

*EASTERN EUROPE IN TRANSITION***WHAT HAPPENED IN EASTERN EUROPE
IN 1989?*****Daniel Chirot**

The world knows that communism in Eastern Europe collapsed in 1989, and that the USSR set out on a path that not only promises the end of socialism but threatens its very territorial integrity. But knowing this does not explain why it all happened. Nor are the implications of all these revolutionary events as clear as the immediate, short-run strategic effects that follow from the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

There are many ways of looking at the „Revolution of 1989“. As with other great revolutionary events, the French Revolution of 1789, the European Revolutions of 1848, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, or the Chinese Revolution of 1949, economic, political, cultural, and social analyses offer only partial insights because everything was interconnected, and yet no single analysis can entirely absorb all aspects of such cataclysmic events. Even after 200 years, the French Revolution is still a subject for debate, and novel interpretations remain possible; and if the political controversy generated by that Revolution two centuries ago has cooled somewhat, for well over a century and a half it remained a burning issue at the center of European and world politics.¹

Having said this, I should add that for those of us interested in social change, revolutionary periods offer the most important fields of observation. We cannot, of course, conduct controlled laboratory experiments that suit the needs of our research. But in fact, revolutions are large scale social experiments. Though they are not tailored to scholarly ends, or, by any stretch of the imagination, controllable, they are the closest thing we have to those major scientific experiments that have shaped our understanding of the physical world. Great revolutions, then, are better windows than almost any other type of historical event into how societies operate in the long run. So, aside from being immediately and keenly interested in the events that have taken place in Eastern Europe in 1989 because these are reshaping the international political order, we also have a fascinating, unexpected, revealing glimpse into how seemingly stable, enduring social systems fail and collapse.

1. The underlying causes

Economic

There is no question that the most visible, though certainly not the only, reason for the collapse of Eastern European communism has been economic. It is not that these systems failed in an absolute sense. No Eastern European country, not even Romania, was an Ethiopia or a Burma, with famine and a reversion to primitive, local subsistence economies. Perhaps several of these economies, particularly the Romanian, and to a more limited extent the Polish one, were headed in that direction, but they had very far to fall before reaching such low levels. Other economies, in Hungary, but even more in Czechoslovakia and East Germany, were only failures by the standards of the most advanced capitalist economies. On a world scale these were rich, well developed economies, not poor ones. The Soviet Union, too, was still a world economic and technological power despite deep pockets of regional poverty and a standard of living that was much lower than its per capita production figures would indicate.²

There is no need to go over the defects of socialist economies in detail. These have been explained by the many excellent economists from these countries, particularly the Poles and Hungarians, the two most famous of whom are Włodzimierz Brus and János Kornai.³

The main problem is that investment and production decisions were based, largely though not entirely, on political will rather than on domestic or international market pressures. In order to overcome the force of the domestic market, which ultimately meant consumer and producer wishes and decisions, the quantities and prices of goods and services were fixed by administrative order. To exclude external market forces, which might have weakened domestic guidance of the economy, foreign trade with the advanced capitalist world was curtailed and strictly controlled, partly by fiat, but also by maintaining non-convertible currencies. The aim of curtailing the power of market forces was achieved, but an inevitable side effect was that under these conditions, it became impossible to measure what firms were profitable and what production processes were more or less efficient. There were no real prices.

As the inefficiencies of socialist economies became evident, it proved impossible to reform them largely because the managers were so closely tied to the ruling political machinery. They were able to lobby effectively to steer investments in their direction, regardless of the efficiency of their enterprises. Success as a manager was measured by the ability to produce more, maintain high employment, and attract politically directed investment, not by producing more efficient, more marketable goods. Equally important was the fact that the very concept of profit as a measure of efficiency was foreign to these managers.⁴

Such systems developed inevitable shortages of desired goods. This was partly because production was so inefficient that it kept the final output of consumer goods lower than it should have been at such high levels of industrialization. It was also because the very crude ways of measuring

success, in terms of gross output, slighted essential services and spare parts, so that the very production process was damaged by shortages of key producer goods and services.

But whereas in some cases it was possible to carry out reform, most notably in agriculture and some services (the outstanding successes were the Chinese decollectivization of agriculture after 1976 and the Hungarians' ability to privatize some services and small scale agricultural production), in industries the power of the Communist Party and its managers was simply too strong to carry out real change. Furthermore, the sincere commitment to full employment and the maintenance of low food prices further damaged efficiency.⁵

But none of this would have made the slightest sense without the ideological base of communism. Some critics of communist economic arrangements have argued that the system was simply irrational. In strict economic terms, it may have been, but that hardly explains its long life. The key is that political will was ultimately the primary determinant of economic action, and this will was based on a very coherent world view developed by Lenin, Stalin, and the other Bolshevik leaders. This view then spread to other communist leaders, and was imposed on about one third of the world's population.

Lenin was born in 1870, and Stalin in 1878 or 1879. They matured as political beings in their teens and early twenties when the most advanced parts of the world were in the industrial heartland of Western Europe and the United States, in the Ruhr, or in the newly emerging miracles of modern technologies being constructed in the American Middle West, from Pittsburgh and Buffalo to Chicago. It is not mere coincidence that these areas, and others like them, including the major steel and shipbuilding centers of Britain, or the coal and steel centers of northern France and Belgium, became, one hundred years later, giant rust belts with antiquated industries, overly powerful trade unions, and unimaginative, conservative, bureaucratic managers. It has been in such areas, too, that industrial pollution has most ravaged the environment, and where political pressures resistant to free trade and the imposition of external market forces were the fiercest in the advanced countries. But in 1900, these areas were progressive, and for ambitious leaders from a relatively backward country like Russia, they were viable models.

Lenin, Stalin, and all the other Bolshevik intellectuals and leaders, Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin and so many others, knew that this was what they ultimately had to emulate. They felt, however, that they could make it all happen more quickly and more efficiently by socialist planning than by the random and cruel play of market forces. Despite the inherent inefficiencies of socialism, these astonishing, visionary men, particularly Stalin, actually succeeded. The tragedy of communism was not its failure, but its success. Stalin built the institutional framework that, against all logic, forced the Soviet Union into success.⁶ By the 1970s, the USSR had the world's most advanced late nineteenth century economy, the world's biggest and best, most inflexible rust belt. It was as if Andrew Carnegie had taken

over the entire United States, forced it into becoming a giant copy of U.S. Steel, and the executives of the same U.S. Steel had continued to run the country into the 1970s and 1980s! To understand the absurdity of this situation, it is necessary to go back and take a historical look at the development of capitalism.

There have been five industrial ages so far. Each was dominated by a small set of "high-technology," leading industries located in the most advanced parts of the industrial world. Each has been characterized by a period of rapid, extraordinary growth and innovation in the leading sectors, followed by slower growth, and finally a period of relative stagnation, overproduction, increasing competition, declining profits, and crisis in the now aging leading sectors. It was precisely upon his observations about the rise and fall of the first industrial age that Karl Marx based his conclusions about the eventual collapse of capitalism. But each time, one age has been followed by another as unexpected new technologies have negated all the predictions about the inevitable fall of profits and the polarization of capitalist societies into a tiny number of rich owners and masses of impoverished producers.

The ages, with their approximate dates, have been:

- (1) the cotton-textile age dominated by Great Britain, which lasted from about the 1780s into the 1830s;
- (2) the rail and Iron age, also dominated by Britain, which went from the 1840s into the early 1870s;
- (3) the steel and organic chemistry age, which also saw the development of new industries based on the production and utilization of electrical machinery, which ran from the 1870s to World War I, and in which the American and German economies became dominant;
- (4) the age of automobiles and petrochemicals, from the 1910s to the 1970s, in which the United States became the overwhelmingly hegemonic economy;
- (5) and finally, the age of electronics, information, and biotechnology which began in the 1970s and will certainly run well into the first half of the next century. In this last age, it is not yet certain which economies will dominate, though certainly the Japanese and West Europeans are well on their way to replacing the Americans.⁷

Transitions have been difficult. Depressions and political turmoil from the 1820s to the 1840s, in the 1870s and 1880s, and in the 1920s and 1930s can be explained, at least in good part, by the difficult effects of the passage from one age to another. World War I, or more particularly the mad race for colonies in the late nineteenth century and the European arms race, especially the naval race between Germany and Britain, was certainly a function of the shifting economic balance within Europe. World War II resulted from the unsatisfactory outcome of the first war, and from the Great Depression of the 1930s. The shocks from the latest transition to the fifth industrial age have been very mild by comparison, but the difficulties that attended past transitions produced many predictions about the imminent

collapse of capitalism that seemed reasonable at the time.⁸ This brief bit of economic history has to be connected to the events of 1989.

The Soviet model, that is the Leninist-Stalinist model, was based on the third industrial age, the one whose gleaming promises of mighty, smoke-filled concentrations of chemical and steel mills, huge electric generating plants, and hordes of peasants migrating into new factory boom towns mesmerized the Bolshevik leadership. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union found out that creating such a world was not easy, especially in the face of stubborn peasant and worker refusal to accept present hardships as the price for eventual industrial utopia. But Stalin persuaded the Party that the vision was so correct that it was worth paying a very high price to attain it. The price was paid, and the model turned into reality.⁹

Later, the same model was imposed on Eastern Europe. Aside from the sheer use of force used to insure that the East Europeans accepted the model, it must also be said that the local communists, many of whom were only a generation younger than Stalin, still accepted the same model. Particularly those who came from more backward countries still had the same vision. In Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu held on to it until his last day in power. It was based on his interpretation of his country's partial, uneven, and highly unsatisfactory drive for industrialization in the 1930s, when he was a young man just becoming an active communist.¹⁰ To a degree we usually do not realize, because there the country remained so heavily agricultural, this was Mao's vision for China, too.¹¹ Today its last practitioner is Ceausescu's contemporary and close ideological ally, Kim Il-Sung.

In the Soviet Union, in the more backward areas of Eastern Europe, in the already partly industrial areas of China (especially on the coast and in Manchuria), and in North Korea, the model worked because there were a lot of peasants to bring into the labor force, because this type of economy required massive concentrations of investments into huge, centralized firms, and because, after all, the technology for all this was pretty well worked out. Also, producer goods were more important than consumer goods at this stage. (It is worth remembering, too, that these were all areas where industrialization had begun *before* communism, either because of local initiatives, as in Russia or most of Eastern Europe, or because of Japanese colonial investments, as in North Korea and Manchuria.)

I should note, in passing, that the model is particularly disastrous for very backward economies that have no industrial base to begin with. Thus, whatever successes it may have had in East Asia and Europe, it has produced nothing but disaster when tried in Africa or Indochina.

But if the Stalinist model may be said to have had some success in creating "third age" industrial economies, it never adapted well to the fourth age of automobiles, consumer electrical goods, and the growth of services to pamper a large proportion of the general population. This is why we were able to make fun of the Soviet model, even in the 1950s and 1960s, because it offered so few luxuries and services. But the Soviets and those who believed in the Stalinist-Leninist model could reply that yes, they did not cater to spoiled consumers, but the basic sinews of industrial and military power, the

giant steel mills and power generating plants, had been built well enough to create an economy almost as powerful as that of the United States.

Alas for the Soviet model, the fifth age turned out to be even more different. Small firms, very rapid change, extreme attention to consumer needs, reliance on innovative thinking – all these things were exactly what the Stalinist model lacked. Of course, so did much of America's and Western Europe's "rust belt" industry – chemicals, steel, autos, but even as they fought rear-guard actions to protect themselves against growing foreign competition and technological change, these sectors had to adapt because market pressures were too intense to resist. Their political power was great, but in capitalist societies open to international trade, not sufficient to overcome the world market. In the Soviet case, such industries, protected by the Party, and viewed as the very foundation of everything that communism had built, were able to resist change, at least for another twenty years. That was what the Brezhnev years were – a determined effort to hold on to the late nineteenth century model the Bolsheviks had worked so hard to emulate. So, from being just amusing, their relative backwardness in the 1970s and 1980s became dangerous. The Soviets and East Europeans (including the Czechs and East Germans) found themselves in the 1980s with the most advanced industries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries – polluting, wasteful, energy intensive, massive, inflexible – in short, with giant rust belts.¹²

Of course, it was worse than just this. It was not merely the adherence to an outdated, inflexible model that prevented adequate progress, but all of the well known failures of socialism. The point is that the strains of keeping out the world market, of excluding knowledge about what was going on in the more successful capitalist world, became more and more difficult. It also became more dangerous because it threatened to deepen backwardness. Finally, what had been possible in the early stages of communism, when the leadership was fresh and idealistic about the possibilities of creating a more perfect world, became more difficult with the growing awareness of the cynicism about the model's failure.

But the Soviet and East European leaders in the Brezhnev years were very aware of their growing problems. Much of their time was spent trying to come up with solutions that would nevertheless preserve the key elements of Party rule, Soviet power, and the protection of the new ruling class's power and privilege. The Soviets urged their East European dependencies to overcome their problems by plunging into western markets. That was the aim of detente. China, of course, followed the same path after 1978. This meant borrowing to buy advanced technology, and then trying to sell to the West to repay the debts. But, as we now know, the plan did not work. The Stalinist systems were too rigid. Managers resisted change. They used their political clout to force ever greater investments into obsolete firms and production processes. Also, in some cases, most notably Poland and Hungary, foreign loans started to be used simply to purchase consumer goods to make people happier, to shore up the crumbling legitimacy of regimes that had lost what youthful vigor they had once possessed and were now viewed simply as the tools of a backward occupying power. This worked until the bills came due,

and the prices had to be raised. Societies with little or no experience with free markets responded to price increases with political instability. This was truest in Poland, but it became a potential problem in Hungary (and China) because it created growing and very visible social inequities between the small class of new petty entrepreneurs and the large portion of the urban population still dependent on the socialist sector.¹³ (Kornai and others have explained why the partial freeing of the market in economies of shortage creates quasi-monopolistic situations favoring the rapid accumulation of profits by those entrepreneurs able to satisfy long repressed, immense demand.)¹⁴

What had seemed at first to be a series of sensible reforms proved to be the last gasp of European communism. The reforms did not eliminate the rigidities of Stalinism, but they spread further cynicism and disillusionment, exacerbated corruption, and opened the communist world to a vastly increased flow of Western capitalist ideas and standards of consumerism. They also created a major debt problem. In this situation, the only East European leader who responded with perfect consistency was Nicolae Ceausescu. He reimposed strict Stalinism. But neither Romania's principled Stalinism, Hungarian semi-reformism, nor Polish inconsistency and hesitation worked.¹⁵

Political and Moral Causes of Change

If understanding economic problems is fundamental, it is, nevertheless, the changing moral and political climate of Eastern Europe which really destroyed communism there. There is no better way to approach this topic than by using the old concept of legitimacy. Revolutions only occur when elites and some significant portion of the general population, particularly intellectuals, but also ordinary people, have lost confidence in the moral validity of their social and political system.

There have never been advanced industrial countries, except at the end of major, catastrophic wars, in which the basic legitimacy of the system collapsed. And if some serious questions were raised in Germany after World War I, France in 1940, or Germany and Japan in 1945, there were no successful revolutions there. It would be laughable to claim that Eastern Europe's economic crisis in the 1980s approached such levels of massive crisis as those brought about by utter defeat in international war. To witness the development of such revolutionary situations in times of peace and relative stability, in societies with a strong sense of their nationhood, with functioning infrastructures, police forces, armies, and governments, in the absence of foreign invaders or international crises, without precipitating civil wars, famines, or even depressions, is unprecedented. No mere recitation of economic problems can provide sufficient explanation.

To see how this loss of legitimacy occurred, it is necessary to go back to the beginning.

In the mid- to late 1940s, at least among cadres and a substantial number of young idealists, communism had a considerable degree of legitimacy, even where it had been imposed by force, as in all of Eastern Europe. After all,

capitalism seemed to have performed poorly in the 1930s, the liberal European democracies had done little to stop Hitler until it was too late, and Stalin appeared to be a leader who had saved the Soviet Union. The claim that Marxism-Leninism was the "progressive," inevitable wave of the future was not so far-fetched. In fact, many intellectuals throughout Europe, East and West, were seduced by these promises.¹⁶

In the Soviet Union itself, as in China after 1949, communism benefited from the substantial nationalist accomplishments it had to its credit. Foreigners had been defeated, national greatness reasserted, and for all of the problems faced by these regimes, there was clear economic growth and extraordinary progress.¹⁷

The repressions, terror, and misery of life in the early 1950s soured some believers, but after Stalin's death, reform seemed possible, and after all, the claims made about rapid urbanization, industrialization, and the spread of modern health and educational benefits to the population were true. Not 1956, when the Hungarian revolution was crushed, but 1968 was the decisive turning point. That was when the implications of the Brezhnev policy became clear. Fundamental political reform was not going to be allowed. It must be said in Brezhnev's defense that what happened in 1989, both in Eastern Europe and in China, has proved that in a sense he and his policy of freezing reform were perfectly correct. To have done otherwise would have brought about an earlier demise of communism. Economic liberalization gives new hope for political liberalization to the growing professional and bureaucratic middle classes and to the intelligentsia. It further increases the appeal of liberal economic ideas as well as of democracy. The demand for less rigid central control obviously threatens the party's monopoly on power.

Whatever potential communist liberalism may have had in the Prague Spring of 1968, the manner in which it was crushed, and the subsequent gradual disillusionment with strictly economic reform in Hungary and Poland in the 1970s, brought to an end the period in which intellectuals could continue to be hopeful about the future of communism.

But this was not all. The very inflexibility of communist economies, the unending shortages, the overwhelming bureaucratization of every aspect of life created a general malaise. The only way to survive in such systems was through corruption, the formal violation of the rules. That, in turn, left many, perhaps almost all of the managerial and professional class, open to the possibility of blackmail and to a pervasive sense that they were living a perpetual lie.¹⁸

Then, too, there was the fact that the original imposition of the Stalinist model had created tyranny, the arbitrary rule of the few. One of the characteristics of all forms of tyranny, whether ideological and visionary, as in this case, or merely self-serving and corrupt, is that it creates the possibility for the dissemination and reproduction of petty tyranny at every level. With tyrants at the top, entire bureaucracies become filled with tyrants below them, and more below them, behaving arbitrarily and out of narrow self-interest. The tyrants at the top cannot hope to enforce their will unless they have subservient officials, and to buy that subservience they must allow their

underlings to enjoy the fruits of arbitrary power. In any case, arbitrary, petty tyranny becomes the only model of proper, authoritative behavior.

This is one of the explanations given in recent attempts to explain the very widespread, almost uncontrolled spread of the purges in the USSR in the 1930s, and of course, of the ravages of the Chinese Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. Once the model is set from the top, imitating that behavior becomes a way of insuring survival for officials. But even beyond this, there is the fact that a tyrannical system gives opportunities for abuse which do not otherwise exist, and lower level officials use this to further their own, narrow ends. (This is not meant to suggest that in some way the tyrants who ruled such systems, and their immediate followers, can be absolved of responsibility for the abuses; it does imply that the way in which tyrannies exercise power is necessarily deeply corrupt.)¹⁹

Daily exposure to petty tyranny, which at the local level rarely maintains the ideological high ground which may have inspired a Lenin, Stalin, Mao, or even a Ceausescu, also breeds gradual disgust with corruption and the dishonesty of the whole system. In the past, peasants subjected to such petty tyranny may have borne it more or less stoically (unless it went too far), but educated urbanites living in a highly politicized atmosphere where there were constant pronouncements about the guiding ideological vision of fairness, equality, and progress could not help but react with growing disgust.²⁰

In that sense, the very success of communism, in creating a more urban, more educated, more aware population, created the potential for disintegration. The endless corruption, the lies, the collapse of elementary social trust, the petty tyranny at every level - these were aspects of life less easily tolerated by the new working and professional classes than they might have been by peasants. (This remains, of course, the advantage of the Chinese Communists; they can still rely on a vast reservoir of peasant indifference and respect for authority as long as agriculture is not resocialized.)²¹

The whole movement toward the creation of alternate social institutions, free of the corruption and dishonesty of the official structures, was the great ideological innovation of what began to emerge in Poland in the 1970s and 1980s as the movement toward the creation of a "civil society." Traditional revolutionary resistance, taking to the streets, planning covert military actions, and assassinations might be fruitless because they could only bring down a heavy military intervention by the Soviets. But simply by beginning to turn away from the state, by refusing to take it seriously, Polish, and then other Central European intellectuals exposed the shallowness of communism's claims, and broke what little legitimacy communist regimes still had. It is because of his early understanding of this fact, and his excellent descriptions of how this new ideology grew in Central Europe, that Timothy Garton Ash has earned his justly deserved fame.²²

Certainly, in the Soviet Union all these forces were at work, too, but the patriotism engendered by major power status (though it has turned out that this was largely Russian, not "Soviet," pride and patriotism), the sheer size of the military, and the long history of successful police terror and repression kept the situation under better control than in much of Central Europe. Yet,

combined with the slow erosion of legitimacy, there was also the fundamental economic problem alluded to above, namely the failure to keep up with the rapidly emerging fifth industrial age in Western Europe, the United States, and most astonishingly for the Soviets, in East Asia.

There is no doubt that in the mid-1980s, after Solidarity seemed to have been crushed in Poland, with the Soviets massacring Afghan resistance fighters, with Cuban troops successfully defending Angola, with Vietnam controlling all of Indochina, it seemed to the rest of the world that Soviet military might was insurmountable in countries where the Soviet system had been imposed. But underneath, the rot was spreading. So the question is not, "What was wrong with Eastern Europe," or "Why was communism so weak?" Every specialist and many casual observers knew perfectly well that was wrong. But almost none guessed that what had been a slowly developing situation for several decades might take such a sudden turn for the worse. After all, the flaws of socialist economic planning had been known for a long time. Endemic corruption, tyranny, arbitrary brutality, and the use of sheer police force to maintain communist parties in power were hardly new. None of these facts answers the question, "Why 1989?" Almost all analysts thought that the Soviet system would remain more or less intact in the USSR itself and in Eastern Europe for decades more.

To understand why this was not to be requires shift in analysis from a discussion of general trends to a review of some specific events in the 1980s.

2. The Events of the 1980s

No single event can explain what happened, but if there was a central, key series of developments that began to unravel the entire system, it has to be located in the interaction between events in Poland in the early 1980s and a growing perception by the Soviet leadership that their own problems were becoming very serious.

As late as 1987, and throughout most of 1988, most specialists felt that the Soviet elite did not understand the severity of their economic situation. Gorbachev almost certainly did, as did many of the Moscow intellectuals. But there was some question about the lesser cadres, and even many of the top people in the government. But as Gorbachev's mild reforms failed to have a beneficial impact, and as the original impact of his policy of openness, encouragement, and anti-alcoholism ran into sharply diminishing returns, the Soviet economy began to slip back into the stagnation of the late Brezhnev years.²⁴

Serious as rising discontent in the Soviet Union might have seemed to Gorbachev, this would not have been enough had it not been for the direct military implications of the Soviet's inability to keep up with the developments of the fifth industrial age. While the Soviet nuclear deterrent was unquestionably safe and effective in preventing any possibility of a frontal attack by the United States, the growing gap between western and Soviet computer and electronic technology threatened to give NATO (and

ultimately Japan) a striking advantage in conventional weapons. This is almost certainly why the Soviets were so worried about "Star Wars," not simply because the illusion of an effective anti-ballistic missile defense was likely to unbalance the nuclear arms race. Pouring billions into this kind of research was likely to yield important new advantages in lesser types of electronic warfare that could be applied to conventional air and tank battles. This would nullify the Soviets' numerical advantage in men and machines, and threaten Soviet military investments throughout the world.²⁵

Given the long standing recognition by the major powers that nuclear war was really out of the question, a growing advantage by the capitalist powers in electronic warfare threatened to turn any future local confrontation between Western and Soviet allies into a repetition of the Syrian-Israeli air war of 1982. From the Soviet point of view, the unbelievable totality of Israel's success was a warning of future catastrophes, even if Israel's land war in Lebanon turned out to be a major failure.²⁶

There was one other, chance event that precipitated change in the Soviet Union by revealing to the leadership the extent of the country's industrial ineptitude. This was the Chernobyl catastrophe. But unlucky as it may have been, it served more to confirm what was already suspected than to initiate any changes of itself. The fact is that many such massive industrial and environmental accidents have happened before in the Soviet Union. When they occurred in the past, they had little effect, though throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there was a growing environmental movement. But on top of everything else, the 1986 nuclear plant accident seemed to galvanize Gorbachev and his advisors.²⁶

Meanwhile, in Eastern Europe, the communist orthodoxy imposed under Brezhnev was seriously threatened in Poland. Rising discontent there had made Poland ungovernable by the mid 1980s. It seemed that Hungary was going to follow soon. Economic reforms were not working, the population was increasingly alienated, and while there was no outward sign of immediate revolt, the Jaruzelski regime had no idea how to bring the situation back under sufficient control to be able to carry out any measures that stood a chance of reversing the economic decline and regaining the trust (rather than the mere grudging and cynical acceptance) of the population.²⁸

In retrospect, then, the events in Poland in the late 1970s, from the election of a Polish Pope, which galvanized the Poles and created the massive popular demonstrations that led to the creation of Solidarity, to the military coup which seemed to destroy Solidarity, had set the stage for what was to happen. But the slow degeneration of the situation in Poland, or in all of Eastern Europe, would not have been enough to produce the events of 1989 had it not been for the Soviet crisis. On the other hand, had there been no breakdown of authority in Poland, and a looming, frightening sense of economic crisis and popular discontent in Hungary, and probably in the other Eastern European countries too, the Soviets would certainly have tried to carry out some reforms without giving up their European empire. The two aspects of the crisis came together, and this is why everything unravelled so quickly in the late 1980s.²⁹

Gorbachev must have realized that it was only a matter of time until there was an explosion – a bread riot leading to a revolution in Poland, or a major strike in Hungary – which would oblige the government to call out the army. The problem was that neither the Polish nor Hungarian armies were particularly reliable. The special police could always be counted on, but if they were overwhelmed it would be necessary to call in Soviet troops. This the Soviet economy could not bear if it was also to reform itself enough to begin to meet the challenges of the fifth industrial age, especially if this involved increasing trade and other contacts with the advanced capitalist countries.

I believe that sometime in 1988 Gorbachev decided that it was necessary to head off the danger before it was too late to prevent a catastrophic crisis.³⁰ I cannot prove this, because the documentation is not available, but I am almost certain that because of this decision, in discussions with the Poles there emerged a plan to allow partially free elections and the reopening of talks with Solidarity. The aim would be to relegitimize the regime, and give it enough breathing room to carry out economic reforms without risking strikes and massive civil disobedience. The idea of “Roundtable” talks between Solidarity and the regime was proposed in a televised debate between Lech Walesa and a regime representative on November 30, 1988. The talks themselves began on February 6 1989.³¹

It did not work. The reason is that everyone – Gorbachev, the communist parties of Eastern Europe, foreign specialists, and intelligence services in NATO and the Warsaw Pact – vastly underestimated the degree to which the moral bankruptcy of communism has destroyed any possibility of relegitimizing it.

There was something else, too, an event whose import was not fully appreciated in the West, and which remains almost unmentioned. In January of 1989, Gorbachev tried an experiment. He pulled almost all of the Soviet army out of Afghanistan. The United States and the Pakistani army expected this to result in the rapid demise of the communist regime there. To everyone’s surprise, it did not. I think that this might have been an important card for Gorbachev. He could point to Afghanistan when his conservative opponents, and especially his military, questioned his judgment. Afghanistan was proof that the Soviets could partially disengage without suffering catastrophe, and that in some cases, it might even be better to let local communists handle their own problems. I suspect that a rapid victory by the anti-communist guerrillas in Afghanistan would have slowed progress in Eastern Europe, if not ended it entirely.³²

We know how rapidly event followed event. Despite the patently unfair arrangements for the Polish election designed to keep the Communist Party in power, the electorate refused, and Party rule collapsed. Since the Soviets had agreed to the process, and wanted to avoid, at almost any cost, a war of invasion, they let Poland go. Once it became obvious that this was happening, the Hungarians set out on the same path.³³

Then, partly out of a well-timed sense of public relations, just before George Bush’s visit, the Hungarians officially opened their border with

Austria. In fact, the border had not been part of any „iron curtain“ for a long time, but this move gave thousands of vacationing East Germans the idea that they could escape to the West. We know that this set off a mass hysteria among East Germans who had given up hope of reform, and whose demoralization and disgust with their system led hundreds of thousands to want to flee. They rushed to West German embassies in Budapest and Prague, and began demonstrating in East Germany, particularly in Leipzig and Dresden.³⁴

The failure of communism in East Germany, in many ways, represents the ultimate failure. Here was a country that was not poor, where there were 200 automobiles for every 1000 inhabitants, and where, for years, western, particularly West German, sympathizers had said that communism was working by producing a more communal, more kindly Germany than the harsh, market driven, materialistic West German Federal Republic. It was another misconception born of wishful thinking.³⁵

It is known that Honecker ordered repressive measures. Earlier, during the summer, Chinese officials had visited East Berlin to brief the East Germans on how to crush pro-democracy movements. But during his early October visit to East Germany, Gorbachev had publicly called for change and let it be known that the Soviets would not intervene to stop reform.³⁶

Now, in October, ambulances were readied to cart away the thousands of dead and injured bodies in Leipzig and perhaps Dresden that were to sure to be produced by the crackdown. This was prevented. Most accounts credit a local initiative in Leipzig led by the conductor Kurt Mazur, though the central party machinery, taken in hand by Egon Krenz, also played a pacifying role. It is likely that an appeal was made to the Soviets, and that the local Soviet military commander said he would not intervene. Knowing this, the East German Communist Party simply overthrew Honecker rather than risk physical annihilation.³⁷

East Germany was no China, despite Honecker's claim that it would be; it had no reserve of ignorant, barely literate peasant boys to bring into the breach; and its economy was far too dependent on the West German connection to risk a break. So, once repression was abandoned, the system collapsed in a few weeks. With East Germany crumbling, the entire edifice of communist rule in Eastern Europe simply collapsed. On November 9 the Berlin Wall was opened. It was no longer possible to maintain it when the government of East Germany was losing control over its population, and the rate of flight was increasing at such a rapid rate.

East Germany was always the key Soviet position in Europe.³⁸ It was on the internal German border that the Cold War began, and it was there that the military might of the two superpowers was concentrated. When the Soviets abandoned the East German hard liners, there was no hope anywhere else in Eastern Europe. The Bulgarians followed in order to preserve what they could of the Party, and Todor Zhivkov resigned after 35 years in power on the day after the Berlin Wall was opened (November 10). This was surely no coincidence. A week later, demonstrations began in

Prague, and within ten days, it was over. Only Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania resisted.³⁹

Enough is now known about Ceausescu's Romania so that it is unnecessary to give much background. Only three points must be made.

Ceausescu himself still held on to the Stalinist vision. Aside from the possible exception of Albania (which began to change in the spring of 1990),⁴⁰ there was only one other communist country like this, where the model was so unquestioned – North Korea. In fact, Ceausescu and Kim Il-Sung had long considered themselves close allies and friends, and their styles of rule had many similarities. Yet in Romania, and probably in North Korea as well, this model turned sour about two decades ago, and pursuing it meant economic stagnation, a growing gap between reality and ideology, and the progressive alienation of even the most loyal cadres.⁴¹

Second, Romania was the most independent of the Warsaw Pact European countries, and so felt itself less dependent on Soviet support. But though this brought considerable legitimacy to the Romanian regime in the 1970s, when partial independence was thought to be grounds for hope, by the late 1980s that hope had failed, and the intellectuals, as well as a growing number of ordinary urban people, had noticed that the Soviet Union had become more progressive than Romania.⁴² In southern Romania, they listened to Bulgarian television and radio, and when they heard that even there (for the Romanians Bulgaria has always been a butt of jokes as a backward, thickheaded, peasant nation) there were reforms, it must have had a considerable impact. In the north and west, Romanians could pick up the Hungarian and Yugoslav media, and so be informed about what was going on elsewhere. In the east, of course, they had the example of the Soviet Union, and of Romanian speaking Soviet Moldavia, where, for the first time since the 1940s, people were freer to demonstrate than in Romania itself. I should add that aside from broadcasts from these neighboring countries, Radio Free Europe, too, played a major role in educating Romanians about what was going on elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The point is that, again unlike China, it proved impossible to keep the news about the world out of the reach of the interior.

Finally, and this is much less known than other aspects of Romania's recent history, even at its height the Ceausescu regime relied very heavily on the fear of Soviet invasion to legitimize itself. There was always the underlying assumption that if there was too much trouble, the Soviet tanks would come in, and was it not better to suffer a patriotic Romanian tyrant than another episode of Soviet occupation? Once it became clear, in 1989, that the Soviets were not going to march, the end was in sight. It was only because Ceausescu himself was so out of touch with reality, and because he had so successfully destroyed his Communist Party by packing it with relatives and sycophants (like Kim Il-Sung) that no one told him the truth, and he was unable to manage the more peaceful, gradual, and dignified exit of his Bulgarian colleague Todor Zhivkov.⁴³

So, in the end, communism collapsed. The ramifications are far from clear, and there is no way of knowing how things will develop in the Soviet Union.

But come what may in the USSR, it is certain that the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe is dead, and that there are almost no foreseeable circumstances that would make the Soviet army invade any of its former dependents. We cannot be sure what directions the various revolutions of Eastern Europe will take, though it is safe to predict that there will be important differences from country to country. On the whole, it is also possible to be somewhat optimistic about the future of Eastern Europe, or at least its northern, "Central European" parts, if not necessarily of the Balkans and the Soviet Union. Why this is so I shall leave to my concluding remarks in which I will try to draw together some of the lessons Eastern Europe has taught us about revolution and social change in general.

3. *On the Causes of Revolution in Advanced Societies*

Eastern Europe and the Traditional Causes of Revolution

Most widely accepted sociological models of revolution provide limited help in explaining what happened in Eastern Europe in 1989.

There was no sudden fall in well-being after a long period of improvement. If the Polish, Hungarian, and Romanian economies were deteriorating (at very different rates), the East German and Czechoslovak ones were not yet causing immediate problems. People felt deprived when they compared their lives to those available in Western Europe, but this had been true for well over three decades. In Poland, as a matter of fact, the sharpest period of economic deterioration was in the early 1980s, and though the situation had not improved much since then, it could be assumed that people were getting used to it.⁴⁴

In Poland, there was a prolonged period of protest marked by open explosions in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, and of course 1980-1981. As time advanced, Poles learned to organize better and more effectively. But this gradual mobilization and organization seemed to have been decisively broken by the military seizure of power. In fact, there is good evidence that the Communist Party and police had learned even more from the long series of protests than the protesters themselves, and had become very adept at handling trouble with just the right level of violence. Certainly, in the early 1980s the Jaruzelski regime was able to impose peacefully a whole series of price increases that in the past had provoked massive, violent uprisings.⁴⁵

Only in Hungary was there much open mobilization of protest in the late 1980s, and that only in the last couple of years. Much of it was over ecological and nationalist issues that did not take the form of direct anti-regime activity. In fact, the communists even supported some of this activity.⁴⁶

None of the other countries had much open dissent. At most, in Czechoslovakia a few, seemingly entirely isolated, intellectuals had organized themselves, but they had no followers. In East Germany the Protestant churches had supported some limited draft protests and a small peace movement, but the regime had never been directly threatened. In Bulgaria only a tiny handful of intellectuals ever made any claims to protest. In Romania, there had been some isolated outbreaks of strikes in the late

1970s, and a major riot in one city, Brasov, in 1987, but there, even intellectual protest was muted, and rarely went beyond very limited literary activities.⁴⁷

The international position of the East European countries was not at stake, either. Whereas in the Soviet Union it is clear that key elites, particularly in the KGB, saw the impending danger to the USSR's international strength, in Eastern Europe no one cared about this kind of issue. None of these countries' elites saw their countries as potentially powerful nations, nor was their national existence threatened by any outsiders except the Soviets. And that threat, present since 1945, was now so highly attenuated as to be almost absent. That the Soviets were unpopular in Eastern Europe was a given, and a very old one, but there was no new risk of further intervention or damage because of these countries' weakness.⁴⁸

Perhaps, however, the debt crisis in Poland and Hungary (and in Romania, because it had provoked such harsh and damaging countermeasures by Ceausescu) was the equivalent of visible international failure that exposed the incapacity of the regimes. But though this remained severe in Poland and Hungary in the late 1980s, elsewhere the problem was not particularly acute.⁴⁹

Nor can a very strong case be made for the rise of an economically powerful new class that was fighting to gain political power. Political and economic power was firmly in the hands of what Djilas had called the "New Class," but that class, the professional party cadres, had been in charge for four decades, and it seemed neither highly dissatisfied nor in any way revolutionary. The leadership of the revolutions, if there was any, was in the hands of a few intellectuals who represented no particular class.⁵⁰

Poland, of course, was different. There, an alliance between the Catholic Church, the unionized working class, and dissident intellectuals was very well organized, and it had almost taken power in 1980. But the days of Solidarity seemed to have passed, and the regime reasserted visible control. Virtually none of the Polish opposition thought it had much chance of success in an open, violent confrontation. So even in Poland, this was not a traditional revolution. The opportunity for that had passed with the successful imposition of martial law.⁵¹

What happened was that the moral base of communism had vanished. The elites had lost confidence in their legitimacy. The intellectuals, powerless as they seemed to be, disseminated this sense of moral despair and corruption to the public by their occasional protests and veiled commentaries, and the urban public was sufficiently well educated and aware to understand what was going on. The cumulative effect of such a situation, over decades, cannot be underestimated. Those who had had hope in the 1940s or 1950s were replaced by those who had never had hope and who had grown up knowing that everything was a lie. Educated youths, not just in the universities, but those who had just gone through high school, knew enough about the rest of the world to know that they had been lied to, that they had been cheated, and that their own leaders did not believe the lies.⁵²

What took everyone by surprise was the discovery that the situation was

not all that different in the Soviet Union. Nor could anyone foresee the kind of panicked realism, combined with astounding flexibility and willingness to compromise, shown by Gorbachev. In the end, this was the reason that all of this happened in 1989 rather than in the 1990s, but sooner or later, it would have happened anyway.

Eastern Europe Compared to Other Modern Revolutions

This brings up a serious issue. It has long been assumed that modern methods of communication and the awesome power of tanks, artillery, and air power would prevent the kind of classical revolution which has shaken the world so many times since 1789.

Even relatively inefficient regimes, such as the Russian autocracy, or the KMT in China, fought successfully against revolution until their armies were decisively weakened by outside invaders. In China's case, it took the Communists two decades to build the strong army that finally won power for them, and they probably would have failed had it not been for the Japanese invasion.⁵³

Many utterly corrupt, weak African, Asian, and Latin American regimes have held on to power for a long time with little more than mercenary armies whose loyalties are purchased by allowing them to loot their own countries. This is what goes on in, for example, Burma, Gutaemala, and Zaire. Cases where such regimes were overthrown show that it takes long years of guerrilla organization and warfare to carry out revolutions, and then the chances of success are slim. If revolutions occurred in Batista's Cuba and Somoza's Nicaragua, in Uganda Idi Amin held on until he foolishly provoked Tanzania into attacking him. If Baby Doc Duvalier was frightened into leaving office in Haiti, it is not clear, even today, that the Duvalier system has been removed.⁵⁴

Finally, even anti-colonial wars, when the overwhelming majority of populations have sympathized with revolutionary movements, have been long, bloody events when the colonizers have chosen to fight back, as did the Dutch in Indonesia, the French in Indochina and Algeria, or the British in Kenya and Malaya (where, however, the Malay population rallied to the British side against the Chinese revolutionaries). A particularly startling case was the Bangladesh war, when massive popular opposition to Pakistani rule still needed help from an Indian military invasion to get rid of the Pakistani army.⁵⁵

Only internal military coups, as when the Ethiopian, or much earlier, the Egyptian monarchies were removed, seem to make for relatively easy revolutions.⁵⁶

But none of these types of revolutions fit what happened in Eastern Europe. There, even if the Romanian case is included, the total level of bloodshed was minuscule compared to other revolutions. There were certainly no military coups. In Romania there was almost certainly cooperation between the army and the population, but no direct coup, and that was the only case where the army was involved at all. But compared to any African, Latin American, or almost any non-communist Asian

dictatorship, the East European communist regimes were overwhelmingly strong. They had large, effective, loyal secret police forces, an abundance of tanks and soliders led by well trained (though not necessarily enthusiastic) officers, excellent internal communications, and no threat of external, hostile invasion. Only in Romania was the army thoroughly alienated.

Again, we are left with the same explanation, utter moral rot.

Few observers have noticed a startling parallel between events in Eastern Europe in 1989 and in Iran in 1979. There, too, the Shah should have been stronger. But even though there were a lot of deaths in the final days, and months of rioting before the Shah's departure in January, many were taken by surprise by the overwhelming lack of legitimacy of the regime. Even the newly prosperous middle classes and the young professionals, who had much to lose if the Shah was overthrown, failed to back him.⁵⁷

While this is not a suitable place to discuss Iranian society and politics in the 1960s and 1970s, it is evident that the rapid modernization and urbanization of the society helped its intellectuals disseminate their feelings of disgust about the Shah's regime, with its empty posturing, its lies, its torturers, its corruption, and its lack of redeeming moral values.

We can wonder, of course, to what extent the rising intellectual and professional classes in urban France in 1787 to 1789 felt the same way about the French monarchy, church, and aristocracy, and the extent to which such feelings played a decisive role in unleashing that revolution. We know that in Petrograd and Moscow from 1915 to 1917, whatever the level of popular misery, the professional and middle classes felt a good bit of disgust at the corruption and lack of morality at the Imperial Court.

The lesson may be that in fact we need to combine some Marxist notions of class with an understanding of John Rawls' theory of justice as fairness in order to understand what happened in Eastern Europe. Economic modernization did, indeed, produce a larger middle class (not in the sense of bourgeois ownership, of course, but in the cultural and educational sense, as well in its style of life). That class was in some ways quite favored in communist regimes. But because of the flaws of the socialist system of economic management, it remained poorer than its West European counterpart, and even seemed to be falling further behind by the 1980s. This is the Marxist, or class and material, basis of what happened.

But what was more important was that almost by definition, the educated middle classes are well informed, and can base their judgments about morality on a wider set of observations than those with very limited educations. The artistic and literary intellectuals who address their work to these middle classes in a modern society helped them understand and interpret the immorality of the system, and so played a major role. They needed receptive audiences, but it was their work that undid Eastern European communism.

Without the social changes associated with the economic transformations that took place in Eastern Europe from 1948 to 1988, these revolutions would not have taken place. But it was not that new classes were striving for power so much as that a growing number saw through the lies on which the whole

system was based. That is what utterly destroyed the will of those in power to resist.

Once these conditions were set, the massive popular discontent with material conditions, particularly on the part of the working classes in the giant but stagnating industries that dominated communist economies, could come out into the streets and push these regimes over.

Models and Morals

That raises three final points. First, the fundamental reason for the failure of communism was that the utopian model it proposed was obviously not going to come into being. Almost everything else could have been tolerated if the essential promise was on its way to fulfillment. But once it was clear that the model was out of date, and its promise increasingly based on lies, its immorality became unbearable. Perhaps, in the past, when other ideologically based models failed to deliver their promises, because the middle classes and the intellectuals were present in smaller numbers, systems could still survive, but not in advanced societies. Thus, the original economic problems spelled out above, the absurdity of basing a whole social system on an outdated industrial age, was more than an economic mistake. It undermined the whole claim to scientific validity which lay at the very heart of Marxism-Leninism.

Second, much of the standard of morality that created such a revolutionary situation in Eastern Europe was based on the middle classes' interpretation of what's going on in other countries, namely in Western Europe. This is one reason why, despite all the economic and political troubles that are sure to accumulate in the near future in Eastern Europe, there is some reason for optimism. Western Europe is no longer the warlike set of competing imperialistic powers it was when the Eastern Europeans first began to look at the West as their model in the nineteenth century, continuing through 1939. All of Western Europe is democratic, its various countries cooperate very well with each other, and on the whole they have abandoned their imperialistic pretensions. This means that as a model, Western Europe is a far healthier place than it was in the past.

This does not mean that all future revolutionary intellectuals and scandalized middle classes will look to Western Europe or the United States as their model. After all, the Iranians looked at Islam, and it is only because Eastern Europe has long been so close to Western Europe that it automatically looks in that direction.

Third, we must come to realize that in the twenty-first century there will still be economic problems, political instability, and revolutions. But more than ever, the fundamental causes of revolutionary instability will be moral. The urban middle and professional classes, the intellectuals and those to whom they most directly appeal, will set the tone of political change. Regimes to which they do not accord legitimacy, because these regimes are seen as unfair and dishonest, will be shaky. When these classes can be persuaded to defend their own narrow material interests, when they accept immoral and unfair behavior, then regimes, no matter how corrupt, will be safe. But it would be foolish for regimes that are defending essentially unjust

social systems to rely too much on the continued acquiescence of their middle classes and intellectuals.

But many of us who study social change must be reminded that we barely know how to study moral perceptions and legitimacy. We have been so busy studying material changes, which are, after all, more easily measured and perceived, that we do not know where to look to sense the moral pulse of key classes and intellectuals. In some ways, the lesson of Eastern Europe has this to offer, too. Sometimes literature written for what seems to be a small handful of people is a better measure of the true state of mind of a society than public opinion polls, economic statistics, or overt political behavior.

An alternative „civil society,“ places where people could interact freely and without government interference, where they could turn their backs on the party-state's corruption, was in creation in Eastern Europe before 1989. This alternative civil society was the creation of intellectuals, novelists, playwrights, poets, historians, philosophers like Václav Havel, Miklós Haraszti, Adam Michnik, George Konrád, and hundreds of other, less famous ones. In a sense, in their literature and pamphlets, in their small discussion circles, they imagined a future that most of their people could only dimly perceive, and which hardly anyone believed possible.

Vladimir Tismaneanu, in an article entitled „Eastern Europe: The Story the Media Missed,“ correctly pointed out that most Western observers never grasped the significance of this creation of an alternative “civil society.”⁵⁸ This is not quite correct, because even before 1989 those most closely following the intellectual life of East-Central Europe were aware of what was going on, and were writing about it. Garton Ash was the best known, but a few other scholars saw it too.⁵⁹ On the whole, however, most of the specialists on communism were too hard-headed, too realistic, and even too dependent on social science models to take such highly intellectualized discussions seriously.

After the fact, it is easy for us to say this. Before the fact, almost none of us saw it.

NOTES

* Forthcoming in: Daniel Chirot, Editor, *The End of Leninism and the Decline of the Left: The Revolutions of 1989* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

* I would like to thank Tim McDaniel for his helpful comments on my paper.

1. Because of its second centennial anniversary in 1989 this has been a particularly busy period for the publication of new works on the French Revolution. That the event still generates considerable excitement is shown by the controversies about Simon Schama's hostile critique of the Revolution, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1988). A more positive evaluation is Eric J. Hobsbawm's *Echoes of the Marseillaise: Two Centuries Look Back on the French Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1990). A lively review essay about recent books on the Revolution is Benjamin R. Barber's "The Most Sublime Event," *The Nation*, March 12, 1990, pp. 351-360.

2. A review of the condition and prospects for the East European economies can be found in *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 2:3 (Fall, 1988), "Special Issue on Economic Reform" edited by John R. Lampe. Though the articles in this issue emphasize the region's economic problems, not all are pessimistic, and none predicted the astounding political

changes that were to begin within months of publication. The same is true of a slightly older, but still recent review of Eastern Europe's economies, with some comparative chapters on other socialist economies in Ellen Comisso and Laura Tyson, editors, *Power, Purpose, and Collective Choice: Economic Strategy in the Socialist States* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1986). A surprisingly positive account of the Soviet economy published a few years ago by Ed A. Hewett also seemed to soften the nature of the crisis, even though Hewett gave an excellent account of the many problems facing the Soviets. See his *Reforming the Soviet Economy: Equality versus Efficiency* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1988).

3. János Kornai, *Economics of Shortage*, 2 volumes, (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1980) and Włodzimierz Brus, *Socialist Ownership and Political Systems*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1977).

4. The popular resistance to accepting capitalist profits should not, after all, be surprising. Karl Polanyi's seminal work, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon, 1957) showed how difficult it was for the English to accept the notion that market forces should regulate the economy in the early nineteenth century. By now, the capitalist west has had almost two centuries to get used to this dramatic change in the organizing principles of society, and it has only been in the last few decades that resistance to the market has waned in Western Europe. That Eastern Europe, and even more the Russians should view markets with suspicion is understandable. Among the many discussions of this, Geoffrey Hosking's new book, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1990) is particularly good. He writes, "How many times over the last year or two have I heard Soviet citizens use the word 'speculator' to disparage private traders or co-operatives providing at high prices goods and services seldom available at all in the state sector? This sullen egalitarianism dovetails neatly with the interest of the party-state apparatus in retaining their network of controls and hence their grip on the economy." (p. 132)

5. On China, see Nicholas Lardy, *Agriculture in China's Modern Economic Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983), pp. 190-221. On Hungary see Tamas Bauer, "The Hungarian Alternative to Soviet-Type Planning," *Journal of Comparative Economics* 7:3 (1983), pp. 304-316. See also Ellen Comisso and Paul Marer, "The Economics and Politics of Reform in Hungary," in Comisso and Tyson, *Power, Purpose, and Collective Action*.

6. Though the story is now well known, it is worth reviewing the nightmarish quality of this success. For a good account, see the essays in Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1985).

7. The attempt to fit the industrial era into such simple stages oversimplifies its economic history. Walt W. Rostow identifies nine "trend periods" in his *The World Economy: History and Prospect* (Austin: University of Texas, 1978), pp. 298-348. My industrial ages group together his first and second periods (1790-1848), take his third period (1848-1873) as a distinct age, group together his fourth and fifth periods (1873-1920), his sixth, seventh, and eighth periods (1920-1972), and consider his ninth (starting in 1972) as the beginning of a new industrial age. I rely more on the history of technology provided by David S. Landes in his *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1969) and by the various authors in Carlo M. Cipolla's edited series, *The Fontana Economic History of Europe* (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, volumes 4-6, 1973-1976) than on price data and business cycles. I explain my reasoning more fully in Daniel Chirot, *Social Change in the Modern Era* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp. 223-230. The point, however, is not to argue about precise periodization, but to recognize that there are different technologies, different types of social organization, and different models of behavior at different stages of the industrial era. The forceful maintenance of an outdated model is one of the main reasons for the backwardness of Soviet-type economies.

8. Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* was one such prediction. So was Lenin's in *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1939). For an account of the ideological effects of the Great Depression of the 1930s on Eastern Europe, see Daniel Chirot, "Ideology, Reality, and Competing Models of Development in Eastern Europe Between the Two World Wars," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 3:3 (1989), 378-411.

9. Alexander Erlich, *The Soviet Industrialization Debate* (Cambridge: Harvard University 1960). Whether or not this strategy was necessary remains a subject of debate in the Soviet Union, where Stephen F. Cohen's book on Bukharin has been greatly appreciated by the Gorbachev reformers because Bukharin was the most important ideological opponent of the Stalin line. See Cohen's *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution, a Political Biography 1888-1938* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1980). For Eastern Europe, however, the issue is moot.

10. Vladimir Tismaneanu, "The Tragicomedy of Romanian Communism," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 3:2 (1989), gives the most recent, and best short account of the origins and development of the Romanian Communist Party from the pre-War period until 1989, and explains Ceausescu's role in determining its fate.

11. Lardy, *Agriculture in China's Modern Economic Development*, pp. 130, 155, 158 165.

12. Geoffrey Hosking quotes the Soviet reform economist Otto Latsis who put it this way. "They build irrigation channels which bring no increase in agricultural production. They produce machine tools for which there are no operators, tractors for which there are no drivers, and threshing machines which they know will not work. Further millions of people supply these superfluous products with electricity, ore, oil, and coal. In return they receive their wages like everyone else, and take them to the shops. There, however, they find no goods to buy, because their work has not produced any." And Hosking also quotes Soviet Premier Ryzhkov, "We produce more tractors in this country than all the capitalist countries put together. And yet we don't have enough tractors." *The Awakening of the Soviet Union*, p. 134.

13. Kazimierz Poznanski ascribes the failure of the Polish reforms in the second half of the 1970s to political pressure rather than to economic mismanagement, but it would be fruitless to argue about which came first. See his "Economic Adjustment and Political Forces: Poland Since 1970," in Comisso and Tyson, *Power, Purpose, and Collective Action*.

14. Comisso and Marer, in their article "The Economics and Politics of Reform in Hungary" cover this and the other major contradictions in the Hungarian economic reforms, pp. 267-278.

15. On the debt crisis and Eastern Europe, see Laura D'Andrea Tyson, "The Debt Crisis and Adjustment Responses in Eastern Europe: A Comparative Perspective," in Comisso and Tyson, *Power, Purpose, and Collective Choice*. On Romania, see Ronald H. Linden, "Socialist Patrimonialism and the Global Economy: the Case of Romania," in the same volume edited by Comisso and Tyson.

16. Jan Gross stresses this in "Social Consequences of War: Preliminaries to the Study of Imposition of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 3:2 (1989), pp. 213-214. There is no way of quantifying the extent to which youthful enthusiasm helped communist cadres take power and effectively transform their societies in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but the phenomenon is attested to by numerous literary sources, describing the period. Even such bitter anti-communists as Milan Kundera in *The Joke* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982) verify this. Had there never been a substantial body of energized believers, it is unlikely that the sheer force of Soviet military might could have held all of Eastern Europe in its grip. On the other hand, as Gross and others, for example Elemer Hankiss in "Demobilization, Self-Mobilization, and Quasi-Mobilization in Hungary, 1948-1987," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 3:1 (1989), have pointed out, communist regimes worked hard to destroy social cohesion and any type of genuine solidarity, so that in the long run, it was inevitable that the enthusiasm of the early intellectual believers would be curbed and debased. As for western, particularly French, Marxism, Tony Judt believes that it also contributed to the legitimacy of Eastern European communist regimes. See his *Marxism and the French Left* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1986), pp. 236-238. Thus, the rise and demise of Marxism in Eastern and Western Europe are not wholly separate phenomena, but fed on each other.

17. The best known explanation of communism as nationalism is Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1962), especially pp. 176-187. Johnson explicitly

compares Yugoslavia to China. To varying degrees, but most strongly in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Albania, the communists were able to make similar claims as national saviors after 1945 elsewhere in Eastern Europe. In East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania, they could at least claim to represent the substantial leftist nationalist sentiments that had been silenced during the period of Naziism or the German alliance.

18. Again, it is difficult to quantify feelings of moral revulsion. But the sense of all pervasive corruption and self-disgust can be grasped in all of the literature of Eastern Europe, starting in the 1950s, and becoming ever more obvious with time. A particularly somber view is given by Petru Dumitriu's *Incognito* (New York: Macmillan, 1964).

19. Though he certainly exaggerates the role of local officials, this is a central theme in J. Arch Getty's revisionist view of the Stalinist purges in his *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1985). On the Chinese Cultural Revolution, see Hong Yung Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1976). While such events could not have begun without central direction, they could not have been carried out without local officials trying to ingratiate themselves by imitating the top. But this very process led to widespread cynicism and corruption, and so had to undermine the long term legitimacy of communism.

20. James C. Scott's argument about how the violation of a "moral economy's" sense of justice leads to revolts is based on observations of peasants, but it actually applies even more to urban intellectuals and professionals. It is now evident that they also have a "moral economy," though one tied to their own sense of self-worth rather than to their subsistence. See *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale, 1976), particularly pp. 157-192.

21. Yet, it is difficult to believe that China will not follow the same course as Eastern Europe in future years. The crisis of the Democracy Movement in the spring of 1989 was caused by all the same factors that led to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the contradictions of economic reform in a system still run by communist officials, growing corruption, loss of faith in the official ideology, and increasing disgust with the endless hypocrisy of those in power. The main difference, of course, was that China in 1989 was much less developed, much less urbanized than the Eastern European countries, and also much more insulated from the effects of the economic and political crisis in the Soviet Union. For a brief review of the events in China and their causes, see Jonathan D. Spence's new book, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), pp. 712-747.

22. His major essays from the late 1980s have been collected in Timothy Garton Ash, *The Uses of Adversity* (New York: Random House, 1989).

23. Kazimierz Poznanski, *Technology, Competition and the Soviet Bloc in the World Market* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies of the University of California, 1987).

24. Each new report from the Soviet Union makes the picture of the Brezhnev years and the prognosis for the future seem bleaker. For years the CIA reports painted a bleaker picture than the official Soviet reports, but recently Soviet economists have said that even the CIA reports were too optimistic. As an example of what is now known about the state of the Soviet economy, and how it got to its present state of crisis, see Bill Keller, "Gorbachev's Need: To Still Matter," *New York Times*, May 27, 1990, Section 1, pp. 1, 6. None of this new to the academic specialists, for example, Marshall Goldman, *USSR in Crisis: The Failure of an Economic System* (New York: Norton, 1983).

25. That scientists did not believe the extravagant claims made by the proponents of the "Strategic Defense Initiative" is clear. See, for example Franklin A. Long, Donald Hafner, and Jeffrey Boutwell, editors, *Weapons in Space* (New York: Norton, 1986), particularly the essay by Hans Bethe, Jeffrey Boutwell, and Richard Garwin, "BMD Technologies and Concepts in the 1980s," pp. 53-71. Yet, the Soviets were very troubled by it, and it was Gorbachev's political genius that figured out that American funding for military research could only be reduced in the context of a general move toward disarmament, and this necessitated a reversal of traditional Soviet foreign policy that would reassure the West. For an appreciation of Gorbachev's policy in an otherwise harshly critical article, see Elena Bonner, "On Gorbachev," *New York Review of Books*, May 17, 1990, p. 14. In general, it seems to me

that the Soviets' fear that their conventional warfare capabilities would be undermined by the West's technological superiority has been relatively neglected in most of the discussion about arms control. It has, however, been noted by experts. See Alan B. Sherr, *The Other Side of Arms Control: Soviet Objectives in the Gorbachev Era* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp. 38 and 63.

26. Chaim Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars* (New York: Random House, 1982) pp. 347-348. That the Soviets remained very concerned by this is shown by statements in Alexei Arbatov, Oleg Amirov, and Nikolai Kishilov, "Assessing the NATO-WTO Military Balance in Europe," in Robert D. Blackwell and F. Stephen Larrabee, editors, *Conventional Arms Control and East-West Security* (Durham: Duke University, 1989), pp. 78-79.

27. Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union*, pp. 56-60.

28. The desperate, and almost comical attempts made by the Jaruzelski regime to create new organizations and institutions that would reimpose some sort of political and social coherence, and bring soviety back into the system, are explored very well by George Kolankiewicz in "Poland, and the Politics of Permissible Pluralism," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* (1988), pp. 152-183. But even Kolankiewicz thought that the attempt to include broader segments of the population, and particularly the intellectuals, in officially defined institutions might meet with partial success. In the event, it turned out that these desperate inclusionary policies failed, too.

29. Timothy Garton Ash, "Eastern Europe: The Year of Truth," *New York Review of Books*, February 15, 1990, pp. 17-22. A collection of Garton Ash's new essays on 1989 appears in *We the People: The Revolution of '89, Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague* (Cambridge: Granta/Penguin, 1990).

30. The summer of 1988 was certainly a time when it became obvious that the forces of political and social disintegration in the Soviet Union were starting to get out of hand, too, and this, no doubt, influenced Gorbachev greatly. See the essays of Boris Kagarlitsky in *Farewell Perestroika: A Soviet Chronicle* (London: Verso, 1990), particularly "The Hot Summer of 1988," pp. 1-29.

31. The whole process is well documented by the Polish publications, particularly, issues of *Rzeczpospolita*, *Polityka*, and *Trybuna Ludu*. I thank Dieter Bingen of Köln's Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien for helping me understand the sequence of events in Poland during this period.

32. Bill Keller, "Getting Out With Honor," (February 2, 1989), in Bernard Gwertzman and Michael T. Kaufman, editors, *The Collapse of Communism* (New York: The New York Times, 1990), pp. 10-12. This book is a collection of relevant articles in the *Times* published during 1989.

33. John Tagliabue, "Solidarity May Win 40 Percent of Parliament," (February 19, 1989), *The Collapse of Communism*, pp. 20-21; "Stunning Vote Casts Poles into Uncharted Waters," (June 5, 1989), p. 121; "Warsaw Accepts Solidarity Sweep and Humiliating Losses by Party," (June 8, 1989), pp. 121-123; and "Jaruzelski, Moved by 'Needs and Aspirations' of Poland names Walesa Aide Premier," (August 19, 1989), pp. 130-132. To this must be added the August 17, 1989 article from Moscow by Bill Keller, "In Moscow, Tone is Studied Calm," pp. 132-133.

34. Henry Kamm, "East Germans Put Hungary in a Bind," (September 1, 1989), *The Collapse of Communism*, pp. 154-156; and Serge Schmemmann, "East Germans line Emigré Routes, Some in Hope of Their Own Exit," (October 4, 1989), p. 158, "Security Forces Storm Protesters in East Germany," (sent from Dresden, October 8, 1989), p. 159.

35. Thomas A. Baylis, "Explaining the GDR's Economic Strategy," in *Power, Purpose, and Collective Action*, especially the optimistic conclusion, pp. 242-244. A conventionally favourable summary of how East German communist labor relations worked is found in Marilyn Rueschemeyer and C. Bradley Scharf, "Labor Unions in the German Democratic Republic," in Alex Pravda and Blair A. Ruble, editors, *Trade Unions in Communist States* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986). Judging by the comments from these and other similar studies, East Germans should not have behaved the way they did in 1989.

36. In a speech on October 7 in the GDR, Gorbachev said, "life itself punishes those who delay." Timothy Garton Ash, "The German Revolution," *New York Review of Books*,

December 21, 1989, p. 14. Then, on October 25, in Helsinki, he said that the Soviet Union did not have the moral or political right to intervene in the affairs of Eastern Europe. This was interpreted by his spokesman, Gennadi I. Gerasimov, as the replacement of the "Brezhnev Doctrine" by the "Sinatra Doctrine" (after the song "I did it my way"). Bill Keller, "Gorbachev in Finland, Disavows Any Right of Regional Intervention," *The Collapse of Communism* (October 25, 1989), pp. 163-166.

37. Garton Ash, "The German Revolution," p. 16.

38. Christopher Jones, "Gorbachev and the Warsaw Pact," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 3:2 (1989), pp. 215-234.

39. Serge Schmemmann, "East Germany Opens Frontier to the West for migration or Travel; Thousands Cross," *The New York Times*, November 10, 1989, p. 1. Clyde Haberman, "Bulgarian Chief Quits After 35 Years of Rigid Rule," same issue of the *Times*, p. 1. Timothy Garton Ash, "The Revolution of the Magic Lantern," *New York Review of Books*, January 18, 1990, pp. 42-51. The Czech Communist regime fell on November 24.

40. Louis Zanga, "Albania Decides to End Its Isolation," *Soviet/East European Report of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, May 1, 1990, p. 4. Then, after partial liberalization was announced in Albania, and a *New York Times* reporter was allowed in, there was this story by David Binder, "Albanian Youths Split on Pace of Change and Leader's Sincerity," *New York Times*, May 27, 1990, Section 1, p. 9.

41. The Ceausescu regime began to move in this direction in the early 1970s, though the full ramifications of the return to autarkic Stalinism did not become entirely obvious until the early 1980s. For an explanation of the changes in the early 1970s, see Ken Jowitt, "Political Innovation in Rumania," *Survey* 4 (Autumn, 1974) and Daniel Chirot, "Social Change in Communist Romania," *Social Forces* 57:2 (1978), pp. 495-497. Jowitt noted Ceausescu's references to his "beloved friend" Kim Il-Sung and to the fact that a young reform communist who had built up well educated, technocratic cadres, and who was expected to become increasingly important, was suddenly demoted. That was Ion Iliescu, the man who was to become the first post-communist president of Romania! Jowitt again emphasized the similarity of the North Korean and Romanian regimes in "Moscow Centre," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 1:3 (1987), p. 320. For a brief description of what Romania was like by 1988, see Daniel Chirot, "Ceausescu's Last Folly," *Dissent* (Summer 1988), pp. 271-275. In North Korea, despite the many similarities with Romania, decay was not as advanced in the late 1980s, perhaps because, as Bruce Cumings has suggested, Kim's autarkic Marxist patrimonialism was more in tune with Korean historical and cultural tradition than Ceausescu's was with Romania's past. See Bruce Cumings, "Corporatism in North Korea," *Journal of Korean Studies* 4 (1982-83), particularly p. 277 where he quotes Ken Jowitt's quip about Romania and North Korea being examples of "socialism in one family." Since then, that quotation had been widely accepted without being attributed.

42. One of the best accounts of what was going on in Romania was written by the Romanian dissident, Pavel Campeanu, "Birth and Death in Romania," *New York Review of Books*, October 23, 1986. That article was written anonymously. His "The Revolt of the Romanians," *New York Review of Books*, February 1, 1990, was signed. See also, Daniel N. Nelson, *Romanian Politics in the Ceausescu Era* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1988), pp. 213-217.

43. There could hardly be a better demonstration of how removed Ceausescu had become from reality than the way in which he was overthrown. The shock on his face as the crowd he was addressing began to jeer him on December 21, 1989, was captured on television. More than this was the unbelievable ineptitude of his attempt to escape, even though, in fact, his security forces had the capacity to resist. Some highly placed Romanians have told me that Ceausescu realized in the last few days that changes had to be made, and that he was hoping to reassert his full control before starting to reform. But it is quite clear that despite the years of growing misery and the alienation of all Romanians outside the Ceausescu family, he still believed he had enough legitimacy to carry on. His surprise may have been due to the fact that the demonstration against him was probably instigated by elements in the army and from within the Securitate itself. The reports in *The New York Times* on Romania from December 22 to December 25, 1989, give the essence of the story without, however, clarifying what still remains, much later, a murky sequence of events.

44. The famous "J-Curve" theory of James Davies predicted that a growing gap between rewards and expectations would lead to revolutions in his article, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review* 27:1 (1962). Ted Gurr expanded on this and other "psychological explanations" of revolution in *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1970). These would be, at best, weak explanations of what happened, except, of course, for the obvious point that many people must have been dissatisfied for regimes that were essentially intact to fall so quickly. There is no obvious reason why discontent should have been any higher in 1989 than ten, or twenty years earlier.

45. Michael Bernhard has shown that in fact the party-state machine in Poland learned from the events of the 1970s and of 1980s, and that Jaruzelski was able to impose martial law, raise prices repeatedly, and avoid the political turmoil that had occurred earlier. "The Strikes of June 1976 in Poland," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 1:3 (1987), pp. 390-391. Both the opposition and the regime became more sophisticated with time, but by the mid-1980s, the regime had won. The prevailing political attitude, according to many, and on the whole fairly reliable surveys done in Poland, was growing apathy toward all political issues. See Jane L. Curry, "The Psychological Barriers to Reform in Poland," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 2:3 (1988) particularly p. 494. David S. Mason's *Public Opinion and Political Change in Poland 1980-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1984) consistently shows this, but also that the turn in the "J," that is, the growing gap between a deteriorating reality and high expectations created by the growth of the early 1970s took place in the late 1970s and in 1980. As the 1980s unfolded, peoples' expectations fell into line with reality as the excitement of 1980-81 was replaced by the apathy and hopelessness of martial law. See particularly pp. 42-53 and 222-232.

46. Elemer Hankiss in "Demobilization, Self-Mobilization, and Quasi-Mobilization in Hungary, 1948-1987," pp. 131-139.

47. Vladimir Tismaneanu, quoting Vaclav Havel, points out that the dissidents in these countries made up a "minuscule and rather singular enclave." *The Crisis of Marxist Ideology in Eastern Europe: The Poverty of Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 166. In his chapter on intellectual dissidents (pp. 160-182), however, Tismaneanu is prophetic in noting that the refusal of the intellectuals to accept the lies of communism can destroy these systems precisely because they are ultimately based on ideas. This, in fact, was the entire premise of the dissident intellectuals, particularly in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.

48. The analysis of conflicts between states trying to reform in order to keep up their power in the international arena, and obstructionist traditional elites makes up an important part of Theda Skocpol's theory of revolution in *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979). Classes more committed to reform, then, play an important role in conducting revolutions. But however much merit this argument has in explaining the classical French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions, it seems to have little bearing on what happened in Eastern Europe in 1989. It may, however, have considerable bearing on the future of politics in Russia.

49. Przemyslaw T. Gajdeczka of the World Bank claimed in 1988 that the debt problem was more or less under control, and that international lenders only rated three countries poorly, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia. "International Market Perceptions and Economic Performance: Lending to Eastern Europe," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 2:3 (1988), pp. 558-576.

50. That rising classes cause revolutions is at the heart of the Marxist theory of revolution. An interesting twist to this was suggested by George Konrad and Ivan Szelényi in *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1979). Intellectuals were identified as the rising class that helped put the communists into power and were becoming the ruling class. But intellectual dissidents in Eastern Europe represented no class, were not numerically large, and were held together by a common moral position, not their position in the economic structure. Zygmunt Bauman identified their role more correctly by pointing out that they were more the carriers of national consciousness and morality than a class as such. "Intellectuals in East-Central Europe: Continuity and Change," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 1:2 (1987).

51. Only in Poland could it be said that Charles Tilly's theory about revolutions, that it is

organization of the revolutionary groups that counts most, works at all. But even in Poland, the height of organizational coherence in Solidarity was reached in 1980. To the limited extent that Poland fits Tilly's theories about mobilization, that cannot explain the loss of nerve and collapse in the other communist regimes. See Tilly's *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1978).

52. Thus, the first step of what Jack A. Goldstone has called the "Natural history" approach to the study of revolutions, based largely on the 1938 work of Crane Brinton, turns out to describe some of what happened in Eastern Europe, too. "Prior to a great revolution, the bulk of the 'intellectuals' – journalists, poets, playwrights, essayists, teachers, members of the clergy, lawyers, and trained members of the bureaucracy – cease to support the regime, writing condemnations and demanding major reforms." Goldstone, "The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions," *Annual Review of Sociology* 8 (1982), pp. 189-190. See also Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1965). But most recent theorists of revolution have not taken this observation as anything more than a symptom of deeper class and structural conflicts, and none seem to have believed it could be the prime cause of revolutions. Goldstone's own theory that rapidly rising demographic pressures explain revolutions has much validity in pre-modern history (pp. 204-205); it has no bearing on Eastern Europe.

53. See Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism*, pp. 31-70.

54. It would be pointless to extend the number of examples because there are so many. For some African cases, see Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1982), particularly chapter 6, "Tyrants and Abusive Rule" about the incredible misrule of Idi Amin of Uganda and Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea. For Haiti, Robert I. Rotberg's classic study, *Haiti: The Politics of Squalor* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971) remains excellent. The tyranny in Burma, and the revolution of 1988 (whose ultimate effects are still pending, despite the effective repression that took place during that year) are discussed by Bertil Lintner in *Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy* (Hong Kong: Review Publishing, 1989).

55. Leo Kuper, in *Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University, 1981), estimates that up to three million Bengalis were killed as the Pakistani Army tried to reverse the overwhelming electoral victory of the independence-minded Awami League (pp. 78-80). Of course, it was not just the army, but a general collapse into anarchy and inter-ethnic warfare that contributed to the high death toll, but the point is that despite all this, as in Cambodia in 1979, or Uganda, also in 1979, the nightmare perpetrated by the government in control against the wishes of the large majority of the population could only be overthrown by outside military intervention (p. 173). By these standards, the European colonial powers, however brutal they may have been, seem to have been more prone to give in to a combination of moral arguments against what they were doing and simple calculations of the costs and benefits of their colonial wars. None of these cases shed much light on what happened in Eastern Europe, either internally, or by the Soviet Union. After all, the last case of large scale killing by the Soviets in Eastern Europe was in Hungary in 1956.

56. Ryszard Kapuscinski's *The Emperor* (London: Picador/Pan, 1984), about the fall of Haile Selassie, makes that Emperor seem very much of a Ceausescu-like figure – out of touch with his population and with his own elite. But some have pointed out that Kapuscinski's book may have been as much about his native Poland under Gierk as about Ethiopia. The violence that followed the first, peaceful stage of the Ethiopian Revolution, however, is unlikely to be repeated in Eastern Europe, though it is a chilling reminder of what happens when a disintegrating multi-ethnic empire tries to hold itself together at any cost.

57. Tim McDaniel has pointed out the extraordinary analogy between the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Iranian one of 1978-79. In both cases, autocratic modernizing regimes, despite some real successes, managed to alienate almost all elements in the society. In the case of Iran, this was even more startling because, as in Eastern Europe, there was no major defeat, just a collapse. *A Modern Mirror for Princes: Autocratic Modernization and Revolution in Russia and Iran* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1991).

58. *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (March 1990), pp. 17-21.

59. For example, Tony R. Judt in a paper delivered at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington during the summer of 1987 and published as „The Dilemmas of Dissidence: The Politics of Opposition in East-Central Europe,“ *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 2:2 (1988). The journals *Telos* and *Cross-currents*, run by scholars from Central Europe, were aware of what was going on, as were some other equally specialized publications in Europe. But before the events of 1989, very few scholars or intellectuals paid much attention to such publications, and even most specialists, especially those in the policy related fields, hardly took them seriously.