

words carried more credibility in certain Latin American circles than those of gringo diplomats. Coups were called off in Bolivia, Peru, and Guatemala, and the Latino generals and colonels obeyed orders from their elected civilian leaders. Democracy proved contagious, until the governments of virtually the entire region had to submit to the popular verdict.

This, then, is the moment we have been fighting for, with our major enemy in a state of confusion and despair, and our own revolutionary values achieving a degree of success never before seen, and only rarely imagined. The front-line combatants in the Second Democratic Revolution take their inspiration from us, and now is the time for us to press our advantage to ensure that this victory will not be frittered away. Alas, a surprising number of voices—some of them highly distinguished—suggest that we should withdraw from the international arena. Irving Kristol has confessed to being unable to generate interest in the struggles for democracy in faraway places like Burma, and he dismisses the Lithuanians' demands for independence with a sympathetic shrug. Patrick Buchanan thinks we have done enough for the Europeans and the Japanese, and wants the boys to come home and tend their own fires.

Like all good conservatives, such people are uncomfortable in the midst of revolutionary turmoil. The rough and tumble of mass movements, the chaos of disintegrating empires and falling tyrants, are unfamiliar and uncongenial; they prefer orderly change and the rule of law and argue that what remains to be done is best done by the inhabitants of the newly freed foreign lands. I believe they are wrong, above all because this is our revolution. We planted the seeds two hundred years ago, and we must participate in the harvest.

Furthermore, the war is not over. The Soviet Union still stands, or wobbles, under heavy challenge from the several republics that wish to break away from the collapsing Kremlin. It is in our interest that the Soviet Union lose effective control over much of its present territory, and that independent, democratic governments be established in the maximum number of cases. We must make it clear to Gorbachev that anything he does to stop this process will cost him future favors. The President's refusal to support the Lithuanians openly was profoundly discouraging to all the peoples and nations struggling for freedom, both within the old Empire and elsewhere, and reinforced the earlier appeasement of the massacre in Tiananmen Square. The cause of human

At the end of World War II, when our ambassador to the Soviet Union, Averell Harriman, advised Secretary of State Cordell Hull to try to influence the Soviets on the Polish issue, Hull replied, "I don't want to deal with piddling little issues. We must deal with the main issues." The main issues, in Hull's view, were the voting procedures in the United Nations. Compared to issues of this magnitude, the matter of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe—which triggered the Cold War—was small potatoes, indeed.

While it is easy to laugh at the obtuseness of Cordell Hull, U.S. Middle East policy on the eve of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait suggested that his spirit lives on. Everyone knew that Saddam Hussein is ruthless, ambitious, and daring; everyone knew that he had acquired little from his invasion of Iran beyond a ruined economy and a vast external debt; everyone knew—or should have known—of Iraq's long-standing territorial claims against Kuwait. But the possibility of Iraq's invading Kuwait seems to have occurred to no one.

Not that Secretary of State James Baker is uninterested in the Middle East; in fact, he seems, obsessed with it. But, like his predecessor, Secretary Baker had no time for "piddling little issues" like Iraq's claims against Kuwait. He was after bigger game—the Middle East "peace process"—and he was too preoccupied adjudicating such thorny issues as whether Palestinian Arabs residing in East Jerusalem might participate in the Cairo negotiations if they maintained a second residence in Nablus to focus on less weighty matters.

I suppose one should join scholars like George Kennan, Henry Kissinger, and the late Hans Morgenthau in deploring this "legalistic" tradition in American foreign policy—a tradition which, in any crisis, goes unerringly for the capillary. Yet in this most recent crisis, the absence of a strategic approach could have served our long-term national interests rather well.

Consider what probably would have happened had we assessed the Iraqi threat correctly. We would have offered firm assurances to the Emir of Kuwait of our steadfastness and resolve to save his kingdom. We would have threatened Saddam Hussein with grave consequences should he invade his tiny neighbor. Had Saddam ignored our threats, we would surely have felt that a failure to respond militarily would undermine the credibility of our alliances around the world. Hence, the United States would in all likelihood

have gone to war for the sake of Kuwait's territorial integrity.

This, of course, is just as Kuwait would have wanted it. Even after Iraq's armed forces had effectively dispatched his nation, Kuwait's ambassador to the U.S. was openly calling for American military action. That such action could lead to considerable loss in American lives was no concern of his. On the contrary, it no doubt seemed just and proper to this distinguished member of the Al-Sabah dynasty that Americans should pay a blood tax so that his fellow clansmen might continue to levy an oil tax on America and the world.

Why should Americans agree to such a bargain? Editorial writers have invoked the need to stand up to international piracy. But surely the Kuwaitis, who played their part in the "oil-shocks" of 1974 and 1979, who caused massive economic dislocations in the industrial world and tremendous suffering in the Third World—surely the Kuwaitis are no less piratical than the Iraqis. Thus, no issue of principle is involved. The only question is: Should we save the weaker pirate from the stronger pirate?

Those who answer yes make their argument in balance-of-power terms. Iraq seeks hegemony in the Persian Gulf. It is in our interest that it not succeed. Having taken Kuwait, Iraq must be deterred from further conquest. If this entails the threat—and reality—of U.S. military intervention, so be it.

The balance-of-power approach has many able advocates in this country and abroad. Unfortunately, most of them assume that their approach is the *only* way of thinking strategically. It is not. There is another, more fruitful way of approaching the Persian Gulf crisis—the Hegelian way.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel has been much in the news lately. First, former State Department official Francis Fukuyama cited Hegel in defense of his "end of history" thesis. Next, Czech President Vaclav Havel used Hegel's terminology in a speech to Congress that explained why "consciousness" precedes "being" (or is it the other way around?).

If Hegel were, as they say, around today, what would he make of the Persian Gulf? No doubt the first thing that would strike this historically minded philosopher is the anachronistic character of the Gulf regimes. Elsewhere the world is groping, slowly but inexorably, toward democracy, but in the Gulf, tribal clans like the Al-Sabahs

and the Saudis rule in feudal splendor.

Another thing he would surely note is the respect and deference accorded these feudal potentates by the rest of mankind. Even the U.S., the most powerful democratic nation in the world, appears to hold these corrupt despots in special awe.

"How has this absurd situation come about?" he would ask. Because the Arabs own the oil, we would tell him.

"But why don't you simply take the oil away from these outrageous pirates?" Because that is contrary to international law, we would respond.

"But even that British *Dinkelspiel*, John Stuart Mill, had the sense to observe that the norms of international morality do not apply between civilized nations and barbarians," Hegel would counter. But Mill was undoubtedly an imperialist and a racist, we would reply. We, on the other hand, are law-abiding members of the international community.

At this point, shaking his head in disbelief, Hegel would notice Saddam Hussein. "Ah, my old friend Napoleon, reincarnated as a Semite!" Hegel would immediately grasp that, just as Napoleon had been designated by History to sweep away the old order in Europe, so is Saddam History's chosen instrument to remake the Persian Gulf. Hegel would recognize the dialectical nature of the historical process: First, Saddam extends his sway over Kuwait, the Gulf Emirates, and Saudi Arabia. Then the U.S. and its allies, unwilling to act against the "conservative" sheikdoms of Araby but horrified at the prospect of the "Hitlerite" Saddam gaining control over their oil supply, finally do what they should have done in 1973—invade the Gulf, topple Saddam, and—as Hegel's most famous disciple put it—"expropriate the expropriators." And so, by a roundabout and totally unexpected route, the West would regain control of its economic destiny, the feudal era would draw to a close in the Gulf, and Hegel's faith in the "cunning of History" would stand vindicated.

All this may be fanciful. But is it any more fanciful for democratic America to commit lives and treasure to defend a handful of wretched Arab regimes—regimes, moreover, which then use their American-guaranteed security to threaten and despoil the West? In the Gulf, as elsewhere, we must define our objectives carefully, and devise the means to attain them. It cannot be our aim to guarantee the Houses of Sabah and Saud in perpetuity. A new age requires new thinking.

—Saul Lewis

GO TO HEGEL

liberty is universal, and to compromise it in one place damages it everywhere.

Although the Warsaw Pact is dead and it is hard to imagine a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, the Soviet Union continues to produce weapons at very near its traditionally frightening rate. Why? Unless it is assumed that the Soviet marshals are living in dread of a NATO invasion, it must be concluded that someone in the Kremlin has an offensive plan for these weapons. We should not encourage the Soviets to believe in a foreign quick fix to their domestic ills. We need to remain strong, at least until there has actually been a significant cut in arms or arms manufacture, or further disintegration of the Soviet Union itself. Moreover, we need military power to defend the cause of freedom elsewhere. The recent adventures of Saddam Hussein should remove any lingering doubts about the advantages of raw power.

We have an enormous stake in seeing that the new democracies succeed. Otherwise, the blow to the future of democracy—and therefore to our national security—will be monumental. Years hence, we will see a generation of embittered democrats come to power convinced that the United States is not only an unreliable ally but a hypocritical one as well. There is no shortage of democracies under siege: narcoterrorism threatens several Latin American countries; El Salvador and Nicaragua are racked with internal conflict; Pakistani president Ghulam Ishaq Khan used military backing in August to oust democratically elected Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her Pakistani People's party; and disease and war menace much of Africa. If De Klerk's efforts to liberalize South Africa fail, all of sub-Saharan Africa will suffer enormously. We can—must—do our best to support those



fighting for our common ideals.

Nor is the struggle over in Central and Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia, intelligence officers are on trial for continuing to tap phones and bug the homes and offices of dissident leaders, even after the "Velvet Revolution." There is a great debate in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia about whether vengeance is a wise policy at this juncture. Should former leaders be put on trial? If so, how many of them? Such questions are made more difficult by the fact that democrats in Central and Eastern Europe are often missing crucial elements in their own histories.

The obligation to involve ourselves in building free societies does not end at the borders of the Soviet Empire.

In Prague last July, I commented to a top journalist that I had spent time with one of the leading Czech defectors, General Sejna. The journalist reacted as if someone had set off a rocket under his seat, for he had believed the official version, that Sejna had died in the attempt more than twenty years ago.

The American government has pieces of the puzzle that we must share. We will discover that it is a reciprocal process, for they know the true story of the terror network, as well as the story of those of our own citizens who were used—consciously or otherwise—by the governments of the Soviet bloc. The East Europeans have already opposed some actions of the former secret services; we should be providing their citizens with as much information as we can reasonably declassify and publish. Together, we might reliably reconstruct the Cold War years. As we do, we will find the Poles uniquely useful, for the Polish underground has spent much of the past decade assembling and publishing the true history of postwar Poland.

Then there are the massive problems of reconstruction: How to build democracy? How to build a free-market economy? As Irwin Stelzer noted in *Commentary* earlier this year, the notion of a massive aid program for the new democracies makes very little sense, for only after the creation of free political and economic institutions can foreign aid and foreign investment be effectively absorbed. The Poles have done the most so far, making their currency convertible, removing price controls on thousands of items, and preparing to lift wage controls. The Hungarians have done a bit, the Czechs next to nothing, but this is the least of it. The factories and businesses of these countries are overstaffed, underskilled, and

atrociously maintained. And there is hardly a businessman in all of Eastern and Central Europe who knows how to quantify his activities: What are his costs, his cash flow, his profit margin, his tax liabilities? These are the questions they must learn to answer if their countries are going to make it.

We can bring such would-be entrepreneurs to the United States as interns, giving them hands-on experience in running similar enterprises (the National Forum Foundation in Washington is running a worthy pilot program). We can bring them to our business schools, or send American business-

men and professors to lecture to them over there (it is amazing how many American businessmen speak Hungarian, Czech, or Polish). In like manner, we can bring politicians, journalists, and others to the United States for practical training in democracy. They can work in, or watch, our legislative and executive branches, intern at our newspapers, compare notes with our journalism professors, and study our national news broadcasts. We should emulate a particularly intelligent form of foreign aid now being given the East Europeans by the Common Market countries, which are paying the salaries of West Europeans now "on loan" to the ministries of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. The concept has been copied by the East Germans, who in at least three cases have hired West Germans as mayors of their cities.

These activities sound so simple that one assumes they have already been done, but very little has happened, and those who have tried have been profoundly frustrated. Czech émigrés in Canada, for example, raised money to teach democracy in Czech schools this past spring. The money was sent, the (Czech-speaking) instructors arrived, but the education bureaucrats blocked the initiative. As good Communists they did not want to see heretical doctrines creep into the curriculum, and as good bureaucrats they resisted change.

Such examples show that the damage done by Communism was much more profound than is generally understood. It was not merely the day-to-day oppression and misery; it was a violent separation from the knowledge and the skills of the civilized world. We need to participate in the internal affairs of the new democracies, giving our exper-

tise, investing our money, opening our doors to those who want to study our methods. These things are best done by private organizations, but they are far more likely to succeed if our national leaders encourage and inspire them.

The obligation to involve ourselves in building free societies does not end at the borders of the Soviet Empire, any more than the democratic revolution began or ended there. Insofar as we can advance the democratic cause in Kenya or Zaire, Burma, or Panama, we should do so. Indeed, as many businessmen are discovering, it is very difficult to do business in Eastern Europe, because one must eliminate a great deal of rubbish and debris from the Communist era. Starting from scratch, as one often must in Africa, is in many ways easier than in the old Empire.

It has been argued that, in a period of huge national deficits, the government cannot assume worldwide burdens or support a large foreign-aid program, and should encourage Germany and Japan to assume a considerable amount of that obligation. The argument is half true: the Germans and Japanese should certainly be fully engaged (the Germans are, and the Japanese are doing more every year). But this does not exempt us from our duties. If our national leaders encourage American entrepreneurs to invest in the emerging democracies—offering tax credits and other incentives along the way—and provide some hands-on expertise to the new democracies, then we shall grow alongside them. If Africa and Latin America finally begin to develop, we shall have gained business partners as well as democratic friends.

Not least, our active participation in the Second Democratic Revolution will do wonders for our own people. Few generations have been privileged to live through a time of such excitement and promise, yet we are strangely subdued. Some of this is the fault of the President, who apparently feels that passion is not appropriate for a government such as his. The rest can be attributed to the traditional American disdain for international affairs, entangling alliances, and the rest. We would do well to recall Thomas Paine's words:

The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

"By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue," he wrote, "by cowardice and submission, the sad choice of a variety of evils." □



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TALES FROM TWO CITIES (I)

PETERSBURG

by Maurice Cranston

Leningrad claims, with some justice, to be one of the most beautiful cities in the world, displaying, like Venice and Amsterdam, its finest buildings along the banks of rivers and canals. It is also one of the most depressing cities in the world because these rivers and canals are deserted. The Soviet regime does not approve of boats, which can be sailed down to the Gulf of Finland and on to freedom. So all you see are police launches and pleasure craft for tourists or, further downstream, the occasional jetfoil for important passengers. As you wander beside the wide Neva, or the Fontanka or Griboyedova canals that wind through the center of the city, you pass hundreds of landing stages where no vessel has tied up for over seventy years; and from pre-revolutionary prints and photographs you can see that there was once more navigation here than in Venice itself.

Italian architects designed so many of the principal monuments and buildings that you might not believe you were in Russia but for the gold-encrusted domes and towers of the Church of the Savior's Blood, or the massive functionalist barracks which serves as the Leningrad Hotel. Venice is said to be crumbling, but Leningrad is in much worse shape. Many of the old noblemen's mansions and grand bourgeois apartment blocks are dismal shells enclosed in rusty scaffolding, from which fragments sometimes drop on passersby. The streets are thunderous with traffic and the air is thick with the vile fumes of low-octane gasoline. Since there are no barges on the waterways to carry heavy freight, trucks in endless convoys carry stone and rubble for a giant dam being built somewhere down the Neva. Many of the better-paid workers and petty party functionaries drive nasty little East European models, battered and unwashed.

At the end of the day traffic stops, because the main bridges close every

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night. In effect, it is a curfew. On summer nights, when there is hardly any darkness this far north, there is a strange, sad beauty about the silent city, the river so wide that one can see at the same time the splendid palaces of the Hermitage, the noble fortress of Peter and Paul, and the proud Rostral columns of the Strelka, incongruous amidst the bankrupt socialism of Leningrad today.

Those grand Imperial buildings have been preserved and restored, while the houses of private families have been left to rot. Although it is the monuments that tourists come to see, restoration has not been for tourists' sake; the Communist regime has long had imperial dreams of its own. Stalin saw himself increasingly as the successor of Peter the Great and other heroic Emperors, and made Soviet relics of Imperial relics. At the Hermitage, or the Winter Palace or the Peterhof or Tsarskoye Selo, infinite pains are taken to reproduce eighteenth-century moldings and carvings in the palace rooms to the standard of the Emperor's skilled artisans, while in the stores of Leningrad there is hardly a stick of furniture for the ordinary housewife. There is not much food either.

In Leningrad this summer, everyone said that the food shortages were worse than they had been for several years. Outside the *gastronom*, or food shop, you would see a line of people with empty baskets: that was a sign there was something for sale. No line, no food. By way of explanation one hears the word *perestroika*. Gorbachev's policy is blamed for the failure of the economy, and one can see why—people work if they are rewarded or if they are afraid. Under Gorbachev, workers are neither afraid nor yet rewarded with anything worth having, so work slackens, or there are strikes and productivity declines still further.

Crime is becoming widespread. Of the foreign writers with whom I traveled, one was mugged outside the Kirov opera house, another had his watch discreetly removed, two, unwisely using the Soviet airline Aeroflot, lost their

baggage; I had shirts and coats stolen from my hotel room. Touts are everywhere, trying to sell pots of caviar or buy foreign currency for rubles by offering tourists four or five times the official rate. Even solid working-class people are eager to accumulate enough dollars or deutschemarks to go to Yugoslavia and buy second- or third-hand cars to drive around Leningrad.

I write of Leningrad, but that may not be its name much longer. At the Writers' Union meetings I attended, every speaker referred to the place as Petersburg, and since then the local council has asked the government to restore the original name—although strictly speaking that should be St. Petersburg, because the city was dedicated to the Apostle, not to the Emperor. Lenin is not loved in the place where he arrived in a sealed train from Switzerland in April 1917 to overthrow the constitutional monarchy of Kerensky; at the Lenin Museum on Khalturina Street, the custodian said: "Only foreigners come here nowadays."

At the Writers' Union, the members were bitterly divided among themselves. The split was not simply between "conservatives" and "radicals": it was between the mediocre writers who would be lost without the patronage of the state and the good writers who welcomed both the opportunities and the risks of free press. As it is, the party hacks envy the success of good authors who can get their work published abroad. The hacks know that if there were a free market at home they would be lucky to be published at all. The Writers' Union itself might go, or, at any rate, cease to be a club where writers with a union card enjoy far better meals than anyone can at home or in restaurants open to the public.

The Soviet Union has so far kept intact the main structures of organized privilege. If you follow the rules you may do quite well: if you try to go your own way, you are lost, even as a foreigner. Jean-Jacques Rousseau being my special subject, I asked permission

to pursue some research at the Saltykov-Shchedrin library on some Rousseau manuscripts which landed there as part of the archive that Catherine the Great bought from Diderot in the eighteenth century. I wrote the librarian for permission, took a taxi to the premises, and presented my card to the directorate, but all I heard was "*Ne vkhodit*," which even I could understand meant no. So I turned to the bureaucracy of the Writers' Union, and four hours later I was driven by a chauffeur to a side-door of the Saltykov-Shchedrin and ushered into a vast reading room, where I sat alone in the presence of the world's richest French Enlightenment archives. I noticed that the list of readers had had no names added since Arthur M. Wilson of Dartmouth College had worked there on his biography of Diderot some forty years ago.

I would have expected the Soviets to make more of Diderot, since his opinions were at one stage very like those of Stalin on such subjects as atheism, determinism, imperialism, and even art. Perhaps the Soviets also remember that, after a few weeks' experience of enlightened despotism in the empire of Catherine the Great, Diderot changed his mind altogether and ended his days as a champion of Montesquieu's kind of conservative liberalism.

One writer honored in today's Leningrad is the poet Anna Akhmatova. The small apartment where she lived on the Fontanka canal has been turned into a museum, and foreign tourists are encouraged to visit; there are moving souvenirs of her achievements and sufferings under Stalin, and of the persecution of her upper-class family under Lenin. Freedom of speech has undoubtedly made its debut in Leningrad, and Gorbachev has said he wants it to prevail, both in the press and in broadcasting. But in the absence of economic freedom, the media remain at the mercy of those who control the instruments of publishing—the printing presses, the paper mills, the transmitters, and the studios. Such people, like the party hacks at the Writers' Union, are often sworn enemies of freedom.