

# Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in Social Science in Eastern Europe

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The Colonization of East  
European Social Science

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## 1. ILLUSION LOST

Following the fast and unexpected collapse of state-socialist systems throughout Eastern Europe, both observers and actors believed that agents of modernity such as parliamentary democracy, constitutional courts, voluntary associations of free citizens, free media, self-regulating markets, a burgeoning middle class and a generous bourgeoisie would develop and bring about prosperity to the peoples of the individual Eastern and Central European countries. Revolutionary euphoria and spirit, however, were soon to be replaced by a political and social hangover stemming from hardships of the transition from a system of redistribution to a market system. Dramatic reduction of GDP, increasing social inequality, rising unemployment, a growing rate of poverty, and a diminishing public dimension of women's roles resulted in a shock which was then exaggerated

by the rise of historical shadows such as right wing extremism, nationalism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance, crime, deterioration of public health, and dispersion of the social security network. Social research was not immune to these processes of decline.

Sociological research – which in some socialist countries was either nonexistent or was permeated by ideology, and in others was left relatively free to investigate but was prevented from publishing openly – responded highly inadequately to the challenges of the new post-socialist reality.

Nobody had really anticipated the inherent conservatism of the cultural sphere, including scholarly institutions, inherited from state socialism. The sphere of cultural reproduction can generally be considered conservative by nature because incentives for practical pursuits and pragmatic concerns are undermined by the pretexts of pursuing eternal truth. But this tendency to conservatism increased during state-socialism where not only the sphere of cultural reproduction but also social reproduction in its entirety had been subjugated to the power of centralization and redistribution. Paradoxically enough, at least one group of intellectuals involved in cultural reproduction, who had been deeply embedded in the system of redistribution, became the avant-garde of radical change; at least in theory,

they were the forerunners of the transition from state socialism to a pluralistic democracy and market economy. In the process of transition it turned out that the sphere of cultural reproduction has been one of the spheres most resistant to change. Even avant-garde intellectuals realized that the logic of change was against their interests, and so they claimed that every sphere of social activity should change except their own workplace, institution, department, publishing house, editorial board, or faculty.

Resistance to changes, however, lacked the support of economic or political forces; consequently material conditions for any kind of cultural activity, including social research, gradually but steadily deteriorated. Research grants have been diminished or reduced substantially, while earlier institutional frameworks of social research have remained intact. Consequently the whole system of social research has had to face crises stemming from both the loss of finances and the inability to change. Previous scholarly careers lost credibility and collapsed. Paradoxically enough, career failure was not only the privilege of representatives of officially endorsed "ideological socialist entrepreneurs", who were forced to realize that their access to resources vanished as state-socialism withered away; scholarly idols inflated by oppositional political interests also tasted the bitterness of fading away.

However, new careers could not begin because of the continuity of the old system. As a result, universities and social science institutes became empty shells incapable of fulfilling their function of investigation and social feedback. Private institutions, however, emerged, draining off some of the best personnel of existing social research institutional networks. Their market orientation and economic concerns, however, made the continuation of careers according to the rules and standards of scholarly activity practically impossible.

The review of these negative developments is startling in itself, but the picture in reality is even more gruesome. In four decades of state-socialism, the development and social extension of the infrastructure of academic institutions (including library development, communication facilities, introduction of new kinds of information processing, and computerization) was hindered to a considerable degree. This inherited disadvantage has not been reduced in the years of transition, while problems have been compounded by the capricious and spontaneous introduction of new technologies which are often not compatible with the old.

#### COMMENTS BY KIM LANE SCHEPPELE:

*Before 1989, in the West, experts on Central and Eastern Europe were also caught up in an ideologically driven set of research priorities and research funding programs. Though there are significant exceptions to this generalization, many Western experts on Eastern and Central Europe worked on the region either because they were motivated by virulent anti-communism and were therefore interested in showing how the East was inferior to the West, or because their political sympathies were on the left, and they were interested in the more appealing versions of actually existing socialism. Funding, too, tended to track these divisions, with by far the most money going to those anti-communist researchers who were willing to do research relevant to the defense and security interests of the West. When the Cold War suddenly ended, research funding priorities in the West changed also, disorienting many researchers there who had made their reputations on*

*analyzing systems committed to socialism. Even those researchers on the left did not know what to do when actually existing socialism changed suddenly into yet another version of actually existing capitalism, especially when their former comrades among social scientists in the East seemed to welcome the changes.*

*While Western researchers who worked on the region before 1989 did not suffer from a collapse of career characteristic of researchers in the East, they did face having to switch their research agendas rather dramatically. Suddenly, Western experts found that they were no longer really expert in a region where they had failed to predict the biggest historical event of the last part of the 20th century. Funding agencies switched their priorities, moving overnight from calls for proposals on nuclear deterrence and conflict management to calls for proposals on democratization and privatization. Experts made quick changes, ever ready to move where the money was. Someone who studied weapons procurement might switch to studying ethnic conflict. Someone who used to work on mutually assured destruction could study privatization. Someone who studied labor processes in an economy of shortage would now find themselves studying new entrepreneurs. The categories and concepts to be used in the brave new world of grant proposals were created not by experts but instead by surprised Western journalists writing in the daily press: "transition," "post-communism," "the death of history." As those terms moved over into the discourse of academic life, just what those things meant on the ground and in great variation as one went from Central Europe to Central Asia became less important than writing grant proposals about "the region" and about "processes of transition from communism." The money was there, given by all manner of granting agencies that had been funding Cold War research on security studies and other pathologies of a bi-polar world. The new research being funded in the region now demanded comparisons across as many countries as possible both in the region and outside of it, to analyze the presumed differences still there between East and West. This resulted in massive quantitative data, producing statistics that could be analyzed in the computer-driven social science research facilities of the West.*

*What happened to the pre-1989 Western researchers on the region? Prosocialist researchers found that their previous comrades were full of talk of liberalism. Anticommunist researchers met the enemy and he was now asking for funding also. But what was most evident was a stunning new inequality: all the money for research on the East was now coming from the West. The research apparatus of the East had, along with many other cultural products, collapsed.*

## 2. MEETING THE VIRUS

Recent historical writing concerning the discovery of American Indians revealed an intriguing paradox: while there were some losses of human life among native inhabitants of the new continent due to their hopeless military resistance against the well-equipped intruders, the major source of native population loss was to be attributed to an unintended consequence of the intruders' visit. Europeans brought invisible living organisms with them which found their way unopposed into the bodies of native inhabitants who could not resist the detrimental effects of bacteria and viruses that they had never before experienced. They developed symptoms which caused much greater losses than the in-

tentional efforts to punish and limit them carried out by the intruders. Something similar is going to happen now in Eastern and Central Europe, but the unintended effects in this case naturally cannot be explained in biological terms, but instead in terms of political, social, and economic factors.

In this article, we would like to focus on the effects of western intrusion into Eastern Europe on the field of social science research. The name of the disease is colonization. In the following, we would like to characterize some typical response strategies to the attempts of western colonization as they have developed among social scientists in the individual Eastern and Central European countries which unwillingly had to realize their new "liberated" status.

#### A. DATA SUPPLY

Western intruders were eager to gain access to earlier unattainable sources of data such as secret archives and classified data files, which became open and public following the collapse of the system based on secrecy of information. Native social scientists were reduced to the role of opening the archive gates and bringing out the files without having the opportunity to do the analysis themselves. Another new service demand was emerged in connection with creating new databases. A tremendous amount of western research grant money was invested in establishing comparative social survey research to be carried out in as many post-socialist countries as possible in order to explore the alleged characteristics of the transition process in dimensions of political culture, public attitudes, privatization motives, legal awareness, and behavior, etc. The ideological aim behind these efforts can be summarized as "Project Democracy", conceived as something to be implemented from above, following and copying western models.

Native social scientists consequently were limited, on the one hand, to roles of data collectors and, on the other hand, of data suppliers. In this capacity, native sociologists became employees of "data export companies" supplying western social scientists with data in order to enhance their scholarly prestige and to prove their unique status in the eyes of government agencies in their home countries. The relationship between Western and Eastern scholars was based on asymmetry dominated by the unequal distribution of symbolic and financial power between these two categories of actors. This situation has been created in such a way that Eastern participants are trapped with no autonomous way out.

#### B. HELPING EASTERN EUROPEANS THROUGH WESTERN SELF-HELP

The aftermath of state socialism can be characterized by the incessant peregrination of Western experts of different sorts to Eastern Europe. There was at first a sense in the region of a kind of Marshall Plan in social sciences. Visitors said they came in order to help, assist, and develop, but in order to do so they had to get access to data. Later it turned out that the definition of help was not the same for Western and Eastern scholars. The latter thought assistance would lead to their benefit and promotion while the former thought that help was something to be provided after those to be helped had first proven their merit. Waiting for accomplishments, the helpers first and foremost found it necessary to help themselves in order to hasten the time when those who were to be assisted

could finally prove that they were ready to be lifted out of trouble. This one-way process of helping resulted in the long term and stable residence of Western scholarly experts and visitors on the soil of the individual Eastern European countries. These experts have enjoyed the benefits of their per diems, payments, and salaries which have considerably exceeded the meagre financial compensation of their Eastern counterparts. For Westerners, there was no rational motive to change the situation. Easterners might have desired the change but they could not have achieved it.

It would be a mistake to assume that this strange paradigm of a helping relationship for developed as a result of individual rational choice. The evaluation of Western programs such as TEMPUS clearly indicates the presence of a well-conceived institutional strategy which formed a hard constraint against any other choice. Institutional arrangement was the major cause. (Also hidden or sometimes clear political motivations and interests are typically behind these supports. That is, for example, how the TEMPUS money which originally aimed to help some Eastern European countries later became an important form of subsidy for the Southern European members of the European Community. For some time a hidden expectation emerged that new TEMPUS JEPs were required to include countries from Southern Europe as a guarantee for acceptance.) The same can be said in connection with the activity of the major benefactor of all Eastern European countries – the World Bank (and especially its special program called Catching Up With European Higher Education). Bureaucratic procedures of this institution regulated the applications and tenders in such a way that Western suppliers and Western locations were clearly preferred. Eastern participation in these programs at most poses as a pretext for a closed circuit from help to self help.

#### C. CENTRALIZATION AND MONOPOLIZATION

The strategy of the inclusion of Western experts in the individual East European societies led to an unparalleled accumulation of information and data. The access, however, to this data was granted for practical reasons first and foremost to Westerners who had control over the international system files and data banks located in major Western centers of social research. This is not to assert that centralization would be unnecessary or sites of centralization could be replaced by similar Eastern European centers. The fact is that researchers of the individual post-socialist countries (due to a historical legacy of suspicion and distrust) are not able to cooperate with each other and in many cases they are unaware of each other's existence except through the mediation of Western centers of research on Eastern Europe.

#### D. BRAIN DRAIN AND JANISSARY SCHOOLS

With the opening of the "East Camp" gates, almost all scholars in the region tried to establish contact with their Western counterparts, and institutions attempted to do the same. Rules of public relations and self-marketing, however, were still to be discovered because under the umbrella of state-socialist paternalism neither persons nor institutions were able to develop behavior in conformity with Western demands and expectations. Exceptional cases, however, have resulted in the rapid rise of careers of individual Eastern scholars. Some forms of cooperation have emerged between individual research in-

stitutes, departments, and faculties. Due to the asymmetry which we have characterized above, Eastern actors were overwhelmed by the difficulty of adjustment. The price of achievement in the West was the decreasing possibility of returning home. Once having achieved status and prestige in Western scholarly communities, successful Eastern scholars became over-assimilated renegades. But it would be a false assumption to believe that it was just a matter of individual failure of morals or character. The nature of unchanged Eastern scholarly background made it impossible to return. Due to the inherent conservatism, provincialism, rigidity, and technical backwardness, Eastern scholarly communities simply were unable to reassimilate the prodigal sons – many of whom had to refrain from coming back against their own wishes.

Ambitious programs of modern social science education were designed in the West to provide for the most gifted members upcoming generations in Eastern Europe in order to give them degrees and cognitive means of coping with a post-socialist reality. Unfortunately these programs were constructed according to Western paradigms of social thought which conspicuously lacked specific insights and historical knowledge which would have enabled young graduate students to understand and explore their homelands. Consequently, their training was overwhelmed with knowledge stemming from the post-modern reality of Western societies. The young scholars – economists, sociologists, historians – have had to realize upon coming back home that here there is no gender issue, gay rights are unheard of, there are no controversies stemming from competing multicultural constructions of reality, and there are no fields and laboratories to test sophisticated loglinear models of social reality. This is not to deny that particularly in some Central European countries traces of postmodernity already exist. The weight and priority of postmodernism in Eastern European societies, however, are completely different from postmodern social problems in the West. The status of young Eastern European social scientists trained abroad can at best be compared with the historically tragic example of janissaries who some hundred years ago had been brought to Istanbul to be trained as excellent warriors and faithful followers of Allah.

On the other side of the education exchange, programs are offered in many Eastern and Central European universities for Western university students. Some programs are even taught in languages accessible for Westerners and are of high academic level. Nevertheless due to the disintegration of the Eastern European scholarly community, and the lack of regional identity of the individual national scholarly communities, local training programs are able to satisfy only those undergraduate needs which necessarily lack specialization or present the individual national societies as subjects for anthropological case studies.

#### COMMENTS:

*The changes of 1989 and after brought a new group of Western social scientists into the region. Many of these newly minted experts did not have the background, languages or historical knowledge to work in the countries now experiencing such far-reaching changes, particularly in the organization of the social sciences themselves. But nonetheless, these naive newcomers came to the region in a position of power, with grants that were huge by local standards. Without understanding the context in which they were working, however, the new Western experts typically mistook the signs of the stunning new poverty*

*in the social sciences for signs of intellectual backwardness. If Eastern social scientists hadn't read the latest articles on mathematical modelling in Western journals, Western social scientists assumed that their Eastern counterparts were too primitive to understand the techniques. Had the Westerners understood the conditions of research in the region, they might have drawn the more sensible conclusion that Eastern library budgets couldn't permit the purchase of the huge range of journals at Western prices and it would be hard without such library facilities to keep up with the literatures in the West. And if the Easterners had managed to reinvent from scratch a technique available in the West, such research accomplishments were looked down upon for failing to be original. If East European social scientists could not run fancy models on their personal computers at home to keep up with their Western counterparts, the Westerners assumed that the Easterners couldn't do the work, instead of concluding that perhaps computers with such power and software were not widely available to cash-strapped researchers of the East. If East European social scientists claimed original ideas in the research processes, particularly if the ideas emphasized the differences or historical peculiarities of particular countries in the region, Westerners assumed that the Easterners did not understand Western models that require generalizing about all these "small countries." If Easterners revealed their generally superior knowledge of the history of social and political thought, the history of the region or the markers of contemporary culture, Westerners wondered where their hypotheses were.*

*Much of the research that creates the opportunities for these sorts of judgments by the Western researchers has been done through the organizing devices of Big Science. Big Science is where the big money is in the West these days, particularly for studies in comparative social and political research where identical surveys are carried out in each of a number of countries to enable cross-country comparisons of public attitudes using the same models regardless of the specifics of the country. Western researchers, often not able to function in the languages of the countries that they are studying and often trying to study a half dozen or more countries at once, must rely on a "local" researcher to ensure that the research is being carried out according to Western standards and with Western research methods by people who know what the main researcher wants. The local researcher, then, becomes a research assistant – managing only a part of the project without the access to the whole. It is more important that she or he be fluent in English and can act as abridge between two worlds than that she or he is capable of carrying out the research as a principal investigator. In other words, the Western researcher needs someone who can bring back data as if it never originated in another culture and another language, and in a system with different sorts of research obstacles. If the local researcher does this well, the Western researcher can ignore that there have ever been problems of cultural translation, so the Western researcher can then bracket such issues. And since the problems of cultural translation are no longer apparent in the data, it seems that the local researcher is not really necessary to understanding the data collected by the project by the time the major analysis is done. This enables Western researchers to walk away without helping the researcher from the East to do anything more. By the standards of research methodology and the limitations of most grant proposals on what can and cannot be paid for, the obligations of the principal investigator are over once the local researcher is paid for the specific services rendered, which probably include only the physical act of data collection.*

*Part of the fault for this lies with insensitive researchers from the West; part lies with the constraints from granting agencies. In general, grants will pay for data collection done by Eastern researchers but not library facilities, research assistance but not new computers, project-specific costs but not investment in infrastructure to enable Eastern social scientists to do the projects themselves next time. And if such costs can be paid, they can be paid only to the host university where the grant is being managed. This is almost always the American university, not the Eastern one. In fact, most of the major American grants agencies require that the principal investigators be US citizens which makes it quite unlikely that Eastern universities would ever be the home for such grants. Even such a major funder of Eastern researchers as IREX (the International Research and Exchanges Board) recently dropped its program of funding individual research grants for Eastern social scientists to come to the West, and now funds programs only if there is also a Western collaborator on the project. While this may produce some worthy collaborations, it also makes Eastern social scientists dependent on Western social scientists to get their own projects funded.*

*Because the Western researchers are often not on the scene at all, carrying out this research through agents from afar, it is easy for them to ignore many of the conditions of life that make academic research projects so different for those from East and West. In the West, most researchers have full-time jobs that pay enough so that the researcher only needs one job and can do research as part of the salaried commitment to the single employer. But in the East, this isn't true. University professors in the East do not make enough money to live on from their professorships and must supplement their official job's wages with money from other sources. This is what makes them vulnerable to the soft money that grants bring from the West. And Western researchers, accustomed to thinking that people in such elite positions would only do a particular sort of research work if they wanted to, fail to see that the Eastern researchers may imagine the grant as something more: as a connection with the West, as the beginning of a partnership that can produce benefits down the road, as a source of money that will pay for the time it takes to do research, as a collaboration among equals.*

*After the data are collected, the Westerners have gone home with it and the Eastern researchers wait for their "help," Western researchers may then say "But you could have published research with this data and had careers like us." But this misses the point. Researchers in the East don't have the sort of leisure research time that Westerners have. Eastern social scientists are now working on a version of an academic piece rate system, getting almost no guaranteed salary, receiving miniscule amounts to teach individual courses, having to spend all of their time scrounging payment for services. Where is the "free" time that Western researchers have to do research and writing without getting specifically paid for it? Such time exists only around the margins of academic schedules that may include six courses in one semester, often taught in different cities with substantial commuting times between them, plus the local administration of a grant or two from the West, plus translation work on the side, plus small bits of money for writing articles in the local press, and maybe the odd payment for lectures, service writing or a conference in the West – at which the results of the original research hardly anyone has time to do are supposed to be presented. Little wonder that many of those from the region who have been able to get out of this system have fled to the West, where they get accustomed to having one job, one salary and a manageable teaching schedule. It becomes very hard to come back into the academic life of the East after such a life.*

### 3. NAME OF THE VIRUS: RATIONALIZATION

One can hardly argue against the righteousness of Western strategies of intrusion into Eastern Europe even if it resembles earlier invasions which are unfortunately so familiar, taking into account the peculiarities of Eastern European history. No doubt that the rationalization and modernization attempts of Western governments, institutions, and professionals can be justified on the grounds of the backwardness of Eastern European societies. The various elements of backwardness, however, were selectively reinforced by state socialism and we are perhaps not far from accurate in characterizing the present Eastern European situation as a strange mixture of post-feudalism, pre-capitalism, welfare state, and emerging rude forms of capitalism. Consequently, efforts to understand and change this reality should be coordinated from every possible direction including the native perspective. Our aim, however, is not to blame the Westerners exclusively. The virus of rationalization undoubtedly was received inadequately by the natives themselves who became more ill instead of becoming healed.

There are various reasons for the misadaptation to the virus identified as rationalization. First to be mentioned is a misperception of self among Eastern European social scientists who are reluctant to give up their consciousness of mission and their self-image of being intellectuals in the brightest sense of Russian tradition. They are unable to understand that closing their minds in this way results in fundamentalism and increases the cognitive gap between Eastern and Western paradigms of social thought and research.

This leads to the other source for the false sense of difference: incompatibility of language in social science. Here we refer not only the practical problem of linguistic barriers and lack of command of common academic language (which should not necessarily be English). On a deep level, the roots of misunderstanding and the inability to communicate are due to different social representations and constructions of the world. Figurative and metaphorical terms characterized by a peculiar sort of obscurity and vagueness full of the historical and cultural associations which are so rampant in Eastern social science writings, make Eastern scholarship about society impenetrable to Western scholars who would be eager to listen and understand. Moreover, intellectuals in the East are proud of being confusing and obscure, and tend to despise clarity and rationality of composition.

Earlier in our essay, we have already indicated the disintegrated state of the Eastern European scholarly community that is probably the most important source of weakness and defenselessness against Western intrusion. Lacking common scholarly associations, research institutions, integrated forms of higher education, periodicals edited by international editorial boards, and joint grant resources, the Eastern European countries and Eastern European scholars are doomed to compete with each other for awards provided by external (that is, Western) agencies. Participants in this game have to define their situation in terms of non-zero-sum games and consequently the state of "bellum omnium contra omnes" prevails among them.

We have also demonstrated the unwillingness of social science institutions in Eastern Europe to change according to the norms and rules of the Western democracies. There would be no hope of catching up unless privatization and the destruction of the monop-

oly on funding and grants control occurred in the sphere of cultural reproduction in Eastern Europe. Social scholars in Eastern Europe have to realize that the prevailing system of a dysfunctional Academies of Sciences, with their scientific monopoly over the production of ideas, has to be terminated. Higher education should be diversified and made more open, more flexible, and more competitive.

The lack of reforms in the sphere of cultural reproduction, including social science rigidity and the closed nature of existing institutions, make the recruitment of young and gifted research fellows and assistant professors impossible. With no recruitment of new graduates it is no wonder that the age of incumbents of scholarly positions rose enormously. Young generations consequently are forced either to emigrate and go to janisary schools or to refrain from scholarly activity altogether and go into business or public service.

#### COMMENTS:

*And yet there is still a mystique in the West about the East European intellectual. Some of the mystique comes from the sense in the West that Eastern intellectuals are taken seriously in public life in a way that intellectuals are not in the West. Some of it comes also from the realization by some Western academics of how few academics in the West are intellectuals and how few intellectuals are outside academia. But in the East most academics are also intellectuals and there are many intellectuals who are not academics. Some of the mystique also comes from the heroism of suffering, which even insensitive Westerners can see Easterners do better. Many Western researchers who study the region envy Eastern researchers their intense, familiar, and publicly valued public cultures.*

*But it is hard for Westerners to understand intellectual life in the East. With many years of intense exchanges in closed intellectual circles, Eastern intellectuals have learned often to speak in a kind of code with each other. It is hard for newcomers, particularly those struggling with the languages, to learn the elaborated codes and histories of debates that Eastern intellectuals know well. Years of living together without opportunities for frequent travel have created a sense of intense and immediate community within groups of intellectuals in the East. And of course, translation has gone for the most part only one way. Books from the West are available in translation in the East while books from the East are rarely translated and published in the West. This lopsidedness creates the image that the West is the place where knowledge is being created, particularly in the West. And it means that those coming from the West often walk into debates that have been going on for years that are totally new and strange. They feel unwelcome in these debates in which everyone already knows everyone else's positions.*

*The bifurcation of academics into those at the universities and those at the Academies of Sciences, often with very different levels of resources even now, puzzles Western researchers. And the bifurcation of Eastern academics into those who speak languages and have done a great deal of foreign travel on the one hand, and the ones who have stayed at home to contribute to the local intellectual debates on the other, is also puzzling. These divisions create a sort of stratification in the community of social scientists that don't have easy parallels in the West, and Western researchers often cannot read the signals that these divisions convey. Eastern researchers, for their part, also don't always understand the prestige and hierarchy signals of the Western researchers, for whom where you*

*teach (is it a major research university?) and where you publish (refereed journals?) are more important than what you say. So there is much confusion and miscommunication over even the most basic elements of academic life.*

#### 4. FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

There is not much reason to idealize the cultural policy of state-socialism; nevertheless it can be safely stated that in the institutional swamp of cultural and academic life, isolated places, ivory towers, and closed circles which gave grants for independent and autonomous intellectual achievements, miraculously, enough prevailed. These achievements naturally were not able to attain prestige and status in a public realm dominated by the pseudo-achievements of the officially endorsed and valued pseudo-intellectuals. Consequently, the lack of a proper public framework deprived real achievements of their value and their authors were confined to the invisibility of private life. With the transition, cages have opened and, at least in theory, a possibility has been created for the independent and autonomous pursuit of intellectual concerns. Simultaneously, intellectuals have felt the temptation of ideology and political self-assertion. The pretext was the well-known legacy of the Russian "intelligentsia" which formed a compelling motive for presenting a mission or fulfilling a prophesy. There were considerable differences as to the nature of the ideological mission to be represented: some intellectuals believed that their duty was to redeem the nation while other intellectuals envisioned the democratic redemption of society. Both ideologies had strong political implications which were easy to convert into practice.

Two types of intellectual behavior have developed, both betraying classical expectations of the role of the intellectual. The first road leads to the sphere of politics. Political parties, parliament, public administration and local governments have been packed by PhDs, reputed scholars and university graduates who, lacking the skills of decision making, bargaining, negotiating, and conflict resolution, were forced to participate in bitter ideological battles over symbols and values. The other road leads to the sphere of mass communication where intellectuals who have abandoned their desks and research have emerged as warriors for their political-ideological camp, waging a Kulturkampf against each other through fierce articles, pamphlets, accusations, and passionate public debates. In Hungary, the society in transition remained unimpressed by these intellectual performances, and in the free elections of May 1994 sent hundreds of faceless, anonymous, and unknown deputies to parliament who had not distinguished themselves in any sphere of culture or academia.

There are probably many practical ways out of the colonization trap but we firmly believe that there is only one real way to get rid of the virus of rationalization and overcome all the related symptoms of acquired immune deficiency in Eastern European social science. This way must lead inward towards the rediscovery of an autonomous and independent intellectual role as it was characterized by Karl Mannheim. From the perspective of this role, a new and unseen dimension of the Eastern European social landscape would certainly unfold. This rediscovery cannot be the result of Western influence; a noble attempt at rationalization and modernization would be enough to push Eastern European intellectuals off this road of self-discovery. This is not to deny the importance of imported scholarship in redefining the tasks of Eastern European social scientists but to

emphasize a much-needed merger between the legacy of historical and cultural uniqueness of the Eastern European social reality and the postmodern armory of advanced Western scholarship.

What might be the focus of these new perspectives? Or – to put it in terms of economic rationality – what can Eastern Europe sell in the West other than raw data or scientific commodities patterned to external standards? We believe that there are several alternatives to be pursued. First we have the knowledge of ambivalence and paradox which is an unalienable constituent of any representation of Eastern and Central European reality worth communicating outwards. Contradictions in this region of the world will not necessarily be solved by neat theories but they do serve as puzzles challenging the mind. Let us mention only two examples. Markets in Eastern Europe in their incompleteness are mistakenly conceived of as an institution progressing toward a final completion, when they might be better thought of as a set of perplexing contradictions, a mixture of economic rationality and irrationality. The narrative of nation in Eastern Europe is loaded by the inherent contradiction between citizenship and nationality which cannot be ironed out by theoretical efforts.

We have already indicated that the presence of postmodernity in Eastern Europe which cannot be compared with postmodern phenomena in the West, but can be viewed as sources of supplementary knowledge about postmodernity. Ironically enough, Eastern European social reality is soil for the coexistence of postmodern, modern, and traditional elements of social life. Consequently, people living in these circumstances are tuned to more complex and more colorful aspects of social reality than people living beyond the former “iron curtain” which was replaced by a kind of new cognitive one. This new sort of difference would also be worth investigating.

Third, there is an immense potential to be exploited in a common Eastern European heritage and the international solidarity to be brought about among Eastern European countries. We believe that while individual national efforts are likely to fail, a coordinated and organized international cooperation in every field of the social sciences but especially in the field of Central and Eastern European regional studies, would succeed in gaining reputation and recognition.

Finally, we are tempted to mention the motive of globalization of the Eastern and Central European syndrome by which we mean that in the forthcoming century the growing international exchange of information would necessarily lead to a closer integration of various parts of the world. Moreover, in the West we are witness to startling distinctions which appear strikingly similar to some syndromes of an Eastern European existence. Right-wing extremism, bureaucratization, disrespect of citizenship rights, xenophobia, and many other forms of social pathology – which were characterized so aptly by *Istvan Bibó* as early as 1946 – are emerging in the societies of Western hemisphere. We assume that Eastern European social science can yield a substantial amount of knowledge about Western societies as well.

#### COMMENTS:

*Not yet dissuaded from action in the public sphere by the siren cries of postmodernism, Eastern intellectuals are participating in huge numbers in the processes of change that have accelerated since 1989. Westerners are surprised by the level of non-cynical polit-*

*ical commitment as well as by the sheer unbelievability in Western terms of the number of sociologists, politologists and law professors in Parliaments, mayors' offices and ministries. But with the advent of a certain “hip” form of cultural critique in the West, such actual political participation looks naive and certainly takes intellectuals away from the most important task (to Western researchers at least) – publishing.*

*Still, the Westerners who spend a great deal of time in the region cannot fail to be impressed by the extraordinary burdens undertaken by Eastern intellectuals who have assumed a sort of public responsibility for shaping the debate over the way former state-party states should develop. If Western researchers were to think about their own social position and responsibility in similar terms, this would have a profound effect on both theory and practice of social science in the West. Perhaps Western researchers can put down their late twentieth-century versions of scientific instruments long enough to see the extraordinary transformation of social science knowledge occurring in the East, and can learn from the extraordinary development of new knowledges taking place in these extraordinary times. Historically, the greatest leaps in social theory came from times of great social transformation. The changes going on in Eastern societies and among Eastern intellectuals will also produce stunning new developments in social theory, if only the techniques of Western social sciences do not remove the very condition for the existence of such new ideas.*

In order to avoid the impression of being over-ambitious and to prove our modesty we raise the question of whether our alternative offerings are similar to the gadgets of savages restless to sell them to their new rulers. The new rulers were reluctant to pay the price, so instead the savages offered them crystal balls. We don't have an answer to this question.

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