



## Perestroika and the Empire

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**W**hen Moscow sneezes Eastern Europe catches cold. In the Gorbachev era, the mind of the "other Europe" is still plagued by the memory of 1956, when the long and difficult succession of Stalin had created a general situation of uncertainty in the Soviet Bloc. Only six months after the famous XX CPSU "destalinization" Congress of 1956, Khrushchev was obliged to face the Polish October and the Hungarian Revolution.

Before his accession to power, Gorbachev had no experience of Eastern Europe, but he certainly had at the forefront of his mind Khrushchev's experience when assessing the possible repercussions of his attempt at reforming Soviet society on the periphery of the Empire. Out of this came a dilemma that can be synthesised in the question of how to develop and even accelerate *perestroika* in the Soviet Union while avoiding an uncontrolled skidding in Central and Eastern Europe that would endanger the *perestroika* itself. This question is the basis of our interpretation of Gorbachev's impact, through, on the one side the analysis of the different reactions (official or popular) in the various satellite countries and of their objective situation, and on the other side, the analysis of the unavoidable tensions between the need to reform the system and the constraints of managing an Empire.

### Dissonances

The variety of East European reactions to the changes underway in the USSR mirrors the variety of specific local situations and the ensuing consequence, evolution and sometimes inversion of the nature of the relationship between Moscow and its allies. Two paradoxes illustrate well the result of Gorbachev's new initiative. General Jaruzelski's enthusiasm has no equal: "The historical changes underway in Moscow", he says, "are breathtaking" for the Poles<sup>1</sup>.

And he adds that the Polish Party "was taking the same path" and giving its "full support to Gorbachev's new strategy against the lazy, the stiff necked dignitaries, the political sclerosis and reciprocally to strengthen the honest, hard working, industrious and simple people in their convictions". But it is probably Rakowski, member of the Politburo and very close aide of Jaruzelski who has expressed the quintessence of the Poles' attitudes: "For the first time after the War, what takes place in the USSR has acquired, thanks to Gorbachev, a positive connotation in Polish society. This is a new situation, which also has relevance for the credibility of our Party in the population"<sup>2</sup>. In other words, and this is no small irony, the Polish Party relies on its identification with the Soviets in order to legitimize itself at home.

Another paradox, this time in Prague, is that after twenty years of all out "normalization" in the name of unconditional allegiance and fidelity to the Soviet Union, the Czech regime happens to be, for the first time, out of step with the present reform policies preached by the Kremlin. To such an extent that the leading article of the Party's daily paper censored, from Gorbachev's speech at the Plenum of January 1987, the conclusions on the need for secret ballot and multiple candidatures in the elections for party positions. Not a word either on the need to respect laws and to exercise more control over the Police. And just in case anybody entertained doubts in the back of their mind about the Czechs, V. Bilak, in charge of relations between the Czech Party and the "fraternal countries", pointed out not much later, that a "rehabilitation" of the "Prague Spring" in the wake of *perestroika* (as hoped by Dubcek's defeated followers) is out of the question<sup>3</sup>.

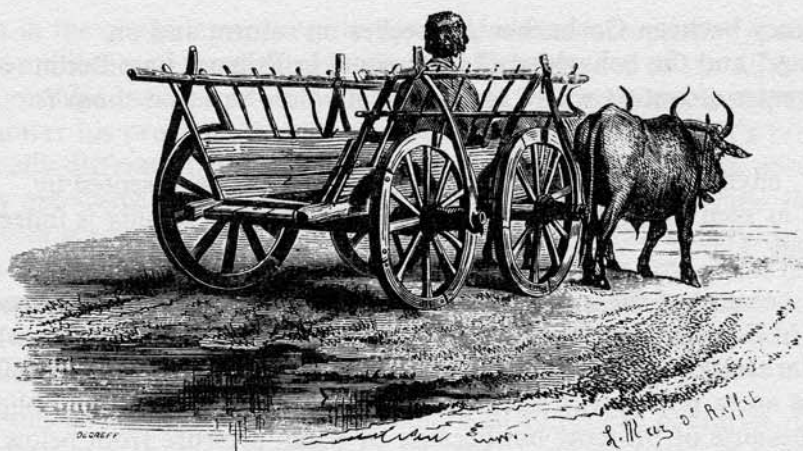
Bilak also argued the case for an inverted version of the theory of "national paths to socialism", which had been used in the past as a reproach to the leaders of the "Prague Spring" of 1968. This enabled Lubomir Strougal, the Prime Minister and leader of the moderates, to ironically comment on those newly converted to the theory of specific national paths. Referring to "those who wish to limit to the USSR alone the relevance of the CPSU experience", he stresses that these opinions come from the same people that, until recently, accepted a degree of national specificity only when it was well within the framework of a common general approach. "While they used to consider the pool of common characteristics an absolute value, now for a change they try to make particularity an absolute principle. One might be forgiven for wondering if this attitude is not just an attempt to hide their reticence to change anything at all of the basis of our Czech experience"<sup>4</sup>. Difficult to put it better!

The Polish and Czech paradoxes show how widely the reactions diverge from

country to country. The Hungarian Party supports Gorbachev's policy, but does not show Jaruzelski's enthusiasm. It is a measured support coming from a mixture of caution and satisfaction for being, for the first time in twenty years, finally on the same wave length as Moscow.

East German reticence is a mixture of conservatism and self satisfaction. As with the Czech party press, *Neues Deutschland* had censored the speech delivered by Gorbachev on January 28, 1987, but less than a month later (February 23, 1987) translated and published with great prominence, the article by Bilak referred to above. An article which can be described as a cry of desperation from the ultra conservative exponents of the Czech leadership. Overall, the East German position can be summed up in three points. 1) Since Gorbachevian enthusiasts in Moscow do not tire of repeating that there is no longer a model to be imitated, East Germany should not be afraid to assert the self evident fact that "if your neighbour replaces his wall paper this is no reason for you to follow suit", as Kurt Hager - the master ideologue in East Berlin - has put it<sup>5</sup>. To which the editor of the journal of the Communist youths *Junge Welt* has added: "the Soviet Union has won great historical merit for having defeated Hitler and winning the War, but as far as technology and progress is concerned, it is no model to us"<sup>6</sup>. 2) The *perestroika* is certainly necessary to improve the failing economy of the USSR, but it would be superfluous in the GDR, since the necessary changes have already been introduced, and there is no need to seek success already achieved. As Honecker pointed out at the Trade Unions Conference, "there is no need to change a winning economic system"<sup>7</sup>. 3) As far as *glasnost* is concerned, it has still to be proven that political liberalisation and economic performance have to proceed along parallel paths. Actually, the East German case tends even to suggest that the opposite could be the case.

In Romania one has to speak not of reticence but of outright refusal. Not, as one might think, a refusal in the name of the exasperated nationalism of a country which cannot bear to look outside its own boundaries for inspiration, but rather a refusal in the name of the purity of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the "Invincible principle of Scientific Socialism". Referring to Gorbachev's reforms, Ceausescu in a speech delivered - as was to be expected - on the occasion of his birthday asserts: "It is unthinkable that a revolutionary party could say 'we are going to let enterprises and the economic sector manage for themselves'". A stand which has been somewhat softened since Gorbachev's Romanian visit in May 1987, but not modified in principle.



### Gorbachev à la carte

This brief analysis suggests two observations. First, that the attitudes of the East European leaderships toward the reforms of the USSR are a function of the relationship that they have with their respected societies, the degree of acceptance or of coolness being correlated with the priority they give either to social control or to the tacit search for consensus in society. This is indirectly confirmed by the attitude of the individual societies and the dissident groups. In Warsaw and Budapest, the latter look rather sceptical and blasé about the possible future developments of Gorbachevism in a Central and East European context. Conversely, in Czechoslovakia and the GDR they are specially attentive and full of hope, frequently without reserve<sup>8</sup>. The popular welcome Gorbachev received during his Prague visit in April 1987, as well as the fact that in East Berlin young people attending a rock concert started up rallying cries of "Down with the Wall" and "Gorbachev, Gorbachev", confirms that we are confronted here with a more serious phenomenon.

One could of course consider it as hopelessly naive to see in the leader of the same super power that imposed both the Berlin Wall and the Czech "normalization" a symbol of hope. But it also reflects a concrete situation, and a pragmatic attitude - to address oneself to the person who has (or seems to have) the power to change the state of things. In a petrified system, such as the one in Czechoslovakia, any movement seems good to latch on to, even if it comes from the East, in the hope of creating some space for the people against the powers that be. In a system where there is no possibility of public political participation one utilises what one can: to play, without any irony intended, on

the discrepancy between Gorbachev's speeches on reform and on "transparency" and the behaviour of the regime in Prague, East Berlin (or Bucarest) creates a context where some critical voices can find room for expression.

One should, anyhow, add a few nuances to this schema represented by Gorbachev, as seen through the eyes of official reactions. Reality is indeed more complex.

First of all, because of the inner ambiguity of the Gorbachev phenomenon, every actor in Eastern and Central Europe seems to find in Gorbachev what suits him. Jaruzelski sees it as a means to wrench the *nomenklatura* of his own party and as an *ex post* justification for the concessions he has been obliged to forgo, not because of Moscow but because of social pressure from below. The relative freedom of expression that the Polish enjoy at this stage has not much to do with *glasnost* Moscow so graciously bestowed; but on the contrary, it has a lot to do with two decades of Samizdat counter culture and with the Solidarity experience. The present Hungarian elite on their part, are sensitive to a policy that legitimates their own reformist experience but, in private, do not place too high stakes on its chances of success and even on Gorbachev's capacity to stay in power.

Honecker's caution in East Germany is mainly due to the fear of *glasnost* giving too much speed to a tightly controlled process of reconquering the Prussian past and establishing *modus vivendi* with the Protestant Church. But at the same time there is no more enthusiastic supporter of Gorbachev's foreign policy than East Berlin. This is due to the withdrawal of the missiles deployed in the GDR, which will benefit the regime in both improving its image in this German society and in facilitating its relationship with West Germany. After all it has been Gorbachev who abolished the veto on Honecker visiting Bonn.

Prague and Sofia are the only two places where one can observe a certain evolution in the attitude towards Gorbachev, from a total silence in the beginning to a verbal acceptance of a rather watered down version of *perestroika*: discipline, struggle against corruption in a context of "modernization" - sometimes they even dare to pronounce the word "reform" - of the economy<sup>9</sup>. To sum up, in Warsaw and Budapest they insist that there can be no real *perestroika* without *glasnost*; in East Berlin and in Bucarest neither is really accepted; in Prague and Sofia a modified version of *perestroika*, preferably without *glasnost* is condoned. In other words, it is a menu "à la carte", Gorbachev to each according to his needs.

Even in the countries apparently best disposed to accept the "good news", there are limits to the Gorbachevian trend simply due to the different relationships between Moscow and Warsaw, Moscow and Budapest, etc. Whatever his proclamation of complete allegiance, Jaruzelski's problem is radically different from Gorbachev's. For the latter, the main obstacle is the party apparatus and the conservatism of the bureaucracy, while Jaruzelski's problem is to establish a minimum credibility in Polish society. In Hungary both government officials and dissenting intellectuals stress that the *perestroika* cannot be a source of inspiration and even less a model, since it is proposed with twenty or more years delay on the reforms implemented (with modest results) by Hungarians.

And this is true for all the Central and East European countries. In comparison with their experience after 1956, and especially in comparison with the "Prague Spring" there is not, in Gorbachev's Programme, a single new idea. All this gives a feeling of *deja vu*, of reforms already attempted. Of course it is psychologically satisfactory for the old Dubcek followers to see their ideas rehabilitated by exactly those who had made their implementation impossible. But in the meantime twenty years had been lost, and the ideological landscape has changed: a mere reform, the "humanization of socialism" is no longer the order of the day; what is now being proposed is a "neo-liberal" ideology. The problem in Hungary today is not to know if a reform of the economy is desirable (which is the debate in Moscow), but what to do with a reform which has failed. The question is to find out if it is possible to give a larger role to private initiative not just in the agricultural or the service sectors, but in the very heart of the industrial sector. The debate among Hungarian reformers, whose most authoritative figure today is Imre Pozsgay, presently centres on the political reform on the possibility of institutionalising the transfer of social pluralism to the political level. The Hungarian economic failure makes it much more difficult for Gorbachev's Soviet followers to accept the reference point of the Hungarian "model" as a source of inspiration. But the reverse is even more true: there is nothing in the Soviet *perestroika* that could help reformist Hungary to solve its deadlock.

### **The Imperial constraints**

Gorbachev's dilemma in Central and Eastern Europe can be summarized as follows: because of the very nature of the Soviet system, all reform which takes place at the centre cannot but have repercussions on the periphery; but by nature of the societies on the periphery, any reform project becomes considerably more dangerous when introduced there, what is more, the

“perverse effects” of change in the periphery risk compromising reform in the USSR itself. Must one believe then, that in order for the reform process to succeed in Moscow, it cannot develop in Central and Eastern Europe? In the best of Gorbachevian worlds a minimum of reformist consensus would be less able to ensure the political cohesion of the Eastern bloc and to avoid angry reactions of conservative “desatellisation”, but at the same time without setting in motion a true dynamic for change in the periphery. And if (for reasons which will be examined) the effects of the Soviet reform are difficult to manage, can one sincerely believe that Gorbachev wishes to see it expand beyond the Soviet borders?



The Gorbachev effect is inevitable on the elites in power in Central and Eastern Europe; and not easily controllable within the societies. With the exception of Jaruzelski and his government, all of the East European administrations came into power during the Brezhnev epoch. Under Brezhnev, each one knew where his place was, although there was the danger of sclerosis and of demoralization due to the paralysis of a conservative gerontocracy. The arrival of a dynamic and willful leader in Moscow could have been exactly what would raise the morale of the "fraternal parties" in a period of moroseness and ideological exhaustion. This arrival has, above all, thrown the East European elite into a state of uncertain expectancy. How can one criticize past administrations (Gorbachev's favourite topic) without accusing oneself? Only a Zhivkov in Bulgaria, can venture (in the summer of 1987) to denounce the exaggerated personalising of power. More generally, every prolonged period of successions and of changes in Moscow naturally produces divisions within the East European elite, which can render them particularly vulnerable to social pressure (as all the crisis periods in the region suggest: 1956, 1968 and 1980).

That is where, moreover, the principal difference between the feasibility of the reforms in Moscow and in the satellite countries lies: in the USSR, the *perestroika* is administered from above to an atomized People and is thereby constantly reversible. In Central and Eastern Europe, all policies in which the party-State concedes ground, all relaxation of censorship, every possibility of independent initiative granted to civil society, risks acquiring its own dynamics, which would be difficult for the political power to control. This is very well known by the leaders of East Berlin and of Prague. The existence of a civil society (even in the embryonic state) with a democratic political culture (lying in any case outside of the framework of Leninism even if revised and corrected by Gorbachev) constitutes the principal difference if one compares the scope of communist reformism in the centre and in the periphery of the Soviet Empire.

Central and Eastern Europe has known, since 1956, three great attempts to reform the system, attempts originated in a society having a democratic political culture. One can even suggest that without an external intervention it would have been possible to witness in Hungary, in Poland or in Czechoslovakia, the "exit" from dictatorship and a transition towards democracy (not only "democratization") which would have been the equivalent of those in Greece, in Spain and in Portugal. Beyond the restraint of the Soviet-type of system, the weight of the Russian political culture goes against



this type of change. The autocratic heritage has been reinforced by seventy years of Soviet power. The alternative to Gorbachevism is neither inevitable democratic outburst nor a return to Brezhnevism; it is more likely to be authoritarian and nationalist. In Central and Eastern Europe, all of the debates on the plausibility of reform in the Soviet system rest, in the last analysis, on an evaluation (optimistic or pessimistic) of the transformation capacity of the Russian-Soviet political culture.

The foregoing would suffice to incite Gorbachev to be prudent and to limit the risks of destabilisation in Central and Eastern Europe, and this sought after stability implicates henceforth the acceptance of the diversification of communism within the Soviet bloc. In the speech delivered on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Gorbachev confirmed that, "unity does not mean identity and uniformity". And he added that "the Soviet leaders are also convinced that there is no model of socialism to be imitated by all". Gorbachev also evoked five principles which must guide relations between Moscow and the other socialist countries: "Complete and full equality, the responsibility of each party in power for its own country, the commitment to the common cause of socialism, mutual respect and strict adhesion to all principles of peaceful co-existence"<sup>10</sup>.

### **"Co-existence" and autonomy**

Two elements very important for our purposes can be noted here. First of all the application of the principle of "peaceful co-existence", until then restricted to the relationship with capitalist countries, while the socialist community was regulated by the "Brezhnev doctrine" of limited sovereignty; no doubt reference is always made to the "common cause" of socialism, but it is difficult to understand how this new formulation of the basic principle of the alliance could justify another "fraternal" invasion such as that of 1968. All the more so as, that same day, Georgui Smirnov, the director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, suggested to "rethink the events of 1968"<sup>11</sup>. It seems unlikely that the Soviets could ever admit (as some of their commentators do in relation to Afghanistan) that the invasion of Czechoslovakia was an error. Such an admission would in the medium long term, destabilise their control on the country. But it seems that some of Gorbachev's entourage, consider the "Prague Spring" as a missed opportunity to reform Socialism from inside<sup>12</sup>. Such an admission as well would be destabilising for the group that holds power in Prague, and neither Gorbachev's visit to Czechoslovakia, nor the choice of Husak's successor seem to show that for the moment such an hypothesis should be seriously considered.



*The vodka seller*

The second element that characterises the idea currently held in Moscow about the relationship between the “fraternal countries”, is the explicit admission of an older idea which recognises that each leading group in the Eastern bloc countries can choose the methods that it judges the most apt to maintain stability. Strictly speaking, this idea cannot be considered a piece of Gorbachevism because the most outspoken supporter of this political line is none other than Yegor Ligachev, the “number one bis” of the Soviet hierarchy, renowned for his criticism of the excesses of *glasnost*. On the occasion of a visit to Budapest in April 1987 he declared that “each country can act independently. In the past, one said that the orchestra was conducted by Moscow and that all the others just listened. This is no longer the case”<sup>13</sup>. This line explains why Moscow can fraternise at one and the same time with Jaruzelski and Husak (or Jakes), with Kadar or with Honecker in the name of the autonomy of each ruling group in managing the crisis.

In his policy towards Eastern Europe Gorbachev has several levers at his disposal. First of all a strategy through the media aimed at improving the image of the USSR in the West but also rebounding back on the population of the Warsaw Pact countries. This policy allows the population from Bulgaria to Poland, all the way through Czechoslovakia, the chance to absorb massive doses of TV *glasnost* direct from Moscow. But what is more interesting is the rebounds felt from the Gorbachevian media strategy towards Western Europe. Indeed, while the impact of West German television on East German public is well known, the phenomenon is much wider spread; two thirds of

Czechoslovakia receiving West German and Austrian television programmes. The latter is also broadcast in Western provinces of Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia. Gorbachev on past occasions has used one or other East or Central European country to make his policy more credible with the West European public; indeed, now one can say the converse is also true. Gorbachev can "legitimize" himself in Eastern and Central Europe not through local propaganda apparatuses (too discredited to perform such a task) but indirectly through the Western media's reports of his policies.

Another very important lever at Gorbachev's disposal - but also one which reveals all the ambiguities of Gorbachevism - is the CMEA and the European integration policy. From his very first meeting (May 1985) with the economic authorities of the CMEA, Gorbachev insisted on two aspects that were subsequently taken up again several times, mainly at the meeting of November 1986. First the Soviet Union would now demand from its East European partners export products of the quality traditionally reserved for the Western market. Secondly an "accelerated integration" of the CMEA economies is considered desirable and direct agreements among Soviet and COMECON firms are favoured. The problem is that for East European firms all modernization and economic reform require wider economic openings to the West, and an inversion of direction is bound to debase medium or long term reform of the system. In other words some Soviet ideas of *perestroika* (namely the thesis of O. Bogomolov and A. Aganbegyan on the necessity of combining the introduction of market mechanisms and rouble convertibility inside the CMEA) give political legitimacy to the strategy of those in the satellite countries favouring a market orientated reform; but these latter theorists are the ones most suspicious of the "accelerated integration" that they rightly perceive as radically opposing their reforms.

### **Replacing the old guard**

The third lever at Gorbachev's disposal is the replacement of the bureaucrats in charge of relations with the allies, especially in the department of the Central Committee Secretariat responsible for relations with the Communist parties of the Eastern bloc countries. Here, Gorbachev has favoured the promotion of Vadim Medvedev, that according at least to some observers, could bring a new approach since he was for a long time a collaborator with A. Yakovlev (the "father" of *glasnost*) in the propaganda department. But the most important change is probably the replacement of the second in command of the department, Oleg Rakhmanin, infamous for his unflinching hostility to all aspirations for reform and to all expressions of national sentiment in Eastern Europe. G.

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Chakhnazarov was appointed in his place, a political scientist by training and supposedly a partisan towards a more open policy.

If one adds to that the changes in the staff of the Prague-based theoretical journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, a last remnant of the Ponomarev era of strict ideological orthodoxy, one could come to the conclusion that all these signals coincide with the beginning, under Gorbachev, of a more tolerant policy towards the specific characteristics of each satellite country.

These changes of responsible staff in Moscow, anyhow, has not been accompanied, for the moment at least, by extensive replacements of political staff in Central and Eastern Europe. Thus providing further evidence of the already mentioned caution: Gorbachev has no interest in triggering off political crises in the periphery of the Empire. But one can assume that in order to put his own clientele in control he will take advantage of the wave of replacements that are due in the near future. Indeed, Kadar, Zhivkov, Honecker and Husak are all over seventy five, and Ceausescu around seventy. One could then assume that in the short term the replacement of the Central and East European administrations appointed by Brezhnev will take place for biological, if not for political reasons.

Two cases are worth mentioning in this respect, that of Czechoslovakia and of Romania, where the problem of succession is already the order of the day. The disagreement between Husak and Gorbachev was obvious<sup>14</sup>.

The absence of the latter at the Czech Congress Party in Prague in 1986, (whereas he had been present on similar occasions in East Berlin, Warsaw and Budapest); the postponement and then cancellation of Gorbachev's visit in Czechoslovakia, in April 1987; and finally the sudden departure of Husak from Moscow on the eve of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the

October Revolution; all this lent to the belief that change was imminent and that after twenty years of "normalization", a page was finally on the point of being turned. Actually nothing like that happened. Husak has indeed gone, (although not completely, since he retains the position of President of the Republic and member of the Politburo), but his successor is not the one for whom the Czech supporters of Gorbachev hoped (Strougal), but Milos Jakes, who represents even more than Husak "normalization" and Brezhnev style immobility. Former Vice Minister of the Interior under Novotny, he had become President of the Party's Control Commission in 1969, and was personally responsible for the largest purge ever in a ruling Communist Party after World War II, the Chinese Cultural Revolution apart. Promoted by Brezhnev in 1981 to the Secretariat and to the position responsible for economic policy, he was in charge during the last five years, that is while the Czech economy underwent the fastest decline ever after the crisis of the early 1960s. And still Jakes made sure that the timid experiment of reform (a name they never dared use) launched by the Strougal faction in 1979, amounted to nothing. Jakes' appointment in Moscow, has been welcomed as the arrival to the top position of the Czech Communist Party of a "well known" personality (as Guerasimov said), and the Western press announced that Prague was finally moving along the same lines as Gorbachev. But, if Jakes is supposed to represent change and *perestroika*, the word no longer has meaning.

The second candidate to be replaced is Ceausescu. The Brasov uprising has only confirmed that the atmosphere of a declining era in Bucarest was firmly grounded. In reality the madness of Ceausescu national communism has reached a dead end which is slowly preparing the return of Romania to the Socialist fold. In economic relations this is already underway, and the public declaration of an important Communist personality (Brucan<sup>15</sup>) shows that this is being prepared at a political level as well. When this is done, with some *perestroika* (and maybe some *glasnost*) being introduced in Romania, the return of Bucarest to Gorbachev's fold will be warmly welcomed by an exhausted population, by the neighbouring Socialist countries - and why not? - by the West which in the past, had directly and substantially contributed to creating the Ceausescu myth. This has a precedent in the Communist World: the relief brought about by which Vietnamese intervention delivered Cambodia from Pol Pot's regime, although not from communism.

### **Towards the "Ottoman Model"**

Beyond the debates on the different models for reforming East and Central European regimes and about the possibility of their transfer from country to

country of the Soviet Empire, this diversity of the reactions to, and of the consequences of, the changes underway in the Soviet Union, actually reflect the ambiguity of the Gorbachev phenomenon itself (modernization from above, or opening up aimed at shaking an anaesthetised society?). Conversely this over view of reformist trends in Central and Eastern society makes Gorbachevism lose part of its novelty and charm, and suggests that it is better to meditate on the limits of the phenomenon than to seek inspiration from it. China might perhaps be in a better position to provide (because of its sheer size and recent policies) a "model". But the fact that this model is unmistakably Chinese would suffice to make it suspicious in Moscow's eyes, all the more so because the Chinese case also shows that the reformist process can be reversible.

What the communist systems in the USSR and in Central and Eastern Europe have in common is a crisis and process of decomposition (Yugoslavisation). In Eastern and Central Europe this decay is more advanced and produces an erosion of the imperial capacity to control its dependents and a parallel erosion of the States' ability to control their societies. The *perestroika* is also an attempt to find a remedy to this situation: a stronger grip in the economic field (through "accelerated integration") but also a larger manoeuvring possibility in the search for local solutions in the management relationship between the



government and society.

But this transformation of the Soviet bloc along the model of the late Ottoman Empire (to use T. Garton Ash's image), by no means coincides with "liberalisation". As we have tried to prove, attempting to liberalise an empire and to keep control of it, is the same as wanting "to have your cake and eat it too". To become convinced of this fact it is sufficient for the Soviet leadership to observe the impact of *glasnost* in the Baltic Republics (according to a logic that is even more valid for Central and Eastern Europe). Looking at this predicament, what comes to mind is the answer that the most enlightened Tsars of all the Russias, Alexander II gave, more than a century ago, to a Polish delegation suggesting an expansion of his reformist ambitions for Russia to the whole of his Empire, "Stop dreaming, Sirs!".

### References

1. Jaruzelski speech to Party delegates. See *Le Monde*, 24 April 1987.
2. In conversation between Rakowski and the author in Warsaw, June 1987.
3. See *Rude Pravo*, 20 February 1987.
4. See *Rude Pravo*, 3 March 1987.
5. Interview in *Stern*.
6. *Die Zeit*, 27 June 1987.
7. Honecker's speech to the Trade Unions, quoted in *The Times*, 24 April 1987.
8. See "La visite de Gorbatchev en Tchécoslovaquie vue la presse indépendante tchécoslovaque", *L'Autre Europe*, no. 14, 1987.
9. "Life, the needs of our time and the party decisions require from us more effective criticism ... the directors of the mass media have received instructions to make a critical analysis of work in order to realize the plans and programmes adopted after the memorandum of comrade Todor Zhivkov and the decision of the Central Committee of the PCB entitled: 'For a decided struggle against the negative phenomenon of our life'". Editorial, *Rabotnicesko Delo*, 24 April 1987.
10. See extracts in Gorbatchev's speech reported in *New York Times*, 5 September 1987.
11. *ibid.*
12. The first among Gorbachevian intellectuals to suggest this hypothesis was E. Ambartsumov, in an interview to *Rinascita*, no 42 (reproduced in the journal of Santiago Carrillo, Madrid, *Ahora*, no 24 December, 1986) which affirmed there was nothing to revise in the Soviet judgment of the Hungarian counter-revolution. But on the contrary, the situation of Prague 1968 was different: "I think that this could have been the occasion to voice a difference of opinion from that which had until then prevailed and to begin new developments in the Socialist experience".
13. *New York Times*, 5 November 1987.
14. See J. Rupnik, "Prague et Budapest à l'heure Gorbatchev", in *Cosmopolitiques*, February 1987.
15. *The Independent*, London 27 November 1987. It should be noted that Brucan spared the security services from his criticisms.

