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NATIONALISM IN EDUCATION:
A COMPARATIVE VIEW

by

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WHAT IS NATIONALISM?

The term "nation" means a group of people of the same historical origin. Clearly, there are strong ties between the concept of a "nation" and the word "nationalism".

Nationalism can be interpreted in different ways. It means the search for national identity, no matter wether this identity is expressed in historical, religious, political etc. terms. Nationalism here is meant as a philosophy or part of an ideology. Nationalism can also mean the fight for autonomy, suvereignity, liberty, independence etc. of the nation. In this sense, nationalism is more a political than a philosophical term. Nationalism can also be a slogan which mobilize groups of people for acting (working etc) for its political, economic, societal, cultural future (eg. "nation-building"). Here, nationalism serves as guidelines for policy making decisions.

In order to elaborate a more or less acceptable definition for nationalism, it is useful to start with negative definitions. Since other concepts seem to cover, at least partly, the "nationalism" concept I will try to differentiate them from what I meant about nationalism before. The word "patriotism" e.g. is clearly the commitment to the mother-land, with a positive value connotation. On the other hand, "chauvinism" means the commitment to the land and its inhabitants, usually with a negative value connotation. "Ethnocentrism" as it is used in the sociopsychological literature is the concern about one's own people with a miscellaneous (partly positive) value connotation. All those positive or negative connotations come from the wider or narrower concentration with which an individual or his/her group is dependent on the nation). From this on, "racism" means a negative behavior toward other ethnic groups (called "races").

To come up with a positive definition, I will use "nationalism" throughout in my paper as someone's ultimate concern toward his/her nation.1 In other words, I propose more a descriptive than a normative definition. Also, it is a definition which brings nationalism close to what we call religious dependence, although the object of the ultimate concern here is not God (as it used to be in the religious languages). More, the concept "nation" serves as a symbol of something which transcends the individual and /or his (her) group); something that is worth of being ultimately concerned for.

Therefore, as any other ultimate concern, nationalism has ideological as well as religious components. "Ideological" refers here to the rationally defined, described, and analyzed elements of that ultimate concern, e.g. the history of the nation, the origin of it, the great heros in the course of its development and the same. While "religious" means the existential side of that commitment; that is, that nationalism,

like any other ultimate concern is a central act of the whole personality. Although it is both an interesting and an important aspect, I will avoid it in the course of my further analysis.

In the following, therefore, I focus to nationalism as it functions as a political ideology. But here again, we need a short analysis. The word "political" points to the fact that nationalism is not only a philosophy but also an ideology of power and governing. Nationalism is the ideology of one or more political groups. If the groups are not in power at present, nationalism legitimizes their demands for power. If they are in power already, nationalism is their ideology that proves their right for that power. Unlike ethnocentrism etc., nationalism is never the ideology of the mass. Even if the people identified with the "nation" concept is in majority within its borders, it may be in a challenging situation from outside. In other words, nationalism has always an apologetical connotation, a connotation of being "under siege".

So far, I have referred to the function of nationalism. In analyzing its content, it is easy to describe some of its common constituencies. In other words it seems that nationalism as a political ideology has some features that characterize it in a cross-cultural sense, according to comparative political studies.

One of the characteristic elements is the notion about the common historical origin of the members that form out the "nation". This "common roots" distinguish them from the rest of the population. Prior to elements like race, culture, language, religion, it is the common history and the historical origin that unites them.

Second, there is the notion of a native land from where the nation has come. Usually, it can also described in geographical terms as an existing place that is, however, far from the nation's present state borders. It is the nation's lost property for which every member has to work and fight.

Third, there is almost always a short but dramatic period of the nation's own history, I could only say the turning point of the drama that has formed out the nation from the mass of other peoples. This short and dramatic period - a catastrophe, a turning point, the peek of the events sheds light on the whole chain of events, explains the present, and open up the future. In other words, it gives meaning to the history of the nations. Therefore, the whole history of the nation is referring to a transcendent meaning, the main idea, a message which has to be forwarded be the nation as its vocation on Earth.

Fourth, characteristic to every nationalism is a group of leading figures of the nation's history. They are the predecessors, the founding fathers (or mothers). Also, they represent the nation's best characteristics and therefore, they personally held the main idea or the message that has to be forwarded during the course of the nation's own history.

Fifth, there are a series of festivities and a set of symbols (the shield, the flag, the anthem etc.). They remind the members of the nation to their common origins. Unlike the signs these festivities and remnants are not only refer to something, but they also contribute to the creation of the common history. Namely, part of the history of the nation, and sometimes the important chapters of it, is the turning point when the nation received the crone, the sword, the shield etc. In other words, the symbols functions both as proves of the common history and as remembrance on it.

So far, I tried to clear up the key concepts of nationalism. In the end of this short introduction, I turn to the means and tools by which nationalism (as a political ideology) influences the society, that is, by which nationalism is functioning as a political ideology. Of course I cannot analyze all the means and tools by which political ideologies are influencing us in our modern time. Throughout in my present paper, I will concentrate on one of the still most important means, that is, education.

Education - formal and informal - contributes to the survival and the upheaval of nationalism by teaching the ideological elements of nationalism to the new generation. From this point, national history is the core. Other elements of the ideology are bound to it. There are so many talks today about overcoming nationalism by education. From the analysis of the key concepts, it becomes clear that education alone, cannot overcome nationalism. What education can do is to shift from nationalism as an outdated political ideology into ideologies that seem to be more up-to-date.

The correct question is, therefore, not the one about how to overcome nationalism by education. The correct question to raise is how to overcome nationalism in favour of an other, more modern, more influencing political (or other) ideology that will lead us out of our present and fragmented political situation. In answering the educational part of this question, we can refer to some important points in the future education. Less emphasis on national heritages, more stress on new technical civilization might contribute to overcome nationalism. The question, however, exists, whether nationalism should be overcome at all; and if so, for what.

NATIONALISM VS SOCIALISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Conservatism and neo-conservatism. Instead of using it as a value judgement, I will use "conservatism" as a descriptive term. It will refer to a set of interrelated ideas, values, and commitments; sometimes uncertainly defined, and with changing functions. Political conservatism deeply varies in its function and its rhetorics in different societies and historical situations. Yet, it can be recognized with a

considerable certainty by its patriotic-nationalistic commitment, elitism, and traditional-religious values.

The interrelated ideas, values and commitments appear as a political paradigm in which the elites express their interests and explain their actions. The term "neo-conservatism" will be used as the present version of conservatism. It is related to economic ideas like free enterprise, market economy, and the restricted role of the state.

Eastern Europe. Under this term I will deal with or refer to the following countries: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary; Yugoslavia, Rumania, Albania (the Balkan countries); Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (the Baltic states). I sometimes refer to individual Yugoslavian republics or parts of Czechoslovakia and Rumania that belonged to other countries in the same region before World War II.

Although supported by political geography,2 this definition of Eastern Europe is different from the one commonly used by other comparativists, and is in need of further explanation.3 All of the Soviet Union is not in Eastern Europe; much of it is clearly in Asia. The USSR consists of various states, nations, and republics which have diverse historical traditions and political cultures.4 The Baltic countries, however, share historical traditions and political culture with other countries from Eastern Europe, especially with Poland.5 The difference between them and the Ukraine and Belorussia is the simple fact that the latter were never independent nations and have been central to the Russian state for centuries.

I have omitted the German Democratic Republic from my analysis. Although its economic and political system has developed under Soviet influence during the last thirty years, its institutions and traditions have different roots.

The debates reviewed in this paper assume an initial knowledge of the history and the education of Eastern Europe6, since I cannot hope to provide such a summary here.7 I will begin with a short overview of the region's history and then turn to the situation in the 1980s and 1990s.

Liberals and populists. There are various explanations on the unexpected and rapid collapse of the former regimes in Eastern Europe.8 In the present study I will consider these changes as struggles for redistributing the economic and political powers among the middle class (the intellectuals).

It is critical to understand the middle classes of the East European societies.9 They are not private entrepreneurs or small property holders, but state employees. They adopted the culture and the mentality of the state employee. And since bureaucrats are the state employees with the longest tradition, the state bureaucrat became the role model of the middle class in Eastern Europe. They got the political legitimation from the Party; and by this way the party could monopolize the political, economic, and cultural leaderships. The professional legitimacy of the middle class came from

the educational system, which, therefore, played an unusually important role in the formation of the middle class. It is the reason for referring to the middle class peoples of Eastern Europe as the intellectuals.

In countries where the Communist party shared their powers with various groups of the intellectuals the transition from the one party system to democracy has been more or less peaceful (Hungary,10 Czechoslovakia,Poland 11). In other countries with strong party power monopoly the transition may even cause armed uprisings or military coups (Rumania12 Yugoslavia, Albania).

Of course the intellectuals were not alone in their fight for the power. They got heavy grassroots supports in the forms of street demonstrations or even armed unrests. Yet, the intellectuals formulated the demands and set the targets for which demonstrators started to fight. In other words, they challenged the one-party system in Eastern Europe. The late 1980s were a new type of revolutionary period in the European history when neither the peasantry of the 15-16th centuries nor the bourgeoisie of the 17-18th centuries, nor the proletariat of the 18-19th centuries fought for their liberty, independence and well-being but the professionals of the 20th century for freedom and political power.

The term "liberals" refers to urban intellectuals. They used to be called the "dissidents", like the movement of the Romanian Libera in Roumania or the Free Democrats in Hungary13. As the history and the leading figures of the New School of Social Sciences show, the "dissidents" started by criticizing "existing socialism" in the name of authentic Marxism through their rediscovery of the young Marx. In Eastern Europe today, they promote the neo-liberal initiatives in the economy, the idea of the constitution state in politics and the protection of human rights in the society. As an opposition, they are well prepared advocates of the transition into a market economy and parliamentary democracy; and as members of the governments they might become outstanding advisors. As a political force, they are decisive and have good mass communication skills. As parties, however, they have only weaker support, and mostly from the urban, educated voters.

"Populists", like the Democratic Forum in Hungary, the Sajudis in Lithuania, the Vatra Romaneasca in Roumania represent groups of the middle class, mostly from agricultural backgrounds, and stronger country ties. They, therefore, appeal easily to religious sentiments and to nationalism as their political ideology. Nationalism, the ideology of national freedom and sovereignty, even though poisoned by the fascist regimes of the 1930s and 1940s, remains strong.14 Appealing to the peoples' original heritages, stressing the nation's own values and restoring traditional institutions like the church or the school - such political rhetoric from time to time provide the populists with mass support even if they do not have elaborated political agendas.

Education as a political arena. For more than four decades, political parties in the usual sense of the word did not exist in Eastern Europe. Instead, other institutions

function as places for negotiations, confrontations, and compromises among opposite forces. Education serves as one of these semi-political arenas.

Since the new political forces (the opposition) have not clarified their educational agendas, it is sometimes hard to differentiate among them.15 They are critical of the former regimes but their alternatives are confused. Sometimes it seems as if neither of them would really know what they are doing. Yet, it is clear that issues like the importance of national culture, ideological housecleaning, the education of the national minorities,16 the reestablishing of traditional schools, or the possible role of the churches come from the populists. Other proposals like privatization, the citizens' rights within the educational systems or the concern about vocational education and the new stress on foreign language teaching other than Russian are characteristic of the liberals.

In this paper I present a brief overview of some of the burning educational issues as they are reflected in the political efforts of the new forces. I shall focus on three debates, namely nationalization of the curricula; revival of the traditional educational institutions; and privatization in the educational system.

THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE CURRICULA

The most burning educational debate is about an "ideological housecleaning".17 It has become urgent for every political forces to distance themselves from an orthodox ideology that has been taught in public schools and higher education. The ongoing changes lead to a sudden revision of textbooks and pedagogical doctrines.

The content of ideological teaching varied in the different school systems of the Eastern European nations. Without question, the Polish system was the most liberal; there even Christian values had been extensively taught. Hungary also has adopted a kind of liberalism after 1956, and with it, the teaching of the Bible, as part of the world literature program of its secondary schools, as well as the study of the Christian church history incorporated into the world history curriculum. Other systems provided much tougher indoctrination. Marxist-Leninist ideology were independent subject matters of the Czechoslovakian or the Albanian curricula.18 The Yugoslavian syllabi, which varied from republic to republic, were and still are less liberal than expected; while the Roumanian regime developed its own version of national Marxism as its official ideology.

The toughness of the indoctrination depended upon the positions of the ruling parties. Indoctrination went on smoother and in more sophisticated ways in countries where the political leadership felt its position to be safe, as in Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, or in Croatia- and Slovenia- Yugoslavia. In those countries the

Communist parties have gained a certain respect from the intellectuals, especially from teachers. Indoctrination was tougher, however, in countries such as Czechoslovakia after 1968, where party leaderships could not establish solid grass-roots support or could gain credence only envisioning dangerous challenges from outside, such as the fall of the federation for the Yugoslavians, a Soviet invasion for the Poles, or loss of territories for the Roumanians.

These examples show also that ideological teaching had an additional function. It was necessary in order to maintain the (limited) national sovereignty of the ruling parties in the region. In the Brezhnev era, for example, the maintenance of ideological teaching could be offered as proof of loyalty to the preservation of Soviet hegemony in the region. At the same time, by emphasizing the "equality of the parties and the importance of "national characteristics," the ideological instruction provided the national parties with a vocabulary for conceptualizing their resistance against outside - even Soviet - influences.[19] Roumania, for example, maintained its unified territories in ideological terms, and Yugoslavian leaders always stressed the historical necessity of its federation in ideological expressions. The Polish leadership for almost a decade opposed Soviet intervention partly by showing ideological loyalty. Marxism is the political terminology by which the Communist parties of the Baltic states expressed their independence from the Soviet party.

The abolition of the ideology from the central syllabi is one of the main requirements of the new political forces. It is so important that they combine it with the abolition of the party monopoly from their constitutions as happened, for example, in Czechoslovakia in November 1989. Yet, the abolition of the state ideology revitalizes alternative values.

Religion represents one of the options, and, in fact there are some who would require it as part of the school syllabi. Religion has lost its political and social influence for a long time in Europe.[20] Yet there are considerable religious revivals throughout the region, and partly among the youth.[21] Oppositions rightly expect a growing religious influence in the state education.[22]

Nationalism is another alternative. Nationalism has a long (although miscellaneous) history in the region since the creation of the first nation states in Europe. Nationalist values contribute to the ideological indoctrinations of the youth in Roumania,[23] Poland, and in some Yugoslavian republics.[24] Hence the emphatic and enthusiastic turn to the revision of history textbooks, the heavy demand on mother tongue and the national literature, the new interest toward geography, environment problems[25], and the deep sense for the traditional symbols.

One reflection of these demands is the movement to give higher priority to "national subjects" in the central syllabi. Analyses of the central syllabi show the dominance of science as opposed to the social sciences, civics, and humanities. 47-61% of the content of the syllabi of the general schools in Hungary, or Poland is covered by

scientific subjects.26 The new political forces, mainly the populists, urge an increase in the proportion of "national studies" which would automatically mean the reduction of science.

The present textbooks of history and its related fields are under siege. In the Baltic countries, the major concern is the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 that gave legality to the Soviet invasion of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia.26   The Polish debates have heated up around the fate of the Polish revolts and the Warsaw uprising during World War II.27 The Czechs and the Hungarians demand authentic interpretations of their liberation movements and their Soviet invasions.28 The role of Tito and the present power balance is challenged everywhere in Yugoslavia.29 It seems that history studies would turn back to the 1940s. Lithuanians have tried to turn back to history textbooks published before 1941; the new private publishers advertise the historical maps of the country in Hungary; the new political and intellectual leadership revive issues of the old Kingdom and Great Roumania (containing Moldavia and Bessarabia) in the mass media.

The dilemma, however, is not so much the interpretation of the past as the interpretation of the present and moreover the future. The new political forces agree in rejecting the former doctrine of "internationalism" because it covered Russification and Soviet influence. But they can hardly agree upon future steps. The liberals propose economic recovery and the political turn-back to Europe with the hope that - in the long run - economic expansion and a free market will eliminate current national borders. Populists, however, insist upon independence and sovereignty which, in turn, assume ultimate commitment to one's own nation and homeland. Populist movements all over the region seem to be influential enough to penetrate the present subject matter debates and to initiate a kind of 19th century turn to national studies within the foreseeable future.

The urgent necessity for textbook and curriculum revision reveals an ideological vacuum. The potential election winners do not want to accept or suggest any official ideologies to fulfill the role of the recent state ideology.30 They are keen to avoid any notions of ideological monopoly. In this ideological vacuum, though, the civil societies become visible31 with their mixed, sometimes even confused values, notions, and emotions. They preserved, for decades, their private interpretations about their lives and histories. These individual pieces and interpretations of the traditions create the basis of the emerging political conservatism.

THE REVIVAL OF TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Behind the debates about curriculum and textbook reforms, another issue is emerging: the reform of the schools. The golden days of the system reforms -

initiated by the administration - are over. The growing demand today is to reestablish those institutions that have been closed down during the Communist takeover at the end of the 1940s. The most prestigious among them were the grammar schools (Gymnasia, Lycee) some of them owned by the churches. In present debates the "general schools," those comprehensive and compulsory basic schools meant to unify elementary education with the middle schools, are being challenged by the new political forces.

The general schools were established in the first wave of the all-embracing school reforms at nearly the same time (1944-47) all over Eastern Europe. The reform cut down the first three (four or five) grades of the grammar schools, unified their curricula, declared them obligatory and administratively connected them to the elementary schools. In this way, the Eastern European countries adopted a basic education system of eight years - seven years only in Roumania 32, or Bulgaria, and nine years in Czechoslovakia. The general schools were declared to be the democratic schools which would bring to an end the cultural privileges of the grammar schools.

In the early 1960s, the parties adopted the new idea initiated by Krushchev and his educational ideologists at the Soviet Pedagogical Academy. They started to introduce an alternative system of public education called the ten-year general polytechnical secondary school. It was introduced to the Soviet Union during the 1960s, but the Baltic states saved their former systems of eleven-year public education.33 The same system has also been introduced (or planned) for countries with shorter traditions of grammar schools, like Roumania or Bulgaria.34

Though the fraternal parties were strongly advised to do so, two of them (the Czechoslovakian and the Hungarian) did not adopt the ten-year system.35 Somewhat later (1973-77) others, namely Poland, Roumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia decided for it.36 The first and second grades of the secondary schools were separated from the remaining third and fourth grades and became independent, and in Yugoslavia, and Roumania, or were connected to the eight-grade general schools.

The ten-year secondary education met a social reality. In Czechoslovakia a high proportion of those who completed the general school also entered the secondary education.37 The appropriate figures were also close to the optimal in Poland or Hungary where 85-89% of a given age group completed the general school within eight years, and 93-96% within ten years.38 Secondary enrollments in those countries were above 90%. After years of compulsory (mostly eight-year) basic education, a new generation has grown up with higher demands for schooling. A ten-year compulsory and comprehensive system seemed to meet their demands.39 And it also promised to postpone the selection year from the age of 14 to 16.40

In the course of their nation-wide introduction, however, the ten-year systems proved to be impossible to operate. After eight years of comprehensive studies the

entire population of the given age group was expected to attend the same type of schools for the additional two years. But many parents did not want to send their children into classrooms "poisoned" by unmotivated and undisciplined classmates. (It is a well-known argument which has received special publicity in Poland as well as in Voivodina-Yugoslavia.) The governments simply declared the "new structure", and they made it even mandatory. In doing so, however, they did not expand the school networks and did not raise the numbers of the teachers. In the name of establishing a new system, the administration ruined the existing secondary schools. So some of those restructuring actions were stopped and/or declared to be "experiments" at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s.41

The new political groups became highly cautious about comprehensiveness. The liberals argue against it in the name of the individual right to establish or attend quality schools even if they prove to be socially selective. The populists, on the other hand, emphasize that the grammar schools was always part of the educational traditions of the country and the families that had been ruined by the communists. Some intellectuals are in favour of them because they promise more rigorous academic training and a better preparation for university studies. These days only a few argue for comprehensive schools.

Reestablishing those prestigious institutions of the early days is a clear sign of a growing educational elitist ideas. Those schools were strongly selective, applied high academic standards, focused on academic as opposed to practical preparation, and stressed quality and excellence. Their revival means more than the nostalgia for the old days. They intend to serve as a model for the public education; which, according to this model, should also be achievement oriented, focus on academic preparation and protect quality. The demand for academic selection and the search for educational excellence put the feature of elitism into the ideological profile of neo-conservatism.

PRIVATIZATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The third issue under debate is the control of the school system. Different political forces, of course, have different reasons to raise the question. But for the moment, all of them agree in abolishing the forty-year old state monopoly in education.

Education is one of the major human rights issue for the liberals, and the ultimate protection for exercise this right seems to be to own the school. For the populists, the privatization is the necessary condition for reestablishing quality institutions owned by the churches or the local communities. For the financial experts - most of them adopting neo-liberal economics - there is an additional argument for privatization: budgetary constraint and financial necessities.

In the name of constructing socialism, the former leaders of the region tried to develop their own welfare states.42 On the one hand, they accomplished an almost total state employment of their populations. The employment rates of the active population go up to 88-96%; Bulgaria has the highest and Hungary the lowest rates (data from the 1980s).

The state heavily subsidized "social services" like health care, education, transportation, housing, child-care, food supply.43 But they paid incredible prices. Their economic policies - heavy industry, state ownership, self-reliance -- did not match their social targets; therefore they could keep moving their welfare states only at a low standard, exploiting agriculture and nature, depending on cheap Soviet energy and raw materials, and running up huge Western debts.44 Thus, with some exceptions in Hungary and Bulgaria, the new political forces have inherited from their predecessors economic disaster, destroyed environment, and agricultural poverty. State coffers are empty and few are free of foreign debt. (Hungary has the highest per capita rate of foreign loans and Roumania the lowest.)

One of the unintended effects of those socialist welfare states has been the impoverishment of the schools and the teaching force. The salaries of those working in the service area are especially low. Teachers have the poorest salaries among all diploma holders throughout the region. The new governments will have to discover new resources to finance their educational systems.

One option that seems to emerge from these debates is privatization. World Bank specialists formulated and discussed this proposal recently in considerable detail. (1987-88). They visited Poland and Hungary to negotiate additional loans for education and vocational training as parts of their economic modernization programs.

Yet a question remains. Who will pay the total cost of education? There are only a few calculations of the per capita costs of education in these countries.45 According to those calculations, the school, even the most elementary type, is too expensive to be financed by individuals and without state support. Privatization, by itself, cannot save the schools and the teachers from their present poverty. So educational privatization is more a political than an economic issue on the agenda of the new political forces.

It may give, says the opposition, better chances for individual families and private organizations to influence the school. The liberals want to save the individual's right for public teaching and learning; a right which has never been practiced without state limitations. Populists in Hungary and in Poland used to associate educational privatization to their community school experiments.46 Those experiments would give the schools to the local societies. Who will change the content of the education and who will modernize the system? Influenced by their decentralization and democratization rhetorics, neither the liberals nor the populists can answer these questions.

The debates on privatization leave several questions open. The most important of them is the essential contradiction between the compelling interest of the state and the contradictory interests of the civil society.47 If education is obligatory - that is, legally required -, it has to be centrally financed. In this case, however, the state budget cannot be saved from the huge public educational expenses. Mandatory education also means that the state raises demands - even if only very broad ones - concerning the aims and goals of education. In other words, even the private schools cannot escape from a certain state control. These contradictions in the educational privatization show that it is not so much an expert-oriented as an ideology-oriented proposal. And as such, it is a rational outcome of political neo-conservatism.

CONCLUSION

I started this study proposing that the East European transition from totalitarianism to democracy goes hand in hand with the revival of conservatism. I pointed out this revival as a shift of the political paradigms, and presented three burning educational issues - the nationalization of the curricula, the revitalization of the traditional schools, and the privatization in the system - as examples for the conservative nationalism.

Yet a question remains. Which of the political forces is responsible for the shift of political paradigms from traditional socialism to neo-conservatism? On the basis of my brief analyses of the three major educational issues, I propose the following answer. The shift of political paradigms is a general outcome of the struggle among the existing forces. Neo-conservatism is a cooperative product of the former leaderships as well as the populists and the liberals.

The former leaderships contributed to neo-conservatism by corrupting the socialistic ideas.48 After decades of their political practices none of the possible forces dare to use socialism as a rhetoric to influence the population and to win elections. Even ideas like social equality, state welfare system, or internationalism seem to disappear from the political vocabularies.49 It became visible from the debate on comprehensive education versus traditional schools.

Populist forces use patriotism and nationalism extensively. 50 References to the tragic moments of the most recent past activate even the politically neutral populations. The religious messages motivate the older generations, while the elitist ideas can be influential among the intellectuals. These ideas guarantee the largest political support; while they represent the core of neo-conservatism. The "nationalization" effort of the curricula is a clear example for it.

The liberals complete the new political paradigm by stressing liberalism in the economy as well as in politics. One of the astonishing suggestions is educational privatization as a solution for budget tensions and as a protection of the individual's rights against state monopoly. The liberals may receive only limited supports at home. However, they create the new images of the "East-bloc countries" which is desperately needed for their economic recoveries.

As a cooperative product, neo-conservatism, in turn, defines the room for political maneuvering of every political forces. As far as education is concerned, the exaggeration of the individual's right may hurt the compelling interests of the newly born states. The stress of traditional institutions and national values, on the other hand, may end up in separation from rather than integration to the other part of Europe as well as the rest of the world. By this way the shift into the neo-conservative paradigm may slow down the transition from totalitarianism into democracy and may lead the Eastern European politics and education into a stagnating situation that is well known in some Latin American cases.

NOTES

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