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CONTENTS

Introduction of the Editor	5
DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE	
Laurence Whitehead: Twenty-five Years of Freedom, and Various Shades of Grey	11
Carlos Flores Juberías: Some Considerations about the Accession and the Performance of Central European States in the European Union	31
Ferenc Gazdag and László Kiss Gy.: Foreign Policy and Indebtedness - Towards the Centre or the Peripheries?	49
Mátyás Szűrös: Regime Change and Republic in Hungary - The 1989/90 Regime Changing Turn and its Preceding Events, Follow-up Developments	77
Géza Jeszenszky: Hungary's Road to NATO (1989-1999)	97
György Csepeli: To be or not to be? - The European Union is at the Crossroads	129
Andrea Carteny: The Protection of Minorities and the V4 Group as Framework for International Cooperation	137
Edit Lőrinczné Bence: Democratic Transition in Croatia - From the First Parliamentary Election in 1990 to the Last One in 2015	149
Attila Szalai: The Regional Policy in the Strategy of Poland's Foreign Policy - The Key Elements	175
Csaba Cservák: Bicameral Parliaments then and Now in Europe and in Hungary	191

**Irina Michaela Pop: The Political Communication Crises
in Romania - Club Collective of October 30, 2015** 209

R e p o r t s a n d C o n f e r e n c e s

**HUG – Hungarian Geopolitics – New geopolitical
quarterly – PAGEO Foundation**
– 21 of March, 2016 231

**The Evaluation of System Changes in Hungary and
Russia – RETÖRKI**
- Budapest, 21-22 March 2016 233

Migrations and Refugees across Europe
- Conference in Roma, April 27-29, 2016 236

5th European Remembrance Symposium
- 24 and 26 May 2016, Budapest 241

60th Commission on the Status of Women
- 25-27 of March 2016, New York 243

B o o k R e v i e w s

**Edit Lőrinczné Bencze: Croatia from the Proclamation of
Independency to EU Membership**
- by **László Domonkos** 247

A b s t r a c t s 251

A b o u t t h e a u t h o r s 257

N e w B o o k s f r o m C E P o l i t i P u b l i s h e r 263

Introduction

It is really a pleasure for me to introduce the **Volume 17th of Central European Political Science Review**. After 17 years, the time has come to significantly improve our review both quantitatively and qualitatively. Starting with the present **63th issue**, we will publish all our issues in 2 thousand copies; furthermore, we will increase the length by one third, to 250 pages. We will try to get closer to the education content wise as well. On the one hand, we will deliver our publications to students participating in PhD programmes, to make them able to use our research results during their work, and on the other hand, we undertake publishing worthy works of one or two PhD students.

Beside the printed version of the **Central European Political Science Review**, we will also renew our electronic interface, where, for example, certain former issues will become freely downloadable, while others will be available on demand. We will retroactively upload the contents and abstracts of the older issues, to this way widen the reader base of the **CEPOLITI Review – CEPSR**.

According to our plans, in two years' time we would like to get into the top 20 most read and cited European social sciences reviews. The renewal and development of our journal is primarily made available by the aid of the Hungarian PAGEO Foundation, to which we hereby express our gratitude.

The main topic of the **Central European Political Science Review No. 63** is DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS in Central Europe. From the 11 studies, 8 deal with this topic. It is of particular pleasure that Professor Laurence Whitehead made his paper, which he presented during the opening session on the conference 25 Years of Freedom in Central-Europe in the Hungarian Parliament Building, available to us.

The editors of **CEPSR** continue to await region-related studies, conference reports, professional notices, and also books offered for review.

One of the main goals of the journal editorial board is to make it available to the broadest circle of readers from among experts and persons with a serious interest in the issues of the unique space of Central Europe, from the different perspective of international relations, history, political science, sociology, anthropology and art-

sociology, respectively. The main reason for publishing the **CEPoliti Review** is to serve and to enhance Central-Europe, to broaden and to spread the thoughts of Central-Europeanism, and Europeanism.

We suggest you contact with our assistant if you have paper for **Central European Political Science Review** or any question:

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János Simon
editor-in-chief



MAIN ARTICLES

**Quarterly of Central European Political Science
Alliance**

**DIPLOMACY AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
IN CENTRAL EUROPE**

Laurence Whitehead

Twenty-five Years of Freedom, and Various Shades of Grey

Introduction about 1989

The Hungarian National Roundtable had finished its work and produced a fully amended democratic constitution by September 1989, and the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989. Similar points hold for Poland. So why has the period of freedom been foreshortened from eleven years to ten? Discussions at this conference suggest that it was not the negotiation of an internal agreement, but the withdrawal of the Russian forces that has been regarded as the decisive turning point. If so, the freedom under consideration is essentially freedom from control from Moscow. Together with that freedom from external constraint came various more positive freedoms. Freedom to elect one's own government, as well as freedom to travel, more freedom to acquire property, freedom to own a business, freedom to compete, and also freedom to fail. These are major and welcome freedoms, of course, and all the more welcome because they had been so systematically and persistently either constrained or outright denied under communism (although Hungary's "goulash" communism ended up being milder than most).

The authoritarian regimes of Latin America and southern Europe had also suppressed most of these freedoms, for most of the population, at least some of the time. But they were less systematic and persistent than under Communist rule, and the linkages between such prohibitions was much looser. Privileged elites generally enjoyed all the non-political freedoms (except, perhaps, the freedom to fail). So the democratization of post-Communist central

Europe involved a much sharper, society-wide discontinuity, with long suppressed freedoms all abruptly restored at the moment of regime change. This orderly expansion of freedom also differentiates the central European democratizations from those of the post-communist former USSR and Yugoslavia, where territorial breakdowns brought instability to much of the population, and where some underwent extreme upheavals, while others may have experienced the continuation of many day to day un-freedoms.

Thus, in Central Europe, many interconnected and typically “western” freedoms were extended or established over a short period of time. However, for these new freedoms to be stabilized they were also accompanied by significant constraints. To evaluate what was distinctive about central Europe’s ten years of freedom we need to consider what was unusual about these constraints. In Latin America or Southern Europe democratization included the freedom to renew or repudiate previous security ties. In Central Europe the requirements of freedom from Russian control left no such range of options. In post-authoritarian capitalist societies socialist parties were free to campaign for strengthened trade union rights, more public ownership, and other left-wing causes. In post-Communist Central Europe there was freedom to privatize (if not an obligation to do so), but obviously not to collectivize. There was freedom to choose from *within* a spectrum of broadly liberal policies and political doctrines, and broadly western international orientations, but the range of such choices was considerably more limited than in, say, post-1974 Portugal, or post-1985 Brazil. Moreover, the basic geopolitical choices that had been made (and that underpinned the individual freedoms newly available) were not open to subsequent revision. Rejoining the “west” was perhaps more of a fate than an active choice. It involved freedom to operate within strong

constraints on political discretionality, constraints arising from the givens of the western model of democracy that was, in effect, being imported wholesale (more so in the GDR, of course, but in fact quite generally).

In short, the ten years freedom so appropriately and enthusiastically celebrated in Budapest involved individual freedom in accordance with western liberal models of the market economy, the rule of law, civil rights, and the pre-eminence of consumer sovereignty as a model for (de-radicalized) political choice, basically in accordance with the EU's Copenhagen Criteria for admission to the Union. Certainly this is freedom. Just as certainly these are constraints."¹

That was, in broad terms, the outcome we were celebrating in 2000, and much of it still holds today. After all, the countries in question did satisfy the Copenhagen Criteria, and they were admitted into the European Union as full members in 2004. However, there are also some further developments of note. Until these nations achieved accession they were under huge external pressure to conform to the standards and regulations laid down from Brussels. But once admitted to the club they became as free as the older members to pick and choose what aspects of convergence most suited them, and to bridle against unwelcome features of the regional integration agenda. In one sense, this new state of affairs can be viewed as an additional gain for national freedom – the recovery of an initially compromised degree of national sovereignty and democratic control. But there are also what I shall term “shades of grey” in this post-accession dispensation, not only because each member state in the Union exercises such freedom at some cost to its partners, but also because even the original members of the Union can find their national and democratic aspirations at loggerheads with their legal treaty obligations.

Recent illustrations can be drawn from Greece and Britain, as well as from Hungary and Poland.

As regards Central Europe, so long as Moscow was seen as the oppressor of nations it was easy to embrace western freedoms with an undifferentiated enthusiasm. But a quarter century later that symbol of unfreedom is no longer so overbearingly present, and it no longer unifies in the same way. After all, even before the dismantling of the Berlin Wall the crucial breach in the so called “iron curtain” came the previous summer, when the communist authorities in Budapest removed the electric fencing that divided Hungary from Austria. Twenty-six years later a democratically elected government in Budapest erected a razor-wire fence to block off refugees trying to enter Hungary from Serbia. More generally, divisions within and between the post-communist democracies of the European Union have become more salient. Some of these concern the affirmation of long suppressed national identities; some reflect resentments directed against supra-national regulations promoted from Brussels; and some involve recriminations between groups within each nation who benefited from the new order, and others – often very numerous- who feel that they were marginalized, and perhaps even degraded, by it. Not only have old nationalisms resurfaced under new guises, but old imperial groupings have also to some extent revived, so that Habsburg boundaries once again demarcate some lines of political alignment, and distant memories of Ottoman expansion compete with anti- Russian reflexes. As a consequence of this complex grid of divisions and rivalries, past clarity about desired freedoms and how to secure them has given way to a far more tortuous and disaggregated pattern of hopes, fears, and resentments.

So, while there is certainly much to celebrate concerning the progress of freedom and democracy over the past

quarter century, both in Central Europe and in Europe as a whole, and indeed around the world (notably in my area of particular expertise, namely Latin America), at the same time there have also been many disappointments and setbacks. In Central Europe, early post-Berlin Wall euphoria has given way to much more sober – sometimes even somber – assessments of what has been achieved, and still needs to be done. Just now there is a great deal of citizen disenchantment in many parts of the democratic community of states (both old and new). In a remarkably large range of cases we can observe a startling degree of open repudiation of the political formulae that seemed so unstoppable a generation ago. Beyond the post-accession change of outlook already mentioned, after 2008 faith in the market economy model has been dented by the inequalities and injustices it has been seen to produce; and failures of western military interventions in places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and now Syria have produced other sources of dissent, especially concerning refugees from Muslim countries. That is why my title refers to “various” (although certainly not fifty) shades of grey. Let me briefly touch on half a dozen of these to illustrate this point.

Distribution of Freedoms

The first shade concerns international variations in the distribution of freedoms. For over four decades, the New York-based NGO Freedom House has been tracking and rating national outcomes on two dimensions (civil and political freedoms) on an annual basis, and across all the sovereign states in the world (plus some dependent territories). One does not need to accept their definitions, or to endorse all their (inevitably somewhat subjective) comparative judgments to appreciate the coverage and consistency of their efforts. There were indeed huge cross-national variations

when they began, and today the range from most to least free is as great as ever, even if the overall balance has shifted somewhat in a favorable direction.

Freedom in the World – Electoral Democracies

Survey edition*	Year Under Review	Number of electoral democracies	Total number of countries	Total percentage of electoral democracies †
2016	2015	125	195	64
2015	2014	125	195	64
2014	2013	122	195	63
2013	2012	118	195	61
2012	2011	117	195	60
2011	2010	115	194	59
2010	2009	116	194	60
2009	2008	119	193	62
2008	2007	121	193	63
2007	2006	123	193	64
2006	2005	123	192	64
2005	2004	119	192	62
2004	2003	117	192	61
2003	2002	121	192	63
2001-2002	2001	121	192	63
2000-2001	2000	120	192	63
1999-2000	1999	120	192	63
1998-1999	1998	117	191	61
1997-1998	1997	117	191	61
1996-1997	1996	118	191	62
1995-1996	1995	115	191	60
1994-1995	1994	113	191	59
1993-1994	1993	108	190	57
1992-1993	1992	99	186	53
1991-1992	1991	89	183	49
1990-1991	1990	76	165	46
1989-1990	1989	69	167	41

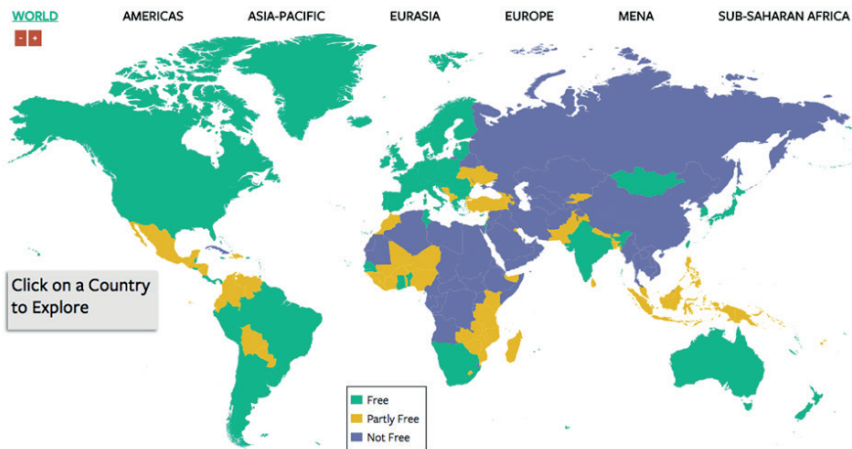
† Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Freedom in the World Country Ratings

Freedom in the World edition +	Year/dates covered *	Total Countries	Free Countries		Partly Free Countries		Not Free Countries	
			Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2016	2014	195	86	44	59	30	50	26
2015	2014	195	89	46	55	28	51	26
2014	2013	195	88	45	59	30	48	24
2013	2012	195	90	46	58	30	47	24
2012	2011	195	87	45	60	31	48	24
2011	2010	194	87	45	60	31	47	24
2010	2009	194	89	46	58	30	47	24
2009	2008	193	89	46	62	32	42	22
2008	2007	193	90	47	60	31	43	22
2007	Dec. 1, 2005-Dec. 31, 2006	193	90	47	58	30	45	23
2006	Dec. 1, 2004-Nov. 30, 2005	192	89	46	58	30	45	24
2005	Dec. 1, 2003-Nov. 30, 2004	192	89	46	54	28	49	26
2004	Jan. 1, 2003-Nov. 30, 2003	192	88	46	55	29	49	25
2003	2002	192	89	46	55	29	48	25
2001-2002	2001	192	85	44	59	31	48	25
2000-2001	2000	192	86	45	58	30	48	25
1999-2000	1999	192	85	44	60	31	47	25
1998-1999	1998	191	88	46	53	28	50	26
1997-1998	1997	191	81	42	57	30	53	28
1996-1997	1996	191	79	41	59	31	53	28
1995-1996	1995	191	76	40	62	32	53	28
1994-1995	1994	191	76	40	61	32	54	28
1993-1994	1993	190	72	38	63	33	55	29
1992-1993	1992	186	75	40	73	39	38	21
1991-1992	1991	183	76	42	65	35	42	23
1990-1991	1990	165	65	40	50	30	50	30
1989-1990	Nov. 1988-Dec. 1989	167	61	37	44	26	62	37
1988-1989	Nov. 1987-Nov. 1988	167	60	36	39	23	68	41
1987-1988	Nov. 1986-Nov. 1987	167	58	35	58	35	51	30
1986-1987	Nov. 1985-Nov. 1986	167	57	34	57	34	53	32
1985-1986	Nov. 1984-Nov. 1985	167	56	34	56	34	55	33
1984-1985	Nov. 1983-Nov. 1984	167	53	32	59	35	55	33
1983-1984	Aug. 2, 1982-Nov. 1983	166	52	31	56	34	58	35
1982	Jan. 1, 1981-Aug. 1, 1982	165	54	33	47	28	64	39
1981	1980	162	51	31	51	31	60	37
1980	1979	161	51	32	54	33	56	35
1979	1978	158	47	30	56	35	55	35
1978	1977	155	43	28	48	31	64	41
Jan.-Feb. 1977	1976	159	42	26	49	31	68	43
Jan.-Feb. 1976	1975	158	40	25	53	34	65	41
Jan.-Feb. 1975	1974	152	41	27	48	32	63	41
Jan.-Feb. 1974	1973	151	44	29	42	28	65	43
Jan.-Feb. 1973	1972	151 [150] §	44 [43] §	29	38	25	69	46

* Unless otherwise noted, the year/dates covered by each edition are January 1 through December 31.

FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2016



These variations matter to even the best placed, since, as both John F. Kennedy and Nelson Mandela asserted: “freedom is indivisible.” Of course this dictum, like most political slogans, is open to diverse uses. (The US abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison used the phrase not only to condemn slavery, but also to uphold the right to bear arms, for example). Even so, the phrase draws our attention to a vital point. British freedom is more secure when France and Germany are also free; it is compromised if Ulster Catholics or black majorities in southern Africa are denied their voices. Hungary can celebrate its quarter century of freedom in the knowledge that its immediate neighbors have also made progress; but un-freedom in parts of the Balkans and the Levant constrains Hungarian liberty, as it does ours. All our freedoms are contaminated by the ongoing tragedies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, or in the eastern Ukraine. Our freedoms are reduced (indirectly if not directly) if hopes of liberation are thwarted to our south and our east. Comparing your tenth anniversary with your twenty-fifth, it is hard not to detect a darker shade of grey in this respect.

Democracy Tainted

A second shade arises from a related development. Not only have some major expectations of democratic progress been set back in large world regions, but also the cause of democratization has been tainted by hypocrisy and misuse, allowing miscellaneous opponents of political freedoms to regroup and to gain traction. The topic of “authoritarian cooperation” either to “prevent” democracy, or at least to block western “democracy promotion” programmers, has become a new academic growth industry. This reflects some genuine new developments on the ground, not only a more assertive foreign policy from Putin’s Moscow but

also more confident projection of Beijing's worldview; and even (quite recently) more aggressive and autonomous action from Riyadh, and perhaps some other Middle Eastern capitals. In each of these cases some legitimate general foreign policy priorities have been mixed in with the anti-democracy components, and the latter have focused mainly on the "near abroad" of each authoritarian power, rather than extending authoritarian practices across the world at large. Clearly, the capacity of such diverse and inflexible regimes to cooperate between themselves cannot be that great, but they have each engaged in a process of adaptation and learning, including some degree of mutual encouragement and emulation, all of which has shifted momentum against the previously "forward march" of Freedom House style democracy. In his parallel lecture, Leonardo Morlino has documented the spread of what he terms "hybrid" regimes that are harder to isolate and combat than the outright authoritarian regimes of the past. Western democracies also share some responsibility here – both for discrediting the cause of democracy promotion, and also for inconstancy in upholding what they claimed to be their fundamental values. This constitutes a second "shade of grey" that has undoubtedly spread and deepened over the past decade or so.

Which Freedoms?

Then there is also the contrast that Isaiah Berlin made so famous during the Cold War between what he termed "positive" and "negative" concepts of liberty: freedom "to" do approved things versus freedom "from" external control over one's choices.² The key idea here was Berlin's belief that reserving space for personal choice would enhance the range of possibilities open to the citizen, whereas pursuing collective goals (his focus here was on utopias and

narrowly conceived ideas of “progress”) might in practice prove illiberal, however attractive these objectives might seem in the abstract.

In the context of Cold War polarization this binary contrast made some intuitive sense, although as a more general philosophy of freedom it always had evident limitations. For example, both the positive and the negative concepts of liberty (which in practice overlap) produce more secure forms of freedom when accompanied by supportive institutions (basic rights, pluralist arenas, neutral arbitrators and fair regulators, among others). Neither can protect liberal freedoms where such institutions are lacking or subverted (in the absence of a stable political order, or in the presence of a despotic regime, for instance). Also, Berlin was focused on freedom of the individual, whereas your twenty-five years of freedom celebrates democratization and national as much as personal emancipation, neither of which he regarded as guarantors of freedom in his sense. From his standpoint, negative freedom might fare better under a stable and benign authoritarian (as in Singapore) than in a raucous democracy. This observation corresponds to what was later dubbed a *dictablanda*,³ a soft authoritarian regime under which personal freedoms were generally respected. But even from within his individualist perspective this contrast between the positive and negative poles can be unhelpful. For example, on a libertarian reading of the case for “negative” freedom neither conscription nor compulsory state education would seem acceptable, but these were not among the “positive” liberties Berlin intended to question (unless they were practiced by “totalitarian” regimes). (Berlin 1969; 2002).

In any case, in a post-totalitarian world this binary divide has lost much of whatever edge it may once have had. Consider some of today’s burning questions about freedom.

(Should the security services have access to our emails? Can my student bring a concealed firearm into my classroom? Can a woman insist on wearing a niqab in public?). From a liberal democratic point of view the answers all involve “shades of grey” rather than Berlin’s stark, historically contingent, and in the last analysis arbitrary, dichotomy.

As these three currently “burning” questions suggest, in the contemporary world we need a more fine-grained discussion of freedom’s multiple dilemmas. In particular, freedom for whom, and freedom under what constraints? In a totalitarian world there is (by assumption) just one centralized source of oppression, and all are at its mercy. But in a more typical contemporary (e.g. “post-totalitarian”) setting the sources of potential un-freedom are multiple and cross-cutting, with some groups assailed from all sides, while others are relatively safe, and may even be emboldened to oppress their weaker neighbors. This is a far more common situation than the ideologised polarity envisioned by the theorists of despotism. In today’s Britain, for example, the right to privacy is under challenge from those most dedicated to the “war on terror”; in democratic Hungary there are debates over the scope of freedom to be provided to the Roma people; the freedom of refugees and asylum seekers is a contested issue in both nations; and so forth.

In a free society (as Berlin always stressed) there is often not a single right solution to such dilemmas, but one can construct a set of rules and procedures that permit open deliberation and that protect minorities and the losing side in each debate from being silenced. Note, however, that these are always contestable social constructions, not just lexically given deductions from the definitional meaning of “political freedom.” That means that the rules are liable to be reinterpreted constantly, and the procedures are always

subject to renegotiation at the boundaries. That is why Foucault viewed liberalism as not just protecting the freedom of the individual but also – and simultaneously – managing the concept of social danger.⁴

Freedom and protection are twin preoccupations, and a liberal regime will constantly arbitrate between them. (“The right to bear arms” is a classic illustration of the two as a joint product of a societal commitment to individual freedom). More generally, liberal permissions and protections are easily eroded in times of insecurity, such as the present. This is currently dramatized by official reactions to “terrorism” both in my country and in yours. The mirror image of a dictablanda (soft dictatorship) is equally plausible – a democradura, (hard democracy) or a democratic regime with tight restrictions on individual freedoms. So here is a fourth shade of grey.

Disaffection from Party Politics

The fifth shade concerns a manifestation of the widespread dissatisfaction that many citizens are expressing towards their elected representatives. It is increasingly common for democratic voters to back “outsiders,” and to endorse “anti-systemic” protests of various kinds. While the form and substance of these movements varies widely according to the setting, there are certain underlying themes that keep recurring. Established political parties are often seen as self-serving organizations, dependent on private financing and secret deals with special interests, which aim to manipulate and even to deceive the electorate rather than to serve them. Behind an appearance of party competition there may be a shared disrespect for the concerns of the ordinary citizen, so that what really prevails is a corrupt “partidocracia.”

Politicians criticized in such terms feel insecure, and search for new ways to express their responsiveness to popular opinion. As a result we see a proliferation of “direct democracy” innovations – open primaries, citizen-based legislative initiatives, recall elections, referendums, and participatory budgeting, to name a few. Take the use of referendums to decide key public policy issues as an example. In 2014 the Scots voted against independence; in 2015 the Greeks voted to reject an external bail-out package; the same year the Danes rejected an “opt in” to EU justice and home affairs policies; in 2016 both the UK and Hungary have convened national ballots – on whether Britain should exit from the EU, and whether Hungary should be obliged to resettle refugees.

In the past most such issues would have been processed through national legislatures in accordance with their normal representative functions as lawmakers, but today – partly because of growing interdependence, and a perceived erosion of national sovereignty, but also because professional politicians are so distrusted – parliaments are surrendering crucial areas of decision-making to the “yes/no” say of their electors. In some respects this may be considered an enhancement of political freedom, but it also carries with it a considerable downside for democratic legitimacy. Operating two parallel decision processes invites confusion and friction between outcomes. Moreover, clear and stable criteria are lacking to determine which issues are best resolved by which means. Who decides to put an issue to the popular vote, when, and on what terms? Rather than enhancing public confidence in the integrity of political leaders such episodes risk adding to citizen distrust, while also generating sub-optimal policies with unintended consequences.

Politics of the Market Economy under Europeanization/ Globalization

As already noted, in Central Europe the collapse of the Soviet bloc was understood as the arrival of “market freedom” as much as of “political freedom”. Indeed, for those who had only known communist rule, with its fusion of political repression with economic controls, these were very widely regarded as two facets of a single system- so political and economic liberalization were seen as indissolubly linked. In other parts of the world, by contrast, dissenters from market liberalism were among the beneficiaries of anti-authoritarian political openings (vis. the left in Brazil; COSATU and the SACP in South Africa, etc). Even where there was no prospect of joining the EU, liberals could view the elimination of communism as potentially heralding the dawn of a market economy (as in Georgia under Saakashvili). It was not just emerging entrepreneurs or liberal intellectuals who embraced such views; they extended to major trade union based movements, such as Solidarnosc and to the leaders of most post-communist political parties.

But a quarter century of post-communist experience has demonstrated to large sectors of opinion that although “the market” may bring new freedoms in the realms of consumer choice and career advancement, for substantial sectors of the newly empowered electorate (e.g. pensioners, unskilled workers, public enterprise employees) it has turned out that it can also reduce security, narrow horizons, and generate new social divisions. While in the abstract political and economic freedoms might seem two sides of the same coin, it has been found that in practice – and in particular under the conditions of globalization and deindustrialization that have prevailed since the end of the Cold War- the market economy can prove a pitiless task master. The legal, political and civil rights guaranteed through the European Union

are often accompanied by new constraints and obligations that are liable to be experienced as external impositions rather than as domestic free choices. Under communism the burden of state controls was oppressive, but it seemed clear who was in charge. In the European “social market” economy there are puzzling new forms of regulation, and it can be unclear who is responsible or how illegitimate outcomes can be corrected.

This is especially the case where “global” market forces gain ascendancy, but it is also relevant where remote institutions such as the European Central Bank or the Brussels Commission exercise control. Since market processes coexist with competitive electoral politics citizens who are dissatisfied with aspects of the new economic model can turn to the political realm for redress. But this turns out to be far from a harmonious coexistence. Many voters may prefer to have free bus passes, and to dispense with free movement of labour; or they may demand free public education and healthcare- but not for minorities, deviants, or the unpatriotic; or they want European subsidies for farmers, depressed regions, and traditional industries, while outlawing intrusive NGO-s and vetoing external conditionalities. In short, citizens seek to pick and choose between the freedoms (both economic and political) and the constraints they accept, rather than to embrace both types of freedom as an integral package.

Evidently it is not just in the new democracies of Central Europe where ordinary voters have developed a more selective and defensive response to the offers of liberalization that were initially envisaged as a globally liberating project. In the old democracies so called “populist” backlashes against what in short hand has become known as “neo-liberalism” are also on the rise. This is a response to the erosion of the old ‘social contracts’ that previously

legitimized the market economy through the provision of pensions and welfare state protections. In the post-communist global market economy it turns out that all such collective protections and reassurances are provisional and subject to renegotiation under the pressures of international competition. This is true everywhere, and felt as intensely in Britain, France and the USA as in less favoured settings. With perceptions of rising insecurity and inequality comes questioning of traditional party loyalties, and the eruption of outside candidates and “anti-system” parties. Far from withering away in the face of globalization, old state identities attract renewed loyalties from frightened voters who look to politics to defend them from the perils of the market. Such tendencies were growing and spread well before the 2008 economic crisis, but they have become much more salient and disruptive in its aftermath, and their disintegrative consequences are still unfolding. So it would be an error to denounce “illiberal populism” in Central Europe as some kind of aberration or local failing to conform to a prevalent template of liberal internationalism. But there are specific regional components to what is really a wider trend. They arise because of the fragilities and added sensitivities of states that only a exited from the Soviet system of politico-economic control just a generation ago. This makes political disappointments over the downsides of economic liberalization harder to manage, and so adds a darker tint to this region’s particular shade of grey.

An Overall Assessment

Obviously more shades could be enumerated, but these six are enough to support the following overall assessment. After ten years there was much to celebrate, but also much that remained to be done in order to build on the freedoms so recently acquired. After a quarter of a century central

Europe has moved on, and gains that were still tentative have been consolidated. The early constraints on freedom are no longer so binding, and there is scope for greater autonomy of choice and action. But with that has come new challenges and dilemmas. The stark polarities of the Cold War period have given way to a more complex and richly shaded panorama. Liberals and supporters of democracy face more tradeoffs, more divisions, and more second best options. Their voters expect them to take responsibility for their own acts of omission and commission, rather than simply to blame past misrule. The threats to freedom they must now deal with come from diverse sources- both external and internal; both economic and political; with risks from too little security, but also from too much. If it is any consolation, the same thought applies to Britain as to Hungary. We have just celebrated the 800th anniversary of our Magna Carta, but even our freedoms still face many shades of grey- some of them the products of our own mistakes. So celebrate by all means, for becoming a more “normal” democracy, like us. But keep in mind, as we all must, that nothing about these freedoms can be taken for granted, and that the international backlash against exaggerated liberal dogmas may still be gathering momentum. Over-reach is typically followed by disorderly retreat, and even if current turbulence proves no more than a passing episode, these various shades of grey warn against liberal complacency. “The price of freedom is eternal vigilance”- and that includes guarding against domestic errors as well as external threats.

Notes

- 1 Whitehead, Laurence 2000. "The Enlargement of the European Union: A 'Risky' Form of Democracy Promotion", In. *Central European Political Science Review* Vol. 1. No. 1. 16-41.
- 2 Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in: *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- 3 The term was first coined in the 1930 to categorize liberalization after the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in Spain. For an extended application see Paul Gillingham and Benjamin Smith (eds) *Dictablanda : Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico 1938-1968* (Duke University Press, 2014). The portuguese equivalente, *ditabranda*, was used in Brazil in the 1980s.
- 4 Michel Foucault *Naissance de la Biopolitique* (Seuil/Gallimard, Paris:2004) pp 65/7. Indeed he went further- "de partout vous voyez cette stimulation de la crainte du danger qui est en quelque sorte la condition, le corrélatif psychologique et culturel interne, du libéralisme. Pas de libéralisme sans culture du danger... (une conséquence)...c'est la formidable extension des procédures de contrôle, de contrainte, de coercition qui vont constituer comme la contrepartie et le contrepois des libertés....(une autre conséquence c'est l'apparition)...dans ce nouvel art de gouverner, de mécanismes qui ont pour fonction de produire, d'insuffler, de majorer des libertés, d'introduire un peu plus de liberté par un plus de contrôle et d'intervention." (ibid pp 68/9). Although at first glance this account of the extension of freedom may seem paradoxical, consider the way fear of strikes and civil disorder has been mobilised in order to stabilize constitutional reforms; or the state direction and control involved in any serious programme of privatization.

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