FEAR IN THE POST-COMMUNIST WORLD

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Project Information

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Executive summary

This paper is based on a research project about the fears experienced by people in four countries – Bulgaria, Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine – during the second half of the 1990s. It uses data derived from questionnaires administered in each country about the kinds of fears people had and the intensities of these fears. The repertoire and intensity of fears are among the best indicators of the political and social stability in society. For this reason, information about fear is an invaluable instrument for predicting developments in any country. The knowledge of fear is particularly important for understanding societies in turmoil, such as most post-Communist countries. The paper describes and compares the most common fears held by the populations of each country, and argues that most of the fears in the four countries that were studied were quite realistic and were activated by the “objective” processes. The paper ends by considering the consequences of fear for these countries. Even if the fears have an objective basis, their impact may be destabilizing, contributing to political disorder and economic decline.
Fear as a concept

In the research project, we deal with social fears that originated in social conditions. We do not look at individual, existential fears like the fear of death, or the fear of losing a beloved family member. It is generally accepted that fear is a mental construct that has been shaped by the hands of evolution and various external factors. The so-called “objective character” of a perceived threat is crucial, but it represents only one of these factors. The author rejects two extremes in the treatment of fears: “naive realism” on one side, and post-modernist “total relativism” on the other. The fears of the people reflect real objective dangers in society (“hard reality”), but they are also mental constructions that can be influenced by “soft reality” (ideology, historical memory, and various individual psychological characteristics). Only concrete analysis of the specific fear permits the establishment of the role of each factor in shaping fear. For this reason, in this project we deal mostly with “rational” fears and in some cases purely “irrational” fears that can have a major social impact.

Images of fear change in the course of history. For example, the nature and variety of fears in the Middle Ages were in many respects different from those of the present. The content and repertoire of fears, in regards to moral corruption for instance, change from one culture to another and from one period to another within a given culture.

1 Dr. Vladimir Shlapentokh and Dr. Samuel Kliger were the principal investigators for the project, “Fears in Post-Communist Society on the eve of 2000: Intensity and Impact on Social Life,” funded by the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research. Dr. Tony Carnes took an active role in the New York part of the project and supervised the processing of data. The author wishes to thank Joshua Woods for his editorial contribution to this paper.

2 According to our survey, in 1998-1999, up to two-thirds of the people in the countries included in the project attributed the emergence of fear to their personal experience (Ukrainians, 65 percent; Russians, 63 percent; Lithuanians, 48 percent; Bulgarians, 33 percent), while roughly one third ascribed the origin of their fears to the media (Lithuanians, 39 percent; Bulgarians, 36 percent; Russians, 27 percent; and Ukrainians, 22 percent). Interpersonal communication (talks between friends, relatives and colleagues) claimed the role of the third source of fear (in Bulgaria it was mentioned by 31 percent; in Lithuania, 11 percent; Ukraine, 8 percent; and in Russia by 5 percent).

In addition to a medley of historically and culturally influenced fears, there are also a number of apparently universal fears that recur with little variation through time and across culture. Among these anxieties are the fears of natural disasters, war, loss of independence by one's ethnic group or nation, starvation, drastic fall in one's standard of living, anarchy, and crime. The similarities in the fears of various times and cultures enable modern scholars to understand the documents of the past as well as address various impending catastrophes.

There are various social actors who are engaged in “the business of social fear.” First, there are those individuals and groups who have a primarily passive relationship to fear and are thus “the recipients” or “carriers of fear,” analogous to the carriers of infection. Second, there are “producers of fear.” These agents and organizations disseminate fear for various reasons. Producers and disseminators of fear include: ideologues, politicians, journalists, teachers, authors, shapers of public opinion and all agents who have access to the minds of the public. In this text we deal mostly with the mass recipients of fears and only briefly with the fears harbored by the elite.

The intensity of fears gives us a clear idea of the population’s feelings about its quality of life. What is more, the repertoire and intensity of fears are among the best indicators of the political and social stability in society. For this reason, information about fear is an invaluable instrument for predicting developments in any country. The knowledge of fear is particularly important for understanding societies in turmoil such as most post Communist countries.

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Sources of data

The data used in this paper about fears in the post Communist world were obtained from a research project financed by the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research. The project carried out an almost identical national random stratified survey in four countries: Russia (in 1996 with 1350 respondents, and in 1999 with 1000 respondents), Ukraine (in 1997 with 450 respondents), Lithuania (in 1997 with 1000 respondents) and Bulgaria (in 1997 with 1042 respondents). The project also surveyed emigrants from post-Communist countries, who now live in the United States (conducted in 1999) and Israel (also in 1999). Additionally, we used the results of a content analysis of about 1000 articles which appeared in the Russian media in 1996-1997 as well as the materials of a seminar on fear conducted in Moscow in 1997.

In the text that follows, when we refer to all four countries as a group we will use the abbreviation RUBL, or RUBL, countries. When we talk about the smaller two countries together, Lithuania and Bulgaria, we will use the abbreviation SC countries. Likewise, when we speak of the bigger countries, Ukraine and Russia, as a group, we use the term BC countries.

Methodological remark

The analysis of fear in this project was based mostly on the answers of respondents to questions about their attitudes toward various fears. With the purpose of gauging the level of fear, the respondents were asked to choose one alternative in a five-item scale. The master questionnaire employed a five-

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5 In 1998, Vladimir Shubkin conducted a small survey (350 respondents) which made it possible to compare the dynamics of fears in several regions of the country.

6 The heads of the national projects were located in the following places: Russia - Dr. Vladimir Shubkin (Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Science); Ukraine - Dr. Vladimir Paniotto (Head of the Kiev International Institute of Sociology); Lithuania - Dr. Vladas Gaidis (Head of the Market and Opinion Research Center); and Bulgaria - Dr. Emil Mitev (Chairman of the Bulgarian Sociological Association). The studies of emigrants were conducted in America by Dr. Tony Carnes and Dr. Samuel Kliger (both from the Institute of Values Studies), and in Israel by Dr. David Aptekman (the Israel Sociological Association). This paper used the reports submitted by the heads of the national projects in Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Israel.
item scale containing the alternatives: “I don’t feel any uncertainty in this sense,” “Some concern,” “Strong alarm,” “Constant fear,” and “I don’t know, didn’t think about it.” In this paper we have operated with the indicator that combined two items, “Strong alarm” and “Constant fear” and have rounded percentages to whole numbers.

Our analysis is based on two dimensions: measurement of the place (or rank) of the particular fear in the hierarchy of fears, and measurement of the absolute level of a given fear in the percentage of people who feel it. The hierarchy of fears helps us understand the relative role of various fears in the public mind and discover the source of the major anxieties in society. The second indicator, which serves as the basis for building the hierarchy of fears, is important by itself for measuring the intensity of fears in the country. It also shows how many people maintained one specific fear in relation to another.

Notwithstanding differences among the countries, the project assumes that the countries are parts of the same universe. They have many commonalities, including a Communist past, geographical location (Eastern Europe), ethnic background, and religion (with Lithuania as an exception).

These post-Communist experiences of these countries also have many common features, a direct result of the transformation of a strictly regimented society into a loose society with high levels of corruption and criminality. What is more, these countries turn out to be, if we take standard of living as the major criterion, quite unsuccessful in their transitions from Communist rule to a new society. Even Lithuania, which had the highest level of economic success after 1994 could not (during the course of the project) achieve the standard of living of 1990.

In general, the dominant role in the repertoire of fears in RUBL countries belonged to the category “universal fears” – those which are quite typical for any society (e.g., fears of economic and ecological disasters, lawlessness, foreign aggression and minorities). At the same time, some fears took on a special character for geographic and cultural reasons. For instance, the fear of the “Invasion of
Islam' was stronger in Bulgaria than in the other countries in the project.\footnote{Almost a quarter of the Bulgarians were seriously afraid of "the invasion of Islam," while the same fear in Lithuania and Russia was shared by only 6 percent of the population (in Ukraine, 12 percent). In the list of "bad times" in the past, Bulgarians ranked "the Turkish yoke" in third place (13 percent in the open question); naturally, this period was not on the list of other nations. The same fears had different intensities in Crimea as compared with other Ukrainian regions. Here, the Tartars demanded the restoration of their rights and went into conflict with the Ukrainian authorities and the Slav population. While almost 20 percent of the people in Crimea had serious misgivings about "the Islam invasion," only 8 percent of the residents of Western Ukraine harbored the same anxieties.}

Treating the RUBL countries as a relatively homogeneous universe, we operated with averages that characterized both the hierarchy and the intensity of fears for all of the countries together. We use two types of averages: weighted and non-weighted. The weighted averages take into account the size of the population in each country and serve as an instrument to measure fears on the territory of the former internal (only Soviet republics) and external (the Soviet satellites) Soviet empire.\footnote{The population of Russia was 147.5 million in 1996; the population of Ukraine was 52.3 million in 1993; in Bulgaria, the population was 8.4 million in 1996; Lithuania’s population was 3.7 million in 1997. Taking Lithuania’s weight as 1, the weight of Russia was 39.9, accordingly, Ukraine’s weight was 14.1 and Bulgaria’s was 2.3.} The weighted averages minimize the influence of small countries (the population of Bulgaria makes up only 5.8 percent of the Russian population; the same indicator for Lithuania is only 2.5 percent) and make Russia and Ukraine (the two largest countries) more influential in determining the general level of anxiety in our universe. There is no doubt that fears in Russia and Ukraine, with a combined population of roughly 200 million, have more impact on international politics than apprehensions in Lithuania and Bulgaria, with a combined population of 12 million.

For analysis of the causes of fear, the non-weighted averages were used. The non-weighted averages are more useful than weighted numbers because they disregard the size of the countries and focus on the role of specific fears in individual countries.
Attitudes toward the future in Communist countries on the eve of perestroika

The project data show an extremely high level of anxiety in the post-Communist world. Before moving to the detailed analysis, we should first draw a picture of the mood of the people before the fall of the Communist regime. The contrast between the mood of the population “before and after” is spectacular.

Indeed, the populations of the European Communist countries (including the nations that were included in this project) enjoyed a low level of fear, although they had to accommodate their life to the conditions of totalitarian society. Living in a strongly regimented society, the people of these countries looked to the future without great fear. Those who were not involved in confrontation with the regime were certain that their jobs were permanent, that nobody could evict them from their apartments, that the state would guarantee free medical service, education and even a decent pension. The people in these countries were not worried about the future for their children, whose careers were quite predictable. They were all guaranteed a more or less decent place in society. They had no significant fears of disorder in the country and no fear of political instability. Social anxiety in Communist countries was mostly fueled by ecological dangers and to some degree by the fear of nuclear war. However, the intensity of these fears was quite low. The majority of the Soviet people and Bulgarians believed in the stable and gradual improvement of their material well-being. At the same time, they were very skeptical about the promised Communist paradise.9

9 Indeed, the notion of a Communist paradise had almost disappeared from the Soviet media. It was replaced by so-called “mature, or developed Socialism” (which, as Soviet ideologues suggested, had already provided Soviet people with a style of life much better than in the West and would continue to do so). See, for instance, G. Glezerman, Rutkevich and Vishenveskii (eds.), Sotsialisticheskii obraz zhizni, Moscow: Politizdat, 1980; Maksim Kim, Problemy Teorii i istorii real’nogo Sotsialisma, Moscow: Nauka, 1983; S. Vishenveskii et al. (eds.), Sotsialisticheskii Obraz Zhizni, Moscow: Politizdat, 1984.
The role of ideology

The relatively optimistic mood of the population in Communist countries was the result not only of the relatively stable economy and order in society, but also of the official ideology. The state’s optimistic ideology affected the attitudes of the people toward the future. The Soviet ideology also cultivated some fears in the public mind, but in essence it was optimistic. Soviet propagandists did their best to inculcate this official optimism in the Soviet mind. They were quite successful, because the majority of the Soviet people accepted most of the official dogmas, including the preeminence of Soviet-Russian patriotism, the supremacy of socialism and social equality, the obligation of the state to guarantee the basic needs of the people, Soviet social and moral superiority over the West, and the superiority of public property and central planning over private property and a market economy. Accepting these major postulates, most people also embraced to some extent the ideology’s optimistic tone. While focusing on an optimistic vision of the future, the state was able to maintain some optimism among most people in RUBL countries in the Communist era, particularly among young people, even in the darkest times of Soviet history.

Liberal intellectuals, including dissidents, were in bad but not apocalyptic moods in the 1970s and 1980s. They believed that the existing state of life, regardless of how bad it really was, would

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11 Almost all ideologies, as well as all religions, contain many catastrophic elements. The importance of fear varies from one ideology to the next. Each ideology has its own proportions of optimism and pessimism. Soviet ideology, a variation of Marxist ideology, always tried to combine an absurdly optimistic belief in a “radiant future,” including “the conquest of nature,” with attempts to scare the population with various notions about catastrophic threats, though the ratio between these two components changed from one period to the next. In the post-Stalin era, the importance of fear in Soviet ideology diminished significantly in comparison with the 1930s and 1940s. However, the danger of an attack by the West on the Soviet Union or other socialist countries, or on its allies, remained quite an important component of official Soviet ideology. At the same time, post-Stalin Soviet ideology was inclined to put more emphasis on optimism, and for this reason discouraged excessively pessimistic images of the future, such as theoretical debates about the eventual end of the earth or the universe.

survive for decades without any cataclysm.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{The radical jump in 1992-1994}

The psychological situation in the former Soviet republics changed immensely after 1991 and to some degree even earlier, in 1989-1990. However, in 1991 with society on the eve of the transformation toward a liberal capitalist order, many Russians and other Soviet people, despite their disappointment with the changes during perestroika, remained confident in the radical improvement in their life that would come with reforms. According to data from the the All-Russian Center of Public Opinion (VTsIOM), about one quarter of Russians met the new year 1991 with hope and only 9 percent with fear.\textsuperscript{13} After 1991, the number of people who were optimistic never reached this rather high level.

The pessimism in Russia increased dramatically after 1992. By 1994, VTsIOM found that the number of optimists declined to 16 percent and the number of those who had fear about the future increased to 22 percent; in 1998, the respective numbers were 12 percent and 24 percent.\textsuperscript{14} When asked at the end of 1994, “are hard times behind us or in the future?” 9 percent of 3000 respondents in a VTsIOM survey said “In the past” and 52 percent said “In the future.” No less than 50-60 percent of Russians characterized their mood as tense. Among them, 11 percent “felt fear of the future” and 40-50 percent also regarded the present situation as fraught with “crisis.”\textsuperscript{15} No less than two-thirds of all Russians described the situation in 1992-1994 in their country as gloomy, with no brighter outlook

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{12} See Vladimir Shlapentokh, \textit{Soviet Intellectuals and Political Power}. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. Alexander Shpagin compared the mentality of Russian intellectuals in the 1970s and 1980s with their ancestors in the “Silver age.” He noted, “In the ‘period of stagnation’ there was no apocalyptic presentiment as compared to the ‘Silver age.’” At worst, the heroes of movies and novels of that era thought about “little apocalypses” which meant only the destruction of their own illusions about the Soviet world (See Shpagin, “Rekviem v stile rok,” \textit{Literaturnaja Gazeta}, August 31, 1994).
    \item \textsuperscript{13} VTsIOM archive, No. 108, section No. 17, 1991 (the size of the sample was 5037).
    \item \textsuperscript{14} VTsIOM archive, No. 62, section No. 1, 1995 (the size of the sample was 1989); No. 4, section No.15 (the size of the sample was 1600).
    \item \textsuperscript{15} VTsIOM, No. 5, 1994; No. 6, 1994; No. 2, 1995, pp. 53, 57.
\end{itemize}
possible for the future.16

Major areas of fear in 1998-1999

In the next period (1998-1999), anxiety was deeply entrenched in the public mind-set in Russia and Ukraine, while in Lithuania fears diminished, though they remained part of the national psychology. In general, by the end of the 1990s, the population in RUBL countries lived in an atmosphere of great uncertainty and fear: 67 percent of Russians, 65 percent of Ukrainians, 56 percent of Bulgarians and 53 percent of Lithuanians were uncertain about their future.17 If we use the size of the population of each country as a weight, the average percentage was 66 percent; without weights, the number was 60 percent because the BC (Russia and Ukraine) influenced the weighted average much more strongly than the SC (Bulgaria and Lithuania). Less than 10 percent of the population in all countries were confident of their future.

The list of the specific fears and their rankings among RUBL countries were largely the same. This similarity reflected the fundamental fact about the pattern of the people’s reaction to the tribulations of life. People in RUBL countries identified the top two major threats as economic disasters and crime. Ukrainians and Russians were particularly concerned about the existing economic order in society.

Third in the list of fears was the deterioration of the environment and the increased probability of ecological disasters. In one way or another, all RUBL countries (especially Ukraine, of course) suffered from the Chernobyl disaster. As expected, the level of fear with respect to ecological disasters was three

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16 In a VTsIOM survey conducted in August 1994, Russians described the situation in the country as “critical” (40 percent), “alarming” (27 percent), or “catastrophic” (22 percent). Only 6 percent considered the situation “normal” (Nezavisimaja Gazeta, August 17, 1994). At the end of 1994, only 6 percent of Russians, according to a VTsIOM survey, strongly believed in the improvement of life in the country. According to another survey conducted by VTsIOM in 1995, 25 percent thought that “the country will continue to slide into the abyss,” and 12 percent expected “anarchy” (Moskovskie Novosti, January 15, 1995).

17 The survey question was termed as follows: “How sure are you in the future?” The given alternatives were: “Confident”, “Rather confident”, “Rather unconfident”, and “Completely unconfident.” In this case, the percentages above reflected the number of people who used the third and fourth alternatives.
times higher among Ukrainians (61 percent against 25 percent in Russia, 29 percent in Bulgaria and 26 percent in Lithuania). With the economic decline and the weakness of the state, the negative ecological tendencies increased significantly and the population's fear intensified. The perceived dangers from abroad and potential international disasters took fourth place on the list of fears.

The people of RUBL countries (with Lithuania as a partial exception) lived in politically unstable democracies and faced potential political disturbances. This instability engendered some moderate fear of political disasters (civil and ethnic wars, and the restoration of a dictatorship with mass repression). This type of fear held fifth place on the hierarchy. However, on the whole, the populations believed that democratic order would survive in their society, despite some potential dangers.

Cultural fears assumed the lowest rank at sixth place. This ranking reflected the relatively high level of tolerance in the RUBL countries regarding serious cultural changes in their societies. Most people were not at all concerned with the serious mutation in the relationship between people, in the changing role of the family, and the Westernization of their society.

The following are data on the average ranks of fears in the RUBL countries. The 41 specific fears were collapsed into 6 categories.

- Economic disasters ("Impoverishment," "Mass unemployment") - 2.7
- Criminalization ("Complete lawlessness," "Corruption of administrative structures") - 3.3
- Ecological disasters ("Natural disasters," "Depletion of natural resources," "Genetic degradation of the nation," "Mass epidemics") - 6.4
- International disasters ("Nuclear war," "Distribution of nuclear weapons," "Invasion of neighboring states") - 15.2
- Political disturbances ("Terrorism," "Civil and ethnic wars," "Dictatorship and mass repression") - 18.7
- Cultural fears ("Complete loss of traditions and culture," "Americanization of life," "Breakdown
of the family.” “Loss of feelings of collectivism, mutual aid, extreme ‘individualism’”) - 20.7

If we use the indicators of the intensity of individual fears in percentages in RUBL countries we find the following results:

- 50-80 percent feared economic disasters;
- 50-60 percent feared the criminalization of society;
- 30-50 percent feared ecological disasters;
- 20-40 percent feared international disasters;
- 20-30 percent feared political disturbances;
- 15-30 percent had cultural fears;

As is clear from the data, one half of the population in RUBL countries felt beset by dangers which threatened their physical survival. Overall, they saw the major dangers as economic regression and disorder in society.

**Ordinary people and the elite**

This project dealt mostly with ordinary people. However, a content analysis of 984 articles in the Russian media in 1996 and 1997 allowed us to get an idea about the views of the Russian elite. We found that the elite’s outlook for the future was even grimmer than that of the masses.¹⁹

Two thirds of all the articles (randomly selected in our survey) were quite gloomy. This level of despondency was almost the same as the proportion of ordinary Russians with bad feelings about the future. Of course, this coincidence was only moderately surprising if we take into account the interaction between media and the masses. The masses and the elite also placed different specific fears in very

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¹⁸ Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Izvestia, Komsomolskaia Pravda, Moskovskie Novosti, Literaturnaia Gazeta, Segodnia, Moskovskii Komsomolets and a few others represented the liberal ideology, while Zavtra and Sovietskaia Rossia represented the Communists and Nationalists.

¹⁹ Among the authors of these articles, 30 percent were scholars and writers, 32 percent were politicians, and 38 percent were journalists.
much the same ranking order in the hierarchy.

Both the authors of the articles and the Russian masses were very pessimistic about the future of the Russian economy (60 to 100 percent depending on the concrete issues). The gloomiest views concerned Russian agriculture (100 percent), then unemployment (93 percent) and industry (81 percent). The authors were also quite pessimistic about the dynamics of the standard of living (73 percent) and investment (57 percent).

The members of the elite were even more pessimistic than ordinary people about crime and corruption: 96 percent of the articles described the situation as almost hopeless and all authors who discussed organized crime did not believe in the success of campaigns against it.

Ecological fears were also more intense among the elite than among ordinary people. Elites were particularly despondent about the future health of the nation (100 percent). They were also quite pessimistic about relations with the USA (57 percent) and Muslim countries (62 percent), though much less with Europe (19 percent) and China (20 percent). The members of the elite had strong misgivings about the future of Russian culture (100 percent), education and morals (95 percent).

The elite was more pessimistic than the Russian people about the future of the Russian political system. Elites had doubts about the survival of democracy in the country (59 percent) and even the unity of the country (69 percent). Almost all elites were extremely gloomy about the future of the Russian army, its military might, discipline, and the standard of living of officers (97 percent).20

20 Another source of information about the view of the Russian elite (in this case seven prominent Russian scholars) was the seminar about the future of Russia. The seminar was organized by the author in June 1997 in Moscow. The scholars almost unanimously predicted a decline in the Russian economy, particularly in agriculture and the technological level of the civil industry. They also predicted a decline of the Russian army, a weakening of the safety of Russia in the international arena, and the degradation of the quality of the Russian population. They did not see any improvement in the ecological situation in the country. At the same time, they believed in some progress by 2002 in the standard of living.
Validity of the data

Besides our comparison with the views of the elite, the validity of our data can be substantiated in three ways, at least for Russia. First, almost all the data from our three Russian surveys (1996, 1998 and 1999) were quite close to each other, if we take into account the "real dynamics" of Russian public opinion. The number of Russians who were afraid of "Impoverishment" in 1996 was 67 percent; in 1998, 76 percent; and in 1999, 71 percent. A similar number of people were afraid of the "Corruption of administrative structures" (the numbers were 53 percent, 54 percent and 58 percent respectively); the numbers for those who feared the "Seizure of power by extremists or by Mafia" were 40 percent, 35 percent and 43 percent.

Second, we can compare the data of our project on Russia with the data produced by various Russian polling firms, even if the questions used by them were quite different from those used in this project. According to the survey on fears conducted in 1997 by the Foundation of Public Opinion (using closed questions), economic fears topped the list of the most serious concerns among Russians. The economic fears included the rise of prices (49 percent), famine (43 percent), and mass unemployment (24 percent). After economic woes, people feared political coups (13 percent), state emergencies (10 percent), and the attack of foreign countries (5 percent). Another prestigious polling firm, the All Russian Center of the Public opinion, found in the same year that 58 percent of Russians were worried about the rise of prices, 56 percent feared economic and social crises, the same number feared crimes, and 29 percent feared corruption.

Third, we can compare the Russian data about fears with the people's desire to emigrate from Russia and other former Soviet republics. It is necessary to take into account the specific composition of the emigrants, who were mostly Jews and feared antisemitism (a fear that was irrelevant to the absolute

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majority of the citizens of the former Soviet republics). The hierarchy of the motives for emigration was quite similar to the hierarchy of fears in RUBL countries. Indeed, immigrants from RUBL countries, who left for Israel in the 1990s (only 5 percent emigrated in the late 1980s), pointed to economic difficulties and political instability (each 28 percent) as the first two causes of their immigration. The third cause was antisemitism (25 percent), then personal safety (19 percent), and ecological problems (10 percent). The motivations of emigrants who came to the USA were quite close to those who left for Israel.

**Similarities and differences: the hierarchy and the intensity of fears**

As expected, the RUBL countries were very close to each other in their profiles of fears. The deviation from this pattern never was more than one rank. The following table indicates the rank in the hierarchy of 41 fears and the rank of the 6 categories of fears which comprised the 41 specific fears.

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23 Remarkably, 58 percent of the Israeli respondents declared that life in their new country (despite the numerous cases of violence surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict) was safer than in the former Soviet Union. Only 10 percent held the opposite view.

24 The emigrants ranked “social insecurity” first, next came “physical safety,” then “material conditions,” “political instability,” “ethnic discrimination,” and last “cultural factors.”
Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fears</th>
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<th>Ukraine</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
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<td>2.0/2</td>
<td>2.5/1</td>
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<td>Criminalization</td>
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<td>3.0/1</td>
<td>4.0/2</td>
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<td>18.1/5</td>
<td>19.8/5</td>
<td>21.3/4</td>
<td>31.2/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural fears</td>
<td>19.8/6</td>
<td>22.8/6</td>
<td>24.0/5</td>
<td>24.2/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The populations of the RUB1 countries placed their major fears (i.e. economic disasters, criminalization, ecological disasters, and cultural fears) in almost the same order on the hierarchy of fears. This shows that the departure from Communist regimes created a similar psychological climate in all post-Communist countries. The major differences in the structure of the fears were related to domestic and international political stability.

**Economic fears**

The fear of poverty was predominant in all countries included in the project. While in the past, people in these countries were fighting for the improvement of their quality of life, they were now haunted by the specter of poverty, unemployment and even hunger. The two major elements of economic disasters were the fears of “Impoverishment” and “Mass unemployment.” The first fear was significantly ahead of unemployment even if this fear was dominant in all countries (the average ranking of 1.2 compared with 3.3). The fear of impoverishment in these countries was as great as it was in America during the Great Depression.
Fear of chaos

The next area of high anxiety was the level of order in the countries. The populations perceived their societies as moving toward chaos. People saw great threats to their survival from three sources: “Complete lawlessness,” “Civil and ethnic wars” and “Seizure of power by extremists or by Mafia.”

Two-thirds of Russians and Ukrainians, more than a half of Bulgarians, and two-fifths of Lithuanians were afraid of being engulfed by the chaos spreading in their countries. Generally speaking, they saw two major causes of the coming anarchy: criminals and corrupt bureaucrats.

Ecological fears

While most of the fears in RUBL countries emerged after the collapse of the Communist regimes, ecological fears were much older, and they were quite strong in the Communist times despite the official propaganda which tried to sustain an optimistic mood in the country. It was not an accident that with the first signs of freedom the first unofficial organizations that mushroomed in the Soviet Union were ecological groups.

Most of the fears studied in this project were perceived by the people as generated from within their own country. However, there was a special category of fear that reflected the concern of people with dangers to all mankind. These fears could be tentatively labeled “semi-altruistic”. On the whole, about one-quarter of the population showed some serious apprehension about developments that could damage the habitat not only of the specific country, but all of mankind. The major concern of people in RUBL countries was “Destroying of forests on the planet” (the weighted average was 32 percent), and the fear of “Ozone holes appearing in the atmosphere” (second in the hierarchy at 26 percent). Fears of the “Accumulation of unused waste products” and the “Global rise in temperature” generated much less fear.
Rational basis of the fears

There have been hot debates about the origin of fears in society, in particular in post-Communist
countries. While some authors insist that the fears which people hold are mostly rational and reflect the
real dangers to their life, property and well-being, others suggest that most of these fears are irrational,
have no basis in reality, and are promoted by forces that gain from fear, such as the political opposition.
The opposition tries to use fear to seize power, discredit the current regime, or even destabilize society.
The media also uses fear as it hunts for news sensations, as do with intellectuals, who yearn for public
attention.

Any discussion about the rationality or irrationality of fears can be reduced to the assessment of
information that originated from different visions of the immediate or remote future. Theoretically, the
different types of information that can be used for predictions, and particularly information about

25 The character of this debate was close to the general discussion about rationality-irrationality in society. The
participants of this discussion included dozens of outstanding scholars such as Weber and Habermas, without
speaking of the authors who wrote on rational choice theory.

26 Relying on his many studies of the people’s perceptions of the quality of life, Ronald Inglehart and several other
scholars thought that the international differences in the people’s evaluations of their life were determined on the
whole by objective factors. The level of subjective well-being in authoritarian countries, for instance, was much
lower than in stable democratic nations (see Paul R. Abramson and Ronald Inglehart, Value Change in Global
Perspective. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995; See also Barbara Crossette, “Happiness, by the

27 Several Russian authors (including a number of Russian liberals) insisted that before the financial crisis in August
1998 fears in Russia were created by fear-mongers, and by the sensational media in the first place. Among the
Soviet authors who defended this thesis with particular vehemence was Boris Grushin, a prominent sociologist. He
elaborated on the theory of “non-grass-roots” causes of the catastrophic mindset of the people in Russia. He
described “the main characters generating and mulling the images of the impending disasters.” They were chief
officers of the executive branch (both central and regional), top politicians belonging to the opposition, mass media
“especially those which focus upon an all-out criticism of the country’s leadership,” and “God’s fools” from the
ranks of the intelligentsia and lower-intelligentsia (see his paper, “The Image of Impeding Catastrophe as a Weapon
in Political Struggle,” presented at the annual meeting of AAASS, November, 1995). Daniil Dondurei, a known
liberal intellectual, defended the same view on the eve of the financial and economic catastrophe of August 17,
idea about “concocted catastrophism” was Viacheslav Kostikov, Yeltsin’s former press secretary (see his article,
“Rekviem dla rodiny,” Nezavisimai Gazette. February 2, 1999). Among American authors, see Barry Glassner,

28 For a similar position, see the views espoused by Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda (Moral Panics, Oxford:
possible disasters or even catastrophes, have different levels of veracity and range from being based on “hard reality,” some real facts, events, or trends, to being based on complete falsities. The concept of information that is used in modern science (for instance, in rational choice theory, or game theory) supposes that information can be perfect or imperfect, correct or wrong, or in between.²⁹

The main thesis of this paper is that most of the fears in the RUBL countries were quite realistic and were activated by the “objective” processes in the countries. This was true for many fears in the past, and it is true today. The outbreak of World War I, which happened so suddenly in 1914, had a tremendous influence on the moods of Europeans and made their predictions about the next World War quite reasonable. The same can be said about people who have the experience of earthquakes, like residents of California, Japan, or Turkey. The dissemination of nuclear weapons in the world, nuclear accidents like Chernobyl, and the expansion of world terrorism can also be cited as bases for “rational fears.” At the same time, the single occurrence of a tragic event certainly does not indicate a total probability of recurrence; the future, of course, is shaped by numerous factors, including the efforts of people to evade the given catastrophe.³⁰


³⁰ It was unreasonable to denounce several fears in the past as irrational simply because the potential dangers which produced these fears did not materialize. A good example was the accusation of some American politicians and scholars that the defense and foreign policy of the American administrations in the 1970s and 1980s with its “billions and billions of dollars spent on national defense” (in Senator Bradley’s words) was based on false fears of the Soviet Union. They claimed that the USSR had been “a house of cards” or a “jerry-built structure” which “ultimately did not work” (See M. Malia, “A Fatal Logic,” The National Interest, No. 31 (Spring), pp. 80-90). In fact, in the early 1980s (the decade that would prove to be the empire’s last), the Soviet Union was both strong and sturdy, a superpower in the true sense of the word. Granted, the empire suffered from several chronic diseases, including an ailing economy, moral erosion, and a corrupt bureaucracy, but these diseases posed no immediate danger to the Soviet body politic. The Soviet Union with its nuclear weapons and aggressive geopolitical policy was extremely dangerous.

The same untenable accusations were lodged against those who talked about the fears of the disintegration of Russia in 1992, or a civil war in September–October 1993. In both cases the dangers were quite serious (see Boris Grushin’s paper, “The Image of Impeding Catastrophe as a Weapon in Political Struggle,” presented at the annual meeting of AAASS, November, 1995).
Economic developments

In all four countries, the GNP at the time of the surveys was about one half of the level before the collapse of the Communist regime. The smallest decline occurred in Lithuania where the GNP fell “only” one-third. The personal income of the population fell by 30 to 70 percent (in Ukraine in 1998, the real salary was 33 percent of the real salary in 1990; in Lithuania, the number was 37 percent).31

All RUBL countries were highly dependent on financial assistance from the West. In 1998, the Russian government used one third of its budget to pay interest on its loans from foreign and domestic creditors. According to official data, by the end of the century, this figure will reach almost 70 percent, if the debts are not restructured.12

The decline of leading demographic indicators was the major evidence for “the objectivity” of many fears in the RUBL countries. In all four countries, the death rate increased and the birth rate declined enormously in the last two decades. In 1980, in Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria the death rate was 11 per 1000; in Lithuania, it was 10 per 1000. Two decades later, the death rate grew to 15 per 1000 in Ukraine, 14 in Russia and Bulgaria, and 12 in Lithuania. The birth rate fell from 15 per 1000 in Ukraine and Bulgaria and 16 in Lithuania and Russia to 9 in Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Russia; the Lithuanian birth rate remained the same.33

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Weakening of the state and the spread of chaos

The level of public order in all RUBL countries declined enormously. Corruption and crime was several times higher than the level in Communist times. The behavior of the elite in all four countries contributed greatly to social erosion. The political and economic elite regarded their positions as temporary. For this reason, they were absorbed by short-term interests and using their positions in various illegal and semi-legal-ways to enrich their individual standing and style of life, whatever the consequences for the nation. Some elites used the West as a sort of safe haven, purchasing real-estate, establishing homes and transferring gigantic sums of money to foreign banks.

Members of the elite were locked in a vicious struggle for resources and political influence. The political immaturity of the elite manifested itself in the total disregard for the penury of the masses. Politicians and oligarchs were constantly demonstrating on television and in newspapers their high style of life and conspicuous consumption. However, even more significant was the deep contempt of the ruling elite for democratic procedures and institutions.

All levels of the bureaucracy and particularly law enforcement agencies were affected by crime and corruption. In 1998, international research centers such as Transparency International ranked Russia (76th out of 85), Ukraine (69th out of 85) and Bulgaria (66th out of 85) among the most corrupt countries in the world.14 The evaluation of this international organization coincided with the views of the people in these countries. Seventy-seven percent of the Russians believed that corruption was a problem that would remain for many years to come.15

Criminalization was another factor of social erosion in RUBL countries. In the last years, criminals penetrated the major branches of the economy as well as the political establishment, entering

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politics at both the regional and national levels. The shadow economy was an ever-present force in all RUBL countries. The shadow economy was said to produce around 25-50 percent of the GNP. The prevalence of crime and corruption in society blurred the borders between legal and illegal activity, established violence as the solution to everyday conflicts, and led the country closer to stateless anarchy.

Real Ecological Problems

The ecological fears of people in RUBL countries were quite well-grounded. The ecological situation began to deteriorate in Communist countries already in the 1960s and 1970s. The Chernobyl accident only confirmed the worst fears of people, particularly in Ukraine. The Ignalinsk nuclear power station in Lithuania as well as coastal devastation by oil companies were seen as permanent threats to the safety of the country.

Ethnic Conflicts

The rational basis for the fears of ethnic conflicts was illustrated well by the Bulgarian data, which showed the level of anxiety of the major ethnic groups in the country. While 54 percent of ethnic Bulgarians were fearful of the future, this number was 56 percent for Bulgarian Muslims and 64 percent for Bulgarian Gypsies. Another piece of evidence comes from the Russian Southwest and South, where

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36 Russian officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs publicly stated that there were members of criminal structures in the local and federal legislatures (See Rossiskii Telegraf, July 22, 1998). See also Dmitrii Oreshkin, “Vybor v Rossii Vo Vremena El Nino,” Rossiskii Telegraf, April 23, 1998.

37 In the opinion of Igor Sundiev, an expert on criminality in Russia, 90 percent of street trade in Moscow as well as 60 percent of "shuttle trade," which was based on individual merchants acquiring goods from neighboring countries and selling them in Russia, can be considered criminal or semi-criminal activity (Igor Sundiev, "Krov i Nerv Kriminalnogo Mira," Literaturnaua Gaceta, August 27, 1997).


40 The differences in the views of the people with different ethnic backgrounds were quite significant in each country included in our project. In Lithuania the views of ethnic Lithuanians and ethnic Russians differed on almost
ethnic relations grew very tense between Chechens and Russians. Russians in this region showed much more anxiety than their compatriots in other regions of the country. The difference was particularly great with respect to the people’s fear of civil and ethnic conflicts. In 1996, the number of people, who feared civil and ethnic conflicts was as follows: in Moscow, Petersburg and in the North of the country, 47 percent; in the Urals and Volga region, 41 percent; in Siberia and the Far East, 44 percent; and in the Southwest, 61 percent.41

Lack of a dominant ideology as a source of political instability

The ideological disarray in RUBL countries, particularly in Russia and Ukraine, was also a powerful cause of pessimism in the post-Communist world. Indeed, people in these countries were strongly ideologically polarized and no one ideology could claim high support.

Thirty-two percent of Russians and 28 percent of Ukrainians supported parties that “stood up for the ideas of socialism”; 31 and 34 percent respectively supported parties that “stood up for the course of market reforms and joining Russia to the world community”; the rest of the population “did not have any political preferences.”42 The polarization of views in Bulgaria was also quite high, though less than in both big countries: 21 percent favored “state property and a planned economy”; 25 percent wanted “private property and market economic reforms”; 43 percent of Bulgarians wanted a mixed economy.

every political and social issue. For instance, 36 percent of the Russians said in 1998 that they “would be better off if we were still part of the Soviet Union”; only 18 percent of the Lithuanians held the same view (see Rose R. Vilmorus, “Baltic Data House. Saar Poll. New Baltic Barometer III: A Survey Study.” Studies in Public Policy. Vol. 284. Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 1997, pp. 28-36).

41 People in the Russian Southwest and South lived in a tense ethnic climate and were strongly influenced by the Communists, particularly in Stavropol and Krasnodar. These people were also much more afraid of “complete lawlessness” (71 percent against 65 percent in the country as a whole) and the “corruption of administrative structures” (65 percent against 53 percent respectively). Their fear of “Zionist Jewish conspirators” was two times greater than in the country as a whole (11 percent against 6 percent).

42 According to data collected by VTsIOM in October 1999, 36 percent of Russians preferred the Western model (47 percent in April 1997); 25 percent preferred the socialist state with Communist ideology (21 percent in April 1997); 26 percent favored a Russia with its own special type of society (18 percent in April 1997). See Yuri Levada, “Opiat’ drugim putem,” Vremia MN, October 26, 1999.
People in these countries were also split on which political system they preferred. Russians, for instance, were divided almost equally among the supporters of the “presidential republic” (37 percent), a “parliamentary republic” (23 percent), and a “Soviet regime” (34); a significant number of people favored “monarchy” (7 percent). The differentiation was also quite high on this issue in Ukraine (the numbers were 17, 10, 21 and 2 percent respectively), and in Bulgaria (20, 41, 14 and 12 percent).

The ideological and political battles between political forces with mutually exclusive values became a serious source of tension and fear of political instability. The lack of a strong official ideology in post-Communist Russia was evidently one of the major causes of the spread of pessimism in the country and Russian disbelief in “the radiant future.”

“Negative events” and the dynamics of fear

The fact that fears were generated by concrete events demonstrated the rational character of fear. For instance, it was quite clear why Muscovites, who experienced two big terrorist attacks in September 1999 (two residential, multistory houses were blasted), were much more fearful of new attacks than the rest of the country, even if one attack occurred in the provinces (in the Rostov region). According to a VTsIOM survey in September 1999, 94 percent of Muscovites feared new attacks, as against 86 percent in the country as a whole.43

The fears engendered by a tragic event created powerful waves of fear, which gradually declined if the event did not reoccur. In the post-Communist period in Russia there were a number of events which provoked intense fear and alarm in society and then subsided. One example was the disintegration of Russia. In 1992-1993, with the growing decentralization of the Russian Federation, both the population and experts looked with growing fear at the prospect that the Russian Federation would follow the fate of the Soviet Union, which collapsed only one year before. Since the end of 1993, these

fears ebbed considerably as the Kremlin fought separatism. So, in January 1993, among the 400 Russian experts surveyed by Boris Grushin’s polling firm “Vox Populi,” 47 percent were confident that “Russia would break into independent states.” However, two years later, in February 1995, this number diminished to 18 percent.

In the same way, the probability of the civil war was considered quite high by 24 percent of the experts in a survey in November 1993, in the aftermath of Yeltsin’s bloody confrontation with the Russian parliament. When it became evident that the president was able to consolidate his power, the estimates of the experts changed, and, already in May 1994, only 9 percent of them continued to believe in the high probability of the war. 44

We should draw a distinction here between a tragic event that served as a signal, and one that directly influenced the lives of the people. For instance, the Chernobyl accident served as a signal to most Russians and the rest of the world. The impact on those who were close to the accident was, of course, much more serious and had a long-term effect. At the same time, some events directly affected the population evenly throughout the country. The financial crisis in Russia in August 1998 was a good example. The crisis significantly increased fears of impoverishment. Choosing only one danger from a list of 13 possible negative events, 10 percent of the Russians in 1996 and 9 percent in 1998 (before August) pointed to impoverishment. In 1999 this figure jumped to 21 percent. 45


45 According to VTsIOM data, 91 percent of the Russians assessed the economic situation in the country in September 1998 as “bad” or “very bad.” In July 1999, with some evident improvement of the economic situation in the country, 83 percent of the Russians still evaluated the status of the Russian economy in the same way (Monitoring, No. 4, 1999, p. 48).
Different intensities of fears in big and small countries

If the hierarchy of fears was more or less the same in RUBL countries, the relative numbers of people who were exposed to different types of fears oscillated significantly among countries. It is clear even from the survey data that the four countries make up two dyads: one which paired Russia and Ukraine (BC or big countries), and the second, Bulgaria and Lithuania (SC or small countries). The data show that while the hierarchy of fears was almost the same, the variation in the level of anxiety was much higher. In the big countries the intensity was much higher than in small countries in all cases (see Table 2, below).

Table 2. Intensity of fears (in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Big countries</th>
<th>Small countries</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic disasters</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminalization</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological disasters</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International disasters</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political disturbances</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural fears</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average percentage</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On average, the intensity of fear in BC was 1.5 times higher than in SC. The people of BC endured higher levels of fear with respect to possible disasters triggered by various political developments, both inside and outside the country. They also worried much more than the residents of SC about their environment and the dangers of technological accidents.

As a whole, the SC populations were less nervous than the BC populations. This was particularly true for Lithuanians. Lithuanian fears surpassed Bulgarian fears in only 13 categories.
Lithuanians were particularly fearful of nuclear war (32.9 percent against 19.5 percent) and the negative influence of immigrants (evidently Russians) on the life in the country (25.3 percent against 7.7 percent).

Differences among countries: “epidemiological analysis” and hypotheses

Let us try to explain the differences between two dyads: the BC and SC. The size of the given country, by itself, is not a major factor for determining social and political processes. Several small former Communist countries like Moldova, Georgia and Tadzhikistan are in a much worse situation than Russia and Ukraine. At the same time, the size of Russia and Ukraine is somewhat accountable for their post-Communist problems.

All other things being equal, small countries are easier to govern. Along with the size of the countries, there are other circumstances (such as social and ethnic conflicts and the corruption of elites) that explain why the fear of political instability is much higher in the BC than in the SC (32 percent against 20 percent). The difference is particularly high with respect to the dangers of “extremists” or “Mafia” coming to power in the country. While in Ukraine and Russia, about one half of the population (52 and 42 percent) experienced this fear, in Bulgaria and Lithuania the number of people with this fear was only about one quarter of the population (25 and 23 percent). “Terrorism” also roused much more fear in the BC than in the SC (54 percent in Ukraine and 37 in Russia, against 29 in Bulgaria and 31 in Lithuania). Only the fear of “dictatorship and mass repression” in Russia (19 percent) was as low as in Bulgaria (16 percent) and Lithuania (18 percent).

The huge military industry played the dominant economic role in both Soviet Ukraine and Russia. The demilitarization of the economy, and the conversion of the military industry were major obstacles to post-Soviet development. The inability of the governments in these countries to cope with the conversion explains why the official level of unemployment in the BC was much lower than in the SC (3.4 percent of labor force in Russia and 1.5 in Ukraine against 11.1 and 7.1 in Bulgaria and
Lithuania). The dyads also differed from each other in the duration of their Communist regimes. Russia and Ukraine lived under Communism for more than seven decades, while in the small countries the duration was four decades. This circumstance made it easier for Bulgaria and Lithuania to adjust to the new political and economic realities. In 1991, in the SC there were still people alive who remembered "the capitalist past" and the rules of the market economy. What is more, Soviet ideology was not able to conquer the minds of people of the SC as easily as it did in the BC. The struggle of the Communist authorities with the capitalist mind set in the SC and the battle over the so-called "petit bourgeois ideology" were fixtures in the life of these countries since the establishment of the Communist regimes.

It is remarkable that while the level of unemployment in the SC was much higher than in the BC, the fear of losing a job was higher in the BC (78 percent in Ukraine and 61 percent in Russia, against 51 percent in Bulgaria and 53 percent in Lithuania). For Bulgarians and Lithuanians the status of unemployed was considered somewhat more "normal" than in Russia and Ukraine.

The size of both nations, particularly Russia, was of great importance also because the BC were much more involved in international politics and made much larger military expenditure than the SC. Russia still saw itself as a great power and suspected that foreign enemies (the USA in the first place) harbored negative intentions against it. Ukraine still felt itself quite insecure facing Russia with its lingering imperial ambitions. With assumed foreign threats, military expenditures remained quite high. However, the populations in Lithuania and Bulgaria were quite satisfied with their international status and the majority did not feel any serious foreign dangers, though Lithuanians were somewhat more concerned about their neighbors (especially Russia) than Bulgarians.

Of great importance was the mood of the people in the SC, who felt closer to the West and particularly to Europe than the citizens of the BC. Anti-Western attitudes were more intense in the BC.

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It was noticeable that 54 percent of Bulgarians identified themselves with Europe and only 23 percent with Russia. The fear of Americanization was shared by 27 percent of Russians and 18 percent of Ukrainians, but only by 12 percent of Bulgarians and 8 percent of Lithuanians.

The differences between the two dyads with respect to the NATO expansion was quite complicated. Before the Balkan war, only Russians were hostile toward NATO; 66 percent of Russians in 1997 were categorically against the expansion of NATO to the East. For the most part, the other three countries were either neutral or favored NATO expansion. With the Balkan crisis in March-June 1999, the situation changed. Ukrainians joined Russians in their hostile stance toward NATO. Bulgarians were much closer to their Slav brothers than to Lithuanians, who supported the Western countries in this conflict.

In any case, the number of Ukrainians who worried about possible foreign attacks was 30 percent; among Russians this number declined to 21 percent; among Lithuanians, 16 percent; and among Bulgarians, only 12 percent.

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48 In 1997, 51 percent of the Ukrainians wanted to cooperate with NATO; 10 percent advocated membership in this organization. Forty percent of the Lithuanians and 52 percent of the Bulgarians were for “membership,” while 22 percent and 25 percent were against it (see The Kiev International Institute of Sociology, personal communication, October 25, 1999); Rose R. Vilmorus, “Baltic Data House, Saar Poll, New Baltic Barometer III: A Survey Study,” Studies in Public Policy, Vol. 284, Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 1997, pp. 28-36). After the start of the war in Yugoslavia in March 1999, the people were asked if Bulgaria should cut its relationship with NATO; 20 percent of the 1044 respondents said “Yes”; 46 percent said “No” (BBSS Gallup International, Political & Economic Index, May 1999).

49 In April 1999, according to the Fund of Public Opinion, 72 percent of the Russians described themselves as “hostile toward the USA.” The trend of anti-Americanism bridged the gaps between almost all Russians with their varying political views (The Fund of Public Opinion, Bulletin, April 21, 1999). Eighty one percent of the Ukrainians were also strongly against the NATO’s intervention in Kosovo (The Kiev International Institute of Sociology, personal communication, October 25, 1999).

50 In Lithuania, 26 percent of the population was directly on the side of NATO and the Albanians, 4 percent (probably mostly Russians) supported the Serbs, and 64 percent declared neutrality (The telephone survey conducted by the polling firm “Baltic Surveys,” Newspaper “Respublika,” April 29, 1999, pp. 6, 8).

51 According to an April survey, 73 percent of the Russians were sure that “Today there are foreign enemies who can launch a war against Russia” (The Fund of Public Opinion, Bulletin, April 14, 1999).
The SC populations were farther removed from geopolitics and, for this reason, they were less concerned about dangers related to nuclear weapons than in the BC (41 percent in Russia and 53 percent in Ukraine, against 28 percent in Lithuania and 32 percent in Bulgaria).

**Highest and lowest levels of anxiety: Ukraine and Lithuania**

In general, we discovered the highest level of anxiety in Ukraine. The percentage of Ukrainians who experienced a particular fear surpassed the percentages in other countries in 39 of the 41 categories. Ukrainians were most afraid of economic disasters and criminalization in their country: 87 percent of Ukrainians feared “impoverishment” (only 52 percent of Lithuanians had the same worries); and 79 percent feared “complete lawlessness” in the country (39 percent of Lithuanians feared the same).

A high level of irrationality was revealed in the anxieties of Ukrainians. While only 10 percent of Russians (a minimal level among the countries of the project) gave some thought to “the end of this world,” three times more Ukrainians (28 percent) feared this issue. Ukrainians also were ahead of all others in their fear of “cosmic catastrophes” and the eradication of life on earth (25.1 percent against 10.4 percent among Russians).

**Ukraine and Russia**

The comparison of Russia and Ukraine has special importance. Ukrainians were more fearful than Russians in almost all categories. It is to be expected that the fear of “chemical and radiation” poisoning in the country that experienced the Chernobyl tragedy ranked second place among all fears (after the fear of “impoverishment” and before the fear of “mass unemployment”), and that the number of Ukrainians who feared radiation was much higher than the number of Russians (81 percent against 53 percent). Other ecological fears were felt in Ukraine more than in Russia: 61 percent of Ukrainians expected “natural disasters” against 25 percent of Russians; 67 percent of the Ukrainians feared a “catastrophic crop failure” against 32 percent in Russia. Ukrainians were also more scared than Russians
about economic developments ("impoverishment" – 87 percent against 71 percent; "mass
unemployment" – 78 percent to 60 percent); and order in society ("complete lawlessness" – 79 percent to
62 percent; "growth and crimes" – 74 percent to 60 percent). The single exception was
"Americanization of life" which troubled Ukrainians less than Russians (18 percent against 27 percent).

**Historical memory**

To some degree, the objective roots of fear in RUBL countries were based on the rather tragic
history of the 20th century. This may be especially true among Russians and Ukrainians.\(^5^2\)

The war with Nazi Germany, the aftermath of the war, Stalin’s collectivization and mass
repressions, and perestroika in the 1990s, were among the most difficult events. In fact, during the 70
years of Soviet history only 20 years (mostly during Brezhnev’s period) were excluded by Russians and
Ukrainians from the list of “bad times” after the Bolshevik revolution. While both Russians and
Ukrainians ranked the war with Nazi Germany highest on the list of “bad times” (11 and 41 percent in an
open question), they differed about the ranking of the other four “bad times.” Ukrainians placed
“collectivization” second, followed by “famine” (27 percent), while Russians ranked “life in the 1990s”
second (11 percent).\(^5^3\)

The list of “bad times” for Bulgarians was very different than the list for Russians and
Ukrainians. They ranked the post-Communist period in first place (34 percent), WWI in second place (15

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\(^5^2\) At critical junctures of history, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russians (especially the
intelligentsia) resurrected images of the past. For instance, in the period mentioned above such seemingly remote
events as the feudal strife in Russia and the “Time of Troubles” (in the beginning of the 17th century) surfaced in the
public’s mind in connection with the possible disintegration of Russia. The Civil War period of 1918-1920 became
one of the most potent symbols evoked not only by the intelligentsia but also by the common people. The memory
of the famine in the early 1930s as well as Stalin’s mass repressions was very much alive in the people’s “virtual"
memory. It was never erased during the entire Soviet period of Russian history.

\(^5^3\) Among the most tragic events which occurred in Russia before 1917, the people named WWI at the top of the list
at 27 percent, then the Patriotic War with Napoleon in 1812 (11 percent), next the Russian-Japanese war in 1904-
1905 (9 percent), the Tartar-Mongolian yoke (9 percent), and finally the periods of epidemics and famines (6
percent).
percent), the Turkish yoke in third place (13 percent), and the Balkan wars in fourth (11 percent). Forty three percent of the Lithuanians, the biggest enemies of the Communist past, ranked in the first position “the resistance to Moscow, repressions and collectivization in the post-War period.” World War II was chosen as a “bad time” by 35 percent, and the fight for independence in 1990-1991, including the carnage in Vil’nis in 1991, was chosen by 27 percent.

It was interesting how the people of all four countries considered the post-Communist period in the hierarchy of “bad times.” Bulgarians ranked it in first place (34 percent), Russians put it in second place (11 percent), Ukrainians placed it in third (27 percent), and Lithuanians in fourth (19 percent).34

Irrational fears

While this paper suggests that social fears are mostly rational and reflect real threats, there are several fears which can be treated from a researcher’s point of view as essentially irrational, because there are no objective data supporting the existence of the dangers that seemingly fuel these fears. At the same time, the study of irrational fears conveys a great deal of information about the people who bear them. First of all, even if these fears have no objective basis they create discomfort in the human mind and sometimes generate powerful social processes. For instance, the irrational fears about ethnic minorities can foment the persecution of minorities. Second, the intensity of irrational fears indicates the degree of general anxiety, as well as the strength of obscurantism, in society.

The project touched on two types of irrational fear. The first had a purely apocalyptic character and is less influential in the political process; the second was directly related to the myths about various domestic and international enemies and influence developments in the country quite significantly. The

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34 The people of Bulgaria and to a lesser degree Lithuania regarded the post-Communist period as materially more difficult than in Communist times. This finding was quite interesting because Lithuanians and Bulgarians were generally much more hostile toward the Communist past than Russians and Ukrainians. When labeling the “bad times” in history, only 11 percent of Bulgarians and 19 percent of Lithuanians pointed to the Communist period; 34 percent of Bulgarians and 19 percent of Lithuanians pointed to the post Communist period.
first type of irrational fear is generally less dangerous for society than the second type. It is noticeable that the most dangerous of all irrational fears (fears that could lead to destructive actions) in all countries was at a relatively low level: Russia, 6 percent; Ukraine, 7 percent; Bulgaria, 10 percent; and Lithuania, 5 percent.

Among the fears in the first category are fear of "the end of this world" (17 percent on average in all RUBL countries), "annihilation of all people as a result of cosmic catastrophe (collision with asteroids, comets and others)" (17 percent) and the "seizure of power on the earth by aliens" (6 percent). The scope of the apocalyptic mood in Russia was also studied by the Fund of Public Opinion in special surveys. It found that by the end of 1998, 33 percent expected by 2000 "extraordinary events" and 42 percent assumed that people "expected the end of the world" by this date.

The leading fears in the second group were fears of "Masons and their attempt to seize the world" (8 percent) and "Zionist Jewish conspirators" (7 percent). Ukraine again topped the list of RUBL countries with irrational fears (considering all of the "irrational" fears together, the average was 16 percent); Russia had the minimal level of these fears (7 percent), with Bulgaria (12 percent) and Lithuania (9 percent) in the middle.

When compared to the rest of the world, the people of RUBL countries did not bear universal fears about the end of the world any more than in other countries, including the USA where apocalyptic fears have been propagated by various events.

In general, this and other projects showed that irrational fears did not play a prominent role in the

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55 In our project, "the end this world" was included in the roster of the 43 fears. The Public Opinion Fund made this a central issue in their surveys about the apocalyptic mood in the country. Placing more emphasis on this issue increased the number of people concerned with "the end of this world" as compared to our data.


life of post-Communist countries. However, they should hardly be ignored when imagining various
scenarios for the future. These fears were quite widespread and were used by extremist groups in times
of turmoil. This was particularly true for fears with ethnic colors, which inspired hatred of Jews and
other minorities.

Passivity and adaptation

Society's reaction to individual fears as well as to general anxiety varied from country to
country, and from one period to another. Overall, in our study, people of RUBL countries held rather
fatalistic attitudes toward imminent dangers and were sure that they could do nothing to prevent them.

The level of passivity was particularly high in the BC. When asked in a survey “What actions can you
take to protect yourself against crimes?” 36 percent of the Russians said “nothing,” against 18 percent of
Bulgarians. The percentage of Russians who wanted to fight pollution was even lower: only 39 percent
of the Russians pledged to do something, against 51 percent in Bulgaria.

The differences between the BC and the SC were based on the different lengths of their
Communist experience as well as the level of criminality and the alienation of people from the state.58

The estrangement people from each other (which was stronger in the BC than the SC) was also of great
importance.59 As our longitudinal study in Russia showed, the passivity and fatalism of the Russians
clearly increased over the years. The number of the Russians who declared that they would do nothing to
protect themselves against crimes increased from 29 percent in 1996 to 36 percent in 1999. The number
of those who proclaimed their readiness to take a personal part in the fight against pollution decreased


58 After being asked if the leaders of the countries shared the same anxieties as ordinary people, only 23 percent of
the Russians and 30 percent of Ukrainians said “Yes”; 63 percent of Lithuanians and 41 percent of Bulgarians
responded “Yes.”

59 Personal communication as a source of information about fears was mentioned by only 5 percent of the Russians
and 8 percent of the Ukrainians against 11 percent in Lithuania and 31 percent in Bulgaria.
from 43 to 39 percent.60

Looking to the future with resignation, most people, however, tried to adjust to the situation that had inspired so many fears. This adjustment took two forms: material and psychological. Trying to adjust to the existing life and overcome their fears, people engaged in both socially positive and socially negative actions. The drastic decline of the standard of living after 1991 and the spread of rumors about famine pushed Russians and Ukrainians and, to lesser degree, Bulgarians and Lithuanians to make a positive material adjustment by immensely expanding their private agricultural plots, a development which clearly prevented the catastrophic fear from materializing.61 To make up for their small incomes and the periodic nonpayment of their salaries, many Russians (20 percent) held two or even three jobs simultaneously.62 While remaining skeptical about the possibility of major collective action to avert dangers, people in post-Communist countries intensified mutual support in small groups (i.e., family, relatives and friends).63

Among the negative material adjustments were the criminal activities that drew in millions of Russians, in particular young people who could not find a decent place in society for themselves. Some people completely resigned from active life and the number of homeless people in Russia rose significantly.64

60 According to VTsIOM data, in the last five years, despite the immense material tribulations of the Russian people, no more than 25-30 percent expressed even verbally their willingness to participate in any action of protest against authorities or business (VTsIOM, Monitoring Obshchestvennogo Mnenia, No. 4, 1999, p. 55).

61 Russia was a good example. Private gardens and small farms were another important factor of Russian survival. Two-thirds of the population supported themselves with these types of gardens, reminding one of the role of subsistence agriculture in the pre-industrial era. Private plots accounted for 90 percent of the potatoes, 77 percent of other vegetables, 52 percent of the meat and poultry, and 45 percent of the milk produced in Russia. In 1996, on the whole, private plots produced 46 percent of the agricultural products, against 26 percent in 1990, while private farmers accounted for only 2 percent of the production (Goskomstat, 1997, p. 179-380).


64 Evgenii Primakov asserted in October 1999 that criminals controlled 40 percent of the economy (see his speech at the round table for the fight against corruption in Russia, Federal New Service, October 14, 1999).
Of no less importance was the adaptation to fear by psychological adjustment. Many people tended to adjust to existing dangers psychologically by “normalizing” life in their minds. We observed this process in Russia from 1995 to 1999.66 Though life in Russia had not improved at all and even became worse in some ways, escapism accounted for a certain (but certainly not radical) decline in some fears, especially when the situation was not critical.

For instance, the fear of crime in Russia changed and gradually diminished over time. In 1996, 66 percent of Russians feared crime on the streets; in 1998, 61 percent felt this fear, and the number dropped a further one percent in 1999. This decline came about because the people adapted to the existing level of street crimes in society. We observed the same dynamic with regard to the fear of civil war and ethnic conflicts after the end of the first Chechen war; the numbers were 46 percent, 33 percent and 29 percent. The situation changed drastically after the terrorist acts in Moscow in September 1999 and in the beginning of the second Chechen war. Russians also adapted to the nature of the market economy with its unemployment. In 1996, 61 percent of the people talked about their fears of losing their job; in 1998, the number increased to 69 percent. Then, in 1999, economic conditions declined dramatically with the August financial crisis and the number of people who lost their jobs increased. However, in the same year, the number of people who feared unemployment dropped from 69 percent back to 61 percent.67

Adapting to a harsh life, people made a distinction between the future for themselves and the

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65 A significant number of Russians applied the term “normal” to various negative developments in the country. By doing so, they implied that these events were unavoidable and must be taken for granted as a sort of natural disaster. Instead of fighting such vagaries of life, they adjusted to what can not be avoided. Among other things, this circumstance reflected the Russians’ recognition that no one in their country has a good solution to its numerous woes. Many people thought that it would be better not to change things.


67 The level of Russian fear of corruption actually increased because of the growing demoralization of the Russian political and business classes in the last years of the 1990s: 53 percent in 1996, 54 percent in 1998, and 58 percent in 1999.35
future of society. It was remarkable that in some individual cases, people "normalized" their own life and future with greater ease than that of society as a whole, and in some cases the opposite occurred. In Stalin's time, people were able to combine great optimism for the future of the nation with pessimistic feelings about their personal future. In post-Communist Russia the opposite was typical. There was a less gloomy vision of the individual's fate and a more pessimistic outlook on the future of the nation. As VTsIOM data showed, 31 percent of the Russians assessed their individual material life in 1999 as "average" or "good and very good": only 7 percent said the same about the economic situation in the country as a whole.68

Escapism was another psychological mechanism that diminished anxiety. Religion probably played some role in coping with fears: 60 percent of Russians, 80 percent of Lithuanians and 70 percent of Bulgarians declared themselves believers. Of religious people, one half of the Russians, two thirds of the Bulgarians and one third of the Lithuanians asserted that faith helped them overcome fears.

Among other forms of escapism were suicide, emigration, and alcohol. In coping with fears, alcohol played an extremely important role in the life of all RUBL countries and particularly in Russia and Ukraine. The consumption of alcohol in Russia increased in the 1990s enormously against the decline of consumption in general.70


70 The consumption of alcohol per head increased in Russia from 5.56 liters in 1990 to 7.51 liters in 1997. The general consumption of vodka and other hard liquors increased in the same period by 1.6 times (Goskomstat, Rossiiskii Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik, 1998. Moscow: Goskomstat, 1998, p. 594).
Conclusion: consequences

Fear plays an ambiguous role in society. On one side, it warns people about dangers and mobilizes people to avert them. On the other side, fear, even when rational, can have negative “side effects” on political and social process. Fear engenders feelings of uncertainty in society that sometimes have nefarious effects. Fear can produce exactly those events which people are afraid of, the so-called self-fulfillment prophesy. Fear of criminals, for instance, often provokes people to perform criminal acts, while the fear of war can trigger real war.

In post-Communist countries, particularly in Russia and Ukraine, fears of the future created a climate of uncertainty which at least partially explained why people in these countries, and bureaucrats in the first place, considered their positions to be temporary. And this sense of uncertainty pushed them toward corruption and other criminal acts and undermined the democratic process.

Even more dangerous, the spread of fear opened the gate for populists and potential dictators. Indeed, the installation of a dictatorship has almost always been preceded by the spread of catastrophism, sometimes justified, sometimes exaggerated, in the public mind. Hitler’s victory in 1933 was possible not only because of the bad economic conditions in Germany, but also because the Nazis were able to foment feelings of catastrophism in the country. The same was true for the Bolsheviks in 1917. One of Lenin’s best known articles on the eve of the October coup was entitled “The imminent catastrophe and how to fight it.”

The dissemination of fear played an essential role in Russian and Ukrainian politics from 1991 to

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72 A good example can be borrowed from the Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages, at the turn of the millennium, people in Western Europe waited for the end of the world (see among recent books on this issue, Krishnan Kumar “Apocalypse, Millennium and Utopia today.” in Malcolm Bull (ed.). *Apocalypse Theory, and the Ends of the World.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, pp.200-224; Damian Thompson, *The End of Time.* London: University Press of New England, 1996). Russians did the same, but expected this event in 1492, according to the Julian calendar. Many rich people handed their land and other wealth to the church with the hope of obtaining salvation in another world (see about the apocalyptic vision in Russia before 1492 in Mark Glukhovskii, “Apokalipsis vchera segona i zavtra.”

37
1999. A major feature of the Russian and Ukrainian Communist parties was their focus on various fears (from Western conspiracies to future global ecological catastrophes and mortal conflicts between “the North” and “the South” for resources). Russian and Ukrainian liberals were also active in producing fear. The entire presidential campaign of President Boris Yeltsin in the summer of 1996 was based on the suggestion that a Communist victory would lead the country toward catastrophe.73 The champion of apocalyptic prognoses for Russia, the USA and the world was the extremist Russian weekly Zavtra.74 In contemporary Russia and, to some degree also in Ukraine, the spread of fears stimulated the move toward the curtailment of democracy and even toward dictatorship.

In economic life, the fear of various negative developments like high inflation and economic depression enormously affected consumer and investment behavior. In Russia, economic fears, which were almost always justified, hurt the economic situation even more because people refused to invest their money in the Russian economy. Most people kept their money at home in hard currency.75 Those who could potentially make the best living and the biggest investments (professionals and talented young people) emigrated.

Even when fear did not produce negative effects in politics and the economy, it did indeed diminish the quality of life of the individual and society. To paraphrase the 19th-century German poet Heinrich Heine, “Even imaginary fears are fears.”

In the near future, various fears will likely continue to haunt the majority of the population in RUBL countries, and particularly in Russia and Ukraine. The presence of fear in the mind of the people

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74 See, for instance, typical articles such as “On the eve of the demise of mankind” (Nakanune gibeli chelovechestva), by Alexander Rudenko and Denis Tukmakov (Zavtra, No. 30, 1998, p. 4), and “Crusade against us” (“Krestovyi pokhod protiv nas”) by Alexander Dugin (Zavtra, No. 42, 1997).

75 In March 1999, people bought hard currency 4 times more than depositing their savings in banks or stock
will continue to signal not only the low quality of the life for the majority of the population, and not only the high instability in the economy and in social and political life, but also the direct threat to democratic institutions in these countries. By monitoring the dynamics of fears, we are able to have some insight in the direction of the historical processes for these as well as other countries in the world.

**Table 3. The individual fears**

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<tr>
<td>1. Decline of general level of life, impoverishment</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>51.8</td>
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<td>2. Complete lawlessness</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>39.4</td>
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<td>3. Mass unemployment</td>
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<td>61.4</td>
<td>78.4</td>
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<td>4. Criminalization of society</td>
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<td>65.4</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>58.6</td>
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<td>5. Corruption of administrative structures</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chemical and radiation poisoning in water, air, food (Toxication)</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>36.3</td>
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<td>7. Mass epidemics, threat of AIDS, and other lethal diseases</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>49.8</td>
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<td>8. Seizure of power by extremists, or by mafia</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>25.6</td>
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<td>9. Distribution of nuclear weapons</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>31.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Terrorism</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>28.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Genetic degeneration of the nation</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>27.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Destroying of forests on the planet</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>53.4</td>
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<td>13. Catastrophic crop failure</td>
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<td>36.8</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>40.4</td>
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<td>14. Civil and Ethnic wars</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
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<td>15. Break of the family</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
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<td>16. Americanization of life</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Complete loss of national traditions and culture</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>27.8</td>
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<td>18. Danger of extermination of different kinds of animals</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>28.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Natural disasters</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>26.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Decline of birth</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
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<td>(depopulation)</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
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<td>20b. Depletion of natural resources</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>26.0</td>
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<td>21. Accumulation of unused waste products</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Invasion of neighbouring states</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>16.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Non-belief in God, rude materialism</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
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<td>24. Dictatorship and mass repression</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
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<td>25. Ozone holes appearing in the atmosphere</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
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<td>26. The spread of neo-Nazism and similar forces</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<td>27. Genocide (i.e. mass repression of people by their ethnic and national identity)</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
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<td>28. Loss of feeling of collectivism, mutual aid</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<td>29. Global rise temperature</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>16.6</td>
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<td>30. Annihilation of all people as a result of cosmic catastrophe (collision with asteroids, comets and others)</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<td>31. Prevalence of immigrants, who do not, or can not assimilate to our culture, language, and style of life</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. The end of this world</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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<td>33. Seizure power by radical communists</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
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<td>34. Disappearance of &quot;white race&quot; as a result of high birth of people with dark skin</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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<td>36. Understanding the meaningless of life and inevitability of death</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>26.6</td>
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<td>37. Invasion of Islam</td>
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<td>12.0</td>
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<td>38. Zionist Jewish conspirators</td>
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<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>39. Masons and their attempt to seize the world</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
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<td>40. Seizure of power on earth by aliens</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
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<td>41. Overpopulation</td>
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<td>6.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<td>42. Lithuania's incorporation into Russia</td>
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<td>43. Activity of the KGB</td>
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<td>13.1</td>
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