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**"Between Utopia and Dystopia:
The Labilities of Nationalism
in Eastern Europe"**

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BETWEEN UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA:
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UTOPIA, DYSTOPIA AND LABILITY

Utopia has been used to refer to an idea, a thing to dream about, a transcendent vision designed to replace an unsatisfactory present.¹ Most often, these visions have as their object of transcendence whole societies, whose core is fundamentally flawed, and which should be replaced through the utopian operation.² Utopia is therefore a form of criticism containing a hope of practical change.

Dystopia can only exist with utopia: dystopia is the claimed utopia gone wrong. It is designed to make the normative present³ seem a better alternative to what utopia promises. By sanctioning this present state of affairs, dystopia sparks the powers of negative imagination, much as utopia sparks more generous possibilities in human imagination.

Utopia and dystopia connote a state of proteic lability. They appear to be unstable in relation to each other, as one tends to fold into the other. They constantly generate their opposites, harboring a dialectical relationship to each other, yet yielding no synthesis. Dystopic visions can only emerge out of the critique of utopic ones, but dystopic visions also romanticize the present, giving the present moment an eutopic, or normatively desirable, quality.⁴ Dystopia is therefore seen also as "abnormal," making normality not only extent, but also good.

1 Especially as it was used in in the discourse of the Institute for the Humanities in the Fall of 1992, in the midst of which this paper was written.

2 Of course there are many utopian communities the size of villages or small towns, from the Kibbutz to the Shakers, but we do not mean to refer to such experiments in the reconstruction of life at a face to face level. Our comments are mostly directed at the "societal" level of nations and their states, much as the most consequential visions of nationalism, liberalism and socialism were directed in this century.

3 We say normative present to distinguish actual conditions from the "normality" that *ought* to exist were the utopian project not engaged. This distinction is important to introduce to take into account those writers (e.g. Eugene Zamyatin and George Orwell) criticizing the dystopian present in communist-led societies on the basis of an imagined "normal" present, embryonic in the liberation of societies from their dystopian oppressors.

Our paper is an exploration of the labile relationship among utopia, dystopia and eutopia, within a specific regional context where the lability of alternative visions is most developed.

The fluid history of Eastern Europe makes the region the perfect site to consider the lability of these utopias. The "sick heart of Europe" was the term Hugh Seton-Watson⁵ used to describe this region, not without cause. If we can say that a sick heart comes from an uncertainty as to how to think about oneself, or within what vision to project oneself, then Eastern Europe's heart is truly sick, and it is sick with confusion. For nowhere else in the world has the lability among visions associated with communism, nationalism and liberalism been more prominent.

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When one speaks of this lability in Eastern Europe today, the countries that leap to mind are the former Yugoslavia, the soon-to-be former Czechoslovakia and the new Germany. In each of these cases, the lability of the utopias within a discourse of nationalism, communism and liberalism is prominent, but in different forms from what we consider today.

Our presentation is not inspired by these cases, for if it were, the pains associated with the reconfiguration of national boundaries, whether through violent or peaceful means, would have to loom large in our accounts. Our focus is more on the reconstitution of societal identities without the making of new boundaries among nations and their states.

Our analysis is informed by a comparison of nationalism, communism and liberalism in Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and Romania. Their various historical trajectories and post-communist conditions allow us to adopt a novel vantage point from which we might understand the lability of utopic visions that have so dominated the history of Eastern Europe. Their comparison allows us to see the variability within national visions so easily homogenized with reference to the opposition

4 Thomas More, who used the term "utopia" for the first time, played on the two Greek words: good place (*eu-topos*) and no place (*ou-topos*). When *eutopia* has been used in subsequent literary scholarship, its deployment signifies the existence of a good place, rather than its impossibility, as *ou-topos* suggests.

5 Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Sick Heart of Europe: The Problem of the Danubian Lands*, University of Washington Press, 1975.

between nationalism and liberalism.⁶ Our intent is not to give you the systematic comparison among these countries that we are elaborating for other uses.⁷ Rather, we shall suggest a couple of ways in which we can think about the lability of utopias by drawing upon the relationships between these visions in our four cases.

Before we turn to illustrations of our thesis, we should consider the different reasons why we think this lability in topias exists.

WHY IS THERE LABILITY?

The same quality of human mind can make up utopia or dystopia. Both are figments of imagination engendered by a critical attitude. The criteria of their criticisms are not based on objective conditions, as much as in subjective factors. The importance of subjectivity in making utopia thus means that clear cut distinctions are hard to draw. What for some is a utopia, for others may be dystopia, and vice versa.

Because utopia is so subjective, it can easily be transformed into a dystopic vision, much as any fiction can be modified by another author. But utopia itself has something more to it, for its fictional state, though gratifying, is not satisfactory. It demands fulfillment by its translation

⁶ In a footnote, one can only suggest the richness of the comparisons. One might distinguish the social groups which historically "embody" the nation, by comparing the "aristocratic" nationalisms of Poland and Hungary to the "peasant" nationalisms of Ukraine and Romania. Ukraine and Romania each had well developed integral nationalisms between the world wars, while Poland and Hungary's integral nationalisms were always comparatively limited by the aristocratic lineages national ideologues would draw. While one can draw similarities along these dimensions, the similarities inspired by the interaction of contending nationalisms, between Poland and Ukraine, on the one hand, and between Romania and Hungary, for example, on the other, can be drawn. Hungarian irredentist claims on Transylvania, while diminished after World War II, nevertheless continue to inspire Romanian nationalism on its main course. Ukrainian nationalism has always had *both* Russian and Polish visions to contest, if in different ways. The struggle to claim national status was inspired by both Russians and Poles insisting that Ukrainians were not a really separate nation.

⁷ We have taught a course in the fall of 1992 which tries to develop this systematic comparison, and we hope to use it as a basis for a more sustained analysis of these nations' different trajectories.

into "reality". However as soon as the utopia is transformed into reality, it must begin to lose that innocence conferred to it by its past imaginary existence.

Any vision is always based on an incomplete account of reality. Since reality is made up of an infinite set of qualities, any intervention is likely to generate a set of responses that the author could hardly anticipate, and could hardly include in the original vision. Utopias transformed into practical programs for reorganizing societies thus inevitably descend from the original hopes of dreamers. They step out of the realm of the ideal, although different visions of utopia carry different implicit tides of lability. It matters what the original dream looked like. Even when Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden, that which they lost informed the character of their discontent.

REAL EXISTING SOCIALISM

The changes of 1989-91 in Eastern Europe have led many commentators⁸ to argue that the appeal of utopian thinking, and especially its experiments, has been destroyed. Communist rule itself first helped to erase from both East European and world imaginations the variety of socialisms that once existed in Eastern Europe generally.⁹ As communism helped to erase alternative socialisms, the dystopia of real existing socialism helped to destroy the appeal of utopia itself. Actual socialism created only the eutopia of "normality," in a typically labile way. For the apparatchiks, actual socialism became a normality providing relative privilege, but deprived of any utopian pretension. For the common folk, the good life associated with normality lay outside their dystopic world of everyday life.

8 Jonathan Beecher, for example, used this to introduce his colloquium to the Institute for the Humanities: "Two Concepts of Utopia," September 11, 1992.

9 The variety of socialisms changes by place, of course. In our set, Romania had the least developed socialist tradition, and while Hungary had more alternative socialisms, Ukrainians and Poles seemed to generate the greatest variety, the internationalist communist form being generally the least domestically popular. Consider, for instance, the stateless socialism of an Abramowski, and the patriotic socialisms of a Brzozowski or Drahomanov and Franko.

This latter eutopia of normality depended upon the recognition of the dystopia of real existing socialism. Although the person on the street would see this dystopia in the totality of control, the dystopia of Romanian socialism can be explained in a more analytical fashion:¹⁰ The Romanian public sphere was appropriated by the party/state. The party/state controlled the media, public space and associations. Every citizen was enrolled into some kind of organization, from the "Front of Socialist Unity" for adults to the "Falcons of the Fatherland" for children aged 3 to 7. All of these organizations were supposed to extend the mass basis of democracy, but in fact they just served as means to implement the official policies of the party. Whenever the party leadership took some important decision, it was "unanimously, enthusiastically approved" by these organizations.

The only "civic" attitude that was allowed was to interfere with other people's lives and deeds. This was the specific communist empowerment of the individual. He was made to feel strong only if he was backed by some kind of official institution, like the party or police. Instead of defending citizens from the authorities or other forms of organized power, the "civic" attitude in this Romanian dystopia helped reproduce an atmosphere of fear.

This kind of dystopic description depends, of course, on the embrace of its antithesis: the liberal democratic utopia which the socialist experiment claimed to supercede. In this sense, the construction of socialism relied on the critique of liberalism's eutopia, but the latter also provided the foundation for the utopian imagination that helped end communist rule across Eastern Europe.

Although communist rule extended across Eastern Europe, the dystopia of Romanian real socialism was far more developed than in any other communist led society. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that in the popular consciousness of East Europeans, the various degrees of socialist dystopia are not seen as much as is the commonness of this dystopia across Eastern Europe. One can even see this in the construction of public opinion surveys administered by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research and their East European collaborators when

¹⁰ It was in this form that Nicolae Harsanyi explained how he perceived the dystopia of socialism to our common class on East European nationalism.

they construct the image that East Europeans are all leaving the same dystopia behind, and moving toward the same eutopia of normality.¹¹ But what is that normality?

Is the eutopia of normality the import of the civil societies and market economies of Western Europe or North America? Or is it the normality of pre-communist Eastern Europe? In either case, the "normal" becomes rather utopian in a sense, because a remote way of life is first being imagined, and then called into being, in an entirely different society from that which existed between the wars or beyond the Iron Curtain. In the decades of communist rule, these societies became more industrialized and urbanized, but different from the West, as the tensions between East and West Germans in post-communist reconstruction illustrate. But whatever the experience of "normality" after the revolution, in 1989, the power of the socialist dystopia moved the people of communist-led societies to call for an eutopia of normality, which itself has many utopian elements.

The "normal" in anti-communist discourse denies, after all, what exists in communist-led society or its aftermath as desirable and rather elevates to definitive features of normality certain elements that were ostensibly absent in socialist dystopia. The eutopic vision of normality is thus a transcendent vision based on the critique of the present. It is all the more powerful, however, because it denies its utopian dimensions, not entirely without justification. Nationalism, after all, is a very different kind of utopian vision than is the mislaid utopia associated with communist rule.

¹¹ This comment is based on Kennedy's participation in a conference sponsored by ISR in winter 1992 in which he was asked to comment on a paper given by Elena Bashkirova, a Moscow-based public opinion researcher. She was reporting on the Times-Mirror survey on Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and other places, detailing the different responses to the appeal of the market, democracy and so on among these different post-communist countries. When Kennedy suggested that this was a misleading construction, that all are headed in the same direction of normality, leaving more or less the same place behind, Ronald Inglehart countered that one can always reduce social change to a more contextual level, and that this more abstract construction was a legitimate level of analysis.

NATIONALISM

One important characteristic generating the lability of the communist utopia is the irreducible gap between its ideal and reality. Because scientific socialism only claimed to know the process by which its promised utopia would be made, and that like a horizon, communism would never be reached, deviations from the promise of socialism's alternative could always be explained in terms of errant practices but never errant ideals. The ideal could remain pure because its implementation was always quite distant from it. Indeed, the powerful idealism and purity of the utopia has made many communists and socialists recant their left politics in the name of the ideals which once motivated their practices. In contrast, nationalists rarely recant.

Nationalists rarely recant because of the different way in which the nationalist utopia relates to the practice of realizing it. Nationalism and communism differ in their scope. Communist utopias depend on transforming the whole of society in order to realize the elusive construct, while nationalist utopias depend on preserving that which external forces threaten to destroy. That preservation might require alterations in some domains,¹² but changes are made principally in order to save that which already exists, and that which is of the greatest value: the nation.

In a way, nationalism then becomes the obvious foe to the communist experiment in Eastern Europe. Communism threatens with its universalism the particularity of the national potential based on its distinctive patrimony.¹³ Although communism might be invoked in struggle for national liberation against invaders, as in Yugoslavia during World War II, communism once in power also seems to generate nationalist opposition even when communism appears more or

12 As Friederich List insisted that the relationship between the state and the economy be rearranged for all nations developing capitalism after England; see Roman Szporluk, Communism and Nationalism: Karl Marx vs Friederich List. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

13 For a particularly good essay comparing the apparent thinness and abstractness of communism as a universal program, and the relative cultural depth of nationalism, see Kenneth Minogue and Beryl Williams, "Ethnic Conflict in the Soviet Union: The Revenge of Particularism" in Alexander Motyl (ed.) Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

less home-grown, as in Croatia in 1970-71 or even Serbia after Tito's death seem to suggest. Nationalism need not be deployed against communism, however. It might also be marshalled in communism's defense, as it was in Romania by Ceausescu.

Despite nationalism's multiple uses, nationalist utopias never claim the same universalism associated with socialism. Nationalist utopias are always exclusive in a sense; even the most "inclusive" and universal of nationalisms, that of the French or perhaps the Americans, demand conformity to commonly held visions of what it means to be French or American, even while they claim to allow anyone, regardless of bloodline, to become a member of the nation. Even the attempt to make Soviet patriotism an alternative to an ethnically national focus foundered on the rocks of what language this supranational expression would use to express its reverence.¹⁴

Not only, then, is nationalism less universalist than socialism, but it also is less ambivalent about the relationship of the individual to the collective in its utopia. Socialist utopia promised not only a certain kind of collective order based on greater equality and democracy, but also claimed to be creating the conditions for individual self-realization, transcending both the division of labor and local culture. Nationalism, by contrast, celebrates the individual only in so far as they are extensions of the nation. Indeed, most nationalist discourses incorporate outstanding individuals in their accounts, as heroes, martyrs and geniuses, but usually to epitomize the greatness of the collective body, and not the distinction of the individual.¹⁵

It is more difficult, however, to homogenize nationalisms as socialisms have been homogenized with communist rule. With nationalism's anti-universalist claims comes also apparent diversity, and not just with regard to content. Nationalism has many faces, as each

14 For a wonderful discussions of the difficulties and alternatives involved in language policy of multinational states, see Paul R. Brass "Language and National Identity in the Soviet Union and India" in Alexander Motyl (ed.) Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

15 The individual epitomizing the nation, from the intellectual to the soldier, is usually male. Physicist Marie Curie Skłodowska for Poland and revolutionary heroine Ana Ipatescu in Romania are exceptions which prove the rule. Individual greatness that epitomizes the nation's essence is male; women are typically identified with the nation as its collective silent womb.

nation claims their action based on national consciousness to be different from the consciousness of others.

There are many labels used to distinguish among these nationalisms¹⁶, for instance the distinction between political and ethnic nationalism, or the distinction between liberal nationalism and integral nationalism, or the distinctions among official, revolutionary and diaspora nationalisms. One of the most interesting enterprises in the study of nationalism is to consider whether it is in fact a disservice to label all of these different forms variations on a common theme. Nevertheless, we establish that commonality in order to make nationalism's lability apparent. Categorizing them as essentially different from one another stabilizes the problem with a semantic gesture inappropriate to their transformations and mutations in practical activity.

Nationalist utopias may be the most powerful transcendent visions in Eastern Europe, both historically and in the present. Because modern national consciousness was forged and cultivated in Eastern Europe at a time when imperial rather than nation states were the rule, nationalism acquired an emancipatory vision. The main dimension of oppression was identified to be the oppression of one nation by other nations, or of a nation by the supranational imperial state itself.

16 Andrzej Walicki notes an important problem that constantly interferes in the dialogue between Anglo-Saxons and East Europeans. For the latter, nationalism is usually understood only in a narrow way, "it is a pejorative term, meaning, approximately, the same as chauvinism, narrow national egoism, state expansionism, intolerant attitudes toward national minorities and so forth" and was distinguished in the early nineteenth century from patriotism. In Anglo Saxon discourse, however, nationalism combines "every concern with winning national independence, awakening national consciousness or preserving national identity" Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982. (p. 5). Walicki then writes "the contemporary English usage of the term 'nationalism' has many obvious advantages; it is perhaps preferable to have a common term for all the different -- both positive and negative -- manifestations of national feeling and national consciousness at different stages of their historical evolution" (pp. 5-6). We agree. What is more, the English use of the term also allows us to find the "bad" in the ostensibly "good," to discover even in ostensibly patriotic discourses the oppression of others as Ukrainians could find in Polish universalist claims, and the utopian in the apparently dystopian integral nationalisms, as when otherwise decent people are moved to sacrifice themselves and their families for an exclusive organic vision of their nation.

The period between the two world wars changed that, as many nations, although not all, realized their own states.¹⁷ With the nation's attainment of statehood, the nationalist utopia became dystopic, precisely because it was realized.

The ideal of the nation seems lofty, but at the same time it is at one's fingertips. Unlike the communist utopia where the ideal is distant, the nationalist ideal is already present, embedded with the people of the nation and emboldened by its past. The nation needs tools and channels, however, to allow its full expression. The national poet or the nation state are typical vehicles through which the national ideal can be expressed. At the hands of the poet, however, the nation may retain its utopian quality, but at the hands of the state, it rarely can. Nevertheless, for most nationalist movements, poets are necessary but not sufficient. The state is a much more compelling way to assert the nation.

Nation states of course express their nationalisms in different ways, being more and less tolerant of differences, or more and less insistent on conformity. But they all emphasize the primacy of national identity in the range of possible affiliations.¹⁸ Certainly nationalism's dystopic quality is most obvious when it engages the "outsider," the ethnic, national or racial minority.

In Poland and Hungary, post-communist nationalism seems comparatively innocent vis-a-vis its ethnic minorities because of the overwhelming perception that they are homogenous societies. But this perception is partly a consequence of communism itself.

Communism helped to create the illusion of national homogeneity, expelling and forcing the assimilation or emigration of minorities. Those Germans who remained in Poland, for instance, were officially prohibited from establishing their own cultural associations and using German in schools. Anti-German propaganda and popular sentiment among Poles discouraged those with

17 Ukraine, despite revolutionary struggles between 1917 and 1921, was denied fully independent status when most of its territory was incorporated into the Soviet Union as one of its socialist soviet republics, while a sizeable minority of Ukrainians lived within the Polish state.

18 See Craig Calhoun, "Why Nationalism? Sovereignty, Self-Determination and Identity in a World System of States," American Journal of Sociology (forthcoming).

German ancestry from pushing their distinction. Even in an obviously more multinational state like Romania, homogenization moved ahead.

After 1965, the Romanian official position was to create a homogeneous nation without any kind of ethnic distinctions in which all would speak the "language of work". Because of the increasing restrictions on the possibilities for minorities to express their distinction, this common language of work sounded more and more like Romanian. Hungarians and Serbs had to adapt and become acculturated; Germans and Jews could be sold to West Germany and Israel.¹⁹ The status of Gypsies or the Roma Nation throughout Eastern Europe was the worst, and also the least understood.²⁰

In post-communist societies, however, the minorities tend to be elevated and even celebrated in the most official liberal public discourse, that of parliamentary representation. The Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania has about 7 per cent of the seats in the Romanian parliament, and each ethnic minority, including the Roma, has at least one representative. In Poland the new authorities actually encouraged Ukrainian and German minorities to enter parliament.²¹ Outside parliaments, Jewish contributions to Polish culture are celebrated in conferences.²² The Ukrainian movement Rukh has a Jewish activist, Aleksandr Burakovsky, as chair of its Council of Nationalities, and in its literature, makes every attempt to construct a Ukrainian nationalism that celebrates its multinational condition.

19 See Richard Wagner, "Ethnic Minorities in the National State: The Case of Germans in Romania," a paper presented at the conference, Utopian Revisions: Nationalism and Civil Society in Eastern Europe, Institute for the Humanities, the University of Michigan, October 29 and 30, 1992.

20 See Nicoale Gheorghe, "Roma-Gypsy Ethnicity," Social Research 58:4(1991):829-44.

21 See Janusz Mucha, "Democratization and Cultural Minorities: The Polish Case of the 1980's/1990s," East European Quarterly 25:4(1992):463-82.

22 For one example, see Antony Polonsky's (ed.) collection, My Brother's Keeper: Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust, Routledge, 1990. In a more literary vein, the interest in Polish-Jewish writers like Bruno Szulc has increased considerably, yielding, among other things, a major conference on his work. Theodosia Robertson discussed this in her presentation to the University of Michigan's Center for Russian and East European Studies on October 21, 1992 entitled "New Perspectives on the Career of Bruno Szulc, 1882-1942".

While diversity is celebrated among East European liberals, ethnic and national tensions proliferate among others, even in the liberally defined public sphere. Anti-semitic themes were prominent in the anti-Mazowiecki campaign in Poland's 1990 presidential elections²³, in Istvan Csurka's critique of post-communist Hungary²⁴ and in the attacks on Petre Roman, the former Romanian prime minister.

More physical expressions of this intolerance are also present. The most dramatic examples occur in the anti-Romany violence in Hungary, Poland, Romania and elsewhere throughout Eastern Europe. But threats are also felt among those better represented and more celebrated in the new post-communist parliaments. The German-Polish deputy, Henryk Kroll, lamented the worsening relations among Poles and Germans in Opole, for instance,²⁵ and the desecration of Jewish cemeteries and monuments proceeds without sufficient discouragement by the new authorities. But if the dystopia of nationalism is most apparent in war, then the status of Hungarians in contemporary Romania deserves elaboration.

The revolution against Ceausescu and his regime began on December 16, 1989 in the streets of Timisoara when Romanians, Hungarians and others joined to protect the Hungarian minister Laszlo Tokes from being evicted from his home by the Securitate. From its inception, the revolution promised the supercession of nationalist intolerance, for it seemed finally clear that good relationships among majority Romanians and minorities were in everybody's interests. Ceausescu's last attempt to accuse foreigners and minorities of threatening the country's sovereignty didn't work out. And the first official declarations of the post-communist political

23 See Konstanty Gebert, "Anti-Semitism in the 1990 Polish Presidential Election," Social Research 58:4(1991):723-55.

24 In a study released in August 1992, the vice president of Hungary's ruling party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, argued that Hungary's politics were being controlled by international forces dominated by Jews. Under pressure from at home and abroad, he revised his generalizing anti-semitic indictment to refer only to the Jewishness of former communist leaders in Hungary's history, from Bela Kun to Matyas Rakosi and Erno Gero.

25 Reported in FBIS Report on Eastern Europe, September 23, 1992, p. 21.

establishment in the National Salvation Front reinforced this hopeful image. But old habits die hard.

All high and almost all low level officials, party activists, Securitate and army officers were Romanians. Therefore, as soon as they realized that their wheel of fortune was turning downwards, they also realized that their only way to avoid losing face, and, possibly, to remain in power, was to break up the freshly forged solidarity into various warring factions. What these people aimed at, in the first place, was to be looked upon not as individuals who had (or not) collaborated with the previous hateful regime, but to be seen as part of the Romanian people, endlessly threatened or despised by malevolent and ruthless "others". These former officials were joined by many mediocre, but ambitious, individuals who in order to push themselves forward, had no other asset to promote but their pure "Romanianness". Instead of the tools of communist oppression, the Securitate and other collaborators are today portrayed by nationalists as heroes who helped preserve the nation.

So, the old and well known nationalist discourse was reactivated soon in January 1990, whose declared concern was (and still is) to defend the Romanian majority against the minorities. Of course the arch-enemy was identified with the Hungarians, both those living in Romania (about 2 million) and those living in Hungary or elsewhere in the world. Within two months, the rhetoric escalated into violent clashes between Hungarians and Romanians. The Hungarians' claims for more rights were then perceived as a threat to the Romanian nation and its integrity. Although the violence has not itself grown, the discourse on the Hungarian threat to the Romanian nation has become more effective in actual political mobilization. In the elections of September 1992, for example, explicitly right wing nationalist parties, like The Party of National Unity of Romanians (the political expression of *Vatra Romanesca* or Romanian Hearth) and the Greater Romania Party, took fifteen per cent of the seats in parliament.

The threat to Hungarians by Romanian nationalism was one of the most important political issues in communist led Hungary, uniting opposition and authorities in a common concern. The Hungarian Democratic Forum, now the ruling party, made the plight of Hungarians abroad

one of its central themes in opposition to communism and liberalism. Now that it is the ruling party in the Hungarian post-communist state, Romanian nationalists have found even more fertile ground for imagining the Hungarian threat to Romania's territorial integrity. Conflicts within Romania therefore contain these seeds of international conflict.²⁶

The dystopia of nationalism is thus better developed in contemporary Romania than in any of our other cases. This is probably because nationalism was linked to communism under Ceausescu, being the distinguishing feature of the Romanian brand of communism.

All states rely on symbols to mobilize support. After World War II, East European states acquired a new set of symbols as they became communist states. They all became *People's Republics*, from the Polish to the Hungarian to the Romanian People's Republic. The Ukrainians were now incorporated in one political unit, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Old symbols were destroyed; the crown was taken off the Polish eagle, and the Romanian eagle disappeared altogether. Until 1956 in Hungary, the communist red star replaced the traditional coat of arms on Hungary's flag.

Symbols have emotive power, but these symbols of communism mainly generated negative feelings, given that they stood for national subordination to Soviet rule. Across Eastern Europe, national roads to communism later were evoked in order to legitimate home communist rule, but nowhere more forcefully than in Romania under Ceausescu.

National symbols were elevated in their use in Romania. Romania was recentered in the official name of the country. It was no longer only an adjective, but the biggest noun. The Socialist Republic of ROMANIA was inscribed on the emblem in the center of the national flag. The national anthem, which after communism's introduction celebrated the signalling of

26 Ioan Mircea Pascu, the counsellor for foreign affairs, office of the Romanian presidency, sees Romania as threatened by all its neighbors. He writes in "Romania's Response to a Restructured World," that "... on our western border, a bloc of Catholic states is taking place under the guidance of Budapest and Vienna backed by Berlin. The "Slav Bloc," consisting of orthodox Russia and the Ukraine, will dominate our northern and eastern borders, while Islamic Turkey -- with which Romania maintains extensive and good relations and has concluded a treaty -- is becoming more and more active close to our southern border" in Daniel N. Nelson (ed.), *Romania After Tyranny*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1992, p. 279.

communism's dawn by the battleship Aurora, was replaced. A nineteenth century nationalist hymn, the Three Colors, was legislated as the new anthem: the tune was the original composed by Ciprian Porumbescu 130 years earlier, but the verses were new, adapted to the new socialist realities.²⁷ Little by little, every policy, from industrialization and the prohibition on abortion to the razing of villages and the direction of cultural production, was cast in terms of the struggle of the Romanian nation to assert its independence, sovereignty and ultimately its greatness.

The greatness of the Romanian nation and its leader was even reinforced by Western practice, when it applauded Ceausescu's condemnation of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. But even here, the protest was justified to the Romanian people in terms of violations of the integrity of a nation state, not in terms of the violation of basic human rights. From that time on, the West looked upon Ceausescu as their favorite maverick communist, who had the courage to stand up against the Soviet Union. And that also won him favor at home.

Given his identification with the national ideal of independence and sovereignty over and above communist internationalism, many intellectuals joined the Communist Party. The power of Romanian nationalism made even communism appear patriotic. In this way, the nationalistic discourse of the interwar period was revived by the Party apparatus.²⁸ The celebration of the national idea went so far as to acquire rather grotesque dimensions. For instance, every cultural event, even a symposium on post-structuralist literary theory, had to be organized and incorporated within the all-inclusive Festival, "Song to Romania," and then, the symposium could take place only if some papers on the Romanian contributions to French literary theory were also presented.

When communism and nationalism are linked so organically, then, the chances for post-communist nationalism are greater. In Ukraine, however, the struggle of both communists and

27 The new national anthem of Romania after 1989 has become yet another national hymn by the same composer of the Three Colors, called "Romanians Awake!"

28 For an outstanding analysis of cultural production and the revival of nationalist discourse, see Katherine Verdery, National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

their anti-communist opponents for a national culture and for state sovereignty has generated a fundamentally different kind of nationalism, one where its utopian elements might still be found.

Ukrainian nationalism is different from that in Poland, Hungary and Romania. First, the glory of its national past is a little more difficult to recall than in our other cases²⁹, and the nation is less certain about its own distinctions from its neighbor than are the other cases in our comparison. The passion to "Ukrainianize" higher education and to circulate a different national currency from the Russian ruble are signs of the need to construct the national distinction, rather than just release it from communist oppression.³⁰

The main vehicle for realizing this longstanding utopia of course is the independent state. It is so important that even longstanding dissident opponents to communism like Ivan Drach are willing to collaborate with the former chief of ideology for the communist party, Leonid Krawchuk, in defense of the state. Here, nationalism elevates above all other principles the vehicle of its expression because it needs to *realize* and not just *release* the nation. In this, perhaps, Ukraine's nationalist utopia is more like the communist utopia than any of the other nationalisms in our purview, because the national ideal cannot be based so easily in the past or present, but relies more on the dreams of those who administer the state.

This nationalism seems to have retained its utopian quality more than other nationalisms also because it is not based only on the defense of that which is essentially Ukrainian, but also because it is actively engaged in discovering what is Ukrainian. One part of that search is a Westward gaze toward the ideology of civil society and its embrace of individualism in a pluralist

29 For instance, consider the importance of the Cossacks in defining a *common* national heritage; see Frank Sysyn, "The Reemergence of the Ukrainian Nation and Cossack Mythology," Social Research 58:4(1991):845-64, or the emphasis given to Ukraine's link to tenth century Kievan Rus'; see Mykola Ryabchuk, "Civil Society and National Emancipation: The Ukrainian Case" in Zbigniew Rau (ed.), The Reemergence of Civil Society in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union Westview Press, 1991.

30 For a rather critical essay on the new Ukrainian nationalism, see Abraham Brumberg, "Not So Free At Last," New York Review of Books October 22, 1992.

state. But even the marriage of civil society with nationalism does not ensure that nationalism will begin a descent to dystopia. Poland is a good example of that.

It is common in Eastern Europe to see liberalism and nationalism as opposing visions. One can look for variations on this theme with Romanian nationalist criticisms of their early liberals, Russian criticisms of those who would Westernize their lands, and the Hungarian Democratic Forum's criticisms of the liberalism of the Association of Free Democrats and FiDeSz. But in Poland, it was those with a liberal vision who best wore the cloak of national devotion, thanks to Solidarity.

The obvious efforts undertaken and sufferings endured by liberal Polish intellectuals like Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik or Bronislaw Geremek on behalf of Solidarity and the nation made them part of the obvious political class to replace the communists in 1989. But also, the origins of Polish nationalism in the nineteenth century gave Poland a fundamentally different kind of cultural legacy on which to draw, and which made certain principles of liberalism and nationalism more compatible.

Andrzej Walicki³¹ identified several alternative nationalisms within the Polish experience, but the one we wish to emphasize here is the nationalism based on the nation as an ethical ideal. Because Polish nationalism was first developed in the romantic era, when Mickiewicz and Mazzini could struggle on behalf of each other's nations in the name of a higher principle of cultural pluralism, Polish nationalism from the start had an "all-European" quality to it. The ideal of the nation could not be based on what was exclusive to it, but what was universal in it, and has yet to be realized. Walicki quotes Poland's national poet, Adam Mickiewicz: "The Fatherland of the Poles is not a mere piece of land bound by frontiers which limit the national existence and activity of the Pole," and Walicki then goes on to say, describing this view, that "the Fatherland of the

31 "The Three Traditions of Polish Patriotism and Their Contemporary Relevance," a paper read at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, March 26, 1987. Available from the Polish Studies Center, Indiana University, 1988.

Poles is an ideal which has never existed, since the actual Poland never fulfilled all the conditions necessary for its realization" (p. 16).

All East European nationalisms had their origins in Romantic thought and ideas about the brotherhood of nations, but nowhere else has this romantic spirit survived the rise of integral nationalism better than in Poland. Because of its survival, Polish nationalism could more easily be associated with the liberalism of civil society, in as much as this liberalism was now seen as the all-European ideology of universalism. But liberalism and civil society as utopia do not guarantee the survival of these lofty national images.

LIBERALISM AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society and the liberal vision associated with it gained part of its power in Eastern Europe because of its claim to be eutopic, not utopian. After all, those with a westward gaze would claim, those societies which have not only economic prosperity but political freedoms are those which are constructed along liberal principles, where freedoms of association, press, speech, and economic association rest.

Polish Solidarity was the first and most powerful expression of this vision of civil society, but it was a civil society not exactly like that found in the West. It was not based on private property but on the decentralization of the economy through self management; it was not based on the pluralism of competing political parties, but on the opening of a public sphere in which a self organized society would influence the ruling political party; it was not based on a state whose laws are legitimate, but on a mobilized society which pressured the state to follow the rule of law. This vision of civil society, however, did not survive the imposition of martial law on December 13, 1981. The rapidity of change in 1989 further destroyed the possibility for gradual change based on pragmatic domestic visions, and rather was replaced by an embrace of a more totalistic vision of Western liberalism.³²

32 See Michael D. Kennedy, "The Intelligentsia in the Constitution of Civil Societies and Post-Communist Regimes in Hungary and Poland," Theory and Society 21(1992):29-76.

The utopian quality of privatizing all of state industry is being increasingly recognized as such by Polish government officials,³³ but that is not our focus. Rather, it is the contradictions and expectations of the open public sphere itself.

The utopian dimension of civil society and its public sphere rests in the expectation that the predominant form of social movement and public discourse will be democratic, tolerant and inclusive. Civil societies were revered in Eastern Europe and the West in the struggle against communism because they typically embraced the language of human rights and pluralism in their opposition to the system. But once the activists of civil societies gain access to state power, there is no guarantee that they will remain so open and tolerant as they were in opposition. And there is also no guarantee that the very openness of the public sphere will mean the defeat of those who use that public sphere to limit democracy's scope or the rights of its demos. There are reasons to think that liberalism is unlikely to survive the end to communism!³⁴

The utopian quality of civil society and liberalism is most apparent in Romania, where the survival of the most extreme communism and its mentality was ensured by the restoration of nationalism as the centerpiece of post-communist legitimacy. Both society and the state embraced the totalizing vision of a centrally controlled system. In this context, liberalism is viewed as an anti-national, anti-patriotic doctrine. Mobilizing against liberalism generates support for the nationalist neo-communist alliance which rules Romania; they needed only reactivate the discourse of communist times to defeat the liberalism the Timisoara rebellion promised.

33 Maciej Drozdowski, economics consul at the Polish Consulate in Chicago, now says that it is wrong to focus on privatization as a goal, and rather, what is the "optimal" level of privatization given Polish conditions. "Will Privatization Succeed in Poland?" at the conference "From Post-Communism to Post-Solidarity: Polish Transition Embroiled," November 20, 1992 at St. Mary's College, Orchard Lake, Michigan.

34 Andrew Arato has written a very good paper showing the difficulties facing Hungary in its institutionalization of civil society, and why the concept remains a good normative vision in the post-communist epoch. See "Revolution, Restoration and Legitimation: Ideological Problems of the Transition from State Socialism," a paper delivered at the conference, Utopian Revisions: Nationalism and Civil Society in Eastern Europe, Institute for the Humanities, the University of Michigan, October 29 and 30, 1992.

At the same time, some of the principles of liberalism, like pluralism and freedom of speech, enable the cooptation of some liberals who were ready to compromise with the survivors of the old communist establishment.³⁵ The new authorities construct the impression of presiding over a pluralistic society, while those coopted get the impression that they are helping to make it. But as the wave of nationalist rhetoric intensifies, even the pretense of liberalism will be sacrificed in the name of the nation.

Liberalism's eutopic dimension is more apparent in Poland. Solidarity helped to generate not only a political class with liberal views, but also a wider Polish culture that was more tolerant and insistent on democracy. At the same time, however, liberalism's hegemony concealed fundamental differences in morality, which, in an open public sphere, come to the fore.

The controversy over rights to abortion illustrates this tension. Public opinion polls clearly favor retaining abortion rights, but the Catholic Church, the Physicians' Chamber and other well organized groups have pushed the issue beyond return. This, they say, is not a matter of choice, personal conscience or even democracy; it is a matter of what is right. Liberals find themselves trapped.

In order to push forward with economic reforms, they must include in their government activists from Christian parties whose first priority is the restoration of morality to a Polish society corrupted by communism's atheism, and who view liberal emphases on the separation of church and state as something inappropriate for a Catholic nation like Poland. Thus, while Poland's ethnic minorities are not so endangered as Romania's, the very definition of Polishness is being narrowed and more tightly circumscribed so that even Poles might find their rights endangered by a nationalism based on a religious crusade.

³⁵ One of the most vexing dimensions facing liberal thought is that of lustration and other forms of using past behavior to indicate present rights. Liberal documents like the Timisoara Proclamation of March 11, 1990 proposed that a new electoral law be introduced prohibiting former Communist activists and Securitate officers from being president and from running for political office. See "The Timisoara Proclamation" in The East European Reporter 4:2(1990): 32-35. For a contrasting liberal view on this subject, see the paper by Arato cited above.

Not every post-communist nation has so powerful a church as Poland, but every post-communist nation has a large industrial working class whose acceptance of liberal economic policy to this date is almost a miracle, if God is on the side of private property. And if God is so allied, the dystopic power of really existing socialism deserves beatification.

If really existing socialism did not generate its own legitimacy, it did make a class which, after the fall of communist party rule, has a neo-socialist interest.³⁶ Workers' resistance to closing the large inefficient plants which employed many of them is only to be expected, and that it has taken so long to occur and spread can be attributed to the power of the socialist dystopia on which the liberal economic utopia rests. But the power of this old dystopia is being displaced as the policies of the liberal economic utopia are put in place.

Even the former allies of the liberal intellectuals, the Solidarity trade union, has been forced to take a far more militant stance against the shock therapy that was supposed to be the quicker road to eutopia. They were forced to do this because they had competition, from those who claim, in Solidarity '80, to more truly represent the interest of the old union which brought down communism, and also competition from the old communist trade union, which now claims genuine support from workers. The utopian side of socialism thus returns as its dystopic memory is being revised in light of the new liberal economic dystopia. But by leaving nationalism out of socialism, we only see part of the picture.

More than in any other place in our four countries, in Poland, nationalism was constructed against actually existing socialism. As such, the spectacle of former Solidarity activists and former Communist activists working together to oppose a truly Polish government's efforts to privatize has sparked yet another transformation of the relationship between socialism and nationalism. To represent workers, a new union has been formed: its symbol carries the most powerful expression of the nation's struggle against communism. The new union is named for

³⁶ Edmund Mokrzycki, "The Vicious Circles of Utopias in Eastern Europe," a paper delivered at the conference, Utopian Revisions: Nationalism and Civil Society in Eastern Europe, Institute for the Humanities, the University of Michigan, October 29 and 30, 1992.

Father Jerzy Popieluszko, the priest-activist known for his rousing sermons on the Polish fatherland, and who was murdered by communist secret police in 1984. Thus, nationalism doesn't just affect the debate over the consistency of state policy with Catholic morality, but it even extends to what the proper representation of workers in a truly Polish civil society should be.

The difficulties involved in the construction of a post-communist society are likely to push people to find the answers to economic, political and social problems in recasting and legislating morality and its accompanying identities. Strict definitions of what it means to be Polish, or at least a "true Pole" should not be seen as deviations from the logic of the post-communist transformation, even if they are departures from the utopian tolerance and pluralism of a civil society. Thus, even in Poland, where civil society is no longer the dream of utopian thinkers, the idea of a civil society nonetheless retains many utopian qualities.

CONCLUSION

We can make no forecasts about the future of Eastern Europe or even of any of the individual countries upon which we have focused. After all, post-communism has completed only its third year of existence. Despite the glorious proclamations from the East received with the enthusiastic applause of the West, many things are still in a raw state, defined by the liability of their experiment in which new directions are confronted with old mentalities and practices which themselves generate new conditions that are less and less as the utopians imagined. Liabilities within and across visions generate unforeseeable possibilities and frustrations.

In Romania, communist and nationalist utopias were merged after 1965, whereas in Poland, communist and nationalist visions were locked in bitter opposition. In Hungary, liberalism managed to move Hungarian nationalism away from obsessions with past glories and regional aspirations towards a spirit of compromise in ending communism. Liberalism also infused the Polish and Ukrainian movements for ending communism, but Polish nationalism finds the compromise with communists anathema to the national ideal, while Ukrainian nationalists are supporting the former Party leader in his efforts to extend his presidential executive powers in

order to assure the state which might build the nation. In Romania, the nation is not being built with anything new, whereas the Ukrainians try to integrate liberalism in their national self definition. Rather, a fundamentalist Romanian nationalism is being used to consolidate the power and privilege of communists who claim their former politics as an expression of their devotion to the sovereign, but ever threatened, Romanian nation.³⁷

In sum, our two tripartite relations - among utopia, dystopia and eutopia and among liberalism, nationalism and communism - suggest why we elevate lability to the center of our analytical project. While analysts of utopia or dystopia, or of nationalism or communism or liberalism, manage their project by studying in isolation one or another of these visions, it is only in their relationship to one another that these visions of alternatives come to life. While they claim to exist in opposition to one another, they are also dependent on one another for their construction. And it is in their dependence that they acquire their instability. Their mutuality and their omissions open the window for others, who, with their pens or their politics, may force yet another set of meanings onto old visions, especially in Eastern Europe.

³⁷ For a discussion of this and other kinds of nationalism in the post-communist world, see Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Fantasies of Salvation: Varieties of Nationalism in Post-Communist Eastern Europe," a paper delivered at the conference, Utopian Revisions: Nationalism and Civil Society in Eastern Europe, Institute for the Humanities, the University of Michigan, October 29 and 30, 1992.