THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE

ANTI-TOTALITARIAN COURAGE AND POLITICAL RENEWAL

epp group in the european parliament

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The reunification of Europe is a story of the people. It tells how - in eleven different countries in the Baltics and in Central and Eastern Europe - the people took their destiny in their own hands to overcome the division of the continent to become part of Europe again. This collective choice for Europe was the most important directional decision in recent history, not only of those countries, but of the continent as a whole. It was a natural choice for the people to return to the European family because they felt that they had always been part of Europe, regardless of violent divisions at times. But this choice for Europe was not only a choice of the heart. It was also driven by the overwhelming power of all the arguments in favour of a united Europe. The people chose Europe because they knew what Europe means.

Europe means freedom and democracy. The people said 'no' to taking orders from Moscow. Instead, they chose to be free members of a community that they themselves are shaping. And the people are clearly sticking to this choice: in all new Member States, an overwhelming majority of people affirm the clear advantages of EU membership for their country and support being a member of the EU. The people chose to be stronger together, under one common European roof.

Europe means lasting peace. The Second World War and its aftermath imposed a particularly heavy blood toll on the Baltics and Central and Eastern Europe and war continued in the Western Balkans as late as the 1990s. Today, a war between members of the European Union appears completely impossible. The Western Balkans are at peace, and Slovenia and Croatia, two former Yugoslav Republics, have already joined the Union. With a united Europe, the people chose peace for the continent.

Europe means prosperity. In the ten years surrounding its 2007 EU accession, between 2004 and 2014, the Romanian economy grew by a breath-taking 180%, 2.4 times more than in neighbouring Serbia. In Lithuania, the average wealth per inhabitant is today three times higher than in neighbouring Belarus. With Europe, the people chose to multiply their economic success and their standard of living with the power of the common market.

This success story of the reunification of Europe offers the best argument against all those demagogues who define themselves mainly through their opposition to Europe. Today's freedom and democracy, peace and prosperity all over Europe is the best demonstration of how only the common European approach can overcome the catastrophes caused by nationalism and communism on our continent.

The people in the Baltics and in Central and Eastern Europe chose Europe because they knew about all the advantages of being stronger together. This book's intention is to keep this knowledge alive. We must be aware of our history if we want to be able to shape a good future. This book is a clear political statement for a common future of our continent. The European People's Party (EPP) was the driving force for the reunification of Europe. This is why I am particularly proud that this book has been published by the EPP Group in the European Parliament, with such compelling contributions from many of its Members and supporters.

*My special thanks go to **Tunne Kelam**, Head of the Estonian Delegation in our Group, without whom this book would not have seen the light of day. Tunne Kelam has always been active at the forefront of Estonia's democratic transition. And since the very beginning of Estonia's EU membership, he has been an extremely prominent member of the EPP Group, sha ping the common future of our continent. His biography and his continued engagement probably stand better than anything else for the success of the reunification of Europe. Thank you for making this book possible!*

Manfred Weber
Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament

The idea for publishing the twentieth century stories of the ten EU member nations that became free of Communist totalitarianism at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s occurred to me during a conversation with a Slovakian colleague early in 2007 in Washington. Having discussed the recent pasts of Slovakia and Estonia, my Slovakian colleague ***Miroslav Mikolášik*** *and I were both astounded at the inadequacy of our own knowledge of what had taken place under totalitarian rule as well as how free civil society was finally restored in our respective nations.*

Sharing our countries' experiences of losing and regaining democracy with our friends, the older members of the European Union, is even more daunting. After four years in a reunited Europe, it is clear that Europe's mental and historic integration has yet to be completed. This will require overcoming region-centred attitudes, comparing and integrating different historic perceptions, traditions, prejudices and even fears. This will require more than being just satisfied with political and economic equality. We must also achieve an open, genuine mental acceptance of each other. It is in our common interest to understand that every member nation has a unique, enriching contribution to make to the continuing building of our common European home.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my good colleagues, ***the Heads of the ten National Delegations*** *of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, who wholeheartedly supported this endeavour and provided their national contributions. Our heartfelt thanks go to the Presidency of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, headed by* ***Manfred Weber MEP****, who unhesitatingly approved the project and provided the necessary means for the editing and publishing of the book.* ***A warm thank you also goes to the staff of the EPP Group for their work****. My friend, the eminent scholar Prof. Dr.* ***Ludger Kühnhardt*** *of the Institute for European Integration in Bonn, merits special gratitude for taking on the crucial task of supervising the book as a whole and for sharing his vision and experience.*

Finally, I would like to thank the hard-working and dedicated people in my office: ***Kadri Vanem****, who so efficiently coordinated the project,* ***Kadri Kopli****, head of my office and* ***Kaja Sõrg****, our EPP Group Press Advisor.*

Tunne Kelam *MEP, 2018*

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Ludger Kühnhardt

I. THE MEANING OF 1989

The meaning of "1989" will continue to influence politics and society in Europe for many years to come. "1989" was the year of a revolution, of a peaceful revolution in Europe. Usually, revolutions are considered to be bloody events, abrupt and violent changes of power and social structures. Victor Hugo described revolutions as return to normalcy. Hannah Arendt saw revolutions as a way to return to the original idea that defines a body politic. When Nicolaus Copernicus analysed the position of stars in the sky, he formulated the first scientific definition of revolutions as a process in which stars return to their original position. The philosopher Hannah Arendt applied this scientific observation to the world of politics and concluded that revolutions are the return to the original freedom of man. In this regard, she added, revolutions need not be violent in order to qualify as a revolution. The American Revolution of the eighteenth century was as much a revolution as the French Revolution of the eighteenth century. One produced the longest living constitution in the world, the other generated subsequent series of turbulences and upheavals. In any case, revolutions are processes that unveil the unknown in history. Revolutions are revelations. 1980 -1990 was such a revelation in Europe.

Most people living through the political events of 1989 or observing them from a distance did not reflect instantly the meaning of the political changes that happened across Central Europe. The fall of Communist regimes that had been governing many societies was met with excitement and joy, sometimes even with disbelief and worry. With hindsight, two facts became evident: 1989 did not begin in 1989, and it did not end with 1989. When comparing the fall of Communist regimes in Europe with the French Revolution of 1789, parallels may be drawn in that 1789 did not begin in 1789 and it did not end with 1789. The French Revolution had gone through periods of incubation. And it continued through several periods of transformation, of revolutions inside the revolution, of unexpected results and unintended consequences. The same was happening in Europe again two centuries later.

When people shouted "We are the people" in the streets of Leipzig during the "Monday Demonstrations" in this city of the German Democratic Republic, optimists heard the main demand of the American Revolution, namely "a government of the people, by the people, for the people." Variations of the same slogan were heard across Central and South Eastern Europe. In the Soviet Union, the centre of the Communist empire of the twentieth century, the changes had begun as a revolution from above. In the summer of 1989, Soviet leader Michail Gorbachev told the Communist leadership of the German Democratic Republic that those who come late will be punished by life. By then, his own perestroika had been taken over already by history, too. Gorbachev wanted to rescue Leninism by reforming the basis of its ideology. Eventually, he lost the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was an artificial state, built on an ideology with wrong anthropological premises and false economic theories. Like the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and Yugoslavia were doomed once the ideological glue did not longer hold these countries together. The peaceful revolution of 1989 meant a return of history. The fall of Communist regimes and the struggle for new parameters of power and public authority was beginning as a peaceful revolution. In same cases, the revolution stayed peaceful. In other cases, the revolution turned violent. In Romania, in Yugoslavia and in Russia, too, the revolution was devouring its children. Like Saturn.

Yet, the term 'peaceful revolution' was often used to describe the fall of the Communist dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic. Other revolutions of 1989 or in the following years were labelled "singing revolution", "orange revolution", or "velvet revolution". In all cases, these terminologies were meant to portray political events of fundamental magnitude as a happy, friendly, peaceful way of transforming political legitimacy and authority. No matter the specific context of a country, the principal phenomenon was the same: Totalitarian rule in the name of a Communist ideology and executed through the structures of power and terror in a one-party state came to an end. Totalitarian rule had three defining features:

> The monopoly of power over state and society;
> The monopoly of power over the economy and all social forces;
> The monopoly of power over the minds and hearts of people.

In Marxist ideology only class struggle was considered to be the trigger of a good, and probably even unavoidable revolution. Violence might be necessary and, wherever inevitable, it was considered legitimate. The melody of 1989 was fundamentally different: The struggle was not for one class against another. It was a struggle for freedom, driven by the idea of the primacy of the rule of law, political pluralism and the market economy. It was a struggle for the power of law and not for the power to manipulate law. It was a struggle for the power of diversity and not for the power that curtails diversity. It was a struggle for the power of freedom and not for the power to limit freedom. It was the struggle for a new beginning. And, in its own way, it was a struggle based on the idea of forgiveness against those who had committed so many terrible crimes in the name of totalitarian communism.

1989 was not only a revolution for freedom. 1989 was also a revolt to "return to Europe". After World War II, the countries of Central and South Eastern Europe had fallen under the geopolitical and systemic control of the Soviet Union. For them, the Cold War, the Iron Curtain and totalitarian dictatorship also meant a separation from "Europe", from its Western part and its common heritage. "Returning to Europe" was an unfulfilled dream and obvious aspiration. 1989 opened the doors that had been slammed by the forces of a tragic history. 1989 meant the end of the order of Yalta. It meant a homecoming, the return to a common civilisation of freedom, law and democracy.

1989 did not happen overnight and it did not stop with the next daylight. Several periods have been identified by analysts in order to better assess the incubation periods that led to the rebellion against totalitarian rule. The uprising of workers in the German Democratic Republic in 1953, the Polish Revolt in 1956, the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, the Prague Spring of 1968 – these were the most prominent events that marked the continuous resistance to an artificial and inhuman order. Samizdat literature, rebellion and revolt, migration and refugees, human rights movements and "Solidarność" symbolised the continuous stream of dissidence and resistance. By the track record of its opposition, one can design the picture of how porous the moral credibility and political authority of Communist rule was. Communism was a system of power without the power of legitimacy. Communist rule had to fail at some point because it had never succeeded.

II. THE DIFFICULT PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

After the fall of Communist totalitarianism, the transformation continued in all respective countries. Post-revolutionary upheavals were as regular as the struggle with old nomenclature and new concepts of authority, reform and distribution of power. The revolutions continued as processes of re-calibrating public authority. State authority had to be re-defined: freedom and authority needed a new balance. The new, post-Communist, post-totalitarian order required a new leadership. Along with structural acts of transformation, a substantial transformation of personalities in public life took place in post-Communist Europe. Many post-Communist leaders would have never entered public life if the totalitarian regimes would have prevailed. Many of the new leaders were – and often still are – of a genuine, authentic type. They lived the promise "to life in truth", as Vaclav Havel has described the aim of liberating totalitarian societies. Yet, living in truth also meant to live in co-existence with those who had denigrated truth to a function of their claim to power and who had violated human rights in the name of an ideology. Living in truth was never an abstract absolute, but always a relational criterion of re-defining public morality, civic sense and political commitment under conditions of complex post-Communist transformation. Each country of Central, South Eastern and Eastern Europe went through its genuine history. Each story turned out to be different and yet all the stories of transformation were united in their root that is the common desire to eliminate the vestiges of totalitarian rule and destruction. Often, this was a moral destruction, an intellectual mutilation which was the consequence of totalitarian pressure and its human counter-reaction.

After the end of Communist totalitarianism, the revival of the public sphere was no easy task. Fighting communism had united many. Working for a stable democracy generated manifold splits in each society. Hope and fear, frustration and opportunism, new moral revival and disguised forms of old power went hand in hand. The observation of Alexis de Tocqueville that the French Revolution had triggered the desire for freedom while replacing it soon again with the comfort of equality found its distant echo. And yet, one overriding compass guided many post-Communist societies through the daunting period of transformation and the chaotic phase of reform anarchism and restoration anachronisms: to return to Europe.

Poland and Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria, and of course also Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Albania, Serbia and Bosnia-Hercegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro had always belonged to Europe. These were never countries of a different continent. Those who define Turkey as a European country would also add this EU candidate country to the list of European nations; after all, Turkey was a founding member of the Council of Europe. But as far as the post-Communist countries were concerned, their claim "to return to Europe" expressed the desire of the new elites and the majority of the ordinary population to integrate as soon as possible. They invoked a common civilisation in order to be recognised as political equals. The quest for membership of the European Union was a political program based on cultural commonality. The power of freedom and solidarity as it had culminated in the 1989 Revolutions was interpreted as the foundation of sharing the political community of values that had begun to emerge in Western Europe since the founding of the European Economic Community in 1957. When the European Community was renamed the European Union in 1993 it had become evident that it would only be a true Union if it was to become truly European. Eastward enlargement became the strategic formula for this civilisational project. The East of the West was to return home to the common European house.

In 2004 and 2007, this dream came true for ten post-Communist countries: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined the EU first - together with Cyprus and Malta - followed by Bulgaria and Romania. The transformation process had been intense and multi-dimensional ever since the Communist dictatorships had been toppled in those countries. They had affected the constitutional and institutional structures of these states and the economic and social structures of the respective societies. The individuality of each society and country had been reinforced, this also being a dimension of the return to a pluralistic Europe with enormous diversity at the basis of its unification project. The European Union was the new frame for the positioning of each individual country and society. But, unlike the Communist regimes of old, the European Union was not premised on centralistic machinations which undermined cultural and national diversity. To the contrary, the European Union provides the frame for the flourishing of Member States' individuality and respective diversity. The European Union has assisted all Member States in overcoming the legacy of totalitarianism, and advanced the safeguarding and strengthening of their individuality. The European Union supports and protects diversity, beginning with the use of one's mother tongue in the European Parliament.

III. GENERATION 1989

The transformation process of countries and societies that had been governed and mistreated by totalitarian rule would not come to an easy and speedy end. It will require more than a generation to outlive all the ligatures of totalitarianism, especially in the overall political culture of each society. Totalitarianism includes more than its imminent ugly and illiberal face. Totalitarianism destroys the soul of a people and manipulates the hearts and habits of it. To overcome this history of seduction and terror takes time. The healing process has many dimensions, many of them neither easy nor pleasant. But with membership of the European Union, the perspective of the former totalitarian countries that have "returned to Europe" has found a safe haven and clear form.

Membership in the European Union has not been an abstract process. It does not take place as an anonymous operation. Membership in the European Union has been driven by political actors and will be shaped by political actors.

The revolt against totalitarian oppression brought many different individuals and groups together. Not all of them remained in public life after the fall of the respective Communist regimes. Many political parties appeared in post-Communist societies. They became part of the transformation process, shaped this process and were shaped by its effects. Some political parties lived a short life after 1989. Others are still present on the public scene in their respective countries. The social forces which they represent echo the impulses of an anti-totalitarian revival and the perspectives of post-transformation normalcy. Those who hold responsible public offices reflect the condensed ideas and aspirations of a certain segment of the society in which they are rooted.

Social and political transformations are not a mechanic process about power and reconstruction. Social and political processes also reflect the generational developments in any given society. Often, attention has been paid to pensioners as a group of potential "losers" in the post-Communist transformation. Their economic potential was linked to the failed economic systems. Their political socialisation was a reflection of the past totalitarian order. Some failed with this order. Others felt liberated and relieved when they saw it disappearing. Many had to struggle with the new realities. Younger generations were in a different situation. Those born in 1989 participated for the first time in the election to the European Parliament in 2009. Time has changed and they have changed with this time. The young generation of post-totalitarian societies in Europe have become part of a consolidated normalcy across today's European Union. Yet, their roots touch the structures and vestiges of the Communist past of their respective countries, societies, and families.

Part of this overall experience has been the oppressive nature of Communist totalitarianism. The current development of political culture across Europe cannot and should not extinguish the memory of this historical evil. The victims of totalitarian rule in the name of a Communist ideology deserve to be remembered. Younger generations will live their life more free if they do not forget about this dark chapter in their respective national history. Totalitarian communism did not appear without origins and it did not disappear without consequences. By the same token, the generation born in 1989 has

the right to know what has happened before they were born and why they still live in the consequences of this history. This book is dedicated to the liberated generation of Central and Eastern Europe born amid the tumultuous events of 1989, and thereafter.

This book includes chapters about the origins, structure and disappearance of Communist totalitarianism in Poland and Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Estonia and Slovenia, Latvia and Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania. These are narratives about a dark past that makes the current life in the European Union lighter because it has disappeared for good. Yet, this book helps us not to forget what has happened and why it has happened. Europe's future will be a better one if we do not forget Europe's past. Today, it is a shared future in a common European Union. This is a community of values not least because of the enormous courage, wisdom and vision of those who toppled Communist totalitarianism and re-established public authority based on freedom, the rule of law, democracy and solidarity. This book is especially focused on the contribution of those men and women who founded, joined and shaped the Christian Democratic and conservative parties and movements across the zone of transformation. Their respective groupings and political parties are part of a larger European "political family", united in the name of Christian ethics and values of freedom, especially however in the name of human dignity, the rule of law, freedom and solidarity, democracy and the market economy.

In his inaugural address, the President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering, said to his colleagues on February 13, 2007: "We shall be judged on how we set the newly achieved European unity on a lastingly good and safe path. Leadership is expected of us politicians... We must concentrate on essentials...We need a Europe that believes in itself, that draws its strength from its values and that wants to, and can, be a good partner in the world." The chapters of this book provide ample background why these words have meaning for each citizen in today's European Union. A Europe that believes in itself and draws its strength from its values is a Europe sensitive to its past totalitarian darkness and proud of its victory of freedom. The reuniting of Europe is a thrilling story never to be forgotten and, times and again, worth being retold.

BULGARIA: FALSE START AND A SUCCESSFUL SECOND REVOLUTION

Evgenii Dainov

Republic of Bulgaria – Република България
Area: 111 002 km²
Population: 7 717 200 (2006)
Capital City: Sofia
Official language: Bulgarian
Currency: Lev (BGN)
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.01.2007

I. INTRODUCTION

After several false starts in the early 1990s, Bulgaria became a settled and predictable parliamentary democracy, in which the fundamental elements of a market economy are in place, in a context of financial stability and robust growth. While major issues remain in the fields of law and order, administrative capacity and government accountability, Bulgaria has successfully traversed the turbulent waters of the "transition" and has taken on her new identity as a full member of NATO and the EU. Bulgaria's democratic stability is founded on several defining values.

First is the absence, uncharacteristically for the Balkan region, of significant nationalist and xenophobic temptations. The democratic awakening began in the mid-1980s as resistance to government repression against the Muslim Turkish minority; the new democratic political culture was from the outset structured around political – as opposed to ethnic, religious or cultural – rights. Second is the national consensus

on parliamentary democracy. The institutions of democracy have weathered weak governments, periodic upsurges of organised crime, two economic disasters and two revolutions. Every major issue arising in the national agenda is always brought to the institutions of representative democracy and resolved there by procedure. Third, since 1997, has been the overriding national ambition to become a fully integrated member of the EU and NATO. When national sacrifices were required during the crisis in neighbouring Kosovo and, later, the international battle against terrorism after 2001, the pro-"Western" choice has held both in government and in public opinion. Fourth is the most vibrant civil society in the region of South-Eastern Europe, coupled with a wealth of print and electronic media largely unrivalled on the territory of the former Warsaw Pact. These factors provide some guarantee against oligarchy, truly unaccountable government and routine injustice.

II. FROM INDEPENDENCE TO TOTALITARIANISM (1870s-1940s)

Recognised by the Byzantine Empire as an independent state in a peace treaty dated 681 A. D., Bulgaria went through several periods of imperial splendor before splintering and falling to the invading Ottoman Turks by the end of the fourteenth century. Following some centuries of disarray, by the middle of the nineteenth century Bulgarian society had attained an important place in the Ottoman Empire. Forming no more than ten percent of the population of the Empire, the enterprising Bulgarians controlled no less than one-fifth of its trade and much of the manufacture. There followed, however, a breakdown of law and order in the Empire, which hit trade and enterprise. Bulgarians reacted to the rising insecurity by formulating two major political principles. The first was that security would not be possible inside the Empire. The second was that no outside Great Power should be petitioned to come and take over from the Ottomans. Bulgarians would attain security through the formation of a sovereign nation state.

The program of National Liberation differed from the surrounding nations. Rather than basing itself on irredentism, the Bulgarian program consciously copied Mazzini and Garibaldi. The enemy was not an ethnic group, but a political establishment – not "the Turk", but "the current despotic-tyrannical system". The principles of political life in the future Republic would be "agreement, brotherhood and perfect equality". In this way the Bulgarians set for themselves a political tradition that was strongly democratic, independent, consciously European and non-xenophobic. Indeed, ethnic Turks were to have a strong presence in all democratic Parliaments following liberation, and are currently for the second time in a row part of the government.

The program of liberation underpinned the national uprising of 1876. Put down with great ferocity and loss of life by Turkish irregulars, the uprising caused an uproar in Europe. Russia, itching for revenge after its defeat in the Crimean War in 1854, declared war on Turkey, which it then won with some difficulty in 1878. Subsequent Russian attempts to make Bulgaria its satellite failed, and Bulgaria entered the twentieth century with the ambition of being a mid-sized European power.

In the economy, other trends were in the making. Liberation had led to a severe economic crisis, as Bulgarian merchants and manufacturers lost sheltered markets. While entrepreneurs had no access to credit, the state needed great volumes of manufactured goods to build schools, provision a new army and a new bureaucracy. The state stepped into the credit void and began financing producers. By the first decades of the twentieth century, Bulgaria's economy was considerably less modern ("European") than its politics, being dependent on state orders. Instead of looking to the market, economic actors became reliant on the state, forming corruption networks. The deformed structure of economic incentives created the conditions for a popular fascination with collectivistic and statist doctrines. This pulled society in the direction of dictatorship. But the political culture in place ensured that Bulgarians, while occasionally tempted by extreme ideals, would not fully embrace them.

Extremes did, nevertheless, plague the country in the inter-war period. Two military coups (1923 and 1934) undermined the party system and representative democracy. Lack of representation led to violent agrarian unrest and an unsuccessful uprising in 1923. Communist agitators used the mass resentment and declared a terror-based insurrection, attempting to blow up the King and his entourage in 1925. The explosion, in

a crowded church, missed the King, but killed over 160 people, injuring severely another 500. This was to be the biggest single terrorist act in the world until the Oklahoma city bombing of 1995. The government's backlash resulted in more than 6,000 arrests.

Politics failed to evolve into a fully democratic direction, while the economy failed to develop into a modern market-based one. Because of its democratic and egalitarian genesis Bulgaria, however, produced neither authoritarian regimes, nor powerful fascist or Nazi movements.

Bulgarians also preserved the values of multi-cultural society, while most of Europe was going in the opposite direction. Bulgaria found itself a German ally in 1942, but refused Nazi demands to deport its 50,000 Jews to concentration camps in Northern Europe. Years later, in her famous "Eichmann in Jerusalem", Hanna Arendt was to quote frustrated German reports of the time, which complained that Bulgarians had "no understanding of the Jewish problem whatever".

Through the summer of 1944, various coalition governments tried to leave the Axis and negotiate peace with the Allies, but failed due to Soviet intransigence. Although in September Bulgaria broke with Germany and even declared war on it, Russia did not relent and declared war on Bulgaria. On the night of September 8, pro-Soviet Army officers carried out a coup d'etat and on September 9, 1944, a government of the "Fatherland Front" was declared, heavily dominated by the Communists.

Bulgarian society immediately became submerged in the violence of totalitarianism. Between September 1944 and the end of that year, local "People's Courts", ran by armed Communists, managed to kill around 18,700 people. These Courts were soon discontinued, to be replaced by one national People's Court, which tried 10,000 individuals and handed down 2,600 death sentences during 1945. These included most government Ministers of pre-Communist governments, as well as journalists, intellectuals, religious leaders and even entertainers. A further 23,500 people were deported to concentration camps and some 50,000 "interned" to remote areas up to 1989.

III. IMPACT OF COMMUNISM (1940s-1980s)

Bulgaria was the only Warsaw Pact member, which did not have Red Army units stationed on its territory after 1947. The Kremlin considered Bulgaria "safe" and, indeed, this country was less turbulent than other Soviet satellites. There are reasons for this.

First was the wave of terror, wholly without precedent, of 1944-1947. Extreme elements of the Communist regime beheaded the pre-war elites, and also instilled a real fear in the population. Levels of fear were to be maintained in later years by: land collectivisation, which affected 80 percent of the population; the maintenance of concentration camps to 1963; the ever-present threat of "internment" to outlying areas and the discrimination of the children of "bourgeois elements"; and by the maintenance of the largest, per capita, political police and Communist Party structure in the Soviet Bloc. Second, large sections of Bulgarian society were, at least initially, tempted by a programme of "modernisation without capitalism" – something that had gained considerable support from the 1920s on.

The third factor was hands-on Soviet control. From 1949 onwards, "Soviet specialists" were attached, in positions of effective control, to all Ministries and institutions of the state, including the military, intelligence and police. By the 1950s Bulgaria was re-fashioned into Moscow's most servile satellite, to the extent that in 1958 Great Britain seriously considered closing its Embassy in Sofia with the argument that Bulgaria was, effectively, "a Russian province".

In this climate of hopelessness, Bulgarians turned their backs on public affairs and sank into private life and the chronic shortages of the socialist economy, which itself was disintegrating. Until the 1960s, foreign observers placed Bulgaria ahead of Greece, Yugoslavia and Poland in terms of economic well-being, infrastructure and "general orderliness". But the Soviet model of industrialisation gave out as early as 1960 and rapid degradation of life was the result. The problem was that the regime relied on Western and Soviet credit, therefore amassing a heavy foreign debt. When Moscow asked for its money by the end of the 1950s, the Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov (who ran the country from 1953 to 1989) secretly handed over to the Kremlin the national gold reserve. This did not, however, solve the problem and in July 1963 Zhivkov decided

to cut losses by dissolving Bulgaria and integrating it into the USSR as a sixteenth Republic. Rarely has the anti-national nature of communism been illustrated so clearly. The Soviet leadership declined, fearing geopolitical problems, but then Zhivkov tried it again. When, in the early 1970s Bulgaria failed to service its debts to Moscow, in 1973 he again asked for Bulgaria to be incorporated into the USSR. The Kremlin, however, continued to fear the geopolitical consequences of such an act and again declined the offer. To keep its satellite afloat, the Kremlin decided to subsidise Bulgaria's economy with up to 600 million dollars annually for agricultural produce, and with oil supplied at internal Soviet (subsidised) prices. Bulgaria became dependent on the Soviet market for its export, and on low-priced Soviet fuels for its economy.

Having avoided bankruptcy with aid from Moscow, the Bulgarian regime decided to embark on a new wave of spectacular industrialisation. By 1987 Bulgaria was again unable to service its debt to the USSR. Worse, under Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership the Kremlin discontinued both the agricultural production subsidy and the supply of cheap fuel. Severe petrol and electricity shortages hit the country.

Although Bulgarians were still not in a revolutionary mood, the Communist Party was aware that it was losing support because of the degradation of daily life. Unable to revive the economy, the regime came up with the idea of diverting society's attention by claiming that the hereditary enemy was again at the gates. In the winter of 1986-1987 the regime unleashed wave of mass repression against the Turkish minority, which comprised one-eighth of the population. The use of the Turkish language, Mosque attendance, traditional Turkish clothing, and Muslim rituals were all banned. All Muslim-sounding names were replaced by Slav-Christian sounding names. The dead were also renamed, retrospectively. Flatly denying all of this to the outside world, domestically the regime claimed that Bulgaria's Turks were a fifth column of neighbouring Turkey, which was preparing to annex the southern half of Bulgaria.

The political ends of this offensive were not attained. The public refused to rally to the BSP and sympathised with the Turks as it had sympathised with the persecuted Jews a generation earlier. Panicked, in the spring of 1989 the regime tried a last desperate measure – to push the entire Turkish minority across the border into Turkey. The resulting dislocation dealt the final death blow to the Communist economy, while the international uproar isolated Bulgaria. On 10 November, as the Berlin Wall was being smashed into pieces, long-serving Communist leader Todor Zhivkov was deposed by the Central Committee as thousands of Bulgarians demonstrated in the streets, demanding freedom. The socialist experiment had led to bankruptcy, this time definitively.

IV. RESISTANCE (1944-1989)

The ferocity of the regime, and the measure of support it had gained by the 1960s ensured that resistance was sporadic and ineffectual. Total control over information and over historical memory also guaranteed that, by the time the post-war generation reached adulthood, the early attempts at resistance were forgotten. Only now do we begin to realise that initially resistance to the regime in Bulgaria was much more determined than in any other socialist country.

Throughout history Bulgarians have reacted to oppression by taking to the mountains. Once inside the forests, they would form armed bands to resist the oppressor. This cycle repeated itself after the takeover of September 9, 1944. Thousands took to the mountains to escape the violence and the firing squads. Soon they formed armed bands and declared armed resistance, giving birth to the "goryani" ("forest people") movement. The movement was active for a decade and, although numbers are still debated, it is clear that around 2,000 armed men, backed by up to 10,000 helpers, organised themselves into 28 big detachments and dozens of smaller units. Archives reveal that the political profile of the "goryani" covered the entire spectrum – Agrarians ex-Communists, Trotskyites, nationalists, democrats and even anarchists. At the end of the 1940's the movement was strengthened by an influx of peasants escaping collectivisation.

After 1952, with more than half the "goryani" killed by the regime, the movement began to dissipate and was dissolved in 1956. The defeat enabled the regime to complete land collectivisation, which it had earlier abandoned. In 1958, the Congress of the Communist Party declared that "socialism" had achieved complete and irreversible victory in Bulgaria. By the late 1950s Bulgaria was quiescent. Land collectivisation was completed, all known opposition was crushed and, to avoid further trouble, the regime

began deporting "bourgeois" families from the cities. This finally cowed Bulgarians into submission, as did events on the international arena. The German rebellion of 1953 and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 demonstrated that "the West" would not help.

Resistance became an act of individual self-sacrifice. In 1955, Dr Ivan Georgiev founded the Bulgarian National-Revolutionary Party and ended up in prison. In 1956-1957, a handful of intellectuals distributed texts supportive of the Hungarian Revolution and were also sentenced. In 1968, students were imprisoned for supporting "Prague Spring". Individual resistance went on through the 1970s, invariably landing dissidents in prison. In 1985, two long-time dissidents were killed in the Pazardjik prison.

By that time, however, the political situation had changed. The urban post-war generation had reached adulthood, only to find that life was unpredictable, insecure and increasingly undignified. From abroad came news of Soviet defeats in Afghanistan and of stiffening resistance in Poland. Increasingly, the post-war generation saw socialism as an aberration and wanted change. The regime refused to bow to engage in reform from the top, on the model of Soviet "perestroika". In a speech in the summer of 1987, the leader Zhivkov declared: "Comrades, we have decided to wait out this storm and then to think, whether to take part in any perestroika". This ensured that anyone who wanted change would have to look outside the Party.

Then came the impact of the re-naming of the Turks, which spawned both organised resistance and public sympathy for the victims of oppression. These developments shook the regime and revealed its weakening. In 1988, resistance finally moved to the capital with the establishment of the Club for Glasnost and Perestroika. While its members were sacked, they were not jailed. This opened the floodgates and by the end of 1988 a plethora of anti-regime organisations were set up, including the trade union confederation "Podkrepa" (Support), modeled on Poland's Solidarity. Although the official media kept quiet about all of this, most of the country was aware that dissident organisations were springing up by the dozen, making the regime look weak and indecisive. The renewed pressure on the Turks backfired again, as did other attempts of the regime to demonstrate muscle, such as and the arrest of school students for celebrating the birthday of John Lennon.

On November 3, 1989, anti-regime organisations came together to march on Parliament and present it with an environmental petition. Very quickly, the chants of the ten thousand-strong crowd turned from environmental to political, with "Freedom!" becoming the main demand. The authorities had no plans of dealing with this scale of events. A week later, a panicked Communist Party deposed its leader, Todor Zhivkov. On December 7, the Union of Democratic Forces (SDS) appeared out of the dissident movements and by January declared itself ready to take power from the Communist Party. The Communist regime proved unable to "wait out the storm". The winds of change, blowing through Europe, blew it away as it did all the others.

V. REGIME CHANGE (1989-1997)

Bulgaria is the only European ex-Warsaw Pact country that failed to make the transition in one leap. It went through two economic collapses, caused by ex-Communist governments, and consequently carried out two political revolutions – first in 1989-1990 and then in 1996-1997.

There are easily identifiable reasons for this chequered development path. Although politically things moved well and fast, in the sphere of the economy Bulgarians continued to be unwilling, as they had been since the 1920s, to enter the turbulent waters of the market economy. The reformers themselves, indigenous as well as international, had little understanding of the time-scale involved. Ordinary people, furthermore, failed to be convinced by the reformers that the factories and industrial plants constructed during the socialist period were better demolished, rather than maintained. As a consequence, while Poland was going through "shock reforms" and the Czechs were gearing up to follow suit, Bulgarians were not convinced that such major changes were necessary.

In the arenas of politics and civil society, things moved very quickly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The media was free by mid-November 1989. Daily mass demonstrations shook the big cities. A National Round Table began work in January 1990, where the Communist Party and the SDS negotiated over the introduction of democracy. With the basic institutions of deliberative democracy quickly falling into place, the threat of civil war was evaded.

But bloodshed was not the only trap that lay on the road ahead. The most dangerous was the trap into which most ex-Soviet republics were lured, involving the 'national unity' tempation - to avoid democracy and in its place construct authoritarian oligarchic regimes on the basis of a continuity of elites. Later to be known as "the third way", this was the option maintained throughout this period by the Communist (Socialist from April 1990) Party of Bulgaria, BCP/BSP.

The other trap was ethnic confrontation, and that sprang first. On the eve of Christmas 1989, the regime issued a decree to the effect that, should Turks want to recover their Muslim names, they could do so. Local officials, who had been closely involved in the repression against the Turks, refused to accept this. Feeling that a nationalist ferment was their only chance of evading responsibility, they launched the slogan "Bulgaria for the Bulgarians!" and started daily mass demonstrations. Taken aback by this rebellion in its ranks, the government at all levels did not intervene, while sections of the public and some media backed the nationalists. Thankfully, while the government "waited out the storm", the new democratic organisations acted. They talked to all sides and convinced them to construct a National Committee for Reconciliation, at which all grievances could be negotiated. Roped into democratic procedure, and placed in full view of the media, the nationalist leaders failed to produce a convincing case. The public abandoned them by the end of the first week of January, when the Round Table with the opposition started its work.

Bulgarians became fixated on the Table to the exclusion of all else. Thinking about democratic procedure took over from thinking about ethnicity and national grandeur. In this way the "Yugoslav temptation" was avoided in Bulgaria. Avoiding the "third way" temptation was the challenge faced by the Round Table. The BCP entered the negotiations determined to replace multi-party democracy with "national unity", and market reforms – with a "mixed economy", based on "societal property". The obvious intention was to keep power concentrated in Communist hands. Ultimately, however, the argument was carried by the SDS. Bulgaria was to be a democratic parliamentary republic, moving towards a market economy. By April 1990 Bulgaria had escaped not only the "Yugoslav" model of disintegration, but also the "Russian" model of a "third way", which would have resulted in an oligarchy based on the old Communist elites. The country entered the "transition", as opposed to evading it.

Unfortunately for the reformers, the elections to the Grand National Assembly, held in June 1990, were won by the recently re-named Communists. In Sofia, the multitude of daily demonstrators refused to accept this outcome. Student occupations were declared, demonstrators swelled in numbers and on August 29, the building of the Socialist Party was stormed and set alight. As food disappeared entirely and the coupon system of rationing, introduced by the Socialist government, failed to alleviate the shortages, a national strike was declared and the government resigned in early November. A government of "national salvation" took over, composed of Socialists, Agrarians and the SDS. This government freed prices and, after some price shocks, food reappeared in the shops. By the autumn, the constituent parliament produced a new constitution and dissolved itself. The elections which followed were narrowly won by the SDS and a reforming government took office under the young lawyer Philip Dimitrov. The government relied on a fragile majority composed of the SDS and the new Turkish minority party, Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS).

As reflected in the election results, however, that government did not have a clear mandate to begin a drastic overhaul of the economy. Opinion polls of the period consistently revealed that the Bulgarian public was still trying to out-wit capitalism. Until the mid-1990s, the public believed that the state had a duty to provide jobs and wages to its citizens – something totally at odds with the reforms under way elsewhere in Central Europe.

What the reforming government managed to do was to return to their owners nationalised real estate and collectivised farm land. Even such small steps bore fruit. By the autumn of 1992, the after-shocks of the disintegration of the (socialist) economy had been largely overcome. Bulgaria had become solvent again, with a record-breaking currency reserve of $1.2 bn (starting from a mere $150 million in 1990). Monthly wages stabilised at around $100, compared to less than $80 in the last months of socialism. The nascent private sector created 800,000 jobs in 1992 alone. Inflation was down from 400 to 60 percent in a year. The government was also poised to clinch a recovery package with the IMF and to start large-scale privatisation of the entire economy. Bulgaria became a member of the Council of Europe and began negotiations for associated membership of the EU.

As the first fruits of reform became visible, the public decided it needed no more changes. The fragile national consensus on "the transition" weakened and, with the defection of its ally DPS, the SDS government was brought down on a vote of confidence in December 1992. Parliament refused to dissolve and, instead of declaring elections, cobbled together a "shifting majority" for a "national" government. The new government stopped reform and Bulgaria lurched into the direction of the "third way". The economy, left without clear owners, was taken over by organised and mafia-related interests. These milked the enterprises for profit, leaving the tax payer to pay for the losses, which increased four-fold between 1992 and 1993. The foreign trade deficit rose ten-fold in just that year, from $86 million to $900 million. As the economy shrank and the mafia expanded, gangster assassinations began in 1993 and set the tone for the coming decade.

While this was going on, the BSP was falling prey to its own propaganda. Prior to the appearance of the "democrats", the party had been telling its electorate since 1990, there were mere "economic difficulties" that could have easily been overcome; and it was the "democrats" that turned difficulites into a crisis. By 1994, this thinking had permeated the top leadership of the party. The outcome was that the BSP produced a new programme, which declared that democracy was nothing more than willful destruction and chaos, knowingly produced by the SDS in the service of foreign interests. Whereupon followed the logical conclusion: in order for things to return to normal, what was needed was to re-establish the dominance of the state in the economy and in society. Bulgaria would not, in a word, be capitalist. The BSP also committed itself to "redefining" relations with the IMF and the World Bank, whose grants had been underpinning the economy since 1990. A Socialist government would force these institutions to abandon "financial stabilisation" and provide money for "national production". In foreign policy, the priority lay in establishing relations with Russia and other ex-Soviet states. The BSP also promised to limit the penetration of Western culture.

In the meantime, inflation for 1994 was breaching 100 percent and average wages were down to $ 65. The public felt some kind of crisis looming, but its conclusion was in line with the BSP – i.e. that reform was the cause of the trouble, and that a return to some kind of socialist "normality" was the solution. In the elections, held in December 1994, the BSP defeated the SDS by a margin of 2:1.

Normality, however, did not return. As the state re-established price controls and domination over the economy, banking sector losses rose by 400 percent by the summer of 1995. The current account balance moved from a surplus of $233 million in 1994 to a deficit of $750 million in 1996. By mid-1996, grain and bread disappeared, leading to a revival of rationing schemes. Average wages, already almost halved in 1994 (compared to 1992), halved again by mid-1996. A run on the banks led to the closure of 19 of them in the second half of the year.

Although the Socialist government had deposited a request for EU membership, by mid-1996 it had little choice but to blame "world capitalism" for the disasters in the economy. Western-funded NGOs were accused of destabilising the country politically. The government refused to even discuss prospects for NATO membership, referring to its priority relations with Russia. By late autumn of 1996, fuel disappeared along with bread, while the national currency collapsed from an exchange rate to the US dollar of 70: 1 in January 1996 to 3,000: 1 in early February. Inflation reached 2,040 percent by the end of February 1997 as monthly wages sank to under $10.

VI. THE SECOND REVOLUTION AND RECONSTRUCTION (1996-2007)

The "socialist societal project" turned out to be a revival of the worst aspects of the crisis of 1989-90. The economy shrank by one-tenth in 1996, more than during the post-war crises of 1918 and 1945. Unlike previous bankruptcies, this time popular reaction was immediate. Bulgarians again rose up in revolution. This time, unlike 1990, it was short (December 1996 – February 1997), massive (up to 800,000 participants nationally, supported by three-quarters of the seven million population) and decisive. By the opening days of February 1997, barricades were manned in all cities and towns, as well as across the major national roads, the entry and exit points of the country, and around the airports. The Socialists fell on 4 February 1997, elections were declared for April and the President, who had won elections two months earlier on the SDS ticket, appointed a SDS-staffed interim government.

The Communist-organised blowing up of St Kral church in Sofia (1925) was the biggest terrorist outrage in the world, to be eclipsed only 70 years later by the Oklahoma bombing.

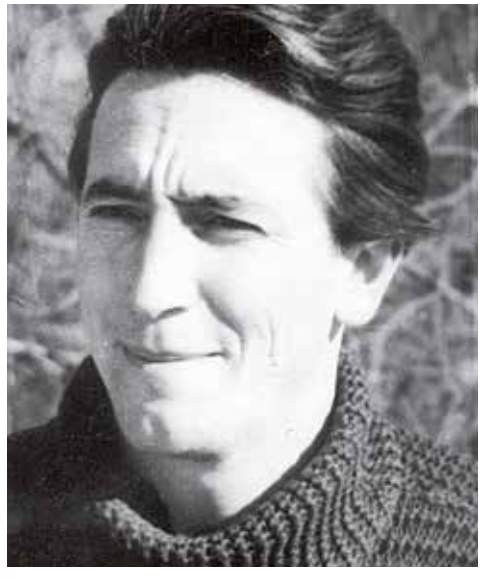
Communist armed forces took power on 9 September 1944.

For more than a generation, Bulgarian citizens of all professions were periodically drafted into the "shock brigades", to provide the state with unpaid labour.

The Communist regime took particular pride in drafting women to do heavy labour in the "shock brigades".

By the late 1950s all farmers were forced to enter into collective farms.

Dr Nikola Petkov, leader of the anti-Communist opposition, was shot in 1947 as soon as the regime signed the post-war peace treaties with the Allies.



Dissident writer Georgi Markov, the first victim of the "umbrella murders" of Bulgarian opposition emigres of the late 1970s.

The Communist Party leadership oversees one of the many annual official parades.

This legendary kiss between Bulgaria's top Communist Todor Zhikvov and the Soviet Union's Leonid Brezhnev signified more than personal friendship. In 1971 Todor Zhivkov offered to his friend Brezhnev to dissolve the sovereign state of Bulgaria and integrate the country into the USSR as a 16th Union Republic.

At least half-a-dozen times a year, Bulgaria's citizens were mobilised for mass parades to express their gratitude to the Party.

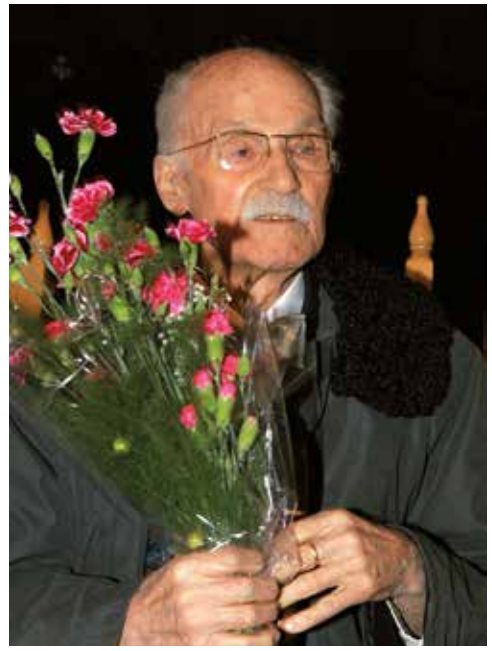
3 October 1989. The first protest march in a generation.

Petar Beron (centre) led Ecoglasnost, the environmental organisation which ignited change in Bulgaria.

April 1989. In its last atrocity, the Communist regime tried to deport Bulgaria's entire community of ethnic Turks, at the time 750,000 strong.

On 10 November 1989, facing a rising tide of protests,
the Communist Party sacked its General Secretary of 33 years Todor Zhivkov (right).

In the run-up to the first free elections for half a century,
a million anti-Communists gathered to celebrate freedom on 7 June 1990.



Rupture and continuity.
The poet Yosif Petrov was the youngest member of parliament in the last democratic Assembly of 1947. Following decades as political prisoner of the regime, Mr Petrov returned to the first post-Communist democratic parliament of 1990 as the eldest MP.

In the August heat of 1990 the people's patience ran out and the Communist Party HQ
in Sofia was stormed and set on fire.

Following the sacking of the Communist Party building, finally the red star topping it was taken off.

Dr Zheluy Zhewlev (centre) led the Union of Democratic Forces, EPP member, from 1989 to 1990, when he became Bulgaria's first democratic President.

On the spot of the former Communist labour camps, annual commemoration ceremonies take place.

Mourning the victims of the Communist regime at the Victims Monument in Sofia.

It took a second revolution to oust a post-Communist government in February 1997.

Ms Nadejda Mihailova (centre, with flowers), Foreign Minister in the reforming democratic government of 1997-2001, cried in parliament when receiving news that Bulgarians were no longer required visas to travel to the EU in preparation for full membership.

Mr Ivan Kostov led the Union of Democratic Forces and its government from 1997 to 2001, pulling the country from the brink of disaster and taking it to the brink of membership of the EU and NATO.

Bulgaria's national flag (front) flew in front of NATO HQ in Brussels as Bulgaria entered the Alliance.

The government acted decisively. Following a lightning agreement with the IMF, a "currency board regimen" was introduced, bringing inflation to 12 percent within three weeks. Average monthly wages went up from under $10 to $65 within two months, while over the same period the national currency reserve quadrupled, reaching $1.1 bn. In parliament, a new social contract was signed, embodied in the "Declaration on National Agreement". In signing this, the BSP renounced all "third-way" experiments, agreeing to full membership of NATO and completing the return of land that the Socialists had halted.

In April, the elections returned the SDS with an overwhelming majority, in this way finally providing the reformers with a mandate for drastic reforms. These were undertaken by the SDS government of Ivan Kostov. He faced urgent issues and crises on all sides, but the political basis of society was not one of them. As usual in crucial moments of Bulgarian history, the politics of the country had been settled fairly successfully in 1990. The clear structure of politics and government ensured that as early as 1998 the European Commission recognised that Bulgaria had fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria for membership of the EU.

Things were much less easy in the economy and society, but the Kostov government moved in a fast and resolute manner. Long-delayed reforms were started and at least initially enjoyed overwhelming public support. Privatisation was re-started and the bankrupt industries of socialism were finally placed in liquidation. The government confronted crime and by 1999 the emblematic gangster groups of the 1990s either disappeared, or moved into legitimate business. Racketeering decreased and the most exotic form of 1990s banditry, highway robberies, disappeared. By the end of the Kostov government's tenure, the proportion of GDP produced by the private sector was more than 70 percent, the "grey economy" was down from 60 percent to less than 40 and wages and incomes were back to pre-crisis levels.

Headed by a tough and unyielding reformist leader, the SDS government of 1997-2001 was the one which, in the words of the World Bank's 2001 report, resulted in that "remarkable turnaround" which brought Bulgaria out of the economic disasters of the mid-1990s and directly into line for EU and NATO membership. During that period also the SDS became a member of the EPP.

As other countries, which failed to fully modernise during the twentieth century, Bulgaria followed a chequered course in its transition. Unlike some ex-socialist countries, however, where transition failed entirely, changes in Bulgaria succeeded because they were driven by several powerful engines of transition and reform.

First was the established political culture, which easily handled issues of representation, separation of powers and liberal democracy. Second, in part due to this culture, the political force heading the reforms, the SDS, avoided the traps of nationalism or the search for some unique "national values" – both of which lead away from liberal democracy and into the mire of oligarchy. From the start, the SDS (and the other anti-Communist forces) based itself on the freedoms and values of the individual, rather than "the nation" or some other imagined collective. With some speed, the SDS evolved into the direction of Christian democracy and a combination of liberalism and conservatism which represented the active age groups, becoming a "people's" party, in effect, as early as 1992. This political current proved powerful enough to propel Bulgaria forward even when the SDS disintegrated, from 2001 on. It powered most of the major new parties, such as the NDSV, and is behind the rise of party GERB since 2007. In 2009 GERB won the elections, bringing Christian democratic Bulgaria back into government.

The third engine was the indomitably independent media, backed by the most powerful, erudite and Christian democrat-leaning civil society in the former socialist bloc. These engines held the country on course from 1989 to 2007. But in the late 1990s, Bulgaria's most reforming government was to fall victim to its own success. First came a loss of popular interest in politics. As in 1996-7 the choice was finally made in favour of the market economy, democracy, membership in the EU and NATO, there seemed to be nothing important left to resolve at the level of politics. The public lost interest and in the 1999 municipal elections the "Blues" and "Reds" taken together polled just one-third of the votes cast. The public's gaze, secondly, shifted to issues of governance. The public discovered that while it was suffering the pain of enterprise closures, senior SDS politicians were getting "inexplicably rich", as the then President put it. Corruption became the major debate topic and this undermined trust not only in the SDS, but in politics generally. In the meantime, the public could not turn back to the Socialists. Memories of recent disasters were too fresh.

These developments, taken together, signified that the public was looking for something new in politics. Attractive new parties did appear on the scene. None was more attractive than the party the exiled Czar, Simeon II, put together in his own name. The "National Movement Simeon the Second" (NDSV) appeared in the spring of 2001, won the elections in the summer and formed a government with the pledge of raising living standards to "European levels" within 800 days.

The NDSV situated itself at the centre-right and affirmed its allegiance to the established consensus: liberal democracy; market economy; membership of the EU and NATO; financial stability; and the re-structuring of the economy. The NDSV even tried to enter the EPP, testifying to the endurance of the centre-right consensus. The government's effectiveness in reforms was, however, undermined by inexperience and weak capacity. Reforms under way were continued, but changes about to start, such as in public health, stalled. "Second generation" transformations, such as administrative reform, reform of education and reform of the judiciary and law enforcement, were not even attempted. Organised crime re-surfaced and the annual monitoring by the European Commission pointed to lack of judicial reform.

Financial stability was nevertheless preserved and the new, vibrant private sector managed to push the country along at rates of growth of 5-6 percent annually. By the end of the NDSV's government in 2005, wages had increased by more than one-third, foreign investment had doubled, there were more than a million (out of an adult population of 6.4 million) mobile telephones. By 2005-6, economists were estimating that real livings standards were the highest in the country's modern history. In foreign policy the government continued previous commitments. It was on Simeon II's watch that Bulgaria became a full NATO member (29 March 2004) and signed the accession treaty with the EU in April 2005.

The public, however, expected more from Simeon than he could deliver. It also felt the repercussions of the slow-down of reforms. The health system was producing increasing hardship and corruption. Lack of reform in law enforcement and justice led to a revival of organised crime. Gang warfare was renewed, while the prosecution developed a pronounced taste for bribery. Corruption was seen as increasing, which was in contravention to Simeon's pledge that he would purge politics and introduce "a new morality in everything".

At the 2005 elections, the public gave vent to its frustrations. The NDSV came in a poor second, far behind the Socialists and only slightly ahead of the DPS. To the right, the SDS lay in disarray and was in no condition to govern. It had split into no less than five separate parties and only two of those – the SDS and the newly formed DSB, headed by ex-PM Ivan Kostov – managed to enter parliament. After three months, parliament produced a left-centre coalition: the BSP, the King's NDSV and the DPS. For the third time since 1989, the prime minister was again a Socialist, the BSP leader Sergey Stanishev.

With two centrist parties inside the government, fears of another Socialist-type backsliding proved unfounded as the government declared that it would build on the policies of the two preceding (right-centre) governments. With immediate fears thus allayed, more fundamental anxieties had to find their resolution in the opening months of the "three-sided coalition", as the government came to be known. Much to everyone's surprise and shock, the 2005 elections produced a xenophobic wing in Bulgarian politics. A hastily put together party, Ataka, entered parliament as the fourth largest parliamentary group. Ataka's pre-election pledge was to "ensure that this country will no longer be ruled by Turks, Gypsies, Jews, national traitors or pederasts". This led to anxieties that society was turning its back on its long history of ethnic tolerance, and that some kind of Bulgarian-Turk conflict could be expected. This danger was neutralised – again by civil society. Some 86 NGOs and hundreds of individuals took to court the leader of Ataka for "hate speech". He was issued a court injunction to desist from using the language that got Ataka into parliament. The party changed its discourse and split immediately, with the hard-line fascists leaving it and disappearing back into political oblivion.

As for the Socialists, they reaffirmed both in word and in deed the pro-"Western" course of the country, persevering with efforts to join the EU and sending new contingents to Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kosovo. Achievement in domestic policy proved less easy. The government simply drifted in the direction set by the previous two governments, lacking in vision, political energy and policy. Health reform was abandoned. Administration reform, although declared, produced few results. Although, for the first time since 1989, the government did produce a keen reform strategy for modernising secondary education, the public remained lukewarm. Economic recovery continued apace. By 2007, car ownership covered 60 percent of the population, while mobile telephones outnumbered the population. But the public was not overtly impressed, for worrying developments were taking place

in other spheres. Weak urban planning and outdated infrastructure ensured that during 2007 existing roads were no longer capable of handling the traffic. Public transportation, including rail, continued to decline at an accelerating rate. The weakness of government determination encouraged organised crime and corruption, which spread at a pace reminiscent of the mid-1990s.

The government did achieve its one declared aim. On January 1, 2007, and in spite of manifest inadequacies in its economic and judicial structure, Bulgaria became a full member of the EU, together with Romania. After this, however, the government staggered under its inability to formulate and follow policy aims. By early spring of 2008, massive corruption scandals led to the European Commission's decision to suspend funds for outstanding pre-accession programmes.

With the crisis of trust also continuing in the SDS and its splinter parties, the entire Bulgarian party political system was again losing popular trust by 2007. Election turnout in the 2007 elections to the European Parliament was risible, while at the November 2007 municipal elections a good half of all votes cast by-passed the national parties, going to local groups.

Against this background, the new centre-right GERB party, set up by Sofia's charismatic Mayor, Boyko Borisov, gathered strength on a platform of reviving party-based politics. GERB, an EPP member, polled more votes than any other party at both the European and the local elections, warming up for the 2009 parliamentary elections and preparing to set up a future centre-right government. It became clear that the disintegration of the SDS was not the end of popular support for Christian democracy. On the contrary, via GERB Bulgaria looked set to enter a new center-right era after the end of the BSP-led government.

VII. INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO

In comparison with Central European countries, Bulgaria's decision to join the EU and NATO was neither automatic, nor easy. Clear geo-political choices had never come easy to Bulgarian society in modern times. Even prior to the 1878, during Ottoman times, Liberation activists were divided in their vision of the future of Bulgaria. There were the Russo-philes, the Germano- and Franco-philes, as well as the "Levantists", who argued for a continuing association with the Ottoman Empire. And there were the nation-statists, who demanded a democratic republic "equal to and standing together with the free nations of Europe". This "pro-European" platform fuelled the national uprising of 1876, but this did not signify the end of the debates. Pro-Russian sentiment became dominant when the Russian Empire warred against Turkey to liberate Bulgaria. Heavy-handed Russian interference led, however, to a turn back to the West. In the two World Wars, Bulgaria was an ally of Germany, but was then for 45 years the closest Moscow satellite.

Such divisions and hesitations were reproduced through the 1990s. The first opinion polls, conducted in the spring of 1990, revealed that the educated young wanted democracy, capitalism and a "Western" orientation, while the older and the less educated – the numerical majority – feared "too much freedom", wanted some kind of socialism and was firmly anti-American (and the strongly pro-Russian). As the first reforms bore fruit, for a brief period (autumn 1992 – spring 1993) numerically dominant reflected pro-Western attitudes. As reforms broke down during 1993-1994, the public drew the wrong conclusions – i.e. that reforms, rather than the lack of them, caused hardship and chaos – and anti-capitalist, pro-Russian attitudes revived. Following the 1996 economic collapse and the second ousting of the ex-Communists, the public turned its back on anything identified with the BSP, including its pro-Russian position. The nation embraced reform, market economy and a pro-Western identification.

At the level of politics, the story is even more complicated. From the outset, the SDS-BSP cleavage clearly coincided with a geopolitical cleavage, with the SDS being pro-West and the BSP – pro-Russia. The first contacts with the EU with a view of future membership were started under the 1991-1992 reformist government led by Philip Dimitrov. As the government fell and reforms became suspended, the issue of EU membership lay dormant

until 1995. During most of that year, the newly re-elected Socialists were re-packaging the East-or-West debate in traditional Cold War terms, casting the "West" as the villain, while at the same time pledging to recover "priority relations" with Russia. Unfortunately for the BSP, at that time Bulgaria's Socialist leaders proved unwelcome in Boris Yeltsin's Kremlin. Thus rebuffed, by the end of 1995 the Socialist government quietly prepared and deposited with the EU an official request for membership.

Following the 1997 revolution, in March the National Assembly produced the first document, in which NATO membership was agreed to by all parties, the "Declaration for National Agreement". The caretaker SDS government immediately lodged with NATO an official request for membership. From this moment on, EU and NATO membership were Bulgaria's official position. With financial and political stability re-gained through 1997, and with reforms re-started at break-neck speed, in 1998 the European Commission recognised that Bulgaria had fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria and accession negotiations began.

From a technical point of view, accession to NATO is very much easier than entry into the EU and, not surprisingly, negotiations with NATO moved ahead quickly through 1997 and 1998. Then things became complicated as the fall-out of the Kosovo crisis hit Bulgaria. The bombing of Kosovo very nearly overturned public support for NATO membership. The inhabitants of Sofia were to hear the bombings across the border for weeks on end. Fear of being drawn into a ground war raised its head as the NATO bombing campaign seemed to fail. No less than 80 percent of Bulgarians turned against NATO membership in late 1999. As the crisis gathered pace, the BSP reneged on its pledge to support NATO membership and began organising anti-NATO rallies.

Clear government leadership was the factor which managed to break this trend. President Petar Stoyanov, voted into office on a SDS ticket, firmly stuck to his idea that Bulgaria's "return to the fold of European civilisation" went via NATO membership. The SDS majority in parliament allowed NATO aviation to use Bulgarian air space, while denying the same to the Russian air force. By the end of the Kosovo war, the Bulgarian public recovered its support for NATO membership.

It has been powerfully argued that events relating to NATO and the EU during 1999 in fact mark the end of Bulgaria's period of "transition" from communism. On December 10, Bulgaria, along with Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus and the Baltic republics, received from the European Commission the official invitation to negotiate for full accession to the EU.

With the political debate thus over, efforts to accede to NATO and the EU concentrated on technical matters over the lifetime of the next government, that of the NDSV, which ran the country between 2001 and 2005. History demonstrated a rare sense of benign humour when, on March 29, 2004, it was Solomon Pasi who signed the Atlantic treaty on behalf of Bulgaria. Having been laughed at in 1990 for mentioning NATO membership in parliament, in 2004 Solomon Pasi was the Foreign Minister who sealed Bulgaria's membership of the alliance.

Notwithstanding the return of the Socialists to power in 2005, Bulgaria's allegiance to NATO has proven sustained and determined. Bulgaria was also an early participant in the "Coalition of the Willing" in Iraq, and did not follow the later example of some NATO members in withdrawing its contingent.

The road to full EU membership, which came on 1 January 2007, was more dramatic. Although negotiations with the EC went apace from 1999 on, the loss of reform momentum by governments from 2001 ensured that Bulgaria did not accede with the first batch of members from the ex-socialist part of Europe. The Commission remained intensely critical of the situation regarding law and order, judicial reform, organised crime and corruption. At the same time, negotiations were not conducted in full view of the public and the business sector. Both were to be surprised, after accession, by some of the commitments made on their behalf. For example, the milk processing industry went through a very severe crisis when it turned out that producers had not been informed of EU regulations.

Through 2007 it became obvious that there was very limited administrative capacity to access newly available EU funding and that the law and order situation remained poor. Deliberate government obstruction of EU-related commitments in environmental protection also emerged.

Clearly, private and sectional interests were still strongly embedded in the fabric of the state, undermining the government's capacity to service the common good. Pending the return of strong-willed Christian-Democratic governments, addressing Bulgaria's weaknesses depended on the continuing combination of pressure, on the government, from public opinion, civil society and the European Commission.

VIII. GENUINE EXPERIENCES AND NEW CHALLENGES AHEAD

Bulgaria is a latecomer to the EU because it entered into the process of transition burdened with two severe handicaps: it was not a modernised or fully democratic country before 1945; and, after 1989, the society took a long time to embrace reform and transformation. But Bulgaria did complete the transition, because it managed to avoid the mortal dangers that lie in wait for countries with a similar history as they attempt to emerge out of totalitarianism.

Since 1989 Bulgaria has avoided the two major traps: the search for some kind of "national-specific third way", typical of most post-Soviet republics; and the search for national-ethnic homogeneity, which has led to civil wars and failed states elsewhere.

Bulgaria stands almost alone in the post-Communist world as the country to have had, for most of the period since 1989, something like a classic two-party system along the left-right (BSP-SDS) divide. As new parties come onto the scene, they too align themselves along the left-right spectrum. This is particularly true of the largest of the new parties, National Movement Simeon II (NDSV) and Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB). Such a structure of party politics has saved Bulgaria from authoritarian temptations.

Bulgaria is also markedly different in the way ethnic issues have played out. Ethnic differences have not resulted in the birth of significant nationalist or xenophobic political parties or movements. The one exception, Ataka, which entered parliament in 2005, has been losing support ever since. Most of the country's Muslim population and virtually the entire Turkish minority (one-tenth of the population) see themselves represented through the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS).

After some hesitation, by 1996-1997 the public had overcome its generations-long vacillation between "East" (Russia) and "West" (Europe) and made a firm choice in favour of membership of both EU and NATO. This helped to secure Bulgaria (and most of the Eastern Balkans) against explosive instability and thereby contain instances of violent conflict that occurred in the Western Balkans. On March 29, 2004, Bulgaria became a NATO member, participating with armed forces in troubled regions such as ex-Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan. On January 1, 2007, it became full member of the European Union.

Bulgarian society has accumulated a wealth of experience on representative democracy and civil society, particularly as regards the issue of national minorities. The "best practice" it can present in this is the effective and sustained representation of minorities in the political and media arena, together with efficient inclusion into decision-making. Bulgaria can be – and to some extent already is – a mentor of emerging democracies on their way to EU and NATO membership. On the larger geopolitical arena, Bulgaria's experience of egalitarian democracy, civic activeness and media pluralism contains significant lessons relating the avoidance of the "managed democracy" that is currently taking shape to the east.

Challenges lie in several problem areas that have remained ill-addressed by effective policy. Administrative capacity remains weak. Reform of education is still in its infancy, although the necessary government will and the minimal required public support is now, finally, in place. Law and order issues will not be resolved as long as private interests remain embedded in the fabric of the state, held in place by a degree of corruption that is quite unacceptable for a modern European country. Sectors such as health care, where reform has remained suspended since 2001, continue to produce avoidable degradation. Efficiency remains an issue, with productivity falling since 2006.

Basic infrastructure remains primitive, lagging behind public demand, the requirements of economic development and even – of basic safety. As regards the minority problematic, although fundamental political issues have been definitively resolved, the exclusion of the Roma minority is intensifying. Finally, Bulgaria is still unable to

participate effectively in the discussion and resolution of urgent international issues, such as climate change, energy efficiency and human rights in the global arena.

But the engines of change – powerful Christian democracy, civil society and media – are still functioning. At a minimum, when left without adequate representation, they ensure that even weak and haphazard governments can not produce major relapses. At a maximum, when fired up and represented in government, these engines have the capacity to overcome the deficiencies listed above, and to guarantee Bulgaria's status as an integral part of Europe and the democratic international community.

List of abbreviations

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
SDS – Union of Democratic Forces
BCP – Bulgarian Communist Party
BSP – Bulgarian Socialist Party
DPS – Movement for Rights and Freedoms
IMF – International Monetary Fund
EPP – European People's Party
NDSV – National Movement "Simeon the Second"
GERB – Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria
DSB – Democrats for Strong Bulgaria

CZECH REPUBLIC: FROM MONOLITHIC TOTALITARIAN RULE TO DEMOCRATIC POWER STRUGGLE

Hynek Fajmon

Czech Republic – Česká Republika
Area: 78 866 square km²
Population: 10 209 600 (2007)
Capital city: Prague
Official Language: Czech
Currency: Czech koruna (CZK)
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.05.2004

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of Czechoslovakia is closely connected with the totalitarian Communist regime in the period from 1948 to 1989. In Czechoslovakia, the Communist ideology, planned in Moscow and transposed to the countries with socialist systems of government, i.e. the countries forming what was referred to as the "Eastern Bloc", became a symbol of the totalitarian rule of a single party, enforcing obedience by imposing hard and inhuman penalties on citizens disapproving of the regime, a symbol of complete nationalisation of the national economy, accompanied by a ban on private business, control of the media and destruction of human values and demagogical distortion of the history as well as the events of those times.

Transition from the non-democratic to a democratic regime was complicated in all spheres of life in society. Legislative was no exception. In Czechoslovakia, it was often the legislative on which the crucial degree of responsibility for the future developments rested. In the period from 1990 to 1992 it fulfilled its task honourably. At moments when the government was not an action-oriented and resolute body, it was the Federal Assembly where the crucial conflicts about the future content of economic and political reforms were fought. In spite of the fact that the Federal Assembly was internally limited as a result of its unsuitably configured structure, it was a body which had a fundamental influence on further developments in the country like no other Czech parliament thereafter.

II. NATURE OF THE OLD REGIME

The totalitarian system in Czechoslovakia was implemented according to the Soviet Communism model. The following characterised the Czechoslovak totalitarian system:

> the leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, guaranteed in the constitution;
> complete nationalisation of economy;
> ban on private business;
> economy governed by five-year plans;
> considerably limited possibility to travel abroad, especially to the states referred to as “capitalist states”;
> the media controlled according to the interests of the regime and a blockade of alternative sources of information;
> complete subordination of the state’s foreign policy to the interests of the USSR.

However, from the formal point of view, the Czechoslovak Communist regime retained all constitutional and legal elements of a civilised society. The state had its written constitution, which defined the president of the republic as the head of state; it defined the federal system of the state, consisting of two republics. At the federal level, there was a federal president, a federal government and a federal parliament (the Federal Assembly consisting of two chambers). At the national republic level, there was the Czech parliament (the Czech National Council) and the Czech government and, likewise, there was the Slovak parliament (the Slovak National Council) and the Slovak government. These institutions were the authors of legislation, which was implemented in the territory of the state in the form of laws. The power of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) was exercised under the already mentioned article of constitution on its leading role.

In practice, there were elections to representative bodies organised every five years. However, these elections were by no means free elections. An elector had the right to choose from the following three options:

> the first option was to go to the election room and submit the prepared single ballot with the candidates of the National Front, lead by the KSČ;
> the second option was to go to the election room and refrain from putting the prepared ballot into the ballot box;
> the third option for a citizen was not to turn out at the election at all.

However, if a citizen had chosen the second or the third option, he or she might have expected that the regime would impose sanctions on such a citizen and his or her family. As a result of fear of such sanctions, citizens used to turn out at the election and put the prepared ballots into the ballot box.

For the future, the federal system of the state proved to be an important factor. The federation was a result of a political agreement reached in 1968. The structure of the governmental bodies described above was considerably complicated, even in the totalitarian system. The viability of this, laid down in the constitution, ensured that the system was guaranteed by the leading role of the KSČ.

After democratic policy was restored, the impassability of the decision-making process immediately became the most important constitutional problem of the new regime. The main problem lay with the federal parliament, which was set up as a two-chamber parliament. The House of People Deputies had 200 members of parliament and the House of Nations had 150 members of parliament. In the House of Nations, 75 members of parliament were elected for the Czech Republic and 75 members of parliament were elected for the Slovak Republic. To approve a law, it was necessary to gain a simple majority of the votes in each chamber and, in addition, a simple majority in each of the national parts of the House of Nations (this was known as ban on majority domination). For constitutional laws, the required number of votes was even higher, so these laws required an agreement of nearly three quarters of all members of parliament; consequently, such laws were difficult to pass. It was, in fact, a three-chamber parliament. This legacy proved to be highly unfortunate for future developments.

III. THE NEW DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM

The year 1989 brought a fundamental change of regime in Czechoslovakia. However, there were almost no changes in the structure of the supreme constitutional bodies. Constitutionally, the change of regime only had the effect of revocation of Article 4 of the constitution, which guaranteed the leading role of the KSČ. The institutions of the president, the federal parliament, the federal government and the national parliaments and national governments remained the same according to the constitutional framework created back in 1968. This fact had important consequences for further political developments in Czechoslovakia. The most important one was the acceptance of the high voting quorum in the federal parliament. Due to the new distribution of political forces, this practically blocked the federal parliament and led to the division of Czechoslovakia into two sovereign states in three years' time.

The federal and national parliaments, inherited from the totalitarian era, were reconstructed during the Velvet Revolution by the voluntary departure of the most compromised persons and replacement by appointment of new persons from the ranks of the hegemonic entity of the Velvet Revolution, the Civic Forum (OF), and its Slovak counterpart, Public Against Violence (VPN). This process took place as early as in January 1990. The change of persons in the positions of the supreme constitutional bodies of Czechoslovakia took place during the Velvet Revolution first at the level of the federal government and, shortly after that, changes in the national governments followed. The change of the staff composition of the supreme constitutional bodies was a result of an agreement between the representatives of the old regime and the leaders of OF and VPN.

The totalitarian system in Czechoslovakia was based on the leading role of the KSČ. Its leading role was laid down directly in the constitution. Up until 1989, more than 1.5 million members out of 15 million citizens of the state were organised in this party in the entire Czechoslovakia. The Communist Party was organised on a territorial principle and it had branches virtually in every town and municipality, but it also had branches in enterprises and workplaces. Consequently, the local KSČ organisations worked basically in every school, in every office and every workplace. Almost all the leading positions in the state were held by the members of this party. In addition to the KSČ, there were several other political parties in Czechoslovakia, such as the Czechoslovak Socialist Party or the Czechoslovak People's Party. However, these parties were absolutely subordinated to the KSČ and they had no influence on the essential working of the regime. Political opposition was persecuted and its activists imprisoned.

The change of regime in Czechoslovakia was carried out with the active participation of two groups. The first one consisted of students of the universities and secondary schools and the second one was a civic movement expressing dissatisfaction, led by the opponents of the regime from among people known as the "dissidents". This umbrella movement of the revolution was called the Civic Forum. One of the key demands of the revolution of 1989 was the issue of free elections. The citizens saw free elections as a hope of change in the situation and they followed the examples of the Polish, Hungarian and other Central European nations who expressed similar demands.

The demand for free elections meant a fundamental reorganisation of the entire political system of Czechoslovakia. The first free elections took place in June 1990, i.e. seven months after the toppling of the Communist regime. In a short period of time, the first Czechoslovak non-Communist government thus had to address the issue of an election system and registration of election parties, commensurate with ensuring a fair

election campaign and voting process. The political entities had to address the issues of choosing candidates, acquiring members, conducting an election campaign, preparing election programmes and, finally, forming a democratic government. All these tasks were new in Czechoslovakia and people had no experience with them. In spite of that, the situation was handled fairly well.

The first and most important public issue was what to do with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and other political parties and organisations of the totalitarian regime. In principle, there were two opinions on how to address this issue. Radicals claimed that it was necessary to completely dissolve at least the KSČ and not to permit its participation in the free elections. On the other side of the spectrum, moderates claimed that there was no problem in letting the KSČ participate in the elections because it would be defeated in the voting process anyway. This dispute dragged on for a number of months and repercussions of this dispute in the Czech Republic resonate even today. However, eventually, the dispute was resolved as follows:

> the leading role of the KSČ in the constitution was revoked;
> a law was passed that forbade association in political parties in workplaces and in public institutions;
> the supporters of the old regime were dismissed from the public administration, the police, the courts and other governmental bodies;
> the Screening Act was passed;
> all political parties had to re-register and to promise loyalty to democratic principles.

As a result of these measures, the influence of the KSČ in society was radically restricted and the party found itself in societal isolation. The other political parties, which operated during the era of the old regime, underwent internal reconstruction and adapted to the democratic system. The Czechoslovak People's Party, which became a classical Christian-democratic formation, succeeded in adapting well to the new situation. Conversely, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, in spite of its considerable potential, was unable to capture the interest of electors and did not make it to the parliament in the free elections.

In addition to the political parties of the old regime, new political formations also came into being. Unlike the KSČ, the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence were not well organised movements, their member base was unclear and they had only gradually emerging organisational structures. In spite of these handicaps, these two formations represented the strongest political forces due to strong public backing. This was confirmed in the first free elections. However, besides these formations, other political parties also started to come into being, which wanted to make use of the opportunities and enter the political competition.

The collapse of the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia necessitated establishing the political system on new foundations. The main principle for the new political system was the principle of free competition of political parties in free elections to the parliament. This meant that all political parties were strictly separated from the state; the conditions of their registration were defined, among which the main condition was acceptance of the democratic system of the state; and the rules for free elections and an election campaign were laid down. The whole system was based on the democratic belief that those who obtain the majority of votes from citizens in elections should govern.

The first free elections to the parliament took place in June 1990 according to the system of proportional representation. However, there were disputes concerning the proportional representation election system. The disputes mainly concerned what was referred to as "preferential votes" and "independent candidate lists".

The dispute over preferential votes concerned whether an elector has the right to vote only for the candidate list of a political party, respecting the order of candidates set by the party, or whether an elector also has a right to assign what was referred to as "preferential votes" to individual persons on the candidate list, thus influencing the resulting order of the candidates on the candidate list. This dispute was soon settled by a certain compromise when 2-4 preferential votes were introduced for the individual types of elections.

The dispute over independent candidate lists concerned whether candidate lists of non-party entities could be registered for elections, i.e. the candidate lists of political formations not affiliated to any political party or movement. This dispute was resolved by a decision not to permit such candidate lists in the national elections, while at the level of local elections, this possibility was enacted.

IV. CHALLENGES FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

The leaders of the democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia were facing many complex issues. One of them was the issue of building democratic political parties and recruiting members for these new organisations.

It was an extraordinarily difficult issue because people had generally a favourable attitude to democratic changes but their willingness to be directly involved in political parties was fairly low. As a result of the many-year dictatorship of the KSČ, members of political parties were compromised in the eyes of the public. This is why the thesis of what was referred to as "non-political politics" gained widespread support. This referred to the possibility to engage in politics as an independent politician, that is, as a person who is not a member of any political party. Václav Havel, the first non-Communist president of Czechoslovakia, supported systematically this thesis and consequently prolonged the process of building democratic political parties.

Consequently, from the outset the process of building democratic political parties was very difficult and even today this process cannot be deemed completed. And yet literally tens of thousands of people, especially at the level of local politics in municipal and town councils as well as in the election commissions in all kinds of elections, were necessary for the operation of the democratic state, which Czechoslovakia had become again.

The Communist Party and the People's Party inherited an established partisan organisation from the totalitarian era. The Civic Democratic Party (ODS), which became the dominant player on the right wing of the political spectrum, just as the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), which gradually became the hegemonic force on the left, did not have any partisan organisation and both were starting essentially from scratch after 1989. The Civic Democratic Party relied on the legacy of the hegemonic force of the revolution, which was the Civic Forum. Consequently, ODS recruited an overwhelming majority of the activists from the Civic Forum, and in 1992, ODS had approximately 22,000 members.

ČSSD did not have this advantage but it succeeded in regaining a large part of its partisan property, which had been nationalised by the Communist regime in 1948. As a result, ČSSD quickly acquired a strong economic position and gradually it built quite an operational party from the former reformist Communists, some members of the former Czechoslovak Socialist Party and several other smaller organisations. In 1996, the number of the members of ČSSD already exceeded 15,000. In spite of this, both parties had fairly low numbers of members. This has limited their capacity to operate up until today.

Besides recruiting members and building organisational structures, democratic political parties were addressing the challenge of selecting candidates for the elections to the parliaments and to the town and municipal councils. In both cases, it was a very complex task, especially because of time constraints. The first free elections to the federal parliament and to the two national parliaments took place as early as seven months after the revolution, and the first free elections to the town and municipal councils took place as early as 12 months after the revolution.

Concerning the elections to the parliament, there was a somewhat less complicated problem in numerical terms. The Czechoslovak federal parliament had 350 seats, the Czech parliament had 200 seats and the Slovak parliament had 150 seats. In total, a nomination of several hundreds persons was involved, who were to fill a total of 700 parliament seats. Each political party had the possibility to fill candidate lists and nominate its candidates for each of these seats, but the realistic possibility to fill these seats was limited to a total of 6-8 political entities. Even so, it was necessary to nominate several thousand persons on the candidate lists of political parties.

Particularly, the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence paid special attention to this. It was expected that these two groups would supply the highest number of new MPs to the parliament elected in the free elections. On the other hand, these groups had the least developed organisational structure and member base. Therefore, in this situation, a specific method of nominating candidates for the elections was chosen.

Inside the Civic Forum a political agreement was reached, under which 50 percent of the places on the candidate lists were filled by the leaders of the movement and 50 percent of the candidate lists were filled by candidates elected in primary elections in towns, districts and regions. The leaders of the movement had the right to fill the odd places on the candidate lists and the activists from towns and rural areas had the right to fill the even places on the candidate lists. Thanks to this system, people directly connected with

the Velvet Revolution as well as those who had done a lot of work at the local level were represented on the candidate lists. However, this system for selection of candidates was only a temporary phenomenon. Already in the next parliamentary elections in 1992, the strongest political party - the Civic Democratic Party - introduced internal partisan primary elections for all candidates and this system has gradually become a standard in all Czech political parties. Thus, every candidate to the position of a member of parliament must first solicit the votes of the members of his or her party and only if he or she wins their trust, he or she can be put on the candidate list of his or her party and can start to solicit the trust of the electors.

As well as the selection of candidates, the issue of the conduct of an election campaign had to be addressed. There was no previous experience in this regard in Czechoslovakia as the last free elections in Czechoslovakia took place in 1935. The leaders of the new political parties and movements resolved this situation by inviting experts from the West-European states as well as from the USA. Persons who participated in various campaigns of various political parties were invited. Thus, during a short period of time, the first generation of Czech democratic politicians and election campaign managers were trained.

As usual, it became apparent in the process that life itself is the best teacher. Thus, the quality of election campaigns started to increase significantly with each additional election. It also became apparent that not everything that works in Western Europe also works in Czechoslovakia. Therefore some methods of campaigning were not used at all, for example, door-to-door campaigning. Conversely, large billboards, posters of political leaders and leaflets distributed to mailboxes proved to be very effective in the first campaigns. Meetings with the participation of actors, musicians and politicians were also very successful. These open-air events were very well attended and met with a great response among the electors. As time progressed however the interest in meetings started to decline and presently the election campaigns shift towards personalised solutions, to the internet and to a direct contact between the politician and elector.

Besides the selection of candidates and the conduct of election campaigns, the new political entities also had to define their offer to electors in the form of an election programme. In this area, too, there was no experience in Czechoslovakia. Therefore the first programme documents were very general and rather declaratory. It was not until the parliamentary elections in 1992 that a real confrontation of programmes between the democratic right wing and democratic left wing occurred.

Of course, the election programmes mainly had to respond to the general situation in which Czechoslovakia found itself. A very narrow group of politicians, who were able to communicate with experts in the fields of law, economics, foreign policy and other disciplines, were writing the election programmes in each political party and movement. However, already during the first free elections, it became apparent that the interest of the public in specific proposals contained in the election programmes was fairly low.

The majority of electors were able and willing to perceive politics in the context of simple slogans, into which the election programmes were converted. In the election campaign in 1990, such slogans included the slogan of the Civic Forum - “Back to Europe” - which symbolised the commitment of the Civic Forum to return Czechoslovakia to the family of European democracies, to which it had belonged before World War II. However, the slogan also symbolised the opening of the state borders for Czechoslovak tourists, who had been denied, for many decades, the possibility to travel freely. Thus, the slogan “Back to Europe” became one of the most successful slogans in the history of election campaigns after 1989.

V. THE PROBLEM OF COALITION GOVERNMENTS

The formation of democratic governments was an unexplored area in Czechoslovakia after 1989, just as all the other attributes of a democratic life were also. The first non-Communist government was formed already shortly after the mass protests of the citizens in the streets of Czechoslovak cities. However, this government cannot be regarded as democratic in the true sense of the word. The first democratic government can be deemed to be the government that resulted from the first free elections organised in June 1990.

Those elections gave rise, for the first time, to the situation in which the Czechoslovak and Czech politics is still found today. It is the situation in which no political party has enough votes and members of parliament by itself to be able to form a government. In order to gain a majority in the parliament, it is necessary to compose a coalition of several parties, who participate in the government and support it during the vote of confidence and in the process of passing laws. This gives rise to the problem of what is referred to as "coalition government", i.e. a situation, in which the politicians from several parties must negotiate compromise positions to gain the support of the majority in the parliament. This situation has been present in the Czech politics until today.

The actual formation of governments took place according to the following procedure: After the parliamentary elections, the president tasked the representative of the winning political entity with forming the government, thus making this representative a designated prime minister. This person then negotiated with the other parties, which he needed to win over to his side in order to secure a majority in the parliament that would support the composition of the government and its programme declaration. This created opportunities for agreeing on staff-related and programme-related compromises. The designated prime minister presented a list of ministers to the president, who appointed the government. The government wrote a programme declaration and was required to request a vote of confidence from the parliament within a few days. The parliament discussed the issue of confidence at its next session and voted in order to decide whether the government would have their confidence or not. On that occasion, the voting showed which MPs supported the government and which did not. This clearly delimited the positions of the government coalition and the opposition.

The problem of a coalition government has still the same essence but its manifestations vary. Its essence is the necessity to enter into agreements on compromises, by which all participating parties usually depart from their original programmes, with which they had entered the elections. This created tension in each ruling political party, which, in turn, is transmitted to the activities of the government. Thus, in the system of a coalition government, problems such as disputes over the terms of reference among individual ministries, different interpretations of the adopted governmental decisions and similar matters are part of the everyday agenda. Coalition disputes in the areas of the power ministries, i.e. the ministry of the interior and the ministry of defence, as well as, of course, in the area of intelligence services can have very grave consequences for the stability of the government.

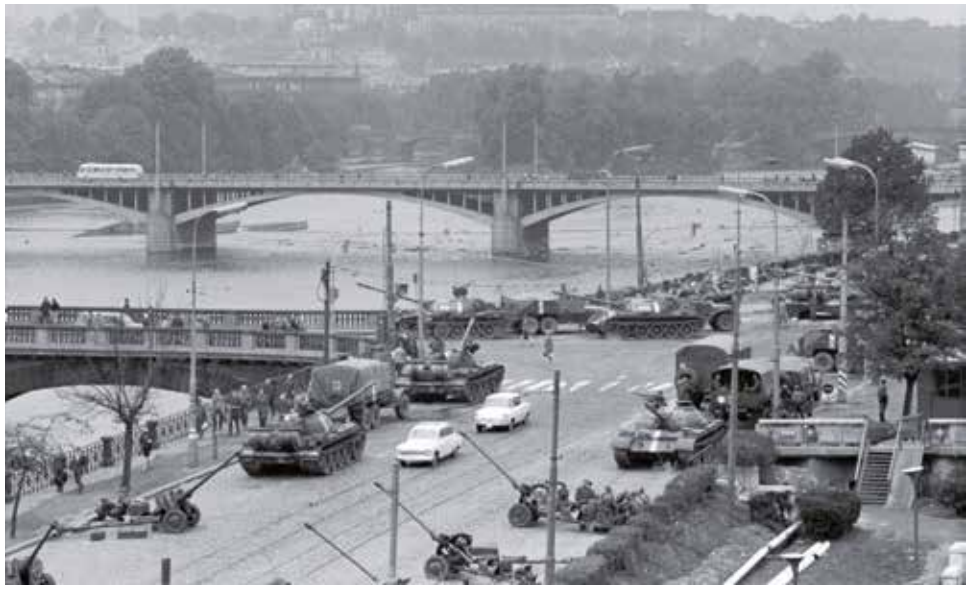
The problem of a coalition government is very closely related to the parameters of the election system. In principle, it can be said that in an ethnically, culturally and religiously homogeneous society, the proportional representation system invariably leads to fragmentation of the political spectrum and the necessity to form a coalition government. Conversely, the simple majority system usually leads to the establishment of a system of two large political parties, which alternate in the position of power and each of them is usually able to form a majority government on its own. With respect to operation, this system is more effective and many critics of the Czech politics still claim that a transition to the majority system should be carried out.

VI. PARLIAMENT, GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESIDENT

In totalitarianism as well as in democracy, there is an incessant struggle for power taking place. However, democracy is equipped to ensure that this struggle for power takes place in a dignified and civilised manner and to the benefit of the citizens and society as a whole. This result is achieved by the system of what is referred to as the "division of power", by the work of free media, free elections, constitutional protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens and by other systems referred to as safeguards and counterweights.

The main characteristics of a democratic system concern the roles of and relations among the key institutions such as the president, the government, the parliament, the parameters of the election system, the role of courts and many other aspects. In new democracies, these roles and relations are usually decided on during the first period after establishment of the democratic regime. Therefore it is advisable to be well aware of the different results, which the setting of these roles can bring.

In Czechoslovakia and, later on, in the Czech Republic, the struggle for the setting of the basic parameters of democracy was tough and basically led to the disintegration of Czechoslovakia into two sovereign states. The political struggle took place primarily among individual institutions as well as among individual political currents. However, the system gradually became stable and works quite reliably today.



Invasion into Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

The trial of Dr. Milada Horáková.

President of Communist Czechoslovakia Gustáv Husák with the rest of KSČ leaders observing the May Day procession.

President of Communist Czechoslovakia Klement Gottwald.

Czech president Václav Havel.

Demonstration supporting Václav Havel for president of Czechoslovakia.

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana with Czech Prime Minister Miloš Zeman.

Old Town Square in Prague, 30 August 2004. Czech citizens are awaiting the entrance of the Czech Republic to the EU.

In Czechoslovakia and, later on, in the Czech Republic, there was quite a tough struggle between the president and the parliament. After all, it was natural to a certain extent. Václav Havel, the dissident leader, embodied the victorious revolutionary power. As early as five weeks after the revolution he was elected to the position of president by the parliament and he remained in this position for a total of 13 years, with a single six-month interruption. In the times of dramatic political and economic changes, he represented a natural authority, which the large majority of the public looked up to.

As opposed to that, the parliament never had that kind of authority in the eyes of the public. Even the parliament elected in free elections became unpopular very soon as its internal polarisation was growing stronger. The public was not much prepared for open political confrontations. As a result, the parliament soon gained the reputation of a place where MPs only quarreled. This reduced its trustworthiness in the eyes of the public.

However, the constitutional system of Czechoslovakia has always been based on the principle of parliamentary democracy from its establishment in 1918. This system, in a curtailed form, survived even the Communist regime and was revived after the revolution in 1989. Subsequently, this system led to extensive disputes over the terms of reference between the parliament and the president. It was not until the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and the formation of sovereign republics and subsequent approval of new constitutions that this conflict-ridden relation was successfully resolved by limiting the role of the president and increasing the significance of the role of the prime minister, who is held responsible by the parliament.

In relation to the executive power, the parliament is the body that fulfils a key controlling task in parliamentary democracy. The correct and responsible fulfilment of this role has been a subject of permanent criticism from the media and the public ever after 1990. A radical economic transformation, the essence of which was the privatisation of the enormous state-owned property, was taking place since 1990. In this process, mistakes were understandably made and this had, in turn, an effect on the activities of the legislature and its attitude to the government.

In the initial stages of democracy, the relation between the government and the parliament was quite imbalanced. The government was not sufficiently representative, and therefore a large part of bills, some of which were of key importance, were rewritten in the parliament into something completely different. It also happened quite often that in some matters, the parliament completely took the initiative and approved a law which the government did not wish to be approved. However, over time, this relation started to evolve into a situation in which the government took the main legislating initiative. Political parties gradually acquired such positions that their individual MPs were not able to carry out legislating actions on their own to such an extent.

When the governmental coalition and opposition were formed, the parliamentary culture also started to crystallise gradually. Consequently, mainly the opposition parties and their MPs in the parliament naturally assumed the role of controlling the government. A practice was established that the governmental MPs do not address official questions to “their” ministers in the parliament. Consequently, the MPs of the opposition were almost exclusively the ones who address official questions to the ministers. On the other hand, in the field of creation of legislation, the MPs of the ruling parties gained a fairly important position and an opportunity to influence the final versions of laws. The MPs of the opposition basically never had this opportunity because their suggestions for change were mostly dismissed by the government majority.

However, generally, the relations between the government and the parliament were proper from 1990 until the present times. A vote of no confidence has never been passed on the government yet, although such a motion has already been made many times. In cases in which the government disintegrated during an election term, the matters were solved in the parliament in a decent manner and without big problems.

The relations between the parliament and the president also underwent a complicated evolution after 1989. The first milestone of this evolution was the election of the first non-Communist president shortly after the Velvet Revolution in 1989. Gustáv Husák, the last Communist president, voluntarily abdicated after having appointed a non-Communist government. The old parliament, still controlled by the Communists, was faced with the necessity to fill the position of the president. After certain hesitation and negotiation with the Slovak sister formation The Public Against Violence, the Civic Forum nominated Václav Havel, the leader of the Velvet Revolution, to the position of the president. After complicated negotiations, an agreement was finally reached and Havel took the position of the president in December 1989.

After the free elections in 1990, the election of the president took place again because of the renewed democratic legitimacy and Václav Havel was re-elected as president. However, a crisis in the relations between the president and the parliament occurred in spring 1990. This crisis was brought about by the president's motion to change the name of the state. The president suggested leaving out the work "socialist" from the name of the state and returning to the traditional name Czechoslovak Republic. However, the Slovak MPs opposed this solution and, step by step, they enforced the approval of the name Czech and Slovak Federative Republic.

In response to the results of the parliamentary elections in 1992, Václav Havel resigned from the position of the president of Czechoslovakia in July. After the federation was divided into two sovereign states and after a new Czech constitution was adopted, Václav Havel decided to run for the position of the Czech president. In early 1993, he was elected to this position for a five-year term. In 1998, he was elected to the position of the Czech president for the second time and he terminated his presidential office in February 2003.

Disputes over terms of reference with the governments and the parliaments were characteristic of the period of his presidency. The main points of controversy were as follows:

> The role of the president in the formation of government (specifically regarding the nomination of a person to the position of the prime minister).
> The specific practice of the president's appointing persons to positions in the Constitutional Court and the Banking Board of the central bank.

These disputes were partly caused by inadequate definitions of these procedures in the Czech constitution and partly by different political ideas about the focus of the activities of these institutions.

The problem of the trustworthiness of the parliament in the eyes of the public is a very complex phenomenon. It can be observed on several processes, running simultaneously. The first process, which objectively exists, is the decreasing turnout at the elections to the parliament and, generally, at elections to all representative bodies. It is a peculiar phenomenon because the main demand of the citizens during the Velvet Revolution was the demand for free elections. Once free elections were introduced, interest in participating in them gradually declined. In each of the parliamentary elections, the turnout of electors was lower and lower. During the first parliamentary elections, the turnout reached 96.8 percent of the electors and during the parliamentary elections in 2002 the turnout was merely 58 percent of the authorised electors.

The phenomenon of trustworthiness of the parliament was very closely related to the complicated process of building democratic political parties. In a free parliamentary democracy, nobody is required to turn out at the elections and the state cannot impose any penalties for failure to participate in elections as was the case during the totalitarian era. In principle, political parties are supposed to be the main players, who should offer such programmes so as to attract the maximum number of electors to the ballot boxes. However, the problem is usually that the public have very high expectations, which are inconsistent with the economic reality and the realistic possibilities of the state.

During the Velvet Revolution and a number of months after the revolution, there were high expectations in Czechoslovakia that it would be possible to achieve a standard of living comparable with the Western European standard very quickly. When these notions were confronted with the reality, a large part of the public started to put all blame for these unfulfilled wishes on politicians and the parliament as a whole.

Criticism aimed at the parliament used to come and still comes from among the supporters of non-democratic political currents and supporters of the old regime. The criticism is usually very superficial and is based on topics interesting for the media, such as the salaries of politicians, the scope of privileges of politicians, such as free transport, and the practical performance of their activities. On this basis, demagogic criticism of parliamentarism in general is voiced. The result of this criticism, which is often justified, is frustration of electors and their reluctance to participate in elections; they claim that the politicians from all parties are the same and therefore do not deserve any support.

VII. ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The essence of the changes, which occurred in Czechoslovakia in 1989, was the abandonment of all principles on which the totalitarian regime was based, and a gradual restoration of democracy and a market economy. In the constitutional and legal area, the leading role of the KSČ was revoked immediately and the normal operation of the parliament and the government was restored. In the economic field, the institutes of private property and private business were restored. Accordingly, extensive privatisation of all parts of the Czechoslovak economy followed. In the field of foreign and military policies, fast departure of the Soviet Army took place and the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance were dissolved.

The political leaders of the new regime were all convinced that it was absolutely necessary to change the economic policy in Czechoslovakia. However, the question was how to do it and the opinions of individual political forces differed very significantly in this respect. There was consensus that it was necessary to terminate the practice of planning the economy centrally, to open up the economy, to permit private business and to privatise the economy, which was totally nationalised in the Communist regime. All the steps of the economic reform were initiated by the government; however, the Federal Assembly or the National Councils had the final say.

The new Czechoslovak government first started implementing those reforms, on which there was absolute consensus among the politicians of the new regime. Therefore, dissolution of all institutions, which were responsible for the planning, was among the first steps of the new government. In Czechoslovakia, this meant dissolving the State Planning Commission, which had been determining what and how much will be produced, and the Federal Price Bureau, which had been determining the prices for all kinds of produced goods and services. At international level, the changes in Czechoslovakia's economic policy and the economic policies of the former countries of the Soviet Bloc in the Central and East Europe resulted in the dissolution of the totalitarian Council for Mutual Economic Assistance organisation, which had been coordinating the economic policies of all countries in the Soviet Bloc.

There was also consensus on the intention that people would be permitted to perform private business activities again after forty years. Therefore, in early 1990, private shops and then other private enterprises started to appear again in Czechoslovakia. At the same time, the government launched the programme of privatisation of the Czechoslovak economy. In Europe, Czechoslovakia, along with the USSR, was a country where the economy was nationalised to the greatest extent and where private sector was virtually non-existent. The new government intended to change fundamentally these proportions in the ownership structure of the Czechoslovak economy because it believed that private business would have a favourable effect on the development of the Czechoslovak economy.

Privatisation was carried out basically by means of four different methods. The first method used was what was referred to as "small privatisation". In this type of privatisation, small shops and business facilities, which had been owned by state-owned enterprises until that time, were sold in public auctions. Small privatisation was taking place particularly in the areas of trade and services and it was generally very fast and successful. Over a period of 2 years, during which this privatisation was carried out, several thousand operational units were privatised.

The second method of privatisation used were restitutions of nationalised property to the original owners. This method was based on returning the property, nationalised after 25 December 1948 (after the establishment of the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia) to the original owners or their posterity. Under this law, several thousand business facilities were returned, which had been managed by state-owned enterprises until that time. It was a very fast method, which created a group of owners of immovable properties and business facilities capable of functioning in the free market in a short period of time.

The third method of privatisation was a method referred to as "coupon privatisation". This privatisation primarily covered large industrial, commercial, banking and agricultural enterprises. The government made a list of several hundreds of these state-owned enterprises, transformed them into joint-stock companies and distributed among citizens documents known as "coupon books" for a very low registration fee of 1,000 CZK (40 USD). Citizens then competed for the shares of the state-owned joint-stock companies in several rounds of auctions. The result of this process was the transformation of state-owned enterprises into joint-stock companies with many minor

shareholders. Simultaneously, a stock exchange was founded and a system referred to as RM-system, where these new shares started to be traded and consequently a classical securities market came into being.

The fourth and basically the last privatisation method concerned direct sales of enterprises, which were organised by the government in the form of various tenders. The most successful example of such privatisation was the sale of ŠKODA, the only Czechoslovak automobile manufacturer, to the German Volkswagen corporation. However, the method of direct sale was also used for hundreds of other smaller enterprises. In many cases, enterprises were thus sold to foreign owners because there was not enough of domestic capital in Czechoslovakia.

In addition to privatisation, extensive liberalisation and deregulation of economic activities took place in Czechoslovakia. Price liberalisation proved to be the most important step for further developments. In the totalitarian Czechoslovakia, there was total price regulation implemented by the Federal Price Bureau. A producer had no right to determine the price of its goods. This principle was completely abandoned and replaced with a liberal system, in which a producer determined the price of its product or service on its own according to its own assessment of the situation in the market. Save for minor exceptions concerning the area of housing and the supply of water, electric power and gas for citizens, prices were completely liberalised. With regard to the fact that prices were artificially kept at a low level during the totalitarian era, the price level rose by 60 percent in the initial phase after liberalisation of prices. However, the prices then stabilised and the rate of inflation gradually decreased to a level around 10 percent per annum and, approximately 10 years after the change of regime, it reached 5 percent per annum.

VIII. COPING WITH THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

In the first years after the revolution, the legislative made it possible to cope with the past at least partially. In general, it can be said that no other parliament was so much inclined to take steps aimed at coping with Communism as the Federal Assembly in the years 1990-1992. Coping with the legacy of a totalitarian regime is a long-term process, which started in Czechoslovakia in 1989 and has not yet been completed. In retrospect, the following steps of the new regime may be deemed positive:

> Restitution of property was a process based on several laws, in which property was returned to people from whom it had been confiscated and nationalised by the totalitarian regime. Restitution covered land as well as immovable properties and enterprises. Thanks to this, owners were found quickly, who started to take care of this property intensively, thus laying down the foundations for restoration of a market economy.

> Screening was a process, in which a law laid down the principle that people who had been among the staff of the intelligence service or its collaborators or significant officers of the former regime were banned from being appointed to important positions in the public administration. This law ensured that the public administration was gradually cleared of the significant officers of the old regime. However, the Screening Act does not apply to elected functions – this is how it could happen that several former collaborators of the State Security Service are members of the Czech parliament.

> Dissolution of the institutions and abandonment of the symbols of the old regime proved to be highly effective, too. This process basically consisted in renaming all institutions and giving them the traditional names, which they had had before the Communist regime was established. Thus, the heads of towns and municipalities were again called mayors. The word “socialist” was removed from the name of the state and the structure of public holidays and the contents of textbooks in all types of schools were soon changed, too.

> Extrajudicial rehabilitation was a process, in which unjust sentences imposed during the entire era of Communism were nullified under the law. Nullification of the sentences was accompanied by financial compensation for the time spent in prison. Step by step, all categories of people affected by the totalitarian regime were given compensation.

IX. PEACEFUL DISSOLUTION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Czech Republic came into being thanks to Slovaks. It seems to be paradoxical but that is how it was. Very soon after November 1989, it began to become apparent that Czechoslovakia was too confining for the Slovak political elite. The whole thing started in spring 1990 when the motion by the president Václav Havel to leave out the word "Socialist" from the name of the state started to be discussed in the Federal Assembly. The president's objective was to make the name of the state become the "Czechoslovak Republic". However, this name was unacceptable for Slovak members of parliament and after a long argument, a new awkward state title, the "Czech and Slovak Federative Republic" was approved. The dispute over the name of the state started the process of disintegration of Czechoslovakia, which was inevitable due to the prevailing political situation.

The driving force of the disintegration of Czechoslovakia was the Slovak political elite. They were accommodating the real interests of Slovak voters, who were by no means disgusted by the period 1968-1989 as much as the Czech voters were. The different perception of this historical period in the two parts of the federation was the main reason of their separation. While the Czech society experienced one of the worst periods of its modern history after 1968, the Slovak society experienced a real advancement during this period. Slovak modernisation was the result of the federalisation of Czechoslovakia carried out in 1968 and the result of a massive transfer of funds from the Czech Republic to Slovakia. Slovakia also benefited from its geographical position within the Warsaw Pact. The large arms factories in Slovakia were built in order not to be endangered during the presumed military confrontation on the border between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The different perception of the joint history was an important factor driving the country towards the disintegration of Czechoslovakia. This can be best illustrated by the opinions on the most important characters of the modern Czechoslovak history. While Czechs consider the most important Czech person of the twentieth century to be Tomáš G. Masaryk, for Slovaks, it is Alexander Dubček. For Czechs, the most important person was the founder of Czechoslovakia. For Slovaks, the most important person was the man who achieved the federalisation of Czechoslovakia. This is also the source of the different perceptions of the state. Czechs considered Czechoslovakia to be their state and they fully identified themselves with it. Slovaks did not share this feeling. Slovakia has always been the first and foremost concern for them and Czechoslovakia represented a sort of a protective umbrella.

The different attitudes to the state were manifested in the election campaign before the parliamentary elections in June 1990. The Civic Forum posted the election slogan "Back to Europe" throughout the Czech Republic at that time. However, the main political force in Slovakia, the Public Against Violence, used a different election slogan: "Good Day to You, Slovakia". The focuses of the two election campaign messages showed clearly that the Czech and Slovak political elites had different goals. Shortly after that, the disintegration of Czechoslovakia ensued.

The disintegration of Czechoslovakia was carried out by agreement of the political representatives of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic over a very short period of six months: 1 January 1993 was set to be the date of separation. Both newly established republics became the legal successors of Czechoslovakia. This was very important for both states. For Slovaks, legal succession after Czechoslovakia was a defence against the possible claims of Hungary, and for the Czech Republic, it was a defence against the possible claims of Germany. Both teams of political representatives of the newly established states agreed to support each other in matters concerning their shared past in relation to third countries. This agreement has remained in existence until today and has brought good results to both countries.

The Czech Republic entered the global politics on 1 January 1993 and has been highly active since the first days. The problems connected with the need to renegotiate all international treaties were overcome in a fairly short period of time. The most important treaties were the new treaties with Germany and the European Community. The Czech

Republic won the trust of the international community very soon after its establishment. After all, this is best evidenced by the fact that it was elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 1994.

Since its establishment on 1 January 1993, the Czech Republic started to seek integration into the international organisations of the democratic West. The first step to achieve this goal was its accession to NATO in 1999; the last step was the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union in 2004.

The Slovak Republic was in a more complicated situation as regards its foreign policy orientation. The governments headed by Mečiar tended to move Slovakia further from the institutions of the democratic West. As a result, the integration of Slovakia into the OECD and NATO took longer. Slovakia joined the OECD and NATO in 2000 and 2004, respectively. In 2004, Slovakia also acceded to the EU and consequently, both successor states of Czechoslovakia found themselves in the same family of European democratic states.

***Milada Horáková**, Czechoslovak politician executed by Communists on charges of conspiracy and treason in 1950. She studied law at the Charles University in Prague. In the year of graduation, 1926, she entered the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party. In 1940 she was arrested by the Gestapo and initially sentenced to death. After 1945 she was elected a MEP and in 1949 arrested as leader of a supposed plot against the Communist regime. Her trial was screenplayed by Soviet advisors. She was hanged in Pankrác Prison on June 27, 1950.*

***Václav Havel**, writer, dramatist and former President of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. In 1977, his involvement with the human rights manifesto Charter 77 brought him international fame as the leader of the opposition in Czechoslovakia; it also led to his imprisonment. In 1989, during the so-called Velvet Revolution, he became its leading figure.*

List of abbreviations

KSČ – Komunistická strana Československa – Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
OF – Občanské fórum – Civic Forum
VPN – Verejnost proti násiliu – Public Against Violence
ODS – Občanská demokratická strana – Civic Democratic Party
ČSSD – Česká strana sociálně demokratická – Czech Social Democratic Party

ESTONIA: ALMOST EXTINGUISHED, SUCCESSFULLY REBORN

Mart Laar

Republic of Estonia – Eesti Vabariik
Area: 45 227 square km²
Population: 1 342 000 (2007)
Capital city: Tallinn
Official Language: Estonian
Currency: Estonian crown (EEK)
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.05.2004

I. INTRODUCTION

Comparing Estonia's return to Europe with that of other nations from Central and Eastern Europe, it is clear that Estonia is among the most successful transition countries. Many analysts have tried to explain the Estonian success story only to find that this cannot be explained merely with historical, economic or social preconditions. It depends largely on decisions made during the transition period. More and more studies have started to point to the Estonian heritage of anti-Communist resistance, especially the decisive break with the Communist past at the beginning of the reforms in 1992. A strong national and cultural heritage has helped Estonians as well. Perseverance, developed in the course of century-long struggle for survival, a clear-cut perception of identity and national pride have helped Estonians to live through the first painful years of reforms in the first half of the 1990s as well as to take the necessary steps to return to Europe. This also meant

Europe returning to Estonia, which had been an integral part of the common European cultural heritage for a millennium. Becoming part of the common European home both politically and economically became the highest national priority for Estonians.

II. INDEPENDENCE WON AND LOST

Estonia is a small country of 1.4 million on the shores of the Baltic Sea in Northern Europe, bordering Latvia to the south and Russia to the east. Eighty kilometers to the north across the Finnish Bay is Finland. With an area of 45,200 square km, sparsely populated Estonia is the size of Denmark or Switzerland. Estonians belong to the Finno-Ugric family of languages (Finnish being closest to Estonian). Their forefathers migrated to the present territory more than 5000 years ago. The world of Estonians changed dramatically in the thirteenth century, when Danes invaded the northern part of the country and German Knights of the Sword moved up the Baltic coast in a series of Northern Crusades determined to Christianise and conquer the area of today´s Estonia and Latvia.

The territory of Estonia was next ruled by the Livonian Order, then by the Swedish kings (1561-1710), the southern part also by Poland (1560-1645). Four Estonian towns became members of the Hanseatic League (Tallinn in 1285). As a result of Peter the Great's victory over Sweden in the Great Northern War, Estonia became part of the Russian Empire (1710-1918). For a small nation, centuries of foreign domination presented a constant challenge to cultural identity and even physical survival. After the devastations of the Great Northern War, by 1712 the number of Estonians was estimated to be fewer than 150,000. From the thirteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, the Estonian language had no official status and higher as well as secondary school education was available only in German or Russian. The nineteenth century became a period of economic and cultural revival. By 1819 Estonian serfs were granted individual freedom and in the 1860s they were given the right to buy their lands back from the large estate owners. An Estonian educated class formed, Estonian developed into a literary language, and national song festivals were started in 1869. In 1905, the Young Estonia cultural group published the first pro-European program: 'Let's become Europeans, while remaining Estonians'.

The opportunity for Estonia to realise its aspirations for self-determination came with the fall of the Tsarist regime in Russia in February 1917. Pressured by well-organised Estonians, in April 1917 the Russian Provisional Government created an autonomous Estonian province, administered by a popularly elected Estonian National Council. In November 1917 the latter proclaimed itself the supreme authority in the land. The Estonian National Council was soon disbanded by the Communists who took over after Lenin's coup in Russia. From February to November 1918, Estonia was occupied by the German Army. Before that, on February 24, 1918, just before the start of the German occupation, the National Salvation Committee, authorised by the Estonian National Council, had proclaimed Estonia independent. Despite suppression by German authorities of the newly formed provisional Government led by Konstantin Päts, Estonian politicians continued their diplomatic and lobbying efforts abroad. In May 1918 Great Britain, France and Italy granted de facto recognition to the Estonian Republic. Immediately after the collapse of the German Empire in November 1918, Lenin ordered the Red Army to invade Estonia, whose independence was seen as an obstacle to the spreading of world revolution from Russia to Central Europe. In the following War of Independence (November 1918 - February 1920) hastily organised Estonian forces succeeded in driving the Red Army out of the country and also defeated in June 1919 a Latvian-based German volunteer army (Landeswehr) which attempted to re-establish German rule. On February 2, 1920, the Tartu Peace Treaty was concluded, whereby Soviet Russia recognised 'unconditionally and forever' the independence of Estonia, renouncing voluntarily all rights over its territory and people. In January 1921 the Allied Supreme Council in Paris recognised Estonian independence; in September 1921 Estonia became a member of the League of Nations.

In April 1919, while the War of Independence was continuing, a Constituent Assembly was elected. In October 1919 a radical land reform nationalised and redistributed 97 percent of the big estates to smallholders; in 1920 a liberal constitution enforced a parliamentary republic. In 1922, Estonians, numbering almost 1 million, formed 88 percent of the population, followed by ethnic Russians (8 percent), Germans, Swedes and Jews. A law introducing cultural autonomy for minorities was adopted in 1925, one of the first such laws in Europe. These years of independence saw fast and positive development in all areas. Estonia´s GDP per capita was considerably higher than that of Poland or Spain, mostly on the same level with Finland. The accomplishments of those twenty years of independence became the essential value upon which, fifty years later,

the restoration of independence was based. Later, during the Soviet occupation, the Estonians' earlier experience with civil order and democracy, rule of law and a modern educational system helped them to resist Sovietisation.

All positive development was stopped by the Soviet - Nazi Pact (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) of August 23, 1939, under which the two dictatorships secretly divided Eastern Europe into their spheres of influence. The secret protocols of the Soviet-Nazi pact blatantly violated both international law and earlier treaties of the signatory states. As a result of the Pact, the Second World War started, Hitler attacking first from one and then Stalin from other side. On September 24, 1939, Moscow, suddenly accusing Estonia of endangering the security of the Soviet Union, demanded that Tallinn allow the Red Army to establish its military bases on Estonian soil. Isolated internationally and facing a military invasion, the Estonian Government yielded to the ultimatum. Under the September 28, 1939, 'mutual assistance and cooperation' treaty, Soviet naval and air bases were established in Estonia and 25,000 Red Army troops crossed the border in October. At the same time Stalin promised not to impair Estonia´s sovereignty nor its form of government. At the end of 1939, in flagrant violation of the treaty, the Soviet Union began to use its Estonian bases in an aggressive war against a third party Finland. Taking Estonia under Soviet control was conducted in coordination with the other partner to the September 1939 deal - Nazi Germany. A week before the arrival of the Red Army into Estonia, Hitler ordered the historic German minority to leave the country; some 17,000 Estonian Germans were 'repatriated' not to Germany proper but to the newly conquered Polish territories.

In the spring of 1940 the government of the Soviet Union began preparations to finalise the occupation of Estonia and the other Baltic States. This coincided with Hitler´s occupation of France. On May 28, 1940, the official Soviet newspaper Pravda suddenly accused the Estonian political and commercial elites of sympathies toward England and of 'hatred of Germany and everything German'. At the end of May 1940, larger Red Army units began to mobilise on the Estonian border. By mid-June, 160,000 men backed by 600 tanks were ready to invade the country whose sea and air connections with the outer world were cut off. On June 14, 1940, the same day the Wehrmacht entered Paris, the Soviet Union presented an ultimatum to Lithuania, followed on June 16 by similar ultimatums to Latvia and Estonia. All three Baltic States were accused of plotting against Moscow and of violating the mutual assistance treaties. The ultimatums demanded the immediate formation of new Soviet-friendly governments and the stationing of even more Red Army troops on their territories. In the early morning of June 17th, the complete military occupation of Estonia began. An additional 80,000 Soviet troops entered Estonia.

Under international law, the Republic of Estonia was an occupied State as of 16 June 1940. Stalin´s plenipotentiary Andre Zhdanov arrived in Tallinn on June 19. His task was to conduct a civil transfer from legal government to a puppet Soviet regime. By that time, the Red Army had assumed total control of the country. Estonian Army units were confined to their barracks, the paramilitary Defence League was disarmed. The Soviet security apparatus, the notorious NKVD, began to arrest people and to purge government institutions while formally the Republic of Estonia still existed. To disguise the occupation, Zhdanov ordered Estonian Communists (numbering 150) to organise demonstrations on June 21 against the incumbent government. Most of the participants were workers from Soviet military bases, troops in civilian clothes as well as Russians from border areas who were brought to Tallinn by train. Pro-Soviet demonstrators were accompanied by Red Army tanks. President Päts, now virtually a political prisoner of the occupation authorities, was forced to formalise the nomination of the pro-Soviet government which initially promised to preserve independence on conditions of a close alliance with the Soviet Union. However, the program and decrees of the new government were drafted in the Soviet embassy by Zhdanov.

Practically all public organisations were disbanded, Communists established control over media and the suppression of suspected opposition began. Now the Kremlin´s main task was to stitch together a fig leaf to cover the brutal suppression of independence of the three small neighbouring states. Stalin ordered extraordinary elections to be conducted within one month (on July 14-15, 1940) in all three occupied Baltic states. Only one official list of candidates was nominated - that of the Estonian Working People´s League. However, despite political pressure and intimidation, true political parties and patriotic groups organised themselves and succeeded in filing alternative candidates. This did not fit into Zhdanov´s scenario – the alternative candidates were removed from the lists by force. The 'elections' of July 14-15, left no room whatsoever for choice. Citizens were threatened to be labelled as "enemies of the people" if they did not show up. Polling stations were guarded by the Red Army. Election results were grossly falsified as shown by the preserved protocols of the district electoral committees. Accordingly, the Soviet

regime claimed 92.8 percent support for the Estonian Working People´s League - a figure that no one domestically or in the West believed.

Having thus created some legal cover for Moscow´s plans, Zhdanov´s team stepped up the measures for formal annexation. On July 21, the illegally formed new parliament approved a resolution to transform Estonia into a Soviet state, and petitioned for the admission of Estonian Soviet Republic into the Soviet Union. The petitions of all three Baltic puppet parliaments showed the same handwriting and were duly satisfied by the Moscow´s Supreme Soviet. The annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union was finalised on 6 August 1940 in Moscow. The illegal character of Estonia´s take-over and subsequent annexation was understood and officially noted by several democratic states, most notably by the United States of America, which initiated the policy of non-recognition and allowed the diplomatic representations of the Baltic republics to continue their activities.

III. SOVIET OCCUPATION OF ESTONIA 1940-1941

The first year of Soviet Communist rule surpassed the worst predictions. Communist terror aimed at anticipating and suppressing any protest or resistance and succeeded in spreading an all-embracing sense of fear. The national elites, civil servants, entrepreneurs, policemen and military were especially targeted for destruction. This was Moscow´s pre-planned policy. The Soviet security organs (NKVD) started operating in Estonia in June 1940, before Estonia was illegally incorporated into the Soviet Union. On June 17, 1940, Commander-in-Chief General Johan Laidoner was deported to Pensa and on July 30, President Konstantin Päts was deported to Ufaa together with his family. Both were arrested in 1941 and died in Soviet custody (Laidoner in 1953, Päts in 1956).

The pace of arrests gathered momentum from August 1940. Prisons were filled up, numerous detainees died from torture. Of eleven former prime ministers, four were executed, five died in imprisonment and one committed suicide. Only one managed to escape to Sweden. Courts martial and executions continued in labour camps. Of the individuals arrested in 1940-1941 only a couple of hundred (approximately 5 percent) survived. At the same time Estonian society was Sovietised. A forced nationalisation stripped practically all owners of their property without compensation. Industrial enterprises, banks, larger private homes and even private motor vehicles were taken under governmental control; bank accounts were confiscated. Farms were limited to a maximum of 30 hectares.

The Soviet regime´s first mass crimes against humanity in Estonia took the form of deportations on June 14, 1941. Preparations for the mass deportations started in the winter of 1940-1941. On May 14, 1941, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government issued a special top secret (No. 1299-526) directive. Security forces were authorised to repress five categories of inhabitants, including ‘activists of the counter-revolutionary parties’, members of anti-Soviet and nationalistic organisations, former policemen, big landowners, factory-owners, civil servants, former army officers and the ‘criminal element’. The term “counter-revolutionary parties” covered all non-Communist political parties and the term “anti-Soviet and nationalistic organisations” included all NGOs and patriotic formations, including the Boy Scouts. The Moscow-designed deportations were the equivalent of a massive political cleansing operation against a civilian population, conducted in peace time. More than half of the 10,000 deported persons were women, children and old people, who were crammed into railroad cattle cars. They were transported as prisoners for thousands of kilometers and landed in primitive conditions as slave labour to face cold, hunger and the denial of their basic rights. The men were arrested and died mostly during their first winter in the Gulag, or were shot. After many years only 4,331 deportees or less than half were able to return to their homeland. The 1941 deportees included about ten percent of the Estonian Jewish community.

*Among the most shocking testimonies preserved is the diary of the then 10-year old **Rein Vare**, covering the years 1941-44. With a seriousness of an adult, he notes the deaths of his playmates and draws pictures of their graves. Rein describes the beginning of the deportation, the journey to their Siberian destination, and events that took place there. A large part of the diary is dedicated to Rein's beloved father, a school teacher from Sausti near Tallinn, who had been separated from his family and was starved to death during the winter of 1941/42. As the family was not informed of his fate, in his son's imagination and diary, the father continued to live. In 1946, after the end of the war, Rein Vare and his sister were allowed to return to Estonia to live with relatives there. Their mother, who desperately tried to be reunited with her children, fled from Siberia but was caught in Leningrad before reaching Estonia and sentenced to another three years in the Gulag. In 1951, twenty year old Rein Vare who had meanwhile graduated from a school in Estonia, was arrested again. He was kept in the Patarei prison of Tallinn for a few months and then was sent back to exile in Siberia. Although the remaining Vare family members managed to return to their home country in 1958, they were not the same people any more. Rein Vare became embittered, had difficulties of keeping a permanent job, and fell prey to the abuse of alcohol. He died in solitude in year made famous by George Orwell – 1984 – a broken man. His diary was discovered only after his death and was published in independent Estonia. Rein Vare's diary can be seen as an Estonian version of the Diary of Anne Frank.*

The first year of the Soviet Communist regime made a profound impact on the Estonian people. The scope and cruelty of indiscriminate violence were so shocking and contrary to normal reasoning that the whole nation instinctively reached one and the same conclusion – nothing could have been worse. Traditionally public opinion in Estonia in 1930s tended to be less sympathetic to Germany than to Russia. After June 14, 1941, Hitler's Germany was considered the lesser of two very great evils.

IV. NAZI OCCUPATION OF ESTONIA 1941-1944.

Having been totally cut off from Western democracies, the only hope left for Estonians was counting on the possible outbreak of war between the two predators – Stalin and Hitler. After Hitler's invasion on June 22, 1941, the Communist regime regarded the local population as their potential enemies. As the Red Army retreated, special death battalions were formed who roamed the country, seeking out and killing supposed agents of the enemy and carrying out scorched earth tactics. Around 2,400 persons were murdered by the Soviet death battalions, the great majority of them without even a formal court decision. The biggest mass executions of prisoners took place in Tartu prison, in Tallinn and in Kuressaare (Saaremaa's administrative centre).

In the course of forced mobilisation into the Red Army, at least 33,000 men were taken to Russia. Most of the 5,600 Estonian soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the Estonia based 22th territorial corps (the Estonian officers of the corps had been arrested en masse beforehand) deserted during the first encounters with Germans or were taken prisoners. By August 1941, the rest of these soldiers together with thousands of drafted men ended up in the labour battalion camps of the Far North as persons "not trustworthy". Since these camps did not differ much from Soviet Gulag camps, at least 8,000 Estonians in labour battalions died during the following winter as a result of hunger and inhuman working conditions. Pressed by the advancing Germans, Stalin later changed his mind and in September 1942 the Estonian National Rifle Corps (25,000 – 30,000 strong) was formed from the surviving draftees and Estonians living in the Soviet Union. The Corps participated in the Soviet war effort and was disbanded in 1946.

To escape this new wave of terror and forced conscription into the Red Army, thousands of men took refuge in the forests and started organising self defence groups. In many places, partisan units called "Forest Brothers" defended their home villages from destruction and tried to rescue compatriots arrested by the NKVD. In several regions the "Forest Brothers" seized power, displayed national flags and proclaimed the restoration of the Republic of Estonia. Tartu, the second largest city in Estonia, was liberated by the "Forest Brothers". On 28 August 1941, Tallinn fell into the hands of German and

Estonian units. The Estonian patriots even hoisted their blue, black and white national colours on Tall Hermann Tower in the parliamentary complex. However, on the following day the Germans replaced the Estonian flag with their own swastika banner.

It became clear that Hitler was not interested in restoring even a quasi-independent Estonian state. In reality, one foreign occupation had replaced the other. On July 29, 1941, Jüri Uluots, the last legal prime minister of Estonia, acting as the constitutional President, presented a memorandum to the German authorities demanding the restoration of Estonian sovereignty. His appeal was ignored. Soon an Estonian Self-Governing Directorate with strictly limited powers was formed. In fact, Hitler's state minister for the occupied eastern territories Alfred Rosenberg, the German Army and security services (Sicherheitsdienst; SD) exercised full control of the country. Nazi strategic plans foresaw the conversion of the Baltic States into a German settlement area by assimilating racially suitable elements and resettling the rest of population to Russia.

In many of its aspects the German occupation was similar to the Soviet one. In the first year 19,000 people were arrested. Of these about 45 percent were set free after an investigation, 5,634 were executed; the rest were sent to Nazi labour camps. Today the names of 7,798 Estonian citizens who were executed or perished in labour camps during the three years of Hitler's rule are known. 929 Jews and 243 Roma, who were residents of Estonia, were murdered. Having killed the local Jews, the German occupation authorities established several extermination camps in Estonia, to which Jews from Central and Eastern Europe were transported.

While claiming to oppose Communism, the Nazi authorities did not restore Soviet-confiscated property to their legal owners; farmers were allowed to continue their activities but they were heavily taxed and their ultimate ownership rights were, in fact, suspended. These developments made the German occupation powers increasingly unpopular among Estonians. In October 1943, German authorities started a forced mobilisation into Labour Corps (Arbeitsdienst) and later into an Estonian Legion. Looking for an alternative, hundreds of young men secretly fled over the sea to Finland. In December 1943 an Estonian regiment of volunteers was formed within the Finnish Army. Their ultimate goal was to create an independent organised military force as an asset for the future restoration of independence.

In October 1943 democratic forces started to organise themselves underground. Estonians anchored their hopes to the Atlantic Charter of August 14, 1941, in which the American and British leaders committed themselves to restore sovereignty to all nations who had been deprived of it as a result of the World War. An underground National Committee was formed which first convened on February 14, 1944. Several of its members were arrested in April and sent to Nazi concentration camps. The others hid and continued their activities in cooperation with Estonian pre-occupation diplomatic representatives in Sweden and Finland. In July 1944, the National Committee issued a manifesto to the Estonian nation, declaring as its main objective the restoration of the democratic republic before the return of the Red Army.

In January 1944 the Red Army had reached the Estonian border. The imminent horrifying prospect of the Soviet regime returning pushed national leaders to support the total mobilisation announced by the Germans. Thousands of Estonians who were taken into the German Army participated in battles in North Eastern Estonia, which halted the Red Army invasion for several months. In September 1944, after Finland had stepped out of the war, Hitler decided to withdraw from Estonia. Patriotic forces made a desperate attempt to take advantage of this moment. On September 18, 1944, Juri Uluots proclaimed a temporary government headed by former government minister Otto Tief. Clashes started between Estonian soldiers and Germans, and the blue-black-and-white national flag was again hoisted to the top of Tall Hermann tower. However, on September 22, 1944, Tallinn was reoccupied by Soviet troops. The Russians did not need to remove any Nazi symbols - this had already been done by Estonian patriots. Instead, they started taking down the Estonian national colours. Most members of the temporary government were arrested. Uluots escaped to Sweden and started a government in exile. Estonians had no illusions about the coming Soviet rule. More than 80,000 Estonians (every 12^{th} inhabitant) escaped across the Baltic Sea as best as they could, most of them in small boats. The more fortunate landed in Sweden, others had to stay for years in displaced persons camps in Germany before being able to move on to USA, Canada, Australia and many other countries.

V. THE SOVIET OCCUPATION OF ESTONIA 1944 - 1986

With the start of the new occupation, Estonia experienced a new and even more extensive wave of terror. In the post-war period at least 53,000 people were arrested in Estonia on political grounds. Between 1944 –1953, as many as 30,000 people were sentenced to Soviet labour camps (the usual term was 25 years), where more than a third - about 11,000 – perished. The post-war society had the decorative form of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR) but was subjected in all important matters to centralised control from Moscow. In 1946, the Estonian Communist Party (a branch of the All-Union Communist Party) had only 7,000 members, 52 percent of them newly arrived Russian officials and immigrants, 27 percent native Estonians and 21 percent Russified Estonians from the Soviet Union. The latter category, together with officers of the Estonian Rifle Corps, formed the local Soviet ruling class. Already in 1947 a campaign against the "bourgeois nationalists" struck the cultural elites, followed in 1949-51 by a purge of the local Communist leadership. All churches suffered heavily from repressions and under the official atheist policies. Of 260 pre-occupation Lutheran pastors only 63 remained in 1952. The rest had been arrested or had escaped to the West. As a result of Moscow-planned industrialisation, heavy industry plants and shipyards were started in a country which lacked the necessary raw materials and manpower. Almost half of these plants served the needs of the Soviet defence establishment which employed technicians and workers sent from Russia. As a border region, Estonia was covered with Soviet military bases and was guarded by thousands of border guards.

To crush the spirit of resistance, the Soviet authorities started to make preparations for a new extensive deportation. The pretext was the need to overcome the passive resistance of the farmers to the policies of collectivisation. This was officially labelled the liquidation of kulakdom (independent farmers) as a class. On March 25-26, 1949, about 21,000 persons, the majority of them farmers, were deported along with their families from Estonia and re-settled in the remotest areas of Siberia. This act of mass terror resulted in the formation of nearly 3,000 collective farms in Estonia in just a few months. Farmers had to give up their lands, agricultural machines and cattle were relinquished to the agricultural proletariat. The living conditions in Siberia were continuously severe, and deportees were officially treated as politically unreliable second class people. Especially tragic was the fate of 5,000 Estonians who were deported to the Omsk region and settled in the vicinity of the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing grounds. In the years between 1949–1956, about 260 atomic and hydrogen bombs were exploded there. The victims of radiation sickness were left for decades without any information or medical help. Overall Estonian losses under the two occupations are estimated near to 200,000 people – 17 percent of population. The number of Estonians in Estonia today is still fewer than there were in 1939.

Certain changes in the character of Soviet policy occurred after Stalin's death in 1953. After the Khrushchev led criticism of Stalin's "excesses" in 1956 and in 1961, the majority of the political prisoners were released and the deportees were gradually permitted to return to their homeland. However, their property was not returned, nor were many of them allowed to settle in their former homesteads. People who had suffered under repressions were continuously treated as second-class members of society and remained under the surveillance of the security organs. In fact, the whole population had the status of collective hostages, guarded by more than one hundred thousand Red Army troops and Soviet border guards – on average one Soviet soldier for every 15 inhabitants. The islands and the sea coast were isolated from the rest of the country as special border zones. To enter these zones one needed a Ministry of Interior permit.

Although indiscriminate terror subsided in the Soviet Union from the second half of the 1950s, it had achieved its principal aim – to generate a deep-seated aversion to any independent action. As thousands of arrested or deported husbands and wives were separated for years, tens of thousands of children remained unborn. The official Soviet population policy even worsened the Estonians' demographic problems. Estonians who were banished to Siberia were replaced by tens of thousands of colonists from other regions of the USSR. While in 1945 Estonians had constituted 88-90 percent of the population, by 1989 official figures put them at 61 percent. Unofficial estimates were even more pessimistic. In 1979 the number of ethnic Estonians (948,000) was still lower than in pre-occupation Estonia (982,000). Estonian cities on the border with Russia in North-East Estonia were deliberately changed to nearly 100 percent Russian, because the former inhabitants were denied permission to return to their homes.

The surviving economic and social elements of a free ownership-based society were totally liquidated by the new Soviet occupation. The nationalisation of the economy made people totally dependent on the state owned and controlled system. Forced collectivisation produced havoc in agricultural production which brought agricultural producers close to starvation and resulted in shortages of basic food articles. In 1952 the real purchasing power of wages in food baskets was estimated to be one third of the 1939 level. At the end of the 1950s and in the 1960s, Khrushchev's reforms allowed more local initiative, aiming at stimulating productivity. Living standards started to improve and were soon considered to be higher than in the rest of the Soviet Union. All of this made the Baltics, with their slightly foreign connections and commodities and also the remnants of the pre-war culture, a non-standard Soviet province, a deceptive "Soviet West", which was avidly visited and also settled by masses of people from other parts of the Soviet Union.

At the end of the 1960s economic reforms came to a halt. In both industry and agriculture gigantism spread, and in the reckless exploitation of resources, quality was neglected, even ignored. As a result of Moscow-planned large-scale industrial and mining projects, the ecological situation worsened dramatically. Even though agricultural production improved, more than half of it was centrally re-distributed to other areas of the Soviet Union; the actual producers had to be satisfied with scarce quotas. Economic stagnation and poor social conditions were more and more seen as resulting from the essence of the Communist system itself. This became especially obvious when comparing Estonia and Finland. The living standards and way of life of Finland and Estonia were comparable in 1939. After 1944, development under the two different systems produced a growing disparity, despite the fact that Finland was handicapped for ten years by having to pay massive reparations to the Soviet Union. Regarding basic social and prosperity characteristics, the Finns prospered, the Estonians did not. By 1987 the Finnish GDP per capita had reached 14,370 USD, while in the Soviet Estonia it was seven times less (under 2,000 USD). As more information such as what Estonians saw on Finnish TV and more travelling increased the general awareness of this disparity, faith in the Soviet model of development was ever more undermined.

The situation become especially grim after 1978 when the Brezhnev leadership boosted the ideology of Socialist patriotism and internationalism which officially aimed at merging the different peoples into a new historic Russian-speaking entity - the Soviet nation. In national "provinces" like Estonia, this meant an intensified campaign against the "vestiges of nationalism" and "provincial egotism" as well as enforced Russification at the expense of local language and culture. The Communist authorities tried to introduce artificially new all-Union Soviet traditions in order to overcome "national introversion" and the still surviving religious customs. These measures, together with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (where in the 1980s hundreds of Estonian draftees were killed or crippled) rang an alarm bell regarding the future of the Estonian nation and its identity.

VI. RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN ESTONIA

The new Soviet occupation in 1944 provoked an armed resistance movement. The number of "Forest Brothers" was estimated at 30,000, which is nearly 4 percent of the total population at the beginning of 1945. In pre-war Great Britain, such a percentage would mean 1.6 million, and in the US more than 5 million partisans. As late as 1949, two Soviet Army divisions (27,650 soldiers) were deployed against the partisans. Only the mass deportation of farmers in 1949 shattered the basis of partisanship, whereas the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 broke the moral resistance of the last 700 men still hiding in forests. Between 1944 and 1953 according to Soviet data, 20,351 resistance fighters were 'rendered harmless'. Of these more than 2,000 fell in battle. The partisans killed approximately 2000 Red Army soldiers, NKVD officials and "Soviet activists".

Soon after Stalin's death in 1953, underground groups, often formed by students, attemped to spread the ideas of freedom and knowledge of true history with the aim of undermining the Communist dictatorship. These groups distributed patriotic leaflets, hoisted the forbidden Estonian flag on national holidays, stored arms, destroyed newly-erected Communist symbols and monuments. Most of them were exposed and their members sentenced to the Gulag.

The Khrushchev era presented the Estonians with a new dilemma: to persist in grim mental opposition or to accommodate themselves to Communist society. As living standards began to improve, people were able to concentrate more on their family lives. The failure of Western democracies to provide any tangible assistance to the Hungarians in 1956 slammed shut the gates of hope for the future. It became clear that Soviet rule was there to stay. This ushered in a painful period of accommodation and collaboration. However, accomodation was mixed with growing fears about the future of national identity, culture and language. As a result of Moscow-promoted industrialisation and the massive influx of labour from Russia, an internal alarm clock started to tick in the minds of most Estonians, warning about the impending moment when the indigenous people would become a minority in their native land. On this background, even many Soviet careerists remained internally split between official ideology and their endangered nationality. As is clear now, the price paid for some economic progress and more individual liberty resulting from accommodation with the system was a long-lasting deformation of the moral fabric of the nation.

After the suppression of the Prague spring in 1968 the resistance movement emerged again. In 1972 two underground Estonian groups addressed an appeal to the UN. Stressing the legal continuity of the Estonian Republic, they asked for UN help to withdraw the occupation forces and to organise free elections. Five of the suspected authors of the appeal were sentenced in 1975 for "slandering" the Soviet Union. However, the goal was achieved – to direct attention to the most vulnerable aspect of the Soviet rule – its illegal nature. The first Helsinki conference of 1975 encouraged the opposition to stand up more openly for human rights and democratic freedoms. With human rights defenders being harassed and arrested in blatant disregard of the Helsinki principles, prisoners of conscience became known by name in the free world and were given increasing support and sympathy by human rights organisations. The major battlefront became the preservation of true history, language and culture and through them, the Western way of thinking.

Russification, started in 1978, provoked more articulate and wide spread resistance. New underground magasines, among them "Addenda to the Free Circulation of Ideas and News in Estonia" were published underground, petitions were sent abroad. The Polish "Solidarity" movement was followed with great interest. In 1979, on the 40th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, forty-five Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian freedom fighters signed the 'Baltic Appeal', asking the international community to rectify the consequences of the 1939 Nazi-Soviet deal. In 1983, the European Parliament became the first international institution to react positively to that appeal.

1980 saw Soviet power using riot police to counter a series of spontaneous patriotic youth demonstrations protesting against Russification of education. The brutal repression of the schoolchildren prompted 40 Estonian intellectuals to publish an open letter in which they protested against police violence and also against the suppression of Estonian national culture. Despite intimidations, the hugely popular letter became a modest but genuine platform around which all patriotic Estonians could rally. The Soviet regime responded with repressions and by sentencing more dissidents to prison terms. In 1981 chemist Jüri Kukk of Tartu University, who had openly challenged the Soviet system in 1978, died in prison as a result of a hunger strike, becoming a martyr of the independence movement.

Popular protests delayed the implementation of the planned measures of Russification by the authorities. However, it looked as if in the long term the Estonians would not be able to resist the increasing pressure of Russification. The basic life line for them was the knowledge that most Western democracies had still not recognised the occupation of the Baltic countries. This approach was supported by active Estonian exile communities in the USA, Canada, Sweden, Australia, etc. who coordinated their activities through various organisations, including the Estonian World Council. Through political lobbying and protest actions they managed to keep the Baltic question alive. This gave courage and support for freedom fighters in the occupied home country. Beginning in 1982, the US Congress annually passed a joint resolution asking the US President officially to proclaim June 14 (the date of 1941 deportations) as Baltic Freedom Day.

VII. RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE

By the mid 1980s, the failure of Soviet economy, social frustration and demoralisation of society became evident even to Kremlin leaders. Defeated by Western technological superiority in the modern arms race (the so-called Star Wars) and having reached a total economic and political impasse (officially called "stagnation"), the Soviet establishment was forced to improvise. To save Communist rule and the Soviet empire, the only option for the new leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, became reforms which aimed at motivating frustrated citizens to work more efficiently. By introducing a new dimension of openness and publicity (officially called "glasnost") into the modernisation process Gorbachev tried to inject some spiritual oxygen into the system. By permitting relatively free expression and criticism he hoped to revive the faith and motivation of citizens for the cause of socialism. However, the opposite happened. Like new wine poured into old vessels the oxygen of free speech burst open the rigid monopolist framework of the Communist reformers. The way to true changes was opened.

In the first years of Gorbachev's restructuring (officially called 'perestroika') two issues – environment and history – became focal points for the national opposition in Estonia. Attempts to restore the historical memory of the people prepared the ground for the following political initiatives. In 1986, a non-governmental Estonian Heritage Society was founded. In less than a year, it developed a network of grassroots organisations all over the country. This was followed in 1987 by a massive protest movement trying to protect the natural environment against the Kremlin's plans to start large scale mining of phosphorous ore. Protesters reacted not only to the likely environmental damages but also to the imminent introduction of a new labour force to be employed in the mines. The protest actions mobilised thousands of people and resulted in their victory in the "Phosphorous war" – the Soviet planners had to step back. And this sudden success encouraged the people to try for more.

On August 23, 1987, the first public political meeting took place in Tallinn. As in the other two Baltic capitals, the organisers, some of them recent political prisoners, drew attention to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. Gathered in Hirvepark (Deer Park), just a few hundred meters from the government buildings, several thousand people presented a request for the historic truth. They demanded the disclosure of the secret protocols of the notorious 1939 Pact. Because US senators sent a letter to Gorbachev in support of the meeting, the Soviet repressive bodies hesitated and finally abstained from suppressing it. The success of the Hirvepark meeting gave an important moral boost for further initiatives. People started to lose their deeply ingrained fear. The August demonstrations were also the first major breakthrough of Baltic aspirations into the international media.

Between August 1987 and February 1988, the atmosphere in Estonia changed more than it had done during all the preceding forty years. People woke up to the possibilities of public protests. While on February 2, 1988, in Tartu, a political demonstration commemorating the signing of the 1920 Tartu Peace Treaty, was violently broken up by riot police, on February 24, (the 70th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia) thousands in Tallinn spontaneously demonstrated their allegiance to free Estonia, this time without interference. A further public meeting in Tallinn on March 25th, 1988, marked the anniversary of the 1949 mass deportations. By hesitating, the Soviet authorities started rapidly to lose control over the situation. On the first days of April 1988, a plenary meeting of the Union of Estonian Arts and Letters, bringing together the elite of artists, writers and composers, articulated not only the problems of national identity and culture but severely criticised Communist cultural policies. The message of the cultural leaders, transmitted live on television, provided an electrifying impetus to the nation. This led the way to further new political initiatives. On the Estonian TV program, 'Let us think again', on April 13, 1988, an economist Edgar Savisaar advocated the creation of a Popular Front with the aim of mobilising ordinary people through this quasi-official organisation in support of Gorbachev's perestroika.

By that date, however, the situation in Estonia had already changed fundamentally. One of the tipping points became the all-Estonian meeting of the Heritage Societies on April 14-17, in Tartu. The organisers dared to present the national flag at a public meeting of 10,000, displaying the long-forbidden blue, black and white national colours together, but on separate strips of fabric. Immediately these colours started to spread. Participants returned to their homes all over the country with a new spirit of courage and hope. By the end of May and early June, one could see the tricolour on display at many public meetings all over Estonia.

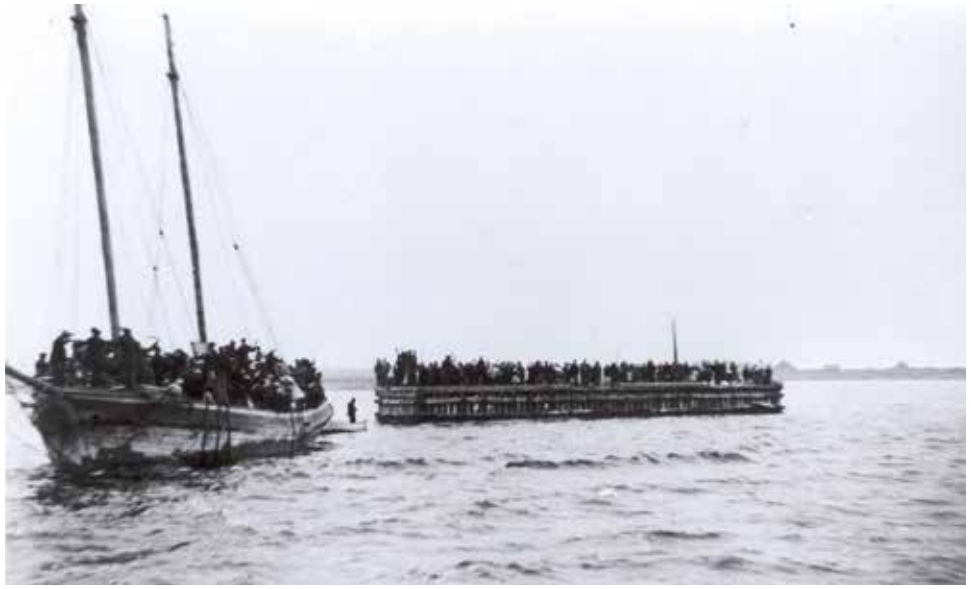
21.07.1940, Estonian State Council is greeted by the delegations of the Soviet Army and navy (ERM - Estonian National Museum).

A poster mocking the Soviet regime - 'The below is the top, black is white, day is night, big is small, high is low, and yes is no.' (ERM - Estonian National Museum).

1941, Letters thrown out of the window by the deportees (ERM - Estonian National Museum).

1941, Kuressaare castle, the victims of the Red Terror (ERM - Estonian National Museum).

The bunker of the "Forest Brothers" app. 1941 (ERM - Estonian National Museum).



1944, Vormsi, a western island in Estonia, the port of Sviby, people of Vormsi leaving the country. (ERM - Estonian National Museum)

The resettlers camp of close to Leningrad. (ERM - Estonian National Museum)

1964, Border zone, entry to Vormsi island. (ERM - Estonian National Museum)

August 23, 1988. Hirvepark (Deer Park) in the centre of Tallinn became the cradle of the Estonian democratic citizen´s initiative. The first Hirvepark demonstration took place in 1987 on the anniversary of the criminal deal between Nazi and Communist dictators that sealed the fate of the Baltic countries in 1939 - the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Many thousands of demonstrators demanded the truth - the publication of the secret protocols of the infamous Pact. From then on people gathered at the same place every year on August 23th. (Tunne Kelam)

September 11, 1988. 'Estonia´s Song' (Eestimaa laul) at Tallinn´s Song Festival Grounds. The biggest demonstration of the 'Singing Revolution' brought together 300,000 people - almost one third of the Estonians living on the territory of Estonia. (Tunne Kelam)

May 1, 1989. The Second Conference of Nations Occupied by the Soviet Union in Loodi manor in southern Estonia. The organisers were former political prisoners, who had become active leaders of new democratic movements in their own nations. (Tunne Kelam)

May 1989, Citizen´s Committee of Põlva, a small town in southern Estonia, has begun to register its inhabitants. Legal continuity made visible in real living people. (Tunne Kelam)

August 23, 1989, close to Tartu, the Baltic Way, a human chain gathering approximately 2 million people from Tallinn to Vilnius to plead for the freedom of the Baltic States. (ERM - Estonian National Museum)

February 1990. The Citizen´s Committees are fast approaching the goal - moving in one year from semi-underground activities to prominent placards in Tallinn announcing the elections to the Congress of Estonia. (Tunne Kelam)

March 11, 1990. The opening of the first session of the Congress of Estonia in the Estonia Concert Hall. (Tunne Kelam)

1996, Lennart Meri, former Estonian president (1992-2001) together with Ernst Jaakson, Estonian diplomat whose unique contribution was to keep Estonia's legal continuity with his uninterrupted diplomatic service for 69 years being a chief diplomatic representative of Estonia in the United States and later during independence ambassodor to the United States and permanent representative to the United Nations. (ERM - Estonian National Museum)

2008, e-government in working session. (The Public Service of Estonian State Chancellery)

In May 1988 the national-political ideals started to attract thousands of young people. Leading Estonian rock musicians transformed the patriotic message into language and style that the younger generation eagerly embraced. In a way, Alo Mattiisen and Juri Leesment's "Five patriotic songs" created a bridge between the nineteenth century national awakening and the present. When in June the authorities attempted to cut off the performance of these songs in Tallinn's Town Hall Square, the crowds proceeded to the Song Festival grounds at the outskirts of the city. This was the start of the spontaneous "night song festivals" where tens of thousands waved national flags, sang patriotic songs and celebrated one night after the other. The tremendous spirit of togetherness and unity made the people feel stronger and more courageous. It was then that the artist Heinz Valk coined the term "Singing Revolution".

The Singing Revolution woke up the masses. On the political level, during the summer of 1988, the initiators of Hirvepark were preparing an alternative to the monopoly of the Communist Party. On August 20, 1988, the first democratic political party on the territory of the Soviet Union - the Estonian National Independence Party (ENIP) - was founded. While previous movements had evaded challenging the Communist dictatorship openly and envisaged their reform programs within the framework of the Soviet Union, the ENIP proclaimed as its main objective the restoration of a fully independent Republic of Estonia on the basis of legal continuity. The ENIP regarded political independence as the master key and precondition to genuine reforms. While the Soviet Estonian elites still distanced themselves from the idea of political independence, assessing it as unrealistic and provocative, one of the longest political taboos was broken. Since the ENIP was not suppressed, its creation stimulated the restoration of the multi-party system not only in Estonia but also elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

These changes had also an impact on Soviet structures. Already in September 1987 a proposal for an economically self-managing Estonia was made. In June 1988 Karl Vaino, the long-time, staunchly pro-Moscow top Communist leader was replaced by Vaino Väljas who gave a green light to Popular Front activities and avoided suppression of national democratic forces. In November 1988, the Estonian Supreme Council passed a declaration on sovereignty, thus moving towards open conflict with Moscow.

The national-democratic movements again took the lead in the political process. On February 24, 1989, the Heritage Society, the ENIP and the Estonian Christian Union started what was to become the biggest citizens' initiative in modern Estonian history — the Citizens' Committees Movement. Based on the continued legal existence of the Republic of Estonia, it set out to determine the legal citizens of the country. Although obviously the Committees could hope for no support from the Soviet authorities and lacked both money as well as adequate media coverage, in one year the organisers succeeded in conducting a real national-political census, registering 790,000 persons as legal citizens of the Estonian Republic – a republic which still was but a dream in the Soviet reality. In addition some 60,000 applicants for citizenship were registered. Those Soviet-time immigrants who ventured to support the restoration of independence were promised simplified procedures for naturalisation once independence was restored. Networks of local citizens' committees formed all over the country and in November 1989, a General Committee of Estonian Citizens was elected. It was a real act of courage to publicly register oneself as a citizen of the Republic of Estonia while still carrying a Soviet internal passport. However, the cumulative effect of thousands of such acts of registering transformed this into a powerful and genuine referendum in favour of true independence. Rediscovering themselves as citizens of Estonia finally united supporters of all political groupings, including the Popular Front whose leaders had initially opposed the movement. The Citizens' Committees created an alternative to the Communist system, destroying in one year the remaining credibility of the Communist Party. By the end of 1989, the new national political goal was born – the goal of an independent nation state.

In the elections to the All-Union Peoples Deputies Congress (PDC) on 26 March 1989, initiated by Gorbachev and allowing a choice of candidates, the Popular Front won most of the seats. At the PDC, the Baltic delegates formed a united faction. They defined their goals as economic autonomy for the Baltic states and the denunciation of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (MRP).

On August 23, 1989, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, approximately two million Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians joined hands across the three Baltic States, forming an unprecedented human chain. This was a powerful visual image, dramatising the Baltic States' desire to restore their freedom that had been snuffed out by the notorious Pact. The event became front-page news across the world, bringing the Baltic question more clearly than ever to the attention of the world. In December 1989 Gorbachev had to admit that the secret clauses of the MRP had led

to the occupation of the Baltic States; however he denied that this fact could cast any doubts on the latter being part of the Soviet Union.

On February 24, 1990, elections to the Congress of Estonia took place. With 90 percent of registered citizens participating, the 499-member Congress included representatives of 31 parties and movements (the strongest groups being the Popular Front, the Heritage Society and the ENIP). The Congress of Estonia assembled for its first session on March 11 and 12. Its decisions were based on international law and included a declaration on restoring legal state power, a plan of action to restore independence, and the demand for the withdrawal of Soviet occupation troops. Estonia was truly on the road to restoring independence. As a significant and viable alternative to the official Soviet bodies, the Congress created an example that was followed in Latvia, Georgia, Tatarstan and elsewhere. The Congress also called for a transition period leading to independence in cooperation with the ESSR Supreme Council. Elected as chairman of its standing committee was Tunne Kelam (ENIP).

ESSR Supreme Council elections were held in March 1990. Although still officially Soviet, the elections were almost democratic, with different parties competing. The resulting new government of Soviet Estonia, led by Popular Front leader Edgar Savisaar, started moving the country gradually away from Soviet dominance. An initial period of cooperation with the Congress of Estonia soon ended when the prime minister started to treat it as his opposition.

In January 1991, Soviet special forces carried out brutal attacks in Lithuania and Latvia. Estonia may have avoided such attacks with the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Estonian leadership and the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin. Nevertheless, Moscow was still opposed to the independence of the Baltic States.

The August 19, 1991, a military coup d'état attempt in Moscow offered an opportunity for the Baltic nations to restore their independence. In the space of one day the leaders of the Congress of Estonia and the Supreme Council reached a national understanding on the principles of restoring the statehood and mechanisms of procedure. A key aspect was the decision to create a Constitutional Assembly. On August 20, 1991, the Supreme Council in concordance with the Congress adopted a motion on the restoration of independence on the basis of the legal continuity of the Estonian Republic.

Estonia's independence was first recognised by the Yeltsin-led Russian Federation, followed by Iceland and Denmark. Within a few weeks all leading Western countries had re-established diplomatic relations with re-independent Estonia. On September 17, 1991, Estonia became member of the United Nations organisation.

VIII. THE SOCIAL FORCES OF TRANSITION AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN ESTONIA AFTER RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE

After the restoration of independence, work on the basic documents and structures necessary for a democratic society began. A Constitutional Assembly, representing equally members of the Congress of Estonia and the Supreme Council, was elected in September 1991. After that the Congress of Estonia declared that its mission as legal restorer of independence was successfully completed. The new draft Constitution, strongly influenced by the German political model, was presented in April 1992 and approved by popular referendum on June 28, 1992. The elections for President of the Republic and the legal parliament, the Riigikogu, were set for September 20, 1992.

In January 1992 Edgar Savisaar's government resigned as the result of an economic and political crisis. The new prime minister Tiit Vähi served as a caretaker administration until the September national elections. In the summer of 1992 monetary reform introduced the Estonian kroon which was pegged to the German mark. The Estonian financial system became the responsibility of an independent Currency Board.

The driving social force of the transition came from intellectuals of different generations, especially young people who often incorporated the more radical-seeming ideas of former dissidents. The Heritage Society, the ENIP and the Congress of Estonia functioned as hotbeds from which new democratic politicians sprouted. By 1992 a new center-right 'Pro Patria' movement was formed which associated itself with the European People's Party.

The September 20, 1992 parliamentary elections resulted in the victory of the Pro Patria election list under the slogan 'Let's Clean House!'. Pro Patria advocated a decisive turn from East to West, from Soviet society to a free market economy. Savisaar's Popular Front came in third and was left in opposition. On October 21, the first democratic government since 1940 was formed under the stewardship of 33-year old historian Mart Laar. The center-right coalition comprised Pro Patria, the Moderates and the ENIP. Trivimi Velliste, the Heritage Society leader, became foreign minister.

The presidential elections brought the two top candidates to a second round: former chairman of the ESSR Supreme Council Arnold Rüütel and Pro Patria's candidate, the writer Lennart Meri, faced off in the parliament. On October 5, the Riigikogu elected Lennart Meri as the first post-occupation President of the Republic. Meri, President until 2001, a brilliant intellectual and polyglot, set Estonia's Western image in the international arena.

In the devastating economic crisis which followed the collapse of Soviet economy, the new government immediately launched a series of fundamental reforms, notwithstanding the ferocious opposition by political forces who were associated with Soviet time networks and practices. The government reform radically cut the number of ministries and laid the groundwork for a non-political civil service. As a result, educated young civil servants started to replace Soviet time officials. Starting a sweeping privatisation process, the government radically reduced the state's direct participation in the economy, stimulating private initiative and creating a favourable climate for foreign investors. The prime minister's statement "the government will only help those who wish to help themselves", provoked a wave of negative reactions, but initiated a fundamental change in society. The Laar government's crucial achievement was turning the country from East to the West in just a couple of years, as well as creating relations of mutual trust with Western leaders, who gave their support to the continuation of reforms.

The government also enforced the building up and equipping of Estonia's armed forces, trying at the same time to achieve the evacuation of Russian Army and military bases. To this end, Estonia succeeded in getting political support from Western countries and was able to link the issue to the withdrawal of Russian troops from Germany. As a result of an agreement between Presidents Yeltsin and Meri, Russian troops finally left Estonia on August 31, 1994, nevertheless leaving behind several thousand retired Soviet military.

By 1994, economic reforms were yielding their first results. The country's economy started to grow, and people's living standards to improve. At the same time, social discontent gathered momentum as pensioners and Soviet time collective farmers felt that progress was being made at their expense. In September 1994, Laar's Government was defeated in the parliament. The "Pro Patria Union" (formed as a result of a merger between Pro Patria and ENIP) suffered heavy losses in the 1995 elections. However, the new pragmatic coalition of the Coalition Party led by prime minister Tiit Vähi, 1995-1998 and the newly formed liberals (Reform Party) maintained the general course of reforms.

The 1999 elections brought back the center-right coalition of 'Pro Patria Union', Reform Party and Moderates, headed once again by Mart Laar (1999-2003). The economy revived and renewed efforts were made to prepare to join the EU. The coalition fell apart by the end of 2002. The next government was led by Siim Kallas, leader of the Reform Party, in coalition with the Center Party (successor to the Popular Front). The 2003 elections brought to power a brand new political party, "Res Publica" which won by advocating new policies and 'clean hands'. The leader Juhan Parts became prime minister in coalition with the Reform Party and People's Union.

Estonian political life has thus been similar to other post-Communist countries. There are, however, some significant differences. In Estonia, too, governments firmly committed to reforms have been replaced with coalitions which retained links to the past. Nevertheless, even the leftist and populist-inclined governments have not been able to change the essence of the country's political course. At the same time the most reformist governments have had the longest political life (Mart Laar's governments of 1992-1994 and 1999-2003). On the other hand, the symbolic "Vilnius express" which, since 1992, has returned former Communists to power nearly everywhere in Central and Eastern Europe, has exercised almost no impact in Estonia. Parties which are successors to the Communist Party have never gotten more than 1 percent of the votes. All in all, the country's politics has remained stable, which is to be seen as one of the most important factors of Estonia's successful reforms. One could conclude that citizens can vote out the radical reformers, but not necessarily the reforms they have introduced, provided that the reforms in question have been implemented without wasting time.

IX. ECONOMIC REFORMS IN ESTONIA

The damage caused by 50 years of Soviet rule was fully disclosed only in independent Estonia. The crucial flaws of the Communist economy were often not noticed or fully appreciated even by opponents of the system. This, in turn, nurtured a kind of superficial optimism that it would suffice merely to remove Communist rulers from power – the liberated countries would then quickly and automatically reach Western standards of development. It was extremely difficult to understand, looking from the outside, how backward and structurally bankrupt the Communist economies really were. In fact, the return to the normal free market economic model turned out to be harder, more complicated and painful than was assumed. The end of the Communist-controlled economic system had created real havoc. Shops were empty, the Russian ruble had lost all value. In just two years (1992-93) industrial production declined by more than 30 percent, real wages plummeted by 45 percent, fuel prices rose by more than 10,000 percent, while the annual inflation rate exceeded 1,000 percent. People queued for hours to buy food; bread and milk products had to be rationed. With 92 percent of trade still with Russia, Estonia continued to depend economically on Moscow. The country was unprepared to compete in free markets and the first amounts of foreign currency had to be earned through massive exports of timber. The Soviet centralised economy and numerous Soviet military bases (which were exempt from any environmental control) had dramatically damaged the natural environment. Many foreign experts viewed Estonia as just one of the "former Soviet republics" with not much hope for a better future.

There were not so many in Estonia who believed in the possibility of a better future, either. However, looking at the deep chasm dividing the nation from normal European standards of life, only one option became clear for the new leaders – to take one decisive leap. To cross the chasm in several hops would not be possible. There was no time to lose. Speed was the most important factor. There are limits to the trust which voters have in their politicians and also to the level of pain which citizens are prepared to endure. A radical economic program, launched as quickly as possible after the political breakthrough, has a much greater chance of being accepted than either a delayed radical program or a non-radical alternative that would introduce difficult measures in piecemeal fashion. On the other hand, liberation from foreign domination can generate a special state of mass mentality and provide the government with wider political leeway. What seems almost impossible under 'normal' political and economic conditions becomes doable during the first phase of democracy – if there is a political program prepared and a leadership determined to carry out the reforms.

A closer examination of Central and Eastern European experiences shows no link between the type of economic reform program introduced and the intensity of social protest. One can even state that prolonging the timetable of necessary reforms can meet with serious discontent while rapidly passed equivalent measures will be accepted by the general public without serious problems. Therefore, the right decisions taken at the right time can provide countries with advantages and guarantee greater satisfaction of the electorate due to tangible economic progress. Usually, the window of opportunity for fundamental reforms is limited, giving way to the 'normal' politics of contending parties and interest groups.

A major readjustment of attitudes, too, is essential to avoid remaining in the trap of the post-Communist predicament, which would strongly limit the establishing of a functioning free market economy under the rule of law and transparency. In the era of Soviet-imposed socialism people were not used to thinking by themselves, initiating changes or taking personal risks. A significant portion of the population had to be shaken free of the inherited totalitarian mentality that somebody else will take responsibility and solve their problems. Therefore, it was necessary to energise people, to get them moving, to motivate them for decision-making and taking responsibility.

Radical reforms helped to bring this about. First was monetary reform in 1992. Estonia became the first country freed from the Soviet Union to introduce its own currency - the kroon, pegged to the DEM through an independent currency board system. The next fundamental decision by the new 1992 government was to introduce a balanced budget. Without this, monetary reform could not have been efficient. Estonia opened up its economy, abolishing all customs tariffs and introducing a radical liberalisation program. Property reform was launched, restoring the property rights of former owners and privatising almost all state-owned enterprises. Serious attention was given to the rule of law, judiciary and administration reform, which also helped to fight corruption. Economic development was boosted by bold tax reforms — in 1994 a flat rate income tax was introduced and in 2000 corporate income tax from reinvested profits was abolished.

Estonia's growth started to speed up, reaching 10 percent - and not just for one year. By now Estonia has changed beyond recognition. It is even hard to remember what Estonia looked like under the socialist system. Estonia became the first former Communist country raised to the status of free economy by the Heritage Foundation's annual Index of Economic Freedom. And even more remarkable – it is not only a "free economy", but one of the freest in the world. As a result of this Estonia became the country with the fastest economic growth in Europe. Until the worldwide economic downturn in 2008, the average rate of economic growth after the start of reforms was 7 percent a year. Estonia is a frontrunner in e-government. Estonia's successful economic development proved that radical reforms are the right way for a better future, improving the standard of living, decreasing poverty and inequality and also easing significantly the social problems and tensions of the years of Communist system. As a result, Estonia has a good base from which to meet the challenges presented by the new millennium.

X. RETURN TO EUROPE

Immediately after the restoration of independence not only the economy and society were problematic for Estonia, its foreign political perspectives did not look very optimistic either. Just as at the beginning of the 1920s, the international community was rather pessimistic about the outlook for the Baltic countries. They were assessed as too dependent on Russia to be able to build up their independence and economy in real terms. To many in the West it seemed likely that the Baltic countries would in one way or another return to Russia's orbit. Moscow made this its official neo-imperialist policy already in 1992. This included raising energy prices, cutting off gas and oil supplies at the end of 1992 and implementing an economic boycott aimed at forcing Estonia to abandon its plans to join the West. At the beginning of the 1990s, even analysts who assessed Estonian political and economic reforms favorably did not have much hope for EU membership for the Baltic States in the foreseeable future. And the Baltic States' aspirations to join NATO were considered not only utopian but also highly risky for international cooperation and balance, especially on the background of ferocious Russian opposition.

Estonia chose another option. The cornerstone of Estonian politics became overcoming the long forced separation and the returning to Europe as the common home. This was based on a clear-cut program of radical reforms. A determined break with the Communist heritage and Soviet mentality prepared the ground for a genuine breakthrough. Ironically, the Russian economic blockade helped Estonia to detach itself from the old Soviet economic system even more quickly.

On its way back to Europe, Estonia joined the Council of Europe in May 1993. In February 1994, Estonia joined the NATO "Partnership for Peace" program. On January 1, 1995, a free trade agreement with the EU came into effect. Since Estonia had chosen to sign without a transition period, it moved somewhat faster towards full integration with the EU than other applicants. "The Estonian economic miracle" gave credibility to its aspirations in the eyes of the West. It became hard to refuse the approaches by a state whose main export article to other transition countries – using the words of the US Vice-President Al Gore - was "hope". Estonian aspirations were indirectly supported by the 1995 EU enlargement to the Nordic countries, i.e. to the Russian borders, and also by the opening of the NATO enlargement process. In December 1997 Estonia, together with Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Slovenia and Cyprus, was invited to start accession negotiations with the European Union. The start of negotiations in 1998 strengthened Estonia's international position and resulted in additional foreign investments. Accession negotiations were completed by the end of 2002; the EU membership was realised in May 2004 and was approved by 63 percent of the voters in a national referendum in June 2004. Paradoxically, NATO membership, which was considered much more difficult to achieve, became a reality in April 2004 even before Estonia joined the EU. With the realisation in 2004 of these two key national goals, Estonia's return to the West could be considered as irreversible.

New challenges now lie ahead for Estonia. As Estonia is now sitting at the table where decisions not only about the fate of Estonia or its neighbouring countries, but about the whole world are being made, Estonia must be a reliable and trusted partner in taking responsibilities and working towards a new and better world. Estonia can be a good example for countries driving to democracy and market economy, demonstrating that a successful transition is possible.

Enn Sarv was born in Estonia in 1921, graduated from the famous Westholm gymnasium and started in 1939 studies in Tartu University. When Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union Sarv joined the national resistance movement against communism. Like many Estonians he hoped that using the war between Germany and Russia, Estonia could restore its independence. When the country was nevertheless occupied by Nazi Germany, Sarv joined the underground national resistance movement, fighting against German occupation. In 1944 Sarv was arrested by the Gestapo and send to Stuthoff KZ. He survived the horrors of Stutthof and returned in 1945 to Estonia, which was by this time occupied again by the Soviet Union. He was there arrested on the same accusations as in German occupation – for attempting to restore Estonian independence. After more than ten years spent in GULAG camps in Siberia, Sarv returned in 1958 to Estonia, finished university and worked as a scientist. Sarv participated in the resistance movement and became after the restoration of independence of Estonia one of most valued experts on the crimes of communism.

List of abbreviations

NKVD – People´s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del)
UN – United Nations
PF – Popular Front
ENIP – Estonian National Independence Party
MRP – Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact
ESSR – Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic

HUNGARY: A CENTURY OF COMPLICATED TRANSFORMATIONS

György Schöpflin

Republic of Hungary – Magyar Köztársaság
Area: 93 030 square km²
Population: 10 037 800 (2007)
Capital city: Budapest
Official Language: Hungarian
Currency: Forint (HUF)
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.05.2004

I. INTRODUCTION

Communism left a deep imprint on Hungary and the political practices of today cannot be understood without a knowledge of the previous system and the mentalities it constructed. In brief, Hungary today is the scene of a cold civil war of these mentalities, value systems and ontologies. In politics, it is played out as the clash of two reality defining agencies which will have no truck with the reality definition of the other. To this conflict may be added the formal and informal rules of the international community and the basic ground rules of democracy. The entire picture is further complicated by the dilemmas of late modernisers - Hungary still had a sizeable peasantry in 1945 - and the tension between domestic and imported values and discourses as to the methods, meanings and aims of modernity. Should Hungarian modernity be defined overwhelmingly, even exclusively by the real or supposed universalist criteria of the

West, or primarily by its own particularist domestic resources? In this connection, the Communists represented just one particular attempt at the imposition of an alien universalist modernity, imposed with particular viciousness, which was resisted actively and passively by Hungarian society. The resistance then generated its own values, adding to the complex of attitudes with which Hungary received the collapse of communism in 1989.

The particular pattern of the post-1989 period is that these two approaches have become mapped onto party politics, with the particularist approach being represented by the centre-right and the universalist by the left. The outcome has been a hyperacute polarisation in which each side, convinced of its own rightfulness, adopts non-negotiable positions. The Communist legacy necessarily forms a part of the armoury of the left. It is in this sense that the centre-right argues that there has been no genuine system-change in Hungary.

The Communist value system may have been rebranded as democratic socialist - and the West's readiness to accept this rebranding has been the source of major difficulties - but in real terms it continues to inform the Hungarian left. Its principal features include the reluctance, even refusal, to accept that in a democracy political power has to be exercised for the benefit of the people, not the party elite; that the formal and informal rules of power exist for a reason and not in order to be circumvented; that corruption and informalism are unacceptable in a modern democracy; and that the left does not have monopoly ownership of the meaning of democracy.

At the same time, the left runs the risk of becoming captive of its own propaganda, of failing to understand the difference between words and reality. Thus the particular thought patterns developed under one-party rule remain in being even today, with the difference that Marxist-Leninist language has been replaced by that of globalisation and market. In its own awful way, it is fascinating to see how people can become captured by a particular meta-language and thereby lose their capacity for autonomous thought. But in order to understand how this arose, we need to retrace our steps to the early years of the twentieth century.

II. THE FIRST HALF OF THE CENTURY

Hungary's history in the twentieth century has been marked by caesuras and dislocations, as well as continuities and restorations, but more than anything else the century was characterised by the sense of loss of agency and the struggle to regain it. This struggle is not over yet.

The loss of agency has given rise to a deep division over how to regain it - through the wholesale imitation of the West, the hallmark of success, or by reliance on Hungary's domestic resources. This cleavage, which has its origins in the post-1867 period, has been mapped on to party politics, with the left espousing unrestricted cultural importation and the right insisting that a Hungarian modernity must define itself by its own qualities.

In brief, the twentieth century began with considerable success and the self-confidence that success begets. Hungary was a model, it had a mission civilisatrice in the central Danube valley, and Budapest was its showcase capital that was admired far and wide. The country, though a part of the Austrian realm, was fully a autonomous kingdom, with only foreign affairs, defence and certain financial areas coming under Vienna; to these may be added the emperor's - in Hungary the king's - Hausmacht, the powers reserved to the ruler.

The construction of a specifically Hungarian modernity was well under way, therefore, and its cultural attraction was self-evident. Equally, the development of an economic modernity, a central aspect of the modernising project, was clearly taking shape. It was in the field of political modernity, the entry of society into politics, where the project was in trouble.

The project had three interrelated flaws, basically those of, democracy, class and ethnicity. The problem of democracy, the distribution of power, was inherent in the settlement of 1867, when the king was constrained to do a deal with the Hungarian ruling elite, without which the country could be ruled only by repression. The deal entrenched the power of the lesser nobility, which then used this power to launch a modernisation from above - French models were influential - from which the bulk of the population was not merely excluded but by the nature of the project, could not be

included. Any serious extension of the franchise, especially to the 'untutored' peasant masses, would - it was recognised - dilute the power of the agents of modernisation and potentially take the country in some wholly undesirable direction.

Matters were even more fraught with the non-Magyar part of the population, amounting to around 50 percent of the population. This 50 percent was not homogeneous either in terms of ethnicity or their capacity to develop their own competing models of modernity. Thus the Romanians and Serbs, with kin states across the border, separated from the Magyars by their Orthodox religion and having the critical mass to sustain an alternative, were able to resist assimilation fairly successfully. Indeed, both groups had evolved their own middle classes, which engaged actively in the construction of a competing identity.

The Germans, Slovaks and Ruthenes were not in this position and were much more open to seeing upward social mobility as involving an identity switch. Generally, this involved migration - a real as well as a symbolic journey - to the city or to America. But for the Magyar majority, the ruling elites, the fear was ever present, that if the entire population were given the vote, they would use it to dismember the country. It should be recalled that in the period before 1914, the equation 'language equals nation equals state', understood normatively, was an unquestioned norm (cf. Alsace-Lorraine, the inhabitants of which were never asked whether they actually wanted to be German, it was assumed that this was automatic).

This was the political and sociological background to the events of 1918-20, which can be seen as a catastrophe for the Hungarian project, one from which it has still fully to recover. In brief, two processes went hand-in-hand - the loss of territory and the attempt to construct a democracy based on universal suffrage. The defeat of the Central Powers discredited the elite and provided an opportunity for the non-gentry middle class to establish a democratic system, which - it was hoped - would be sufficiently attractive to ensure that the non-Magyars would opt to stay in Hungary. This was hopelessly naive, seeing that that the non-Magyars had much better alternatives or, at any rate, alternatives that they thought were superior. The democratisers of 1918 were particularly naive in their belief that the West would respect their democratic aims and leave Hungarian territory intact. On the contrary, France especially was preparing to give its Czech, Romanian and Serbian clients whatever they demanded where Hungarian territory and population were concerned.

The radicalisation of the new elite meant that by 1919, with the declaration of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the Allies had a perfect pretext to intervene militarily in Hungary and the future members of the Little Entente were able to help themselves almost to as much territory as they wanted - not quite all, for the tacit aspiration wholly to divide Hungary amongst themselves was not sanctioned. This dismemberment of Hungary completely flouted the principle noted above, that 'language equals nation equals state', for the new dispensation left around 3 million indubitable Magyars as subjects of the successor states, a process that was most certainly non-consensual.

But the loss of territory and population was henceforth closely associated with the experiment in democracy, discrediting the idea of democracy itself, and offering a renewed opportunity for the pre-1914 elites to return to power. This they did and instituted a system that was as closely modeled on the previous regime as could be sustained, even to the extent of returning to the monarchical form of government, though unable to agree on the person of the monarch. Admiral Miklós Horthy, as the most senior officer, was made regent.

The conservatism of the new order was inevitable. Social change, the entry of society into politics especially, was identified with the disaster of Trianon, where the treaty enshrining the dismemberment was signed as a part of the Paris Peace Settlement, and the old-new order was restrictive, semi-authoritarian and dreamed of restoration, of regaining the lost territories and population, albeit the elite was divided as to whether all the territories should be reincorporated or only those with a Magyar majority.

This system lasted until 1944. It was stable, even static, had very little concept of change other than territorial revision, and by the 1930s was increasingly vulnerable to challenge from below. The central, even all-encompassing problem was that of the peasantry, around 3 million people or not far short of half the population of Hungary. The problem of converting peasants into citizens was far from being uniquely Hungarian - indeed, it was in many ways the pivotal problem of Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries - but the Horthy regime was unusual in that it had no recipe and saw no particular difficulty in this. Economic development was slow and industrialisation was ineffective in absorbing the rural population. The economic crisis of 1929 saw a collapse in agricultural prices and a large part of the rural population saw itself marginalised economically as well as politically (the vote in rural areas was restricted and open, not secret). Given that left-

radicalism had been utterly discredited by the 1919 events, the challenge to the status quo necessarily came from the radical right, which was able to mobilise considerable support, much to the alarm of the Horthy regime, though it was able to contain it, partly by repression and partly by incorporation.

In 1938, with the collapse of Czechoslovakia, Hungary regained the ethnically Hungarian areas of Slovakia and Ruthenia, two years later it regained the northern parts of Transylvania and then in 1941, the Backa region of Serbia. The price was an alliance first with fascist Italy and then with Nazi Germany which had already begun the process of pulling Hungary towards its economic system by becoming the purchaser of Hungary's grain surplus. Entry into the war against Soviet Union in 1941 saw the country committed ever more closely to the Axis, though the alliance between the conservative Horthy and the right-radical Hitler was always an uneasy one. This brought about the paradox that in the centre of Nazi controlled Europe, a Social Democratic party was operating legally in Hungary with deputies sitting in parliament. All that changed when Nazi Germany occupied Hungary in 1944, installed its own puppet government, arrested anti-Nazi figures and began the large-scale deportation of Jews - until then protected by the Horthy regime - to their deaths in Auschwitz.

The Red Army reached Hungary in the autumn of 1944, captured Budapest after a devastating siege and then finally drove out the last remnants of the Wehrmacht and the Hungarian Nazis, the Arrow Cross, by the 4 April. The installation of a new provisional government under Soviet auspices took place in the autumn of 1944, but the depredations of the Red Army, the far-reaching destruction and the general chaos meant that it was not really until well into 1945 that the new order established its authority.

To return to the argument made in the first paragraph of this section, in the first half of the twentieth century, Hungary saw first the collapse of 1918-1920, the disintegration of a working model of modernity, the left-wing experiment of 1919 which likewise collapsed, the restoration of a neo-k.u.k. system wholly committed to the status quo and avoiding experiments with modernity, a right-radical challenge, war and renewed collapse this time with terrible devastation, followed by a brief and not especially successful democratic government that was coercively thrust to one side by the Communists, who then imposed their own radical experiment. 1956 saw the failed revolution and in the 1960s, the Kádár regime opted for continuity and conservatism, until that too fell apart. In all of this, change came from above, society was a minor actor - extras on the set, as it were - so that the shift to democracy in 1989 began with severe handicaps. But before we reach that stage, a discussion of the second half of the century is in order.

III. THE PLACE OF COMMUNISM IN EUROPEAN THOUGHT

There is a point where communism overlaps with fascism, much as the successors of the Communists hate to admit it, and this is at the moment when a society begins the painful move from having a primarily collective identity to individual identity, the move towards modernity in other words. Anomie, the loss of meanings brought about by physical displacement, pushed the individual towards a longing for a new collective identity to replace the one that he or she has lost. Communism and fascism both offered exactly this, as Hannah Arendt demonstrated, was which is why both types of system could construct a certain authenticity for a while.

The question prompted by this proposition is whether the move from collective to individual identity is a universal feature to be found everywhere in the world or is only European, for in the European context it took only three generations for the individual identity to emerge as the stronger. In Russia this is not so clear and potentially significant sections of society are content with a largely collective identity that dominates the individual; in Central and South Eastern Europe the reverse is true, certainly in Hungary it is. The full exploration of the reasons for the tension between collective and individual identities would take us too far from the story of communism in Hungary. Still, a brief glance at some of the explanations would appear appropriate here.

Deepak Lal argues that the Western Church, by prohibiting lateral inheritance and making the Church the ultimate heir, ensured the continuing growth of church property, as around two-fifths of all marriages ended without issue; the unintended consequence was the break-up of the extended family and extended family property, resulting in the emergence of the nuclear family as the European norm.

Second, agricultural conditions in Europe favoured settled cultivation rather than pastoralism and, importantly, by the early Middle Ages, land shortage required the establishment of the complex system of land regulation and power that we know as feudalism. This assigned a clear position to the individual in the feudal hierarchy. Other patterns of development, like the rise of the city as a space where complexity could evolve, together with specialised forms of knowledge and technology, resulted in a dynamic interaction that by the 18th-century converged into the proposition that the European and Western personality is the rational, calculating individual. All that was needed to was to transform the still largely peasant societies of Europe into the community of citizens, which is what the Communists thought they were doing, except that they skipped rather a large number of intermediate steps by insisting on forced marches through history, whether the people affected wanted this or not.

By the time Communists had taken power in Russia and subsequently in Central and South Eastern Europe, however, the rise of the self-aware individual made purely collective solutions unviable, which meant that coercion, violence, force had to be imposed on a society wide scale. Hence the terror. However, the collective models of the individual under communism, while not failing completely, brought into being a distorted, fragmented society which in considerable part characterises the Hungary of today; this applies to both collective and individual identities - the ones that were externally imposed or internally generated through the alien concept of modernity that communism represented.

IV. THE ORIGINS OF COMMUNISM IN HUNGARY

There is a strange paradox at the heart of communism in Hungary. From 1919 to 1989, there were few countries where communism was as unsuccessful as in Hungary, yet once the formal layers of communism - the language, the ideology, some of the institutions - were peeled off, it proved to be remarkably resilient. It is as if the residues of previous regimes just appear to be very hard to discard. After all, there was no other successor state of Austria-Hungary where the carry-over from the old regime was as difficult to transform as

in Hungary - it took defeat in war and the social transformation after 1945 to do that. Some nostalgia, some customs and attitudes still linger. If true, this is bad news, because it implies that the relics of Communist habits will take some major upheaval to shift.

This argument would appear to suggest that Hungarian society is just past-driven, traditional in the wrong way, negatively conservative. In fact, a better explanation is that the externally imposed regimes that Hungary has had to live with - the Hapsburg and Communist transformations - acquired reality and hence deep roots precisely because of the resistance to them. It is a commonplace that we acquire some of the qualities that we resist; as Nietzsche said, those who spend their time fighting dragons, become dragons themselves.

The first time that Hungary experienced communism came very early, in 1919, in the immediate aftermath of a lost war, which - even worse - resulted in a massive loss of territory. The Hungarian Soviet Republic lasted 133 days before it was suppressed by Romanian interventionist troops. This defeat left its mark and made Hungarian Communists both cautious and radical. Both the intellectual and the social basis of Hungarian communism was narrow. They were led by former prisoners of war, many of whom had fought with the Reds in Russia, and were joined by left-socialists and anti-war radicals. The social base was what could have been expected in a barely industrialised country - a few workers, landless peasants and other marginal elements. What gave the Communists serious support was their attempt to reconquer lost territory; large swathes of historic Hungary were rapidly occupied by Czech, Romanian and Serbian forces, with Allied backing. As soon as the Bolsheviks were forced to abandon their attempt to reconstitute historic Hungary as a historic Communist Hungary, a prospect that terrified the Allies, their support in Hungary disappeared.

While in power, they tried to implement far-reaching egalitarian measures which were thoroughly unpopular, especially the insistence on collectivising the land, which alienated the rural population. The urban population was equally alienated by the confiscations and depredations of the Red Terror. This effectively eliminated the social base that the Communists might have used. They remained a marginal force throughout the interwar period, illegal and ineffectual. In addition, they bore the stigma of defeat - a unique case in international communism, that a party in power was overthrown by force.

The key lesson the Hungarian Communists drew from this episode was that society could not be trusted, because it had wrong ideas of its own and was so backward and reactionary that it could never see the great shining truths proclaimed by the party. Naturally, they were reinforced in this belief by Leninism, which argued much the same proposition with its doctrine of the vanguard party. This particular quality of Hungarian communism persisted and persists on the Hungarian left, to the effect that society, as people, as voters, as citizens are fundamentally an alien and infinitely malleable element, which it is best to ignore and override.

It follows that communism has no meaningful theory of change, no explanation for why society responded differently at different times and in different places; crucially, Communists could not even understand the consequences of the changes that they themselves wrought, like the overrapid industrialisation and destruction of the peasant way of life. Most significantly of all, given that the Communists invariably believed in the absolute truth of their doctrine, that the proletariat was the transcendental agent of history, which they as the vanguard party represented, they were wholly incapable of comprehending the persistence and renewal of national sentiments. The formal explanation was, as is well-known, 'false consciousness', a kind of verbal escape hatch, that because of the machinations of the crafty bourgeoisie, the working class could be deluded into thinking that their identities as members of the nation would marginalise their proletarian consciousness - but this did not explain why these national sentiments were still in being after decades of Communist rule.

V. THE TAKE-OVER

In 1944, when the Red Army entered Hungary, the total number of party members was below a thousand - the chief of Budapest police had boasted in the 1930s that he knew the identity of every Communist personally. To this handful should be added a few thousand sympathisers left over from 1919 and, more significantly, those radicalised by the Second World War. This was coupled with the loss of authority, prestige and power of the post-1919 ruling elite, which had largely avoided the reforms needed to modernise the country, but which did have political skills. A further significant source of support for the radical left came from the far from negligible reservoir of backing that the radical right had enjoyed between and during the war; quite a few of them shifted to the radical left. The point here is not that they were right-wing, but that they were radical and did not particularly care if radical change came from the far right or the far left. The Communists were happy to receive them among their ranks.

The Hungarian Communist Party, however, laboured under various handicaps. The stigma of 1919 has already been noted; to that should be added its irrelevance until the moment of defeat, coupled with the fear of the Soviet Union and then, in 1944-1945, the unspeakable behaviour of the Red Army, which looted and raped its way across the country. The NKVD followed in its tracks. There was, therefore, a great lack of trust in communism in Hungary. This was not understood by the Communist leadership, who were correspondingly shocked by the results of the fairly free elections of November 1945, in which they gained just less than 17 percent of the vote. The election was not wholly free, because a sizeable proportion of the electorate had been blacklisted at the Communists' behest and there was sporadic intimidation; the presence of the Red Army and the power-plays of the Allied Control Commission, dominated by the Russians, did not help either.

A closer look at the overall vote shows that while there was certainly support for change, this did not mean that Hungarian voters wanted the kind of change that the Communists were insisting on. The Smallholders' Party actually gained an overall majority (54 percent), while the Social Democrats received 17 percent and the radical National Peasant Party 7 percent. If we accept that some of the Smallholder vote, especially from among the landless peasantry, was looking for a major transformation, then we end up with somewhere under half of Hungarian society looking for some kind of radical change, and it was this radicalism that the Communists used and abused for their own purposes. In sum, while they might have liked the semblance of a democratic majority, they did not care if they lacked it, as long as they could move into a monopoly of power.

It is open to debate whether the Communists were bent on seizing absolute power immediately on their return to Hungarian politics in 1945 or whether their appetite grew with the eating. What is incontestable is that from the outset they accumulated power in whatever ways were open to them. They insisted on control of the secret police, they colonised ministries, they placed their agents in every social institution that they could and banned the rest, they or their Soviet masters arrested recalcitrant politicians or drove them into exile. The inexperience of their opponents was a further helpful factor.

From the outset, the Communist way of doing things was marked by ignoring or bending the law, the fanning of a climate of fear in a society already traumatised by the war and the consequent uncertainty and the ruthless deployment of violence. By the time of the second elections in 1947, the Communists believed that they could create a majority for themselves. After all, the Smallholders had been effectively eliminated - the final turn of the screw was a supposed conspiracy by a rather nebulous group, called Hungarian Community - and the other parties were being subverted from within. Even so, the Communists gained only 22 percent of the vote, despite major electoral fraud, and the various right-wing and conservative groups performed well. But the key was that the power of parliament was already secondary to the dominant, if not monopoly position achieved by the Communists in the institutions of the state and other bodies.

From this point on, the second half of 1947, there was to be a steady consolidation not just of hegemony but monopoly by the Communists. The Social Democrats were forced into a merger in 1948 and by 1949, the new constitution signalled that no alternatives, whether at the level of organisation or of thought, was to be permitted. How could it be - Stalin's version of communism was (supposedly) perfect?

VI. STALINISM

For Hungary, as for the whole of Eastern Europe, Stalinism was the central formative experience after the war, the benchmark against which all subsequent developments must be measured. Stalinism must, therefore, be understood in all its different manifestations and at all its different levels. Its extraordinary quality derives in the first place from its breathtaking political scope. It is hard to muster a precedent for the experiment conducted by the Soviet Union in a wholly alien and culturally rather diverse polity over such a short period of time. It is this concentration of time and the compression of the process involved that gave Hungary's experience of Stalinism its second striking quality. The third was the breadth, depth and intensity of the process. All institutions, all organisations, all forms of communal activity, all individuals were expected to conform to a predetermined set of norms or suffer the consequences for failing to do so. It was in this sense that Stalinism represented an attempt at totalitarian

control, although even at its height it was nowhere successful in actually establishing the total penetration of individuals, their motives and activities. It was successful only in as much as it was able to exact conformity to a set pattern of behaviour as far as the majority was concerned.

Stalinism functioned at a variety of levels - in ideology, institutions, structures, the exercise of power, its impact on social groups and society as a whole. At its centre was a proposition derived from Stalin's transformation of Marxism-Leninism, to the effect that this ideology represented perfection - the distillation of all human wisdom in its final form - by which these societies were marching towards a secular utopia. It was perfect, it was claimed, because it was rational in all respects and in all its manifestations. The advantage of this proposition was that it inherently excluded the possibility of all argument over alternatives, different strategies, policies and their implementation - it is, after all, logically impossible to disagree with perfection.

Consequently disagreement or debate was antagonistic, hostile activity or thought, therefore open to punitive counteraction. The implications of the ideology of perfection are very far-reaching and the way in which it was applied sought to extend it as far as possible. If Marxism-Leninism is perfect, then it is capable of providing the answers to questions not just of politics and economics, but also of technology or the natural sciences or any other branch of human knowledge. Conversely, what Stalinism declared to be a non-existent or reactionary area of human knowledge could simply be discarded. In this way it was logical to assert that there could exist a Marxist-Leninist way of building a bridge or performing an appendectomy or catching fish. In other words, one is dealing here with political reductionism of epochal proportions.

No activity, however apolitical it might appear, can escape the purview of the ideology because, by its own definition, everything is political and capable of being understood only through politics. It follows from this, too, that there could be no political neutrality. Neither individuals nor groups could stand back and say, as it were, "we neither approve nor disapprove of the system; we are apolitical." The political system driven by the ideology had to insist that everyone should be seen to give it his or her overt and continuous support, otherwise he or she was a potential doubter. How can perfection be doubted?

Again, the ideology of perfection logically established itself as omniscient. There could by definition be no problems to which there was no solution. And should the solutions derived from the ideology fail, then this failure could not be attributed to the ideology but to its antagonists, the proponents of other ideologies, all of which were hostile. Consequently, the system excluded the possibility of error. If something went wrong, as it often did, someone was responsible. There could be no such phenomena as accident, chance or an honest mistake. All actions were invested with political purposiveness and all were categorised as 'progressive' or 'reactionary'. By the same token, criticism could not exist autonomously of the ideology, but had to be integrated into its imperatives. Only the criticism actually permitted or rather, more properly, directed by the political authority could find expression.

The political structure constructed by the criteria of this ideology was strictly hierarchical, disciplined and regimented. At its centre was Stalin himself. His will was the supreme political (and all other) imperative. Rákosi, the party leader, the party politburo, the central committee and members all depended on Stalin. The Hungarian party, acting as ever on directives from above, controlled all state and social institutions, which it permeated with the new body of thought. Parallel structures of control existed via the Soviet advisors strategically placed in Hungary, as in all East European countries (Yugoslavia being the exception); they were particularly active in the instruments of coercion - the secret police and the military. In this way an identity of both form and content was imposed on Hungary. What was also noteworthy was the remarkable concentration of power demanded by the system. While it would be an exaggeration to claim that all Stalin had to do was to press a button and simultaneously in every East European state there would be an identical response, nonetheless the degree of homogeneity imposed on the area and the extension of Soviet norms were very far-reaching indeed. At the time, when viewed from the outside, the appearance of identity was complete. It was only later that it emerged that conformity to externals did not automatically transform content, although it did not leave content unaffected.

The central proposition of the Stalinist experiment - the ideology of perfection - sought, therefore, to construct a total system from which both feedback and self-limitation were excluded as harmful and damaging. This was inherent in the nature of the project, for evidently there cannot be any feedback, any communication between rulers and ruled, where the rulers already are in possession of both past and future. In reality, of course, government without feedback creates enormous and insoluble problems for the rulers, in as much as it sets up tensions between the objectives of the state and the aspirations of society. The latter can be overruled for a while, but ultimately the wishes of society will distort the workings of the system, even while the system has no cognitive instruments for decoding these as anything other than hostile conspiracy. The moral codes of society are partly destroyed and partly distorted, but they are never entirely transformed in the way that the Stalinists expected.

Self-limitation is likewise alien to perfection, for identical reasons. There is no logical need for a government to accept limits to its power when everything that it does is in any case perfect. Unfortunately, this proposition can be led back to a prior, tacit assumption that people are perfect or perfectible, which is manifestly not the case, with consequences both for the corruption of power and the strategies of compensation for powerlessness adopted by individuals. This then simply confirmed the Communists in their disdain for society. The use of mass terror was, therefore, the logical outcome of the tacit premise. It marked communism indelibly, with important consequences for the longer-term viability of the system.

VII. THE TERROR

Given the starting point, that there existed an omniscient leadership equipped with the ideology of perfection, the imposition of this system on all areas of society was wholly logical and since society was too backward to understand this perfection, the system would have to be imposed on it coercively.

Various new institutions, derived from Soviet antecedents, were used to reduce society to compliance. The best known of these were the show trials, used first against non- and anti-Communists, and then against potential deviationists, those why might just conceivably betray the party because their experiences diverged from those of Stalin's best pupils. The form of these trials was similarly taken over from Soviet practice - a courtroom, prosecutor, defence, judges, several accused and confessions. The last is noteworthy, because unlike Western criminal trials, there was no attempt by prosecution

to adduce proof - this was provided by the accused in the form of confessions. And these were extracted by torture. The script was carefully prepared and the accused was tortured until he was ready to read it out word for word. The charges reflected the party's concerns as of that moment. Thus in 1949, in the trial of László Rajk, the charges concerned support for Titoism and Western imperialism. Later on, Zionism was added, though that was more a feature of the Czechoslovak show trials than in Hungary. Guilt was predetermined and so was the sentence.

The show trial should be seen as an enactment of the party's omniscience, that it always knew everything and would uncover everything; at the same time, it had total capacity to rid itself of polluted elements; note that this pollution did not have to be conscious or deliberate, for the accused did not have to believe, simply to confess to it. In legal terms, there was no attempt to establish mens rea (guilty knowledge), just guilt which the party determined. The show trial was made public in order to demonstrate to society (and the world) that there was no alternative to communism and that even thinking it could have fatal consequences.

The greatest attention was attracted by the Rajk trial - Rajk was no traitor, on the contrary, he was a dedicated and humourless activist, who had been merciless in destroying non-Communist organisations and individuals as Minister of the Interior. But he had spent his years in Hungary as an underground Communist, and lacked the Moscow experience, so he made an excellent straw man in the anti-Titoist campaign of 1949. The Rajk trial was accompanied by other lesser trials which encompassed an ever wider range of party activists, including János Kádár, who took over as leader after 1956.

The trials were accompanied by the purge, the second new institution. This had various targets. The party, now calling itself the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, expelled many of the Social Democrats who had become Communist willy-nilly as a result of the 1948 merger. Then the fascist small-fry, who had been eagerly accepted in 1945 to swell party ranks, were now dumped. Anyone with experience of the West was likewise unreliable, Spanish Civil War veterans especially. And those who had formed the core of the underground party were similarly suspect and purged.

Then came the turn of the upper and middle classes, around 100,000 persons, who were summarily expropriated and expelled to the countryside, their property being given to reliable cadres. This was followed by the continuous purge of the lowest social strata, like certain categories of proletarians deemed unreliable, like the printers with their Social Democratic leanings, and then the kulaks, the class enemy of the countryside (these were the most efficient agricultural producers). The forced collectivisation had the effect of expelling tends of thousands of peasants to urban areas, as cheap labour for new industries. In the twenty-eight months after 1 January 1950, some 850,000 persons were punished, mostly fined, by the police. In the three and a quarter years from 1950 onwards the courts looked at 650,000 cases and sentenced 387,000 persons; finally, during the four years 1952-5, some 1,136,434 persons were subjected to police investigation and of these 516,708 or 45 percent were actually sentenced. A significant part of those affected were peasants, caught up in the collectivisation drive, but it must also have included workers sentenced for 'sabotage', i.e. failure to fulfil unrealistic quotas.

VIII. THE ROAD TO 1956

Stalin died on 5 March 1953. This can be seen as a turning point for his successors understood that Stalin's vision of communism was destructive and dangerous, indeed personally so. But where they should go in developing communism was quite unclear. It grew into the "New Course", which accepted some modest shifts, like lowering the breakneck pace of industrialisation and the release of political prisoners. Just as Stalinism had been imposed on Eastern Europe in general and Hungary in particular, so was the New Course. In both cases, Moscow was not much concerned with intended and unintended consequences of its course changes - empires are like that. But whereas in the Soviet Union the system was robust enough to absorb changes, this was far less true of the satellites.

In brief, the Kremlin first imposed the New Course, which had the result of placing a question mark over the headlong industrialisation projects of Stalinism. Rather more dangerous for Rákosi was Khrushchev's reconciliation with Tito in 1955. Khrushchev's precipitate initiative had incalculable consequences for the entire legitimacy of the Soviet-type systems in all the East European states. The proposition was painfully simple. If there could be a Yugoslav road to socialism that was now no longer revisionist

Count István TISZA

Count Mihály KÁROLYI

István BETHLEN

Mátyás RÁKOSI

Béla KUN

Miklós HORTHY

János KÁDÁR

József ANTALL

Poverty in the 1920s.

The defeated Hungarian Army in Russia.

The Hungarian Nazi leader Ferenc SZÁLASI with the Chain Bridge in ruins.

Budapest after the siege 1945.

Destroyed Soviet tank after 1956.

The reinterment of Imre NAGY 1989.

A T-shirt c.2008.

and excluded from the canon, why then could there not also be a Hungarian road as well? There could be no logical answer to this as long as the official ideology was being taken seriously.

The actual institutions developed by Tito - self-management in industry - were of lesser significance than the acceptance by the Kremlin of his historic decision in 1948-9 to remain in power and to insist on being a Communist, thereby challenging Stalin's monopoly of communism. It was this legitimation of a Communist alternative to Stalinism that Khrushchev, wittingly or otherwise, triggered off by the Belgrade Declaration. The Soviet Union's long-standing claim to be the centre of world communism, to have the sole right to determine what constituted authentic socialism and what did not and to take action to suppress undesirable variants was, as it were, being given away. The potential for Hungarian reformers to find their own roads to communism was, it appeared, acceptable. One point should be noted here. The reformers mentioned here were intellectuals inside the system. They continued to believe at this time that a Communist system was viable and that the distortions imposed on the political systems were the outcome of Stalin's misconceptions or Rákosi's megalomania or of insufficient heed being paid to local variations which did not influence the thrust of the ideology.

This made life extremely difficult for the East European leaders who did not want change, who felt that the Stalinist system, to which they owed their power, was perfectly acceptable as it was, and not in need of any reform. It became practically impossible to defend the system in terms of ideology; instead it had to be defended in other terms, like those of power politics or foreign threat or pragmatically, saying that the situation was not yet ripe for change. This conflict was the seed-bed of reform communism, which lived roughly from 1953 to 1968. Its end was still many years ahead, but the failure to take up the challenge in any real as distinct from propagandistic sense (e.g. 'Our system is the best because it is the best') was to have the long-term outcome of voiding the content of Marxism-Leninism entirely. The clash over Titoism was the first step in that direction.

There was a final aspect of Khrushchev's reconciliation with Tito that was also to create major problems for Rákosi and his fellow Stalinists. Almost without exception, they had taken a highly active part in the vilification of Tito in 1948-9 and, indeed, they were all involved in the plans to invade Yugoslavia. Rákosi in Hungary was particularly exposed in this respect. Indeed, Tito demanded his political head as his price for the reconciliation.

But while it may have been highly embarrassing for these leaders to be told that Tito was not, after all, a hireling of the Imperialist-Zionist-Trotskyist conspiracy - as they had trumpeted just a few years earlier - but a loyal Communist, that could be shrugged off and, for what it was worth, blamed on Beria.

The far more serious issue was that of the local Communists executed as Titoists. If Tito was not an enemy, then those sentenced to death as Titoists were in the same category. So, the question was being covertly put, how come that Rajk and the other purge victims were executed for something that had not been criminal? And what of the people who had been responsible for their execution, what should be their responsibility? Rákosi had boasted a couple of years earlier that it had been his personal vigilance that had succeeded in unmasking Rajk, except that, as it turned out, there had been nothing to unmask. And what of the confessions that had been made in open court by these people? How had these been obtained, what had happened to the judicial process? In the countries where de-Stalinisation produced upheaval, the struggle for their rehabilitation became a central focus for the political conflicts of the mid-1950s.

None of the three factors described so far, whether jointly or severally, would have been sufficient to destabilise any of the East European states, though Hungary had entered a ferment by the time of Khrushchev's final throw - the Secret Speech. On 26 February 1956, during a special secret session of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, from which foreign delegates were excluded, Khrushchev denounced Stalin for having been a murderous despot. He accused the former wisest father of mankind of having been a tyrant who sent thousands of good Communists to their deaths, who wrought untold damage on the Soviet Union and the ideological legacy of Lenin. Khrushchev's motives, as with the Belgrade Declaration, were primarily to be understood within the context of the struggle for power in the Soviet leadership. When he found himself blocked within the Praesidium and the Central Committee, he moved the conflict to the Congress and, though he enjoined secrecy, took his assault into a wider public arena. Within a very short space of time the news and the details of the Secret Speech were out.

Their effect on the political climate of Eastern Europe differed markedly from the more placid response of the Soviet Union. It spread uncertainty among the cadres and stirred the intellectuals to renewed questioning, especially in Hungary (and Poland), but there were

reverberations in Czechoslovakia and the GDR as well. It brought the question of the socialist agenda and what Stalin had done to it to the fore with greater urgency than ever. The ground on which criticism of local practices could be based was now incomparably stronger.

By contrast, the Stalinists and even conservatives within the elite who were not necessarily committed to all the tenets of Stalinism but looked for a quiet life, were dismayed. It was not enough for their chief ideological inspiration to have died just short of three years previously, but now it turned out that they had been in grievous error in having vested their faith in him at all. The denunciation of Stalin, for an instant at any rate, acted as a kind of threshold. Each and every individual wielding power had to confront the question of by what right he or she exercised power, what really was the ideology that he or she was serving. The legitimacy of the system as understood by those in power was at issue. In states where the questioning was already advanced this was a severe blow, and the local Stalinists were hard put to deal with it. But even where the system remained relatively stable, the leadership had to respond to a renewed ground swell of criticism and questioning. The morale of the ruling parties was badly shaken.

Two local factors made the situation in Hungary worse. The first of these was the rehabilitation of Béla Kun in 1956. Kun was now recognised as having been a faithful Communist and it became possible to re-examine the fate of the 1919 Hungarian Soviet republic as well. However, this was much less significant for Hungarian opinion than an event that had taken place the previous year - the Austrian State Treaty and the Soviet Union's recognition of Austrian neutrality.

This event had a considerable influence on some currents of Hungarian thought, for not only was Austria geographically close to Hungary, but its cultural proximity made it a very attractive model to emulate. If the idea of neutrality was acceptable for Austria, then why not for Hungary? And if Austria was neutral then why was it necessary for the Soviet Union to keep four Soviet divisions on Hungarian soil, seeing that the original justification for their presence had been to guarantee Soviet lines of communication to Austria? No answer to these questions was forthcoming, other than a flat rejection, but they were to resurface in October 1956.

The unity of the party leadership between 1953 and 1956 was severely tested by these events and clearly began to come apart towards the end, not least because the Hungarian party had to endure the ham-fisted intervention of the Kremlin in the composition of the leadership. On 13-14 June 1953, a large top-level delegation from the Hungarian leadership was summoned to Moscow. It included Rákosi and Imre Nagy. In the Kremlin, they were read a curtain lecture by Beria, who instructed them to adopt the collective leadership at once and, with a good deal of personal offensiveness, told Rákosi to desist from the policies of high mobilisation that had brought Hungary to the edge of ruin. Nagy became prime minister and, a little later, read the Central Committee a most powerful indictment of Rákosi and his associates, who were in the hall at the time, accusing them of unparty-like behaviour. This was the beginning of a deep fissure in the Hungarian party, which was to contribute materially to the eruption of the revolution in 1956.

Nagy, however, was never able to launch his reforms properly. He was unable to have his speech to the Central Committee published and Rákosi, with backing from the Kremlin, counter-attacked. Some changes were introduced, including a halt to collectivisation, slowing down the pace of industrialisation and the slow release of political prisoners. Nagy sought to use the government bureaucracy to effect change, but discovered that the party was countermanding much of what he was doing. The tug of war persisted until the early months of 1955, when Nagy suffered a minor heart attack, his patron in Moscow, Malenkov, fell and Rákosi had him thrown out of office.

A few months later Nagy was expelled from the party and disgraced, but the damage had been done. Enough of the intelligentsia had been inspired and enough of the apparat's self-confidence shaken to make the situation more and more unstable. Khrushchev's secret speech burst like a bombshell in this milieu. Rákosi was still trying to reimpose Stalinism on a society quite unwilling to submit, and after the 20th Congress his position was virtually untenable. He was losing his authority and his grip on the party machine.

The intellectuals had long before turned against him. Their lever was the rehabilitation of Rajk and in May 1956, after Rákosi had grudgingly accepted that perhaps, after all, Rajk might have been innocent, he was openly called on to resign. He held on and it was not until 18 July, during which time attitudes polarised, that Rákosi was sacked, and even at that it needed the presence of Mikoyan, the Kremlin's ubiquitous troubleshooter, to ensure his departure. But, personalities again, the Kremlin's choice of successor, Ernő Gerő, proved to be a disaster. Gerő was a man in the Rákosi mould, but he lacked

even Rákosi's adeptness in wielding power. Gerő simply made a bad situation worse by encouraging more polarisation. But division in the leadership, though extremely uncomfortable, did not inherently lead to upheaval.

The divisions in the Hungarian leadership went back much farther and were more deep-seated. The replacement of Rákosi by Gerő came too late to halt the slide, for the morale of the upper echelons of the party had begun to corrode. During the crucial months of July to October 1956 there was no one at the top who could rally the party faithful - apparat and membership - and give it enough of a sense of purpose under the new conditions to encourage it to rally round a new purposiveness. To make matters worse, the party was also losing the loyalty of its supporting intelligentsia, which began to sense that a more radical transformation was in the offing than the party could devise and, more frighteningly, that this could be more attractive than anything the party could offer.

Too many intellectuals, on the contrary, found a new sense of purpose and mission around a loosely constructed set of ideas which could be called, to use this perplexing and misleading term, "national communism". The debates of the Petőfi Circle, the ideas expounded in Irodalmi Ujság and elsewhere would have taken Hungary a very long way from the Soviet-type system that it had been saddled with after 1949. The ceaseless criticism of the summer of 1956, coupled with the intellectual bankruptcy of the leadership, left the elite reeling. The situation was dangerously close to an explosion.

There were two events to provide the spark. On 6 October the ceremonial reinterment of László Rajk took place. This was a moment of pure political symbolism. Rajk, who had been the hard-headed Minister of the Interior of the immediate post-war years, was suddenly metamorphosed into a symbol of democracy and the victim of Stalinist terror. To underline the latter the date of the reinterment has to be understood. This was an anniversary deeply imbued with the meaning of revolution and liberation in the affective universe of Hungarians. On 6 October 1849 the leaders of the 1848 revolution, the Martyrs of Arad, were put to death by the Austrians, the alien tyrants of the time. No one could have failed to understand its significance. A crowd of 150,000 to 300,000 came to the same conclusion. This proved to be the dress rehearsal, the moment when thousands of atomised individuals recognised that they were not alone and lost their fear of the system, the moment when the possibility of changing the regime from below returned to the agenda.

On 23 October an even greater crowd, this time with an explicitly political objective, support for the parallel events in Poland, as opposed to the implicitness of 6 October, took to the streets, to demand political freedom and democracy. The revolution had begun.

IX. REVOLUTION OF 1956: FAILURE AND SUCCESS

Revolutions are extraordinarily difficult to define consistently. We sort of know what they are, but all comparative work on revolutions tends to flounder when attempting to find their common structural features. We can agree that revolutions include regime change, discontinuity, new modes of legitimation and legality and relatively rapid change, but it is unclear when the revolution can be said to be finished.

Then, must a revolution be successful to count as one? The French revolution was followed by the Restoration eventually, including that of the monarchy, but it enrooted a very deep republican tradition that could not be undone, as well as a certain acceptance of the role of the crowd in politics - this was visible even in 2005. Restoration was even slower in the case of the Russian revolution.

So what we can say is that a revolution that is more than a putsch must involve:

> radical change and spontaneity
> a political project and a legacy
> (some) irreversible consequences
> mass mobilisation

The Hungarian events of 1956 are all the more interesting because a large number of non-Hungarian commentators deny their status as a revolution and call it an uprising, something they would clearly never do with the French revolution - "the French uprising of 1789" sounds distinctly idiosyncratic. Why this should be so in the case of 1956 is not at all clear at first sight, but it could be explained by the interaction of several factors.

First, there is ignorance (never to be underestimated), the inability or unwillingness to consider the distinction between revolutions and uprisings. Then, there is denial, because in Western thinking, especially left-wing thinking, revolutions are positive, progressive and morally good. Yet the Hungarian revolution took place against a left-wing regime and was ignored by much - not all - of the left as an uncomfortable anomaly. A.J.P. Taylor's analysis that the choice was between 'clerico-fascism' and the Soviet invasion was not that unusual. Then, there is David Irving's syllogism - equally banal - to the effect "communism was a Jewish invention; 1956 was an anti-Communist event; hence 1956 constituted an anti-Semitic uprising". Simple and false.

Then residual guilt at having abandoned Central and South-Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union could also have played a role. The Western left was always ready for this, as witness its distaste for Solidarity in 1981.

Ultimately, 1956 is neglected because it does not fit pre-determined categories of thought. It was, or could be so characterised, both left-wing and right-wing, both national and European in its implications. It raised tacit questions of national liberation in Europe at a time when de-colonisation was in the air outside Europe. It was both democratic and egalitarian. Then it was maybe a factor of major inconvenience for both the Soviet Union and the United States, because it disturbed the post-Yalta dispensation and took the US roll-back rhetoric at its word, a major error, as we know. Besides, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 appeared to have no palpable consequences. The Cold War persisted, the Russians were shown to be beastly, the Hungarians were heroic (or irresponsible, take your pick) and not to mention Hungary having to redeem itself for having been Hitler's last satellite. In any case, the West fulfilled its obligations by giving shelter to around 200,000 refugees.

In Hungary, of course, 1956 was always understood to have been a revolution or a counter-revolution, but a 'counter-revolution' still recognises the revolutionary qualities of what happened. The collapse of the Kádár regime in 1989 turned precisely on this point, when on the 28 January 1989 the Communist authorities acknowledged that 1956 was not a counter-revolution, but a popular uprising.

What are the reasons why 50 years on the events can still be seen as having a revolutionary significance:

The events had the quality of speed both and acceleration. What was unthinkable today became the norm two days later. There was a extraordinarily rapid shift in perspectives. Then, there was the spontaneity: no one set out to make a revolution, there was no plan, and there was great fluidity in which none of the actors could see the consequences of their actions. The revolution completely eliminated the ancien regime. If a tabula rasa is ever possible, then Hungary 1956 came close to it. The Communists lost all their legitimacy and had no means of regaining it, other than reestablishing their power by force.

The programme of the revolution was radical and innovative. Bill Lomax stresses the workers councils as the core of the project, but that is not the whole story. A variety of new institutions was thrown up by the revolution, the central feature of which was extensive popular participation, unsurprisingly given the total exclusion of the population from all political action during Stalinism. These institutions included street demonstrations, self-management (territorial as well as work-place), voice given to all who sought it, plus the return of the multi-party system, i.e. representative democracy. How direct and representative democracy would have worked in practice, how they would have fitted together, we just do not know, because there was never a chance to make it work (I am sceptical myself).

During the revolution, national, social and civic unity was remarkably far-reaching. Class differences were (briefly) forgotten, likewise urban-rural, old-young and other cleavages. Beneath this was a striking concept of social harmony, which would not have lasted. Note that something similar underlay Czechoslovakia 1968 and Poland 1980-81. The European significance of 1956 was to demonstrate that communism was not what it claimed to be, it was not consensual, not democratic but rested on violence. At the same time, it could be overthrown - this was a message that Europe found difficult to accept and understand. For many, communism was there for ever and they were reluctant to accept the proposition that it could disappear even in 1989.

X. THE KÁDÁR YEARS

What happened after 1956 can fairly be termed the third and last Communist take-over of Hungary (after 1919 and 1945-1949). It was achieved with terror and the threat of terror. But all the same, the revolution could not be sloughed off - it had a profound effect on both rulers and ruled. This proposition is seldom understood as a part of the post-1956 period, yet it is a key dimension of Communist rule. Basically, even failed revolutions have consequences and no restoration is ever a hundred percent effective. There was no way in which the early Kádár regime could reproduce the high Stalinism of the 1950s. Above all, the revolution - or counter-revolution as the Kádár regime insisted on calling it - inflicted a devastating shock on the ruling party. It brought the Communists face to face with the fact that their doctrines and methods were thoroughly detested by the very proletariat in the name of which and for whose benefit they were meant to be ruling.

The failed revolution generated a kind of anomie, a loss of the reason for being in power, a divided consciousness, because it showed that the narratives of the Communists did not resonate. It brought with it a realisation that terror for its own sake, as under Rákosi, was not goal-rational but counter-productive, because while it might have kept the lid on, it bred resentment or passivity. In other words, by the early 1960s the regime accepted that it needed some kind of consent, a new formula for exercising power.

These factors underlay Kádár's innovation of the 1960s, that acceptance - not active support - was sufficient to sustain Communist rule as far as the majority was concerned, while simultaneously the regime built up a solid core of supporters with an active stake in the version of communism formulated under late Khrushchevism. One should note here, as ever, the importance of the changes in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev recognised that the unbending imposition of Soviet norms on the East European satellites was not working, hence they had to be given some leeway to construct alternatives, though within strict limits. How strict those limits were emerged only in 1968, when the Czechoslovak party overstepped the threshold of tolerance with its radical (though doomed) experiment in one-party democracy. But in the early 1960s, no one knew this, the Kremlin included.

The leeway that Kádár had was to be able to offer a cowed society a one-way deal. In exchange for staying out of politics, political power would stay out of people's everyday lives. They would be given a choice in small matters and allowed a measure of economic well-being for political passivity. Some of the arbitrary power of the party would be retracted, political error would no longer be regarded as hostile conspiracy, a low-level consumerism became tolerated and the party's control over the economy would be made more flexible via the New Economic Mechanism.

The underlying deal was that the party would retain its monopoly of political initiative and action, for fear of a resurgence of revolutionary aims, that 1956 itself would be removed from the public sphere (the euphemism 'the unfortunate events of 56' was devised), that there could be no question of press freedom or questioning the leading role of the party or Hungary's connection with Moscow. This system worked well for a time in its own terms. It substituted political stability for political legitimacy - shadow for substance - and functioned as long as all involved were prepared to accept this. The sociological outcome, a partially intended consequence of the original design, was the emergence of a sizeable section of society with a vested interest in the system or at least in something that would continue to guarantee the benefits of the system.

In this sense, the depoliticisation pursued by the regime brought into being a depoliticised barrier that one could breach only at some risk to the system itself. Since change is always destabilising and has unforeseeable consequences, so the Kádár system's quest for stability became conservative and over time even stagnant, with narrowing perspectives. Yet society changed and the world around Hungary changed too, most significantly with the arrival of Gorbachev, whose perestroika was a seriously unwelcome development for the aging rulers of the later Kádár years.

XI. THE CRUMBLING OF COMMUNISM

Furthermore, these rulers were incapable of renewing their legitimacy, not least because they could not even see the problem. Equally, renewed activism to relaunch an ideological party would breach the barriers set 30 years previously, for fear of disturbing the stability of the regime. The Moscow connection also proved to be broken reed once the Soviet leadership embarked on a renewal process, for that necessarily removed the so-called Soviet pretext, to the effect that 'we would love to reform, but the Soviet comrades would look askance at that'.

Thus failed revolutions never fail completely, but invariably have unintended consequences. In the case of Hungary, it resulted in a Sleeping Beauty society that actually came to like its somnolence. It is from this perspective that 1956 had and has delayed effects that have shaped both rulers and ruled in the years of post-communism. The particular way of leaving communism, and it really was more like a quiet farewell than anything more dramatic, had virtually no popular input, quite unlike Czechoslovakia, say, or Estonia. The reinterment of Imre Nagy on the 16 June 1989, the nearest to a popular event, was carefully monitored, supervised and choreographed.

There existed a politically rather inexperienced counter-elite and a society that had very little understanding either of power or of governance. I suspect that many believed at the time that the end of communism as a system and mode of legitimation would bring with it a thoroughgoing transformation, in which those who had been excluded from power would now be able to exercise it. This assessment failed to reckon with the far greater political experience of the beneficiaries of the previous system, with their determination to preserve their privileges and to make their grab for state property, to maintain their networks, resources etc., as well as their complete unwillingness to accept any form of democratic self-limitation or ethical constraints on action. They accept only the minimum - the results of elections, the Constitutional Court and, to some extent, European disapproval.

From this perspective, it becomes understandable why 1956 is contested and why both left and right seek to own it. The left would like to derive its legitimacy from it for the present, as the heirs of a social revolution, and the right sees it as a democratic, national and anti-Communist revolution. Though the 1956 revolution was put down by force and in that sense only it failed, it lives on in various complex, indirect and sometimes distorted ways.

This system proved to have considerable staying power and remained largely unchanged until its disintegration in 1989. It provided Hungarian society with a tolerable way of life, stability and was successful able to incorporate the great majority into its functioning. The instruments of coercion operated within limits, though the activities of the secret police were very far-reaching; if one stayed out of active politics, one was largely left alone, albeit the threat of coercion was there all times.

Logically, therefore, from 1988 on the system began to crumble, leaving behind a society that had become accustomed to a stability that looked more like changelessness, that was politically very inexperienced, had no real knowledge of market conditions and only the vaguest sense of the relationship between democracy and freedom. The memory of 1956, then, was the central focal point as a symbolic event around which all could organise against the Communist regime, and that included the reform Communists. It is important to stress that this was exclusively symbolic. The trauma of remembered violence and devastation was alive and well in 1989 and acted as a severe constraint on action. There was a kind of fearful determination that there would no revolution in the sense of 1956. This also had the result that, as so often with a struggle for symbols, once the initial aim was gained, after that, unity disintegrated and thereafter 1956 was contested between left and right.

The weaknesses of the system, however, meant that it had no long term future. In the first instance, its stability depended on Kádár remaining in power and once his age began to be a factor - he was born in 1912 - the problem of succession became visible on the horizon. Second, there was the Soviet factor already noted. As long as the Kremlin remained a captive of its conservatism, Kádár and Kádárism were safe, but with the rise of Gorbachev, who understood that change in the Soviet Union was unavoidable, a question mark was raised over Kádár's position too. Third, was the system's commitment to stability, which after a while become stagnation, essentially because it did not have, indeed could not have a theory of change. Fourth was Hungary's dependence on the outside world - given its trade-dependence this was unavoidable - hence the oil shocks were traumatic. By the 1980s, it was clear from international comparisons that even

an intelligently managed centrally planned economy was less successful than a market economy, cf. South Korea. Fifth was the slow change of generations, the younger age groups no longer being traumatised by the memories of 1956 and after. Sixth was the decay of the system, together with the corresponding attractiveness of the West. In Weberian terms, the system ceased to be exemplary and thus was no longer binding. In simple terms, by creating an ever greater complexity but eliminating political instruments to manage it, Kádárism gradually undermined itself. The outcome was the regime shift of 1989.

Basically the rulers of the Kádár system were in a political and ideological trap from which they could only escape by writing themselves out of the script. Stability no longer counted because it was taken for granted, communism as an ideology had decayed, few people took it seriously, and the Soviet Union was no longer a source of support. Equally, by the late 1980s, the elite, sensing that change was in the air, began to manoeuvre to acquire state property for itself.

The meaning of 1989 was and is contested. Was it a revolution or a regime change or simply a regime shift? Those who hoped for a thoroughgoing cleansing of the Augean stables were to be disappointed and the gradualism of the regime shift permitted the salvaging of Communist power (networks, money, buildings, organisations and the like) which was to reemerge as a kind of neo-Communist though formally democratic system. Democracy was incomplete, however, as it extended only to rule by consent and not to sustaining a proper democratic infrastructure. And that was the state of play in 2008.

LATVIA: THE BALTIC DESTINY AND THE REBIRTH OF A NATION

Antonijs Zunda

Republic of Latvia – Latvijas Republika
Area: 64 589 km²
Population: 2 294 600 (2006)
Capital city: Riga
Official language: Latvian
Currency: Lat (LVL)
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.05.2004

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of Latvia and the other Baltic States has been very complex in the twentieth century. To get a true insight into its development and today's economic, social and political problems one should keep in mind that Latvia has experienced occupation three times. In 1940-1941 Latvia was occupied by the Soviet Union, from 1941 to 1945 Latvia came under rule of Nazi Germany, but after the World War II until 1991 Latvia was again incorporated into the Soviet Union. Every occupation regime had its own goals and purposes that were strongly antagonistic to the wishes of the majority of the Latvian nation.

Although from 1941 to 1991 Latvia did not exist as an independent state because it was occupied, annexed and incorporated into the Soviet Union, more than 50 counties in the world considered it to be a subject of international law, thus expressing their protest against the expansionist, unlawful policy of the USSR. International non-recognition of the annexation was very important for the people of Latvia and during the long occupation decades it helped them to retain the spirit of resistance to the Soviet regime. This in general facilitated a rapid and efficient restoration of Latvia's statehood in 1990/1991.

Taking the road of independence Latvia had to solve many severe consequences left by the Soviet regime. Deep, fundamental reforms of the economic and political system had to be carried out. The Popular Front of Latvia became an important political force; it was the largest mass-scale organisation, which united various strata of society that supported the independence ideas and the need for reforms. In a relatively short period of time in 1991 Latvia created the foundations of a democratic and law-based state. New state administration structures, army, police and border guards were established. Transition from the Soviet type command economy to the free market economy took place; the national currency – the lat - was introduced. An important task at the initial stage of restoration of independence was a speedy withdrawal of the Russian Federation troops from Latvia. It was accomplished on April 30, 1994, by signing a special treaty. Withdrawal of the Russian Army ended the occupation of Latvia that had lasted for more than four decades.

A very serious question to be solved by the young state of Latvia was the non-citizens' issue. The problem was caused because during the years of the Soviet regime many hundreds of thousands of migrants came to settle in Latvia. The issue is being solved through naturalisation process based on the rule of law and democracy.

In April/May of 2004 Latvia became a member of NATO and the European Union; preconditions for stable economic and political development of the state, and for its security were created. By integrating into a union of economically strong countries Latvia has achieved in a short span of time a more rapid development of its economy, an increase of the standard of life, welfare and social security. The biggest benefit for Latvia, given its complicated history, is the sense of security and stability for its future. After a very complex period of development in the twentieth century, after deep economic and political changes, Latvia has returned to the community of the democratic countries and sees its future within this community.

II. INEDEPENDENCE OF STATEHOOD AND TWO TOTALITARIAN OCCUPATION REGIMES (1940-1945)

Latvia lies on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea and its history has always been influenced by the policy of big aggressive powers. As a result of invasion by the German crusaders in the thirteenth century, the Latvian people were deprived of opportunities to continue creating their own statehood. In the eighteenth century, after several wars among super powers that were struggling to gain the dominant role in the Baltic region, the territory of Latvia was incorporated into Russia for two hundred years. At the end of World War I when German, Russian and the Austro-Hungarian Empires collapsed, several new states including the Republic of Latvia appeared on the European map. Independence of the state was declared on November 18, 1918.

In-between the two world wars (1918-1940), that is, during the first period of state independence, Latvia achieved considerable success in economic growth, education and culture. In 1922 the Constitution of the state was adopted, which declared that Latvia is a democratic state where power lies with the people. The Constitution stipulated the rights of ethnic minorities and guaranteed equality of all the nations. Latvia was being formed as an ethnically tolerant state. Inviolability of private property was also set out by law. All the citizens were guaranteed broad democratic rights and freedoms. There were free municipality and general elections in the state, freedom of press and political activities, independent judiciary and so on. Latvia was a parliamentary republic, yet the cabinet of ministers had a wide scope of authority and during parliamentary vacation it could issue legal acts. The president of the state was not a politically accountable person, he rather performed representative functions. Yet the president could dissolve the parliament although such a decision had to be approved by a nation-wide vote, if the approval was not achieved the president had to resign.

During the independence period Latvia was an economically flourishing and stable country. The economy, devastated during World War I, was quickly restored. Good achievements were made in industry, agriculture and external trade. Latvia was approaching the rate of development of the most advanced European states. For instance, butter exports in the 1930s between Latvia and Estonia were the second

highest in the region after Denmark. Industrial companies produced high quality products. The most famous company the was "State Electro technical Plant" (VEF) manufacturing radios, telephones, electric bulbs and even the world famous smallest camera "Minox". Significant achievements were made in education. In the mid-1930s by the number of students Latvia was in the first place in Europe. The successful development of Latvia was interrupted by the criminal Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact signed on August 23, 1939, by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. The pact divided spheres of influence of the two aggressive states in Eastern Europe and in the Baltic region. Latvia became under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union in September – October 1939. Threatening to use force the Soviet Union pressed Latvia and the other Baltic States to sign the so-called mutual assistance agreements that allowed establishing the of military bases in these countries. By that, the sovereignty of Latvia was restricted; in reality it became a USSR protectorate.

In June 1940 when Nazi Germany invaded France, the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin decided to occupy and incorporate the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. On June 16, the government of Latvia received an ultimatum from the USSR demanding the immediate formation of a new government and admitting into its territory the Soviet troops of unrestricted size. On June 17 the USSR had occupied all of Latvia. The USSR unilaterally violated all the previously signed agreements with Latvia (the Peace Treaty and the 1932 Non-Aggression Treaty). Aware of the evident supremacy of force, Latvia like Denmark in the face of Germany in April 1940 did not put up resistance and surrendered to the demands.

The process of Latvia's occupation was coordinated by the Soviet Union embassy in Riga and by a special Kremlin emissary, Andrei Vishinski. First, the Soviet Union decided to form in Latvia the so-called people's government headed by Augusts Kirhensteins. The Communist Party became the only political party since the other parties were banned. By the order from Moscow, Kirhensteins' puppet government announced parliamentary elections in Latvia on July 14-15, 1940. They were organised to legitimise the occupation regime. On July 21, the newly elected "people's parliament" passed a decision to accede to the Soviet Union grossly violating the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia. Now as a Soviet socialist republic Latvia was illegitimately incorporated into the Soviet Union in a big haste. The first occupation regime phase was finished. The USA, Great Britain and other West European countries did not recognise the legitimacy of such an act carried out by the Soviet Union.

During the period of 1940-1941 (the beginning of the German-Soviet war), the occupation regime set up by the Soviet Union carried out fundamental changes in the economic and political system of the state. A dictatorial, totalitarian system was established in Latvia closing down all the democratic institutions that had existed during the independence times. Nationalisation of industrial and trade companies, as well as banks was started. The land was declared to be state property. The biggest companies – VEF, "Vairogs", "Tosmare" and others - were integrated into the Soviet economic system and named as all-union companies. Radical changes were made in culture and education imposing upon the nation the Communist ideology. The Latvian Army was reorganised and transformed into the Territorial Corps No. 24. Large-scale repressions and persecution of Latvian officers started. Until June 22, 1941, when Germany occupied Latvia, 19.4 percent of all the officer corps had been repressed.

Extensive repressions and terror acts against inhabitants started. The Soviet regime turned with particular cruelty against public officials, politicians, intelligentsia representatives and well-known entrepreneurs of the independence time. On July 21, the State President Karlis Ulmanis was deported from Latvia. He died on September 20, 1942, in the Krasnovodsk prison. Indications of colonisation and "Russification" were obvious. Large numbers of the Russian population, employees of the Communist Party apparatus and Soviet institutions, officers and soldiers of the Red Army, and representatives of repressive institutions were brought into Latvia. During the first year of the Soviet regime, dramatic changes took place in agriculture sector. An agrarian reform was carried out hastily, during which farmers were deprived of land, which was then distributed among landless peasants. The Soviet regime propagated the idea about collectivisation and establishment of collective-farms.

In May 1941 the USSR Government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party took a decision about mass-scale deportation of civilian population from Latvia and other Baltic republics to remote northern areas of the USSR. This was carried out by the so-called People's Commissariat of the USSR State Security in cooperation with security institutions of Soviet Latvia under the leadership of Alfons Noviks and Semion Shustin. Local collaborators from among the Communist Party activists and Soviet institutions helped to compile the lists of deportees and assisted in the deportation process.

Deportations took place in Latvia in 1941 on the night of June 14 to 15 where 15,424 people were subjected to this inhuman cruelty, among them more than 3,000 children under the age of 16. From all the deportees 6,081 people died, which makes 39.43 percent of the total number. From 1957 to 1959 the majority of surviving deportees were released and were allowed to return to Latvia. From June 1941 until May 1945 Latvia came under the control of another occupant – Nazi Germany. That was the second occupation in the same year. Also the Nazi regime left grave consequences upon Latvia's economic, political and demographic development. The independence of Latvia was not restored; the state was integrated into the so-called Ostland. The general plan "Ost" worked out by the German government entailed colonisation and the "Germanisation" of Latvia.

From the first days of its existence the Nazi regime started repressions against civilians, in particular Jews, and began their extermination. An absolute majority of Latvian Jews, almost 70,000 were killed during the Holocaust. A small part of the population of Latvia was involved in these crimes too, the so-called Arajs commando. About 100,000 civilians were exterminated in Latvia during the Nazi occupation (the number includes approximately 2,000 Roma people and 2,271 mentally sick people).

When the situation on the Eastern Front deteriorated the Nazi regime decided to call up into its armed forces inhabitants of Latvia. Latvian police battalions and the Latvian voluntary SS legion (division 15 and 19) were formed. About 110,000 people were drafted in total. Almost half of them died during World War II. Latvian soldiers were sent to the Eastern Front; they did not fight in the West against the allied forces.

In the final stage of the war in 1944/1945 when the Soviet Union occupied Latvia repeatedly, many tens of thousands of inhabitants of Latvia voluntarily and by force left the native land and became refugees. The major reason for fleeing to the West was fears of terror of the Communist regime, deportations and repetition of repressions. Propaganda carried out by the Nazi regime and forced evacuation of civilians had also their role to play. In the given period about 200,000 people left Latvia. According to some experts the damage inflicted upon the economy of Latvia was around 660 million US dollars. All in all during World War II as a result of combat activities Latvia lost about 120,000 people (soldiers and civilians); adding refugees and the repatriated people these losses amounted to about 450,000 people, which makes almost ¼ of the total population.

III. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE Communist REGIME (1944-1990)

In mid - July of 1945, when the German troops retreated, the Red Army came into the Eastern part of Latvia; this marked the beginning of re-occupation of the state. The Nazi Germany occupation regime was replaced by the USSR regime. This process was finished on May 8, 1945, with the unconditional capitulation of Germany. The political and economic system existing in the Soviet Union was established in Latvia.

By its integration into the Soviet Union, Latvia lost some of its territory. On August 22, 1944, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Latvia SSR, which at the time was located in Moscow, took a decision to give up part of the Latvian Abrene region to Russia. The transfer of Abrene town and six townships to Russia was done violating the Constitution of Latvia SSR. As evident from documents, there was no Presidium sitting at all. On August 23, a decree of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium was issued by which the former territories of Latvia were included into the Pskov region, belonging to Russia.

From the first days of its existence, the Soviet occupation regime began repressions against the population. On January 29, 1949, the USSR Council of Ministers took a decision on mass deportations in all Baltic republics. From March 25 until March 30, 44,271 people were deported from Latvia to remote northern regions of Russia. The first secretary of the Latvian Communist Party Janis Kalnberzins in his report at the plenary session of the Central Committee pointed out that in the period from 1945 until 1953, 119,000 people were repressed in the republic, among them 72,850 arrested, 43,702 deported, and 2,321 killed. Some historians in Latvia as well as in Russia consider that political repressions affected from 140,000 up to 190,000 people. All in all during the Soviet regime 240,000 people became victims of political repressions. People were subject to repressions if they expressed national views, in some way resisted the occupation power, had been working in a leading position during independence of Latvia or possessed some larger property. Also those people who were accused of praising Western culture (the so-called French group, intellectuals who took interest in French art and literature) were repressed. Political repressions diminished in Latvia at the beginning of 1950s after the dictator Stalin's death, and yet the Soviet regime never stopped them, thus keeping society in a state of fear and tension.

The occupied Latvia became one of the fifteen united republics of the USSR. The decisive political force was the Communist Party that had unrestricted power in its hands. The Communist regime exploited also pseudo-democratic attributes and symbols: there was the Supreme Council of the Latvia Soviet Socialist Republic (the parliament), Council of Ministers (the government), there was the state coat-of-arms, standard and even anthem. The above mentioned institutions had no real impact; they only created a fictitious illusion of sovereignty. All the responsible decisions were taken either in Moscow or at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia. Therefore the main persons in Soviet Latvia were not the heads of the government or the parliament but the first secretaries of the Communist Party: Janis Kalnberzins (1940-1959), Arvids Pelse (1959-1963), Augusts Voss (1966-1984), Boris Pugo (1984-1988) and Janis Vagris (1988-1990).

Apart from the first secretary an essential role in the life of Latvia was played by the second secretary of the Communist Party appointed from Moscow, who actually performed functions of a supervisor and indirectly of a viceroy. Structural units of the Communist Party of Latvia were throughout all the country and together with the repressive institutions (the prosecutor's office, militia, and state security committee) were a support for the Soviet occupation regime. A typical feature was also the existence of nomenclature that consisted of the responsible public officials of the regime (party and the Soviet apparatus, trade union, Komsomol, economic leaders) who were appointed with approval of the Communist Party leadership.

The Soviet regime tried to strengthen the leading role of the Communist Party also by legislative measures. Thus Section 6 of the 1978 Constitution of the Latvia SSR underlined that the leading and guiding force, the nucleus of the state and public organisations is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It was the party who relying on Marxist and Leninist teaching defined the general line of development of all the state, its internal and external policy, thus imparting a planned and scientifically motivated character to its struggle for the victory of Communism. A very massive propaganda campaign was undertaken in order to influence public opinion to make it favourable for the regime. In order not to allow expression of the people's free will a stringent censorship was introduced that was carried out by the Main Literature board. It very closely monitored that no information undesirable for the Soviet regime or criticism of its national or economic policy appear in literature, art, television, radio, press. In this sense the speech made by the first secretary of the Communist Party of Latvia, Augusts Voss, at the central committee plenary session in 1971 was very indicative. He declared that a writer or an artist may depict any facet of our reality, also its dark sides. But to be able to represent or depict them the artists must always retain a strict party and class position.

The Communist Party always stressed in its propaganda that a Soviet individual must always be loyal to the Communist ideals, he must be an internationalist, sacrifice his personal interests to society and so on. In the course of time society discovered a discrepancy between the Communist Party propaganda and the actual reality. The regime did everything to conceal, ignore the existing problems or depict life and its problems in a desirable light. It all caused contradictions and a certain moral crisis in society, a wish to hide one's views and thoughts.

The beginning of the post-war period (until 1953) was the time of Stalin's rule. During that period essential strengthening of the Soviet totalitarian system was carried out in Latvia. Moscow's basic aim was a complete 'Sovietisation' of Latvia. In education and culture the main task was indoctrination of the Communist ideology in society at large. Mass-scale repressions were started against all who held nationalist views. With all possible means and resources the Soviet regime was trying to impose upon Latvians ideologically and politically biased views about the history of their state. Utmost efforts were made to deprive the people of their historical memory, to deny the previous achievements in the independence period from 1918 to 1940. Special attention was paid to representation of the 1940 events in Latvia, emphasising that there had been no occupation of the state, that the nation after the so-called "socialist revolution" decided "voluntarily" to accede the Soviet Union. Thus historical truth about the USSR policy carried out in Latvia and other Baltic states was grossly distorted. Yet despite the efforts of the Communist regime Latvians passed on from a generation to generation the truth about what had happened to their country.

To weaken the Latvian identity and to facilitate a more rapid "Russification", in the 1950s the Soviet regime started a comprehensive campaign praising the Russian language and culture. The Russian language was started to be more intensively taught at general education schools, technical colleges, vocational schools and higher learning institutions; compared to the Latvian language it gained a more advantageous status. As a result of such a policy in many branches of industry, public institutions, even in daily

life, the Russian language gradually became the dominant language, ousting Latvian. In 1989 89 percent of all the population spoke Russian freely.

During the rule of the first secretary of the Communist Party of Latvia, Arvids Pelse, the celebrations of the Midsummer festival so very popular in Latvia were banned. The official propaganda stressed that the festival was outdated, non-compliant to the spirit of the times, that it was unacceptable for socialist society to practice some heathen traditions. The midsummer festival was forbidden to be reflected in music, literature, film and even in cuisine. For instance the popular "Midsummer cheese" was renamed as "Farmer's cheese". Even school books were revised crossing out any references to the Midsummer festival tradition. The Midsummer Day regained its official status only at the end of existence of the Soviet regime in 1988.

The Soviet regime fiercely fought against religion and church. Religious teaching was not allowed at educational establishments, church festival celebrations were banned. Atheist propaganda was carried out on a very high level; university curricula had a course of atheism. The official power tried to restrict the church activities by imposing large taxes and by creating other obstacles. In 1961 the most famous Orthodox cathedral was closed in Riga, its premises were turned into an exhibition hall and planetarium.

Cardinal changes took place in the economy. Total nationalisation was done in industry, agriculture, trade and other areas. The population lost their property getting no compensation. Private entrepreneurship was limited at the beginning, later on totally banned; the economy came under entire control of the state, and was subject to strict planning.

In the agricultural sector general collectivisation took place, using repressive measures peasants were forced to join collective-farms. Already in 1946 the first collective-farm was established in Latvia. The Soviet agricultural system was inefficient, with low rate of productivity and high cost. The small auxiliary farms of the population were much more effective, they produced a significant amount of meat, milk and other products. During the rule of Nikita Khrushchev in the USSR, agriculture underwent different campaigns.

Overall the economic structure of Latvia was radically changed; industry was developed with a particular intensity. In the 1950s and 60s tens of new plants and factories were built. Large industrial enterprises were constructed that basically manufactured products to be exported to other republics. This policy had no objective economic grounds. Mass scale labour force influx from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova started. Eventually it led to essential changes of the demographic structure in Latvia. At the beginning of 1980 Latvians comprised only 52 percent of the total population. The trends of development showed that as a result of the policy implemented by Moscow Latvians could become a minority in their land.

Due to the artificial development of industry the number of inhabitants quickly increased in the largest cities of Latvia - Riga, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Ventspils, Valmiera, Rezekne. In the 1960s and 1970s rapid urbanisation took place in Latvia, which caused a shortage of housing. Starting from the 1960s reinforced concrete residential blocks were built on a mass scale; they had poor planning and architectural design. The new residential areas did not have the necessary infrastructure; there was a deficiency of kindergartens, shops, and health-care facilities. Although every year many new dwelling-houses were built, the housing problem, in particular in the capital Riga, was very severe. Families had to spend ten and more years in the waiting list for a flat. Latvians had a particularly complicated situation, because newcomers as well as the former USSR Army officers and nomenclature representatives were treated preferentially.

In general, during the Soviet regime by the most important economic and social development indicators Latvia started comparatively to lag behind those countries (Scandinavia) with whom in the independence times it had approximately the same level. It all was evidence of the inefficiency of the Soviet system, its stagnation and crisis.

IV. RESISTANCE TO OCCUPATION AND DICTATORSHIP

A very large part of the population in Latvia at the beginning of the post-war period was ready to resist the occupation regime. Basically the resistance had two forms: armed struggle of the national partisans or the so-called "Forest Brothers" and non-violent resistance. After the Red Army came into the Eastern part of Latvia in summer of 1944 the first "Forest Brothers" groups started to be formed randomly and they began an armed struggle against

the Soviet power. It was the escalation of repressions against the population that facilitated the growth of the resistance movement. Initially the "Forest Brothers" were joined by those who had actively cooperated with the Nazi regime: the former police officers, legionaries who had been called-up into German troops, employees of land governance, and others. The "Forest Brothers" were young people, 20-30 years old. Later on their ranks were joined by the sons of the new farmers, rural intelligentsia, the former soldiers and officers of the Republic of Latvia Army who retained in their heart the ideal of an independent state of Latvia. Many people in Latvia after the war believed that soon a new war would start between the Western countries and the Soviet Union and therefore actively got involved into fighting against the Soviet occupation regime.

The armed struggle of the "Forest Brothers" against the Soviet Union regime was not a unique phenomenon. Similar operations took place in Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, Poland and in other East European countries. Initially, in 1944/45 comparatively large "forest brother" groups were formed. For instance, in the Balvi and Vilaka vicinity the "Latvian National Partisan Union" was established under the leadership of Peteris Supe. The unit had about 400 "Forest Brothers". Its activities covered all the Northern part of Latgale, as well as the northern and central part of Vidzeme. The Soviet security authorities managed to exterminate the union only in 1953. In Kurzeme region two "Forest Brothers" unions were functioning: "the Northern Kurzeme Partisan Organisation" and "the Latvian National Partisan Organisation". According to the information from the archive approximately 20,193 people were involved in "Forest Brother" units with almost 2,659 operations against the Soviet regime. 2,422 "Forest Brothers" were killed in action, 7,342 were arrested. During their operations the "Forest Brothers" killed 259 soviet military persons, 111 KGB employees, 199 fighters of penal battalions, as well as 1,070 Soviet regime activists.

The most active period of "Forest Brothers" activities was 1944-1949, when they did not only stay on the defensive but actively attacked Soviet establishments, army and security forces. During the subsequent years by escalating repressions and propaganda campaign the Soviet regime managed to restrict the "Forest Brothers" activities. The "Forest Brothers" did not carry out large scale operations any more. The attack strategy of the previous years was replaced by a survival strategy. Part of the "Forest Brothers" voluntarily surrendered to the Soviet authorities. It was particularly facilitated by the USSR Supreme Soviet's decree "On Amnesty" that was passed in 1955. In a year's time about 350 "Forest Brothers" surrendered.

The "Forest Brothers" units not only engaged in combat operations but also tried to publish their illegal newspapers, various leaflets and proclamations that they spread among people. Such activities were of great significance because they revealed the policy of the Soviet occupation regime. During the "Forest Brothers" war 14 newspapers or newsletters of different size were published in Latvia.

The high efficiency of the "Forest Brothers" movement in the post-war Latvia is attested by the fact that in the second half of 1944 the Soviet regime established special military formations - exterminating battalions by involving more than 44,000 combatants. Exterminating battalions were set up in all regions in Latvia; on the average each consisted of 800 combatants. In the townships there were extermination battalion units 25-30 people strong; they were the basic force of the Soviet regime to fight against the "Forest Brothers" in rural regions of Latvia. Combatants were conscripted to the battalions from the local Soviet population or those loyal to them.

The Soviet security institutions used also cover-up agents in the units. These agents not only helped to exterminate a specific "Forest Brothers" unit but also revealed the network of its supporters, food and arms supply chain. To fight against the "Forest Brothers", their family members and relatives were cruelly persecuted. Even small children were subject to terror. "Forest Brothers" who were taken captive were often subject to physical torture and mutilation. To intimidate the local population the bodies of "Forest Brothers" were regularly displayed in the townships for public. A widespread practice was burning down of the houses of "Forest Brothers" and their relatives.

A non-violent resistance in Latvia also started when the Soviet regime was established. Many illegal groups were formed that gathered people who tried to collect and analyse information about the policies implemented by the Soviet regime. These groups tried to print leaflets, proclamations, even small newsletters in which they invited the inhabitants to disobey the Soviet regime. Non-violent means of resistance included: damaging of Soviet flags put out in public places, destroying of the official portraits of the USSR leaders, putting out of the flag of the Republic of Latvia, anti-Soviet slogans on walls, streets and so on. Listening to the radio stations "Voice of America" and dissemination of its information was also qualified as resistance to the regime. Non-violent resistance was also manifested as activities of various illegal school societies and groups. Between 1947 and 1957 the Soviet security authorities discovered more that 100 anti-Soviet groups of pupils. An

important resistance to the regime was put up by the traditional denominations in Latvia: Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Old-Believers and Orthodox Church. The church printed illegal publications in which they explained to society the existence of God and His role in the spiritual life of men. This was the only way for the church to counteract atheist propaganda carried out by the regime at schools, higher learning establishments, and work communities. Today's head of the Catholic Church in Latvia, Cardinal Janis Pujats, in the period of the Soviet regime started an illegal printing shop. During the Soviet years the Baptist Church published 600 illegal typewritten and handwritten publications. One of the forms of protest the church used were activities of congregations that had not been officially registered and who held sermons that were not subjected to control from the public authorities. Despite the declared freedom of faith in the Constitution of the Soviet Union, the church and its servants felt constant pressure and various forms of restrictions from the side of the Soviet regime. Before the Soviet Union occupied Latvia in 1940 there were 190 catholic priests in the country. By 1973 their number as a result of various repressions (arrests, deportations, murder) had decreased to 70. Six priests were banned from serving in the congregation and from teaching Christianity to children.

In the 1960s essential changes in the organisation of resistance and ideology took place. Although there were still some attempts to form illegal groups they were usually very quickly discovered and destroyed. Opposition to the regime and its policy was more manifested through the activities of separate individuals or small groups. Dissidents appeared who were not afraid to voice openly their critical opinions about the life in the Soviet Union. The movement basically had the character of democratic and national resistance. Dissidents usually demanded from the Soviet Union compliance to those commitments it had undertaken by signing international agreements or abiding by those principles and norms that were stipulated by the state legislation. The main aim of Latvian dissidents was the struggle for the rights of the Latvian nation to self-determination, the restoration of an independent state, and the retaining of one's culture and language identity, against Russification.

Certain disapproval against the Soviet regime in Latvia was caused by the intervention of troops of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact states into Czechoslovakia in August of 1968. Even members of the Communist Party protested against it. The student Ilja Rips, protesting against the invasion of Czechoslovakia, in 1969 tried to burn himself close to the Freedom monument in Riga. Many illegal leaflets were spread, slogans of protests written on asphalt, walls of houses and fences. Public authorities received letters of protest from inhabitants.

Dissidents considered that one of the very important tasks is to inform the public about the actual events, to raise awareness among society and to keep up the spirit of resistance. To reach the goal there were attempts to unite the Baltic opposition forces. On August 20, 1977, several Baltic dissidents adopted a document by which they planned to set up the Supreme Committee that would coordinate the national movement of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The KGB tried to stop these attempts by making several arrests among dissidents. When in 1970s detente started between East and West, the Soviet regime found it increasingly hard to suppress the dissident movement. Leaders of the Western countries and international human rights organisations opposed the Soviet regime repressions. Particular attention in the West was drawn by the Latvian Communist Party dissident Eduards Beklavs' and his supporters' letter (the so-called '17 Communists Letter') about the situation in Latvia. They managed to take this document to the West and it had a big resonance. The letter openly characterised the policy implemented by the regime, underlining that it was aimed at the "Russification" of Latvia. The economic policy that facilitated the rapid influx of immigrants in Latvia was also criticised. It was indicated in the document that there was no democracy in Latvia and that human rights were violated. The Soviet authorities tried their best to prove that the letter by 17 Latvian Communists is a forgery and did not reflect the actual reality.

Fighting against dissidents, the Soviet regime often resorted to repressive methods. For instance, at the beginning of the 1960s the poet Knuts Skujenieks was arrested and sentenced to a long prison term. In 1961 Gunars Astra was sentenced to 15 years in Gulag camps. The last biggest dissident arrests in Latvia before the collapse of the Soviet regime were made during the rule of the General Secretary of the CPSU Yury Andropov. In 1983 Gunars Astra, as well as Ints Calitis, Lidija Doronina-Lasmane and other dissidents were sentenced repeatedly. Several dozen of people received official warnings and were pursued. Gunars Astra, making a statement at the sitting of the Supreme Court of Latvia SSR on December 15, 1983, said: "I trust that these times will vanish like a horrible nightmare. It gives me strength to stand here and breathe. Our nation has suffered much and therefore will survive these dark times." In the 1970s and 80s against dissidents such a method was used as exiling to the Western countries. This was a punishment received by brothers Olafs and Pavils Bruvers.

In the second half of the 1980s human rights movements became more active in Latvia. The group "Helsinki 86" was founded, which monitored how the USSR is complying with the documents signed at an OSCE conference in Helsinki in the area of human rights. This group organised large demonstrations on June 14, 1987, protesting against the Communist system in Latvia. The crisis of the Soviet regime had started and no large repressions after the rally occurred, although the KGB managed to achieve the deportation of several members of the "Helsinki 86" members to Western countries.

V. CHANGES IN THE Soviet regime BETWEEN 1950 AND 1980

After the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin died in 1953, certain changes started in its political system that have been called by historians "Khrushchev's thaw". During this period in several Soviet republics, including Latvia, the different forces demanded reform of the dictatorial system, greater freedom, reduction of dependence on the centre (Moscow) and more independent decisions when appointing the national staff in the leading posts. With the same initiative arose one of the so-called Stalin's inheritors Lavrentiy Beria, who was head of the state security authorities and an influential member of the Central Committee of the CPSU. He called for strengthening the national cadres in the system of the Communist Party of the republics and in the apparatus of government. He emphasised that the leading cadres of the national republics must know the local language otherwise they are not entitled to these posts and should be recalled back to the centre. Regarding the Latvia SSR such a decision was taken in Moscow on June 12, 1953. Soon after that on June 22, the Latvian Communist Party Central Committee plenary session was held and similar ideas were stressed there as well. Special attention was paid to the fact that many functionaries did not know the Latvia language, that Latvian is discriminated against and ousted from official use.

Thus the so-called national Communists took the leading positions in the Communist Party and the government had no intention of destroying the existing Communist system, rather aiming to reform and democratise it. This group spoke against the artificial industrialisation of Latvia and against mass-scale immigration of people from other republics. They wanted the locals to be appointed in high-ranking posts in the party and to safeguard the role of the Latvian language and culture. The national Communists also called for openness in reflection of history of the Soviet Union and Latvia. The best known national Communist leaders in Latvia were: the first deputy of the chairperson of the Council of Ministers Eduards Berklavs, the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party Vilis Krumins, economist Pauls Dzerve, minister of agriculture Aleksandrs Nikonovs, head of the Agriculture division of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party Antons Lurins, and others.

Owing to the criticism of Stalin's cult started by Nikita Khruschev and due to a certain liberalisation of the Soviet system, two camps were formed in the elite: the Latvian Communist Party and government, and a serious conflict appeared between both. One camp was represented by the old Stalinists who opposed any change in the Soviet regime. While the second group, the national Communists, aspired to discard the so-called model of Stalinist socialism and to implement in life the genuine Marxist-Leninist principles. There were arguments about what is more important for Latvia – its own interests or demands and priorities put forward by Moscow. Unlike national Communists, Stalinists derogated the Latvian language and culture, and emphasised the supremacy of the Russian language and culture.

The Stalinist camp in Latvia consisted of the old nomenclature that had a very negative attitude towards Khrushchev's reforms. They were people from the party and Soviet institutions, from the State Security Committee and from the leaders of the Baltic military zone. The most well-known representatives of this group were the ideology secretary of the Communist Party Arvids Pelse, and the head of a department of the Communist Party Central Committee Augusts Voss, general Alexander Gorvatov, editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Soviet Latvia" (Sovetskaja Latvija) and others.

In December of 1956, Khrushchev met the leaders of the Latvia SSR, chair of the Council of Ministers Vilis Lacis, the first Communist Party secretary Janis Kalnberzins and the chair of the Supreme Soviet presidium Karlis Ozolins. During the meeting an appeal was expressed to restrict the number of incomers in Latvia, to appoint in the leading positions those who know the Latvian language and traditions, as well as to review the artificial plan of building all-union plants and factories in Latvia. Khrushchev admitted the proposals by the leaders of Latvia to be well-grounded and recognised that a certain

disproportion has been created in Latvia.

Yet the national Communists in Latvia had not organised themselves into distinct structures. They did not have their own structural units or activity programme. They were rather a group of individuals of similar outlook supported by the younger generation of the nomenclature and also by intellectuals of Latvia. The impact of reformists was seen in 1958 when Fiodor Kashnikov, who was promoted and supported by the centre, was not elected as the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia. It created a shock in Moscow because it was an unprecedented case in Moscow's relations with the Communist Party of a republic. Moscow started counteractivities because Kashnikov was considered a victim of the anti-Russian policy in Latvia.

An active opponent of the forced influx of migrants into Latvia was Eduards Berklavs. Being deputy of the Chairperson of the Council of Ministers he tried to prevent mass-scale influx of immigrants and their settling down in the capital Riga. In this issue Berklavs even got a support from the USSR government by proving that Riga has no capacity to provide all the immigrants with housing. National Communists tried to achieve the same restrictions for immigrants from other republics to Riga as in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. Such an approach was met with particular dislike by the ex-officers of the Soviet Army who perceived Riga as a very attractive place of residence.

In December of 1956 Latvian national Communists managed to adopt a decision at the Central Committee bureau about the teaching of Latvian and Russian. It stressed that many leading public authorities in the republic have poor knowledge of Latvian and thus Latvian is ousted from the official use. It was stated that enterprise documentation, political and cultural mass events, irrespective of the ethnic structure of the labour community often was in Russian. It all created grounds for disparity between Latvians and Russians, and facilitated different manifestations of nationalism. To improve the situation, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia ruled that at the party organisations, enterprises and institutions the Latvian and Russian language training should be provided, demanding from the senior staff to acquire both the languages in two years' time at least on a conversational level.

New approaches appeared also in the area of education policy. Curricula were worked out focusing more attention than before on aesthetic upbringing, as well as the history and culture of Latvia. Leaders of the education system in Latvia considered that the duration of studies has to be prolonged by one year, compared to the system in the Russian Federation. It was motivated by the need for students in Latvia to learn Latvian and Russian. Moscow turned this proposal down. In 1958 the relations between the Stalinists and the liberal Communist wing became more aggravating in the Communist Party of Latvia. The reactionary wing of the Communist Party became more active, as a result a special inspection group was sent to Riga from the CPSU Central Committee in Moscow.

In June 1959 the leader of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev arrived in Riga. Stalinists convinced him that nationalists have occupied the leading positions in the Communist Party of the republic, and Russians are discriminated in Latvia. A decision was made in Moscow to perform cleansing among the leadership of Latvia. On November 25, the first secretary of the Communist Party of Latvia Janis Kalberzins and the chair of the Council of Ministers Vilis Lacis resigned from their posts. One of the most well-known national Communists Eduards Berklavs was dismissed from his post. In actual reality he was deported to the Vladimir region in Russia where he worked as the head of the film board. During the subsequent month the editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Fight" (Cina), Pavels Pizans, the editor of Riga city newspaper Osvalds Darbins, the editor of the magasine "Zvaigzne", Rafaels Blums, and many others were released from their positions. As a result of this cleansing more than a thousand people were dismissed from their jobs. The reactionary Arvids Pelse was appointed as the first secretary of the Communist Party of Latvia; he continued the replacement of the leading staff and the political cleansing until 1962.

After Khrushchev was removed from his position and Leonid Brezhnev came to power in Moscow, the current changes took place also in the elite of the Communist Party of Latvia. Augusts Voss, the Latvian from Russia did not speak any Latvian but still was appointed as the first secretary. The so-called stagnation period started in Latvia. There was no open struggle for power in the highest echelons of power any more. The most important principle was good relations with the centre and denial of any national priorities. The 1960s and 70s were characterised by stringent political and ideological control and enhancing the centralisation of power. Yet the regime was not capable any more of subjecting everyone and everywhere to total control. Intellectuals and the most active part of society saw a distinct discrepancy between the deeds and words of the representatives of power. Nomenclature had access to everything but the others got what remained. Such a situation facilitated the increase of the distance between power and society and formation of a gap

between the elite, nomenclature and rank and file people. Part of society indulged in alcohol, apathy and indifference to the surrounding reality increased.

The new leaders of the republic obediently followed the instructions from the centre and in the 1960s supported the rapid construction of all-union industrial enterprises. As a rule, machinery, metal processing, chemical, ship building, as well as radio and electronic equipment plants were built. Latvia, along with the other Baltic republics was increasingly industrialised. Continuing the policy declared by Khrushchev on enhanced development of the chemical industry, four large chemical facilities were built in Latvia in the first half of the 1960s: Olaine chemical plant, Valmiera glass fibre plant, Daugavpils chemical fibre factory and Olaine plastic processing plant. The State Electrotechnical plant (VEF) and Riga Radio plant named after Andrei Popov were considerably enlarged. Riga train factory became a monopoly enterprise for train carriage manufacturing in the Soviet Union.

Moscow was not interested in a balanced development of the economy. The missing raw materials, labour force and energy resources were brought to Latvia. Thus, in 1960-1970 already 43.3 percent of all the necessary labour force came from other USSR republics. For example, at that time the Jelgava minibus plant was built, almost all the necessary spare parts were brought to it from Russia and other republics. A similar situation occurred in the Ogre textile plant and in the plant built in Liepaja city "Lauma".

The main indicator of production according to the Soviet regime was the mandatory fulfilment of production volumes as defined in the state plan. The quality of the manufactured goods was not paid due attention because there was a continuous shortage of any kind of goods in the Soviet Union. High production quality was ensured only in military industry, and there were an increasing number of such plants in Latvia in 1960s and 70s. More than 15 percent of the whole labour force in the given period was employed in manufacturing of military production. That was considerably more than in Lithuania and surpassed three times the respective indicator in Estonia.

Due to the disproportion the agricultural branch had always been in a more complicated economic situation. The situation was similar also in Latvia. The Soviet regime nationalised the land and carried out collectivisation of the farms. The traditional forms of production were destroyed, which caused serious social, demographic and even moral

problems in rural areas. In the first collective farming years (end of the 1940s, beginning of the 1950s), the collective farmers in a sense were treated like serfs because without permission from the chairperson of the collective farm they could not step out from it or move to another place of residence. Payment for the hard and heavy work was ridiculously small. Agricultural rate of production did not reach the pre-war level for a very long time, which indicated the inefficiency of the collective farming system. This was admitted in his report by the leader of the Communist Party of Latvia Janis Kalberzins. Collective farms were undermined by the very low purchasing prices set by the state, the big taxes and various other additional mandatory duties, for example, the compulsory timber supply quotas. Khrushchev's times brought new ordeals to the peasants because for political reasons they were invited to give up the small individual auxiliary farming, which was one of the sources of income for the collective farmers. Certain damage to agriculture in Latvia was also caused by Khrushchev's campaign for the mandatory cultivation of maize.

Yet, starting from the 1960s discrimination of the collective farmers began to decrease, because purchasing prices went up, state pension payments were started, incomes of the rural population and also their social security increased. The government allowed the collective farms to develop various additional production forms (tinned food manufacturing facilities, ceramics production, breweries and so on), which increased the income of the employees. Despite separate positive trends in the 1970s and 80s the main problem of rural development was low production efficiency. By many indicators agriculture of the Latvia SSR had not reached the rates of the independence times. Thus, in 1940 potato productivity was 151 hundredweights from a hectare while between 1971 and 1975 it was only 138. In corn production the situation was similar. The 1940 total yield of crop - 1.4 million tons - was surpassed only in 1981. Within the given period supply to the population with food products started to deteriorate because more and more of the production was sent to Moscow. It caused dissatisfaction among the population.

The economic policy of the Soviet Union was not sufficiently effective which subsequently was a cause of severe problems. There was an increase of inflation in Latvia, large savings of the inhabitants in banks, decrease of purchasing power, as well as a considerable shortage of staple goods. In 1963/64 there was even shortage of bread in Latvia and in the 1980s a shortage of meat and dairy products. Separate manufactured

goods were also in short supply. For instance, in order to buy a car people were in the waiting list even for ten years. There was also shortage of household goods, modern clothing and footwear. People were trying to acquire the necessary things via the "black market" or through "a pull" (personal contacts for buying goods in short supply). The system by itself created profound bases for high corruption levels in society.

The Soviet regime paid little attention to environmental protection. In organising the production process the government usually considered the cheapest and fastest ways. Technologies used in industry and agriculture were often environmentally unfriendly. An explicit example to that was Ventspils Sea Port industrial complex. Economising resources, the facility for handling hazardous chemicals in Ventspils was built in a way that it did not eliminate all the threats to health of the city population. The Municipal economy of the large cities could not catch up with the rapid growth of the population numbers either. Thus in separate cities the tap water quality deteriorated, treatment plants were of low quality. Large damage to the environment was inflicted by the Soviet Army units stationed in the territory of Latvia that grossly violated rules and regulations worked out by the government and municipalities.

The Soviet regime introduced big changes in the cultural life of Latvia. During the Stalinist period in the second half of the 1940s and in the first half of 1950s there was no development of culture at all, the main concern being the preservation of the national culture heritage. Communist ideology canons and socialist realism principles were imposed upon everything. Russian culture and its big impact upon the development of Latvian culture were to be praised. Certain liberal trends in life of culture appeared in the second half of the 1950s and in the 1960s when the national art achievements were started to be recognised, and it was allowed to mention artists and writers of the independence times. The creative intelligentsia could work much freer and in more diverse ways, within different genres. Yet all kinds of coercive measures and pressures were taken against the artists who expressed even implicit criticism of the existing regime. Traditionally such artists were subject to public defamation, their works stopped being published and they were excluded from cultural process. These were repressions experienced by the poets Knuts Skujenieks, Vizma Belsevica and the writer Visvaldis Lams.

In the 1970s and 1980s the post-war generation came into the cultural life of Latvia. They had experienced terror and repressions and their fear of the Soviet regime was

smaller than among the previous generations. The young artists, musicians, writers were more educated about the processes in the world; their creative manifestations were marked by much greater freedom. Contacts with émigré Latvians in the Western countries were also developing. Yet the Soviet regime vigilantly followed the trends in the cultural life of the Latvia SSR and clamped down any manifestations that it deemed unwelcome. For instance in 1984 the exhibition of creative artists "Nature, Environment, Man" was closed before the planned time and activities of rock groups popular among young people were banned (the group "Perkons").

Although the Soviet regime always tried to keep the cultural life in Latvia under stringent control and management, the national culture still developed in a certain interaction with the processes in the world; it was not a thoughtless glorification of the Communist ideology. The best traditions of the independence times, such as the Latvian Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration was preserved and served as manifestation of the spiritual strength and the power of song.

VI. CRISIS OF THE SOVIET REGIME AND THE BEGINNING OF CHANGE (1987-1990)

The economic, social and political situation in the Soviet Union in the first half of the 1980s signalled a serious crisis of the regime. Economic indicators of the country seriously deteriorated and so did the relations with the West. It became more and more evident that the USSR economically and technologically was lagging behind the most developed countries of the world. Within a short period of time because of old age and disease three general secretaries of the CPSU had changed. There was distrust and certain hopelessness about the capacity of the regime to carry out positive changes in the world. Under such conditions, Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as the general secretary of the CPSU in April, 1985. He represented those forces that recognised the need for liberalisation of the regime and reforms. Gorbachev considered that the backward Soviet economy should urgently be modernised, corruption in the

nomenclature of the party and Soviet authorities should be stopped, and that stagnation and lack of enthusiasm in society must be overcome. The new Communist Party leader declared the move to perestroika and glasnost.

Gorbachev considered the Baltic republics as the laboratory for his course towards perestroika and glasnost because he believed that the leaders of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania and society at large in those republics would much better understand the gist of the reform and would extend bigger support and understanding. Gorbachev did not fully evaluate the society's disposition and reaction to openness and changes. The opportunity to freely express thoughts about the realities of the Soviet Union was quickly taken on board by the intellectuals in Latvia and other Baltic republics who started advancing slogans about the restoration of independent statehood.

In July 1986 in Liepaja the human right defence group "Helsinki 86" was founded; they openly spoke about the occupation of Latvia by the Soviet Union, about repressions and crimes against the Latvian nation committed by the Soviet regime. The group "Helsinki 86" sent a letter to Gorbachev in which they asked him for assistance in enforcing the rights stipulated in Article 69 of the Constitution of the Latvia SSR to secede from the Soviet Union. The letter stressed as follows: "Allow us to decide about our destiny by ourselves. Allow us to eat our own bread and sell the remaining to others. Allow us to meet freely with all the nations of the world. We have never harmed any nation and we do not deserve to be locked in and told who we should make friends with and who not."

A certain breaking point in further undermining the Soviet system was caused by the large-scale manifestation in Riga on June 14, 1987, organised by the group "Helsinki 86". Commemorating the victims of deportations of civilians carried out by the Soviet regime on June 14, 1941, people laid flowers by the Freedom monument. The so-called "calendar rebellion" started in Latvia, that is, mass-scale rallies and manifestations on significant commemoration days when dissatisfaction with the Soviet regime was shown. For example, on August 23, the anniversary of the signing of the criminal Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a large protest rally took place again by the Freedom monument. Militia and KGB staff attempted to interrupt the rally and detained its separate participants. On the day of the foundation of the Republic of Latvia another protest rally took place. Repressive forces of the regime did not permit it by dispersing and arresting its participants. The national movement continued to grow at the end of the year. A group of enthusiasts tried to restore the memorial house of the first commander-in-chief of the Latvian Army Oskars Kalpaks. Activists of the environmental club began a campaign against building a hydro-electric power station on the Daugava River near Daugavpils city. All this shattered the foundation of the existing regime even more.

Disunion appeared in the political elite of the Latvia SSR about how to treat the protesters. Reactionary forces claimed the need for more stringent approach in dealing with the demonstrators, while others believed a dialogue should be started. The view that the manifestations of public protest should be channelled within the perestroika started by Gorbachev gained the upper hand. On March 25, 1988, the government allowed the Writers' Union of the Latvia SSR to organise a commemorative rally in the war cemetery dedicated to the memory of the Soviet regime victims. On April 27, the militia did not disperse a mass rally (about 10,000 people) in Riga against the construction of the Riga's underground system.

The situation development in the summer of 1988 demonstrated that the intellectuals had started actively opposing the existing regime. On June 1-2, 1988, an enlarged plenary session of the Writers' Union took place during which the historical issues, ousting of the Latvian language from the official use, the demographic situation and uncontrolled migration were discussed openly. A strong resonance was caused by the speech made at the plenary session by Mavriks Vulfsons, a lecturer at the Arts Academy. He stressed that by evaluating events of June 1940 in Latvia it was obvious that the view propagated at the Soviet times that a socialist revolution took place in Latvia is clearly wrong. Vulfsons stated that the Soviet Union, assisted by the Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact, occupied the Baltic States.

In 1988 the formation of the patriotic organisation – the Popular Front of Latvia (PFL) - started. The regime wanted the Front to be only a public organisation that would act within the existing political system and would support the restructuring initiated by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. Yet even at the time of its establishment the Popular Front became more radical and its activities went beyond the initial framework. It was clearly evident from the activities of the Popular Front newspaper "Awakening" (Atmoda). The programme adopted by the Popular Front envisaged achieving the sovereignty of Latvia within the Soviet Union. The Popular Front was a mass-scale organisation with more than 100,000 members, uniting both Communist reformers and

Riga. Latvia. The Military Occupation of Latvia on 17 June 1940. The Red Army (the army of the Soviet Union) started the occupation operation in the early morning of 17 June.
Photo of the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation

July 14-15, 1940. Mass demonstrations in Riga were led by organisers who had come with the Red Army. Portraits of Stalin, Molotov and other Soviet leaders are carried here.
Photo of Latvian War Museum

October, 1944. The Second Soviet occupation 1944-1991. The Red Army in Riga.
Photo of the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation

1944. The Latvian resistance movement - Latvian "Forest Brothers". Many Latvians resisted the Soviet occupation.
Photo from the book "Latvian legionaries", Daugavas Vanagi, 2005.

The transition to collective farming in Latvia by the Soviet regime. Forcible displacement of peasant's house to collective farm (kolkhozy).
Gunārs Birkmanis. Latvian Museum of Photography nr. 7960/ 119

The "Singing Revolution" 1987-1991. The Baltic liberation movements were the earliest in the Soviet Union and became known as the "Singing Revolution". Photo from the Museum of the Popular Front of Latvia

The Baltic Way- Tallin-Riga-Vilnius, 23 August 1989. Approximately two million people joined their hands to form an over 600 kilometer long human chain across the three Baltic States. This original demonstration was organised to draw the world's attention to the common historical fate which these three countries suffered. Signature of the Accession Treaty.

The Way to Independence. Barricades in the Dome square in Riga 1991. Photo from the Museum of the Popular Front of Latvia

NATO Riga Summit. 28-29 November, 2006. Latvia has become a member of NATO. During V. Vike-Freiberga's presidency Latvia's membership in NATO became a reality. Photo of J. Kūmiņš

Latvia's Accession Treaty to the European Union was signed in Athens on 16 April 2003 by the President of Latvia Vaira Vike-Freiberga and the Prime Minister Einars Repše. Photo of J. Kūmiņš

nationalists, and outspoken anti-Communists. A big role in setting up the Popular Front was played by Janis Peters, Sandra Kalniete, Ivars Godmanis, Dainis Ivans, Romualds Razukas, and others. The PFL more and more actively spoke of the sovereignty and independence of Latvia.

This caused concern among the reactionary forces, and by the knowledge and support of Moscow in January 1989 the constituent congress of Latvia Workers' International Front took place in Riga. The Interfront was supported by the party and Soviet nomenclature, the leaders of the Baltic military zone, and also by the large all-union enterprises that were basically managed by people sent over from the centre. One of the leaders of the idea of the Interfront was the second secretary of the Communist Party Vitaliy Sobolev. Interfront strongly spoke against any autonomy of Latvia or its secession from the USSR. Basically it was an organisation of Russian speakers and those who aimed at retaining the Soviet regime. Its goal was to deliver a blow to the national forces and to consolidate pro-Moscow oriented society. Taking into consideration the mood of society the Board of the PFL on May 31 came up with an appeal to discuss the issue on complete political and economic independence of Latvia. A certain radicalisation of society and support to the independence idea was demonstrated by the event organised on August 23, "The Baltic Way". It was organised as a reaction against the fiftieth anniversary of the criminal Ribbentrop – Molotov Pact. About 2 million people in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia joined their hands and formed a 595 kilometres long live human chain from Tallinn to Vilnius. In response, The Central Committee of the CPSU came out with a declaration: "The situation in the Baltic Soviet republics causes an increasing concern. The way events develop there affects the interests of all Soviet nations, of all the socialist fatherland. This matter has gone too far." But that was all, because the regime was afraid to apply force to stop the national awakening in the Baltic republics.

A big success by the Popular Front was the victory at the elections to the Soviet of the USSR People's Deputies (the USSR parliament) that took place in March 1989. The candidates nominated by the Popular Front received 80 percent of all mandates allocated to the Latvia SSR. The elections showed the popularity of the Popular Front not only among Latvians, but also among the Russian speaking population. The Soviet regime and the Communist Party gradually were losing power in Latvia. That was seen during the Latvia Supreme Council elections on March 18, 1990. The PFL and its supporters got 131 seats out of 201.

VII. FROM INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION TO INDEPENDENT STATE (MAY 4, 1990 – AUGUST 21, 1990)

By winning in the Supreme Council of Latvia (parliament) elections, the Popular Front could strive to achieve independence of Latvia in a political way. In the spring of 1990 debates about adoption of the Declaration of the Independence of Latvia started. Lithuania had already done it on March 11, Estonia on March 30. The Popular Front of Latvia and the deputies elected from it discussed several ways of regaining independence. The more radically minded members considered that independence should be declared immediately. The more moderately minded supported a gradual road to independence, setting out the so-called transition period. On May 4, the Supreme Council of Latvia approved the Independence Declaration: 138 deputies voted for it, one abstained, but the opposition faction "Equality" deputies associated with Interfront (57 deputies) did not take part in the voting. The declaration stated that the Republic of Latvia and its Constitution are restored. At the same time a transition period for achieving full independence was defined. Anatolijs Gorbunovs was elected as the Chairman of the Supreme Council, but Ivars Godmanis became the first prime minister of Latvia after the country became independent from the Soviet Union. The PFL had taken over political power in Latvia.

There was euphoria and enthusiasm in society for success on the road towards independence. But serious economic problems appeared as well. A harsh problem was deficiency of commodity goods (meat products, sugar, alcohol, soap and so on). Industrial companies lacked raw materials. On May 14, 1990, the USSR leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed a decree declaring that the Independence Declarations adopted by the Baltic republics did not comply with the USSR Constitution and were illegitimate and therefore are not in force. On May 20, the Committee for protection of the constitution and citizens of the USSR and Latvia SSR, which united organisations opposing independence of Latvia was founded. Alfreds Rubiks, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia was appointed as its chairperson. On May 14-15, reactionary forces tried to break into the Supreme Council (parliament) building of Latvia and to cause insurgency there.

A very topical question was whether the interior affairs units and employees of the State security committee would support the new government. There was a rift among the militia (police) employees. Some were loyal to the Republic of Latvia but others joined the opponents of the independence of Latvia. The armed special units of militia, the so-called OMON were also hostile to the government. The Prosecutor's Office of the Latvia SSR was split as well. The State Security Committee of Latvia SSR and its head general Edmunds Johansons took a relatively favourable position towards the independence processes. He was even included processes into the government led by Godmanis.

In the autumn of 1990 the government of Latvia attempted to start negotiations with Moscow about mutual economic and political relations issues. The USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev was convinced that economic difficulties would force Latvia and the other Baltic republics to remain within the Union. On November 26, the new Union treaty draught was sent to Latvia, which included also all the Baltic republics. More than a million signatures were collected in Latvia against this treaty. There were many indications that there was a turn to a more reactionary policy in the USSR, that establishment of dictatorial regime and use of violence against the independence aspirations in the Baltic republics was possible. There were cases of blowing up and desecration of the restored monuments of the independence era. On December 6, the reactionary All-Latvia Rescue Committee appealed to Gorbachev to introduce in Latvia the presidential rule and to terminate activities of the independence forces. The armed commando OMON took over control of the Press house in Riga. Relations between Latvia and the USSR were tense. The support by Boris Yeltsin, the President of the Supreme Soviet of Russian Federation, had a great role in strengthening Latvia's positions.

A very high point of confrontation between the national and pro-Moscow forces was reached in January 1991. Vilnius TV station in Lithuania was attacked by the Soviet military forces. 14 people are killed and another 110 were injured. Meanwhile, the Latvian Popular Front issued a call for people to gather in Dome Square to protect the Supreme Council and other strategically important objects. The national demonstration attracted some 700,000 people to the shores of the Daugava River in Riga in protest to the violence and casualties in Vilnius. Ministers and Council of Ministers issue a motion to people of Latvia and requesting to bring heavy agricultural and construction equipment, as well as trucks full of logs to Riga so that barricades can be set up.

During this time the reactionary Communist Party leadership with the support of the commander of the Baltic military zone were preparing to overturn the legitimately elected Supreme Council and the government of Latvia. On January 13, these forces demanded to hand over the power in Latvia to the All-Latvia Public Rescue Committee, one of whose leader was Alfreds Rubiks. On January 15, this committee announced the takeover of power in Latvia. On January 20, the OMON commando stormed the building of the Interior Ministry; five people were killed.

The building of barricades showed the people's strong determination to defend their rights to independence. The power of the barricade defenders was in their moral supremacy over the Soviet aggression. Owing to the help by mass media the whole world viewed the determination of the Baltic nations to regain statehood lost as a result of occupation. Such a resolute action by independence defenders confused the USSR government in Moscow and there was no bloodshed and fighting in Riga. At the end of January 1991, a delicate balance set in between the independence and pro-Moscow forces. The work was continued by the Supreme Council, the government, and municipalities, while the forces obedient to the centre maintained control over the objects seized by the OMON and the Soviet Army. Both sides understood that such a dual power cannot last for long.

On March 3, the government of Latvia held a referendum on whether the state should stay within the Soviet Union; 87.5 percent of all the voters took part in it. The great majority, approximately 78.3 percent of the population, voted for independence. The leader of the USSR Gorbachev had to start negotiations with the government of Latvia. The negotiations on the future status of the Latvia, its economic relations with the USSR were very complicated. In July Moscow came forth with another draught of the Union treaty. Large pressure was put upon Latvia; there were threats of economic sanctions. The USSR government demanded to ensure conscription of young people from Latvia into the Soviet Army. The OMON commando started violent attacks upon the border crossing points of the Baltic States. During the attack on July 31 in the Lithuanian border post Medininkai seven people were killed. Everything indicated that Moscow did not want to accept the independence of the Baltic republics.

On August 19, 1991, there was an attempt of coup d'etat in Moscow. The State Emergency Rule Committee consisting of eight people (Genadi Yenaev, Boris Pugo and others) tried to seize power in the country. In Latvia the first secretary of the Communist Party Alfreds Rubiks and the commander of the Baltic military zone Fiodor Kuzmin declared that they supported the putsch and demanded resignation of the government. Special units of the USSR Army together with the OMON commando seized the building of the public radio, television, international telephone exchange and other objects. Yet after three days it became clear that the coup had failed in Moscow. Organisers of the putsch had not managed to neutralise the president of the Russian Federation who appealed to the nation to disobey the conspirators.

After the failure of the coup in Moscow on August 21, on the same day when the OMON commando tried to storm the parliament building, the Supreme Council of Latvia adopted the Constitutional law on statehood of the Republic of Latvia. It stipulated that the transition period set out in May 4, 1990, declaration had been finished and independence of the state has been restored in full scope. Reactionary forces had suffered defeat in Latvia too.

On August 24, 1990, the independence of Latvia was recognised by Boris Yeltsin in the name of the Russian Federation. A day before Iceland had done it as the first one. Similar decisions by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary and other countries followed. The European Community recognised the state of Latvia on August 27, the USA on September 2. By September 18, the Republic of Latvia had been recognised by 79 countries. On September 17, Latvia was admitted to the UN. The most important task of the government of Latvia was now to carry out economic and political reforms in the state, to strengthen its independence.

VIII. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE FROM 1991 TO 2004

The most important task after declaration of independence in Latvia on August 21, 1991, was to begin far-reaching economic and political reforms. The government had to form its new public administration structures; its own army, police, border guards, order and conformity to law had to be ensured everywhere. Many people had no clear understanding

about what and where had to be done. After regaining independence society was dominated by a euphoric moods and a conviction that it is possible to implement reforms quickly and painlessly. And yet the transition from the Soviet totalitarian system to democracy and the market economy was not simple. Some politicians believed that the Scandinavian social market economic model should be the goal of the reforms in Latvia, the model that is based on high rate of taxes, intervention of the state in economics, and a high level of social protection of people. Yet preference was given to the neo-liberal model that envisaged privatisation of public enterprises, tax and currency reform, strict budgetary discipline and so on.

Latvia chose the so-called shock therapy, abolishing price control and implementing a very rapid transition to market economy. The government was convinced that liberation of prices will create a faster awareness about the actual economic situation in the country, eliminate short supply of goods, and begin absorbing the large financial savings by the population. The most severe problem confronted by society at that time was the very high rate of inflation that in 1992 reached 1,051 percent. In the subsequent years inflation gradually decreased and in 1994 it was only 119 percent.

As part of reform process a temporary currency was introduced – the Latvia rouble, which later was replaced by the lat. When transfer to the lat took place the decision was made that 1 lat is 200 roubles. The lat had a high rate of exchange and it was pegged to the SDR. Such steps were taken to achieve macroeconomic stability and a decrease of the inflation rate. But Latvia, like other post-socialist states could not avoid serious financial and banking system calamities. The most serious one was experienced in 1995 when the largest commercial bank "Baltija" collapsed. It affected interests of more that 100,000 people and interests of many public and municipality institutions. A characteristic feature was also setting up of investment companies of short-lived life span, which on the basis of the so-called pyramid principle, defrauded inhabitants and later went bankrupt or disappeared.

An essential step was the agrarian reform, which started in July, 1990, when the decision of the Supreme Council "On Agrarian Reform" was taken. The law "On privatisation of agricultural companies and fishermen's collective companies" stipulated that privatisation shall concern all the collective-farms, Soviet farms and agrarian firms. The law granted wide authority to the communities of agricultural companies

and privatisation committees. As a result of the agrarian reform the rights of the former owners to the land and buildings deprived from them by the Soviet regime were restored. In 1993 there were already 40,000 farms in Latvia, whose number in 1995 together with the household farms had reached almost 250,000.

One of characteristic feature of the agrarian reform was a decrease of the production volume in the countryside. If in 1990 agriculture contributed 21.9 percent to the GDP, a few years later this indicator had decreased almost by half. Private farmers had become the main producers of agricultural products. During the privatisation process there were also mistakes made as a result of which of the former chairpersons and other officials of the collective farms using their official status could become the biggest private owners.

As a result of reforms privatisation process affected also other branches of industry. At first the small and medium, trading, transport and industrial enterprises, apartments and banks were privatised. Privatisation of the large public companies began only in the middle of 1990s and the process was very slow. Yet by the year of 2,000 privatisation of the large public enterprises was generally finished. Only such monopoly enterprises as "Latvenergo" (Electric Energy), "Latvijas Dzelzcels" (Latvian Rail) remained non-privatised. Privatisation of property was done either for privatisation vouchers or money.

Changes in the economic model of Latvia lead also to essential adjustments also in its structure. Contribution of industrial entrepreneurship in the GDP of Latvia quickly diminished. In 1990 it was 36.5 percent of the total value of the GDP but in 2001 it was only 14.8 percent. This could be explained by closure of many of the so-called all-Union enterprises. Meanwhile the proportion of the service sector increased radically – from 31.9 to 70.4 percent. Basically it was linked with transit of oil products from Russia via Latvia. In the given period of time proportion of agriculture also showed a big decrease – from 21.9 to 4.4 percent. Production was negatively influenced not only by the change of the type of ownership but also by the increase of prices for raw materials and the loss of markets in the former Soviet Union. The rate of unemployment also grew rapidly. The official indicator at the end of 1990s was 7-8 percent of the total number of employed. The negative trends in the economy of Latvia were basically overcome at the end of the 1990s when annual GDP growth was no less than 6-7 percent. Despite these achievements Latvia had the lowest economic growth among the Baltic States and also the lowest salaries.

Essential differences in socio-economic development between the rapidly growing cities like Riga and Ventspils and the depressive rural areas in the Eastern part of Latvia appeared. Such a disproportion was manifested in a higher rate of unemployment, lower salaries and social security level. For instance, unemployment in Riga in 2004 was 4.5 percent while in Eastern Latvia (Latgale) it reached 20-27 percent. Lower rates of income in Latgale resulted in worse education and health-care opportunities for the population. These negative phenomena facilitated drain of the labour force and population, and lower birth rates.

A certain test for Latvia and other Baltic States was the 1998 financial and payment crisis in the Russian Federation. Food processing companies, especially fish manufactures, suffered a lot in Latvia. Many companies went bankrupt. The situation was made worse regarding trade as Russia did not apply the greatest preferential treatment. It weakened competitiveness of goods from Latvia in Russian internal market compared to produce from other countries. Because of political disagreements Russia also started reducing its oil export via Latvia. All these processes facilitated the refocusing of Latvia's external trade from Russia to the EU states. In 2001, 61 percent from all export and 53 percent from import were to or from the EU.

In Restoring the independence of its statehood Latvia had to solve also a number of political and external policy problems. An essential question was if Latvia is an inheritor of the statehood of the first independent state (1918-1940) or a completely new state. An absolute majority of Western states recognised the continuity of the statehood of Latvia; while Cuba, China, Russia and Albania did not recognise the legality of the state continuity and considered it to be a newly-established state. The form of recognition of Latvia's sovereignty depended on how each state interpreted the occupation of the Baltic States in June of 1940. In some international organisations the attitude was contradictory. For example, although Latvia was one of the Member States of the International Labour Organisation founded in 1921 after restoring independence, Latvia had to join this organisation anew. The Council of Europe recognised the continuity of the statehood of Latvia.

Official recognition of statehood continuity enabled Latvia to solve positively the issues of its properties abroad, including regaining of the buildings of the former diplomatic missions and its gold deposits. At the very beginning of 1990s the UK, France, the USA and Switzerland returned to Latvia currency and gold deposits put in the banks of these states during the first independence period of Latvia. For a very long period of time during the 1990s Latvia could not regain the former embassy building in Paris, which the French government had transferred to the Soviet Union in summer of 1940. Only on March 24, 2004, an agreement between Latvia and France was signed about this issue. France undertook to compensate the value of the building.

After the restoration of independence a very important issue was international recognition of its borders, in particular with Russia. This issue had been solved already by the Peace Treaty on August 11, 1920, between the two countries. But the Russian Federation as a legal inheritor of the USSR refused to recognise the force of the Peace Treaty. The Russians emphasised in the negotiations that the Treaty had only a historical significance and that is not a legally binding document. Latvia in its turn tried to foreground this question. It considered that when the Russian Federation incorporated into its territory Abrene town and six villages in its vicinity it had violated the above mentioned treaty. On January 22, 1992, the Supreme Council of Latvia took a special decision on non-recognition of the annexation of Abrene town and the six townships of Abrene region. Likewise, the August 28, 1996, Declaration on the occupation of Latvia adopted by the Saeima (parliament) of Latvia underlines the given issue. Seeing that the border agreement issue with Russia was stalled, the Latvian side announced in 1997 that it was ready to sign the so-called technical border agreement. That enabled to begin negotiations on preparation of the border agreement and to perceive the borders of both the states as they are in the natural setting. The border agreement between Latvia and Russia was signed only in 2007 when Latvia gave up for ever all its territorial claims to Abrene (now Pitalovo) town and the six above identified rural municipalities. Russia managed to impose upon Latvia its views on the border issue.

Strengthening of statehood required the necessity of solving the citizenship issue. One approach was that citizenship should be granted to all those inhabitants who lived in Latvia at the moment of restoration of its independence and were loyal to it. The other approach was that citizenship was to be granted only to those persons who were citizens of the Republic of Latvia until June 17, 1940 (until the occupation of Latvia) and to their descendants. On the basis of such principles on October 15, 1991, the Supreme Council passed a resolution "On Restoration of Rights of Citizens of the Republic of Latvia and the Basic Principles of Naturalisation". That created a big dissatisfaction among

non-Latvians, among the potential non-citizens. Harsh criticism was expressed also by Russia, accusing Latvia of discrimination against Russians living in it. In a sense non-Latvians did not identify themselves with the state of Latvia any more; their uncertainty about their future grew.

On July 22, 1994, the Parliament of Latvia adopted the Citizenship law, which a stipulated quota principle in granting citizenship. Subsequently, every year 0.1 percent a persons from the number of citizens could get citizenship by way of naturalisation. Such a norm included in the citizenship law caused objections from the OCSE. Therefore the president of, Latvia Guntis Ulmanis, did not proclaim the law. The law was revised, cancelling the quota principle and stipulating that citizenship candidates shall be divided into several groups depending on age and time of arrival in Latvia. The new edition of the citizenship law defined the so-called "window system" that set out that each inhabitant group would be naturalised within a certain period of time. Naturalisation was to be started with the youngest group.

In 1995 after the adoption of the Citizenship law a Naturalisation Board was established and the naturalisation process of non-citizens could be started. On April 28, the parliament passed a separate law on the citizens of the former Soviet Union who lived in Latvia. They were recognised as permanent residents of Latvia. Yet the naturalisation process of non-citizens turned out to be very slow. According to legislative norms about 150,000 people could be naturalised within the period 1995 – 1998. These rights were used only by 11,400 people. Non-citizen's status did not influence the daily life of people; therefore they were in no hurry to be naturalised. Also after the amendments in the Citizenship law of Latvia separate international organisations (for example the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) indicated unjustified restrictions of non-citizens' rights. For example, non-citizens could not be practicing lawyers, acquire in their property land, as well as work in pharmaceutics or be pilots of planes. Many restrictions of non-citizens were gradually cancelled but the naturalisation rates remained slow. Many non-citizens lacked objective motivation for obtaining citizenship, and there was also an opinion that it was a very complicated procedure.

From 1997 – 1998 there were discussions in Latvia among society and political parties at the parliament on new amendments in the Citizenship law. They were supported by the liberal party Latvian Way (Latvijas Ceļš), as well as by the leftist parties the People's Consensus party (Tautas saskaņas partija) and the Democratic party Master (Saimnieks). The party of national orientation the For Fatherland and Freedom/Latvia National independence party (Tēvzemei un Brīvibai/ LNNK) was against the changes. President of the state Guntis Ulmanis defended the idea of the necessity for amendments, in particular cancelling the naturalisation windows but supporting automatic granting of citizenship to non-citizens' children born in Latvia after regaining of independence. On June 22, 1998, the amendments in the Citizenship law were adopted and they included both norms defended by the president of the sate. In such a situation 36 parliamentary deputies together with the For Fatherland and Freedom/Latvia National independence party announced that the Citizenship law amendments did not meet the interests of the people of Latvia and are not in compliance to the Constitution, and demanded its suspension for two months. At that time signatures were started to be collected for organising a referendum. About 224,000 citizens' signatures were collected and on October 3, 1998, the popular vote for the issue was held. More than 487,000 citizens (52.5 percent) of the referendum participants supported the amendments in the citizenship law. Gradually also the rates of naturalisation started increasing; in 2004, since the beginning of naturalisation 69,288 people had received citizenship. Experts explained the naturalisation rate increase by the accession of Latvia to NATO and the EU. Despite this, the number of non-citizens in Latvia was still more than 450,000. A certain role was played also by the policy of Russia who incessantly stressed that all non-citizens of Latvia should be granted citizenship at once and the so-called 0 citizenship option should be implemented. All in all such a position influenced part of the non-citizens who assumed that the state of Latvia would grant citizenship to them automatically without any naturalisation procedure.

A very topical issue to be solved by the government of Latvia was withdrawal of Russian troops as soon as possible. For the first time this issue was brought forward by the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Latvia in November of 1990 in its appeal to the president of the USSR, Michael Gorbachev. On February 1, 1992, an agreement between the two states was achieved that the withdrawal of troops would start in about a month. But the process was very complicated and it got prolonged. To retain its influence in the Baltic region, Boris Yeltsin, president of Russia declared on October 28, 1992, that he was linking the issue of the army withdrawal with guaranteeing the rights for the Russian speaking population. Russia appealed to the fact that there is no accommodation for the personnel of the withdrawn troops, that there in no necessary infrastructure. Russia claimed that they

needed first to build barracks for soldiers, dwelling houses for officers and their family members. The position of the Russian government in this issue was determined both by internal political factors (pressure from the army commanders and opposition), and by external political realities.

In order to achieve a faster solution of the issue the Baltic States involved the leading western counterparts, and in particular the USA, as well as international organisations. On July 10, 1992, at the meeting of the OSCE leaders the document was signed that called for the Russian Federation not to delay withdrawal of its troops from the Baltic States. The UN General Assembly Security Council resolution of November 25, 1992, was a similar document. A positive role was also played by the Prime minister of Sweden Karl Bildt's in his support and his mediator's role in negotiations with Russia. A certain pressure upon Russia was exerted also by the USA. To make Russia's position more flexible the Western countries set up a special foundation that funded the construction of dwelling houses and other buildings for the troops withdrawn from Russia. Although withdrawal of Russian troops from Latvia started in March 1992, it took a long time to agree upon the final date of withdrawal. Russia tried to put it off as much as possible. During the negotiations in May 1993, Russia demanded the keeping of the naval military base in Liepaja city until 1999, an electronic interception station near Ventspils city until 1997, and Skrunda early warning station until 2003. Yet the international pressure was so intense that Russia gave in and it signed an agreement with Latvia on April 30, 1994. The agreement stipulated to finish the withdrawal of Russia's troop by August 31 of the same year. Latvia on its side agreed to retain the Skrunda early warning station operational until August 31, 1998, signing for that a specific lease agreement for four years. The agreement on the withdrawal of the troops included a condition very unfavourable for Latvia. It provided that about 21,000 Russian military pensioners would remain in Latvia as permanent residents. The state of Latvia took up obligations to guarantee to them property rights, as well as full-scale social security. Some part of society perceived the agreements with Russia ambiguously. The government was criticised for giving in to Russia too much. The Skrunda early warning station stopped its operations in 1998 but its demolition was done a year later. A big role in the timely implementation of the agreements was played by the OSCE mission in Latvia that did inspections on sites and forced Russia to comply with the agreement provisions. Lithuania was the only Baltic State to manage withdrawal of Russian troops by on August 31, 1993.

After the restoration of independence transition from a totalitarian political system to democracy took place. At the very beginning of the 1990s many political parties were formed. Initially separate parties that had existed during Latvia's first independence were restored – the Social Democratic Workers' party and the party representing interests of the rural population – the Union of Latvian Farmers. The Union of Christian Democrats (KDS) was also established in the early 1990s and in the first parliamentary election it received 6 mandates out of 100. The KDS alongside conservative and liberal forces supported the fast implementation of economical and social reforms. Unlike other post-socialist countries the reformed Communist Party (the so-called national Communists) did not manage to retain influence in the country. Interests of pro-Moscow forces in Latvia were represented by the Socialist party. After the restoration of independence its influence was gradually lost by the former largest mass-scale organisation the Popular Front of Latvia on the basis of which multi-party system was established. The crisis of the PFL and its rapid decline started in summer of 1993 when it suffered a complete failure in the first democratic parliamentary elections after the regaining of independence.

As a result of the crisis of economic and social policy implemented by neo-liberalists in the mid - 1990s, populist political forces came into foreground. Explicit examples could be seen during the sixth general elections; for instance, the success reached by the popular movement "For Latvia" led by Joachim Siegerist - received 16 seats out of the 100 mandates in the parliament. Success was achieved also by the Democratic Party Master (Saimnieks) and the Unity party, which were forces aiming at populism. The above mentioned parties, unable to offer any specific solutions to the emerging problems, quite soon disappeared from the political scene of Latvia.

Criticism of liberal policy in society forced the most influential political party Latvia's Way (Latvijas ceļš) to change the previously defended economic activity strategy. Instead of liberalism it started emphasising in its policy the need for a socially oriented market economy. The national conservative force in the political system of Latvia was the party For Fatherland and Freedom/Latvia National independence party (Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/ LNNK), while the leftist force in the country was the Socialist party that supported strong regulatory functions of the state in the economy and in solution of social issues. This party opposed wide-scale privatisation and wanted to keep the large public enterprises. The Socialist party supported the formation of close ties with the Russian Federation.

Six parliamentary elections have been held in Latvia since the restoration of independence, the last one occurring in 2011. These elections demonstrate that the population of Latvia have retained interest in political processes. On average about 70 percent of all the electors take part in general elections and about 60 percent in the municipality elections. Several referendums have taken place in Latvia. Different NGOs are actively functioning in Latvia. Evaluating these processes one may conclude that as a result of reforms a successful transition from totalitarian to democratic society has taken place in Latvia. Despite the lack of experience in political activities people have become gradually aware of their role in political decision making in the state and in the building of civic society. At the end of the 1990s separate social groups of society: medical workers, teachers, and farmers started expressing their opinions about the processes in the country in an organised way, forcing the government to take decisions that would improve their conditions. People gradually gained experience of political activities and the skills to formulate their interests and to achieve their implementation. In 1993 there were 978 NGOs in Latvia but in 2004 their number had grown to 7,704. One of the most serious concerns among society is that separate economic groups and wealthy individuals have too large an influence upon the processes in the state, and that corruption is too high in the country.

The Soviet regime had left in Latvia a heritage of severe moral and legal problems. It is of utmost importance to assess the activities of those people who had been involved in crimes against humanity and in different repressions against individuals during the Communist regime. The former leader of the Communist Party Alfreds Rubiks was sentenced for treason during the process of regaining independence. The former security people's commissar of the Latvia SSR, Alfons Noviks, and one of the mass-scale deportation organisers Mikhail Farbtuch were sentenced for genocide against the Latvian nation. On April 30, 2004, the Soviet partisan Vasily Kononov who during World War II had been treating ruthlessly civilians was found guilty of war crimes by the Criminal Cases judicial panel of Latvia Supreme Court.

A topical issue to be solved by the young state of Latvia was minority policy and integration of society. On March 19, 1991, the Supreme Council adopted the law "On Free Development of National and Ethnic Groups of Latvia and Their Rights to Cultural Autonomy". The law stipulated that all the ethnic minorities have rights to cultivate and preserve the traditions of their national culture. The state undertook responsibility for ensuring these rights. Already at the beginning of the 1990s many national societies were established: Polish, Ukrainian, Russian and others. Jewish, Polish, Ukrainian, and Estonian minority schools were founded. The National Affairs department was set up at the cabinet of ministers. A typical phenomenon of the 1990s was that the minority problem in Latvia was basically seen as a problem of relationships between Latvians and Russians. A certain ethnic tension appeared in Latvia in spring of 2004 when the Russian minority expressed protests against increasing the proportion of subjects taught in Latvian in the Russian schools.

The most important foreign policy task was a faster integration of Latvia in the political, economic and security structures formed by the Western countries thus ensuring stable guarantees of the existence of the state. An essential role in foreign policy was assigned to the development of regional cooperation with the closest neighbours – Lithuania, Estonia and the Scandinavian countries. A very large role in strengthening independence in the 1990s was played by US support. The Russian government still today has not recognised the fact of occupation of the Baltic States in 1940. It shows the existence of relapse into an imperial mode of thinking and the covert claims of Russia to achieve important influence in the Baltic region.

IX. INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO

From the very first days of its existence the security issue was of the highest importance for Latvia as a new state. It could be solved by organising modern armed forces, as well as by integrating into the structures established by the Western states. In the autumn of 1991 the formation of the Latvian armed forces started; it was done on democratic principles. Parliamentary control over the army and the Ministry of Defence was prescribed. Along with the armed forces strong structure of home guards was also created, its units were located throughout the whole Latvia. In June 1995 the parliament approved the defence conception of Latvia, which included the formation of a regular army and the development of home guards as well as their close cooperation in defence area. Total and territorial defence principle of the state was accepted, at the same time developing cooperation with NATO.

The first steps towards NATO were made in December of 1991 when Latvia was accepted into the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. In 1994 led by the US initiative all interested states were offered the NATO programme "Partnership for Peace". Latvia considered it as an important opportunity to be better prepared for joining the Alliance. In 1995 NATO announced that in the nearest future NATO will accept new Member States but the enlargement process would be gradual and the candidate states would be given certain criteria. Among the important elements were: civilian control over the armed forces of the state, good relations with neighbours, absence of different ethnic and political conflicts, and existence of borders with a NATO country and others. During the 1997 NATO summit the decision was taken to accept into NATO the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland in two years. The idea of further enlargement was approved as well, thus turning down any objections voiced by Russia.

During the 1999 NATO summit in Washington the Baltic States were nominated as candidate states. The situation had changed favourably for Latvia; it had received signals that integration into NATO could happen in the near future. At that time intensive reorganisation of the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence started. A specific action plan of the tasks to be fulfilled by Latvia to join NATO was worked out. A complicated NATO criterion was an increase of the funding from the state budget for armed forces to 2 percent of the GDP. In 2003, the decision of integrating the home guard units into the armed forces was taken. At that time the state defence conception was revised too, discarding the previously accepted principle of total territorial defence of the state and emphasising the collective defence skills. In future the stress would be put upon the formation of professional armed forces, ensuring the capacities for participation in a NATO collective defence system, international military cooperation and creation of a conceptually new image of the armed forces in society. Much was done to make it possible for the Latvian soldiers to participate in NATO missions and missions of other international organisations. In spring of 2004 the Latvian armed forces consisted of: 1,200 soldiers, 11,650 home guards, 1,350 officers, 1,900 NCOs, and 1,000 conscripts.

On November 21, 2002, during the summit meeting of NATO in Prague Latvia and six other countries received an invitation to begin accession talks. In 2004, fourteen years after regaining independence Latvia had achieved one of its main foreign policy goals: becoming a member of the Transatlantic Security organisation, and had gained very important prerequisites for guaranteeing the existence of its statehood. It was particularly important for Latvia, taking into account its complicated twentieth century history. Along with joining NATO by Latvia and other Baltic States security and stability in the region have increased. It has also facilitated modernisation of the national armed forces, and their combat capacity and prestige. Latvian soldiers participating in peace keeping missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and elsewhere is seen as an important part of peace strengthening strategy.

Since the very first days of the restoration of independence Latvia has always emphasised its desire to be integrated into the community of the European states. In this sense the decision by the European Commission from August 27, 1991, was very important because it laid the foundations for relations between Latvia and the EU. The Latvian government has always stressed that it supports the same principles and values as the EU: democracy, human rights, welfare and stability. In 1992 the Baltic States together with the East European countries were included into the EU assistance programme PHARE that facilitated economic and political reforms. On May 11, Latvia signed its first agreement with the European Community concerning trade, commercial and economic cooperation that guaranteed the highest preferential treatment in mutual economic contacts. The preamble to the agreement stressed Latvia's aspirations to sign the association agreement in future. Latvia tried to activate its relations with the EU and soon it declared that one of the most important priorities of its foreign policy is joining the European Community. At the Copenhagen summit in 1993 the EU admitted that it supports the accession of new Member States at the same time putting forward stringent criteria to each Member States: stability of institutions sustaining democracy, rule of law, human rights, a functioning market economy, and capacity to be competitive in the EU, compliance to minority rights, capacity to fulfil the Member States duties.

A very important event in the relations between Latvia and the EU was the Free Trade agreement signed on July 18, 1994. It provided for free movement of goods, reducing or lifting entirely customs tariffs. The EU agreed that Latvia for four more years retains import duty on timber, raw hide, scrap iron and gypsum. That was done with an aim of facilitating the development of these branches of mining and processing industry so vitally important for Latvia. The agreement also stipulated granting of mutual advantages in trade with agricultural and fishery products. In actual reality with this agreement gradual reorientation of Latvia's foreign trade from Russia and other CIS

countries to the EU countries started. In May 1994 Latvia approved the programme for integration into the EU. The European Integration Office was also established with an aim to ensure closer cooperation among public institutions to achieve the promoted aims.

The year of 1995 was particularly active in the development of relations between Latvia and the EU because on June 12 Latvia signed the Association agreement with the EU. In 1997 the European Commission published the document "Agenda 2000", which included conclusions about all the new candidate states and recommendations about starting the accession talks. On December 12, the EU Luxemburg Council decided to include all the 11 candidate countries into the accession process. Thus Latvia and Lithuania were included into the so-called second group of negotiations but, Estonia as a better prepared candidate in the first group. Negotiations with Latvia started in February 2000 and finished in December 2002. On April 16, 2003 at the EU Council meeting in Athens Latvia together with the other candidate states signed the Treaty of Accession. From the Latvian side it was signed by the State President, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, and the prime minister Einars Repše.

Legislation in Latvia provided that the EU accession treaty has to be approved by a referendum, which was held on September 20, 2003: 66.97 percent of the referendum participants supported Latvia's accession to the EU. 32.26 percent of participants of the referendum voted against. The formal accession of Latvia to the EU was finished on May 1, 2004, when all the EU Member States had ratified the Treaty of Accession. At present Latvia is a full-fledged EU Member State and has been fully integrated into its common economic, social, legal and political space. Latvia has one post of a commissioner at the European Commission and nine members at the European Parliament. From December 2008 Latvia is a Member State of the Schengen Agreement and is working to join the EU monetary union in the nearest future.

X. LATVIA AND THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

In 2008 the Republic of Latvia celebrated 90 years of statehood. The history of the country has been very complicated in this period. In the twentieth century Latvia has experienced three occupation periods, which have left severe political, economic, demographic, psychological and moral consequences upon the development of the nation. From its 90 years of statehood Latvia has been an independent state only for 37 years. The destiny of the Latvian nation for many years was determined by powers of foreign occupation. Therefore Latvians value very highly the regained independence and the rights to decide their own destiny.

As its important priority in the future Latvia sees the rapid economic growth of the country, provision of welfare for its inhabitants, development of education and culture, close integration in the EU and NATO, as well as ensuring such conditions that would guarantee the existence of irreversible statehood. To achieve these goals Latvia became a Member State of the European Union and NATO. It should be pointed out that cooperation within the EU at the beginning of the twenty-first century has already reached a high level. Economic and monetary union has been established, a single currency system is functioning, cooperation takes place in foreign and security policy, as well as in home affairs and justice. The EU is united by common values and principles. There is a very high level of democracy, and human rights and basic freedoms have been guaranteed. Latvian society is happy for joining a club of such highly developed and stable countries.

A serious test for the readiness of Latvia and the other EU states for further integration was evident in the Treaty on the Constitution for Europe that was voted against in the referendums in France and the Netherlands. Latvia supported this treaty. The critical attitude towards the Constitution in separate countries caused a certain confusion and standstill both in the community of the EU states, and in the political elite. The question "What will the European Union be like in the future?" became more topical. Will it be a voluntary union of European states as it has been so far, or will it be European United States; that is, a European superpower with strongly restricted sovereignty of the national states? Today an essential question is about the identity of the EU in the future. The previous positive experience of integration processes over more than fifty years leaves no doubt that Europe will cope with its challenges.

During the subsequent integration process one should rely upon the common values, upon the achievements in economic, political and social integration. A united Europe's successful economy must be in the foreground, as well as strengthening of its competitiveness in the global world, compliance to the interests of the community of citizens, and improvement of democracy and human rights. Everything that makes Europe attractive for the rest of the world must be retained and developed: high level of the development of science, new technologies, the single currency, environmental protection, social security of the population, equality of all states, sovereignty and solidarity, rule of law, and predictability. In future, it is important for the EU to diminish essentially the differences existing between the new and old, large and small, and the rich and less developed countries. Deepening of the integration processes in future must proceed on the basis of the previous achievements, courageously promoting new targets and tasks that would be equally attractive for all the EU Member States. The strength of the EU is in the solidarity and equality of its all nations; it should never represent only Brussels' interests. The future of the United Europe depends on the capacity of all the nations united in it to overcome narrow national interests and act in the name of common interests.

Memories of the deportees

Elfrida Misiņa *- memories about June 14, 1941, deportation and the life in Siberia:*

In the morning of June 14, I was getting ready to go to work in Liepaja city consumer society co-operative "Hope" (Ceriba) where I worked as the sales manager. Then four Russian speaking men dressed in army uniforms came and said that I and my husband had to go with them. One of the soldiers went to fetch my husband (Pauls Misins, born in 1915) who worked in the hospital as a stoker. We were not told anything about where we would be taken. One of the soldiers threw some things in the blanket and we were taken away. My husband at the station was put in another carriage, but I, together with the other arrested women and children, were taken to Krasnoyarsk region.

I ended up in Iltyukovo village in the Krasnoyarsk region of the Novosiolovo district, in the collective-farm "Revolution". All the Latvians who had been taken there, five adults and five children, lived in one room. We, the deportees, were examined like slaves and distributed among various collective-farms by some sort of criteria. My work was tying sheaves; I earned money by doing different random jobs, knitting and sowing. In November of 1941 I gave birth to a daughter who was very sickly and in autumn of 1942 she died in Novosiolovo hospital. In the autumn of 1944 my husband came to me; he had survived after being deported to the Komi autonomous region. My husband had worked hard physical labour there. From his words I know that only 3 out of the 68 deportees survived there. My husband was very ill, with black teeth, many fallen out, hair fallen out, and he walked with difficulty. On 27 August 1946 I gave birth to my son Visvaldis who was disabled from his childhood. The wife of the minister of agriculture of Latvia, Birznieks Katrina, with her son Uldis was also deported to Novosiolovo. Around 1951 her husband Janis Birznieks came after her. In autumn he died in the hospital."

Arnolds Treide *- memories (born in 1926, deported on June 14, 1941, released in 1957) I had just finished the first year at Liepaja Technical College when in the morning of June 14, all of us were taken to the railway branch of Karaosta (Military Port) where a long train with many carriages and barred windows was waiting. With lies and cunning heads of families were separated from the others. In the Pullman carriage in Liepaja there were more than 50 people – only women and children. I was the oldest among these kids because I was already 15.*

Our train had about 90 carriages and it was pulled by two engines. On June 17, 1940, the occupants' tanks had come across the border but exactly a year later our long train crossed the border in the opposite direction. Only one year had passed – the Year of Horror – but what misery had it inflicted upon our land and the nation! After three weeks we had reached the Yenisei River. The convoy soldiers who had carefully guarded us throughout the journey closed the doors, threw their guns and sacks upon shoulders and marched towards the station. They had done their job. But we, with all our tragedy, remained there under bare sky. We got acquainted with the main torture of Siberia – mosquitoes. The tiny insects could get anywhere and bit ferociously and painfully. We had no means of protection against them and kids suffered most from them. Eyes were swollen, arms were itching and legs were scratched bloody.

The bosses in riding-breeches and "kirza" (impregnated tarpaulin) boots started walking along our camp and selecting the labour force. They had no need for old people and women with children but the strongest men had already been taken to death camps. We were taken to the regional centre 100 kilometres deeper into taiga where we were distributed to different collective-farms. Each family was given at the beginning 5 kilos of rotten oats.

List of abbreviations:

GULAG – The Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies
KDS – Kristīgi demokrātiskā savienība(Union of Christian Democrats)
Latvijas PSR – Latvijas Padomju sociālistiskā republika
(Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic)
LNNK – Latvijas nacionālā neatkarības kustība
(Latvian National Independence Movement)
LNPA – Latvijas Nacionālo partizānu apvienība (Latvian National Partisan Union)
LTF – Latvijas Tautas fronte (Popular Front of Látvia)
OMON – Milicijas īpašo uzdevumu vienība (Special Purpose Police Squad)
PSKP CK – Padomju Savienības Komunistiskās partijas Centrālā komiteja
(The Communist Party's Central Committee of the Soviet Union)
VEF – Valsts elektrotehniskā fabrika (State Electro technical Plant)


Rīga
LATVIJA
ŠIAULIAI
Telšiai
Šiauliai
PANEVĖŽYS
Panevėžys
TELŠIAI
Klaipėda
LIETUVA
UTENA
Utena
KLAIPĖDA
TAURAGĖ
Tauragė
KAUNAS
Kaunas
VILNIUS
Vilnius
MARIJAMPOLĖ
Marijampolė
Alytus
ALYTUS
Olsztyn
Němen
PODLASKIE
B

LITHUANIA: THE CENTURIES-LONG STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Vytautas Landsbergis

Republic of Lithuania – Lietuvos Respublika
Area: 65 301 km²
Population: 3 403 300 (2006)
Capital city: Vilnius
Official Language: Lithuanian
Currency: Lithuanian Litas (LTL)
Political system: parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.05.2004

I. INTRODUCTION

The presence of Lithuania in the European Union provides the country an opportunity to make its contribution to the common goal of peace and welfare, as well as to leave post-Soviet, in principle colonial backwardness, and meet the new challenges of the twenty-first century. Those are energy, demographic, climate and moral challenges. The new short-sighted Russian expansionism is another main challenge for Lithuania. It concerns and will concern not only Lithuania, but the entire continent of Europe. At the same time, it is easy to see Russian efforts to disrupt the consolidation and solidarity of the European Union by its actions targeted against individual Member States. Lithuania realises that there will be no freedom from this kind of threats for a long time yet. Now, the EU and Lithuania have a joint destiny.

II. A MILLENIUM TO REMEMBER

In 2009, Lithuania celebrated the millennium of its existence. Namely in 1009 the country was mentioned by this name in the chronicles (annals) of the German city of Quedlinburg as a geographical reference where Brunon, one of the pioneering missionaries bringing Christianity into the lands of nature-worshippers at the Baltic Sea, was killed. The country was already known at that time since it was inhabited by the warlike tribes speaking a common language different from the Germanic and Slavic ones and capable of uniting their efforts for the joint campaigns against their neighbours. In the thirteenth century, Lithuania was already a united state whose ruler Mindaugas was christened and was brought his royal crown from Rome. Nevertheless, the adoption of Christianity lasted another one and a half hundred years during which Lithuania had to defend herself from the armed missionaries, that, in truth, were aggressive subjugators coming from the West. Only in 1410, in the great battle close to Grünwald, the joint forces of two allied states - the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland - defeated the Teutonic Order and halted its 'Drang nach Osten' for a longer period. Lithuania at that time was already extended far into the East, ruled Kiev and the Crimea, collected taxes from Great Novgorod and competed for the sphere of influence with the neighbouring Duchy of Moscow that was known in Europe as Muscovy. These aspects of political history explain why the statehood was and has always been a significant value for the noble and educated society of Lithuania, described then and later as the civil nation. The statehood had a well-thought legal form. The famous code of penal and administrative laws, called the Statute of Lithuania, was followed in the vast territories of Eastern Europe in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and united them much earlier than the idea of the European Union emerged. In her territory, Lithuania also sought the implementation of the Church Union, the ecumenism of those times.

In 1791, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth called the Republic of the Two Nations adopted the first Constitution in Europe, thus becoming a constitutional monarchy, though it only existed for a few years. In 1795, more powerful neighbours Russia, Germany and Austria destroyed it to the ends and divided among themselves the territories of the formerly united Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Kingdom of Poland. Here we can see a certain precedent for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. The subjugation of the nations was followed by the recurring uprisings in both Lithuania

and Poland, usually targeted against extremely heavy Russian oppression. Finally, the cultural resistance of the Lithuanians at the end of the nineteenth century, when even the Lithuanian language and Lithuanian books were prohibited in the annexed territory of Lithuania, matured an idea and the objective to have the Lithuanian state again in essentially ethnical lands. Such occasion occurred when the First World War was ended by the downfall of three European empires. The enlightened Lithuanian society, which had convened a one-time congress of delegates, i.e. the Great Seimas of Vilnius as far back as in 1905, now declared not a merely established but historically restored independent state of Lithuania by the unanimous will of its delegates to the Council of Lithuania, on 16 February 1918. By the same act, it was detached from all state relations that had ever existed with other nations. This declaration, which had yet to be defended in the independence wars from Russia and Poland claiming the rule of Lithuania, was consolidated in 1920 by a democratically elected parliament/the Constituent Assembly. The territorial consolidation of the state was especially difficult. The western part of Lithuanian lands that had been separated from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles was appended to the Republic of Lithuania only in 1923. On the other hand, the capital city of Vilnius, including the neighbouring eastern lands, was occupied and annexed in 1920 by Poland for nineteen years. Nevertheless, Lithuania grew stronger and would have successfully overcome internal issues of democracy and evolved into the chosen model of her Scandinavian neighbours if not for the developments of 1939-1940.

III. THE TRAGEDIES OF THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

The fate of the country and her nation was then determined by the tragic events of the Second World War. Yet it is also important to note the historical background of the new destruction of Lithuania. Neither Germany, nor the Soviet Union missed the opportunity to take to revengeful expansionism, ignoring both international treaties and earlier provided guarantees for Lithuanian sovereignty. In March 1939, Germany again invaded the western territory of Lithuania, including its only port, the Klaipeda region. It happened very soon after Stalin sent a token of proposed friendship to Hitler (which perhaps encouraged Nazis for more aggression). This Soviet concept of a new policy within six months turned into a conspiracy treaty describing how to divide Europe by provoking "a new great war" (along with Stalin's vision). First, they agreed to divide among themselves certain countries named in the secret protocols of 23 August 1939 and situated among both aggressors. Thus, they criminally determined the destiny of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and even eastern Romania, namely Bessarabia. Following this agreement, Germany and the Soviet Union attacked Poland from two sides. While the USSR invaded Finland soon after, the three Baltic States managed to last until June 1940. After the Soviet Army overstepped the borders of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, subverted their governments, organised their urgent annexation, implemented Sovietisation, the period of dependence lasting half a century commenced for the Baltic States.

Thus, during the Second World War, the struggle for the freedom of Lithuania and other Baltic States resumed and lasted long after. While their fate was common and the history was painfully depolarising, Lithuania had its own peculiarities.

In 1940-1941, the Sovietisation accompanied by repressions on the political, national and social, or so-called "class" grounds encouraged the unification of patriotic, independence-targeted forces for the organisation of a Lithuanian uprising on the first favourable occasion until the first mass deportations on the eve of the USSR-German war. The occasion was expected to emerge at the beginning of the USSR-German war. The war was launched by a German attack across Lithuania on 22 June 1941, on which before the Germans approached, Lithuanian insurgents already had control over the major cities of Kaunas and Vilnius, and declared the restoration of Lithuanian independence and the Interim government. One of the political objectives was to use this action, widely supported by Lithuanian society, for the underlining of illegality and rejection of the Soviet annexation conducted in 1940.

The insurgents had contacts in Berlin and were aware of the German ban to take such actions as a declaration of independence. By such disobedience they also demonstrated their moral opposition to the dictatorship of the new occupant. Germany and its military government (Militärverwaltung) did not recognise the Interim government and after six weeks ordered its dissolution, thus, recognising it in a peculiar negative way. It was also recognised in an even more peculiar way by Viacheslav Molotov when he promised to

take revenge on Lithuanians in Moscow. The Interim government had time enough to restore the former national system of local administration, courts and education, and declared the law of denationalisation; however, it was kept away from actual executive power by the German military and later civil administration (Ziwilverwaltung). Germany neither recognised the declared restored independence, nor proposed the "alliance" model of Slovakia and Croatia, despite the fact that it would have benefited Berlin much more. Therefore, from 1941 the status of the country was occupation by the Reich, and soon Lithuania became a part of Berlin's newly created eastern province Ostland. Immediately, the Nazi persecution and killings of the Jews ensued and reached its peak after the liquidation of the Interim government. Special SS "Rollcommandos" sought also contribution from local collaborators. The resistance in Lithuania occupied by the German Nazis took the form of underground political activities and boycotts. The allied political structure called the General Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania was established, while in spring 1944 the Lithuanian forces of volunteers were being gathered. It had to resist the returning Soviet military and political power in the hope of quick end of the war and the survival of Lithuania (Finland passed it successfully); however, first they had to disobey and fight the retreating forces of Germans, which destroyed the "local corps" of Lithuania. Thus ensued the long-drawn second Soviet occupation that lasted until the restoration of independence in 1990. The Soviets, self-proclaimed liberators, did not retreat after the German capitulation, while the promises of the Atlantic Charter in respect to the Baltic States were not kept. Moreover, the Western allies agreed with Stalin's demands to transfer to him Königsberg, thus, geopolitically and de facto situating Lithuania and the other Baltic States on the Soviet side. (Only the fact that Königsberg, together with the helpless population, was passed for the USSR administration 'pending the Peace treaty' could their conscience have been calmed.)

The second Soviet occupation was again accompanied by armed violence, penal repressions and coercive Sovietisation. The armed resistance arose first in the regions, later in the forests and underground as the united war of the occupied state against the occupant. The united resistance in 1949 was called the Lithuanian Movement for the Fight for Freedom; it had its central staff body, military statutes and the press disseminated for the population. It also approved the constitutional principles of the independent Lithuania for the future. After the retreat of the occupants, the Council

chairman of the Movement would have become an interim president and would have had to ensure free democratic election. The residents, especially the inhabitants of the villages turned into kolkhozes, supported the resistance, for which they were cruelly punished by the special Soviet NKVD Army and regular units, as well as those recruited among local collaborators. The deportation stages closely followed each other; about 150,000 people were deported to remote inclement regions of the USSR in order to prevent them from ever returning. Lithuanian resistance was broken by those measures as well as executions and treasons, and in 1954 terminated by the order of the military leaders (the last free Lithuanian soldier was killed only in 1965). This ten-year "war after war" finally was given the appropriate legal evaluation in Lithuania after the restoration of independence: its resistant members became defined as national volunteering soldiers, while the leaders of military districts and central leadership became affirmed retrospectively as the only legitimate Lithuanian government of 1944-1954.

IV. SUFFERING UNDER SOVIET OCCUPATION AND NEW FORMS OF RESISTANCE

The occupation government and the puppet Communist structures it appointed even after Stalin's death persisted in conducting genocide, although not as physical as before, except occasional killings; but economic and cultural - to Sovietise, colonise and fully absorb Lithuania into the "unified and eternal" Soviet Union. The resistance continued in the cultural and religious freedom spheres, by occasional protest campaigns such as the self-immolation of the school student Romas Kalanta in Kaunas in Spring 1972, dissident press and escapes to the free world (the best-known case was that of sailor Simas Kudirka) and by retaining the pre-war diplomatic representation of independent Lithuania in the democratic West. The significant objective in this regard was to resist the international legitimation of the occupation and this political struggle was not in vain. No state of either the democratic Europe (with a single exception) or both Americas recognised the legality of Lithuania's annexation. Thanks to the efforts of the dissidents and diplomats, the case of the subjugated Baltic peoples repeatedly

emerged in the US Congress and even in the European Parliament in 1983, and later. When the independently elected Lithuanian Parliament adopted legal constitutional acts by declaring the restoration of the state's independence, which happened still under the Soviet military occupation in 1990, the representation of the Republic of Lithuania was still retained in at least three capital cities - Washington, London and the Vatican. The rising state could appeal to the Western democracies, which in good faith had not recognised Lithuania's occupation and transformation into a part of the USSR, asking to naturally recognise her independence. This was far from easy but first it is important to realise how this legal constitutional restitution could happen at all.

The Soviet Union that demonstrated imperial atrocities in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the territories it ruled directly, that tried to win the Cold War in Africa, Asia and Central America, and that finally unsuccessfully attacked Afghanistan, was inevitably approaching political, economic and moral bankruptcy. The Soviet Communist administration drafted the reform plan to save the USSR by rejecting further expansion and confrontation with the West after the economic and armament race was already lost. The said reforms, or perestroika, meant both a more liberal economy achieved by gradually transferring the monopoly of the state capital to the 'private' hands of the Communist elite, and greater freedom of ideas and discussions. It was associated with the name of the new generation leader Michail Gorbachev. Western democracies enjoyed the diminishing threat of the world nuclear war, while in the Soviet Union the part of society that retained democratic thinking and appreciated liberties felt that the time had come in history to act. It sought to demand justice and real changes, including democracy that would change the rule of a single "party". These changes were visible in Moscow and Leningrad, among the students and in the mines of maltreated workers, in a variety of Soviet pseudo-republics and especially in the occupied Baltic States that still remembered Stalin's tyrannical wrongdoings and their own struggles for freedom.

While 'perestroika' was initiated in 1985, two years later there emerged public protests against the Soviet occupation in the Baltic States (in Vilnius on 23 August 1987, i.e. on the Black Ribbon day), and three mass movements - two People's Fronts and one Sajudis (Reform Movement) were already formed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 1988.

The Lithuanian Sajudis was born in Vilnius on 3 June 1988 where it was resolved in the meeting of mostly academic and artistic 'intelligentsia' to unite already existing separate initiatives, clubs and circles of human rights, protection of national culture and the Lithuanian language, saving of environment, restored historical truth and publicity, and the preservation of historical and cultural monuments.

It was all based on the freedom to discuss in public and raise fundamental requirements for government, including those concerning the change of outdated attitudes and unsuitable officials. Freedom was perceived as the universal freedom of choice, that is, democracy. For the requirements to be weighty, the democratic powers had to be unanimous and supported by the majority of society. The support groups of Sajudis were being established and spontaneously emerged all round Lithuania; the first independent newspaper 'Sąjūdžio žinios' ('Sajudis News') appeared without any applications or permits thus stimulating free press all round Lithuania, its regions, cities and towns. Sajudis used to convene mass meetings of tens and hundred thousands of people where it declared its ideas, plans and requirements, and the government could not stop them, so it more often tried to piggyback instead. The very organisation was treated by the authorities as de facto, however, unregistered for a long time and directly and indirectly threatened with repressions.

The main political events of the period between the end of 1988 and the beginning of 1990 were the following: the grand meeting of all Lithuanian representatives (over 250,000 people) organised by the Lithuanian Sajudis to commemorate 49 years of the Stalin-Hitler conspiracy and all its victims and to state the requirements for the USSR leadership; the Constituent Congress of Sajudis that established the programme-oriented and consistently structured organisation, although it was not yet registered; the Seimas of the members elected by Sajudis (which became a more legitimate representation of the nation than the pseudoparliament appointed by the Communist Party) that declared the right and objective of the Lithuanian independence in its session of 15-16 February 1989; the first competitive elections to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR (Moscow) in Spring of that year that were triumphantly won by Sajudis over the local administrating Communist Party; joint front with the analogous mass movements of Latvia and Estonia; joint political struggle with other democrats in two 1989 Congresses of People's Deputies in Moscow; the decision to declare null and void the so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact voted there by real majority; the grand manifestation known as the The Baltic Road whereby 2.5 million people from Vilnius to Tallinn demanded their freedom; and the elections to the new national parliaments won in 1990.

15th of June, 1940. Invading Soviet Army forces cross the border of the independent Republic of Lithuania after midnight's blunt "ultimatum" not to resist.

Border police officer A. Barauskas. The picture was taken the same day near Varena town and he was murdered before his family by Soviet invaders with the aim of terror to prevent any resistance.

Mass deportations of civilians to the occupying foreign country – the USSR, many never to come back.

Bodies of 260 prisoners and staff of the Pravieniškės Penal Labour Colony murdered on 26 June 1941 by NKVD troops.

Armed resistance to the second Soviet occupation. Leadership of Jura district in the winter of 1949. The same winter the joint leadership of all Lithuanian Movement of Struggle for Freedom elaborated and signed a declaration about provisional basis of the restored democratic Lithuania. In 1999 this historical interim Constitution became a law of the restored (in 1990) Republic of Lithuania.

Countless cemeteries of Lithuanian deportees in the Far North of the USSR.

A deportee at his turf-made home.

Underground publication of the most famous Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church.

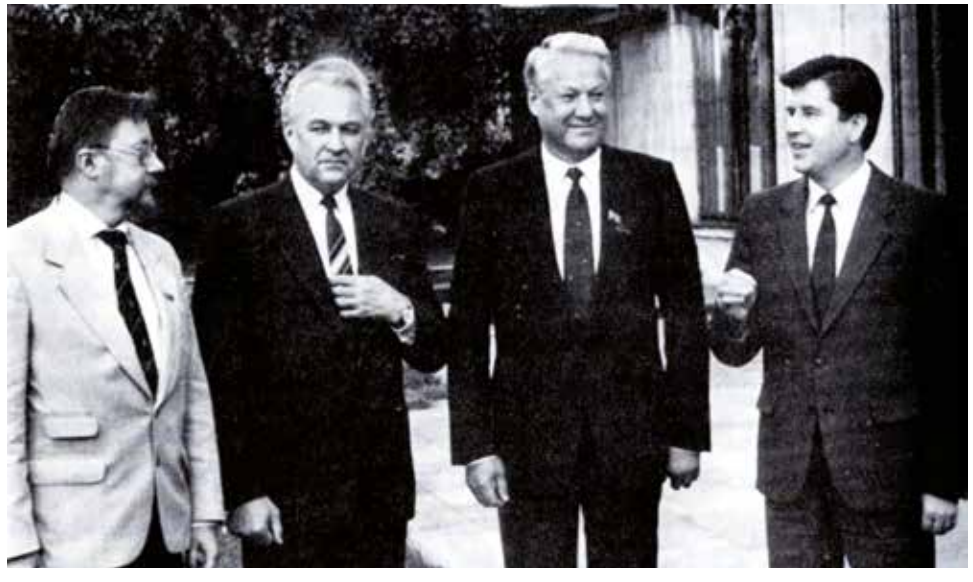
Underground typography at the home of Vytautas Andziulis.

Sajudis Movement for reforms (perestroika) and liberation of Lithuania established! Vilnius, 22-23 October 1988.

Walkout of the Lithuanian delegation from the Congress of People's deputies in Moscow, 8 June 1989.

The Baltic Way – world's greatest manifestation of approximately 2.5 million people demanding freedom for Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, in the form of a chain of hands which extended from Vilnius to Tallinn.

The Act of Restoration of Independent Lithuanian State adopted. Vilnius, 11 March 1990, the leadership as well as the whole Supreme Council singing the National Anthem.



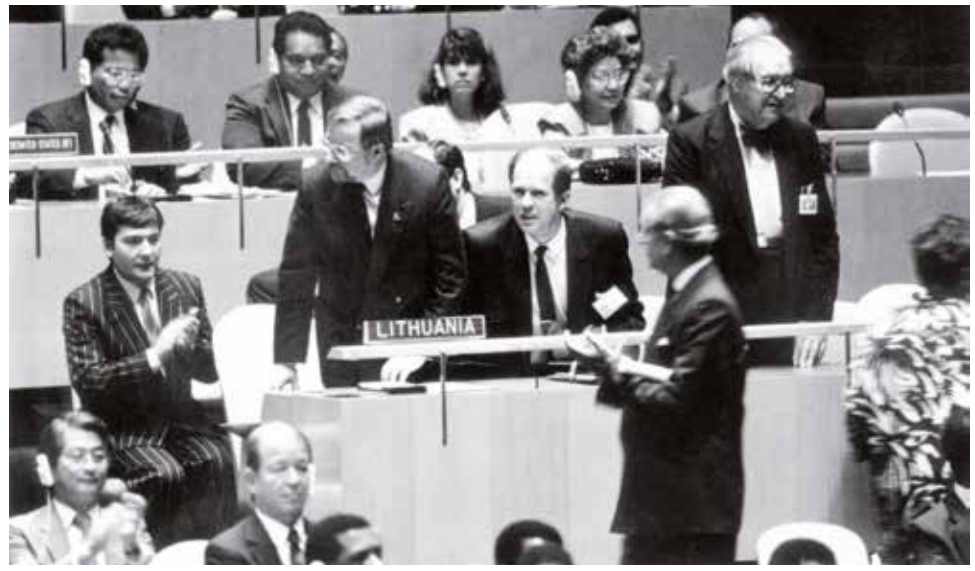
Three Baltic leaders with the leader of democratic Russia Boris Yeltsin. An accord signed on 27 July 1990 in Jurmala near Riga to prepare bilateral agreements on mutual recognition and normalisation of relations.

Soviet aggression – an attack against TV in Vilnius, 13 January 1991.

Foreign minister of Iceland J. B. Hannibalsson in Vilnius on 20 January 1991 just after the bloodshed. Beside – President of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania Vytautas Landsbergis. Iceland was the first to reestablish pre-war diplomatic relations with the restored independent Lithuania.

Vigil at the Parliament after the bloody night of the massacre. Vilnius, 13 January 1991.

16. The Treaty on the Basis for Relations Between States signed in Moscow on 29 July 1991. The ratification procedure ended by exchange of ratification letters on 4 May 1992 in Vilnius. Russia recognised Lithuania as a sovereign state on the grounds of 11 March 1990 Restoration Act; both condemned the unlawful annexation of Lithuania by the USSR in 1940.

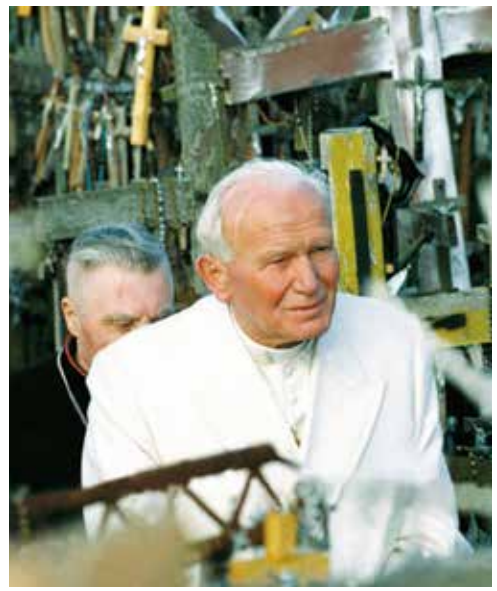


Lithuanian delegation to General Assembly on 17 September 1991 – the day of accession of the Republic of Lithuania to the UNO.

Lenin leaves Vilnius, 22 August 1991.

Free farming back in Lithuania replacing the Soviet-imposed kolkhoz system. Margrethe II of Denmark visiting the home of a Polish farmer near Vilnius on 31 July 1992.

Agreement on scheduled withdrawal of Russian troops within the term of one year was signed on 8 September 1992 in Moscow by Defense ministers in the presence of Heads of both States.



John Paul II visiting Lithuania in September of 1993, several days after the country was free from former Soviet-Russian troops, as a pilgrim to the Hill of Crosses together with Cardinal of Lithuania V. Sladkevicius.

US President G. W. Bush and Lithuanian President V. Adamkus announcing on 23 November 2002 at the old Town Hall in Vilnius; the good news – Lithuania granted invitation to join NATO.

Modern high school given the name "Lithuanian Millennium" in Salcininkai, South Lithuania.

Citizens of Europe – the young generation excited and active for the referendum to join the EU.

Vilnius – the Cultural Capital of Europe the 1 January 2009.

V. INDEPENDENCE RESTORED

The Lithuanian "Sajudis" won the elections and elected its representative to act as a Parliament Chairman and state head by a majority higher than two thirds against the Communist candidate who was the leader of the local Communist Party. In one day the Parliament adopted a set of fundamental legal acts of the restoration of independence. The last of them was the Interim Constitution that replaced the Constitution of Lithuania of 1938 that had just been reinstated for a short moment. The Soviet constitutions were declared null and void for the Republic of Lithuania. During the voting for the principal act of the continuity and restoration of the independent state, there were no votes against, just six abstainers. The historical state coat of arms was reinstated, and the previous anthem and flag of independent Lithuania were approved.

It occurred on 11 March 1990. The corresponding legal acts in Estonia and Latvia were adopted respectively on 24 March and 4 May 1990. They differed from the absolute national independence status of Lithuania in that they declared a transition period to independence as if they were concluded still from the Soviet "republic" point (this ambiguity was annulled by the parliaments of both neighbouring countries only during the putsch in Moscow in August 1991). Lithuania challenged the Kremlin fundamentally, however, at the optimally chosen moment. On 12 March, the Third Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR started in Moscow where Michail Gorbachev had to be elected as the President (although he had never been elected by the people to act as a deputy). Therefore, the Kremlin politicians had to mind their own issues instead of perhaps cruelly responding to the Lithuanian decision. Only on 14 March, their Congress declared the resolution and ultimatum stating that the acts of the Lithuanian Parliament were annulled and it was mandatory to obey the "central" authority. The President of the Lithuanian Parliament responded saying that the resolutions of another country's parliament had no power in respect to independent sovereign Lithuania. Thus were set the principal positions and their fundamental divide, determining the dangerous and sometimes bloody international confrontation for the upcoming one and a half years. Its parameters can be defined on a few levels.

Already on 12 March the Lithuanian Parliament sent a letter to Michail Gorbachev, Chairman of the USSR Parliament, with a proposal to initiate the negotiation for the normalisation of relations. Michail Gorbachev's reply (naturally, not in a letter) was 'Never'. He declared Lithuania to be a part of his state, while Lithuania saw two states and proposed friendly relations. From this point there emerged the first question and Lithuania's challenge to the surrounding world: two states or one state? The Soviet Communist regime, or 'the Kremlin', expected to undermine the Lithuanian government from inside, first, through its influence on various structures (law enforcement, manufacturing) and important figures of the former establishment, and also by demonstrating its armed power and Lithuania's helplessness; and, finally, through the initiation of an economic blockade. The Kremlin put quite an effort into maintaining the diplomatic blockade of Lithuania.

The Soviet Union, and personally Michail Gorbachev, used all their substantial international influence to prevent the Western countries from recognising the restored independence of Lithuania. The Lithuanian Parliament immediately received official congratulations from the parliaments of Canada and Poland, and even the Soviet-type parliament of the Moldavian SSR voted in favour of recognising the restored independence of Lithuania. The Australian Foreign Minister personally congratulated Lithuania with recognition slightly hastily. Especially lively debates took place in the French National Assembly. The first reaction of the White House was quite positive; however, it soon cooled. It became apparent that so far democratic governments, considering the Soviet pressure, would not make any essential step for the restoration of bilateral diplomatic relations. Michail Gorbachev's team used two principal clout levers: 1) The recognition of Lithuania would cause a "domino effect" in the Soviet Union and the latter's downfall with a gruesome global aftermath; furthermore, various separatists of the Western countries would follow the Lithuanian example (the same rhetoric is now used for the Kosovo case); 2) The recognition of Lithuania would severely undermine Michail Gorbachev's prestige and his reforms; the hardliners would take over the power, etc., and thus the designed New World Order would collapse. The diplomatic war of Lithuania against this USSR diplomacy became the priority task of defence. In the meantime, the democratic institutions were being set up following the newly-adopted laws of the independent state.

The visits and meetings of the Lithuanian prime minister and the supreme state official, the President of Parliament, with the heads of states and governments of Norway, Iceland, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, also in Prague and Moscow, significantly contributed to the objective to receive full-fledged renewed recognition. Michail Gorbachev had to give up and initiate negotiations, although in the meantime he planned an armed attack. On his return from a visit in Prague on the invitation of Czech President Havel, the head of the Lithuanian Parliament and the State had a secret meeting with Boris Yeltsin, the leader of new democratic Russia in Moscow where they discussed the future relations between Lithuania and Russia.

On 12 May 1990, the Baltic States restored their pre-war tripartite Concord unity in Tallinn and further acted as the Council of the Baltic States appealing to both the USSR concerning the normalisation of relations, and the international organisations so that they could hold their legitimate positions as the former members of the League of Nations. In the summer of 1990, the three heads of the Baltic States met with Boris Yeltsin in Riga to begin the drafting of bilateral treaties with the Russian Federation bypassing the USSR "centre".

In the West, the main arenas for the diplomatic activities of Lithuanians were located in Washington and Paris, and especially in Nordic countries. Czechoslovakia and Iceland volunteered their territories as neutral locations and services for the negotiations of Lithuania and the USSR. Paris proposed the same to Moscow. In Autumn, the French President in his conversation with the President of Lithuanian Parliament declared that the gold of the first Republic of Lithuania, preserved in the Bank of France, belongs to the restored Lithuania, thus, recognising the continuity of the state. The Soviets had to revoke the economic blockade installed on Lithuania in April. The Baltic States at the Paris Summit meeting, and their ministers of foreign affairs, were asked to leave the premises of the conference on the demand of Michail Gorbachev. At the end of December, the Icelandic Parliament Althingi reminded the validity of pre-war recognition of Lithuania making the sign to its government. Lithuania had already informed the Kremlin that starting from 1 January 1991 it would completely withdraw from the budgetary and taxation system of the USSR. The empire decided to wait no longer as it already planned an armed attack.

VI. VIOLENT CHALLENGE AND SUCCESSFUL RESPONSES

The events of the beginning of January 1991 turned into the fateful challenge for all: for Lithuania, the Soviet Union, the West and all the democratic world. The Soviets attempted the overthrow of the independence government by the hands of the allegedly unsatisfied people, at the same time redeploying special armed forces, and on the night from the 12th to the 13th of January, 1991, they launched an armed attack. They expected overnight success, while the Persian Gulf War should have overshadowed it all. Fourteen people were killed and hundreds of peaceful, unarmed freedom defenders were injured in Vilnius while shielding the television buildings and the Parliament with their bodies. The international protests were followed by huge demonstrations supporting Lithuania in Russia as well as the solidarity of Russian President Yeltsin with the Baltic States determined to procure the retreat of the Kremlin and obtain victory for Lithuania. The Soviet violence in Riga also suffered failure, while the attack in Tallinn was revoked. (It is said that the Chechen commander of the deployed Soviet forces, Air Force general Dzokhar Dudayev, who later became the President of freedom-seeking Chechnya, had a hand in this.) The European Parliament condemned the actions of the USSR in Vilnius as aggression and invasion, thus showing its recognition of Lithuania as a sovereign state. Iceland sent its Minister of Foreign Affairs Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson to Vilnius, while the Althingi resolved to restore diplomatic relations and informed the Lithuanian government about this. The bilateral declaration of relation restoration had been being drafted since February. The diplomatic blockade of the Kremlin began collapsing. After the USSR cancelled purportedly initiated negotiations with Lithuania, the real negotiations with the Russian Federation were held and successfully completed in Moscow on 29 July by the signing the Treaty on the Basics of Interstate Relations (its ratified documents were exchanged in Vilnius on 4 May 1992).

By this agreement Russia recognised the state of Lithuania on 11 March 1990 and condemned the annexation of Lithuania carried out by the Soviets in 1940. It was a blow for the Kremlin, and the Soviet response came two days later with the savage murder of seven detained Lithuanian officers at the border of Lithuania and the USSR. However, the USSR was fast approaching its own collapse through the failed putsch of 19-21 August 1991, after which Lithuania and the other Baltic States were immediately internationally recognised both in the West and in the East with the restoration of bilateral diplomatic relations. On 17 September 1991, they were accepted to the UNO. That is how the restoration of the independence of the Baltic States was conducted by employing peaceful diplomatic and political measures. There emerged the next immediate task to get rid of the former occupation army that entered the jurisdiction of Russia at the end of the year. In this respect Lithuania had more experience, employed the favourable attitude of Yeltsin and after the diplomatic breakthrough at the Helsinki Summit of the CSCE on 9-10 July 1992, it signed, in Moscow on 8 September 1992, the agreement with Russia concerning the withdrawal of Russian units within one year. And this was accomplished. The Russian Army left Lithuania before it left Poland, Germany, Latvia and Estonia. In September 1993, Pope John Paul II undertook a historic visit to free Lithuania.

VII. PERSPECTIVES TO JOIN WESTERN INTEGRATION STRUCTURES

As early as 1992, during the reform of its economy, Lithuania joined the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and introduced its temporary currency, thus leaving the post-Soviet rouble zone. The international treaties regulated the relations not only with neighbouring Russia, but also with Belarus, Poland and Germany; Lithuania also began its approach to the Council of Europe, the European Community and NATO. The EU and NATO memberships became the new national priority targets. They were as directly related to the ensuring of national security as the restoration of the Lithuanian Army and its formation on the new principles coordinated with NATO.

The geopolitical view of the process reveals that it helped both Finland and Sweden to conduct fully independent foreign policy and join the European Union. That stood as an example for other three Baltic States on the eastern shore of Mare nostrum.

Thus the Baltic Sea too recovered its previous status as the “Northern Mediterranean” Sea, conceptually turning from a de facto Russian sea into a European sea. Here again emerged the reborn eastern littoral states with their marine issues and borders as well as economic areas. These were their ports, the “loss” of which still embitters Russia.

As early as 1991, the Council of the Baltic States raised important questions concerning Second World War instruments of conflict that remained in the sea. This was an invitation to declare this area free from nuclear weapons and globally address the danger raised by the huge quantities of sunk German chemical weapons rusting and threatening the coastal nations with real ecocidal catastrophe. Lithuania, like some other countries, made attempts to stress the necessity of Kaliningrad demilitarisation. All these security concerns remain unresolved today. The German-Russian project Nord Stream has even further exacerbated the threat of lethally contaminating the shallow sea bed with chemical industrial sediments and disturbed bombs. It simultaneously opened the prospect for Russia to militarise, and de facto annex the international areas of the Baltic Sea under the new pretext of protecting the pipeline, once it commissioned its navy to protect the oil drill next to the Lithuanian border in 2002. However, these voices of concern were not taken into account as well.

Starting from the end of 1993 when consensus of the major parties was reached in Lithuania encouraging the President's appeal to join NATO, both Euro-Atlantic processes were in the midst of political struggle and manoeuvre. It took ten years that were perceived as the continuation of struggle for freedom from post-Soviet Russia's claims to dictate and dominate. Both the European Union and NATO had their own doubts and specific requirements for Lithuania's "homework". But next to it all, Russia loomed: though promising a new era (the West eagerly announced the end of the Cold War), still highlighted conditions that Russia and its "legitimate concerns" in regard to the Baltic States would be respected.

Russia claimed imaginary rights to the "near abroad" and "post-Soviet area"; therefore, Lithuania was forced to persistently reject them on any possible occasion and remind the West that she had not been a "Soviet republic" but instead a state occupied by the USSR. Russia also attempted at imposing a one priority choice, that is, the European Union and its 'soft security', so that NATO would stay away from "antagonising" or engendering the provocation of Russia. (Today, Georgia and Ukraine find themselves in the same position.) Lithuania has never accepted this attitude, stressing that it had two priority objectives and sought both simultaneously. Nevertheless, if NATO would accept Lithuania earlier, that would be welcome.

The path of the self-liberated Lithuania, after its restoration of international affairs, into the EU started by the Agreement on Trade and Commercial and Economic Cooperation signed on 11 May 1992. A Free Trade Agreement was signed with the European Community on 18 July 1994. A year later in 1995, it became an integral part of the Lithuanian Europe Agreement. This was an agreement that consolidated the associated membership of Lithuania in the European Union and her recognised candidature for the full-fledged membership. Lithuania became involved in the EU strategy for Central and East European countries. It has to be noted that at the same time, i.e. at the beginning of 1994, Lithuania submitted her accession application to NATO; however, throughout 1995 it was not clear whether the Alliance will not falter due to the Russian pressure that the Baltic States should not be invited and accepted, but instead should remain in the Russian sphere of influence. Although Lithuania attained full withdrawal of the Russian Army by 1 September 1993, the Army stayed in Latvia a couple years longer, while in the Kaliningrad Region it is still deployed and ostentatiously modernised as a means of pressure for the neighbouring countries. Russia used to regularly renew its demands to sign a military transit agreement with Lithuania, yet Lithuania managed to avoid it. Sending military transit to Kaliningrad, she applies interim rules that are annually extended. Thus, Lithuania did not block her road to NATO, but, on the contrary, continued it by participating in the Partnership for Peace and seeking the Membership Action Plan. The prospects were enhanced by the development of friendly relations with Poland, a prospective member of NATO and the EU, consummated by the joint Assembly of both parliaments (from 1997) and the strategic partnership. The quadripartite Charter of Partnership among the Baltic States and the USA became an important factor consolidating the NATO membership as the "common goal".

A breakthrough came in 1997, when the NATO summit in Madrid named the Baltic States as those seeking Alliance membership, while the US Congress started to allocate funds. In the meantime, three high ranking US Army retirees of Lithuanian origin came to assist Lithuania. One of them became the army chief commander. Then the development of a real, western-type army complying with NATO standards began apace. Lithuania's involvement in the international peacekeeping operations was increasing. Now she has undertaken a duty to protect Afghanistan and the restoration of the entire Ghor province. But first, on 23 November 2002, US President George W. Bush brought good news to Lithuania in Vilnius on his way from Prague where a NATO summit confirmed

that the Baltic States were adequately prepared and invited to join the Alliance. From now on "anyone who would choose Lithuania as an enemy has also made an enemy of the United States of America," he said to the applauding people in Town Hall Square of Old Vilnius. The majority took it as a real guarantee of freedom from Eastern aggression.

On 8 December 1998, Lithuania submitted an official application for EU membership. These were difficult times since the Russian financial crisis also affected Lithuania, more than its neighbours. Lithuanian GDP went down. The unemployment rate increased (and kept increasing until 2001), while exports declined (exports recovered and started to grow in 2000). Despite these obstacles Lithuania fulfilled the objectives of the EU pre-accession, solved the most difficult and extraordinary problem: the perspective closure of the nuclear plant in Ignalina with the support of the EU and its Member States. International agreements were reached on this issue and the necessary, although unpopular, legal instruments were adopted in the country. Following these instruments, Lithuania closed its last nuclear reactor at the end of 2009. In 2002, before Lithuania's accession to the organisation, Russian diplomats put great efforts to make the EU grant Russia the exceptions of transit to Kaliningrad (corridor, visa-free regime), thus violating Lithuania's sovereignty. The European Union stood its ground. The year 2003 became the period of great crucial solutions such as the successful referendum concerning EU membership, and the signing and ratification of the Europe Agreement. In 2004, Lithuania became a full member of both NATO and the European Union, and the first elections to the European Parliament took place. Lithuania was the first to ratify the Constitution for Europe, while after the failure of this project it ratified the new Treaty of Lisbon in 2008. Lithuania will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2013. In doing so it will be the first of the three Baltic States to hold the Presidency since joining the European Union in the spring of 2004.

POLAND: THE LAND OF A POPE AND OF "SOLIDARITY"

Włodzimierz Bernacki

Republic of Poland – Rzeczpospolita Polska
Area: 312 834 square km²
Population: 38 115 800 (2006)
Capital city: Warsaw
Official Language: Polish
Currency: Złoty (PLZ)
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.05.2004

I. INTRODUCTION

1918 was a moment when Poles regained their independence, 1945 ensured the return to subjugation. Mirroring the 123 years when Poles kept undertaking efforts to regain independence, in all the years after 1945 they did not give up these efforts. This long-lasting struggle took different forms: military actions (in the 1940s), strikes and demonstrations, building structures independent from the Communist powers as well as creating independent systems of education and information. "Solidarity" turned out to be the movement which in the 1980s bore all these ambitions and experiences. This trade union came to unify both the working class as well as the intelligentsia in the fight against communism. "Solidarity", whose name referred to the idea of social solidarism as opposed to the Marxist-Leninist notion of class struggle, became the trade union movement thanks to which Polish society freed itself from Communist rule. The main reason of this success was the fact that the movement showed beyond doubt that it was only through the solidarity of all members of society that could bring victory. Social solidarity was lethal for the totalitarian system which built its power on atomisation and division of society, as Hannah Arendt and Erich Fromm pointed out. "Solidarity" was a movement which advocated solidarity with those repressed, unemployed, imprisoned, and because of that it undermined the fundaments of totalitarian rule.

As a result of its constant struggle "Solidarity" was the force which led to the Round Table negotiations as well as the breakthrough parliamentary elections of 1989, in the process of which Poland appointed its first non-Communist prime minister since World War II.

Today Poland – with the EU and NATO membership - has a real chance to start regarding its geographical location between Russia and Germany as less of a curse and more of a blessing.

II. DOUBLE INVASION

In November 1918, after 123 years of servitude, Poles regained independence. It was an outcome of a direct military, political and diplomatic engagement in the years 1918-1919. The newly-won independence had to be defended from Bolshevik Soviet Russia, which also meant protecting Western Europe from the Communist deluge – it is enough to think of the battle of Warsaw of 1920. In September 1939, as a reaction to the invasion by the Third Reich (September 1) and the Soviet Union (September 17), the Polish government had to flee into exile. The President, Ignacy Mościcki, handed over the office to Władysław Raczkiewicz. Władysław Sikorski was appointed prime minister, which he remained until his tragic death in July 1943 whereby Stanisław Mikołajczyk was installed in his place. The government of the Republic of Poland was the only legal and internationally accepted governing body during the war period. Its organisation included a highly developed clandestine state structure as well as a clandestine army –

the largest in Europe. In the first years of war, the government had both the German and the Russian occupation zone under its power. The aim of the occupier was the physical elimination of the intellectual elites of the country – Polish university professors were detained in concentration camps, and thousands of Polish officers were murdered in Katyń.

Beginning in June 1941, when the Third Reich invaded the territory of its former ally, the Soviet Union, the latter decided to decided to revive the Communist movement in Poland. The first attempt to do so, which consisted in transferring an initiative group behind the front line, ended in failure, but the second one, attempted in December 1941, was a success. This group brought into being the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), a Communist formation directly connected to Moscow. The party consisted of so few members that it was often described as a 'couch party' – an ironic way to illustrate that all its members could be seated on one couch. It also received direct instructions from the Communist authorities of the Soviet Union, for whom it became an extremely useful tool. It was in fact the PPR that made it possible to fight the Polish underground state structures so effectively – it provided all the necessary information, both from the military and political point of view. It was also the PPR, which added the State's National Council (KRN) to its structures on January 1, 1944, which later provided Stalin with an argument – used to persuade his allies – that certain political structures should be taken into consideration when deciding on the shape of political powers in Poland after the end of the war.

In July 1944, when the Red Army crossed the German-Russian border of 1941, the Soviet authorities created the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN). Despite the existence of a legal government of Poland as well as underground state structures, the Soviets began to transfer power to PKWN Communists, maintaining direct political and military control over them. One of the most shameful acts on the part of both Polish and Soviet Communists were the activities in order to enable the German occupying forces to deal with the Warsaw Uprising, which led to the capital of Poland being literally burned to the ground.

As a consequence of the concessions of the Great Britain and US governments to Stalin's politics, the Council of National Unity was appointed, which gave the dominant role to politicians directly connected with PPR Communists, as they held power in the most important departments – the military and the police. After gaining the approval of the West, Stalin could begin eliminating all his political enemies. The commanders of the Polish Underground were arrested, sent to Moscow, put on trial there and convicted for many years' imprisonment. The leaders of major political parties such as PSL, SN, PPS or SP who opposed the shift to communism were either arrested or forced to emigrate (like Stanisław Mikołajczyk of Polish People's Party or Karol Popiel of Labour Party). Local party activists were eliminated by means of political assassinations, imprisonment or intimidation. Some of the underground military units who fought the German occupying forces rose against the Communist state. It is estimated that many thousand of people were killed during the period euphemistically called the "consolidation of the people's power".

Beside purely political and military actions aimed at the physical eradication of political enemies, attempts to create a completely new system of political organisation were also made. Such an organisation consisted in eliminating old democratic parties, and creating new ones, fully subservient to Communist authorities, in their place. Thus, the United Peasants' Party was created instead of PSL, the antiCommunist (Christian-Democratic) Labour Party was eliminated in order to create the Democratic Party, and the survivors of the pro-independence PPS were incorporated into the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR was created in 1948 out of the PPR who absorbed the pro-soviet PPS activists). The new authorities functioned at first on the basis of the so-called Small Constitution of 1945, which meant breaking the continuity of the political system shaped by the constitution of 1935. Despite the fact that the Big Three emphasised the necessity of conducting parliamentary elections in Poland immediately, the Communists, fearing that they may lose 'fully' free elections, decided to move them to January 1947. In June 1947, the authorities conducted a referendum which was meant as an experiment intended to show if a large-scale falsification of the election outcome was possible. The experiment proved effective beyond expectations – in spite of the protests of the SP and PSL, no western power undertook any political action when the referendum results were falsified. The situation was identical in January 1947, when the unofficial elections were won by the PSL, but the Communist Bloc of democratic parties was announced to be the official winner on the basis of falsified election results. In practical terms, the Communist Party gained full power in Poland. Soon, religious freedom was formally limited, and both public and private space was subjected to supervision of political police. Another

very significant step towards the consolidation of Communist power was the passing of a new constitution on July 22, 1952, which was drafted under the direct supervision of Joseph Stalin and closely modeled on the Soviet constitution of the 1930s.

III. ESTABLISHING TOTALITARIAN RULE

The Communist authorities, wishing to gain the acceptance of at least a part of society, decided to nationalise industry and introduce agricultural reforms. As a result of nationalisation, most enterprises became state property, although formally only companies employing more than 50 employees were eligible to be nationalised. Obviously, the compensation was of symbolic value only. In spite of these facts, the Nationalisation Act is still considered to be legal – therefore, only entities nationalised on the basis of the violation of the provisions of this Act are eligible for re-privatisation today.

Along the Marxist and Leninist principles of the socialist economy, the dominating form of property was state property, and in the same way both management and supervision of the economy was handed over to the Communist authorities. Private ownership of the means of production was a capitalist relic, which was to be fought in every possible way. And it was – private commerce was opposed and craftsmanship was strongly limited – all craftsmen were forced to belong to co-operatives controlled and managed by the state.

The agricultural reform was only a propaganda tool – the real aim of the Communist authorities was agricultural collectivisation. However, in this respect the Communist authorities met with failure, even though the actions undertaken in the years 1949-1953 were highly repressive. Such was the resistance of rural communities that Poland became one of the few countries of the Eastern Bloc in which private ownership of land was preserved. Seeing that depriving peasants of land proved impossible, the Communists decided to introduce extensive limitations of privileges resulting from the ownership of land as well as the obligation of mandatory deliveries of goods for the state at extremely low purchase prices. Mandatory deliveries functioned until 1972.

The Polish economy during Communist times was fully subordinated to development and production in the sector of heavy industry, which the authorities considered the basis of military power. A characteristic quality of the Communist economy was economic exploitation, based on socialist competition principles at work, which necessitated heightening production norms and lowering employee payment at the same time. Economic development was centrally planned on the basis of five-year plans, which regarded the same time period of time for all dependent states.

During the first years of the post-war period (1945-1947) the main ideological motivation for the society was rebuilding the country from war damage. However, after Poland rejected the Marshall Plan and the Iron Curtain fell, the Communist authorities encouraged people to work arduously in order to be able to face the military threat of western imperialism and counterrevolutionary movements. To understand the processes which Poland underwent after 1945, one must comprehend the term revolution as it was used by the Communist authorities – as regarding not only politics, but also economy and culture. The power of the Communist Party was, according to the guidelines of Karl Marx, meant to extend over three dimensions: politics, economy and, culture. The politics were especially aggressive in the sphere of spiritual culture, which was meant to be fully subdued and controlled by political authorities. In order to achieve this aim, the main enemy – that is, the Catholic Church – had to be eliminated. Therefore, in the years 1947-56, the authorities attempted to remove the Church completely from the social sphere. In these years, many spectacular arrests and trials of church officials took place, which went as far as arresting Cardinal Wyszyński.

The Communist authorities assumed full control over education as well, introducing unified curricula at every level of education, based on a 'scientific worldview', which actually meant the affirmation of dialectical materialism. This 'scientific' vision of the world was also a tool to propagate historical materialism, which saw communism as the ultimate stage of development of all human communities. Such ideas as Heisenberg's "Uncertainty Principle" as well as Einstein's theoretical notions were considered contradictory to a scientific worldview, as were all scientists who embraced the findings of genetics. Eminent pre-war philosophers were removed from universities – for example these of the Lwow-Warsaw school of logic, along with sociologists and historians whose views of science contradicted Marxist methodology.

The only official model of art – literature, painting and sculpture – was the one which conformed to a Marxist, proletarian canon. Artists of that period were obliged to follow the rules of "socrealism" – social realism. In the 1950s jazz music was, for example, prohibited, and access to rock music was seriously limited. Scientific and artistic communities were closely scrutinised and controlled by secret political police, and each work of art was evaluated and censored with a view to its compliance with the official canon. Just as in Nazi Germany, works deemed as 'inappropriate' were either destroyed (physically – books were for example pulped, as paper was valuable) or their distribution was forbidden. The media – press, radio and finally TV – were subject to such meticulous censorship that they only reinforced the power of the Communist Party.

Poles are the nation who experienced the effects of Sovietisation earlier (from September 1939 to June 1941) and more directly than others. A large proportion of the members of the Polish underground military structures, who during the war fought the Nazi occupiers, after the year 1945 started to combat the Communist authorities. It needs to be emphasised that it was not only Polish Communists belonging to the Polish Committee for National Independence (PKWN) – established by and totally dependent on Moscow – but also the Soviet Army, stationed on Polish territory until the 1990s, that tried to do away with the resistance movement. It was the military administration that organised deportations of Polish freedom-fighters far away into Russia in the years 1945-1946. A striking example of this political action was the deportation of 16 members of the Polish underground and organising the infamous "Process of 16" there. In response to such actions, Poles had to establish completely new structures: on September 2, 1945, the Freedom and Independence Movement (WIN) was created. The primary goal of this organisation were actions leading to the re-instatement of democracy in Poland which would guarantee civil rights for the society. As soon as Communists openly declared war on all opponents of the new regime, WIN also decided to undertake military actions. In 1946 the first leaders of WIN were arrested, which, however, did not weaken the movement itself. Communists, beside fighting the underground structures directly, also established special divisions within the Ministry of Public Security, the aim of which was conducting political assassinations on the members of chosen legal political parties, especially the PSL and SP. In the years 1946-48 antiCommunist military underground units operated in many regions of Poland. At the same time courts martial legally convicted more than 23,000, 676 of whom were sentenced to death.

Beside political organisations, like political parties, and military structures (armed underground structures), the major role in fighting the antidemocratic regime was played by the Catholic Church. Just as during World War II the Church supported those fighting Nazi Germany, when the war ended, many members of the Church backed the fight against the new political order. The Communist system treated religion as a kind of 'false awareness', viewed the institution of the Church as a feudal relic, and promoted an especially anti-religious and anti-Church politics from the 1940s.

This form of politics was displayed in such actions as, on the one hand, arrests and internment of church officials – for example the arrest of Bishop Kaczmarek and internment of Cardinal Wyszyński – and on the other hand, by undertaking a long-term policy of propagating atheist views by means of restricting religious education of youth (prohibiting religious education in schools) as well as limiting the employment and promotion of people admitting to religious practices.

IV. FIRST WAVES OF PROTEST AND NEW WAVES OF REPRESSION

In 1952 the Communist regime reached its maturity in Poland, a fact which was finally sealed by passing the Constitution of the People's Republic of Poland on July 22, 1952. The Constitution was modelled on the Soviet Constitution of 1936, and its final draft was accepted by Josef Stalin. The date of July 22 was not chosen at random – it was the eighth anniversary of the establishment of the Polish Committee for National Independence (PKWN) by the Soviet authorities in 1944. The constitution renounced the tradition of pre-war constitutionalism, as it rejected the tradition of the balance of three powers, eliminated the presidential office, approved a one-chamber parliament (the Seym), and eliminated free elections at both the parliamentary and local levels. According to the Constitution, the Republic of Poland became the People's Republic of Poland. The former president, Bolesław Bierut, now took the office of the President of State Council. Beside the PZPR, there were two other parties at the political stage, SD and ZSL, but they played only a dummy role.

From the point of view of the Communist regime, 1956 was a deeply significant year. In this year the twentieth Assembly of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was called, during which Nikita Krushchev delivered his speech regarding the so-called one-man cult. From a political point of view, this speech became a document by means of which a partial exchange of power elites in the countries of the Eastern Bloc could take place. Strangely enough, the leader of the Polish group, Bolesław Bierut, went down with a flu at the time of the proceedings. The flu cost him his life – he came back to Poland in a coffin. Edward Ochab was proclaimed the leader of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), and held the office briefly until autumn of 1956.

In 1956 public discontent caused by the way the country was governed erupted on a great scale for the first time. In June, employees of industrial works in Poznań rose against the authorities. The direct reasons for their outburst was an increase in the production norms, lack of stock in shops and increase in prices of food. The demonstrations first had a peaceful character, but later turned into armed resistance. The army – 10,000 soldiers, 40 tanks and armed vehicles – was used to pacify the demonstrators. As a result, 80 people were killed and over 500 injured. The wave of protest spread to the whole country. The Communist authorities, although they officially described the protests as acts of provocateurs inspired by imperialists, were forced to attempt to introduce changes in the structure of the party authority. In October, the lead was taken by Władysław Gomułka, who had left prison two years before. In the eyes of many Poles, the choice of Gomułka was a proof of the fact that reformatory tendencies in the party were successful and were now taking the lead.

Truly, the end of the year 1956 and the beginning of 1957 was the period of liberalisation of the Communist system, which could be seen in limiting censorship activities, allowing religion to be taught in schools and increasing the role of local employee organisations. However, in the autumn of 1957, Gomułka's government returned to old methods of executing power – that is, concentrating it all, both political and economic, in the hands of the strictly hierarchical structures of the Communist Party, according to the principles of democratic centralism. The Seym was only a façade of a parliament, as the PMs were chosen from among these accepted by the PZPR, and no candidate could be rejected, which meant that all these with top list ranking were accepted. Fifty percent of seats were guaranteed for the PZPR, and the rest to their satellites. The secret political police – the UB – was in favor again, and it intensified its actions by means of surveillance of non-conformist circles.

When the celebration of the one thousand year anniversary of the Polish state was announced, aggressive repressive actions against the Catholic Church were undertaken – it was again forbidden to teach religion in schools, the curricula of theological seminaries were supervised, mandatory military service for seminary alumnae was introduced, church libraries were inspected, and the building of new churches was practically forbidden. The celebration of the acceptance of Christianity by an ancient Polish ruler, Mieszko I, were of strictly secular character. A few days before the celebrations, Polish bishops appealed to their German counterparts for forgiveness and granted them their own. The second half of the 1960s was a period of an ongoing political and economic crisis. The centralised system of the socialist economy came to a complete standstill because of the lack of access to new technologies, which in turn was a result of the lack of capital for investment. In accordance with the intentions of the authorities, the dominating industry was heavy industry, which in their opinion granted Poland an advantage over the capitalist world. The whole system was a perfect example of a centrally planned economy, which was in fact an economy of deficiency.

The 1960s was the time when social, political and religious protest movements emerged. In 1966 the anniversary of thousand years of accepting Christianity was celebrated independently, intellectuals protested against the cultural policy of the authorities with their "Letter of 34 intellectuals" (1964), revisionist movements in the PZPR gained momentum, the "Open Letter of Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski" was published in 1964, and finally the organisation Movement (Ruch) emerged, whose members considered Bolshevik authorities to be illegal, and whose straightforward aim was fighting communism. In 1966 thousands of Poles participated in millennial celebrations, showing their support for the Catholic Church. Finally, in March 1968, after Mickiewicz's patriotic play "Dziady" was removed from the stage by the censorship, a wave of student protests against the policy of Communist authorities swept over all major university cities – 2,732 people were arrested, and 1,616 were removed from universities. The authorities used the protests in a truly Machiavellian way, claiming that the student demonstrations were inspired by Poles of Jewish origin, which in turn served as a pretext to conduct purges in party and state administration structures. In the years 1968-1969 more than 15 thousand citizens of Jewish origin were forced to leave Poland.

The ongoing economic crisis exposed all faults of the socialist economy of the People's Republic – in December 1970, the authorities, facing the shortages of basic goods,

decided to introduce price increases on a majority of everyday-use goods. The price of flour rose by 16 percent, meat by 17 percent, and cereals by 30 percent, which soon led to massive protests in the north of the country. The shipyards of Gdynia and Gdańsk stopped working, and the protests again spread to the whole of the country. Like in 1956, the authorities used the army to pacify the protesters – six were shot on December 15 in Gdańsk, 18 on December 16 in Gdynia, and 16 on December 17 in Szczecin. All in all, according to official data, 45 people were killed in the whole country, 1,165 were injured, over 3 thousand arrested, and 10 tanks and 18 armoured vehicles were burned. Because of all these factors connected with such violent pacification of the demonstrations, the authorities decided to remove the First Secretary, Władysław Gomułka, from office, and replace him with Edward Gierek – a person whose constant presence at the top level of party authority allowed him to play the role of the man of the moment. His first task was to conduct another purge of the party, which allowed the replacement of old activists with new ones. He also introduced an important administrative reform – in 1972 'communes' were introduced as rural administrative units instead of 'gatherings'; in 1973 collegial administrative units (so-called presidiums) were eliminated for the sake of voivods, presidents and chiefs. In 1975 districts were abolished, giving way to a twofold system of communes and voivodships. Such changes allowed Gierek to create a feeling among the society that deep reforms had been conducted, but in fact the only thing that was done was the creation of a new legion of people who owed everything to the new authorities and were completely dependent on them.

In the economic sphere Gierek decided to do what none of his predecessors had dared to – to seek credit in western banks. The money of "European imperialists" was used to finance gigantic economic investments; however, it was largely wasted because of the mismanaged central planning and false management systems of the economy. As early as 1975 the signs of economic crisis reappeared – rationing of many goods, such as sugar, was introduced. Facing the economic crisis, the authorities decided to amend the constitution and introduced additional provisions – for example, a declaration that the People's Republic of Poland is a socialist country (and not a state of people's democracy, as the constitution stated before), as well as a provision formally handing over the government of the country to the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), and emphasising the fact that Poland is inseparably linked to the Soviet Russia. The attempts to formalise the constitutional position of the Party fully showed its fears concerning their political future. The amendments, in spite of wide public protests (like the "Letter of 59 intellectuals", or the "Letter of 101"), were passed on the 10 February 1976 by the parliament of the People's Republic with only one contradictory vote (of Stanisław Stomma). In the summer of 1979 the authorities informed society of the planned increase in the prices of most goods, especially sugar (100 percent price rise) and meat (69 percent), which again resulted in manifestations of public discontent, this time in Ursus and Radom. Massive arrests followed – 634 people were arrested, 72 were convicted to long-term imprisonment and over 200 had to pay large fines. In order to help the repressed both financially and legally, the intellectual community created the Committee for the Protection of Workers (KOR). Soon, other movements emerged - the Movement for Defense of Human and Civic Rights (ROPCiO), Committee for Free Trade Unions, the Young Poland Movement and "the Confederation of Independent Poland" (KPN) in the opposition. In May 1977, after the political police assassinated a KOR associate, the student Stanisław Pyjas, his colleagues established the Student Committee of "Solidarity" (SKS).

What needs to be emphasised is that in the second part of the 1970s a publishing system working outside censorship appeared, of which the most prominent was the "NOWA" Independent Publishing House.

V. A POLISH POPE AND THE RISE OF "SOLIDARITY"

A turning point in shaping the widely-understood Polish political culture was the choice of Karol Wojtyła as Pope on the October 16, 1978. The fact itself, as well as the Pope's subsequent visits to Poland caused a huge increase of pro-independence and antiCommunist feelings. The uncompromising attitude of Pope John Paul II towards the Communist authorities was very heartening for Poles, especially at such moments as his speech in Warszawa in 1979, when he uttered these extraordinary words: "Let your Spirit descend, and renew the face of the earth. The face of this land."

The end of the decade brought about a complete economic breakdown. In 1980 Gierek introduced regulated prices, which again resulted in massive protests. At that time, Lech Wałęsa became the undisputable leader of the anti-Communist movement. In 1981 he signed an agreement with the government, which, among other provisions, specified the right to create independent and self-governed trade unions, which later turned out to be the most significant gain of workers on strike, as now an official registration of the "Solidarity" (Solidarność) trade union was possible. The new union soon had more than 9 million members and was led by Wałęsa. It was in fact the first legal institution independent from Communist authorities, and in the same way undermined the system. Soon, other independent trade unions and political organisations started to appear.

"Solidarity" itself had the highly heterogeneous structure of a trade union as well as a political organisation consisting of different social, professional and political groups – factory workers as well as professionals. Members of The Workers' Defence Committee (KOR), seasoned in previous clashes with Communist authorities, played the most important role in the union as the president's board of advisors. Thanks to "Solidarity", the beginning of the 1980s became the herald of freedom for Poles.

However, the concessions of the authorities were purely tactical – just like before, one leader was replaced by another one – Gierek gave place to Stanisław Kania, and the latter to General Wojciech Jaruzelski. The political direction, however, remained the same – practically, since the protests of workers in the 1980s, the main issue was how to preserve the Communist rule over Poland. Moving Jaruzelski to the position of a leader meant that the confrontationist option prevailed. Military advisors had been preparing plans for a warfare state since the spring of 1981, and it was finally introduced on December 13, 1981.

The Communist authorities, introducing the warfare state, wanted to restore the political conditions of the pre 1980s, when the Communist Party held absolute political power. In spite of the police and military terror (during the pacifying of miners protesting in Wujek coal mine nine people were killed), isolation and imprisonment of "Solidarity" leaders, political assassinations (like that of Jerzy Popiełuszko, a priest strongly supporting the independence movement), the underground structures of resistance remained intact. The warfare state meant the taking of power by military authorities, both on the central and the local level, as well as the de-legalisation of all organisations. Furthermore, citizens were forbidden to leave their places of residence, mail was subject to control, and so were telephone calls (in fact, telephones didn't work for a month after December 13, 1981), press ceased to appear, the number of TV and radio broadcasts was strictly limited, and all Polish-language stations broadcasting from other countries were increasingly jammed.

The experience of the warfare state was for the majority of "Solidarity" activists a confirmation of the fact that the main goal of Communist authorities was preserving their power. The years 1980-1982 showed clearly that all concessions of the authorities resulted from their temporary weakness and were only a tactical maneuver allowing the Communists to gain strength before they dealt the final blow to the opposition.

The underground "Solidarity" along with other organisations undertook wide covert action. The years 1982-1988 were a period when an independent underground party and trade union structures existed – beside "Solidarity", there was the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN), the Liberal-Democratic "Independence" Party as well as the PPS (Polish Socialist Party) actively operated in the underground. Many titles of independent press were also published (for example, Tygodnik Mazowsze, Hutnik, Solidarność Walcząca, Wiadomości and Obserwator Wielkopolski) as well as over five thousand books and other printed materials. In the spring of 1982, "Radio Solidarity" started broadcasting.

Thousands of Home Army soldiers continued the fight for independence and fought the Communist authorities. In the photo: one of underground military divisions under the command of Major Zygmunt Szendzielarz "Łupaszka", September 1945 (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

Falsified parliamentary elections of January 19, 1947, were preceded by a wave of terror, the aim of which was the destruction of the opposition – the Polish Peasants' Party. In the photo: Józef Hachlica, one of politicians of the Polish Peasants' Party, killed by members of the Security Service. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

Bodies of underground fighters killed in battle with the Communist authorities, profaned by members of the Security Service (the division of Eugeniusz Lipiński "Mrówka" of the National Military Union). (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

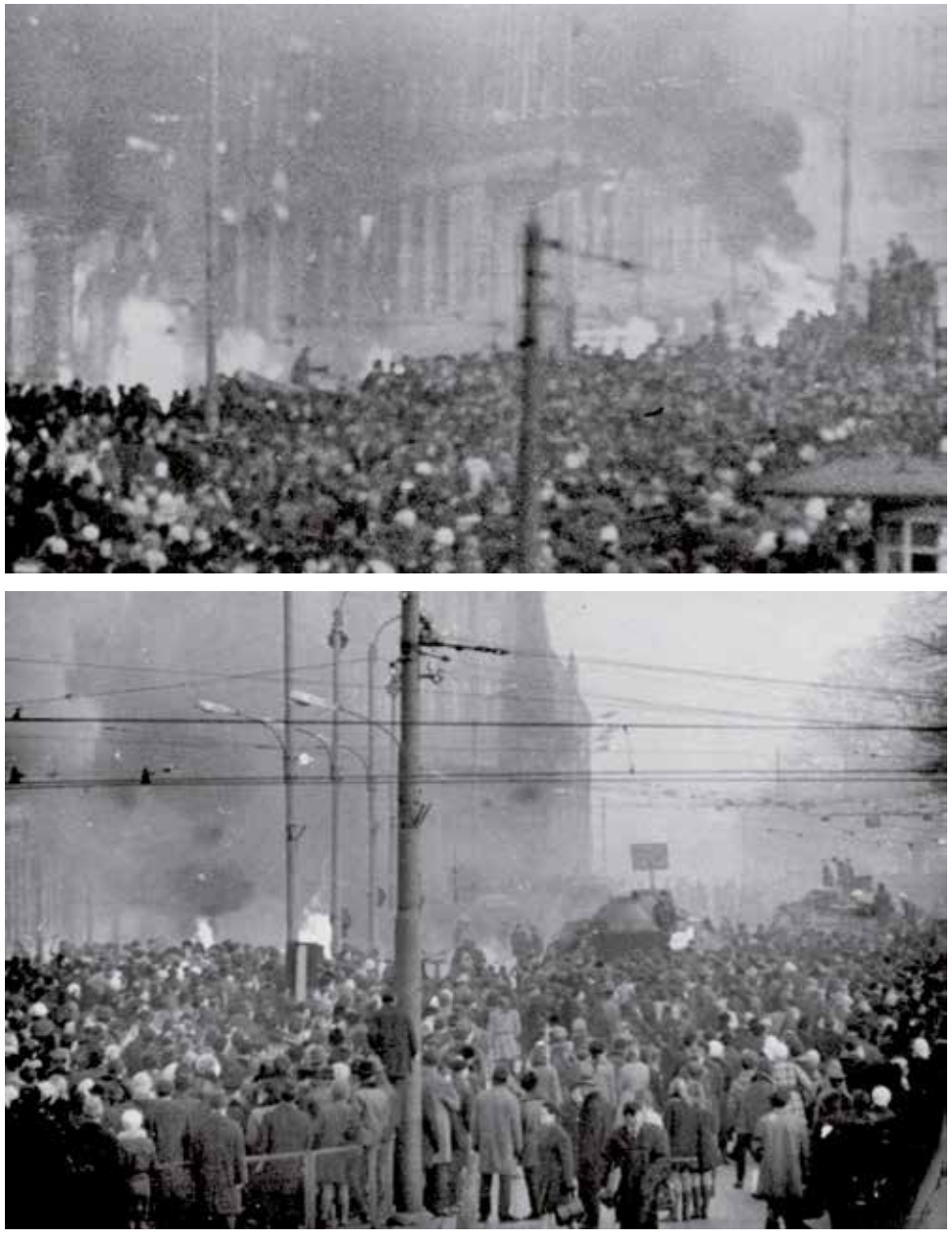
On June 28, 1956, workers of Poznań protested in the streets, demanding "freedom and bread". Brutal repressions followed – seventy four protesters were killed. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

Inhabitants of the model socialist city, which Nowa Huta was intended to become, protested against removing a cross from the square on which a church was meant to be erected. In return, the militia used arms, batons and gas against the protesters. In the photo: A Nowa Huta street after the demonstration. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

Religious celebrations of the 1000th anniversary of accepting Christianity in Poland gathered millions of people demonstrating their faith. In the photo: Cardinal Wyszyński conducts celebrations at Jasna Góra, May 3, 1966. (Archives of Salesian Inspectorate in Piła).

In March 1968 youth protested against the policy of Communist authorities concerning the freedom of speech. Fights with militia took place in several cities. In the photo: militia attacks with tear gas in Warsaw. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

In December 1970 workers protested in the north of the country. The militia used force against shipyard workers. The official number of casualties – 45. The burning building of the Communist Party seat in Szczecin. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).



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*On June 15, 1976, workers of Radom, Ursus and Płock protested against price rises.
The protest was brutally pacified by the militia. In the photo: Street fights in front
of the Communist Party seat in Radom. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).*

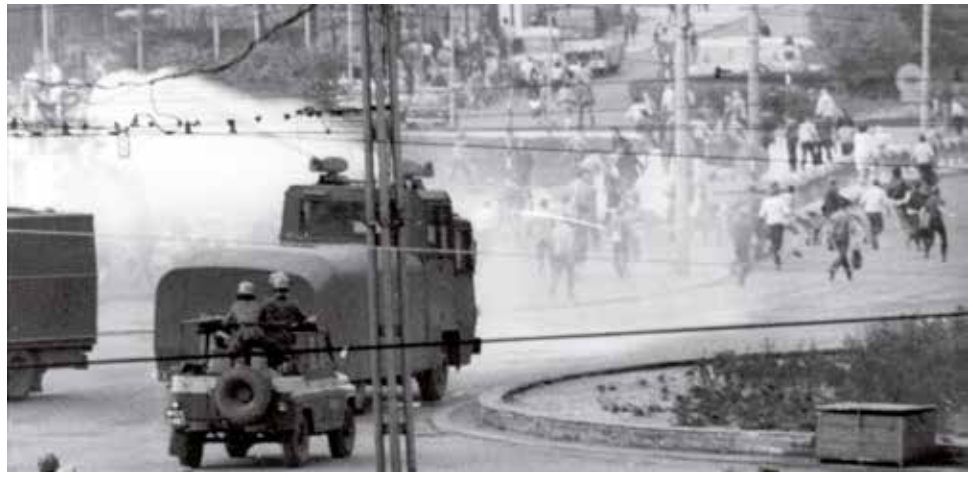
In response to the brutality of the authorities towards the protesting workers, the opposition organised aid for the repressed. Stanisław Pyjas, a student later murdered by the Security Service, was one of the activists taking part in this action. In reaction to his death, students of Kraków organised a "black march" and established the Students' Independent Solidarity Committee. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

The first visit of John Paul II to his homeland in June 1979 gave rise to high hopes not only among Poles, but also other countries of the Eastern Bloc. In the photo: Students of Kraków on their way to meet the Pope (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

In the summer of 1980 Poland saw a wave of protests across the whole country, from which "Solidarity" was born. In the photo: Workers of the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk on strike. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

*The establishment of "Solidarity" gave rise to hopes of regaining independence.
In the photo: Thousands manifest on the forbidden Independence Day – October 11, 1980.
(Archives of the Foundation for the Centre of Documentation of the Independence Movement).*

The warfare state which the Communist authorities introduced on December 13, 1980, was an attempt to crush "Solidarity". In the photo: Pacification of the striking employees of the Wujek coal mine, where nine miners were killed. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).



*In spite of repressions, Poles demonstrated their support for the underground "Solidarity".
In the photo: "Solidarity" demonstration in Wrocław, August 31, 1981.
(Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).*

*Social resistance was sustained by hundreds of materials issued by underground publishing houses. In the photo: One of independent printing offices.
(Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).*

John Paul II provided spiritual support to those demanding freedom. In the photo: The mass held by the Pope in Gdańsk Zaspa, June 12, 1987. (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance).

In the summer and spring of 1988, during strikes in major factories, workers demanded the legalisation of "Solidarity". In the photo: Strike in the Lenin Iron Works, May 1988. (Photo: Andrzej Stawiarski)

On June 4, 1989, partially free parliamentary elections took place, which ended in the victory of "Solidarity" and hastened the final collapse of the Communist state. In the photo: "United in the fight for independence" demonstration during the election campaign. (Photo: Stanisław Markowski)

The first fully free parliamentary elections since the end of World War II took place only in 1991. (Photo: Grzegorz Kozakiewicz)

The changes which took place after after 1989 liberated the economy from the limitations of ideology and contributed to the development of the country, but they were also a cause of widespread social discontent. In the photo: Miners protest in Warsaw in 1995. (Photo: Grzegorz Kozakiewicz)

The Pope, whom Poles always saw as a great authority, warned the nation that freedom cannot be built without the support of moral values. In the photo: Two and a half million people, seen from the Kościuszko Mound, as they attend the Papal mass on Błonia Common in Kraków, June 1997. (Photo: Grzegorz Kozakiewicz)

In 2004, Poland became a member of the EU. In the photo: EU supporters gathered at the Main Market Square in Kraków. (Photo: Grzegorz Kozakiewicz)

The economic situation of Poland after the year 1981 was truly dramatic – as a result of an economic crisis pronounced in market shortages as well as rampant inflation, the authorities decided to ration the majority of basic goods, such as meat, butter, flour, powdered milk, chocolate, alcohol, cigarettes, petrol, washing powder, soap, shoes – which were only available in fixed allowances per head. Other goods, which were rationed according to different principles, included TV sets, refrigerators and washing machines.

In 1983, the national socio-economic plan was adopted, which was intended to stop the rapid decrease in industrial production. The aim was to have achieved 85 percent of the production from twelve years before in 1985, but again the planning process in the centrally controlled economy failed completely. In 1988, prices were raised again – this time by 60 percent, and again social protests followed. The authorities came to realise that this time facing the opposition may be their last battle. In the autumn of 1988 the prime minister Mieczysław Rakowski attempted to save the position of the PZPR by reforming the economy in the direction of a free-market one with the preservation of full political power for the Communists, according to the Chilean or Korean model. These attempts ended in failure as well. The legal resolutions adopted at that time were used mainly to take advantage of state property by party activists.

VI. TRANSFER OF POWER

Facing massive social unrest and the coming anniversary of the August agreements, the Communist authorities decided to negotiate with the representatives of the opposition. On 31 August 1988 talks started between general Kiszczak and the opposition leader, Lech Wałęsa, resulting in the promise of negotiations at the so-called Round Table. In December the Civic Committee of "Solidarity" trade union was established, which included associates and experts cooperating with the opposition.

The Round Table negotiations started on February 6, 1989, with the aim of reaching agreement between the Communist authorities and the opposition movement as well as drawing the principles along which liberalisation of the governing system in Poland should take place. It seems that the authorities still wanted to keep power to themselves, giving only a tiny remainder of it to the opposition. Fifty-seven participants negotiated in the Round Table, but the most important decisions were made in a much more narrow company which gathered at Magdalenka. The effect of the negotiations was the decision that the highest state authorities were to to be reformed – instead of the State Council a president of the People's Republic would be chosen, and the parliament would be supplemented by another, higher house – the Senate. The coming elections were meant to be 'partially free' – that is, 65 percent of seats would be granted to the Communists and 35 percent would be subject to a truly democratic division between candidates submitted on a free basis from the opposition. Following the negotiations, the government allowed the "Solidarity" trade union to work legally again, and so it was again formally registered along with Farmers' trade unions (NSZZ RI). Beside these, other organisations like KPN, PPS and the students' association NSZ continued operating. However, some communities regarded any negotiations with Communist authorities as highly suspicious – these were mainly Solidarity 80', the Polish Independence Party, Freedom and Peace Movement, Militant Solidarity as well as the Liberal-Democratic "Independence" Party.

On April 7, 1989, the parliament amended the constitution, effecting changes that had been negotiated at the Round Table. The election was planned for the June 4, 1989. The candidates for parliamentary seats were on the one hand members of regime parties (PZPR, ZSL,SD, PAX) and on the other these proposed by the Civic Committee of Solidarity.

It must be emphasised that in the latter part of the 1980s the Security Police intensified its operations – before the Round Table negotiations as well as after them, the secret police worked tirelessly infiltrating all those connected with the opposition. These operations continued until the autumn of 1989. It seems that despite the negotiated concessions, the Communist authorities attempted to maintain the control over the political life of the country, and especially over the activities of the opposition at all costs.

In the period just before the elections, one of the leaders of "Solidarity" associates, Adam Michnik, started publishing a daily newspaper – "Gazeta Wyborcza" – which beside its temporal (that is, strictly connected with the upcoming elections) function was also informative. Beside Gazeta Wyborcza, such papers as Tygodnik Solidarność started appearing again, edited by Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

Sixty two point one percent of voters took part in June 4 elections – which in comparison to previous, falsified elections, was not a stunning turnout. However, the result of the elections was stunning for the Communist authorities – all 35 percent of the so-called 'free' seats were won by the representatives of "Solidarity". What is more, the Communist candidates, which were in fact the leaders of the race, placed at the 'state list' did not gain enough votes. Two weeks later, a second round of elections had to be called – at which the turnout was 25 percent. The Senate election results were even more surprising for the authorities – independent candidates won 92 of 100 seats (and in the second round they gained an additional seven seats). June 4, which was meant to be a day of co-optation, became a huge breakthrough for the "Solidarity" revolution.

The MPs and members of the Senate from the Civic Committee lists established a Parliamentary club of 260 people (including 161 MPs), which was the second largest club after PZPR (which had 173 members). ZSL only had 76 MPs, and SD 27.

On July 19, a joint meeting of Seym and Senate (called the National Gathering), at which General Jaruzelski was chosen president, and he immediately transferred the mission to form the government to his associate, General Kiszczak, who, however, did not manage to obtain sufficient support in the parliament. As a result of a coalition of the Civic Committee and ZSL and SD, Jaruzelski was forced to delegate the forming of the government to the candidate of the opposition. On August 24, the Seym appointed Tadeusz Mazowiecki prime minister.

The new parliament undertook actions aimed at amending the existing legal order. In December 1989 the constitution was amended – some changes were mainly of symbolic value, like returning to the name Republic of Poland, and a crowned eagle as the country's emblem. But there were also changes of primary importance – that is, returning to the principles according to which the Republic of Poland was a state of political pluralism, in which the state protects its citizens` rights to own property and guarantees freedom of enterprise.

Another amendment of the constitution, consisting in the independence of local governments from state administration and granting them legal existence as well as the right of ownership, was effected in March 1990. Consequently, the Seym passed a new local government act, on the basis of which the first free local elections since World War II were conducted.

On September 27, 1990, another amendment took place, this time as a consequence of general Jaruzelski's decision to end his term of office before the due time. The amendment specified that a president was to be chosen in general elections by the whole nation. The elections took place on November 25, 1990, and as the first round was inconclusive, a second round had to be conducted on December 9, in which Lech Wałęsa was chosen to a five-year term in the office. The next two terms belonged to Aleksander Kwaśniewski, who won the elections in 1995 and 2000. In the spring of 1991, under the influence of the President, the term of office for the parliament was shortened, and in June a new electoral law was adopted. On October 27, in elections conducted on the basis of the new law, members of twenty nine political parties entered the parliament. In the next elections a requirement of achieving the threshold of at least 5 percent votes for political parties and 8 percent for party blocs was enacted, which was meant to avoid parliamentary fragmentation and facilitate forming party coalitions. The elections of 1991, in contrast to these of 1989, were fully free and democratic. The characteristic feature of the Polish way of democratisation of state structures was the fact that firstly local governments, then the president and finally the parliament were elected in a democratic way. One may risk the statement that the 'contract Seym' of the years 1989-1991, which was a product of a certain compromise, existed until the most important reforms were introduced, which in fact meant that these reforms had been overseen by the former Communist leaders.

VII. NEW CONSTITUTION, NEW PARTIES

The "Little Constitution", which regulated relations between the highest state authorities, was passed in October 1992. It was in fact a new-old constitution, because it repeated many provisions from the 1952 constitution. The new Little Constitution can be seen today as a way of maintaining the legal continuity between the People's Republic and the Third Republic of Poland. It also meant that all actions conducted according to the law in force in the times of the People's Republic were, in fact, legal. The lack of a definite legal borderline between two systems meant giving up the possibility of announcing the Communist system as a criminal regime.

An entirely new constitution was passed only in 1997. The greatest paradox is that it was passed during the parliamentary office when the ruling party was a post-Communist one. The constitution of 1997 defined Poland as a democratic state of legal rule.

The new constitution, based on Montesquieu's principle of separation of powers, gave the legislative power to the two-house parliament, executive power to the government and the president, and judiciary to independent courts.

The length of the transition period between constitutions (1989-1997) was to a large extent an effect of the weakness and deficiencies of the Polish political party system. In 1989 the only party with the proper discipline and enough assets was the Polish United Workers' Party. Wałęsa's Civic Committee was far from homogeneous in terms of politics and programme. In the Autumn of 1989 the Christian National Union (ZCHN), led by Wiesław Chrzanowski was established, and in February 1990 the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD), whose president was Janusz Lewandowski. In May 1990 Lech and Jarosław Kaczynscy established the Centre Agreement (PC), and in July Zbigniew Bujak created the Citizens' Movement - Democratic Action, which later turned to Democratic Union, which finally, after joining with KLD, became Freedom Union.

Also the Communist Party underwent transformations, but these were purely formal, and their aims only utilitarian. The 11th Assembly of the PZPR dissolved the existing party, and most of its members decided to create a new one – the Social Democracy of Republic of Poland (SDRP). The new party could not be directly associated nor accused of Communist crimes, and it was easier for the members to take care of the new-old possessions.

Resolutions of the Round Table and the peaceful transfer of power were important factors thanks to which the society accepted the "policy of the thick line", which was proposed and conducted by politicians connected with Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuroń. This policy meant avoiding all legal actions against politicians of the former regime, and at the same time recognising the Communist legal order as lawful. Therefore, the leaders of the Communist state avoided criminal liability for their deeds. Because of the fact that legal continuity was assumed between the Peoples' Republic and the Third Republic it was only possible to bring to justice these who, when fighting with the opposition, broke the laws in force at that time.

After 1989, when both the military and the police had a political character, it was necessary to conduct verification procedures regarding their personnel, with special emphasis to secret services. At the beginning of 1990, employees of the political police (UB), as well as these of intelligence and counter-intelligence were verified. As a result of these procedures, most of employees lost their positions, and these who did not were employed in the newly established services.

In 1997, the Seym passed the Lustration Act, according to which every citizen aspiring to perform public functions (such as an MP, Senate Member etc.) is obliged to submit a vetting declaration, in which he or she was supposed to declare any cooperation with the secret services of the Peoples' Republic. Admitting such cooperation does not to lead to any consequences, only concealing such cooperation leads to consequential factors.

VIII. REFORMS

The changes in the party system which were begun in 1990 did not turn out to be long-lasting. The Polish political arena was changing constantly with every parliamentary, presidential and local election. It seems that it was only the Financing Political Parties Act – and especially its provision specifying that only political parties who gain at least 3 percent of the overall number of votes in parliamentary elections shall obtain the financial support of the state – that contributed to the stabilisation of the system. At present, from among the parties which had their MPs in the parliament in 1990 only the PSL is still functioning. It is also worth noticing that in the 2007 elections the difference between "post-Solidarity" and post-Communist parties was completely blurred.

It seems that at present Poland is progressing towards a two-party system, in which key positions are held by the liberal Civic Platform (PO) with Donald Tusk at the lead and the conservative Law and Justice (PIS) with Jarosław Kaczyński, who must, however, search for coalition with other parties in order to form the government.

The changes in the economy were closely connected to political transformation. In Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government the person responsible for conducting market

reforms was the Deputy PM and Minister of Finance, Leszek Balcerowicz. As early as October Balcerowicz demonstrated the plan of actions with the aim of reforming the Polish economy, which included such operations as privatisation (de-monopolisation) as well as market facilitation of the economy. It also defined the actions to be undertaken in the sphere of fiscal and social policy. The so-called Balcerowicz's plan envisaged putting society through a couple of months' of shock treatment, thanks to which citizens were to become better-off. According to Balcerowicz, the reforms would release the great entrepreneurial potential of citizens, which had been suppressed for so many years. Relevant acts were directed to parliament in December 1989, and came into force on January 1, 1990. Introducing market reforms immediately led to a rapid increase in prices (the prices of coal and oil rose by 400 percent, power by 300 percent) and a decrease in citizens' real pay. Internal convertibility of zloty was introduced, and the state monopoly for international trade was lifted. The economy, which until 1989 was a command economy characterised by permanent crisis and shortage, now was becoming a system in which internal shortages were made up for by import of cheaper goods from abroad. An economy in which work was both a right, but also an obligation (in PRL people were punished for avoiding work), was now turning into a system where work was seen in market categories, according to the rules of supply and demand. After the first year of reforms the unemployment figures soared to one million people, and 30 percent of society were living below the minimal social level. In July 1991 the Stock Exchange was opened in Warszawa, at which only five companies were present at first, but thanks to market mechanisms and privatisation the economic system was becoming more and more effective.

The chances of success in the beginning of the 1990s, however, looked quite bleak. It turned out that the negative backwash of the reforms lasted much longer than Balcerowicz had anticipated. In the years 1989-1991 the GDP fell by 20 percent, and it was only in 1992 that a slight improvement was noted (it rose by 2.5 percent), and it continued to rise in the years 1995-1997 with the dynamics of about 7 percent. The case was similar with inflation – in 1991 it was 70 percent, in the next year 44.3 percent, in 1997 it fell to 14 percent and in 1999 to 9.8 percent.

The economic reform in Poland was possible to implement initially thanks to the support of citizens, determination of the authors of the reform but also thanks to the support that the country obtained from the International Monetary Fund and The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which granted Poland two billion dollars. Also the creditors of the country had a positive role to play – they announced a memorandum for the payment of debts, and what is more, negotiated with the Polish government a partial cancellation of the debts. However, the main burden of the reforms was borne by the average citizen, which may be the main reason for the fact that the post-Communist Party won the 1993 elections and formed a coalition with PSL. The leftist rule stopped the liberal reform programme for some time, but it was again taken up again in 1997 by AWS, when Balcerowicz one more time became a deputy PM and the Minister of Finance.

IX. JOINING NATO AND THE EU

Since 1945 and the Yalta Conference, Poland found itself under the power of the Soviet influence. From 1955 onwards, along with other countries of the Eastern Bloc, it was a part of the Warsaw Pact, which was aimed at protecting its own territory rather than balancing the influence of the NATO. The Pact conducted joint military operations in order to, for example, pacify the "Prague Spring" demonstrations. The Czechoslovak experience, beside its military aspect, also had a doctrinal one – it became clear that the sovereignty of the particular members of the Warsaw Pact was strictly limited, according to the Brezhniev doctrine, which emphasised that it was impossible for anyone to leave the Russian sphere of influence. The Warsaw Pact was to protect socialism much more than independence. It was among the leaders of the allied armies of the Pact that the issue of Polish anarchy of 1980-1981 arose; the debate returned in the years 1988 and 1989 thanks to GDR and Czechoslovakian leaders. It is worth mentioning that the Soviet Army was stationed on the Polish territory uninterruptedly from 1939 until 1994.

Beside the military control that Moscow exerted over the Polish territory, the control and dependence of the Polish economy from supplies from the Soviet Union (Poland was a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid) was equally important. Moscow's strongest argument in this respect were the supplies of gas and oil. All actions of Poland were supervised and controlled by the Soviet Union, and all mention of emancipatory politics would be met with either hard or soft economic or military arguments.

In order to understand Polish-Russian relations at that time, it is necessary to remember the bipolar balance of power between the USA and the Soviet Union, where Poland belonged to the Communist side, as well as a tradition of centuries of bad Polish-Russian relations. Russia was responsible for partitioning Poland, deprived Poles of their nationality and brutally pacified national uprisings in the country.

It was autumn 1989 which was of utmost importance for Polish-Soviet relations, when Poland already had an independent government and the Berlin wall fell. The Soviet Union, after entering a phase of acute crisis, was nearing collapse. Under these circumstances, the Polish government turned to its western neighbors in order to gain help in freeing itself from the Soviet influence – as the meeting in Krzyżowa between Mazowiecki and Kohl in 1989 showed.

As regards German-Polish relations, the case was similar, but the relations were even more aggravated by negative stereotypes spread by Communist propaganda, which saw the Federal Republic of Germany as a fundamental threat to the integrity of its territories. However, with the euphoria accompanying the fall of communism, Poles supported Germany's intentions to form a unified state. The celebrations which took place at Krzyżowa in the autumn of 1989 had a great political and cultural impact. With time, Germany became one of the most ardent supporters of Poland on its way to the European Union.

Besides Germany, the USA were another powerful ally of Poland. The visit and speech of Lech Wałęsa in the American Congress, as well the applause that Wałęsa gained were only external signs of reverting alliances. Poland was turning from being a member of the Warsaw Pact and ally of Moscow into the supporter of the US. In 1991 negotiations were started concerning the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Poland, and at the same time at the meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Warsaw Pact in Budapest it was decided to overrule military alliances and dissolve the Pact. Suppressing the Yanayev coup in Moscow and the taking over of the Kremlin by Boris Yeltsin definitely gave an advantage to Poland in terms of integration with the Western Europe. The turning point, however, was the "Brown amendment", adopted by the US Congress, which allowed for accepting the countries of the so-called Visegrad Group into NATO. It turned out that cooperation with the Czech Republic and Hungary was a decisive factor for being admitted into NATO, because thanks to the cooperation the European sphere of political and military stability was expanded. It was an especially important moment for Poles when the Russian troops were finally withdrawn from Polish territory on September 18,1993. It was rather a symbolic date, when one remembers that it was on September 17, 1939, that Soviet forces began its occupation of Poland.

Poland was formally invited to join NATO in January 1999, and on 17 February the parliament authorised the president to ratify the North Atlantic Treaty. A few days later President Kwaśniewski ratified the Treaty together with President Havel in Prague (26 February 1999), and it was presented to Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, by the foreign ministers on March 12.

Actions aiming at achieving political and economic security were led in a parallel fashion. In February 1990 Tadeusz Mazowiecki applied for Poland's accession to European structures in Brussels. On November 22, 1991, facing the dissolution of the USSR, Poland initialed the association agreement with the EEC, and four days later it joined the Council of Europe. The Soviet Union ceased to exist on December 31, 1991.

After ratifying the Association Agreement between Poland and the EU by the Member States in February, the Polish government placed a formal application to be admitted into the EU in April 1994. In December 1998, The European Union issued a formal invitation for Poland to access negotiations to the prime minister Jerzy Buzek. However, the accession to the EU turned out to be much more difficult than joining NATO. To meet the requirements of the EU, two subsequent governments (of Jerzy Buzek of AWS and Leszek Miller of SLD) and parliaments of the two subsequent offices undertook and finalised the gigantic task of adapting the Polish legal system to that of the EU, as well as introducing fundamental reform programmes in the spheres of social and health security as well as the structure of administration and local governments. The latter reforms were mainly the achievement of the AWS government, that is the government including many former "Solidarity" activists. The last step took place in the year 2000, when the Nice Treaty, granting Poland 27 votes in the European Council was adopted and the year 2002 was named as the final date of ending the negotiations. The year 2003 was a year of doubt, because after a referendum concerning the EU access, to which 77.5 percent of Poles agreed (June 8, 2003), the Convent of the EU adopted a new project - The Constitutional Treaty - which drastically reduced the number of Polish votes in the Council. The MP Jan Maria Rokita was remembered then for coining the

phrase "Nice or death" which was meant to be a guideline for the Polish government in further negotiations with the EU. In spite of all these difficulties, Poland became a regular member of the European Union on the May 1, 2004.

What is important to consider in the context of joining the European Union is the attitude of the intellectual elites of the country towards this process. After 1989 it was people of science and culture who were the greatest beneficiaries of political changes. For nearly half a century, in accordance with the intentions of the Communist authorities, the borders of the country were hermetically sealed and impenetrable both to people and to ideas. The publishing market of the People's Republic could indeed boast of a high number of books printed, but only the authors accepted by the regime were allowed to publish, and even then their works were heavily censored. Everyone who refused to comply with the regulations of the state, or even worse, attempted to publish in underground institutions was immediately included in a list of authors whose works are "not fit to be printed". There was a similar mechanism at work when it comes to all branches of culture – "progressive" authors, actors and poets were promoted, "reactionist" ones were eliminated. Therefore, it was natural that when Communism fell, all these previously repressed creative elites actively joined propagating the notion of joining the EU. A similar process took place among university elites – thanks to newly-won democracy, intellectuals could re-join the European scientific community.

A good climate for integration was also created by the Catholic Church – its authorities encouraged people to vote for integration using the example of Mieszko the First, who, because he accepted Christianity, united his territory with the linguistically and culturally universalist Europe. Church authorities also emphasised the fact that Poles, re-entering Europe, had a chance to enrich the European community with their religion. The favourable tone of the Church was further strengthened by the support of Pope John Paul II.

Pro-EU parties were also dominant on the political scene. The continuity and consequence of the actions of subsequent governments should be emphasised, even though governments were often very different, like the first non-Communist government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki and the social democratic of Leszek Miller. In spite of many similarities in the actions of prime ministers representing completely different political backgrounds, some differences are also worth mentioning.

Members of the former Freedom Union (Unia Wolności), who presently function in the ranks of Democrats PL (Demokraci PL) were all fervent enthusiasts of the Union, as were politicians connected with the Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD) and those of the Civic Platform. From this perspective, the conservative wing of the Civic Platform could be seen as center party – that is, still favoring the EU, but with certain reservations. Parties who were stern opponents of the integration were the League of Polish Families and the Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland, who saw this process as a threat to the country; however, they are at present outside the parliament, as they did not cross the threshold of minimum 5 percent of support in the 2007 elections.

In 2011 the Civic Platform became the first Polish party to win two consecutive terms since the fall of communism.

Witold Pilecki *(1901-1948) – described by Michael Foot in his book "Six Faces of Courage" as one of the six most courageous men of the period, was an officer of the Polish Army, who established his name during the Bolshevik War (1919-1921), and was one of the last soldiers to lay down their arms during the German invasion in 1939. In 1940, he voluntarily entered the Auschwitz death camp as a prisoner, in order to organise underground structures there, and he managed to encourage over 500 people to join the organisation. After two and one half years he organised a successful escape, and provided the Underground State structures as well as the Polish Government abroad with a detailed report which contained priceless information concerning the situation in the camp. After that, he fought in the Warsaw Uprising, and when it surrendered, he was sent to POW camp. However, he decided to return to Communist Poland to continue his fight for the independence of the country in the underground. He was arrested, tortured and finally murdered by the authorities on May 25, 1948. After the unjust verdict of death was announced, he said that Auschwitz was a trifle in comparison to what the Communist authorities did to him.*

Stanisław Pyjas *(1953-1977) – a student of the Jagiellonian University, murdered on May 7, 1977, on the orders of the Security Service (UB). He took part in many underground activities, such as circulating independent literature and organising aid for the repressed, for which he was repressed himself and later murdered. His death came as a shock to academic circles, who in response established an independent Solidarity Committee for the purpose of defending basic rights and rejecting the Communist ideology.*

Jerzy Popiełuszko *(1947-1984) – a Catholic priest, the chaplain of "Solidarity", murdered by the authorities. In 1980 Popiełuszko became involved in supporting the independence movement. After the warfare state was introduced, he performed church services with the intention of defending truth and justice as well as urging the authorities to release political prisoners. He preached non-violence in accordance with the message of St. Paul, who said that evil should be fought by means of doing good. Popiełuszko was a constant target of repressions and attacks of Communist propaganda. On October 19, 1984, he was kidnapped and murdered by members of the Security Service (UB). His funeral was attended by half a million Poles, and the Pope John Paul II prayed on his grave. At the present moment, the beatification process of the heroic priest is in progress.*

List of abbreviations

AWS – Solidarity Electoral Action
KLD – Liberal Democratic Congress
KOR – Committee for the Protection of Workers
KPN – Confederation of Independent Poland
KRN – State's National Council
NSZZ RI – National Independent Farmers' Union "Solidarność"
PC – Centre Agreement
PIS – Law and Justice Party
PKWN – Polish Committee of National Liberation
PO – Civic Platform
PPS – Polish Socialist Party – a social democratic party
PPR – Polish Workers' Party
PSL – Polish People's Party – a party representing rural and peasant communities
PZPR – Polish United Workers' Party
ROPCiO – Movement for Defense of Human and Civic Rights
SD – Democratic Party
SDRP – Social Democracy of Republic of Poland
SKS – Student Committee of "Solidarity"
SLD – Alliance of the Democratic Left
SP – Labour Party – a Christian Democratic party
UB – Office of security
WIN – Freedom and Independence Movement
ZCHN – Christian National Union ZSL – United Peoples Party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MOLDOVA
REPUBLICA MOLDOVA
Chişinău
Tisza
ROMÂNIA
Bucureşti
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Dunărea
Sofija
БЪЛГАРИЯ
Skopje
PORANEŠNA JUGOSLOVENSKA

ROMANIA: FROM DEMOCRACY TO TOTALITARIANISM AND BACK

Virgil Tarau

Republic of Romania
Area: 238 390 square km²
Population: 21 266 700 (2006)
Capital city: Bucharest
Official Language: Romanian
Currency: Leu (ROL)
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.01.2007

I. INTRODUCTION

Beginning as a common and complementary action to joining NATO, Romania's accession to the EU proved to be a long and difficult process. Romania submitted its accession request on the 22 June 1995, and obtained the status of candidate country in December 1999, when the European Council in Helsinki decided that negotiations with Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, and Malta will start in February 2000. For Romania to become a Member State, the Copenhaga criteria had to be accomplished: political criteria (stable institutions which guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect and protection of minorities); economic criteria (functional market economy, able to deal with competition in the Union; and judicial-administrative criteria (existence of solid administrative structures capable of taking over and implementing the acquis to the constituent treaties, and legislation adopted according to these treaties and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice).

The accession negotiations began on February 15, 2000, and were completed at the end of 2004. Out of the 31 negotiated chapters, the most problematic ones were the justice and internal affairs, agriculture, energy and competition. To facilitate the accession negotiations, a pre-accession strategy was established, based upon the Association Agreements. Following the completion of accession negotiations, Romania signed the EU Accession Treaty on the 25 April 2005.

Romania's return to the European structures illustrates not only a dimension of foreign policy but also the difficult transition from communism. It was a long road back to democracy, a political system which was established in Romania in the second half of the nineteenth century.

II. FROM MODERN STATE TO TOTALITARIAN REGIME

Besides the long processes specific to the evolution of economical and social systems, the modern history of Europe is defined by several important political moments. These events, starting with the 1848 revolutions, to the Franco-German and Russo-Ottoman wars at the end of the nineteenth century, the two world wars of the twentieth century, offers an opportunity to observe both the common and the divergent destinies of the European states.

At the middle of the nineteenth century, in the context of a Europe marked by the birth of the states based on modern political principles, the modern Romanian state was founded at the borders of three empires; the Ottoman, Russian and Austro-Hungarian. After the 1856 Treaty of Paris the Principalities of the Wallachia and Moldavia entered under the guarantee of the European powers and soon after they were unified under the leadership of Alexandru Ioan Cuza. Following its independence in 1878 and its recognition as a sovereign kingdom in 1881, the Romanian state entered a period of political, economic, and social reforms.

At the Paris Peace Conference which settled the First World War, the Romanian government succeeded in gathering virtually all ethnic Romanians within the same borders. Territorial consolidation was followed by political, economical and social reforms. If the political unification was accomplished relatively soon, through the administrative acts of 1919-1920 and the constitutional reform of 1923, the course of the processes of social, economic and judicial developed only gradually. Yet these transformations affected primarily the urban environment and less the countryside because of its traditionalist and conservative core. With these limits, the Romanian political system was evolving toward a democratic paradigm until the beginning of World War II. Within the context in which the states in Central and Eastern Europe felt under authoritarianism year after year, renouncing to democracy, this left Romania and Czechoslovakia as the sole states in which were respected the democratic principles that emerged at the end of World War I.

The changes happening in Europe in the 1930s and the 1940s took their toll on the Kingdom of Romania as well. Parliamentary democracy gave way to dictatorship in Bucharest as well as in many of the other European capitals. It would take six years until August 23, 1944, when Romania ended its war against the Allies, and sued for peace. Through the removal of the regime of Marshal Ion Antonescu, accomplished without Soviet help, the inter-war political elites and the Monarchy under King Michael I, succeeded in restoring the constitutional link with the old inter-war democratic regime. If in other East European countries the elite sought "a third way" between communism and capitalism, the majority of Romanian society aimed toward returning to the values of the constitutional democratic political system, de-structured after 1938. As a consequence, when the Soviets troops entered Bucharest in September 1944, they had found there central and responsible institutions and authorities that enjoyed a popular support and represented the Romanian independent state.

In spite of these, with the direct support of the Soviet Union, Romanian democratic institutions were subjected to constant ideological pressure in order to transform them according to the views of the Communist leaders. From the autumn of 1944, the Romanian Communists, directly supported by Soviets representatives on the Allied Commission of Control, succeeded in gaining stronger representation in the governmental structures. The Romanian political regime became extremely unstable until the spring of 1945 due to the conditionings imposed by the Soviets and the actions carried out by Romanian Communists aimed at reinforcing their representation in the executive. The combined effect of these two factors determined the fall of three governments during August 1944 and February 1945. At the end of February 1945, the Soviets imposed in Romania a non-representative government, under Petru Groza as his president, dominated by Communists, ignoring and violating the principles assumed by Stalin at the Yalta Conference.

The elimination of the democratic parties, The National Peasant Party and The National Liberal Party, from the governmental structures was soon followed by the introduction of several populist measures for attracting supporters for the Groza government, respective of the repressive ones meant to marginalise the former political elites. The purge of the public administration, judiciary, police and army, sustained by an aggressive campaign of monopolising communications and transportations, determined the deterioration of the political environment during the summer of 1945. King Michael attempted to remedy the situation. On August 21, 1945, he entered in the so-called royal strike refusing to sign any governmental act until its reorganisation according to principles of Yalta. The King's action remained without any practical effects, since the promises made after the Moscow Conference, held in December, were not observed by the Communist leaders in Bucharest. Lacking any social support, they paid a lip service to the democratic evolutions until the parliamentary elections of November 19, 1946. The elections gave the Communists the appearance of legitimacy by virtue of a massive electoral fraud. Even though the western powers were aware of the violation of democratic criterions of the election, in the context of the deterioration of the international rapports and of the beginning of the Cold War, they recognised de facto the result of the elections.

Following their electoral victory, the Communist Party set aside any restraint, launching an aggressive campaign against anyone identified with the opposition.

1947 marked the transition from a regime of a "popular democracy" to the "dictatorship of the proletariat". At the end of the year, the political institutions of a democratic state were abolished. The Monarchy was replaced by the Republic, and the Parliament was to become The Grand National Assembly. The traditional political parties were suppressed or marginalised. The specific structures of a civil society and different types of associations were disbanded during the second half of the 1947. Besides the institutional

transformations and the alteration processes of the economic structures, terror against the citizenry became all encompasing. During 1947 five massive campaigns of arrests on political motives were launched. During February 1947 and again in May 1947, the Communist government targeted sympathisers and the local members of the National Peasant Party and of the National Liberal Party. The arrests and the confinement in the penitentiaries were not the result of the judicial processes, but of the two secret decrees of the Minister of Interior, no. 50.000 and 18.000 from January and May 1947, respectively. More than 100,000 persons were to become victims of these actions. The campaign for destructing the National Peasant Party started during the summer of 1947. Its leaders were arrested and condemned under the accusation of "national treason." The violence continued intensely parallel with the Communist authorities' actions for the homogenisation of Romanian society. The process of pauperisation was initiated by the destruction of the economic bases of the former elites through the monetary reform of August 1947 and continued with the introduction of progressive taxation methods aimed both at the upper and the middle class.

III. ROMANIA UNDER THE Communist REGIME (1948-1989)

After the abolition of the monarchy, at the beginning of 1948, as with the other states of the region, Romania became a People's Republic. The characteristics of the Romanian Communist regime can be described as:

> The domination of the "single party". During the entire period, the power was wielded, as a political monopoly, by the Romanian Communist Party (named the Romanian Workers' Party between 1948 and 1965). Its leading role was sanctioned in all three constitutions of the period (1948, 1953 and 1965).

> The wielding of power ignoring its own laws, using Secret Police (Securitatea), the armed wing of the party in the conflict with its real or imaginary enemies.

> The destruction of the civil society and the forced homogenisation of the population on the base of a process of social engineering with the purpose of constructing a socialist nation. Social atomisation and the lack of any constitutional guarantees regarding observing individual rights and liberties generated major abuses of the state against its own citizens. Numerous examples, from crimes, arrests, and condemnations on political reasons to the application of the forced pro-birth policy or the program for "food rationing" are examples of the contempt the RCP displayed toward the comfort and happiness of the Romanian people.

> The monopoly of the communications means, the affirmation of the supremacy of the Communist ideology through propaganda and the control over all forms of public communication through censorship.

> The generalisation of repression against all those that had opposed or had been incapable of adhering to the values and the principle of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. The repression instruments, the Secret Police, militia and judicial system, were exclusively subordinated to the ideological commandments and practical needs of the RCP. As the consequence of the brutal actions committed by these institutions, over 500,000 Romanian citizens were confined in the system of penitentiaries until 1964, a veritable Romanian Gulag.

> Moving away from market economy principles and the imposition of a centralised economic model identical to that of the Soviet Union. The centralised planning, the industrialisation and the collectivisation of agriculture represented the pillars of this economic system.

> The liquidation of the state of law, the subordination of justice for legitimising and disguising the terror, and the political control over all means of coercion.

> A foreign policy subordinated to the Soviet interests until the beginning of the 1960s, followed by a relative autonomy of Romania on the international scene throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Besides these characteristics, the history of the Communist regime in Romania is also worth analysing from the perspective of its consequences on the institutions, economics and on the society as a whole. As the regime lasted for more than 40 years, the political, social, economical and cultural transformations and the evolutions influenced the way in

which Romania transitioned to democracy.

The Romanian Communist regime's historiography mentions three main phases of its development, taking into consideration the internal evolutions as well as those related to the foreign policy. Between 1944 and 1958, the first period in question, the RCP succeeded in eliminating or marginalising all of its opponents by means of terror. Taking place at the same time was a new constitutional frame consonant with the Communist ideology and the integration of the main sectors of society in the new social-political order. The nationalisation of the means of production, together with the monetary stabilisation, legislation regarding industrial charges, and the beginning of the economic planning, destroyed an important part of the economic basis of the country. Following the economic reorganisation were Communist reforms of the educational and cultural system which resulted in destroying the centers of the civil society and also in the subordination of the intellectual and cultural life. In 1948 the Communist regime passed the Law on Religious Confessions pushing for the dissolution of the Eastern-Rite Catholic Church (Greco-Catholic Rite). The law targeted another important sector of the Romanian society – religion - a persevering element of some traditional and democratic values. Lastly, a campaign against the Romanian peasantry was launched. The collectivisation of agriculture would last until 1962, a painful process that had affected the social, economical and human essence of the Romanian village.

The process of reforming Romanian society was carried out in the context of a generalised terror against all those that did not adhere to the ideological and political values promoted by the Communist leaders. The repression against the former elites comprised three distinct periods: 1944-1948; 1948-1954; 1956-1964. Only in 1955, and only for that year, did the Communist regime limited its repressive policies as to not effect the Geneva meetings. We find it hard to specify the exact number of the victims of the repression. Communist authorities have themselves only estimated the exact numbers. A statement made in 1952 by the Minister of Interior, Teohari Georgescu mentioned 100,000 people had been subjected to the regime's repression since 1945. If the number of people affected was in flux, the categories of guilty, ideologically defined in terms of the "class hate" were clearly specified, allowing to mention the stages of the actions taken against different social, economical and political categories, at least until 1952: These included high officials of the Antonescu period 1945-1946; the political leaders of the traditional political parties, 1946-1952; members of the fascist organisation The Iron Guard, 1944-1952; those that publicity expressed against the Communists and their allies during the 1946 elections; February, May 1947, and the former officials of the inter-war period, the economic, cultural and religious elites of 1948-1952. These individuals had been jailed, and their families deprived of the elementary means for survival and deported or administratively confined. It was, in fact, a real war against all those who did not adhere to the values of the Communist regime.

The Romanian state was exclusively dependent on the Soviet Union and the Communist Bloc as it was integrated in the bloc's structures: political (Cominform, 1947), economical (Comecom, 1949) or military (The Organisation of the Warsaw Treaty, 1955). Decisions were often taken in Moscow and implemented in Bucharest and the other East European capitals. Romania's subjugation to Soviet interests was clearly visible in the Romanian economy, whose resources were used according to the plans elaborated and to the needs expressed by Moscow. Moreover, until the middle of the 1950s, a large amount of the raw materials and exploitations as a state monopoly (financial, strategic transportations, petroleum, minerals, etc.,) were jointly exploited within the Romanian–Soviet societies. The Romanian economy was transformed according to the dogmas of the Stalinist economical model: massive industrialisation, rigid and centralised planning, and the collectivisation of agriculture. By the end of the 1950s, the effects proved catastrophic. The living standards decreased yearly, while the scarcity of basic goods required the introduction of rationalisation. Prices of the basic products attained levels similar to the inter-war period while salaries had dropped 900-1000 percent.

The Romanian Communist leadership came unscathed by the ongoing de-Stalinisation process that overtook some of the other East European Communist regimes following Nikita Khrushchev's rise to power in the Soviet Union. Having obtained a limited measure of personal security, the leadership under Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej began a gradual move toward a more independent foreign policy. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Romania in 1958 allowed for a greater degree of autonomy. In the following years, Bucharest sought to increase its economic autonomy within Comecom, and took steps toward limiting its participation in the political and military planning within the Eastern Bloc. All these transformations did not change the Stalinist essence of the Communist regime in Romania. The terror remained dominant. The collectivisation was brutally ended at the beginning of the 1960s, and the industrialisation was further stimulated in order to modernise the Romanian economy and society and to construct a mass base and also a political legitimacy for creating the socialist society.

At the beginning of the 1960s, relations between Romania and the Soviet Union became tense against the background of the disputes within the Communist Bloc – of which the most important was the Sino-Soviet one - and of the elaboration of a project meant to achieve an "international division of labor" in the Eastern Bloc. An open debate regarding the transformation of the Eastern Bloc into an economically integrated market evolved between 1962 and 1964. Romania's role within the new economic system was limited to supplying primarily agrarian goods. In April 1964 Romanian Communist leaders decided to adopt a clear position on the issue by elaborating a declaration of political principles as an instrument for the affirmation of their economical independence towards Moscow's plans. Moreover, on the same occasion, they vehemently attacked the socialist internationalism, underlining their complete engagement for the national independence and sovereignty. Simultaneously, in order to gain the popular support, the Communist authorities from Romania relaxed the control over society, trying to co-opt the majority of Romanians to the expressed positions. De-russification of culture, the opening towards Western cultural values, and a relaxation of the control over the means of information were followed by the great amnesty. Consequently, the large majority of the political convicts – at least several hundred thousand - were liberated from the penitentiary system in 1964. After 1964, Communist leaders would no longer seek to break Romanian society through the use of terror, but rather developed a strategy of co-opting Romanian society. Adding the national component, Romanian communism did not only wish emancipation from Moscow's tutelage, but also a way for an apparent reconciliation with its own people. The intented pacification proposed to the diverse sectors of Romanian society was meant to strength the legitimating of the Communist power, represented by an elite faithful to the Stalinist model of social modernisation.

For all its costs, and there were many, the modernisation of Romanian society during the four decades of communism was also marked by successes: urbanisation, industrial modernisation, the massive rise of employment, the equilibrium between the rural and urban population, the reduction of illiteracy and the augmentation of the number of persons with middle and vocational education, represented the main positive evolutions of the Communist period. But the same evolutions took place all over the world. Yet the limits of this process of modernisation were also apparent. The leadership's obsession with increasing the working class and with building an extensive industry constituted barriers in the social and economical development of a modern and efficient economy.

On final analysis, Romanian communism was a failed modernising experiment, wagered on the extensive and quantitive industry growth, while lacking adequate technology and with the perpetuation of excessive political planning. Even if the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s represented a 'golden era' of Romanian communism, it was a combination of different factors: industrialisation (with the aid of Western technologies) and economic nationalism; autonomy within the Soviet Bloc and the affirmation of national sovereignty principles, and shaping the regime with society.

The increase in the standard of living, accelerated rhythm of industrialisation, intensive urbanisation, corroborated with the affirmation of a Stalinist type of communism although nationalist in its essence, conferred a certain dosage of internal legitimacy as well as a external recognition of the unconventional choices made by Romania in its foreign policy.

The opening of diplomatic relations with West Germany in January 1967, the refusal to break relations with Israel in 1967, or condemning the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1968, improved the image of Romanian Communists in Westerner circles. High level visits by foreign dignitaries, such as the visits of Charles de Gaulle, Willy Brant or Richard Nixon to Romania increased Bucharest's international standing. Foreign policy was supplemented by a relative improvement of cultural relations with the West, relaxation of control domestically, and continual integration in the global economy. The economical agreements with the EEC states (1967, agricultural products and food, 1967, textiles, 1978, heavy steel industry products and 1981 industrial products) as well as the acceptance of Romania in the international financial organisations (World Bank, Monetary Fund, General Agreements for Trade and Commerce) or granting the Most Favored Nation clause by the US, were a recognition of the new position of Romania on the international arena.

Ambitious and pragmatic, the new Communist leader in Bucharest, Nicolae Ceausescu, even tried to play an active role in resolving the international conflicts (Israeli-Arab, American-Vietnamese) and to be among of the promoters of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (1975, Helsinki Final Act). He succeed in capitalising these successes externally, then used them to increase his legitimicy internally.

Yet, if abroad Romania succeeded in maintaining a privileged image until the end of the 1970s, and even as far beyond as the mid-1980s, the internal evolutions placed the country in a totally different position. Following a short period characterised by liberalising measures, Ceausescu returned to the Stalinist development paradigm. Actually, in a period when the East European States tried, through means of reforms, to stabilise the distance and the modernisation deficit in relations to the Western states, Romania came back to the Stalinist dogmas of modernisation: accelerated industrialisation. Ceausescu developed a personal project for the forced modernisation of Romania. The acceleration of industry investments, predominantly in the heavy industry and the ambition to naturalise the needed technology and products for this modernisation, eventually led to Romania's economical bankruptcy. The contributors to this 'evolution' were not only external factors like oil shocks and the energy crisis in the 1970s, but also the very development of the Romanian economy. Lacking the necessary resources and with limited access to the world economic markets brought on by a lack of competitively of products, Romania entered the crisis at the end of the 1970s. The attempt to reform by introducing a New Economic Mechanism was doomed to fail. Moreover, following the second oil shock in 1977, instead of reducing and rationalising industrial growth, Ceausescu took measures with effects on the entire society. The changing international economic situation meant that access to credits for the Romanian economy became more expensive. Focusing on the expensive nature of debt servicing, Ceausescu's economic reforms concentrated not on the source of the country's problems with hard currency—the lack of competitive export producs—but rather on ways in which he would be able to pay reduced domestic consumption in order to free up hard currency for debt repayment. Of the total investments in the 1980s, only 5 percent were directed to the food sector, with the balance directed toward sectors of the economy which would be involved in debt repayment. The effects of these policies had drastic consequences: the technological backwardness of the economy, deterioration of the infrastructure, and a lack of basic goods destined for the population. The effects of this mixture were disastrous for regular citizens. The rationalisation of electricity and thermal energy destined to the consumer was meant as a measure of resource conservation for an economic base that was woefully behind in terms of energy efficiency but continued in its drive for increasing industrial output.

The economic component of the failure of the Romanian Communist regime is just partially illustrative for what happened in the years when Romania was under the Ceausescu regime. Romania, like Albania and North Korea, continued with the Stalinisation of its society. The population control policies, intimidation and pressure reached impressive levels. The Securitate remained the guard of the control over society. While terror was no longer visible, more of an administrated and bureaucratised type of coercion meant to destroy any attempt of promoting a discourse differing from the party one. The society, in its whole, was under surveillance and repressed through an informants network coordinated by Militia and Securitate officers. At the same time, for more than two decades, with the sole purpose of ensuring full control of the society, an intensive and never-ending campaign of mobilisation and political socialisation around the Supreme Commander and the Romanian Communist Party was carried out. After a short co-habitation with the society as well as the Party (1965-1970), enhancing his power consolidation by removing the colleagues from the 'Old Guard' and re-founding of the political institutions, Ceausescu inaugurated a new stage in the struggle to reshape Romanian society, influenced by the Asian mobilisation model. Similarly with the North Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese leaderships, Ceausescu fused proletarian internationalism with nationalistic discourse. Re-Stalinisation of culture, and mobilisation of society with the purpose of a 'leap ahead', meant to build the "new man" and the "multilaterally developed socialist society" were components of this project. They materialised around the personality cult and in an attempt to find an organic connection between Ceausescu and the Romanian Communist Party with Romanian history. Association with illustrious figures from the Romanian past, identifying similarities with the independence period from within the Romanian state history alongside promoting an aggressive nationalism became elements to legitimise the 'Ceausescu era'. After 1971, year after year, the Communist regime in Romania became personalised in its extreme with Ceausescu, his family and camarilla as its focal point. In the last decade, the personality cult became more sophisticated, meant to monopolise the entire propagandistic space 'and to promote and accentuate' the Romanian model of communism. Within this evolution, the Party becomes one with its leader, who in turn leads with the help of his wife, and of the group of activists raised and promoted by him in the party. An immense breach is created between the leaders and society. In fact, Ceausescu's Romania was an insular and atomised society. Repression and control through mobilisation and surveillance affected all spheres of existence of Romanian society: lack of freedom of expression, thought and belief, disdain and pressure for alternative currents of thought, food penury, hard working conditions, restriction of the freedom of movement, of national minorities' rights, cultural censorship, and birth rate control, etc.

The last years of the regime proved to be the most dramatic ones. As the economic crisis accentuated and the population found it harder to accept the limitations imposed on it, the control and surveillance of the society grew worse. In the 1980s, the Securitate began targeting schoolchildren, gymnasium or students, in order to pressure or blackmail them to become informants. A recent estimation shows that in the last years of the regime, almost 20 percent of the Securitate informants were adolescents. In order to eliminate all protests, the authorities forced annual registration of all typewriters at the local Militia office. The adoption, in 1966 of Decree No.770 through which the state regulated the pregnancy interruption regime, inaugurated in Romania the phase of abuses against private life, of political control over the woman's body, in short a repressive regime affecting the life of all Romanians. According to official data, from 1966 to 1989, approximately 10,000 deaths were registered following birth complications. Many other cases, such as those caused by illegal abortions or associated measures remained unregistered. In 1989 alone, approximately 170 deaths per 100,000 cases were also registered, 87 percent of them caused by pregnancy interruptions. Entering a crisis of legitimacy, resources and solutions, the Romanian Communist regime succumbed violently, incapable of surpassing its own dogmas.

IV. RESISTANCE TO DICTATORSHIP AND OCCUPATION

The instauration of the Communist regime in Romania did not lack conflicts and manifestations from the democratic opposition regarding the political and economical encroachment and interference of Soviet power. Romanian society attempted to stop the instauration of the totalitarian power. The November 1946 elections granted the majority of votes to the National Peasant Party, facts confirmed by documentary resources of the Romanian Communist Party. The party was forced to falsify the poll results in order to obtain legitimacy within and outside the country.

Following the victory in the elections and the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty in 1947, the Communists triggered a generalised offensive against all identified opposition centers. Romanian society went through an intense process of purification, with political, economic, and cultural elites either eliminated or marginalised. By 1947, several groups of former soldiers, opposition members, or disenfranchised people atempted to forcibly oppose the country's communisation. These groups either targeted Soviet troops or tried to organise a 'National Movement of Resistance' in which to structure efforts against the Communist authorities. Most were arrested and condemned throughout 1946.

The Communist offensive against opposition to its regime in the beginning of 1947 saw the construction of new armed-resistance formations. Formed gradually, by representatives of various political and social groups and dispersed throughout the country, these resistance groups, in the mountain and sub-mountain regions, resisted to Communist repression till the end of the 1950s. Without jeopardising the regime, these opposition centers challenged through armed resistance the legitimacy of political power in Romania.

These groups were poorly equipped and under constant pressure from the government forces, yet supported by the local population.

According to the estimations of the Securitate, from 1945-1958, more then 1,000 'organisations and counter-revolutionary and subversive groups' of this kind were identified, taken into evidence and eliminated. The high peak of their activity was the beginning of 1950 when the largest number of armed confrontations between partisans and government forces took place.

It is hard to estimate the exact number of those taking part in the subversion of Communist authority in this manner without access to additional sources. The various groups were relatively small. They were not homogenous, containing representatives of different social layers or political options, both men and women, both young and old. Most partisans were drawn from the countryside. Alongside them we can identify former military men, students, intellectuals, as well as representatives of the former political parties from both the right and the left. Motivated either by political beliefs or because they were targeted for arrest, these people withdrew to the mountains organising propaganda or military activities against the Communist regime. These groups acted locally, without coordinating at a national level their military and political activities. Most groups were short lived, their existence depending on the intensity with which the Communist government sought to repress them. Only a few partisan

groups lasted several years, such as those organised and led by Gheorghe Arsenescu and Toma Arnautoiu or the one by Ion Gavrila in the Carpathian Mountains. With few inconsequential exceptions all groups were destroyed by the 1950s, with their members killed or on life-sentence on forced labour.

While the authorities aggressively repressed the partisan groups, they also used their existence as a means to maintain a regime of terror in the country side. As such, the regime directed campaigns aimed at punishing those accused of offering active or passive support to the the resistance.

By the mid 1950s opposition to the regime evolved from 'heroic' armed resistance to other methods of resistance. Such resistance took the form of peasant uprisings against collectivisation, student protests triggered in the context of the Hungarian revolution of 1956, or various forms of protest organised by the workers for defending some economical and social rights. The substance of those movements was political in nature, being directed against the regime. Repressive measures organised by the authorities, recurrent waves of political terror, and a gradual understanding on behalf of the population at large that Western powers will not come to their rescue, led to an increased acceptance of the reality of Communist control over the country over the next decade.

It was within this context that policies of co-optation and conformation adopted by the Communist leaders began to take effect. The nationalisation of Romanian communism, built around sedition acts against the USSR but also the gradual re-integration in society of the social categories previously highly repressed, contributed to an almost complete disappearance of the opposition. Even more, as a result of the extensive programme for modernisation from the 1960s, the accelerated industrialisation and gradual urbanisation, and economic progress, a significant part of the Romanian population started to live better than before. Conformism and adaptation allowed a relatively peaceful 'co-habitation' between the regime and the Romanian society until the second half of the 1970s.

Following the signing of the Final Helsinki Act and the emergence of human rights as an important issue in international affairs, dissident movements against the Communist regime emerged in Eastern Europe. Some historians suggest a link between destructuralisation of the Communist regimes and these movements. In the Romanian case, due to the quasi-total control of the Securitate on the society and the inability of the different groups and dissidents to coordinate their activities, passive resistance to the Communist regime under the Helsinki guarantees had a more reduced contribution to this process. Even so, the protest and opposition against the Ceausescu regime had some impact on the Romanian society, especially through the publicity given the dissidents by the Western radio stations broadcasting in Romanian.

Starting in 1977, either through the actions of human rights activist and writer Paul Goma or through the economically inspired miners' strikes in Valea Jiului, open protests against the regime were back on the arena. Both phenomena outlined the limits of the Romanian Communist regime ability to prevent dissent, thus showing a systemic synchronicity with the rest of the Eastern-European states.

Between February and March 1977, more than 200 people endorsed Goma's initial letter. The intervention of the Securitate, following Ceausescu's personal order on the March 30, 1977, the arrest of Paul Goma and the pressure exerted upon the other signatories by the Securitate through isolation, persuasion or repression, finally lead to the failure of this attempt of making common cause with the human rights' problem. Even so, the idea of institutionalising an opposition did not completely fade. In February 1979 some few hundred workers joined to form a Free Syndicate of Working People, meant to protect and promote the rights and interests of the workers outside of the Communist controlled unions. This initiative was also quickly suppressed by the authorities, and its members were arrested or harassed by the Securitate.

The second significant event from 1977 witnessed the miners' strike. Almost half of the 90,000 miners, working in that coal-bearing in Valea Jiului, entered general strike in the beginning of August, protesting non-violently against the economic and social measures affecting their life and work. Government officials sent by Ceausescu to the region to negotiate were sequestered and Ceausescu himself was forced to come there and accept their grievances. This signaled the end of co-habitation between the Communist Party and the workers. While immediately after the strike repressive measures against the miners were not very serious, in the months that followed thousands of miners were relocated to other regions of the country and their leaders were arrested. The two events of 1977 were symptomatic for the way in which actions against the Communist regime would take shape in the 1980s. The intellectuals, through active or passive forms of public protest or 'resistance through culture,' tried to fight against the politic and

ideological abuses of the regime, while the workers used more radical solutions, such as strike or street movements. These manifestations, without actually jeopardising the existence of the regime, cleaved its legitimacy.

Throughout the 1980s, cultural personalities and regular individuals began to openly criticise the excesses of the Communist regime. Without exception, they were severely sanctioned, some being imprisoned, while others were forced to emigrate, relocated, or placed under house arrest.

Life conditions worsened in the context of the 1970s economic crisis and of food rationalisation measures coupled with an unabated industrialisation drive led to new workers' rebellions in the urban industrialised centres. In 1981 miners in the Motru region, followed by those in the northern part of the country, in Maramures in 1983, protested against living and working conditions. Workers from the main industrial centers in Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj, and Timisoara also protested throughout the 1980s, culminating in the autumn of 1987 when workers from the Brasov industrial platform protested violently against the regime. The manifestation, which started with economic demands on the morning of November 15, quickly developed a political character, with anti-Communist slogans being chanted. Workers seized and destroyed the local Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. The brutal intervention of the Militia and Securitate troops led to the dispersion of the demonstrators. The most active protestors were arrested and forcefully relocated to other regions within the country. The echo of this event, both internally and internationally was extremely powerful. The Western public and West European NGOs as well as political parties in Western Europe raised a public outcry against the regime's actions and the gravity of the situation in Romania. It was the beginning of the end for the Communist regime in Romania.

V. THE CHANGE OF THE ROMANIAN Communist REGIME

In a specific international context, as in the other Communist countries in Eastern Europe, by the end of the 1980s the Romanian population had become increasingly dissatisfied with the Communist regime. But in the Romanian case, the despotic rule of Ceausescu, the economic shortages, and the coercive practices of the regime, played a significant role in the way that the change of the power took place. It was a violent change, in the first place, because of the incapcity of the regime to reform himself.

The revolution broke out, in Timisoara, in December 15, 1989. A small-scale protest against the authorities initiative to move out from the city the dissident priest László Tőkésmarked the event which started the change of the political regime. Riots and protests of the population in Timisoara were violently repressed by the Communist authorities. The increasing of the street protests and the fights with the military forces of the regime escalated in the following days. The revolt spread to other big towns culminating in December 21 and 22, in Bucharest. More than 160 deaths and around 1,100 wounded persons were registered until Ceausescu was overthrown. 942 deaths and 2,245 wounded were recorded in the following days. The mass-mobilisation and the violence of the repression were the principal characteristics of the Romanian revolution.

The change of the political regime found Romania in full economic crisis and beset by serious social problems brought on by the decrease in the standard of living, the depreciation of the educational and medical services, and the regime's demographic policies. Strong political will and drastic economic changes were necessary in order to establish a functional market economy. Unfortunately for Romania, it was exactly this combination of strong leadership that the political class lacked. If publically, economic liberalisation became a primary objective of the political class, practical solutions remained elusive.

The Romanian Prime-Minister from 1990-1991, Petre Roman, alongside his younger colleagues from the government advocated the acceleration of the reform rhythm and the adoption of 'shock therapy,' like Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, also known as the Visegrad Group, had done. President Iliescu and and the older guard opted for a

Penitentiary system of Communist Romania

Inside the Sighet prison

Ion Mihalache

Sighet Prison-"The Prison of Elites"

The first Presidium of Communist Romania

Danube-Black Sea Canal

Iuliu Maniu, leader of the National Peasant Party, died in Sighet prison

Parade for Ceausescu

National Day Show, 23 August 1986

Danube-Black Sea Canal

Elisabeta Rizea, symbol of the popular resistance

Romanian Revolution, Bucharest, 22 December 1988

Romanian Revolution, Opera Plaza, Timisoara, 22 December 1989

Luxemburg, 25 April 2005

The 14th Ministerial Council, Brussels, 4-5 December, 2006

Luxemburg, Signing the Treaty

Praga, Romania became member NATO

Signing the Lisbon Traty

Bucharest Summit NATO, 2008

EU accession celebrations in 2007

slower rhythm of reforms and of industrial restructuring, while continuing government subsidies of non-productive economic sectors that had strong social implications (e.g. Valea Jiului). The resulting conflict was a slowdown in reform. The lack of a coherent national strategy in the medium and long term was tied not only due to lack of political will, but primarily the result of the experience of those still maintaining the levers of decision making, all of whom had been formed and educated under Nicolae Ceausescu.

Lack of political will and economic imagination were not the only challenges faced by the government. The violent events in March and June 1990 showed a picture of Romania markedly different then the heroic fight against communism that had captured the imagination of the Western public in December 1989. The immediate effects were a drying up of Western sympathy, and, most importantly, foreign aid.

As state farms and socialist cooperatives were dismantled, food production dropped dramatically. Numerous families were unable to regain their former properties, either because of the lack of proper records, or because of a system that was designed against allowing a rapid return to private property. The lack of a technologically advanced farming capability meant that those who were able to regain their properties were forced to farm them with a technology of the eighteenth century. The inflation rate reached 200 percent. Limited attempts to restructure the industrial base led to an increase in unemployment. While Ceausescu had repayd the debt, Romania found itself lacking any liquidities, access to credit, or foreign investment. Salary payments on time became increasingly difficult, which in turn reduced the reduced speed of reform. A lack of a viable institutional and legislative framework only added to the woes of the economic environment and further cautioned possible foreign investors. Corruption became widespread, while social insecurity and ever decreasing buying power raised the level of poverty among retired people and in the rural areas. The lateness of economic reforms meant that the transition towards a market economy would be very painful for the population. The government attempted to adopt policies aimed at relieving some of the negative effects the economic situation was having on the population, but with limited effect. More often than not, the very policies adopted by the government to alleviate the suffering caused more economic harm in the medium and long term and further destabilised the economy.

VI. RECONSTRUCTION OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

The Romanian totalitarian experience was a grim one. With a political regime based on terror, where any chance for opposition was de-structured, the image of the Romanian state remained that of a Stalinist state. Transition toward a democratic system proved difficult. The lack of alternative political structures and dissident movements which would provide the political context for a transition, placed Romanian society in the unenviable position of having to not only revolutionise its political system, but do so without any core political values on which to build its democracy. Democratisation of public life could not come down to changes at the top of the political structure. The "nomenclatura," the administrative class, was not willing to give up the instruments of its own power and privileges.

If in the other Eastern European socialist states, the political change was produced in the context of 'Velvet Revolutions' or in that of gradual changes of political structures through negotiations between the Communist leaders and the representative groups of an emerging civil society; in Romania, the political change came around violently, in a revolutionary way. In this way, the revolutionary events of 1989 formally marked the death of the totalitarian state institutions and the debut of the democratic construction, even if the changes were not consistent in the first years.

The creation of the National Salvation Front on the December 22, 1989, and the adoption of the political programme promoting the Western type democratic principles marked the end as well as the beginning of an era. The principles of the rule of law, political pluralism, and separation of powers within a state and the need for popular representation through organisation of free elections became central issues for the reform of Romanian society.

The reconstruction of the democratic state comprised three distinctive stages: when the institutions and the democratic principles were formally built and legally recognised (1990-1992), the second in which the government sought to establish political, economic and social solutions of transition, and the third which marked the completion of the political transition through evolution from electoral democracy to political democracy.

The 1989-1992 period is one of major acquisitions in institutional and legislative matter. The 'consecration' of the multi-party politics through the adoption of the Decree no. 8 from December 31, 1989, opened the way for the formation of free associations. In less than three months, on the political scene dominated by the FSN (National Salvation Front) 200 other political parties emerged. Most important were the re-emerging political parties from the inter-war period: the National Peasant Party, the National Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party. While these parties might have otherwise focused Romanian society around progressive ideas, the FSN used the levers of power at its disposal to denigrate its political opposition and terrorise sympathisers of its political opponents. The National Salvation Front replicated its structure at the level of every administrative, economical or cultural structure, practically replacing the structures of the deceased Communist Party. While the "historic" political parties attempted to carry out public rallies in January 1990, the FSN reneged on its promise to be a steward of the revolution and registered as a political party on February 6, thus announcing its intention of taking part in future parliamentary elections. Since the FSN had been established in December 1989 as a revolutionary government with supreme powers in governing the country, its transformation into a political party meant that it had to, at least officially, withdraw from the control of power. To accomplish a separation of powers in the state, the Provisional National Unity Council was formed to adopt all the political norms on which the parliamentary elections should be organised.

Even if until May 1990, hundreds of political parties were formed, the Romanian political system was dominated by the FSN. Its immediate advantages were not only connected to the part taken in the 1989 events but also to the paternalist way in which the party chose to form its political actions and objectives. Control over the mass media allowed the transmission of its political messages while at the same time preventing or misrepresenting the messages of the other parties. Under these conditions, perpetuation of some collectivist principles, of inherited nationalism, asserting the state prominence in relation to the society, retrieving the Communist bureaucracy but also the control of the power levers became major trumps in the political battle. During the May 20, 1990, elections, the FSN managed to obtain over 65 percent of the votes for the Constituent Assembly, while Ion Iliescu, its candidate for presidential, won 80 percent of the votes.

Following the parliamentary elections in 1990 the political system entered into a debate concerning the nature of the future state institutions. While the National Salvation Front had gathered a confortable majority in Parliament, it found itself unable to cope with the challenge posed by representatives of the civil society and the historical parties. The fragility of political values the democratic institutions were based on led to major disruptions in the political arena. In fact, up to the moment when the Constitution was adopted, in December 1991, the political system was dominated by confrontations demonstrating its qualitative limits. The punitive activities of the miners during the early 1990s are a clear example in this respect. The miners' intervention, an attempt to regulate political disputes, substantially inhibited the development of democracy and the establishment of the rule of law in the country.

The democratic change could not have been accomplished without a new constitutional framework. It is only after May 1990 that one can speak of the building of the Romanian democratic state on the basis of a constitutional process. The adoption of the December 1991 Constitution, which replaced the constitution adopted in 1965, marked the official break-up with the old Communist order.

The new fundamental law established Romania as a republic. Yet the separation of powers in the state was complicated by a functional differentiation among the state powers. While the executive power rests with a prime minister elected by the Parliament, the President, elected by popular vote, becomes a mediator among the state powers. The legislative power is given to the Parliament, formed of a bicameral structure: a Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Like the President, the Parliament is elected through universal suffrage, direct, equal and secret. In its essence, the Constitution of 1991 created the conditions for accomplishing political transition towards democracy by completing institutions and principles that were specific to a new political order. Ensuring public freedoms, of individual and citizenship rights, association and public manifestation were primordial.

The first "official" elections of the new Republic, the ones organised in view of the new Constutution, were held on the September 27, 1992. The political context was substantially modified in relation to the 1990s, since now the duration of the mandate and the qualifications necessary for a candidate were clearly specified, and electoral legislation established more severe conditions for taking part in the electoral race.

Important transformations took part on the political scene as well. The National Salvation Front split up into two political parties, the National Democratic Salvation Front Party, led by President Ion Iliescu, and the NSF Party led by former prime minister Petre Roman. Both parties would evolve over the years on the Romanian political scene, both changing their name several times to emerge today as two of the most powerful parties in the country: Iliescu's FDSN as the Social Democratic Party and Roman's FSN as the Democrat, then Democrat–Liberal party.

To better compete on the political scene, the "democratic" opposition (the former historical parties and several civic organisations) joined forces in November 1991 to create the Romanian Democratic Convention (CDR). The 1992 parliamentary and presidential elections, based on a proportional electoral system with a 3 percent benchmark, marked an equilibrium of the 'force relations' between the political parties. Even though it obtained just 28 percent of the votes, Ion Iliescu's FDSN managed to form a government with the support of other leftist or nationalist parties: PUNR (Romanian National Unity Party), PSM (Socialist Party of Labour) and PRM (Greater Romania Party). The government, led by Nicolae Vacaroiu, survived political wrangling for the next four years. On the other hand, the political opposition became consolidated with the support of 40 percent of the electorate. The Democratic Convention obtained over 20 percent of the votes, Petre Roman's FSN approximately ten percent and the Democratic Union of Hungarians (UDMR) eight percent.

In 1996, the first democratic political alternation to power takes place. The elections result in the CDR candidate, Emil Constantinescu, winning the presidency, while CDR, the Democratic Party (former FSN) and UDMR obtained the majority of places in the Parliament. The victory of the opposition created a new set of problems for the Romanian political system. Unprepared to govern, the CDR and its allies were fraught with political infighting. Governmental instability was the norm, and attempts to radically reform the economy only added to the pressures experienced by the new leaders. The instability will take a serious toll on the CDR in particular, with the two main parties going their separate ways in the 2000 election. While the National Liberal Party survived, the National Peasant party, widely seen as the leader of the CDR, and thus responsible for its failures, failed to enter parliament and broke away into inconsequential pieces. The next two elections in 2000 and 2004 changed the control of government between the Iliescu's party (winning in 2000) and the DA coalition (Truth and Justice, formed by the Democrat Party and the National Liberal Party) winning in 2004.

Apart the formal evolutions, institutional or electoral, the Romanian political regime visibly improved its functioning mechanisms, by partially adapting to social and economic evolutions. The internal evolutions, forced by the desire of successive governments to integrate Romania in the European and Atlantic community generated substantial changes in the political system. One of these was the cooperation between Romanian parties and the representative organisation of the Hungarian minority in Romania, UDMR. The disappearance of several smaller parties, as well as an ideological consolidation of the main actors on the political arena allowed for clearer ideological lines to be drawn. The process of political reforms was further solidified by the 2003 Constitutional revisions. All these evolutions could not have been possible without pressure from the civil society, a mature and extremely diverse one, illustrating a real pluralism of public life in Romania. The press, first newspapers and later on radio and television, began to play a very active role in Romanian political life, taking the role of "forth power in the state."

VII. THE REFORM PERIOD IN POST-Communist ROMANIA

The beginning of the political, economical and social transition in Romania was, as stated, predominantly institutional in its initial phase. The legacy of the totalitarian state, in which the monopoly of political power was held by a single party and where the state held an essential position as owner and producer administering its economic resources in a paternalist-bureaucratic manner, had major effects on the reformist transformations. In Romania's case it was not just the political process, but also the superposition of several processes with implications on all sectors of social, economic and cultural life. The situation in Romania was even more serious than in other states which embarked on transition in 1989. Ceausescu's national-communism, with its paternalistic and Stalinist nature, had major effects on the way the Romanian society had to be reformed.

The focus on industrialisation in the 1970s and the 1980s, during an unfavorable international context, had dire consequences for the Romanian economy. The

overwhelming investments in heavy industry and the horizontal development of industry on national scale, coupled with dependence on obsolete technology and a low work productivity, affected both the ability of the country to develop and the rhythm of the country both development and daily life. Ceausescu's desire to retire the national debt meant that the country would not use any hard currency to substitute deficits in consumer goods. Price control, the centralised planning, rationing and centrally controlled distribution of goods led to massive corruption and a constant depreciation in the standard of living. Official propaganda which sought to highlight the superiority of the socialist system over capitalism through selected statistics such as numbers of doctors, unemployment, or access to education could not whitewash the daily challenges faced by the population. High infant mortality, poor living conditions, and a shortened life expectancy remained common. The lack of access to basic necessities and a general malaise with respect to life in Romania played an important part in the violent outburst against the Communist regime in December 1989.

Aware of the challenges they faced, the new authorities set forth in an 'Official Statement to the Country' issued by the National Salvation Front on December 22, 1989, a set of objectives meant to improve the situation in the country. Restructuring of the national economy, eliminating bureaucratic-administrative backlogs and the promotion of free initiative and competence, orientation of commerce towards satisfying the people' needs, agricultural reform and government support for small peasant production, the reorganisation of education, setting new grounds for developing national culture and mass-media were stated priorities of the new regime. Studies on Romania's transition phase tend to emphasise that the national transformation took place on two different tracks: economic and politic. Because of the influence of both tracks on the evolution of Romanian society, it is important to follow the effects of economic and political refom not just on the system as a whole, but on the society on which said reforms were implemented.

The historical context in which Romanian society underwent the transition is important. As stated before, the political developments of the early 1990s squandered any political capital the Romanian government might have had with the West after the 1989 events. The changes in 1989 also meant that a good portion of the markets Romania had gained through its participation in COMECON or due to Ceuasescu's relationships with other leaders were also lost. On paper, the structural problems faced by the Romanian economy were tackled following similar methods employed by other East European states: fiscal stabilisation and currency convertibility, liberalisation of commerce, privatisation and the end of state monopolies, conversion from industrialised economy to the 'service' economy, and the strengthening and guaranteeing of private property. The results differed, according to the speed with which the reforms were applied, the availability of foreign capital invested, and the political capacity of dealing with reform.

In Romania, following the timid adoption in the beginning of the 1990s of measures meant to assist implanting in the Romanian economy institutions specific to the market economy (commercial or private companies/ firms), during the summer plans for the structural reforming of the economic sector began to be discussed.

Some of the younger generation of technocrats coopted into the government appeared determined to reform the Romanian economy, another part of the FSN, reunited around president Iliescu and the two Parliament leaders Alexandru Barladeanu (a former RCP politburo member) and Dan Martian (a revolutionary turned politician), acted in favour of a 'temporisation' of the processes. The key of the entire conflict lay in the different types of approach these leaders promoted.

The two different approaches were bound to clash. The Romanian government had assumed responsibility for a rapid transformation of the economy through liberal measures: liberalisation of commerce, privatisation of state enterprises and adaptation to the market economy rules. On the other hand, President Iliescu and his close allies were advocating for a more accentuated role of the state in the economy, invoking the 'Swedish model'. After a series of disputes, the government adopted measures for liberalising the economy which culminated in the establishing of the institutional and legal framework of privatisation in August 1991.

The privatisation process was divided in three stages: commercialising the state enterprises, assigning 30 percent of the privatised enterprises' shares - through means of value coupons - to all adult Romanian citizens and, finally, the selling of the remaining value of state owned corporations over a seven years period to Romanian or foreign investors. The ambitious reform programme did not aim at strategic economic sectors (military industry, energy production, mining, transport or telecommunications) since all of the above would function as autonomous state administrations following the French model.

Through the privatisation Law, the institutions to supervise this process were also created: a National privatisation Agency to supervise the operations, the State Properties Fund to control the third phase of privatisation, respectively five funds of private property, regionally distributed, to administrate and invest the coupons received by the Romanian citizens. The preparations for applying the privatisation were delayed by the political problems following the removal of the government, the decrease of GDP, and hyperinflation. Over the next few years, privatisation of a small number of enterprises was realised in three main ways: creation of mixed companies, or through raising capital through contribution of private investors (900 until 1999), pilot privatisations, accomplished for the benefit of employees and managers, with echeloned payment (less than 0.5 of the enterprises were privatised in this way), MEBO (or privatisation through transfer to employees of shares belonging to companies or economic 'societies' (28 percent, above 3,700 privatisations were accomplished until 1996.) The results of the privatisation process up to 1995 were modest as firms lacked financial support and foreign investments were limited.

A new privatisation drive began in 1995 when the Mass Privatisation Programme was adopted. This meant another 4,000 enterprises were proposed for privatisation through transfers to the citizens of new coupons - privatisation coupons this time - which represented 30 percent of their shares. This programme also could not accomplish its goals. The lack of structural reforms in the economy out of fear of social repercussions meant maintaining bureaucratic measures for coordination of the process and general conditions of economy in the pre-electoral period which contributed to the limited success of the MPP.

The political change of 1996 brought along a new perspective for privatisation. The MEBO method and pilot privatisations were discarded. The "case by case" attempt of privatisation was brought back and the acceleration of privatisation through the simplification of the legal framework took hold. Privatisation became a more transparent process, a direct negotiation; public offers or the auctions were the most used methods to realise property transfer. The results came along quickly. Over 20 percent of the State Property Fund "portofolio" was privatised in two years compared to just ten percent in the first four years of the system functioning. This evolution was made possible due to reorganisation of the banking system and national currency liberalisation, despite the inflation rate.

Following an indisputable victory in the elections, the PSD returned to power on a leftist electoral programme in 2000. Even so, measures were taken to continue the privatisation, and were correlated with those dedicated to economic restructuring. Both processes were necessary to achieve the standard needed for EU accession. New privatisation drives were aimed at large enterprises and some of the strategic economic areas, previously protected. The portfolio of FPS (now Authority for the privatisation and Administration of the State Participations) decreased from one year to another, being transferred to the private sector. A large portion of state monopolies, from energy distribution, to communications, to the heavy steel industry and the banking sector would be privatised in the following years.

The overview of the privatisation process is indicative of how the Romanian economical transition was accomplished, from economic centralism, determined on ideological and political principles to market economy, up to EU accession. The contributions of the international financial organisations cannot be overstated. The IMF, World bank, and the EU gave Romania, and all states in the region, the necessary technical and financial assistance and created the necessary context in which private investment firms and multinational corporations felt secure enough to invest.

The political and economical reforms developed in the last decade and a half had both costs and benefits. Social inequities rose exponentially: income differentiation and ethnical tensions or political confrontations contributed to installing a social uncertainty in the transition period. The upward trajectory of reform in Romania (and throughout the region) allowed for the amelioration of those inequalities as the society reforms and adapts.

VIII. EU AND NATO INTEGRATION

Changes produced in December 1989 determined Romania to reconsider foreign policy options. The international relations system restructured following the dissolution of the Communist Bloc and the Warsaw Pact, and especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The changing nature of the international system imposed the need for a

profound reassessment of national security strategies in Romania. Following a a period of tension, subsequent to internal political convulsions from 1990 and 1991, but also to some 'uninspired' foreign policy initiatives, like the 1991 Treaty with the disassembling USSR, Romanian diplomacy consistently oriented itself towards solutions offered by political, military and economic structures developed in Western Europe. Agreements for invitation (1991), associating to the EU (1992), and later admission to the Council of Europe (1993), and the re-granting of the Most Favoured Nation Clause by the US Congress (1992) represented important steps in this direction.

Romanian diplomatic efforts and the larger context of Western states redefining their priorities or fundamental concepts of their strategic partnerships with the EU and NATO, paved the way for closeness and negotiations with Euro-Atlantic security structures. In the beginning of 1992, the Council for the North-Atlantic Cooperation was established as a means to ensure closer relations between NATO and East European states. The council sought to maintain relations with East European states regardless of the state and rhythm of political and economic reforms. The integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions would have a real and beneficial effect on the political class in Romania. Bucharest understood the necessity to reform the military and security apparatus, and democratise the levers of control. The introduction of civil control on the army and the imposition of parliamentary supervision on security, safety and public order were two of the consequences of the decision to reform.

Cooperation with NATO started in January 1994 with the signing of the Partnership for Peace, a program launched by NATO to develop interoperability elements with East European militaries in view of the eventual expansion of the alliance. The option for integration in the European economic and security structures got a desired political consensus in 1995, following the Snagov reunion of the parliamentary parties in Romania.

Searching for solutions to finalise the war in Bosnia, Romania started to enforce reforms that would ensure its inclusion in NATO's enlargement formula. Even if the authorities' efforts in this direction were substantial, the short amount of time did not allow the resolution of all criteria to be accomplished for being accepted in the first wave of integration. The failure to sign bilateral agreements with neighbouring states and the slow rhythm of reforms on political and economical fields affected the chances of integration in the first wave. While the Alliance commended Romania for its efforts in the direction of reform, it did not extend the invitation to Bucharest to join the alliance. At the same time, Bucharest was repeatedly assured that the door for accession in NATO would remain open.

To strengthen the government's resolve to implement the necessary reforms and as a consolation prize, the United States signed a Strategic Partnership in 1997 on the occasion of President William J. Clinton's visit to Bucharest. Bilateral cooperation between the two countries created the necessary mechanisms for eventual accession to NATO.

Under the guide of the Strategic Partnership, Romania took on commitments similar to those of NATO Member States. Following the events in the former Yugoslavia, and the NATO intervention in the region, Romania acted in support of the Alliance's actions, despite widespread domestic opposition.

A new step towards adherence was taken with the Washington Summit in 1999 when Romania was given an Accession Action Plan, setting the adherence date for the Summit in Prague in 2002. The political transfer of power between the CDR and PDSR after the 2000 elections did not shift the Romanian national security orientation, even though the Social-Democrats had opposed Romanian-NATO cooperation in Kosovo. Internally, a "National Accession Plan" was drawn up, with the aim to reform the armed forces and reach NATO standards. In order to demonstrate the strategic position of Romania in the region but also the collaboration policy among the Central and Eastern-European states in security, a V10 (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) summit was held in Bucharest on the 25 March 2002, to discuss joint support. The summit was named "Spring of New Allies." At the Prague Summit, Romania was invited, along with six other states to to join the alliance. By the Istambul Summit on March 29, 2004, Romania was a full Member State.

Summarised this way, Romania's rebirth into the European institutional structures illustrates both a foreign policy dimension and also the difficult transition from communism. The consistent political determination to integrate Romania into the Euro-Atlantic family transcended ideological differences.

List of abbreviations

CDR – Romanian Democratic Convention
FDSN – Social Democratic Party
FSN – National Salvation Front, later Democrat Party and then Democrat-Liberal Party
FSP – State Ownership Found
MPP – Mass privatisation Programme
NPP – National Peasants Party
PRM – Greater Romanian Party
PSM – Socialist Party of Labour
PUNR – Romanian National Unity Party
RCP – Romanian Communist Party
UDMR – Democratic Union of Hungarians

SLOVAKIA: IDENTITY AND DEMOCRATISATION

Slavomír Michálek

Republic of Slovakia – Slovenská Republika
Area: 49 034 square km²
Population: 5 379 500 mio
Capital city: Bratislava
Official Language: Slovak
Currency: Euro
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.05.2004

I. INTRODUCTION

The gradual formation of Slovakia as an equal partner of other democratic nations in Europe started at the beginning of twentieth century and was completed by the beginning of the twenty-first century. Undoubtedly, it folded under the influence of external and internal factors and events. There are some principal periods in the "life" of modern Slovak history: World War I and the creation of Czechoslovakia to begin with, through the years of the inter-war Republic, the Slovak Republic (1939-1945), Communist dictatorship (1948-1989), and formation of the first Slovak democratic statehood (1993). Certainly, there are milestones in each of these periods: the Treaty of Trianon (1920), the Munich Agreement and Vienna Arbitration (1938), the Communist Coup of 1948, the Soviet tanks (1968), the "Velvet Revolution" (1989), entry into NATO and the European Union (2004).

Slovakia has experienced a turbulent and often painful development process over the past decades. Today, it is a democratic European state looking for ways of addressing the new challenges that time brings. The issue of national identity is important. What is the perspective of Slovaks as a nation? Slovaks undoubtedly are a valid member of the European Union.

II. FROM POLITICAL PROGRAMME TO THE BIRTH OF CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

The first national programme of Slovaks was developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was elaborated by Ľudovít Štúr and was based on the fact that Slovaks were an autonomous and independent nation. However, it was not until the outbreak of World War I that this programme had any hope of being successful. It was World War I that meant an essential turnover in the solution of the Slovak issue. Out of several possibilities, the formation of a common state of Czechs and Slovaks seemed to be the optimal one. The "Czech and Slovak solution", that is state autonomy, was initially discussed openly only abroad, because at home, possibilities of political activity were limited under the strict surveillance of the Hungarian power.

At the time of the outbreak of World War I, Slovakia was an integral part of multinational Hungary and did not exist as an independent administrative unit. Slovakia as a nation was defending itself from escalating Magyarisation and national repression. Therefore, the Slovak cultural and political elite, which was still in its embryonic stage, was forced to struggle for basic attributes of national existence: language and cultural preservation. It was only at the end of May 1918 that the political elite set out a clear political programme for Slovakia's future. At a meeting in Turčiansky St. Martin they decided the strategic line of future Slovak policy: definite separation from Hungary. Based on the right to self-determination, they outlined participation in the formation of the independent Czech-and-Slovak state. However, it was not a public proclamation.

What the nation could not openly demonstrate at home, Slovak authorities abroad took to be their task, especially the American Slovaks. They proposed a political programme

to the international public, in which the right to self-determination for the Slovak nation and total national self-governance was asked for. Together with fellow Czech countrymen in the US they came to an agreement in the autumn of 1915 that set in place a programme of independence for the Czech "country" and for Slovakia for the union of the Czech and the Slovak nations in a federal union of states and for full national autonomy for Slovakia. Thus, the Slovak issue had to win recognition in an international forum, by aligning itself closely with the similar Czech issue, which on its own, had little chance of succeeding.

The above-mentioned programme activities of the Slovaks and Czechs based in the US and in Europe gradually succeeded in being united with the Czech and Slovak foreign resistances associated with Czechoslovak National Council (Československá národná rada), headed by Tomáš G. Masaryk, Milan R. Štefánik and Edvard Beneš. From the beginning, the leaders of the foreign resistance joined all their efforts with the alternative of the Allies' military victory, and aimed at bringing about the creation of an independent Czech and Slovak state. In particular, the military performance of the Czech and Slovak foreign troops (legions) - and systematic diplomatic activities of the countries' foreign resistance leaders – had a considerable role to play in the fact that, during the summer and autumn of 1918, the Allied governments recognised the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris to be de facto a representative of the Allied nations. Apart from the credit that foreign resistance achieved at the meeting of the Allies, home resistance played the crucial task of declaring and establishing an independent state; and whose activities culminated at the end of October 1918.

On 28 October 1918 the Czechoslovak National Council officially declared the establishment of the Czechoslovak state, in Prague. Two days later, independent of the events in Prague, the Slovak political elite passed the Declaration of the Slovak Nation, in Martin – now well-known as the Martin´s Declaration, by which it made public its long-time decision to separate Slovakia from pre-war Hungary and subsequently co-exist with the Czech nation in the Czechoslovak Republic (ČSR). Slovakia, as a nation, became a state related to constitutional law for the very first time in its history. The political decisions of Prague and Martin of representatives of both close Slavic nations created a historical key that opened the door to more than a seventy-year-long common historical way for the citizens of both nations, on the common ground of the Czechoslovak Republic.

One of the multinational succession states rose out of the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Two territorial units came together: Slovakia and the Czech countries. Both had different historical developments. The primary task was to distance the newly-formed state from historical heritage and the influence of the preceding monarchy, in an effort to build a united Czechoslovak Republic – with the same levels of economy, industry, judiciary, education, etc. According to the 1921 population census, there were 13,613,172 inhabitants in the territory of the ČSR, out of which 3,000,870 were in Slovakia. Germans and Hungarians also lived in the Republic alongside Czechs and Slovaks – minority groups now who, due to their significant number before, had been the "ruling" groups in Austria-Hungary until 1918.

The birth of Czecho-Slovakia in 1918 was an important impetus for essential changes affecting all of Slovakia, mainly the cities and lifestyle of their inhabitants. Bratislava became the centre of Slovak life. Through the following decades, Bratislava transformed from a quiet, semi-provincial, trilingual town to a metropolitan area with a dynamic, social life. It became the epicentre for Slovakia's political, economic and cultural life. Bratislava entered the Republic with advanced industrial factories that provided employment to thousands of workers. These factories included, for example, the Dynamo Nobel factory (explosives production), Stollwerck (chocolate), factories producing cables, the Siemens-Schuskert factory (transformers), Matador (rubber), Apollo (refining), Roth´s (production of cartridges and economic machines), Cvernovka (thread production), cloth-producing plants, several breweries, mills, dairy works and wineries.

From 1919 to 1927, the state-wide administrative authority - the Ministry of Administration for Slovakia – was based in Bratislava. The territory of Slovakia was administratively divided into regions (župy) by the end of 1927. After reorganisation of the state administration on 1 July 1928 the territorial area of Slovakia was united by the official creation of a Slovak country. For the first time in its history, Slovakia gained a complete territorial border.

Despite the fact that Slovakia entered the ČSR as one of the most developed areas of Hungary, its economy did not match the advanced economic levels reached by the Czech state. Slovak industry constituted 8.5 percent of ČSR's industrial potential in times of

the common state. Metal ore mining and processing had a strong industrial tradition in Slovakia. The presence of many forests created favourable conditions for the operation of pulp-mills and paper plants. Slovakia was well-known for its tanning, food-processing and textile plants, which were equipped with the most advanced machinery. (The Ružomberok textile plants were the largest and most modern textile plants in the territory when Slovakia entered the common state). However, most Slovak citizens lived in the countryside and worked in agriculture, and in forestry (60.6 percent). Villages were made up of significant numbers of industrial and construction workers (who cultivated their own lands for their family needs) and agricultural workers (who were landless and worked on foreign country estates). Many of them relied upon seasonal work in the Czech Republic, in the fertile areas of southern Slovakia, or left for jobs abroad.

III. THE TREATY OF TRIANON

The international position of Czechoslovakia became stable shortly after its formation, and particularly after the conclusion of the post-war peace treaties – the Treaty of Versailles with Germany, the Treaty of Saint-German with Austria, and the Treaty of Trianon with Hungary, all of which greatly influenced the delimitation of state borders and determination of the territory's area. The peace treaty with Hungary that was signed in Trianon on 4 June 1920 was particularly significant for Slovakia and Slovaks in Czechoslovakia, with one of the two Czechoslovak signatories being a Slovak diplomat, Štefan Osuský.

The Treaty of Trianon definitely set the seal upon the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. At the same time, it confirmed de jure the existence of the Czechoslovak Republic. One third of the former territory remained with Hungary. It was the state that Hungarians refused to reconcile with, and a revision of "dictated" peace became a permanent feature of both local and foreign politics in Hungary. The shock of Trianon still lives on today in Hungary's national consciousness.

The set of post-World War I peace treaties was the result of the proportion of power. It had its positives and negatives, compromises and extremes. It was an effort at building a long-term peace system, which, however, did not become a reality. The alliance with France played a significant role in the formation of the new state, and became the pillar of the latter's foreign policy focus in the following twenty years. The conclusion of treaties with Yugoslavia and Romania was also of considerable significance for the security of the ČSR, which now created a bloc of states of the Little Entente.

The period between 1918 and 1938 in Slovakia was a time for the building of networks and establishing organisational, cultural and artist institutions, theatres, cinema, radio, foundations, libraries, etc. A primary indication of a civilisational change in Slovakia was the elimination of illiteracy by the democratisation of all school networks (i.e. by providing the possibility of education to all young people). It was necessary to make an independent Slovak school system. The Ministry of Education covered the numerical insufficiency of teachers and secondary school teachers by inviting approximately 1,400 Czech teachers who brought with them Czech school books that were gradually supplemented by new Slovak ones. The Czechoslovak State University and Library were established in Bratislava in 1919; the university was named the University of J. A. Komenský. During the first decade of the ČSR's existence, 301 elementary and 68 secondary schools were built from state resources in Slovakia. The number of vocational schools, business schools and pedagogical institutes also increased, and the Matica Slovenská (Slovak cultural association) was reestablished. Soon after the coup, the National Theatre was put into operation in Bratislava.

The second half of the 1920s witnessed the world economic boom. But at the end of the 1920s, indications of another worldwide economic crisis started to appear in some sectors of the Slovak economy, the side effects of which were fully visible in Slovakia and in its all production sectors in 1931. When the economic crisis culminated in 1933, national industrial production went down to 60 percent in comparison to production in 1929. The heaviest burden in agricultural Slovakia was shouldered by the farmers.

The economic crisis not only contributed towards the radicalisation of inhabitants but also brought with it new, extremely serious, political changes that threatened democracy in Europe. One of the strongest symbols of this threat was the victory of Germany's fascist and nationalistic movement. The German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, who seized power in the country, did not keep secret his plans to redeem Germany's failures in WWI by expanding control to surrounding countries ("Lebensraum"). The forced occupation of ČSR was one of the first plans in Hitler's political programme. In the centre of the

European continent, along the borders of Czechoslovakia, a new war had begun.

The Munich Agreement of the four Great Powers – Germany, Italy, Great Britain and France – on 29 September 1938 (involving the transfer of the Sudetenland to Germany), and the following Vienna Arbitration – Germany and Italy – on 2 November 1938 (in which the south of Slovakia was escheated to Hungary), were the dictates that curtailed the republic and portended its fast ending. The declaration of the independent Slovak state and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia followed.

IV. SLOVAK STATE UNDER NAZI GERMANY

On 14 March 1939 the Assembly of the Slovak country declared the Slovak State. The Slovak State was constituted half a year before the outbreak of World War II, and at the beginning of its existence its sovereignty was limited to its relationship with Nazi Germany. This relationship was confirmed in the Treaty of Protection (19 March 1939), which detailed the formation of a Special Protective Zone ("Schutzzone" of 23 March 1939) on the north-western border of the state, and in conclusion of negotiations in Salzburg in July 1940. After acceptance of the Constitution on 21 July 1939 the official name of the state was "Slovak Republic" – however, this title was rarely used. Despite the circumstances surrounding the formation of the Slovak State and its satellite position vis-à-vis the Third Reich, it made tangible the concept of the Slovak state and national independence.

The Slovak Republic, with the area of 38,456 km² and 2.6 million inhabitants, belonged to the category of the smallest European countries between 1939 and 1945. Shortly after the country's formation, its existence was officially recognised by twenty-seven countries, amongst them the Great Powers, excepting the United States. Slovakia led its foreign policy in accordance with the approval of Nazi Germany, and thus, diplomatic contacts with states under the influence of the German power developed the quickest. The Slovak Republic concluded several bilateral international agreements in cultural and economic areas even with neutral and other countries.

Together with the German Army, the Slovak State Army entered the sovereign territory of Poland on 1 September 1939, thus making it a participant (from start to finish) in the battles of World War II. The focus of the foreign policy was confirmed when the Slovak state entered the Axis Alliance in November 1940 and participated in the war against the Soviet Union (June 1941) and against other countries in the anti-Hitler coalition.

The political system of the Slovak state was authoritative and totalitarian. It suppressed the ideas of parliament, emphasised the Slovak National Unit, advanced Christian philosophy and stressed the principle of authority in political life. The President, Jozef Tiso, led the state from 26 October 1939. The executive power was in the hands of the nine-member government, with subordinated regional offices. The legislative body was the Assembly.

Political and public life in Slovakia was subordinated to the Hlinka´s Slovak People´s Party (HSĽS), and was confirmed in Section 58 of the SR's Constitution: "Slovak nation participates in the state power through HSĽS". The President of the Republic performed his function as chairman of the HSĽS with the official title of Leader. The Hlinka Guard and the Hlinka Youth, united trade unions and newly-formed professional associations were also part of the People's Party. Political parties representing German and Hungarian minorities operated independently.

From 1939 onwards, the home affairs situation was marked by various struggles for acquiring the best positions in the state's power machinery. On one side, there was the conservative wing around President Tiso, which was made up primarily of HSĽS officials who participated in the state machinery. Their objective was to build a totalitarian state in Slovakia, based on religious and class principles. On the other side, there was a radical wing headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vojtech Tuka, and the Minister of the Interior, Alexander Mach. Radicals used the Nazi model of the political system, and were trying to achieve the principles of National Socialism in Slovakia. The radical wing had more sympathy from the Third Reich than the conservative one.

The interest of both wings of the People's Party was to find the solution to the "Jewish problem" – one of the essential requirements Germany had with respect to Slovak domestic policy. They achieved it by passing a so-called "Jewish Code" that was related to the previous government's regulations. Regulations and the law systematically

deprived the Slovak Jews of civil, political and economic rights. The oppression resulted in deportations and the ultimate realisation of the Nazis' "Final Solution" to the Jewish Problem by placing Jews in concentration camps (1942).

Slovak society was full of contradictions during the existence of the Slovak state. Most of its inhabitants lived in relatively stable economic conditions, conditions that were reflected in their social situation. Slovakia's industrial and agricultural production had stable customers – via unequal agreements. Nazi Germany used its satellite's production potential to its fullest capacity. Tens of thousands of Slovak workers left annually for Germany. Due to the war trade boom, there was no unemployment in Slovakia.

Between 1939 and 1943, the actual territory of Slovakia was not directly touched by World War II battles. This fact was reflected in the development of culture, which was limited by the ideology of the Slovak state regime and HSĽS influence. From 1939 to 1944, new secondary schools, universities, scientific and artist institutions (with a fruitful production of books and magazines) were established in Slovakia.

During World War II, there were ideologically different resistant lines with a common objective – to fight against Nazism and Fascism. Basic streams of resistance were represented by a Communist and a civic resistance. Both of them were focused on the foreign resistance of Czechs and Slovaks. Slovak streams of resistance united in the Slovak National Council (SNR) in 1943 where the Christmas Treaty was concluded – this was the basic programme of resistance movement in Slovakia. The illegal SNR was active in the Slovak Army, in governmental, economic, judicial and administrative bodies of the Slovak state, through which an armed uprising was being prepared. The uprising began on 29 August 1944 when the German Army began to occupy the territory of the Slovak Republic. Partisan fighting tactics continued even after the occupation of rebel territory, until the arrival of the Red Army in the spring of 1945. The Slovak Republic experienced international isolation after occupation by the German Army. The government and exposed state authorities left Bratislava before the arrival of the advancing Red Army in April 1945. The Czechoslovak Republic was restored in the territory of Slovakia.

V. REBUILDING OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE Communist COUP

The history of Slovakia, from its liberation from Hitler's Germany in 1945 to the fall of the Communist regime in 1989, consists of two separate periods: the so-called people's democratic period (a contemporary name for the regime in power from the time Slovakia was liberated up to February 1948), and the Communist period (from the coup in February 1948 up to November 1989). The People's democratic regime was a temporary and hybrid political formation. It was different to previous and following totalitarian regimes, as well as to the parliamentary democracy of the first Czechoslovak Republic, even though its legal continuity with the first Republic was often declared. Most frequently, it was defined as a political system of limited and closed democracy and plurality. Considering the fact that it was wedged in between two totalitarian systems (from the time period point of view), its democratic features became visible and it became embedded in the national consciousness of Slovak and Czech societies for a long time after, even though it also contained several non-democratic features. The National Front became a political base of the new power, a particular kind of people's democratic coalition, which merged four political parties in Slovakia and the same number of political parties (of a centre-left political nature) in the Czech countries. The power of the government became stronger and control functions of the parliament became weaker. The functions of the parliament and government in Slovakia were carried out by the Slovak National Bodies, namely the Slovak National Council and the Board of Commissioners.

In the autumn of 1945, companies in key industries, large-scale industry, banks, and insurance companies were nationalised (brought under state ownership) by decrees of the President of Republic; also, the property of Germans, Hungarians and collaborators was confiscated (in the same manner, the property of other states was nationalised and confiscated, e.g. affected American property comprised USD 149 million in Czechoslovakia). As a result, a mixed economy emerged with different kinds of ownerships and business activities and with a strong representation by the state sector.

Slovakia entered the renewed Czechoslovak Republic as a self-conscious and equal partner, with its own political representation and its own national bodies. It had a history of its own state independence during war (the Slovak Republic and the Slovak National

Uprising). Both events contributed, in a certain way, to Slovak national consciousness, which was also expressed in submitted requirements in the area of Slovakia's position related to constitutional law within the renewed Republic. However, the attempts of Slovak Communists and democrats to enforce a federal form of state, based on national principles, failed due to the unwillingness of Czech political parties. Therefore, an asymmetric model of state organisation was formed within the unitary state, with the central (state-wide) and Slovak national bodies not having a partner on the Czech side. The logical consequence of this model was the fact that the authority of the Slovak national bodies was limited.

For a short post-war period, the People's democracy was actually the common work of Communists and democrats. The results of World War II, particularly the Soviet power factor, influenced the establishment of People´s democracy in Czechoslovakia. War destroyed human lives and material values. It upset civic society, compromised political parties and individuals who collaborated with Nazism, and allowed Bolshevism to enter Central and South-Eastern Europe. The power vacuum was filled by the Soviet Union and its Communist ideology. The fact that the state territory was liberated by the Red Army (except the narrow strip of Western Bohemia) played right into the hands of Czech and Slovak Communists.

From the beginning, the Czechoslovak Republic was built up as a national state of Czech and Slovaks where there was no place for German and Hungarian minorities. New political and state representation wanted to get rid of the non-Slavic minorities via displacement. Nationals of these non-Slavic minorities were accused of participating in and assisting the disintegration of the Republic, and on 2 August 1945, they lost their Czechoslovak citizenship by Decree of President No. 33/1945. The intentions of displacement were, however, not fully successful. Based on the resolution of the Potsdam Conference – attended by prime ministers of the victorious Great Powers from 17 July to 2 August 1945 – the transfer of Germans took place but the Western Powers did not agree to a similar approach when dealing with the Hungarian problem. Therefore, they looked for and applied other measures that affected the Hungarian minority – exchange of inhabitants based on the interstate Czechoslovak-Hungarian Agreement, re-Slovakisation, and mostly violent internal colonisation (settlement of territories after the deportation of Sudet Germans). It was only in October 1948 that nationals of the Hungarian minority had their Czechoslovak citizenship renewed.

How did Czechoslovakia's international political position develop in this short period? It was predetermined by the attitudes of the anti-Hitler coalition of the Great Powers towards the end of the war, on the basis of which Czechoslovakia belonged to the Soviet area of interest and from which Kremlin built a monolithic Eastern Bloc within a short period of time. The Soviet power factor in Central Europe was accepted by Great Britain and the US. The original ambition of Czechoslovak political representation, namely that of President Edvard Beneš, to be the bridge between East and West, appeared soon to be an unreal possibility. Practically a textbook example of the vassal position is the Czechoslovak refusal of the Marshall Plan in July 1947 after experiencing hard pressure from Stalin. In keeping with its great power policy, the Soviet Union considered Czechoslovakia a steady component in a "buffer state chain" in Central Europe. Moreover, Czechoslovakian uranium was an irreplaceable resource in its nuclear attempts and early production designs of the atomic bomb (from autumn 1945 onwards). Czechoslovak rejection of the above-mentioned Marshall Plan was real evidence of the disintegration of the anti-Hitler coalition and increased Czechoslovak subordination to Moscow even in the economic sector. The Communist coup in Prague technically completed this process in February 1948.

Also from an internal affairs point of view, Slovakia (Czechoslovakia) lived turbulently through this short period. The results of parliamentary elections in Slovakia in May 1946, in which the Democratic Party obtained 62 percent, showed that Slovak society was more polarised and less inclined towards left-wing thought than Czech society (where Czech Communists were the clear winners of the elections). At the same time, the elections confirmed the considerable political influence of the Catholic Church in Slovakia. The result of the Communist failure in the elections in Slovakia was the sharpening of political arguments between Communists and democrats, limitation of competence of the Slovak national bodies in form of the third Prague Treaty acceptance, and an increase of tensions in the Czech-Slovak relationship. From this time on, a considerable number of Slovaks saw double danger in Prague: the threat of communism and the threat of centralism.

A definitive power confrontation, on a state scale, between powers of democracy and totalitarianism took place in February 1948. From the very beginning, the Communists considered the people's democratic regime a temporary and transitional level to overtake their power monopoly. The Communists used the governmental crisis of 20 February 1948 in

which twelve ministers from three non-Communist parties (National Socialist, People's, and Democrat) resigned – to achieve their goal. Even though the solution of the governmental crisis moved more or less within parliamentary practices, the power coup itself was the work of extra-constitutional means. But the fact is that the Communist offensive did not meet any efficient resistance during the events in February, and a considerable number of nationals supported it in public whether out of conviction or fear. The period of Communist dictatorship started, and Czechoslovakia was definitely integrated into the Soviet power bloc. Democracies of the West did not actively intervene to protect democracy in Czechoslovakia during the spring of 1948. They verbally denounced the situation in a common American-British-French declaration (dated 26 February 1948), but no other action was taken. It left Czechoslovakia fully in the Moscow orbit, much to the detriment of Slovaks and Czechs themselves. The protest of the Czechoslovak ambassador to the UN Security Council, Ján Papánek, against the coup in Prague was vetoed by Soviet Union. By the time the Communist coup took place in February, the Communist Party had gained a power monopoly that was a precondition for building a totalitarian regime.

The years 1948 and 1989 are the boundary years of the Czechoslovak (Slovak) Communist era. They define a closed cycle of epigonic Communist experiments – its rise, development and fall, and thereby, the historic dimension, given to it, i.e. the dimension of an irretrievable past. The Communist regime had certain weaknesses that characterised its nature, namely a dictatorial way of government, state party power monopoly and gear shifts, economic and social statism, elimination of political opponents, closed markets, application of the principle of central and directive economic planning, and Marxist-Leninist ideology and propaganda. At the same time, as is any other political regime, it was subject to certain changes. The changes happened in its social pillar (support structure): within the Marxist-Leninist ideology, individual doctrines were alternating, its policy was more flexible than the Communist regime itself. The regime was at its peak at the time of Stalinism, it survived the "ice age" years 1948-1953, the slight thaw in 1956 after disclosure of the "personality cult", increase in temperature, crisis and a reform attempt in the 1960s, as well as neo-Stalinism (i.e. a return to the past during normalisation post-1968), to finally collapse completely in the fall of 1989.

VI. THE Communist TOTALITARIAN SYSTEM

The Communist totalitarian system was formed within several months of the February 1948 coup. Very few realised the profoundity of these political changes. The President, Edvard Beneš, still held office for several months after the coup. The National Front, as a political institution, was formally retained but its purpose changed. It became a façade for the real nature of the Communist dictatorship. Non-Communist parties lost control, some actually becoming pseudo-parties, and there were gear shifts in Czech and Slovak Communist orders. The Communist power monopoly substituted the National Front's pre-February 1948 power monopoly. The elections ceased to fullfil the function of elections, the Parliament ceased to be a Parliament, the government ceased to be a government, etc. Everything was decided upon in an inner circle of Communist Party administration. Civil liberty remained only on paper.

Within the Czech-Slovak relationship, there was no positive move noted. On the contrary, an asymmetric model of policy and increasing Czech centralisation were cutting away the competence of Slovak national agencies until there was nothing left of it. Continuous Communist pressure in the state was resisted mainly by the Church, particularly the Catholic Church, in Slovakia. On 14 October 1949 the National Assembly passed Act No. 217/1949 ("On State Office for Religious Matters and on Slovak Office for Religious Matters") and Act No. 218/1949 ("On Economic Security of Churches and Religious Communities"), as specified by governmental regulations. The Church laws and governmental regulations substantially changed the position of churches. They determined autonomy and a status of public law subject. They were subordinate to the state (they were responsible to the state), and priests were actually state employees. Those priests who resisted the duress were apprehended, persecuted and tried in political trials. The Church laws remained valid and in effect without any substantial changes until the fall of the Communist regime.

The fundamental changes in Slovak (Czechoslovak) society happened at the end of the 1940s and beginning of 1950s – the economic, educational and cultural spheres were also affected. Directly after February 1948, the second phase of nationalisation as well as the third phase of land reform were enacted. At the end of the year, the wave of "restriction and suppression of capitalist elements" started as did the elimination of

trade enterprise. In 1949, the collectivisation of agriculture started, which lasted (with a short break) from the summer of 1953 to the summer of 1955 (one decade). The structural transformation of Czechoslovak industry took place as well, with a preference for heavy industry construction. Czechoslovakia became the machine-industry power of the Eastern Bloc. The industrialisation of Slovakia was part of these economic changes in Czechoslovakia. Due to strategic reasons, heavy industry construction was preferred, with no regard to ecological consequences, and the proportion of Slovakia in Czechoslovak armament production was increasing. Moreover, finalisation did not win recognition in industrial production in Slovakia; therefore, as a rule, the contribution toward gross domestic product (GDP) was lower. A new school system was implemented, the iconography of socialist realism was promoted into art and literature, and Marxist-Leninist methodology and ideology were promoted in the humanities. Society was becoming secularised and more people were embracing atheism. There was now deep intervention into ownership, social relationships, culture, traditions and ways of life – unthinkable without accompanying Communist violence and terror. People were discriminated against due to various political, social and religious reasons.

The end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s in Europe, or in the world, brought with it the period of "full bloom" of the Cold War. The danger of a new worldwide conflict between the recent allies dictated international development from the point of view of life for future generations. Under the wings of the USA, the West acted at that time as a more or less homogenous unit without internal shakes, but in the Eastern Bloc, the internal process of ideological cleaning of their own lines fully flared up under the patronage of Moscow.

The political trials in Czechoslovakia at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s are legitimately considered to be the most tragic phenomenon of Slovakia's modern history. Their common factor was their illegitimacy. They were illegitimate due to various reasons – they were artificially fabricated via involuntary confessions and the breaching of fundamental human and civil rights, as well as of laws in place at the time. They affected all of society, all social classes. The "class enemy" was being looked for everywhere.

The main objective of the Czechoslovak political trials in the monitored period was reflected at many levels. It is hard to define exactly which one was dominant, but as a permanent constant, it undoubtedly seemed to be the attempt to disclose, eliminate, punish and knock out prospective, real or imaginary opponents of the Communist regime, wherein the psychology of fear worked as a significant motivator. Fear was supposed to shock society massively and "educate ". In this case, it was against the class imperialistic enemy. The public mega-trials with internal enemies of the state were mainly responsible for activating this fear psychosis.

The most significant role during the "creation" of the Czechoslovak political trials at that time was played by State Security Police (ŠtB, an equivalent of KGB in Soviet Union), which was predominantly a political police force that helped, protected and actively participated in the building of the Communist regime. The tentacles of the ŠtB were everywhere – in the cities, villages, regions, in social organisations, schools, and companies as well as on cooperatives and farms, simply everywhere where there were people.

State Security Police used a combination of two methods in their investigations – physical cruelty and mental duress. The ŠtB procedure at the "production" of political trials had its own running patterns and stages. In general, the following was applied – selection of the enemy, his surveillance, provocation, agent employment, search of fabricated proofs. This initial stage culminated with victim apprehension. The pre-trial custody then followed – total isolation, where no valid laws or rights existed for the suspect. There was only a two-sided relationship – the investigator versus the suspect. The suspect was not considered a human anymore – he was just a number, a prejudged criminal, helpless and puzzled. He was exposed to the full extent of his investigator´s willfullness, a person not looking for the truth. The latter followed the instructions he received from "above" as well as his own initiative. He determined the method of interrogation as well as the suspect mode. Also, the questioning was carefully prepared. If the suspect cooperated, he was spared physical and mental torture as a reward. If he refused to cooperate, then violence followed. Sooner or later, everybody gave in, and there was only one result – the question protocol.

When the ŠtB went forward in the trial to the extent that they completed the question protocol, they then elaborated the indictment. It was officially submitted by the Prosecution Office, but the main architect – ŠtB – continued to determine the procedure. Its part on the creation of the trial's final stages took place in the court room. The suspect recited by heart all "crimes" he had committed. The tribunal then publicly disclosed the hostile and anti-state activities of the suspect.

The legal proceeding itself had its specific form too, before the State Court. Generally, particularly in mega-trials, it was public, and the presiding judge as well as the Prosecutor actively involved the audience in its procedure. It was a psychological game, a clever use of mob mentality; therefore, the sound effects could not be missing – screams of outrage, anger, as well as joy from the disclosure of seditious conspiracies in the service of the imperialists, Trotskyites, Zionists, Titoists or bourgeois nationalists.

All this poor and superficial "theatre" was concluded by the lawyer. The lawyer, appointed ex offo, did not, in reality, defend the suspect – he too was convinced of his guilt and restricted his role only to stating the extenuating circumstances (providing the suspect had fully and willingly pleaded guilty). The verdict in the name of the Republic – guilty – was supposed to be of educational influence to society – death, life sentence, or long-term imprisonment.

Political trials were part of the form of Communist power governance. Punitive components pursued official policy – they were its tool. They expanded the most in the initial period of communism, between 1948 and 1954. By means of political trials, the Communist power carelessly eliminated their opponents – the real ones, the prospective ones, and the imaginary ones.

The total number of political trials in the forty-year period of Communist totality in Czechoslovakia is still not exactly known. We know, however, that the minimum limit represents almost 260,000 cases (out of which more than 62,000 took place in Slovakia), which is the number of the rehabilitated on the grounds of the Act from 1990. This data, however appalling it might be, does not fully represent all the consequences of the political trials, which did not only affect the direct victims, their families and friends, but it also influenced society in the long term – politically, economically, culturally and morally.

And who shall be held guilty for this disaster? Who shall be held responsible for the tragedies and horrors experienced by numerous generations? From the general point of view, it would undoubtedly be the Communist regime, its power authorities, and all those individuals who worked in this uncontrollable mechanism. From the point of view of home affairs, Czechoslovak development at the beginning of the 1950s was a hectic period. The Czechoslovak Communists, making full use of the tools of state power, successfully eliminated domestic opponents to the regime and cleaned their own lines. An opinion that it was all in progress only under the command of Moscow and its "consultants" may not stand (the argument that "we are not responsible, it is all the Russians' fault "); rather the domestic political and repressive element to be of similar importance – which through its own initiative and with the feeling of unstoppable power – created a "brighter future".

Several examples of political trials exist. The first of them took place in Slovakia in the spring of 1948. In 1950, there was the mega-trial of Milada Horáková and others, and the group of former Slovak partisans (Viliam Žingor and others). In January 1951, there was a staged political trial before the State Court in Bratislava, with the "treasonous" Roman Catholic bishops, Michal Buzalka (Trnava) and Ján Vojtaššák (Spiš), and with the Greek Catholic bishop, Pavol Gojdič (Prešov). Buzalka and Gojdič were sentenced to life imprisonment, and Vojtaššák to 24 years in prison. The trial was part of the campaign against the Catholic Church. Two similar monster processes had already begun in the Czech Republic. The first one took place at the beginning of April 1950 – the trial of the representative of orders, and the second one at the end of November that year, with the bishops' assistants. The political goal of these trials was to "reveal" to the believers and the clergy that the church hierarchy was an enemy of the state and the Vatican a tool of American imperialism.

At the beginning of July 1951, world public opinion was literally ruffled by the fabricated trial of the American journalist William N. Oatis, who was accused of seditious conspiracy and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. The highest publicity was achieved for the monster trial in November 1951, with the so-called administration of the seditious conspiracy headed by Rudolf Slánsky, former Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ). It was the biggest and most brutal monster trial involving Communist officers in Czechoslovakia. In the verdict, they were (in various ways) charged with espionage, sabotage and military treason. Eleven out of fourteen accused were sentenced to death, while the remaining three were sentenced to life imprisonment. The death penalty was executed on 3 December 1952. Vladimír Clementis, Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1948 to 1950, a left-wing intellectual and a Communist, was one of those sentenced to death and was also executed; he was a Slovak who immediately and sharply condemned the Soviet-German Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact (1939) and the aggressive Soviet attack on Finland (1940).

In April 1954, after long preparations in Bratislava before the Supreme Court, the trial of the so-called Slovak bourgeois nationalists took place. They were apprehended in pre-trial custody from the beginning of 1951 and were exposed to physical and mental violence. The trial was held behind closed doors, only in the presence of predetermined "prepared" witnesses. The accusation was a conglomerate of the most absurd accusations and ideological constructions. Gustáv Husák was sentenced to life imprisonment, Ladislav Novomeský to ten years imprisonment, Daniel Okáli to 18 years, imprisonment, Ladislav Holdoš to 13 years imprisonment and Ivan Horváth to 22 years imprisonment. From the point of view of socio-political impact, it was the most important trial in Slovakia in the whole post-February period. However, in Slovakia (or in Czechoslovakia), the campaign of the fight against so-called Slovak bourgeois nationalism was led, in reality, throughout the 1950s, thus resulting in the reduced competence of Slovak national authorities. By cancelling the Board of Commissioners in 1960, the remains of Slovak autonomy were thereby eliminated. The Slovak National Council changed into a powerless institution which "ruled only for itself ". The new national constitution adopted by the National Assembly on 11 July 1960 declared the victory of socialism, which was also reflected in the name of the state – Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (ČSSR) – and confirmed the leading role of the Communist Party in the state and in society, and Marxism-Leninism as an exclusive state ideology.

VII. 1968: WARSAW PACT INVASION

The 1960s contained almost all the alternative Communist policies that were applied in Czechoslovakia during the entire Communist regime. The hard track policy that was initially fading away was renewed after the Soviets bloody suppression of the Hungarian uprising in November 1956. Since 1963, a certain political liberation may be noted – a partial regime liberalisation – which was immediately followed by the military invasion of five Warsaw Pact states for the "Socialist rescue" in Czechoslovakia on 21 August 1968 after which a well-known normalisation took place (a restoration of the Communist dictatorship). Czechoslovakia was struggling with numerous problems at this time. It was predominantly due to economic stagnation (1961-1964) and the collapse of the third Five-Year Plan (1961-1965), both of which symbolised the need for economic reform. The January 1965 session of the ÚV KSČ approved the need for such reforms. Its first measure already proved that, without change in the political system, it would be difficult to bring about reform. This economic reform became only a generator of establishing system changes.

The second problem was the rehabilitation of political trial victims. Due to delayed de-Stalinisation, rehabilitation began between 1963 and 1964, but was not consistently applied. These were mainly concerned Communist officials who were wrongly convicted – the question of responsibility for the political trials had still not been solved. The National Security continued to be a state within a state. During the democratisation process in 1968, rehabilitations made greater progress when they were legitimised by the law and when they were related to a much wider range of people (including non-Communists and former Communist opponents). What is significant about the limited rehabilitation in 1963-1964 is that at least part of the crimes committed between 1949 and 1954 were revealed – this shook citizen trust in the leading political officials, thus causing some personnel changes in leading positions. Scapegoats included Slovaks such as Viliam Široký, one of the most loyal Moscow dogmatists and the then prime minister of Czechoslovakia, and Karol Bacílek, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia (ÚV KSS).

Alexander Dubček became the leader of the Slovak Communists in 1963. From the beginning of the 1950s, the new KSS leadership was not burdened with staged political

21 August 1968, Streets of Bratislava. Soviet led occupation of Czecho-Slovakia.

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Danube river border during Communist era in the 1980s.
The Border with Austria was heavily protected and guarded. Many were killed in their attempt to escape and to pursue their dreams in free and democratic West.

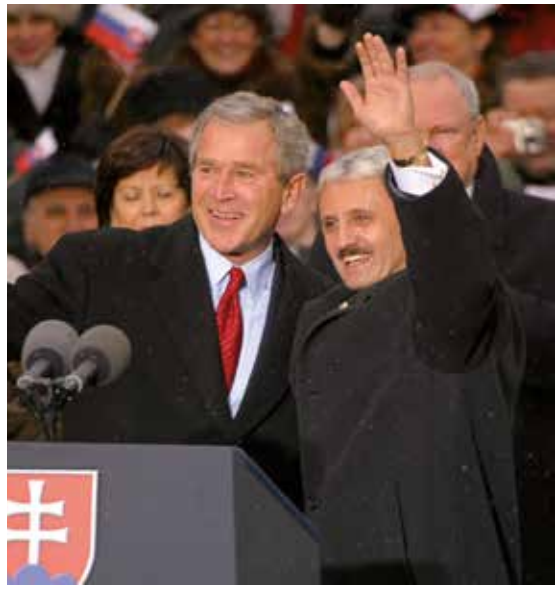
Sviečková Manifestation, 25 March 1988, Hviezdoslavovo Square. Peaceful candlelight demonstration for more freedoms was brutally suppressed by Communist commandos.

17 November 1989, Bratislava. One of many demonstrations that led to the fall of communism in November 1989.

The Audience of Slovak Prime-Minister Dzurinda with the Pope John Paul II., Rome.

Europe´s New Democracies: Leadership and Responsibility. Bratislava, May 10-12, 2001.

November 29, 2004, Rome. Slovak Prime-Minister Dzurinda signing the European Constitution.



Summit Putin-Bush in Bratislava, February 24, 2005.

November 17, 2007. Politicians who participated on democratisation of Slovakia speaking on the 18th anniversary of November 1989. From left to right: Hrušovký, Dzurinda, Csáky, Topolánek.

May 2004, Prime-Minister Mikulás Dzurinda introduces four leading candidates of his SDKU party for EP election to EP president Pat Cox.

trials. Consequently, they were much more courageous than the ÚV KSČ in overcoming the Stalinist heritage. At the same time, they objectively helped the development of a national emancipatory movement with their policies – this was another source of social movement, which gradually resulted in the reform movement. With the growth of the national political movement in Slovakia, Dubček´s authority in the party, as well as in society, grew significantly, and so did his role in the Prague KSČ chairmanship (since he was able to rely on a substantial portion of Communists in Slovakia).

The above-mentioned events and almost a five-year liberalisation (1963-1967) period prepared the ground for a reformatory and democratising process in 1968, which was later named the Czechoslovak Spring. Within the KSČ, the heterogeneous reform wing was being formed. A certain political liberalisation bore fruit also in the areas of culture, literature, and art and film production. Almost all forms of art were walking away from a so-called socialist realism and some original works of art started to appear. The role of intellectuals in social and political life was growing. After the January 1968 session of ÚV KSČ, which elected Dubček to be the First Secretary of ÚV KSČ, events started to move rapidly. The idea of socialist reform originated within the Party. Many middle-aged Party officials lost their youthful illusions but did not lose their visions and beliefs in Socialism as a social structure. They did not wish or mean to remove it, but to reform it, change it to "Socialism with a human face". While maintaining state federalism and the leading role played by the KSČ, they also pursued democratisation of the Party and the state and modification of the political system on grounds of plurality of interests. They meant to modernise and humanise state Socialism, connect Socialism with democracy and the plan with the market. Democratisation of a totalitarian regime itself is not possible, the same way a democracy cannot meet totalitarianism on the same platform. However, the reform-supporting Communists believed that through the reforms, they could give Socialism and its ideology a second wind. A majority of society at that time accepted the programme as they did not wish to return to capitalism. The level of non-Communist power involvement in favour of the system change in Czechoslovakia was much lower in 1968 than in Hungary in 1956 and in Poland in 1980-1981.

The social movement for democratisation exceeded the intentions of reform Communists. The Dubček chairmanship therefore found itself under pressure and had to give in to the movement in certain ways. In Slovakia, with the democratisation process, the Slovak emancipatory movement was dominant, with the centre of attention being on the issue of federal state organisation – this was publicly declared by the Slovak National Council (SNR) at their session on 14-15 March 1968. On 9 April, ÚV KSS joined them as well, and in mid-May 1968, the government of the Czechoslovak Socialistic Republic (ČSSR) ratified the creation of a specialised committee for the preparation of constitutional law for the Czechoslovak Federation, headed by the vice-prime minister, Gustáv Husák. It was made up of 30 members: 15 from the Czech Party and 15 from the Slovak Party. The truth is that the Czech Party sabotaged and slowed down committee work. A common Czech and Slovak state federation was not a priority for the Czech Party. Ultimately, however, the Slovak Party succeeded in its efforts – on 27 October the ČSSR National Assembly adopted Constitutional Act No. 143/1968 on the Czechoslovak Federation. Besides other things, it stated that "the Slovak and Czech nations, … acknowledging indefatigability for self-determination until the separation … have agreed on the formation of the Czechoslovak Federation".

On the same day, the National Assembly also adopted the Constitutional Act No. 144/1968 on the position of nationalities. It stated that ČSSR was a common state of the Czech and Slovak nations and nationalities that lived on its territory. Minorities – Hungarian, German, Polish and Ukrainian (Ruthenian) – would be, pursuant to the Constitutional Act, provided "possibilities and means of comprehensive development". The Act was supposed to secure the right of nationalities to education in their own language, the right to comprehensive development, the right to use their language in official transactions in the areas inhabited by that particular nationality, the right to assembly, and the right to press and information in their language. All forms of oppression contributing towards de-nationalisation were banned. The Constitutional Act on the Czechoslovak Federation was signed on 30 October in the Federation Hall of Bratislava Castle. The individuals involved in signing the Act were: the ČSSR President, Ludvík Svoboda, the Chairman of the ČSSR National Assembly, Josef Smrkovský, and the ČSSR prime minister, Oldřich Černík. This ceremonial act was a part of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the creation of Czechoslovakia.

The wide social democratisation movement in Czechoslovakia was monitored by Moscow from the very beginning with certain uneasiness. If Moscow showed any signs of weakness, passivity or inactivity, it would endanger its big-power interests. Czechoslovakia had to be returned to the "sheepfold"; otherwise, it might initiate a similar avalanche in the other countries of the Eastern Bloc. The first warning from Moscow was addressed to Prague on 23 March 1968, after a meeting of Communist leaders in Dresden and attention was drawn to the "sneaking up counter-revolution". Brezhnev advanced the following warning directly to Dubček at negotiations held in Čierna and Tisou between the delegations of KSČ and the Communist Party of Soviet Union (KSSZ) on the subject of political development in Czechoslovakia (29 July – 1 August). Soviet representatives once again appealed to the Czechoslovak leadership to deal with the "counter-revolutionary" situation quickly and efficiently, using their own methods. That would, however, suggest ending the reform policy, which was an unacceptable alternative for the progressive wing in the Party leadership. Shortly afterwards, a meeting was held in Bratislava (3 August) with the representatives of Communist and labour parties, representatives from Bulgaria, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the Soviet Union, with the leadership of KSČ. They adopted a statement saying that "support, protection and securing Socialist accomplishments shall be the common international obligation of all Socialist countries" (Brezhnev Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty). During the meeting, a so-called letter of invitation was delivered to the Chairmanship of KSSZ. It had been signed by five controversial Czechoslovak Communists (with Vasil Biľak signing on behalf of the Slovaks). This letter, which was supposed to provide validity to the prepared invasion by the Warsaw Pact Army into the ČSSR, was a crucial document of its kind because it had been signed by the leading representatives of KSČ.

Soviet political and psychological pressure continued but it only masked the preparations taking place for military intervention. Military measures began on the night of 20 August 1968. The intervention of five state armies of the Warsaw Pact (Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Eastern Germany and Bulgaria) initiated a spontaneous resistance movement by the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia. They watched with terror how, in one night, the territory of the CSSR was invaded by 300,000 foreign soldiers, over 6,000 tanks and combat vehicles, 4,000 cannons and 1,000 airplanes in 24 air regiments. It was the biggest armed action in Europe since the end of World War II.

Via facti, shortly after midnight on 21 August, the Chairmanship of ÚV KSČ adopted the letter "To all people of ČSSR", disapproving the military action of the five Warsaw Pact states. That night the members of the Czechoslovak ŠtB arrested the leading representatives of the Party and State – Alexander Dubček, Josef Smrkovský, Oldřich Černík, František Kriegel, etc. The establishment of a puppet government was part of the original Soviet plan for elimination of socialist reform in Czechoslovakia. Subsequently, the members of the ČSSR National Assembly adopted the resolution where they identified with the proclamations set forth by the ÚV KSČ Chairmanship, which declared the Czechoslovak invasion by the five Warsaw Pact state armies to be an infringement of international law, of the provisions of the Warsaw Pact, and of the principles of equal relationships amongst nations. The Czechoslovak government held an extraordinary session where disapproval was expressed to the five countries' governments (whose armies had invaded the ČSSR). After the failed attempt to establish a pro-Moscow, so-called workers' and farmers' government (Indra and others), some leading pro-reform political representatives were abducted to the Soviet Union. The ČSSR government issued a proclamation wherein they emphasised that Czechoslovakia had been invaded against its will and that therefore, for the first time in the history of the international Communist movement, an act of aggression – led by the Communist Party and performed by the allied armies of the Soviet countries – had taken place against a state. The Chairmanship of ÚV KSS also publicly reacted by issuing the unanimous viewpoint that supported the policy represented by Dubček.

The Czechoslovak President, Ludvík Svoboda, flew to Moscow for negotiations with leading USSR representatives. He was joined the following day by the Czechoslovak interned politicians (Dubček and others). The negotiations lasted until 26 August, the result of which was the signing of a so-called Moscow Treaty that bound the KSČ to end all revival processes. Brezhnev's policy of a tough attitude towards "disobedient" Czechoslovakia achieved the desired result. Moreover, with the use of arms, Moscow soon forced the reform Communists to be removed from leading positions in Czechoslovakia (and in Slovakia as well), with party and state led positions taken up by dogmatic, conservative Communists.

What was the reaction of the West towards the military intervention of "brotherly countries" in Czechoslovakia? There was none. The West was capable only of issuing several disapproving political statements. The US and NATO evaluated this international event to be an action that was not directed against the interests of the West, or saw it simply as an internal Eastern Bloc issue.

The intervention stopped the democratisation process and created conditions conducive to the elimination of results already achieved. It was the beginning of the longest period in the history of the Communist regime in Slovakia (and Czechoslovakia), and was later termed "normalisation". This period lasted more than two decades. Soviet control of the stated was re-established and supremacy of the state party above society was renewed – the fruits of reform and the democratisation process were destroyed.

Shortly after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, a part of the reforming Communists, including Alexander Dubček, anticipated that even within the new conditions, something of the "socialism with a human face" policy could be salvaged. However, reality proved them wrong. Dubček himself had to resign from office of the First Secretary of ÚV KSČ, and on 17 April 1969 he was replaced by Gustáv Husák, who remained in this position until December 1987. The aforementioned normalisation process is associated with the latter's name. Even if he had had his own idea about normalisation when he assumed the position, he would have still consequently implemented the plan put forth by Brezhnev and the conservatives within KSČ.

The system of governance in Czechoslovakia (and Slovakia) at the time of normalisation was eventually determined by the strategic interests of the Soviet Union, as the superpower wished to stabilise its hegemony in this region. Placement of Soviet armies in the territory of Czechoslovakia and the strong attachment to the USSR was part of this interest. The political regime returned to reprisals, censorship, purges, checking up, nomenclature, and application of class criteria when seeking admission to universities. It was reminiscent of the atmosphere of the 1950s, with the exception that the regime in charge was not a Stalin model. We could rather refer to it as neo-Stalinist. Even though the reprisals were not of a preventative nature and persecutions were milder, deterioration of ideology continued. The main ideological document now became "Lessons from the Crisis Development in the Party and Society after the 13th Plenum of KSČ". Its real objective was to rationalise the military intervention in August 1968 and legitimise the new political establishment. After the party check-ups, reform Communism began to disappear from official structures, and not even in the final phase of the Communist regime during Soviet "perestroika" were conditions created for its recovery. The triumphant Conservatives, with their sterile thinking considered A. Dubček, the symbol of the Prague Spring, to still be a threat to the regime, right up until the fall of Communism.

A much stronger bond than the ideology between power and society at the time of normalisation was the unwritten, (but from experience) well-read, contract – an unspoken agreement resulting from the status quo. Its subject matter consisted of the following: the governance promised to provide inhabitants with a certain "welfare" amenities and protection, agreed to not violently disregard their privacy or require any demonstration of approval from them besides the elections and the First of May celebrations that had become a ritual. On the other hand, Czechoslovak (Slovak) society gave in to the loyalty and obedience. The power resigned to play an active role of human factor. Its ideal – as opposed to that of the 1950s – was no longer the fighter -conscious Socialist builder, but a loyal citizen preoccupied with his own interests. The aforementioned "contract" was long respected by both sides. Slovakia (and Czechoslovakia) did not know about or experience waves of turbulence or strikes, such as were experienced in Poland. Workers did not join any opposition activities and dissident intellectuals were, until 1985, only a limited and rather isolated group. On the other side, an important role in the fight against Communism had being played Slovaks who lived abroad. They were unified and well-organised in the Slovak World Congress (SKS). The SKS was created and chaired by Slovak-American patriot Štefan B. Roman.

When mapping the opposition activities in Slovakia, we must include the so called "Candle demonstration" which took place in Bratislava on 25 March 1988. This quiet protest (fired candles in thousands of hands) against the Communist regime was brutally oppressed by ŠtB and belongs to the biggest form of domestic Slovak resistence in this period. Paradoxically, the main factor in planning and coordinating the "Candle demonstration" was not the domestic underground in Slovakia, but the SKS and its vice-chairman Marian Šťastný.

The existence of a "goulash Socialism" was dependant on economic performance, and consumption therefore focused on economic and social policy. In the first half of the 1970s the economy noted a rise which could be attributed to Soviet loans in convertible currencies and the increased delivery of oil and gas for a reasonable price. In light of some changes in external conditions (such as energy and raw material crises) that the economy was unable to react to flexibly, the second half of the 1970s was less successful than the first half. The pace of national income growth slowed down and this trend continued through the 1980s. At the same time, from an industrial point of view, Czechoslovakia was increasingly lagging behind the industrially developed countries,

but after the "oil shock", innovative processes began to speed up. Regime stability was ensured at the expense of conservation of the existing industrial structure that did not correspond to modern requirements and assisted environmental deterioration. That means such regime stability was brought about without solving key economic issues. With the decline in economic performance, sources of social corruption and society consensus began to dry up.

Failure of the economic system and its overall weak status at the close of the 1980s undoubtedly contributed considerably to the fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia; however, it was not the determining factor of Communism's downfall in the country, nor was it an impetus for the events of November 1989. The economic situation was not bad enough to initiate a wave of disorder and start the destruction mechanism. Both dominant and dominated elements realised that Communism had lost the war to capitalism; the people had used up their development possibilities and were no longer able to provide for their futures. Communism was thus destined to extinction – moreover, it had lost its outside guardian. This conviction created a certain foundation but did not determine the consequent course of action. Opinions changed, resulting in an aversion towards the politics of the power elite and their suppression of civil and human rights in a time when there were significant political changes in surrounding countries – the USSR, Poland, Hungary and in East Germany in October 1989. The regime crisis in Czechoslovakia grew between 1987 and 1989, as did the influence of opposing political powers and independent structures. Tensions escalated, and it was just a matter of time before there would be a physical outburst of dissatisfaction. The catalyst – or the fuse that lit the ticking bomb – came in the form of the violently-suppressed student demonstrations in Prague and Bratislava on 17 November 1989.

The Slovak diaspora played an important role in the efforts to reestablish freedom and democracy in their homeland through the Slovak World Congress (SWC). Renowned industrialist Stefan Roman, SWC Founder and Chairman, provided great leadership and crucial financing. Subsequent SWC Chairman Marian Stastny was a leading figure in organising the "Candlelight Manifestation" in the centre of Bratislava on the night of 25 March 1988. It was the largest popular revolt against the Communist regime since the Soviet invasion on 21 August 1968. The peaceful gathering was brutally suppressed by Communist riot police. The event was a spark and catalyst to the final fall of the regime 20 months later.

From the mid-1980s, the political establishment in Czechoslovakia (and Slovakia) – both under the influence of Gorbachev's perestroika – began to lose support not only amongst civilians but also amongst their own party members. During the month of November 1989, hundreds of thousands of people emerged in the squares and streets to openly disavow the regime that refused them dialogue, ignored the requirements needed for system democratisation, and adhered to a policy of hostility towards everyone who failed to subordinate to the Communist Party dictate. The democratic opposition was emerging from the heart of civil society, and their programme of system changes supported the concepts of democracy, freedom, and spiritual, political and economic plurality. The process of elimination of the Communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia had a "velvet" alternative. Similar processes were ongoing almost simultaneously in the surrounding countries of the Soviet Bloc. The events of November 1989 paved the way for political, social and economic system changes.

VIII. 1989: THE VELVET REVOLUTION

The events of November 1989 placed Slovak and Czech societies at the forefront in solving key problems: on the one hand, to deal with the period of Communist regime, and on the other, to implement basic objectives of social change at the political, social, and economic levels (and even at the state level in Slovakia). The driving force behind democratic changes in Slovakia was the efforts of a citizens' movement called the Public Against Violence (VPN), the Civic Forum (OF) in the Czech Republic, and the students' movement. One of the basic conditions for democratisation of Slovak and Czech society was the reconstruction of the Federal Parliament and the National Parliament, which was carried out via co-optation of new members of Parliament, from the end of November 1989 to the end of March 1990.

Rudolf Schuster became the first post-November 1989 Chairman of the Slovak National Council, and Milan Čič became prime minister of the Slovak Government. The Federal Parliament removed the monopoly of power by repealing Article 4 of the ČSSR Constitution. Reconstruction of the top legislative assemblies allowed legal rules to be passed confirming essential socio-political changes, such as the right to assemble

and gather, a democratic legal order, and a pluralistic political and economic system. It allowed the creation of new political actors – the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), the Slovak National Party (SNS), the Green Party (SZ), parties representing Hungarian minorities, etc. It also allowed the transformation of the VPN into a political party and the restoration of the Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (SDSS) and the Democratic Party (DS). These moves resulted into the establishment of a wider political spectrum, from liberal to national wing, from left wing to right. In direct relation to the formation of a pluralistic political system, reforms of the electoral system also took place, thus allowing free and democratic elections and the total transformation of post-totalitarian to democratic political system.

Parliamentary elections in Czechoslovakia in 1990 were actually a referendum in which citizens voted for or against democratic changes. The main protagonists of the democratic revolution – the VPN and the OF – acquired the most support. Based on the results, the new Slovak National Council and the new Slovak Government were formed. In January 1991, the Federal Assembly passed the "Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms", whereby Czech and Slovak society joined the group of advanced democratic societies. The society attempted to deal with property and other injuries committed between 1948 and 1989 by passing a law on extrajudicial compensation.

An essential prerequisite to economic transformation was the change in proprietary relations that stood forth in connection with economic privatisation, restitution and transformation. The existing planned and centrally directed economy was gradually substituted by a market system. The liberalisation of prices in January 1991 removed the old-fashioned system of central price regulation. However, socio-economic transformations were still in their infancy.

The events of November 1989 opened the door not only to democracy, freedom, and a market economy, but also to improvement of deformation in state relations. The first serious dispute between Slovak and Czech political representation arose with a change in the common state name; the public remember this episode as the so-called "Hyphen War" (Spring 1990). The change in state name was supposed to not only document the end of the totalitarian period (by removal of the word "Socialist"), but for Slovakia, it was also supposed to express the equality of both nations – Slovak and Czech – based on federal principles. The move to establish a generally accepted name for the common state and its symbols resulted in a rise in initiatives declaring Slovak state sovereignty. The dispute about the division of competition between the republics and the federation culminated at the end of 1990. It was increasingly obvious that it was a collision of two different conceptions, the Czech one and the Slovak one, of the common state setup, and of further coexistence of the Slovak and Czech nations. There was a strong inclination towards establishing a Unitarian federation, with strong federal bodies on the Czech side, and an "authentic" federation – built from the bottom-up by strong national republics – on the Slovak side. Disputes between Slovak and Czech political representations significantly excited public opinion and divided society. A Pandora's Box of state problems was opened up by the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) when it came up with a proposal of a state treaty between the Slovak and Czech Republics in February 1991. It was unconditionally rejected by the Czech side, followed by long discussions by government and parliament representatives.

IX. THE BIRTH OF DEMOCRATIC SLOVAKIA - STRUGGLE AND DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

The incompatibility of the Slovak and Czech ideas about the common state, and the incapability of political representatives to find an acceptable compromise, increased the levels of tension in mutual relationships. A decision was finally made by the parliamentary elections in June 1992. The ODS won in the Czech Republic and Moravia, while the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) won in Slovakia. The representatives of both political parties – Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar – failed to come to a compromise after seven rounds of discussion on federal government structure, economic concerns and state setup of the republic. The leaders of the victorious political parties came to an agreement on creating a common state division schedule, after passing the Slovak National Council's Declaration of Independence of the Slovak Nation (July, 1992) and the Constitution of the Slovak Republic (1 September 1992). On 25 November 1992 members of Parliament passed the Constitutional Law on dissolution of the CSFR and further laws on the Customs and Monetary Union, the Federal Property division, cooperation and friendship.

Two new independent states in the centre of Europe, the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic, originated on 1 January 1993. There were new challenges facing the political representatives of the Slovak Republic as well as its citizens: to manage a social and economic transformation that covered each sphere of life, to build a democratic and pluralistic system, to keep track with the ongoing integration of the European Community, and to lay strong foundations for their own state. As it happened, the first few years of the Slovak statehood witnessed a political maturity that worked on making many previous expectations a reality, and also broke various illusions that existed.

After the origination, the Slovak Republic expressed its interest in entering international political, economic and defence organisations and the will to fully participate in their activities. Slovakia became a member of the United Nations in the middle of January 1993, a member of the Council of Europe on 30 June 1993, and in October 1993, signed the European Association Agreement (regarding its association to the European Union). At negotiations at NATO headquarters in Brussels (November 1993), the President, Michal Kováč, expressed Slovakia's interest in becoming a member. Four months later, in February 1994, the Slovak government signed a framework document about associating the Slovak Republic to the Partnership for Peace in Brussels. In June of the same year, the National Council of the Slovak Republic passed a fundamental security document – the Defence Doctrine of the Slovak Republic – in which Slovakia officially declared its interest in full NATO membership. But the path of the Slovak Republic to becoming a full NATO member was not smooth, and it took ten years before prime minister Mikuláš Dzurinda submitted the ratification documents on the Washington Treaty to the US State Department in March 2004. Finally, on 1 May 2004 Slovakia's efforts of incorporating itself into the Euro-integration process were complete, with the accession of the Slovak Republic to the European Union.

From an internal affairs point of view, the beginning of the independent Slovak Republic was marked by many difficulties, resulting from price liberalisation, armament industry conversion, high taxes, a shock macroeconomic therapy, privatisation, etc. The unemployment rate rocketed, as did the prices of goods; the social situation of citizens worsened and regional differences increased. The building of the supreme state and political institutions moved forward quickly; the third sector developed from an organisational point of view, as did voluntary and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The HZDS won again in the preliminary parliamentary elections in the autumn of 1994. It started to rule aggressively according to its slogan of "the winner takes all", together with its coalition partners, the SNS and the Union of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS). Privatisation became non-transparent, and political and party affiliations became a determining factor in how to possess offices at all levels – even when considering privatisation projects. From 1995, internal political development was increasingly marked by noticeable social polarisation, instability of democratic institutions, and conflicting relations amongst major political participants (the prime minister and the Government, or the Parliament and the President, etc.). The consequence of the authoritarian politics of the ruling coalition parties was deviation from a model of democratic transformation, resulting in curtailment of freedom and media, cultural independence, decadence of a legal state, and growth of political tensions. Negative trends in the state's development intensified between 1996 and 1997. Slovak society was upset and traumatised by several dramatic cases – from the tunnelling of enterprises and banks, to corruption and clientelism, to the kidnapping of Slovak citizens. Political analysts agreed that totalitarian political practices from the past were being restored after the formation of the ruling coalition (HZDS, SNS and ZRS) in the autumn of 1994.

The results of sociological surveys showed that citizens perceived Slovakia less as a fair, democratic, and law-abiding country, and rather more as a country witnessing increased violence, a rise in organised crime, chronically persistent social problems, and a weak international position. Such developments caused dissatisfaction in a large part of society. Employees in the fields of culture, education and health expressed their concerns about the situation, as did the Conference of Bishops and the engaged third sector. Citizens now approached the questions of democracy and a legal state more carefully. Political opposition started to collectively unite, and at the end of 1996, the chairmen of the KDH, DS and Democratic Union (DÚ) signed the Treaty of Cooperation, which resulted in the creation of the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK); this was done before parliamentary elections in 1998 and was the consequence of a controversial election law. The Hungarian political parties proceeded similarly by uniting in the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK).

Concerns were voiced by representatives of the western democratic states about ongoing developments in Slovakia. These concerns were given via démarches from the EU to the highest state representatives of Slovakia, in November 1994 and October 1995. The Slovak Government derogated the signals from NATO and the EU that gave notice to the consolidation of democracy. Persistent democratic deficits in internal

political developments led to Slovakia's exclusion from the first wave of NATO expansion, as decided at the NATO summit in Madrid in July 1997. Slovakia faced a similar fate on the issue of entry into the EU. In December 1997, the EU bodies decided that dialog about EU membership would start in March 1998, without Slovakia. The Slovak Republic now found itself internationally isolated.

The year 1998 became a year of continuous political and opinion struggle on the future of Slovakia. It seemed that the future development of the state and orientation of its foreign policy would depend upon the results of the autumn parliamentary elections. In 1998, the voters expressed a clear will for change. The winner was the HZDS, but it was unable to arrange the government, which was arranged by the opposition. It represented a heterogeneous mixture of political parties and movements, which caused complications in its activities in the following period. It was made of ministers on behalf of the SDK, the Party of the Democratic Left (SDĽ), the Party of Citizen Understanding (SOP), and – for the first time in history – representatives of the Hungarian minority from the SMK. In parliament, the government coalition had a vast majority in members of Parliament, which helped them to enforce the direct election of the President by the citizens of the Slovak Republic.

The programme of the new government of prime minister Mikuláš Dzurinda was made up of four pillars: development of a democratic legal state, economic recovery, social policy reform, and issues of domestic and foreign security. The centre of their activities lay in the strengthening of integration attempts to enter international structures. In the next four years, the government of prime minister Dzurinda tried to achieve a "successful renewal of democratic rules of the game". Slovakia was gradually becoming a standard country of the Visegrad Four (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia) and a stable component of a wider European direction. Social development provided many reasons for having positive expectations in the future. It seemed that Slovak society had enough internal potential to cope with new challenges and to perform fundamental changes. Democratic institutions were gradually strengthened, and a modern, decentralised and democratic legal state was formed, and political culture was enhanced, a dialogue developed between the main social actors, and there was improvement in the performance of human and minority rights. Reform processes in the economic and social spheres headed for the creation of a transparent business environment. However, the unemployment rate continued to rise, and regional differences were growing.

The 2002 parliamentary elections were won by the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKÚ); together with the KDH, the SMK, and the New Citizen Alliance (ANO), they formed the second Dzurinda government. The formation of a conservative-liberal coalition opened up space for reforms in numerous areas. The pro-reform oriented government could rely on a well-shaped and stable political environment that created a suitable backdrop for reform determination. Reform touched upon various areas – public finance, the labour market, business environments, tax reform and implementation of a so-called flat tax, improvement in investment environment, pension reform, commencement of healthcare reform, education, changes in local administration, access to information – and it all gradually reflected in the country's economic development. There was a slight improvement in living standards and in the growth of real salaries between 2005 and 2006. The high pace of GDP growth, decrease in inflation and the unemployment rate, increase in work productivity, boom in civil construction, and foreign investment inflows were positively assessed by the international institutions and rating agencies. However, the reforms had a negative impact on the socially weaker classes in the social sphere. The Act on Social Help and Life Minimum, in force from 2002, significantly decreased social welfare benefits, thus causing dissatisfaction and unease with some sections of citizens. Financial undersizing meant that the sectors of education, culture, science and healthcare suffered.

After the successes in macroeconomic development, there were some corruption-related scandals in public as well as political life. Slovak citizens and the third sector criticised government performance, the political style of the parties making up the government coalition, weak enforcement of human rights, deficits in citizen participation in matters of public administration, the lack of attention given to cultural needs, morale deterioration, and increased levels of alienation between the government and citizens, all of which led to lower levels of credibility of the key political institutions. According to a 2004 opinion poll, more than half the adult Slovak population did not wish to continue in any of the crucial reforms in the way the government had planned. Criticism surrounding the Dzurinda government's socio-economic policy was increasing.

There has been turbulence in the government coalition since the summer of 2005. One of the Ministers belonging to one of the parties of the coalition left, and rearrangement of members of parliament resulted in a minority position for the government coalition members, thus narrowing room for manoeuvring and enforcing further reform steps. The government became dependant upon the loyalty of numerous independent

members of parliament, thus increasing scope for corruption at higher levels. From the beginning of 2006, Slovakia's political scene was marked by government parties jostling for a stronger position; this eventually led to a crisis in the government coalition and its subsequent disintegration. Shortening the terms of office for parliament and the government had no influence on the stability of the constitutional system.

Premature elections in July 2006 changed the basic distribution of political power in Slovakia. The elections were won by the social democratic party Smer-Social Democracy (Smer-SD), which together with the HZDS and the SNS formed a new government headed by Prime Minister Robert Fico. Contrary to the Dzurinda government that considered its main priority to be the improvement of essential microeconomic indicators (by means of improving the quality of the business environment and paying less attention to the social sphere), the new government and its representatives defined their priority to be the policy of solidarity and enhancement of the principles of a "social state".

Premature elections in 2012 were won by the Smer-SD Party, which in turn formed a new government headed by Prime Minister Robert Fico.

List of abbreviations

ANO – Aliancia nového občana – New Citizen Alliance
ČSR – Československá republika – Czechoslovak Republic
ČSSR – Československá socialistická republika – Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
DS – Demokratická strana – Democratic Party
DÚ – Demokratická únia – Democratic Union
HSĽS – Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana – Hlinka's Slovak People's Party
HZDS – Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko – Movement for Democratic Slovakia
KDH – Kresťansko demokratické hnutie – Christian Democratic Movement
KSSZ – Komunistická strana Sovietskeho zväzu – Communist Party of the Soviet Union
ODS – Občianska demokratická strana – Civic Democratic Party
OF – Občianske fórum – Civic Forum
SDK – Slovenská demokratická koalícia – Slovak Democratic Coalition
SDKÚ – Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia – Slovak Democratic and Christian Union
SDĽ – Strana demokratickej ľavice – Party of Democratic Left
SDSS – Socialnodemokratická strana Slovenska – Social Democratic Party of Slovakia
SKS – Svetový kongres Slovákov – Slovak World Congress
Smer-SD – Smer-sociálna demokracia – Smer-Social Democracy
SMK – Strana maďarskej koalície – Party of the Hungarian Coalition
SNR – Slovenská národná rada – Slovak National Council
SNS – Slovenská národná strana – Slovak National Party
SOP – Strana občianskeho porozumenia – Party of Citizen Understanding
SZ – Strana zelených – Green Party
ŠtB – Štátna bezpečnosť – State Security Police
ÚV KSČ – Ústredný výbor Komunistickej strany Československa – Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
ÚV KSS – Ústredný výbor Komunistickej strany Slovenska – Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia
VPN – Verejnosť proti násiliu – Public Against Violence
ZRS – Združenie robotníkov Slovenska – Union of Workers of Slovakia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HRV

SLOVENIA: FROM TRIPLE TOTALITARIAN OCCUPATION TO FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

Damjan Hančič, Renato Podbersič and Blaž Ivanc

Republic of Slovenia – Republika Slovenija
Area: 20 273 km²
Population: 1 959 900 (2006)
Capital city: Ljubljana
Official Language: Slovene
Currency: Euro
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 01.05.2004

I. INTRODUCTION

Slovenia is the only member of the European Union to have gone through all three types of totalitarian regime in the twentieth century: Fascism, Nazism, and Communism.

II. THE DOUBLE EXPERIENCE WITH FACISM IN NAZI OCUPATION

The west of present Slovenia, which in 1920 with the Treaty of Rapallo became part of the Kingdom of Italy, was the first region confronted with a first totalitarian system – Fascism. Italian Fascism denied any national rights to Slovenes (also, Istrian Croats) and tried to Italianise them. The nationally conscious Slovenes, above all priests and educated people, were exiled and moved towards the interior of Italy. However, the Primorska region or Venezia Giulia, was inhabited by Italians from other parts of the country. Fascist terror increased more and more, year by year, and flourished between 1941–1943, when Italy occupied part of post-war Slovenia (the Drava Province) and the so-called Ljubljana region (Notranjska, Dolenjska, Ljubljana).

The next totalitarian regime which affected the Slovenes was German National Socialism. This first influenced a Slovene minority in Carinthia, which found itself within the borders of the Third Reich in March 1938 after the "Anschluss". Educated Slovenes, particularly Slovene priests, were the most affected. When the Germans attacked Yugoslavia and occupied a large region of the post-war Slovene territory, the circumstances were aggravated. (Gorenjska - Upper Carniola, South Styria, part of Carinthia). In these areas they immediately undertook rigorous denationalising measures, which included not only the deportation of educated Slovenes, but also of a major part of the Slovene population from various regions. Then these areas were populated by the German population.

At the end of 1941, the Nazis and the Italian fascist authorities jointly achieved the migration of the Germans from Kočevje (Gotsche) area and colonised them to the region of the Sava and Sotla rivers; the Slovene population had already been removed. This ethnic cleansing of Kočevsko was completed after the war by the Slovene-Yugoslav Communist authority.

The third and longest totalitarian system in Slovenia was Communism. Its beginnings go back to before World War II, but its crucial influence became stronger after the occupation of Slovenia in mid-1941, when it started a Communist revolution under the pretence of a liberation struggle against the occupation. This is shown in the monopolisation of the resistance movement and the liquidation of political opponents

even in time of war. On account of this, it is hard to distinguish precisely between the liberation struggle and the Communist revolution even today, because both occurred simultaneously. Although there were some definite differences in individual Slovene regions: civil war and revolution took place mainly in the Italian Ljubljana region, while in the northern regions occupied by Germans and Hungarians the so-called second phase of the revolution occurred, which during wartime had been set aside, even though it had showed signs of "ideological" struggle or Communist revolution.

On account of the post-war division of spheres of interest in Yalta in 1945, the former Yugoslavia, of which Slovenia was part, belonged to the Communist Bloc, and therefore the Communist system could develop to its fullest extent. After the break with Stalin (the Kominform) in 1948, the Communist terror increased and in many ways exceeded the violence in the Soviet Union. From the beginning of the 1950s the severe regime began to weaken because of the dependence of the Yugoslav political system upon American aid, although it remained totalitarian until it broke up in 1990. Thus we can already in the mid-1980s find individual cases of political trials, not to mention ideological platforms in the school and educational systems. Throughout, the system swung between so-called "liberalism" or détente and tension. The most important period of Communist liberalism was at the end of 1960s, after the fall of the Interior Minister, Aleksandar Ranković (1908-1983); but at the beginning of 1970s this was smothered due to fear that the system could be remodelled as multi-party pluralism. Thus began the "Leaden times", which lasted until the middle of the 1980s.

The Italian military attack on Yugoslavia meant the summit of many years of fascist imperialistic politics towards the Balkan countries and the Danube basin area. This was a violation of the Briand-Kellog Pact (27 August 1928), to which Italy was a signatory. In contravention of the provision on the international humanitarian law of war, which does not permit the annexation of territory by armed force, Italy expanded to the region of Ljubljana (Provincia di Lubiana). National and cultural autonomy was ensured approximately to 350,000 inhabitants of the region of Ljubljana by statute. The occupying authorities greatly strived for faster assimilation of the region with an Italian fascist system and for subordination of its institutions and organisations as appropriate Italian. On account of political, cultural and economic appeal of Italy, the home population should be gradually converted to Fascist and became enthusiastic about Italianism. The fascist occupiers at first believed that the Slovenes would be easily subjected under the impression of the more valuable Italian civilisation, so the Italian occupying policies at first were relatively mild. They wanted to gain the affection of the Slovene population, particularly social elites.

The Slovenes, in comparison with the Nazis, first saw the Italian occupying regime as a lesser evil, so some political forces cooperated with them, although they were not inclined toward Fascism: the majority of Slovenes trusted in the victory of the allied forces after the first doubt, and saw the future of the Slovene nation in an anti-fascist coalition.

The Italian occupying authority at first respected Slovene cultural and educational autonomy, and these institutions continued their work almost undisturbed. The long-term aim of the Italians was without doubt the Italianisation of the country, which they wanted at first to be gradual and less harsh than Germanisation. Everything began with a bilingual public administration, compulsory Italian in schools, and the establishment of the auxiliary fascist organisations. The Italian assumption of an "Italian occupation with cultural benefits", which would drive out inferior Slovene culture in the fascist corporatist society, met with resistance and soon ended in violence and the burning of houses. It reached its peak in the time of the so called Roshka offensive, against the territory occupied by the partisans, between June and November 1942. It became characteristic of the Italians to shoot hostages and deport people to Italian concentration camps (Rab, Gonars, Visco, Renici etc.); in Rab alone more than 1,000 Slovenes died in desperate circumstances, among them many women and children. The plans for mass deportations from the region of Ljubljana were formulated.

During the occupation the Italians judged more than 13,000 people and at least 3,500 were sentenced to many years' imprisonment; dozens of people were sentenced to capital punishment, and 145 hostages were shot. The Fascist violence against Slovenes lasted until the capitulation of Italy on 8 September 1943, when the territory of Ljubljana and Venezia Giulia were occupied by the Germans and the Operative Zone of the Adriatic Sea was established (Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland).

In opposition to democratic systems, which are based on the legal equality of all citizens, National Socialism was based upon inequality. Its foundation was subordination. The Third Reich was established on racially organised and legitimised society, where the

"perfect" Germans should be united in the people's community and where legislative implementation against "inferior" nations would be justified. Therefore, the foundation of National Socialism was racism. The laws which regulating this were the so-called "Nuremberg Laws", which deprived Jews and Roma/Sinti of German citizenship. During the war they were exterminated in massive numbers. Other nations, particularly the Slavs, were also considered inferior people. After the occupation in April 1941, these laws also affected the Slovenes of Lower Styria, Gorenjska and the Yugoslav part of Carinthia (Mežiška dolina), and members of the Slovene minority in Austria after the Anschluss i.e. from March 1938. When Germany attacked Yugoslavia, all the ideological and practical arrangements for the execution of further policies in the regions occupied by Germany were in place.

In 1941 the Slovene region was occupied and divided by three forces: German, Italian and Hungarian. The largest part was occupied by the Germans: Styria, Gorenjska, and the 90 km by 10 to 15 km zone south from the River Sava in Dolenjska and four communities in the northwest of Prekmurje. For these regions Hitler chose the same occupying system as he had introduced in Alsatia, Lotaringia and Luxembourg. This means that he nominated gauleiters and national deputies of neighbouring region as heads of the civil administration.

Nazi Germany began the most radical ethnic cleansing and took on the task of making a large part of Slovenia German. Hitler's plans included the deportation of the Slovenes and colonisation by the Germans of Kočevje and other regions which had stayed outside the region of German conquest after the occupation.

In the first two years of occupation, the civil administration had before it Hitler's order that the occupied region had to be Germanised and brought into the Reich. All efforts were subordinated to this aim, which the Nazis emphasised incessantly. Among the most fundamental measures for attaining this goal were the exiling of politically and racially unsuitable people, the strengthening of German nationality and the Germanisation of racially and politically suitable Slovenes who would be allowed remain. For this purpose the Styrian Patriotic Union (Steirischer Heimatbund) was established in Styria, and in Gorenjska the Carinthian People's Union (Kärtner Volksbund) which all Slovenes suitable for Germanisation had to join. For young people there were special "sections" in these organisations.

During the first days of occupation the Nazis began to change the external appearance of the country. They removed the Slovene names of places, streets, factories and companies, replacing them with German. They also changed proper names and surnames. Posters were hung everywhere exhorting the population to learn German. Mayors in individual communities strove for the total Germanisation of local names.

In the occupied territory of Lower Styria, the Nazis proceeded with Germanisation and emigration on a wider scale and with more determination than in Gorenjska. Parallel with the first Germanisation, they executed, arrested and exiled many nationally conscious Slovenes who were politically opposed to Nazism. The first arrests were in Maribor on April 11, 1942. Those arrested found themselves in jails and assembly and transit camps. Among them were people who took an active part in Yugoslav parties before the war, the Slovene intelligentsia, priests, professors, teachers, lawyers and doctors.

Primarily the Germans intended to deport about 220,000 to 260,000 Slovenes from May to October in 1941. Together with those 17,000 people who avoided emigration by escaping to Italian territory, they exiled some 80,000, among them, 90.83 percent of Slovene priests, 84.21 percent percent engineers, 66.18 percent of professors, 45.20 percent of doctors and pharmacists, 22.32 percent of lawyers and notaries, 14.98 percent of officials, 17.5 percent of teachers, and 6.02 percent of workers in economy.

In the assembly camps the people were examined by special commissions and give a final assesment. Those marked 'E – Fälle' (Evakuierungsfälle) were intended for deportation to Serbia or the Independent State of Croatia (NDH). All together, the Germans deported 36,000 Slovenes to Germany in 62 transports. Most of them were forced to work in German industry. By the end of 1941 the Nazis had confiscated 1,011 buildings (houses, shops, inns) and building plots. By the end of 1943 this number had increased to 2,064 (this does not include the properties of Slovenes from the areas around the Sava and Sotla rivers where almost every estate was seized). The migration of pure Germans, 'Volksdeutsche', as they were named, from the region of Kočevje – as foreseen in the treaty between Germany and Italy on 31 August 1941 – lasted from 14 November 1941 to 20 January 1942. Some moved into triangle of Brežice, where homes were abandoned and others into territory of the German Reich. 11,174 people migrated to the Lower Styria.

The work of the Offices of Deputies of the National Commissioner for Strengthening German Nationality was tightly connected with the deportations of Slovenes. At first, their duty was the administration of the sizeable possessions of deported Slovenes and Germans. During the process of Germanisation, the German occupying authorities dedicated special attention to children in kindergarten and schools. They established German-only kindergartens, and lessons in schools were in German only.

The German occupying authorities also undertook other Germanisation measures, including the mass destructions of books, the abolition of Slovene associations and the confiscation of their estates. The occupier sought to destroy Slovene nationality with these measures. In the spring and summer of 1941 the Nazis marked politically and racially almost the whole population in the occupied region of Slovenia. Nowhere in the occupied territories was the examination as thorough as here. With the political evaluation they tried to eliminate all “persons hostile to Germans”, and with the racial evaluation they wanted to prevent the inclusion in “the German people’s community” of “racial unsuitable elements”. Political grades were awarded from 10 to 5, and racial from I to IV (the best were I, 1). They evaluated each person separately and then gave political and racial grades for the whole family. On the basis of these two evaluations they assigned final grade: ‘E’ (evacuee-deported in NDH or Serbia), ‘V’ (verbleibt-stay home), ‘A’ (Altreich-deported to Germany).

The majority of the population were graded racially as III and politically as 3, which ensured the deportation of more than half of the Gorenjska population. Since this kind of mass deportation was hard to execute, the criteria were slightly changed. They introduced the new grades of III+ and III-, whereupon only the families graded III- were assigned for deportation.

In the German military and paramilitary formations and in German labour service 150,000 men and women in Styria, Gorenjska and Carinthia were mobilised. And in 1942, 28,000 were mobilised from Lower Styria, and from Gorenjska, between 8,000 and 10,000 men. Many of them were sent to the eastern front. More than 10,000 people lost their lives. Many Slovenes deserted and joined illegal units – partisans and others.

Because of the occupiers desire to destroy the Slovene nation and efforts to annex Slovene territory to the German Reich, Slovenes resisted. There followed mass arrests of those whom the Nazis believed were collaborators of the resistance movement. They called them Communist criminals, although they were merely collaborators with the Liberation Front or even members of Catholic resistance groups. Those arrested were interrogated and horribly tortured in prison and then shot as hostages or sent to concentration camps. They released only those whose guilt could not be proven. 1,590 people were killed, 1,508 men and 82 women. The number of those shot is even greater, because the Nazis did not always release the names of those shot.

The Nazis were not satisfied with killing hostages, because according to theirs beliefs, the families of hostages who were shot and partisans also had to suffer. In March 1942 they began arresting the relatives of these people. Since the National Liberation movement had become stronger and was growing more powerful, Himmler gave the order to eliminate the men and move the women to concentration camps, and to separate children from their parents and send them to special children camps. The Nazis deported the majority of Slovenes to the following camps: Dachau, Auschwitz, Ravensbrück, Mauthausen, with branches (for example, Ljubelj, where they built a tunnel), Buchenwald and Flossenbürg. Many died in the camps – some 1,772 in Auschwitz, 1,340 in Dachau and 971 in Mauthausen. In the summer, 1941, 597 exhausted and mentally deficient persons from the Lower Styria were “euthanasied” by the Nazists in Austrian Hartheim. Between 1941 and 1945 the German occupatiers deported some 63,000 Slovenes from the occupied territories (Styria, Gorenjska and the Mežiška Valley), the majority of 45,000 to German banished camps, 10,000 to Croatia, 7,500 to Serbia, while some 17,000 escaped from to the region of Ljubljana and elsewhere. We must not forget the 15,000 the Nazis sent to concentration and other camps (Dachau, Auschwitz, Mathausen, Buchenwald). More than 3,400 were shot as hostages.

In Gorenjska and Styria the Nazis consistently Germanised all local names. They mostly took over names from the time of Austrian imperium, but in places they introduced partially or completely new names. And then just as later under communism, they often tried to leave out the word “Saint” or even the Saint’s name from places named after Saints. In May 1944, (after the occupation of Prekmurje, which was part of the Hungarian sphere from 1941) at Auschwitz, the majority of the Jewish community (about 550 people) from the Slovene region were murdered in the gas chambers.The goal of Nazi politics in occupied Slovene territory was obvious: the ultimate elimination of the Slovene language from the territory and the disappearance of Slovenes as an independent ethnic group.

III. THE PERIOD OF THE TAKE-OVER BY THE CommunistS DURING THE OCCUPATION (1941-45)

Communism in Yugoslavia, particularly in Slovenia, in contrast to Communism in others eastern countries, came to power, without the intervention of the Soviet Army. This meant some kind of uniqueness in European space, so it is important to detail the very beginning of the Communists' usurpation of authority within the framework of their organising resistance.

The Communists took the initiative in organising the resistance, at the end of April 1941 establishing the Antiimperialist Front, renamed the Liberation Front after the attack on the Soviet Union. Actually, they continued the tradition of the pre-war people's front movement and Friends of the Soviet Union Association. In the Liberation Front there were also Christian Socialists, part of the Sokol (Falcon) pan-national gymnastic movement, groups of persons connected with culture and some other groups. The consequence was the establishment of partisan units and many acts of passive resistance. After the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Slovenes were called to armed revolt. Because of the deep anti-occupation mood, the call met with a satisfying response. At the end of 1941, the Liberation front formed a programme based on immediate armed revolt as a necessity of existence and condition for national rebirth and irrecognition of a dispensed Yugoslavia.

In the Italian occupied region a "liberated territory" was established in spring 1942, which extended to the suburbs of Ljubljana. As early as August 1941 the Security Intelligence Service (VOS) was established, which was directly subordinate to the Communist Party and rather arbitrarily executed collaborators, supposed collaborators and enemies of the Liberation Front and Communism.

Revolutionary violence in the liberated territory against peasants and fear of revolutionary victory led to the spontaneous formation of village guards and collaboration with the Italian occupatiers. All supported the establishment of Anti-Communist Units ('Milizia Volontaria Anticomunista'). The War of Liberation, therefore, was interwoven with civil conflict, which fatally divided the Slovene nation. In spring 1942, representatives of pre-war parties united in a Slovene alliance. The common basis of these united parties with differing political principles was counter-revolution. At the end of 1941, a programme was published - the London Points - which advocated a united Slovenia as a part of federal Yugoslavia, with the king as head, and a democratic, socially more just political system than previous. In relations with the occupiers they continued the politics of waiting for the right moment for resistance. Because of their desires to thwart development of the revolution, they decided on military/police collaboration with the Italians and later also the Germans.

The beginnings of the Liberation Front (OF) are not accurately documented, in complete contrast to the tradition of the Communists. First, on April 26, the 'Anti-imperialistic Front' (PIF) was founded, which in June 1941, following the German attack on the Soviet Union, was renamed the 'Liberation Front'. It was clear from the very beginning that the struggle for total control were more important to the Communists than any struggle against the occupation. In October 1940, in Zagreb, Kardelj announced that, "...the Communists start armed engagements with the occupier only if they see a chance for revolution." It was decided in advance that they would fight against every group which planned resistance against the occupation. All the anti-Communists would be destroyed later or (with pretended collaboration) compromised. The Communist Party as initiator of this formation had the leading role and was by no means willing to give up this role or share it. The members of the PIF and the Liberation front (OF) never discussed equality of rights among collaborating groups or the appropriate division of tasks.

Therefore, on September 16, 1941, the Slovene National Liberation Committee (SNOO), announced the prevention of operations of all organisations and resistance groups outside the OF. This day marks the formal beginning of the civil war and decades of concealed Communist guilt.

The provisions of September 16, 1941, were, at the second session of the Slovene National Liberation Committee on November 1, 1941, supplemented with another seven articles – on December 21, they finally added articles 8 and 9. These nine articles stood as the "nine Basic Articles" of the OF. They represented its programme, which was valid until the first Congress of the OF on July 1945 in Ljubljana. But the records of the VOS show that the mentioned decrees were not so important - they were a kind of alibi to prove that they were acting legally. The prior Communists task was not the elimination

of national traitors, but to lead people from the anti-Communist side who represented a danger to their goals and to "social revolution". The guilt of individuals did not play any part, but only if someone stood in the way of the goals set by the KP. Most important were people's beliefs that the liquidated person was guilty, because otherwise the danger that people would oppose the National Liberation movement could appear.

At first the Supreme plenum proclaimed itself the Slovenian national Liberation Committee with a decree. The decree included three articles, of which the second was the most important, because it justified the monopoly and supreme authority of the OF. Immediately there arises the question as to who the OF were, and its constitutive groups of power, that it could speak and act in the name of the nation? During the war, it was impossible to hold an election or referendum. The legal pre-war parties or their elected representatives, the only ones with the right to appeal to the population, were not represented in the Liberation Front. In the plenum of the OF, besides the Party, there were "only splinter groups of former political parties and not the conservative Catholic side, which without doubt represented an important part of the nation," wrote France Bučar. The OF represented only a certain opinion in Ljubljana and its surroundings. The opinion of the rural regions was not reflected at all, particularly of those who were under German and Hungarian occupation. Therefore, the OF did not represent the majority of the peoples' opinion, although the majority was hostile to the occupation. The KP, which dictated the intention of the OF, acted illegally before the war. At the beginning of the war the KPS had about 1280 members and, according to others, nearly 1,000. Therefore the KPS was objectively too weak to impose itself or even appealed to the minds of the population. The KP was aware of this, which is why, at the beginning, on the basis of the enlarged OF, it hid under the very popular idea of liberation and watched carefully to put "the company" of the OF forward as a front organisation. People were enthusiastic about the idea of a meeting place of resistance. The majority of Slovenes were hostile to the occupators or just rejected them. And now, there suddenly appeared an organisation about which they knew little, but which promised to mobilise all "to the liberty-devoted Slovene combat teams, irrespective of which political and world point of view they had". The inclination of the OF does not automatically mean the inclination of the KP. People at first did not even recognise the dominant position of the KP in the organisation. Therefore, the OF became a symbol of the struggle for liberation. The establishment of an organisation such as the OF was deemed legal, in contrast to the denial of the same right to other political parties and social groups. Anyone who did not agree upon the principles of the OF, which was led by the Communists, were denied the right to resist the occupation outside the OF. Non-Communist groups within the OF, which was named as the "allies" in the sense of a Russian civil war by the party; in truth had an absolutely subordinated role. The Party - in Lenin's sense – used them as a tool. At the beginning, the Communists would not be successful without "the allies", because they offered a more extended platform to the Party. And when the Communists had the whole situation under control, "the allies" were not needed any more, so they were forced to sign the Dolomiti Declaration, with which they finally capitulated.

With this decree the leaders of the OF hardly obstructed the resistance of traditional parties. Obviously, they did not strive to resist the occupation as such, but to set up the basis for a Communist revolution. As early as at the end of August 1941, the organising secretary, Tone Tomšič, clearly said: "Those are mistaken who thought that the great Liberation Front of the Slovene nation is possible without the strong organisation of the Slovene KP."

All activities, and therefore also resistance were "self-interested" and directed to national liberation if they did not act in the framework of the OF, under Communist leadership and the partisan military. Besides the death penalty, other punishments were determined - confiscation of all property, destruction of property, "national boycott" (exclusion from society). "The protective decree" envisaged special secret courts, but it did not mention how they should be constructed, who should be named to them, and how they were to act. According to its judgment, this was a "typical form of revolutionary judiciary, which demands constant watchfulness from the responsible holders of political authority, the integrity of members of the court and the ability to properly evaluate information about criminal offences." Therefore this statement already indicated the true character of these sentences. Victims were selected by the leadership of the Party and not the executive committee of the OF. It only gave orders for the circle of people from whom the Security Intelligence Service (VOS) as an executor of the Party selected the appropriate casualties. According to the published cases the accusations were very general and did not bother to cite concrete evidence. They were dictated by the needs of revolution. They did not consider the principles of the rule of law or humanitarian acts. The purpose of these "liquidations" was not a punishment for some concrete act, but the discouragement and intimidation of others. Only after the decision of the executive

committee of the OF on July 31, 1942 in "liberated regions" – regions which the Italians had deserted and were then invaded by Partisans – was a "special judicial commission" established. It was to make judgements according to "the protective decree", but because of the hard fighting it could not act properly. Later, after 1943, some criminal acts under "the protective decree" were left to military courts. But these 'revolutionary courts' were also based on the reports of the VOS. In autumn 1943 their representatives accepted the reports of the VOS about the alleged guilt of 'the accused' as a valid proof of guilt without further deliberation.

The VOS acted until February 19, 1944, when at the first session of SNOS (Slovene National Liberation Council) in Črnomelj it was dissolved. The successor of VOS became Department for National Protection ('OZNA'). Although the VOS had the title OF (VOS OF), which should emphasise party responsibility for the OF and documented that it served the whole National Liberation struggle (NOB), it was actually an exclusive body of the Party. The Liberation Front did not subsequently identify the VOS. Members of the VOS were exclusive members and candidates of the KP and the Communist Youth Organisation, SKOJ. The VOS answered directly and exclusively to the Central Committee of KPS and served the Party exclusively. They carefully were hiding certain information from "the allies", and later wrote special censored reports for them.

The VOS was divided into three departments: the Mass Intelligence Service, Special Intelligence Service, and Security Service. The latter was some kind of executive body of the Intelligence Service. The units were organised on military lines and actions executed (sabotage actions and "liquidations") according to precisely defined plans. The units were manned by activists, supposedly brave and calm, but not reckless, ruthless, suitable and ready for total individual armed actions. The Security Service in Ljubljana executed house searches of obvious enemies of the Communist partisan movement, stole their documents and records, destroyed printing offices, robbed weapons, equipment and money and, particularly, liquidated groups of people.

By the end of the year 1941 one hundred people had lost their lives. They were shot because of alleged denunciation and betrayal. They violently forced people to join the Partisans not only in Ljubljana, but also in the country. The causes of growing violence, which greatly increased in this period, lay in the conviction of the Communist Party that the war would be decided in 1942. During the war four thousand civilians were killed by the Partisans. These were people, who represented ideological enemies for the Party. In Ljubljana in 1942, the VOS killed among many others the president of the Association of Industrialists, August Praprotnik, academicians Franc Župec and Jaroslav Kikeljan and Professor Lambert Ehrlich. The last great actions in Ljubljana were the liquidations of the Ljubljana Police officer Kazimir Kukovič on October 8, 1942, and former ban (political leader) Marko Natlačen on October 13. They did not liquidate only opponents of OF in other organisations, but also allies. They obviously tried to prepare the ground for a later Communist take over.

IV. Communist RULE ESTABLISHED IN SLOVENIA

We must differentiate between two phases in the worst Communist repression after the war. First, we must remember the bloody battle with the Home Guard and other members of armed anti-Communist and partly collaborationist units, the elimination of some most exposed anti-Communists and bigger entrepreneurs (for example, culturist Narte Velikonja, industrialist Josip Benko) and the fight with the German minority on Slovene territory. Therefore, in autumn 1945 there were more than 3,500 Germans from Lower Styria and Prekmurje in prison or camps; 7,400–9,000 'Volksdeutsche' and Slovenes who acted for the Germans in the war, but were deported between 1945-46 by the Slovene and Yugoslav authorities. Then follows the period from August 1945 until the middle of the 1950s, when terror weakened.

At the end of war, in May 1945, the Home Guard ('domobranci'), at that time officially part of the Slovene Army, together with many civilians (about 6,000) withdrew to (Austrian) Carinthia. They entered the occupied territory of British 5th Corps of the 8th army, which occupied Carinthia. The retreat of the Slovene Home Guard took place between May 8–13, 1945. The British settled them in Vetrinjsko polje (Viktring) near Klagenfurt in military and separate civilian camps. It is interesting that the British did not return the anti-Communist units (Chetniks, Home Guard members from Primorska), who retreated into Friuli back to Yugoslavia.

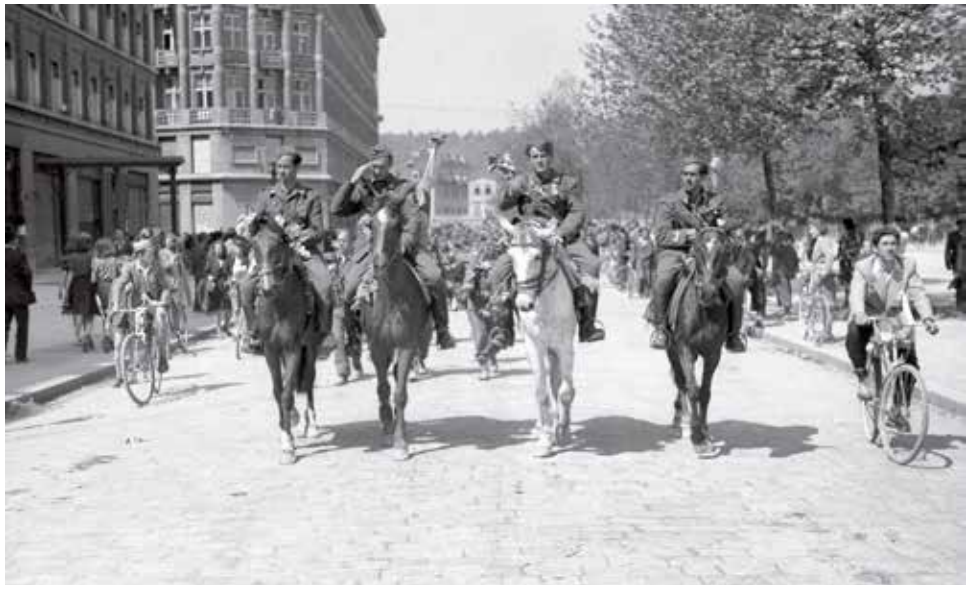
Prisoners of war in the Šentvid war camp, Summer 1945.
(picture is from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)

Miners in Trbovlje mine, 1959. A year before there was a first strike in socialist Yugoslavia.
(picture is from: Zasavski muzej Trbovlje)

Prisoners of war, killed by the partisans in May 1945, excavated near Lesce in 2006.
(Photo: Pavel Jamnik)

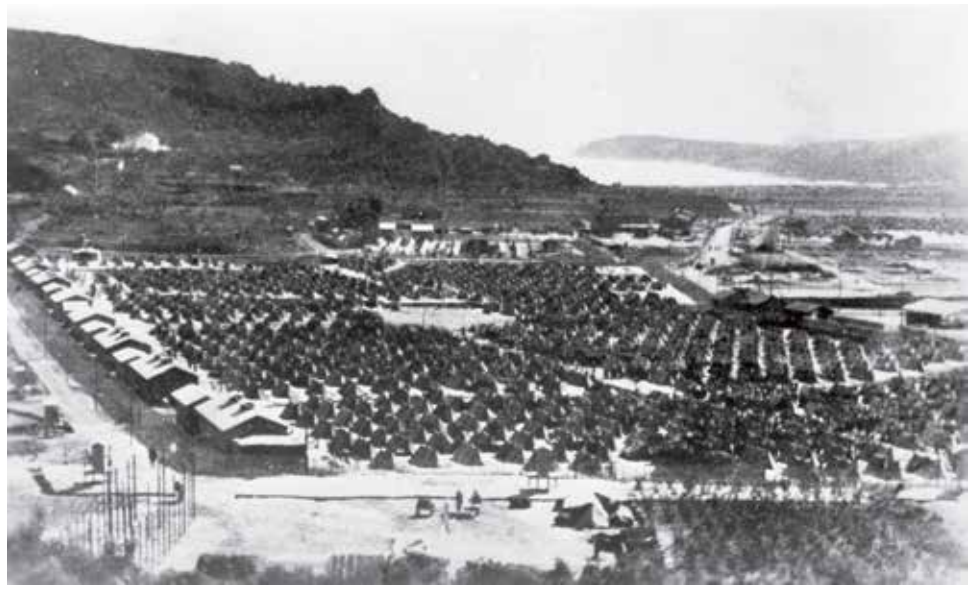
The Slovene National Center in Trieste was burnt down by the Fascists, on July 13, 1920.
(Photo from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)

Hostage shooting near Smlednik, August 22, 1941.
(Photo from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)



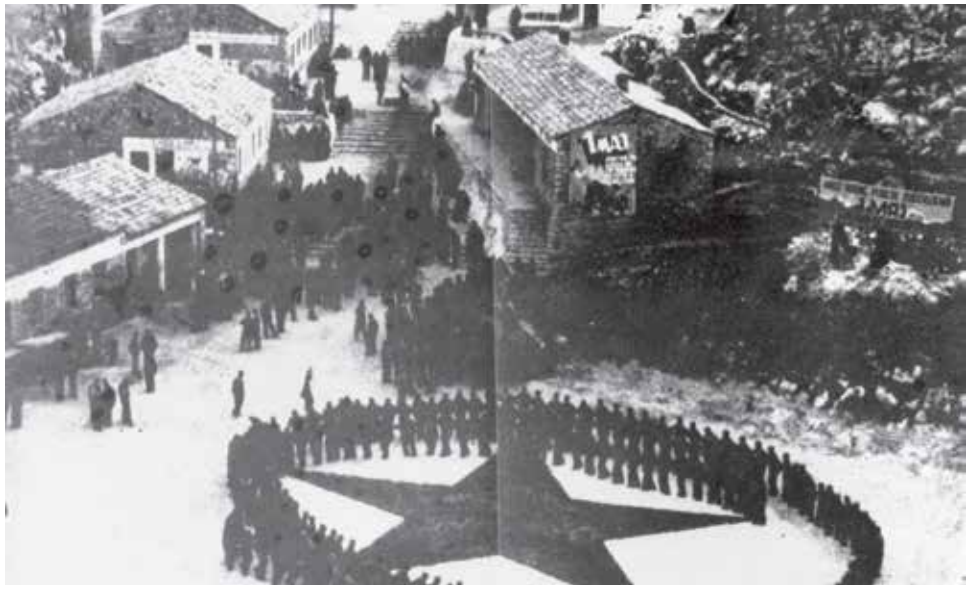
Entering of partisan troops in Ljubljana, May 9, 1945.
(Photo from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)

Pro-Yugoslav demonstrations in Triest, June 1945.
(Photo from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)



Italian concentration camp on the island of Rab.
(Photo from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)

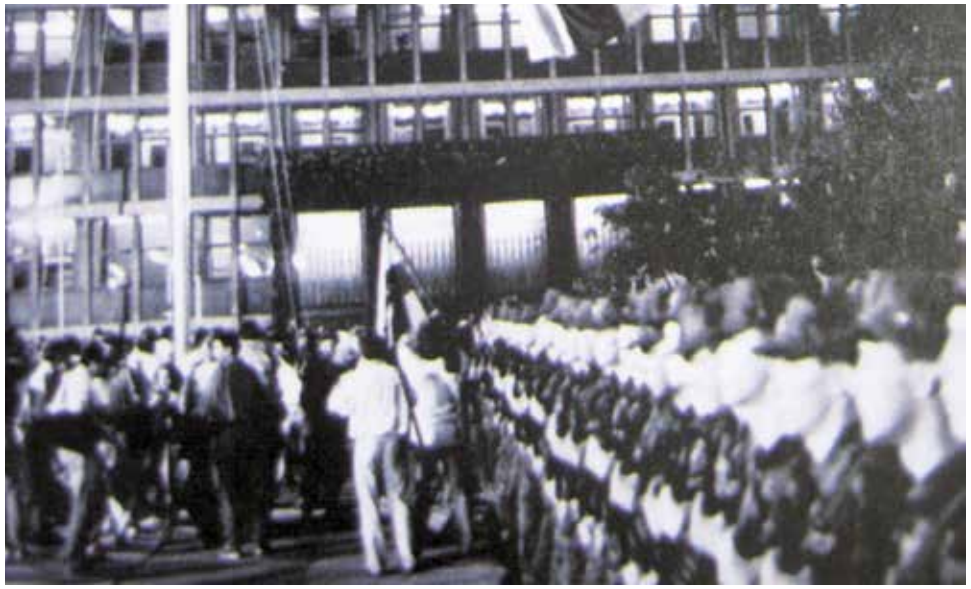
The deportation of Strehar's family from Koren near Krašnja, July 8, 1942.
(Photo from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)



Labour camp Goli otok in the Adriatic, were political prisoners were kept, around 1950.
(Photo from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)

Captured partisans in Celje 1942.
(Photo from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)

Fake political trials, so called Dachau trials, against pre-war Communists or activists in the OF. (Photo from: Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije)



Celebration of Slovenia's independence. Ljubljana, June 26, 1991.

Yugoslav soldiers near Trzin during the 10 days war in Slovenia.

Slovenian Territorial Defence member during 10 days war in Slovenia.

Demonstrations for political freedom, Ljubljana 1989.

The British authorities began to return different anti-Communists (Home Guard members, Chetniks, Ustaši, Croatian Home Guard) to Yugoslavia on May 24: 11,000 Slovene soldiers (mostly Home Guard members) and about 600 civilians were returned. Some historians mention higher numbers, about 13,000. The British mostly assured them they would only transfer them to the camps in Italy. Although the Slovene anti-Communist military and political leadership soon found that the returned Home Guard members had been transferred to Yugoslavia, they did not act effectively. They were probably guided by almost blind trust in the British political and military authorities, which grew during the war. They could not imagine that they could be extradited to the Yugoslav Communist and non-democratic authorities by a country with a rich democratic tradition and gentlemanly behaviour.

On their return to Yugoslavia the Home Guard were divided into three groups: A (juveniles), B (mobilised from 1945) and C (the rest). All from group C and the majority from group B were soon killed. Only in the camp at Teharje did they imprison 400 juveniles, who were released after August 1945, although many never returned home. They were killed on their way home by various groups and militias.

Immediately after the return of the Home Guard ('domobranci') mass slaughter began, carried out by the Yugoslav OZNA with the help of KNOJ. The order to slaughter the returned without doubt came from the highest authority in the Party. Prisoners were led to mass killing fields and usually shot in the neck and then thrown into karst caves, natural abysses, mines, and tank ditches. So far, more than five hundred post-war graveyards have been discovered in the Slovene regions. The majority of Home Guard members are buried in Kočevski rog, in deserted mine pits in Zasavje region (Trbovlje, Hrastnik), in anti-tank ditches near Celje or in abysses near Ljubljana. Most liquidations were executed in June 1945.

Up until now we do not know the precise number of Home Guard members liquidated at the end of the war by the Partisans. The then Communist authorities drew up a list, but this "miraculously" vanished in the mid-1980s. According to the numbers gathered during political emigrations, the number of victims is about 11,720. We must take into consideration also those who stayed home and did not retreat to Carinthia; therefore, the new Yugoslav authorities imprisoned or captured them later. Thus today the generally accepted number of Home Guard members and civilians killed is almost 14,000. Therefore, according to its bolshevik revolutionary justice, in 1945 the Communist powers committed judicial slaughter outside the courts on Slovene territory, about which it was forbidden to talk.

In 1945, Slovenia was gripped by a wave of confiscations, which followed the mass persecution of real and imagined speculators. In the summer of 1945 a special court known as the "Court for Slovene National Honour" was established. They carried out agrarian reform and divided the confiscated estates of landowners and the Catholic Church among small peasants and country people. By this means they got the poorer peasants on their side, but these small rural producers could not replace the fall in production which resulted from the destruction and nationalisation of large land establishments.

The next act with which the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) strengthened itself and apparently legitimised its authority was the election to the constituent assembly on November 11, 1945, which was actually a vote on the future social regime. The first elections in the second Yugoslavia were marked by election fraud and mass removals of voting rights. Although after World War II women received voting rights, the only candidates available were those checked by the Party and the secret political police. The Communists used elections as a confirmation of their domination. In reality, people voted without having a genuine voting right. The arrangements for voting were carried out in the shadow of pressures among differently thinking people and upon all who were not in the pro-Communist "People's Front", and continued under the supervision of its political police – OZNA. A high number of people who would have voted against the new authority in the elections were crossed off the electoral register. Therefore the results of the elections were known in advance, of course, in favour of the Communist Party. The authorities wanted an election that appeared democratic, but in the end they got some kind of referendum to decide on support for the ruling regime. A poll for the nominated group list was placed in polling stations, because they wanted to leave a better impression. This was intended for those who did not want to vote for the People's Front. The poll was known as the "black poll". The first free post-war elections in Slovenia were hold only in April 1990.

In June 1945 group trials began against actual and imaginary opponents of the Communist system, particularly against representatives of cooperatives, banks and the economy. The authorities carried out numerous trials to compromise representatives of political opposition and the Catholic Church. Following the Soviet example, in the summer

of 1947 the Slovene Party staged a great Stalinist political trial, the so-called Nagode trial (named after the first accused, Črtomir Nagode) in which fifteen people were accused of treason and spying for Anglo-Americans. In May 1947, the Slovene secret police, the UDBA, arrested 32 higly educated intellectuals. They were questionned and tortured for two months in Ljubljana prisons. The political bureau of the Central Committee of the KPS marked the arrested in public as "a handful of spies, class enemies, mercenaries from foreign countries, who had no political tenor and whose works are without any political basis to harm the people's authority". On July 29, the trial against the twenty-nine accused began, broadcast via special loudspeakers to the citizens on the streets of Ljubljana. After thirteen days of trial, on August 12, three of accused were sentenced to death by firing-squad, among them Črtomir Nagode, while the others received long prison sentences with forced labour and the removal of all citizen's rights. Two of the accused commited suicide. In 1991, the Supreme Court of RS overturned the judgment against Nagode and fourteen co-defendants. It was ascertained that the case was based upon false accusations and that this was an unfair trial against imaginary western spies.

From April 1948 to October 1949 the so-called Dachau trials were held (9 trials), before a military court or Disctrict Court against former internees at Buchenwald and Dachau. They were accused of collaborating with the Gestapo. After the war, they continued their spying and treacherous activities and carried out sabotage. All the accused were pre-war Communists, activists in the OF or Partisans, some of them even Spanish fighters. Others had senior positions, particularly economic. Fifteen were sentenced to death (eleven were executed), three died in remand prison, and twenty were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The Slovene political elite converted the trial against the accused into a real media spectacle. The trial was transmitted via loudspeaker and radio and fully published in newspapers. Now the Slovene Communists got ahead of the leaders of other Yugoslavian Republics, because nowhere else were there similar judicial performances. In Belgrade the initiators were even warned off.

At first, mass political trials took place, and later, political trials and sentences became rare. Throughout the whole totalitarian period political trials involved some 25,000 people, about 2 percent of the Slovene pre-war population. The number of political prisoners between 1948 and 1988 numbered about 6,500 according to official statistics of the former Communist authorities, which means approximately a quarter of the people judged in court. Their actual number was even higher.

Jože Pučnik *(1932-2003) was expelled from the classical gymnasium in Maribor because of his cooperation in the student newspaper Iskanja. He only graduated high-school after serving his military duty in 1953. In 1958, he graduated from the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. Because of his critiques of the politics in Revija 57 he was arrested in 1958 and sentenced to nine years in prison. He was released on parole in 1963. He kept criticising the regime in the magazine Perspektive. In 1964 he was imprisoned again. In 1966, he emigrated to Germany. Because the Slovenian secret political police did not return his degree he had to study again. He attained his PhD in 1971 and was a successful academic researcher and pedagogue. From 1989 he was a key figure in the democratisation and the process of gaining independence of Slovenia.*

Angela Vode *(1892-1985) was an active intellectual, a teacher of disabled children, a womans' rights activist and one of the first Communists. In 1939, she was thrown out from the Communist Party for opposing the pact between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. She cooperated in the resistance against the occupators during the Second World War. In July 1947 she was sentenced to twenty years of hard labour at a Stalinist trial (the so–called 'Nagode process' trials). She was released on May 1, 1953, and was exiled from public life until her death. She wrote her memoirs which were published in 2004 by Alenka Puhar, causing quite a stir in the Slovenian public. Let her memories speak of the lawlessness of Tito's Yugoslavia.*

Viktor Urbas *was a farmer, innkeeper and a sawyer. During the Second World War he supported the partisan movement. After the Second World War, he disagreed with the persecution of the Church and collectivisation of agriculture. On the night between the September 2 and 3, 1946, he was wounded by a shot through the door and then killed by the secret political police members. The body was taken away and his grave remains unknown. The family was robbed, marked and persecuted for several decades after that.*

Among the post-war trials before the Civil Court, trials against bigger farmers or kulaki, known as the 'kulak trials', deserve special attention. They were also political in nature. They took place particularly between 1949-1951, when the campaign for collectivisation and so-called "socialisation" was at its peak in Slovenia. This was during the establishment of agricultural cooperatives (KOZ), which was the Slovene variant of the Soviet 'kolkhoz'. The adoption of the mentioned resolution and execution of collectivisation in Slovenia and Yugoslavia were actually the consequences of the Yugoslav national and Party leadership upon reproaches from the Informbureau that Yugoslavia does not build Socialism, but just strengthened Yugoslav village capitalist elements. To counter such reproaches and prove its orthodoxy, the leadership of the KPJ decided to finally liquidate the private agricultural sectors, which they wanted to attain with collectivisation. Its implementation was to be voluntary; however, besides strong propaganda urging membership of the cooperatives, the authorities also carried out various types of oppression. The worst was directed at the biggest farmers, who were considered as kulaki, according to the Soviet model, and were accused as main guilty for the failures of collectivisation as the government had envisaged. Many received severe sentences in fake trials, and often confiscation of property was one of them.

The trials of peasants and consequently the confiscation of their property were also held because of their failure to surrender products. During the period 1945-1952, when a system of rationing was introduced in Yugoslavia, the authorities specified how much produce, meat, fat, etc. was to be surrendered. Many peasants could not deliver the required quotas and in some cases following the compulsory requisitioning of produce, some peasants were left with nothing, not even for sowing. So peasants hid their produce and slaughtered animals illegally. Such peasants were accused of being saboteurs and speculators, under the laws of unlawful killing, speculation and economic sabotage. They came before the courts. Otherwise, the Civil Court handed down sentences of confiscation less frequently than the military courty, the Slovene Court for National Honour and confiscation commissions. Only in 1947 did the Civil Court hand down sentences of 290 confiscations of property.

The Communists changed the economic characteristics of property with drastic reforms, which meant the restriction of private property to a minimum. All these ended in 1953, when the authorities realised that these experiments had not succeeded. Then the land maximum was defined (ten hectares of land, with some exceptions up to thirty hectares), which prevented remunerative production from farming.

By the end of 1945, the Communist authority had confiscated all important companies. This was done under the false accusation of "collaboration with the occupier", often meaning that some companies even operated during the war. These were mainly German properties or the properties of persons of German nationality. The authorities chose a strategy of gradually suffocating the private sector to dispossess owners of the remaining private property. According to the principle of from large to small, the appropriation process of private properties was based on ideological and partly economic reflection in all three phases of nationalisation (1946-1948, 1948-1950, 1958-1963): from banks, insurance companies, industrial and building companies, hotels, cinemas, building plots, houses, and apartments.

The fighting fist of the Bolshevik revolution was the Administration of National Security (UDBA), the secret political police (1944 the Department for National Protection – OZNA, from 1946 onwards, the Administration of National Security – UDBA, and from 1969 onwards, the Service of National Security - SDV). It led a civil war by using all available means to attack political opponents as the enemies of the people at home and abroad. All-powerful and omnipresent, it restricted the freedom of thought and completely established a totalitarian regime. In 1946 there was one member of UDBA per 1,200 inhabitants of Slovenia (including the active informers, there was one member of UDBA per 282 inhabitants). Hundreds of thousands of people were affected by the constant spying and denunciations, creating an atmosphere of general distrust.

The success of OZNA was commended even by Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) who, in 1948, found that the essential elements for building socialism had been established. Among these elements were total command of the position and action of national security, the militia and UDBA. In 1948, for example, the latter arrested 6,985 people and a year later, 8,762. Meanwhile, in 1947, 57,184 letters arriving in Slovenia were examined and in 1950, 98,000. They succeeded in planting their informants almost everywhere, even in the church organisation. The secret political police of the Slovene Party spread into a well-structured expansive organism, whose tentacles extended into Trieste, Italy and Austria. In these countries UDBA organised legal commercial companies as fronts for collecting information, under the formal ownership of their informants; at the same time this also generated income. UDBA even organised illegal commerce.

The secret and violent actions of OZNA and UDBA also enabled the regime to terrorise the public. The regime tried to create the appearance of the rule of law by issuing many different, even revolutionary laws and legal decrees, which actually confirmed that the rule of law was not possible. The judiciary was also subordinated to political authority, because the courts became a "body for the class struggle of workers against their class enemies".

After the war there were numerous concentration camps (Teharje, Strnišče near Ptuj, Brestrnica, Hrastovec) and labour camps (Ljubljana, Medvode, Kočevje), and women's labour camps in Rajhenburg and Ferdreng near Kočevje. Many convicts from Slovenia were also sent to Goli otok Island in the Croatian Adriatic.

Up to the end of the 1950s, there were strict controls on the frontiers of Slovenia or Yugoslavia, just as on the other frontiers between the Eastern and Western Bloc. After 1960, this regime weakened and the numbers of escapes over the border decreased, as foreign travel and economic migration were permitted. Before that, there were mass illegal escapes. From Slovenia between 1945 and the end of 1959, 34,256 people escaped, and 26,710 persons were caught when attempting to escape.

The Catholic Church in Slovenia represented the biggest "thorn in the flesh" of the Communist regime, because it was the only one which stayed organised outside the Party and had widespread support from the religious population. Therefore, on the one hand the Communists wanted to slander the Church in public, and on the other hand, destroy its economic basis. Only in Slovenia did priests need authority consents if during war they were not in theirs posts, even those who were deported or sent to concentration camps by the occupiers. Some 630 priests, monks, nuns and seminarists were imprisoned or in concentration camps. Many fake trials were held against Church representatives. Up to 1961, 429 trials took place (of about 1,000 priests); 329 were sentenced to imprisonment and nine to death – four death penalties were executed. The most important trial against the Church in Slovenia took place in 1946, before a military court in Ljubljana against the Bishop of Ljubljana, Gregorij Rožman (1883-1959), who in 1945 moved abroad. He was sentenced together with a very heterogeneous group who had nothing in common. Among them was SS General Erwin Rösener. The shadow of his guilt fell upon the less guilty or innocent.

At the same time, at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, the Yugoslav leadership tried to establish some kind of Catholic National Church on the model of the Orthodox Church. This Church would have been cut off from the Vatican and turned to be dependent upon the Communist regime. Therefore, at the beginning of the 1950s, diplomatic relations with the Vatican were terminated.

The height of the persecution of the Church was in January 1952, when in Novo mesto the Bishop of Ljubljana, Anton Vovk (1900-1963), was covered in petrol and burned alive. And before this he had suffered numerous painful interrogations. That year, Christmas became Labour Day and was no longer National Day. Religion in schools was forbidden and the Theological Institute was expelled from the University.

At the beginning of the 1960s there was a gradual warming of relations between the Catholic Church and the Yugoslav or Slovene political leadership. The consequence was the reestablishment of regular diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Yugoslavia. And with this, the former Yugoslavia became the exception among the Communist countries. The Church here acted more freely, unlike the position in other East European countries, but it could declare on social and political questions in public. Believers were considered second-class citizens until 1990.

V. SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE YUGOSLAV Communist MODEL Typical of Yugoslavia was the so-called Informbureau dispute between the Yugoslav and Soviet leaderships, or more pertinently, between Tito and Stalin. This dispute at first aggravated Communist violence: on the one hand, Yugoslavia sought to prove its correctness or orthodoxy and the devotion of its Communist Party to the Soviet Union, with stronger collectivisation, and on the other hand they started to settle with those who in the dispute between Tito and Stalin took the latter's side. After the conflict with Informbureau, Yugoslav Communists on the one hand became more Stalinist than Stalin, and on the other they tried to create an alternative to administrative socialism through self–management, which was the basic principle of Yugoslavian government from 1950 to 1990. The Yugoslav model was the biggest attempt to actualise the 'socialist self–management'. In 1950 they accepted the Basic Law on Management of State Economic Enterprises and Higher Economic Associations by the Workers'

Collective, enabling the workers to take control over the companies. State property was renamed into social property; "social management" was expanded to local communities, education, health, and culture. The constitution in 1963 introduced a streamlined definition of self–management.

The self–managers were not able to bear the weight of management and most of the power remained in the hands of the leading members of the League of Communists. But then Yugoslavia or Slovenia began to open towards the West, because it had to get help from there, on account of the very bad economic situation. At the same time, so-called National Communism appeared – Tito's self-management, because, after the dispute with Stalin, the Communist ideologues had to find some "philosophical" excuse for their policies. Although this meant deviation from Stalinism, on the other hand, it retained all the characteristics of Communist totalitarianism until its end, and even after it, with some definite consequences. After the first wave of violence, when exemplary cases of judicial punishment and dismissals from employment appeared only from time to time, society, or rather, the people grew accustomed to lives in new circumstances. The pressure decreased at times, for example at the end of the 1960s, and in the 1970s increased again – the 'Leaden times' – although at the beginning of the 1970s Yugoslav socialism perhaps had a last chance to became more reliable. But then came the so-called "Tito letter", and the Party began to persecute liberals and technocrats. And soon occured the old vocabulary about internal, external enemies, hostile emigration and clericalism. Precisely in the 1970s there appeared a general social amnesia and with it, opportunism. This was the time of easy loans, higher living standards, open borders and membership of the Party for peace and quiet. At the same time, individuals could seize the opportunity to avoid demagogic campaigns in the press and imprisonment, to which were sentenced some political dissidents. This period also saw the ascent of small-time careerists who took up important positions after the destruction of the Liberal Party, together with the older and more severe Communist forces.

On the other hand, in the 1970s, the general denunciation of "socially harmful elements" was considered a national virtue, as well as those articles which reffered to criminal offences against the social regime according to the penal code. Most notorious was Article 133, on "hostile propaganda", which stated that a citizen could insult the country orally, in writing or with signs. Until the end of the 1970s, the country could announce some of its declarative principles as the truth. Precisely in this decade it gave the impression that its economic model had begun to live and give people the opportunity for greater prosperity. But the economic "success", which was based on loans (in 1947 Yugoslav debt amounted to $2.7bn, in 1975, $5bn, and in 1980 $18bn), started to disappear after Tito's death in 1980, when foreign aid declined. The economy began to languish, there were shortages of goods, everyday necessities and petrol. Strikes started and unemployment increased.

After World War II, the Slovenian Partisan Army was disbanded and integrated into the Yugoslav Army (from 1951 on, the Yugoslav People's Army), which was one of the foundations of Tito's Yugoslavia. Until 1951, it had developed under the influence of the Soviet doctrine and by 1958 the concept of general people's defence war was developed. Only Serbo-Croatian was spoken in the army. The absolute power in Tito's Yugoslavia was in the hands of the Communist Party (since 1952 The League of Communists). The Party members held all the leading social positions. A typical party member was a man, with a good job or a leading function, with a good pay and access to other advantages. That is why the highest percentage of Party members was among the officials, and the lowest among manual labourers and farmers.

The governing Party was at the same time a magnet and a source of disappointment. From 1950 to 1977 almost 124,000 members were accepted into the League of Communists of Slovenia; 68,000 left the Party or were suspended.

As a political religion, the Party established a system with the cult of the leader – a human god, new holidays and rituals (revolutionary heritage, the youth relay runs). A special ritual involved mass initiations (joining the pioneer, youth or party organisations) and the desire to achieve a hundred percent attendance at the 'elections' for government choices.

In Slovenia in the first post-war years, a new power elite was formed which together with the leading part of the growing Republican and State office staff, gradually grew into the Communist "new class". It was severe hierarchic organisation. The individual's position in the authoritative and official scale decided not only their power and influence, but also their material position and privileges. The new authorities introduced a system of payment by function, instead of payment by qualification, which made it possible to reward leading individuals who did not have proper education, and at the same time the most eager devotees and adherents were given extra benefits (better apartments,

a chance to shop in special stores, better quality medical benefits, the use of luxury holiday houses, using state-owned vehicles etc.). This was, of course, in opposition to Communist principles and the declared policy of reducing differences.

The Communist elite ensured itself a wide range of privileges. Besides the advantages in attaining positions, rents and other ways of bettering themselves, they also received confiscated real estate of class enemies – e.g. Josip Broz Tito enjoyed the hunting grounds and residences of the exiled Yugoslav royal family. Many others took advantage of confiscated chattel in the so-called Federal Collection Centre, in which several thousand paintings, almost a thousand pianos, several hundred thousand books, a large quantity of furniture, porcelain, rugs and other equipment were gathered.

VI. TYPICAL CASES OF ENCROACHMENT ON HUMAN'S RIGHTS

The basic goal of the victorious Communists was to execute the Bolshevik revolution. The first period of tough repression after the revolutionary victory in 1945 indicates an obvious suppression of human's rights. Direct and severe mass violations of human rights were typical and also essential freedoms were violated, often with brutal force. This was a period of revolutionary violence and terror needed for the Party to take power and gain strength. Therefore, for example, the authorities began to use so-called "temporary appointments of residence", instead of the deprivation of liberty with criminal decisions. They were passed by an administrative body on political opponents, who were sent to concentration camps, and other suspicious or harmful persons to remote parts of the country. This was connected with numerous enforced displacements of people. This period lasted from 1945 to 1955. In this period the State was based on murder (wartime liquidations, mass slaughter of political opponents, post-war "clearing the ground" of class and military enemies, judicial murders), robbery or legal collective theft (wartime and post-war confiscations, nationalisations, agrarian reforms, dispossessions, confiscations of property), violence against the body, dignity and other essential human rights (police terror, illegal arrests, fake trials, forced labour in concentration camps, arbitrary political interventions in official relations, fear, deception and lies (indoctrination, the manipulation of public opinion, ideological violence, and the misappropriation of history).

As regards the relation of the totalitarian system towards the principle of division of authority, the Yugoslav and with it also the Slovene constitutional system were the same as all the other totalitarian systems. In opposition to the tradition of European legal civilisation, it did not advance human rights and form clear legal restrictions on national authority and its violence. Therefore it opened the possibilities for arbitrary authority. In the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia stood the principle of unity, which meant that the boundaries between the executive, judicial and legislative branches were not precisely defined. And therefore also relations of independence, inspection and collaboration connected with it.

According to the constitutional concept of a people's democracy, which was defined by Communist ideology between 1945–1953, authority in the State should belong to the people or to a representative body elected from among them. For practical reasons the Communist elite in Yugoslavia centred authority on the government, which was personally connected with the head of the Communist Party. The Party made excuses, as though the circumstances dictated constant powerful national interventions with political means and means of revolutionary pressure. Therefore it is not surprising that members of parliament met only twice a year. The Government took over legislative functions and all vital relations were arranged by decrees with legal force. The number of these decrees and their content attained large extensions. In the period from 1945–1950, the Yugoslav government passed 345 decrees, and between 1950-1953, 104 decrees. The Constitutional Act of 1953 did not allow such decrees any more, but in 1953 the government issued 80 more, in 1954 more than 40, and in the following years over 20 more each year.

The decisions of administrative bodies were not subjected to judicial review until the introduction of administrative dispute, which occurred after 1952. Regulations of administrative the process for the administrative-legal activity of national bodies were used only after the year 1957, when the General Administrative Procedure Act was adopted.

The unity of authority principle, which actually meant the monopolistic authority of the ruling Communist Party, centred on its Politbureau, could not recognise the Courts as

independent and autonomous state bodies. The pressures on judges were various, from the most brutal purges of judges and their re-education, to the later more refined form of subordination of the judicial branch of power. Already at a meeting of the temporary People's Assembly in July and August 1945 in Belgrade political adequacy of judges was demanded during a discussion about qualifications. The judges could be lawyers, but only under the condition that they were "boundlessly loyal". Therefore, when choosing between uneducated, but loyal legal laity and educated lawyers who are not loyal, the opportunity had to be given to the former. The primary task of the judiciary was the liquidation of political opponents and enemies, and not the solution of disagreements by legal means.

The purge of judges formally began with a decree of revolutionary authority on October 31, 1945, on the availability of all state employees. With this decree the new authorities took into service only those who seemed suitable. Other judges were systematically reeducated by the new authority. The primary task was entrusted to the Ministry of Justice, which tried to influence the judicial cadre professionally and politically. Most significant is one of the resolutions from the Ministry of Justice conference with the presidents of District Courts in December 1947: "The Courts have to become the fighting body of people's authority. In our Courts we must educate new people, new cadres of socialist jurists with advanced, hardworking methods". Therefore the judge had also to be a political worker. The role played by the judicial branch in the period of "People's Democracy", is best illustrated by the comment of the president of the District Court in Gorica in 1950: "The juridical function as part of the united people's authority is very important in the transitional period from capitalism to socialism. This is during the dictatorship of the proletariat, when the point of the state forces is fixed against those elements which tried to prevent or obstruct our progress to socialism. The courts are also a body of the people's authority, which has dealt a blow with help of criminal judiciary to exploitative elements and harmful persons of all kinds. At the same time, they protect honest working citizens to work untroubled. Therefore it is important how the courts execute punishment politics, which has the task of influencing people who have committed crimes. Therefore, the right punishment politics is the best weapon in the hands of working people, which also serve as to re-educate people." The authorities imposed repressive measures with the help of the criminal judiciary.

Activity by any political party except the KPJ was impossible after the war. Although some of them existed for some years after the war and their activities were allowed according to the law. The agreement on the activities of political parties on the political level, between Josip Broz Tito and Ivan Šubašič (the representative of the Government of Yugoslavia-in-exile in London) was achieved in 1944, with the third so-called Belgrade agreement. Otherwise, the formation of parties was allowed under a special act on associations, assemblies and public meetings from the formal-legislative view on August 25, 1945. This was valid until 1965, when it was replaced by the new primary assembly act. This 1965 act does not mention explicitly political parties, but it also does not forbid them. With temporary provisions defines that all established associations can continue with their work. But all parties were totally eliminated from political life and brutally repressed by repressive means. It is necessary to mention that the ruling KPJ or ZKJ was never formally legally registered and was therefore illegal. It is typical that the KPJ after taking power in 1945, used conspiracy and plots for some years. Prevention and suppression of the opposition were not only incompatible with the then Constitution, but also expressly illegal and meant the constant severe violation of human rights and privileges. Immediately after World War II, the Slovene political leader demanded that the UDV (Administration of State Security) execute precise reviews of the activities of all political parties in Slovenia. At first the methods were violent, then more subtle: repeated interrogations, psychological pressure, threats of legal action, blackmail regarding family members etc.

The authorities in Slovenia and Yugoslavia did not allow the formal existence of parties, as was the case for example in East Germany or in Poland, but instead, it found substitution in so-called social-political organisations, particularly in one of these, Socialist Union of Working People (SZDL).The right of political union is closely connected with the right of freedom of expression, and particularly freedom of the press. Like the rest of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the Communist regime in Yugoslavia or Slovenia also did not allow freedom of expression and only free expression of opinions was subject to censorship. The Party controlled all aspects of public life with the help of institutes, so-called "social-political suitability", which enabled privileges and discrimination regarding the views of the world or political beliefs and activity.

In the 1980s a secret Official Journal began to be distributed, but only to certain important persons. The introduction of this secret journal was in clear opposition to the then constitutional principles of laws and others legal regulations, and thus in opposition to the concept of democratic rule of law. All together 618 editions of the secret Official

Journal were published, while in the same period, 817 public Official Journals were published. There were also special secret general implementing regulations, which were never published and were never found in any secret Official Journal. They regulated certain matters in the field of national security.

A special form of human rights violation appeared in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia: the committees for general people's defence and social self-protection. They were established for realisation of policies, goals and tasks for social self-protection, for evaluations of safety circumstances and for the assurance of realisation by the Constitution defined role and responsibility of Communist Union for protection of socialistic self-government relations. The Committees were established in companies, local communities, districts and at Republic level. The president of the District or Local Committee for General People's defence and social self-protection was the president of the district Committee of the Communist Union. This system ensured UDBA or party supervision of all important state and social institutions or all interesting fields about protection, with the help of a wide net of secret police under the patronage of the Communist Party. All economic organisations, social services, associations and soldier-recruits were under control, irrespective of their location. The territorial organisation or division was very similar to the formal divisions of districts and local communities. In the safety area acted a capillary network of the street commissioners and collaborators with special tasks. Otherwise, the Communist Party had also spread its own basic cells, known as essential organisations of the Communist Union, everywhere. They were present in all economic organisations, social services, (schools, universities, health centres, hospitals, museums), in state and district administrations, in courts, and among prosecutors.

Therefore the Yugoslav and Slovene Communist Union several times determinedly insinuated that they had no intentions of moving away from the classic Leninist-Stalinist model or of changing the nature of their authority, although they often announced new reforms. They renounced them as soon as they threatened the leading role of the Party in society. Their followers were characterised and considered dangerous to the social regime. The Union never allowed self-government and decentralisation to dominate over principles of democratic centralism. Nevertheless, the bloody decay of Yugoslavia was the consequence of the mistaken and totalitarian policies of the post-war Yugoslav regime.

VII. TRANSFORMING SLOVENIA 1990-2000

The first multi-party and free elections after the Second World War in Slovenia were hold in April 1990. The united democratic opposition coalition (DEMOS) won with 56 percent of votes. The expression of will of all citizens on the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Slovenia is among the key acts of Slovene independence. At voting on December 23, 1990, 88.5 percent of all the citizens of Slovenia circled word Yes. The result of the plebiscite was ceremonially declared in the Slovene assembly or parliament on December 26, 1990. On June 26, 1991, the Slovene parliament officially proclaimed Slovenia to be an independent state.

After proclaiming the Declaration of independence, the Republic of Slovenia declared integration in the European Community to be its top political and economic goal. The Slovenian economy had to be reformed and consolidated in order to enable free trade and full respect for private property rights. A new Constitution (adopted in December 1991) provided for the protection of private property. Consequently the legislator initiated the process of privatisation and also the process of denationalisation. The privatisation process and particularly the denationalisation process were both met by a strong opposition from the ex-Communist elite. In 1992w Slovenia submitted a request to enter the Europe Association Agreement, which was signed on 10 June 1996.

VIII. BECOMING A MEMBER OF EU AND NATO 2000-2009

On November 11, 1996, Slovenia and the EU signed an interim agreement on trade, which came into force on January 1, 1997, implementing the trade part of the Association Agreement, and reinforcing a free trade area between the EU and Slovenia. On July 16, 1997, the European Commission presented its opinion on the candidate countries (Agenda 2000). The opinion on Slovenia was favourable. Thus, on the December 13, 1997, Slovenia and the other five members of the so-called Luxembourg group (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Cyprus) were invited to the negotiations. When on the February 1, 1999, the Association Agreement with the EU came into effect, the Republic of Slovenia officially submitted a request for EU full membership. During the negotiations Slovenia had to harmonise its legislation with the acquis and provide for the functioning of the internal market and to meet also other criteria for membership adopted at the 1993 European Council in Copenhagen. In December 2002 the negotiations about 31 specific areas were concluded and at the meeting of the European Council it was confirmed that Slovenia could become a new Member State of the EU.

In March 2003 the National Assembly changed the Constitution in order to provide for the transfer of States' sovereign rights to international organisations such as the EU or NATO. The changes also provided for a non-obligatory referendum before the National Assembly ratifies the accession treaty. Consequently, on March 23, 2003, a national referendum was held in Slovenia on the question of whether to join the European Union. A vast majority (89.64 percent) of the voters voted in favour of EU membership. Finally, on May 1, 2004, Slovenia became a full Member State of the European Union. A referendum also occured concerning the question of whether to join NATO; 66 percent of the voters voted in favour and on February 24, 2004, the Parliament ratified the Washington Treaty. Slovenia became a full member of NATO on March 29, 2004. In March the same year Slovenian soldiers joined the peacekeeping mission ISAF in Afghanistan.

With the adoption of the common European currency - the Euro on January 1, 2007, and with the joining of the Schengen Area in December 2007 the Republic of Slovenia became fully integrated into the European Union. In the first half of 2008 Slovenia undertook the presidency of the Council of the EU, in doing so becoming the first post-socialist Member State to hold the presidency of the European Union.

List of abbreviations

DEMOS – The united democratic opposition coalition
ISAF – International Security Assistance Force
KNOJ – People's Defence Corps of Yugoslavia
KOZ – agricultural cooperatives, the Slovene variant of the Soviet "kolkhoz"
KPJ – Communist Party of Yugoslavia
KPS (KP) – Communist Party of Slovenia
NDH – Independent State of Croatia
NOB – National Liberation struggle
OF – Liberation Front
OZNA – Department for National Protection
PIF – Anti-imperialistic Front
SDV – Service of National Security
SKOJ – Communist Youth Organisation
SNOO – Slovene National Liberation Committee
SNOS – Slovene National Liberation Council
SZDL – Socialist Union of Working People
UDBA – Administration of National Security
UDV – Administration of State Security
VOS – Security Intelligence Service of Slovenia
ZKJ – Communist League of Yugoslavia

CROATIA: FROM THE INEQUALITY BEHIND THE MASK OF "BROTHER AND UNITY" TO THE UNION OF DEMOCRACY AND EQUALITY AND THE CROATS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND AFTER

Mario Jareb and Ante Nazor

Republic of Croatia – Republika Hrvatska
Area: 89 988 km2 (56 538 km2 of mainland and approximately 33 450 km2 of sea area)
Population: 4 284 889 (2011)
Capital city: Zagreb
Official Language: Croatian
Currency: Kuna
Political system: Parliamentary republic
EU accession: 1 July 2013

I. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the twentieth century Croatian lands constituted a part of Austria-Hungary. The centre of Croatian social, political, cultural and economic life was the Ban's (or Viceroy's) Croatia (also known as Croatia-Slavonia) with its capital Zagreb, which existed as an autonomous kingdom within Hungarian half of the Monarchy. Ban's Croatia, officialy the Triune Kingdom of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia, inherited the statehood traditions of medieval Croatian Kingdom. Dalmatia was nominally a part of The Triune Kingdom, but in reality was separated from it and was directly administered from Vienna as the center of the Austrian part of the Monarchy. At that time Croats also constituted a relative majority in the Markgraviate of Istria. Before the Ottoman conquest the majority of the western parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina belonged to Croatian Kingdom, so the commonly used name Turkish Croatia for those territories

remained a kind of memento on that fact throughout the centuries. At the beginning of the twentieth century Catholic Croats constituted a bit more than 20% of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The division of Croatian lands and population into several entities dominated by foreign rulers disenabled the constitution of united Croatian state as the precondition for the solution of the Croatian question and the building of the modern Croatian nation. Such a situation caused dissent among numerous Croatian intelectuals and political leaders, who were willing to accept various solutions for Croatia, including the destruction of the Monarchy. At that time of the Yugoslav idea, the notion of a South Slavic unity became a powerful force among Croatian intelectuals and political elites.

II. BETWEEN TWO WORLD WARS: CROATIA AND YUGOSLAVIA

After the outbreak of World War I Croatia was still part of Austria-Hungary. Some of the Croatian politicians who refused to accept this (Ante Trumbić, Frano Supilo, famous sculptor Ivan Meštrović and others), were active outside of the national borders through the Croatian Committee, later the Yugoslav Committee, gathering support and organising volunteers to fight alongside the Entente. Towards the end of the war (29 October 1918), the Croatian Diet abolished all legal relations with Austria-Hungary and proclaimed Croatia (Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia together with Rijeka) an independent state, which was immediately incorporated into the newly-established State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (SCS). The SCS included all former South Slavic countries of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia with Rijeka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Istria, Trieste, Carniola, Gorizia, Styria, Carinthia, Bačka, Banat and Baranja. However, this state was short-lived.

Because of territorial claims in Croatia (part of Dalmatia and Slavonia) and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were implicitly designated to Serbia by the Treaty of London (1915), the Serbian government did not recognise the SCS. Political circumstances and fears that the Croatian territory would be divided up between Italy and Serbia forced Croats to negotiate a common state with the Serbs in Belgrade. Placed under pressure and going against the "Directive" delivered at the Central Committee of the People's Council in Zagreb, Croatian representatives signed the unification agreement with the Kingdom of Serbia (1 December 1918). Even though the Croatian Diet had never endorsed it, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was created (the Kingdom of Yugoslavia after 1929). Serbia's ruling Karađorđević dynasty, Serbian political elites, and the Serbian army, who were the creators and driving force behind the new state policies, considered the Kingdom of SCS or Yugoslavia an extension of the Kingdom of Serbia, rather than an equal community of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The lack of regard on the part of the this (Serbian) state policy towards the Croatian territory is evident, as parts of the Croatian territory were handed over to Italy (Istria, Rijeka, Cres, Lošinj, Zadar, Lastovo and Palagruža). This resulted in the resistance and rebellion of Croats in Istria (the area of Labin and Proština) against the Italian assimilation policy (conflicts with Italian troops and the fascist "squadrons" in 1921).

Centralism, Yugoslav unitarianism, Serbian oppression and the unresolved Croatian question threatened Croatian national identity, so the Croats were dissatisfied with their position in the so-called First Yugoslavia. It is true that the idea of creating a South Slavic union was advocated by some Croatian politicians as of the 19th century, but not in the way that Serbian leaders in Belgrade implemented it in the new state. The very nature of this state and its attitude towards the Croatian national question is reflected in the fact that during this period Croats were killed and wounded even in People's Assembly in Belgrade: in June 1928, Croatian deputies, including the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, Stjepan Radić, were shot and wounded (Radić died from his wounds in August 1928).

In June 1928, at the State Assembly in Belgrade, a representative of the leading Serbian party and a prominent member of the greater Serbian and violent Chetnik association, Puniša Račić, assassinated two Croatian deputies. They were killed on the spot, while several more were wounded. Croatian political leader Stjepan Radić was also wounded, but soon died from his injuries.

The crisis caused by Croatian discontent following the assassination of Stjepan Radić and other Croatian representatives threatened to topple the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The King's attempt to resolve the crisis of the state undemocratically at the beginning of 1929 was just the beginning of authoritarian and totalitarian rule over Croatian and Yugoslavian soil. Indeed, on 6 January 1929, King Alexander introduced the royal dictatorship, renounced the Vidovdan constitution and dissolved the People's Assembly, the intentions of this authoritarian regime were immediately revealed as the acting general became Prime Minister, and as a series of laws filled with prohibitions and threats were published. All freedoms of public expression were abolished, the censorship of the press was reinforced, political parties were banned and dissolved, and the gendarmerie, police and armed forces were granted greater powers. Every opposition was sanctioned by the government, and imprisonments, torture and assassinations became an everyday occurrence. The regime's representatives identified the differences between Croats and Serbs as the main obstacle to the creation of "national unity" and a strong Yugoslavia, so the idea of a unique Yugoslav nation was promoted, erasing the names and distinctiveness of ethnic groups. For this reason, in the autumn of 1929, the state was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Serbian dominance was ensured by means of a strong crackdown on any symbol of Croatia (for example, the use of the Croatian coat of arms and flag). At the same time, the Serbian Orthodox Church, a religious community with close links to state authorities, maintained the "Serbian" adjective in its name and publicly and officially used Serbian national symbols as its own religious symbols. Aside from the use of national symbols, this unequal treatment was also reflected in the new administrative division of the state into nine Banates, since the borders of two Banates – Sava and Primorje – where Croats were in the majority, did not encompass other larger, predominantly Croatian areas. The nature of the dictatorship, especially in its first two years, was undoubtedly authoritarian. However, such elements to create a new Yugoslav people and to impose a corresponding Yugoslav nationalist ideology ensured the regime resembled a system of totalitarianism.

Serbia's attempt to achieve its goals for the Greater Serbian projects of the 19th century within the First Yugoslavia, along with its continued intimidation of Croatian people in Yugoslavia, was well known to the world. It was attested to by the murder of Milan Šufflay, a historian, expert in Albanian studies, writer and member of the Croatian Party of Rights on 18 February 1931, backed by the Yugoslav police. Šufflay's murder and the campaign of "horrendous brutality against the Croats" was condemned by renowned physicist Albert Einstein and writer Heinrich Mann ("Einstein Accuses Yugoslavian Rulers", The New York Times, 6 May 1931).

The regime of terror and the Croatian resistance led to Yugoslavia's diminishing reputation abroad and a deepening crisis within the country. King Alexander therefore decided to introduce changes intended to appease the mounting dissatisfaction, especially among Croats. In the autumn of 1931, the Octroic Constitution was imposed, introducing a false constitutionality and parliamentarism, while maintaining a dictatorship that denied national rights to the Croatian people and other nations of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. At the end of 1932, seemingly favourable conditions prompted the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party (henceforth referred to by its Croatian acronym: HSS), Vladko Maček, to initiate talks aimed at uniting all opposing parties. The aim expressed in Zagreb Points of 1932 was to abolish the dictatorship and restructure the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on the basis of respect for civil and political freedoms and the rights of its peoples. The Yugoslav dictatorship responded by arresting Vladko Maček.

The proclamation of dictatorship prompted a leading member of the Croatian Party of Rights, Ante Pavelić, to emigrate at the end of January 1929. He advocated armed resistance to the dictatorship and the creation of an independent Croatian state by all available means. Italy tried to benefit from the situation, providing political asylum and assistance to Pavelić and his associates. At the beginning of 1930, the Ustasha Organisation (Ustasha - the Croatian Revolutionary Organisation, or UHRO) emerged; most of its members were émigrés housed in a special military camp in Italy. The UHRO was formed as a small elite and military organisation, which was supposed to lead the struggle for Croatia's liberation. Pavelić deemed the term Ustasha synonymous with revolution, and this was how he saw his struggle. He attempted to gather Croatian émigrés and immigrant workers in European countries into mass immigrant organizations of Croatian Home Defenders. Ustashas in Italy were prepared for armed struggle against the Yugoslav authorities, but some of them, along with UHRO supporters in their homeland, participated in terrorist acts and armed attacks originally aimed against Yugoslav authorities. The most famous action on home soil was the assault on the gendarmerie's barracks of Brušani in Lika in September 1932 (known as the Velebit or Lika uprising). Even though it was only a minor diversion by a small Ustasha group, the fierce reaction of the Yugoslav authorities, the Ustasha's own depiction of the events

and propaganda, and the Italian press attributed it with a far greater notoriety.

Outside the homeland, in cooperation with Macedonian émigrés and with the support of Italy, Ustashas organised the assassination of King Alexander Karađorđević during his visit to France in the autumn of 1934. The King was assassinated in Marseille on 9 October 1934 by the Macedonian émigré Velichko Kerin. As the French authorities soon discovered that the UHRO participated in the assassination, its operations were terminated across Europe.

The assassination did not lead to the dissolution of the Yugoslav state. King Alexander was succeeded by his young son Peter, but as Head of the Royal Regency, Prince Regent Paul Karađorđević was the real ruler. A profound political crisis soon forced him to liberalise political life, so numerous political prisoners were released. Ethnically-oriented parties and associations were tacitly allowed, which meant that the HSS could once again take up its political activities.

The regime, however, was not prepared to relinquish the centralism and Serbian dominance, nor to initiate serious negotiations with Croatian representatives. It therefore resorted to violence to suppress opposition and the expression of Croatian national sentiments. For example, in February 1935 gendarmes killed 15 Croatian peasants in the village of Sibinj near Slavonski Brod, and in May 1937 in Senj seven young members of a Croatian choir from Gospić were killed for singing Croatian patriotic songs. The situation was also aggravated by a disproportionate national representation at every level of government and state administration.

These injustices convinced many Croats, especially the younger generations, that change could only be brought on by radical means, even if this meant embracing the political ideas that advocated authoritarian and totalitarian rule. Part of them looked up to Pavelić and the Ustasha Organisation as role models, while others were attracted by Communist ideas. Pavelić's supporters in the Homeland lacked the unity Ustasha organisation at that time, so they acted, spreading their ideas to the Croatian public through various associations and societies.

The Communists acted within the illegal Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), which had operated under that same name since 1920. Due to radical Communist invocations for a revolutionary reorganisation of government, the authorities forcibly banned its activities (Decree from 1920), and the remaining Communists began operating illegally. The CPY originally believed that creating the Yugoslav state would resolve the national question, so in the beginning it did not specifically advocate the rights of Croats and other groups affected by Serbian dominance. It subsequently recognised the importance of the national question, so the party concluded that the just solution of the national question is a prerequisite for the revolution. Therefore, during the 1930s Croatian Communists also supported the Croatian liberation struggle, and in 1937 the Communist Party of Croatia was founded within the CPY. But for the Communists, seeking a solution to the national question was only a tactic intended to gain as many supporters as possible. Their main goals continued to be an international Communist revolution that would spread the model of social relations present in the Stalin's USSR across the world.

Although living conditions in the First Yugoslavia were difficult for the Croatian people, most Croats did not support radical political options. They remained the followers of the pragmatic and moderate policy of Vladko Maček and the HSS, which sought to establish a free Croatia within Yugoslavia by peaceful means and through negotiations with the regime. Accused by Pavelić's supporters of being a traitor to national interests, Maček was all the while a critic of Communist ideology, which he believed would harm the peasants' interests.

The negotiations with the regime intended to resolve the Croatian question became successful in August 1939. International crises and the imminent approach of a World War forced Prince Regent Paul Karađorđević to undertake serious negotiations with the Croats to preserve Yugoslavia. In August 1939 it resulted in the agreement between the Serbian representative and new President of the Yugoslav Government, Dragiša Cvetković, and the Croatian representative Vladko Maček (Cvetković-Maček Agreement). On that basis the Banate of Croatia was founded as an autonomous unit within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

It consisted of the former Banates of Sava and Primorje, the districts of Dubrovnik and Ilok (now in Croatia), Šid (now in Serbia), Brčko, Gradačac, Derventa, Travnik and Fojnica (now in Bosnia and Herzegovina). When the Banate of Croatia was established, the principle of majority Croatian and majority Serbian areas was introduced as the main criterion for demarcation, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The districts with a majority Croatian population were simply attached to the already existing Banate

The coat of arms of the Banate of Croatia as displayed on a tax stamp issued in 1940

of Sava and Primorje. In the territorial sense, however, the previous division was essentially retained. This was also envisioned in the Octroic Constitution of 1931, which was the legal basis of Cvetković-Maček Agreement. It provided the Banate of Croatia with economic and financial autonomy and in theory made it possible to federalise the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The Banate of Croatia had many political opponents, and it faced the greatest threats from Serbian political elites, the Yugoslav Army, and the Serbian Orthodox Church, which perceived the new Banate of Croatia as a threat to Serbian dominance in Yugoslavia. Pavelić's supporters were also fierce critics of the Banate of Croatia. They had previously accused Maček and the HSS of betraying Croatian national interests and did not accept the possibility that this could be a step on the path to Croatian sovereignty. The Communists perceived the Cvetković-Maček Agreement as "an agreement between the Croatian and Serbian bourgeoisie" directed "against the rights of the working class", so they also fiercely attacked the Ban's administration and the HSS.

At the same time, following the negotiations between Cvetković and Maček, Serbs established the "Krajina" Movement in Zagreb. In collaboration with Belgrade military circles and the Serbian Orthodox Church, some Serbs in Croatia opposed any kind of Croatian state organisation, or even a Croatia with limited autonomy in the existing Yugoslavia. They therefore requested the annexation of some territories of the Banate of Croatia to the Serbian part of the state (a scenario that was to be repeated in Croatia at the beginning of the 1990s). The consolidation of institutions of the Banate of Croatia was interrupted as World War II spread onto the territory of Yugoslavia.

III. CROATIA AND THE CROATS DURING WORLD WAR II

Due to the Croatian leaders' unfortunate policies which divided the Croats, World War II is one of the most tragic periods in Croatian history.

The beginning of World War II in September 1939 bypassed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. To maintain this situation, Yugoslav authorities kept good relations with both Nazi Germany and Great Britain. As events unfolded, German influence in the countries surrounding Yugoslavia increased, as did its pressure on the country. Eventually, the Yugoslav Government joined the Tripartite Pact on 25 March 1941, but on 27 March, a group of senior officers from the Yugoslav Army executed a coup with the support of the British secret service. The Cvetković-Maček Government and the Royal Regency led by Prince Regent Paul collapsed, and King Peter II Karađorđević was proclaimed of age and ascended to the throne. Many of those participating saw the coup as a means of altering the country's structure of power, i.e. of restoring total Serbian dominance and abolishing the Banate of Croatia.

The imminence of a German attack and the real weakness of the Yugoslav Army forced the new Prime Minister, General Dušan Simović, to highlight Yugoslavia's commitment to the Tripartite Pact and offer Vladko Maček and the HSS a place in government once again. Believing that it would be possible to preserve peace, Maček accepted this offer, which also granted the Banate of Croatia extended powers. Despite this, Hitler decided to destroy Yugoslavia since he believed that no Yugoslav Government was going to be viable, and that stability in the region could only be achieved by the German forces.

The German attack on Yugoslavia began on 6 April 1941 with the bombing of Belgrade. The united German, Italian and Hungarian forces soon quashed the resistance of the poorly-organised Yugoslav Army, which, much like the state it was defending, was also burdened by unresolved national and social conflicts. After a dozen days of warfare, the Yugoslav Army surrendered, and substantial parts of Yugoslavia were annexed to the Third Reich, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria and Italian Albania. The Independent State of Croatia was established on part of the territory. Serbia was under German occupation, but it had its own government, police and armed forces. Montenegro was under Italian occupation.

The Germans believed that it would be easier to achieve their goals in the Yugoslav territory if they established cooperation with local forces, so they tried to capitalise on the Croatian dissatisfaction with Yugoslavia. As the real representatives of the Croatian people, they offered to help the HSS and Vladko Maček establish an independent Croatian state, but Maček refused to cooperate with them. Only then did the Germans decide to support the Ustashas, whom they hitherto considered as Italian protégés. The approach of German troops to Zagreb prompted the leader of the Ustasha group in Homeland, Slavko Kvaternik, to announce the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (or Nezavisna Država Hrvatska – NDH in Croatian) on behalf of the Ustasha leader Ante Pavelić on 10 April 1941, with the agreement of German special envoy. Although the Ustasha organisation did not have many supporters, this act was welcomed by many Croats who desired their own state and the dissolution of the despised Yugoslavia. They were even more satisfied with the deal since it appeared that Croatia had avoided further suffering and foreign military occupation. All this sparked great expectation among many people, but the Ustasha regime's behaviour soon left them disillusioned.

To fit in Hitler's "New Order", the NDH tried to implement a domestic policy in accordance with that of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. A single-party totalitarian dictatorship was introduced with the Ustasha Movement as the sole political organisation, while other parties and political organisations, including the HSS, were banned and disbanded. HSS leaders faced persecution and were under constant surveillance by the authorities. Either voluntarily or under coercion, a minority of HSS officials and members joined the ruling Ustasha Movement, which used this to present itself as the only political representative of the Croatian people.

Coat of arms and flag of the Independent State of Croatia.

Poglavnik (head) of the Independent State of Croatia and of the Ustasha Movement Ante Pavelić.

The Ustasha regime carried out repressive policies against the non-Croat population, primarily Serbs, Jews and Roma. This repression also affected Croats who did not support the Ustasha regime. Among them were numerous HSS members. By accepting the Nazi's anti-Semitic policies, the Ustashas in the NDH proclaimed racial laws (later applied to the Roma population) by the end of April 1941, and in the summer of that same year began the deportations of Jews to the newly-established concentration camps. There, detainees were subjected to killings, terror and atrocious living conditions. According to available documentation, mostly inherited from the period of the Second Yugoslavia, which should be scientifically examined, tens of thousands of people of different ethnic groups and religions lost their lives in the camps of the NDH. Almost half of them were Serbs, killed in the concentration camps of Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška, which were grouped into a single unit, and hence usually referred to only as Jasenovac.

Many distinguished public figures were also held there, including HSS leader Vladko Maček, and among those who were killed was the well-known Croatian writer and member of the HSS Mihovil Pavlek Miškina. Because they became indefensible even for many NDH officials, the persecutions and killings were gradually terminated from the end of 1941. In 1942 the authorities established a special Croatian Orthodox Church, which enabled numerous Serbs, now "Orthodox Croats", to survive the war without major turmoil. Although, to a lesser extent, the regime continued to persecute numerous Serbs because of their religious and national affiliation or political beliefs.

Entrance to the Jasenovac concentration camp, where Ustasha authorities detained and killed tens of thousands of people, mostly Serbs, Jews and Roma, as well as numerous Croats (according to available documentation, mostly inherited from the period of the Second Yugoslavia, which should be scientifically examined).

Many Croats condemned such violence against their fellow citizens. A prominent opponent of the Ustasha terror was Zagreb's Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac. He welcomed the proclamation of the NDH in the hope that the new state would bring liberty to the Croatian people. But he soon fiercely opposed the persecution of Serbs and Jews, believing that such actions were not in the Christian spirit. At the end of 1943, in a sermon at the Zagreb Cathedral, he condemned racism and stressed that all men were equal regardless of their origin. Prior to this he condemned Jasenovac as "a shameful disgrace (...) for the entire Independent State of Croatia".

Germany's role in the creation of the NDH was crucial, as well as in the establishment of Serbian "Quisling" authorities, Milan Aćimović's commissariat and the Government of general Milan Nedić, so the German military administration in Serbia in the implementation of the "final solution to the Jewish question" was also assisted by Serbian institutions and forces, such as those of Serbian Fascist Dimitrije Ljotić. The extent to which this cooperation was effective was attested by the fact that in June 1942 a commander of the German security force in Serbia, Emanuel Schäfer, reported to Heinrich Himmler that "Serbia is free of Jews" ("Serbien ist Judenfrei"). By the end of August 1942, the head of the German military administration in Serbia Harald Turner informed his superiors that Serbia was the only country in which the Jewish issue and the Roma issue were solved.

While Germany's role in the creation of the NDH was crucial, during 1941 the Italian influence was considerably stronger. This was particularly evident when the borders of the new state were defined. According to the Treaties of Rome of 18 May 1941, the NDH was forced to relinquish significant portions of Gorski Kotar and the Croatian Littoral, along with most of its northern Adriatic islands and a large part of Dalmatia and its islands, to Italy. In addition, the Italian occupying army remained in the southern part of the NDH, exercising real military and civil power in many areas. The Italian Army violently dealt with the Croat population in these areas, especially after the Partisan Movement spread across Dalmatia in the autumn of 1941. The control of the Italian armed forces over almost half of the state's territory adversely affected the situation in the NDH, most notably the economy.

In the areas annexed to Italy the Croatian population was exposed to terror. The Italian authorities initially attempted to win the population over by propaganda and by the implementation of various economic measures. However, Croatian associations were quickly dissolved, and other signs of Croatian identity erased. Many Croatian officials and teachers were dismissed, and numerous distinguished Croats were imprisoned or banished. The Italian language was gradually introduced in schools. Resistance to this Italianisation continuously increased, which prompted the Italian authorities to implement more violent measures. The court-martial frequently pronounced death sentences and sent entire families to concentration camps. The Partisan Movement opposed the Italian administration in the annexed territories, but it disintegrated only after Italy surrendered on 8 September 1943.

Germany's presence in the NDH during 1941 was less evident, but it strongly influenced the development of domestic and economic policies. The German influence and pressure prompted the Ustasha regime to imitate its national socialist policies, especially on racial issues. After the Italian capitulation in September 1943, the German influence spread into areas previously under Italian control, and was reinforced throughout the territory of the NDH, which survived until the end of the war as a state under German occupation.

The behaviour of the Ustasha regime, as well as the Italian and German occupation and power over Croatian territories, prompted many Croats to resist the occupying forces and NDH authorities from the beginning. The HSS was subjected to the opression of the Ustasha regime and was unable to organise a resistance. As part of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the Communist Party of Croatia, which had a small number of members, was the only one determined to organise a resistance. As an illegal and revolutionary party, it was accustomed to operating under the difficult conditions of police persecution and had military-sabotage personnel at their disposal. Shortly after the breakout of war in April, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia issued a decision to organise a resistance across Yugoslavia and began preparations. In Croatia, members of the Communist Party of Croatia undertook the same measures as part of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. This Communist resistance was sparked by the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union at the end of June 1941.

Particular attention was paid to win over the Serbs, but the Communists who advocated the struggle against the NDH and all the occupying forces had to confront quite different Chetnik views. The latter believed that resistance should be directed exclusively against

the NDH and all Croats (and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina) for their alleged collective responsibility for Ustasha crimes. After the beginning of the Serbian uprising in the summer of 1941, especially in the areas of Lika, northern Dalmatia and southwest Bosnia, a significant portion of Serbs followed Chetnik ideas and established cooperation with the Italians. Communists were also among the resistance forces (guerilla fighters). During the autumn of 1941, divisions emerged among the resistance forces, who split up into Partisan and Chetnik troops. At this time, many Croats from the areas under Italian occupation and annexed to Italy joined the Partisan ranks.

The Partisan Movement developed throughout Yugoslavia under the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and Josip Broz Tito, promoting a struggle against occupying forces and "domestic traitors". Moreover, its aim was to revive the Yugoslav State as a community of equal peoples and to carry out a Communist revolution modelled after the USSR. All political opponents had to be reckoned with, and religious faith and the Church faced harsh attacks.

The leader of the Partisan movement and Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito.

The Communists led and controlled the Partisan Movement, and their domination came to the fore not only in the sign of the red five-pointed star that the Partisan fighters wore on their caps, but also in the display of Communist flags. A scene from a Partisan rally in Northern Dalmatia in the autumn of 1942.

To win over as many supporters as possible, the Communists emphasised the struggle for national liberation and the idea of a federal Yugoslavia, where all of its peoples would be equal, possessing both a federal unit and national state. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a state of Croats, Serbs, and Muslims, would be the exception to this. The idea of establishing a free Croatian State within the new, federal Yugoslavia, was also promoted, which led many Croats to join the Partisan Movement. The Communist Party of Croatia publicly advocated uniting all anti-fascist forces, irrespective of partisan or religious affiliations, and promoted the creation of a new, democratic Croatia. This incited many HSS members and supporters to join the Partisans. Nevertheless, the Communists endeavoured to control members of other parties and prevent them from acting autonomously. The cooperation of the Communist Party of Croatia with other parties and the proclamation of democracy were only tactical moves designed to strengthen the Partisan Movement.

By the end of 1941, Croatian Partisans had already defined a clear military structure. The National Liberation Army of Croatia (NOVH) was part of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (NOVJ), led by Josip Broz Tito. National Liberation Councils were established as bodies of the new state government, and at the end of 1942, the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (henceforth denoted with the Croatian acronym: AVNOJ) was established as the leading political body. In Croatia, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia led the movement, and war operations were led by the General Staff of Croatia. In early 1943, the supreme political body of federal Croatia – The National Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia (henceforth denoted with the Croatian acronym: ZAVNOH) – was established, led by the Croatian writer Vladimir Nazor. For ZAVNOH's leadership, the goal of the Croatian Partisan struggle was to establish a free,

united and democratic Croatian state as an equal state within the new Yugoslav federation. From the outside, it seemed that the People's Liberation Movement in Croatia was indeed a democratic movement in which different political parties operated on the same level, but the leadership of the Communist Party of Croatia sought to supervise the movement's activities and made sure that Communist primacy was not disrupted.

After the capitulation of Italy in the autumn of 1943, the Partisan struggle gained powerful momentum. On 29-30 November 1943, the second session of AVNOJ was held in Jajce (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and it became the supreme legislative and representative body of the new Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFJ) during the war. The new Yugoslav federation was established with six federal units: Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia. Emphasis was placed on the idea that the federal state guaranteed the equality of all the peoples of Yugoslavia and confirmed their right to their own state.

AVNOJ's decisions enabled the development of the Federal Croatia, reflected in the third session of ZAVNOH in Topusko in May 1944. At that time, the leading figure of the Partisan Movement in Croatia was the prominent Croatian Communist Andrija Hebrang. He believed in the idea of a free and sovereign Croatia within the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia. The idea of a free Croatia had attracted many Croats to the Partisan Movement, so that fact places Croatia among triumphant Allied nations.

The resolutions from the ZAVNOH session in 1943 state that the period prior to 1941, during the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, was extremely negative for the Croats; they mention "the 22-year-long oppression of Croatian people under the Greater Serbian faction in Belgrade"; they claim that "in the Yugoslavia of the Versailles Peace Treaty, all nations were subjected to the tyranny and oppression of Belgrade's anti-ethnic regimes, especially the Croatian and Macedonian people", and that the Croats fought "against Greater Serbian hegemony and the imposed Yugoslavianism". According to the Declaration on the Fundamental Rights of the People and Citizens of Democratic Croatia, issued at the Third session of ZAVNOH, on 9 May 1944, in addition to the equality of all citizens within the "federal state of Croatia", each citizen should be guaranteed "personal safety and the security of their property" (Article 4), "freedom of religion and freedom of conscience" (Article 5), as well as "freedom of speech, press, assembly, agreement and freedom of association" (Article 6). However, these rights were not implemented in Croatia after World War II, which was one of the reasons for the Croats' dissatisfaction with their position and the level of democracy in the Second Yugoslavia.

The Chetniks, led by the Yugoslav Army Colonel Draža Mihailović, gathered in May 1941 to resist the German occupation, but quite soon after they started to cooperate with the Germans and Serbian "Quisling" authorities. Their main enemy became the Partisan movement. Mihailović established contacts with the Yugoslav Government-in-exile in London and was promoted to the rank of a General and appointed Minister of the Army, Navy and Air Forces. At the same time the Chetniks were recognised as the "Yugoslav Army in the Homeland". Accordingly, they urged the restoration of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the return of King Peter Karađorđević II. The restored kingdom was conceived as an extended Greater Serbia, encompassing most Croatian territories. The Chetniks treated the Partisan movement as their principal enemy within the NDH territory, so they cooperated with the German and Italian troops, and from 1942 with the NDH authorities as well. Aspiring to create ethnically cleansed Serbian areas, they destroyed and burned Croatian and Muslim villages, killing those who lived there. A faction of the Chetniks operated in the Knin area under the Chetnik commander and Orthodox priest Momčilo Đujić. The Western Allies initially supported the Chetniks, believing them to be the only ones fighting the occupying forces in Yugoslavia. This belief was largely based on false information about their alleged struggle against the Germans and the Italians, spread by some Serbian members of Yugoslav Government-in-exile in the United States and the UK. Allied support was revoked only upon the decisions of the Tehran Conference in December 1943. The Chetniks were gradually brought to the verge of collapse by this lack of support and by attacks from Partisan forces. With the end of the war came the final blow, and in early 1946, Yugoslav authorities captured Mihailović and sentenced

Chetnik officer in the company of SS-Obergruppenführer Werner Lorenz in Northern Bosnia in November 1942.

him to death.

By the summer of 1944, the Partisan movement had strengthened its position on the international scene. However, the Western Allies were not keen on having an exclusively Communist leadership of the new Yugoslavia and requested an agreement between Tito and the Yugoslav Government-in-exile as a guarantee of future democratic relations in Yugoslavia. Ultimately, in June 1944 on the island of Vis, an agreement was reached between Tito and the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia and the new President of the Yugoslav Government-in-exile and the former Croatian Ban, Ivan Šubašić (the Tito-Šubašić Agreement). The Yugoslav Government-in-exile recognised the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia as their government in the Homeland, and the latter agreed that the government could carry out its duties abroad. They also agreed that decisions regarding the political system of the state would be made by the citizens of Yugoslavia after the end of the war. This eventually enabled the international community to recognise the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia as an equal ally in the war at the Yalta Conference in February 1945.

The Communists retained their primacy within the Partisan Movement. Being confident that they would win the war, they prepared the conditions for a full takeover of power. They tried to block everyone who, in their opinion, would obstruct their goal, even members of their own movement, and especially members of the HSS. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the Communist Party of Croatia considered the HSS and its leader Vladko Maček their principal enemies. The Catholic Church also came under Communist attack. All those who were labelled "enemies of the state" were depicted by Communist propaganda as Ustashas and criminals, regardless of their affiliation during the war.

At the end of 1943, a part of the NDH leadership was convinced that Germany would be defeated, which would also imply the collapse of the NDH as its ally. Among them were the Ministers Ante Vokić and Mladen Lorković. With Pavelić's consent, they collaborated with several officers from the Croatian Home Defense and some HSS members to organise a coup and to ensure that the NDH transitioned to the side of the Western Allies. The conspirators intended to announce war on Germany, disband the Ustasha Movement, and remove Pavelić from power. Under the pretext that the Germans found out about these preparations, Pavelić had Lorković and Vokić arrested at the end of August 1944, thus preventing the coup, and the NDH remained Germany's ally until its collapse in May 1945.

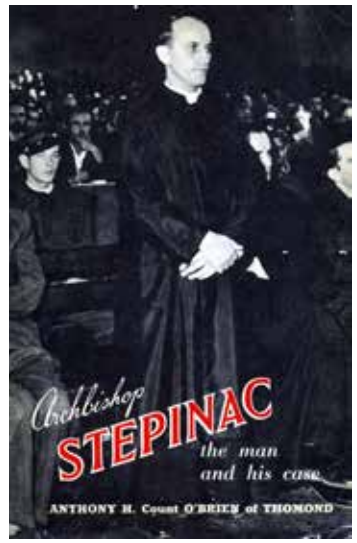
When, in the spring of 1945, the forces of the Yugoslav Army (formerly the NOVJ) launched their final offensive on Yugoslav soil, NDH authorities decided that the Croatian Armed Forces, along with the Germans, should withdraw towards Austria and surrender to the Allies. Numerous civilians who feared Communist violence left alongside them. Part of the Ustasha leadership, including Pavelić, abandoned the civilians and the retreating army. The first part of the main Croatian column was stopped by British troops at the Austrian town of Bleiburg. The Yugoslav Army troops soon arrived in Austria, and the British extradited the captured Croatian soldiers and civilians to Yugoslav forces. Numerous prisoners and civilians were executed on countless execution sites, including the Macelj Forest in Hrvatsko Zagorje and in Tezno near Maribor where, according to estimates, at least 15,000 civilians and NDH soldiers were killed in under a week and without a trial in May 1945. Surviving soldiers and civilians were forced on exhausting marches (the "Way of the Cross") and taken to the prisoner-of-war camps throughout Yugoslavia, where many died.

The end of the war brought a retreat in the direction of the Western Allies of the Armed Forces of the NDH and numerous civilians who feared Yugoslav Communist rule. The Allies handed over most of the soldiers and refugees to Yugoslavia, whose authorities murdered thousands of people without trial. Furthermore, many others died from the consequences of abuse on the "Ways of the Cross" and in camps in which they were detained.

When the Yugoslav troops entered Istria and Rijeka, the preconditions were met to annex these areas, which had been under Italian rule until the capitulation of Italy, to Croatia and Slovenia, i.e. Yugoslavia.

IV. IN Communist YUGOSLAVIA

The end of the war made the newly established Federal State of Croatia (since the summer of 1945, the People's Republic of Croatia) a part of the restored Yugoslav State, with a government under the full dominance of the Communist Party of Croatia as part of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Even though initially, to gain full international recognition, Communist leaders officially and to a very limited extent allowed the existence of opposition parties, in reality they firmly held on to all the strings of power and government. To achieve this, and to initiate a complete transformation of existing Croatian and Yugoslav society according to their ideology, the Communists used all available means. They made abundant use of violence, largely by relying on the secret police, known as the Department for People's Protection, both towards the end of the war and in its immediate aftermath. This organisation was later renamed the State Security Administration. To establish a monopoly of power and impose their own views on social relations, the Communists executed a series of unwanted individuals and groups. They did so by accusing all of them of being affiliated with the Ustasha Movement, fraternising with the occupying forces, and perpetrating war crimes. Such a policy was mostly based on false accusations and numerous staged political trials conducted according to the Stalinist model, which resulted in death sentences and out-of-court executions for all those who stood in the way of Communist authorities. In a short period of time, executions, confiscations and nationalisation transferred the entire economy into Communist hands. In addition to numerous businessmen, the non-Communist Croatian intellectual elite was particularly affected, and in some sense the Communists committed a kind of aristocide. It may be said that after only a few months in power, the Communist Party had almost completely monopolised Croatian society, launching radical societal and economic changes, and largely following the model of the Stalinist Soviet Union, which was a great ally of the restored Yugoslavia and its leader, Josip Broz Tito. The Catholic Church, a religious community to which the clear majority of Croats belonged, was the only non-Communist force in Croatia that had a significant influence over large strands of society and jeopardised the Party's hegemony because it did not depend on the regime. It is therefore not surprising that after persistent attempts to place the Catholic Church under its control, and after numerous crimes were committed against it by local Communist authorities, the Party decided to prosecute the heads of the Catholic Church. In the autumn of 1946, Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac was arrested in Zagreb and sentenced to long-term imprisonment following a staged political trial. Although Stepinac was imprisoned and isolated from the public, the Church remained independent of Communist authorities, and continued to be the only significant social force that defied the Communist hegemony.



A scene from a staged trial of Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac in Zagreb in October 1946.

The People's Republic of Croatia was one of the federal units of the restored Yugoslav state, which was proclaimed as the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in the autumn of 1945. Its borders, which coincide with the present-day borders of the Republic of Croatia, were defined in the period spanning from the end of the war to 1954. Shortly after the end of the war, the borders with other Yugoslav republics – Slovenia and Serbia – were also defined.

On paper, the republics were equal members of the Yugoslav federation, but since the latter was based on the model of the Stalin's USSR, they were subordinate to the Party's central control from Belgrade. The Communists implied that the creation of the People's Republic of Croatia was the solution to the Croatian national question and that it established a truly united, sovereign and equal Croatian state, as stated in the Croatian Constitution of 1947. However, everything was subordinated to the centralist policy of the state and the Party in Belgrade, which made the contents of the federal Yugoslav and republican constitutions merely a dead letter. After the end of the war, Yugoslav Communists emphasised the fraternity and unity of all the people of Yugoslavia, and frowned upon any public display of national symbols, associating the display of Croatian national symbols with separatist tendencies. The vast number of Croatian Serbs who fought with the Partisans during the war, and their strong presence within the Party, meant that they could control and prevent any display of desire for an independent Croatian state. There was a huge discrepancy between the proportion of Serbs within

the population of the People's Republic of Croatia and their representation in the institutions on which the Communist regime was based: the structures of government, the Party, institutions of repression (especially the police) and the military (the Yugoslav People's Army, henceforth referred to by the Croatian acronym: JNA). Most Croats felt resentment towards this situation but could not express themselves publicly because of the Party's hegemony.

Coat of arms and flag of the People's (Socialist) Republic of Croatia from 1947 to 1990.

Croats warned of the unscrupulous Serbianisation of their language in the "Declaration on the name and position of the Croatian literary language" (1967) and sought the equality of all national languages in Yugoslavia. In 1971, this striving to overcome Serbian dominance in Croatia and Yugoslavia turned into a national democratic movement known as the "Croatian Spring" (demand for economic reform and a democratisation and decentralisation of the state). The movement was abolished in December 1971, and was followed by mass arrests and persecutions, prompting many Croats to emigrate. Nevertheless, the "Croatian Spring" led to the adoption of the new Yugoslav Constitution (1974), incorporating confederate elements into the federal government system. The Basic Provisions of the 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia stress that the Croatian people have established their state, the Socialist Republic of Croatia, based on the right to self-determination, including the right to dissociate and associate with other peoples by their freely expressed will. In

The fall of the Croatian Spring at the end of 1971 brought about an increased repression of the regime towards many who emphasised their Croatian patriotism. Among the first to be arrested and soon thereafter sentenced in a staged trial were the leaders of Croatian students.

the period that followed (the uprising of Serbs in Croatia and the aggression of Serbia-Montenegro and the JNA against Croatia in 1991), these provisions were invoked as Croatia sought its separation from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the recognition of its independence by the international community.

V. THE HOMELAND WAR – A SOVEREIGN AND INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

The creation of the First and Second Yugoslavia after the two World Wars fulfilled the main goals of Greater Serbia, presented in a series of large-scale nineteenth and twentieth century projects: that all Serbs should live in one state, and that this state should have access to the sea. Proponents of a Greater Serbia were therefore prepared to uphold Yugoslavia as a political framework for their activities, only insofar as it remained a strictly centralised state dominated by its largest (Serbian) population and governed from Belgrade.

However, the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, symbolising the beginning of a new era of European history in which most Eastern European countries replaced the single-party Communist regimes with a democratic multi-party system, called into question the survival of a centralist Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. During the democratic, multi-party elections held in 1990, Croats, like most European peoples, rejected communism. However, Serbia's political elite refused to recognise the democratically elected government in Croatia

or accept any reform of Yugoslavia. Instead, they continued to carry out their 19th-century project for a Greater Serbia, which was relaunched by Serbian nationalists in the mid-1980s. According to this project, the western border of the Serbian state – the so-called Greater Serbia – was to be placed deep within the Croatian territory, along the line of Virovitica-Pakrac-Karlovac-Ogulin and part of Gorski Kotar-Karlobag. This was roughly the border established by Ottoman conquests in Croatia in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.

The media played an important role in creating the conditions for the implementation of the Greater Serbian project by publishing the draft of the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Belgrade's daily Večernje novosti in September 1986, which stressed the alleged vulnerability of the Serbian identity in Yugoslavia. Serbian nationalists were in fact striving for an even greater centralisation of the state. They called for Serbian dominance within the federation and the full influence of Belgrade over events in the autonomous Socialist provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, and the Socialist Republic of Montenegro. In these constituent regions of the SFRY, such nationalist Greater Serbian policies promoted by certain Serbian politicians resulted in a shift in political leadership at the end of 1988 and the beginning of 1989. This was followed by changes in the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, de facto abolishing the autonomy of the provinces. Considering that pro-Serbian representatives from Montenegro, Vojvodina and Kosovo were appointed to the SFRY Presidency (6 representatives from the republics and 2 from the autonomous provinces), Slobodan Milošević (the President of the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Serbia from 8 May 1989) controlled over half of its members, and Serbia was able to politically dominate other Yugoslav republics. Events in Serbia triggered reactions in the western Yugoslav republics of Croatia and Slovenia.

In line with the politics coming out of Belgrade, the representatives of part of the Serbian population in Croatia organised meetings in 1989 and early 1990 in the Socialist Republic of Croatia which they called "people's gatherings". These were intended for Serbs from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and exacerbated political relations between Serbia and Croatia. These gatherings, taking place on Croatian territory, were swamped with images of the new "all-Serbian" leader, Slobodan Milošević, flags of Serbia, Yugoslavia and the League of Communists, as well as Greater Serbian and anti-Croatian slogans. But even such aggressive Serbian policies could not halt the process of democratisation in Slovenia and Croatia. In April and early May 1990, free, multi-party elections were held in Croatia and won by the Croatian Democratic Union led by Franjo Tuđman.

Shortly after, in line with the demands of Serbian politicians, SFRY military forces reacted to the results of the Croatian elections by disarming the Croatian territorial defence, the republican section of the SFRY armed forces. The disarming was planned and expediently conducted by 23 May 1990, following a strictly confidential command, illicitly signed by the military Chief of Staff of the SFRY armed forces, Colonel General Blagoje Adžić, on 14 May 1990 (without the knowledge or consent of the SFRY Presidency). Three days later, Borisav Jović, an associate of Slobodan Milošević and a Serbian member of the SFRY Presidency, who acted as its President from 15 May 1990, wrote the following as published in his book, Poslednji dani SFRJ: Izvodi iz dnevnika [The last days of the SFRY: Excerpts from the diary] (Belgrade, 1995), page 146: "We practically disarmed them. Formally, this was done by the military Chief of Staff, but in actuality it was upon our command. Slovenes and Croats reacted fiercely, but they had no other alternatives." This therefore occurred before the handover of functions and the establishment of a new government in Croatia, in accordance with election results. The sequestered weapons from the Croatian territorial defence (estimates range from about 80,000 to 200,000 pieces of firearms) were placed in JNA magazines.

In this context, on 30 May 1990 at the constituting session of the new democratically elected Parliament, the Croatian Parliament elected Franjo Tuđman as President of the

The Celebration of the resurrection of Croatian Statehood on Zagreb's main square (today Ban Josip Jelačić's Square) on 30 May 1990.

Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Croatia.

On 25 July, amendments to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia were adopted, removing the adjective "Socialist" from the name of the state, establishing a traditional and historical coat of arms and flag, and adopting more appropriate titles for state functions: President, Government of the Republic of Croatia, Ministers and others. On the same day, Serbs adopted the Declaration on the Sovereignty and Autonomy of Serbs in Croatia at a meeting in Serbia. A "referendum on Serbian autonomy" was also announced from 19 August to 2 September 1990, which had no basis in republican or federal regulations.

Croatia's destabilisation after the elections continued with the anti-constitutional and terrorist actions perpetrated by some Serbs in Croatia, which developed into the armed rebellion initiated by a part of the Serbian population in Croatia in August 1990. Attempts by the Croatian police to establish order and secure peace in the areas of Dalmatia and Lika, where Serbian terrorists blocked roads with rocks and logs, were prevented by the JNA. The so-called "log revolution" was the response of part of the Serbs in Croatia to a democratic process and can be seen as the beginning of the armed rebellion of Serbs in Croatia against the democratically elected Croatian government. The goal of the rebellion was to annex part of the territory of the Republic of Croatia to a united Serbian state, which would cover most of the former Yugoslavia.

Certain conflicts between the Croatian police and Serbian terrorists were particularly fierce: in Pakrac on 2 March 1991; in Plitvice at Easter, on 31 March, when Josip Jović, a Croatian police officer and the first Croatian veteran to be killed in the Homeland War, died; and on 2 May 1991, when 12 Croatian police officers were massacred in an ambush in Borovo Selo (Slavonia), and one in Polača near Zadar (Dalmatia).

Such unacceptable circumstances in the country and the imposition of Serbian policies, which manifested itself through arbitrary and anti-constitutional decisions by the Presidency and Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, along with attempts to centralise and strengthen the political and economic position of Serbia to the detriment of other republics in the federation, led the Croatian and Slovene leadership to propose the restructuring of Yugoslavia into a confederate state. However, since the Serbian leadership rejected such a restructuring, Croatia and Slovenia embarked on the process of independence. Having ratified the new Constitution of the Republic of Croatia on 22 December 1990, and based on the results of the referendum held on 19 May 1991, on 25 June 1991 the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia adopted the Constitutional decision on sovereignty and independence and the Declaration on the establishment of a sovereign and independent Republic of Croatia, as well as the Charter on the Rights of Serbs and other Nationals in the Republic of Croatia. Facing pressure from the international community, the decision regarding independence was subsequently "postponed" for three months by the Brijuni Agreement, signed on 7 July 1991, so that

Poster for the "Referendum for Croatia", which took place in May 1991.

The promulgation of the Declaration on the Establishment of the Sovereign and Independent Republic of Croatia in the Croatian Parliament on 25 June 1991 (photography by Stanko Szabo)

negotiations on the peaceful resolution of the Yugoslav crisis could resume.

However, instead of negotiations, a direct and ruthless aggression by Serbia and Montenegro, i.e. by the JNA and Serbian paramilitary formations, was initiated from Bosnia and Herzegovina against the Republic of Croatia in early July 1991. In addition to the killing and persecution of civilians in eastern and western Slavonia, Banovina, Kordun,

Serbian poster: "One People, one Will, one State"; along the margins of the "flower" are the names of towns in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Beli Manastir, Petrinja, Knin, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Trebinje...) to be annexed to "Greater Serbia".

Lika and Dalmatia, Croatian cultural and religious sites and symbols, founding elements of Croatian national identity, were systematically destroyed throughout these areas.

The Serbian representative of the SFRY Presidency and acting President, Borisav Jović, wrote in his afore-mentioned book on the last days of the SFRY on page p 349 that on 5 July 1991, the SFRY Federal Secretary for National Defence (the Minister of Defence), Veljko Kadijević, "immediately accepted the request of the Serbian President Slobodan Milošević to impose JNA forces over all territories inhabited by Serbs until a final resolution was achieved, and to remove all Croats and Slovenes from the army". In fact, the JNA had already acted in accordance with the demands of the Serbian leadership: on 26 June, JNA troops helped the armed Serbian paramilitary militia in Croatia to occupy most of Glina, and on 3 July 1991, they attacked Baranja. Since the JNA had started to deploy in crisis areas in Croatia in May, by July 1991 it controlled all of the

bridges between Croatia and Serbia. By assuming important strategic positions, the JNA was ready to attack Croatia in early July 1991. The direct aggression of Serbia and the JNA against Croatia was not prevented by the above-mentioned Brijuni Agreement of 7 July 1991. According to this agreement, the JNA was supposed to withdraw to its barracks, and the Croatian representative in the SFRY Presidency, Stjepan Mesić, was to be elected its President, pursuant to the one-year rotating mandate of representatives of the different Yugoslav republics; this was opposed by Serbia as of 15 May 1991. Although the generals of the JNA Chief of Staff had been discussing a new plan of attack on Slovenia since early July, on 18 July 1991 the SFRY Presidency issued a decision to withdraw the JNA from Slovenia, a republic with relatively few Serbian residents. It is believed that this decision sealed the fate of Yugoslavia. Indeed, by adopting such a decision, the JNA leadership renounced its constitutional obligation to preserve the integrity of the existing state, and openly began following the demands of the Serbian leadership, pursuing the Greater Serbian policy that all Serbs from the territory of the former Yugoslavia should live in one state.

Ignoring the peace negotiations and attempts by the Croatian Government and the international community to resolve the crisis peacefully, in late September and early October, the JNA and troops from Serbia and Montenegro initiated a general attack on all fronts in Croatia, aiming to defeat the defence of the Republic of Croatia in 20 days. The fierceness of the attack was attested to by the judgement of foreign military analysts, who claimed that the Croatian defence would not be able to withstand for "more than two weeks". In his memoirs, the Yugoslav Defence Minister at the time and JNA General, Veljko Kadijević, presented the JNA's plan of attack on Croatia in the autumn of 1991:

"- Completely block off Croatia from the air and from the sea;

- The direction of the attacks of the main forces of the JNA must focus on the liberation of Serbian areas in Croatia and JNA garrisons deep within Croatian territory. To this end, cut off Croatia along the following lines: Gradiška – Virovitica, Bihać – Karlovac – Zagreb, Knin – Zadar, Mostar – Split. With the strongest group of armoured-vehicle forces, liberate eastern Slavonia, then swiftly resume westward progress, join with the forces in western Slavonia and progress towards Zagreb and Varaždin, and the border with Slovenia. At the same time, block Dubrovnik with strong troops from Herceg Novi

– Trebinje from the mainland, and break into the Neretva valley, thus cooperating with the forces operating in the direction of Mostar – Split;

- After reaching designated sites, secure and maintain the border of the Serbian Krajina in Croatia, withdraw the remaining elements of the JNA from Slovenia, and then withdraw the JNA from Croatia; (...)."

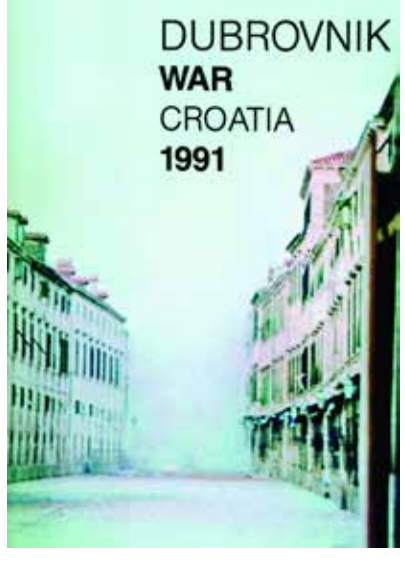
On 7 October, the day that the moratorium on the Croatian Parliament's decision regarding independence expired, JNA planes dropped bombs and launched missiles on the seat of the Croatian Government – Banski Dvori, in Zagreb's old town, Gornji Grad.

On 7 October 1991 JNA planes bombed Banski Dvori, the seat of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and Zagreb's Gornji grad (Upper Town) (photography by Hrvoje Knez)

The aim of the attack was to assassinate the President of the Republic, who at the time was in a meeting with the acting Prime Minister of Yugoslavia and President of the SFRY Presidency (both Croats). Troubled by this event as well as by images of destruction and news of numerous victims from other Croatian cities and villages under attack, and facing fierce aggression from the JNA, on the following day, 8 October 1991, the Croatian Parliament declared the independence of the Republic of Croatia. In fact, having established that the three-month postponement of the Constitutional Decision of 25 June 1991 had expired, the parliamentary representatives adopted the Decision on the Secession of the Republic of Croatia from SFRY, and its independence. The Republic of Croatia abolished all political and legal ties based on which, together with other republics and provinces, it had constituted the former SFRY.

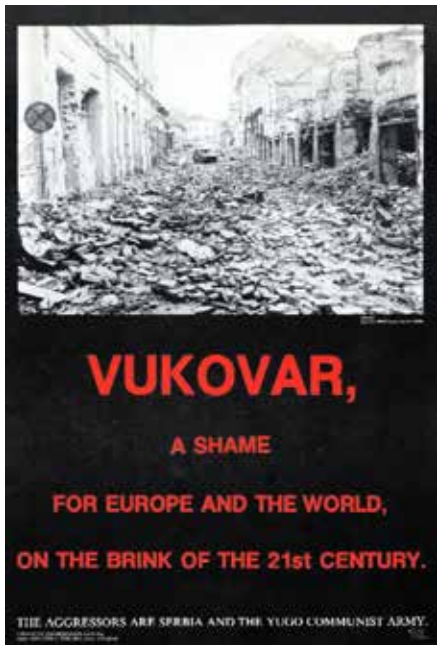
In response to the decisions and conclusions of the Croatian Parliament, on 18 October 1991 the European Community presented a plan for the reorganisation of Yugoslavia into a community of sovereign states at The Hague Conference on Yugoslavia. "The Agreement on the General Resolution of the Yugoslav Crisis", known as the "Carrington Plan", proposed the creation of a "free association among sovereign and independent republics with comprehensive agreements including supervisory mechanisms for the protection of human rights and a special status for certain groups", and provided for the "recognition of republics wishing it, within the existing borders." The proposed plan was accepted by all Yugoslav republics, except Serbia. Subsequently, Montenegro also withdrew its consent to the plan. Thus, the exclusive nature of the Serbian political leadership and the JNA's military leadership sealed the fate of Yugoslavia, making its bloody dissolution inevitable. At this stage, Croatia accelerated the process for its international recognition.

By the end of 1991, the JNA and Serbian-Montenegrin troops occupied almost one-third of Croatia, which at the beginning of the aggression was unarmed and practically without its own army; it only contained of a police force which was ethnically mixed. Nevertheless, contrary to the predictions of military analysts that were based on the aggressor's massively superior weaponry and technology, Croatia was not defeated. The



Poster "DUBROVNIK/WAR/CROATIA/1991" Author: Tomislav Gusić, photography by Pavo Urban, Dubrovnik, 1991. The image shows stone dust on Stradun, the central street of old Dubrovnik, after the explosion of a shell on 6 December 1991. On that day Dubrovnik suffered one of its heaviest attacks. This was one of the last photographs taken by Pavo Urban, who died later that day near Orlando's Column from a shrapnel wound.

long-held Serbian dream of a western border for a Greater Serbia along the Virovitica-Karlovac-Karlobag line was lost somewhere in the Slavonian mud, during the legendary battle for Vukovar, and on other battlefields in Croatia. The heroism of the Croatian defenders and their ability to improvise prevented the progress of the aggressors across all Croatian battlefields, and the end of the year marked the first major liberation operations in western Slavonia. This resulted in a peace agreement in Sarajevo (2 January 1992), which temporarily halted the war in Croatia.



Poster "Vukovar" A Shame for Europe and the World, on the Brink of the 21st century".

Consequences of Serbian attacks and destruction in 1991 in the village of Bogdanovci (photography by Marko Perić)

In the period during which the Homeland was being defended and the state created, the Croats relied on the Church in Croatia for their spiritual guidance, inspired by the speeches and support of Pope John Paul II. Moreover, in August 1991, at the very beginning of the Greater Serbian aggression against Croatia, the sermon of Cardinal Franjo Kuharić strongly resonated among Croatian defenders. In it, he appealed to their moral values even in warfare: "Godliness implies humanity, and humanity is patriotism! Therefore, our patriotism must not be poisoned by hate or desire for vengeance. The defence of freedom and peace is both a right and a duty, but always within the limits of the state of law. (...) Therefore, our patriotism must not be racist, nor imperialist, nor chauvinistic. Our patriotism is Christian. (...) If my enemy has burned down my house, I will not burn his! If he has destroyed my church, I will not touch his; in fact I will preserve it. If he has left his home, I will not take so much as a needle from his home! If he has killed my father, brother, sister, I will not seek revenge, but will respect the life of his father, brother, son, and sister."

On 15 January 1992, Croatia received its recognition, earned through bloodshed, from the European Community. Then, on 22 May 1992, Croatia became a Member of the UN along with the former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, after Bosnia and Herzegovina gained international recognition on 6 April 1992, the Serbs, with the help of the JNA, launched a war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serbian aggression on Croatia (1991) and then on Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992) constituted the most atrocious events to take place on European soil since World War II.

In 1992 and 1993, Bosnian Serb forces managed to conquer significant parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The crucial point for the Serbian side was to control the so-called corridor, i.e. the road that connected the Serbs with the occupied territories in Croatia, and part of Bosnia and Herzegovina with Serbia, which passed through the Bosnian part of Posavina. Despite Serbian gains, the Croatian Council of Defence managed to achieve strategic victories over Serbian forces, which on several occasions attempted to conquer Herzegovina and reach the Croatian coast through the Livno field and the Neretva valley.

During 1992, 1993 and 1994, the Croatian Government tried to peacefully restore the occupied parts of its territory, with the help of European and global diplomatic means, and the newly-arrived UN Peace Corps. At the same time, due to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia had to ensure the defence of Croats in that area, as well as to

prevent Serbian troops from threatening the Republic of Croatia from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because of the Serbian aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina, and soon because of the Croatian-Muslim war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more than 400,000 Croats had to leave their homes in this region. Due to Serbian aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina, hundreds of thousands of Muslims escaped to Croatia, where they were assisted and helped by Croatian authorities even during the Croatian-Muslim conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Serbian forces were able to keep their hold over conquered territory partly thanks to the conflict between Muslim-Bosniak Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Croatian Council of Defense. Aside from the occasional standstill, this conflict lasted from the end of 1992 to 1993, until the Croatian-Bosnian ceasefire agreement was signed in Washington DC (USA) in March 1994. This conflict stemmed from mutual distrust and differing opinions regarding the internal organisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Bosniak politicians favoured a unitary Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Croatian politicians advocated for the creation of specific Croatian, Bosniak and Serbian territorial entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the ultimate goal of the Serbian policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina was to annex a part of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia, i.e. unite the self-proclaimed Serbian Republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the self-proclaimed Republic of Serbian Krajina – the occupied area in Croatia – as a precondition for creating the imagined Greater Serbia). The Washington Agreement anticipated the reconstruction of Croatian-Bosniak military cooperation and the establishment of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, encompassing the Croats and Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims (Bosniaks) of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The agreement also envisaged a confederation between the Republic of Croatia and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but this was never realised. Based on this cooperation, a coordinated action of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatian forces from the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina ensued, resulting in a series of Serbian military defeats during 1995, and forcing the Serbian leadership into peace negotiations and the end of the war.

Since Serb insurgents and terrorists in Croatia rejected all proposals from the Croatian Government and the international community for a "peaceful reintegration" into the legal order of the Republic of Croatia, the restructured Croatian Army, made up of well-trained professional brigades, along with special forces from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, conducted the military operations "Flash" ("Bljesak", May 1995) and "Storm" ("Oluja", August 1995) to liberate most of the occupied territory of the Republic of Croatia, and thus ensured the restitution of the remaining occupied part of Eastern Slavonia.

The beginning of Operation Storm. Croatian Army forces crossed the Sava early in the morning on 4 August 1995 (photography by Željko Gašparović)

Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and the Minister of Defence Gojko Šušak review the honorary detachment of the 4th and 7th Guardian Brigades on 6 August 1995 in Knin. (photography by Gordan Laušić)

Allies meet: Croatian Army General Marijan Mareković and General of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina Atif Dudaković on 6 August 1995 near Tržačke Raštele.

Memorial cemetery for the victims of the Homeland War in Knin; 938 white crosses, one cross for each victim exhumed from mass graves in the area. (photography by Marko Perić)

"The winner who does not know how to forgive, plants the seed of strife and future evil. The Croatian people do not want this. They did not want what they had suffered in Vukovar and in all of Croatia. All that we are doing now is not limited by local interests, rather by the overall interests of Croats and Europeans; it is in the interest of peace, the future of this region and Europe. Let coexistence between the Croatian and Serbian people and other ethnic communities flourish in this region! Let us celebrate the life of unique and eternal Croatia!" From the speech delivered by the President of the Republic of Croatia Franjo Tuđman in Vukovar on 8 June 8 1997.

Operation Storm enabled the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina to break the long Serbian siege of Bihać. This prevented a new humanitarian disaster in Bosnia and Herzegovina and further horrific crimes from being committed by Serbian soldiers, such as following the conquest of Srebrenica, where they killed more than 8,000 Muslims or Bosniaks (according to the Potočari Memorial Centre).

Following Operation "Storm", in accordance with the agreement between the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and the President of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Presidency Alija Izetbegović (Split Declaration, 22 July 1995), Croatian forces continued fighting against Serbian forces in the territory of neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina. During several major military operations, a considerable part of the occupied territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was liberated, and Serbian forces faced complete collapse. In this context, the international community compelled the warring parties to sign the Dayton Agreement (November 1995), which ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, there was a general impression that the deal was not fair, that those who had initiated the aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina were rewarded (the Serbs), and that the results of the Serbian aggression were recognised. The Serbian entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina received the territory from which almost all non-Serbs were expelled (most of Bosanska Posavina, etc.), even the area where Serbian forces committed genocide (Srebrenica).

The other entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) was envisaged by the Dayton Agreement as a federation of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims (Bosniaks) and Croats. However, coexistence in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (i.e. relations between Croats and Bosniaks) is burdened by the period of armed conflict between these nations, by Croats' fears based on the predominance of the Bosniaks, and by the distrust Bosniaks feel towards Croats.

The European Parliament holds the view that Bosniak centralism and Serbian separatism are jeopardising Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that federalism is the key to Bosnia and Herzegovina's path towards European integration (a debate on this issue was held in January 2014). This stance confirms that Croatian fears are justified and that the Dayton provisions must be reviewed to satisfy all three constituent peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consequently, it can be concluded that if even in 2014 the European Parliament was advocating federalism as a political and democratic solution

for Bosnia and Herzegovina, then official Croatian policy, both in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, cannot be accused of forming a "Greater Croatia", considering that since the 1990s it has publicly advocated for a federal organisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, all international plans and proposals (Cutileiro, Vance-Owen, Owen-Stoltenberg) provided for constitutional solutions for Bosnia and Herzegovina on federal or confederate grounds. This was precisely why the official Croatian policy was the first, and often the only one, to accept the international community's proposals. By accepting and implementing international community proposals, Croatian officials and generals were aware that this was the only means they had to protect the national interests of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see: Miroslav Tuđman, "Hague Indictments against Tuđman's Croatia and the 'Velvet Reconstruction' of the Communist Past", The Hague Tribunal Acquittals of Tuđman's Croatia, Zagreb, 2014, p. 96).

To understand the role of Croats and Croatian policy during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s, the following facts are key:

- Since 1990, Croatia has consistently advocated for the respect of republican borders;

- The Croatian votes cast at the referendum for the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina (29 February and 1 March 1992), upon the recommendation of the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, were crucial to its success;

- Croatia recognised Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent state on 7 April 1992, i.e. the day following its recognition by the European Community on 6 April and on the same day as the United States of America, while Serbia did not do so until after the war;

- Croatian troops, together with the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, participated in the defense and liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: in 1992, Croatian troops prevented Serbian forces from capturing strategically significant regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar and the Neretva valley, the entire Bosanska Posavina, Livno, Tomislavgrad, Rama and Neum) and occupying an even larger part of the country, and in 1995 they liberated large areas (more than 5,000 km2) in Western Bosnia, whereby they saved Bihać from the Serbian occupation and prevented a new Serbian genocide against the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims (Bosniaks);

- The analysis of the strengths and numbers of volunteers and troops from Croatia that fought against the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (roughly 1,400-1,800 soldiers) shows that their tasks were primarily defensive (to enable the survival of the Croatian people in the areas where they lived), i.e. these forces could only serve to "patch up the front lines", not carry out aggression. The Croatian Army forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina were mostly engaged in a fight against Serbian forces, based on an agreement between the Croatian and Muslim (Bosniak) leadership, to prevent Serbian attacks from Bosnia and Herzegovina on Croatia, and to protect Croats from Serbian aggression. Their secondary task was to help Croatian forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina defend themselves from attacks by the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in central Bosnia, where the Muslim (Bosniak) forces, strengthened by numerous Islamist fighters arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina to create an Islamic state (the "Mujahideen"), expelled more than 150,000 Croats;

- The Croatian leadership acted within the political framework defined by the international community, which is reflected in the fact that only the Croatian leadership accepted every proposal from the international community regarding conflict resolution and the internal organisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia was committed to an integral and sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina in all its statements and contributions to the preparation of international peace treaties;

- The Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna (18 November 1991), i.e. its military and administrative organisation, was born in reaction to Serbian decisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This occurred during a period of uncertainty when the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina were unable to protect Croats from imminent Serbian aggression (the Croatian Republic of Herceg-Bosna was proclaimed on 28 August 1993, after conflicts began between the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Croatian Council of Defence, in accordance with the international community's plans regarding the internal division of Bosnia and Herzegovina into three entities);

- Croatia assisted in the arming and training of members of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

- Due to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia took in refugees and displaced persons from that country irrespective of their ethnic and religious affiliation.

Since the beginning of the war until mid-October 1994, even during the conflicts between Croats and Bosnian Muslims, the Office of the Republic of Croatia for displaced persons and refugees helped provide for more than 600,000 refugees and displaced persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina (roughly 425,000 Muslims or Bosniaks, 170,000 Croats, and 5,000 others). At the same time, hospitals in Croatia treated members of the Croatian Council of Defence, along with wounded members of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and civilians –Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims (Bosniaks).

Finally, it should not be forgotten that the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina acted as a base for Serbian aggression against Croatia in 1991; that Croatia was directly threatened from that same territory even after 1991; and that during one phase of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina there was a tragic conflict between the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Croatian Council of Defense (which benefited the Serbian aggressors most of all), with crimes being committed on both sides, and whose perpetrators should be punished. Both Croatian and Muslim extremists in Bosnia and Herzegovina were responsible for unacceptable and unauthorised actions at local levels, but above all else, the cause of the war, i.e. the responsibility of the Serbian leadership, and the leadership of Bosnian Serbs and the JNA for beginning the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, should be borne in mind. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was in fact a continuation of the war in Croatia, the second stage of Serbian aggression, which began with attacks on Croatia in the summer of 1991 to achieve the goal that "all Serbs should live in one state". Everything else, including the war between Croats and Bosnian Muslims and the greatly reduced number of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is a result of this aggression.

VI. CROATIA IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The end of the war in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina removed the obstacles which had prevented the development of democracy in Croatia and the transformation of Croatia into a modern state – a state of justice and prosperity for all its citizens. The Croatian leadership could once again devote itself to fulfilling Croatia's strategic foreign policy goal: membership of the Euro-Atlantic alliance. Due to its civilisation and cultural values, Croatia strived for accession to the EU, and due to security concerns, for NATO membership. This could not be achieved during the conflict, but once the war ended, Croatia's EU membership process advanced slowly due to the war's aftermath and unresolved border issues with its neighbours, as well as EU criteria for receiving new members. Negotiations lasted from late 2005 until 1 July 2013, when Croatia finally joined the EU as its 28th Member State. Prior to that, Croatia was admitted to NATO in 2009.

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