developing situation in the GDR. By late October and early November "Britain's official silence on the subject was becoming conspicuous," as the editors of the British volume of foreign-policy documents put it.[60]

In fact only three days after John Major's speech, Prime Minister Thatcher had made her position crystal clear, albeit in private. During a visit to Moscow on 23 September 1989 she asked Gorbachev to stop the tape recorders and the note takers from recording what she had to tell him. "We are very concerned about the processes taking place in Eastern Germany," she began. She soon came to the crux of the problem.

The reunification of Germany is not in the interests of Britain and Western Europe. It might look different from public pronouncements, in official communiqué at NATO meetings, but it is not worth paying one's attention to it. We do not want a united Germany. This would have led to a change to postwar borders and we can not allow that because such development would undermine the stability of the whole international situation and could endanger our security. In the same way, a destabilisation of Eastern Europe and breakdown of the Warsaw Pact are also not in our interests."[61]

Margaret Thatcher sounded just like Selwyn Lloyd in 1953. At about the same time, one of Gorbachev's closest advisors and speechwriters, Vadim Zagladin,[62] was traveling in France and met with many French politicians, including President Mitterrand and his confidant Jacques Attali. "They all say in unison," he reported back to Moscow, that "nobody wants a unified Germany." Attali even "brought up the possibility of restoring a serious Soviet-French alliance, including military 'integration,' but camouflaged as a joint use of armies to fight natural disasters."[63] According to Zagladin, Attali was horrified at the thought of German unification and said at one point that he would go and live on Mars if unification occurred.[64]

Gorbachev, however, seems to have been under no illusion regarding what the two Western leaders wanted him to do. As they could not speak out publicly against

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[59] Mallaby (Bonn) to Major (London), 21 September 1989, in *DBPO*, 33.

[60] See *DBPO*, xv.

[61] Transcript produced from memory by Soviet note taker Anatoly Chernyaev of a conversation between Gorbachev and Thatcher, 23 September 1989. Published in *Times Online*, 10 September 2009, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article6829735.ece (accessed 3 June 2013).

[62] For a brief biographical sketch, see "Gorbachev's aide Zagladin: when word is mightier than deed," RIANOVOSTI, 22 November 2006, http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20061122/55896229.html (accessed 3 June 2013).

[63] Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 94.

[64] Ibid. For Jacques Attali's views see also idem, *Verbatim, Tome 3: Chronique des années 1988–1991* (Paris: Fayard, 1995), especially 237ff.

long-established NATO policy, it appeared to him that Thatcher and Mitterrand were attempting to maneuver Moscow into vetoing German unification or perhaps even to putting a stop to the destabilizing developments in East Germany by deploying Russian tanks.[65] To some extent this is confirmed by Helmut Kohl's memoirs, although at the time, he explains, he was not fully aware of the fact that the French and British leaders were hopeful that "Gorbachev would do the job for them." Mitterrand and Thatcher were convinced that "Gorbachev would never accept a reunited Germany as a member of NATO," Kohl writes.[66]

Decision time, however, came ever closer with the increasing strength of the protest movement in East Germany and the accelerating disintegration of the GDR. The continuing mass demonstrations on the streets of East Germany and, not least, an initiative by the West German chancellor proved to be decisive.

On 28 November 1989, in a speech to the Bundestag, Chancellor Kohl presented a cautious Ten-Point blueprint for German unification, much of which he had drawn up himself. Neither the Western allies nor even his own foreign minister had been consulted. The US government had only received a copy of Kohl's speech shortly before it was given and the US president had not yet read it. Paris, London, and Gorbachev had not received any advance notice and were less than pleased.[67] In the speech the chancellor expressed his view that "unity will come." While in his fifth point he referred to the possible creation of confederate structures between the two German states, he declined to mention a timeframe. Instead he said cautiously that "nobody knows how a reunified Germany will look."[68] Despite the guarded and carefully calibrated sentences, which did not refer explicitly to outright reunification, following Kohl's speech reunification was very much on the international agenda. No longer did it make sense for Western politicians to avoid talking about the issue and to refer to it only in an indirect and cryptic way.[69]

As for the United States, President Bush and most of his advisors recognized by early December 1989 that the course of events set in motion in the summer and fall of that year by the widespread protests of the East German population would unavoidably lead to German reunification. Instead of resisting this almost certain development and thereby antagonize the Germans without being in any

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[65] Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 94.For the hope that Gorbachev would issue a veto, see Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 792.

[66] Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1982–1990*, 956. See also Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland*, 160, 162; Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage. Innenansichten der Einheit* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991), 59–60. Whether Gorbachev in turn relied on Thatcher and Mitterrand since he thought that they would refuse his agreement to reunification, as claimed by Rödder, 162, is however doubtful.

[67] See von Plato, *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands*, 122ff, 136ff; this is also confirmed in the various memoirs of the major participants.

[68] For the speech see for example Konrad H. Jarausch and Volker Gransow, eds., *Uniting Germany: Documents and Debates, 1944–1993* (Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1994), 86–89.

[69] For a good analysis of Bonn's policy towards the GDR (and to some extent toward the four allies), see Markus Driftmann, *Die Bonner Deutschlandpolitik 1989/90* (Munster: Lit Verlag, 2005).

way able to alter the result, Bush decided to gracefully bow to the inevitable. Already during a meeting with Thatcher at Camp David on 24 November, that is, before Kohl's speech, he remained unconvinced by the prime minister's arguments that the West ought to do all it could to maintain the Cold War status quo to shore up Gorbachev's ever more precarious domestic position in the Soviet Union. At this stage Bush's national security advisor, Brent Scowcroft, however, still displayed a certain amount of sympathy for Thatcher's point of view.[70]

A day after Kohl's speech, on 29 November, Secretary of State Baker proposed four principles that should guide the international dimension of German unification: self-determination for the Germans; an orderly evolutionary process; the inviolability of the European borders; and lastly and perhaps most importantly the continued membership of a united Germany in both NATO and the EC.[71] Bush repeated these four principles at a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels on 4 December 1989.[72] The United States thus made clear its firm intention to support German unification if these conditions were met. Thatcher concluded in exasperation that "there was nothing I could expect from the Americans as regards slowing down German reunification."[73]

It was obvious: by late November 1989 the Bush administration had clearly made up its mind to support German unification. Although Secretary of State Baker advised Kohl on 12 December to be a little more careful when dealing with the Soviets, the British, and the French,[74] for Washington the ultimate outcome of the developments in the East that had started in the summer of 1989 were no longer in doubt. Already by mid-February 1990 this had led to the development of the Two Plus Four framework, as agreed by Western leaders at the Ottawa Open Skies conference, for negotiating the precise nature of German unification between the four World War II victors and the two German states.[75]

In the course of January 1990 the United States was joined in their pro-reunification policy by French President Mitterrand. Initially Mitterrand had attempted to prop up the GDR by, for instance, paying the disintegrating state an official state visit on 20 December and by expressing his interest in coordinated joint

70 *DBPO*, xvi.

71 See Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland*, 150.

72 *DBPO*, xvi.

73 Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 795–96. For the United States and German unification, see above all the book by Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified;* but also Robert D. Blackwill, "Deutsche Vereinigung und amerikanische Diplomatie," *Außenpolititk* 45, no. 3 (1994): 211–225; Robert L. Hutchins, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War. An Insider's Account of U.S. Policy in Europe, 1989–1992* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1997); Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*; James A Baker III, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989–1992* (New York: Putnam, 1995); Wulf Schmiese, *Fremde Freunde: Deutschland und die USA zwischen Mauerfall und Golfkrieg* (Paderborn: Schoeningh, 2000).

74 Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 209, 215.

75 See Reinhard Müller, *Der 2+4-Vertrag und das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997).

Anglo-French attempts at preventing or at least delaying German unification.[76] Nonetheless, on 4 January 1990 Kohl and Mitterrand met at the French president's country residence in the Gascony and Mitterrand told him that "if the Germans want unity, the French know they cannot prevent it."[77] In his memoirs Kohl even writes that already during the Franco-German summit on 2 and 3 November 1989 (and thus before the fall of the Wall) Mitterrand referred to the necessity of further deepening the integration of the European continent and "in the course of our conversation François Mitterrand explicitly gave the green light for German unification, although during the next period he would pronounce a number of skeptical assessments."[78] Kohl continues by writing that "unfortunately he had been forced to conclude since then that Mitterrand pursued a game of deception" in the weeks after the bilateral Franco-German summit conference.

The French president had clearly recognized that in all likelihood reunification could not be prevented (and he thus emphasized the need to embed Germany even more firmly than hitherto in European structures). The NATO allies, he realized, were also bound by their many pro-reunification declarations over the previous forty years. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to commend the GDR, express his strong respect for Gorbachev, and secretly hope that Gorbachev would resolve the West's reunification dilemma. He was realistic enough, however, to recognize that a formal anti-reunification entente with the British as desired by Downing Street would be counterproductive. During the EC summit conference on 8 and 9 December in Strasbourg, Mitterrand and Thatcher met twice to consider a new entente between France, Britain, and perhaps even the Soviet Union.[79] Yet Paris soon grasped how unrealistic it was to attempt going back to the alliance system of the years 1913 and 1938. It might also well have lasting negative consequences, it was reasoned in the Élysée Palace, if reunification did in fact occur after all, as was increasingly likely. In a meeting with Prime Minister Thatcher on 20 January in Paris, Mitterrand told her extremely frankly that while both London and Paris might not like German reunification, they could do little to stop it. And if this were the case, they should remain silent and not attempt vainly to derail the process and its inevitable outcome.[80] Although this did not stop him to con-

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[76] See Frederic Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War and German Unification* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 139–43; also Tilo Schabert, *Wie Weltgeschichte gemacht wird: Frankreich und die deutsche Einheit* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002).

[77] *DBPO*, xix, n.31. For the West German memorandum on the conversation, see "Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Staatspräsident Mitterrand, Latche, 4. Januar 1990," in *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik. Deutsche Einheit*, 682–90.

[78] Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1982–1990*, 956.

[79] Powell (Strasbourg) to Wall (FCO), 8 Dec. 1989, in *DBPO*, 162–66; see also Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland*, 157.

[80] *DBPO*, xviii–xix. For the memorandum of the conversation, see Powell (London) to Wall (London), 20 Jan. 1990, ibid., 215–19. See also Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War and German Unification,* 168–70.

tinue making skeptical remarks, by mid-January 1990 Mitterrand had reluctantly accepted the inevitability of German reunification.

Thatcher, however, was not impressed. She had intended to put "some specific proposals" to Mitterrand "on how Britain and France could work together more closely." Prior to her meeting with the French president she had admonished her Foreign Office "to work out our own ideas in rather more detail" regarding German reunification. She had explained that "we should not simply regard this as inevitable and wait for events to overtake us." Not least, she outlined, the Foreign Office "had to think through the consequences for Gorbachev: we did not want to lose the greater good of seeing his reforms succeed throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in order to satisfy a German wish for faster progress with reunification."[81]

But this was all academic once Mitterrand had made it clear that Franco-British cooperation to derail reunification was out of the question. Thatcher was furious when she recognized to her great dismay that Mitterrand had resigned himself to putting up with reunification in favor of attempting to move "ahead faster towards a federal Europe in order to tie down the German giant."[82] This was indeed Mitterrand's objective as he had already explained to Gorbachev in early December 1989.[83] For him the German Question clearly needed to be transformed into a European question (and monetary union) before its resolution would be acceptable.

The Europeanization of the German Question, of course, ran counter to Thatcher's ideas. While the prime minister was strongly opposed to reunification, she nevertheless did not develop much of a coherent strategy to either prevent it or embed it into structures which would make a unified and enlarged Germany acceptable. Mitterrand, by contrast, was the only opponent to reunification who did develop a convincing strategic structure that looked well into the future.[84] "Europe will be your revenge," former West German chancellor Adenauer had told the severely shocked French prime minister after the British had suddenly halted the invasion of Egypt and the Suez canal in November of 1956. Adenauer may well have been right.[85]

As far as the USSR was concerned, Gorbachev also seemed to be quite relaxed about the possibility of German unification and the disappearance of the GDR as an independent state.[86] During a meeting with Bush on a ship off the coast of Malta on 2 and 3 December 1989, the two leaders formally declared the Cold War over. Yet during the subsequent weeks and months, Gorbachev appeared to retreat to a much more hard-line position regarding German unification.[87] The

81 Powell (No.10) to Wall (FCO), 10 Jan. 1990, in *DBPO*, 199–200.

82 Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 798.

83 See Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland*, 161.

84 Ibid.

85 See Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests*, 134.

86 Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland*, 151–52.

87 For Gorbachev's policy, see also Ekkehard Kuhn, *Gorbatschow und die deutsche Einheit. Aussagen der wichtigsten russischen und deutschen Beteiligten* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1993) and

more the GDR began to disintegrate, not least after the free East German elections on 18 March 1990 which brought a conservative-led coalition government under Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière to power in the GDR, and the more desperate the economic and financial woes of the Soviet Union grew, the higher Gorbachev's price became. The Soviet leader also needed to pay more attention to his domestic audience. An increasing number of communist hard-liners viewed Gorbachev's policies in a very critical light and were strongly opposed to giving up the spoils of war gained by having defeated Hitler. They were appalled at the idea of rescinding the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe by abandoning the GDR and allowing the creation of a reunified Germany. In the end this would lead to the failed August 1991 coup against Gorbachev.[88]

Privately Gorbachev seems to have made up his mind as early as January 1990 that German unification was unavoidable. On 30 January 1990, at a press conference with visiting GDR Prime Minister Modrow, Gorbachev's statement recognized, in the words of the British Foreign Office, "that unification will take place."[89] On 10 February 1990 Gorbachev told visiting Chancellor Kohl in Moscow that he believed it was for the Germans in East and West to decide whether or not they wished to reunite. The Soviet Union would certainly respect their decision; it was up to the Germans themselves to select the timing and method for achieving it. Gorbachev, however, envisaged a united Germany to remain outside the two military blocs and to be equipped with only national forces for self-defense purposes.[90] Despite Gorbachev's reservations, in principle he had agreed to German unification. In the next few weeks Bonn would deliver to the Soviet Union meat and other foodstuff, clothes and many household goods worth more than 220 million deutsche mark. On the flight back from Moscow to Bonn, Kohl and his entourage opened champagne bottles. In his memoirs he used the subtitle "breakthrough" for the section about his visit to Moscow.[91]

Still, during the next few months Gorbachev stalled. In particular he wished to resolve the NATO question. But in the end, on 30 May 1990, during a visit to Washington, Gorbachev agreed with Bush that Germany had the right to decide which alliance it wished to join. The choices obviously included NATO.[92] There

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the chapter by Wolfgang Mueller, "The USSR and the Reunification of Germany," in this volume, 321–53.

88 See Michael Gorbachev, *The August Coup: Three Days that Shook the World* (London: HarperCollins, 1991).

89 Powell (No.10) to Wall (FCO), 31 Jan. 1990, in *DBPO*, 233.

90 Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1982–1990*, 1066–68. See also von Plato, *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands*, 252–79.

91 Kohl, ibid., 1069–70, 1062.

92 Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified*, 271–86. For good accounts on Soviet policy, see Gerhard Wettig, "Moscow's Acceptance of NATO: The Catalytic Role of German Unification," *Europe–Asia Studies* 45, no. 6 (1993): 953–72; Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch: Germany in Soviet Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998).

remained another issue however: Gorbachev wished to obtain as much financial aid as possible in return for agreeing to German unification. Negotiations with the West Germans had commenced in early May but, once again, the Soviets stalled since they wished to drive up the price. The final agreement was reached during a bilateral meeting between Gorbachev and Kohl in the Caucasus, at Gorbachev's dacha, in mid-July 1990. Kohl and Gorbachev agreed on a sum of 12 billion deutsche mark in addition to the food aid, financing of homes, and a vocational retraining program for returning Soviet soldiers that the Germans had already promised to Moscow.[93] After the Caucasus meeting, the Soviet Union no longer stood in the way of giving its agreement to German reunification, including the membership of a reunited Germany in NATO. The Two Plus Four treaty was signed on 12 September 1990 in Moscow, and on 3 October the GDR joined West Germany under Article 23 of the West German Basic Law.

Initially, therefore, it had been the United States that had taken the calculated decision to support the German reunification process. For both ideological and strategic political reasons, President Bush was convinced that this was the right policy to embark upon. Mitterrand and Gorbachev, as well as political leaders from countries like Poland, Italy and the Netherlands (as well as Israel), first had to overcome their deep reservations to this development before they were ready to join the United States.

For Thatcher, however, it was impossible to put her private suspicions aside. It did not help that she and Helmut Kohl never developed close personal relations. In fact, Thatcher and Kohl greatly disliked each other. Even when talking to the US president, the German chancellor tended to refer to the British prime minister as "that woman" and Bush was "uncomfortable" with Thatcher's constant "dismissive references" to Kohl and also, in particular, to Foreign Minister Genscher.[94] In her memoirs Thatcher attests to the difficulties between herself and Kohl when she writes somewhat insincerely that "in fact, we did not get on at all badly."[95]

More importantly, throughout 1989–90 the prime minister's thinking remained rigid and visionless. Her mind was imprisoned within a rather inflexible framework of thought that was strongly influenced by both the Second World War, including the Holocaust, and Cold War parameters. At the same time, her lack of sympathy for and understanding of the European integration process and her faulty concept of British patriotism, including her longing for past glories of empire and world power, prevented her from consenting to the further development of the EC into a genuine European Union that integrated an enlarged Germany. Even Margaret Thatcher's own foreign policy advisor, Percy Cradock, who was close to her personally, writes in his account of the Thatcher years that the prime minister

93 See Helmut Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1990–94* (Munich: Droemer, 1997), 162–85.
94 Alexander (NATO) to Wright (FCO), 18 Sep. 1989, in *DBPO*, 31–32.
95 Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 747; see also Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests*, 135.

> had on the whole a poor view of foreigners, other than Anglo-Saxons, just as she had little time for European traditions or statesmen. This lack of imagination about the other side was a real defect. Too often it meant a one-dimensional policy, the assertion of British claims in a vacuum, with inevitable surprises and rebuffs when the other party failed to fit into our preconceptions. In a world in which we had long lost a dominant role and had increasingly to live by our wits, this was dangerous.[96]

With these entirely different approaches among Western leaders, Bush reaped a renewal of the Germans' deep thankfulness and pro-American attitude for his country. Gorbachev received considerable financial payments and enormous personal admiration, which continued after his retirement (at least in Germany and the Western world, much less so in Russia). Mitterrand's price for French consent to German reunification consisted mainly in the reaffirmation of Kohl's agreement, already obtained in December 1989, to support the realization of European Monetary Union, including the creation of a European currency which Germany would adopt.[97] It was generally believed at the time that this would lead to the end of German monetary domination in Europe.

In contrast, Thatcher clung so long to a negative position, that she then had no option left but to retreat in view of the policy followed by the United States, France and the Soviet Union. This came close to a personal humiliation of the prime minster, since it appeared that she had made a last-minute U-turn. By this stage, moreover, the British prime minister had wasted a great deal of time and profoundly antagonized not only her American ally, but also the Germans and Chancellor Kohl. She therefore was unable to gain anything from her reluctant and belated agreement to German unification. Her ultimate agreement to and acceptance of German reunification evolved within the context of an internal British battle between Downing Street and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about the core of British foreign policy in the German Question.

### *Two different foreign policies: Downing Street vs. the Foreign Office?*

It is commonly thought that it was only Thatcher and a very limited number of her loyal supporters, including her private secretary Charles Powell, who were strongly opposed to reunification. The Foreign Office diplomats, it is generally assumed, had a much more enlightened point of view and did their best to persuade the prime minister to give her agreement to German reunification.[98] This is perhaps a somewhat oversimplified version. In fact both the prime minister and many Foreign Office officials viewed German unification skeptically. While

[96] Cradock, ibid., 21–22. See also in a similar vein, Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion*, 100–1.

[97] See Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War and German Unification*, 143–47.

[98] See Salmon, "The United Kingdom and German Unification," 177–90; also Klein, "Obstructive or Promoting?," 409–12.

Thatcher expressed her views bluntly and the officials were more diplomatic, nonetheless initially their point of view was not all that different. On 15 September 1989, for example, deputy ambassador Colin Munro wondered in his dispatch from the British embassy in East Berlin whether "the GDR can be preserved as a separate German state but with Western political, economic and social conditions" or whether or not reunification was "unavoidable."[99]

In contrast to the prime minister, the British diplomatic officials, however, appear to have had a greater sense of realism. The Foreign Office diplomats realized significantly earlier than the prime minister that resisting German reunification made little sense. In a major Foreign Office draft memorandum on German reunification, dated 11 October 1989, it was argued that Britain, along "with others can exert some influence, [but] we cannot block reunification, if that is indeed the direction in which events lead."[100] While listing a number of disadvantages for the UK if such a result were to occur, the paper explained that "these aspects should not be exaggerated. They can be largely averted by good management of any evolution towards reunification." Moreover, "the advantages which could flow from reunification are considerable," it was argued. It would clearly be a victory for Western values, would improve the West's security, and would also strengthen the economic potential of the EC. The paper then presciently outlined why reunification was not to be feared but ought to be welcomed:

> Much of the FRG's surplus capital would be absorbed by the infrastructural projects that would be needed to bring the East up to West German standards, putting an end to the FRG's chronic capital surplus and holding out the prospect of more balanced trade flows in the EC. The UK industry should also benefit from the opportunities offered (the FRG is already our second largest export market).
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> 26. The UK's best approach, therefore, is not to discourage reunification, but rather to exert influence over the speed and timing of any moves in that direction. Close contacts with the Germans at all levels, including the highest, will be a crucial element in this process. They will be particularly important if events in the GDR take a dramatic turn.[101]

However, the public utterances by the prime minister and her well-known private reservations about reunification soon put Britain in the unenviable position of being regarded once again as the "odd one out" among the Western allies. Still, in early November a good number of Foreign Office officials continued to hold the view that "our line on the German Question should be to stress the importance of self-determination and go no further."[102] In the public imagination in Germany and elsewhere in the Western world, British silence regarding the unfolding events in East

[99] Munro (East Berlin) to Ratford (FCO), 15 Sep. 1989, in *DBPO*, 30.

[100] "Draft Paper on German Reunification" (WRL 020/4), 11 Oct. 1989, in *DBPO*, 50. This draft was then considerably revised and toned down. For the final version, dated 25 Oct. 1989, see ibid., 68–78.

[101] "Draft Paper on German Reunification," 11 Oct. 1989, ibid.

[102] Synott (FCO) to Broomfield (FCO), 3 Nov. 1989, in *DBPO*, 56, note 5.

Germany had convinced many observers in Germany and elsewhere that the British government was at best lukewarm about the possibility of the collapse of the GDR and German unification. The last formal but vague declaration concerning British support for Germany's national aspirations had been Foreign Secretary John Major's circumspect statement during his visit to Bonn on 20 September. But the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November required a response.

Ambassador Christopher Mallaby reported from Bonn that the "absence of any statement by a senior member of HMG" in response to the fall of the Wall, similar to those made by Mitterrand and Bush and Baker, "has been commented on here."[103] He believed that a British statement was highly desirable. Tellingly he emphasized in the memorandum to new Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd that "in our own interests" his statement should not "fall short in two respects: willingness to accept reunification, if that is the way things go, and confidence in the Federal Government to conduct FRG policy in ways which are consonant with Western interests." New Foreign Secretary Hurd, who had only been appointed to this position on 26 October 1989 in the course of a reshuffle of the government, took heed of Mallaby's advice, at least to some extent. In an interview with the BBC World Service on 10 November, Hurd declared that he "would welcome unification based on free institutions." The principle of German unity was not in doubt, he declared, "but the how and when," he said, was "not on the immediate agenda."[104] This was a rather cautious statement. Together with Thatcher's reservations which became increasingly known, Hurd's statement defined the British attitude toward German unification for both the international press and the West German government. After all, Hurd had used almost exactly the same words during a press conference in The Hague on 9 November and then again in a BBC radio interview in Bonn on 15 November.[105]

In the following two months the officials in the British Foreign Office were not only busy with following and analyzing the dramatic, confusing, and constantly changing developments in the GDR, they were also paying attention to the reactions of Gorbachev, Paris, Washington, and not least the Kohl government. They also had the unenviable task of attempting to persuade their own prime minister to adopt a more constructive and positive policy toward German reunification, which appeared to be ever more likely. The Foreign Office became increasingly aware that both the Germans and the American administration saw "our position as being outside the mainstream." A Foreign Office paper written by John Fretwell explained it well:

> The impression we create on this arises from the nuances rather than from the basic statement of our position. It is all right to insist on the need for prudence in handling the present dramatic developments in Europe, but we need to convey to the Germans that we too have a positive

[103] Mallaby (Bonn) to Hurd (FCO), 9 Nov. 1989, in *DBPO*, 98.

[104] Quoted in *DBPO*, Preface, xv.

[105] See *DBPO*, 190, note 3.

> vision of what should emerge at the end of the day and what we are prepared to work for. […] If we do not start conveying this impression to the Germans soon […] they will conclude that we are fundamentally hostile to that sort of vision. They will be tempted increasingly to move ahead without us on these fundamental issues of European policy. We could ultimately impose a block, based on our position as one of the four Powers responsible for Germany and Berlin. But we should not count on carrying anyone else with us.[106]

The doubts and skepticism about reunification among the officials of the Foreign Office, including the foreign secretary himself, gradually dissipated or became considerably less pronounced. In particular, ever since Chancellor Kohl's Ten-Point speech on 28 November, Hurd, as indeed most Foreign Office diplomats, had clearly come around to accepting the inevitability of reunification. It was also obvious that this might occur a lot faster than had been predicted until then. The British as well as the other allies were skeptical when Kohl's primary foreign policy advisor Horst Teltschik attempted to tone down the importance of the Ten-Point program by explaining that Kohl's speech was meant "to put German unity at the end of a lengthy process and thus to head off calls for early unity." Britain's ambassador in Bonn, Mallaby, fully recognized that "Kohl's decision to set out a program culminating in unity, without agreement of coalition partners or prior consultation with allies, is a sign of the speed with which the debate is moving." He reported back to London that Kohl's "vision of a lengthy process before unity" was achieved might well be soon overtaken "by other views."[107]

Mallaby regarded Kohl's Ten-Point plan as a "major event" and a "landmark speech." He told the Foreign Office back in London that "reunification in the form of a German federation is now clearly an aim of policy, though without a timescale."[108] Kohl's speech, he wrote, "takes reunification out of the realms of aspiration and makes it the culmination and aim of a staged programme." The ambassador also noted that "it is helpful that Kohl has set no timescales and has linked his programme to wider European developments which will take considerable time."

The prime minister, however, was not amused. She read Mallaby's telegram with a great deal of concern and noted in the margin, "Christopher Mallaby seems to *welcome* reunification," implying that she herself did not.[109] During the NATO summit of heads of government on 4 December 1989, Thatcher did not hesitate to say that reunification ought not to take place for ten to fifteen years. This was immediately "quoted by German commentators as evidence of a negative and mistrustful British attitude," as ambassador Mallaby put it.[110] When at a private luncheon organized by the right of center Centre for Policy Studies on 18 December, Conservative MP David Willets expressed the view that reunification was unstop-

[106] Fretwell (FCO) to Wall (FCO), 29 Nov. 1989, in *DPBO*, 144.
[107] Mallaby (Bonn) to Hurd (FCO), 28 Nov. 1989, in *DBPO*, 138.
[108] Mallaby (Bonn) to Hurd (FCO), 29 Nov. 1989, in *DBPO*, 142–43.
[109] *DBPO*, 143, note 3.
[110] Mallaby (Bonn) to Hurd (FCO), 5 Jan. 1990, in *DBPO*, 190.

pable "the PM threw up her hands in horror: 'No, not at all,'" she shouted.[111] Time and again she said in the course of the luncheon, "We've been through the war and we know perfectly well what the Germans are like […] and how national character doesn't basically change." Thatcher also did not hesitate to express her fairly racist and dogmatic view that "once a German, always a German." "You can never trust them," she said.[112] George Urban, one of the participants at the luncheon, later wrote in his memoirs that "if allied governments knew just how narrow-minded, and in many ways xenophobic, MT has become, they would be even more disturbed than they are already."[113]

There was indeed rising concern about the British standpoint. In early January Mallaby commented in a telegram to Foreign Secretary Hurd that in Germany the UK was "perceived […] as perhaps the least positive of the three Western Allies, and the least important." To drive the point home, Mallaby wrote unambiguously that the UK had an image problem which was to a large extent its own fault:

> I remain concerned that despite our consistent support for the principle of German unity through self-determination, the UK is perceived here as opposing, or at least wishing to brake, reunification. The French, on the other hand, whose doubts seem if anything stronger than ours, manage to maintain a more positive public image […] The US are perceived as the most supportive of German aspirations even while laying down conditions for German unity.[114]

Once again Prime Minister Thatcher was not impressed by Mallaby's analysis. She believed, according to a note drafted by her confidant and private secretary Charles Powell, dated 9 January, that Mallaby "showed a lack of understanding of our policy which she finds alarming. She would like to see any reply before it is sent."[115]

The rising tension within the government and the increasingly more desperate attempts by the Foreign Office to bring the prime minister to her senses in view of the damage done to Britain's international standing by Thatcher's inability to accept German reunification culminated in a seminar at Chequers on 27 January 1990, after the prime minister's return from her visit to Mitterrand in Paris. Although the editors of the British volume of documents on German reunification write that "there was certainly no point at which Mrs. Thatcher explicitly accepted defeat,"[116] the Chequers seminar on "East-West relations and Germany" was important for persuading the prime minister to change her mind, however reluctantly.[117] Effectively the seminar at the prime minister's country residence was a brainstorming session, attended by Thatcher and her most important foreign

[111] Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion*, 102.
[112] Ibid., 104–05.
[113] Ibid., 113.
[114] Mallaby (Bonn) to Hurd (FCO), 5 Jan. 1990, in *DBPO*, 190.
[115] Powell (No.10) to Wall (FCO), 9 Jan. 1990, in *DBPO*, 195.
[116] *DBPO*, xviii.
[117] For the proposed agenda and items to be covered, see *DBPO*, 180–82, 185–86, 192–94.

policy advisors, both ministers and officials. Thatcher gradually and hesitantly gave her "assent" in principle to the proposition of German unification closely embedded within NATO and further European integration.[118] In late January 1990, however, she still found "the overall picture very worrying" and was wondering whether she should fly to Washington to discuss matters with the US president. She thought that would somehow "convey a good political signal."[119] Moreover, some of her most strident anti-unification remarks were made in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* on 25 January and on 12 February in the context of a speech to the Young Conservatives at the seaside resort Torquay.[120]

Still, it was on 6 February 1990, in a speech in the House of Commons, that the prime minister expressed the view for the first time that German reunification was on the cards.[121] Although Thatcher was coming round to accepting the inevitable, she did not let go without a rearguard fight. In practice she continued to attempt to delay reunification by, for example, expressing concern about the future of NATO, Kohl's hesitation to recognize the Western frontier of Poland, and also about the form and substance of the Two-Plus-Four framework. She convened another all-day seminar at Chequers on 24 March 1990. This time she assembled British and American historians to talk about the German character.[122] The seminar became notorious due to the press being leaked a summary of the discussion written by her private secretary Charles Powell which grossly distorted the nature and conclusions of the discussions.[123] "By coincidence or design," as John Campbell writes, the memorandum was leaked in July, in the same week as the Ridley affair broke.[124]

In the leaked document Powell referred to the unchanged German national character with words like "aggressiveness, assertiveness, bullying, egotism, excessive exaggerations, inferiority complex, self-pity, sentimentality." The actual talks had been much more positive. Historian Trevor Roper (Lord Dacre), for example, re-

[118] See Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests*, 112; Alan Clark, *Diaries* (1983–1991) (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1993), 276–77.

[119] Powell (No.10) to Wall (FCO), 31 Jan. 1990, in *DBPO*, 233–34. See also Salmon, "The UK and German Unification," 184–85.

[120] See for example Salmon, ibid., 185.

[121] See *House of Commons Parliamentary Debates* (H.C. Deb.), Vol.166, 757 (6 Feb. 1990) and 1005–06 (8 Feb. 1990). This is pointed out by Kettenacker. "Britain," 114 and n. 71. See also Teltschik, *329 Tage*, 134.

[122] Almost all of the participants have published their accounts about this meeting (though Thatcher herself remains silent in her memoirs), but the best, most detailed and most enlightening account can be found in Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion*, 118ff. See also Timothy Garton Ash, "The Chequers Affair," *New York Review of Books*, 27 Sep. 1990, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1990/sep/27/the-chequers-affair/ (accessed 3 Jun. 2013).

[123] Powell's leaked memorandum can be found in Jarausch and Gransow, eds., *Uniting Germany*, 129–31; and also in Harold James and Maria Stone, eds., *When the Wall Came Down: Reactions to German Unification* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 233–35.

[124] Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher* 1, 635. It has been suspected that the Foreign Office was responsible for leaking the document to discredit Downing Street.

ferred to a "sea-change in German thinking" since World War II.[125] He also wondered why "the government was so horrified now that the original postwar aim of Allied policy was being suddenly achieved. […] Why our apprehensions? How can we now possibly wish to put off or negate unification? We should rejoice, because we've won."[126] The prime minister, it appeared, "was a little taken aback" by this forceful reasoning.[127] Still, during the seminar Thatcher did not "hide her cordial dislike of all things German […] aggravated by her distaste for the personality of Helmut Kohl […] The contrast between herself as a visionary stateswoman with a world-view and Kohl the wurst-eating, corpulent, plodding Teuton, has a long history in MT's imagination," George Urban, one of the participants, reported in his memoirs.[128]

While matters were moving rapidly ahead with the creation of economic and currency unity between the two German states on 2 July and the Caucasus meeting between Kohl and Gorbachev in mid-July 1990, Britain was still regarded as being opposed to reunification. This was further confirmed by the unfortunate Ridley Affair. The affair commenced on 14 July 1990 when an interview was published that the Minister of Trade and Industry Nicholas Ridley had given to the conservative British weekly *The Spectator*. The minister, regarded as a Thatcher loyalist and close friend, explained in outspoken language that thanks to the financial policy of the Bundesbank the Germans were set to take over the leadership of Europe with the envisaged economic and monetary union. The EC, he outlined, was "a German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe. It has to be thwarted." The French would follow them on this course like poodles with no will of their own. Only the British remained in a position to put a stop to German ambitions. Ridley did not hesitate to put Kohl and the EC Commission on the same level as Hitler when he pontificated about European integration. He said that he was "not against giving up sovereignty in principle, but not to this lot. You might just as well give it to Adolf Hitler, frankly."[129]

Regarding the future shape of postcommunist Europe Ridley explained that "it has always been Britain's role to keep these various powers balanced, and never has it been more necessary than now, with Germany so uppity." The interview was accompanied by a cartoon of Ridley adding a Hitler moustache to a poster of Helmut Kohl. While this was not Ridley's fault, it added to the bad taste the text of the interview left behind.[130]

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[125] Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion*, 134.
[126] Ibid., 140–41.
[127] Ibid., 141.
[128] Ibid., 131.
[129] See Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher 1*, 635; Michael Seamark, "Margaret Thatcher feared reunited Germany would 'make more ground than Hitler'" (review of *DBPO* volume), *Mail online*, 11 September 2009, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1212552/Secret-documents-reveal-Thatchers-fears-united-Germany-make-ground-Hitler.html (accessed 3 Jun. 2013).
[130] Ibid.

In spite of a few cautious attempts on Thatcher's part to protect her minister from the indignant reactions to his declarations, he was eventually forced to resign. Nevertheless it was generally suspected that Thatcher's thinking still largely agreed with the sentiments expressed by Ridley. Indeed already in the *Spectator* issue of 14 July 1990 the magazine's editor, Dominic Lawson, had commented that "Mr. Ridley's confidence in expressing his views on the German threat must owe a little something to the knowledge that they are not significantly different from those of the prime minister [...] even though in public she is required not to be so indelicate as to draw comparisons between Herren Kohl and Hitler."[131]

## Concluding remarks

Both the Ridley affair and the leakage of the Chequers seminar in March greatly damaged the embattled prime minister, who had become rather unpopular in the country at large due to the imposition of a community tax (or poll tax). It was well known that her Cabinet was deeply split over the new housing tax as well as over a large number of other serious issues. Rumors multiplied about an impending internal coup against the prime minister. This occurred in November 1990 when Thatcher was unceremoniously ejected as leader of the Conservative Party and thus as prime minister. Her controversial opposition to German reunification and her inability to adopt a more constructive policy toward European integration played a large role in her downfall. Her attitudes appeared to defy common sense. By late 1990 both the country at large and the Conservative party grandees had realized that Thatcher's foreign policy was orientated along the lines of Britain's glorious past as an imperial world power, rather than along the more modest necessities of the present and future. Thatcher's foreign policy, and in particular her German and European policies, were clearly damaging the country's international standing. Germany was unified on 3 October 1990. Margaret Thatcher lost power on 28 November 1990. Just over a year later the Soviet Union ceased to exist. In her years in retirement the former prime minister became an embittered person who frequently attacked her successors from the sidelines. She clearly never forgave her party for having ousted her from power. While much feted in the United States as a distinguished statesperson, in fact Thatcher became ever more narrow-minded and developed an ever more vigorously anti-German and in particular anti-European frame of mind in her post-prime ministerial years.

[131] Quoted in Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion*, 99 n. 1. Dominic Lawson was the son of former chancellor of the exchequer Nigel Lawson, who had fallen out with Thatcher over monetarist principles and resigned from the Cabinet in October 1989.

Georges Saunier

# FRANCE, THE EAST EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 was certainly the most important landmark in the succession of upheavals that occurred in the years from 1987 to 1992, upheavals that significantly altered the balance of the international system as it had gradually developed from 1945. It is clear that the shock wave following this event was also to have an impact on French diplomacy.

The attitude of the French government during this period has been examined from various viewpoints. Several recent publications are quite valuable in this analysis due to their use of French archives, i.e. first hand sources, which were not always used in earlier research.[1] These works reveal French policy as having been more proactive than had been previously described.

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[1] Cf. Tilo Schabert, *Wie Weltgeschichte gemacht wird. Frankreich und die deutsche Einheit* (Stuttgart: Klett Cotta, 2002); in English: *How World Politics is Made: France and the Reunification of Germany* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009); Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, la diplomatie française et la fin de la guerre froide* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005); in English: *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2009); Marion Delamarre, *La politique allemande de François Mitterrand, 1981–1995* (Paris: PHD Institut d'Etude politique de Paris, 2007); Georges Saunier, "A special relationship: Franco-German relations at the time of François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl," in Carine Germond and Henning Türk, eds., *A History of Franco-German Relations in Europe. From "Hereditary Enemies" to Partners* (New York: Palgrave-McMillan, 2008), 235–47; idem, "Le tandem François Mitterrand-Helmut Kohl. Une gouvernance franco-allemande?," in Wilfried Loth, ed., *La gouvernance supranationale dans la construction européenne* (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 2005), 239–54; Georges Saunier, "SSSR v mitterranovskoi diplomatii," in Yu.I. Rubinskii and M. Ts. Arzakanyan, eds., *Rossiya–Frantsiya 300 let osobykh otnoshenii* (Moscow: ROSIZO, 2010), 279–88. In this regard, it is important to mention the recent publication of a selection of documents from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning German unification. In their introduction, the editors, Maurice Vaïsse and Christian Wenkel, state that "myths die hard. From the time of the unification and until now, the idea of François Mitterrand being hostile or at least very reluctant vis-à-vis German unification is well established, while the archives, now open, do not confirm that." Maurice Vaïsse and Christian Wenkel, *La diplomatie française face à l'unification allemande* (Paris: Tallandier, 2011), 29. This controversy still surrounds the issue. Indeed, unlike the books mentioned above, the recent work of Ulrich Lappenküper, which includes documents from the archives of the French presidency as well as pages from Jacques Attali's book, supports the idea of a French diplomacy raising barriers between the two Germanys. See Ulrich Lappenküper, *Mitterrand und Deutschland. Die enträtselte Sphinx* (Munich: Oldenbourg 2011). Cf. Matthias Waechter, "Ulrich Lappenküper: Mitterrand and Germany", *Sehepunkte* 12, no. 3 (2012), http://www.sehepunkte.de/2012/03/20486.html (accessed 19 October 2012); Tilo Schabert, "Mitterrand and the Germans. Ulrich Lappen-

Rather than attempting to delay a move toward German unification, Paris seems to have tried to reach a number of diplomatic goals in this period of important and rapid changes. The French were interested in guiding German unification, not stopping it.

This chapter will present, in four sections, the chronology of these goals, as well as their reasons and consequences. The analysis of this series of events will be based on French sources[2] and will focus on the Franco-German dimension, which was a significant factor during this period.

## The post-Yalta era and the return of the German Question (summer 1988 to autumn 1989)

As the post-Yalta era slowly emerged, the Franco-German relationship was multifaceted; it included not only political aspects, but also cultural, social, and economic ones. Both bilateral meetings and meetings within the framework of multilateral institutions were the basis of political relations, which involved senior administrative executives as well as political actors. These various forums for the Franco-German relationship had been more or less formally framed in the Élysée Treaty of 1963, which subsequently underwent several modifications.[3]

At the political level, the disagreements between the two countries were numerous, particularly in the years following the fall of the Wall. One might see the political function of the so-called Franco-German couple as having been the identification of dissent concerning upcoming issues and, as far as was possible, attempts to overcome them. This nearly permanent state of negotiation often called for political arbitrations. On the French side, the decision-making process involved many persons, in particular the staff at the Foreign Ministry on Quai d'Orsay and a few counselors at the president's office in the Élysée palace. Most important decisions were made by the president, together with the minister of foreign affairs or other ministers as required by the topic at hand.

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küper has worked on French policy regarding Germany since 1989," in *Die Welt*, 23 June 2012, http://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/literatur/article106998490/Mitterand-und-die-Deutschen.html/ (accessed 19 October 2012).

[2] In order to write this article, I have used several sources, including: private archives (advisors, ministers); Archives nationales de France, fonds 5AG4, boxes AH (35), CD (52, 67–68, 73–74, 76, 177, 187, 189, 274, 304, 358, 360, 372, 384), EG (58–59, 60–61, 156, 204, 212–214), CDM (13, 33–36, 38–39, 43), 4160; Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères (AMAE), boxes 6119–6125, 6135–36; Archives de l'Institut François Mitterrand (IFM), fonds service de presse, fonds discours; interviews (with advisors, ministers).

[3] For a complete historical overview of the Franco-German relationship, see Georges-Henri Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine: les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands, 1954–1996* (Paris: Fayard, 1996); and Germond and Türk , eds., *A History of Franco-German Relations in Europe*.

The main motives behind these negotiations need to be noted, since they were the grounds upon which French diplomacy regarding the Federal Republic of Germany was based:

- protection of specific interests (trade, cultural, etc.);
- the context of the European Community and, more widely, the context of Europe as a whole;
- the background of the Cold War and the French attitude toward the two superpowers, the United States and the USSR;
- French security and, more specifically, the autonomy of French nuclear deterrence policies;
- the delicate balance of powers between the two countries, which was the result of economic competition, cooperation and partnership, including how Germany was perceived in France based on the history of Franco-German hostility, as well as Germany's specific situation, including its partition, its supposed eastwards tropism, and its potential neutralism.

It is clear that for France, all of these elements had already begun to shift from the mid-1980s, especially from 1988, before being deeply altered by the fall of the Wall, the collapse of the Eastern bloc, and the prospect of German unification. In other words, the basis of the German Question changed.

Although the expression "German Question" was never clearly defined, it nevertheless was always high on the French diplomatic agenda. As mentioned above, the partition of Germany and the political consequences thereof long determined France's Western Germany policy as a whole.

However, Germany's partition was not a main concern when François Mitterrand came to power in the early 1980s. On the contrary, the issues debated at the meetings between Paris and Bonn had to do with East-West tensions, the integration of the European Community, or economic difficulties. It is true that on a few occasions, the French president and the German chancellor did raise the issue of German unification, but they kept their discussion to a theoretical analysis, since the division of Europe imposed its own structures.[4]

- The consequences of Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power in 1985 called for new considerations on the part of the French government. The effects of these considerations were felt as early as Mitterrand's re-election to the presidency in 1988.[5] Two aspects must he highlighted:

[4] For example, at their first official meeting in Latche in October 1981, Mitterrand declared to Helmut Schmidt: "You'll need time to achieve reunification, but it's the course of history. It corresponds to objective and subjective realities. A generation will have to go by. The Soviet Union will weaken, which will be the case in fifteen years." The German chancellor responded: "In my opinion, it will take much more time." See Bozo, *Mitterrand, la diplomatie française*, 33; Schabert, *Mitterrand et la réunification allemande*, 136.

[5] See Bozo, *Mitterrand, la diplomatie française*, 94–102; Saunier, "L'URSS dans la diplomatie mitterrandienne."

- The will to renew a Franco-Soviet partnership. This meant supporting and encouraging Gorbachev's policies to the degree that their positive effects could be seen in Paris;
- Connected to the above, a desire to boost relations between France and Eastern Europe, which materialized in state visits by Mitterrand to these countries as early as late 1988 and in 1989. All Eastern European countries were involved, including the German Democratic Republic.

This new Eastern European policy was part of a wider political interest that was high on the French agenda: the deepening of integration within the European Community. For Paris, two things were essential: the implementation of a monetary union (the EMU), and the establishment of European defense structures.

From the spring of 1988, owing to the changes occurring in Eastern Europe, the Quai d'Orsay as well as the Élysée began to engage in substantial reflections on how the post–Cold War world might be structured. In these reflections, the integration of the European Community played a central role, as integration seemed to be the means for overcoming the antagonisms of the continent. In an integrated Europe, of course, France would play a major role, along with its natural partner, West Germany. It was also foreseen that the end of the Cold War and of the division of Europe would force the question of German unification to evolve.[6] Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that these changes were not expected to occur over a short-term period.

Because of the Eastern revolutions in the summer and autumn of 1989, French diplomacy renewed its interest in the potential unification of Germany.[7] While this was primarily due to the events in Eastern Europe, it was also due to statements by German and Soviet representatives. Mitterrand was interviewed on several occasions by journalists. His statement of 3 November 1989 reflects the trend of the thoughts in Paris perfectly:

> I do not fear unification. […] History is moving forward. I accept it as it comes. I believe that the will for unification is proper for the Germans. If they want it and can manage it, France will adjust its policy in order to support European and French interests.[8]

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[6] In April 1989, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, head of the Center for Prevision and Analysis at the Quai d'Orsay, wrote a memo in which, especially considering the "apparent fluidity of the situation in the East," he suggested a new direction for the Franco-German partnership and a redefinition of the common European ambition. But, he stated, "such clarification [would] immediately raise the question of German sovereignty and relations with the GDR." He then called for a common policy toward East-European countries. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, "La relation franco-allemande", 30 April 1989, in AMAE, Centre d'analyse et de prévision, 1988–1992, 111.

[7] A good example of both Cold War and unification reflections can be found in the Quai d'Orsay's papers. See, for example: Jacques Blot, "Réflexion sur la question allemande," 30 October 1989, in Archives nationales, 5AG4, CD (177). See also the notes of the different Quai d'Orsay services: ibid., 5AG4, CDM (33).

[8] "Conférence de presse conjointe de Monsieur François Mitterrand, Président de la République,

On this occasion, the president was clear in his position that unification would have to be peaceful, democratic and European. The latter point was paramount. In his view, the upheavals in Eastern Europe would have to be supported by a deepening of European integration in the West.

The above statement of the French president can be augmented by a memo dated 18 October 1989 of Hubert Védrine, his diplomatic advisor, entitled "Reflections on the German Question."[9] Here Védrine states that:

– the legitimacy of German unification is incontestable;
– it is not a French issue;
– "the coming together of the two Germanys is inevitable";
– and that the final framework of this unification is unclear at the moment and could range from the liberalization of the border to the formation of a single state.

With these points in mind, he adds that "since it would be illogical to oppose this will, and since it is impossible to stop the coming together, we must go along with this move toward unity, if not toward unification." Under these circumstances, Védrine supported the idea that France should be ready with supportive policies, which he outlined in the following terms: to keep the European construction abreast with the unification in order to anchor "the FRG into the Twelve," to realize the EMU, to unite Germany with both Eastern and Western Europe, to maintain a system of alliances, which he considered "stability factors," and to maintain a proactive policy from all of Europe towards the Soviet Union, "so that the USSR does not feel deeply threatened" by these events. The final point proved vital in the period that followed.

A few days before the fall of the Berlin Wall, French authorities had already begun to discuss a possible unification of Germany. This does not mean, however, that the events about to occur in Berlin had been predicted in Paris. No one would have ventured the idea that Germany would be unified in less than a year.

French scenarios for the end of the Cold War and unification involved developments in which the agreement of the FRG was decisive.[10] Nevertheless, the French government, which at that time chaired the EC, knew of its partner's reticence on several points, notably the EMU. Thus, the main concern on the French diplomatic agenda, which was Community integration, required the Germans to make the necessary concessions. Early in November, the French government was relying on the Franco-German relationship to reach these results. The French were expecting that the EC would come first on the German agenda.

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et du Chancelier Helmut Kohl, à l'issue des 54e consultations franco-allemandes à Bonn," 2–3 November 1989, in Archives IFM, fonds service de presse.

[9] Hubert Védrine, "Réflexions sur la question allemande," 18 October 1989, in Archives nationales, 5AG4, CD (177).

[10] Saunier, "A special relationship", 239–40.

## Keeping the fall of the Berlin Wall under control (November 1989 to January 1990)

The events that occurred during the night of 9 to 10 November 1989 altered this scenario, and the French government and President Mitterrand had to react.

Without going into details, in this period French public opinion, both in the media and in political circles,[11] might be described in two words: enthusiastic and anxious. There was enthusiasm regarding the return of freedom to Eastern Europe, particularly in the GDR. There was also enthusiasm regarding détente, which was hoped would last. And there was enthusiasm regarding the reunion of the German population, since the French took their friendship for granted. But at the same time there was fear regarding the upheavals, since their effects were unpredictable. It was clear that a future greater Germany would have a lasting impact on Europe and its relations. While specialists and policy makers remained optimistic about this latter point, they all called attention to a number of uncertainties:

– What would be Germany's priorities? Would it turn to the East? Would it be tempted by neutralism?
– What would become of its Western commitments, such as those regarding NATO, the EEC or France?
– What would be the final framework for unification, a single state or a confederation? And how long would the timeframe be, short-term or mid-term?
– At the end of these historical events, where would the Americans, Soviets, Europeans and the French themselves stand?

Most of the French political parties, both those in the government and in the opposition, with some variations, desired clear official statements on these issues, as well as on European commitments and alliances. At the same time, they wanted to remain positive about the developments in Germany. There was one exception: the radical opposition of the French Communist Party, which was clearly hostile toward unification and demanded the clear-cut opposition of the French government. This was a major factor: it must be remembered that at this time, the presidential majority relied on the support of the communists.

The first official French reactions shared the public opinion. The French foreign minister Roland Dumas's statements in Parliament reflected a dichotomy of enthusiasm and concern.

On 10 November, Mitterrand talked to journalists in Copenhagen[12] concerning the events of the previous night. He referred to "propitious events" that announce the end of the "Yalta order." He also stated that the future European order re-

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[11] For the French public debate about the German unification, see Marie-Noëlle Brand Crémieux, *Les Français face à la réunification allemande, automne 1989–automne 1990* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004). I also refer here to Archives IFM, fonds presse.

[12] "Conférence de presse de Monsieur François Mitterrand, Président de la République, lors de sa visite à Copenhague," 10 November 1989, in Archives IFM, fonds service de presse.

mained to be defined and realized. Regarding unification, he repeated his statements of just a week earlier: "France expresses no reservations." Nevertheless, he refused to see the events in Berlin as "an organic phenomenon that would entail immediate unification." He declared that "a number of acts and some time will intervene [before one can talk about unification]."

As a matter of fact, the French government, as well as Mitterrand himself, wanted to remain cautious and pragmatic. Indeed, the events confirmed that "the time of unification had come." But when? And what remained to be settled? French priorities lay elsewhere: the success of the European Council in Strasbourg, to be held in early December, during which decisions favoring the EMU were expected to be made.[13] For Mitterrand and the French government, it was essential that the changes in Germany not intimidate the Kremlin, as this would result in Gorbachev's position being weakened, a position that was reputed as being fragile.

However, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Ten-Point Plan, announced on 28 November 1989, despite being wary, seemed to challenge the French caution.[14] It is noteworthy that Paris was not informed in advance of Kohl's initiative. At a time when Paris was examining the future of the Franco-German couple, the plan, which was not entirely clear, was met with reservations. If the preliminary considerations of the chancellor are disregarded, the Ten Points overlooked the future of the Community completely, the Community only being referred to with regard to enlargement in the East. This was not, as has been mentioned above, the main objective of the French. The declaration also did not mention the issue of alliances. While it did mention a future European balance of forces, it did not go into details. Finally, it did not mention the issue of borders, although this was to become an important element in future negotiations. The chancellor asserted that "German policy is now committed to a new phase."[15] The French government wanted to know if this meant that all German policy would now be subjected to unification exigencies, disregarding other issues.

In the days following the chancellor's announcement, the statements and decisions of Mitterrand and his ministers focused on the following:

- to make the French position clear—notably concerning the delicate issue of the Oder-Neisse border;

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[13] On the European priorities and the European Council of Strasbourg, see Archives nationales, 5AG4, EG (58–59, 61), CDM (13). This was the reason for the decision to hold the "Diner de l'Élysée" on 18 November, before the European Council. This was a way to frame the German Question within the European context, but also to keep it from disturbing the European discussions in Strasbourg. On the "Diner de l'Élysée," see Archives nationales, 5AG4, EG (52); interviews.

[14] On the French reactions to the Ten-Point Plan, see Hubert Védrine, *Les mondes de François Mitterrand* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 430. See also AMAE, Europe (6123, 6681); private archives; interviews.

[15] "Déclaration du chancelier Helmut Kohl au sujet de la politique de l'Allemagne lors des débats budgétaires (Bonn-Bundestag, 28 November 1989)," *Documents d'actualité internationale*, no. 6, 106–108.

- to emphasize that German unification could only occur within a wider process—a wider European process—which ultimately came down to looking for a way to thrust the German Question onto the international stage;
- to reassure the Soviets.

All this was aimed at "*donner du temps au temps*,"[16] in Mitterrand's own words, in order to keep events under control and obtain the necessary commitments from Bonn and Moscow, as well as all other involved countries. It is important to recall that this was a time in which the events both in Germany and Eastern Europe were exceptionally unpredictable.

One point—a point that has been hotly debated since that time—must be emphasized. Nothing in diplomatic sources or in French public statements shows any attempt to stop German unification.[17] On the contrary, unification was deemed inevitable, although no one knew the when and the how. France approved the successive moves forward, both within the contractual community and the project of "federal structures," both of which the Ten Points had envisaged for binding the two German states together in the future until unification was achieved. Mitterrand—despite his real concerns about the pace of unification and the possibilities for controlling it—reaffirmed on several occasions that France considered unification legitimate. But after the fall of the Wall, Mitterrand's affirmations were aimed at keeping the issues raised by unification high on the agenda. This was the motivation for his visits to Kiev and the GDR.[18]

At the end of 1989, it seems that this strategy had borne some fruit:

- France's Western partners had also set conditions for unification;
- the concerns of the Soviet Union had subsided, although it showed hostility toward any rash steps;

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[16] "Give time to time," that is, do not rush and make the most of the time you are given. Mitterrand was well known for using this maxim.

[17] The recent publication of the Thatcher–Mitterrand private talks—based on documents of Charles Powell and published by the Foreign Office—has not changed our point of view. As a matter of fact, Mitterrand repeated to the British prime minister that "we have to accept that there was a logic to reunification." But, at the same time, these documents attest to the concerns of the French president. He said that "everything depended on the how and when, and on the reactions of the Soviet Union. Britain and France were arguing for caution. The trouble was that the West Germans did not want to hear this." Patrick Salmon, Keith Hamilton, and Stephen Robert Twigge, eds., *Documents on British Policy Overseas III, vol. 7: German Unification 1989–1990* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 164–66, 215–19. The British papers about these talks are close to the French ones, which are already known; see for example Delamarre, *La politique allemande de François Mitterrand*, 46, 118. On this issue, see also Frédéric Bozo, "Thatcher's European Delusions," in *Prospect*, 30 November 2009 http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/thatchers-european-delusions/ (accessed 19 October 2012).

[18] On Mitterrand's trip to the GDR, see Christian Wenkel, *Auf der Suche nach einem anderen Deutschland, Die Beziehungen Frankreichs zur DDR im Spannungsfeld von Perzeption und Diplomatie* (Paris: Institut d'étude politique, 2008), 533–50. See also the papers on the preparations for this trip: Archives nationales, 5AG4, CD (187).

- after the announcement of the Ten-Point Plan, the West German government displayed their caution by emphasizing the gradual character of the projected steps;
- the debate concerning unification did not stop an agreement being made between France and the FRG on the EMU, which stood as a major success at the European Council in Strasbourg;
- plans for a CSCE meeting, which would outline the future of all Europe, seemed well under way.

Paris was fully aware from the summer of 1989 that the situation in the GDR was deteriorating. But it still believed in the possibility of a mid-term development, as confirmed by the talks that Mitterrand and Kohl held in Latche on 4 January 1990, during which the German chancellor still mentioned a process that would last years.[19]

At this time, how did Paris envisage the timetable of future events? The president himself often mentioned publicly that "things move so fast, it is difficult to make predictions."[20] His advisors' notes all mention the transitory character of the situation. However, in Paris, one was still thinking in terms of two or three years.[21]

## Negotiating unification (January-October 1990)

As we have since seen, the timetable as imagined by the French, with unification a mid-term process, was to be contradicted by events. By mid-January it became obvious that the unification process would be much faster. There were several signs supporting this:

- the collapse of entire sectors of the GDR's economy;
- the increase in the number of demonstrations in the GDR;
- the rescheduling of East German elections from May to March;
- requests by the GDR for financial support from the FRG and the increase of joint projects;
- the feeling that the Soviet Union had become aware that it could not stop unification, and that Gorbachev's opposition was only temporary, or would in fact be used in future bargaining.[22]

[19] On the 4 January meeting in Latche between Kohl and Mitterrand, see Delamarre, *La politique allemande de François Mitterrand*, 27–32, 47, 61, 80–82, 87–91, 145, 158.

[20] The French president made this statement during a visit paid to the GDR. "Conférence de presse de Monsieur François Mitterrand, Président de la République, à l'issue de sa visite d'état en République démocratique allemande," Berlin, 22 December 1989, in Archives IFM, fonds service de presse. On that visit and the French intentions, see Archives nationales 5AG4, CD (187), EG (204).

[21] See, for example, the anonymous declarations of French advisors to the press during the visit of Mitterrand to Kiev on 6 December 1989. Archives IFM, fonds presse.

[22] On these events, see Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

It became clear that it had become too late to attempt to slow the pace of unification to a mid-term process. Nonetheless, it was necessary to ensure that French interests were taken into account. The Germans would have to make concrete decisions and not only verbal statements.

This diplomatic phase was to last from February 1990 until the following summer, when a climax was reached. Before analyzing the French position in detail, it is best to list chronologically the steps that were taken, as well as their underlying logic.[23]

With this acceleration of events, the French primarily feared unification being realized without an international framework in which France could advance its interests. It was therefore urgent to raise the process to an international level. Once this had been achieved, it would then be necessary to bring Germany and the Soviet Union to a negotiating table to discuss a number of issues.

The difficulties in the French position were the following:

- How could France obtain the necessary concessions from the Germans without intimidating them at this crucial stage in their history, bearing in mind that German participation would be absolutely necessary in the future European order? This was particularly delicate because Bonn was reluctant to negotiate anything that might jeopardize its sovereignty, present or future.
- How could concessions be obtained from the Soviets, while making sure that they would not feel isolated in the process?
- How could France ensure that the unification process was accompanied by real progress regarding European integration, with the end of Germany's partition as part of a wider framework? Questions here included disarmament as well as the structure of the European Community.

As can be seen, in this phase of unification acceleration, the path for French diplomacy was quite narrow.

From February to April 1990, the French emphasized primarily the following:

> A conference had to be summoned in which the four Allies of 1945 could agree on a diplomatic settlement of the problems raised by German unification. Involving both German states, this was referred to as the Two Plus Four conference, as was suggested by the US administration based on a plan that had already been worked out in Paris political circles.[24] An agreement reached by Kohl and Gorbachev on 10 February 1990 enabled the convening of such a conference.

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[23] For the German unification talks discussed here, the author has used, in addition to the books mentioned above, the detailed account of Bertrand Dufourcq, who was the French negotiator and the head of the French delegation during the Two Plus Four negotiations. Bertrand Dufourcq, "2+4 ou la négociation atypique," *Politique étrangère* 65, no. 2 (2000): 467–84, http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/polit_0032-342x_2000_num_65_2_4952 (last accessed 13 April 2010). His papers related to the talks have also been used: AMAE, Affaires stratégiques et désarmement (15–17); Archives nationales, 5AG4, CDM (34–36).

[24] On the genesis of the conference from the French side, see, for example, Hubert Védrine, "Note pour le Président de la République," 6 February 1990, in Archives nationales, 5AG4, EG (213).

> The French government had to make sure that definite commitments would be secured in the process, with legal writs by which all parties would have to abide. This process would have to be carried out at least as fast as the process of unifying the two German states.

This first stage ended more or less in April 1990, when the Quai d'Orsay and the Élysée judged their main objectives to have been reached. It remained to support West Germany in its approach toward the Soviet Union, and to make sure that the process was undertaken in accordance with the agreed decisions. On 22 June 1990, Roland Dumas suggested that the final treaty be written down, in order to ensure that the conference taking place in Paris the next month, on 17 July, would be a success.

In the course of these negotiations, the French had a number of concerns. The first was to ensure the democratic character of the self-determination of the German people, which meant the freedom to vote in East Germany. The conditions and outcome of the East German elections on 18 March 1990 gave a clear signal on this point. In Paris, this was seen as another indication that unification would be undertaken quickly. Mitterrand's response to the election results was: "Good luck Germany."[25]

The second concern regarded the peaceful character of the process. Paris wanted the Two Plus Four conference to deal with what it called the external issues of unification. The objective of the Quai d'Orsay was nothing less than to reach a global settlement for a unified Germany, a settlement that would leave no room for future political or judiciary claims. The following aspects had to be settled:

– The future of international treaties involving the GDR and other countries;
– Collective security measures that would guarantee peaceful unification (prohibition of weapons of mass destruction [ABC weapons] in Germany, a limitation on the size of the German military, etc.);
– The end of quadripartite prerogatives (the status of Berlin, the 1951 Treaty of Paris, etc.);
– The future of Soviet troops on East German territory;
– The place of the future Germany in NATO, as well as within the European Community;
– The future of French troops in Germany.

While these points were important, they were not a priority for France. For example, it was soon clear that the reunified Germany would not seek to acquire ABC weapons. And it also soon became clear that the West German decision to carry out unification by simply absorbing East Germany—in the end, a decision approved by the French—put an end to many legal issues.

[25] In a message he sent to the Germans while dining with Václav Havel, who was in Paris at that time. "Allocution prononcée par Monsieur François Mitterrand, Président de la République, à l'occasion du dîner offert en l'honneur de Monsieur Vaclav Havel," 19 March 1990, in Archives IFM, fonds service de presse.

The issues concerning military alliances were of course more tricky, but they also did not cause major difficulties, since it was commonly agreed in Paris at that time that the nature of these alliances was bound to evolve. Thus, although NATO membership of the future unified Germany was a prerequisite, the French government was able, without any difficulties, to support the various demilitarization projects in the ex-Eastern German territories.

Regarding collective security matters, the cornerstone for the French government was the recognition by the reunified Germany of the Oder–Neisse border. The judiciary problems concerning the border are well known.[26] In Paris—and particularly at the Élysée,[27] where some leaflets from the German Christian Democratic Union Party were circulated showing maps of Germany including former German territories in Poland[28]—the matter was carefully monitored. While Chancellor Kohl always sought to reassure Mitterrand during their meetings that Germany would not claim these territories, his hesitation to make a public declaration in this regard was a matter for concern.[29] Paris felt it necessary to urge Bonn to clarify its position. For this reason, the French insisted on involving Poland at this stage in the negotiations, and to make sure that a border agreement was an integral part of the Two Plus Four Treaty. The French insistence on this point can certainly be seen as one reason for the chancellor's actions in March–April.[30] It must be noted France did not suggest that the treaty be a written document until the German parliaments had guaranteed that the border would be accepted.[31]

What was left at this stage was the issue of European unity. The French priority was to link the unification process with significant progress in the area of Community integration. German unification raised difficulties, which were soon identified in Paris as the following:

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26 Jochen Abr. Frowein, "The Reunification of Germany," *The American Journal of International Law* 86, no. 1 (1992): 155–57; Jochen Abr. Frowein, "Legal Problems of the German Ostpolitik," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1974): 105–26.

27 This particular issue has been described by Marion Delamarre as the feeling of "*responsabilité historique*" (historical responsibility) of the French president, a feeling that was confirmed by the private talks he had with several leaders, including Chancellor Kohl. Delamarre, *La politique allemande de François Mitterrand*, 50.

28 Interviews with Roland Dumas, August 2000.

29 Indeed, the French authorities demanded a public statement from the chancellor, *before* the unification, as regard the inviolability of the Oder-Neisse border. A statement that, from the French perspective, did not come easily.

30 Chancellor Kohl agreed in March with the adoption of a resolution on this issue in the Bundestag. In April, substantial discussions began on the Oder-Neisse problem during the Two Plus Four negotiations. For a complete chronology on this point, see Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War*, 222–33; Sarotte, 135–38.

31 On the Oder–Neisse issue and the French attitude, see Caroline de Margerie, "La Frontière Oder Neisse," 27 August 1991, in Archives nationales, 5AG4, CDM (34). On the French–Polish talks on this issue, see Archives nationales, 5AG4 CD (358), CDM (34, 43).

- threats to the budgetary and political balance within the EEC;
- questions about how to apply the *acquis communautaire* (the body of EEC laws) to the ex-GDR territories and how quickly;
- how to ensure that the goal of a single market or the EMU was not delayed by the unification process.

In addition, the French government soon decided that the FRG should not be left alone to support the burden of unification, but that the EEC should play a role in the process. This would "Europeanize" the unification. Élisabeth Guigou, advisor to the French president on European matters, wrote several memos in February–March 1990 on the subject of Europeanization.[32] She emphasized the necessity of linking the process of unification with an acceleration of European integration. According to her, this acceleration would not only allow immediate issues to be settled, it would also launch a new phase of integration. She believed that such acceleration could only occur if initiated by France and Germany, an initiative she therefore encouraged. This would stand as a test for Germany's involvement in the Community. Its involvement had to be ambitious and not confined merely to the EMU. She called for a true European union and deeper political integration, something that the German chancellor had already claimed to desire.

This process, it is now acknowledged, began as early as March 1990, with its first concrete outcome being the sending on 18 April of the first Franco-German letter. This introduced a series of similar communiqués that were sent throughout the negotiations toward the Maastricht Treaty. On the German side, the intent of this initiative was to provide a clear signal for Germany's commitment to the European Community. On the French side, the Mitterrand-Kohl communication addressed the EMU, but also the desire to build a genuine political union between the Community's member states. Notably, this was to be achieved by working out a common foreign policy. This political initiative was confirmed by the close Franco-German cooperation at the European Councils of Dublin I and II in April and June 1990. Moreover, prior to the entry of ex-GDR territories into the EEC, the French proposals were to be applied: no Community projects were to be delayed, and the Community would play an active role in the unification process by means of its traditional intervention tools, such as structural funds. However, the *acquis communautaire* was not discussed on this occasion.

Thus, despite the repeated demands of France in the Two Plus Four process, the Franco-German couple managed to meet a joint agreement on the European re-launch. It was this second step—which was a priority for Paris, as has been mentioned above—that undoubtedly enabled political détente to be maintained. During this period of doubts and major upheavals, this was an absolute necessity.

In July 1990 there were again a few ups and downs before the Two Plus Four negotiations could be concluded. Before the finalization, the FRG had to be per-

[32] On the European issues mentioned above, see Archives nationales, 5AG4, EG (212–214); interviews.

suaded to commit itself to a number of points—for example, the renouncement of ABC weapons and the acceptance of the Oder–Neisse border—as written conditions prior to unification. However, a compromise was found for each of these points on the basis of French propositions. There were also last minute hesitations on the side of the Soviets. Here again, the French delegation acted as a catalyst, and one might say that the friendly relations between Roland Dumas and Hans Dietrich Genscher helped.[33]

## Toward a new European balance?

The various treaties leading to German unification were signed and came into effect in the autumn of 1990. Paris considered its diplomacy to have been a success. Indeed, the issues of the Oder–Neisse border and ABC weapons were settled, and German unification had been linked to a European development process.

It must be emphasized that nothing in the treaties obstructed a future European defense policy. This point is of some significance and echoes the French global strategy regarding the future organization of the European continent. We shall look at this in some detail below in the conclusion.

In this period, which today all analysts see as having been historically momentous, Mitterrand was, as is usual in such circumstances, of two minds. As a political leader, he voiced his enthusiasm for the return of freedom in Eastern Europe and his hopes for the end of the Cold War. But as the president of the French Republic, he was primarily concerned with protecting French interests in a period that, in his view, was full of dangers. He stated this clearly to his close circle and during private talks: Europe was in the same situation as it had been in 1913. He was fully aware that the collapse of the Eastern bloc heralded the return of many disparate nations, a fact that was linked to many potential risks. As he underlined in his farewell speech before the European Parliament in 1994, to him “nationalism means war.”[34]

In this matter, the German Question was of course highly significant. A unified Germany would lie at the heart of the future Europe. But in the end, it was only ancillary. What mattered more was to quickly reach a new European balance,

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[33] Bertrand Dufourcq has stated that in September 1990, in the last days of the Two Plus Four negotiations, the discussions could have failed over the question of the possibility, or not, of NATO forces training on the territories of the former GDR. Following final negotiations in plenary, Roland Dumas, who presided, and Hans-Dietrich Genscher then made a common plea for a solution that could finally be adopted even by the Soviets. On the final talks, see Dufourcq, “2+4 ou la négociation atypique”; interviews.

[34] “Discours prononcé par Monsieur François Mitterrand, Président de la République, à l’occasion de la présentation du programme de la présidence française de l’Union européenne au Parlement européen. Strasbourg,” 17 January 1995, in Archives IFM, fonds service de presse.

based on democracy on one hand, but also on institutional organizations of co-operation and solidarity between the old nations of the continent.

This is why the importance bestowed on the Oder–Neisse border issue by the French president—as well as his entire diplomatic staff—was significant. Freezing this border stopped a Pandora's Box of European minorities from being opened. One might recall that the problem of the Oder–Neisse border was long a concern for Mitterrand: the fact that it would be an important factor in a unification process was publicly voiced by Mitterrand as early as 1969.[35]

This is why the European Community was so important: It was to stabilize the future of Europe. However, to Mitterrand's mind, the European Community, as well as the planned union, was not quite ready to expand to the Eastern European countries, insofar as they were not in a position to enforce the *acquis communautaire*. Thus, on 31 December 1989 Mitterrand suggested that a European confederation be set up that would provide a formal framework for the relations between Eastern and Western states and ease their coming closer.[36]

This desire to stabilize the continent can also be seen in the relations between France and the Soviet Union becoming closer. It was of utmost importance at the Élysée that these events should, on no occasion, be presented as a victory of the West over the East. On the contrary: the Soviet Union—whose evolution under Gorbachev's leadership was expected—should not feel threatened by the new European balance in the least. This was the reason for a series of comforting gestures towards Moscow during this period. These were then finalized by the conclusion of a new Franco-Soviet treaty of cooperation in late October 1990.[37]

To support the Soviet Union, it was crucial to break its isolation. In this, the French and the Germans finally acted together. As a matter of fact, Moscow held many keys to the situation, both for European organization as well as for German unification. Thus, from the summer of 1990, Paris and Bonn cooperated to provide significant financial support to the Soviet Union. In Bonn, this was done by providing payments and loans. For Paris, the primary goal was to demonstrate that the German unification process was basically a European process—as seen by the Community's support—and not opposed to Soviet interests. It was for this reason that, during the 1990 Houston G7 Summit, Kohl and Mitterrand attempted to get support for the Soviet Union from the Western world as a whole. And in order to prevent a destabilization of the Kremlin at a crucial moment in these

[35] See for example his statement when he led the Convention des institutions républicaines, in Archives IFM, FM-001 (75); interviews.

[36] On the European confederation project, see Frédéric Bozo, "The Failure of a Grand Design: Mitterrand's European Confederation, 1989–1991," *Contemporary European History* 17, no. 3 (2008): 391–412.

[37] On the French policy toward the USSR during that period, see Marie Pierre Rey, "Gorbatchev et la Maison commune européenne, une opportunité manquée?" *La Lettre de l'Institut François Mitterrand*, no. 19 (2007): 12–17. See also idem, "Europe is our Common Home: A Study of Gorbachev's Diplomatic Concept," *Cold War History* 4, no. 2 (2004): 33–66.

negotiations, Paris and Bonn worked together to calm down the national independence movement in Lithuania. In April 1990, a joint letter was sent to Vytautas Landsbergis, the movement's leader.

This desire to give a formal framework to future cooperation at a European level also influenced the French insistence on summoning a major Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) meeting. Here again, the idea—as in the case of the European confederation—was to create appropriate structures of cooperation necessary for the common security in the post–Cold War era. Paris had been working on this project since November 1989. At the start, this meant finding an institutional framework that was able to manage the unification process. But once the Two Plus Four conference was convened, the idea was to get the CSCE to agree on a genuine decree that would end the Cold War. This was to be the Paris Charter, which was adopted by the CSCE's 35 members in November 1990. The objective of the Charter was, on one hand, to consecrate the democratic model as the only model of government and, on the other hand, to create a formal institution in the field of security that would render conflict impossible. In other words, the Paris Charter was to be a "détente" treaty paving the way for disarmament in a unified Europe.

One more aspect must be considered, namely France's view[38] of the future of NATO. One must recall that at this time, relations were excellent between Mitterrand and George H.W. Bush.[39] Several meetings took place at the end of 1989 and in early 1990. This does not mean, however, that there were no political differences.

To understand these differences, one must consider various factors. At first, Paris deemed the continuity of NATO necessary in this period of great transition in Europe. It was also thought that a unified Germany should set up a defense policy in a wider framework. Insofar as a general European defense strategy was only a plan at this stage, it was thought that Germany should remain part of NATO. Later Paris believed that the ending of the Cold War would lead the United States to distancing itself from Europe, which in turn would lead to the end of the guarantee offered by the alliance. The role of NATO could only evolve. In fact, the evolution of NATO was a key element in the negotiations of 1990. It was thought that the Soviet Union would be more willing to accept the changes occurring in the East, as well as German unification and the integration of Western Europe, if at the same time the Atlantic alliance were to change its outlook.

The Bush administration let Paris know as early as spring 1990 that they were looking for a new thrust for NATO and asked Paris for advice. Very soon it appeared that the US project was, in fact, a plan aimed at extending the NATO missions beyond their traditional field of competency. This was something that

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38 On the issue of NATO, see Frédéric Bozo, "'Winners' and 'Losers': France, the United States, and the End of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 5 (2009): 927–56.

39 See, for example, their private talks in late 1989, in Archives nationales, 5AG4, CD (74, 266).

French diplomacy had always opposed. Paris was thus confronted with a problem: it was opposed to this US project, but at the same time was in favor of a revitalization of NATO. In fact, the French ambition was to introduce a reference to a future European defense structure within the formal framework of the alliance. Although, as mentioned above, the German unification treaties did not contain any clauses hindering such a structure in the future, in 1990 it was too early for this. The Quai d'Orsay saw that its other European partners were against any plans of this sort. Thus, this became an indecisive period with regard to NATO, in spite of a few aborted attempts at negotiation and the attempt at reinforcing the European defense, e.g. the talks for the Maastricht treaty.

To conclude, Mitterrand's policies to deal with the revolutions of 1989 followed a clear line, a line that unified and linked his various projects. He sought a unified Europe as well as a Europe that was self-supporting and based on international institutions. But above all, he sought a Europe that was democratic and peaceful.

Antonio Varsori

# ITALY, THE EAST EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS, AND THE REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY, 1989–92

Despite the fact that two decades have elapsed since the outbreak of the "clean hands" scandal, it is still a difficult task to deal in a balanced way and with a historical perspective with the policies pursued by the Italian cabinets between the early 1980s and the early 1990s, the decade in Italy that was characterized by the so-called five-party coalition governments (*pentapartito*) and dominated by political personalities such as Bettino Craxi, Giulio Andreotti, Arnaldo Forlani, and Giovanni Spadolini. Studying Italy's foreign policy in this period is not an exception to this murky picture. As far as public opinion in this period is concerned, it seems that, after some first reactions to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of communism, most Italians focused less on international affairs and more on the internal events that led to the setting up of the so-called Second Republic. While a certain amount of scholarly research has been begun by historians,[1] such attempts face serious obstacles: on one hand, the almost complete lack of archival sources, and on the other, a sort of *damnatio memoriae* that appears to have affected most of the politicians who played a leading role in those years, especially the members of the Italian Socialist Party (*Partito Socialista Italiano*) and the Christian Democracy (*Democrazia Cristiana*). In the early 1990s, members of both parties became the target of judges' inquiries and widespread hostility in the media, both press and television. This played an important role in destroying an entire political class.[2]

If one examines Italy's foreign policy between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Maastricht Treaty—the period that marked the most dramatic changes in Europe in the second half of the twentieth century—one encounters similar difficulties as a historian: once again the lack of archival records in this regard is a major obstacle. This is still the case despite the fact that Andreotti published several volumes of memoirs a few years ago and Gianni De Michelis published a long interview in which one section deals with his experiences as foreign min-

[1] See for example Ennio Di Nolfo, ed., *La politica estera italiana degli anni Ottanta* (Manduria: Lacaita, 2003); Simona Colarizi, Paolo Craveri, Silvio Pons, and Gaetano Quagliariello, eds., *Gli anni Ottanta come storia* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2004).

[2] Simona Colarizi and Marco Gervasoni, *La cruna dell'ago. Craxi, il Partito socialista e la crisi della Repubblica* (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 2005); Stefano Rolando, *Una voce poco fa. Politica, comunicazione e media nella vicenda del Partito Socialista Italianodal 1976 al 1994* (Venice: Marsilio, 2009).

ister between July 1989 and June 1992.[3] However, in the last few years some new archival sources have become available, owing especially to the decision by former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti to open his private archives to scholars.[4]

During the period from the early 1980s to the early 1990s Italy's foreign policy actually experienced an unusual continuity. Giulio Andreotti was foreign minister from 1983 to 1989; when in late July 1989 the Christian Democrat leader became prime minister, he appointed Gianni De Michelis as head of the Farnesina, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Andreotti's government would last until the eruption of the "clean hands" scandal in the late spring of 1992. Thus, it was Andreotti's cabinet that dealt with all the relevant events of those years, including the fall of the Berlin Wall, the revolutions in East-Central Europe, German reunification, the negotiations that led to the Maastricht Treaty, the first Iraq war, the end of the Soviet Union, the implosion of Yugoslavia, etc. In spite of the fact that a number of other issues, including problems in the Middle East and US–USSR relations, played a relevant part in Italy's international agenda, the dramatic events taking place on the European continent and the fact that the end of the Cold War was mainly a European affair gave the Italian political leadership the quite obvious choice of focusing its attention on the nation's attitude toward the new European balance emerging from the ruins of the communist system. This was also a consequence of the significant role the Italian Communist Party had played since the 1940s in the history of the Italian Republic.[5] Together, Andreotti and De Michelis played an important role in shaping Italy's foreign policy during this crucial decade.

The well-known political figure of Prime Minister Andreotti characterized nearly half a century of Italian political history. He entered the Italian political scene in the immediate postwar period as an under-secretary in an early De Gasperi cabinet, then became one of the leading members of the Christian Democrats, and on several occasions he was Italy's prime minister. It should be mentioned that he led a so-called national unity government between 1978 and 1979, a cabinet that was supported by the Italian Communist Party (PCI). It was this cabinet that had to face one of the most serious crises in Italian postwar history, the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, a leading Christian Democrat who had

[3] Giulio Andreotti, *De (prima) republica: ricordi* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1996); Gianni De Michelis, *La lunga ombra di Yalta. La specificità della politica italiana* (Venice: Marsilio, 2003).

[4] The Andreotti archives are kept at the Luigi Sturzo Institute in Rome. The author would like to thank Senator Giulio Andreotti for permission to examine his private papers, as well as the Luigi Sturzo Institute in Rome. In this connection, he would like to express his gratitude to Dr. Flavia Nardelli, former secretary general of the Sturzo Institute, and Dr. Luciana Devoti, chief archivist, for their precious help. Cf. Antonio Varsori, *L'Italia e la fine della guerra fredda: La politica estera dei governi Andreotti 1989–1992* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2013).

[5] For an overview, see Lucio Caracciolo, "L'Italia alla ricerca di se stessa," in Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto, eds., *Storia d'Italia*, vol. 6, *L'Italia contemporanea* (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 1999), 541–604.

advocated the forming of the compromise with the communists. Later Andreotti was a leading member of the so-called five-party coalition, and during the second half of the 1980s, held the post of foreign minister in various governments. In 1989 he was once again appointed prime minister.[6]

De Michelis is perhaps less well known to the wider international public, but he held a significant role as well. When De Michelis became foreign minister, he was one of the leading representatives of the Italian Socialist Party of the Craxi era. De Michelis, a member of a distinguished Venetian family—his brother was long the owner of a flourishing publishing house—started his career as a scholar. He became an associate professor of chemistry at the University of Venice, but very early became involved in politics at a local level. He was an outstanding representative of the Socialist Party in the Veneto region, which between the 1970s and the 1980s emerged as one of the most economically dynamic and wealthiest areas in Italy.[7] During the 1980s, De Michelis was the deputy-secretary of the Socialist Party, concurrently between 1980 and 1983 he was the minister for state industry, between 1983 and 1987 the minister of labor, and between 1988 and 1989 deputy-prime minister. Two British political scientists, Kenneth Dyson and Kevin Featherstone, have sketched the following portrait: "De Michelis […] was an intelligent, loquacious bon vivant, liable to pursue grand political gestures [… he] was an unusually assertive foreign minister by the standards of his predecessors."[8]

Dyson and Featherston, who have focused their attention on the creation of the European Monetary Union, are two of the very few foreign scholars to have dealt extensively with Italy's foreign policy between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Maastricht Treaty, at least as far as the negotiations at the basis of the EMU are concerned. Most other foreign historians and witnesses have usually underrated Italy's position in these years, also as far the European construction and the setting up of a post–Cold War European balance are concerned. A few examples can give an impression of this attitude. In his volume dealing with Mitterrand's foreign policy, of Italian leaders, Hubert Vedrine quotes only Andreotti, and that very few times.[9] In Hans Stark's study on Kohl's European policy there is no reference to the Italian leaders with the exception of Emilio Colombo, mainly with regard to the Colombo-Genscher declaration.[10] In her memoirs, as

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6 See Massimo Franco, *Andreotti. La vita di un uomo politico, la storia di un'epoca* (Milan: Mondadori, 2010).

7 Carlo Fumian and Angelo Ventura, *Storia del Veneto*, vol. 2, *Dal seicento a oggi* (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 2004).

8 Kenneth Dyson and Keith Featherstone, *The Road to Maastricht Negotiating Economic and Monetary Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 494.

9 Hubert Védrine, *Les mondes de François Mitterrand. A l'Elysée 1981–1995* (Paris: Fayard, 1996). The same under-evaluation is found in the memoirs by Roland Dumas, *Affaires Entrangéres,* vol. 1, *1981–1987* (Paris: Fayard, 2007).

10 Hans Stark, *Kohl, l'Allemagne et l'Europe. La politique d'intégration européenne de la République fédèrale 1982–1988* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2004).

far as the Maastricht Treaty negotiations are concerned, Margaret Thatcher only remembers Italy's role in relation to the Rome European Council held in October 1990, writing: "As always with the Italians, it was difficult throughout to distinguish confusion from guile, but plenty of both was evident."[11] In his detailed study on Mitterrand and the German reunification, based mainly on French archival sources, Frédéric Bozo makes some interesting remarks about Italy's position, although in his analysis Rome's policies seem to have played a minor role. With regard to De Michelis' policies, Bozo has focused his attention on the joint Anglo-Italian statement regarding the hypothesis of the close ties between the Western European Union and NATO; in this connection the French author appears to regard this initiative as a failure that led to a closer French-German "rapprochement."[12] Indeed, this widespread underrating of Italy's international role is a common feature in most foreign scholars' studies dealing with European affairs, at least with regard to the Cold War and the integration process. But this is a complex issue to which we will turn our attention in this paper's conclusion.[13]

## Italy's early reactions to Europe's changing balance

When the Andreotti government was appointed in late July 1989, a number of relevant changes were already taking place in the Soviet bloc, mainly as a consequence of glasnost and perestroika but also due to the crisis of the Soviet system: In Poland the communist régime was trying to work out a compromise with the opposition. At the same time, thousands of East Germans were leaving to spend their holidays in Hungary, holidays that were going to become the first step in their escape to the West. Nevertheless, very few statesmen or political commentators were able to predict what was then to happen a few months later. In the Western political scenario, Italy was not an exception.

On the occasion of a speech he gave at the Italian Parliament in July 1989, the new foreign minister De Michelis seems to have realized that relevant changes were going to shape a new international balance, especially in Europe, and he tried to develop a broader view of Italy's role in the international arena. He argued that Italy had always focused its attention on three geographical areas: Western Europe, East-Central Europe and the Mediterranean/Middle East. In the foreign minister's interpretation, the Cold War had denied Italy the opportunity to develop an effective policy toward East-Central Europe and there had been several obstacles to Italy's Mediterranean ambitions. Thus, from the late 1940s onward

[11] Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), 765.

[12] Fréderic Bozo, *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et l'unification allemande* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005), 317–18.

[13] On these aspects, see the introduction in Antonio Varsori, *La Cenerentola d'Europa? L'Italia e l'integrazione europea dal 1947 a oggi* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2010), 1–27.

the only theater open to Italy's initiatives was the Western European one, a fact that had mainly resulted in Italy's deep involvement in the integration process. But in De Michelis' opinion, the sudden dramatic developments that were taking place in the Soviet bloc were going to change the European balance and offer Italy a precious opportunity, especially in East-Central Europe.[14] During the previous years, Italy had focused its attention on the possibility of closer relations with Gorbachev's Soviet Union, a policy, however, that had raised a number of doubts and debates.[15] The new foreign minister did not ignore Moscow's position but he was eager to launch a new initiative. Also as a consequence of his political experience as a major local politician, De Michelis had already shown some interest in creating relations with Italy's northeastern neighbors.

His first venture was a meeting in Venice with his Yugoslav colleague Budimir Lončar. A few months later there was follow-up meeting in Umag on the Istrian coast. On this occasion the two governments launched a plan to create a cooperation agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia; this was to be a preliminary step towards a four-power (Italy, Yugoslavia, Austria and Hungary) organization. The *quadrangolare* was to promote political, economic and cultural cooperation, a plan aimed both at overcoming the division between East and West in the Adriatic region and at strengthening an already shaky Yugoslav state.[16] In this context Italy was obviously a senior partner. Projects of this type were not new to Italian diplomacy. Indeed, after the end of World War I, under both the Liberal governments and the Fascist régime, although in different ways, Italy had always aimed at becoming the leading power in the Adriatic and the Balkans. Such interests had been revived from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s owing mainly to the growing economic links between northeastern Italy and certain parts of Yugoslavia and Austria. Despite these first steps, however, in the first months of the Andreotti government a more urgent question appeared that caused a quick shift in Italy's attention: the sudden collapse of the German Democratic Republic.

## Italy and German reunification: advocating the European solution

The changing balance in Europe was a quicker development than most politicians in both East and West had foreseen. In November the Western leaders were confronted with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the possibility of a quick German reunification. Almost immediately these developments were linked to the integra-

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[14] De Michelis, *La lunga ombra*, 94–95.

[15] The Italian Ambassador to Moscow, Sergio Romano, resigned from his office as a consequence of disagreements with the De Mita government on Italy's policy towards the Soviet Union. Romano had no confidence in Gorbachev's ability to achieve his planned reforms.

[16] Italian Foreign Ministry (Rome) to various Italian embassies, 16 November 1989, in Luigi Sturzo Institute (hereafter ILS), Andreotti Papers (hereafter AP), box 382, tel.

tion process, since in the same period the European Community was dealing with Delors' ambitious project of creating an economic and monetary union. The Italian government was also compelled to focus its attention on what was happening in Germany. At an early stage, Prime Minister Andreotti appeared to share the doubts and fears that were being nurtured in Paris and in London about the creation of a new powerful Germany that would be less interested in European construction and more attracted by its traditional *Sonderweg*. In a public speech a few years earlier, Andreotti had stated half-jokingly, half seriously, that he loved Germany so much, two German states were better than one. At that time this statement had raised a sharp reaction and harsh criticism on the part of the West German authorities and press.[17] Although most likely meant primarily as a joke, it nonetheless mirrored the feelings in some Italian political and diplomatic circles. In the Italian decision-makers' opinion, the postwar Western European balance had always been based on a cohesive group of four "big" countries that were roughly on equal footing, of which Italy felt it was one.[18] Moreover, the legacy of the past had not been forgotten and thus it is not surprising that in December 1989, the Italian secret service sent a detailed memorandum to Andreotti about the presence of pan-German and neo-Nazi movements in Germany as well as in certain East-Central European countries.[19]

In spite of these traditional fears, Italy's political elite could not ignore the fact that in the Italian public opinion, the fall of the Berlin Wall seemed to be viewed as a very positive event and German reunification an almost obvious consequence.[20] The Italian leadership realized very early that hindering Germany's quick reunification would be an impossible task: the only choice that would safeguard Italy's interests would be to create a close link between a reunified Germany and the existing Western structures, especially the Atlantic Alliance and the European Community. On 8–9 December 1989 there was a meeting of the leaders of the European Community in Strasbourg. On this occasion Chancellor Kohl pleaded for European support for his Ten-Point Plan, which aimed at a quick reunification. In De Michelis' recollection of this episode, most of the European leaders seemed to oppose Kohl's plan, but De Michelis and his diplomatic advisor, Ambassador Silvio Fagiolo, suggested that Andreotti take a more flexible

[17] Ferraris (Bonn) to the Italian Foreign Ministry, strictly confidential, 14 September 1984, in ILS, AP, box 458, tel. no. 1518. The German state secretary for foreign affairs summoned the Italian ambassador and criticized Andreotti's statement severely.

[18] On Andreotti's reaction to West Germany's critical remarks, see letter Andreotti to Pertini, 17 September 1984, in ILS, AP, box 458. Andreotti explained to the Italian president that he had only taken into consideration the existing situation, which stressed the existence of two German states.

[19] Memorandum CESIS (Comitato Esecutivo per i servizi di informazione e di sicurezza) to Andreotti, "Prospettive di riunificazione delle due Germanie: eventuali ritorni nazionalistici e pangermanici," strictly confidential, 15 December 1989, in ILS, AP, box. 458.

[20] On the relationship between Italy and Germany see Gian Enrico Rusconi, *Germania Italia Europa. Dallo stato di Potenza alla "potenza civile"* (Turin: Einaudi, 2003).

attitude and make a statement indicating that the European Community favored German reunification. This statement was very vague, but in De Michelis' opinion, it helped the German chancellor and prevailed over the tougher position of other European leaders, thus opening the way to Kohl's reunification policy. It is difficult to argue whether this Italian initiative was indeed relevant, since other sources do not mention Andreotti's role at the Paris meeting.[21] Nonetheless, his position expressed Italy's main goal as far as the issue of German reunification was concerned: overseeing the reunification process and linking Germany to the European Community and NATO.

Despite Italy's interest in being party to the negotiations on Germany's future, however, from very early the issue of reunification was to involve only the four victorious powers of World War II (the United States, the USSR, Great Britain and France) together with the two German states. Thus, Italy's ambitions seemed to have been utterly frustrated. De Michelis repeated Italy's demands in February 1990 on the occasion of the Open Skies conference held in Ottawa, but the German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher replied curtly: "You are not part of the game."[22] Italy was thus excluded from the diplomatic process that would lead to Germany's reunification as well as to the new European balance that emerged not only due to the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also as a consequence of the end of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. However once again, as on several occasions in the past, the European integration process and NATO—in particular, the bilateral link between Washington and Rome—offered Italy an opportunity to overcome its traditional weaknesses. In February, Andreotti met Kohl in Pisa and explained Italy's position to the German chancellor; the West German reaction seemed quite forthcoming.[23] Later there were a number of meetings between Italian diplomats and US representatives, whereby the latter appeared eager to reassure the Italian government concerning Italy's role in the new balance emerging in Europe, especially through Rome's role in the Atlantic alliance.[24]

In spring 1990, Mitterrand and Kohl decided that a deepening of European political integration was the best way to achieve Germany's reunification without too many fears being raised of a "fourth" German Reich. At the European Council held in Dublin in April 1990, this goal was singled out by the EC-twelve. The political aspects of the integration process were clearly linked to Delors' project on an economic and monetary union. In the Irish capital, Italy supported the acceleration of the integration process and the link between a deeper political

21 See in general Bozo, *Mitterand*.

22 Bozo, *Mitterand*, 193.

23 Cossiga to Andreotti, 19 February 1990; and Andreotti to Cossiga, 19 February 1990, in ILS, AP, box 458.

24 Baker (Washington) to De Michelis, 20 February 1990; De Michelis to Baker, 24 February 1990 and note by the Italian Foreign Ministry, 3 March 1990, secret, in ILS, AP, box 458. The US authorities appeared to be interested in involving Italy in some of NATO's initiatives dealing with the process of German reunification.

integration and the setting up of a monetary union.[25] In this same period, the Italian Foreign Ministry was analyzing the dramatic events that were unfolding in East-Central Europe. Although the Italian authorities obviously welcomed the democratization process, they appeared worried that the changes in the European balance were moving ahead too rapidly, since they seemed very concerned about the Soviet Union's reaction. Italy thought that in order to avoid too many suspicions being raised in Moscow, a cautious policy based mainly on Western economic and technical aid was the best solution to the problems related to the fall of communism in East-Central Europe.[26]

European integration and the fact that Italy was to chair the European Community during the second half of 1990 appeared to offer Italy a precious chance to recover its part in the game, especially as far German reunification was concerned. Both in his book *La lunga ombra di Yalta* and in a number of articles, De Michelis has emphasized Italy's ambitions, stressing that he was helped greatly in his task by a small team of experienced diplomats, including Silvio Fagiolo, Rocco Cangelosi and Pietro Calamia, who played important roles. At the Dublin European Council the Italian foreign minister advocated the convening of an intergovernmental conference to deal with the issue of political integration and stressed that it was important to achieve both the goal of a closer political union and of an economic and monetary union.[27] The Italian authorities regarded progress in political integration a paramount goal, since in their opinion achieving this would avoid a group of leading nations, a "directorate," being set up in the European Community, something that would threaten Italy's international position.[28]

Nonetheless, while the political aspects of the integration process were very relevant to the Italian government, in the opinion of the Italian authorities economic issues were just as important as political ones. Despite internal problems, Italy was trying to be deeply involved in the strategies for realizing the EMU. In this connection a few Italian top officials, including Tommaso Padoa Schioppa, were cooperating closely with Jacques Delors in developing the European common currency project.[29] The treasury minister, Guido Carli, and the governor of the Bank of Italy, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, also shared Delors' views, and not only because of the EMU's international significance. They hoped that the creation of the EMU would offer Italy the chance to force the political elites to implement healthier economic policies; in early 1990, as an example of Italy's faith in these policies,

[25] See for example Note by the Italian Foreign Ministry to the President of the Council, 27 April 1990, in ILS, AP, box 382.

[26] Memorandum, Italian Foreign Ministry "Sviluppi nei paesi dell'Europa centro-orientale," 18 April 1990, in ILS, AP, box 382.

[27] Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947–1993* (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 2003), 403.

[28] See memorandum Guidi (Bonn) to De Michelis (Rome), 8 May 1990, in ILS, AP, box 458.

[29] Tommaso Padoa Schioppa, *La lunga via per l'euro* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2004).

the lira had joined the narrow band of the European Monetary System (EMS), a position similar to the one enjoyed by other stronger European currencies.[30]

During the Italian EC presidency in the second half of 1990 two important European Councils were held. The first was an extraordinary session convened in Rome in late October, the second was held in the Italian capital in December. During this period, Italy's European policy was harshly criticized by a number of international commentators, especially in Britain, where *The Economist* stated that the Italian presidency was similar to a coach whose drivers were the Marx brothers. It was also criticized that at the October Council the various issues on the agenda had not been dealt with effectively enough or in detail. The British prime minister wrote that she was puzzled at the closing statement concerning the development of closer forms of political integration.[31] Actually Italy's strategy was clear: it was Rome's intention to intertwine political and economic integration closely, since this would peacefully solve the problem of the European role of a reunified Germany. At the same time the Italian government was well aware of both the difficulties and interests this held for Italy. In September, according to De Michelis' memoirs, he had a secret meeting with Delors at the Argentario, a Tuscan seaside resort. On this occasion, the two politicians sketched out the document that the Italian government then put forward at the Rome extraordinary European Council. In De Michelis' opinion, this document combined the two traditional approaches to the European construction: on one hand the federalist ideal, and on the other, intergovernmental pragmatism.[32] Mitterrand's and Kohl's position at the Rome Council seemed to imply that Italy's policy enjoyed the support of both Germany and France. Although any progress was impossible without Kohl's and Mitterrand's approval, Italy was able to play a role in the process, and the convening of these two intergovernmental conferences, the former on the political union, the latter on the EMU, can be regarded as an Italian political achievement. Moreover, this diplomatic success was achieved in the midst of a serious international crisis, namely, Kuwait's invasion by Saddam Husein's Iraq. This crisis caused serious difficulties to the Andreotti government due to widespread pacifist feelings in Italy, supported in part by the Holy See and Catholic circles and widely exploited by the former Communist Party.[33]

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to deal with Italy's position at these two intergovernmental conferences in detail,[34] so our attention will focus on a few

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30 On this issue, see Antonio Varsori, *La Cenerentola*, 353–74; see also Paolo Craveri, ed., *Guido Carli senator e ministro del Tesoro 1983–1992* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2009).

31 Thatcher, *Downing Street*, 764–67.

32 De Michelis, *La lunga ombra*, 141.

33 The Italian Government was also very worried about the economic consequences of the Gulf crisis; see note for the Minister by the Italian Foreign Ministry, 23 October 1990, in ILS, AP, box 383. Thus, in the early stages they favored a diplomatic solution of the crisis.

34 For a detailed analysis of the two conferences, see Bozo, *Mitterand*; Colette Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht. Politics and Negotiations to create the European Union* (New

major aspects. Despite what is usually stated, it is likely that Italy was more interested in the EMU negotiations, and thus the outcome of the political union conference was also linked to these economic issues. De Michelis stated in an interview that Andreotti and the Farnesina were aware of the importance of the EMU, not only for the Community's and Europe's future, but also for Italy's international position as well as its economy in the post–Cold War European balance, a balance that would be dominated by a reunified Germany. Italy aimed at being recognized as a member of the "first division" in the future EMU, as this would be important from both a political standpoint and an economic one—the important lesson of Italy's participation in the EMS in 1978 had not been forgotten in Rome.[35] But the Italian economic situation posed serious obstacles for achieving this goal. This is why Italy clearly favored forms of closer integration, that is, the creation of a common European currency and definite rules to be administered by a supra-national body. Last but not least, the Italian leaders were aware that some European partners, in particular Germany, nurtured doubts concerning Italy's role in a future EMU that would have the deutsche mark and the Bundesbank's strict rules as its point of reference. Despite these difficulties, Andreotti and De Michelis relied on the experience and prestige enjoyed by the treasury minister, Carli, and a group of technocrats tied to the Bank of Italy who were well known in international financial circles (Ciampi, Padoa Schioppa, Draghi, etc.).

Italy's attention focused on the so-called convergence criteria.[36] Italy was able to achieve a few goals: the convergence criteria were not part of the treaty, so the Community could interpret them without changing the treaty. These criteria offered maneuvering room for economically weak countries. This included the public debt ratio not exceeding 60 percent of the GNP, whereby what mattered was progressing toward a decrease in debt, not achieving the final goal. Moreover, Italy played a role in singling out a definite date for the final implementation of the so-called stage three of the EMU,[37] a decision that would tie the member states, especially Germany, to the implementation of the EMU and the creation of the euro. And finally, the "tier" system offered Italy further room for maneuvering, since it provided steps in the longer process. If a country was unable to reach the scheduled agenda of "stage two," it would be possible to reach a favorable position later on. Obviously the Italian authorities were aware that they

York, London: Garland, 1997); Stark, *Kohl*; Dyson and Featherstone, *Road*. With the exception of the two British authors in these volumes, there are few references to Italy's position, although the attention is focussed on France and Germany, and, to a minor extent on Britain. A few important documents are available in AP. On Italy's position, see Antonio Varsori, "The Andreotti Governments and the Maastricht Treaty: Between European Hopes and Domestic Constraints," *Journal of European Integration History* 19, no. 1 (2013): 23–44.

35 On this episode, see Varsori, *La Cenerentola*, 314–30.

36 As far as these aspects are concerned, see Dyson and Featherstone, *Road*; Padoa Schioppa, *Lunga via*. See moreover Guido Carli, *Cinquant'anni di vita italiana* (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 1993).

37 See De Michelis, *La lunga ombra*.

would have to deal with the country's economic problems in the near future, but they hoped that, as had happened at the time of the EMS, the *vincolo esterno* (external obligations) would help the political elite and the Bank of Italy to convince the public of the need for strict—and unpopular—economic policies.[38]

As far as the political union was concerned, De Michelis and Andreotti supported Italy's traditional federalist approach. However, it is open to question whether on several occasions Italy merely paid lip service to federalist ideals, since they were useful for gaining a wider consensus in a political elite that was accustomed to debating grandiose—and vague—federalist projects. With regard to foreign policy, especially from the 1970s onwards when the PCI had accepted European federalism, faith in Spinelli's federalism was the only common ground held by the various political parties in a country where foreign policy had always been a matter of sharp divisions and disparities. Furthermore, a supra-national approach in the political context had always been regarded by both Italian politicians and diplomats as an easy means for coping with the nation's political weaknesses. Italy's "opportunistic" approach to the issue of political integration is confirmed by De Michelis' position on what was regarded one of the most difficult questions in the negotiations on political integration: foreign and security policies. In his memoirs, Delors seems puzzled by the joint Anglo-Italian declaration released in October 1991, writing: "sans qu'on sache pourquoi, le ministre des Affaires Etrangères italien De Michelis s'était associé à Douglas Hurd pour proposer que les questions de défense et de sécurité soient un instrument de l'Alliance Atlantique, destiné à la renforcer."[39]

While it is not necessary to discuss the success of this Italian diplomatic move in detail here, it should nonetheless be mentioned that this decision was consistent with Italy's traditional foreign policy interests. The creation of a strong European defense instrument in the future European Union would mean a French-German leadership that was too strong. As has been stated above, De Michelis' European policy was less federalist than is usually thought; Italy did not agree to a leadership in the Community that was too powerful. Close relations with the United States had always counterbalanced the French-German duo, the UK being the obvious link to the United States and NATO being the instrument through which Italy could achieve its aims. In this context, Italy's declaration was an almost obvious move, especially since the Italian leaders could not ignore the influence that the future EU, typified by a reunified Germany, would exert in East-Central Europe. Last but not least, in the opinion of the Italian government, a strengthened NATO—and the presence of the United States—would better guarantee Europe's security in the uncertain post–Cold War balance, a balance that might likely be dominated by a too powerful

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[38] On the vincolo esterno, see Roberto Gualtieri, "L'Europa come vincolo esterno," in Piero Craveri and Antonio Varsori, eds., *L'Italia nella costruzione europea. Un bilancio storico (1957–1997)* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2009), 313–31.

[39] Jacques Delors, *Mémoirs* (Paris: Plon, 2003), 366.

Germany. When in February 1992 the EC-twelve signed the Maastricht Treaty, the Italian government was satisfied with the role the Italian delegates had played, and the final outcome was consistent with the nation's political and economic interests.

## The end of communism: War on Italy's border

Between 1990 and 1991, Italy not only had to focus its attention on the Iraq war, but also on another serious political crisis, especially as it was taking place along its borders, namely, the crisis developing in Yugoslavia. As already mentioned above, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Italy tried to strengthen the already shaky Yugoslav republic through the so-called *quadrangolare* initiative. At the local level, this policy was backed by another initiative, the so-called AlpeAdria, a cooperation agreement involving various border regions.[40] In 1990 De Michelis continued these efforts by strongly supporting Ante Marković's federal government. In this period Italy was aiming at saving some sort of Yugoslav unity, and supported the Yugoslav federal government taking a pro-Western and pro-Community stance. In an article published in 1994, De Michelis writes that Italy played a leading role in Europe's policy towards Yugoslavia in 1990, and that its position enjoyed the full support of Germany.[41] But he also seems to complain that the European Community paid little attention to the Yugoslav situation, focusing its attention, also as a consequence of Germany's interests, on Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. These three countries enjoyed almost immediate aid from the Community through the PHARE program. Indeed, Italy also supported these policies, since the Italian authorities believed it possible for the European Community to stabilize these former communist nations.

For a period of time Italy's policy toward Yugoslavia appeared successful, but in 1991 the Yugoslav economic situation worsened. Georg Meyr stated: "Italy and France strongly supported the Delors-Marković economic plan in Brussels, where it was not approved due to British opposition."[42] When that spring both Slovenia and Croatia marched toward full independence and hostilities began between the Slovenian militia and the federal army, De Michelis became part of the so-called European troika (together with Jacques Poos from Luxembourg and Hans van den Broek from the Netherlands), which sought, at the Brioni conference, a diplomatic solution to the conflict. There, De Michelis was very active, hoping that an intervention of the Community would preserve some form of confederal bond between the various republics of former Yugosla-

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[40] See Georg Meyr, "Italy and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia up to the Recognition of Croatia and Slovenia (1989–1992)," *Journal of European Integration History* 10, no. 1 (2004): 169–78.

[41] Gianni De Michelis, "Così cercammo di impedire la guerra," *Limes*, no. 1, 1994, 229–36.

[42] Meyr, "Italy," 172.

via.[43] The Italian foreign minister hoped to halt Slovenia's and Croatia's move toward full independence; he thus put pressure on both republics to refrain from making any major decisions.

De Michelis' position was not an easy one, since the Italian media, the political leaders of Italy's northeastern regions, the Catholic world, and most of the population favored a quick independence process. These groups perceived Slovenia and Croatia as Western democratic nations that were freeing themselves from Belgrade's backward communist oppression. But Andreotti and De Michelis feared the obvious consequences: the danger of mass emigration. In August 1991 Italy was compelled to face an early wave of illegal immigrants, when about 20,000 Albanians reached the Italian coast looking for a better future. In 1991 De Michelis launched the project of transforming the *quadrangolare* into a *pentagonale*. In September of the same year, a German-Italian meeting was held in Venice, where both De Michelis and Andreotti tried to convince the German delegates to take a cautious attitude towards the Yugoslav question. The same issue was debated at the Brussels European Council in December 1991. Nonetheless, while other delegations still opposed this solution, Germany appeared determined to recognize the independence of both Slovenia and Croatia immediately, which left the situation in an apparent deadlock. In his memoirs, De Michelis states that it was the Italian delegation that found a compromise: The members of the Community would recognize the two republics, but this would be made public by the EC-twelve only on 15 January 1992 as the outcome of a unanimous decision.

De Michelis has tried to explain this radical change in Italy's foreign policy: On one hand, the Italian government could no longer ignore the intensification of the public opinion in favor of the two republic's full independence. On the other hand, the Italian foreign minister wanted to avoid revealing, on the morrow of the Maastricht Treaty, that there were serious disagreements between the EC-twelve on an important foreign policy issue.[44] Actually De Michelis and Andreotti hoped that one month would be long enough to slow down the recognition process. We must also not forget that internal factors were playing a role in shaping Italy's policy as well: The Andreotti government was becoming very weak, and the policy toward Slovenia and Croatia was closely linked to the strong autonomy sentiments emerging in northern Italy. Italy's new policy was a means for appeasing the Northern League, which some Italian decision-makers feared would make claims based on the Yugoslav secessionist "model."

But as is well known, Germany did not wait until the date set in Brussels, recognizing Slovenia's and Croatia's independence only a few days later. Shortly thereafter the Yugoslav army opened hostilities leading to a civil war that would last for nearly a decade, a war that involved Italy both directly and indirectly.

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[43] See in general Joze Pirjevec, *Le guerre jugoslave* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001).

[44] See De Michelis, *La lunga ombra*; Meyr, "Italy."

## Conclusions

In February 1992, Italy signed the Maastricht Treaty. The same month, a minor Socialist politician and administrator was arrested in Milan by an almost unknown public prosecutor, Antonio Di Pietro. This episode was the beginning of the "clean hands" inquiry. In April the general elections were marked by a defeat for both the Christian Democrats and the Socialists; in northern Italy the true winner was the Northern League. The Andreotti government acquiesced. It was the beginning of the collapse of a political system that had ruled Italy for almost forty-five years.[45] It seems paradoxical, but in the post–Cold War period it is significant that Italy, a Western European country, seemed to share the same fate as the former communist countries, namely, a crisis of its internal political system owing to the end of the Cold War.

This paper will not conclude, however, with what happened in Italian politics after 1992. Our attention has focused on Italy's foreign policy as pursued by the Andreotti government in one of the most difficult and complex periods of Europe's history, the period that witnessed the end of the Cold War, German reunification, a series of revolutions in East-Central Europe, and the emerging of both a new European balance and a different European role in the international context. To the Italian government's credit, it is possible to list the following points:

- The Italian political elite and Italy's diplomats clearly understood the importance of the events that were occurring and were able to target a number of goals that were consistent with Italy's foreign policy experience as well as the country's traditional interests.
- Regarding the radical transformations that were beginning to shape a new Europe, Italy considered it vital to back the reunification of Germany, but also to thwart the emerging of a German superpower that was no longer interested in its relationship to Europe's traditional partners. To this end, strengthening the integration process, from both a political and an economic viewpoint, was Italy's chief political goal.
- Economic integration, based on the creation of the EMU and a common European currency, was a related goal, but this involved a number of serious risks due to the structural weaknesses that characterized the Italian economy. Connected to this, the Italian government tried to attain some concessions that would allow the Italian authorities to cope, over time, with the country's internal economic problems as well as the general public opinion.
- Regarding the dramatic situation in East-Central Europe, Italy felt itself compelled to focus its attention on the Yugoslav crisis and, to a lesser extent, the situation in Albania. The most dangerous crises connected to the end of communism were taking place along Italy's border, bringing obvious threats both internationally and internally, especially the danger of a flow of illegal immi-

[45] See in general Caracciolo, *L'Italia*.

grants. In this connection, between 1989 and the second half of 1991, the Italian government attempted, by means of various initiatives, to hinder Yugoslavia's implosion, although this position became more and more unpopular in the general Italian public opinion. De Michelis changed his mind only when he was convinced that there was no longer any possibility for diplomatic maneuvering from either an internal or international standpoint.

It is clear that there were some serious shortcomings in Italy's policy towards the changing European balance:

- The end of the Cold War in Europe and the reunification of Germany was the last stage in a long process that had started in the immediate postwar period; the role of the "Big Four" plus Germany was an almost obvious consequence of both the postwar situation and the entire Cold War period. History was still able to exert its influence. In this context Italy was a minor actor, also from a formal viewpoint.
- Within the integration process, it was possible for the Italian political elite only to postpone solutions to various serious problems. These were problems of an internal nature, namely, addressing Italy's economic situation.
- As far as the Yugoslav question was concerned, while the Italian position was sound, Germany's determination proved a too powerful factor. Moreover, in late 1991 the Andreotti government could no longer face the pressure of the Italian public opinion as well as that of the Holy See.
- The Italian political elite was unable to understand that Italy's internal political balance had also been tied to the Cold War. Once the Cold War was over, the policy of "clean hands" transformed itself into the collapse of the political system. No foreign policy can survive a crisis of the political system of which it is a part. There is some irony in the fact that, although the communist regimes in East-Central Europe lost their external support due to changes in the international arena, the Italian Communist Party quickly transformed into the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) and would be the one party to survive internally.

Last but not least, a nation's foreign policy is largely influenced by its international "image," that is, how it is perceived by its international partners. This is something that the Italian political elite also often forgot. One of the consequences of this has been the failure of foreign actors—and sometimes of foreign historians as well—to recognize the relevance of Italy's foreign policy in this period.

Arnold Suppan

# AUSTRIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS IN EASTERN EUROPE, 1955–89

After the State Treaty of 1955, Austria not only succeeded in avoiding a re-run of its history, but managed in a surprisingly short space of time to repackage itself as a model Alpine democracy: neutral, prosperous and stable. In part this was due to the uncomfortable proximity of the Red Army, which withdrew in 1955 only a few dozen kilometers to the east—a reminder that Austria's neighbors now included three communist states (Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia). Due to the country's vulnerable location it was prudent to pursue conciliatory and non-contentious policies both at home and abroad. The price Austria paid to get the occupation powers to leave was neutrality and high "reparations" to the Soviets. However, neutrality also put Austria on a path of neutralism and pacifism in the world's conflicts, producing from the mid-1960s an "island-of-the-blessed" mentality that still prevails today. At the same time, neutral Austria joined the Western European trajectory toward prosperity, consumerism and a "leisure-class society." Yet neutrality arrested full political and economic integration into Western Europe. "In addition, the Cold War assigned Austria an identity by association—as Western, free, democratic—that it might have been hard put to generate from within."[1] Piotr C. Wandycz sums up what seems to be historical fact after 1945:

> The Second World War, or rather its outcome, reversed the course of history of East Central Europe. Traditionally a borderland or a semi-periphery of the West, the region became a westward extension of the Soviet East [...] For the first time in history the Russian shadow fell not only on Poland but also on Hungary and Czechoslovakia.[2]

Nevertheless, due to Austria's geopolitical situation between the blocs the foreign ministers after Karl Gruber, Leopold Figl and Bruno Kreisky, imposed an active "good neighbor policy" toward the adjacent communist states Yugoslavia,

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[1] Tony Judt, Postwar, *A History of Europe since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005), 261; Gerald Stourzh, *Um Einheit und Freiheit. Staatsvertrag, Neutralität und das Ende der Ost-West-Besetzung Österreichs 1945-1955*, 5th ed. (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), 155–61, 537–48; Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka and Michael Gehler, eds., *Austrian Foreign Policy in Historical Context* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 1–24; Wolfgang Mueller and Michael Portmann, eds., *Osteuropa vom Weltkrieg zur Wende* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 9–36.

[2] Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom. A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1992), 236.

Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and from the 1970s also toward Poland, East Germany and Bulgaria. There were two events that fundamentally changed the attitude of Austria and the Austrians toward Hungary and Czechoslovakia—and vice versa. And these changes strengthened the relationships between the populations and started to infiltrate the communist regimes behind the Iron Curtain: the role of Austria and the Austrians during the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and during the "Prague Spring" in 1968.[3]

## The Hungarian Revolution

After demonstrations and protests on 23 October 1956 at the building of the national radio in Budapest, a spontaneous, genuine people's uprising erupted. The police force and a part of the Hungarian army joined the uprising. The morally discredited party leadership asked Soviet army units stationed in the country to crush the "counterrevolutionary gangs" of "fascist reactionary elements." On 28 October, the Austrian government, led by Federal Chancellor Julius Raab, made a courageous appeal to the Soviet government to stop the military fight and to end the bloodshed. On 1 November, the new Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Nagy informed the Soviet ambassador Yurii Andropov that Hungary was unilaterally renouncing its membership in the Warsaw Pact and declared Hungary a neutral country. But on the same day, the Soviet secretary general Nikita Khrushchev ordered "an initiative for restoring order in Hungary." On the morning of 4 November, Soviet tanks attacked Budapest und crushed the Hungarian revolution.[4]

At two emergency Special Sessions, held on 4 and 9 November 1956, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Resolutions 393 and 399 with regard to Hungary. On 14 and 15 November 1956, the Austrian Government sent an aide-mémoire to twenty countries asking for immediate help for the Hungarian refugees. The proposals included:

- The swift absorption of refugees into the individual countries without prior investigation of their personal or financial status; in particular, families should not be separated and immigration not limited to only young and able persons.
- Sending financial aid to help Austria defray the costs emerging from the exodus of Hungarian refugees. The handling of these funds, to be placed at the disposal of the Austrian government, was to be under the control of the Court of Audit.

[3] Cf. Arnold Suppan, Wolfgang Mueller, eds., *Peaceful Coexistence or Iron Curtain? Austria, Neutrality, and Eastern Europe in the Cold War and Détente, 1955–1989* (Vienna: LIT, 2009).

[4] Ivan T. Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe 1955–1993. Detour from the periphery to the periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 121–26; László Kontler, *A History of Hungary. Millenium in Central Europe* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 424–30; Csaba Békés, Malcolm Byrne, János M. Rainer, eds., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002).

– Sending various goods and necessities of all types, including clothes, etc. The Austrian Ministry of the Interior was to serve as the central depot for the delivery of these supplies.[5]

On 26 November 1956, the Austrian Ambassador Franz Matsch gave a statement to the UN secretary general concerning the situation of Hungarian refugees in Austria:

> Since the recent developments in Hungary started, approximately 83,000 new refugees have crossed the border. Although 20,000 of this number have been able to leave the country for new destinations in Europe or overseas, the rest, amounting to a total of 63,000, is still in Austria and is continuously augmented by an additional number of about 8,000 refugees coming to Austria every night. The majority of these new refugees are young people, women and children. They are coming from practically all parts of Hungary. New strata of the population seem to be affected increasingly. Austria, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention, cannot and will not refuse anyone seeking asylum in her territory.[6]

The Austrian government, in cooperation with the Austrian people, undertook all possible efforts to accommodate these unfortunate people as quickly as possible. But Austria needed “generous, united and immediate help from other countries, because collecting points, reception centers, holiday homes and empty hotels, all available private housing facilities and even schools, are completely full.” Sixty-three camps and seven large reception centers were operated in Austria by the federal government. Matsch noted that not a single case of contagious disease had occurred and that all refugees were in good health. He also noted that in the previous four weeks, Austria had already spent 120 million shillings, i.e. 4.8 million dollars, on refugees from Hungary. But the cost of maintaining the current number of Hungarian refugees in Austria for a period of six months was estimated at 600 million shillings or about 24 million dollars. Therefore, he requested other European countries to send trains directly to the Austro-Hungarian border to allow the immediate transportation of refugees to third countries.[7]

The welcome the Hungarian refugees received in Austria changed Austria’s image in Hungary, which had not always been positive as a consequence of 1849 and the two world wars. From this point in time, the Austrian *Schwager* (brother-in-law) and the Hungarian neighbor became a comfortable twosome. This positive

[5] Aide Mémoire Ambassador Matsch to Philippe de Seynes, UN Under-Secretary, 15 November 1956, UN Archives, Social Matters: Relief and Rehabilitation, SO 534/32 Aut.

[6] Statement Ambassador Matsch to UN Secretary-General Dag Hammerskjöld, New York, November 26, 1956, UN Archives, Social Matters: Relief and Rehabilitation, SO 534/32 Aut. Ambassador Matsch underlined that 650,000 refugees had crossed the Austrian border since 1945. “While a large number of these 650,000 could be settled outside the country, 190,000 of them are still living in Austria, 36,000 of whom still being housed in camps.” I am grateful to Dr. Georg Kastner for providing me copies of these documents.

[7] Ibid.

atmosphere has persisted to the present day; according to opinion polls, the admission of Hungary into the European Union was supported by a majority of Austrians.[8]

## The "Prague Spring"

In the mid-1950s the Austrian economy outdistanced that of Czechoslovakia, which had formerly been much larger[9]—a development that would have been unthinkable in either 1918 or 1945. After the Czechoslovak economy entered a serious crisis around 1960, a group of experts from the Institute for Economics at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, under the leadership of Ota Šik, was given the task of drawing up plans for reform, plans that incorporated decentralization and more market-orientation and individual responsibility of enterprises. Despite this, communist property affairs were not to be changed.[10]

Relations between Austria and Czechoslovakia began to intensify. In May 1963, the Czechoslovak author and literature historian Eduard Goldstücker organized an international Kafka Symposium at Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad) with Austrian participation, while the Austrian Society of Literature (*Österreichische Gesellschaft für Literatur*) played host in Vienna to a number of Czech writers, including Václav Havel. Of greater immediate importance in the public sphere were the beginnings of collaboration between the Austrian and Czechoslovakian television stations and live broadcasts of the show "City Discussions" moderated by Helmut Zilk and Jiří Pelikán. Most significant of all for relations was travel between the two countries. Whereas until 1963 only 47,000 Czechs had been to the West, by 1967 the number had climbed to 258,000. And Western foreigners—especially Germans and Austrians—suddenly began to fill Czechoslovak hotels and restaurants in Prague, Brno, Karlovy Vary and smaller towns. In joint university history seminars with Austrian colleagues, Czech and Slovak students clearly articulated their wish that their country leave the communist bloc and like Austria become neutral in the East-West conflict.[11]

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8 Michael Gehler, *Österreichs Außenpolitik der Zweiten Republik* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2005), 1, 162–73.

9 Arnold Suppan, "Österreicher und Tschechen—missgünstige Nachbarn?," *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations* (2006): 265–98; Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe*, XV–XVI; Alice Teichova, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Tschechoslowakei 1918–1980* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1988); Hans Seidel, *Österreichs Wirtschaft und Wirtschaftspolitik nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Manz, 2005).

10 Otakar Turek and Miloš Pick, "Die Wirtschaftsreformen der sechziger Jahre," in Stefan Karner et al. eds., *Prager Frühling. Das internationale Krisenjahr 1968* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 133–40.

11 Arnold Suppan, *Missgünstige Nachbarn. Geschichte und Perspektiven der nachbarschaftlichen Beziehungen zwischen Tschechien und Österreich* (Vienna: Club Niederösterreich, 2005), 68–69; Helmut Zilk, "Zum Beginn des 'Prager Frühlings': Die 'Stadtgespräche Prag—Wien',"

The "Manifest of 2000 Words," written by Ludvík Vaculík and published on 27 June 1968, was intended to be an account of the state of the country. It was addressed to workers, farmers, officials, scholars, artists and "all others." The manifesto criticized the privileged class of functionaries who held power in the name of workers, power that was founded on their control of the party and the state apparatus. Signed by sixty-nine intellectuals, the manifesto created an enormous sensation, also in Moscow. On 11 July 1968, *Pravda* was already talking of a "counterrevolutionary conspiracy." The Austrian ambassador to Moscow sent secret warnings to Vienna.[12]

The first written threat to the leadership in Prague by the Warsaw Pact came on 16 July. Bilateral summit meetings in Cierná nad Tisou and Bratislava ended tensely. On the night of 20–21 August 1968, some twenty-nine divisions with 7,500 tanks and more than 1,000 aircraft of the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic (not troops from the People's Army but police troops) and Bulgaria marched into Czechoslovakia. Between 80 and 200 deaths occurred. Some members of the Communist Party leadership were arrested and taken to Moscow, where they were forced to accept a joint protocol on the "normalization" of the country. The pro-Russian sentiment of many Czechs, which went back to the nineteenth century and had been strengthened in both world wars, evaporated completely in this night of humiliation.[13]

The Western world—despite having been warned by their secret services and diplomats—was taken completely by surprise. It could only watch from a distance and report on the events taking place. The Austrian broadcasting system played an important role in this regard. The Austrian government registered violations of Austrian airspace in the north and east and feared violations of the land border by tank columns advancing on Brno and Bratislava. Thus only very hesitant public statements were made by the government of the Austrian People's Party (*Österreichische Volkspartei*, ÖVP) under Federal Chancellor Josef Klaus. Nevertheless, the Soviet ambassador to Austria protested the "anti-Soviet" position of the ORF (*Österreichischer Rundfunk*, the Austrian national public service broadcaster) and the Austrian press. Despite a warning by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, the Austrian envoy in Prague, Rudolf Kirchschläger, later the president of Austria, issued tens of thousands of visas to Czechoslovak citizens. Some 150,000 people, mainly well-educated and young, left Czechoslovakia at

in Stefan Karner et al. eds., *Prager Frühling. Das internationale Krisenjahr 1968* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 1089–93; see also Gehler, *Österreichs Außenpolitik* 1, 294–300.

12 "Die Stunde der Tschechen und Slowaken. Ludvík Vaculíks 'Manifest der 2000 Worte' als nationale Rechenschaft," *Die Presse*, 13–14 July 1968, 5.

13 Jan Pauer, *Prag 1968. Der Einmarsch des Warschauer Paktes. Hintergründe, Planung, Durchführung* (Bremen: Ed. Temmen, 1995); H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Michail Prozumenščikov, "Die Entscheidung im Politbüro der KPdSU," in Stefan Karner et al. eds., *Prager Frühling. Das internationale Krisenjahr 1968* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 205–41.

least temporarily. Thousands of others did not return from their vacations in Yugoslavia. The Western world readily admitted all refugees and integrated them in a variety of ways.[14]

## Yugoslavia

In the fall of 1974, the foreign ministries of Austria and Yugoslavia exchanged sharp notes concerning the Slovene minority question in the southern Austrian province of Carinthia. An outside observer reading the newspaper would have had no reason to doubt a serious disruption of intra-state relations between the neighbors. But this was by no means the case. Despite the disagreement, the economic, social and cultural relations between Yugoslavia and Austria remained largely intact:

- Some 180,000 Yugoslav citizens continued to be employed in Austria as "guest workers."
- More than 600,000 Austrians continued to take their annual vacations on the Yugoslav Adriatic coast.
- Austrian exports of wood, paper, cattle, and machines to the Arabic world and overseas through the Yugoslav ports of Koper and Rijeka continued to increase.
- Cross-border traffic at the local level between Styria and Carinthia on one side and Slovenia on the other increased.
- Bilateral cultural contacts became more frequent. These included exhibitions ("Trigon"), scholarly symposia ("Mogersdorf;" Yugoslav-Austrian historian symposia), concerts ("Styrian Fall"), and readings by poets.[15]

Bilateral relations became less tense following a secret visit between Christmas and New Year 1975 by Federal Chancellor Kreisky to Marshal Tito in Brdo near Kranj. And after the adoption of the Austrian nationalities' law on 7 July 1976, they clearly improved. Non-aligned Yugoslavia and neutral Austria also continued to work together at the level of the United Nations.

[14] Gehler, *Österreichs Außenpolitik* 1, 341–52; Karl Peterlik, "Tausende Visa pro Tag ausgestellt," in Stefan Karner et al. eds., *Prager Frühling. Das internationale Krisenjahr 1968* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 1163–66; see also Richard G. Plaschka und Karlheinz Mack, eds., *Die Auflösung des Habsburgerreiches. Zusammenbruch und Neuorientierung im Donauraum* (Vienna: Österreichisches Ost- und Südosteuropa-Institut, 1970); "Ein großer Mann. Professor Kurt Krolop über Eduard Goldstücker," *Prager Zeitung*, 2 November 2000, 7; David Schriffl, "Der 'Prager Frühling' 1968 und die österreichisch-slowakischen Beziehungen," in Wolfgang Mueller and Michael Portmann, eds., *Osteuropa vom Weltkrieg zur Wende* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 299–311.

[15] Arnold Suppan, *Jugoslawien und Österreich 1918–1938. Bilaterale Außenpolitik im europäischen Umfeld* (Vienna and Munich: Geschichte und Politik; Oldenbourg, 1996), 11–13. See also Peter Weibel and Christa Steinle, eds., *Identität:Differenz. Tribüne Trigon 1940–1990. Eine Topographie der Moderne* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1992).

## Austrian-East European relations in the 1970–80s

East–West détente after 1970, in part a product of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, gradually pushed the memory of the unhappy end to the "Prague Spring" into the background. And the seemingly all-powerful head of the Soviet Communist Party, Leonid Brezhnev, after whom the theory of the limited sovereignty of communist states was named, regarded the Helsinki Agreement of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe of 1 August 1975 as a guarantee of Soviet dominance in East-Central Europe. From 1976 the civil and cultural stagnation that had established itself in Czechoslovakia was called into question by the Czechoslovak civic initiative *Charta 77*. The movement was based on Basket 3 of the Helsinki Agreement, a concession by Moscow to the West, and called for the upholding of basic civil rights. The protagonists Jan Patočka, Václav Havel, Jiří Hajek and Pavel Kohout were soon persecuted as alleged agents of the CIA, and samizdat publications were strictly suppressed. But Western radio and television broadcasts, many from Austria, nevertheless reached behind the Iron Curtain. In the area between České Budějovice, Brno and Bratislava, many antennas were aimed at the neighboring country to the south and west. The head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Gustáv Husák, build up an increasingly imposing police regime with a heavily armed "people's militia," and began a new campaign against the Catholic Church that put quite a few priests into prison. The Soviet army, with its 70,000 soldiers a de facto occupying force, provided the background for these developments. Under such conditions, it was not possible for *Charta 77* to become the mass movement that *Solidarność* (Solidarity) was later to become, although about one thousand persons participated, above all intellectuals from Prague and Brno. It nevertheless became a "moral challenge" to the cynicism of Czechoslovak officials, the apathy of the public, and the shallow materialism of both.[16]

After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the declaration of martial law in Poland in 1981, the communist regimes appeared cemented in place. *Solidarność* received little support from the Association of Austrian Trade Unions and Chancellor Kreisky remained as passive as Chancellor Klaus had been in 1968. A new wave of political refugees, this time about 40,000 Poles, arrived in Austria. The reception of the Austrian population was not nearly as friendly as it had been in 1956 or 1968, and Austria also did not participate in the Western sanctions against the dictatorial regime of General Wojciech Jaruzelski.[17] But the election of the Cracow archbishop, Karol Cardinal Wojtyła, as pope in the fall

[16] Ferdinand Seibt, "Deutsch-tschechischer Diskurs 1947–1999. Ein Lesedrama in sieben Akten," *Merkur—Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken* 54 (2000): 216–30; Vilém Prečan, *Die sieben Jahre von Prag, 1969–1976. Briefe und Dokumente aus der Zeit der "Normalisierung"* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1978).

[17] Gehler, *Österreichs Außenpolitik* 1, 483–88.

1978 strengthened the Catholic population of Poland and influenced the mobilization of grassroots Catholic movements also in Moravia, Slovakia and Hungary.[18]

## Signs of change

Thus, in the mid-1980s the Austrian capital of Vienna was a "Western" city surrounded by Soviet "Eastern" Europe. For Polish, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Serb, Croat and Slovene intellectuals, Vienna stood for "Central Europe" (*Mitteleuropa*), an imagined community of cosmopolitan civility that Europeans had somehow mislaid in the course of the century. But for more than 150,000 guest-workers from Yugoslavia, Vienna and Austria stood for better living conditions. "In Communism's dying years the city was to become a sort of listening post of liberty, a rejuvenated site of encounters and departures for eastern Europeans escaping West and Westerners building bridges to the East."[19] But Erhard Busek, until 1987 vice-mayor of Vienna and from April 1989, Austrian minister of science and research, frequently warned in those years about overstraining these bridges, since bridges were often windy places and they sometimes collapsed—as a major Viennese bridge over the Danube (the *Reichsbrücke*) had done in 1976. Nevertheless, in 1989 Austria embodied all the slightly self-satisfied attributes of postwar Western Europe: capitalist prosperity supported by a richly-endowed welfare state; social peace guaranteed by jobs and benefits liberally distributed through all the main social groups and political parties; external security assured by the implicit protection of the NATO nuclear umbrella—although Austria itself remained smugly "neutral."[20]

Although more than half of the Austrian frontier ran along the Iron Curtain and its borders with Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, the great majority of the Austrian population, including the intellectuals, did not really recognize what was happening in the *annus mirabilis*, the year 1989, not to mention 1987 or 1988. But today we know that there were several clear signs of the upcoming changes.

### *Yugoslavia*

The events in Yugoslavia were the first sign. The Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences, partly published in September 1986, openly introduced a program of a nationalistic Greater Serbia. Its principle of "all Serbs in one state" heralded the aggression in Yugoslavia against the federal units geographically

[18] Andrzej Paczkowski, *Pół wieku dziejów Polski 1939–1989* (Warszawa: PWN, 1995), 441–48.

[19] Judt, *Postwar*, 2.

[20] Cf. Emil Brix and Erhard Busek, Projekt *Mitteleuropa* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 1986).

separated from Serbia in which both ethnic Serbs and non-Serbian populations lived. The memorandum stirred wide opposition in Slovenia, not only in cultural circles, but also in certain economic circles that were critical of the state of the federal economy. The Yugoslav foreign debt had by then reached the enormous sum of 21 billion US dollars, the highest per capita debt in Eastern Europe. In the spring of 1987, a group of young intellectuals—predominantly anticommunist liberals and Catholics associated with the magazine *Nova revija* (New Review)—published articles outlining a Slovene national program in which they demanded the introduction of political pluralism, democracy, a market economy and independence for Slovenia in a possible Yugoslav confederation. Such views encountered opposition and condemnation everywhere in Yugoslavia. But the new leadership of the Slovene Communists, after 1986 led by Milan Kučan, decided not to oppose these demands of the critical youth.[21]

In the spring of 1988, the Yugoslav army—at the time some 260,000 officers and soldiers—staged a show trial before a military court in Ljubljana against four Slovenes, three journalists from the magazine *Mladina* and one army cadet. They were accused of publishing the minutes of a meeting of the Central Committee of the Union of the Yugoslav Communists. But since the trial was conducted in the official language of the army, namely Serbo-Croatian, the trial had exactly the opposite effect of what was desired: the Slovenes united strongly behind a program of democratization and national independence. Even Admiral Branko Mamula, the Yugoslav defense minister at the time, later realized: "With my threats against the Slovene opposition, I did more for Slovene independence than anyone else." In mid-1988, an abyss opened between Slovenia and Yugoslavia that could no longer be bridged. In 1990, one of the four prisoners, Janez Janša, became the minister of defense of the sovereign Republic of Slovenia and later even became prime minister.[22]

In February 1989, a rally in Ljubljana organized jointly by the Slovene government and Slovene opposition parties condemned the political and police violence of the Serbian authorities in Kosovo and called for peace and coexistence. This Slovene stand was the trigger for Serbia to mount a major propaganda campaign against Slovenia. At a large rally in Ljubljana in May, the Slovene opposition parties adopted the "May Declaration"—in memory of the Slovene demand of autonomy in May 1917—for "a sovereign state of the Slovene nation" which would "as a sovereign state decide independently on its links with South Slav and other nations within the framework of a renewed Europe." In spite of severe pressure and threats from Belgrade, in September the Slovene Parlia-

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21 Janko Prunk, *A Brief History of Slovenia* (Ljubljana: Mihelač, 1994), 74–75; Peter Štih, Vasko Simoniti, Peter Vodopivec, *Slowenische Geschichte. Gesellschaft—Politik—Kultur* (Graz: Leykam, 2008), 465–80; Laura Silber and Alan Little, *Yugoslavia. Death of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 31–33.

22 Štih, Simoniti, Vodopivec, *Slowenische Geschichte*, 481–84; Silber, Little, *Yugoslavia*, 48–57.

ment—still composed of members elected through the one-party system—reclaimed the sovereign national rights it had ceded when the Yugoslav Federation was founded in 1945. At the end of November 1989, the Slovene and Croat governments banned the pan-Yugoslav rallies of the centralistic Greater Serbian forces that had been planned to take place in Ljubljana and Zagreb. By that time similar demonstrations had been held everywhere in Yugoslavia except in Slovenia and Croatia. Serbia and Montenegro reacted to the ban by breaking off all commercial trade with Slovenia. In January 1990, the Greater Serbia hegemonic leanings prevailing in the League of Communists of Yugoslavia caused the members of the Slovene League of Communists to walk out of the fourteenth and last congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in Belgrade. Their Croat comrades followed.[23]

The United States, the European Community and the Soviet Union were all interested in the further existence and unity of Yugoslavia. They did not comprehend what was happening in Yugoslavia or why. This was so despite democratic elections for the Slovene and Croat Parliaments being held in April and May 1990 and the victory of the non-communist parties in both republics, the Republic of Serbia illegally using foreign exchange holdings in the Yugoslav Federal Bank to finance the Serbian special forces, the Slovene–Croat proposal to form a Yugoslav confederation, and the clear results in the Slovene and Croat plebiscites of December 1990 and May 1991 for independence. Yugoslavia's Prime Minister Ante Marković, a Croat economist, succeeded in presenting himself to the world as a liberal economic reformer and even succeeded in eliciting a guarantee of new loans. US secretary of state James Baker warned the Slovene Kučan on one hand that the Helsinki Final Act recognized only peaceful self-determination, not secession by force; on the other hand, Baker warned the Serb Milošević that the United States would not tolerate the use of force to prevent declarations of independence. The Slovene and Croat decisions were supported only by Germany, above all Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and Austria, primarily Foreign Minister Alois Mock. The Serbian generals at the top of the Yugoslav military and their adherents in Yugoslavia's diplomatic corps spoke loudly of a "fourth German Reich" (obviously including Austria!). It was declared that the independent republics of Slovenia and Croatia were going to join this new "Reich" immediately. A number of international spectators still question whether the Western world would have accepted the Slovene and Croat declarations of independence, both on 25 June 1991, if they had not already accepted German reunification. In any case, after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the Warsaw pact, Yugoslavia had lost its strategic importance to Washington and Moscow.[24]

[23] Prunk, *Slovenia*, 75–78; Štih, Simoniti, Vodopivec, *Slowenische Geschichte*, 486–90.

[24] Prunk, *Slovenia*, 78–81; Štih, Simoniti, Vodopivec, *Slowenische Geschichte*, 491–501; Silber and Little, *Yugoslavia*, 29, 147–53.

## *Hungary*

The second group of signs occurred in Hungary. When János Kádár had his first audience with the new ruler in the Kremlin, Mikhail Gorbachev, he also referred to a new opposition in Hungary:

> There is an opposition in Hungary; a few social scientists, sociologists, representatives of the intelligentsia, writers. There are not many. They could be called an organized group in the sense that fifty or sixty occasionally meet. The West seeks them out, supports them […]. The question arises of what we are to do with them. We can take administrative measures against them only in the last resort, as we do not wish to give these people free publicity. Now and then we arrest opposition elements, confiscate their copying equipment, but if need be we can be harsher.[25]

In Kádár's estimation as well as that of his authorities, routine police harassment did not count as harsh administrative measures. But György Aczél, Secretary of the Central Committee for cultural affairs, defined the boundaries between "prohibited" and "permitted." Although diversity in literary, artistic and scholarly trends, styles, tastes and moods was allowed, these elements of society remained under state supervision.[26]

Nevertheless, the monopoly of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) began to receive jolts in several areas:

– In 1986, the planned construction of a series of dams and a hydroelectric power station at the Czechoslovak-Hungarian section of the Danube between Gabčikovo and Nagymaros became the object of intensive political debate because of the predictably disastrous ecological consequences they would bring. The plan was finally abandoned. A protest march in October 1988 against the construction of this hydroelectric system called attention to the communist system's ecological exploitation.[27]
– According to data of the Hungarian Central Statistics Office, in 1987 1.9 million people, or nearly 20 percent of the population, lived at or below the "social minimum" level. In the mid-1980s, the country ranked number one in international suicide statistics and second in the consumption of spirits and liquor. The disaffection of the general public was creeping, rather than bursting, into Hungarian life.[28]
– Kádár, the one-time pioneer of reforms in the Soviet bloc, was deeply disturbed by the aspirations of Gorbachev. In the broad segment of reformers in the party, rank-and-file expectations were raised by the "Gorbachev phenom-

[25] György Gyarmati, "Hungary in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century," in István György Tóth et al. eds., *A Concise History of Hungary. The History of Hungary from the Early Middle Ages to the Present* (Budapest: Corvina-Osiris, 2005), 614.

[26] Kontler, *Hungary*, 445–46. The historian Ferenc Glatz started to publish the magazine *História* in 1979.

[27] Gyarmati, "Hungary," 615; Kontler, *Hungary*, 465.

[28] Kontler, *Hungary*, 458–59.

enon." In July 1987, Kádár decided to drop the long-serving Prime Minister György Lázár, replacing him with Károly Grósz, who was the most characteristic representative of the new, technocratic type of cadres favoring the continuation of economic reforms without changing the political system. In addition to Grósz, the main reformers included Rezső Nyers, the father of the 1968 economic reform, and Imre Pozsgay, whose commitment to reform, unlike that of the prime minister, extended to democratization as well.[29]

– On 5 and 6 March 1987, under the protection of Pozsgay, the secretary general of the Patriotic Popular Front, a symposium and an exhibition entitled "300 years of living together—from the history of the German Hungarians" was held at the Houses of Parliament in Budapest. It was the first time since the expulsion of more than 200,000 German Hungarians in 1946 that this subject was officially discussed.[30]
– On 27 September 1987 the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) was set up in Lakitelek, a village east of Kecskemét, in the presence of Pozsgay, the liberal democratic writer György Konrád, as well as the leading right-wing populist István Csurka. Its founding members were mainly men of letters and social scientists who spoke up in favor of the democratic *Rechtsstaat*, Hungarian national traditions, and in support of Hungarian minorities abroad. In the neighboring countries, the living conditions of the Hungarian minority in Yugoslavia, mainly in the Serbian Vojvodina and 430,000 strong (1981 census), were comparatively the most favorable. In contrast, for the 1,670,000 Hungarians in Romania (1981 census) a "national homogenization program" had drastically restricted education in this population's mother tongue. Kádár had intervened unsuccessfully with Ceauşescu. In June 1988 a demonstration in Hungary on behalf of the Hungarian minority in Romania protested Ceauşescu's megalomaniac plan of destroying the historic network of Hungarian villages and towns in Transylvania. Finally, in Czechoslovakia, the 1968 law on the national minorities made no allowance for cultural autonomy, although 580,000 Hungarians still lived in Slovakia.[31]
– On 22 May 1988, Kádár and another five members of the Politburo, the hard-liner's "council of the aged," were forced into retirement. Despite this, Pozsgay and Grósz, the new Party Secretary, could not stabilize the communist party (MSZMP). Deep generational and political divisions within the party and the obvious loss of confidence among the population could not be checked. From early 1988 a constant stream of new organizations began to be formed:

[29] Ibid., 460.

[30] Wendelin Hambuch, ed., *300 Jahre Zusammenleben—Aus der Geschichte der Ungarndeutschen. Internationale Historikerkonferenz in Budapest* (5.-6. März 1987), 2 vols. (Budapest, Tankönyvkiadó, 1988). I attended the opening with my friend Ferenc Glatz.

[31] Ferenc Glatz, et al. eds., *A magyarok krónikája* (Budapest: Officina Nova, 1995), 758; Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe*, 271; Kontler, *Hungary*, 454–55.

the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ), the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), etc. Even the so-called reform communists established weeklies and magazines. While these initiatives were confined to a few dozen individuals, they maintained contact with several hundred other sympathizers, among them intellectuals at research institutes, university departments and editorial offices, as well as within student circles. The authorities kept detailed information about the activities of this opposition and the groups linked to them.[32]

– Because Grósz was rapidly losing his credibility, in November 1988 he handed over his premiership to the young Miklós Németh, who turned out to be one of the engineers of transition. Németh received reinforcement through the successful maneuvering of Pozsgay, who broke with the interpretation of the events of 1956 as a "counter-revolution," recognizing them instead as a "popular uprising" and a "fight for national independence." The government quickly laid a new law before Parliament concerning organizations, and in January 1989 the right to form political parties was proclaimed. In March an opposition round table was formed by the more important parties: MDF, SZDSZ, FIDESZ, the Social Democratic Party, the Independent Smallholders, Agricultural Workers and Bourgeois Party, the Hungarian People's Party and the Christian Democratic People's Party. In a cabinet reshuffle in May 1989, most positions held by followers of Grósz were refilled by pragmatic reformers such as Németh himself, and the government became an institutional regulator of transformation. Németh's main efforts were to ensure that the outlines of a new and workable framework had been created before the old system of institutions was completely dismantled. The government introduced radical reforms, including advances toward privatization and a subsequent market economy. The first month of the "revolution by discussion" ended with the ceremonial reburial of Imre Nagy, together with his fellow martyrs, on 16 June 1989. An estimated 300,000 Hungarians lined the streets, with millions more watching the proceedings live on television. Among the speakers at the graveside was Viktor Orbán, the youthful leader of the Young Democrats, who could not help noting that some of the communists present at Nagy's reburial were the same people who, just a few years earlier, had so strenuously decried the very revolution whose praises they were now singing. By the end of June, the first secretary had to be content with being only one member of a quartet: he was joined by Németh, Pozsgay and Nyers at the head of the party.[33]
– In June 1989, the Iron Curtain was opened a crack: the Hungarian foreign minister, Gyula Horn, and his Austrian colleague, Alois Mock, cut the barbed wire separating western Hungary from the Austrian province of Burgenland. The Austrian minister of science and research, Erhard Busek, concluded agree-

[32] Kontler, *Hungary*, 461–62.

[33] Glatz, *A magyarok krónikája*, 777–79; Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe*, 274–75; Kontler, *Hungary*, 466; Gyarmati, "Hungary," 614–17; Judt, *Postwar*, 610.

ments on German-language teachers and scholarships with the Hungarian minister of education Ferenc Glatz. In August 1989, some six hundred East Germans used an Austro-Hungarian "border picnic" near Sopron (Ödenburg), organized by Otto von Habsburg's Pan-European Union, to flee to Austria. The picnic was secretly tolerated by the Hungarian government. Events picked up speed when, on 10 September, the Hungarian government authorized the departure via Austria of tens of thousands East German vacationers hoping to flee to West Germany. This wider opening of the Iron Curtain was negotiated with the West German Chancellor Kohl and tolerated by Moscow, but caused a diplomatic clash with East Berlin. In a later interview, Prime Minister Németh stated that the Hungarian government used this event as a *ballon d'essai* to test the Soviet reaction. The Austrian government was informed about the decision very late. When at midnight on 10–11 September, the Hungarian-Austrian border was opened for the East German citizens, it was broadcast live on Austrian, German and Hungarian television. Euphoric young refugees were interviewed and the celebratory mood was obvious. Radio Free Europe and Voice of America covered the event, which enabled the people of East Germany, Czechoslovakia and other bloc countries to learn of the breathtaking mass exodus.[34]

– Between June and September 1989, representatives of the MSZMP, the Opposition Round Table, the Patriotic Popular Front and the trade unions reached an agreement on creating the legal and political conditions for the transition to multi-party democracy and the rule of law. The fourteenth congress of the MSZMP in early October 1989 also proved to be the last. While the new players in political life were primarily concentrating on rearranging power-sharing, the members of the collapsing Communist Party—only 50,000 of the 700,000 members of the old party became members of the newly formed Hungarian Socialist Party—had the necessary information for appropriating state property. This was a process that was only in its beginning stages. Within the framework of the so-called pre-privatization transactions, they became the proprietors, company directors and managers of societies, limited companies and holdings that soon began to mushroom.[35]

– On 23 October 1989, Hungary was transformed from a "People's Republic" of the Soviet type to a "Republic." The novelty of the Hungarian exit from communism was that it was conducted by the communists themselves. Two weeks before the elections on 25 March 1990, Gyula Horn and his Soviet

[34] István Horváth, *Die Sonne ging in Ungarn auf. Erinnerungen an eine besondere Freundschaft* (Munich: Universitas, 2000), 251–334; Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe*, 282; Andreas Oplatka, *Der erste Riss in der Mauer. September 1989—Ungarn öffnet die Grenze* (Vienna: Zsolnay, 2009); Gehler, *Österreichs Außenpolitik* 2, 588–93; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 August 2009.

[35] Gyarmati, "Hungary," 618–19.

colleague Eduard Shevardnadze signed an international agreement for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops that had been stationed in Hungary for the previous forty-five years. In the autumn of 1990, a well-attended discussion between leading intellectuals was held at Eötvös Lóránd University in Budapest to answer the question "Did we see it coming?" "It", of course, referred to the course of events in 1989. The consensus of the participants and the audience was unanimously negative: "It" had been unforeseeable almost until it was actually happening.[36]

### *Czechoslovakia*

The third set of signs that were overlooked occurred in Czechoslovakia. What was the basic difference between the Polish *Solidarność* or the Czechoslovak *Charta 77* movements, on one hand, and Hungarian reform-from-within on the other? Did the first two merely oppose the regime while the latter simply collaborated? In fact, the line distinguishing these different developments was not so marked. "This line," stated Václav Havel, "runs de facto through each person, for everyone in his or her own way is both a victim and a supporter of the system."[37]

When in 1988 the Czechoslovak foreign minister Bohuslav Chňoupek received his Austrian colleague Alois Mock at Bratislava castle, he stated with a resigned gesture toward the nearby border with Austria that neither would probably live to see it opened.[38] He recalled that before 1938, as a child in Engerau (Petržalka, today a southern suburb of Bratislava), he had played soccer with boys from Kittsee in northeastern Burgenland, not far from the Austro-Czechoslovak border. Despite this pessimism, Austrian construction firms began building modern hotels in Prague soon thereafter. Thousands of locals were astonished at the capitalist industriousness of the "Austrians" working on weekends. They did not know, of course, that many were Yugoslav "guest workers" and thus, the Austrian model remained attractive.

In both Hungary and Czechoslovakia, communist rule rested uneasily on the silent memory of a stolen past. When in Czechoslovakia Gustav Husák, in power since 1969, resigned as secretary general of the party in 1987—remaining state president—he was replaced by the younger Miloš Jakeš, best known for his prominent role in the mass "purges" of the early 1970s. Thanks to the brutally efficient management of these purges, most of the country's intelligentsia, from playwrights to historians, had been removed not merely from their jobs but also from public visibility. Havel's own civic organization, *Charta 77*, gained fewer than two thousand signatories from a population of fifteen million. Nonetheless,

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[36] Kontler, *Hungary*, 469; Glatz, *A magyarok krónikája*, 787; Judt, *Postwar*, 610.

[37] Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe*, 272.

[38] This detail was related to me by Alois Mock after his retirement as foreign minister.

to bolster its citizens' mood communist Czechoslovakia tried to mimic certain aspects of Western consumer society—notably television programming and popular leisure pursuits. There were signs of change already in 1988, when a petition for greater religious freedom was signed by half a million people. And on 28 October 1988, the seventieth anniversary of the founding of independent Czechoslovakia, 10,000 people went onto the streets of Prague. After similar demonstrations on 21 August 1988, many demonstrators were arrested as were Havel and thirteen other *Charta 77* activists in January 1989. All in all, as late as the summer of 1989 there was a clear lack of reform intentions on the part of the party chiefs as well as an absence of any effective opposition.[39]

On the other hand, the new relations of Moscow to Washington and Bonn, as well as internal developments in the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary were creating uncertainty among the leaders in Prague. But neither the leaderships in Warsaw and Budapest nor in East Berlin and Prague were aware of what Aleksandr Yakovlev, a member of the Soviet Politburo, told the West German minister Kurt Biedenkopf in February 1989. In Biedenkopf's words:

> they [the Soviets] could not continue to support their satellite countries. They would then seek ways of pulling back these supports, and look for some exit options, or some resolution, because they were becoming too expensive. Their weakness was coinciding with the will of the people to be free.[40]

An aging and frightened Husák regime and its perplexed but hopeful population watched the broadcasts of the collapse of Honecker's Germany. The rather apathetic Czech and Slovak masses who had turned their backs on politics during the twenty Husák years, trying instead to "cultivate their own garden," were suddenly mobilized. With the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, the fate of the communist regime in Prague finally became clear. Although as late as 15 November some old communist cadres warned the West not to intervene, the whole world was waiting for what would happen.[41]

Rather surprisingly, the end was triggered by a student demonstration on 17 November to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Hitler's closing Czech universities and schools of higher learning. The demonstrations started with ceremonies held that afternoon at Charles University's campus in Prague's New Town in memory of ten students the Nazi regime had killed fifty years earlier in connection with anti-protectorate demonstrations. Now, in 1989, when nearly 15,000 demonstrators began to chant anti-communist slogans, Czech police forces surrounded the demonstrators and brutally attacked them. The rumor that one of the students had been killed was also encouraged. This false report provoked the students to huge protests, supported by their parents and soon even by many workers. Western

[39] Judt, *Postwar*, 616–17.; Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe*, 283.

[40] Kurt Biedenkopf, "Will Europe Stay Together?," *IWMpost*, no. 100 (January–March 2009): 14.

[41] Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe*, 283.

journalists placed their cameras at the front of the crowd. Václav Havel returned from virtual house arrest in rural northern Bohemia on 19 November, whereupon he established the Civic Forum (*Občanské Forum*) with friends at a Prague theater and practically overnight became the focal point of the opposition movement. A group led by the historian Petr Pithart drew up the "Programmatic Principles of the Civic Forum": 1: Rule of law; 2: Free elections; 3: Social justice; 4: A clean environment; 5: An educated people; 6: Prosperity; 7: Return to Europe.[42]

Within a week, the entire Presidium of the Communist Party resigned. After a second week and some negotiations, Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec resigned. And after a third week, President Husák appointed a new government with a majority of non-communist ministers—and then he resigned as well. The new prime minister, Marían Čalfa, was still a party member, but Jiří Dienstbier of *Charta 77* became foreign minister, the Catholic lawyer of the Slovak Public Against Violence (VPN), Jan Čarnogurský, was named deputy prime minister, and Vladimír Kusý of the Civic Forum became information minister. Alexander Dubček tried to replace Husák as president, but because he still spoke of a Czechoslovak path to socialism, Dubček was considered unfit for this office. He was thus elected chairman of the Federal Assembly. The crowds in the streets of Prague demanded: "*Havel na hrad*!" (Havel to the Castle). Indeed, on 29 December 1989 a communist assembly elected Havel president of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.[43]

Austria temporarily suspended visa requirements for Czechoslovak citizens, first until 17 December and then until the end of 1989. The citizens of Břeclav (Lundenburg) undertook a symbolically profound reconfiguration of spatial relationships by forming a human chain to the Austrian village of Reintal, a mere eight kilometers away, as part of a "Hands to Europe" event. Perhaps the grandest "mission" of all involved 150,000 citizens who set out from Bratislava on 10 December 1989. Following arrangements that had been made in advance by Public Against Violence (VPN) activists, most walked through Austrian customs and then proceeded happily along the Austrian bank of the Danube toward the small town of Hainburg, some fifteen kilometers away. On 9 and 10 December alone, a quarter million Czechs and Slovaks visited Austria; 100,000 of them went to Vienna. The city of Vienna invited Czechoslovak citizens to visit its museums free of charge and the Austrian railway company offered them discounts in order to do so. So many citizens wanted to travel to Austria that Czech and Slovak financial institutions ran out of banknotes for them. The organized border cross-

[42] Václav Havel, *Fassen Sie sich bitte kurz. Gedanken und Erinnerungen zu Fragen von Karel Hvížďala* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2007); Judt, *Postwar*, 618–19; Beáta Blehová, "Michail Gorbačev und der Fall des Kommunismus in der Tschechoslowakei," in Wolfgang Mueller and Michael Portmann, eds., *Osteuropa vom Weltkrieg zur Wende* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 349–367.

[43] Jan Rychlík, *Rozpad Československa. Česko-slovenské vztahy 1989–1992* (Bratislava: AEP, 2002), 67–90; Judt, *Postwar*, 618–20.

ings as well as these individual excursions to Vienna were an appropriation of previously forbidden public space.[44]

On 17 December 1989, the new Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jiří Dienstbier and his Austrian colleague Mock symbolically opened the Iron Curtain by cutting the barbed wire between Austria and Czechoslovakia south of Znojmo (Znaim). With the Iron Curtain's fall, Austria's position on the periphery of the West was suddenly re-transformed into a central European position. The dramatic events in Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991 finally allowed Austria to join the European Community.[45]

[44] James Krapfl, "A Big Bang of Signifiers. Nineteen Eighty-Nine and the Theory of Revolution," paper presented at the conference "1989 Revolutions: Roots, Courses, and Legacies," Stanford University, 14–15 March 2008.

[45] Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser, "Austria and Europe, 1923–2000. A Study in Ambivalence," in Rolf Steininger, Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Austria in the Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2002), 294–320; Gehler, *Österreichs Außenpolitik* 2, 605–56.

Michael Gehler

# AUSTRIA, THE REVOLUTIONS, AND THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

The historical significance of the year 1989 was global; it was a year in which the entire world changed dramatically.[1] This chapter deals with the perceptions and reactions of Austrian actors (I) to the revolutionary changes that occurred in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989–90. This will first be examined in relation to the events in Poland (II.1), and then to the dramatic events at the Hungarian border, especially the Austrian reaction to the resulting wave of East German refugees (II.2). Next to be analyzed will be the Austrian reaction to the revolutionary events in the GDR (II.3), to the developments in Czechoslovakia (II.4) and, briefly, to the events in Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia (II.5). The final sections will describe how the role of the Warsaw Pact (III) and of transnational party cooperation (IV) was evaluated, as well as the attitude of the general Austrian population toward the events that were occurring (V).

## I. Austrian actors and contexts

In addition to the Austrian chancellor Franz Vranitzky (social democrat, SPÖ), the key persons involved were the vice-chancellor and foreign minister Alois Mock (Christian-democrat, ÖVP), and Vienna's deputy mayor Erhard Busek (ÖVP), who later became minister of science. The characters, temperaments and interests of these three men could not have been more different. In 1989, the foreign policy of Austria's large coalition government was focused on the conclusion of the CSCE follow-up conference, the negotiations held in Vienna on confidence and security-building measures, and Austria's application for EU membership.[2] In a dynamic, multi-leveled system, there were three contexts in which Austria's perceptions and reactions developed:

- In the multilateral setting of the meetings and exchange of experiences that were part of the framework of the CSCE follow-up process in Vienna (1986–89);
- In the bilateral context of diplomatic and political contacts with representatives from Central and Eastern Europe through visits, meetings and direct communication;
- In the transnational context of networking and party cooperation.

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[1] Pierre Grosser, *1989. L'année où le monde a basculé* (Paris: Perrin, 2009).

[2] Michael Gehler, *Österreichs Weg in die Europäische Union* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2009).

How did Austria's protagonists see Central and Eastern Europe? The vantage point from which Vranitzky surveyed the Central Eastern European region was pragmatic and quite different from that of Busek, as Vranitzky himself admitted:

> There were several efforts called "Central Europe cooperation." I attempted to do this at the bilateral level with the various governments—out of necessity already before the Velvet Revolution, and then, of course, afterwards. Erhard Busek was an important trendsetter because of his contacts with "dissidents" during the communist period, not a few of whom "afterwards" held and still hold important functions.[3]

Vranitzky's practical approach, as well as the priority he gave to the EC, was also recognized in other countries. The German journalist Theo Sommer wrote in this regard:

> Vranitzky was rather suspicious of abstract temptations such as the imaginary concept of "Central Europe" or the Italian construction of a "Pentagonal," at least as a political project. This was "absolutely not an alternative or substitute for the EC," as he stated tersely. He approached the candidacy in Brussels from two directions. On one side: "... that after the internal market has been established, it is necessary for us to be part of it." And on the other side: "... that we can make an important contribution to the process of European integration."[4]

In his memoirs, Vranitzky does not give the events of 1989–90 a particularly prominent position; the central role is held by domestic politics. For him, Central and Eastern Europe was a geographic term not connected to politics, despite the fact that the region had a definite socio-cultural dimension. As he stated:

> I do not consider Central Europe a political entity or a political project—even less do I believe in the mythical concept of Central Europe. That is too connected to a longing for the good old days, good old days that were not particularly good. Central Europe is a geographical term for me. In its framework, certain regional collaborations can certainly be conveniently carried out; nonetheless, it does not represent an alternative to the project of Western European integration.[5]

But Vranitzky had an international outlook; he was far from being focused only on the West:

> In this sense, European thinking goes far beyond what Brussels currently represents. I would add that a culturally comprehensive understanding of Europe should not be focused entirely on the West. It would be shortsighted to ignore the creative potential of Eastern Europe, be it

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[3] Personal written communication from Franz Vranitzky to the author, 5 June 2008, 3. Cf. Armin Thurnher and Franz Vranitzky, *Franz Vranitzky im Gespräch mit Armin Thurnher* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1992), 75; see also Erhard Busek, "Der strategische Vorteil der Österreicher gegenüber den Deutschen liegt in der Mentalität," in Michael Gehler and Imke Scharlemann, eds., *Zwischen Diktatur und Demokratie. Erfahrungen in Mittelost- und Südosteuropa. Hildesheimer Europagespräche II* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2013), 457–97.

[4] Direct citations in the quotation added by Theo Sommer, "Österreich, Deutschland und darüber hinaus," in Edi Keck, Karl Krammer, Heinz Lederer, Andreas Mailath-Pokorny, and Oliver Rathkolb, eds., *Die ersten 10 Jahre: Franz Vranitzky* (Vienna: D & R, [1996]), 146–55, 152.

[5] Vranitzky and Thurner, *Franz Vranitzky im Gespräch*, 86.

> intentionally or due to oversight. It is not befitting for us in the West to be arrogant. We should also try to learn from the East.[6]

Unlike Mock, Vranitzky's relations with the EC were temperate. Mock was "passionate defender," whereas Vranitzky was considered a "mild advocate." As stated by an Austrian journalist:

> The reasoning of the chancellor was refreshingly different from that of his foreign minister. For Mock, participating in the large market is nearly a religious goal, but it is also an act of grace that he must request from his party colleagues. In contrast, Vranitzky notes that if Austria participates, it will not only be the large market that has something to offer. Austria will function as a bridge; it is an interesting market and ideal for cooperative ventures.[7]

For Mock, who considered himself obliged to follow Chancellor Josef Klaus' "*Ostpolitik*" of the 1960s—when Austrian foreign minister Bruno Kreisky and Lujo Tončić-Sorinj first visited Budapest, Bucharest and Warsaw—the speed of the political upheavals in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989–90 was surprising. Nonetheless, both Mock and Vranitzky quickly realized the significance of the reform movements and followed them carefully, despite the fact that Mock had a much stronger historical and emotional attachment to Central and Eastern Europe than did the chancellor.

Mock did not overemphasize the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, and had made various overtures to dissidents. When he visited Bohuslav Chňoupek, the Czech foreign minister, in Prague in July 1987, Mock was the first Western foreign minister to request to see the dissident Václav Havel. Already in 1969, when he was the minister of education, Mock had nominated Havel for the Austrian State Prize for European Literature. And during his visit to Moscow in September 1988, Mock met Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov. At the CSCE follow-up conference in Vienna, there were bilateral talks with the foreign ministers George Shultz, Eduard Shevardnadze, Geoffrey Howe and Hans-Dietrich Genscher. After the arrest of Havel on 21 February 1989, Mock took the opportunity to use the CSCE machinery for inspecting questions of human rights. Then, during his visit to Prague from 7 to 8 March 1990, he met the new Czech president Havel and Cardinal František Tomášek. And when visiting Budapest on 14 March, he took part in the renaming of the "Street of the People's Republic" to "Andrássy Street." In the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Andrássy had been the minister for foreign affairs from 1871 to 1879.[8]

With regard to Austria's multilateral foreign policy and to developing specific plans for the Central European region, Mock and Vranitzky had common goals. They both supported the Quadragonale regional project (Austria, Hungary, Italy

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[6] Ibid., 49.

[7] Paul Fritz, "Klare *Worte*," in *Neue Zeitun*g, 7 November 1987.

[8] Martin Eichtinger and Helmut Wohnout, *Alois Mock: Ein Politiker schreibt Geschichte* (Vienna: Styria, 2008), 191–97.

and Yugoslavia) at a meeting from 11 to 12 November 1989 in Budapest, and from May 1990, the Pentagonal (the same group together with the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic).[9]

Whereas Vranitzky's international outlook was directed toward the West,[10] Busek was clearly focused on Central and Eastern Europe. He made contacts of varying intensity almost single-handedly, establishing close relationships with political dissidents and opposition groups, as for example in Hungary with József Antall of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), and to a lesser degree with Viktor Orbán from the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ), which initially held a center-left position. He did the same with Václav Klaus of the Czechoslovak Civic Democratic Party (ODS). Busek's contacts aimed in part at "old" Christian-democratic parties, which had been subjected to communist control and coopted in coalitions with the communists. These parties were having to expend a great deal of effort to break away from the past and their connections to the communists by means of the National Front. A distinction must be made between Busek's relations to the Slovak Christian Democratic Movement of Jan Čarnogurský (KDH) and to Mikulás Dzurinda's faction, the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK). Relations with Tadeusz Mazowiecki in Poland were problematic, since he refused to let his group join the conservative anti-communist Christian European Democrat Union (EDU) supported by Mock and Busek. The connections of Busek were based less on the political network of the EDU and more on personal contacts with dissidents.[11]

## II. Austria's foreign policy and diplomacy—perceptions of the events of 1989

### *1. Poland*

On 17 January 1989, Mock mentioned in passing at the final Vienna CSCE meeting that Austro-Polish relations were "very good." On the same occasion, Polish foreign minister Andrzej Olechowski acclaimed the conclusion of the CSCE follow-up meeting as a historic event, and stated that Austria had played

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[9] Emil Brix, "Die Mitteleuropapolitik von Österreich und Italien im Revolutionsjahr 1989," in Michael Gehler and Maddalena Guiotto, eds., *Italy, Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany: A Triangle Relationship: Mutual Relations and Perceptions from 1945/49 to the Present* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2012), 455–67, 459.

[10] Michael Gehler, "Paving Austria's Way to Brussels: Chancellor Franz Vranitzky (1986–1997): A Banker, Social Democrat and Pragmatic European Leader," in *Journal of European Integration History* 18, no. 2 (2012): 159–82, 165–70.

[11] Communication from Erhard Busek to the author, 26 October 2007; see also Esther Schollum, "Die Europäische Demokratische Union (EDU) und der Demokratisierungsprozeß in Ost-, Mittel- und Südosteuropa," in *Österreichisches Jahrbuch für Politik* (1991): 491–523, 491–93.

a significant role in its positive outcome. For Warsaw, the CSCE process was one of its "most important foreign policy issues." Poland was "very interested" in having a good relationship with Austria "at all levels."[12] The extent of the Polish debt constituted the country's largest economic and political problem. In order to have time for internal consolidation, several years of leniency were requested. Agreements for long-term debt repayment were seen as a viable option. Poland sought a bilateral connection to the EC, as had Hungary. From the Polish perspective, the "friendly voice of Austria" could "help a lot." Olechowski assured Mock that the leader of the military government of Poland, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, was undertaking the "greatest possible efforts" to "integrate, in the internal transformations," not only the important Catholic Church, but also the trade union movement Solidarity and its leader Lech Wałęsa. Poland was searching for a pluralistic means of operation for both the unions and public life. After Poland, Hungary and the USSR, it was only a matter of time for transformations to take place in the other socialist countries in Europe, Olechowski argued. Mock considered the political transformations in Eastern Europe "very significant." He recommended "striking the right balance," and referred to the negotiations that had begun concerning the reduction of conventional armed forces in Europe (CFE). He also asked the Polish authorities to speed up renovations on the Austrian Cultural Institute in Warsaw.[13]

## *2. Hungary and its border with Austria*

Vranitzky met the new Hungarian prime minister Miklós Németh for the first time on 13 February 1989. As part of delegation meetings, the two men met privately at the Hungarian Nagycenk Palace as well as in the town of Rust on Austrian territory to discuss their bilateral relations and respective economic and political positions. Németh spoke of a "second reform era" in Hungary, a process that had begun in 1986 when it was recognized that economic reforms were no longer feasible within the old political structures.[14] For this reason, since May 1988 the aim had been to accelerate the separation of party and state, to establish

[12] Amtsvermerk "Beziehungen Österreich-Polen; Gespräch HVK-AM Olechowski am Rande des Wiener KSZE-Abschlusstreffens, 17 January 1989," 23 January 1989, in Bundesministerium für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten (BMEIA), GZl. 750.04/46-II.3/89. After applying for special permission, I was allowed early access to diplomatic records at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the events in Central and Eastern Europe 1985–91. A volume of documents and a monograph are forthcoming. I would like to thank Ambassadors Fritz Bauer and Franz Wunderbaldinger, as well as Ministerialrat Gottfried Loibl for their support in this project.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Resuméprotokoll, Sucharipa m. p., "Österreich-Ungarn; Grenztreffen HBK-MP Nemeth (13 February 1989)," 14 February 1989, in BMEIA, GZ. 222.18.22/12-II.3/89.

democracy and the rule of law, to form an "entirely new political system," and to rapidly create the conditions for a market economy to develop by means of laws regarding banking, tax reforms and corporate bodies. According to Németh, both the population and the party had become divided into two camps due to the question of which direction to move: toward establishing a multiparty system or pluralism in the context of a single-party system. As part of the Central Committee meeting of 10–11 February 1989, the party had taken the initiative to create a multi-party system within the socialist context, so that various parties could compete with different agendas. The seeds for new parties existed, and it was expected that some would actually be established in the coming year. With regard to the issue of how the events of 1956 should be defined, the Central Committee had reached a compromise. While the events had had the character of a popular uprising, towards the end, they were declared to be similar to a counter-revolution. According to Németh, this "verdict decision" had been taken to prevent the party from being torn apart and to avoid the need for punishing particular individuals. It was hoped that the party and the people would see the events in the same way. Németh gave Vranitzky the impression that Hungary was "aware" of its great responsibility as the pioneer of political reform in the socialist world. Indeed, in Hungary political competition was emerging for which no one was prepared. Thus the Central Committee was planning for the needed transition period. It was likely that a coalition government would form in Hungary. Németh raised the issue of work permits for Hungarian workers in Austria, and Vranitzky replied by assuring him that solutions would be found. Despite critical voices, Németh said that his government supported holding a joint world exhibition together with Austria. Combined planning and implementation of joint ventures in the auto and rail industries, as well as joint efforts in securing (external) funding were considered essential. In private conversations, in some cases also in the presence of Johann Sipötz, the governor of Austria's easternmost province Burgenland, and his deputy, Franz Sauerzopf, it was agreed to construct new border and railway crossings at Pamhagen and Fertörakos/Mörbisch. It was also decided that the possibility of creating a duty-free zone in Sopron should be examined, a proposal that was to be made more concrete at the next meeting. Vranitzky declared his firm intention of maintaining Austria's neutrality if it were to become a member of the EC. Notwithstanding Austria's efforts in this direction, its "excellent relations with Hungary would not be neglected." Németh announced that the physical barriers at the border would be completely dismantled by 1991. The increasing organizational and technical cooperation between the two countries would also involve new obligations.[15]

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[15] Ibid. Cf. Maximilian Graf, "Die Welt blickt auf das Burgenland 1989 - Die Grenze wird zum Abbild der Veränderung," in Maximilian Graf, Alexander Lass and Karlo Ruzicic-Kessler, eds., *Das Burgenland als internationale Grenzregion im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Neue Welt, 2012), 135–79.

In March Hungary joined the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, entering into force on 12 June. The dismantling of the Hungarian border barricades had already begun on 2 May 1989.[16] The "cutting" of the Iron Curtain by Alois Mock and Gyula Horn on 27 June actually only involved last remnants of the barbed wire fences as most of them had already been removed, and so in fact the whole action was staged for the media. Nonetheless, the television images of the events that were broadcast subsequently stimulated the largest exodus of GDR citizens since the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

At a breakfast meeting the previous day, the two foreign ministers had discussed European integration and Hungary's participation. Horn thought that integration had come about for "objective reasons."[17] He was worried about the possibility of being isolated from the EC. Hungary sought an agreement on preferential tariffs with the EC like the one held by Yugoslavia and hoped, in due course, to have a "true free trade agreement." Before this could happen, the Hungarian economic system had to be liberalized and the forint had to be made convertible. At the same time, Hungary desired an intensification of its cooperation with EFTA, whereby it imagined a joint declaration like the one that had been concluded by EFTA with Yugoslavia. Horn suggested to Mock that a special EFTA fund for Hungary be created to the order of 80 to 100 million dollars. While this would not repair the Hungarian economy, it would give many companies new momentum. With regard to the Council of Europe, Hungary indicated that it was satisfied with having come closer and was "not impatient" for full membership. Mock agreed to support Hungary's rapprochement with EFTA politically. He raised the question of whether a large fund for all reform-minded Eastern European states could be created. Horn stressed that in principle Hungary saw Austria's anticipated membership in the EC in a positive light. Hungary's concern lay with preserving the special quality of its bilateral relations with Austria. Mock pointed out that Austria's European policy rested on two pillars: its participation in West European integration (EU, EFTA, and the Council of Europe) and its neighborhood policy. With regard to the current state of the EC and its foreseeable development, he saw no reason for Hungarian concern. Horn made it clear that prospects for an agreement being passed on the disarmament issue had never been more positive, "but the devil is in the detail." As an example, he mentioned problems about the air forces ("not everything can be solved in one go"). In any event, a new political impetus was needed. This could be accomplished by a joint

[16] Andreas Oplatka, *Der erste Riss in der Mauer. September 1989—Ungarn öffnet die Grenze* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2009), 87–104; 154–99. Cf. John Lewis Gaddis, *Der Kalte Krieg. Eine neue Geschichte* (Munich: Siedler, 2007), 302–3; Bernd Stöver, *Der Kalte Krieg. Geschichte eines radikalen Zeitalters 1947–1991* (Munich: Beck, 2007), 443; Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Endspiel. Die Revolution von 1989 in der DDR* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 346.

[17] Amtsvermerk Schmid m. p., "Off. Besuch von AM Horn; Gespräche mit HBM, 26 June 1989; Internationale Themen," 28 June 1989, in BMEIA, GZ. 222.18.23/25-II.SL/89.

declaration being made at the higher levels of government, best that autumn. Mock agreed and repeated Shevardnadze's proposal for holding a meeting of heads of state. He explained the useful role of the "neutral and nonaligned (N + N) states," which were currently practicing restraint. Despite difficulties of internal consensus, they were always available as mediators in crisis situations. Horn did not wish to dramatize the fact that there had been a lack of agreement concerning a final document at the CSCE Paris meeting. The principle of consensus should not be abandoned, despite the fact that it also had disadvantages, such as allowing one or two countries to prevent decisions from being made (a reference to Romania made by the Hungarian foreign minister). Horn pointed to the major importance of the 13 June 1989 joint statement of the Federal Republic of Germany and the USSR, which confirmed the right of self-determination for all peoples,[18] including the Germans. Mock underlined the "leap forward" that had been accomplished by the Vienna CSCE Final Document. This meant that it had been predictable that little more than the "human dimension" could have been achieved at the Paris meeting. It was probable that in Copenhagen there would also be no major progress, this being reserved by the Soviet Union for the Moscow meeting in 1991. Horn described the Warsaw Pact as being in a process of defining itself. It was not collapsing, despite tendencies to that effect. The reform-minded members were dependent on one another and had to strengthen their cooperation. The political objectives of the Pact had to be identified. Hungary was seeking modernization, not disintegration. In the future, the pact would have to coordinate its defense policy, whereby an extensive restructuring would also have to include a change in the balance between cooperative and national military forces, to define a basic approach toward international issues, and should also safeguard the sovereignty of member states in domestic affairs, bilateral issues, as well as national interests with regard to third countries and matters of integration. It was planned to discuss these issues at the Warsaw Pact meeting to be held in Bucharest in early July. While the pact had never been a monolithic alliance, now any impressions of the like were also disappearing. The internal situation of individual countries (for example, Romania) was inconsistent with the general easing of pressure. The restructuring efforts at the national level were leading to

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18 Information Sucharipa "BRD-Sowjetunion; Gemeinsame Erklärung," 15 June 1989, in BMEIA, GZ. 225.01.01/17-II.3/89. See also "Achtung des Selbstbestimmungsrechts der Völker," in *Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der deutschen Bundesregierung,* no. 61, 15 June 1989, 542–44, 542; "Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Generalsekretär Gorbatschow Bonn," 12 June 1989; "Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Generalsekretär Gorbatschow Bonn," 13 June 1989; "Delegationsgespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Generalsekretär Gorbatschow Bonn," 13 June 1989, in Hanns Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hofmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik. Deutsche Einheit. Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), 276–99; and Andreas Hilger, ed., *Diplomatie für die deutsche Einheit. Dokumente des Auswärtigen Amts zu den deutsch-sowjetischen Beziehungen 1989/90* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011).

tensions with those countries that did not accept pluralism. The problem was that "conservatives" were questioning the legitimacy of the new structures, as was happening between Czechoslovakia and Hungary.[19]

Mock outlined the basic Austrian position concerning the reform efforts:

- the respective states were to make sovereign decisions;
- Austria aimed to react in a differentiated manner: as far as possible, it was supporting the reforms in Poland, Hungary and the USSR, but where necessary, it was showing clear restraint, as for example with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Romania;
- Austrian support should not cause any inconvenience, whereby Mock stated that he would be grateful for any suggestions;
- the opening of Eastern Europe would not lessen the role of Austria, but widen its possibilities;
- the budding developments would diminish the differences between the systems, reducing tensions and bringing peace and stability to Europe;
- Austria's neutrality enabled it to make a competent contribution to the current events.

Due to the developments, it would become possible to leave the phase of "peaceful coexistence," which might be followed by a period of "wider cooperation." In the long term, this might lead to a third phase, that of a "Common European Home."[20] Here, Mock was referring to the slogans of Khrushchev and Gorbachev, seeing them as a possibility for dynamic development.

The reactions of the Warsaw Pact countries to the crackdown on the democracy movement in China on 4 June 1989 and the reburial of Imre Nagy in Budapest were watched closely by the Austrians and aptly interpreted. There was "a striking disagreement among the statements,"[21] which on one hand documented the crumbling of the monolithic character of the Warsaw Pact, and on the other, the emergence of two camps.

Poland and Hungary expressed dismay at the events in China. The Foreign Policy Committee of the Hungarian Parliament expressed its deep alarm.[22] The Council of Ministers spoke of international responsibility in terms of human rights. The Polish dissident Adam Michnik argued that the events in Poland and China were an expression of the decline of political power. The Polish media considered Nagy's interment to be the end of Stalinism in Hungary. The GDR, Romania and Czechoslovakia disapproved of the Nagy interment. No represen-

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[19] Amtsvermerk Schmid m. p., "Off. Besuch von AM Horn; Gespräche mit HBM, 26 June 1989; Internationale Themen," 28 June 1989, in BMEIA, GZ. 222.18.23/25-II.SL/89.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Sucharipa m. p., "Reaktionen der kommunistischen Staaten Europas auf das Nagy-Begräbnis," 21 June 1989, in BMEIA, GZ. 222.03.00/36-II.3/89.

[22] Sucharipa m. p.,"Reaktionen der WP-Staaten auf die Ereignisse in China und das Nagy-Begräbnis als Gradmesser für den Stand der eingetretenen Diversifizierung," Vienna, 14 July 1989, in BMEIA, GZl. 33.03.00/172-II.3/89.

tative of the Romanian government took part in the funeral rites; the Hungarian ambassador in Bucharest was summoned before the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and handed a memorandum of protest. The general secretary of the Czechoslovak Central Committee Jan Fojtik criticized “certain circles in the West,” which saw the Nagy interment as the symbolic burial of socialism in Hungary. The official East German news agency ADN opined that the celebration expressed the enmity between the Hungarian Communist Party and that of the Soviet Union. Led by the GDR, the response of these three states (GDR, CSSR, and Romania) and Bulgaria to the events in China was also unanimous, although the reaction of the CSSR was less severe. The army’s intervention was declared as having been necessary in order to eliminate “errors” and “to fight a counter-revolutionary rebellion.” In the GDR, the Church criticized the official position of the party and state with regard to the “Chinese solution.” In Bulgaria, despite restraint with regard to Nagy’s interment, the demonstrations in China were appraised as a “counter-revolutionary rebellion.” The Soviet Union took a middle position in both cases; both liberal and orthodox opinions were expressed, whereby in the case of the Nagy interment, a remarkable effort at objectivity could be detected. The Congress of People’s Deputies adopted a balanced resolution regarding the events in China, mentioning the use of troops and casualties, but also presenting the view that it was an internal matter and that no rash or hasty conclusions should be drawn. Other than a commentary in *Pravda*, which drew a comparison between the military deployment on Tiananmen Square and the fighting in Tbilisi and Fergana, what was published was only the official Chinese version, reproduced without comment. Gorbachev emphasized the need to find appropriate political solutions.[23]

The Pan-European Picnic, which was held on 19 August in the border region on Hungarian soil under the patronage of Otto von Habsburg together with Hungarian reform communists such as Imre Pozsgay, had the character of being a signal or a test, especially with regard to Gorbachev’s reaction. But the picnic was not the decisive factor in Hungary’s willingness to officially open the border, another event was much more critical: In the night of 21 to 22 August, the East German citizen Kurt-Werner Schulz was shot dead during a scuffle with a Hungarian border guard. A bullet is said to have been released from the officer’s submachine gun. The incident took place on Austrian territory in the Lutzmannsburg district. After the Hungarian authorities notified Austria, a border commission was immediately convened to clarify the case. Mock expressed his regrets about the incident.[24] A few days later there was another fatality. After a successful escape to the West, a forty-year-old East German died of a heart attack. The transfer of the body was undertaken by the German Red Cross. The autopsy revealed that the man had been healthy, but had died of exhaustion. He had endured

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[23] Ibid.

[24] APA Report 0263 5 AI, 22 August 1989.

five days without food in a Budapest church so that he could meet his West German fiancée.[25] Many years later, Németh acknowledged in a television interview that these fatal incidents, especially the death of the GDR citizen Schulz, were the crucial events that triggered Hungary's explicit willingness to open the border. Németh's closest advisors had brought it to his attention that because of the "aggressive" behavior of the East German refugees, he would have to bear the responsibility for more incidents and fatalities.[26] But while an internal decision had been made, it had, of course, not been settled at the highest levels between Budapest, Bonn and Vienna.

The East German refugees crept through corn fields, waded through swamps, swam across Lake Neusiedl, crawled over fields and used any hiding place they could find at the Hungarian-Austrian border. They left their cars, "Trabis" and even more valuable Wartburgs, back in Hungary. According to the West German ambassador in Vienna, Count Dietrich Brühl, "the hour of Burgenland," Austria's easternmost province, had struck. Without the Burgenlanders' "inestimable help for the Germans from the GDR," the exodus would never have grown to the extent it did before the border was opened. This help ranged from assistance during the escape and first aid in the homes along the border, to providing information about where buses to the embassy stood or families letting exhausted refugees stay with them for longer periods of time. Mayors of the smallest villages at the Hungarian border opened aid facilities in gymnasiums and similar buildings.[27]

Medical care and ointments were needed for sunburns and babies suffering from innumerable mosquito bites. Donations were ready: from toys, diapers, clothes, food and medicine, to body care products, including shower gel, unknown in the GDR. The rooms of the German embassy were crowded with people. There were not enough rooms in simple hotels. The mayor of Vienna, Helmut Zilk, provided rooms in hostels. The Austrian Red Cross, the Maltese Order relief agency, and several parishes in Vienna took in refugees and helped.[28]

By allowing the departure of refugees who had sought refuge in the West German embassy in Budapest, the Hungarian government infringed on the rules

[25] APA Report 0117 5 AI, 28 August 1989.

[26] ORF ZIB 2 Report, 19 August 2009.

[27] Report by former ambassador Dietrich Graf von Brühl, "Flucht in die Freiheit. Die Flüchtlingsbewegung aus Ungarn im Jahre 1989," 3 with an accompanying letter to the author dated 20 November 2005. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador von Brühl (†) for the permission to use this report, as well as for the many conversations we had. See also Dietrich Graf von Brühl, "Deutsche Erfahrungen mit Österreich," in Michael Gehler and Ingrid Böhler, eds., *Verschiedene europäische Wege im Vergleich: Österreich und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945/49 bis zur Gegenwart. Festschrift für Rolf Steininger zum 65. Geburtstag* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2007), 579–84; Jens Schöne, *The Peaceful Revolution. Berlin 1989/90 - The Path to German Unity* (Berlin: Story Verlag, 2009), 53–69, 54–61; Interview with Countess Maria Octavia von Brühl, 26 February 2013 in Vienna; Graf, Lass, Ruzicic-Kessler, *Das Burgenland*.

[28] Brühl, "Flucht in die Freiheit," 4.

of the Warsaw Pact. For the first time, East German citizens were allowed to leave Hungary to West Germany without permission of the GDR government. Until then, they had always been forced to return to their hometowns in the GDR, where at best they were released to the Federal Republic in the West after paying a large bribe to the government. The unimpeded group exodus of refugees from the embassy was new.[29]

A comprehensive solution for the refugees living in camps, however, required high-level talks. On Friday, 25 August, one day after the arrival of the refugees from the Budapest embassy in Austria, Németh and Horn met at Gymnich Castle near Bonn for secret talks with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.[30] When discussing the East German citizens in Hungary seeking to escape to the West, Németh stated that deportation of the refugees back to East Germany was out of the question, and added: "We are opening the border. If there is no military or political power from outside that forces us to act differently, we will keep the border open for East Germans." The departure of the refugees was to take place until mid-September 1989.[31]

On 21 August, Genscher had already declared in an interview that no one in the GDR was being encouraged to leave the home. But anyone who did come had to be helped. In the same breath, he confided that he had turned to his "best people" to ensure that there would be help. He mentioned the former government spokesperson and foreign secretary Jürgen Sudhoff, his highest officials, and his former chief of cabinet Michael Jansen. To organize help, Sudhoff went to Budapest several times, and Jansen to Budapest and Vienna. Jansen was the main person responsible for organizing aid in Austria. He saw to it that Ambassador Brühl, who as a precaution had left "on vacation" to Tyrol, was brought back to duty. Brühl returned to Vienna the same day. On 25 August, Jansen was in Vienna to get a transit "green light" from Mock. Austrian approval was granted immediately. Between 28 August and 10 September, important details were clarified with the head of the Foreign Ministry's consular section, Ambassador Erik Nettel,

[29] Ibid., 7.

[30] On this conversation, see Genscher's memorandum, 25 August 1989, in Küsters and Hofmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit*, 377–80. The memorandum, however, contains no mention of the opening of the Hungarian border to East German refugees, but only recounts the difficult economic situation in Hungary, as had been reported by Prime Minister Németh; although he does not mention Austria's and Mock's role when opening the Austro-Hungarian boarder, see also Andreas Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland. Die Geschichte der Wiedervereinigung* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 72–75; Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Helmut Kohl. Eine politische Biographie* (Munich: dva, 2012), 526. In contrast to Rödder and Schwarz, see Grosser, *1989. L'année où le monde a basculé*, 44–45; Kowalczuk, *Endspiel*, 350–51, 377.

[31] Ibid. At the end of the statement was a hidden message to the refugees. See also, Helmut Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1982–1990* (Munich: Droemer, 2005), 921–23; concerning Bonn's instrumentalization of the GDR refugee problem and the intensified reform process in Central Europe, see Janusz Sawczuk, *Turbulentes 1989. Genese der deutschen Einheit* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 174–206.

and his deputy, Erich Kussbach, and an agreement was reached. Brühl recalls: "It was a pleasant conversation. The goal was clear. The road had to be paved. But it was not as easy as it sounds today. For example, a treaty with the German Democratic Republic obligated Austria to allow entry to persons arriving from East Germany only if they had a visa."[32] The main problem was how to organize the transit journey. The Austrian government maintained the decision it had already made with regard to the embassy refugees from Budapest: The Austrian Red Cross was commissioned with the task to make it clear that the activities were providing humanitarian aid. Using private buses and not the state railways (ÖBB) was practical for preserving neutrality. A combination of train-bus or even only trains was ruled out since the big camps in Hungary were not near railway stations. In addition, the number of refugees was too large. Reloading so many refugees twice was not feasible. The bulk of the refugees were therefore to be transported by bus to the German border via three major routes, along which the Red Cross had set up aid and support stations. The border crossings to Germany were Passau and Freilassing.[33]

Each Trabbi driver who could identify him- or herself as a citizen of the GDR at the Austro-Hungarian border was given 700 Austrian shillings by Red Cross workers at the aid stations, enough to buy the gasoline needed to reach the German border. The Red Cross also prepared maps that showed the routes through Austria. The problem of the Austria-GDR visa agreement was regulated with a flexible "Austrian solution" by the government in Vienna: a loose piece of paper with a visa stamp was inserted into the identification papers of each East German refugee. Only the refugee's name was recorded, whereupon entry was authorized. The insert was then removed at the German border. This satisfied the visa agreement. Bonn had relayed the message to the West German embassy in Vienna that "money does not matter." The expenses incurred by the Red Cross were refunded.[34]

On 10–11 September, the border was opened for free crossing. Kohl had been made aware of this date by 4 September, as a result of an agreement between his advisor Horst Teltschik and the Hungarian prime minister. Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher was in the loop as of 7 September at the latest, after Horn had informed employees of the German Foreign Ministry in Budapest. Bonn had provided substantial financial guarantees, thus making Hungary more inclined to follow through. On 12 September, the paralyzed SED Politburo belatedly discussed countermeasures in East Berlin that had been hectically developed by the

[32] Brühl, "Flucht in die Freiheit," 7.

[33] Ibid., 8; Michael Jansen, "Vielleicht sah Genscher mit der Deutschen Einheit seine Mission nach achtzehn Jahren als Außenminister als erfüllt an," in Michael Gehler and Hinnerk Meyer, eds., *Deutschland, der Westen und der europäische Parlamentarismus. Hildesheimer Europagespräche I* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2012), 148–72, 169–70.

[34] Brühl, "Flucht in die Freiheit," 9.

Stasi, but it had neither political arguments nor concrete means of exerting pressure with respect to Budapest. The idea of recalling the ambassador was dropped. Initially, not even a decision to increase controls on GDR tourists going to Hungary was made. In a protest note, East Berlin demanded that Budapest immediately reverse the opening of the border, which was promptly rejected. Hungary referred to article 62 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the *clausula rebus sic stantibus* (the fundamental change of circumstances).[35]

During these days and weeks, the USSR remained neutral in the bilateral conflict between East Berlin and Budapest, while the triangle of Bonn-Vienna-Budapest coordinated with each other and organized the transfer of thousands of East Germans to the West, thus driving another wedge into the uncertain states of the Eastern bloc. Standing opposed to the reform-oriented Poles and Hungarians was the communist-orthodox triangle of East Berlin-Prague-Bucharest.

In the period from 10 July to 13 November, the German embassy in Vienna directly furnished about 15,000 refugees with money, tickets and identity cards. In addition, from 11 September, at least 5,000 people were provided 700 Austrian schillings for gasoline by the Red Cross. More than 20,000 refugees crossed Austria to Germany in Red Cross buses or drove from Hungary, so that the wave of refugees who were counted numbered some 40,000 people. This does not include the many who were brought by West German tourists from Hungary, or were picked up directly at the Austro-Hungarian border by West German relatives. Thus, a total of up to 50,000 refugees chose to travel to West Germany through Austria in the summer and fall of 1989. The costs to the German embassy in the fiscal year 1989, including daily allowances, in some cases hotel rooms, tickets, the expenses for buses and general care, were around 3.8 million DM. The Red Cross was refunded around 1.5 million DM, and thus the total was about 5.2 million DM.[36] The German-Austrian-Hungarian cooperation, which, whether unwittingly or consciously, further aggravated the erosion of the SED regime, was thus not particularly expensive.

For both sides, policy concerning the media was a balancing act from the beginning. On one hand, as Brühl has emphasized, "Without the photo of the two foreign ministers cutting the barbed wire, which went around the world, and the reaction of the East Germans who were willing to flee, the rapid collapse of socialism in its communist form [would have been] unthinkable." The media's "daily drumming,"

[35] On the backgrounds and developments see Oplatka, *Der erste Riss in der Mauer*, 170–230. No reference to these forms of German-Austrian-Hungarian cooperation during the summer of 1989 is made in Ines Lehmann, *Die Außenpolitik der DDR 1989/90. Eine dokumentierte Rekonstruktion* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011). On Kohl's foreign and European policy, see Günter Buchstab and Hans-Otto Kleinmann, eds., *Helmut Kohl. Berichte zur Lage 1989–1998. Der Kanzler und Parteivorsitzende im Bundesvorstand der CDU Deutschlands* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2012), XXXII–XXXVI, XL–XLIII, 12–14, 38–39 as well as the documents: 9 October 1989, 11–17; 6 November 1989, 36; 15 November 1989, 37–39, 43–48, 27 November 1989, 52–59; 15 January 1990, 71–75; 11 June 1990, 145–50.

[36] Brühl, "Flucht in die Freiheit," 10–11.

its reports on the growing numbers of people eager to flee, fed the public pressure on politicians to help. Without the influence of the media, the events of the summer of 1989 would have been unimaginable. But information about the refugees still had to be muted. If a refugee appeared in front of a television camera, this could trigger retaliations against relatives who still lived in the GDR. For Brühl it is clear:

> If the information about the death strip being eradicated had not spread so quickly, especially the extremely popular image of the two foreign ministers cutting the barbed wire fence on 27 June 1989, the movement of refugees probably would not have been so rapid.[37]

Bonn praised Vienna, and Austria's policy received gratitude and approval. Kohl personally thanked the citizens of Burgenland. The Austrian Federal Chancellery on Ballhausplatz registered the West German reaction: it was "admonishing stubborn patience," it continued to talk about the integration of the West and its active participation in the European unification process, and it held "relieved gratitude" for confidence statements from its allies such as US president Bush.[38]

The position of the United States from the view of the diplomatic reports and evaluations of the political situation by the Austrian Foreign Ministry Foreign Ministry shows that what was involved was essentially the continuation and safeguarding of the Western security policy, the guarantee of the peaceful reform process in Central and Eastern Europe, and the support of the policies of Mikhail Gorbachev. In spite of different positions (Henry Kissinger doubted the continuous logical development of the line pushed by Gorbachev from Lenin's Decree on Peace to the idea of a "Common European Home"), one thing was totally clear for Washington: the CSCE process was to be strengthened and the human rights situation in Central and Eastern Europe was to improve. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) of 1987 was adopted, becoming a foreign policy success of US president Ronald Reagan. Austria's geopolitical situation was viewed by US military and security strategists as a weak point (literally a "nightmare") for the defense of Western Europe.[39] Nevertheless, US deputy secretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger assessed Austria's knowledge of and experience with Central and Eastern Europe for the State Department as "valuable." On the other hand, he evaluated proposals for the neutralization of Germany (such as in the Modrow Plan of 1990) to be "very dangerous."[40]

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[37] Ibid., 11–12, quote here 12; see also Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage. Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991), 39

[38] Report Loibl, Austrian embassy Bonn, to Austrian MFA, "BRD; Regierungserklärung des Bundeskanzlers zur Lage der Nation im geteilten Deutschland, 8 November 1989," 10 November 1989, in Archive of the Austrian embassy Bonn Zl. 21.56.02/2-A/89.

[39] Report Plattner, "Einige Aspekte der Sicherheitspolitik des Westens (Lage zu Jahresbeginn 1988)," 2 February 1988, in BMEIA, GZ. 703/1-II.1/88.

[40] Quotation from Information Vukovich, "Österreichisch-amerikanische KSZE-Konsultationen Washington, 2 February 1990," 7 February 1990, in BMEIA, GZ. 807.30/39-II.7/90; also in this respect: Aktenvermerk Prohaska, "Besuch des stv. amerikanischen AM Eagleburger in Wien

Austria itself welcomed the rapprochement between the superpowers (with regard to the disarmament of conventional weapons systems and the elimination of nuclear weapons) and also wished to see these measures extended to cultural and economic areas. Against the background of the new reduction of tensions, Vienna wanted to present its function as a bridge between East and West through its neutrality, which for the most part still remained untouched.

### *3. The events in the GDR*

The virulence of the German question and the rapidly implemented German unification did not come as a surprise only for Austrian diplomats and politicians, but also for the public. At the beginning of September 1989, Austria's ambassadors in East Berlin, Franz Wunderbaldinger, and in Bonn, Friedrich Bauer, were "unanimously convinced that talk about [reunification] was not to be taken seriously." [41] According to Bauer, "No one who was politically accountable" would seek such a thing. "Almost everyone would accept the two countries side by side. The maximum goal of a 'Germany policy,' supported by almost all political parties, would only be to increase the existing contacts between the two states at all levels." Wunderbaldinger made it clear "that in the GDR, too, there is no great pressure to make radical changes. It is not expected that there will be a sudden upsurge and change of direction. Because, on the whole, the state is functioning, it is also accepted by the population."[42]

Ambassador Thomas Nowotny, who sat in the home office, was doubtful about all this: "There is evidence of a fundamental change in the political climate of the two German states." He was referring to a debate between historians in the Federal Republic, in which "Germany's war guilt" had been "put into perspective," and to the issue of the Polish-German border. "East German nationalism" probably did not exist; at best, there was a feeling of certain local ties. The population had grown accustomed to certain convenient things such as job security and cheap basic food and housing, but these were not enough to create an identity. In the future, reunification was very much on the political agenda of both German states, and the Western European countries could not formally object to it. "Of course nobody" outside Germany actually wanted the two Germanys to "reunify" by applying their right to self-determination, a principle recognized

(23. bis 25.2.) Besuch bei HBM, Round Table-Gespräch; AV," 5 March 1990, in BMEIA, GZ. 224.18.13./2-II.9/90.

41 The following quotes are from the report of Ambassador Nowotny, "Das Gespenst der deutschen Wiedervereinigung," , 19 September 1989, in the Archives of the former Austrian embassy Bonn, GZ. 22.17.01/4-II.6/89. A copy is in the possession of the author. See also Michael Gehler, "Österreich, die DDR und die Einheit Deutschlands 1989/90," in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 57, no. 5 (2009): 427–52.

42 Ibid.

internationally by all countries, "but this fear is not articulated in so many words. One is very aware that an open stand against reunification would only strengthen the extreme nationalist forces in the Federal Republic. In this question there is no open political dialogue with the FRG—only mute, unacknowledged fear." Nowotny left no doubt about what he described as an eerie scenario: "For the [current] structures, reunification would certainly be a huge shock." According to his sophisticated analysis, however, in the event that reunification was realized, it would not be very dramatic and even less harmful: Not only was the population growth in the Federal Republic low or even negative, economically it was "much less dynamic than either it itself or other European countries commonly believe." One had to start from the premise that if the present-day East Germany were to be reunified, it could not be brought to the economic level of the Federal Republic immediately. For a number of reasons, Nowotny did not consider German neutrality to be a mandatory prerequisite or result of the German states merging: He cited a statement that Khrushchev had made to Kreisky in an earlier decade, whereby neutrality was an appropriate status for smaller states, but inapplicable for those that held a significant role in international relations due to their own weight. Nowotny continued: Neutralization of the current Federal Republic would weaken the Western defense alliance to the degree that it would become "insubstantial." Under its European policy, France was aiming at strengthening the Federal Republic's Western ties so that they would be "de facto indissoluble." Nowotny considered it more likely that the result would be an (enlarged) Federal Republic that was part of the Western defense alliance, rather than a reunified Germany that was neutral, whereby this would involve a military shift that was apparently detrimental to the East. This, however, would be "less extensive" than one might initially expect. The Austrian diplomat summed this up in a realistic and far-sighted manner:

> Despite lip-service to "self-determination," no European state today desires German "reunification." However, the fear of such a reunification could become a very destabilizing element in European politics, despite the fact that it cannot prevent reunification. Whether this reunification actually occurs is, of course, uncertain. But whatever happens, it cannot be ruled out. In any case, developments have occurred in both German states that make such a reunification more likely today than it was two or three years ago. A reunified Germany cannot and should not be neutral or neutralized. But if at least [sic!] the western part of the reunified Germany were to continue to be part of NATO, and the entire state of Germany remain integrated [into] the EC, then the generally feared threat of a newly formed military and economically dominant super-power would not arise.[43]

[43] Ibid. Nowotny was obviously responding to the idea of neutralizing Eastern Europe, which had been reintroduced and circulating in the US media; see Irving Kristol, "Why not Neutralize Eastern Europe?," in *International Herald Tribune,* 13 September 1989. See also Christiane Lemke, *Die Ursachen des Umbruchs 1989. Politische Sozialisation in der ehemaligen DDR* (Darmstadt: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 276–78; Karl-Rudolf Korte, *Deutschlandpolitik in Helmut Kohls Kanzlerschaft. Regierungsstil und Entscheidungen 1982–1989*, Geschichte der Deutschen Einheit 1 (Stuttgart: DVA, 1998), 479–83; Werner Weidenfeld, Peter M. Wagner and

For Austrian diplomacy and politics, the fall of the Berlin Wall came as a complete surprise. In the first weeks and months after 9 November, German reunification was not expected. It was a taboo subject. The enthusiasm and joy about the unexpected events in the East were held in check at Ballhausplatz.[44] Bauer has summarized the attitude in Vienna as follows: "We did not campaign against reunification, nor did we specifically welcome it at a certain point in time."[45]

For this reason, in October and November 1989, the Austrian government adopted a wait-and-see attitude that subsequently leaned clearly toward the status quo. Its approach was mainly that of politically correct neutrality. Vranitzky tried to be generous regarding the process of reforms in the GDR, but at the same time also to contribute to the normalization and stabilization of the East German transitional regime, and thus of the existing state of affairs. In the financial sphere, ties were to become closer, and the policy of economic bilateralism that had already been followed until then was to be intensified. On 24 November 1989, Vranitzky was the first Western state guest to visit the new East German head of government, Hans Modrow. During the visit, Austria's chancellor also paid his respects to the GDR opposition and met the governing mayor of Berlin, Walter Momper.[46]

In his Ten-Point Plan of 28 November, German chancellor Kohl then suggested a confederation of the two German states.[47] He had to suppress his annoyance concerning the "East-West Fund" that had been initiated by Vranitzky and the Austrian minister of finance Ferdinand Lacina. The five billion shillings (about 710 million DM) that Austria had introduced into the discussion that week needn't have worried Bonn, because it was also planned to use the money for Poland, not only the GDR. But according to Bauer, Kohl was more fearful "that the Austrian proposal might become the nucleus of a larger Western European support action" for the GDR regime, especially since a European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was in the making. Vranitzky had put in a bid for its seat to be in Vienna. In the end, London's bid was accepted. Apparently, Modrow's request for 15 billion DM in financial assistance during his visit in February 1990 to Bonn was gruffly rejected by Kohl. The goal of the Austrian initiative had been to effect a smooth transition from a planned economy to a market economy over the mid-term period, as well as being a means for stabilizing and improving Austrian market economic competitiveness.[48]

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Elke Bruck, *Außenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit. Die Entscheidungsjahre 1989/90*, Geschichte der Deutschen Einheit 4 (Stuttgart: DVA 1998), 300–45. On the German historians' dispute, see Jürgen Elvert, "Erdmann-Debatte und Historikerstreit. Zwei Historikerkontroversen im Vergleich", in Gehler and Böhler, *Verschiedene europäische Wege im Vergleich*, 454–67.

[44] This is the unanimous verdict of the two ambassadors Bauer and Wunderbaldinger, who were concurrently the representatives in East Berlin and Bonn. Interviews with the two ambassadors in Vienna, 4 May 2007.

[45] Interview with Ambassador Friedrich Bauer, 4 May 2007.

[46] Gehler, "Österreich, die DDR und die Einheit Deutschlands 1989/90," 430–35.

[47] Weidenfeld, Wagner, Bruck, *Außenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit*, 97–110.

[48] Letter from Ambassador Friedrich Bauer to the author, July 2007.

On 26 January 1990, GDR prime minister Modrow, accompanied by foreign minister Oskar Fischer, the minister for foreign trade Gerhard Beil and tourism minister Bruno Benthien, stopped in Vienna during a visit to Austria. On this occasion it was decided to temporarily suspend visa requirements as of 1 February. Vranitzky pledged rapid support for the reforms in Eastern Europe. Austria would be ill advised to wait for the consolidation of democracy in the East, before deciding to help. When working together it was focusing on "specific projects" and "not spectacular conferences." Negotiations were also held with Austrian transport minister Rudolf Streicher and minister of economy Wolfgang Schüssel.[49]

Only during the visit of the newly elected, non-communist East German prime minister Lothar de Maizière to Vienna on 25 July 1990 was the reunification of the two German states appraised by Vranitzky as being "an event of greatest political significance that embodies, like no other, the victory over the division of Europe, and, at the same time, that allows a viable peace settlement to replace the decade-long confrontation between the two blocs."[50]

On 30 July 1990, Mock spoke at the International Diplomatic Seminar at Klessheim Palace near Salzburg on the topic "Central and Eastern Europe on the road to parliamentary democracy and a social market economy." He stressed the importance of the transition, and honored the achievements of Gorbachev, without whom the changes in Central and Eastern Europe would not have been possible. Through his "new thinking" it had become possible for communism to change into a system of parliamentary democracy and market economy.[51]

In contrast to the Austrian Federal Chancellery, the early reaction of the Austrian Foreign Ministry to the events in Germany had been very positive. Mock supported, openly and straightforwardly, the program of Kohl, which amounted to an all-German solution as part of the Western alliance. Through the course of January 1990, the growing untenability of the political situation in the GDR had become visible, although Vranitzky still wanted to give the Modrow government a chance.[52]

In the end, Austria did not serve as a neutral model for a united Germany. It also distanced itself from becoming a mediator. On one hand, it did not want to put a

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49 Gehler, "Österreich, die DDR und die Einheit Deutschlands 1989/90," 437–43.

50 See the chronology of 25 July 1990, in *Österreichisches Jahrbuch für Internationale Politik* 1990 (1991): 146, as well as the Document 10, declaration of the Austrian chancelor Dr. Franz Vranitzky on the occasion of German unification on 3 October 1990, Vienna, in *Österreichische außenpolitische Dokumentation. Texte und Dokumente* (November 1990): 51–52.

51 Ibid., 147; Aleksandr Galkin and Anatolij Tschernjajew, eds., *Michail Gorbatschow und die deutsche Frage. Sowjetische Dokumente 1986–1991* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011), xxxiii–xxxiv.

52 Michael Gehler, "Eine Außenpolitik der Anpassung an veränderte Verhältnisse: Österreich und die Vereinigung Bundesrepublik Deutschland-DDR 1989/90," in Michael Gehler and Ingrid Böhler, eds., *Verschiedene europäische Wege im Vergleich: Österreich und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945/49 bis zur Gegenwart. Festschrift für Rolf Steininger zum 65. Geburtstag* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2007), 493–530, 506–11.

strain on its ambitions for joining the EU, and on the other hand, it was interested in the revision of certain clauses of the 1955 State Treaty, for which the Soviet Union's consent was still needed. In February–March 1990, the Austrian chancellor adapted his policies, especially in the wake of Modrow's recall from office by the first free parliamentary elections in the GDR on 18 March, to the changing circumstances and finally expressed his support for German reunification.[53]

Until then, Vranitzky had followed the line of François Mitterrand and Margaret Thatcher in the question of German unity, whereby the survival of the GDR was initially considered not only possible, but also desirable.[54] He then changed his course for lack of a better alternative, after realizing the futility of this idea given the GDR's massive debt.

In his speech to the Austrian National Assembly on 15 March 1990, Mock responded to the dramatic developments that had occurred in the recent months in the GDR. Since the beginning of the year, more than 100,000 East Germans had immigrated to West Germany. "The moment the apparatus of repression broke its stride and Soviet troops were no longer available as a control factor, the artificiality of the state structures in the GDR was revealed with a bang." [55] With regard to the unification of the two German states on the basis of their right to self-determination, in the minds and hearts of the people it seems to be "a matter that has already been decided." Mock continued: "For us, as members of the European international community, it is important that this process of reunification is based on democracy, that existing borders and treaties are respected, and that the results of the Helsinki Process are also considered." The reform processes in Poland and Hungary, which had started even before the revolutionary developments, had intensified in a peaceful manner, although this did not mean that all difficulties had been overcome. During a meeting with President Jaruzelski in Geneva, which took place on the periphery of the session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Mock reassured him that "Austria is prepared to support the reforms in Poland to the best of its abilities." Mock visited Hungary twice, where he gained the impression "that this country is already quite far along the road to parliamentary democracy and a social market economy."[56]

53 Ibid., 512–15.

54 Valérie Guérin-Sendelbach, *Frankreich und das vereinigte Deutschland. Interessen und Perzeptionen im Spannungsfeld* (Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 1999); Tilo Schabert, *Wie Weltgeschichte gemacht wird. Frankreich und die deutsche Einheit* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002); Elke Bruck, *François Mitterrands Deutschlandbild—Perzeption und Politik im Spannungsfeld deutschland-, europa- und sicherheitspolitischer Entscheidungen 1989–1992* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003); Klaus-Rainer Jackisch, *Eisern gegen die Einheit: Margaret Thatcher und die deutsche Wiedervereinigung* (Frankfurt am Main: Societäts-Verlag, 2004); Ulrich Lappenküper, *Mitterrand und Deutschland. Die enträtselte Sphinx* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011).

55 Speech by Alois Mock, "Der Wandel in Europa als Herausforderung für Österreich," 15 March 1990, Inzko m. p., Runderlass an alle österreichische Vertretungsbehörden, 16 March 1990, in BMEIA, Zl. 700.17.15/149-I.3/90.

56 Ibid.

Austria was participating in aid operations and support measures. It was also playing a role in debit relief programs. The former communist dictatorships had debts in Austria of 190 billion shillings. In a televised press meeting on 25 November 1990, Mock agreed to several 100 million shillings of Austrian loans, with direct binding to other Austrian payments. In particular it was considered important to restructure the debt of Poland, which had "the most difficult situation."[57]

### *4. The changes in the CSSR*

The first official visit since 1981 of a Czechoslovak head of government to Austria took place on 24–25 October 1989. For Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec, this was also his first visit to the West. The long delay for this official visit to Austria made it evident that from the Austrian viewpoint, bilateral relations with Czechoslovakia were not as deep-rooted or close as those with Hungary. Adamec's visit left the impression in Vienna that the government in Prague had decided on a policy of cautiously becoming more open and of pursuing matters that Austria considered important. A sign of this had already been seen by a number of humanitarian cases being resolved before the visit. This indicated Prague's willingness to introduce a series of other measures that would make it easier for the citizens of both countries to cross the border. But one key Austrian request, a reduction in visa fees, did not appear on the list of measures proposed by Adamec. It seemed that the CSSR either could not or did not want to relinquish this source of foreign currency earnings, especially when tourism was increasing. When questioned later, the former Czechoslovak ambassador to Vienna Marek Venuta agreed that this had been the case. Environmental issues were presented as one of the Czechoslovak government's biggest concerns. Vienna was expecting Czechoslovakia to build more nuclear power plants. Adamec repeated that Czechoslovakia was very interested in intensifying its economic relations with Austria. There were opportunities for this particularly in the area of environmental technology. According to Vienna's appraisal of the situation, Prague was aware of its need for socio-political change, particularly in light of the incipient reform developments in the GDR and the possibility of an impending isolation, which sparked serious concern. But any attempts at other political forces gaining political participation were still rigidly tied to the communist party's grasp on its governing role, and thus from the outset were severely limited. This was unequivocally expressed by Adamec during his Vienna visit: There would be "dialogue with 'independent groups' only if they do not place the existing system in ques-

[57] Transcript of the "Pressestunde" with Mock on 25 November 1990, Greinert, m. p., Runderlass an alle Österreichischen Berufsvertretungsbehörden und Kulturinstitute, 28 November 1990, in BMEIA, Zl. 800.55.07/55-I.3/90.

tion."[58] In October 1989, the course had been set in Prague for a careful and yet perceptible intensification of Austro-Czechoslovak relations. But the CSCE human rights stipulations continued to be a limiting factor from Vienna's point of view, while in Prague they were perceived by many communists as annoying.

A few weeks later, Mock concluded in retrospect that the developments in Czechoslovakia had been "less dramatic" than those in the GDR. Because of the sudden feeling of political isolation, the local leadership yielded "relatively rapidly to the pressure of the powerful demonstrations, especially after 17 November."[59] The rigid functionaries heading the communist party were soon replaced by leaders ready for power-sharing. With the election of former dissident Václav Havel as president, "an unambiguous signal [was] set in the direction of democratization." During Mock's visits to Prague and Bratislava in March 1990, he was able to "perceive this change clearly." Just as Mock had initiated the first stage of the CSCE human rights control mechanism when Havel had been arrested the previous year, Mock intervened on 25 October 1989 for the release of Jan Čarnogurský, who was imprisoned in Bratislava. A few weeks later Čarnogurský had become part of the government as the first deputy to the prime minister. Mock made it clear "that today at the top of the Czechoslovak state are people with whom we are closely connected because of our natural solidarity in difficult times."[60]

### *5. The changes in Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia*

Especially dramatic were the developments in Romania, which coincided with the Christmas holidays. Hundreds of people died in chaotic conditions during the struggle for freedom.[61] Vienna was informed about the continuing miserable supply situation and the violation of human rights. The government's position could only be sustained by the security forces. Although a few individuals could be considered part of an opposition, their efforts were ineffective. The federal government in Vienna had applied the CSCE human dimension mechanism (levels 1 and 3) according to the Vienna follow-up meeting.[62] As stressed by Mock, Austria could also be proud "that it had the courage to call on the United Nations Security Council to deal with the situ-

[58] Record entry, Sucharipa m. p., "CSSR; offizieller Besuch Ministerpräsident Adamec'; Gesamteindruck," 30 October 1989, in BMEIA, GZ. 35.18.09/36-II.3/89.

[59] Report Valentin Inzko, "'Der Wandel in Europa als Herausforderung für Österreich,' Rede des Herrn Bundesministers im Nationalrat, 15 March 1990," 16 March 1990, in BMEIA, Zl. 700.17.15/149-I.3/90.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution: Rumänien zwischen Diktatur und Demokratie*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Piper, 1990), 82–131.

[62] Information, Sucharipa m. p., "Osteuropa; aktuelle Lagebeurteilung," 8 June 1989, in BMEIA, GZ. 713/6-II.3/89.

ation in Romania."[63] However, the Security Council was blocked by Chinese and Soviet vetoes. As soon as the tide had turned in Romania after the bloody overthrow of Nicolae Ceaușescu, Austria and its population distinguished themselves, as Mock notes, "through a huge wave of aid and solidarity that was internationally recognized."

The reform efforts in Bulgaria were judged in Vienna as being "art for art's sake." At the first signs of pluralistic impulses, repressive forms could immediately be seen. Austria served as a transit country for Turkish-Islamic minorities.[64] While the developments in Bulgaria were still largely dominated by the communist party, although excesses toward the country's Islamic ethnic minority had subsided (Sofia had initiated a brutal Bulgarization and assimilation policy against the Turkish population which led to a mass exodus), Mock let it be known that the developments in Yugoslavia gave "cause to a certain degree of concern." Old nationalistic and ethnic divisions that were thought to have been overcome threatened to erupt again. The foreign minister, however, was swayed by the idea "that Yugoslavia is strong enough to cope with these problems politically and to solve them step by step in the course of the democratization process."[65] He was mistaken. Hungary's foreign minister Horn had informed the Ballhausplatz about "Hungary's great concern" already in March 1989: "Milošević is pursuing a neo-Stalinist model that is even more dangerous when seen in a nationalist-Serbian framework. This can lead to unforeseeable consequences."[66]

In the 1990s, Europe was to experience three new conflicts in the Balkans (in 1991–92, the federal government and army of Yugoslavia against Slovenia and Croatia who had declared independency; 1992–95, a civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina with Serbian and Croatian intervention; and in 1999, the Kosovo war between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians with NATO intervention). Until 1945 there had been four wars in the Balkans (in 1912, 1913, 1914–18, and 1941–45), and thus in the twentieth century the area saw a total of seven wars.

## III. The Warsaw Pact in transition and other trends in Central and Eastern Europe

In Austria's assessment (based on Yugoslav and Hungarian sources), the meeting of the Warsaw Pact countries in Bucharest on 7 and 8 July 1989[67] was marked

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[63] Speech Mock, "Der Wandel in Europa als Herausforderung für Österreich," 15 March 1990.

[64] Information, Sucharipa m. p., "Osteuropa; aktuelle Lagebeurteilung," 8 June 1989, in BMEIA, GZ. 713/6-II.3/89.

[65] Speech Mock, "Der Wandel in Europa als Herausforderung für Österreich," 15 March 1990.

[66] Record entry, Sucharipa m. p., "Entwicklungen in Osteuropa; Gespräch des HGS mit Staatssekretär Horn," 20 March 1989, in BMEIA, GZ. 502.16.03/19-II.3/89.

[67] Records of the Political Consultative Committee Meeting in Bucharest, 7–8 July 1989, in Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, eds., *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact 1955–1991* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2005), 644–54.

by a "new atmosphere" that allowed "genuine consultations" of the type held between equals. The Pact was in the process of evolving into something similar to a political alliance. The Hungarian foreign minister considered three aspects worth mentioning: There was no resistance to Gorbachev's disarmament proposals, or even misgivings. Perestroika was deliberate and the Brezhnev Doctrine had been "suspended." And a clear division had emerged between the socialist states with regard to their willingness to reform: On one side were the "hardliners," to which Horn counted not only the GDR and Romania, but also Bulgaria, to the surprise of Vienna. The progressive states were considered the USSR, Hungary and Poland. The CSSR's low-key stance did not allow an opinion to be formed. According to information provided by Yugoslavia, bilateral issues were discussed in Bucharest, but not within the framework of the Pact's conference, but at a concomitant meeting of the party leaders. Ceausescu made serious reproaches against Hungary, but was "held back" by other party leaders. Todor Zhivkov requested support in Bulgaria's conflict with Turkey, but it was pointed out to him that he could hardly expect support from his partners now, after having neither informed nor consulted them with regard to his unilateral handling of his country's dispute with Ankara (due to the repressive measures Bulgaria had taken against its Turkish minority).[68]

In December 1989, Vienna considered the general trends in Central and Eastern Europe to be the following: Most of the Warsaw Pact countries were pursuing courses of reform from which "positive regeneration effects" would develop. Pragmatically, shifts were occurring in the limits Moscow regarded tolerable in the satellite states' transformation processes. Membership in the Pact was "still a *conditio sine qua non*." The northern states in the Pact's territory (Poland and the GDR) had a different strategic importance than the southern area (Bulgaria and Hungary). Stronger aspirations for neutrality were seen in Hungary. It was also noted that there were separatist tendencies in the Baltic Soviet republics, which would dangerously boost the opposition to Gorbachev in the Soviet bureaucratic and military apparatus. Vienna considered it best if the West practiced restraint. The transformation of the Warsaw Pact into a (defensive) military alliance that no longer had the authority to intervene in internal affairs was seen by the majority of the member states as the goal.[69]

The foreign ministers' meeting in Warsaw 26–27 October, the first Warsaw Pact meeting without a communist chair, went well. With the increasing equality of the member states' rights on foreign policy issues, the need was seen for improved coordination through the establishment of a permanent (political) Warsaw Pact secretariat. Vienna recommended that the West encourage these develop-

[68] Report, Austrian embassy Belgrad, "Zum Warschauer Pakt-Gipfel in Bukarest (7–8 July 1989)," Zl. 395-RES/89, 2 August 1989, in BMEIA, Zl. 701.03/14 and 16-II.3/89.

[69] Report Abteilung II.3, "Osteuropa. Generelle Tendenzen," Zl. 350-RES/89, 13 December 1989, in BMEIA, Zl. 713/78-II.3/89 (642li).

ments, also during the Vienna CSCE negotiations. Moreover, the Austrian chancellery was watching the desperate Soviet attempts to create a more efficient basis for CMEA cooperation. Vienna thought it very unlikely that this would happen, due to the attractiveness of the European Community as well as EFTA. Austrian foreign policymakers were aware that the West had the great task of economically assisting the East European states and cautiously binding them institutionally (Council of Europe, EFTA, EC). EFTA could not take on the function of a waiting room, and therefore the EC and EFTA had to act in tandem. Western economic support had to be reform-oriented ("structural reform consistency"). At the Ballhausplatz it was accurately recognized that economic structural reforms represented "a bigger problem" than had been previously thought. The process would be happening for the first time in history under the worst possible conditions: debt burden, poor infrastructure, obsolete institutions. Then again, the generally high educational level of the Eastern population was noted. If the economic reforms failed in the medium-term, it was feared that the political reforms would be threatened. The possibility of these countries tipping toward nationalist right-wing governments or military regimes could not be ruled out. A return to the old communist rule in the Warsaw Pact countries was considered possible only if a concurrent revolution occurred in Moscow. At the Ballhausplatz, the central issue was therefore considered the continued existence of the Soviet course of reforms. Despite Gorbachev's apparently strong political position, increasing signs were already noted in December 1989 that the gap between the accelerated political change and the slow economic reforms would become dangerous. Washington also thought this to be the case. With the rapid changes in East Germany and the reaction of West Germany, pan-European issues were being faced. From the Austrian viewpoint, these were to be addressed "calmly." With regard to the question of (re-)unification, the right to self-determination was emphasized, which Austria supported unconditionally. According to the Ballhausplatz, it was "self-evident that this also applied to the people of both German states." Nonetheless, any reorganization of the German-German relationship should be done in a manner that neither endangered the process of détente and peace in Europe, nor created questions regarding the inviolability of the postwar borders for the neighboring countries.[70]

## IV. Transnational party cooperation

To date, the role of transnational party cooperation has received scant attention in connection with the changes in Central and Eastern Europe. While the social democrats and socialists were noticeably reserved—which had not only to do with the fundamental question of assessing existing socialism and its future, but

[70] Ibid.

also repercussions concerning the value of its ideology and politics—Christian democratic and conservative party representatives were noticeably more active.

Already years before the dramatic events of 1989–90, the party representatives who had joined together in the aforementioned European Democrat Union (EDU) had registered that changes were emerging in the so-called Eastern bloc. The EDU perceived itself as a kind of "Anti-Communist International" (Eichtinger and Wohnout), with numerous contacts to dissident groups. Mock saw a new era opening with General Secretary Gorbachev. As he pointed out in September 1988 at the EDU party-leaders conference in Rhodes, "Nevertheless one thing is certain: a wind of change is blowing also in Eastern Europe." He did not consider Gorbachev a revolutionary; he was rather a reformer who was not aspiring to change the communist system, but to improve it. At the EDU steering committee in Stockholm on 30 June 1989, it was decided to support the democratization processes as well as the "like-minded" parties. Gabor Roszik, the first freely elected opposition member of the Hungarian Parliament who had won his seat in a by-election, was a guest at the second EDU parliamentary conference in Antalya from 24 to 26 August 1989. Mock saw the EDU as having the "assignment" of developing new parties in Central and Eastern Europe. To explore the political field, fact finding missions were conducted in Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.[71]

Relatively early, on 13 November 1989 at a meeting of delegates to the EDU held in the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Sankt Augustin near Bonn, a clear commitment to "German reunification" was made. Four days after the opening of the Berlin Wall the European Committee of the EDU

> congratulated Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his government on the developments in inner-German relations. The form insistence on the Basic Law and its implication by the CDU/CSU contributed to this success just as much as their adherence to the principle, unlike the SPD, not to enter into friendly relations with the SED, the communist party, which bears the responsibility for the old regime of terror. Only a few weeks ago the SPD still tried to conduct top-level talks with the SED, thus stabilizing this party.
>
> The EDU welcomes and supports the courageous and far-sighted attitude of Chancellor Kohl to respond to the crisis in the GDR with a broad offer of aid, if those in power initiate a process of democratization.
>
> The Committee will support Chancellor Kohl and his government in all further steps that lead to peaceful development as well as to more freedom and democracy in the GDR. The EDU supports the desire of the Germans to complete the unity of Germany in freedom and peace in exercising the right of self-determination.[72]

[71] Eichtinger and Wohnout, *Alois Mock*, 152–55. The author would also like to thank Helmut Wohnout for providing a copy of his manuscript of the article "Österreichs Außenminister Alois Mock, Deutschland und Europa," which he presented at the History Department at the University of Hildesheim in the fall/winter semester of 2010–11.

[72] 28th Meeting of the EDU Committee on "European Structures - European Policy" in St. Augustin/Bonn, 13 November 1989, in Archiv des Karl von Vogelsang-Instituts, Vienna (AKvVI),

The EDU Committee then also adopted the declaration under the heading "For a united Europe in peace and freedom" and expressed its clear support of the federal government's demand for Germany's reunification as well as pointing out its continued integration in the West (and consequently its disapproval of neutrality or neutralization for a united Germany):

> The EDU welcomes and supports the peaceful development toward more freedom and democracy in the GDR. It reconfirms the desire of the Germans to complete the unity of Germany in peace and freedom in exercising their right of self-determination. [...] The attractiveness of Western European integration has had a positive influence on developments in Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore the economic and political unification of the European Community must be strengthened further. This is a prerequisite for political evolution in Germany. The three Western powers, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France, continue to have treaty obligations and political commitments with regard to Germany. Likewise, the member states of the European Community and the EC itself are called upon to implement such a policy.[73]

On 30 and 31 August 1990, the EDU accepted the membership of the first new democratic parties in Central and Eastern Europe, and the Hungarian Christian democrat József Antall became the EDU's vice president. This development was mainly due to the efforts of ÖVP politicians, including Erhard Busek and Andreas Khol, but especially Alois Mock, who served from 1979 to 1998 as the chairman of the EDU.[74]

## V. The reaction of the Austrian population

In May 1990, the Ballhausplatz became aware that in the Austrian population interest in foreign policy had increased. On one hand, this had to do with the events in Central and Eastern Europe; on the other, it had developed out of the deliberations regarding how to define Austria's relationship with the EC. Based on a survey conducted by the Sozialwissenschaftliche Studiengesellschaft, it had emerged that almost a third of the Austrian population was "very" interested in foreign policy issues, twice as many as those who were "very" interested in domestic policy.[75]

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Materialbestand EDU 1989–90, EDU/1989/1705 rev 14-11-1989. Dr. Hannes Schönner kindly allowed the author preliminary access to this and the following document.

73 Declaration "For a united Europe in peace and freedom" of the EDU meeting in St. Augustin/Bonn, 13 November 1989, ibid., EDU/1989/1700 rev, 14-11-1989. See also Hans Stark, *Helmut Kohl. L'Allemagne et l'Europe. La politique d'intégration européenne de la République fédérale 1982–1998* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), 145–57.

74 Eichtinger and Wohnout, *Mock*, 155.

75 Report Nowotny, "Interesse für Außenpolitik stark gestiegen und liegt nun weit über dem Interesse für Innenpolitik," 4 May 1990, sent to the Austrian embassies, in BMEIA, GZ. 502.02.01/68-II.6/90.

Of 2,000 Austrians surveyed by two Austrian marketing research companies Fessel + GfK (Institut für Marktforschung) and the Institut für Empirische Sozialforschung (IFES) in the period between November 1990 and January 1991, 87% responded to the question of how they saw Germany's unification with "rather positively," in contrast to 10% who responded with "quite negatively." The largest number of negative responses were from members of the Green Party, with nearly 20%. Interestingly, over 10% of the right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ) also expressed a negative reaction. In this context, the answer to whether or not Austria should become part of the unified Germany was also quite revealing. Altogether, 92% responded with no to this question, and only 6% said yes. Nonetheless, 10% of those who had FPÖ leanings were for a merger, while Green Party members had the largest number against, with 95%.[76]

As to the general question of the expected impact of unification, the most frequent responses were unspecified consequences for business and industry (32%), an increase in tourists from former East Germany (12%), problems with immigrants to Austria (8%), and greater market opportunities and trade growth (7%). Nearly two-thirds were worried by the fact that approximately 60% of the Austrian companies acquired by foreigners in recent years were in German hands. This was because Austria's economic dependence on the Federal Republic was already quite high. If Germany were reunified, 19% believed that there would be a revival of "Anschluss thinking" in Austria, whereas 77% disagreed.[77] On one hand, this data confirmed Austria's strong support of German unification, but on the other hand, it also showed Austria's mature sense of identity and the stable perception of the Austrian nation, to which the Austrian foreign policy and the diplomacy of the Ballhausplatz during the previous decades had contributed significantly. Ideas of Greater Germany belonged to the past.

## VI. Conclusion

Austria responded early and positively to the reform efforts in the states of Central and Eastern Europe. Its strongest sympathies were for the changes in Hungary, as well as for those in Poland, albeit to a lesser degree. The reaction to the developments in Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria ranged from skeptical to disapproving. The end of the GDR had an entirely different impact and was to change the situation dramatically. The collapse of the communist dictatorship was received in Vienna with mixed feelings. While Vranitzky's attitude toward a reform-minded GDR was open, well-disposed and even friendly, Mock clearly

[76] Gehler, "Eine Außenpolitik der Anpassung", 522.

[77] Hanspeter Neuhold, "Die deutsche Wiedervereinigung und ihre Folgen," in idem and Paul Luif, eds., *Das Außenpolitische Bewußtsein der Österreicher: Aktuelle internationale Probleme im Spiegel der Meinungsforschung* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1992), 35–36, 241, 244.

sided with Kohl's policy. Dissent within the coalition was unmistakable. The differing attitudes of the Austrian government leaders toward the German developments were also due to their different lines regarding the EC. Mock's course was focusing on accession to the EC, whereby he was relying on West German support, just as he had also expressed his early support for Kohl's Germany policy. Vranitzky moved thoughtfully and carefully with regard to Austria's application for EC membership, at all times emphasizing and upholding the government's policy of neutrality. This resulted in his more economic-pragmatic approach to the reform movements in Central and Eastern Europe, while Mock's position was more strongly based on anti-communist—that is, ideological—as well humanitarian and cultural-political motives. In the second half of the 1980s, the ÖVP, with Busek and Mock, was more focused on Central and Eastern Europe than the SPÖ under Vranitzky. With the exception of the rapid onset of the German unification movement, which surprised all who were involved (except for Thomas Nowotny), it is amazing how accurately the changes in the other states were assessed.

To conclude, five aspects should be established:

1. Vienna was accurate in its assessment of the actual interdependence and mutual interaction between glasnost and perestroika in the Soviet Union and the changes in Central and Eastern Europe.
2. Gorbachev's key role in the reform processes and the further opening of Central and Eastern Europe was recognized by Vienna early: Whether the developments stood or fell was dependent on him. This is why the stability of the Gorbachev regime was accorded a top priority. In this regard, Austria's foreign policy moved completely in line with that of the West.
3. The reform movements in Central and Eastern Europe were judged realistically with regard to their significance and stage of development. The difference between the pioneering role of Poland and Hungary and the slower headway in Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Romania was evaluated reliably and with fine distinctions.
4. The fact that the German question might result in a significant shift of power in Central Europe was perfectly clear in Vienna. The diplomats at the Ballhausplatz did not follow the changes in East Germany only by waiting and sitting still, but with a sense of urgency and concern. The fall of the GDR was different than the changes occurring in Hungary and Poland. While Vranitzky tried to moderate and Mock acted in a pronounced pro-unification manner, Busek remained silent.
5. The CSCE offered an important stabilizing and conciliatory framework into which the dramatic upheavals could be placed. This was also the consensus among all twelve EU member states. Austria's mediation services within the CSCE follow-up process and Vienna as a meeting place had a positive impact on the further developments.

The only decisive way for Austria to intervene politically in the course of the events just before the fall of the Berlin Wall was through the symbolic cutting of the Iron Curtain and the assistance and support it gave to fleeing East German citizens. The Austro-Hungarian prologue in the summer of 1989 was decisive for the extreme speed of the developments in Germany that autumn. The decision to reunify Germany and to free the Central and Eastern part of the continent from communist dictatorship as well as Soviet oppression and involve it in the medium and long-term European integration project was the result of a "glorious moment of diplomacy."[78] The decisions were not only made in Vienna, but in Moscow, Washington, Bonn, and later in Brussels within the framework of NATO and the EU.

78 Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Sternstunde der Diplomatie. Die deutsche Einheit und das Ende der Spaltung Europas*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Propyläen, 2001), 483–91.

# AFTERMATH

Dieter Segert

# SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE AFTER 1989 AND THEIR PRECONDITIONS

"Systemic change" is used to describe the complex change of all basic institutions in any given society.[1] In 1989, the distinctive and multifaceted institutional system in Eastern Europe—European state socialism—began to change into another system that was very different, a system that might be described as "democratic and welfare capitalism." This chapter will only deal with those transformation processes within the sphere of politics, economy, and culture that had an influence on the systemic change as a whole. The expression "societal transformations or changes" will be used in the same sense as "systemic change."

Secondly, "societal transformation" will be used in its narrower sense, namely, to indicate the process of changes in the social status of members of a given society, in this case caused by the East European societies' transformation from state socialism to capitalism. The main tendency of societal transformation usually consists in large-scale differentiation in social relations. One goal of state socialism was to equalize people's social status. Notwithstanding certain countertendencies,[2] when compared to other types of societies this was attempted by state socialism's ruling politics favoring blue collar workers and farmers, as well as its measures against the former upper classes. No study of the societal changes in Eastern Europe overlooks the fact that the transformative changes involved

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[1] On this issue, see the proceedings of the series of conferences in the 1990s convened by a study group of the same name in Germany. The German title was "Systemwechsel" (systemic change). The initiator of these conferences was Wolfgang Merkel. To a great degree, in the German scholarly community the respective discussions have supported the paradigm of "transition to democracy." Wolfgang Merkel et al., ed., *Systemwechsel 1: Theorien, Ansätze und Konzepte der Transitionsforschung* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1996); *Systemwechsel 2: Die Institutionalisierung der Demokratie* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1996); *Systemwechsel 3: Parteien im Transformationsprozeß* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1997); *Systemwechsel 4: Die Rolle von Verbänden im Transformationsprozeß* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1999); *Systemwechsel 5: Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich 2000).

[2] As stated by Iván Szelényi in a paper written in 2002: "State socialism was not an egalitarian society and people under socialism tended to be rather poor. Commentators after the fall of socialism often falsely describe socialism as an egalitarian society. This it was not: neither in its ideology, nor in its practice." Gail Kligman and Iván Szelényi, "Poverty and Social Structure in Transitional Societies," paper presented at the Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung (Berlin 2002), 7.

a sharp increase of social inequality after 1989, with clear groups of winners and losers[3] distinguishable within the respective countries.

As a result of the systemic changes after 1989, processes of economic decline occurred in all of the former East bloc countries. In the first period of transformation, an economic slump appeared in the region, although its severity varied. Apparently there are winners and losers at the level of entire societies as well.

Thirdly, the social and political changes in Eastern Europe are clearly interconnected. At their intersection, enormous political conflicts have emerged. These originated from expectations raised in 1989 that were frustrated in the ensuing years. This phenomenon can be seen in many opinion polls. The systemic change was both a success story and a big disappointment.[4]

It is unclear how to assess these widespread sentiments on a theoretical basis. Some sociologists foresaw these problems already at the outset of the transformation—the ambivalent results came as no surprise for them. Claus Offe coined the well-known expression "dilemma of simultaneousness."[5] Although in general his apprehensions did not materialize—nowhere did the losers in the transition resort to an uprising—he was quite accurate in forecasting deep social tensions as a result of the systemic change. The frustrated hopes and the interweaving of politics and economics will be the focus of the analysis below.

## The source of the crisis in 1989

In contrast to the political science mainstream, anthropologists never presumed that the East European societies would experience the abrupt disruption in their development that occurred in 1989. Anthropologists have generally

3 Several opinion polls have been conducted that have underlined this. To provide only one example: In the 2001 EU *Candidate Countries Eurobarometer* (CCEB) poll, it is stated that the social situation of pensioners in ten EU candidate countries had worsened during the previous five years, whereas the situation of managers and younger people typically became better. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2001/cceb20011_en.pdf (accessed 18 July 2009), 15.

4 János Kornai, "The Great Transformation of Central and Eastern Europe. Successes and Disappointment," *Economics of Transition* 14, no. 2 (2006): 204–44; Ivan T. Berend, "Social Shock in Transforming Central and Eastern Europe," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40, no. 3 (2007): 269–80.

5 Claus Offe, "Das Dilemma der Gleichzeitigkeit. Demokratisierung und Marktwirtschaft in Osteuropa,"*Merkur* 45, no. 4 (1991): 279–92. Wiesenthal described this dilemma in the following way: "The dilemma theorem maintains that an unavoidable blockade of the reform process would result—or that tremendous costs of transaction were to be incurred—when crucial decisions over the allocation of property rights had to be made *after* the introduction of universal suffrage and responsive democratic governments." Helmuth Wiesenthal, "The 'Dilemma of Simultaneity' Revisited," paper for the international conference "Thirty Years of the Third Wave of Democratization: Paradigms, Lessons, and Perspectives" (Social Science Research Center Berlin WZB, December 2004), http://www.hwiesenthal.de/downloads/no_dilemma.pdf (accessed 28 May 2013), 3.

stressed social constancy, the "inevitable continuity of everyday life."[6] The everyday life of average people will be the main topic and source of this paper. Like social phenomena in a broader sense, people's expectations and their social routines do not change from one day to the next, at least in the opinion of anthropologists. Change of this kind needs much more time.

In the last two decades, the persuasive power of this argument has grown. It has also become clear that the events of 1989 did not emerge out of nowhere, but were merely a deeper cut in a longer process of social transformation in the respective societies. When seen from the perspective of continuity, the capitalism of Eastern Europe today is a post-socialist capitalism that was already developing during the "late socialism" period.[7]

Behind the façade of changing political and economic phenomena, a great deal of continuity exists. One can better understand East European societies before and after 1989 if they are seen as backward societies, at the periphery of the West, that were striving for the richer and more successful social order of their western neighbors. In this sense, even state socialism might be understood as an attempt (albeit failed) of modernizing backward societies.[8] If seen in this light, the "systemic change" of 1989 was not the victory of a good political principle (democracy) over a poor one (dictatorship), but was the outcome of a competition between two social and economic orders that had started at least two decades before the breakdown of state socialism.

There is no doubt that the starting point of this breakdown was the continually deepening structural crisis of state socialism. The question arises as to which subsystem crises contributed to this final outcome. The economy was perhaps the most important area of struggle. Without a doubt, the state-socialist command economy was less efficient than its Western counterpart, the social market economy, as János Kornai has shown.[9] Several points contributed to this failure: One major aspect was the inability of command economies to launch any kind of intensive growth. They were also unable to fully realize the possibilities of the information revolution. Also, the costs of running a welfare state exceeded eco-

[6] Chris Hann, Caroline Humphrey, and Kathrine Verdery, "Einleitung. Der Postsozialismus als Gegenstand ethnologischer Forschung, in Christopher Hann, ed., *Postsozialismus: Transformationsprozesse in Europa und Asien aus ethnologischer Perspektive* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002), 11–49, 16.

[7] Dieter Segert, "Postsozialismus-Spätsozialismus-Staatssozialismus: Grundlinien und Grundbegriffe einer politikwissenschaftlichen Postsozialismus-Forschung," in idem, ed., *Postsozialismus. Hinterlassenschaften des Staatssozialismus und neue Kapitalismen in Europa* (Vienna: Braumüller, 2007), 1–23, 11–15.

[8] On this point, see Dieter Segert, *Die Grenzen Osteuropas—1918, 1945, 1989—Drei Versuche im Westen anzukommen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002), and idem, "Der Staatssozialismus war mehr als nur ein politisches Herrschaftsverhältnis. Anmerkungen zu einem theoretischen Defizit des Totalitarismuskonzepts," *Bohemia* 49, no. 2 (2009): 420–28.

[9] János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

nomic capacity, and from the mid-1970s, the amount of external debt had rapidly increased. And the most important internal reason for the inefficiency of these states' economies was the failure of the economic reforms that had been introduced during the 1960s.[10]

In 1992, Kornai did not see any chance for a successful change of state socialism. In his view, the respective systems were unalterable, mainly due to their economies. This can be seen in his use of the term "perfection" for characterizing the changes that occurred after the death of Stalin. But Kornai's conviction that the classic interconnection of state party power, state property and command economy could not move toward a more efficient economy has been disproved by the fact that Chinese state socialism experienced successful reforms from the end of the 1970s.[11] And even the history of Soviet state socialism provides some arguments against his hypothesis. From the mid-1950s, in many areas of politics, state socialism as a whole was changing in a number of countries at different speeds. Within the seemingly monolithic order, a tangible diversity had emerged.

To understand the starting point more deeply, as well as the frustration about the systemic change that occurred, it is important to see how the other side, the Western market economies, also changed. Especially from the perspective of the current world financial crisis (more than twenty years after 1989), it becomes apparent how much also changed within the Western system during the same period. The social order that succeeded state socialism is not Western capitalism of 1989, but an earlier stage in capitalism's development. In order to appreciate this aspect, one must go back several decades, indeed to the 1930s. As a result of the world financial crisis of 1929, classical capitalism changed dramatically in the direction of more state intervention being undertaken to stimulate and coordinate economic growth and more attention being devoted to securing the welfare of the broad masses. It continued to change due to the resulting shift in authoritarian governments in most parts of Europe, and then as a result of World War II. Following 1945, a kind of socially negotiated state capitalism emerged in the West. In addition to internal causes, these changes were also a reaction to the social promises of state socialism. Classical capitalism in the West was challenged by the utopia of a fair economic and social order, not by the actual form that state socialism had acquired.

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[10] Probably the most critical event was the crushing of the reforms in Czechoslovakia in 1968 by five Warsaw-Pact states. Deep reforms of the economic system would have had been a necessary precondition for fundamental changes in the direction of democratization to occur in that country's political policy. To explain the failure of state-socialist reforms, one must also consider the failed attempt of reforms in Yugoslavia. In that case, even the liberalization of politics did not suffice to create a functioning socialist market economy.

[11] For a comparison of the two transformations, see, for example, Rüdiger Frank and Dieter Segert, "Postsozialismus in Ostasien und Osteuropa? Grundlagen eines Vergleichs," in Dieter Segert, ed., *Postsozialismus. Hinterlassenschaften des Staatssozialismus und neue Kapitalismen in Europa* (Vienna: Braumüller, 2007), 123–58.

State socialism shifted in response to this socially concerted capitalism, since the latter not only had an efficient economy, it also realized a high degree of equal opportunities for the average citizen and represented real democratic participation. During the "late socialism" period, this type of capitalism gradually became the general model, not only for the population as a whole, but also for some of the power elites. In the decades before 1989, this fostered a paradigm change toward "consumer socialism" in state-socialist politics.[12]

To sum up these thoughts, the events of 1989 cannot merely be understood as the collapse of dictatorships, but also, in the battle for the hearts and minds of the population, as an about-face of the Eastern "authoritarian welfare state."

This thesis is also based on the clearly visible element of continuity in the changes that took place before and after 1989. It also explains why post-socialist capitalism could emerge so easily from the ruins of state socialism. Having emerged as a counter-model to Western economic and social life, state socialism adapted step by step to its competitor. By introducing a broader use of money, loans and taxes as economic instruments, Eastern national economies were opened to world markets that were dominated by Western economic actors. The economic self-reliance (autarchy) of the Eastern regional economic system was weakened. In order to support technical modernization, machines were imported from the West, whereby a number of Eastern bloc states took out loans from Western banks. With the high interest rates at the end of the 1970s, this led to disastrous consequences. Several countries (Hungary, Poland and to some degree the GDR) accrued high debts and began to have payment difficulties at the beginning of the 1980s. Some countries searched for a way out by applying for membership in (Western dominated) international financial organizations like the International Monetary Fund. In 1982 Hungary became a member of the IMF, and four years later, Poland.[13]

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[12] See Dietrich Staritz, *Geschichte der DDR,* rev. ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996). Boyer has proposed the thesis that there were two types of "welfare state" that competed against one another. Christoph Boyer, "Zwischen Pfadabhängigkeit und Zäsur: ost- und westeuropäische Sozialstaaten seit den siebziger Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts," in Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., Das *Ende der Zuversicht? Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 103–19. In my view, Dalos has misinterpreted this clear tendency as having merely been a kind of prevention on the part of party leaders to avoid political or social conflicts. György Dalos, *Der Vorhang geht auf—das Ende der Diktaturen in Osteuropa* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2009). As a result of this strategic change, at least in East Central Europe, the most important political aim became the immediate social improvement of the population's day to day life, rather than the aim of future amelioration (and the communist "bright future"). In the case of the GDR, the influence of competition with the neighbouring FRG (and its social regime) was clearly visible. In many cases, the social policies of the SED leadership were in direct reaction to the political announcements of their Western counterparts, such as, for example, the introduction of shorter working weeks and Saturday as a regular free day.

[13] See James M. Boughton, *Silent Revolution: The International Monetary Fund 1979–1989* (Washington, D.C.: IMF, 2001), chapter 19, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/history/2001/ch19.pdf (accessed 16 July 2009).

In late socialism, even incentives for work were borrowed from the other side. From the beginning of state socialism, there had been few incentives for the population to work diligently. Ideology and enthusiasm were not enough to foster performance and discipline. For this reason, incentives for individual or team work had to be found. Competitive wages were introduced in more and more work places, and more consumer goods began to be produced. The one-sided orientation of the planned economy toward producing investment goods began to shift. Though delayed in comparison to the West, the consumer trend in Eastern Europe was similar, with most households owning a television set, refrigerator, washing machine and, in the end, a private car. A holiday abroad became obtainable for more and more people in East Central Europe. In some countries, purchasing private flats became an official policy.

From the beginning of the 1970s, life gradually changed in many East bloc countries. The goal was no longer the communist future, but a present that was envisaged to some extent as an idealized form of Western society. The emergence of a mirror world in the East was accompanied by the rise of Western currencies as a second type of money in the state-socialist countries.[14] This could not be realized without support from the side of the political leadership. Due to the opening of their finances to world markets, state-socialist governments badly needed Western currency. Official policy aimed at exploiting this grey currency flow, and thus special shops were opened in which the population could buy Western goods with Western currency. Shops that had formerly been exclusively for diplomats and foreign tourists were now open for anyone who had Western currency at their disposal. In the GDR, this enterprise was called "Intershop," in the Czech Republic it was "TUSEX."

These examples illustrate the common trends in late socialism that created the cultural preconditions for systemic change. Long before the real end, the value model of a "consumer society" had gained the upper hand over the model of a communist lifestyle. An additional sign for this was the fact that the supply systems of the ruling elite in Eastern Europe mainly circulated goods from Western markets.[15]

The coming systemic change was also prepared by another social process. In classical socialism, there were no private economic enterprises and consequently, no private entrepreneurs.[16] In late socialism, new social groups emerged that

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[14] There are various estimates concerning the number of Western DM that were in circulation in the GDR. If measured by black market rates, the circulation of Western DM within the entire cash flow of the GDR rose from 1.4 percent in 1974 to 13.3 percent in 1988. André Steiner, "Zwischen Konsumversprechen und Innovationszwang. Zum wirtschaftlichen Niedergang der DDR," in Konrad Jarausch and Martin Sabrow, eds., *Weg in den Untergang. Der innere Zerfall der DDR* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 153–92, 168.

[15] In fact, in the years before 1989 the highest ranks of political elites in the GDR bought a great deal of consumer goods directly from West Berlin. Thomas Kunze, *Staatschef a.D. Die letzten Jahre des Erich Honecker* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2001), 58–59.

[16] The absence of private property was based on the Marxian model of a post-capitalist economy. The abolition of private property was the most important aim of this model. Karl Marx and

undertook activities very similar to private entrepreneurship. In the process of economic experiments, private enterprises were even allowed again in the Soviet Union—notwithstanding the fact that the official term for them was "cooperatives." A relevant law was passed in 1988. It was in this kind of company that many later oligarchs learned their first lessons about market economics. For example, Mikhail Khodorkovsky first directed a private company of the Komsomol and in 1988 founded a private bank. In Hungary, the class of private entrepreneurs emerged in a different way: In the second half of the 1980s it became possible to rent the machines and infrastructure of state companies for private use. In this legal parallel economy, private assets were amassed that laid the groundwork for the class of Hungarian capitalists to emerge in the 1990s. Here too, the familiarity with market economies collected in these years was important. In some countries, including Hungary and Poland, the main institutions of a market economy financial system were already established in the last years of the old order.

The strongest manifestation of the fact that state socialism had prepared itself for capitalism was surely the fact that in some countries the legislation for the systemic change was instigated by members of the former elite. In Hungary the new constitution was written by the last state-socialist government and ratified by the old parliament in the autumn of 1989. In Poland, too, economic reforms were initiated by the last government before 1989, whereby a process of privatization had already begun prior to the negotiations with the opposition (at the so-called round-table talks). Another aspect indicating this is the fact that both countries became members of the IMF, as mentioned above.

To sum up my conclusions: The systemic change of 1989 was possible because capitalist elements had been silently growing within the fold of state socialism. Certain actors, social relations, competences and expectations had already emerged in the earlier system. The dramatic institutional changes that then took place could only happen due to this foundation.[17] In particular, the crisis of the "authoritarian welfare state" was one of the most important preconditions of the changes that occurred.

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Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *Selected Works* 1 (Moscow: Progress, 1969), 98–137, here the final theses of chapter 2, http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm (accessed 13 May 2013).

[17] This social continuity has also been stressed by those scholars who have analyzed the specific interweaving of formal and informal institutions before, during and after the systemic change. Notwithstanding the radical changes within the formal social institutions, certain social practices were maintained. One important trend in the political systems was the metamorphosis of informal into formal power positions. Cf. among others, Gerd Meyer, ed., *Formal Institutions and Informal Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Hungary, Poland, Russia and Ukraine* (Opladen: Barbara Budrich, 2008), esp. the chapter by Kerstin Zimmer, "Formal Institutions and Informal Politics in Ukraine," 267–313.

## Economic transformation and social change in the narrower sense

After 1989, economic output declined dramatically, especially in industrial manufacturing. This slump has been called the "transformation recession" (see Table 1). The reasons for this turndown were manifold. First was the dissolution of the former common regional markets such as the CMEA, as well as the inner markets of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav Federation. Second, changes in the coordination of directives (from state planning to a free market) caused difficulties. Third, in many companies the technical level of production was low.

**Table 1: Transformation recessions in Eastern Europe 1989–2008**

| Country | Years of GDP decline | Year of most drastic decline | Decline | Year of return to 1989 GDP per capita levels |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albania | 1990–92, 1997 | 1991 | 28% | 1999–2000 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | n.d. | First year of recovering: 1996 | | 2008 only 85% |
| Bulgaria | 1990–93, 1996–97 | 1991 | 11.7% | 2006 |
| Croatia | 1989–93 (war); 1999 | 1991 | 21.1% | 2005 |
| Czech Rep. | 1990–92, 1997–98 | 1991 | 11.6% | 2000 |
| Estonia | 1990–94 | 1992 | 14.2% | 2002 |
| Hungary | 1990–93 | 1991 | 11.9% | 1999–2000 |
| Latvia | 1991–93, 1995 | 1992 | 34.9% | 2005 |
| Lithuania | 1990–94 | 1992 | 21.3% | 2005 |
| Poland | 1990–91 | 1990 | 11.6% | 1995–96 |
| Romania | 1989–92, 1997–99 | 1991 | 12.9% | 2004 |
| Russia | 1990–96 | 1992 | 14.8% | 2007 |
| Serbia | 1990–93, 1999 (war) | 1993 | 30.8% | 2008 only 73% |
| Slovakia | 1990–93 | 1991 | 15.9% | 1999 |
| Slovenia | 1989–91 | 1991 | 8.9% | 1997 |
| Ukraine | 1990–99 | 1994 | 22.9% | 2008 only 72% |

Sources of data: Kornai, "The Great Transformation," 213; Alex Melzer, "12 Jahre Ostzusammenarbeit, Evaluation 2003/4, vol. 1: Die Transition und ihr Schatten," (Bern: Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit der Schweiz und Staatssekretariat der Wirtschaft, 2003), 89; Hermann Clement et al., "Wachstum in schwierigem Umfeld: Wirtschaftslage und Reformprozesse in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa sowie der Ukraine 2001/2002," Working Paper 242 (Munich: Osteuropa-Institut, 2002), iv; EBDR, "Countries," http://www.ebrd.com/pages/country.shtml (accessed 28 May 2013).

**Table 2: Inflation rate (increase of consumer prices in percent) (yearly averages)**

| Country | 1990–91 | 1992 | 1995 | 2000 | 2008 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albania | 35.5 (1991) | 226 | 7.8 | 0.1 | 2.3 (2005) |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | n.d. | n.d. | 24.5 (1996) | 1.9 | 2.1 (2005) |
| Bulgaria | 26.3 (1990)<br>333.5 (1991) | 82 | 96.3 (1994)<br>123 (1996) | 10.3 | 12.0 |
| Croatia | 123 (1991) | 665.5 (1992)<br>1517.5 (1993) | 2.0 | 4.6 | 3.3 |
| Czech Republic | 52 (1991) | 20.8 (1993) | 9.6 | 3.9 | 6.3 |
| Estonia | n.d. | 1076.0<br>89.9 (1993) | 47.7 (1994)<br>29.0 (1995) | 3.9 | 10.6 |
| Hungary | 28.9 (1990)<br>35.0 (1991) | 23.0 | 28.2 | 10.0 | 6.0 |
| Latvia | n.d. | 951.2 (1992)<br>109.2 (1993) | 25.0 | 2.6 | 15.3 |
| Lithuania | n.d. | 1020.5 (1992)<br>410.4 (1993) | 72.1 (1994)<br>39.6 (1995) | 1.1 | 11.1 |
| Poland | 251 (1989)<br>585 (1990)<br>70.3 (1991) | 43 | 27.8 | 10.1 | 4.2 |
| Romania | 170 (1991) | 210.4 (1992)<br>256.1 (1993) | 136.4 (1994)<br>32.3 (1995) | 45.7 | 7.9 |
| Russia | n.d. | 1526 (1992)<br>875 (1993) | 311 (1994)<br>198 (1995) | 20.8 | 11.3 (2005) |
| Serbia | n.d. | 3.3 (1994) | 78.6 (1995)<br>94.3 (1996) | 60.4 (2000)<br>91.1 (2001) | 17.3 (2005) |
| Slovakia | 115 (1991) | 207 (1992)<br>32.9 (1993) | 13.5 | 8.9 | 5.5 |
| Slovenia | 61.2 (1991) | 23.2 (1993) | 9.9 | 12.2 | 3.9 |
| Ukraine | | 1210 (1992)<br>4734 (1993) | 891 (1994)<br>377 (1995)<br>80 (1996) | 28 | 13.5 |

Source: EBDR, "Countries," http://www.ebrd.com/pages/country.shtml (accessed 28 May 2013); Eurostat, *Eurostat Jahrbuch 2008, Lebensbedingungen und Wohlfahrt* http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/publications/eurostat_yearbook (accessed 9 July 2009), 137, 242. Underlined are years with inflation rates of 100 percent or more.

**Table 3: Unemployment rates in Eastern Europe after 1989 (percent)**

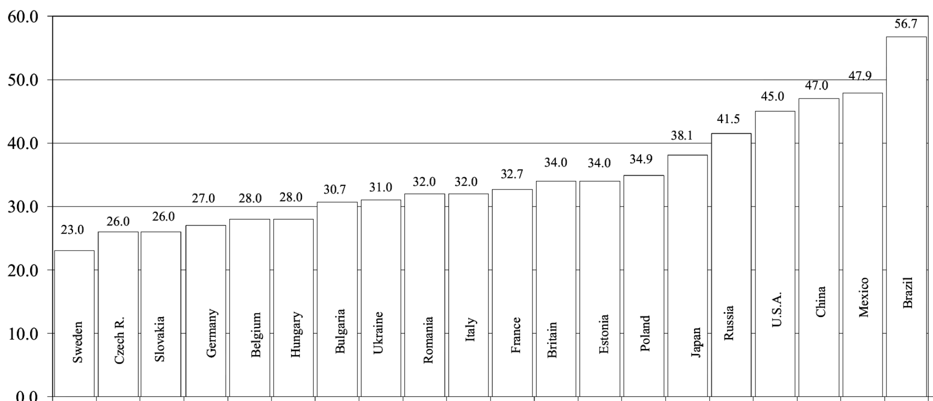
| Country | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2008 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albania | 9.5 | 10.2 | 16.8 | 14.7 | |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | n.d. | n.d. | 39.6 | 44.5 | |
| Bulgaria | 1.6 | 13.7 | 16.4 [9.4] | 12.1 [6.0] | 5.6 [2.9] |
| Croatia | 13.2 (1991) | 14.5 | 15.7 | 12.3 | 8.4 |
| Czech Republic | 0.7 | 4.0 | 8.3 [4.4] | 7.5 [4.4] | 5.4 [2.2] |
| Estonia | 3.7 (1992) | 9.7 | 13.6 | 7.9 | 5.5 |
| Hungary | 1.4 | 10.2 | 6.4 [3.1] | 7.3 [3.2] | 7.8 [3.6] |
| Latvia | 3.9 (1992) | 18.1 | 13.1 | 8.7 | 7.5 |
| Lithuania | 1.3 (1992) | 17.5 | 16.4 | 8.3 | 5.8 |
| Poland | 6.5 | 14.9 | 15.1 [7.4] | 17.6 [10.3] | 7.1 [2.4] |
| Romania | 3.0 (1991) | 9.5 | 7.1 | 5.9 | 5.8 |
| Russia | 5.3 (1992) | 9.2 | 10.2 | 7.6 | 7.7 |
| Serbia | 23.8 (1992) | 24.2 | 24.4 | 31.7 (2004) | |
| Slovakia | 1.2 | 13.1 | 18.0 [11.3] | 15.3 [11.7] | 9.5 [6.6] |
| Slovenia | 7.3 (1991) | 7.4 | 6.6 | 7.2 | 4.4 |
| Ukraine | 0.2 (1992) | 0.3 | 4.2 | 2.9 | |

Source: EBDR, “Countries”, http://www.ebrd.com/pages/country.shtml (accessed 28 May 2013); Eurostat, *Eurostat Jahrbuch 2008,* 260; *Russlandanalysen* 182, 8 May 2009, 9. Underlined are unemployment rates above 15 percent; in square brackets: long-term unemployment.

The ensuing reforms then led to declines in production as well as in the size of the work force. In general, the GDP declined by between one fourth and one third, and in extreme cases it was even reduced by half. On average, it took a decade to return to the starting production levels of 1989.

The social consequences of this radical re-orientation in the economic system can be expressed in figures. First and foremost, in almost all states (with the exception of the GDR) there was a large rise in consumer prices (see Table 2). In some states, inflation lasted for several years, in others there was not a single price peak but several. Particularly high inflation was experienced in the successor states of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. There was also long lasting infla-

**Figure 1: Gini coefficient for selected countries (in the year 2000)**




Source: CIA Factbook, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html (accessed 8 July 2009).

tion in Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. The financial assets of the populations in these countries were essentially liquidated. Only in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary was inflation moderate.

A major hardship in everyday life was the escalation of unemployment. In the former economic order, the position of workers was strong because of shortages in the workforce. The phenomenon of unemployment had only been experienced to a minor degree in Yugoslavia, and then during the final years of state socialism in Hungary and Poland. In all other countries, unemployment was new experience. Unemployment levels were different in the various countries.

While these data are striking, they only allow approximations to be made concerning the intensity of social problems. It should be considered that the size of the working population also dropped significantly. On the average, the labor force participation rate of the new EU member states fell by 17 percent between 1989 and 2003. In Estonia, Hungary and Latvia, the size of the workforce fell by up to 25 percent of former levels.[18] Certain social groups were particularly excluded from the new workforce: older generations of employees, women in general, industrial workers from large enterprises with outdated machines, and employees from former agrarian cooperatives.

Another side effect of the systemic change was rising social inequality. This can be measured in part by the Gini index of incomes (see Figure 1). Different levels of inequality were experienced in the various countries. The most homogeneous were the countries of East Central Europe (with the exception of Poland). The most unequal in the group of countries in question was Russia, with levels near those of the United States. And in Russia, inner disparities are also the most

[18] Kornai, "The Great Transformation," 230.

visible: incomes in the "two capitals" (Moscow, St. Petersburg) became much higher than in the rest of the country.

The phenomenon of higher income levels in the capital city is a feature that can be found in other countries of the region as well. Based on data from 2005, in the new EU-member states, country capitals often had a GDP per capita that was higher than the EU-27 average, while regions in national peripheries were far below average. For example, income levels in Slovakia's capital of Bratislava were 150% of the EU average, while regions in the eastern part of the country were 50% below average. Incomes in Prague were similar to those in Bratislava, while the figures in Central Moravia lay at 70% of the EU norm. In Bucharest incomes were 75% of the EU average, while in the northwestern part of the country, incomes were 25% thereof. This process of economic segmentation has been underway since 2000.[19]

## Direct effect of political changes on everyday life

In the beginning, the political changes in Eastern Europe clearly brought an enormous benefit for the majority of the population: political freedom. The changes were therefore met with enthusiasm. In the first years political participation was high, although Poland was an exception: turnout was already quite low in the elections of June 1989, and as a rule, in later parliamentary elections less than half of the eligible voters participated. In most other countries, participation in the first few elections after 1989 was high. But this engagement later declined and election turnout also decreased.[20]

Decreasing willingness to participate in elections had various causes, one being ambivalence about the new system. The political elites were the winners in the transformation process, but most voters were not in this group. The new apparatuses of the post-communist states provided many attractive posts for politicians, diplomats and higher administrative employees, but the economic deterioration caused by the decay of the common and domestic markets and political tensions between the neighboring states led to the quality of daily life diminishing for the majority of the population.

Another direct outcome was the stress suffered by the ethnic minorities in all of the states in question. The strengthening of the national consciousness of the leading ethnic group in each state was often detrimental to their minorities. Sharp

[19] Eurostat, *Eurostat Jahrbuch der Regionen 2008,* http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-HA-08-001/EN/KS-HA-08-001-EN.PDF (accessed 16 July 2009), 42. Cf. also the data of Kornai, "The Great Transformation," 229: from 1989 to 2004, in the new EU member states economic segmentation expanded on average at 29 percent. Economic segmentation grew at an even higher rate in the Baltic states and Slovakia.

[20] In some countries (above all Albania and Romania), election turnout became lower than 50 percent.

conflicts emerged between majority populations and minorities in the post-Yugoslav countries (especially when a minority represented the main ethnic group in a neighboring country), in Slovakia between the Hungarian minority and the Slovak majority, in Bulgaria between Bulgarians and Turks, and in the three Baltic republics between the Baltic peoples and Russians. In addition, explicit discrimination and even a racist discourse against the Roma population developed in many East European countries, especially those in the southeast.[21]

The dissolution of multiethnic federations resulted in violence, military force, and—in the case of Yugoslavia—open wars. This caused new types of migratory movement: If the majority of a new emerging state was that of an ethnic minority somewhere else, migration in that direction of the new state occurred. In Croatia, for example, the number of Serbs declined by 65% between 1989 and 2002.[22] Similar substantial population shifts involved the emigration of Russians from former Soviet republics to Russia: About 3 million Russians migrated from Ukraine, where the number of ethnic Russians declined by 27%. In Lithuania, 36% of the ethnic Russian citizens left, and Estonia and Latvia lost between 20% and 25% of their ethnic Russian population (between 100,000 and 200,000 people).[23] A huge number of ethnically German and Jewish people from Russia and Ukraine migrated to the West (to Germany, Israel or other states): between 1989 and 2003 more than 1.2 million people from Russia and 250,000 from Ukraine.[24]

In addition to migration that was directly politically induced, another type also developed: workers in the new Eastern market economies who had become unemployed left to look for work in Western, Southern and Northern European countries. After the Iron Curtain between East and West was eliminated after 1989, from some areas there was an explosion of labor migration to the West. For example, one third of the Albanian population emigrated. Between 1989 and 2003, the net migration from Bulgaria was about 8 percent, and from Romania it was about 6 percent.[25] According to estimates, in 2002 approximately 2.5 million Romanians were migrant laborers, working especially in Southern Europe.[26] In 1995, there were approximately 900,000 Poles abroad, and by the end of 2006,

[21] As, for example, the politics of the Hungarian political party *Jobbik* (Movement for a Better Hungary), the Slovak National Party SNS (*Slovenská národná strana*), and *Ataka* in Bulgaria. While these three examples represent marginal parties, in Slovakia the SNS succeeded in becoming a coalition member between 2006 and 2010. In addition to extremist or openly racist parties, there are also individual politicians from politically center parties who express extremist positions. An example is Jiří Čunek, who was the head of Czech Christian Democrats between 2006 and 2009 and a minister in the national government.

[22] See Ali Mansoor and Bryce Quillin, eds., *Migration and Remittances. Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union* (Washington: EBDR/World Bank, 2007), 120.

[23] Ibid., 118.

[24] Ibid., 122.

[25] Ibid., 33.

[26] Cf. “Studie: Angst vor EU-Neulingen unbegründet,” *Stuttgarter Nachrichten,* 6 Feb. 2008, in which an ECAS (European Citizen Action Service) study is quoted.

this number had increased to approximately 2 million. Many Poles took on short-term employment, including approximately 300,000 seasonal farm workers in Germany, but also several thousand Polish doctors and nurses working in the UK and Ireland.[27] The remittances from migrants to their home countries have been an important economic factor for some states.

## Changes in the everyday life

With regard to changes in spatial perspectives after 1989, in the mid-1980s there had already been some movement among intellectuals toward ideas such as the "Central Europe" debate of Kundera, Konrád and others, whereby intellectuals in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia pointed to the fact that their native countries were "really" in the middle of Europe. It is possible to see this debate as an attempt to question the political divisions that had existed since the end of World War II.[28] For many decades, the Iron Curtain had blocked the West's view of Eastern Europe and the people living under state socialism had become accustomed to looking toward Moscow to see if changes were possible. For the intellectuals involved in this debate, it was important to get rid of the East stigma. According to them, East Central Europe was nothing other than an "unfavorably situated part of the West."[29] After 1989, this mental viewpoint then became reality. The accession of these countries to NATO and the EU represented the political culmination of this change of space.

Social time also changed fundamentally in Eastern Europe. After 1989, the pace of life began to move much faster. For the individual, life became more intense and less predictable. And the speed of change also accelerated. The amount of time left for leisure and activities with friends and acquaintances dropped considerably. As society became more dynamic, one could climb much higher than had been possible within the state-socialist system, but one could also fall deeper. As competition for success grew, so did the stress for those subjected to this acceleration. Particularly in the first decade, growing migration resulted in a large number of moves. This affected the basic rhythm of these people's everyday lives and also changed the lives of those who remained at home. The

[27] Pawel Kaczmarczyk, "Arbeitsmigration und polnischer Arbeitsmarkt" (Berlin: Progressives Zentrum, n.d.), http://www.progressives-zentrum.org/media/file/16.Kaczmarczyk.pdf (accessed 10 July 2009), 5–7. Since that time nearly half of the million East Europeans who had migrated—among them also many Poles—had returned to their home countries. "Viele Polen verlassen Großbritannien wieder. Migranten kehren zurück," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 3 May 2009, http://www.faz.net/print/Politik/Migranten-kehren-zurueck (accessed 10 July 2009).

[28] Segert, *Die Grenzen,* 13.

[29] Kundera has been paraphrazed by François Bondy. Martin Schulze-Wessel, "Die Mitte liegt westwärts. Mitteleuropa in der tschechischen Diskussion," *Bohemia* 29, no. 2 (1988): 325–44, 329–30. See also Segert, *Die Grenzen,* 13.

change in time rhythms was connected in many ways to the basic changes in the economy. In the business world, the importance of competition and individual initiative grew. People experienced the new feeling of being superfluous. This was a shock especially for many workers in industry and the service trades. Previously there had been shortages in these areas and so such workers had felt needed.

The state-socialist societies were societies of workers. They were characterized by high employment rates. Almost all women held jobs. Belonging to a workers' society also meant that work and its success established the social standing of the individual. At the same time, however, workers were not strictly supervised. Overseeing individual work performance was not particularly developed. After 1989, many things changed in these respects. The average employment rate sank clearly; there was high unemployment, in some regions affecting more than half the population. Rates of unemployment were significantly higher than in the EU-15; in some years, such as 2003, they were even twice as high.[30]

When describing the entirety of the systemic change after 1989 and its impact on the daily lives of the population, one should not be too categorical. For people whose entrepreneurial spirit had been subjected to tough restrictions before 1989, a better time had now come. Increased performance on the job was better recognized in the new market economy and compensated. Those who had managed to keep their job or get work in privatized enterprises had a distinct advantage over others. The biggest winners were those who worked in the financial sector. One of the most important economic changes in everyday life was the transition from a society lacking in goods to a consumer society with an abundance of commodities. Not only did the supply of consumer products change, but consumer purchasing behavior was also transformed. Lines outside shops largely disappeared. The private exchange of hoarded consumer goods that were in short supply lost its previous significance. And in addition to the rich world of abundant consumer goods came the possibility of travel anywhere in the world. The old ideology of connecting "communism" with "abundance" had developed into a real abundance of goods under capitalism. Shopping nearly became a civic duty.

Also culturally there were many changes for many people. Initially, aggressive advertising and the roar of products being recommended were unfamiliar and perhaps even exciting. The questionable aspects of this were impressively shown in the Czech film *Česky Sen* ("Czech Dream," 2006). The inhabitants of Eastern Europe had now become part of a consumer society in which everything revolved around money, and happiness was to be achieved through the consumption of goods. But the consumer surplus was only real for the winners in the system change. Only they had enough money to afford the abundance. Others had to live with their old cars, furniture and other things from the period before 1989. And they stayed at home because they could not afford vacations in the wide world.

30 Kornai, "The Great Transformation," 231.

A basic indicator of the changes that had occurred in both the business world and everyday life was the rise of money being considered a standard of personal prestige. Although money had had an economic function in the state-socialist societies, it had somehow held a marginal position in people's lifestyle. Fulfilling the socialist plan and cultivating a variety of "connections" were more important for the economic and personal success of the individual. But in late state socialism, private financial wealth had already become an important measure of success, and after 1989, wealth became the primary measure of a person's value. While in the eyes of the public, the rapidly acquired wealth of some was not without a moral shadow, this was not really important. Indeed, in earlier capitalist eras it was not different, as one can read in the novels of Charles Dickens and Victor Hugo. The rise of the new rich made the poverty of the majority suddenly extremely visible. Many who had been previously satisfied with their poor social situation could now see the growing social differences and became more and more dissatisfied.

The political and economic transformation also created fundamentally different conditions for crime. The crime rate increased significantly everywhere.[31] This certainly had to do with the fact that, with the increased importance of money and property, the rewards for crime became greater. The rise of the consumer society and the increasing differences in wealth made burglaries more profitable. The rising crime rates added to the feeling of insecurity in the population.

In addition to labor and consumption, housing also changed. On one hand, the proportion of home ownership increased dramatically in many countries—today, in almost all East European countries more people are homeowners than in the old EU member states. Home ownership is especially high in the Baltic states, Hungary and Slovakia, where it represents 75 percent or more of all homes and apartments.[32] This was because these governments wanted to sell apartments to reduce their fixed investments; it represented a social policy objective. And it was also a trend of the times. More privatization of public property was undertaken in the 1990s than had ever occurred in Europe before. However, for those who continued to rent, the situation also clearly changed. Rents increased significantly. Previously, in most countries less than 10 percent of one's income was spent on rent. With the market regulating housing prices and rents, the proportion of money spent on housing costs increased more than threefold. In the capitals this was sometimes even higher.

And finally, a radical restructuring of the welfare state occurred. Health care and pension systems were extensively reformed. Funding was transferred from the state to health insurance companies. In the majority of new EU member states, considerably less is spent on social welfare when compared to most of the old

[31] On average in the eight new EU member states, by two and half times. Kornai, "The Great Transformation," 231.

[32] See *Eurostat Jahrbuch 2008*, 234.

member states.[33] In 2004, such services in the Nordic countries lay between 27% and 33% of the GDP, and in the UK, Italy, France and Germany between 26% and 31%; in comparison, the Baltic states spent about 13%, Slovakia 17%, the Czech Republic 20%, and Hungary 21%.[34] In all EU countries, social transfers are provided to ensure that the number of people who are at the risk of poverty is significantly reduced; in 2005, the old EU member states reduced this group from 26% to 16% of the population. In some of the new EU member states, however, because of lower social transfers, this group dropped to a significantly lesser degree, as for example in the Baltic states, where after social transfers this group was still 18% to 21% of the population.[35] The social situation experienced other changes due to social transfers being reduced, such as retirement age. Given the sharp reduction in birth rates, all societies clearly began to age quickly, and thus, the existing practice of relatively low retirement age was also found to be no longer affordable. The retirement age has gradually been raised, and in Central and Southeastern Europe is now similar to that in the old EU member states.

Among the new welfare state institutions that were previously unknown in most countries are employment offices. But unemployment in East European countries means something different than in the old EU countries. To take the Polish example: there, the unemployed receive low financial support for half a year; after that they receive no more government help. Thus in the 1990s, many Poles left the labor market and went into early retirement or applied for disability benefits. Between 1989 and 1999, the number of pensioners in Poland rose from 6.9 to 9.45 million, about a quarter of the population. In addition, about 5 million people were registered as being disabled. Since the average pension is very low, the number of people with incomes below the social minimum increased between 1989 and 1996 from 15 percent to 47 percent. The situation was similar in Bulgaria. Here in the early 1990s, 9 percent of the population went into early retirement. As in Poland, pensioners now make up about a quarter of the population.[36] The large number of retirees, however, also has something to do with the demographic trend after 1989 toward an increase of the elderly and a decrease in birth rates. In Romania, for example, the total fertility rate dropped from 2.6 (1970–75) to 1.3 (2000–5); in Poland it fell during the same period from 2.3 to 1.3, in the Czech Republic from 2.2 to 1.2.[37] In contrast, life expectancy developed in various ways. While it declined in Russia and some

[33] Social welfare includes health care benefits, including continued pay in the case of illness, benefits for families, the sick, the handicapped, and for the unemployed, pensions, etc. Ibid., 236.

[34] Ibid., 238.

[35] Ibid., 224.

[36] Sabine Riedel, "Arbeitslosigkeit in der erweiterten EU," SWP-Studie/S40 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2003), 12, 17.

[37] United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 2003*, http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2003/chapters (accessed 16 July 2009), 250–51.

other post-Soviet societies (Soviet Union 1987: 70 years, Russia 2000: 67 years), and stayed the same in Southeastern Europe, since 1989 it has risen by about 2 years in Central Europe.[38]

## Frustrations about the social outcome and their political consequences

Both the broader population and the elites faced the systemic change in Eastern Europe with high expectations. The willingness to support the political changes of 1989 was supported by hopes of a brighter future. There was a widespread assumption that by introducing democracy and market economies, it would soon be possible to have the same living standards as in Western Europe. In short, the revolutions of 1989 took their legitimacy not only from the expectations of political freedom, but also due to the assumption that quickly adjusting the economy would result in living conditions similar to those in the West.

In the meantime, it has become clear that the process of economic assimilation, even in the new EU member states, would take much longer than originally thought. According to János Kornai, it will take the eight Central European countries that became EU members in 2004 about 55 years for them to reach the average economic level of the old EU states—and that only if the current growth tempo does not change.[39]

It is because of this that the systemic change, nearly twenty years after it began, is generally appraised negatively—with the exception of Albania—at least with regard to personal financial status and that of one's own family (see Table 4).

The results of the systemic change are also evaluated positively in former East Germany. According to the "Social Report 2008," 39 percent of those polled regarded themselves as winners in the German unification (the specifically German path of systemic change), for 28 percent profits and losses were balanced, and only 29 percent felt themselves as having lost. The latter were mainly the unemployed or low-income earners.[40]

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[38] United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 1990*, http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1990/chapters (accessed 16 July 2009), 129, 131; *HDR* 2003, 262–63.

[39] Kornai, "The Great Transformation," 238.

[40] Sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschungszentrum Berlin-Brandenburg im Auftrag des Bundesverbandes der Volkssolidarität (verantwortlich Rainhard Liebscher), "Sozialreport 2008: Daten und Fakten zur sozialen Lage in den neuen Bundesländern," (Berlin, Dezember 2008), http://www.sfz-ev.de/Publikationen/Sozialreport/SR_2008/SR2008.pdf (accessed 18 July 2009), 49. Similar results are found in Jörg Jacobs, *Tücken der Demokratie: Antisystemeinstellungen und ihre Determinanten in sieben post-kommunistischen Transformationsländern* (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag 2004), 206, based on a survey conducted in 2000. Here, however, the current general economic situation of individual households was being assessed. The situation in Eastern Germany and the Czech Republic was generally considered to be positive, in Poland the sides were balanced, and in other countries (Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria) the assessment was predominantly negative.

**Table 4: Self-evaluation of family economic situation in 2007 as compared to 1989 (percent)**

| Country | Relative decline | Relative improvement |
|---|---|---|
| Albania | 32.9 | 44.4 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 79 | 9.5 |
| Bulgaria | 69.5 | 15.1 |
| Belarus | 50.3 | 27.0 |
| Croatia | 67.5 | 12.3 |
| Czech Republic | 45.3 | 25.6 |
| Estonia | 60.9 | 19.3 |
| Georgia | 81.1 | 10.3 |
| Hungary | 65.2 | 12.4 |
| Latvia | 66.6 | 17.2 |
| Lithuania | 57.5 | 21.3 |
| Poland | 55.9 | 22.4 |
| Romania | 54.5 | 18.8 |
| Russia | 67.2 | 19.1 |
| Serbia | 77 | 10.4 |
| Slovakia | 57.2 | 18.9 |
| Slovenia | 42.5 | 21.4 |
| Ukraine | 64.8 | 18.7 |

Source: “Pessimismus führt zu Reformstillstand,” *Die Presse*, 29 Nov. 2007, 25.

The *Human Development Reports* (HDR) since 1989 have also stressed the ambivalent social development of the region. In the *HDR* 1997, for example, it is stated that poverty in Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet region had increased significantly since 1990. In the same period, the opposite trend was seen in East Asia.[41]

In general, these social developments also had political consequences. In the first years of transition, the fact that expectations were not being fulfilled was not perceived as negative. The hope prevailed that the deterioration of material living standards represented only a temporary phase, a short valley of tears. However, after the accession of ten countries to the EU in 2004 and 2007, it finally became clear that this was a longer term social situation. For those who could be consid-

[41] United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 1997*, http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1997/chapters (accessed 16 July 2009), 4.

ered the losers in the transition, there is hardly any hope that the situation will change. This has created a social gap between the winners and losers. An attempt is being made to fill this gap by political means.

This end result has had an impact on how political developments have been assessed. In early 2003, a year before the first eight former East bloc states became members of the EU, satisfaction with national democracy was much lower than in the original EU member states. While in the EU-15, about 60% of the respondents were very or fairly satisfied, the proportion in the eight new member states lay at about 30%, in fact, in Romania it was only 23% and in Bulgaria 15%.[42] The next spring, this low level fell even further, with only 24% of the population expressing satisfaction. In Poland, those who were very or at least fairly satisfied decreased from 24% to 16%, in Hungary from 42% to 31%. However, by the autumn of 2007 the level of satisfaction in the ten new member states had increased again slightly, on average to 39% (with the percentage who were satisfied in the old member states at 68%).[43] In Poland, the group of those who were very or fairly satisfied with national democracy lay at 48%, in Romania it had risen to 36%; Hungary displayed the lowest levels, with only 24% satisfied.[44] This is associated with low confidence in the key institutions of democracy. Trust in political institutions is low; indeed, it is much lower than in the old EU member states. As seen in a *Eurobarometer* survey of the year 2004, on average confidence not only in parliaments, but also in political parties was less than half of that in the EU-15. The comparison of confidence in political parties was 7% vs. 16%, and in parliaments 16% vs. 35%.[45]

Regarding political stability, the new member states also differ significantly from the old, in this case for the worse: In the entire period since 1989, voter

[42] *Candidate Countries Eurobarometer* 2003, no. 2 (Fall 2003), http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2003/2003.2_full_report_final.pdf (accessed 18 July 2009), 20. Satisfaction within the population is linked to social groups: about 40 percent of managers, students and young people are satisfied, whereas the retired (24 percent), unemployed (26 percent) and people with limited education (34 percent) are much less satisfied. Ibid.

[43] *Candidate Countries Eurobarometer* 2004, no. 1 Annexes (Spring 2004), http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb61/cceb2004.1anx.pdf (accessed 18 July 2009), B–79.

[44] *Eurobarometer* 68 (2007), http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb_68_en.pdf (accessed 18 July 2009), 87. Until fall 2012 the figures changed only slightly, 48 percent of Poles remain satisfied, in Romania the respective figure was 13 percent (now the lowest level of satisfaction in the region, in Hungary it was 29 percent. *Eurobarometer* 78 (2012), http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb78/eb78_anx_en.pdf (assessed 29 May 2013), 74.

[45] *Eurobarometer* 61 (2004), http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb61/eb61_en.pdf (accessed 18 July 2009), 10. In the spring of 2008, the situation was a little better, but not by much. In Poland, confidence had risen to 7% (it had been 3%), in the Czech Republic 11% of respondents trusted the political parties, 9% in Hungary, 11% in Slovakia and 13% in Slovenia. In the same poll, the percentage of citizens who trusted their parliaments were the following: 12% in Bulgaria, 16% in Poland and the Czech Republic, 15% in Hungary, 22% in Slovenia, and in Romania, 31%. *Eurobarometer* 69 (2008), Appendices, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_annexes.pdf (accessed 18 July 2009).

unpredictability is significantly higher here than in the "old democracies." In most elections in Eastern Europe—with a few exceptions—the current government is voted out of office, and thus, governments remain at best a single term in office. These aspects have determined the populist momentum that characterizes the current situation in political terms. The results of social change in Eastern Europe have favored a policy of socially unrealistic promises before elections and politics that are centered on individuals. Thus the political class has tried to bridge the gap that has developed since 1989 between itself and the majority of the population. Linked to this are the pointed political conflicts and a certain instability even in the countries in the heart of East Central Europe.[46] Two decades after the pessimistic forecasts of sociologists like Claus Offe concerning the systemic changes in East Europe, it seems as if these might still take place. But this is only one of many possible directions, and it can be countered politically.

[46] Dieter Segert, "Parteiendemokratie in der Krise. Gründe und Grundlagen in Ostmitteleuropa," *Osteuropa* 58, no. 1 (2008): 49–62.

Liliana Deyanova

# REMEMBERING REVOLUTIONS: THE PUBLIC MEMORY OF 1989 IN BULGARIA

What meanings has 1989, the *annus mirabilis*,[1] as characterized in Ralf Dahrendorf's *Reflections on the Revolutions in Europe*, acquired for Bulgarians? The aim of this chapter is not to explain what happened in this year and why, but to describe "the year 1989" in the coordinates of memory. Or rather the different "1989s" in different collective memories. Also of interest is how this symbolic year—whose commemoration, like any, homogenizes contradictory experiences—is already beginning to free itself from and elude the memories of eyewitnesses and becoming an object of history. This history is unclear and complex, however, since during over the past twenty years, opposing groups have tried to make their specific memories of 1989 universal and official by stigmatizing and marginalizing the memories of other groups. This is a process that in recent years has resulted in resolutions and laws regulating the memory of past events. One of the most discussed is Resolution 1481 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe dated 25 January 2006, "The Necessity of an International Condemnation of the Crimes of Totalitarian Regimes." The logic of this resolution will be considered in the last section of this chapter.

The analysis here is based on discourse analysis of various types of narratives concerning 1989, including media reports, high school textbooks, electoral platforms of political parties, diverse theoretical interpretations, etc. A diachronic view of two decades of narratives linked to 1989 enables us to see various tendencies, such as the exhaustion of the symbolic energy of "the 1989 revolution" or "the Change," as experienced in the form of increasing disappointment. It is also possible to see three distinct phases of memory: these can be tentatively categorized as *trauma* (generated by the memory of communism becoming a traumatic syndrome), *nostalgia*, and *laws on memory* (the regulation of the memory of communism by laws regarding memory, *lois mémorielles*).

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[1] Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolutions in Europe*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 7. See also Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Revolutions of 1989. Rewriting Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999); Claus Offe, *Varieties of Transition: The East Europe and East German Experience* (Cambridge: MTT, 1997); Andrew Arato, "Interpreting 1989," *Social research* 60, no. 3 (1993): 609–46; Nadège Ragaru, "Apprivoiser les transformations postcommunistes en Bulgarie: la fabrique du politique (1989–2004)" (PhD diss., IEP, Paris, 2005.); Katherine Verdery, *What was socialism and what comes next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

### The year 1989 as representing events and as a symbol

The year 1989 was long and overloaded with events. On one of the first days of the year, 9 January, the Bulgarian State Council issued Decree 56, which introduced corporate organization as a basic form of entrepreneurship. This released the economy from state control and contributed to it becoming market based. It also eased the conversion after 1989 of political capital—the capital of the former *nomenklatura*—into economic capital.[2] Then from May to August 1989, several hundred thousand Bulgarian Turks moved to Turkey (four years after they had been forced to change their Muslim names, one of the greatest crimes of the Bulgarian communist government).

This chapter, however, focuses on 1989 as the beginning of the postcommunist era in Bulgaria, although as quickly becomes clear, the beginning of the new era did not fall on a particular day. While the Bulgarian symbolic counterpart of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Bulgarian beginning or "genesis," has long been considered 10 November 1989, this date has become more and more contested as years go by. It was on 10 November, at a plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, that Todor Zhivkov, who had held the role of dictator in Bulgaria for many decades, was forced to resign. This resulted in a massive feeling of irreversible change, of the end of the epoch that had begun on 9 September 1944 (which had long been celebrated as the date of the "Communist Revolution"). This generated real euphoria. However, one can perhaps speak of euphoria only with regard to those first few hours and days, when there was a shared feeling of a revolutionary turning of the tides.[3] The first large rally of the opposition, on 18 November, took place not on the Party Square, where the festive communist marches had taken place (which were no longer obligatory or had been cancelled), but in front of St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. Today, the opinion is increasingly heard that 18 November should be designated as "the day of the fall of communism"[4] and be the date this is commemorated.[5] But there was

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[2] George Mink, Jean-Charles Szurek, *La Grande Conversion. Le destin des communistes dans l'Europe Centrale* (Paris: Seuil, 1999); Deyan Deyanov, "The Economy of Shortage and the Network Revolution (Rethinking 1989)," *Sociological Problems* 28 (2006): 372–87; see also the articles by Ivan Tchalakov and Andrey Bundjulov on networks before and after 1989 in the same issue.

[3] See, for instance the memories uploaded in 2009 on various websites (bghep.co.uk; "20 years later" etc.): "On 10 November, I was a seventh form schoolboy… We, the students of Class 7b, touched history;" "For me, communism was over that morning, one could take a breath." Cf. Dimitar Ludjev, *Revolutsiata v Balgaria 1989–1991*, vol. 1, *"Nejnata revolutsia" i neinoto vreme* (Sofia: Ivan Bogorov Publishers, 2008).

[4] I refer to the letter of Lubima Yordanova to Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, 2 November 2009, https://bg.fanopic.com. See also http://forums.ec.europa.eu.

[5] On the difference between "commemoration" and "celebration" and a date as a "memory site," "realm of memory" (*lieux de mémoire*), see Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire,* 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–93).

another key event in the history of the opposition even before 10 November: the march organized by the *Ekoglasnost* movement on 3 November 1989 to submit a petition to the Parliament against a governmental power plant project on the Maritsa and Mesta rivers. While collecting signatures for the petition at the end of October, a number of *Ekoglasnost* activists were beaten and others arrested by the People's Militia. This spurred a major international reaction. Thus, today some propose 3 November, the day of the largest demonstration against the socialist power that had been held until that time, as the first day of the postcommunist era. And according to yet others, it should be 7 December, the day when the various opposition movements united and created the political formation called the Union of Democratic Forces (*Sayuz na demokratichnite sili*, SDS), which subsequently long remained the main opponent of the Bulgarian Communist/ Socialist Party in electoral struggles. And another key date for the consolidation of the anti-communist opposition was 14 December 1989.[6] On that day, a "living chain" that gathered around the National Assembly to demand academic autonomy joined other protest movements, demanding the abrogation of Article One of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, upon which the governing role of the Communist Party was built. A fact often forgotten today, however, is that on the previous day one of the plenums of the Communist Party had requested the convocation of a Party Congress to do just that: abrogate the anachronistic article. Year one of the revolution then ended with the Parliament's decision of 29 December to restore the Muslim names of Bulgarian citizens with Turkish ethnicity, citizens who formed one-tenth of the population. This occurred after their mass mobilization in late December and round-the-clock demonstrations near the Parliament building.[7]

[6] Historian Mihail Gruev has defended the thesis that precisely 14 December, the "day of the birth of our civil society," must be the date on which to celebrate the anniversary of "1989" in Bulgaria. See his contribution to the conference dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the changes, organized in St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia on 14 December 2009 by historians Iskra Baeva and Dimitar Ludjev. See more on the conference debates in Theodora Georgieva, "20 Years Later, Eyewitnesses and Commentators," *Kultura* 25 December 2009, p. 3. There are also other ideas about the when the actual "date" should be, e.g. 13 October 1991 when the anti-communist opposition finally won the parliamentary elections. It is well known that Bulgaria was the only country in which the first democratic elections after 1989 were won by the communist party, albeit under the new name Socialist Party.

[7] For a systematic chronicle of the events, see Evgenia Kalinova and Iskra Baeva, *Balgarskite prehodi 1939–2002* (Sofia: Prozorets 2005); Nadège Ragaru, "Apprivoiser les transformations postcommunistes en Bulgarie: la fabrique du politique (1989–2004)," Vol. 2 (PhD diss., Paris: IEP, 2005); a detailed history of the events is found in Ludjev, *Revolutsiata*. It is not possible here to enumerate all of the initial larger dissident formations. To mention a few, the Public Committee for the Ecological Protection of the Town of Rousse was established on 8 March 1988, the earlier Independent Association for the Protection of Human Rights (IAPHR) was established on 16 January 1988, and the independent trade union Podkrepa was created. The Club in Support of Glasnost and Restructuring held an important role. It was "an informal association," a "discussion club," but the leadership of the Communist Party qualified it as "a

## Conceptualization of the "change in 1989"

I will not deal here with the theories about the definition of socialism or the subsequent period, ideologically called the "transition from totalitarianism to democracy" (which is also the name of the mandatory lessons taught today in the history curricula of Bulgarian high schools). My task is another one: to describe the different waves of how 1989 as well as socialism/totalitarianism/communism has since been remembered.

The year 1989 initiated a radical transformation of institutions and elites. It was a year in which old institutions were no longer legitimate but the new ones had not yet become so. Collective memory is a means for legitimizing in times when there is a shortage of legitimacy ("the more conspicuous the defects of legitimacy, the more important the appeal to memory becomes"[8]). A comprehensive analysis would, of course, show how the stages of dissolution of the old regime, the institutions and symbols of the socialist state, have had an influence on how "the long farewell to communism" has been represented and, correspondingly, how the narratives that interest us have developed.

There are a number of conceptualizations of "the change" that are important to this analysis. One of the first in Bulgaria, and also one of the most interesting, is that of the sociologist Georgi Dimitrov. According to him (in explicit disagreement with Dahrendorf), the notion of "the revolutions in Eastern Europe (REE)" is a myth and must be deconstructed in order to "expand our public horizon in reference to which to organize our civil behaviours."[9] While the concept of "revolution" was politically effective when it emerged, it later became obsolete. If one continues to chant "democracy has no alternative," we cannot understand a social transition in which there is "a blatant discrepancy between certain public expectations and the facts of the political process."[10] The cliché of the "revolutions in Eastern Europe (REE)" homogenizes "Eastern Europe" and ignores

parallel structure in opposition to the party." Ludjev, *Revolutsiata*, 58. A differentiated analysis would demonstrate the contradictory memories of the glorious dissident years as well as the struggle of these groups to be recognized as "the most important dissident formation." A very important conflict in the postcommunist public sphere is that between perestroika dissidents (who some call "infiltrated communists") and the "real anti-communists," as for example the IAPHR considers itself. I refer to an interview with Freddy Foscolo in the newspaper *Glasove*, 17 December 2009. These last groups were not invited to the meeting held on 19 January at the French embassy between President Mitterrand and Bulgarian dissidents, the so-called Mitterrand breakfast. Its anniversary in 2009 was celebrated by a large conference.

[8] Alain Brossat, Sonia Combe et al., *Mémoires en bataille. Histoire et mémoires en URSS et en Europe de l'Est.* (Paris: Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine, 1992). This thesis has been explicitly mentioned by Jean-Charles Sczurek.

[9] Georgi Dimitrov, *Balgaria v orbitite na modernizatsiata* (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 1995), 185.

[10] Ibid., 185

the other processes in the reality after 1989 that were the result of long-term national differences. The separate national cases are "incommensurable." Thus, in Hungary or the Czech Republic, the events can be viewed as "processes of political normalization after a successful modernization," while in Bulgaria or Russia, the processes have in fact been generated by "another crisis," a series of failed attempts to modernize. "En bloc thinking legitimates the presumption of the revolutionarity of the ongoing processes."[11] Timothy Garton Ash's neologism "refolution" also highlights the forms rather than the character of the processes. For the majority of Western observers, the processes that took place did look like a "revolution," "an optimistic label" that "provides emotional and conceptual comfort." Its function is to normalize the international situation.[12]

The internal point of view is equally non-analytic. The strategists and the leaders of the restructuring "have an interest in heroizing their work." Most political leaders have not been "representatives of well-structured citizen interests" and have had no way of legitimizing their rise to power other than by an "external heroization of their civil contribution" to the revolution.[13] And ordinary citizens have been persuaded that the problem of leaving socialist society, which really could no longer exist, could have been resolved merely by an unprecedented mobilization and self-negation; thus ordinary citizens also continue to believe in this symbolic myth. Since the different groups seem to be talking about the same thing, the unstable foundations upon which this myth is built have remained unnoticed for a long time.

However, it seems to me that what became clear in the first days was that the different participants were not "talking about the same thing," and indeed they did not want to. This is why even today some remember 1989 as a year that revived the aborted 1968 events in Bulgaria and the desire for "socialism with a human face."[14] Others remember the year as having accelerated the end of the "communist yoke" and the violence this yoke had generated (for these, the beginning of the end was 14 December 1989). What a third group remembers about 1989 are the rallies and demonstrations demanding the restoration of Muslim names, which the communist power had forbidden and replaced with Bulgarian ones. A fourth group remembers the year as when they finally could legalize their private businesses, a fifth as the year *Batman* came to the cinemas, and for still others, it was nothing in particular.

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[11] Ibid., 190.

[12] Ibid., 192–94.

[13] Ibid.

[14] In 1968 dissidents in Bulgaria were a very small group without influence. Although there were quite a few intellectuals who advocated the reform of socialism (a "socialism with a human face"), and although there was mass dissatisfaction with the participation of Bulgarian troops in the crushing of the "Prague Spring," dissent remained fragmented in Bulgaria, with no publicly visible civil actions.

Quite a few researchers have stressed "the dividing nature of the founding myth" of the revolution.[15] The historian Nadège Ragaru has emphasized one extremely important idiosyncrasy of the post-1989 processes, namely, disappointment. This remains poorly understood in transitological and other theories, whereby postcommunist transformations move (albeit at different speeds and with different amounts of success) from the institutional and legal chaos caused by the change of regime to a gradual stabilization in political and other types of institutions and organizations. But in Bulgaria, such processes of "stabilization-banalization-consolidation" did not take place. As Ragaru, author of one of the most interesting "Western" studies of the Bulgarian postcommunist period, has written, the transformations were "not because there was democratic dysfunctionality," a shortage of democracy. Rather the social actors "had to manage the challenges of the present." And the context of that present was the great social transformation of the Western institutions of classical modernity, of the "globalization of the forms of economic organization, of an increased geographical mobility."[16]

But as I mentioned above, my object in this text is not the memories of scholars doing research on 1989 and post-1989,"[17] but is the collective memory of Bulgaria.[18]

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[15] Ragaru, "Apprivoiser." See also Peter-Emil Mitev, *Izbori '91* (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo, 1993).

[16] Ragaru, "Apprivoiser," 751–62.

[17] In this text, I will also not deal with methodological issues as, e.g., "the truth of memory" of eyewitnesses. Since the classic book by Jean N. Cru, who analysed falsity in the memories of witnesses of World War I, there is abundant literature on this question. More on the issue of historical evidence can be found in François Hartog, *Evidences de l'histoire. Ce que voient les historiens.* (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, 1999).

[18] For a systematization of certain debates on the study of collective memory and of Bulgarian studies, see Roumen Daskalov, *Ot Stambolov do Jivkov* (Sofia: Gutenberg, 2009); Liliana Deyanova, *Ochertaniata na multchanieto. Istoricheska sotsiologia na kolektivnata pamet* (Sofia: Critique and Humanism, 2009); Ulf Brunnbauer, ed., *(Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism*, Studies on South East Europe 4 (Münster: Lit, 2004). Many scholars in Bulgaria are working on the problem of the collective memory of communism, including Daniela Koleva, Kristina Popova, Peter Vodenicharov, Ivan Elenkov, Ilya Iliev, Snejana Dimitrova, Ivaylo Dichev, Krassimira Daskalova, Rayna Gavrilova, Rositsa Gencheva, Tchavdar Marinov and many others. Recently, the enormous project at Ivaylo Zneploski's Institute for Studies of the Recent Past (presented on the website http://minaloto.org) has seen a great deal of publication activity. Alexander Kiossev is the leader of several projects concerning the memory of communism, including one of the first in Bulgaria, "Construction and deconstruction of the symbolic world of Communism." Within the international project of Maria Todorova and Stefan Troebst, "Remembering Communism" (see the site www.rememberingcommunism.org), Petya Kabakchieva has studied the memory of social inequalities, Mila Mineva the "nostalgia for the Soc," Albena Hranova the "loan-memory" of the youngest generation, Vanya Petrova postcommunist films, Iskra Baeva and Evgenia Kalinova the memory of the "Revival Process" 1984–89 as well of the files of the political police, and Tanya Boneva the memory of ethnographic archives. Mihail Gruev and Aleksey Kalionski are also doing research on the memory of the "Revival Process" of 1984–89. See also some of project's research as presented in Maria Todorova, ed., *Remembering Communism: Gen-*

## The memory of 1989 as a memory of 9 September 1944

Many of the narratives about 1989, especially in the initial traumatic phase after the dissolution of the official memory of communism (the memory that was merged with the memory of the party state), were related to the memory of a fundamental event in modern Bulgarian history: 9 September 1944. The memory of "the Ninth of September" (a popular uprising or anti-fascist revolution for some, a coup d'état mounted with the Red Army's help for others) is *a demarcation line* that divides the Bulgarian people into two large and almost ethnic-like groups: communists and anti-communists ("fascists"), executioners and victims, true Bulgarians and traitors, patriots and agents, us and them, red and blue (blue being the symbol of the anti-communist opposition). This memory—also associated with the memory of the so-called People's Court, which condemned 2,700 "enemies of the people" to death in 1945—has created a deep national trauma and syndrome (similar to Henry Rousso's "Vichy syndrome"[19]). Following the collapse of the official memory of communism, the public sphere was dominated by two opposing narratives about communism and the nation's history. These were used by the political elites for political purposes. Each group favored its own account and strove to universalize its own memory. Historians found it difficult to neutralize and assess these accounts, to create a hierarchy within the huge mass of testimonies that was accumulating, and to secure them a place in the public sphere, not a new oblivion. It was difficult to integrate the memory of communism into contemporary experience, to use it as a mechanism that regulates—to quote Tzvetan Todorov—people's ability to manage the present. And it was difficult for historians to identify the collective aspects of the Bulgarian situation; it was easier to limit themselves to the idea of its uniqueness.[20]

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*res of Representation* (New York: Social Sciences Research Council, 2010). One of the authors has taken part in a project that has created a special site for the memory of communism: www.spomeniteni.org. Within the framework of two different projects, G. Gospodinov, together with Yana Genova, produced the *Inventory Book of Socialism* (Sofia: Prozorets, 2006). Blagovest Nyagulov and Antoaneta Zapryanova are examining the memory of Bulgarian historians. Since as early as 1990, the Institute for Critical Social Studies has been examining the memory of communism—in history textbooks, in the political public domain, etc.—and is currently working on a project to create a "Virtual Museum of Socialism." Nikolai Vukov has done a systematic study of the destruction of monuments after the communist era. Daniela Koleva has systematized biographic and autobiographic publications on socialism in Ivaylo Znepolski, ed., *Istoria na Narodna Republika Bulgaria* (Sofia: IIBM Siela, 2009). One of these is the project of Vera Mutafchieva, Antonina Jeliazkova and others entitled *History Populated with People.* The Institute for Advanced Study is working on several projects concerning historical and collective memory (https://www.cas.bg; the site also contains an important bibliography of Bulgarian postcommunist studies).

19 Henry Rousso, *Le syndrome de Vichy* (Paris: Seuil, 1990); Jeffrey K. Olick, "What Does It Mean to Normalize the Past?" *Social Science History* 22, no. 4 (1998).

20 Tzvetan Todorov, *Les abus de la mémoire* (Paris: Arléa—Le Seuil, 1995); Olick, "Normalize"; Marie-Claire Lavabre, "L'histoire de la mémoire—sociologie de la mémoire," in Bogumil Jew-

In one of the studies undertaken at the Institute for Critical Social Studies,[21] it was examined how landmark events, places and persons in Bulgaria's history since the liberation from Ottoman rule (1878) had been presented in the postcommunist public sphere. Articles about historical events and relevant references were compared in two opposing newspapers: *Douma*, the daily of the former communist party, and *Demokratsiya*, the daily of the united opposition (the two main political formations, which—in the post-1989 period—were supported by four-fifths of the total electorate). Examined was how these two factions, the "red" and the "blue," referred to "Bulgaria" and what they considered "the common places of national memory." The divide in national identity as civic identity (in contrast to ethnic identity) proved so deep that it was not only reflected in events which by definition had opposing significance (e.g., the People's Court), but also more in consensual events, events with a great unifying potential for the nation, such as the Jews on Bulgarian territory having been saved from deportation during World War II.

In the extensive disputes about the "communist genocide" or, more precisely, about which of the two genocides—the Gulag or Auschwitz—was larger in scale and "more horrible," it was in fact easy to discern an eliminatory logic: In the narratives of communists and anti-communists, respectively, the testimonies of victims were disqualified as "lies," and the testimonies of the executioners were considered invalid (insofar as they were extracted by violent means or fabricated by their accusers). "Executioners" and "victims" exchange places in the accounts of the two main parties to the dispute, but the logic they have followed is the same. It is strongly reminiscent of the logic of "classical negationists:"[22] every eyewitness testimony of a Jewish survivor is proclaimed to be a lie; all confessions of Nazi witnesses on trial are eliminated on the assumption that they were made under threats. It is, however, not only testimonies about the Holocaust that carry this danger.

How does today's "ordinary negationism" work and why has it become possible? It is especially visible at the start of the anti-communist revolution, when communist monuments were destroyed and history was rewritten (a time, as was often stated, in which "the past was becoming more and more unpredictable"). It

siewicki, ed., *Travail de mémoire et d'oubli dans les sociétés postcommuniste*s (Bucharest: Editura universitatii din Bucuresti, 2006), 30–45; François Hartog, Jaques Revel, *Les usages politiques du passé* (Paris: EHESS, 2001).

21 Maya Grekova, Liliana Deyanova, Milena Yakimova et al., *Natsionalnata identichnost v situatsia na kriza: istoritcheski resursi* (Sofia: Minerva, 1977). Another important source for my analysis here is the research done at the same Institute as found in Deyan Deyanov, ed., *Prenapisvaneto na istoriata v utchebnitsite za gimnaziite* (Sofia: MONT, 1995).

22 Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Les assassins de la mémoire* (Paris: Seuil 1995); Emmy Barouh, *History and Memory. Bulgaria facing the Holocaust* (Sofia: LIK & Open Society, 2003). See also Bogumil Jewsiewicki, ed., *Travail de mémoire et d'oubli dans les sociétés postcommunistes* (Bucharest: Editura universitatii din Bucuresti, 2006).

has also been revived at every new social crisis. The memory of communism is a basic resource; even today it is used politically by the political elites. Nonetheless, this moving force in the postcommunist struggle has lost its centrality. Ideological politics have been replaced by pragmatics and, as the renowned political analyst Ivan Krastev puts it, the elites and parties of the transition have become invalid and out of place.[23]

The debate concerning "the two dates," i.e. 1944 and 1989, was revived on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of Bulgarian communism/socialism in 1944. The opposition MPs, during the parliamentary session, proposed a special "Declaration on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of 9 September 1944." They contested "the right of this party and its electorate," of "a party that wants to look nice to those people who feel nostalgia about communism" to "glorify this historical period while ignoring the fact that the democratic world has univocally condemned Nazism and communism."[24] The declaration against nostalgia for "totalitarian symbols" was contested by the leftist MPs and, in the end, was not adopted. The right to memory also presumes the recognition of the right to nostalgia.

After the initial euphoria, the dreams and the construction in 1990 (after a defeat in the first free parliamentary elections) of the "Town of Truth," a tent camp built by anti-communist demonstrators in the city center of Sofia after the elections in June 1990, after festivities such as the event "Say Goodbye to Communism," whose participants solemnly burnt personal communist-era objects, it became evident that some sites of memory had also become sites of nostalgia. I believe, however, that many of the incidents being interpreted as "nostalgia for communism" do not, in fact, reveal a real desire for communism to return. In this sense, the conclusions of empirical studies like the New Eurobarometer 2001, establishing "increasing levels of nostalgia" in ten postcommunist countries and the respective threat of "non-democratic values," seem quite problematic.[25] A detailed analysis must include a particular nostalgia's contextualization. Such "meaning-seeking machines" demonstrate various expressions of longing for the past, such as the recently built monument to the last communist leader, Todor

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23 Ivan Krastev, "The Strange Death of the Liberal Consensus," *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 4 (2007): 56–63. On this, see "the end of the 'ideological politics'" on the website of the Media Democracy Foundation, Sofia. In my analysis, this reflects the modifications to the "the image of the enemy" during the "transition" period until the elections of 2009. And then again, the election-winning representative of the right-centrist formation GERB did not miss the chance to say that he dedicated his victory to his grandfather, who was "killed like a dog on 9 September 1944 by the communists." http://www.fmd.bg/?p=4597 (accessed 9 January 2014).

24 See the stenogram of the plenary session of the 39th National Assembly of 9 September 2004, http://www.parliament.bg/bg/plenaryst/ns/1/ID/1066 (accessed 9 January 2014).

25 Joakim Ekman and Jonas Linde, "Communist Nostalgia and the Consolidation of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 21, no. 3 (2005): 354–75, 354.

Zhivkov, the club of the friends of the Moskvich car, and the mass showings of the twenty-six episodes of the first Bulgarian socialist "Eastern movie," *On Every Kilometer*, which glorifies the communist anti-fascist resistance.

A rarely mentioned cause and form of nostalgia is related to the fact that the communist society was also a modernization project, a product based on the logic of modernity itself. According to Reinhart Koselleck, communist society is based on a "horizon of expectation," hope that is a narrative of progress or a "future past," a future that illuminates the past by giving it a new perspective.[26] This kind of nostalgia is also familiar in democratic countries—nostalgia for perspectiveness as perceiving mankind developing into a certain, better future in an era of global modernity, an era, as has been expressed by Jean-François Lyotard, that is seeing the "decline of meta-narratives" and "nostalgia for nostalgia."[27] It is an era that is seeing the end of the welfare state, in which insecurity is structurally produced and an "imperative of urgency" dominates. A symptom of this type of nostalgia is "galloping patrimonialization."[28]

## The anniversaries of 1989

Two decades after the revolutions in Eastern Europe, solemn commemorations have become less energetic or have almost disappeared and the events themselves have increasingly lost the designation of "revolution." But in 1997, this term and hope for change were still alive. By then inflation had reached 300 percent and the governing party, the former Communist Party which had been renamed Bulgarian Socialist Party, experienced a radical legitimacy crisis. The "January protest movement" of 1997 were called a "new revolution," a "second revolution," a "second chance for civil society," and the "beginning of a new chronology." Ragaru, who wrote one of the most interesting analyses of this five-week "pres-

[26] Reinhart Koselleck, *Le futur passé* (Paris: EHESS, 1990).

[27] Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Minuit, 1979)

[28] For patrimonialization as a symptom of a new "régime of historicity," see François Hartog, *Régimes d'hitoricité* (Paris: Seuil, 2002). On the commercialization of the public sphere and the emergence of images (e.g. in advertisements) from "the good old times," see Mila Mineva's article "Communism reloaded," which was published as part of the project "Remembering communism" directed by Maria Todorova and Stefan Troebst. http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-Soz-u-Kult&month=0809&week=c&msg=Z1yboPD4dSLFWymCZShdNA&user=&pw= (accessed 15 July 2013). According to Mineva, new pop-cultural repertoires of remembering have started to emerge since 2000. They are a popular form of critiquing the present: by remembering socialism positively, people are expressing their hopes for the utopias of a better world. For a comparative perspective on nostalgia, see Dragos Petrescu, "History in transitional counter-memory, and nostalgia," within the same project. See also the contributions to the colloquium that took place in September 2005 in Berlin at the Marc Bloch Institute entitled "La nostalgie de l'époque communiste: émergence d'une nouvelle mémoire collective en Europe de l'Est."

sure of the street" and crisis of institutions and parties, has examined its stages and the causes for this revived will to change. The "January events" were expressing the desire for the anti-communist opposition to embody "the European future of Bulgaria," the desire to denounce the false changes and artificial reforms, and the desire for a final condemnation of the "criminal Bulgarian Socialist Party."[29]

But the twentieth anniversary of 1989 was not celebrated with fireworks and fanfare in Bulgaria. According to the communist newspaper *Douma*, mentioned above, "twenty years after the fall of the Wall, most people are unhappy with capitalism."[30] According to its opponents, the *Demokratsiya* newspaper, "you cannot celebrate something that did not happen or was a failure," and "communists are still here."[31] The liberal press published a study conducted by the Alfa Research sociological agency entitled "Twenty years after the changes, Bulgarians hesitate as to when they lived better."[32] Many publications were dedicated to the festivities in Berlin, where "freedom was being celebrated." But as both Western and Bulgarian analysts of the post-1989 events stated, "Bulgaria is not celebrating." And while there were actually quite a number of jubilee events and publications in Bulgaria, they were as fragmented as the memory of 1989 itself. Moreover they were not, and had little chance to be, visible publically—with a few exceptions, as for example the exhibition "Without a Trace" on the Belene labor camp 1949–59, organized by the private Institute for the Studies of the Recent Past and solemnly opened on 10 November, together with an international conference organized by the same Institute. The memory of communism had become split into pieces.[33]

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[29] Increasingly called "the BSP mafia." This desire can also be seen in events such as the mock funeral march for the Party, enacted by the students of the Theater Academy, as well as in a renewed romanticism symbolic of 1989 but also of the Bulgarian national revival of the 19th century. See "1989 in 1997" in Nadège Ragaru, *Le temps feuilleté du changement. Essais sur la Bulgarie post-socialiste* (Sofia: Critique & Humanism Publishing House, 2010); see also the revolutionary slogans published by the Bulgarian Student Protest Union, of which some are included in Lubima Yordanova, *Ot lumpena do grajdanina* (Sofia: Bulteks, 1997).

[30] *Douma*, 10 November 1990.

[31] *Demokratsiya* , 10 November 1990.

[32] Published in *Kapital,* 13 November 2009. According to this survey, 78.2% said that health care was better under socialism; only 12.2% responded that it was better in 2009. This is also the case with other indicators: according to 48.3% (vs. 26.2%) education was not better in 2009. The ratio was reversed in only three indicators: the diversity of commodities, freedom of speech, and leisure and travel. On Bulgarian National TV, it was possible to watch dialogs such as the following: *Reporter:* "What do you know about 10 November?" *Student girl:* "Almost nothing." *Reporter:* "Haven't you been told about it?" *Student girl:* "No." *Student boy:* "As far as I know, they say this is the date of transition […] when the Communist Party lost power." *Another student boy:* "That was when reforms were undertaken in Bulgaria; it changed from totalitarianism, or something like that, into democracy."

[33] Cf. Alexander Kiossev's project "Beyond Hatred, Beyond Nostalgia," a mini festival of the socialist past; see also the special issue: Alexander Kiossev, ed., "The Living Archive of a Fes-

My research comparing the events and their tenth and other round anniversaries is outlined in the following survey.

*One year after 1989*

On 10 November 1990 the communists joyfully celebrated "the pivotal date of the newest political history"[34] and "the day when the change began." For these changes, "the Bulgarian Communist Party played a historical role […] without its effort to destroy the totalitarian system, our development would have had another fate." It is stated that "the Party has distanced itself from its mistakes," which is why the leader of the communists says that "we must take the offensive—for democracy and civil peace, against violence and neo-fascism." On the next day, 11 November, many photos and other material are published of a rally organized by the Supreme Council and the City Council of the Bulgarian Communist Party in Sofia. It is described as "a meeting of many thousands celebrating the birthday of democracy," whereby "they are demonstrating their resolution to continue with change."

But in the same issue of the communist newspaper *Douma*, we also find many stories and photos of counter-rallies and anti-communist protests, which were frequent at that time. Here one sees faces of people who suffered from "alternative [anti-communist] action," as from a "violent blue fans gang." The latter was a metaphor for anti-communism; actually no such gang ever existed. Some communists condemn the "incompetent voluntarism" of the former party leader—"the dictator"— Todor Zhivkov. ("10 November is the date on which our party found the strength to break once and forever with the dictatorship and the personal regime"[35]). Slogans such as "we bring the future" and "democracy for everyone" are used.

On 10 November, *Demokratsiya*, the daily of the anti-communist opposition, notes the date without enthusiasm: "One year from the start of the Big 'Change'" (placing the word "change" between ironic quotation marks).[36] Memories of persons close to Zhivkov and the communist circles are published. The desire is strong to keep the memory of "the crimes of communism" alive (because "while

tival," *Piron* 2 (2009); cf. also the conference "1989. The Divided Year. Literature as a Political Construction of Transition," organized by Plamen Dojnov and Mihail Nedeltchev at the New Bulgarian University. See also the important series of articles on the anniversary of 1989 in *Kultura*, and the festival of critical documentary films from the socialist period, "Despite: at the verge of changes" (Bulgarian publishers of human & social sciences, National Cinematheque and others). See also Maria Todorova, "Daring to remember Bulgaria pre-1989," *Guardian*, 9 November 2009.

34 *Douma*, 10 November 1990; *Douma*, 11 November 1990.

35 Ibid.

36 *Demokratsiya* , 10 November 1990.

communism is going, communists are staying"). The sites of "communist concentration camps" are sought and the memories of witnesses are published.

The communists were opposed to the opposition's alleged desire to take over power completely. "Yesterday the opposition demanded absolute power in a series of rallies" is the announcement about a national strike that then lasted thirty-seven days, revealing the high degree of political tension at that time.[37]

### *Ten years after 1989*

In 1999 the anti-communist opposition was in power and the changes that had begun on 10 November 1989 were described differently. The most glaring statement is the front-page title in *Douma* reading "No Reform or Transition in Bulgaria." Debates at the conference "Ten Years after the Tenth," organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, are quoted. The decline of the country and the misery of its citizens are described against the background of the hope for freedom that had momentarily sparked.[38] *Douma*'s editorial board invites the ambassadors of Russia and the United States to discuss "the place of Bulgaria in the contemporary world."

Concurrently, *Demokratsiya* writes about freedom: "Germany, ten years without the Wall." It recalls the will of the ordinary citizens: "If they had not demanded the change […] then those who invent stories of their own heroism would have continued to speak happily." On the same day, the front page of the newspaper carries the article "The archives about 10 November have been hidden." The head of the General Department of Archives confesses to the absence of twenty-six archival items that would have been important for understanding the history of "10 November 1989." The decisions of the Politburo of the Communist Party are missing, as well as records of other key decisions, as for example of the intervention of Bulgarian troops into Czechoslovakia in 1968. Against the opinion that the actors of 1989 were "heroes," it is argued that 10 November was an internal Party coup: "a perfunctory change of the First One," "a palace coup endorsed by Moscow."[39]

The "coup" thesis is also taken up by some textbook authors. After a period of confusion immediately following 1989 and the impossibility to "teach" the previous period (which is why it was automatically deleted from the history curricula[40]), 1989 was gradually thematicized. It became mandatory to call these

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[37] *Douma*, 11 November 1990.

[38] *Douma*, 10 November 1999.

[39] *Demokratsiya* 10 November 1999.

[40] See the Instruction of the Ministry of Public Education of 1990 entitled "Some changes in the content and organization of the educational work from the first to the eleventh forms." Copy in the author's possession.

lessons “From totalitarianism to democracy.” Textbooks explain that “the crisis of socialism became especially conspicuous in the mid-1980s,” but removing Zhivkov from power “was done by political figures from the highest circles of the party and the state in the form of palace coup.”[41] It can be read that “the Berlin Wall finally fell down, Zhivkov was deposed, and Bulgaria took the road of democracy.” According to the same authors, the Bulgarian opposition was different from that in the Central European countries: it “was born in early 1988 and stopped unexpectedly after ‘the change on the Tenth.’”

Another textbook explains that the problems of communism were mainly due to Todor Zhivkov (who was “an impostor and opportunist”) and the fact that establishing diplomatic relations with the EC was so late (in 1988) because of “the ideological burden of the ruling communists.”[42] Other textbooks analyze the struggle between the two main views of “the destruction of the old system”: either as a rebuilding (perestroika) under the guidance of the Communist Party or as a “radical transformation of the society” after the fall of communists’ monopoly.[43] As mentioned above, the subject “The Bulgarian transition to democracy” becomes a mandatory part of the curriculum and a separate topic in new textbooks.

## The laws on “the memory of communism”

There have been many attempts to pass laws on “the memory of communism.” These include the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Resolution 1481 (2006) on “the need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes.” Also in Bulgaria, for the past two decades different groups have been trying to assert their memory as being “the true memory of communism” and to control textbooks, monuments, museums and the media. In other words, they are attempting to acquire a monopoly over the legitimate symbolism of the era and the interpretations of the common sites of the memory of “communism.” In the following I will describe several attempts at creating memory laws.[44]

On 30 March 2000, the Bulgarian Parliament discussed the Act Declaring the Criminal Nature of the Communist Regime in Bulgaria, and a month later it was passed. The Act was the final result of a series of attempts to pass decommunization and lustration laws in Bulgaria. The positive decision on the Act was

[41] Iskra Baeva, Ivan Ilchev et al., *Istoria i tsivilizatsia za 11 klas* (Sofia: Planeta, 2001), 148.

[42] Ivan Lazarov, *Istoria i tsivilizatsia za 11 klas* (VelikoTurnovo: Slovo, 2001), 163.

[43] Alexander Nikolov, Mitko Delev, et al., *Istoria i tsivilizatsia za 11 klas* (Sofia: Prosveta, 2002), 422, 425.

[44] For the logic of the so-called *lois mémorielles*, see Pierre Nora, Françoise Chandernagor, *Liberté pour l’histoire* (Paris: CNRS Edition, 2008), as well the debates between the French historian Gerard Noiriel and the Comité de vigilance face aux usages politiques de l’histoire.

predestined by the parliamentary majority of the anti-communist Union of Democratic Forces (*Sayuz na demokratichnite sili,* SDS).

The socialists called the Act "insane." Georgi Parvanov, a historian and socialist MP at the time (and later president of Bulgaria) wrote an article in which he repeated (unrevised) the post-1989 arguments of the Left. He pointed out that the USSR was part of an anti-Nazi coalition; that before 1944 there had also been crimes, killings and foreign troops in Bulgaria; that the current Bulgarian GDP is lower than before 1989 and that many families "have forgotten the taste of meat products," while under socialism seventy-eight kilograms of meat products were consumed per capita each year; that Bulgaria had been the world's largest producer of cigarettes and second largest producer of nitrogen fertilizers; in short, that "we" (the socialists) would not allow "the distortion of the truth about the past" and "the rewriting of history post factum."[45] Conversely, the SDS daily, *Demokratsiya*, congratulated itself on the fact that communism had been outlawed, emphasizing once again that Bulgaria had done the least of all ex-communist countries concerning decommunization. They pointed out that Bulgaria was the only country where "the debate with the communists has not been recorded in any document" because the communists in Bulgaria are "even worse than those in Romania."[46]

As always, "Europe" was also invoked in the arguments. According to the BSP elites, a law like this was "a death sentence for a parliament that is heading for the EU." And according to the SDS elites, "EU membership itself is the contemporary dimension of anti-communism."[47]

At the same time, other parliamentary panels and committees discussed various proposals for creating an Institute of National Memory. In some drafts, the Institute of National Memory is even called the Institute for Studies on the Crimes of Communism. This is why the SDS proposed that 50 percent of the members of the Institute be appointed by the Union of the Repressed People in Bulgaria after 9 September 1944, and the rest by the Supreme Judicial Council and the National Assembly. Item 6 of Article 28 of this draft defines a main task of the future Institute as "the formation of proposals on history curricula that will be made available to the Ministry of Education."

A typical lustration law is the Act of Provisionally Introducing Certain Additional Qualifications for Senior Members of Scientific Institutions and the High-

[45] *Douma,* 31 March 2000.

[46] *Demokratsiya*, 31 March 2000.

[47] For more on this topic, see Liliana Deyanova, "Des condamnations locales du communisme à la Condamnation internationale de janvier 2006 (les guerres des élites bulgares pour le monopole de la mémoire du communisme)," in Bogumil Jewsiewicki and Erika Nimis, eds., *Expérience et mémoire* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 193–213. I am also using interviews with historians and other researchers on communism within my project "How do Bulgarian Historians Remember Communism?" This project is part of the international comparative study "Remembering Communism" often mentioned here.

er Certifying Commission of 9 December 1992 (known as the Panev Act after the SDS MP who proposed it). On 21 October 1998 the Bulgarian Parliament passed a Public Administration Act that contained lustration provisions. The then president, Petar Stoyanov, used his right of veto and returned the Act to further debate. On 30 July 1997 the National Assembly passed, again with an SDS majority, a law on declassifying state security files. While at the time the law was revoked, by December 2006 Bulgaria had received a law regarding secret police files and a commission had been formed for granting access to them. The fixation on secret police files, conspiracy paradigms and "a clean past" have proven to be central issues in the debates about the memory of communism.

The above-mentioned PACE Resolution 1481 of 25 January 2006 on "the need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes" is rightly considered the culmination of the attempts to condemn communism. And calls for a "Nuremberg Trial" of communism are becoming louder. In the first variant of the resolution, it is said—and this opinion seems to be voiced ever more frequently in Bulgaria as well—that "the communist regime was even more perverse than the Nazi regime."[48] But the attempts of the European People's Party/Christian Democrats to promote this idea (together with Resolution 1481, which was the result of a long and skillful lobbying campaign of the Party) in a document called "Recommendation to the Council of Ministers" failed to win the necessary two-thirds majority. This means that this sentence will not yet be included in the history textbooks of the member countries concerned. But the problem of the official memory of "communism," of the effort of particular groups to make their memory of "this regime" official, to turn it into a juridical law, a moral norm and even into a scholarly truth with the help of "their historians," remains unresolved. While in 2006 the PACE resolution was not approved by the Bulgarian Parliament, it did pass in 2009. Soon thereafter, on 19 November 2009, the Bulgarian Parliament also approved the European Parliament Resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism of 2 April 2009 (proclaiming 23 August a "Day of Remembrance of the Crimes and Victims of the National Socialist, Communist and All Other Totalitarian Regimes").

The Bulgarian participation in both the initiative and adoption of PACE Resolution 1481 was not insignificant. According to the account of Bulgarian politician Lachezar Toshev, after a 2003 rally in Bulgaria to remember the people who had been repressed in the labor camp on Belene (Persin) Island, the initial text of the resolution was planned and written in Bulgaria, whereupon it was taken to Strasbourg, debated, revised and registered as a document to be put to the vote. In the name of this cause, a special website, *Decommunization*, was created in

[48] PACE Draft Resolution, 16 December 2005, http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewHTML.asp?FileID=11097&Language=fr. The final version is PACE Resolution 1481, 25 January 2006, http://assembly.coe.int/mainf.asp?link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta06/fres1481.htm (accessed 26 September 2013).

Bulgaria, and a conference was organized in Koprivshtitsa on "The International Condemnation of Communism—the Initiative of the European People's Party—The Bulgarian Perspective." Also presented there on 24 September 2004 was a newly founded institute.[49]

While the new institute for the study of the crimes of communism and the proposals for establishing an Institute for National Memory became the object of debate, this did not enter the public discourse. Some researchers see these kinds of institutes not as scholarly institutions, but rather associate them with the former "institutes for propaganda." Others, however, are convinced that these institutes provide the long-desired chance of "guaranteeing the freedom of scholarly research" and an objective reading of history, which used to be obstructed by the "communist *nomenklatura*."

## Conclusion

The main question that has guided this account of the memory of 1989 (which, as in every narrative, is a question of construction, this construction being made from a position both scholarly and popular) has been how in Bulgaria the contradictory experience of communism and the various conflicting interpretations that clash in the public sphere are represented in the memories of ordinary citizens as well as of researchers on communism. The modern public space of history presupposes equal access to different interpretations. Indeed, to use the term of Pierre Nora, the modern public space of history consists of *lieux de mémoire*, "common places of memory." But these places belong to no one; the "common places of memory" are not necessarily "places of common memory." In the battle of conflicting interpretations this is, by definition, what is at stake: the possibility for a state, "Europe," or various groups to assert a symbolic monopoly on a particular interpretation.

This is why it is essential to critically analyze the above-mentioned resolutions and memory laws that want to present "the truth about communism" as well as the research institutes whose goal is "to unify the memory of the times of communism," and thus, also the memory of the year 1989.

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[49] See the collection of official speeches and political messages as well as many documental studies [Vassil Stanilov, ed.], *Memory for Tomorrow* (Sofia: Rabotilnitsa za Knijnina Publishers, 2005), which was presented to the PACE. Cf. [Luchezar Toshev et al.], *Istoriata na edin document: 1481/2006* (Sofia: Rabotilnitsa za Knijnina Publishers, 2006).

Mikhail Prozumenshchikov

# THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1989 AND THE "ARCHIVAL REVOLUTION" IN THE USSR

It is generally assumed that the "archival revolution" in Russia took place in the year 1991 when the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was dissolved and the Soviet regime opened the doors to scores of archives (mainly of the party), making millions of previously inaccessible documents available to the general public. To a great extent this is true, but it must not be forgotten that these fundamental changes—the political upheavals themselves and the new access to the archives—were determined by events of earlier years. The year 1989, which became a turning point not only for Eastern Europe but for the world as a whole, was also in many ways symbolic and significant with respect to the fate of Soviet archives and the documents contained within them.

At the end of the 1980s, when perestroika started to be implemented in the Soviet Union followed by most of the communist states of Europe, a situation arose that in Trotskyesque terms might be referred to as a new kind of "crisis of opposites." On one hand there were half-hearted and inconsistent economic transformations, unsuccessful reforms of the unwieldy national party structures and a sharp decline in the standard of living. On the other hand a politics of transparency was unquestionably successful, which led to a rapidly developing political awareness in the population, an increase in nationalism and an end to fear of government authority. Further developments in these two directions could only lead either to an end of the existing regimes or attempts to "reestablish socialist legitimacy" by means of brute force. The revolutions of 1989 demonstrated that Eastern Europe chose the first of these options,[1] but they also triggered a deepening and irreversible development of transformational processes in the Soviet Union itself, essentially determining the future of the country that had embodied "the victory of socialism."

When considering the links between the events in Eastern Europe and the "archival revolution" in the Soviet Union, it is worth pondering for a moment the two basic features of so-called closed (both in the literal and figurative sense of the word) institutions such as the party archives. Characteristic of Soviet perestroika were diametrically opposed tendencies appearing in all spheres of public life. This was also true with regard to the archival sector. Here the new principles of glasnost and democracy clashed directly with the same party's aim of maximum secrecy

[1] Although the course of events was somewhat different in some Warsaw Pact countries (the GDR and Romania, for instance), this did not prevent the collapse of the regimes there as well.

regarding party and Soviet government documents. During the year 1989, which saw not only the revolutionary upheavals in Europe but also political battles at the first congresses of the People's Deputies of the Soviet Union, which were closely observed by the entire country, both tendencies were reinforced. This led to inevitable confrontations. Against this background, a "crisis of opposites" also developed that was of a specifically archival nature. On one hand, under the changing social political conditions it became practically impossible, even dangerous, for the authorities to maintain a policy of "closed archives." On the other hand, it was just as dangerous to open the archives: the Kremlin could not avoid being aware of the role the assertions of the opposition regarding various episodes in the past (e.g., the Katyń massacre, the crushing of the Hungarian uprising and the "Prague Spring") were having on the revolutions in Eastern Europe. Under these conditions the year 1989 was unique in its divisive character. The archival fortifications, which until that time had seemed to protect the bulk of historical documents of the CPSU and the Soviet Union from curious eyes, began to be washed out, in one part due to official decisions, in another, unauthorized activities.

Another issue concerns the changes that took place at that time with regard to the party archives themselves and the documents contained within them. Today, more than twenty years later, this is of course already a part of history which is documented with highly significant and interesting historical material. The former archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU, today the Russian State Archives for Contemporary History,[2] stored documents of the highest party and federal structures of the Soviet Union. These determined the internal and external policies not only of the Soviet state, but to a large extent also of the countries that were at that time part of the European communist camp.

The relations between the Soviet Union and its European satellites contained a number of "skeletons in the closet" that leaders of the communist states were loath to dwell upon. Accordingly, documents relating to these unpleasant episodes remained locked "with seven seals" in Moscow's archives. The democratic processes developing in the countries of Eastern Europe in the second half of the 1980s increasingly forced the leaders of the "brother parties" to demonstrate their independence from Moscow. In their struggle to stay in power, they sometimes attempted to adopt the popular demands of the opposition, especially its desire for the Soviet Union to reveal documents relating to the "blank spaces" in their common history. This was considered the least risky concession to their political opponents. But when Moscow's protégés were forced to leave the political arena, the new leaders who took their place demanded even more forcefully, almost categorically, the release of relevant documents by the Soviet regime.

[2] The generally accepted reference to "the former archive of the Central Committee of the CPSU" is not entirely accurate: RGANI, at the time of its formation in 1991 called the Center of Storage of Contemporary Documents, was in fact formed from a number of archives that were operating in various divisions of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

The demands that were most repeated and widespread concerned the fate of compatriots who had been repressed in the Soviet Union during the Stalin years. To a great extent these demands were prompted by the Soviet leadership itself, which in 1987 had instituted a “Commission of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU for the Expanded Study of Materials Related to Repression Taking Place during the Period between 1930 and 1940 and at the Beginning of the 1950s.”[3] Due to tendencies toward more transparency and openness, the attempts by some leaders in the Soviet Communist Party to conceal the activities of this committee were doomed to failure from the outset. While a process of reconciliation was relatively easy for Soviet citizens, the situation for former “cominternists” and political emigrants from other countries (who represented the bulk of the politically repressed) was extraordinarily difficult. Many of them had not only been party or political figures, but had carried out “special” assignments for Soviet intelligence organs or law enforcement agencies. From the current perspective, some of the activities they had undertaken before being declared “enemies of the people” and which—under the earlier political structures—were clearly based on the principles of the struggle to establish “a dictatorship of the proletariat” could generate widely varying reactions from the general public. The question was much more than finding documents; it was a question of taking extreme caution in their declassification.

In earlier years the Central Committee (CC) had received similar inquiries, but they were of an individual nature and the information that was released was confidentially passed to “friends” (i.e. communists) along secret channels. From 1989, however, inquiries began cascading upon Moscow and information about these inquiries was being widely circulated by authorities in the countries of their origin. In February 1989, from Bulgaria alone, requests were directed to the CPSU Central Committee to provide data on more than 1,000 Bulgarian political emigrants who had been victims of repression by the Soviet regime.[4] The Hungarians, the Czechs and the Poles followed suit. Almost all inquiries were accompanied by the urgent appeal to “remit a response as soon as possible,” with the standard rationale being the need for “aid in coping with the growing public unrest.” In the USSR, an effort was made to respond to the requests despite the immense difficulties posed by the huge volume of correspondence. In mid-1989 the KGB and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs complained to the Central Committee that their staffs were not capable of coping with the deluge of inquiries, much less deliver them within the deadlines demanded.[5]

[3] Decree, CPSU Politburo, “Ob obrazovanii Komissii Politbyuro TsK KPSS po doplonitel’nomu izucheniyu materialov, svyazannykh s repressiyam, imevshimi mesto v period 1930–1940 i nachala 1950-kh godov,” 28 September 1987, in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii (hereafter RGANI), f. 3, op. 103, d. 96, l. 3.

[4] Documents of the Committee for Party Control regarding the rehabilitation of Bulgarian victims of Stalinist repression, February–November 1989, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 102, d. 750, l. 1–374.

[5] Memorandum, deputy head of the CPSU International Department, V. Musatov, on the presentation to the Hungarian Socialist Party of several lists of repressed Hungarian political émigrés, 29 June 1990, in RGANI, f. 3, op. 103, d. 687, l. 1.

Another important aspect of the opening of Soviet archives as influenced by the developments in Eastern Europe was the attention given by several countries to the tragic period in their histories that was associated with Soviet military intervention. Of major interest was the insurrection in Hungary in 1956 and the "Prague Spring" of 1968. In fact, in these countries truly open discussion about these events only began with the onset of the struggles for power. In the case of the "Prague Spring," Moscow itself was an instigator of these discussions. At the behest of the CPSU Central Committee, in mid-1989 the Soviet Academy of Sciences prepared an analytical dossier called "From the Prague Spring of 1969 to the Perestroika of Today," which contained translations of numerous twenty-year-old documents from Czechoslovak and German sources that had never before been published in the Soviet Union.[6] Although it was common practice to classify such documents, the dossier was not even accorded the status "for official use only," meaning that any member of the CC apparatus could read it. In December 1989 the leaders of Hungary, the GDR, Poland and the Soviet Union (four of the five countries that had taken part in the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968) declared that handling the matter this way was inappropriate.[7] Nonetheless, a few months later the secretary of the Central Committee, Valentin Kuptsov, suggested to the director of general affairs of the Communist Party, Valerii Boldin, that the communist leaders who had joined the opposition in Czechoslovakia should be granted access to Politburo documents regarding the "Prague Spring." Kuptsov argued that "there is no way to avoid disclosure of the archives relating to the 'Prague Spring' and that it is probably better that the CPSU gradually undertake this task itself, beginning with the 'more benign' material. Now it is possible for the party to benefit from disclosures of this type; later it will be too late."[8]

The situation in Hungary was different: until the final day of the Soviet Union's existence, the Soviet leadership continued to consider the Hungarian revolution of 1956 "an anti-communist fascist coup." For this reason Moscow reacted with great displeasure when the leaders of the Hungarian communist party, under pressure from the opposition, agreed in 1989 to ceremoniously inter the remains of executed participants of the 1956 uprising, above all Imre Nagy, on Hero's Square in the center of Budapest. Even more displeasing to the Soviet Union was the decision of the new—no longer communist—Hungarian parliament to declare the first day of the Hungarian uprising, 23 October, a national holiday and to ask the

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[6] Analytical dossier, Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System, "Ot prazhskoi vesny to sovremennoi perestroike," in RGANI, f. 5, op. 102, d. 166–69. In particular, the dossier contained basic information about the "Prague Spring" that was completely unknown in the Soviet Union, such as "the programmed activities of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party" or an appeal to the Czechoslovak opposition of "2000 words," among others.

[7] *Pravda*, 6 December 1990.

[8] Report, CC Secretariat, regarding the disclosure of CPSU archival materials about the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 to the associates of the CPSU International Department, 13 February 1991, in RGANI, f. 89, op. 11, d. 76, l. 6.

Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union to condemn their 1956 military intervention. The CPSU Central Committee issued an order to its staff for foreign affairs "to acquaint themselves with the material in the archives of the CPSU Central Committee on the decision to send Soviet forces to Hungary and other aspects of the Hungarian crisis of 1956 and prepare an assessment of the respective documents for the *Izvestiya TsK KPSS* [Newsletter of the CC CPSU]." [9] However, it was apparently not possible to find documents in the archives that justified the Soviet military intervention in Hungary. An assessment was never published in the *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, which, like the Central Committee itself, ceased to exist in August 1991.

Nevertheless the Soviet leadership began to open its archives in response to requests from Hungary. The result of this in Budapest, however, was not as might have been expected. At the same time Imre Nagy was being praised in Budapest as "fighter against Stalinism" and "as an honest and principled advocate of democracy and the fundamental renewal of socialism," documents from the 1930s and 40s were being released in Moscow revealing that when in Soviet emigration, Nagy had been an active and voluntary agent of the Soviet NKVD and had contributed significantly to the repression of foreign communists.[10] At the request of the KGB, the Politburo of the CPSU decided to dispatch these documents to the general secretary of the Hungarian communist party, Károly Grósz, for use in his struggle with the opposition. Grósz, however, either did not have the will to exploit the documents for this purpose or simply was unable to do so.

While in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, archival documents concerning the Soviet military interventions in their countries were of primary concern, Poland, which had been close to similar intrusions more than once, had a different interest at the end of the 1980s. Warsaw insisted ever more forcefully that Moscow release documents relating to the mass execution in 1940 of Polish prisoners of war in Katyń. Without addressing the details of the Katyń massacre, which has recently been the object of much attention in professional literature, it should be noted that this issue dominated Russian-Polish relations in 1989–90. Poland was one of the first countries in the "communist brotherhood" where the communists lost power, this happening already in the summer of 1989. This created a major change in the situation concerning Katyń. Until then, the Polish researchers and public officials who were members of the joint Soviet-Polish Commission for the Study of the History of the Relations between Both Countries had adamantly yet diplomatically called for the Soviets to acknowledge that detained Poles had been executed by members of the NKVD and to declassify Soviet documents relating to this issue. But from autumn 1989, the demands became ultimatums that resonated

[9] Report, CC Secretariat regarding the study of archival materials on the events in Hungary in 1956, n.d., in RGANI, f. 89, op. 11, d. 23, l. 1.

[10] Report on the agent "Volodya" (Imre Nágy), copy, June 1941, in RGANI, f. 89, op. 45, d. 82, ll. 1–3.

at the highest levels of the government. The Polish members of the commission threatened to dissolve the commission if the Soviet authorities did not produce comprehensive information on the Katyń massacre.

Paradoxically, the Soviet members of the commission had no reliable information about the existence or absence of materials on Katyń. At the same time they had to defend the official Soviet line, a line that due to Western publications of ever more documents had become openly untenable. The chairman of the Soviet part of the commission, Georgii Smirnov, attempted in vain to convince the Soviet leadership "that under the present circumstances the only alternative is to open the archives to Soviet and Polish historians." Gorbachev was fully aware of where the main documents confirming that the massacre had been committed by Soviet forces in 1940 were being kept. Nonetheless, he persistently continued to give orders, among others, that arrangements be made to find "conclusive evidence" and to organize "further research and study into archival materials" relating to the matter. In light of subsequent revelations that the Soviet leader had held "sealed packet no. 1" in his hands with documents relating to the Katyń massacre already at the beginning of 1989 at the very latest, it becomes quite clear why the CPSU general secretary, in his public appearances at the time, so assiduously avoided meetings and interviews with Polish journalists.

In their discussions with colleagues from abroad, the history of the Katyń massacre was by far not the only topic that left Soviet historians vulnerable due to their lack of access to documents in domestic archives. At the time even more attention was being devoted to the release of documents and classified appendices relating to the Soviet-German pact of 1939 (the Hitler-Stalin Pact). The fiftieth anniversary of the event occurred in the midst of the revolutions in the countries of Eastern Europe as well as during a growing wave of resolve in the Baltic nations to secede from the Soviet Union. Calls to find and release documents in Soviet archives grew ever louder, not only from Poland, the first victim of the Soviet-German agreement, but also from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and even from Moscow itself. More cautious Soviet historians, such as for instance the director of the Institute for Global History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, academician Aleksandr Chubar'yan, suggested to the Soviet government to publish an article in a professional journal elucidating the Soviet-German agreement of 1939 and its "secret protocol." He observed that "the article would not serve as recognition of the protocol's authenticity, rather solely as a scholarly interpretation of questions raised in the document."[11]

Other researchers explicitly demanded party leaders to open "secret" archival documents, arguing that this was the only means by which they could convincingly debate with their opponents. Many historians criticized authorities not

[11] Memorandum, deputy head of the CPSU Department for Science and Research Institutions, V. Ryabov, and material of the Institute of Global History of the USSR Academy of Sciences regarding the Soviet-German agreement of 23 August 1939, 28 August 1988, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 101, d. 361, l. 40.

only for concealing documents, but for causing a disastrous delay in assessing the developing situation: "The Central Committee and its ancillary agencies are losing their grasp on reality."[12] As a result the information from the archives placed at the disposal of the Commission for the Political and Legal Evaluation of the Soviet-German Treaty of 1939, which was created at the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union, was far from complete. The conclusions of the commission were extremely contradictory and late: they appeared after the whole world—especially the Baltic states—had loudly commemorated the anniversary of the events of 1939. When Soviet historians attempted to "beat the clock" with a film on the August event using documents obtained by the commission, the plan was categorically prohibited by the higher party authorities. Despite gradually losing control of the situation in the country, leaders of the party clung to old attitudes and kept reiterating: "How can one give the commission the materials? They are being prepared for the Congress of the People's Deputies."[13]

Within the CPSU there were attempts to demonstrate that the proclaimed transparency and openness in Soviet society also extended to historical source material. At the nineteenth all-union party conference held in 1988, some of the most important tasks for democratizing the society included demands for ensuring the right of individual citizens to receive complete and accurate information on any question not related to state or official classified data, as well as regulating the use of archival materials and expanding access to them.[14] Based on a Politburo decision, from 1989 onwards the CPSU Central Committee began to publish a new journal,[15] the above-mentioned *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*. In addition to reports on the current activities of the party, the journal included information about matters such as the activities of its various divisions, and also published answers to readers' questions. There was also a section called "from the archives of the CPSU."

Given the times, against a backdrop of total secrecy of the party archives, this was clearly a step forward, although in reality this contribution to "expanded access to party documents" was quite modest. The archival materials published in the *Izvestiya TsK KPSS* related mainly to the period of the 1920s–40s, carefully skirting numerous "dubious" episodes in the history of the party. They dealt almost exclusively with the inner workings of the party or the domestic activity of

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[12] Minutes of the meeting of the CPSU Politburo member V.A. Medvedev with historians and social scientists, 3 October 1989, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 102, d. 163, l. 21.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Report, head of the CPSU Department for Ideology, A. Kapto, and head of the CPSU General Department, V. Boldin, regarding the problem of open access to the party archives for citizens, 2 April 1990, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 103, d. 991, l. 51.

[15] In fact, it was not a completely new edition: from May 1919 a journal had been published with the name *Izvestiya TsK VKP(B)*, in whose pages documents of higher Party organs reporting on current activity appeared. Later the journal was renamed *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo* (from 1946: *Partiinaya zhisn'*). Here only information on the activities of local Party organizations and their Party-building experiences was published.

the CPSU. The "hottest" document of postwar history was the publication of the text of Khrushchev's secret speech at the twentieth congress of the CPSU about the Stalin personality cult—a speech that for thirty years had been well known to the entire world except for the Soviet Union itself. The presentation of these publications in the journal was in many ways peculiar: a few were equipped with a scholarly apparatus noting that the documents were kept in the Central Party Archive (CPA) of the Institute for Marxism-Leninism at the CPSU Central Committee, an archive that was nearly inaccessible to most citizens. But most of the material lacked any information about its origin.

In order to satisfy at least some of historians' "hunger" for information from hitherto secret archival materials and to demonstrate the success of its democratization and glasnost policies, the Soviet party leadership decided to intensify the declassification of documents in state custody. As mandated by the Central Committee on 3 December 1986, the state archives of the USSR began actively to remove existing restrictions to researchers on access to collections of the USSR state archives and to transfer classified material to open storage. The head of the main archive administration of the USSR, Fedor Vaganov, reported to the CPSU Central Committee that on the first of January 1989, the state archives of the country made more that 5.5 million files available for open access and that the work on this process was continuing.[16]

Archivists and historians, however, encountered a very serious and even intractable problem. The most interesting and important archival documents were kept in the archives of governmental agencies whose administrators had no interest in transferring them to state storage, nor in declassifying them, much less in making them available for research. This went as far as archivists being forced to suspend their work on preparing numerous volumes of documents because, despite the decisions of higher party organs, the archivists of governmental agencies refused to make materials stored in their archives available, even if they concerned "innocuous" matters such as "Industry and the Working Class of the USSR in the years 1946 to 1975." Needless to say, acquiring archival documents from governmental agencies with the aim of publishing on foreign policy affairs was a hopeless cause. This was well known to the Soviet leadership, but they chose to create the impression that the issue was a moot point. At a meeting of historians and social scientists at the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in October of 1989, CC Secretary Vadim Medvedev displayed surprise when he heard that all governmental agencies were keeping their archival documents under wraps: "Which governmental agencies? You mean all agencies including the Council of Ministers of the USSR? And the Central Committee?"[17]

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[16] Memorandum, head of the Main Archival Administration of the USSR, F.M. Vaganov, to the CPSU Central Committee, regarding the declassification of archival documents, 14 April 1989, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 102, d. 164, l. 12.

[17] Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo member V.A. Medvedev with historians and social scientists, 3 October 1989, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 102, d. 163, l. 56.

Apparently at least this party leader "didn't know" that all requests of Soviet historians for access to archives relating to the past of the Soviet Communist Party received the following stereotypical answer: "The issue of access to requested documents is the purview of the respective governing bodies of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party."[18] Moreover, when in October of 1989 the director of the Administration for Protection of Printed Classified State Secrets, Vladimir Boldyrev, brought forward an initiative that "authorization for the release of secret and restricted for publication documents of the Central Committee of the CPSU […] can be obtained from the General Department of the Central Committee," he was corrected by the Old Square (i.e. the Central Committee headquarters) that this could be done "not by the General Department of the Central Committee, but only by the leading organs of the Central Committee of the party, the Politburo and the Secretariat of the CPSU."[19] Under such conditions a significant general disclosure of party documents was hardly likely.

Regular calls of party leaders for more "openness," and their criticism of those agencies not willing to declassify their documents looked increasingly incomprehensible in the face of the actions of the Central Committee itself in this respect. Thus it happened that on 20 September 1989 the Politburo finally approved the resolution "On raising the level of information regarding the events of the years 1939 to 1941," by which the Foreign Ministry of the USSR was to expedite the publication of the respective volumes in the series *Documents on the Foreign Policy of the USSR*. The attempts, however, of the Foreign Ministry to acquire meaningful documents for this period from the Archives of the Central Committee of the party (above all transcripts of conversations between Stalin and Molotov with representatives of Germany and other Western countries) were unsuccessful. Equally unsuccessful were requests of the CPSU Central Committee to representatives of the KGB[20] and the efforts of the editorial collective of the Institute for Marxism-Leninism working on a ten-volume edition of the history of World War II. The scholars of the collective received only scattered documents, with material from official archives of party leaders and the government as well as documents

[18] See for instance Memorandum, head of the Institute of Military History at the USSR Ministry of Defense, D.A. Volkogonov, to the CPSU Central Committee, requesting permission to read CPSU archival documents, 13 March 1989, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 102, d. 992, l. 4.

[19] Memorandum, Main Administration for the Protection of State Secrets, with a resolution by CC secretary V.I. Boldin, regarding the publication of secret documents and CPSU materials in the public press, 19 October 1989, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 102, d. 992, l. 50.

[20] A KGB request for documents from the archives of the Central Committee for the set referred to as "Soviet military counter-intelligence (May 1945–May 1954)" received the following response from the main office of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party: A review of the requested documents has shown that they neither "contain data of the activities of military counter-intelligence," nor "relate in general to specific questions of operational activity." Memorandum, KGB to CPSU Central Committee, regarding the publication of a volume of documents on the activities of military counter-espionage organs, 6 November 1990, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 103, d. 992, l. 82.

from the so-called special folders remaining inaccessible.[21] In addition the preparations for publishing materials related to the fourteenth congress of the CPSU and the regular edition of the complete works of Lenin were stalled. Indeed, while the first edition had become a victim of ideological and political dissension among its authors, to publish the new one-hundred-volume *Leniniana*, the party firstly had insufficient resources and secondly the work's publication involved real risks: "If the publication does not have a large number of subscribers, this will be actively used by opponents of Leninism for political purposes."[22]

Along with the struggle to open party archives, Soviet archivists and historians of this period had another serious concern: the contents of the federal archives. At the end of the 1980s, federal archives began to be transferred from all of the soviet republics, with the exception of Russia and Ukraine, to the regional Ministries of Justice. Archivists were not convinced by assurances of the Central Committee that "the scientific-methodological management of the archives in the union republics will remain in the hands of the central archive of the Soviet Union."[23] They remembered only too well the unfortunate times when the Soviet archives were controlled by organs of the NKVD. Attempts to secure the adoption of a law regarding the federal archive collection of the Soviet Union that would regulate all aspects of the archives' activities (including the declassification of documents at certain times and their release by authorities to federal storage) vanished in the *nomenklatura*-bureaucratic quagmire.

Events in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s accelerated the disintegrating forces in the Soviet Union. This was also reflected in the situation concerning archival documents. Many republics began demanding the transfer of documents "representing their historical interests" to their own archives and their own supervision. Such initiatives, many of which, it should be noted, never became law, posed a real threat of once unified archival collections being torn apart. Another rapidly spreading phenomenon that could be observed in this period was the effort to "privatize" archives and their collections. This process quickly gained momentum both at the government policy level and with the general public. In the year 1990 the Lithuanian parliament passed legislation to transfer the ownership of

[21] Report, CPSU Institute for Marxism-Leninism, on problems in preparing a 10-volume series on the history of the Great Patriotic War, November 1990, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 103, d. 992, l. 76. Still one more paradox of the Soviet system of Party archives: The Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the CPSU, which was responsible for the administration of the central Party archive, tried unsuccessfully to convince higher Party officials to give them at least rudimentary information about the documents kept in the General Department of the Central Committee.

[22] Memorandum, head of the CPSU Department for Ideology, A. Kapto, on the preparation of the sixth edition of the complete works of V.I. Lenin, 11 October 1990, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 103, d. 303, l. 97.

[23] Report, CPSU departments, regarding the memorandum of the head of the Main Archival Administration, F.M. Vaganov, on the situation in Soviet archives, 8 June 1988, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 101, d. 360, l. 42.

a building containing documents pertaining to the local communist party. The prime minister of Lithuania, Kazimira Prunskiene, even appealed to Gorbachev to resolve this issue.[24] After Vilnius similar propositions began to appear in other republics. The CPSU Central Committee attempted to declare such actions illegal by citing recently enacted normative provisions of the Soviet Union regarding property rights,[25] but it was clear that stopping this process of "usurping" party archives was becoming increasingly difficult. In the same period, commercial enterprises emerged that provided Russian, but mainly foreign researchers information services regarding documents in archival collections in the Soviet Union.

With the exception of a few Soviet leaders, who repeated their mantra that the developments in the countries of Eastern Europe were not a model for the Soviet Union, which would construct its own individual destiny, there was a growing general awareness that the Soviet Union could avoid neither economic reform and free markets, nor multiple political parties and free elections. The experiences of the former communist camp countries, where the shifts in political structures were resulting in changes in all spheres of life, including wide-scale access to archives, graphically demonstrated that power over archival information meant both a huge advantage in the struggle for political power and—a good source of hard cash.

Obviously, the CPSU Central Committee understood this, and it was therefore to be expected that the "archive mania" at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s did not go unnoticed within higher party structures. With the creation of the office of President of the Soviet Union and election (or elevation) of the CPSU general secretary, Gorbachev, to this office, the dissection of the party archives and the documents contained within them began. While to a great extent this was arbitrary, the most valuable documents were transferred to the presidential archives. From 1989 intensive, albeit incomplete, work began at the Central Committee to prepare a new "order for the use of documents from party archives" and "regulations concerning the use of documents in the archival collections of the CPSU."[26] But as it turned out, those carrying out these preparations saw the future of the archival legacy of the party in a different light. Actually the project initiated by the Institute for the Theory and History of Socialism (as the Institute

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[24] Report, deputy head of the CPSU General Department, P. Laptev, "Ob otvete na pis'mo prem'er-ministra Litovskoi Respubliki K. Prunskene po voprosu ob archive Kompartii Litvy," October 1990, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 103, d. 991, l. 107.

[25] Only in 1990 were measures taken with respect to this question: the Law "On ownership in the Soviet Union" (6 March 1990), the Decree of the president of the Soviet Union "On measures to protect the inviolability of the right to ownership in the Soviet Union" (10 October 1990), and the Decree of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union "On measures to protect private property in the Soviet Union on the territory of the Lithuanian Socialist Republic" (27 March 1990). None of these measures, however, had the power of authority under the conditions as they were developing.

[26] Report, CPSU General Department, regarding the CPSU archival holdings, 5 August 1991, in RGANI, f. 89, op. 20, d. 76, l. 2.

of Marxism-Leninism began to call itself in 1991) for “regulations regarding the archival collection of the CPSU” was an attempt to secure the Institute’s monopoly of control and use not only of documents in the Central Party Archive, but of all archives related to the party. But even before the Central Committee of the CPSU ceased to exist and the doors of the party archives were thrown open to researchers, a number of “most trusted” scholars had begun to work on classified documents from the party archives with the permission of high party leaders. Later, after the demise of the party and the Soviet Union, some of these researchers actually began to sell copies of these documents abroad.

It should be noted that the structuring and development of party archives in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s was strongly influenced not only by processes taking place within the country, but also within the party itself. The transformation of the social and political situation and the accompanying changes in public life forced improvements to be made in higher party structures. Democratic processes affecting the party during this period led to a certain amount of streamlining of party filing activity, whereby the number of documents entering the archival departments of the Central Committee was reduced. Certain elements of transparency (if such a term can even be used in association with the archives of the Central Committee of the party at the time) became apparent in less material being designated as classified. Earlier this designation had been almost automatically applied to any document produced at the CC headquarters or directed there from external sources. This less restrictive practice, of course, was not applicable to documents of the Politburo or the Secretariat of the Central Committee, nor for materials relating to foreign relations, but nevertheless at the end of the 1980s more and more documents began to appear without this limiting and intimidating designation. This fact, combined with the general decline in the level of secrecy of party documents (even during the tensest moments of the upheavals in Eastern Europe materials were designated “confidential” as opposed to “secret” or “top secret”), marked an important step towards shredding the shroud of party secrets covering the archives of the Central Committee.

The archives of the Central Committee were also seriously affected by attempts to rid the CC apparatus of redundant elements in order to turn it into a more dynamic, flexible and effective operation. The end of 1988 saw the most ambitious reorganization of the CC apparatus in its entire history, resulting in only eight departments remaining. These oversaw all aspects of public life in the country. What is more, while most of the former departments of the Central Committee were consolidated or merged, there were also some that “died a natural death.” One of these, in light of the ongoing revolutionary upheavals in Eastern Europe, was the Department for Relations with the Communist and Workers’ Parties of Socialist Countries: it simply disappeared from the Central Committee apparatus, together with the disappearance of communist structures in the majority of these countries.

The number of sections, however, soon began to grow again. This was a result of departments being needed to deal with new matters the CPSU Central Committee now had to address, including policies concerning nationalities, relations with public political organizations, legislative initiatives and legal issues. These new departments became the focus of a huge number of documents concerning some of the most pressing issues facing the country: the tragedy at Chernobyl, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the activities of public organizations such as "Memorial," "For a Democratic Union," "The Socialist Initiative," and "We Remember." One set of documents contained material concerning events that the party leaders would have considered nightmarish two or three years earlier. These included the "de-partying" of constituent republics and public organizations, referendums on preserving the Soviet Union, and elections for the president of the Russian Federation.

The fundamental political changes at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 90s triggered changes in the contents of the documents being stored in the archive of the CPSU Central Committee. A line was drawn below the entire complex of historical documents of those organizations that, with the collapse of the communist camp, also ceased to exist. The collections of the Central Committee archive filled with the final documents on the International Conferences of Communist and Workers' Parties, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the Warsaw Pact. In general there was a reduction in the number of international material (especially those relating to the former communist camp) and, conversely, an increase in the proportion of documents relating to domestic affairs. The increase in the number of analytical reports as well as current and future prognoses on the possible development of the situation both in the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe was remarkable. (The range of views expressed in the latter were extremely wide—from assertions that these nations would still remain within the sphere of Soviet foreign policy to the conviction the these countries would soon be absorbed into the West.)

Evidence of how these prognoses influenced the Soviet party leaders in their decisions or references to leading figures in the country (as was so characteristic in earlier periods, with features such as underlining, editorial comments, and notes in the margins) is essentially missing from the documents in the archive. In fact from the last years of its existence the archive of the Central Committee must be viewed from a very broad range of perspectives. For more than ten years, until the turn of the century, RGANI staff worked on reviewing and processing the remaining documents of the Central Committee that were referred to as "archival loose ends," that is, documents, most of them dating from 1985 to 1991, which were in a fragmented and unordered state (often entirely unrelated to one another) and came from different departments of the Central Committee of the CPSU apparatus.

Regarding the documents from the end of the 1980s as they relate to the revolutionary upheavals in the countries of Eastern Europe, a familiarity with the

contents of these documents reveals less about the course of these events than about the CPSU leadership's reaction to them. The two examples of documents cited below demonstrate how inconsistent, contradictory and incoherent policy was in Moscow when dealing with regimes that had only recently been their allies.

When the first communist regimes began to collapse, the Soviet Central Committee initially still attempted to implement immediate measures to take care of their "friends" in a difficult moment and to provide them full support. Resolutions to this end were enacted that aimed at creating a framework for major activities of the CPSU in some of the relevant countries. The first of these resolutions was passed on 28 September 1989 and was called "Regarding the situation in Poland, possible forms of its further development and prospects for Soviet-Polish relations." In the long list of measures designed at supporting Polish communists as well as preparing agreements with the new Polish government, there were points dealing with exchanges of opinions on the basis of historical documents concerning "de-Stalinization of Soviet-Polish relations, and their general improvement."[27]

With a notable delay, a comparable document relating to Czechoslovakia appeared. Its contents were brief, but nevertheless in addition to a promise of support to the demoralized representatives of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, a reference was made to "forming a Soviet-Czechoslovak commission of party historians to study current problems in the relations between the two countries and their parties."[28] The resolutions mentioned here remained solely on paper, and for the rest of the countries involved, resolutions of this type were never taken. The contents of the resolution regarding Czechoslovakia even contained a provision to assist the Czechoslovak Communist Party to acquire paper "essential for the uninterrupted publication of the newspaper *Rudé právo*." Two months later the decision was in effect rescinded by the ideology section of the CPSU Central Committee, which commented that "in connection with the severe crisis and the scarcity of paper," aid to the Czechoslovak communists "does not seem possible."[29]

A second episode demonstrating the processes in the Soviet leadership in the 1980s and 90s also regarded the Czechoslovak Communist Party. A report about a CPSU delegation visit to the CSSR in 1990 mentions a complaint of Czechoslovakian communists concerning the Soviet embassy in Prague: after the Communist

[27] Decree, CPSU Politburo, "Ob obstanovke v Pol'she, vozmozhnykh variantakh ee razvitiya, perspektivakh sovetsko-pol'skikh otnoshenii," 28 September 1989, in RGANI, f. 89, op. 9, d. 33, l. 5.

[28] Decree, CPSU Politburo, "O nekotorykh merakh po usilieniyu politico-ideologicheskogo vliyaniya na Chekhoslovakiyu," 23 April 1990, in RGANI, f. 89, op. 9, d. 124, l. 2. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia lost power in November of 1989 and the resolution of the CPSU Politburo "On certain measures to strengthen political-ideological influence on Czechoslovakia" was not adopted until 23 April 1990.

[29] Memorandum, deputy head of the CPSU Department for Ideology, A. Degtyarev, on the impossibility to provide the Czechoslovak communist party with paper, 23 May 1990, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 103, d. 310, l. 55.

Party of Czechoslovakia had lost its governing power, the Soviet ambassador had not participated in a single conference with party leaders and instead had actively participated in meetings with representatives of the right-wing Civic Forum. The following short exchange that ensued between Soviet leaders concerning the complaint is instructive:

> The deputy general secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, V. A. Ivashko: “Comrade V.M. Falin, it would not be a bad idea to have a conversation with our ambassador: ambassadors’ heads at times can begin to spin.”
>
> Head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party: “Vladimir Antonovich, ambassadors fulfill confidential orders of the leadership of the Foreign Ministry […]. The difference is that intelligent ambassadors are very cautious and others de-partyize to the utmost.”
>
> V. Ivashko: “Comrade G. I. Yanaev. It is clear that we must talk with the leadership at the Foreign Ministry about all of the problems that have built up.”
>
> Vice-President of the Soviet Union, G. I. Yanaev: “This conversation will take place without fail.”[30]

In concluding it should be noted that twenty years ago these documents did not, and could not, become subject to glasnost. Now, together with many analogous materials, they have become generally accessible. They are priceless historical sources of the Russian Federation that tell us of our recent past. This is one of the results of the revolutions of 1989: a more open path to the study of a historical legacy that was long hidden behind a double Iron Curtain of party secrecy—from the world community as well as from the USSR’s own citizens.

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[30] Notes of CPSU Politburo members regarding a report of CC secretary V. Kuptsov on his trip to Czechoslovakia, 26 October 1990, in RGANI, f. 5, op. 103, d. 346, ll. 11–12.

Stanley R. Sloan

# NATO ENLARGEMENT IN THE BEGINNING: AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

The process that led to the enlargement of NATO following the end of the Cold War was relatively transparent and well documented, particularly the decision-making process in the United States. It was covered in detail by news reports as well as official documents, including administration speeches, congressionally-mandated reports and hearings. Most of these are readily available on line. Following the initial stage of enlargement in the 1990s, participants in the process produced detailed accounts of the interactions among US officials.[1] In addition, Jeffrey Simon, a government analyst working at the National Defense University, produced a series of studies and reports in the 1990s and into the 2000s assessing the qualifications of prospective candidates and the performance of new members. The presidential papers of George H.W. Bush and William Clinton provide yet more insights into the environment in which enlargement moved ahead. This article is based in part on the author's participation in the process of Congressional oversight and decision-making. In retrospect, there seem to be very few stones from the period that have been left unturned concerning US participation in the NATO enlargement process, and thus the main research questions here instead relate to how the greatly expanded membership might affect the long-term future of the alliance.

## The setting for NATO enlargement

For many Americans, inviting new democracies to join the Western alliance seemed a natural step when the revolutions of 1989 led to the end of the Warsaw Pact and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This was especially the case for those countries that had been less-than-willing members of the Warsaw Pact. However, at the same time, for others it seemed counterintuitive. After all, the framework for international relations had been dominated and, indeed, stabilized by the two-alliance standoff in Europe. For some observers, that stability seemed more important than the opportunities for independence and democratization to which the revolutions had given birth. As a consequence, the years between 1989

[1] Two of the most notable among these are James Goldgeier, *Not Whether but When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), and Ronald Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

and the first phase of NATO enlargement saw a political struggle within the United States as well as conflicts in the broader alliance concerning how best to approach the new opportunities and challenges.

In the early 1990s, the new democracies in Eastern and Central Europe began lobbying for NATO membership. Reactions in the alliance were mixed. The United Kingdom worried that adding these newly liberated states might water down the alliance. France was reluctant because it feared enlargement would give NATO too prominent a role in the future composition of Europe. Germany, however, saw enlargement increasingly as a way of moving away from the front lines in Europe, since enlargement would provide a buffer zone between it and Russia. These mixed emotions were matched by divided opinion in the United States. This initially led to an intricate ballet, in which the would-be members stepped anxiously toward NATO's door, while on the other side of the slightly ajar opening, the NATO members tried to postpone difficult decisions by offering cooperation with all aspirants, as well as with the great skeptic, Russia.[2]

As with any transformative historical development, the process of NATO enlargement had an important "pre-history." Particularly after adopting the Harmel Report in 1967 which advocated embarking on détente, NATO governments actively sought to promote dialogue and cooperation with the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. The goal was to try to overcome the East–West division in Europe and reduce the risk of war. This commitment to détente led the allies in 1972 to join with the Warsaw Pact and other European countries to begin preparations for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and to open East–West talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) in 1973. It also provided the underlying political rationale for negotiations with Moscow on Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF), which opened in 1985.

The CSCE, originally proposed by the Soviet Union primarily to win recognition of the European status quo, was used by the West to promote human rights and other fundamental principles that should govern the behavior of states, both in relation with their own peoples and with other states. The Helsinki Process, as the CSCE forum was called, was widely credited with legitimizing human rights groups in Eastern Europe and weakening the hold of communist regimes on those countries. The CSCE process also included negotiations on confidence-building and stabilizing measures. In 1986, these talks resulted in an agreement signed in Stockholm, Sweden, on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament.

The MBFR talks, after many years of stalemate, were converted into negotiations on Conventional Forces in Europe, which yielded an agreement limiting conventional armaments and forces in Europe just as the Cold War was ending in 1990. And the INF negotiations resulted in an agreement to eliminate Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces from Europe in 1987.

[2] Stanley R. Sloan, *Permanent Alliance? NATO and the Transatlantic Bargain from Truman to Obama* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 130–34.

NATO's active pursuit of détente through arms control negotiations and security cooperation initiatives in the 1970s and 1980s demonstrated that the allies were prepared to take diplomatic steps to reduce the chance of war, even if Warsaw Pact military strength required NATO to maintain a credible defense and deterrence posture. Some political conservatives in the United States doubted the relevance or utility of NATO's détente role, seeing its usefulness mainly as a palliative for the European left. At the same time, some on the left in Europe saw this role as a political sham, designed for show but not likely to help overcome Europe's division.

Seen at some distance more than twenty years after the end of the Cold War, it appears that a combination of allied détente, deterrence, and defense policies contributed to the events that culminated in the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. During this time, public opinion in Europe and in the United States considered the Harmel formula to provide a sufficiently broad rationale for NATO to sustain its alliance, even if the formula was not highly valued by those on the political extremes on either side of the Atlantic.

In the first years of the post-Cold War period, it was therefore not a desperate or illogical step for the NATO allies to adapt a new version of the Harmel concept to address the radically new circumstances that had emerged in just a matter of months. In so doing, the NATO allies began a process of engineering another fundamental adjustment to the transatlantic bargain: extending the bargain's reach to include potentially all of democratic Europe.

One of the first needs was to adapt the CSCE, shaped as it was by Cold War conditions, to the new circumstances in Europe. The CSCE had played an important role in the Cold War, helping regulate relations among European states and also keeping up a human rights critique of Soviet and East European communist regimes. The Helsinki Final Act, signed by 35 European states including the United States, Canada, the USSR, and most communist regimes of Eastern Europe in 1975, was not legally binding on the participants. But the Final Act provided the "rules of the road" for interstate relations in Europe and constructive guidelines for the development of democracy in all European countries.

At a summit meeting in London on 6 July 1990, NATO leaders agreed that the CSCE should be strengthened as one of the critical supports for European peace and stability. NATO reasserted this opinion at its summit in Rome on 7 and 8 November 1991. As an important token of NATO's intentions, a North Atlantic Council meeting on 4 June 1992 in Oslo, Norway, agreed that, on a case-by-case basis, NATO would support peacekeeping operations initiated by the CSCE. Subsequently, NATO called for strengthening the CSCE's ability to prevent conflicts, manage crises, and settle disputes peacefully.[3]

[3] See, for example, NATO's 1994 Brussels Summit Declaration, 11 January 1994, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-73364D74-3144351F/natolive/official_texts_24470.htm?mode=pressrelease (accessed 30 April 2013).

The key to the CSCE's ability to take on an expanded operational mandate was resources. As a "process," the CSCE had only an ad hoc structure that was not capable of supporting a more ambitious role. On 5 and 6 December 1994, a CSCE summit meeting in Budapest, Hungary, agreed to turn this process into an organization, with the result that the name was changed to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The decision was made to provide staff and financial resources so that the OSCE could send missions into European nations to mediate disputes, monitor elections, and conduct other activities designed to prevent conflict.[4]

By the end of the 1990s, NATO and the OSCE were working hand in hand to deal with potential threats to peace. In Bosnia, the OSCE played a critical role in helping to establish a process of free elections and respect for human rights. NATO provided the military backing that was required to give such efforts a chance to succeed. OSCE monitors and mediators played important roles in helping resolve conflicts and build democracy from Abkhazia and Tajikistan to South Ossetia and Ukraine. The relationship between NATO and the OSCE became one of the key ingredients in an evolving cooperative European security system.

In 1990, negotiations aimed at cutting non-nuclear forces in Europe, which had begun as the MBFR talks in 1973, concluded with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). This landmark agreement produced reductions and controls on non-nuclear military forces, from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Ural Mountains in the Soviet Union. The CFE Treaty of 19 November 1990 is the most comprehensive, legally binding agreement on conventional arms control ever produced. Its goal was to reduce imbalances in the numbers of major conventional weapon systems in Europe in order to eliminate the potential for surprise attacks or large-scale offensive operations.

Perhaps the CFE Treaty's most important accomplishment is its contribution to transparency, as it makes military establishments and forces more visible to other states. The treaty's required declarations of information and inspection procedures help reduce concern about the intentions and capabilities of neighboring states. In this new system, it has become much more difficult to hide military capabilities.

## Emerging candidates for NATO membership

As democratic governments stepped out from the shadow of communism in Eastern and Central Europe, many of the new democracies sought membership in NATO as one of their main national goals. The NATO countries approached them carefully, offering the new democracies friendship and cooperation but not, initially, membership.

[4] CSCE Budapest Summit Document 1994, 5–6 December 1994, http://www.osce.org/mc/39554?download=true (accessed 30 April 2013).

In July 1991, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved, leaving NATO standing but still in need of greater clarity concerning its future relationship with former members of the Pact. NATO took the first formal step in the Rome Declaration of November 1991, which invited former Warsaw Pact members to join in a more structured relationship of "consultation and cooperation on political and security issues."[5] They created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and invited the foreign ministers of the former Pact countries to the first meeting of the new council on 20 December 1991. When the Soviet Union was dissolved in the same month, the NATO countries immediately invited Russia to join the NACC, and Russia became one of its founding members.

The main goal of the NACC was to serve as a forum for dialogue between NATO members and non-member states on a wide range of security topics.[6] Sixteen NATO members, twenty-two former Warsaw Pact members, and former Soviet republics participated in the new body. The NACC represented a major statement of intent by the allies. They were asserting, in effect, that NATO was not going to remain an exclusive club. Although at that point the allies were reluctant to envision offering NATO membership to former Warsaw Pact members, the creation of the NACC opened the door to that prospect later. East European leaders who wanted their countries to join NATO saw the NACC as totally inadequate for their needs, but they accepted the first move and immediately began working for more.[7]

The NACC was essentially the brainchild of US president George H.W. Bush's administration. President Bush and his foreign policy team had played a major role in the process of negotiating German reunification and ensuring that a united Germany would remain a member of NATO.[8] German reunification in effect

[5] NATO Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation, 8 November 1991, http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c911108a.htm (accessed 30 April 2013).

[6] David Yost has documented the fact that France was the only NATO ally to have serious reservations about the NACC. According to Yost, "The French had two preoccupations in this regard: resisting the tendency to give more substantial content to NACC activities, which might increasingly compete with those of the CSCE and maintaining coherence with the Alliance participation policy they had pursued since 1966." It is also evident that France's socialist president François Mitterrand did not want to strengthen NATO's position in post–Cold War Europe at a time when other options might better suit French preferences. See David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 95–96.

[7] In the fall of 1990, on the occasion of one my lectures at the NATO College in Rome, I served on a panel with a West European security expert and a Polish professor to discuss the future of NATO. The Polish panelist urged that the NATO countries take Polish pleas seriously, while the West European judged that the question of membership in NATO was many years away from serious consideration. Sympathetic to the Polish case, the best I could do was to suggest that Poland be patient and that the logic of their case would bring them through.

[8] Cf. the chapter by Philip Zelikow, "US Strategic Planning in 1989–90," in this volume, 283–306.

represented the first expansion of NATO in the post-Cold War era, as well as the first since Spain had been admitted in 1982. In addition, President Bush made a major contribution to the process of winding down the Cold War by declaring substantial unilateral US reductions in its short-range nuclear forces. At the same time, Bush developed and maintained a sympathetic working relationship with Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian president Boris Yeltsin, helping support the transition to a post-communist political system in the USSR and Russia after the Soviet Union was dissolved.

In 1990, neither the Bush administration nor any of the European allies were prepared to signal public acceptance of the possibility that countries that had just left the Warsaw Pact might soon become members of NATO. After all, in 1990 the question was whether NATO was still necessary, not whether its membership should be expanded. Moreover, most European governments, as well as President Bush, were focused primarily on how to ensure that the transition in the Soviet Union, and then in Russia, would confirm the end of the Cold War and not lead to a new one.

Toward the end of the Bush presidency, senior administration officials nevertheless began acknowledging that the desires of East European governments to join NATO were indeed legitimate. Late in 1992, after Bill Clinton had beaten George Bush in the presidential elections, both Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney and Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger suggested that the process of opening up NATO that had begun with the NACC could lead toward NATO membership for some NACC partners.[9]

The Clinton administration was to bring new and dramatic developments to the process of NATO outreach. While the Bush administration had put the process on track, it had not had time to move beyond the relatively limited and "easy" NACC initiative.

## From partnership toward membership

When President Bill Clinton came to office in January 1993, the administration did not have a clear line on the issue of NATO enlargement. Its top priority was the economy, following the political rhetoric ("It's the economy, stupid!") that had helped pave Clinton's way to the presidency. In the administration's first year, Europe was seen mainly as a problem: the source of economic competition for the United States and the locale for a bloody conflict in Bosnia that would not go away. However, one of the important rituals for any new US president is the first NATO summit. Officials in charge of preparations for President Clinton's

[9] Goldgeier, *Not Whether but When*, 18. Goldgeier's account of the enlargement decision-making process in the Clinton administration is an insightful look at the US decisions that led to the entry of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland into the alliance.

inaugural NATO summit, scheduled for 10–11 January 1994, were not of one mind on NATO's future in general, nor on enlargement in particular.

One high-level National Security Council staffer, Jenonne Walker, had written in 1990 that the United States should pull all its troops out of Europe as an incentive for the Soviet Union to withdraw from Eastern Europe.[10] This official was skeptical that the Clinton administration should promote NATO enlargement, and she had the task of chairing the initial inter-departmental review of the issue. Strobe Talbott, a close personal friend of the president and leading Russian expert at the Department of State, was concerned that moving too quickly on enlargement would sour prospects for reform in Russia.

At the Pentagon, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin and his top officials, including Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Kruzel, were skeptical that the United States and NATO should take on the potential burdens of preparing countries that were far from meeting NATO military standards for NATO membership. However, as James M. Goldgeier has documented, two key officials leaned in favor of enlargement: National Security Adviser Tony Lake and President Clinton himself.[11]

Bill Clinton had not spent much time or energy on foreign policy issues in his campaign, but one of his campaign themes had emphasized that US foreign policy should be focused on "enlarging" the democratic and free-market area in the post-Cold War world. Both he and Lake apparently came to believe that NATO enlargement would directly serve this end. This approach made Clinton ripe for the message from the new democracies in central Europe. It was a message that he heard loud and clear when he met with several Central European leaders, including Poland's Lech Wałesa and the Czech Republic's Vaclav Havel, at the opening of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., on 21 April 1993. Clinton subsequently reflected on the meeting, saying, "When they came here a few weeks ago for the Holocaust dedication, every one of those presidents said that their number one priority was to get into NATO. They know it will provide a security umbrella for the people who are members."[12]

From the Holocaust Memorial meetings on, Clinton had an emotional as well as philosophical predisposition toward enlarging NATO.[13] Even if other administration officials favoring enlargement had geostrategic rationales for the move, such as hedging against future Russian power and ensuring continued US prom-

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[10] Jenonne Walker, "U.S., Soviet Troops: Pull Them All Out," *New York Times*, 18 March 1990, E19.

[11] Goldgeier, *Not Whether but When*, 23–24. Goldgeier reports that at the first meeting of the inter-agency working group formed to prepare for Clinton's first NATO summit in January 1994, "Walker announced that there were two people in the White House who thought NATO expansion was a good idea—Bill Clinton and Tony Lake."

[12] William J. Clinton, "Press Conference," 17 June 1993, *The American Presidency Project*, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=46708 (accessed 24 April 2013).

[13] Goldgeier, *Not Whether but When*, 20.

inence in European security affairs, it was the value-based rationale that would tip the balance in convincing the public and members of the US Congress that NATO enlargement was in US interests.

Even while official policy largely favored deferring a decision on enlargement at the January 1994 summit, some administration officials and others outside the administration were putting together a case for moving ahead. In an assessment for Congress at the end of 1992, I noted the logic of the case for enlargement, writing,

> How can the existing members of Western institutions, who have throughout the Cold War touted the Western system, now deny participation in the system to countries that choose democracy, to convert to free market economic systems, respect human rights, and pursue peaceful relations with their neighbors? This suggests the need for creative and flexible attitudes toward countries making credible efforts to meet the criteria for membership.[14]

And in a statement to a special committee of the North Atlantic Assembly in January 1993, I further added that "Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic deserve serious consideration for NATO membership in the near future."[15]

In Europe, German Minister of Defense Volker Rühe became the official most outspoken as a proponent of enlargement.[16] Early in 1993, he organized a small conference of US and European experts to provide ammunition in support of his position on Europe's future. (At the time, Rühe was considered not only a leading official expert on defense, but also a potential candidate for the chancellorship.)

[14] Late in 1992, within constraints imposed by the Congressional Research Service mandate to produce "objective and non-partisan" analyses, I anticipated the issue facing the new administration: "The goals of supporting democracy, the development of free market economies, and the observance of human rights probably will be served best by an inclusive rather than an exclusive approach to participation in components of a new European security system. In spite of the complications involved, inclusion may have to be the rule; exclusion the exception." Stanley R. Sloan, "The Future of US-European Security Cooperation" (Congressional Research Service Report for Congress 92-901, Washington, D.C., 4 December 1992), 2–3.

[15] In a statement to the North Atlantic Assembly Presidential Task Force on America and Europe, on 21 January 1993, I carried the point to its logical conclusion, arguing at that early date for an approach that eventually became US policy: "Full membership in specific institutions, such as NATO, should be based on the desire and demonstrated ability of countries to adopt the norms and obligations of membership. Not all former members of the Warsaw Pact may be able to meet such standards in the near future. But can the allies in good conscience deny participation in their security system to countries that have overthrown communist dictatorships and committed themselves to a democratic future? This suggests, in practical terms, that Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic deserve serious consideration for NATO membership in the near future. Clearly, taking such a step would require that the NATO countries reassure Russia and other non-NATO European states that growing membership in the alliance will help create conditions of stability and peace that will support their own attempts to become constructive participants in the international community." Stanley R. Sloan, "Trends and Transitions in U.S.-European Security Cooperation" (Statement before the North Atlantic Assembly Presidential Task Force on America and Europe, Washington, D.C., 21 January 1993).

[16] Gebhard Schweigler, "A Wider Atlantic?," *Foreign Policy*, no. 126 (2001): 88.

The conference (in which this author participated) was held outside Bonn, Germany. It provided some of the foundations for Rühe's enlargement position.[17]

To augment his resources, Rühe contracted the services of a team from the well-respected US think tank Rand. The Rand analysts—Ronald Asmus, Richard Kugler, and F. Stephen Larrabee—had been developing an advocacy of enlargement based on work they were doing under a contract with the US Army and Air Force. In June 1993, Rühe and the Rand analysts were joined by Republican Senator Richard Lugar (Indiana), who became the most forceful of US official proponents of enlargement, arguing for early consideration of the membership desires of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

The Rand team published a major statement of the case for enlargement in the fall of 1993, providing a key reference point for the coming enlargement debate.[18] Senator Lugar remained a strong supporter of NATO and of enlargement, even though his cool relationship with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms prevented Lugar from playing a formal role in the process.

These proponents of enlargement were in a minority in Europe as well as in the United States, but they were not alone. While most of the US foreign policy bureaucracy was working on finessing the enlargement issue at the January 1994 summit, others, including Lynn Davis, undersecretary for arms control and international security affairs, and two key staffers on the Department of State policy planning staff—Stephen Flanagan and Hans Binnendijk—were developing the case for moving enlargement ahead. Both Flanagan and Binnendijk had leaned forward on enlargement in the early 1990s, and Davis had close ties to the work of the Rand team.

However, the ship of state changes directions slowly. While US policy generally supported developing ties to the new democracies, the more difficult and demanding enlargement issue continued to be deferred.

As the administration prepared for President Clinton's first NATO summit meeting, a cautious approach dominated. Secretary of State Warren Christopher observed that NATO enlargement, while possible at a later date, was currently "not on the agenda." Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, with his focus on facilitating Russia's transition to democracy and free markets, reinforced the secretary's cautious inclinations. Meanwhile, US civilian and military officials were searching for a concept to serve as the centerpiece for NATO outreach activities. The concept that developed in collaboration between General John Shalikashvili (the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe), his staff, and senior Pentagon officials (particularly Deputy Secretary of Defense Joseph Kruzel),[19] was

[17] The invitation to me and others suggested that the session was designed as an off-the-record opportunity to think and talk prospectively about transatlantic security issues.

[18] Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, and F. Stephen Larrabee, "Building a New NATO," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (1993): 28–40.

[19] Kruzel, a central and creative participant in NATO policy formulation in the early Clinton years, Col. Nelson Drew, the main architect of the Combined Joint Task Force concept, and respected career diplomat Robert Frasure, who played a key role in the process leading to the peace accord

premised on the need for aspiring members to meet certain political and military criteria before being considered for membership. The second assumption was that NATO should help such countries become producers, not just consumers, of security. The end result of this thinking was the proposal for the Partnership for Peace (PfP).

## Cooperation prepares ground for enlargement

The PfP concept was a policymaker's dream. It signaled to those who aspired to NATO membership that they had been heard. It made no commitment, however, concerning the future. Perhaps its most crucial benefit was that it bought time. It avoided destabilizing relations with Russia at a perilous moment in that country's post-Soviet development. It (temporarily) bridged differences between those in the US administration who favored enlargement and those who were skeptical. The PfP initiative also served some practical needs. Countries that wanted to join NATO could not expect to do so until they had begun to scrap old Warsaw Pact military systems and habits, while adapting to those of NATO. Partnership would provide a channel for US and other NATO assistance to aspiring members. The PfP would also serve as a vehicle for aspirants to make contributions to NATO's new role as a regional peacekeeping instrument, potentially spreading the burden among NATO and non-NATO countries.

On the negative side, the PfP was clearly not the end of the story. The Central European democracies recognized that, although active engagement in the PfP was essential to their longer-term goal of NATO membership, it could also serve as a long-term excuse for NATO to postpone serious consideration of their membership objective (hence the occasionally heard derogatory references to the PfP as the "Policy for Postponement"). In addition, experience would come to show that under PfP scrutiny of a nation's defense reforms and modernization, shortcomings could not be as easily hidden from their publics, nor from NATO members.

In any case, at the NATO summit meeting in Brussels from 10 to 11 January 1994, allied leaders endorsed the PfP program, giving countries that wished to develop a detailed cooperative relationship with NATO the opportunity to do so.[20] The program would provide the possibility for non-member military leaders and forces to interact with and learn from NATO militaries. This created a formal framework for the development of NATO military outreach activities and, concurrently, began to shape a new mission for NATO military forces.

The PfP was destined to become a successful program in its own right, helping reform regimes in Central and Eastern Europe to accelerate the process of

in Bosnia, all lost their lives when the vehicle in which they were riding plunged off a dirt road outside Sarajevo.

[20] NATO 1994 Brussels Summit Declaration, 11 January 1994.

democratization, as well as to become NATO compatible. Because these countries were at a variety of stages of political, economic, and military evolution, US and allied officials knew that a program of association with NATO would have to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate such diversity. The NACC already had provided a forum in which such countries could discuss military security issues with NATO allies. The PfP added a way for individual countries to tailor their relationship with NATO to meet their national needs and circumstances.

The PfP sought initially to promote greater transparency in national defense planning and budgeting as a way of building confidence in the peaceful intentions of all participants. It also aimed to encourage effective democratic control of defense forces: to help develop each partner as a potential contributor to NATO-led peacekeeping, search-and-rescue, or humanitarian missions, and to enhance the ability of partners' military forces to operate together with NATO units. Each partner was invited to identify the extent and intensity of cooperation it wished to develop, within the broader agenda of the program.

In mid-1997, the allies decided to add some new and important elements to the PfP agenda to "enhance" the program. When the Clinton administration proposed the PfP, it had been unable to decide what to do with the NACC, even though logically it could have served as a communal consultative forum to complement the more individualized partnership program. NATO officials observed that the Clinton administration, perhaps due to a "not invented here" attitude, wanted to ensure that the focus was on the PfP, not on the NACC, which Clinton officials saw as a Bush administration initiative.[21] The PfP and the NACC existed in parallel but mostly separate worlds until the Clinton administration proposed replacing the NACC with the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). The EAPC was formally established by the foreign ministers of NATO and partner nations at a meeting in Sintra, Portugal, held in May 1997.

Also at Sintra, the allies gave their partners a much stronger role in developing and deciding on PfP programs. They created the concept of partnership "cells," or units made up of partner military and civilian officials working hand-in-hand with NATO international and member-state officials. A special Partnership Coordination Cell was established in Mons, Belgium, where NATO's top European command is located, to coordinate activities directly with the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and his staff. Through the new Planning and Review Process, partner countries that were making contributions to NATO operations, such as those in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, could participate more actively in planning and overseeing the carrying out of such operations. As a result of these changes, the PfP became an important part of the evolving cooperative European security system, even if it was seen as a transitional device by many of its participants.

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[21] Off-the-record interviews with the author.

Both allies and partners alike came to regard the EAPC as an important token of NATO's commitment to openness and cooperation, as well as to extending the benefits of peace and stability to all European nations. However, given the large EAPC membership, formal meetings consisted largely of set-piece statements by participating governments. This provided an opportunity for participants to put their national positions on the record, but hardly a chance for discussion and dialogue. As with many other international organizations, opportunities for discussion and dialogue became part of "corridor" conversations and informal meetings on the margins of the scheduled EAPC sessions.

In recognition of their special significance and unique circumstances, two countries—Russia and Ukraine—were given additional opportunities for partnership and dialogue with NATO. As noted above, when the Soviet Union was dissolved in December 1991, the NATO countries set the goal of developing a partnership with Russia, the primary successor state to the former Soviet Union. Russia became a founding member of the NACC, and the partnership became more formal when Russia and NATO agreed in June 1994 to develop a "broad, enhanced dialogue and cooperation."[22]

Despite the generally positive development of Russia-NATO cooperation in the 1990s, the issue of NATO enlargement seriously troubled the relationship. In response to the strong desires of new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe to join NATO, the allies agreed in December 1994 to study the "why and how" of NATO enlargement. Most Russians viewed this and subsequent steps toward enlargement as a threat to Russian prestige, or at least as NATO rubbing salt, so to speak, in Russia's open wounds.

Russia's negative attitude toward NATO enlargement reflected feelings about the alliance that had been reinforced by four decades of Soviet propaganda. Even many sophisticated Russians found it difficult to understand the fundamental differences between NATO, a voluntary alliance among independent countries, and the Warsaw Pact, where membership was imposed by the Soviet Union. Expansion of NATO's role and membership meant that US power and influence would stretch ever closer to Russia's borders, displacing what had been Soviet/Russian zones of influence in Central and Eastern Europe. Some Russian officials believed that when Moscow agreed to facilitate German reunification, the Soviet Union had been promised that NATO would not expand up to its borders—a claim rejected by Bush administration officials who represented the United States in the negotiations.[23] The Russian perception may help explain Moscow's strong reaction to NATO's enlargement plans. The bottom line, of course, was that even if

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[22] NATO produced the Partnership for Peace Framework Document (available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_24469.htm?mode=pressrelease) in January 1994. Russia signed the document on 22 June 1994.

[23] Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 133–34. Cf. the chapter by Wolfgang Mueller, "The USSR and the Reunification of Germany," in this volume, 321–53.

the negotiations had led the Russians to such a conclusion, no such commitment had ever been formally made.

In the mid-1990s, the NATO allies decided that it was important to respond to the enthusiastic desire of the new democracies to join NATO while at the same time trying to overcome Russian opposition with a cooperative embrace. NATO's attempt to reassure the Russians took several forms. The NATO allies pledged that they had "no intention, no plan, and no reason" to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members. They also said that they planned no permanent, substantial deployments of NATO soldiers in any new member states. Perhaps most importantly, the allies authorized NATO Secretary General Javier Solana to act on behalf of the member states to negotiate a more permanent cooperative relationship with Russia. These negotiations, guided by Strobe Talbott and other US officials, resulted in the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation. This document was signed in Paris in May 1997, just before NATO announced its decision to invite three former Warsaw Pact nations to join NATO.

The Founding Act set a large agenda of topics on which NATO and Russia would attempt to collaborate.[24] It created a Permanent Joint Council (NATO nations plus Russia) as a framework for continuing consultations. Creating this channel for communications was an important step, but there were limits on its effectiveness. From the beginning, there was a tension between the Russian desire to use the forum to "participate" in NATO decision making, while the NATO allies sought to ensure that the Permanent Joint Council remained a place for consultations rather than co-decision making. This would change in 2001, when, following the terrorist attacks on the United States and evident Russian support for the war on terrorism, NATO and Russia moved toward a new relationship that was to give Russia a "vote" on those issues that NATO decided to handle jointly with Moscow.

NATO's relationship with Ukraine began and has continued in an entirely different manner than that with Russia. As the next most significant independent country that had formerly been a Soviet republic, Ukraine gave up the nuclear weapons deployed on its territory by the Soviet Union in return for Western financial assistance and the tacit promise of acceptance into the Western community of nations. By the mid-1990s, many in the Ukraine elite quietly aspired to eventual membership in both NATO and the European Union (EU). However, political divisions in the country called for a cautious approach. Ukraine did not ask to be considered for NATO membership, but strongly supported the process of NATO enlargement. The NATO allies responded to Ukraine's aspirations at their summit meeting in Madrid on 8 July 1997, agreeing with Ukraine on a

[24] See the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, 27 May 1997, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm (accessed 30 April 2013).

Ukraine-NATO Charter on Distinctive Partnership. This established an intensified consultative and cooperative relationship between NATO and Ukraine.[25]

In subsequent years, Russia has worked hard to ensure its future political and economic influence in Ukraine, leaving Ukraine's future orientation and role in Europe open to question.

## The enlargement process

NATO has expended considerable time and energy developing or supporting a variety of cooperative security arrangements in its relations with non-members. It is, however, the membership track of NATO's outreach program that has generated the greatest controversy. Although the January 1994 Brussels summit deferred decisions on enlargement and put the PfP forward as an outreach vehicle, the allies did agree to keep the membership door open.

The drafters in 1949 of the North Atlantic Treaty anticipated that other European states might subsequently wish to join the alliance. The Treaty's Article 10 says that the allies may, "by unanimous agreement, invite any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty."[26] The original twelve members were, over the years, joined by Greece and Turkey, Germany, and then Spain.

At the NATO summit meeting held in Brussels on 10–11 January 1994, allied leaders said that the commitment in Article 10 would be honored, and that NATO's door would be opened to qualified candidates. The allies began a study in December 1994 of the "why and how" of NATO enlargement. More importantly, President Clinton left the Brussels summit apparently ready to move on to the next step, even as those who favored a go-slow approach were reassured that the PfP would buy time and defer tough decisions on enlargement.

On a visit to Warsaw in July 1994, in an interview with Polish television, Clinton pushed the issue further down the road, saying,

> I want to make it clear that, in my view, NATO will be expanded, that it should be expanded, and that it should be expanded as a way of strengthening security and not conditioned on events in any other country or some new threat arising to NATO. […] I think that a timetable should be developed, but I can't do that alone.[27]

Clinton's comments affirmed that NATO should be enlarged because it was the right thing to do. The Warsaw remarks were taken by pro-enlargement officials in Washington as a green light to move ahead. According to Goldgeier, a

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[25] For an excellent collection of analyses of Ukraine's role in European security, see David E. Albright and Semyen J. Appatov, *Ukraine and European Security* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999).

[26] See http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm (accessed 24 April 2013).

[27] Goldgeier, *Not Whether but When*, 68.

number of factors combined to get enlargement on track inside the US administration. These included the appointment as Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian affairs of Richard Holbrooke, who had become an enlargement believer during his time as US ambassador to Germany, the shift of Strobe Talbott from enlargement skeptic to enlargement supporter, and the appointment of several enlargement enthusiasts to key positions on the National Security Council staff. Alexander (Sandy) Vershbow, for example, was to direct European affairs, and Daniel Fried began to cover Central and Eastern European policy. While the Pentagon remained largely skeptical, administration policy began moving slowly but surely toward an active enlargement approach.[28]

Meanwhile, the oppositional Republicans took control of the US House of Representatives in the fall 1994 mid-term elections. The new leaders of the House brought with them a "Contract with America," which listed their policy priorities. Perhaps the only priority on which Clinton and the Republicans could agree was the Contract's advocacy of NATO enlargement. The Contract's enlargement position suggested that despite disparate motives, NATO enlargement might enjoy a fairly wide bipartisan base of support in Congress.

In Brussels, the necessary NATO work on enlargement moved ahead. In September 1995, the allies released the "Study on NATO Enlargement," which explained why enlargement was warranted.[29] It also drew up a road map that was to be followed by countries seeking membership on their way to the open door. The report said that enlargement would support NATO's broader goal of enhancing security and extending stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic area, and would support the process of democratization and the establishment of market economic systems in candidate countries. The report also proposed that enlargement would threaten no one, because NATO would remain a defensive alliance whose fundamental purpose was to preserve peace and provide security to its members.

With regard to the "how" of enlargement, the allies established a framework of principles to follow, which included the requirement that new members assume all the rights and responsibilities of current members and accept the policies and procedures in effect at the time of their entry. No country was to enter with the goal of closing the door behind it, that is, using its vote as a member to block other candidates. Countries were to resolve ethnic disputes or external territorial disputes before joining NATO, and candidates were to be able to contribute to the missions of the alliance. Additionally, no country outside the alliance (e.g., Russia) would have the right to interfere with the process. In this area, the report drew on a set of principles that had been articulated earlier in 1995 by Secretary of Defense William Perry (which had become known as the "Perry Principles"),

[28] Ibid., 69–70.

[29] NATO, "Study on NATO Enlargement" (Brussels: NATO, 1995).

and on further enlargement analyses by the Rand team of Asmus, Kugler, and Larrabee under their contract with the German Ministry of Defense.[30]

The NATO allies made clear that one of the key factors influencing readiness for membership would be an applicant country's ability to work within NATO's Integrated Command Structure. NATO military leaders were expected to help applicant countries prepare themselves to become effective military contributors to the alliance, adding another important task to NATO's military mission profile. During 1996–97, NATO officials conducted intensified dialogues with twelve countries that had expressed an active interest in NATO membership. The candidacies of all countries were thoroughly examined from a wide range of perspectives. It was clear, however, that the United States would play the decisive role in the question of whom to invite for the first round of enlargement.

Bringing new members into the alliance constitutes an "amendment" to the North Atlantic Treaty and, as such, must be ratified by all NATO members. All in all, NATO enlargement had not been a major issue in Congress, but to the extent that there was interest, there was sustained bipartisan support for NATO and for bringing in new members.[31] This support included the passage of the NATO Participation Act of 1994 (Title II of P.L. 103-447),[32] which backed NATO enlargement as a way to encourage the development of democratic institutions and free-market structures in the new democracies. The low-intensity but fairly consistent support was a good foundation for collaboration between the White House and the Senate, a collaboration that was to be critical for eventually ratifying any enlargement decision.

In 1996, the private, nonprofit Committee to Expand NATO was established to support the enlargement cause. This group, which involved an impressive collection of corporate leaders, former civilian officials, and retired senior military officers, largely from the ranks of the Republican Party, actively courted congressional support for enlargement and played a major role in the lobbying effort on behalf of the initiative over the next two years. As well, 1996 was a presidential election year in the United States, but once again, foreign policy was not a big issue in the campaign.

On the issue of NATO enlargement, President Clinton and his Republican opponent, Senator Robert Dole, mainly competed to be seen as the strongest supporter of enlargement. Dole criticized the president for being too attentive to

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[30] Goldgeier, *Not Whether but When*, 94–95.

[31] At the time, I was the leading NATO expert at the Congressional Research Service and a source for Congress of objective and nonpartisan analysis on NATO issues. When the NATO Observer Group was established in the Senate to manage the process of NATO enlargement, I was asked to serve as an adviser to this group, as well as to be the Congressional Research Service liaison on NATO enlargement issues to both the Senate Observer Group and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

[32] See the NATO Participation Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-447), http://www.fas.org/man/nato/congress/1997/csce_nato/part09.htm (accessed 30 April 2013).

Russia's views: Clinton had worked hard to reassure Russian president Boris Yeltsin that legitimate Russian interests would not be threatened, despite keeping the process of enlargement moving ahead. Dole's criticism, however, had almost no political impact, and most observers saw very little difference between the Republican and Democratic positions on the issue. It was yet another sign of the bipartisan nature of support for bringing new members into NATO, although it certainly did not guarantee that the approach taken by the president and the alliance would win the necessary two-thirds majority in the Senate.

The election campaign provided an opportunity for the administration to move ahead decisively. President Yeltsin had survived his reelection campaign in July 1996 and was no longer in imminent danger of being destabilized by the US position on enlargement. In September 1996, Clinton called for a NATO summit in 1997 to name the first post-Cold War candidates for NATO membership. In October 1996, Clinton told an audience in Detroit that "by 1999, NATO's fiftieth anniversary and ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the first group of countries we invite to join should be full-fledged members of NATO."[33]

The prominent use of the enlargement issue during Clinton's campaign visits to the Midwest—home to many Central European immigrant communities—was subsequently cited by opponents of enlargement in the United States and by skeptics in Europe as evidence that the US position was driven primarily by domestic politics. The history of administration policy, as documented by Goldgeier and observed personally by me, suggests a different conclusion. The president's commitment to enlargement grew much more fundamentally out of his acceptance of, and belief in, fairly basic Wilsonian principles of international relations: promoting peace and stability through inclusive and cooperative relations among democratic states. Ethnic communities in the United States provided important support for both the president and the issue. Had enlargement not made sense in terms of basic US values and interests, it would have withered on the vine, despite the enthusiasm of Polish and other Central European lobby groups.

By the end of 1996 and Clinton's successful reelection effort, collaboration between the White House and Congress had become more serious. The White House was fully aware that if the Senate felt it had not participated directly in the enlargement process, the issue could fail to gain the required two-thirds majority. This could occur even if two-thirds of the Senate leaned toward enlargement, as appeared to be the case. The administration was sensitive to the fact that President Woodrow Wilson had failed to win US involvement in the League of Nations because he had not made an effort to get Senate support. The Clinton administration therefore followed President Harry Truman's strategy for Senate consideration of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1948–49, a strategy that

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[33] William J. Clinton, "Remarks by the President to the People of Detroit," 22 October 1996, http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1996/s961022a.htm (accessed 23 April 2013).

brought key senators into the process early enough to win their commitment but not too early to complicate the policymaking process prematurely.

As the White House began developing working relationships with critical Capitol Hill staff, a related but more immediate question arose: To decide which countries should be invited when the NATO "enlargement" summit convened in Madrid, Spain, on 8 July 1997. There was virtually unanimous agreement in the administration and among the European allies that the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland would be invited. Only Poland would add significantly to the military strength of the alliance. These three probably could, however, be sold to the Senate as strategically important and politically acceptable.

From Germany's point of view, these three countries satisfied its desire to move away from the "front lines" in Central Europe. Being surrounded by NATO members would give Germany a political and military buffer between it and Russia. The United Kingdom preferred to keep the package as small as possible, not being a big fan of the process of enlargement in any case, and concerned that too rapid or large an increase in membership would weaken the alliance. However, France, Italy, and some other allies wanted to give enlargement a southern focus as well, and they thus favored including Slovenia and Romania in the first tranche.

Several members of the Senate, led by Senator Joseph Biden (Democrat, Delaware), ranking minority member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator William V. Roth Jr. (Republican, Delaware), favored the inclusion of Slovenia—a small former Yugoslav republic—to create a land bridge between existing NATO territory (Italy) and Hungary. The Clinton administration decided that, despite the senatorial sentiments for Slovenia, the core package of three candidates would be a sufficient challenge for the process of ratification in the United States, as well as for absorption by the alliance.

Romania, with an important geostrategic position in Southeastern Europe and with substantial military forces, lagged far behind the three core candidates in political and economic development. Slovenia could be kept as a given for the next round. The administration came to an internal consensus on putting just three candidates forward. Even though intensive discussions had been held at NATO and among NATO allies in preparation for the Madrid meeting, the US choice of three and only three was publicly revealed in a Pentagon press briefing by Secretary of Defense William Cohen in mid-June. Cohen's suggestion that, as far as the US government was concerned, the case was closed by the White House, implied that a NATO decision had been made before NATO consultations had in fact been completed.[34]

The way the United States appeared to close the door to further discussion stunned the allies and was instantly interpreted by the French and others as just

[34] Philip Shenon, "U.S., Defying NATO Allies, Insists NATO Limit Expansion to 3," *New York Times*, 13 June 1997, A6.

one more sign of hegemonic US behavior. The United States had always been "first among equals" in NATO, where decisions are taken by consensus but where US preferences almost always carried the day. Nonetheless, the allies resented the cavalier US approach to the consultation process. The challenge for the Clinton administration and for administrations before and after was how to be a hegemon without acting like one. The administration had now made the mistake of acting like one.

The Madrid meeting endorsed the US preference, but not without significant grumbling by French president Jacques Chirac and others. The allies found much to complain about, including the fact that the United States wanted seats in the session for US senators who had been brought along with the US summit delegation to help ensure a favorable ratification process. At Madrid, to help smooth the many feathers ruffled by US actions, other candidate states were encouraged to continue to work toward eventual membership by following the guidelines laid out in the "Study on NATO Enlargement," and to develop bilateral cooperation with NATO through the PfP program.[35]

The allies reaffirmed their commitment to the open-door policy, in which all European countries meeting the conditions of Article 10 and the guidelines of the study could be considered for eventual membership. The next task for NATO was to negotiate the terms of entry with the candidate states. The Clinton administration, however, had its own challenging task: to convince at least two-thirds of the members of the Senate that NATO enlargement was in US interests.

The administration had already begun preparing the ground. A respected former Clinton White House aide and expert on congressional–executive relations, Jeremy Rosner, was brought back to serve as coordinator of the ratification process with both a State Department position and staff, as well as the status of special adviser to the president. The administration had been wise to include senators in the Madrid delegation, but now the serious lobbying work would begin.

In the Senate, the Committee on Foreign Relations, chaired by a politically conservative Jesse Helms, would have primary jurisdiction over the legislation, with the Senate Committee on Armed Services also playing an important advisory role. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (Republican, Missouri) had already created the Senate NATO Observer Group, chaired by Senators Biden and Roth, designed to help manage the process in support of the Senate's advice and consent role.

In the summer of 1997, even though it appeared that Rosner and his administration team were starting with a good core of support in the Senate, it became clear that they would need a strong lobbying effort to ensure final victory. In the course of a luncheon meeting in August hosted by a Scandinavian embassy offi-

[35] Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation, 8 July 1997, http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-081e.htm (accessed 30 April 2013).

cer, Rosner and I had a few moments to discuss his challenge. I said that I presumed that President Clinton would be personally involved in the lobbying effort. Rosner assured me that, in the coming months, the president would invite senators to the White House for dinners and private meetings that were focused on lining up the required votes.

However, despite the fact that Clinton had played an important part in getting NATO enlargement on the US and NATO agenda, the fall of 1997 and spring of 1998 found him increasingly caught up in impeachment proceedings against him in Congress. He never conducted the lobbying dinners and meetings Rosner had reasonably expected. At the numerous official events marking various stages of the ratification process, the president was present and involved, but one had to wonder whether his mind was not on other problems.

Opponents of enlargement in the United States, indeed until the Senate vote on 30 April 1998, complained that the issue had not been given the kind of serious attention that was warranted by such an important national commitment. It is true that the issue was not particularly exciting for the public at large. Public opinion polls showed broad, but somewhat shallow support for enlargement. The positive numbers seemed to reflect the public's positive image of NATO and of the idea that the US approach to international cooperation should be inclusive. However, a large percentage of those queried in polls showed a lack of basic knowledge about what was going on. For example, a large number of respondents in some polls believed that Russia was already a NATO member.[36]

The debate that raged on opinion and editorial pages of major American newspapers was largely conducted among the academic and policy elite and was not of great interest to the American public. Indeed, most foreign policy issues, such as NATO enlargement, are debated and decided largely by the elite public. The public at large is moved to action and involvement only by more headline-making events, particularly those with imminent life-or-death consequences.

In the deliberative body that had to debate and decide the issue, however, there was a thorough and serious process of consideration[37] in keeping with the Senate's role as a "partner" to the transatlantic bargain. Despite the president's "absence"

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[36] See, for example, the results of polls conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, which found that support for enlargement, ran more than three to one in favor (63 percent for, 18 percent opposed); however, only 10 percent of the public could identify even one of the potential new members. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, America's Place in the World II, 19 October 1997, http://people-press.org/report/102/americas-place-in-the-world-ii (accessed 24 April 2013).

[37] A partial record of Senate activities related to NATO enlargement, along with the Foreign Relations Committee's Resolution of Ratification and the separate views of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence can be found in US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic" (105th Congress, 2nd session, Exec. Report 105-14, 6 March 1998).

from the process,[38] the work of the NATO Observer Group moved into high gear, in close collaboration with the administration. The process relied heavily on teamwork between Rosner and key Senate staffers, particularly Senate Foreign Relations Committee staffer Steve Biegen, Ian Brzezinski, who worked for Senator Roth, and Michael Haltzel, who worked for Senator Biden. Other staffers, including Ken Myers of Senator Lugar's staff and David Stevens, who worked for Senator Jon Kyl (Republican, Arizona), played key roles in the period leading up to the Senate debate.

The Senate NATO Observer Group, almost completely out of public view, organized a steady stream of classified and unclassified briefings and meetings in the course of 1997–98. Some of these sessions were intended largely for administration officials to communicate information to Senate staff. Others provided opportunities for members to meet with senior NATO-nation military officials. One critical session of the NATO Observer Group brought senators together with the foreign ministers of the candidate countries. The meeting appeared to be a turning point for at least one senator who had been skeptical about enlargement. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (Republican, Texas) had profound concerns about the plan and examined the issue carefully, asking her staff, with the help of the Congressional Research Service, to research a number of enlargement issues. At the session with the candidate country foreign ministers, however, it became clear to this observer that Senator Hutchison's feeling of respect and admiration for the accomplishments of the three new democracies would likely bring her into the "yea" column. It did.

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a series of public hearings in October and November 1997 in which both supporters and opponents of enlargement were invited to address the committee.[39] Proponents and critics of enlargement in the Senate had their staffs investigate the major issues, whereby a wide range of outside experts were called in to brief senators and staff, and Congressional Research Service analysts were engaged in hundreds of hours of support. One of the most sensitive challenges for Jeremy Rosner and other administration officials was to hold together a coalition of Senate supporters and potential supporters who were motivated by substantially different assumptions and objectives.

Supporters ranged from conservative Republicans to liberal Democrats. Senator Helms and a few other conservative Republican senators saw NATO enlargement first and foremost as an insurance policy against a resurgent Russia once again laying claim to the sovereignty of Central and East European states. Helms was particularly interested in how the administration saw the future of NATO-Russia

[38] This aspect of the ratification process went completely unnoted in Goldgeier's otherwise excellent account of NATO enlargement decision making.

[39] US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "The Debate on NATO Enlargement" (105th Congress, 1st session, 7, 9, 22, 28, and 30 Oct. and 5 Nov. 1997, S. Hrg. 105-285).

relations. In the process of introducing Secretary of State Madeleine Albright at the committee's first enlargement hearing, Helms cautioned, "NATO's relations with Russia must be restrained by the reality that Russia's future commitment to peace and democracy, as of this date, is far from certain. In fact, I confess a fear that the United States' overture toward Russia may have already gone a bit far."[40]

In addition, many senators had not agreed to the "new NATO" (in which members cooperated to deal with new security challenges, including peace operations in the Balkans), and still believed that the "old NATO" (focused primarily on Article 5, the commitment to assist a fellow member that has come under attack) was what was still needed. On the other hand, some senators found the old NATO to be of decreasing relevance and were more interested in the idea of increasing the number of democratic states that could help deal with new security challenges in and beyond Europe. Others (e.g., Senator Barbara Mikulski, Democrat, Maryland) were motivated most strongly by the fact that Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary had thrown off communism and committed themselves to a democratic path. How, such proponents asked, could they be denied membership in the Western system, of which NATO was a core part?

The Senate opponents of enlargement were also very diverse, both politically and philosophically. Senator John Warner (Republican, Virginia) became one of the most severe critics of enlargement. He believed that too many members would make it impossible to manage the alliance, dooming it to future irrelevance since timely consensual decisions with nineteen-plus members would be very difficult to make. Senator Warner's attempt to impose a formal pause on the enlargement process was rejected, but a number of senators who had voted for enlargement voted with Warner in favor of a pause. Some forty-one senators voted for the Warner amendment, enough to block a two-thirds majority of the Senate for the next candidate(s) if they were all to vote against.

The most strongly committed enlargement opponent, Senator John Ashcroft (Republican, Missouri), simply believed that the United States was already overburdened and that NATO enlargement would perpetuate a responsibility that had long ago outlived its utility. Among the opponents, Ashcroft's position came closest to representing a neo-isolationist stance. His perspective related in part to concerns about the potential cost of NATO enlargement. At one point, it seemed that the question of cost would become the most difficult issue in the Senate debate. However, conflicting and confusing estimates of the cost blurred the issue and made it a virtual non-factor in the final debate. Ashcroft's attempt to amend the resolution of ratification to mandate a narrow interpretation of NATO's future mission was defeated through deft parliamentary procedures on the Senate floor. Instead, the Senate passed an amendment offered by Senator Jon Kyl (Republican, Arizona) that affirmed the continuing importance of NATO's collective defense role, allowing that NATO was now useful in non-Article 5 missions as well.

[40] US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "The Debate on NATO Enlargement," 2.

The other main school of thought motivating opponents of enlargement was concern about its impact on relations with Russia. From the other side of the political spectrum, George Kennan, the highly respected Russia expert who played a major role in developing the US containment strategy toward the Soviet Union, opined[41] that NATO enlargement would be a disaster for U.S.-Russian relations. Some members, including Senators Paul Wellstone (Democrat, Minnesota) and Patrick Leahy (Democrat, Vermont), were to cast their votes against enlargement largely on the basis of Kennan's warning.[42] Another opponent, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Democrat, New York), argued that the European Union, not NATO, should take the lead in including the new democracies in Western institutions. After several abortive attempts to organize a debate and final vote in the Senate, Senator Lott devoted the entire day of 30 April to the enlargement issue. The opponents, led by Senators Warner, Robert Smith (Republican, New Hampshire), Moynihan, Ashcroft, and Wellstone, put on a strong show of their concerns. As Senator Helms was not well, Senator Biden managed the bill for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with single-minded energy and enthusiasm that left some of his democratic colleagues standing impatiently, waiting to be given the floor. Several senators made impressive contributions to the advocate's side, including Mikulski, Joseph Lieberman (Democrat, Connecticut), and Gordon Smith (Republican, Oregon). The decisive vote was taken late that evening. At the urging of Senator Robert Byrd (Democrat, West Virginia), in his role as the unofficial guardian of the procedures and practices of the Senate, all senators took their seats and then rose when called to deliver their vote. Byrd suggested that the

> Senate would make a much better impression [… if senators would] learn to sit in their seats to answer the rollcall [… rather than] what we have been accustomed to seeing down here in the well, which looks like the floor of a stock market.[43]

The Senate, seated with the decorum requested by Senator Byrd, voted eighty to nineteen to give the Senate's advice and consent to ratification of the membership of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in NATO. The missing vote was that of Senator Kyl, an enlargement supporter who had left Washington on an official overseas trip a few hours before the vote was taken, reassured that his side would win by a clear margin.

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41 George F. Kennan, "A Fateful Error," *New York Times*, 5 February 1997, A23.

42 Following one Senate NATO Observer Group session in the weeks before the Senate vote, Wellstone engaged me in a discussion about the Russia issue. I attempted to provide a balanced perspective, but suggested that Kennan's prediction was probably exaggerated. It was clear from that discussion, however, that Wellstone's vote probably would be with the enlargement opponents.

43 Even though the Standing Order of the Senate says that "votes shall be cast from assigned desk," roll-call votes are routinely taken with senators walking into the chamber and milling about the clerk's desk until their names are called. Byrd's comments can be found in *Congressional Record* (105th Cong., 2nd sess., 30 April 1998), S3906.

Although enlargement supporters managed to beat back all potential "killer" amendments, the number of votes garnished by Senator Warner's proposed "pause" in the enlargement process reflected an important sentiment. Few enlargement advocates were anxious to take on a new round in the near future. Even Jeremy Rosner, who had dedicated so much time and energy to NATO enlargement, judged that the system would not be able to support another round until the first candidates had demonstrated their successful entry into the NATO system.[44]

Some enlargement proponents, however, thought it important to keep the process moving ahead. The first package had left aside Slovenia, a small but relatively attractive candidate. Senator William V. Roth Jr., one of the leading forces behind the enlargement process, argued that the process should "be carefully paced, not paused." In a special report for the North Atlantic Assembly (now the NATO Parliamentary Assembly) in September 1998, for which the present author was rapporteur, Roth proposed that when the allies met in Washington in 1999 to celebrate NATO's fiftieth anniversary, "Slovenia should be invited to begin negotiations aimed at accession to the North Atlantic Treaty. In addition to reflecting Slovenia's preparedness for membership, the invitation would demonstrate that the enlargement door remained open without overloading the enlargement process."[45] Senator Roth's advocacy was considered by and had some supporters in the Clinton administration. But the administration ultimately decided that it was too early to move ahead with new candidates. That step was left for the next US administration to handle.

The European allies were relieved that the United States did not want to push ahead immediately with another round of enlargement. The strongest European proponent of enlargement, Germany, had accomplished its main objectives with the accession of the first three candidates. As it no longer stood on NATO's front lines looking east, it no longer displayed such great enthusiasm for the enlargement process. Most of the other allies did not look forward to negotiating the next round, in which the potential candidates would likely include one or more of the three Baltic states: former Soviet republics whose NATO membership was strongly opposed by Moscow.

At the fiftieth-anniversary NATO summit in Washington from 23 to 25 April 1999, all aspiring candidates for NATO membership were given some cause for hope, even though Slovenia was left standing outside the door. The leaders pledged that "NATO will continue to welcome new members in a position to further the principles of the Treaty and contribute to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area."[46] The allies created the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which promised cooperation beyond the possibilities in the PfP and, perhaps more

[44] Discussion with the author, May 1998.

[45] William V. Roth Jr., *NATO in the 21st Century* (Brussels: North Atlantic Assembly, 1998), 53.

[46] Washington Summit Communique, "An Alliance for the 21st Century," 24 April 1999, http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-064e.htm (accessed 30 April 2013).

important, feedback from NATO concerning their progress toward membership. Nine aspirants—Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia—initially signed up for the program. These nine were promised that NATO would formally review the enlargement process again no later than 2002.

According to NATO, "The MAP gives substance to NATO's commitment to keep its door open. However, participation in the MAP does not guarantee future membership, nor does the Plan consist simply of a checklist for aspiring countries to fulfill."[47] What MAP did do, however, was to provide "concrete feedback and advice from NATO to aspiring countries on their own preparations directed at achieving future membership." The MAP did not substitute for full participation in NATO's PfP Planning and Review Process, which, in NATO's view, was "essential because it allows aspirant countries to develop interoperability with NATO forces and to prepare their force structures and capabilities for possible future membership."[48]

In 2000, with the United States preparing to elect its next president, the man who would make the next critical decisions on enlargement, the nine candidate states joined together in support of a "big bang" approach to enlargement. Meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 18–19 May 2000, the nine foreign ministers pledged that their countries would work for entry into NATO in 2002 as a group, rather than compete against each other for a favored position. Both major presidential candidates in the United States, Vice President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush, sent letters of support to the session.[49]

With his close victory in the November 2000 election, it was Bush who would take on the challenge of leading the alliance toward its enlargement decision. In a speech in Warsaw on 15 June 2001, President George W. Bush outlined his vision of a Europe "whole, free, and at peace," and said that all new European democracies, "from the Baltic to the Black Sea and all that lie between," should be able to join European institutions, especially NATO.[50] Bush's declaration opened the way for a large second enlargement round, one that might have been expected to be controversial, but which turned out to be far less contentious than the first one.

Prior to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, political interest in and support for NATO's second enlargement round could not be compared to that for the first round. President Bush said that his administration was a strong supporter of

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[47] See for example, NATO Office of Information and Press, *NATO Handbook* (Brussels: NATO 2001), 65. Cf. http://www.opsroom.org/documents/handbook.pdf (accessed 30 April 2013).

[48] NATO, "NATO's Membership Action Plan," NATO on-line-library fact sheet (Brussels: NATO, 2000), http://www.fas.org/man/nato/natodocs/99042451.htm (accessed 30 April 2013).

[49] William Drozdiak, "9 NATO Candidates Pledge to Join in a 'Big Bang' Bid," *International Herald Tribune*, 20–21 May 2000, 1.

[50] President Bush Speech in Warsaw, CNN.com./World, 15 June 2001, http://archives.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/06/15/bush.warsaw.trans/index.html (accessed 30 April 2013).

enlargement, but the administration had no eager European partner on this issue. Germany, the key European architect of the first round, had less of a strategic stake in the next stages and, until late in 2001, had been reluctant to upset Moscow. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States, some observers questioned the wisdom of moving ahead with NATO enlargement. However, within a few months of the attacks it appeared that a consensus was growing in favor of a major enlargement initiative, when allied leaders meet in the Czech Republic in November 2002.

In Prague, a "big bang" enlargement process was initiated. During the Bush administration's two terms, seven additional countries joined NATO. In 2004, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia became members. In 2009, Albania and Croatia joined the alliance, while Macedonia was left invited but standing outside the door, pending a resolution of its differences with Greece over the country's legal name.

With these states coming on board, the enlargement process seemed to be nearing its end. Ukraine and Georgia were waiting in the wings, Serbia remained somewhat defiant, and other states remained "partners" of various sorts. The question of NATO membership for Europe's former neutrals who are already members of the European Union (Austria, Finland, Ireland and Sweden) remains open, and is probably dependent on the quality of future US leadership and Russian tendencies toward old Soviet behavior.

## Postlude and consequences

The NATO enlargement process has been "successful" in helping bring new European democracies into the Euro-Atlantic community. It has become a normal, but not guaranteed, step for the countries that have joined NATO subsequently to become members of the European Union, completing their integration into the community. However, the process has left unanswered a number of questions concerning the future of European security, and concerning NATO in that future.

One question is whether shortcomings in military reform and defense improvements of the new members suggest that leverage on candidate states disappears when they become members.

If countries that do not fully meet the military guidelines for membership laid out in the NATO enlargement study[51] are nonetheless invited to join, does this

[51] In 2001, a Rand Corporation study evaluated the qualifications of potential candidates and produced the following conclusions: "Of the MAP states, Slovenia and Slovakia largely meet the criteria outlined by NATO [in the 1995 "Study on NATO Enlargement"] and their accession poses no major strategic problems for NATO. Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia are advanced in terms of meeting NATO's preconditions, but the strategic ramifications of their accession [vis-à-vis Russia] loom large. Bulgaria and Romania have the opposite problem of being unable to meet NATO's preconditions, even though the strategic implications of their accession are not prob-

imply that NATO is becoming "more political," making military capabilities of potential members less relevant?

Has the increase in members had any discernible effect on NATO's decision-making ability? Is there a magic number beyond which NATO's consensus-based deliberative process will become unworkable? Has that number already been surpassed?

To what extent can the tendencies toward authoritarian rule in Russia be blamed on NATO enlargement? Russian officials have used NATO's expanding membership as justification for its foreign and domestic policies, but to what extent are those policies driven by other factors, primarily related to the perceived need to hold Russia together? What are the likely consequences for relations with Russia of various possible enlargement scenarios?

How will further enlargement interact with other policy initiatives; for example, attempts by the United States and NATO to develop a collaborative approach with Moscow on nuclear missile reductions and ballistic missile defenses?

Will enlargement be linked in any way to the process of further reforms within NATO to make it more relevant in the struggle against international terrorism?

In spite of such questions, the consequences of the decisions taken in the 1990s concerning NATO enlargement, from an American perspective, appear largely positive so far. The dual NATO/EU enlargement process has stimulated reform and democratization in former Soviet bloc states and republics. As former members of the Warsaw Pact have joined NATO, they have become strong supporters of the transatlantic link, and have moved toward and became members of the European Union.

The leadership in Moscow, seeking to solidify control and keep Russia from coming apart at the seams, has complained about NATO enlargement and its consequences loudly and frequently. The bottom line in the analysis of the NATO–Russia relationship is that enlargement has troubled but not destroyed a cooperative relationship between the alliance and Russia: it did not lead to a "new cold war." Political developments in Russia—unconnected to NATO's enlargement process—have turned out to be far more important to the relationship than the addition of former Warsaw Pact allies and the Baltic republics to the alliance.

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lematic. Macedonia and Albania are least advanced in meeting NATO's preconditions and their prospects for membership are distinctly long term. Of the European Union members currently not in NATO, Austria is in a good position to join if it chooses to do so. To a lesser extent, so is Sweden. Finnish membership, however, would entail some difficulties because of the strategic cost it would impose on NATO [also with regard to relations with Russia]. Thomas S. Szayna, "NATO Enlargement 2000–2015: Implications for Defense Planning," Rand Research Brief 62 (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 2001). The brief summarizes the analysis completed by Szayna in *NATO Enlargement 2000–2015: Determinants and Implications for Defense Planning and Shaping* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 2001). See also Jeffrey Simon, *Roadmap to NATO Accession: Preparing for Membership* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 2001).

Russia's future nonetheless remains critically important to the NATO allies. Neither the United States nor any European ally wishes to see Russia re-emerge as a challenge to Europe's peace and stability. NATO policies have therefore for the most part been designed to invite Russia's constructive involvement in European and global security affairs, while at the same time critiquing Moscow's recent tendencies to reverse the process of democratization and liberalization that began under Gorbachev.

Moreover, NATO has not been brought down by the process of enlargement and can still function as a framework for coordinating responses to the security needs of its members. This will remain true as long as the allies—individually and collectively, and most importantly the United States—continue to believe that such cooperation is in their best interests. The biggest challenge to alliance members, old and new, is therefore not Russia, nor even terrorism, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran or the Middle East more generally, but rather that of maintaining sufficient transatlantic cohesion to deal with these and other issues effectively.

John O’Brennan

# EU ENLARGEMENT, 1989–2009

On 1 May 2004 at a historic, if understated, signing ceremony in Dublin, the European Union (EU) formally recognized the accession to the Union of ten new states. These were the Mediterranean ‘micro’ states of Cyprus and Malta, and eight new members from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)—the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia—which, for more than fifty years, had been cut off from the European integration process by virtue of their geopolitical imprisonment behind the Iron Curtain. The eastern enlargement was completed via the “coda enlargement,” with the accessions of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. At that point the EU completed its extraordinary and cumulative geographic sweep: the first enlargement in 1973 had been “west” (UK, Ireland and Denmark), the emphasis in the 1980s was on the “south” (Spain, Portugal and Greece); in the 1990s the Union had expanded “north” (Finland, Sweden and Austria).[1]

The history of European integration has been one of successive and successful enlargement rounds; “widening” has proved as potent a force as “deepening” in determining how the European Union has evolved as a postnational interstate and supra-state zone of peace and relative prosperity. For more than three decades after World War II, the Cold War stood in the way of the realization of the oft-stated ambition to unite “east” and “west” in a single European constellation of states. But with the demise of the Soviet Union and the loosening of its postwar grip on its Central and Eastern European satellite states in the wake of 1989’s so-called geopolitical earthquake, Jean Monnet’s ambition of a European construction stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals suddenly seemed possible. Thereafter, enlargement quickly made its way to the top of the European Union’s political agenda. Two decades later the EU has applied the successful model of “Europeanization East” in negotiating with states in the Western Balkans and Turkey. Thus a process which was instituted in the aftermath of the dramatic events that defined the 1989 revolutions and had brought the EU population up to 500 million people now sought to consolidate democracy and European integration in Europe’s most fragile and contested political space.

This chapter analyzes the European Union’s enlargement process in the two decades that followed the *annus mirabilis* of 1989. The revolutions opened up the

[1] I do not include the accession of the old East Germany (GDR), which formally acceded to the EU after its absorption into the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1991. This is considered a purely domestic matter. I treat the 2007 “coda” accessions of Bulgaria and Romania as part of the eastern enlargement round.

possibility of a vast and voluntary framework of economic and political integration extending to a genuinely pan-European scale. At the center of this historic project the European Union initially demonstrated great hesitation in response to what Jacques Delors termed the "acceleration of history," but gradually found its stride as the European Commission assumed responsibility for the practical implementation of, if not a utopian "Return to Europe" by "Yalta Europe," then a process whereby gradual "catch-up" could be pursued and adaptation of CEE states to existing legal and procedural norms of the European Union could be achieved.

### A rather hesitant and ungenerous response

For the Central and East European states emerging from the shadow of the Soviet monolith, the central aspiration was clear: a "Return to Europe"; the Europe from which, it was frequently asserted, these states had been forcibly separated for over four decades.[2] The new CEE governments from the beginning framed their endeavors and aspirations with explicit reference to the core values of the European integration.[3] They sought freedom, prosperity, and a secure place in the international community of nation states, and especially within European organizations. Opinion polls in the newly independent states pointed to massive popular support for "joining Europe."[4] For the European Union, however, the aftermath to the peaceful revolutions would produce a period of intrinsic questioning, firstly, of what the term "European" actually meant, and, more pragmatically, how the Community might respond to the CEE states' stated desire for membership of the club. For the first time, Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome, which simply stated that "any European State can apply" for membership of the Community, began to be seriously scrutinized.[5]

Even at this early stage, however, a division between EC/EU "drivers" (advocates) and "brakemen" (obstructionists) was in evidence. On one side British prime minister Margaret Thatcher unashamedly made the case for an EC commitment to enlarge. The question of what motivated her advocacy is usually answered with the assertion that she saw a wider Europe as a tool for slowing down the integration process and forestalling, if not derailing, any moves to embrace federalism. It was undoubtedly the case, however, that she also admired the

[2] The "Return to Europe" quickly emerged as the central foundational pillar upon which membership bids by the CEE states were framed around. The "Return" has been the subject of an exhaustive range of academic analysis. Iver B. Neumann, "European Identity, EU Expansion, and the Integration/Exclusion Nexus," *Alternatives* 23, no. 3 (1998): 397–416.

[3] Ulrich Sedelmeier and Helen Wallace, "Eastern Enlargement: Strategy or Second Thoughts?," in Helen and William Wallace, eds., *Policy-Making in the European Union*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 427–60, 433.

[4] See, for example: "Poll finds yearning to join Community," *The European*, 30 November 1990.

[5] "EC dilemma over Eastern Europe," *Guardian*, 10 April 1990.

CEE states for overthrowing communism and embracing the dual freedom of the market and the ballot box. At the Aspen Institute in Colorado on 5 August 1990 she called for a pan-European "Magna Carta."[6] Her foreign minister Douglas Hurd was equally supportive, as was John Major once he became prime minister.[7] For some European leaders, however, the idea of a speedy enlargement was just too big a leap of either the imagination or the purse strings. French president François Mitterrand, for example, declared in Prague that it would be several decades before the CEE states could become members of the Community.[8] The European Commission for its part took a middle path at this time, urging closer links but seeking to deflect the question of membership.[9] Later the Commission would become a key institutional driver of the process, whilst attending to the concerns of member states about one or other area of policy. This division between "drivers" and "brakemen" was one that would characterize enlargement politics for long periods to come.

The atmosphere was captured in the European Council's declarations at the Strasbourg summit in December 1989 where it specifically acknowledged a "special responsibility" for Central and Eastern Europe and suggested that the Community was the only point of reference of significance for the CEE states.[10] This was despite the fact that the revolutions had caught the Community off guard. For the EU this was as much a question of adjusting the cognitive and ideational, as well as the physical and geopolitical map of Europe. EU policy, according to Sedelmeier and Wallace, was characterized at this time by, amongst other things, hyperactivity, enthusiastic pledges of support, and consensus that the EU should play a leading role in the transformation process in CEE, even if it was unclear what this might involve.[11]

It seems instructive, however, that despite the soaring rhetoric from EU leaders, there emerged nothing like a Marshall Plan for Central and Eastern Europe.

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6 "Thatcher urges closer EC ties with East bloc nations," *Financial Times*, 15 November 1989; "Thatcher seeks commitment on EC entry for Eastern Europe," *Financial Times*, 6 August 1990; "Thatcher defies EC over East bloc members," *Independent on Sunday*, 12 August 1990.

7 See, for example: "Hurd pushes for EU expansion," *Guardian*, 1 May 1995; "Major promises to help Poland join the twelve," *Independent*, 27 May 1992. Major visited Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland between 26 and 28 May 1992 and pledged support for early entry to the Community.

8 "Eastern Europe 'threatens to destabilise EC'," *Financial Times*, 7 November 1990. On Mitterrand's position see Jean-Marc Trouille, "France, Germany and the Eastwards Expansion of the EU: Towards a Common *Ostpolitik*," in Hilary and Mike Ingham, eds., *EU Expansion to the East* (Cheltenham: Elgar, 2002), 50–64. On differences between Thatcher and Mitterrand, see "Umpteen ways to spell Europe," *Independent*, 22 September 1990.

9 "Delors frames EC 'Ostpolitik'," *Independent*, 16 November 1989; "Brussels urges wider links with East bloc," *Financial Times*, 2 February 1990.

10 European Council, Presidency Conclusions, Strasbourg European Council, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, EC 12 (1989).

11 Sedelmeier and Wallace, "Eastern Enlargement," 432.

Indeed EU funding levels to CEE in the two decades that followed compared very unfavorably even with the "poorest of the rich" within the EU—Ireland, Portugal, Greece and Spain. The Delors Package of 1988 had significantly expanded the existing redistributive arrangements in favor of these countries; similar pressure during the Maastricht negotiations yielded the Cohesion Fund, which provided further more targeted financial assistance. Cross national comparison of aid figures between "insiders" and "outsiders" demonstrates the extent to which EU policy favored these existing members. In 1992, for example, the four poorer, peripheral EU countries received fifteen times more per capita aid subvention than did the CEE countries.[12] Ten years later the gap had narrowed but was still very significant. Poland would receive €67 per capita, Hungary €49, Slovenia €41, and the Czech Republic €29 in the period up to the end of the 2006 financial framework. By contrast, in 2000, Greece received €437 per capita, while Ireland got €418, Spain €216 and Portugal €211. Further, it was stipulated that aid to individual CEE states was not to exceed the imposed "absorption capacity" figure of 4 percent of GDP. This threshold was set much lower than had been the case in previous enlargement rounds. It is little wonder that the CEE states gazed wistfully at the Cohesion states and their very generous levels of EU support.[13]

The point is further put in perspective when one considers that Ireland, although already by 2000 one of the richest states in the Union, was still in receipt of almost six times more aid than was envisaged for Poland. Between 1989 and 1999 regional aid to Ireland amounted to approximately 3 percent of GDP per annum; in some years the receipts amounted to in excess of 5 percent of GDP, a supranational transfer of wealth unprecedented in European history.[14] To further emphasize the lack of support offered CEE, a comparison can be offered with German transfers to its eastern *Länder* after unification: in 1993, these amounted to $5900 per capita.[15] In the decade after unification, net fiscal transfers from the German Federal Government to the former East Germany amounted to some 1.2 trillion DM. This figure amounted to ten times what the EU allocated in aid to all the CEE candidate countries put together in the run up to accession in 2004. The impression of the CEE countries remaining the poor relations is difficult to refute and is reflected in the opinion of some that the Oder-Neisse line quickly transmuted into a new and lasting economic divide, separating Europe's haves and have-nots.[16]

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[12] Helmut Leipold, "The Eastward Enlargement of the European Union: Opportunities and Obstacles," *Aussenpolitik* 46, no. 2 (1995): 126–35, 131.

[13] The figures are cited by Heather Grabbe, "The Copenhagen Deal for Enlargement," *Briefing Note* (London: Centre for European Reform, December 2002).

[14] John O'Brennan, *The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union* (London: Routledge, 2006). The financial figures are assessed in chapter 2, "1989 and Beyond."

[15] *Economist*, 17 June 1995.

[16] Arnulf Baring, *Germany's New Position in Eastern Europe: Problems and Perspectives* (Oxford: Berg, 1996), 68.

Ivan T. Berend showed that had the Marshall Plan been emulated for Central and Eastern Europe, even on a limited basis, with, for example, a Western contribution of only one half of one percent of GDP, this would have yielded up to $100 billion annually for reconstruction and transition in Central and Eastern Europe. If one shifts the focus to EU aid alone, in 2004 the combined EU-15 GDP amounted to over €9 trillion. A Marshall-style financial aid program would have delivered approximately €90 billion per year to CEE. Even a contribution of one half of one percent of EU GDP would have yielded a figure of €45 billion annually for a limited period. The total package of financial aid, however, amounted to only €40.8 billion (2004–06). But given that the new member states would also contribute something approaching €15 billion to the budget, the net figure was reduced to about €25 billion. The Commission thus suggested a net cost for ten countries over three years of just €10.3 billion per annum, which amounted to just one-thousandth of EU GDP.[17] This was by any estimation a pale imitation of the Marshall Plan.

This hesitant and rather ungenerous response to CEE on the EU's part was predicated on a number of factors. Firstly, the Union's self-absorption for most of the twenty years after 1989 stands out. Perry Andersen argues that, paradoxically, the demise of communism acted to the disadvantage of the CEE associated countries because it triggered an intensification of Western European integration efforts.[18] Indeed in this interpretation, Maastricht is singularly identified as the *quid-pro-quo* for German unification: the assurance of a united Germany's renewed commitment to its EU partners and the European integration system. Suspicion of German hegemonic or aggrandizing intent was not slow in materializing. Eastward enlargement, it was widely thought, would economically and geopolitically benefit Germany much more than any other EU member state. Thus, fear of the putative German giant caused some of the present member states to steer enlargement along the "slow lane." The gradual realization, on the part of EU leaders, of the daunting institutional and policy implications of enlargement also encouraged caution and inertia. Analysis of the micro implications of enlargement was provided by a wide range of commentators and by the European Commission and European Parliament.[19] The shadow of enlargement thus hovered over every major internal EU debate from the early 1990s onwards.

For the CEE states this meant that, at precisely the moment of their return to the mainstream European interstate arena, they were effectively locked out of the central political processes that would shape the future Europe. Their absence from

[17] Peter Ludlow, *The Making of the New Europe: the European Councils on Brussels and Copenhagen 2002*, European Council Commentary 2, no. 1, (Brussels: EuroComment. 2004), 299.

[18] See *Independent*, 29 January 1996.

[19] See, for example, Richard E. Baldwin, Joseph E. Francois, and Ricardo Portes, "The Costs and Benefits of Eastern Enlargement: the Impact on the EU and Central Europe," *Economic Policy* 24, (April 1997): 125–76; Karen Hendersen, ed., *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union,* (London: University of London Press, 1999).

the Maastricht and Amsterdam constitutional negotiations, for example, was striking.[20] Exclusively the incumbent members would determine the shape of the new European compact without any input from the Central and Eastern European states. Throughout that period, growing concern about the direction of EU policy towards Central and Eastern Europe manifested itself on a regular basis. Indeed, a European Commission official was quoted as saying: "The level of seriousness about enlargement is not minimal, it simply does not exist."[21] The initial euphoria of 1989 then soon gave way to muted resignation as the EU found that its response to the emerging democracies became increasingly affected by the economic and political vicissitudes of both EU and global politics.

A second problem arose from the impact of a Europe-wide recession on the member states, and—later—the deflationary policies employed in many countries in order to conform to the European Monetary Union (EMU) convergence criteria. Budget deficits, increased unemployment and attendant social strain resulted in the subordination of enlargement to domestic policy issues in many member states throughout the mid-1990s. Sclerotic growth and a fiscal climate governed by relative austerity rendered it more difficult to respond with imagination and generosity to the extraordinary economic and social "gaps" in CEE. One might also at this point cite the existential fears which existed in some member states about the emergent competitive threat from CEE in important industries such as motor manufacturing and electronics: notions of solidarity and "we-ness" often gave way to narrowly-based EU sectoral interests, intent on maintaining competitive advantage.

A third issue emerged in the logistical problems encountered by the Commission in its efforts to coordinate aid programs for the CEE states. Dependent on outside expertise, and handicapped by a severe lack of resources, the Commission soon ran into implementation difficulties and voluble criticism. Sedelmeier and Wallace assert that the EU found it easier to devise *ad hoc* policy than to design a more balanced and rounded approach. This was a common charge, though mostly leveled with the benefit of hindsight and with little regard to the problems relating to speed, timing, and staff and expertise shortages.[22] In addition rivalries within the Commission—principally between Directorate General (DG) I and Directorates General III (industry) and VI (agriculture)—and within national administrations (typically the Foreign Ministry against sectoral ministries) contributed to the problems of coordination and implementation in the early stages of the enlargement process. Sedelmeier and Wallace presented this as a "macro/meso" divide among policy makers, with macro policy makers (usually located

[20] "Absent friends frozen out of unity talks," *Guardian*, 7 December 1991; "Eastern Europe keeps half an eye on the EC," *Financial Times*, 12 December 1991.

[21] Quoted by Lionel Barber, "Brussels keeps shut the gates to the East," *Financial Times*, 16 November 1995.

[22] Sedelmeier and Wallace, "Eastern Enlargement," 435. See also Ulrich Sedelmeier, "Sectoral Dynamics of EU Enlargement: Advocacy, Access, and Alliances in a Composite Polity," *Journal of European Public Policy* 9, no.4 (2002): 627–49, 627–34.

within the foreign ministries of national administrations) typically taking the long term view and being more sympathetic to the CEE concerns, while meso policy makers (usually to be found in sectoral ministries) engaged in narrowly-constituted short-termism and were very susceptible to the claims of special interests in their own domestic economic spheres. Even within DG I there was significant division along similar lines.[23] Thus at both the horizontal and vertical levels within the EU, opposition to, or at least different forms of obstructionism toward, enlargement came over time to characterize a process that had been instituted with such utopian fanfare in 1990.

## The enlargement "canon" within EU studies

If the 1989 revolutions launched a continental scale institutional re-engineering of Europe, it seems clear that eastern enlargement also catalyzed a renaissance in scholarship on and interest in EU external affairs. In conjunction with a deepening of intra-EU cooperation in the external relations field heralded by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) provisions of the Maastricht Treaty, the geopolitical re-calibration set in motion by 1989 provided a dynamic of its own within the world of scholarship: from Fukuyama's *End of History* thesis to Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*, to declarations of the return of Realism by John Mearsheimer and others, almost every geopolitical question of the 1990s revolved around security re-alignments within and beyond the EU and the "new Europe"; enlargement studies developed an identity of its own within the world of scholarship, whilst also drawing upon and adding new dimensions to existing literatures within International Relations (IR) and the ever-more diverse smorgasbord that was European Integration Studies. This section assesses the literature on enlargement and what each element contributed both to this "enlargement canon" and what one might call the (looser and more recognizable) political history of the enlarged and enlarging Europe. We can divide this political history into three separate sections: how the external impacted on the internal (institutional and policy domain within the EU), the economic dimension of enlargement, and the geopolitical phenomena associated with expansion. Each section is explored via the literature which emerged to help define and shape the "enlargement canon." Finally, a specifically theoretical literature is analyzed from the perspective of rational institutionalism on the one hand and social constructivist and normative understandings of enlargement on the other. The spirited debate between these two "camps" to some extent reflected polarized conceptions of what kind of EU emerged from the 1989 revolutions and the fundamental dynamics of the unfolding continental-scale framework of institutional and policy interaction taking shape under the aegis of Brussels.

[23] Sedelmeier and Wallace, "Eastern Enlargement," 439.

*The external and the internal*

In the first place we can trace the internal European Union debates on eastern enlargement and thus both the political history of the accession process and the institutional division of labor as it played out in Brussels and in member state capitals. From the beginning of the period of internal debate, which we can identify as coinciding with the European Council meeting at Copenhagen in June 1993, which produced a (rather loose and ambiguous) set of membership criteria for candidate states to work toward as they engaged in different degrees of reform of their domestic economic and political structures, the serious nature of the institutional and policy challenges facing the Union was underlined by both official documentation and scholarly analysis that clearly marked out this enlargement as historically unique in scope and scale. Two types of approach in particular stand out: those that focused on the complex re-calibration of EU institutions which would have to accompany a "big bang" accession process, and the myriad policy challenges thrown up by expansion, most especially those of agriculture and regional funding (the policy areas which accounted for approximately 85 percent of EU spending). Such studies revolved largely around in depth empirical work on institutional and policy change and also sought to outline the gradual development of EU relations with the CEE states. Of particular importance here are the contributions of EU "insiders" such as Graham Avery, Fraser Cameron, Anna Michalski and Peter Ludlow, all of whom worked in different periods for the European Commission, and whose work contains valuable accounts of the internal EU deliberation on enlargement and especially the inter-institutional context in which the actors, interests and identities at play within the regime of enlargement politics was played out.[24] These works allow us to peer into the EU structure of power and how it responded to and itself was changed by the great challenges of enlargement to the east. The clash between "drivers" and "brakemen" emerges as a consistent theme of insider accounts and can be traced right up to (and even beyond) the successful conclusion of negotiations at Copenhagen in December 2002.

The enlargement of such a complex and multifaceted international entity necessarily entails an important internal institutional dimension. Enlargement arises out of specific forms of institutionalized cooperation and subsequently produces a reconfiguration of those institutionalized norms, practices and structures: thus

[24] Graham Avery, "The Enlargement Negotiations" in Fraser Cameron, ed., *The Future of Europe: Integration and Enlargement* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 35–62; Graham Avery and Fraser Cameron, *Enlarging the European Union* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Michael J. Baun, *A Wider Europe: The Process and Politics of European Union Enlargement*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); Peter Ludlow, *The Making of the New Europe: the European Councils on Brussels and Copenhagen 2002*, European Council Commentary 2, no. 1, (Brussels: EuroComment, 2004); George Vassiliou, ed., *The Accession Story: the EU from 15 to 25*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

the myriad (and frequently contested) modes of "internalization" of the external by insiders constitute an important locus of analysis for scholars of enlargement politics. Enlargement is a policy domain which involves each of the main EU institutions in a distinctive way. This was clearly reflected in the institutional division of labor laid down in the treaties, which would govern CEE accession decisions:

> Any European state which respects the principles set out in Article 6(1) may apply to become a member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members.
>
> The conditions of admission and the adjustment to the treaties on which the Union is founded, which such admission entails, shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.[25]

Thus the *formal* hierarchy of power with respect to an enlargement decision appears very clear: the Council, consisting of representatives of the member state governments, takes the decision, having consulted the Commission. The decision seems then to be purely a matter for the member states operating in an intergovernmental mode. But a more substantive contextual analysis of Article 49, informed by an understanding of how the EU system works (and has evolved) in practice, reveals a more complicated and nuanced picture of the decision-making process. The European Commission effectively acts as principal interlocutor with the candidate states and has an important influence on both the content and shape of the process as it develops. The treaty articles also bestow an important role on the European Parliament, in that no accession decision can be taken without the Parliament's assent.[26] And, in the final instance, the outcome of the process rests on the ratification procedures in both the acceding states and the member states. All of this suggests that it is quite wrong to identify the Council as the *only* EU actor that counts in the process.

The eastern enlargement is particularly noteworthy for the way in which the European Commission carved out a distinct institutional and political role for itself within enlargement politics. The Commission's influence flowed principally from two sources. The first was its *formal power* to initiate policy proposals, which helped it to set and shape the enlargement policy agenda. Although, as in the general integration framework, as a rational actor, it sought to anticipate, incorporate

[25] Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), *Consolidated Treaties*, 2012. Article 6 (1) (Ex Article F) effectively codified the Copenhagen criteria for membership of the Union. It reads: "The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States."

[26] This procedure is now known as "Consent" after changes introduced through the Lisbon Treaty, enacted in December 2009.

and adjust for the specific concerns of member states (and increasingly the European Parliament EP), it often found itself to be (almost by default) the sole *policy entrepreneur* and thus the most active, visible and best placed EU institutional actor within the enlargement process. It is important to understand that much of this particular dynamic evolved out of the early response by the EU to events in CEE in the early 1990s. Facing the challenge of managing relations with the new democracies and the imperative of moving quickly and decisively to embed the democratic transitions taking place in CEE, the EU very quickly became dependent on the Commission for both political leadership and policy advice. It was the Commission which took responsibility for managing the initial aid programs for CEE such as PHARE (Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Reconstructing their Economies) and SAPARD (Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development), produced the official Opinions on the ability of the candidate states to meet the criteria for membership, and oversaw the screening process, that is, the analysis of efforts by candidate states to transpose and implement the *acquis communautaire* into their bodies of domestic law. Even in the latter stage of negotiations in 2001–02, where the member states were (in theory) in the ascendancy and the Presidency played a crucial role, the Commission continued to cajole, deliberate, and persuade both insiders and outsiders of the merits of its "community-centered" enlargement strategy and thus to put aside narrow partisan interests.

The experience of eastern enlargement also demonstrates that where formal prerogatives were absent, the Commission used what developed as "customary enlargement practice" to carve out a substantive informal agenda-setting role for itself outside of the formal treaty structure, framing policy problems and urging consensus where difficulties arose. Individual commissioners such as Günter Verheugen and Olli Rehn very often acted as political entrepreneurs, and proved themselves both proactive and integral to enlargement outcomes. In its policy documents and public pronouncements, the Commission frequently resorted to a specific normative enlargement discourse, deploying a series of moral arguments in its efforts to accelerate the negotiation process. The Regular Reports on candidate state progress, for example, just as they stressed the importance of enlargement as a vehicle for securing EU values across Europe, also presented eastern enlargement as one with "an unprecedented moral dimension." The speeches of Romano Prodi and Günter Verheugen in particular were studded with references to Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland as "an integral part of Europe," or part of the "extended family of European nations."[27] Jacques Delors similarly, in retrospect, presented enlargement as an act of historical and moral justice:

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[27] See, for example, Prodi's 2001 speech to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The title is indicative of the "drivers" inclusive approach—"Bringing the Family Together." Romano Prodi, "Bringing the Family Together," Speech to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Speech/01/158, Budapest, 4 April 2001, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-01-158_en.pdf (accessed 16 July 2013).

> Active peace is not the "peace of cemeteries" we experienced during the Cold War. We must not forget that we West Europeans found ourselves on the right side of the line drawn by the Yalta agreement and that our East European relatives were less fortunate. I consider we have a debt toward them from a historical point of view.[28]

At the broader institutional level, the Commission, through its capacity building and compliance functions within the process, was (and remains) the EU institutional actor closest to the candidate states throughout the process, providing advice and pragmatic engagement, urging broader and deeper transposition (and internalization) of EU norms, and actively socializing candidate state public representatives into EU practice. Viewed by the candidate states as ever-demanding and frequently unreasonable in its insistence on full and unconditional implementation of the *acquis*, viewed by the member states as frequently too accommodating of candidate state preferences, the Commission often tread a thin line between bureaucratic process manager and political entrepreneur, between agent of the member states and separately constituted political actor. And although it might seem decidedly unfashionable to describe what is sometimes misidentified as the "Brussels Bureaucracy" as the unsung hero of the enlargement process, much of the evidence suggests that this is exactly how the Commission emerges from eastern enlargement. In its engagement with the candidate states, imaginative framing of policy proposals within the EU, and not inconsiderable diplomatic skill in pushing the sometimes reluctant member states toward completion of the negotiations, the Commission performed the type of role which, if indeed unglamorous and hidden from the European public, was integral to consolidating the gains of the 1989 revolutions. It is thus quite inarguable that the Commission acted as the primary internal EU "driver" or "motor" of the eastern enlargement process.

### *The economic dimension of enlargement*

Given the scale of the devastated economic landscape in the east, and the nature of the restructuring of the industrial base which took shape in CEE after 1989, the economic dimension of the enlargement process took on a highly significant importance for both insiders and outsiders. EU member states were fearful of new competitive threats emerging from the ashes of the moribund socialist economies, whilst in CEE the most common complaints related to EU obstructionism on market access and difficulties in adopting costly single market legislation. The obvious weaknesses of postcommunist legal systems and public administration rendered doubtful the capacity of many CEE states to compete effectively in the single market. Thus a primary focus of the Commission as

[28] Jacques Delors, "An Ambitious Vision for the Enlarged Union," Speech delivered to the "Notre Europe" Conference, Brussels, 21 January 2002.

accession drew closer was that of market oriented juridical and administrative transposition of EU law and compliance with EU rules.

Whilst some approaches to the economic dimension of eastern enlargement focused on the nature of productivity growth and capital and investment flows into Central and Eastern Europe, the prospect of enlargement also compelled the EU to focus on extending its existing framework of regional and structural funding while also reforming key policy areas such as agriculture.[29] Perhaps the most influential of the academic contributions was that of Alan Mayhew, whose *Recreating Europe* analyzed the political economy of eastern enlargement and bridged the divide between academic analysis and policy-making and between inside and outside perspectives.[30] Similarly, Richard E. Baldwin's work sought to combine analysis of the costs and benefits of enlargement for both insiders and outsiders [31]

Enlargement promised gains for both incumbents and applicants, though considerably more for the latter than the former, and spread very unevenly amongst the member states. The scale of the economic challenge was also evident in the fact that the level of economic development of the CEE countries, measured by GDP per capita was not just significantly below that of existing members, but in a majority of cases, much lower than any previously successful entrant to the EU. Income per head in 2002 ranged from 60 percent in the case of Slovenia to as low as 30 percent for Poland and 25 percent for Bulgaria and Romania.[32] Enlargement clearly implied a re-balancing of EU regional policy in favor of the poorer, less developed and infrastructurally deficient states to the east: subvention would have to be found to underpin new motorways, airports, ports and sewage systems, whilst high levels of unemployment, at least outside most capital cities, compelled investment in human resources and re-training. Although it is now clear that the new member states have received substantially less than did earlier, poorer entrants such as Ireland and Greece, what is remarkable is that disputes about redistribution did not come to dominate the enlargement agenda. CEE leaders seemed to understand that economic renewal would come mainly from within and from adaptation to the established market system,

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[29] Baldwin, Francois, and Portes, "The Costs"; Fritz Breuss "Macroeconomic Effects of EU Enlargement for Old and New Members," *WIFO Working Papers* 143/2001 (Vienna: Austrian Institute of Economic Research, 2001); Terry Caslin and Laszlo Czaban, "Economic transformation in CEE" in Mike Manin, ed., *Pushing Back the Boundaries: The European Union and Central and Eastern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 70–98.

[30] Alan Mayhew, *Recreating Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); idem, "The Financial and Budgetary Impact of Enlargement and Accession," *SEI Working Paper* No.65 (Brighton; Sussex European Institute, 2003).

[31] Richard E. Baldwin, *Toward an Integrated Europe* (London: Centre for Economic Policy Reform, 1994).

[32] Nikos Baltas, "The Economy of the European Union," in Neil Nugent, ed., *European Union Enlargement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), 146–57.

and not from the EU as a rich external benefactor. And indeed trade between the "old" and "new" member states tripled in the decade prior to 2008, from around €150 billion to €450 billion.[33]

By far the most important policy area to come under scrutiny, however, was that of agriculture, which despite the professed urgency which often accompanied official pronouncements on the need for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), managed to survive more or less intact (and thus unreformed) until very late in the negotiation process. The fear of extending the financial largesse of the CAP to Poland and Romania, to identify those candidate states most dependent on agriculture, motivated a stream of policy proposals centered on reform and sustainable adaptation on both sides.[34] And whilst the new member states in CEE would not benefit nearly to the same extent from CAP as earlier entrants such as Ireland, Portugal and Spain, the eventual regime that would emerge at least provided a much more secure footing for transition in the countryside than might otherwise have been available. But even after securing the partial extension of CAP after 2004, the new eastern members could not avert the familiar "flight from the land" which had so characterized the experience of both earlier entrants and established producer countries alike.

### *The geopolitical dimension of enlargement*

Enlargement both developed out of and encouraged new thinking about key geopolitical and security considerations, sometimes linked to the parallel process of NATO expansion, and also complicated the search for consensus on the EU's emerging security and defense policies.[35] From the outset geopolitical issues featured strongly in the calculus of EU leaders. Enlargement increased both the size of the EU population and the territory it covers by a significant degree (about one third in each case). In terms of area that meant the European Union now stretched from the Atlantic in the west to within miles of St. Petersburg in the east, and after 2007, to the Black Sea coast in the southeast. Enlargement thus brought with it new dangers and new geopolitical opportunities for the Union. Some saw it as a vehicle for turning the EU into a global geopolitical power that would match the EU's power in the economic realm. But other commentators feared the messy entanglements that might arise from moving EU borders to an eastern geopolitical space which remained contested and fragile, and where bor-

[33] European Commission, "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010–2011," *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council*, COM (2010) 660 final, Brussels, 9 November 2010.

[34] Mayhew, *Recreating Europe*.

[35] John O'Brennan, "Bringing Geopolitics back in: Exploring the Security Dimension of the 2004 Eastern Enlargement of the European Union," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19, no. 1 (March 2006): 155–69.

der demarcations were both physically porous and, potentially, catalysts of interethnic conflict. Enlargement gradually threw open the question of where Europe's eastern and southeastern borders might lie. Although Russia was much more suspicious of NATO enlargement eastward, in time the EU also got drawn into a more tense relationship with Russia, mainly because of the tensions provoked by new borders and disputes such as that over Kaliningrad. While eastern enlargement may have been a vehicle for containing both Russian power and the consequences of Russian state weakness, EU policy toward Russia was both assertive *and* conciliatory.

Eastern enlargement helped stabilize and then normalize interstate relations in Eastern Europe and ensure a peaceful transition from communism to European integration. Security considerations were especially important in both moving the enlargement process forward at critical junctures and also changing the contours of enlargement in specific ways. The Kosovo war of 1999 especially stood out in this regard. Kosovo was a warning shot to the EU about the dangers of excluding the Balkans from the integration process. This not only accelerated the eastern enlargement process, it also produced a much more sure-footed and concrete EU model for the integration of the Balkans. The same political–institutional mix employed for eastern enlargement began to be deployed in Southeast Europe also, thus ensuring that analysis of EU relations with the states of the Western Balkans and Turkey proceeded from a starting point of "learning lessons from" the eastern enlargement.[36] Geopolitical factors certainly counted in the timing and nature of enlargement policy-making, even if they were frequently superseded by economic and normative considerations on the part of the EU.

### *Theoretical approaches to enlargement*

In the years after 1989, as the integration of Europe gathered pace, a theoretical literature began to develop; this drew on two juxtaposed bodies of thought from the subdiscipline of International Relations (IR), and conceptualized eastern enlargement from those perspectives. Rationalist scholars argued that enlargement proceeded from a materialist and utilitarian understanding on the part of both internal and external actors; the main motivation of the key actors lay in concerns about securing both economic and security benefits from expansion. In contrast,

[36] Othon Anastaskis, "The EU's Political Conditionality in the Western Balkans: towards a More Pragmatic Approach," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 8, no. 4 (2008): 365–77; David Phinnemore, "From Negotiations to Accession: Lessons from the 2007 Enlargement," *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 10, no. 2 (2009): 240–52; John O' Brennan, "The EU in the Western Balkans: Statebuilding as Empire? A Rejoinder to Professor David Chandler," *Global Society* 22, no. 4 (2008): 507–18; Arolda Elbasani "EU Enlargement in the Western Balkans: Strategies of Borrowing and Inventing," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 10, no. 3 (2008): 293–307.

scholars approaching the phenomenon from a normative perspective argued that enlargement emerged out of common and shared norms, principles and understandings of what the European integration process represented and the natural right of all European states to participate in the unique institutional and policy-making structures as full and equal members. Where rationalist scholars highlighted so-called "logics of consequentiality" which allegedly governed enlargement decision-making, sociologically-grounded scholars instead argued for "logics of appropriateness" as the key cognitive templates which informed and guided the behavior of decision-makers. This disciplinary clash was both a product of and contributed significantly to the rationalist/constructivist divide which had come to define a large part of the academic conversation on EU public policy-making.

On one side of the theoretical divide a rationalist literature grew up around the study of the constitutional and institutional dimensions of the enlargement process. The study of national decision-making and supranational bargaining which accompanied specific aspects of the eastern enlargement framework drew attention to a part of the process which was at least as important as the (largely asymmetric) inside-outside bargaining between the EU and the candidate states.[37] In particular, scholars sought to determine the likely impact of enlargement on EU decision-making by focusing on changes to the rules governing the use of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) within the Council and the general costs of institutional adaptation. Perhaps the most important theoretical template for analyzing enlargement from a rationalist perspective was Andrew Moravscik's *The Choice for Europe*, which offered a view of the European integration process as one characterized by intergovernmental bargaining and dominated by the powerful economic interests of the larger member states. *The Choice for Europe* had very little to say about eastern enlargement (or indeed any previous enlargement of the EU), but in other contributions, Moravscik applied his liberal intergovernmentalist framework to argue that enlargement did not fundamentally re-order any of the important features of the integration process and that the EU bargaining which accompanied the enlargement process resulted in typical compromises which protected the structural interests of the larger member states whilst buying off potential losers with compensatory "side payments."[38]

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[37] Stefanie Balier and Gerald Schneider, "The Power of Legislative Hot Air: Informal Rules and the Enlargement Debate in the European Parliament," *Journal of Legislative Studies* 6, no. 2 (2000): 19–44; Bernard Steunenberg, ed., *Widening the European Union* (London: Routledge, 2001).

[38] Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Ana Vachudova, "National Interests, State Power, and EU Enlargement," *East European Politics and Society* 17, no. 1 (2003): 42–57; Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Ana Vachudova, "Preferences, Power and Equilibrium: the Causes and Consequences of EU Enlargement," in Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, eds., *The Politics of the European Union Enlargement: theoretical approaches* (London: Routledge, 2005), 198–212.

On the other side of the theoretical divide, constructivist scholars highlighted the importance of ideas, identity, and social interaction within the eastern enlargement process. This literature, although itself increasingly diverse, sought to highlight the normative importance of different features of the process, and especially the cumulative and net effects of CEE exposure to EU norms and values in multiple and cross-cutting arenas of mutual activity.[39] One school of thought focused on EU motivations for enlargement deriving from a sense of historical obligation, such as "uniting Europe," or "undoing the historical injury wrought on the CEE states at Yalta." Other approaches analyzed eastern enlargement from different identity perspectives and sought to determine whether enlargement practice produced identity transformation.[40]

This debate revolved in particular around the role and impact of the EU's conditionality regime on candidate states. The effort to bridge the divide between the rationalist and normative camps was led by Swiss scholar Frank Schimmelfennig. His work became by far the most cited work on enlargement; it sought to contribute to existing debates on the nature of European integration and the EU as an external actor. [41] As the enlargement process developed and measurement of EU "successes" and "failures" became possible, a growing number of scholars sought to analyze the use of various types of conditionality, especially political conditionality, by the EU, as scholars sought to determine the extent to which Central and Eastern Europe was becoming (alternatively) "Europeanized," "modernized," and "democratized" through the enlargement process.[42] And under what conditions could the EU really make a difference in penetrating the domes-

[39] See John O'Brennan, *The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

[40] Ivan T. Berend, "The Further Enlargement of the European Union in a Historical Perspective," *European Review* 7, no. 2 (1999): 175–81; Neumann, "European Identity," 397–416; Ulrich Sedelmeier, "EU Enlargement, Identity and the Analysis of European Foreign Policy: Identity Formation through Policy Practice," EUI Working Papers, RSC 2003/13 (San Domenico: European University Institute, 2003).

[41] Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO, and the Integration of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Frank Schimmelfennig, "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union," *International Organization* 55, no. 1 (2001): 47–80; Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, "Governance by Conditionality: EU Rule Transfer to the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe," *Journal of European Public Policy* 11, no. 4 (August 2004): 661–79; Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, eds., *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005); Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, eds., *The Politics.*

[42] Marise Cremona, ed., *The Enlargement of the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Antoaneta L. Dimitrova, "Enlargement, Institution Building and the EU's Administrative Capacity," *West European Politics* 25, no. 4 (2002): 171–90; Marc Maresceau, "The EU Pre-Accession Strategies: a Political and Legal Analysis," in Marc Maresceau and Erwan Lannon, eds., *The EU's Enlargement and Mediterranean Strategies: A Comparative Analysis*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 3–28.

tic realm of governance in candidate states?[43] The conditionality debate juxtaposed those who saw EU policy as efficient and transformative against more skeptical voices which argued for the minimal impact of conditionality on the domestic politics of candidate states. In a particularly nuanced and widely-read study, Milada Ana Vachudova emphasized the *promise* of membership as the key facilitator of real adaptation to EU norms and for rule-following in advance of accession.[44] Similarly, in a systematic study of international networks, Beate Sissenich argued that the transposition of EU rules through enlargement was to say the least very uneven. Rule transfer depended on many factors, including underlying patterns of cultural accommodation and the congruence of local interests with EU norms. Sissenich especially identified the domestic arena in candidate states, where EU rules would sometimes be contested quite robustly and where the capacity to implement the EU *acquis* was frequently lacking.[45] EU rule transfer was also analyzed under the rubric of existing literatures on democratization and democratic transitions. The EU's role as an "agent of democratization" in its immediate neighborhood and beyond provoked important arguments about the nature of EU democracy promotion and its effects in candidate states and (post eastern enlargement) in neighboring states.[46] In particular this theoretical analysis drew on the existing EU-centered "Europeanization" literature, and would produce an important mutation of this strain of theory in a specific approach termed "Europeanization East." Thus the empirical work on "Europeanization" patterns was accompanied by much more sustained theoretical attempts to measure and analyze the exact degrees of "Europeanization" to be found within the enlargement process.[47]

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[43] Tim Haughton, "When does the EU Make a Difference? Conditionality and the Accession Process in Central and Eastern Europe," *Political Studies Review* 5, no. 2 (2007): 233–46. Cf., for example, Dimitrova, "Enlargement"; Antoaneta L. Dimitrova, ed., *Driven to Change: the European Union's Enlargement viewed from the East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[44] Milada Ana Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration after Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[45] Beate Sissenich, *Building States without Society: European Union Enlargement and the Transfer of EU Social Policy to Poland and Hungary* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

[46] Richard Youngs, "European Democracy Promotion Policies: Ten Years On," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 6, no. 3 (2001): 355–73; Geoffrey Pridham, *Designing Democracy: EU Enlargement and Regime Change in Post-Communist Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005); Richard Rose, "Evaluating Democratic Governance: a Bottom-Up Approach to European Union Enlargement," *Democratization* 15, no. 2 (April 2008): 251–71.

[47] Heather Grabbe, "Europeanization Goes East: Power and Uncertainty in the EU Accession Process," in Kevin Featherstone and Claudio Radaelli, eds., *The Politics of Europeanization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 303–31; eadem, *The EU's Transformative Power: Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2006); Dimitri Papadimitriou and David Phinnemore, "Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42, no. 3 (2004): 619–39.

## Conclusions

Enlargement, as Desmond Dinan reminds us, “has been a central and quasi-permanent element in the EU’s history.”[48] The first set of new members (UK, Denmark and Ireland) had hardly been assimilated when the second set (Greece, Spain and Portugal) applied to join. Similarly, the Community was still assimilating the second set when the third set of ultimately successful applicants (Austria, Finland, and Sweden) requested accession. There followed the absorption of the old GDR, and, in the aftermath of the 1989 revolutions and after a protracted period of sometimes very heated negotiations, the “Return to Europe” of the ten CEE states that emerged from the *annus mirabilis* of peaceful transition.

It seems clear in retrospect that from early on in the emerging dispensation, enlargement cast a clear and discernible shadow over every important aspect of internal and external EU activity. Thus even if the eastern enlargement differed significantly from previous rounds in terms of scale and diversity, academic literature and political commentary continued to focus on the established preoccupation with widening and deepening. The questions related to the “*finalité*” of integration were of course intimately connected with the EU’s ambitions for further widening. This is because, as Jan Zielonka has reminded us, one cannot study the question of enlargement without reference to that of more or less integration, or at least the impact of enlargement on the process of integration.[49] Now that the EU is negotiating with the states of the Western Balkans and Turkey, this relationship between widening and deepening is back on the political agenda and many of the polarizations familiar from the eastern enlargement process have returned to structure conversations about the future of Europe.

Looking back it also seems clear that there was nothing inevitable about the outcome of negotiations: the 1989 revolutions did not in and of themselves constitute anything but a necessary condition—a starting point if you will—for the successful realization of the dream of a voluntarily embraced system of intra-European integration. The recurring clashes between national interests and the collective interest of “Europe” that characterized the negotiations, both on the “inside-outside” level and amongst insiders, brought a familiar element of the existing integration framework into the EU-CEE relationship, and represented a good training ground for “doing business” within a post-accession context. If indeed the early idealism that flowed from the 1989 revolutions was diminished rather rapidly by the slow progress on negotiations, this was counterbalanced by Poland, Hungary, and other states learning to play the game of both interstate negotiations

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[48] Desmond Dinan, “The Commission and Enlargement,” in John Redmond and Glenda Rosenthal, eds., *The Expanding European Union: Past, Present and Future* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 17–40, 20.

[49] Jan Zielonka, “Ambiguity as a Remedy for the EU’s Eastward Enlargement,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 12, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 1998): 14–29, 15.

and supra-state institutional politics. The successful adaptation to existing EU modes of decision-making can be demonstrated in the smooth functioning of those (enlarged) institutional structures after 2004: those who argued that enlargement would lead to chronic institutional failures have been proved very wrong.

In the final analysis one should acknowledge the asymmetric nature of this analysis: it remains far too early to make judgments about how eastern enlargement has changed the European Union and the existing integration process. The accession of Croatia as the EU's twenty-eight member state on 1 July 2013 suggested a continuing capacity for incorporating new states, even if patterns of "enlargement fatigue" threw into doubt further enlargement within the Western Balkans.[50] It is much easier to analyze the micro-impact of the EU on Central and Eastern Europe than to offer judgments about the European Union that has evolved out of the 1989 revolutions. Rather, this chapter has focused on the different elements of the enlargement process that quickly took shape after 1989 and how each of these elements triggered diverse conversations about the nature of the evolving EU. Enlargement may have been completed successfully in 2004 and 2007, but the process remains a partial and incomplete one, both in the geographic and normative senses. The current Europe-wide academic and political preoccupation with democratic deficits of one variety or another, and the obvious shortcomings of the EU as a welfare-enhancing entity on the one hand or global geopolitical force on the other may have led to a failure to properly appreciate the nature of the European achievement in consolidating the gains of the "1989 moment." The EU may be bureaucratically cumbersome and politically enigmatic, but in supervising a framework for the renewal of meaningful pan-European interstate cooperation, not to mention the reconstitution of the democratic impulse across the continent, it may have contributed in some small way to making 1989 at least as important a historical juncture as 1789 and 1848 in the rich tapestry of the European collective experience.

[50] John O'Brennan, "Will Europe End in Croatia?," *Project Syndicate*, 30 June 2013, http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-consequences-of-the-eu-s-enlargement-fatigue-by-john-o-brennan (accessed 17 July 2013).

Horst Möller

# EPOCHAL CHANGES, 1989–91

The term "*Wende*" (German for "turnaround") was first coined by East German communist leader Egon Krenz; the term has since prevailed in everyday speech—at least in the new federal states of Germany (*die neuen Bundesländer*; the GDR areas re-established as states in 1990)—for denoting the political changes that took place in Europe from 1989 to 1991. Rarely has a world-revolutionizing process such as the collapse of the communist dictatorships in this period and the resulting global political change been connected with such an easygoing, non-descriptive term. Its use seems even stranger if one is reminded that the same term was used during the 1982 change of government in West Germany, when there was also talk of a *Wende*, with Helmut Kohl asserting his intention to bring about a "*geistig-moralische Wende*" (a mental/spiritual-moral turnaround). If the term *Wende* is appropriate for such a process, then it is clearly inappropriate for the epochal caesura of 1989–91, especially since other democratic changes in the German government, for instance the change from a grand coalition to a social-liberal coalition in 1969, have been characterized by the much more weighty word "*Machtwechsel*" (change of power).

## I.

Historical-political language is revealing; in this case, it reveals the surprising inability of many contemporaries to grasp the historical magnitude of the events they have lived through. Historians experience this time and again: being a contemporary is anything but a source of historical understanding. On the other hand, the use of appropriate terminology is a means for comprehension. I thus consider the term "revolution" more appropriate for describing epochal upheaval. I venture to state this, even though each of the modern revolutions—in England in 1688, in North America in 1776, in France in 1789, in many European states in 1848–49, in Russia in 1917 as well as in Germany and Austria in 1918–19—had their own particular causes and followed different courses.

Historiography and sociology have provided many definitions and interpretations regarding the phenomenon of modern revolutions. Formal criteria are decisive in this context, not fuzzy political or ethical assessments that make revolution a dream for some and a nightmare for others. Part of the formal characteristics of a historical-sociological definition of revolution is the interruption of political and social development, including the destruction of the existing political and consti-

tutional system—in this sense revolutions are always "illegal." This is so because they question the legitimacy of the existing state and call for a new legality to replace it. Successful revolutions then face the problem of gaining the respect of the population for the newly created order by making it seem legitimate, and the order of the *ancien* régime illegitimate. This is usually a long-term process, the success of which ultimately also depends on the economic performance of new policies designed to improve the material situation of the population.

In addition to these medium- and long-term components of successful revolutions, the immediate victory is a change of the political system and culture. This also always entails a change of elites, although this change does not necessarily have to be absolute; indeed, a new revolutionary ruling elite can contain members of earlier functional elites. Examples during the French Revolution of 1789 include Count Mirabeau or the former bishop Talleyrand. If a change of system and elites does not occur, as for instance in the case of the revolutions in the states of the German Confederacy in 1848–49, the revolution does not have an immediate success. Nonetheless, such revolutions may have medium- or long-term repercussions. For example, despite the lack of success in 1848–49, the essential topics and goals of the constitutional debates of the German Paulskirche constitutional assembly in Frankfurt remained on the agenda of German politics, and it did not even take a generation for them to be realized by Bismarck in 1871, albeit not by means of a revolution.

Usually revolutions consist of or are at least connected to prolonged, both temporally and procedurally, transformation processes, since social structural change cannot be implemented in single, individual actions. This is already clear by the fact that revolutionary eruptions are preceded by ongoing crises of varying lengths. Usually the exchange of political elites also takes place unevenly; only rarely does the first tier of revolutionary elites remain in power permanently. While the statement, the revolution "devours its own children,"[1] need not be understood in a literal or murderous sense, in general it is accurate.

The question thus arises whether a revolution must necessarily be violent or require victims. While revolutionary systemic changes are often violent, this is not always the case. There were different patterns even between the various "revolutions" in Eastern and East Central Europe that occurred from 1989 to 1991, seen for instance in the different courses taken by the revolutions in the GDR and in Romania.

It is more difficult to define content. For instance, is a fundamental change of the economic order characteristic of revolutions, as suggested by Marxist revolutionary theory? The answer is no, since this was neither the case during the American Revolution of 1776, nor during the German Revolution of 1918–19. Nonetheless, it is true for the 1989–91 revolutions. And still more difficult is to answer the question whether large-scale national revolutions inevitably result in

[1] Georg Büchner, *Dantons Tod* (1835), act I.

a fundamental change of the international system. While the rationale behind national revolutions generally does not aim at this goal, nonetheless revolutions in large states almost always exert a lasting influence on international policy. While this was not true for the English Revolution of 1688, which was primarily a constitutional revolution in a single country, it was certainly true for the American Revolution of 1776 and even more so for the French Revolution, which between 1789 and 1815 turned the entire European state system of the *ancien* régime upside-down. Also in the case of the Russian October Revolution of 1917 this occurred, although here the effects of this type were more indirect and long-term. Also the overthrowing of the communist dictatorships from 1989 proved to be not just a chain of national revolutions, but was connected to the end of the Cold War and of the bipolarization of the world, thus becoming a fundamental revolution of the international system and the postwar world order that had been created from 1945.

There is much to suggest that the epochal caesura of 1989–91 has changed or altered our idea of revolutions in general. This concept will be examined in the present article.

The events of 1989–91 have shown contemporaneous historians the degree to which errors can be made: one only knows the history of something if one knows how it ends. Before 1989, it was not known that communism would fall, that the structures of the postwar era would change, that Germany would be reunited—any statements regarding these topics remained hypothetical. Many errors in the assessment of the GDR, not only by politicians and journalists, but also by scholars, stemmed from the fact that they were basing their ideas on an unknown future. Many supposed "experts" not only misjudged the true character of the GDR regime and its economic weaknesses, they also trusted manipulated statistics and ultimately underestimated the discontent of the population. Simultaneously, they overestimated the potential for development within the communist dictatorships. They thus proved to be poor diagnosticians as well as illusionary prognosticators. Today we know that reformist communism never had a chance in Europe. We should therefore be cognizant of the fact that we, too, do not know the end of the history of which we are the contemporaries.

What conclusions can be drawn from these considerations? Epochal caesuras such as the one in 1989–91 change perspectives, not just our perspective of the future, but also our perspective of the past. Complex historical structures and situations are never as univocal as they often appear to contemporaries; their layers can be exposed only gradually, with increasing distance and historical experience.

Some well-known examples can demonstrate this: The over-simplistic interpretation of 8 May 1945 as the day of "Liberation"—as celebrated since about 1985 by politicians, journalists and large segments of the German population—exhibits a limitation not only in the West-German perspective, but also the German viewpoint as a whole. Many Poles consider 27 January 1945 merely the date

of the liberation of Auschwitz; only 1989 was the year of liberation for the entire country. Thus the end of World War II is not so much put into a different perspective by the caesura of 1989–91, it becomes a clearer one. For most contemporaries, an adequate historical appraisal and a degree of insight only become possible after some time has passed. As is true for the year 1949—the year that the division of Germany gained constitutional, albeit not international legal structure—a teleological interpretation would also not do justice to 1989–91.

After 1945, the division of Germany, Europe, and the world deepened increasingly. The longer it lasted, the less an end to the division was considered possible. And yet the signs that the world would not remain the same increased during the 1970s, and still more during the 1980s. Evidence of this can be seen in the following:

- The CSCE conferences of the 1970s, with the famous "Basket III" of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which put pressure on the Eastern bloc states in the area of human and civil rights; the regimes seemed to have underestimated the repercussions of these treaties at home.
- NATO's Double-Track Decision in December 1979, which forced the Soviet Union to modernize and increase its economic output;
- Solidarność in Poland;
- Problems with different rising nationalistic interests and increasing pressure toward reform in the Soviet Union, leading to Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika in the mid-1980s: as recognized already by Alexis de Tocqueville, the most dangerous moment for a bad system of government is the moment reforms are begun.
- The dissolution of Yugoslavia, which, in hindsight, began soon after Tito's death in 1980.

History was accelerating. When events piled up in 1989–91, history changed its rhythm.

## II.

The collapse of the communist dictatorships in Europe did not only end an era of totalitarian ideologies in Europe; their demise also demonstrated the failure of hopes for the future founded on historico-philosophical concepts, and the collapse of utopian counter-proposals for society and economies. The brief attempts to revive Lenin as a focus for communist hopes of salvation after the final de-masking of Stalin as a mass-murdering dictator, already begun in 1956 at the twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union by Khrushchev, never had a chance: Lenin was seen as the originator of the Bolshevist system of terror. He was also toppled from his pedestal and Leningrad once again became Saint Petersburg.

In Western Europe, the weak attempts of self-immunization—attempts to circumvent the historical experience and to construct an "ideal," and thus true, socialism to replace the now indefensible "real" socialism—remained limited to a few intellectual circles. Such constructions, which reduce the world to a mere idea, are indeed unshakable; there are simply some premises that will always suit theory, but never work in practice.

## III.

Since 1989–91 it is once again possible to compare, in an unbiased manner, the communist and National Socialist dictatorships, as well as the common elements in these regimes' totalitarian rule. As a by-product of the Cold War, for more than two decades a comparative analysis of totalitarian rule was dismissed by the majority of historians and political scientists working in their respective fields, as well as large sections of the general public. Comparing dictatorships was considered "right wing," but it is unclear why this was so. Today, comparisons are even made by those who, before 1989, considered the mere question of whether there were any similarities objectionable.

Stalin, who, like Mussolini, gained power in 1922, and Hitler, who achieved it in 1933, are now recognized as the twentieth century's two poles of personified inhumanity. This is based on the terrorist techniques of their rule, their unscrupulousness, the degree and atrociousness of their crimes, and finally their striving for hegemony charged with ideological fanaticism and personality cults. Flanked by these two figures, the states of Central and Eastern Europe were crushed. Indeed, the comparison still stands, despite the differences between Stalin's cautious foreign policy and Hitler's "all or nothing" mentality, which became apparent when National Socialist Germany broke the Hitler-Stalin Pact in June 1941 by attacking the Soviet Union and waging an unprecedented war of ideological and racist annihilation to eradicate Bolshevism and subjugate the entire country to gain so-called *Lebensraum*, space to live, in Eastern Europe.

The comparison also does not weaken in view of the fact that the two dictatorships exhibited antithetic and hostile ideologies, or that their respective crimes were different regarding motives and victims. These facts do not cancel the analogy of dictatorial rule and their historical reciprocity. Of course, these insights do not allow their acts to be relativized in an ethical sense or allowed an apologia in the political sense. Neither dictatorship justifies the other, despite their complicated interconnection: cooperating for a period of time but then mortal enemies. Rather, there are two levels of reasoning.

Comparing these has repeatedly led to controversy. By relying on reciprocal causality and the respective specific conditions of the genesis periods, a comparative interpretation proceeds historiographically: it "historicizes" its object of inquiry.

For political–moral reasons stemming from the present, the opposing position fears historicizing comparisons of this sort, falsely believing that they equalize the two sides and thus, (in some way) are hazardous for the national educational narrative: they are not interested in historical "understanding" (although this in no way means exculpation), classification, and analysis. In contrast, the critics of comparison consider it necessary to continually invocate Germany's Nazi past to prevent a "suppression" of the past in the collective consciousness of the present—which would of course not only be politically problematic, but morally reprehensible.

Naturally, suppression is the antipode of any historiographical examination of the past, inasmuch there is no debate. It is just as irrefutable that in the Federal Republic of Germany democracy was developed as a learning process focusing on the past. Maintaining an awareness of its historical legacy has stabilized democracy in Germany, immunized it against nationalism, and eased the Federal Republic's European path. However, this has simultaneously required the much heralded— yet oft ridiculed and nevertheless fundamental—anti-totalitarian consensus of all the democratic parties of the early Federal Republic. Still, the following holds true: while historiography provides insights that must be used for political education today, this form of learning is always an indirect process. In a way, it is a by-product. Like all forms of scholarly enquiry, historiography must focus on its subject—which lies in the past and not in the present.

Once again it becomes clear that the struggle between totalitarian dictatorships and liberal democracies upholding the rule of law, which characterized the twentieth century in Europe, was not decided in 1945, but only in 1989–91. With regard to contemporary history, this enhances our understanding decisively. However, as part of this new understanding, Germany must transcend its egocentrism. The problem of historical legacy has a different meaning for Germany than for its neighbors. To be more exact: The Germans have to deal responsibly with the experience of two, albeit different, dictatorships during the twentieth century.

The neighboring states that, until 1945, were victims of Nazi Germany then lived for the next forty-five years—that is, for a generation and a half—in a collective state of presuming their innocence with regard to their own postwar history. Their democracy and rule of law will also remain wanting if they do not face their own history objectively. I do not refer here only to acts toward German minorities, but also to the consequences of the communist dictatorships in the areas of domestic, social, moral and economic policy. The fact that these other questions remain open is, for instance, demonstrated by the ever recurring discussions about the Beneš decrees in the Czech Republic. All in all, mass expulsions, including those of the Germans, have been recognized as a trait of the twentieth century. Even if their historical consequences have been overcome, they remain a historical topic that is repeatedly revived. But it will not be endlessly possible to divide up history and select pieces of it—positive or negative—that just happen to be useful in the current situation.

Thus, since 1989–91 the different national pasts have become relevant again, sometimes in an intensified form. The collapse of communism has also made it possible to properly analyze its historical assessment and its role in Europe and the world, not only because many sources have become accessible, but also because we know how it ended. *Le passé d'une illusion* (The Passing of an Illusion) is the fitting title of a book published in 1995 by the great French historian François Furet,[2] who himself changed from being a communist to being a liberal after the Soviet repression of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. Furet could only write this work about twentieth century communism after its collapse and after seeing the devastation it caused. This is also true of *The Black Book of Communism*, edited by Stéphane Courtois, which, despite some shortcomings, has its merits.[3] It is indicative that, while such publications enjoyed great success in Germany, comparable works of this sort were not written there.

## IV.

Until 1989, the division of Germany seemed to be a clear consequence of the barbarism spread by the Nazi dictatorship across Europe, its defeat in World War II, as well as the subsequent ideological partition of the world into spheres of influence. The fundamental opposition during the twentieth century between democracy and despotism seemed to be firmly installed on German soil. The fissure went right through the nation itself; Germany's central position in Europe was dissolved into a bisection and its resulting Western and Eastern integration. The two constituent states ended all German *Sonderwege*—the German "special path" that had struck dread into its European neighbors—through their integration into the opposing blocs.

The historians who had prematurely tossed the concept of nation and nation state onto the ash heap of history were shown the opposite by the ethnic conflicts of the 1980s, and then by the events following 1989. Although the reunified Germany has not restored the traditional nation state due to its being embedded in Europe, it is also not a post-nation state, something we became accustomed to during the period of two German states. Obviously this question requires deeper consideration.

The suppression of the right to self-determination for dozens of different peoples for seventy years by Bolshevik rule in the Soviet Union was obviously incapable of permanently suppressing these various nationalities. In the Balkans, a

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[2] François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[3] Stephane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosek and Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

situation surprisingly analogous to the period just before World War I returned. Two states emerged from the territory of former Czechoslovakia. And efforts to achieve autonomy are also still being observed in Western democracies, sometimes even as forms of terrorism such as in the Spanish Basque Country.

Obviously most of the diverse models tested in the twentieth century to solve nationality problems have failed: This is true for historically developed forms of organization such as the multiethnic Habsburg Monarchy, for new political formations such as the multiethnic state of Czechoslovakia in the inter-war period and after 1945, as well as for the Versailles system since 1919. It is just as true for the Soviet repression of peoples and countries—in which internationalist socialism sometimes combined with Russian imperialism—as for the racist *Lebensraum* politics of the Nazi regime, with its enslavement of entire peoples. Obviously since the 1980s we are seeing a situation of re-nationalization, especially within the Soviet Union as well as its successor and former satellite states.

## V.

We have reached the point where we should move from discussing the mixture between problems of the past and those of the present and future, as treated above, and instead to examine the main concrete results of the caesura of 1989–91.

Can the domestic and foreign policy of the peoples and new states that liberated themselves from the Soviet grip and communist domination be discerned? While the national movements since the nineteenth century usually involved a symbiosis of national emancipation, increasing constitutionalization, parliamentarization and finally democratization of government, thus connecting nation building with modernization, today this type of symbiosis is evident in only some of the former Eastern bloc states and Soviet republics. National emancipation from Soviet hegemony did not necessarily bring about equal rights for minorities. The restoration of the smaller states did not inevitably entail a thorough democratization, which has been a general weakness of many newly established states, as for instance Belarus or Ukraine, or solve the complex problems in the Caucasus region, of which Chechnya is only the best-known example. In this context, it is unclear whether smaller minorities possess the necessary energy to achieve viable statehood.

In other words: Large regions are far from being consolidated. The destabilization of domestic and foreign policy caused by the disintegration of the Soviet Union generated developments that have not yet been concluded.

In contrast, the democratization of state and society has progressed much more decisively in the East Central European states that are not a part of the CIS, although former communists in reform-socialist successor parties have taken political office surprisingly often. Paradoxically, they have usually striven to implement a free market and thus, an anti-socialist economic system. As have

the Germans, they have discovered that cleaning up forty-five years of debris will take at least a generation. Indeed, during communist rule many states did not even manage to clear away all of the damage of the war. The continued activity of persons involved in the final reformist phases of individual communist regimes has not necessarily meant that they have continued their political aims through other means. Hungary and, in a complex manner, Poland are examples of this. In contrast, the first years of newly independent Slovakia under Vladimír Mečiar present a counterexample. In any case, just as in Germany after the war, the successful setting up of a democracy takes time: The Weimar Republic offers a premonitory example of just how complicated it is to combine systemic change with fast solutions to fundamental problems, and this together with a difficult legacy. The effects of the transformations accompanying the 1989–91 path from dictatorship to democracy are also quite clear, and not just in the area of the economy, where liberalization has led to profound social consequences. The introduction of democracy was awaited with great expectations by the people, expectations that often could not be fulfilled, or fulfilled fast enough. And the replacement of political elites was neither dependable nor frictionless. Changing collective mentalities takes decades at least. In these countries, a democratic political culture still needs time to develop.

## VI.

In the 1980s, opposing tendencies regarding international cooperation could be observed in the West and East. In the East, the forced collaboration under Soviet hegemony began to revert to re-nationalization and disintegration, a process that accelerated from 1990. In the West, however, the trend was toward internationalization and (West-)European integration, as had been initially established in the ECSC and the Rome Treaties of the 1950s.

When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, a number of East Central European states sought closer connections to the West. This was manifest by the accession to NATO by Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in 1999, as well as later further enlargements, resulting in the current 28 members and 25 security partnerships. The NATO-Russia Council was created in 1997 as a permanent consultation forum, despite setbacks such as the Russia-Georgia War and the debate about the deployment of US missile defense in Poland. This security forum is indeed remarkable if compared to the Cold War and the confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Today NATO is the only remaining military alliance left in Europe. Its main power, the United States, has become the only world power, although this has been weakened by the war in Iraq, the long-term US military engagement there and in Afghanistan, and since 2008–09 by the global financial and economic crisis.

The role of NATO has changed. It is no longer the purely defensive alliance it was when founded in 1949 and which it remained for more than forty years. Taking part, from 1994, in UN combat operations in the former Yugoslavia involved security duties that were not provoked by an attack on one of NATO's members In this context, the involvement of the German military has also been based on fundamental changes: during the first Iraq War in January–February 1991, the mere thought of military participation by the recently reunified Germany met fierce internal opposition.

## VII.

The caesura of 1989–91 was not just a sea change in the area of security policy, but also in the areas of economy and financial policy, as well as for human rights and national self-determination.

The reunification of Germany did not only result in a fundamental change for its constellation of domestic and foreign policies. The reunification process expressed an almost revolutionary solution to the German Question" a debate that had led to military conflict through the centuries. The reunification in 1989–90 used only peaceful and diplomatic means; it did not take place in opposition to neighboring states, but rather sought their agreement (even if this was sometimes quite difficult). Thus, it occurred within a European context. It was one of the most outstanding achievements of Euro-Atlantic politics and, especially, of former Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl. For a long time in European history, a united Germany did not traumatize its neighbors: reunification was not achieved only on the German stage, but on the European and world stage, with decisive support from the United States.

The remaining open questions of 1945 regarding international law and power structures were conclusively resolved. I will name only a few examples: the peace treaty which had been lacking between 1945 and 1990 was achieved in the Two Plus Four Agreement; the international recognition of the Oder-Neisse border was ratified in 1990; and the withdrawal of Soviet/Russian troops from Germany as well as its Eastern neighbors was regulated.

This process opened up a number of possibilities for the future, not only for the Germans, but also for the former states of the Warsaw Pact. The principles of popular sovereignty, national internal and external independence, as well as human and civil rights were now not merely acknowledged abstractly, but implemented in practice. The end of the division of Germany, of Europe, and the world hastened the European Monetary Union, which had been planned from the end of the 1980s. The Union was now backed by the debates concerning German reunification and European integration, and was particularly supported by Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand. There is no question that the ratified measures were es-

sential steps toward European integration, including the step-by-step introduction of the Euro from 1998, the accession of Finland, Austria and Sweden to the union, as well as the 1985 Schengen Treaty, the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, and finally the above-mentioned Eastern Enlargement of the European Union in 2004.

In this process, Austria has served as a link to Central and South-Eastern Europe due to its Habsburg tradition, elements of which, while part of the distant past, have proven recoverable. But there are questions that remain open. For example, notwithstanding the Lisbon Treaty, which provided a constitutional basis for the European Union, can its 27 member states (2012) function together, despite their wide political, economic and cultural differences? And how well will the monetary union function if national budget policies in the Euro zone do not follow the required guidelines?

## Conclusion

The epochal changes of 1989–91 clearly led toward a globalization of the financial markets and the world economy. The consequences of this cannot yet be fathomed. In any case, the jolt of the recent global financial crisis has once again demonstrated the degree to which national economic policy is losing its influence. Also unclear is how these changes have affected the self-perception of democratic societies, since they no longer define themselves in opposition to dictatorships. Rather, they will have to reflect more on their own fundamental values.

The European coordination of its various governments' foreign policies is still wanting, a need that in recent years has even increased. Once again, this shows that even the traditional core states of the European Union, between one another, no longer have roles that are defined as clearly as they were during the Cold War. This also involves new efforts needed for defining the European role of Germany. Undoubtedly, this transformation process also holds risks to political stability. Here, the fatal experiences of the interwar period can serve as a warning: at that time, the unsuccessful transformations of the political systems in most of the individual states in Europe led to the destruction of many recently founded democracies.

Translated from the German original by Giles Bennett

# SUMMARY AND CHRONOLOGY

Michael Gehler

# 1989: AMBIVALENT REVOLUTIONS WITH DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND CONSEQUENCES

## Revolutionary actors and events—revolutionary effects and results

To begin this volume, *Andrei Grachev* focuses on one of the most influential figures in history of the revolutionary events in 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE): Mikhail Gorbachev. Although he was an ambivalent revolutionary, he tried to bring the "old thinking" to an end and made the emergence of "new thinkers" possible. One year after his taking power, an evolution of "new thinking" started—also as a result of the Chernobyl catastrophe. His revolutionary foreign policy produced not only revolutionary events, but also the successful "Velvet Revolutions" in the CEE countries. In addition, it changed the system of international relations. Grachev raises the question of whether this "unusual politician" was "a dilettante statesman, an idealist, or a visionary." To a certain extent, all of these descriptions may be accurate. Indeed, Gorbachev's policy was based on a well-calculated intention of replacing the old balance of power with a new one. This was to be achieved through strengthening international organizations and gradual transferring national sovereignty to the United Nations. While Gorbachev was not able to transform all former enemies into new partners during his seven years in power, Grachev underlines the positive results of the revolutionary policies he introduced. First, Gorbachev left behind a more or less peacefully dismantled totalitarian system and a new Russia in the international arena. Although Gorbachev did not encourage the opening of the Iron Curtain, he tolerated it and agreed with Germany's unification after the country's more than forty years of division. Also, his name is connected with a disarmament process that slowed down and ultimately stopped the arms race. Grachev argues that Gorbachev's "new political thinking" was not so different than George H.W. Bush's vision of an emerging "new world order." If Grachev is correct in his belief that Gorbachev also contributed to globalization, this would give him the status of a world revolutionary such as Lenin or Stalin. In any case, it seems clear that he created highly controversial new realities due to the ambivalence of his policies. When conflicts of interest arose, including his own political survival, he changed positions and chose principles. During Gorbachev's time in power, it was not possible for the concept of "new political thinking" to be successful because the structural realities in Soviet Russia were too strong. Nonetheless, his

ideas were highly relevant. They enabled revolutionary processes to begin that were peaceful and non-violent.

*Klaus Bachmann* analyzes the situation in Poland before and after 1989. He argues that the round table talks and June elections of 1989 constituted milestones in Poland's shift to democratic structures and rule. But bargaining had already started months before the round table was established. The Catholic Church was also involved in these talks from the very beginning. While the "self-limiting revolution" had been put to an end by Jaruzelski's introduction of martial law in December 1981—without legal basis and violating human rights—in the end, de-legalizing and prohibiting the Solidarity trade union was counterproductive: it led to a well-organized clandestine underground movement developing, a movement that, due to its decentralization, was more difficult to control than the public dissent activities that had taken place earlier.

Bachmann also examines the international environment, the various disputes concerning the causes and reasons for Poland's transition, the key actors and their goals, internal constraints and external influences, and short-term as well as long-term consequences.

While Poland served as an icebreaker with regard to the ensuing revolutionary events—especially those in Hungary, but also in East Germany—the road to the first free elections in the still Soviet bloc country was long and stony. Bachmann makes it clear that several influential pre-revolutionary events took place in Poland in the decades before 1981. Revolution and transition were two sides of the same coin; they must be seen as a single entity. Although the Polish revolution was spontaneous, peaceful and successful, the ensuing transition was negotiated and contained contradictions, failures, paradoxes and setbacks. To better understand these events, Bachmann recommends examining archives in Moscow, Washington, Bonn, Paris and London. A comparative approach of this sort will not only provide more details, but also a general overview.

*Andreas Oplatka* describes the process of events in Hungary, a process that had begun with the country's defeat in 1956. In the second half of the 1980s, compromises were found and in 1989, a political transition was achieved through a negotiated revolution. In response, János Kádár stepped down and the Soviet leadership remained silent. Gorbachev assured Prime Minister Németh on 3 March 1989 that there would be "no new 1956" as long as he was in power. The Kremlin also agreed to negotiations concerning the withdrawal of troops from Hungary, and in November 1989 removed nuclear warheads from Hungarian soil. Moscow did not protest the rehabilitation of Hungarian revolutionaries, the round table talks, or Hungary's decision to eradicate the Iron Curtain and open its western border for East German refugees. While he opposed the introduction of a multiparty system in Hungary, Gorbachev did not take any measures to hinder it.

Oplatka raises several critical questions that have long remained unanswered: Who were the main actors in the political changes of 1989? Who fought at the

front line—reform-communists or dissidents and the opposition? Was it a revolution, an evolution or a transformation? Was there public pressure or did the population remain passive? The author reflects upon whether the notion of "revolution from above" would be more appropriate when describing the Hungarian events of 1989. He remains unable to answer the question of when the Hungarian communists recognized that giving up socialism and transforming the economy into a Western-style democratic market system had become unavoidable. There are indications that the coming changes were visible in the second half of the 1980s, at the latest at the beginning of 1989, when opposition groups and critical intellectuals began to be more active. Since the 1970s, the majority of the population as well as the opposition had accepted Kádár's "goulash communism." While freedom remained restricted, living conditions, albeit modest, were satisfactory. In the second half of the 1980s the economy declined, which changed the public opinion and delegitimized the communist rulers. A large majority of the population began to desire that the system be replaced. The opposition succeeded in mobilizing the masses, which took part in demonstrations and campaigned political issues such as the role of the Hungarian minority in Romania or the rehabilitation of the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

*Peter Vámos* compares the perceptions, reactions and consequences of the revolutionary events in Central and Eastern Europe, the Chinese student opposition movement, and the Tiananmen Square "incident" in Beijing. According to this author, 1989 was not only a critical moment with regard to political developments in China, but was also a turning point for Sino–East European relations. In the 1980s, China and the CEE socialist states faced similar problems, and comparable reform processes had been begun in both regions. Their parallel structures can serve as a point of reference. While these reforms contributed to a process of normalizing relations, in the end they led to totally different political results: the CEE countries experienced peaceful and bloodless revolutions, while protest movements in China were violently suppressed. The developments in China strengthened the anti-socialist movements in the CEE countries, while the developments in CEE states alarmed the Chinese communist leaders. In the end the Chinese government took brutal action against organized opposition groups in its country. The bloodless events in the CEE states were also a result of the bloody developments in China. In China, the harsh oppression of the student rally in Tiananmen Square prevented a revolution from below and also influenced a policy of reforms from above. But as a consequence of the political changes in the CEE states, Sino–East European bilateral relations collapsed.

After the bloody events of 4 June 1989, in order to regain acceptance and legitimacy for the still existing totalitarian system, the Chinese communist government proposed a political offensive of reform policies. This began with a three-year policy of opening to the world, after which a reform process could start. In the early 1990s, the Chinese communist regime achieved economic growth, reestablished

its relations abroad, strengthened its influence worldwide, and was able to control inflation tendencies. Since the 1990s, China has experienced unprecedented economic growth and become the world's second largest economy.

*Hans Hermann Hertle* describes the East German developments in the period between the "October Revolution" and the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. To better understand these revolutionary events, Hertle refers to Pierre Bourdieu and his analysis of the effect of the media on historical events, whereby historical acts and structures are juxtaposed in order to find causalities and moments of interaction. The official opening of the Hungarian-Austrian border for East German refugees on 11 September is seen by Hertle, in the sense of Bourdieu, as a "critical event," as is the decisive Monday demonstration in Leipzig on 9 October, which saw tens of thousands of protesters and was the starting point and symbol of the East Germans' "October Revolution." The reporting on TV of these events enhanced the effect of both. Hungary's "hole in the wall" (Oplatka) demonstrated the weakness and loss of power of the SED regime. As the exodus grew, protests in the GDR against the government exploded.

Since 1961 the Berlin Wall had guaranteed the existence of the GDR. The opening of the border and the fall of the Wall were not planned by the SED leaders. According to Hertle, these revolutionary events were caused largely by the media, which also changed their course. In the three weeks after 9 November, the number of demonstrations did not decrease. The result was the involuntary self-dissolution of the GDR's political system. Hertle also describes the irony of the fact that the SED leaders had realized the state's bankruptcy already weeks before the revolution had begun and that, without West Germany's help, the GDR would not survive. Indeed, the East German communist politicians were ahead of their own people. Hertle considers it a tragedy that the opposition dreamed of a new socialist GDR without knowing the details of its debts and deficits, while the majority of the population claimed the right of self-determination and Germany's unity. Many civil rights activists marginalized themselves because of this contradiction. It was important for ordinary East Germans that the West German chancellor Helmut Kohl advocated German reunification. But the main reason for the success of the revolutionary events was Gorbachev's policy of wait and see. If he had ordered a military intervention, this would have contradicted his "new thinking." This was something Honecker ignored. He had not learned the lesson that Brezhnev had taught him in 1970: that the GDR could not exist without the power and support of the USSR.

*Jiří Suk* investigates Czechoslovakia before and after 1989, whereby he analyzes the background of this crucial year as well as the results and changes it brought. The most critical moment until that time for the Czechoslovak communist system had been the "Prague Spring" in 1968, during which a "palace revolution" changed into a reform movement aimed at creating "socialism with a human face." A number of previously suppressed civil rights groups formed a new civic

society, whereby they gained full freedom of speech, openly criticized the terror of the 1950s, and delegitimized the communist party. The intervention of the Warsaw Pact put an end to this reform movement, and no Prague summer followed.

The resulting dictatorship led to a political, mental and moral depression in Czechoslovakia. In the 1970s, more than 500,000 members were expelled from the Czechoslovakian Communist Party and persecuted. The economy was marked by constant shortages of consumer goods. By the second half of the 1980s, the oppressive system could not compete economically with the Western capitalist system, nor could it convince its own people of its legitimacy.

The violent suppression of a peaceful student demonstration on 17 November 1989 by police forces in Prague provoked resistance and strikes the next day by artists and intellectuals. Opposition movements and parties were organized. The Adamec government launched discussions with the opposition, but the concessions it offered had come too late. On 10 December, a new federal government was appointed and Gustáv Husák resigned as state president. The former dissident Václáv Havel became the new elected president. However, his nomination caused problems with the Slovaks, who wanted Alexander Dubček as president, since he was a political symbol of 1968.

In Czechoslovakia a double revolution took place: a Czech one and a Slovakian one. Both revolutions took place within a specific national framework and thus, they must be seen as weakened, half revolutions that led to the nation's division. A small and temporary compromise was reached by Dubček being elected chairman of the Federal Assembly. But a later round table resulted in a division of power that involved political fragmentation and conflicts. A fight against the communist past began, but attempts at creating a "Czech road to capitalism" as a way to solve the chaotic political structures failed.

Slovakia, guided by Vladmir Mečiar's national-populist coalition, separated from the Czech Republic, which was represented by a center-right coalition headed by Václáv Klaus. The "Velvet Revolution" changed the communist regimes into democratically elected governments in both Prague and Bratislava. The national separation into the Czech and Slovak Republics was decided by the political leaders of both sides.

With regard to Yugoslavia, *Florian Bieber* and *Armina Galijaš* argue that here a revolution did not occur. When Josip Broz Tito, president for life since 1963, died in 1980, the country's leadership was passed to an eight-member rotating presidency filled by representatives of Yugoslavia's six republics and two autonomous provinces. During the 1980s, demonstrations and protests had started against Belgrade, but they were also directed against the republics and provinces. The main cause of dissatisfaction was the worsening economic situation, growing unemployment, decreasing living standards, and exploding inflation.

The two authors show that the failed revolution in Yugoslavia must be seen in a global context and from the viewpoint of the changed international arena. The

coming to power of Gorbachev, the beginning of perestroika and glasnost, as well as the end of the Cold War in Europe contributed to Yugoslavia losing its strategic position and political significance. The period of distancing itself from both blocs and representing the neutral and non-aligned states, which Yugoslavia had done since 1961, was over in the early 1990s.

In the late 1980s, the focus of Western diplomatic circles and political observers as well as the media was concentrated on the CEE states. When the Yugoslav federal republic began to collapse, the leaders of the various republics tried to establish new coalitions and alliances with other countries: Slovenia and Croatia leaned toward Austria and Western Europe, whereas Serbia tried to get support from the USSR. Although external relations had little impact on the domestic developments, some people thought the dissolution of Yugoslavia was the result of foreign players. In the summer of 1991, the situation escalated. The United States and, to some extent, the European Community initially backed a democratic and unified Yugoslavia. But from the domestic perspective there was no central leader who could establish such a course (with the exception perhaps of Prime Minister Ante Marković). The CEE countries were occupied with their own issues and the Western European countries and the United States remained passive observers, showing no willingness to intervene.

In the 1980s, Yugoslavia lacked a strong bond with the USSR, and its earlier close links with the communist CEE members had also weakened. But the changing international environment did not have as much impact on Yugoslavia's dissolution as its domestic financial problems; the economic crisis led to problems of legitimacy for the communist rule. The system was unable to reform itself or address economic underdevelopment and regional inequalities. Furthermore, once the war-time generation of communists began to pass away in the late 1970s and early 1980s, political loyalties toward Belgrade became less enthusiastic and the federal structures weakened. National grievances and demands for political and economic reforms were directed toward the republics and not the federal state. Political opposition and pluralism emerged within the republics and also between the leaderships of the various republics. However, the transition from single party rule to a multiparty system was different from republic to republic. Each sought the choice of becoming autonomous, which led to separation. Cultural, ethnic and religious conflicts contributed to the resulting civil war, which saw ethnical cleansing, persecutions and mass murder. It was a process that destroyed any productive effects and constructive options that the revolutionary events of the late 1980s had brought.

*Ulf Brunnbauer* analyzes the end of the communist system in Bulgaria, which was also the product of a legitimacy crisis: economic problems and the alienation of Bulgaria's youth and labor forces played an important role. In the late 1980s, the socialist party started to reduce its visibility in order to extract itself from public criticism. Already in the summer of 1987 it gave more maneuvering room to

state authorities and enterprises. It increased the autonomy of companies, allowed more self-management of workers, and supported decentralization. These measures were designed to reduce the alienation of workers and increase their will to push productivity. But the reforms came too late; since the party did not give up its power, in the end its reforms were unsuccessful. Many planned reforms were not implemented and those of decentralization were later revoked. Attempts at the beginning of 1989 at economic liberalization were not realized.

Brunnbauer describes the "Bulgarian pseudo-perestroika," which involved growing administrative chaos and a regime that was unable to organize any successful political changes. Its reform measures had no real chance of implementation because the population reacted hesitantly and skeptically. Resignation and doubt were so strong that only a small minority were interested in taking part in the reform programs. Bulgaria's society had disintegrated to such a degree that labor discipline decreased still further and labor turnover increased more and more. Since doubts were larger than hopes, people withdrew into their private lives. The First Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party Todor Zhivkov even stated that the population had lost confidence in the party and that no one wished to get involved in the proclaimed political changes.

According to Brunnbauer, Bulgaria experienced "a half-baked reform" which exposed the self-created deficits of the system. The new party slogans "individual initiative," "self-management," "rule of law," "democracy," and "human rights" made the weaknesses of the system more obvious than ever and revealed the failings of the old and long-used communist propaganda. Although democracy and a market economy were propagated, increasing the expectations of the citizens, the communist party maintained its power. Thus, public disappointment became still higher, undermining the party's leading role. Brunnbauer argues that at the end of the 1980s, the question was no longer whether communist rule would end, but when and how. Its weak performance and the breakdown of the economy led to the political collapse. The conclusion seems clear: In Bulgaria a revolution did not arise from below, but was due to the failed reforms from above.

*Anneli Ute Gabanyi* focuses on Romania's "incomplete and unfinished revolution." She starts and ends with the collective memories of earlier uprisings. She also describes the attempts of restructuring in the Soviet bloc, the impact on Romania of the world economic crises, its loss of Western support and the emergence of domestic opposition. Gabanyi also offers a chronology of the revolutionary events and the details of the Romanian "revolution." The popular uprising against Ceauşescu cost many lives: over 1,000 civilians, officers and army conscripts were killed and over 4,000 persons injured. Still many more died after 22 December, when Ceauşescu was taken out of Bucharest and arrested. Gabanyi informs the reader that the vast majority of Romanians today believe these later victims died in vain, since the anti-communist people's uprising had been "stolen" or "diverted."

The still unclear background of the violent events following the capture of Ceauşescu continues to influence the state's course of political, social and economic transformation until today. Gabanyi argues that those who seized power after December 1989 did everything they could to prevent the investigation, prosecution and condemnation of those who were responsible for the bloody events. Thousands of people were investigated, but most were released or pardoned.

A group of people around Ion Iliescu seized power in a military coup d'état following a popular uprising in Timişoara. They stayed in power for a long time. According to Gabanyi, although some of them were responsible for the bloodshed, they escaped conviction. Representatives of the victims put pressure on the new government to prosecute those responsible, but the judiciary, acting on political orders, delayed prosecution in the cases of high-level functionaries. Documents were confiscated, such as the files on the Ceauşescu trial, were destroyed or forged, or are still being held by military or civilian prosecutors' offices.

Gabanyi argues that to a greater degree than the other CEE revolutions, the Romanian revolution was supported by electronic media and Western radio stations broadcasting to Romania, above all Radio Free Europe, which was very popular. This contributed to an anti-regime mobilization that delegitimized Ceauşescu's position and popularized regime dissidents from the 1980s. When the broadcasting time of local radios and TV stations was reduced, listeners and viewers turned to the radio and TV stations of the Soviet Union and other neighboring communist countries like Hungary. Soon after the departure of Ceauşescu from Bucharest, the national television station took over the role of Western broadcasting. Gabanyi speaks of a "tele-revolution," which in the end seems to have been a mixture of a popular uprising and a coup d'état. Thus, the events in Bulgaria can also be understood as an incomplete revolution.

*Karsten Brüggemann* describes the revolutions in the Soviet Union's Baltic republics, which when compared to the above "revolutions" in the CEE countries had a different profile and style. The Baltic "singing revolution" can be characterized by an extraordinarily high degree of youth engagement. Decisive was a collective consciousness of the past (such as memories of the secret protocol of the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 and the Soviet occupation in 1940) as well as the existence of a kind of independent Baltic culture. This youth engagement grew into a mass movement in the streets that was visible by all. For some time the new Soviet leadership hesitated to intervene militarily, since this would have risked violating its new image. Nonetheless Lithuania's declaration of independence on 11 Mach 1990 provoked negative feelings in Moscow. Also the Western powers were less than euphoric, fearing the destabilization of Gorbachev's position. But while the Baltic revolutionary changes were initially peaceful, they escalated into bloody confrontations in January 1991 when Soviet leaders decided to suppress the protests. This also contributed to the further weakening of the Soviet Union.

The erosion process of the USSR seems to have started in Poland at the beginning of the 1980s, moving on to Hungary and the GDR, but the collapse of the Soviet Union was not only caused by the economic and political decline of these countries. The mass demonstrations in the Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania constituted a new dimension; they were a decisive threat for the Soviet empire's cohesion. The Baltic states changed from being annexed and controlled districts at the empire's periphery into being a subversive and separatist region. But they should not be seen as unique cases. Their claim for emancipation and independence from the USSR in 1988–89 not only demonstrated the lack of attractiveness of socialism, it was also an expression of Russian "imperial overstretch." According to Estonian social scientists, the "singing revolution" reached "mythological" dimensions in 1988 and reached an "ideological point" in 1989, a first phase that made historical rebirth possible and produced euphoria and optimism about the political future. These societal-ideological changes of 1988–89 preceded the actual political changes, which took place in 1991 parallel to the dissolution of the USSR.

## International context, external influences, perceptions and reactions

*Norman M. Naimark* sheds light on the role of the superpowers in the events in the CEE states. While the British prime minister and the French state president wanted the USSR to prevent Germany's unity, the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union wanted the Western powers and the German chancellor to restrain the Americans from "interfering" in the CEE countries, although according to Naimark this was "pretty much the last thing on Washington's mind." The main concern of the US administration and George H.W. Bush was maintaining Gorbachev's reform policies as well as the political status quo in Europe.

The wait-and-see attitude of the superpowers continued even when the CEE countries and the East Germans claimed their self-determination. When Hungary pulled down its barriers to Austria, enabling East Germans to escape to West Germany, Moscow treated this as an affair that only concerned Hungary, the GDR and the FRG. When Polish communists made a power sharing deal with Solidarity, round table discussions that contributed to the erosion of communism, this happened without Soviet interference. Neither Moscow nor Washington stopped Kohl's moves toward German unification. In his summary, Naimark speaks of the "self-induced paralysis of the superpowers." This helped East German protesters and West German political decision makers bring the postwar order in Germany to an end.

Concerning the outcome of the revolutionary events, Naimark considers Gorbachev's role a decisive one. In the second half of the 1980s, his assurances that

the CEE countries could make their own decisions supported the resulting political changes. Perestroika encouraged the opposition movements to articulate their claims. While it seems that Gorbachev did not have a policy concerning Germany, he nonetheless opposed the old "conservative" foreign policies such as the Brezhnev Doctrine. Due to various special interests, the superpowers kept an observer position and did not interfere. Naimark reflects that the congratulations they gave themselves about "1989" were "mostly about what they did not do rather than what they did."

*Ella Zadorozhnyuk* examines the causes and effects of the Soviet Union's policy with regard to the revolutions of 1989–90. According to this author, at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s the events in the USSR and in the so-called satellite countries were reciprocal. She argues that the interaction between these events was causal; one event was often the consequence of another. When Gorbachev's reform policies were announced, people in the CEE countries started to consider comparable options, including alternatives to single-party structures. In turn, these political reactions affected Soviet Union policy. The revolutionary tendencies in the CEE countries stimulated by perestroika led to questions also being raised about the one-party structure in the USSR. Many of the CEE countries' political options were adopted in the USSR. In the end, the process of transformation in the socialist states also occurred in the USSR, resulting in its dissolution in 1991.

*Philip Zelikow*, the US foreign policy and security advisor during the George W.H. Bush administration, discusses the strategic planning of the United States during this period. Discussing "the generation of 1988," including Ronald Reagan, George Shultz, Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Margaret Thatcher, despite having some differences, together with other experts they believed the Cold War had ended in 1988. This makes sense if one takes the INF Treaty and the START talks into account. Zelikow relates a chronology that began with European arms control agenda in 1987–88, a period of transition from June to November 1989, and a phase of rapid changes from November 1989 to November 1990.When in December 1989 President George W. H. Bush assured the Europeans that US troops would remain in Europe as long as their presence was desired, he also frankly asserted that the United States would remain "a European power." Europe's leaders had nothing against such reassurances.

The outcome was improved relations with the USSR and China, as well as the United Nations Security Council organizing international solidarity against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The positive developments in Europe during 1989/90 influenced Bush's dealing with Saddam Hussein in 1991. In the end, US diplomacy reached goals that were more than President Truman's containment doctrine had been able to achieve after 1947 and better than the Bush administration had expected: Russian influence in Europe was contained, US influence in Europe increased, and NATO stood at the border of the Russian Federation.

*Alexander von Plato* begins by discussing international politics until December 1989, continues by examining the policy of non-military interference, turns to Gorbachev's vacillating reactions, and concludes by describing the various European reactions to German reunification. Thatcher rejected reunification with the argument that it could threaten Gorbachev's position. Mitterrand reacted differently: he feared that reunification would weaken the process of European integration and thus encouraged a monetary union that absorbed the Deutschmark.

At the February 1990 Open Skies conference in Ottawa, the international conditions for reunification were presented. The fact that they were excluded from these negotiations angered the Italian and Dutch foreign ministers: the conference only involved the four victorious powers of World War II and the two German states. The Two Plus Four Agreement was signed on 12 September 1990. Von Plato argues that the role of Baltic republics has been underestimated by scholars. In Politburo protocols, the Lithuanian Question was on the agenda more often than the German Question. After German unification, all of the CEE countries desired safeguards against the Soviet Union and Germany. Only NATO, with its new capacities, seemed to protect them from these perceived dangers. The transatlantic alliance remained the main factor of the United States in Europe. Mitterrand expressed hopes that European integration would reduce the influence of the United States and Russia in Europe, especially with regard to military questions. But the CEE governments thought NATO offered them a guarantee of security.

Gorbachev's road toward German unity can be divided into three steps: 1) the retrospective approval of opening the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989; 2) his consent, expressed in January–February 1990, with the two Germanys' right for self-determination regarding possible unification; 3) his acquiescence in May–July 1990 with Germany's right for self-determination regarding a free choice of alliances. *Wolfgang Mueller* argues that the Soviet leader made each of these decisions separately, a procedure that made each step easier to accept and, thus, influenced a final outcome that at the beginning had hardly been thinkable. He demonstrates that the Soviet leadership communicated acceptance of the German right of self-determination with regard to German unification ten days earlier than hitherto thought, namely on 20 January 1990, in a conversation between the Soviet and the East German foreign ministers.

*Klaus Larres* presents Margaret Thatcher's attitude toward Germany. He first describes her experiences as a child during World War II and then turns to the growing lack of support for her policies in 1989–90. Here, the author focuses on British public opinion and the houses of parliament, the four powers, and the beginning of the end for the GDR. Larres raises the question of whether Downing Street and the Foreign Office pursued two different foreign policies. The prime minister had become unpopular in her own country because of the imposition of community taxes. In addition, the Ridley affair and the leakage of the Chequers seminar in March 1990 damaged her image. As consequence of an internal party

coup in November 1990, Thatcher had to give up her leadership of the conservatives and leave her prime minister office. Her strict opposition to Germany's unification and European integration further contributed to her downfall. Thatcher's conservative, immobile and narrow-minded policies concerning Germany and Europe also weakened the international position of Britain. The end of her career can be seen as a political tragedy: the anti-German Thatcher became a victim of Germany and its unification. Two months later she lost her power entirely. After retiring she attacked her successors from time to time and never forgave her party for its unceremonious farewell.

*Georges Saunier* focuses on the post-Yalta era and its different phases: the re-emergence of the German Question (from summer 1988 to autumn 1989); the attempts to keep the consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall under control (from November 1989 to January 1990); the period of unification negotiations (from January to October 1990); and the debates concerning a new European balance after autumn 1990.

From the summer of 1989, French politicians realized that the GDR system was eroding, but they still believed in an evolutionary development with a mid-term perspective. In talks in Latche on 4 January 1990, Mitterrand heard from Kohl that German unification would be a process taking years.

Paris decided that Bonn should not pursue a unification policy alone; the EC should play an important role and the process should be "Europeanized." Elisabeth Guigou, advisor to Mitterrand, emphasized the need of linking unification with the deepening of European integration. It would allow immediate issues to be settled, but would also launch a new integration phase. According to Saunier, the 1990 Charter of Paris was a "détente treaty" that paved the way for disarmament in a unified Europe. In view of future transatlantic relations, Paris considered NATO stability necessary in this period of European transition and thus, that Germany should remain part of NATO. The evolution of NATO was a key element in the 1990 negotiations, with US policy aiming at its expansion. This was something France had opposed in former times and thus Paris was confronted with a dilemma. But due to the circumstances, France had to favor the revitalization of NATO. French policy therefore tried to introduce a reference to a future European defense structure within the formal framework of the alliance, although the German unification treaties did not contain any clauses providing such structures. In 1990 it was too early for such concepts. The Quai d'Orsay had to accept that the other European partners were against any plans of this kind. Therefore NATO's development remained undecided. Mitterrand's policy followed a clear line that combined his own projects. Unified Germany was to be part of a unified Europe that was based on international agreements and organizations.

*Antonio Varsori* shows that Italy's political elite and diplomats understood the importance of the events in the CEE countries. They backed the reunification of Germany, but wanted to prevent a German superpower that was no longer interest-

ed in its traditional relations with his European partners. Rome's primary foreign policy goal was to implement the integration process from both a political and an economic perspective. The creation of the European Monetary Union (EMU) was an additional goal, but involved dangers because of Italy's weak economy.

After 1990 Rome felt itself compelled to pay more attention to the Yugoslavian crisis than to the events in the CEE states. In order to avoid a large flow of immigrants, between 1989 and 1991 Italy tried to prevent Yugoslavia's breakup, although this policy was not popular in the general public opinion. Independent of Giulio Andreotti's reservations against German reunification, Varsori makes it clear that in the Two Plus Four negotiations, Italy was, against its will, only a "minor actor." Through Europe's integration, Italian politicians tried to influence the decisions being made, but due to the country's weak economy these attempts were limited.

Italy signed the Treaty of Maastricht on February 1992. Soon after this the Andreotti government resigned and the entire Italian political system collapsed. Its power of almost forty-five years had also come as a result of the Cold War. When the East-West conflict came to an end in Europe, the "clean hands" policy caused an implosion of Italy's political system. Despite the CEE socialist regimes' loss of power, the Italian Communist Party became the *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* (PDS) and survived.

*Arnold Suppan* presents a survey of the relations between Austria and its neighbors in the CEE states and the Balkans from the signing of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955 until the end of the Cold War. He points out that Austrian public opinion—especially in Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland—was divided: living next to Iron Curtain produced an "island-of-the-blessed" mentality, but at the same time Austrian had joined the Western European trajectory towards prosperity, consumerism and a "leisure-class society." Nevertheless, due to Austria's geopolitical situation between the blocs, the foreign ministers Karl Gruber, Leopold Figl and Bruno Kreisky insisted on an active "good neighbor policy" towards the adjacent communist states Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and from the 1970s also toward Poland, the GDR and Bulgaria. But the bloody suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and the "Prague Spring" in 1968 forced concrete reactions; the Austrian government as well the public helped hundred thousands of refugees from these two countries. From 1952, relations with Tito's Yugoslavia improved and from the 1960s became relatively close due to Yugoslav "guest-workers" coming to Austrian and increased tourism on the Adriatic coast. Even the minority question in Carinthia did not disturb the excellent contacts between Vienna and Belgrade. Astonishingly, Poland's Solidarity movement received little support from the Association of Austrian Trade Unions or Chancellor Kreisky, despite the fact that a new wave of political refugees arrived in Austria. But the election of the Cracow archbishop, Karol Wojtyła, as pope in the fall of 1978 was supported by Vienna's archbishop Franz König.

Thus, in the mid-1980s, the Austrian capital of Vienna was a "Western" city surrounded by Soviet "Eastern" Europe. For Polish, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Serb, Croat and Slovene intellectuals, Vienna stood for "Central Europe" (*Mitteleuropa*), an imagined community of cosmopolitan civility that Europeans had somehow mislaid in the course of the century. Nevertheless, a great majority of the Austrian people, including the intellectuals, did not really recognize what was going on in the late 1980s in its neighborhood. They did not see the significance of the new nationalism movements in Serbia (from 1986), in Slovenia (from 1988) and in Croatia (from 1989), the increasing conflicts in Kosovo, and the fractures within the Union of the Yugoslav communists (in January 1990). They were also not aware of how important the reform processes within the Hungarian communist leadership (from 1987) had become, including the resignation of Kádár in 1988 and the opening of the Iron Curtain, first in December 1988 for Hungarians, in August 1989 for some six-hundred East Germans at the Austro-Hungarian "border picnic," and then at midnight on 10–11 September for tens of thousands East German vacationers fleeing to West Germany. There is no doubt today that this mass exodus was the starting point of the disintegration of the communist regimes in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Immediately after the "Velvet Revolution" in Prague, Austria also opened its border to Czechoslovakia. With the fall of the Iron Curtain, Austria's role at the periphery of the West was suddenly transformed into a position in the center of Europe.

*Michael Gehler* shows that Austria responded early and positively to the reform efforts in the CEE countries. Its strongest sympathies were for the changes in Hungary. In contrast, the rapid end of East Germany was not expected and had an entirely different impact, with the positive climate shifting quickly. Diplomats at the Ballhausplatz did not follow the changes in East Germany merely by waiting and sitting still, but with a sense of urgency and concern; the end of the SED regime was perceived with surprise and mixed feelings. While the reaction of Austrian chancellor Franz Vranitzky toward a reform-oriented GDR was positive, his foreign minister Alois Mock backed Bonn's policy of a quick solution to the German Question in the sense of unification. The differing positions were also due to different approaches toward Brussels. Mock's course focused on accession to the EC, whereby he relied on the support of West Germany. Vranitzky moved more cautiously with regard to Austria's EC membership. While Vranitzky's attitude toward the CEE states was based on state decisions and the status quo, Mock was oriented toward humanitarian and cultural aspects, despite his being an anti-communist hardliner. Vienna was accurate in its assessment of the interdependence and mutual interaction between glasnost and perestroika in the Soviet Union and the changes in the CEE countries, recognizing early Gorbachev's key role in the reform processes and the further opening of the CEE countries. That is why the stability of Gorbachev's government was seen as a top priority. In this regard, Austria's foreign policy was parallel to that of the Western powers. The

reform movements in the CEE countries were see realistically, with the differences between the pioneering role of Poland and Hungary and the slower political changes in Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Romania being evaluated reliably. The perception of the latter developments ranged from skepticism to disapproval. The CSCE-succession process in Vienna (1986–89) offered an important stabilizing and conciliatory framework into which the dramatic upheavals could be placed. The key way that Austria intervened politically in the course of the events just before the fall of the Berlin Wall was through the symbolic cutting of the Iron Curtain and the assistance and support it gave to fleeing East German citizens. The Austro-Hungarian prologue in the summer of 1989 was decisive for the extreme speed the developments in Germany took that autumn.

## The aftermath and consequences

*Dieter Segert* analyzes the societal transformations in CEE states after 1989 and their preconditions. Despite changing political and economic conditions, "a great deal of continuity" still exists. The CEE societies were seen as backward societies on the periphery of the West that were trying to gain the richer and more successful social order of their Western neighbors. State socialism is characterized by Segert as having been an attempt to modernize these backward societies. But he has no doubt that the starting point of political breakdown was the deep ongoing crisis of state socialism from the mid-1970s. The systemic changes of 1989 took place because elements of capitalism had silently been placed into the fold of state socialism. Following 1989, economic output declined significantly, especially in industrial manufacturing. Segert calls this development a "transformation recession." Ensuing reforms also contributed to production decreases. The social consequences of these political changes were a rise in consumer prices and inflation, as was experienced for example in the successor states of former Yugoslavia and of the Soviet Union. The size of the working population dropped dramatically as well, which has resulted in rising social inequality. In most CEE countries, political participation in the first few elections after 1989 was high, but later this engagement declined and election turnouts decreased remarkably. Also social time changed fundamentally in the CEE countries. After 1989 the pace of life began to move faster and faster, with living conditions for the individual becoming more intense and less predictable. A radical restructuring of the welfare state occurred, with health care and pension systems massively changed. It has become clear that the process of economic adaptation and integration of the new member states into the EU will take much longer than was originally expected. With regard to political stability, the new member states differ from the older ones. Since 1989 voter unpredictability has grown, becoming even more widespread than in the "old" Western democracies.

*Liliana Deyanova* explores the different ways and different waves of how 1989 and communism have since been remembered in Bulgaria, a country where reformed communists managed to stay in power after 1989. Whereas the two main political groups in the country have tried to make their specific interpretations of 1989 universal by marginalizing the memories of the other, their readings have not remained unchanged, as a review of party media coverage in 1990, 1999, 2004 and 2009 reveals. What was celebrated by communists in 1990 as starting point for great reforms was later criticized by them as beginning of capitalism. Anti-communists were and remained skeptical about the success of 1989 in Bulgaria but used the occasions to denounce the crimes of communism. The division of memory regards not only 1989, but also September 1944, an anti-fascist revolution for some, a coup d'état mounted with Soviet help for anti-communists. Deyanova makes it clear that the "common places of memory" are not necessarily "places of common memory." She believes, however, that many of the incidents being interpreted as "nostalgia for communism" do not, in fact, reveal a real desire for communism to return but rather indicate what Jean-François Lyotard has called "nostalgia for nostalgia."

*Mikhail Prozumenshchikov* shows that the revolutions of 1989 also caused an "archival revolution" in the USSR, with documents becoming accessible that enable new revelations about contemporary history. Studying history with these open archives makes it possible to discover secrets that were hidden for a long time behind a "double Iron Curtain," first of the country and second behind the party secrecy. These secrets were not only hidden from the outside world, but also from the USSR's own citizens.

*Stanley R. Sloan* focuses on NATO's expansion from the American perspective. First he examines the setting for NATO enlargement, then discusses the emerging candidates for NATO membership, the process from partnership to membership and cooperation that has prepared the ground for enlargement, and in conclusion, the consequences of this expansion. Sloan considers NATO enlargement a success story. A small enlargement around 1999 was followed by a second bigger one in 2004, which represented a geopolitical and geostrategic revolution in the CEE states. Germany was the key European architect of the first round, followed by Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The decision in favor of a major "big bang" enlargement was made when the leaders of the NATO member states met in Prague in November 2002. During the administration of George W. Bush, in 2004 seven additional countries became members of NATO: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. In 2009 Albania and Croatia joined the alliance. Macedonia remains invited but still stands outside because of its differences with Greece over the country's official name. Ukraine and Georgia are still waiting, Serbia remains defiant and other states have the status of "partners" of various kinds. The question of NATO membership of Europe's non-aligned and neutral countries, like Austria, Finland and Sweden (which became members of the EU in 1995), is still open.

According to Sloan, NATO enlargement was "successful" because it brought new democracies into the Euro-Atlantic partnership. But he concedes that the process has left a number of unanswered questions concerning the future of European security with regard to relations with Russia. Sloan draws our attention to the point that Russian officials have used NATO's expansion toward the east as justification for its own foreign and domestic policies. The NATO and EU enlargement processes have caused a double revolution: they have stimulated first a new consciousness of European security and secondly the democratization of former Soviet bloc states and republics. Joining NATO has been followed by active EU integration: as former Warsaw Pact members have joined the alliance, they have become strong supporters of the transatlantic community within the EU. NATO-enlargement has troubled but not destroyed relations with Russia. In this context, Sloan refutes that NATO enlargement has led to a "new Cold War." Sloan argues that political developments in Russia that are unconnected to NATO's enlargement process have turned out to be far more important to its relations with Europe than the acceptance of former Warsaw Pact allies and the Baltic republics by the transatlantic alliance. Moreover NATO functions as a framework for coordinating responses to the defense and security needs of its new members.

*John O'Brennan* analyzes the EU's enlargement. In general, enlargement "has been a central and quasi-permanent element in the EU's history," an accurate statement of Desmond Dinan. Enlargement to the east was accompanied with rather hesitant and grudging responses by the old members. O'Brennan continues by focusing on the external and internal enlargement "canon" within EU studies, the economic and geopolitical dimensions, as well as theoretical approaches to EU enlargement. The first round of new members—UK, Denmark and Ireland (in 1973)—had hardly been assimilated when the second round followed and Greece (in 1981) and Spain and Portugal (in 1986) joined the community. Following the absorption of the old GDR (in 1990), the third round was negotiated quickly, with Austria, Finland and Sweden joining (in 1995), this causing nearly no problems. EU enlargement continued in 2004, with EFTA states and the "return to Europe" ("big bang" enlargement) of ten CEE countries, which was combined with their peaceful transitions.

O'Brennan makes it clear that there was and is an ongoing process of unfinished enlargement, with accessions of new member states taking place although the assimilation of older members remains non-consolidated. But the enlargement to the east has differed significantly from previous rounds in terms of size, scale and diversity.

1989 was also a starting point for changes in the West, especially for the transformation of the EC into the EU, with the events of this year contributing to a revolution within the old European Community. The Maastricht Union Treaty was an outcome of 1989 as well as a response to the unification of Germany.

The EU's eastern enlargement has been connected with democratization, Europeanization and modernization. But following the initial political changes, euphoria and idealism disappeared and disappointment and a new realism took their place. This was a consequence of expectations that were too high, as well as the challenges of inner-state and inter-state supra-national negotiations. With regard to new candidates from the Western Balkans, the controversies and struggles concerning widening the EU are back on the political agenda.

The establishment of new institutional structures shows that there has been successful adaptation of existing EU modes of decision making, but the process has remained partial and incomplete in both a geographic and normative sense. The democratic shortcomings of the CEE countries and of the EU itself have made it difficult to progress more quickly. The EU was and is confronted with a double challenge: on one hand being a welfare boosting entity and on the other, a global geopolitical power. It has not been possible to reach both goals at the same time, which has led to the failure of consolidating the gains of the "1989 moment." O'Brennan concludes with the critical yet reflective remarks:

> The EU may be bureaucratically cumbersome and politically enigmatic, but in supervising a framework for the renewal of meaningful pan-European interstate cooperation, not to mention the reconstitution of the democratic impulse across the continent, it may have contributed in some small way to making 1989 at least as important a historical juncture as 1789 and 1848 in the rich tapestry of the European collective experience.

Michael Gehler and Arnold Suppan

# CHRONOLOGY OF THE POLITICAL EVENTS IN CENTRAL, EAST AND SOUTH EUROPE, 1 AUGUST 1975–1 JULY 2013

## 1975

August 1: At the **Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe**, leaders of 35 countries—all the European countries except for Albania, plus the United States and Canada—sign the **Helsinki Accords,** in which European frontiers are declared inviolable and key principles concerning human rights, security, and cooperation are agreed upon.
October 1: **Treaty of Osimo** between Italy and Yugoslavia: final agreement on the issue of Trieste through the bilateral recognition of the previous zone boundaries as state boundaries (Zone A to Italy, Zone B to Yugoslavia); bilateral assurances of minority rights.

## 1976

February 24: Under the leadership of General Secretay Leonid I. Brezhnev, the **25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)** takes place in Moscow; 103 delegations from 96 countries take part.
May 24: The Archbishop of Esztergom, Hungary, László Lékai, is appointed cardinal.
July 18: The "Kiev," the first Soviet aircraft carrier, passes through the Turkish Straits and joins the Soviet Mediterranean fleet.
September 23: After worker uprisings in Warsaw and Łódź, Jacek Kuroń founds the Workers' Defense Committee (KOR).
November 15–17: During an official visit to Belgrade, the general secretary of the CPSU Leonid I. Brezhnev and the Soviet foreign minister Andrei A. Gromyko again assure Tito of his right to follow his own path to socialism.
December 29: In its new constitution, Albania declares itself a "Socialist People's Republic."

## 1977

January 1: The **Charter 77 Declaration** is published in Czechoslovakia. Signed by over 200 citizens (among them Jan Patočka, Jiří Hájek and Václav Havel), it calls on the communist regime to honor its commitments to international human rights accords.
January 6-7: Agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and Romania regarding family reunion of Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Swabians; the FRG agrees to a payment per emigrant based on their education; beginnning of 370,000 ethnic Germans emigrating from Romania.
May 24: The Archbishop of Prague, František Tomášek, is appointed cardinal.
After the opening of the *Đerdap* power plant I on the Danube at the Iron Gate between Yugoslavia and Romania in 1972, in 1977 the planning of *Đerdap* II started.

September 16: Hungarian and Slovakian prime ministers György Lázár and Lubomír Štrougal sign an agreement in Budapest to construct a hydroelectric power plant between Gabčikovo and Nagymaros.
October 4–March 8, 1978: CSCE follow-up meeting in Belgrade.

## 1978

January 6: The Holy Crown of Hungary and other Hungarian coronation regalia, which had been put into American hands in Upper Austria in May 1945, are returned by the United States to Hungary; the Crown of Saint Stephen is later put on display in the Hungarian Parliament.
July 7: China discontinues economic and military aid to Albania.
October 16: The **Archbishop of Cracow, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła**, the first non-Italian pope to be elected since 1522, assumes the papal throne as **John Paul II**.

## 1979

June 2–10: Pope John Paul II takes his first trip to Poland and is received enthusiastically by the population.
June 7–10: First direct elections of 410 members to the European Parliament.
June 18: US president Jimmy Carter and CPSU general secretary Brezhnev sign the **SALT II armament control agreement** in Vienna.
December 10: The native Albanian Mother Teresa of Calcutta is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
December 12: The NATO Double-Track Decision calls on the USSR to remove its newly deployed SS-20 missiles.
December 24: **Soviet troops invade Afghanistan**; communist rule is restored under Babrak Karmal; President Carter announces sanctions.

## 1980

May 4: **Death of Marshal Tito** in Ljubljana; more than 100 heads of state and government from all over the world take part in the state funeral in Belgrade, at their head Brezhnev and US vice president Walter Mondale.
July 19: Start of the Summer Olympic Games in Moscow; the United States and 63 other countries boycott the games because of the war in Afghanistan.
August 14–31: Strikes in the Gdańsk shipyards in Poland lead to emergence of the independent Solidarity labor movement (**Solidarność**), under the leadership of the worker Lech Wałęsa; the movement demands reforms and soon has 10 million members.
November 8: Opening of the 300-kilometer long highway between Prague and Bratislava.

## 1981

January 1: Greece joins the European Economic Community (EEC); it is the first time that a larger Orthodox population is part of the hitherto largely Catholic-Protestant community.
January 20: **Ronald Reagan** is inaugurated president of the United States.
March 11: In the Autonomous Province of Kosovo, student protests begin at the University of Priština; the protests soon spread to the general Albanian population. Serbian police and army take action against striking Albanian miners.

May 13: The Turkish extremist Ali Agça—possibly supported by Eastern secret services—commits an assasination attempt on Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square in Rome and wounds him critically.

May 26: Death of the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński; Bishop Józef Glemp becomes his successor.

December 13: Communist Party leader and Prime Minister of Poland **General Wojciech Jaruzelski imposes martial law** and has leading Solidarity activists arrested. In the 1990s, it is revealed that there had been a Warsaw Pact intervention plan, as is presented to a Polish-Russian commission.

## 1982

January 4: The EEC foreign ministers condemn the imposition of martial law in Poland.

October 1: Constructive vote of no confidence against FRG chancellor Helmut Schmidt (SPD); after the formation of the Christian-Liberal coalition, **CDU chairman Helmut Kohl** is elected by the Bundestag as his successor.

November 10: **Death of Brezhnev**; his successor as general secretary of the CPSU is KGB chief Yurii V. Andropov, who promotes Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

## 1983

January 20: In the Bonn Bundestag, President Mitterrand discusses the deployment of US medium-range missiles in Western Europe.

February 4–16: In a letter to Chancellor Kohl, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) State Council president Erich Honecker proposes joint support of the Swedish prime minister Olof Palme's initiative to establish a nuclear-free zone in Europe; in the letter of response Kohl rejects the Swedish initiative.

March 23: President Reagan denounces the USSR as an "evil empire" and announces the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), also called the **"star wars" program**, a space-based missile defense system.

June 19: The European Council signs the "Solemn Declaration on European Union" in Stuttgart.

June 16–23: Second visit of the Pope to Poland.

June 29: On the initiative of the Bavarian minister president Franz Josef Strauss (CSU), the West German federal government guarantees a loan of one billion DM to the GDR.

July 4–7: State visit of Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher to Moscow.

July 24–27: Private trip of Minister President Strauss to the GDR; meeting with Honecker.

September 15: Honecker receives the governing mayor of West Berlin, Richard von Weizsäcker (CDU), in East Berlin.

October 5: The Polish labor leader **Wałęsa receives the Nobel Peace Prize**.

October 23: Large demonstrations in Western Europe against the deployment of cruise missiles.

November 22: In accordance with the NATO Double-Track Decision of 1979, the German Bundestag approves the deployment of new US medium-range missiles, with 286 votes for and 226 against.

## 1984

January 20–22: After negotiations with the GDR government agencies, six GDR citizens who had requested political asylum at the US embassy in East Berlin are allowed to leave for West Berlin.

February 11: CPSU general secretary Andropov dies in Moscow; Konstantin U. Chernenko becomes his successor.
February 13: Meeting **Kohl–Honecker** on the sidelines of the funeral of Andropov in Moscow.
April 9: The "Luxembourg Declaration," regarding the creation of a single European economic area, is concluded on the occasion of a joint EC and EFTA ministerial meeting.
May 23: The German Federal Assembly elects Richard von Weizsäcker as president of the FRG by a large majority of votes.
May 26: Opening in Romania of Danube–Black Sea Canal, under construction since 1949.
July 25: The chief of the FRG Chancellery announces the approval of a loan of 950 million DM to the GDR.
September 22: Mitterrand and Kohl shake hands at the Douaumont cemetery in Verdun.
October 19: Kidnapping and murder of Polish priest Jerzy Popiełuszko by the Polish secret police.
December 31: In 1984 the GDR issued an unusual number of exit permits: 40,900 (in comparison 1983: 11,300).

## 1985

January 7: The French socialist **Jacques Delors becomes president of the EC Commission**.
January 20: Reagan begins his second term as US president.
March 11: **Mikhail S. Gorbachev is named general secretary of the CPSU** after the death of Konstantin U. Chernenko.
March 18: On the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II, the Evangelical Church in the FRG and the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR publish a common "Word for Peace."
April 23: Convening of the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and the official launch of the policy of perestroika ("restructuring" of the economic and political system).
April 11: Death of the Albanian state and party leader Enver Hoxha.
May 8: On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, the G-7 heads of state and government adopt a solemn declaration: "We deplore the division of Europe. With our commitment to the ideals of peace, freedom and democracy, we aim through peaceful means to break down the barriers that have emerged within Europe."
May 22: The 30th anniversary summit of the Warsaw Pact Organization (WPO) in Warsaw renews the treaty for twenty years.
June 16: At a meeting of the Landsmannschaft Schlesien in Hanover, Chancellor Kohl affirms the inviolability of frontiers.
June 29: Eduard Shevardnadze is appointed Soviet foreign minister.
Summer: Protests of Hungarian environmentalists begin against the construction of the Czechoslovak–Hungarian power plant Gabčikovo-Nagymaros; after years of fierce debates—also between the Budapest and Prague governments—in the end only the Gabčikovo side is built on Slovakian territory.
July 7: Approximately 100,000 faithful commemorate the 1,100th anniversary of the death of St. Methodius in Moravian Velehrad.
August 25: The state of war, which had existed since 1940 between Greece and Albania, is ended; Greece waives its claims to Northern Epirus.
October 21–23: At a session of the WPO Political Consultative Committee (PCC) in Sofia, Gorbachev discusses the prospects for integration in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), as well as the state of affairs of the international communist movement.
November 21–23: **The first Gorbachev–Reagan summit** is held in Geneva**;** they agree in principle to a 50% reduction in strategic offensive weapons. The most important result of the summit, however, is the two leaders establishing a personal relationship and discussing common interests with regard to abolishing nuclear weapons.

## 1986

January 1: Portugal and Spain join the EEC.
January 15: Gorbachev announces the Program for Comprehensive Elimination of Nuclear Weapons by the Year 2000.
February 25–March 6: The 27th Congress of the CPSU takes place.
February 28: Swedish prime minister Olof Palme is murdered in Stockholm by a still unidentified assassin; Kohl and Honecker meet at the funeral.
April 26: The **Chernobyl nuclear disaster** occurs, demonstrating the potential effects of a nuclear war to Kremlin leaders and their allies. The incident is made known only by Swedish control stations in the West; radioactive clouds drift across Belarus and the Baltic states, and—after a change of the wind—over Ukraine, the northern Balkans and as far as Austria.
June 13: The Soviet Poliburo discusses the economic crisis and the need of the communist countries to receive loans from the West.
July 1: Gorbachev attends the 10th Congress of the PUWP in Warsaw and meets PUWP leader Wojciech Jaruzelski.
August 19: The Central Committee passes a resolution allowing 20 ministries and the 70 largest enterprises of the USSR to establish direct contacts with foreign partners and to create joint ventures.
September 11: Greece and Bulgaria conclude a non-aggression pact.
September 24–25: **The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts publishes a "Memorandum** on the current social issues in our country," triggering sharp protests among Slovene and Croat intellectuals; the "Memorandum" is the ideological basis of Slobodan Milošević's Greater Serbia plan.
October 11–13: **The second Reagan–Gorbachev summit** in Reykjavik, at which they come close to an agreement on abolishing all strategic offensive weapons. However, they fall short of agreeing because of Reagan's insistence on keeping the SDI and Gorbachev's inability to compromise on SDI research and testing.
November 4: Third CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna.
November 10–11: At a meeting of the heads of CMEA countries in Moscow, a frank discussion takes place about the general economic crisis, failed efforts at integration within the CMEA, and the need for serious economic reform.
December 23: Physicist Andrei Sakharov is allowed to return to Moscow from internal exile in Gorky.

## 1987

January 6: According to statistics of the GDR Foreign Ministry, 573,000 GDR citizens were given permission to visit the FRG in 1986 "due to urgent family matters."
January 29: The Soviet Politburo discusses the results of a recent conference in Warsaw of Central Committee secretaries from communist countries. Members point to the **growing pro-Western orientation in Eastern Europe.**
February 10: The USSR announces that 140 individuals convicted of subversive activities had been pardoned.
February 19: Reagan lifts economic sanctions on Poland.
March 5–6: Under the patronage of Minister of State Imre Pozsgay, an international conference of historians takes place in Budapest's Parliament as well as an exhibition on the 300-year history of Germans in Hungary. For the first time, documents and photos of the 1945/46 expulsion and deportation of Germans from Hungary are shown in public.
March 15: In Budapest, up to 2,000 demonstrators mark the anniversary of the 1848 uprising against Habsburg rule and call for more democracy in Hungary.

March 28: Poland announces price increases of between 10% and 100% on basic foodstuffs, cigarettes, fuel, alcohol, transportation, and postal services.

March 28–April 1: **British prime minister Margaret Thatcher visits Moscow**. Her critical views on Soviet human rights violations and continued military involvement in Afghanistan are given full coverage in the Soviet media.

April 9: Gorbachev visits Prague to meet with CPC leader Gustáv Husák.

April 13–16: US secretary of state George Shultz arrives in Moscow to negotiate on arms control. He meets Gorbachev, Shevardnadze and the chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nikolai I. Ryzhkov.

April 14: Turkey applies for EU membership.

April 24: At **Kosovo Polje, Slobodan Milošević** witnesses a staged fight between Serbian demonstrators and ethnic Albanian policemen which he then exploits to begin a wave of nationalist agitation on television.

May 25: Gorbachev visits Romania and holds a speech explaining the reform process in the Soviet Union.

May 28–30: Eluding vaunted Soviet air defenses, West German peace activist Matthias Rust lands a small private plane on Moscow's Red Square. USSR Defense Minister Sergei L. Sokolov is fired and replaced by Dmitrii T. Yazov. The chief of Soviet air defenses and other generals are also replaced, reportedly as a result of the Rust incident.

June 8: **Pope John Paul II visits Poland**.

June 12: On the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the founding of Berlin, US president Reagan visits Berlin and appeals to Gorbachev: **"Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."**

Early summer: Slovenian intellectuals present a national program in the Ljubljana newspaper *Nova revija* and declare sovereignty a necessary condition for a people to become a nation; the rock group *Laibach* provokes the national communists.

June 25: Hungary announces the appointments of Károly Grósz as prime minister.

June 26: The Central Committee of the Yugoslav League of Communists meets in Belgrade to discuss problems in Kosovo.

July 28: In a speech to the Central Committee Plenum in Sofia, Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov calls for a reduction of the Communist Party's role in the government and the economy.

September 1: **Official Visit of Erich Honecker to the FRG**: Signing of agreements on cooperation in the fields of science and technology, environmental protection and protection against radiation; Honecker visits his hometown Neunkirchen in Saarland.

September 17: Shevardnadze and Shultz agree in principle on the elimination of INF missiles.

October 5: A state of energy emergency is declared in Romania.

October 23: Shultz meets with Gorbachev in Moscow to discuss INF issues.

November 2: At a celebration of the **70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution**, Gorbachev denounces Stalin's legacy, defends perestroika, and announces his intention to seek a strategic arms agreement with the United States.

November 11: At Gorbachev's request, the Moscow Party Committee removes Boris Yeltsin as first secretary.

November 15: Several thousand industrial workers riot in Braşov, Romania, over mandated pay cuts.

November 15: A general wage freeze and price increases are implemented in Yugoslavia, setting off a buying panic that devalues the Yugoslav currency.

December 7–10: At the **Washington summit**, Reagan and Gorbachev sign the INF treaty, mandating the removal of 2,611 intermediate-range missilies from Europe.

December 17: Miloš Jakeš succeeds Husák as general secetary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ).

## 1988

January 11: Kohl releases official figures provided by Honecker for travel in 1987, according to which there were 5,062,914 visits from the GDR to the FGR.

January 11: Gorbachev agrees with Jakeš that there is no reason to reassess the events of 1968, including the Soviet-led intervention. He adds that the attempt by supporters of the "Prague Spring" to present themselves as the "legal heirs of Soviet perestroika is nothing other than an attack on our perestroika."

February 1: Prices on about half of Polish goods and services are raised by 27%; the price of gas and electricity increases by 100% and coal by 200%; thousands protest in Warsaw and Gdańsk. The foreign debt of Poland rises to $38.5 billion ($1,030 per capita), that of Hungary to $18 billion ($1,820 per capita).

February 8: **Gorbachev announces** on national television a plan to **withdraw troops from Afghanistan** beginning 15 May 1988 and ending 15 February 1989.

February 11–12: The European Council in Brussels adopts the "Delors Package" concerning reformations of the financing system, including the Common Agricultural Policy and the doubling of the structural funds of the EU.

February 29: Bulgaria holds regional and municipal elections that allow more than one candidate per position for the first time.

March 10: At a Politburo meeting, Gorbachev announces that the USSR will provide 41 billion rubles annual assistance to communist countries and trade partners around the world, including 27 billion rubles to Cuba.

March 13: *Sovetskaya Rossiya* publishes the "Nina Andreyeva letter," which attacks perestroika in language borrowed from the speeches of Andrei Zhdanov. The Politburo holds an intense discussion about the letter as well as about glasnost. A split forms between radical reformers and those who are more cautious.

April 14: The Geneva Accords on Afghanistan are signed, calling on the USSR to remove half of its forces by 15 August 1988 and the rest by 15 February 1989.

April 25–27: Thousands of Polish workers, including those in the shipyards in Gdańsk, strike with the demand for higher wages.

May 20: At the conference of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, General-Secretary **János Kádár is removed** from office and replaced by Károly Grósz.

May 26: The Evangelical Church of the FGR and the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR release a "Joint Statement" on the 50th anniversary of the pogrom against German Jews on 9 November 1938.

May 27–29: Private trip of Chancellor Kohl to the GDR, where he visits the cities of Erfurt, Gotha, Weimar, Dresden, Gera and Saalfeld.

May 29–June 1: The **Gorbachev–Reagan summit** takes place **in Moscow**.

May 31–July 18: Arrest of three Slovenian jounalists from the magazine *Mladina* and a non-commissioned officer of the Yugoslav National Army for alleged theft of secret military documents; the process conducted in Serbo-Croatian by a **military court in Ljubljana** provokes fierce resistance in the Slovenian general public ("Committee for the Protection of Human Rights"); among the sentenced is the later Defense Minister and Prime Minister Janez Janša.

June: Many official and private protests in Hungary as well as in Western Europe against Ceauşescu's plan to destroy Transylvanian villages.

June 16: A commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the execution of the former Hungarian prime minister Imre Nagy and his associates is forcibly broken up by the police.

June 28: In his address to the **19th All-Union Conference** of the Communist Party, Gorbachev calls for a restructuring of the government and the creation of a strong president chosen by a more representative legislature that replaces the Supreme Soviet.

July 11: Gorbachev visits Poland. At a dinner with the Polish party leadership, he gives a detailed description of his "**Common European Home**" idea.

July 28: Millennial anniversary of the Baptism of Kievan Rus', celebrations in Moscow, Kiev/Kyiv and other cities; many older churches and some monasteries are reopened.

July 30: The Yugoslav government orders an end to the recent demonstrations by minority ethnic Serbs in Kosovo, who claim mistreatment by the region's Albanian ethnic majority.

From early July: Milošević supporters begin mass demonstrations in Novi Sad, using yogurt cups as weapons ("Yogurt Revolution"); on 5 October they force the political leadership of Vojvodina to resign; the former party leadership in Montenegro is also replaced by Milošević supporters.

August 31: Solidarity leader Wałęsa meets Interior Minister General Czesław Kiszczak; after the meeting he urges to end nationwide strikes.

September 11: In the Soviet Republic of Estonia, 300,000 people demonstrate for independence.

September 14: West German Federal Chancellery chief Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) and the Head of Commercial Coordination (CoCo), Alexander Schalk-Golodkowski, agree on new rules for transit trade and an increase in the transit fees from 525 million DM a year to 860 million DM.

September 30: The CC CPSU Plenum implements radical structural and personnel changes in the Central Committee: **Gorbachev replaces Gromyko as president**; Vadim A. Medvedev takes over responsibility for ideology and propaganda; Anatolii F. Dobrynin is retired as CC secretary in charge of foreign affairs and replaced by Aleksandr S. Yakovlev; Viktor M. Chebrikov is replaced by Vladimir A. Kryuchkov as head of the KGB.

October 24–27: Kohl visits the Soviet Union with a large delegation of business representatives.

In autumn: In Hungary, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) are formed.

November 8: **George H.W. Bush is elected president of the United States**.

November: More than 100,000 Albanians in Priština protest against two party leaders being arrested.

November 24: The Central Committee of the Socialist Worker' Party in Hungary names Miklós Németh as head of government, replacing General Secretary Grósz.

December 7: In a landmark speech at the United Nations in New York, **Gorbachev announces plans to reduce the Soviet military by 500,000 troops** and endorses the "common interests of mankind" as the basis for Soviet foreign policy. Afterwards, Gorbachev lunches with Reagan and president-elect Bush at Governors Island in New York Harbor.

## 1989

January 11: The Hungarian Parliament votes to allow freedom of association and assembly.

January 15: A demonstration in Prague commemorates the 20th anniversary of the student protest-suicides following the 1968 invasion. Police break up the protest and arrest demonstrators, among them Václav Havel.

January 17: Delors proposes a **European Economic Area (EEA) between the EC and EFTA** to the European Parliament.

January 22: Speaking on ABC television news, Bush's security adviser Brent **Scowcroft states: "I think the Cold War is not over."**

January 24: At a Politburo meeting, Gorbachev instructs Yakovlev, the head of the Politburo's International Commission, to conduct "a situational analysis" of Eastern Europe with think tank scholars.

January 28: Imre Pozsgay, a member of the Hungarian Politburo, calls for the reappraisal of the 1956 revolt.

Between January and March: Albanian miners strike in Trepča; after the introduction of martial law in Kosovo there are numerous deaths in armed clashes; the Albanian-dominated Communist Party leadership of Kosovo is removed from office.

February 6: In an attempt to escape from East Berlin to the West, 20-year-old Chris Gueffroy is shot.
February 6: **“Roundtable” talks** begin between the Polish government and representatives of Solidarity as well as the Catholic Church.
February 10–11: The Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party agrees to a multi-party system.
February 28: At the inaugural meeting of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) in Zagreb, the historian Franjo Tuđman is elected chairman.
March: The new Yugoslav prime minister Ante Markovic, a Croatian, attempts as the last reformer to hold together the Yugoslav state by means of a market economy and pluralist democracy; the foreign debt already amounts to $22 billion ($1,000 per capita).
March 7: **Baker receives Shevardnadze** at the US ambassadorial residence in Vienna for their first private meeting. He tells the Soviet minister: “We really hope that you succeed.”
March 26: Elections take place to the new Soviet Congress of People’s Deputies. Boris N. Yeltsin wins the Moscow at large seat with 89% of the vote.
April 5: The Polish government and Solidarity reach an agreement on political and economic reforms, including the holding of elections in the summer and the restructuring of the Parliament. On 7 April, the **government and Solidarity sign roundtable accords**.
April 6: In a private meeting in London with Thatcher, **Gorbachev denounces Bush’s “pause” as “intolerable.”** Thatcher urges patience but immediately sends a message to Bush describing how upset Gorbachev is.
April 9: Soviet troops kill 20 Georgian demonstrators in the capital city of Tbilisi. In response to critics in the Politburo, Gorbachev claims he did not know about the decision to deploy troops, blaming it on the Georgian party leadership.
April 12: Ceaușescu announces that his country’s foreign debt has been paid ahead of schedule.
April 25: One thousand Soviet tanks leave Hungary.
May 2: **Hungary begins to dismantle the “Iron Curtain”** at its border with Austria.
May 8: **Milošević is elected by the Serbian Parliament as the new president of Serbia**; soon thereafter he abolishes the autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo, and begins to mobilize the Serbs in Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia.
May: Strikes and demonstrations begin in Bulgarian Turkish communities against the campaign of Bulgarianisation that had been underway since 1984.
The “May Declaration” of opposition Slovenian politicians demands an independent Slovenian state.
May 11: The CPSU Politburo discusses a proposal by the Politburo commission on the **situation in the Baltic republics**. Gorbachev emphasizes that “force does not help in this business.”
May 15–18: **Gorbachev visits China** for the first Sino–Soviet summit in 30 years and announces the “normalization” of relations.
May 20–21: Bulgarian authorities put an end to protests against the government’s policy of forced assimilation. Over 100 ethnic Turks are killed.
May 25–June 9: The new **Soviet Congress of People’s Deputies** meets for the first time and elects Gorbachev as president.
May 31: Bush appeals for “an undivided Europe” in a speech in Mainz.
June 4: **Solidarity wins a decisive victory in partially free parliamentary elections**. The union wins 99 of 100 seats in the Senate and 160 of 161 available seats in the 460-seat Sejm.
June 4: Chinese government troops crush pro-democracy demonstrations in **Tiananmen Square** in Bejing with armored vehicles, killing hundreds.
June 13: **The Hungarian “Roundtable” talks begin**.
June: At the request of the new Minister of Culture Ferenc Glatz, the government reinstates an eight-year high school curriculum. Russian is abolished as the first foreign language being taught; from the school year 1989/90, English, German, French, Italian and Spanish are also offered.

June 12–15: **State visit of Gorbachev to Bonn.** In a joint statement, Kohl and Gorbachev call for "understanding, trust and partnership as the basis for neighborly relations and the reconciliation between peoples." Also: "War must not be a political means."

June 16: Imre Nagy is ceremonially re-interred in Budapest. First public appearance of the student functionary Viktor Orbán, who later is to become Hungarian prime minister between 1998 and 2002, and from 2010.

June 19: START negotiations resume in Geneva.

June 22: The Hungarian CC reorganizes the leadership of the party, creating a four-member Presidium consisting of Grósz, Pozsgay, Németh and Nyers.

June 27: The foreign ministers Gyula Horn and Alois Mock symbolically cut the last remnants of the "Iron Curtain" at the Hungarian-Austrian border.

June: **Shevardnadze visits Budapest** and tells the Hungarian leaders: "Do what you think is best to preserve the position of the party."

June 28: **Mass rally of nearly one million Serbs in Kosovo Polje** on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the battle against the Ottomans in 1389; Milošević is the keynote speaker.

July: Strikes in the Donbas region with political and financial demands.

July 1: Speaking on Soviet television, Gorbachev warns of ethnic conflict breaking out in the USSR.

July 6: Addressing the **Council of Europe in Strasbourg**, Gorbachev states that the USSR will not block reforms in Eastern Europe and will promote comprehensive European political and economic integration within the framework of a "common European home."

July 7: In Bucharest, **Gorbachev speaks to Warsaw Pact leaders** and seems to accept the changes in Poland and Hungary. Ceauşescu openly complains about "disunity" within the alliance. The member states of the Warsaw Pact revoke the 1968 Brezhnev Doctrine limiting the sovereignty of socialist states.

July 9–13: **Bush is hailed by crowds in Poland and Hungary**. However, his cautious speeches, designed not to offend the Soviets, are later the subject of criticism. Speaking before the Polish Parliament, Bush pledges US$100 million in aid to support the development of private enterprise. Bush also meets with Wałęsa in Gdańsk. Meeting privately with Grósz, Nyers and Németh in Budapest, Bush tells the party leaders that he does not want to force them to "choose between East and West."

July 19: Jaruzelski is elected president of Poland.

July 22: **The Lithuanian Parliament declares the 1940 Soviet annexation of the Baltics illegal.**

August 16: Yakovlev holds a press conference to denounce "unequivocally" the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact, which led to the annexation of the Baltics. However, he states that the Soviet government still considers the Baltics a part of the USSR and will resist any attempt to separate them from the Union.

Summer: Due to further Bulgarian repression, over 300,000 Turks leave Bulgaria; Turkey closes its boarders temporarily.

July–August: More and more East German citizens traveling on holiday to Poland, the CSSR and Hungary flee in a roundabout way to the FRG. The chief of the German Federal Chancellery Rudolf Seiters (CDU) appeals to GDR citizens who wish to emigrate not to go through the diplomatic missions in Warsaw, Prague and Budapest.

August 19: "Picnic" of the "Pan-European" movement (president: Otto von Habsburg) at the Hungarian-Austrian border near Sopron and the joint "border walk"; 661 GDR citizens use the opportunity to flee to Austria.

August 21: The Catholic writer and journalist **Tadeusz Mazowiecki** becomes the first non-communist Polish prime minister since 1947.

September 8–10: ***Rukh*–the Ukraine nationalist movement**–holds its constituent congress in Kiev and displays the banned blue-and-yellow flag of independent Ukraine.

September 10: After ten thousands of East Germans have gathered in Hungarian refugee camps at the end of August/beginning of September, the Hungarian government—after negotiating with Bonn and Moscow—announces that they will no longer prevent **East German citizens from crossing Hungary's border into Austria**, a move that eventually makes it possible for 50,000 East Germans to reach the FRG.

September 22–23: **Shevardnadze and Baker** meet at the latter's ranch in Wyoming. They discuss START, chemical weapons, regional conflicts, and independence movements in the USSR.

September 23: The Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet makes Azeri the official language of the Republic, reasserts sovereignty over Nagorno–Karabakh, and reaffirms Azerbaijan's right to secession from the USSR.

September 30: After negotiations between Bonn and East Berlin, approximately 7,000 GDR citizens who had taken refuge in FRG embassies—more than 6,000 in Prague and more than 800 in Warsaw—obtain permission to emigrate by train through the GDR to the FRG.

October 4: The GDR halts free entry into Czechoslovakia.

October 6–7: **Honecker's speech celebrating the 40th anniversary of the GDR**: The GDR was to pass into the new millenium with confidence because "socialism" belongs to "the future." **Gorbachev** points out that the profound changes to come would spare no country: "Those who come late are punished by life." Gorbachev later tells aides that Honecker "can't stay in control" and must go.

October 6–9: The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party is dissolved and it is decided to establish the Hungarian Socialist Party. In the previous weeks the communist workers' militia and the party cells had already been dissolved in the defense and interior ministries.

October 9: Over 70,000 East Germans demonstrate against their government in Leipzig. Local communist leaders refuse to disperse the marchers.

October 12: The Polish government announces new anti-inflation measures and promises the "full introduction of market mechanisms and institutions" in 1990–91.

October 17: **Honecker is forced to resign** both as general secretary and head of state. He is replaced by Egon Krenz, the former security chief and the youngest member of the Politburo.

October 21: Between 200,000 and 300,000 East Germans demonstrate against the government in Leipzig.

October 23: Hungary adopts a new constitution permitting a multiparty system, scheduling elections for 1990 and changing the country's name to the **Republic of Hungary.**

October 28: About 10,000 protesters gather in Wenceslas Square in Prague to mark the 71st anniversary of the formation of Czechoslovakia. Riot police storm the crowd and arrest 355 demonstrators.

October 30: Founding of the "Democratic Awakening" party by Rainer Eppelmann and Angela Merkel.

October 31: Faced with growing economic problems, Krenz authorizes secret meetings with the FRG to obtain emergency loans in exchange for specific liberalization of travel between the two Germanys.

November 1: Gorbachev meets Krenz at the Kremlin and calls on him to speed up reforms and to open borders in order to "avoid an explosion."

November 4: A crowd of **500,000 East Germans demonstrates** for democracy in East Berlin.

November 6–7: The draft of a new DDR Travel Act as announced by the government is rejected by the responsible People's Chamber Committee; the GDR government under Prime Minister Willy Stoph resigns.

November 8: Resignation of the SED Politburo. Hans Modrow, the SED leader in Dresden, is named the new premier of the GDR. An overwhelming majority of the German Bundestag speaks out in favor of guaranteeing the Oder-Neisse border.

November 9: Following discussions in the new SED Politburo, Günter Schabowski announces at a press conference the immediate opening of the East German border: **the unexpected fall of the**

**Berlin Wall**. Berliners from both sides cross through the eight check points, and begin to chip away at the concrete and steel barrier.

November 10: **Todor Zhivkov**, general secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party from 1954 and president from 1971, is deposed and replaced by Petar Mladenov.

November 11–12: Meeting of the foreign ministers of Italy, Yugoslavia, Austria and Hungary to form a "Quadragonale" to enhance economic and political cooperation in the Danube-Adriatic region; in May 1990, this group expands into a "Pentagonale" with Czechoslovakia.

November 17: **Protests in Prague and Bratislava** to commemorate the closing of Czech universities and colleges by Hitler in November 1939; in Prague demonstrators are beaten by security forces; the rumor about the death of a protester triggers further demonstrations, which in the next days are joined by many workers and other citizens.

November 19–21: The **Civic Forum is formed in Prague** as an umbrella opposition organization. In Bratislava, the Public Against Violence movement is formed (VPN). Mass demonstrations take place in Prague's Wenceslas Square. A closed-door meeting is held between Czechoslovak Premier Adamec and the leaders of the Civic Forum. **Václav Havel** later announces that Adamec promised not to impose martial law and to investigate charges of brutality by the security forces.

November 21: Prime Minister Németh has to announce to the Hungarian Parliament that Hungary's foreign debt would amount to 20 billion US$ by the end of the year.

November 24: Jakeš and the rest of the Czechoslovak Politburo and Secretariat resign their party posts.

November 27: General strike throughout Czechoslovakia against the power monopoly of the Communist Party.

November 28: In the Bundestag **Federal Chancellor Kohl unveils his "10-point plan to overcome the division of Germany and Europe":** By means of a contractual community between East and West Germany and the establishment of confederal structures, the unification of the two German states is to be achieved.

November 30: At a speech in Rome, Gorbachev calls for a "common European home."

December 1: Serbia imposes a trade embargo on Slovenia.

December 1: Pope John Paul II receives Mikhail S. Gorbachev and his wife Raisa at the Vatican.

December 2–3: **The Malta summit takes place.** Gorbachev attempts to convince Bush to accept his idea of the gradual transformation of Eastern Europe with the close cooperation of the superpowers in order to prevent instability. The US president states that he will not "jump on the wall," but puts pressure on the Soviet leader not to apply force with regard to regional conflicts. In the final communiqué, Gorbachev suggests recognizing the importance of common democratic values rather than Western ideals.

December 3: The East German Politburo resigns, including Krenz.

December 4: **Gorbachev meets leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries in Moscow**. Bulgaria is represented by Mladenov; Czechoslovakia by Urbánek; East Germany by Krenz and Modrow; Hungary by Nyers; Poland by Mazowiecki; Romania by Ceauşescu. They issue a condemnation of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, although Ceauşescu refuses to sign.

December 4: **NATO Summit in Brussels**. Bush outlines four principles for German unity: 1. The Germans' right to self-determination; 2. the existence of obligations of the FRG to NATO; 3. the peaceful and gradual development of the association; 4. the validity of the Helsinki Final Act in the question of the German border.

December 5: Visit of West German Foreign Minister Genscher to Moscow: Gorbachev and Shevardnadze strictly reject Kohl's 10-point plan.

December 6: Gorbachev receives Mitterrand in Kiev where they discuss the changes in Central and Eastern Europe.

December 7: At a "round table" in East Berlin, with the participation of the five governing parties and several new groups, 6 May 1990 is agreed upon as the date for free elections in the GDR.

December 9: Gregor Gysi replaces Krenz as the GDR's communist leader.
December 8–9: **European Council in Strasbourg**: Thatcher and Mitterrand are against German unification; only the Spanish socialist prime minister Felipe Gonzáles supports Kohl. Nonetheless, it is decided to convene an intergovernmental conference on the creation of an economic and monetary union, and to establish a European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in London.
December 10: Husák, leader of the Czechoslovak Communist Party from 1968 to December 1987 and president from May 1975, resigns the presidency.
December 11: When at the request of the USSR a meeting between the ambassadors of the four former occupying powers takes place for the first time in 18 years in the Allied Control Council building in West Berlin, both German governments protest.
December 13: Twenty-four Western nations announce a 1 billion US$ emergency fund to support Poland's economy.
December 15–17: Special Congress of the East CDU, which argues against socialism and for German unity; Lothar de Maizière is chairman.
December 15–17: In Timişoara, Hungarians and Romanians defend Pastor László Tökés against the Romanian police. Romanian security forces fire on demonstrators.
December 18: The European Community and the Soviet Union sign a ten-year trade agreement.
December 19: In a speech to the Policy Committee of the European Parliament, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze clarifies Soviet thoughts on German reunification in seven points.
December 19–20: **Modrow and Kohl** meet in Dresden and argue for a "**contractual arrangement**"; demonstrations are held in Dresden for German unity and in East Berlin for the preservation of the GDR.
December 20–22: State visit by Mitterrand to East Berlin: He urges the GDR to respect the existing realities and borders, especially those with Poland.
December 21–25: After a speech in Bucharest's main square, a pro-Ceauşescu demonstration in Bucharest turns into an anti-Ceauşescu demonstration. The Romanian dictator flees in a helicopter. The National Salvation Front declares itself the new government. The Soviets hail the **overthrow of Ceauşescu** as reflecting "the will of the Romanian people." Provisional Romanian leader Ion Iliescu declares himself in favor of reformed socialism. Ceauşescu and his wife Elena are executed after a hasty trial before a military tribunal.
December 28: The Czechoslovak Parliament elects Alexander Dubček, the CPC leader since 1968, as speaker of the Federal Assembly.
December 29: The Czechoslovak Parliament elects **Havel as Czechoslovakia's new president.**
December 29: The new Bulgarian government under Peter Mladenov recognizes equal rights for all Muslims and Turks.
December 1989–January 1990: Anti-government unrest in Shkodra in Northern Albania.
December 31: New Year's speech by Kohl: Europe should not "end at the Elbe"; "Germany is our fatherland—Europe our future!"

## 1990

January 4: Meeting Kohl–Mitterrand: attempt to win the support of France for German unification by connecting such support to the European integration process.
January 17: In front of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, EC Commission president Jacques Delors states that East Germany is a special case; if East Germany desires, it should have a place in the EC.
January 22: "Human Chain" across Ukraine.
January 23: After all of their reform proposals are voted down by the Serbian leadership majority, **Slovenian and Croatian delegates quit the last Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia** in Belgrade; the united Party is thereby dissolved.

January: After the dissolution of the Polish Workers' Party, Deputy Prime Minister Leszek Balcerowicz begins a drastic economic reform program.

January 28: Due to **increased waves of emigration to the FRG**, the election date for the GDR People's Chamber is advanced to 18 March.

January 29: US secretary of state James Baker and UK foreign secretary Douglas Hurd agree on a six-party mechanism ("Two-plus-Four") to resolve the external aspects of German unification, whereby the two German states and the Four Powers are to have equal rights in their negotiations with each other.

January 31: In his Tutzing speech Genscher calls for "no expansion of NATO's military structures into the territory of the GDR."

February 1: Modrow presents his concept, "For Germany, united fatherland": Contract Community–Confederacy–Unification.

February 5–8: In Bonn, Polish foreign minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski stresses the need for Poland's western border to be guaranteed.

February 6: On a flight to Moscow, Baker lands in Shannon, Ireland, where he seeks the approval of French foreign minister Roland Dumas for the six-party mechanism.

February 7–9: Baker lobbies for the six-party mechanism in Moscow.

February 10: **Gorbachev receives Kohl in Moscow** and states: "It is for the Germans to determine the timing and the path of their unification."

February 12–14: **"Open Sky" conference in Ottawa**: On the sidelines of the conference of 23 NATO and WPO states, the Two-plus-Four mechanism is decided upon as a framework for German unification.

February 15: During a visit to Bonn, Modrow—supported by the GDR "round table"—calls for a "solidarity contribution" of 15 billion DM for the GDR; this is rejected by Kohl.

February 24–25: **Bush receives Kohl at Camp David**: Both agree that Soviet agreement to an all-German NATO membership would ultimately be a question of the price.

February 27: The Polish prime minister Mazowiecki demands the initialling of a German–Polish border treaty before German unification.

March 2: Kohl links a German–Polish border treaty with the relenquishing of Poland's demands for reparations from Germany, as well as regulations on the rights of the German minority in Poland.

March 5–6: Gorbachev receives Modrow in Moscow and requests support in the question of property; Gorbachev rejects the NATO membership of a united Germany.

March 8: **Resolution of the Bundestag on the western frontier of Poland**: "As soon as possible after the elections in the GDR, the two freely elected German parliaments and governments [should] make a similar declaration" that would uphold the renunciation of German territorial claims.

March 9: During a state visit to Paris, Mazowiecki demands a partial inclusion of Poland into the "Two-plus-Four" process; Mitterrand expresses his support in view of Polish security interests.

March 10: Hungarian–Soviet agreement on the removal of Soviet troops stationed in Hungary by the end of June 1991.

March 14: **Two-plus-Four Officials Meeting in Bonn**: agreement on limiting the topics to be dealt with. The Soviet Union calls for a peace treaty for Germany, which is, however, rejected by the other delegations.

March 15: Gorbachev is elected president of the USSR.

March 18: **First free elections for the People's Chamber of the GDR**: The Alliance for Germany (CDU, DSU, DA) receives 48.1%, SPD 21.8%, the PDS only 16.3%; on 12 April, Lothar de Maizière (CDU) is elected prime minister of the GDR.

March 19: Bloody clashes in Tirgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely, Neumarkt) in Transylvania between supporters of the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania and the *Vatra Românească*, an ultra-nationalist Romanian grouping.

March 29–30: Thatcher receives Kohl for talks in Cambridge.

March/June: Lithuania declares its independence; economic blockade by the USSR; Lithuania suspends its declaration of independence and the USSR lifts the blockade.

April: The USSR admits responsibility for the 1940 Katyń massacre against Polish officers.

April 6: Meeting Baker–Shevardnadze; the latter explains that the USSR is still against NATO membership for a unified Germany, but that he could imagine solutions other than a neutral Germany.

March 25–April 8: The Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) wins the **first free parliamentary elections in Hungary since 1947**, gaining more votes than the Free Democrats (SZDSZ), the Smallholders' Party, the Socialist Party and the Young Democrats (FIDESZ); on 23 May, the historian József Antall (MDF) becomes the new prime minister of a coalition government with the Smallholders and the Christian Democrats.

April 13: Bush and Thatcher meet each other in the Bermudas.

April 20: The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is renamed the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic.

April 21: EC Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Dublin: Adoption of a policy for the integration of East Germany into the EC.

April 8–22: In the **first free elections in Slovenia since 1927**, the non-communist coalition DEMOS (Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Peasant Party) wins, ahead of the League of Communists–Party of Democratic Renewal (ZKS-SDP), the League of Socialist Youth–Liberal Party (ZSMS-LS) and the Socialist Federation of the Working People (SZDL); the historian Lojze Peterle (Christian Democrat) becomes the new prime minister; the former Communist Party leader Milan Kučan is elected the new president of Slovenia.

April 24: Kohl and de Maizière meet each other in Bonn and agree on an economic, monetary and social union beginning on 1 July 1990.

April 28: De Maizière and Foreign Minister Markus Meckel (SPD) travel to Moscow. Gorbachev: "A united Germany may not be a member of NATO."

April 28: **Summit of the European Council** in Dublin: The EC members make a clear commitment to German unity.

April 30: **Two-plus-Four Officials Meeting in Berlin**: the USSR and the GDR are not willing to forego discussing military-political issues.

April 22–23/May 6–7: In the **first free parliamentary elections in Croatia since 1927,** the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) wins, ahead of the League of Communists of Croatia–Party of Democratic Changes (SKH-SDP), as well as several small parties; the historian Franjo Tuđman (HDZ) becomes the new prime minister; by the end of May 1990 he is already president of Croatia.

May 5: **Two-plus-Four Meeting of Foreign Ministers in Bonn**; it is agreed to discuss the following topics: 1. the border issue, 2. political-military issues, 3. Berlin, 4. a final settlement under international law. A consensus is reached that a peace treaty will not be concluded and that Poland will be invited to the third meeting of foreign ministers.

May 8: Estonia declares its independence.

May 16: The Yugoslav National Army begins disarming the territorial defense forces in Croatia and Slovenia; in Slovenia, this is only partially successful.

May 18: Baker presents a plan in Moscow to ease the USSR's acceptance of German unification.

May 20: In the **parliamentary elections in Romania** the National Salvation Front (FSN), a successor organization of the Communist Party, wins two-thirds of the votes and mandates, ahead of the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) and the National Liberal Party (PNL).

May 23: At a meeting in Geneva of Genscher–Shevardnadze, the basis for the USSR consenting to the Germans' free alliance choice is addressed.

May 25: Gorbachev receives Mitterrand in Moscow and suggests a special role of Germany in a completely reformed NATO (similar to the status of France).

May 30–June 3: **Bush receives Gorbachev** for consultations at Camp David: A consensus is reached on the basic elements of START 1 Treaty; there is no consensus on the issue of the alliance membership of a united Germany.

June 5–8: **Bush receives Kohl**: Both explain that a united Germany in NATO does not constitute a threat to the USSR.

June 6–8: WPO Conference: Antall proposes that the Warsaw Pact be dissolved. The Political Consultative Committee declares that "the ideological enemy has been overcome."

June 7–8: NATO foreign ministers meeting in Turnberry: Bush's "nine-point offer" to the USSR; NATO extends the WPO "the hand of friendship."

June 8: Gorbachev receives Thatcher in Moscow.

June 8–9: **Parliamentary elections in the Czechoslovak Federal Republic**: In the Czech part of the country, the Citizens' Forum wins 53.2% of the vote, the KSČ 13.5%, the Christian and Democratic Union 8.7%, and the Movement for Self-governing Democracy 7.9%; in the Slovak part of the country, Public Against Violence wins 32.5% of the vote, the Christian Democratic Movement 19%, the KSČ 13.8%, the Slovak National Party 11%, and the Magyar Christian Democratic Movement 8.6%; Marian Čalfa, who had left the KSČ, is appointed by Havel as prime minister.

June 10–17: The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), the successor to the Communist Party, wins the parliamentary elections, the absolute majority of seats, ahead of the Union of Democratic Forces (SDS), the Bulgarian National Farmers' Federation (BZNS) and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS).

June 21: Both German parliaments adopt a joint resolution on **Poland's western border**, which is notified the next day by the two German governments. Poland retreats from their demand for initialling a border treaty before unification.

June 22: **Second Two-plus-Four Meeting of Foreign Ministers** in Berlin: The Soviet Union presents an overall design for a peace treaty that provides for a transitional period of five years, the double membership of Germany in NATO and the WPO, and an overall military strength of 250,000 soldiers. When the other foreign ministers reject these proposals, Shevardnadze states that Germany should receive full sovereignty at the CSCE Summit Meeting in November 1990.

June 25–26: The EC Summit of Heads of State or Government in Dublin schedules a governmental conference for December 1990 to discuss how to achieve an economic and monetary union as well as the political union of the EC.

July 1: **The state treaty between the FRG and the GDR on the economic, monetary and social union** comes into force. The Deutsche Mark becomes the official currency in the GDR.

July 5–6: NATO Summit of Heads of State or Government in London: Willingness of NATO to cooperate with the WPO; idea of a "declaration of ending the enemy relationship" between the alliances.

July 6: After a video reveals that Bulgarian prime minister Mladenov still wanted to use tanks against demonstrators in December 1989, he is replaced by Zhelev.

Early July: Riots in Tirana; 5,000 Albanians seek refuge in foreign embassies.

July 9–11: **World Economic Summit of the G-7 states** in Houston, Texas. Financial assistance proposed to the USSR is refused.

July 1–13: 28th Congress of the CPSU: Despite sharp criticism Gorbachev is upheld as General Secretary on 10 July.

July 15–16: **Gorbachev and Shevardnadze receive Kohl and Genscher** in Moscow and in Zheleznovodsk in the Caucasus. In an "**eight-point statement**" the main questions with regard to the Two-plus-Four process are clarified: 1. United Germany is to include the FRG, the GDR and Berlin; 2. When unified, Germany is to receive full sovereignty; 3. Germany will be allowed to freely choose membership in either alliance; 4. Germany will conclude an agreement with the USSR concerning troops staying and leaving which provides for the withdrawal of Soviet troops within 3 to 4 years; 5. There will be no expansion of the NATO military structures onto

GDR territory; 6. The troops of the three Western powers are to remain in Berlin as long as Soviet troops remain on GDR territory; 7. At the Vienna negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the German Federal Republic is to commit itself to reducing its armed forces to 370,000 troops; 8. United Germany is to waive manufacturing, possessing or being able to obtain weapons of mass destruction.

July 16: Verkhovna Rada adopts a resolution proclaiming Ukraine's sovereignty.

July 17: **Third Two-plus-Four Meeting of Foreign Ministers** in Paris: Skubiszewski agrees to a German–Polish Border Treaty after unification has been completed.

August 2: The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq causes new tensions between the United States and the USSR.

August 3: The poet Arpád Göncz is elected president of the Hungarian Republic.

August 16–17: In Moscow, Genscher demands that Shevardnadze suspend the four-power rights before the ratification of the Two-plus-Four documents.

August 17: The "Log Revolution" starts in the Krajina—a Serb majority area along the Croatian-Bosnian border between Petrinja and Knin; Serb militia raids the weapon depots of the Croatian police.

August 23: The People's Chamber of the GDR decides to complete the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic on 3 October 1990.

September 8: Meeting Bush–Gorbachev in Helsinki. They discuss the Two-plus-Four negotiations, the CSCE conference in Paris, and the annexation of Kuwait.

September 12: **Fourth Two-plus-Four Meeting of Foreign Ministers in Moscow**: 45 years after the "London Protocol," the quadripartite rights and responsibilities are replaced by the "Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany."

September 13: Signing of an agreement on good neighborliness, partnership and cooperation between the German Federal Republic and the USSR.

September 27–28: The Treaty between FRG and GDR is suspended through an exchange of notes and is to be annuled after the Two-plus-Four Treaty comes into force on 15 March 1991.

October 1–2: At the sidelines of the CSCE Foreign Ministers' Conference in New York, the rights and responsibilities of the quadripartite are suspended.

October 3: "**Day of German Unity**": in accordance with Article 23 of the Basic Law, the five states of the GDR and East Berlin join the Federal Republic of Germany; as part of the FRG, they also become members of the EC and NATO.

October 5: Ratification of the Two-plus-Four Treaty in the Bundestag.

October 10: Ratification of the Two-plus-Four Treaty in the US Senate.

November 11: In the cathedral of Shkodër (Shkodra), Albania, thousands of faithful take part in the first public Catholic mass since 1967.

November 14: Initialling of the German–Polish Border Treaty in Warsaw: **Germany and Poland recognize the Oder–Neisse line as their common border**.

November 16: In the **parliamentary elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the majority of Muslims (SDA, 31.5%), Serbs (SDS, 26.1%) and Croats (HDZ, 16.0%) vote for their respective national party, while the Communist Party receives only 12.3% of the vote; the chairman of the SDA, Alija Izetbegovic becomes the president of the Republic.

November 19–21: CSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government in Paris: The 34 states of the CSCE initial the CSCE Treaty; the institutionalization of the CSCE is anchored in the **"Charter of Paris"**; the final communiqué declares that the division of Europe is ended.

November 27/ December 7: Wałęsa wins the presidential elections against Mazowiecki and the unknown candidate Stanisław Tyminski.

December 7: In the **parliamentary elections in Serbia**, the Socialist Party of Milošević wins 193 of 250 seats, followed by the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), the Democratic Party and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Vojvodina.

December 23: In a **referendum in Slovenia** (election turnout: 94%), 88% of the electorate vote for independence.

## 1991

January 11-13: Soviet forces kill 19 civilians in a crackdown at Vilnius.
February 15: In Visegrád in Hungary, presidents Havel and Wałęsa and the Hungarian prime minister Antall sign a declaration on cooperation between the three states; with the dissolution of Czechoslovakia on 1 January 1993, the troika expands to a quadruple alliance.
February 22: The Warsaw Pact member states decide to dissolve the military structure on 1 April 1991 and thus, the obligation of mutual assistance.
March 4: Ratification of the Two-plus-Four Treaty in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.
March 9: President Milošević orders the Yugoslav National Army break up demonstrations in Belgrade of the Serbian opposition.
March 12–15: The Yugoslav state presidency rejects the Serbian request to impose martial law in Yugoslavia.
March 15: The **Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany** comes into force.
End of March: Presidents Milošević and Tuđman hold secret negotiations in Karadjordjevo (Vojvodina) about a possible division of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
April 1: Anullment of the Warsaw Pact.
Beginning of April: A **rebellion of Serbian militias** begins in the Plitvice Lakes district of Western Croatia; the Croatian government responds with the establishment of a "National Guard."
April 29: Albania removes the term "socialist" from its national name.
Beginning of May: Croatian policemen stumble upon a Serbian ambush in Borovo Selo near Vukovar and are shot.
May 17–18: The foreign ministers of the "pentagonal" states and Poland meet in Bologna and declare that the peoples of Yugoslavia have the right to decide on their future.
May 19: In a **referendum in Croatia**, 94% of the electorate vote for independence.
May 29: Pope John Paul II appoints the Bishop of Nitra, Ján Chryzostom Korec, cardinal.
June 12: Boris Yeltsin becomes the president of Russia.
June 17: Initialling of the Polish–German **Treaty of Good Neighborship and Friendly Cooperation**: recognition of the Oder–Neisse border; acknowledgment of minority rights of Polish Germans (Upper Silesia).
June 19: **The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary is completed**.
June 21: US secretary of state Baker visits Belgrade and speaks in favor of Yugoslav unity; however, its preservation should not be imposed by force of arms. Colleagues of Tuđman learn of Yugoslav National Army plans to attack and inform Tuđman and Kučan.
June 25: As had been agreed, **Slovenia and Croatia declare their independence simultaneously**.
June 27: Without the unanimous decision of the Yugoslav state presidency, the Yugoslav National Army begins a **military deployment against Slovenia** and tries to close the borders to Italy and Austria as well as the airport in Ljubljana; the Yugoslav National Army is surprised by the armed resistance of the Slovene territorial defense, which leads the latter to a partial success; 67 fatalities.
July 8: A troika of three EC foreign ministers on the island of Brioni mediates a cease-fire based on a three-month suspension of Slovenian and Croatian declarations of independence.
July 18: The Yugoslav state presidency decides to withdraw the Yugoslav National Army from Slovenia; the troops are moved to Croatia and Bosnia.
August 26: The Croatian village of Kijevo in the Krajina is destroyed by the Yugoslav National Army.
August 18–27: After an unsuccessful coup attempt against Gorbachev by the Soviet vice-president and the KGB chief, in succession the republics of **Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Be-**

**larus and Moldova declare independence**, as do the three Transcaucasian and the five Central Asian republics.

September 14: The Croatian National Guard begins to besiege all Yugoslav National Army barracks in Croatia and to interrupt their electricity, water and food supplies, as well as the telephone lines; a number of garrisons surrender and hand over their weapons.

September 19: Supported by Serbian militias, the Yugoslav National Army moves from Srem and attacks Vukovar; after extensive destruction of the city, the siege ends on 18 November with the surrender of the Croatian forces.

September 25: The UN imposes an arms embargo on Yugoslavia, which is aimed at preventing a civil war, but gives an advantage to the Yugoslav National Army.

September 26–30: In a referendum in Kosovo, in which the Serbian and Montenegrin population do not vote, the vast majority of Albanians are for secession from Yugoslavia.

October 1: Supported by Montenegrin militia and with Montenegrin warships, the Yugoslav National Army begins an **attack on Dubrovnik**, which leads to the destruction of many hotels and yachts; the historic old town survives the bombing without major damage.

October 15: With the votes of Muslim and Croat deputies, the parliament in Sarajevo declares the sovereignty of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the session is boycotted by Serbian representatives.

October 21: Completion of the political negotiations on an EEA Agreement between the twelve EC and the seven EFTA countries.

October: After **parliamentary elections in Bulgaria**, for the first time since September 1944, a government is formed in which no communists participate.

November 7–9: The **Hague Peace Conference on Yugoslavia** fails because Lord Carrington's "Arrangements for a General Settlement" (union of sovereign republics, no unilateral changes of borders; wide range of minority rights) is rejected, above all by Milošević; an EC summit in Rome imposes an oil and trade embargo on all Yugoslav republics.

November 20: **Macedonian declaration of independence**; recognized by the UN on 4 August 1993.

November 22: Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia conclude association contracts with the EC.

December 1: Ukraine becomes an independent state; Leonid M. Kravchuk is elected president.

December 7-8: Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Treaty signed by Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus; Ukraine's Parliament never ratifies the treaty.

December 9–11: The EU Heads of State and Government agree at a summit in Maastricht on the **Treaty on European Union** (EU), which establishes Economic and Monetary Union, Political Union, Common Security and Foreign Policy.

December 16: The EC decides to recognize those Yugoslav republics that meet the criteria of the **Badinter Commission**; Genscher demands the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia on 15 January 1992.

December 21: In Almaty, 11 of the 15 Soviet republics decide on the **dissolution of the Soviet Union** and the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

December 23: The FRG unilaterally recognizes the former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia.

## 1992

January 3: UN Special Envoy Cyrus Vance mediates a cease-fire in Croatia.

January 15: **The European Union, the United States, and another 20 countries (including Austria) recognize the independence of Croatia and Slovenia.**

February 7: Signing of the **Treaty on European Union in Maastricht**.

February 21: The UN approves the deployment of 14,000 UN troops to Croatia; the first UN soldiers arrive on 1 April and over the course of April the Yugoslav National Army gives up those parts of Croatia they occupy; Serb artillery attacks on Dubrovnik, Zadar, Karlovac and Osijek also begin to ease off.

February 29–March 3: After a referendum boycotted by Bosnian-Herzegovinian Serbs, President Izetbegovic proclaims the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina; first serious unrest in Sarajevo.

April 6–7: **The EU and the United States recognize the independent state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.** The Serbian community calls for a "Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

April 27: The Yugoslav Republics of Serbia and Montenegro establish the new **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**, which consists of Serbia (including Vojvodina and Kosovo) and Montenegro.

Spring and summer: supported by the now split Yugoslav National Army and the Serbian government, Serbian troops conquer about 70% of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, drive out the majority of the more than two million Muslims and hundreds of thousands of Croats from their homes ("**ethnic cleansing**"), murder tens of thousands, also in concentration camps, and destroy historic buildings in many cities, especially Catholic churches and mosques.

May 31: The UN Security Council imposes a **full trade embargo against Serbia and Montenegro** and stops all flights; due to numerous violations of the embargo—especially via the Danube and the Adriatic—Western warships start to control vessel traffic; however, fuel and weapons smuggling across the land routes from Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Macedonia continues largely unhindered.

May: The UN peacekeeping force (UNPROFOR) established.

June 5–6: **Parliamentary elections in the Czechoslovak Federal Republic:** In Bohemia and Moravia, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) wins, in Slovakia, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). Already on 8 June, the two party leaders Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar begin negotiations in **Villa Tugendhat** in Brno. After several weeks of negotiations, both sides agree on the federation being dissolved on 1 January 1993.

July 21: In Moscow, the presidents of Russia and Moldova sign a peace agreement on the Dniester region; the region remains part of Moldova, but the rights of Russian and Ukrainian minorities are guaranteed.

August 25–28: The **London Peace Conference on the former Yugoslavia**, in which 40 states participate following the invitation of the UN and the EU, agrees on humanitarian aid for prisoners and displaced and trapped civilians (for instance, in Sarajevo), but fails in terms of a future solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

September 17: After stock market speculation (also by George Soros), the British pound and the Italian lira are eliminated from the European monetary system.

September 22: After the disclosure of war crimes in Serbian detention camps and mass systematic rape of Muslim women and girls by Serbian soldiers (cf. **Mazowiecki report**), the UN repeals the membership of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

October 25: First fighting between Croat and Muslim units in Prozor in Central Bosnia.

November 3: **Bill Clinton is elected president of the United States.**

December 11–12: Denmark, which on 2 June had voted by a narrow margin against the Treaty of Maastricht, is granted exemption from the EU Treaty by the heads of state and government of the European Community.

December 20: Milošević wins the presidential election in Serbia against the "Yugoslav" prime minister Milan Panić; in the parliamentary elections, the Milošević Socialists remain ahead of the nationalists of Vojislav Šešelj and opposition groups.

## 1993

January 1: The **Maastricht Treaty comes into effect:** All 12 members of the EU agree to introduce a common currency, drop all trade barriers, and accept a common defence and foreign policy.
January 1: **Czechoslovakia splits into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.** Therewith the Czechoslovak Republic, which was established on 28 October 1918, ceases to exist.
January: The UN and EU mediators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen present a peace plan that provides for the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina into cantons based on ethnic majorities.
February 1: **Beginning of EC accession negotiations with Austria, Sweden and Finland.**
February 15: Michal Kováč is elected the first president of the Slovak Republic.
April 5: Beginning of EC accession negotiations with Norway.
April: President Yeltsin survives a referendum on his government and crushes a rebellion in the Supreme Soviet.
May 25: UN Security Council establishes the **International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTFY) in The Hague.**
May: While the Vance-Owen plan is signed in Athens by the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Radovan Karadžić, it is, however, rejected by the parliament of the Bosnian Serbs.
June 21–22: **In Copenhagen,** the **European Council** decides on principles and criteria for including the Central and Eastern European countries.
November 1: Following a decision by the German Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe on the compatibility of the Treaty on European Union with the Basic Law, the Maastricht Treaty enters into force.
November 9: In a bitter battle for Mostar, Bosnian Croat units destroy the 16th-century Ottoman bridge over the Neretva; only ten years later it is rebuilt by a Turkish company with EU funds.
December: A new constitution is adopted in Russia and a new Duma elected.

## 1994

January 1: **The EEA enters into force**: free movement of people, goods, capital and services becomes available for 372 million Europeans.
January 10-11: **NATO's Partnership for Peace** (PfP) program with neutral and former Warsaw-Pact member states is launched. Subsequently, Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia join the PfP and, later, NATO. Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan join the PfP.
February 5: A grenade fired by Serb besiegers on the Sarajevo marketplace kills 69 people and wounds over 200; a few days later, NATO places an ultimatum on Bosnian Serbs, threating to bomb if they do not withdraw their heavy weapons around Sarajevo; after the mediation of Russia, the Bosnian Serbs accept.
March 2: Through the mediation of the United States, Croatia and Bosnian Muslims sign an agreement on a Croatian-Muslim Federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
March 30: Sweden, Finland, Norway and Austria sign the negotiation packets for accession treaties.
April 1: Hungary applies for EC membership.
April 8: Poland applies for EC membership.
May 4: The **European Parliament** approves the **accession of the "neutrals"** (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Austria) with 374 "yes", 24 "no" votes and 61 abstentions.

June 12: In a referendum held in Austria, 66.6% vote in favor of joining the EU.

July 15: After parliamentary elections in Hungary, Gyula Horn from the Socialist Party forms a coalition government with the Liberals.

Summer: The “**contact group**” (the United States, Russia, France, Britain, Germany) designs a new partition plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to which the Bosnian Serbs would have to return about 20% of the occupied territory; they refuse.

October 16: In a referendum held in Finland, 57% vote in favor of joining the EU.

November 13: In a referendum held in Sweden, 52.2% vote in favor of joining the EU.

November 27–28: In a referendum in Norway, 52.2% vote against joining the EU.

November: The attempt of the Bosnian army to break through the blockade of Bihać fails; the United States calls for bombing against the Bosnian Serbs; France and the UK are against it.

22 December: The Executive Committee of the **Schengen States** in Bonn decides to put the agreement on the abolition of border controls into force on 26 March 1995.

December: Russian forces invade the breakaway republic of Chechnya.

## 1995

January 1: Austria, Finland and Sweden become members of the European Union.

March 26: With the Schengen Agreement coming into force, personal checks are no longer carried out between Germany, France, the Benelux countries, Spain and Portugal.

Beginning of May: Croatian forces reconquer Serbian-occupied Western Slavonia (“Operation Blijesak”) and force the Serbian forces to withdraw to Bosnia.

June 12: Signing of EU Association Agreements with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Between June and December: Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Bulgaria apply for EU membership.

Beginning of July: The far superior Bosnian Serb forces, under the command of General Ratko Mladić, occupy the Muslim enclave and UN safe area of **Srebrenica**, which is protected only by a small Dutch detachment; after the evacuation of the women and children, on 11–12 July **some 7,500 Muslim men are shot** in the surrounding woods. Despite being intensively sought and accused of genocide, Mladić is not arrested until 2011, when he is extradited to The Hague.

Early August: Croatian troops begin a concentric attack on the “Independent Republic of Krajina” (Operation “Oluja”) and force the vast majority of the approximately 200,000 Serbs to flee to northern Bosnia; Milošević takes no countermeasures.

August 28: Another artillery attack by Bosnian Serb forces on the Sarajevo marketplace kills or wounds about 100 civilians. In the next days, at the request of UNPROFOR, **NATO begins targeted air strikes against Bosnian Serb military bases and artillery positions**.

September 20: The NATO air strikes force the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table.

November 21: After lengthy negotiations between Izetbegović, Milošević and Tuđman at the **US air force base in Dayton, Ohio**, the United States—with the support of Russia, Britain, France and Germany—force a **preliminary peace** which is then formally signed in Paris on 14 December 1995.

November: NATO-led forces, including US troops, are created to oversee the implementation of the settlement; the UN War Crimes Tribunal indicts Bosnian Serb leaders, including President Radovan Karadžić, for genocide and crimes against humanity.

November 28: The Hungarian Parliament allows the temporary stationing of US troops in Southern Hungary so they can intervene in the former Yugoslavia; the first units land in Taszár already on 9 December.

December 15–16: At a meeting in Madrid, the European Council chooses the name “EURO” for the future European currency and decides on its introduction in 2002.

## 1996

From January: IFOR troops are stationed in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
January 17: The Czech Republic applies for EU membership.
February 28: Despite the war in Chechnya, Russia becomes member of the Council of Europe.
June 10: Slovenia applies for EU membership.
September 16: Hungarian–Romanian Basic Treaty.
December 6: In Geneva, the South-East European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) is formed between Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and Hungary. Its director is former Austrian vice chancellor Erhard Busek.
December 19: Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Iceland join the Schengen Agreement.
December 20: **Beginning of the SFOR mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina** (which continues until 20 June 1998), in which 31,000 soldiers from 33 countries participate: 8,000 from the United States, 5,000 from the UK, 3,000 from Germany, 2,500 from France, 1,900 from Italy, 1,400 from Spain, 1,350 from the Netherlands, and 1,200 from Canada.

## 1997

June 16–17: The EU Heads of State and Government adopt the **Treaty of Amsterdam**, which is to enter into force on 1 May 1999.
July 8–9: In Madrid, the NATO heads of state and government decide to invite Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary for membership negotiations.
July 9: Nationalist riots in the Macedonian cities of Gostivar and Tetovo.
October 5/19: Milo Đukanović wins the presidential elections in Montenegro.
December 12–13: In Luxembourg, the European Council decides to start accession negotiations with Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia and Cyprus.
December 16: In Brussels, the foreign ministers of **Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary** sign the Act of Accession of their countries to NATO; the ratification process is then completed on 2 December 1998.

## 1998

From the end of February: Human rights violations in Kosovo increase, as do armed conflicts, acts of retaliation and expulsions.
May 2–3: At a special meeting the European Council, the countries participating in the **Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)** are decided upon: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain (the UK, Greece, Sweden and Denmark are not included) are to become part of the EMU on 1 January 1999; the EU Commission and the European Monetary Institute determine the conditions for fixing binding conversion rates for the euro; the European Central Bank (ECB) is founded and the Dutchman Wim Duisenberg is elected its first president.
July 8: Following parliamentary elections in Hungary, Viktor Orbán forms a moderate-right coalition government (with the FIDESZ-MPP, MDF, Smallholders).
October 27: **Gerhard Schröder** becomes the German chancellor.
October 30: After parliamentary elections in Slovakia, Mikuláš Dzurinda forms a broad coalition government.

## 1999

January 1: Start of the Economic and Monetary Union; the euro is officially introduced as the unit of account.
February 6–23: Representatives of Serbia and of Kosovo Albanians are invited by the Contact Group (the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, Germany, Italy) to the castle of **Rambouillet** near Paris for negotiations; Milošević refuses to sign the contract, but it is signed by Hashim Thaci, the political leader of the UÇK.
February 22: Bulgaria recognizes the autonomy of the Macedonian language.
March 12: **Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary become full NATO members**.
March 24–26: The European Council adopts the “Agenda 2000” at a special summit in Berlin; Romano Prodi is appointed the new Commission president.
March 24: After increases from the beginning of March Kosovo Albanians being expelled, **NATO begins—without a mandate from the UN Security Council—“air strikes” against military and civilian targets throughout Serbia**; not only are barracks and oil storage tanks destroyed, but also several bridges across the Danube as well as the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade; at the beginning of June, Milošević gives in and withdraws the Serbian forces from Kosovo; after the cessation of hostilities on 10 June, most of the nearly 800,000 Albanians who had been expelled or fled to Albania and Macedonia return back to their towns and villages in Kosovo.
May 29: The mayor of Košice, Rudolf Schuster, a native Carpathian German, is elected president of Slovakia.
June 3–4: In Cologne, the European Council adopts a common strategy regarding Russia, and declarations on Kosovo. The former NATO secretary general Javier Solana is appointed the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; in addition, the European Employment Pact is adopted.
June 12–13: NATO troops (KFOR) enter Kosovo, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1244.
July 30: In Sarajevo, 27 heads of state and government decide on the “**Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe**”; the German Bodo Hombach is appointed special coordinator; the Austrian Erhard Busek becomes his successor in 2002.
October 15–16: At a special meeting of the European Council in Tampere, the creation of an EU-wide area of justice for fundamental rights is adopted.
December 10–11: In Helsinki, the European Council decides to begin accession negotiations with Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia in the spring of 2000; Turkey receives candidate status. The EU also decides to establish rapid reaction forces by 2003.
December 11: Death of Croatian president Tuđman in Zagreb.
December 31: **Boris Yeltsin steps down** as president of the Russian Federation.

## 2000

January 3: In Croatian parliamentary elections, the Social Democrats and Social Liberals obtain the absolute majority; the 1989 party leader of the Croatian communists, Ivica Račan, becomes the new prime minister.
January 31: **Joint declaration of the 14 EU member states to impose sanctions** if a government with the participation of the FPÖ (chairman Jörg Haider) is established in Austria.
February 4: In Austria, after the failure of SPÖ–ÖVP coalition negotiations, President Thomas Klestil is forced to swear in an ÖVP–FPÖ government led by Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel; massive national and international political protests; the 14 EU countries, under the leadership of Germany,

France, Portugal and Belgium, put sanctions into force; the United States, Russia, Switzerland and Hungary hold back.

February 7: Stjepan (Stipe) Mesić, the last chairman of the Yugoslav state presidency in 1991 and until 1994 a close associate of Tuđman, wins the Croatian presidential election.

February 14: Opening of the **EU Intergovernmental Conference in Lisbon**, which by December 2000 is to provide a basis for institutional reforms.

February 26: **Vladimir V. Putin** is elected president of the Russian Federation.

March 12: Pope John Paul II prays for forgiveness at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.

September 13: After a report by a Finnish-German-British panel, the **bilateral EU 14 sanctions against Austria are revoked**.

September 28: The majority of the Danish population decides against joining the euro zone.

October 7: The opposition candidate and lawyer **Vojislav Koštunica** wins the **Serbian presidential elections**; when Milošević again refuses to recognize the election results, mass protests start in Belgrade; Koštunica also receives foreign support; the Milošević era ends and Koštunica becomes president.

October 28: In municipal elections in Kosovo, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) under **Ibrahim Rugova** is the strongest political force; the demand for independence from Serbia is raised by all Kosovo Albanian parties, but is rejected internationally.

November 7: **George W. Bush is elected president of the United States.**

December 6–11: The **EU summit in Nice** foresees comprehensive changes in institutional rules (ballot evaluation, majority decisions), as well as a future EU with 27 member states. A draft of the Charter of Fundamental Rights is solemnly proclaimed.

## 2001

January 1: On the recommendation of the EU Commission, Greece becomes the 12th member of the euro zone.

January 25: The leading candidate of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), German-educated philosopher **Zoran Đinđić,** becomes the prime minister of the first non-socialist Serbian government.

March 23–24: In Stockholm, the European Council makes concrete decisions on the implementation of economic reforms, employment and education policies, as well as E-commerce.

May 4–9: In Athens, Pope John Paul II apologizes for the crimes commited by the crusaders on Orthodox Christians.

June 15–16: Mass protests by opponents of the EU and globalization accompany the European Council meetings in Gothenburg. Nonetheless, the EU heads of state and government state that the enlargement process is "irreversible" and for the first time declare 2004 as the year of accession.

June 28: **Milošević is extradited to the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague**.

September 11: **Terrorist attacks** by hijacked airliners on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington by Islamic fundamentalists of the **Al Qaeda** terrorist group, headed by Osama bin Laden, cause more than 3,000 deaths, resulting in horror around the world and solidarity with the United States.

December 15: The EU summit in Laeken, Belgium, issues an official order to form a "Convention on the Future of Europe."

## 2002

January 1: First introduction of **euro banknotes**; the single European currency becomes legal tender in 12 EU countries.

May 27: Following parliamentary elections in Hungary, Péter Medgyessy forms a Socialist–Liberal coalition government.

September 17: US president George W. Bush describes the American claim to a conventional or nuclear first strike (“preemptive strike”) against “rogue states” and the “axis of evil” in the world.

October 10: The Hungarian poet Imre Kertész receives the Nobel Prize in Literature.

October 28: The President of the Constitutional Convention, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, presents the draft of a future Constitution for Europe to the European Parliament.

December 13: The **EU summit in Copenhagen** decides on EU enlargement with ten new members; their accession is to take place on 1 May 2004. Despite criticism and warnings, priority is given to politics rather than economic and institutional problems.

## 2003

January 18: Serbian prime minister Đinđić calls for a soon start of negotiations on the final status of Kosovo; he initially encounters rebuffs not only from Belgrade and Priština, but also from Washington and Brussels.

February 4: The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is renamed Serbia and Montenegro.

March 8: Positive referendum (about 53%) in Malta for accession to the EU.

March 12: Prime Minister Đinđić **is shot** in the courtyard of his official residence in Belgrade by a hired killer.

March 20: Without a mandate by the UN Security Council, **the United States and Great Britain begin a war against Iraq;** France and Germany hold back.

March 23: Referendum on Slovenia’s future membership in the EU, about 90% of the voters are for the EU.

April 12: Referendum on Hungary’s future membership in the EU, about 84% of the voters are for the EU.

May 10–11: Positive Referendum on Lithuania’s future membership in the EU.

May 16–17: Positive Referendum on Slovakia’s future membership in the EU.

June 7–8: Positive Referendum on Poland’s future membership in the EU.

June 15–16: Positive Referendum on the future membership of the Czech Republic in the EU.

June 20–22: At the **EU summit in Thessaloniki** the possibility of EU accession for the Balkans is endorsed, although only after they meet a number of specific conditions; accessions can take place according to the “regatta” principle, i.e. each country individually, if it has fulfilled these conditions. In addition, convention president Giscard d’Estaing presents the draft of a European constitution.

September 10–14: Visit of the Pope John Paul II to Slovakia, his 102nd and final trip abroad; large mass in Petržalka (Engerau) at the Slovak-Austrian border.

September 14: Positive referendum on Estonia’s future membership in the EU.

September 20: Positive referendum on Latvia’s future membership in the EU.

December 12–13: The **summit of EU leaders in Brussels** fails to adopt the draft of the EU Constitutional Treaty; outwardly this seems to have to do with the weight of votes in the Council of 27, the background reasons are more complex.

## 2004

March 29: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia become full members of NATO.

May 1: (Greek-)Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia become full members of the EU. Apart from the special cases of Swit-

zerland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland—this leaves only the Eastern European countries (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova) and the Balkans (Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Macedonia) outside the EU; Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Turkey—in the majority a non-European country—have submitted applications for membership.

June 18–19: After months of discussion, the EU leaders in Brussels under the Irish council presidency reach an agreement on a **new EU constitution**.

December: In the so-called "**Orange Revolution**," Ukrainians protest against fraud in the presidential elections in favor of Viktor Yanukovych. In a re-vote, pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko, who had been poisoned a few months earlier, is elected. He chooses Yulya Tymoshenko as prime minister.

## 2005

January 24: US president Bush and Russian president Vladimir V. Putin meet in Bratislava Castle.

April 19: **Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger**, a native Bavarian, is elected the new pope and takes the name **Benedict XVI**.

October 3: After difficult discussions concerning various terms and conditions for accession negotiations—in which Britain campaigned in particular for Turkey, Austria for Croatia—the European Union decides to **begin accession negotiations with Turkey and Croatia**.

November 22: **Angela Merkel** (CDU), who grew up in the GDR as a pastor's daughter, is elected chancellor of the FRG.

## 2006

March 11: Milošević is found dead in his UN war crimes tribunal prison cell in The Hague.

June 3: **Montenegro declares its independence.**

July 4: After parliamentary elections in Slovakia, Róbert Fico (Direction Social Democracy, SMER) forms a new government.

September 10: The Socialist Party of Prime Minister Milo Đukanović wins the parliamentary elections in Montenegro.

## 2007

January 1: Bulgaria and Romania become members of the European Union.

May 6: **Nicolas Sarkozy becomes president of France.**

December 13: Treaty of Lisbon amends the Maastricht Treaty.

December 21: Slovenia and Hungary become members of the Schengen Area.

## 2008

February 18: **Declaration of independence** of the former Autonomous Republic of **Kosovo/Kosova.**

April 3: NATO invites Albania and Croatia to join the organization.

August 8-15: War between Georgia und Russia.

October 7: The EU ministers of finance conclude guarantees for savings accounts.

## 2009

April 1: Albania and Croatia become full members of NATO.

September 1: **Commemoration on Westerplatte next to Gdańsk** to mark the 70th anniversary of the beginning of World War II in the presence of Polish president Lech Kaczynski, the Polish prime minister Donald Tusk, German chancellor Angela Merkel and Russian prime minister Vladimir V. Putin.

## 2010

April 7: **Meeting Putin–Tusk in Katyń** to commemorate the murder in the spring of 1940 of some 26,000 Polish officers, officials, police officers, landowners, etc.

April 10: The plane carrying Polish President Kaczyński, who was also travelling to Katyń for the commemoration, crashes with 96 passengers—among them Polish members of parliament, bishops, generals and relatives of the victims.

May 9: **Military parade on Red Square** in Moscow to mark the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, with the participation of US, British, French and Polish soldiers and in the presence of Russian President Medvedev, German Chancellor Merkel, Polish President Komorowski and Czech President Klaus.

## 2011

December 9: "Fiscal pact" of the Euro members.

## 2013

July 1: Croatia becomes the 28th member of the European Union.

November: EU association agreements with Georgia and Moldova are signed.

November 21: Demonstrations on Kyiv's Maidan against President Viktor Yanukovych's hesitation towards signing a similar agreement with the EU begin.

## 2014

February 21-22: After violent clashes on the so-called "**Euro-Maidan**", Yanukovych and opposition leaders agree on new elections and a return to the 2004 Constitution. Yanukovych flees to Russia; the Ukrainian Parliament votes him out of office.

February-March: Russian special troops without insignia take control of the **Crimea**. After a quick referendum regarding the Ukrainian peninsula, which is later declared invalid by the UN General Assembly, the Crimea is incorporated into the Russian Federation.

April-July: Russian-speaking separatists and Russian citizens seize control of **Eastern Ukraine** and declare the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. Battles between separatist and Ukrainian forces start. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights accuses pro-Russian forces of having subjected the eastern Ukrainian population to "a reign of intimidation and terror," resulting in "hundreds of abductions with many victims tortured" and killed. The destruction of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 near Donetsk kills 298 people, with evidence indicating that pro-Russian separatists fired a surface-to-air missile at what they probably thought was a Ukrainian military aircraft. The EU and the United States accuse Russia of supporting the separatists and impose economic sanctions.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ABC weapons | atomic, biological, chemical weapons |
| ÁBTL | Állambiztonsági *Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára* (Historical Archive of the Hungarian State Security Police, Budapest) |
| ACC | Allied Control Council for Germany |
| AGF | *Arkhiv Gorbachev-Fonda* (Gorbachev Foundation Archives, Moscow) |
| AMAE | *Archives du Ministère des Affaires* étrangères (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris) |
| AP | Andreotti Papers |
| APRF | *Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Archives of the President of the Russian Federation, Moscow) |
| BA | *Bundesarchiv* (Federal Archives, Berlin) |
| BANU | Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (*Bălgarski Zemedelski Naroden Sayuz*) |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| BCP | Bulgarian Communist Party (*Bălgarska komunisticheska partiya*) |
| BMEIA | *Bundesministerium für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten* (Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs, Vienna) |
| BSP | Bulgarian Socialist Party (*Balgarska sotsialisticheska partiy*a) |
| *Bull. EC* | *Bulletin of the European Communities* |
| CAP | Common Agricultural Policy |
| CBS | *Columbia Broadcasting System* |
| CC | Central Committee |
| CCEB | EU Candidate Countries Euro-barometer |
| CCP | Chinese Communist Party |
| CCTV | China Central Television |
| CDU | *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* (Christian Democratic Union, Germany) |
| CEE(C) | (Countries of) Central and Eastern Europe |
| CFE | Conventional Armed Forces in Europe |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| CIS | Commonwealth of Independent States |
| CMEA | Council for Mutual Economic Assistance |

| | |
|---|---|
| CNN | Cable News Network |
| CNR | Council of National Representatives |
| CPSU | Communist Party of the Soviet Union |
| CSCE | Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| CSFR | Czech and Slovak Federative Republic |
| CSSR | Czechoslovak Socialist Republic |
| *DBPO* | Patrick Salmon, Keith Hamilton, and Stephen Robert Twigge, eds., *Documents on British Policy Overseas III, vol. 7: German Unification 1989–1990* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009) |
| DEMOS | Democratic Opposition of Slovenia |
| DM | deutsche mark |
| Dok. | Dokument (Document) |
| DSU | *Deutsche Soziale Union* (German Social Union) |
| EAPC | Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council |
| EB | Euro-barometer |
| EBRD | European Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| EC | European Community |
| ECJ | European Court of Justice |
| ECP | Estonian Communist Party |
| ECU | European Currency Unit |
| EDU | European Democrat Union |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| *EFTA* | *European Free Trade Association* |
| EMS | European Monetary System |
| EMU | European Monetary Union |
| ERM | European Exchange Rate Mechanism |
| ERSP | *Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei* (Estonian National Independence Party) |
| ESSR | Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic |
| EU | European Union |
| EUI | European University Institute, Florence, Italy |
| FCO | Foreign and Commonwealth Office |
| FDJ | *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (Free German Youth, GDR) |
| FIDESZ | *Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége* (Alliance of Young Democrats, Hungary) |
| FKGP | *Független Kisgazdapárt* (Independent Smallholders Party, Hungary) |
| FPÖ | *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (Freedom Party of Austria) |

| | |
|---|---|
| FRG | Federal Republic of Germany |
| FS | *Federální shromáždění* CSSR (Czechoslovakian Federal Assembly) |
| FSN | *Frontul Salvării Naţionale* (Front of National Salvation, Romania) |
| | |
| GDP | Gross domestic product |
| GDR | German Democratic Republic |
| GF | Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow |
| | |
| *HDR* | *Human Development Report* |
| HDZ | *Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko* (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) |
| HDZ | *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* (Croat Democratic Union) |
| HIA | Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, Ca. |
| HIGFC | Hoover Institution-Gorbachev Foundation Collection, Stanford |
| HMG | Her Majesty's Government |
| HNA | Hungarian National Archives |
| HSWP | Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party |
| | |
| ICTY | International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia |
| IGC | intergovernmental conference |
| IFM | Institut François Mitterrand, Paris |
| ILS | Istituto Luigi Sturzo, Rome |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INF | Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces |
| IPN | *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* (Institute of National Remembrance, Poland) |
| IR | International Relations |
| | |
| JCS | Joint Chiefs of Staff |
| | |
| KDH | *Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie* (Christian Democratic Movement, Slovakia) |
| KGB | *Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti* (Committee for State Security, USSR) |
| KOR | *Komitet Obrony Robotników* (Committee for the Defense of the Workers, Poland) |
| KSČ | *Komunistická strana Československa* (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) |
| KSS | *Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej* KOR (Committee for Social Self Defense of KOR) |
| | |
| LiCP | Lithuanian Communist Party |
| | |
| MBFR | Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions |
| MDF | *Magyar Demokrata Fórum* (Hungarian Democratic Forum) |

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| *MGGV* | Aleksandr Galkin and Anatolii Chernyaev, eds., *Mikhail Gorbachev i Germanskii vopros* (Moscow: Ves' mir, 2006) |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| MRF | Movement for Rights and Freedoms |
| MSzMP | *Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt* (Hungarian Socialist Workers Party) |
| | |
| n. | note |
| NACC | North Atlantic Cooperation Council |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| n.d. | no data, no date |
| NEM | New Economic Mechanism |
| n.i. | no information |
| NMP | Net Material Product |
| NPA | National People's Army (*Nationale Volksarmee*, GDR) |
| NSA | National Security Archives, Washington DC |
| NSC | National Security Council |
| | |
| ODS | *Občanská demokratická strana* (Civic Democratic Party, Czechoslovakia) |
| ODÚ | *Občianska demokratická únia* (Civic Democratic Union, Slovakia) |
| OF | *Občanské fórum* (Civic Forum, Czechoslovakia) |
| OKP | *Obywatelski Klub Parlamentarny* (Civic Parliamentary Club, Poland) |
| OMB | Office of Management and Budget |
| OMON | *Otryad Mobilnyi Osobogo Naznacheniya* (Special Purpose Mobile Unit, USSR/ Russia) |
| OPZZ | *Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych* (All-Polish Federation of Trade Unions) |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| ÖVP | Österreichische Volkspartei (Austrian People's Party) |
| | |
| *PACE* | *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* |
| PCI | *Partito Comunista Italiano* (Italian Communist Party) |
| PDS | *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* (Democratic Party of the Left, Italy) |
| PDS | *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus* (Party of Democratic Socialism, Germany) |
| PfP | Partnership for Peace |
| PHARE | Poland and Hungary Assistance for Reconstructing their Economies |
| PKW | *Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza* (State Election Commission, Poland) |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |

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|---|---|
| PRON | *Patriotyczny Ruch Odrodzenia Narodowego* (Patriotic Front of National Recovery, Poland) |
| PUWP | Polish United Workers' Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*, PZPR) |
| PZKS | *Polski Związek Katolicko-Społeczny* (Polish Catholic-Social Union) |
| PZPR | *Partia Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (*Polish United Workers' Party) |
| QMV | Quality Majority Voting |
| RCP | Romanian Communist Party |
| RFE | Radio Free Europe |
| RGANI | *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii* (Russian State Archives for Contemporary History, Moscow) |
| ROPCiO | *Ruch Obrony Praw Człowieka i Obywatela* (Movement for the Defense of Human and Citizen Rights, Poland) |
| SAPARD | Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development |
| SAPMO | *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR* (Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR, Berlin) |
| SD | *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* (Democratic Party, Poland) |
| SDA | *Stranka Demokratske Akcije* (Party of Democratic Action, Bosnia) |
| SDK | *Slovenská demokratická koalícia* (Slovak Democratic Coalition) |
| SdRP | *Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland) |
| SDS | *Srpska demokratska stranka* (Serbian Democratic Party) |
| *SDS* | *Sayuz na demokratichnite sili (Union of Democratic Forces, Bulgaria)* |
| SEA | Single European Act |
| SED | *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Socialist Unity Party of [East] Germany) |
| SFRY | Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia |
| SKH | *Savez komunista Hrvatske* (League of Communists of Croatia) |
| SLD | *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* (Alliance of the Democratic Left, Poland) |
| SNF | short-range nuclear forces |
| SNR | Slovak Council of National Representatives |
| SNS | *Slovenská národná strana* (Slovak National Party) |
| SPD | *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* |
| SPÖ | *Sozialistische (Sozialdemokratische) Partei Österreichs* (Socialist/Social Democratic Party of Austria) |
| START | Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty |
| SZDSZ | *Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége* (Alliance of Free Democrats, Hungary) |

| | |
|---|---|
| TsDA | *Tsentralen D’rzhaven Arkhiv* (Central State Archive, Sofia) |
| UchS | *Unia Chrzescijańsko-Społeczna* (Christian Social Union, Poland) |
| UDF | Union of Democratic Forces, Bulgaria (*Sayuz na demokratichnite sili*) |
| UN | United Nations |
| US(A) | United States (of America) |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| VMRO-DPMNE | *Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija—Demokratska partija za makedonsko nacionalno edinstvo* (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization—Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) |
| VPN | *Verejnost’ proti násiliu* (Public Against Violence, Slovakia) |
| WRON | *Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego* (Military Council of National Salvation, Poland) |
| ZSL | *Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe* (United Peasants’ Party, Poland) |

# AUTHORS

Klaus Bachmann, Prof. Dr., chair, international politics, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw; head of the executive board, Foundation for European Studies, Wrocław, Poland; board member, Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw. Main publications: *Repression, Protest, Toleranz. Wertewandel und Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Polen nach 1956* (Dresden, Wrocław: Atut and Neisse Verlag 2011); *Vergeltung, Strafe, Amnestie. Eine vergleichende Studie von Kollaboration und ihrer Aufarbeitung in Belgien, Polen und den Niederlanden* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012); together with Thomas Sparrow-Botero and Peter Lambertz, *When Justice Meets Politics. Independence and Autonomy of Ad Hoc International Criminal Tribunals* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013).

Florian Bieber, Prof. Dr., MA, professor of Southeast European Studies, University of Graz, Austria; director, Centre for Southeast European Studies; Visiting Professor at the Central European University; University of Bologna, and the University of Sarajevo; 2010 Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics; 2009 Luigi Einaudi Chair at Cornell University, USA. Between 2009 and 2013, editor in chief of *Nationalities Papers*. Research interests: institutional design in multiethnic states, nationalism and ethnic conflict, political systems of South-eastern Europe. Publications: *Nationalism in Serbia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005, in German) and *Post-War Bosnia: Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector* (London: Palgrave, 2006); four edited and co-edited books on South-eastern Europe; articles on institutional design, nationalism and politics in South-eastern Europe in *Europe-Asia Studies, Nationalities Papers*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Current History, International Peacekeeping, Ethnopolitcs* and other journals.

Karsten Brüggemann, Prof. Dr. habil., professor for Estonian and General History, Tallinn University. Main fields of research: Russian and Soviet history, history of the Baltic states, civil wars and wars of independence, the cultural history of Stalinism and late socialism, national narratives and memory cultures. Main publications: *Die Gründung der Republik Estland und das Ende des ‚Einen und Unteilbaren Rußland'* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002); *Von Sieg zu Sieg, von Krieg zu Krieg* (Hamburg: Kovač, 2002); with Ralph Tuchtenhagen, *Tallinn: kleine Geschichte der Stadt* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011); with Bradley D. Woodworth, eds., *Russia on the Baltic. Imperial Strategies of Power and Cultural Patterns of Perception* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2012).

Ulf Brunnbauer, Prof. Dr. phil., chair, history of South Eastern and Eastern Europe, University of Regensburg; managing director, Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS). Main publications: *„Die sozialistische Lebensweise." Ideologie, Gesellschaft, Familie und Politik in Bulgarien, 1944–1989* (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar: Böhlau, 2007); "Making Bulgarians Socialist. The Fatherland Front in Communist Bulgaria, 1944–89," *East European Politics and Societies* 22, no 1 (2008): 44–79; ed., *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics. Migrations in the (Post-) Yugoslav Region, 19th–21st Century* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2009); with Claudia Kraft, and Martin Schulze Wessel, eds., *Sociology and Ethnography in East-Central and South-East Europe: Scientific Self-Description in State Socialist Countries* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011); "Politische Entwicklung Südosteuropas von 1945 bis 1989/91," in Konrad Clewing and Oliver Jens Schmitt, eds., *Geschichte Südosteuropas* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2011), 597–650.

Liliana Deyanova, Prof. Dr., professor of general and historical sociology, University of Sofia Kliment Ohridski; member, Institut of Critical Social Sciences; member of the board, *Sociological Problems Review*. Recent publications: *Lineaments of Silence. Historical Sociology of collective memory* (Sofia: Kritika i humanizam, 2009); "Les images cinématographiques du passé national. Le Congo, le temps utopique-mythique de la modernité socialiste et problème du comparatisme," in: I. Ndaywel è Nziem and E. Mudimbe-Boyi, eds., *Images, mémoirs et saviors* (Paris : Karthala, 2009), 281–99 ; "Les sciences sociales socialistes à l'épreuve de la consommation élargie. Le double tournant à l'Est," in: Nadège Ragaru et Antonela Capelle-Pogăcean, eds., *Vie quoitidienne et pouvoir sous le communisme. Consommer à l'Est* (Paris: Karthala & CERI, 2010), 51–81; "Caught between Two Empires. History School Textbooks in the Twentieh Century," in: Peter Carrier, ed., *School and Nation. Identity Politics and Educational Media in an Age of Diversity* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, 2013), 91–100; "New Names of the Classes: Preface," in Pierre Bourdieu, Loic Wacquant, *Social classes and symbolic power* (Sofia: Ciela, 2014), 21–38.

Anneli Ute Gabanyi, Ph.D., M.A., political scientist, senior research associate, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin. Main publications: *Partei und Literatur in Rumänien seit 1945. Untersuchungen zur Gegenwartskunde Südosteuropas* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1975); *Die unvollendete Revolution. Rumänien zwischen Diktatur und Demokratie* (Munich: Piper, 1990); *Systemwechsel in Rumänien. Von der Revolution zur Transformation* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998); *The Ceauşescu Cult. Power Politics and Propaganda in Communist Romania* (Bucharest: Romanian Cultural Foundation, 2000); "Moldova—A Test Case in EU-Russian Relations?," in Wim van Moeurs and Johanna Deimel, eds., *The Balkan Prism. A Retrospective by Policy-Makers and Analysts* (Munich: Sagner, 2007), 449–512;

"Rumänien," in Wolfgang Ismayr, ed., *Die politischen Systeme Osteuropas*, 3rd ed. (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2009), 627–76.

Armina Galijaš, Dr. phil., M.A. assistant professor, Centre for Southeast European Studies, Karl-Franzens University Graz, Austria. Research interests: contemporary history of Southeast Europe, ethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia, history of everyday life, social history, political history. Main publications: "Humor und Kriegsdiskurs in Bosnien. Wie reden die Bosnier über den Krieg?," *Südost-Forschungen* 68 (2009): 439–55; *Eine bosnische Stadt im Zeichen des Krieges. Ethnopolitik und Alltag in Banja Luka (1990–1995)*. (Munich: Oldenburg Verlag, 2011); "Musik als Spiegel politischer Einstellung. Turbo-Folk vs. Rock," in Oliver Jens Schmitt, Stefan Michael Newerkla, Fedor Poljakov, eds., *Das Politische Lied in Osteuropa*. (Vienna: Lit, 2011), 273–93; "Sjećanje ili zaborav kroz preimenovanja, rušenja i gradnju (1990–2010)," in Tihomir Cipek, ed., *Kultura sjećanja: 1991. i'pamćenje' nacija* (Zagreb: Disput, 2011), 239–61.

Michael Gehler, Prof. Dr., permanent senior fellow, Center for European Integration Studies, University Bonn; member, Groupe de liaison des professeurs d'histoire contemporaine auprès de la Commission européenne; professor for Modern German and European History and Jean-Monnet Chair ad personam for Comparative Contemporary History of Europe and European Integration History, University of Hildesheim; director, Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences. Recent main publications: *Modellfall für Deutschland? Die Österreichlösung mit Staatsvertrag und Neutralität 1945-1955* (Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: Studienverlag 2014); together with Robert Rollinger, *Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte. Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014); *Three Germanies. West Germany, East Germany and the Berlin Republic* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011); *Europa. Ideen—Institutionen—Vereinigung (*München: Olzog, 2010).

Andrei Grachev, Dr. phil., 1974–87 consultant and deputy director, International Department, Central Committee of the CPSU; spokesman of the president of the USSR; visiting professor, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan; Université Paris-I, Pantheon, Sorbonne; senior researcher, St Antony's College, Oxford; chairman, Scientific Committee of The World Political Forum, Turin, Italy. Main publications: *Final Days. The Inside Story of Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Boulder, Co.: Westview, 1995); *Meeting of Civilizations: Clash or Dialogue?* (Paris: UNESCO, 1996); *L'Exception russe. Staline, est-il mort?* (Paris: du Rocher, 1998); *Le mystère Gorbatchev. La terre et le destin* (Paris: du Rocher, 2004); *Twenty Years that Changed the World 1985–2005*, ed. with Chiara Blengino and Rossella Stievano (Rome: Editori Laterza, 2005); *Gorbachev's Gamble. Soviet Foreign Policy and the End of Cold War* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008).

Hans-Hermann Hertle, PhD, senior researcher and head of communication, Center for Contemporary History, Potsdam, Germany. Main fields of research: political sociology, contemporary history of the Federal Republic of Germany, Cold War international history. Main publications: *Chronik des Mauerfalls*, 12$^{th}$ ed. (Berlin: Links, 2011); *The Berlin Wall Story* (Berlin: Links, 2011); ed. with Maria Nooke, *The Victims at the Berlin Wall, 1961–1989. A Biographical Handbook* (Berlin: Links, 2011).

Klaus Larres, Prof. Dr., Richard M. Krasno Distinguished Professor for History and International Relations, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; senior fellow, Center for Transatlantic Relations, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC. Main publicatons: *Churchil's Cold War: The Politics of Personal Diplomacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); *Enlightened Self-Interest? The United States and the Unity of Europe from Truman to Obama* (New Haven: Yale University Press, t.b.p. 2015/16).

Horst Möller, Prof. em. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult., 1992–2011 director, Institute for Contemporary History, Munich-Berlin; chair, Modern and Contemporary History, Universities of Regensburg 1992-1996, and Munich 1996-2011. Main editor, *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*; co-chairman, Deutsch-Russische Historikerkommission. Main publications: *Aufklärung in Preußen* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1974); *Exodus der Kultur. Schriftsteller, Wissenschaftler und Künstler in der Emigration nach 1933* (Munich: Beck, 1984; engl. 1983); *Vernunft und Kritik. Deutsche Aufklärung im 17.u. 18. Jh.* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986, 4th ed. 1997); *Die Weimarer Republik. Eine unvollendete Demokratie* (Munich: dtv, 1985, 10th ed. 2012; *Parlamentarismus in Preu*ßen 1919-1932 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1985); *Fürstenstaat oder Bürgernation. Deutschland 1763-1815* (Berlin: Siedler, 1989, 4th ed.1998); *Europa zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998, 3rd print 2013).

Wolfgang Mueller, Doz. Dr. habil., deputy director, Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences; visiting professor and lecturer, Russian History and History of International Relations, University of Vienna; visiting professor, universities of Vienna and Rostock; visiting lecturer, University of Bern. Main publications: *A Good Example of Peaceful Coexistence? The Soviet Union, Austria, and Neutrality, 1955-1991* (Vienna: ÖAW, 2011); *Die sowjetische Besatzung in Österreich 1945-1955 und ihre politische Mission* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005); ed. *Peaceful Coexistence or Iron Curtain? Austria, Neutrality, and Eastern Europe 1955-1989* (Vienna: Lit, 2009); *Osteuropa vom Weltkrieg zur Wende* (Vienna: ÖAW, 2007); *Sovetskaia politika v Avstrii: Dokumenty iz Rossiiskikh arkhivov* (Vienna: ÖAW, 2005).

Norman M. Naimark, Prof. Dr., Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of East European Studies, Stanford University; Fisher Family Director, Division of International, Comparative and Area Studies; senior fellow, Hoover Institution and Freeman-Spogli Institute. Main books: *The History of the "Proletariat": The Emergence of Marxism in the Kingdom of Poland, 1870–1887* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); *Terrorists and Social Democrats: The Russian Revolutionary Movement under Alexander III* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983); *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–49* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1995); *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001) and *Stalin's Genocides*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); ten co-edited books and document collections related to the history of the Soviet Union, East Central Europe, the Balkans, and genocide, e.g. *Yugoslavia and its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* (Stanford: University Press, 2003); *The Lost Politburo Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

John O'Brennan, Dr., lecturer in European Politics; director, Centre for the Study of Wider Europe (www.widereurope.ie) and European Studies Programme, National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Main publications: *The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union* (London: Routledge, 2006); with Tapio Raunio, *National Parliaments in the Enlarged European Union: from 'victims' of Integration to Competitive Actors?* (London: Routledge, 2007); *The EU and the Western Balkans: Stabilization and Europeanization through Enlargement?* (London: Routledge, 2014 forthcoming).

Andreas Oplatka, Dr. phil., 1968–04 editor, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*; foreign correspondent in Stockholm, Paris, Moscow and Budapest; 2004 lecturer, University of Vienna; 2005–11 professor, Andrássy University Budapest. Main publications: *Nachrufe auf den Ostblock. Zehn Essays* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1998); *A többnyelvüség svájci modellje* (Budapest: Osiris, 1998); *Lennart Meri—ein Leben für Estland* (Zurich: Verlag der NZZ, 1999); *Graf Stephan Széchenyi* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2004); *Der erste Riss in der Mauer. September 1989—Ungarn öffnet die Grenze* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2009).

Alexander von Plato, PD Dr., historian, 1993–2007 founder and director, Institute for History and Biography, Open University of Hagen, Germany, guest professor in Vienna (2007) and Winnipeg 2012-2013, Co-editor of BIOS—Journal for Biographical Research, Oral History and Life Story Analyses), former secretary and vice-president, International Oral History Association. Main publications (besides films): *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands. Ein weltpolitisches Machtspiel* (Berlin: Christoph Links, 2010[3]; will be published in English 2015); together with Almut

Leh and Christoph Thonfeld, *Hitler's Slaves. Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books); together with Tomas Vilimek, *Opposition als Lebensform. Dissidenz in der DDR, der ČSSR und in Polen* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013).

Mikhail Prozumenshchikov, Dr. phil., historian, since 2003 deputy director, Russian Federal Archive of Modern History (RGANI). Area of expertise: international relations in the second half of the twentieth century, history of the CPSU, Sino-Soviet relations. Main publications: *Bol'shoy sport i bol'shaya politika* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004); "Deutsch-sowjetische Sportkontakte im Kontext politischer Zielsetzungen von 1950 bis Anfang der 1980er Jahre," in *Tauwetter, Eiszeit und gelenkte Dialoge. Russen und Deutsche nach 1945* (Munich: Fink, 2006), 811–50; "Die Entscheidung im Politbüro der KPdSU," in Stefan Karner et al, eds., *Prager Frühling. Das internationale Krisenjahr 1968*: *Beiträge* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 205–41; "'Es muss alles daran gesetzt werden, die Beziehungen Schritt für Schritt zu normalisieren…' Der letzte, erfolglose Versuch einer sowjetisch-chinesischen Versöhnung," *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (2009), 315–28.

Georges Saunier, chargé de missions, Institut François Mitterrand; associated lecturer, University of Cergy-Pontoise. Main publications: with Gérard Bossuat, eds., *Inventer l'Europe, Histoire nouvelle des groupes d'influence et des acteurs de l'unité européenne* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2003); "A special relationship: Franco-German relations at the time of François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl," in Carine Germond and Henning Türk, eds., *A History of Franco-German Relations in Europe. From "Hereditary Enemies" to Partners* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-McMillan, 2008), 235–48; "'J'y étais, j'y croyais': François Mitterrand et le Congrès de La Haye," in Jean-Michel Guieu and Christophe Le Dréau, eds., *Le "Congrès de l'Europe" à La Haye (1948-2008)* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2009), 375–92; "Défaire le mur sans défaire l'Europe: la diplomatie française au pied du mur," in Michèle Weinachter, ed., *L'est et L'ouest face à la chute du mur—Question de perspective* (Cergy-Pontoise: CIRAC, to be published in 2013).

Dieter Segert, Prof. Dr., professor for political science (regional focus on Eastern Europe), University of Vienna. Main publications: *Die Grenzen Osteuropas. 1918, 1945, 1989 - drei Versuche, im Westen anzukommen* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2002); *Das 41. Jahr. Eine andere Geschichte der DDR* (Vienna: Böhlau 2008); "Der Staatssozialismus war mehr als nur ein politisches Herrschaftsverhältnis. Anmerkungen zu einem theoretischen Defizit des Totalitarismuskonzepts," *Bohemia* 49, no. 2 (2010): 412–20; "Osteuropa nach 1989—ein Labor für die soziale Belastbarkeit unserer Demokratie?," *Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitische Zeitschrift* 33, no. 3 (2010): 29–42; with Heinz Faßmann, eds., *Stable Democratic Institutions in Spite of Weak Popular Support—A Comparison of the Southeast Europe-*

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Stanley R. Sloan, founding director, Atlantic Community Initiative; visiting scholar, Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs, Middlebury College; honorary ancient, NATO Defense College. Most recent publications: *Permanent Alliance? NATO and the Transatlantic Bargain from Truman to Obama* (New York: Continuum Books, 2010); "NATO's Deterrence Review," *Strategic Insights* 10, no. 3 (Winter 2011): 1–8; "Re-engineering the transatlantic security and defence relationship" (Wilton Park Report, rapporteur, September 28, 2011); "In Defense of NATO," *International Herald Tribune/Global New York Times*, 28/29 June 2011; "America's Euro Fatigue," *The New Atlanticist*, 5 September 2012, http://www.acus.org/new_atlanticist/americas-euro-fatigue (accessed 30 April 2013); "What is NATO's Role in a New Transatlantic Bargain?," in Marc D. Ducasse, ed., *The Transatlantic Bargain* (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2012), 129–39.

Jiří Suk, PhDr., Ph. D., senior researcher, Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences. Main publications: with František Koudelka, *Ministerstvo vnitra a bezpečnostní aparát v období Pražského jara 1968* (Prague: Doplněk and Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1996); *Občanské fórum. Listopad—prosinec 1989,* 2 vols. (Prague: Doplněk, 1997–98); with Jaroslav Cuhra and František Koudelka, *Chronologie zániku komunistického režimu v Československu 1985–1990* (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1999); *Labyrintem revoluce. Aktéři, zápletky a křižovatky jedné politické krize (od listopadu 1989 do června 1990)* (Prague: Prostor, 2003); with Josef Koudelka et al., *Invasion 68: Prague* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2008); with Jiří Hoppe, *Dvojí identita Klubu angažovaných nestraníků. Před invazí 1968 a po pádu komunismu 1989* (Prague: Euroslavica, 2008); with Adéla Gjuričová et al., *Rozděleni minulostí. Vytváření politických identit v České republice po roce 1989* (Prague: Knihovna Václava Havla, 2011); *Politika jako absurdní drama. Václav Havel v letech 1975–1989* (Prague: Paseka, 2013).

Arnold Suppan, Prof. Dr., 1994-2011 professor, East European History, University of Vienna; visiting professor, Leiden, Fribourg, Stanford, Budapest; 1988-2002 head, Austrian Institute of East and South-East European Studies; 2002-08 head of the department, East European History, University of Vienna; 1998 corresponding, 2003 full member, Austrian Academy of Sciences/AAS; 2009-11 secretary general and 2011-13 vice president of the AAS; 2013 honorary member, Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Main books: *Die österreichischen Volksgruppen* (Vienna: Geschichte und Politik, 1983); *Jugoslawien und Österreich 1918-1938*

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Péter Vámos, CSc (PhD) habil., senior research fellow, Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences; associate professor, Institute for East Asian Languages and Cultures, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, Budapest. Major publications: *Kína mellettünk? Kínai külügyi iratok Magyarországról, 1956* (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2008); "Sino-Hungarian Relations and the 1956 Revolution," Cold War International History Project Working Paper 54 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2006); with James Hershberg et al., "The Interkit Story: A Window into the Final Decades of the Sino-Soviet Relationship," Cold War International History Project Working Paper 63 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011); "'Only a Handshake but no Embrace:' Sino-Soviet Normalization in the 1980s," in Thomas P. Bernstein and Li Hua-yu, eds., *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-present.* The Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009); 79–104; 从和解到疏远 ：1980年代后期的中国与东欧国家矢系" (Cong hejie dao shuyuan: 1980 niandai houqi de Zhongguo yu DongOu guojia guanxi) (From Reconciliation to Estrangement: Relations between China and East Central Europe in the late 1980s) in: 冷战国际史研究 *Lengzhan Guojishi Yanjiu* (*Cold War International History Studies*) 13 (Summer 2012): 27–55.

Antonio Varsori, full professor, history of international relations; head, Department of Political Science, Law and International Studies, University of Padua; deputy chairman, Liaison Committee of Historians at the European Commission. Most recent publications: with E. Calandri, eds., *The Failure of Peace in Europe 1943–48* (London: Palgrave, 2002); ed., *Inside the European Community: Actors and Policies in the European Integration 1958–1972* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2005); ed., *Alle origini del presente. L'Europa occidentale nella crisi degli anni '70* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2006); *La "Cenerentola d'Europa". L'Italia e l'integrazione europea dal 1947 a oggi* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2010); and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *European Union History Themes and Debates* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010); *L'Italia e la fine della guerra fredda. La politica estera dei governi Andreotti 1989–1992* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2013).

Ella Zadorozhnyuk, DrSc., leading research scientist, head, Department of Contemporary History of Central and South-Eastern Europe, Institute of Slavic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia. Main fields of research: contemporary history of the Czech and Slovak Republics (Czechoslovakia, 1970-1989) and Central and South-Eastern Europe. Main publications: *Urban Small-Scale Production in Central and Eastern Europe: Search for the Optimal Model. 1940-1980-s years* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991); *Social Democracy in Central Europe*. (Moscow: Academia, 2000); *From the Collapse of the Prague Spring to the Triumph of the «Velvet» Revolution. On the History of the Opposition Movement in Czechoslovakia* (August 1968-November 1989) (Moscow: Indrik, 2008); *Czech Lands and Slovakia in the 20th Century. Essays on history* (Moscow: Nauka, 2005).

Philip Zelikow, J.D., Ph.D., White Burkett Miller Professor of History, University of Virginia; dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. 1989–91 director for European security affairs, National Security Council; 2003–4 executive director, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States; 2005–7 counselor, Department of State, deputy to Secretary Rice; 2001–3 and 2011–13 member, the President's Intelligence Advisory Board. Main publications: with Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); with Ernest May, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House during the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); with Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999); with Ernest May, eds. *Dealing with Dictators: Dilemmas of U.S. Diplomacy and Intelligence Analysis, 1945–1990* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).

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