

Crisis in Eastern Europe: Issues and Implications

Aileen San Pablo-Baviera

A revolution is sweeping Eastern Europe, transforming the face of socialism as we know it, and altering the political landscape of the world. These developments are a matter of grave concern for many groups, foremost of whom are the peoples of Eastern Europe who are boldly pushing for a new, democratized political and social order, and their old communist leaders who are now compelled to heed the clamor for change, or be swept into the dustbin of irrelevance. They are also watched by the reform-wary communist governments of China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, and Albania which, for diverse reasons, resist restructuring in their own societies and fear the democratic contagion. The countries of Western Europe which, having recently moved towards integration within the framework of the European Community, now face the prospect of a new type of relations with Eastern Europe -- perhaps, in some form of Pan-European cooperation -- are another group of concerned observers. The superpowers are also anxious about how their respective interests will be affected. From the Soviet leaders' perspective: will the new-found democracy and independence of Eastern Europe enhance Soviet security by providing a more peaceful, dynamic, and sympathetic environment for its own restructuring and reform? Or will a more "open" Eastern Europe undermine socialism and Soviet security by falling

prey to the maneuvers of foreign capitalists, and to the subversion by domestic counter-revolutionaries? From the viewpoint of the United States, the question is whether it is prepared to support these changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which may lead to the increasing irrelevance of American military power -- the remaining bastion of its global influence. Not to be forgotten are the anti-communists and ideological conservatives who view these changes as the end of socialism. The last group is that of socialist partisans who are united in their desire for the survival of socialism, but divided in their concept of socialism. It is imperative that this last group develop a correct analysis of the upheavals in Eastern Europe.

Problems in Research

This article addresses the following questions: What exactly is the character of the ongoing changes in Eastern Europe? Is it a social revolution, spelling the end of socialism, and a reversal to a capitalist mode of production? Is it a political revolution -- an attempt to both break the monopoly of the communist party over the structures and distribution of power, and institute some form of pluralism? Is it a social movement for new norms in social behavior (e.g., greater respect for individual rights and freedoms)? Are the advocates of reform counter-revolutionaries or progressives? Can the countries of "actually existing socialism" (referring to those where the vanguard

communist party has led the socialist construction) undertake a successful restoration of "civil society", or a transition to "democratic socialism" or "socialism with a human face"? Will the bureaucratic and authoritarian tendencies ascribed to the "Stalinist" parties continue even under the new pluralist leadership?

Marxism points out the failings of the capitalist social order, and bequeaths to the world proletariat a vision of a society free from exploitation. It is by no means a dogma. In the absence of a blueprint, the transition to socialism undertaken by the Soviet Union, China, the countries of Eastern Europe, etc., becomes a product of Marxist theory and of the concrete conditions (economic, as well as superstructural) that shape various interpretations and applications of the theory. In fact, from the classical Marxist viewpoint, when these countries of "actually existing socialism" began the transition to socialism, they still lacked the material prerequisites for such a project. These prerequisites include, among others, the socialization of labor, large-scale production, and monopoly capitalism. Marx had explained that "a social order never perishes before all the productive forces for which it is broadly sufficient have been developed, and new, superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the womb of the old society". [1] In Eastern Europe, socialist relations of production and Party dictatorship were imposed given the absence of large-scale commodity production, and of a highly politicized and socialized working class. From the onset of "actually existing socialism", it was necessary to dichotomize the theory from the practice of socialism, or, as some would have it, to distinguish socialism itself from the "socialist experiment".

Immediate and conclusive answers to the questions raised are difficult to make considering the fast pace of developments in Eastern Europe, and the paucity of materials on the subject. New political forces and alliances are emerging in Eastern Europe, along with political groups that have been dormant for the past

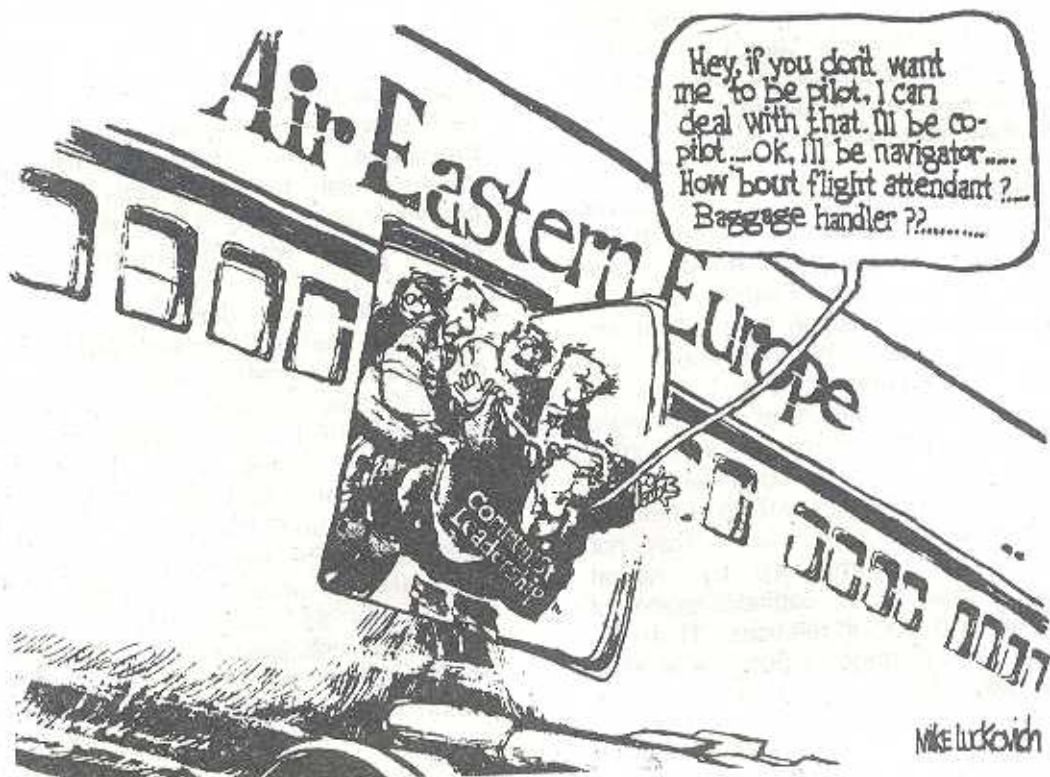
decades, and the different tendencies within the communist parties that now draw courage from the mass democratic movements. It will take time before these groups are able to organize sufficiently, articulate their programs lucidly, and take a more definite direction.

Given the above constraints, the best one can do is to survey the spectrum of political forces and their respective programs from the materials at hand. This is also difficult. For a long time, Western "bourgeois" academics tended to view developments in Eastern Europe as mere reflections of Soviet politics. They gave insufficient attention to the study of dissent, and of the various actors in the political opposition (except when these actors are being suppressed). Neither are Western socialist publications of any help. The pro-Soviet ones completely discredit the dissenters. Those against "Soviet revisionism", on the other hand, focus on specific groups whose programs are close to their own, without indicating the relative strength or influence of these groups in their respective polities.

There is also a problem of generalization. It has been customary for us to think of the countries in Eastern Europe as forming a region. This is partly because we have imbibed the West's penchant for lumping these countries together as "Soviet satellites", and partly because they, in fact, belong to such alliances as the Warsaw Pact and COMECON. There is only so much that we can establish if we choose solely to generalize about the situation in Eastern Europe. If we wish to ascertain the directions of change, then there is need to look closely into the individual experiences of these countries -- to find out their commonalities, and, more importantly, to understand the specific factors and contradictions that led to the groundswell of dissent, and the mass movements that toppled their respective regimes.

The Search for the Common Denominator

Some analysts refer to the events in Eastern Europe as a political revolution because most of the demands focus on



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changes in the structures and distribution of power. The workers invariably comprise the majority of participants in the mass movement, with the cooperation and, in some cases, leadership of intellectuals. Reformers within the communist parties and the state bureaucracies also play important roles in the unfolding events.

Political aspirations have been clearly articulated in the recent demonstrations in the region. Foremost among these were for free elections; some form of pluralism (whether socialist pluralism, or a multi-party system, or, at least, one in which the communist parties do not enjoy institutional advantages over other groups); accountability of leaders through public monitoring agencies; press freedom; a transition towards a "state of laws"; the abolition of the repressive apparatus of the State (e.g., the secret police and nomenklatura); the rehabilitation of the victims of Stalinism; [2] a review of history; and an open door policy. Although they also raised economic demands (e.g., higher wages, increase in consumption, and reduction of income differentials), the workers seem prepared to accept economic reforms only in the context of drastic political change. They even

focus on sectoral political demands, the most common of which are for the establishment of independent unions, the freedom to organize and hold strikes, greater control over production through the election of leaders, the formation of workers' councils, and the implementation of workers' self-management.

It is clear from these political demands that the workers and intellectuals reject what we may initially refer to as "Stalinist bureaucracy" or the situation where the ruling communist parties had become involved not only in steering the broad directions of socialist construction, but also in centralizing all aspects of government administration, economic management, and social engineering. The workers blame the centralized bureaucracy for their continuing economic difficulties. They argue that the "Stalinist bureaucratic state" substitutes its interests for those of society itself. Under this state, ideology, or, at least, Leninist ideology as interpreted by their ruling communist parties, is confused with truth. Initiatives by individuals and groups to propose a different conception of reality are deemed intolerable. Instead of allowing the free contest of ideas and

programs to test the superiority of the socialist world-view, leaders of the bureaucratic regimes imposed their own "truths" (not necessarily Marx's or Lenin's). This created a dilemma for the intellectuals whose ideas, if different from the official view, cannot find a market.

Inspired by *glasnost* in the Soviet Union, various political, ideological, philosophical, and artistic trends have recently appeared in Eastern Europe. Public opinion has begun to play an important role. Mass demonstrations are taking the communist parties to task for past and present failures, and demanding a radically different framework for building the future. Thus, we may soon see a transition from a hegemonic state to a pluralist polity in Eastern Europe, which may not necessarily be accompanied by retreat from a socialist to a capitalist mode of production and social relations. There is, however, a wide range of possible alternatives actually being explored by the current reform-oriented leaders of Eastern Europe.

Developments in Eastern Europe may also be viewed as principally a "social movement" for civil rights. After decades of socialist transformation, the peoples of Eastern Europe seem to have already achieved the basic requisites of economic welfare, military security, and social justice. These gains, however, were achieved at such costs as shortages in consumer goods, suppression of ideas in the name of security, and widespread corruption within and abuse of privileges by the leadership. The social movements that emerged in Eastern Europe, such as Solidarity in Poland, Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, espoused such higher ideals as equality, democratic participation, respect for human rights, and opportunities for individual self-realization – all to improve the quality of life. This implies that the present democratic movement appreciates the gains of socialism, and wants them expanded, although one may counter that the current upheavals would not have been necessary had the socialist transformation and bureaucratization process not led to the alienation of the individual.

This perspective also recognizes the generational aspect of the upheavals. Most of the adherents of reform are young people whose concern for and apprehensions about the future motivate them to seek even the most radical alternatives. On the other hand, resistance to change comes mostly from the elder members of the leadership who retain the Cold War mentality, and wish to cling to power.

Can the current democratic movements in Eastern Europe be characterized as part of a class struggle? There are two views on this issue. According to the first view (to which the former bureaucratic regimes subscribed), dissent is counter-revolutionary, aimed at advancing the interests of imperialism, and the return of the old ruling class. The second view looks at the contradictions within the societies of Eastern Europe as non-antagonistic, and, although the criticisms raised by the people are legitimate, they have been, on occasion, violently repressed.

It has been observed that socialist construction in these societies focuses, almost exclusively, on economic transformation, without paying due attention to the transfer of political control to the workers, nor to the full development of proletarian consciousness and democratic leadership. This is tragic because workers feel alienated from their State. They have begun, however, to call for independent trade unions and workers' (not State nor joint workers-State) management.

The Upheavals in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia

Discrepancies between socialist theory and practice are evident in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia. What follows is a tentative discussion of the more important features of the reform process in these countries.

■ Poland

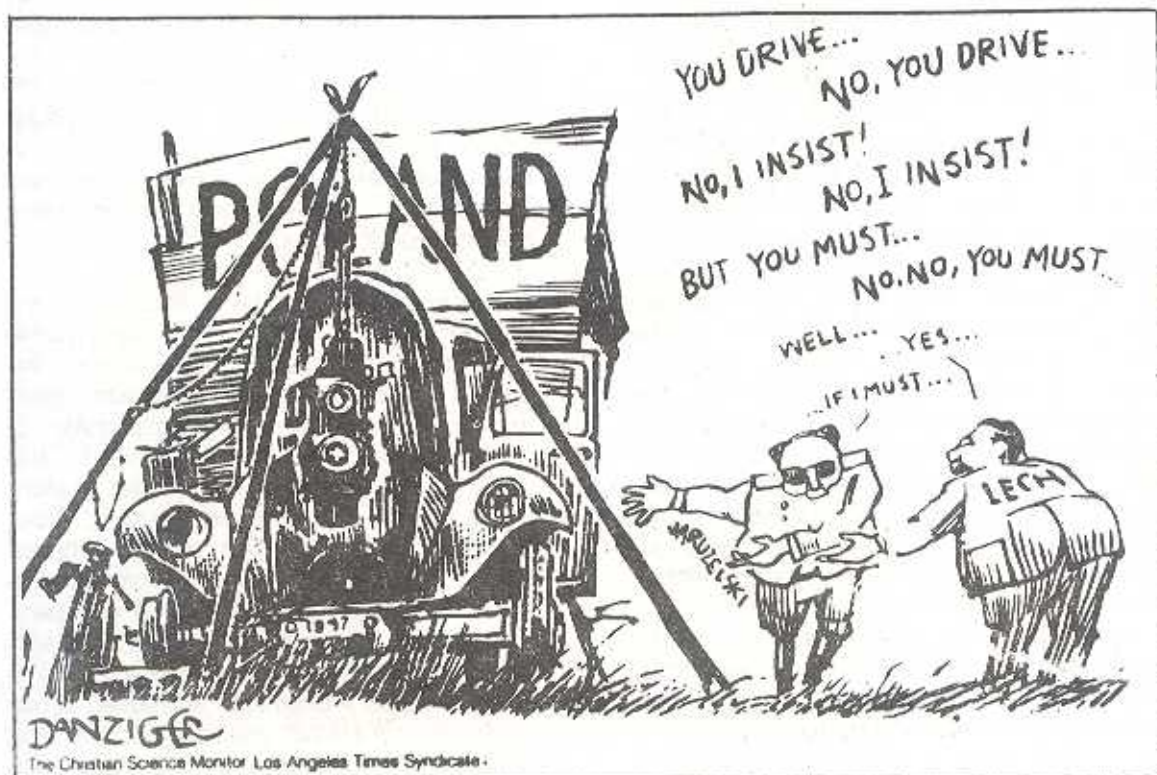
Socialist construction in Poland has always been complicated by such factors as its people's strong sense of nationalism, the role of religion, liberal agricultural

policies, and its congenial ties to international capital. Historically, Polish nationalism has been directed against what is perceived as Russian expansionism during the reign of the Tsars, and during World War II when the Soviet Union chose to ignore Polish national aspirations. This is one factor that explains the unpopularity of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) which is seen to be more loyal to Soviet rather than Polish interests. Such anti-Sovietism, if allowed to boil over, can take the form of anti-socialism.

The Polish working class is strongly Catholic, giving it, what some observers have called, a strong social-democratic orientation. In recognizing this, the PUWP has consistently courted the support of the Catholic Church by allowing, for instance, the construction of new churches, and tolerating Church proselytizing. During the peak of Solidarnosc demonstrations and strikes, the Party asked Cardinal Wyszynski, who is popular among the people, to go on television and persuade striking workers to go back to work.

Despite decades of socialism, Polish peasants still enjoy private ownership and control of their farms, and have the right to own and inherit land. In 1975, 77 percent of the country's agricultural land was privately owned. Agricultural production is primitive, with the land being divided into small family farms. No clear program for agricultural socialization has been pursued. This, together with Poland's huge debt to international capitalist institutions (e.g., the IMF), [3] has inspired criticism that while Poland still has a long way to go towards basic socialist transformation, it already seems to be abandoning the process.

The new government is a broad coalition headed by Prime Minister Mazowiecki of the Solidarnosc and President Jaruzelski of the PUWP. Solidarnosc started out as a trade union, using strikes as its main weapon against the State, especially in 1981. It then adopted new forms of underground struggle in the face of State repression. It also established publications as the venue for organizing, with the intellectuals enjoying a prominent role. Solidar-



nosc later evolved into a highly centralized organ of opposition, i.e., with its own bureaucratic institutions. [4]

Petty bourgeois intellectuals appear to have wrested leadership of Solidarnosc from the workers. This has caused a division between Solidarnosc activists who see it mainly as a social movement, and the rank and file, most of whom are workers, who see it as a trade union (it claims to have nine million members). The first enjoy dominance in Solidarnosc, and has been co-opted into the new government. This coalition government under Mazowiecki has been criticized for hastily entering into a compromise with the PUWP, which is part of the coalition, thereby maintaining the latter's control of the army, police, transportation and communication system, banks, etc.. It has also been accused of embarking on a transition to capitalism, betraying the Polish workers who have been struggling for control over their own destiny. There have been attempts to ban strikes (as when Walesa floated the idea of a strike moratorium, but was voted down by Solidarity leaders), start the "transition to a modern market economy of the type existing in developed countries", and to accede to IMF-WB conditionalities, such as the freezing of wage increases and reduction of subsidies.

There is, thus, basis for the claim that the new government has betrayed the Polish workers. In 1981, Solidarnosc stated: "We demand the introduction of self-management and democratic reform at all levels of management, of a new social-economic order that will link up the plan, self-management, and the market -- the basis of the economy must be the social enterprise, managed by the workers' collective and represented by their council." It also demanded "socialized planning". But none of these points in the 1981 program of Solidarnosc is being addressed by the Mazowiecki government.

Meanwhile, a radical-left opposition, called the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution, has emerged, demanding self-management. Two "nostalgia parties" -- the United Peasant Party (peasant-based)

and the Democratic Party (composed of remnants of the urban petty-bourgeoisie) have also surfaced.

■ Hungary

Hungary has been one of the most reform-minded among the countries of Eastern Europe. It started its reform process as early as 1956, experimented with "capitalist measures", and actively involved the private sector in its mixed economy. It suffered, however, shortages in goods and social services (such as housing and medical care) as whole sectors of the economy remained unproductive, and was plagued by rampant crime, corruption, alcoholism, and drug dependency. In 1988, its foreign debt reached 12 billion dollars, with 55 to 70 percent of its export earnings earmarked for debt service. In the same year, inflation was recorded at 25 to 30 percent.

After leading the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) for 31 years, Janos Kadar was overthrown in 1988, not by a mass movement of workers or intellectuals, but by a coup staged by a coalition of radical reformers within the Party itself. This coalition included Party intellectuals from the Academy of Sciences, and members of the central and provincial party apparatus, and of such institutions as the Trade Union Federation and the Young Communist League. Kadar's supporters, on the other hand, were senior government bureaucrats, and regional administrative and economic elites.

Karoly Grosz, Kadar's successor, endorsed "socialist pluralism", the relative autonomy of social organizations, improved socialist legality, less party interference in the economy, expansion of debate within the Party framework, and government accountability. But before these reforms could be implemented, Grosz revealed his conservatism when he began calling for "discipline on the part of the press", "commitment to a lasting one-party system", a uniform trade union that is self-governing rather than independent, and a uniform youth movement. Moreover, Grosz reiterated the HSWP position that the 1956 democratic movement of Imre Nagy was

counter-revolutionary, thus legitimizing the Soviet invasion of Hungary at that time. Grosz was later succeeded by Imre Poszgay who transformed the HSWP into the Hungarian Socialist Party, and promised a transition to parliamentary democracy and further economic liberalization.

Under the present leadership of Rezso Nyers (who used to be a member of the Social Democratic Party before it merged with the communists in 1948), the Hungarian government further opened the country's industries to foreign capital, and responded to IMF conditions with economic measures bound to hurt the workers. The HSP has legalized other political parties and groups, and paved the way for elections. More than fifty parties are now preparing for the 25 March elections, among which, the most significant are the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), [5] which is composed mostly of intellectuals, and is divided into the christian democratic and social democratic wings; the Federation of Free Democrats, [6] which includes economists, sociologists, and lawyers; the Federation of Young Democrats, which is issue-based, pro-market economy, and pro-liberal politics; and the Left Alternative, which is both anti-capitalist and anti-Stalinist, and favors self-government and a free association of producers.

In March 1989, eight opposition groups organized an Opposition Round Table to define the ground rules for negotiating with HSP for an election. Meanwhile, Hungarian workers have organized themselves into councils to consolidate their opposition to pro-capitalist moves. They have also started to raise the issue of workers' ownership of enterprises.

■ East Germany

The economy of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) is almost as strong as that of most developed capitalist countries. The Socialist Unity Party (SED) appears to be monolithic, displaying no public factional struggle since the 1950s. There is little room within the Party for debate or flexibility in terms of

policy. One explanation is that it is politically and militarily dependent on the Soviet Union, especially because the GDR is right in the middle of superpower rivalry in Europe.

This facade of unity and stability broke, however, when the workers rallied by the hundreds of thousands, forcing the resignation of Ernst Honecker. Shortly after replacing Honecker, Egon Krenz was also forced to resign in favor of Hans Modrow who used to head the reformist wing of the SED. A coalition was then formed by the reformist group within the SED (which supports the principles of workers' self-management, political pluralism, and the collective ownership of the major means of production, e.g., banks) and such opposition groups as the New Forum [7] and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). The New Forum is a mass movement of 200,000 members, led by intellectuals, and is calling for justice, liberty, democracy, and the defense of nature. The Social Democratic Party has 32,000 members, and is supported by West German social democrats, members of Democracy Today and of Christians for Socialism (Protestants), and others. Six opposition parties -- the New Forum, [8] SPD, Democratic Awakening, Democracy Today, Initiative for Peace and Human Rights, and the United Left -- formed an alliance to challenge the communists in the elections this March, and to prevent a rightward drift in opposition politics.

Meanwhile, beyond its working class agenda, the workers are demanding for a review of history, and respect for the rights of other parties. They are also calling for the establishment of workers' councils and self-management to replace the earlier system of co-management.

The opposition coalition, however, has no clear idea about how to set up a government of a workers' state. It lacks an organizational framework, and has no elected leadership nor a viable united front with the working masses.

Independent left groupings have also started to emerge. Meanwhile, the caretaker government of Hans Modrow is

trying to stay in power in the face of challenges from a poorly organized but popular opposition alliance.

■ Czechoslovakia

In 1968, the Soviet leadership ordered its army to stamp out reforms in Czechoslovakia, sending a clear message to the country and the rest of Eastern Europe that it (Soviet Union) would not tolerate any "unauthorized" innovations in the socialist experiment. After this incident, which is popularly referred to as the Prague Spring, Czech communist leaders have since been cautiously toeing the Soviet line. The opposition, in turn, had been compelled to focus on such issues as the rule of law and respect for human rights, while only implicitly raising the issues of sovereignty and nationalism.

Czechoslovakia has relatively high living standards, and a manageable foreign debt. It has a strong industrial base, but is today facing economic problems and serious ecological damage.

The opposition coalition, Civic Forum,[9] prefers parliamentary democracy and a market economy, but stresses the need for social protection as well. Until recently, dissent in Czechoslovakia was seldom articulated in anti-socialist terms. In fact, the idea of a new and reinvigorated socialism was always the call of the reform movement. "Bahro-itis", or the practice of "dissenting from socialism for the sake of socialism", had been a major influence in recent years. But such opposition, nevertheless, came to a head when it became clear that the Czech Communist Party was resisting glasnost and blocking reform even when the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe were already moving progressively ahead.

Czechoslovakian politics today is dominated by four political parties: the Movement for Civic Liberty, which is a liberal democratic group; the Socialist Renewal Club for Perestroyka (Obroda), whose members include Dubcek and the other cadres who were expelled after the Prague Spring; the Czechoslovak Democratic Alliance, which has links with

Hungary's Democratic Forum; and the anti-militarist Independent Initiative for Peace.

It is the Charter 77, however, which is at the fulcrum of dissent. It is basically a human rights organization which counts among its members Vaclav Havel and other leaders of Civic Forum. Charter 77 has been characterized as conservative and traditionalist -- emphasizing the need for law and order, the development of public spirit among citizens, religious freedom, and individual morality. Many of Charter 77's members would describe themselves as social democrats. It remains very influential, and enjoys broad mass support.

The opposition has, so far, remained solid, even after joining the Cabinet as the dominant force, and relegating the Communist Party to a minority. Moreover, its demands for civil rights have found support among members of the Communist Party at the regional and district levels. Perhaps, it is the fear of Soviet intervention that has kept the opposition united, and which may have forced the Communist Party itself to maintain a semblance of unity.

It was a general strike of millions of workers that removed Milos Jakes from government. But now Civic Forum is calling on the workers to cease further demonstrations for fear of endangering the Czech economy. Workers' demands for self-management may not have been the rallying issue in Czechoslovakia, but without the participation of workers in the new government, it is difficult to say whether the new leadership, composed mostly of civil rights activists, will take the economy towards a true socialist workers' state, or a pro-capitalist market economy, or greater self-reliance or a new dependency, this time on international capital.

Conclusion

Given the current mix of political forces competing in Eastern Europe, and the propensity of the opposition coalitions to readily enter into a compromise, it is difficult to ascertain the economic and political direction of the reforms in these

countries. The following observations, however, are offered for further discussion:

First, the participants of these political revolutions cum social movements appear organized, and come from such socially distinct sectors as workers and intellectuals. While they may agree on the need for radical changes in the political structures and processes, their long-term agenda for social and economic development are bound to differ. More specifically, despite their deep-seated disillusionment with the Stalinist bureaucratic regimes, the workers of Eastern Europe have so internalized certain socialist ideals and values -- e.g., the primacy of the social role of workers, egalitarianism, State protection in the form of credits and subsidies, and others -- that they may opt for the retention of those institutions with which they are familiar, even as the reforms being pushed by the opposition embody promises of good things to come. The thrust towards denationalization, enterprise autonomy (and responsibility), competition, private enterprise, integration into the world economy, etc., may displace the working class and add to the insecurities and pressures already borne by the people. They might grieve the fact that "socialism" gave them a "dictatorship of the proletariat" in name only, but the workers are still not likely to agree to a pluralist framework that will contradict this principle. In fact, the workers are demanding self-management, and greater control over the enterprise. They do not want the enterprise to be given to some new capitalist class.

Second, the West may wish to create out of this confusion a new bloc of friendly (capital-starved and labor-rich) market-oriented economies in Eastern Europe. But from their experience under Soviet hegemony in the COMECON, the peoples of Eastern Europe have come to learn the implications of unequal exchange, and would not, therefore, serve as willing victims of international capital. In any case, the West is hard put to find imaginative means of "managing" the crisis in its favor. One wrong move -- such as failing to use adequate resources, or to influence the

right processes to help the Eastern European countries -- could cost it the opportunities created by such a crisis.

Third, centralization may have been a historical necessity during the early years of socialist construction when there was need to consolidate internal support for the socialist project, and in view of the hostile international environment created by Western imperialism. Centralization, however, was instituted for the wrong purposes and in the wrong areas (for instance, there was extensive centralization in culture and propaganda than in the agricultural sector where there was urgent need for rationalization), and resulted in the political alienation of the workers.

And last, the concept of the "vanguard party" is today being put to test in the emergent multi-party parliamentary democracies in Eastern Europe. It is argued here, however, that in countries where the productive forces remain backward, and which confront the dominance of world capitalism, a socialist project *cannot* possibly survive without the leadership of an advanced party of the proletariat. This argument has validity especially if this vanguard party, in fact, directly represents the interests of the citizens and working masses, performs its vanguard role within clear, non-arbitrary, and legal limits, and is subject to the mechanisms of democratic elections and recall. Socialist pluralism, therefore, may still flourish even under the existence of a vanguard party. It is only when the workers choose to abandon the socialist project that the vanguard party should dissolve itself.

These complex uncertainties hide the many dangers in the future. They also conceal the many opportunities that socialists the world over should appreciate and explore. Here is the place and now is the time to examine, redefine, and chart a new course for socialism that will do greater justice to Marx, Engels, Lenin, even Trotsky, and many others. It should be a new course that will vindicate millions who were imprisoned, oppressed, tortured, and killed for their vision of a world free from exploitation.

1. Karl Marx, *Preface and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* (International Liberal Publishing Company, 1904).

2. I use "Stalinist" with reservation because it totally condemns Stalin, and obliterates any positive contributions to the socialist cause that he may have made.

3. Poland's foreign debt to imperialist countries stands at more than 20 billion dollars, and its debt service comprises 90 percent of export earnings.

4. At one time, Solidarnosc was even paying 40,000 activists. See *Political Science Quarterly* 104, #1, Spring 1989.

5. MDF calls itself an "independent intellectual-political movement" rather than a political party. Its program calls for free elections; independent political parties, judiciary, and armed forces; local self-government; free press and trade unions; social security; long-term political neutrality; and participation in the world market.

6. FFD is linked with the Democratic Opposition of the 1970s that produced *samizdat* Marxism. Its program includes the adoption of a market economy, multi-party system, free press, free trade unions, local autonomy, citizen's rights to social welfare, national sovereignty, and close ties with Western Europe. It rejects a unilateral withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, but favors long-term neutrality.

7. New Forum is calling for a democratic dialogue on the tasks of establishing a state of laws, developing the economy and integrating it into the world market, revitalizing culture, instituting free elections and a multi-party system, improving social services, increasing consumption goods, and protecting East German sovereignty.

8. The SPD advocates social democracy with an ecological orientation. It favors a "social market economy" with restrictions on monopolies, a state of laws, civil authority, parliamentary democracy, multi-party politics, and the relative economic and cultural autonomy of the different regions, departments, towns, and villages. It believes in the workers' right to form independent trade unions and launch strikes.

9. Civic Forum opposes the concentration of power in the Czech Communist Party, the presence of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia, and the country's membership in the COMECON. It favors a "developed market not deformed by bureaucratic interference", denationalization of large portions of industry, real economic competition, different forms of ownership of property, equal rights, opening the economy to foreign investors, and the promotion of social justice under a prosperous national economy.