

Varieties of Post-Totalitarian Regimes: Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria

TWENTY-SIX of the twenty-seven post-Communist states in Europe (the only exception, as we have argued, being Poland) had at one time approximated the totalitarian ideal type during the period of high Stalinism or before the Yugoslavian “heresy.” Most of them later came to approximate the post-totalitarian ideal type. The term *post-totalitarian* itself indicates that this type of regime had not been conceived initially by its founders as a distinctive type of polity but was the result of changes in a system that had once approached the totalitarian model. Thus, *post-totalitarianism* (unlike democracy, totalitarianism, authoritarianism, or sultanism) is not a genetic type but an evolutionary type. That is, no one would or could create a post-totalitarian regime unless there had already been a prior totalitarian regime.

Conceptually the two dominant paths, from within the regime, to post-totalitarianism can be called “post-totalitarianism by choice” and “post-totalitarianism by decay.” In the former path, regime elites (often for their own sense of personal safety) may collectively decide to constrain the completely arbitrary powers of the maximum leader, to reduce the role of terror (if that had been prominent), and to begin to tolerate some non-official organizations to emerge in what had been virtually a completely flattened civil society. In “post-totalitarianism by decay” (or post-totalitarianism by reluctant acquiescence), commitment to ideology may simply become hollow, mobilization may degenerate into bureaucratic ritual, and pockets of resistance or relative autonomy may emerge, more due to regime incapacity or reluctant acquiescence to foreign pressure than to any choice. Forces outside the regime can also generate a situation of “post-totalitarianism by societal conquest,” in which civil society groups struggle for, and win, areas of relative autonomy.¹ Whatever the path, all post-totalitarian regimes, by definition, emerge out of totalitarian regimes.²

1. There are, of course, other paths out of totalitarianism. Totalitarianism can be ended by conquest and occupation by democratic polities, as happened to Germany and Japan after World War II. In these cases there never was a post-totalitarian regime, but rather a sequence of totalitarianism followed by occupation and liberalization followed by democratization. See table 4.2, The Implications of Prior Nondemocratic Regime Type for Paths to Democratic Transition.

2. Specific concrete cases of a shift from a totalitarian to a post-totalitarian regime often may empirically contain some elements of post-totalitarianism by choice, post-totalitarianism by decay, and post-totalitarianism by societal conquest.

The empirical fact that change from totalitarianism is normally not to a typical authoritarian regime but to a distinct type of post-totalitarian regime confirms the argument of Linz that there is no continuum from totalitarianism to authoritarianism.³ However, the fact that post-totalitarianism cannot be understood without reference to totalitarianism also explains that it can be conceived of as a continuum from an almost totalitarian system to one in which the former totalitarianism elements are almost survivals (in the anthropological sense). This also accounts for the difficulty of determining at what point the transition from a totalitarian to a post-totalitarian regime has taken place.

Because post-totalitarianism is a continuum, we will dedicate extensive space to presenting some of the textures of life within different kinds of post-totalitarian regimes. We will also attempt to conceptualize and discuss the major possible variations within the post-totalitarian type, which can range from an early post-totalitarianism close to the border with totalitarianism, to a frozen post-totalitarianism that shows no significant tendency to evolve toward greater pluralism, to even a mature post-totalitarianism, which may be close to an out-of-type change toward a democratic or authoritarian regime. Only after we have an understanding of such variation within the post-totalitarian type are we analytically prepared to study, evaluate, and even predict the extensive range of transition paths that actually could and do occur within post-totalitarianism. Most of the post-Communist states in Europe began their transition away from Communism from a post-totalitarian starting point. All of the post-totalitarian regimes were affected by the “domino-like” events of 1989, but the style and consequences of the actual transition depended greatly, as we shall see, on the specific post-totalitarian subtype found in each individual country.

Empirically, what do we mean by variations within post-totalitarianism? The variation was most stark in the cases of Hungary and Bulgaria. As we will document, Hungary by February 1989 (i.e., the same month in which the Polish Round Table began) was in fact already close to an out-of-type change from post-totalitarianism to a still undetermined democratic or authoritarian regime. In contrast, we believe we will provide convincing documentation for the argument that Bulgaria, as late as 1988, was close to the totalitarian pole concerning autonomous groups in civil society. Czechoslovakia, in contrast to Bulgaria, had had for more than a decade some important post-totalitarian characteristics in the area of civil society, since the human rights group Charter 77, linked to the Helsinki process, had emerged in 1977. However, detotalitarianization in Czechoslovakia in the 1980s—which was a case essentially of “detotalitarianization by decay”—was nowhere as deep or extensive as it was in Hungary, which had much stronger elements of “detotalitarianization by choice.”

3. See Juan J. Linz, “An Authoritarian Regime: Spain,” in Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Mass Politics: Studies in Political Sociology* (New York: Free Press, 1970), 251–83, esp. 253.

If we call Hungary an example of mature post-totalitarianism, and Bulgaria an example of early post-totalitarianism, Czechoslovakia can be considered an example of frozen post-totalitarianism. In essence, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria in the late 1980s had different state, rule of law, economic, civil, and political society mixes. These different mixes structured much of the negotiating capacity of regime and opposition alike, opened and/or blocked certain transition paths, and helped generate distinct constellations of consolidation tasks.

Our purpose in this chapter is to explain how and why—and with what consequences—Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria had sharply different transition paths. In Hungary, the Communist Party increasingly led by reformists on the one side and an organized democratic party opposition on the other side, *negotiated* an agreement that the next government would be produced by free elections. In these elections, the largest of the Opposition Round Table parties won the most seats and formed a coalition government with a strong parliamentary majority. In Czechoslovakia, after the Berlin Wall was torn down, students and artists led a protest against police brutality. The hard line regime *collapsed* and handed over power to a provisional government headed by the most famous leader of the civil society opposition, Václav Havel.⁴ In Bulgaria, a still unreformist Communist Party experienced some societal protests but was able to *control* the transition. The Communist Party, via an internal coup, rid itself of its old leader, Todor Zhivkov, gained some legitimacy by participating in a round table, and eventually won the first competitive election against the still weak democratic forces.

All of these cases were, of course, strongly affected by our variables concerning diffusion effects and the political economy of legitimacy. However, our central thesis is that the most powerful way to explain these three strikingly different transitions (negotiation, collapse, and control) is by exploring the causes and consequences of their variation within the post-totalitarian regime type.

Before examining these three cases, let us briefly mention a cruel paradox. Hungary (and authoritarian Poland) increasingly experimented with a variety of economic reforms and in the process opened themselves up to Western international credit, which eventually made them two of the most indebted countries of the world. This indebtedness contributed to pressures for regime transition; however, it left a difficult economic legacy for democratic consolidation, especially for Hungary, which did not reschedule before or after the transition. In contrast, the frozen post-totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia engaged in no economic experiments or reforms and received almost no Western foreign credits and thus

4. If we had not excluded the GDR on account of its disappearance as a result of unification with the Federal Republic, it would have been a case of early post-totalitarianism leading to regime collapse. Like Czechoslovakia, the GDR only began any efforts to negotiate a transition when collapse was already imminent. Credible negotiators within the regime were weak in both Czechoslovakia and the GDR. However, in the case of the GDR the successive changes of leadership of the regime and perhaps the international dimension of the Germany case gave a bit more breathing space for the incumbents.

faced fewer economic pressures pushing for a transition. However, Czechoslovakia's lack of foreign debt, of course, not so paradoxically became an asset in the democratic consolidation phase.

HUNGARY: A NEGOTIATED TRANSITION FROM MATURE POST-TOTALITARIANISM

For readers familiar with the standard works on negotiated transitions and pacts in southern Europe and Latin America, the East European country that is by far the most familiar in terms of the dynamics of the transition is Hungary.⁵ Indeed, most of the basic vocabulary used to describe the Spanish and Uruguayan transitions can be used to describe the Hungarian transition.⁶ Regime *blandos* (soft-liners) sought out alliances with some of the leaders of the moderate opposition; regime *blandos* endeavored to use their roles as sponsors of liberalization to strengthen their positions against their own hard-liners; both *blandos* and opposition leaders increasingly focused on the political mechanics of transition, and elite negotiations figured prominently. Why did such a similar political process of regime transition occur in such dissimilar political systems?

Of all the regimes in East Central Europe we will analyze, the Hungarian one underwent the sharpest set of changes. Hungary had free elections in 1945, a very totalitarian period from 1948 to 1953, a reform period that led to a successful popular revolution in 1956, a Communist counter-revolution from 1956 to 1962, and detotalitarianization starting in 1962. By the mid-1980s Hungary was the world's leading example of mature post-totalitarianism.⁷

Between 1945 and 1947 Poland saw a civil war between Polish partisans and Soviet-backed forces. In Hungary, however, possibly because of its less strategic position for the Soviet Union, the Soviet military administration allowed an election in November 1945 that has often been called the freest ever held in Hungary

5. See, for example, Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); John Higley and Richard Gunther, eds., *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin American and Southern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Giuseppe di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

6. Indeed, a Spanish social scientist draws extensive parallels between Hungary and Spain; see Carmen González Enriquez, *Crisis y cambio en Europa del Este: La transición húngara a la democracia* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas / Siglo XXI de España, 1993), esp. 50–80 on pacts and 340–68 for an overall comparison of the Hungarian and Spanish transitions.

One of Hungary's leading public opinion specialists, János Simon, learned Spanish to be able to study the Spanish transition and occasionally publishes his work, often with László Bruszt, in Spain. See their "La mayoría más silenciosa" (Madrid and Budapest, 1990, unpublished manuscript).

7. References to all these changes will be found in this chapter. For a classic book on pre-Communist Hungary that is particularly strong on the country's dualistic electoral principles after 1922 (secret and free in the cities but unsecret and manipulated in the countryside) and an interwar authoritarian period with a reasonably robust press and areas of rule of law, see Andrew C. János, *Politics of Backwardness in Hungary: 1825–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

to that date. The Smallholders won the election with 57 percent of the vote, the Social Democrats received 17.4 percent, and the Communists 17 percent.⁸ However, in the less-free 1947 parliamentary elections, the Communists received the largest single vote with 22.3 percent and then used a variety of tactics to get the Parliament to prorogue itself for a year. From 1948 to 1953 Hungary underwent one of the most intense periods of Stalinization in Eastern Europe, ranging from a show trial of Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty to coercive collectivization of agriculture to the summary execution of two thousand "local undergrounders" of the Communist Party. This period is called by many Hungarian commentators "totalitarian."⁹

After Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev, as part of his anti-Stalin campaign, replaced the Hungarian mini-Stalin, Mátyás Rákosi, with the more moderate Imre Nagy, who inaugurated the "sharpest and earliest reversal of mature Stalinism to be initiated in any people's democracy."¹⁰ The detotalitarianization of Hungary had begun, but it was to prove a stop-and-go process. From April 1955 until his removal by the Soviets again in July 1956, Rákosi returned to power, to be succeeded by Ernő Gerő and, in the face of widespread student and intellectual demands, by Nagy. Under Nagy, the Hungarian protests rapidly became revolutionary. In Rothschild's judgment, the events in Hungary from October 23 to November 4, 1956, were "a genuine and domestically victorious revolution with national-political as well as socioeconomic aims. This revolution was defeated only by overwhelming foreign force," Soviet tanks.¹¹

The evolution of the Hungarian regime from counter-revolutionary repression in 1956 to near out-of-type change by February 1989 deserves a book-length analysis. Our contribution is necessarily more restricted and driven by democratic theory. We believe that the dynamic process of detotalitarianization should and can be analyzed. We also believe that post-totalitarianism is not and should not be a static concept. In addition, we believe that the specific forces and processes by which some post-totalitarian regimes have evolved is an important area of inquiry for scholars interested in democratization. Therefore, we will now attempt to show how detotalitarianization started. We will also attempt to

8. Charles Gati argues that the openness of the elections was largely due to Stalin's fears, until 1946, that he might have to trade away Hungary to the West for his demands on Poland and Germany. See his *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), 118.

9. For example, Rudolf Andorka's paper to the XII World Congress of Sociology in Madrid, July 1990, "Transitions from a Totalitarian to a Democratic Political System: The Case of Hungary," argues that "after 1947 Hungary clearly became a Totalitarian state under the rule of the Communist Party the power of which was based on the presence of the Soviet army. . . . The first relaxation of totalitarianism came after the death of Stalin" (p. 1).

10. Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 154.

11. *Ibid.*, 160. For a revealing analysis of the process of regime division and social protest that led to this too-often-forgotten case of the internal reversibility of totalitarianism, see Paul Kecskemeti, *The Unexpected Revolution: Social Forces in the Hungarian Uprising* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

demonstrate how, in each of the five *arenas* of a consolidated democracy we discussed in chapter 1, some important changes occurred in Hungary before the regime change in 1989. We will likewise show how changes in each arena increasingly reinforced each other. Our task, therefore, is to analyze and illustrate the dynamic process of interacting changes. We will proceed by exploring changes in the rough sequence in which they occurred: ideology, the economy, the state, the rule of law, civil society, and finally political society.

The first area in which Hungary became post-totalitarian was the area of ideology. The revolution of 1956 was followed by repression and the execution of Nagy, but it also left a preoccupation in Khrushchev's Soviet Union and among the team led by Nagy's successor, János Kádár, with how to avoid policies that might precipitate a revolutionary reoccurrence. The search for passive compliance, rather than a totalitarian attempt to mobilize enthusiasm, became a hallmark of Kádár's political style. The first explicit argumentation that reflected the post-totalitarian turn was articulated by Kádár when he advocated a "politics of alliance" at the Plenum of the Central Committee in March 1962. At the plenum, Kádár explicitly distanced himself from the totalitarian aspirations of the Stalinist dictator Mátyás Rákosi when he announced that, "whereas the Rákosites said that someone who is not on our side is against us, we say, those who are not against us, are with us."¹²

The next major step toward detotalitarianization was the introduction in 1968 of the New Economic Mechanism, which despite a partial reversal from 1972 to 1979 represented the most pervasive experimentation of any Warsaw Pact country with markets and quasi-private property.¹³ This experiment could not have started without a prior ideological change toward post-totalitarianism, but the New Economic Mechanism itself further eroded the classic Communist utopian ideology and represents the beginning of the process of detotalitarianization by choice. Much has been written about the Hungarian reform from an economic perspective but relatively little about how attendant social and legal changes altered both the state and society. Numerous state-society interactions growing out of the New Economic Mechanism pushed Hungarian society and the regime further away from the totalitarian pole. Evidence abounds. State control over individual job mobility *de jure* was lessened when in 1968 workers were allowed to

12. In 1962 Kádár was still to complete the last phase of recollectivization that finished his 1956–62 re-consolidation, but no leader committed to maintaining a system that approximated totalitarianism could have issued such a classic post-totalitarian dictum. For the context of Kádár's speech, see González Enríquez, *Crisis y cambio en Europa del Este*, 9.

13. As Charles Gati explains, "the New Economic Mechanism (NEM), begun in 1968, had introduced a measure of rationality into the economy. By focusing on agriculture, small-scale industry, and the service sector, the reforms succeeded in creating an economy in which plan and market could somehow co-exist and living standards rise as well. Kádár's 'goulash Communism'—perhaps an early version of perestroika—was also assisted by his regime's relative political tolerance and openness—perhaps an early version of glasnost." See his *The Bloc That Failed: Soviet East European Relations in Transition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 95.

change their jobs, to relocate, and legally to work part-time in private, small-scale industry.¹⁴ The state's near-monopoly over worker income sources was demonopolized to the extent that the proportion of total income "derived from the second economy by about three-quarters of the population amounted to at least two-thirds of wages paid in the first economy."¹⁵ The state monopoly over housing was also broken. By 1984, 55 percent of all new housing in Hungary was constructed by the second economy and was open to private purchase and ownership.¹⁶

Hungary also made important changes toward increased rule of law, especially toward a regulated framework not of a command economy but of what we have called an *economic society*. In 1982 a new set of regulations passed which legalized property rights in much of the second economy.¹⁷ The political import of this was twofold. On the one hand, for society it reduced the party-state discretionary authority and increased the sphere of legally protected rights and thus the rule of law. On the other hand, for party-state officials, it made it legal for nomenklatura families to diversify their "portfolios" and to participate in the second economy.¹⁸

This new regulatory framework thus began to alter the career and network opportunities for members of the second economy and the state apparatus alike. The groundwork was laid for a "hollowing out" of the state sector and, indirectly, for "nomenklatura buyouts" seven years before the end of Communism. For the nonagricultural state-controlled cooperative sector, reorganization and restructuring of public property began almost immediately as groups of up to one hundred people could legally "break off from a non-agricultural state-cooperative, taking equipment and capital with them."¹⁹ As Anna Seleny has argued, the second economy in Hungary became high-trust networks of everyday people *and* highly placed and well-connected individuals which, without an explicitly political purpose, began to have political implications. Possibly more than anywhere else, we will analyze in this book how the spread and institutionalization of the

14. See Anna Seleny, "Hidden Enterprise and Property Rights Reform in Socialist Hungary," *Law and Policy* 13 (April 1991):156–58. This article and her 1993 MIT doctoral dissertation in the Political Science Department, "The Long Transformation: Hungarian Socialism 1949–1989," are pioneering works on how the New Economic Mechanism had many unintended consequences in the legal, social, and political arenas and how it began to create an "economic society" in Hungary. For a discussion of "contested language and meanings" within the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, see her "Constructing the Discourse of Transformation: Hungary, 1979–82," *East European Politics and Societies* 8, no. 3 (1994): 439–66.

15. Seleny, "Hidden Enterprise and Property Rights," 162.

16. See table 19.5 in János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 441. Upon publication this book by a Hungarian economist who was a long-time consultant of Hungarian economic reforms and is now a chairholder in economics at Harvard became an instant classic on the problems of command economies and the limits to efforts to partially reform them.

17. This is discussed at length in Seleny's "The Long Transformation."

18. For the consequences of the new structure of rational-choice opportunities for state managers, see László Urban, "Hungarian Transition from a Public Choice Perspective" in András Bozóki, András Körösnéyi, and George Schöpflin, eds., *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1992), 88–95.

19. Seleny, "Hidden Enterprise and Property Rights," 163.

Hungarian second economy makes it difficult empirically or analytically to distinguish between economic society and political society. Some Communist systems *collapsed*, as in Czechoslovakia; others, as in Hungary, *adapted*. In Hungary the complex networks of the second economy were a key part of the nomenklatura's capacity and propensity for adaptation. Political out-of-type change did not begin until early 1989. But economic out-of-type change began in 1982.

Despite these important changes in the arenas of economic society, law, and the state, it is important to stress that Kádár never allowed changes in the leading role of the party. Also, until 1987 there was virtually no significant organized political opposition, and associational life in civil society was quite weak. In these arenas Hungary was still early post-totalitarian.

However, by the mid-1980s the political economy of the Kádár regime—and the Communist party-state—came under increasing pressure. Despite the resumption of economic experiments in 1979, the economy experienced growing problems. Foreign debt soared throughout the 1980s. Indeed, by 1989, public external debt soared to over 16 billion. The country's debt per capita of \$1,561 was the largest in the world, dwarfing Brazil's \$622 per capita debt.²⁰ A reform wing in the party became increasingly critical of Kádár and sought out alliances in the party and in society. By 1987 independent groups in society, tacitly supported by party reformers, had also become critical of Kádár. The *samizdat* publication, *Beszélő*, in the first half of 1987 issued a special publication, "Social Contract," that began with the assertion that "Kádár Must Go." A normal *Beszélő* publication had a circulation of 4,000. "Social Contract" was reissued and sold 12,000 copies and was widely read by party reformers, whose leaders, Rezső Nyers and Imre Pozsgay, met privately with the authors in sympathetic discussions.²¹ We believe that these events could not have occurred without a power struggle within the regime already going on and without some legitimacy for both regime moderates and opposition moderates. In fact, by October 1987 Hungary's first opposition protoparty, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, had its organizational meeting, which was attended by Pozsgay.²²

It is true that before 1989 Hungary had no social movements remotely comparable to Solidarity in Poland or multitudes in the streets as in East Germany or even in Czechoslovakia, but it would be a mistake to see the Hungarian transition as being initiated and controlled solely by reformers in the regime. In 1988 a

20. Per capita debt figures calculated from public and publicly guaranteed long-term debt data in the *World Debt Tables, 1991–1992* (Washington: World Bank), as reported in the *Statistical Yearbook 1993* (New York: United Nations), 1051–53. Population figures from *Statistical Yearbook 1993*, 59–67.

21. The above is based on a conversation of Alfred Stepan in Prague (December 16, 1992) with the principal author of the "Social Contract," the political philosopher János Kis, who later became president of the Alliance of Free Democrats after free elections.

22. Pozsgay's supportive relationship with the Hungarian Democratic Forum is discussed in detail in Robert M. Jenkins, "Movements into Parties: The Historical Transformation of the Hungarian Opposition" (Program on Central and Eastern Europe, Working Papers Series, no. 25, Harvard University, 1993).

plethora of largely self-organized associational groups emerged as new actors. One of the most important of the new social movements was an ecology group who effectively organized demonstrations against a dam on the Danube. The focus of two other important groups that emerged in 1988 was explicitly to advocate an institutional framework that would help engender a stronger and more autonomous civil society. In the area of communications, the Publicity Club was organized by journalists and other professionals to advance freedom of speech. In the legal area 135 lawyers created an Independent Forum of Jurists to help empower civil (and later political) society with sufficient expertise to actively review and revise the growing number of legal and constitutional proposals being raised both by the regime and by the new social groups.²³

One of the great political problems for the newly elected regimes in Eastern Europe is the question of political representation due to the “flattened” post-totalitarian economic and social landscape. In Hungary, however, the economic reforms begun in 1968—with earlier precedents back to 1953—and given legal recognition in 1982 created a more variegated and pluralist environment in which to articulate interests. Anna Seleny captures this relationship nicely.

In sum, private business expanded more rapidly than many officials expected, and its legal and political institutional consequences have proved surprising. The seemingly endless round of amendments, modifications and subsequent reforms which the Ministry of Finance was forced to undertake between 1982 and 1989 indicates that once property rights are granted to groups thereby newly legally enfranchised, the pressure to broaden those rights grows from its own logic. . . . The net effect of such decrees was the broadening of second-economy entrepreneurs’ property rights and space for action. . . . Once endowed with legal status, individual entrepreneurs and various organized groups pressed for further changes. Transmission-belt organizations, responsible for “representing” the interests of the small traditional legal private sector of manufacturers and retailers, were internally disrupted because the government changed the economic landscape overnight without specifying their new mandates. In 1987 entrepreneurs formed their own independent interest representation organization which helped extract concessions vis-à-vis the private sector (e.g., on tax policy); and a year later, entrepreneurs formed a political party. The 1982 reform of private property rights was a turning point . . . it was insufficient to stabilize the economy, further destabilized Party ideology, social attitudes and behavior, and proved incompatible with state-socialism as an institutional-political system. The legalization of private entrepreneurship on a wide scale challenged the state’s claims on rights to control not only production but economic organization and association.²⁴

Shortly after the entrepreneurs organized, a Union of Scientific Workers was created to be followed by other independent unions. While relatively small and largely confined to intellectual workers, these unions pushed the boundaries of post-totalitarianism in a more pluralist direction. As Andrew Arato states, “all these

23. An excellent analysis of these new social movements is contained in Andrew Arato, “Civil Society in the Emerging Democracies: Poland and Hungary,” in Margaret Latua Nugent, ed., *From Leninism to Freedom: The Challenges of Democratization* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992), 127–52.

24. Seleny, “Hidden Enterprise and Property Rights,” 165–66.

organizations of the defense of worker interests, influenced by different aspects of the model of Polish Solidarity, understood themselves as promoting a fabric of thick social self organization from below, as building and fighting for a civil society with important elements of participation in economic and political life.”²⁵

The final arena in which Hungarian opposition forces began to organize was political society. The more politically inclined members of social movements developed protopolitical parties. Populist and somewhat rural and traditional nationalist intellectuals met at Lakitelek in 1987 and formed the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF). In March 1988 a protoparty, the Federation of Young Democrats, was formed. In the spring of 1988 a loose alliance of new social movements, greens, journalists, reform economists, and independent student and worker organizations formed a more urban and socially liberal grouping called the Network of Free Initiatives. By autumn 1988 this group formed the basis of the Alliance of Free Democrats. One of the distinctive facts about Hungarian politics is that none of the above-mentioned parties was a historic pre-World War II party; they had instead emerged in mature post-totalitarian Hungary. This combination of new social and political movements contributed, by late 1988, to the passage of a new law of association which in turn helped pave the way for a multiparty system. Once this new law of association was passed, three historic parties—the Independent Smallholders Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Christian Democratic Party—announced their reactivation.²⁶

One of the most frequently asked questions about the Hungarian transition is why the Hungarian Communist Party began to accept competitive politics, even before the Polish Round Table was completed and the first non-Communist government was formed in Poland. To begin to answer this question, we have to step back and look at the changing context of Kádár’s and the Communist Party’s legitimacy. In chapter 5 we argued that a traditional measure of a regime’s legitimacy is whether a particular regime is perceived by its citizens to be “the most appropriate one given the circumstances.” For much of the 1970s, the Kádár regime’s economic and political policies were widely seen as being relatively successful within the parameters of the “Brezhnev Doctrine.” Given the geopolitical constraints of the “Brezhnev Doctrine,” the most relevant reference group for Hungarians was the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

However, by the late 1980s, even before the so-called “Sinatra Doctrine” was

25. Arato, “Civil Society in the Emerging Democracies,” 139.

26. On the emergence and increasing formalization of these opposition parties, see László Lengyel, “The Character of Political Parties in Hungary (Autumn 1989),” in András Bozóki, András Körösiényi, and George Schöpflin, eds, *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1992), 30–44, and Jenkins, “Movements into Parties.” For the effective mobilization of pressure that led to a law of association much more democratizing in final form than the regime had originally intended, see Gábor Halmás, “Representation and Civil Society in Hungary: The Recodification of the Right of Assembly and Association,” *Law and Policy* 13 (April 1991): 135–47. This is a clear example of the dynamic of “detotalitarianization by societal conquest.”

Table 17.1. Hungarian Assessment of Their Declining Quality of Life, Equality, and Personal Political Efficacy: A Five-Country Comparison, 1985 and 1989

Country	Percentage of Respondents	
	1985	1989
"In which country do the people live better?"		
Austria	49.9	80.3
Hungary	28.7	12.7
Soviet Union	4.3	0.9
Czechoslovakia	0.3	0.6
Yugoslavia	0.3	0.3
Romania	0.0	0.1
"In which country is there greater equality among the people?"		
Austria	9.8	48.9
Hungary	17.8	19.6
Soviet Union	38.2	9.5
Czechoslovakia	1.1	3.9
Yugoslavia	0.8	1.3
Romania	0.4	0.9
"In which country do the people have the greatest possibility to participate in political matters?"		
Austria	14.1	52.3
Hungary	23.0	24.0
Soviet Union	25.0	4.7
Czechoslovakia	0.6	0.8
Yugoslavia	1.1	2.6
Romania	0.1	0.0

Source: László Bruszt and János Simon, *La mayoría más silenciosa* (Budapest: Institute of Social Sciences, 1990). Based upon a poll they administered for the Gallup Poll of Hungary.

Even if we would suspect a certain caution in the 1985 responses, or what is called by polling specialists a *spiral of silence*, the fact that people expressed their attitudes so freely in 1989 would reflect a significant change in itself. The table does not include other answers, and DK/NA, therefore, does not add up to 100.

formally articulated, the relevant reference group increasingly became Western Europe, especially Hungary's neighbor up the Danube, Austria.²⁷ Table 17.1 shows how in 1989, after four years of Gorbachev, Hungarians increasingly viewed their situation negatively in areas involving the quality of life, equality, and personal political efficacy.

What is clear from table 17.1 is that Gorbachev's reforms were seen as a relative failure by 1989 and that Austria was seen as overwhelmingly the best on all three measures surveyed, even including the issue area most Communist systems felt was their greatest comparative strength—equality. In this overall context, by 1987 the elements of a complex transition game were coming into place in Hungary.

As Stepan has argued elsewhere, a split in the state apparatus (or in Hungary

27. Vladimir Tismaneanu explains that the "Sinatra Doctrine" was "the Soviet decision to allow each East European country to pursue its own variety of reform." In effect, it allowed them to go "their own way." See his *Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 216.

in the “party-state”) may set into motion a “downward reach” by part of the state to mobilize part of civil society so as to increase its own power position within the state.²⁸ This sets the framework for concession. However, if civil society is not strong enough, what is given by one part of the state can, when it has served that state group’s purpose, be taken away. But, if opposition forces in society are strong enough, a complex dialectic of “regime concession and societal conquest” may ensue that will help push the overall system toward a boundary change, first in the direction of liberalization and finally crossing the line of a democratic transition.²⁹ Awareness of the potential for such a political process to occur alerts us to look at some transitions as cases of competitive bidding by parts of the state vis-à-vis civil society. Thus, while the optic of civil society *versus* the state is often correct, part of the growth and empowerment of civil society may be due to a momentary *alliance* of parts of the state with parts of civil society, both parts betting, of course, that in the end they will become the ultimate winner. No faction of the Hungarian Communist Party, even the faction of the most advanced reformer, such as Pozsgay, started regime concessions accepting the fact that it might lead to the loss of power. Why then, did the dialectic of regime concession and societal conquest result in Hungary passing beyond the boundary from mature post-totalitarianism to free competitive democracy?

By 1987 the party-state, in a situation of a growing economic crisis and a new geopolitical context, had at least four distinct factions: (1) a hard line hoping that Gorbachev would fall and interested in imposing a post-1968 Czechoslovak-like “normalization strategy” in Hungary, (2) a status quo group around the aging leader Kádár, (3) a moderate reform group led by Károly Grósz interested in economic decentralization but little political change, except for an increasingly law-bound state, and (4) a reform group led by Pozsgay interested in economic, legal, and political change. Starting in mid-1987 the two party reform factions supported each other and both used the party mechanisms they controlled to help build pressure against Kádár.³⁰ Kádár’s major challenger was Károly Grósz, who became prime minister in July 1987. Grósz used this normally weak position as a

28. For Stepan’s argument about intrastate conflict and the courtship of civil society, see “State Power and the Strength of Civil Society in the Southern Cone of Latin America,” in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 317–46, and *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), chaps. 1 and 3.

29. For Stepan’s analysis of a “regime concession and societal conquest” dialectic in Brazil, see his *Rethinking Military Politics*, esp. 39, 45–46.

30. It is important to stress that the two reform factions in the party and their numerous technocratic allies had little to do with a Polish style dichotomous “civil society versus the state” dynamic. In fact, the increased space for civil society groups in Hungary was partly due to numerous networks created by reformers *inside the state* with civil society. See the important work by X. L. Deng, which recasts traditional thinking about “civil society versus the state” in his “Institutional Amphibiousness and the Transition from Communism: The Case of China,” *British Journal of Political Science* 24 (July 1994): 293–318. Deng correctly cites the work of the Hungarian social scientist Elemér Hankiss as documenting important instances of “institutional amphibiousness” in Hungary (p. 301).

platform from which to criticize Kádár in his campaign to be his successor. An excellent study of the intraparty leadership competition notes that “the Grósz strategy pursued a controlled mobilization and radicalization of the elites to pressure the Kádárist leadership. . . . Grósz went beyond ideology to seek the advice and support of party and non-party alike and, in so doing, fatally undermined Kádár’s authority as a national leader.”³¹

One of Grósz’s tactical allies in this campaign was his reform rival Pozsgay, who had great influence over the media. Pozsgay both helped nonparty social movements gain some access to the media and was in turn helped by them. Pozsgay attended the important organizational meeting of the Hungarian Democratic Forum in September 1987 and ensured the publication of their statement in a party-controlled newspaper. In fact, Pozsgay actually spoke at the meeting and urged the attendees to present an alternative program for reform. One scholar who has studied the transformation of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) from a social movement to a political party offers the following judgment: “The resources provided by Pozsgay through the People’s Patriotic Front—organizational support and access to the media—did play a role in helping the MDF. . . . This group might not have undertaken the formation of an organization without the decisive protection provided by the coalition of party reformers. . . . This alliance benefited both camps. It gave Pozsgay and his reform colleagues popular support in the internal [Communist Party] struggle.”³²

The dynamic between regime concession and societal conquest was dramatically clear in the acceleration of events in early 1989. The Hungarian political scientist, András Körösesny, graphically captures how an increasingly empowered civil society and numerous protoparties pushed Hungary’s post-totalitarian regime to the brink of an out-of-type political change by recognizing the legitimacy of multiparty elections.

What pushed events forward was Pozsgay’s action at the end of January 1989. Pozsgay recognized that there could be no consensus without the reevaluation of the events of 1956. While Károly Grósz enjoyed the mountains of the Alps in Switzerland, Pozsgay declared in a radio interview that what happened in Hungary in 1956 was not a counter-revolution, as the official Communist historiography considered the event, but a “national uprising.” The effect was dramatic. Grósz called together an extraordinary session of the Central Committee of the HSWP [the Communist Party] in two weeks time. During these two weeks hundreds of social and political organizations expressed their agreement with Pozsgay, or at least their appreciation of his statement. Backed by public opinion and the press, Pozsgay and the reformers won the battle. The Central Committee session of February accepted not only the reevaluation of the events of 1956, but the multiparty system as well.³³

31. George Schöpflin, Rudolf Tökés, and Ivan Völgyes, “Leadership Change and Crisis in Hungary,” *Problems of Communism* (Sept.–Oct. 1988): 34, 36.

32. Jenkins, “Movements into Parties,” 67, 60.

33. András Körösesny, “The Decay of Communist Rule in Hungary,” in Bozóki, Körösesny, and Schöpflin, eds., *Post-Communist Transition*, 6–7.

With the Hungarian Communist Party's acceptance of multiparty elections, especially with Pozsgay's explicit statement that multiparty competition "entails the possibility of losing power," a new regime-society relationship had emerged and a democratic transition was close to being born.³⁴ By our regime criteria of pluralism, ideology, mobilization, and leadership, Hungary by February 1989 had already arrived—before the dramatic events of the Polish election—at the brink of a boundary change away from post-totalitarianism. The rest is history, well told by others.³⁵ However, as comparativists we would like to review how Hungary's mature post-totalitarianism opened up a transition *path* not available to Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria—or to any other post-totalitarian regime in Eastern Europe. In table 4.2 we referred to this path as *reforma pactada–ruptura pactada*.

Most of the elements for understanding why Hungary had this option in the first place have been presented. However, not all options that are *available* are *realized*. Let us be more explicit about what the *reforma pactada–ruptura pactada* requires and why this possible path was actually taken in Hungary.

Four of the most important facilitating conditions for a *reforma pactada–ruptura pactada* path are that (1) both moderates in the regime and moderates in the democratic opposition have some power capacity, (2) both of the above "players" come to believe that, considering all the alternatives, negotiations are the preferred alternative, (3) both moderate players have and/or develop strategic and tactical negotiating capacity, and (4) the moderate players become the dominant players on their side.

We believe that we have clearly demonstrated that both regime moderates and democratic opposition moderates had some power capacity. Negotiation became the preferred possibility for both moderate players because both sides were aware that they could not triumph by their own efforts alone, both recognized the depth of the social and economic crisis, and both feared what a repeat of 1956 would do to their futures. The memory of the Hungarian revolution in fact helped both moderate sets of players come to the negotiating table and helped make them the dominant players of their side. László Bruszt and David Stark nicely depict how the legacy of 1956 affected regime and opposition alike. "For the Communist elite,

34. The Pozsgay quote was in an interview in *Magyar Hirlap*, an official Communist Party daily, and was cited in Charles Gati, *The Bloc That Failed: Soviet–East European Relations in Transition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 171. For the symbolic significance of the Pozsgay statement, see András Sajó, "Round Tables in Hungary" (Center for the Study of Constitutionalism in Eastern Europe, University of Chicago Law School, working paper, no. 2, August 1991), 5.

35. Three excellent studies are László Bruszt and David Stark, "Remaking the Political Field in Hungary: From the Politics of Confrontation to the Politics of Competition," in Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 13–55; Timothy Garton Ash, *We the People: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague* (London: Granta Books, 1990), 47–60, which gives a particularly graphic account of how the symbolic and power relations were changed further in the direction of democrats by Nagy's reburial; and the previously cited book by the Spanish social scientist who makes interesting comparisons of the Spanish and Hungarian transitions, González Enríquez, *Crisis y cambio en Europa del Este*, esp. 362–68.

the ghosts of 1956 were the memories of the fury that can be unleashed when society has been pushed beyond its limits. It was above all the *fear of society* that so deeply inscribed in the Communist leadership an instinct to do everything to avoid another 1956. As the economic and political crisis deepened throughout 1988, so increased the references to 1956 in party leaders' speeches.³⁶ Likewise, for much of the democratic opposition, Bruszt and Stark argue,

it was the lesson of the Russian intervention in 1956 that made the leaders of the newly emerging social and political groups hesitant to question the legitimacy of the regime and to seek, instead, a compromise with its leaders. Mikhail Gorbachev did not automatically alter those calculations, for the limits of his toleration were neither clearly articulated nor yet tested in this period. . . . The first clear test of the end of the Brezhnev Doctrine was the Soviets' acceptance of the non-Communist Mazowiecki government in Poland [August 1989].³⁷

The opposition in early 1989 was made up of numerous parties and social movements. The regime made an attempt to enter into negotiations with each fragment of the opposition singly. However, a major step forward in developing the democratic opposition's negotiating capacity was their refusal to negotiate singly. They first created their own "Opposition Round Table" on March 23, 1989. The eight groups who participated in the Opposition Round Table represented conflicting interests and opinions. But, they greatly enhanced their strategic and tactical bargaining capacity by forging an internal agreement that the central purpose of any round table with the regime should not be about social policies or sharing power but *fundamentally* about the details for arriving at a free election by which future power in Hungary would be determined.³⁸ Unlike any other Eastern European round table, negotiations were between the regime and an already constituted political society, not civil society. The political groups had to reach an agreement among themselves before they could or would negotiate. In fact, in critical events like the reburial of Nagy, political society convoked and organized civil society.

When the National Trilateral Negotiations (the Round Table) began, parts of the regime had not fully accepted the principle of free and competitive elections. However, in a context where political space was constantly being reconfigured by the extraordinary outpouring of national sentiment around Nagy's reburial and the Polish elections, Pozsgay and the Communist Party reformers became dominant within the party and moved toward accepting the uncertainty of democratic elections.³⁹

36. Bruszt and Stark, "Remaking the Political Field in Hungary," 24, emphasis in original.

37. *Ibid.*, 25.

38. See László Bruszt, "1989: The Negotiated Revolution of Hungary," *Social Research* (Summer 1990): 365–88, esp. 375; András Bozóki, "Hungary's Road to Systemic Change: The Opposition Round Table," *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 7, no. 2 (1993): 276–308, esp. 285; and Sajo, "Round Tables in Hungary," 20–25.

39. László Bruszt, as national secretary of the Democratic League of Trade Unions, was an official participant in the Opposition Round Table and the Government-Opposition Round Table. Because he both

At this point we need to pause and explore why the reformers in the Communist Party could accept the uncertainty of elections as the best alternative and get many other weighty elements of the party, state managers, and the army to acquiesce in their decision. From the reform Communist viewpoint, a successful crackdown of the regime, such as that attempted by the coup coalition in the USSR in August 1991, could well have led to their purge, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968. However, the reform Communists considered that they had a reasonably good chance to do well in competitive elections. In fact, a June 1989 survey indicated that they would win the first plurality, 26 percent, and that if presidential elections were held soon no opposition candidate had the name recognition and support of Pozsgay.⁴⁰ Even if they did not win the first plurality, there was the prospect that they could be legitimate contestants in a democratic multiparty system. As Bruszt and Stark said of the reform Communists' calculations, "their perceptions of the weakness of the opposition and their assessment of their own electoral prospects gave them confidence. . . . With this they made the decisive step of accepting the principle of 'certain institutions of uncertain outcomes' that is at the core of liberal democracy."⁴¹

Certainly, parts of the party hardline and secret police were not prepared to accept this uncertainty principle, but a weighty part of the party-state, especially the state-enterprise managers, who were normally "pragmatic conservatives," had to make their calculation as to whether it was more in their interest to support a crackdown or possibly to side with the reform Communists. While we will not go so far as to argue that the golden parachute possibility of "nomenklatura buyouts" made state-enterprise managers *active coalitional* partners with Pozsgay, we do believe that the state-enterprise managers' good prospects of "converting" their locational assets as public sector managers into personal economic assets may help explain their *passive acquiescence* in the rise of reform Communists within

was a trade union officer and knew some Polish, Bruszt was sent as an observer to the Polish Round Table. His "1989: The Negotiated Revolution of Hungary" is particularly acute in demonstrating the interactive comparative dynamics of events in Poland and Hungary and how this dynamic helped the reform Communists become dominant in the Hungarian Socialist Workers (Communist) Party.

40. In the same June 1989 Gallup poll in Hungary, the largest opposition party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, received only 9 percent. Most important, as late as the fall of 1989, Pozsgay was convinced that, because of the lack of name recognition of opposition leaders, he could win a direct presidential election. For the poll, see Elemér Hankiss, "In Search of a Paradigm," *Daedalus* (Winter 1990): 206. For a review of a variety of polls, many of which in 1989 offered some encouragement to Communist reformers, see László Bruszt and János Simon, "The Change in Citizens' Political Orientations during the Transition to Democracy in Hungary (Reflected by Public Opinion Survey and Electoral Studies, 1990-1991)," (Budapest: Institute of Political Science, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1991). As late as July 6, 1989, Sajo characterized the general opinion of the pro-Pozsgay participants in the round tables as follows: "It was taken for granted that the winner of the popular presidential elections would be Pozsgay." Sajo, "Round Tables in Hungary," 25.

41. Bruszt and Stark, "Remaking the Political Field in Hungary," 45. Their reference to the "principle of uncertain outcomes" in their internal quote refers to Adam Przeworski's "Democracy as a Contingent Outcome of Conflicts," in Jon Elster and Rune Slagstad, eds., *Constitutionalism and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 59-80.

the Communist Party.⁴² As László Urban argues, the opportunity structure opened up by the second economy altered their rational choice calculations.

Why did the reformers gain control gradually within the Communist Party and within the government, and why were they not blocked and replaced by conservatives who resisted the transformation? The short answer is that the reformers took over the lead easily because the pragmatic conservatives let them do that. Why? Because the political supporters of the pragmatic conservatives, the rent-seekers of the old regime, had their own business to take care of, which offered high positive returns for them as opposed to organizing political resistance against the transformation of the system.⁴³

A pioneering survey of new elites shows that for some state managers this calculation turned out to be correct. Eighty-one percent of the new private sector economic elite in Hungary in 1993 had been employed by the party-state in areas concerning the economy in 1988 (50 percent in managerial jobs in the state sector of the economy and 30 percent in economic command posts).⁴⁴

What about the army? A crackdown, especially one that could not count on the Soviet army, would probably have had to use the Hungarian army as well as the Hungarian secret police. But, unlike the Yugoslav Army, with its predominantly Serbian officer corps, who perceived it to be in their interest actively to support the war with Croatia and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or the Polish Army, which was a leading part of the party-state from 1981 to 1989, or the Romanian army, which helped capture the Romanian uprising for the nomenklatura, the Hungarian army stayed absolutely neutral during the Hungarian transition. Once again, given Hungary's recent political history, the army calculated that a passive acceptance of peaceful negotiated change would not hurt its interests. János Simon, in one of the first evaluations of the role of the army in the Hungarian transition in 1989, argues that "in 1956 the [Hungarian] military either supported the revolution or deserted from the army, but there was no organized force which supported the Russian invasion. . . . From the very beginning of the regime change the demand of the withdrawal of Soviet troops was on the agenda." The army's gamble paid off in terms of trust. In an annual study of citizens' trust

42. The "passive acquiescent" behavior of Hungarian state managers was not qualitatively different from the passive acquiescent behavior of capitalist business elites in transitional cases we have discussed such as Spain, Uruguay, or Chile. In fact, the only transition case in our set, where some entrepreneurs were, for a while, "active coalitional partners" with the democratic opposition, was in Brazil. See Fernando H. Cardoso, "Entrepreneurs and the Transition Process: The Brazilian Case," in O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, *Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*, 137–53.

43. See the previously cited Urban, "Hungarian Transition from a Public Choice Perspective," in Bozóki, Körösnéyi and Schöpflin, *Post-Communist Transition*, 91–92.

44. However, if one takes the entire group of the old economic elite in 1988, 23.4 percent had experienced downward mobility by 1993 and 47.6 percent were forced into early retirement. See Szonja Szelényi, Iván Szelényi, and Imre Kovách, "The Fragmented Hungarian Elites: Circulation in Politics, Reproduction in Economy," in Iván Szelényi, Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski, and Donald Treiman, eds., *Circulation of Elites? Old and New Elites in Post-Communist Society*, tentative title of a book-length manuscript in process.

in institutions, in every year between 1989 and 1992, the army ranked the highest of the six institutions polled.⁴⁵

Given the overall position within the party, the state apparatus, and the army on the one hand and the politically organized opposition on the other hand, it should be clear why a *reforma pactada–ruptura pactada* was not only a possible path but the actual path.

Let us now briefly look at what the specificities of Hungary's mature post-totalitarianism implied for the tasks the incoming democratic government and Parliament had to address before democracy could be consolidated. In table 1.1 we spelled out how one could conceptualize a consolidated democracy as being composed of five major inter-relating arenas. It might be too early to address the question as to whether or not Hungary is democratically consolidated. However, it is not too early to say that, if one reviews all five polity arenas, Hungary, despite important stateness problems and civil society representation problems that we will discuss, had significant advantages vis-à-vis the tasks of consolidation over the other East European countries that began transitions in 1989.

The first arena we will consider is political society. Unlike any other post-totalitarian country in Eastern Europe, Hungary's political society had assumed much of its organizational structure *before* the transition. In fact, though the founding election was not held until March 1990, by December 1988, fifteen months before the election, *every* one of the six parties that eventually won representation in the Hungarian Parliament as a result of the 1990 elections had already been formed.⁴⁶ Furthermore, unlike Poland, organized political parties that were already beginning to make the necessary shift from the unitary *we* of civil society to being competitive components of political society were the weightiest parts of the opposition in the round table.

From our theoretical and comparative perspective, political society made a further step toward the capacity to function well in that, unlike the Philippines, Korea, or any country in Latin America, Hungary selected a pure parliamentary model of government. Pozsgay wanted a direct election for the presidency before free elections for the Parliament. In fact, he won support during the round table from the Hungarian Democratic Forum for a direct election of the president in November 1989.⁴⁷ In our judgment, if such an election had occurred, Hungary

45. János Simon, *Fieldmarshal's Baton and Peace (Judgements on the Role of the Military in Hungary during the Regime-Change between 1988–1992)* (Budapest: Erasmus Foundation for Democracy, 1993), quote from 7–8, poll data found in table 3.

46. For tables on votes and seats, see András Körösenyi, "The Hungarian Parliamentary Election, 1990," in Bozóki, Körösenyi and Schöpflin, *Post-Communist Transition*, 72–81. In fact, these *same* six parties were the only parties returned to Parliament after the 1994 elections. No new parties entered Parliament. No old parties were eliminated. See Attila Ágh and Sándor Kurtán, "The 1990 and 1994 Parliamentary Elections in Hungary: Continuity and Change in the Political System," in Attila Ágh and Sándor Kurtán, eds., *Democratization and Europeanization in Hungary: The First Parliament, 1990–1994* (Budapest: Hungarian Centre for Democracy Studies, 1995), 13–26.

47. See Bruszt and Stark, "Remaking the Political Field in Hungary," 48–50.

would have had a semipresidential form of government with some of the attendant problems of this form of governance. Likewise, the constitutional revision process, the first free parliamentary elections, and the government formation process all might have been complicated somewhat by a sitting president legitimated by direct election. In the event, two democratic opposition parties (the Alliance for Free Democrats and the Young Democrats) were sufficiently well organized and sufficiently capable of strategic and tactical behavior that they were able to gather the constitutionally mandated number of signatures for a referendum, one of whose five items was whether parliamentary elections should be held before or after the president was elected. After a spirited campaign, the "parliamentary elections first" option won by a narrow margin. The newly elected Parliament, after deliberations, then decided to elect the president indirectly.⁴⁸

The contrast between Hungary and Poland concerning the arena of political society is extremely sharp. The Hungarian Round Table agreement did not lead to a power-sharing formula but to direct popular elections of the Parliament. The early structuring of political parties and the relatively unconstrained negotiations led to free and competitive elections in March and April 1990, whereas in Poland the first fully competitive parliamentary elections were not held until October 1991. This meant that in Poland the democratic parties suffered the consequences of assuming the responsibilities of government twenty-one months before free parliamentary elections.⁴⁹

Hungary did not have the constitution-making formula that we argued in chapter 5 was optimal, in that a new constitution was not made by a freely elected legislature or constituent assembly and then submitted to a referendum. Rather, all of the major parties during the round table and the two major democratic parties in a pact after the parliamentary elections heavily amended the existing constitution to make it workable.⁵⁰ However, in a context where political parties al-

48. The above discussion was informed by an interview of Alfred Stepan with János Kis, Budapest, July 5, 1991, and the previously cited articles by Bozóki and by Bruszt and Stark.

49. This may help account for the fact that, whereas in Poland voter turnout was reported as 42 percent for the first free parliamentary election, in Hungary the first round of the parliamentary elections in March 1990 had a reported voter turnout of 63 percent. Also, in Poland "commentators blamed the low turnout on disaffection with the Solidarity led government's draconian economic austerity measures . . . and on confusion about the programmes of the more than 80 competing political parties and dozens of associations." See *Kessings Record of World Events: 1990*, 37464-65, 37325, respectively, quotation from p. 37465. However, we would like to note that the number of parties appearing on the ballot in almost all "founding elections" is normally extremely large. In most cases the voters quickly whittle them down, as they did in Hungary. In fact, in Hungary fifty-four parties were registered in 1989, of which only twelve managed to satisfy the requirements, intelligently established, to appear on the national list. Indeed, only nineteen parties even presented provincial lists. The earlier structuring of political society in Hungary allowed, in contrast to Poland, a reasonably well-structured party system to emerge. See González Enriquez, *Crisis y cambio en Europa del Este*, 149-50, and Körösiényi, "The Hungarian Parliamentary Election, 1990," 74-81.

50. For the constitution-amending process and its results, see Andrew Arato, "Legitimation and Constitution Making in Hungary" (paper prepared for the American Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Miami Beach, August 16, 1993), and András Bozóki, "Political Transition and Consolidated Change in Hungary," in Bozóki, Körösiényi and Schöpflin, *Post-Communist Transition*, 60-71.

ready existed and where there was no sitting elected president to pre-empt decisions, the debate about possible governing formulas was broadly informed by modern European democratic constitutional thinking and practice.⁵¹ While sub-optimal, Hungary's approach rapidly produced the rules of the game for political society, a rule of law, and procedures for adjudicating a hierarchy of governmental and state authority. Hungary never had constitutional impasse of the sort we analyzed for Poland and will analyze for Czechoslovakia, the USSR, and Russia. Likewise, while Hungary's constitution-making process lacks the full "origin legitimacy" of a voted constituent assembly or the "ratification legitimacy" of a referendum on the constitution, the relatively consensual process of amending the constitution avoided a sense of "majoritarian imposition," which, as we will see, led significant minorities in Bulgaria and Romania to question the legitimacy of the constitution. Hungary also did not face the decisional paralysis produced by the fictive soviet-type federal system that contributed to the disintegration of the former USSR, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Finally, Hungary's hierarchy of legal authority precluded a war of laws like the one that plagued Gorbachev's USSR and Yeltsin's Russia. Nonetheless, the fact that Hungary had amended a Communist-made constitution, rather than creating a new one, was still a source of political conflicts in 1995.

In the arena of economic society, property laws, contract laws, capital market, and banking structures, all had an earlier pretransition start in Hungary than in any other country in Eastern Europe. Much of the regulatory framework for what we call an *institutionalized economic society* was in place before the first democratically elected government of Prime Minister Antall assumed office. As one analyst has summed up,

The actions of the old regime made matters much easier for the Antall government: the legalization of the second economy wherein resided the entrepreneurial skills which would put Hungary at a comparative advantage vis-à-vis the other East European countries after the political transition; the launching of a capital market and a commercial banking system capable of providing the intermediary services vital to the privatization effort; the establishment of the legal mechanisms necessary for the launching of new private firms and the transformation of

51. In the constitution-amending process, Hungary adopted the famous German (and later Spanish) "constructive vote of confidence" formula, which helps avoid excessive government instability in that a vote of no confidence can pass only if there exists a positive majority for an alternative government. Hungary also created a strong constitutional court, which on a number of occasions has checked the government's tendency to abuse its majority. On the constitutional court see Ethan Klingsberg, "Hungary: Safeguarding the Transition," *East European Constitutional Review* 2, no. 2 (1993): 44-48. The electoral law they designed also helps avoid excessive party fragmentation because some districts are single member and other districts have proportional representation based on a high 4 percent threshold. However, unlike the German law, which ensures the election of individual candidates in the districts and a reasonable level of proportionality at the national level, the Hungarian law makes possible a significant over-representation of the most successful party or parties. This element of over-representation contributed to what Douglas Rae would call a "manufactured majority" in the 1994 election.

existing state enterprises into private ownership forms; the enactment of the most forgiving foreign investment laws in existence in Eastern Europe.⁵²

In the above quotation it is not just the size of the second economy that is critical, but that this new market is part of an institutionalized and thus more predictable framework. Our statement about Hungary's relatively developed economic society is not merely our academic judgment. Self-interested financial leaders will buy bonds at low premiums only if they believe that the risk is acceptable. An institutionalized economic society helps produce this lower risk environment. Two of the most influential assessors of comparative "sovereign risk" are Moody's Investors Service and Standard and Poor's. Amazingly, within just three years of Hungary's 1990 elections, in all of Latin America (countries with a long background of capitalist economies and erratic economic societies), only Chile was accorded a higher credit rating than Hungary.⁵³ Foreign investors also made a very positive assessment of Hungary's comparative attractiveness. In 1991, for example, they invested as much money in Hungary as they did in the rest of Eastern Europe combined.⁵⁴

Concerning the question of a usable state apparatus, as in every East European country there were some demands to purge former members of the nomenklatura and the security apparatus. Given Hungary's relatively open educational system, which permitted many policy specialists to visit or teach routinely in Western Europe or the United States, the high level of informal contacts between party reformers and many parts of the democratic opposition, and the fact that the Hungarian state had become increasingly subject to economic processes, institutions, and a regulatory framework, the societal demand for revolutionary purges and ex post facto justice was substantially lower in Hungary, as we shall see, than in a frozen post-totalitarian country such as Czechoslovakia. In these circumstances most technical experts and even judges were considered usable by much of the new

52. See David Bartlett, "The Political Economy of Privatization: Property Reform and Democracy in Hungary," *East European Politics and Societies* (winter 1992): 73–118, citation from 104–5.

53. On Standard and Poor's finely tuned twenty-one-grade scale ranging from the most creditworthy ranking of AAA to D (for default), Chile had a BBB and Hungary was one rung lower at BB+. Mexico tied Hungary with BB+. Oil-rich but politically troubled Venezuela was given a lower rating of BB. Brazil, Argentina, and Russia were unranked. Moody's uses a somewhat different formula but ranked Hungary three grades above Argentina and four grades above Brazil. Hungary's ratings are all the more impressive when one remembers that in 1988 Hungary had a per capita foreign debt more than twice as high as Brazil's; see John F. H. Purcell et al., "Rating of Sovereign, Sovereign-supported, Local Government, and Supranational Issuers" (New York: Solomon Brothers, January 8, 1993). The ratings in our text are taken from a June 16, 1993, update of the above document.

54. Hungary has only 10 percent of Eastern Europe's population, but was the recipient of more foreign private capital in 1991—over \$1.4 billion worth—than all the other countries in the region combined. Dirk W. Damrau, "The Role of Foreign Investment in East European Privatization: Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia," in John R. Lampe, ed., *Creating Capital Markets in Eastern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 33–46, quote from p. 44.

democratic government. A qualified purge law was passed by the Parliament but overturned by the Constitutional Court.⁵⁵ In 1993 there were further efforts in Parliament to pass ex post facto “lustration” laws, but their focus was largely restricted to those who had played major coercive roles in the 1956 revolution.⁵⁶

Three factors that helped Hungary handle the potential crisis of the state due to excessive lustration laws deserve special mention. First, all political actors, including the former Communists, who participated in the negotiated transition to democracy via the round tables acquired at least some political capital, a source of political capital not generated for the former Communists in frozen post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia, where the regime, as we shall see, simply collapsed. Second, the indirectly elected president Árpád Göncz, whose office and power had its ultimate legitimization in the freely elected Parliament, skillfully and authoritatively used his constitutionally granted moderating powers to refer doubtful legislation to the Constitutional Court. Third, the Constitutional Court acted within its charter and maintained its legitimacy and authority even though it reversed more parliamentary laws than is the norm in Western European consolidated democracies.

The last of our five arenas is civil society. Here we have a bit of a paradox. Some Hungarian analysts called 1988 the year of civil society and 1989 the year of political society.⁵⁷ This should have prepared the ground for a mutually supportive relationship of the type we discussed in chapter 1. However, political society after 1989 effectively demobilized civil society. The parliamentary majority of the government was sufficiently strong in 1990–93 that they tended to neglect inputs from civil society. The government also blocked legislation that would have allowed wider civil control of and access to the media. We agree with those analysts such as Arato who believe that Hungarian democracy would be improved by the creation of more effective and more diverse ways for civil society to exercise a mediating effect on political society. Many potentially important interests, such as social democratic constituencies, were not really represented in the opposition parties that emerged during the transition.⁵⁸

55. See the special forum on the Hungarian Constitutional Court decision that overturned the retroactivity law in *East European Constitutional Review* (summer 1992): 17–22.

56. See Edith Oltay, “Hungary Attempts to Deal with Its Past,” *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 18 (1993): 6–10.

57. This phrase was intended to call attention to the rapid growth of civil society in 1988 and to its subsequent immediate conversion into political society in 1989. As Bruszt and Stark explain, “the transition from social movements to political parties could be measured in months rather than years.” They go on to explain that the leaders’ mobilization of civil society against the state “was brief; and the week that this mobilization crescendoed on June 16, 1989, was the same week that it began rapidly to subside. The summer of 1989 was not a season of organizing society but of negotiating with other political parties.” Bruszt and Stark, “Remaking the Political Field in Hungary,” 52–53.

58. See, for example, the discussion of why the social democratic constituency was under-represented in Tamás Kolosi, Iván Szelényi, Szonja Szelényi, and Bruce Western, “The Making of Political Fields in Post-Communist Transition (Dynamics of Class and Party in Hungarian Politics, 1989–1990),” in Bozóki, Körösné, and Schöpflin, eds., *Post-Communist Transition*, 132–62.

There is a debate in Hungary as to whether this civil society–political society imbalance is reversible. János Simon reviewed some public opinion questions that were asked in 1985, 1989, and 1991. Two findings struck us as particularly important. First, on all twelve issue areas polled citizens wanted *more* from the government in 1991 than in 1985. Second, in an impressive continuing upward trend, citizens increasingly said that, if their interests were violated, they “could do something about it” at the local and the national level.⁵⁹ If the media are free, if people have the right to organize, and if elections are fair, future elections may provide an opportunity for an improved representation of civil society within political society.

Let us close our discussion of Hungary with a word about stateness. At the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Hungary was severely truncated. Hungary lost *two-thirds* of its former territory, *three-fifths* of the total prewar population, and *one-third* of the Hungarian-speaking population.⁶⁰ Hungarians living under nationalist governments in Romania, Slovakia, and Serbian-controlled Vojvodina are a constant issue in Hungarian politics. For democrats, the issue is the advocacy of the human rights of Hungarians living abroad. For some of the rightist nationalists, it is a question of irredenta, as it was for German and Austrian rightists during the interwar years. The potential for delegitimizing a democratic government if it does not “protect” all Hungarians and for system blame politics based on irredenta was real. Some of the greatest struggles within the ruling coalition of 1990–94 revolved around this issue. A vice-president, István Csurka, of the major party in the coalition, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, issued a racist manifesto.⁶¹ In a less politically developed environment, the government probably would have turned to an increasingly nationalist and nondemocratic course.⁶² Indeed, the Hungarian Democratic Forum equivocated and was slow to respond to Csurka’s provocation. Eventually, with the standing of the Hungarian Democratic Forum in the opinion polls at an all-time low, elections looming in 1994, and a desire to be “coalitionable,” the ruling party expelled the racist-nationalist faction’s leader, Csurka.

With a war on their border, refugees in their cities, anxiety about maintaining their standard of living, and pressure from the European Union for minority

59. János Simon, “Post-paternalist Political Culture in Hungary: Relationships between Citizens and Politics during and after the ‘Melancholic Revolution’ (1989–1991),” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (June 1993): 226–38.

60. Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 155.

61. See Edith Oltay, “Hungarian Democratic Forum Rent by Dispute over Extremists,” *RFE/RL Research Report* 1, no. 47 (1992). George Soros effectively challenged Csurka’s declaration both inside Hungary and on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*.

62. Only Romania, which has manipulated Hungarian threats, scored higher on the sense of threat from neighboring countries in the survey of the countries reported in Richard Rose and Christian Haerpfer, “Adapting to Transformation in Eastern Europe: New Democracies Barometer—II,” *Studies in Public Policy*, no. 212 (1993): table 19.

treaties with their neighbors, irredentist nationalism that could lead to internal and external conflict did not look like a winning electoral formula in Hungary. In fact, in the 1994 parliamentary elections, the two extreme nationalist parties, Csurka's Hungarian Truth and Life Party and the Green Party, received 1.6 percent and 0.7 percent of the vote, respectively, and did not get into Parliament. This vote was less than a fifth of the number of votes extreme right-nationalist parties had received in France in 1993 or in Italy in 1994.⁶³

Despite the 1994 election results, it would be a mistake to believe that nationalist and stateness issues will disappear from the political agenda in Hungary. These issues will no doubt reappear in a more modern form and may affect the quality of democracy in Hungary, but in our judgment they will probably not stop democracy from being consolidated. Mature post-totalitarian and now democratic Hungary has managed its stateness problem reasonably well.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: TRANSITION BY THE COLLAPSE OF "FROZEN" POST-TOTALITARIANISM

The Czech lands of modern Czechoslovakia, as a component of the Austrian part of the Habsburg Empire, had one of the strongest traditions of law in Eastern Europe. Czechoslovakia, until its partition and occupation by Germany in the aftermath of the Munich Agreement, was also the only country in Eastern Europe to experience uninterrupted democracy from its independence in 1918 until 1938. Finally, Czechoslovakia also had the most developed industry and the most fully literate population in Eastern Europe.⁶⁴ This pre-Communist legacy and the fact that Prague is west of Vienna and is the Central European capital closest to Berlin, the de facto political center of Europe, means that the homogeneous Czech Republic, its stateness problem behind it, has reasonably good prospects to become a developed, democratic member of Western Europe.

However, Czechoslovakia, in sharp contrast to Hungary, was not able to have a negotiated transition. After ten days of public demonstrations, the regime simply collapsed. The provisional government that emerged from the Velvet Revolution had strong antipolitics tendencies and rejected an opportunity to develop state-wide political parties. Likewise, the provisional government was sufficiently uninterested in the formal structures of decision making that it did not focus on

63. In France, Le Pen's National Front received 12.4 percent of the votes in the first round parliamentary elections in 1993. In Italy, the neofascist National Alliance, formerly known as the Italian Social Movement, received 13.5 percent of the direct PR votes in Italy's 1994 parliamentary elections, as reported in *Kessings Record of World Events: 1993*, 39381–82, and *1994*, 39918–20, respectively.

64. For an appreciative comparative assessment of law and democracy in interwar Czechoslovakia, see Jacques Rupnik, *The Other Europe* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 3–23, esp. 13–18. In terms of an overall industrial complex, the Bohemian—or Czech—lands—part of the Austro-Hungarian empire was more advanced than the Austrian part.

changing the fictive Soviet-style federal constitution until it was too late to renegotiate and save the federation. Finally, the elected Parliament of Czechoslovakia passed one of the most morally and democratically dubious pieces of *ex post facto* state purging legislation in all of East Europe.⁶⁵ To understand why and how the above events occurred, it is important to analyze certain central characteristics of the rulers and the democratic opposition in Czechoslovakia's frozen post-totalitarian regime.

Let us first look at the rulers. Alone in Eastern Europe, the Communist Party in the interwar years enjoyed the legal right to participate in the political system. Indeed, in Czechoslovakia, Skilling says the party was regarded as a "legitimate heir of Austrian social democracy."⁶⁶ After 1941 the Czechoslovak Communists supported the Soviet efforts to fight the Nazi occupation. Both the Soviet Union and the local Communist Party emerged from World War II in a vastly more favorable light in Czechoslovakia than they did in Poland. In fact, in the first free parliamentary elections in the postwar period the Communists emerged with a plurality of 38 percent.⁶⁷ The Communist Party thus had a strong base to build on in Czechoslovakia.

After the 1948 Communist coup, Czechoslovaks became subject to extensive repression which "left the country as, arguably, the most Stalinist of all the peoples democracies." This dogmatic Czechoslovakian Stalinism endured intact after Stalin's death. As late as 1957 the party chief denounced the word *destalinization* as being synonymous with "weakness and yielding to the forces of reaction."⁶⁸ The historically somewhat weak (especially in the Czech lands) Catholic Church was subject to more systematic and effective repression than in any other country in Eastern Europe.⁶⁹

65. The comparison with Hungary is captured on the cover title page of *East European Constitutional Review* (Spring 1992): "Backward-looking Justice in Czechoslovakia" and "Forward-looking Justice in Hungary." The campaign in Czechoslovakia is called *lustration*; its Latin roots lie in the concept of "purifying" sacrifice. The law was denounced by most international legal and human rights groups. A major source for the compilation of the lists of collaborators came from the Ministry of Interior files of people they approached to collaborate. If a person's name appeared in the files, there was a near presumption of guilt. Only those accused of the lower level of collaboration had a right of appeal. Higher level Communist officials had few appeal rights. See Vojtech Cepl, "Ritual Sacrifices," *East European Constitutional Review* (Spring 1992): 24–26. For a strong critique from a human rights perspective, see the article by the executive director of the Helsinki Watch Committee, Jeri Laber, *New York Review of Books*, April 23, 1992. For a comparative analysis of Czechoslovakia's particularly dubious lustration procedures, see Herman Schwartz, "Lustration in Eastern Europe," *Parker School Journal of East European Law* 1, no. 2 (1994): 141–71.

66. See H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 3–10, quote on p. 6.

67. For the comparative strength of the Czechoslovak Communists after World War II, see Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, 89–97, and Jan Urban, "The Politics of Power and Humiliation," in Tim D. Whipple, ed., *After the Velvet Revolution: Václav Havel and the New Leaders of Czechoslovakia Speak Out* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), esp. 269–70.

68. Both of the above quotes are from Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, 166.

69. For the regime's comprehensive five-part strategy to control the Catholic Church and the church's slight recovery after 1986, see Sabrina Petra Ramet, "The Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, 1948–1991," *Studies in Comparative Communism* (Dec. 1991): 377–93. In a ten-country survey in 1993, the Czech-lands had the second highest percentage of respondents who "never" or "rarely" go to church (68 percent). This

With Moscow's initial approval, a Slovak leader, Alexander Dubček, in 1968 began a cautious party-led effort at reform that rapidly emerged as the peaceful and still party-led Prague Spring. But Soviet tanks, leading troops from some of the Warsaw Pact countries, crushed the Prague Spring and began the era of the Brezhnev Doctrine.⁷⁰ From 1969 to 1989 the major leader, first as secretary-general of the party and later as president, was Gustáv Husák. He was a much less flexible and compromising leader than Kádár in Hungary. Indeed, the aftermath of the Prague Spring led to probably the largest purge of Communist Party membership in the history of Eastern Europe. Approximately one-third of the party quit or were purged. Reform-minded Communists, if they remained in the party at all, were, in sharp contrast to Hungary, quiet and marginalized.⁷¹

Again in sharp contrast to Hungary, the party-state adhered to economic orthodoxy. Pretransition Czechoslovakia never tried any market or reform experiments. It therefore borrowed little from the West and thus was not subject to the debt-based pressure for economic and political reforms that Poland and Hungary experienced.⁷² After 1968, university life in Czechoslovakia, especially in the social sciences, experienced almost none of the pockets of vitality, excellence, and activity one could normally find in Poland, Hungary, or Slovenia. Lacking the citizenship in a developed democracy available to all East Germans in West Germany, the mass exit option as a trigger to regime decomposition was also not present.⁷³ Total identification of Husák with the Brezhnev Doctrine and the lack of reforms within the party made the Czechoslovakian party resistant to Gorbachev's thinking.

The area where the regime was furthest from the totalitarian ideal type was in the degree of pluralism—especially for some expression of dissent by civil society. The Soviet Union and thus even Czechoslovakia signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 as one of the thirty-five member states of the Conference on Security and Cooperation. All signatories to the Helsinki accord agreed to international monitoring of human rights. Czechoslovakia's adherence to the Helsinki accords opened up an organizational opportunity for the human rights activists in

contrasts dramatically with Poland, where the comparable figure was 16 percent. See Rose and Haerpfer, "Adapting to Transformation in Eastern Europe," table 35. In the same survey, by almost a factor of two, the Czech Republic had the highest percentage of nonbelievers (47 percent). Poland and Romania had the lowest percentage of nonbelievers (2 percent). *Ibid.*, table 34.

70. The classic book on the Prague Spring is Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution*.

71. One of the leaders of Civic Forum in the Velvet Revolution was Jan Urban. His father had once been a high-ranking member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Urban writes that after the Soviet invasion "about a half a million Party members were purged and about 800,000 lost their jobs. From that moment on, the CPCz (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) established itself in opposition to the nationalist and humanist forces within society. . . . This party could no longer reform. Henceforth, it could only control the people through corruption and fear. The word 'reform' became a curse." See Urban, "Politics of Power and Humiliation," 276.

72. Kornai, *The Socialist System*, 427.

73. Albert O. Hirschman, "Exit, Voice, and the Fate of the German Democratic Republic: An Essay in Conceptual History," *World Politics* 45, no. 2 (1993): 173–202.

Czechoslovakia.⁷⁴ Groups like Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted continued to function, despite regular jailings, more or less continuously from 1977–78 until the Velvet Revolution.⁷⁵ Unlike Hungary, post-totalitarianism did not evolve toward any out-of-type change but, in return for acquiescence, the regime made few attempts to mobilize enthusiasm.

Thus far, because we dealt first with authoritarian Poland and mature post-totalitarian Hungary, we have not really described the texture and atmosphere of post-totalitarian cultural life, although in chapter 3 we discussed the characteristic post-totalitarian retreat from politics and hollowing of ideology. In the following pages we will therefore quote at length from two eloquent writers, Václav Havel and Timothy Garton Ash, who discuss what “living a lie” under frozen post-totalitarian meant both for the limits of the regime and for the organizational limits of a political opposition.⁷⁶ We say *frozen* to capture the notion that the regime was neither in the early months of post-totalitarianism (as Bulgaria was in 1989 concerning pluralism) or evolving toward a possible out-of-type change from mature post-totalitarianism (as in Hungary in the late 1980s). Czechoslovakia was a frozen, post-totalitarian-by-decay regime from 1968 to 1989 and in some small areas was post-totalitarian by societal conquest.

The most significant dissident group in post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia was the Charter 77, whose members, though completely peaceful, were often jailed.⁷⁷ One of the founding Chartist leaders, the playwright Václav Havel, wrote of the “parallel culture” of independent thinkers who tried to “live in truth.” In 1981 ten million Poles had inscribed in the legally recognized independent trade union. Havel, writing in 1984, the year before Gorbachev came to power, spoke of the “hundreds, possibly thousands of people of all sorts and conditions—young, old, gifted, untalented, believers, nonbelievers—gathered under the umbrella of ‘parallel culture,’ [who] were led to it exclusively by the incredible narrow-mindedness of a regime which tolerated practically nothing.”⁷⁸

Timothy Garton Ash, the Oxford historian, also writing in 1984, nicely captures the frozen post-totalitarian dimension of Czechoslovakia. Whereas a totalitarian regime makes an intense effort at a “mobilization of enthusiasms,” Garton Ash,

74. For the importance of the Helsinki Rights Accords for democratization in Eastern Europe, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 89–94.

75. For a useful inventory of these independent groups, see the Helsinki Watch report, *Toward Civil Society: Independent Initiatives in Czechoslovakia* (New York: Helsinki Watch, 1989).

76. Nothing can convey better what frozen totalitarianism means than the writings of Václav Havel and Timothy Garton Ash which we shall refer to. We now realize that our term “frozen” is an echo of one of the essays of Garton Ash called “Czechoslovakia under the Ice.”

77. For an excellent discussion of the early history of Charter 77, see H. Gordon Skilling, *Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981).

78. Václav Havel, “Six Asides about Culture” (1984), in Jan Vladislav, ed., *Václav Havel: Living in Truth* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), 128.

following the great Czech writer Milan Kundera, called Husák “the President of Forgetting.” “*Forgetting* is the key to the so called normalization of Czechoslovakia. In effect, the regime has said to the people: Forget 1968. Forget your democratic traditions. Forget you were once citizens with rights and duties. Forget politics. In return we give you a comfortable life. . . . We don’t ask you to believe in us or our fatuous ideology. All we ask is that you will outwardly and publicly conform.”⁷⁹

The leadership, far from having a charismatic leader and change-oriented party militants of the totalitarian ideal type, was pure careerist post-totalitarian. Garton Ash writes, “the Party is little more than a union for self-advancement. . . . The country’s politics are frozen into immobility—a fifteen-year Winter after one Prague Spring. . . . No impulses of reform come from the purged, cowed, and corrupt apparat. Younger party leaders are devastatingly critical—but cynically and in private, while most Czechs do not look to the Party for anything at all. . . . I have never been in a country where politics, and indeed the whole of public life, is a matter of such supreme indifference.”⁸⁰

Havel captures the lack of real political pluralism and the inauthenticity and boredom of membership in what had once been a party organization of mobilization. “In societies under the post-totalitarian system, all political life in the traditional sense has been eliminated. . . . The gap that results is filled by ideological ritual. In such a situation, people’s interest in political matters naturally dwindles. . . . Individuals need not believe all their mystification, but they must behave as though they did. . . . they must live within a lie.”⁸¹

In his famous letter to Dr. Gustáv Husák, Havel raises almost all the themes of post-totalitarianism we discussed in chapter 3; he talks of “self-alienation,” of the “principle of dissimulation,” of “political apartheid,” of the “escape from the sphere of public activity which the authorities welcome.”⁸² The hope Havel holds out is that the parallel culture may grow because it inevitably must be in permanent tension with the “first culture” of the post-totalitarian party state. He also holds out the prospect that “power shifts at the center of the bloc can influence conditions.”⁸³

Writing in 1984, Timothy Garton Ash knew that a Polish “self-organizing” society could not develop in Czechoslovakia but, like Havel, he held out hope for an externally initiated change.

Of course the Chartists see that a Czech Solidarity is as likely as fire under ice. But they also see that the development of the *samizdat* counterculture, and the growing alienation of private

79. Timothy Garton Ash, “Czechoslovakia under the Ice,” in *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe* (New York: Random House, 1989), 62. Emphasis in original.

80. *Ibid.*, 63.

81. Václav Havel et al., *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens against the State in Central-Eastern Europe* (Armark, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1985), quotes from pp. 49 and 31.

82. Havel, “Letter to Dr Gustáv Husák,” in Vladislav, *Václav Havel: Living in Truth*, 3–35.

83. Václav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless,” in Vladislav, *Václav Havel: Living in Truth*, 105.

opinion, combined with economic and political stagnation, have begun at least to make the ice mushy on the underside. If ever a real thaw comes—from above? After change in Moscow? . . . They know from their own experience in 1968 . . . how suddenly a society that seems atomized, apathetic, and broken can be transformed into an articulate, united civil society. How private opinion can become public opinion. How a nation can stand on its feet again. And for this they are working and waiting, under the ice.⁸⁴

Let us now turn back to the dissidents. How were they living under the ice? A number of groups besides Charter 77 emerged in 1988 and 1989, but none of them could be considered an organized political opposition. They were protest groups in civil society. In comparison to Poland they were only, of course, a minute fraction of the population. In comparison to the social movements in Hungary, which turned into political parties by late 1988, they were small, unorganized, and anti-political. Jan Urban, a leading dissident in Charter 77, in a self-critical article written on the eve of the secession of Slovakia, observed that,

in the summer of 1989 we received a copy of a secret paper for party propagandists, based on an analysis the StB (the Czechoslovak secret police) had prepared for the Politburo. In it, the StB estimated the hard core of “anti-socialist opposition groups” to consist of about sixty people with some five hundred supporters and collaborators. Their estimate was right. And it remained right. . . . We believed in the regime’s invincibility until it *collapsed* on its own. We did not know how to organize ourselves to form a political opposition. . . . We did not know the non-society we lived with. All we knew was our enemy and he—spiteful bastard—all of a sudden ran away. Without him we were left alone with an unknown atomized non-society—and with power over it. Had the Communists been able to bargain longer, or had they tried to resist, the new power elite would have learned at least something about how to organize political support and how important it is to institutionalize it. . . . Blinded by the easiness of taking power, we did not think about its nature and institutions. . . . Because of our own anti-political way of existing as political creatures before the change, we were bound to lose—unless we ourselves changed into politicians. By now we know we have failed.⁸⁵

These quotations give some insight into why, as we argued in chapter 3, a frozen post-totalitarian regime is one in which *collapse*, rather than negotiation, is a more likely transition path and why the opposition, surprised by its unexpected success, normally has not developed an articulated political approach.

We have now said enough to allow us to analyze why Czechoslovakia, unlike Hungary, did not have a *reforma pactada–ruptura pactada*. Mature post-totalitarian Hungary met the two necessary (and the four facilitating) conditions for such a pact. Frozen post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia met none. In particular, the Czechoslovak hard-line regime gave no space for reformist moderates in the party-state. Likewise the opposition, while a great moral presence, had no nego-

84. Ash, “Czechoslovakia under the Ice,” 70.

85. Jan Urban, “The Powerlessness of the Powerful” (Prague, Nov. 1992, unpublished manuscript), 22, emphasis added.

tiating capacity with the regime and indeed was not institutionally organized to conduct strategic and tactical negotiations.

A second dimension of our intra-post-totalitarian comparison relates to differences between Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. Why did the Czechoslovakian regime *collapse* (as the above quote from Urban indicates), whereas, as we will demonstrate, the Bulgarian regime, via a complex process of adjustment, repression, and negotiation, was able to *control* the transition? For us, the operative word in the above sentence is *collapse*.

Regime collapse is a phenomenon that we believe needs much more conceptual and empirical work. Collapse can be counterposed both to being overthrown and to transition through negotiation. Collapse is different from a regime overthrow in that there is no storming of the seats of power and no occupation of the television station, the governmental buildings, the army bases, or the communication network, either by the military in a coup or by revolutionary activists and masses. There is no arrest, shooting, or immediate flight of the regime leaders trying to save themselves from their opponents, who take over power proclaiming a provisional government, a national salvation junta, or a military junta. Consequently there is no violence.

Regime collapse is also different from our model of negotiated reform and transition in that the incumbents cannot negotiate the conditions under which they will leave power. They cannot impose rules governing the transition, delay the process significantly, or exercise some control of the future. They cannot do so because they believe that, if they should attempt to hold power until an election, they will provoke an immediate outburst of popular anger or a coup. Incumbents no longer believe they can count on the coercive apparatus to support them. In addition, on the side of the democratic opposition, there is no reason to negotiate conditions for the transition because they are convinced of their overwhelming relational power. Collapse is the result of rigidity, ossification, and loss of responsiveness of elites that does not allow them to make timely decisions anticipating crises and change.⁸⁶ Rather than being a step ahead of the demands of opposition, the regime is forced to respond on the march, like the GDR leadership, or on the spot, as in Czechoslovakia. In both cases incumbents lost so much control that the best descriptive phrase of the transition is "regime collapse."

Our hypothesis, therefore, is that regimes collapse, not so much due to external forces, but in those circumstances where, when the regime is challenged, multiple and almost simultaneous defections occur within the interior of the state, particularly within the middle levels of the coercive apparatus.⁸⁷ To explain such

86. For the critical role of timing in regime change, see Juan J. Linz, "Il fattore tempo nei mutamenti di regime," *Teoria Politica* 2, no. 1 (1986): 3-47.

87. We believe that two of the most prominent examples of this are Czechoslovakia and East Germany. Fortunately, David V. Friedman of Yale University is writing a dissertation on the collapse in East Germany, which promises to be an important contribution. His preliminary findings were reported in "Regime Col-

a phenomenon of collapse, the concept of legitimacy is indispensable. Legitimacy in the polity can be a question of what millions of people believe. However, legitimacy within the staff of a coercive apparatus in the early stages of a challenge often depends on what tens, hundreds, or at the most thousands of members of the state apparatus, who will have to *give* and/or *implement* orders, believe.

In crisis situations the question in Weberian terms is whether the coercive staff of the ruler believe in the legitimacy of the orders to use force. For Weber “normally the rule over a considerable number of persons requires a staff, that is, a *special* group which can normally be trusted to execute the general policy as well as the specific commands. . . . Custom, personal advantage, purely affectual or ideal motives of solidarity, do not form a sufficiently reliable basis for a given domination. In addition, there is normally a further element, the belief in *legitimacy*.”⁸⁸

We do not have data for Czechoslovakia. However, an outstanding survey designed to probe precisely this Weberian question was administered by Daniel V. Friedheim in the GDR to 119 leading cadre in the *Einsatzleitungen*.

Friedheim writes that his “sample was defined by membership in secret crisis management teams (*Einsatzleitungen*) in the greater Berlin, Dresden (South) and Rostock (North) areas. At the central, district, and local levels, these teams brought together the top party secretaries, government representatives, and regular police, army and secret police commanders who decided whether or not to deploy force against demonstrators in the fall of 1989.”⁸⁹ Using Weberian criteria this is an excellent example of a ruler’s “coercive staff.” What did this coercive staff think in the fall of 1989?

In the course of writing this book, again and again people have asked us, Why did the Communists in Eastern Europe not shoot, as in Tiananmen Square, to maintain themselves in power? Friedheim’s survey provides powerful answers. He asked a battery of questions. The first set of questions showed that, when they joined the Communist Party (SED), 97.4 percent of the coercive staff polled believed that “no other political system could better realize the social goals of the G.D.R.” In the period before the demise of the GDR 65 percent of them personally still believed that. However, there had been a sharp erosion in their belief in the legitimacy to use force against what the state declared were illegal protests (table 17.2).

If massive Tiananmen Square-type coercion had been imposed early against

lapse in the Peaceful East German Revolution: The Role of Middle Level Officials” (paper prepared for the Eighth International Conference of Europeanists, Chicago, March 27–29, 1992). Claus Offe also analyzes the process of collapse in East Germany in his *Der Tunnel am Ende des Lichts. Erkundungen der politischen Transformation im Neuen Osten* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1994), chap. 2.

88. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 1:212–13. Emphasis in original. Also see in the same volume Weber’s discussion of the threat of the use of force by the state (pp. 53–55 and 314–15).

89. From a draft of his Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, Yale University. Cited with permission from the author.

Table 17.2. Erosion of the GDR Coercive Staff's Belief in the Right to Use Force against State-declared Illegal Protests. Question: (1) Just like any government in the world, the GDR always tried to implement the law despite the disagreement of some citizens. When you began your career with the Party did you believe that the state was entitled to use the police to resist illegal protests? (2) In the Fall of 1989, as more and more citizens left your country or demonstrated in the streets, did you still believe the state was entitled to do that?

Answer	Percentage of Respondents	
	In the Past	Fall 1989
Yes	78.4	8.8
Mostly	18.9	21.2
Subtotal	(97.3)	(30.0)
Had Doubts	0.9	31.0
No	1.8	38.8
Subtotal	(2.7)	(69.9)
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Daniel V. Friedheim, Ph.D. dissertation in process, Department of Political Science, Yale University. Data reproduced with permission.

the protesters in the GDR, some analysts believe that the Communist regime might well have prevented its subsequent collapse. However, Friedheim asked the GDR coercive staff what they thought about the possibility of using Tiananmen Square-type force. The answers reveal that in the European context they overwhelmingly believed that such use of force would be illegitimate and impossible even in defense of socialism (table 17.3).

With this empirical excursus on the GDR taken into account, let us state our argument about how regimes collapse more formally. In critical stages of a regime crisis, vital parts of the state coercive staff equivocate, rebel, or melt away. Seeing this sudden absence of effective force, demonstrators swell in numbers and are emboldened in spirit. At a certain moment there can be so many antiregime demonstrators and so few regime defenders that the leaders of the regime lose all capacity to negotiate. At this moment, the regime is not so much overthrown as it collapses.⁹⁰

Let us explore this process in Czechoslovakia. The wall started coming down in Berlin on November 9, 1989. Eight days later on Friday, November 17, students

90. A valuable formalized model of people's lessening fear in the streets as more people join the protests and the regime's coercive presence becoming less salient is contained in Gary Marks, "Rational Sources of Chaos in Democratic Transition," in Larry Diamond and Gary Marks, ed., *Re-examining Democracy* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1992), 47-69, esp. 53-55. Also see Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44, no. 1 (1991): 7-48. In the People's Republic of China, should a situation like Tiananmen Square emerge again, the combination of the loss of ideological legitimacy of socialism and the evident self-promotion of the nomenklatura in the new business ventures might lead to a situation where neither the regime nor the opposition has moderates empowered to negotiate. In such a situation, if, as in Czechoslovakia and East Germany, the soliders do not use force, the regime could collapse. During Tiananmen Square neither the regime nor the opposition had the capacity to negotiate. However, unlike Czechoslovakia and East Germany, the regime did have the capacity to coerce.

Table 17.3. Response of the GDR Coercive Staff Members to the Question: "What Was Your Opinion at the Time about the Most Important Lessons to be Derived from the Events on Tiananmen Square in June 1989?"

Answer	Percentage
"It could have been possible in the GDR."	1.2
"A bloodbath like that is only possible in the People's Republic of China or Asia."	42.5
"Socialism is not worth that bloodbath."	26.4
"I never saw it as a bloodbath."	29.9

Source: Daniel V. Friedheim, Ph.D. dissertation in process, Department of Political Science, Yale University. Data reproduced with permission.

at a regime-approved march to commemorate the first student killed in the Nazi invasion turned the march into an antiregime demonstration and were brutally beaten. Saturday morning, with Havel and most of the leading dissidents in the country on vacation, the students decided to go on a protest strike. A strike proclamation was read at a popular theater that afternoon, where many theater directors, as well as a normal audience, were assembled. Discussion of a peaceful general strike began.

Before going further with the sequence of events, let us establish some parameters so that the readers can appreciate how *early* the internal collapse began. On Tuesday, November 21, Havel in Prague addressed an outdoor rally for the first time. The major mass demonstration at Letná occurred on Sunday, November 26. The two-hour general strike (so peaceful that many workers agreed to work overtime to make up the lost time) was held on Monday, November 27. The regime, however, was experiencing mass defections from within its core institutions even before Havel spoke.⁹¹

On Sunday evening, November 19, the Youth Union of the Communist Party, whose chairman Vasil Mohorita had a seat on the Central Committee of the Communist Party and which controlled their own newspaper *Mladá Fronta (Young Front)*, issued a call for an inquiry into the beatings of the students and condemning the use of force by the state. "A majority of young people are calling for and supporting fundamental and essential political reform in our society. . . . We regard a political solution to the current situation as essential. . . . We consider violence in this case to be undemocratic. . . . It is not possible in our society for certain subjects to be forever forbidden."⁹² On Monday morning this Communist youth union "turned over its office accommodation on each faculty, complete

91. Two day-by-day, book-length accounts of the Velvet Revolution that reproduce invaluable documents are Bernard Wheaton and Zdenek Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution: Czechoslovakia, 1988–1991* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992), and John F. N. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution: A Political Analysis* (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, distributed by Columbia University Press, New York, 1992).

92. The entire text is reproduced in appendix B of Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 209–10.

with telephone and copying facilities, to the strike committees, giving them significant help in the struggle to communicate directly with the people.”⁹³ On that same day “a police patrol told the students guarding a technical college building to remove the strike posters from the windows. The request was ignored and no further police action was reported at this or any other college or faculty.”⁹⁴

Early Tuesday, November 21, after a Central Committee meeting, the government issued various statements that they would resist further antisocialist actions by “all possible means.”⁹⁵ But that afternoon Havel spoke to his first large public demonstration. The ambivalence of the police was evident to the demonstrators. “Policemen sighted during the demonstration were sporting the national colors on their lapels, a sign of solidarity with the demonstrators, and were also seen cheering Havel.”⁹⁶

On Wednesday, November 22, the police began to put in writing what they had been practicing. “We, Communists of the basic organization of the party in the police force in the North District of Prague, turn to you in the Presidium of the Central Committee. . . . The events of the recent days oblige us to take up a position with the aim of achieving a political solution. . . . It is no longer possible to use us, the officers of the law, to cover up unsolved political and other problems.”⁹⁷

That same day, before and while Havel spoke, other parts of the state apparatus were experiencing defection and resistance. The general director of state television was called to a mass meeting where 700 of his 1,500 employees had signed a petition demanding, among many other things, that video films of police brutality be shown. He capitulated.⁹⁸ At the state radio station, “300 staff members of the basic organization of the CPC [Communist Party of Czechoslovakia] met and condemned the Central Committee stance and expressed support for the C.F. [Civic Forum].” They also demanded two hours of air time per day to be open for public discussion “as a reflection of the pluralist tendency of different sectors of the population.”⁹⁹

In 1948 factory workers outside of Prague had played a major role in the Communist Party’s coup. Factory militias were a crucial part of the regime’s reserve coercive apparatus. On Tuesday, November 21, the hard-line leader of the Prague City Council, Miroslav Štěpán, made an appeal to “the workers of Prague, members of the People’s Militia, and other armed units to deal with the anti-socialist circles.”¹⁰⁰ Militia after militia met in angry mass meetings and voted themselves out of existence.¹⁰¹ In this context the commander of the army, General Vaclavík,

93. *Ibid.*, 60.

94. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia’s Velvet Revolution*, 78.

95. *Ibid.*, 79.

96. *Ibid.*, 85.

97. The full document is produced in Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 204–5.

98. *Ibid.*, 67.

99. *Ibid.*, 68.

100. Wheaton and Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution*, 70.

101. *Ibid.*, see documents 13 and 17 in appendix B and pp. 70–71 of the text.

who was later appointed minister of defense by Havel, gave a rambling speech on television where, according to Bradley, he said “the army would not fight the people.” Bradley adds, “the reason was obvious: soldiers would not obey their officers’ orders. This was a deathblow to the Communist leadership.”¹⁰²

On Friday November 24, the internal defections within the state (three days before the scheduled general strike was actually held), had already led to a crisis at the elite level of the regime. After an all-day meeting of the Central Committee, at which a variety of proposals including repression were considered, Secretary-General Jakeš submitted his resignation as well as that of his secretariat and his politburo.¹⁰³ By December 4 Husák announced his resignation as president. On December 29 the Communist Parliament voted the only candidate, Václav Havel, president of Czechoslovakia.¹⁰⁴

Why did this collapse occur? Let us refer to a brilliant, prophetic observation by Václav Havel. For Havel, in his famous 1975 “Letter to Dr. Gustáv Husák,” the hope for frozen post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia was for “a moment to arrive” in which the “entropic regime” could not respond. “In trying to paralyze life, the authorities paralyze themselves and, in the long run, incapacitate themselves for paralyzing life.” For Havel, when that moment comes “the dead weight of inertia crumbles and history steps out again into the arena.”¹⁰⁵ Havel’s hope was fulfilled. The regime *had* incapacitated itself for paralyzing life and *collapsed*.

As social scientists our hypothesis is that the type of internal collapse that occurred in Czechoslovakia owes much to its frozen post-totalitarianism, especially to the atmosphere of growing inauthenticity of ideology, the pro forma support for the regime, and the modest space for dissent in civil society that can be the base for an alternative. These are good reasons to believe that this type of situation is more likely to happen in a frozen post-totalitarian regime than in any other type of polity. In a full totalitarian regime or a very early post-totalitarian regime, as in Bulgaria in 1989, ideological commitment will tend to be more real, at least, for the cadre, who are the key staff needed to implement coercive policies. In an evolving, mature post-totalitarian regime, reform communists have greater negotiating capacity. In most authoritarian regimes the governments will tend to react via a new coup or extrication from rule by using elections.

In the chapters on Spain and Brazil, we could have described events very similar and even on a larger scale, comparable to the actions of students, professionals, crowds, and strikers in Prague. We did not because they had little direct effect on the transition and the final demise of the regime. Those in power could count on the loyalty and obedience of the police and, if necessary, of the armed forces

102. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia’s Velvet Revolution*, 93.

103. *Ibid.*, 98.

104. As in Hungary, a compelling eyewitness account of many of the crucial events is contained in Garton Ash, *We The People*, 78–130.

105. Václav Havel, “Letter to Dr. Gustáv Husák” (1975), Vladislav, *Václav Havel: Living in Truth*, 3–35, quote from p. 27.

and never considered giving up power as a response to such pressures. There was no collapse and no prospect for collapse.

Stateness and the Velvet Divorce: A Neo-Institutionalist Analysis

Our final question concerns stateness. At midnight on December 31, 1992, barely three years after the Velvet Revolution, Czechoslovakia divided into two separate states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.¹⁰⁶ There have been a number of excellent studies that correctly call attention to some important social, cultural, and historical differences between the two component parts of the former federation of Czechoslovakia. The Czech-lands were a part of the Austrian half and Slovakia was a part of the Hungarian half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During the empire, the Czech-lands became one of the most industrial parts of the Empire and Slovakia remained one of the most agrarian. The two components of Czechoslovakia spoke different but mutually intelligible languages. Slovakia has historically been more Catholic than the Czech-lands. Slovakia from 1939 to 1945 was a quasi-independent Nazi puppet state. Slovakia underwent heavy industrialization under Communist rule, a form of subsidized industrialization oriented toward the USSR that resulted in greater structural vulnerabilities in the post-1989 movement toward a market economy. As a result, before 1992, Slovakia had an 11.3 percent unemployment rate compared to 2.7 percent in the Czech-lands.¹⁰⁷

Having acknowledged these sociocultural and historical differences between the Czech-lands and Slovakia, we believe that it would be a mistake for analysts to overstress the determinate role of mass nationalist sentiment in the breakup of Czechoslovakia. There are many allusions in the press to stateness problems being driven by "irrational" and primordial mass feelings. However, in our judgment the available evidence suggests strongly that intense *mass* separatist and national demands were never dominant in either the Czech Republic or Slovakia until long after the political elites had already begun crafting the divorce after the June 1992 elections (table 17.4).¹⁰⁸

106. An overall treatment of this subject is found in Jiri Musil, ed., *The End of Czechoslovakia* (Budapest: Central European Press, 1995). Jon Elster explores critically six possible explanations for the breakup in his "Explaining the Breakup of the Czechoslovak Federation: Consenting Adults or the Sorcerer's Apprentice?" *East European Constitutional Review*, 4, no. 1 (1995), 36–41. In essence, we provide a seventh explanation. Four articles on the breakup, two by major political actors (Petr Pithart and Jan Carnogursky), are contained in *Scottish Affairs*, no. 8 (Summer 1994).

107. Two excellent reviews of the literature, which discuss and document these and other differences, are Jiri Musil, "Czech and Slovak Society: Outline of a Comparative Study," in *Czech Sociological Review* 1, no. 1 (1993), 5–21, and Sharon Wolchik, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia," *East European Politics and Societies* 8, no. 1 (1994), 153–88.

108. "Many citizens in Czechoslovakia share the view that political leaders were primarily responsible for the growth of ethnic tensions and the difficulties that arose over the form of the state. . . . Seventy-one percent of respondents in the Czech-lands and 65 percent in Slovakia surveyed in late 1991 for Radio Free Europe agreed or strongly agreed that politicians were using nationalism for their own purposes." Wolchik, "Politics of Ethnicity in Czechoslovakia," 176.

Table 17.4. Preferred State Arrangements (November 1991–July 1992) in Czech-lands (CR) and Slovakia (SR) (in percentages)

Type of State Arrangement	November 1991		May 1992		July 1992	
	CR	SR	CR	SR	CR	SR
Unitary state	39	20	34	12	38	14
Federation	30	26	28	33	19	27
"Lands-based republic"	20	6	22	6	18	8
Confederation	4	27	6	31	3	30
Two independent states	5	14	6	11	16	16
Don't know	2	7	4	7	6	5

Source: Reproduced with permission from Sharon L. Wolchik, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia," 180. Based on polls taken by the Institute for Opinion Research.

Note: In addition to the results displayed in this table, the Director of the Association of Independent Social Analysis (AISA) in Prague gave us the results of a national sample conducted in October–November 1992, according to which only 22 percent of respondents in the Czech-lands and 19 percent in Slovakia wanted two completely independent states, even though the political leaders had already agreed on the separation date of December 31, 1992. The "lands-based republic" option was not fully defined but normally was understood to entail a system based on three units: Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia.

In fact, an overwhelming majority of citizens wanted a referendum to decide the future of the country. In July 1992, "eighty-two percent of respondents in the Czech-lands and 84 percent in Slovakia agreed that the further existence of the state should be determined not by politicians but *only by citizens in a referendum*."¹⁰⁹

In July 1992, another public opinion poll was structured to ascertain the "least preferred" and the "most preferred" of the three most plausible options: federation (the existing model), confederation, or separation. The least preferred option in Slovakia (47 percent) and in the Czech-lands (46 percent) was separation.¹¹⁰

Part of the reason for fears about separation was economic. Only 21 percent of those polled in the Czech-lands and only 34 percent in Slovakia felt that their standard of living would be improved by a separation.¹¹¹ The major difference of opinion was about the constitutional arrangements of a federation or a confederation. The model most preferred (62 percent) in the Czech-lands was the existing model, federation. By a slight plurality (38 percent) this was also the most preferred model in Slovakia, but 35 percent of those polled most preferred confederation and 20 percent most preferred separation.¹¹²

If the mass publics of the Czech-lands and Slovakia did not demand separate states, why and how did Czechoslovakia break up? Much research should be carried out on the subject before definitive monographs can be written. However, we suggest that such works cannot be written if they do not give full attention to the interaction of the Soviet-style federal constitutional system with the antipolitical

109. *Ibid.*, 178, our emphasis.

110. For the methodology of this poll by the Institute for Public Opinion Research, see *ibid.*, 180–81.

111. *Ibid.* However, both component parts of the federation felt that the other region benefited most from the distribution mechanisms used by the federal government.

112. *Ibid.*

style of the democratic leadership who unexpectedly inherited state power after the sudden collapse of the frozen post-totalitarian regime. Our working hypothesis is strongly neo-institutionalist. Specifically, *without* the impasse-creating mechanisms of Czechoslovakia's Soviet-style federal system, we doubt that the historical, cultural, and economic differences between the Czech-lands and Slovakia would have resulted in the division of Czechoslovakia.¹¹³ Let us consider some basic arguments and data about institutions, attitudes, missed opportunities, and strategic elite choices.

After the regime collapsed in November 1992, the new democrats inherited a parliament (National Assembly) that was bicameral but with a *de jure* and *de facto* potential actually to be tricameral. The lower house, the Chamber of the People, had 150 members and was based on population. The Upper House, the Chamber of Nations, also had 150 members, composed of a 75-member Czech section and a 75-member Slovak section. Legally, both the Czech and Slovak sections could deliberate and vote separately. More importantly, on a whole range of issues, especially those that had any relevance to the working of the federation, the constitutional power to block was extremely high. A measure could be approved only if it received the positive vote of 60 percent of *all* members in each chamber, whether they were present or not and whether they voted or not. David Olson captures the blocking power of small groups quite well when he argues that the post-totalitarian constitution that Havel inherited "provided a small number of members (30), if they were so determined or merely absent, with a veto power within the Assembly. . . . As federalism increased in importance . . . the Federal Assembly could not adopt proposed legislation on the most important question before it—state-ness."¹¹⁴ This potential for impasse had long been noted by H. Gordon Skilling, who in his classic work on Czechoslovakia had commented that the post-1968 constitution meant that a very small minority could block "the ratification of the government's program and a vote of confidence in the government."¹¹⁵ Skilling went on to note that the constitution did not really affect the party-state, which remained unitary. Since the party-state was in charge, the constitution was fictive. Once the transition occurred the constitutional potential for impasse became more real because, unlike a standard West European parliamentary democracy, in Soviet-style constitutions neither the prime minister nor the head of state could dissolve the Parliament and call for new elections in the case of impasse.¹¹⁶

113. In fact, given the distribution of opinion in the Czech-lands and in Slovakia, probably a *necessary* condition of separation was the existence of institutions that eventually seemed (because of missed opportunities) unworkable and unchangeable.

114. David M. Olson, "The Sundered State: Federalism and Parliament in Czechoslovakia" (paper presented at the Conference on Comparative Parliamentary Development in Eastern Europe and the Former USSR at the Center for Soviet, Post-Soviet and East European Studies, Emory University, Atlanta, April 9–10, 1993), 7.

115. Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution*, appendix B.

116. Personal conversation of the authors with Professor Leon Lipson, a law professor at Yale University and a specialist on Soviet-style constitutions. Also see Paul Wilson, "Czechoslovakia: The Pain of Divorce," *New York Review of Books*, 39 (Dec. 17, 1992): 69–75.

A constitution of the sort we have just analyzed may be fictive for the party-state, but it can take on a new and dangerous life the longer it is not changed in the new democratic context.

As comparativists, we believe that in the crucial period after the collapse of the frozen post-totalitarian regime the new democrats could have rapidly put on the agenda a number of fundamental issues concerning the future of democratic institutions and decision-making arrangements. One possible early agenda item could have been a decision on whether or not to elect a constituent assembly to approve a new and more viable constitution for the federation. Another option could have been for Havel, backed by the authority of the Velvet Revolution, to have asked the existing Federal Assembly to modify the constitution shortly after he was elected president. This was the option Adolfo Suárez followed successfully in Spain with the "Law for Political Reform," as we have documented.

The decision, or better nondecision, to hold elections in June 1990 *within* the confines of the ultra federal and blocking characteristics of the Soviet-style federal constitution constrained severely the manner in which the stateness problem of Czechoslovakia could be handled. The disintegrative potential of the constitution was increased when Havel, unlike Adolfo Suárez of Spain, decided not to try to form a statewide party.

What happened and what did not happen, concerning the soviet-style federal constitution? Unfortunately, the atmosphere of dissident life in frozen post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia did not generate much attention to formal institutional matters. Indeed, the style of Havel and of many of his closest advisors, in sharp contrast to the opposition leadership in Hungary or Spain, was actively antipolitical and anti-institutional.

On the eve of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, leaders of the Velvet Revolution increasingly commented on the costs of their initial antipolitics and anti-institutionalism. A close confidant of Havel, Petr Pithart, who initially headed the Coordinating Center of Civic Forum and was later prime minister of the Czech Republic from 1990 to 1992, later said that Havel "underestimated the impediments of the inherited constitution. He felt the élan of the Velvet Revolution would carry them by the problem." As we argued in our discussion of Spain, a unified statewide party could have helped. However, Pithart went on to argue that, a few days after the Velvet Revolution was over, leaders from the Slovak capital of Bratislava came to talk to Havel about the Civic Forum party apparatus in Slovakia. Havel urged them to create their own separate party in Slovakia. They left and eventually set up People against Violence.¹¹⁷ Pithart says that this reflected the "widespread negative attitude toward anything that resembled a party. Havel was a symbol of this. He completely dissociated himself from the party."¹¹⁸ Pithart's successor as Civic Forum coordinator, Jan Urban, is even more critical of

117. Interview in Prague with Stepan, December 16, 1993.

118. *Ibid.*

Havel's antipolitics. "He became President as a leader and representative of the Civic Forum, but very soon declared himself a non-partisan President above any political parties . . . Already in February 1990, after several weeks of mutual isolation, the joint delegation of Civic Forum (Czech lands) and Public against Violence (Slovakia) had to force Havel to meet them officially. He received them in one anteroom, not even inviting them to the meeting room."¹¹⁹

This inattention to politics and political parties no doubt contributed to the fact that the electoral campaigns of 1989 were largely run by Czech-based and Slovak-based groups. Indeed, of the eleven parties that gained seats in the federal parliament, only one, the former Czechoslovak Communist Party, had representatives from both republics. The Czechoslovak "founding election" paid almost no ideological or organizational attention to the formation of federation-wide parties. Like Spain (and unlike the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia), Czechoslovakia *did* have a founding election sequence that began with statewide elections. However, unlike Spain, the central government leadership made no effort—and in fact discouraged—the formation of a statewide party.¹²⁰

In separate interviews a year after the Velvet Divorce, Stepan asked Pithart and Urban if they believed that Havel and the Civic Forum leaders could have successfully asked the sitting parliament to change the fictive constitution. One can never be certain with complex historical counterfactuals. However, it is worth noting that in the retrospective judgment of both Pithart and Urban, the Civic Forum in late 1989 or early 1990 *could* have achieved some key changes, such as going to a simple majority system for both houses or a constituent assembly. A variety of other formulas could have avoided constitutional impasse. But the central point was that serious constitution-building was not then on the agenda. As it turned out, Havel, despite great efforts in 1991 and 1992, was never able to change the constitution. No referendum on dissolution was ever held. The June 1992 elections did not produce overwhelming mass fervor in either the Czech-lands or the Slovak Republic for separation. However, it did produce a prime minister of the Czech Republic, Václav Klaus, and a prime minister of Slovakia, Vladimir Mečiar, with electoral pluralities, with different economic and political agendas, and with veto power over each other.

In the "terminating" election of June 1992, Vladimir Mečiar's party (HZDS) won only 12 percent of the vote for the lower house of the Federal Republic of Czechoslovakia and a first plurality of only 33.8 percent of the vote to the Slovak Chamber of Nations. However, this was more than sufficient in the Soviet-style trichamber federal system of power to give his party an absolute veto over any significant reform in the federal system they opposed. The Václav Klaus-led coali-

119. Urban, "Powerlessness of the Powerful."

120. On the importance of electoral sequence *and* the formation of statewide parties, see chap. 6 on Spain in this book and Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, "Political Identities and Electoral Sequences: Spain, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia," *Daedalus* (Spring 1992): 123–39.

tion won 27 percent of the valid federal votes, and this also gave Klaus's coalition an absolute veto (table 17.5).

Two of the major issues in the June 1992 election in Czechoslovakia concerned the future of federal relations and alternative development models. After the elections Václav Klaus, who favored a Thatcher-like rapid move to the market and a stronger role for the central government, emerged with the first plurality (not a majority) in the Czech lands. Mečiar, who favored a slower, more statist Austrian move toward a market and substantially more autonomy for Slovakia emerged with the first plurality (not a majority) in Slovakia. However, in essence the Soviet-style federal system gave each republic's prime minister *de facto* veto power over the other, Mečiar possibly would have settled for a confederal state with socioeconomic autonomy, but Klaus could deny him his confederal state. Klaus possibly would have settled for a federal state as long as he could advance his economic reform agenda, but Mečiar could deny him the capacity to implement his market plan. Given their separate goals and their mutual veto power, the rational solution for each leader was to sunder the state. The divorce was peaceful, if not velvet, because the nations were reasonably demarcated territorially and each leader was able to get, because of his control over his respective legislature, a vote for the division they eventually both wanted.¹²¹

BULGARIA: A REGIME-CONTROLLED TRANSITION FROM EARLY POST-TOTALITARIANISM

The secondary and monographic literature on the Bulgarian transition is still much less rich than it is for Hungary or Czechoslovakia, so our analysis is necessarily more tentative. However, this literature, supplemented by our visits and interviews, allows us to assert with some confidence that, unlike the transitions in Hungary or Czechoslovakia, the early post-totalitarian regime in Bulgaria *initiated* and *never lost control* of the transition and that the leaders of that regime emerged from the first free elections not only with a plurality of the vote but with

121. For reasons we cannot discuss here, the Czech Republic emerged from the divorce with better chances to consolidate democracy. In the sociopolitical sphere, the separation may help the Czech Republic move toward democratic consolidation because the new state, with few Germans or Jews (because of World War II) and few Slovaks (because of the Velvet divorce), was, with the possible exception of Moravian sentiment, close to being a nation-state, so it should have no major stateness problems. Also, the Czech Republic's constitutional choice, made at the time of the separation, for a pure parliamentary model also helps avoid the political type of problems that may result from an independently elected president with significant powers and an independently selected prime minister with broad powers. Furthermore, following our prior argument about parliamentarism, the parliamentary system should help create an environment in which parties can develop and where there are incentives for enduring party coalitions. It should be noted that Klaus is a skillful politician committed to building a party.

The division left Slovakia in a somewhat more difficult situation in that Mečiar wanted to build a majoritarian nation-state, but he had significant Hungarian, Gypsy, and Ukrainian minorities. Even after the 1994 election, he only held a bare plurality. In Slovakia, nation-state and democracy could be conflicting logics.

Table 17.5. The "Terminating" Election of Czechoslovakia in 1992: Party Vote and Seats for the Federal Chamber of People and Chamber of Nations, Compared with Votes Needed in Chamber of Nations to Veto any Significant Federal-related Legislation Passed by the Chamber of People

Party	% of Total Votes Received for Federal Chamber of the People	% of Seats Won to Federal Chamber of People after 5% Threshold	% of Votes Won in Slovakia for Chamber of Nations	% of Seats Won in Slovakia for Chamber of Nations after Threshold Effect	% of Votes Won in Czech Lands Chamber of Nations	% of Seats Won in Czech Lands Chamber of Nations after Threshold Effect	Number of Seats Obtained in Chamber of Nations	Number of Seats Needed in Chamber of Nations to Veto Any Major Federal Legislation Passed by Chamber of People
Mečiar-led party (Slovak Democratic Movement)	12	16	33.85	44	—	—	33/75	30/75
Václav Klaus-led coalition (ODS-KDS)	26	32	3.66	—	33.43	49.33	37/75	30/75

Source: *Keesing's Record of World Events*, News Digest for June 1992, 38944–45, and David M. Olson, "The Sundered State: Federalism and Parliament in Czechoslovakia," paper presented at the Conference on Comparative Parliamentary Development in Eastern Europe and the Former USSR, at the Center for Soviet, Post-Soviet and East European Studies, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga., April 9–10, 1993.

a newly reconstituted claim to power. What accounts for such a different path out of post-totalitarianism in Bulgaria, in contrast to Hungary and Czechoslovakia? Much of the explanation seems to be found in the nature of the previous early post-totalitarian regime and the limited role the democratic opposition was able to play in that regime, given its intermittent and illegal nature.

Among the four dimensions of a totalitarian regime (pluralism, mobilization, ideology, and leadership), Bulgaria in terms of pluralism—unlike Hungary or even Czechoslovakia—still approximated the totalitarian ideal type until 1988.

To document this assertion and to illustrate the texture of the regime, let us quote at length from a valuable study of the birth of the democratic opposition in Bulgaria by Deyan Kiuranov, one of the leaders of Bulgaria's most influential opposition group, Ecoglasnost, founded in February 1989.¹²² Kiuranov argues that before 1988 there were some individual acts of resistance but “unfortunately these truly heroic acts did not have any social effect at the time . . . we knew literally nothing about them when they were committed.”¹²³ For Kiuranov, the first truly nongovernmental protest organization to appear in Bulgaria was the Hungarian Rights Association founded in a small provincial town in January 1988 by a former political prisoner, Edward Genov. Genov and the other activists were rapidly “banished from the country.”¹²⁴ However, small support groups grew up in the country. These groups “were constantly arrested and harassed; they were effectively prevented from meeting organizationally, not to speak of doing something together. In fact, the police forced them to revert to the tactics of the pre-group period: individual action. However, unlike previous “martyrs,” they were heard [due to Radio Free Europe and B.B.C.]. This made all the difference.”¹²⁵

At about the same time as the Human Rights Association was formed and broken up, an antipollution group in Ruse created a support group that had 300 founding members. But, Kiuranov notes, “after its founding meeting, this group never met again.”¹²⁶ In Sofia a group saw a film about the Ruse protest and, in March 1988, 30 notable figures, some of them members of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, founded the Ruse Support Committee. On the day after the committee's formation, the 30 signatories were summoned by the

122. Deyan Kiuranov, “Political Establishment of the Bulgarian Opposition (January 1988–April 1990)” (unpublished paper prepared for the Center for the Study of Constitutionalism in Eastern Europe at the University of Chicago Law School in partnership with the Central European University, April 25, 1991). Other valuable accounts of the very late and thin emergence of a democratic opposition are by Roumen Daskalov and Boris Nikolov, “Bulgaria, 1989: The Birth of the Opposition” (Center for Cultural Studies, Sofia University, no date, unpublished paper), and Richard Crampton, “The Intelligentsia, the Ecology and the Opposition in Bulgaria,” *World Today* (Feb. 1990): 23–26. Also see the article by Roumen Dimitrov, “March across the Institutions: Formation of the Bulgarian Opposition, 1989–1991,” *Bulgarian Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1991): 43–52.

123. Kiuranov, “Political Establishment of the Bulgarian Opposition,” 7.

124. *Ibid.*, 8.

125. *Ibid.*

126. *Ibid.*, 9.

politburo and accused of “creating structures parallel to already existing ones.”¹²⁷ For us, this charge is virtually a definitional statement demonstrating that, in the arena of pluralism, Bulgaria in 1988 still approximated a totalitarian regime. In any case, the regime’s action “forestalled any other activity of the Committee. Two months after its founding it had disappeared from the scene.”¹²⁸ Other groups formed and were dispersed, and, as Richard Crampton notes, “the backlash intensified at the end of 1988 and with the early months of 1989. The most troublesome leaders of the independent groups were expelled, while many of those who remained at home were harassed and subjected to a vilification which was more reminiscent of the Stalinist purges than of Gorbachev’s era of glasnost.”¹²⁹

From February 1989 until November 1989, other important independent groups emerged, the most important of which was Ecoglasnost. Under the protective cover of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) held in Sofia in October and November 1989, Ecoglasnost became the first group to carry out explicitly political coordinated public protests. However, even Ecoglasnost felt that its existence was in jeopardy right up to the internal party coup that overthrew Todor Zhivkov on November 10, 1989. Zhivkov had ruled the Bulgarian Communist Party from 1954 until the Bulgarian Politburo removed him in 1989. One of the key leaders of Ecoglasnost, Deyan Kiuranov, in an interview said that, despite the Ecoglasnost protests, the regime was still in complete control in early November 1989. In fact, Ecoglasnost leaders feared that they would be massively repressed by the regime as soon as the CSCE delegation left town.¹³⁰ “I did not believe in Zhivkov’s downfall until it happened—and indeed for some time after. Ecoglasnost was preparing a deep defense for the post-CSCE period. We assumed our major visible leaders would be deported. We were planning for a leaderless organization. A few people were being saved by not going public so they could be in a position to try to coordinate some activities.”¹³¹ In his written work Kiuranov is just as clear that the regime, not the opposition, led to the overthrow of Zhivkov. “Despite speculations to the contrary, my opinion is that the activities of the opposition of the green umbrella were not the direct cause of the anti-Zhivkov coup . . . it was essentially an internal party affair. Much as I would have liked it, I cannot give Ecoglasnost or the opposition credit for the sophisticated palace coup.”¹³²

127. *Ibid.*, 9, emphasis added.

128. *Ibid.*, 10.

129. Crampton, “Intelligentsia, Ecology and Opposition in Bulgaria,” 24.

130. This perception is also part of the reason that, unlike Hungary, where the organized opposition also sprang up relatively late in the game, in Bulgaria prodemocratic groups had little echo in society and “the prevailing feeling among Bulgarians was that the Zhivkov regime still had enough strength to disarm the opposition and to curb any genuine reformist efforts.” See Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 221.

131. Interview by Alfred Stepan with Deyan Kiuranov, Sofia, September 4, 1992.

132. Kiuranov, “Political Establishment of the Bulgarian Opposition,” 15.

One of the leaders of the first independent trade union, Podkrepa, concurred that “10 November 1989 was a coup d’état within the party. In November and most of December 1989, the party still had control of the country. We only made our first public appeal for a strike more than a month after the internal party coup.”¹³³ Compare this fact with the strike rate in the late years of the Franco regime, the strikes in Poland, and those in the industrial belt of São Paulo.

Our conclusion is that independently organized democratic opposition activity emerged as an effective force in Bulgaria only by mid-1989. Until that time the Bulgarian regime in the area of pluralism approximated a totalitarian model.¹³⁴ Even frozen post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia had had a continuous political opposition from 1977 to 1989, and the Charter 77 groups had visible protest leaders such as Havel and produced numerous policy papers on a wide range of issues. In fact, as the regime collapsed in Czechoslovakia, Havel and his supporters emerged as a clear moral alternative that had substantial hegemony in civil society. In sharp contrast, in early post-totalitarian Bulgaria, the opposition was thin, had few nationally known leaders, and, as subsequent events were to prove, had been deeply infiltrated by the regime so that again and again leaders were exposed as “informers” and lost credibility. Quantitatively, compared to authoritarian Poland, frozen post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia, or mature post-totalitarian Hungary, Bulgaria had significantly fewer independent movements in 1989. Since power is always relational, this weakness of the democratic opposition enhanced the capacity of the nondemocratic regime. Let us now turn to how the regime started and controlled the transition.

One of the two key leaders of the internal party coup against Zhivkov was Petar Mladenov, who eventually was selected by the Communist Party of Bulgaria to be the Secretary General of the party and who, with the Communist Party’s support, was elected president of Bulgaria by the People’s Assembly. That he was a pro-regime but anti-Zhivkov actor is clear from his extraordinary letter of resignation of October 24, 1989, addressed to Zhivkov, the Politburo, and the Central Committee. Initially, Zhivkov did not circulate the letter, but the following are extracts from the letter that Mladenov later circulated and never denied. It clearly demonstrates that at most he was a staunch properestroika Communist. He began by saying that both his father and mother were members of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) and that he had attended the Moscow Institute of International Relations for six years. He went on to stress that

133. Interview by Alfred Stepan with Boyko Proytchev, political advisor to Podkrepa, in Sofia, September 2, 1992.

134. Even private initiatives in the economy were severely curtailed, contributing to the rather flat configuration with respect to pluralism. There was very little private economic activity and “virtually no experience with marketlike incentives.” See Jacek Kochanowicz, Kalman Mizsei, and Joan M. Nelson, “The Transition in Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland: An Overview,” in Joan M. Nelson, ed., *A Precarious Balance: Democracy and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe* (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1994), quotation from p. 10. In the same volume also see Ekaterina Nikova, “The Bulgarian Transition: A Difficult Beginning,” 125–162.

I was appointed chief of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the CC of the BCP . . . In 1977 I was elected member of the Politburo of the CC of the BCP (i.e., for more than 18 years now I have been participating in the supreme governing body of our Party) . . . I think that the true reason for Comrade Zhivkov's irritation and crudeness [toward Mladenov] is his understanding that he has led the country to a profound economic, financial and political crisis . . . [Zhivkov] "succeeded" to isolate Bulgaria from the world, to isolate it even from the USSR, and now we (and we alone) are in a boat with the rotten regime of family dictatorship of Ceaușescu. In a word, Todor Zhivkov's policy has thrown Bulgaria outside the stream of time . . . I think that we are all aware that the world is undergoing a major change, and that if Bulgaria wants to be in tune with the world, our policy must be updated. Even if we don't believe anyone else, we have to believe the USSR and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.¹³⁵

In the first month after the overthrow of Zhivkov, it was not clear whether Mladenov wanted either perestroika or regime liberalization. But, after major effective public protests against the regime began one month after Zhivkov was overthrown, Mladenov from December 1989 to February 1990 initiated a series of liberalizing steps. One of the more important of these steps was removing article 1 from the constitution, which declared the Communist Party to be the sole leading force in society.¹³⁶

Another major document of the Bulgarian transition that shows that the regime controlled the pace of change is a detailed study of the Bulgarian Round Table.¹³⁷ Unlike the Hungarian Round Table, where the democratic opposition first held an Opposition Round Table and set out firm principles of negotiation even before they agreed to enter negotiations, in Bulgaria the preparatory meetings for the Round Table were coordinated by Andrei Lukanov, one of the Bulgarian Communist Party leaders of the coup, who "chaired all meetings, set up the agenda and led the discussions."¹³⁸

The opposition was further weakened in that some of the leaders of the democratic opposition, such as G. Tanbuev, S. Prodev, S. Russev, and Ch. Kiuranov, who were in 1989 among the co-founders of the oppositional organization, all had rejoined the Bulgarian Communist Party, many before the round-table talks actually began.¹³⁹

135. Letter reprinted in *The Insider: Bulgarian Digest Monthly*, no. 1 (1990): 41–42. In the same issue Kostadin Chakurov, a close political advisor to Zhivkov in 1988–89 confirmed the receipt of the letter by Zhivkov, p. 39.

136. At the Fourteenth (extraordinary) Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), Mladenov laid out the foundations for liberalization in his report, "On Restructuring the Party and Building a Democratic Socialist Society." The report called for a "socially oriented market economy" and stated that the BCP was to be "de-Stalinized." According to *Keesing's* the report was "followed by a heated debate which illustrated the division between reformers and conservatives." See *Keesing's Record of World Events, News Digest* for February 1990, p. 37253.

137. Romyana Kolarova and Dimitr Dimitrov, "Bulgaria," in Jon Elster, ed., *The Roundtable Talks and the Breakdown of Communism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming). Future references will be to the 1991 unpublished manuscript, "Round Table Talks in Bulgaria."

138. Kolarova and Dimitrov, "Round Table Talks in Bulgaria," 12.

139. *Ibid.*, 8. Prodev returned to become the editor of the party newspaper, "making it as diverse and interesting as the opposition press" and contributing to the party's new, liberalized image. See John D. Bell, "Post-Communist Bulgaria," *Current History* (Dec. 1990): 417–20, 427–29, quote from p. 420.

After the round-table talks began in January 1990, Aleksandar Lilov was elected the Communist Party leader and, in the judgment of Kolarova and Dimitrov, the reality that Lilov was in a position "to have total control over power and make concessions was considered by the general public as proof of transformation and democratization and was a powerful legitimizing factor. The fact that all major concessions were announced by the party leader A. Lilov and intensely propagated has to be emphasized."¹⁴⁰ The Bulgarian Communist Party, due to its control of the Parliament, was also able to set a date for elections in June 1990, earlier than the fledging opposition would have liked. Another victory for the Bulgarian Communist Party was that they were able to convince many potential voters that Zhivkov, rather than the Communist Party (after March 1990 known as the Bulgarian Socialist Party [BSP]), was the major cause of Bulgaria's troubles.¹⁴¹

In an early post-totalitarian context, where the ruling party was able to personalize the dictatorship, to take credit for its overthrow, and to present itself as the initiator of liberalization and where the opposition was still divided, where the Soviet Union was never seen as the major enemy of nationalism, and where the opposition barely had an organizational presence in the countryside, the ruling party, unlike in Hungary or Czechoslovakia, won the first free and fair elections.

We concur with most election observers that the Bulgarian Socialist Party had numerous structural advantages in the 1990 elections but that the elections were basically fair. Most pre-election polls in fact gave the Bulgarian Socialist Party a slight lead. This makes us believe that fraud on election day was not great. The Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) won in most of the major cities but did poorly in the countryside, where their modernizing message, if heard, was distrusted by a significant part of Bulgaria's relatively old rural population.¹⁴²

Some analysts are harsher in their judgments and argue that local BSP activists manipulated rural voters' fears. "The people there were simply told they would be deprived of essential supplies if they voted for the opposition. After June 1990, a number of Muslim villages in southern Bulgaria were in fact deprived of supplies when it was discovered that they had supported the Movement for Rights and Freedoms or the Union of Democratic Forces."¹⁴³ The victory by the Bulgarian

140. Kolarova and Dimitrov, "Round Table Talks in Bulgaria," 33–34.

141. For example, in a pre-election poll 60 percent of the sympathizers for the Bulgarian Socialist Party blamed "Zhivkov and his Mafia" for Bulgaria's crisis, but only 7 percent of them blamed the previous Communist Party. See an analysis of these pre-election polls in "The Political Change in Bulgaria: Pre-Election Attitudes," in *Stability and Transition to Democracy in Bulgaria* (Center for the Study of Democracy, Sofia, 1990, occasional paper 1), 15.

142. See "The Political Change in Bulgaria: Post-electoral Attitudes," in *Stability and Transition to Democracy in Bulgaria*, 19–38.

143. See Plamen S. Tzetkov, "The Politics of Transition in Bulgaria: Back to the Future?" *Problems of Communism* (May–June 1992): 34–42, quote from p. 34, n.1. Analysts interested in comparative analysis might well compare Bulgaria with Paraguay, where close allies of General Stroessner overthrew his dictatorship, gained much credit for initiating liberalization, and were able to use the Colorado Parties' resources against a divided and weak opposition to win the first free election with a particularly strong showing in the rural areas.

Socialist Party in the June 1990 elections meant that the party controlled the parliament and the government and had succeeded in reconstituting its rule on the basis of participation in the round-table discussions and a popular mandate.

After the elections the Bulgarian Socialist Party's impetus for continued symbolic or substantial reform slowed somewhat. The newly named Bulgarian Socialist Party continued to occupy the former headquarters of the Bulgarian Communist Party. At a Party Congress of the Bulgarian Socialist Party in September 1990, the party chose to emphasize a degree of continuity with the past by calling the meeting the Thirty-ninth Party Congress (instead of the First Party Congress) of the Bulgarian Socialist Party. Of the 151 representatives to the Party Congress elected to the Supreme Council, few strongly identified with a reform faction. Aleksandar Lilov, who was one of the leaders of the internal party coup against Zhivkov but who was also Zhivkov's chief ideologist from 1974 to 1983, was re-elected party president.¹⁴⁴

On the opposition side the victory of the former Communist Party created some difficulties for the consolidation of sound democratic practices in political society. The most intense explosion of opposition in civil society occurred *after*, not before, the election, and for a while the streets seemed to displace the parliament as the center of politics. 'Tent cities' of young protesters sprang up in some of the major cities during the summer of 1990. In a still unexplained but dangerous incident, on August 26, 1990, the Bulgarian Socialist Party headquarters was "burned in a pogrom," as the General National Assembly officially called this fire.¹⁴⁵ The Bulgarian social scientist Ekaterina Nikova describes this period thusly: "During the whole period of 1989–1992, Bulgarian politics remained in a phase of prepolitics or antipolitics. Revolutionary rhetoric was kept alive, together with an anachronistic paranoid preoccupation with the past, the KGB, Moscow, and various conspiracies."¹⁴⁶ In conditions rather analogous to East

A June 1991 survey may provide us with a clue for the success of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) in the rural areas. In the survey there was no large difference between cities and rural areas in their response to the question "Do you prefer the system of governing that we have now or the system we had before the Revolution?" Positive answers were given by, respectively, 80 percent and 70 percent. However, when we turn to a battery of eight questions concerning that system of governing, the percentage of rural "don't knows" ranges between 42 and 64, compared to only 17 to 26 percent in the cities. Significantly, to the statement that "everybody is free to say what he or she thinks," 45 percent of rural respondents versus 17 percent of city respondents answered "don't know." We suspect that these high rates of rural "don't knows" reflected a climate of social control that leads to caution. On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that the rural population is particularly favorable to a controlled economy (78 percent). See NAPOC survey, "Divisions within Bulgaria: Results of a Survey of Economic and Political Behavior," *Studies in Public Policy*, no. 199 (1992): questions 57, 58, 63.

144. See the detailed article by Duncan M. Perry, "The Bulgarian Socialist Party Congress: Conservatism Preserved," *Report on Eastern Europe* (Oct. 26, 1990): 4–8.

145. For an analysis of the fire, of the charges by the BSP that it was opposition-inspired violence, and of countercharges by the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) that it was done by the BSP to burn incriminating documents, see Mark Baskin, "The Politics of the Attack on BSP Headquarters," *Report on Eastern Europe* (Sept. 28, 1990): 8–12.

146. Nikova, "The Bulgarian Transition," 137.

German politics after the fall of the early post-totalitarian regime, a number of key leaders of the former democratic opposition lost legitimacy when it was revealed that they had been “police informers” under the previous regime.¹⁴⁷

Possibly the most dangerous attitudes for the legitimacy of democratic institutions involved the reluctance of some members of the UDF to accept the legitimacy of a “formal democracy” led by the BSP. A faction of the UDF (called the “Dark Blues”) in opposition to what was originally the mainstream of the UDF party, the “Light Blues,” protested the moral legitimacy of the formal majority of the BSP to write the constitution for the new democracy. Their protest tactics included walking out of the constitutional debates in the National Assembly.¹⁴⁸ They were particularly enraged that the constitution made it difficult to prosecute former regime officials for acts that were not illegal when they were committed. In numerous interviews in the press and with Stepan, this group questioned whether formal democratic constitutional procedures should have precedence over the moral imperatives of justice. In terms of our categories, at times the Dark Blues were only semiloyal democrats in opposition in 1990–91. Even in the 1991–92 period, after the UDF had won the general election in October 1991 and a Dark Blue militant, Filip Dimitrov, had been prime minister for a year, they engaged in some semiloyal activity.¹⁴⁹

Despite these problems, by 1995 Bulgaria was still a functioning democratic system. In 1991 the BSP began to renovate itself internally in a more democratic fashion after they were voted out of power. At the December 1991 Fortieth Party Congress of the BSP, the leadership began to be renewed with many young people assuming positions of importance. The UDF, in contrast, faced greater difficulties. In 1994, in protest against continued Dark Blue control of the UDF, the Democratic Party and major groups from *Ecoglasnost* left the UDF. In fact, *Ecoglasnost*, the most prominent civil society opposition group in the October–November 1989 antiregime demonstrations, *joined* in an electoral coalition with

147. The most damaging case involved the leader of the UDF, Petar Beron, who was forced to resign in December 1990 when accusations were made that for many years he had been an informer for the State Security. See Rada Nikolaev, “Between Hope and Anger,” *Report on Eastern Europe* (Jan. 4, 1991): 5–10.

148. In May 1991, fifty UDF delegates walked out of the National Assembly demonstrating their unwillingness to work with the BSP, but “two-thirds of the opposition deputies remained in the parliament, arguing that a more conciliatory attitude toward the communists might win the latter over to democracy.” See Plamen S. Tzvetkov, “The Politics of Transition in Bulgaria: Back to the Future?” *Problems of Communism* (May–June 1992): 35.

149. Interviews by Alfred Stepan in Bulgaria, August 31 to September 4, 1992. While some members of the opposition “advocated an eventual reconciliation and opposed the idea of reprisals against BSP officials,” another faction (the Dark Blues) “adopted a far more strident tone, frequently referring to the BSP as ‘murderers’ and a ‘Mafia,’ giving the impression that the UDF would conduct a wholesale purge of the government if it won. Both the BSP and some members of the UDF referred to this as a policy of ‘McCarthyism.’” See Bell, “Post-Communist” Bulgaria, 427. J. F. Brown goes further in his critique of the Dark Blues. He argues that they contributed to dangerous confrontational politics in 1992–93. “The former communists (now socialists) were not the ones most to blame; instead ‘totalitarian’ anti-communists had threatened to run riot.” J. F. Brown, *Hopes and Shadows: Eastern Europe after Communism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 105–14, quote from p. 113.

the BSP. In December 1994, for the second straight general election, the UDF experienced a decline in its total vote share. The BSP coalition, with 43.5 percent of the votes, won 52 percent of the seats. In January 1995, this led to the second peaceful alternation of party power since 1991, as Zhan Videnov of the BSP was sworn in as prime minister.¹⁵⁰

In early 1995 the UDF was thus in opposition again and still was divided about whether it should be a party or a movement. For example, the UDF continued to give an equal vote to each of the seventeen disparate groups in its organization. In other words, the UDF had yet to transform itself from its prepolitical origins as an umbrella movement that had emerged out of an early post-totalitarian context into a modern democratic party.

From the perspective of prior regime type, Bulgaria from 1989 to 1995 probably "overperformed" democratically. The Bulgarian case needs much more study by observers more qualified than we are. However, we offer two hypotheses to explain this democratic "overperformance": one to do with institutional choice and another to do with an overlooked aspect of Bulgaria's pretransition civil society. The institutional choice question concerns Bulgaria's initial use of a parliamentary framework and its continued use of proportional representation which facilitated minority representation. The parliamentary form of government gave some flexibility to the fragile Bulgarian democracy that a presidential or semipresidential system would not have. For example, when president Mladenov became involved in a scandal about his possibly urging the use of tanks against protestors, the parliament was able to select the leader of the UDF opposition, Zhelyu Zhelev, the dissident philosopher of great prestige, as the president in August 1990. (The July 1991 Constitution subsequently introduced a semi-parliamentary system with direct election of the president.)

The elections in October 1991 were won by the Dark Blues, helping to bring them a bit more into normal politics. The choice of a parliament elected by proportional representation has also meant that politically motivated attacks on Bulgaria's Turkish minority have been softened somewhat, since both major parties intermittently wanted to follow policies that made them a plausible "coalition partner" with the Muslim-based Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF), which in the first few elections provided the swing vote. In fact, the MRF was a crucial partner in a BSP minority government and in a UDF minority government.¹⁵¹

150. We owe our information on the 1994 election to an unpublished paper by Dessislava Zagorcheva, "The Transition to Democracy in Bulgaria and Hungary" (Department of Political Science, Central European University, Budapest, January 1995), and to Stefan Krause, "Bulgaria: Socialists at the Helm," *Transition* 1, no. 4 (1995): 33-38.

151. Indeed, Nikova asserts that "the Dimitrov government was in fact a minority government whose fate depended on cooperation with the MRF. The UDF-MRF coalition was disciplined, voting as a bloc on major issues. . . . In a situation unique in Eastern Europe, a small, ethnically based movement has assumed the role of a real national party, thereby thwarting the combined efforts of UDF and BSP extremists." See Ekaterina Nikova, "Bulgaria's Transition and the New 'Government of Privatization,'" Woodrow Wilson Center East European Studies Meeting Report, no. 82, p. 1. MRF's swing role in 1990-94 probably enhanced Bulgaria's capacity to deal with its potential stoniness problems.

Our second hypothesis to explain Bulgaria's overperformance concerns an unexpected finding about civil society. Concerning oppositional organization, we are convinced that Bulgaria was close to the totalitarian ideal type until as late as 1988. However, the life of the university and researchers was not as closed as this implies. As long as academics did not organize protests or write critical reports, they were able to read a surprisingly wide variety of material in the national library—much more than their counterparts in Czechoslovakia or the USSR. This has meant that Bulgaria had more intellectual capital than our category *early post-totalitarian* would suggest. We are happy to call attention to the specificity of this anomaly of Bulgarian early post-totalitarianism.¹⁵² Notwithstanding this optimistic hypothesis, we are nevertheless concerned about the degree to which some of the legacies of early post-totalitarianism (i.e., nearly flat civil, political, and economic societies and a strong antipolitics strain in the parties and much of the public) mutually reinforce each other *negatively*. Thus, the challenge to rebuild each of these arenas is a difficult but necessary task for democratic consolidation.¹⁵³ In this respect we should record some sobering evidence. In a survey conducted in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, in answer to the question as to whether it was “best to get rid of Parliament and elections and have a strong leader who can quickly decide things,” 45 percent of Bulgarians polled strongly agreed or somewhat agreed. Hungary and the Czech Republic were much closer to meeting our criteria of “attitudinal” support for democratic consolidation in that, respectively, only 18 percent and 16 percent of the population strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with this antidemocratic statement.¹⁵⁴

We have concluded that there is great variety and that there are some possibilities of evolution from the post-totalitarian regime type. We are now ready to explore an even more difficult type of regime configuration for democratic transition and consolidation. We consider it the most difficult and least understood regime configuration—one that combines sultanistic and totalitarian tendencies.

152. This observation is based on Alfred Stepan's review of the holdings as of 1989 in various libraries in Prague, Moscow, and Sofia and was confirmed by Bulgarian academics such as the economist Maria Todorova and the social scientist Deyan Kiuranov, who have conducted research in both Moscow and Bulgaria in the pre-1989 period.

153. With respect to the importance of pluralism in economic society and its expression in political society, Herbert Kitschelt notes that “Bulgaria's transition to democracy was shaped by the preemptive strike of segments in the communist party who then acquired a position to shape much of the economic transformation because the opposition forces do not have a competent counter-elite that could effectively organize the political-economic transformation. . . . What is missing in the Bulgarian political landscape is a genuinely libertarian pro-market political force equivalent to those found in Poland or Hungary.” Herbert Kitschelt, “Emerging Structures of Political Representation in Eastern Europe” (paper prepared for the conference on the Social and Political Bases of Economic Liberalization, Warsaw, September 23–26, 1994), quotes from pp. 14 and 32.

154. Richard Rose and Christian Haepfer, “New Democracies Barometer III: Learning from What Is Happening,” *Studies in Public Policy*, no. 230 (1994): table 45.

The Effects of Totalitarianism-cum-Sultanism on Democratic Transition: Romania

OF THE FORMER Warsaw pact countries in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania), Romania has numerous distinctions.¹ It had the last transition. It had the most violent regime termination. It was the only country that had nothing remotely close to a national round table. It is the country where the successor regime committed the most egregious violations of human rights. It is the only country where the democratic opposition has yet to win a national election. It is the only country where a former high Communist official was not only elected to the presidency in the first free election, but re-elected.²

DECONSTRUCTING ROMANIAN EXCEPTIONALISM

What explains such exceptionalism? We should first acknowledge that there is more debate about some of the most basic “facts” concerning the transition in Romania than about any other transition we consider in this book. For example, the uprising that sparked Ceaușescu’s downfall began in the town of Timisoara. There has been an intense dispute about how many citizens were killed in

1. This chapter draws upon some material previously presented in Alfred Stepan, “Romania: In a Sultanistic State,” *Times Literary Supplement* (Oct. 1992), 26–27. Permission to reprint is acknowledged gratefully.

2. Part of this “exceptionalism,” of course, has historical roots that precede the Communist period. Romania had one of the weakest experiences of interwar democracy and one of the strongest indigenous fascist movements (the Legion of the Archangel Michael or Iron Guard) in Eastern Europe. For this period see the important studies by Eugene Weber, “Romania,” in Hans Rogger and Eugene Weber, eds., *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 501–74, and Henry L. Roberts, *Romania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State* (New York: Yale University Press, 1951). For the purposes of this chapter, the best biography of Ceaușescu is by the Oxford historian Mark Almond, *The Rise and Fall of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu* (London: Chapman’s, 1992). Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *Die unvollendete Revolution: Rumänien zwischen Diktatur und Demokratie* (Munich: Piper, 1990), is particularly useful for the complex politics of the overthrow of Ceaușescu. A useful modern history of Romania that contains seven short chapters on the post-Ceaușescu period is Martyn Rady, *Romania in Turmoil: A Contemporary History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1992). See also Daniel Nelson, ed., *Romania after Tyranny* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992).

Timisoara, who killed them, and whether the uprisings in Timisoara and later in Bucharest were spontaneous, manipulated, or even planned by Communists for their own ends.³ In Romania a major explanation for the country's exceptionalism involves variations of the theme of captured revolution and a well-planned conspiracy.⁴ For an immersion in the atmosphere of elation, fear, rumor, confusion, disinformation, and disillusionment that surrounded the fall of Ceaușescu in the winter of 1989 and that contributes to the conspiracy theory, one can do no better than read the account by the award-winning poet Andrei Codrescu of his return to Romania after a twenty-five-year exile in the United States.⁵ One of his best chapters, subtitled "Seize the Means of Projection," describes the young students, poets, peasants and former officials in front of the cameras, urgently presenting their views of what was happening to an electrified country and the world. Securitate terrorists were still believed to be a counter-revolutionary threat. Rumors of deliberately poisoned water supplies, of 10,000, 60,000, even 100,000 dead, filled the news channels and the streets. Codrescu had his reservations about many of the new converts to revolution from the old regime, but he, like everyone else, was amazed by the ability of the revolutionaries to use television for their purposes and was swept up in the revolutionary spontaneity of events.

Six months later, on a return visit, Codrescu's euphoria had turned to despair. The old Communists, now the neo-Communists organized in the National Salvation Front, had not only "captured the revolution" (the government itself, led by Ion Iliescu and his former Communist allies), but also captured the words and the meanings of the revolution. President Iliescu had called out vigilante miners to smash the students (who represented to Codrescu the most authentic part of the revolution in Bucharest). Codrescu was distressed to find that many of his friends hailed Iliescu for thanking the miners publicly for their patriotic and disciplined rampage. Then, too, the body count in Timisoara had apparently been inflated by digging up bodies from nearby paupers' graves. Codrescu was thoroughly disillusioned and disoriented. It seemed to him that the whole revolution had been a fake, a film scripted by the Romanian Communists, with a "beautifully orchestrated piece of Kremlin music conducted by Maestro Gorbachev."⁶

3. Comparativists interested in Romania are fortunate that two anthropologists with many years of field work in Romania have dedicated an excellent article to a careful rereading of myths concerning the fall of Ceaușescu. See Katherine Verdery and Gail Kligman, "Romania after Ceaușescu: Post-Communist Communism?" in Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 117–47. For a much-needed analysis of the myths concerning Timisoara, see 118–22. See Michel Castex, *Un mensonge gros comme le siècle: Roumanie, histoire d'une manipulation* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990), for one such myth, the revolution as a KGB plot.

4. Verdery and Kligman go so far as to call "'the plot mentality' characteristic of virtually every Romanian's description of events prior to, during, and after December 1989." Verdery and Kligman, "Romania after Ceaușescu," 119. Nestor Ratesh devotes a forty-page chapter to a review of conspiracy theories in his *Romania: The Entangled Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 80–119.

5. Andrei Codrescu, *The Hole in the Flag: A Romanian Exile's Story of Return and Revolution* (New York: William Morrow, 1992).

6. *Ibid.*, 206.

Codrescu's difficulty in knowing what happened is ours too. We do know that the number of people killed in the collapse of Ceaușescu's regime is closer to two thousand than sixty thousand. We also know that Codrescu is probably right in thinking there was an element of a staged counter-revolution, even to the extent of simulated gunfire, and that disinformation played an important role in the events. If, during the uprising, the forces of Iliescu in the Central Committee building in Bucharest's main square were under siege by Securitate loyalists, why are the surrounding buildings destroyed and the Central Committee building unscarred by bullets?

We dwell on Codrescu's book because the idea of a "scripted" revolution, implying a sinister plot written in advance whose enactment allowed its authors to "capture" the revolution, is still probably the reigning framework for analyzing the events in the country. But, as we have indicated, of all of the transitions from Communism that occurred in Eastern Europe, Romania's is the one where we are least able to know what really happened, and, of all the narratives, that of the scripted revolution allows the fewest ambiguities and contradictions. The value of Codrescu's book, then, lies not in its account of connected events as they occurred, but in its documentation of how myths are replaced by countermyths. Indeed, what we are arguing is that, for Romania more than for any other transition in Eastern Europe, any primarily narrative account is necessarily unsatisfying; what we need, rather are studies of the dynamics of myth creation and the function of disinformation—a deconstruction of the revolution itself. The best effort along these lines is the superb *picce* by two anthropologists, Katherine Verdery and Gail Kligman. They too have sifted through the supposed facts and evidence, and they know all the literature, but their concern is with the very terms by which the events in Romania were experienced, described, and understood: *the miners, the demonstrators, the front, the revolution, neo-communism*. This makes for a lot of italics, but is illuminating.⁷

Most importantly, to analyze the Romanian transition we need to think more deeply about the nature of the Ceaușescu regime and to place Romanian politics in comparative perspective. Of the Warsaw Pact countries in Eastern Europe, Romania had the weakest organized opposition. Indeed, civil society is still so weak that many members of the two innovative organizations, the Civic Alliance and the Group for Social Dialogue, want the monarchy back in order, they say, to give civil society a chance to develop.

The exceptionalism of Romania is most apparent when we consider it in relation to Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. However we classify the latter regimes in political terms, in all of them, but not in Romania, some space for organized opposition already existed before the transitions began. Ceaușescu's Romania was a fundamentally different place. In Romania, there were no autonomous or even semi-

7. Verdery and Kligman, "Romania after Ceaușescu."

autonomous career paths in the state apparatus. Even the top nomenklatura were hired, treated, mistreated, transferred, and fired as members of the household staff. There was growing personalism, beginning with the appointment of Elena Ceaușescu to the Politburo in 1972 and ending with the well-known “socialism in one family” of the 1980s.

In essence, Ceaușescu treated Romania as his personal domain. Max Weber called this kind of extreme patrimonialism “sultanistic.” The Middle Eastern associations of the term are unfortunate because regimes as geographically diverse as Kim Il Sung’s in North Korea, Bokassa’s in the Central African Empire, and Somoza’s in Nicaragua all exhibited strong sultanistic tendencies. In our judgment, understanding the combination of sultanistic and totalitarian tendencies in Ceaușescu’s Romania clarifies much more that is distinctive in Romania’s past, present, and foreseeable future than the framework of a Communist plot or a “captured revolution.”⁸

TOTALITARIANISM: ANTI-SOVIET STALINISM AND THE MISSED POST-TOTALITARIANISM TURN

Before we explore the sultanistic component of Ceaușescu’s rule, let us first examine the totalitarian component. Specifically, did Romania ever come close to being post-totalitarian, by which we mean did Romania ever loosen any of the controls of a fully totalitarian system? And, if it did, how and why—unlike in most East European countries—did totalitarianism re-emerge? Personalism and the manipulation of nationalism are a key part of this and the subsequent sultanistic story.

Whereas most of the East European countries underwent destalinization periods under Khrushchev’s influence, Romania under Gheorghiu-Dej and his close associate, Nicolae Ceaușescu, actually resisted destalinization. However, in the last two years of Dej’s rule (1963–65), a combination of anti-Soviet nationalism and domestic liberalization gave the regime a somewhat greater degree of internal support.

When Dej died in March 1965, Ceaușescu, by no means the clearly pre-eminent surviving member of the Politburo, was selected within three days as the First Secretary. Ironically, Ceaușescu successfully used appeals to “collective leadership” and respect for colleagues in his effort to consolidate power. Indeed, as Ken Jowitt

8. The totalitarian-sultanistic combination is not such an unlikely combination as is often thought. In a trenchant and pioneering manner, Kenneth Jowitt has long insisted on the patrimonial dimension of many Leninist regimes. In his opinion both the Soviet and Romanian regimes had strong patrimonial tendencies before Stalin’s death in 1953. He goes even further. He develops an argument, using the same quotes from Max Weber that we cited in chapter 3, that “patrimonialism in its sultanistic form was dominant in the Romanian Party at least from 1957 until 1965.” See Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania 1944–1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 190–197, quote from 193. For Dej’s fusion of Leninism and patrimonialism and how this was in some ways congruent with traditional Romanian ascriptive structures of personal patronage, see pp. 147–149.

and Mary Ellen Fisher make clear in their perceptive studies, Ceaușescu's rise to power was aided precisely by the fact that he appealed to those party leaders who wanted a more institutional approach to party rule. The 1965–68 period is a crucial period in Romanian development because mutual fear among the party elite might have contributed, as it had earlier in the Soviet Union, to the regime becoming post-totalitarian.⁹

However, Ceaușescu skillfully used nationalism to go from *primus inter pares* to undisputed leader. Alone among the Warsaw Pact leaders, Ceaușescu condemned the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. This act greatly increased his national and international support. Both sources of support augmented his relative independence from the collective leadership and from criticism. A leading Romanian intellectual captures how nationalism helped Ceaușescu: "At the end of 1968 Romania was the only country in Eastern Europe where the communist leader was strongly supported by intellectuals. To criticize Ceaușescu we had to undergo a process of rejection that was not easy for us because each gesture against Ceaușescu was seen as a gesture for the Soviet Union."¹⁰ An analogous process, which yielded important material and moral resources and helped demoralize the domestic opposition, occurred among Western leaders. Leaders from De Gaulle to Nixon came to Romania and praised Ceaușescu for his independence. Such international acclaim distracted attention from the fact that Ceaușescu was not like Czechoslovakia's Dubček, who combined anti-Soviet and anti-Stalinist practices, but was actually creating a new form of "anti-Soviet Stalinism."¹¹

By the Tenth Party Congress in 1969, collective leadership was interred. Ceaușescu managed to change the party statutes so as to increase his freedom

9. Jowitt cites a key 1965 Ceaușescu speech to the Party Congress as an example of his appeal to a more collegial style of leadership. He also notes that "another element is the very real fear which most members of the elite coalition probably had of Draghici, the head of the security police, to obtain leadership of the Party." *Ibid.*, 226; see also 192–97, 224–28. Jowitt's argument is similar to the reasons he gives for the emergence of a more collegial post-totalitarian leadership style in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. "The party leadership favored Khrushchev's Party Magna Carta—that is, strictures against a Party sultan like Stalin and his possible use of a patrimonial secret police against the leadership itself." Kenneth Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 251. The most extensive analysis of the rise and demise of collective leadership in Romania under Ceaușescu is Mary Ellen Fischer, *Nicolae Ceaușescu: A Study in Political Leadership* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), 66–140.

10. Interview by Alfred Stepan with Pavel Campeanu, Bucharest, June 23, 1991. A comparable remark was made by another prominent intellectual who otherwise has a quite different political outlook than Campeanu. Ovidiu Trăsnea, who was a vice president of the International Political Science Association in 1984, argues that "Ceaușescu from 1968–1971 succeeded in gaining the sympathy of the people. This was his most brilliant period." Interview with Stepan, Bucharest, June 25, 1991. Martyn Rady also comments on the importance of Ceaușescu's condemnation of the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia for the consolidation of his power: "Ceaușescu's defiance of Moscow made him a national hero. He and the survival of the Romanian nation became for a time inextricably bound together in the public imagination and opposition to him became temporarily confused with betrayal of the country." Rady, *Romania in Turmoil*, 42.

11. As Mark Almond notes, "It is difficult today to recall that Dubček and Ceaușescu were often mentioned in one breath as the great hopes for reform." Almond, *Rise and Fall of Ceaușescu*, 65. He goes on to say that, in fact, Ceaușescu never repudiated Stalin; indeed, four months before his death he affirmed that "Stalin did everything a man in his position should have done." 67.

from collective leadership. The instrument that was most potentially useful for collective leadership was the fact that the Politburo and the Central Committee had the prerogatives of appointing and removing the General Secretary. Ceaușescu was able to shift these prerogatives to the much larger Party Congress, over which he had greater personal control. His arguments were that this should be done for reasons of national autonomy because the Congress would be harder for Moscow to manipulate, and for democracy, because the Congress should be the sovereign body of the party.¹²

In 1971 Ceaușescu visited China at the height of the cultural revolution and made the first of his many trips to North Korea. As Mark Almond comments, "He was even more impressed by the cult of Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang than by the adoration of Mao on display in Peking."¹³ Upon his return to Romania, Ceaușescu almost immediately eliminated the last vestiges of a more relaxed post-totalitarian cultural life.¹⁴ In 1974, he was inaugurated president in a ceremony mimicking a coronation, which completed the fusion of all key party and state roles.¹⁵

SULTANISTIC ACCRETIONS

After 1974 the Romanian regime never became less totalitarian, but it did become increasingly sultanistic. This combination made the Romanian regime very resistant to any form of nonviolent transformation.

In chapter 3 we spelled out what a regime with strong sultanistic tendencies would be like vis-à-vis the four key dimensions of regime type: leadership, pluralism, ideology, and mobilization. We start with the regime feature that is most distinctive of sultanism—leadership. Ceaușescu's policies and personal style made it clear that he was unbounded by rational-legal constraints like collective leadership and party statutes, and his rule was highly personalistic and arbitrary.

We argued that sultanistic regimes, because of their personalism and the fact that all power derives from the sultan, tend to exhibit strong dynastic tendencies. The extreme tendency of the "sultan" to place his family in most key positions differentiates it from the strong personalism of totalitarianism. Under Ceaușescu, his wife Elena was formally and informally the second most powerful person in the country. Among the titles she held were First Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the Commission on Cadres of the Romanian Communist Party, and

12. Previously cited interview with Ovidiu Trasnea; also Fischer, *Nicolae Ceaușescu*, 152–59.

13. Almond, *Rise and Fall of Ceaușescu*, 70.

14. From 1970 to 1972 the minister of culture in Romania was Mircea Malitza. Almost immediately after Ceaușescu's visit to China and North Korea, Ceaușescu criticized Malitza for being too tolerant, ordered the cancellation of an experimental course in Western management techniques, greatly curtailed the study of foreign languages, and made all ideological courses revolve around his personal thought. Interview with Mircea Malitza by Stepan, June 22, 1991, Bucharest.

15. For details see Fischer, *Nicolae Ceaușescu*, 160–70, and Almond, *Rise and Fall of Ceaușescu*, 70–71.

Chairman of the National Council on Science and Technology. President Ceaușescu's four brothers all held key levers of power, while other ministerial positions rotated in and out at the pleasure of Ceaușescu (often called the *Conducator*). In the Ministry of Defense, his brother, Ilie, was Chief of the Main Political Directorate. In the all-powerful and hated security police (Securitate), his brother, Nicolae, was in charge of the personnel department. His brother, Ioan, was Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Commission, and his brother, Florea, was a member of the staff of *Scinteia*, the party daily. The list of other family members in high positions goes on and on. And, of course, his son, Nicu, was widely seen as being groomed as his successor.¹⁶

The leadership style also became increasingly personalistic. Ceaușescu's 160 "books" were translated into thirty languages and the Romanian philosophical dictionary gave more space to President Ceaușescu's doctrine of Marxism than to the entries for Marx, Engels, and Lenin combined.¹⁷ By the mid-1970s, Mary Ellen Fisher writes, "no Romanian official could deliver a report or write an article without referring to President Ceaușescu's personal insight and leadership as the major source of inspiration and guidance."¹⁸

Ceaușescu's sultanistic leadership style was again and again manifested in policies. He personally designed, with virtually no technocratic or party help, many huge industrial projects. He destroyed much of historic Bucharest as he capriciously designed and endlessly redesigned all of the approach routes and the central edifice of the most brutal architectural project in Eastern Europe, The Palace of the People.¹⁹ The construction of huge steel mills was a product of this style.²⁰ One of the most devastating of Ceaușescu's personal decisions was his pronatalist and antiabortion campaign, which led to compulsory humiliating gynecological examinations of women in factories, unwanted pregnancies, abandoned children and, given the weakness of Romania's hospital system, an AIDS epidemic among children in orphanages.²¹

16. On the dynastic dimensions of Ceaușescu's rule, see R. de Fleurs, "Socialism in One Family," *Survey* 28, no. 4 (1984): 165–74, and Ronald H. Linden, "Socialist Patrimonialism and the Global Economy: The Case of Romania," *International Organization* 40, no. 2 (1986): 347–79. For an extensive list of family members in key public positions, see Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Personal Power and Political Crisis in Romania," *Government and Opposition* 24, no. 2 (1989): 177–98, esp. 192–93.

17. See Vlad Georgescu, "Romania in the 1980s: The Legacy of Dynastic Socialism," *East European Politics and Society* 2, no. 1 (1988), 82, and Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Ceaușescu's Socialism," *Problems of Communism* 34 (Jan.–Feb. 1985): 63.

18. Mary Ellen Fisher, "Idol or Leader? The Origins and Future of the Ceaușescu Cult," in Daniel N. Nelson, ed., *Romania in the 1980s* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1981), 118.

19. Almond devotes an entire chapter, "The Architect of Socialism," to this revealing sultanistic episode. Almond, *Rise and Fall of Ceaușescu*, 153–71.

20. For the arbitrariness of these and other policies, see Daniel N. Nelson, *Romania: Politics in the Ceaușescu Era* (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1988), esp. xiii–xvii, and Vlad Georgescu, "Romania in the 1980s: The Legacy of Dynastic Socialism," *East European Politics and Societies* 2, no. 1 (1988), 66–93.

21. See Gail Klingman, "The Politics of Reproduction in Ceaușescu's Romania: A Case Study of Political Culture," *East European Politics and Societies* 6, no. 3 (1993): 364–418; Daniel J. Rothman and Sheila M.

These totalitarian and sultanistic tendencies combined to make all individuals, groups, and institutions permanently subject to the sultan's arbitrary intervention. The essence of pluralism in sultanism is that no one is free from the exercise of despotic power by the sultan, from top party officials to pregnant women. Tismaneanu captures the personal despotic power of Ceaușescu deftly: "He behaves like an absolutist monarch humiliating party bureaucrats (his vassals) and treating citizens like his property."²² This extreme personalization of power inevitably meant that there was no degree of institutional autonomy or pluralism in Romania. Career lines in the party and in important state organs such as the military were constantly disrupted. According to Tismaneanu, "the leading role of the party has been superseded by the absolute power of the General Secretary and his family. The level of independent initiatives by party apparatchiks has been reduced to a minimum. In order to stay in office, these people must excel in servility and conformity. . . . Under Ceaușescu the communist elite has virtually disintegrated and the Political Executive Committee is nothing but a rubber-stamp body dominated by the President and his wife."²³

The Romanian Orthodox Church had no autonomy. In the late 1980s a few priests began to protest against the regime, but according to Romania's Sakharov, Mihail Botez, "all priests who took some very tough stands against state-church cooperation were expelled or voluntarily left the country. For Romanians, they are no longer important."²⁴

In 1977 the most significant unrest before 1989 broke out during the miners strike in the Jiu Valley. The two most important leaders of the strike were Constantine Dobre and Engineer Jurca. After the strike was settled via a combination of Securitate intervention and Ceaușescu populism, Dobre disappeared and Jurca was murdered.²⁵ In 1979 there was an attempt by fifteen people in Bucharest to try to form an independent trade union. According to Nelson, "Ceaușescu's reaction was swift; Vasile Paraschiv, a principal organizer, was arrested and his fate remains unknown."²⁶

There was absolutely no space in Ceaușescu's Romania for the development, as in post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia, of a second culture. Typewriters had to be registered with the police (decree 98 of March 1983), and failure to report a conversation with a foreigner was a criminal offense (decree 408 of December 1985).²⁷

Rothman, "How AIDS Came to Romania," *New York Review of Books*, November 8, 1990, 5–8; and Rady's chapter on the environment and AIDS in *Romania in Turmoil*, 78–82.

22. Comments during a round-table discussion, *Romania: A Case of Dynastic Socialism (Perspectives on Freedom* no. 11, general ed., James Finn) (New York: Freedom House, 1989), 30. This fascinating book reproduces on pp. 5–93 a late 1988 round-table discussion among ten Romanian dissidents.

23. Tismaneanu, "Personal Power and Political Crises," 192–93.

24. In round-table discussion mentioned in note 20, *Romania: A Case of Dynastic Socialism*, 76.

25. *Ibid.*, 80–81.

26. Nelson, *Romania: Politics in the Ceaușescu Era*, xiv.

27. See Georgescu, "Romania in the 1980s," 84. In interviews with Stepan, a number of writers made a point of insisting on the draconian effectiveness of these control mechanisms.

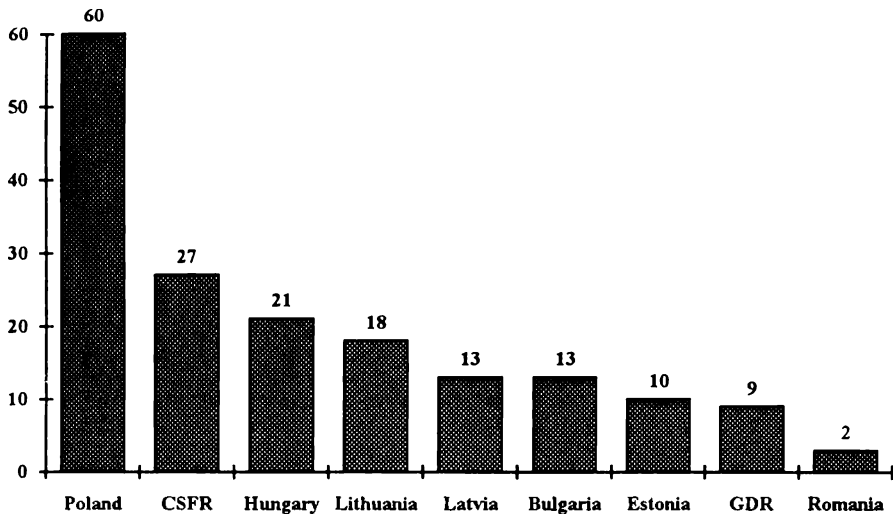


Fig. 18.1. Number of Independent Movements in Eastern Europe, June 1989.

Source: Jiri Pehe, "An Annotated Survey of Independent Movements in Eastern Europe," Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/100 (Eastern Europe), June 13, 1989, pp. 1–29.

In the last chapter we showed that Bulgaria had substantially fewer independent organizations in civil society than had Hungary or Czechoslovakia. However, in comparative terms, sultanistic and totalitarian Romania was even much more repressive of independent groups than was the country closest to the totalitarian/post-totalitarian boundary, Bulgaria. According to a comparative study by Radio Free Europe, in June 1989 Bulgaria had thirteen independent organizations, all of which had leaders whose names were publicly known. In sharp contrast, in June 1989, Romania only had two independent organizations with bases inside the country, *neither* of which had publicly known leaders (figure 18.1).

Stepan interviewed a number of the dissidents who in 1991 and 1992 were often cited as having made the most courageous attempts to print and distribute material critical of the regime. They all told varieties of the same tale. They worked alone or almost alone. They virtually had to hand-make their printing equipment, and they were all arrested either before or immediately after they attempted to disseminate their critique or calls to action.²⁸ Of all the countries we consider

28. Radu Filipescu, who in 1992 was president of Apador, a human rights and election watch organization, had three times personally made and distributed (with one other person) a one-page flyer for a symbolic protest. Two of the three times Filipescu was caught and arrested. Gabriel Andreescu, a key figure in two of the major vehicles of post-Ceaușescu civil society, the Group for Social Dialogue and the weekly *22*, spent three years trying to get a dissident text smuggled out of the country. When Stepan asked him how many people in Romania had ever seen his dissident statements, Andreescu said "five or six." When Stepan asked, "Why so few people?" Andreescu replied, "I fear that was too many." Andreescu was once arrested for treason and once sent into internal exile. Probably the largest effort to create a dissident publication was by

in this book, Romania is the *only* country where not one genuinely full-blown *samizdat* publication appeared.²⁹ In no country was the penetration by, and fear of, the ruler and his security services so intense.

This is not to say there were not forms of private dissent among people who spoke a coded language. There was. One of the most famous involved a literary critic. A poetry group called "Cenaclul de Luni" (Monday Circle) met at the University of Bucharest from 1977 until 1983 under the supervision of the renowned literary critic, Nicolae Manolescu, as part of a compulsory cultural activity. One of the members of the Monday Circle, the poet Bogdan Lefter, notes that, while the group never had a journal or the opportunity to publicly express itself politically, it did evolve its own standards. "The best literary critics refused to praise bad writers who praised the regime. They did not invert the scale of values. The poets developed a way to describe society via 'small realism'. We depicted a small symbolic scene in a way that made a comment, without doing what we were not allowed to do, such as direct criticism. We were able to transform an official institution into a free, critical and creative institution." Precisely because the regime feared the élan of the Monday Circle, the university's ideological officer closed the circle in 1983.³⁰

Another event that gave spirit to intellectuals who opposed the regime was the publication of two widely read books of dialogues by a disciple of the almost monastically reclusive philosopher, Constantin Noica. The books acquired great significance precisely because the very idea of a socratic dialogue introduced the idea of disagreement and pluralism of thought.³¹ But the fact that the Monday Circle and the socratic dialogue were two of the most widely discussed expressions of independent thought and life indicates how far away from organized public dissent "living in truth" remained in Romania.

the journalist Petre Mihai Bacanu (who in 1992 was editor of the most important independent daily, *Romania Libera*). For eight months, Bacanu worked with six colleagues and used scrap material to build, "like Gutenberg," a small movable-type printing device so they could publish a newspaper. They made 2,000 copies of one sheet printed on both sides. All seven dissidents were arrested before the paper was distributed, probably because they tried to extend their group to thirty people to create a distribution network. Bacanu was released from prison on the day that Ceaușescu fled Bucharest. This note is based on interviews with Stepan in Bucharest, June 21–25, 1991, and August 25–31, 1992.

29. Future research will no doubt unearth some examples of a *samizdat* publication, but the key point is that most political activists insist they never saw one. Let us quote from some of our interviews with important political activists: "No *samizdat* existed in Romania. Occasionally a single person would put out a flyer, but no journal even had a single issue" (Pavel Campeanu). "We did not exactly have any *samizdat* here. But we had jokes of extremely high quality" (Senator Sorin Botez of the National Liberal Party and a former political prisoner). "No real *samizdat* of any sort, just an occasional flyer but even this was difficult because all the typewriters had to be registered with the police and their typeface analyzed once a year. There is not much study of the opposition under Ceaușescu because there was nothing that significant" (Calin Anastasiu, social scientist who won election as an opposition deputy in September 1992). *Ibid.*

30. Interview by Stepan with Ion Bogdan Lefter, poet and an editor of the important cultural journal *Contrapuncte* in Bucharest, August 27, 1991.

31. The "school" of the philosopher Constantin Noica is the subject of a chapter in the important book on cultural politics by Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 256–301.

In authoritarian Poland the parallel society was led by a trade union with ten million members eight years before the transition. In the highly repressive post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia, the leader of the parallel society was a playwright who helped lead an organization that in the twelve years before the transition issued 570 reports. In sultanistic/totalitarian Romania, the leaders were poets, literary critics, and philosophers, all of whom spoke a deeply encoded language of dissent, but none of whom were nationally known organizers of any form of public resistance. When the sultan fell there was no nationally known democratic movement or individual who could contest effectively for control of state power.

We now turn to the question of ideology. Under Ceaușescu there was indeed an elaborate ideology of the sort that is a key characteristic of totalitarianism and that is not normally associated with sultanism. This ideology had many of the standard features of Marxism-Leninism: a focus on collective property, the vanguard role of the party, and the articulation of utopian goals. The massive industrialization policy and the schematization plan to eliminate the rural-urban distinction by razing seven thousand traditional villages and forcibly putting peasants in three- or four-story buildings represent the subjection of the society's specificity in the name of totalizing, abstract ideology. However, under Ceaușescu, especially in the 1980s, there were also increasingly strong sultanistic tendencies that weakened the guiding function of ideology because Ceaușescu's ideological messages became increasingly contradictory, erratic, and personalistically opportunistic. In chapter 3 we argued that in sultanism there is "no elaborate and guiding ideology" but a "highly arbitrary manipulation of symbols" and an "extreme glorification of the leader." Countless analysts of Ceaușescu underscore the extraordinary manipulation of ideology. A few citations will suffice.

One of us asked a Romanian social scientist what ideology meant to Ceaușescu. The answer was revealing:

He gave much importance to ideological problems but he was very mobile, very attentive to changes in the national and international environment, so one of his preferred slogans was 'enrichment of socialist theory.' In his mind it was a serious effort, but there was a constant tendency to interpret ideology in his favor, and for the last three or four years his resolve to search for such ideological enrichment became weaker and weaker. Slogans were repeated without argumentation. . . . He convinced few people with his ideology. There was a declining curve of commitment and identification with Ceaușescu.³²

A European scholar, writing while Ceaușescu still ruled, also captured the degree to which ideology increasingly became neither a constraining framework for Ceaușescu nor a guiding parameter of action for followers. "Ceaușescuism," he wrote,

contains a core of basic tenets constantly violated in practice, thus introducing a sense of unreality, fiction, and a Kafkaesque atmosphere of insecurity, anxiety and erratic behavior. As a style

32. From the previously cited interview by Alfred Stepan with Ovidiu Trasnea.

of operation it is characterized by extreme centralization of power, irrationality, and bombastic symbolism. . . . As a set of parameters for subelite behavior, Ceaușescuism is unpredictable . . . thus rendering predictable parameters and standards of performance invalid and dependent upon the attitudes of the movement in the inner circles of the Ceaușescu-Petrescu clan.³³

Gheorghe Sencovici, son of a former Romanian Central Committee member and a computer scientist who left Romania in 1982, asked in 1986: “Who is Ceaușescu today? Is he a Communist? Is he a Stalinist? Is he obsessed by lack of legitimacy? Is he representing a doctrine? I am afraid he does not represent anything at all. . . . He is closer to Idi Amin, Hitler, Reza Pahlavi and Bokassa than to some other Communist leaders who are still driven by the doctrine.”³⁴ Significantly, of the four figures whom Sencovici compares with Ceaușescu, only Hitler was not in our judgment close to the sultanistic type.

In this context Marxism as a living ideology virtually died in Romania. As Katherine Verdery concludes in her systematic and impressive study of ideology and cultural politics under Ceaușescu, “Marxist philosophy in Romania did not reproduce itself into a second generation: in the 1980s scarcely anyone was carrying on serious philosophical inquiries of a materialist sort.”³⁵ In fact, her central thesis is that the extreme nationalism of the sort that Ceaușescu espoused and endorsed undermined the universalism of Marxism-Leninism. “This national ideology disrupted the Marxist discourse and thus—despite the Communist Party’s apparent appropriation of it—was a major element in destroying the Party’s legitimacy.”³⁶

The final regime characteristic we discuss is mobilization. This is the hardest for us to classify clearly. Certainly Romania under Ceaușescu approximated the totalitarian ideal type, in that there was “extensive and intensive mobilization into a vast army of regime-created organizations.” As one Romanian social scientist commented, “in no other East European country were so many organizations politicized. Even small organizations with no intrinsic political character, such as an ‘organization of people concerned with bees,’ were organized by the party-state. The system interfered more deeply in aspects of your life than in any other East European country.”³⁷ Certainly there was a degree of “voluntary” work on Saturdays, and a constant round of state-sponsored mobilization not normally characteristic of either a post-totalitarian or a sultanistic regime.

33. Trond Gilberg, *Nationalism and Communism in Romania: The Rise and Fall of Ceaușescu’s Personal Dictatorship* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990), 56.

34. See the previously cited Freedom House round-table discussions, *Romania: A Case of Dynastic Socialism*, 19.

35. Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*, 269. Juan Linz in a private conversation with a top candidate for public office in Catalonia supported by the PSUC, the Partido Socialista Unificado de Cataluña (the Catalan wing of the Communist Party), who had been a guest of Ceaușescu in Bucharest, heard the candidate comment that the regime that he considered most similar to Ceaușescu’s was Somoza’s Nicaragua.

36. *Ibid.*, 4.

37. From the previously cited interview by Alfred Stepan with Ovidiu Trasnea.

If there was a deviation from totalitarianism concerning mobilization, it was that it was designed not so much to “mobilize enthusiasm” as to ensure the sultan’s control of the population by reducing private space and the scope for any form of unauthorized activity. Certainly, the mass ritualized adulation of Ceaușescu had as much a sultanistic as a totalitarian quality. By the 1980s militants and cadres did not play an especially important role. Rather, every organization and institute in Bucharest was assigned a quota and a specific place for fulfilling ceremonial obligations.³⁸

In summation, we believe our analysis of the status of pluralism, leadership, ideology, and mobilization under Ceaușescu, especially in the 1974–89 period, merits classifying Romania as a regime that exhibited both strong sultanistic and strong totalitarian qualities.

No one variable ever completely explains complex historical processes. However, an understanding of the nature of a regime that combines totalitarian and sultanistic qualities helps illuminate how and why most of the democratic paths to transition are virtually precluded. It also helps us understand why, even in the aftermath of the transition from sultanism, organized democratic forces are predictably weak and nondemocratic forces who can get credit for destroying the sultan can claim revolutionary credibility.

THE MISSING PLAYERS FOR A “PACTED TRANSITION”

One of the most common paths away from a nondemocratic to a democratic regime is via a “pacted transition.” In this book we have analyzed such pacted transitions from authoritarian regimes in Spain, Brazil, Uruguay, and Poland and even in the mature post-totalitarian regime of Hungary. In essence, pacted transitions are four-player games composed of hard-liners and soft-liners in the regime and moderates and radicals in the opposition. Theoretically and politically, there are two structural preconditions of such a pacted transition to democracy: (1) the existence of organized, nationally known, and nonviolent democratic groups in civil and political society and (2) the existence of soft-liners in the regime who have the desire and autonomy to negotiate a “pacted reform.” Neither one of these necessary preconditions is possible in a sultanistic and totalitarian regime. Opposition groups, especially if they are moderate, democratic, and visible, are made to disappear. Within the regime, the sultan does not have room in his personal household staff for soft-liners who negotiate regime change. Thus, the four-player game is not an available transition path because the two most critical players are simply not present.

38. For a description of such compulsory mobilization and adulation, see Nelson, *Romania: Politics in the Ceaușescu Era*, 60.

EXITS FROM SULTANISM: THE SPECIAL ROLE OF
VIOLENCE AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

Romania's peculiar combination of nationalist sultanism and totalitarianism also helps explain why violence predictably played a major role in the transition and why it was the last country in the Warsaw Pact to have a regime change. In a sultanistic regime there are almost no incentives or vehicles for regime-led democratic transition. The sultanistic erosion of the party's autonomy virtually precluded that a peaceful Bulgarian-type, collective, Politburo decision to remove the maximum leader would be possible. A military-led extrication coup by the "military as organization" was even less likely because not only was there no military as government, but, as Weber indicated, in a sultanistic regime state careers and state organizations lose all their organizational autonomy as they are constantly manipulated in accordance with the sultan's will. Finally, the sultanistic and totalitarian combination virtually precludes a transition in which a democratic and well-organized opposition in civil society brings down the regime without being met by violence. It is precisely this closure of nonviolent paths to regime transition that helps explain why regimes with strongly sultanistic features, probably more than any other type of regime, end in violent or revolutionary upheavals.³⁹ Cases in point are Somoza's Nicaragua, the Shah's Iran, and Batista's Cuba, as well as Ceaușescu's Romania.

In these circumstances, not only is some form of peaceful regime-led or society-led transition virtually impossible, but external events more than internal events can play an especially important role. Due to the diffusion effect, events in the Soviet Union concerning glasnost and perestroika and the upheavals in Hungary, Poland, East Germany, and even Bulgaria were widely followed throughout Romania via Radio Free Europe and Hungarian and even Bulgarian television.⁴⁰

39. There is a growing literature on the propensity of regimes with strong sultanistic qualities to fall by revolutionary upheavals. See Jeff Goodwin and Theda Skocpol, "Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World," *Politics and Society* 17, no. 4 (1989): 489–509; Richard Snyder, "Combining Structural and Voluntaristic Explanatory Perspectives: Paths Out of Sultanistic Dictatorships," in H. E. Chehabi and Juan J. Linz, eds., *Sultanistic Regimes*, a book-length manuscript in progress; and John Foran and Jeff Goodwin, "Revolutionary Outcomes in Iran and Nicaragua: Coalition Fragmentation, War, and the Limits of Social Transformation," *Theory and Society* 22 (1993): 209–47. Writing months before the violent overthrow of Ceaușescu, Giuseppe di Palma perceptively observed, "Ceaușescu has moved closer to the patrimonial and predatory despotism of Central America. Thus, open repression/open conflict are more likely." See his *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 240.

40. In interview after interview, activists and observers stressed the importance of external events. Even events in the penultimate Warsaw Pact country to fall—Bulgaria—were critical in changing power relations in Romania. Malitza, a former education minister, commented: "From 1988–1989 it was a delight for us to watch Bulgarian television. We got Yugoslavian, Hungarian, Soviet and Bulgarian T.V. To Romanians it was amazing to see such relative freedom. We had always looked down on Bulgaria. In the late 1980s some Romanians began to learn Bulgarian. We knew we could not go any lower. We watched the fall of Zhivkov in Bulgaria. We knew something had to happen here." Interview with Stepan, June 22, 1991, Bucharest. Gabriel Andreescu clearly acknowledged the Bulgarian demonstration effect. "I saw the success of the Bulgarian 'Eco-Glasnost.' I tried to create an ecological group here." Interview, August 26, 1992, Bucharest. Very impor-

Table 18.1. Evaluation of the Most Important Factors Influencing Public Opinion in the Period before the Overthrow of the Ceaușescu Regime

Factor	%
Political change in Eastern Europe	61%
Soviet policy change toward Eastern Europe	53%
Radio Free Europe broadcasts	33%
Romanian dissident activities	28%

Source: Poll administered to 1,500 people in Romania in 1990 by Radio Free Europe and presented by Ronald Linden at the IVth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, July 21–26, 1990, Harrogate, England.

The importance of these events and the relative unimportance of domestic dissidence activities is underscored in the results of a poll administered after the overthrow of the Ceaușescu regime (table 18.1). Given the critical importance of such prior events, it is understandable that Romania's sultanistic and totalitarian regime was the last of the Warsaw Pact dominoes to fall.

THE "CAPTURE" OF THE REVOLUTION: SULTANISM'S ROLE

Much of the academic and popular literature on the Romanian transition puzzles over the problem of the "captured revolution." The ease with which Ion Iliescu and other neo-Communists were able to assume control of the popular uprising that began in Timisoara has led many commentators to attribute it to Soviet control or to a well-orchestrated prior plot. We are now in a position to advance our claim that sultanism itself is a more powerful explanation.

It was precisely the sultanistic component of Ceaușescu's regime that enabled Iliescu to present Ceaușescu as the embodiment of the system and to imply that he, Iliescu, had changed the political and economic system completely by decapitating the "hydra-headed monster." In no other Warsaw Pact country would this rhetorical trick of focusing moral outrage on a person, not the system, have had such weight. In East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and, to a lesser extent, even Bulgaria, the top leader was removed by the party, but this did virtually nothing to stop the protests against the regimes as such and the demands by the democratic opposition for a change of the entire system.

The extreme personalism and despotism of a regime, however, facilitates the "capture" of a revolution by groups very close to the old regime. The highly personalistic nature of the regime allows new leaders, even if they had close links to the regime, to advance the claim that the sultan was responsible for all of the evil

tantly, people felt that peaceful change would not be an option. In the words of the poet Ion Bogdan Lefter, "after 1980 in Poland, after Gorbachev in 1986, and especially after the 1989 dominos, we felt we were an isolated case and that Ceaușescu would never accept peaceful change." Interview, August 27, 1992, Bucharest.

in the country, thereby dissociating themselves from the sultanistic regime by playing a prominent role in his overthrow.

In Romania the radio and television accounts of the new Council of National Salvation emphasized the personalistic nature of the regime. The communiqué talked of the “downfall of the odious dictatorship of the Ceaușescu clan.” In fact, this goes a long way to explain why Iliescu’s colleagues in the interim regime rapidly eliminated the sultan in a “judicial murder.”⁴¹ To understand the new regime and the doubts we have about its liberal democratic character, we cannot but remind the reader of the grotesque nature of the “trial” and “judicial murder” of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu, which were totally in contradiction with the principles of rule of law and formal justice. The hurried execution has left many doubts about how it was handled, even though the entire world was shown the trial and the official version of the execution on television. It would seem that the new rulers wanted to exploit the hatred of the Ceaușescus and at the same time to prevent embarrassing accusations of their own past involvement under the sultan. In any case the show trial and summary execution were an inauspicious beginning for the new regime. The success of the revolution was proclaimed to lie in the destruction of the sultan himself, not in the creation of new democratic institutions as such nor in the destruction of the extensive coercive apparatus closely associated with Ceaușescu.⁴²

The sultanistic quality of the regime also helps explain why Romania was the only Warsaw Pact country where former high Communist officials won the first elections, not only in the countryside, as in Bulgaria, but in *every* major city.⁴³ For reasons we have made clear, no democratic leaders or groups with national visibility and organizational resources had emerged in Ceaușescu’s Romania. The uprising was too short, spontaneous, and politically manipulated to produce a governing alternative. In this context Iliescu and his allies only had to compete in the elections against two pre-World War II traditional parties, the National Liberal Party, whose leader returned to Romania from many years of exile to run for the presidency after the revolutionary events, the National Peasant Party, and the new Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania. While the traditional parties had been anti-Communist for decades, they could not make any case that they had

41. On the “squalidness” of the trial, see Almond, *Rise and Fall of Ceaușescu*, 224–36, and Vladimir Tismaneanu, “Romania: Democracy, What Democracy?” *East European Reporter* 4, no. 2 (1990): 30.

42. This follows the logic and dynamics of revolutionary interim regimes that we discussed in chapter 5 and that are analyzed in Yossi Shain and Juan J. Linz, eds., *Between States: Interim Governments and Democratic Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

43. The only other Warsaw Pact country where there was an electoral triumph by forces closely associated with the Communist regime was Bulgaria. Yet, even there the democratic opposition was strong enough to win in the four largest cities and to win control of the presidency before its victory in the second free elections. In non-Warsaw Pact Albania, the opposition lost the first elections but won every major city. In sharp contrast, no poll ever showed that Iliescu was even behind in Bucharest in the May 1990 elections.

played a role in destroying the sultan, and the Hungarian party was easy prey to nationalist attacks.⁴⁴

In contrast, not only was Ion Iliescu able to take personal credit for eliminating the hydra-headed monster, but he won further credit for almost immediately eliminating many of the most egregious measures personally associated with the sultan. Within weeks of Ceaușescu's death, compulsory gynecological examinations were abolished, condoms became available, the razing of peasant villages was stopped, the schematization plan was scrapped, the typewriter registration law was repealed, and publications proliferated. Under Ceaușescu no one had a personal passport. If a person was given a temporary passport for an officially approved trip abroad, it had to be handed in immediately upon return to get back the individual's indispensable personal identification card. One year after the fall of Ceaușescu, the Foreign Ministry claimed that ten million Romanians had personal passports.⁴⁵ Just as importantly, Iliescu was able to use his control of the state apparatus to help himself win the presidency and to help the National Salvation Front (NSF) gain an overwhelming majority in the parliament. Foreign credits were used to bring meat into the stores. The NSF provisional government allocated three million dollars for new printing equipment for the pro-NSF press, while it made newsprint scarce and distribution difficult for the opposition press.⁴⁶ While the opposition had some access to the state-controlled television, the NSF had a clear advantage when an analysis is made of what was shown and not shown before the elections.⁴⁷ Before we went to Romania, we believed that if the opposition had had more time to campaign they might have possibly won the May 1990 elections. However, two trips to Romania made it clear to us that Iliescu had such personal advantages as the antisultan figure and such structural advantages through his control of the state apparatus that he actually got more popular as the campaign progressed.⁴⁸ In this context, major technical fraud on election day was unnecessary, and on May 20, 1990, Iliescu won 85 percent of the presidential vote and the National Salvation Front won 66 percent of the parliamentary vote.⁴⁹

44. For the May 1990 Romanian elections, see Rady, *Romania in Turmoil*, 160–174; Roger East, *Revolutions in Eastern Europe* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1992), 145–46; and Nestor Ratesh, *Romania: The Entangled Revolution*, 142–44.

45. Interview by Stepan with the foreign minister of Romania, Adrian Nastase, Bucharest, June 25, 1992.

46. For example, in the town of Iasi the NSF took over the major Ceaușescu-era newspaper, "which after the revolution changed its name but nothing else." The opposition press in Iasi, however, was regularly denied paper, was intimidated by thirty thugs sent by a former Securitate agent, and was denied access to the city's printing press. See "'24 Hours': An Independent Daily Newspaper Fighting for Survival," *East European Reporter*, 4, no. 2 (1990): 43.

47. See Crisula Stefanescu, "Romanian Radio and Television Coverage of the Election Campaign," *Report on Eastern Europe* 1, no. 23 (1990): 42–45.

48. This point was emphasized to Stepan by a major critic of Iliescu, Pavel Campeanu, who conducted polls during the election campaign. Interview in August 31, 1992, Bucharest.

49. There was some fraud, but the high vote derived from pre-election structural advantage. However, for detailed accounts of electoral irregularities, see Vlad Socor, "National Salvation Front Produces Electoral Landslide," *Report on Eastern Europe* 1, no. 27 (1990): 24–31.

THE NONDEMOCRATIC DISCOURSE OF THE INTERIM REGIME

The specific nature of a transition often has an effect on the style of discourse and practices of the successor government. In the case of Romania, the specificity of the transition was that it involved revolutionary uprisings followed by an interim government that never had to have a round table or a pact. In chapter 5 we analyzed how and why interim governments often create a range of problems for the democratic quality of transitions. One of the major predictable (and observable) problems created by interim governments is that they tend to speak and act in the name of revolution and to believe that they are beyond the normal procedural constraints of democracy. Nondemocratic revolutionary discourse and practice will tend to be employed as "normal." If a transition is carried out in the name of revolution rather than democracy, the new power holders, even if they later augment their legitimacy via elections, will tend to govern in a way in which nondemocratic discourse and practice are frequently present.

Even after Iliescu and the National Salvation Front had won an overwhelming electoral victory, they chose to treat their defeated opponents in highly undemocratic ways. In the period between his election and his formal inauguration, Iliescu showed the primacy of revolutionary over democratic discourse and practices when he used vigilante justice against student protesters in Bucharest's University Square. He called upon (and provided elaborate prearranged transportation for) coal miners to come to Bucharest to defend the government and rid the city of the "hooligans." For two days in Bucharest the miners not only brutally beat students, but also seriously damaged the headquarters of the two main opposition parties.⁵⁰ One of the defining characteristics of a democratic government is that it meets its obligation to maintain a rule of law and to shape its own actions within the confines of those laws. When the miners left Bucharest, the newly elected president Ion Iliescu went to the train station and publicly addressed them. His discourse was more that of a nondemocratic revolutionary than that of a democratic head of state.

I thank you for everything that you have done these days. I thank you all once again for what you have proved these days: that you are a powerful force, having a high civic and working-class discipline, one can rely on in good and especially in bad times. The whole thing is a part of a bigger and more detailed scenario in the whole of Europe. There has existed a convergent action on behalf of extreme rightist forces that have in mind that in all of Europe extreme rightist forces have to come to power. . . . Everything they have done, all the slogans they have brought forth accusing me and also others that we have confiscated the revolution, as if one could steal away a revolution! But the truth is the extreme right has been trying to turn the Romanian Revolution into the right wing's hands. We have to keep our vigilance awake. . . . We

50. See Michael Shafir, "Government Encourages Vigilante Violence in Bucharest," *Report on Eastern Europe* 1, no. 27 (1990): 32-39.

have to maintain a fighting briskness. . . . We know that we can rely on you. We should ask for your help whenever it seems necessary! . . . The very best to you.⁵¹

TOTALITARIANISM CUM SULTANISM AND NATIONALISM: THE DIFFICULT LEGACY

In September and October 1992, Romania again held parliamentary and presidential elections. President Ion Iliescu was re-elected with relative ease. The united democratic opposition (the Democratic Convention) was able to win only 21 percent of the parliamentary vote despite the fact that most international observers did not find too many irregularities.

How can we go about understanding Romanian politics after the parliamentary and presidential elections of September–October 1992? To approach this task we have to go beyond the conceptual framework provided by the scripted uprising, the captured revolution, or neo-Communism. To speak of *scripted* uprisings in Timisoara and Bucharest is to underestimate the importance of the “movements of rage” (to use Ken Jowitt’s memorable phrase) in undermining Ceaușescu’s coercive power. *Revolution* overestimates the degree to which these movements of rage represented organized opposition groups with their own leaders and programs. *Captured revolution* misses the extemporaneous opportunism and weakness of Iliescu. *Neo-Communism* overstates the principled cohesion of the government that followed Ceaușescu’s downfall and in particular does not take into account the profound divisions within the National Salvation Front that emerged in 1991. In fact, in the twelve months before the 1992 elections the anti-Iliescu wing of the National Salvation Front, faced with a crisis of governance in September 1991, formed a coalition government that included some of the traditional liberals, supported the prime minister’s courtship of the International Monetary Fund, and, in late March 1992, won control of the party label.⁵²

But, as the presidential and parliamentary elections showed, sultanistic rule left behind a flattened political and social landscape.⁵³ Civil society remained incipi-

51. Iliescu’s “farewell and thank you” speech to the miners on June 15, 1990, is reprinted in full in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, *East Europe*, June 18, 1990, 67–70.

52. See Dan Ionescu, “Romania’s Ruling Party Splits after Congress,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1, no. 16 (1992): 8–12.

53. Gail Kligman correctly stressed that one of the major legacies of Ceaușescu and his demise by uprising was almost the complete lack of what we call *political society*. The “demonstration of public will, in body and voice, was critical in the exhilarating days of the coup/popular revolt, [but] public power may not be best realized through continuous mass street demonstrations. . . . It is one thing to overthrow a dictatorship; it is another to participate in the establishment of a democratic public sphere and of civil society. The current daily events have acquired their own ritualized, theatrical character. They are more exemplary of the inherited legacy of the Ceaușescu years, in which behavior was thoroughly ritualized, than they are of progressive steps on the road to democratic practice. Now there is a need for the institutionalization of interests in formal and informal associations.” Gail Kligman, “Reclaiming the Public: A Reflection on Creating Civil Society in Romania,” *East European Politics and Societies* 4, no. 3 (1990): 393–437, citation from 410–411.

ent, the rule of law fragile, political coalitions turbulent, and most political tendencies compromised.⁵⁴ In this context, the Romanian opposition was not able to mount a principled and united democratic campaign led by a prominent political figure and to carry its message into every corner of the country, as the anti-Pinochet opposition in Chile had been able to do in 1989. The Romanian opposition won only 21 percent of the parliamentary vote, while Emil Constantinescu, the opposition's presidential candidate, won 39 percent of the vote to Iliescu's 61 percent in the second round of the presidential election. The weakness of the opposition, as much as the strength of Iliescu, explained why Iliescu won the presidential run-off in October 1992.⁵⁵

In our analysis of the weakness of the democratic opposition, we have stressed the sultanistic and totalitarian legacy. However, Romania also has a simmering stateness problem, which has been exploited by Ceaușescu's successors. Romania has a minority population of 1.7 million Hungarians, many of whom are concentrated in Transylvania. In an appeal to nationalism, article one of the new Romanian constitution defines Romania as a "unified national state." Article 4 says the state is based on the "unity of the Romanian people." Article 13 says "for Romania, the official language is Romanian."⁵⁶ In rejection of this nation-state policy, an important political party, the Hungarian Democratic Alliance, has sometimes stressed its democratic opposition character and sometimes stressed its autonomist character. Both in 1992 and in 1995, the status of the Hungarian Democratic Alliance led to significant splits in the democratic opposition. In this

54. Both the National Liberal Party and the Ecological Party split, with one faction of each party joining the government from September 1991 to April 1992. The student leader Marian Munteanu, who had been brutally beaten by the miners in June 1990, was made first chairman of the Havel-like Civic Alliance in November 1990, but by 1991 he had broken with the Civic Alliance and formed a party called Movement for Romania, which deliberately used many of the slogans and symbols of Romania's interwar fascist-inspired Iron Guard. In June 1992, on the 110th anniversary of the birth of Romania's wartime authoritarian and nationalist leader, General Ion Antonescu, almost all members of Parliament stood up and observed a moment of silence in his memory. See Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Endangered Democracy: Emerging Pluralism in Post-Communist Romania" (paper prepared for the Bellagio Conference on New Issues in Democracy, December 1992).

55. The democratic opposition did manage to get eighteen parties together in a coalition called the Democratic Convention. However, the main wing of the National Liberal Party left the convention in April 1992 because it objected to the presence in its ranks of the party representing Romania's Hungarian minority. Subsequently, the convention lost many valuable months deciding on a presidential candidate. The two principal forces in the Democratic Convention were the pre-war National Peasant Party led by Corneliu Coposu, a staunch anti-Communist monarchist octogenarian, and the more modern Civic Alliance Party. Although Pavel Campeanu's polls showed that the Peasant Party had 11 percent of voter support and the Civic Alliance Party had 9 percent, the price of uniting was that the Peasant Party received 55 percent of the slots on the convention's electoral lists, while the Civic Alliance Party received less than 20 percent. In the 1992 electoral campaign there was very poor coordination between the two major wings in the Democratic Convention. As a result, the convention was unable to wage a vigorous campaign in the countryside, which remained under the control of Iliescu and the former Communist nomenklatura, and won only 21 percent of the parliamentary vote. These observations are based on Stepan's pre-electoral visit to Romania and postelectoral conversations with participants.

56. See Aurelian Craiutu, "A Dilemma of Dual Identity: The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania," in *East European Constitutional Review* 4, no. 2 (1995): pp. 43-49.

context, the Iliescu government, like that of Ceaușescu, has exploited and exaggerated the threat to national integrity. Indeed, in January 1995 stonewalling problems contributed to the division of the democratic opposition and the temporary agglutination of a sinister “brown-red-sultanistic” four-party ruling coalition. One analyst described this new pro-Iliescu coalition in the following terms:

The chauvinist Greater Romania Party (PRM) and the Socialist Labor Party (PSM), the heir of the defunct Romanian Communist Party, formalized their relationship with the ruling coalition. . . . The fourth signatory to the protocol, the extreme nationalist Party of Romanian National Unity (PUNR), had already joined the government. . . . At the signing of the protocol, Ilie Verdet, a former premier under Ceaușescu and now PSM chairman; Adrian Paunescu, PSM first deputy chairman and a “court poet” of the Ceaușescu family; Corneliu Vadim Tudor, another Ceaușescu “court troubadour” and now the overtly anti-Semitic PRM chairman; and the staunchly anti-Hungarian Funar were immortalized in photographs alongside the PDSR leadership.⁵⁷

This coalition stepped up pressure on opposition mayors, many of them perceived as being too sympathetic to minorities or to the opposition. The constitution watch of the *East European Constitutional Review* noted that, “overall, 133 mayors have been dismissed by government-appointed prefects. . . . Of the 62 mayors who appealed to the Court of Justice only four received redress. Despite the reaction of the parliamentary opposition, international organizations and the electorate, the executive seems determined to carry on its program of purging mayors.”⁵⁸

By 1995, Romania seemed to be in a paradoxical position. In contrast to all of the post-Communist East Central European countries we have analyzed thus far (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Bulgaria), Romania was the farthest from a consolidated democracy in each of our five arenas. Civil society was still very weak. Political society had not created a robust governing alternative. Rule of law was intermittent, especially in areas concerning local government and the human rights of minorities such as gypsies and Hungarians. The reform of state administration had not been undertaken. Economic society had yet to be crafted. Many of these problems could be directly traced (as in Haiti with its similar problematic configuration) to the legacies of sultanism.

The apparently paradoxical point is that Romania, in poll after poll, emerges as one of the countries where the respondents say that the present regime is a substantial improvement over the former regime.⁵⁹ The apparent paradox is ex-

57. For a description of the coalition, see Michael Shafir, “Ruling Party Formalizes Relations with Extremists,” *Transition*, 1, no. 5 (1995), 42–46, quote from 42.

58. See “Constitution Watch: Romania,” in *East European Constitutional Review* 4, no. 2 (1995): 22.

59. For example, in 1993 only 35 percent of those polled viewed the former Communist regime positively, whereas 68 percent viewed the then-current regime positively. This 33 percentage point positive differential is significantly greater than the comparable differentials in Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland and is slightly higher than that in Slovenia. Only the differential in the Czech Republic was greater.

plained, of course, by the intensity of fear of the sultan and his totalitarian and sultanistic penetration of their private and public lives. Given the terrible memories of the past, some opposition leaders took solace in the fact that, if they were able to strengthen civil and political society, they might do better in the 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections than they had done in 1990 or 1992.

Romania has by now experienced two elections, many of the formal institutional aspects of democracy are in place, and people perceive their new regime as a positive change with respect to the past. However, we cannot refrain from suggesting that Romanian democracy is different from that of all other East Central European countries in this study, as well as from the three Baltic republics, in that, until now, no leaders have gained power who did not have a career in the Communist Party apparatus (not just membership or association with the party). Sociologically, there has been no *ruptura*. Such continuity is not the same as having ex-Communists leading reformed communist parties (by whatever name) returning to power in free elections. In such polities (Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania), non-Communists were able to create political parties that were able to win elections and oversee a basic *ruptura*. To date, such a *ruptura* has only partially happened in Romania.

Why should this have been the case? We argue that the legacy of totalitarian control until the overthrow of Ceaușescu, combined with the legacy of sultanism and the way (as a consequence) that the transition took place, account for that significant difference.

See Richard Rose and Christian Haerpfer, "Adapting to Transformation in Eastern Europe: New Democracies Barometer—II," *Studies in Public Policy* 212 (1993): 47.