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The New Right in the New Europe? Unravelling The Ideology of ‘Czech Thatcherism’

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Abstract

The remarkable success of Václav Klaus and the ‘Thatcherite’ right in the Czech Republic was an exception in post-communist Eastern Europe. Explanations for its success have usually focused on policy performance, fixed historical legacies or generalised understandings of post-communism, but have largely ignored the role of ideology. However, despite differences of context, ‘Czech Thatcherism’, like its British precursor, can be seen in Gramscian terms as an innovative, populist right-wing ideology linked to a hegemonic project of social transformation.

This article traces the importation of Anglo-American neo-liberal and conservative ideas by intellectual counter-elites under the communist regime. It then examines the ‘revolutionary conservatism’ formulated by the Czech Right after 1989, focusing on its discourse of post-communist transformation and its attempts to ground imported New Right ideas in the Czech context. Finally, the article considers the ideological tensions within ‘Czech Thatcherism’ and discusses alternative Czech readings of conservatism.

The New Right in the New Europe? Unravelling The Ideology of ‘Czech Thatcherism’

Introduction

The political success of parties and politicians inspired by the Anglo-American New Right in the Czech Republic has been widely remarked upon as unusual. While in other states in the region, governments committed to free market policies quickly faltered, lost support and were replaced by nationalist or left-wing administrations, Czechs not only voted for the Right in large numbers in 1992, but continued to support it solidly throughout much of the 1990's. The success of what has been termed ‘Thatcherism Czech-style’¹ was above all associated with the Czech Prime Minister Václav Klaus and his Civic Democratic Party (ODS). In the early-mid 1990's Klaus's party and its smaller coalition partner, the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA)², which shared its Western-derived ‘Thatcherite’ New Right ideology seemed to enjoy a position of unassailable intellectual and political dominance. Whilst the combined electoral support of the two parties never exceeded 35-36%³, their political power and the broader influence of their ideology reached well beyond their own electorates. At one point in late 1993 their combined opinion poll rating rose as high as 55%. The two parties also controlled key economic ministries and exercised considerable influence in the Czech state bureaucracy⁴. They faced a largely supportive and uncritical media⁵ and a fragmented opposition seemingly unable to offer any coherent alternative policies. After the split of Czechoslovakia in 1992, the independent Czech Republic thus appeared to be an island of conservatism and free market radicalism in a sea of nationalism, populism and post-communism.

By 1996-7, however, the Czech 'Thatcherite' Right's era of dominance seemed clearly at an end. The Czech 'economic miracle' showed signs of increasing malaise⁶ and in elections in 1996 the right-wing coalition narrowly lost its parliamentary majority. At the same time the Czech Social Democrats emerged as a powerful electoral force, ushering in a period of minority governments pragmatically accommodated by the opposition⁷. The previously united, self-confident Czech Right was increasingly afflicted by splits and scandals and by a growing crisis of identity and direction. In December 1997 a financial scandal in Klaus's ODS led to the final disintegration of the centre-right coalition that he had led since 1992. Similar scandals precipitated the complete disintegration of the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA)⁸ a few months later. In January 1998 Klaus's opponents within ODS broke away to found a new right-wing party, the Freedom Union (US)⁹. Although elections in June 1998 gave the former coalition a small theoretical parliamentary majority it was so acrimoniously divided, that it was a minority Social Democratic government that finally took office - the first centre-left Czech administration since the fall of communism. In 1998 the Social Democrats also outpolled ODS for the first time to become the largest Czech political party¹⁰. While Klaus's ODS retained a sizeable and loyal electorate and remained the main party of the right, polling evidence suggests that it has lost the broad acceptability it once enjoyed among the Czech public¹¹.

How then can we understand this pugnacious but short-lived East European 'Thatcherism'? Many analysts have examined 'Thatcherism Czech-style' as a set of policy prescriptions or a display of political acumen by individual leaders. Others have highlighted historical and conjunctural factors specific to Czechoslovakia and the Czech Lands. However, little systematic attention has been paid to the ideology of

the Czech ‘Thatcherite’ Right *per se* and the way it articulated and constructed the politics of post-communist transformation. In this article I will argue that, in addition to policy-related and general contextual factors, ‘Czech Thatcherism’, like the British original, can be understood best as a political project articulated through an innovative *ideology* combining neo-liberalism and a re-invented conservative tradition. Such an ideology was in both cases first developed by intellectual elites on the social and political margins. I will also discuss alternative readings of conservatism, which developed in the Czech Lands both before and after 1989 and were in part also influenced by Western ideologies.

‘Czech Thatcherism’ and Post-Communist Politics: Bringing Ideology Back In

Almost all analyses of the subject treat ‘Thatcherism Czech-style’ as an example of East European liberalism or neo-liberalism, most viewing it as a set of policy prescriptions. While some Czech economic policy failures can indeed be traced to neo-liberal assumptions about a self-regulating free market¹², this approach is of limited usefulness in understanding the *political* appeal of ‘Thatcherism Czech-style’ and its ideology. Such policy-based analyses¹³ usually note the divergence between the Klaus government’s radical neo-liberal/Thatcherite rhetoric and its more pragmatic, statist and corporatist political practice¹⁴. Such analyses then argue that this pragmatic pulling of economic punches, combined with the relatively high living standards and macroeconomic stability Czechoslovakia inherited from communism made economic reform after 1989 painless enough for the Czech ‘Thatcherite’ Right to maintain its political support. However, although important, this insight alone is an inadequate explanation of its political success. It does not explain, for example, why Czechs’ support for Klaus and his party was high and rising in 1991, when the post-

1989 transformational recession was deepest and when living standards in the Czech Lands fell most sharply¹⁵.

Other authors have noted the greater public hostility to the former communist regime in Czechoslovakia which, unlike its Polish and Hungarian counterparts, stifled almost all private economic initiative and remained highly repressive until its ultimate demise in November 1989¹⁶. Neo-liberalism, it is argued, in fact represented a 'neglected path of anti-communism'¹⁷. The free market and the minimal state were seen as polar opposites of totalitarianism and central planning. However, as in other countries in the region, Czech populist anti-communism initially took more direct and obvious forms: for example, demands that (former) Communists be prosecuted or purged from public life and that the Communist Party be banned¹⁸. A further factor sometimes cited in explaining support for 'Czech Thatcherism' is the split with the more left-leaning Slovaks in 1992, which left the Right dominant in the newly independent Czech state, cutting the Czech Left off from potential allies in Slovakia. However, while again relevant, this explanation does not address the intrinsic appeal of the Czech Right, whose rise took place in 1991-2 *before* the split of Czechoslovakia, an outcome few seriously anticipated before mid-1992.¹⁹ Those analyses that do address the content of the Czech Right's ideological discourse often remain vague and over-general²⁰. Others have cited plausible sociological reasons explaining the strong appeal of neo-liberalism in post-communist societies in general²¹ without examining the appeal of neo-liberal ideas in any concrete historical or national context. Moreover, few distinguish between the mass appeal and the elite appeal of such ideas. None of these explanations explain why Klaus and others should have invested such effort into presenting themselves not simply as liberals, but also as conservatives similar to the

British Tories under Mrs Thatcher. Indeed, there have been few sustained attempts to analyse the role of either right-wing ideologies or ideology in general in post-communist politics²². Commentators on the right or in the political centre have generally considered the popularity of (neo-) liberal and conservative ideas in East Central Europe as self-evident. Those on the Left have analysed these ideologies more critically. However, while raising important issues, their explanations have often lacked plausibility and sophistication, usually depicting post-communist societies and their citizens as gullible or passive victims of external manipulation²³.

However, while ideology has been neglected in the analysis of both ‘Czech Thatcherism’ and post-communist politics generally, it has loomed very large in the study of the British politics of the 1970’s and 1980’s. In a now classic analysis Stuart Hall and others drew on the ideas of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, to analyse the 1980’s phenomenon of British ‘Thatcherism’²⁴. The coming to power of Mrs Thatcher’s Conservative Party was, they argued, not a ‘swing of the pendulum’ that would be reversed when the Left mobilised or the economy deteriorated, but a historical ‘project’ based on a powerful, newly formulated *populist* ideology, cementing together and mobilising new *popular* constituencies. Its ideology, initially developed in think-tanks and academia²⁵, had later percolated into popular ‘common sense’ via the media and party politics. It was an ideology with far-reaching ambitions. It sought to explain both current social problems and past policy failures; to re-define politics so as to legitimise new radical policies of social transformation and, at the same time, discredit existing understandings of politics and other possible alternatives. Disconcertingly for many on the Left, Hall argued that Thatcherism was not so much imposed or foisted on people as *accepted, consented to and supported*

by them even when their ‘real’ interests lay elsewhere. Its success lay above all in the way its ideology defined, addressed and explained the specific problems of Britain in the 1970’s.

I would like to argue that a Gramscian model of the type developed by Hall to analyse British Thatcherism can be fruitfully applied as a heuristic device to ‘Thatcherism Czech-style’ and perhaps to post-communist politics generally. For a number of reasons, Gramscian approaches to politics and ideology can be seen as highly relevant to post-communist politics. This is because 1) while one-party systems suppressed the public sphere and monopolised the political discourse, the more pluralistic and democratic political arrangements that replaced them now make securing long-term *consent* by a range of social groups a newly important aspect of holding power; 2) because the sudden extinction of the old (communist) regimes requires not only the creation of new institutions but also of new understandings of politics and of new political identities to provide a meaningful framework for political action; and finally 3) because the *very absence* of civil society or well articulated alternative ideologies creates a vacuum that can and must be filled in the early post-transition period²⁶.

Is it, however, really legitimate to speak of two ‘Thatcherisms, and to compare the post-war politics of Britain with the post-communist politics of the Czech Lands? Despite Hayek’s warnings, few would seriously equate the totalitarian-inclined, bureaucratic-authoritarian, communist regime in Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989 with the British post-war settlement of Keynesian welfare capitalism and mildly corporatist liberal democracy. Moreover, while Britain’s post-war settlement rested on a more or less meaningful social and ideological consensus, Communist rule in Czechoslovakia, with the brief exception of 1968, was based on a coercive monopoly

of political power, rendering both ideological and political discourse and the ‘public sphere’ itself largely meaningless²⁷. While Mrs Thatcher’s conservatism reacted against one particular *form* of capitalism and liberal democracy and offered an alternative model, post-communist political and economic change in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic involved a wholesale *change of regime*²⁸. Finally, it should be noted that Czech ‘Thatcherites’ in the early 1990’s were not confronted by well-established institutional and ideological consensus, but by a confusing *partial vacuum* of institutions and ill-defined political and ideological buzzwords. In so far as there was any ‘established’ consensus it was the vague civic ideology - ‘a hybrid of romantic, Heideggerian metaphysics and liberal jurisprudence ... which had evolved in resistance to the state’²⁹ - embodied by President Havel and the Civic Forum movement, which emerged in 1989 and sought to be non-ideological, social-*cum*-political organisation. Nevertheless, despite enormous differences of context, both ‘Thatcherisms’ can be seen as having certain similarities.

- Both sought to re-define radically the relationship between market, state and civil society as a means of reversing long-term economic stagnation and perceived moral decline, and to make a radical break with the past, more specifically with their respective ‘post-war settlements’.
- In both cases, Thatcherite ‘organic intellectuals’ formulated their ideology on the margins, largely undetected. In Britain these intellectuals were academics and researchers in right-wing think-tanks. In the Czech case they consisted of intellectual counter-elites committed to neo-liberalism and conservatism, which emerged in communist Czechoslovakia from the mid-1960’s and early-1970’s as

both ‘dissent’ and as informal networks in official research organisations engaged in ‘crypto-opposition’.

- Both were predominantly identified with one political party led by a charismatic and forceful leader supported by a centralised state and support in the media.
- Both legitimised and explained themselves through innovative popular (or populist) right-wing ideologies combining neo-liberalism and conservatism, ideologies which projected their policies as reflecting a historical imperative to which there was no viable alternative.
- Both used such ideologies to define and mobilise broad new, heterogeneous popular constituencies (in Gramscian terms ‘historic blocs’). In doing so, both drew on aspirations for social mobility and personal advancement, rather than conventional social or class divisions. In the Czech case, given the social levelling of the Communist era and the uncertain impact of economic reform, such divisions were largely undefined and perhaps even undefinable³⁰.
- Both enjoyed periods of intellectual and political dominance, before suffering sudden decline, revealing not only policy failure but also ideological exhaustion.

In using a loosely Gramscian framework, I am also suggesting that ‘Czech Thatcherism’, like its British precursor, can be understood as a ‘hegemonic project’. I do not wish to suggest, however, that it successfully established such a hegemony in Czech society. Such a judgement, which would require broader analysis and greater refinement of concepts, is beyond the scope of this article. Rather, while touching the role of ‘organic intellectuals’ and the role of ideology in mobilising social constituencies and shoring up power structures in state and civil society, my main

focus will be on the *articulations* of the ideology of ‘Czech Thatcherism’ as an innovative attempt to ground neo-liberalism in a re-invented post-communist conservatism. In doing so, I deal mainly with its popular and ‘common sense’ articulations, rather than its coherency in more rigorously philosophical terms³¹.

Such an analysis of ‘Czech Thatcherism’ shows, I believe, that although historically rooted in responses to the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and the regime of ‘normalisation’ that followed, it possessed a number of underlying weaknesses. Such weaknesses stemmed above all from the lack of a strong pre-communist Czech conservative tradition, inducing a reliance on imported neo-liberal models, largely legitimated on the prospect of a ‘Czech economic miracle’.

The Czech Lands: A Cold Climate For the Right?

Stuart Hall argued that what was striking in British Thatcherism was the way it:

‘brilliantly *combines* within a single political ideology an organic conservative emphasis on the values of tradition, family, monarchy, patriarchy and the nation with a ‘neo-liberal’ emphasis on the gospel of the free market, (.....) and the private sphere of the citizen against the “creeping socialist” threats to liberty from an overweening state and an overextended welfare system’³².

However, Czech political traditions, unlike those of Great Britain, lacked either a strong belief in the ‘gospel of the free market’ or well-established organic conservative ideologies. Indeed, viewed historically, the Czech Lands seem an unlikely setting for an East European post-communist New Right revolution. It is true that by the late 19th century economic and political liberalism was firmly rooted in the Czech Lands, drawing support from an increasingly important Czech commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. As in much of 19th Europe century Europe, Czechs looked to

Britain and the United States for both practical and intellectual models of liberalism³³. However, such Czech liberalism was always historically highly ‘impure’, suffused and intertwined with both nationalism and metaphysical and moral concerns and was increasingly crosscut by the simultaneous rise of mass class-based politics³⁴. Liberal institutions - parliamentarianism, constitutionalism, free trade, the free market etc. - were thus often viewed as a means of achieving national autonomy or social goals rather than ends in themselves. Moreover, like the Czech national programme itself, such institutions remained largely unrealised until the creation of an independent Czechoslovak state in 1918.

Historically, the meaning of ‘conservatism’ in the Czech Lands was still more obscure. The word had little historical resonance for Czechs except as a synonym for reactionary 19th century Austrian rulers, whom traditional Czech national historiography viewed as holding back the Czech nation. Indeed, the social composition of Czech society and its lack of a native aristocracy were usually viewed as making the Czech nation inherently ‘plebeian’ and democratic. The typical historical and social basis of the Right in many European countries - the aristocracy, authoritarian integral nationalism, and/or political Catholicism (what Anthony Giddens terms ‘old conservatism’³⁵) were thus weak or absent in the Czech Lands, in marked contrast to, for example, pre-communist Hungary and Poland. In these ‘gentry nations’ native aristocracies and oligarchical social structures co-existed with strong authoritarian nationalist ideologies linked with Catholicism and nativist or ruralist political traditions³⁶. Apart from the more chauvinistic anti-German manifestations of Czech nationalism, the closest equivalent to a historic Czech conservatism was perhaps a line of Catholic-oriented, political thought associated with Josef Pekař

(1870-1937). This current of thought challenged the progressive democratically-oriented Czech nationalist ideology developed by Masaryk from the earlier ideas of František Palacký³⁷. It was sceptical of both the mythopoeia and liberal-democratic orientation of such Czech nationalism and critical of new the Czechoslovak state's policy of demonstratively breaking with the Austrian past through, for example, land reform or hostility to the Catholic church. Czechoslovakia's interwar political establishment was attacked for somewhat different reasons by a small *fronde* of right-wing nationalist intellectuals. In the view of these thinkers the new state's leaders placed too much faith in the West and in the historical inevitability of liberal-democratic values and paid too little attention to asserting Czechoslovakia's self-interest, national self-confidence and self-defence³⁸.

In the highly fragmented multi-party coalition politics of democratic interwar Czechoslovakia the 'right-wing' was represented by an array of parties with different historical roots, which in other countries had merged into stronger right-wing traditions. The three most significant were Czechoslovak National Democracy, the declining successor to the classical Czech nationalist parties of the 19th century; the Catholic-based People's Party, whose support was restricted to rural regions in the East of the Czech Lands³⁹; and the Agrarian Party, which evolved from a party representing agricultural interests to a political force representing interwar Czechoslovakia's closest equivalent to a broad party of the right. The Agrarians played a pivotal role in inter-war coalition-building and had a firm implantation not only in rural civil society, but also in business and the state apparatus. Under the leadership of Rudolf Beran in the 1930's the Agrarians even adopted a conscious strategy of making their party the core of a right-wing conservative bloc. However,

their efforts met with little success and, despite being the largest party for much of the inter-war period, the Agrarian vote never exceeded 15%. In inter-war Czechoslovakia the right-wing thus remained fragmented, organisationally undeveloped and intellectually marginalised and failed to develop a broad appeal. Attempts after the 1938 Munich Agreement, in the 'Second Republic' (1938-9) and the Nazi-controlled Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1939-45), to create an authoritarian pro-German Czech national ideology based on a corporate state were even less successful⁴⁰.

After 1945 the Czech electorate and Czech politics as a whole swung markedly to the Left. Even in the short democratic interlude before the communist takeover in February 1948, two of the three historic 'right-wing' parties - National Democracy and the Agrarians - were banned for alleged wartime collaboration⁴¹. Discussion of right-wing or conservative elements in Czech political history, other than those assimilating them to Fascism or reactionary foreign rule, remained a taboo subject in official communist historiography⁴². Further confusion was caused in the 1960's by the use of the term 'conservative' to describe Communist opponents of Dubček's (and in the 1990's Gorbachev's) reforms⁴³. However, it is in reactions to Dubček's reform communist project, Czechoslovakia's 'Prague Spring', and its suppression during and after the Soviet-led invasion of 1968 that the roots of the Czech post-communist 'Thatcherite' right are to be found⁴⁴.

On the Trail of the Czech New Right : (1) Dissident 'Neo-Conservatives' and 'Tories'

For both communist and non-communist reformers, the 'normalisation' regime established in Czechoslovakia after 1968 ended any meaningful prospect of working through the existing 'socialist' political institutions and ideology. Many opposition

thinkers, most famously Václav Havel, stressed the idea of human rights, legality and a semi-philosophical ‘non-political politics’ of ‘living in truth’. Some, however, thought in more political terms of continuity with a better national past. Many turned to the democratic heritage of the interwar Czechoslovak Republic, which also served as a general source of moral inspiration for Havel. Others pursued the idea of ‘Central Europe’ as a ‘kidnapped West’⁴⁵, carrying it over into a generalised nostalgia for the supra-national, hierarchical, Catholic monarchical conservatism of the pre-1918 Hapsburg Empire. Such thinkers presented the revisionist view that Czechs had steadily prospered under Hapsburg tutelage and that in establishing an independent, socially progressive Czechoslovakia in 1918, had merely created a weak vulnerable state, whose egalitarian ethos paved the way for communism⁴⁶. However, as Marlene Laruelle argues, such nostalgic conservative Central Europeanism implied little in practical political terms after 1989 (other than viewing the Czech Lands as part of the Germanic world pro-German orientation in foreign policy). Moreover, it represented a radical deconstruction of the Czech national identity as it had evolved since the mid 19th century⁴⁷. However, given that for most Czechs the Nation is still a central category for understanding politics⁴⁸, the popular appeal and political potential of such a ‘Central European’ conservatism after 1989 was virtually nil.

Western-derived neo-conservative orientations in the Czech Lands originate largely from a group of young Catholic-oriented intellectuals centred around Pavel Bratinka and Daniel Kroupa. This grouping emerged in the early 1970’s. Its informal political discussions both continued certain debates of the 1960’s reform era and reacted to the collapse of the reform communist project and the onset of ‘normalisation’⁴⁹. Kroupa, for example, has noted the formative influence on him of the 1968-69 debate between

Václav Havel and Milan Kundera over the meaning of the Prague Spring. While Kundera considered the reform communist project of ‘democratic socialism’ a unique and heroic Czech contribution to world politics, Havel saw it as a failed and half-hearted attempt to return to political normality⁵⁰. Endorsing Havel’s view, the small, isolated group around Bratinka and Kroupa made a conscious effort to find a wholly non-socialist social and political philosophy. A second source of inspiration for such right-wing dissidents was the phenomenological philosophy of Jan Patočka, whose central preoccupation was examining the ‘natural world’ or ‘life world’ undistorted by power, ideology or technology⁵¹.

From an early stage, however, the Bratinka-Kroupa group drew on the thinking of the Anglo-American New Right. Kroupa, for example, recalls how ‘Bratinka studied Anglo-Saxon literature and was enchanted by the American neo-conservatives. At the beginning of the 1970’s he used to translate articles, which we pored over, as we were left to our own lonely reflections, because there was no one to talk to and virtually no literature which might have guided us’⁵². Pavel Bratinka mentions G.K. Chesterton, the Austro-American philosopher, Eric Voeglin, and the American Catholic writer, Michael Novak, as key political influences. The group’s initially purely philosophical project became gradually more political⁵³, markedly so from the mid-1980’s when they discovered Hayek and came into direct contact with British right-wing intellectuals such as Roger Scruton⁵⁴, editor of the *Salisbury Review*, one of the leading voices on the ‘social authoritarian’ wing of the British New Right⁵⁵. As a result of contacts established by Scruton, the *Salisbury Review* and other Western (neo-)conservative journals were widely known (sometimes as translated *samizdat*) among dissident intellectuals in Czechoslovakia. In the 1980’s, the Czech dissident

intelligentsia thus became more consciously ‘right-wing’. In February 1988, Václav Havel, for example, told an English visitor of ‘new moods’ in dissent and a drift to the right reflecting a ‘worldwide wave of neo-conservatism, which has reached here also. Such moods have mainly affected Catholics of the younger generation’⁵⁶. The Bratinka-Kroupa group were later ‘founding fathers’ of the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), a junior partner in the 1992-7 Klaus government.

Another important dissident thinker influenced by English Toryism was Petr Pithart, later Czech Prime Minister (1990-1992) and Speaker of the Czech Senate (1996-1998). Pithart’s cautious, balanced, self-doubting reflections set him within a long tradition of scepticism in Czech political thought⁵⁷. His 1978 *samizdat* book of reflections on 1968, for example, took up Havel’s interpretation of the era, sceptically dissecting many of the reform communist illusions of the period⁵⁸. Nevertheless, his outlook has been strongly influenced by British conservative thought and the ‘British political style’, which he first discovered in a moment of revelation on a study visit to St Anthony’s College, Oxford in 1969 where

‘... I quite literally found myself. Everything I had philosophically and politically only sensed, I discovered in place and precisely expressed’⁵⁹.

Pithart developed his dissident intellectual ‘conservatism’ more consciously in the 1980’s when he explored the historic conservatism of, for example, Pekař as well as that of Scruton, whose *The Meaning of Conservatism* he translated into Czech⁶⁰. However, it was traditional Tory ideas - the importance of historical continuity, the immutability of human nature, the need for a sense of place, pragmatic non-ideological statecraft⁶¹, the importance of a judiciary independent of political control - which attracted him, rather than Scruton’s militantly social-authoritarian stance⁶².

Unlike philosophically or religiously inclined dissidents or Hayekian liberals, Pithart was also deeply concerned with critically understanding the continuities and discontinuities of Czech history. In particular he was concerned with understanding the appeal of ideologies which had sought to break with and ‘undo’ the past, including the mass support and legitimacy communism enjoyed in 1945-8 (and to a lesser extent 1968).

Thus, despite the absence of a conservative tradition, conservative *concerns* - order, historical continuity, morality, identity, a sense of the particular - were abundantly present in Czech dissident politics. Such concerns fell into three broad areas: 1) the problem of historical (cultural) continuity⁶³; 2) the need to restore ‘traditional values’ and ‘natural’ social forms; and 3) a suspicion of populism and mass democratic politics. Both dissident anti-politics and British conservative thought of their respective societies as in essence natural, organic communities. Many dissidents, including ‘anti-political’ thinkers such as Havel, saw the communist regime as promoting soulless modern consumerism and moral decay and longed for an authentic, ‘natural’ society and a return of ‘decency’ (*slušnost*), public spiritedness and spiritual values⁶⁴. Pithart, for example, wrote in 1979

‘The authorities are creating a social climate characterised by the social decay (*pokleslosti*) of traditional values of human solidarity, honesty (*poctivosti*) and decency. But the reverse is also true: this climate in return creates ... conditions which fertilise, reproduce and reinforce the present authorities’⁶⁵

Similar preoccupations with moral decline have animated many Western neo-conservatives. However, dissident concerns were more communitarian than conservative. The ‘traditional values’ whose loss they mourned were more those of

the ‘civic culture’ - traditions of co-operation and trust - than those of patriarchy and a monolithic national culture. These, paradoxically had been well maintained in socialist Czechoslovakia where communist authoritarianism had enforced a social and cultural conformity and insulated the country from much of the cultural pluralisation and ‘permissiveness’ of the West⁶⁶. Like many traditional conservative ideologies, much dissident thought linked authenticity and human identity with the renewal of the local, parochial and small scale. In the Czech context, however, such concerns reflected less a preoccupation with authority than a reaction against communist gigantism and strong traditions of localism, which identified the community (*obec*) with the commune (*obec*).

Thirdly, throughout virtually the whole of the communist regime most Czechoslovak dissidents lived in a tiny ghetto of opposition intellectuals. Despite their commitment to democracy, many regarded the possible mass entry of the Czech public into politics with distinct apprehension. A sudden collapse of the regime would, they feared, bring not meaningful democracy, but an outbreak of vengeful demagogic anti-communist populism. This was particularly the case with thinkers such as Pithart, who, while aware of the dangers of dissident ghettoisation, were acutely conscious of how democracy had ‘malfunctioned’ in the Czech Lands in 1946, when (uniquely in Eastern Europe) the Communist Party had won a sweeping election victory in relatively free elections. It had then taken power in 1948 with mass support in an outwardly legal and constitutional manner⁶⁷. Pithart was determined that post-communist transition should not take the form of an ‘anti-1948’, populist anti-Communist purges masquerading as parliamentary democracy, but in reality ignoring the rule of law. Many Western conservatives historically and some neo-conservatives

in the present day have been sceptical of democracy. Scruton, for example, has referred to it as a ‘contagion’⁶⁸. However, they have typically been more concerned with preserving traditional (unelected) authority, than stemming popular mobilisation. Thus, while Czech dissident (anti-)political thought undoubtedly *did* have certain common preoccupations with Western neo-conservatism, these affinities should not be overstated. Václav Havel, for example, commented in 1988 that ‘...I am irritated with Roger Scruton, who has said in the *Salisbury Review* that I am a typical neo-conservative. It is not true, and everybody who knows me knows this’⁶⁹. Close affinities were confined, in fact, to a relatively distinct dissident ‘right-wing’.

On the Trail of the Czech New Right : (2) The Neo-Liberalism of ‘The Young Economists’

Let us now turn to the neo-liberalism of ‘Czech Thatcherism’. This too, was anything but a set of ‘designer ideologies’⁷⁰. The penetration of Western neo-liberalism too was a direct consequence of the 1960’s reform era and its traumatic suppression in August 1968. In the search for ideas to reform and modernise the Czechoslovak economy in the 1960’s, academic elites were allowed access to previously unavailable Western social science literature. In this context, a narrowly generationally defined group of ‘Young Economists’⁷¹ emerged, including Václav Klaus, Tomáš Ježek (Czech Privatisation Minister in 1990-2) and other important figures after 1989, who even by the late 1960’s had come to reject not only orthodox Marxist central planning, but also officially-backed ideas of a ‘socialist market’ developed by Ota Šik and his team at Economic Institute of the Academy of Sciences⁷². The ‘Young Economists’ quickly gravitated from the Keynesian ‘neo-classical synthesis’ towards neo-liberalism of the Austrian and Chicago schools (Hayek, Friedman)⁷³. For example,

Klaus, in the 1960's a researcher in the Economic Institute in a department devoted to the study non-Marxist economic theory, recalled :

'Paradoxically, I was being paid to study contemporary international economics and clearly, for a graduate of the Economic University [in Prague] which was simply untouched by contemporary international economics, this was simply a revelation and I was completely hooked. I had entered a completely different intellectual world and toying with official Czechoslovak economics just never entered into consideration'

In the 1960's the political impact of young neo-liberals was minimal. Following the 1968 invasion, some 'Young Economists' including Klaus were dismissed from academic posts. They were, however, allowed to work in technical roles in financial and economic institutions (Klaus for example in the State Bank). Others such as Ježek were untouched by the post-1968 purges⁷⁴. During the years of 'normalisation' these economists and others working within official structures (the Institute of Economics, State Bank, the Forecasting Institute) were largely left alone by the authorities and were able to make use of the resources and opportunities afforded to engage in 'crypto-opposition'. Such activity largely consisted of quietly promoting and discussing free-market economics and economic reform⁷⁵. During the Velvet Revolution certain of these elites became important political actors in the Civic Forum-led transitional government (Klaus, for example, became Federal Finance Minister).

Klaus, Ježek and the Young Economists were attracted to neo-liberalism and monetarism in the 1960's for very practical reasons. Firstly, the Austrian School of Hayek and Von Mises had from the 1930's elaborated a critique of the idea of

planning, and in particular of the idea of socialist central planning, which it rejected as an impossibility given the nature of human knowledge. Secondly, monetarists such as Friedman focused on the dangers of inflation, which, Klaus and others realised was a major, but hidden, feature of socialist economies given the distortions, shortages and a ‘monetary overhang’ created by administratively fixed prices ⁷⁶. Such neo-liberals drew their inspiration almost exclusively from foreign sources (mainly Hayek and Friedman, but also thinkers such as Michael Novak and James Buchanan and the Virginia ‘Public Choice’ school ⁷⁷). Ježek, by contrast was a convinced Hayekian and the foremost Czech exponent (and translator) of Hayek’s works. Klaus consciously dismissed traditional Czech social, political and economic thought (including that of the democratic interwar Czechoslovak Republic) as uninteresting, unproductive and parochial.

Klaus recalled, for example, that the approach of James Buchanan and the Virginia Public Choice School’:

‘...is very close to mine, and to that of the small group of people around me, who used to meet in the 1980s. We never romanticised politics. I believe that the view of our leading dissident elites on political matters drew on completely different intellectual sources and roots. It drew on a much more traditional view of the problem, or came out of a not very pragmatic philosophy. It certainly did not draw on the more rigorous, exact and markedly liberal standpoint which culminated in the Public Choice school’⁷⁸.

Whereas the philosophy of Jan Patočka was a formative influence on Kroupa and neo-conservatives’ in Charter 77, Klaus dismisses Patočka as ‘indisputably one of the blind alleys of Czech philosophy’⁷⁹.

The broader public appeal of (neo)liberalism in the Czech Lands after 1989 is at one level not difficult to state: economic efficiency, prosperity, the freedom to pursue one's own individual goals and interests denied under communism. All these points were made by politicians of the right⁸⁰. In August 1992 Tomáš Ježek, shortly after leaving the post of Czech Privatisation Minister, even predicted

‘... that just as in the fifties and sixties people spoke of a German economic miracle, so in five years time, or maybe sooner, people will be talking about a Czech economic miracle’⁸¹

In some ways such promises merely represented a renewal and re-negotiation of Czechoslovakia's unwritten ‘social contract’ which ‘more or less worked for the regime’ in the years of ‘normalisation’. The ‘social contract’ the regime then offered its people has been summed up by Timothy Garton Ash thus:

‘Forget your democratic traditions. Forget that you were once citizens with rights and duties Forget politics. In return we will give you a comfortable, safe life. There'll be plenty of food in the shops and cheap beer in the pubs. You may afford a car and even a little country cottage - and you won't have to work competitively. We don't ask you to believe in us or our fatuous ideology. By all means listen to the Voice of America and watch Austrian television (*sotto voce*: so do we). All we ask is that you outwardly and publicly conform’⁸²

The neo-liberal vision, however, offered not a shabby, limited socialist consumerism in exchange for political quiescence, but the glossy lifestyle seen on Austrian and German television in return for electoral support. As early as 1988 Neal Acherson recognised that the Central European intelligentsia's ‘dream of escape’ would most probably in practice be more a world of ‘BMW salesmen and German blue movies’⁸³.

For, as the exiled left-wing philosopher, Ivan Sviták, put it still more brutally: '[p]eople are attracted by the lifestyle of prosperous societies, not the ideology of freedom; by being able to travel, not the moral defence of human rights; by the video shop with a shelf full of porn, not the values of humanism'⁸⁴. The neo-liberal promise of an economic miracle recognised and catered for such appetites.

However, at both mass and elite level Anglo-American neo-liberal ideas - and especially those of Hayek - had a wider normative appeal than simply abstract efficiency or getting-rich-quick. Ježek, for example, recalled his pre-1989 vision of a Czech 'market society' thus:

'I personally dreamt of a little, clean, orderly Austrian town with white houses, small inns and a sense of spiritual balance. I imagined people coming out of church on fine Sundays, all the houses whitewashed, all the fences mended and all the lawns mown. Nothing that wasn't carefully looked after by someone - simply boring old Europe (*ta nudná Evropa*)'⁸⁵.

Unlike many Anglo-American liberals Hayek is less interested in the idea of individual freedom than in the problem of *social order*⁸⁶. The Hayekian idea is one of the market and market society as a 'spontaneous order', guaranteeing the emergence of a stable, well-ordered and moral society - with morality promoted by individual choice not state coercion. This was an idea deeply appealing to many Czechs, who had retained both a Central European sense of petit-bourgeois propriety *and* a suspicion of the state, rooted in the experience of both communism and foreign rule before 1918⁸⁷. In a sense, Hayek's philosophy thus served as a the basis of a kind of economic, liberal anti-politics, paralleling the moral and philosophical anti-politics of Havel and others.

However, given the dearth of conservative traditions, dissident conservatives' underlying fear of popular mass democratic politics and the neo-liberals' outright rejection of Czech political traditions combined with a hard-headed recognition of the appeal of consumerism, why and how did a would-be post-communist *conservatism* emerge, rather simply a right-wing free-market liberal ideology?

Getting Grounded: The Meaning of Post-Communist Conservatism?

Always known for his firm free market views, Klaus emerged as the dominant figure on the Czech Right in late 1990. He initially defined his views as a right-wing 'genuine liberalism', outlining a Hayekian view of politics as opposing collectivist social engineers and individualist liberals⁸⁸. Klaus admired the British Conservatives, toyed with the idea calling his party (founded in March 1991) 'conservative'⁸⁹ and encouraged delegates and activists at its founding congress to see it as a Czech equivalent of the British Tories. However, the conservative label lacked resonance even among the party's grassroots supporters⁹⁰ and the idea of a Czech conservative *ideology* was not at first pursued. Nevertheless from 1992 onwards - beginning with the essay 'Why I Am A Conservative' - reversing Hayek's famous postscript ('Why I Not A Conservative')⁹¹, the erstwhile neo-liberal Klaus thus made a sustained effort to argue that ODS represented Czech conservatism⁹². The party's 1992 programme identifies it as 'a conservative party attempting to preserve and renew for our future the fundamental values of European Christian civilisation and Czechoslovakia's democratic traditions'⁹³. Why did this ideological turn occur?

The issue went deeper than choosing a political label comprehensible to the Czech public⁹⁴. For, despite the emphasis it laid upon rapid economic transformation, in order to mobilise political support an effective ideology had to offer more than a well

packaged set of policies or principles. In other words, neo-liberal ideas had to be ideologically ‘grounded’ both in Czech culture and history and at the same time in the post-communist context of Czech politics. Given that imported ideological models, whose main element was neo-liberalism, were seen as *superseding* dissident and traditional (pre-communist) Czech political thought, such a ‘grounding’ would have to take a different route from the usual mix of morally and metaphysically tinged liberal nationalism, humanism and nostalgia for interwar Czechoslovakia.

Moreover, as we have seen from Ježek’s evocation of a ‘small Austrian town’, liberal considerations of a Free Society inevitably slipped into or concealed normative considerations of the Good Society. In his battles of 1990-1 to assert his concept of economic transformation and transform Civic Forum from a loose movement into a disciplined party with a clear ideology, Klaus had stressed not only their greater efficiency, but deployed a range of normative arguments, above all the idea that parties and free markets were ‘standard’ and ‘classical’ European institutions.

It was the recognition of the need to ground and adapt foreign models to the Czech context that led to the elaboration of the ideology of ‘Czech Thatcherism’ - what Czechs refer to as a ‘liberal-conservative’ (*liberálně konzervativní*) orientation. This was partly a conscious ideological project and partly a response to unforeseen events such as the split of Czechoslovakia. For Jan Stráský, then Deputy Chairman of the Civic Democratic Party noted in 1993

‘British conservatism and the British conception of the market economy, although we might take notice of and respect them as much as possible, are things we will definitely never succeed in creating. Rather, it could be said that

the Czechification (*počeštění*) of the conservative programme, which we have taken on is something which will emerge'⁹⁵

Let us now examine how neo-liberalism was in fact grounded and 'Czechified' and at the same time consider alternative Czech readings of conservatism after 1989.

The Meanings of Post-Communist Conservatism: 1) Klaus and Kroupa 'Traditionalising the Revolution'

While Czech neo-liberals sought to emulate the 17th century English Whigs who had 'sanctified their revolution by traditionalizing it'⁹⁶, would-be Czech (neo-)conservative politicians after 1989 faced the same problem from a different angle. It was difficult in the Czech context to identify what (if anything) was genuinely 'traditional'. As we have seen, this was a problem which had already occurred in more intellectualised form in dissent. In the Czech Lands after 1989, as one Czech journalist noted, 'just about anything can be conserved, starting with the Golden Age of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and ending with the revolutionary "conquests" of Victorious February [1948 - the communist takeover]'⁹⁷. Moreover, as Daniel Kroupa conceded in 1990 '... we have very few values we should conserve, in the past forty years most of them have been shattered' leaving only 'a certain [Czech] popular feeling (*lidovost*) and straightforwardness (*civilnost*)'⁹⁸. To speak of the 'traditional values of European civilisation and its traditional institutions. (...) ..the family...the nation or religion'⁹⁹ was both vague and uncontentious in a society which, while less socially conservative than Poland or Slovakia, was hardly 'permissive' or multicultural. This, coupled with a political atmosphere that understood political change after 1989 in terms of *extending* rather than restricting freedom, would have made the importation of the social authoritarian discourses on, for example, race,

gender and sexuality, typical of Anglo-American neo-conservatism, both problematic and inappropriate for the Czech Lands.

Inter-war Czechoslovakia, whilst broadly inspiring as a democratic, Western-style market economy was, however, too socially progressive and etatistic to offer inspiration to either neo-conservatives or neo-liberals. The 1945-48 interregnum was also unattractive as a period of pro-Soviet stances and left-wing policies such as nationalisation, which many historians view as preparing the ground for the Communist takeover in 1948¹⁰⁰. This ideological dilemma led to the formulation of a ‘revolutionary conservatism’¹⁰¹, which made a number of key ideological claims:

1. Firstly, it offered a *reading of communism* as an ‘unnatural order’¹⁰², a period of discontinuity in Czech history and an artificial break imposed by a *putsch*, for which external forces and a minority of Czechs (Communists) were responsible. The 1968 era was dismissed as simply a power struggle between communist elites over misconceived and naive ideas of reforming the unreformable, which were in the worst utopian traditions of Czech national messianism. Mass public support for the Communist Party or socialism in 1945-8 or 1968 (as well as the tacit mass collaboration with ‘normalisation’) were glossed over, a key ideological silence. Subsequent legislation pushed through by the Right such as the Czech ‘Lustration’ Law (1991) or the Law on the Illegality of Communist Regime (1993) make sense less in terms of their practical or jurisprudential effects, than as a symbolical enactment of this reading of communism¹⁰³.

2. Secondly, it defined a *special post-communist conservatism* turning on the idea that in the post-communist context conservatism was not concerned with evolutionary

change but with recovering ‘values’ via a revolutionary break with the immediate past. As Klaus put it

‘The credo of conservatism is not a longing to hold on (*uchovávat*) at all costs everything old, but an attempt to conserve (*zachovat*) the genuine, tried and tested values on which our civilisation was for a long time based and on which we want it to be based in the future’¹⁰⁴

‘...when society rests firmly on well-anchored pillars of ‘conservative’ values, when it senses them thoroughly and is governed by them (...) ... conservatives act in a very ‘unrevolutionary’ way, as guardians of what exists, in such situations they want in the true sense of the word to conserve what is. However, in a society in which true values have been violently interrupted..... the goal of conservatives is to return to true values, and their means of doing so is to make every possible effort to re-establish them. It is for this reason that the conservatism of our time, of our present time, is revolutionary in the extreme (*navýsost revoluční*), and for this reason that it is wholly, and as a matter of policy (*programově*), lacking in moderation (*neumířný*)’¹⁰⁵.

Or, in Kroupa’s words:

‘Whilst British conservatism is both structural and value-oriented (*hodnotový*), our conservatism cannot be structural, in the sense of trying to preserve the existing social order... Our conservatism must be value-oriented. There is a charming paradox, conservatism is becoming a revolutionary force’¹⁰⁶

The special situation of post-communism thus justified the temporary and special dispensation of using ‘revolutionary’ means for conservative ends. On similar grounds

a temporary reversal of Hayekian principles in allowing an extensive initial economic role for the state in kick-starting the ‘spontaneous’ market order¹⁰⁷.

3. It defined *the market and liberal institutions as ‘traditional values’ (and vice versa)*. Any conflict between conservatism and liberalism, it was argued, was now purely historical. The restoration of ‘traditional’ liberal institutions could and would restore and recreate other traditional moral values¹⁰⁸. Liberal institutions were traditional not only because, as one ODS billboard put it in 1992, ‘Doing Business is Natural’ but also, as Hayek had argued, because they were the ‘tried and tested’ product of a long evolutionary process. This Hayekian view was extended beyond legal and economic organisation and applied to other ‘normal’ institutions such as, for example, ‘standard’ political parties. As Bratinka, for example, argued

‘Czechoslovak conservatism has to dig back more than 41 years into the past to find a time when parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, market economics and civil society were established features of this country. Bringing these things back to life will indeed be an extremely ‘‘conservative’’ undertaking’¹⁰⁹

Or, in Klaus’s view

‘Conservatism today is characterised by the linking of classical liberalism, promoting individualism, freedom and the market with a certain traditionalism calling for the restoration of the moral values of the past’¹¹⁰

Although Hayek rejects the notion of social justice, the idea of the market-as-tradition or ‘natural state’ helped legitimise restitution as a form of privatisation, a moral and historical approach at odds with strict liberal economic rationality¹¹¹.

4. The free market, it was argued, was not only natural and 'traditional' institution offering a source of mass opportunities ('Everyone Has the Right to Succeed' as a 1992 ODS election slogan ran). The market and its mass opportunities were also projected as *grounded in Czech national character and cultural traditions*. For Czechs political and economic transformation, it was stressed, represented not simply a 'return to Europe' but also a 'return to normal', a rediscovery and restoration of their national tradition and identity, which would logically benefit all Czechs. The market and liberal institutions were thus projected not so much as mechanisms of political and economic co-ordination and mediation, but as an expression of Western and European culture - a culture with which Czechs supposedly had special affinity¹¹². Such an ideological view of the market partly was linked with the adoption of mass coupon privatisation - the Czech version of 'popular capitalism'¹¹³, - an economic strategy explicitly intended to minimise foreign ownership to lay the basis of *Czech* capital and a *Czech* entrepreneurial class¹¹⁴.

This theme of the 'Czech Way' (*Česká cesta*¹¹⁵) of socio-economic transformation became more explicit with the split of Czechoslovakia. As something of a historical novelty the new Czech state required historical and ideological justification. It could, however, be directly contrasted and favourably contrasted with Slovakia. Nevertheless, as Kieran Williams notes, Klaus was ill at ease with many of the historic symbols and myths of Czech nationhood,¹¹⁶ the folk legends, saints and writers of traditional Czech nationalism, or the humanism of Masaryk, the first president of independent Czechoslovakia after 1918. Rather, it was Czech economic success, a post-communist 'economic miracle' that was to be the new content of Czech nationalism. This practical, hard-working and entrepreneurial Czech character -

what Czechs call their ‘golden hands’ (*zlaté české ruce*) - had made them solidly prosperous in the past and would do so again. It was thus perhaps not coincidental that Ježek cited the German *Wirtschaftswunder* into which traditional romantic German nationalism had been sublimated. However, despite the absence of explicit historic reference, post-communist Czech ‘national liberalism’ had strong echoes of the nationalistic Czech economic liberalism of the late 19th and early 20th century, which saw the creation of a prosperous market economy and strong Czech financial and industrial sectors, above all as an expression of national independence¹¹⁷.

The result was an ideological *synthesis* which, like all effective ideologies, united diverse themes and reconciled apparent contradictions into a coherent narrative¹¹⁸. This was a narrative of a Czech post-communist transformation, whose central content would be economic and which would restore an interrupted national continuity and dormant national values through a radical ‘revolutionary’ break with the immediate past. Such a conservatism thus included notions of both progress *and* tradition. It advocated overturning old institutions and creating new ones, but was nevertheless ‘conservative’ because it was recreating and reconnecting with what had historically evolved before the historical rupture represented by communism. ‘Revolutionary conservatism’ thus anchored the rationalistic principles of an imported academic neo-liberalism firmly in the Czech context. As Klaus himself put it: ‘Conservatism is a wider world view than liberalism and has a richer programme. Liberalism is contained within conservatism’¹¹⁹.

8. The Meanings of Conservatism: (2) The Non-Ideological Evolution of Civil Society and The Market

For Klaus and Kroupa post-communist conservatism logically implied a liberal, anti-communist ‘revolution’ because conservatism in the conventional sense would mean preserving large elements of ‘real socialism’. However, in the view of Czech conservatives such as Petr Pithart, this did not make such traditional conservative thinking and its scepticism towards blueprints for radical change any less valid or in some sense ‘left-wing’. A cautious, pragmatic, evolutionary approach need not imply a commitment to state interventionism or egalitarianism, and was in fact more likely to result in genuine social change than a hurried ‘revolutionary’ approach which underestimated the need for a firm rule of law and the growth of a civic culture.

Pithart and others argued after 1989 that the concept of a revolutionary break with the past was itself both ‘left-wing’ and inherently dangerous. It raised expectations which, given the practicalities of politics and the frailties of human nature (of which Pithart took the traditional pessimistic conservative view), could not be met. This would result in frustration, disappointment and a ‘Jacobin’ phase of militant radicalism directed against imaginary internal enemies.¹²⁰ As with Poland’s Solidarity in 1980-1 and mid-1989, Czechoslovakia’s ‘Velvet Revolution’ had been necessarily ‘self-limiting’. However, this was not, as the case of Poland to avoid provoking Communist repression or Soviet intervention, but because to establish democracy and the rule of law it was necessary to avoid ‘total victory and total defeat, that roundabout of threats, violence, discrimination and arbitrariness’¹²¹. Indeed, Pithart saw the very notion of revolution (including that of a ‘Velvet Revolution’ in November 1989) as a myth. In November 1989, he argued, rather than Czechs winning their own liberation ‘the rotten roof of the regime simply collapsed’¹²². The ‘Velvet Revolution’ had been

both confined in scope to Prague and other major towns and cities and belated when compared to other countries in East Central Europe.

In accordance with more traditional understandings of ‘conservatism’ Pithart always took the sceptical view that ‘changes [after 1989] would be slow, necessarily “impure”, that is not very fair’¹²³ and ‘that the old and the new would for a long time be distastefully intermeshed, that in short we would carry into the future much more of the past than we would like’¹²⁴. In contrast with the idea of a clean, revolutionary break, Pithart argued that, it was regrettable but inevitable that many beneficiaries of the old regime would also benefit disproportionately from the new democratic regime and emergent market economy. Moreover, he argued, many ordinary people too would retain the asocial, cynical get-rich-quick mentality necessary to get along under ‘real socialism’, rather than developing the ethic of hard work and social trust necessary for a flourishing market economy¹²⁵. The relatively inefficient and corrupt nature of post-communist Czech capitalism could be seen as the price to be paid for the cynicism and lack of moral integrity many Czechs had developed to cope under ‘normalisation’¹²⁶. However, while injustices stemming from communist-era connections and clientelism could have been minimised, this, too, would have had a price: either slowing the pace of economic reform (Pithart’s favoured approach), or establishing a powerful, intrusive regulatory bureaucracy¹²⁷.

As well as gradualistic change within adequate regulatory and constitutional frameworks (e.g. a functioning Senate and reformed legal code¹²⁸) Pithart has also advocated serious and realistic reconsideration of Czech history. In his view, ‘[f]or many Czechs, the future is not just uncharted territory, it is enemy territory’. Only an honest public acceptance and awareness of the national past, including uncomfortable

truths (for example, the widespread belief in ‘socialism with a human face’ in 1968) could re-establish a necessary sense of historical continuity¹²⁹. If Czechs could honestly embrace their own past in its entirety, Pithart argued, this would not only increase national self-confidence, but also allow Czechs to contribute something positive to a united Europe¹³⁰. By contrast, failure to ‘return the historical dimension to the time we live in’ will leave a lingering post-communist *anomie*, in which Czechs will inhabit ‘a cynical world that we do not understand and Czech society will lack fundamental cohesion’¹³¹.

What does such an ‘evolutionary conservatism’ imply in practice? In 1990-2 when he was Czech Prime Minister, Pithart’s conservative principles led him to favour a relatively gradualistic model of economic reform and to give priority to reaching a pragmatic constitutional settlement with the Slovaks. He was also an outspoken opponent of demands for anti-communist purges in the state apparatus and the economy which for reasons explained above he saw as dangerous. More generally, we might also highlight the transformation strategy of Civic Movement (OH) - the loose centrist grouping of Klaus’s opponents wiped out in the 1992 elections, which viewed transformation as gradual, multi-faceted process deeply embedded in the cultural and social *realia* of post-communist society. OH’s political programme emphasised the complex interdependency of social, cultural, legal and economic change¹³². While many OH leaders had a social liberal or social democrat outlook, the party’s policies were consistent with ‘evolutionary conservatism’ represented by Pithart (who was a Deputy Chairman of OH).

Interest in this brand of post-communist conservatism has, however, increased among parties on the Czech Right since 1995. For example, the third party in the 1992-7

Klaus coalition government, the Christian Democratic Union (KDU-ČSL), has since 1995 has promoted the concept of a German or Austrian-style 'social market economy'¹³³. In doing so the Christian Democrats have challenged Klaus's conservatism as an Anglo-American import inappropriate to the Czech Lands and its Central European traditions¹³⁴. Similar ideas were also quietly promoted by Klaus's opponents inside his own party (ODS) such as Foreign Minister Josef Zieleniec in 1995-6¹³⁵ and later featured prominently in the programme of the breakaway Freedom Union (US). The new party's programme thus emphasises not a sudden break with the past, but the need to build adequate social and moral foundations for the market economy by promoting civil society and a Czech middle class¹³⁶. Petr Matějů, a Freedom Union Deputy Chairman, for example, has spoken of the party's outlook as one of 'realist liberalism' which, in contrast to the 'orthodox liberalism' of Klaus, sees transformation not as revolutionary process which is now 'basically over' but as stretching ahead 'for several generations'¹³⁷.

While Czech neo-liberal and neo-conservative intellectuals found considerable common ground in the revolutionary conservatism of 'Czech Thatcherism' in the early 1990's, their views of Czech politics are now increasingly divergent¹³⁸. While conservatives (along with the Czech Left) have blamed the problems of the Klaus era on *excessive* economic liberalism and a neglect of morality, social cohesion, state authority and law-and-order, neo-liberals see the period as one half-hearted compromise, unprincipled pragmatism and state intervention - a missed opportunity for genuinely radical free market reform. While neo-liberal economists advocate the full-blooded unleashing of market forces into the Czech economy and public sector¹³⁹, neo-conservative intellectuals have embarked upon a strikingly fundamentalist anti-

liberal agenda centring upon the reassertion of religious values, morality and authority¹⁴⁰. However, in a secular and increasingly transformation-weary Czech society, with continuing expectations of a paternalistic state¹⁴¹, neither radical stances would seem to have great potential appeal.

Conclusion

The ideology of 'Czech Thatcherism', like that of British Thatcherism, can be seen as an innovative attempt to combine neo-liberalism and conservatism to mobilise electoral and social support for a project of far reaching political and social transformation. Both were initially absorbed and formulated into a coherent ideology over a period of decades by marginal intellectual elites seeking an alternative to the very different forms of post-war settlement in Western and Eastern Europe. Neither fully resolved the inherent ideological tensions between individualistic market liberalism and the conservative imperatives of identity, history and authority, between the Free and the Good¹⁴². Both 'Thatcherisms' were ideologies of social and national transformation whose initial appeal and coherence were arguably undermined not only by the inevitable gap between promise and performance, but also by their very success in bringing about rapid social transformation¹⁴³.

However, in the Czech case both neo-liberal and neo-conservative currents of thought were (re)invented on the basis of ideas imported from the Anglo-American New Right. Despite precursors in pre-communist history, Czech 'revolutionary conservatism's' only substantive link with traditional Czech political thought is arguably its (submerged) nationalism. Whilst the historical absence of strong or broad-based right-wing traditions in the Czech Lands facilitated - and perhaps required - the articulation of new innovative post-communist ideologies drawing

imported ideas, their adoption and popularisation after 1989 must also be seen as a deliberate attempt to break with the past. Despite the continued popularity of radical neo-liberal and neo-conservative ideas with sections of the Czech intelligentsia, the only coherent ideological alternative on the Czech right would now seem to be the second more sceptical, cautious evolutionary form of post-communist conservatism.

NOTES

¹ Peter Rutland, 'Thatcherism, Czech-style: Transition to Capitalism in the Czech Republic' *Telos*, no. 94 (1992-93), pp. 104-129.

² The third party in the coalition was the more centrist Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL). The tiny Christian Democratic Party (KDS) was a the fourth partner until its merger with Klaus's ODS in March 1996.

³ In elections to the Czech parliament in 1992 Klaus's ODS received 29.7% and ODA 5.9%. In 1996 these figures were respectively 29.6% and 6.4%.

⁴ For example, these parties' close links with emergent business elites, endorsement by celebrities, support from the intelligentsia and latterly Western-style think-tanks such as neo-conservative Civic Institute (founded 1991) and the neo-liberal Liberal Institute (founded in 1992).

⁵ See Steve Kettle, 'The Czech Republic Struggles To Define an Independent Press', *Transition*, 6th October 1995.

⁶ These problems came to a head in spring 1997 with the devaluation of the previously stable Czech crown. In March 1998 The Economist Intelligence Unit reported that worsening macroeconomic results, serious concerns about market regulation and inadequate micro-economic reform had caused the Czech Republic to fall behind Hungary and Poland. 'Poláci a Maďaři mají lepší klima k podnikání', *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 27th March 1998.

⁷ After June 1996 the Klaus-led coalition continued as a minority government ‘tolerated’ by the opposition Social Democrats. The minority Social Democratic government formed in July 1998 has in turn been ‘tolerated’ by Klaus’s ODS.

⁸ There were concealed business donations to ODA and allegations that ODA-controlled ministries had traded (and even demanded) donations in exchange for favours in privatisation ‘ODA přiznala, že i ona měla falešného sponzora’, *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 7th February 1998, pp. 1 and 2.

⁹ ‘ODS se definitivně rozdělila, vznikají nové strany’, *Lidové noviny*, 14th January 1998, p.1.

¹⁰ The former coalition regained a theoretical majority of one. While Klaus’s ODS lost support in 1998, the Freedom Union and the centrist Christian Democrats polled well. All parties gained seats as result of the small, far right Republican Party’s failure to re-enter parliament.

¹¹ For example, exit polling after the June 1998 elections. ‘Občanská demokratická strana měla letos věrnější voliče než komunisté’, *Hospodářské noviny*, 22nd June 1998, p. 22.

¹² Most notably, ‘perverse effects’ of coupon privatisation and the Klaus government’s tardy and *laissez faire* attitude to regulatory frameworks and the completion of economic transformation. This allowed corruption and the emergence of powerful rent-seeking groups. See Jiří Večerník, *Markets and People: The Czech Reform Experience in a Comparative Perspective* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996); Martin Potùèek, *Nejen trh: role trhu, státu a občanského sektoru v proměně české společnosti* (Prague: SLON, 1997).

¹³ See, for example, Mitchell Orenstein, *The Political Success of Neo-Liberalism in the Czech Republic* (Prague: CERGE-EI Working Paper Series no. 68, 1994); Stephen Holmes, 'The Politics of Economics in the Czech Republic', *East European Constitutional Review* 4 (1995), pp. 52-5; Martin Dangerfield, 'Ideology and Czech Transformation: Neoliberal Rhetoric or Neoliberal Reality', *East European Politics and Societies*, 11 (1997), , pp. 436-467.

¹⁴ Such 'inconsistencies' are attributed either to Klaus's sensitivity to social issues and skilful 'transplantation of Thatcherite principles to East European soil', Rutland, *op.cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 107, or, alternatively, to Klaus being held in check by 'social-liberal' institutions inherited from the 1990-1992 Civic Forum/Public Against Violence government. On the latter see Mitchell Orenstein 'Vaclav Klaus: Revolutionary and Parliamentarian', *East European Constitutional Review* 7 (1998), pp. 46-55.

¹⁵ See Martin Myant, *Transforming Socialist Economies: The Case of Poland and Czechoslovakia* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1993).

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 453.

¹⁷ See Jerzy Szacki, *Liberalism After Communism* (London and Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995).

¹⁸ See J. F. Brown, 'Goodbye (and Good Riddance) to De-Communization', *Transitions* 4 (July 1997), pp. 28-34.

¹⁹ An additional factor explaining the dominance of the Czech Right in 1990's is the slowness of the Czech Left to crystallise. This is partly traceable to Czech Communists' failure to become a post-communist social democratic party. See Seán Hanley, 'The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia: A Neo-Communist

“Subcultural” Party’ in András Bozóki (ed.), *The New Democrats: Socialists in Power in East Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European University, forthcoming).

²⁰ Stating, for example, that Klaus appealed to ‘Czechs’ self-perception as Europeans and willingness to shoulder collective sacrifices’, Rutland, *op.cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 128, offers little enlightenment, as the same could be said of virtually all leading Czech politicians after November 1989, including Klaus’s defeated opponents.

²¹ Plausible sociological reasons for the appeal of neo-liberalism in Eastern Europe include 1) its role as theoretical blueprint of capitalism, Szacki, *op.cit.*, Ref. 17, p. 148-49; 2) its sharing similar radically economic assumptions to those of all-pervasive official Marxism, Illja Šrubaø, ‘Neoliberalismus, transformace a obèanská spoleènost’, *Sociologický èasopis*, 32 (1996), pp.67-78; or 3) the fact that the Hayekian vision of a society of isolated, self-interested individuals without wider social bonds corresponds closely to the reality of atomised post-communist societies. See Hilary Wainwright, *Arguments For a New Left: Answering the Free Market Right*. (Oxford and Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1994).

²² At best there have been discussions of ‘political culture’. See, for example, George Schöpflin, ‘Culture and Identity in Post-Communist Europe’ in Stephen White, Judy Batt and Paul Lewis (eds.), *Developments in East European Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 16-28; Andrew C. Janos, ‘Continuity and Change in Eastern Europe: Strategies of Post-Communist Politics’, *East European Politics and Societies*, 8 (1994), pp. 1-31.

²³ Most stress the manipulation of East European publics by intellectual and technocratic (ex-nomenklatura) elites with a hidden pro-capitalist agenda. See, for

example, Alex Callinicos, *The Revenge of History: Marxism and the East European Revolutions*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 50-81 or James Petras, 'Eastern Europe: Restoration and Crisis', *Critique*, no. 25 (1993), pp. 13-45. Others stress the imposition of free-market shock therapy by Western-dominated international organisations. See, for example, Peter Gowan, 'Eastern Europe, Western Power and Neo-Liberalism' *New Left Review*, no. 21(1996), pp 129-40.

²⁴ See amongst others Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal* (London: Verso, 1988) and Mark Hayes, *The New Right in Britain: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (London: Pluto Press, 1994).

²⁵ See Radhika Desai, 'Second-Hand Dealers in Ideas: Think-Tanks and Thatcherite Hegemony', *New Left Review*, no. 203 (1994), pp. 27-64 and Richard Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Think-Tanks and the Economic Counter-Revolution 1931-1983* (London: HarperCollins, 1994).

²⁶ Points made by Jeremy Lester, *Modern Tsars and Princes: The Struggle For Hegemony in Russia* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), pp. 1-24. See also Renata Saleal, 'The Crisis of Identity and the Struggle For New Hegemony in the Former Yugoslavia' in Ernesto Laclau (ed.), *The Making of Political Identities* (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 205-232 for a more 'post-Marxist' application of Gramscian concepts to post-communist politics.

²⁷ A point famously made by Václav Havel in his essay 'Power of the Powerless', in Jan Vladislav (ed.), *Living in Truth* (Faber and Faber: London and Boston, 1989), pp, 36-122.

²⁸ For a discussion of this distinction (which he conceptualises as levels of ‘state crisis’) see Colin Hay, *Restating Social and Political Change* (Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press, 1996), pp. 85-90

²⁹ Jaroslav Veis, ‘King Klaus’, *East European Reporter*, (September-October 1992), pp. 12-13.

³⁰ On this point see Zdeněk Mlynář’s analysis of Klaus’s support as the mobilisation a of revolutionary movement. ‘Kdo potřebuje „druhou revoluci“’, *Rudé právo*, 27th November 1991 reprinted in *Proti srsti: politické komentáře 1990-1995* (Prague: Periskop, 1996), pp. 42-50. In the Czech case it was first necessary to mobilise an internal constituency of Civic Forum (OF) activists, enabling the election of Klaus as OF Chairman in October 1990 the creation of the Civic Democratic Party on the base of OF’s grassroots base in 1991. See Magdaléna Hadjisky, *La fin du Forum civique et la naissance du Parti démocratique civique (janvier 1990 - avril 1991)* (Prague: Documents du travail du CEFRES no. 6, 1996).

³¹ I leave unexplored the conflicting preoccupations of the different Western neo-liberal thinkers cited by Klaus and other Czech ‘Thatcherites’ and the accuracy of their interpretations.

³² Stuart Hall, ‘Variants of Liberalism’ in James Donald and Stuart Hall (eds.), *Politics and Ideology* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), p. 67.

³³ See Ivan Pfaff, *Česká přináležitost k Západu v letech 1815-1878* (Brno: Doplněk, 1996), pp. 19-30, pp. 69-88 and pp. 205-241.

³⁴ See Otto Urban, 'Český liberalismus v 19. století' in Milan Znoj, Jan Havránek and Martin Sekera (eds.), *Český liberalismus: texty a osobnosti* (Prague: Torst, 1995), pp. 15-27.

³⁵ Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: the Future of Radical Politics* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 23-7.

³⁶ See George Schöpflin, 'The Political Traditions of Eastern Europe', *Daedalus*, no. 1 (1990) and 'Conservatism and Hungary's Political Tradition', *Problems of Communism*, nos. 1-2 (1991).

³⁷ The Masaryk-Pekař debate is often termed the 'Dispute Over the Meaning of Czech history'. See Miloš Havelka (ed.), *Spor o smyslu českých dějin* (Prague: Torst, 1997), pp. 7-43 (preface).

³⁸ See Petr Pithart, '„Fronta“ proti Hradu' in his *Dějiny a politika* (Prague: Prostor, 1990), pp. 105-164.

³⁹ See Les Blackwood, 'Czech and Polish National Democracy at the Dawn of Independent Statehood 1918-1919', *East European Politics and Societies*, 4 (1990), pp. 469-488; Milan E. Hapala, 'Political Parties in Czechoslovakia' in Miroslav Rechcigl jr. (ed.), *Czechoslovakia Past and Present* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), pp. 124-140; Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1974), pp. 95-113.

⁴⁰ Jan Rataj, *O autoritativní národní stát: ideologické proměny české politiky v Druhé republice 1938-1939*. (Prague: Karolinium, 1997).

⁴¹ The People's Party was allowed to contest the (free) elections of 1946 along with three left-wing parties (the Communists, National Socialists and Social Democrats). The elections were won by the Communists, who polled 40% of the vote in the Czech Lands. After the Communist takeover, the People's Party became a 'satellite' party. After 1989 it developed into the Christian Democratic Union (KDU-ÈSL) discussed elsewhere in this article.

⁴² See Jan Křen, *Bílá místa v našich dějinách?* (Prague: Lidové noviny, 1990), pp. 95-101.

⁴³ Václav Klaus, *První zprava* (Prague: Cartoonia, 1993), p. 55.

⁴⁴ The most recent general history of the Prague Spring published in English is Kieran Williams' *The Prague Spring and its aftermath: Czechoslovak politics 1967-1970*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴⁵ Famously set out by Milan Kundera in his essay 'The Tragedy of Central Europe' *New York Review of Books*, 26th April 1984.

⁴⁶ Such 'Central European' positions are also detectable in Jan Patočka's writings on Czech history which evoke the Holy Roman Empire as a golden age of European spiritual unity. See Patočka's 1969 *Co jsou Češi?/Was sind die Tchechen?* (Prague: Panorama, 1992) (eds). Ivan Chvatík and Pavel Kouba) and also Aviezer Tucker 'Book Review of Jan Patočka: Essais herétiques sur la philosophie de l'histoire', *History and Theory*, 31 (1992), pp. 355-363 and also his *Fenomenologie a politika: od J. Patočky k V. Havlovi* (Olomouc: Votobia, 1997), pp. 94-118. English publication forthcoming (New York: St. Martins Press). The idea of 'reinventing' pre-1918 Central Europe was most explicitly taken up in the mid-1980's by intellectuals

around the *samizdat* journal *Střední Evropa* ('Central Europe'). See Marlene Laruelle, "*Střední Evropa*": *Une autre écriture de la nation?* (Prague: CEFRES Documents de travail no. 4, 1996).

⁴⁷ See Laruelle *op.cit.*, Ref. 46.

⁴⁸ See Ladislav Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: National identity and the post-communist social transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 55-72 and *passim*.

⁴⁹ See Daniel Kroupa, *Svoboda a řád (sváteční rozhovory)* (Prague: Éós, 1996).

⁵⁰ Kroupa, *op.cit.*, Ref. 49, p. 9. The Havel-Kundera exchange consisted of the following articles: Milan Kundera, 'Český úděl', *Listy*, no. 7-8 (1968); Václav Havel, 'Český úděl?', *Tvář*, no. 2 (1969), reprinted in Václav Havel, *O lidskou identitu* (Prague: Rozmluvy, 1990), pp. 187-193 and pp. 193-200. See also Kundera's riposte to Havel 'Radikalismus a exhibicionismus', *Host do domu*, no. 15 (1968-69).

⁵¹ Patočka's philosophy also influenced Václav Havel's (anti-)political thinking. See Tucker, *Fenomenologie a politika op.cit.*, Ref. 46, and Ivan Blecha, *Jan Patočka* (Olomouc: Votobia:, 1997).

⁵² Kroupa, *op.cit.*, Ref. 49, pp. 11-12

⁵³ See June 1990 interview with Bratinka. 'Conservative Reflections on Czechoslovak Politics' in Tim Whipple (ed.), *After The Velvet Revolution* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), pp. 207-215. Kroupa cites Eric Voeglin and Jan Patočka, *op.cit.*, Ref. 49. On Patočka see Tucker, *op.cit.*, Ref. 46.

⁵⁴ Underground seminars in Prague and Brno by Western academics and intellectuals and contacts organised by the Jan Hus Educational Foundation. While many lecturers (e.g. Roger Scruton, David Regan, David J. Levy) were politically conservative, some (e.g. John Keane) were on the left. See Petr Oslzlý (ed.), *Podzemná univerzita* (Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 1993).

⁵⁵ The *Salisbury Review* acquired some notoriety during the ‘Honeyford Affair’ in 1983-84 over articles it published attacking multi-culturalism in education. For a critical review of the ‘Salisbury Group’s’ agenda on race and other issues see Gill Seidal, ‘Culture Nation and ‘Race’ in the British and French New Right’ and Miriam David ‘Moral and Maternal: the Family in the Right’ in Ruth Levitas (ed.), *The Ideology of the New Right* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), pp. 107-135 and pp. 135-166.

⁵⁶ Cited in David Selbourne *Death of the Dark Hero: Eastern Europe 1987-90* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1990), p.81.

⁵⁷ See Peter Zajac, ‘Údel českého vzdělance’, *Nová přítomnost* (Prague), no. 7 1998, p. 24.

⁵⁸ Petr Pithart, *Osmádesátý* (Prague: Rozmluvy: 1990).

⁵⁹ Petr Pithart and Jana Kusáková, *Petr Pithart NADORAZ* (Prague: Primus, 1992), p. 49. See also interview with Pithart, ‘Vstup do KSČ jsem vnímal jako romantické gesto’, *Lidové noviny*, 26th March 1998, p. 11.

⁶⁰ See Richard Štencel’s preface to Pithart, *op.cit.*, Ref. 38, pp.7-16.

⁶¹ See Pithart's 1972 *samizdat* book *Obrana politiky* [The Defence of Politics] (Prague: Panorama, 1990).

⁶² Pithart supports the notion of multi-culturalism and sees the emergence of an ethnically homogenous Czech Republic as a step backwards. See his 'Od multikulturality spijeme zpátky' in his *Po devětaosmdesátém: Kdo jsme* (Bratislava and Brno: Kalligram/Doplňek, 1998), pp. 79-98 and other essays in the same volume.

⁶³ In 1984 Charter 77 published a document entitled 'A Right to History' calling for a national history undistorted by communist ideology. The document was strongly criticised by left-of-centre dissidents. Charter 77 document no. 11/84 20th May 1984 'Právo na dějiny'. Excerpted in Vilém Prečan (ed.), *Charta 77 1977-1989 od morální k demokratické revoluci* (Scheinfeld-Schwarzenberg and Bratislava: Čs. středisko nezávislé literatury/ARCHA, 1990), pp. 254-7

⁶⁴ Havel's romantic anti-modernism reflects the (indirect) influence of Heidegger and the *direct* influence of Jan Patočka. While Heidegger was politically on the far right, Patočka's political vision was wholly democratic. See Aviezer Tucker, 'The Heideggerism of Vaclav Havel', *Telos*, no. 85 (1990), pp. 27-38 and 'Patočka vs. Heidegger: the Humanistic Difference', *Telos*, no. 92 (1992).

⁶⁵ Petr Pithart, 'Dizi-rizika' in Prečan, *op.cit.*, Ref. 63, p. 90.

⁶⁶ Western feminist ideas, for example have received a distinctly cool reception among both Czech elites and public. See Alena Heitlinger, 'Framing Feminism in the Post-Communist Czech Republic', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 29 (1996), pp. 77-93 and Jiřina Šiklová, 'Feminism and the Roots of Apathy in the Czech Republic', *Social Research*, 64 (1997), pp. 258-280.

⁶⁷ See Jacques Rupnik, *Histoire du parti communiste tchécoslovaque* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1981).

⁶⁸ Roger Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (London: Penguin Books, 1989 - second edition), pp. 58-9, citation, p. 59.

⁶⁹ Cited in Selbourne, *op.cit.*, Ref. 56, p. 81. Scruton took any interest in market economics, private property, civil society or transcendent values as indicting a conservative outlook. See his 'The New Right in Central Europe I: Czechoslovakia', *Political Studies*, 36 (1988), pp. 449-62 and 'The New Right in Central Europe II: Poland and Hungary', *Political Studies*, 36 (1988), pp. 638-52. On the far left, Alex Callinicos is equally inaccurate, labelling Havel both a 'conventional romantic neo-conservative' and a 'social democrat', *op.cit.*, Ref. 23, p. 52 and p. 61. For a more insightful discussion of Havel's political thought, see Aviezer Tucker, 'Waiting For Meciar', *Telos*, no. 93 (1992) and Tucker, *op.cit.*, Ref. 46.

⁷⁰ Francis Harris, 'Dressing to the left', *Business Central Europe*, November/December 1997, p. 22.

⁷¹ In 1968 the 'Young Economists' were organised in the Club of Young Economists (KMEN), which had 300-400 members. Klaus himself also wrote for in the radical opposition political-cultural magazine *Tvář* in. Following the 1968 invasion both KMEN and *Tvář* ceased to exist. See Václav Klaus, *Mezi minulostí a budoucností* (Prague and Brno: Nadace Universitas Masarykiana / Edice Heureka/ Nakladatelství Georgetown/ Nakladatelství Svoboda, 1996), p. 14.

⁷² The strength of neo-liberal ideas was more the result of generational differences rather than a shift of thinking in the Czech economics profession in the 1980's as Dangerfield suggests. *op.cit.*, Ref. 13, p. 441.

⁷³ Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 71, pp. 15-16.

⁷⁴ Despite resigning his Communist Party membership in 1968, Ježek remained at the Economic Institute throughout the 'normalisation period' before joining the Forecasting Institute in 1988.

⁷⁵ For example, from 1980 to 1985 Klaus organised a series of economics seminars within the Czechoslovak State Bank, papers from which were legally printed (100-200 copies) for internal use. See Jan Stráský, *Jan Stráský - prezident na půl úvazku* (Prague: Inma, 1993) and Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 71, pp. 18-20. In the late 1980's Klaus and other economists sometimes wrote pseudonymously for *samizdat* publications such as *Lidové noviny*.

⁷⁶ See Judy Batt, *Economic Reform and Political Change in Eastern Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

⁷⁷ Klaus looks to Friedman as a technical macro-economist and Hayek as ideologist and philosopher. See Klaus's 'Žijeme v Hayekově době' in *Rok málo či mnoho v dějinách zemi* (Prague: REPRO-PRESS, 1993), pp. 31-4 and 'Rozhovor místo prologu' in Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 71, pp. 14-28. Elsewhere Klaus cites the work of Michael Novak and James Buchanan.

⁷⁸ Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 38, p. 49. See also Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 71, p. 22.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ While the 1990 Civic Forum programme promised a vague ‘Return to Europe’, the 1992 programme of Klaus’s Civic Democratic Party offered the benefits of a liberal order: ‘Freedom and Prosperity’. *Svoboda a prosperita* (Prague: ODS, 1992).

⁸¹ Tomáš Ježek, *Budování kapitalismu v Čechách: Rozhovory s Tomášem Ježkem* (Prague: Volvox Globator, 1997), p. 16. Ježek was then a member of the Civic Democratic Alliance, but joined Klaus’s ODS in 1995.

⁸² Timothy Garton Ash, *The Uses of Adversity* (London: Granta, 1991 second edition), p. 56. The French historian Muriel Blaive has argued that even in 1950’s the Czechoslovak regime’s stability was due not so much to intense repression and exceptional mass support (the conventional analysis) as relatively high living standards. See her *Scenário du film 1956 Le rendez-vous manqué de l’histoire ou le retour du Pere Noël en Tchécoslovaquie* (CEFRES: Prague, 1997) and ‘O Pražském jaru mluví jen komunisté a jejich oběti’, *Lidové noviny*, 25th July 1998, p. 28.

⁸³ Neal Acherson, ‘Dream of Escape’ in *Games With Shadows* (London: Radius, 1988), p. 271.

⁸⁴ Ivan Sviták, Voice of America radio commentary, 24th November 1989 reprinted in his *Budoucnost bez komunismu* (Prague: Orbis , 1990), p. 150

⁸⁵ Ježek, *op.cit.* , Ref. 81, p. 15

⁸⁶ See Andrew Gamble, *Hayek: the Iron Cage of Liberty* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

⁸⁷ See Holy, *op.cit.*, Ref. 48, pp. 180-194.

⁸⁸ Václav Klaus, 'Zamlčené předpoklady našich politických spor', *Literární noviny*, 8th November 1990. Klaus also became a member of the Mont Pelerin Society founded by Hayek in 1947 as a forum for neo-liberal statesmen and intellectuals.

⁸⁹ Both because the word 'liberal' was used by Klaus's opponents in Civic Forum (the 'Liberal Club') and by analogy with the British Conservative Party, which Klaus admired as a broad integrative party of the right. See Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 43, p. 55 and Václav Klaus, *Current Challenges and Conservative Solutions: The Czech Perspective* (London: Conservative Political Centre, 1995).

⁹⁰ See memoirs of Klaus's close aide and later ODS's first National Secretary, Petr Havlík. M Stoniš and P Havlík, *Klaus & ti druzí: Osobní inventura Petra Havlíka* (Prague: Pallata, 1998), p. 84.

⁹¹ Václav Klaus, 'Proč jsem konzervativcem' in Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 71, p.225. The title also echoes a well-known essay by the Czech writer Karel Čapek: 'Why I Am Not A Communist'. Hayek's post-script appears in *The Constitution of Liberty* (London: Routledge, 1960).

⁹² Klaus took little personal interest in *formulating* ideology and never attended the 'advisory group', which wrote the 1992 ODS programme. This group was chaired by ODS Deputy Chairman Josef Zieleniec. Klaus was, however, the new ideology's leading spokesmen. See Havlík and Stoniš, *op.cit.*, Ref. 90, pp. 43-4.

⁹³ ODS, *op.cit.*, Ref. 80, p. 3.

⁹⁴ The philosopher Václav Bělohradský, who attended meetings the ODS 'advisory group' (see Ref. 92) claims divisions between 'liberals' and 'conservatives' were

visible even in 1991-92. 'Kolik hlasů může strana znít', *Lidové noviny*, 17th August 1996, p.8.

⁹⁵ Stráský, *op.cit.*, Ref. 75, p. 75.

⁹⁶ Hall, *op.cit.*, Ref. 32, p. 53.

⁹⁷ Jan Štětka, 'Na konzervatismus zatím nenaladění', *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 20th October 1995, p. 12.

⁹⁸ D Kroupa, 'Máme málo hodnot, které bychom měli konzervovat', *Fórum* no. 46 (1990), p.16.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ See Rupnik *op.cit.*, Ref. 67, and Karel Kaplan, *The Short March: The Communist Takeover in Czechoslovakia 1945-48* (London: Hurst, 1987).

¹⁰¹ A term coined by the Czech liberal philosopher Milan Znoj, 'Anatomie Klausova konzervatismu', *Listy*, 24 (1994), pp. 69-79.

¹⁰² Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 71, p.225.

¹⁰³ A point made by Tomáš Rychlý, 'Srovnáme si minulost do latě!', *Orientace* supplement to *Lidové noviny*, 28th March 1998 pp. II-III.

¹⁰⁴ Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 91, p.224.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.225.

¹⁰⁶ Kroupa, *op.cit.*, Ref. 49, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰⁷ Václav Klaus, 'Systémová změna: vyvážená směs úmyslného a spontánního (projev na valném shromáždění The Mont Pelerin Society', *Dopočítávání do jedné*, (Prague: Management Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁸ A belief held especially firmly by Tomáš Ježek. See Ježek, *op.cit.*, Ref. 81, pp. 274-9.

¹⁰⁹ Bratinka, *op.cit.*, Ref. 53.

¹¹⁰ Klaus *op.cit.*, Ref. 91, p.226.

¹¹¹ Klaus resisted restitution in practice. See Ježek, *op. cit.*, Ref. 81, pp. 117-126. On the normative basis of Czech restitution see Hilary Appel, 'Justice and the Reformation of Property Rights in the Czech Republic', *East European Politics and Societies*, 9 (1995), pp. 26-40.

¹¹² For a fuller discussion of Czechs' perceptions of the market and of their own (West) European identity see Holy *op.cit.*, Ref. 48, pp. 149-158.

¹¹³ 'Your [Privatisation] Coupon Book is Voting For the Right' was another ODS election slogan in 1992.

¹¹⁴ Orenstein cites a strategy document presented by Klaus in April 1990, which spells this out explicitly. *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, p. 54. The need to limit foreign ownership of Czech industry was a tenet shared across the political spectrum at this time.

¹¹⁵ 'The Czech Way' is also the title of a set of Klaus's writings: *Česká cesta* (Prague: Profile, 1994).

¹¹⁶ Kieran Williams, 'Václav Klaus's Czech Nation', unpublished paper presented at School of Slavonic and East European Studies Seminar on Nationalism, 1995.

¹¹⁷ Orenstein *op. cit.*, Ref. 14, pp. 54-5. Rutland, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1.

¹¹⁸ On deeper narratives of transformation see Jiří Kabele, 'Mýtus, realita a transformace', *Sociologický časopis*, 30 (1994), pp. 21-35.

¹¹⁹ Klaus, *op.cit.*, Ref. 91, p.229.

¹²⁰ Petr Pithart, 'Co jsem slyšel před pěti lety rust', in Pithart, *op.cit.*, Ref. 62, pp. 293-300 (especially pp. 293-6), first published in *Český týdeník*, no. 6, 20th-23rd January 1995.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 295. Similar arguments were, however, advanced in Poland in the late 1980's by Adam Michnik, who explicitly cited Edmund Burke. See Michnik's, 'Towards A New Democratic Compromise', *East European Reporter*, 3 (1988) no. 2.

¹²² Pithart *op.cit.*, Ref. 120, p. 296.

¹²³ *ibid.*, p. 297.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 299.

¹²⁵ Petr Pithart, 'A Trip Through An Unknown Past' *The New Presence* (Prague), April 1998, pp. 6-7, citation, p.6.

¹²⁶ Pithart, *op.cit.*, Ref. 120, p. 297.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 297-8.

¹²⁸ Petr Pithart, 'Senát jako konzervativní instituce', *Lidové noviny* 4th December 1996, reprinted in Pithart, *op.cit.*, Ref. 62, pp. 353-5.

¹²⁹ Petr Pithart, '1956: Proè Èeši byli tak hodní (rozhovor)' *Listy*, 26 (1997), no.6, pp. 35-42; *op.cit.*, Ref. 125, pp. 6-7, citation, p.6 and 'Proè se stydíme za rok 1968', *Lidové noviny* 25th July 1998, p. 29.

¹³⁰ Above all, an ability to warn against the temptations of left-wing political experiments. See Pithart, *op.cit.*, Ref. 125.

¹³¹ Pithart 'Proč se stydíme za rok 1968' *op.cit.*, Ref. 129.

¹³² *Program Občanského hnutí* (Prague: OH, n.d.) and *Jak dál k prosperitě? Hospodářský program Občanského hnutí* (Prague: OH, 1992).

¹³³ See, for example, articles by the party's 1990-1998 leader, Josef Lux, 'Stavba založená na dvojici pilířů', *Lidové noviny*, 31st October 1995, p.8 and 'Neztrácejme orientaci', *Lidové noviny*, 8th December 1995, p.10.

¹³⁴ Josef Lux, 'Politický koncept KDU-ČSL je zcela konkrétní', *Lidové noviny*, 11th May 1996. KDU-ÈSL supported Pithart's candidature to the Senate as an independent in 1996.

¹³⁵ Zieleniec insisted on the adoption of a statement of long-term principles (the 'Political Programme') *Politický program ODS* (Prague: ODS, 1996). See Bohumil Peèinka, 'ODS Příklad ke konzervatismu?', *Lidové noviny* 18th August 1995; Josef Zieleniec, 'ODS by už neměla znít jen jedním hlasem, říká Zieleniec', *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 5th August 1996, p.4.

¹³⁶ The programme is on the Freedom Union's internet site: <http://www.uniesvobody.cz>.

¹³⁷ Petr Matějů, 'Česká transformace skončí až za několik generací', *Lidové noviny*, 8th April 1998.

¹³⁸ See, for example, discussions at the 1992 'Liberalism At the End of the Twentieth Century' colloquium organised by the neo-conservative Civic Institute. Jaromír Žegklitz (ed.), *Liberalismus konce 20. století* (Prague: Občanský institut, 1994).

¹³⁹ E.g. Jan Macháček, 'Nezapomeňte na předvolební sliby', *Respekt*, 29th June - 5th July 1998, p. 27.

¹⁴⁰ Such neo-conservative intellectuals are grouped in the Civic Institute think-tank, the Christian Academy and the small Party of Conservative Accord (SKS), which broke away from ODA in early 1998. Recent contributions to the conservative journal, *Prostor*, illustrate this agenda. Themes raised include: the need for culture, tradition and ethics in politics; disillusion with the materialism and moral bankruptcy of the West; scepticism towards mainstream Czech nationalism and nostalgia for Austria-Hungary; and achieving a 'renaissance of Christian values' through educational and social policy and further decommunisation measures. Michal Janata, 'Český stát na prahu třetího milénia' and Tomáš Vystrčil, 'Smysl krize a krize smyslu. *Prostor*, no. 36 (1998), pp. 8-10 and pp. 17-19.

¹⁴¹ See Večerník, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 223-228 and 247-250.

¹⁴² See David Edgar, 'The Free or the Good', in Levitas *op.cit.*, Ref. 55, pp. 55-79 and Gamble, *op.cit.*, Ref. 86, pp. 101-125.

¹⁴³ See Andrew Gamble, 'The End of Conservatism', *New Left Review*, no. 214 (1995), pp. 3-26 and John Gray, 'The Undoing of Conservatism' in his *Enlightenment's Wake* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 87-120.

