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The Liaison Committee of Historians came into being in 1982 as a result of an important international symposium that the Commission had organized in Luxembourg to launch historical research on European integration. The committee is composed of historians of the European Union member countries who work on contemporary history.

The Liaison Committee:
– gathers and conveys information about work on European history after the Second World War;
– advises the European Union on research projects concerning contemporary European history.
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Preface

Anne DEIGHTON

This special number of the Journal of European Integration History has been compiled and coordinated by Ilaria Poggiolini, Professor of International History at the University of Pavia, Italy, for the Groupe de Liaison. The number has been made possible because of a research project at the University of Pavia, co-funded by the Italian Minister of Education and the University of Pavia and carried out by Ilaria Poggiolini in cooperation with the Machiavelli Centre for Cold War Studies (CIMA). The project is entitled ‘A Common European destiny and identity beyond the borders of the Cold War? British “Ostpolitik” and the new battlefield of ideas in Eastern Europe (Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia) 1984-92’. Another rationale for this special number is of more general interest to historians of the late cold war world. The British government passed a Freedom of Information Act in 2000. Under this new legislation, it is now possible to request access to state documents on a vast range of subjects that may be of personal, regional, or national significance. This legislation has been used extensively, and it has proved to be a gold mine for contemporary historians who wish to examine documents that were generated in the years after the end of the Thirty Year Rule. Some of the documents that dealt with the 1980s were requested by the project leader, and were then released to the research project. Many of these have now also been made available on the Thatcher Foundation website. In particular, it is now possible to follow both the thinking and actions of Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials, and in particular, of their senior diplomats who were serving in Eastern Europe during the 1980s. It is also possible to read more documentation generated by the Prime Minister herself, or annotated by her during her premiership. It is interesting that this Act has also stimulated a more generous release policy, as the Thirty Year Rule is to be reduced to a Twenty Year Rule in the UK; and two special volumes of documents have already been released relating to the end of the cold war in Europe as well. The French and the Germans have now also released a large amount of archival material covering the 1989-91 period.

Further, given that this is very contemporary history, Professor Poggiolini has included a number of witness/participant contributions. These personal observations resonate well with one of the main themes of the volume. This is the examination of the importance of key individuals during a period of dramatic and unpredictable change. 1989 was not widely predicted, although we can now, post hoc, detect many signs of earlier change on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Because the events themselves were so little predicted, it would seem that it is of even more importance to examine the role of key individuals, as all parties were relying on a combination of hard national interests, vision, risk, and luck.

This volume does of course not aim to be a definitive account on the end of the cold war in Europe. Rather, Professor Poggiolini has focused on one major player, the UK, and on a number of themes: the role of the individual; and the deeper roots
of British cultural attitudes and policies towards Europe and Eastern Europe in par-
ticular. This opens up new avenues for research both for historians of British foreign
policy, but also for other national accounts of the period. She has also developed a
theme that is still very controversial in Britain, and which is central to the interest of
this journal, the relationship between British policy towards the European Commu-
nity at a time of a sharp integrationist thrust – the Single European Act, and how
British policies about European integration did, or did not, fit with the wider views
about the European continent. This therefore brings into sharp focus the extent to
which the history of European integration should be considered both as a *sui gene-
ris* study, but also as being within the intellectual, diplomatic, and policy environment
of a wider Europe, both during and after the cold war.
Britain in Europe in the 1980s: East & West.

Introduction

Ilaria POGGIOLINI / Alex PRAVDA

Twenty years after the end of the Cold War the literature on the history of a divided and then reunited Europe is richer than ever. This issue builds on four trends in historiography which have emerged over the last two decades. First, it draws upon the writings of those who have linked the phenomenon of European détente to West European Ostpolitik, Eastern Westpolitik, and, more generally, to the process of liberalisation in Eastern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s.1 Second, the last decade of the Cold War has now become a very attractive object of investigation for scholars, and not only for historians, thus requiring knowledge of different disciplinary approaches to the topic.2 Third, studying the “return” of the other half of Europe to the West as a vital moment in the process ending the Cold War and transforming Europe, has highlighted the need to access sources beyond the thirty years rule and for historians to use these sources to transcend the earlier boundaries separating areas of study such as transatlantic relations, the history of European integration, the study of the former Soviet Union, or Western and Eastern Europe.3 Finally, this tendency to overcome disciplinary barriers and the interest of historians in the 1980s has provided fertile ground for reflecting the role played by Britain in the 1980s, in Europe and in its

transatlantic relations. The articles and participants’ evidence included in this special issue represent a significant contribution to our understanding of British Ostpolitik and on the related question of Thatcher’s pursuit of the liberal option in the two halves of Europe.

Thatcher and Gorbachev ‘the odd couple’ of the 1980s?

In the second half of the 1980s Britain deployed a wider, more active and more effective Ostpolitik than at any time since the onset of the Cold War. It was the rise in Cold War tensions in the early years of the decade that largely prompted Margaret Thatcher to try and open up dialogue with Moscow. In this sense, her initiative recalled previous attempts by British Prime Ministers, notably Harold Macmillan, to defuse high levels of superpower tension. Thatcher’s approach was broader in scope, embracing Eastern Europe as well as the Soviet Union. Some of the contributors in this issue who focus on the Thatcher-Gorbachev relationship argue that her diplomacy was far more intense than that of her predecessors and more successful in building understanding and respect. Second, the relationship she built with Mikhail Gorbachev was far closer than the distance separating their ideological positions and national interests would have led one to expect. Indeed, both the Foreign Office and Prime Minister Thatcher built on the 1970s approach to Ostpolitik - a mixture of pressures and incentives to governments and opposition movements. Thatcher often took a personal approach to Ostpolitik, particularly during her visits to Hungary and Poland in 1984 and 1988. At the same time, she was determined not to upset the existing


5. The starting point for this project is a research project funded by the Italian MIUR (Ministero dell’Istruzione, dell’Università e della Ricerca) and the University of Pavia on “A Common European destiny and identity beyond the borders of the Cold War? British ‘Ostpolitik’ and the new battlefield of ideas in Eastern Europe (Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia) 1984-92”, led by Ilaria Poggiolini. The scientific results of the project were discussed at the conference “Britain and Europe in the 1980s: East & West” (University of Pavia) where most contributors to this issue were present. Ilaria Poggiolini is indebted to the European and Russian-Eurasian Studies Centres at St. Antony’s College Oxford. Conversations with St. Antony’s former Warden, Lord Ralf Dahrendorf, who died on 18 June 2009, were an inspirational guide to the understanding of ideas of freedom in Europe.
nuclear and political balance of power in East-West relations or endanger the stability of transatlantic relations, by pushing the limits of British Ostpolitik.  

British archival sources and published documents, as well as documents released under the Freedom of Information Act, have been an invaluable asset in undertaking the research which informs the articles in this special issue and seeks to reassess Thatcher’s role, the complex interaction between 10 Downing Street and the Foreign Office in elaborating Eastern policies and, more broadly, continuity and change in British Ostpolitik.

Outside Europe, within the larger context of the transformation in East-West relations in these years, Thatcher’s role was significant though limited. The British Prime Minister was not in a position to conduct any real negotiations with Moscow. The heavy lifting of negotiating agreements was done throughout this period by Washington and in the later stages also by Bonn. Where Thatcher played an outstanding role was in helping to transform the climate of relations between East and West, particularly in the early years. Her contribution to the changes in the political milieu was three-fold. First, she was a trailblazer in developing the new dialogue with Moscow. Second, she acted as an interpreter, helping on the one hand to explain US thinking to a more open-minded yet still suspicious Kremlin; and, on the other, to convey the importance to the West of perestroika to those who had doubts about Gorbachev’s reforms. It was as an enthusiastic, if critically-minded, champion of perestroika, that Thatcher made her third and arguably most important contribution: the building of higher levels of understanding and confidence. This is not to claim that she played the key role in the West in creating the new levels of trust associated with the end of the Cold War. Confidence-building on the Western side was the result of the effort of a number of leaders, both European and American. Yet, in her characteristically determined manner, Thatcher played an important role in the beginning of the drama. However, she was definitely upstaged as soon as the process of progressive change in the East gathered speed and a radical, swift transformation brought the Cold War to an end. She had never expected or desired the acceleration of history which produced 1989.

The contributions in this issue by Andrei Grachev, Rodric Braithwaite and Archie Brown highlight the importance of personal factors in shaping the relationship between Margaret Thatcher and Gorbachev. The first two are insider accounts of the

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8. I. POGGIOLINI, Thatcher’s double track ...., op.cit.
relationship, one from a Soviet and one from a British perspective. Andrei Grachev was a senior member of the International Department of the Central Committee, and in 1991 served as President Gorbachev’s press spokesman. He brings to bear insights from his time in the corridors of power to shed light on Kremlin views of the relationship with Thatcher. Rodric Braithwaite draws on his experience in Whitehall in the early 1980s to trace the emergence of the new approach to the Soviet Union. The critical years (1988-1992) he spent as British Ambassador in Moscow inform his assessment of the dynamics of relations between the two leaders. Archie Brown, an academic and a leading authority on Soviet politics, was himself involved in key discussions in the 1980s which influenced the evolution of Thatcher’s views of Gorbachev and his reforms. Brown’s meticulous account of how those views evolved is based on recently declassified British documents as well as Soviet archives.

Both Gorbachev and Thatcher gave great importance to the role of personal diplomacy – what Gorbachev called the ‘human factor’ – in international politics. Both did so partly because of great confidence in their own powers of persuasion. Personal chemistry also played a part. Thatcher found Gorbachev personally charming. He was more equivocal, finding her impudent as well as engaging. As Grachev notes, Gorbachev was attracted by her qualities as a strong-minded woman; he was used to vigorous discussions with his wife Raisa. The personal rapport between the two leaders was strengthened by shared habits, including a Stakhanovite attitude to discussion, and a fondness for long speeches and having the last word. The most important common trait - and a major reason for the sustained intensity of their engagement - was a passionate commitment to their own fundamental political convictions and keen enjoyment in debating these in quasi-philosophical manner.

Political interest reinforced the personal compatibility of this rather odd couple. Yet the bilateral relationship remained far thinner than the engagement between the two leaders. London derived its value for Moscow mainly from its Atlantic position. Being an off-shore player, as far as European developments were concerned, made London attractive for a Kremlin trying to pay more attention to Western Europe while retaining the US as its primary target. The main ‘European’ issues Moscow raised with London centred on security; these were essentially Atlantic questions where Britain carried some weight and on which it could provide valuable insight. For Gorbachev the main policy value of Thatcher hinged on her capacity to interpret US views as well as exercise influence on the White House. The Prime Minister’s political and personal proximity to Reagan made her a more valuable interlocutor than European leaders such as President François Mitterrand, whose views on the US and security Gorbachev found more congenial yet less reliable. Thatcher did not see herself as a broker of particular deals, but aspired to be a general intermediary between the superpowers. In the Reagan era she played this role to some effect, especially in the


10. See Gorbachev Foundation Archives, Gorbachev’s comments on Thatcher at the Politburo on 2 April 1987, as noted by Anatoliy Chernyaev.
early years. Her assessment of Gorbachev encouraged an American President who, as he began his second term, was also thinking about developing dialogue with the Kremlin.11

From Moscow’s perspective, a key issue in any such a dialogue on which Thatcher might have a useful influence was that of the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). As Braithwaite points out, her views on Star Wars were mixed. She supported the research Ronald Reagan wanted to develop. But she had doubts stemming from scepticism about the technical feasibility of the project and fears that the development of missile defence would weaken nuclear deterrence. Beyond the immediate issue of SDI, Thatcher’s commitment to nuclear deterrence made her a problematic if useful interlocutor for Moscow. Her alarm at how close the Reykjavik summit had come to agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons caused irritation in the Kremlin.12 Still, the very firmness of her stand against far-reaching disarmament made it worth Moscow’s while to try and allay her anxieties; this was especially the case when she took the lead in airing West European anxieties about plans to cut short-range missiles.

At the fundamental level of thinking about security, Thatcher’s militant attachment to deterrence made her an attractive challenge for a Soviet leader with an anti-nuclear mission. Gorbachev seemed to relish their robust exchanges on deterrence and even flattered himself that his arguments had tempered her policy positions, if not her basic commitment to deterrence.13 As Grachev notes, the Soviet leader got more return from their discussions about threat perceptions. In highly combative exchanges at the March 1987 meeting, Thatcher insisted that Soviet interventions in Eastern Europe and the Third World fuelled continuing Western fears of an aggressive Moscow. Gorbachev used her testimony about the reality of a perceived Soviet threat to drive home to his Politburo colleagues the costs of forceful interventionism.14 As Gorbachev’s new line against the use of force gained political ascendancy in the course of 1988, so Thatcher became less useful as a foil for his arguments. Her value on the Washington front also declined with the passing of the Reagan era. She remained of some interest as a source of information in early 1989 when Gorbachev was anxious about the intentions of the new Bush administration. She went out of her

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14. Ibid.; and Gorbachev Foundation Archives, comments by Gorbachev to the Politburo, 8 May 1987, as noted by Chernyaev.
way to reassure him on that score and, more generally, about continued Western support for perestroika.\textsuperscript{15}

It was Thatcher’s steadfast support for the perestroika project that underpinned the building of trust between the two leaders. The articles by Brown, Grachev and Braithwaite all highlight the importance of trust and confidence in the relationship. Personal qualities played a part in shaping Gorbachev’s general confidence in Thatcher. He considered her straightforward and, unlike Mitterrand, incapable of hiding her intentions.\textsuperscript{16} To be sure, there were occasions on which Gorbachev felt let down by her lack of frankness. As Braithwaite recalls, there was disappointment that the Prime Minister made no mention at their meeting in April 1989 of the expulsion of Soviet diplomats which followed a month later. Even so, the relationship between them remained one of considerable trust. Such trust came in large measure from Thatcher’s genuine admiration for the Soviet leader and for his efforts to push through radical reform. As Brown notes, she took an early interest in perestroika and came to identify with Gorbachev in his struggle for radical change. In a sense she saw him as ‘one of us’, a fellow radical, heroically battling against incompetent and conservative bureaucrats. He in turn was impressed by her well-informed observations on Soviet developments and appreciated her steadfast support for perestroika.\textsuperscript{17} Her loyalty was valued all the more in 1989-1991, when the Kremlin feared that Western leaders were becoming ever more pessimistic about perestroika and increasingly doubtful about Gorbachev’s survival. Thatcher, by contrast, was seen as a relatively steadfast champion of project and leader alike.\textsuperscript{18}

The strength of Thatcher’s support for perestroika affected her stance on developments in Eastern Europe. She saw the region in terms of captive nations and herself as the champion of self-liberation. She understood that Gorbachev was trying to distance himself from the captor tradition, even if she, along with many others, remained unsure until very late in the day whether he would be able to constrain traditional Soviet reaction to crisis in the region. It was to help avoid such crises, and the damage a forceful Soviet response would do to perestroika, that Thatcher exercised unusual self-restraint in her dealings with Eastern Europe.

\textsuperscript{15} M.S. GORBACHEV, {	extit{Zhizn’...}}, op.cit., p.83.
\textsuperscript{16} Gorbachev Foundation Archives, Chernyaev’s notes of Gorbachev’s comments to a group of advisers on 1 April 1987 and his comments to the Politburo, 2 April 1987.
\textsuperscript{17} Gorbachev comments in meeting with the British ambassador, Rodric Braithwaite, 15 June 1991, in V Politbyuro TsK KPSS, p.676.
\textsuperscript{18} Anatoliy Chernyaev, Gorbachev’s closest foreign policy aide, thought highly of Thatcher’s commitment to perestroika, and appreciated the support given by the British ambassador, Rodric Braithwaite. See A. CHERNYAEV, {	extit{My Six Years...}}, op.cit. pp.221-222.
British traditions of ‘looking east’

Thatcher, the “champion of self-liberation” in Eastern Europe probably never realised that she was not standing alone. As the article by Carola Cerami points out, Thatcher was in the company of a significant number of prominent academics, politicians and diplomats who were not Cold War warriors but shared her belief in the cause of Eastern Europe. Furthermore, during the 1970s and 1980s the other half of Europe started being rediscovered. Gradually, as Sara Tavani shows, both external observers and internal dissidents contributed to bring back this area - first figuratively and then from being Eastern Europe, to Central Europe, a concept evoking both pre-communist memories and ideas of future liberalisation and openness.19

Prominent voices of democratic dissidents and free-market thinkers in the Communist bloc in the early eighties gave substance and depth to the claim that a distinctively Central European identity still existed and now demanded to be acknowledged.20 This new awareness of a possible “return” of Central Europe to Europe grew rapidly in the 1980s on both sides of the Iron Curtain and itself fed Western Ostpolitik.

The return of the idea of Central Europe and that of a strong interest in the revival of civil society East of the Iron Curtain were parallel processes. In 1995, Michael Ignatieff in reviewing Ernest Gellner’s book *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals in Foreign Affairs*, observed that, “since the 1980s, the renewed East European interest in civil society has returned West European intellectuals to a concept they had forgotten”.21 Among those intellectuals Gellner and the German born Ralf Dahrendorf, played a central role. As Carola Cerami shows, these two scholars responded with extraordinary intellectual eagerness to East European interests in civil society. Besides thinking and writing on this theme, they actively engaged in initiatives such as Dahrendorf’s project of a “common market of the mind”, open to both sides of Europe, and Gellner’s involvement with the creation of the Centre for the study of nationalism at the Central European University, funded by George Soros. The debate on the return of Central Europe and that on civil society contributed to creating a solid intellectual basis for British Ostpolitik. These developments, as Sara

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Tavani argues, set in motion a process of mutual reinforcement of Ost- and Westpolitik.

Prime Minister Thatcher publicly entered the debate on Central Europe when she talked about her aspirations while visiting Hungary in February 1984. On that occasion she uncharacteristically embraced the FCO briefing without reserve and expressed her wish to contribute to the creation of a society “Central rather than Eastern European in character”. 22

Politicians as well as engaged individuals played key roles in the debate on the European transformation on both sides of the European divide in the 1980s and the essays in this issue offer valuable insights and reflections on how the “human factor” played out in Britain in the 1980s. 23 In a recent conversation Timothy Garton Ash recalled:

“I do not think we created a sort of international civil society, a network of intellectuals in Eastern and Western Europe a liberating "internazionale". But, first of all, particular individual matters a lot in history, and individuals who mattered a lot in 1989 were often intellectuals.” 24

Britain, the EC and the Eastern dimension

How did the European Community dimension play into this?

Stephen Wall, the Head of the European Community Department and Private Secretary to three successive Foreign Secretaries and to Tony Blair, points out that Thatcher’s tough style in pursuit of the rebate in the first half of the 1980s made the deal ultimately possible but convinced her partners that she did not understand the Community. When the UK delegation at the Fontainebleau Summit of 25-26th June 1984 submitted a document called “Europe-the future” which Wall himself describes

22. FCO Steering Brief, Prime Minister’s visit to Hungary, 02.-04.02.1984, FOIA request 2007 by I. Poggiolini, for the Machiavelli Centre, now online at www.margaretthatcher.org.
as the “most complete and coherent statement of European policy made by any British government”, the event passed almost unnoticed.25

Now that the contents of the document have been made available, we know that it rested primarily on the idea of the Single Market as the main unfulfilled objective of the original Treaty of Rome, but listed also other areas of British interest in fostering European cooperation. Among the most relevant were: research and development, common external policies, improved European defence, environmental coordination and efforts to bring the Community closer to the lives of European citizens. The timing and place chosen for the presentation of “Europe-the future” indicated that the controversy regarding the rebate could be set aside and that Britain would now make her contribution to the European project. As far as our partial access to the archives suggests, nothing came of this initiative, adding yet one more “missed opportunity” to a long list of missed turning points in the relationship between Britain and Europe.

Indeed, the EC was soon to be the cause of the widening gap between Thatcher and her diplomats although they remained close in carrying on British Ostpolitik, as in the occasion of Thatcher’s visit to Poland in November 1988. In Gdansk with Solidarity’s leaders or in Warsaw with Wojciech Jaruzelski, Thatcher ended up by urging caution on both sides notwithstanding her instincts to encourage the radical opposition and “do battle with the communist authorities”.26

In the fall of 1988 before the Polish trip, Thatcher delivered her most controversial statement on Europe at the College of Europe in Bruges on September 1988. Passages of the speech are often quoted with enthusiasm by eurosceptics. As recalled by Wall, the genesis of the famous Bruges speech was a long process of writing and re-writing, up to the last moments when the draft, rewritten by Charles Powell, was “batted backwards and forwards across Downing Street”. Wall, who was directly involved in the preparation of the speech, argues that:

“the shocked reaction to the speech in much of Europe at the time, as well as the iconic status it has achieved among Euro-sceptics, owed much to the way it was briefed to the Press by Mrs Thatcher’s spokesman, Bernard Ingham”.

In many ways, Wall believes, the speech was no more than “a classic exposition of British views” and Thatcher’s first guiding principle in the Bruges speech (“willing and active cooperation between independent sovereign states is the best way to build a successful European Community”) “was taken, almost word for word by Tony Blair as his defining vision when he spoke in Oxford in February 2006”.28

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27. Documentation on the genesis of the speech is now available at www.margaretthatcher.org.
Yet Thatcher’s exposition of the British view at Bruges was particularly damaging because it came after a basic failure of the British Europeanists to promote a fresh start and after the end of the brief parenthesis of active engagement in the creation of Single European Act. It also further raised the level of confrontation between the Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, by responding publicly to what she had interpreted as a personal challenge delivered on her own ground: Delors’ speech to the British Trade Union Congress on September 8th 1988. At Bruges Thatcher denied that the European Community was the main manifestation of European identity, rejected the move towards more centralisation of power in the EEC and made clear that she would not have “successfully ruled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at the European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels”. This line of her speech overshadowed everything else she said, including her noteworthy appeal for the return of Eastern Europe to the freedom of Western Europe. By 1988, her conviction that more idealism could be found on the other side of the Iron Curtain than on the Western side was the result of her frustration with the project of the Single Market. She now charged against the “European super state” on behalf of Britain as well as of Eastern Europe and of their common struggle for liberal values and the open society. 29 This is a linkage of great importance in UK’s EC policies and its policies towards Eastern Europe in the late Thatcher’s years.

However, Thatcher’s ideas of freedom did not help her to understand that there was no necessary contradiction in a liberalisation that develops swiftly into liberation as in the German case. According to Timothy Garton Ash, also one of the specialists invited to the seminar on the future of Germany held at Chequers in March 1990, “she definitely missed the moment completely because of her totally misguided and anachronistic reaction to German reunification and fear that the acceleration would undermine Gorbachev”. 30 Thatcher’s inability to adjust to the transformation of 1989 deprived her of a share in two European successes: the reunification of Germany and the opening of the EC/EU door to Central Eastern Europe. However, her personal and political relationship with Gorbachev and the long term achievement of British Ostpolitik were important factors in the wider process leading to the end of the Cold War.

29. “Arguably”, Thatcher wrote, “it was the Czech, Poles and Hungarians who were the real – indeed the last – European ‘idealists’”. M. THATCHER, op.cit., p.744.
Margaret Thatcher and Perceptions of Change in the Soviet Union

Archie BROWN

In the 1970s and well into the second half of the 1980s there was a variety of views on how change could come about in the Soviet Union and in Communist states more generally. Not everyone, though, wished even to pose that question. One widely-held assumption was that the Soviet Union was impervious to change. At a conference (in which I participated) its chairman, a retired British ambassador, summed up the proceedings by saying, to murmurs of approval from prominent members of the foreign policy communities in Britain and the United States: ‘There’s one thing we all know. The Soviet Union isn’t going to change’. That statement was made in February 1985 – one month before Mikhail Gorbachev succeeded Konstantin Chernenko as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and embarked on reform of the USSR. By 1988 Gorbachev had come to the conclusion that the system needed to be fundamentally transformed. Liberalisation and, subsequently, democratisation of the Soviet system (a process that remained, however, incomplete both then and in post-Soviet Russia) were consciously pursued by Gorbachev. The break-up of the Soviet state was, in contrast, an entirely unintended consequence of the pluralisation of the political system.¹

The pre-perestroika notion that the Soviet Union was largely immune to change, especially of a democratising kind, went along with a view that the most that could be achieved was to manage the relationship with the Communist world in a way which avoided crises and reduced the risk of nuclear war. It implied ‘business as usual’ over the long term. That outlook undoubtedly had its adherents within the British Foreign Office. Some officials there had, indeed, concluded that, since attempts at radical change in Communist countries were doomed to failure, it was foolish even to try. I recall having a very vigorous argument with two FCO exponents of such ‘realism’ in the early 1970s. One was a leading Foreign Office specialist on Czechoslovakia and the other, who also had a primary specialisation on East-Central Europe, went

¹. For my substantiation of the points briefly made in that opening paragraph, see A. BROWN, The Gorbachev Factor, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996; A. BROWN, Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007; and A. BROWN, The Rise and Fall of Communism, Bodley Head, London, 2009. So far as the break-up of the Union is concerned, the continued membership within it of the Baltic republics was essentially incompatible with democratisation. However, there was nothing preordained about all fifteen union republics becoming separate states, in spite of the fact that they had institutional resources that, in the transformed political climate, they could use to pursue independence. For differing evaluations of the reasons for the dissolution of the Soviet state, see M.R. BEISSINGER, Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002; V.J. BUNCE, Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999; and S.F. COHEN, Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives: From Stalinism to the New Cold War, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009.
on to become an ambassador to one of the post-Soviet states. They both argued that Gustáv Husák was greatly to be preferred to Alexander Dubček and that the current regime in Czechoslovakia was a vast improvement on the ‘Prague Spring’ which had been a foolhardy endeavour that had done more harm than good. The chaos of 1968 had now been replaced by a commendable stability and improved living standards.

That would not appear, however, to have been the predominant view within the FCO which contained quite a wide spectrum of opinion. Sir Rodric Braithwaite has said that he believed that ‘the seeds of change were sown in the early 1960s and that the Soviet Union was bound to change from inside’ but added that this, too, ‘was certainly not the prevailing view’ in the FCO. Officials often felt an affinity with those whom they regarded as the ‘technocrats’ in Communist countries and believed that if change was to come, it would be through them. In fact, when radical change came from within ruling Communist parties, whether in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or in the Soviet Union during perestroika, it was instigated by people who were interested in ideas and who were very much politicians, not technocrats. One strand of Foreign Office thinking which was much more to the point was the seeking of more East-West contact in the belief that this would contribute over the long term to a liberalisation of the regimes under Communist rule. That approach predominated in the mid-1970s and a striking manifestation of it was the seriousness with which FCO officials took the Helsinki process.

The United States administration, and Henry Kissinger specifically, were much readier to cut a deal on terms acceptable to the Soviet negotiators than were the British. Far from legitimising the political boundaries in Europe for all time, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) incorporated the principle that they could be changed peacefully. It also placed an emphasis on human rights and on a free flow of information which was to prove an embarrassment to Communist rulers. Margaret Thatcher was among those who believed at the time that the Helsinki agreement played into the hands of the Soviet Union, although later

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2. Personal communication from Rodric Braithwaite of 14 August 2009.
3. Thus, for example, Sir Duncan Wilson, who was British ambassador to Moscow from 1968 until 1971, was a relative optimist about the longer-term prospects for change in the Soviet Union, but time and again in his dispatches he places his hopes in the ‘technocrats’ who were contrasted with the ‘ideologists’. See, for example, G. BENNETT, K.A. HAMILTON (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Vol.I: Britain and the Soviet Union, 1968-1972, HMSO, London, 1997, pp.48, 87, 160 and 304. Wilson, however, in his valedictory dispatch from Moscow in 1971 made a case for Britain following a policy towards the Soviet Union more akin to that being pursued by the West Germans and the French. In particular, he strongly approved of Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik, noting that Brandt’s ‘own powerfully stated justification of this policy is essentially that, in the long term, it will assist peaceful evolution in Eastern Europe (including the Soviet Union)’, ibid., p.308.
she acknowledged that ‘by making human rights a matter of treaty obligations rather than domestic law it gave the dissidents leverage which they employed to the full’. After Thatcher became Prime Minister, and especially between the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and 1983, British policy was to avoid high-level contact with Soviet leaders. This reflected the views of the Prime Minister more than the attitude of the FCO. At the time of the death of Leonid Brezhnev in November 1982 the Foreign Secretary was Francis Pym whose relationship with the Prime Minister was difficult, to say the least. Pym disapproved of the fact that Mrs Thatcher had chosen not to be among the numerous heads of government who attended Brezhnev’s funeral in Moscow and deplored, more generally, her resistance to the idea that there needed to be more dialogue with the Soviet Union.

Another position, which had some adherents in the Foreign Office, although there it was only a minority view, was that Western countries should be much more aggressive in waging the Cold War against an unreformable Soviet Union, both through increased military and intelligence expenditure and by going on the ideological offensive. That was a view held less by officials than by many of Margaret Thatcher’s informal advisers. Among them, Brian Crozier – who, on his own account, had numerous meetings with Thatcher, both while she was leader of the opposition and when she was Prime Minister – may serve as an extreme example. For some of those who saw themselves as Thatcher’s natural allies, it was self-evident that Gorbachev’s perestroika could be nothing but cosmetic and a ‘grand deception’. Even with the benefit of hindsight, Crozier believed that ‘everything Gorbachev said and did, in fact, was in line with the teaching of Lenin, his earthly god’. A number of Thatcher’s informal advisers fell into the category of those who, as Alec Nove put it in 1987, believed both that ‘the Soviet Union is an expansionist monster in its very essence’ and that fundamental change within the system was impossible. Therefore, ‘any change that has actually occurred cannot be fundamental because it has occurred’. It goes without saying that advisers of that cast of mind were oblivious to the single most important fact for understanding the potential for change in Communist Europe – namely, that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union contained people of the most diverse political views, to be found not only in policy-oriented research institutes but even in such an inner sanctum of the party apparatus as the International Department of the Central Committee. It was from there that Gorbachev was to draw several of the most

6. F. PYM, *The Politics of Consent*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1984, p.60. Pym says that ‘I tried to persuade the Prime Minister that Britain should rebuild a dialogue with the Soviet Union’, but he failed. Following his dismissal from office, he complained about the centralisation of decision-making within the government, adding: ‘This process stems from the Prime Minister’s tendency to think she is always right. In turn, this leads her to believe that she can always do things better than other people, which then encourages her to try to do everything herself’ (p.17).
9. A. NOVE, in the symposium, ‘What’s Happening in Moscow?’, in: *The National Interest*, 8(Summer 1987), pp.3-30, at p.18. (Nove was one of eight contributors to this early evaluation of the significance, or otherwise, of Gorbachev’s reforms by that Washington journal.)
influential ‘new thinkers’ of the perestroika era, including Anatoliy Chernyaev, his principal foreign policy adviser. Chernyaev became a full-time, and highly influential, aide to Gorbachev in February 1986, having been a deputy head of the International Department for the previous sixteen years.\(^{10}\)

From the people outside government who most frequently bent Thatcher’s ear on the subject of the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1970s and in the early 1980s she was unlikely to draw the conclusion that the most realistic hope of change – serious change that could get off the ground – lay within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union itself. The agents of change for that circle of advisers, to the extent that they admitted even the possibility of improvement occurring, were dissident groups, religious believers and national minorities. Some of those who advised Thatcher informally on what they perceived as an acute threat of Soviet subversion reinforced her tendency to regard the Foreign Office as a nest of ‘defeatists, even collaborators’, in the view attributed to her by Sir Percy Cradock, her Foreign Policy adviser of the perestroika years.\(^{11}\) Sir Rodric Braithwaite has recalled Thatcher’s reaction when it was suggested in 1980 that she might usefully acquaint herself with the knowledge of the Soviet Union of a group of FCO specialists: ‘Foreign Office? Foreign Office? What do they know about Russia’? But when she took part in the discussion and learned more about the serious problems the Soviet Union was facing, she observed that if it was ‘in such a parlous state, the system was bound to collapse before long’.\(^{12}\) In fact, it was not bound to collapse any time soon. A highly authoritarian regime, and especially one with all the sophisticated levers of propaganda, control, and repression that the Soviet system possessed, could survive economic downturn and foreign political setbacks (such as the Prague Spring of 1968 and the rise of Solidarity in 1980-81) by tightening the screws at home and within the Soviet bloc.

The September 1983 Chequers Seminar

The validity of Alexis de Tocqueville’s view that the most dangerous time for an authoritarian regime is when it begins to reform itself was to be demonstrated, yet again, in the second half of the 1980s. However, among many of Thatcher’s informal advisers on the USSR and Eastern Europe, the idea that a genuine reformer could emerge as leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was ruled out of court. There is no evidence that before 1983 the British Prime Minister expected change in the Soviet Union to emanate from within the CPSU. Rodric Braithwaite,
in his article in this issue, quotes Thatcher saying that she spotted Gorbachev ‘because I was searching for someone like him’. That was doubtless true from September 1983 onwards, but not earlier. With strong encouragement from John Coles, her Private Secretary at that time (later, as Sir John Coles, Head of the Diplomatic Service) and her Foreign Policy Adviser, Sir Anthony Parsons, Thatcher decided to convene a major seminar to re-evaluate British foreign policy, the main emphasis of which was to be on East-West relations. There was alarm within the Foreign Office that Thatcher might pack it with people whom she consulted, at Chequers and elsewhere, in her more frequent political, rather than governmental, seminars.13

Once persuaded of the desirability of this official seminar, involving the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence as well as outside experts, Thatcher approached it with characteristic zeal and industriousness. She read and annotated in advance of the seminar the lengthy papers prepared for the Chequers meeting by the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence and the shorter papers (6-8 pages each) prepared by the eight specialists from outside government whose invitations were personally approved by the Prime Minister. Just as the Foreign Office had been anxious to keep out those who, from their standpoint, were some of Thatcher’s most dubious allies, she had been adamant in rejecting the names of FCO experts when they were proposed for the specialist component of the seminar. In her memoirs Thatcher says that she had wanted ‘to pick the brains of experts on the Soviet Union’ but ‘instead of the best minds on the Soviet system’ she was presented with ‘a list of the best minds in the Foreign Office, which was not quite the same thing’. She added:

‘The difficulty of tapping into outside thinking even in our own open democratic system of government shows just why closed totalitarian systems are so sluggish and mediocre’.14

It is doubtful, though, if any post-Second World War Prime Minister consulted with outside specialists more than Thatcher did – both for better and for worse. By the time the seminar of 8-9 September 1983 went ahead, with the academics involved only on the first day, she ‘felt that we did have the right people and some first-class papers’.15

13. For these unofficial seminars (many of them organised by Hugh Thomas), which had an impact on Thatcher’s thinking but a diminishing one after she established a working relationship with Mikhail Gorbachev, see G.R. URBAN, Diplomacy and Disillusion at the Court of Margaret Thatcher: An Insider’s View, I.B. Tauris, London, 1996. Foreign Office alarm at the prospect of the September 1983 Chequers seminar, involving outside specialists as well as ministers and officials, and FCO relief at its outcome, was reported to me shortly afterwards by Malcolm Mackintosh, the Cabinet Office specialist on the Soviet Union.


15. I have discussed this seminar in much greater detail, citing the papers produced for it, along with Thatcher’s annotations of them (obtained under the UK Freedom of Information Act) in A. BROWN, The Change to Engagement in Britain’s Cold War Policy: The Origins of the Thatcher-Gorbachev Relationship, in: Journal of Cold War Studies, 3(2008), pp.3-47.
The Prime Minister, having retained her deep suspicion of the Foreign Office (though she made exceptions for some of its individual members),\(^{16}\) totally ignored in her memoirs the substantial paper produced by the FCO. It came to 84 pages, 50 of which were devoted to East-West relations. There was also a section defining Britain’s ‘global interests and priorities’, another on the Middle East, and one on the European Community. Her copious annotations of the East-West Relations FCO paper at the time are, in any event, of more historical significance than her retrospective remarks would have been. She took issue with the Foreign Office statement that ‘the West is faced by the task of managing a powerful military Empire in decline’. She did not like the word ‘managing’ or, evidently, the statement that the Soviet Union was ‘a powerful military Empire in decline’. That last phrase was double-underlined and greeted with double question-marks in both margins.\(^{17}\) Some of the FCO points earned large ticks, such as the statement that ‘The Russians should be disabused of any impression that they can divide the West or undermine its resolve by appeals to public opinion’ and that ‘balanced and verifiable arms control agreements which would maintain security at lower levels of expenditure’ should be pursued. She also approved of the statement that ‘Nothing so far, during the Andropov period of office, has indicated a willingness to alter the fundamentals of the system’.\(^{18}\) The FCO stress on a need to improve the flow of information to Communist countries was also met with underlinings of assent. The Prime Minister questioned, however, their statement that ‘the pursuit of national ambition and the spread of communism are closely linked in the minds of Soviet leaders’.\(^{19}\) The Foreign Office’s preamble on Britain’s global interests and priorities referred to ‘Soviet expansion’ into Afghanistan and said that

> ‘we must ensure […] that the Soviet Union either withdraws from the country or continues to bear the full cost of its occupation, political as well as military’.\(^{20}\)

Thatcher underlined ‘full cost of its occupation’ and wrote in the margin ‘We could put this up’; she also double-underlined ‘military’.

The Foreign Office paper noted that the average age of the Soviet Politburo was at that time sixty-seven, but omitted any discussion of the implications of this, commenting simply on Soviet failure ‘to evolve a way of handing on power or of renewing leadership’ which had ‘resulted in one sick man succeeding another’.\(^{21}\) There was nothing about generational change and no mention of the name of Gorbachev. As the author of the paper on ‘The Political System, Policy-Making and Leadership’, written for the Chequers seminar, I did discuss Gorbachev as a likely future General Secretary, noting that he was ‘the best-educated member of the Politburo and probably the

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17. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, ‘East-West Relations’ (prepared for Chequers Seminar, 8-9 September 1983), p.10. I have used the Cabinet Office copy of this document (obtained under the Freedom of Information Act), for it contains Thatcher’s annotations and underlinings.
18. Ibid., pp.15 and 19.
19. Ibid., p.11.
most open-minded’ and ‘might well be the most hopeful choice from the point of view both of Soviet citizens and the outside world’. My doubt as to whether Thatcher was already looking ‘for someone like’ Gorbachev prior to the Chequers 8 September meeting is reinforced by the fact that she underlined none of the points in his favour which I advanced. It was, however, in the course of oral discussion of my paper at the Chequers seminar, in which I said more about Gorbachev, that Thatcher first raised the idea of inviting Gorbachev to Britain. Later discussion within the government centred, however, on the Foreign Office proposal that the Prime Minister should meet with Juri Andropov. The invitation to Gorbachev was not issued until June 1984. In the autumn of 1983, when Andropov was still General Secretary and Konstantin Chernenko Second Secretary, it would, indeed, have been premature to seek a visit from Gorbachev, but Andropov was already too ill to go anywhere.

Although in some respects the papers of the academics at the Chequers seminar of 8-9 September were bolder than those from within government (the scholars had less to lose than the officials), on many of the fundamentals they were in agreement. The first item in what the FCO called its Action Programme suggested that

‘the Prime Minister should discuss East/West relations with President Reagan with a view to adopting as a conscious goal the objective of a “gradual evolution of the Soviet system towards a more pluralistic political and economic system” ’.

The quotation was from American Secretary of State George Shultz whose desire for engagement with the Soviet Union was to prevail within the Reagan administration over the scepticism of the Pentagon and the CIA. Shultz’s view was shared by Sir Geoffrey Howe and, if it had been seen by the academic specialists at the time (it became available to them only a quarter of a century later when the document was declassified), the scholars, too, would have endorsed that aim. When Thatcher asked the outside specialists after lunch at Chequers on 8 September for their policy recommendations, they emphasised ‘the desirability of more contacts with Communist countries at all levels – from dissidents to General Secretaries’.

The significance of the September 1983 Chequers seminar lay in the fact that it was the turning-point at which Thatcher was persuaded that it was desirable to seek

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22. The passage is cited at greater length in A. BROWN, *The Change ...*, op.cit., p.13, identifying which parts of that paragraph were and were not underlined by the Prime Minister.

23. She did, however, underline many other points in the paper and also identified it (by its subject-matter) in her memoirs as the one she had found most useful (M. THATCHER, *The Downing Street Years*, op.cit., p.451). This may have been partly because of the greater salience the reference to Gorbachev had for her subsequently. That the discussion of Gorbachev in the seminar stuck in Thatcher’s mind is suggested by the fact that I was invited – along with three other academics and one businessman – to 10 Downing Street the evening before Mikhail Gorbachev arrived in Britain in December 1984. This informal meeting on 14 December 1984 was with the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. I was asked to speak specifically about Gorbachev. The other participants, who had broader assignments, were Michael Kaser, Alec Nove (both of whom had participated in the Chequers seminar), Lawrence Freedman and businessman Norman Wooding.


more contact with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. That view was advanced not only by the Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, but also by the Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Heseltine, and was shared by the Minister of State at the Foreign Office responsible for relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Malcolm Rifkind. That it was independently promoted by the outside specialists at the Chequers seminar – who were unaware of the intra-governmental communications – should normally have been inconsequential by comparison. However, given Thatcher’s distrust of the Foreign Office and her difficult relationship not with the Ministry of Defence but with Heseltine personally, the fact that the academics produced arguments which complemented those of the FCO almost certainly mattered. That is, furthermore, suggested by the fact that from the two and a half pages of her memoirs Thatcher devotes to this seminar, a reader could be forgiven from concluding that the only people involved in the discussion were the outside specialists.

In a memorandum dated 12 September 1983 sent to Brian Fall, who was the Private Secretary to Sir Geoffrey Howe, John Coles summarised the conclusions of the Chequers seminar, following discussion after the academics had departed. These related to ‘the policy which the Government should pursue on East/West relations in the next few years’. Coles noted:

‘The question of whether or not the United Kingdom should seek increased contact, at higher levels, with the Soviet Union was discussed at length. It was agreed that the aim should be to build up contacts slowly over the next few years. There would be no public announcement of this change of policy’.

It had been agreed, Coles reported, that ‘the capacity of the West to exercise influence on the Soviet Union was not great’ and policy should ‘be based on the assumption that any change in the system in at least the medium term would not be fundamental’. Eastern Europe ‘might provide more scope for influence’, but the process of change there, too, ‘would be at best gradual’.

26. Cabinet Office Papers PM/83/65, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Memorandum to Prime Minister, ‘Strategy Meetings on Foreign Affairs and Defence’, 05.09.1983. All the Cabinet Office and Foreign Office papers cited in this article were obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.
28. Thatcher initially tried to prevent Heseltine from attending the part of the Chequers seminar involving the academics where, in fact, he was the only person on the government side of the table to express disagreement, more than once, with the Prime Minister. Although Heseltine’s memorandum of 1 September to the Prime Minister, cited in the previous note, was sent on to Thatcher by her Private Secretary John Coles with a note saying ‘You will want to read this before the Chequers meetings’, the text, though doubtless read by its recipient, remained unmarked by even as much as a solitary underlining.
31. Ibid.
So far as a meeting with Andropov was concerned, Coles reported that ‘the Prime Minister would not go to the Soviet Union for this purpose’. The aim should, therefore, be ‘to persuade Mr Andropov to visit the West (which he had never done)’. Further:

‘It might also be useful to arrange at the appropriate time for other senior members of the Politbureau, particularly potential successors to Andropov, to visit London. The Prime Minister would be prepared, in principle, to receive one or more such visitors. This question should be further examined in due course’.

Gorbachev’s 1984 Visit to Britain

A little over a fortnight after the Chequers seminar of 8-9 September Thatcher had her interest in meeting Gorbachev augmented. On a visit to Canada, she met with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and discussed international affairs with him. What, she said, ‘was most interesting for me was his impression of Mikhail Gorbachev, of whom I had heard but whom I did not yet know’. Gorbachev, it seemed, had ‘been prepared to argue and make at least verbal concessions’. Nevertheless, Thatcher adds: ‘I did not at this time foresee the importance of Mr Gorbachev for the future’.

In September 1983 (and for some time thereafter), the expectation of Thatcher as well as of the Foreign Office was that the best that could be hoped for was gradual change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but that a policy of engagement with these countries should be adopted. So far as Eastern Europe was concerned, ‘each country should be treated individually and those tendencies which diverged from the Soviet model should be encouraged’.

Andropov died in February 1984 and was succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko whose health was already in serious decline. Gorbachev became – after some argument and delaying tactics – Second Secretary of the CPSU. The largely ceremonial post of Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Soviet of the Union of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR went with that job. It was in his Supreme Soviet capacity that Gorbachev was invited by the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons, Sir Anthony Kershaw, to come to Britain in December 1984. A more general British letter of invitation (signed by the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Chancellor) to the Supreme Soviet to send a delegation had been issued on 2 February (while Andropov was still alive), but it expressed no preference as to its composition or leadership. In contrast, the letter delivered by the British Ambassador to Moscow on 14 June, in Kershaw’s name but drafted in the Foreign Office under the supervision of Malcolm Rifkind, the Minister
of State with special responsibility for British relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, was addressed to Gorbachev. It made no bones about the fact that ‘I should like to invite you to lead the delegation from the Supreme Soviet’. The British Ambassador, Sir Iain Sutherland, was instructed by Sir Geoffrey Howe to make clear to Gorbachev that he would be received by the Prime Minister.  

Gorbachev’s visit to Britain in December 1984 is discussed elsewhere. It was significant for Gorbachev, since he did not put a foot wrong and thus improved his already strong position as principal contender to succeed Chernenko as Soviet leader. And it was important for Thatcher, since she established a good relationship with Gorbachev in advance of his becoming General Secretary. The fact that she was the foreign leader to whom President Ronald Reagan felt closest, and one whose opinion he took seriously, meant that her judgement counted for something in Washington. That was especially significant in the year that separated Gorbachev’s UK visit and Reagan’s first summit meeting with Gorbachev in Geneva. Thatcher promptly conveyed the favourable impression Gorbachev had made on her when she participated in a meeting at Camp David with President Reagan and some of his most senior officials on 22 December 1984. The Prime Minister told them that Gorbachev was ‘an unusual Russian’ in that he ‘was much less constrained, more charming, open to discussion and debate, and did not stick to prepared notes’. She made it clear to her American hosts that she had not been a soft touch. The transcript of the Camp David meeting reports: ‘Over the private lunch at Chequers, she had raised a number of pointed questions. She asked Gorbachev why the Soviet Union denies its people the right to emigrate. She had underlined that the West simply cannot understand or accept the Soviet policy of refusing people the right to leave. She contrasted the Soviet policy with the situation in the West, where many countries have had to stop people from coming in’.

1987 – A Year of Changing Perceptions  

From her meetings with Gorbachev in December 1984 and on the occasion of Chernenko’s funeral in March 1985, Thatcher was already disposed to think well of him. That does not mean that she had yet reached the conclusion that serious change in the Soviet Union might be in the offing. The issue of how radical Soviet reform might be in the process of becoming was the central theme of another Chequers seminar

36. The process by which the invitation to Gorbachev was issued is discussed in greater detail in A. BROWN, The Change ..., op.cit., esp. pp.18-22.
39. Ibid.
which the Prime Minister convened in February 1987, in preparation for her official visit to the Soviet Union for extended talks the following month. Most of the academics present with expertise on the Soviet Union, as well as the British Ambassador to Moscow at the time, Sir Bryan Cartledge, took the view that serious reform was underway and that it could turn out to be far-reaching. Charles Powell, who had succeeded John Coles as the Prime Minister’s Private Secretary in the middle of 1984, noted the division of opinion at the seminar:

‘Discussion of the prospects for change within the Soviet Union revealed a difference between those, principally the experts on the Soviet Union, who were impressed by the scope and energy of Gorbachev’s reforms; and those, principally non-specialists, who were not convinced that real change could be either possible or allowed and were sceptical of Gorbachev’s motives. To simplify: between enthusiasts and sceptics’.40

In a covering letter to A.C. Galsworthy in the Foreign Office, Powell said that his account ‘may err slightly on the side of conveying too negative a view of what is happening in the Soviet Union’. It was, indeed, very much closer to the view of the sceptics, and a number of conclusions which Powell listed as having commanded ‘broad assent’ did not reflect the view of a majority of academic specialists present (of whom I was one). These included the proposition that ‘fundamental change was not on the agenda’ and that there might be enough reform to ‘produce limited improvements in efficiency’, but ‘there would be nothing dramatic or far-reaching’. Indeed, ‘The Soviet system might at best evolve in 20 years time into something resembling Yugoslavia today’ (italics added).41 An annotation by an FCO official to the covering letter which circulated Charles Powell’s report to a small group of officials cites Martin Nicholson, the Cabinet Office specialist on the Soviet Union who participated in the seminar, listing as the ‘Enthusiasts: [Ronald] Amann, [Peter] Frank, [Archie] Brown, [Sir Bryan] Cartledge’ and as ‘Sceptics’ Robert Conquest and Sir Michael Howard. (Although this was not mentioned in the Foreign Office annotation, the most sceptical contributor to the discussion was, in fact, Hugh (Lord) Thomas, a longstanding political ally and speechwriter of the Prime Minister). When Thatcher had said she wanted an American specialist on the Soviet Union at the seminar, the Foreign Office had chosen Seweryn Bialer of Columbia University. His views were to the taste of the FCO. It was noted that, in his oral contributions to the seminar, Bialer, in contrast with the ‘enthusiasts’ and the ‘sceptics’, occupied ‘the judicious centre ground’.42

41. Ibid.
42. A. BROWN, The Change ..., op.cit., p.38. I am not convinced that Conquest’s and Howard’s positions at the seminar were as sceptical as Thomas’s or Cradock’s. Conquest’s view at that stage of perestroika may be judged from a remark in an article he wrote at the time saying ‘Gorbachev stands for radical reforms within the system – that is, reforms which are not really radical’ (italics in original). See R. CONQUEST, What’s Happening in Moscow?, in: The National Interest, 8(Summer 1987), pp.3-6, at p.5. This article was in the same symposium as A. NOVE’s article, already cited, in which Nove spoke of observers who had decided that the reforms could not be fundamental because they were happening.
Thatcher had, however, heard for herself a variety of different viewpoints at the seminar, even though the view that nothing ‘far-reaching’ could be expected was evidently shared at that time by both her principal aides – her Private Secretary (Powell) and her Foreign Policy Adviser, Sir Percy Cradock. She had also read a number of articles containing a wide spectrum of opinion on developments in the Soviet Union, as well as Gorbachev’s speeches, before departing for Moscow. If, as seems likely, Thatcher was still not entirely sure on the eve of her first extended visit to the Soviet Union as Prime Minister whether she was primarily with the ‘sceptics’ or the ‘enthusiasts’, she returned as an enthusiast, in the sense that she had been persuaded that highly significant change was taking place and that Gorbachev was serious about carrying the reform process further. The two leaders argued at length – on arms control, especially nuclear weapons, and on Third World hotspots – but the Prime Minister welcomed the steps Gorbachev was taking domestically. In particular, Thatcher referred in their conversation to Gorbachev’s report to the January 1987 plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, at which he had put political reform firmly on the agenda, as a ‘historic speech’.

She was also influenced by the variety of opinion she heard expressed in different parts of the Soviet Union and by the fact that she was given the opportunity of a live television interview to come out on top in debate with her interlocutors. Although these were still early days of perestroika, and the system was to become far more pluralistic by the end of the 1980s than it was in March 1987, it was already a far cry from Brezhnev’s Soviet Union. The difference was not lost on the British Prime Minister. At the next meeting between the two leaders, at Brize Norton on 7 December 1987, when Gorbachev made a stopover in Britain on his way to the Washington summit meeting with President Reagan, the tone of their exchanges was even warmer than before. (The television cameras captured the atmosphere. As a smiling and windswept Thatcher watched Gorbachev coming down the steps of his aircraft, some irreverent observers were reminded of the film Casablanca.)

Thatcher congratulated Gorbachev on his ‘bestseller’, Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World, which she had read, and Gorbachev apologised for not having a copy with him which he could sign for her! Both leaders noted that their relations had become much closer which Thatcher attributed ‘in the final analysis’ to the policies Gorbachev had pursued both domestically and internationally. Distrust, she said, was gradually disappearing and the great significance of perestroika was being recognised. Gorbachev spoke still more frankly than hitherto, given that his conversation was with the person whom the pre-perestroika Soviet press had

43. Gorbachev Foundation Archives, ‘Zapis’ peregovorov M.S. Gorbacheva s prem’er-ministrom Velikobritanii M. Tetcher, 30 marta 1987 goda’, p.37. The citation is from the 64-page document of the Thatcher-Gorbachev discussions of two days earlier produced by Anatoliy Chemyayev on 1 April 1987.

44. Gorbachev Foundation Archives, ‘Zapis’ besedy M.S. Gorbacheva s prem’er-ministrom Velikobritanii M. Tetcher, 7 dekabrya 1987 goda’, pp.1-2. This 18-page document is the Soviet transcript of the Thatcher-Gorbachev discussions at Brize Norton airport.

45. Ibid., p.2.
dubbed the ‘Iron Lady’. He said ‘the fact is that up to the present we have not been able to cross the threshold beyond the Stalinist system of administrative govern-
ment’. The boldest attempt thus far to change things had been made by Nikita
Khrushchev and there had been some half-measures in Brezhnev’s time, but now something completely different was being undertaken. It was a policy of ‘democrati-
sation, glasnost and economic transformation, including the decentralisation of the economy’, but every step had to be calculated carefully.

Thatcher by now was identifying very strongly with Gorbachev as a reformer and comparing her own reforms (which she said had met a lot of opposition before the advantages had time to emerge) with Gorbachev’s. When the Soviet leader said that his most difficult opposition was ‘the old psychology’, the Prime Minister said she understood him completely, adding that her kind of Conservatism was completely different from the conservatism he encountered in the Soviet Union. When Gor-
bachev volunteered that there was not a unity of views on all questions ‘even in our Politburo’, Thatcher responded that the same was true of the British Cabinet. The leaders were two-thirds of the way through their friendly conversation before the first note of discord arrived when nuclear weapons entered the discussion. Thatcher con-
tinued to argue for them as a deterrent, not a weapon, insisting that the nuclear bomb had ‘already kept the peace in Europe for more than forty years’. Gorbachev reiterated his concern about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and wanted to know when Britain would be ready to take part in the process of nuclear disarmament. The Prime
Minister also raised the issue of Afghanistan, to which Gorbachev responded that the political decision about ending the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan had al-
ready been taken and that the sooner ‘your American allies’ end their interference there, ‘the sooner that problem will be resolved’.

The Brize Norton meeting ended on a very amicable note with Thatcher regretting that their meeting had been so short, asking Gorbachev to let her know the results of his meeting with Reagan, either through the Soviet Ambassador or by some other means, and repeating an invitation to him to make an official visit to Britain. Gor-
bachev said he would certainly pass on the information about his visit to the United
States, adding: ‘Then you may compare it with what your American friends say’. He thanked her for ‘the reminder about my visit to England’, an invitation which he would without fail take up.

46. Ibid., p.3.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., p.4.
49. Ibid., p.8.
50. Ibid., pp.11-14.
51. Ibid., p.17.
52. Ibid., p.18.
Some Conclusions

Following her visit to the Soviet Union in March 1987, Thatcher was in no doubt that Gorbachev’s perestroika was in the interests both of the peoples of the Soviet Union and of the West. As Andrei Grachev notes in his article in this issue, she was initially more enthusiastic about the domestic reforms he had initiated than about Soviet foreign policy. It took time to convince her that it was changing dramatically. By 1989 it was clear to all but the most dim-witted or ideologically hidebound that Soviet policy towards the outside world had, indeed, been transformed. Thatcher became increasingly concerned about the strength of the opposition to Gorbachev from various quarters in the Soviet Union – by 1989 it included such major institutions as the military, the KGB, the industrial ministries and even the party apparatus – and by 1991, when she was out of office, she was, as both Grachev and Braithwaite have noted, critical that Western leaders had not done more to sustain Gorbachev. Although there were limits to what Gorbachev could get away with – as the August coup of 1991 demonstrated – the powers of the office of General Secretary, together with the existence of a constituency for radical change within the party intelligentsia and a minority of officials in the Central Committee apparatus, had enabled a break with the past. The change was fundamental – and it had occurred!

By the last two and a half years of perestroika, this was no longer a reform or revolution from above. The pluralisation of Soviet politics had produced the possibility and reality of movement from below, of which the national movements were the most destructive of Gorbachev’s authority and, ultimately, of the Soviet Union itself. That point would not have been reached, however, but for the developing freedom of speech and publication and the contested elections which had already been facilitated and promoted by Gorbachev and his most radically reformist allies (including, especially notably, Alexander Yakovlev). By her support for Gorbachev and the process of perestroika, Thatcher had come to accept that far-reaching change in the Soviet Union (with its huge implications for the whole of Eastern Europe) could emanate from the highest echelon of the Communist Party in Moscow. This was far from being something that was bound to happen, but it was the only way in which fundamental change had been likely to get off the ground. It was not a possibility that had been entertained by the Prime Minister’s most regular informal political advisers on Communism and the Soviet Union.53 Like her friend Ronald Reagan, however, Margaret Thatcher proved flexible enough to modify at least some of her long-cherished beliefs when brought into contact with new realities and a new Soviet interlocutor in the shape of Gorbachev.

53. See G.R. URBAN, op.cit.; and B. CROZIER, Free Agent ..., op.cit.
Gorbachev and Thatcher

Witness Remarks

Rodic BRAITHWAITE

Thatcher played a significant but limited role in East-West relations in the last decade of the Soviet Union. She had her own vision of how East-West relations should be shaped. She was not prepared to accept the status quo, and she was one of the first Western politicians to give public support for liberal change in Eastern Europe. In the 1980s she played an important role in reopening up communications with the Soviet Union at a time when they were in difficulty. But the serious negotiation of change was conducted not by her, but by the American President and the German Chancellor.

Thatcher comes to power

In the late 1970s detente between the Soviet Union and the West began to unravel, and tension increased markedly. This was the dominating thought in Thatcher’s mind when she became Prime Minister in May 1979. She believed that the balance of power between East and West had been seriously altered by the Soviet military build-up and the failure of the West, and especially Britain, to match it.


2. This paper is based on my personal diary, on the published memoirs of the two protagonists and other publications, on published Russian documents of proceedings in the Politburo and elsewhere, and on conversations with Gorbachev’s associates and some material generously supplied by them. I have mostly used the English translations of books originally in Russian where these are available. The FCO kindly gave me permission to look through relevant documents to check my recollection of the period. The papers show that the British government was very well informed about what was going on in the Soviet Union at that time. Its judgements can bear the critical eye of hindsight. Much of that insight was due to the FCO’s cadre of Soviet research experts, whose contributions over many years stand out for their clarity, knowledge and wisdom.

3. Speech by Francis Pym, shadow Defence Secretary, a few weeks before the election.
FCO Views in 1979

The FCO’s Planning Staff wrote a paper for the new government which attempted to reduce these fears to more sober levels. It recognised that the Russians were likely to continue their military build-up on which their claim to superpower status chiefly rested. But their economy and agriculture were backward and inefficient, not least because of the burden of military production. Their political system was stultifying, their hold over their allies and their own national minorities was shaky, their ideology had little attraction for the outside world, and they feared the rise of China. All this weakened their effectiveness on the world scene.

There was no particular reason to think that this moderate analysis would prosper under Thatcher. But it became evident that in this field, as in many others, she was prepared to consider ideas which differed (though not by too much) from her own. She had a real intellectual curiosity, and in the four years before she met Mikhail Gorbachev, she participated in a number of seminars to broaden her knowledge and test her ideas about the Soviet Union.

The FCO Seminars of 1980

In Spring of 1980 three seminars were organised by her Private Office and the FCO Planning Staff.

The first took place on 7 February 1980. The FCO team consisted of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Peter Carrington, myself and Christopher Mallaby, who had recently returned from a stint as head of the Political Section in the embassy in Moscow. Thatcher began with a fierce monologue about the Soviet threat. But she started to listen when Christopher embarked on a brilliantly informed analysis of the economic, technological, social, and political difficulties the Soviet Union was facing, she remarked that it seemed the system was bound to collapse before long. We countered that change had begun: the Soviet Union might eventually become more democratic and less expansionist. But this would not easily happen while the Soviet Communist Party and its apparatus of repression were still intact.

There were further sessions at Chequers and in Downing Street. In the Chequers meeting, Thatcher set the FCO to compete against three academics, Michael Howard, Elie Kedourie, and Hugh Thomas. All were asked to write papers: the FCO planners wrote a paper on Soviet activities in the Third World. It was at Chequers that I first heard Thatcher develop her views on nuclear weapons as a force for peace. She remarked to me afterwards that she was not at all sure that, in the event, she could press the button: “I want grandchildren too” – an endearing flash of humanity.4

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4. These seminars are described in R. BRAITHWAITE, Across the Moscow River, Yale University Press, London, 2002, pp.51-52.
The views Thatcher expressed at these seminars showed that she was more open-minded and imaginative than her reputation; and that whatever her view of the Foreign Office as an institution, she was prepared to listen to individual officials if she thought they had something useful to say.

**The Chequers Seminar of 1983**

In 1983 she organised another substantial seminar in Chequers. Her motive was typical: “In a cold as in a hot war it pays to know the enemy not least because at some time in the future you may have the opportunity to turn him into a friend”. Once again she got everyone to write papers in advance.

Her central conclusion from the seminar was that the Western system would eventually triumph because, unlike the Soviet system, it rested on “the unique, almost limitless, creativity and vitality of individuals”. But the Soviet system could only be changed by someone who had risen to power within it. “For this reason […] I was convinced that we must seek out the most likely person in the rising generation of Soviet leaders and then cultivate and sustain him, while recognising the clear limits of our power to do so. That is why those who subsequently considered that I was led astray from my original approach to the Soviet Union because I was dazzled by Mr Gorbachev were wrong. I spotted him because I was searching for someone like him”.

Although Thatcher wrote these words with the benefit of hindsight, they probably reflected her thoughts. She was able to test her theories during Gorbachev’s visit to Britain in December 1984 and during her own visit to Moscow and Tbilisi in March-April 1987. Each encounter marked a significant evolution in the East West relationship.5

**Getting to Know Gorbachev, 1984-1987**

**Gorbachev in London December 1984**

Gorbachev had become a candidate member of the Politburo in 1979 at the comparatively young age of 47, and a full member a year later. His youth and energy distinguished him from the grey old men in the Politburo, some of whom had served under Stalin. British officials in Moscow and London (and some academics) saw him as a possible future leader of the Soviet Union and pressed for him to be invited to Britain so that we could get a better look at him. He was not sufficiently senior in the

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Soviet government to come on an official visit. So he came as leader of a Soviet parliamentary delegation instead.

Gorbachev’s aim was to clear away obstacles to better Anglo-Soviet relations. In addition, he doubtless calculated that a successful high-profile visit to London would help in the succession struggle as it evolved in Moscow.

The centrepiece of the visit was the meeting between Thatcher and Gorbachev at Chequers. “It was not long”, Thatcher later wrote,

“before the conversation turned from trivialities – for which neither Mr Gorbachev nor I had any taste – to a vigorous two-way debate. In a sense, the argument has continued ever since and is taken up whenever we meet, and as it goes to the heart of what politics is really about, I never tire of it”.

Many of the themes of that first debate were taken up on many later occasions: the relative merits of the communist and the capitalist systems, the ambitions of both in the Third World, the dangers of nuclear war. Thatcher refused to allow him to divide her from President Ronald Reagan on “Star Wars”, even though she had her own doubts about that project –

“one of those areas in which only a firm grasp of the scientific concepts involved allows the right policy decisions to be made. Laid back generalists from the Foreign Office – let alone the ministerial muddlers in charge of them – could not be relied upon. By contrast, I was in my element”.

(The scientific issues were not all that complicated. Thatcher provided the willpower. But she relied heavily on the “generalists” in the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence to devise a policy which was both well-founded in facts and viable in politics.)

Thatcher saw immediately that Gorbachev was quite different from the traditional Soviet leader. He was not as buttoned up as Leonid Brezhnev or Andreï Gromyko nor, of course, as sinister as Josef Stalin. He had something of Nikita Khrushchev’s ebullience and spontaneity. But his charm was far more polished, his grasp of the matters under discussion more sophisticated, and he seemed far less erratic. He was, in short, as Thatcher famously said, a man with whom one could do business. For his part, Gorbachev found Thatcher “self-confident, the gentle charm and feminine face disguising a rather tough and pragmatic politician”.

But whatever she thought of Gorbachev personally, Thatcher was still not sure he was a man with whom one could cooperate towards long term aims. Did he simply embody the traditional aims of the Soviet Union in a more subtle, more attractive, and therefore more dangerous guise? That doubt was largely resolved when she visited Moscow in Spring 1987.

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6. Ibid., p.463.
Thatcher in Moscow, March-April 1987

She prepared for this visit with her usual relentless energy. She held another seminar, with the significant title “The Soviet System under Gorbachev: Terminal Case or Ripe for Revival?” It was already clear to Western observers that the Soviet Union was in serious trouble, and perhaps in terminal decline. Did Gorbachev really intend a fundamental change in the Soviet system? What were his prospects of success? The answers would influence the way she handled her talks with him and how the visit would be presented.

Those invited to the seminar included the Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe; Brian Cartledge, the Ambassador in Moscow, several other officials, and a number of distinguished academics. Thatcher was particularly impressed by the comments of one scholar, Seweryn Bialer, who believed that Gorbachev had no alternative to far-reaching reform if the Soviet Union was to remain a first-rate power. Like Tito, he believed that in Communist systems you cannot have economic reforms, only political reforms with economic consequences. He would go over the heads of the managers and the bureaucrats in an attempt to mobilise the people: the political tactic which Gorbachev did indeed follow over the next three years. But the seminar’s conclusions were downbeat. Fundamental change was not on the agenda. At best the Soviet Union might evolve in twenty years into something like Yugoslavia was at the time.

The British aims for the Moscow visit were sober. Thatcher hoped to become Gorbachev’s principal interpreter to the West at least until normal contact was resumed between Moscow and Washington. But she was determined to be seen to be tough, while avoiding the danger of being seen as the main obstacle to détente.

Thatcher arrived in Moscow on Saturday 28 March, and spent Sunday sightseeing. Over the next two days she spent eleven hours in restricted session with Gorbachev. The exchanges were as lively as they had been in London 1984. But, this time Gorbachev, like Thatcher, was the leader of his country. “She was, as always”, comments Gorbachev’s diplomatic adviser Anatoliy Chernyaev, “extremely attractive, earnest but determined, stubborn, sometimes didactic. He was ironic sarcastic, at times even abrupt”. Much of the conversation was about the relative merits of capitalism and communism: among other things, she told Gorbachev he did not understand economics. Each accused the other of interfering in the Third World. Thatcher raised Afghanistan. Gorbachev raised Grenada. Although he had rebutted her accusations roundly, Gorbachev later came to believe that Soviet policy towards the Third World had been excessively ideological: to a certain extent, she had been right.

They turned to nuclear deterrence: a regular theme in all their dealings. He accused her of being prepared to accept the risk of nuclear war;

“[s]he got very tense, blushed, and her expression hardened. She […] began to talk without letting him get in a word. She poured forth the reasons why she considered it impossible

to give up nuclear weapons: they had been ensuring peace in Europe for forty years, they were a guarantee against a terrible war, etc. And how could he suspect her of such ghastly intentions? She became so excited that the conversation got completely out of hand. They started to interrupt each other, repeat themselves, assure one another of their best intentions".8

It was, Gorbachev’s diplomatic adviser Chernyaev thought, the most interesting of all Gorbachev’s encounters with foreign politicians at that time.

But twenty years later what ordinary Russians still remembered was the interview which Thatcher gave on nationwide Soviet television on 31 March. Three Soviet journalists cross-examined her about nuclear deterrence. Unfortunately for them, she was far better briefed than they were, not only on the issues, but also on the size and capacity of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. She wiped the floor with them. Izvestia, the Soviet government newspaper, wrote that “The size of the audience - practically the whole nation - was astounding […]. [They] showed a certain concealed satisfaction”.

It was “an unprecedented example of the expression of opinion in the history of Soviet TV”.

Thatcher also saw the physicist Andrei Sakharov, his wife Elena Bonner, and other former dissidents, who at that time were still supporting Gorbachev and his reforms.

She told them firmly that it was not enough to support him now. They should continue to support him when the going got rough. The costs of reform would be evident long before the benefits came through. And indeed when the going got rough a few years later, the Russian liberals did withdraw their support from Gorbachev, and helped to usher in the successes, but also the great failures, of the Yeltsin regime.

As she left Moscow on 1 April, Thatcher called her trip “the most fascinating and invigorating visit I have ever made abroad as Prime Minister”. It was indeed a sensational political event, even though there was no breakthrough on any matter of substance. There had been a remarkably candid and coherent exchange between the two protagonists. Their relationship had been strengthened. Thatcher now believed that the West needed perestroika to succeed as much as the Soviets. It was this new belief that Thatcher sought to convey to President Reagan and her other Western partners. She no longer worried that Gorbachev was simply the old Soviet wine in a more attractive bottle. Instead she was concerned that his reforms would fail on the opposition of the hardliners in the Soviet party, the army, and the secret police. Her concern was justified in August 1991 when Gorbachev’s critics mounted a coup against him.

Gorbachev told the Politburo on 1 April that he had told Thatcher that her arguments about nuclear weapons would provide other countries with the justification for acquiring them too. She had been ambiguous about preserving the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty: but her argument that the march of science could not be stopped could

8. A.S. CHERNYAEV, My Six Years with Gorbachev, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, 2000, p.99. Chernyaev’s account is closely based on the Soviet official record, and on his own diary and notes.
equally be applied to biological and chemical weapons. He was taken aback when she said that the West was afraid of the Soviet Union. 9 But her appearance on television had made a positive impression on the Soviet public. Soviet women found her sympathetic, she had not emphasised ideological differences in her public appearances, and she had undertaken to speak up for perestroika back home. That probably irritated the Americans: but he continued to keep her in touch with his dealings with them. 10

The two meet briefly in December 1987

Thatcher next met Gorbachev in December 1987, when he made a brief stopover at the RAF base in Brize Norton on his way to see Reagan in Washington: the Soviet Foreign Ministry remarked in public that “London is in the middle of the road between Moscow and Washington in more ways than one”. At the last minute the visit was nearly derailed by an attack on Raisa Gorbachev in the London weekly paper The Observer.

The recent sacking of Boris Yeltsin from the Politburo had dented Gorbachev’s image both abroad and among liberals at home. He had lost some of his bounce, and he needed the appearance of success abroad. The short meeting between the two leaders could hardly produce much of substance. There was some discussion of arms control. Gorbachev refused to be drawn on Afghanistan, although negotiations for a Soviet withdrawal had already begun in Geneva. But the vibes were good, and Thatcher and Gorbachev had their customary set-to over lunch, this time over Lenin’s historical legacy.

The Go-between

Gorbachev in London April 1989

In the spring of 1989 President Bush had just come into office, and was conducting a rigorous review of policy towards the Soviet Union. The Republican Right had accused him in the past of being too complacent about the Soviet threat. His new National Security Adviser, Brent Scowcroft, believed that Gorbachev was potentially more dangerous than his predecessors: his new foreign policy might be simply intended to throw the West off its guard while the Soviet economy was rebuilt; the

10. Ibid., pp.162-163 and 168. Gorbachev told the Politburo on 16 April that he would let Thatcher know of the exchange he had just had with Shultz on nuclear weapons.
challenge would then be renewed. Robert Gates, Scowcroft’s deputy and later Director of the CIA, said at about the same time that

“A long, competitive struggle with the Soviet Union still lies before us. [...] The dictatorship of the Communist Party remains untouched and untouchable”.

Bush had called Gorbachev on the telephone and sent him a soothing letter. But as the weeks went by, and the Americans continued to refrain from substance, Gorbachev was beginning to fear the worst.¹¹

British officials were not very happy about the proposed visit - Gorbachev’s third to Britain. They worried that European public opinion was being carried away by Gorbymania. He had gained the moral high ground with his spectacular initiatives, such as his announcement at the United Nations in December of substantial cuts in the Soviet forces in Germany. He might in any case be dislodged by a coup. The briefing for the visit was appropriately wary. Officials advised that Thatcher should show support for what Gorbachev was doing at home. But she should make it clear that he needed to do much more – in the field of human rights and international affairs - before the Soviet Union could be accepted as a normal member of the international community. We would keep up our own defences meanwhile. Officials knew well enough that the main deals would be done between the Russians and the Americans. So they deliberately set out to play down public expectations.

The visit to Britain was important to Gorbachev primarily because he had so far failed to establish a personal relationship with the new American President to match the understanding he had had with Reagan. Bush was still reappraising US policy towards the Soviet Union, and the continuing silence from Washington was making Moscow nervous. Thatcher could, perhaps, provide clues as to what was going on.¹²

Although Gorbachev’s short-term aim was to advocate his new policies, he had a longer term worry as well. Europe was forging ahead, and attracting even the members of the Warsaw Pact into its orbit. Gorbachev needed to do what he could to lessen the risk that the Soviet Union would find itself stranded on the borders of Asia.

And Gorbachev was on shaky ground at home as well. He was still digesting the results of the national elections he had organised in March. The Communist administrations of Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev had been swept from power. One in four of the powerful Oblast Party secretaries, the Commander of the Soviet Forces in Germany, and the Military District Commanders - all hitherto sure of a seat in the Supreme Soviet - were thrown out. No nationalist or anti-Semitic candidate got elected. Nothing like this had yet happened in any other country of the Warsaw Pact. The election results, Gorbachev claimed, were a success for perestroika. But the increasingly battered Communist Party was still his main instrument of power. And all would eventually depend on the success of his economic reforms. The problems were intellectually, technically, and politically most complex. But Gorbachev had failed to take a grip. His ability to do so might well be the acid test for the future of his reforms.

¹¹ R. BRAITHWAITE, Across ..., op.cit., p.74.
Thatcher’s visit to Moscow in 1987 was still echoing among the Soviet public. She was, the embassy thought, perhaps the only leader with whom Gorbachev could discuss domestic and foreign policy on equal terms. If he could not get her to understand his domestic and foreign policies, his chances of influencing Western policy more widely would be diminished.\footnote{R. BRAITHWAITE, \textit{Across ...}, op.cit., p.106; and \textit{Diary}, entries for 29 March and 3 April 1989.}

Gorbachev and Thatcher met in Downing Street on 6 April. Gorbachev spoke throughout without notes or a brief. The discussion covered the standard subjects: defence, arms control, and regional problems. But the central issue was Gorbachev’s concern that the Americans no longer thought it was in their interest for \textit{perestroika} to succeed, and that they were worried about Gorbymania in Europe. Thatcher stoutly contradicted him: Bush would continue the same policies as his predecessor. Even so, he repeated his fear that the new American President was being hijacked by “certain circles”, coded language for the reactionaries in Washington in his speeches at dinner that evening at Number 10 and at the Guildhall the following day. In an aside over dinner, he remarked to the Prime Minister that the problem of the nationalities in the Soviet Union was a nightmare. If he gave them too much autonomy they would push for independence and the post-war settlement would be undone. Thatcher urged him to strike a new balance between the centre and the nationalities: he must move forward, not back.

Gorbachev’s last engagement was lunch at Windsor Castle with the Queen. Both were ill-at-ease to begin with: constrained perhaps by the ghost of the Queen’s relative, the murdered Tsar Nicholas II. But they became more animated, until at some point he invited her to Russia and she accepted: she would come to Russia “in due course” (“due course” turned out to be Autumn 1994, when Yeltsin, not Gorbachev, was the beneficiary). By the end of the meal the ghost seemed to have been laid.\footnote{R. BRAITHWAITE, \textit{Across ...}, op.cit., p.75.}

Gorbachev was genuinely pleased by the warmth of his reception, both by his hosts and by the British people. He told the Politburo that he was struck by Thatcher’s independence of mind and her understanding. You could talk to her about anything: nuclear weapons, Northern Ireland, the future of the Soviet Union. Bush and Kohl spoke about her ambition to become the leader of the West with a certain irony. She thought \textit{perestroika} was in the interest of the West, and feared lest it be cut short. Altogether, he concluded, his contact with her was valuable.\footnote{Gorbachev speaking to Politburo on 1989. A.S. CHERNYAEV et al, \textit{V Politburo ...}, op.cit., p.470.} But for all the warmth, the British government had not expected the visit to produce anything of substance, and there had indeed been none. Thatcher’s role as a go-between - essential, or perhaps only convenient - was coming to an end. Quite soon the action would pass to the Americans and the Germans, and there would be little but sentiment left.\footnote{R. BRAITHWAITE, \textit{Diary}, entry for 24 April 1989, BRAITHWAITE R., \textit{Across ...}, op.cit., pp. 75-76.}

Business of a substantial but unproductive kind followed a few weeks later. On 19 May, Thatcher wrote to Gorbachev informing him that the British had just expelled
thirteen Soviet officials from London on the ground that they were spies. Chernyaev, who received the letter on Gorbachev’s behalf, asked two questions. Were the British sure that they had caught the right people? - to which the answer was obviously yes. And why had Thatcher not warned her good friend Gorbachev of what was in the wind during his friendly visit to London so recently? - to which there was no good answer. Gorbachev risked looking foolish and naive to his own hard men. But he reacted with sophistication and common sense. The Russians inevitably expelled thirteen Britons from Moscow in retaliation. But, as he told a British journalist, everyone had trouble with spies from time to time: the thing should not be got out of proportion. His relationship with Thatcher was unaffected.17

**Thatcher in Moscow, September 1989**

The Congress of People’s deputies elected so sensational in March met in an atmosphere of universal excitement. As inhibitions fell away, the deputies subjected all the sacred cows - the army, the KGB, even Gorbachev himself - to the most withering criticism. They decided that their proceedings would be televised, and for weeks on end work stopped as people throughout the country sat glued to their screens, listening to things that until a few weeks ago no sensible person had ever dared utter in public. Nothing like that had yet happened anywhere else in the Soviet bloc.

But there was soon a reaction: post congress triste. The economy was still in a mess, the miners went on strike, and the aura around Gorbachev began to fade. The unbridled Soviet press started to discuss whether a coup against Gorbachev was likely, and whether it could succeed. Soviet officials pressed for some public gesture from Thatcher to support Gorbachev and his policies. At the embassy’s suggestion, Thatcher stopped in Moscow on her way from Tokyo in September.18 She arrived from Tokyo late on the evening of 22 September 1989, and spent the following morning in talks with Gorbachev. She found him relaxed and confident. Half the time, and with considerable frankness, he discussed perestroika. The implementation was proving difficult, and grave issues were being raised. The army was tense. Inflation was the main economic problem. He had strong support and he was confident he could cope with the opposition, though it would be difficult if the extremists of right and left combined against him to stir up the popular mood. In perhaps the first indication of the way his mind was to turn later, he warned that he would not exclude using “old methods” if necessary.

The rest of the discussion was on world affairs, especially arms control. Gorbachev was clearly anxious to push ahead with arms cuts at the greatest possible rate - limited no doubt by his generals' willingness to accept them.

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17. Ibid., pp.62-64.  
There was one matter which, on Mrs Thatcher's insistence, was not written down by those taking the record of the meeting. She told Gorbachev that she was most concerned with what was happening in East Germany, which was on the verge of big changes. She wanted Gorbachev to know that Britain and Western Europe were not interested in German unification, the destabilisation of Eastern Europe or the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. She wrongly told him that this was also the view of the President of the United States. These words may be said to mark the beginning of the end of her role as a reliable intermediary between Gorbachev and the outside world.\(^\text{19}\)

In her interview with Moscow TV that afternoon, Thatcher did her best to give Gorbachev the puff she thought he needed. He

"is in extremely good form, strong, bold, vigorous, determined to carry through this great historic mission to its great conclusion. The old system that you had for seventy years produced neither personal liberty nor personal prosperity. It could not and so now things are being changed […]. We look forward to the Soviet Union becoming as well as a great military power a great international power, a great and strong economic power".

Some of her Russian listeners were irritated at the lecturing tone, while some of her own entourage thought she had gone overboard, and risked being derided in the British press after all the stout words on defence she had only just uttered in Tokyo.\(^\text{20}\)

By now the Americans and the Russians were in close communication. They had resumed negotiations on arms control were proceeding. The relationship was cemented when Bush met Gorbachev in Malta in November.

In November the Berlin Wall came down. A baffled and worried Gorbachev, bereft of any coherent policy, sent a message to Thatcher on 10 November, expressing his concern about the potential for instability and violence. She replied that she too was worried that things could get out of hand. The West should do nothing to undermine Gorbachev. German reunification was not an immediate issue. The Warsaw Pact and NATO should continue to guarantee European stability. She made similar points in public in Washington at the end of the month and to NATO in December.\(^\text{21}\) As pressure grew in the winter of 1989-1990 for the early reunification of Germany, Thatcher’s hostility towards it deepened and became more futile. Gorbachev still hoped to exploit her doubts to his own advantage in the negotiations on reunification.\(^\text{22}\) But Soviet officials said that the Russians were not going to snatch the chestnuts out of the fire for the French and the British just because they didn’t like the prospect of Germany dominating the European Community.\(^\text{23}\)

\(^{19}\) Record of meeting by Anatoli Chernyaev, published by National Security Archive, translated by S. SAVRANSKAYA. At http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB293/doc03.pdf.

\(^{20}\) R. BRAITHWAITE, Diary, entry for 23 September 1989.


\(^{23}\) R. BRAITHWAITE, Diary, entry for 19 December 1989.
By January 1990, Thatcher had accepted with her mind that reunification was inevitable. But her heart was not in it. Shortly thereafter she organised another seminar, this time on Germany. The record gave the impression that Germany was still a threat to the stability of Europe. It leaked, and was denounced by some of the participants as biased and inaccurate. Her credibility took a further dent.24 Thatcher’s role as a go-between was over and she had lost much of her international influence. She never seems to have understood that: “[I]n those last months and weeks of my premiership, while domestic political pressures mounted”, she later wrote,

“I found myself once more at the centre of international events with renewed ability to influence them in Britain’s interests and in accord with my beliefs”.25

Thatcher bows out

By now Gorbachev’s power was visibly shrinking, undermined by the rise of Yeltsin, the grossly misjudged launch of yet another plan for a market economy, and the increase of nationalism in the Soviet republics. Thatcher’s power was declining, too, as she faced a leadership challenge, economic troubles, and a more confident Labour opposition. They remained in touch: ironically, foreign affairs had become more attractive to both than the grind of domestic politics.26

Thatcher’s last official visit to Moscow, June 1990

She paid her final official visit to the Soviet Union from 7-9 June 1990. She spent two hours with Gorbachev, alone except for aides. Over lunch she told him that he needed a better definition of the relative powers of central and local government, and better central government machinery. We had, she said, lots of experience of advising Indians and Africans on things like that, and she offered to help the Russians too.27

Her last official exchange with Gorbachev took place in Paris in November 1990, in the margins of the Summit which adopted the “Charter of Paris for a New Europe”. That was where she heard that the ballot for the leadership of the Conservative Party had gone against her. It was the death knell of her Prime Ministership. Gorbachev was shocked at the news.

25. Ibid., p.770.
27. R. BRAITHWAITE, Diary, entry for 8 June 1990.
Thatcher visits Moscow privately: May 1991

In May 1991 Thatcher made one more visit to Moscow while Gorbachev was still in office. He generously gave her a private talk and a dinner, and was grateful when she told him of her support for a generous approach by the West at the forthcoming G7 Summit in London towards the Soviet Union’s economic problems.

“It would be truly a tragedy if your efforts should end in failure merely because the West proved incapable of coming to your assistance in a timely fashion. Future generations will never forgive us for that”.

She met her old friends the generals among others, and she delivered a brilliant and optimistic speech to the students at the State Institute of International Relations on the theme that Russia would become prosperous if it adopted democracy and the rule of law. But without the trappings of power, she was of course diminished.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev was one of the most colourful and dramatic political relationships of recent times. Both were highly intelligent, forceful personalities. Both loved a good argument. Each enjoyed the other’s company: it was not exactly a flirtatious relationship, but an element of flirtation was there.

Notwithstanding her opposition towards everything the Soviet Union stood for, it was Thatcher who first among Western leaders scented the wind of change. She did not believe that the Soviet system could survive for ever. Her belief that it could only be challenged by an insider was vindicated by the rise of Gorbachev. Once she had concluded that Gorbachev genuinely intended to change the Soviet Union, she stuck to her view that perestroika was in the interest of the West as well as the Soviet Union. She was always prepared to say so in public, even though in private she was fully aware that perestroika could fail. Sceptics in London and Washington, many of whom predicted that the Soviet Union would still be the main threat to our security twenty years on, thought she was naïve. There is nothing in her record to justify that.

She had little illusion on the substance of her role. She accepted that her meetings with Gorbachev would achieve no breakthroughs. She was never a principal in the central negotiations on East-West relations which took place in the last years of her power. On arms control, she was able to tweak or modify American policy, but only at the margins. Her refusal to accept the realities of the German problem fatally undermined her influence with her friends.

Gorbachev appreciated the public support she gave him, especially when he was in trouble at home. She was a useful indicator of changes in mood in Washington when his channels of communication with the Americans were clogged: the impressions she passed on to Washington, he believed, helped to improve relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.\(^{29}\) He “was always more sincere with her than with others, partly because he knew that she was watching us closely and that he couldn’t put anything over on her”.\(^{30}\)

From time to time she irritated him – though he tried not to show it - with her rumbustious attacks on his political beliefs.\(^{31}\) Her tough methods and her “inherent authoritarianism” were sometimes hard to take. He

“had the impression that in order to work with her, you had to accept her style and character unconditionally. [She] was not an easy partner for us, and her fierce anti-Communism would often hinder her from taking a more realistic view on various issues. Still one must admit that in a number of cases, she was able to substantiate her charges with facts, which eventually led us to review and criticise some of our own approaches. […] she was always very considerate and courteous. We eventually came to know each other better and she showed genuine warmth towards both me and Raisa Maximovna [Gorbachev]”.\(^{32}\)

He summed it up to John Major when they met in March 1991:

“We managed to build a very good relationship, which enable us to discuss the whole range of problems. It was a unique dialogue. Sometimes our exchanges could be quite sharp. But I am grateful to Margaret Thatcher for her contribution to the development not only of good Anglo-Soviet relations, but of a new type of relationship in Europe”.\(^{33}\)

\(^{29}\) Ibid., pp.497 and 499.


\(^{32}\) M.S. GORBACHEV, \textit{Memoirs}, op.cit., p.547.

\(^{33}\) Extract from record of meeting between Major and Gorbachev, Moscow, 5 March 1991, supplied by A. Chernyaev.
The “special relationship” between Mikhail Gorbachev and Margaret Thatcher undoubtedly played an essential role in the process of rapprochement and the building of understanding between the new Soviet leadership and the leaders of the major Western powers. During the years of perestroika this singular mix of politics and personal chemistry originally came about as one of those accidents of history. The British Prime Minister was the only a major Western leader who had the chance to meet this untypical future Soviet General Secretary before he was elected officially to that post; a representative of the new political generation, it was still by no means certain that he would be chosen.¹

For Gorbachev, it really was only by chance in late 1984 that Thatcher became his first top-level Western contact. Having succeeded Mikhail Suslov as chief ideologist of the Politburo, he also inherited the role of Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Foreign Affairs Committee. It was largely accidental that this should have meant that he would lead a Supreme Soviet delegation to Britain. However, for Thatcher it was rather different. She was curious about Gorbachev and keen to meet him. Her interest had been aroused some time before, probably at the noted Chequers seminar on 8 September 1983 where Archie Brown pointed to him as a future General Secretary, describing him as an unusual Soviet political figure and certainly the most promising.

According to the memoirs of Anatoly Chernyaev, who became Gorbachev’s principal assistant for international affairs (he remains the main source of first-hand information about the development of this political “romance”), the story of the visit started quite prosaically at the end of September 1984. Chernyaev, who at that time was deputy head of the International Department of the Central Committee and responsible for contacts with British left-wing political parties, recalls that after he had accompanied Gorbachev to a meeting with a delegation of the British Communist

¹. Andrei Grachev is a Russian political analyst and journalist, Ph. D in history from the Academy of Social Sciences, Moscow (1976), presently editorialist for the Novaya Gazeta (Russia) and Chairman of the Scientific Committee of The World Political Forum. Grachev was Consultant and Deputy Director on the International Department of the Central Committee of CPSU (1974-1987), adviser and official Spokesman for Mikhail Gorbachev until his resignation in December 1991 and senior research fellow in the Institute of World Economy and International relations, Russian Academy of Science (Moscow) between 1992-1995. Grachev held positions of Visiting Professor in Kyoto and Paris and of Senior Researcher in Oxford. Among his books in Russian, French and English: L’Histoire vraie de la fin de l’URSS (1992); La chute du Kremlin. L’empire du non-sens (1994); Meeting of Civilizations: Clash or Dialogue?, UNESCO (1996); Le mystère Gorbatchev. La terre et le destin (2004); Gorbachev’s Gamble. Soviet Foreign Policy and the End of Cold War (2008).
Party, Gorbachev rang him and mentioned a possible trip to Britain at the head of a Soviet parliamentary delegation. Chernyaev enthusiastically supported the idea and tried to convince Gorbachev to profit from this visit, above all with regard to foreign policy issues. It could be a chance to place additional emphasis on Soviet European policy as well as to soften the anti-American confrontationist hard line characteristic of Gromyko-led Soviet diplomacy at that time.

Yet it became apparent during their conversation that for Gorbachev the main interest of the trip lay elsewhere – in the realm of internal policy. As Gorbachev indicated to Chernyaev, he apparently regarded the proposed visit as an opportunity not only to start breaking Gromyko’s monopoly domination over Soviet foreign policy but even more as an occasion for sending a political message to the Western world from the new generation of Soviet political leaders.2

In Gromyko’s time, Soviet relations with Britain were on the “back burner”: the long-serving head of Soviet foreign policy was convinced that his privileged partner in the West was Washington. British diplomacy, especially in the Thatcher years, appeared to Moscow to be largely subordinate to US global strategy and insufficiently ‘European-minded’ for the UK to be regarded as an independent player worthy of particular attention. At the same time, it is quite possible that Thatcher, starting her second term as Prime Minister, decided to change this situation. She could not have relished being permanently regarded by the Soviet Union merely as America’s junior partner, while enviously observing France and West Germany successfully elaborating their own political strategies vis-à-vis Moscow: the French had Charles de Gaulle’s widely proclaimed vision of a Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals”, while the Germans embraced Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik. Yet with Soviet diplomacy stagnating, with the anti-Western arrogance of the late Brezhnev years and the hopeless image projected by his immediate successors, Juri Andropov and Konstantin Cher nenko, there was very little space for an innovative British initiative in the direction of Moscow. That is why Thatcher must impatiently have been looking ahead to the post-Chernenko era, trying to work out who could become his successor.

Chernyaev, whose formal sector of professional concern was limited to the CP-SU’s contacts with the British Communist Party and to a much lesser extent with the British Labour Party and trade union leaders, was certainly sensitive to the signals coming from the UK political elite, which is why he had reason to tell Gorbachev that he was impatiently awaited “by everybody including Madame”.3

For a number of reasons Gorbachev’s December 15-21 1984 visit to Britain turned into a remarkable political event far beyond the modest objective of eroding Gromyko’s monopoly control over Soviet foreign policy. And not only because within three months, the relatively obscure ideology chief of the Central Committee was propelled to the position of one of the two most influential world leaders.

3. Ibid.
Chernyaev himself was not misled by Gorbachev’s apparent modesty. In his diary he noted at the time: “He has big plans”.

In fact, after Gorbachev’s first trip abroad (in July 1984) in his status as the “new Suslov” to attend the funeral of the Italian Communist leader Enrique Berlinguer, his coming to London offered him an opportunity to step beyond his formal position as the second man in the Party hierarchy as he tried on the attire of “shadow head of State”, responsible not only for doctrinal questions but also for crucial political and diplomatic issues. This potential aspect of the visit did not escape Gromyko, which explains his formal objection to the idea that Gorbachev would be accompanied on the trip by his first deputy, Georgy Kornienko. Later Gromyko went so far as to reprimand Anatoly Dobrynin, the influential Soviet Ambassador in Washington, for, in spite of his considerable experience, overrating the significance of an “average parliamentary delegation”. Dobrynin’s offence had been to send cables to Moscow describing the great attention given to Gorbachev’s British visit by Washington political circles and the American press.4

However the main, even if undeclared, foreign policy goal of Gorbachev’s visit to a Western capital was to serve as an informal spokesman for a new generation of Soviet political leaders preparing to replace the “old guard”. The main message, therefore, was a general one: Gorbachev wanted to transmit the idea to the Soviet Union’s Western partners that the future Soviet leadership would be willing to put an end to an epoch of sterile and dangerous confrontation. At that time, Gorbachev’s motivation was closely related to the pragmatic priorities of his internal political plans (even if at this stage they still looked rather vague). In his opinion the only chance to overcome the growing gap in development separating his country from the West, and to raise the standard of living of its population, largely depended on the possibility of ending the arms race and easing the burden of militarisation that was crushing the Soviet economy.

Naturally, in his conversations with Margaret Thatcher, both at 10 Downing street and during the unusually long (unprecedented for any Soviet dignitary) discussions at Chequers, Gorbachev did not present any concrete proposals – he was certainly not authorised to do so and probably personally was not yet ready. But he did produce charts drafted by the Soviet General Staff showing Soviet and Western nuclear missiles targeted at each other and capable of destroying life on Earth a thousand times over, and he spoke of the absurdity of the logic of overkill. His main arguments, as he recalls, were taken not from the ideological dictionary but inspired by common sense.5

However, in several public speeches delivered in London, Gorbachev did reveal certain important aspects of his reflections on foreign policy issues. Thus, when addressing British members of parliament, he referred for the first time to a “Common European Home”, although at that point it was still more a metaphor than a political

4. Author’s personal record of Dobrynin’s remarks on the subject, December 2, 1989.
project. He also declared that “the nuclear age inevitably dictates new political thinking”.  

It took Gorbachev about three years to formulate this concept in concrete terms and present it in his book Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World. But it was not his innovative proposals or initiatives that impressed his British hosts, but rather his style, apparent open-mindedness and sense of humour; they were delighted to discover that he was most unlike a stereotypical apparatchik and behaved like a normal human being. He spoke freely, answered questions without resorting to notes, made jokes himself and laughed at the jokes of others. He also clearly was fond and proud of his elegant wife Raisa who accompanied him to London. All this produced a political effect far more significant than any that could have come simply as a result of a well-planned diplomatic mission.

As for his personal relations with Margaret Thatcher, the visit marked the beginning of an exceptional political collaboration between two outstanding leaders based on mutual respect, perhaps even admiration. They both understood that each had a specific role in the delicate process of overcoming the legacy of the Cold War, while the special chemistry between them suggested a striking similarity of character despite all the ideological differences. Thatcher apparently was seduced by the straightforwardness of Gorbachev and even admitted this herself, speaking to him in March 1987 during her visit to Moscow: “We have similar characters. We both want to pronounce the last word”. As for Chernyaev’s personal impressions, he confirms that Gorbachev was usually more open with her than with other Western leaders.

Later Thatcher gave the following explanation of her own unusually enthusiastic résumé of their first meeting in London: “His personality could not have been more different from the wooden ventriloquism of the average Soviet apparatchik […]. I found myself liking him”.  

In the years that followed, Margaret Thatcher continued to profit from a kind of privileged position among all other Western leaders in contacts with Gorbachev which naturally was beneficial for Britain’s international status. I agree with Archie Brown who has written that

“Margaret Thatcher was able to become a more important partner of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the United States, on the other, than any British Prime Minister since Churchill”.

However, Thatcher’s role in the history of the end of the Cold War and her participation in the demolition of the Iron Curtain (its existence first announced by her illustrious predecessor in 1946) was not just a question of “discovering” Gorbachev. Until her resignation and even subsequently, she remained one of the most attentive observers of Gorbachev’s endeavour and an enthusiastic supporter of his project of perestroika. Paradoxically, on a number of occasions she was much more supportive.

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of Gorbachev’s domestic strategies than of some of his foreign policy initiatives such as the INF Treaty, the abolition of nuclear weapons or his approach to German unification where she was either sceptical or openly critical. It was the consistency of her support for Gorbachev’s domestic project that prompted Chernyaev to declare that “Thatcher’s position on perestroika set the pace for our recognition by the West”. Gorbachev greatly appreciated this, saying that Thatcher “had honestly tried to help us by mobilizing the West’s help for perestroika”.10

Yet perhaps “paradox” is not the appropriate term. It was an interesting aspect of Thatcher’s understanding of Gorbachev that either intuitively or out of political wisdom she realized that for Gorbachev himself, his innovative foreign policy was, if not secondary, then certainly subordinate to his main project of internal political reform. This, in turn, meant that the global, strategic and long-term benefit for the West in dealing with Gorbachev would come less from some concrete, practical and ultimately short-term successful deals or gains in the field of foreign policy bargaining but more from the long-term results of his ambitious plans for the internal transformation and modernization of his country, its society and its political system.

I can think only of one other Western politician – François Mitterrand – who to the same degree as Thatcher paid much more attention to Gorbachev’s internal perestroika than to his new thinking on foreign affairs. George Bush and Helmut Kohl, each for their own reasons, were anxious to seize maximum profit from Gorbachev’s stay in the Kremlin, seeking to “lock in the change” that he personified, the former in the field of security and the strategic balance between the superpowers, the latter on the question of German reunification. Thatcher and Mitterrand were sincere fans of political perestroika and behaved accordingly, although they differed in their political and ideological aspirations. Mitterrand, the French socialist, envisaged the realisation of a century-old dream of European social democracy – not so much of the ruin of Soviet Bolshevism but, far better, its historic repentance and conversion into a social democratic model, thus confirming the historic victory of reformist socialism over the revolutionary model. Thatcher, on the other hand, was betting on an eventual triumph of liberal values in the Soviet economy and polity that in the long run would totally transform Russia, bringing it back to Europe and linking it to the West.

Even after she left office, Thatcher did not abandon her efforts to assist Gorbachev in his reform project, considering it to be a historic chance both for Russia and the world. Jack Matlock, the American Ambassador to Moscow, has recorded that when Thatcher was on a private visit to Moscow in the summer of 1991, he was invited to a meeting with her in the residence of the British Ambassador, Sir Rodric Braithwaite. There the former Prime Minister asked him to transmit her emotional appeal to President Bush to stop looking for excuses and find a way to help Gorbachev.11 In July of the same year during the G-7 summit in London, Thatcher, aware of its unhappy results for Gorbachev, visited him in the Soviet embassy and expressed her disap-

11. Author’s conversation with Jack Matlock, October 22, 1999.
pointment with the position taken by the majority of G-7 leaders. Pavel Palazchenko, who translated their conversation, cites her as saying: “I know they let you down”, adding:

“How couldn’t they understand that what is most important at present is really to support Gorbachev and undertake important moves in order to consolidate what you have started in the USSR.”

Coming back to December 1984, it is important to remember that for Gorbachev also the encouraging outcome of his first official political mission abroad played an extremely important role. Significantly, it gave him psychological assurance. Having successfully passed the “Thatcher test”, especially since the “iron lady” had the reputation of being a top political professional and certainly a “tough nut” for anybody to deal with and perhaps especially for him, given her outspoken anticommunism, the future General Secretary could now feel assured that “if he could make it in London, he could make it anywhere”.

Next, and rather quickly afterwards, came the first political dividends from the London visit; not only did Thatcher famously announce: “I like Mr. Gorbachev. We can do business together”, 13 but within days after her meeting with Gorbachev she flew to Washington to convey her positive impressions to the US President Ronald Reagan. Thatcher’s recommendation was extremely important since according to the US Secretary of State George Shultz, Reagan “had immense confidence in her and her views carried great weight”. 14 In the words of Reagan himself (cited by Archie Brown),

“She told me that Gorbachev was different from any of the other Kremlin leaders. She believed that there was a chance for a great opening. Of course, she was proven exactly right”. 15

Gorbachev’s visit to Britain was important for him personally also for another reason. Just as his previous trip to Italy in July of the same year, it marked an important step in his education as a future political leader. Even though it was far from his first visit to a Western country, in many aspects, as again notes Archie Brown, this journey was “an eye-opening one for him”. 16 One might even say that thanks to this visit, with its various components that included meetings with the parliamentarians, the Prime Minister and several members of her cabinet, opposition leaders and the press (the coverage of the visit by some of the British tabloids turned into a real baptism of fire for Gorbachev and especially for Raisa), Gorbachev for the first time was able to step into a typical Western “political kitchen” (in its perhaps peculiar but highly instructive British version). Another specific feature of the event was the fact that Gorbachev

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16. Ibid., p.77.
could bring with him some of those who were to become future members of his political team and group of experts: Alexander Yakovlev, Academician Evgeny Velikhov, Anatoly Kovalev (future first deputy of Edward Shevardnadze) and General Nikolay Chervov from the Soviet General Staff.

Because of the sudden death of one of the strongmen in Moscow, Marshal Dmitry Ustinov (an ally in the Politburo), Gorbachev was obliged to shorten his British programme by one day. Less than three months later, on 10 March 1985, came the death of Konstantin Chernenko, General Secretary for little more than a year. This opened the way for Gorbachev’s long-awaited election to this post.

It was, of course, for Gorbachev, and not out of any desire to pay tribute to Chernenko, that an exceptional group of global leaders came to Moscow for the funeral in March 1985. And naturally Thatcher was among them. It may be worth citing again Chernyaev’s record of their short but by now informal encounter on this occasion since apparently Gorbachev singled it out among the marathon series of obligatory meetings with foreign leaders during these days:

“‘Madam’ [later between themselves Gorbachev and Chernyaev often referred to Thatcher as ‘Margo’] was all compliments and charm. He responded in kind. Apparently, she doesn’t just want to conduct politics with her good looks, she banks on using Gorbachev to get the better of Kohl, Mitterrand and even Reagan himself. It seems she also enjoys exercising her feminine wiles on Gorbachev in particular”.

17 In the years that followed the two leaders never missed an occasion to meet, although there were not too many opportunities. The rigid rules of diplomatic protocol during what was still a rather precarious political climate – it was only the first stage of global political warming - would not, for example, allow Thatcher to fly to Moscow to watch the Bolshoi in the way that Tony Blair, a decade later and impatient to meet Vladimir Putin, came to St Petersburg for a performance of the Kirov ballet. Also, Gorbachev’s ultra-intensive schedule, imposed by the torrent of perestroika, did not leave him much chance to select visitors to his liking. Out of the few meetings he had with Margaret Thatcher, perhaps her visit to Moscow in March 1987 was the richest in political and even emotional content.

From the very beginning the conversation between Gorbachev and Thatcher took the form of a fencing match. Thatcher was the first to attack. She argued that the “Brezhnev Doctrine” was still active, with Communism striving for global dominance. She pointed to Yemen, Angola, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Mozambique, the Cuban troops in Africa, and went on: “And what about Afghanistan? That’s why we say the foreign policy of communism aims to rule the world”. 18

Gorbachev was on the defensive and obliged to answer for the policies of his predecessors. Caught in the logic of formal diplomatic and ideological wrangling, he claimed that the Soviet Union never had a doctrine of spreading socialist revolution across the world. It was simply a question of socialism following capitalism where

17. A.S. CHERNYAEV, My Six Years ..., op.cit., p.23.
18. Ibid., p.100.
people could no longer tolerate exploitation as in the case of Nicaragua. And yet even within this ritualistic exchange, he introduced an argument from his nascent philosophy of new thinking (which in the long run worked out in Thatcher’s favour): freedom of choice. Suggesting that they end the ideological debate, Gorbachev proposed they agree that both capitalism and socialism were existing realities and that every people had to make its own choice between these alternatives. Gone was Nikita Khrushchev’s promise “to bury” capitalism, which would end in “the ash-bin of history”. By this time, as Chernyaev observes, Gorbachev already felt “the contradiction between the logic of perestroika and the logic of the system he was defending”. Writing in the 1990s, Chernyaev observed that “in historical perspective, Thatcher turned out to be more correct”.  

It could be argued that Thatcher actually helped Gorbachev to arrive at his own subsequent conclusion, that in order to go beyond peaceful coexistence and achieve cooperation with the West, the Soviet Union would have to change radically. Later, with the benefit of hindsight, Gorbachev himself admitted:

“For us, Margaret Thatcher was not an easy partner, especially having in mind her anti-communism which sometimes prevented her from seeing things more realistically. Although in many cases she was able to illustrate her accusations with facts which later [italics added, AG] we ourselves began to subject to reappraisal”.  

However, on the subject of nuclear weapons and disarmament, it was Thatcher’s turn to have to defend and justify herself. By that time Gorbachev had proved how far he was prepared to go and that he “was genuinely committed to eliminating the burden of armaments and the nuclear threat”. He showed no hesitation in his counter attack. “You, Madam Thatcher, with your stance on nuclear weapons […] are an ardent supporter of those who are prepared to accept the risk of war”. Chernyaev, in his role of amazed observer, notes that the heated character of the debate “strangely enough […] only strengthened their mutual sympathy”.  

Yet, Gorbachev’s respect and even admiration for this hard-line British Amazon should not be regarded as only a unique personal reaction. During her visit to the Soviet Union, and especially after she was interviewed on Soviet TV, “Margo” charmed the Soviet public probably even more than Gorbachev charmed the British during his first visit to London (taking into account the fact that he did not appear on television). And apparently this was not just the short-lived surprise effect of encountering an intelligent and dynamic woman in the role of successful politician. Two years later in 1989 according to a poll conducted by the major public opinion research institute VTsIOM, Soviet respondents named her the “woman of the year”.

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19. Ibid., p.102.
Gorbachev successfully used Thatcher’s 1987 visit to Moscow to solidify the foundations of his new foreign policy as part of the daily pedagogy in which he was engaged within the Politburo. “It was important to see what such people are really thinking”, he said he in his report to the Politburo.

“Thatcher is an ardent defender of Western interests [...]. She is sincere but determined. She is greatly interested in everything that is going on in the Soviet Union […]. She was deeply impressed. Let her think about it”.

But having said this, Gorbachev moved on to the subjects on which the Politburo in turn had to reflect. He reproduced Thatcher’s arguments about Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan. “We are afraid of you”, she said. “She’s sure we have not given up the Brezhnev Doctrine. This is really something to ponder, comrades. We can’t just brush it aside”.

Another consequence of the visit was that Gorbachev turned his attention to Western Europe. He said to his advisors:

“We have to plan our European policy seriously. Maybe we should set up a European Research Center [a new academic Institute of Europe directed by Vitaly Zhurkin was established shortly afterwards]. And remember: Western Europe is our basic partner”.

Summing up his appraisal of Thatcher’s visit, Gorbachev stressed the strategic place of Britain:

“Thatcher is important not only in herself but also stands for both the US and the European direction which for us has a key significance. The increase of Britain’s role corresponds to our interests [my italics, AG]”.

Gorbachev was supposed to pay a return visit to the UK at the end of 1988 on his way back from the UN General Assembly, but this trip had to be cancelled because of the Armenian earthquake. In fact while still in New York he learned about the event from Thatcher’s telegram of condolence. His visit to Britain thus took place in April of the following year.

According to Chernyaev, Thatcher was lavish with high praise for Gorbachev in public, even in defiance of her own establishment and other Western leaders. He interpreted this as a reflection of her “two parts”, part statesman motivated by principled, long-term concerns and part politician who, having placed her bet on Gorbachev, had a personal interest in his success.

In his view, the practical significance of this 1989 meeting lay less in bringing closer their respective positions on disarmament and regional affairs (the two continued to argue about nuclear strategy) but in the fact that Thatcher, along with Kohl and Mitterrand later, did much to ease Gorbachev’s suspicion that the new US Pres-

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24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p.105.
27. A.S. Chernyaev, My Six Years …, op.cit., p.221.
ident Bush would veer off the course that he and Reagan had established. At that time Gorbachev complained to Thatcher about the “meditation pause” taken by the American administration in order to formulate its own position regarding the Soviet perestroika and its leader. Remembering her role in establishing his contact with Reagan, he tried to use her as an intermediary to pass on a message to the US President.

Reporting to the Politburo on 13 April 1989 about his visit to the UK Gorbachev said:

“I like Thatcher’s independence […]. It’s always interesting to debate with her […]. You can talk to her about anything. And she understands it all. She is a reliable person. Each time we argue vehemently about nuclear weapons she is obliged to fight back. She feels the flaws in her position. She realistically evaluates the situation that perestroika has created in the world. And doesn’t hesitate to confirm that ‘they need’ our perestroika. So here we can observe the real turn in people’s minds”.28

Chernyaev reports an interesting detail from the discussion of the “Margaret phenomenon” on the plane that brought Gorbachev and his team back from London. During the exchange of impressions about the visit between Shevardnadze, Yakovlev and Raisa Gorbacheva, among others, Chernyaev reproached Gorbachev for being so restrained with Thatcher. He elaborated on this, once again enthusiastically praising her position. Gorbachev defended himself: “There’s nothing wrong with that […]. She and I are different”.29 The original Russian version of Chernyaev’s diary gives an amusing continuation of the conversation: “The women present advanced their own version of Gorbachev’s restraint: Look at their photo in Moscow News: real lovers”.30 It is certainly true that the two were quite different. On another occasion, for example, Chernyaev speaks of Thatcher as “stubborn and sometimes didactic”, which can hardly be said about Gorbachev. This characteristic of Thatcher is rather reminiscent of Raisa. It could be that in this similarity between the two women, one can find the explanation for Gorbachev’s attraction to both.

The unexpected acceleration of the process of German unification in the autumn of 1989 forced the two leaders to have a series of emergency consultations with the idea of coordinating their position. When Margaret Thatcher came to Moscow in September, she had raised the question of German unity which at that time still looked like a largely hypothetical and distant possibility. “She explained to Gorbachev that Germany’s allies were apprehensive about German reunification despite their traditional statements in support”, writes Rodric Brathwaite who had become British Ambassador to Moscow the previous year. Reacting to Thatcher’s concerns, Gorbachev politely agreed, saying that the Russians did not want German reunification either. This rather abstract exchange of generalities created an ambiguity which was confirmed two months later after the fall of the Berlin wall and especially after the surprise

29. A.S. CHERNYAEV, My Six Years ..., op.cit., p. 222.
30. A.S. CHERNYAEV, Shest’ let s Gorbachevym ..., op.cit...,p.289.
announcement by Kohl of his ten-point programme of accelerated rapprochement between the two German states. Thatcher and Gorbachev found themselves in a situation where each had to react almost daily to the precipitate development of the situation. The British Prime Minister’s initial reaction to the spectre of a united Germany suddenly becoming a reality was more emotional than political. She convinced herself that Gorbachev, both for strategic as well as for internal political reasons, would categorically oppose it, using not only political arguments but perhaps even military objections as well. But as Braithwaite justly remarks,

“she had misunderstood Gorbachev: he did not intend to stand uselessly against the tide of history. His problem was a different one: to extract the best bargain he could in exchange for Russia’s inevitable retreat”.31

After the fall of the wall on 9 November, and particularly after Kohl presented his 10-point programme to the Bundestag, Thatcher, in private conversations with Gorbachev (in some cases she even asked Chernyaev to stop taking notes), and Mitterrand shared their concerns about the “unpredictable consequences” and the risks of “international destabilization” that could arise from the speedy German march to unity. Vadim Medvedev, who led a Soviet parliamentary delegation to London in March 1990, reports that his face-to-face conversation with the “iron lady” left him with the clear impression that she not only did not welcome the unification of Germany, but ardently hoped that Gorbachev would block it. However, despite all the prompting he was receiving from Thatcher and Mitterrand, Gorbachev was quite conscious of the fact that neither of them would ever publicly express their reservations about the structure and timing of German unification. “They were counting on us to slow it down and if possible to block the process”, according to Vadim Zagladin.32 Chernyaev’s interpretation is similar:

“Gorbachev realized that Thatcher and Mitterrand would never conspire with him against the Germans, especially after Bush made his views known. It was also clear to him that they would like to use him as a braking mechanism. Yet since it was obvious that the process of unification had already begun and could not be stopped, he feared that it might go ahead without him and would consequently be directed against him”.33

As Rodric Braithwaite has noted:

“In June 1990, Thatcher came to Moscow for her last visit as Prime Minister. By then her position had changed, and she tried to convince Gorbachev that the presence of a united Germany in NATO would be of positive advantage to the Soviet Union”.34

By that time Gorbachev had already made his decision and Thatcher’s arguments just proved to him that he was right not to follow the initial advice of the British and

32. Author’s interview with Zagladin, December 1, 1997.
33. Author’s interview with Chernyaev, February 10, 2000.
34. R. BRAITHWAITE, Across the Moscow River ..., op.cit. p.137.
French leaders who both, having panicked at the prospect of the resurrection of the German giant, tried to incite him to block this process.

The last official contact between the two leaders took place in November 1990 in Paris during the OCSE conference that ended with the signing of the Charter of the New Europe and the conclusion of the CFE Treaty. Thatcher was soon after forced to resign by a revolt inside her own party. Gorbachev was able rapidly to forge friendly relations with John Major, largely thanks to his special relations with Thatcher. But in the course of the next year he, too, was forced to resign in the aftermath of two successive plots staged against him. The first took place in August 1991 in the form of a putsch jointly prepared by his conservative adversaries; several months later came the second, a conspiracy of the three leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia who announced the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Galina Starovoitova, a member of the Yeltsin team and future member of the Russian parliament (she was assassinated in 1998 in St Petersburg), happened to be in London in August 1991. She reported that when she called on Thatcher during those days, she could see how worried Thatcher was about the fate of Gorbachev - he had been arrested by the putschists at his summer residence in Crimea - and that it was Thatcher who proposed the setting up of an international investigation mission that could go to Russia to make sure that Gorbachev’s life was not endangered.
Making the Single Market

Witness Remarks

Stephen WALL

As early as 1982, Margaret Thatcher reported to the House of Commons that she had, at a meeting of the European Council, stressed to her fellow Heads of Government the vital need to complete the single market in services.¹

The European Council in Fontainebleau in June 1984 was most notable for its resolution of the long and bloody battle over the British EU budget contribution. But at that meeting Thatcher also gave to her fellow leaders a booklet, drafted in the British Cabinet Office and Foreign Office. Although it was not written by Thatcher, she had read it and approved it which, in her case, invariably meant reading every word. “We must” said the pamphlet

“create the genuine common market in goods and services which is envisaged in the Treaty of Rome and will be crucial to our ability to meet the US and Japanese technological challenge. Only by a sustained effort to removing remaining obstacles to intra-Community trade can we enable the citizens of Europe to benefit from the dynamic effects of a fully integrated common market with immense purchasing power...We must create the conditions in which European businessmen too can build on their strengths and create prosperity and jobs. This means action to harmonise standards and prevent their deliberate use as barriers to intra-Community trade; more rapid and better coordinated procedures; a major effort to improve mutual recognition of professional qualifications; and liberalising trade in services, including banking, insurance and transportation of good and people [...]”.

Such was the importance Britain attached to the pamphlet that the British Ambassador in Bonn, Sir Julian Bullard, asked Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s closest adviser, Horst Teltschik, whether there was anything in the British approach which the Germans found unacceptable or inadequate. Teltschik responded that the Germans found the British paper a very good starting point but Germany wanted not just to fulfil the existing Treaty, including by completing the single market, but to take a qualitative step forward in political union.

¹. From 1979 to 1983, Stephen Wall served in the British Embassy in Washington. On return to the FCO he was Assistant Head and then Head of European Community Department (Internal). From 1988 to 1991, he was Private Secretary to three successive Foreign Secretaries (Geoffrey Howe, John Major and Douglas Hurd). From 1991 to 1993, he returned to No 10 Downing Street as Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, John Major, responsible for Foreign Policy and Defence. Stephen Wall served as British Ambassador to Portugal from 1993 to 1995. He was the Permanent Representative to the European Union from 1995-2000. From 2000-2004 he was the Head of the European Secretariat in the Cabinet Office in London and EU adviser to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair. He is currently the official historian for the Cabinet Office. In 2008, he wrote A Stranger in Europe, Britain and the EU from Thatcher to Blair, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
At the same time, the British Embassy in Paris was reporting that the French government was attracted by the idea of European Union, especially if it was a vague concept that allowed them to exercise European leadership. That approach was not congenial to the British. In a speech in Bonn in October 1984, British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe urged the need to make progress on trade, freedom of movement, environmental pollution and closer cooperation in foreign policy. He did not favour crossing “a paper desert of institutional schemes” but, instead, advocated making use of existing institutions to achieve pragmatic, flexible cooperation.

Margaret Thatcher put it more bluntly in an interview, in the same month, with a British newspaper. None of her partners could, she claimed, tell her what they meant by political union. Chancellor Kohl had called for a United States of Europe. She did not believe in that but in a Europe of separate countries coming together in a common market – a market which, in her view, the European Community was still a long way from achieving.

The Fontainebleau European Council had set up a committee, under an Irishman, Senator James Dooge, to make recommendations on the future development of the European Community. Despite British reservations, the Committee was looking at the need for Treaty change, including the completion of the single market. At a speech in Angers in November 1984, Thatcher told the Franco-British Council that she was against union and in favour of unity. She thought that the Community’s founders would be horrified to see how their bold vision had been pinned down by bureaucratic regulations and how we had focussed on protecting home markets, not on expanding trade. Making a heartfelt plea for the kind of action she had called for in her pamphlet, she concluded by affirming Britain’s desire for greater unity of Community action in world affairs, in tackling unemployment and in the development and application of new technology. That was her idea of a united Europe.

But, in the Dooge committee, the argument was slipping away from Britain. It was characteristic that, of the personal representatives of EC leaders who sat on the committee, Malcolm Rifkind, the Minister of State for Europe at the Foreign Office, was one of the few serving government members. Other heads of government had been content to appoint non-governmental personal representatives and to let a thousand flowers bloom, confident that they could take or leave the final product. That was not the British way, either then or since.

When the European Council met in March 1985, Thatcher was again clearly opposed to changing the treaties. In the view of the British government, the single market could be achieved on the basis of the existing Treaty of Rome, unamended. This view was almost universally held among ministers and government departments. Even the Foreign Office was slow to argue the case for majority voting to achieve Britain’s aims and it took Rifkind to point out that,

“if we were serious about serving the British national interest through getting the single market completed, then we would probably stand to gain more than we would lose by votes being taken”.

Stephen WALL
Geoffrey Howe remained circumspect and the Prime Minister was firmly opposed. She told Commission President Jacques Delors in May 1985 that there was no need for Treaty change. In her view, if the European Community consumed its energies in trying to amend the Treaty, no practical work would get done. Foreign Secretary Howe, subsequently told Delors that the Treaty of Rome was the constitution of the European Community. It would be extremely difficult to change it since that required the assent of twelve governments and twelve parliaments.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary went to the European Council in Milan at the end of June 1985 convinced that it was still possible to head off the demands for an inter-governmental conference to negotiate treaty change, not least because the European Council operated by consensus. But, in the event, Thatcher was outsmarted by Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi who rightly worked out that the decision to call an intergovernmental conference was a procedural one under the Treaty of Rome, requiring only a simple majority in the Council. Thatcher was outvoted and the conference was called.

Milan was a shock for the British. No one had seen it coming. Thatcher was used to using blocking tactics to secure success. On this occasion, her ace had been trumped. Britain still had a veto on the outcome of the inter-governmental conference, since any treaty change required unanimity. But Britain faced a choice between agreeing to some treaty change in order to secure the single market objectives of which she had been the main champion, or perhaps to face a situation in which her partners found a way to go ahead without her. This fear was very prominent in the minds of officials and does not seem to have been lost on the Prime Minister either. Even before she left Milan, she had accepted the advice of officials not to rule out all treaty change. She subsequently authorised British officials to negotiate on the treaty while reserving her position and saying that they did not know what position she would take in the end.

Thatcher’s resistance to treaty change was not born of scepticism so much as a realistic assessment of British public and parliamentary opinion. Britain had been a reluctant European at the outset of the Common Market project. But the minds of senior ministers changed very swiftly after the signature of the Treaty of Rome and, had it not been for President Charles de Gaulle’s veto of Britain’s application in 1963, Britain would have joined by 1965 at the latest. De Gaulle’s veto was a national humiliation, made even worse when he cast a second veto in 1967. British public opinion on Europe has never really recovered from that. Yet, it is now forgotten that when Prime Minister Harold Wilson re-launched Britain’s bid for EEC membership in 1966, he secured the largest majority on any subject recorded in the House of Commons for over a century. And the British government of that day was open to the future political development of the EEC, including the prospect of economic and monetary union. Indeed, in the late autumn of 1966, Jim Callaghan, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, told a public meeting of City leaders that one answer to the perceived problems of the sterling area might be a single currency.
After de Gaulle’s loss of office in 1969, French official policy towards British entry into the EEC changed. But President Georges Pompidou, never an enthusiast for British membership, insisted that the definitive shape of the Common Agricultural Policy and of the EEC’s own resources financing arrangements should be set before any renewed negotiations for entry were opened with Britain. Thus, France was able to secure arrangements which were uniquely favourable to her. And, having done so, the French government wrapped itself in the Community flag and insisted that no change could be made to what had now become Community practice. This was in sharp and cynical contrast to the attempts made by de Gaulle only a few years earlier to thwart the planned progress of the EEC towards more common policies. It was not the commonality of the policies that France objected to, but the extent to which they did or did not advantage France’s national interests.

So the incoming Conservative government led by Edward Heath in 1970 was faced with two intractable problems: a British public opinion which had become hostile to the EEC because of de Gaulle’s contemptuous intransigence; and financial arrangements which would put Britain at a huge financial disadvantage compared with her future partners and which, at French insistence, were un-negotiable. British officials advised Heath that, intolerable and unsustainable as these arrangements would be, to walk away from the negotiations would not be an answer. Britain could not prosper outside the EEC and would be forced back to the negotiating table in due course. At that point, Britain might be forced to accept an even harsher financial settlement.

In the end, therefore, Britain accepted a bad financial deal, but with a review clause. That review clause, invoked by the Labour governments of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan between 1974 and 1979, produced partial and inadequate rebates for Britain. But the underlying problem remained unresolved when Thatcher took office in 1979 and she was quickly persuaded by her officials that seeking a lasting solution must be her top European priority. To get the result which she eventually secured at Fontainebleau in 1984 required toughness and intransigence on her part given the fact that all of Britain’s partners had a national financial interest in seeing Britain continue to subsidize their gains from the EEC budget. In accusing her of undermining the Community system, they were guilty, as she correctly saw it, of massive hypocrisy. Thus, once she had won the day, British public opinion generally and her own in particular, had again turned against Europe. She saw, in Treaty change, nothing but trouble within her own party and beyond.

When the negotiations on what became the Single European Act began, it was with huge difficulty that the British forbore from weighing in with their objections since the British government machine hates inaction, even when tactically driven, British negotiators sat on their hands in the early meetings of the inter-governmental conference. The tactic succeeded in that it smoked out the French and German governments and obliged them to reveal the very modest nature of the treaty changes which they (by contrast with the Commission, Italy and Benelux) wanted to achieve.

The inter-governmental conference which led to the Single European Act was the shortest in the history of the European Union to date even though the content of the
eventual treaty was significant. As the December European Council under Luxembourg chairmanship approached, the principal British preoccupation was to constrain the wish of the European Commission to extend majority voting into areas such as taxation and workers’ rights, to avoid extensions in the power of the European Parliament at the expense of national parliaments and the Council of Ministers, to avoid extending the definition of what was meant by freedom of movement and to ensure that majority voting did not weaken Britain’s phyto-sanitary controls on imports of products such as plants and seeds. Curious as it now seems, this issue almost proved the deal breaker at Luxembourg.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were also concerned about the references in the draft treaty to economic and monetary union. But they felt obliged to accept what was written. First of all, the language harked back to the undertaking agreed to by Prime Minister Heath at the European summit of October 1972 (“the progressive realisation of Economic and Monetary Union”). Secondly, the relevant chapter of the Single European Act was headed “Co-operation in Economic and Monetary Policy (Economic and Monetary Union)”, so the British could argue that economic and monetary union was a cooperative process, not a certain goal. And, finally, at a meeting with Kohl in the margins of the summit, the Chancellor reassured Thatcher that he was opposed to EMU, and that the text on the table was harmless and meaningless. The fact that further treaty change would be needed would, Kohl argued, be a protection against creeping EMU. Thatcher accepted those arguments.

In recent years, Margaret Thatcher has said that she was misled about the true nature of the Single European Act. At the time, she told David Williamson, then head of the Cabinet Office’s European Secretariat, that she had read every word of the draft treaty and there was no question of her doing anything inadvertently. There were, however, two issues that were problematic for the British during and beyond the negotiation. The first was the definition of the Single Market in article 8A of the draft treaty. The internal market was to comprise

> “an area without internal frontiers in which free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty”.

Foreign Office lawyers believed that this wording and, in particular, the words “in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty” restricted the scope of free movement and did not imply free movement for all, in all circumstances. That view was supported by the Law Officers although, as I recall, they were not more than reasonably confident of the British case.

The European Commission never accepted the British interpretation and, as it transpired, nor did the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in subsequent jurisprudence. From 1986 to 1997, the British position was legally anomalous and successive British governments feared a challenge in the ECJ. In the end, the issue was resolved in the Amsterdam Treaty negotiations of 1997 in which Britain secured an “opt-out” from the EU’s frontier-free provisions in exchange for allowing the terms of the Schengen protocol to be incorporated in the main EU Treaty.
The second issue arose over article 21 of the Single European Act which required member states to "pay particular attention to encouraging improvements in the working environment, as regards the health and safety of workers, and [to] set as their objective the harmonisation of conditions in this area, while maintaining the improvements made". Qualified majority voting was to be introduced in this area but the directives in question were to establish "minimum requirements for gradual implementation, having regard to the conditions and technical rules obtaining in each of the member states". At British insistence the article also stipulated that "Such directives shall avoid imposing administrative, financial and legal constraints in a way which would hold back the creation and development of small and medium-sized undertakings".

Thatcher was not easily persuaded that this article was watertight from the perspective of a British government that did not want to see harmonising social legislation. British officials believed that the article was limited to measures related to health and safety. But, in practice, Thatcher’s doubts were justified. The European Commission used the article as a basis of social legislation going beyond health and safety and, in doing so, was supported by a majority of other member states. The determined policy of the European Commission under Delors to create a social Europe going beyond anything which Thatcher had signed up to reinforce her view that the EEC was fundamentally protectionist. In this, she was of course, correct. Pompidou had told the editor of *The Times* in 1971 that he wanted the British to be in no doubt of the nature of the Community they were aspiring to join: it was protectionist and Britain had to accept that.

It had been his realisation that Britain would not accept a protectionist Community which had underlain de Gaulle’s hostility to British accession. But, in resisting protectionism, and in canvassing for liberal economic policies, British governments were not simply pursuing national interest: Thatcher was more farsighted than many of her fellow heads of government in seeing the reality of a world in which the EEC was already losing competitive ground to the United States and Japan. The argument continues to this day.

At the end of 1985, Sir David Hannay, Britain’s Permanent Representative to the European Communities, sent to the Foreign Secretary his annual review, a document sent to the Foreign Office by all its overseas posts, summarising the lessons of the year just past and making predictions and recommendations about the year to come. Hannay wrote:

“What at the time [the Milan European Council] looked like the possible beginning of a dangerous split in the Community, with the UK becoming isolated from the mainstream of Community policy making, has not turned out like that, not least because we ourselves set about preventing it from doing so. The maximalists (Italy, Belgium and Commission) in the event had little support and, above all, not that of France and Germany”.

For Britain, something was won and something lost from the campaign for the Single Market. The gain was the priority given to the single market itself, something for which Thatcher can claim the principal credit among heads of government. It would
not have happened without the commitment of Delors and the British Commissioner responsible, Lord Francis A. Cockfield. But nor would it have happened if she had not pressed the case, any more than the Lisbon agenda of economic reform would have happened without Tony Blair twenty years later.

What was lost from Thatcher’s perspective was the ability to hold the rest of the European Community to ransom as she had done ruthlessly but necessarily over the British budget rebate. At Milan, Britain’s partners found a way round her veto. That event sent shock waves through Whitehall. The possibility of being bypassed became a real fear and helped dictate the cooperative attitude shown by the British delegation in the subsequent negotiations on the Treaty itself.

Two years later, there was nearly a split between eleven member states and Britain over agricultural reform. In the event, both sides stepped back from the brink. A two tier Europe, much talked about at the time, did not happen. But the Europe of overlapping circles, also much debated, did start to happen. Its first formal manifestation was the Schengen agreement in which Five of the original Six decided to pre-empt wider Community agreement by abolishing frontier controls between them. Even at the time, it was obvious that this was a step of far reaching constitutional significance. What was less obvious at the time was the fact that the near split at Milan also changed the mindset of the European Community, not just in terms of better tactics by Britain’s partners, but also in terms of a perception of a European agenda, set by France, Germany and the Commission, which other member states willingly bought into and to which Britain alone was perceived as the obstacle.

It would have been difficult, within the framework of the Treaty of Rome, for eleven member states to create a single market without Britain. When it came to the creation of a single currency in 1991, a treaty without Britain was much more attainable. Margaret Thatcher hated the idea but, had she survived in office she would almost certainly have been obliged to accept the opt-out/opt-in strategy that Major, her Chancellor of the Exchequer, was recommending to her and which he himself implemented when he became Prime Minister. That is not to say that her judgement was entirely wrong. Her Bruges speech of 1988 was seen at the time as an attack on the fundamentals of the European Community. Parts of it, in particular her call for the enlargement of the EEC, read today as both powerful and farsighted. Her strictures on a European Commission bent on the accretion of power at the centre, were cast in characteristically vehement form, but in substance she had a point. It was, after all, Delors who, soon thereafter, proposed a model of the EEC in which the Commission would be the government, answerable to the European Parliament and with the European Council as a revising chamber. What Margaret Thatcher said “no, no, no” to in 1990, the rest of the EU membership says no to it today. The European Commission president today would not even think to put forward such a model. Indeed, paradoxically, on issues such as climate change and energy policy, today’s British government is more European-minded than its German, French or Italian counterparts.

The question whether Britain has paid a price for its opt-out strategy is beyond the scope of this paper. In both EMU and Justice and Home Affairs, Britain has the
right to opt in and, in the latter instance, does so pretty consistently. In the case of EMU, the project itself has not been as economically or politically integrationist as Kohl and Mitterrand probably, and Delors certainly, envisaged. Indeed, today’s European Union looks closer to the British concept than did the Europe of the 1980s, i.e. a Union in which political and economic integration happen organically more than by great institutional leaps forward. But that does not tell the whole story. In moving away from the approach of the constitutional treaty, the Lisbon Treaty has concentrated more on institutional changes necessary to attain practical ends. This applies, in particular, to the dismantling of the Maastricht pillar devoted to Justice and Home Affairs. The member states have decided that the extension of the Community method is necessary if they are to attain their shared objectives. This is exactly the approach which underlay the Single European Act twenty years ago.
The Open Society and “British Soft Power” in Central/Eastern Europe at the End of Cold War

Carola CERAMI

In his book “Erasmians” Ralf Dahrendorf explored “the wellsprings of the liberal spirit”. He focused on a generation of “public intellectuals” born in the first decade of the 20th Century, who grew up under the shadow of increasing Soviet power as well as the rise of Fascism and then of Nazism. In particular, he refers to three intellectuals: Isaiah Berlin, Raymond Aron and Karl Popper, calling them “Erasmians”, because like Erasmus from Rotterdam, they were steadfast, under the most adverse conditions, in their adherence to core liberal ideas. Dahrendorf conferred the label of “Erasmian nation” on Great Britain, a country he considered to be immune from the temptations of authoritarianism and totalitarianism.

The “Erasmian” intellectuals cited by Dahrendorf played a leading role in the defence of the liberal spirit throughout the 20th Century. This article will attempt to highlight the equally important role played by British intellectuals of Central European origins from a successive generation who were inspired by the Erasmians and committed to the liberalization of the Eastern European countries the 1980s and 1990s. Their engagement in this process is represented by the concrete application of their ideas on freedom and the Open Society.

As pointed out in the introduction, “in the second half of the 1980s Britain deployed a wider, more active and more effective Ostpolitik than at any time since the onset of the Cold War”. This process was advantaged by the new climate of détente and had an extraordinary influence on East-West relations before the end of the Cold War. The “new détente” was also, as Mary Kaldor noted, “a strategy of dialogue, an attempt to change society through the actions of citizens rather than governments, to change ideas and to develop new institutions; in short to create a new political culture”.

This article will analyse one specific aspect of cultural exchanges at the end of the Cold War in Europe, namely the influence of those intellectuals based in Great Britain who promoted a “strategy of dialogue” between intelligentsias on both sides of the

2. Dahrendorf’s definition of “public intellectual” was the following: “We are not dealing with intellectuals in general, but with those whom I call public intellectuals […]. The concept of public intellectual has a stronger meaning. These are people who believe it is an imperative of their profession to participate in the leading public debates of their time, indeed, to determine their contents and direct their development”. See R. DAHRENDORF, Erasmiani …, op.cit., p.14.
3. See the introduction to this issue.
Iron Curtain. The principal objective will be to highlight the most significant cultural initiatives originating in Britain that were directed towards Central and Eastern Europe from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s under the banner of the Open Society. The issue of Open Society will therefore represent the central theme of this article. However the main focus will not be on the philosophical or sociological debate on this idea but rather on the dimension of active engagement which it inspired. The kind of “British soft power” which is described in the following pages is therefore the result of the fusion of two processes: the intellectual attraction exercised by a rich debate on liberalism in Britain and the capacity of thinkers such as Ralf Dahrendorf and Ernest Gellner to engage in the active pursuit of the Open Society in the other half of Europe.

This approach raises three fundamental questions:

– How significant was the exchange of ideas between East and West at the end of the Cold War and in particular what was the role played by the intellectuals discussed here?;
– How meaningful and innovative was the expression “A Common Market of the Mind in Europe” used by Dahrendorf?;
– Did liberal ideas emanating from Great Britain exercise a true “power of intellectual attraction” on Eastern Europe, influencing the debate on inter-European relations in the 1980s and 1990s?

The article may not provide definite answers to these questions but by raising them and focusing on their meaning, it will shed light on the active engagement in Central Eastern Europe of a small group of intellectuals of central European origins, operating in Britain. Their main goal in the years just before and after the end of the Cold War was to put to test their theoretical models based on the Open Society on the other side of the Iron Curtain. In order to sustain this approach the article will examine the role played by selected foundations and publishers that disseminated the ideas of the Open Society within Central-Eastern Europe. These include the “Central and East European Publishing Project” (CEEPP), whose establishment was strongly backed by Dahrendorf and Timothy Garton Ash and operated from 1986 to 1994. In addition, there was the foundation of the “Centre for the Study of Nationalism” at the Central European University of Prague (CEU). This Institution was Gellner’s main opportunity of active engagement in Eastern Central Europe. He directed it between 1994 and 1995 and played, together with George Soros and Al Stepan, a leading role in its development.

These initiatives were mainly inspired by two people: Dahrendorf and Gellner. These two very prominent scholars, both born in the 1920s in Central Europe, shared a common experience of the horrors of totalitarianism and of adopting Great Britain as their elective homeland. Their backgrounds allowed them to maintain close links with Central and Eastern European countries and enhanced their efforts to mediate and encourage dialogue between Eastern and Western Europe. Personal experiences

5. The term open society was first introduced by Henri Bergson in 1932, when he published his Two Sources of Religion and Morality.
also heightened their sensitivity to questions of freedom and to the struggle against totalitarianism. However, it was Great Britain that fostered their intellectual development and enabled them to create an academic and cultural network for the elaboration of ideas and projects.

Britain, the “Erasmian Nation” provided a unique environment for debating ideas and spreading them. Dahrendorf and Gellner became British but remained “European”. Their origins and their links with the European cultural world heightened their sensitivity to issues associated with the concept of Open Society and inspired them to dedicate most of their intellectual efforts to elaborating the theory and practice of freedom. Starting from Karl Popper’s observations, Dahrendorf and Gellner developed, expanded and deepened the concept of ‘open’ as opposed to ‘closed’ societies. They were both profoundly influenced by Popper’s insistence on establishing and testing knowledge and his studies on the Open Society, which they both developed, in different directions, beyond Popper himself.

It should be pointed out here that these two intellectuals were not particularly close personally, did not work together as a team, nor did they share political allegiances. However, for both, the reading of Popper’s work *The Open Society and Its Enemies* represented a milestone in their intellectual development. Karl Popper, the “Erasmian”, completed his manuscript in 1943 during the Second World War. At the time he considered it his “war work”, that is his contribution to the war effort, given his liminal status as an enemy alien domiciled in the Dominion of New Zealand. The war was being fought against Fascist power, but he regarded Communism as a more insidious menace waiting in the wings should the current enemy be defeated. This book attracted immediate attention after its publication in 1945, but its real triumph came later. In the enthusiasm generated by the 1989 revolution, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* became essential reading throughout the post-communist world. After the fall of the USSR’s Eastern European empire in 1989, there arose a great need to build free and democratic institutions, and to reintroduce notions of freedom of thought, critical thinking, and intellectual inquiry in the former Soviet bloc countries. Popper, from his chair in Logic and the Scientific Method at the London School of Economics that he held from 1949 onwards, became the point of reference for a whole generation of scholars inspired by his view of the Open Society.

Dahrendorf and Gellner’s unique contribution lay in their ability to combine abstract political theory with an approach to the concrete problems of Eastern and Central Europe. Each, however, acted independently in creating networks that not only

6. K. POPPER, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol.1-2, Routledge Classics (new edition), London, 2002. Karl Popper was born into a Jewish family in Vienna in 1902. In 1937 he was forced to emigrate to New Zealand. Popper’s manuscript on the open society (written in 1945) came to the attention of Friedrich von Hayek, then a Professor at the London School of Economics. In 1946 von Hayek freed Popper from his New Zealand exile by inviting him to the LSE. Great Britain thus became Popper’s new homeland and the base for the dissemination of his ideas.
8. Ibid., p.8.
involved other scholars but also brought in journalists, practitioners and diplomats. Research at the Gellner Collection held at the archives of the London School of Economics, particularly his correspondence in the early 1990s, has made it possible to reconstruct the intellectual and academic network that lay behind the establishment of the Centre for the Study of Nationalism at the Central European University of Prague. Indeed, both Dahrendorf and Gellner felt very strongly from the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s, that it was necessary to step beyond purely intellectual debates in order to take advantage of the changes occurring in Europe. They directed their initiatives towards Central and Eastern Europe, starting from the dissemination of selected publications and books in translations and creating a “secret channel” funding or exporting intellectual work from Eastern Europe. The second objective was to invest in education with the objective of revitalizing the civil societies that lay East of the Iron Curtain.\(^9\)


In 1990 Ralf Dahrendorf wrote in *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*:

“The countries of East Central Europe have not shed their Communist system in order to embrace the capitalist system (whatever that is); they have shed a closed system in order to create an Open Society, the Open Society to be exact, for a while there can be many systems, there is only one Open Society. […] The road to freedom is not a road from one system to another, but one that leads into the open space of infinite possible futures, some of which compete with each other. Their competition makes history”.\(^10\)

Dahrendorf’s concept of the Open Society contains two strongly interrelated factors: change and complexity. If the greatest danger to the Open Society derives from dogma, or from the monopoly of control by a group, an ideology, or a system, then the first step must be opening to change, to evolution. At the same time an Open Society is intrinsically complex. To fulfil the exciting perspective of open horizons, one must deal with conflict, difficulties, uncertainties, in other words to develop complexity. Open societies are those that allow trial and error.

As Dahrendorf himself noted, the term Open Society is more eye-catching than it is precise, and the differences between open societies and closed societies are even more significant than Popper himself thought. Dahrendorf believed that the open

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9. This article is the result of my work as a researcher within the framework of the research project “A Destiny and a European identity beyond the boundaries of the Cold War? The Ostpolitik of Great Britain and the new battlefield of ideas in Eastern Europe (Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia) 1984-1992”, lead by Ilaria Poggiolini at the University of Pavia. I am indebted to Professor Poggiolini for her invaluable leads to the analysis of the theme of this article and to the relevant sources.

society was principally a guiding principle that also needed to be integrated with other ideas. The most immediate task according to Dahrendorf was "to fill the structures of the open society with the lifeblood of civil society". Open societies multiply options, closed societies reduce them. An open society benefits from a variety of options: different types of media as well as plural political parties, opportunities for access and a full range of human rights.

For Dahrendorf, who was born in Germany and had experienced imprisonment as a very young dissident in the Nazi era, though for a shorter period than his father, the years 1945 and 1989 represented two extraordinary and inimitable moments of freedom. Both the end of World War II and the end of the Cold War marked the defeat of those enemies of the Open Society which he had seen in action. In Dahrendorf’s view, these two unique events should have paved the way to a rainbow of new possibilities, not simply to a single model of democracy and market economy.

Moments and places were equally important in forming and strengthening Dahrendorf’s intellectual and political convictions. His “discovery of the West” coincided with his arrival in and discovery of Britain in the 1950s, where he completed a second doctorate at the London School of Economics (LSE). Britain and her institutions remained central to Dahrendorf’s life and he distinguished himself in the British academic and political scenario as Director of the LSE between 1974 and 1984, as a life peer from 1993 onwards and as the Warden of St. Antony’s College, Oxford, between 1987 and 1997. He would recall with great enthusiasm the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s at St. Antony’s College at Oxford. Here the study of Communist Europe had a long tradition and among the fellows, Timothy Garton Ash shared Dahrendorf’s commitment to promote change in Eastern Central Europe. The result was the opening of a real channel of communication of ideas and people. As Dahrendorf himself recalled:

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12. According to Dahrendorf an Open Society is a society that promotes natural change, it is a mobile society in the wider sense of the word, embracing social (increase and decrease), geographic (geographic movements and migratory phenomena) and economic factors (mobility of the factors of production). It is a society endowed with a healthy and robust civil society, capable of expressing itself through a “creative chaos” variously made up of associations, religious institutions, artistic forms, educational institutions and sporting events, that includes entertainment as well as social, environmental and volunteer activities. See R. DAHRENDORF, *La società riaperta. Dal crollo del muro alla guerra in Iraq*, Laterza, Roma –Bari, 2005, pp.22-35 (title of the original edition: *Der Wiedergeburt der Geschichte. Vom Fall der Mauer zum Krieg im Irak*, Verlag C.H. Beck, München, 2004).
13. Ibid., p.199.
The close friendships between Eastern reformers and their active supporters in the West led to an exchange of ideas capable of changing life. [...] It was a pleasure to witness with open eyes this era when freedom erupted”.

The year 1989 was in the first place for Dahrendorf “a great moment of freedom”:

“The revolution of 1989 changed Europe. It changed the world. For my life and my understanding of the world, it indicated a fundamental turning point as important as 1789. When I published a volume of collected essays titled After 1989, I meant with that title to highlight how in that fateful year many social political and economic issues took on a new colour. It was a change for the better, because it was change towards open societies”.

Dahrendorf believed that an important impulse towards the 1989 revolution came from “glasnost”, in other words, from the realization that apparently even a small dose of freedom of opinion could make the foundations of the regime tremble. With “glasnost” the moment of the intellectuals had come. The year 1989 brought in radical change, and a unique opportunity for those public intellectuals who had cultivated values inspired to Erasmian principles. Indeed 1989 and the end of totalitarianism in Europe highlighted once again the great dilemma of the vita activa of public intellectuals.

Dahrendorf’s reflections on this theme were principally directed towards Eastern European intellectuals, who at that time were actively challenged by the transition from communism to post-communism. However, Dahrendorf also felt a strong need to urgently engage with Central and Eastern Europe. He wrote at the time:

“Irrepublican intellectuals have a public responsibility. Where they remain silent, societies have lost their future. [...] It is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak up and thereby address those involved in the trials and tribulations of active life”.

Dahrendorf’s active commitment towards Central and Eastern Europe in those years is exemplified by two initiatives:

“There were two sectors where I was personally involved in helping to promote civil societies in the post-communist world. One was the "Central and East European Publishing Project", on which a very well documented book has been published under the title: Publishing for Freedom – Freedom for Publishing. This small foundation had the objective of supporting the translation and publication of books and journals. My other contribution was through the Hannah Arendt Prize, awarded for exemplary reforms in higher education and research within Central and Eastern Europe. Both these projects helped bring publishing and higher education in the post-communist countries of Europe into a wider European context. If today there remains a need to support publishing and higher education, it can and must be pan-European or more simply, European”.

The “Central and East European Publishing Project” (CEEEP) had Dahrendorf as creator and protagonist together with Timothy Garton Ash. The CEEPP was a small

17. R. DAHRENDORF, La società riaperta ..., op.cit., p.5.
19. R. DAHRENDORF, Erasmiani ..., op.cit., pp.204-205.
foundation (commonly called “the Oxford project”), whose head office was located in Oxford, and whose primary objective was to encourage the free exchange of ideas in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, to create a “free flow of culture between East and West Europe” and above all, to launch, using an expression coined by Dahrendorf himself: “A Common Market of the Mind in Europe” between East and West. The project was inspired by the idea of creating a “marketplace”, in the old liberal meaning of the word, a place where it was possible to exchange ideas, and where such an exchange could generate new ideas. One can argue that this was a small but concrete attempt to spread Western ideas in the East and vice versa, and to enhance the exchange of ideas among the Eastern European countries. The project began in 1986 and was prompted by the concept that the geopolitical division of Europe - the Iron Curtain - had interrupted not only the normal beneficial flow of people between East and West, but also the exchange of ideas and culture. For this reason the project centred on two main initiatives: “continued publication” (in Polish, Hungarian, Czech, etc.) and “improved translation” (from, to and between these languages), it focused especially on three countries in central Eastern Europe: Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.22

The experience of the Oxford Project, as observed by Garton Ash, was not a “short history of a small organization”, but rather “a small contribution – a footnote, if you will - to that great transformation”.23 The question is, as very clearly pointed out by Dahrendorf himself in discussing the role of publishing and of foundations in reviving civil society:

“In an open world, civil society is simply the ordinary medium of life, the untidy universe of organizations and institutions, of small businesses and universities and local communities and associations of many kinds in which we spend our days […]. Publishing is a central part of civil society. Newspapers and journals and books are perhaps the most visible index of whether there is an autonomous sphere of associations or whether government determines all. Publishing is at the heart of civil society. […] One other aspect of civil society is foundations. Foundations as one of the keys to the reality of civil society”.24

The Oxford Project ended in 1994. After 1989 it aimed at supporting the transition to post communist societies.

In those years it was Garton Ash, with his contribution to the “Central and East European Publishing project”, who played an important role in the circulation of ideas between these two parts of Europe. He was an active participant in those events and he wrote about them for newspapers and journals. His articles and essays from Berlin,

22. This project was funded by a number of foundations (these included: the Ford Foundation, the European Cultural Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and George Soros’ The Open Society Foundation). Besides Garton-Ash and Dahrendorf, the founding members included: François Furet, Raymond Georis, Jane Kramer, Laurens van Krevlen and Pet Wastberg.
24. Ibid., p.11.
Warsaw, and Budapest are important sources for a reconstruction of the social, cultural and historical political climate of that era.\textsuperscript{25} From 1990 onwards, Dahrendorf would enthusiastically single out Garton Ash, among the fellows from St. Antony's College in Oxford, for his commitment and active contribution to the events of 1989.\textsuperscript{26} In his book on the events of 1989, \textit{We the People}, Garton Ash used the term “revolutions of intellectuals” in referring to the role played by certain Eastern European intellectuals such as Vaclav Havel, Adam Michnik, George Konrad, Bronislaw Geremek and others.\textsuperscript{27} He asserted that these intellectuals played a decisive role both in the events of 1989 and in the following phase, during the complex process of democratic transition.

Recently Garton Ash has argued that

“people like me and others managed to tell a different story about what was happening in Eastern Central Europe in the mid 1980s and I think that had some impact on policy makers even possibly on MT but certainly on the Foreign Office […], but it was crucial to think of this story as the emancipation of a part of Europe who felt it belonged to the West”.\textsuperscript{28}

The idea of a “return to Europe” and of belonging to “the West” had a strong impact among the intellectuals of Central and Eastern Europe, but just as important was the “power of attraction” that the West exercised on the East. In the light of this double exchange, the part played by British intellectuals, on whose role this article has focused, does not appear to be secondary. Although they may not have succeeded in creating a “pan-European East-West network of intellectuals”, they nevertheless made an important contribution to the spread of freedom of expression in Central Eastern Europe, as well as to a courageous “exchange of ideas between East and West” during a crucial phase of contemporary history.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} T. GARTON ASH, \textit{We The People}, op.cit.; see also R. DAHRENDORF, \textit{Reflections on the Revolution}, op.cit.
\item \textsuperscript{27} T. GARTON ASH, \textit{We The People}, op.cit.
\item \textsuperscript{28} See Garton Ash in conversation with Ilaria Poggiolini, 22 October 2009, St. Antony’s College, Oxford.
\end{itemize}
Behind the Creation of the Central European University: Ernest Gellner and George Soros

Ernest Gellner was forced into exile by Nazism and emigrated to Great Britain: his adopted homeland. In a long interview by John Davis published by Current Anthropology in 1991, Gellner told the story of his life, beginning with his childhood in Prague, fleeing with his family to Great Britain at the age of 13 and later studying at the LSE and Cambridge University. Gellner was a Professor of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method at the LSE between 1962 and 1984, under Dahrendorf’s directorship. Intellectually, both subscribed to and embraced the empirical method and liberal ideas, and were determined to further pursue Karl Popper’s reflections on the open society, a notion that both thinkers developed beyond Popper, albeit reaching different conclusions.

From the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s, Gellner became increasingly concerned with Eastern Europe and particularly with the impact of Marxism on civil society. Between the years 1984 and 1994 he held the position of a Professor for Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. In 1988/89 he had the opportunity to spend a year in Moscow. This was the time and place when Gellner was able to take a closer look at the course of events taking place in Central and Eastern Europe.

His deep involvement in this extraordinary transformation alongside his very eclectic intellectual interests make him a significant test case not only in terms of the dissemination of liberal ideas in Eastern Europe, but also for his central role in the intellectual debate in Britain on the future of Central Eastern Europe from the end of the 1980s to the mid 1990s.

A radical shift towards active engagement in Central Eastern Europe came for Gellner in 1994 when he became the Director of the Centre for the Study of Nationalism at the Central European University (CEU) in Prague. George Soros was among the prominent founders and sponsors of the CEU and first Chairman of the CEU Board. The overall idea of the CEU was to establish a network-university whose priorities were to foster research on the transition of post-Communist societies to market economy and political liberalisation, to encourage an intense exchange of scholars and students between Eastern and Western Europe, and finally to contribute to the long term goal of creating the Open Society in Central and Eastern Europe. The CEU became a significant think-tank in the very heart of Central Eastern Europe. On

29. Gellner began his academic career in 1947 at the University of Edinburgh moving to the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1949.
31. He relates this experience in his interview with N. KEDDIE, A Year in the Soviet Union (recorded 7 July 1990), in: Contention, 2(Winter 1992), pp.107-120.
32. The CEU was founded in 1991 with the express purpose of encouraging, through education, the democratic transition process in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
33. The first Rector was Alfred Stepan.
July 4th 1993, before accepting his appointment as Director of the Centre for the Study of Nationalism, Gellner wrote to Soros outlining his concerns regarding the position in his characteristically vigorous prose:

“The task in hand is not an easy one. One is supposed to say something of importance about one of the most intractable and difficult and important problems facing post-Communist Europe. There are now 28 or 29 post-Communist countries (according to whether one counts East Germany), presenting a considerable diversity of conditions. I can’t guarantee success in generating ideas about all this, but I’m eager to have a determined try. Quite apart from the inherent intellectual difficulty of the task, working in Prague, Moscow, and presumably the crucial areas of the ex-USSR and ex-communist empire, will really make it a hell of a job. I am willing to try, but only if I have proper support […]”.34

Gellner ultimately accepted the position and entered the fray, strongly motivated by the need to actively engage with the transformation of Central Eastern Europe. The difficulties of the transition to democracy in the area demanded active participation and events taking place in his native city of Prague were also a very strong incentive to take action. In particular, Gellner felt that theoretical concerns should be able to underpin a practical commitment to resolving the real problems of Central and Eastern Europe. On October 30th 1995, in a letter to George Soros, he wrote:

“We are studying Nationalism because it constitutes one of the major threats to the emergence of stable, liberal and prosperous societies in Eastern Europe. But another and equally important threat is the moral and intellectual vacuum left behind by the collapse of communism (which after all wasn’t displaced by a rival, but simply collapsed, leaving a vacuum). The enquiry into philosophical and political issues at the Centre would really be guided by this consideration”.35

Indeed, the Gellner Collection allows researchers to partially reconstruct the dynamics of the exchange between Gellner, Soros and Stepan in the early 1990s.36 This correspondence mainly concerned the activities and development of the Central European University, but it also reveals the important role played by this group of scholars and thinkers who shared a common commitment to the struggle against totalitarianism and the opening up of closed societies.

In 1994 Gellner published *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*, a title inspired by Popper’s *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. In this work, Gellner elaborated his original thoughts on the uniqueness of Western civil society and the relationship between Communism and Liberalism, state and society, democracy and totalitarianism.37 As already pointed out, Popper was at the origin of Gellner’s involvement with the concept of Open Society and his belief in the importance of fos-

34. Gellner’s correspondence for those years can be consulted in the Gellner Collection, which is held in the LSE Archive in London. LSE ARCHIVES, Gellner Collection, Box 54, Gellner to Soros, 04.07.1993.
35. Ibid., Box M 1913 File 6, Gellner to Soros, 30.10.1995.
36. Ibid., Box M 1913 File 4, 7, 31; Box 54.
tering civil society. Popper visited the Central European University on May 26th 1994. In Prague he received an honorary degree at Charles University and chaired a seminar at the Central European University. Popper and Gellner were one generation apart, but they had Central European origins in common, as well as the experience of exile in the 1930s. Now they found themselves in the same city and on the same platform, giving voice to plans to bring lasting freedom to the region. Popper died only a few months later on September 17th 1994.

In the year following Popper’s death, Gellner launched the idea of a conference to be held at the CEU to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. The conference was held between the 9th and 10th November in 1995. This conference is significant because its principal objective was, as Gellner wrote to Stepan on April 25th: “to combine abstract political theory with the concrete problems of Eastern and Central Europe”. In a letter to Soros and other guests, dated May 18th 1995, Gellner explained the meaning and the importance of this event:

> “The month of November 1995 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. This is obviously one of the outstanding formulations of Liberalism of the century. It was written against the background of the Second World War, and its author himself, in my hearing, once described it as a “fighting book”: he evidently considered it his contribution to the war effort. Since then, the book has provided inspiration for people locked in a different conflict with a different totalitarianism”.

The letter continued, emphasising a key aspect:

> “Its ideas constitute a kind of intellectual foundation for the Central European University and the institutions connected with it, as indeed is manifest from the names of some of them. The CEU is planning to hold a conference to mark this fiftieth anniversary […]. The problems for discussion will include: 1. The distinctive problems of building stable, free and prosperous societies on the ruins of Marxist absolutism. To what extent has Communism bequeathed a moral and institutional vacuum? Does the aspiration to build an Open or Civil Society face distinctive problems in the post-Communist world? 2. In what ways can or need post-Communist societies come to terms with the period of Marxist domination? What does it show concerning the regrettable potential of societies for totalitarianism? 3. The central theme of Popper’s work was the linkage of science and Liberalism. How have these ideas stood up? 4. Do we need, and can we have a general sociology of the preconditions of Open or Civil Societies”?

Gellner’s central objective in organising the conference was to highlight the role played by Popper’s book, *The Open Society*, in inspiring initiatives, projects and the very idea of the Central European University in the name of the Open Society. Gellner also intended to launch a debate on how an Open Society can be built, and on the

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40. LSE ARCHIVES, Gellner Collection, Box M 1913, File 4, Gellner to Al Stepan, 25.04.1995.
41. Ibid., Box M 1913, File 26, Gellner to Soros, 18.05.1995.
complexity of the transition in post-Communist Europe. Suddenly Gellner died only a few days before the conference he had so carefully planned, on November 5th 1995. His work as Director of the Centre for the Study of Nationalism, and the network of intellectuals involved with the activities of the CEU, are but one further example of initiative launched in the name of the Open Society by public intellectuals with strong links with the London School of Economics.

George Soros, the Chairman of the CEU Board, was also linked to the LSE. Of Hungarian origin and of the same generation as Gellner and Dahrendorf, Soros emigrated to Great Britain in 1947. He studied at the LSE with Popper. His reading of how Popper’s ideas could inspire action went in the direction of encouraging critical thinking in education as a precondition for the creation of an active and lively, civil society. Soros himself described the importance of Popper’s influence on his view of Open Society:

“As a student after World War II, I adopted Popper’s concept of Open Society with alacrity. As a Hungarian Jew who first escaped extermination by the Nazis by adopting a false identity and then escaped Communism by emigrating, I learned at an early age how important it is what kind of social organization prevails. Popper’s dichotomy between open and closed societies seemed to me profoundly important. Not only did it illuminate the fundamental flaw in totalitarian ideologies but also threw light on some basic philosophical issues. It is his philosophy that guided me in establishing my network of Open Society Foundations”.

Indeed the Open Society Foundation was by statute directed at opening closed societies, strengthening open societies and promoting critical thinking. The foundation focused its energies on Central and Eastern Europe, creating in 1984 a foundation in Hungary and a second one in 1987 in Poland. As the Soviet empire disintegrated, the Foundation continued to set up institutions inspired by the idea of the open society elsewhere and by 1991 its network covered over twenty countries. Looking back, Soros commented:

“Those years were revolutionary not only for the countries of the ex-Soviet empire, but also for me and my network of foundations […] I felt I had to dedicate all my energies to the establishment of foundations. The Central European University’s role was to act as a think-tank for the foundations […] I wanted my foundations to become prototypes for the ‘open society’, but then I realized that this ambition would be a constructive mistake. An open society must be able to support itself, while the survival of my foundations depended on my funding them. In reality they acted like a deus ex machina; but a deus ex machina is exactly what was needed to change the course of history. […] It was such a vast undertaking that without external help it would have been impossible to ensure the transition

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42. Revised and reconsidered texts prepared in the light of the conference’s discussions were published in I. JARVIE, S. PRALONG, op.cit.
from a closed to an open society. It was this realisation that led me to dedicate all my energies and my resources to providing such assistance."  

Soros’ correspondence with Gellner over the years of the creation and establishment of the CEU is ongoing. This correspondence confirms the role played by Soros in sharing an innovative project based on the understanding of the urgent need to invest in education in Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, as observed by Timothy Garton Ash, “British soft power” did play a role at the end of the Cold War. Clearly, this particular power of attraction was not the monopoly of Great Britain, but rather originated in “the Anglo-sphere” or the wider “English speaking world”.

**Conclusions**

The central aim of this article has been to highlight the part played by prominent public intellectuals such as Dahrendorf and Gellner in the dissemination of liberal ideas beyond the Iron Curtain during the crucial years 1985 to 1995. In so doing, they elaborated the concept of an Open Society and participated actively in the formulation of ideas and the launching of projects in Central and Eastern Europe. The focus is therefore upon the power of ideas, as much as the effects that politics and diplomacy create; upon the open society of Europe, rather than the institutions and policies of the European Community.

This article has analysed three fundamental issues concerning the role played by Dahrendorf and Gellner in the years immediately before and after the end of the Cold War. These are the relationship between the acceleration of the process of change in Europe in the second half of the 1980s and the decision by intellectuals to actively engage with it; the part played by the reform movement and increasingly visible change in Central and Eastern Europe in prompting a response from the West among politicians as well as intellectuals; and the centrality of Great Britain as an arena where ideas and projects launched in the name of the Open Society were discussed, elaborated and put to the test.

46. See Timothy Garton Ash in conversation with Ilaria Poggiolini, 22nd October 2009, St. Antony’s College, Oxford.
Dahrendorf’s ambition to create a “Common Market of the Mind in Europe” which could connect East and West was what inspired the “Oxford Project” and strongly motivated his own active engagement with Central and Eastern Europe. The “marketplace” of ideas that Dahrendorf and others had in mind was a liberal space where ideas could be fielded and exchanged. This particular place could finally be identified with Europe at the end of the Cold War: a place to come back to from the East and a pole of attraction and liberalisation to treasure and strengthen for those already part of it.

British inspired liberalism exercised a “power of cultural attraction” that survived the period immediately following the end of the Cold War and continued beyond to influence the democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe. This was a kind of “British Soft Power”, which while prevalently cultural, was still capable of making a small but significant contribution to the development of Central and Eastern European societies.

The contribution of ideas and activities by the protagonists of the debate surrounding the idea of the Open Society to the process of liberalisation in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s represents a relevant dimension of the European and global political/cultural world at the end of the Cold War. It is also relevant to point out that the return of a free flow of culture between East and West in Europe coincided with the revival of the debate on the future of intra-European relations. The idea of the Open Society played a role not only in conceptual terms but also by inspiring initiatives in favour of all forms of freedom of expression, the rule of law and the revival of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe.

Whether or not what is described above was part of the overall process of British Ostpolitik since the 1980s remains an open question because archival sources are only partially available through the mechanism of FOI requests. However, the personality and intellectual independence of the thinkers discussed in this article seem to suggest at least a two-way street with moments of convergence and divergence. The importance of the “human factor in international politics” is highlighted in the introduction to this issue. A similar argument has been developed in this essay: the “human factor” is represented by the biographies of the protagonists, hence by the course of their very lives. Their origins, the places of their belonging, their life choices, determined not only their single intellectual pathways, but also their public participation in the events that accompanied the end of the Cold War in Europe and the successive period of transition of Central and Eastern Europe towards democracy.

Ralf Dahrendorf reminds us that “in troubled times intellectuals are necessary, but in ordinary times they are just useful”. The need for the public participation of such intellectuals in those troubled times is what emerges from this reconstruction of those years together with their enthusiasm and their awareness that they were indeed living in an era of exceptional importance, and gives an additional dimension to the more obviously political and diplomatic dimension of European Community and nation-state policies as the Cold War ended.
British Ostpolitik and Polish Westpolitik: ‘push and pull’ diplomacy

Sara TAVANI

Introduction

Current historiography has, for quite some time, been centred upon the theme of Western Ostpolitik and its influence on Eastern Europe.¹ More recently, scholarly research has broadened this picture, by linking the Ostpolitik conducted by Western countries to the parallel evolution of their Westpolitik, especially within the EC framework.² Yet, less attention has been paid to the other side of the coin: Eastern policies of opening towards the West. This is of course in part due to the limited availability of archival sources. This article contributes to the wider theme of this issue by investigating the role that Eastern Westpolitik has played in the elaboration of Western Ostpolitik. This shift is based on the central argument that East Europeans were not simply passively affected by Western policies, but purposely pursued cooperation with the West, in spite of Cold War boundaries.

The article focuses, not on the wider West European dimension, but on the main motivations which encouraged those decision-makers who were responsible for British Ostpolitik to respond to the spontaneous emergence of a distinctly national Polish ‘Westpolitik’. The aim is to advance an hypothesis of the relevance of British influence on the Polish process of transformation and of British reactions to Polish Westpolitik. It was specifically what we might call a ‘push and pull’ diplomacy that


determined Britain’s ability to adapt its foreign policy to changing Eastern realities as well as to exert a certain degree of leverage on both Poland’s domestic and international status. This is clearly just one strand in a more complex West-East, and East-West European development that could be examined at the levels of individuals, states and institutions, including the EC, but which merits a focused state-based study, too.

From the early 1960s, Poland sent clear signals of its wish to cooperate with the West in different fields, from security to trade. This spontaneous move, along with the launch of West German Ostpolitik, broke the rigidity of the British post-war stance towards the East and brought about economic, cultural and even political openness. The result was an experimental, ‘first’, British Ostpolitik. This essay will argue that, during the 1960s, changes in Poland’s international and domestic policies were both encouraged by the new British approach and encouraging for the assertion of British Ostpolitik. The achievements of the Polish reform process confirmed that dialogue and cooperation were more productive than confrontation and this further strengthened the thesis of Ostpolitik’s advocates, enhancing their political clout and leading to a normalization of Britain’s Eastern relations.

During the 1970s, Britain launched a ‘second’, more intense Ostpolitik, which was aimed at improving relations with Eastern Europe, while normalizing relations with the Soviet Union. In the mid 1970s, this broadened the possibilities of interaction with Poland, where, meanwhile, the opposition was gaining momentum. The activities of Polish civil society could then benefit from a growing Western support.

It could be argued that multifaceted opposition represented by Solidarity mostly derived from the cultural, social, and political turmoil that the Ost/Westpolitik interaction had created. Nonetheless, the long-term goal of British policy eventually proved to be that of keeping a self-reform process going, rather than fomenting a powerful revolt which could bring with it the risk of sudden and dangerous political change.

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3. The effects of the diplomatic, commercial and cultural interaction with Western European countries were clearly visible in Poland during the 1970s on both economic and social grounds and these contributed to the transformation of the country. The birth of a mass dissident phenomenon, as Solidarity was, with its innovative features, has to be partially reconnected to this phase of deep socio-economic transformation. The reference is first of all to the social consequences of the market socialism’s phase. COMECON data regarding Poland economy show a significant run-up in the sectors of research, high education, and work force training and highlight the mass access to new consumer goods such as cars, televisions and washing-machines. See COMECON data 1979, edited by the Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche (first edition in 1979).
destabilization. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) measured the components of its parallel approach and sustained the choice of gradualism in the Polish process of transformation, even in the presence of martial law, at least until Mikhail Gorbachev started to shuffle the cards.

‘First’ British Ostpolitik: a reaction to Polish Westpolitik

Nikita Khrushchev’s famous acknowledgement of the ‘national ways to socialism’ and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) reforms produced domestic reforms and noticeable signs of openness towards the West in Poland. From the 1960s onwards, Poland, without questioning its membership in the Warsaw Pact and in CMEA, inaugurated a course that did indeed often clash with the limits inherent in the socialist system and the alliance’s commitments. Adam Rapacki’s proposal of 1964 and the moderate attitude taken with regard to Chinese-Soviet disputes were obvious signals of growing Polish autonomy.

Western governments and their intelligence services demonstrated full understanding of the spontaneous process under way in Eastern Europe. British diplomats were also very much aware that a real and independent Polish Westpolitik was taking

4. After the introduction of martial law, the British Ambassador in Warsaw blamed the “intellectual militants in Solidarity” of bearing “a heavy responsibility for their lack of realism and historical perspective”. Poland’s Annual Review for 1981. HM Ambassador at Warsaw C. M. James to the Secretary of State for FCO, Poland, 30 December 1981. This document, as many others in this essay, has been released in response to a series of FOIA requests regarding the Annual Reports of British Ambassadors from Eastern-Central Europe between 1979 and 1989. These requests were advanced during my participation at the research project “A Common European destiny and identity beyond the borders of the Cold War? British ‘Ostpolitik’ and the new battlefield of ideas in Eastern Europe (Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia) 1984-92”, led by Ilaria Poggiolini at the University of Pavia. All documents we have obtained are now available online on the Thatcher Foundation website www.margaretthatcher.org.

5. Regarding the effects of CMEA reforms see, for instance, W. V. WALLACE and R. A. CLARKE, Comecon Trade and the West, Frances Pinter, London, 1986. See also on OSA webarchives the report of RFE Research and Evaluation Department, Background Research. 11 November 1961, The Background of Polish-Czechoslovak Economic Co-Operation.

6. About the Rapacki plan see: European Navigator web archive, Polish Government memorandum on the freezing of nuclear and thermonuclear armaments in Central Europe, Warsaw, 28.02.1964; and Z. MARUSZA, Denuclearization in Central Europe? The Rapacki Plan during the Cold War, Cold War History Research Center, Budapest, on line publication May 2009.

7. About the Polish ‘soft’ position with regard to the Chinese-Soviet controversy see: Open Society web archives, Polish-East German Talks End; Party Declaration Stresses Chinese Achievements. Munich, 21.06.1957. RFE News and Information service.

shape, although it was still tentative in testing the “limits of Soviet tolerance”. The British government decided to encourage the signs of insubordination within the Soviet block by promoting contacts and exchanges with the Polish government. This ‘first’ British Ostpolitik, thus, paved the way to relevant economic and cultural relations between the two countries. The improvement in bilateral economic relations proved to be the easiest of the changes, because it was fostered by a clear Polish willingness to ensure new commercial relations with Great Britain so as to counterbalance the growing West German economic influence since the 1960s. The new West German approach towards Eastern Europe emerged as a result of the 1958-1961 Berlin crisis, when Konrad Adenauer’s Eastern policy became the object of questioning even by conservative forces. Among the signs of change in Bonn’s relations with Washington as well as Moscow, were Chancellor Ludwig Erhard critics of the US approach towards the German problems and new autonomous overtures towards Eastern countries. At the same time, Poland had chosen to intensify its economic relations with major West European countries.

9. Anne Deighton argued that the British understanding of Polish domestic tendencies dates back to the 1956 Polish crisis, even if at that time the fear of Soviet intervention and the comfort of a divided Europe determined a restrained behaviour. See A. DEIGHTON, Different 1956: British responses to the Polish events, in: Cold War History, 6(November 2006), pp.455-475.


11. This was the American Intelligence perception: “In recent years, West Germany has moved cautiously to regain an economic toehold in the area and it is now the most important non-Communist trading partner for nearly all East European states. [...] As the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe has loosened, Bonn has discovered room for increased manoeuvre in the area and there are signs, finally, that it may be willing to improve the political climate”. Thomson Gale Collection, n.1829, 2004, Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, Special Report, “Eastern European Attitudes toward West Germany”, 21.10.1966, p.12.


One can argue that rising West German political ascendancy in Central Europe was instrumental in convincing the British government that it had to compete with such a successful Eastern policy model. British interest was both that of engaging in this competition, and of contributing to the overall effect of European Ostpolitik towards the Eastern satellites. At the end of 1963, Prime Minister Douglas Home was in the position to react to what the West German diplomat Franz Krapf said about the Wall, that it was perceived as “less and less acceptable to the East European countries”. As perceived in London and Washington, Bonn’s Ostpolitik had paved the way to new possibilities for social exchanges, leading to comparisons between East and West lifestyles. So it was referred to the British Prime Minister during a meeting with the US Secretary of State Dean Rusk at the American embassy in London in December 1963:

“Krapf said that the German Foreign Office thinks the Wall is less and less acceptable to the East European countries. The same goes for [Walter] Ulbricht. The East Europeans are now in a position to compare their economic conditions, freedom, etc., with the other nearby countries which they can visit. The East-Germans return from abroad and ask questions of their Communist Party heads. A German intelligence source indicates that the Soviets have asked Ulbricht to “try to look more human”. Another factor mentioned by Krapf was that the East European countries are interested in Western tourism”. Such comparisons constituted a direct threat to the stability of the Eastern block.

British ambassadors in Eastern Europe, periodically summoned to conferences in London, played a significant role in pointing out that new opportunities were available to exert political influence in Poland. They were privileged witnesses and analysts of a major process of change. In 1968, the ambassadors’ conference did not hesitate about strongly supporting the necessity of taking part in the new commercial and scientific cooperation between East and West, as well as in information exchanges.

Alongside political Ostpolitik, Britain was also engaged in bilateral cultural cooperation in Eastern Europe. One can observe that the dialogue between Polish and British intellectuals intensified, in a line of continuity with the overall post World War II experience. For instance, Polish Libraries in London turned into venues


where common initiatives were discussed and launched and Polish scholars found their way to Oxford. This was the case of several well-known Polish sociologists, such as Zdzisław Najder and Jerzy Szacki, both of whom studied at Oxford during the 1960s and 1970s respectively. Najder later became a vocal critic of the Polish system, as head of the Polish section of the American Radio Free Europe, while Szacki was a more moderate supporter of the opposition.

The ‘first’ British Ostpolitik met a prompt response on the part of Polish Westpolitik. The country had begun a journey towards its historical past, particularly towards its political and social traditions, pre-dating the communist experience. Indeed, Poland was considered by Moscow as its most problematic partner, both geopolitically and as a result of its national and international history, including its relations with Great Britain, Germany and France.

Polish domestic developments in the social and economic spheres confirmed the continuity of the new ‘Polish course’, embracing the views of the advocates of Ostpolitik. Specifically, in the 1960s, the Polish leadership pursued a ‘Polish way to socialism’ and rapidly distanced itself from more Stalinist methods of social control. Greater attention and respect were paid to national values, as well as to the role of the Catholic Church, whose activities and rights were increasingly tolerated. Within the economic field, changes led to an increase in trade relations with the West and to the introduction of new cooperative models. The best results were seen in the area of agriculture, once the model of collectivization was rejected.

However, compared to German and French Ostpolitik, the British attitude towards the East was still characterized by deeper mistrust. The FCO monitored the process of change under way in the Soviet alliance, but without deciding to advise the government to make a daring move towards any improvement of bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. This showed a degree of prudence far more marked than that of other Western European countries. This can be explained by the pursuit of a strategy based on the idea that overtures towards the Kremlin should be balanced with gains in other political fields: a strategy of ‘linkage’ which remained central in the following years.

20. Author’s interview with Vadim Andreevich Medvedev at the Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow, October 2006.
23. G. BENNETT, K.A. HAMILTON (eds.), op.cit.: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on Relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 17.06.1968, pp.48-57.
24. Ibid. According to the Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart, the inspiring concepts of British Ostpolitik were the “wait and see” policy and the “compartmentalisation” of relations.
Even so, the UK’s interest in individual Soviet satellites, and especially in Poland, grew. Such domestic change was interpreted by the British Ambassador in Warsaw, Sir Thomas Brimelow, as an anticipation of reformist tendencies in the country and as a permanent social and economic threat for the authority of the Communist Party. He fully believed that Britain should encourage and sustain reformism as a central goal in its bilateral relations with Poland. This new diplomatic approach furthered Polish domestic transformation during the 1970s.

**British ‘second’ Ostpolitik: the 1970s**

The Prague Spring neither interrupted the first phase of British Ostpolitik nor did it disrupt British plans of ‘transformation inside the socialist system’. Over the following years, prominent voices inside the FCO, such as that of Ambassador Brimelow, upheld the conviction that bilateral relations with Warsaw had a fundamental role in British Ostpolitik. He believed that Polish longing for independence could withstand the Brezhnev doctrine and that Polish reformers would continue to turn to the West for support. British diplomacy should continue to exercise “patience, understanding and friendliness”.

The crisis of 1968 confirmed that changes could not occur overnight in Eastern Europe. Instead they had to be pursued in the framework of a broad evolution of East-West relations in Europe and along with the emergence of a new security system that would weaken the satellites’ reliance on the Soviet military guarantee. Within this broader process Great Britain had an active part to play. Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart, soon after the Soviet intervention, delivered the following instructions to the Eastern embassies:

“We recognize that in the longer term contact with Eastern Europe is the principal means by which we can hope to encourage the liberal forces in these countries”.

The search for a wide spectrum of interaction with Polish Westpolitik at the beginning of the 1970s went hand in hand with a revised view within the FCO regarding the benefit for Great Britain to join the European process of integration. London’s role as a ‘mediator’ between Washington and Moscow had been reduced by bipolar détente. However, within the EC, it was hoped that the UK government could regain an influential role in the regional, East-West dialogue. To this purpose, the UK needed to enhance its relations with both Western and Eastern European countries, along

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25. Record of 9th meeting of the Conference of HM Representatives in Eastern Europe, op.cit.
with the completion of the accession process to the EC. The FCO aimed, therefore, to establish stronger diplomatic and commercial relations with Eastern Europe and with the Soviet Union. This goal brought about a ‘second’ Ostpolitik, characterized by a stronger determination and clarity of purpose.

The pursuit of an improved Eastern policy meant that new channels of dialogue had to be opened with Moscow. Once more, this shift was prompted by fears of marginalization by West German and French dialogues with the Soviet Union. The Ambassador to Moscow, Duncan Wilson, went so far as to presage the risk of a “Rapallo-type bilateral pact” between USSR and the Federal Republic of Germany and to advise the government to prevent it.

Soviet reactions to the ‘first’ British Ostpolitik had been very harsh. London was accused of subversive goals, having refused to open a dialogue with the Soviet Union, while intensifying relations with its satellites. British Ambassador John Killick noted that the degree of suspicion surrounding British diplomats in Moscow was unparalleled, compared to other European diplomats in Moscow. In 1973, he urged the FCO to foster better bilateral relations with the USSR, in order to avoid being perceived as “cast in the role of the West’s leading and unrepentant reactionary”.

Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas Home supported a re-examination of the costs for Britain regarding the existing anti-Soviet policy and the risks in making Britain the “odd man out” within the process of East-West reconciliation, damaging at the same time the trade balance. To avert this all, Prime Minister Edward Heath eventually decided in 1973 to re-launch bilateral relations by sending Trade Secretary John Davies to Moscow. Another signal of improved British-Soviet relations was the replacement in London of the elderly Ambassador Mikhail Smirnovsky with the younger Nikolay Lunkov. A meeting between heads of government became possible, as Brimelow observed: “we accept at official level that this would probably be a price worth paying.”

The improvement in East-West relations in Central Europe, following the Warsaw Treaty in 1972, and the cooperative climate created by all-European negotiations,

33. The Warsaw Treaty was ratified in 1972 by the Federal Republic of Germany and Poland. It stood for Bonn’s acknowledgement of the Oder-Neisse post-war border and it marked the beginning of a growing normalization regarding German-Polish relations.
substantially boosted Western Ostpolitik and inaugurated the phase of so called ‘Polish Market Socialism’. Polish commercial links with the West deepened from the early 1970s and trade with the West quickly reached 50% of Polish foreign trade.\(^{34}\)

London was now ready to seize this new opportunity. In December 1973, the Heath government accomplished its diplomatic revolution. Douglas Home felt that the moment had come for visiting Moscow with the aim of improving bilateral relations and paving the way for closer relations with Eastern Europe.\(^{35}\)

The Wilson government and the return of the Labour Party in 1974 boosted this ‘second’, more articulated Ostpolitik. In the mid 1970s, high-level British politicians, such as the new Foreign Secretary James Callaghan, were sent to Poland, and relations with the Edward Gierak leadership intensified. British-Polish cooperation improved, thanks to new initiatives which included the re-launching of the bilateral Round Table in Toruń, in 1976, that promoted industrial joint ventures in Poland.\(^{36}\)

### British ‘carrot and stick’ and the new ‘stream of ideas’

The Polish-German Warsaw Treaty, ratified in 1972, provided a convincing diplomatic outline which would later be a source of inspiration at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) negotiations. It simultaneously dealt with humanitarian and territorial-commercial issues. It was a model that Great Britain also adopted in Poland, focusing on demands of domestic social and political softening in exchange for commercial and financial concessions. This is how the mechanism of “carrot and stick”\(^{37}\) in British Eastern policy was adopted and would remain central to its diplomacy in the following years.

As recent research has shown, the CSCE Conference was a major opportunity for Ost-Westpolitik interaction.\(^{38}\) The conference provided a unique opportunity for dialogue with Eastern governments and for supporting the emerging demands of Eastern societies, which were the engine behind the process of the self-reformation of the Eastern European countries. During the CSCE preparatory talks, the British representative championed international cooperation to assure the implementation of the

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\(^{34}\) Politika’s data, quoted by G. ANDERSEN, in: Combat, 16 April 1974.

\(^{35}\) A. GROMYKO, op.cit., pp.151-163.

\(^{36}\) The reference is to the first agreements between Massey-Ferguson industry and Petrocarbon Developments ltd. with the Polish authorities. Times, 15.06.1976.

\(^{37}\) This is the way the American Ambassador Burns defined European diplomacy toward the East. Thomson Gale Collection, n.0829, 2004: Embassy Bonn, Telegram from Burns to Secretary of State. Subject: Schmidt-Mitterrand meeting talks, 14.01.1982.

Helsinki commitments on human rights. In strong opposition with the Warsaw Pact countries, Britain demanded a special role for NGOs. The British stance, along with that of the Americans, fostered the creation of new citizen groups to monitor the behaviours of Eastern governments (for instance, the Committee of Polish Youth for the Observation of CSCE Resolutions) and later this led to the creation of ‘watching groups’ all over Eastern Europe. This favoured the emergence of an East-West stream of information concerning living conditions in Eastern countries, producing both a renewed criticism on real socialism’s distortions and ideas on reforms. In Poland this new ‘stream of ideas’ blended with pre-existing claims and moods. As Professor Edward Lipiński’s 1976 open letter to Edward Gierek pointed out, in the mid 1970s Komitet Obrony Robotników (KOR) members quickly won the support of British well-wishers and their activities succeeded in arousing new worldwide interest. In addition, new Polish and Soviet engagements regarding human rights imposed a moderate reaction to the 1976 protests against price rises and constitutional reform.

It followed that from the mid 1970s, large economic and technical aid from Great Britain allowed for an increase in the publication and dissemination of an independent or samizdat' press inside Poland. The new press rapidly spread thoroughly around the country and contributed to reinforce the social network as well as free speech.


43. Especially during Edward Raczyński’s presidency of the London émigré community (1976-1986), London became a very active centre of dissident publishing activities. Some examples, quoted by Paczkowski, concerned the initiatives of the Sikorski Institute, or the Polish Cultural Centre. See A. PACZKOWSKI, The émigré community in the era of détente, in: The Spring will be ours, Poland and Poles from occupation to freedom, op.cit, pp.586-588. This also involved several London-based periodicals like Wiadomości, edited by Mieczysław Grydzewski, Aneks, created by Aleksander and Eugeniusz Smolar, or Pulse. These periodicals were also disseminated in Poland. For relations between the dissident editorial activities abroad and inside Poland see for instance the review Zapis, directly supported by Aneks entourage. For relations with KOR activities, like for example Aneks’ launch of a special Appeal for Polish workers in 1976, see M. TYRCHAN, Aneks. Post March émigré, in: Studia Medioznawcze, 2(2009). About “the flood of ‘goods’ (books, equipment, and later office supplies and computers) and ‘services’ (visiting lecturers) coming from London”, see B.J. FALK, The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe, CEU Press, Budapest, 2003, p. 93. See also activities described in A. JASTRZĘBSKI (ed.), Dokumenty Komitetu Obrony Robotników i Komitetu Samoobrony Społecznej, Aneks, Warszawa/London, 1994, quoted in O.N. MAJOROVA, Pol’sha 80-ch godov: poisk puti k kompromissu, web-magazine Mezdunorodnyj Istorichekij zhurnal, n.7, janvar’-fevral’ 2000.
Testimonies of this uncensored press can now be found in the Budapest OSA archives.44

Publishing initiatives were often representative of the activities of the political opposition groups and were therefore the result of this new tendency to form associations. The KOR experience, from which we can argue that Solidarity derived, can be recalled as the most significant, but it was not alone, as there were several other political groups contributing to this new turmoil. They all demonstrated that Polish civil society was very much alive and open to Western influence. Polish opposition forces focused on human rights, as in the case of the Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights (ROPCiO) and Freedom and Peace (WIP). They also sought intellectual freedom, as the Society for Academic Courses (TNK) and many student organizations such as the Independent Students’ Union (NZS); alongside these dimensions, was a rise in nationalism, as the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KNP) and the Committee for National Self-Determination (KPSN); and last, the defence of the private agricultural sector, as Solidarność Wiejska and the All-Poland Farmers’ Resistance Committee (OKOR).45

These new ideas penetrated the establishment. Polish reformists, or ‘revisionists’ according to the Soviets, included party officials Tadeusz Fiszbach, Mieczysław Rakowski and Henryk Jabłoński, whose influence was on the rise during the 1970s and the 1980s. These reformists were openly opposed by the CPSU leaders.46 The Soviets believed that their Westpolitik was too similar to the objectives of the Solidarity movement. Both the will to carry out socialist ‘renewal’ and the ambiguous slogans of socialist ‘modernization’ and ‘improvement’ were interpreted as subtle attempts at overturning the system.47 Similarly, the August 1980 agreement between the Polish government and Solidarity could be interpreted as a result of such an ambiguity.48

An overt willingness to reform the system was strongly expressed from within the Polish State Academy. Economists belonging to the Polish United Workers’ Party (PUWP) progressive wing increasingly showed their interest in the Western scientific models of development. Leszek Balcerowicz, for instance, studied in Western Universities and had the opportunity to experience different analytic methods. In 1980, he argued in favour of softening the planned economic system and opening to external

47. Ibid.: Ob ukazanijach sovposlu v Italii v svjazi s poezdkoj L. Valensy v Italiju. Vypiska iz protokola N. 246, IGS Sekretariata TsK.
markets. These proposals became more radical at the end of the 1970s, along with the worsening of the state of the Polish economy, when the WOG experiment (Wielkie Organizacje Gospodarcze, i.e. Large Economic Organizations) demonstrated that a partially reformed and centralized economy could not work. As a result, progressive Polish economists called for deeper reforms.

The need for gradualism

Yet, the FCO also understood that the revival of civil society was not the only major process of change under way in the 1970s and the 1980s. During the same period, and thanks in part to the normalization of European East-West relations in which Britain had chosen to take part, Poland’s strategic position within the Warsaw Pact which was still determined by the post World War II security framework, was now shifting. Successes at the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) and MBFR (Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions) negotiations consolidated the quiet political project of a block-free Europe, and this greatly encouraged Poland to be more independent both on the international stage and in domestic policy. A new security concept, based on dialogue, collaboration and eventually disarmament, seemed to be emerging and it seemed clear that this might reduce the necessity of superpower protection. Poland was in 1978 among the advocates of a European Defence Conference, along with the CSCE follow-up. Indeed, Warsaw promptly declared its willingness to host such an initiative.

Nonetheless, reshaping the European ‘security concept’, and the possibility for Poland to renounce its military ties with the Soviet Union, was going to be a very slow process. Even among the most progressive Polish politicians, a political trans-
formation of the country that did not take into account the basic security concerns was unthinkable, as indeed it was to most in the FCO.\textsuperscript{55}

Yet the FCO was aware that changes were occurring in Poland both outside the party and inside the PUWP. The ruling bodies were seeking popular consent, and granting greater freedoms and reforms, on condition that the alliance with the Soviet Union be preserved.\textsuperscript{56} Ambassador Kenneth Robert Pridham referred to the ‘Experience and Future’ movement as an example of dissidence within the establishment which strongly promoted reforms, while at the same time respecting existing Polish international commitments. The British believed that the Polish government was striving to balance “the need to govern without provoking unrest against the need to maintain itself in power and placate the Soviet Union”.\textsuperscript{57} Once again, British diplomacy urged that UK Ostpolitik should intensify and give clear signals, such as the visit by the new Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to Warsaw. At the end of 1980, the Warsaw Pact summit in Moscow was perceived by the British embassy as no more than a tactical move to produce an intimidating effect. Despite Soviet pressures, Pridham unshakably observed “Poland is a much freer country than it was in July”.\textsuperscript{58} He was persuaded that the PUWP Extraordinary Congress scheduled for 1981, still had a chance to propose an effective recovery plan, with “that measure of reform which the Communist system should be able to contain”. Facing this perspective, London had to continue to strengthen its economic leverage and encourage the democratic evolution within Poland. Specifically, the long-term aim was to keep “the Polish economy going and with so conducting matters in other fields so as to foster the preservation of Polish independence”.\textsuperscript{59}

At the beginning of the 1980s the FCO clearly perceived the risk of instability inherent in Solidarity, which had become stronger, more divided and unpredictable. The British embassy in Warsaw understood the necessity to contain and channel grassroots forces in Poland. Soon after the introduction of martial law, despite public shock, Pridham’s successor in Warsaw, Ambassador Cynlais Morgan James, advised the FCO not to rush into “over-simplification” against Wojciech Jaruzelski’s move, arguing that the best reaction on the part of Western diplomacy was still “to keep the door ajar”.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{57} Poland’s Annual Review for 1979. HM Ambassador at Warsaw Kenneth Robert Komyn to the Secretary of State for FCO, Poland, 02.01.1980, online at www.margaretthatcher.org.
\textsuperscript{58} Poland’s Annual Review for 1980. HM Ambassador at Warsaw Kenneth Robert Komyn Pridham to the Secretary of State for FCO, Poland, 01.01.1980, online at www.margaretthatcher.org.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} C.M. James wrote: “There may still be something of a reformed Poland to be rescued even more from the present wreck”, Poland’s Annual Review for 1981. HM Ambassador at Warsaw C.M. James to the Secretary of State for FCO, Poland, 30.12.1981, online at www.margaretthatcher.org.
Conclusions

FCO calculations and the strategy of gradualism in British Ostpolitik were largely successful in the early 1980s. Reformism in Poland was not defeated in the early 1980s, though it experienced a major setback. Cultural and social cooperation with the West remained vibrant. The Thatcher government accepted to moderate the EC pressures exerted on Jaruzelski’s government. As pointed out by Karen Smith, the EPC (European Political Cooperation) represented for the Europeans an extremely useful “framework to counter the US pressure” on this matter. The UK Ambassador believed that reformism in Poland could be rescued. He supported the rescheduling of Polish debts, as both a political and a financial choice, to the advantage of the Polish government and its economic reforms.

This article argues that the ability of Ostpolitik to adapt itself to signals of changes deriving from Eastern Westpolitik contributed to foster those changes. However, a full assessment of the balance between external European influences and other factors within the state and East European/Soviet system will not be possible until archival sources are made available. But what is clear is that a major transformation of the Soviet system soon became unavoidable. The level of East-West interdependence, as the Polish public debt demonstrated, represented a well-established reality that military blocks could not ignore. The rise of Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid 1980s, can therefore be construed both as the natural epilogue of such an evolution, as well as a new turning point in the domestic and international stands of Eastern Europe. It also directly affected the evolution of British Ostpolitik.

The intra-block reforms introduced by the new Soviet leader actually unchained Poland from what was left of its ties with the Soviet system. The socialist system was no more an unquestionable reality and Poland could now choose to reform without fear of a backlash from Moscow. This, first of all, meant that the strategy of gradualism pursued by the Thatcher government, in continuity with previous British policies, became suddenly outdated. The end of the Cold War balance of power in

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63. According to the Western press, Polish foreign debt was about $ 25 - 27 billion in the mid 1980s.
64. Very soon, Western European countries turned out to be dependent on Eastern countries’ ability to repay their huge debts. See F. LEMOINE, Les conditions de l’endettement des pays de l’Est, in: Economie et statistique, n.116, 1979, pp.31-41.
Europe did not tally with Thatcher’s long-term vision of the end of Cold War.\textsuperscript{67} Second, during Gorbachev’s leadership, British cultural policy was freer than ever before, because the danger of violent repression or escalating social conflicts was now considerably reduced. Once the last obstacles in overcoming East-West divisions had been eliminated, many cultural programmes were financed by the British government and private citizens with the aim of spreading democratic and liberal ideas, as well as promoting and educating new democratic leadership.\textsuperscript{68} It was a new starting point, though the European political and geostrategic framework still remained tentative.

From the mid 1980s, greater priority was given to the activities of the opposition and to possible alternatives to the ruling party, all of which contributed to the ensuing Round Table negotiations. However, this was not a revolutionary, but an evolutionary process: specifically, the result of two decades of evolution both within the British diplomacy and in the Polish domestic situation. The interaction with the Polish political and social actors gradually pushed the FCO towards a better understanding of Poland’s needs, ties and ambitions, bringing about a new, less dogmatic vision of East-West relations in Europe and providing the necessary tools to exert a major influence on them. British ‘push and pull’ diplomacy therefore emerged as a dynamic, pragmatic undertaking, designed to adapt itself to the emerging signals and to seize new opportunities, to overcome the ideological divisions and re-shape European relations.

\textsuperscript{67} See I. POGGIOLINI, op.cit.

\textsuperscript{68} The reference is to initiatives like the CEEPP or the Soros Foundation. \textit{Freedom for publishing, publishing for freedom: the Central and East European Publishing Project}, Central and East European Publishing Project, Central European University Press, 1995.
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Dans sa monographie intitulée *Robert Schuman: Neo-Scholastic Humanism and the Reunification of Europe*, Alan Paul Fimister aborde le personnage de Robert Schuman sous un angle très original. En effet, il examine si l’œuvre de Schuman en faveur de l’intégration européenne est liée à son adhésion à la philosophie humaniste néo-scolastique, qui est introduite sous le pontificat de Léon XIII en 1879 et ensuite développée sous Pie XII, pendant la période de la création des institutions communautaires.

L’ouvrage de Fimister tente ainsi de faire le lien entre la sphère religieuse et les relations internationales, entre le catholicisme et la construction européenne. Fimister tente de prouver que les valeurs chrétiennes défendues par le chrétien-démocrate et catholique Robert Schuman se retrouvent dans le projet de la construction européenne qui est lancé avec la déclaration du 9 mai 1950. Selon l’auteur, une nouvelle étude sur Robert Schuman serait d’autant plus nécessaire qu’il y aurait une non prise en compte, voire même une méconnaissance de Robert Schuman dans la littérature britannique sur l’intégration européenne. Dans son introduction, il n’hésite pas à critiquer le silence sur ce personnage clé dans l’histoire de la construction européenne chez certains auteurs anglophones (comme Michael P. Fogarty) ou une interprétation trop biaisée chez d’autres (comme Rodger Charles S.J.). Fort heureusement, il ne remet pas en cause les ouvrages de référence français, tels que *Robert Schuman, Homme d’État (1886-1963)* de Raymond Poidevin.

Pour initier le lecteur à l’humanisme néo-scolastique, Fimister qui témoigne ainsi de son savoir-faire en tant que politologue et expert en sciences philosophiques, retrace l’introduction de l’humanisme néo-scolastique dans les doctrines de l’Église catholique sous les papes Léon XIII jusqu’à Pie XII. Dans un premier chapitre, il aborde le *magisterium* social et la société supranationale comme deux éléments clés de la période qu’il dénomme néo-Thomasisme (signifiant la reprise de la doctrine sociale de St. Thomas d’Aquin) qui commence en 1879 et se termine en 1958. Il explique que sous le pontificat de Léon XIII, l’idée d’un nouvel ordre social catholique voit le jour au sein duquel le rôle de l’Église catholique serait le représentant d’une société universelle. L’objectif du pape Léon aurait aussi été de lier la sphère religieuse et politique par l’affirmation d’une philosophie politique catholique qui n’a pourtant pas beaucoup de chances de réussir sous le régime de la Troisième République en France, marquée par un fort mouvement anticlérical.

Le deuxième chapitre est ensuite consacré à la réception du magisterium social du pape Léon XIII dans la classe politique et les écrivains-philosophes en France après la Première Guerre mondiale. Fimister montre, par exemple, les abus de
l’Action Française dans l’utilisation du magisterium social pour justifier un État autoritaire catholique. Il prétend surtout que ce serait la prise en compte de la doctrine catholique par le philosophe Jacques Maritain, notamment dans son ouvrage «L’Humanisme intégral» de 1936, qui a eu un impact sur la pensée de Robert Schuman et son engagement dans le courant catholique politique.


La description de la vie de Robert Schuman est pour un lecteur connaisseur du personnage historique un peu décevante. En effet, comme l’auteur l’annonce dans son introduction, ce chapitre n’apporte rien de neuf ou de surprenant, à part peut-être de souligner que la date de la première rencontre entre Robert Schuman et Konrad Adenauer reste encore une énigme. Pour autant, la manière dont le personnage est abordé, quelquefois très originale, est agréable à lire, comme, par exemple lorsque Fimister introduit Robert Schuman en citant une pièce de théâtre sur la construction européenne de 2006 où l’homme politique français n’apparaît guère, au profit de Jean Monnet, qui est montré comme le seul initiateur du projet de la Communauté Européenne du Charbon et d’Acier (CECA). Par ailleurs, il est étonnant que ce chapitre sur la vie de Robert Schuman ne poursuive pas sa trajectoire au-delà de la date de 1952 jusqu’à sa mort en 1963, car Schuman continue évidemment à œuvrer en faveur de la construction européenne, notamment en tant que premier président de l’Assemblée parlementaire de la Communauté européenne, entre 1958 et 1960.

Cette période ultérieure est abordée par l’auteur dans le chapitre suivant, où il analyse les discours et adresses de Robert Schuman lors de ses nombreux voyages à l’étranger. Ce chapitre apporte des éléments intéressants, basés sur de nouvelles sources de la maison Schuman au Luxembourg et des archives départementales de la Moselle. Fimister prouve, à travers les différents discours, que Schuman était en fait profondément convaincu que le projet de la construction européenne est étroitement lié aux valeurs de la démocratie chrétienne. La recherche de la paix, la solidarité de la société européenne, voire même la supranationalité sont des composantes intégrales à la fois du christianisme et du projet d’une Europe fédérale. Le livre Pour l’Europe de Robert Schuman, publié en 1963 juste après sa mort, confirmerait cette hypothèse, car Schuman lui-même écrit: «l’Europe, c’est la mise en œuvre d’une démocratie généralisée dans le sens Chrétien du mot» - comme le cite Fimister dans son ouvrage.

D’un autre côté, l’ouvrage est conçu d’une manière peu satisfaisante pour l’historien: il n’y a pas d’approche chronologique continue pour la partie biographique de Robert Schuman et le lecteur a finalement l’impression de se trouver face à deux livres distincts, l’un sur la pensée humaniste néo-scolastique et son introduction dans la doctrine de l’Église catholique et un deuxième qui retrace la vie de Robert Schuman et qui tente ensuite de lier sa biographie à cette pensée. En effet, un ouvrage sur Robert Schuman qui ne commence à vraiment parler de lui après plus de la moitié du texte intégral, laisse un doute sur la structuration adéquate de ce travail de recherche. Ceci a pour conséquence que le lien entre le projet européen de Robert Schuman et l’humanisme néo-scolastique reste, en fin compte, peu évident même pour des spécialistes du processus d’intégration européenne. Il est sans doute très difficile, voire impossible d’établir un lien apparent entre un sujet très philosophique, les doctrines de l’Église catholique et la vie «pratique» d’un homme politique français et son implication dans le projet réel de la construction européenne après 1945.

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nationale Verbindungslinien, Wechselwirkungen und Konvergenzprozesse, die jenseits der Grenzen des Nationalstaats wirksam werden, ebenfalls von Relevanz sind.


Den umfangreichen, hier nur ausschnittartig skizzierten Interpretationsofferten in Kaisers Darstellung ist leider kein analytisches Fazit angefügt, das die wichtigsten Ergebnisse systematisch zusammenfasst. Dieser Verzicht sollte jedoch nicht den Blick auf die zahlreichen inhaltlichen und konzeptionellen Erträge der Studie versperren, von denen im Folgenden fünf zentrale Problemkreise knapp gesondert beleuchtet werden:

1) Die Untersuchung leistet sowohl in diachroner als auch in synchroner Perspektive einen in dieser Form bisher nicht existenten Vergleich christdemokratischer Parteien in Europa. Die Längsschnittperspektive von rund 150 Jahren europäischer Geschichte ermöglicht ebenso wie der Rekurs auf einzelnen Parteien der sechs Gründerstaaten der Montanunion eine komparatistische Betrachtung der christdemokratischen Parteienfamilie, die auch die britischen Konservativen einbezieht. Entsprechende Vergleiche werden in der Studie zwar nicht explizit und systematisch durchgeführt, im Zuge der Darstellung wird aber reichhaltiges Material für eine ganze Reihe von vergleichenden Fragestellungen geliefert. Besondere Beachtung verdienen dabei die in jüngster Zeit wieder verstärkt von der historischen Forschung ins Blick-
feld gerückten längerfristigen Kontinuitätslinien. Kaisers Darstellung trägt dieser Tendenz ebenfalls Rechnung, da sich nur rund die Hälfte des Buches auf den Zeitabschnitt nach 1945 bezieht.


europäischen Integrationsgeschichte gilt – überlagert oder durch diese überhaupt erst konstituiert wurden.

5) Schließlich leistet Wolfram Kaiser mit seiner Studie auch einen wesentlichen Beitrag zur Definition dessen, was als politischer Katholizismus sowie als christdemokratische Politik im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert überhaupt bezeichnet bzw. verstanden werden kann. Anschaulich werden dabei neben zeit- und länderspezifischen Unterschieden auch entsprechende Gemeinsamkeiten veranschaulicht, zugleich aber auch die Schwierigkeiten verdeutlicht, religiöse und politische Positionen in Einklang zu bringen. Die Schneise, die Kaiser hier in das Dickicht einer noch unübersichtlichen Forschungslandschaft geschlagen hat, zeigen sich ebenso wie die Aufgaben, die von der Forschung künftig noch zu bewältigen sind, nicht zuletzt an dem Umstand, dass die politisch-gesellschaftlichen Diskussionen der christdemokratischen Parteienfamilie in der Studie eingehender nachgezeichnet werden können als die kirchlich-religiös inspirierten Debatten.


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Zunächst erörtert das Buch die Frage nach der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit im Rahmen der verschiedenen Integrationsmaßnahmen, stellt Europabilder vor und diskutiert Identifikationsmöglichkeiten, die zwecks Überzeugungsarbeit der Bürger angeregt worden sind. Weitere Einzelaspekte in diesem Kontext sind der oft wiederholte Rekurs auf die Bedeutung der Jugend, aber auch die informellen, transatlantischen Netzwerke zu Beginn der 1950er Jahre, die ganz richtig als Weichenstellung für den Integrationsprozess interpretiert werden dürfen.

Freilich verlief dieser Prozess nicht immer reibungslos. Vor allem die Bundesrepublik musste sich auf französische Direktiven einlassen und Konzessionen an Frankreich in Bezug auf EURATOM machen. Die Rolle Deutschlands zu Beginn des Prozesses wird insgesamt als moralisch-materielle Unterstützung Frankreichs gewertet. Auch die Debatte über verschiedene Formen der Integration (sektoral versus horizontal) deutet auf den Kompromisslösungscharakter einiger europapolitischer Entscheidungen hin. In Deutschland waren zudem Diskrepanzen zwischen dem Triumvirat Ludwig Erhard, Konrad Adenauer und Walter Hallstein virulent. Der Durchbruch zum Gemeinsamen Markt gelang scheinbar erst durch die amerikanische Europapolitik und die Suezkrise.

Einzelne Beiträge setzen sich mit bis dato weniger berücksichtigten Fragen auseinander. So wird zum Beispiel die Rolle der französischen Automobilindustrie im Kontext des Europäisierungsprozesses eruiert, oder auch das Verhältnis Dänemarks zum Schuman-Plan. Tatsächlich schien es laut Johnny Laursen zumindest bis in das Jahr 1954 hinein ernsthafte Überlegungen Dänemarks gegeben zu haben, der EGKS beizutreten.

einer Freihandelszone als wirtschaftspolitische Alternativen an, die im Zuge der Par-
allelaktion von EWG und EFTA an Brisanz gewann.

Weitere Themen des Bandes sind die oft gar nicht so einhellige Positionen von
Benelux und das Bonner Veto gegen die Gemeinsame Agrarpolitik, welches schein-
durch falsche Lobbypolitik forciert worden ist. Den Luxemburger Kompromiss
stellt der Band treffend als den Beginn einer informellen Konsens-Kultur auf euro-
päischem Parkett vor und zeigt, dass die Mitgestaltung der Einigung durch Funkti-
onseliten, die oftmals keine wirklich überzeugten Europäer waren, nicht unterschätzt
werden darf. Abschließend thematisiert werden Anspruch und Wirklichkeit des Ge-
meinsamen Marktes, das Spannungsfeld von Souveränitätsstreben, Föderalismus-
anspruch und europäischer Einheit sowie der Blick der SED auf den europäischen In-
tegrationsprozess, der durch Hetze, Polemik und Zynismus geprägt, durchaus die ein
oder andere treffende Pointe aufzuweisen hatte. Neben dem Rekurs auf Asien, Italien,
USA und Österreich und ihrem Verständnis von Europa schließt der Band mit den
Zukunftsperspektiven der EU.

Allein diese Aufzählung zeigt, wie vielschichtig das Thema Römische Verträge
ist. Und es ist nur konsequent, wenn Michael Gehler und seine Autoren den 25. März
1957 horizontal wie vertikal, synchron wie diachron analysieren, ja die Verträge
förmlich in Einzelteile zerlegen. Sie machen dies allesamt auf anschauliche Weise. 
Nicht zuletzt deshalb liegt in der Gesamtheit ein unverzichtbarer Beitrag zur Euro-
paforschung vor. Es gilt nichtsdestotrotz allerdings zu berücksichtigen, was Mark
Gilbert am Ende des Bandes zu verstehen gibt: Dass ein Historiker mehr Künstler als
Photograf ist. Er hält nichts für ewig so fest wie es sich im Augenblick des Geschehens
abzeichnet, sondern malt an einem Bild der Vergangenheit. In diesem Fall ist es ein
gelungenes, und ganz wie das europäische Projekt ein Triumph des Geistes der Ko-
operation.

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Matthieu TROUVÉ, L’Espagne et l’Europe. De la dictature de Franco à l’Union

Diplômé de l’Institut d’Études Politiques de Bordeaux (1995) et agrégé d’histoire
(1997), Matthieu Trouvé est l’auteur d’une thèse sur La diplomatie espagnole face à
Communautés européennes, effectuée sous la direction de Sylvie Guillaume
(Université de Bordeaux-3). Ses travaux portent sur la construction européenne,
l’Espagne et l’Amérique latine au XXe siècle. Il est maître de conférences en histoire
contemporaine à l’Institut d’Études Politiques de Bordeaux depuis le 1er septembre
Le rapprochement entre l'Espagne et l'Europe est un vieux débat, que l'on peut faire remonter à la «génération de 1898» qui, lasse de l'archaïsme et des faiblesses du système politique espagnol, démontrés encore une fois lors de la défaite écrasante face aux États-Unis à Cuba, proclame le besoin d'une «homologation» européenne capable de régénérer une Espagne trop longtemps décadente. Ce débat, qui rebondit de période en période sans aboutir, notamment suite à la guerre d'Espagne, peut expliquer le consensus au moment de ce rapprochement réel, qui commence dans le dernier tiers du XXe siècle. La démarche globale de l'auteur consiste, sur un long terme, à expliquer ce rapprochement, dont il démontre qu'il a commencé sous le franquisme, avec comme thèse que le politique commande tout, et que cet épisode a fortement servi les Espagnols à se définir eux-mêmes. Son approche chronologique commence en février 1962, date de la première approche sérieuse, jusqu'à janvier 1986 et l'entrée dans la CEE, avec une insistance toute particulière, étant donné les archives et les interviewées par l'auteur, sur les relations diplomatiques.

La première partie du volume porte sur le rapprochement et ses limites sous Franco (1957-1975). Son régime est au départ esseulé, refusé à l'ONU, et voit sa frontière avec la France fermée. Guerre froide oblige, cette situation ne dure pas, mais l'Espagne est éloignée d'entrée de l'aventure communautaire. Le pays assouplit sa politique économique, et abandonne l'autarcie en 1959, mettant en place un plan de stabilisation qui s'inspire beaucoup de celui engagé en France l'année précédente. Sous la houlette de ministres technocrates, dont Fernando Castiella mais aussi Alberto Ullastres ou Laureano López Rodó (ces deux derniers membres de l'Opus Dei), un certain libéralisme est accepté, bien qu'unique d'ordre économique (desarrolloismo). La politique étrangère est ainsi «désidéologisée», avec un Franco en retrait, ce qui permet une certaine ouverture vers les organisations européennes: les exportations s'envolent, alors que l'Espagne se respectabilise (entrées successives au FMI, à la Banque mondiale, à l'OECE). Dans l'ensemble cependant, le «splendide isolement» continue, ce qui n'est pas le cas du Portugal par exemple.

Cette situation provoque des inquiétudes suite à la création du Marché commun, notamment concernant les exportations agricoles espagnoles. De fait, il y a dès lors recherche de contacts, sans pour autant qu’il y aient certaines incertitudes (on penche ainsi un temps pour la solution britannique de simple zone de libre-échange). Cette situation nourrit un débat europiste intense, entre l’opposition et une certaine frange du franquisme, entre certains acteurs confiants (grosses entreprises et milieux banquiers, fruits et légumes, vins et huile d’olive), et d’autres plus méfiants (PME, céréaliculteurs, producteurs de viande). En Europe, on a de l’Espagne une image de carte postale (le tourisme est alors en hausse) ou très politisée (s’appuyant sur les témoignages de la guerre civile ou celui des exilés, très actifs). L’AELE étant discréditée par la candidature britannique à la CEE de 1961, l’Espagne se tourne alors vers les Six, qui sont en train de mettre en place la PAC. Le gouvernement espagnol pense alors demander l’association, en vertu de l’article 238 du Traité de Rome. Dans cette optique, il joue la carte de Paris (lettre adressée par Fernando Maria Castiella à Maurice Couve de Murville dès le 9 février 1962). Du côté des Six, cette demande amène à une première réflexion sur les conditions d’entrée à imposer, à une doctrine.
la plus stricte possible, alors que les Espagnols pensent que leur activisme suffira à obtenir gain de cause. Ces réactions diverses vont dans le sens de la politisation d’une demande espagnole que d’aucuns commencent à trouver gênante, ce qui débouche sur un simple accusé de réception.

Dans les pays de la CEE, certaines associations s’emparent du sujet, notamment le Mouvement européen dans sa réunion de Munich des 5 et 6 juin 1962, qui devait au départ ne traiter que de la CPE. L’opposition est sans appel. Les participants espagnols à cette réunion seront d’ailleurs inquiétés à leur retour, ce qui accentue l’image répressive du régime (exécution de Julian Grimau le 20 juin 1963). Ainsi, subrepticement, la démocratisation apparaît comme la solution, même si les autorités espagnoles font semblant de ne pas se rendre compte de cette idée. Elles tiennent cependant compte de ces réticences inattendues en relançant le débat, à travers une lettre du 14 février 1964, moins précise, plus technique, appelant à des conversations exploratoires avec la CEE. Cette dernière débouche cette fois-ci sur une ouverture des négociations (2 juin), qui n’aborderont pas la question de «l’association». Madrid tient à ces négociations, et le démontre en créant une mission auprès de la CEE avec Alberto Ullastres à sa tête. Parallèlement, le remaniement ministériel de juillet 1965 va dans un sens plus libéral, que semblent cautionner les visites successives de Konrad Adenauer et de Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber en Espagne. Les liens commerciaux sont de plus en plus forts, notamment avec la RFA: tous les chiffres sont en hausse dans les années 60, qu’ils concernent l’émigration, le tourisme ou les investissements étrangers.


La deuxième partie porte sur la transition vers la démocratie (1975-1982). Juan Carlos est nommé roi à la mort de Franco, mais n’est cependant pas chef de
gouvernement, poste laissé au fidèle Carlos Arias Navarro. Celui-ci se retire néanmoins quelques mois plus tard et Adolfo Suárez le remplace. Ce dernier se rend à Paris, où on lui signifie froidement que l’entrée dans la CEE n’est absolument pas envisageable dans l’immédiat. La priorité va du coup à la réforme politique de l’Espagne, commençant par l’amnistie, la légalisation des partis politiques et des libertés essentielles. Tout se fait de la loi à la loi, sans heurts et de manière consensuelle. La victoire, lors des premières élections en 1977 (les premières depuis 1936), revient à l’UCD (Union du Centre Démocratique) de Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, qui vient d’être créé. L’élaboration de la nouvelle constitution peut alors commencer et est approuvée par référendum l’année suivante. En matière de politique étrangère, la France est très présente, et pose déjà des problèmes dans les secteurs sensibles que sont l’ETA et les fruits et légumes. Il s’agit donc de procéder avec prudence: le ministre des Affaires étrangères Marcelino Oreja poursuit la politique franquiste de rapprochement avec l’Occident, avec le soutien de l’opinion, qui aboutit dans un premier temps à l’adhésion au Conseil de l’Europe (24 novembre 1977). Auparavant, une candidature a été déposée auprès de la CEE le 28 juillet, alors qu’une constitution démocratique n’a même pas encore été adoptée dans le pays!


Dans ce débat, seul l’OTAN ne rassemble pas tous les Espagnols. Ces derniers, largement sollicités en matière européenne, comprennent d’emblée l’importance du lobbying pour se faire entendre, notamment les régions qui ont gagné de larges pans d’autonomie. Cela dit, les négociations à l’échelle nationale ne commencent vraiment qu’en septembre 1979, et s’avèrent d’abord être une «affaire franco-
espagnole». De gros problèmes sont posés par la pêche ou par les fruits et légumes, à une époque de récession, du problème agro-budgétaire européen et de celui du «chèque» britannique. Le discours retentissant de Giscard du 5 juin 1980, appelant à une «pause», est dénoncé comme un «giscardazo», consistant à temporiser et à repousser la seconde candidature pour un temps indéfini. De fait, une paralysie des négociations s’installe, tous les partis en France s’accordant plus ou moins à ce sujet, sans parler des syndicats agricoles. L’Italie n’est pas en reste, alors que la Grande-Bretagne soulève le problème de Gibraltar et critique la position de neutralité de l’Espagne au moment de la guerre des Malouines. L’Irlande, elle, a peur pour ses subventions. Dans le fond, seule la RFA soutient sans faille l’entrée des Espagnols. Le putsch manqué va relancer les discussions; quant à l’entrée dans l’OTAN, le 30 mai 1982, elle ne se fait pas dans le consensus, mais les acteurs politiques espagnols se rendent compte qu’ils peuvent se servir de ce dossier comme levier dans les discussions avec la CEE.


Ainsi, on peut dire que le rapprochement initié par Franco a eu son importance. Parallèlement, il est un fait que les Espagnols se sont lancés dans les négociations de manière un peu précipitée, le consensus en la matière, réel, ayant peut-être masqué certaines difficultés. Quant aux socialistes, ils n’ont pas tout fait, mais ont indéniablement accéléré le processus de manière décisive.


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Le premier chapitre part du concept d’«Europe des projets», lié au pragmatisme et au fonctionnement institutionnel qui ont fait l’Europe, et où les aspects économiques jouent un rôle important. Les tentations de la rationalisation, qui ont accompagné cette démarche «logique» et «auto-entretenue» dès le départ (fonctionnalistes, néo-fonctionnalistes), sont aujourd’hui peu crédibles, où les luttes politiques et les rapports de force autour de l’économie reviennent en scène de manière très vive, dans le même temps où les apports de l’UE aux citoyens semblent abstraits ou indirects. Il est un fait que la redistribution à l’échelle de l’UE est territoriale, puisque les Etats n’ont cessé d’être les intermédiaires dans cette histoire de la construction européenne (emplois, infrastructures). L’UE est d’abord et avant tout une force régulatrice qui s’exprime par la normalisation: c’est l’ère post-nationale, où s’impose la figure de l’expert. Or, le citoyen ne se retrouve pas dans cet univers dépolitisé, où le processus de décision est toujours plus complexe. Le problème est d’abord celui d’un pouvoir illisible et d’autant moins légitime, puisqu’il est fondé sur la neutralité et la recherche du compromis. On note ainsi l’absence d’une dimension politique et historique dont le seul moteur n’a jamais cessé d’être celui du citoyen, singulièrement mis de côté. Dans cette perspective, c’est le rapport au pouvoir des Européens qu’il faut changer.
Intermédiaire indispensable, la communication, fait l’objet d’un deuxième chapitre. Celle-ci est d’autant plus primordiale à une époque où les formes de légitimation du passé ont disparu et que toute collectivité est fondée sur l’adhésion, qu’il faut en permanence renégocier. Difficile dans un monde en mouvement perpétuel, difficile aussi car l’individu n’est pas «Européen», il reste d’abord national. Les formes d’appartenance définies par Gellner ou Anderson sont donc toujours vraies, même s’il faut y ajouter les thèses plus récentes du «transactionnalisme», une forme de constructivisme où les interactions sociales et économiques peuvent elles aussi déboucher sur une forme d’intégration des sociétés européennes. Or, l’UE ne communique pas en priorité avec les citoyens, mais d’abord avec leurs gouvernements. Les allégeances n’aboutiront pas ainsi sans grand projet politique, ce que ne sous-tend pas la recherche perpétuelle du compromis. En ce sens, les élites ne jouent pas leur rôle, alors que l’idée d’Europe a toujours plus été un contenant qu’un contenu. C’est une idée politique, culturelle, économique, mais pas vraiment associée au concept de société. C’est une transcendance, une mystique avec laquelle on ne peut être que pour ou contre, une idée séductrice ou repoussante, mais pas une matrice identitaire. Quelle réponse des autorités européennes? Fragmentaire et elitiste en ce qui concerne l’aspect culturel, comme le montre par exemple le choix des capitales européennes; partielle depuis le Traité de Maastricht, où l’intérêt porte plus sur les réalisations du passé que sur les manifestations du présent. Des programmes d’échanges existent, mais pas des programmes scolaires. L’auteur montre d’ailleurs combien la socialisation voulue par Erasmus n’est pas forcément celle que l’on attend, et que le recrutement reste confidentiel (pp.75-76); il signale également les «ratés» de l’audiovisuel (Eurikon, Europa TV) qui ont abouti à des coproductions et des échanges, mais qui restent marqués par les mécanismes de l’économie plus que par une logique de construction d’identité (exception d’Arte). De leur côté, le football et l’Eurovision réactivent plus les appartenances nationales que le renforcement d’une identité européenne.

De fait comment «incarner» l’Europe? Le troisième chapitre s’intéresse à la question en commençant par le problème du protocole et des fonctions «européennes». En premier lieu, les acteurs eux-mêmes: les commissaires restent des «entrepreneurs supranationaux informels», dont la légitimation repose d’abord sur les idées et l’information, et dont le registre est la persuasion. Ceux-ci n’ont cependant pas l’onction du suffrage ni de capacités de coercition, alors que leur président jouit d’une assez faible visibilité. Certes, celui-ci est amené à être élu avec le processus de Lisbonne, et le nombre des commissaires devrait diminuer, instaurant des liens moins forts avec les Etats, mais il reste du travail. Autre figure, le député européen est quant à lui d’abord représentant des Etats et non d’un «peuple européen». Certes, là aussi, Lisbonne peut amener des clarifications: on parlera de «représentants des citoyens de l’Union» et l’harmonisation du régime des rémunérations devrait amener un début de clarification. Cela dit, beaucoup d’eurodéputés restent de second choix (exceptions comme Daniel Cohn-Bendit) dans une configuration où l’Européen n’a pas toujours quelque chose à demander à l’Europe, mais d’abord aux élus locaux ou aux ministères. L’absence de bipolarisation droite-gauche et donc de dramatisation est
rédhibitoire, de même que la nécessité de la traduction, qui prive des ressources de l'éloquence au sein de l'hémicycle strasbourgeois, attirant peu médias et citoyens.

Enfin, le fonctionnaire européen est souvent réduit au mystérieux néologisme «eurocrate». On en compte aujourd'hui près de 30.000, pas forcément facilement abordables («l'Europe n’a pas de guichets»), et dont la compétence est parfois mise en doute du fait de l'existence de «postes à drapeaux». Dans le cas de ces fonctionnaires, on note parallèlement l'importance de l'expérience personnelle comme le plurilinguisme, mais aussi la perte de la «vocation», si déterminante dans les premiers temps de la construction européenne: le fonctionnaire aujourd'hui n'est plus mu par l'idéal de paix et de démocratie, et défend un «supranationalisme tempéré». Il y a donc au total un «défaut d'incarnation», ce qui se voit déjà dans la mise en scène du pouvoir européen (protocole), «l'ordre symbolique exprimant l'ordre politique»: pas de codification stricte à Bruxelles, pas de texte juridique pour fixer l'ordre des présences au niveau communautaire (exemple des «photos de famille» des Conseils européens, soumises à un ordre aléatoire). Le registre symbolique est pauvre, privé des honneurs militaires ou des remises de décoration dont jouent les différents protocoles nationaux. Au total, l'auteur met en avant la secondarité du protocole communautaire par rapport aux allégeances nationales (que l'on se rappelle la brouille de Gaulle/Hallstein à ce propos, au cœur de la crise de la chaise vide). Tout cela est peut-être le dérivé du processus d'engrenage défini au départ, mais qui atteint ses limites avec la dénonciation du «déficit démocratique». Le protocole n'est pas neutre, car il a aussi une fonction anthropologique, et s'avère être un processus de régulation sociale.

Le quatrième chapitre se focalise sur l'étude du discours et de la rhétorique institutionnelle. On ne doit pas oublier que les grands discours sur l'Europe sont d’abord le fait de grands dirigeants nationaux (Winston Churchill à Zurich, François Mitterrand au Bundestag, Margaret Thatcher à Bruges, Joschka Fischer à Berlin). De fait, comment communiquent les institutions européennes? Foret s’est intéressé au «Livre blanc sur la gouvernance européenne» et aux publications de la Commission à destination du grand public pour répondre à cette question. Il est difficile, dans un univers où les compétences sont éclatées, de tenir un discours performatif: personne, dans le cadre communautaire, n’en a la capacité politique ni juridique. Sans majorité, on ne peut que tenir des déclarations d’intention. De même, le rapport au temps enlève pas mal d’affectif, puisqu’on se situe en priorité dans le présent, et tourné vers l’avenir. De manière générale, la question de la légitimité ne se pose pas, l’UE se repliant sur le système organisationnel et son mode de fonctionnement (gouvernance). La question des valeurs est évacuée au profit d’absolus comme le libre-échange; il n’y a pas plus de justification puisque tout dérive du bon sens, de l’évidence et de l’action (suivant le schéma d’un Jean Monnet), d’où le caractère bureaucratique d’une communication axée sur le compromis. On est loin des basiques du langage politique!

Sur le contenu, l’auteur note l’absence remarquée des «citoyens» et de «l’opinion publique» au profit du «public» (éloignement du modèle participatif), la prégnance du mode passif dans la conjugaison des verbes; enfin, la surreprésentation de la
«société civile», qui n’est pas à la base de la démocratie représentative, mais qui se réfère d’abord aux instances de représentation organisées plutôt qu’au corps social dans son entier. Le recours fréquent à des mots «magiques» comme «acquis communautaire» ou «transparence», et l’effacement de vocables tabous comme «fédéralisme» ou «constitution» est une autre constante, vérifiant la disparition des mots d’ordre basiques de la légitimité politique. Ainsi, la mise en avant de l’expertise court-circuite le politique (rationalité, efficacité) et légitime l’euro-péanisation du dossier. On note l’accentuation du discours de coordination plutôt que celui de communication, ce qui est le propre des «systèmes politiques composés» comme celui des États fédéraux (voir le cas du lobbying), dans le même temps où le fédéralisme n’est pas présenté comme une alternative crédible.

Le cinquième chapitre porte précisément sur l’étude des rituels. Il est un fait que les symboles de l’Europe ont fait les frais des «non» à la Constitution. Par ailleurs, existe-t-il un répertoire ad hoc depuis les élections de 1979? Premier constat à ce propos: l’existence de 26 règles électorales différentes, et un scrutin sur plusieurs jours cassent l’unité de ce moment politique et rituel de communion dans le politique. Il n’y a ainsi pas d’«humiliation rituelle des grands» comme dans chaque élection, car l’ointment par les gouvernés est réellement secondaire dans ce cas de figure. Le prisme national reste déterminant, et entraîne pour les élections européennes une faible ritualisation ainsi que peu de ressources symboliques («élections de second rang»). Autre rituel: la fête. Celle de l’Europe ne jouit pas de l’assistance officielle, n’est pas fériée, et se révèle plus une célébration de l’idée que de l’Europe politique. Il lui manque un centre. Constat approchant pour l’hymne: l’air choisi dérive d’un tropisme élitaire, universel plutôt que proprement «européen» (même la Rhodésie a pu un temps récupérer l’air sans que l’on n’y puisse rien), alors que le texte de Friedrich Schiller a été écarté, et ne peut donc être repris en chœur. Pour l’image, il s’agirait de «donner à voir l’Europe». Difficile car celle-ci n’a pas d’existence concrète, d’où le recours fréquent au dessin et à la subjectivité de l’auteur. Pas d’«hexagone», puisque l’espace est incertain et en mouvement perpétuel, pas de vivier de personnages historiques «conformes» (pas plus que les acteurs européens). Ce sont du coup les étoiles qui font consensus. Au point de vue institutionnel, la Commission a tendance à privilégier l’esprit de corps, ce qui risque d’amener à un hermétisme favorisant tous les fantasmes; quant aux Conseils des ministres et européens, ils sont d’abord l’incarnation de dynamiques nationales. Que faire des stéréotypes, instruments primaires de connaissance de l’autre? Ceux-ci sont à double face (voir la figure du Polonais) et en évolution constante. On ne peut pas compter sur eux pour évoquer un sentiment d’appartenance, surtout dans un univers présenté comme rationnel.

Le sixième chapitre porte sur le drapeau, processus absolu d’encodage social et culturel, objectivation par excellence d’un projet collectif. «L’objet est fait pour être vu», suscitant identification et engagement, se révélant un instrument nécessaire, comme le montre le statut des bateaux sans pavillon dans le droit de la mer. Or, le drapeau européen est enregistré comme symbole d’une organisation internationale et non d’un État auprès de l’Organisation mondiale de la propriété intellectuelle. Le
choix du bleu s’explique par l’attirance pour cette couleur de la majorité des Européens (avec les présupposés religieux du bleu «marial»); le 12 a une portée symbolique (signes du zodiaque, travaux d’Hercule, apôtres, fils de Jacob, mois de l’année). On peut voir que traditions antiques et chrétiennes se renforcent. Or, il ne faut pas oublier que le temps symbolique est a-historique, ce dont doit tenir compte l’art vexillaire. Le 12 a pour lui la continuité, la stabilité au-delà des changements dus à l’élargissement, socle idéal d’une «destinée manifeste» qui provient tout droit du chaos de 39-45. Du coup, il s’agit de traduire une volonté à l’œuvre. Cependant, l’Europe reste un «Etat faible», et la société civile européenne n’est pas plus forte, ce qui amène une certaine décontraction à l’égard des symboles, dont le drapeau fait partie. Ce n’est pas un signe sacralisé, mais plutôt un instrument de communication et de droit, sans compter qu’il n’y a pas dans ce cas de figure «d’école du drapeau» non plus, l’armée européenne relevant encore du vœu pieux. Certes, il y a eu des morts en ex-Yougoslavie, mais est-on bien dans la logique définie par Ernest Kantorowicz pour la patrie? Finalement, cet emblème manque d’ennemis et se révèle trop sage pour une instrumentalisation belliqueuse. Doit-on s’en alarmer ou s’en féliciter?

Le septième chapitre s’intéresse enfin à l’euro, partant du principe que la monnaie a un rôle social (Georg Simmel), et que l’autorité en charge de sa gestion et de son usage détient une fonction politique et symbolique très forte. Que penser de la valeur autoréférentielle de la monnaie, comme celle que préfigure l’ordo-libéralisme allemand, faisant de la stabilité monétaire un impératif supérieur en lui-même? Les statuts de la BCE semblent traduire cela, où la banque paraît être une gardienne indépendante du pacte social. Il est pourtant un fait que la monnaie doit traduire une communauté de destin en même temps qu’être un indicateur de puissance. Or, le terme «euro» traduit avant tout le refus d’appellations trop chargées d’histoire: il y a exigence d’unité en même temps qu’un parti pris de neutralité. L’imagerie monétaire montre cette difficulté de l’Europe à s’emblématiser: il n’y a pas sur les billets de lieux identifiés, le seul sens visible étant une survalorisation de la modernité. Il ne faut pas non plus oublier que, sur les pièces, l’espace européen représenté exclut les nouveaux adhérents, qui peuvent d’autant plus se considérer comme victimes d’une Europe à deux vitesses. On a ainsi un refuge dans l’abstraction, même si le symbole de l’euro concurrence de plus en plus les douze étoiles, ce qui démontre que l’action publique a eu des résultats positifs.

L’étude de François Foret est passionnante, et permet un regard renouvelé, non pas sur la construction européenne elle-même, mais sur la façon dont elle est appréhendée. Le chemin restant à faire en paraît d’autant plus long, et incline à la modestie, qui n’est pas forcément un aveu de faiblesses, mais l’occasion d’un second départ de l’idéal européen.

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nalismus werden allerdings dann vereinbar, wenn die Revolution als Zivilisations-

sprung zum Mythos werden soll. Genau dies sollte sich in der nationalistischen

Sprachrevolution der Türkei abspielen. Wohlgemerkt handelte es sich dabei erstens

stets um eine Revolution von oben, die bestenfalls von den Eliten unterstützt wurde,

und zweitens nicht um eine Reform: „Mustafa Kemal wusste genau, dass das be-
währte Wertesystem des Westens niemals durch Reformen durchzusetzen sei“

(S. 52-53). Yılmaz kann als Muttersprachler in diesem Punkt mit der verbreiteten

falschen Übersetzung „Reform“ aufräumen, die sich erstens nicht mit der damals im

Gesetz stehenden Bezeichnung „Buchstabenrevolution“ bzw. „Schriftrevolution“

deckt (S.49) und zweitens aufgrund ihrer vollständigen Umwandlungskraft nicht an-
ders als „revolutionär“ genannt werden kann. Zur argumentativen Untermauerung

werden Blicke auf die unterschiedlichen Formen politischer Sprachplanung in China,

Japan, Griechenland und Israel geworfen.

Nach Überzeugung der Revolutionäre war die arabische Schrift ursächlich für die

Kluft zu den westlichen Staaten verantwortlich und für den verbreiteten Analphabet-

tismus in der Türkei im Besonderen. Das Buch greift diese Überzeugung auf, um sie

in vielfacher Weise zu entkräften. Zunächst wird vergleichend anhand von Zahlen

der UNESCO festgehalten, dass erstens auch die Industrienationen mit Analphabet-

tismus kämpfen und dass zweitens dieser unabhängig vom verwendeten Alphabet

verbreitet ist. Die türkische Sprache (Osmanisch) war zwar eine Mischsprache mit

eigenständiger Grammatik und vielen Entlehnungen aus dem Persischen und Arabi-

schen. Ihre Schrift war arabisch. Doch erneut begegnet dem Verfasser dem „politisch

motivierte[n] Argument“, dass die lateinische Schrift „schnell und fehlerfrei zu lern-

nen“ ist (S.153). Anschaulich verdeutlicht er, dass die europäischen Sprachen selbst

Probleme mit dem lateinischen Alphabet hatten, die sie nur lösen konnten, indem sie

beispielsweise mit diakritischen Zeichen und Affrikaten ihre eigenen Hilfszeichen

schufen. Kurzum: „Auch die lateinische Welt verfügt über keine einheitliche Schrift“

(S.166). Insofern ist der Alphabetwechsel als Maßnahme zur Alphabetisierung der

Gesellschaft ungeeignet und offenbar nebenher, dass es sich beim Analphabetismus

um „ein Problem der Sprachbildung“ handelt (S.159).

Unumgänglich, dass Yılmaz auf das sich aus der Revolution entwickelnde Span-

nungsverhältnis zur Religion eingeht. Für den Islam ist die mindestens ansatzweise

Beherrschung des Arabischen Voraussetzung, um überhaupt den Koran lesen, d.h.

die Religion ausüben zu können: „Die enge Beziehung der Schrift zur Religion ist

spezifisch für den Islam“ (S.94). Hier wären weitergehende Erklärungen wünschens-

wert, denn dies ist keinesfalls mit dem Stellenwert des Wortes im Protestantismus

vergleichbar. Der Koran, so heißt es in der islamischen Welt, bekehrt als schönste

er aller arabischen Dichtungen auch durch die Schönheit seiner Sprache, die nicht allein

in der Semantik liegt.

Nach Yılmaz‘ Ansicht spielten die „Russlandtürken“ und die Sowjetunion eine

determinierende Rolle im Bestreben, auf die Lateinschrift umzustellen. Mit Gotthard

Jäschke und Bernard Lewis wird die These vertreten, dass es Ziel der russischen

Führung war, mithilfe des Schriftwechsels jeden „türkischen Stamm“ zu schwächen
und die (kommunikative) Verbindung „zwischen den arabisch schreibenden Türkei-
türken und den Russlandtürken zu unterbinden“ (S.172). Den Höhepunkt des russi-
sehen Einflusses auf die Sprachplanung der neuen Turkrepubliken bildete der Turk-
kologen-Kongress von Baku im Jahr 1926, dessen Hauptgegenstand die Frage nach
dem zukünftigen Alphabet in der Türkei war. Amüsant sind die damals zum Teil
abweichenden Begründungen, z.B. das die Augen schädigende Lesen von arabischen
Schriftzeichen. Mit 101 gegen sieben Stimmen bei neun Enthaltungen wurde schließ-
lich für die Einführung der westlichen Schrift plädiert. Wie fast überall war die Aus-
einandersetzung mit der eigenen Sprache eine Angelegenheit der gesellschaftlichen
Elite, die sich durch den Fachkongress „wissenschaftlich“ bestätigt fühlte. Dabei
waren in dieser Phase allein die Schriftsteller und Publizisten für die Einführung der
lateinischen Schrift, während die „überwältigende Mehrheit der Wissenschaftler“
(erfolglos) für die Normierung der vorhandenen Schrift eintrat (S.186).

Die geplante Einführung der lateinischen Schrift wurde in der „Wartezeit“ zwi-
ischen 1924 und 1928 über die engsten Regierungskreise hinaus nicht bekanntgege-
ben; allen Beteiligten war bewusst, dass die Schriftrevolution nur Erfolg hätte, wenn
sie gut vorbereitet war. Im Mai 1928 nahm eine Kommission zu Fragen der Ortho-
graphie und Schrift ihre Arbeit auf, welche sich im wesentlichen darauf beschränkte,
auszuarbeiten, wie die arabische Schrift abgelöst werden könnte. Yılmaz stellt fest,
dass die Quellen widersprüchlich sind in der Frage, ob nicht Kemal Atatürk die
Kommission zunächst lediglich mit der Klärung der Notwendigkeit des Schriftwech-
sels beauftragte. Im Schlusskapitel kommt er allerdings zum Ergebnis, dass Kemal
den „wissenschaftlichen Gegebenheiten in jeder Hinsicht Folge leisten wollte“ (S.
328). Davon unberührt beendete die Kommission nach einem guten Monat ihre Arbeit
und präsentierte ein Alphabet mit 29 Lauten. Das am 3. November 1928 in Kraft
getreteene Gesetz sah die Ablösung des Arabischen bis spätestens zum Ende des Jahres
1929 vor. Volksschulen auf dem Land, Massenorganisationen und Sanktionen bei
Verstößen sorgten für die Umsetzung. Von den geschätzten 14 Millionen Menschen
in der Türkei konnten nur 1,1 Millionen lesen und schreiben. Dies ist, wie man
hervorheben muss, wohl auch mit der wichtigste Grund für die rasche Implementie-
rung. Nennenswerte Bildungserfolge blieben indes aus.

Selten tritt die Funktion von Sprache als Schlüssel zur Vergangenheit so deutlich
hervor wie im Beispiel der Türkei. Das Ziel der Sprachrevolution, die sofortige Mo-
dernisierung, wurde dadurch manifestiert, dass sie die Vergangenheit verschloss.
Yilmaz:

„Welche ein Wagnis es bedeutet, Kultur und insbesondere die Schrift einer Gesellschaft,
die auf eine mehr als tausendjährigen Geschichte zurückblickt, in die Hände einer knapp
drei Monate lang arbeitenden Schriftkommission zu legen, zeigt die Geschichte der repub-
likanischen Türkei“ (S.9).

Als das Verbot der arabischen Schrift in Kraft trat, war ist es nur eine zeitliche Frage,
bis die Beschäftigung mit der Vergangenheit unmöglich wurde. Heute sehen wir die
Folge, dass die Türkei von der islamisch-arabischen Welt getrennt ist, „ohne von den
Europäern als europäisches Land akzeptiert worden zu sein“ (S.62). Mit Blick auf
die Probleme in der türkischen Sprachpolitik plädiert Yılmaz abschließend erstens für Bilingualität als Mittel zur Bekämpfung des Analphabetismus sowie zur Integration fördern der kurdischen Minderheit. Zweitens könne die Lehre des Osmanischen als „Hilfssprache“ (ähnlich dem westlichen Lateinunterricht) die Wissensan- eignung der eigenen Vergangenheit ermöglichen und die Lösungsansätze in der in der unauflöschlichen Auseinandersetzung mit den Koranschulen erweitern. Diese beiden Punkte betreffen besonders auch die zwischen Orient und Okzident schwankende Identitätsbildung der Türken: durch das Osmanische könnte die eigene Her- kunft besser nachvollzogen wie auch das Islamverständnis gestärkt werden.

Das Buch verweigert sich im besten Sinne der eindeutigen Zuordnung zur Sprach-, zur Geschichts- oder zur Politikwissenschaft. Es ist eine darstellende, erklärende Arbeit, welche erfrischend viele Vergleiche zieht, die über den üblichen Kanon hinausgehen. Vor allem aber schreckt die Arbeit vor Bewertungen und „historischen Leh- ren“ nicht zurück. Das funktioniert aber nur, weil Yılmaz diesen Anspruch glaub- würdig und mit guten Gründen vertritt. Sein Anliegen ist es, die sprachliche Brücke in die Vergangenheit wieder zu errichten und vor der Normierung der Sprache durch die Politik zu warnen.

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The best way to assess the European aspects of Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s foreign policies, as he explains them in the third volume of his memoirs, is to take a look at the final chapters of their second volume. At the end of this part of his memoirs, Kohl dwells on the highly precarious phase of his attempts, after the fall of the Berlin wall, to create international conditions that would help pave the way for an eventual German unification. In view of a confusing mass of contradictory recommendations flooding in from at home as well as from abroad, he decided to disclose a kind of road map for dealing with the future of Germany. In a speech delivered before the Bundestag on 28 November 1989 he developed his Ten Points’ Programme advocating a long term process which could ultimately lead to a merger of the Federal Republic and the GDR into a common federation. Although the Chancellor had care- fully avoided mentioning any period of time for his road map to be implemented, his unilateral announcement unleashed violent reactions abroad. The Chancellor got a full taste of them during his meeting with the heads of the European governments convened in Strasbourg on 8 December 1989. At that occasion, he reports, his Euro- pean partners submitted him to a searching interrogation, which revealed their con-
cern about a restoration of an independent German nation state. “Twice we have beaten the Germans”, Margaret Thatcher exploded, as Kohl recalls, “and here they are back again” (p.1013). With the exception of the Spanish and the Irish Prime ministers – not to forget: both countries were neutral in World War Two –, most other European leaders shared Thatcher’s strong reservations regarding the prospect of a united Germany. There was but one more dissenting voice – that of Jacques Delors, the President of the European Commission, who from then on turned out to act as a European midwife for German reunification, as Kohl gratefully acknowledges. To be sure, Delors implied that German unity had to be achieved within a European frame. The French President, who in his meetings with Kohl had not concealed the deep suspicions he felt with respect to the latter’s German policy, shared Delors’ conviction. François Mitterrand thus insisted and Kohl had to accept that German reunification had to dovetail with further progress toward European integration. To Kohl this became an indispensable long-term “key concept” (p.1036), the alternative being near to total isolation of the Federal Republic in the face of a coalition of European governments that followed the lead of the British Prime minister in opposing German national unity.

This brings us to the second volume of Kohl’s reminiscences which the author regarded not only as an account of his personal contribution to German unification, but also as a legacy bringing home his political beliefs and values to his own people. The question to be asked here is to what extent Kohl’s European commitment contributed to Germany’s speedy unification and to what degree the Chancellor afterwards remained faithful to it. For the early months of 1990, Kohl makes clear, the Franco-German relationship was absolutely crucial to him. Glaring differences of opinion had to be overcome: Mitterrand insisted, as a prerequisite of German unification, on an immediate and internationally binding West German commitment to recognize the Oder-Neiße as the definite German-Polish border, whereas Kohl preferred to postpone such commitment, until it would become an integral part of a final international settlement sanctioning German unification. At their decisive meeting on April 25/26, 1990, the two leaders came to reach an understanding. Kohl pledged his government’s support for European integration in monetary and economic matters, as Mitterrand had urged. The French premier, Kohl claims, reacted much less enthusiastically to his suggestions for a political European union, for fear of far-reaching cessions of sovereign rights by the member States of such a union (p.95). A special European summit, held in Dublin on 29 April 1990, confirmed this agreement. Between Kohl and Mitterrand this had been a partly tacit quid pro quo linkage, as Kohl reports - a linkage never explicitly spelt out by Mitterrand (vol.1, p.1033). It implied French acceptance of German unity in exchange for the German commitment to a common European currency. For Kohl this proved to be the effective leverage to overcome Mitterrand’s initial apprehensions concerning his German policy. Delors speaking in the name of the European commission went even further by proposing that German unification proceed in accordance with article 23 of the West German basic law. This permitted the East German Länder to join the new German federation quasi automatically without the need to renegotiate West Germany’s numerous in-
ternational treaties and thus promised to speed up the process of unification silencing Kohl’s domestic and foreign opponents. Kohl on his part preferred to decline Delors’ offer of extra financial support from the European Commission for East Germany, in order to make German unification more palatable to some of Bonn’s smaller European partners.

The Maastricht Treaty negotiated on 9-11 November, 1991, carried out the Franco-German agreement of April 1990 in providing for the establishment of the Euro on terms, as Kohl does not fail to emphasize, that rigorously assured the independence of the future European Bank. The provisions for a political union disappointed Kohl somewhat. In this context he denies rumours of an alleged deal between France and Germany in the sense that Germany would have swallowed the Euro in exchange for being conceded terms which would allow the European political union to be strengthened and the European parliament to gain more weight (pp.388 f.). There remains no doubt, the present reviewer feels compelled to add, that French insistence on accelerated preparations for a monetary union for Europe on the one hand, coupled with caution regarding political integration on the other, lay at the roots of the uneven, if not uncoordinated growth of the European Union in the following years and of the ensuing present troubles in the Euro zone.

Did Kohl then remain faithful to his European commitment during the post-unification years? Kohl’s memoirs leave no doubts about his continued adherence to what he calls his European “creed” or Germany’s “historic mission”, i.e. to promote European integration as a means to assure peace and to make a united Germany definitely acceptable to his European partners. During the EC negotiations following Germany’s unification he relentlessly pressed for a political union for Europe, a “United States of Europe”, as he called it, sharing a common foreign policy and a security related identity. This European union, he hoped, would ultimately become a Federation – a “genuine community” transcending not only a mere combination of sovereign nation states “à l’anglaise”, but also a Europe of “different speeds” in the degree of integration, - a united Europe that also had to be open for new members from the Eastern part of the continent.

In all these respects both the Rome summit of December 1990 and then the Maastricht conference, as Kohl admits, left much to be desired (pp.331 f.). Again and again the German Chancellor tried to use the Franco-German partnership as a European engine. He succeeded, as far as the future Euro was concerned, reaffirming his commitment by giving support to the slipping French franc in September 1992. Delors reserved particular praise for this assistance. Kohl and Mitterrand also reached a Franco-German agreement on a Eurocorps as a nucleus for a European military capacity. This objective initially provoked American dissent – in part as the result of the notoriously poor relationship that existed between Mitterrand and President George H. Bush, who feared that a European military force might develop independently of NATO. In early 1994 President Bill Clinton dropped such suspicions, and thus paved the way for an agreement, which provided for a coordinated defence policy of both NATO and a largely independent European military force.
There remains one blemish on Kohl’s European record – the intra-European conflict over the crisis in the defunct Yugoslav federation. Looking back to that controversy Kohl becomes clearly defensive. His decision of late 1991 to recognize without delay and, if necessary, unilaterally the break-away republics of Slovenia and Croatia, provoked sharp criticism, not least on Mitterrand’s part, who regretted the failure of the EC to arrive at a common foreign policy, where it was most needed. Kohl responds to his critics by stressing the still provisional character of the European Political Union (pp.406 f.). Thus, he admits, other considerations prevailed for him – the right of self-determination from which united Germany just had benefited and which, he felt, Germany could not deny to the Balkan nations, the large number of Croatian immigrant workers in West Germany, and not least the pacifying effect recognition would entail. Future events disappointed such hopes. The Chancellor had failed to notice the difference that existed between the effects of self-determination in the German and in the Yugoslav contexts – in the first case integration and stabilization of a larger political unit, in the second disruption, destabilization and bloodshed. Lacking sufficient influence, because constitutional reasons barred German troops from joining the peace keeping forces of the UN, Kohl could do no more than bemoan the bloodshed and the persecution of the Muslim population in former Yugoslavia. In the end he joined the American President Clinton in coming out in favour of arming the Bosnian troops.

Concluding his memoirs, Kohl claims to have been the authentic executor of a European policy, which his predecessor Konrad Adenauer had launched. In this he is essentially right, as he always had ruled out any kind of see-saw diplomacy (Schaukelpolitik) between East and West and had remained faithful to and successfully defended a policy of solidarity with the Euro-Atlantic community of nations. Germany’s peaceful unification, as he justly claims, confirmed the soundness of that policy. Kohl’s memoirs do not contain any sensations concerning his European commitment or Franco-German relations. They are revealing with regard to the tactical considerations that guided him and the personal relations he developed with his international and domestic counterparts. In fact, his account does not leave the slightest doubt as to who were his friends and who were not. Kohl’s reminiscences thus authentically reflect his political orientation and its implementation during a most momentous period of recent history, on which he left a lasting and decisive imprint.

Klaus Schwabe
RWTH Aachen

Despite the huge interest, the massive economic impact and the impressive ideologies linked with the freedom of mobility, the European road network is definitely far from being well targeted by historians.

Frank Schipper has worked on this gap and offers us his research on the projects (and constructions) of a free road network crossing European national borders as a way to build up continental awareness. After intense and in-depth work in international archives, such as the League of Nations archive, the author presents the 20th century as one of progressive development of international connection and of increasing freedom of movement on the roads. After the first automobile border pass in the early years of the century, the end of the Great War launched several projects in order to develop a harmonious and peaceful relationship among the continental countries, proposals which used land transport and freedom of travelling as political tools to enhance European unity. While those plans failed, after World War 2, the topic was kept on the political agenda. As early as 1950 an (East and West) European road network was drawn (the E-Road network), not to mention the (struggling but successful, even if incomplete) steps to harmonize road technical outfits and European vehicles.

Schipper’s volume is important because so far the available literature on this topic has been at national level or investigates single INGO or IGO events. In this respect the author proposes a century of European road debates, offering us several clues and many future investigation paths. Paradoxically it emerges, for instance, how the European networks were developed by organizations which were not strictly European, such as the League of Nations or the UN Economic Commission for Europe. There was, in this respect, weak and inconsistent activity by the European Union until the 1980s, activity that was often driven by a particular country or, at its best, re-elaborated the 1950 E-Road network. It’s also important to note how, in Schipper’s eyes, the role of INGOs appears to be less crucial than expected, a decreasing importance after the driving force of national touring clubs in the early years of the 20th century. Even the International Road Federation (a lobbyist group founded in the late 1940s) or the more technical Permanent International Association of Road Congress seem to have played a side role in continental road integration. In this longue durée analysis we can also notice a wave trend, with peaks of road integration projects and activities in the years after both World Wars and distrustful attitudes in the 1930s and in the 1960s and 1970s.

As a general outcome, there was no hegemonic organization in European road development, but a mixed (and sometimes messy) presence of inter-governmental organizations, lobby actions by car industry and transport associations, national governments and even single private entrepreneurs in the 1920s and 1930s (like Puricelli, Michelin, Pigelet).
As said, the book offers many clues and explicitly suggests further investigation on the topic, a theme which surely deserves stronger attention. Particularly, some minor points could present interesting developments and a less linear account (and in this respect, sometimes, the book seems to be too smooth). For instance among several massive motorways projects on the European scale, it is interesting to note, as Schipper does, the (failed) Deloisi plan for local roads in order to enhance Eastern Europe agricultural production. In another example, the huge 1950s E-Road network scheme, considered as a forerunner of today’s motorways, planned a grid of bicycle and pedestrian lanes. Even more, trips through European countries were, in many respects, easier before the Great War, considering that passports (and visas) only become necessary after 1914.

So it could mean that the management of land and road mobility was not only “car friendly”, but was also open to other options throughout the 20th century.

Massimo Moraglio
Technische Universität Berlin


Ebenso einprägsam wie die Formulierung dieser Zielsetzung ist die von ihm gestellte Frage, ob die europäische Integration möglicherweise eine Transnationalisierung, ja gar eine Europäisierung nach sich gezogen habe. Hiermit bewegt er sich nicht zuletzt aus dem einen Historiker meist zugedachten Rahmen der ausschließlichen historischen Auseinandersetzung mit einem Thema und erklärt sein Buch ganz deutlich zum interdisziplinären Gesprächsangebot. Dieses Selbstverständnis von Autor und Text tragen eindeutig zur vielseitigen und ausgesprochen lebendigen Auseinandersetzung mit dem so oft als langweilig und trocken abgetanem Thema bei.


In seinem dritten Kapitel „'Keine Experimente': Die Gründungsphase von 1959 bis 1964" führt dann der Autor genau das ein, was als einer der Hauptgewinne dieses Buches betrachtet werden kann: Er setzt sich mit dem DBV mit Hilfe politikwissenschaftlicher Methoden auseinander, indem er den Verband als Vetospieler etabliert und durchleuchtet. Man kann dieses interdisziplinäre Vorgehen nur begrüßen, da es in geschichtswissenschaftlichen Arbeiten allzu selten vorkommt und doch so hilfreich sein kann beim Ausleuchten komplexer Zusammenhänge. Der DBV mischte auf allen Ebenen der bundesrepublikanischen Landwirtschaftspolitik mit. Das ging, wie Patel nachweist, sogar so weit, dass der Verband teilweise Mitsprache hatte bei der Ernennung der Landwirtschaftsminister. Diese Macht- und Vetostellung war auch beim Bundeskanzler nicht immer gern gesehen, blieb aber trotzdem während des Untersuchungszeitraumes bestehen. Patel hat damit für die Bundesrepublik etwas nachgewiesen, was bisher für die wenigsten Länder untersucht wurde – nämlich die Einflussnahme der Bauernverbände auf die europäische Einigung. Landwirtschaft als
wirklich maßgebliches Element der europäischen Einigungsprozesse ist nun Dank Patel am deutschen Beispiel endgültig etabliert.


Anne Rudelt
Doktorandin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin


Unter diesen Gegebenheiten sind die jüngsten Fortschritte in der italienischen Integrationsforschung, wie dieser Tagungsband bezeugen will, kaum zu übersehen. Schon die Teilnahme von vier ausgewiesenen ausländischen Fachexperten am Symposium bescheinigt die in den letzten Jahren zunehmende „Europäisierung“ der zeitgeschichtlichen italienischen Integrationsforschung. Was jedoch das Buch primär auszeichnet, sind die insgesamt zweiundzwanzig auf reichem internationalen Quellennmaterial fundierten Beiträge.


Um einen Gesamtüberblick über die italienische Europapolitik in den letzten fünfzig Jahren zu gewinnen, müsse man sich allerdings nicht nur mit den Grenzen
der italienischen Europapolitik, sondern auch mit den weniger erforschten Verdiens-
ten Italiens im Integrationsprozess auseinandersetzen. Dieser teilweise Anerkennung
reklamierende Ansatz findet seinen Niederschlag in den Beiträgen von Marinella Neri
Gualdesi und Elena Calandri. Auf der einen Seite hätten Persönlichkeiten wie Bettino
Craxi, Giulio Andreotti und Gianni De Michelis eine weichenstellende Rolle im Zu-
sammenhang mit den bedeutenden Fortschritten des Integrationsprozesses in den
1980er Jahren gespielt, während auf der anderen Seite der italienischen Regierung
wichtige Verdienste in der Ausgestaltung der europäischen Kooperations- und Ent-
vicklungspolitik in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren zugeschrieben würden, besonders
bezüglich ihrer geographischen Verstrickung in die Länder der dritten Welt.

Das zweite Untersuchungspaket ist dem Beitrag Italiens innerhalb der europä-
ischen Institutionen, insbesondere an der Ausgestaltung einzelner gemeinschaftlicher
Politikbereiche gewidmet. Die Beiträge von Giuseppe Ciavarini Azzi und Antonio
Varsori ermöglichen eine partielle Revision des negativen Urteils, wonach Italien in
der Kommission vorwiegend von untergeordneten, sogar inkompetenten Politikern
und Beamten vertreten worden sei. Dass Persönlichkeiten wie Bino Olivi, Giancarlo
Olmi, Paolo Cecchini oder Franco Maria Malfatti, Lorenzo Natali und Altiero Spinelli
europapolitische Erfolge versagt waren, führen beide Autoren auf eine mangelnde
Koordinierung zwischen Rom und den europäischen Institutionen zurück. Die Un-
tersuchung der Beteiligung an der europäischen Sozial- und Regionalpolitik (Lorenzo
Mechi) und an der europäischen Energiepolitik (Barbara Curli) bietet ebenfalls einen
originellen Gesichtspunkt. Im Mittelpunkt steht jedoch auch hier die Frage nach der
Bedeutung des italienischen Beitrages, während es sich vielleicht in diesem Zusam-
menhang auch gelohnt hätte andere Forschungsfragen zu thematisieren.

Das dritte Untersuchungsfeld zeigt, wie die Beschäftigung mit gesellschaftlichen
Kräften und wirtschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen ebenso notwendig ist wie die
Analyse der außenpolitischen Entscheidungsträger, um Motive und Bestimmungs-
faktoren der Europapolitik Italiens herauszuarbeiten. Dabei untersuchen Francesco
Petriti und Ruggiero Ranieri die Rolle der Industrie und der Unternehmenschaft und
Andrea Campani die der Gewerkschaften, während Roberto Gualtieri die komplexe
Wahl- bzw. Zwangbeziehung zwischen Italien und dem wirtschaftlichem Integrati-
onsprozess während ausgewählter Schlüsselmomente analysiert. Auch hier lässt die
Kosten-Nutzen-Analyse keinen Zweifel an der Richtigkeit der europäischen Ent-
scheidung; nicht alle Beiträge stimmen jedoch, auf Grund der vielen angebli-
en “verpassten Chancen”, der These der “Erfolgsgeschichte” zu.

Der vierte Teil wird unter der Überschrift “Die Europäisierung der italienischen
Politik” subsumiert. Hier setzen sich die einzelnen Beiträge hauptsächlich mit der
Frage auseinander, inwieweit die integrationspolitische Perspektive die italienische
Politik beeinflusst hat. Unter Rückgriff auf unveröffentlichte und veröffentlichte
Quellen, gelingt es Piero Craveri in seinem Beitrag den Mythos von “De Gasperi als
europäischem Föderalisten” zu widerlegen. Dabei zeigt der Autor, wie aus der Sicht
des Trentiner Staatsmannes Europa zunächst ein Mittel war, um zahlreiche Probleme
zweckmäßig und auf innovative Art und Weise zu lösen, ohne auf die Wahrung na-
tionaler Interessen zu verzichten. Eine ähnliche Einstellung teilte auch der bislang wenig erforschte italienische Europapolitiker Antonio Segni (Federico Scarano), sowie vermutlich auch andere Spitzenpolitiker der Democrazia Cristiana, deren Europaperspektiven allerdings auch von anderen politisch-kulturellen Orientierungen geprägt wurden, wie zum Beispiel der katholischen Ausrichtung (Guido Formigoni).

In diesem bilanzierendem Abriss der italienischen Europapolitik wären vielleicht Beiträge über die Rolle einzelner Parteien auch wünschenswert gewesen. Diese Lücke zu schließen stellt letztendlich auch eine der dringlichsten Aufgaben der zeitgeschichtlichen Integrationsforschung dar. Am Ende der Lektüre erscheint das Europapolitische Italienbild dennoch mythenfreier, wesentlich komplexer, differenzierter, und daher vielleicht auch unsicherer.

Gabriele D’Ottavio
Università di Bologna


The rejection by France and Holland of the referendum on the European Constitution (2005), and that of Ireland of the Lisbon Treaty (2008), brought a halt to the process of European integration and was interpreted by many parties as a ‘crisis’ in Europe. Wide reflection followed, on both the origins and measures needed to overcome this. Paolo Garonna, an economist with professional experience in international organisations, (OCSE and ONU as executive vice-secretary of the European Economic Commission) contributes to such reflection by proposing an original argument which strongly leans towards the historical perspective.

The volume consists of 15 chapters, preceded by a brief introduction of the author and followed by a bibliographical array.

Garonna kicks off his reflections by introducing some components of the European ‘crisis’ and researching some of the causes (chapter 1). The crisis is shown in a triple dimension: Economic-Productive (low economic growth due to low productivity and therefore limited competitiveness); Institutional (the incapacity of political advancement in the process of European integration); Value Based (the difficulty in defining a European identity). The causes are dealt with from four angles: reaffirming prerogatives of national states and in consequence a strong reluctance to transfer national sovereign expertise to community level (such as foreign politics and security); the tendency to proceed with integration – not via gradual and incremental long-term reform but via what the author describes as ‘a revolutionary method’ or rather an acceleration of the forces of predetermined relationships from the top down; the slowing-down and in certain cases, the inversion of the process of freeing the economy which had represented a guarantee against excessive state intervention and as
such, in favour of increased participation of the various components of civil society – from the individual to businesses via the various organisations representing economic and social interests which lie in conjunction with citizens and institutions; finally in the failed concretization of some of the values founded in the European cultures, and in particular those connected to equal opportunities between men and women.

Garonna individuates in a group of intellectuals reunited in the castle of Coppet (Vaud, Switzerland) between 1780 and 1820 a source of inspiration for overcoming these obstacles (Chapter 2). He observes that a certain similarity exists in the questions which the Coppet group faced and those which he recognises at the base of the ‘European crisis’. At the centre of their reflections was the common aversion to Europe which had been taking shape since the French Revolution and then with the Napoleonic era and in particular to the centralization and intervention of the Nation-States, as well as to the revolution itself which is seen as an instrument for change in the existing system of institution. The group was created around Madame de Stael and was supported by the multidisciplinary contributions of Jaques Necker, Benjamin Constant, Jean Charles Sismonde of Sismondi and August Wilhelm Schlegel.

What validates the Coppet group’s personal dynamics starts with a description of the professional experience of Necker (Madame de Stael’s father), a banker and subsequent successful controversialist, then a man of government who played a relevant role in the direction of France’s finances in the decades which preceded the French Revolution (chapter 3). His approach to financial rehabilitation was to suggest a guideline to put reform into practice. This method is based on the clarity of public policies (above all public accounts), on the involvement of public opinion, on effective administration as well as on the responsibility of class leaders.

The author continues with an analysis of the definitions of the principles of liberalism which the Coppet group developed as a reaction to the absolutist degeneration of the French Revolution (chapters 4-5). In particular the principles which address discussions on the construction of Europe were: the constitution should be ‘historic’ (or rather built on progressive adjustments, experiences of fate, using the English constitution as an example) and “minimum” (or rather fixed on general principles); rights and individual freedom should be guaranteed against the power of the state; the exercise of power should be recognised as executive as opposed to legislative (based on the model of the English monarchy and of the federal states of the United States); the decentralisation of power, through conjunctive roles carried out by the levels of regional local government, to guarantee the safeguard of local communities.

A model of both economy and society is further outlined in the writings of the Coppet group (chapters 6-9). In particular, the relevance of economic growth is emphasised as an instrument of control over poverty and the simultaneous need for social reform in order to lessen the effects of capitalist development and to create conditions which sustain economic development. Some aspects are identified as essential and necessary to accomplish economic growth. Among these are social mobility and the control of the pension culture as well as the actionable privileges through the pro-
motion of education, (Adrienne Albertine Necker of Saussure and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi). In addition, there is emphasis on the fundamental role of private initiative in production activities and active rather than interventional policies (of local authorities rather than central government) to support employment (Necker). Lastly, economic growth requires an enhancement of freedom of the economy and the market (Sismonde of Sismondi).

The accomplishment of reform requests administrative transparency and efficiency. In particular, the decentralisation of power at local level is seen as a rational way to pursue these objectives (chapters 10-11).

In the Coppet group’s perspective, the family plays a key role (chapter 12). The family is central to the accumulation of wealth, which in turn guides economic growth and development. But above all, the conception of the ‘family’ is based on an advanced vision of equality between men and women and on women’s liberation.

Finally, in his examination of the Coppet group’s reflections, the author considers the conception of nations (chapter 13). What emerges is a rejection of nationalism and the prevalence of the idea of the nation as a historical cultural expression as well as in the territory of the population. The institutional framework which would promote national development must therefore enhance its originality and contrast the tendencies of uniformity which the centralisation of institutions may bring. Strong criticism emerges of the professional politicians who exploit national sentiment for power as well as criticism of international regulations of Nation States founded on the principles of nationalism.

Garonna observes that in the process of building Europe, there are aspects which recognise and recall the contributions of the Coppet group. The European project was founded in the second post-war period, not on the basis of particular conflicts between political parties and the project proceeded according to an incremental logic. It has progressively limited and bound the power of National States, in favour of private autonomy and individual freedom. The intergovernmental method has often been demonstrated as weak and inefficient. Nevertheless, there have been immediate counterpart processes which have risen from society (for example international exchange programmes in the educational field) and from local and territorial economy (such as small and average sized businesses which have shown a strong competitive capacity, aimed at research and development of new products and technology, experimenting in new forms of collaboration). The European institutions should therefore know how to interpret these spontaneous forces and enhancing their processes.

To conclude, the historical perspective gives originality and validity to the author’s arguments. On the one hand it can be seen as a reference instrument to examine critical aspects of the top down European process of construction. On the other hand, it is a source of inspiration to follow on the road to integration.
Europa existierte jahrhundertelang als Mythos, als geographischer Raum, als Idee, als Quelle für Identität. Schon lange bestand der Gedanke, dass es notwendig ist, die politischen Kräfte in Europa zu vereinigen, sei es durch einen Vertrag, eine Gründungscharta oder eine Verfassung.

Dieser Gedanke findet sich zuerst bei Dante, und von da an setzte sich die Suche über die Jahrhunderte fort bis in die Zeit nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, als die Gründungsverträge der Europäischen Gemeinschaft und danach der Europäischen Union in eine konkrete Form gegossen wurden. Während dieser gesamten Zeitspanne befassten sich Denker sehr unterschiedlicher Provenienz mit der Frage, wie Frieden und Versöhnung auf dem europäischen Kontinent einkehren könnten, und verfassten entsprechende Schriften.

Mit diesem Buch sollen die Versuche zur tatsächlichen Ausgestaltung dieser ambitionierten Vision als ein wenig bekannter Teil der europäischen Geschichte nachgezeichnet werden. Dabei wird deutlich, dass das Ziel eines befriedeten Europas weit in die Geschichte zurückreichende Ursprünge hat und dass viele der zur Verwirklichung dieses Ziels vorgetragenen Ideen die Europäische Union in ihrer heutigen Gestalt im Kern schon in sich trugen.
PHD Theses – Thèses de doctorat – Doktorarbeiten


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This doctoral thesis is an original research dealing with the relations between the Italian and French Left – namely, the PCI, the PSI, the PCF and the PSF – and the opposition within the Soviet bloc (the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Poland), between 1968 and 1981. The study is based on an extensive archival research and private papers in more than eighteen archives, in Italy, France and the United Kingdom. The research has been completed by a broad analysis of the Italian, French and British press, as well as interviews with the main protagonists of that period. The Western Left’s attitude towards Eastern dissents is used as a mirror through which the dialogue between the two Europes, focusing on the identities of the considered parties, is analyzed in order to understand their ideological evolution, their political strategies and their cultural development. Moreover, the double comparative approach allows, on the one hand, stressing the changing relationship within the Western European workers’ movement; and, on the other, to analyze the diverse answers to, and domestic use of the topic of the Eastern opposition. The research has been developed around five issues: the Czechoslovakian normalization and the Polish crisis at the beginning of the 1970s; the Helsinki agreement and the Soviet dissidents’ excellent cases; the Euro-communism and the Euro-socialism in confrontation; the political and cultural reassessment of the ‘real socialism’; the Polish issue at the beginning of the 1980s.

The thesis re-conceptualizes the conventional analysis of the Western Left’s behaviour towards the Eastern dissents, making a significant contribution to the re-evaluation of their relations with the Eastern ruling class. It stresses the ambiguities of the PCI compared with the persistent orthodox attitude of the PCF, and focuses on the Realpolitik of the French Socialists and the pro-dissidents evolution of the PSI. It argues that détente became a myth among the Western Left, impeding – rather than promoting – the dialogue between the two blocs. The study casts new light on the identities of the Western Left, making a significant contribution to overcoming the limits of the traditional diplomatic history approach.

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European integration constitutes a new form of peaceful unification of a continent. To explain this process appropriately historians need innovative theoretical concepts. However, at the moment integration historiography is marked by a substantial lack of theory. This lack of theory is the point of departure of the thesis. It firstly analyses the theoretical foundations of European integration. From an interdisciplinary perspective the thesis then develops a concept drawing on the theoretical basis of integration history. This concept of a “historiographical narration in episodes” (Peter Pichler) considers the unification of Europe as an extensive cooperation and transformation process. In this process various spheres of transformation (such as the political, economical, cultural, social, legal, religious spheres, etc.) intertwine and form a complex network. The thesis argues that in a historical narrative it is most useful to present the entirety of these aspects as a “historiographical network of episodes” which corresponds with the spheres of transformation. This new theory should be utilized by historians as a new metaperspective and methodological working instrument. This metaperspective was developed first by reflecting on the research which has been carried out to date and by analysing this discourse critically. Particular attention was paid to include Eastern and South-Eastern European as well as Turkish perspectives.

Secondly, the thesis isolated theoretical elements of the latest developments of integration and historical theory which were deemed able to contribute to an innovative renewal of research perspectives. Hence, the concept of a historiographical narration in episodes developed in the thesis combines elements of political, social, economic, legal and cultural sciences to form an interdisciplinary theory.
In der vorliegenden Studie wird erstmalig der Frage nachgegangen, in welchen Zusammenhängen und mit welchen inhaltlichen Schwerpunktsetzungen sich der Europarat seit Ende der 1990er Jahre mit den nationalsozialistischen Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit auseinandersetzt. Damit wird die bislang hauptsächlich essayistische Auseinandersetzung mit europäischer Holocausterinnerungspolitik um eine systematische Forschungsarbeit ergänzt.


The European Investment Bank (EIB) was created on March 25th, 1957, by the treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC), in order to contribute to the balanced development of the common market. Its working capital and funds raised on capital markets allowed it to participate in investments directly linked to the set-up of the common market and pursuing three main missions: contributing to the development of economically underdeveloped Community regions, facilitating modernization, conversion of companies and creation of new activities and lastly supporting projects that are in the common interest of member states.

Hence the EIB action fits in with the overall set of efforts made to integrate the European economies. Its role in the construction of the economic Europe and its links with other European institutions and member states was largely unexplored by historians. This thesis fills the gap; it deals with the debates about the EIB’s creation in the 1950s until the early 1980s, when Greece entered the common market. More specifically, it focuses on the case of France, which then greatly benefited from the bank’s loans. The thesis studies the debates that were triggered by the definition of the role and missions of the bank, their evolution and application, in the national and European spheres, and within the frame of association agreements signed with overseas and Mediterranean countries. The thesis thus opens up new perspectives on Europe’s economic integration that are at the crossroad of several types of history: an history of Europe’s economic construction, an history of international relations and an history of Community institutions.
Nicolas STENGER, Les intellectuels et l’identité européenne en débat. Le parcours et l’œuvre de Denis de Rougemont – Cotutelle Université Paris 8-Vincennes-Saint-Denis et Université de Genève

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La thèse précise le cheminement intellectuel et militant de l’écrivain suisse Denis de Rougemont (1906-1985) après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, sachant que sa vie s’est dès lors confondue avec la cause de l’union fédérale européenne. Acteur de premier plan lors des congrès de Montreux (1947), La Haye (1948) et Lausanne (1949), Rougemont fonda en 1950 à Genève le Centre européen de la culture (CEC), où il tenta de mener, en autonomie vis-à-vis des gouvernements et malgré des moyens financiers limités, une action en profondeur de réforme des mentalités, accompagnant mais aussi critiquant l’œuvre accomplie par les artisans officiels de la construction européenne. Alors que le lecteur dispose de nombreuses études concernant l’itinéraire de l’écrivain avant la guerre, son parcours européen n’a encore fait l’objet d’aucune approche historique globale, lacune que notre travail essaie partiellement de combler grâce à l’exploitation d’archives inédites déposées en Suisse à Coppet, près de Genève (fonds du CEC), et à Neuchâtel (fonds Denis de Rougemont) notamment.

Dans une perspective comparative, les positions de Rougemont sont par ailleurs confrontées à celles d’autres intellectuels autour desquels se sont polarisés les débats après la guerre, et qui, partisans ou hostiles à la construction européenne, ont exprimé à tel ou tel moment une certaine idée de l’Europe et de la culture européenne. En interrogant la notion d’engagement de l’intellectuel à travers l’itinéraire particulier de l’écrivain suisse, la thèse tente de montrer les interactions possibles entre l’œuvre politique, philosophique, littéraire, et l’énergie mobilisée par l’action européenne sous toutes ses formes. Elle souligne l’évolution, la précision progressive et la clarification du projet européen de Rougemont, ainsi que le problème de sa réception sur la scène intellectuelle et politique. Outre un essai sur l’Europe et ses problèmes de définition et de finalités, il s’agit d’une mise en perspective historique d’un homme en prise avec son temps, avec d’autres hommes et leurs idées.
Standardisierung und Integration europäischer Verkehrsinfrastruktur in historischer Perspektive

Herausgegeben von Gerold Ambrosius, Christian Henrich-Franke, Cornelius Neutsch und Guido Thiemeyer


Mit diesem Sammelband erfolgt ein Einstieg in die historische Forschung zur Standardisierung und Integration von Infrastrukturen in Europa. Thematisiert werden sowohl erfolgreiche Beispiele von Standardisierung als auch gescheiterte Projekte.

Liberale vs. institutionelle Integration von Wirtschaftspolitiken in Europa

Das 19. und 20. Jahrhundert im systematischen und historischen Vergleich
Von Gerold Ambrosius


Im vorliegenden Band werden die nicht-kooperativen und kooperativen Integrationswege von Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitiken in Europa miteinander verglichen.

Europäische Integration und Wettbewerbspolitik

Die Früphase der EWG
Von Sibylle Hambloch


Die Studie zeigt auf, inwiefern es trotz unterschiedlicher nationaler ordnungspolitischer Traditionen und Interessen gelang, Strukturen, Prozesse und Inhalte einer gemeinschaftlichen Wettbewerbspolitik in der EWG zu entwickeln.

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Mit dem Beitritt zur Europäischen Gemeinschaft (EG) 1986 positionierte Ministerpräsident Felipe González Spanien scheinbar selbstverständlich neben Deutschland und Frankreich als Teil des Motors der Europäischen Integration. Doch mit dem Regierungswechsel 1996 definierte José María Aznar Spaniens Rolle in Europa und der Welt neu und sah die spanische Führungsposition in der EU nun an der Seite Großbritanniens. Während die Beziehungen zum gesamten amerikanischen Kontinent eine signifikante Aufwertung erfuhr, wurden Deutschland und Frankreich zunehmend zum Ziel spanischer Kritik.


Den Abschluss der Untersuchung bildet eine Bewertung der Rolle Spaniens in der EU.

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Abstracts – Résumés – Zusammenfassungen

Archie Brown
Margaret Thatcher and Perceptions of Change in the Soviet Union

The author explores the varied advice Margaret Thatcher received on the Soviet Union and the development of her perceptions of the possibility of radical change emanating from Moscow. Her distrust of the Foreign Office as an institution made her receptive to briefings from informal advisers, although those she received from a circle of political supporters and from academic specialists differed markedly. Mrs Thatcher’s first meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev at Chequers in December 1984 was important for both sides, but it was her own visit to the Soviet Union in March 1987 which put her firmly in the camp of those who believed that the Soviet perestroika was of immense significance. Brown uses Cabinet Office and Foreign Office documents, released under the Freedom of Information Act, and transcripts of Thatcher-Gorbachev meetings obtained from the Gorbachev Foundation in Moscow, to document the development of this political relationship. Among the archival material used is the previously untapped transcript of the conversation between Thatcher and Gorbachev at Brize Norton on 7 December 1987 during Gorbachev’s brief UK stopover on his way to the Washington summit meeting with President Ronald Reagan.

Margaret Thatcher et la perception des changements en Union Soviétique

L’auteur examine les différents conseils que Margaret Thatcher recevait sur l’Union Soviétique et la façon dont elle percevait la possibilité d’un changement radical orchestré à Moscou. Sa méfiance à l’égard du Foreign Office en tant qu’institution la rendait sensible aux avis de conseillers informels, quoique les opinions de ceux-ci différaient largement selon qu’ils étaient issus des milieux politiques proches du Premier ministre ou qu’ils émanaient de spécialistes recrutés dans les milieux académiques. La première entrevue du chef du gouvernement britannique avec Mikhail Gorbachev en Décembre 1984 au Chequers était important pour les deux côtés, mais c’était sa propre visite en Union Soviétique en mars 1987 qui amena Thatcher à se ranger pour de bon dans la camp de ceux qui croyaient en la force profonde de la perestroïka soviétique. Dans le but de documenter la naissance de la relation particulière entre Thatcher et Gorbachev, Brown se sert à la fois de documents du Cabinet Office et du Foreign Office, déclassés grâce à la loi sur la liberté d’information, et des transcriptions de la Gorbachev Foundation à Moscou qui conserve les procès-verbaux des rencontres au sommet. Ce matériel archivistique comprend aussi et notamment la transcription non encore exploitée d’une conversation à Brize Norton, le 7 décembre 1987, lorsque Gorbachev, sur son chemin à Washington où il avait été invité par le président Reagan, fit une courte escale en Grande-Bretagne pour se concerter avec Margaret Thatcher.
Margaret Thatcher and the Evaluation of Change in the Soviet Union

The author examines the various pieces of advice that Margaret Thatcher received concerning the Soviet Union and how her view of a possible radical change in Moscow further developed. Her mistrust of the Foreign Office as an official institution led her to follow the teachings of informal advisors, depending on whether they were from the circle of political supporters of the prime minister or from the academic experts. Margaret Thatcher's first meeting with Michael Gorbachev in December 1984 at Chequers was important for both sides, but it was ultimately her own visit to the Soviet Union in March 1987 that led her to resolutely align herself with those who believed in the immense significance of Soviet perestroika. Files of the Cabinet Office and the Foreign Office, which are now accessible due to the Freedom of Information Act, as well as transcriptions of Thatcher-Gorbachev meetings kept in the Gorbachev Foundation in Moscow, enable Brown to chart the political relationship between the British prime minister and the Soviet leader. The author also draws on little-used material, such as the meeting report of Brize Norton on 7 December 1987, when Gorbachev stopped en route to Washington to meet the American President Reagan.

Rodric Braithwaite
Gorbachev and Thatcher

Margaret Thatcher played a significant but limited role in East-West relations in the last decade of the Soviet Union. She had her own vision of how East-West relations should be shaped. She was not prepared to accept the status quo, and she was one of the first Western politicians to give public support for liberal change in Eastern Europe. In the 1980s she played an important role in reopening up communications with the Soviet Union at a time when they were in difficulty. But the serious negotiation of change was conducted not by her, but by the American President and the German Chancellor.

Gorbachev et Thatcher

Durant la dernière décennie de l'Union soviétique, Margaret Thatcher jouait un rôle significatif, mais limité, dans les relations Est-Ouest. Elle avait développé ses propres visions sur la manière dont ces relations devraient être façonnées. Elle n'était pas prête à accepter le statu quo et elle comptait parmi les premiers chefs de gouvernements occidentaux qui publiquement soutenaient le changement libéral en Europe de l'Est. Pendant les années 1980, elle assumait la tâche importante de rouvrir les communications quand le dialogue avec Moscou était en panne. Mais les vraies
négociations génératrices des bouleversements en cours n'étaient pas dirigées par elle; celles-là furent du ressort du président américain et du chancelier allemand.

**Gorbatschow und Thatcher**

Margaret Thatcher spielte eine bedeutende, aber beschränkte Rolle in den Ost-West-Beziehungen während den zehn letzten Jahren der Sowjetunion. Sie hatte ihre eigenen Vorstellungen über die Art und Weise wie sich diese Beziehungen gestalten sollten. Sie war nicht bereit den Status quo zu akzeptieren, und sie zählte zu den ersten Regierungschefs im Westen, die den liberalisierenden Wandel in Osteuropa öffentlich unterstützt. In den achtziger Jahren, wenn die Kommunikation mit der UdSSR sich schwierig gestaltete, gewährleistete sie die Aufrechterhaltung des Dialogs mit Moskau. An den wesentlichen Verhandlungen die die Welt veränderten hatte sie aber nicht teil; letztere wurden vom amerikanischen Präsidenten und vom deutschen Bundeskanzler geleitet.

**Grachev Andrei**

**Gorbachev-Thatcher – an exceptional “political romance”**

Thanks to the hazard of political history the British Prime Minister became the only major Western leader who met the atypical future Soviet General Secretary even before he was officially elected to this position. For Margaret Thatcher this meeting reflected her desire to look ahead for the post-Chernenko era trying to guess who could become the new ruler of the Soviet state. For Gorbachev the main foreign policy goal of the visit to Great Britain was to transmit to the Soviet Union’s Western partners the willingness of the new generation of Soviet political leaders to put an end to an epoch of a sterile and dangerous confrontation.

Their first meeting in London in December 1984 marked the beginning of an exceptional political complicity of two outstanding leaders based on mutual respect, perhaps even admiration, the understanding of the specific role of each in the delicate process of overcoming the legacy of cold war and the singular chemistry in personal contacts that showed the striking similarity of characters despite all the contrast of ideological convictions.

**Gorbatchev-Thatcher – une “romance politique” exceptionnelle**

Grâce au hasard de l'histoire politique, le Premier ministre britannique a été le seul leader important du monde occidental à avoir rencontré le futur Secrétaire général atypique de l'Union soviétique avant même que celui-ci ne fût officiellement élu à ses fonctions. Pour Margaret Thatcher cette entrevue reflétait son envie de préparer l'ére post-Chernenko en essayant de deviner qui pourrait devenir le prochain numéro un à Moscou. Pour Gorbatchev le principal but diplomatique de son voyage en Grande-Bretagne consistait à signaler aux partenaires occidentaux de l'URSS la
disposition de la nouvelle génération des leaders politiques soviétiques à mettre un terme à la confrontation dangereuse et stérile.

La première rencontre en décembre 1984 à Londres marquait le début d'une complicité politique exceptionnelle entre deux hommes d'Etat éminents. Leur relation était fondée sur le respect mutuel, peut-être même sur l'admiration l'un pour l'autre, une sage compréhension du rôle spécifique de chacun dans cette délicatesse requise par la gestion de l'héritage de la Guerre froide et une chimie particulière des contacts personnels qui révèlent de frappantes similitudes entre leurs caractères et ce, en dépit de tous les contrastes notés au niveau des convictions idéologiques.

Gorbatschow-Thatcher – eine außergewöhnliche “politische Romanze”

Der Zufall der Geschichte wollte, dass die britische Premierministerin die einzige führende politische Persönlichkeit der westlichen Welt war, die dem atypischen zukünftigen Generalsekretär der KPdSU begegnet war noch bevor dieser offiziell in sein Amt eingeführt worden war. Bei Margaret Thatcher entsprach diese Zusammenkunft ihrem Drang etwas über die Ära nach Chernenko in Erfahrung zu bringen, insbesondere wer denn nun der neue starke Mann in Moskau sein würde. Für Gorbatschow bestand der Hauptgrund seines Besuchs in Großbritannien darin, den westlichen Partnern der Sowjetunion klarzumachen, dass die neue Generation der sowjetischen politischen Führungselite bestrebt war, die sterile und gefährliche Konfrontation des Kalten Krieges zu beenden.

Das erste Treffen fand im Dezember 1984 in London statt. Es legte den Grundstein für ein außergewöhnlich politisches Einverständnis zweier herausragender Staatsmänner die sich gegenseitig respektierten, ja sogar vielleicht bewunderten. Trotz aller Unterschiede bezüglich ihrer ideologischen Überzeugungen, stimmte die persönliche Chemie zwischen beiden, die in ihren persönlichen Begegnungen stets größtes Verständnis für die Rolle des jeweils anderen aufbrachten, wenn es dabei um die heikle Frage der Bewältigung des Erbes aus dem Ost-West-Konflikt ging.

Stephen WALL
Making the Single Market. Witness Remarks

This paper argues that today’s European Union looks closer to the British concept than did the Europe of the 1980s, i.e. a Union in which political and economic integration happens organically more than by great institutional leaps forward. It also offers an insight view of Margaret Thatcher’s resistance to treaty change arguing that it was not born of scepticism so much as a realistic assessment of British public and parliamentary opinion. According to this interpretation, to fulfil the existing Treaty - including the completion of the single market - resisting all moves towards political union and making use of existing institutions to achieve pragmatic, flexible cooperation, were aims at the core of Thatcher’s strategy. Finally, this analysis looks at the
UK campaign for the Single Market and its implementation as a test case of the interaction between Thatcher’s agenda and the European project.

La création du Marché unique. Remarques d’un témoin

La contribution prétend que – à l’encontre de la Communauté des années 1980 – l’Union européenne actuelle correspond davantage aux conceptions britanniques, c’est-à-dire une union au sein de laquelle l’intégration politique et économique s’opère organiquement plutôt qu’à travers des rebondissements institutionnels. L’article offre en même temps un regard intérieur sur la résistance opposée par Margaret Thatcher à la modification des traités en argumentant que celle-ci ne résultait pas tellement d’un scepticisme, mais d’une appréciation réaliste des opinions publique et parlementaire en Grande-Bretagne. Selon cette interprétation l’exécution du traité existant – y compris l’achèvement du Marché unique – placèrent au centre des objectifs de la stratégie du Premier ministre la résistance à tout mouvement vers une union politique ainsi que le maintien d’une coopération pragmatique et flexible moyennant les institutions existantes. L’analyse porte finalement sur la campagne britannique pour le Marché unique et son instauration comme un test de l’interaction entre le programme politique de Thatcher et le projet européen.

Die Schaffung des Europäischen Binnenmarktes. Ein Augenzeugenbericht

Carola Cerami

The Open Society and “British Soft Power” in Central/Eastern Europe at the End of Cold War

The central aim of this essay is to highlight the role played by prominent thinkers of Central Eastern European origins, such as Ralf Dahrendorf and Ernest Gellner, in promoting and discussing liberal ideas beyond the Iron Curtain during the crucial years 1985 to 1995. In so doing, they elaborated the concept of Open Society, participated to the debate on liberalisation in Central and Eastern Europe and actively engaged in the process which finally made it possible. Accordingly, the principal objective of this work is to highlight the most significant cultural initiatives originating in Britain and promoted under the banner of the Open Society. British liberalism exercised a “power of cultural attraction”, which can be described as an example of “Soft Power”. It was a small but significant test case of the power of ideas in the process leading to the end of the Cold War.

La Société ouverte et la «Soft Power» britannique en Europe centrale et orientale à la fin de la Guerre Froide


Die Offene Gesellschaft und britische Soft Power in Zentral- und Osteuropa am Ende des Kalten Krieges

This article argues that the making of national *Westpolitik* in Eastern Europe during the Khrushchev years, had a long term impact on the shaping of West European *Ostpolitik*. The central aim of this essay is to appraise the encouragement which Polish *Westpolitik* received from a gradually more consistent British *Ostpolitik* during the 1970s. Equally central to this narrative is the choice of the British government to increase commercial and cultural cooperation with Poland, once the improvement of bilateral relations with the Soviet Union were under way, so to contribute to the opening of the country. Archival and published sources together with a reflection on recent trends in historiography, have been behind this appraisal of British *Ostpolitik* as a dynamic diplomacy, responding and relaunching the process of liberalization in Poland.

La *Ostpolitik* britannique et la *Westpolitik* polonaise: un stimulant réciproque de la détente

Cet article argumente que l’émergence des *Westpolitik* nationales en Europe de l’Est pendant les années de Khrouchtchev a durablement influencé la formation de l’*Ostpolitik* pratiquée en Europe de l’Ouest. Le but principal de cet essai consiste à évaluer les développements que la *Westpolitik* polonaise a connus dans la foulée de l’*Ostpolitik* britannique de plus en plus active à partir des années 1970. Au centre de l’analyse se situe également la décision du gouvernement britannique d’amplifier la coopération commerciale et culturelle avec la Pologne. Après avoir amélioré ses relations avec l’Union soviétique, Londres a ainsi largement contribué à l’ouverture internationale de la Pologne. La présente appréciation de l’*Ostpolitik* britannique comme ayant été une diplomatie dynamique et stimulante du processus de libéralisation en Pologne repose sur des sources d’archives tantôt inédites tantôt publiées; elle tient compte en outre des nouvelles orientations mises en avant par l’historiographie récente.

Die britische *Ostpolitik* und die polnische *Westpolitik*: eine Diplomatie der wechselseitigen Einflussnahme

Der Beitrag vertritt die Auffassung, dass die Entfaltung der nationalen Westpolitiken in Osteuropa während der Chruschtschow Ära einen maßgeblichen Einfluss auf die Gestaltung der westeuropäischen Ostpolitik nahm. Zentral behandelt wird u.a. die Frage in wie weit die während den 1970er Jahren stets aktiver werdende britische Ostpolitik die Entfaltung der polnischen Westpolitik vorantrieb. Nachdem zunächst die bilateralen Beziehungen zur Sowjetunion verbessert worden waren, leistete die
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Der Vertrag von Lissabon ist in Kraft.

Mit dem Vertrag von Lissabon beschließt die EU ihren langjährigen internen Reformprozess. Die Autoren des Bandes kommentieren den Vertrag anhand der Struktur des neuen EU-Vertrags, dessen einzelne Titel den jeweiligen Analysen in Gänze vorangestellt sind.


Bisweilen entsteht aber auch ein ganz anderer Eindruck, so dass sich insgesamt ein sehr differenziertes, wenn auch stellenweise ambivalentes Bild des neuen europäischen Primärrechts ergibt.

Das Beiheft will diesen Fragen nachgehen und so eine Gesamteinschätzung des Urteils aus der Perspektive der Europarechtswissenschaft vorlegen.
Die EU ist wieder handlungsfähig!

Am 1. Dezember 2009 ist der Vertrag von Lissabon endlich in Kraft getreten! Der vorliegende Kommentar zeichnet nicht nur die Entstehungsgeschichte des Vertrags nach und erläutert die einzelnen Änderungen des EU-Primärrechts, sondern stellt in dieser zweiten Auflage auch den komplexen Ratifikationsprozess dar. Überdies wird erstmals für Wissenschaft und Praxis die konkrete Umsetzung des Reformvertrags detailliert vorgestellt, so beispielsweise die Neuerungen durch die Einführung eines Europäischen Auswärtigen Dienstes, die Einführung des ordentlichen Gesetzgebungsverfahrens, und die neuen Organe und Funktionsträger der Union.


Der neue und erweiterte „Fischer“ wird dieses Mal Wissenschaft und Praxis auf den aktuellen Stand des europäischen Vertragsrechts bringen.