DISSENT AND OPPOSITION IN COMMUNIST EASTERN EUROPE

Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe

Origins of Civil Society and Democratic Transition

Edited by

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Contents

Introduction<superscript>*</superscript>

A decade and a half after the end of state socialism, the epochal political upheavels of 1989 in Eastern Europe have shifted far into the background of public interests. They have become historical events, essentially thought of only on the occasion of various anniversaries. The collective memories of the period before 1989 have been largely displaced by the experiences of post-socialist processes of transformation. The change of political systems brought the populations of Eastern Europe significant gains in individual freedom and legal security, something still appreciated by a majority of citizens, as many surveys have demonstrated, in most former socialist countries. Yet at the same time the reorganization of socioeconomic order has imposed enormous social burdens on large groups of the population. Even in certain new member countries of the European Union where the political and economic reforms are significantly more advanced than in most former Soviet and Yugoslav republics, the costs of the transition are still palpable. In Poland, Slovakia, and even the highly privileged East German federal states (see Wiesenthal, 1996) the average unemployment today is nearly 20 per cent. Entire regions that less than twenty years ago were important centers of industry have since transformed into periphery provinces largely uncoupled from general processes of modernization. The majority discourses today are thus marked in particular by concerns for securing daily existence materially and professionally, sometimes even for survival from day to day, and the attainment of security for the future. When the socialist past appears in these discussions, it is most often in the form of rosy memories of job security, lower criminality, free schooling and university education, general social security, etc. Against this background, the once-celebrated representatives of the democratic opposition – as shown by the change in popularity of such well-known figures as Lech Wałęsa, Václáv Havel, and Bärbel Bohley – are no longer so highly esteemed today by the public of their countries.

What, then, can occasion social scientists today to occupy themselves with problems of this extinguished social order, and moreover specifically with the seemingly marginal phenomenon of intellectual dissidence and political opposition? The dissemination of historical knowledge and political education are doubtless important tasks in any democratic polity. It is precisely in times when general trust in the competence of democratic institutions is confronted with considerable stress from far-reaching socioeconomic processes of change resulting in growing social insecurity and inequality, as is presently the case in nearly all modern industrial societies, that the dissemination of the knowledge of the costs of dictatorial rule and the knowledge of historical traditions of collective opposition prove themselves to be important supports for the potential for resistance in civil society against attempts at authoritarianism. Nor should the importance of this

research – as demonstrated by the West German example – be underestimated in the cultural consolidation of young democracies. As shown by the country studies gathered here, a considerable deficit still exists today in this area in many Eastern European societies. The public discussions of recent history, insofar as they take place at all, are also sometimes still characterized strongly by a 'struggle over the "ownership" of the past' (Petrova, in this volume), in which protagonists of the *ancien régime* concerned with their self-legitimation not infrequently have more advantageous starting positions than former dissidents. In such a context objective historical processings and analyses are often given short shrift, not least in the granting of research grants. Against this background, the authors of this volume thoroughly consider their work to be a contribution to objective the dissemination of historical knowledge and political education, and that not only in the countries of Eastern Europe.

Inner-academic motives were nonetheless decisive in prompting this book project. The state of historical research on dissidence and opposition against the state-socialist regimes remains extremely various. A wealth of documentation, source editions, case studies, and now several historical overviews exist today on the opposition in the GDR. In this historians and social scientists have profited from a radical opening of the archives of nearly all institutions of the SED state and in particular from massive state support for research in the 1990s. Research conditions in the other countries are very distant from those privileged terms. To be sure, a relatively extensive historiographic literature exists today on the history of opposition in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and to a lesser extent in the case of Hungary. In the Baltic states and the countries of southeast Europe, including Romania and Bulgaria, by contrast, the research on these themes is by and large just beginning.

The state of research also varies considerably in regards to social science, which is naturally, but not only, conditioned by the varying degrees of historical knowledge. The development of *Solidarność* in Poland was already the subject of intensive accompanying research in its formatory phase. In the case of East Germany, a series of sociological and political science studies likewise analysed constraints and incentives for collective oppositional action, processes of organizational development, and the development of informed opinions among the opposition, interactions between various opposition groups, their mobilization strategies, and their external interactions, among other aspects. Yet in most of the other countries the sufficient empirical basis information needed to make such analyses possible is still lacking today – information on the spread of political nonconformist attitudes, the quantitative character and social structure of critical milieus, the number, regional distribution, and thematic profile of active dissident and opposition groups, their networking with each other and their contacts abroad, the individual motives for participation, etc. It cannot be surprising against this background that there have been very few comparative studies across countries on this subject matter to date, and those that exist consider for the most part only a small number of Eastern Central European countries – Poland, Hungary, and the Czechoslovakia (see, for example, Ekiert, 1996; Fehr, 1996; Judt, 1991; Skilling, 1989). A first concern in putting together this volume was thus to win an overview

of the state of historical research and sociological knowledge of dissidence and opposition in the individual countries, which further comparative analyses can then rely on. The country studies gathered here were therefore subdivided generally into two large sections, insofar as the available empirical information allowed – a compact overview of the historical development of resistance, dissidence, and opposition against the Communist regimes, and an analytic section on various social scientific aspects. The empirical results of the country studies are then summarized and considered from various comparative perspectives in a concluding chapter.

It was the famous insight of Max Weber that it is problems that guide scholarly work. What are the problems posed by the research on resistance, dissidence, and opposition in the former state-socialist countries? A first problem is that of agreeing on a common understanding of basic terms characterizing the subject of the project. In the literature one encounters a variety of explicit and implicit definitions that often complicate a problem-oriented discussion, resulting in various authors attributing different forms of behavior and types of actors to one and the same term. Some authors, in particular supporters of hermeneutic approaches, let themselves be led in the terminological classification by the self-understanding of the actors. According to this, one must ascribe to the 'opposition' every person who considered himself an 'oppositionist'. Had we taken such an approach, the consequence would have been that individuals and groups that acted oppositionally without defining themselves as 'opposition' – as was the case with many of the groups treated in this book until well into the second half of the 1980s – would have dropped out of our area of research *per definitionem*. At the same time, we would have given up the meaningful distinction between actors who were politically active in the inofficial/extralegal sector and reform-oriented party functionaries and members who sometimes subjectively perceived their own engagement in the official sector as 'oppositional', because directed against Communist hardliners. Studies on the transition from authoritarianism to democracy have nonetheless made clear that the kind of interaction between these types of actors were of central importance for the chances for democratic change, precisely because these actors came from different areas largely sealed off from one another in dictatorial regimes – society on the one hand and the state on the other (Karl and Schmitter, 1991). If, on the contrary, one takes the opposite path and judges the character of political action on the basis of its objective effects (Broszat, 1981), one finds oneself confronted with other difficulties. On the one hand, there were many oppositional protests that were hardly able to have a major effect. On the other, the political effects of oppositional action against authoritarian regimes are often indirect, which is to say not perceptible as the direct consequences of individual actions. The effects are generally the result of the interplay of various chains of actions and therefore can largely be attributed neither to individual actions nor individual actors. Directly visible consequences of individual actions would, however, be the direct reactions of the regimes, that is the state repression carried out against the relevant individuals or groups. In the GDR, for example, the Ministry for State Security had a differentiated system of classification of nonconformist persons that has been preserved in the files almost

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entirely. Were we to orient ourselves to which persons were formally classified there as 'bearers of ideological diversion' or as 'bearers of underground political activity', however, we would swiftly be in danger of taking up as a criterion of scholarly analysis the often arbitrary judgment of politically dogmatic agents of an authoritarian state. Such a procedure would not only impermissibly neglect the intentions of the actors, but also ultimately – just as with the approach described previously – sacrifice the claim of science to objectivity.

For the present volume we have selected a pragmatic approach to the difficulties of definition that gives particular attention, alongside the intentions of the actors and the forms of their action, to the social spheres in which they worked. As a rule, three different types of nonconformist action are distinguished accordingly. 'Resistance' describes here quite generally individual or collective action directed at the removal of the Communist regime. It encompasses both conspiratorial and public activities, militant as well as nonviolent, spontaneous and organized action. In the volume following we use this term above all to characterize the activities of social actors – parties, churches, militant groups – that sought to defend themselves against the establishment of Communist Party dictatorships in the early periods of state socialism. With the implementation of the monopoly on power of the Communist parties, which may be dated at 1921 in Russia and at around 1948/49 in the other Eastern European countries, this period was essentially concluded. Later protest events bore characteristics of this sense of resistance chiefly in the uprisings in the GDR in 1953 and in Hungary in 1956. To a certain extent this applies also to the Baltic protest movements of the late 1980s, insofar as they openly articulated demands for national independence and massively opposed the Soviet claim to power.

Described as 'dissent' and 'dissidence' will generally be – following the original meaning of the word in the sense of 'apostasizing' – various forms, in the context relevant here, of questioning the official ideological doctrine of the state party, up to open repudiation. Largely forming the ideological point of departure for this was the critique of the breach of the original values of the socialist movement – equality, freedom, and solidarity – by the Communist rulers themselves. In the 1950s and 1960s, this 'revisionist' critique, carried out in large extent by intellectuals who themselves were members of or sympathizers with the Communist Party, joined together with diverse reform currents aiming at a modernization of the economic system of socialism, and in part also at a partial democratization of the political system. Joppke (1995) nonetheless sees – in defining this 'revisionist' type of critique of the system – the actual core of 'dissidence' to lie in the fundamental turn away from the socialist utopia and in the practical orientation towards the expansion of individual freedoms and human rights. In so doing, he undoubtedly marks the most important turning point in the history of Eastern European dissidence. The definitional attaching of the term 'dissidence' to an ideological orientation – the effective abandonment of socialist values – appears to us nonetheless as too narrow. This is not only because the commitment to these basic values and an orientation specifically towards human rights and constitutionalism are by no means mutually exclusive. Democratic-socialist value orientations were not only widespread among East German civil

rights activists in the 1970s and 1980s but among critical intellectuals in other countries of Eastern Central Europe as well, if to a lesser extent. And one can find constitutionalist approachs at times even in official Reform Communist discourses in the 1980s. Should it really suffice, however, to classify established lawyers, pleading in official publications for the establishment of administrative courts and other institutions of the rule of law, as 'dissidents', and on the other hand to dispute this attribute for persecuted supporters of a socialist democracy of workers' councils? It thus seems to us that, for a meaningful distinction between 'dissidence' and other forms of the articulation of criticism, the position of the relevant discourses within the system of social communication is a more appropriate criterion than a certain ideological orientation of regime criticism. We correspondingly understand as 'dissidence' all discourses and activities critical of the regime that constituted, or wished to constitute, an autonomous sphere of public political and cultural communication outside of the official institutions of the party state and which in so doing openly denied the claim of the regime to full control of public life. The systematic 'site' of dissidence in this sense was the Samizdat – the public debate outside of the state and open to all. The most important trait of dissidence was that of putting forth at all the openly demonstrated claim to make the rules of free communication that characterized this area of the 'inofficial public' the norm of public action (see Voronkov and Wielgohs, in this volume). The activities of dissidents were not aimed primarily at the removal of the regime, but rather foremost at expanding the sphere of autonomous action under the conditions existing. Since this automatically challenged the claim to state control, however, the boundaries between 'dissidence' and 'opposition' in the political sense were necessarily fluid. The contributions that follow speak of 'opposition' mainly in regard to groups that sought, via various forms of organized collective action, not only to extend personal freedoms under the existing regime, but in addition to question publicly the legitimacy of this regime. This boundary between 'simple' dissidence und political opposition is, to be sure, difficult to mark empirically. This is because, under the conditions of the permanent threat of repression on the part of the state, opposition groups were often forced to formulate implicitly their disapproving attitude to the regime. The circumstance that the real readiness for repression varied considerably both between countries and within a single country between various periods of time makes a clear classification only the more difficult. The term 'opposition' will therefore describe in this volume the political parties of the anti-Communist resistance in the initial phase of state socialism as well as, and in particular, the political formations that emerged from the dissident milieu in the late 1980s to challenge the regimes, and press them to give up, through organized actions – most visibly through demonstrations and the demands for round table negotiations. The *Solidarność* citizens' committees, the newly founded parties in Hungary in 1988, the initiative groups of the Baltic Popular Front movements, and the Bulgarian *Ecoglasnost* all had an obvious oppositional character.

One of the most important questions to occupy us in this volume is that of the social and political significance of opposition and dissidence in state socialism. Did the critical and opposition groups of the 1970s and 1980s, which generally

included only a very small minority of intellectuals, really make up a genuine threat to the stability of the state-socialist order? Poland, where the united protest movement of workers and opposition intellectuals was able to wring substantial political concessions out of the regime in 1980, concessions that were no longer compatible with the system's logic, seems at first glance to be the only case in which one can answer this question in the affirmative. In the uprisings of 1953 in the GDR and 1956 in Hungary, by contrast, groups of opposition intellectuals played hardly any role, nor were the reform projects of the Prague Spring the work of such groups, which were rather due to initiatives from the reform wing within the party establishment. With the exception of the events in Poland in 1980/81, there were no cases until the late 1980s in which opposition groups succeeded in mobilizing broad protest movements representing existential threats to regimes. But were the groups therefore politically irrelevant? Were that the case, then the repression against dissidents and members of the opposition could only be explained as the paranoid reactions of those in power. The enormous expense at which the populations in certain countries were kept under secret service surveillance does in fact seem exceptionally irrational. Yet the fact that all Communist regimes in Eastern Europe saw even marginal groups of opposition intellectuals as potential threats has a rational core. The central pillar on which the monopoly on power of the Communist Party elite was based was the belief of the administrative classes – the large number of mid-level leadership cadres in the party apparatus, industry, security organs, education, and state administration – in the legitimacy of the rule of the Communist Party (see Brie, 1996, pp. 41ff). The danger posed by dissidence and opposition was less that of the possible mobilization of broad open protest movements against a regime than that these forms of political nonconformism would undermine the reliability of these classes, the *nomenklatura* of state servants and party functionaries, who were in direct command of the resources to carry out the will of the party leadership. Seen in this way, the suppression of dissidence and opposition was a central prerequisite for the securing of Communist power. The country studies gathered here show that the ability and readiness of the regimes to suppress dissident discourses and oppositional activities was of a highly various character across countries and different periods of time. From this perspective, the differences in the history of opposition appear as a dependent variable in the development of state-socialist systems, as an indicator that may be able to convey more detailed insights into the various forms of Communist rule and the particular specific problems of each state in securing legitimacy and stability.

A second aspect of the question as to the political relevance of dissident and opposition groups concerns their significance in the political upheavals of 1989-91. It is precisely on this question that judgments remain widely divergent to this day. The public versions of history presented by mass media in particular, though also in the retrospective reflections of former activists and various interpretations by academics, often give the impression that the defeat of the Communist regimes and the transition to democracy was a particular achievement of opposition groups and movements. In contrast to this, social scientists explain the collapse of the Communist regimes mostly as a result of errors in the construction of the state-

socialist system and its structural incapacity to withstand the pressure of the competition of systems in the Cold War (Kuran, 1991). It is widely uncontroversial in the academic literature that dissidence, opposition, and even the mass protests in the fall of 1989 were not the decisive cause for the collapse of the system; in the course of their history, the Communist regimes had, after all, survived massive protest movements and far-reaching crises time and again. The inability to innovate conditioned by the system, the economic backwardness relative to the Western industrial nations that had grown since the beginning of the era of modern information and communication technologies, and the progressive loss of loyalty among the Eastern European populations in the 1980s should therefore undoubtedly be seen as elementary causes for the fall of state socialism. But would it then be correct, in regard to social science, to interpret oppositional forces as just a 'side effect'[1] of a quasi-automatic implosion? Structural factors, functional contradictions, and inconsistencies in the system, as well as external conditions (such as the annulment of the Brezhnev Doctrine by Gorbachev) have no effect 'in themselves', but rather only insofar as they influence the action of various politically relevant actors. The actions of those actors are, in turn, not the inevitable result of structural factors, but rather result from political values and goals, the availability of resources for action, the interpretation of situations for action, and the corresponding decisions, which could turn out one way or another. The collapse of the Communist regimes can thus, in our view, not be sufficiently explained when one does not consider it as the result of the interactions of various political actors, interpreting the perceived objective conditions and past as well as anticipated future actions of other actors in the light of their own goals and reacting to all this in their own particular actions. From such an actor-oriented perspective, the action of oppositional forces appears to be highly relevant, even when it was of highly various importance in the events of upheaval in the different countries. For this reason, we consider it to be essential to consider the history of dissidence and opposition as an independent, and explanatory, variable for the specific mode of transition.

    The central social scientific question posed by the research on opposition and dissidence in state-socialist societies is nevertheless that of the conditions explaining the creation of these phenomena and the national differences in the course of their development. How was it possible that, under dictatorial regimes, such forms of open political nonconformism came into being at all, spread, and endured over time? Following the logic of the view, still widespread today, that the state-socialist regimes were, from start to finish, nothing more than a special species of totalitarianism, hardly different, in their essence, from other totalitarian regimes, this phenomenon would be unexplainable, and resistance could only have been conceivable in the form of sporadic conspiratorial actions: 'In a totalitarian society, opposition is prevented from developing by the organization of totalitarian terror' (Friedrich and Brzezinski, 1956, p. 131). The distinction between the totalitarian initial phase and the post-totalitarian period following the end of Stalinism, in which the primary method of Communist rule shifted from massive terror to selective repression and ideological and sociopolitical strategies of legitimation and the securing of loyalty, is a first precondition for the explanation

of the possibility of dissidence and opposition (see Saxonberg and Thompson, 2001). But what factors are responsible for the fact that, in this post-totalitarian period, a broad milieu of cultural and political dissidence could develop in Poland, for example, out of which could ultimately emerge a political opposition capable of action, which then for its part definitively influenced the course of the democratic transition and the early periods of post-socialist reforms, but that in Romania, on the other hand, political dissidence remained no more than a short-lived episode limited to a handful of intellectuals, and forces from the old political establishment retained the upper hand for several years after the change of regimes? To refer here to national differences in the Communist regimes' readiness and ability for repression, differences which appeared increasingly clearly after the end of Stalinism, is essential, but insufficient because the causes of these differences remain unclear. In this regard Herbert Kitschelt offers an instructive point of departure. He distinguishes, depending on the pre-socialist level of economic and social modernization as well as the political mobilization of the bourgeoisie and industrial workers, different types of Communist rule, each characterized by a different degree of internal coherence and the social anchoring of the Communist elites. In countries in which historically weakly rooted Communist Parties were faced with certain democratic traditions from the interwar period and a correspondingly strong bourgeoisie, the Communist elites tended later towards granting greater concessionary measures to society than in countries with a traditionally strong Communist movement or an underdeveloped bourgeoisie (Kitschelt, 1995; Kitschelt et al., 1998, pp. 19ff). Countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia possessed accordingly the most favorable historical preconditions for the emergence of intellectual regime critique, dissidence, and opposition, and – as the following country studies show – these phenomena were in fact much more widespread in these countries, from the 1950s on, than in, for example, Bulgaria and Romania.

The historical starting conditions and the typological regime traits nevertheless mark only general differences in the possibilities for the articulation of political nonconformism. To be able to clarify the concrete models of development, the profile, and the strength of dissidence and opposition, there must be considered alongside general conditions a series of specific factors – the varying measure of available resources of material, time, and personnel, the varying possibilities for travel abroad, emigration, and foreign contacts in general, the openness to Western influences and the access to Western media. An important role is played by subjective factors on the side of the oppositional actors themselves – their value orientations and political goals, and in particular also their ability and readiness in the formation and networking of organizational structures. In this connection, cultural differences – religious, national, and literary traditions, and in particular also historical models of political opposition and national resistance – take on considerable significance.

Over the last three decades, political sociology has developed various approaches with the aim of clarifying the causes for the creation, the spread, and the change in the forms of social movements over the course of time (see McAdam et al., 1996; Roth and Rucht, 1987). These approaches have been used explicitly

fairly rarely to date in research on dissidence and opposition in Eastern Europe, since their central concepts – structural strains, resource mobilization, framing, political opportunity structure – were predominantly developed on the basis of democratic Western societies and there therefore exist doubts as to whether they are at all appropriate for the analysis of social phenonema under conditions of authoritarian rule. Various works point out, however, that a creative use of the instruments developed in the Western research of movements can prove thoroughly helpful for the clarification of political processes in state-socialist societies (see Oberschall, 1996; Pollack, 2000; Tarrow, 1991; Wielgohs and Johnson, 1997). Furthermore, dissidence and opposition in Eastern Europe certainly appear to be a worthwhile field of study in which to test the universal analytical force of the available theoretical approaches. Without theoretical orientation it is hardly possible to understand in a scholarly fashion the causes of the creation and the logics of development of opposition, dissidence, and resistance in the state-socialist countries. Drawing on the approaches to the research of movements developed in the Western context seems appropriate to us to deepen both our insight into the specific logic of dissidence and opposition under state-Communist conditions as well as our knowledge of the conditions of the creation and development of social movements in general.

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Notes

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1   In regard to the end of the regime in the GDR, Ehrhart Neubert, maintains that it was 'the historical service of the GDR opposition to have made possible, in its struggle against a totalitarian regime, the self-liberation of a society' (Neubert, 1997, p. 826). Claus Offe formulated the counter-position in the argument that the change of regimes was not brought about by political action from below and from above, but rather through the mass flight of GDR citizens to the West. 'The oppositional forces did not *bring about* the end of the GDR, but were rather only a short-term *side effect* of this end' (Offe, 1992, p. 36). For an alternative position explaining the change of regimes as the result of the interaction of various actors, see Pollack (2000, chapter 4).

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Conclusion

Chapter 11

Comparative Perspectives on Dissent and Opposition to Communist Rule

Jan Wielgohs and Detlef Pollack

If one were to compare the country studies gathered here from an undifferentiated perspective, it would seem at first that the history of dissidence and opposition against the state-socialist regimes in Eastern Europe exhibit a number of common traits. These essentially concern the chronological succession of various stages of development, the core themes in the various periods, and the forms of oppositional action. The similarities correspond to transnational characteristics of the development of state-socialist systems, and refer to general restrictions on and incentives for oppositional conduct that were determined by the foundational institutions of the system as well as by international conditions.

The differences, however, are of greater social-scientific interest. They concern, first and foremost, the extent and the persistence of the dissident and oppositional milieus, the relationships between the critical intelligentsia and larger sectors of the population, the interactions between dissidents and the relevant circles of the party establishment, the political effectiveness of dissident activities, and finally the role of the political opposition in the systemic upheavals of 1989/90. Such national differences were already to be seen, in the early post-Stalinist regime phase, in the varying intensity and extent of the 'revisionist' reform currents of the 1950s and 1960s. In the so-called 'periods of stagnation' in the 1970s and 1980s, these differences once again grew significantly. There were without a doubt many-faceted causes for the variance in the pattern of development of dissidence and opposition: The degree of political independence from Moscow, the economic and ideological capacity of the national regime for securing loyalty and acceptance, the social anchoring of and the endogenous potential for resistance by the church, the degree of cultural proximity to the West and the degree of openness towards Western influences – these are all factors that affected opportunities for the development of alternative political potentials and which varied considerably across different time periods as well as generally between different countries. The comparison between the patterns of development described in the country studies thus refers to a more general connection: The development of dissidence and opposition in the individual countries was strongly influenced by the different strategies or policies the regimes employed in order to cope with the post-Stalinist crisis and the failure of inner-systemic attempts at economic modernization (see Brie, 1996; Ekiert, 1996).

In the following, we will first describe the major stages of development of dissidence and opposition, emphasizing common traits as well as essential differences. In connection to this, we will then investigate the role of the opposition groups that emerged from the dissident and human rights movement in the regime upheavals of 1989-91. In conclusion, the most important factors will be summarized that made possible dissidence and opposition under state-socialist regimes and decisively influenced their development.

In view of the major national differences that existed, any attempt to make a periodization, unified across all countries, of the history of resistance, dissidence, and opposition faces considerable difficulties. While the early phase of resistance can still be bordered off to a certain extent, the degree of national differences in the later courses of development hardly permits a unified, clear, chronological demarcation of various periods.[1] The coexistence of differing ideological currents and concepts for action within the opposition (liberal democrats, national conservatives, reform socialists; 'anti-politics', the cultural opposition, new social movements) in the individual countries makes it additionally difficult to make a unified periodization according to the criterion of a dominant political program. Through the rough abstraction of national differences, however, one can describe a general model of the course of development of resistance, dissidence, and opposition, albeit in which the various phases were markedly different in their characteristics in the individual countries and also encompass differing periods of time.

Resistance to the Establishment of Communist Rule

With the exception of the Baltic republics,[2] the implementation of the dominance of the Communist Party in the Eastern European countries passed through a transitional period, generally beginning with the governance of Popular Front governments either initiated or tolerated by the Soviets. These governments were either dominated by Communists from the start or led at first by social democrats (Czechoslovakia) or agrarian parties (Hungary, Romania). Among the central measures implemented by these governments directly after the end of the war were land reforms, the nationalization of the major banks and industrial concerns, and reforms of the educational system. On the one hand, the Communist parties sought in doing so to win alliance partners from various groups of the population for their anti-capitalist policies. On the other hand, they pursued, from the start and with the support of Soviet occupying forces as well as their own military organizations,[3] the goal of acquiring a monopoly on power independent of democratic consent, and thus sought to exclude, co-opt, or suppress real or potential political opponents as swiftly as possible.

In the time immediately after the war, the project of a socialist order did indeed find relatively broad support or at least acceptance in Eastern as well as Western Europe. Many intellectuals saw in such an order, after the experiences of the socially disastrous global economic crisis of the interwar period, a sensible alternative to capitalism, and some also saw an opportunity to restrain the re-

strengthening of chauvinist nationalisms. Many small farmers and farm workers, who made up a sizeable proportion of the population in the predominantly agriculturally characterized societies of Eastern Europe, profited from the new distribution of agricultural land. Workers, who in the economically backward Eastern European societies of the interwar period had lived in large part under terrible conditions, could hope for an improvement in their economic position and in their chances for social advancement. This notwithstanding, the increasingly open, forced claim of the Communist parties to sole dominance encountered more or less broad resistance in all of these countries, oriented in part against the hegemonial claim of Communist ideology, the dismantling of democratic institutions, and the limitation of civil rights, and in part against Soviet dominance perceived as foreign rule.

The palette of forms of resistance encompassed open as well as conspiratorial activities and ranged from flyers with public statements by political or ecclesiastical regime opponents, spontaneous strikes, and protest demonstrations against individual measures to acts of sabotage and assassinations of Communist functionaries. Among the most important groups carrying out these activities were non-Communist parties, either traditional or founded immediately after the war. In the Baltics, as well as in Croatia, Bulgaria, and Romania, paramilitary groups formed, recruiting at least in part from pro-Fascists who had collaborated with the German *Wehrmacht*. In Poland, the national underground army *Armia Krajowa* sought without success to prevent the competing Communist government, founded by the Soviet Union after the liberation of Eastern Poland, from taking power by organizing the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944. The remainder of the partisan units were defeated by 1947. In Czechoslovakia, the attempts at organized military resistance collapsed in the preparation phases; sporadic actions by militant groups continued until 1951. In some countries in which attempts at forced collectivization of agriculture had already been undertaken in this early period, there were numerous local peasant riots, which not infrequently used militant force (Croatia, Romania, Czechoslovakia). Although resistance was carried out by a broad spectrum of social groups and was articulated in numerous activities, which in individual cases mobilized large numbers of participants, it was usually constrained to spontaneous, isolated activities.

By the end of the 1940s, resistance had generally been broken, and the last, isolated groups were liquidated by the beginning of the 1950s at the latest. In East Germany in 1946, and in 1948 in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, and Hungary, the forced union between the social democratic and Communist parties took place, which was effectively a 'hostile takeover' of the former by the latter. The other parties were either forced into a Communist-dominated 'democratic bloc' (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland) or banned entirely (Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia). The possibilities for action by the churches, in particular in the sectors of education and culture, had been drastically reduced by 1948 at the latest and largely limited to conducting church services. Massive or exemplary repression was carried out in multiple countries against priests and holders of ecclesiastical offices, lastingly undermining the potential for resistance from the churches. Totalitarian regimes had established themselves in all of these

countries by the end of the 1940s. These regimes consolidated themselves in the years that followed on the basis of massive terror, which, following the break between Stalin and Tito in 1948, came to encompass in particular actual or alleged 'deviationists' within the Communist establishment.[4] With the economic loss of power by the bourgeoisie and the massive persecution of regime opponents, generally affecting multiple tens of thousands, as well as the emigration of numerous members of the educated bourgeoisie and the middle class (in particular from East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Croatia), the social basis for an effective anti-Communist opposition was lastingly destroyed.[5] The traditions of the early resistance played at most a marginal role in the emergence of the new oppositional currents from the 1950s through the 1970s. The origin of the latter lay predominantly in the new social milieus that were a product of the state-socialist system itself.

In all it is clear that in no country that fell into the Soviet sphere of influence following the Second World War did the radical and in part militant anti-Communist opposition succeed in organizing resistance movements that, beyond the mobilization of numerous individual actions, were coordinated nationwide, nor did they prevent the establishment of Communist regimes. The support of the Communists by the USSR was undoubtedly decisive in this. Another reason, however, was that the bourgeois and in part aristocratic opposition found only limited support among the working classes.

Social Protest and Political Non-Conformism in the Early Post-Totalitarian Period

Stalin's death in March of 1953 and his successor Nikita Khrushchev's criticism of the cult of personality and mass terror at the XX Party Congress of the CPSU in 1956 opened a new phase in the development of the regime, along with which the conditions for nonconformist political efforts also changed successively. While the Tito regime in Yugoslavia, which in 1948 had taken a course independent from Moscow in domestic and foreign policy, profited from the death of Stalin and the Soviet-Yugoslav easing of tension that followed, consolidating itself further, the regimes in most of the satellite states initially entered into a deep crisis. The official Soviet criticism of the cult of personality and the partial disclosure of the extent of the terror of the Stalin era shook not only the public but also the belief in the party's legitimacy among extensive segments of the party membership. There were as a result inner-party confrontations and power struggles, in particular in the countries of Eastern Central Europe. Massive economic problems intensified the crisis further, since they forced the governments in exactly this situation in several countries to adopt rigid economic policies with high social costs.

The combination of social anger and political dissatisfaction was released in a series of mass protests, inflamed largely by price and production quota increases, but which in their further course were directed openly against the regimes and were suppressed without exception by massive military and police intervention. The prelude was formed by the uprising in the GDR and massive workers' protests in

Plzeň and other Czechoslovak cities in June of 1953. In 1956 there followed the workers' uprising in Poznań and a wave of demonstrations in multiple Polish cities (Sonntag, in this volume), student protests in Prague and Bratislava in Czechoslovakia (Tůma, in this volume), and in Cluj and Timişoara in Rumania (Petrescu, in this volume). The peak of this cycle of protest was the Hungarian uprising in the same year. The mass protests threatened the existence of the regime, since they deprived it of its credibility and the ideological legitimation of representing the interests of the working class, and thus at least potentially undermined the belief in the party's legitimacy among broad sections of the party membership and administrative classes. In the GDR and Hungary, the state-socialist order was only saved through the intervention of Soviet tanks.

In the mid-1950s the Communist regimes reacted to this systemic crisis with a significant strategic shift in securing their power, marking the Bloc-wide transition from the totalitarian to the post-totalitarian type of Communist Party dominance. On the one hand, the politics of massive repression and terror, which remained the central means of securing power into the early 1950s, were gradually replaced by the politics of the latent threat of repression and 'structural' and 'exemplary' repressions.[6] At the same time, the surveillance apparatus was considerably expanded in several countries. On the other hand, the consumer needs of the population received strengthened attention in economic policy from then on. The production of consumer goods was raised significantly. The second half of the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s brought a palpable improvement in the general standard of living in all of the countries in the Soviet bloc, as well as in Yugoslavia. A consequence was the clear stabilization of the regimes, traceable in part to the resignation of the population after the suppression of unrest and in part to the pacifying effect of the new sociopolitical orientation. The period between 1956 and 1968 was largely free of social protest. In the USSR, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR, the change of socioeconomic strategy was accompanied by various experiments at reform, aiming at shifting the mode of economic development from an extensive to an intensive type of growth via a more or less wide-ranging decentralization of economic decision-making, and which were actively supported by a majority of members of the administrative classes.

On the political level the reactions were much more divergent. Inner-party reform discussions and de-Stalinization politics did not take place in Romania. There, too, the party leadership nevertheless changed its strategy of repression, as Petrescu (in this volume) shows on the basis of the selective and relatively moderate action taken against striking workers. De-Stalinization in Bulgaria was essentially limited to the removal of the party chiefs V. Chervenko (1956) and A. Yugov (1962). De-Stalinization in the Baltic Soviet republics resulted above all in a 'nationalization' of the local party apparatus and a 'recovering' of the national cultural and professional elites that had been massively persecuted under Stalin (Ruutsoo, in this volume).

The leadership of the GDR reacted to the crisis with a further concentration of power in the person of General Secretary W. Ulbricht. After 1956, it also initially put a stop to all public and inner-party discussion – a reaction that Neubert (1997, p. 103) describes as 'bureaucratization instead of de-Stalinization'. A partial

domestic political liberalization first arrived in 1962, after the construction of the Berlin Wall and a new phase of de-Stalinization by the XXII CPSU Party Congress – a similar delay to that in Czechoslovakia. The crisis and Khrushchev's 'Thaw' had much farther-reaching political consequences in Hungary and Poland. There reform debates and fierce conflicts of power politics began within the Communist parties shortly after Stalin's death, ultimately resulting in the representatives of Stalinism being replaced in both countries by the reform-oriented general secretaries I. Nagy and W. Gomułka. The new orientation was visible not only in a relatively far-reaching political, cultural, and economic liberalization, but also in efforts to reduce the Soviet influence on domestic politics to an unavoidable minimum. Recurring relapses, including the wave of repression following the Hungarian uprising, notwithstanding, these trends remained virulent in the politics of both parties in the coming decades.

The step-by-step disclosure of Stalinist crimes and the accompanying crisis of the system opened more or less limited free spaces for critical debates in the USSR itself, in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, and, from the beginning of the 1960s on, also in Czechoslovakia and the GDR. In contrast to the anti-Communist opposition of the 1940s, however, these were decisively carried out by intellectuals within or in the sphere of the Communist parties. The criticism was not directed against the socialist system as such, but rather against the ideological dogmatization and perversion in practice of the socialist idea. This criticism was initially theoretically oriented in particular at revaluing the previously suppressed emancipatory streams of Marxism (Meuschel, 1992, p. 152). Among the best-known representatives of the theoretical 'revisionism' were Milovan Djilas and the journals *Napried* and *Praxis* in Yugoslavia (Spehnjak and Cipek, in this volume), Zdeněk Mlynář and Ota Šik in Czechoslovakia, Georg Lukács and the early Budapest School in Hungary, Leszek Kołakowski, Włodzimierz Brus and Karol Modzelewski in Poland, and Ernst Bloch, Wolfgang Harich and in particular Robert Havemann in the GDR. The Polish student protests in March of 1968 were likewise predominantly marked by the 'spirit of revisionism'. The practical demands that were the subject of these debates were directed above all at the party apparatus' estrangement from society and its bureaucratic rigidity, taking as their first goals the ending of political and administrative intervention in the sectors of art and culture and the opening of the media to public debate and realistic reporting. In Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia in particular, far-reaching economic and political reform ideas were also discussed in the frame of these debates, oriented around diverse ideas for a democratic socialism which found their best-known expression in Dubček's formula of 'socialism with a human face'.

'Revisionism' was not a social movement in the stricter sense of a more or less clearly bordered group of actors with independent structures of communication and organization. It was instead a diffuse ideological current that articulated itself in equal parts in official and unofficial fora and which was of a highly various character in different countries. In Russia, Bulgaria, and the GDR, the revisionist discourse was limited to intellectuals in the orbit of the party and did not include relevant groups within the party apparatus. Occasional attempts to make criticism public were blocked with more or less drastic measures. By contrast, the

revisionists in Hungary and Poland, and, in the second half of the 1960s, also in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, succeeded in setting off broad public debates on de-Stalinization and a democratization of socialism. Their criticism made its way into official media and established groups of intellectuals and artists, and it found relevant allies in the party apparatus.

Despite its 'system-immanent' ideological character, 'revisionist' criticism represented a double potential danger to the regimes. Where this criticism reached broad sectors of the public and where reformers influenced by revisionism largely gained the upper hand in the party leadership – as in Hungary in 1956, Yugoslavia in 1966, and Czechoslovakia in 1968 – it not only theoretically but practically put into question the party state's universal claim to power. The establishment of a Western-style multi-party democracy was not on the horizon, to be sure. Yet in the measure in which 'revisionist' reforms aimed for a withdrawal of the party from economics, culture, and education, they threatened to eliminate the basis for the claim of the party leaderships to helm general social development towards the goals of a Communist utopia. That this danger was perceived was clearly shown in the rescinding (in part by force) of the reform efforts. The 'revisionist' debate also had a long-term effect. The suppression of the debate, and the defeat of economic modernization in particular, lastingly undermined the belief of broad sections of the cultural and administrative elites in the legitimacy of Politburo rule, though this occurred with differing intensity in the individual countries. This was to be seen not only in Hungary and Poland, where the later reform discourses, even within the establishment, were distinguished by an increasingly technocratic orientation and a growing alienation from socialist ideas. It was revealed even more clearly by the fact that in none of the countries could enough forces be mobilized any longer from the administrative classes (including the repression authorities) to save the regimes in 1989.

'Revisionism' was, Bloc-wide, the most conspicuous tendency in regime criticism in the first post-totalitarian period, but it was not the only one, nor was it relevant in all of the countries. Romania, where a reform-oriented party wing never existed, was almost entirely untouched by this phenomenon. The 1956 student unrest, carried out primarily by members of the Hungarian minority, notwithstanding, there was also no criticism of the regime to be heard from the intellectual milieu. After the end of the early resistance, expressions of protest came exclusively from the workers, in the form of locally limited, predominantly economically motivated strikes, the last of which was registered in 1958 (Petrescu, in this volume). In Russia an 'anti-political' intellectual 'opposition' already began to form in the second half of the 1940s that had given up hope from the start in the reformability of the regime, and which, in contrast to the 'revisionists', articulated its disapproval of the regime not in ideological or political counter-projects but in artistic form and in its approach to banned authors. Daniel' (2000, p. 41) ascribes greater importance in the formation of the coming dissident movement to this current, which he characterizes as 'freethinking' (vol'nodumstvo), than to the 'revisionists'. In Estonia and the other Baltic Soviet republics, reform socialist ideas played a subordinate role among the critical intelligentsia; there they were displaced from the start by the national question. In Poland and Hungary in

particular there arose, at about the same time as did democratic-socialist regime criticism, national-conservative currents directed in large measure against the universalist character of Marxism and which would lastingly influence the later development of the opposition (see Sonntag; Szabó, in this volume).

Human Rights and 'Second Society' – Dissidence and Opposition during the 'Stagnation' of State Socialism

The suppression and repression of the attempts to reform the system 'within the frame of socialism' that culminated in the Prague Spring lastingly changed conditions for the development of opposition, consequences and time frames once again varying significantly from country to country. It became apparent by the mid-1960s that limited 'technocratic' reforms were not sufficient to achieve the hoped-for breakthrough to a type of economic growth based on innovation, but that a more far-reaching democratization and decentralization of structures of economic decision-making was not politically feasible (see Šik, 1983). Between 1965, the year following the unseating of Khrushchev by Leonid Brezhnev, and 1973, when the efforts for the restoration of centralized planning came to include even the Hungarian economy, economic reform experiments were broken off and decision-making structures were recentralized to a considerable degree throughout the sector of Soviet authority.

In parallel, the free spaces for autonomous intellectual and cultural activities were once again clearly limited. The 1965 trial against the authors Andrei Siniavskii und Iulii Daniel' in Moscow announced the end of the 'Thaw liberalization'. There followed in the same year a massive propaganda campaign in the GDR against 'anarchistic' and 'nihilistic' tendencies in literature and art, rigidly displaying once more the control of the party apparatus over public cultural life. The ban on the performance of Adam Mickiewicz' national drama 'Dziady' (Forefathers' Eve) in March of 1968 and the accompanying student protests formed the prelude to a new wave of repression in Poland, which turned into a massive anti-Semitic campaign. In Hungary, too, the restrictions on critical intellectuals were increased markedly in reaction to the Prague Spring. The reprisals were greatest in Czechoslovakia. In the course of the purging campaigns there after 1968, a half million members, a third of the total, were expelled from the Communist Party (Pauer, 2000, p. 52), tens of thousands of mid-level leadership cadres in industry, science, and administration were discharged or demoted to subordinate positions, and youth protests as well as oppositional circles were suppressed through the massive intervention of state power (Tůma, in this volume). In 1971, after the 'Croatian Spring', a phase of restoration finally began in Yugoslavia too, in the course of which reform-oriented party functionaries in the component republics were removed and numerous activists in the reform movement were sentenced to prison terms (Spehnjak and Cipek, in this volume).

The late 1960s and early 1970s inaugurated a new phase in the development of the state-socialist system, one that was later commonly designated the 'period of stagnation'.[7] After the attempt at a fundamental economic modernization was

defeated, there remained only the possibility of administering the status quo and securing the loyalty of the population and the administrative classes through the extensive use of those resources still available (see Brie, 1996, p. 55). It was in fact possible to stabilize the regime for the time being through the means of the new socioeconomic strategy of promising, in exchange for loyalty, sustained increases in prosperity and an expansion of social services. In the context of this new arrangement, often called the 'Consumption Pact' or the 'New Social Contract', there was a reorientation of foreign affairs that proved to be of lasting significance for the development both of the regime as well as of the opposition. The Brezhnev Doctrine opened to the satellite states (limited) flexibility for an independent design of their domestic policies. This led not only to an official reappraisal of national traditions in comparison to the by then worn-out ideological phrase of 'socialist internationalism', but in particular created new possibilities to gain access to the resources necessary for the improvement of standards of living that the USSR itself could no longer provide, but which could be obtained through the expansion of trade relations with the West. The accompanying politics of détente between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which reached their peak in the Helsinki Accords of 1975, also opened new possibilities for action for regime critics, insofar as they – in accordance with the then-growing economic dependency on the West – set certain bounds on the intensity of reprisals against dissidents and thus reduced the individual risks of oppositional engagement.

The renewed stabilization of the system disillusioned the critical intellectuals in two regards: On top of the depressing insight that the system could not be liberalized and modernized through top-down reforms, yet also seemed insurmountable, came the disappointing experience of the population's many years of abstaining from protest. This is because, with the exception of the Polish workers' protests of 1970 and notwithstanding the support for the reformers of the Prague Spring from segments of the Czech skilled workers, (Ekiert, 1996, pp. 151f; Judt, 1991, p. 256) large protest mobilizations were absent outside of the intellectual milieu and subculture youth scenes during the entire crisis cycle after 1956. The nearly 'total isolation [of the intellectuals] from the working population' (Judt, 1991, p. 256) did not only have traditional roots. It was also determined by the fact that the early discourses on reforms 'of the system' had in content and form largely ignored the problems of daily life of the majority of the population. The dominant perception that the majority of the population had 'adapted' and that the system now seemed to have stabilized for the long term resulted in a many-faceted 'change of strategy', manifested in changes in (i) the goals and the thematic profile of oppositional engagement, (ii) its forms of action, and (iii) its audience.

(i) The theoretical and practical reform currents of the 'revisionists' had been directed towards the democratization of the 'system'. To the extent to which this goal had been perceived to have been an illusion, oppositional engagement sought increasingly to win respect for individual civil rights within the existing system. The minimalist intentions were, first, to put the authorities under pressure to at least respect the existing laws, and then further to expand civil rights (such as through calls for an alternative to compulsory military service). Here 'dissidence'

articulated itself primarily through the transgressing of informal rules of the exercise of state-socialist power, in that one made practical use of only formally valid constitutional principles, in particular the right to freedom of expression. Behave as though one were living in a state under the rule of law – so went the characteristic maxim of post-revisionist dissidence. Where there had previously been the 'reform movement' came the 'civil rights movement', where there had been the 'democratization of socialism' came the 'defense of human rights' – a change of direction that gained further impulse from the Helsinki Accords and which threatened to get the regimes into considerable difficulties. This was because, in this changed constellation, it was no longer the dissidents who appeared to be violating legal principles of the existing order – now it was the state that was infringing on the rules of its own constitution every time it suppressed the public expression of critical opinions or banned unofficial exhibitions and journals. The focusing on civil and human rights had still more strategic advantages. To be sure, it did not necessarily eliminate the ideological differences between different currents of regime opponents. But it provided a common basic anti-totalitarian consensus within the frame of which the ideological variances between democratic-socialist, liberal-democrat, and national-conservative dissidents could be of secondary importance. At the same time, the human rights discourse adopted a language that, on the one hand, broad groups of the Eastern European population were acquainted with, through associations with religiously characterized ideas of values and morality, better than with the manner of speech of the earlier 'theoretical debates'; on the other hand, this language was also compatible with the official language of 'socialist legality', and thereby could force those in power to be on the discursive defensive (see Judt, 1991, pp. 259f). The appeal for human rights furthermore offered a formula – legitimated by Helsinki – through which altogether different political goals could be pursued: With the byword of the defense of civil rights one could engage on behalf of the defense of universal human rights, the rights to peace and a healthy environment, the rights of women, and the right to national self-determination and the defense of national culture. Universalist as well as particularist political orientations could therefore be at least partially integrated. At the same time, every 'single issue initiative', insofar as it questioned the party's claim to leadership in environmental policy, peace policy, etc. and was at least latently, and in general manifestly, confronted with repression, raised time and again the problems of civil rights. This lent the otherwise heterogeneous movement a certain cohesion.

(ii) The reform discourses of the 'revisionist' phase were carried out – varying by national political conditions – either in conspiratorial circles or in official fora (literary and technical journals, artists' organizations and academic institutions, party meetings). With the thematic shift from theoretical counter-projects to the practical defense of civil and human rights, conspiracy as a form of action became more or less obsolete. The open collective letter of protest, 'invented' in 1965 by the early activists of the Soviet human rights movement, marked the transition to a broad repertoire of forms of public protest (appeals, memoranda, petitions) that became characteristic in the 1970s for the dissident movement in all of Eastern

Europe. Connected to this was a second direction of action, one that had been stimulated by the closing of official spaces of communication for alternative discourses after the end of the 'Thaw liberalization' – the development of alternative media. Western radio stations like Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, and Voice of America became important media for the dissemination of information on human rights groups at home and abroad. Of more lasting importance for the further development of the oppositional capacity for action, however, was the building up of independent periodicals, the prototype again being the Soviet 'Chronicle of Current Events', founded in 1968.

In the USSR, the illegal circulation of uncensored literary manuscripts had already formed a practice of cultural life beyond the official public during the late Stalinist era. But the use of the Samizdat for the articulation of citizen protest, as practiced for the first time in the context of the 1964 trial against the poet Iosif Brodskii,[8] and its continuation through the production of periodicals was the decisive impulse for the Samizdat developing into the foundation for the formation of an unofficial public, a cultural counter-world that made possible the preservation and the social cohesion of critical milieus even through periods of harsh repression. In its advanced stages this 'parallel society' offered not only autonomous spaces and fora for free cultural and political articulation in the form of illegal publishing activities, unofficial exhibitions, film screenings, and 'flying universities', but also the infrastructural networks for communication between various oppositional groups and – under the best circumstances – for the coordination of their political activities.

(iii) In the reform-socialist discourses of the Thaw period, reforms of socialism were predominantly conceived as top-down projects, and the primary, though not wholly exclusive,[9] audience was correspondingly the party leadership and the state itself. Since the state as primary addressee had become obsolete with the abandoning of system-related reform ideas, the frame of reference for oppositional engagement underwent successive change. Alongside the international public, to whom reports on violations of human rights and appeals for solidarity were often directed, society came increasingly to the fore. Well before this reorientation was theoretically conceived and reflected upon in the form of the Central Eastern Europe civil society debate,[10] the early Soviet human rights groups made their first practical efforts. Legal education, independent legal advising, and the institution of relief funds for those who were politically persecuted (Voronkov and Wielgohs, in this volume) were among the first steps in the building up of counter-society structures that went beyond the Samizdat in the strict sense and which would later be replicated in other countries. The welfare initiatives of the Hungarian dissidents (Szabó, in this volume) and the social street work initiatives ('open work') of church opposition groups in the GDR (Ohse, in this volume) may be seen as an indicator of an at least intended practical turn towards society. The most prominent representative of this 'strategic shift' was the Polish Committee in Defense of the Workers (KOR), founded in 1976. While in other countries the oppositional concept of the activation and self-organization of society went at most barely beyond the frame of theoretical debates, the nationwide networks of civil society

initiatives that rose up in a short period of time as a result of the practical successes of the KOR (Sonntag, in this volume) formed the social basis in 1980 for the effective interaction of intellectuals and workers in the founding of *Solidarność*.

Politicization of the Dissident Milieu and Formation of Counter-Elites in the Collapsing Phase of the System

With the new paradigm of human rights and the 'parallel society', dissidents had not only found an approach that gave them a way out of the crisis of orientation that had broken out among critical intellectuals in most of the Eastern European countries following the failures of the attempts at reform. In civil and human rights, the dissidents had also 'discovered' a theme that carried with it strong potential for the integration of different alternative political currents.

The state of human rights was a touchy matter for all of the Eastern European regimes. Furthermore, these issues were embedded in an international discourse that the Communist governments could refuse to take part in only at high diplomatic and economic cost. In the guise of 'civil and human rights activists', dissidents appeared from the start as participants in a universal, worldwide movement. This gave their engagement not only a legitimation that was far more difficult to denounce ideologically than that of the mere 'critic of the system' or 'patriot'. The anchoring in the discourse of human rights also offered a more suitable basis for transnational action and networking than did the debates on systemic reforms and national sovereignty. The possibilities for communication and cooperation across borders did of course remain more or less tightly limited until the late 1980s, varying by the degree of national entry and exit travel regulations as well as by the intensity of state repression against dissidents. The entry regulations of the USSR were quite restrictive even for individual travellers from the socialist countries until the end of the 1980s, and Soviet citizens who wished to travel abroad had to fight against nearly insurmountable bureaucratic barriers. The external contacts of Russian, as well as Baltic, dissidents therefore were largely limited to the Soviet area; relationships with Central Eastern European activists remained sporadic exceptions. Between the Central Eastern European countries, by contrast, one could move much more freely from the early 1970s on. Despite special state restrictions for individual persons, relatively close and regular contact emerged between Polish, Czech, and Hungarian dissidents by about the end of the 1970s, in which in part the international activities of the churches could also be used (see Szabó, in this volume). This was certainly more difficult for civil rights activists in the GDR, since the state security services strictly prevented such contacts by means of bans for individuals on entering and exiting the country; furthermore, free travel to Poland was suspended in general after 1980. There were nevertheless at least individual contacts between individual East German dissidents and neighboring countries, and there were also some joint protest activities (Mehlhorn, 1995). In general, however, the dissident groups of the GDR maintained more intensive relationships with the West German new social movements than with groups in the neighboring Eastern European countries,

contacts favored not only by the particular national constellation and the contacts to the Lutheran church, under whose auspices they acted, but also in particular by the dissidents' thematic profile as a peace movement (Ohse, in this volume; Pollack, 2000, p. 101).[11] Despite these restrictions, the international connections, mutual pledges of solidarity, and joint public statements were able to contribute to encouraging the groups and strengthening the political effect of their engagement.

More important, however, than the international networking were the impulses that came from the new orientation towards civil and human rights and the parallel society approach for the development of the organizational infrastructure within the alternative milieu. Effective protest against violations of human rights and support for the politically persecuted required the procurement of information that could not be found via official means, and this thus stimulated the expansion and the networking of autonomous structures of communication. As the country studies show, the focusing of dissident discourses on the problems of human rights regularly released new activities in the area of the Samizdat – the founding of the 'Chronicle' in Moscow at the end of the 1960s, the expansion of the Samizdat in the sphere of the Polish KOR and the Czechoslovak Charter 77 in the second half of the 1970s, the founding of the legal but autonomous journal *Nova Revija* in Slovenia in 1980, the founding of the periodical *Grenzfall*, edited by the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights, in the GDR in the mid-1980s. The central importance of this development was less in the quantitative increase in the number of Samizdat publications, but rather in the qualitative structural changes released by this. All of the initiatives named here were more than simply new groupings within already existing landscapes of more or less numerous, generally sporadically acting circles of dissidents. They acted to a certain extent as 'centers of communication' in which information on violations of human rights, actions by civil rights initiatives, and other political events was collected, analyzed, and then published via the Samizdat or foreign media, which brought with it not least a certain professionalization. In this way, these initiatives formed points of departure and catalysts for the building of increasingly dense networks of communication and political activities within the alternative milieu, which of course reached different levels in different countries. In general, the individual groups always acted autonomously and therefore maintained rather loose contacts with one another, which were made additionally difficult by the interventions of the security services. The emergence of such networks nonetheless made possible a clear intensification and continuation of the communication between groups acting in a decentralized fashion, one that in advanced cases extended to the organization of joint political actions. The coordination between the Gdańsk strike committee and the intellectual representatives of the KOR in the summer of 1980 in Poland was without a doubt the outstanding example of this. This was the only case in the history of Eastern European state socialism in which oppositional actors succeeded in effectively bringing together protest potential from various social milieus – the working class, the civil rights groups, and religious figures critical of the regime. However, the supervision of the counting of votes in the local elections in May of 1989 in the GDR by opposition groups in multiple large cities (Ohse, in this

volume) also demonstrates the expanded ability for coordinated action as a result of the preceding network formation.

Viewing the final phase of the state-socialist system in retrospect, the national differences in the development of the human rights movement and parallel-society structures appear of importance in two ways in particular. The symbolic integration of groups with ideologically and thematically different orientations on the question of human rights, the emergence of organizational networks, and the connected beginnings of a professionalization of dissident activities led to the emergence within the alternative milieu of something like an 'internal milieu elite' – tighter circles of persons who, on the basis of long-term engagement, their particular organizational, intellectual, or charismatic abilities, and also often because of prominent political persecution, had ascended to the rank of identity-creating symbolic figures. Countries like Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Slovenia, in which these processes were relatively far advanced, had by the end of the 1980s comparably favorable preconditions for the formation of a political opposition capable of action. In Bulgaria, and even more so in Romania and Albania, it was not until the direct regime crises that oppositional leadership figures could effectively crystallize out of diffuse intellectual milieus, out of a latent rather than an open dissidence. They therefore had to manage orientation problems significantly larger than those of their Eastern Central European 'colleagues' and always remained at a disadvantage to newly converted representatives of the regime. In the aforementioned countries, by contrast, at least a core of a political counter-elite was available in this situation that could not only draw on already existing organizational and communicational resources but also had more elaborate programmatic ideas.

This already addresses the second aspect. By the mid-1980s, the alternative milieus, including the active groups of dissidents, were dominated by the self-understanding of an 'anti-political' counterculture or counter-society. With the economic crisis of the 1980s and the beginning of Perestroika in the USSR, however, the 'system question' became again and increasingly acute. Gorbachev had effectively placed it on the agenda himself, in that he placed alongside the 'stagnation' of the previous type of socialism the concept of a democratization and modernization of socialism as an alternative, a concept that had already seemed obsolete since the end of the 1960s to many dissidents, and also in particular to the technocratic elite. The growth of crisis phenomena – the decline of the level of repression and the growing readiness for reform of the Communist Parties in Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, and the USSR, the nationalist excesses of the regimes in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia/Serbia, the obvious paralysis of the political leadership of the GDR and Czechoslovakia – placed critical intellectuals under growing pressure to act. In the second half of the 1980s, a process of politicization of the dissident milieu began, articulating itself in the growing radicalization of its actions, the intensification of communication between different ideological currents, and a further expansion of organizational networks. The founding of new political associations – parties, popular front initiatives, and citizens' movements – in the course of an 'internal mobilization' (Wielgohs and Johnson, 1997, p. 352) marked the change in self-understanding into the role of a political opposition. At

the latest with the annulment of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which Gorbachev officially announced on 6 July 1989 before the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, fully placing responsibility for the handling of the crisis in the hands of the individual nation-states, could the dissidents no longer avoid asking the question of political alternatives.

In this context, due to the immanent connection between human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, the central role of the question of human rights in prior dissident discourses turned out to be of lasting relevance: In countries like Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, groupings gained discursive hegemony in the evolving opposition movement that had been involved in human rights for a longer period of time. Here, the opposition was recognizably more unequivocal in its support of an alternative of democracy and the rule of law in the phase of regime change than in those countries where human rights groups had always remained more or less marginal. This also was true of the Baltic republics and Slovenia, whose national understanding was defined culturally rather than ethnically and where discourses on national self-determination – conditioned by a quite long tradition of legal rationality (Lauristin and Vihahemm, 1997, p. 94) – were in the last decade more strongly linked to the question of human rights than was the case in the other Soviet and Yugoslav component republics. The counterexample of Romania, where the human rights discourse never went beyond the episodic initiative of Paul Goma, supports this thesis, as does Russia, where the human rights movement was effectively smashed entirely at the beginning of the 1980s and where the successor groups, between currents of nationalist and egalitarian-populist orientations, were prematurely marginalized among the new political movements of the Perestroika period.

Dissidents, Opposition and the End of State Socialism in Eastern Europe

The causes of the breakdown of the system in the Soviet sphere have been the subject of numerous social scientific analyses in the 1990s. Many of the attempts at explanation concentrate on one of the following factors: the 'Gorbachev factor', the fragmenting of the Soviet power elites set off at the beginning of the 1980s, the destructive momentum of the overstretching of the Soviet empire, the defeat of the Eastern Bloc in technological competition with the West, the economic decline of the 1980s conditioned by the weakness in innovation systemically immanent to planned economies, and the crisis of legitimation and the role of political opposition movements.[12] Over time, however, the view has gained precedence that none of these factors can provide a sufficient explanation alone. The breakdown of state socialism in Eastern Europe is rather to be understood as the result of the interaction of various – economic, political, and cultural, exogenous and endogenous – processes, each of which showing its own dynamics, but whose coming together represented a historically unique constellation of events (see Pollack, 2002). The breakdown demonstrates, according to Renate Mayntz, both 'the contingency (...) of historical processes *and* the contributions of generalizable mechanisms and connections of conditions' (Mayntz, 1995, p. 14). Seen in this

way, the change of the political regimes in the countries of Eastern Europe – or the transition from state socialism to the diverse post-Communist orders[13] – forms only one 'moment' of long-term, multi-dimensional social change conditioned by multiple factors (Ettrich, 2003, p. 231). The 'revolutions' of 1989-91 appear here – to paraphrase an idea of Hannah Arendt (1963) – not as cause, but rather as consequence of the collapse of state socialism.

The series of events that marked the immediate breakdown of the system – beginning with the legal permitting of a pluralist party system and the Communist Party's repudiation of its constitutional guarantee of a monopoly on power in January/February 1988 in Hungary, continuing with the August 1989 assumption of office of the Mazowiecki government in Poland, the first non-Communist government in the Eastern Bloc, the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the execution of the Romanian dictator Ceauşescu in December 1989, and up to the proclamation of national independence in the Baltic republics in the spring and the dissolution of the USSR in the autumn of 1991 – illustrates the imperial character of this process, the interdependence of its national dynamics. The erosion of the state-socialist social order in Hungary and Poland had begun, certainly, well before the beginning of Perestroika and Glasnost in the USSR. But the peaceful dissolution of the political regimes would have been barely possible even in these cases without the prior annulment of the Brezhnev Doctrine. In the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria, the influence of the Soviet development was essential, with the prior events in Poland and Hungary displaying an additional 'catalyzing' effect. The collapse of the GDR regime, in turn, contributed immediately to the acceleration of the political dynamics in Czechoslovakia.

The crisis of the regime was nonetheless not in any country primarily or exclusively exogenously conditioned. Each case had predominant endogenous, system-immanent causes and specific national characteristics, in which individual factors – the influences of the world market or the consequences of Gorbachev's policies, the dividing of the regime elites and the political mobilization of society – varied in importance between countries. The circumstance that – in contrast to China, North Korea, and Cuba – none of the Eastern European regimes was spared the breakdown dynamic, not even the Yugoslavian or Albanian regimes, which were relatively independent from the USSR, shows that the most important resources for the securing of Communist dominance were thoroughly exhausted in all of these countries by the end of the 1980s. It became increasingly clear in the 1980s that the state-socialist system was no longer able to keep up with the tempo of international economic and technological development, which was accelerating increasingly through innovations in the sector of modern information technologies, and the system was therefore less and less prepared to integrate the populace sociopolitically and ideologically. In view of this, the regime lost not only the acceptance of the broad population. The last supporting pillar of the system of rule finally itself collapsed – the loyalty of the administrative classes. As the economic crisis intensified and it became increasingly obvious that system-immanent attempts at reform were doomed to failure, the members of the class of middle and upper leadership cadres saw the chances dwindle to maintain their own social position through continued loyalty to the existing regime. When they opened

themselves to change and were willing at least to tolerate non-socialist alternatives, the destabilization process neared its critical point. It was ultimately the case that a sufficient part of this class was no longer ready in any Eastern European country to take on itself the risks that an attempt to maintain the regime by force would have carried with it. This was the decisive point distinguishing the Bloc-wide constellation at the end of the 1980s from the Polish situation in 1981. 'State socialism was given up by its most important supporting class. The administrative class itself in part introduced the transition to a free-market system, and in part tolerated the taking over of power by the opposition or concluded a transformation pact with them' (Brie, 1996, p. 56).

Dissidence and opposition thus always formed only one – more or less important – component among many of factors that influenced the process of the collapse of the system, and indeed one that generally had an effect very late, if at all. Interpretations that explain the removal of the Communist establishment from power as mainly the work of the opposition movement are therefore not just to the complexity of this historical process, even if they encompass relevant aspects of the events of the upheaval in individual countries. Their reductionist character is clear at the latest when one takes into consideration – with Romania and Albania, for example – the cases in which the Communist regimes collapsed, yet had been able to prevent successfully the creation of an opposition capable of action up to the last days, and the actors of the upheaval came instead almost exclusively from the ranks of the regimes themselves.

When we turn, in the following, to the role of the opposition groups emerging from the dissident milieu in the processes of the political regime change, we stipulate just such a multi-causal understanding of the dynamics of the upheaval. We observe the effect of opposition groups not as the cause of the fall of the national regimes, but rather ask to what extent a catalyzing function in the collapse of the regimes can be attributed to them, and to what extent they have influenced the course of the regime change. In so doing, the various patterns of interactions between regime elites, opposition, and populace in the final phase of the system come into center stage. Three variables play an outstanding role in the various variants of regime change: the mobilization of the population, the capacity for action of opposition groups, and the level of cohesion of the Communist leadership and its reaction to the crisis of the system. In our view, decisive importance for the mode of regime change is to be attributed to the lattermost.

In the post-Communist studies literature of the first half of the 1990s, one may find various typologies for the mode of regime change (Huntington, 1990; Karl and Schmitter, 1991; Beyme, 1994; Kitschelt, 1995). Fine differences notwithstanding, there are by and large three typological models, varying primarily in the role of elites of the old regime.

The *first* model, described in the literature as 'transformation' (Huntington), 'imposition' (Karl and Schmitter) and 'preventive reform' (Kitschelt), distinguishes itself in particular by the democratization of the political system being controlled or dominated by reorganized groups of the old establishment throughout the entire transition process up to the first free elections. Among the countries treated in this book, this model involves Russia, Bulgaria, and Romania.

In each of the three cases, factions of the party apparatus ready for reform proved themselves prepared to win the upper hand over the regime hardliners and to take over the leadership of the state before opposition groups could develop the strategic capacity that would have made it possible for them to exercise decisive influence on the reform of political institutions and to introduce a significant change of elites. The time at which such a Reform Communist wing formed, its intentions, the concrete models of interactions between the various actors, and the role of earlier dissidents vary quite extensively between the countries.

In the USSR, the party leadership newly formed under Gorbachev itself introduced a partial liberalization and democratization of the political system in 1986. This was done in particular so as to win political allies against the conservative bureaucracy in the state and the party, which sought persistently to sabotage the primarily militarily motivated economic reforms (Ettrich, 2003, p. 239). The unintended consequence was a broad political mobilization, first in the major cities and soon thereafter in the Russian provincial cities and in the other Soviet republics, because of which Gorbachev's goal of saving socialism and the USSR ultimately failed. Former dissidents played an important role in the early phase of mobilization in particular. Activists from the human rights movement smashed under Andropov were among the initiators of the so-called 'informal associations' (neformaly), and, in 1988, among the founders of the first explicit opposition party, the Democratic Union. The new associations and parties contributed decisively to the broad political mobilization of the population, forcing the party leadership in 1989 to open the voting for the First Congress of People's Deputies, in the course of which the faction around Gorbachev fell further into the defensive. Yet the more the political mobilization advanced and the CPSU fell apart, the faster the former human rights activists and other liberal intellectuals lost importance. This was because, alongside the nationalist-traditionalist currents of the former political underground, functionary elites of the bureaucracy now increasingly came into formation on the side of the opposition against Gorbachev. While the liberal-democratic heirs of the human rights movement were marginalized, the elites of the old administrative class ultimately succeeded in retaining access to considerable resources of political and economic power through the political regime change and beyond.

The Bulgarian case differs from the Russian above all in the sequence of the processes of liberalization. There, the old leadership elite around Zhivkov had continued to refuse any political opening until the end of 1989. At the same time, they increasingly lost the ability in the late 1980s to effectively suppress oppositional forces that had begun to organize, influenced by Soviet Perestroika and in reaction against the nationalist excesses against ethnic Turks. This was because the anti-Turkish campaign had been the cause of growing dissatisfaction in the party basis itself and had moreover provoked distinct criticism on the part of Moscow and other allies, causing the regime to fall into growing isolation diplomatically as well (Karasimeonov, 1997, pp. 13ff). In Bulgaria, in contrast to Russia, it was not reformers from the party elite but rather from the emerging opposition groups who provided the impulse for democratization. At the top of the party, a reform wing first began to form in the fall of 1989. It was of course already

foreseeable at that time, in view of the developments in Hungary, Poland, and the GDR, as well as in the refusal of Moscow to continue to support the old regimes militarily, that the Zhivkov regime could not survive much longer. Yet the fall of Zhivkov in favor of Mladenov first took place only after multiple opposition associations had been founded and, in *Ecoglasnost*, an organization with significant potential for mobilization had emerged. In this case, the young opposition had undoubtedly accelerated the fragmentation of the party elite in the final phase and wrested imported concessions towards democratic reforms from the Reform Communists following the coup of 10 November 1989. They were, however, not in a position to form a unified opposition movement in time to forestall the reconsolidation of the old functionary elites. The founding of the Union of Democratic Forces took place only after the assumption of power of the Reform Communists around Mladenov, who were then able to retain their starting advantage through the first free elections.

The Romanian party leadership around Ceauşescu ignored, like the Bulgarian leadership, the developments in the USSR and in neighboring countries and refused any reforms until the bitter end. However, they were at any rate able until the end to consistently prevent the formation of potential rivals within tight leadership circles, and to hinder the few scattered dissidents and critical intellectuals from forming a political opposition. The collapse of the regime was begun by spontaneous mass protests. The toppling of the Ceauşescu clan took place, however, through well-networked functionary elites of the party and security apparatus, which could then act immediately against the remainder of the clan and new competing actors in the form of the National Salvation Front. The new rulers were not interested in reforming socialism, but rather only in retaining, under the changed circumstances, their privileged access to resources of political and economic power. Opposition groups and parties were only created later. Because of their organizational weakness and low cultural resonance in the population, they were able to influence the subsequent round table negotiations only unimportantly. The regime change in Romania took place, then, largely without the participation of opposition counter-elites; it had the character of a 'quasi-revolution' (Tismaneanu, 1993, p. 313), resulting in elite formations from the old establishment clearly dominating the formation of the new political institutions.

A *second* model was displayed by the change of regimes in Czechoslovakia and – at least in the destructive phase – also in the GDR. This model is essentially distinguished by decisive parts of the administrative elites of the old regime withdrawing their loyalty on the basis of growing symptoms of crisis in the party leadership, but, because of massive protests by the population, themselves no longer being able to obtain control over the process of transition. The power vacuum thus created opened the opportunity to counter-elites to win, with the support of the protest movement of the population, dominant influence over the reforms of the political institutions. In the literature, this mode of regime change is mostly termed 'implosion' (Beyme; Kitschelt) or 'replacement' (Huntington). As in the cases of Romania and Bulgaria, the old party leaderships in these other two countries had also refused significant reforms up until their removal. They reacted until well into 1989 either with political ignorance or the signaling of increased

readiness for repression against the resonance that the development in the USSR, Hungary, and Poland had found in the native intelligentsia and beyond, and to the growing dissatisfaction in the population at large. In both countries, much as in Romania, spontaneous mass protests by the population formed the immediate trigger for the collapse of the regime, with the famous Leipzig Monday demonstration on 9 October and the student demonstration of 17 November 1989 in Prague, along with the subsequent call for a general strike, as the respective turning points. In the GDR, the protest demonstrations had been preceded by the flight of multiple thousands of citizens, in particular young people, via the West German embassies in Warsaw and Prague and across the Hungarian-Austrian border in the summer of 1989. This massive wave of flight had made the paralysis of the regime obvious to the population and in so doing contributed decisively to the growth of readiness for protest in the country (see Pollack, 1990; Hirschmann, 1993). In both countries, the mobilization of the population took place – similar to Romania – largely independently from the activities of political opposition groups, which were themselves surprised by the dynamic of the protest movements.

The decisive difference from the Romanian and Bulgarian cases was that nationwide networks had begun to emerge both in Czechoslovakia as well as in the GDR from the mid-1980s on, networks that were quite loosely structured, to be sure, but nonetheless made possible more or less regular communications between diverse groups of dissidents. In Czechoslovakia, Charter 77 effectively became, from 1987 on, a sort of 'center of communication' for a growing number of newly founded groups (see Tůma, in this volume). In the GDR, peace and environmental groups, which in part had already been active under the auspices of the Lutheran churches since the end of the 1970s, had constructed a decentralized network structure in the 1980s that, through regular workshops, seminars, and similar programs guaranteed direct communication between groups and also promoted the emergence of an 'internal milieu elite' (see Ohse, in this volume; Wielgohs and Schulz, 1995). On the basis of this prior history, the associations founded out of this milieu could draw, in the fall of 1989, on resources and cultural competency that were wholly or largely lacking among the Romanian and Bulgarian dissidents. They were thus able to form unified political opposition movements shortly before the removal of the old party leaderships. The moral authority of their activists, which was of course more substantial in the case of Czechoslovakia than in that of East Germany, and the offer of plausible interpretations of the situation made it possible for them to politically represent the spontaneous and diffuse mass protests to the regime and thereby prevent a violent escalation. This was a decisive precondition for leadership elites of the regime, 'renewed' on short notice in reaction to the protest movement, ultimately had to agree to negotiations on terms of capitulation. In Czechoslovakia, actors coming from the dissident movement, together with new opposition forces, intellectuals and professionals who had been blocked entry into the establishment after 1968, gained control over the process of system change. In the case of East Germany, the majority of the population gradually delegated this function after the fall of the Berlin Wall to the West German political class.

The *third* model was marked at the beginning of the immediate regime change by a constellation of political actors in which factions ready for reform within the party elite had won the upper hand, though were at the same time confronted by an opposition capable of political action. The terms of the transition were governed by a pact, negotiated formally or informally between Reform Communists and opposition elites, which aimed in part at neutralizing hardliners among the regime elites, and in part at avoiding an escalation of the social and political conflicts. Large differences between the involved countries may be seen again in the evolution of the inner-party conflicts and processes of fragmentation, as well as in the history and structure of the opposition and in the level and influence of the mobilization of the population. The most prominent representatives of such a 'negotiated transition' (Beyme) are Hungary and Poland.

Within the Hungarian party elite, in which processes of differentiation had advanced constantly since 1968 and where the relationships of power between competing factions were always in flux, the reformers finally prevailed over the conservatives and the 'centrists' around Kádár at the start of 1988. In this, they had the support of the large majority of the administrative elites. These elites had, under the conditions of the relatively liberal cultural climate and the expansion of the 'second economy', long since renounced dogmatic Marxism, learned to prize economic efficiency and attractive consumer goods, and had 'no interest (anymore) in returning to the old times of a shortage economy' (Ettrich, 2003, p. 241). The Reform Communists began democratization themselves in January 1989 with the legal introduction of freedom of assembly and association, acting without direct political pressure to speak of on the part of the population or the opposition. The Hungarian dissidents did doubtlessly support, through their critical discourses from the 1970s on, the de-ideologization of the party reformers. Their many currents, which were already able to organize themselves into oppositional proto-parties in 1988 relatively free of danger, profited more, however, from the opening of the political system than they perhaps had contributed to that directly. The population, likewise, played no active role in this process. The expansion of the 'second economy' had considerably accelerated tendencies of individualization in Hungarian society over the course of two decades and had deeply undermined the social fundaments for collective political action. The contribution of the opposition to the regime change was thus in particular that it placed the Reform Communists under sustained pressure from the beginning of democratization onward and to such an extent that the latter even lost the public authority to determine the themes of change. Through its coordinated appearance at the Round Table (Szabó, in this volume), the opposition was able to serve as a representative of the majority of the population and, through this, make an important contribution to the maintaining of social integration during the period of upheaval.

In Poland, too, the Communist establishment had lost considerably in cohesive force over the years in the course of numerous crises and internal processes, in which the reform-oriented currents were unable, however, to obtain influence comparable to the Hungary case up until the end of the 1980s. Here it was pressure from the population that triggered the liberalization of the political system. In the second half of the 1980s, after the relaxing of martial law, price

increases and a rapid deterioration of the standard of living resulted once again in massive social protests. In view of the high foreign debt load and Western boycott measures, the party leadership around Jaruzelski was no longer able to avoid incisive reform steps. It therefore attempted, with an at-first cautious political liberalization, to integrate moderate representatives of the opposition into its reform project in the hope of being able to control the protests in this way, and at the same time strengthening support for its position against the hardliners in the party leadership. The intellectuals of the opposition were likewise interested in such a pact, since they feared that without it social conflicts would escalate and the political development would get out of control (Sonntag, in this volume). In view of the growing protest dynamic, however, they could only exercise this restraining effect insofar as they publicly supported the demand on the street that the ban on *Solidarność* be lifted, and they raised this in the round table negotiations as a central condition of their consent to a transformation pact. The Polish transformation pact, which at first only opened to the opposition limited access to the political decision-making bodies and assured the Communist Party a continued dominant institutional position for the duration of the transition period, was, first and foremost, and in contrast to the Hungarian case, the result of the political mobilization of the population against a regime elite within which the position of the reform wing was always precarious up until the beginning of negotiations. It was the achievement of the opposition intellectuals to win the mobilized society over to acceptance of this 'self-limitation of the revolution', thereby opening the option for a non-violent yet comprehensive transformation of the social order.

In the group gathered here of 'negotiated transitions', Estonia represents the most striking special case. This is because the highly centralized power structures of the USSR hardly permitted independent reform politics in the component republics until the beginning of Perestroika. The beginning of political changes was a direct consequence of the decision described above of the Moscow leadership for a limited liberalization. Kitschelt (1995), one of the few authors to consider the Baltic republics at all separately in their typology, therefore notes in the Estonian case more traits of 'prevented reform' than of 'negotiated transition'. Against this speaks the fact that the further course of political changes was increasingly determined by endogeneous factors, as well as the results of these changes. This is because, even notwithstanding that Estonian party functionaries played a considerable role in the independence movement, the loss of power of the local pro-Soviet class of functionaries (not least those of the KGB) meant a radical change of elites. Much like in Croatia and Slovenia, the 'system conflict' in Estonia was subordinate to the national question until the end of socialism. Since the cleavage between the titular nation and the occupying power cut across the entire society, from ordinary citizens to the political leadership, the boundary between regime elites and counter-elites grew increasingly diffuse. From 1988 on, a majority of the political and administrative establishment of Estonian derivation stood on the side of the independence movement and thereby in effective opposition to the Soviet regime. This naturally makes it difficult to describe the particular role of 'the opposition'. All the same, the contours of a 'negotiated transition' may also be made out here. The 'center of bargaining' in this was not a

formal round table, however, but instead the Estonian Popular Front (EPF), which won the largest number of delegates in the last, already more or less freely elected Estonian Supreme Soviet. The EPF effectively united the majority of the rank and file party members of Estonian nationality and the moderate, pragmatically oriented intelligentsia within one 'organization', and moreover cooperated in parliament with the faction of the national nomenklatura, who likewise supported independence. This constellation made it possible for the EPF to moderate the transition process between the radical nationalists on the one hand and Moscow on the other, and thus reduce the danger of a Soviet intervention by force. Former dissidents were, if not numerously, then nevertheless prominently represented in both the moderate and radical wings of the national movement. Their joint achievement lay in their contribution to a culture of discourse that made possible such moderation and thereby also a liberal-democratic alignment of the independence movement. The violent conflicts that the independence movements triggered in other Soviet republics, republics which had no such traditions of discourse, and the authoritarian regimes that most often emerged from these conflicts, speak in particular for this thesis.

This cursory overview shows that the significance of opposition groups in the course of regime change varied considerably between countries. The level of fragmentation of the regime elites as well as the mobilization of the populations decisively influenced the mode of regime change and thereby defined the frame within which the opposition could act. But these factors do not provide a full explanation for the outcome of the transition. Where a democratic opposition, acting in unison and capable of effectively representing the population to the Communist regime, emerged in good time out of the dissident milieu, it was able to contribute decisively to shaping the course of the transition. A decisive precondition for this was the existence of alternative networks marked by a basic democratic consensus. Whether these emerged from a longer tradition of an open dissident movement, as in Eastern Central Europe, or from critical discourses in diffuse but broad intellectual milieus, as in Estonia, appears to have been of only secondary importance. In all of these cases, the transition, whether mediated by 'elite pacts' or the result of an 'implosion' of the Communist regime, led to a victory of the democratic opposition in the first free elections. In Russia, Bulgaria, and Romania, such network structures were not available in sufficient measure. In each of the three countries, successor formations of the old elites succeeded in reconsolidating themselves before the formation took place of democracy movements capable of action, and these successor formations then dominated, or at least strongly influenced, the determination of the politics of the first freely elected government. As has turned out to be the case only a few years later, this difference in the outcome of the 'founding elections' has been of lasting importance for the further course of the transformation, in particular for economic development (see Fish, 1998). Whereas the majority of the countries in which the democratic opposition won these elections for themselves have since become full members of the European Union, the countries in which this was not the case have for the time being fallen into considerable backwardness in their reform politics, a state that continues to mark their development today.

Social Movement Theories and the Causes and Preconditions for Dissent and Opposition to Communist Rule

Western research on social movements in the second half of the twentieth century has given at best sporadic attention to the development of dissidence and opposition in the state-socialist societies in Eastern Europe up to the end of the 1980s. Prominent exceptions are sociological accompanying studies on the Polish *Solidarność* movement of 1980/81 (Tatur, 1989; Touraine, 1983). In addition, there have been isolated works in which Eastern European peace and environmental groups, in particular the East German and the Hungarian, have been thematized as manifestations of *new* social movements spanning different systems (Knabe, 1988). It was only the unexpected outbreak of democratic mass movements in the autumn of 1989 that caused Western research of movements to engage more intensively with the developments in Eastern Europe. Following McCarthy and Zald (1977), it had become a widespread view, in the American literature in particular, that the successful mobilization of social movements requires a high level of formal organization, and in particular the existence of so-called social movement organizations. In Eastern Europe, such organizations were as good as non-existent up until 1989; the mass protests in many cases took place, as described in the previous section, independently of the activities of organized groups. Even at the peak of the mobilization, the opposition was at best only beginning to form formal organizations. Western movement research thus saw itself challenged to submit the universality and the boundaries of the explanatory force of its theorems to a fundamental test (Brand, 1990). Its new interest in Eastern Europe was then directed in particular at the mobilization processes of the period of upheaval (Oberschall, 1996; Opp and Voß, 1993; Tarrow, 1991). From this perspective, the opposition groups and associations appeared particularly relevant in regard to their role in the process of regime change. The causes of the emergence and the conditions for the development of dissidence and opposition in the earlier periods thereby continued to remain outside of view.

Various factors may be behind the limited interest in social movement studies on the developments in Eastern Europe. From the 1970s on, Western European research was occupied above all with the so-called *new* social movements. The environmental, peace, new women's, and third-world movements to emerge in the West following the end of the 1968 student movement were considered the result of a 'new' global cleavage situated beyond the conflict between capitalism and socialism. The classical themes of freedom and equality were no longer the central conflicts, but rather the destructive problems resulting from the dominant model of modernization in industrial society, as well as from the competition of systems between East and West (Rucht, 1994a). Groups did exist in Eastern Europe that occupied themselves with these 'new' themes, to be sure (see Ohse; Ruutsoo; Szabó, in this volume). By and large, however, the protest events and the dissident discourses revolved predominantly around 'old', that is, system-specific, conflicts that were outside the paradigm of the *new* social movements. In addition, the question naturally arises of to what extent one may speak at all, in the strict sense, of 'social movements' in the case of the dissident milieus and opposition groups in

Eastern Europe. Social movements distinguish themselves, according to the usual understanding of political sociology, not only through a certain permanence, common goals, and a particular collective identity, attributes that were more or less present also among the dissident groups in the USSR and Eastern Central Europe. However, one of the central features of social movements is the ability to mobilize collective political action with significant public response (see Rucht, 1994b). The Polish case notwithstanding, the potential for mobilization among the Eastern European groups was extremely limited until the summer of 1989 (and at least until 1988 in the Soviet case). Until that time, their actions only rarely extended beyond the boundaries of their own milieus. It therefore seems appropriate to characterize these forms of collective political action not as 'social movements', but rather as 'groups' or 'networks of groups', ones that, in certain countries, found themselves at the end of the 1980s transitioning into social movements (see Pollack, 2000, pp. 48ff).

The indisputable differences in the structure and character of these social phenomena, Eastern European dissidence on the one hand and the Western new social movements on the other, are no reason, however, to ignore the analytical instruments of social movement studies in the investigation of the causes of the emergence of dissidence and the factors responsible for national differences in the development of oppositional actors. What alternative instruments are available? The theories that have been developed since the 1970s on the basis of Western social movements certainly offer no 'ready' explanations for the Eastern European phenomena. They nevertheless provide important instructions about the scholarly problems that research on the conditions of alternative political action in state-socialist societies must confront. These are essentially related to the macrosocial causes for the emergence of protest, the organizational and cultural preconditions for collective political action, and the political and institutional contextual conditions that structure the chances for success of alternative collective actors.

(i) Macrosocial causes for the creation of collective protest are at the center of the Western European tradition of movement research. The emergence and the profile of social movements is explained in it as the result of collective dissatisfaction, which in turn has its origins in certain tensions and conflicts based in the social structure of society itself. The most prominent example for this is the conflict of interests between capital and labor that led to the creation of the workers' movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s have been traced, as discussed above, back to the contradictions of the logic of development of the industrial societies, resulting, in the second half of the twentieth century in the Western world, in the emergence, on the one hand, of a broad middle class of an increasingly post-materialist orientation (Inglehart, 1977), and, on the other, growing potentials for global danger. Reference to these two cleavages would, in fact, contribute little to explaining the phenomena of protest in Eastern Europe. Workers in Eastern Europe also had sufficient grounds for dissatisfaction on their part, which articulated itself in the protest events described. Their conflict situation, however, was structured differently than in societies organized along capitalist lines, insofar as they confronted no class of

capitalist entrepreneurs. The state itself represented the ownership of the means of production, at the same time taking on the claim to represent the interests of the workers. And middle classes of a post-materialist orientation were, when they existed at all, very tightly bordered.[14] The emergence of dissidence and opposition can nonetheless hardly be sufficiently explained without reference to system-conditioned, macrosocial causes, something confirmed by the Bloc-wide extent of the phenomenon. Two largely overlapping lines of conflicts were of central importance in this. The first and dominant conflict was that between the claim of the Communist Party state to a monopoly on political rule and the claim of citizens to individual freedoms, legal security, and democratic participation. The second line of conflict ran between the imperial ambitions of Soviet hegemonial power and the desire of individual peoples for national sovereignty.

As the country studies show, these lines of conflict varied in relevance for the development and shaping of alternative political actors in the various countries, and they expressed themselves in different ways in different periods. In revisionist criticism, the conflict over political rule was particularly thematized as a discrepancy between the emancipatory origins of Marxism and the socialist movement and the bureaucratic rigidity of the state-socialist system. In the dissident discourses of the 1970s and 1980s, the conflict articulated itself in the plea to 'withdraw' from the 'system' into the 'parallel society', and then, in the last phase of the regime, it articulated itself in the demand for democratic pluralism. In the countries that had been among the most backward in the region before the Communist assumption of power, and in which the socialist period was perceived more strongly as a history of modernization (Russia, Rumania, Bulgaria), these lines of conflict were less strongly seen than in those countries in which economic and political modernization had progressed farther in the inter-war period, a difference that ultimately precipitated out in the differing social resonance of system-critical discourses.

The relations between the two lines of conflict also showed clear national differences. In Soviet-occupied Estonia, the national question was always at the center of critical currents. In contrast to those in Croatia, however, the Estonian discourses on national self-determination and universal civil and human rights stimulated one another. This may be seen not least in the fact that the Estonian party elite made no attempt to lead the independence movement into a semi-authoritarian nationalist regime, à la Tudjman. In the countries of Eastern Central Europe, Soviet dominance was also naturally always a latent potential for conflict. In the discourses of the dissidents, however, this set of problems always remained subordinate to the question of human rights – not least in view of the experiences of 1956 and 1968. With the 'strategic shift' to the parallel society approach, of course, an open approach to the issue of Soviet hegemony could be avoided relatively easily. In Romanian and Bulgarian society, this line of conflict too was relatively weakly developed. In Bulgaria this was because of the strong affinity for Russia (Petrova, in this volume); in Romania it was in thanks to Ceauceşescu's emphasized distance from Moscow. The relative weakness of dissident milieus and activities in these two countries therefore reflects not only the perception of a high

level of readiness for repression by the regimes, but also corresponds to the low intensity of these two lines of conflict there.

(ii) Structural strains and widespread dissatisfaction on the basis of experiences of deprivation justify a social potential for protest, but they do not explain how collective political action comes about. 'Grievances are everywhere, movements not' (Japp, 1984, p. 316). Collective protests can break out spontaneously. To continue collective political interaction beyond short-term events, however, the actors must have the organizational and cultural resources necessary to secure collective cohesion and to be able to mobilize new participants. Representatives of the resource mobilization approach have, as mentioned above, made out formal and professionalized movement organizations to be the most important 'providers' of these resources. In view of the organizational monopoly of the party state, this approach was declared quite early to be inappropriate in the Eastern European context (Tarrow, 1991). Yet even under state-socialist conditions, a 'minimum measure of infrastructure and communicational networking (...) was necessary to be able to transform collective dissatisfaction and the wish for change into collective action' (Brand, 1990, p. 14). The question of organizational resources for collective dissident activities therefore may not be avoided. If the option for the formation of formal autonomous organizations is not available, then analysis must be directed at possible functional equivalents. The participants in the revisionist discourses were, as a result of their membership in or proximity to the party establishment, sometimes able to draw on the resources of official institutions to a not inconsiderable degree. The comparison between the GDR and Bulgaria on the one hand and between Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia on the other indicates that the intensity and reach of the revisionist discourses was influenced at least in part by the extent to which critical intellectuals could use such resources. Access to official institutions was blocked, in contrast, to the dissidents of the 1970s and 1980s. As we have seen, the ability to survive and the perseverance of civil and human rights groups, as well as their social resonance and, ultimately, their ability to influence the course of regime change depended definitively on the extent to which they succeeded in constructing, and maintaining over time, informal communication networks between different groups and beyond into the broader critical milieus. The Samizdat and the network structures connected to it were the most important functional equivalent to the Western social movement organizations.[15] A considerable further contribution to compensating the deficit of organizational resources of individual groups could also be made by external support networks, in particular Western electronic media, the churches, in Poland and the GDR in particular, and émigré organizations, as in the Baltic states at the end of the 1980s. Petrova (in this volume) points out a further aspect: The specific qualities of socialist working conditions offered critical intellectuals the opportunity to mobilize a significant amount of free time for dissident activities and thus to compensate at least in part for their shortage of financial means.

(iii) The emergence of stable informal networks of communication was not only a precondition for opposition groups, under the conditions of the organizational

monopoly of the party state, to be able to exchange information, organize solidarity, and coordinate actions. It was also an important basis for the cultural integration of the dissident milieus. For collective political action to come about, potential participants need common interpretations of their respective situations and a common understanding of the causes of their dissatisfaction as well as the possibilities for change that would give meaning to their participation. If participants are not able to develop a common view on the causes of their grievances, and if they differ widely in their evaluation of their chances for success, then they will lack sufficient incentives to act collectively. Moreover, it is precisely under the conditions of authoritarian rule, when alternative political action is connected to high individual risks, that strong socio-cultural ties, a feeling of shared identity, and a shared distinction from 'the others' are necessary to preserve the coherence of the groups, both over time and across changing political environments. In both processes, which have been extensively addressed in Western social movement studies under the terms 'framing' and 'collective identity' (Hunt and Benford, 1994; Zald, 1996), the Samizdat and other informal networks played an important role in two respects. First, they were, as has already been mentioned, a precondition for 'internal elites' to crystallize out from the dissident milieus – leadership figures who, on the basis of their particular moral and intellectual qualities, could win a certain authority and thus function both as identity-creating symbolic figures and as 'providers' of integrative 'frames'. Second, such networks were naturally an important condition permitting such symbols and interpretations of situations to be communicated and thereby realize their integrative and mobilizing potential. The connection between organizational resources (the quality of informal networks), cultural resources (integrative leadership figures), and the ability to act of the opposition groups became, as has been presented in the previous section, particularly clear in the phase of upheaval. In Poland in particular, though also in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, where relatively dense dissident networks had emerged from the end of the 1970s on, recognized leadership figures from the opposition were present in 1989 who were able to symbolize the unity of the opposition both internally and externally and to represent effectively the entire protest movement to the regime. In Russia, Andrei Sakharov and Aleksandr Ginzburg were, until the smashing of the dissident networks in the early 1980s, important integrative symbolic figures in the civil and human rights groups. When Sakharov was released from internal exile and could again make public appearances, however, Perestroika and the formation of competing actors were already well underway, such that the influence of the opposition current represented by him remained limited from the start. In Romania, the tight and amorphous milieu of critical intellectuals had no organizational networks worthy of mention by the end of 1989. Individual dissidents who may have had the individual stature for political leadership or for the symbolic representation of the opposition, such as Dan Petrescu or Doina Cornea, to name two examples, therefore lacked the basis to develop any such integrative potential in good time. The Romanian protest movement thus remained diffuse, and in this way effectively faced the converted regime elites without an authentic 'voice'.

(iv) The concept that representatives of the social movement studies consider best suited for the analysis of Eastern European protest movements is that of focusing on the significance of political opportunity structures. In the literature, this approach has been applied in particular to the democratic mass movements of the upheaval phase (Oberschall, 1996; Tarrow, 1991). In our view, however, the approach may also be used for the investigation of the development of resistance, dissidence, and opposition in the earlier periods. Under 'political opportunity structure' is to be understood the respective specific constellations of political and institutional contextual conditions structuring the chances of success for political actors.[16] The political opportunity structure can encourage as well as discourage opposition actors to act, according to how these actors appraise, under the given contextual conditions, the prospects for the changes they seek and the risks of oppositional action.

The parameters of the political systems usually taken into consideration in studies on Western social movements (see Tarrow, 1991, p. 652) are of course only in part instructive for the investigation of Eastern European developments, since they characterize the specific ways of functioning of competitive democracies. For the creation, possibilities for survival, and prospects for success of oppositional actors in Eastern European countries, international general conditions played a far more important role than for Western protest actors. The decisive external variables of the political opportunity structure were the readiness and ability of the Soviet hegemonial power to secure, if necessary, the satellite regimes by military force, as well as the intensity of its political interventions in the domestic politics of these countries.[17] Other external factors were the general political situation between East and West and the respective level of economic dependence of the individual countries on economic relationships with Western states. The decisive internal variable was the intensity of repression that the individual regimes were ready and able to carry out against oppositional actors. This potential for repression was, for its part, strongly influenced by the degree of unity or fragmentation of the party elites, as well as by the level of loyalty among the administrative classes.

The country studies show that all of these parameters changed over time, and that internal conditions in particular varied strongly between countries from an early period on. The disintegration of the anti-Hitler coalition and the start of the Cold War nourished hope among the anti-Communist resistance in the early postwar years that the Western powers would prevent a lasting subordination of the region to the Soviet empire, if necessary by military force (Petrescu; Rutsoo; Tůma, in this volume). When this aid remained absent and it became clear that the West would accept the European postwar order induced at Yalta, the resistance of the 'old' opposition rapidly declined. At the latest with the intervention in Hungary in 1956, it became obvious that Moscow would under no circumstances tolerate political changes in the satellite states that would open to question their integration into the Eastern military alliance or the fundamental pillars of the state-socialist system, and that Moscow was also able to push through its claims of hegemony. This clearly defined the externally conditioned constraints for efforts at regime criticism; the Soviet readiness for intervention was a constant parameter of the political opportunities for oppositional action for the next three decades, one that

also shaped the profile of the main currents of dissidence and opposition. Critics of the system who openly rejected the claim of the Communist Party to political leadership had, until the end of the 1980s, no chance to articulate themselves openly or publicly in any Eastern European country without facing consistent persecution. This was one reason that the next cycle of activities critical of the regime did not come from anti-Communist circles but rather from the Communist milieu itself, from intellectuals who in their critique did not question the ideological or socio-ethical essentials of socialism. The opportunities that encouraged this type of criticism were opened by Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policies and 'Thaw liberalization', which, with the transition to post-totalitarian practices of rule, changed the general conditions for political nonconformism across the entire bloc. The intensity and the extent of 'revisionist' discourses was nevertheless influenced definitively by domestic conditions in the individual countries. As has been shown above, the discourses developed most strongly in those countries in which various factions with different strategic concepts competed within the party leadership itself, where informal alliances could emerge between a reform-oriented wing of the political elite and the critical intellectuals. In countries in which the political leadership elites could effectively prevent internal rivalries, by contrast, the room to maneuver for 'revisionist' criticism remained more or less tightly limited. As Kitschelt (1995) has argued, the disposition towards internal fragmentations of the party elites themselves was conditioned by the different national traits of the Communist assumption of power, reflecting the degree of political and economic modernization reached before the Second World War.

The dissidents of the following 'cycle' also largely respected the boundaries of criticism defined by the Soviet claim to hegemony, insofar as they programmatically turned away from the question about systemic alternatives. The thematic shift to civil and human rights was induced primarily by he failure of the revisionist reform currents of the 1960s. At the same time, the orientation towards an improvement of the state of human rights under the conditions of the existing system was encouraged by significant changes in the international context. On the one hand, the Brezhnev Doctrine and the growing economic problems of the USSR resulted in a gradual, though limited, expansion of the room to maneuver for independent domestic politics by the national regimes. On the other, the Helsinki Accords and the intensification of economic relationships between East and West increased the costs to the regimes of repressing their critics. The impact of the changes in the external parameters of the political opportunity structure can be seen in the fact that intellectual regime criticism articulated itself Bloc-wide, from the second half of the 1970s on, as criticism of the state of human rights, even in Romania, the intellectual milieu of which was relatively isolated even by Eastern European standards. The different reactions of the national regimes to the changes in international context and the increasing internal symptoms of crisis, however, produced very different opportunities for the further development of dissident discourses, organizational structures, and networks of communication. Increasing economic dependence on the West and growing social dissatisfaction resulting from the onset of economic stagnation or positive experiences with market-

oriented reforms undermined the loyalty of the administrative classes to the state-socialist model. Where these processes further accelerated an at least latent fragmentation of regime elites, and where these elites showed themselves ready for reform, relatively favorable opportunities for the development of alternative political currents 'from below' opened up in the 1980s (in Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the USSR). In the countries in which the political leadership elites suppressed internal competition and uniformly refused to address the need for reform (GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania), the opportunities for the development of activities critical of the system also continued to remain limited. However, the extent of dependence on good relationships with the West and the decline of loyalty, both among the administrative classes and in the population at large, also influenced the readiness for repression of the regimes within this group of countries in various ways. As shown by the comparison between the GDR and Czechoslovakia on the one hand and Bulgaria and Romania on the other, even apparently minor differences in domestic conditions could create different opportunities for oppositional activities. With the annulment of the Brezhnev Doctrine in the course of Soviet Perestroika, the external parameters of the political opportunity structure then changed in such a way as to first make possible addressing the systemic cleavage openly, which ultimately triggered the political dynamics described in the prior section.

This cursory overview should show that the analytical instruments developed in the course of over three decades by Western social movement studies can also be of great use in the explanation of dissidence and opposition under conditions of authoritarian rule. The precondition for this is, to be sure, that one avoids a schematic application of theorems that are plausible only for Western societies, using the instruments instead in a heuristic manner appropriate to the specific contextual conditions of the respective countries. Although the political opportunity structure approach appears particularly productive for the Eastern European context, it does not seem very helpful to us to dismiss resource mobilization theory, since the logic of development of the object under investigation may only be revealed through the combination of various perspectives. Successful collective political action aiming at social change requires, under all circumstances, significant social conflicts, the availability of certain organizational and cultural resources, and favorable political opportunities. If resources and opportunities that have proven favorable for collective protest in Western societies do not appear to be present in other societies, we must search for functional equivalents. An analysis of dissidence and opposition to Communist rule through the lens of social-scientific problems can therefore provide an independent contribution to the deepening of our understanding of collective political protest action, in that it uncovers the diversity of possible forms that these universal factors can take on in various social systems.

Notes

2 Judt (1991) structures the development of dissidence in Central Eastern Europe (Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR) into a revisionist period (1956-68), the disillusionment phase (1968-75), and the catch-up period (1975-89). This periodization is only highly contingently transferable to the other countries, first because the chronological scope of the individual phases varied a great deal, and second because the profile of dissidence and opposition also varied a great deal in the individual phases. Romania and Bulgaria deviate the most from this model.

3 The Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were annexed by the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940 in the course of the division of Eastern Europe between the USSR and Nazi Germany resulting from the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939. The Soviet Union then installed brutal occupation regimes without long transition periods (see Ruutsoo, in this volume).

4 The single exception in which Soviet support did not play the decisive role in the implementation of a Communist regime was Yugoslavia. In Serbia in particular, the Communist claim to power could be based in high degree on moral legitimation from the leading role of Communist forces in the military resistance against the German occupation and its regional allies. In the elections for the constitutional convention of 11 November 1945, the Communist-led Popular Front received 88% of the votes.

5 The assertion of Soviet leadership claims and the intimidation of potential inner-party critics were aided by massive purging campaigns, which were coordinated by Moscow but were often also used for internal power struggles within the national Communist leaderships. Generally, several hundred party functionaries fell victim to the purges. The high point was formed by public show trials or by secret trials, accompanied by public campaigns, against leading functionaries. The most prominent cases were the show trials against the Hungarian minister of the interior and member of the Politburo László Rajk (1949; death penalty), against Traicho Kostov, member of the Politburo of the Bulgarian CP (1949; death penalty), against the general secretary of the Czechoslovak CP Rudolf Slánský (1952; death penalty), the deposing and imprisonment of the Polish party chief Wladysław Gomułka (1948), accompanied by multiple show trials in particular against leading military personnel, public campaigns and secret trials against the Romanian Politburo members Lucretiu Patrascanu and Vasile Luca (1948/1954, death penalty) and against the SED Politburo members Paul Merker (1952/53, imprisoned) and Franz Dahlem (1953) (see Hodos, 1987). There was likewise a brutal inner-party purging campaign in Yugoslavia from 1948 onwards – only the other way around. There the campaign was directed against functionaries loyal to Moscow who opposed Tito's break with Stalin (see Spehnjak and Cipek, in this volume).

6 During the phase of regime change in 1989/90, many founding members of new parties connected their movements to historical models from the interwar and immediate postwar period. These connections were, however, not so much about a revitalization of political traditions, which the Communist era had outlasted in the condition of latency, so to speak; the historical models, including certain surviving veterans, served rather as 'props' in the 'staging' of new collective political identities, promising the initiatives involved under the conditions of the 'founding fever' a certain starting advantage over their innumerable competitors.

7 'To put it in slightly exaggerated terms: The terrorists ended the terror because it mainly threatened the terrorists themselves. The terror ate its own fathers. This dearly paid realization broke the dominance of state terror from the inside. Legitimacy and loyalty shifted into the foreground of securing power' (Brie, 1996, p. 53).

8   The term came into use after Mikhail Gorbachev officially characterized the Brezhnev era as the 'period of stagnation' (period zastoya) (Gorbachev, 1987, p. 58).

9   The term 'Samizdat' first appeared in the 1940s. The coinage is ascribed to the Soviet poet Nikolai Glazkov, who wrote it on the typescript of his collection of poems. In 1964 Frida Vigdorova brought into circulation the typescript of her notes from the trial against her husband Iosif Brodskii. This document is considered the first human rights text in the history of the Soviet Samizdat (Daniel', 2000, pp. 41/45).

10 An extreme but symptomatic example was the 1956 'Platform for a Special German Way to Socialism' by the East German 'revisionist' Wolfgang Harich. Harich sent his reform program first to the Soviet ambassador to the GDR and then to members of the Politburo. Only after the SED general secretary had rejected the concept in conversation did he seek support outside of official bodies, but without publishing the paper (Neubert, 1997, p. 109).

11 For the debate on Central Eastern European civil society concepts see Arato, 1991; Benda et al., 1988; Liehm, 1983; Skilling, 1989.

12 The GDR seems to be, at first glance, a special case, insofar as groups that officially made human rights their central concerns appeared there first in the mid-1980s. This had to do with the relationship between individual rights and social rights being more strongly controversial there than in the dissident milieu of other countries of Eastern Europe. Democracy and human rights were important themes, however, from the beginning for the peace groups, insofar as these groups increasingly came to understand democracy and the protection of human rights as also a precondition for a stable, peaceful order (Neubert, 1997, p. 594). In this way, one may regard the GDR peace movement as the specifically East German variant of the Eastern European human rights movement.

13 A compact overview of the literature on the breakdown of Soviet-type socialism and a critical engagement with various explanatory approaches is provided by Ettrich, 2003.

14 We consciously do not speak here of a 'transition to democracy', so as to take into consideration the fact that the change of regimes, in a series of cases, led to the establishment of non-Communist authoritarian regimes, and indeed not only in Central Asia, but also in Europe, as in the cases of Belarus and Serbia.

15 For the East German case see Vester et al., 1995.

16 The significance of informal networks of functional equivalents for formal social movement organizations was not discovered first by the research on dissidence and opposition in Eastern Europe. Since Tilly et al. (1975), numerous studies on various Western social movements have criticized the one-sided orientation towards formal organizations and proven the role of various grassroots settings and informal networks for the mobilization of resources for movements (Evans, 1980; McAdam, 1982).

17 The first empirical study on the influence of various political opportunity structures on the possibilities for success of protest groups on the local level is by Eisinger, 1973. In an analysis of anti-nuclear movements in multiple Western states, Kitschelt (1986) proved their significance for the new social movements for the first time.

18 This essentially applies to the member states of the Warsaw Pact, but may also largely be transferred to the relationships between the Yugoslav component republics and the central authority of the Yugoslav Federation in Belgrade.

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