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## “Triple Chauvinism” in the New Eastern Europe\*\*

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Introduction – Ethnic/National Chauvinism – The Radical Right  
– Patriarchal Chauvinism – Religious Chauvinism – Conclusion

I do not subscribe to the common notion that the ethnic hatreds and chauvinisms presently visible in Eastern Europe were there all along, but repressed by communist power, and that as soon as that power collapsed, these hatreds percolated to the surface. I consider this interpretation facile, simplistic, and fallacious. At a minimum one should always want to know why a given problem or phenomenon exists, and the “standard” interpretation entirely evades this question, by positing ethnic hatred and chauvinism as eternal verities – but not for all humankind, but only for Eastern Europe, because in the West we do not need repression to keep our chauvinists in line. So this is a chauvinistic theory about chauvinism.

Among the questions in which I am interested for this essay are: Where and when did the current chauvinisms emerge? Whose interests do they serve? Why do chauvinist parties display a sudden strength? And what is the function of chauvinism in a society? This last question is also closely related to the question, who is drawn to chauvinism? Or perhaps, more specifically, what is the socio-economic and psychological profile of the chauvinist?

Before proceeding further into a direct engagement of the foregoing questions, I should like to make a preliminary and, I think, crucial observation about the nature of chauvinism. Chauvinism and ethnic hatred tend to be diffuse rather than specific, in two senses: first, hatred of one ethnic group (for example, Croats) can easily be, and usually is, associated with hatred of other ethnic groups (for example, Bosnian Muslims, Albanians, Hungarians of Vojvodina); and second, ethnic chauvinism per se tends to be associated with chauvinisms of other kinds – above all patriarchal chauvinism (sexism) and religious chauvinism. These points are crucial because they lead us to understand that the “reasons” which a chauvinist gives for his hatred of another group are not motivating reasons at all, but ex post facto justifications for a chauvinism which is chosen for quite different reasons. Chauvinism, thus, has nothing to do with the rational calculation of wrongs or slights or injuries; on the contrary, it is the whole-hearted embrace of the irrational.

So now we may return to our original questions and rephrase them thus: When and why is irrationality chosen? What functions does this form of irrationality perform for the individual and for the collectivity (party, movement, or the whole society)? And whose interests are served by fostering irrational behavior in a society?

Sociologists from T. W. Adorno to Rodney Stark, who have studied the phenomenon, seem to agree on certain functions performed by chauvinism. First, chauvinism, by defining various out-groups, also defines an in-group, which thus provides a ready-made basis for inter-personal identification and group solidarity. It follows that persons lacking a social framework, especially people whose frames of reference have recently been shattered (as per the collapse of the socio-political system) may be especially vulnerable to this species of disequilibrium, and hence to the chauvinist “remedy” for it. Second, chauvinism is an ego-enhancer. With other groups defined as “inferior,” one’s own group is ipso facto “superior” by definition. From this it follows that persons with low self-esteem, whether because of low levels of education, low skills, obsolescent skills, loss of job, or loss of some form of stable support system, will be most likely to be attracted to chauvinist movements and chauvinist values.

The data support these propositions. For instance, T. W. Adorno and his associates, in their monumental study, *The Authoritarian Personality*, found that chauvinistic attitudes reflected low self-esteem, a desire to be subordinated to a powerful authority-figure, and a general intolerance of complexity or ambiguity.<sup>1</sup> Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, in their pathbreaking study of religious sects and cults, found that sects, which they define as deviant religious movements emerging from established religious traditions, which function at a high level of tension with society,<sup>2</sup> thrive on lower class recruitment, especially among the powerless and the poor; indeed, one may say that the greater the tension between a sect and society broadly, the greater the sect’s appeal to this target audience.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the intolerant belief that only one’s own religion is legitimate, an essential element in sect formation, serves as a compensator for relatively low honor and status in the larger society. As James Coleman has commented, “Each religious sect is, in a sense, a mutual admiration society.” By defining themselves as especially righteous, members of high tension groups gain a basis for this mutual (and self) admiration.<sup>4</sup>

Although they draw a clear distinction between sects and cults, including in patterns of recruitment, Stark and Bainbridge also found parallels in cult compensators. For example, studies of California branches of the Ananda cult found that recruits were overwhelmingly socially withdrawn and socially isolated, and discovered in their cult membership a route to social bonding.<sup>5</sup>

Even at a more general level, conditions of privatization plus economic deterioration are, in the first place, already not conducive to socializing people to be oriented to social interests. On the contrary, these are processes conducive to social atomization, in which two related processes occur. On the one hand, people are pushed to rely on their own resources and to think in terms of self. The spirit of this process was captured by Max Stirner, a German publicist, in 1845: “Of what concern to me is the common weal? The common weal as such is not my weal...”<sup>6</sup> But on the other hand, there is a groping for some social identity, to help cushion the psychological cascade

from the implosion of a system that long provided a sense of preordained certainty for its subjects. Thus, in conditions of social stress, it is not only the "powerless" and the "poor," and those with low self-esteem, who gravitate toward the "false consciousness," or "bad faith" (as Sartre called it), of chauvinism; on the contrary, chauvinism offers the otherwise overloaded a release from stress, an escape from the cruel unrelenting pressure of a world in which economically "rational" processes show no mercy, to a realm of irrational fantasy, in which all members of the in-group are decent, hardworking, and deserving, and would flourish, but for the pernicious and unscrupulous activities of certain out-groups. And in this way, Jews, Gypsies, women, non-Christians, gays, lesbians, and inevitably, in Eastern Europe today, communists can all be blamed for the troubles of transition.

Under communism, there were two sources for positive social bonding. The first was the village, with its traditions, its religio-centrism, its sense of community; but the village inevitably went into decline as a concomitant of industrialization and, in some cases, for example Romanian Transylvania, the communists actually sought, for political purposes, to accelerate the decline of village life by bulldozing villages and herding the villagers into highrise apartments on the edge of megacities. The second, ironically, was opposition to communism itself, because here was an "enemy" that everyone could understand, that certainly affected everyone, and that even claimed responsibility for the basic social processes in society. Now that this "enemy" has been vanquished, the negativity it evoked, which once provided a kind of social glue, is no longer.

There was, under communism, also a third, related process going on, viz., a repression of cultural diversity and choice which habituated people to a regime of closed borders, secret police surveillance, ideological rituals, and censored media. As the perspicacious long-time observer of the region, Wolf Oschlies, has noted, this acculturation did not prepare people for the frondescence of heterogeneity and choice under pluralism, and inevitably, some citizens have wanted to restore the sense of security and certainty that the old communist order afforded: this psychological frame of mind is simultaneously the source of both anti-democratic attitudes and of tendencies toward radical-right thinking.<sup>7</sup>

Chauvinism feeds on resentments about economic deprivation, economic injustice, alleged advantages enjoyed by "less deserving" groups (such as ex-communists, Jews, et al.), and self-righteous claims about a "moral crisis" in the country, as evinced by the widespread corruption typically associated with processes of rapid social transformation and, in this particular instance, also by the rapid penetration of the area by organized crime, together with the sharp increase of crimes of all kinds. That crime is a problem in post-communist Eastern Europe is not disputable. Whether one talks of organized crime (sharply increasing throughout much of the region),<sup>8</sup> or of a revival of revenge crimes (in Albania),<sup>9</sup> or the looting of national treasures from Bulgarian archeological and art museums,<sup>10</sup> or the involvement of the state

itself in organized crime (in Serbia),<sup>11</sup> or the explosion of drug addiction and drug smuggling in Macedonia,<sup>12</sup> or the alarming increase in attacks on foreigners – most dramatically manifested in Germany since 1992 – crime rates are up and local authorities are struggling to cope. There have been various bilateral and multilateral agreements between various East European governments to coordinate their efforts to combat crime,<sup>13</sup> as well as agreements with the US, to obtain the benefit of American expertise in crime-fighting. But for the time being, law authorities are still very much on the defensive. Typical is the comment by Gheorghe Ioan Danescu, Romania's Minister of the Interior, in an interview with *Romania Libera* in December 1992. After admitting that the Interior Ministry had had to deal with problems of corruption within its own ranks, the general conceded, further, that “the growth of infractions of great social danger – murder, robbery, rape – is truly alarming,” and cited, as aggravating circumstances, “our inadequate equipment and the light sentences stipulated for some penal infractions” as well as “the pernicious mentality of some people” – the latter being an issue not appreciated nearly adequately in the West.<sup>14</sup>

I have dwelled momentarily on the problem of increasing crime because it is both symptomatic of the weakened enforcement-capacity of a system in transition which creates a vacuum in which extra-legal movements can flourish, and at the same time partly constitutive of feelings of insecurity, uncertainty, and threat which can, in turn, contribute to an openness to appeals from the right.

In the remainder of this essay, I shall explore the three tentacles of chauvinism: ethnic/national chauvinism, patriarchal chauvinism, and religious chauvinism. I shall also analyze the radical right opposition which has arisen throughout the region.

### Ethnic/national Chauvinism

Ethnic-national chauvinism is rising across most of Europe, partly because of persistent economic difficulties that afflict Western as well as Eastern Europe,<sup>15</sup> and partly because of increased numbers of foreigners in many countries, often the combined result of the presence of long-term residents (*Gastarbeiter*) and of the influx of refugees from the collapsed Soviet imperium in the east and from the Yugoslav war.<sup>16</sup> Using a variety of statistical measures of attitudes and behavior, the London-based Institute of Jewish Affairs claimed, in a report published in June 1993, that anti-Semitism rose 9 per cent across Europe as a whole between 1990 and 1991, with characteristically more frequent efforts to deny that the holocaust ever took place.<sup>17</sup>

In the past, anti-Semitism has often figured as part of a strategy designed to mobilize group hatred and resentment, to shift attention from economic woes (or shift the blame for such woes from the regime to designated “enemies”), and to create artificial issues which will deflect public attention

from whatever real issues the elite wants to avoid (in the case of Serbia in the late 1980s, from the issue of genuine democratization). It is, thus, no accident that both Croatian President Tudjman and Serbian President Milošević have included anti-Semitism in their nationalist ideologies, although in neither case do the Jews constitute the principal "enemy." Taking a historical glance back, it should not be forgotten that the Russian tsars deliberately fostered anti-Semitism in Poland, as an instrument of control, and that communist authorities throughout Eastern Europe, built their systems with the help of sundry anti-Semitic campaigns and purges.

Ethnic-national chauvinism tends to have three stable features: promotion of a myth of threat to the nation, perpetuation of notions of a hostile conspiracy, and a persistent tendency of glorification of the national past, especially of questionable episodes. After all, glorifying past literary revivals or past achievements in painting is not nearly as useful in mobilizing people to commit mass murder as the glorification of past episodes of genocide.

The East European elites, perhaps without exception, manipulated ethnic-national chauvinism when it seemed to suit their interests. And hence, the anti-Semitic purges of the 1950s (in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania), the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968 (in Poland), and the campaign to expel the Turks from Bulgaria (in 1984-85). But properly speaking, the first sharp manifestation of right-radicalism in the region came in 1987-89, when the Serbian party (under Milošević) embraced racism as its state ideology. This embrace led directly, as Mirjana Kasapović has noted, to demands for the (re)construction of a Serbian national state and for a "final solution" of the Kosovo question to be achieved by a combination of pressures to drive the indigenous Albanians out of the province and of "colonization" by Serbs from other parts of the country.<sup>18</sup> Central to efforts to mobilize Serbian hatred of non-Serbs (itself a prerequisite for the igniting of inter-ethnic war between Serbs and non-Serbs), was the successful promulgation, among Serbs, of the notion that their nation had been exploited and victimized by sundry peoples of Yugoslavia (and in particular by Slovenes, Croats, and Albanians) and of the conviction that Serbs living in Croatia, Bosnia, and now even Macedonia, were threatened by discriminatory, nationalist regimes.<sup>19</sup> This has led directly to Serbian allegations of sundry anti-Serbian conspiracies, whether the Vatican-Comintern-Islamic fundamentalist conspiracy favored by Vladimir Dedijer,<sup>20</sup> or the German-American-Croatian conspiracy, with Kohl's Germany painted as "the Fourth Reich."<sup>21</sup> As for the past, today's Serbian mythologists have chosen two great traumas to serve, in their portrayal, as the very "soul" of Serbia: the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, in which an Ottoman Turkish army defeated a mixed Serbian-Albanian army, killing Serbian King Lazar and, within a few years, extinguishing the Serbian state; and World War Two, with its fratricidal bloodshed and the semi-collaborationist Chetniks fighting a losing battle against Tito's partisans. But as retold by the new mythologists, the Albanians disappear from the ranks of King Lazar's army and instead of promoting notions of Serbian-

Albanian cooperation (the true lesson of the battle), the distorted memory of the battle serves essentially to focus Serbian hatred on the Albanians. And in the second instance, the Chetniks, who enjoyed cooperative relations with the Nazis and who themselves massacred large numbers of innocent civilians (Croats and Muslims), have come to be seen as great nationalist patriots, their own role in killing innocent people is simultaneously both denied and adulated (in typical nationalist sublation of contradictions), and beginning in 1991, self-styled “Chetniks” have reappeared, who sing the old Chetnik songs and recapitulate the atrocities of their forebears.

It is similar with other right-oriented politicians. Croatian President Tudjman, for example, dwells at length on the rather-obvious Serbian threat to Croatia, drawing from this the inevitable conclusion that all national energies must be harnessed to combat that threat, but adding the questionable corollaries that (a) there is only one set of policies that will best address this threat and hence no serious debate is useful (indeed, it is potentially treasonous), and (b) any effort to highlight other social needs, such as legislation to protect gender equality, is covert treason. And there are conspiracy theories here too, such as Croatian Foreign Minister Zvonimir Separović’s belief “...that the Serbian-Croatian conflict is largely due to a ‘Jewish-Serbian conspiracy’.”<sup>22</sup> Even the past is exorcised, with the rehabilitation of the Croatian Ustasha. Thus, for example, Dobroslav Paraga, whose Croatian Defense Force militias wear black uniforms reminiscent of the Ustasha, says, “The ustasha was not a fascist organization. In its fight against the Serbs, it only accepted help from the only one who provided it. That was Hitler.”<sup>23</sup>

But Serbs and Croats are not the only ones worrying about “threats” to the nation and conspiracies. István Csurka, the obese former vice president of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, “...talks about a vast conspiracy — comprising Washington, Communists, Jerusalem, the World Jewish Congress, and the Hungarian liberal opposition — that was formed [expressly] to undermine Hungary’s interests.”<sup>24</sup> Csurka, in an infamous article published in August 1992, compared the financial elite supported by the IMF today with “the communist henchmen, murderers, and torturers...supported by Voroshilov’s Allied Control Committee and the occupying Red Army” in the late 1940’s.<sup>25</sup> And on other occasions, he has expressed contempt for the West and called for the use of force against “enemies” of the nation. More than 30 years ago, the great political philosopher Hannah Arendt pointed to the organic, symbiotic relationship between anti-Semitism and totalitarianism.<sup>26</sup> The connection is rather straightforward — it runs through intolerance. For it is tolerance, the very spirit of democracy, which is attacked and subverted by the anti-Semites and other chauvinists.

It is a direct line from ethnic intolerance, buoyed up by paranoid visions of threats and conspiracies, to demands for ethnically pure — or, in the latest language, “ethnically cleansed” states. The oft-repeated Serbian demand, espoused by Milošević himself, that “all Serbs have to live in one state,”<sup>27</sup> is a

classic expression of this kind of thinking. But there are related phenomena all across Eastern Europe, ranging from Slovakia’s rush to independence and immediate suppression of Hungarian-language street signs and obstruction of Hungarian-language higher education among its 600,000-strong Hungarian minority,<sup>28</sup> to demands by “Omonia” chairman Theodhori Bezhani that Albanian territories inhabited by the Greek minority be detached from Albania and annexed to Greece and the Greek government’s ultimatum to Tirana in July 1993 to extend political autonomy to the local Greek minority or face a prolongation in bilateral tensions,<sup>29</sup> to strangely distorted agonizing in Poland about the fate of ethnic Poles in Lithuania,<sup>30</sup> to persistent Turkophobia in Bulgaria,<sup>31</sup> to complaints by Hungarians in Romania of continued persecution, discrimination, humiliation, and even destruction of important cultural monuments.<sup>32</sup> In what is probably the most bizarre instance of ethnic chauvinism – and in this instance even legitimized and supported by the European Community – Greece succeeded in blocking European and American recognition of Macedonia on the argument that the name “Macedonia” did not adhere to any particular area but was the property of the Greek government and people – even though the region comprised by the Republic of Macedonia has borne that name for more than 3,500 years – and has further felt authorized to object to the Macedonian state coat of arms.<sup>33</sup>

This climate has given rise, on the one hand, to a series of defensive actions, and, on the other hand, to a swelter of radical right organizations existing for the most part on the fringes of politics. On the defensive side of the ledger, European Gypsies established a Roma Parliament in Budapest in August 1992, with 22 Gypsy organizations from 10 European countries participating in the founding meeting. At another level, appealing to the legacy of American black leader Martin Luther King, Jr., Gypsies in northern Bohemia formed a “Black Panther” organization, and in January 1993, “declared war” on all racists, fascists, and chauvinists.<sup>34</sup> And in a related and rather interesting move, the office of the Jewish Religious Communities Central Union, in Bratislava, issued a statement at the end of December 1992, that it

expect[ed] that government structures of the independent Slovak Republic will resolutely dissociate themselves from the practices which might remind [Jews] of the Slovak state of 1939-45.<sup>35</sup>

### The Radical Right

By far the most disquieting by-product of Eastern Europe’s transition from communism to pluralism is the frondescence of organizations subscribing to radical-right ideologies, advocating violence against foreigners, and, almost without exception, looking back with nostalgia to the Nazi Third Reich. For years, radical-right ideologies appealed essentially to unrehabilitated Nazis

and fascists from the World War Two era, i.e., to what was increasingly the older generation. Although there were some young converts to Naziism, they were too few in number and, especially in the East, largely unable to propagate their message. But, to the surprise of politicians, since the late 1980s (beginning even before the collapse of communism in the area), right-radicalism has rapidly gained adherents among young people. And with the reemergence of the radical right has come an explosion of violence against those branded as “foreigners.”

I shall briefly examine, in the following pages, the radical-right scene in the Czech and Slovak republics, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland, and Romania; I have examined the radical right scene in Germany elsewhere.<sup>36</sup>

### The Radical Right in Eastern Europe

In the Czech and Slovak republics, skinheads and other right radicals have formed a number of organizations. The two best known neo-fascist groups in the Czech Republic are “New Czech Unity,” co-founded in April 1990 by Vladimír Franz and Daniel Landa (the latter being leader of the rock group, Orlik), and the “National Fascist Society,” a Prague-based group, although there are also some explicit Nazis in the Czech Republic as well.<sup>37</sup> Miroslav Sládek’s Republic Party also has an extreme-right orientation. Czech skinheads differ from skinheads elsewhere in Europe in being distinctly less concerned with Jews. Their chosen enemies are Gypsies, Vietnamese, and “other colored peoples,” and there have been bloody riots involving Czech skinheads and local Vietnamese students. Czech Gypsies have been mugged, in like fashion, by skinheads.

Inevitably, they talk about “White Power” and look to the Ku Klux Klan, as well as Hitler’s Nazis, with admiration. Some Prague skinheads have been seen greeting each other with the Nazi salute and shouting “Sieg Heil!”<sup>38</sup> Although there are different strains of skinheads in these republics – above all, nationalists, racists, neo-Nazis, and punks, with the punks being concentrated in Slovakia – they share common emphases on patriotism, comradeship, good physical conditioning, struggle against drugs, a “solution” of the “*Gastarbeiter* question,” and the expulsion of Gypsies from the region.<sup>39</sup> As of late 1991, there were said to be about 350 skinheads in Prague.

Meanwhile, in nearby Hungary, skinhead anger has become wed to a misplaced nostalgia for the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen, as pre-1920 Hungary was sometimes called (at a time when its territory was three times its current extent). Hungary’s skinheads – who number about 4,000 according to a June 1993 estimate<sup>40</sup> – have returned to the traditional Nazi rhetoric. “We must shed as much blood as necessary for the homeland,” said István Szoke, one of the leading figures among Hungarian skinheads. Szoke loudly complains that political power remains in the hands of a “Jewish elite.”<sup>41</sup> For many skinheads, the rehabilitation of fascist symbols, such as the turul (a mythological eagle-like bird) is a gripping concern.<sup>42</sup> There have

been reports that leaflets have been circulated, with the imprint of the Arrow Cross movement (the principal Hungarian fascist movement pre-1945).<sup>43</sup> The town of Eger, in particular, has become a center of Hungarian neo-Nazi activity.<sup>44</sup> Hungarian authorities have responded to the growing threat by arresting István Gyorkos, leader of the neo-Nazis in Hungary, and by introducing a ban, in November 1992, on the display of “Nazi symbols, communist symbols, and other emblems and regalia recalling autocratic systems of government.”<sup>45</sup>

In Slovenia, small right-radical paramilitary formations have appeared since the country’s first post-communist elections in 1990, advocating hostility toward non-Slovenes (which basically means Bosnian refugees, and a handful of Serbs and Albanians) and speaking of the “natural inferiority” of women to men. The Slovenian far right has its own newspaper (*Rudi*) and organization, the National Front of Slovenia (established in April 1990). The Slovenian radical-right groupings have developed international contacts with radical-right organizations in Austria (especially Graz and Klagenfurt), as well as Germany and Italy.<sup>46</sup> Slovenian skinheads, like their comrades in Germany, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, are fascinated by the Third Reich and display openly nostalgic feelings for it. The Slovenian skinhead/radical right scene is distinctively small and without immediate prospects.

In Poland, there are perhaps 2,000-3,000 active adherents of radical-right organizations, according to Jerzy Bogucki, a Polish film director, who has made two films about the Polish radical-right scene.<sup>47</sup> Of all the East European right-radicals, those in Poland display the most intensely negative feelings about Jews, although as of 1993, there were probably at most 3,000 elderly Jews remaining in Poland. The darling of the Polish right is Bolesław Tejkowski (age 59 in 1993), founder of the Polish National Community, who went into hiding in 1992, after being ordered to report for confinement in a lunatic asylum.<sup>48</sup> Tejkowski’s party polled 0.5 per cent of the vote in 1991. Meanwhile, in Tejkowski’s absence, his deputy, Janusz Bober, presides over a party that debunks the standard histories of World War Two and claims that there are still three and a half million Jews in Poland. Bober and his coterie enthusiastically supported the legal restriction of abortion in Poland in early 1993, having always construed liberal abortion as “a Jewish scheme to kill millions of Poles.”<sup>49</sup> Tejkowski’s organization has formidable resources given its size, with meeting rooms at its disposal, a newspaper (*Polish National Thought*), its own press, and an institute. Aside from Tejkowski’s Polish National Community, one should also mention the Polish National Front, founded in March 1991, which had about 600 adherents as of late 1992 (mostly in or around Gdańsk).<sup>50</sup> Glyn Ford also cites “...evidence that fascist material from the US Third Way neo-Nazi group led by Gary Gallo has been circulated at the University of Radom by Sociology Professor Mieczysław Trzeciak and that initiatives have been taken to establish groups of the US fascist LaRouche organization in Poland.”<sup>51</sup>

And in Romania, economic troubles seem to be closely correlated with ethnic chauvinism of one kind or another. Here, in a country long exposed to officially-sponsored Romanian nationalist idolatry à la Ceaușescu, two parties appeared on the political right, very soon after the collapse of the Ceaușescu regime in December 1989, viz., *Vatra Romaneasca* (Romanian Hearth) and *Romania Mare* (Greater Romania), the former being a direct descendant of the pre-war and wartime Iron Guard movement of Corneliu Codreanu. Both organizations have disseminated anti-Hungarian and anti-Jewish propaganda and have instigated acts of violence against Hungarians, Jews, and Gypsies. *Vatra Romaneasca* (established in February 1990) was largely responsible for inciting the ethnic violence in Transylvania in March 1990, targeting local Hungarians.<sup>52</sup> Gypsy communities have increasingly become the target of violent attacks, in several of which local police and/or officials were said to have participated. Altogether, the Ethnic Federation of Roma in Romania reported some 15 separate incidents of anti-Gypsy violence during 1990.<sup>53</sup>

On 23 December 1991, a third party on the Romanian far right was registered: the Movement for Romania (MfR), headed by Marian Munteanu, former leader of the Bucharest University Students' League. The MfR soon showed sympathies for quasi-religious mysticism, exculpated the inter-war fascist organization, the Iron Guard, and declared liberalism "unconvincing."<sup>54</sup> Referring vaguely to a "New Generation," Munteanu has demanded that Romanians' allegedly "passive" orientation be supplanted by an "offensive protection" of Romanian culture. Romanians, Munteanu told the daily newspaper, *Cotidianul*, must show that they are "among the most superior [peoples] in Europe."<sup>55</sup> Meetings of the MfR are said to begin with prayers beneath a portrait of Iron Guard leader Corneliu Codreanu, with Codreanu's Handbook for Legionnaires distributed to members.

Some mention should be made of two more recently established right-wing parties: the Party of the National Right, founded in April 1992; and the New Christian Romania, which took shape in November 1992. The former is the creation of a young journalist named Radu Sorescu, who talks of wanting to intern Romania's Gypsies in special "camps" in the Baragan region and of outlawing political parties of non-Romanian nationalities. Openly nostalgic, Sorescu fantasizes about the reemergence of a Berlin-Rome-Tokyo "axis," this time emphasizing economic cooperation, and wants Romania to adhere to it. The establishment of the latter — the New Christian Romania — was announced on 27 November 1992 by Serban Suru, a 35-year old teacher. For this purpose, Suru called a press conference, which was only attended by members of Codreanu's family, the niece of one of the Iron Guard's "martyrs" of 1937, and various old members of the original Iron Guard alongside younger converts. Suru has called for Codreanu's "canonization."<sup>56</sup>

## Rock and the Radical Right

In Germany, there are an estimated 42,700 radical-right extremists at the present time.<sup>57</sup> Of this number, about 5,000-6,000 could be counted as constituting a militant hard core. About 70 per cent of the members of German radical-right groups are between 16 and 21 years of age. Another 27.5 per cent are between 21 and 30 years of age.<sup>58</sup> This age distribution helps one to understand why rock music has become a medium for the mobilization of the radical right in Germany.

It has been a central theme of my work that political currents are adumbrated, reflected, and reinforced in the cultural sector, and in an especially powerful way by rock groups. In the 1980s, as political disaffection among East Germans rose, rock bands took up themes of alienation, discontent, the wall, travel, and so forth. So now, in the early 1990's, rock bands, albeit involving new personalities, responded to the shift in the wind, to the new forms of discontent and social stress, taking up the issues of alienation and discontent, but now from a far-right perspective. Skinhead bands such as Störkraft (Destructive Force), Radikahl, and Böhse Onkelz (Evil Uncles) have sung about favorite themes of the Right: Germany, alcohol, foreigners, the Left, women, and violence.<sup>59</sup> The Düsseldorf-based Störkraft, for example, made its name with songs like their 1990 "Kraft für Deutschland" (Strength for Germany). In this song, lead singer Jörg Petrisch howls:

We fight shaved, our fists are hard as steel,  
Our heart beats true for our Fatherland.  
Whatever may happen, we will never leave you,  
We will stand true for our Germany,  
Because we are the strength for Germany,  
That makes Germany clean.  
Germany awake!<sup>60</sup>

"Germany awake!" (Deutschland erwache!) was the slogan used by the Nazis during their rise to power in the early 1930's. Nor has the message been lost on skinhead audiences who have generally responded to this slogan by breaking into a steady chant of "Sieg Heil!," while giving the stiff-armed Nazi salute. Böhse Onkelz made its name in the early 1980s with songs like "Turks out!"

About the time that the authorities began to proscribe various radical-right groups, they also took a closer look at these skinhead bands. Already in October 1992, federal authorities banned Störkraft's music. On 27 November 1992, the city of Darmstadt banned two concerts by Böhse Onkelz which had been scheduled for mid-December. City authorities cited the tendency of the band's lyrics to incite "disobedience." Five days later, the German government banned songs by neo-Nazi rock bands Endstufe (Final Stage)

from Bremen, Noie Werte (New Values) from Stuttgart, Kahlkopf (Bald Head) from Oberursel, and Sperrzone (Prohibited Zone) from Bruchsal.<sup>61</sup> Subsequently, in February and May, police conducted further raids, this time of the homes, studios, and record companies of producers and rock musicians responsible for the stigmatized music. In the February raids, police confiscated about 30,000 records, cassettes, and CDs, along with several hundred rounds of rifle ammunition. These raids were focused on the town of Brühl, near Cologne, headquarters of Rock-o-Rama Records, the leading producer and distributor of neo-Nazi music. The recordings seized involved the work of 28 right-wing bands.<sup>62</sup>

Inevitably, other rock groups, such as the Cologne-based band, BAP, have opposed the right wing. BAP was among a large number of bands to play in a 12-day Concert against Hatred of Foreigners in March 1993.<sup>63</sup>

Inevitably, some commentators have voiced worries that current right-wing violence in Germany could presage a new rise of the Right, perhaps culminating in the restoration of Nazi rule.<sup>64</sup> But such worries are ill-founded and overlook the significant differences between Germany in the 1930's and Germany now.

#### Patriarchal Chauvinism

In his celebrated work, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, George Mosse showed that there is a profound connection between ethnic/nationalist bigotry and patriarchal chauvinism.<sup>65</sup> Glorifying the nation always ends up meaning that women's interests should be subordinated to men's, and that women should accept, as their principal purpose in life, the "duty" to bear children. This linkage has been stated explicitly in several countries, including Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia, as Catholic Church activists have cited national survival and national interests as reasons to oppose abortion! While American religious right-wingers chant "a fetus is also a person," in the current Croatian nationalist rhetoric, the favored phrase is "a fetus is also a Croat."<sup>66</sup>

Now in the post-communist "democracies" of Eastern Europe, as new elites wrestle with problems of economic transition including inflation and growing unemployment, the burden of unemployment is being fobbed off on women: in the nine new Länder of eastern Germany, thus, two thirds of the women are unemployed.<sup>67</sup>

There were, to be sure, shortcomings under communism. After all, despite endless communist rhetoric exalting the dignity and equality of women, women remained underrepresented in the state and party hierarchies. Thus, for example, out of 25 full and candidate members of the SED in 1985, only two were women.<sup>68</sup> In political terms, women came closest to an equal share in political representation in Stalinist Albania — a fact which itself suggests that only coercion suffices to counteract the deep uncomprehending prejudice of patriarchal society.<sup>69</sup> But there were compensations, viz., the energetic

promotion of female education and female employment in the communist orb, and the provision of ample day-care centers for children.<sup>70</sup> And there was a constant, unremitting effort to give women better representation in organs of administration — and if that did not usually mean the highest levels, it at least brought women into the middle levels of administration in numbers that exceeded anything realized in the West, outside Scandinavia.

In these new democracies, by contrast, the representation of women in the political and administrative spheres plunged immediately. An ideological climate is being created which is hostile to the education and advancement of women, as female employment is being repeatedly portrayed as a "danger" to the family. Even the rhetoric about the dignity and equality of women has vanished. It has been replaced by rhetoric about the dignity and importance of the mother, and not just the mother in general, but the Croatian mother, the Slovak mother, the Hungarian mother, and so forth. In nationalist democracies, women are reduced to instrumentalities for the reproduction of the nation. That is seen as their central purpose and function. (Of course, it takes both sexes to reproduce; yet no one thinks to say that the central purpose and function of men is the reproduction of the nation.)

"What is all this about women?" asked Adam Michnik in an emblematically uncomprehending manner. "About women's rights? We gave them freedom. What do they want?"<sup>71</sup> But if one cherishes the values of human dignity and human equality, then democracy is not enough — or at least not the kind of democracy that patriarchal society offers. One of the hallmarks of Western Enlightenment thinking, and of the liberal tradition to which it gave birth — as German feminist Birgit Meyer has noted — is the failure to conceptualize women as citizens with equal rights, or even fully as humans; man is the standard, woman the exception — or so the Enlightenment would have us believe.<sup>72</sup> Meyer is not alone, thus, in concluding that the next step for European feminists (East and West) is to seek "the emancipation of women from political democracy."<sup>73</sup> Frigga Haug summarizes the belief of many, if not all, feminists in writing that "...the level of emancipation of a society can be read in the level of emancipation of women."<sup>74</sup> Ina Merkel, one of the leading feminist voices in eastern Germany, concedes that for many men, questions of equality seem secondary, peripheral, inessential; what, after all, is wrong with a system in which women hold only 5-10 per cent of positions of power (or, reversing the proposition, what would be wrong with a system in which men held only 5-10 per cent of positions of power, provided the system as a whole — or as a half — is "democratic")? Merkel, on the contrary, insists that questions of female equality "...are not socially marginal problems, but fundamental existential questions. They have to do with the mode of existence of a society, with its development possibilities and goals."<sup>75</sup>

A growing number of East and Central European feminists see part of the solution in the establishment of rigid quota systems designed to foster and maintain gender balance in positions of power. This was in fact one of the first

demands of the Independent Women's Association in the GDR, which was formed at the end of 1989.<sup>76</sup> Far-fetched? In March 1993, the Schleswig-Holstein regional branch of the CDU actually embraced this principle, and ordained that henceforth, in all organs of party leadership, women and men will be represented in equal numbers and with equal levels of responsibility.<sup>77</sup>

In late 1989, as the communist systems of Eastern Europe collapsed like just so many dominoes, female activists in the region prepared to play a role in the social transformation of their societies. As early as 24-26 November 1989, a Conference of the European Forum of Socialist Feminists, held in Göteborg (Sweden), took up the theme, "Women in Changing Economies – Feminist Perspectives and Strategies." Women from Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia were among those in attendance.<sup>78</sup> And in the succeeding months, feminist organizations were established throughout much of the region. On 3 December 1989 came the establishment of the aforementioned Independent Women's Association (IWA) in the GDR. Similar groups were established elsewhere, such as the Czech Society of Modern Women, Pro Femina (in Warsaw), the Feminist Network of Hungary, and the Women's Party (in Serbia). On the whole, organized feminism is best represented in Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia, and more weakly in Poland. Organized feminism is, however, virtually nonexistent in Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, and Slovakia, while earlier efforts to create feminist circles in Croatia and Serbia have recently experienced severe repression. And everywhere, of course – except Germany – feminism remains above all an urban phenomenon.

But in the years since 1989, East European and Central European feminists have complained that the "revolution" has let them down. Tatjana Böhm, a feminist activist from Berlin, recalls:

While we were making the revolution in the GDR, I was a minister in the transition government and part of the Round Table writing the new constitution. Now I am politically unemployed.<sup>79</sup>

She had been close to the center of the vortex until she and the IWA entered into a coalition with the Green Party. The coalition won eight seats in the elections, but the Green Party broke the agreement, pulled off an organizational coup, and took all eight seats for itself; the women got nothing. As for the new feminist organizations, they find themselves isolated and encumbered even in reaching professional women, their most accessible audience. Part of the problem is the cultural milieu itself, produced and shaped in part by the media, as a result of which most East Europeans, women and men alike, associate "feminists" with extremism, irrationality, destructiveness. The upshot, as Zsuzsa Beres, an editor at Budapest's Corvina Publishing House, notes, is that "feminism here is a dirty word."<sup>80</sup> "Of course it's a dirty word," agrees Agnes Hochberg, a young Hungarian anarchist. "Women do not know what feminism is, but because men despise it, they are

against it too."<sup>81</sup> Another part of the problem is the sheer success of patriarchal socialization in the region. Jiřina Šiklová, a Czech feminist, points out that only about 25 per cent of Czech and Slovak women consider themselves really equal to men; they have, therefore, no aspirations to leadership positions and no desire for authority over subordinates.<sup>82</sup>

Feminists throughout East and Central Europe see a backsliding in the status of women, a condition in which the creation of more rights for men is associated with a shrinkage of rights for women. This backsliding has taken five chief forms: (1) a statistically significant decline in the representation of women in political and administrative positions; (2) the prohibition of abortion; (3) the curtailment of social services for women; (4) the active promotion (by the Churches, in the first place) of "traditional," i.e., patriarchal, values, decreeing that a woman's life should revolve around *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, Church); and (5) a demonization of feminists and feminism, both explicitly and implicitly. I will take up these points in succession.

1. Decline in the representation of women in politics. Under the communists, women comprised between 20 and 35 per cent of the membership of the national parliament; in communist Slovenia, for example, it was almost 25 per cent. In the post-communist parliaments in the region, women's share has been sliced dramatically — 4.2 per cent in the German parliament, 6 per cent in the first Czechoslovak parliament, barely 10 per cent in Slovenia's parliament, and only 3.5 per cent in the case of Bulgaria.<sup>83</sup> In the Hungarian parliament there were, in 1991, only 28 women out of 386 MPs.<sup>84</sup> In Albania, there were 73 women among the 250 deputies in the last communist parliament, but only 9 out of 250 were women in the first post-communist parliament.<sup>85</sup> The same principle applies throughout the political apparatus, as the new elites quietly shelve the issue of women's equality as "not pressing." Instead, some of the conservative parties have created subsidiary women's organizations, to serve as arms of the parties themselves. These organizations typically focus their attention on propaganda work among women, stressing traditional themes. An example is the Democratic League of Albanian Women, founded in Tirana in July 1991 as a subsidiary of Sali Berisha's Democratic Party.

2. Prohibition of abortion. The assault on abortion has been one of the most controversial issues in post-communist eastern Germany, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Croatia, as women have struggled, usually in vain, to hold onto options that they had come to take for granted under communism. Given the complexity of the challenges of political and economic transformation, there is something perverse about governments spending such a large amount of time seriously entertaining, and in some cases accepting, the principle that the moral values of a minority should be legally enforced against a majority of a society. In Poland, for example, where the debate over abortion rights has been particularly heated, 59 per cent of Poles (in a 1988 survey) said that abortion should be an option in cases of poverty,

threats to the mother's health, mental illness, a large number of living children, or AIDS. Some 37 per cent of women in the sample said that they would choose abortion rather than bear an unwanted child. A subsequent survey (in October 1990) found that 51 per cent of Poles were opposed to the abortion law being considered, at the time, by the Polish parliament.<sup>86</sup> But for all that, the parliament, under the unrelenting pressure of the Church, pressed ahead with legislation to ban abortion. A Warsaw Committee for an Abortion Referendum, organized by the long-time Solidarity activist and current MP Zbigniew Bujak, called for televised public discussion of the law and for a referendum on the issue. The Committee quickly gathered more than 300,000 signatures in favor of a referendum.<sup>87</sup> But the Catholic Church mobilized its strength to block the proposed referendum. And eventually, in January 1993, the Church obtained its abortion law. *Rzeczpospolita*, the Warsaw daily, sounded an early warning:

We are not prepared for the numerous consequences of this law. There will certainly be "backstreet abortions," with all their consequences. The law will have demographic, economic, and medical consequences. Attention has already been drawn to the medical consequences – an increase in the number of pregnancy complications and of infant mortality. The health service, already on its last legs, will have to cope with all this.<sup>88</sup>

And there will be other, more subtle consequences, including the attenuation of the boundary between Church and state (and the consequent encouragement to the Church to seek to realize other institutional aims through legislation), and a reinforcement of a cultural milieu in which women are taught to view themselves, in the first place, as wives and mothers – or, if single, as potential wives and mothers.

Parallel processes unfolded in eastern Germany where, despite objections by women's organizations, Germany's highest court struck down a compromise law on abortion and asserted, in a May 1993 decision, that "the right to life begins at conception."<sup>89</sup>

Only in Romania has decommunization actually resulted in the liberalization of abortion legislation. Under Romanian President Nicolae Ceaușescu, a 1966 law stipulated that to be eligible for an abortion, a woman had to have given birth to at least four children and to have them, at the time, under her care. This meant that adopted children or children acquired through second marriages did not count toward an exemption.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, beginning in 1986, women of ages 16-45 were placed under close medical surveillance, and some women who were known to have had illegal abortions were confined to a hospital (imprisoned in essence) in order to prevent any similar recurrence.<sup>91</sup> One of the first acts of the Iliescu government, announced the day after the execution of the Ceaușescus, was the

relegalization of abortion. Romanian women, both urban and rural, have thus viewed the fall of the Ceaușescus as liberating in the most direct sense.

3. Curtailment of social services. Across Eastern and Central Europe, the infrastructure of social services that made it possible for women to work is being dismantled, usually on economic arguments. As Yudit Kiss notes, this has involved “[...]the] shutting down of the ‘economically unprofitable’ creches, day schools, play centers, the cut-back of subsidies on restaurants, ready-made food, children’s clothes, laundries, cultural services, etc.”<sup>92</sup> In reunified Germany, the GDR’s polyclinic system that combined preventive and care/cure services, was scrapped without giving the matter a second thought, while the parliament has moved slowly in taking action to expand the system of refuge centers for abused and battered women (as the incidence of such crimes rises).<sup>93</sup>

The declining employment of women both reflects and reinforces trends in this sector. “Women are being removed from the labor market in great numbers. With the restriction of employment opportunities also comes the restriction of their educational opportunities.”<sup>94</sup>

4. The active promotion of traditional values. The communist Old Guard and contemporary feminists agreed on at least one thing – that pornography was degrading to women and inappropriate in civilized society. One of the first repercussions of the collapse of communism, of the “new freedom,” was the deluge of pornography which immediately flooded the region, followed by a steady growth of sex shops, sex cruises, brothels, topless bars, and other manifestations of the reification of the female body. The growth of the “sex industry” has been accompanied by a rapid increase in crimes of violence against women, especially in the home<sup>95</sup> – a correlation to which American feminists have long pointed. In Serbia, feminist activist Sonja Licht pressed a Belgrade legislator to take up legislation to curb the physical abuse of wives by their husbands. “Do not speak to me about a law against violence in the family,” the legislator replied. “It would destroy the essence of the Serbian family.”<sup>96</sup>

Insidiously, quietly, without any conscious decision being taken, capitalist societies manipulate and subvert images of love for their own purposes. The resulting dehumanization is targeted largely on women.<sup>97</sup> Yudit Kiss writes, “There is a hidden sensual dimension beneath every social formation, which is extremely revealing about the inner nature of the system. The way they treat love and sex gives a telling insight about them. Love does not accept social boundaries – Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet the same way as Orwell’s Winston and Julia, break through, almost unconsciously, unacceptable, mutilating social restrictions. That is why repressive systems fear love. They try to oppress it or try to convert it into something more manageable, channel it into religion, sell it in Hollywood, degrade it in sex shops, pervert it into warfare, which is a peculiar expression of impotence: an inability to make contact.”<sup>98</sup>

The mainstream media also reflect this tendency. *Playboy*, for example, is now appearing in Czech, Hungarian, and Polish editions.<sup>99</sup> Meanwhile, magazines for women, such as the Czech magazine, *Betty*, devote their pages to such matters as hair-styling, skincare, and fashions. The upshot is that to men's eyes, the revolutions of 1989 appear to have led to "sexual liberation," while to women's eyes, they have led to a revival of sexual discrimination and sexual exploitation. Needless to say, lesbians have been stigmatized, if anything, more than they were under communism.

The conservative guardians of the new social order propound values as distant from feminism as they are from socialism. Albanian President Berisha, for example, spoke to a congress of the Democratic League of Albanian Women, about the "sacred" vocation of motherhood.<sup>100</sup> Polish President Lech Walesa offered the advice, "I have eight children and I wish the same to everybody."<sup>101</sup>

The linkage between the promotion of women's traditional role, the illegalization of abortion, and the promotion of "births for the nation" – is clear enough. An example from Croatia illustrates this all too well. Addressing a Croatian audience, Ante Baković, president of the Croatian Population Movement (an agency promoting this triad of values), told a *Vjesnik* interviewer in June 1993:

CPM is a movement to save the Croatian nation from extinction. Today's average Croatian family operates on a two-child system, with two or with only one child. That practice must come to an end, and it is the fundamental goal of the CPM to create a pro-life disposition among the Croatian population, who will decide on a third child in the city, and on a fourth child in the village.<sup>102</sup>

Once the notion of a threat of national extinction is accepted as an official "truth," then failure to "do one's part" to "save" the nation is automatically defined minimally as moral decrepitude, if not as treason. Baković comes close to saying as much:

Poverty does not explain why some people have no children. The real reason is an anti-life mentality. By that, I mean moral collapse and decadence. Our Croatian mother is afraid to have children and it is necessary to destroy that fear.<sup>103</sup>

It is telling that Baković sees women as mothers even before they have children.

In this context, it is apparent that the systematic rape of more than 20,000 Bosnian Muslim women and girls by Serbian forces between 1992 and 1993<sup>104</sup> is only the most savage manifestation of a region-wide problem.

5. Demonization of feminists and feminism. There has been a pronounced tendency throughout the region to treat issues of female equality as "details"

which can, and should, be postponed until some supposed more-convenient date in the future.<sup>105</sup> Feminists, as the advocates of these “details,” must be trivialized in the interests of the agenda of the current elites. But in actual practice, the media have done much more than merely “trivialize” the feminists — they have demonized them, painting them as traitors, as extremists, or, as per the Croatian weekly *Globus*, as witches!<sup>106</sup> In Hungary, for example, there were no feminist organizations and no feminist dialogue until 1990, but immediately, traditionalists lashed out. Judit Sas, a Hungarian defender of patriarchal authority, called feminism “blind” and accused feminists of “not tak[ing] men’s problems into consideration at all.”<sup>107</sup> And in the post-communist Hungarian media generally, feminism has been portrayed “...as something unnatural and very selfish, certainly not something to which Hungarian women would wish to relate.”<sup>108</sup> Symptomatic of women’s status in Hungarian society is the formula used in assigning personal identity numbers to citizens, marked on their identity cards. By government decision, every male’s identity number begins with the digit “1”; every female’s identity number begins with the digit “2.”<sup>109</sup> And as a result of the media onslaught, the very word “feminism” has indeed become tainted, whether one speaks of Hungary, or Poland, or Croatia, or Serbia, or the Czech and Slovak Republics. In this way, by stigmatizing the very struggle for dignity and equality, patriarchal forces place women under pressure — sometimes intense pressure — to accept their “fate” and accept their politically-decreed “inferiority.” Two German writers highlighted this problem in 1990: “The most terrible legacy of patriarchy,” they write, “is that its structures are present within us, within women. So women are also partly responsible [for the perpetuation of such structures].”<sup>110</sup>

Are feminists trapped in a blind alley? No more than the democratic opposition in Poland was at the height of martial law. And the very same strategy developed by Solidarity, of building alternative structures rather than merely doing battle within existing ones, may well hold the promise of eventual success. This is, at least, the thinking of some prominent feminists in Germany today. Ina Merkel, for example, talks of women creating “their own” publications, newspapers, radio and television stations, cultural centers, even institutes devoted to researching women’s history and women’s interests.<sup>111</sup> Even more explicitly, Eva Schäfer has called for the organization of women’s groups that would operate in great measure autonomously of the patriarchal system and which would foster and sustain an alternative culture which would be nonhierarchical and nonconfrontational in content. And for this purpose, even such mundane institutions as women’s cafes and sisterhood bookstores, not to mention archives, newspapers, and so forth, all have a part to play.<sup>112</sup> Where will all this lead? Kate Soper’s answer is direct — to “a cultural revolution which delivers us from the very modes of conceptualization within which we have hitherto constructed gender identities.”<sup>113</sup>

## Religious Chauvinism

From the very outset it has become clear that the three strands of this triple chauvinism are symbiotically intertwined, so that it is impossible to speak of one strand without already anticipating aspects of the discussion of the other strands.

Chauvinism thrives on absolutes, abjures compromise, relativity, or the allowance that different people might have different perspectives. Nothing can give chauvinist absolutism as firm an anchor as can religion. This is why religious chauvinism is often the most tenacious and embittered of the three.

In Eastern Europe today, religious chauvinism manifests itself in many ways. Churches in almost all the East European countries are again talking about the nation. In Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia, Catholic appeals to the interests of the nation serve as a veil for efforts to ban abortion (as already noted). In Serbia and Bulgaria, Orthodox appeals to the interests of the nation serve the purpose of stoking violence against specific outgroups (Catholic Croats and Bosnian Muslims for the Serbian Orthodox Church, Muslim Turks for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church). In fact, the Serbian Orthodox Church as a whole, and especially its news organ *Pravoslavlje*, enthusiastically fanned the flames of Serbia's war against Croatia, singing rhapsodies about the "Orthodox" heritage of overwhelmingly Croatian towns such as Osijek and Dubrovnik, until spring 1992 when the Serbian leadership attacked Bosnia too. At that point, a rift within the Church came to the surface, as the patriarch and some of his closest aides took a strong anti-war stance, while a number of prominent bishops outside Belgrade, along with the bulk of Serbian lower clergy, continued to endorse the war against Catholics and Muslims alike as a "holy war."<sup>114</sup>

In neighboring Bulgaria, Orthodox believers formed an Orthodox Christian Union under the leadership of Fr. Stanimir Todorov, in summer 1990, in order "to combat false prophecy and its bearers," including Muhammad.<sup>115</sup> Religious chauvinism has also been manifested in more purely religious contexts, as in the success of the Catholic Church in Poland and Croatia and its so-far stunted endeavor in Slovenia, to place Catholic religious instruction on the basic required curriculum, for all students enrolled in state schools. In Croatia, the introduction of Catholic religious instruction in the schools got off to a rocky start during the 1991-92 academic year, because of Croatia's war with Serbia, and many schools were lucky to be functioning at all, without worrying about religious instruction. But by autumn 1992, school curricula were more regularized and Catholic religious instruction had by then become standard throughout Croatia's public school system.<sup>116</sup> In Poland, after a Constitutional Tribunal struck down a challenge brought by the government-appointed ombudsman, Catholic religious instruction, already introduced in the 1992-93 academic year, was confirmed.<sup>117</sup> And although parents are technically allowed to withdraw their children from the Catholic classes, the children run the risk of harsh

ostracism and ridicule by their classmates if they are withdrawn from these classes. Inevitably, this situation has brought complaints from Protestant, Muslim, Old Catholic, atheist, agnostic, and other non-Catholic parents in both countries. Already in 1985, Stanisław Dobrowski, president of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Poland, expressed deep concern about the behavior of Catholic prelates. “Many instances demonstrate,” he said at the time, “that the Roman Catholic Church has not rid itself of its hegemonist tendencies and practices vis-à-vis adherents of other faiths.”<sup>118</sup> Viewed in retrospect, the statement sounds rather like a warning, and in any case, all too prophetic.

In Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, Churches have pressed to remove sex education from school curricula (in Germany in the eastern part). In Poland, Croatia, and Slovenia, the Catholic Church endorsed specific candidates and parties during recent multi-party elections and used its weight to assure the victory in Poland and Croatia of pro-clerical candidates.<sup>119</sup> The Churches’ heightened political presence since the collapse of communism has not always met with broad approval; indeed, it appears ironic that the Church has more influence with the legislatures of Poland (at least until the election of September 1993) and Croatia than with the respective peoples of these countries. And in Croatia, at least, some 44 per cent of people surveyed in 1992 thought the Catholic Church had too much political influence in the country; a somewhat smaller number – 38 per cent – disagreed.<sup>120</sup>

Christian Churches, like the Islamic sects, are founded on the claim to possess some exclusive and transcendent Truth, a Truth against which no other truth can make any counterclaim. It is this ideological arrogance which underlies the sundry efforts to impose Catholic religious instruction on non-Catholic children, to prevent non-Catholic and non-believer parents from having access to abortions, and in the Polish case, to require Catholic prayers at the start and finish of every class, not just religion class.

Whether one approves of this or not, it should at least be clear that this attitude has nothing in common with the principle of toleration, or with the liberal tradition at all (i.e., with the presuppositions of democracy). John Stuart Mill gave articulate expression to the liberal view in his tract, *On Liberty*:

If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing [the rest of] mankind. We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavouring to stifle is a false opinion; and if we were sure, stifling it would be evil still.<sup>121</sup>

Yet clearly when pro-prayer and anti-abortion activists demand that the children of non-believers pray Christian prayers and that non-believer

parents not have access to abortion, they are declaring their own opinions about morality to be universally binding, while denying that the moral opinions of those who differ have any force whatsoever, much less an equivalent claim.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty voiced a useful caution, in remarking that "...true morality is not concerned with what we think or what we want."<sup>122</sup> That is to say, it cannot be about decreeing viewpoints. What, then, can be the guide for behavior, if not "what we think"? Immanuel Kant's answer, some 200 years ago, that one should always try to act toward others in such a way that if everyone acted according to the same principle, the world would be the better for it,<sup>123</sup> seems like a useful guide today as well. And this, in fact, is not so different from what Kohl has recently been telling his countrymen.<sup>124</sup>

### Conclusion

I have described the three dimensions of chauvinism in this essay and I have suggested that chauvinism – intolerance, to use another word – is incompatible with democracy, and that the East European societies in transition will find their efforts at shaping and stabilizing democratic institutions challenged, strained, and perhaps even subverted and railroaded – as in the cases of Serbia and Croatia – by this three-headed hydra. So what is wrong with intolerance in a democracy anyway?

Elsewhere, I have argued that democracy requires an honoring of the principle of respect for personal autonomy, and that this principle in turn entails toleration.<sup>125</sup> It follows further, as Hannah Arendt noted more than 30 years ago, that doctrines claiming to possess exclusive and transcendent Truth (such as Catholicism and Bolshevism) are intrinsically in tension with democratic culture, just as they are injurious to the principle of pluralism and to the maintenance of heterogeneity of opinions.<sup>126</sup>

This helps us to understand why an intolerant society is more threatening to the preservation of personal autonomy than an intolerant state. For in the latter, the individual is unfree in the political sphere, but autonomous, perhaps even in some sense "free," in the social sphere. But in an intolerant society, probably regardless of the specific institutional forms of government, the individual is unfree in society itself, and without freedom in society, no constitutional provisions for the political sphere can make much difference. These considerations point to the most serious challenge confronting the East European political systems in the wake of the collapse of communism.

### Notes

- \*\* This article is a chapter from the author's forthcoming book, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Consequences of the Great Transformation*, 2nd ed. (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press,

forthcoming in 1994). Published here by permission of Duke University Press. All rights reserved.

- 1 T. W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper, 1950).
- 2 By contrast, they write that "...cults are deviant religious movements within a deviant religious tradition." – Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 26.)
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 153.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 315-316.
- 6 Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, trans. from German by Steven T. Byington (New York: Libertarian Book Club, 1963 – from 1845 original), p. 213.
- 7 Wolf Oschlies, *Rechtsradikalismus im postkommunistischen Osteuropas. Teil 1: Fallstudien* (Cologne: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche Studien, No. 29, 1992), p. 4.
- 8 Re. organized crime in eastern Germany, see *Neues Deutschland* (Berlin), 29 March (1993), p. 4. Re. organized crime in Slovakia, see *CTK* (Prague), 12 January (1993), in FBIS, *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe), 14 January (1993), p. 21; and *Wirtschaftswoche* (Vienna), 8 April (1993), p. 43, trans. in FBIS, *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe), 14 April (1993), p. 2. Re. organized crime in Hungary, see *Nepszava* (Budapest), 31 December (1992), p. 5, trans. in FBIS, *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe), 6 January (1993), p. 22. Re. organized crime in Serbia, see *Srpska reč* (Belgrade), No. 51, 20 July (1992), p. 52; and *Vreme* (Belgrade), 8 March (1993), pp. 18-19. Re. organized crime in the area as a whole, see *New York Times*, 2 September (1993), p. A13.
- 9 *Zeri i popullit* (Tirana), 3 April (1992), p. 2, trans. in FBIS, *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe), 14 April (1992), pp. 2-3.
- 10 Douglass W. Bailey, "The Looting of Bulgaria," in *Archaeology*, March-April (1993), pp. 26-27.
- 11 *Vreme*, 22 March (1993), pp. 10-13.
- 12 Macedonian Information and Liaison Service, *MILS-NEWS, Dnevni Vesti Angliski*, 30 June (1993).
- 13 Re. a Bulgarian-Polish agreement, see *BTA* (Sofia), 22 April (1993), in FBIS, *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe), 23 April (1993), p. 3. Re. Croatian agreements with Slovenia, Hungary, and Italy, see *Glas Istre* (Pula), 5 June (1993), p. 5. Re. a multilateral agreement involving Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Russia, and Belarus, see *New York Times*, 20 November (1992), p. A4.
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