

# EUROPE: EAST AND WEST UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM 2007

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## **SOME NOTES ON THE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM**

The Undergraduate Research Symposium is designed to provide undergraduate students from the University of Pittsburgh and regional colleges and universities with opportunities to develop advanced research and presentation skills. This year, which marked the 6th annual Symposium, brought together 24 students from the University of Pittsburgh, Washington and Jefferson College, Oberlin College and John Carroll University to present their research papers on a number of different topics pertaining to Europe or Russia. Dr. Gregor Thum, DAAD Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of History, gave the keynote address at the opening dinner.

The event is sponsored by the Center for Russian and East European Studies (REES) and the European Union Center of Excellence/European Studies Center (EUCE/ESC), with support from the School of Arts and Sciences.

### **THE PROCESS**

Students each submit an application and paper abstract in mid-January. A faculty selection committee then determines who will participate and groups the selected papers into relevant panels. Unlike many academic conferences, panel titles are not identified in advance. This allows the committee to choose based on the merit of the papers.

In advance of the Symposium, student participants attended workshops or worked with their professors or the Symposium graduate assistants to polish their papers, practice their presentations, and prepare for some potentially grueling Q&A.

### **THE SYMPOSIUM**

Selected participants, grouped into panels according to their research topic, gave 10 to 15-minute presentations based on their research papers to a panel of faculty and graduate students from both REES and ESC. The presentations were open to the public. Participants were judged on the quality of both the paper and the presentation. For each panel, a cash prize was awarded at the closing ceremony of the Symposium.

For more information on the 2007 Symposium or on participating next year, please visit the Symposium website at [www.ucis.pitt.edu/ursymposium](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/ursymposium).

The first prize papers are included within this publication.

# **FIRST PRIZES BY PANEL**

## **European Literature**

“The Appropriate Definition of Comedy and its Impact on Western Literature”  
**Jonathan Kern**, University of Pittsburgh

## **Germany in Modern European History**

“Economic Populism and the Rise of National Socialism in the Sudetenlands”  
**Jeffery Ernsthausen**, University of Pittsburgh

## **Culture, Film, and Propaganda**

“The Quotidian and the Horrific:  
Filmmakers’ Use of the Everyday in their Attempts to Represent the Holocaust”  
**Stephen Grebinski**, University of Pittsburgh

## **Yugoslavia and Post-Yugoslavian Politics**

“Slovenia in World Politics”  
**Kelly Gaberlavage**, University of Pittsburgh

## **EU and Eastern Expansion**

“Big Trouble in Little Albania: The Dilemma of Organized Crime in Kosovo”  
**George W.F. De Esch**, University of Pittsburgh

## **Policy Formation in Europe**

“Managed Society: NGOs in Modern Russian Politics”  
**Joshua Keating**, Oberlin College

The Center for Russian and East European Studies and The European Union Center of Excellence/European Studies Center would like to express appreciation for the following professors, graduate students, and organizations for helping to make the sixth Undergraduate Research Symposium a success:

**The Selection Committee:**

Dr. Salvatore Babones  
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Dr. Tom Aspell  
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# UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM 2007

## ~ PROGRAM ~

### EUROPEAN LITERATURE

- Kristen DiLemmo:** *The Spirit of Beauty: Classical Aestheticism and Ethics in Oscar Wilde's Critical Essays*
- Kathryn S. Easter:** *Holding the Mirror Up to Nature: A Closer Look at Hamlet's Endeavor*
- Jonathan G. Kern:** *The Appropriate Definition of Comedy and its Impact on Western Literature*
- Andrew Porter:** *From Achilles to Kutuzov: An Analysis of the Epic Hero in Different Eras of Western Culture*

### GERMANY IN MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

- Michael G. DeSensi:** *Anglo-French Appeasement and the Phony War, 1937- 1940*
- Jeffery J. Ernsthausen:** *Economic Populism and the Rise of National Socialism in the Sudetenlands*
- Sarah Larsen:** *Kulturkampf, Polenpolitik, and the Catholic Church*
- Samuel G. Mann:** *The Perpetual Divide: German Federalism*

### CULTURE, FILM, AND PROPAGANDA

- Stephen Grebinski:** *The Quotidian and the Horrific: Filmmakers' Use of the Everyday in Their Attempts to Represent the Holocaust*
- Dezeree' Hodish:** *The Destructive and Constructive Force of Culture in Soviet and Post-Soviet Society*
- Marie Semple:** *Examining Historical Constructions Depicted in Himmel Über Berlin*
- Daniel Sterba:** *Body Czech: The Dynamics of Establishing Sexual Consent in Central European Cinema*

## **YUGOSLAVIA AND POST-YUGOSLAVIAN POLITICS**

- Kelly T. Gaberlavage:** *Slovenia in World Politics*  
**Joshua B. MacCarty:** *The Path to the Present: A Comparative Analysis of the Geo-Political Status and Economic Reform Policy in the Current States of Slovenia and Macedonia*  
**Michelle Lee Sipe:** *The Current Situation in Macedonia*  
**Kurt Jameson Threlfall:** *The Collapse of Yugoslavia, 1963-1990*

## **EU AND EASTERN EXPANSION**

- David Bernhardt:** *Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic in the Near Future*  
**Stephanie Camarda:** *Poland: Transatlantic Bridge or Trojan Donkey?*  
**George W.F. De Esch:** *Big Trouble in Little Albania: The Dilemma of Organized Crime in Kosovo*  
**Brianna M. Horan:** *Romania 2007 and Beyond: Challenges Faced by a New European Union Member State*

## **POLICY FORMATION IN EUROPE**

- Joshua Keating:** *Managed Society: NGOs in Modern Russian Politics*  
**Megan Kenna:** *The Inclusion of Gender Policy in the European Union*  
**Kevin Newak:** *From St.-Malo to Nice: French Efforts to Build a Common European Security and Defense Policy*  
**Weilu Tan:** *Race, Immigration, and the Paris Riots of 2005*

## ***The Center for Russian and East European Studies***



For over a decade, the region that includes the former Soviet Union and the states of Central and Eastern Europe has been undergoing fundamental and, at times, tumultuous change. Societies are being transformed, and economic and political systems are being rebuilt under a variety of models and conditions. But even as new dynamics are emerging and new alliances are being formed, long-standing traditions persist. In the United States, a new generation of scholars, familiar not only with the area and its history, culture, and language, but also trained in social science approaches and methods, is addressing these issues in sophisticated and increasingly integrated ways. The Center for Russian and East European Studies (REES) plays a vital role in forging these new directions of research and teaching, thanks to its faculty, dedicated staff, strong commitment to crossing traditional cultural boundaries and active partnerships with institutions and scholars in the region of study.

Established in 1965, the Center for Russian and East European Studies is designated by the U.S. Department of Education for Title VI funding as a National Resource Center. This distinguishes REES as one of the nation's strongest language and area studies centers. The Center is responsible for coordinating the efforts of the University of Pittsburgh in teaching, research, and public service related to the former Soviet and Central/East European world region. The 65 faculty members affiliated with REES are based in 14 arts and sciences departments and five professional schools. This diverse and highly accomplished faculty allows REES to embrace a broad, multidisciplinary teaching and research mission.

## ***European Union Center of Excellence /***

### ***European Studies Center***



The European Union Center of Excellence/European Studies Center (EUCE/ESC) promotes the study of Western Europe at the University of Pittsburgh by coordinating existing departmental activities and by developing new courses, lectures, symposia, and conferences with international participants. Through its outreach efforts, the Center also builds relationships among the University, the business community, policy-makers, and community organizations. Since 1984, EUCE/ESC has built an international reputation for excellence in research on the European Union and its Member States. Other Center research foci include comparative public policy, social and intellectual history, questions of identity, and Europe's historical and contemporary role in the world.

In July 1998, ESC was selected in a nationwide competition as one of only 10 European Union Centers (EUC) in the United States. In 2005, the EUC at the University of Pittsburgh was chosen to be a European Union Center of Excellence (EUCE). The goals of the EUCE at the University of Pittsburgh include promoting research and teaching related to the European Union, developing a regional outreach network to disseminate EU knowledge, and creating a transatlantic (EU-US) policy network to bring together academics and practitioners through policy conferences, distance learning education, and other collaborations with European institutions.

**The Appropriate Definition of Comedy  
and its Impact on Western Literature**

Jonathan Kern

Undergraduate Research Symposium 2007

The definition of comedy has changed much over the past centuries. Today, when our culture thinks of comedy we think of a film genre or comedian. Attempting to produce laughter is the primary aim of a “comedy” by today’s standard. However, many traditional definitions of comedy do not include laughter as an essential element. One foundational statement is Dante’s: “It differs, then from tragedy in its content, in that tragedy begins admirably and tranquilly, whereas its end or exit is foul and terrible . . . whereas comedy introduces some harsh complication, but brings its matter to a prosperous end” (in Park 58). His definition has two major points. First, comedy has a “happy ending,” an idea often related to fairy tales or children’s stories. But his second point emphasizes that the happy ending is more than just something meant for children; the comedic ending arises from circumstances that are horrible and harsh, in some cases even the pit of hell, as is the case in Dante’s Divine Comedy. In distinguishing tragedy and comedy, Murray Krieger comments that “the essence of the tragic vision, is ‘the sickness unto death,’ despair” (28). This definition can help differentiate tragic works from texts that do not exhibit such qualities. An example of a largely somber text with a comedic result is Virgil’s Aeneid. Virgil’s text begins with the destruction of Troy and ends with the founding of Rome. This text on its own is hardly funny, ending with the death of Turnus in an intense battle scene, yet what is implicit in the ending is far from tragic. Readers are to understand that there will now be a peaceful assimilation of Trojans and Italians. The fall of Troy undergoes a transformation from “Many deaths, / Much suffering” (The Aeneid II.307-308) to the glories of Rome that would eventually be created out of Troy’s fall; that change is the essence of comedy.

Comedy has its origin in ancient rituals, and the concept of a happy outcome emerging from a tragedy is evident throughout the canon of Western literature. Comedy is inherently a continuation of tragedy, and ancient rituals allowed these two dramatic forms to develop. Northrop Frye acknowledges the closeness of the two forms: “The ritual pattern behind the catharsis of comedy is the resurrection that follows the death, the epiphany or manifestation of the risen hero” (*Mythos of Autumn* 106). Through comedy, people are able to feel cleansed, release tension, and view life as something flexible. Robert Corrigan discusses how comedy and

tragedy differ: "Thus, while tragedy is a celebration of man's capacity to aspire and suffer, comedy celebrates his capacity to endure" (3).

## II

In his book The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Joseph Campbell argues rather audaciously that all eras and cultures preserve one essential underlying story with myriad variations. There is a "hero" who undergoes some sort of trial and adventure, only to come out in the end as the "master of both worlds." Campbell's monomyth coincides with the theory that much of comedy and tragedy today developed out of rituals. Many of these myths accompanied the rise of agriculture. So Campbell's monomyth reflects a supposedly universal agricultural ritual. In his study The Golden Bough, James Frazer describes how rituals that seem unique to a certain culture have developed in a wide range of different areas independently. Confirming Campbell's theory that many cultures share an archetypal monomyth are Jane Ellen Harrison's writings. In her book Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion, she discusses rituals that included a trial by fire, where a child would be forced to touch fire to gain the strength needed for the rest of his life. As in the monomyth, an individual must undergo trials to gain strength and understanding of the world and himself. Likewise, comedy's emotional response is amplified by the trial and suffering endured in reaching a happy conclusion.

The hero's journey has many features, but ultimately it proves to have a comedic conclusion. Like most comedies, Campbell's hero's journey is tragic at first. It begins with some incident, often a problematic occurrence that calls the hero to action. After he accepts the challenge, he must proceed through many trials, which are difficult, dangerous, and allow him to gain perspective on the world and himself. These situations are often tragic and the texts operate with a bleak perspective during this phase in the journey. Finally, after the hero has overcome the problematic beginning, he can return with a joyous celebration at the end. The story is cyclical; the hero must finally end where he began.

The story of Moses in the Old Testament Book of Exodus can be seen as embodying the hero's journey. The Israelites are enslaved by the Egyptians, which is where Moses's story

begins. Moses's life is hard from the beginning, with his mother having to avoid a decree that all male Israelite babies must be killed. He is set in a river where Pharaoh's daughter fortuitously finds the child. Moses would grow up in the palace and would begin his actual journey or change when he journeys to the wilderness. Moses is called by the burning bush in the wilderness, at first hesitates, and then finally accepts. He proceeds with the difficult duty of convincing Pharaoh to let his people escape, then must lead the Israelites in eluding Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, and finally must endure the hardships of the wilderness. Exodus ends with Moses receiving a vision of the Promised Land, which he is told his people will eventually inhabit. This completes the hero's journey with a happy, comedic ending. The book of Exodus begins with great sorrow and the people literally "crying out because of their slave drivers" (Exodus 3:7, NIV). Yet, like Aeneas, Moses sees the glorious future of his people, and that is what warrants the happy conclusion after a long journey riddled with hardships. Neither Moses nor Aeneas complete their tasks or physically witnesses the glory promised their people. Israel's journey ends in the Book of Joshua where with Yahweh's assistance they receive their inheritance. The Aeneid has an underworld scene where Aeneas's father Anchises reveals the future glories of Rome to come. However, this vision is the closest that readers have to actually seeing the assimilation of the Trojans and Italians. At the end of the text, it is implied that there will be assimilation but Virgil assumes that Roman history will provide proof of the achievements of Aeneas.

Another parallel between Moses and Aeneas is that neither of their triumphs is everlasting. Israel as a nation is conquered by Babylon and suffers because of internal division in 1 Kings. The Roman Empire, too, will fall (specifically in 476 AD when the Vandals destroy Rome), and its glory and strength is ephemeral, which Virgil certainly did not believe would happen. These stories are similar yet were written at very different times and in different places. The similarities of these stories and many others which Campbell discusses all show some characteristics of the monomyth, even though the myths are from many different cultures with many different religions.

### III

Many scholars compare ancient fertility and food rituals to the origin of comedy. Intriguingly, however, all the rituals also include some sort of mini-tragedy before the comic and happy ending. Northrop Frye tries to explain society's need for change. Often, the societies would have yearly festivals where very specific rituals had very specific results, always ending happily. The comic twist is meant to "cause a new society to crystallize" ("Mythos of Spring" 84). This new society will be free of sin, and this idea is emphasized in other rituals. Corrigan agrees with the idea that the rituals bring change, so that stability can occur. He writes that the comedic triumph, even if the triumph is manufactured, is necessary because "discord is assimilated, and social order is restored. At the end of every comedy, we have a condition of momentary stability—there is a balance and equilibrium" (Corrigan 9). Social stability is at the heart of these rituals, and the rituals are tied closely with religion and the need for bountiful crops. Theodor Gaster argues that there is primarily one comic plot that has evolved out of the rituals; there are variations that different societies and authors manipulate for their purposes, but the basic idea is the same. This view seems to support Campbell's notion that there is a monomyth, and Gaster argues that this monomyth came from the fertility rituals.

Several rituals symbolized this redemption and regeneration of the culture. Francis Cornford describes how the redemption can be shown: "It may be figured as the expulsion or death of Winter, while Summer is brought in; or the young King may kill the old and marry his wife . . . or the God may be put to death and rise again in renewed youth and vigor" (Cornford 67). The comic plot evolved out of these rituals. The new king would overcome an opponent, often the previous king, and the ceremony would end with a marriage. This marriage would be the triumph, and comedic joy evolved into the plot readers see today. Comedy and tragedy are linked, and tragedy is crucial to the relief and joy felt at the conclusion of a comedy. Cornford observes that the Attic comedians actually learned how to construct plots from the tragic writers; however, hope needed to be restored at the end, so a happy conclusion was compulsory. Comedy and tragedy represent different stages in the year, and the yearly cycle is not complete without the comedic rebirth. Frye discusses the happiness an audience feels at seeing this

rebirth. He extracts two ideas from this happiness: “first, that tragedy is really implicit or uncompleted comedy; second, that comedy contains a potential tragedy within itself” (“The Argument of Comedy” 84). The battle of summer and winter, which were linked with good and evil, is a real-life battle. While humor is derived from the physical battle between the people representing the seasons, there are serious undertones to these rituals.

With winter fading, the spring brought a literal rebirth of crops, which was imitated in the rituals that were celebrated. Harrison discusses the importance of seasonal festivals for those who lived off the crops: “[G]reat was man’s hope and fear in the winter, great his relief and joy in the spring. It was literally a matter of death and life” (Ancient Art 67). The seriousness of these changes is shown in the many rituals that were preserved for numerous years. An important aspect of the rituals was that the “good” always triumphed, confirming the hope for a prosperous crop. These rituals comprised religious worship. According to the Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, there were often fertility cults that were worshipped as a way to help generate a thriving spring crop. The primary god worshiped was Dionysus, because of his association with fertility and vegetation. Through his worship, many of the rituals evolved. While these rituals showed a belief in Dionysus’s divine power to bring a productive crop, the ritual and worship were directly tied to food supply and not specifically to the god Dionysus. Other cultures worshiped other powers, but all believed that the gods provided food for survival. The early Christians even acknowledged the usefulness of crops in garnering support. In the book of Acts, Paul reasons with the crowd about the Christian God’s influence: “He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in the seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy” (Acts 14:17, NIV).

#### IV

Many critics argue that the texts that have happy endings have typical features such as the “green world,” the battle of the sexes, and other ideas that are reused with different variations by authors. However, Northrop Frye observes that interpretation is the most important aspect in discovering whether something is comic or tragic, so much depends on the author’s use of the feature: “[T]his is obvious with relatively neutral archetypes like the island, which may be

Prospero's island or Circe's" ("Archetypes" 230). As this example illustrates, it is difficult to say whether an island always fits into an archetypal structure as part of the "green world." While it fits into that mold in William Shakespeare's The Tempest, it does not in the Odyssey, where it is a roadblock in the path to home and a comedic conclusion.

Another supposed stereotype that is challenged by Robert Corrigan is the battle between the sexes. Corrigan questions whether this plot is necessarily comical: "While it is true that the struggle for power in the home has provided a comic impetus for many plays, from Aristophanes' Lysistrata . . . this same struggle is also at the heart of such eminently serious works as Macbeth" (7). Many writers have strived to emphasize that there is no one thematic feature that distinguishes a work as a comedy. Readers cannot assume that a text is comic just because it is bawdy, takes place on an island or green world, or presents a battle between the sexes. Specific archetypes are not the essence of comedy, and that is the point that the critics are trying to make. Comedy can arise from many circumstances, especially those that seem least comic, such as the destruction of Troy, the fall of humanity, or a trip to the depths of Hell.

Styan argues that the problem created at the beginning of the comic text must be reconciled for the reader to feel a cathartic response. Styan discusses how readers of comedies respond to the comedic twist: "A sense of incongruity, with a resulting release of tension, is felt within the mind" (Styan 154). Corrigan goes further, arguing that this change and release of tension are not only necessary for the text to be relevant to the reader, but can also have a life-affirming function:

The spirit of comedy celebrates our capacity not only to endure our tragic fate, but to overcome it with a kind of energy and exuberance which insists that our good fortune is every bit as much an active force in our lives as our limitations. Our fate may be tragic, but comedy, in all its forms, is an assertion of that life force which enables us to be joyous survivors in an acceptable and accepting world. (Corrigan 11)

Corrigan argues that within comedies, there must be a disaster and that disaster must be reconciled by the end, even if it is fixed in some incongruous way. This concept is essential because through this change readers can gain hope for their own lives. He compares the structure of comedy to life: "Life has shortcomings, but this situation is not viewed as irremediable, for everything about comedy confirms the possibility of change" (Corrigan 9). This

restoration is important to note because it becomes a theme in much of the literary canon. Aeschylus's plays like the Oresteian Trilogy are often recuperative drama where some disaster in the first play is ameliorated by the last part followed by a rowdy satyr play. This idea is also essential to Christianity, where tragic suffering is everywhere but Christians believe that ultimately goodness will come from it.

## V

The same rituals that produced many landmark Christian texts in Western literature have also helped form some of the best-known Greek writings. The same comic plot line can be found in many texts that are not Christian and exhibit a Greek pantheon of gods. In the Oresteian Trilogy, the first two plays are utterly tragic and bleak. However, the trilogy ends with happiness and peace. The Eumenides' blessings that are bestowed on Athens at the end of the play confirm the close tie between ritual and this text's ending. The Eumenides grant blessings on the soil, and banish all possible plagues; it appears that they are fertility goddesses. This text is not the only text in the Greek canon where a tragic ending is averted. In Helen by Euripides, the Greek god's interference provides a happy romantic ending by duping Paris and allowing the real Helen to be preserved for her husband. This same interference by the gods is seen in Aeschylus's Oresteian Trilogy, where Apollo and Athena intervene and restore order. The sudden appearance of gods often produces a comic ending. When this ending happens, as in the Oresteian Trilogy, it is called "Deus ex machina," Latin for "god out of the machine." Euripides is noted for often using this device, and "Deus ex machina" is related to the origins of the comic plot. This plot change relates also to Aeschylus's Oresteian Tragedy. The change in tone between the separate plays had a cathartic purpose, and the ending of the plays was often used as an etiological myth about the origin of an institution. In the case of the Oresteian Trilogy, the Aeropagus, or Greek court system, was founded out of this trial, and it is believed that the play is the reason that cities began taking responsibility for murders instead of having relatives seek vengeance on their own.

Sophocles' Oedipus Trilogy is also a non-Christian work that exhibits a comedic ending produced out of tragedy through the sacrifice of the main character. The first two works, *Oedipus*

*the King* and *Antigone*, are terrible in the amount of death and horror produced. They are well-known for their horrors and are regularly studied for their tragic qualities. Yet, *Oedipus at Colonus* is a very different work from the other plays by Sophocles. It has been prophesized that wherever Oedipus's burial place is, that city will have divine protection. The city of Athens gains this right of protection. Now, the pitiful character that killed his father, slept with his mother (leading her towards suicide), and blinded himself, gets the chance to be helpful. This ending redeems Oedipus from the tragic, arrogant man found in the first work. His actions are commendable, and thus the trilogy is changed from an utter tragedy towards more of a comedic resolution.

## VI

The Gospels rely heavily on the comedic plot. Christians need to have a comedic outlook on their beliefs because without that view they would have no hope and faith. Two essential Christian tenets are comedic: Christ's resurrection and the promise of everlasting bliss in Heaven. If Jesus did not rise from the dead and if Heaven does not exist, Christian life has little meaning other than as a general moral principle. Northrop Frye argues that deeply religious cultures often rely on comedy. He states: "Civilizations which stress the desirable rather than the real, and the religious as opposed to the scientific perspective, think of drama almost entirely in terms of comedy" ("The Mythos of Spring: Comedy" 89). While not completely correct about Christianity, this statement makes some important points. Many feel that Christians must inevitably come to see life as comedic. Christianity's core belief demands faith in a comedic perspective on Jesus Christ. In the Gospels, there is a plot that is congruent with tragedy, which is epitomized in the Crucifixion of Jesus. The Christian faith, however, does not believe that the story ends tragically. Frye comments on how the Christian tragedy must be redeemed: "Christianity, too, sees tragedy as an episode in the divine comedy, the larger scheme of redemption and resurrection. . . . The serenity of the final double chorus in the St. Matthew Passion would hardly be attainable if the composer and audience did not know that there was more to the story" (*Mythos of Autumn* 106-107). The resurrection of Jesus that followed the Crucifixion is similar to the resurrection that is seen in the crops or worship of Dionysus. The resurrection is wholly based on the individual's

faith - a faith in a larger scheme - because there is no physical proof Jesus' resurrection happened. The Gospel of John rightly stresses the necessity of Christians to have faith in the Resurrection: "Blessed are those who have not seen, yet have believed" (John 20:29, NIV).

Comparisons can be made between the risen Christ and the ceremonies of the fertility cults. These similarities suggest that rituals may have had an influence on the religion's comic perspective on life. The Dionysian cults' worship pre-dates Jesus' birth by several centuries: "Child sacrifice was . . . a feature of the rites," explains the Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. "It was not simply a cult of wine, women, and song, but a matter of life and death in which the dearest things of life, and life itself, were offered to ensure the ongoing of life" (II, 265). The deep suffering expressed within this passage is supported by D.D. Raphael's ideas on tragedy: "[I]t seems to me, the poignancy of Tragedy comes out chiefly in the misery of innocence" (194). His comment reinforces the great sacrifice that is inherent in tragedy and some comedy, yet comedy also contains a redeeming quality. The definition of the cults of Dionysus in the Interpreter's Dictionary closely parallels the Christian belief in Jesus Christ. Jesus can be perceived as the dearest thing in life, and his life was offered up to ensure the continuation of life after death by taking the burden of a Christian's sins with him to the cross. This perspective is interesting because it makes readers question if the cults may have influenced the Christian view on Jesus' resurrection. Without questioning the existence of Jesus, the similarities between ritual and Christianity are profound and may have influenced believers to take a comedic outlook on their faith and life. However, the Bible also is clear in its stance against cult worship like that of Dionysus cults. The Ten Commandments, in the book of Exodus, specifically outlaw worship of other gods like Dionysus (Exodus 20:2-3). In 1 Kings, Elijah too condemns the worship of the Baals, which were worshiped through "shouting," "dance," and even self-mutilation. The self-mutilation is intriguing to consider because readers see frenzied murder in The Bacchae, associated with Dionysus. Elijah takes a firm stance against the Baals: "You and your father's family have [made trouble for Israel]. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals" (1 Kings 18:18, NIV). Besides the comic perspective that Jesus did rise from the dead, the entire Christian outlook on life is comic too: Christian belief is based on the idea that

there is a heaven, and that this world is transitory. This world includes suffering, but if Christians endure the trials and have faith, their life will have a comic ending in Heaven, where happiness abounds.

## VII

Dante's Divine Comedy is a text that takes the idea of Heaven and the Christian comedic view on life and uses those concepts to show God's love. Dante's text ends with a God whose love controls the stars, yet it begins with horrible and depressing imagery in the Inferno. It follows the Christian comic view with Dante physically moving from Hell to Heaven, in addition to his spiritual journey, where he moves from a spiritual low to a glimpse of his creator. Like Dante's Divine Comedy, John Milton's Paradise Lost tries to show the comedic side of Christianity while giving readers a unique glimpse of Christian supernatural beings. One of the most influential stories in the Old Testament is the story of Adam and Eve's fall from God. No single person wants to claim responsibility for causing the fall of humanity. The fall has many horrible results as shown in Genesis: childbirth will hurt, work is created as a punishment, and Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden of Eden. But the Biblical viewpoint contrasts with Milton's. Milton twists the story of the fall into a somewhat positive event for humanity. Jesus is shown to redeem humanity and allow God to show mercy and grace. This grace would not have been necessary if the original sin had not been committed. Milton's text is able to reflect upon the events after Adam and Eve because he had lived after the writing of the New Testament and the Gospels. He was able to add what the Genesis story was lacking: a preview of God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Milton clearly embraces the notion that comedy and Christianity are inseparable. After viewing the sacrifice of Christ, Adam is bursting with excitement over this transformation. He states: "O goodness infinite, goodness immense! / That all this good of evil shall produce, / And evil turn to good" (Paradise Lost XII.467-469). Milton adopts one of the worst stories of the Bible and puts the post-Jesus comedic Christian spin on it to make it include God's forgiveness and the grace Christ gave humanity.

Another instance where ritual has influenced literature many centuries after its origin is in the idea of the "green world," as seen in William Shakespeare's The Tempest. Northrop Frye

analyzes the comic aspects of the green world: “[T]he action of the comedy begins in a world represented as a normal world, moves into the green world, goes into a metamorphosis there in which the comic resolution is achieved, and returns to the normal world” (“Argument of Comedy” 85). He draws a parallel between this plot development and the summer and winter rituals where hope and order are restored in the springtime. This symbolism is made even more apparent through the actual description of the green world, which is bursting with nature’s glory and would be associated with spring’s rebirth. The sacrificial aspects of the rituals and of Jesus in the Gospels draw interesting parallels to some of Shakespeare’s works. King Lear and Hamlet are tragic, depicting the sacrifices of children. Cordelia, in her attempt to save Lear, ends up dying herself. In addition, while Hamlet succeeds in murdering Claudius and avenging his father, he dies sacrificially himself. Fundamental to the Western literary canon, Shakespeare’s works contain many elements such as tragic sacrifices, which classify them as incomplete comedies. These rituals that began long ago have had a vast influence on writers, from the ancient Greeks to Christians like Shakespeare.

## VIII

Ancient rituals have had a large influence not only on their own cultures, but also on the many different cultures that have evolved out of them. These rituals appear throughout the world often as a monomyth underlying many writings. Comedy seems to be a complete and full plot, where a hero overcomes the adversity he is faced with. The types of literature that this comedic ritual has produced are as vast as the western literary canon. They differ from ancient Greek texts with Apollo and Athena, to Christian doctrine with Jesus as the center, to writings from many centuries by Shakespeare, Milton, and Dante. Today, these rituals continue to be seen not only in our society’s writing, but also in our religions, with many religions having a comedic attitude towards life. The comic plot that I have advocated was an important part of writing which has been used by many writers over the centuries and continues to be used today.

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**Economic Populism and the  
Rise of National Socialism in the Sudetenlands**

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Undergraduate Research Symposium 2007

## **Introduction**

Despite the challenge posed by minorities, Czechoslovakia achieved a state of relative peace in the late 1920s. Economic prosperity, particularly in comparison to the Austrian Republic, and sensitive cultural institutions had settled the complaints of national minorities. The Germans native to Czechoslovakian territories, who had attempted to create an independent state following the end of the World War and elected nationalists overwhelmingly in the first parliamentary elections, had become politically active within the framework of the Czechoslovak democracy. Cooperation proved to be more useful than antagonism, and though German nationalism did not vanish, it no longer appeared to threaten the integrity of the state.

It would have been difficult, therefore, to imagine that by 1935, Germans who had once identified themselves as German-Bohemians oriented toward Austria would begin to identify as “Sudeten” Germans separated unjustly from the German Reich. That year, German voters drastically increased the number of German nationalists in the Czechoslovakian parliament, giving the German Nationalist leader, Konrad Henlein, the political capital he needed to secure support for Berlin and force a wedge between Germans and the Czechoslovak state, which ultimately contributed to its undoing (Crampton 1997, 71-75).

That the sentiment among millions of Germans living in Czechoslovakia shifted so swiftly from that of the late 1920s to the mid-1930s suggests a correlation between Czechoslovakian economic performance and German loyalty to the state. Germans accepted their membership in the Czechoslovak state when economic conditions there were superior to those in Austria and Germany, which both suffered heavily from runaway inflation following the war. Their allegiance faltered, however, in the face of a world depression, from which Germany recovered swiftly, while Czechoslovakia did not (Crampton 1997, 70).

Most scholars accept that the depression played an important role in reorienting the Sudeten Germans toward the German Reich and, indeed, many perceived it at the time (Seton-Watson 1938, 660). Little attempt has been made, however, to discern why the depression affected Sudeten German communities to a much greater extent than their Czech and Slovak counterparts.

As the Great Depression led to a massive increase in government intervention in economies throughout the world, including in Czechoslovakia, and as Germany played a dominant economic role in the former Habsburg lands, it is natural to look toward the economic policies of these two countries to explain this abnormality. What specific policies did the German and Czechoslovak governments implement to cope with the adverse effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s, who did they benefit, and how did they impact the economic well-being of the German population residing in Czechoslovakia? The answers to these questions will shed light upon the relative importance of class and nationality in framing economic policy in multinational states. They also may expose contradictions in the official propaganda of Hitler's regime, which argued that protecting the interests of oppressed German nationals in Czechoslovakia justified the dismemberment of the first Czechoslovakian Republic prior to the Second World War.

### **I. The Economic Structure of Interwar Czechoslovakia**

Before analyzing the motivation behind specific economic policies and the impact that those policies had upon the Sudeten Germans, it is necessary to understand the structure of the Czechoslovak economy in the interwar years. The territory that became Czechoslovakia contained 80% of the total industrial capacity of the former Habsburg Empire, and its success depended upon unrestricted access to a protected market within the Empire. The war reduced this domestic market of 52 million people to one of only 13.5 million that was only capable of absorbing approximately 30% of Czechoslovak industrial production (Diamond 1941, 267). In order to avoid a painful readjustment process, government leaders had to secure foreign markets for excess industrial goods. To this end, the government negotiated a number of trade agreements, starting with Yugoslavia, Germany, and Switzerland in 1920, and many other continental European nations in the following years, including Austria, France, and Italy (Diamond 1941, 253). Thus, Czechoslovakia avoided the trade disruption that might have crippled it following independence from Austria-Hungary, and production patterns within the country remained much the same as they had been prior to independence (Pryor 1975, 515).

Foreign trade drove exceptional economic expansion in Czechoslovakia throughout the 1920s. By the end of the decade, just prior to the onset of the worldwide depression, exports accounted for 30% of gross national product (G.N.P.) (Pryor 1975, 502). Exports played a particularly important role for Czechoslovakian industrial development. In 1929 the country exported approximately 50% of all stone, glass, clay, porcelain, leather, shoes, textiles, and metal products, compared to only 6.9% of its agricultural production (Pryor 1975, 510). The destination of these goods was primarily Germany and former Habsburg lands, which accounted for 20-23% and 30-33% of Czechoslovakian exports respectively between 1925 and 1930 (Roucek 1932, 403).

## **II. Role of Germans in the Czechoslovakian Economy**

In order to evaluate how policy changes affected the Sudeten Germans as compared to the rest of the population, it is important to understand that Germans were the most active of Czechoslovakia's nationalities in the modern sectors of the economy. Agriculture employed only 23% of the German population in 1930 compared to 85% of the population of all other nationalities. Germans, while only comprising 23% of the country's population, made up almost 64% of the employees in industry, banking, and commerce (Shute 1948, 40). Furthermore, they possessed a disproportionate amount of technical expertise, a fact that worried a Czechoslovak leadership that regarded them as unreliable and feared a return of German economic hegemony (Boyer 2000, 263).

A closer look at German employment in Czechoslovakia reveals that this group was particularly dependent upon foreign trade. Table one below compares German employment in several key exporting industries to that of Czechoslovak employment. The first column reports the percentage by which the proportion of German workers in an industry exceeded the proportion of Czech workers in that industry in 1921 (if two in every ten Germans were employed in an industry that only employed one in every ten Czechoslovaks, the percentage by which the German proportion of workers exceeded the Czechoslovak proportion of workers would be 100%). Columns one and two show the percentage of production in that industry that was exported from the country in 1920 and 1929 respectively. Notice that each of the industries selected relied

heavily on foreign markets to absorb their goods, and employed a disproportionate number of Germans. The fortune of the Sudeten Germans, therefore, depended upon policies, foreign and domestic, that affected the free flow of goods into and out of the Czechoslovak Republic.

**Table 1:**  
**German Relative Employment Concentration (1) and  
Dependence on Exports 1920 (2) and 1929 (3), Selected  
Industries**

<b>Sector*</b>	(1)	(2)	(3)
<b><i>Mining and smelting</i></b>	15.4%	12.6%	17.9%
<b><i>Stone, glass, earth</i></b>	108.4%	64.3%	54.4%
<b><i>Metals</i></b>	10.1%	37.2%	47.7%
<b><i>Chemical</i></b>	71.0%	31.8%	28.4%
<b><i>Textiles</i></b>	190.3%	32.5%	46.7%
<b><i>Paper Products</i></b>	112.0%	18.2%	19.8%

1: Percentage by which the proportion of the German workforce employed exceeded the proportion of the Czechoslovak workforce employed by a given industry, 1921(Pátek 2000, 255).

2: Exports as a percentage of production, 1920 (Pryor 1975, 508).

3: Exports as a percentage of production, 1929 (Pryor 1975, 508).

\* Note that data for each sector may be defined slightly differently by each source.

### **III. Economic Policies that Affected the Sudeten Germans**

Given the structure of the Czechoslovakian economy and the role that the Sudeten Germans played in it, one can deduce the impact that a given economic policy had upon their well-being. Because of the disproportionate concentration of Germans employed in industry, one can assume that policies that adversely affected industrial workers and entrepreneurs during the depression would have had a greater negative effect on Germans than on the rest of the Czechoslovakian population. Furthermore, since the success of Czechoslovakian industry, especially in sectors dominated by Germans, depended disproportionately on foreign trade, policies that restricted this trade would have a greater negative impact on Germans as well.

The economic policies instituted by both the Czechoslovakian and German governments restricted trade, and therefore did have a negative impact on employment in the Sudetenlands, which accounted for half of total unemployment in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s (Crampton 1997, 74). In both Czechoslovakia and Germany, the agrarian population demanded and received economic advantages, but unlike Germany, Czechoslovakia was not in a position to offset the adverse effects that granting such privileges had upon the urban-industrial population. Economic populism, rather than economic nationalism, informed policy decisions in Czechoslovakia and Germany, and provides the most plausible explanation for the disproportionate suffering of Sudeten Germans and their subsequent reorientation toward the German Reich in the 1930s.

### **German Reich Policies**

The claim that Germany sought to protect the interests of German minorities in foreign lands is inconsistent with German economic policy in the 1930s. This policy restricted trade flows in and out of the Reich and economically isolated Czechoslovakia from its traditional markets in southeastern Europe by securing them only for the German Reich, and thus played a major role in both deepening and extending the depression in Sudeten-German industry.

As previously mentioned, Germany was Czechoslovakia's single largest trading partner in the 1920s, accounting for about one fifth of total exports from the country. Like Czechoslovakia, Germany was also highly dependent on foreign markets to provide raw materials and outlets for its industrial production (Chase 2005 93-94). Therefore, when the Great Depression hit Germany, economic activity there plunged. The political unrest generated by previously unfathomable unemployment rates resulted in populist pressure for government intervention in the economy, and allowed National Socialists to come to power in 1933 (Frey 1983, 411). The Nazi Party instituted policies that not only diminished Czechoslovakian exports to the Reich, but which indirectly affected their ability to trade with the rest of Central Europe as well.

Agrarians agitated for protectionist policies throughout the Weimar period, and capitalized on the suffering of the Great Depression (Spaulding 1991, 355). Blaming cheap imports for the price deflation occurring throughout the economy, protectionist forces succeeded in passing a nearly 100% increase in tariffs on all imported goods between 1931 and 1935. These tariff hikes

had a negative impact upon Czechoslovakian exporters by forcing them to charge uncompetitive prices for their goods in German markets, thus lowering their sales abroad. Combined with non-tariff barriers such as quotas and capital controls imposed by the Nazi regime, the German market became virtually closed to Czechoslovakian exporters during this period (Madsen 2001, 858-9).

While agrarian voters played a key role in bringing the Nazi regime to power in 1932, their influence took second place to the military aims of Hitler after 1934, which required a build up of the industrial economy (Frey 1983, 409). Price guarantees on agricultural goods silenced calls for protection from Eastern European imports, and the Nazi regime set about using Germany's economic might to acquire export markets for German industrial goods (Spaulding 1991, 358). This meant negotiating trade agreements with Germany's agrarian neighbors to the southeast on terms favorable to the German industries that Hitler sought to promote. Due to the advanced state of Czechoslovakian industrialization, Germany did not enter into agreements with that country. Between 1933 and 1934, Germany negotiated agreements with Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia to purchase agricultural goods from these nations at prices that greatly exceeded world rates. In exchange, these countries allowed German exporters to enjoy preferential tariff and non-tariff treatment on manufactured goods, including metals, textiles, glass, and paper. Recall from table one above that these industries employed a disproportionate number of Germans in the Sudetenlands, and that trade with former Habsburg lands accounted for approximately 30-35% of Czechoslovakia's exports annually. Favorable tariffs made German goods more competitive in these markets relative to goods from Czechoslovakia while the non-tariff arrangements, such as quotas and customs permits, excluded Czechoslovakia from trade with these important partners almost entirely (Chase 2005, 101-2).

Although quantifying the exact impact of German trade policy upon Czechoslovakian industry would require advanced statistical modeling and precise data, one can say with confidence that the effect was negative. Sealing Germany's markets through a complicated series of tariffs and currency controls virtually severed ties between Czechoslovakian exporters and their single most important market (Neal 1979, 399). The creation of the "Reichmark trading bloc"

further isolated Czechoslovakia, redirecting its foreign trade towards countries like the United States, which passed legislation to liberalize foreign trade as the economy recovered (Pryor 1979, 239). Only German rearmament likely had a positive effect on Czechoslovakia: exports of machinery, metals, chemicals, and rubber all rose significantly faster from 1933-1937 than other exports (Pryor 1975, 523). Whether Sudeten German workers knew who their patrons were remains for another analysis. That they did not know the extent to which the Reich was responsible for their plight is almost certain.

### **Czechoslovakian Policies**

The German government was neither the sole nor primary cause of the decline of Czechoslovakian industry in the 1930s. The policies of the Reich were by no means unique to Germany and, in fact, almost every country in the world, including Czechoslovakia, instituted various tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in the wake of the depression. This led to a series of escalating tariffs, or tariff wars, between Czechoslovakia and its formerly cooperative trading partners, effectively halting the flow of trade between central and southeastern European nations. Agrarian political domination prevented the renegotiation of these agreements, which were so vital for the German employees of Czechoslovakia's export industries.

The strength of protectionist sentiment among the agrarian population of Czechoslovakia stems from one important fact: in the production of agricultural products, Czechoslovakia was comparatively disadvantaged (Pryor 1975, 508). While Czechoslovakian land may have been more productive per acre, labor was cheaper in less developed parts of Europe, and therefore agricultural imports from those regions sold in the Czechoslovak market at lower prices. This represented a distinct threat to the economic well being of the agricultural class, which amounted to over a third of economically active persons in 1930 (Pátek 2000, 255). The typical response to this threat was to support tariffs on agricultural imports and subsidies for domestic producers.

Divergent interests among the industrial classes, both between individual industries and between workers and owners, enhanced agrarian power over economic policy. Industries that produced for export favored trade agreements rather than trade protection, while the opposite was true of industries that produced for domestic consumption (Diamond 1941, 263-4).

Furthermore, in many industries, the interests of the workers and owners diverged, as the structure of some firms allowed owners to make more profit with fewer workers because of higher prices in the absence of foreign competition. Indeed, opposition to tariffs came primarily from socialist political parties, presumably representing the interests of workers, while bourgeois and agrarian interests favored them (Diamond 1941, 254). Thus, the vote of the industrial classes split on the issue of tariffs, while that of agrarians did not.

Although agrarians also dictated economic policy in the countries of southeastern Europe, their dominance had the opposite effect. The situation facing farmers in countries like Hungary, Rumania, and Yugoslavia was similar to that of export industries in Czechoslovakia: domestic consumption could not absorb domestic production. Conversely, manufacturers in these countries were comparatively disadvantaged and sought protection from the industrial products of more advanced European countries. The dynamic of trade negotiations between Czechoslovakia and these countries was predictable: Czechoslovakia sought to gain access to these markets for its manufacturers while these countries sought to gain access to Czechoslovakia's markets for their agricultural producers in exchange. Such an exchange would have mutually benefited both economies, but at the expense of the powerful agrarian class in Czechoslovakia. Therefore, no trade agreement could be reached without a compromise of agrarian economic interests (Diamond 1941, 253).

The economic prosperity which had provided a foundation for compromise between Czechoslovakia's agrarian and industrial classes in the 1920s collapsed in 1931. Agricultural prices plummeted early in the depression, rallying agrarian voters around demands for tariffs to stabilize prices. The Czechoslovakian government responded by increasing duties on grains, much to the dismay of farmers in Hungary. A tariff war with that country ensued: "The Czechoslovak Agrarians refused to make any compromise, whereupon Hungary retaliated by decreeing that henceforth, except by special permission, certain manufactured goods, including shoes, textiles and woolens, could not be imported from countries with which Hungary had no trade agreement" (Diamond 1941, 257-9). This had a devastating impact upon exporters,

particularly in the German-dominated textile industry, which depended upon the Hungarian market for both raw materials and exports.

The Czechoslovakian government took measures to alleviate suffering among the urban classes, but these efforts could not hope to combat the devastating effects of trade loss upon German industries (Pryor 1979, 228-240). The government instituted various welfare and public works programs to stimulate domestic demand, of which Germans received a disproportionately large share (Seton-Watson 1938, 661). However, the Czechoslovak government could not hope to consume all of the products of its large industrial centers alone. The country needed trading partners, but agrarian interests kept foreign markets sealed, ensuring radicalization of the unemployed in Czechoslovakia.

### **Economic Pragmatism and Reorientation toward the Reich**

While working class Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia did not have an alternative to the faltering Czechoslovak state, their German counterparts did. Improving economic conditions in Germany contrasted greatly with the situation in Czechoslovakia. Austria, too, remained in a depressed state, so that although most Sudeten Germans favored unification with the Austrian state in 1918, they came to identify with the more successful German Reich by the mid-1930s. The reasons for this are certainly varied, but it is clear that economic pragmatism played an important role in determining the political orientation of the Sudeten Germans, and, indeed, of all nationalities within Czechoslovakia in the interwar years.

Far from being antagonistic, Germans and Czechoslovaks sharing similar economic interests often cooperated in interwar Czechoslovakia. One example is the particularly close cooperation between German and Czechoslovakian industrialists that followed the cooling of nationalist tensions after 1920. The two leading industrial organizations in Czechoslovakia, the Central Association of Czechoslovak Industrialists (USCP) and the German Central Association of Industry in Czechoslovakia (DHI), initially opposed to one another on nationalistic lines, soon formed a close-knit alliance in the name of unity on matters of trade and currency. Eventually, the two organizations adopted a single structure as a cost saving measure, a reflection of how identical their aims were. Only with reluctance, under great pressure from National Socialism, did

the DHI part ways with its Czechoslovak counterpart in the 1930s. This reluctance attests to the inseparability of German and Czech economic interests. The very skill of German technicians and businessmen made them indispensable assets to Czechoslovakian capital, which rewarded them handsomely (Boyer 2000, 265-273).

Relations among the working and agrarian classes, too, tended to emphasize economic, rather than nationalistic, interests. When the first tariff scheme was introduced in 1926, it was not supported by the Czechoslovaks or the Germans: it was supported by the agrarians and the bourgeoisie. Similarly, the opposition to these tariffs was not a single national party, but a coalition formed by Czechoslovak and German socialist and communist parties. "The division in Parliament was on a basis of class or occupational interest; thus the conflict was purely economic. Racial and political differences did not enter the controversy" (Diamond 1941, 254).

The rise of National Socialism changed the political landscape in the midst of the Great Depression, creating a fusion between Sudeten German nationalism and economic pragmatism. German policy, although detracting from the economic well-being of Sudeten Germans, accelerated the recovery of the German economy (Chase 2005, 102). Many Germans in Czechoslovakia, correctly or not, perceived that the fortunes of Germans within the Reich were better than their own. Nazi propaganda confirmed these suspicions, correctly placing blame for the economic woes of the Sudeten Germans upon the Czechoslovak state. However, the Nazi account of events contained a fictional Czechoslovak antagonist working against German interests. As has been shown, the antagonist was a non-national coalition of agrarians and select industrialists, both German and Czechoslovakian. Evidence of their success in distorting this fact came in 1935, when 63% of Sudeten Germans voted for Henlein's Sudetendeutschepartei. When the German Agrarians joined the SDP in 1937, the fusion of economic and national interest in the Sudetenlands was complete (Crampton 1997, 74).

## **Conclusions**

The role of economic success in shaping national identity is apparent in the world around us. The history of the United States, for example, shows a wide variety of ethnic groups shedding their previous national identities to take part in a thriving and successful economic life. In Iraq, the

opposite occurs today: as the economic situation in the region disintegrated, so too did the loyalty of the various ethnic groups occupying the state.

Although the present case does not illustrate a shift in national identity arising from economic concerns, it does reveal a correlation between economic success and loyalty to a particular state. In this instance, Sudeten-German loyalty to the Czechoslovak state depended upon economic success through the interwar years. Their allegiance disintegrated with the rise of rampant unemployment in the 1930s. Reinforcing a materialistic theory of state identity is their reorientation during the mid-1930s towards recovering Germany, rather than faltering Austria, of which they had long been citizens.

A coincidence of occupational concentration, rather than nationalist political forces, explains why the economic suffering of Czechoslovakia was so greatly borne by the German population. Agrarian interests, which dominated economic policy in governments throughout Europe, choked the flow of goods between Czechoslovakia and her trading partners in the 1930s. That this devastated the exporting industries responsible for employing a vastly disproportionate percentage of the Sudeten German population was an unintentional consequence of economic populism, rather than economic nationalism.

Cooperation between Czechoslovak and German parties representing similar class interests illustrates that economic self-interest trumped nationalist fervor in interwar Czechoslovakia. The success of Nazi propaganda in blurring the line between these two made the shift in Sudeten-German political loyalty toward the nationalistic SDP possible. Unnaturally high unemployment rates in the Sudetenlands, caused by German and Czechoslovak economic policy, allowed National Socialists to convince the population that their economic lot would improve under German leadership. This was a precondition for the preeminence of National Socialism in the Sudetenland in 1935.

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**The Quotidian and the Horrific:**  
Filmmakers' use of the everyday in their attempts to  
represent the Holocaust

Stephen Grebinski

Undergraduate Research Symposium 2007

*“Beware of these pictures, they only reflect the executioner. As for them, it’s of their love, their joy that they would want to talk to you. You, the unknown child of their children’s children, they would have wanted you to remember their gentleness.”<sup>1</sup>*

## **Introduction**

The Holocaust was an event that is not only incomprehensible to our contemporary society, but also to those who experienced it—perpetrator and victim alike. The victims could not have ever imagined what would eventually be done to them while the perpetrators cannot clearly explain or understand how the Holocaust was brought about. History itself is unclear in many aspects of the event. Yet as we finally begin to understand the magnitude of the Holocaust, and wish to remain silent on this issue no longer, there is a great eagerness to bear witness to the tragedy, in order to understand what occurred as an attempt for society to recover.

Just like any other traumatic event that defies all other means of comprehension, the Holocaust has been the subject of many works of art and literature, including film. Yet film can only produce a simplified version of the events of the Holocaust. The audience eventually becomes immune to constant violence<sup>2</sup>, which although an accurate portrayal of the events of the Holocaust, is counterproductive in that the film’s ultimate goal of representation is not achieved. Thus, the turmoil of those who endured this tragedy is shown in a limited scope, and dramatization occurs, which, in many cases, may be contrary to the truth. The victims of the Holocaust experienced a litany of emotions, far too extreme for film to truly recreate—emotions the audience has never experienced. Another problem is that film cannot teach us to feel, film cannot force emotions upon us—emotions that we *should* feel. The effect of the film only has a basis in the emotions and experiences of the viewer. Cinema can only show the surface of these conflicts, giving an impression of what occurred, but never representing the Holocaust.

In other films of a horrific and spectacular nature, we allow ourselves to become affected by the reality that is created, yet the whole time the audience is in “suspended disbelief”—accepting this alternate reality while still aware that what is being presented is either fiction, or some dramatization of an actual event. Holocaust cinema also falls into this realm of “suspended disbelief.” We see these horrific

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<sup>1</sup> From Fabienne Rousso-Lenoir’s *Zahor* (1996)

<sup>2</sup> Although there are several theories that argue against this assertion, I will, for this paper, agree with the more widely accepted argument made by the fields of communications and marketing, that we become immune to violence after prolonged exposure.

events unfold on screen, and for a moment categorize them as other films of the horrific and spectacular, films we generally categorize as *fiction*. This is one of the many problems of representation preventing Holocaust cinema from bringing the event into our understanding. Here is where scenes of the quotidian come into play. These scenes help to remind the viewer of the factual reality of these events. These scenes provide the audience with a way to relate to the characters—the victims—on some level.

All Holocaust films contain some aspect of the quotidian, in order to show the jump from normal life to the event. The quotidian is more than just a placeholder for the Holocaust. The quotidian exists in the social realm, as the characters interact with one another, and normal social events take place, or are attempted to take place within the context of the horror. The quotidian lies in the domesticity of life as well, as these activities prove to us that life did not stop; the Holocaust as a break in time is simply unfeasible. The quotidian also refers to the routine of everyday life, of the occupational, as the concept of work—in a sense a sort of perverse employment, exists in the microcosm of the concentration camps. Objects too are the quotidian, as they retain their same properties. A bed is still a bed. Bread is still bread. But in the circumstances of the Holocaust, they receive different meanings by their context, which differ from those identities that the audience assigns to them. The quotidian is finally, industrial. The mundane process of creation, or in this case, destruction, almost defines the Holocaust itself—an act that is coldly and precisely planned and undertaken. Any inconsistencies in the process are soon rectified, and all is set into motion again. All manners of life continue, even in the face of death. The Holocaust was not a break from history, but part of the same continuous framework of all events past.

All of the films discussed in this paper use at least one aspect of the quotidian in their attempts to represent the Holocaust. By relying on the quotidian, these filmmakers help bring the Holocaust closer to our understanding. By showing the rhythm of life, film can—at the least—contextualize this event, bringing it closer to our understanding. Four Polish films, Herbert B. Fredersdorf and Marek Goldstein's *Lang Ist der Veg* (1948), Wanda Jakubowska's *Ostatni Etap* (1948), Andrzej Wajda's *Wielki Tydzień* (1995), and Janusz Morgenstern's *Ambulans* (1962) all have elements of the banal and mundane, which provide a unique method for portraying the Holocaust. The specificity of the everyday causes the Holocaust, by remitting the shock, more horrifying. These scenes help not only to connect the vastness of

the Holocaust with the specificity of the everyday, but also portray the Holocaust in terms with which we can understand and relate.

### **The Banality of Evil**

The banality of these films is so powerfully effective because of the quotidian nature of the Holocaust itself—what Hannah Arendt refers to in her book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, as the “banality of evil.” As she witnesses the trial of SS officer Adolf Eichmann, she slowly dispels the myths surrounding the Holocaust. There was no set plan to exterminate the Jews. There was no clear strategy. Extermination simply followed forced emigration, violence against Jews and the curtailment of their liberties, the sequestering of Jews into ghettos, which after becoming a nuisance to the other residents of the city, were replaced by concentration camps in the countryside, which eventually became death camps. The progression from increased sentiments of anti-Semitism to the attempted and nearly complete destruction of an entire race of people creates such a disjunction between history and logic that the event almost seems mythical, a time unique from history that will never be repeated, as the monstrous men who perpetrated such acts are dead.

Israeli Attorney General, Gideon Hausner, who lead the trial against Eichmann wanted to show the world such a monstrous man, and punish him, thereby ensuring no more harm—so that an event with the magnitude of the Holocaust would never happen again. Although this seems basically logical, there are more complications to this thought process. Arendt, who witnessed the trial explains “Mr. Hausner wanted to try the most abnormal monster the world has ever seen, and, at the same time, try in him ‘many like him,’ even the ‘whole Nazi movement and anti-Semitism at large’” (Arendt 253). Hausner too was under the impression that the whole of the Nazi regime, the German people who served as complicit perpetrators themselves, were simply not human--the worst of mankind made manifest in that time in place.

Yet, despite a few key personalities in the third Reich, such as Hitler or Himmler, most Nazis were simply under the impression they were being Patriotic—being good Germans. These were ordinary men attempting to do what their moral upbringing told them: be loyal to the state. However evil the crimes committed, the layers of bureaucracy, the vagueness of the Reich’s solutions to the “Jewish Question”, all made it so that anyone who played a role in the extermination could have little or no idea what there small

job had in the grander sense of the Holocaust. Even those working in the camps were either in fear of the repercussions of not submitting or were just so overtaken by national pride, propaganda, and the chance to feel useful after the years of economic strife and unemployment in Germany. Eichmann and men like him were in fact quite ordinary, as Arendt explains:

“This normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implied—as had been said at Nuremburg over and over again [ . . . ] that this new type of criminal [ . . . ] commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong.”

Evil is banal, and evil acts can take place under any circumstances. Films using the quotidian capture the banality of evil and are able to relay this to the audience. Once the concept of evil is redefined, the task of understanding becomes a bit less daunting as we are able to realize the personal nature of this event and stop treating it as a monolithic occurrence. All of us are capable of genocide, and this is what must be realized. Film must take this into consideration, for if not explored, such a film would not be coming close to the aims of effective representation. The Holocaust was not a break from history, but an event made possible by the complacency of *normal people*.

Because evil is a banality, showing scenes of the quotidian can show how this evil has permeated every facet of life. We can only learn about a people by how they *lived*, thus it is essential to come to terms with the fact that although we cannot psychologically place the Holocaust into any sort of understandable, or at least acceptable trajectory, *life continued*. Yet we doubt so much about the Holocaust, struggle with understanding the event, because the evil of the event still exists. The Holocaust is unique in that the trauma makes those who survived unable to fully recall what they experienced, unable to fully articulate to anyone what they experienced *exactly*, and causes for them, and even for us as after-the-fact witnesses, to doubt the past, to call into question testimony, and to some extent, even pretend that nothing happened. We are left with too many unanswered questions, and no one to answer them, no way of finding any closure. Because of the banality of evil, there is no one to blame. We can do nothing but struggle with the basic facts of the matter. We can speculate, and nothing more.

Arendt's theory of the banality of evil explains why the Holocaust was possible, but Jean Baudrillard theory of the *Transparency of Evil* explains why we cannot truly understand the Holocaust, but

shows that the quotidian is essential in attempting to do so. As he explains, “. . . the characteristic thing about the present period, the present *fin de siècle*, is the fact that the tools required for such intelligibility have been lost. History should have been understood while history still existed” (Baudrillard 90-91).

Those in the camps had no time to understand what was happening to them, were unable to contextualize their sufferings, and thus, understanding of what was happening was not able to be achieved.

Thus, after liberation, society has attempted to understand what happened, and to this day struggles to do so. Baudrillard asks us to “consider how continual scrutiny of Nazism, of the gas chambers and so on, has merely rendered them less and less comprehensible, so that it has eventually become logical to ask an incredible question: ‘But in the last reckoning, did all those things really exist?’” As we continue to work through these events, more questions are raised. Yet we cannot escape contemplating the Holocaust, at least for a moment, because the acts perpetrated are so unbelievable that they merit our attention and consideration. The Holocaust in a sense even attempts to destroy itself as well, as eventually we will become tired of attempting to understand the event and abandon it forever.

The frustration from our inability to understand is not so apparent, as the event is still not distant enough from our present, as we still feel obligated to the survivors to bear witness. But as Baudrillard poses, “We will never know whether Nazism, the concentration camps or Hiroshima were intelligible or not: we are no longer part of the same mental universe”. It is impossible to understand the Holocaust by attempting to view it as any historical event. We cannot try to place ourselves in the event as we would place ourselves in the circumstances of any other narrative. But the quotidian, however, the aspects of which will always be present in human life, can serve as a bridge from the present to the past, lending us, at least for a moment, insight and a small understanding of the event at hand.

### ***Lang Ist der Veg: An Early Cinematic Response to the Holocaust***

*Lang Ist der Veg* (Long is the Road) was filmed only three years after the liberation of the concentration camps, and was written and directed by survivors of the Holocaust. The film depicts the deportation, and the main character, David Yellin’s escape from the trains and life as a partisan fighter with the Polish Resistance. However, as film theorist Ira Konigsberg explains, “The brevity and lack of detail in the scenes of the ghetto and Auschwitz are significant—the scenes suggest, instead of depicting.

They function as signifiers of horror that are too painful to dramatize and can only be alluded to” (Konigsberg 10). By suggesting these painful moments mirrors the process of memory, and coping with trauma, as passing visions of these scenes cause us to recall our body of knowledge of the Holocaust. Directors Goldstein and Fredersdorf do not want to further traumatize an audience that has already experienced such horror, or has at least heard firsthand accounts of the camps, due to how recent the liberation of the camp was in relation to the release of this film. Instead, the film wishes to teach and shock the audience in a different way, through the quotidian. The Yellin family learns that they must move to a ghetto on the Sabbath. The father insists that they sit and eat, as he says the blessing and cuts the bread. There is a direct crosscut to blueprints of the ghetto. As the Yellin family packs to move to the ghetto, they bring with them a brass bed, oriental rugs, and all of their furniture. We assume that they bring their things because they will need their things. It appears as if they are simply moving. People are coming in and out of the ghetto just as if it is any other section of town—until the Nazi’s shut the gates. Later, as David and the other Jews sit in the darkness of the cattle car, it at first appears as if they are all sitting in a normal train car, until the camera slowly reveals how many people the car actually contains. Later, as David finds a cart being driven by a harmless looking Polish couple, they attempt to capture him for reward money. What appears to be a sight of salvation, especially in contrast to the crowded cattle cars from which he escaped, is actually more danger. In this film, scenes of the everyday are transformed into scenes of the horrific, giving the audience insight into the unpredictability of the society during this time, as neighbor turns against neighbor, and a person’s life is now able to be measured in gold. These scenes of the quotidian help not only to confuse the audience about the outcome of the film, which is a diluted version of the confusion the victims of the Holocaust experienced. These commonplace scenes as compared to the truth that follows help to explain the Holocaust through contrast, as well as giving the audience more reason to be appalled at the attempted extermination of the Jews, who, instead of performing all of the activities that have lead to the downfall of Europe, as the Nazis have portrayed them, they are simply ordinary people living their mundane lives, who are then attacked, and exterminated.

*Lang Ist der Veg* (Fredersdorf and Goldstein, 1948) also depicts the difficulty survivors of the Holocaust faced in attempting to resume their normal lives after the liberation. In the beginning of the film, Warsaw is shown as a place where “The children played with colorful balloons and the people believed in

peace.” This image is ruined, as the city lies in ruins and most of the survivors find themselves living in displaced persons camps. These camps are faintly reminiscent of the concentration camps. There is not enough room for anyone, and the camp is still surrounded by barbed wire and guards. All of the displaced persons are expected to work, just as in the concentration camps, and there is widespread confusion and concern about what may happen next. As we see how this camp, although much more humane, is organized in nearly the exact same way as an extermination camp. Although the survivors have jobs, they do not receive the benefit. Women fold their laundry, and tend to the children. Young men even attend classes to learn about automobiles. The banality of everyday life sets in, but in a much more restricted way. Much like these restless survivors, we begin to make some of the same associations with the displaced persons camp and the concentration camps, we become, for a moment, that much closer to understanding the Holocaust through these scenes of an everyday life taking place in an unordinary setting.

### ***Ostatni Etap: A woman’s perspective of the Holocaust***

Wanda Jakubowska’s *Ostatni Etap* (Last Stop) was made the same year as (1948) *Lang Ist der Veg*, yet Jakubowska chooses to show more of the violence of Auschwitz. The film begins as a man and woman cross a street in Warsaw. They make it to the middle of the street as they are suddenly taken by the SS and thrown into a truck. As we are shown the squalor and fear of Auschwitz, women are standing in lines outside, as the *bluchowa*, commander of the block, who is, herself a prisoner of the camp, forces them to stand outside for hours because a pregnant woman collapsed. As the women stand outside, she retires to her personal room with the other *bluchowa*. She changes into a nightgown, and takes off her shoes in exchange for more comfortable slippers. Another of the *bluchowa* lights a candle on an elaborate silver menorah. This ordinary scene would be very uninteresting if it were taking place anywhere else, but in Auschwitz, two Jewish prisoners in lace nightgowns sitting in a heated, well-lit room with beds and a menorah is jarring, if not altogether shocking. A moment later, the cruelest *bluchowa* leaves her room in her nightgown in order to reprimand her block. These almost routine activities take on an entirely new meaning, showing the truly twisted nature of concentration camp society. This scene of the quotidian causes the audience to hate the *bluchowa* almost as much as the women she wields her power over. This scene gives the audience an explicit reason to feel outrage, as we feel even more

sympathy for these women. Here the quotidian not only reveals some shocking truths about the concentration camp itself, but increases the sympathy we feel for these women.

Another chillingly quotidian aspect of the camps is the presence of music, be it live or recorded. We also see the misery of the women who must play in the orchestra. We generally associate music with pleasure, and this sight allows us to see another form of torture in the camps. As Annette Innsdorf, a well known scholar on Holocaust cinema explains:

“Jakubowska also uses music as ironic counterpoint: when the inmates are being beaten and forced into the gas chambers, the women’s orchestra plays Beethoven and Brahms (a historical fact); while Eugenia is being tortured, the German officer puts on a dance record of a Russian song. Contrapuntal music was appropriate to Auschwitz—and therefore, perhaps, to the films about it.” (Innsdorf 133).

The music not only creates a contrast that helps the audience to be further sickened by the atrocities that occur on screen as we hear this beautiful and very lively music. As the SS attempt to interrogate the kind Eugenia for attempting to tell the International Inspection Committee about the true nature of the camps, a man sits near a gramophone, sifting through records as if he is at a party. The women’s orchestra is summoned to play lively marches as the women run in terror as the guards attempt to select who will die in the gas chambers. The contrast between the beautiful music and the horrific sight is difficult to reconcile. The Holocaust moves closer to our realm of understanding, as the disjunction between pleasure, music, and terror, the beatings and torture, defies all logic. Because we are so taken aback by this sight, we stop attempting to rationalize an irrational event, and thus, are able to understand the Holocaust a bit more through our lack of understanding.

As some of the wealthiest Polish Jews enter the camp, we are shown more scenes of mundane activities and behaviors. A group of wealthy women walk into the camp in their fur coats carrying purses and sauntering along through the checkpoints. Later on, one of the women jokes with another saying “Oh Helen, how funny! Your sweetheart will not recognize you.” The women laugh and talk as if they are in a schoolyard. “Class tensions arise as the coarse *blochowa* lords it over these socialite Poles—this is her one chance in life to act superior to them. However, as some of these ladies come to realize her power, they connive to become her ‘friend’ bringing her little gifts and thereby enjoying the warmth of her private

room” (132). Jakubowska does not portray all of the prisoners as innocent fearful victims, but as individuals. There are characters we can like, while there are characters we despise and fear. Jakubowska creates a social microcosm with which we can relate. We see scenes of the mass groups to put the actions of these individuals into context. If a film were made using only these mass scenes, this film would become redundant, causing the audience to lose sight of the film’s original intention—to attempt to portray the Holocaust. Thus, in order to convey the emotions and objectives of these characters, a more classical dramatic style is employed; yet this is not how the Holocaust occurred. However, by being able to understand the objectives of these different individuals, we stop classifying the victims as simply members of the endless masses of misery. Through the mundane objectives that these petty women have, we are able to stop drawing simple conclusions about the victims of the camps, allowing the audience to have a somewhat greater understanding of the inmates of Auschwitz.

### ***Wielki Tydzień*: Polish Catholics respond to the Holocaust**

Andrzej Wajda’s *Wielki Tydzień* (Holy Week), takes place over one week, Holy Week, of 1941. The film begins with a group of people walking through a forest. As they pass, we see the yellow Star of David sewn into their coats. Without any specification, we know what awaits these people. The main character, Irena, is hiding in the forest as her father, tired of hiding with her, walks out onto the road and joins the crowd. He walks slowly, with dignity. The simple act of walking becomes a symbol of his defiance to the Nazis and to fear. Soon, the scene cuts to Irena being driven in a fine car by Nazis. She has fake identification papers. She has to pay off these men, who drop her off in the outskirts of Warsaw. Whenever Irena walks, or attempts to flee, she always buttons her coat, carries her purse, straightens her hat and carries her parasol. These mundane objects represent all she has left in the world and illustrate the human desire to maintain order and dignity. Polish cinema scholar Marek Haltof states that “The director portrays the film’s protagonist in an unconventional way: she is not a sympathetic character, not a typical Holocaust victim” (Haltof 231). Irena is not just any other victim. She connives to keep her freedom. She hides from authority in order to save herself. She becomes a Holocaust character we can understand through her actions, because these are actions many of us imagine we would take, being in the same situation. We never see her in the ghetto. We never see her in the concentration camp. We only see her within the ordinary context of the city. She eventually becomes a victim of the Holocaust—well

such is the logical conclusion, for after her expulsion from Jan's apartment building, her fate is unknown. We are able to relate with Irena and identify with her fear because she is shown in an environment with which we can relate. As we see an image of a concentration camp inmate suffering within the confines of a concentration camp, their death is expected, but by showing us these individuals as ordinary people, we feel a greater sadness from the knowledge of their death. These photographs are in a way more effective than photographs of the atrocity itself. Zelizer explains of Holocaust photography that "The mounds of corpses, gaping pits of bodies, and figures angled like matchsticks across the camera's field of vision have paralyzed many of us to the point of critical inattention. But they have provided only a thin veneer of knowledge about the camps and the atrocities that took place inside" (Zelizer 1). The images in *Wielki Tydzień* cause us to pay attention, for they are images of activities that many in the audience have themselves experienced.

As Irena moves in with Jan and Anna, they live a very mundane life. Irena asks Anna about the baby, and helps her with her chores. No matter what the topic of conversation, be it the war, anti-Semitism, Irena's fear, some character is always performing some mundane task. Anna washes the dishes as she and Jan discuss the prospect of her getting caught. Anna's brother Jurek lies on a couch in his pajamas as he argues for the resistance. These quotidian aspects of each scene aid in our understanding of these characters as the banality of their surroundings and actions in contrast with their speech transform them from mythic figures of history to ordinary people.

Life still continues for these people, even though every day they could be captured by the Nazis. Anna can tell Irena how her parents were killed by the Nazis, but she still has to fold her laundry. Irena must hide for her life, but eggs still must be painted in preparation for the Easter holiday. Anna and Irena even joke about Jan and how lazy and forgetful he is. In the face of all the terror, as bombs are heard exploding in the distance and Irena even happens to see the entire ghetto engulfed in flames, life continues. The constant rhythm of life continues. In the face of all this terror, there is much difficulty in understanding why the world simply does not just stop—why everyone continues to go about their day, and why there is a carousel in front of the tallest wall of the ghetto. However, understanding that the quotidian persists, brings us closer to understanding that the Holocaust did happen, was ignored by most, but life still continued in the face of everything.

### ***Ambulans: A Film without words***

Morgenstern's *Ambulans* (1962) starts with a long tracking shot of a concrete road. Every now and again, we see a bit of exhaust smoke, since the camera's point of view is from the back of an ambulance. As this scene continues, there is a lively German march. As the march plays, a man begins to speak. There are no subtitles, but in a Polish film with a German speech, this was intentional. We do not understand the German just as many of the Polish inmates of the concentration camps did not understand the language. The ambulance comes to a stop in what appears to be a schoolyard of some sort. Many children are playing a game as others play with toys.

A German officer comes out of the ambulance and smokes a cigarette. He pulls out a gas can and refills the tank. The scene seems wholly unremarkable until these objects are being held by these Nazi guards. Simply seeing the swastika on their uniforms causes the audience to recall the body of knowledge they have of the Holocaust. As Barbie Zelizer, an expert on the effects of atrocity footage, comments:

"We also know that collective memories are material. They have texture, existing in the world rather than in a person's head. We find memories in objects, narratives about the past, even the routines by which we structure our day. No memory is fully embodied in any of these cultural forms, but instead bounces to and fro among all of them on its way to gaining meaning. Memory's materiality is important, for it helps offset the fluctuations that characterize remembering."

(Zelizer 4)

Our memories of past events lie within the material world, as everyday objects can cause us to recall memories just as well as stories of those memories themselves do.

Despite the presence of these men, nothing happens. The world of the fenced does not change. There is a shot to a bird eating seeds from the pavement and then a shot to a dog panting. "Each carefully composed shot of *Ambulance* suggests rather than states a horrific aspect or a moral question of the Holocaust. A knowing leap of the imagination turns the exhaust pipes into crematoria chimneys, and the fenced-in yard into a concentration camp" (Innsdorf 46). Nothing is ever stated in this film. In fact, there is no dialogue. The audience is shown these quotidian scenes, and urged to draw their own conclusions.

These mundane scenes trick us into a false sense of security that is somewhat similar to that of the children, as they continue to play and move around. The officers begin to mess with the exhaust of the ambulance, so that now black, poisonous exhaust fumes come from the ambulance's interior. The image of safety associated with the ambulance is lost, as we see death emanating from the back. Just as the use of the ambulance is redefined, the purpose of the fierce German shepherd dogs is as well, as one of the dogs comes and plays with one of the boys. Eventually, all of the children, including their teacher, climb into the ambulance as the doors are shut. The dog that was playing with the children earlier also tries to jump into the ambulance as well. This film helps us to see how easily the Jews were killed, and not only how easily this occurred, but how easily such an act could occur *again*. All of *Ambulans* is of the banal and mundane. This scene also helps to show how the tools of genocide are simply ordinary objects, bringing the Holocaust away from their mythic concentration camps and into the light of the everyday, the relatable. The tools of murder become objects with which we have some familiarity.

### **Conclusion**

The Holocaust is something beyond our perception, something that time has obscured from our knowledge. Our capacity to remember is indeed limited, but our capacity to understand is much smaller. Yet, film has always been thought to have the ability to capture life and to recreate history. The Holocaust, however, escapes our comprehension, and cannot be accurately portrayed through any means. The victims of the Holocaust are the only ones who are close to understanding what happened to them. They were surrounded by death, fear, hopelessness, on a daily basis. Not even they can articulate their sufferings in a way that would completely impart on the listener such unbelievable sights, sights that they themselves could not believe. The true nature of the Holocaust is also clouded by the psychological effects of living through such a traumatic event. Scenes of factual terror are effective enough in showing the plight of the victims of the Holocaust, but such terror taking place in civilized nations on such a massive scale seems too fantastic to understand, or at least for the audience to initially categorize as truth. Although faced with the constant fear death, these victims still had chores to complete, and routines were eventually developed. They woke up just as they did in their previous lives, still made their beds, went to work, and at the end of the day, if they were not killed, would go to bed again. This is an idea that we cannot understand: how the basic activities of everyday life persist. By showing how the rhythm of life

continues, film can help put this event into context, bringing it closer to our comprehension. Film can attempt to connect the vastness of the Holocaust with the singularity of the everyday.

These filmmakers have all taken various approaches in their attempts to portraying the Holocaust, yet no film can give us this understanding. Using eyewitness accounts, atrocity footage and narrative structures, these filmmakers have all found different methods to provide the audience with some sort of insight into a different aspect of the Holocaust. However, in each of these films, there is at least one instance of scenes of the quotidian used to explain the Holocaust to the audience in terms they can understand. The terror we have experienced is basically second hand, imagined. Thus, filmmakers follow this pattern, showing us scenes of the everyday, requiring us to imagine the terror we do not see. Scenes of the quotidian bring the Holocaust out of the obscurity of history and into an arena that, for at least a moment, we can understand.

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# **Slovenia in World Politics**

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## ***I. Introduction***

Since it declared independence in 1990, Slovenia has moved rapidly to modernize and integrate itself into Western economies and international governments. Although it has experienced tremendous success in economic and political reforms, Slovenia is plagued by some lingering problems associated with its national identity, economic future, and relations with the West, Russia, and its Eastern European and Balkan neighbors. In this paper, I will examine some of the problems Slovenia is experiencing as a new state immersed in the political and economic ideals of the west and situated in the complex and tumultuous region of southern Central Europe.

I will explore the difficulties that Slovenia faces in finding its national identity and how its search for itself affects its ethnic and religious minorities, as well as relations with its neighbors. Second, I will look into Slovenian involvement on the international stage as it relates to international economic institutions, terrorism and crime prevention, and humanitarian missions. Third, I will consider Slovenia's relations with Russia in terms of trade and fuel. Finally, I will look into the relations between Slovenia and its neighbors in Central Europe and the Balkans to determine possibilities for conflict and chances for economic improvement and political leadership in these regions.

In the past fifteen years Slovenia has moved from being a part of communist Yugoslavia to an independent, stable state and economic unit. However, in the next five years Slovenia will face many difficult decisions. It must confront its identity in Europe and the Balkans. It must also make decisions about what kind of international policies it will pursue, both economically and militarily. Slovenia will have the opportunity to define itself as a permanent political and economic force in the next few years and it must determine how it will deal with its new status in terms of foreign policy.

## ***II. Slovenia's National Identity***

Like most countries in Eastern Europe, Slovenia has been dominated by foreign powers for much of its history. It did not have a historical tradition of democracy or being an independent political power. Slovenia was a part of the Habsburg Empire and after its demise following WWI; Slovenia joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918 (State). Following WWII and Yugoslavia's internal civil war, Tito and his Partisans incorporated Slovenia into communist Yugoslavia. As Yugoslavia began to fall into political crisis in the late 1980's, the relatively well-off Slovenian republic began to distance itself

from the other republics of Yugoslavia. Slovenia declared its independence on June 25, 1990 (State). At this time Slovenia began to establish itself as an independent political unit and search for its place in the international arena.

After the fall of communism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Slovenia was forced to find its identity in a time of uncertainty and fear. It established itself as a constitutional democracy with a directly elected president as head of state, a bicameral legislature, a prime minister who serves as head of government, and an independent Constitutional Court (State). After establishing itself as a democracy, it actively pursued a European identity by joining European international organizations, and sought Western protection in NATO. It has campaigned for recognition as a Central European country and tried to distance itself from identification with Yugoslavia and the Balkans (Patterson).

Slovenia's best interests are served by becoming a modern society and reforming its underperforming economy by joining the EU. However, Slovenia's interest in distancing itself so fully from its former Yugoslav neighbors is troubling. Although it is important for Slovenia to stress its interest in modernity and democracy, its success in these areas depends greatly upon the stability of the Balkans. It would be in Slovenia's best interest to spend less time distancing itself from the region's problems and more time trying to help solve them through its involvement in the EU and using its previous connection and understanding of the region to make more comprehensive and effective Balkan policies. Slovenia can use its unique ties to both the West and the Balkans to establish itself within the international community as a leader and advocate for the continued development of the Balkans.

Another aspect of Slovenia's identity is how it defines its ethnicity and treats its minority populations. Slovenia has a fairly homogenous population with a population of 83% ethnic Slovenians (State). However, it does have a variety of ethnic groups within its borders. The Slovenian Constitution recognizes both Hungarians (0.32% of the population) and Italians (0.11% of the population) as indigenous minorities and guarantees both groups a representative in the National Assembly (State). This measure is an excellent step forward in ensuring that nationalistic and ethnic problems can be resolved through legislation rather than violent conflict. However, these constitutional measures completely ignore the many other minority groups who live in Slovenia, namely the Croats (1.8%), Serbs (1.98%), Bosniaks (1.10%), and Albanians (0.31%). All these ethnic groups, excluding the Albanians,

represent a much larger share of the population than either the Austrians or the Italians. Providing these groups with representation or a direct outlet to the government in Slovenia is necessary to maintain minority rights. Inter-ethnic conflict could diminish Slovenia's rise to become one of the most successful post-communist states. The Slovenian government must offer these minority groups a chance to be represented in the government.

Slovenia, like many countries situated in south Central Europe, has a population of Roma. The Roma have faced a great deal of discrimination despite Slovenia's espousal of liberal ideals and attempts to separate itself from the ethnic conflict in the Balkans. According to the Council of Europe, "Slovenia is neglecting Roma rights" (Council). Roma children face discrimination in schools, where they are placed in special-needs classes (Wood). Roma are also faced with threats of unlawful stripping of citizenship, as well as threats of violence and forced evacuations. Slovenian treatment of Roma has tarnished the country's image in the international community (Wood). Slovenian officials like Prime Minister Janez Jansa must stop ignoring the outcry of human rights workers and work to protect Roma from discrimination and violence (Wood). Slovenia needs to take measures to ensure protection for Roma and make attacks and discrimination against them have real consequences.

Religion is another aspect of Slovenia's national identity. Slovenians are religiously heterogeneous with 57.8% identifying as Catholics, 15.7% refusing to reply, 10.1% atheist, 2.3% Orthodox Christians, and 2.4% Muslims (State). Like the Roma, Muslims in Slovenia face a great deal of discrimination. Slovenia remains the only country in Central or Eastern Europe without a single mosque. Currently, Muslims are trying to build an Islamic center in Ljubljana, Slovenia's capital, but the initiative has been met with a great deal of opposition. Several of Slovenia's central-right and right wing parties have come out in opposition to building the country's first mosque (Gaube). Some public officials cite as a reason for their opposition fear that the mosque will spread Islamic extremism. This prejudice shows the limit of tolerance that Slovenia has for some of its minorities. Both the Roma and Muslim populations must be given representation and protection in Slovenian society. In order for Slovenia to truly be a democratic society it must work towards greater tolerance and ensuring minority rights. Over the next five years, Slovenia must work towards integrating these groups into society and ensuring the protection of minority rights in its political institutions.

In its effort to define itself, Slovenia must be careful not to exclude and diminish others. In order to establish itself in the international community, Slovenia must encourage ties to the West but not forget about its neighbors who can also affect their economic and political standing. Slovenia must practice the ideals of liberal democracy that it preaches and ensure civil rights to all minority groups. In the next five years it will be important for Slovenia to encourage a positive perception of itself in the international arena; this can only be done if Slovenia makes an effort to correct minority discrimination and encourage further ethnic integration and tolerance.

### ***III. Slovenia in West Europe***

Slovenia was the first of the former Yugoslavian republics to join the European Union (EU) on May 1, 2004 and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on March 29, 2004. Slovenia is also a member of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the World Trade Organization (State). Slovenia has moved rapidly to reform its state-owned enterprises in order to comply with EU regulations and it currently holds the highest GDP per capita of any newly initiated country in the EU (State). Slovenia has successfully taken the steps to integrate itself into Western political and economic institutions, but the country still faces more reform and a growing responsibility in international conflicts and policies.

Slovenia became the first new member of the EU to adopt the euro on January 1, 2007 (Slovenian Government). Becoming the first new member of the EU to adopt the euro is a matter of national pride and is a testament to Slovenia's impressive economic reform (Slovenian Economy). Thanks to extensive planning, the changeover from tolar to euros has been relatively smooth. For the past two years the Slovenian government has tied the tolar to the euro's exchange rate. This measure will hopefully decrease the risk of increased prices on everyday goods (Castle). In order to make the switch easier on consumers, shops throughout the country have posted both tolar and euro prices since March 2006 and mailed each Slovenian citizen manuals explaining the currency change (Lagorce). Although there are risks associated with the adoption of the euro like price increases and inflation, Slovenia's adoption of the euro is a very positive step for the country. The adoption of the euro could help to stabilize the Slovenian economy during fluctuations in the world market, increase exports, and generate productivity gains (Lagorce). Its adoption of the euro signifies Slovenia's compliance with the EU's

demanding economic regulations. Through continued economic reforms and the adoption of the euro, Slovenia continues to move forward in modernizing its economy and becoming a more stable economic unit.

Membership in the EU has influenced Slovenia's economy in other ways as well. Its entry into the EU has helped Slovenian businesses find new markets. Slovenia is relatively new on the international scene and its name and goods are unfamiliar to many consumers (Stoyanova). However, with entrance into the EU, Slovenian goods now bear the mark 'Made in Europe.' This label has helped to increase the legitimacy of Slovenian goods abroad. Slovenia has expanded its trade in new markets in the Far East, especially China (Stoyanova). Although Slovenian companies now face greater domestic competition, membership in the EU and Eurozone has helped Slovenia expand its exports and participation in new world markets.

In 2008, Slovenia will be the first new member of the EU to take the six-month EU presidency (Bernstein). When Slovenia first became an independent state many speculated that a country roughly the size of New Jersey and with a population of just over two million people would be unable to assert much of an influence in international affairs. However with the EU presidency in sight, Slovenia has an opportunity to lead one of the most powerful institutions in the world. This is an opportunity that the Slovenians will take very seriously. They will use this opportunity to show the rest of Europe that they are capable of leadership. This is also a golden opportunity for Slovenia to champion Balkan reform, stability, and progress. Much has been left unfinished in both Bosnia and Kosovo. Slovenia should use this opportunity to help its neighbors move towards modernity and away from conflict. Slovenia could use this opportunity as EU president to assert itself as a permanent leader in Balkan affairs as well as improve its relations with the other Western powers. In this elevated position, Slovenia will have the opportunity to show its competence to the West and establish its authority in the Balkans.

As a member of NATO, Slovenia has been touched by the prevailing security dilemmas of the day, namely terrorism. As a part of former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's "New Europe," Slovenia has become minimally involved in the US's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq by sending training personnel and participating in the International Security Force (State). The Prime Minister of Slovenia, Janez Jansa, believes in an international effort to increase security and the condemnation of terrorist

violence (PM). Although both the war in Iraq and Afghanistan have had tremendous problems, it is good that the Slovenian government has been willing to become involved in international affairs dealing with democracy building and terrorism. This experience can equip them with an idea of the difficulties that Europe may face in building functioning democracies in Kosovo and Bosnia. Also, their interest in fighting terror emphasizes their liberal ideas and underlines their condemnation of violence as a legitimate political expression. An increased involvement in either conflict would not be wise but their nominal participation in the conflict is good in that Slovenia is taking a tough position on terror and violence and learns more about building democracies.

Slovenia has had to confront the problem of genocide and ethnic cleansing several times in its history, during WWII and in the more recent conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo. Slovenia has taken steps to condemn such actions through its involvement in the NATO Stabilization Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina, European Union Force, and NATO Kosovo Force (State). Slovenia has also participated in another humanitarian engagement in the conflict in Darfur. The President of Slovenia, Janez Drvnosek, has expressed a largely personal interest in the genocide in the Sudan. It is a positive step that Slovenia has taken an interest in international humanitarian concerns. Slovenian calls for negotiations and distribution of humanitarian workers in Sudan demonstrates Slovenian commitment to human rights (Slovene President). Slovenia is confronting the idea that its geographical positioning in the Balkans means that it condones violence and genocide. However, this message would be more powerful if Slovenia would not deny its connections to the Balkans and take measures to protect its own minorities. Slovenia should continue its humanitarian campaigns in Darfur and the Balkans and remain committed to human rights in the future.

In the next five years, Slovenia will continue to assert its new role as a participant in international affairs. As Slovenia becomes more integrated in the European system, it will have to worry less about its economic needs and have the ability to assert its positions on international affairs. Through the EU and NATO, Slovenia can have a profound effect on international policies and programs. Slovenia has the opportunity to establish itself as a key player in Balkan affairs and an important model and mediator for the EU in East, South, and Central Europe.

#### ***IV. Slovenia in the East***

Despite its increasingly close ties to Western Europe, Slovenia has also reestablished some of its traditional ties to Russia. Although separated for a large part of the communist era, both countries find themselves in similar situations, trying to navigate through the Western system and reform their governments and economies. Today, like during the communist period, Russia remains economically behind many of the former communist countries of East-Central Europe, like Slovenia. Today, Slovenia and other European countries are trying to rebuild their economic and political relations with Russia because of Russia's wealth in natural resources, especially fuel.

Russia and Slovenia have begun to work to improve their trade relations. Both sides have a mutual interest in bilateral contracts (Slovenia Russia). This year, trade between Russia and Slovenia reached \$1 billion US and both Russia and Slovenia are working towards diversifying their goods trade, encouraging cooperation in industry and agriculture, and promoting Russian investment and participation in privatization in Slovenia (Russia). This increased cooperation between Russia and Slovenia is positive for both economies. Unlike their behavior during the communist era, the Russians appear to be behaving respectfully and treating Slovenia with equality. Leaders of both countries have spoken of their mutual respect and interest in working together. This recognition from Russia and a more equal relationship between the two will greatly benefit Slovenian society. Slovenia should be careful that these ties remain mutually respectful and not tolerate manhandling by Russian officials. However, with their political and economic clout, Slovenia appears to be able to establish fair economic relations with its former enemy.

Slovenia's assumption of the EU presidency is an exciting development not only for Slovenia but for Russia as well. The Russians believe that they will have a powerful ally in the EU as Slovenia will be the first Slavic country to hold this prestigious position. Russia appears to believe that Slovenia's heightened position will help support "constructive relations with Russia" and the "relations of mutual dependence which would be difficult to upset" (Government). Slovenia has confirmed the Russian hope by stating that the main objective during its presidency will be strengthening the strategic relationship between the EU and Russia (Government). The EU presidency will be an opportunity for Slovenia to show leadership and tackle problems in the Balkans; but it will also give Slovenia the opportunity to create better relations with Russia both for itself and the EU. Slovenia, as a nation tied to the three

distinct regions of Western Europe, the Balkans, and Russia, has the opportunity to serve as a link between all three and promote civil diplomatic relations and peace. Slovenia's close connections with both East and West may make it the perfect medium between the two for improving relations and bettering economic cooperation. Using its position in the EU and relations with Russia, Slovenia could promote itself as a bridge between cultures and profit from friendly relations on both sides.

In return for cooperation and increasingly warm relations with Russia, Slovenia hopes to secure its energy supply. Currently, Russia supplies 40% of Slovenian natural gas needs, continues to deliver fuel, and "takes part in the construction of energy facilities" in Slovenia, as well as garnering Russian investment in Slovenian advanced fuel technology (Urban). Also, an agreement between the Russian LUKOIL joint-stock company and the Slovenian Petrol Company has formulated a joint venture to sell oil products in the countries of Southeast Europe. In this agreement the Slovenian company will have 51% of the shares and LUKOIL will have 49% (Shamshin). Slovenia has been prudent in its pursuit of oil. It is dealing with Russia with which it has established favorable relations and shares common economic interests. This makes their fuel needs more stable and less susceptible to the hostility of Middle Eastern countries. They have also been wise to not hand over all their fuel responsibilities to Russia. They continue to encourage Russian investment in new technology for alternative energy and have joined in Russia's oil marketing campaign in Southeastern Europe. Slovenia's involvement in the oil market and pursuit of alternative fuel will be beneficial to their economy and also help to secure their fuel needs. Slovenia should continue working with Russia for its fuel needs and remain actively involved in expanding its own interests in the fuel business.

The future of relations between Russia and Slovenia seems bright. Mutual cultural respect and similar economic interests have allowed these two countries to improve their trade relations, which will more than likely increase over the next few years. Slovenia's anticipated position as EU president will allow the country to work as a bridge between East and West. It will have the opportunity to establish itself as a negotiator and profit from increased cooperation with both sides. Slovenia's increased fuel security and interest in the oil market will help to improve the efficiency of its economy and increase the countries trade in Southeastern Europe.

## ***V. Slovenia in Central Europe and the Balkans***

Slovenia maintains itself as a member of Central Europe; however, from 1918 until 1991 it was a member of the multiethnic Yugoslav identity and state. Although Slovenia did not experience the horror of ethnic cleansing and decimation of infrastructure that many of its Southern neighbors did in the disintegration of communist Yugoslavia, Slovenia has had to deal with the instability and disputes that have engulfed this region for the last fifteen years. Here Slovenia faces its greatest tests as a new nation in settling border and water access disputes, encouraging democracy and capitalism in newly formed states, and dealing with ethnic minorities.

Slovenia and its neighbors to the west and north, Italy and Austria, are already recognized members of the reborn Mitteleuropa or Central Europe; however, Slovenia still fights for this distinction because of its ties to communism and Yugoslavia (Patterson). Slovenia's neighbor to the northeast, Hungary, has also set out to establish itself as part of Europe's center rather than as a part of the East. These three countries, on the whole, experience peaceful and friendly relations with Slovenia. Occasionally these countries have complaints against Slovenia like minority disputes, conflicts over bilingual signs in minority heavy areas, and resolving restitution and property compensation for World War II (State). These conflicts are minimal and will not have a profound influence on Slovenia's relations with its neighbors. Because these countries have good relations with one another, Slovenia's next challenge in this region is cooperation with its neighbors in combating organized crime and money laundering, improving the environment, and expanding economic ties. Slovenia must learn to work with these other governments in addressing problems that are important to their collective security and economic stability.

Slovenia and its southern and eastern neighbor, Croatia, have established relatively friendly relations; however, the two countries have engaged in longstanding territorial disputes threatening their peaceful relations (State). Slovenia maintains that it "owns the whole of the bay of Piran, with a border between the two states running along the Croatian shore of the bay," according to the Slovenia White Paper, while Croatia maintains that "the border between the two countries runs in the middle of the bay of Piran (Slovenia publishes). This border issue has manifested itself in everything from trucking restrictions

across the border to penalties for fishing in the bay to the arrest of protesters in the disputed regions (Crossing). This border dispute has been unresolved because of the failure of bilateral talks between the two countries. This reflects badly on both Croatia and Slovenia. Slovenian claims of liberal society and devotion to diplomatic processes mean little when it is unable to solve longstanding border disputes that literally define it. Slovenia's first priority in international relations right now should be to resolve this issue with Croatia. Slovenian threats to complicate Croatia's bid for EU membership are unnecessary (Crossing). Instead, Slovenia should continue bilateral talks, firmly demanding access to the bay of Piran but using economic incentives and aid to Croatia in its quest for EU membership as a bargaining chip. It is not necessary for Slovenia to be heavy handed with its neighbor; it should offer Croatia economic incentives in exchange for a favorable resolution to the border situation.

Slovenia's neighbors in southern former Yugoslavia are much further behind in developing independent states with functioning governments and economies. Slovenia has participated in peacekeeping operations in both Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It has been very supportive of Montenegro's new independence, becoming the first country to establish an embassy there, welcoming the country to Europe during an independence celebration, and proclaiming a commitment to helping to preserve peace and stability in the region (Slovene Croatian). The next few years will determine the fate of these divided countries. Slovenia needs to take an active role in keeping the peace and assist in rebuilding governments and infrastructures of the region. Slovenia should act carefully in this region. It should continue to work with the EU and NATO to provide incentives for these countries to keep the peace, work to rebuild their economies, and establish democracies that allow all ethnic groups representation.

Serbia is Slovenia's largest Southern neighbor. Slovenia and Serbia have not always had friendly or stable relations. After Slovenia declared independence, Yugoslav military forces, primarily made up of Serbian troops, attacked the country creating a ten day military conflict. After Slovenia's success in defending itself from the Serb attack, Serbia waged an economic war on the country by boycotting Slovenian goods (State). With the fall of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic and Serbian reforms and progress toward democracy and modernization, Slovenian and Serbian relations have warmed.

Although they are not engaged in conflict, the two countries often disagree with one another over the situations in Kosovo and Montenegro. Slovenia has been an advocate of independence of both these regions. Slovenia has supported Montenegro's independence and called for Serbia and Montenegro to avoid tensions (Slovenia calls). Although the secession of Montenegro has been peaceful, it was not popular in Serbia and there is a possibility for conflict. Slovenia also supports self-determination in the province of Kosovo. Serbia has been unwilling to relinquish control in this region and its future remains uncertain. In the next five years, the situation in Kosovo must be resolved. Slovenia and Serbia may be on opposing sides of the issue. It will be important for Slovenia to maintain a dialogue with both Serbia and Kosovo and work towards a peaceful transition in the region. There is no simple solution to the difficulties in this region but Slovenia can help bring about peaceful transitions by encouraging diplomatic relations between the disputing regions.

Serbia, like many of the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe, has an interest in joining the EU. Slovenia is currently the only member of the former Yugoslavia that is a member of the EU. It supports Serbian membership to the EU just as it supports Croatia's bid for membership. Slovenia's support of Serbian integration into the EU is largely strategic. It believes that Serbia's membership in the EU would help to secure stability in the Balkans (EU). Serbia is seen as Slovenia's greatest uncertainty for continued peace and stability in the Balkans. If they belong to the same international communities, it would lessen the chance for conflict between the two countries. In the next five years, Slovenia will probably continue to champion Serbia's request for EU membership in order to secure peace in South Eastern Europe.

In the next few years, Slovenia will be in a position to assert its newfound power in Central Europe and the Balkans. Slovenia will have the chance to become a leader in the reconstruction in the Balkans and show its capabilities in an international arena. It will have the opportunity to influence the new republics in the region around it and become a true regional leader. Encouraging regional stability will help secure Slovenia's success in the future.

#### *VI. Conclusion*

Slovenia has entered an important new phase in its existence as an independent nation. It has become a success story in forming a stable democracy and becoming a profitable economic entity.

Although, Slovenia still continues to reform and struggle to make its economy comparable to those of Western democracies, it has done an excellent job stabilizing itself domestically. In the near future, through its involvement in international organizations and its own international engagement, Slovenia will have an opportunity to make a difference outside its own borders. Slovenia will find itself on the international stage with a chance to serve as a mediator between both the West and the East as well as within the Balkans. In the next five years, Slovenia will continue to struggle and find its own course in the realm of international relations.

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**Big Trouble in Little Albania:  
The Dilemma of Organized Crime in Kosovo**

George WF De Esch

Undergraduate Research Symposium 2007

Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime.

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- Aristotle

Organized crime is a difficult enough problem to control in states that have functioning police services, a legitimate judicial system, and a relatively stable recent history. Imagine then what it is to police an area in which the former are weak and corrupt and whose recent history includes civil war involving well armed insurgents. Additional difficulties arise where the area also happens to be located on a major trading crossroads between a significant region of drug production and an affluent population ready to consume it. This worst-case scenario is not a fictional simulation used to test the best minds in international law enforcement; this mind-boggling dilemma-ridden area is Kosovo.<sup>3</sup>

The major motif of organized crime in Kosovo is that the political, geographical and socio-cultural environment does little to hinder its development, but instead exacerbates the problem and expedites the criminal development. Elements of the situation in Kosovo to be examined and analyzed in this paper are the roots of current groups in Albanian tradition and the war; the illicit activities and tactics in which these groups practice their trade; and ultimately the utter failure of the international community and law enforcement to make a major impact.

### **Background of the Problem**

The current mixture of a pseudo-anarchical state, the influences of Albanian culture and mafia, and a centralized location in the heroin supply-and-demand route between central Asia and Western Europe all provide Kosovar criminals the perfect environment to establish and maintain a standing organized crime group. Links exist between Albanian criminal networks and the Kosovar insurgents that sparked the conflict in the late 1990s, starting with the skirmish between members of the Jashari clan and Serbian Internal Police (MUP) forces (O'Neill 23-24). The ensuing ethnically-based conflict between the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK) and Serbian Army and MUP forces from 1997 to 1999 only further exacerbated Kosovo's criminal breeding ground by providing myriad small arms to the area and razing much of the existing law enforcement infrastructure.

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<sup>3</sup> The author of this essay served as an intelligence analyst with the United States Army contingent of the NATO KFOR 6B peacekeeping mission in Kosovo from February 2005 to January 2006, and draws upon personal experience and observations made during this time frame and immediately prior. No information contained in this essay originates from classified materials.

Existing branches of Albanian organized crime reaching into Serbia readily supplied these small arms to the conflict. The Albanians purchased them from former Soviet bloc countries with monies earned from the sale of Afghani heroin in Western Europe with the support of Russian and Italian organized crime groups on both sides of the trade. The ensuing NATO intervention and the United Nation's attempt at nation-building in a province that had lost its quasi-autonomous status a decade earlier created a lawless state lacking any sort of internal order or justice mechanisms. This series of events left the borders wide open for the Albanian mafia to strengthen their foothold along with local crime clans establishing their own bases of operations in ethnic Albanian dominated cities such as Pec, Prizren, Priština, and Uroševac.<sup>4</sup>

Albanian culture dictates that Albanians follow the *Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini*, or Kanuni, the laws of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Albanian Prince, which established an honor-based, revenge-oriented set of laws (Ahmeti). Tenets such as 'eye-for-an-eye' and 'offenses against honor can be paid with death' are reasons that the clan-based Albanian culture provides such ruthless criminal clans. As such, the presence of a police force would seem unnatural, alien, and even offensive to the fundamental beliefs of traditional Albanians.

One aspect of organized crime in Kosovo that is unique is the strong ethnic identity observed by the Albanian Kosovars. While cooperation with outside organized crime groups such as the Albanians of Albania, Italians, and Russians is necessary for business, Kosovar crime clans rally together, despite intra-ethnic turf conflict, against Serbian rule and minorities. Organized crime clans allegedly had a major part in the March 2004 riots that reached across Kosovo and left 19 Serbs dead, thousands expelled, and several Serbian Orthodox churches burned (Pantelic).

In February 2006, negotiations to decide on the fate, or 'Final Status' of Kosovo began in Vienna, Austria. Since 2003, Kosovo had been under a 'standards before status' program of progress under eight different standards established jointly by the provincial government of Kosovo and the UN. These standards include: Functioning Democratic Institutions, Rule of Law, Freedom of Movement, Sustainable Returns and the Rights of Communities and their members, Economy, Property Rights, Dialogue, and the

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<sup>4</sup> City names in the Kosovo province for the most part have two accepted names, one in Serbian and one in Albanian. The Serbian names will be used here forth to alleviate confusion as the Serbian names are more widely recognized internationally and officially in English due to Serbian authoritarian control under late former President Slobodan Milosevic over the province since the early 1990s.

Kosovo Protection Corps (“Standards”). In 2005, UN Representative Kai Eide completed a comprehensive review of Kosovo’s progress within these eight standards; to international observers, the report was generous, but still very critical. It was evident that Kosovo had made little progress over the preceding three years. Seven of the eight standards had dismal progress, with Rule of Law being the most lacking (“Review”).

The Rule of Law Standard, Standard II, requires everything needed for a safe and civil society; criminalization of certain offenses, requirements for a fair and active judicial system, and enforcing laws (“Standards” 7-8). Eide, in his review, states that the Kosovo Police Service (ShPK) is growing and taking on increasingly difficult yet necessary tasks, but acknowledges that the judicial system is the weakest of all of Kosovo’s institutions and that crime and corruption are the most serious threats to the stability of Kosovo (“Review” 7-9). Eide further states that several components necessary for the success, or mere improvement, of legal conditions in Kosovo have yet to be created by or remain in the international community’s hands (“Review” 7-9).

#### **A Criminal Criminal Justice System?**

Following the dissolution of the UÇK, the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo Police (UNMIK-P) recruited the former ‘freedom fighters’ who did not become part of the Kosovo Protection Corps, a supposedly unarmed FEMA-like organization, to serve in the ShPK. It is unlikely that the former insurgents would leave behind criminal links and/or tendencies upon donning a ShPK uniform. An American Counterintelligence Special Agent who operated in Kosovo estimated that three out of every five ShPK officers are corrupt in some way; while one of those three is directly involved in some form of organized crime (“Special Agent”). Transparency International reported in 2005 that surveyed Kosovars believed their customs service to be “most corrupt” and that the perception of Kosovars of police and legal corruption is at a 3.0 on a scale of 5.0, with 5.0 being extremely corrupt and 1.0 being not at all corrupt (Transparency International).

Corruption and ties to the insurgent movement still reach high into the major political parties. On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006, three men were arrested with a minibus packed with heavy weapons and ammunition including a 12.7 mm anti-aircraft gun and over 100 rocket-propelled grenades. One of the

men is a senior advisor to the Kosovo Labor Minister, while another is a high-ranking member of the governing Alliance for the Future of Kosovo party (Bytyci).

As the ShPK ranks swelled with former insurgents, the susceptibility of the other police to corruption and bribery rose as well. Those officers who made the attempts to be legitimate were threatened or outright attacked with the plethora of munitions still readily available. As recently as September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006, well into the Final Status negotiations process, unidentified individuals threw two grenades at the house of a Kosovo government police minister ("Serb Politician"). These threats are not uncommon at any level, as high as police ministers down to both ShPK patrolmen as well as UNMIK-P international officers. Even Kosovar organizations such as the aptly named Movement for Self-Determination (MSD), led by activist Albin Kurti, openly discredits UNMIK-P's authority in Kosovo. On October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005, the MSD barricaded a UNMIK-P parking lot and vandalized eight UN vehicles by spray-painting the vehicles to read 'FUND', which translates to 'end' in Albanian ("KFOR Report"). These brash actions of misdemeanor-type actions directed against the UNMIK symbols of authority illustrate UNMIK-P's inability to police and control the population.

Even if an arrest occurs, offenders often fall through the cracks of the Kosovar penal system. Local judges adhere to the same cultural sense of familial clan ties that hampers the effectiveness of the ShPK. Even when suspects are detained under UN mandates by international authorities, local judges have been known to release the suspects (Freedom House). Additionally, the court system is backlogged by tens of thousands of cases awaiting trial.

A multiethnic mix of judges would aid in combating selective prosecution on the part of ethnic Albanian judges and prosecutors, but of the 354 judges and public prosecutors sworn-in under UN auspices in 2000, none were Kosovo Serbs (Marshall 155-174). The UN would later establish an international council, the Kosovo Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, which would oversee the judicial processes in Kosovo and spearheaded efforts to train local prosecutors and judges to improve the system. The effort largely failed due to the differences in the European law instructors' focus and the basic needs of the Kosovar penal system as well as a lack of follow-up instruction (Marshall 155-174).

## **The Economy and its Shadow**

Currently, Kosovo's economy is practically non-existent. Unemployment rates in Kosovo range from 30% province-wide to 60-70% in the more densely populated municipalities. For example, the 100 largest businesses in the largest and capital city of Priština employ only 35,000 workers; in Pec there are an estimated 24,500 unemployed; 77% of the ethnically mixed region in Mitrovica is unemployed (OSCE "Prishtinë/Priština" 11, "Peć/Pejë" 9, "Mitrovicë/Mitrovica" 18-19)

One anomaly is in Uroševac, where only approximately 12,000 of the estimated 140,000 people are unemployed; this can be attributed to the presence of the US Army Camp Bondsteel located in the outskirts of Uroševac proper (OSCE "Ferizaj/Uroševac" 10-11). The interesting aspect of this is that many of the workers are employed by the US contractor Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR). In this instance, the presence of international peacekeepers brings employment as well as an influx of Euros into the local service industry establishments, similar to the 'military towns' that formed around US military bases in Germany during the Cold War.

During the ten years of Belgrade's oppression under Milosevic, the shadow economy emerged alongside ethnic Albanian parallel government structures. These illicit economies emerged as a coping and survival mechanism for the ethnic Albanian Kosovars where, in a post-communist state, they received no aid from Belgrade after decades of a communist welfare state (Pugh 53-60). Kosovars became reliant on black market trading to provide day-to-day commodities and services, which is evident in the significant amount of smuggling occurring to this day.

With UN intervention, western economic models were forced onto Kosovo and applied where they were not applicable. Like Russia, the Kosovar government anticipated high revenue from privatization, but was devastated when corruption-induced low bids won out and the state earned only a fraction of the anticipated revenue. The impoverished region continues to flounder economically due to very limited foreign direct investment, the inability of the government to sign international trade treaties due to Kosovo's current status, and constant threats of violence and instability deterring would-be investors.

While the state suffers from the existence of the shadow economy, the Kosovar people actually benefit from it; Kosovo customs and taxes raise the prices to the point where a legitimate worker can

barely afford the necessities (Pugh 53-60). Smuggled goods can be purchased at discounted prices through the black market, improving the quality of life significantly. Given the situation of Kosovo's legitimate economy compared to the foundation and support that the illicit market provides, it is of little surprise that smuggling is rampant throughout Kosovo.

### **Smuggling: The (Not-So-) Great Albanian Pastime?**

Kosovo is located on a major smuggling route between Central Asia and Western Europe. The drug trade actors are the most insidious of those involved in the criminal world to capitalize on Kosovo's weak state. With the elimination of Taliban rule in Afghanistan and the subsequent resurgence of Afghan heroin, Kosovo has become a major distribution hub for Europe. Workers refine the drugs in Turkey, and then transport the processed drugs through the Balkans westward on what is called "The Balkan Route." Drugs shipped along this route are worth an estimated \$400 billion a year and handle approximately 80 percent of Europe's heroin (Cilluffo 21-25). Interpol estimated in 1997 that Kosovar Albanians controlled the largest shares of the heroin market in Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Norway and Sweden (Cilluffo 21-25). It estimated in 1999 that 40 percent of the heroin supplied to Western Europe traveled through Kosovo (Rozen).

Kosovo's practically non-existent internal security, porous borders, and border crossing stations (where international border guards focus mainly on weapons) allow for a virtually unregulated influx of drugs into Kosovo for further distribution to the West. In one instance in July 2006, Ukrainian KFOR peacekeepers manning a border checkpoint in Đjeneral Janković seized 4.35 kilograms of heroin hidden in a luggage compartment of a coach traveling from Istanbul, Turkey, to Priština, Kosovo (Interfax).

The path used for smuggling drugs is also used for other illicit goods. With an environment this ripe for exploitation, smuggling expanded over time to include all goods: household goods and commodities, counterfeited goods, and persons. Cigarettes are one of the commodities many smugglers gravitate towards, due to the European market for tobacco as well as the sheer profit from the trade. Estimates claim that cigarette smuggling alone costs the Balkans region several hundred million Euros in lost taxes and tariffs (Hozic 35-44).

Smugglers move other goods such as food items and clothing as commonly as cigarettes in order to avoid the high taxes and tariffs. Items smuggled include vegetables, socks, building materials, alcohol,

and fruits. These enterprises are likely to not be organized networks, but rather small, single-faceted crimes and more prevalent as the perpetrators in these offenses are likely local shop-owners and peddlers. One example of this household commodities smuggling occurred on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006, when the ShPK arrested five smugglers, three Albanian and two Roma, in Gnjilane moving over €1,000 worth of shoes (KosovaLive).

While cigarettes and other commodities appear to be inherently non-threatening goods, the loss of any monies to these developing governments is crippling. For example, Kosovo's western neighbor Montenegro reports its 2005 GDP at a mere \$2.412 billion (CIA). Legitimization and taxation of illicit activities legitimized could raise that figure significantly.

Another source of income for criminal groups is intellectual property theft. Interpol reports that a significant portion of consumer goods available for sale at both commercial and underground locations are counterfeit (Noble). These establishments make no attempt to fake the authenticity of the goods, while policing bodies condone the sales by going as far as to park patrol cars outside the larger stores for security. Many soldiers deployed with the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) frequent these establishments with full allowance of their commands to purchase DVDs of newly theater-released movies and designer clothes at thrift store prices.

Along with the aforementioned contraband, Kosovo stands as a source, transit point, and destination for human smuggling (State Dept.). Europol estimated that in 1998, the people smuggling trade through the Balkans into Europe brought in between \$3 and \$4 billion a year (Cilluffo 21-25). An estimated 80 percent of the individuals trafficked are minors. Many Albanians are smuggled out of Kosovo to flee the poor economic conditions for other parts of Europe. Despite alleged progress in Kosovo, demand for this illegal method of transit has driven the price from approximately \$900 in 1999 to nearly \$2,500 per person in 2006 (UPI). On June 5, 2006, authorities arrested 22 individuals, 18 from Albania and four from Kosovo, crossing into Serbia from Kosovo; three of the four Kosovars were minors ("18 Arrested").

Many of the women trafficked externally to and internally within Kosovo are forced into prostitution. In this instance, international peacekeepers not only fail to stop the problem, but may even help to further exacerbate it. Freedom House, an international human rights body, states that the

international troops and the civilian aid and monitoring agencies provide affluent customers for the human trafficking trade, specifically in prostitution.

Under international pressure, increased efforts have been made in 2006 to crack down on the human trafficking and forced prostitution problems throughout the Balkans. During two operations in October 2006, the ShPK arrested groups of 20 and five people and rescued 24 and six women, respectively; of these 30 victims, 27 were Moldovan ("Five Arrested"). In the same month, Slovenian authorities arrested 43 members of an international organization thought to have smuggled over 500 ethnic Albanian Kosovars to Western Europe; one individual arrested in this operation was a Slovenian border guard who worked on the Slovenian-Croatian border (UPI).

### **Alphabet Soup: KFOR, ShPK, and UNMIK**

The growth of organized crime has steadily continued despite tens of thousands of NATO peacekeepers patrolling the streets and several thousand international police personnel supporting the establishment of the ShPK. The terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, are one exogenous factor that affected the international community as it caused troop strength to be diverted eastward and command focus shifted from peacekeeping to combating potential terrorist elements in the Muslim-dominated Kosovo. There was minimal time between the beginning of operations for KFOR in 1999 and the terrorist attacks, which led to the subsequent US-led war on terror in 2001.

KFOR changed their *modus operandi* for dealing with searches that led to detentions. Detainees resulting from contraband finds began being handed over to the ShPK instead of being transported to the detention facility at Camp Bondsteel. Given the ShPK's low funding and the Kosovar judicial system's impotency, the local criminal justice system released the criminals until their trial dates and they were often arrested several more times before those dates (US KFOR). Marek Antoni Nowicki, the UN's international ombudsman in Kosovo, admits that, "[criminal networks] can rely on the weakness of public institutions to sanction their operations (Walker)."

Budget matters contribute to the impotency of the police services including their susceptibility to corruption and bribery. In 2000, UNMIK published the 2001 budget for Kosovo, allocating 27.8 million Deutschmarks (DEM) to the Police service, with 15.7 million DEM earmarked for wages (UNMIK). This 15.7 million is to be paid to a projected 4,475 policemen and staff, which calculates to an average of

293.21 DEM per employee per month. This wage converts to about €150 a month, with executives and chiefs taking larger proportional shares. Kosovo's Provincial Government has had limited success in building budgets on its own, but wages have remained at similar levels. When the average salary of a ShPK officer is compared to the amount to be gained, €2,000 (USD\$2,500), by smuggling a single ethnic Albanian to Western Europe, the math of bribery, complacency, and corruption is elementary.

### **What Is To Be Done?**

Western politicians have altruistically tried to solve problems by utilizing international aid monies. The United States gave Kosovo the following amounts of economic assistance in recent years: 2000, \$177.4 million; 2001, \$176.1 million; 2002, \$130.7 million; 2003, \$57.7 million; 2004, \$110.0 million (USAID). These monies were in addition to comparable amounts of military monetary assistance as well. In Kosovo, this course of action is counterproductive. Since 1999, sizeable amounts of the humanitarian aid doled out to Kosovo for economic rebuilding and quality of life improvement have been embezzled or rerouted through contract abuse into the pockets of those who do not need aid. Increasing aid would merely fatten the bank accounts of the criminal and corrupt with the public receiving only a fractional increase, if any.

Oversight is what is necessary for accountability within international humanitarian aid distribution. Redundancy in oversight by UNMIK observers alongside NGO observers would curtail corruption and embezzlement of funds. Threats of economic aid withdrawal would be productive toward internal oversight; although, actual withdrawal of aid could ultimately increase the criminal element by cutting funding to the already low ShPK budget.

Enforcement and prosecution is a key element to in Kosovo's fight against crime, but right now the ShPK is fighting an uphill battle. KFOR has continually and prematurely altered its policing mission from that of an active role to that of merely a supporting player. Given the nature of KFOR's mandate under a NATO flag, KFOR (US forces in particular) are not subject to the individual laws of their respective countries governing the use of the military in support and activity of civil policing matters, like that of the US's *Posse Comitatus* Act of 1878. A shift of authority is necessary for the fledgling police organization to truly cut its teeth and become a legitimate entity, but the time for this gradual shift has not yet arrived in Kosovo. The ShPK does not have adequate muscle to flex against better armed, better

controlled, and better organized criminal enterprises and networks; KFOR has ample muscle but it is being under utilized on standard 'presence patrols' in which KFOR soldiers merely drive around in random areas in armored vehicles to make their fleeting presence known to the locals.

In contrast, credit must be given to the Provisional Government for efforts, however meek, to combat smuggling, illicit activities, and corruption within Kosovo. Formations of sub-ministry level organizations such as Financial Investigation, Anti-Trafficking, and Terrorism Finance Investigations units were significant strides toward improving command and control from Priština as well as appeasing Kosovo's EU neighbors. Crackdowns by these organizations in 2006 led to several of the arrests mentioned earlier.

A cynic would comment that these recent efforts are a too-little, too-late effort to beef up Kosovo's progress in the Rule of Law standard. Final status negotiations for Kosovo began in early 2006, which, coincidentally, is when major arrests started to occur. It may also be said that this crackdown is a direct result of the report, and authorities had realized just how significant the problem had become. In either scenario, it was the prospect of further international occupation and withholding of independence that provided necessary motivation.

### **Independent Kosovo: Giving the Wolf the Keys to the Hen House?**

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007, UN diplomat Martti Ahtisaari presented his official plan for the future of Kosovo in Vienna. The plan will included both substantial international supervision and autonomy from Serbia proper. Thusly, the reality of an independent Kosovo becomes ominously closer as this plan solidifies the status quo. As a state deeply rooted with corruption, a hand over in power from the international community to a Kosovo-led government will eliminate even the present level of minimal interference with the Kosovo-based criminal enterprises (Lyons).

A gradual withdrawal of KFOR and later UNMIK to a skeleton-crew type of manning, comparable to the current EUFOR configuration in Bosnia-Herzegovina, would be expected under any conditional independence plan. Any power the ShPK currently wields will decline along with the reduction of international forces, the ShPK's de facto reinforcements, intelligence gatherers, and muscle. The presence of the ShPK, judicial system, and penal systems will continue as structures within the government, but only to maintain the perception of the international community. An independent Kosovo

will need these structures in the likely case when they would attempt to gain entrance to international organizations which benefit member-states financially such as the Partnership for Peace, UN, and European Union. This independent state will be a legitimized front and sovereign umbrella for the illicit activities of Albanian organized crime groups.

If this weak state emerges, interethnic violence would likely continue at the same low level currently observed or possibly at a decreased level, due to those in power likely realizing the ramifications of renewed expulsions by ethnic Albanians of Serbs and Roma from Kosovo's borders. Kosovo will continue to be under the microscope, per se, should it gain entry to any international organizations, and human rights violations would bring unwanted international attention to Kosovo and subsequently to smuggling and trafficking operations. Kosovo's proximal neighbors such as Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Bosnia will likely become EU member states much earlier than Kosovo, and any instability in Southeastern Europe will be assumed to have an epicenter in Kosovo, effectively increasing the unofficial oversight of Kosovo's neighbors. The current status of Kosovo's transnational organized crime as the real power behind the power of Kosovo will continue, and these criminals' bank accounts will continue to swell at the expense of a people all too deserving of a legitimate fresh start.

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# **Managed Society: NGOs in Modern Russian Politics**

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Undergraduate Research Symposium 2007

**Introduction:**

On January 10, 2006, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into effect a law placing a new set of restrictions on Russian non-governmental organizations, particularly those that receive funding from abroad. The law created a new government agency to oversee the activities of NGOs and severely limits their ability to operate within the political sphere. An original draft of the bill would have closed all foreign NGOs altogether (Moscow Times 2006).

The chorus of condemnation from the NGO community was swift and severe. A press release from Oxford Analytica read, "The law, which has been designed to enable Putin to reinforce his personal political control, will increase the authoritarian character of the Russian political system" (2006). Lev Ponomarev, of the Russian group For Human Rights felt the government was exhibiting Soviet-like behavior: "NGOs will become like Soviet dissidents: They can criticize the Kremlin only from home and not publicly" (Moscow Times 2006).

Nicola Duckworth, the director of Amnesty International in Russia, said, "This law gives excessive powers of scrutiny and discretion to the authorities in monitoring organizations and making decisions on their registration and closure...Russia should be encouraging their civil society sector not stifling it" (Agence France Presse 2006).

Why all this concern over NGOs in the first place? It may be because these organizations are the most tangible manifestations of the popular but amorphous political science concept of civil society. Scholars have argued the primacy of civil society development as a precondition of democratization, and the recent "color" revolutions in the post-communist world are often viewed as a textbook example of how western aid to NGOs can lead to liberalization. As a country with little indigenous civic tradition, Russia provides a unique opportunity to examine the effectiveness of civil society promotion from abroad.

In a certain sense, even broaching this topic relies on a flawed premise, that the types of political organizations receiving funding from abroad, which Putin has worked to curb, in any way constitute civil society in the classical sense. Even in the best of settings, NGOs are in reality but a small component of a vital civil society which includes everything from churches and labor unions to sports clubs and bird-watching societies. What has emerged in Russia, is a relatively new phenomenon: a network of advocacy

groups primarily funded from abroad and largely isolated from the concerns of those they claim to represent.

So if the political sector represented by the foreign NGOs is different from the traditional notion of civil society, the question at hand is what are the characteristics of this sector as an actor within Russia's domestic politics. This paper will focus particularly on the question of whether the NGO sector can be effective at promoting democratization. What I will argue is that the international nature of the NGO community and its separation from true Russian society make it possible for the Russian government to downplay, co-opt and control NGO activities.

While the Putin government's aggressive legislation is certainly meant to put Russia's NGO community on notice, there are still a large number of very active foreign and domestic organizations operating in Russia, engaged in advocacy ranging from women's issues to soldiers rights and environmental concerns. What Putin has in fact done is create a manageable NGO sector in which groups that are issue-specific and local are allowed to continue operating whereas those which directly threaten the regime's political power are either crushed or co-opted.

This is consistent with the Putin regime's governing philosophy of "managed democracy:" a strange hybrid in which democratic institutions are allowed to exist, if only for appearance's sake while actually political developments are stage-managed by a small and powerful oligarchy.

This paper will look into why the funding of NGOs has not and likely will not lead to further democratization in Russia. I will look at both the flawed political premises on which this aid is based and the policies that Putin's government has used to create what could be called a "managed society."

### **Civil Society and Democracy**

Part of the blame political impotence of Russia's NGO community lies with the NGOs themselves. The fact is, much of what is termed "civil society assistance" by advocates bears little resemblance to this concept as it was originally defined by political scholars, and the conflation of the terms "NGO sector" and "civil society" by policymakers is probably ultimately counterproductive to civil society development.

While discussion of civil society as a domain of the citizenry separate from the state dates back at least to Aristotle and continues through the enlightenment in the writings of Thomas Paine and Alexis de

Tocqueville, the idea has taken much greater intellectual currency in the context of twentieth century antiauthoritarianism (Carothers 99).

The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci helped to revive the concept for the twentieth century with his idea of a 'socio-ethical' sphere: "a cultural front as necessary alongside the merely economic and political ones" (Gramsci 194). Gramsci's concept of a 'cultural front' as a means of counteracting state and market hegemony was in the context of the struggle against capitalism and fascism but his writings became popular once again with the organizers of the anti-communist movements in Eastern Europe in the late '80s and early '90s (Carothers 101).

Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*, the seminal work on the relationship between civil society and well-functioning democracy, is an empirical study of levels of civic association in northern and southern Italy, concluding that regions with higher levels of association in the north tended to have better functioning, more democratic regional governments than regions with low levels of association in the south. Putnam concludes:

"Citizens in civil communities expect better government and (in part through their own efforts,) they get it. They demand more effective public service, and they are prepared to act collectively to achieve their shared goals. Their counterparts in less civic regions more commonly assume the role of alienated and cynical supplicants" (182).

Putnam concludes that building social capital is key to "making democracy work" throughout the world but cautions that such efforts will not be easy and may take centuries (Putnam 185). It is also important to keep in mind that Putnam's idea of social capital is exemplified as much by choral groups, gardening societies and (famously) bowling leagues as labor unions and civil rights NGOs.

### **Russian NGOs and International Assistance**

Russia's inhospitable climate toward civil society is not new. Except for a brief resurgence of volunteerism during the Khrushchev thaw, civic associations were for the most part unheard of during the Soviet period (Sundstrom 27). It was not until the mid-1980s that the regime began some tentative experiments with "socialist pluralism." As Steven Fish writes, the new civic organizations that emerged during this period—devoted to such issues as protecting the environment, fighting alcoholism and memorializing the victims of Stalinism.—"in no way constituted a real opposition. At the time of their

inception, they were not incompatible with the goals of perestroika, as defined by top state officials.” The importance of these groups should not be underestimated however. Fish again:

“...The emergence and toleration of some small nonstate organizations was in itself a momentous development. It represented the birth or at least conception, of a genuine public realm. If one accepts the definition of totalitarianism put forth in the previous chapter—the ban on all pluralism and the complete étatisation of associational life—this form of regime, after six decades of ruinous existence in Russia, died quietly in 1987 in the apartments and small public conference rooms where the new political clubs convened” (Fish 32-33).

Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom describes the major transition that Russia’s nascent NGO community underwent after the collapse of communism. First of all, many of the former Soviet-era dissidents found themselves out of touch with the concerns of most Russians and greatly at odds with their former comrades over basic political issues with the absence of the common enemy of the Soviet regime. Second, many ordinary Russians who had rallied and marched for reform in the waning days of the USSR retreated from public life and public participation actually declined as the political system became more open (Sundstrom 27).

The other major change was the huge influx of foreign capital and influence which greatly altered the character of the NGO sector. The pioneers of civil society assistance in Russia were the MacArthur Foundation and George Soros’ Open Society Institute, which began operating during the late perestroika period (Sundstrom 32). While funding approaches may have differed between organizations, all the agencies shared a similar goal of promoting a “constructive dialogue” in which NGOs should be autonomous from the state in terms of personnel and funding but should interact directly with state agencies (Sundstrom 32).

Russian civic groups were granted legal status by the state in 1990. However, domestic sources of funding were few and far between with many Russians distrusting the motives of the groups, viewing them as fifth columns of foreign influence or fronts for political corruption. This attitude combined with widespread poverty, little tradition of philanthropy in the Soviet era and a lack of tax incentives for donations made it extremely difficult for organizations to rely on domestic sources of funding. Sundstrom found less than twenty percent of NGOs eschewing foreign funding entirely (Sundstrom 31-32).

However, with the newfound post-cold war optimism in the west, sources of funding from private foundations and governments in America and Europe were plentiful. During the 1990s various Russian organizations received approximately \$92 million from USAID, \$56 million from OSI, \$38 million from the Eurasia foundation and \$17 million from MacArthur. By 2001 450,000 NGOs were operating in the country (Henderson 6-7).

There has been substantial scholarship on the goal-distorting effect that foreign assistance can have on civic groups. Aid-receiving groups often find themselves in a position of dual allegiance to both their core local constituency and the bureaucrats in Washington or Brussels who pay the bills. Sarah L. Henderson, building off the work of Thomas Carothers, Larry Diamond and others writes of Russian NGOs that:

“Groups that had received [foreign] funding tended to reflect the post-materialist values of the donor, such as concerns for gender equity, environmentalism, or respect for human rights, rather than the survivalist, materialist bent of many organizations that relied solely on domestic sources of financial support. As a result, the goals agendas and projects of NGOs that received assistance from Western organizations had shifted over time to reflect the agenda of the foreign assistance programs rather than objective domestic needs” (Henderson 10).

There are other potential problems with foreign assistance to NGOs as well. Competition for scarce funds can make it difficult for NGOs with similar interests to cooperate on common goals (Henderson 14).

There is also a case to be made against the primacy of NGOs in discussions of civil society building. Many of these arguments go back to Putnam’s original definition of civil society, which is less focused on issue advocacy and more on traditional civic culture. Carothers writes:

“In many countries NGOs are outweighed by more traditional parts of civil society. Religious organizations, labor unions and other groups often have a genuine base in the population and secure domestic sources of funding , features that advocacy groups usually lack, especially the scores of new NGOs in democratizing countries. The burgeoning NGO sectors in such countries are often dominated by elite-run groups that have only tenuous ties to the citizens on whose behalf they claim to act...” (101).

All the same, NGO funding is still a large portion of American and European funding for democracy abroad.

### **Putin and the NGOs**

From the beginning of his presidency it was clear that Vladimir Putin would not make things easy for Russia's NGO community. In one infamous incident, Irene Stevenson, who had directed the AFL-CIO's efforts in Russia since the early 1990s was denied re-entry into Moscow's Sheremetevo airport after traveling home to the U.S. for a few weeks in early 2002 (Interfax 2003).

Putin's two major political acts regarding NGOs are the formation of the Public Chamber and the 2006 law restricting NGO activities. The public chamber, a new branch of the State Duma, is comprised of representatives of civil society organizations, one third of which are selected by the president himself. The role of the chamber is to monitor draft legislation of the Duma's legislative branch, but its role is advisory and its resolutions are nonbinding.

Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov described the chamber as "an additional opportunity for the development of civil society in the country." Many NGO leaders themselves are not so sure that civil society can exist within a vertically integrated governing structure and feel that the chamber is merely a way of co-opting the political power of civil society.

Lyudmilla Alekseeva, director of the Moscow Helsinki group had this to say:

"There has been this idea to organize civil society, which has already developed in our country, according to this vertical of power," Alekseeva said. "But this is a crazy idea. As soon as you organize civil society into this vertical of power, it stops being civil society. It becomes a pathetic appendage of the government. And it is destroyed" (Alekseeva).

As for the infamous NGO registration law, on paper it does little more than create a new agency charged with monitoring NGO activity. But as with much of the Russian bureaucracy, the real effects are much more complex. Ivan Safranchuk, director of the Moscow office of the Washington-based Center for Defense Information described going through the registration process.

"We have over 500 foreign NGOs in Moscow and the office where you have to go to register is only open for half a day three times a week. There are many other little things that make things more difficult. For instance you are not allowed to provide documents through lawyers. They

demand that head of the organization comes personally. They will not receive representatives.

There are many other minor technical obstacles which when put together make things quite difficult for us” (Safranchuk 2006).

As of the Oct. 17 deadline, 85 groups, including the Russian offices of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the National Democratic Institute had been refused legal status because of “negligent filling in of forms” (New York Times 2006). All but a few have since had their status restored but the Kremlin’s message had been sent.

International attention focused on the plight of Russia’s NGO community in July of 2006, when Russia hosted a meeting of the G8 countries in St. Petersburg. It should have been Putin’s chance to show off and prove that Russia, with its gas-powered resurgent economy still deserved a place in the exclusive club. But the event also provided a chance for NGOs and civil society advocates to make their presence felt as well.

The “Other Russia” conference, which took place in Moscow ahead of the G8 meeting brought together leading opposition figures including Kasparov and National Bolshevik Party leader Eduard Limonov, strange bedfellows under any circumstances. The event focused international media attention on the issue and the NGO heads met with President George W. Bush and the wife of Prime Minister Tony Blair. However, several delegates complained of being robbed and beaten by unidentified assailants on their way to the conference (*The Guardian* 2006).

### **These Colors Don’t Run: Why Russia is not Ukraine**

Much of the Western enthusiasm and Russian skepticism regarding civil society aid is a direct consequence of the democratic uprisings, which have swept through the post-communist world in recent years. The ouster of authoritarian regimes in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan—known collectively as the “color revolutions”—seem to provide a real-world template of how Western funding and know-how can help activists on the ground achieve dramatic political change.

Ukraine’s Orange revolution was particularly exciting for Russian democrats since Viktor Yuschenko campaign against the Moscow-backed candidate Viktor Yanukovych took on the character of a referendum on the corrupt pro-Russian regime of Vladimir Kuchma. Yuschenko’s victory was also a humiliating defeat for the highly paid Russian “political technologists”—so instrumental in Putin’s

continued electoral success—who were hired by the Yanukovych team in hopes of engineering the desired outcome by any means (Wilson 88). Nadia Diuk writes about the role of NGOs in the revolution.

“A variety of nongovernmental organization spearheaded the protest movement against the regime by innovative means, including street protests. By the fall of 2004, these organizations succeeded in getting several hundred thousand people into the streets throughout Ukraine. The nongovernmental organizations excelled at being peaceful, and they played a decisive role in the Orange Revolution. The Ukrainian events show how important a strong civil society can be” (Diuk 83).

But how applicable is the Ukrainian model to the Russian case. Diuk’s article traces the history of Ukrainian *hromady* or civic organizations back to the nineteenth century. There is no such comparable tradition in Russia where the primacy of the state in public life predates communism (Diuk 71).

The role played by western organizations such as OSI and the National Democratic Institute has also been widely publicized, leading to widespread suspicion both in Ukraine and abroad that the whole thing was little more than American meddling in the affairs of a sovereign state (*The Guardian* 2004). The Yanukovych camp tried to seize on this perception, dubbing the insurgent candidate “Bushenko” in campaign posters and advertisements (Wilson 95). However, much recent scholarship has shown the western role to be largely overhyped. Michael McFaul writes:

“Ukrainians made the Orange revolution. This obvious observation cannot be stressed enough. Equally as important, for almost all external actors involved in Ukraine, there was no an explicit goal to foster “revolution.” Rather, the focus for most Western organizations was to make the 2004 presidential election as democratic as possible and/or to promote democratic development more generally” (McFaul 8).

The point here is not that Western aid was not critical in making Yushenko’s victory, simply that this aid had little to do with what we typically think of as civil society promotion. Indeed, much of the Western aid to Ukrainian NGOs in the lead up to the 2004 events was *explicitly political* in nature. The most effective instance was the improved exit polling funded by the Soros Foundation and the National Endowment for Democracy which made the regime’s electoral fraud much more difficult to carry out.

Other assistance included American and European consultants provided to the Yushenko campaign to help with public relations and organizing efforts (Sushko, Prystayko 135).

This type of aid is almost directly contradictory to the traditional Putnam conception of civil society building. Western donors were not interested in building a social sphere separate from the state, but in influencing developments *within* the state. The orange revolution may have been a victory for Ukrainian society and it may have been a triumph for Western democracy promotion but the two are not the same thing.

In any case, the exclusion of NGOs and Western funders from the electoral process in Putin's Russia would make aid of this type of aid of little use in the Russian context. Encouraging as it may be, Ukraine's democratic breakthrough was a very particular Ukrainian phenomenon and should not be used as a universal model or cause for undue optimism.

### **Virtual Society**

In the book *Virtual Politics*, Andrew Wilson puts forth a disturbing vision of post-Soviet, postmodern political reality. Through the use of what has come to be known as "political technology" Russian power-brokers maintain the façade of democracy not so much by crude traditional methods of ballot stuffing and intimidation (though to be sure this goes on as well) but by the manipulation of political reality itself through control of the media and the manufacture of fake opposition parties, whose true purpose is to keep the real opposition fractured and impotent. The extreme nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is the most notable example of this phenomenon.

Wilson presents an almost perfectly hegemonic view of Russian state power in society:

"Russians are used to venerating the state, but also to placing it at a distance, on a pedestal.

They are therefore also used to an indistinct image of power, and to coping with the plasticity or viscosity of power" (Wilson 35).

And later:

"How is such an edifice kept standing? There are four key conditions for the practice of virtual politics in the post-Soviet space: a powerful but amoral elite; a passive electorate; a culture of information control; and the lack of an external counterpoint, i.e., foreign intervention" (Wilson 41).

But perhaps Russian civil society, and the foreign funding that sustains it, is itself a form of virtual politics. The civil society representatives handpicked by President Putin for the Public Chamber of the Duma would certainly seem to fit Wilson's definition of a manufactured opposition; ostensibly acting as ombudsman but exercising no actual political power. Lisa Sundstrom has also described the struggle of the influential and controversial NGO, Committee for Soldier's Mothers to differentiate itself in the public eye from a Kremlin sponsored NGO with the same name located only a few blocks away in a Moscow suburb (Sundstrom 46).

The army of foreign NGOs operating in Russia might seem to contradict Wilson's argument that Russia's virtual democracy thrives in the absence of foreign influence that that foreign intervention can help to prevent it. However, by effectively excluding the foreign groups from electoral politics and making it clear that they operate only by discretion of the state and can be closed at any time, the Russian state has essentially virtualized even the foreign actors. The appearance of a thriving internationally-supported civil society is maintained because NGOs are free to complain as much as they wish about the war in Chechnya or police brutality, but they have little political leverage to do much about it.

The structure of the NGO community also contributes to this virtuality by linking the priorities and interests of organizations more to their funders in the west than to the communities they are set up to serve. Gramsci and Putnam's view of civil society as representative of the collective interests of the populace is thus negated in the virtual political sphere where "civil society" is merely a playing field for political maneuvering between the state and its foreign rivals.

## **Conclusion**

What does all this say about the role of civil society in democratization? Frankly, not very much. There is nothing in the Russian case to disprove the notion that high levels of association and social capital are prerequisites for good governance. Russia, as a result of its historical tradition, is cursed with little of both.

What is clear is that civil society, precisely because it is so amorphous and organic a commodity, is extremely difficult to create. Putnam predicted that it would take several generations in southern Italy. It is important once again that the NGO sector not be confused with civil society, because though NGOs

can under certain circumstances help to undermine authoritarian regimes, they cannot create the relationship between society and the state that is necessary for functioning democracy.

The purpose of this paper is not to attack the work of NGOs in Russia or anywhere else, simply to propose a new way of thinking about the role they play in transitional societies. NGOs can be remarkably affective at addressing specific societal concerns, particularly in the areas of social and economic rights. When they enter the realm of electoral politics, as in the Ukrainian case they can have a transformative political effect. However, when the NGO sector is largely imported it should be considered a separate entity apart from both the state and society rather than the institutional manifestation of that society.

With American prospects in Iraq and Afghanistan looking increasingly bleak, western policymakers may turn to NGOs as an alternative to military force in democracy promotion. They should be wary. What the Russian case proves is that the NGO sector is essentially one more interest group that a savvy authoritarian government can contain just as easily as it controls political parties or the media.

So it seems that barring a large-scale shift in public opinion—which would almost certainly arise in response to domestic rather than international stimuli—Russia will, for the foreseeable future, continue to be Russia.

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