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The End of Postcommunism

Trade Unions in Eastern Europe's Future

David Ost
Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York

Following a long period in which labor in Eastern Europe had been marginalized, often with unionists' complicity, five conditions now favor revival: survival imperatives of the union bureaucracy, incorporation into the European Union, emerging international solidarity, a new generation of workers, and the end of postcommunism in the firm, or the dismissal of unessential workers. This article focuses on subjective factors: union officials' own misgivings about unions in the postcommunist era and their revived interest now that they no longer need to defend the unskilled. Yet three factors work against union revival: ideological (continued distrust of unions), organizational (plethora of small firms), and structural (location in the global economy). Labor is likely to remain weak, with a few stronger unions emerging that are more elitist, male, "producerist," and less class oriented. Legacies continue to be the major problem, but in a twist, the problem today is the legacy not of communism but of postcommunism.

Keywords: *labor; postcommunism; trade unions; industrial relations*

Postcommunism is over. The grand effort to transform a state socialist economy into a market economy has been completed. While its long-term prospects are unknown, the privatization of the economy, the breakup and rationalization of the old state firms, the disciplining of labor, the creation of a class system—these grand historic projects have been accomplished. Postcommunism began to decline around the beginning of the century, and died with the 2004 accession to the European Union. Postcommunism is dead. The global economy is here.[1]

The aim of this is to explore the consequences this transformation has had for labor, particularly in the manufacturing sector. I argue that after over a decade in which both workers and organized trade unions had been humbled and marginalized, often with unionists' own conscious complicity, things began to change early in the new century. Today's generation of union officials is more eager than its predecessor to defend the interests of those on the job. But this is far from a return to, or a new embrace of, a recently radical past. Today's emerging unionism is much more elitist—male and "producerist"—than the region's previous unions. It also faces severe obstacles to its growth, for the damage done to the labor movement in the immediate postcommunist period has proven quite durable, perhaps enough to thwart any revival before it happens. As in the past, the obstacles it faces are due to problems of legacy. But in a twist from the old story, today's obstacles are due to the

legacies not of communism but of postcommunism, particularly its pro-market sensibilities and its peculiar insertion into the global economy.

Postcommunist Union Decline

Before we turn to the basis for union revival, let's look at the facts and factors leading to its decline. Trade unions fared poorly in postcommunist Eastern Europe. Everything about them declined: their membership, workplace authority, collective solidarity, sectoral diversity, enterprise responsibilities, and political influence.[2] While it was obvious that basic factors such as union density would drop in the aftermath of communism, when membership, except in Poland, was essentially universal (not just because the Party required it but because unions were chief suppliers of social benefits), the level and pace of decline has been astounding. Today, unions have been largely marginalized both in the workplace and in politics.

How bad has the damage been? In 1995, union density in the EU-10 (the ten countries that joined the European Union in 2004) was still much higher than in the old EU-15: 42.7 percent for the new countries, compared to 31.0 percent for the EU-15. Six years later, in 2001, EU-10 density dropped by more than half, to 20.4 percent, beneath the level of the EU-15, which declined only slightly to 27.3 percent.[3] In the following years, the situation got even worse. From 1995 to 2004, density dropped in Hungary from 63.0 percent to only 17.0 percent; in the Czech Republic, from 41.0 percent to 22.0 percent; in Slovakia from 57.0 percent to 31.0 percent; in Poland, from 33.0 percent to 17.0 percent. In the Baltic republics, meanwhile, union density ended up even lower.[4]

These density numbers disguise the depth of the problem in manufacturing, for they reflect a labor movement dominated by public sector employees, particularly in health and education, and a precipitous drop in unionism in the private industrial sector. Indeed, most new private manufacturing firms, especially smaller ones, are union-free. By 2002, 70 percent of Hungary's trade unionists, 71 percent of Slovakia's, and nearly 77 percent of Poland's unionists worked in the public sector, with most of the rest working in privatized as opposed to new private firms.[5] The rule, troubling for the very future of trade unionism in the region, is that union representation has gone down as the private sector goes up. Andras Toth, for example, notes the "drastic deunionization" of the private sector in Hungary in the mid-1990s. Management in formerly state-owned but now privatized firms became increasingly antagonistic to unions, withdrawing consultation rights and making it difficult to organize, while new private firms took an openly aggressive stance. In just two years, the country's largest union saw its membership drop from 1.2 to 0.5 million.[6] Where unions exist and negotiate collective agreements, these contracts tend to do little more than reaffirm what is already in the official labor code. One study in

Poland found that bargaining with management accomplished so little that few employees were even aware they had a collective agreement.[7]

Industrial relations in the public sector is not much better. While the state has not tried to bar unionism there, it has typically not negotiated in good faith. Instead, collective bargaining tends to be a meaningless affair, with ministries setting the terms and unions protesting, or not, to little effect. The tripartite bodies that exist in all the countries, urged on them by the European Union long before accession, have dealt mostly with public sector negotiations, but the results have been so poor, with governments often presenting unions with *fait accomplis* not open for discussion, that unions in the Czech Republic and Poland have often boycotted them. Far from representing an empowering neocorporatism, tripartite negotiations have served mainly to provide symbolic cover for neoliberal transformation.[8] Private employers in tripartite bodies, meanwhile, do little negotiating at all, due to the fragmentation of employer associations and the desire to weaken unions. In recent years, almost all tripartite boards have fallen into disuse. Even the Kaczyński government in Poland from 2005 to 2007, which came to power in large part thanks to union support, refused to open serious negotiations.

Does union strength matter for workers' well-being? The argument that it was not necessary was pervasive and widely accepted in the immediate postcommunist period, when the romance with the market was at its peak. The evidence, however, is that today's market economy is rife with just the kinds of abuses that strong unions would be likely to combat. Take "self-employment," a euphemism for forcing employees to resign from their position and set up as an "independent contractor." In this arrangement, the "former" employees do the same work as before, but with neither security nor benefits, thus forcing them to work longer hours in less-safe conditions. By the late 1990s, "self-employed" was the fastest growing job category in Poland. Because this entails the setting up of an independent firm, the statistics showed a remarkable growth of the private sector, which economists and foreign newspapers presented as evidence of great success. But as one journalist put it, "what in the statistics looks like an eruption of entrepreneurship is often just a violation of work rules."[9] Among the "self-employed" who have been forced to set up their own "firms" are construction workers, tram drivers, X-ray technicians, cashiers, and even primary school teachers. For employers, this is a way to save on payroll taxes, avoid long-term contracts, and, as with the X-ray technicians, get around costly safety rules requiring limited work hours (since the hospital is now dealing with "independent contractors" who can do with their bodies as they please, but who may not be "contracted" again the next day if they balk at management requests). It is also, of course, a way to avoid dealing with unions. In 2003, 24 percent of all employees in Poland were self-employed, with 17 percent in the Czech Republic and Lithuania and 13 percent in Hungary. Although in the former EU-15 self-employment is concentrated in the farming sectors of the southern countries, in the East it is widespread in the commercial and service sectors, providing

employers a way to save money and wiggle out of their remaining labor obligations.[10] In companies that do not choose this path, and where formal contracts still apply, large numbers of contracts are given on a fixed-term, rather than open-term, basis, which heightens both the insecurity and docility of the workforce.

Working time, meanwhile, is longer in the East than the West. In 2004 about 38 percent of workers in the EU-10 worked over 45 hours per week, compared to 21 percent in the EU-15.[11] Overtime is widespread, and not only is much of it involuntary, but much of it is not even compensated as such. According to the European Commission, "More than 70 percent of workers in Poland do not receive any additional remuneration for overtime."[12]

What accounts for the weak position of unions in Eastern European manufacturing? Factors familiar from accounts of globalization and technology change certainly apply. Large manufacturing firms radically reduced their workforce, competitive pressure pushed owners and managers to cut labor costs, and the plethora of small private firms at a time of high unemployment discouraged potential union organizers. But reasons like these—the decline of large manufacturing, global competition, the increase of small firms, the computerization of the work process that leads to an erosion of class identity—are present throughout the world. If the decline in labor in the East is so much more dramatic than in the West, other factors clearly must be at work. This article looks closely at the subjective factors, all legacies of the communist era. For one of the most striking findings of those who have studied postcommunist unionism concerns the beliefs and attitudes of union officials in the manufacturing sector. Unions were marginalized not only by the global economy and pro-market state policy. They also played a key role in their own decline. Most union officials in the first postcommunist years believed not only in the necessity of market reform, but believed, contrary to the Western European experience of which they were largely unaware, that market economies, and private firms in particular, work best without much union involvement.[13] In many cases, this led them to be remarkably blasé about building up their own unions. This disinclination had many sources: the association of trade unions with the communist era, naïve hopes in and lack of experience with a free market economy, fatigue with universal representation (making unionists reluctant to recruit others), and the special perceived interests of skilled workers, who tended to be union leaders, and unskilled workers, who made up most of the rank and file. These factors made unionists reluctant to try to build up their unions, which allowed the negative tendencies due to global economic factors to cascade in a downward spiral leading to a veritable union collapse. Unionism declined so dramatically in manufacturing in large part because it did not have many proponents committed to building it.

These attitudes were strongest in Poland, for even though the Solidarity trade union was so strong, by 1989 it had become almost exclusively an anticommunist movement, with its activists seeing union activity through this ideological prism. Yet the situation was similar elsewhere in the region. Indeed, the only countries where there was any active significant trade union activism in the wake of the communist

collapse were Hungary and Bulgaria. Here, however, the exception proves the rule: the union organizing was being done by *new* unions with an explicitly political agenda. Liga in Hungary and Podkrepa in Bulgaria both modeled themselves on Solidarity. They sought members not so they could protect workers in the workplace, but to build support for the anticommunist political forces to which they were allied. (In Poland, as just noted, since its allies were now in power, Solidarity stopped organizing; these two unions trying to be like Solidarity needed to start organizing, precisely in order to help *their* political allies.) As the old system eroded, however, and their allies did obtain opportunities in power, these unions cut back on organizing. Most of their original leaders moved on, or back, to liberal politics. As for the successor unions to the former official ones, these were quiescent too, as their new leaders (usually individuals who had been second or third tier in the past) also became supporters of market reform. They did so partly because they saw such support as demonstration of their "democratic" bona fides, and partly because they too got swept in the enthusiasm for change and believed they could benefit from it.

To be sure, unskilled rank-and-file workers in the old communist factories liked unions because they wanted protection. But in the postcommunist East it was almost entirely skilled and more highly educated workers who headed unions in the large manufacturing plants. This was true for the former communist unions, since the Party had always relied on moderately educated, middle management types to be union representatives. And it was true for the independent, anticommunist unions, whose activists tended to be skilled, ambitious workers who rejected the nomenklatura system and sought upward mobility.[14] None of the postcommunist unions, in other words, were created or run by the kinds of workers (unskilled) who most needed unions to protect them from the negative effects of market reform. Instead, they were run by those who believed they had an interest in reform, and who thought unions would be an obstacle every bit as much as the new market elites did.[15]

Nowhere, in other words, were there vital pockets of unionists—or, for that matter, intellectuals—who strongly believed that unions should be important institutions of the new civil society. Unions became weak and quiescent in the postcommunist era not because they were repressed by the new capitalist system, as many Western leftists like to believe, and not because workers were treated well by the new system, as Western conservatives like to believe, but because union leaders largely agreed with the policies aimed at weakening them.

During the postcommunist era, unions lost prestige, resources, and voice. Prestige was the first to go, for communism's strong association with labor—less by its formal glorification than its commitment to large, sprawling factories—made everything connected with it seem passé after 1989. The new elites and media promoted a new paradigm championing individual achievement, entrepreneurial freedom, white-collar over blue-collar work, and the importance of creating a propertied class. Of course, the communist-era cult of the proletariat had already been on the wane, jettisoned by late communist elites who tried to legitimize themselves on grounds of technical expertise

rather than class origin.[16] But it had persevered symbolically to the extent of making labor protests the most powerful way political oppositionists could express themselves. Trade union activism thus figured prominently in the 1989 anti-regime mobilizations in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Russia and performed the *coup de grace* in Czechoslovakia. Regime conservatives, of course, used the same symbolism: when Polish authorities declared martial law in 1981, or when anti-Gorbachev plotters briefly seized power in the abortive Soviet coup ten years later, they each claimed they wanted only to "defend the achievements of the working class."

And so the new regimes, after 1989, denigrated the cult of labor any chance they got. Newspapers ran endless columns on "free market" ideas and business etiquette, lauded individuals who quit their jobs and started their own firm, quoted neoliberal foreigners on the need to break up the "socialist factory" system through massive layoffs and the introduction of individualized pay and bonus systems. Virtually overnight, trade unions began to be seen by the new dominant culture as something retrograde, an obstacle on the road to a healthy "transition." Elizabeth Dunn, who worked for over a year in a privatized Polish factory, shows how production-line workers got coded by the new management as inferior and inflexible, regardless of the creative and extremely flexible work they actually did. "This view of the workers as unthinking—or incapable of thought," she writes, "permeated the production process."[17]

Associating trade unions with the outmoded past allowed the attack on union resources to proceed quickly. Resources here refer to the material or cultural assets that an organization disposes, and the various kinds of capital—economic, social, and cultural—that it can deploy to its advantage. High membership, automatic dues payments, enterprise payment of union activists and bureaus, factory newsletters, trained activists, links with political and intellectual circles: these are some of the union resources that were adversely affected by postcommunism. Universal membership with firm-collected dues payment has everywhere been abolished. Some countries still mandate company payment of union officials, provided the union surpasses a threshold membership level, but this is under attack. Unions can still publish a factory newsletter, but because they often have to pay for it themselves, they do so less, with membership decline likely to accelerate this trend. As for capable activists, only the independent and thus oppositionist unions ever had those, as the former official ones were staffed with administrators charged with maintaining firm discipline. After 1989, however, the opposition unions lost most of those activists to government and business posts, with those staying in the union often more intent on selling market reform to their members than defending members in the face of the reforms.

Postcommunism also saw a drastic decline of union voice in the workplace. The new deferent mold was cast in the first months of the postcommunist era, when unions, contrary to the fears of reformers, accepted not just the massive cutbacks, but the view that reform was largely an elite affair in which workers and unions would not play an important role. Unions accepted authoritarian and secretive management styles, without collective bargaining, transparent wage or bonus policies, or even

basic observation of labor law. They tolerated new "human resources management" practices that ignored rank-and-file input, even when the latter knew such practices were often hurting the firm. Management consultation with unions was either routinely ignored, even where mandated by law, or routinized in such a way that management preferences prevailed regardless of what unions thought. The desuetude of the tripartite councils was thus only the crowning stamp of a process that had been happening at the workplace for years.

Basis for Union Revival after Postcommunism

It is then, we might say, the subjective factor—or as Gorbachev used to say, the "human factor"—where legacies proved so destructive to postcommunist trade unionism. *Unions didn't mobilize on behalf of workers because unionists didn't believe in unionism.* A counterargument claiming that they did believe in unionism but thought that reforms were necessary in the short term, or that they "recognized" that protest would do no good at the present time, would be beside the point. For survival, organizations need to engage in self-promoting symbolic activity all the time. Entrenched trade unions regularly speak up even for lost causes, or for causes that their members believe in even when their leaders do not, in order to keep the organizations thriving and members mobilized. But not much of this happened in the postcommunist East. Legacies were crucial here.

Around the turn of the century, things began to change. In firms where unions had become moribund, union leaders got more excited about their work, committed to helping their members. More young people have become interested, beginning to see unions not as old-fashioned organizations affiliated with the *ancient regime*, which was their aura in the early 1990s, but as organizations they can fashion to defend their own interests in a market economy that they seen as normal. Unions have even begun recruiting efforts in the new private sector. In Poland, both Solidarity and OPZZ, (a communist successor union) which until then had been excessively engaged in politics—sometimes bringing governmental posts to activists but little rewards to regular members—each formed special sections devoted to organizing private-sector employees, from retail workers to security personnel. In short, the situation is not quite the same as it was a short decade ago.

In the rest of the article, I try not just to explain these changes, but to suggest what they mean for the future. I argue that while the changes are significant, the legacies of the recent past are likely to keep unions from maximizing their advantages. What we will see is a double irony. First, one of the chief reasons why so many unionists did *not* want to be unionists in the postcommunist era—because of their attitude to the workforce—is what makes them want to be unionists today. Yet, second, it is precisely the pattern they established as unionists in the postcommunist era that makes it difficult to be successful unionists today. While the communist legacy was the

main problem facing unions in the postcommunist period, it is the postcommunist legacy that is the chief obstacle to the development of unionism today.

Why then are things beginning to change, since about the beginning of the new century? There seem to be five key factors: survival imperatives of the union bureaucracy, incorporation into the European Union, emerging international labor solidarity, a new generation of laborers, and the end of postcommunism in the firm, creating new challenges for unionists. These last two factors, due to generational and temporal changes as postcommunist experiences replace communist ones, lead to a new subjectivity that is perhaps the most important of the story. Let's look at each of these factors in turn.

The first factor is the survival imperatives of the union bureaucracy. Put simply, today's union officials can no longer afford to neglect their own unions. Not long ago, in the postcommunist era, they could. For most of the 1990s, union leaders had relative autonomy from their base, because of both the resources they controlled and the exit options at their disposal. As for resources, although membership may have been declining, it was doing so from a level of near universal membership, so it was still very high. As noted earlier, in 1995 union density in the EU-10 was still over 40 percent, about a third higher than in the EU-15; it was only in the next decade that the ranking would reverse. Unions also still controlled access to many services, such as vacation resorts and summer camps. Union leaders could thus take positions their members disagreed with, without jeopardizing the resources they controlled. But when membership has plummeted and easy access to resources has disappeared, union officials can no longer afford to be condescending to their base. (Theoretically, union officials could have been voted out in the earlier period too, but there was virtually no organized dissent in postcommunist labor unions, since few could yet know which policies served which interests. It was only when the postcommunist period ended, early in the new century, that internal opposition emerged.)

As for exit options, the period of rapid mobility is over, meaning that union leaders no longer have a safe cushion. In the early 1990s, local union leaders tended either to be ambitious young skilled workers and professionals (in the "oppositionist" unions of Solidarity in Poland, Liga in Hungary, or Podkrepa in Bulgaria), or middle-aged, compliant, but well-connected political functionaries (in the communist successor unions). Today, those types have moved on—the former to higher nonunion positions, the latter to retirement—replaced typically by skilled rank-and-file workers, without political ambitions, who understand that they are there to stay. A union position is no longer a ticket to a higher office. Poland was not the only place where upward mobility from unions took place. Officials from Liga and Podkrepa also moved into firm administrative positions or midlevel government positions, while in Romania national trade union leader Victor Ciorbea became Prime Minister. Today, those midlevel business and governmental slots are filled with trained experts, and parties are well established enough to have their own activists now. Promoting market reform from within trade unions can no longer be parlayed into a

better-paying position in management or government. If today's union officials are going to maintain their relatively good jobs, they need to do so *as* union officials. And keeping unions going requires greater commitment than in the past. With most firms now privately owned, owners are less sympathetic to unions than in the early postcommunist period. With the privatization of services that unions used to administer, unions dispose of fewer resources, and employees have less reason to keep paying dues. In these conditions, labor officials can no longer afford to see the continued hemorrhaging of members, nor do they want to. So although earlier it was possible to be a union official while neglecting union activity, that is no longer possible today.

Second, there is the role of the European Union. While some reformers and even some unionists might have wanted unions to fade away, EU integration guaranteed that would not happen. The European Union has long treated unions as a constitutive part of the European political economy, an essential actor in the "social partnership" regime that EU rules mandate. Even while the individual EU-15 countries were trying to cut back on the influence and prerogatives of their own trade unions, it provided both money and personnel to promote union education programs in the East and to facilitate contacts of Eastern unionists with their Western counterparts. Already in the early 1990s, the EU aid program PHARE financed "Project 'Social Dialogue,'" instructing postcommunist states on the details of European social partnership and training trade unionists to take part.[18] Incorporation into the European Union seems to mean that unions in the East are condemned not just to survive but to be active.

The massive entry of EU capital and the move toward euro conversion are also conducive to union revival, to the extent that both corporations and the state seek the stable and predictable labor relations that union cooperation can provide. In recent years euro conversion gave a boost to social pacting in Western Europe, at a time when globalization and neoliberalism seemed to indicate a steady decline for such forms of organized cooperation.[19] There are signs that a similar process is happening in the East, as some in government and in the employers' organizations have begun talking about the need for pacts with unions, particularly in order to facilitate the euro conversion they are formally obliged to undertake.[20]

The third factor is emerging labor solidarity. While during the cold war unions in the West of different ideological stripes—whether the conservative AFL-CIO, socialist French unions, or communist Italian unions—used to aid East European oppositionist unions on ideological grounds, as labor and civil society groups fighting against dictatorship, Western trade unions now get involved in the East because of globalization. That is, labor leaders in the West see the need to follow capital as it moves abroad, and they have far greater possibilities of doing so in Eastern Europe than in East Asia. Consequently, labor aid has moved beyond the work done, say, by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in publishing books and sponsoring labor-related research and conferences. In the 1990s, the AFL-CIO helped establish the Union Development Office of Solidarity, aimed at organizing workers in new private firms.

German unions have been particularly helpful in assisting auto workers in Eastern Volkswagen and Opel plants to establish and manage successful unions. Foreign retail workers' unions, meanwhile, have been helping new organizing drives in Eastern Europe's "hypermarkets." Lately, Eastern European unions have been returning the favor, such as by committing themselves to the fight against the Bolkestein Directive on the liberalization of the service sector, even though it would bring jobs to the East at a time when their countries suffer from the highest unemployment in the European Union.[21]

The fourth factor pushing toward union revival in Eastern Europe is the emergence of a new generation of workers. By the beginning of the new millennium, young workers began getting interested in unionism for the first time since the fall of communism. This was a big turnabout, for unions had completely dropped out of fashion after 1989. Central to the pageantry and iconography of communism, from May Day rallies to productivity campaigns, trade unions were associated with the system that had just passed, not the new one to be created. Young workers deserted unions in droves, new labor market entries simply declined to join. Besides the image problem, the "aging" process of trade unions stemmed from two other factors: the availability of the bulk of the new jobs in the new private sector, which were non-union and went to younger workers, and the economic crisis which kept established unionized firms from making new hires, causing more youth to move into the informal sector, travel abroad for work, or seek higher education.

Things began to change by the end of the 1990s, as young workers now had experiences shaped not by actually existing socialism but by actually existing capitalism. The private sector lost the glitter and gleam that swathed it earlier. Harsh discipline and long hours, violation of labor law with impunity, low pay for all except for a relatively small number of elite manufacturing jobs—these conditions became more real to young workers than the fading memories of the past, stoked chiefly by aging parents and an increasingly out-of-touch political class. Youth who, in the late communist period, believed capitalism to be a meritocratic system, soon found that it was as perfectly compatible with cronyism, toadyism, and nepotism as the old system had ever been. That is, they saw that people advanced by flattering owners rather than contributing added value and learned that it was not just in a communist system that connections could count more than expertise.[22] And so young people started seeing unions in a different light: not as a dismal remnant of the past but as a possible protector in the future. Youth who traveled and lived in EU countries also picked up the more favorable impressions of unions common in the West.

A personal story illustrates this change. While I had been visiting Poland regularly after 1989, it was only in 2000 that I met unionists younger than me (I was then forty-four). The main organizers in Solidarity's Union Development Office were twentysomething men and women who had worked in the private sector both at home and abroad and had war stories to tell not about fighting the "reds" but about the everyday oppression of owners and managers. And when they went out recruiting,

about which they had no compunctions, and found workers telling them they didn't like unions and wanted nothing to do with politics, these young recruiters were able to say that they too wanted nothing to do with politics, and thereby found a more willing audience. As more young workers began getting used to capitalism rather than communism, they began looking at unions more favorably.

Finally, the fifth factor driving new interest in unionism in Eastern Europe today is the end of postcommunism in the firm, or the dismissal of unessential workers. As management and the state have finally privatized, restructured, and downsized the myriad old state firms they inherited in 1989, union leaders are finding that they are no longer responsible for the unskilled workers for whom they never had much respect. Indeed, this is probably the most important development of all. For the key reason union leaders were barely committed to "doing their job" in postcommunist Eastern Europe was that they agreed with the reformers that the socialist factory need to be fundamentally overhauled. The skilled workers who headed the unions did not want to lead organizations of the unskilled, which trade unions in the post-communist era had overwhelmingly become. But precisely as the factories give up their old state socialist character, they become more open to union mobilization.

Skilled workers tended to treat the communist-era saturation of enterprise employment as a threat to their chances after communism since it meant that firms that might otherwise be healthy were weighted down with excess labor costs. Communist governments had hired massive numbers of workers not needed in the production process, simply because that's what communist governments did. A way of realizing the classic Marxist promise to provide jobs for everyone, the policy also served to secure popularity, provide social welfare benefits, and keep control over people. Managers, who did not need to worry about labor costs, since companies were allocated separate wage funds, were happy to have these superfluous workers as insurance to fulfill the plan. But when the old regime came down, and firm survival came to depend on profit making, not plan fulfillment, these workers were needed to no one but themselves. They figured this out pretty quickly and looked to the trade unions to defend them. With professionals leaving unions to go into management, and many skilled workers leaving the old state factories to go into (non-unionized) private-sector jobs, the unskilled suddenly became the mainstay of the trade union movement.[23] For trade union *leaders*, this was a blow. For they believed in the need to move toward a "normal" market economy—one where firms needed to make a profit in order to survive and prosper, and where skilled labor, they thought, would obtain a premium—and thus saw their members not as a valuable resource but as a problem they wished to overcome. Trade union leaders, in other words, did not want the rank and file that they had.

My long discussions with Polish unionists from 1992 to 1995 first made me aware of the depths of anti-union sentiment among union activists. For example, Solidarity officials in the large aircraft manufacturing plant in Mielec, often considered a hotbed of militancy because of a strike and City Hall demonstration that took place in 1992

after months of nonpayment of wages, told me they were not very proud either of their members or their unions. The local vice president, a forty-four-year-old die maker, said union work in the 1990s was about "the protection of losers":

> Most people in the plant don't want to work, they want the state to take care of them. They complain to the union that they're not making enough money, basically they complain about everything, but in the end most of the problem is their own. The ones who are good workers, they are only a handful.[24]

The ones who ran the unions were largely skilled workers who felt degraded by the old regime's commitment to use factories less as a site of production than as a site of social control. Indeed, the socialist firm's perennial woes stemmed precisely from it being chiefly a place where benefits were delivered and order maintained. This was a problem throughout the old Soviet bloc. Reformers in the Soviet Union had identified the economic problems of the socialist factory already in the 1960s. But plans to deal with them always ran aground since any real effort to do so would challenge the social contract on which the system was based—the contract that gave workers jobs, welfare benefits, and loose on-the-job discipline in return for acceptance of Party control.[25] So instead of tackling the problems, the Party maintained the arrangement of employing virtually the entire citizenry (except, as is now clear, for those in non-urban areas in the non-Slavic republics)[26] in factories that administered housing, maintained cultural institutions, and provided basic social welfare.

The point, as far as our skilled workers are concerned, is that under the old regime, *cultivating craftsmanship took a back seat to maintaining order*. The system worked well for low-skilled and unmotivated workers, as it provided them work, social guarantees, and a sense of inclusion. Comparisons with Yeltsin's Russia, where such people saw their lives thoroughly degraded and impoverished, make this starkly clear. For skilled workers, however, the communist system became a humiliating one, depriving them of job satisfaction, ambition, drive, and the chance to fully use their skills. The old communist-era complaint of "they pretend to pay us and we pretend to work" has often been misinterpreted as a boast. In fact it was a lament, on the part of skilled workers who resented that they had to "pretend to work." (There were of course places where skilled work was valued, particularly in sensitive military sectors, such as in the "closed cities" of the former Soviet Union,[27] or in top defense-producing plants in Eastern Europe, such as the Mielec plant I visited. By 1991, due to the crisis of the Soviet state, such work disappeared.)

These workers, who ran the independent unions after the professionals had left for better positions outside the factory, looked to the postcommunist market economy to change all that. That is why they did not oppose unemployment. They thought the socialist enterprise was too large, employing too many people doing unnecessary work. They wanted the numerous "fictitious" employees to be fired, which is why they wanted most of the women fired too, as women were more likely,

because of educational patterns, to have been hired doing makeshift deskwork—"unproductive work," in the view of the craftsmen. When I spoke with the Mielec Solidarity president in 1993, he noted that the plant now employed only eleven thousand people, down from twenty-one thousand at its peak. Instead of complaining about the high number of layoffs, however, he complained that they weren't high enough: "There's still only room for seven or eight thousand at the most." Indeed, one reason he was concerned about the Social Democratic government that had just come to power was because he thought they might discontinue unemployment in response to public pressure. "They have the word 'social' in their name, so let's see how it will relate to the factory. Will it be 'social' or will it be a factory?"

Such internal differentiations undermining potential class unity are not, of course, unusual. Beverly Silver has written of the way workers in a variety of historical contexts have "actively constructed identities that have excluded other workers from the community of rights."[28] Creating boundaries is one of the few ways any group of laborers is able to protect itself against those who would treat all labor as an interchangeable, homogenous commodity. Think of the native way workers in the West draw boundaries between themselves and immigrants, in order to gain and preserve advantages for themselves. In Eastern Europe, however, the point is that this differentiation divided postcommunist unions against themselves: unions in manufacturing firms were run by skilled workers who wanted to cut the workforce, while most union members were unskilled workers who wanted their jobs to stay. The result, which I repeatedly encountered in Polish factories during the 1990s, was that union officials regularly opposed their own union base, and sympathized more with management that was also trying to streamline the firm. In a national survey of union leaders in manufacturing firms in 1994, nearly three-quarters of both Solidarity and OPZZ officials believed one of their key roles as unionists was to explain the necessity of market reforms to their members.[29] In the postcommunist era, skilled workers *wanted*, finally, to distinguish themselves from the unskilled. They believed they should be better rewarded than these others. They believed that a firm should be just a firm—a place producing quality goods—and they believed that getting rid of "excess" workers, mostly fellow unionists, would help bring that about.

When I visited Mielec in 2001, however, the scene was quite different: I found a new union president interested in protecting his members and *excited* to do union work. In fact, this seemed increasingly to be the case everywhere I went. A unionist at the Lucchini Steel Mill in Warsaw, privatized just a few years earlier, spoke to me in 2000 about his pride in being a unionist, about the recent course he took on labor law and his close monitoring of the situation in his firm. He was aware that he was a new type of unionist, on the one hand less militant—"We can't just walk in here and call a strike anymore"—yet on the other hand more assertive—"We have to know the legal rules inside and out, because management is always trying to use them against us." In the past, he said, Solidarity had been militant chiefly over political issues; now it needed to be assertive over workplace issues. Absent from his comments was the

scornful disapproval of the rank and file, typical of the postcommunist period. Instead, the new leaders took union work more seriously, and saw it as their role as unionists to protect workers against management.

What had changed? One simple thing: the excess labor force of the earlier postcommunist period had finally been laid off. *Unionists became more engaged in union work in firms where restructuring and privatization had already done their damage.* By 1999, the Warsaw steel works had been through the ringer: its workforce was about 30 percent of its previous size, the firm had jettisoned most of its social welfare apparatus, and the Italian owners had already weathered several tough confrontations with an unusually militant workforce and unions. The plant in Mielec, meanwhile, had been through an even tougher time: in 2000, the firm had gone officially bankrupt, victim not just of the continuing tough economic times but of insider corruption. The new workers now represented by the unionists I spoke with had all been hired *after* bankruptcy—after, in other words, bankruptcy had wiped out all rights and privileges to remaining employees, leaving those who previous union leaders had derided as "unproductive" laborers now out of a job.

Once communist-era "add-on" workers are let go, it seems, unionists don't mind being unionists anymore. Unionism is thus ready for a revival because postcommunism is over. As postcommunism ends, and a more typical capitalism takes hold—typical in the sense that firms do not have large numbers of economically unnecessary workers on their payrolls—labor can begin to move on too. As it comes to see the workplace as a place where interests clash, it comes to see that unions might be important after all.

In the end, all the factors listed above contribute to the emergence of what Beverly Silver calls "Marx-type" labor movements, or forward-looking movements of confident workers who use their growing structural power in the workplace to extract benefits from vulnerable employers. Silver distinguishes between these forward-looking "Marx-type" movements, so called because of Marx's view of workers gaining in strength as the capitalist economy grows, and "Polanyi-type" movements.[30] The latter, based on Karl Polanyi's view of capital as having the upper hand, are rearguard movements of vulnerable workers trying to maintain their nonmarket benefits, trying to muster the resources to counter capital's attempts to commodify increasing sectors of society.

For most of the postcommunist era, there were *only* Polanyi-type movements: typically short-lived strikes of public sector employees designed to salvage some benefits and dignity in face of the globalizing juggernaut confronting them.[31] For both structural and ideational reasons, no Marx-type movement was even conceivable, what with plants closing, unemployment widespread, foreign investment minimal, not a single sector internationally competitive, and almost no support from intellectuals, most of whom believed in painful market reforms and a quiet civil society. Of all the Polanyi-type protests, only those of the coal miners had some success. Not *much* success: they have managed to hold onto benefits, such as privileged

pension and buy-out arrangements, and keep good wages (though that is chiefly because of the increased demand for coal on the global, mainly Chinese, market), but these successes pale against the hundreds of thousands of jobs lost and the decimation of their unique, privileged world that gave them such prestige in the past. This is why liberals who regularly cite miners' militance as evidence of strong trade unionism are wrong. Miner protests have been Polanyi-type movements par excellence: more successful because of the resources with which they started, but unable nevertheless to stop the sure and steady erosion of the life they had before.

The developments I have been talking about here, however, constitute the budding emergence precisely of a "Marx-type" labor movement (meaning, again, only a forward-looking labor movement trying to make gains instead of simply resist decline; it does not mean a Marxist political movement). With skilled labor in short supply, and domestic and foreign investors confident of their ability to make a profit, workers in the more skilled sectors can be more assertive and more confident in engaging in collective action. So far, this is limited to the skilled sectors, but if emigration of younger and lesser skilled workers to the European Union continues—this has been a massive tendency since 2004, with estimates of up to two million workers having left, chiefly for the United Kingdom and Ireland—and the supply even of unskilled laborers drops, labor assertiveness might grow throughout the economy. Of course, that would then likely be countered by liberalized, or simply under-enforced, migrant worker rules. Cashiers, security guards, and even many health care workers can easily be replaced by Ukrainians or Asians. At that point, workers might be able to use a nationalist rhetoric, still widely accepted in the region, to offset such pressure for liberalized immigration rules.[32] Still, skilled labor is clearly more likely to recover strength faster than unskilled labor. We shall see in the conclusion that this has important consequences for the kind of unionism that might arise.

Obstacles to Union Revival

And yet, the question is whether all this really makes a difference. Will the labor weakness of the postcommunist era, brought about in large part through self-inflicted blows, prevent it from re-arising now, just when it seems increasingly possible? Will labor now be impeded by postcommunist legacies just as it was earlier impeded by communist legacies? Much evidence suggests that it will.

There seem to be three chief obstacles to a union revival today, all due to postcommunist legacies. These can be categorized as ideological, organizational, and structural. Together, they indicate why labor in the East is likely to remain weaker, more marginalized, and less class oriented than in the West, even after a revival of union activity.

The ideological obstacles refer to what I have been discussing above: the general distrust of unions, their association with the old regime, the sense that they're inadequate

and ineffective and perhaps not really necessary. As noted, there are signs that this is changing. But there are still very few people writing about this and helping change social expectations, for postcommunism pushed away most of the people who might have been able to do so. We might say that the Gramscian organic intellectuals are sorely missing. The irony is great: precisely at the moment when class became a relevant matter, when the new elites openly proclaimed their intentions of creating a "normal" class society, journalists and scholars largely turned their attentions away from stratification and the situation at the bottom. Opposition activists who regularly bemoaned the hardships of laborers during communist times treated the hardship of laborers during postcommunist times as a sign of normality. Scholarship dealing with class, meanwhile, focused chiefly on the question of identifying the new elite, with the marginalization of labor seen as a natural, and therefore not troublesome, feature of a "normal" society.[33] There has been little study of the Western experience**,** little interest in the long line of neocorporatist theory that shows it matters greatly for a society's economic and political health *how* workers are incorporated into a market economy. (It is indicative that the few who did do such research often had difficulties publishing. Many Polish publications on labor matters appeared only because they were subsidized or published by Germany's Friedrich Ebert Foundation. And when I asked a Hungarian colleague why he didn't publish locally, in a single volume, his many different articles on labor and postcommunist industrial relations presented at international conferences and frequently published abroad, he replied simply that no publishers were interested.)[34] The ideological legacy of postcommunism thus makes difficult overcoming the anti-labor tendencies so dominant in that period.

By "organizational" obstacles, I mean the plethora of small firms that have taken the place of the large, unified enterprises of the past. Such firms are difficult to organize in any environment but are particularly difficult in the postcommunist context since unions in general now serve so poorly as a model. The new types of union officials would like to change this, but they now have a problem simply getting their foot in the door. Unions were terribly weakened even in the old state-owned firms, for when privatization and restructuring came, these firms devolved into a host of spin-off firms, created as entirely new entities. Yet union membership did not travel automatically, and few employees rejoined. Having lost their base in the old state firms, never having had one in new private firms, and now confronting myriad small firms with managements predisposed against unions and workforces inexperienced with them, unions will find it extremely tough to create that base now. With unions and labor relations having become "institutionally consolidated into a rather liberal and flexible labor regime," as Stephen Crowley puts it,[35] even a growing desire for more assertive unions is unlikely to bear fruit.

Structural obstacles to union revival refer to the new political economy that has taken shape in the postcommunist era, including both the investment patterns and the industrial relations regimes that have crystallized over time. In two important articles, Bohle and Greskovits have detailed the way Eastern Europe's insertion into the global

economy has affected labor. In the first, they show that most of the investment Eastern Europe received in the 1990s went to the "labor-intensive capital goods industries" that are least conducive to strong unionism, as opposed to the "capital-intensive consumer goods industries" that are most conducive. The result is that while international capital transforms and even "modernizes" Eastern Europe, this does not produce the union power, not to mention the social democratic neocorporatism, that came to the West. "The social model [of the West] has not traveled to the East," they conclude, "because its socio-economic foundations . . . have not traveled either."[36]

In a second article, Bohle and Greskovits demonstrate that even though the region has now produced diverse industrial relations regimes, none of them is particularly propitious for union development. They do differentiate between the Baltic states on the one hand, where workers' rights are poorly articulated and ethnic divisions with Russians are used to limit social protection, and the Central European countries of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia on the other, where electoral pressures in the context of an inclusive nationalism (due to few ethnic minorities onto whom to foist economic costs) provide for more rights and better social protection. But then they show that in both types of regimes collective bargaining is low, tripartite negotiations are regularly bypassed, and unions are marginalized in public policy decisions. Both models, in other words, are varieties of neoliberalism, a point they underscore by calling the first model "neoliberal" and the second "embedded neoliberalism". (The sole "neocorporatist" exception they find is Slovenia, population two million.) Thus, even though proximity to Western markets has generated recent new economic investment in the area, which could potentially redress the adverse investment profile they write about in their earlier article, they note that there has been "no . . . recovery of unions and negotiated industrial relations anywhere in the region," and that "even the major skill-intensive investors seem to prefer individual . . . deals with their workers and public administrations to nationally or sectorally organized interest mediation."[37]

Institutions, once created, have a tendency to persevere. Unions may be less influential in Western Europe today than a few decades ago, but their long and deeply embedded presence, with extensive resources and lingering symbolic resonance as the force that bequeathed the benefits citizens now enjoy, means they are likely to survive as strong social actors. Even in France, with the lowest union membership in Europe, official attacks on unions continue to elicit a powerful negative public response. The problem in Eastern Europe is not that labor was weakened after 1989—it was not even independent before then—but that it was *created* as a weak actor. Trade unions in the East lack the status and resources that keep unions flourishing in the West. They confront the global economy not from an initial position of strength, as in the West, but from a position of weakness, uncertainty, and popular indifference. In this way, it is the legacies not of communism but of postcommunism that constitute the key obstacles to labor revival.

The Rise of Aristocratic Unionism, or Is Mexico Again the Model?

What does all this mean for the future? Since skilled workers, as is common, have played so important a role in union developments so far, we can best begin to answer this by looking at how their understanding of conflicts and cleavages has evolved in the postcommunist era. At the outset, as we have seen, the skilled workers who ran the unions tended to side with reformers and against their rank and file, leading to a particularly weak union movement. They did so because they embraced what can be called a "producerist," rather than a class-based, view of social cleavages. Although a class perspective sees the central workplace divide as the one between workers and employers, a producerist perspective sees the dominant social cleavage to be that between "producers" and "non-producers." In this view, embraced by many nineteenth-century labor movements in the West, such as the Knights of Labor in the United States, "producers" refer both to skilled laborers and those employers intimately involved in the production process but excludes the non-skilled workers said to be cheapening and degrading the "manly" process of production. As Victoria Hattam tells it, in her historical account of unionism in the United States, it is only when the American Federation of Labor emerged that a class perspective supplanted the producerist one.[38]

East European unionists in the postcommunist era were producerists *par excellence*. They saw themselves as skilled laborers ready to work together with market reformers in order to get rid of excess workers and turn the workplace into a site where *their* labor would be valued and well rewarded. And now that postcommunism is over, and the workplace has been so transformed, these skilled laborers are beginning to embrace a class perspective, in which they seek to advance their own interests against those of the owners, with whom they no longer believe they share a common interest.

But if Eastern union leaders have thus come to be more like the American Federation of Labor than the Knights of Labor, they are further away than before from building a CIO. In other words, they may be more ready to engage in conflict with their own employers, but they still do not seek to build a broad labor movement that includes both skilled and unskilled workers. Such a broad movement is precisely what they have been running from. The postcommunist legacy is thus likely to lead to a divided labor movement. A likely scenario is that instead of large industrial unions representing all workers in the enterprise, such as Eastern Europe had in the past, and instead of large labor confederations seeing themselves as representatives of all workers, as has been the rule in the postwar West, we would see smaller unions of skilled workers, exercising clout on behalf of a relatively small elite, while other unions, existing chiefly in the public sector, would flounder. This would be a unionism for a new labor aristocracy, premised on a disavowal of class solidarity. It would be a unionism like in Mexico or Venezuela—or, for that matter, like in much of the West about a hundred years ago—where unions effectively represent skilled workers

in the leading economic sectors, while the poorest laborers in other sectors are left out of the bargain and on their own.[39]

In this scenario, some workers in the East could benefit from labor's decline in the West, to the extent that the East receives investment by capital fleeing high-wage countries for low-wage havens. But only some workers. The majority are likely to be left out of this new arrangement, as Bohle and Greskovits argue is already happening.

As for national union federations that try to bring together unions from the private and public sectors, and that seek to do new organizing, they will not find it easy. This again is due to the legacy of postcommunism. Union officials may now finally be ready to be active trade unionists again. But so many years of postcommunism have left many reluctant to join. Union officials spent so long being distant and disdainful to the workers they did represent that many of those who they would now *like* to represent don't see them as competent representatives. At the very moment when unions are able to recreate themselves, then, they face profound obstacles of their own past making.

So, the paradox is that it is precisely why unionists did not want to be unionists a short while ago—their attitude to the workplace—that makes them want to be unionists today. Yet it is precisely their behavior as unionists in the postcommunist era that makes it so difficult to be successful unionists today. The postcommunist legacy is a heavier burden today than the communist one.

Notes

1. This paper originated in a request to reflect on possible directions for East European labor, taking into account developments not fully addressed in my 2005 book The Defeat of Solidarity (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press). Some of the points discussed here were raised in a less developed form in my earlier article "After Postcommunism," in Craig Phelan, ed., *The Future of Organised Labour* (London: Peter Lang, 2006).

2. See the collection of essays in Stephen Crowley and David Ost, eds., *Workers After Workers' States: Labor and Politics in Postcommunist Eastern Europe* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); also see Stephen Crowley, "Explaining Labor Weakness in Postcommunist Europe: Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspective," *East European Politics and Societies* 18:3 (2004).

3. European Commission, *Industrial Relations in Europe 2004* (Brussels, Belgium: European Commission), 19, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/news/2005/jan/industrial_relations_2004_report_en.html.

4. European Commission, *Industrial Relations in Europe 2006* (Brussels, Belgium: European Commission), 25, available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/docs/ir_report 2006_en.pdf.

5. Ibid.

6. Andras Toth, "The Failure of Social Democratic Unionism in Hungary," in Crowley and Ost, eds., *Workers After Workers' States*, 49.

7. Barbara Gąciarz, "Dynamika zbiorowych stosunków pracy," In Juliusz Gardawski, Barbara Gąciarz, Andrzej Mokrzyszewski, and Włodzimierz Pańków, eds., *Rozpad Bastionu? Związki Zawodowe w gospodarce prywatyzowanej* (Warsaw, Poland: Institute of Public Affairs, 1999).

8. David Ost, "Illusory Corporatism in Eastern Europe: Neoliberal Tripartism and Postcommunist Class Identities," *Politics and Society* 28:4 (December 2000): 503-30.

9. Ryszard Socha, "Masz pan być podmiotem," *Polityka* 3 (November 2001).

10. European Commission, *Industrial Relations in Europe 2006*.

11. European Commission, *Industrial Relations in Europe 2004*, 154.

12. Ibid., 158.

13. Paul Kubicek, *Organized Labor in Postcommunist States* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004); David Ost and Marc Weinstein, "Unionists Against Unions: Towards Hierarchical Management in Post-Communist Poland," *East European Politics and Societies* 13:1 (1999).

14. Jacek Kurczewski, *The Resurrection of Rights in Poland* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993).

15. Much of my previous work has documented this for the Polish case, but cross-national studies show it to be true throughout the region, and case studies document this in Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia. On Poland, see David Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); for regional studies, Crowley and Ost, eds., *Workers After Workers' States*; and Kubicek, *Organized Labor in Postcommunist States*; on Hungary, Laszlo Neumann, "Decentralised Collective Bargaining in Hungary," *International Journal of Comparative Labor Law and Industrial Relations* 16:2 (2000), and "Circumventing Trade Unions in Hungary: Old and New Channels of Wage Bargaining," *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 3:2 (1997); on the former Czechoslovakia, Anna Pollert, *Transformation At Work* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000); on Romania, David Kideckel, *Getting By in Postsocialist Romania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

16. George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971); Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi, and Eleanor Townsley, *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists* (London: Verso, 1998).

17. Elizabeth Dunn, *Privatizing Poland: Baby Food, Big Business, and the Remaking of the Polish Working Class* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 78.

18. Marek Pliszkiewicz, "Trójstronno**sc** w krajach Europy Srodkowej i Wschodniej," in *Syndykalizm Współczesny i jego Przyszłość* (łódź: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1996), 251-67.

19. Anka Hassel, *Wage Setting, Social Pacts and the Euro: A New Role for the State* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

20. See Juliusz Gardawski and Guglielmo Meardi, "Keep Trying? Polish Failures and Half-Successes in Social Pacting" (paper presented at international conference of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, San Jose, Costa Rica, June 2008).

21. Magdalena Bernaciak, "Stop Bolkestein! An Analysis of East-West Trade Union Mobilization Against the Draft Services Directive" (paper presented at Annual Doctoral Conference 2007, Central European University, available at http://web.ceu.hu/polsci/ADC/2007).

22. Describing the privatized food-processing plant in Poland where she worked, Elizabeth Dunn, in *Privatizing Poland*, shows how educated young employees skilled at kowtowing to management and learning new business styles became elevated, often over people who knew the work process better.

23. Gardawski, Gąciarz, Mokrzyszewski, and Pańków, eds., *Rozpad Bastionu?*

24. These and other quotes below are from my conversations in Mielec, May 1994.

25. Gertrude Schroeder, "Soviet regional policy and CMEA integration," In U.S. Congress, ed., *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1979).

26. Georgi M. Derluguian, *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucuses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

27. Victor Zaslavsky, *Neo-Stalinist State: Class, Ethnicity and Consensus in Soviet Society* (White Plains, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1982).

28. Beverly J. Silver, *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization Since 1870* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.

29. The survey, carried out by Marc Weinstein and myself, is discussed in Ost and Weinstein, "Unionists Against Unions."

30. Silver, *Forces of Labor*, 20.

31. On the pervasiveness of these kinds of protests, see Grzegorz Ekiert and Jan Kubik, *Rebellious Civil Society: Popular Protest and Democratic Consolidation in Poland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

32. These are classic examples of Silver's "boundary-drawing strategies." Although capital likes to cross borders in search of the cheapest labor and then create segmented labor markets to restrict labor gains only to certain privileged sectors, labor often seeks to enhance its chances by pushing for exclusion of immigrants. See Silver, *Forces of Labor*, 24.

33. An exception is Henryk Domanski; see, for example, his *On the Verge of Convergence: Social Stratification in Eastern Europe* (Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press, 2000).

34. Conversation with Laszlo Neumann, Budapest, 2003.

35. Crowley, "Explaining Labor Weakness," 429.

36. Dorothee Bohle and Bela Greskovits, "Capital, Labor, and the Prospects of the European Social Model in the East" (working paper 58, Program on Central and Eastern European Working Paper Series, Harvard University, 2004).

37. Dorothee Bohle and Bela Greskovits, "Neoliberalism, Embedded Neoliberalism, and Corporatism: Towards Transnational Capitalism in Central-Eastern Europe," *West European Politics* 30:3 (May 2007): 462.

38. See the discussion by Victoria Hattam, *Labor Visions and State Power: The Origins of Business Unionis in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

39. Melvin Croan was the first to write about Mexico as a model for East European development, hypothesizing already in the 1970s that its authoritarian but not totalitarian model might be the way the region develops. For his later reflections on that idea, and my discussion of its relevance for labor, see Melvin Croan, Thomas Skidmore, David Ost, Lawrence Graham, and Eric Hershberg, "Is Latin America the Future of Eastern Europe?" *Problems of Communism* 41:3 (May-June, 1992).