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# Identities in Transition: Eastern Europe and Russia After the Collapse of Communism

Edited by Victoria E. Bonnell

# IDENTITIES IN TRANSITION:

# EASTERN EUROPE AND RUSSIA AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM

## Victoria E. Bonnell, Editor

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# PREFACE

In the vast and contentious literature on the subject of identity, one thing is undisputed: the discourse on identity is a distinctively modern phenomenon, coinciding with the epochal changes that transformed agrarian into modern industrial societies. At the end of the twentieth century, people in most parts of the world have become conscious of their multiple identities pertaining to gender, class, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and membership in a political party or movement. For some, identity is "based on some 'essence' or set of core features shared by all members of the collectivity and no others."[1] Others view identity as a social construction. For them, socialization processes and the structures of society impose identities on individuals and groups or at least make them available.

In the Communist era, the party-state provided a modicum of security for most people and, above all, a sense of identity. Personal and collective identities were established in Communist societies by various markers such as the individual's name, nationality and ethnicity, geographic location, gender, education, occupation, and party membership. The authorities attempted to maintain strict control over the forms and expressions of identity, restricting them to a narrow range and depriving citizens of the right to autonomous collective action based on shared identity.

The collapse of communism has had profound repercussions for the identities of people in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. During a short period, geographical boundaries have been redrawn and political, economic, social, and cultural institutions, ideologies, and practices have been fundamentally transformed. The reduction and then the elimination of party controls over information and association have precipitated an explosion of new possibilities for personal and collective identities. The "badges" of identity that for many decades served to place people in an elaborate system of stratification have been rapidly changing in the post-Communist era. For millions of people, the end of communism has also meant

the loss of former identities and the acquisition of new ones. For them, the world has been turned upside down.

Post-Communist societies have vastly enlarged the possibilities for people to redefine their identity through new kinds of employment (or unemployment), new types of organizations, new lifestyles, and new ideologies. Today, many people in the region are searching for new identities, but as the Russian scholar Alexander Etkind has observed, "Identities, like new shoes, do not always fit. People are still groping for a self they can be proud of or at least comfortable with."[2]

How can we chart the formation of new identities among the people of Russia and Eastern Europe? In his monumental study of the English working class, Edward Thompson uses two criteria to establish the growth of what he calls class consciousness—but what we might just as well label collective identity—among workers in the first third of the nineteenth century. First, he looks for evidence that workers have a "consciousness of identity of interests among themselves and against the interests of other classes." Second, he looks for "the growth of corresponding forms of political and industrial organization."[3]

Thompson's approach may be applied to the changing identities among Russians and East Europeans. It prompts us to look for evidence that people have begun to perceive in new ways their identification with a group (based on nation, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, or politics) and to create and participate in corresponding organizations, such as a church, a political party, a women's group, or a business organization.

The essays in this volume grapple, in various ways, with the issues of personal and collective identity and the ways people have found to express their allegiances in post-Communist societies. The collection consists of parallel essays—dealing with Russia and Eastern Europe—on five themes relating to identities in transition: class, gender, nationality, religion, and politics. Each author was asked to provide the reader with an overview of the subject and to address the general questions: How and why have identities been changing in the post-Communist era and with what consequences?

The essays in the volume were originally presented at a conference, Identities in Transition, held in April 1995 at the University of California, Berkeley. Organized by the Center for Slavic and East

European Studies, the conference was part of an ongoing effort to provide educational outreach for the benefit of teachers and the wider community. We are grateful to the Title VI Program of the U.S. Department of Education for support of the conference and partial support of this publication. Anna Wertz, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History, ably provided editorial and production assistance.

## NOTES

1. Craig Calhoun, "Social Theory and the Politics of Identity," in *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), p. 13.

2. Alexander M. Etkind, "Psychological Culture," in *Russian Culture at the Crossroads: Paradoxes of Postcommunist Consciousness*, ed. Dmitri N. Shalin (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), p. 122.

3. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1964), p. 194.

# IDENTITIES IN TRANSITION: AN INTRODUCTION

## George W. Breslauer

This is a tricky subject to tackle. There are many different approaches one could adopt, both to defining identities and to generalizing about them. Moreover, one could be addressing individual identities or collective identities, identities as solely a state of mind or identities as informing behavior.[1] Whatever the definition we choose, we know that the collapse of Communist systems has resulted in a landscape in which many individual and collective identities are not only in transition, but also many of them are up for grabs. Diverse forces are competing to shape new identities and to capture the popular energies released by the embrace of new identities. In this volume, which concentrates on Russia and Eastern Europe, we read about the development of class consciousness and organization, about religious and ethnic identities and how these are being transformed and/or mobilized into politics, and about the development of gender roles and role consciousness during the troubled transformations in this part of the world.[2] The purpose of this introduction is not to offer any especially profound insights about the specifics of these matters or about how they vary across countries in the region. That is the purpose of the interior chapters. Rather, I will introduce the volume by easing the reader into thinking about the nature and role of self and group identities in the post-Communist context.

## DEFINITIONS AND TYPES OF IDENTITIES

What do we mean by "identities"? Technically, we might be referring to "values, categories, symbols, markers, and worldviews

that people construct to make sense of their place in the world."[3] Less technically, identities answer the questions, "Who am I/are we?," "What am I/are we?," Who and what am I/are we *not*?," and "What is my/our place in the larger social order of things?" When people ask these questions, they are inquiring into their individual and group identities.[4]

Note that these are questions entertained by human beings, not by lower forms of animals. Also, these questions require conscious thought. It is not "natural" to ponder them and to articulate answers to them. Thus we are not born with such a conscious identity. We are trained—by parents, teachers, newspapers, television, public officials, ministers, persecutors—to think in terms that lead us to embrace identities or to change them over time. Consider, for example, the three-year-old child. If asked "Who are you?," she would probably respond with her *name,* but not much more. If asked "What are you?," she might respond with her *gender*—"I'm a girl"—and possibly with her relationship to her parent—"I'm Daddy's baby"—but not much more. The rest is acquired through training, education, socialization, political mobilization, and other forms of experience.

As that experience accumulates, the numbers and types of our conscious identities proliferate. A categorization of *types* of identities might include those based on (1) gender (e.g., feminist); (2) sexual orientation; (3) national and regional location or association; (4) racial characteristics; (5) ethnic and linguistic association (a "language community"); (6) religion; (7) class, social stratum, and occupation; (8) political-ideological affinity; (9) political-organizational affiliation; (10) age, generation, and other features of the life cycle.[5] Still other identities can be imagined. How we spend our leisure time can become an identity, as with the sports fanatic who lives for the weekend-long spectator sports.

For the most part, identities are most usefully thought of as *subjective* categories of self-identification. One could point to an individual and note that he is of Hungarian-American background. But if that individual was born in the United States and has made a concerted effort to assimilate into American society, he may possess a background characteristic that he does not care or think about. In that case, he lacks a Hungarian-American identity.

We all possess many identities, and they are not necessarily in the forefront of our minds most of the time. Usually it is situations

that lead us to focus on one identity or another. When most professors end up in the rare situation of chatting with a truck driver, they are more aware of their identities as intellectuals or professionals. When chatting with professors from another discipline, they may be alerted to the differences between their professional identities. When most whites are chatting with blacks, they are probably more conscious of being white, and the reverse is also true. Thus categories become salient when juxtaposed to the "other." Since all categories have boundaries that help to define what they are *and* what they are not, the salience of our self-identifications—both individual and collective—rises when we are confronted by objects that are excluded by the boundaries of our categories.[6]

We may elicit from an individual a list of her diverse self-identifications—as, for example, female, mother, wife, heterosexual, American, English speaker, Californian, Catholic, Caucasian, professional, middle class, liberal, environmentalist, humanitarian, Democrat, middle aged.[7] This would tell us something about that individual's "objective" location in society. But it would tell us relatively little about that individual's state of mind and the subjective identities that drive her behavior. Specifically, we still do not know (1) how intensely she feels about each of those identities; (2) how she ranks them in importance; (3) the extent to which she thinks of some of these identities as being in conflict with each other; and (4) whether her life is structured in such a way that she is frequently or infrequently forced to confront and reconcile conflicts among her multiple identities.

Notice also that most identities are claims, not immutable conditions. A Jew who rejects his Jewishness, or who is somehow entirely unaware of his background, may be a Jew according to rabbinical law but does not possess a Jewish identity. Similarly, a member of the upper class who joins a Communist party to fight for a working-class revolution rejects an upper-class identity in favor of a working-class identity. A male who yearns for a sex-change operation or who is a transvestite may be male by objective characteristics but prefer a female identity. Or take another objective indicator, race. From a social identity standpoint, the question is what one makes of race as a marker. Little children do not even notice racial distinctions until these are pointed out to them. And then they do not know what to make of them until they learn from others, for better or for worse,

what social posture toward racial differences is appropriate. Or take an example from the region of our study. Most Poles know they "are" Catholics. But many Polish women who are alienated by the Catholic Church's impact on post-Communist politics—which has resulted in the criminalization of abortion—are reevaluating the meaning of their relationship to the Church. Similarly, a Pole may have no problems with the meaning of being a Polish national until faced with situations in which other identities compete for allegiance: Slav, Central European, European, a member of "Western civilization," a human being.[8] Which of these identities gets mobilized for social and political action will depend partly on circumstances.

Thus the embrace of identities and one's understanding of the relative priority and conflicts among one's identities are not simply products of formal learning from agents of socialization and education. That embrace and that understanding may also be byproducts of social encounters, pleasant and unpleasant, or direct products of political mobilization.[9] Many American men did not perceive a conflict between being a father or husband and being an overtime professional until the feminist movement raised the consciousness of many women and men and raised as well the personal cost of living with the old definition. Many German Jews were very much assimilated into German society and did not perceive a conflict between being a patriotic German and being a Jew until Hitler informed them brutally that they could not be both. Indeed children of ethnic, racial, or religious minorities often learn through unpleasant social encounters (such as being attacked by a street gang) that their attributes are considered by others to be bases for exclusion or ostracism. This may be their first awareness of both the salience of their identities and the conflicts among their multiple identities.

## IDENTITIES AND BEHAVIOR

We are primarily interested in the relationship between consciousness and behavior. One may, after all, embrace identities but keep them to oneself. Or one may act on them to the extent that one feels strongly enough the desirability, necessity, and possibility of such action.[10] Thus, just as the embrace of identities is in part condi-

tioned by social encounters, so the behavioral expression of identities is conditioned by social, economic, and political circumstances or organization that may create or block opportunities for acting upon one's identities. And the process by which we act upon our identities (or incipient identities) may in turn catalyze further our process of "becoming aware"; it may "raise our consciousness" and lead us to further redefine identities, reprioritize them, or recognize conflicts among them.[11]

This means, in turn, that constraints on public organization and expression of identities may well inhibit social processes through which we become aware of new identities or of conflicts among the identities we entertain. Thus from a long-term perspective, in societies that are not static (and there are few static societies), individuals' identities and identity structures are usually experiencing some degree of transition, whether or not individuals have the opportunity to act on them. But they are rarely up for grabs to the degree that they are today, as a result of the collapse of European communism. Both the subjective embrace of identities and public action to advance the interests of given collective identities are in flux and are being vigorously contested.

## IDENTITIES IN SOVIET-TYPE SYSTEMS

Soviet-type systems, during their Stalinist phases, tried to fundamentally transform their societies: the political, organizational, economic, and social relations and the identities that people embraced. The ideal concept of the "new Soviet person," for example, entailed a vision of a man or woman who subordinated all other identities to the primary identity of shock worker on behalf of the Communist Party's priorities of the moment. The party defined for you how to rank your many identities and whether there existed any sort of conflict among them. The Stalinist regimes, with the exception of Poland's, largely destroyed alternative centers of power that could mobilize people around competing identities: the Church, nationalist political leaders, trade unions, professional associations, property owners, rich peasants, etc. The idea was to destroy the independent public sphere within which political mobilization could otherwise

take place and to ensure that the party maintained a monopoly on both the propagandization of appropriate identities and the mobilization of political energies based on those identities.[12] In this respect, Stalinism reflected and reinforced a feature of pre-Enlightenment societies, which also forced people into stereotypical molds with few identities, little awareness of alternative possibilities, and the status of loyal member of the family or clan and loyal subject of the king and/or Church.

It is not clear how far Stalinism succeeded in transforming the consciousness of its populations. In their post-Stalin phases, the worst excesses of Stalinism were dropped, but the Communist regimes tried to consolidate their systems by preventing people from embracing identities, or acting on identities, that the regime defined as undesirable. In this respect, a fundamental continuity between the Stalinist and post-Stalinist phases was the subordination of public verbal expression and organized action to the party's notions of tolerable identities.

To gain a feel for this, let us consider a specific social type in one Communist system. Our specific case comes from a locale—Ukraine—not covered by the interior chapters, but the pattern of identity conflict is generalizable throughout the region. Our hypothetical individual lived in a large city in eastern Ukraine during the 1970s. Let us call him Nikolai Chervenko, or "Nick" for short. Nick lived a relatively unconflicted life; he was like millions of others in this region—a support base for this type of regime. It is before the crisis has hit.

Nick is a Russified Ukrainian. His family speaks Russian at home and at work; the children go to Russian-language schools. He is Ukrainian Orthodox by religion—or at least his parents were. While he does not consider himself an atheist, he also does not attend church or care about organized religion. When things go wrong, he finds himself praying privately to God, but he does not make a public display of it.

Nick has a master's degree in chemical engineering and works in a factory that produces high-tech conventional weaponry for the Soviet armed forces. He is paid well and, more important, enjoys an array of privileges—in housing, special stores, medical care, and vacation opportunities—that are specific to his skills, importance, and rank in the hierarchy. He hopes to become chief engineer of the

factory someday and has joined the Ukrainian Communist Party aware that loyal service to the party might facilitate his achieving that career goal. He understands the rules of the game, pays his dues on time, and gives political lectures to the workers when asked to do so. Once he becomes a chief engineer, he knows, many more privileges will be available to him.

Nick is aware of the environmental pollution being spewed out by his factory. It bothers him, but he tries not to think about it too often. Similarly, Nick is aware that many officials of the party-state are corrupt, but what can you do? He plays the game, occasionally takes bribes himself, uses the underground economy to get his plumbing fixed when necessary, always uses informal means to get needed supplies for his factory, and tries just to live as comfortable a life as he can.

Nick is aware of the dissident literature being circulated underground and of the echoes of it in some above-ground publications. He knows that Ukrainian nationalists consider Russia to be the oppressor of Ukraine and the Soviet party-state to be the oppressor of the Soviet people. It does bother him a bit when he reads Russian papers that treat Ukrainians like the "little brothers" of the "elder-brother" Russians. And his passport, which he must always carry with him, constantly reminds him of his Ukrainian "nationality." But Nick, while admiring those brave dissident souls at one level, dismisses them as troublemakers who could upset his comfortable life if they came to power (very unlikely) or (more likely) could provoke the regime into a nasty backlash—something he definitely does not want. Moreover, Nick's Ukrainian language is not that good. Where would that leave him under a Ukrainian nationalist regime? Besides, don't the Russians, Ukrainians, and other Slavs have to retain their solidarity against the growing masses of Moslems within the country, Moslem fundamentalists outside the country, and the yellow people of Asia?

Nick considers himself a Soviet patriot—proud to be a citizen of a superpower that is also the largest country in the world. He entertains in his mind no conflict between that identity and his Ukrainian ethnic identity. Nor has he given much thought to the principle of Communist Party hegemony in the political system. The Voice of America, to which he listens regularly, expounds the virtues of a multiparty system and gives him a clearer view of events going

on abroad. He knows that the Soviet regime blocks his access to truth about many things going on in the world. But the realistic alternatives remain murky in his mind and seem quite disconnected from the seemingly immutable order of things in the Soviet Union. Nick is no "new Soviet man," a wide-eyed optimist toiling selflessly for the party and the homeland. He is a hard-working careerist. He believes in going along to get along. He enjoys his work for the most part—though he wishes the damn supplies would arrive more reliably and punctually—and hopes to win promotions and deliver a steadily improving standard of living to his family.

There were millions of Nicks in the Soviet Union—of course more in some regions than in others—and millions of them in Eastern Europe as well. They were the backbone of the post-Stalinist regimes.

## IDENTITIES AFTER COMMUNISM

With the collapse of communism, Nick's life is collapsing as well. I will not go into the details. But consider what has changed with respect to identity issues. Nick can no longer subordinate his many identities to a few that the old regime had rewarded. He is now being urged to define himself publicly along many dimensions. Politicians, political activists, journalists, friends, and associates now directly or indirectly pose hard questions to him: *Nick, as a Ukrainian, why is your Ukrainian language so poor? Nick, why not send your children to Ukrainian-language schools? Nick, have you considered attending church? Nick, where do you stand on the issue of Crimean independence or of giving Crimea back to Russia? Should Ukraine expand political and military ties with Russia?*

Nick is not sure how he is being addressed by Russian television and newspapers. He is not an ethnic Russian, but he is a "Russian speaker." Russian nationalists in these broadcasts are telling him that Russia or a "greater Russia" is his natural homeland. The Russian foreign minister promises to protect him militarily against discrimination or repression, but Nick does not feel especially threatened.[13] Nick does not know whom to believe because he is not sure just what he is or what others will consider him to be.

*Nick, we may have to close your factory, given the cost of purchasing from Russia the fuel to run it, and our inability to sell abroad for hard currency the conventional weaponry that your factory produces. Where are you going to work?* Nick is suddenly déclassé. *Oh, by the way, your wife has been laid off from her job in the textile institute. What are you going to do, Nick? Nick, now that you've quit the Communist Party, how about joining one of the other political parties? Are you a socialist, a social democratic, a market democrat, an advocate of regional autonomy within Ukraine, a liberal internationalist, an isolationist nostalgic for the USSR, or what? Nick, are you an environmentalist? Should the Chernobyl nuclear reactor be closed down? Want to join the Green Party? Nick, should Ukraine be a member of NATO?*

All these questions force Nick to confront conflicts among his many old but often latent identities and between old and new identities. This process engenders confusion, disorientation, emotional crisis, and fear. It means that Nick is searching for answers in a context in which diverse political forces will be all too happy to provide them.

Nick is only one social type living in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. There are scores of different types of people facing all kinds of hard choices. I have chosen to paint a portrait of Nick because he is relatively less conflicted than many others.

If this is the level of disorientation experienced by a Russianized and Sovietized Ukrainian, imagine the disorientation experienced by other broad groupings of peoples in the region, such as: (1) Russians living in Russia who historically have never clearly distinguished the Russian state from the Russian empire and who must now do so in a most jarring way;[14] (2) Russians living in the other newly independent states who are unsure and frightened about their fate and that of their children, who do not know whether to think of themselves as citizens of Russia or citizens of the state in which they live, as "Russian speakers" or as Russians by ethnicity; (3) Russians who have moved from Kazakhstan or the Baltics back to Russia who have been socialized into a cultural frame that does not match the new, hotly contested political reality of Russia in 1996; and (4) peoples along the southern rim of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, Central Asia), where the tapestry of multiethnicity has created havoc. Consider, for example, the single issue of ethnicity within the single republic of Dagestan, as described by Philip Roeder:

Dagestan is a multiethnic republic located on Russia's border with Azerbaijan. The peoples of this republic are the targets of competing ethnic entrepreneurs who offer at least five different bases for ethnic mobilization. Ethnic entrepreneurs who seek to mobilize individual groups such as the Kumyk, Lezgins, and Nogai compete with entrepreneurs who seek to mobilize the so-called "peoples of Dagestan" as one. Still others, such as the Assembly of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, seek to bind all so-called "Mountain Peoples" in a North Caucasus Federal Republic. All three of these compete with entrepreneurs offering Islamic interethnic programs of collective action, on the one hand, and those attempting to cultivate an identity as people of Russia (*Rossiiane*), on the other.[15]

Imagine too the disorientation of the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, many of whom are now being slaughtered by people they previously had not thought of as religious or ethnic antagonists.

Disorientation is real elsewhere in the region as well, though polarization is somewhat less than in the places I have mentioned. Substantial minorities in Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria are nervous about the future of interethnic relations in those countries, as are the majority populations that worry about "fifth columns," with each side wondering whether definitions of identity will become so polarized as to lead them in the Yugoslav direction. With respect to class identities, people from diverse social strata and women generally are being invited to think of themselves as an exploited class or gender in the new socioeconomic order—the losers in the transition to capitalism—and they are being invited to organize politically to fight back.

Throughout the region, then, gender, class, ethnic, and religious identities, among others, are competing for allegiances. These are revolutionary times, for levels of political polarization are such that different political forces are urging their audiences to allow a few, specific identities to dominate all others in determining how people define themselves and act politically. Indeed that could be one definition or indicator of a "revolutionary situation." This is high drama, with huge potential for both triumph and tragedy.

**NOTES**

1. For a complex interdisciplinary survey of the extensive literature on identities and identity formation, see Craig Calhoun, "Social Theory and the Politics of Identity," in *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity,* ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 9–36.

2. Gail Lapidus, ed., *The New Russia: Troubled Transformation* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994).

3. Victoria Bonnell, seminar discussion, University of California, Berkeley, January 19, 1995.

4. Theoretical literature on identities has tended to deal separately with individual and group identities. The current volume treats them as related, as do I in this introduction. In this respect we follow Mennell, who argues that "we-images" and "self-images" are connected and develop together through "unequal and fluctuating power balances between groups of many kinds" (Stephen Mennell, "The Formation of We-Images: A Process Theory," in Calhoun, ed., *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, p. 180).

5. Eric Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle: Selected Papers* (New York: International Universities Press, 1959).

6. See, for example, Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 42.

7. Mennell ("The Formation of We-Images," p. 176) describes the multiplicity of identities as the "filo pastry of identity."

8. For a fascinating case study of relevance to the notion that identities are claims, not essential conditions, see Barbara Skinner, "Identity Formation in the Russian Cossack Revival," *Europe-Asia Studies* 46 (1994): 1017–38.

9. Mennell ("The Formation of We-Images," p. 179) describes a "symbolic interactionist tradition" that stresses how each self-identification is formed by a reflexive process in which how others see us plays a big role in how we see ourselves. Liah Greenfeld makes a case for "status insecurity" and "ressentiment" as the way, or mechanism, by which "social encounters" produce identity. See her "Formation of the Russian National Identity," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32 (July 1990): 51.

10. Note that one may feel strongly about an identity but not feel the need to make a public issue of it. Or one may feel such a need but not consider it feasible to mobilize publicly. On the perceived desirability, necessity, and feasibility of revolutionary change as jointly necessary and sufficient conditions for the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness, see H. Wolpe, "Some Problems Concerning Revolutionary Consciousness," in *The Socialist Register: 1970,* ed. Ralph Miliband and John Saville (London: Merlin Press, 1970), pp. 251–80.

11. For a theoretical discussion, see Craig Calhoun, "The Problem of Identity in Collective Action," in *Macro-Micro Linkages in Sociology,* ed. Joan Huber (London: Sage Publications, 1991). For applications of this approach to the post-Soviet scene, see Rogers Brubaker, "National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External National Homelands in the New Europe," *Daedalus 124,* 2 (Spring 1995): 107–32, and Mark Beissinger, "The Persisting Ambiguity of Empire," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11 (April–June 1995): 149–84.

12. For examples, see Kenneth T. Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Rumania, 1945–1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Jadwiga Staniszkis, "Forms of Reasoning as Ideology," *Telos,* no. 66 (Winter 1985–86): 67–80; Jerry Pankhurst, "Religious Culture," in *Russian Culture at the Crossroads,* ed. Dmitri Shalin (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press—forthcoming).

13. See Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in *Nezavisimaya gazeta,* April 20, 1995.

14. Moreover, under Soviet rule, the official conflation of "Russian" and "Soviet" created, in Beissinger's term, a "persisting ambiguity" ("Persisting Ambiguity of Empire").

15. Philip Roeder, "Post-Soviet Institutions and Ethnopolitics," paper delivered at the 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York, September 1–4, 1994, p. 14.

# WINNERS AND LOSERS IN RUSSIA'S
# ECONOMIC TRANSITION

## Victoria E. Bonnell

Remarkable changes have taken place in Russia's social structure and status hierarchy over the past five years. Many of these changes got under way during the perestroika period but others began much earlier, in the years before Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985. To appreciate the magnitude of what has happened to Russian society since 1991, the broad political and economic context must be taken into account.

Most important of all, the Soviet Union as a political entity has ceased to exist and the Communist Party has lost its dominant position. The dismantling of the command-administrative economy brought an end to the elaborate planning and redistributive apparatus as well as the state's monopoly on the ownership of property. With the removal of legal obstacles to nonstate employment and private ownership in all sectors of the economy, a large private sector has arisen that now employs more than one-half of all those who are economically active in Russia and accounts for more than two-thirds of the country's GNP.[1] The implementation of a series of ad hoc economic reforms in January 1992 moved Russia in the direction of a mixed economic system, characterized by marketization, privatization, and corporatization of medium- and large-scale state enterprises.

As a consequence of these and other changes, the social structure and status hierarchy that existed before 1991 have been reconfigured, with some quite astonishing and unexpected outcomes. We can grasp these changes by focusing on two categories of people in Russia today: the winners—that is, those who have benefited materially and/or gained in terms of prestige since 1991—and the losers—those who suffered materially and/or lost prestige over the past three

years. For most Russians, the world has been turned upside down over the past decade, with particularly drastic changes occurring since the collapse of communism. People who once had status, security, and a relatively decent standard of living have sometimes suffered great hardships during the transition while others, including some who never gained a respectable position under the Communist regime and were sometimes outcasts, have become millionaires.

## THE WINNERS

Which groups have been the beneficiaries of the changes that have taken place since 1991? In the Communist system, the top echelons of the nomenklatura supplied the political and economic elite.[2] What happened to these people (mostly men) who had high positions in the party, state, and economic apparatus during the period of late communism? The answer, in brief, is that many of them "transformed [their] possession of power . . . into the possession of private property."[3] Or to put it another way, political power was transformed into financial power.[4]

This process got under way as early as 1987–88, when the newly legalized cooperatives became vehicles for economic activity by party secretaries of regional party committees, Komsomol officials, and other top bureaucrats. In mid-1990, valuable state property was transferred to so-called private shareholders' associations composed of Communist officials in Moscow.[5] After the failed coup of August 1991, the transfer of party/state assets to high-level officials was accelerated. Many nomenklatura Communists, such as those in the Central Committee, became recipients of enormous bank credits that could be used for investment and acquisition; others were permitted to purchase hard currency at reduced prices, an advantage that turned some into instant millionaires. In still other cases, ministries became transformed into corporations (such as Gas Prom organized by Viktor Chernomyrdin), and the heads of these ministries became the CEOs of the new corporations (for example, Sergei Yegorov, formerly chairman of the State Bank and head of the financial department of the Central Committee, is now one of the wealthiest men in Russia).[6]

According to a 1994 study of the New Millionaires—the hundred richest entrepreneurs in Russia, most of them Muscovites—12 percent are "nomenklatura millionaires." The term refers to individuals who formerly had successful careers in the Communist Party, the Komsomol, or the KGB.[7] Ákos Róna-Tas has called this the "power conversion" route into the new economic elite: "power accumulated during state socialism is converted into assets of high value in a market economy."[8]

Under the Communist regime, directors of large- and medium-sized state-owned enterprises and financial institutions—the so-called Red Directors—also belonged to a relatively small circle of elite groups. Since 1992, the government has promoted policies designed to transfer ownership of these enterprises and banks into private hands by creating joint stock companies and other means. The program has been only partially successful, but in some cases the former directors have become the owners of enterprises or directors of joint stock companies. The winners in this great transformation are those that are well placed with respect to the market and who have adapted to the new post-Communist conditions for doing business, which is not the same as doing business as we understand it since the Russian state is still a very strong force in the business world.

Both the former Communist officials and the Red Directors owe their current success in part to the position they occupied under communism. Another, quite different, group also flourishes today as a result of activities undertaken before 1991. But in contrast to the officials and Red Directors, this third category of new entrepreneurs formerly stood at the margins of Soviet society because they engaged in activities that were illegal, or at best illicit, under the Communist regime. They were the black marketeers, currency speculators, and illegal manufacturers whose activities belonged to the large and flourishing "second" or "shadow" Soviet economy under late communism.

The 1994 study of the New Millionaires discloses that 40 percent of the one hundred richest entrepreneurs previously engaged in activities considered illegal in the Communist era. Furthermore, 23 percent of the one hundred entrepreneurs indicated that criminal charges had been brought against them in the past.[9] In the Soviet era, many economic activities considered routine in the West (such as

private trade and manufacturing) were subject to criminal prosecution. Those individuals formerly active in the so-called "shadow" or "second" economy in the U.S.S.R. entered the newly legalized private sector after 1991 with certain definite advantages in the form of money and assets, as well as certain entrepreneurial skills accumulated under harsh and dangerous conditions.[10]

How many of these former black marketeers and others from the second economy have continued to pursue illegal business practices under the new post-Communist conditions is still not clear from evidence currently available. Nevertheless, a vast network of organized-crime groups operates in Russia today, some of them with interregional or international ties. In Western Europe and the United States, organized crime controls mainly illicit areas of activity, such as prostitution, gambling, and drugs, as well as selected other areas—for example, construction and garbage collection in some locations. In Russia, by contrast, "organized crime controls all types of activity."[11] In the 1994 study of New Millionaires, one out four *admitted* to having ongoing connections with the criminal underworld, and the actual figure may be far higher.

Recent research on Russian organized crime discloses a very extensive network of highly organized criminal groups, interpenetrating governmental organizations at all levels. Data for 1994 indicate that criminal groups controlled 35,000 economic enterprises, including 400 banks; 47 commodity, currency, and stock exchanges; and 1,500 enterprises in the state sector. About one-third of the criminal groups were organized by owners of private commercial enterprises.[12] Since that time, organized crime has further extended its control over legitimate as well as illegal business. Stephen Handelman, author of a recent study of Russia's organized crime, asserts that "criminal cartels, believed by the police to control as much as 40 percent of Russia's wealth, infiltrate stock exchanges and the real estate market. Gangsters not only open bank accounts; they open banks."[13]

Among the new entrepreneurs in Russia today is another important group: the self-made businessmen and women who first appeared during perestroika (1987–88). They often have a higher education, come from educated families, and are today in their thirties or forties. Having entered the business world without any special access to money or assets, they earned their fortunes by skillfully

manipulating market conditions for goods; skills; or services. The New Millionaires study disclosed that three-quarters of the entrepreneurs in the survey acquired their wealth through trade; other lucrative activities include production of consumer goods, banking, activity of stock, commodities, and raw materials exchanges; and publishing.[14] Educated people have begun a great variety of new businesses, including consulting firms, beauty schools, courses on spiritual self-improvement, and high-tech firms.[15] They have benefited from what Róna-Tas calls "structural compensation"—that is, in many instances they enjoy a particularly favorable market position. It is from the ranks of educated elites that most of the new entrepreneurs are still emerging.

To sum up: the new entrepreneurs encompass several different groups. Entrepreneurs have come from the ranks of the Soviet nomenklatura and the Soviet Red Directors; others have a background in the former second economy or previous connections with the criminal world; finally, entrepreneurs have risen from the ranks of the Soviet educated elite.

Not all educated Russians have turned to entrepreneurship, however. Among intellectuals, the cultural elite, and professionals, those who have prospered can be divided into several categories. The first group comprises people with expertise or talent that enables them to obtain income from foreign sources—for example, by teaching, conducting research, performing, or publishing abroad. A second group consists of those who have expertise or talent that is commercially valued in Russia; for instance, good lawyers are now in great demand, as are highly qualified people with technical skills. Individuals holding bureaucratic positions in post-Communist Russia also benefit from recent changes because they are in a position to facilitate control or acquisition of resources. By way of illustration, those who preside over archives are in a position to profit from the sale or use of materials and films; those who have control over physical property can sometimes profit personally from lucrative rental agreements, a situation sometimes found in publishing houses or institutions of higher learning that lease space to other businesses or institutions.

As we have seen, a significant segment of the old Communist nomenklatura has moved into the new economic elite. But who belongs to the new post-Communist political elite of the country? We

have several studies of this phenomenon. One of the most detailed investigations, published in May 1994, reveals that two-thirds of Boris Yeltsin's inner circle had risen to prominence since 1985; the other third dated from the Brezhnev era. Those people who were brought into his entourage between 1991 and 1994 (and thus never belonged to the Communist nomenklatura) comprised 25 percent of the total, a percentage that in 1994 was characteristic of the government more generally. In the 1994 parliament, however, 40 percent were new members of the political elite and had no past association with the Communist nomenklatura. In contrast to their Communist predecessors, the new members of the political elite are younger and more educated. Two-thirds of Yeltsin's close associates in 1994 had Ph.Ds.[16] It is striking that the proportion of women in the post- Communist government has declined in comparison with the Communist era. In 1995 only 11.2 percent of parliament was female, and there were few women in positions of authority in local government.[17]

The new political elite very quickly began to adopt practices reminiscent of the old regime. Ovsei Shkaratan, a Russian sociologist, put it this way: "The democratic elite, having become legitimate, inherited the offices, summer homes, garages, and government connections [of their predecessors]; they also inherited features of the lifestyle of the former Communist nomenklatura."[18] Developments since 1992, when this observation was made, have confirmed the trend toward a reproduction of the old elite patterns.

Some segments of the working class have also benefited from the changes that have taken place. Included among them are workers who possess education and skill and are employed in privatized firms with a strong market position. In the uncertain economic world of post-Communist Russia, these workers have opted for money over security. A small segment of the rural population has also adapted successfully by converting to private farming, but obstacles remain formidable, and 20,000 private farms in Russia went out of business in 1994.[19] In 1995, 5–6 percent of the agricultural land was in the possession of individual and family farms; their share of the overall agricultural production was 4–10 percent.[20]

**IDENTITIES**

Do the new entrepreneurs, private farmers, and others who have benefited from the reforms currently experience a sense of collective identity? Do they have a conception of themselves as part of a larger group defined, at least in part, by their type of economic activity and position in the social structure?

Today hundreds of different entrepreneurial unions and associations operate in Russia. In December 1994, representatives of 105 entrepreneurial unions and associations gathered for the first Congress of Russian Entrepreneurs in Moscow.[21] Not surprisingly, entrepreneurs have taken a strong interest in politics and participate actively in such reform-minded parties as Yegor Gaidar's Democratic Choice of Russia—United Democrats and Yabloko, led by Grigorii Yavlinsky. Efforts to form a party consisting primarily of entrepreneurs have not met with success. The Party of Economic Freedom, led by well-known businessman Konstantin Borovoi, was established in May 1992 but failed to collect the signatures needed for a place on the ballot in the December 1993 parliamentary elections.  In addition to electoral politics, entrepreneurs have also launched lobbying efforts. A private Moscow club, Interaction, was established to promote close ties between businessmen and reformers in the government.[23]

Various groups of entrepreneurs and industrialists are cooperating to promote and protect their interests vis-à-vis the government and other groups in the population. But the label "entrepreneurs and industrialists" covers a highly diverse group of individuals in many different kinds of economic situations. For this reason, their interests may vary greatly (and may even be antagonistic), and no political consensus exists among them. Some support Western liberal democracy, others are nationalists, still others call themselves centrists and want gradual change.[24]

Apart from entrepreneurs and industrialists, other groups in the new privatized economy have begun to organize. Private farmers, for example, are still relatively small in number, but they have several organizations, such as the Association of Farms and Agricultural Cooperatives and the Union of Landowners, created in December 1994 to unite private farmers and owners of small farmsteads and dacha plots. Their aim is to facilitate private ownership of land

in Russia.[25] The formation of these and other organizations provides evidence that the "New Russians"—that is, the beneficiaries of recent transformations—have begun to establish their collective identities and articulate their interests in the public sphere.

## THE LOSERS

The gap between the richest and the poorest citizens has been growing steadily since the collapse of communism. In 1991, the top 10 percent of the population had incomes that were five or six times greater than the bottom 10 percent of the population. By early 1995, the richest 10 percent had thirty times more income than the poorest 10 percent.[26]

At the same time, Russia has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of people with incomes below the poverty line. Official government agencies and unofficial sources have used various measurements to determine the extent of impoverishment in the country. The State Committee on Statistics, Goskomstat, has intermittently established a "sustenance minimum" based on the cost of twenty-five essentiual products and services, a basic procedure followed by other government agencies as well.[27] Depending on the source, most estimates over the past two years indicate that 25–40 of the Russian population live in in poverty.[28] These figures are certainly dramatic but must be treated with caution since it is estimated that "44 percent of the money in Russia today is not declared as income for tax purposes."[29]

Who are the poor people in Russia today? According to the Presidential Council for Social Policies, headed by Ella Pamfilova, the country has three major groups that fall into this category. First, there are those who are "deprived people"—for example, drunkards, drug addicts, and the mentally ill. Another major group consists of people living on fixed incomes: families with many children, families with a single parent, and some pensioners. Finally, there are the "new poor": people employed in defense industries, textiles, or other sectors of the economy which have suffered severe unemployment.[30]

Unemployment is a new problem for Russia that has caused a great deal of consternation. Again statistics vary considerably. In

early 1995, the Minister of Labor reported that there were more than 5 million people unemployed and slightly less than 5 million working a short work week involuntarily. A total of about 10 million out of about 75 million economically active people were thus unemployed or underemployed.[31] Sources

external to Russia have put the number of unemployed at about 2 million.[32] Women and young people have been especially hard hit by the shrinking labor market.[33] On this point, see the article by Valerie Sperling in this volume.  According to a study in early 1994, "those employed in the state sector of the economy have the greatest chance of losing work," especially those in the chemical industry, machine tools, defense, coal, textiles, and nonferrous metallurgy.[34]

When we take a broad overview of these categories, one striking development is the feminization of poverty since 1991. About one-half of the single-parent families with children under the age of sixteen have incomes under the poverty line. The plight of these families, together with those containing many children, has been exacerbated by the government's curtailment of social benefits and reduction of subsidies for children's goods.[35] Among the growing number of unemployed workers in Russia, about seven out of ten are female (and in some regions as many as nine out of ten).[36]

Homelessness has greatly increased in Russia since the collapse of communism. There are many new types of homeless people and no satisfactory estimate of the total number. Some are children abandoned by their parents. In August 1995, there were 300,000 homeless children in Russia.[37] Red Army soldiers returning from West European assignments have faced formidable difficulties in securing housing, and ethnic conflicts have driven large numbers of refugees into the cities.[38] The new categories of homeless people have greatly enlarged the population of drifters, alcoholics, and other marginal types in urban areas.

Many disabled people, once protected by employment in special enterprises, have now joined the ranks of the impoverished and homeless. In early 1994, it was reported by the Russian news agency that 84 percent of Russia's disabled were below the poverty line. With the withdrawal of tax incentives for organizations and firms assisting the disabled, many have lost their jobs and their homes.[39] To date, the government has made meager efforts to cope with the problem of homelessness by providing soup kitchens, shelters, and

other forms of assistance.

In late 1995, there were about 37 million pensioners in the country, most of them living on a more or less fixed income. Their income has adjusted slowly to the situation created by rapid inflation. The government raised the minimum old-age pension toward the end of 1995, largely in anticipation of forthcoming parliamentary elections.[22] On January 1, 1996, the pension was set at 63,230 rubles per month, an increase of more than 5,000 rubles over the November 1995 level.[40] The current level of payment provides substantial benefits to pensioners, but the government is in arrears in the payment of pensions.[42] The situation facing pensioners is somewhat mitigated by part-time employment and the possession of housing. Relative to some other groups, pensioners have fared reasonably well since 1991, but their future is uncertain. A great deal will depend on their ability to sustain their claim to a share of state resources and to make their presence felt in the country's political arena.[43]

The Russian middle class has, on the whole, been adversely affected by the economic reforms. White-collar workers—people in research institutions, education, and health care—have been particularly hard hit. One very significant development is that "a person's qualifications [e.g., educational level] and his social status [and income] have become disconnected."[44] Thus a physician may make less than a cleaning woman, a trend that began under Brezhnev, when lathe operators made more than engineers and there was a general policy of wage equalization.

In general, professionals and other highly educated groups now make only about 20–40 percent of what they made under communism.[45] This has driven some people into secondary employment. A poll in early 1994 indicated that 28 percent of the population had extra earnings apart from their primary job. In a majority of cases, people are doing extra work in professions or occupations different from their primary one, and they are doing it in order to make ends meet.[46]

Many people in the middle class have experienced the transition to marketization and privatization as a personal economic disaster. In terms of consumption, most middle class families are at the level of the late 1960s or early 1970s; they consume about three-quarters of the meat, milk, and fish that middle class families consumed in 1975.[47] The political and sociological implications of these devel-

opments are still unclear, but these circumstances are already having major repercussions on political life.

Blue-collar workers, especially those in the military-industrial complex, have fared poorly during the transition. Once a high-prestige and high-paying sector of the economy, today's wages in the military-industrial complex are about one-half of those in civilian industries. Miners have also suffered greatly and have the most militant labor movement of the post-Communist era.[48]

Agricultural workers generally have not benefited from the reforms. During the Brezhnev era, their condition improved greatly as a result of a massive infusion of government subsidies which, however, failed to increase significantly either productivity or production. These have remained low in the post- Communist era—in fact, agricultural production overall has drastically declined during the past several years due to the "poor support for private farmers," shrinking government subsidies for agriculture, and lack of changes in processing, packaging, storage and transportation (20–40 percent of products are lost this way).[49] The government has never developed a program to "support the development of small and average-size entrepreneurship in production, purchase, processing, packaging and sale of farm produce."[50] The countryside is still run by the former Communist nomenklatura—about two and a half million of whom are directors of collective and state farms and officials at the central, regional, and local collective-farm levels of administration. These people are today controlling the pace and direction of privatization in agriculture.[51]

Groups at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy in Russia today also include migrant workers. Today there are an estimated 350,000–400,000 migrant workers in the country, many of them from Ukraine (earlier they were Vietnamese). In Russia's far east, there are also many Chinese. Migrant workers take a variety of jobs, some of them involving menial work (janitors, hospital orderlies) but some requiring skill (nurses, bus drivers, car mechanics, bookkeepers).[52] They generally live under very poor conditions and have low incomes.

To what extent have "the losers" taken steps to organize collectively since 1991? The most impressive organizations have arisen among workers, especially miners. Two trade union organizations have been highly active: the Russian Coal Miners' Trade Union and

the Independent Trade Union of Miners. Both have organized massive strikes over large areas.

The disabled have effectively organized on behalf of their collective interests. The Society of Disabled People, formed in Novosibirsk in 1986, gained wide support throughout the country.[53] In June 1994, the Poverty Party held its founding congress. Led by pensioners, it sought help for the poor, families with many children, the unemployed and homeless, and the disabled. But the party never developed.[54] The Agrarian Party, which is closely linked to the Communist Party, proved more successful as a spokesman for groups in the countryside resisting privatization. But in the December 1995 parliamentary election, it drew less than 4 percent of the vote and could claim only twenty seats. In fall 1993, the Women of Russia Party was hastily formed, led by women previously associated with the Committee of Soviet Women. The party, whose platform aims at protecting women's rights and supporting families, unexpectedly made a strong showing in the December 1993 parliamentary election (8.13 percent of the vote). Two years later, however, Women of Russia made a relatively poor showing (4.5 percent of the vote) and now has only three seats.[55]

The foregoing changes in Russia's economic and status hierarchy over the past five years have profoundly affected the country's political trajectory. Their impact has been especially visible in electoral politics, most notably the parliamentary elections of December 1993 and 1995. These elections provided an opportunity for collective expressions of popular sentiment, often by disgruntled citizens who have turned with growing enthusiasm to parties and leaders that endorse economic programs, welfare measures, and other policies (often of an authoritarian variety) promoted as panaceas for those disadvantaged by privatization and marketization. To understand trends in Russian politics today, few indicators are as telling as the social structural changes that have taken place and, most important, the perceptions that people have of their current situation and their future prospects in a post-Communist world.

## NOTES

1. For an excellent overview of these developments, see Gail W. Lapidus, *The New Russia: Troubled Transformation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), especially the essays by Victor Zaslavsky, "From Redistribution to Marketization: Social and Attitudinal Change in Post-Soviet Russia," pp. 115–42, and Richard E. Ericson, "The Russian Economy since Independence," pp. 37–78. The nonstate sector accounted for 62 percent of the GNP in 1994 (*OMRI Daily Digest* 1, 34 [February 17, 1995]), part 1.

2. The nomenklatura was created by Stalin in 1923. In accordance with this system, appointment to high office in the party, state, or economy was made on the basis of lists drawn up by the Politburo and Secretariat. From 1932 on, nomenklatura lists became a state secret (Ovsei Shkaratan, "The Old and the New Masters of Russia: From Power Relations to Proprietary Relations," *Sociological Research*  31, 5 [September–October 1992]: 59).

3. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

4. Leonid Khotin, "Old and New Entrepreneurs in Today's Russia," *Problems of Post-Communism* 43 (January–February 1996): 49–57.

5. Stephen Handelman, *Comrade Criminal: Russia's New Mafiya* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 153.

6. Julie Tolkacheva, "Meet the New Rich, Same as the Old Rich," *Moscow Times*, September 15, 1994; Khotin, "Old and New Entrepreneurs."

7. "Just Who Are Russia's New Millionaires," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* (hereafter, *CDPSP*) 46, 36 (October 5, 1994): 1, compiled from Olga Kryshtanovskaya, "Russia's New Millionaires—Their Sources of Wealth, Lifestyle, and Political Views," *Izvestiia*, September 7, 1994.

8. Ákos Róna-Tas, "The First Shall Be Last? Entrepreneurship and Communist Cadres in the Transition from Socialism," *American Journal of Sociology* 100 (July 1994): 45. Lev Karpinsky, editor of the newspaper *Moskovskie novosti*, stated in March 1993: "If the [former] bureaucrat continues to be pivotal to the system, we may find ourselves living under 'nomenklatura capitalism,' whose despotism will not be inferior to the planned socialist system" (quoted in Handelman, *Comrade Criminal*, p. 108).

9. "Russia's New Millionaires," p. 1; for additional evidence on this point, see I. M. Bunin "Sotsial'nyi portret melkogo i srednego predprinimatel'stva v Rossii," *Polis* 15 (1993): 149–50.

10.  Khotin, "Old and New Entrepreneurs."

11. "Crime, Corruption Pose Political, Economic Threat," *CDPSP* 46, 4 (February 23, 1994): 14.

12. "*Izvestiia* Series Surveys Crime in Russia—III," *CDPSP*, 46, 45 (December 7, 1994): 14. Data originally compiled by *Izvestiia's* Analytic Center, October 21, 1994.

13. Handelman, *Comrade Criminal*, p. 3.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

15. Ira Kovalkina and Alexei Levinson, "The Intelligentsia in Post-Soviet Times," *Moscow News*, March 11–17, 1994.

16. "Does New Elite Derive from Old Nomenklatura?," *CDPSP* 46, 20 (June 15, 1994): 8–9; compiled from Irina Savvateyeva, "The Transformation of the Old Nomenklatura into a New Russian Elite," *Izvestiia*, May 18, 1994. Thirty-seven percent of Yeltsin's inner circle rose to prominence under Brezhnev; 39 percent made their careers under Gorbachev.

17. *CDPSP* 47, 43 (22, November, 1995): 18. See Valerie Sperling's essay in this volume for further discussion of this topic.

18. Shkaratan, "Old and New Masters," p. 68, from Valerii Vyzhutovich, "Starye igry na Staroi ploshchady," *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 1 (1992): 6–7.

19. CDPSP 46, 49 (January 4, 1995): 20; Shkaratan, "Old and New Masters," p. 66.

20. *CDPSP* 46, 2 (February 9, 1994): 23.

21. *CDPSP* 46, 51 (January 18, 1995): 23.

22. Michael McFaul and Nikolai Petrov, *Previewing Russia's 1995 Parliamentary Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1995), p. 37.

23. *CDPSP* 46, 29 (August 17, 1994): 16.

24. Tolkacheva, "The New Rich." The article on the new rich asserts that 31 percent are for Western democracy, 22 percent nationalists, and 18 percent centrists.

25. *CDPSP* 46, 49 (January 4, 1995): 20. The ULR is based on the Association of Peasant (Private) Farms and Agricultural Cooperatives of Russia, which unified 90 regional and 1,200 district associations of private farmers in late 1994.

26. *CDPSP* 47, 1 (February 1, 1995): 19. For figures on the preceding year, see "Rich-Poor Income Gap Widens Dramatically," *CDPSP* 46, 3 (February 16, 1994): 13; compiled from Natalya Rimashevskaya (director of the Institute of Social and Economic Problems of the Population), *Trud,* January 18, 1994; other data from Gennady Melikyan (minister of labor), *RFE/Rl Research Report* (on-line), September 1993. Figures provided by the State Statistics Committee in early 1995 were quite a bit lower (15:1) because they do not take into account unreported (untaxed) income (*OMRI Daily Digest* 1, 5 [January 6, 1995]). The average monthly salary in Russia in July 1995 was 495,000 rubles, or about $109.

27. This discussion is based on material from Elzbieta W. Benson, "Poverty in Russia, 1991–1995" (unpublished seminar paper completed in spring 1995). As Benson points out, the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Social

Protection have established their own guidelines, also based on the cost of essential products and services but involving a different assortment. See especially pp. 4–5.

28. Benson, "Poverty in Russia," Appendix IV; *CDPSP* 47, (February 22, 1995): 20; *OMRI Daily Digest* 1, 76 (April 18, 1995), part 1.

29. "Russia's New Millionaires"; "New Elite . . . Old Nomenklatura," p. 9.

30. Benson, "Poverty in Russia," pp. 9–10.

31. *CDPSP* 47, 1 (February 1, 1995): 18. Data given by Gennady Melikyan, Minister of Labor, in *Obshchaya gazeta*, no. 1 (1995): 5.

32. This figure comes from "Pain and Votes," *The Economist*, April 29, 1995, p. 63 and World Bank, *Social Indicators of Development, 1994* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 289, as cited by Benson, "Poverty in Russia," p. 20.

33. On this point, see the article by Valerie Sperling in this volume.

34. "Report from the Center for the Study of the Economic Situation, Russian Government," *Moscow News*, January 24, 1994.

35. Benson, "Poverty in Russia," p. 18.

36. *CDPSP* 47, 43 (November 22, 1995):18.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Benson, "Poverty in Russia," pp. 10–15.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

40. By the end of July 1995, there were 258 shelters for homeless children in the entire country (*CDPSP* 47, 32 [September 6, 1995]): 24.

41. It was reported in February 1996 that the government was about 4.3 billion rubles in arrears in the payment of pensions (see *OMRI Daily Digest* 2, 37 [February 21, 1996] and *Monitor* 2, 37 [February 22, 1996]).

42. Benson, "Poverty in Russia," p. 17.

43. *CDPSP 46, 3 (February 16, 1994): 13; CDPSP*, 47, 44 (November 19, 1995): 20.

44. *Ibid.*

45. Irina Demchenko, "A Second Job as a Means of Subsistence and Self-Assertion," *Moscow News*, April 15–21, 1994.

46. "Rich-Poor Income Gap," p. 13.

47. *What about the Workers?: Workers and the Transition to Capitalism in Russia*, Simon Clarke et al., eds. (New York: Verso, 1993).

48. Dmitry Rubvalter, "Russia Again Threatened by Food Shortages," *Moscow News*, February 17–23, 1995.

49.  *Ibid.*

50.  Shkaratan, "Old and New Masters," p. 68.

51.  " 'Guest Workers' From Near and Far Flock to Russia," *CDPSP* 46, 25 (July 20, 1994): 14; compiled from Vladimir Shmyganovsky, "Gastarbeiter in Russia: They Came to Stay," *Izvestiia*, June 18, 1994.

52.  Benson, "Poverty in Russia," p. 27.

53.  *CDPSP* 46, 21 (June 22, 22 1994): 17

54.  McFaul and Petrov, eds., *Parliamentary Elections*, pp. 45–46.

# POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITION AND THE ABSENT MIDDLE CLASS IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

## Ákos Róna-Tas

### THE POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS OF 1989

The revolutions of 1989 were political revolutions. They ended a political system, the rule of the Communist party-state. It was expected that overthrowing Communist rule meant overturning forty years of history. Countries that had been under the tutelage of their Communist parties, which in turn had received their marching orders from the Soviet Union, could now take their destinies into their own hands and join the developed and democratic part of Europe. These countries faced a double task: they had to introduce both a democratic political system and an efficient economy.

Democratic institutions were quickly fashioned. Electoral rules were devised, constitutions were rewritten, the separation of powers was put into law, and soon multiparty systems emerged. The muzzled and censored press became more open and free, though to differing degrees in the different countries. Many citizen rights, such as the right to travel, to form associations, and to practice one's religion freely, were all put into place.

To replace the old economic system proved to be a bigger task. Early enthusiastic forecasts predicted that the transition from a command to a market economy would take no more than two to three years. There was a consensus among economists about the agenda. Price liberalization was necessary, so that prices could be determined by supply and demand. The state had to withdraw its tyrannical presence from the economy, dismantling needless bureaucratic hurdles and overturning countless regulations, which usually meticulously specified what was allowed instead of what was prohibited.

The economy had to abandon its fascination with polluting nineteenth-century smokestacks and had to adapt to the new post-industrial era of services, trade, and high-tech manufacturing. A new banking system had to be introduced, with financial services from business loans to credit cards. Capital markets had to be instituted, and a new tax system had to be developed. Most important of all, a private sector had to emerge and state property had to be handed over to private entrepreneurs, who would use this property much more efficiently than state bureaucrats ever could.

From the very beginning it was clear to many that the political and economic changes carried serious contradictions.[1] The economic transformation made it necessary to introduce unpopular measures. Freeing prices made them jump considerably, putting many goods outside the reach of ordinary citizens. Closing down old, bankrupt factories forced many workers into unemployment for the first time in their lives. Suddenly workers lost their sense of security, a feeling they had never appreciated before because it was so natural. The rapidly growing private sector brought previously unseen riches to a handful, creating loud resentment among the majority, who felt left behind.

Political reforms were intended to give a voice to the people. But given that voice, they called for the end of economic reforms that made them poorer, insecure, and unemployed and betrayed their sense of social justice. In many ways, democracy made the necessary economic changes more difficult to carry out. At the same time, the stagnant economy soon posed a political threat to democratic institutions. Economic decline made the population impatient with democratic procedures that were increasingly seen as ineffectual and as window dressing for the power grab of special interests. The state, with dwindling resources, was less and less able to carry out its most fundamental responsibilities: catch criminals, keep order, provide justice in the courts of law. It was also becoming less and less able and willing to provide the social benefits it used to deliver under state socialism. All these developments weakened trust in democratic institutions.

This vicious circle, where political and economic reforms are in constant conflict, can be broken by a social constituency that would support both the market and democracy, a sizable social group that is interested and committed to certain economic and political insti-

tutions, even against its own short-term interest. This social group in Western capitalist countries is often referred to as the "middle class." The peculiarity of the middle class is that it is not simply a position in society describable by socioeconomic characteristics directly translatable into some consciousness through some implied argument of rationality. The middle class is a state of mind, an identity, a set of aspirations, shared by a segment of society much larger than those in the middle.

Why the middle class is slow to emerge in Eastern Europe and why it is so inept in mediating between the contradictory goals of democratization and marketization is the topic of this paper. I argue that the social structure inherited from state socialism is undergoing polarization, where the middle ground quickly disappears as a small group of people benefit and the overwhelming majority see their position slipping not just in relative but also in absolute terms.

## THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE INHERITED FROM STATE SOCIALISM

State socialism was more than an economic and political system with institutions in need of repair. It was also a complex social system. Its central institution was universal state employment. In all socialist countries the overwhelming majority worked as employees of the state. Wages, benefits, and careers were designed centrally by state agencies. The state decided how many engineers, music teachers, lathe operators, and carpenters there should be and kept a watchful eye on how different occupational groups fared relative to one another. In general, the socialist state declared its desire to keep inequalities moderate, which did not prevent officials from indulging in a lifestyle that seemed luxurious by local standards but that barely surpassed what a better-off American engineer or academic would take for granted.

Initially socialist ideology emphasized collective consumption and sought to tilt the balance of remuneration of workers from salaries and wages to social benefits. Subsidized staples, child care, company cafeterias, transportation, housing, low-cost energy, free health care, and education were all provided as income supplements, along with cash benefits for families with children. The relatively low

wages in state socialism provided a reasonable standard of living because they were complemented by these nonwage benefits. Citizens were entitled to most of these benefits as state employees and to some as citizens, but since most citizens were employed by the state, the difference mattered little.

These benefits did not necessarily equalize existing differences. For instance, subsidized energy prices proved more helpful to those who had larger houses with more appliances and thus needed more heat, gas, and electricity. Free tertiary education was a bonus only to those parents who sent their children to college, parents who tended to be better educated and thus better paid themselves. Yet this system, targeting basic needs, did not sustain large economic inequalities.*

During the transition many of these benefits have shrunk or disappeared. With the growth of the private sector, fewer and fewer people remain employed by the state. Some benefits that were distributed at the workplace, such as child care or special housing loans, have disappeared as new private owners, conscious about trimming production costs, take over state companies. Even those who stay with state companies have seen their benefits curtailed. The state has also cut many benefits to the population to decrease its own role in the economy and to balance its books. Low wages now are insufficient to maintain, let alone improve, one's living standards. As subsidies vanish and prices grow, real wages plummet and a larger share of the shrinking family budget goes to health, education, and basic necessities (see Table 1). Even though the fall of real wages has stopped recently in a few countries, in the entire region, people work longer hours to purchase the same goods they had been used to purchasing for years (see Tables 2 and 3).

To make up for vanishing benefits, people increasingly turn to the underground economy. States look at their underground economies with ambivalence. On the one hand, illegal transactions deprive states from much needed tax revenues and undermine the legal authority of the government and its ability to measure and steer the economy. On the other, this economy gives many the buffer they need against poverty, thereby alleviating political pressure. The actual deterioration of economic well-being is probably exaggerated

*Inequalities of power, however, were considerable.

Table 1

**Changes in Relative Prices of Health Care, Rent and Water Charges, and Fuel and Power in Selected Countries, 1992**

*(1989 = 100)*

| Country | Health Care | Rent and Water | Fuel and Power |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bulgaria | 132.5 | 99.7 | 54.0 |
| Czech Republic | 125.3 | 124.5 | 117.8 |
| Slovakia | 134.6 | 101.2 | 165.2 |
| Hungary | 104.5 | 145.9 | 154.5 |
| Poland | 169.0 | 176.5 | 413.9 |

*Source:* *Central and Eastern Europe in Transition: Public Policy and Social Conditions* (Florence: UNICEF, November 1993), p. 80; Regional Monitoring Report No. 1.

Table 2

**Changes in Real Wages in Selected Countries, 1990–92**

*(1989 = 100)*

| Country | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bulgaria | 106.4 | 64.4 | 74.6 |
| Czech Republic | 94.2 | 70.1 | 77.7 |
| Slovakia | 94.1 | 70.3 | 76.1 |
| Hungary | 94.3 | 87.7 | 85.9 |
| Poland | 75.6 | 75.4 | 73.3 |
| Romania | 105.1 | 90.2 | 82.5 |

*Source:* *Central and Eastern Europe in Transition: Public Policy and Social Conditions* (Florence: UNICEF, November 1993), p. 78; Regional Monitoring Report No. 1.

Table 3

**Changes in Real Wages in Selected Countries, 1993–95**

*(Corresponding period of previous year = 100)*

| Country | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 (First quarter) |
|---------|------|------|----------------------|
| Czech Republic | 103.7 | 106.5 | 106.5 |
| Hungary | 96.1 | 107.0 | 92.4 |
| Poland | 98.7 | 102.5 | 100.0 |
| Slovakia | 96.4 | 103.0 | 102.8 |

*Source: Statistical Bulletin 1995/1* (Budapest: KSH, 1995): p. 19.

by official statistics because they do not take into consideration the transactions conducted in this untaxed, unregulated, and unmeasured black market.* Nevertheless, there is little doubt that an increasing proportion of the population is sliding into poverty.

## VICTIMS OF THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

Who are the victims of the transition? The biggest losers are the elderly, who must live on fixed pensions eroded by runaway inflation, unless they can find some additional work, usually off the books. Their situation is especially dire if they retired a long time ago and inflation has had more time to devour the value of their pensions. Those who live in cities have the added disadvantage of

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*Statistical systems have been in turmoil since 1989. Time series data should be taken with special caution because data-gathering practices have often failed to adjust to new circumstances (e.g., statistical offices accustomed to dealing with large state companies find obtaining data from small private companies very difficult; thus income and labor data are unreliable), or if they have adjusted, comparisons with earlier years are difficult to make (e.g., changes in accounting practices have redefined the meaning of many economic figures). Thus it is not always apparent if the changes one sees in official statistics are due to the transition, changes in data quality, or changes in measurement procedures.

not being able to fall back on a kitchen garden and thus must buy all their food. If they rent their house or apartment, which is rarely the case in the countryside, they are also faced with a quickly rising rent.

Unskilled workers, who are the first to lose their jobs and stay unemployed the longest, are also among the principal losers. Under socialism, labor was cheap and companies would hire as many workers as they could. Wage regulations establishing the average wage for a company made managers interested in employing "fillers"—i.e., ill-paid, mostly unskilled workers—whose most important contribution was that their below average wage allowed managers to pay good workers better and still maintain the prescribed average. A larger work force also gave companies greater political clout in negotiating with the state for resources. These workers were usually underutilized, "underemployed," or "unemployed within the factory gates." With wage regulations gone and the state no longer the distributor of resources, there has been little to be gained in keeping these workers on the payroll and they have been the first to be dismissed. Not having the skills to qualify for other jobs, they are condemned to stay unemployed for a long time, especially if they are over a certain age. For the unemployed living in the countryside this means that they must find work in a very limited job market that depends on the fortunes of a few companies.*

Another group overrepresented among the poor is large families raising many children. The cost of raising children has been rising quickly as special subsidies for children's clothing and child care vanish. In most countries, governments try to help poor families with many children by giving targeted assistance. Introducing means-testing, however, often excludes the most destitute—those who are unable to cooperate in the bureaucratic procedures establishing and monitoring needs. Means-testing, in the long run, may also contribute to the stigmatization of the poor.

In many countries, gypsies accumulate a number of these disadvantages. Often unskilled, unemployed, living in large families in the countryside, and encountering racial prejudice, they constitute one of the most destitute social groups in Eastern Europe. According

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*The exception is the Czech Republic, where wage regulations survived until the summer of 1995. Unemployment has been correspondingly low, not reaching 4 percent, while in the other countries of Eastern Europe it was in the double digits.

to one Hungarian survey in 1993, 9.8 percent of all Hungarians had income less than half of the average income, compared to 61 percent of the gypsies.[2]

With the end of subsidized housing, homelessness has become a visible problem in large cities. Among the homeless, one finds not only alcoholics and the mentally ill, but also young people unable to afford their first home and people who have lost their residence in a divorce.

There is a large segment of society that is not yet in poverty but which has experienced an enormous loss of status and economic security. Those who work in the nonprofit sector, still dependent on state funding, such as doctors, teachers, scientists, and administrators, are hit severely by the dwindling of state resources in two ways. The state, short on revenues, is unable to pay high salaries, and salaries are decreasing in real value. Moreover, to increase its revenues, the state tries to collect more taxes, including more taxes on income. Unlike those who work in the private sector, state employees cannot avoid income taxes—at least not on the income they get from the state; thus they are among those who must shoulder an increasing tax burden. The state, desperate to increase revenues, ends up cutting its costs instead; by increasing taxes on its employees, it in fact further reduces their salaries. As a result, a large, well-educated group in society is becoming disenchanted with the transition and is growing increasingly hostile to it.

What often partially mitigates these losses is the family. The family, or the household, pools resources and devises strategies by which the loss of one family member is offset by gains from others. If the wife is a school teacher making two-thirds of what she used to earn six years ago in real terms, the husband may start a small enterprise. The family thus combines the relative security of the wife's job with the better pay of the husband's business. These mixed strategies can moderate the actual decline in consumption.

## WINNERS OF THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

If there are many victims of the transition, there are some winners as well. Indeed a minority is taking advantage of the economic

opportunities that have resulted. It is very difficult to find systematic information about the wealth of the new economic elite because the new elite is reluctant to provide such information. The only systematic list compiled about an economic elite on the basis of ownership (rather than control) of property is published annually in Poland. The list reveals that the one hundred richest people in Poland owned businesses with a turnover of $6 billion in 1994. The average age of a Polish millionaire is 44.8 years; the youngest is 30. There is only one woman on the list and two couples. The group is fairly stable: eighty people appeared on the roster the previous year. Most began their private enterprises before 1989, taking advantage of economic liberalization under the last Communist governments. They hold diverse portfolios that typically include companies engaged in financial services, trade, food processing, and manufacturing of electronics, construction materials, and clothing. Very few of these empires are limited to the Polish market; most of them are involved in businesses in other ex-socialist countries.[3]

We know more about the heads of large companies, a group overlapping with but not identical to the largest owners. Comparative data from various countries show the same general picture. In all countries, those who manage large companies for themselves or others are well-educated, middle-aged men who usually held first or second rank positions in state companies before 1989. They typically joined the Communist Party less out of ideological conviction and more to boost their careers. With tertiary degrees in engineering and economics, they have been able to take advantage of privatization and have been in high demand among foreign firms looking for local management to staff their new ventures. In starting their own companies, they have been able to make use of the wide professional, business, and political networks that they built under state socialism.[4]

A portion of the old Communist political elite was also able to parlay political influence into economic power. This often happened in a corrupt manner ranging from simple theft to manipulation of rules to the use of insider information in business transactions. But this conversion was often completed quite delicately. Many ex-Communist officials did nothing that would be considered illegal or even inappropriate in Western democracies: they took advantage of knowledge, skills, and connections in a perfectly legal and accept-

able manner. Under socialism, however, these assets could be acquired only by high Communist officials. For instance, one could not build professional connections with the West unless one was deemed thoroughly reliable politically. Now it is not political reliability that makes ex-cadres successful, but assets such as international connections, through which political assets have already been "laundered."

The new economic elite of Eastern Europe is often intertwined with the criminal underworld. With the weakening of the state, central authorities are less and less able to stem the tide of criminal activities. As a result, illegal business activities proliferate. Legal businesses find it harder and harder to rely on the state to enforce contracts or guarantee physical safety in countries where the court system is slow and sometimes corrupt and where banking is so rudimentary that enormous business transactions are conducted in cash carried in briefcases. Businessmen thus frequently take the law into their own hands, often hiring ex-policemen as private guards and enforcers. In many cases this "privatization of law and order" makes violence, or the threat of violence, an inevitable part of doing business.

Members of the new elite live in large, well-protected mansions, drive expensive Western cars, tote cellular phones, sport Rolex watches, and don Armani and Gucci suits of the latest design. In all respects they try to emulate the upper and upper-middle classes of more affluent countries. They spend their vacations in the Caribbean, Africa, and the Far East. They enroll their children in either expensive domestic private high schools, where tuition can be as much as $10,000 per year, or in schools in the United States and Western Europe. They can afford to isolate themselves, constructing a world that has little contact with the rest of society.

## GROWING INEQUALITIES

There is a widening gap between the quickly rising upper crust and the majority that is slowly sliding downwards or experiencing no improvement in its living standards. Economic inequalities are growing (Table 4). In the four countries where data are available, the poorest two-fifths had a smaller share of a shrinking pie in 1992 than

Table 4

**Changes in Inequalities of per Capita Household Income in Selected Countries: Share of Total Earnings Going to Quintiles and Gini-Coefficient**

| Quintile | Czech Republic | | Hungary | | Poland | | Slovakia | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1988 | 1992 | 1989 | 1992 | 1989 | 1992 | 1988 | 1992 |
| Poorest fifth | 12.0 | 11.4 | 10.9 | 10.0 | 9.1 | 8.9 | 11.9 | 11.7 |
| Second | 15.6 | 15.3 | 14.8 | 14.0 | 13.9 | 13.7 | 15.7 | 15.6 |
| Third | 18.4 | 17.9 | 17.8 | 17.2 | 18.0 | 17.8 | 18.6 | 18.9 |
| Fourth | 22.3 | 21.5 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 22.9 | 23.1 | 22.4 | 22.4 |
| Richest fifth | 31.8 | 33.9 | 34.5 | 36.8 | 36.2 | 36.4 | 31.5 | 31.5 |
| Gini-coefficient[a] | .20 | .22 | .23 | .27 | .27 | .28 | .19 | .20 |

*Source:* Jiří Večernik, "Incomes in Central Europe."

   [a]The greater the coefficient, the greater the inequality in incomes.

they had a few years earlier. The summary measure of per capita household income inequalities, the Gini-coefficient, rose in all countries. Having started, however, from relative equality, the gap between rich and poor in Eastern Europe is still not large even when compared to more developed West European countries.[5] While one can speculate about the effect of unmeasured incomes on measures of inequality, no reasonable adjustment of these figures would yield a picture of unusual social differences. Yet these inequalities are experienced as excessive.

Dissatisfaction with large income differences has increased rapidly since 1989, and as early as 1991, 73 percent of Czechs and Slovaks, 76 percent of Poles, and 91 percent of Hungarians believed that income inequalities were too large. Except for the Hungarian figure, these percentages are comparable to those in developed capitalist countries at the time (67 percent in the United States, 76 percent in [West] Germany, and 79 percent in Great Britain).[6] In a 1992 survey, 77.9 percent of Hungarians agreed that it was the state's duty to decrease income differences between rich and poor, 72.1 percent thought that the state should investigate each case of individual enrichment (!), and half opined that for the most part the rich are not

different from thieves and cheaters except that they are able to get away with it.[7] A similar, growing intolerance of inequalities is documented in Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic.[8]

This impatience with widening social differences has several sources. Undoubtedly forty years of egalitarian indoctrination has made a lasting impact on people's psyches. Yet this is only one contributing factor. One belief, deeply held by a large segment of society, has always dovetailed with Marxist doctrines on productive and unproductive labor. According to this view, only manual labor, or labor that creates material objects, constitutes real work. Pursuits that result in no material product, such as work in commerce, are suspicious and deserve less reward than real labor. Indeed it is often difficult to explain why someone can earn millions in a few days by buying and selling, while others working hard will never earn that much in a lifetime. The usual explanation that elites provide is that not effort, but economic efficiency is rewarded there and efficiency is the ultimate public good as it eventually benefits everyone. This, however, is not an argument for inequalities because it does not claim that inequalities are natural or good, but only that it is the price society has to pay for future prosperity. Thus the power of this argument depends on future benefits that many people do not see coming.

Legitimating large incomes is even more difficult when the distinction between the private and the public loses its clarity. Under state socialism, the boundary between private and public was clearly drawn, if not always adhered to. The private was a narrow realm directly tied to particular individuals or their families. Everything else was public and belonged to the competence of the state. Every organization and association bore the stamp of the authorities. This ironclad distinction nurtured the fiction that corporate actors, unlike individuals, at least in principle, were always guided by some understanding of the collective good and not their own self-interest. If a new factory was built, it was explained that the national economy—i.e., everyone—needed such a factory. It was never argued that the factory was erected because it was expected to make a profit for some particular individuals. The riches of soccer players or pop stars are easier to accept because these individuals earn money "themselves." Individuals who use corporations to get rich are suspicious.

These suspicions are not founded solely on outdated notions of private and public. Private limited liability companies made it pos-

sible for many not just to avoid taxes by writing off personal expenses as business costs, but they also allowed some private entrepreneurs to get rich by cleverly moving money among several companies. For instance, one company would borrow money, then it would use it as payment for some overvalued product or service to another company owned by the same person. The first company would go bankrupt without ever returning the loan. The second would prosper, making its owner rich.

Privatization has created all sorts of dilemmas. If the socialist state had not been the lawful owner of factories, houses, telephone lines, and the rest, why does it have the right to sell them or even decide who will get them? And who deserves to get state property? Those who owned it before the state took it from them? Those who worked in them, maintained them, and improved them? Those who will pay the most for them? Those who will put them to best use? Indeed privatization in all countries is giving rise to many scandals in which state bureaucrats opportunistically exploit the many ambiguities of privatization. Few people will accept others' wealth if the property rights from which this wealth emerged are under dispute.

Moreover, inequalities have different social-psychological consequences whenever the majority experiences loss. Losing security and losing certain entitlements make the transition especially anxiety-ridden for most and violate people's sense of justice.[9] Losing something one already had seems unfair because past possession creates a sense of entitlement.

What makes this anxiety even less bearable is that the losses and gains are calculated in comparison to standards of the developed West. A deluge of pictures of Western affluence is flooding every home through television. Sensing new business opportunities, multinational corporations use state-of-the-art advertisement to peddle their products in the region by conjuring up images of a Western consumer paradise. Increased personal contacts across the East-West divide also reinforce many of these images. As a result, even those whose economic situation has improved and who stand on the upper level of the economic hierarchy of their societies perceive their own position as inferior.

### THE MISSING MIDDLE CLASS

All societies have a middle segment, but for a society to have a middle class, it must have a large social group in the middle whose members feel their lives are improving. The essence of the middle class is the promise of upward mobility; thus the existence of an upwardly mobile middle segment is its necessary condition. As noted, being a member of the middle class is not just a social position; it is an identity.

In democracies the middle class is the nation proper. The typical member of a national community is a member of the middle class. When democratic governments need a social group they can address, a universal class that carries the overarching, common interest of the country, they appeal to the middle class. This appeal, while it calls on a common interest, also acknowledges that there are conflicting interests within society. The middle class is not everyone, but it is the majority and it represents what everyone else can become.

In reality, the middle class is always a potpourri of social groups. It includes employees and employers, entrepreneurs and intellectuals, and various ethnic and religious groups. The need for the middle class label arises precisely from the diversity of interests that this label can unify and cover up, while still excluding the undeserving. The middle class is always ill defined, with uncertain conceptual boundaries serving this unifying function.

The middle class could not develop as a strong identity in East-Central Europe. Before Communist rule, a large part of the Romanian middle class was of foreign ethnic origin—Germans, Jews, or Hungarians. Bulgaria had no strong middle stratum. In Poland, just as in Hungary, the middle stratum was recruited from the large lesser nobility, as well as from ethnic Germans and Jews. The nonethnic members of the middle class in all countries were often employed by the state in some bureaucratic function. Czechoslovakia had the strongest middle class, although an important part of it was of German origin.

All over Eastern Europe these middle classes suffered enormously during and after World War II. The massacre of the Jews, the Polish resistance, and the postwar expulsion of ethnic Germans decimated the ranks of these middle layers. The newly formed Commu-

nist states declared war on the bourgeoisie. This included not only the *haute bourgeoisie*, but also anyone who had not belonged to the working class or the poor peasantry and was a notch higher in the social hierarchy. The middle class was not a category accepted by Communist regimes because it implied a lower and an upper class in a presumably classless and egalitarian society.

Today in East-Central Europe the principal rival of middle class identity is ethnic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism can serve the same unifying function as the concept of the middle class, as it can bring various groups under the umbrella of a shared identity. In an era when people feel they are losing entitlements, the security of an ascribed identity can be very comforting. By standards of ethnic nationalism one belongs to an ethnicity by birth; one cannot make efforts to become a Croat, a Hungarian, or a Romanian the same way one can aspire to become middle class. Therefore, one cannot lose one's ethnicity either. If entitlements are linked to ethnicity, those also seem secure. It is no wonder that ethnic nationalism has been on the rise in the region since the collapse of communism. While the appeal of ethnic nationalism is obvious, its enormous dangers are equally clear.

With the possible exception of the Czech Republic, middle class identity remains weak in East-Central Europe, and the real and perceived downward slide of the middle segment does not bode wellfor its development or for the future of the entire region. Without a supporting social structure the liberal ideals of the 1989 revolutions can easily collapse into the morass of ethnic politics.

## NOTES

1. For early statements of these contradictions, see Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), and Ellen Comisso, "Property Rights, Liberalism and the Transition from 'Actually Existing Socialism,'" *East European Politics and Societies* 5 (1991): 162–88.

2. See Rudolf Andorka and Zsolt Spéder, "Szegénység a 90-es évek elején," in *Társadalmi Riport 1994*, ed. Rudolf Andorka, Tamás Kolosi, and György Vukovich (Budapest: TARKI, 1994), pp. 74–106. Finding statistics broken down by racial or ethnic groups is almost impossible in Eastern Europe.

3. *Heti Világgazdaság,* July 15, 1995.

4. See Ákos Róna-Tas, "The First Shall Be Last? Entrepreneurship and Communist Cadres in the Transition from Socialism," *American Journal of Sociology* 100 (1994):40–69 and József Böröcz and Ákos Róna-Tas, "Small Leap Forward: Emergence of New Economic Elites," *Theory and Society* 24 (1995): 751–81.

5. In 1985 the comparable Gini-coefficient for the United Kingdom was .30. See Anthony B. Atkinson and John Micklewright, *Economic Transformation in Eastern Europe and the Distribution of Income* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 137.

6. Jiří Večernik, "Incomes in Central Europe: Distributions, Patterns and Perceptions," *European Journal of Social Policy*—forthcoming.

7. Péter Róbert, "Engyelötlenségtudat," in *Társadalmi Riport 1994*, pp. 311–33.

8. Večernik, "Incomes in Central Europe."

9. See Zygmunt Bauman, *Memories of Class: The Pre-History and the After-Life of Class* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), and Barrington Moore, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (White Plains, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1978).

# "DEMOCRACY WITHOUT WOMEN IS NOT DEMOCRACY:" THE STRUGGLE OVER WOMEN'S STATUS AND IDENTITY DURING RUSSIA'S TRANSITION

## Valerie Sperling

The transition period in Russia, starting in the late 1980s and continuing up through the present day, has been accompanied by significant changes in women's political, economic, and social status. Whereas much research and media attention during the transition period has focused on privatization and the development of a pluralistic political system, both of these realms tend to be populated by a predominantly male cast of characters, and as a result, the effects of the transition period on women remain largely hidden from view.

In this paper I will describe in brief the circumstances for women in Russia as of 1995, exploring women's economic, political, and sociocultural status—in particular, the extent of discrimination against women in Russian society. I will also provide an overview of women's organizing and the ways in which women have chosen to respond to their newly inherited and in many cases wholly unexpected situation. The economic and political upheavals in Russia have motivated some women to view their personal struggles as women's issues and to join with other women to analyze, ameliorate, and protest their status. The shift in these women's identity vis-à-vis the society and the state lays the groundwork for future organizing and potential change in women's status.[1]

## ECONOMIC STATUS

For several years, Russia has been undergoing a transition from a centrally planned economy to a more market-oriented economic system. Evaluating this process from a normative standpoint lies beyond the scope of this paper. However, from a woman's perspective, the process of transition to the Russian version of a market (labeled by one woman activist as "cave capitalism") has been accompanied by several disruptive and negative trends. The first of these trends is an increase in unemployment. According to International Labor Organization methodology, the unemployment rate in Russia stood at 7.7 percent in June 1995. The Russian Labor Ministry, however, argues that if both open and "hidden" unemployment are taken into account, the unemployment rate is closer to 10-12 percent of the working-age population.[2]

Under the Soviet regime, the specter of unemployment was essentially unknown; the Soviet constitution declared a "right to work" and enforced this right, with severe penalties for those who found themselves jobless. Now unemployment has become a household word, particularly for women, who make up the vast majority of Russia's registered unemployed. In popular magazines such as *Rabotnitsa* (Woman worker), by 1993 unemployment was said to have a "female face." As of January 1994, Federal Employment Service figures showed that 68 percent of the unemployed were women. However, the percentage of women among the unemployed varies by region, from 42 percent to 82 percent.[3] Women made up 78.2 percent of the unemployed with a higher education in 1993.[4]

The current growth of unemployment is shocking for women in Russia, who under Soviet rule had maintained an extremely high labor force participation rate—around 90 percent. The new trend toward pushing women out of the labor force is particularly hard for single mothers, who head 13 percent of Russian families; their salary is the sole source of family income. Women over thirty-five with young children are increasingly hard-pressed to find work. Not only have on-the-job and hiring discrimination increased, but also the social welfare infrastructure undergirding mothers' employment has been severely cut. In a society where fathers rarely take a large role in child care, women especially are left stunned by the rapid decline

in availability of child care and other benefits, such as children's camps, all of which melted away with the collapse of the Communist social welfare system. By 1994, as more and more single parent families slipped below the poverty line, government officials began to refer to the feminization of poverty.

There are two fundamental reasons for the disproportionately high numbers of women among the unemployed. First, one can point to a well-entrenched system of vertical and horizontal occupational segregation by sex. Russian women predominate in certain industrial branches, including some of those hardest hit by the changes in the economic system and the collapse of the USSR, such as light industry, especially textiles. In Ivanovo, a center of the textile industry formerly known as the "city of brides" for its disproportionately female population, many of the textile factories stand still for months at a time for lack of Central Asian cotton. No longer automatically provided to the factories by state orders, cotton must now be purchased at world market prices and appears only sporadically. This has decimated employment opportunities in the region, with an adverse impact on family living standards. Olga Khasbulatova of the Center for Social Support of Women and Families explained in an interview that "for Ivanovskaia oblast', the textile industry is a great problem: it's our historical misfortune that we developed as a textile region. Without the factories, there's no work, no way for the family to survive."[5]

A second reason for women's unemployment has deeper roots in Russia but has been exacerbated by the privatization process. Now responsible for the profitability of their enterprises, employers prefer not to hire women knowing that women hold full responsibility for taking care of the family, including frequently sick children and aging parents. Also, women are the beneficiaries of maternity leave and other associated benefits. These facts and policies encourage the commonly held assumption among employers that women constitute a less desirable and productive workforce since their family responsibilities encroach on their work time. Thus women face the double-edged sword of the "double burden"—they are fully expected to take care of the family yet discriminated against at work for this very reason.

Economic discrimination against women in Russia is hardly new, but it seems to be on the rise. For decades, women have tended

to work in branches of industry with low pay and low prestige. In August 1994, the wages in industrial branches with predominantly male labor forces ranged from 190 to 361 percent of the average salary, while those in "women's" branches ranged from 49 to 127 percent of the average.[6] Despite an overall higher level of education than men, working women are clustered in lower skill categories. Women rarely attain the level of managers or industrial directors. And if in 1989 women's average pay was 70 percent of men's, then by 1994 it was a mere 40 percent.[7]

A second important trend affecting women adversely is a tremendous drop in the provision of public child care. This is one result concomitant to the process of structural readjustment, which entails a separation of the social welfare sphere from the industrial enterprise. Factories are shutting down childcare centers at unprecedented rates: in 1993, 5,000 child care centers were closed, while others were privatized, placing them out of financial reach for many families.[8] The effect of this combination has been to push women back to the home. As Khasbulatova explains:

> For women in the near future, taking care of children is going to be a major problem because they can't count on the state-sponsored children's care centers, which are closing down. Now, when in the West you're moving toward some expansion in this area, we're already shutting them down, turning backward. And also, it'll happen that we'll lose our option to choose: women will have to sit at home with the children.[9]

This trend toward moving women out of the labor sphere received official sanction as early as 1987, when Mikhail Gorbachev, in his book, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, sent a mixed message about women's proper role in society.[10] On the one hand, Gorbachev called for concerted efforts to promote women to leadership positions in politics and economics. On the other, he wrote of the need to establish conditions that would facilitate returning Soviet women to their "purely womanly mission"—in other words, the private sphere of household and family.

It should be said that women, along with men, now have opportunities to open small businesses and to enter the private sector. However, without enjoying the advantages of industrial directors, who were able to privatize their enterprises when the new economic

rules came into play, women have had a harder time than men getting bank loans and credit and have few role models in the business sphere. Furthermore, the private sector offers a limited range of jobs for women. These are frequently secretarial jobs for young women with foreign language or computer skills.

## POLITICAL STATUS

Until perestroika, the USSR Supreme Soviet—the rubber-stamp legislature—maintained a women's quota of 33 percent. Real decision-making power, however, was located within the Central Committee of the Communist Party, of which less than 5 percent were women. Most of the female deputies were "mass representatives," including several prototypical "milkmaid heroines of socialist labor"—in other words, token women who overfulfilled the economic plan and were present for essentially decorative purposes.

Perestroika, or "restructuring," Mikhail Gorbachev's most famous brainchild, included changes in the political system, as well as in the economy. The foremost of these changes was the elimination of the monopoly of the Communist Party's power and the introduction of increasingly free elections. In 1989, semi-free elections to the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies were held, with a significant number of seats reserved for the Communist Party, trade unions, and other official organizations. These included the Soviet Women's Committee (SWC), at the time a puppet organization under the aegis of the party. Women won 15.7 percent of the seats. In 1990, when quotas for seats were lifted, the proportion of female deputies elected to the Russian Federation Congress of People's Deputies was only 5.4 percent, down from 35.3 percent in the pre-reform era.

In December 1993, free elections were held in Russia, and women won 5 percent of the seats in the legislature's upper house, the Federation Council, and 13 percent of the lower house, the Duma. Approximately half of those lower house seats were won by a women's bloc, Women of Russia (WOR), which organized very quickly in the two months preceding the elections on the basis of a nationwide network of women's councils subordinated to the former SWC. The rest of the women's seats were won from a few other

parties and single-mandate districts. In the elections of December 1995, WOR failed to clear the 5 percent barrier. The number of women in the Duma now stands at forty-six, about 10 percent. Only three WOR members won single-mandate district seats in the new Duma. At present, there is only one woman on the Council of Ministers, Liudmila Beslepkina, minister of social welfare. In the political sphere, the Russian adage rings true: "Where there's power, there are no women, and where there are women, there's no power." There are few women in the Federation Council, and none of the administrative heads of Russia's territories or mayors of Russia's major cities are women.[11]

Despite the long-standing quota system, or perhaps because of it, there is a widespread feeling among Russians that women's place is in the home, not in politics. This is substantiated by both national public opinion polls and anecdotal evidence. According to a poll by the Public Opinion Foundation, 65 percent of men and 35 percent of women said that they would not support women's candidacies to legislative bodies under any circumstances.[12] Another survey, from 1992, found that 60 percent of those polled believe that women with children should not work outside the home.[13] On the anecdotal level, one woman who works with a political advocacy organization called the Women's League told me that she had received threatening phone calls from a man who warned her, "The kind of women who want women to be in power end up dead."[14]

## SOCIOCULTURAL STATUS

Such sentiments, though extreme, reflect a more common societal disposition ill at ease with the notion of politically and/or economically powerful women. Social attitudes toward women and women's roles in Russia are frequently essentialist in nature and often openly sexist. Discrimination against women on the basis of sex forms the background to Russian women's sociocultural status.

In comparison with the United States, where discrimination against women is certainly present, discrimination in Russia seems more blatant. In the United States, for example, most publicly elected and appointed officials now believe that it is politically unwise to

express sexist sentiments in public. Not so in Russia. In 1993, Labor Minister Gennadii Melikian was quoted as saying, "There is no point in creating jobs for women when there aren't enough jobs for men."[15] If we recall that this statement was made against the background of women's unemployment described above, the minister's remark seems particularly insensitive. The subtext of his argument is the widespread notion that women should be at home raising the children, rather than working outside the home for a salary. These role stereotypes persist despite the fact that under current economic conditions most families require two salaries in order to meet the minimum living standards.

Other examples serve to illustrate social discrimination and sex-role stereotyping in Russian society. In 1994, a two-volume encyclopedia was published, one volume called *Encyclopedia for Boys*, the other, *Encyclopedia for Girls*. Aside from chapters on health and beauty, the girls' volume was exclusively concerned with domestic labor, from taking spots out of clothes to special ways to prevent bread from spoiling. The boys' volume, in sharp contrast, contained chapters ranging from apartment repairs ("your home is your fortress") to hand-combat skills to starting one's own business.[16] These encyclopedias were given out in one of my interviewees' daughter's first-grade class and are widely available in local bookstores. The girls' proper sphere is clearly delineated, beginning and ending within the home, whereas the boys' sphere extends throughout the socioeconomic arena. This of course stands in sharp contrast to the Soviet regime's official rhetoric, which proclaimed Soviet women as equal to men in all ways, with similar responsibilities and identical opportunities in the labor sphere.*

It should be noted that according to the current Russian constitution, there is no discrimination against women. Naturally, under the Soviet Constitution of 1977, women and men were said to have equal rights. After the USSR's collapse at the end of 1991, a new Russian constitution was composed, the first draft of which failed to

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*Even under Soviet rule, of course, there existed a list of professions forbidden to women. These included night work, work underground, and a variety of jobs deemed too dangerous to women's reproductive capacity and health. Despite these regulations, however, women were, and continue to be, disproportionately employed in heavy manual labor and in difficult and dangerous occupations.

include a clause about equal rights. After lobbying by women's groups and actions taken on the part of WOR, the new Russian constitution proclaimed, "Men and women have equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities to realize them" (Article 19). The lack of legal culture in Russia makes the article, though a very progressive formulation, essentially meaningless. Given the weakness of the legal system and the lack of a mechanism to enforce antidiscrimination legislation, the declaration of equal rights and opportunities for both sexes remains in effect only on paper.

Job advertisements, for instance, openly exhibit discrimination on the basis of both sex and age, inviting applications exclusively from men in some cases. According to feminist journalist Nadia Azhgikhina, classified advertisements seeking male applicants to fill positions as accountants and lawyers in new private businesses are commonplace.[17] "For hire" advertisements in Russian papers sometimes read more like personal advertisements than want ads: it is not unheard of to encounter an advertisement that states, "Seeking attractive woman, with European features, under 35, and without hang-ups." The latter phrase is even abbreviated as "b/k" (*bez kompleksov*) and signifies either sex work or that the woman in question should be willing to put up with advances by bosses, clients, etc. —an institutionalized form of sexual harassment.

The proliferation of beauty contests, such as "Miss Bust," and pornography in a country where for decades laws forbade the propagandizement of the cult of violence and pornography are seen by some women as downright oppressive and by others as simply a phase, during which the forbidden fruit of pornography has become a commonplace presence in both the public and private realm. Pornographic materials are sold in underground street crossings (*perekhody*), dubbed "*porno-khody*," and naked-woman wallet calendars are a staple in many taxicabs. One of the most incompatible sights in the new Russia, particularly in Moscow, is the presence of elderly women who stand on busy sidewalks doing a brisk business in the sale of plastic shopping bags, nearly all of which sport a partially naked, voluptuous woman and a variety of Western corporate symbols. The transformation of women's bodies into "objects of consumption" extends to television and printed advertisements, where women appear in traditionally feminine poses and seem to exist in order to serve men and please the male eye.[18] While I would not

argue that these pornographic and consumerist images of women create an obligatory new identity for women in Russia, I would suggest that the proliferation of these images does have an effect on women and on women's self-image, not to mention on the ideas and stereotypes that men and women develop about women's capacities and proper social roles.

Numerous Russian stereotypes about women, including very sexist expressions, continue to have currency today. Among these is the oft-cited, "A chicken isn't really a bird, and a woman isn't really a person." Another example of how women and men are viewed and valued very differently is that in November 1994, Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov handed out presents to particularly impressive municipal employees, personal computers for the men, irons for the women.[19] Particularly vivid is this example, shared with me by Olga Voronina, a feminist researcher:

> When I gave birth to my daughter and checked out of the maternity hospital [*roddom*], I was asked, when I left, if I'd prepared gifts for the doctor and for the nanny who brings you the child on your way out. You were supposed to *pay* for your child—and to pay *more* if it was a boy, around five rubles, than if it was a girl; I think that was about three rubles.[20]

The devaluation of girls in Russia begins at an early age.

## WOMEN'S ORGANIZING EFFORTS

Having presented the admittedly negative side of the picture of women's status, I will now turn to women's organizing, to explore the ways in which women are trying to fight discrimination and realize themselves as full-fledged members of Russian society. Through organizing, women are able to either assert, reassert, or compose an identity that may reflect traditional patriarchal stereotypes about women's roles in Russian society or oppose them.

If perestroika restructured the economy and politics in a way that had rather a negative effect on women, then glasnost, the policy Gorbachev introduced which brought free speech and the freedom to organize, finally made it possible for women to talk out loud about some of the manifestations of discrimination in Russian/Soviet so-

ciety. Beginning in the early 1990s, a large number of women's groups sprang up, forming a nascent women's movement.

Before a detailed discussion of these groups, a short side trip into the history of the women's movement in Soviet Russia is in order. After the February Revolution of 1917, the Provisional Government granted women the right to vote. Under Bolshevik rule, in 1919 a women's department was established (Zhenotdel) under the Central Committee Secretariat, with the goal of increasing women's political activity and support for the Communist regime and promoting the establishment of child care and public-catering institutions. Representatives of the Zhenotdel sought to inform women of their newfound rights in Russia and even traveled to Central Asia, where they encountered hostile resistance in attempting to liberate Moslem women from their traditional patriarchal families.[21]

In 1930, Stalin decreed that women had been thoroughly "emancipated" and that there was no further need for Zhenotdel activity. The Zhenotdel was promptly closed. Between 1930 and 1979 women did not organize on an independent basis at all. There was, however, one women's organization, the aforementioned SWC, which was, like all other social organizations of the Soviet era, subordinated to the Communist Party. The SWC was originally created in 1941 as an antifascist committee. After the war, it became simply a women's organization whose purpose was in part to convince foreign women's delegations how happy Soviet women were. SWC representatives stressed the fact that women made up the vast majority of professional positions among doctors, lawyers, and teachers, with no mention of the miserly salaries and low prestige of those professions within the Soviet economic hierarchy. This hypocrisy turned many women against the SWC. Said one woman activist:

> [Until perestroika], I personally felt repulsion toward the "women's theme" because the Soviet Women's Committee represented it, and it didn't address women's problems seriously. All of the academics felt, and still feel, this way about the SWC, even among some men, because [the SWC] kept reporting about how well Russian women live; it was speaking some awful ideological abracadabra [*tarabarshchina*].[22]

In the Khrushchev era, miniature women's councils (*zhensovety*), originally born in the 1920s, were revived and established all

over the Soviet Union. The zhensovety played the role of "transmission belts," engaging women's support for Communist Party policies, and also took on service provision, much like the Soviet trade unions. In 1986, Gorbachev voiced his objection to the "formal" nature of Soviet women's organizations and declared the reinvigoration of the zhensovety, now to be under the umbrella of the SWC.[23] Neither the zhensovety nor the SWC, however, were concerned with defending women's rights or increasing women's involvement in political or economic decision-making.

For decades the SWC remained the sole legal women's organization. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, the presence of a growing dissident movement was felt in Russia, a movement that included women. And much the same way that some women in the U.S. New Left began to feel frustrated with their roles within that movement, some Soviet women grew increasingly dissatisfied with the way they were treated within the Soviet dissident movement as a whole. In 1979 in Leningrad, a small group of women involved in the dissident movement decided to create their own women's journal. Like other dissident publications, the journal was *samizdat*—self-published—and reproduced secretly. The women called their journal *Woman and Russia*. Its contents covered the details of grisly abortion procedures in the USSR, the conditions in maternity hospitals, and many other themes common to women. The group and their journal did not go unnoticed by the KGB, and the collective was swiftly disbanded, with several members exiled from the Soviet Union. The journal ceased publication after only a few issues.

It was not until Gorbachev's policy of glasnost that women could start to speak honestly in public about their lives, and, along with a variety of organizations focused on ecology, labor, national independence, and so forth, a small number of women's groups emerged, mostly free from persecution, at the end of the 1980s.

Let us now consider the situation today, in terms of the types of women's groups that exist, the extent to which they have established networks with each other, some of the obstacles to creating more of a mass women's movement in Russia, and how the identities of various organizations have developed in relation to each other and external conditions.

According to the Ministry of Justice, as of 1994 there were over three hundred women's groups operating in Russia. There are prob-

ably more, although many of them remain unregistered; registration is costly and requires that the group leaders submit their passport information to the ministry, a step which some women, wary of Soviet-era persecution, are reluctant to take.

Despite the large numbers of women's groups, the women's movement in Russia does not belong in the "mass movement" category. Most of the women's organizations are very small and do not resemble the large membership organizations more common in the U.S. women's movement, for example. The various groups are often isolated from one another and rarely hold coordinated actions in coalition with other groups. Even within Moscow, organizations concerned with the same issue are often unaware of each other's existence. Nor do the women's groups hold sizable demonstrations, as they do in the United States, when thousands of women converge on the capital on particularly acute issues. In fact, in Russia today, there are no mass nationwide women's organizations with thousands of members. The only women's organization that really enjoys nationwide name recognition (besides the former SWC and  WOR) is the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers (CSM). This organization was formed at the end of the 1980s to protest against the brutal treatment of draftees and the high number of peacetime deaths in the Soviet army and has grown to be a well-known organization, supporting the creation of an all-volunteer army. The CSM's most recent explosion of media attention came as a result of sending truckloads of mothers down to Chechnia to rescue their sons from the army. The CSM, however, is not a women's movement group as such; its purpose is not to overcome sex discrimination barriers, and its actions are not conducted directly on women's behalf but rather for the sake of their children.

By forming and joining in the activities of women's groups, women are able to assert their group identity as women—an oppressed social stratum—and can emphasize particular aspects of that identity through their participation in particular women's movement organizations. Many of my interviewees, regardless of the type or category of women's organization in which they are most active, responded to questions about the reason for their involvement in the organization with statements about the importance of self-realization. Tatiana Maliutina of the Association of Women Entrepreneurs told me,

There was a mutual interest, the desire to somehow show our-selves [*proiavit'sia*], to join around concrete things. It was as if in opposition to the [groups] which were forced upon us—that's why I told you so much about the *zhensovety.* This was our initia-tive. We wanted to see what we could do.[24]

Likewise, Marina Pavlova of the Center for Business Assistance to Women explained,

There was a time when I was working on a really interesting issue: the family and the change in women's roles. I'm a woman myself, and I knew how hard it was to self-realize. Women can realize themselves better, more fully, in a women's movement.[25]

The new social movement literature suggests that movements such as women's movements are primarily concerned with identity issues, rather than the resource-distribution issues common to "older" movements. Although the Russian women's movement is clearly interested in the redistribution of economic and political re-sources, a concern with identity also seems to be borne out by the language that women activists use to describe their activism and participation. No longer locked into official propagandist stereo-types about the perfect Soviet mother-worker, with the advent of glasnost women suddenly had more freedom to choose to emphasize certain aspects of their identities and to seek out other women simi-larly inclined.

What women's organizations populate the growing Russian nongovernmental organization (NGO) stage? Given women's de-clining economic conditions, it comes as no surprise that a significant number of groups are concerned precisely with employment issues. Job training programs, often in conjunction with a local branch of the federal employment services, such as Ivanovo's Center for the Social Support of Women and Families, or Moscow's Center for the Social Support of Women (under the Union of Women of Russia), frequently teach courses in embroidery, handicrafts, and sewing, or accounting, governess training, and sometimes business skills. Groups of businesswomen (new entrepreneurs), such as the Chebok-sary-based Women's Initiative Club, share experiences and provide support to one another. Women in some of the industries hardest hit by the economic crisis, such as the defense industry—which lost vast

government contracts and has been faced with high levels of female unemployment, especially in research institutes—have also formed organizations such as Conversion and Women.

Also present are a large number of mutual support groups—composed of single mothers, mothers of many children (usually three or more), mothers of invalids—and charity organizations intended to help the neediest people, among whom women and children are the majority. National organizations like the Association of Russian Women-Mothers raise money to send sick children to Italy for health care and rest. Many women's councils, some of which have reorganized on a private basis, like Women of Krasnaia Presnia, a former district women's council in Moscow, are not so much dedicated to altering women's status as to supporting families and children. The CSM also fits into this category.

Other types of groups include professional women of various kinds, such as Women in the Police Force/Legal Organs, Women with a University Education, Women Journalists, and Women Film Directors. There are a number of women's publications, now ranging from the small circulation *FEMINF* (*Feministskii informatsionnyi zhurnal*, Feminist informational journal) to the glossy *Cosmopolitan* and the revamped Soviet-era *Rabotnitsa* and even a women's radio station, Radio Nadezhda (Hope), founded in 1992.

The last few years have seen the development of women's crisis services, including hotlines for victims of rape and domestic violence, in nearly every major Russian city. There are now several women's studies centers, in Moscow, Petersburg, Naberezhnye Chelny, and other cities, conducting research on women, rather a rarity in Soviet times. Consciousness-raising organizations, such as Feminist Alternative (FALTA) and Club Harmony, and lecture groups that invite people to come and talk about their research on women once a month, such as the Club F-1, also operate in the capital. Several lesbian support organizations now exist, although some have been denied official registration, such as MOLLI (the Moscow Organization of Lesbian Literature and Art).

Other women's groups are explicitly political, with goals that include advancing women's status against a politicized/party background. These include the pro-(hard-line) Communist Congress of Soviet Women and Women for Social Democracy. Finally, a few women's coalitions and organizations, such as the Women's League

and the Inform Center of the Independent Women's Forum, are composed at least in part of specialists on women's issues and conduct lobbying on women's issues with members of the government and the legislature. Some organizations of course cross several boundaries, including the Union of Women of Russia (heir to the SWC), which engages in both political organizing and charity work across the country.

It is important to note that none of these groups existed, or could have existed, ten years ago. Nearly all of the activists I interviewed agreed unanimously on this subject:

Q.   Do you think such an organization as yours could have existed before perestroika?

A.   No. I think before perestroika, in as much as nobody was allowed to organize anything on their own initiative, it wouldn't have been possible. Perestroika has given us one thing, and that's the opportunity to unite and create something of our own.[26]

A.   No, there was a monopoly. We couldn't even get ourselves registered for the first year and a half. They sent us all around: it wasn't clear who was supposed to register us as a social organization.[27]

A.   No, of course not, definitely not; it would have been impossible. Nothing of the kind was allowed, no free thinking [*inakomyslie*].[28]

Given the oppressive nature of the Soviet regime, the rapid flowering of women's organizations (like the proverbial Russian mushrooms after a rain) in the early 1990s seems all the more extraordinary.

I have preliminarily divided the groups into two broader identity categories: "political-feminist" and "pragmatic." The political groups are occupied with promoting (largely) liberal feminism and women's empowerment (for example, the expert organizations, women's centers, and consciousness-raising groups), although they are not necessarily interested in political participation or lobbying per se. Their overt intention is to improve women's status and/or struggle against discrimination. The pragmatic groups, by contrast, are trying to take up the slack resulting from the collapse of the state welfare system, organizing through cooperation to combat women's

immediate problems (this category includes business training and employment centers, charities, etc.). The pragmatic groups may also have political-feminist leanings, but they do not tend to be explicit.

The creation of the political-feminist groups, and even most of the pragmatic ones, implies a feeling on the part of their women members that they, as women, have an identity, interests, and issues different from men's, or, at the very least, interests that are not being addressed within the male-dominated economic and political realms.

The spread of this type of women's/feminist identity within both movement organizations and the broader Russian population—and the mass mobilization of a women's movement on the basis of that identity—turns on the question of whether or not women perceive their fates as being driven by personal circumstances or by systematic or institutionalized discrimination in society as a whole. From the perspective of some social movement theory (namely, the political process model expounded by Doug McAdam) consciousness-raising (or "cognitive liberation") is necessary for the formation of a movement, and in order for consciousness-raising to take place, networking opportunities are required.[29]

Based on the notion of cognitive liberation, it seems plausible that as the more pragmatic groups work together and network with the more political-feminist groups, they may come increasingly to share the more overtly feminist perspective and identity of the latter. Indeed there have been a few major opportunities for such networking and the concomitant cognitive liberation in the last four years. The first Independent Women's Forum was held in Dubna, Russia, in March 1991. The organizers labeled the forum "independent" to stress its identity independent of the Soviet state, the Communist Party, men, and the official SWC. This first forum was evidence that a plethora of women's organizations and initiatives had arisen from below, rather than having been decreed from above. In all, there were about two hundred participants, representing forty-eight women's organizations. The forum's final document attested to the multiple forms of discrimination against Soviet women, under both state socialism and during perestroika and the transition period. The first forum's main slogan was "Democracy Without Women Is Not Democracy," reflecting opposition to the growing trend toward female unemployment and the decline in women's representation in the political sphere.

The next major opportunity for networking occurred in late November 1992, at the Second Independent Women's Forum gathering, also held in Dubna. This time, there were approximately five hundred people from across Russia, several states of the CIS, and the West, far exceeding the numbers expected by the organizing committee. Many hours were spent on welcoming ceremonies, where representatives of the more than sixty CIS-based groups (often of indeterminate size) introduced themselves, one by one, to the forum participants gathered in a large auditorium. Despite the shortage of time and freezing temperature in the auditorium, nearly all the speakers recited their phone numbers, which were urgently scribbled down by other participants. Given the shortfalls of the CIS telecommunications system, this was the sole chance for these women to find out about each other's existence and exchange such basic information.

Three years later, networking has become more difficult because everything—including travel, board, and food—has become extremely expensive. Problems with resource mobilization thus have an impact on networking as well as the internal operations of nearly every women's organization. The costs of telephone calls, faxes, and even postage stamps—in short, the communications infrastructure in general—complicate the formation of coalitions and ties among organizations. The formation of group identity and consciousness is thereby restricted. Despite such logistical and financial constraints, however, a series of women's conferences was held in Moscow in 1994 and 1995, thus creating the possibility for further consciousness-raising.

Fund-raising and direct mail are still nearly unknown among Russian women's groups, many of which are supported today by grants from the West: Soros, MacArthur, Ford, USAID, and several European foundations. This leads to another problem in terms of building a more coordinated, mass-based movement: a tremendous amount of competition for grants takes place among women's groups. In order to get a grant, one needs one's own organization. Thus the grant-writing process often leads to fractionalization rather than cooperation. Outside of Moscow, however, where granting agencies are less relied upon, contact and cooperation among women's organizations presents less of a problem. The women's groups in Cheboksary and Ivanovo seemed far more cohesive than

those in Moscow, though such cohesion is simpler to accomplish in those considerably smaller cities, with only a few women's groups apiece.

Another problem in uniting the Moscow groups with each other stems from their existence in a post-Communist, post-totalitarian state, and the related struggles over group and personal identity vis-à-vis that past. Many groups and individuals accuse one another of being affiliated with the Communists, having been affiliated with the old Soviet regime, and so forth. However, in Ivanovo, one reason for the high levels of organizational unity and movement cohesion (and as a result, an impressive degree of cooperation with local government bodies) seems to be that nearly all of the main women's activists in the city were former activists in Communist Party-affiliated organizations.

Similarly, the potentially unifying factor of feminist ideology finds no place in the Russian women's movement. Feminism is regarded with disdain, fear, and/or amusement in the wider society and to a certain extent even within women's organizations. While groups and individual activists may admit the existence of discrimination against women and struggle actively against it, many are reluctant to describe their struggle as a feminist one.[30] For instance, neither the first nor the second Independent Women's Forum was billed as "feminist," though the organizers were feminist-identified. One of the organizers of the forums, Anastasia Posadskaia—a self-described feminist—explained that there are two reasons for not using the term:

> [One reason] is that feminism is like socialism—another label. It's seen as a bourgeois trend and caricatured as selfish and stupid. Feminists are thought of as terribly worn and dreary women who look like men, who demonstrate on the streets, and hate men.[31]

Other groups, however, more openly proclaim their feminist principles, such as the Club F-1 (signifying "first feminist club") and the co-counseling organization Feminist Alternative.

Despite the many obstacles to coalition work and women's identification as feminist activists, there are a number of Russian women's organizations that have had varying degrees of success in making contacts with policymakers and exerting influence in policy areas relevant to women in particular. In Moscow, although no regular

channels of contact exist between women's groups and the administration, some personal contacts have been established, especially with WOR, the women's faction formerly represented in the Duma.

These contacts in particular merit discussion as a rather interesting development in women's organizational identity. Originally, the independent women's movement was very suspicious of the WOR, due to the history of the latter's formation, which occurred between Yeltsin's October 1993 shelling of the parliament and the December elections. How did the women's bloc manage to form so quickly? Answering this question requires a brief foray into recent history. At the end of 1991, when the USSR collapsed, the SWC collapsed along with it. In its place, like the phoenix rising from the ashes, appeared the Union of Women of Russia (UWR)—in the same building, with many of the same people, but no longer a Soviet Union-wide organization. Upon the announcement of upcoming elections, the UWR wrote to the various other blocs and parties in formation and asked if they had a platform on women's issues. The response was paltry, and the UWR decided to create its own electoral bloc. In order to collect the requisite number of signatures, it turned to the Russia-wide network of women's councils. It joined forces with the Association of Women Entrepreneurs and the Association of Navy Women, two of the very few federally registered women's organizations at that time.

WOR was essentially based on the SWC, so the independent women's organizations had little faith that WOR would truly support women's rights since in their view the SWC had never done so, being merely a puppet of the Communist Party. It is true that the WOR faction was populated in part with women of the Soviet nomenklatura, but the bloc also contained several more radical women, such as Liudmila Zavadskaia, a lawyer interested in working with independent women's groups. In June 1995, an unstable coalition of Moscow women's organizations arranged monthly meetings with the committee in the Duma that handles women's issues, headed by Galina Klimantova, a WOR deputy. The 1995 election results have probably put an end to those meetings. However, good relations have been established between some women activists and former WOR faction leader Ekaterina Lakhova, who was reelected to the Duma in a single-mandate district and remains adviser to the president on women, family, and demographic issues.

Despite the independent women's groups' suspicion of WOR, evidence suggests that the actual positions of these organizations are not so easily distinguished from one another. For instance, only a few years after the first Independent Women's Forum, various versions of its slogan, "Democracy Without Women Is Not Democracy," gained popularity and were being used more broadly by women activists and politicians to refer to the fact that women were mostly excluded from economic and political decision-making and were being squeezed out of the economy as well. In fact, an almost identical slogan was used by the WOR bloc in its 1993 election campaign. Such blurring of identity boundaries among women's groups of varying backgrounds is one of the more interesting phenomena observable within the women's movement today. The Independent Women's Forum, a relatively radical loose coalition of women's organizations, and WOR, based as it is on the former SWC—an "establishment" organization—end up sharing a single slogan, a single frame for the presentation of women's issues to the public, despite their insistently different backgrounds and long-standing reluctance to work together on most issues and campaigns.

Regardless of these common themes, identity among independent women's groups is shaped in part by defining their collectives as intrinsically different from other groups, such as the former SWC. However, there are other factors at work, influencing organizational identity. Among the most significant is the impact of foreign (Western) granting agencies and foundations on shaping women's organizations' priorities and thus their focus and collective identity. Some Western granting agencies explicitly ask whether the group applying for foundation money engages in political activity, and the understanding is that such activity is not preferred. This has an impact on women's organizations' program priorities. For instance, in the summer and early fall of 1995, many women's organizations (in Moscow) became transfixed by the goal of acquiring funding for travel to the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September, rather than focusing on women's opportunities in the upcoming parliamentary elections, because financing was available for the former but not the latter.[32]

Women's economic, political, and sociocultural status in Russia has suffered in many ways during the transition period. At present,

the trend is toward pushing women out of the workplace and depriving them of their right to choose whether or not to work outside the home. Women are increasingly excluded from certain professions and are becoming more economically dependent. They are showered with sexist images and confronted by unsympathetic male politicians. For the masses of women (and people in general) in Russia, the economic conditions of life are immiserating and the political conditions frustrating—even scary. However, the impoverished but enthusiastic women's movement has emerged in its variety of forms with a great deal of potential for improving women's status overall. Both the more feminist groups (by challenging stereotypes and promoting feminism) and the more pragmatic groups (by bringing women together, expressly to better women's situation) present the possibility of new definitions of what it means to be a woman in Russia, as well as a radical challenge to male power.

## NOTES

1. The analysis I present is based on a set of interviews with Russian women activists conducted between September 1994 and January 1996 in Moscow, as well as in several smaller provincial cities, including Ivanovo (a textile town) and Cheboksary, the capital of the ethnic republic of Chuvashia. Some of the interviews were conducted anonymously. I also gleaned a large amount of information about the political and cultural discourse about women's issues from the press and official statistics.

2. El'mar Murtazaev, "Tempy rosta bezrabotitsy v Rossii zamedlilis'," *Segodnia*, June 30, 1995. Hidden unemployment refers to a situation in which workers remain on the rolls at a given factory but receive only a fragment of their salary and are not in fact employed in productive labor, often due to the factory's lack of raw materials or encroaching bankruptcy.

3. "Labor, Employment, Unemployment" (Moscow: All-Russian Women's Congress, 1994).

4. L. S. Rzhanitsyna, "Zaniatost' i dokhody zhenshchin," in *Integratsia zhenshchin v protsess obshchestvennogo razvitiia* (Moscow: Luch, 1994), p. 282.

5. Author's interview with Olga Khasbulatova, Center for Social Support of Women and Families, Ivanovo, April 6, 1995.

6. The highest paying "male" branch is the gas industry, at 361 percent of the average salary; the lowest is electrical energy, at 190 percent. The corresponding figures for "female" industries are 127 percent for the food industry and 49 percent for textiles (Goskomstat figures cited in *Kontseptsiia zhenskoi zaniatosti* [Moscow: Institut Ekonomiki RAN, 1994], Appendix 3.

7. Frank Viviano, "Russian Women Rocking the Macho Power Elite," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 30, 1995.

8. The trend continued in 1994. See Ekaterina Lakhova, "Vcherashnie shchi liubite? Zakhodite zavtra," *Izvestiia*, April 19, 1995.

9. Khasbulatova interview.

10. Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), pp. 116–17.

11. Ekaterina Lakhova, "Zhenshchiny v politike, politika dlia zhenshchin" (Women in politics, and politics for women); speech delivered at Second All-Russia Women's Congress, Moscow, June 6, 1995, as cited in *Moskvichka,* nos. 22–23 (1995): 7.

12. Alevtina Fedulova, "Zhenshchiny v politike, politika dlia zhenshchin" (Women in politics, and politics for women); speech delivered at the Second All-Russian Women's Congress, cited in *ibid.,* p. 8.

13. General Social Survey of the Russian Federation and Central Asia, October–December 1992, as cited in Katherine Hyde, "Feminist Consciousness and Gender Ideology among Russian Women Activists"; master's thesis, North Carolina State University, 1996, p. 67.

14. Author's interview with Elena Ershova, Moscow, April 18, 1995.

15. Anastasia Posadskaia, "Demokratiia minus zhenshchina—ne demokratiia," *Ogonek,* no. 38 (1993): 9.

16. *Entsiklopedia dlia devochek, Entsiklopedia dlia mal'chkikov* (St. Petersburg: RE-SPEKS, 1994).

17. See Nadia Azhgikhina, "A Movement Is Born," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists,* July/August 1995, p. 49.

18. Among the first discussions and critiques of the objectification of women in Russia was Olga Lipovskaia, "Woman as an 'object of consumption,'" *Moskvichka*, no. 8 (1991): 7.

19. "Moskva zavalena vitaminnoi produktsiei," *Vechernaia Moskva*, November 23, 1994.

20. Author's interview with Olga Voronina, Moscow, April 27, 1995.

21. See Mary Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), pp. 64–69.

22. Author's interview with anonymous (name withheld), Moscow, December 6, 1994.

23. Buckley, *Women and Ideology*, p. 210.

24. Author's interview with Tatiana Maliutina, Association of Women Entrepreneurs, Moscow, April 25, 1995.

25. Author's interview with Marina Pavlova, Center for Business Assistance to Women, Moscow, April 24, 1995.

26. Author's interview with Elena Demeshina, Association of Women Directors (Film/Theater), Moscow, March 26, 1995.

27. Author's interview with Tatiana Riabikina, *Tvorchestvo*, April 26, 1995.

28. Author's interview with anonymous (name withheld), Moscow, November 21, 1994.

29. See Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

30. This is true in the U.S. women's movement as well. See Roberta Spalter-Roth and Ronnee Schreiber, "Outsider Issues and Insider Tactics," in *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, ed. Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), pp. 105–27.

31. Maxine Molyneux, "Interview with Anastasya Posadskaya," *Feminist Review* 39 (Winter 1991): 137. Homophobia within the population serves as an obstacle to women identifying as feminists, joining women's groups, and working together across lines of sexual identity within the women's movement.

32. Personal communication (name withheld), January 1996.

# WOMEN AND THE NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITY IN POST-COMMUNIST EASTERN EUROPE

## Gail Kligman

> On the whole, women will probably come off los-
> ers in many respects: the "revolution" of 1989 left
> the patriarchal system of power intact, transform-
> ing its more superficial manifestations from bad
> to worse.
>
> —Dimitrina Petrova[1]

Before 1989, gendered identities as expressed through gender differences in Eastern Europe were politically masked. Socialism as we knew it legislated gender equality through what were effectively gender-blind ideological lenses. Difference—whether gendered, ethnic, or national—was desirably dressed in the language of a homogenized equality recognizable in a "new socialist man."[2] The dramatic events of 1989 rendered the rhetoric about the better described "new socialist person" to historical texts. The discourse of democracy unleashed the rights of and to "difference" and multiple identities. These latter have sprung from a Pandora's box of multiple choices made possible by the collapse of communism. The institutionalization of the markers of democratic practices and of privatization efforts commandeered the enthusiasm of many, East and West. Increasing ethnic conflict also moved to center stage. Yet the general context of heightened competition over shrinking resources, which has contributed to ethnic strife, for example, has drastically exacerbated the vulnerability of *all* women and children. As shall be discussed, women, as reproducers of "tradition," "the nation," or ethnic groups, have been essential participants in ethnic or national conflicts and often their victims.

Analyses of the positioning and activities of women in the family, the labor market, and the polity speak loudly to the complex processes of dismantling and transforming the former socialist states.[3]

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As I have noted elsewhere, debates about foreign investments, shock therapies, and reproductive as well as minority rights address not only practical concerns about transforming economies, but also the very terms through which identities are being defined.[4] The reconstitution of public and private spheres of relations is not a residual effect of political and economic change, but rather an integral feature of this process. For women, immediate post-1989 predictions suggested that their prospects were reasonably gray: reproductive rights would be curtailed, as would social benefits, family planning and health resources, and job access. According to Sonja Licht, the primary beneficiaries of the momentous promise of 1989 were men; "masculine democracies" were being created throughout the region.[5] From this perspective, the failure of "socialism with a human face" has ultimately yielded to the partial success of "democracy with a male face." The shift from paternalist regimes to patriarchally biased sociopolitical systems that seemingly privilege the interests of men more than those of women may be the most characteristic shared feature of the "transition."

In many ways, these basically discouraging predictions about women's opportunities in post-Communist Eastern Europe have resonated in the public and private spheres of their everyday lives. Nonetheless, generalizations such as "women have gotten the short end of the stick," "shock therapy is particularly hard on women and the elderly," "women comprise more of the unemployed," "poverty has been feminized," and "there has been a backlash against women in the realm of state governance" are just that: generalizations that obscure the architectures of the "transition" throughout Central and Eastern Europe as these differentially affect women and perceptions about them and about how they perceive themselves. The war in Bosnia, for example, brought singular attention to devastating violence against women as well as to human atrocities in general. Violence against women has increasingly become the focus of attention for women's organizations within the region and from abroad.[6]

Five-year plans used to be templates for the future in Eastern Europe. Six years have passed since the events of 1989, constituting a reasonable symbolic interlude to take stock of what has happened to women during this period. In the following sections, I will explore issues pertaining to politics, employment, and reproduction and body politics.[7]

## POLITICS

In each of the countries of the former Eastern Europe, there has been a sharp drop in the political participation of women in the sphere of national governance. Women do not figure prominently among the higher ranks of government. There have been female prime ministers in Poland (Hanna Suchocka), and Bulgaria (Reneta Indzhova), but otherwise women are noticeably absent in ministerial positions throughout the region. In the fourth quarter of 1994, no women held such positions in Albania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, or Romania; there was one woman among eighteen governmental ministers in Poland and two in Slovakia, where a woman was also a deputy prime minister (out of a total of seventeen ministerial positions). In Bulgaria, three women occupied high offices (as prime minister, deputy prime minister and minister of social affairs and health, and deputy prime minister and minister for the economy and finance).[8] Furthermore, women are less well represented in parliaments throughout the region, which is generally taken to mean that their interests are not being appropriately advanced in this time of societal and structural transformation. While it is undoubtedly correct that women are less visible in the public sphere of national governance than they had been under Communist rule, the relationship to representative democratic practice is much more complex. Women are hardly prominent at this level in Western governments.[9]

The trends in Central and Eastern Europe have not yet stabilized. In 1990, women made up only 7 percent of the new Hungarian parliament, as compared with 21 percent representation in the Communist-era "representative" assembly.* However, according to Regulska, by 1994, women's parliamentary participation in Hungary had quietly crept up to 11 percent. She also noted related increases elsewhere: in Poland, the number of women in parliament increased from 9.1 percent in 1991 to 13 percent by 1993.[10] In Czechoslovakia, however, there has been an inverse tendency, to which the "velvet divorce" between the Czech and Slovak republics may have contributed: the number of women has dropped from 11 percent in 1990 to 9.6 percent in the Czech Republic. A similar decline has been regis-

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*As is by now axiomatic, these positions were more symbolic than representative.

tered in Romania.* In general, women's participation in national politics is limited. They are also typically excluded from decision-making roles in party politics. Few women hold high-ranking positions in a diverse array of political parties covering the gamut of the political spectrum; relatedly, few women are endorsed as candidates. Women tend to be hard workers among the rank and file; a basic sexism about their political instincts and qualifications prevails and contributes to their invisibility. Women are seldom publicly promoted.

Although women are less active at the national level of governance, they are more engaged in local-level politics.[11] Women gained 17 percent of local-level seats in the 1990 Hungarian elections, 16.4 percent in the Czech Republic, and 10.4 percent in Poland.[12] These numbers have increased steadily since 1990; in the 1994 Polish local elections, for example, women's presence rose to 13 percent.[13] It is reasonable to assume that family responsibilities both facilitate and constrain women's political involvement and generally favor the latter.† The lack or diminishment of infrastructural resources, such as access to child care, which has been fostered by economic restructuring, makes local-level political activity yet more likely for most women.

Holding local office enables women to gain entry into politics and to participate in the decision-making processes which affect the everyday functioning of their communities. At the same time, women's national possibilities remain limited. Without a concerted effort to democratize household relations and roles, women are likely to continue to participate more heavily in local-level politics, the impact of which is experienced more immediately in their daily lives.**

*I am not providing complete data for all of the countries of Eastern Europe. I simply wish to emphasize that the situation is very much in flux, meaning that it is too early to make strong assertions. (In Romania, of 142 senators, 3 are women; of 342 deputies, 12 are women.)

†As elsewhere, women still assume primary responsibility for child-rearing throughout the region. Parliamentary representatives must generally reside in a country's capital city when parliament is in session, which presents many more obstacles for women than does their local-level political engagement. Familial responsibilities are, in this respect, restrictive.

**From a structural point of view, this political division of labor reproduces "traditional" gender relations, with women staying closer to home. This observation is not meant to devalue the critical importance of women's participation in local-level politics, but rather to note the continuing constraints which serve to maintain their exclusion at the national level.

If elected office tends to be geographically circumscribed for women, their engagement in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) is not. It is estimated that women head 84 percent of the NGOs in the Czech Republic. However, as suggested in Regulska's recent report, participation varies across countries (e.g., the number of women active in Polish NGOs has declined); there also seems to be a "gendering" of NGO involvement, with women more involved in organizations with "socio-economic and educational agendas (in some cases over 65 percent) than among those with a political focus (17 percent)."[14]

International assistance, both governmental and nongovernmental, has been significant in shaping the foci of NGO activities.[15] Apart from what has become by now more standard, such as voter education and registration, women are also engaged in creating and running battered women's shelters (in societies where domestic violence is relatively normative behavior) and crisis hotlines. In the former Yugoslavia, women have become visibly active in rape crisis centers, infant care and adoption organizations, and refugee relief work. Women's active participation in NGOs (at local and national levels) bespeaks a certain irony. In U.S. democracy-assistance programs, NGOs are among those organizations categorized under the rubric of "civil society."[16] Before 1989, the articulation of a discourse about civil society was considered to have been the critical contribution of Central European intellectuals, most of whom are men—especially of those known to the international public.[17] Six years later in Central and Eastern Europe, NGOs are often perceived to be politically weak. It is not then surprising that they are considered to provide appropriate havens for female engagement in creating civic cultures. Yet if democratic cultural practices indeed emerge from the much heralded civil society, then women's roles in transforming the cultures of the past are crucial, if, again ironically, devalued as men have come to dominate "high politics." Female "civil society" activists have commented on the reproduction of an all too familiar division of labor: men talk while women do the hard, nuts-and-bolts work that family writ large—society—requires.

To be sure, political participation is being distinctly gendered as public and private spheres are being reconstituted. However, women are not entirely invisible. Quite rapidly, they have become differentially engaged in political life. Many factors inform the na-

ture of women's involvement. Some women are too overwhelmed by the exigencies of daily survival to bother with politics. Others are sick of what they believe politics, whether Communist or post-Communist, entails: lies, corruption, greed, and obsession with power. The curtailing of reproductive rights (in some countries) and of child care options has compelled many women to enter into single-issue social movements similar to the Western new social movements which emerged after 1968.[18] Yet others have joined nascent women's or feminist movements. As unemployment among women increases, women may become more focused on employment-related issues, to which I now turn briefly.

## EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

In general, austerity programs combined with diminished or disappearing social welfare benefits have presented particular challenges for women. The impact of such policy decisions on women's employment opportunities is hard felt. Double-burdened under the former regimes, many women now unwittingly find themselves juggling three or four jobs.* The crucial distinction is that the ends are now differently valued. Nonetheless, economic restructuring has not meant economic equality between the sexes. The prospects for many working mothers today are less than rosy.[19] Across the map, poverty is increasingly mirrored in the faces of women.† The number of sin-

*Here it is important to recognize that most men were also "double-burdened" under communism: their activities in the second economy were necessary to supplement state wages. The double burden of women was more specifically linked to their having to "labor" in the household and state sector; relations within families had not changed significantly, contributing to women's general exhaustion. Many of those juggling three or four jobs today are intellectuals.

†The feminization of poverty is meant to be a general point. Young families have also been slipping into poverty. Some women are better located on the job spectrum, meaning that they are able to take advantage of new opportunities. The generalized statement about female-headed households refers to countries other than the former Yugoslavia; the actual effects of the war are unknown. It is assumed that children generally remained with female relatives; the fates of many fathers, husbands, and brothers remain unknown. In any event, the causes for the rise in female-headed households are strikingly different here.

gle-parent families has grown, the majority of which are female-headed. (Post-1989 divorce rates have also contributed to this trend.)

Women are still confronted by the contradictory demands of family labor and wage labor. They are also expected to take up some of the slack in care for the young and the elderly, who unexpectedly find themselves among the poverty stricken. Despite public rhetoric about women returning to the home, most of them cannot afford to leave or lose their jobs, meaning that they simply shoulder additional kin work to satisfy familial responsibilities. In this respect, generational factors are significant. The birthrate has declined in the face of a relative increase in life expectancy; the population has aged. (It is important to note that the death rates of men between the ages of forty and fifty-five have risen noticeably since 1989, presumably influenced by the recent upheaval in their lives.)[20] The decrease in child care options, coupled with inflation, increasing unemployment, and rising divorce rates adversely affects women's participation in the labor force.

Generally, the multiple demands on women's time require more accommodating schedules for women, which may give rise to long-term structural discrimination in the labor market. As yet, there are no careful studies on part-time employment; however, women have become primary employees in such jobs. Prior to 1989, part-time work was not nearly as common for women in the East as it was for women in Western Europe. While part-time female labor also dovetails nicely with the more recent flexible organization of labor in capitalist economies, it does little to improve the living situations of many families. Nonetheless, certain types of female part-time employment have been advantageous in the short run. Women who work for foreign firms and whose wages are paid in "hard"(er) currency may support their families through their earnings, assuming that their partners are employed in local (that is, nationally owned and operated) enterprises. To reiterate, the long-term structural consequences of part-time female employment remain of concern.

Although not surprising, occupational segregation is gendered. Under socialism, women tended to hold less skilled, more poorly paid jobs. That trend appears to be continuing, although reconfigured in terms of different and new occupational opportunities and their "value" in a market economy. Agriculture, manufacturing, mining, construction, and transport tend to be male-dominated indus-

tries (as of 1993); education, health, and service sector occupations tend to favor female employees.[21] Finance, which had been feminized during the Communist era, is being transformed; women—despite their better educational backgrounds and experience—are not necessarily being retrained to fill these positions in the new monetary environment. According to an International Labour Organization report, women's access to the labor market has been characterized by two parallel developments:

> They have been integrated in a wider range of occupations; the degree of feminization in their "traditional" fields has increased. The most detrimental consequence of feminization is the mechanism of social devaluation of these jobs affecting not only the wage level but also the standard of qualification provided.[22]

Job availability is now frequently gender explicit: many advertisements openly specify who may apply—attractive female receptionists and male managers.[23] Men also have more job options.

Again, such generalizations must be taken to be just that. There is no consistent evidence supporting assumptions that women are the first to be laid off; instead, who is laid off depends more on the type of enterprise and sector. Downsizing the albatross state-owned enterprises in heavy industry has often meant that men are the ones to be laid off initially. However, in the face of job redundancy, women are more vulnerable. Once laid off, solid data indicate that women are the more likely to remain unemployed for longer periods than are men; women are less likely to be retrained first; and they are more disadvantaged in the search for new employment. If women are reemployed, female wages remain below those of men. Income discrimination is highly problematic, as it is elsewhere in the world. The gap has fluctuated widely, but seems to have narrowed to women earning about 75 percent of male salaries.[24] Some women, seemingly in response to these market constraints, have used market opportunities to gain employment: they have entered the private sector. Although reliable data are difficult to obtain, reports suggest that women in Hungary are quite active in small businesses; they constitute 35 percent of business owners in the Czech Republic.[25]

Wage inequality has important consequences throughout the life cycle. The legal age for women's retirement in Eastern Europe

had been younger than that of men. Pensions were determined according to wage levels and length of service. Given that women were paid lower salaries and retired earlier, their pensions were and are smaller. Against the current economic backdrop, the implications for their standards of living are evident, especially for older women who are now among the most disadvantaged.

Unemployment rates confirm that gender differentiation is meaningful and also variable. For example, in the Czech Republic, the unemployment rate for men in 1990 was 0.9 percent, compared with 1.0 percent for women; unemployment rates for men and women kept apace of each other. In 1991, male unemployment reached 5.9 percent; female, 7.3 percent. But by 1992, the unemployment rate for both men and women dropped to 4.7 percent and 5.4 percent respectively. In Romania by 1992, the unemployment rate for men had risen from 2.2 percent to 6.2 percent; for women, from 4.0 percent to 10.7 percent. Women have been most negatively affected in Poland, where they experienced an unemployment rate of 14.9 percent (compared with a male rate of 11.8 percent).[26]

The general regional trend has been increased female unemployment. However, unemployment data from Hungary show a different pattern. There, the male unemployment rate remains higher than that of women, having increased from 1.8 percent in 1990 to 14 percent by 1992. For women, unemployment rates in Hungary rose from 1.4 percent in 1990 to 10.5 percent in 1992. Regarding female unemployment in Central Europe, Fodor argues that "gender, by itself, is not necessarily an inequality generating mechanism in the post-state socialist transformation."[27] According to her data, women have utilized their higher educational resources and service sector experience to their advantage (with greater or lesser degrees of success) during this period of economic change, whereas men have benefited from their former party memberships, especially in Hungary and Slovakia. Despite employment opportunities for particular groups of women in Hungary, there appears to be a negative shift developing there too with respect to the broader population.

In evaluating unemployment rates, it must be underscored that the measurement of unemployment is problematic. First, the determination of what constitutes "employment" is imprecise. For example, as noted by Fodor, ILO aggregate statistics have been based on data collected by employment offices:

Since registering with these offices is the precondition for receiving unemployment benefits, at least in the first few years . . . employment office data probably overestimates unemployment rates. Ethnographic information suggests that a significant number of unemployed people do work in the "black or grey" market and earn substantial incomes.[28]

Especially in this period of transformation, secondary economic activities remain critical to economic survival or betterment. In many instances, databases are not disaggregated according to gender, making it difficult to assess if, how, and in what sectors men and women are being differentially affected by marketization.[29] Nor is it evident how part-time labor is calculated with respect to employment and unemployment rates. Clearly, sensitive statistical analysis over time is necessary to understand the impact of marketization on unemployment throughout Eastern Europe.

Among the employment options for women which have burgeoned since 1989 are prostitution and the sex trade. The body is a profitable commodity which satisfies all manner of fantasies in all manner of ways. The marketing of the body also speaks to the easy translation of the "labor value" of the body into entrepreneurial activities. The liberation of the body, especially that of the female body, has brought with it a reinvigorated sexual "revolution," and what some speak of as "sexploitation."[30] Phone sex is booming in Hungary, although it has generally remained prerecorded. (Gabor Vajda points out that live phone sex in a business which is as yet unregulated requires greater financial investment than answering machines.)[31] The recently gained freedom of the press opened the print market to pornography. Intellectual journals are now readily found nestled among pornographic magazines. Hungarians seem to have cornered the East European market on pornographic films, which are made for distribution there and abroad. According to a recent article in a Hungarian paper, Hungary has captured 10 percent of Europe's pornographic film production market, and Budapest has become the pornographic film capital of Europe.[32] Pornography raises questions about the representation of women as sex objects and complicates women's struggles in defining their identities in a changed world. The price for controlling the marketization of such images is assumed to be censorship, which is highly

problematic for the reconstruction of a public sphere that was formerly held captive to state censorship.[33]

Prostitution has become more widespread as well as better organized over the past years. The further east, the more visible this historic trade becomes. Women line the border areas between countries as well as the more familiar "red light districts." Prostitution has become a means for women struggling with inflation and unemployment to obtain hard currency or increase their cash flow. But not all of these women are stereotypical women of the night (as I have noted elsewhere). Married women may work a few nights a month to keep their families afloat or to help obtain goods now readily available but often not affordable. For some women, prostitution constitutes a viable form of part-time labor which enables them to supplement their incomes. Young women may work in sex clubs as dancers and/or prostitutes until they earn enough money to pursue university educations.[34] One Hungarian professor observed, "If you see that a prostitute can make a month's salary in half a night's work, what do you do?"[35] Certain hotels which are frequently used for trysts now include a condom among the toiletries (i.e., shampoo, lotion, etc.) provided to hotel guests. In Bucharest, the blatant presence of prostitutes in the hotels in which foreign businessmen stayed immediately after the fall of the Ceauşescu regime has been brought under control; what had developed into a lucrative activity for doormen, pimps, and prostitutes also contributed to an image problem for Romanian businessmen courting Western favor. Upscale hotels now employ their own security guards to keep nonhotel guests out. The *nouveau riche* may spend their newly acquired riches (through whatever means) on highly paid and well-groomed call girls who work at fancy night clubs, casinos, and restaurants.[36] "Escort" services are also flourishing throughout the region.

Despite the entreaties of the Catholic Church, Poles wink at the public advertisement and sale of sex as long as it is cloaked in proper discursive forms. Escorts seem to be located on the same pages as package tours abroad, where Polish women go to have abortions now banned in Poland.*

*Abortion tourism tends to exist in countries in which abortion is restricted (such as Ireland). Women with the means make use of this "method" of resolving unwanted pregnancies. Polish women are known to travel to Russia, Lithuania, Germany, Austria, and Holland for abortions. The Czech Republic has

East European women, as well as women from the former Soviet Union, are hot new items in the international sex trade. The transition has contributed to a growing commercialization of a sex trade. Sex tourism is less well developed in Eastern Europe than elsewhere but is nonetheless growing. Hungary appears to be among the forerunners in providing sexual services to foreigners. There are approximately three hundred strip clubs or erotic bars in Budapest which take in $50,000–$500,000 in earnings per year.[37] In part, East European women (and children) are being marketed as an alternative to AIDS- and STD-plagued Thailand. In view of the poor state of knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases, and especially about AIDS, this is a perilous and irresponsible advertising ploy. One young Hungarian woman commented, "If a man comes from Hungary and looks clean, I will do it without a condom. . . . There's no AIDS in Hungary. AIDS is only outside Hungary."[38] This potentially deadly attitude is widespread throughout the region. It similarly applies to intravenous drug usage, also on the rise among prostitutes. Years of propaganda about the profligate West, coupled with a form of national pride that transforms others but not selves into agents of disease or destruction, enable many to ignore the information provided by Ministries of Health. In Romania, for example, the Minister of Health proposed that brothels be legalized as a means to combat the increase in adult AIDS.

Whereas sex tourism remains in the nascent stages, trafficking in sex does not. This refers to the "import/export" business—at present unregulated and typically controlled by various mafia factions. According to police officials,

> Criminal organizations have set up networks to bring young women from the former Soviet bloc into the voracious sex industry of Western Europe. . . . Owners of nightclubs, strip-tease joints and peep shows commonly trade such women for a fee. When the women's three-month tourist visas expire . . . their handlers rotate

closed its borders to foreigners seeking abortions there. (I thank Malgorzata Fuszara for this information.) With respect to escort services, another Polish colleague provided a personal anecdote pertinent to this point. Her home phone number differs from that of one of these services by one digit. She observed that the frequency of "wrong number" calls she received from men tended to be most pronounced between the hours of two and four in the afternoon.

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them on a circuit that can include Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Greece.[39]

Women are recruited by procurers, who then arrange for their export elsewhere. Many of these women believe that they are being offered positions abroad as dancers, kitchen workers, waitresses, bartenders, or models. They respond to fraudulent advertisements such as "Job in hotel abroad" or "Hostesses wanted."[40] The allure of the much fantasized West is strong. (However, as captured in the title of a newspaper article, the realities of that fantasy may turn out to be radically different than imagined: "They Left Eastern Europe with Capitalist Dreams. Now They're on the Market.")[41] The "allure" of these new sources for the supply of women is equally so; many of these newcomers to the "scene" are white Europeans, adding racial diversification to the sex trade. In 1993, German police estimated that approximately eight thousand Polish women lived and worked as prostitutes in Frankfurt. Visas had been issued on the claims that they were either tourists or students; however, in reality, many of them had signed papers consigning themselves to prostitution.[42] The crucial role of legal practitioners in facilitating the sex trade is noteworthy, particularly with respect to securing proper visas. The following case is illustrative of common practices.

> A twenty-year-old woman from Lithuania was lured into the Federal Republic on the pretense of being offered a job as a waitress in a restaurant. She responded enthusiastically to the idea when approached by two young girls at the Vilnius market. Two weeks later she received an invitation to stay with a German family, sent by an export/import firm in Vilnius, and notarized and stamped by a German lawyer. In addition, the exporter procured her exit and visitor's visas. The Lithuanian woman did not become aware of the deception until she landed at the Frankfurt airport. Two bar owners from Saarbrücken and an importer from Luxembourg met her at the gate and whisked her into a cafe, where they took her and two other girls' passports and return flight tickets. Eventually all three were transported directly to a Frankfurt brothel.[43]

Without proper identity papers, such women often find it difficult to fight these circumstances. They are intimidated into acquiescence and forced prostitution under the threat of deportation. For the traf-

fickers, women from the former Soviet sphere constitute a relatively low-risk, cost-effective proposition created by "new" market conditions.*

The relationship between commodification, the feminization of poverty, and the health of the region's population cannot be ignored or mystified. Recent UN statistics show women to be among the fastest growing AIDS population. The changes in health prospects (such as decreased access to health care, inadequate sexual and contraceptive education, and contraceptive availability) combined with the commercialization of sex, are integral features of the institutionalization of market economies, in which the public as well as the private spheres are being reconfigured.

## REPRODUCTION AND BODY POLITICS

The female body has become vulnerable in other ways as well. Among the most dramatic aspects of the politicization of women's bodies—in contrast to their marketization—has been the reported mass rape of women in the former Yugoslavia. There, rape has not been one of the presumed spoils of war that has historically permitted this form of violence against women to be shrouded in public silence and private shame; instead, a patrilineal cultural logic has privileged rape as a strategic weapon used in the interest of identity politics.[44] Rape is intimately, if perversely, linked to cultural identity and its reproduction—or rather destruction. Violating the women of others violates the family of the nation. Women's bodies may also be transformed into vehicles for biological warfare (through forced impregnation) for or against cultural meaning and political ends. The events in the former Yugoslavia have exploded the boundaries between public and private. Rape there has explicitly been about social reproduction (negatively) as well as violence against women as representatives of the nation.

Women as representatives of the nation have become a popular theme among nationalists. East European birthrates mirror Western trends: birthrates have declined steadily, especially since 1989. Na-

At the least, transport costs are generally much cheaper than those initially involved in obtaining women from Asia.

tionalist parties almost everywhere advocate increased birthrates to secure their nations' futures.[45] Biopolitics and identity politics are conjoined for the "survival of the nation." To this end, nationalists also clamor for the banning of abortion. In Poland, restricting abortion has been a centerpiece of national politics. The Polish law is the most restrictive in Europe, except for that of Ireland. In Poland, abortions are forbidden except if the pregnancy results from a criminal act such as rape or incest, if the fetus is determined to be severely deformed, or if the life of the mother is seriously endangered. Two physicians must confirm any of these grounds, and all abortions must be done in public hospitals. Anyone violating the law, which went into effect on March 16, 1993, is subject to imprisonment.[46] An attempt to overturn the law introduced by a parliament dominated by "former Communists" (hence sympathetic to social rights) failed when President Lech Wałęsa vetoed it. The first abortion-related trial since the law's implementation hit the international news in the spring of 1995.[47] This entangled case involved a woman who had sought an abortion. She was divorced and already had a ten-year-old child to support on her one salary. Her lover had offered a pittance toward her future child's expenses. Desperate, she finally convinced a doctor to perform an illegal abortion which cost her $210. It seems her lover then revealed this violation to local authorities. Ironically, for having paid part of her costs, he was subject to a possible two-year jail sentence as an accomplice; the doctor who performed the abortion was also subject to a two-year prison term and a potential ten-year suspension of his medical license.

It remains unclear what effects the Pope's recent encyclical will have on Polish abortion and reproduction-related practices ranging from contraception to new reproductive technologies.[48] A majority of Poles who are practicing Catholics do not support either the criminalization or the banning of abortion. Abortion tourism has become a favored method for women able to afford a quick trip abroad. Unfortunately, in view of the economic constraints, poor women in particular will increasingly resort to illegal abortions. The relationship among increased maternal mortality statistics, banned abortion, and poverty is a historical and comparative constant. Regarding reproductive technologies, one casualty of the anti-abortion law appears to be in vitro fertilization, which has recently come under fire. Physicians in Poland echo words similar to those of many of their

counterparts in Romania—under Ceauşescu.[49] As compared with political dogma in Ceauşescu's Romania, Polish doctors are worried that religious doctrine will increasingly dictate medical practices. As one Polish physician commented with respect to in vitro fertilization: "In Poland, one in six married couples faces an infertility problem."[50] Given the Pope's encyclical and a likely reticence to take on its provisions, nature and despair may conspire to keep the birthrate low and maternal mortality figures on the rise.

Reproductive politics vary throughout the region. Excepting Poland, the legislation is fairly liberal, meaning that abortion is available during the first trimester of pregnancy (in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania). In Romania, abortion is fully legal. In Hungary, a woman's life-situation is taken into consideration as a legitimate cause for a legal abortion. This law passed despite an active anti-abortion movement there. Where abortion is on legislative agendas, women have formed social movements to defend their right to safe abortions. Safeguarding the legal right to abortion is one thing; however, abortion generally amounts to the primary means of fertility control in most of the region. (Hungary may prove an exception in that contraception seems to be taking hold as a method of fertility control.) Contraceptive and sexual education remains poor throughout much of the region, pointing to the lack of effective investment in it and to the inadequacy of the production and distribution of affordable alternatives.[51] In view of the rise in sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, there is evident need for significant improvement.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are many other issues which affect the lives of women in this period of transformation. Women and children fill the ranks of refugees, especially from the war-torn former Yugoslavia.[52] Emigration has also contributed to the alteration in family structures. The legal (as opposed to the cultural) liberalization of homosexuality has made different household and sexual orientations more viable.[53] Rising divorce rates have contributed to the growth in the number of female-headed households. The changed environment of everyday

life is having profound effects on women and the family. Here, an observation about the family is in order, especially since it became fashionable in some circles to idealize its role under socialism as a site of autonomy from or resistance to the state.[54] While it may be generalized that solidarity tended to exist within the private sphere against the state—another site in which "we" versus "they" was meaningful—that solidarity silenced discussion about gendered inequalities in the sphere in which women were more heavily burdened. (This latter point is also consistently emphasized, without problematization regarding its implications.)[55] If the family was the symbol par excellence of refuge from the socialist state, today nationalists invoke this powerful symbol as the site for reproduction of the nation and of women's responsibilities to it. As Maxine Molyneux has written, essentializing discourses reveal "a vision of social order as dependent on women's place in the family."[56] Some, including women, yearn to return to the family as a refuge from what is known as productive labor. However, economic realities do not make it possible for most women to choose to dedicate themselves to another idealized, if burdened, version of family life.

Thus far, the transition has not been overly kind to women (and their children). State paternalism and masculine democracies form the cultural-political contexts within which identities are gendered in differently formed public and private spheres. Without fundamental restructuring of gender relations in the private sphere, women's full exercise of their newly granted citizenship rights will be artificially limited by their child-bearing and rearing responsibilities as these impact on employment, political participation, reproductive life, family life, and so forth. Democratization of gender relations in the private sphere is a sorely needed, but sadly neglected, aspect of social transformation which contributes importantly to the shaping of gendered identities.

**NOTES**

1. This quote from the Bulgarian feminist and human rights activist is cited in Barbara Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender and Women's Movements in East Central Europe* (New York: Verso, 1993), p. 256.

2. On gender equality under socialism and the "socialist man," see, for example, Gail Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Gail Kligman, "The Politics of Reproduction in Ceauşescu's Romania: A Case Study in Political Culture," *East European Politics and Societies* 6, 3 (1992): 364–418; and Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market,* pp. 17–39.

3. See *ibid.;* Nanette Funk and Magda Mueller, eds., *Gender Politics and Post-Communism: Reflections from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Gail Kligman, "The Social Legacy of Communism: Women, Children and the Feminization of Poverty," in *The Social Legacy of Communism,* ed. James Millar and Sharon Wolchik (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994), pp. 252–70; Maxine Molyneux, "Women's Rights and the International Context: Some Reflections on the Post-Communist States," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23, 2 (1994): 287–313.

4. Kligman, "Social Legacy of Communism."

5. Sonja Licht is a prominent Serbian human and women's rights activist. On male democracies, see Ruth Rosen, "Male Democracies, Female Dissidents," *Tikkun* 5, 6 (1990): 11–12; Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market,* pp. 148–81; Zillah Eisenstein, "Eastern European Male Democracies," in Funk and Mueller, eds., pp. 303–17.

6. See, for example, the report by the Domestic Violence in Eastern Europe Project, *Lifting the Last Curtain: A Report on Domestic Violence in Romania* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 1995), or the numerous articles in Marina Blagojević, Daša Duhaček, and Jasmina Lukić, eds., *What Can We Do for Ourselves?* (Belgrade: Center for Women's Studies, Research and Communication, 1995).

7. This discussion offers a summary of issues that have been treated in a growing literature on women and the transition in Eastern Europe. See, for example, Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market;* Funk and Mueller, eds., *Gender Politics,* and Molyneux, "Women's Rights."

8. See each respective "Country Report," in *The Economist Intelligence Unit* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 1994), from which this summary has been compiled.

9. With certain exceptions, women's participation in national politics has been characterized by a limited number of striking figures—all of whom are deemed "controversial." Although Hillary Clinton is nationally recognized, she is neither an elected nor appointed official. In the United States, it

remains unlikely that "the year of the woman" will become routine electoral practice, despite recent important gains. On women and politics, see Barbara J. Nelson and Najma Chowdhury, eds., *Women and Politics Worldwide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

10. See Joanna Regulska, *Women's Participation in Political and Public Life* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1995), p. 3. Background Document EG/DEM 95, No. 10.

11. For comparative treatment, see Nelson and Chowdhury, eds., *Women and Politics Worldwide.*

12. See Regulska, *Women's Participation,* p. 3.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.,* p. 4. The gendering of NGO participation seems to mirror general trends: women are more actively involved in the pragmatics of everyday life.

15. International assistance consists of infrastructural "know-how" and, importantly, financial support. The political effects of their input must also be assessed in that the dependency relationship between donors and NGO receivers has generally been one-sided. On foreign aid to Central and Eastern Europe, see, for example, Janine Wedel, "The Unintended Consequences of Western Aid to Post-Communist Europe," *Telos* 92 (1992): 131–38; "U.S. Aid to Central and Eastern Europe, 1990–1994: An Analysis of Aid Models and Responses," in *East-Central European Economies in Transition* (Washington, D.C.: 103d Congress, 2d Session Joint Committee Print, November 1994), pp. 299–335; and Steve Sampson, "The Social Life of Projects: Bringing Civil Society to Albania," in *Civil Society: Anthropological Approaches,* ed. C. Hann (New York: Routledge—forthcoming).

16. See, for example, Harry Blair, "Civil Society and Democratic Development: A CDIE Evaluation Design Paper" (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 1995).

17. Among them are Vaclav Havel, Adam Michnik, and Georgy Konrad. For summary discussions of their works and roles, see, for example, Tony Judt, "The Dilemmas of Dissidence: The Politics of Opposition in East-Central Europe," *East European Politics and Societies* 2, 2 (1988): 393–437; Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel* (New York: Free Press, 1992). (A representative review of the literature is beyond the scope of this article.) Barbara Einhorn and others refer to the submerging of women's critical roles in social movements. On this point, also see the report of the conference, "Women and Political Transitions in South America and Eastern and Central Europe: The Prospects for Democracy," International and Public Affairs Center, Occidental College, December 1992.

18. There is a growing literature on the new social movements. For example, Russell Dalton and Manfred Kuechler, *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies* (New York: Oxford

University Press, 1990); E. Larana, H. Johnston, and J. Gusfield, *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

19. The data on women's economic vulnerability are fairly consistent. For an initial summary, see Kligman, "Social Legacy of Communism." See also Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market,* pp. 113–47; Monica Fong and Gillian Paull, "The Changing Role of Women in Employment in Eastern Europe," *World Bank Report,* no. 8213 (1992); Regulska, *Women's Participation;* and the pertinent articles contained in Funk and Mueller, eds., *Gender Politics.* Numerous ILO, World Bank, and AID studies present similar findings (e.g., "Poland: Gender Issues in the Transition to a Market Economy," draft report prepared by Coopers and Lyband for the Office of Women in Development, AID, 1991).

20. See Jean-Claude Chesnais, "La durée de la vie dans les pays industrialisés," *La Recherche* 147, 14 (September 1983): 1040–47; Nicholas Eberstadt, "Mortality and the Fate of Communist States," *Communist Economies and Economic Transformation* 5, 4 (1993): 499–517; Peggy Watson, "Explaining Rising Mortality among Men in Eastern Europe," *Social Science and Medicine* 41, 14 (1995): 923–34.

21. I thank Eva Fodor for the data from the "Social Stratification Survey in East Central Europe 1993," on which these summary statements are based. See also the *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1993), especially sections 2B–C. It appears that the feminization of agriculture continues in Romania in contrast to developments elsewhere, where women are more involved in the service sector than in agriculture. In Romania, as of March 1994, men's participation in the service sector was slightly higher than women's: 35.5 percent compared with 30.8 percent. These tendencies in Romania have been attributed to slow privatization. See "Statistici pe genuri ale fortei de munca" (National Commission for Statistics, 1994). I thank Laura Grunberg for having provided me with a copy of this summary. I am unable to supply a full citation.

22. Sabine Hubner, Friederike Maier, and Hedwig Rudolph, "Women's Employment in Central and Eastern Europe, Status and Prospects"; paper presented at ILO, OECD-CCEET conference, September 1991, p. 11.

23. Sexual harassment is not as yet a prominent issue in the former Soviet sphere. Nonetheless, it is beginning to attract foreign media attention. See Alessandra Stanley, "Sexual Harassment Thrives in the New Russian Climate," *New York Times International,* April 17, 1994.

24. Regulska, *Women's Participation,* p. 7. Female employment must therefore be carefully contextualized for analytic purposes. Employment figures in and of themselves reveal little about women's economic status.

25. *Ibid.* Data collection and analysis are problematic throughout the region, where data are rarely disaggregated according to gender.

26. Again, I thank Eva Fodor for these statistics, which are drawn from section 9A of the ILO's *Yearbook of Statistics 1993* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1993)

27. Eva Fodor, "Gender in Transition: Unemployment in Post-State Socialist Societies"; unpublished paper, 1995, p. 27.

28. *Ibid.*

29. See, for example, William Moskoff, "Unemployment in the Former Soviet Union," in Millar and Wolchik, eds., pp. 354–78, for a useful discussion of unemployment issues with passing attention to gender variables.

30. See Rosamund Shreeves, "Sexual Revolution or 'Sexploitation': The Pornography and Erotica Debate in the Soviet Union," in *Women in the Face of Change: The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China,* ed. Shirin Rai, Hilary Pilkington, and Annie Phizacklea (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 130–46. The above-cited literature about the transition in Eastern Europe contains related discussions. Also see Katrina vanden Heuvel, "From Proletarians to Pinups: In the New, Anti-Feminist Russia, Sexploitation Meets Mandatory Motherhood," *Washington Post,* February 21, 1993. Larissa Lissyutkina remarked: "The prostitute, the lone entrepreneur breaking taboos, is the pioneer of the market economy, from which is supposed to come universal salvation. This salvation is personified by the male foreigner. . . . The age of the transition to a free market . . . may be graphically symbolized by the grotesque marriage of the hard-currency 'intourist girl' to the foreign businessman" ("Soviet Women at the Crossroads of Perestroika," in Funk and Mueller, eds., p. 284). Regarding prostitution as an employment option, a president of a woman's organization in Romania recently noted: "A prostitution law must be adopted urgently, because it is denigrating to be considered the cheapest workforce in the world in this domain" (reported in *Telegrama,* September 11, 1995).

31. See Gabor Vajda, "Zsuzsa in Hong Kong Wants to Talk to You: Phone Sex in Hungary Is Strictly a Pre-Recorded Affair, and, So Far, an Unregulated One," *Budapest Week,* October 7–13, 1993, p. 5.

32. Eva Fodor kindly sent this information to me from the article "Budapest Európa pornófövárosa?" (Is Budapest the porno capital of the world?), *Nepszabadsag,* August 26, 1995. Presumably, most pornographic films are oriented toward heterosexual sex. Fodor also counted eight Hungarian pornographic videos in the adult section of her neighborhood video store in Los Angeles; there were no other films of this sort from Eastern Europe (although there is also a pornographic film market in the Czech Republic).

33. As Ruth Milkman pointed out, regulation short of censorship is another option.

34. See B. Sullivan, "Working 9–5 in a Strip Bar," *Budapest Business Journal,* September 15–24, 1995. The young strip dancer interviewed noted that she en-

joyed the aerobic exercise and that she herself did not engage in sex with customers.

35. See Jane Perlez, "Hungarians' AIDS Risk Rises as Economy Slows," *New York Times,* September 14, 1993. The prevalence of prostitutes in some neighborhoods has prompted local legal action intended to reinstill public propriety. One Budapest council has tried to regulate the dress and behavior of women on the streets, which, in turn, has aroused concern about violations of various rights. The legal action was taken in part to tame local "activity." As one council member commented, "You have no idea what is going on here on a summer night. Women appear on the street in swimming suits or have nothing on their butts. In winter they wear nothing under their coats and flash themselves for passers-by. That is quite obviously enticing, isn't it?" (see "District VIII Seeks to Curb Streetwalkers," *Budapest Weekly,* October 7–13, 1993).

36. I assume that this statement may be generalized throughout the region. On the nouveau riche, see Steve Sampson, "Money without Culture, Culture without Money," *American Journal of European Cultures* 2 (Spring 1993): 7–30.

37. This is gross income and does not include sums paid for advertising, retaining taxi drivers, paying police bribes, and the like. (See B. Sullivan, "Sex for Sale," *Budapest Business Journal,* September, 15–24, 1995. I thank Ákos Róna-Tas for having sent me this article.)

38. See Sampson, "Money without Culture." The "othering of AIDS" is highly problematic.

39. Marlise Simons, "East Europeans Duped into West's Sex Trade," *New York Times International,* June 9, 1993.

40. *Ibid.* False job offers are standard in the international sex trade, which exploits poverty (and often poor education) to advantage. Although some women are conscious of the "subtext," many are not. For a similar case involving the Asian sex industry, see Carey Goldberg, "From a Bangkok Grocery to a Brothel in New York," *New York Times,* September 12, 1995.

41. See Sharon Waxman, "The Newest Profession: They Left Eastern Europe with Capitalist Dreams. Now They're on the Market," *Washington Post,* September 8, 1993.

42. "Rasierklinge am Hals': Tatort Deutschland (III): Frauenhandel und Zwangsprostitution," *Der Spiegel,* no. 34 (1993): 70. I am indebted to Heidi Whitesell, who did the basic research upon which much of this section is based. The references are from "The Dangerous Seduction on the Road to 'Freedom': The Federal Republic of Germany and the Trafficking of Eastern European Women"; seminar paper, spring, 1993. On international prostitution, see Kathleen Barry, *Prostitution of Sexuality* (New York: New York University Press, 1995); Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

43. As reported by Heidi Whitesell, citing "Rasierklinge am Hals'," pp. 4–5. Middle-persons of all sorts are engaged in the international traffic in women—and children. It has proved to be a lucrative endeavor, especially in this period of economic transformation. Moreover, with the exception of Central Asian women, the women entering "the market" are usually white. This is an important point in the racial hierarchy of gender relations. "Familiarity" as well as "exotic otherness" can now be marketed effectively.

44. The literature on rape in the former Yugoslavia is too extensive for reference herein (as is the literature on rape in general, rape and war, and so forth). For example, see Alexandra Stiglmayer, ed., *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Hercegovina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Silva Meznarić, "Gender as an Ethno-Marker: Rape, War, and Identity Politics in the Former Yugoslavia," in *Women and Identity Politics,* ed. Valentine Moghadam (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 77–98. On rape and the spoils of war, see especially Atina Grossmann, "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers," *October* 72 (Spring 1955): 43–63.

45. On the relationship between nationalism and reproduction, see, for example, Susan Gal, "Gender in the Post-Socialist Transition: The Abortion Debate in Hungary," *East European Politics and Societies* 8, 1 (1994): 256–86; Molyneux, "Women's Rights," pp. 307–9; Hermine de Soto, " 'In the Name of the Folk': Women and Nation in the New Germany," *UCLA Women's Law Journal* 5, 1 (1994): 83–101. With respect to the abortion law in Poland, there is room for interpretation regarding the circumstances which justify a legal abortion. Physicians have been harassed for performing legal abortions; the odds are not in the favor of women seeking abortions.

46. On the Polish abortion law, see Eleonora Zielinska, "Recent Trends in Abortion Legislation in Eastern Europe, with Particular Reference to Poland," *Criminal Law Forum* 4, 1 (1993): 47–93.

47. Jane Perlez, "A Painful Case Tests Poland's Abortion Ban," *New York Times International,* April 2, 1995.

48. John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life* (*Evangelium Vitae*) (New York: Random House, 1995).

49. This outcome was predictable. See Gail Kligman, "Women and Reproductive Legislation in Romania," in *Dilemmas of Transition in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,* ed. George Breslauer (Berkeley: Center for Slavic and East European Studies, 1991), pp. 141–66.

50. Jane Perlez, "Fertilization in Vitro Disputed in Warsaw," *New York Times,* March 19, 1995.

51. It is beyond the scope of this review to provide data about each country. For data about contraception in Romania, see, for example, *Reproductive Health Survey Romania 1993* (Institute for Mother and Child Care, Bucharest, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1995), pp. 61–116.

52. The demographics of war tend to favor women and children as survivors, which by and large explains this gendered imbalance. According to the UN High Commission for Refugees' office in Belgrade, nearly two-thirds of the 600,000 persons displaced from Yugoslavia by the end of 1991 were women and children (*World Refugee Report* [Washington D.C.: Bureau for Refugee Programs, 1992], p. 137).

53. See, for example, Christina Schenk, "Lesbians and Their Emancipation in the Former German Democratic Republic: Past and Future," in Funk and Mueller, eds., pp. 160–67; John Borneman, ed., *Gay Voices from East Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). Various organizations throughout the region provide information and support, such as the Ženska Infoteka in Zagreb.

54. George Konrad, *Anti-Politics, an Essay* (New Haven: Henry Holt, 1984), pp. 197–202, as cited in Joanna Goven, "Gender Politics in Hungary," in Funk and Mueller, eds., pp. 225, 235. In addition to Goven, critical views have been expressed by Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market,* pp. 59–68; Kligman, "The Social Legacy of Communism"; and Molyneux, "Women's Rights."

55. See Funk and Mueller, eds., pp. 7, 19, and 70, for example.

56. Molyneux, "Women's Rights," p. 308.

# ETHNOTERRITORIAL UNITS IN THE USSR AND SUCCESSOR STATES

## Yuri Slezkine

The Russian Revolution was fought over class, but the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that emerged from that revolution was organized along ethnic lines.

At least part of the sin was original: in early Bolshevik theory the future belonged to the proletariat, but the present was carved up among nations. Nations had common languages, territories, markets, and cultures. According to both Lenin and Stalin, they also had rights:

> A nation can organize its life as it sees fit. It has the right to organize its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign and all nations are equal.[1]

All nations were not equal in size: there were small nations and there were large (and hence "great-power") nations. All nations were not equal in their development: there were "backward" nations (an obvious oxymoron in Stalin's terms), and there were "civilized" nations. All nations were not equal in their economic (hence class, hence moral) personae: some were "oppressor nations" and some were "oppressed." But all nations—indeed all nationalities no matter how "backward"—were equal because they were equally sovereign—that is, because they all had the same rights.

What social class could demand self-determination and under what conditions it could do so was of course a matter for vigorous and ultimately meaningless debate—all the more vigorous and meaningless because most of the peoples of the Russian Empire had not progressed very far along the road of capitalist development and thus were not nations in Marxist terms.[2] Another acrimoniously

fruitless affair was Lenin's insistence on the political meaning of "self-determination" and his deathbed dispute with Stalin over its practical implementation within the Soviet state. Much more significant in the long run was Lenin's and Stalin's common campaign for a strictly territorial definition of autonomy, a campaign they waged against Bund and Bauer but abandoned after 1917 because both sides won (Soviet federalism combined ethnicity with territory and—at least for the first twenty years—guaranteed the cultural rights of various leftover diasporas). The most remarkable aspect of that campaign was the assertion, rarely challenged either before or after 1917, that all territorial divisions could be described as either "medieval" or "modern," with modernity defined as democracy (borders "based on popular sympathies"), and with democracy resulting in "the greatest possible homogeneity in the national composition of the population."[3] The borders of the socialist state would be "determined . . . according to the will and 'sympathies' of the population," and at least some of those sympathies would run along ethnic lines.[4] If this were to breed "national minorities," they too would have their equal status guaranteed.[5] And if equal status (and economic rationality) required the creation of countless "autonomous national districts . . . of even the smallest size," then such districts would be created and probably combined "in a variety of ways with neighboring districts of various sizes."[6]

But why set up ethnoterritorial autonomies under socialism if most socialists agreed that federalism was a "philistine ideal," that "national culture" was a bourgeois fiction, and that assimilation was a progressive process that substituted a "mobile proletarian" for the "obtuse," "savage," "somnolent" peasant "glued to his pile of manure" and beloved for that very reason by conniving connoisseurs of national culture?[7] First of all, because Lenin's socialism did not grow on trees. To bring it about, Lenin's socialists had to "preach against [the slogan of national culture] in all languages, 'adapting' themselves to all local and national requirements."[8] They needed native languages, native subjects, and native teachers ("even for a single Georgian child") in order to "polemicize with 'their own' bourgeoisie, spread anticlerical and antibourgeois ideas among 'their own' peasantry and burghers," and banish the virus of nationalism from their proletarian disciples and their own minds.[9] This was a missionary project analogous to the so-called "Il'minskii sys-

tem" formulated in the Kazan' of Lenin's youth.[10] "Only the mother tongue," claimed Il'minskii, "can truly, rather than only superficially, set the people on the path of Christianity."[11] Only the mother tongue, wrote Stalin in 1913, can make possible "a full development of the intellectual faculties of the Tatar or of the Jewish worker."[12] Both theories of conversion assumed that "native language" was a totally transparent conduit for an apostle's message. Unlike more "conservative" missionaries, who saw culture as an integral system and argued that in order to defeat "an alien faith" one had to "struggle against an alien nationality—against the mores, customs, and the whole of the domestic arrangement of alien life,"[13] the Kazan' reformers and the fathers of the Soviet ethnic policy believed that nationality had nothing to do with faith. According to Lenin, Marxist schools would have the same Marxist curriculum irrespective of the linguistic medium.[14] Insofar as national culture was a reality, it was about language and a few "domestic arrangements." Nationality was "form." "National form" was acceptable because there was no such thing as national content.

Another reason for Lenin's and Stalin's early defense of nationalism (defining "nationalism" as a belief that ethnic boundaries are ontologically essential, essentially territorial, and ideally political)[15] was the distinction that they drew between oppressor-nation nationalism and oppressed-nation nationalism. The first, sometimes glossed as "great-power chauvinism," was gratuitously malevolent; the second was legitimate, albeit transitory. The first was the result of unfair size advantage; the second was a reaction to discrimination and persecution. The first could be eliminated only as a consequence of proletarian victory and subsequent self-discipline and self-purification; the second had to be assuaged through sensitivity and tact.[16] Accordingly, the slogans of national self-determination and ethnoterritorial autonomy were gestures of contrition. They came easily and went a long way insofar as they dealt with "form":

> A minority is discontented not because there is no [extraterritorial] national union but because it does not have the right to use its native language. Allow it to use its native language and the discontent will pass by itself.[17]

The more rights and opportunities the national minority would enjoy, the more "trust" (*doverie*) it would have in the proletarians of

the former oppressor-nation. Genuine equality of "form" would reveal the historically contingent nature of nationalism and the underlying unity of class content.

> Having transformed capitalism into socialism, the proletariat will create an *opportunity* for the total elimination of national oppression; this opportunity will become a *reality* "only"—"only"!—after a total democratization of all spheres, including the establishment of state borders according to the "sympathies" of the population and a complete freedom of secession. This, in turn, will lead *in practice* to a total abolition of all national tensions and all national distrust, to an accelerated drawing together and merger of nations which will result in the *withering away* of the state.[18]

The "practice" of the revolution and civil war did nothing to change this program. The earliest decrees of the new Bolshevik government described the victorious masses as "peoples" and "nations" endowed with "rights";* proclaimed all peoples to be equal and sovereign; guaranteed their sovereignty through an ethnoterritorial federation and a right to secession; endorsed "the free development of national minorities and ethnic groups"; and pledged to respect national beliefs, customs, and institutions.[19] By the end of the war, the need for local allies and the recognition of existing (and sometimes ethnically defined) entities combined with principle to produce an assortment of legally recognized (and increasingly ethnically defined) Soviet republics, autonomous republics, autonomous regions, and toilers' communes. Some autonomies appeared more autonomous than others, but "nationality" reigned supreme. "Many of these peoples have nothing in common except the fact that before they were all parts of the Russian Empire and now they have all been liberated by the revolution, but there are no internal connections among them."[20] According to Lenin's paradox, the surest way to unity in content was diversity in form. By "fostering national cultures" (*nasazhdat' natsional'nuiu kul'turu*) and creating national autonomies, national schools, national languages, and national cadres, the Bolsheviks would overcome national distrust and reach national audiences:

*"Peoples" and "nations" were used interchangeably.

We are going to help you develop your Buriat, Votiak, etc. language and culture, because in this way you will join the universal culture [*obshchechelovecheskaia kul'tura*], revolution, and communism sooner.[21]

The way to communism, therefore, lay through the creation of the USSR—a union of ethnically defined republics populated by ethnically defined individuals.[22]

There was not an inch of Soviet territory that did not have an ethnic landlord (and sometimes two, as in the case of "autonomous" units within union republics). The constituent parts of the federation were nationally defined states with nationally defined boundaries, institutions, and memories. They did not have full sovereignty, but they did have clear national identities formulated and maintained by specially trained "national intelligentsias." Theoretically, these identities were of equal value (the USSR being a "fraternal family of peoples"), but in fact they were ranked according to their place on the evolutionary scale (not all fraternal peoples were officially recognized as nations) and their degree of institutional autonomy (not all ethnoterritorial members of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were "union republics").

It was not just territory that was fully nationalized: individuals were, too. There was not a single plain Soviet in the Soviet Union: every citizen had a "nationality" defined according to biological (genealogical) criteria impervious to cultural or geographical change. Unearned and inescapable, state-determined personal ethnicity (fixed in one's internal passport) could be a crucial factor in hiring, admissions, promotions, and countless other encounters between individuals and state agencies. In informal—i.e., "passportless"—settings, "real nationality" (important in friendship networks and marriage choices) could be determined on the basis of such external markers of genealogical identity as names, accents, and physical features. Intermarriage and attempts at "passing" confused the picture and therefore called for greater vigilance all around: some colleges inquired after the applicant's mother's maiden name, and some citizens prided themselves on their craniometric and onomastic skills. (Test 1: Describe how an Armenian nose differs from a Georgian nose; Test 2: Is "Slezkine" a Russian name?) The relevance, value, and meaning of these identities were, of course, interpreted differently in

different contexts. The same cheekbones could tell widely dissimilar stories as one traveled along the Trans-Siberian, men might have an easier time "marrying down" than women, and army conscripts tended to collapse the whole intricate system of ethnic markers into two hostile "races."

The territorial and individual identities presupposed one another. The Republic of Uzbekistan was created as a quasi-nation-state for preexisting ethnic Uzbeks; its culture, history, and literary tradition were to be defined and defended accordingly. By the same token, the passport nationality "Uzbek" was fully meaningful in relation to particular territories: it tended to constitute an advantage in Uzbekistan and a drawback in Tadjikistan. Any state with an ethnic landlord was a potentially homogeneous nation. Any compact group of carriers of the same biologically defined nationality had a theoretical claim to a state of its own ("national self-determination"). And given that all uprooted passport holders necessarily resided on someone else's ethnic territory, these two kinds of logic seemed locked in a hopelessly even combat. On the one hand, all residents of Latvia might (and perhaps must) someday become Latvians; on the other, all non-Latvian groups in Latvia were theoretically entitled to national liberation (i.e., to the dismemberment of Latvia). Besides the card-carrying ethnics living outside their territories, the main casualties of the chronic lack of fit between personal and territorial nationality were nationalities without a territory (Poles, Hungarians, Germans) and territories without a nationality (the Khanty and Mansi population of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District was about 2 percent).

The Soviet government endorsed both definitions of nationality without ever attempting to construct an ethnically meaningful Soviet nation or turn the USSR into a Russian nation-state, so that when the non-national Soviet state lost its Soviet meaning, the national non-states were the only possible heirs. Perhaps predictably, the USSR collapsed along preexisting ethnoterritorial lines. All the Union republics (nation states without full political independence) acquired political independence and became full-fledged nation states—*nation* states because that was their raison d'être within the USSR and because that was the universally recognized reason for their withdrawing from the USSR. Estonia had the right to independence because the Estonian people were entitled to their own state.

All the post-Soviet states shared a congenital defect inherited from the same sick parent: not all citizens belonged to the nationality whose name the state bore. The familiar tension between personal and territorial concepts of ethnicity was exacerbated by the fact that the sacred principle of national liberation was accompanied by the no less sacred principle of the inviolability of borders. Estonia is a state because Estonians are entitled to one, but Estonia is a state in its present shape because it was a Soviet republic of the same shape. Estonians as a group did not secede in order to form their own state; the Soviet territory assigned to Estonians (including the predominantly Russian northeast) seceded as a whole. The predominantly Russian population of the Estonian northeast is entitled to self-determination according to the first sacred principle and not entitled to it according to the second. Not all ethnically defined groups equally deserve national self-determination, and not all borders are equally inviolable.

How are the various new states dealing with the predicament of ethnic diversity? One thing, at least, is clear: no one seems particularly keen on ethnoterritorial fragmentation. The Estonian political elites are resolutely opposed to a formal "autonomization" of the compact Russian population of the northeast. The Latvian legislators' lack of enthusiasm for such solutions is probably not surprising, given that variously defined non-Latvians make up important majorities in the country's major cities. The Ukrainian state has had some success in its attempts to undermine the self-styled autonomy of the largely non-Ukrainian Crimea. Both Moldova and Georgia went to war over the issue of ethnoterritorial autonomy, and both lost: the de facto national autonomy of Trans-Dniester, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia is the result of the inability of various sides to impose their versions of the nation-state principle, not the result of their recognition of the principle of ethnoterritorial federation. In Nagorno-Karabakh, too, "national liberation" prevailed on the battlefield but remains hostage to the "inviolable borders."

The legitimacy of a nation state depends on the nationality of its citizens, but the legally recognized markers of ethnic belonging (and hence citizenship) vary from place to place. In the Baltic countries, for example, the crucial criteria of belonging are one's place of birth and official-language proficiency. Such a nongenealogical approach successfully excludes large groups of "nontitular" residents

while paving the way for future assimilation. If the newly nationalized education system does its job, in other words, the children of today's resident noncitizens will in due course become titular, and therefore loyal, citizens (from "Russian speakers" to Estonians).

The Ukrainian nation state, on the other hand, has a strong incentive to preserve Soviet-style biological ethnicity. Given that passport Ukrainians are more numerous than linguistic Ukrainians and assuming that the state is interested in maximizing the number of full-fledged Ukrainians, the best policy would be to make language contingent on genealogy—or rather, to take biological Ukrainianness for granted and then encourage all Ukrainians to learn their "native" (i.e., official) language.

Nation-state rhetoric is everywhere accompanied—as well as contradicted—by the language of civic equality and cultural diversity. The leadership of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in particular, is careful to emphasize that the Kazakh state is a political embodiment of the people of Kazakhstan—not just of the Kazakh people. Aimed at the large non-Kazakh population and its "near-abroad" protectors, however, this message does not, and cannot, replace the notion that the Kazakh people have finally acquired a state of their own. A Kazakhstan completely disassociated from the Kazakhs has no reason to celebrate independence and thus no raison d'être at all.

The only former Soviet state to preserve, and indeed enshrine, the principle of ethnoterritorial federation is Russia. It had the largest number of ethnically defined (and in some cases very powerful) political units to begin with; it was the failed mother country and thus the place to secede from; and it discarded its Soviet trappings (including Gorbachev) with the help of some important "autonomies."

Whatever the reasons, the results are fairly familiar. The Russian territory is divided into ethnically defined administrative units, and the Russian population is divided into legally meaningful ethnic communities, however defined. (For as long as there is a Buriat homeland with special opportunities for Buriats, there has to be a formal way of determining who is a Buriat.)

This leads to more familiar results. Within each unit, there are two classes of citizens: those who belong (Tuvinians in Tuva: personal and territorial nationality coincide) and those who do not (Russians in Tuva: personal and territorial nationality do not coincide).

Those who do not belong are further divided into two categories: those who belong elsewhere in the Russian Federation and those who do not belong anywhere (or belong abroad, which is legally the same thing). Those who belong in their place of residence are divided into those who truly belong (territorial nationality, personal nationality, and native language/culture all coincide: passport Tatars who live in Tatarstan and speak Tatar) and those who do not truly belong (passport Tatars in Tatarstan who do not speak Tatar and have yet to learn how to be a true Tatar).

An additional criterion of belonging is introduced by the concept of indigenousness (*korennoi*). All titular (landlord) nationalities are presumed to be indigenous—often in the face of strenuous but ineffectual opposition by other claimants. The Evenk may present a great deal of evidence proving that the Sakha (Yakut) are not indigenous to Sakha (Yakutia), but for all practical purposes it is the administrative unit that confers primacy—not the other way around. Still, some indigenous peoples are more indigenous than others by virtue of being "traditional" or "premodern." Special (though still embryonic) legislation awards particular status to groups regarded as economically uncompetitive and therefore worthy of government protection (on the theory that the inability to compete constitutes a moral superiority deserving of legal endorsement).

This hierarchy of belonging is further complicated by the fact that most ethnic groups are in the minority in "their own" territories, which means that the ethnic character of a given territory (with the political ascendancy of ethnic elites as its precondition) can be enforced only by means of quotas, veto rights, vigorous "native-language" laws, and other measures that offend against the rhetoric of equal citizenship.

Most inconveniently as well as inescapably, the Russian Federation is rhetorically Russian. Some politicians make the point of using the adjective *rossiiskii* (of Russia) as opposed to *russkii* (Russian) when speaking of the whole multiethnic federation, but the most visible trappings of common statehood and common fate are all Russian in ways that do not lend themselves to the ethnic-civic distinction.

The USSR is dead; long live the Russian Empire?

**NOTES**

1. Joseph Stalin, *Marksizm i natsional'nyi vopros* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1950), p. 51. See also V. I. Lenin, *Voprosy natsional'noi politiki i proletarskogo internatsionalizma* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1965), passim.

2. Stalin, *Marksizm,* p. 37. The view of a nation (as opposed to a nationality) as a "historical category belonging to a particular epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism" became something of a truism and was reconfirmed without debate at the Tenth Party Congress.

3. Lenin, "Kriticheskie zametki po natsional'nomu voprosu" (1913), in *Voprosy,* pp. 32–34.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 33, and Lenin, "Itogi diskussii o samoopredelenii" (1916), in *Voprosy,* p. 128.

5. Lenin, "Kriticheskie zametki," p. 26.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16, and Lenin, "O prave natsii na samoopredelenie" (1914), in *Voprosy,* p. 81n, and "O natsional'noi gordosti velikorossov" (1914), in *Voprosy,* p. 107.

8. Lenin, "Kriticheskie zametki," p. 9.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 28, and Lenin, "O prave," pp. 61, 83–84.

10. Isabelle Kreindler, "A Neglected Source of Lenin's Nationality Policy," *Slavic Review* 36 (March 1977): 86–100.

11. Quoted in Isabelle Kreindler, "Educational Policies toward the Eastern Nationalities in Tsarist Russia: A Study of the Il'minskii System," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1969, pp. 75–76.

12. Stalin, *Marksizm,* p. 21.

13. Veniamin, Arkhiepiskop Irkutskii i Nerchinskii, *Zhiznennye voprosy pravoslavnoi missii v Sibiri* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. M. Kotomina, 1885), p. 7. For a discussion of the controversy, see Yuri Slezkine, "Savage Christians or Unorthodox Russians? The Missionary Dilemma in Siberia," in *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*, ed. Galya Diment and Yuri Slezkine (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 18–27.

14. Lenin, "Kriticheskie zametki," p. 7.

15. See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 1; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 9; John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 3.

16. Lenin: "O natsional'noi programme RSDRP" (1913), in *Voprosy,* p. 41; "O prave," pp. 61–62, 102; "Sotsialisticheskaia revoliutsiia i pravo natsii na samoopredelenie" (1916), in *Voprosy,* pp. 113–14.

17. Stalin, *Marksizm,* p. 163. The same applied to national schools, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, "etc."

18. Lenin, "Itogi diskussii o samoopredelenii" (1916), in *Voprosy,* p. 129.

19. *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti,* vol. 1 (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1957), pp. 39–41, 113–15, 168–70, 195–96, 340–44, 351, 367.

20. S. Dimanshtein, "Narodnyi kommissariat po delam natsional'nostei," *Zhizn' natsional'nostei* 41, 49 (October 26, 1919).

21. S. Dimanshtein, "Sovetskaia vlast' i melkie natsional'nosti," *Zhizn' natsional'nostei* 46, 54 (December 7, 1919). See also S. Pestkovskii, "Natsional'naia kul'tura," *Zhizn' natsional'nostei* 21, 29 (June 8, 1919).

22. The above is from Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53 (Summer 1994): 416–20. For what follows I am mostly indebted to Rogers Brubaker's "Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Eurasia: An Institutionalist Account," *Theory and Society* 23 (February 1994): 47–78.

# NATIONS, REGIONS, MENTALITIES: THE MANY FACES OF YUGOSLAVIA

## Veljko Vujаœić

In one of his many moving stories about Bosnia, the Yugoslav author Ivo Andrić describes the great fragility of the coexistence of different civilizations and cultures in his native land. The hero of Andrić's story is an Ashkenazi Jew from Sarajevo, Max Levenfeld, a high school friend of the author's. In rather typical East European fashion, the author meets his friend many years after their high school days in a train station in Croatian Slavonia. The accidental and unexpected meeting takes place in the immediate aftermath of World War I, during which Max served as a doctor in a Bosnian unit of the imperial Austro-Hungarian army. After exchanging a few bitter impressions about the terrible war, Max explains to his friend that he has decided to leave Bosnia and emigrate to Paris or perhaps Latin America; the reason, he states, is that he cannot stand the "hatred." In the ensuing melee, which routinely accompanies the painful process of boarding a train in these parts of the world, the two friends lose sight of each other. Twenty days later, however, the author receives a letter of explanation from his Jewish friend, a long reflection on that troublesome reality which in some luckier countries is described, in a somewhat colorless phrase, as "multiculturalism."

Appropriately, the fragility of human existence is captured by the ticking of clocks, by that great enemy of all life, time. Unlike Western clocks, however, Bosnian clocks measure collective, not individual time:

> Whoever lies awake at night in Sarajevo hears the voices of the Sarajevo night. The clock on the Catholic cathedral strikes the hour with weighty confidence: 2 am. More than a minute passes (to be exact, seventy-five seconds—I counted), and only then,

with a rather weaker, but piercing sound does the Orthodox church announce the hour, and chime its own 2 am. A moment after it, the tower clock on the Bey's mosque strikes the hour in a hoarse, faraway voice, and that strikes 11, the ghostly Turkish hour, by the strange calculation of distant, alien parts of the world! The Jews have no clock to sound their hour, so God alone knows what time it is for them by the Sephardic reckoning or the Ashkenazi. Thus, at night, while everyone is sleeping, division keeps vigil in the counting of the late, small hours, and separates these sleepy people who, awake, rejoice and mourn, feast and fast by four different and antagonistic calendars, and send their prayers and wishes to one heaven in four different ecclesiastical languages. And this difference, sometimes visible and open, sometimes invisible and hidden, is always similar to hatred, and often completely identical with it.

This uniquely Bosnian hatred should be studied and eradicated like some pernicious, deeply-rooted disease. Foreign scholars should come to Bosnia to study hatred, I do believe, just as scientists study leprosy, if hatred were only recognized as a separate, classified subject of study as leprosy is.[1]

This is how Max, the Ashkenazi Jew from Sarajevo, justifies his decision to leave Bosnia, despite his strong desire to remain in his native town as a doctor, bound by the Hippocratic oath and personal conviction to cure Bosnian children of all faiths and communities. Ironically, however, Max's compassion leads him from Paris straight into the Spanish Civil War, and the "man who ran away from hatred" perishes in the bombing of a hospital in a small town in Aragon together with his patients.

The characters of a story, needless to say, do not always reflect the opinion of the author; were it not so, fiction would lose all meaning. But Andrić, better than any other Yugoslav author, described the hateful as well as beautiful and magical undercurrents of Bosnian life. And if the great author frequently concentrated on the seamier sides of Bosnian reality, it was not because he was eager to experience a repetition of those massacres which periodically destroyed the fragile balance of cultural coexistence.

It is a great irony, in view of all this, that Andrić has become a symbolic victim of "hatred" in the current Bosnian war. Sometime in

the early stages of the conflict, an angry Bosnian Moslem toppled the statue of the great author in the town of Višegrad on the Drina River. Apparently, Andrić's writings, considered anti-Moslem by the current Bosnian government, do not make him the preferred author of "multicultural Bosnia." Serbs, on the other hand, have claimed the writings of the great author as a justification for their actions against a Bosnia that they have done their best to destroy through acts of a "hatred" so deep that it truly deserves to be the object of scientific study. Even worse, one of the main ideologists of the current Serbian "hatred," the author Dobrica Ćosić, recently used Andrić's story, "A Letter from 1920," in order to argue against the possibility of any compromise in a "land torn by hatred," thereby boosting the morale of the likes of Radovan Karadžić.[2]

Nothing, indeed, was further from Andrić's intention. The great author, it should be remembered, was of Croatian stock from the central Bosnian town of Travnik; he spent most of his life in Belgrade and, if pressed, would probably have considered himself a writer belonging to the Serbian literary tradition; although not a Moslem, he had an excellent understanding of the mentality of Bosnian Moslems, that strange Serbo-Croatian speaking "tribe" of Slavic origin that converted to Islam during the long centuries of Ottoman conquest and cultural interpenetration. In short, Andrić's true identity, if any, was that of a Yugoslav.

Such peculiar combinations, in any case, were not untypical of Bosnia, for Bosnia, everyone will agree, was a small Yugoslavia. It is hardly an accident that the two proverbial and colorful characters of many Yugoslav jokes, Mujo and Haso (Mohammed and Hasan) were Bosnian Moslems. Although Moslem by name and in spirit, the overarching identity of Mujo and Haso was Yugoslav. Stuck between the Catholic Yugoslav West of Slovenia and Croatia and the Orthodox Yugoslav East of Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro, Mujo and Haso were at the very center of the larger homeland—a kind of Yugoslav average, a blend of and connection between Serb and Croat with an equally good understanding of Orthodoxy and Catholicism; as if the mixing of Orthodoxy and Catholicism in a South Slavic kitchen would give you a spicy Middle Eastern dish. And just as in an excellent dish of Balkan grilled meat it is impossible to say whether the spirit is Slavic and the flesh is Ottoman, so it is impossible to separate the two into the Bosnian body and soul. Or, to put

it differently, the Bosnian Moslem is rather like a delightful but also dangerous mixture of slivovitz and Turkish coffee, and, as any foreign traveler who was forced by his aggressively hospitable Yugoslav hosts to have a shot of slivovitz and a cup of Turkish coffee before breakfast knows, the cocktail was not made for timid souls.

If there is any purpose to this long introduction, it is to underscore the complexities of Bosnia and, by implication, Yugoslavia. With the exception of the most northern and culturally Western republic, Slovenia, the various Yugoslav lands offer no clear boundaries between civilizations, nations, religious communities, or mentalities. Even in Slovenia, the most ethnically homogenous successor state, one begins to sense the diversity of culture and experience. The impatient Westerner who crosses the border from the Austrian side will say that Slovenian villages are exactly like Austrian ones; but the one who crosses from Italy will say that they are exactly the same as in northern Italy. Visit the thin stretch of the Slovenian coast on the Istrian Peninsula (which Slovenia shares with neighboring Croatia) and you will see that both foreigners are right and wrong. For Istria, like its cuisine, offers a blend of Central Europe and Italy with a distinct Slavic touch. And, to your surprise, you are likely to find that the Istrians have assimilated the best of all those cultures: not as kitschy, but as clean as the Austrians; not as loud, but as fundamentally civilized as the Italians; not as proverbially thrifty (not to say stingy) as some continental Slovenes; not as angry, nor as Mediterranean as their neighbors, the Dalmatian Croats.

Travel further down the beautiful Croatian coast and you will enter a more typically Mediterranean world. It reaches its cultural height in the gorgeous but typically dirty and sweaty town of Split, in whose center one finds the formidable palace of the Roman emperor Diocletian, but unlike other ancient palaces, this one is still inhabited by real people who, in rather typical Mediterranean fashion, hang their linens from the windows. Split is also a world unto itself, not only a part of Croatian Dalmatia. For the old people of Split, there is only one truly legitimate identity: that of being a citizen of Split. The cruder newcomers, who come from the mountainous Dalmatian hinterland, are referred to as "Vlachs," a pejorative term derived from the name of an ancient Illyrian tribe. Sometimes used in Croatia and Bosnia to describe "primitive Serbs," in Split, Vlach applies to all crude mountaineers, regardless of nationality.

Just to prove that the southeast is not always more backward than the northwest, the city of Dubrovnik, located near the very border of Montenegro, is markedly more "civilized" than some parts of Dalmatia. If Split is as beautiful as Genoa and as angry as Naples, Dubrovnik is as majestic as a smaller Venice. With its distinct touch of a commercial aristocracy, it truly stands out among all South Slavic cities. Not accidentally, it was here that the Renaissance touched the South Slavic soul, producing the earliest majestic South Slavic poets like Ivan Gundulić who are jealously, egoistically, and meaninglessly claimed by Serbian and Croatian nationalists alike. This is because Dubrovnik, despite its predominantly Catholic character, always had a significant Serbian contingent. Moreover, it is here that in an interesting aberration from the historical pattern which largely equates Serbdom with Orthodoxy one finds a contingent of Catholic Serbs who converted to the Western faith through a centuries-long process of intermarriage and cultural mixing.

Istria, Dalmatia, and Dubrovnik, the last with its separate existence as a city-state until the Napoleonic invasions (among all the conquerors in the Balkans, it would be somewhat of a crime if we had missed out on the crowned Jacobin, Napoleon), do not exhaust the complexity of croissant-shaped Croatia. After all, the early Croatian kings ruled over the three historic lands of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia. Indeed, continental Croatia is different. In its capital, Zagreb, the angry, noisy, and urbane Mediterranean world of Dalmatia is replaced with the bourgeois (some would say petit bourgeois) manners of a medium-sized provincial capital of that great Central European empire whose symbol is the Viennese waltz. Zagreb is, indeed, a typical baroque Central European town, with the proverbial opera and coffee house at the center of its cultural life, while the southern suburbs of the city imperceptibly flow into the rich fields of Slavonia, itself a part of the larger Pannonian Plain, which Croatia shares with Hungary and Vojvodina, the last being the northern part of today's Serbia.

The boring sleepiness of these Slavonian villages and small towns served as a sort of inspiration for Miroslav Krleža, the most encyclopedic and cynical of all Croat and Yugoslav authors, a polyglot, polyhistor, and existentialist at the same time. Not infrequently—and, one suspects, whenever he suffered from one of those attacks of depression that inevitably and periodically shake a cos-

mopolitan intellectual stuck in the middle of a small provincial country with no grand historical perspective—Krleža would use the metaphor of "our Pannonian mud" to convey to the reader a feeling of existential despair from which there is no escape.

Even all this does not capture the full complexity of the Croatian nation, for we left out the most Croatian of all Croatian tribes, the Croats of Herzegovina. It is here, amidst the rocks and snakes, in the rough landscape of Herzegovina, which is rendered more humane only by the beautifully green and treacherous Neretva River, that the great Catholic Madonna of Medjugorje made her appearance. While Christian miracles are supposed to be unpredictable, if one were faced with a multiple-choice test before it happened, one would have probably predicted that a Catholic vision was bound to occur among the Herzegovina Croats. It is among them that the brothers of the most ascetic Franciscan order came to proselytize in an attempt to preserve the true faith in the face of the Ottoman onslaught from the east. For centuries they said their prayers and sang their chants all the more zealously because their flock was always under the threat of a potential conversion to Islam, in the fashion of some of their Bosnian brothers. Is it surprising that the most determined and vicious Croatian fighters have come from western Herzegovina? And is it surprising that the so-called Herzegovina lobby has a very strong influence on the policies of Franjo Tudjman's government, always pushing it more to the right, as if it were not right-wing enough?

The complexities of Croatia and Bosnia behind us, we can now travel east, to Serbia. If geographical Serbia is not as diverse as Croatia, the mentalities of the different Serbian "tribes" are as distinct as those which can be detected among their Catholic Croatian brethren. First, there are the peaceful Serbs of Vojvodina, a region which flows into Slavonia and is a part of the rich plain to the north. The proverbial hero of many jokes about these Serbs is Lala (tulip) from Vojvodina. In one of them, Lala catches a goldfish and, as is always the case, can have three wishes before he lets the goldfish free:

First wish: I don't want my wife Sosa [typically a healthy, plump lady] to cheat on me;

Second wish: If she cheats on me, I don't want to find out about it.

Third wish: Even if I find out about it, I don't want to get very upset.

Clearly, our Serbian tulip is not a warlike creature. But Vojvodina is not only the site of these peaceful Serbian peasants, but also the cradle of modern Serbian culture. In the aftermath of a series of unsuccessful uprisings against the Ottomans, the migrations from Kosovo (the largest one in 1690) brought into Hungarian Vojvodina a large contingent of Serbs, as well as the patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church. It was from Vojvodina that the bishops and more secular and better educated Serbian intelligentsia and petite bourgeoisie began a Serbian cultural revival in the nineteenth-century age of nationalism, providing rationales for the expansion of the Serbian state, which was gradually gaining ground in its confrontation with the Ottoman empire. Not for nothing was Novi Sad, the capital of Vojvodina, compared to a Serbian Athens, a cultural center with no parallel in the Serbian lands.

But there was also rough Montenegro, the "Black Mountain" and the Serbian Sparta, daring the Ottoman conqueror to climb up the rocky cliffs and confront warrior clans and tribes known for their patriarchal cruelty as well as their sense of honor. Of them, the English poet Tennyson wrote,

> They kept their faith, their freedom and their height,
> Chaste, frugal, savage, armed by day and night,
> Against the Turk.

Amidst these armed, frugal savages arose in the nineteenth century a man of exceptional poetic gift, a cosmopolitan Orthodox bishop and ruler who spoke many languages and wrote one of the most beautiful epic poems of all time, *Mountain Wreath*. Petar Petrović Njegoš was his name. As imposing but more handsome than Peter the Great, as wonderful, but more epic than Pushkin, Njegoš would have been much better known if he had written his poetry in one of the languages of the world. Characteristically, his great epic is devoted to the theme of patriarchal retribution, and its targets are those Serbs who had made the unhappy choice of converting to Islam, thereby becoming, in the eyes of Njegoš's Montenegrin heroes, traitors to their tribe and to Orthodoxy, the "true faith." Here is how one of them admonishes his Slavic Moslem brethren to reconvert to Orthodoxy:

So tear down the minarets and mosques,
also kindle the Serb yule logs
and paint our Easter eggs
the two fasts observe honestly;
as for the rest do as you will.

But what if the Moslem brethren do not want to convert?

Should you not listen to Batrić
I swear to you by Obilić's faith
and by my arms, my trusty weapons,
our faiths will be immersed in blood,
the better one will not sink!
Bairam cannot make peace with Christmas.[3]

In the nineteenth-century age of romantic nationalism, when various Westerners, beginning with Lord Byron and the great German historian Leopold von Ranke (who, incidentally, wrote one of the first histories of the first Serbian insurrection against the Ottoman Turks under Karageorge or Black George) expressed sympathy for the cause of "oppressed peoples," such words were seen as part of a movement for national liberation. Today they would be interpreted as a justification for ethnic cleansing.

The historical tragedy of the Balkans lies precisely in the fact that the two processes could not be separated, and the liberation of one people frequently entailed the persecution of another. The most typical example is the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, when Serbs, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, and Greeks first united to defeat the Turks and then turned against each other in a battle over Macedonia, committing atrocities that are suspiciously reminiscent of the ones we are witnessing today.[4] It is characteristic that Serbs continued perceiving the Second Balkan War as one of liberation, for Skopje, the present capital of the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (this clumsy name itself a confirmation of Greek resentments over Macedonia, as well as its veto power in the European Community) was the town that the medieval Serbian king Dušan chose as the capital of his empire and in which he proclaimed himself tsar in 1346. The Macedonians, however, who were less sentimental about Dušan, saw the Second Balkan War as a continuation of their enslavement, albeit under new and different masters—Serbs, Greeks, and (perhaps less so) Bulgarians.

Such realities are frequently lost on Westerners, especially those of Anglo-Saxon background, for there is nothing in their historical experience that quite matches such unpleasant complexities. The historical confusion of Western visitors to the Balkans was well captured by Rebecca West, a great English lady and the author of one of the most fantastic travelogues of all times, which, incidentally, happens to be about Yugoslavia. In her *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* she quite correctly observed the following:

> Each people was perpetually making charges of inhumanity against all its neighbors. The Serb, for example, raised his bitterest complaint against the Turk, but was also ready to accuse the Greeks, the Bulgarians, the Vlachs, and the Albanians of every crime under the sun. English persons, therefore, of humanitarian and reformist disposition constantly went to the Balkan Peninsula to see who was in fact ill-treating whom, and being by the very nature of their perfectionist faith unable to accept the horrid hypothesis that everybody was ill-treating everybody else, all came back with a pet Balkan people established in their hearts as suffering and innocent, eternally the massacree and never the massacrer.[5]

But let us return to the various Serbian tribes. Besides the warrior-like Montenegrins, there are also the no less warlike Serbs of the Habsburg military frontier known as the Vojna Krajina (or simply Krajina). Like those of Vojvodina, these Serbs migrated in several waves from the Ottoman territories and were attracted to the frontier by the prospect of landownership. In this respect, their position as well as their mentality was not unlike that of those better known protectors of another great empire: the Russian Cossacks. In the Habsburg military frontier every man between the ages of sixteen and sixty was on permanent call; in comparison to the rest of the Habsburg provinces, which gave one soldier for every 142 inhabitants, the ratio in the frontier was one to nine.[6]

For several centuries, therefore, the frontier formed a separate corpus in the empire. Is it surprising, then, that the idea of historical autonomy has survived among these frontier Serbs in Croatia? Not accidentally, it was from this group that the core of Tito's Partisan movement was formed in World War II, after being the target of

horrible persecution at the hands of Croatian fascists. In view of all this, it should not be so shocking that these warlike Serbian communities are now ready to face the Croatian army even in the absence of support from Serbia itself, rather than deriving the concrete economic benefits that are promised to them by well-meaning American ambassadors upon their recognition of the Croatian state. For the stubbornness of these communities is rooted in their historical experiences. And that life in the frontier was no vacation is clear from the following Moslem epic song from Herzegovina:

> The bloody Frontier is this-like
> with dinner blood, with supper blood,
> everybody chews bloody mouthfuls
> never one white day for repose.[7]

Finally, there are the Serbs of Central Serbia, the hilly Šumadija, their mentality lying somewhere between the preoccupation with peace of Lala from Vojvodina and the warlike experiences of their cousins from Montenegro and the frontier. There is possibly no other Yugoslav region which has suffered such losses in this century as the Serbian heartland, devastated by the Austro-Hungarian imperial army and Nazi occupiers and torn by a fratricidal war which pitted Partisan against Chetnik, Communist against monarchist. So even if the Serbian peasant from Šumadija wanted to stay out of it all, as one very popular Serbian nationalist novel of the 1980s, *The Book about Milutin*, suggests,[8] he had little choice but to become a part of that terrifying historical process which brought two world wars to his home.

Belgrade, the capital of Serbia and the former Yugoslavia, is a city of would-be despots, liberal intellectuals, a (still) remarkably free opposition press, and the site of a bohemian cafe life which combines the spirit of Central Europe with that of Eastern Orthodoxy and the Ottoman Mediterranean. It is a testimony to the vulgarity of Slobodan Milošević's regime that the ruralization of this previously cosmopolitan city was deliberately fostered in order to break down the liberal spirit of the growing Belgrade citizen class, but it is also true that this campaign has been only partially successful, as Belgrade was the site of the largest opposition demonstrations in postwar Yugoslavia (in March 1991) and the longest student strike in Yugoslav history (in summer 1992), both of them directed against

that colorless *apparatchik* turned populist despot who has brought such shame upon the whole Serbian nation.

At the end of our Yugoslav journey, we come to Kosovo and Macedonia. Kosovo is the site of that famous Field of Blackbirds (Kosovo Polje) battle, in which the medieval Serbian kings lost their kingdom to the invading Ottomans in 1389. Successive generations turned this defeat on the field of battle into a spiritual victory for Christianity, for according to the legend, when faced with the excruciating choice, Serbian Tsar Lazar chose the Kingdom of Heaven over the one on earth, even if simultaneously one of his nobles, Miloš Obilić, proceeded to take the life of his opponent, the great Sultan Murat, in an act of earthly retribution. This connection between the themes of Christian martyrdom and patriarchal revenge was henceforth passed on from generation to generation through epic poems, forming the basis of the defining myth of nineteenth-century Serbian nationalism. In light of this, the Serbian preoccupation with the loss of Kosovo to the growing Albanian population becomes more understandable, even if the practical political consequences are morally unjustifiable.

The Albanians are the only non-Slavic and therefore, strictly speaking, non-Yugoslav tribe in the former Yugoslav space. Their origin is still the subject of great controversy, for they do not seem related to any of the surrounding peoples; the same could be said of the Albanian language, which is not a part of the more standard language groups. Aside from being predominantly Moslem (there are also Orthodox and Catholic Albanians), the Kosovo Albanians are close in mentality to the neighboring Montenegrins. In any case, like the Montenegrins, they have tended to live in large clans whose origins are carefully preserved in collective memory; naturally, in such a society, vendetta over the perennial question of honor is still far from being an uncommon practice.

Macedonia is itself a great mixture of peoples, among whom the Yugoslav Macedonians (for there are Macedonians in Bulgaria and Greece as well) predominate. It is this great diversity which gave the name to an exotic French salad with a great many different ingredients—*la macédoine*. Frustrated nationhood and a legacy of oppression by every conceivable neighbor also made Macedonia a land of sad ballads and the most wonderfully heavy somber dances, performed in a strange rhythm, which is still the subject of musicological inter-

est, and also a land of dark plots and extremist conspiracies, many of which shook Yugoslav and Bulgarian politics in the interwar period. If present-day Macedonia survives its ordeals as a fully independent state, it will be in defiance of a well-established historical pattern.

Naturally, this brief tour of Yugoslav or former Yugoslav identities, regions, nations, and mentalities has touched on only some select aspects of the larger and even more complex picture. The cultural gap between city and country, the poor people of the mountains and those of the richer plains, various intranational resentments, such as those between former apparatchiks and the new nationalists, army officers and "separatists" or "internal traitors," and a great many other possible divisions have been hinted at only in an indirect fashion. But if this inevitably short tour has served to convey the idea that not everything is as clear-cut as it appears, it will have served its purpose.

## A NOTE ON MULTICULTURALISM AND LIBERAL VALUES

It is only natural to end this brief identity tour of the Yugoslav lands with a speculation on the much discussed theme of multiculturalism and its consequences for liberal values, all the more so since this conference is devoted to the tortuous question of identity politics. The idea that all minority cultures should have their due place under the sun is hardly contestable from any reasonable point of view. But all too often the typically white middle-class academic proponents of the ethnic version of Mao's famous slogan, "Let a thousand flowers bloom," forget that the blooming can take place only within the larger framework of a democratic federal state whose primary commitment is to the preservation of individual rights and freedoms. Even within such a well-established democratic state, the sometimes heavily moralistic emphasis on collective victimization is accompanied by a profound lack of self-criticism and tasteless self-pity, and the natural correlate of this deadly puritanical seriousness in many contemporary discussions of the problem is the censorship of language and a complete absence of a sense of humor.

In this respect, Bosnia and Yugoslavia can serve as an excellent reminder of the terrible dangers involved in such a lack of perspec-

tive and distance. As every Yugoslav regardless of nationality knows, the jokes stopped when the various nations began taking themselves too seriously; the last joke about Mujo and Haso is that they are dead. Victimology and self-pity quickly descend into a politics of resentment, and from there onwards it is just one step to institutional breakdown in the liberal framework that is a necessary precondition for the free flourishing of all cultures.

The essence of the politics of particularism was best defined by the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, who, it seems, already in 1921, had a premonition of the terrible tragedy that would strike his country a full decade and a half later:

> The essence of particularism is that each group ceases to feel itself a part of the whole, and therefore ceases to share the feelings of the rest. The hopes and needs of others mean nothing to it, and it does nothing to help them win their hearts' desires. On the other hand, hypersensitiveness to one's own ailments is a characteristic of this social state. Disagreements or difficulties which are easily borne during periods of cohesion come to be intolerable when the spirit of national life has disintegrated.[9]

If there is any true lesson of the Yugoslav tragedy, therefore, it is that the rights of the individual must take precedence over the grievances of nations, and the main reason is that the much idealized right to collective self-determination is frequently accompanied by the kind of destructive particularism so well described by the morose Spanish philosopher.

## NOTES

1. "A Letter from 1920," in Ivo Andrić, *The Damned Yard and Other Stories* (Belgrade: Dereta, 1992), pp. 107–21.

2. For an appropriate reaction to this travesty, see the article of Stojan Cerović, "Genije banalnosti," *Vreme,* March 20, 1995, which describes the meeting of Serbian writers and academicians with their Bosnian Serb brothers (including Karadžić) in the town of Višegrad, and proceeds to dissect Dobrica Ćosić as a "genius of banality."

3. Petar II Petrović Njegoš, *Gorskii vijenac* (Belgrade, 1947), pp. 82–83, as cited in Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 60.

4. See the recently reprinted report of the Carnegie Commission on atrocities committed by all sides in these wars: International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars, *The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect* (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace/Brookings Institution, 1993).

5. Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (New York: Viking Press, 1941), p. 20.

6. See Jozo Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Stanford, Ca. and London: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 76.

7. Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, *Srpske narodne poslovice,* 3d ed. (Belgrade, 1900), p. 174, as cited in Banac, *The National Question,* p. 59.

8. Danko Popović, *Knjiga o Milutinu* (Belgrade: Književne novine, 1986).

9. José Ortega y Gasset, *Invertebrate Spain* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1937). First published in 1921 in his journal, *Revista de Occidente.*

# ORTHODOXY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN RUSSIA

## John B. Dunlop

With the collapse of the Communist system in Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church, which before the Gorbachev period had been a heavily persecuted body, unexpectedly emerged as the most popular institution in Russia. This development has been confirmed by the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (VTsIOM), as well as by other Russian polling organizations. Russia-wide polls taken by VTsIOM in June 1993, October 1993, and March 1994, for example, found the Church to be consistently the highest rated of seven Russian institutions. (The other six institutions were the presidency, the government, the army, the secret police, the trade unions, and the press. The army consistently came in second, though support for it began to diminish somewhat even before the Chechnya adventure.) "Confidence in the church," the editors of VTsIOM have concluded, "is at the highest level, and it is the only one whose ratings are continually growing. Confidence in all other institutions is falling."[1]

A November 1994 Russia-wide poll commissioned by the U.S. Information Agency concerning confidence in major institutions likewise found the Russian Orthodox Church to be at the top of the list, with a majority of respondents (59 percent) expressing confidence in it, while the army came in second, with 54 percent support. All other institutions listed—the State Duma, the Council of Ministers, the judicial system, state security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and local government—came in at 32 percent or lower. The State Duma placed last, with a 16 percent approval rating.[2]

In similar fashion, a January 1995 Russia-wide poll conducted by VTsIOM found the Russian Orthodox Church to be the most trusted of eleven Russian institutions. Forty-seven percent of respondents "fully trusted" the Church, with another 11 percent partially trusting it and 8 percent expressing a complete lack of trust

in it. Once again, the army came in second, with 24 percent of respondents fully trusting it, 32 percent partially doing so, and 22 percent voicing a lack of trust in the military. For the press, radio, and television, which placed third among Russian institutions, the corresponding percentages were 21, 49, and 16.[3] The patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Aleksii II, the editors of VTsIOM have underlined, enjoys "extraordinarily high" ratings throughout Russia, even among unbelievers. No other public figure comes close to his ratings.[4]

What does all of this mean? Has a religious revival swept the Russian land? What seems to have occurred is that identifying oneself as Orthodox (*pravoslavnyi*) has now become another way of calling oneself an ethnic Russian (*russkii*) or, if one happens to be a "democrat" or a moderate, a *rossiianin* (i.e., a citizen of the Russian Republic without respect to ethnicity). Orthodoxy is now part and parcel of an identity which has reemerged in Russia over the past several years to replace that of "Soviet man" (*sovetskii chelovek*). Over the course of the Soviet period, ethnic Russians largely lost a sense of themselves as a distinct ethnic group or ethnos. (Indeed some specialists have argued that the broad Russian masses never did form a sense of themselves as a distinct ethnos.)[5] As Lev Gudkov of VTsIOM observed in early 1994 concerning developments in the Soviet period:

> For Russians, the chief role in their self-definition was until recently played by the view of themselves as citizens of the USSR, as Soviet people. Neither language, nor culture, nor the past, nor traditions had a significance comparable to themselves as citizens of the Soviet state. From 63 to 81 percent of ethnic Russians called their homeland not Russia but precisely the USSR.[6]

With the disintegration of the USSR, ethnic Russians found themselves adrift, lacking an anchor. But one potential anchor of identity, Orthodoxy, was present all about, as the cupolas of those of the country's churches which had not been razed by the Communists continued to gleam in the sun. Presumably Dostoevskii's oft-cited dictum also came to mind: "A Russian must be Orthodox."

This identification with Russian Orthodoxy, it should be stressed, was not necessarily with the Orthodox religion. In January 1995, I attended a conference which was organized in Moscow by

Russian "democrats." One of the speakers at the conference was the well-known Moscow priest and reformer, Fr. Aleksandr Borisov. "Former Komsomols," Father Borisov noted in his address, "now call themselves Orthodox. They say, 'I don't know if I'm a believer, but I know that I am Orthodox.' They trumpet, 'We're first, we're the best, and we're surrounded by enemies.' Just like under the Communists. The psychology of these people is that of an 'Orthodox nationalist.' They believe that Moscow is the Third Rome."[7]

Father Borisov's comments invite us to examine a related question: how devout are those who call themselves Orthodox Christians in today's Russia? According to public opinion polls conducted by VTsIOM in 1989, 30 percent of the Russian populace considered themselves at that time to be Orthodox, while 2–3 percent identified themselves as belonging to other confessions. By September 1993, 50 percent of respondents (half the population!) were calling themselves Orthodox, with 3-5 percent identifying themselves as adherents of other religions and 40 percent terming themselves unbelievers.[8] This was a striking change in a country that, two years previously, had still been ruled by a Communist regime. As far back as 1989, the editors of VTsIOM have reported, 60 percent of *rossiian* were being baptized. By the end of 1992, that figure had grown to 75 percent. However, the organization's editors noted pertinently that many respondents do not go to church. Only 10 percent of persons calling themselves Orthodox, VTsIOM revealed, attend church at least once a month. Thirty-five percent attend services one to ten times a year, while 45 percent of self-identified Orthodox never set foot in a church.

An important indicator of religious intensity is the extent of an individual's participation in the sacraments. It emerges from the VTsIOM polling data that only 20 percent (one out of five) of self-identified Orthodox attend confession and receive Holy Communion at least once a year. In tsarist Russia, as is well known, it was de rigeur for an Orthodox Christian to confess and receive Communion at least once a year. The believer's name was then inscribed in a book, and he or she was deemed to be in good standing with the Church. (Of course, the tsarist clergy encouraged believers to communicate more frequently—for example, on the twelve great feasts of the Church.) In post-Communist Russia, this sacramental understanding of what it means to be Orthodox has been lost to a large

extent. (It should be noted that, according to VTsIOM, frequency or infrequency of Communion is not related to the age of a given respondent.)

Asked about the degree of firmness of their religious convictions, 25 percent of those polled in September 1993 answered, "I believe in God and experience no doubts." Another 14 percent confided, "I believe in God, although sometimes I doubt that he exists," while 12 percent responded, "I sometimes believe in God and sometimes do not." If these three categories are added together, they total 51 percent of the Russian populace somehow believing in God.

According to recent polling data reported by VTsIOM, "*rossiianie* now more often than not believe in miracles, in the devil, and in immortality." These beliefs, however, often take nontraditional forms. According to polling specialists Sergei Filatov and Liudmila Vorontsova, two-thirds of the Russian population currently embrace nontraditional beliefs: "Sixty-seven percent believe in evil spells, 66 percent in mental telepathy, 56 percent in astrology, and 46 percent in UFO's."[9] As for a detailed knowledge of the Orthodox faith, few Russian citizens are able to answer even the most elementary questions concerning their religion accurately. Thus only 10 percent of respondents were able correctly to identify the nationality of the apostles Andrew and Peter, and 25 percent considered them to have been Russians!

Throughout Russia, religious belief has consistently been the highest among the oldest category of respondents, ages 55–90. A January 1993 Russia-wide poll, for example, found 35 percent of persons in that category identifying themselves as believers, while 32 percent of persons aged 16–25 did so; the other two age cohorts—ages 26–40 and 41–54—placed last, with 27 percent each.

Interestingly, Moscow-dwellers depart from this national trend. An August 1993 poll, for example, found 58 percent of Muscovites in the 16–25 age group professing religious belief; 51 percent of those in the 55–90 age group did so, while the figure for the 26–40 cohort was 45 percent and for the 41–54 group, 48 percent. (In the oldest cohort, the percentage of believers among women is significantly higher than among men throughout Russia, but in the case of young people [16–25] this gender imbalance seems no longer to exist.) Asked why they had chosen to become believers, respondents favored two of the choices offered on a questionnaire: "Religion

prompts me to think about the meaning of life and about death" and "Religion makes me more tolerant."

What view do Russian citizens hold concerning the role that Orthodoxy should play in society and politics? Only 10–15 percent of respondents feel that Orthodoxy should have a "legal advantage" over other religious faiths in Russia. More than half of rossiian, however, maintain that the Church should assist the state in resolving the most important issues before it. Ten to 12 percent of respondents would like to see a return of the Russian monarchy, an issue that for some believers is linked to religion. As of late 1993, only 2–3 percent of persons polled expressed support for the so-called "national patriots," conservative Russian nationalists and protofascists. This low percentage, however, has presumably been growing during 1994 and 1995.

To sum up the findings of VTsIOM and other polling organizations, approximately half of present-day Russian citizens identify themselves as Orthodox Christians. On the whole, however, they know little about their faith, and only some 20 percent of self-identified Orthodox could be considered practicing Christians. None of this should be surprising, given the severity of the antireligious persecution in Russia over the course of nearly seventy-five years of Communist rule. Clearly, the Orthodox Church today consists largely of an "unchurched" flock, people well-disposed toward their national religion and respectful of it, but who have little understanding of Orthodoxy's teachings and customs.

## THE CHURCH HIERARCHY

What is the leadership of the Moscow patriarchate doing about this promising but also quite abnormal situation? The answer seems to be something, but not very much.[10] Much of the productive religious activity taking place in recent years in Russia has been occurring at the grassroots, local level, where believers are engaged in restoring churches and monasteries, opening up orphanages, and engaging in charitable work, such as running soup kitchens for the poor. By grassroots activists, the bishops are often perceived as more of a hindrance than a source of help. The Church hierarchy, for its part,

is energetically involved in promoting various commercial and banking activities.[11]

Few today would seek to deny that prior to the collapse of the August 1991 coup the Russian Orthodox Church was a tightly controlled and meticulously monitored body. Konstantin Kharchev, chairman of the USSR Council for Religious Affairs from late 1984 through early 1989, has confirmed that the Russian Church was indeed rigorously controlled by the Central Committee of the Communist Party (especially by its Ideological Department) and by the KGB.[12] In early 1992, a former KGB operative, A. Shushpanov, gave an interview to the mass-circulation weekly *Argumenty i fakty*, in which he discussed in detail his work as a secret police agent inside the Moscow patriarchate's Department of External Ecclesiastical Affairs.[13] A "majority" of the individuals working in that department, Shushpanov noted, were in fact agents working for either the Moscow or all-Union KGB. There was also a full-time "resident" or chief of station located at the department. Reports on contacts with foreign visitors had to be submitted in five copies. His chief task while at the department, Shushpanov stated, was to "work against" dissenting Orthodox priest Gleb Iakunin. The KGB, Shushpanov revealed, tried to lead Fr. Iakunin into committing espionage.

The available information suggests that the degree of state meddling in Church affairs has remained significantly high in the post-1991 period. There is, first of all, the plain fact that the overwhelming majority of the approximately 120 bishops of the Moscow patriarchate were ordained to the episcopacy prior to August 1991. This implies that each of these hierarchs was carefully screened and vetted by the ideological apparatus of both the Communist Party and the KGB. It need hardly be noted that a flourishing of religion was *not* a priority of those two organizations.

Following the failure of the August 1991 coup, pro-democracy Russian parliamentarians were afforded a brief window of opportunity during which they were able to examine a number of KGB files, including some that shed light on that organization's frequent and wide-ranging intrusion into the life of the Russian Church. Materials unearthed in the KGB archives show, for example, that four of the six current permanent members of the Moscow patriarchate's Holy Synod are, or at least until recently were, KGB agents: Patriarch Aleksii II (agent code name "Drozdov"); Metropolitan Yuvenalii of

Krutitsy ("Adamant"); Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk ("Mikhailov"); and Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk ("Ostrovskii").[14] The individual who until recently served as head of the patriarchate's publications department, Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk ("Abbat"), was also revealed to be an agent.

It should be stressed that an agent of the former KGB was considerably more than an informer; he or she was an active operative of the Committee for State Security—in effect a non-uniformed officer of that organization. Successful agents were wont to receive awards, as "agent Drozdov" (the present patriarch) did in February 1988.

The Russian secret police, it should be noted, have taken the issue of the unveiling of the names of their operatives exceedingly seriously. Thus on February 14, 1992, *Pravda* published a violent attack on Fr. Iakunin, an elected people's deputy, by four officers of the Ministry of Security for "de facto deciphering the [names of] agents of the former Fifth Directorate." The use of such agents, the officers insisted, "is a sharp and necessary weapon in the hands of the special services." At a closed session of the Russian Supreme Soviet, held in July 1992, People's Deputies Gleb Iakunin and Lev Ponomarev were accused of having committed "treason" (*izmena rodine*) by Viktor Barannikov, then chairman of the Russian Ministry of State Security.[15] The treasonable offense? De facto revealing the names of the hierarch-agents. Former political prisoner Zoia Krakhmal'nikova has aptly observed concerning the Moscow hierarchy's close collaboration with the secret police, "It is a catastrophe, a national moral catastrophe. . . . This is a spiritual Chernobyl'."[16]

## THE RUSSIAN CHURCH TODAY

One can currently distinguish three distinct groups among the Orthodox believers in Russia who are active beyond the grassroots level. The smallest of these groups is the Church reformers, whom their opponents often term "radicals" or "leftists," as well as "heretics." In addition to Fr. Gleb Iakunin, who has already been defrocked by the patriarchate and is being threatened with excommunication, there are such activists as Krakhmal'nikova, Fr. Aleksandr Borisov, Fr.

Georgii Chistiakov, Fr. Georgii Edel'shtein, Vladimir Il'iushenko of the Institute of Comparative Politics in Moscow, and journalists Aleksandr Nezhnyi and Mikhail Pozdnyaev. While not a particularly large group, the reformers exert influence in Russia through their connection with the pro-democracy press. Publications such as the weeklies *Novoe vremia* and *Stolitsa* regularly air their views, and on occasion *Argumenty i fakty*, with its huge 4.3 million circulation, will publish a commentary by one of their number.

To summarize the views of the Church reformers, they believe that the Russian Orthodox Church must be freed from the shackles of the state, as is the case in church-state relations in the West. The top hierarchy of the Moscow patriarchate, they argue, needs to be thoroughly cleansed of compromised individuals. Rather than focusing on external affairs, they contend, the Church should be actively engaged in internal missionary work, seeking to "church" a largely ignorant and unchurched flock. Participants in this reform effort have attempted to set up catechetical schools and have experimented with serving the liturgy in Russian rather than in Church Slavonic, a language which the Russian masses have difficulty understanding. The reformers have also been vigorously combating what they regard as the dangerous inroads being made by fascism and anti-Semitism into the ranks of the Moscow patriarchate.

The reformers may be viewed as the spiritual heirs of the sixteenth-century Russian "non-possessors," who called for a "lean" Church not weighed down by material wealth or by compromising entanglements with the state. Their opponents—the adherents of the other two groups to be discussed—advocate a "heavy" Church with abundant material possessions and with close ties to the state. The current intense controversy over rebuilding the very large Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow—which the reformers reject as too expensive a project for the impoverished Russian populace to be asked to support—points up the gulf separating present-day "possessors" and "non-possessors."[17]

If the reformers constitute the "left" of the present-day Russian Orthodox Church, those who look for inspiration and leadership to Metropolitan Ioann of Petersburg, a permanent member of the Holy Synod, comprise the "right." This group, which is larger than that of the reformers, represents a clear-cut, protofascist tendency, in some ways similar to the "Iron Guard" movement in interwar Romania.

Anti-Semitism and aggressive anti-Westernism are distinguishing traits of this group. Metropolitan Ioann of Petersburg, its foremost spokesman, defends the authenticity of the notorious forgery, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and has called for the expulsion of all unbaptized Jews from Russia.[18] The metropolitan has been warmly praised inter alia by Aleksandr Barkashov, leader of the neo-Nazi Russian National Union, who is a self-professed Orthodox believer but also advocates the physical extermination of all Jews and gypsies on Russian soil. The so-called Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods, led by Fr. Kirill Sakharov, has likewise embraced many of the extremist views promulgated by the metropolitan.

Recently the "rightists" have been reined in by the "centrists" (or, more precisely, "right-centrists") gathered around Patriarch Aleksii and Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk, the head of the Church's External Affairs Department. While frequently adopting Russian nationalist and neo-imperial positions (especially toward the states of the so-called "near abroad"), the centrists have recently distanced themselves from the vociferous anti-Semitism and truculent anti-Westernism of the rightists. At a late November-early December 1994 Church Council, for example, the centrists initiated a purge of extremists within the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods.[19] The centrists also declared unambiguously that they intended to continue to participate actively in the ecumenical movement (a position assailed by the Church rightists out of political and moral aversion for the West, as well as by some nonpolitical Orthodox traditionalists concerned about the Church's doctrinal and canonical purity).

The November-December 1994 Church Council signaled a desire on the part of the patriarchate's leadership to continue to expand the Church's foreign activities.[20] As for the leaders' view of the reformers, while they have sought to castigate and to isolate Fr. Iakunin, the centrists have shielded other reformers like Frs. Aleksandr Borisov and Georgii Chistiakov from persecution by the rightists, who want to expel them from the Church as heretics.[21] In short, Patriarch Aleksii, who is sometimes referred to as the "ecclesiastical Gorbachev," has sought to steer a right-centrist course, avoiding perceived extremes and keeping the patriarchate firmly involved in the ecumential movement. The patriarchate's active participation in, and indeed leadership of, the All-World Russian Assembly

(Vsemirnyi Russkii Sobor), an organization that recently held its second congress in the prestigious Hall of Columns in Moscow, has demonstrated the Church leadership's sense of identification with leading "civilized rightists" such as Igor' Shafarevich and retired KGB Major General Aleksandr Sterligov.[22]

While paying lip service to the concept of the separation of the Church from the state, the centrists de facto envision the Moscow patriarchate as a revived Russian imperial state church. They have lobbied President Yeltsin and the parliament to pass legislation that would prohibit activity by foreign missionaries on Russian soil. The Russian Church, they argue, is presently too weak to be able to withstand such competition. At recent parliamentary hearings concerning freedom of conscience in Russia, Orthodox clergy who testified presented uniformly identical positions:

> [They] argued that it was senseless even to speak of the equality of religions in Russia. . . . This idea, they claimed, contradicted Russia's age-old historical and cultural religious traditions. They emphasized that historically Russia had four "traditional" religions: Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. These four religions should, they urged, be granted a special status and should be given special relationships with the state, both of which must be codified in law. They urged the adoption of measures directed against "newcomer" religions.

At the hearings, however, other Orthodox believers chose to voice "concern over the possibility of a renewed union between Church and state in Russia."[23] That union, which is being energetically promoted by the Moscow patriarchate leadership, appears to be well under way.

## NOTES

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3. Intertsentr VTsIOM, *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny: Monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniia,* no. 2 (March–April 1995): 5.

4. Vladimir Borzenko, "Religiia v postkommunisticheskoi Rossii," *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny*, no. 8 (December 1993): 6.

5. See, for example, Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Historical Consciousness and National Identity: Some Considerations on the History of Russian Nationalism* (New Orleans: Graduate School of Tulane University, 1991).

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8. For the extensive VTsIOM polling data discussed in this and in the following paragraphs, see Borzenko, "Religiia v postkommunisticheskoi Rossii," pp. 5–8.

9. Sergei Filatov and Liudmila Vorontsova, "New Russia in Search of an Identity," in *Remaking Russia: Voices from Within,* ed. Heyward Isham (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 283.

10. This section reproduces information contained in John B. Dunlop, "The Russian Orthodox Church as an 'Empire-Saving' Institution," in *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Michael Bourdeaux (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 15-40.

11. On these activities, see Anne Barnard, "Un-Orthodox Business," *Moscow Times*, March 26, 1995.

12. See John B. Dunlop, " 'Kharchev Affair' Sheds New Light on Severe Controls on Religion in USSR," *Report on the USSR*, February 23, 1990.

13. *Argumenty i fakty,* no. 8 (1992): 5.

14. Patriarch Aleksii has been identified as agent Drozdov by leading journalist Evgenia Albats in her book, *The State within a State: The KGB and Its Hold on Russia—Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), p. 46; by former KGB Major General Oleg Kalugin in his book, *The First Directorate* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 200-202; and by religious rights activist Zoia Krakhmal'nikova in "Skandal v blagorodnom semeistve," *Novoe russkoe slovo* (New York), March 3, 1992. On the materials in the KGB archives, see John B. Dunlop, "KGB Subversion of Russian Orthodox Church," *RFE/RL Research Report* 1, 12 (March 20, 1992): 51-53,

and Archpriest Victor S. Potapov (Voice of America), *"By Silence Is God Betrayed": On the Question of Relations between the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate* (Washington, D.C.: author publication, 1992), pp. 26-28.

15. Nikolai Troitskii, "Na dissidentov snova zavodiatsia dela," *Megapolis-ekspress*, July 22, 1992.

16. Zoia Krakhmal'nikova in a speech given at the International Forum, Moscow, January 20-22, 1995.

17. On the controversy over rebuilding the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, see Mark Deich, "Khram Khrista ili pamiatnik meru?" *Ogonek*, nos. 48-49 (December 1994): 10; Alla Bossart, "Teatr vremen Luzhkova i sinoda," *Stolitsa*, no. 2 (1995): 10-13; Ellen Barry: "Church Architect Falls Foul of Mayor," *Moscow Times*, December 11, 1994, and "Patriarch, Mayor Lay Cornerstone," *ibid.*, January 15, 1995.

18. For a defense by Ioann of the authenticity of the *Protocols*, see "Ia ne politik, ia—pastyr'," *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, June 11, 1993. For Ioann's summons to expel all unbaptized Jews from Russia, see "Tvortsy kataklizmov: Otvet mitropolita Ioanna," *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, March 22, 1994. For Patriarch Aleksii's belated criticism of Ioann's views, see the interview with him, "Aleksii II: Polozhenie gosudarstvennoi Tserkvi grozit mnogimi bedami," *Moskovskie novosti*, April 17-24, 1994. On the *Protocols* as a genocidal document, see Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

19. On the November-December 1994 council, see Nataliia Babasian, "Nesostoiavshaiasia revoliutsiia," *Novoe vremia*, no. 1 (1995): 8-39, and "Opredeleniia Arkhiereiskogo sobora Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi: O pravoslavnoi missii v sovremennom mire," *Russkaia mysl'* (Paris), December 8-14, 1994, p. 8. On the discussion of the Orthodox Brotherhoods, see Protoierei Ioann Sviridov, "Est' li mesto bratstvam v sovremennoi zhizni russkoi tserkvi?," *Russkaia mysl'*, January 19-25, 1995.

20. See "Opredeleniia Arkhiereiskogo sobora Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi," *Russkaia mysl'*, December 8-14, 1994.

21. On the attack by the ecclesiastical right on the Church left, see "Khronika odnoi konferentsii," *Russkaia mysl'*, November 24-30, 1994.

22. On the February 1995 Second All-World Assembly, see Masha Gessen, "Chudesa dukhovnogo zazerkal'ia," *Novoe vremia*, no. 7 (1995): 11-12. For the First Assembly, held in May 1993, see Nataliia Babasian, "Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' budet otstaivat' traditsionnye tsennosti v otkrytoi zapadu Rossii, zaiavliaet Mitropolit Smolenskii i Kaliningradskii Kirill," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, June 5, 1993.

23. Mikhail Gorelik, "Freedom of Conscience," *Moscow Times*, March 26, 1995. See also "Vse religii ravny, no est' bolee ravnye," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 22, 1995, p. 2.

# RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES IN POST-COMMUNIST CENTRAL EUROPE: THE POLISH CASE

## Steven Stoltenberg

It is dawn on an August morning in Warsaw, and I have just been awakened by a chorus of far-off voices that echo in the canyons between gray, high-rise apartment buildings. The plaintive songs that rise up to my bedroom window are reminiscent of the solemn chant of the mass. I decide to investigate their source. Descending the ten floors to the street, I encounter something both moving and mysterious. Groups of young people, twenty or thirty strong, are passing by in a procession; many of them are dressed in what appear to be scouts' uniforms. Each group is led by an older adult who intones a melody using a microphone and portable amplifier box, and then the melody is taken up and repeated, call-response style, by the rest of the group. As I listen more closely to the words, I realize they are hymns to the Virgin Mary: "In this our hour of darkness, protect us, O Mother, from evil." Crowds have gathered along the sidewalks to witness the event, and they are visibly moved by what they see—some have tears in their eyes and others raise the "V for victory" sign as a gesture of solidarity. The procession goes on for over two hours, and I cannot pull myself away. Is this purely a religious procession, or is there something more going on? There seems to be a feeling of defiance in the air, as if all of this is meant to demonstrate something to an invisible onlooker. The year is 1984, and this is my first visit ever to Poland. I am thrilled that I may have encountered my first example of the society's lingering resistance to martial law. Or have I?

Hours later that same day, I am on a bus traveling from Warsaw to Cracow. We begin to pass thousands of people making their way on foot across the fields and pastures along the highway. There are old and young, male and female, priests in long black robes and long-haired youths carrying guitars and backpacks. Local residents

have set up tables with food and drink. Suddenly it dawns on me: I am witnessing the annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Black Madonna in Częstochowa! The procession earlier that morning had been the pilgrimage passing through Warsaw as it gathered thousands more pilgrims into its fold. "They have come from as far away as France," the bus driver tells me. "They fly to Poland and then walk the entire way to the Bright Mountain shrine, a distance of several hundred kilometers. In all, the pilgrimage takes over two weeks." I can detect a feeling of intense pride in his voice. But is this pride in the Poles' intense religiosity or in the ability of thousands of pilgrims to organize everything without the intervention or assistance of the authorities? Or is it pride in the banners with their jumbled Solidarity script, announcing the name of the home parish as well as the message that "Solidarity lives!" Am I the only one who would bother to make such distinctions?

In the 1980s, collective action in Poland often exhibited a surprising mixture of the religious and the political. The annual pilgrimage to Częstochowa was only one example of an ostensibly religious event which was *simultaneously* an expression of religiosity, national identity, and civic consciousness. Studies of the Solidarity movement itself, drawing on journalistic eyewitness accounts, sociological investigations, or personal memoirs have repeatedly pointed to the same phenomenon.[1] This coalescence of identities was made easier by the diametrically opposite nature of the two opponent forces: on the one hand, an illegitimate, atheistic regime held in place by a foreign power; on the other, actors who were at the same time citizens, believers, and the authentic representatives of indigenous tradition. Arguably it was the fact that these identities coalesced into a workable synthesis in the second half of the 1970s and on into Solidarity's legal period of 1980-81 that marked the historical distinctiveness of the movement and earned it the respect and admiration of the entire world. But it was a distinctiveness which, despite appearances to the contrary, was ephemeral and limited to a specific historical conjuncture. Roman Catholic identity and national resistance to foreign rule had nourished one another over the centuries of Poland's partition and domination by absolutist or totalitarian powers. What was unique about Solidarity was the way in which a liberal-democratic "civic ethos" provided a new overarching context within which religiosity and resistance came together.

In order for this convergence to occur, several processes needed to take place over the decade or so preceding the emergence of a legal Solidarity movement. These have been described and analyzed in detail, and we need only summarize the main points here.[2] First, key oppositionist intelligentsia elites had to undergo a reorientation vis-à-vis both communism (the end of hopes for "socialism with a human face") and the Catholic Church/Catholicism (made possible by the Church's reevaluation of modernity enshrined in Vatican II ). Second, the Polish church itself had to undergo a process of reform, on ideological and organizational levels, in order to be open to a working alliance with the democratic opposition. The key point here is that a liberal-democratic civic ethos was the ideational field that made a strategic convergence possible. Democratic oppositionist intellectuals such as Kuron and Michnik argued that the values of socialism made sense only when incorporated within a formally democratic political order based on rights. And Catholic intellectuals, whether members of the Church hierarchy or lay thinkers, under the inspiration of personalism, argued that rights were anchored in the sacredness of the individual personality as an image of the divine. It was a natural-law discourse of rights (interpreted either in terms of secular liberalism or Catholic personalism) which provided a common language for the opposition to communism.

These points must be qualified immediately if they are to retain any validity. First, the democratic opposition was not monolithic; even in the second half of the 1970s, there were groups which stressed national and religious identity over civic identity (e.g., the Movement for Human and Civil Rights [ROPCiO] and Młoda Polska). Although smaller in numbers when compared to the larger Workers' Defense Committee (KOR) movement, these "right-wing" and "Catholic" groups remained steadfast in their conviction that the broader Solidarity movement had been "hijacked" by dangerously secular and left-leaning intellectual groups.

Second, the process of internal reform within the Polish church was not universally promoted or accepted by all members of the hierarchy or laity. On the one hand, there were centers such as the lay Catholic intellectuals, organized around the journals *Więź* in Warsaw or *Znak* and *Tygodnik Powszechny* in Cracow, which pushed for Vatican II-style reforms. In Cracow in particular, the in-

fluence of personalism provided a common framework for close collaboration between lay Catholic intellectuals and, for example, Bishop Karol Wojtyła, the future pope. This more liberal Polish Catholicism was a phenomenon primarily of the large cities. In contrast, there was the more traditional Catholicism of rural Poland and its major exponent, Cardinal Wyszyński, who wanted to reconstruct a church of the *lud* (a Polish word for "people," with strong folkish associations) that would stress ritual, devotion, and high ceremony. In short, divisions existed within the democratic opposition, as well as within the Polish church, although they tended to be overshadowed by the more significant alliance of forces in 1980–81 that helped produce Solidarity. But the differences never really went away, and it was under the very different conditions of martial law and what followed that these differences would once again come to the fore.

We now need to take a closer look at how the synthesis of national, religious, and civic identities within the Solidarity movement metamorphosed in the period from the imposition of martial law on December 13, 1981, to the breakthrough to democratic capitalism in 1989.[3] Initially, the close relationship between religiosity and civic activism persisted. The Church took on the social role of providing support and assistance to the victims of state repression, and Church leaders continued to call for the relegalization of Solidarity and an understanding between state and society. The boycott of official cultural institutions by artists led to the organization of independent cultural activities on Church premises. This close cooperation represented a continuation of premartial law practice.

Nevertheless, as time went on, the Church hierarchy became increasingly aware of the divergence between its interests as an institution and the aims or goals of the various independent social groups and initiatives that flourished in Poland's "underground society." Church leaders found that in the absence of a legal Solidarity movement, they had increased leverage as the sole recognized mediators between state and society. This leverage could be used toward various ends—for example, to pressure the authorities to declare an amnesty for political prisoners. But it could also be used to secure building permits from the authorities for the construction of new churches and facilities or to force the authorities to remove objectionable contents from sex education textbooks for high school students. Such leverage depended not only on the Church's support

within society, but also on its ability to ensure societal calm and patience. It would be going too far to suggest that Church and state reached a modus vivendi during the Jaruzelski regime, but there was certainly a considerable amount of *realpolitik* that informed the relations between what were in fact two centers of power.

The strengthening of the Church's position as an institution went hand in hand with other subtle but increasingly perceptible shifts in emphasis. Lest it be forgotten, the Church is after all primarily an institution for the administration of grace. In practical terms, this means exerting a considerable amount of control over the bodies, minds, and practices of believers. The Church's spiritual ministry may thus conflict with such modernist principles as individual autonomy, freedom of conscience, or self-determination. As the 1980s wore on in Poland, the balance shifted from the role of facilitating societal democratization toward exercising spiritual authority over believers.

How did this manifest itself? In the democratic "collective effervescence" of the late 1970s and 1980–81, grassroots Catholic communities took the initiative to devolve power onto lay members, to democratize decision-making within parishes, to increase the role of the laity in educational activities, and even to organize the Mass in such a way as to symbolically register equality between laity and clergy. Such grassroots democratization of the Church was of course potentially subversive of hierarchical control. In the 1980s priestly control was reasserted over lay activities within the parishes, and a "re-ritualization" of the liturgy took place. The potential for the renewal of Polish Catholicism along liberal, reformed lines was blocked, and religiosity was steered back toward traditional devotional piety.

The tone was set by an increasingly conservative Polish pope who, when confronted with the challenges of modern secular culture, stubbornly clung to traditional values—for example, on issues dealing with gender and sexuality. In the early 1980s the basements of Polish churches often housed Solidarity exhibits; in the second half of the decade, these were largely replaced by exhibits on the ground floor promoting the Church's campaign against abortion. Another sign of the times was the letter from Cardinal Glemp in 1987 to the Social Council of the Polish Episcopate, a group of leading intellectuals and scholars entrusted with composing a draft docu-

ment of a vision of a democratic Poland. The cardinal expressed his dismay at the council's liberal interpretation of democracy and stressed his own preference for the prewar tradition of national democracy (where citizenship is closely identified with Polish ethnic identity). As the 1980s came to a close, the Church found itself more powerful than ever, but this power served to obscure the extent to which Church and opposition no longer spoke the same language. This divergence was temporarily concealed by the Church's role in mediating the Roundtable Negotiations, but as the Church found itself in the radically changed circumstances of a post-Communist social reality, the divergence once again became all too apparent.

The fundamental problem regarding church-state relations in a post-Communist Poland is how to reconcile the liberal-democratic principle of disestablishment with the fact that the Catholic Church in Poland enjoys immense authority and that 94 percent of all Poles identify themselves as Roman Catholic. Where exactly should the boundaries be drawn between church and state? To what extent is it legitimate for the Church to exercise its authority in the secular public realm? If such an exercise is legitimate, how should such authority be exercised so as to be consonant with liberal democratic principles?

Let us begin with a few theoretical clarifications. In his recent important work, *Public Religion in the Modern World*, José Casanova analyzes the world-historical processes of disestablishment and secularization to argue that the pendulum is now swinging in the reverse direction: rather than an increasing separation between religion and the institutions that make up the public realm, organized religion now claims an ever larger public role. Furthermore, this enlarged public role does not necessarily conflict with the fundamental principles of a liberal-democratic political order—indeed it may serve to anchor these more firmly (for example, by assisting in the struggle against authoritarian states). In other words, not all religious influence within the public realm of democratic or democratizing states is necessarily antimodernist or fundamentalist. But when is religious influence or activity in the public realm consonant with liberal-democratic principles? On what basis can one make such a distinction?

Casanova's argument hinges on a more differentiated notion of what constitutes the "public realm." One needs to distinguish the state per se from *political society* (political parties, political organiza-

tions) and *civil society* (social movements, voluntary associations, mass media). I would argue that it is possible to include in this typology something like *cultural society* (public performances oriented to aesthetic values). At any rate, Casanova's point is that religious influence in the public realm can reinforce democratic institutions when it is restricted to the sphere of civil society. Why is this the case? Casanova does not make the argument explicitly, but it is implicit due to his theoretical indebtedness to the work of Jürgen Habermas as it is reformulated in terms of political theory by Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato.[4] Civil society is the domain where collective action is oriented primarily toward *argumentative discourse.* Movements, associations, and media all participate in a *public debate,* but they leave the "dirty work" of strategically oriented political conflict, compromise, and policy formulation/implementation to more expressly political institutions. The point here is that religiously motivated individuals, groups, or media actually contribute to the health of a democracy insofar as they contribute to the plurality of voices heard in public discussion.

Lest this formulation appear overly formalistic, it should be added that for Casanova there is yet another precondition that must be met for religion to play the democratizing role he foresees. And this is that churches—i.e., religious organizations and their attendant ideologies—must themselves undergo internal democratization. There has to be a move from hierarchy to genuine democratic participation and empowerment of the laity, and religious ideologies must undergo a process of critique and reconstruction to better meet the demands of a modernized polity and lifeworld. This precondition is so important that the title to Casanova's book could just as easily have been *Modern Religions in the Public World*.

One of Casanova's case studies used to test his hypothesis is Poland. An overview of the church-state conflict in postwar Poland is presented in order to show how Catholicism was essential to the eventual success of the Solidarity movement in overthrowing the Communist system. Clearly this is an example of how a church contributed to the democratization of a formerly authoritarian (some would argue totalitarian) political order. But what of Poland after communism? Recall my analysis above of the subtle shifts in emphasis in the Church's relationship to the democratic opposition that had already occurred between martial law and 1989. This is a necessary

background to the political role of the Church after 1989. Casanova is well aware of this history, as he is aware of recent events. Hence despite his desire to locate yet another case study that fits neatly into his theoretical scheme, his chapter on Poland ends on a rather ambivalent note.

Let us review the highlights of church-state relations in Poland since 1989 to better appreciate the causes behind Casanova's ambivalence. The Church has clearly sought to play a significant role in public life in a post-Communist Poland, but its aim has shifted from a conflict with an atheistic, illegitimate state to the propagation of a Christian (read Roman Catholic) system of values which are to serve as an overarching framework for the construction of a new social order.[5] This system of values is in some ways parallel to, but not wholly synonymous with, the principles which underlie a modern society. The Church has come to terms with the principles of a capitalist economic system and a democratic political order. But what of the principles of individual autonomy and self-determination as these are rendered practical in terms of private lifestyles and public policy? And to what extent should expressly religious values be made binding for the entire society? These questions have been at the center of controversy as the Church seeks to influence the course of events in today's Poland.

The Church has focused on certain key issues in its effort to shape the institutional and moral fabric of post-Communist Poland. First, its major campaign has been to overturn Poland's liberal abortion law of 1956, which essentially provided state-subsidized abortion on demand. The campaign was waged both in the mass media and by putting pressure on members of parliament through informal channels. (Interestingly enough, the Church rejected the notion that the issue be decided by a nationwide referendum.) In 1993 Poland's parliament passed a new law that criminalizes abortion except in narrowly defined circumstances. (An earlier proposal to impose two-year prison sentences on women undergoing abortions was removed from the draft law.) Second, the Church has sought the reintroduction of voluntary religious instruction in the public schools (achieved in 1991 by executive order of the Ministry of Education). Third, the Church pushed for and got new legislation on the mass media that stipulates that programming content respect "Christian values." Fourth, the Church has waged a campaign against what it

sees as the dangerous degeneration of public morality evident in the spread of pornography, the increased visibility of gays and lesbians in public life, and other "social pathologies." Priests have participated in protests by local residents against the opening of AIDS hospices in their communities and received approval for doing so from the Polish cardinal. Last but not least, Church officials have shown remarkable insensitivity to the concerns of other religious groups and organizations—for example, the controversy surrounding the Carmelite monastery located on the grounds of the Auschwitz concentration camp, or the recent pronouncements of the Gdansk bishop regarding the "historical collusion" of Bolshevism and Judaism. When one examines this record, what conclusions can one draw regarding the public role of the Church in the process of democratization?

The answer to this question depends on one's point of view or definition of democracy. It is true that the Church has generally tended to restrict its public activity to the sphere of civil society, although one suspects that much influence is also exerted in a more corporatist, behind-the-scenes manner at very high levels. The Church has refrained from founding its own political party, and it has not endorsed any existing party (although individual priests have made their political sympathies known in homilies). The Church's involvement in the 1995 presidential elections (Cardinal Glemp referred to the choice facing Poles as one between Christianity and neopaganism) was atypical and probably backfired. There is no significant public support for a wider role for the Church in public life; on the contrary, opinion polls demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of (Catholic) Poles feel that the Church already exerts *too much* influence and should restrict itself more narrowly to its spiritual ministry. Since 1989 the prestige of the Church has fallen in direct proportion to its reach for greater public influence.

One would have to adopt a specific definition of democracy to make the argument that the Church's influence on public life or the political process has been pernicious. Such a definition of democracy would stress the ongoing processes whereby democratic rights are extended to all recognizable groups and minorities (including those which the Church defines a priori as immoral), previously unthematized issues in the private realm are made the subject of public debate and policy recommendations (for example, concerning violence

against women), and the principles of individual autonomy and self-determination are actualized in terms of lifestyle choices and the potential for self-realization. Of course such a definition of democracy presupposes that no ideological formation be made binding on society as a whole, but that in the free play of ideas and value positions, each individual is free to make his or her own choices. Interestingly, it appears that Polish political culture as captured in public opinion polls more nearly approximates this view of democracy than the more restrictive one propagated by the Church.

It is interesting to speculate about what is on the minds of those pilgrims who continue to march to the shrine of the Black Madonna in Częstochowa. Has their demonstration of religiosity lost its political connotations? Or is there a new but ill-defined political foe of the true believer, the evil force of secularization, which seems to threaten the hold of religious values over Polish hearts and minds? Or has religious devotion merely become a palliative for those who suffer the most pain in Poland's wrenching transition to market capitalism? There are no doubt participants who wish to aggressively assert their spiritual authority over others in an attempt to shape the world according to religious values. And there are those who are deeply discouraged because the project of a liberalized Catholicism working in concert with democratic social forces has failed to materialize.

## NOTES

1. The most ambitious "sociological intervention" involving focus groups was carried out by Alain Touraine and several Polish colleagues. See Alain Touraine, François Dubet, Michel Wievorka, and Jan Strzelecki, *Solidarity: Poland 1980–81* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). An as yet untranslated study of the Solidarity mentality is Sergiusz Kowalski's *Krytyka Solidarnościowego Rozumu* [A critique of the Solidarity mind-set] (Warsaw: PEN Publishers, 1990).

2. See Michael Bernhard, *The Origins of Democratization in Poland: Workers, Intellectuals, and Oppositional Politics, 1976–1980* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution,* ed. Abraham Brumberg (New York: Vintage Books, 1983); Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985).

3. The best account of this period is still David Ost's *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

4. Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Boston: MIT Press, 1994).

5.  For a more detailed analysis of recent events see Anna Sabbat-Swidlicka, "Church and State in Poland," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, 14 (April 1993): 45–53.

# STAGES OF POLITICAL IDENTITY FORMATION IN LATE SOVIET AND POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

## Michael Urban

As the Soviet and (now) Russian governments have lurched from one debilitating and destructive crisis to another over the past decade, we have been reminded of the many factors—institutions, cultural norms, and practices—necessary for the conduct of "normal" politics.[1] One such factor would be the presence of a community in which political subjects are capable of assuming and projecting discernible and stable political identities. In a broad sense, this community would consist of (1) multiple representations of "who we are and what we stand for" that (2) coexist as patterns of mutual recognition (and thus differentiation) linked to (3) a larger national identity whose core elements are available to each and all of the identities through which it is mediated politically. In our own country we might encounter, say, liberal Democrats who introduce distinctions between themselves and others (other Democrats as well as Republicans). Since these self-representations include elements of the vocabulary and symbology common to American national identity, the political identity in question tends to be acknowledged by these same others more or less as it presents itself. Liberal Democrats often valorize the elements of "fairness" and the responsibility of society via the state for insuring against "unfair" treatment or conditions for individuals or groups. While conservative Republicans might criticize liberal Democrats harshly, they ordinarily do not reject out of hand the notion of "fairness," nor the idea that government should have some role in securing it. These things seem to be part of what "American" means. Thus, their criticism of liberals generally stops short of accusations to the effect that liberals are not in fact who they claim to be, that their principles are alien to the community, that they are "un-American," and so forth.

It would then be these patterns of mutual recognition which construct the basis of political community, anchoring (and thus stabilizing) each identity in a web of relations with others, who might appear as "opponents" but not as "enemies."[2]

Perhaps I have already said enough to remind us of the absence of this condition for "normal" politics in Russia. But my purpose here is not to dwell on the peculiar, if not bizarre, forms assumed by the various identities populating contemporary Russian politics—where "democrats" consecrate the shelling of parliament, "Communists" uphold constitutionalism, "liberal democrats" advocate fascism, and so on—but to sketch out what seem to be the larger outlines of political identity formation and disintegration in which these peculiar forms are located. In order to do so, I shall rely on a number of studies that have analyzed the language of state and politics in the USSR and its successor, the Russian Federation, knitting them together chronologically as a developmental model. My aim is to show (1) that political identity formation and disintegration in the late Soviet and post-Soviet periods can be divided into discrete stages; (2) that each stage represents the outcome of those dynamics—or the resolution of those tensions—animating the previous stage; and (3) that a strong binary opposition—on the order of "we"/"they" or "ours"/"not ours"—has functioned as a constant in this process, assuming different forms in correspondence with discursive changes introduced in one stage or another yet present in the structure of political discourse across them all.

For expository purposes, I refer to each of these stages in terms of its defining characteristic. These are the Failed Mediation of Marxism-Leninism, World-Subverting Discourse, A Time of Troubles, and (prospectively) An Emergent National Mythology. In addition to abstracting the key features of political discourse from each of the respective stages in "vertical" fashion (concepts subsuming phenomena), the model also aims to link "horizontally" the concepts thus derived, indicating thereby a particular trajectory in Soviet/Russian political discourse over the past two decades or so that suggests that the process of political identity formation is in certain respects cyclical.

My attention to the language of politics and identity necessarily neglects a myriad of empirical factors and conditions impinging on the issue of identity formation itself—most notably, the ill-con-

ceived economic reform begun in 1992; the usurpation of power by the executive branch of government in order to push it through; the disastrous socioeconomic and political consequences resulting therefrom; and the actions of Western governments and their international financial and military institutions, whose austerity programs for Russia's economy and announced intentions for NATO's eastward expansion have contributed considerably to shaping the "realities" of Russian politics as well as the words that can be meaningfully uttered about them. The model developed here in no sense represents a substitute for analysis of those empirical factors and conditions relevant to the issue of political identity. Rather, its utility would consist in examining and interpreting the discourse available at one stage or another for mediating those same "realities" within the political community. That which the model discloses about Soviet/Russian political discourse and the way in which identities have formed and disintegrated in the recent past makes possible a forecast concerning the construction of political identities in the immediate future.

## THE FAILED MEDIATION OF MARXISM-LENINISM

Marxism-Leninism was, of course, the official ideology of the Soviet regime. From my perspective, it amounted to a prepackaged collection of identities—"the Soviet people," their "fighting vanguard," the Communist Party, the "fraternal union of the peoples [nationalities] of the USSR," and so forth—that was imposed on all public communication. Thus its antidialogic categories were not only unable to root themselves in a community of speakers (anyone employing this language would immediately be recognized by others as saying things that were not authentic, not actually his or hers), but their ubiquity ruled out the public presentation of any and all alternative identity constructs, which it defined in one way or another as "enemy." In short, Marxism-Leninism was an antipolitical identity that also functioned to foreclose the possibility of forming political identities.[3]

The price paid for Marxism-Leninism's artificial and centrally enforced system of communication was its inability to receive, ana-

lyze, and act upon reports from the world. As a semantic structure, Marxism-Leninism could sustain its capacity to make sense only by canceling its claim to be able to engage the world in a practical way. Thus, its spokespersons were forced to salvage signification by retreating into the mythic dimension of language wherein all signifiers would refer to the purely make-believe universe celebrated in Marxist-Leninist discourse.[4] This retreat was synonymous with the pronounced element of "magic" that appeared in Soviet parlance, attributing preternatural abilities to certain mortals and performing various feats of alchemy on everyday realities.

On the other hand, attempts to employ Marxism-Leninism to address practical problems resulted in communicative calamity: the more that actual reports from the world appeared in narrative, the more the problems thus disclosed overwhelmed would-be solutions and called attention to the bankruptcy of the official ideology. In the field of governmental institutions, for instance, those rare studies that managed to include some description of how laws and Communist Party directives were implemented in practice revealed a world stood on its head. All of the agencies of "people's power"—soviets, citizens' voluntary organizations, the Communist Party itself—appeared powerless to control the behavior of their would-be subordinate, the administrative apparatus of the Soviet state.[5] Unable to employ its categories to discuss and to affect events in the world, it had become evident by the close of the Soviet period that Marxism-Leninism had failed as a mediator for social practice.[6]

## WORLD-SUBVERTING DISCOURSE

For at least some people in the USSR, the world celebrated in Marxist-Leninist discourse was a world that did not work in practice. In order to alter that unhappy state of affairs, Mikhail Gorbachev introduced early in his tenure as General Secretary of the Communist Party a number of emendations to the official discourse that would open at least partially its hitherto closed structures of communication to reports from the social world.[7] Under the rubric "glasnost," he launched a process that restored a practical dimension to public discourse and palpably reduced the dogmatic component

in public speech. In so doing, he also opened the way for a political dialogue that by the end of the Soviet period featured an opposition movement whose language was thoroughly subversive. The more this language proliferated in the USSR, the more it demolished Soviet identity constructs and replaced them with new ones. Just as the "Soviet people" disintegrated into Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Russians, and others, so the Communist identity was undermined and dislodged by a "democratic" one. Especially in the latter instance, this new identity was constructed "negatively"; its actual content was anti-communism pure and simple.

The language of Russia's democratic opposition was thus structured by the waning presence of the old, official discourse. Its narratives consisted of a series of lampoons that would dredge up the categories of Marxism-Leninism and subject them to pitiless ridicule and caustic irony. The "positive" moment in the democrats' discourse went almost entirely missing. The new world that they heralded was in fact the old one turned upside down. "Communism is about a planned economy," they would say, "so we stand for the market. Communism stresses the collective, but for us the individual is everything. Communism is the absence of freedom, so we are all for it." And so it went. The democratic identity born at the end of the Communist era resembled a reflex response to the "enemy" ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Democrats constructed themselves by appropriating its negative categories and reversing their valence. Their political prescriptions were its proscriptions turned inside out. In the same way that the language employed by the Communists at the First Congress of People's Deputies in spring 1989 (and at subsequent ones as well) defined the extant political community in such a way as to exclude their democratic opponents from it,[8] so the language of the democrats featured at the Second Congress in December of that same year traced its own circle around an emergent and authentic political community from which Communists and all that they represented would be banished.[9] An examination of the programs of those democratic political parties that appeared in 1990, moreover, would reveal no significant differences among them; none included practical measures aimed at solving specific problems. Each of them constructed the worthiness of its authors by means of a binary logic that validated statements in proportion to their distance from, and opposition to, everything associated with commu-

nism, while distinguishing itself from others of its type on the basis of identity claims—"Christian-," "social-," "liberal-democratic," and so forth—confected more or less on the spot and in a language accessible only to initiates.[10]

That the discourse of the democrats was a powerful one would appear to be incontestable. In comparison to their Communist opponents, they commanded very few resources. Nevertheless, they were able to destroy the Communist regime by deploying against it the one superweapon in their arsenal: words. The destructive potential of that weapon, however, was by no means spent in their victory over the Communists.

## A TIME OF TROUBLES

The collapse of the Communist order removed at one stroke that all-embracing "other" against which the political identities of Russia's democrats had been pitched. This development triggered a thoroughgoing identity crisis in the polity that might be schematically rendered in terms of three moments. The first moment would involve the presentation of a given identity: "We are the Christian- (or social-, etc.) democrats, and we stand for. . . ." The second moment, the other's response, typically rejected the identity thus presented and relabeled its presenter "Communist" (and therefore not an opponent but an enemy). There are a number of reasons that might explain this rejection/relabeling. Since the vast majority of active political subjects had themselves been Communists and only recently had reconfigured themselves as "democrats," it would appear that each would have little trouble spotting an analogous quick change taking place among others. Moreover, at stake in post-Communist Russia were not the issues of "normal" politics, but fundamental questions of power and property guaranteeing a political struggle of enormous intensity. With respect to the matter of political identity, the salient consideration appeared to have been the fact that Russia was unique among post-Communist nation-states in its inability to assign blame for the catastrophe of communism to another nation. Whereas, say, Poles or Lithuanians could regard their own calamity as the result of Russia's imposition of communism on them,

Russia could not. Guilt for what communism had done to the nation therefore could not be "exported"; instead, it has circulated freely in Russia's domestic politics. Who would be tagged "it"? Particularly in view of the way in which the world-subverting discourse of the previous stage had rendered communism as the fount of all that plagued the nation, a premium would be placed upon avoiding blame. Therefore, by accusing the other of communism, each could exculpate himself or herself. And, in the context of mutual nonrecognition of projected political identities, a third moment appeared as each unmoored identity tended to gravitate for validation toward the lodestone of nation, representing itself as not merely a political tendency but as the defender of Russia.[11]

As this process played itself out during the first year or so of independence, it split political society into two mutually opposed formations, one grouped around the presidency, the other around the parliament. The political world constructed by the language of each side again pivoted on a strong binary opposition: we/they or nation/enemy. Even such ostensibly neutral or innocuous terms as "normal" functioned in this discourse to exacerbate, if not create, division. Rather than pointing outwardly toward some existing standard recognized by both parties to the conflict—which might then serve as a framework or basis for compromise—"normal" appeared in the language of each side as that which covered up its own confusion, justified whatever positions a given speaker was advocating at the moment, and commissioned that side's assaults on the other as that which would be required by any "normal" government, parliament, civilized country, system of values, great power, and so forth.[12] This language made a caricature of compromise, ratcheted upward the terms of conflict, and drove the struggle to its bloody end in Moscow in October 1993, literally blackening that singular symbol conjoining democracy and nation, the Russian "White House."

## AN EMERGENT NATIONAL MYTHOLOGY?

The question mark appended to this subheading indicates my hesitation to predict that either some inclusive national mythology

will indeed emerge or, should it do so, what its contents will include and how it might mediate the formation of political identities. At present, there seems to be much looking inward in Russian politics and no small amount of more or less deliberate myth-making going on.* As to how events might condition this process and where it will lead, we have relatively little to go on and much to consider. Therefore, I shall conclude by offering a few observations of a general type that focus on the dynamics of the previous stages of identity formation, treating them as clues to what may emerge in the future.

A striking feature of the stages of political identity formation reviewed thus far has been the tendency toward binary forms of representation, portraying the world in terms of "we"/"they" distinctions that repeatedly rule out "them" from the political community. Accordingly, Marxism-Leninism constructed a "Soviet people" and banished to the category "anti-Soviet" all those engaged in practices not bearing the regime's imprimatur. In the second stage, initiated by glasnost, a host of "democratic" political identities poured forth, but these—by equating "democratic" with "anti-Communist"—in fact reproduced the division of the political world into community ("democrats") and aliens (Communists and their allies, the "patriots"). In the third stage, the defeat of communism would seem to have ushered in at least some of the conditions for political identity formation of the "normal" variety. The overbearing "other" (the Communist regime) had been dispatched by self-proclaimed democrats insisting on the importance of pluralism, legality, freedom of expression, and so on. The democratic forces rapidly split into two opposing camps, each labeling the other "Communist" and claiming that the fate of the nation had been vouchsafed to its own ministry.[†]

*On a research visit to Moscow in fall 1994, I encountered a number of politically active individuals, a few of them former dissidents, rather intensively debating and attempting to formulate a contemporary version of "the Russian idea." Many believed this an urgent task, inasmuch as competing groups, whose formulations they dreaded, were also working on such a project. They sensed that whoever was able first to circulate some compelling version of an updated Russian idea would have the decisive influence in shaping current politics.

[†]Since popular media in the West had largely taken at more or less face value the characterizations of "the reformers," a widespread view seemed to exist that Russian politics had been centered on the struggle between the democratic

Moving in stages from the (failed) unifying myth of Marxism-Leninism to its disintegration, then to the democratic revolution and the replication of a binary structure of the political field in the first period of the post-Soviet era, leading political actors have relied heavily on "magical" words to construct their respective versions of community and outsiders. In this regard, a basic equivalence would be evident between, say, Leonid Brezhnev's "plans of the Communist Party" and Gorbachev's "the constitution,"[13] and between either of the foregoing and Boris Yeltsin's "reform." Each of these terms has served to draw a magic circle around the leader and his supporters, to define that group as a community of the righteous, and to declare others unworthy of membership in it, excising and excommunicating them in the process. Never mind that the words themselves—plans, constitution, reform—have had no necessary relationship to that which would be signified by them in ordinary language.

In the third stage of my developmental model, a particularly vicious condition beset political society in the form of two mutually opposing centers of authority, president and parliament, each claiming its own "magical" entitlement to rule, to the exclusion of the other. For the president, "the people" functioned in this capacity; for the parliament, it was "the constitution." As a consequence, political society faced a set of circumstances not unlike those described in double-bind theory. In this instance, a subject would be placed in an impossible situation by some powerful "other" who issues contradictory commands and then punishes the subject for whichever choice he or she has made because it (necessarily) has violated one or another end of the injunction.[14] In terms of communication, the two mutually opposed centers of authority that existed during Russia's recent "time of troubles" put political society in just such an impossible situation: either to conform to the will of the people and thus violate the constitution or to abide by the constitution and thus reject the will of the people. No matter which choice was made, the subject would become an "enemy" for one of the centers of authority.

forces led by Boris Yeltsin and a reactionary Communist opposition located in the Supreme Soviet. Were one to look a little closer at the lineups, however, one would likely detect not only a goodly number of ex-nomenklatura on the president's team, but also a remarkably large complement of "ex-democratic" leaders on that of the parliament, including Ruslan Khasbulatov, Il'ya Konstantinov, Oleg Rumyantsev, Viktor Aksyuchits, Sergei Baburin, Mikhail Astaf'ev, Nikolai Pavlov, and Andrei Golovin.

The violent resolution of this condition of split authority has also forefronted the question of how the double bind that it involved might be removed. Two methods are available for that purpose: either metacommunication, whereby the parties involved discuss critically the content of the relevant communications and reach some consensus on changing them; or myth-making, whereby some new ideational construct is generated that alters the representation of reality in such a way as to remove the "impossible choice." The opportunity for realizing the first alternative appears to have passed, as Russia's new constitutional order did not issue from a negotiated settlement of differences leading to consensus on the "rules of the game," but from the imposition of a set of rules by one of the parties to the previous conflict—the executive—which it appears either to respect or to disregard as convenience dictates.[15] Since negotiations leading to consensus on the rules governing conflict either had not occurred in the critical instance of adopting a constitution or subsequently have come to nothing,* it seems that political society has before itself the remaining alternative of a communicative framework or master code—namely, the construction of a national mythology that informs and thus makes mutually comprehensible the language of politics, one that authorizes certain political identities even as it stigmatizes others.

Although we may well have to look past the current troupe of political actors in order to learn the names of its authors and beneficiaries, we can speculate on some of the contents of such a mythology by examining certain prevailing circumstances in the light of developments to this point in time. Along these lines, it appears likely that an emergent national myth will mark "the West" negatively. Just as a broad recognition had developed in the second stage that Marxism-Leninism had failed to mediate a practical response to the USSR's problems, so the recognition appears to be growing at the moment that Westernization is a false idol, sacrifices to which have cost the nation dearly and unnecessarily.[16] This turnabout among

*As an afterthought in spring 1994, Yeltsin attempted to broker a minimal consensus among the various organized forces in Russian political society with his Agreement on Civil Peace. Off to a shaky start since a number of important political groups refused to participate in the signing, things only got worse as some initial signatories withdrew, and the commencement of hostilities against Chechnya at year's end buried this would-be "pact" once and for all.

cultural-political elites is reflected in the changing outlook of the general population. Whereas a few years ago most people had perceived Western governments as desirable partners for Russia, today some two-thirds of Russians see those same governments as maliciously intentioned and hostilely inclined.[17] In opposition to the West, a new national myth is likely to valorize those of Russia's institutions most closely associated with historical-mythical images of the nation itself and most practiced in (and disposed toward) ceremonial displays of grandeur and power. The principal candidates for that role, of course, would be the military and the Orthodox Church, each of which has continued to enjoy the confidence of a citizenry disillusioned with both government and the current crop of political leaders.[18] What is more, the military and the Church have already taken steps toward forming a practical alliance that at present involves certain units of the armed forces contributing to the physical maintenance of churches, while Orthodox priests conduct religious-patriotic indoctrination within those units.[19] The radiance of the national symbology adorning these two institutions appears to bathe others in its light. Not only does rust belt industry, which is mainly related to military production, play the politics of "patriotic protectionism" and harp on the sanctity of "state" (read "our") interests, but on the other end of the economic spectrum, consortia of big banks and export-sector firms have begun to privatize the process of privatization itself, employing the shibboleths of nation and patriotic duty (assumably because the banks in question have the good fortune of being owned by Russians), which they mount against the phantoms of predatory foreign capital, while lining their own pockets at the public expense with both the blessing and financial backing of the state.[20]

As has often been the case, patriotism is again proving very profitable. That would especially hold true for "political entrepreneurs" playing to the hopes and fears of a mass public bewildered by what has been going on around them, increasingly inclined against ethnic non-Russians in their midst just as they are more and more xenophobically disposed toward the outside world.[21] The recent history of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) perhaps illustrates the general trend here. Having constructed for themselves a new identity shorn of all trace of internationalism and heavily larded with patriotic and religious

sentiments[22] (whose value to the proletariat has hitherto not been much acknowledged by Marxists), the CPRF achieved a stunning victory in the December 1995 parliamentary elections, apparently thanks to its ability to speak to the country's "national-patriotic" constituency and thus to win over votes otherwise destined for non-Communist nationalists such as Vladimir Zhirinovskii.[23] At this writing, the CPRF is poised to reprise its successful winter campaign for parliament with a spring offensive for the presidency, marching at the head of a coalition of "left and popular-patriotic forces," which seems certain to leave its mark on contemporary political discourse irrespective of the election's outcome.[24] To its credit, the CPRF's concept of national patriotism has not been overtly racist. But to the degree that an emergent national myth will emphasize fundamentalist aspects of "the Russian people"—which, I should think, it is likely to do—it will feature some elements of racism, drawing divisions between "authentic Russians" and the other "dark peoples" who inhabit the Russian Federation. These invidious distinctions have surfaced already, not least in the thinly disguised code employed by the authorities in their war against Chechnya. It would go without saying that the political identities authorized by such a new national myth are not, for us in the West, inviting ones: assertive nationalism at one end of the spectrum, fascism at the other.

## NOTES

The conception of this work owes much to extended discussions with John McClure, who has my thanks for his insightful comments and suggestions.

1. By "normal" politics, I mean regularized patterns of interest representation and conflict shaped by two conditions: established procedures by means of which political contests are enacted and substantive determinations that prevent fundamental issues from being thematized in a politically significant way. While the first condition would be more or less obvious from the perspective of democracy, the second, involving suppression, forgetting, and the non-articulation of matters fundamental to the organization of power, would not. Following Charles Lindblom, we can conceive of a "grand majority" (which never speaks) as that consensual understanding sustained by power and persuasion that prevents the structures of domination themselves from entering the political process as public issues. See his *Politics and Markets: The World's Political Economic Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

2. Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

3. Rachel Walker: "Marxism-Leninism as Discourse: The Politics of the Empty Signifier and the Double Bind," *British Journal of Political Science 19* (April 1989): 161–89, and "Language and the Politics of Identity in the USSR," in *Ideology and System Change in the USSR and East Europe: Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate, 1990,* ed. Michael E. Urban (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 3–19.

4. Michael Urban, "The Structure of Signification in the General Secretary's Address: A Semiotic Approach to Soviet Political Discourse," *Coexistence* 24 (1987): 187–210.

5. This conclusion appears obliquely or implicitly in a few studies published during this period. Among them are, A. T. Leizerov, *Demokraticheskie formy deyatel'nosti mestnykh Sovetov* (Minsk: Belorusskii Gosudarstvenyi Universitet, 1977); G. B. Polyak, *Byudzhet goroda* (Moscow: Finansy, 1978); "Sovershenstvovat' koordinatsionnye funktsii Sovetov," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo,* no. 1 (January 1976): 23–31.

6. Michael Urban and John McClure, "The Folklore of State Socialism: Semiotics and the Study of the Soviet State," *Soviet Studies* 35 (October 1983): 471–86; Michael Urban, "Local Soviets and Popular Needs: Where the Official Ideology Meets Everyday Life," in *Ideology and Soviet Politics,* ed. S. White and A. Pravda (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 136–58.

7. Michael Urban: "From Chernenko to Gorbachev: A Repoliticization of Official Soviet Discourse?," *Soviet Union* 13 (1986): 131–61, and *More Power to the Soviets: The Democratic Revolution in the USSR* (Aldershot, England: Edward Elgar, 1990), pp. 15–24.

8. Viktor Sergeyev and Nikolai Biryukov, "Sobornost' versus Parliamentarianism," in *Russia's Road to Democracy: Parliament, Communism, and Traditional Culture*, ch. 5 (Aldershot, England: Edward Elgar, 1993).

9. Michael Urban and John McClure, "Discourse, Ideology and Party Formation on the Democratic Left in the USSR," in Urban, ed., *Ideology and System Change,* pp. 92–120.

10. Michael Urban: "Party Formation and Deformation on Russia's Democratic Left," in *Perestroika-Era Politics,* ed. R. Huber and D. Kelly (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), pp. 129–50, and "Parties in Movement: The Articulation of Russian Political Society at the Close of the Soviet Period," in *The Rebirth of Politics in Russia*, ch. 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press—forthcoming).

11. For a detailed discussion, see Michael Urban, "The Politics of Identity in Russia's Postcommunist Transition: The Nation against Itself," *Slavic Review* 53 (Fall 1994): 733–65.

12. These thoughts on the use of the word "normal" in Russian political discourse owe much to the analysis offered by Gasan Guseinov, "Yazyk politiki i publitsistiki v pervyi postsovetskii god Rossii"; working paper delivered at the Department of East European Culture, University of Bremen, March 1993, pp. 10–12.

13. On this point, see Robert Sharlet, "The Path of Constitutional Reform in the USSR," in Huber and Kelly, eds., *Perestroika-Era Politics,* pp. 24–25.

14. Jürgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson, *Communication, the Social Matrix of Psychiatry* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1951).

15. I have attempted to treat the early symptoms of this political malady in my "December 1993 as a Replication of Late-Soviet Electoral Practices," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 10 (April–June 1994): 127–58. More recently, the experiences of Russia's war against Chechnya, conducted on the basis of secret, and therefore not subject to adjudication, presidential decrees would indicate that constitutionally mediated forms of conflict have all but disappeared.

16. Indicatively, one of Russia's leading pro-Western journalists, writing in arguably its most Western-oriented national daily, has reached just this conclusion. See Mikhail Leont'ev, "Posle krakha vesternizatsii," *Segodnia,* November 24, 1994, p. 1.

17. Igor' Kliamkin, "Elektorat demokraticheskikh sil," in *Analiz elektorata politicheskikh sil Rossii,* ed. A. I. Ioffe (Moscow: Komtekh, 1995), p. 16.

18. Leonid Sebov, "Boris El'tsin pal zhertvoi Borisa El'tsina," *Segodnia,* April 8, 1995, p. 3.

19. Yuri Golotyuk, "Rossiiskie pogranvoiska otnyne sluzhat 'Bogu i Otechestvu,' " *Segodnia,* March 17, 1995, p. 2.

20. Some of the details of this "privatization of privatization" that have come to light seem especially tawdry and sordid: the Russian state transfers its properties to private consortia, which arrange for their sale using private bank credits *insured* by state funds; the banks (and Merrill Lynch, which is the link to foreign investors) receive fees from the sale of these stocks and acquire automatically all stocks that remain unsold; the Russian state renounces its sovereignty in dealing with these consortia, promising to submit all disputes to foreign courts and to abide by their rulings. On these arrangements, see Andrei Grigor'ev, "Konsortsium bankov vyrabotal okonchatel'nyi proekt," *Segodnia,* May 18, 1995, p. 3; Rustam Narzikulov, "Merrill Lynch potrebovala ot Rossii otkaz ot suvereniteta" and "'Gruppy zakhvata' v bor'be za chetvertyi peredel kapitala," *Segodnia,* May 18, 1995, pp. 1, 7.

21. Yuri Levada, "Threat or Bogus?," *Moscow News,* March 31–April 6, 1995.

22. Vladimir Sirotin, "National Communism," *Moscow News*, September 2–8, 1994.

23. Aleksandr Segal, "Elektorat levykh sil," in Ioffe, ed., *Analiz elektorata*, p. 42.

24. *Segodnia*, February 16, 1996.

# THE POST-COMMUNIST IDENTITY AND EAST EUROPEAN POLITICS

## Marjorie Castle

How do identities come into play in the *political* arena? Here I address the role of some specifically post-Communist identities in shaping the context of politics in East-Central Europe and the constraints or opportunities political players may find in those identities. In particular, I suggest that certain identities constrain the kinds of political parties that can emerge, the kinds of coalitions they can form, and the constituencies to which they can appeal. While the focus here is on Poland, the following analysis shows that some of these observations apply to other countries in East-Central Europe, and particularly Hungary.

The most prominent characteristic of political parties in this region is their weakness. More than six years into the democratic political game, after several elections in each of these countries (counting parliamentary, presidential, and local elections), we still find relatively weak party systems, with low party membership figures, low voter turnout, failure of voters to identify with parties, and voting patterns that change drastically from election to election. This phenomenon is especially strong in Poland.

One question immediately presents itself: does this weakness matter? Why should it matter whether or not *parties* are going to be effective in channeling and structuring the expression of political identities? After all, the significance of parties has been declining in almost all democracies, while the importance of alternative actors—such as new social movements, interest groups, and even the media—has been growing. Nevertheless, it does matter because parties remain uniquely important intermediate structures, making a political and organizational link between state and society. If parties cannot make strong linkages between themselves and their constitu-

encies, they end up unable to play representational and mobilizational roles, and citizens are left alienated from democratic politics.

While there are various possible factors that may enter into an explanation for this phenomenon, it is the role of political identities that will be examined here. Why have the existing identities not served as a foundation for the development of stable partisan loyalties, and what are the prospects that they may do so in the future? Is there something in how the socialist experience shaped political identities or in how the exit from socialism itself, the transition away from Communist rule, has shaped identities?

There is a possible argument that this is the result of one very important legacy from the Communist system: the underdevelopment of socioeconomic classes. Perceptions of differing economic interests are an important source of the kind of collective identities that can form the basis for political action. While there certainly were inequalities under socialism, there were also pressures that kept these inequalities from becoming the basis for any kind of class consciousness. The primary divide was between the ruling elite, which controlled the state, and the rest of society: in popular consciousness, the distinction between "they" and "we." (While this divide could not be acknowledged officially, it shaped private interpretations as well as opposition discourse.)

Now, however, the restraints are off. These inequalities can be perceived and discussed, and new inequalities and differing economic interests are emerging constantly. There is a possible variation on this argument: during the transition from plan to market, during this ongoing transformation of economic institutions together with the restructuring and opening of the economy, people will be very uncertain about their economic interests in the future and about how any particular state policy might affect those interests. This might make it hard for collective identities based on economic interests to become the basis for political action. But this uncertainty about economic interests is declining. It cannot be the whole explanation. I suggest that, at least in Poland, which arguably has the weakest party system in East-Central Europe, a major part of the problem is that the identities that matter to political elites and the identities that could matter to the electorate are not the same.[1] Identities defined by the positions individuals and their organizations took under the Communist regime remain extremely important to many members

of the Polish political elite but are nowhere near as important to most Polish voters. This is the distinction between a Communist past and an opposition past, between a past spent *supporting* the former Communist regime and a past spent *opposing* it.

What does this mean? While running for president in the 1995 election, Jan Olszewski, a former Polish prime minister, once an activist in the democratic opposition and now a leader of a political party considered to be right wing, stated in a press interview that a president from his own political camp would not be "a president of *all* Poles," such as Lech Wałęsa had claimed to be. Instead, in his view,

> This should be a president of the Polish *nation*. Our president cannot to any extent identify with that social group which identified its interests and position with the structure of Soviet domination in Poland and today identifies with the heirs of that structure. The interests of that group stand in marked opposition to the interests of a democratic and independent Polish state.[2]

For many members of the Polish political elite, those whom they consider to be "red," those who are tainted by association with the former Communist regime, are beyond the pale. The "reds" are unacceptable political partners—cooperation with them carries a profound stigma—and their presence in positions of power is interpreted as some kind of continuation of the old regime. This applies especially to organizations that participated in the Communist regime or to their renamed successor organizations.

Who is it that sees them this way? It is important to remember that Poland, more than any other Communist-ruled country, had an alternative elite, coming from its large opposition and centered in the Solidarity movement. This intensifies the importance of the questions, "What did you do in the past?" or "Where did you stand?" The post-Communist identity is contrasted with the post-Solidarity identity. (Significantly, the post-Solidarity identity might lose some of its luster and moral value if the post-Communist identity were seen as not such a bad thing.) As a result, one crucial legacy—of both the old system and the transition process itself—is that the Polish political elite is largely characterized by a division between individuals and organizations with Communist pasts and those with opposition pasts.

Several implications of this situation are worth noting. First, it adds another dimension to an already painfully complex left-right spectrum, providing another pair of meanings for "left" and "right." These terms have particularly powerful meanings in all the countries of East-Central Europe, and being stuck with the wrong label can be very costly for a politician or a party. This is especially true for the label "left wing" since in the minds of many this is associated with all the flaws of the old system, from long food lines to Soviet domination. At the same time "left" and "right" have particularly complex and ambiguous meanings in post-Communist countries. There is the economic dimension: someone who is for liberal economic policies, for free-market solutions and private property is clearly on the right; someone who favors a larger state role in the economy, more interventionism, or even a return to some kind of socialist policies is clearly on the left. Then there is what might be called a social or moral dimension, which does not necessarily coincide with the economic dimension: someone who favors prohibiting abortion, assuring a respect for religious values on television and the radio, and permitting religious instruction in public schools is on the right; someone who supports abortion rights and the separation of church and state is on the left. This social or moral dimension is often strongly associated with what might be called a nationalist dimension: someone who believes that only people fulfilling specific ethnic, linguistic, and religious criteria should be considered citizens and who advocates concentrating on developing and preserving the country's national uniqueness is on the right; someone who believes that anyone born within the state borders should be accepted as a full citizen and that his or her country should move toward acceptance into the European Community, becoming part of Europe, is on the left.

This complication of the left-right spectrum is a tendency elsewhere in the world, including established democracies. There is no longer any automatic link between positions on economic issues and social/moral issues. But this tendency is stronger in formerly Communist countries, where the new parties can rarely be placed neatly on a left-right scale. In fact, we might say that in this sense, what we have in some of these new democracies is a more modern party system since these parties have been created in response to current issues and pressures, and thus the party system has not been shaped by the inertia of historical issue-configurations.[3]

In the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe, and particularly in Poland, there is still one more left-right dimension. "Left" can also mean associated with the former Communist regime, or even just rejecting policies of retribution against those associated with it, while "right" can mean associated with the former opposition.

An examination of the Polish party system demonstrates the impact of this dimension. As of 1996, there were roughly three political blocs operating in Poland. The governing coalition was made up of the two more or less post-Communist parties: the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (the direct successor to the Communist Party) and the Polish Peasant Party. The latter, while it includes some elements of the rural Solidarity opposition movement, is largely a direct successor to the United Peasant Party, which was an obedient satellite to the Communist Party for decades of Communist rule. The bloc constituting the center of the political spectrum consists of one party, the Union of Freedom. This is a party with solid roots in the Solidarity opposition movement, but its leaders are subject to intense criticism from other former oppositionists for their supposed softness on the former Communists.

The right is almost unrepresented in the parliament. The numerous parties of the right failed to form effective coalitions before the 1993 parliamentary elections; thus all but one failed to get enough votes to meet the 5 percent threshold, even though all together they received approximately 22 percent of the votes.* All of the parties in this third bloc have roots in the former opposition, and all are anti-Communist, which necessarily means anti-*former*-Communist. Although the costs of disunity were made clear by the 1993 parliamentary elections, these parties were unable to agree on a single candidate in the 1995 presidential elections.

The striking thing about these blocs is that the one dimension defining them, the one thing which the Social Democrats and the Peasant Party have in common and which sets them off from each of the others, and the one thing which all the parties of what is called the right wing have in common is their position on the former Communist-former opposition dimension. It is this that defines the major

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*Before this election, in an effort to correct the supposed fragmenting effects of the 1991 electoral law, new legislation was passed to reduce the proportionality of the electoral system, including setting a 5 percent threshold for individual parties and an 8 percent threshold for electoral coalitions.

blocs in Polish politics, that determines who can work with whom, and to what extent. The defining issue is not economic policy positions—and this in a country still facing major economic decisions—nor is it the parties' stands on social/moral issues.

Some of the specific effects of this post-Communist identity deserve closer scrutiny. It holds together the Social Democratic Party. Although activists of this party share a strongly "leftist" stance on most social/moral issues, their positions on economic issues vary widely, from more or less socialist preferences in the party's left wing to solid support of a free-market, liberal economic policy in much of the party's leadership. Nevertheless, in contrast to the splintering of the Solidarity movement in 1990, in contrast to the general fragmentation on the Polish political scene, the vast majority of former Communists who have remained active in politics have remained together in one party. Thus they have kept all the political and organizational resources that remain in their hands together. They have been unified by common defensive interests, by the need to protect themselves and their supporters from decommunization policies, and by the fact that they have few potential partners elsewhere in Polish politics.

Its post-Communist identity also kept the Social Democratic Party from becoming the senior partner in the governing coalition until more than a year and a half after its plurality victory in the 1993 parliamentary elections. Even after installing their own prime minister, the Social Democrats remained in uneasy coalition with the Peasant Party, with whom they shared a "past" but little else. The coalition partners' disagreement on economic policy and on church-state relations was a major reason for the ineffectuality of the Peasant Party-led Pawlak government.

The influence of this post-Communist identity has also thus far prevented any coalition between a post-Solidarity party and the former Communists. The free-market wing of the Social Democratic Party and the centrist Union of Freedom have similar economic positions. Statements by several Union of Freedom leaders suggest that some of them see the Social Democrats as the most promising allies for carrying out the far-reaching economic and institutional transformations they deem necessary.[4] Their stands on several other issues are not that far apart. But there exists a danger that if the leaders of the Union of Freedom try to form a coalition with the Social Demo-

crats, their own party would be torn apart. For many of the Freedom Union's former Solidarity activists, joining in a coalition with the former Communists, with the "reds," would be unacceptable.

An even stronger aversion to working with the "reds" and a commitment to decommunization also weakens right-wing post-opposition parties. Several of them have positions on both economic and social/moral issues similar to those of the Peasant Party. Nevertheless, a full-scale coalition with this party, tainted by its participation in the old Communist regime, has thus far been unthinkable.

What does the electorate think of all this? Do these post-Communist and post-Solidarity identities have any resonance outside the circles of political elites? Strong anti-Communist feelings were certainly widespread in the first couple of years after the fall of the Communist regime. In 1990, 45 percent of Poles surveyed were in favor of outlawing the Communist Party. But much evidence suggests that the importance of the post-Communist/post-Solidarity distinction has declined rapidly and dramatically among the general public. Already in 1993, one week before the parliamentary elections, a national survey showed that while only 23 percent of respondents were pleased by the prospect of a Social Democratic victory, another 50 percent declared themselves indifferent.[5] This was hardly the response of voters who saw the Social Democrats as the unrepentant representatives of a hated and feared old regime.

There is undoubtedly a core staunchly anti-Communist electorate in Poland, voters for whom compromise with the "reds" is anathema—probably less than 20 percent. But for the majority of Poles, this distinction and the accusations and mutual recriminations that arise from it represent a conflict to which they are indifferent. Surveys indicate that Poles dislike too much conflict in their politics—institutions that engage in conflict consistently lose their popularity.[6] This aversion to political conflict, this preference for consensus, may well be another legacy of the old system. Nevertheless, for the present, it appears to be a political reality, and thus intense political conflicts which appear irrelevant to the life of the average Pole can only have an alienating effect.

To what extent is this a Polish peculiarity, and to what extent is this a more general feature of post-Communist politics? Anti-Communist feelings and rhetoric abounded throughout the first stage of all the transitions away from Communist rule. Decommunization

policies of one kind or another have been carried out in several countries. But hard and fast distinctions between a Communist past and an opposition past are much more rare. The epithet of "red" may often be used as a convenient political weapon, but only in a couple of countries does it constitute a real obstacle to otherwise advantageous political moves. After Poland, the East European country where organized opposition played the largest role in the transition was Hungary, so it is not surprising that post-Communist/post-opposition identities have played a major role there as well. Lately, however, the role of this factor in Hungarian politics may be declining. In the 1994 parliamentary election, one Hungarian party, the Young Democrats, chose to project an intensified anti-Communist image. Their popularity fell dramatically and their election results were highly disappointing; the message from the voters appeared unambiguous. When the former Hungarian Communists won an outright electoral victory in 1994, they extended a coalition offer to a party with solid opposition origins, the Free Democrats. The Free Democrats accepted the offer, breaking a hitherto taboo in Hungarian politics.

Is the situation in Poland likely to change any time soon? We might have expected it to change with the 1993 electoral victory for the Polish post-Communist parties since now they could no longer be ignored when creating coalitions; they themselves were forming the governing coalition. Not only did this not happen in Poland, but also the policies followed by the Social Democrats once they found themselves back in a governing coalition were guaranteed to perpetuate the post-Communist/post-Solidarity distinction. This included purging officials appointed under the previous post-Solidarity governments, especially in the Foreign Ministry. These kinds of "vengeance" policies certainly reinforced a post-Communist identity in the eyes of their rivals. But such policies mainly affect only political elites and are much less relevant for voters.

Even though the importance of the post-Communist identity may decline, especially as new cohorts with neither oppositionist nor Communist pasts enter politics, it has already had a lasting impact on the Polish party system. In particular, it has created a united left, a left under post-Communist leadership, but united.

We can only speculate about other possible consequences of the post-Communist/post-opposition divide. Its impact on policy is un-

clear. This cleavage may be an obstacle to an effective coalition of the political forces committed to continuing privatization and institutional reform in Poland. Parties ready to try some kind of third way or to reverse the direction of reforms have been discouraged from uniting. What effect does it have on the potential for some kind of anti-democratic nationalist or populist movement in Poland? Any situation that leaves many people disgusted with politics and without sympathy for democratically inclined political parties can generate support for such movements. But the post-Communist/post-opposition distinction divides nationalists and potential nationalists as well; thus it works against that tendency. In fact, Poland will most likely continue to muddle through, although it may not again have a government capable of choosing a consistent economic policy and carrying it out until the taboo on post-Communist and post-Solidarity coalitions is broken.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Frances Millard, "The Shaping of the Polish Party System, 1989–1993," *East European Politics and Societies* 8 (1994): 467–94; Mirosława Grabowska and Tadeusz Szawiel, *Anatomia elit politycznych: Partie polityczne w postkomunistycznej Polsce, 1991–1993* (Warsaw: Instytut Socjologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1993); and *Polska scena polityczna a wybory*, ed. Stanisław Gebethner (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Fundacji Inicjatyw Społecznych "Polska w Europie," 1993).

2. Piotr Wierzbicki and Piotr Jakucki, interview with Lech Wałęsa, *Gazeta polska,* April 6, 1995.

3. For the classic analysis of how historical conflicts and the resulting social cleavages have shaped party systems in Western Europe, see Stein Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Process of Development* (New York: David McKay, 1970).

4. See, for example, remarks made by Jacek Kuron at his November 9, 1994, presentation at a Woodrow Wilson Center noon discussion in Washington D.C., as reported in the *Woodrow Wilson Center East European Studies Report*, January–February 1995.

5. *Rzeczpospolita*, September 23, 1993, as cited in Frances Millard, "The Polish Parliamentary Elections of September, 1993," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 27 (1994): 309.

6. See reports by the Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej (CBOS), Warsaw, 1989–95.

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