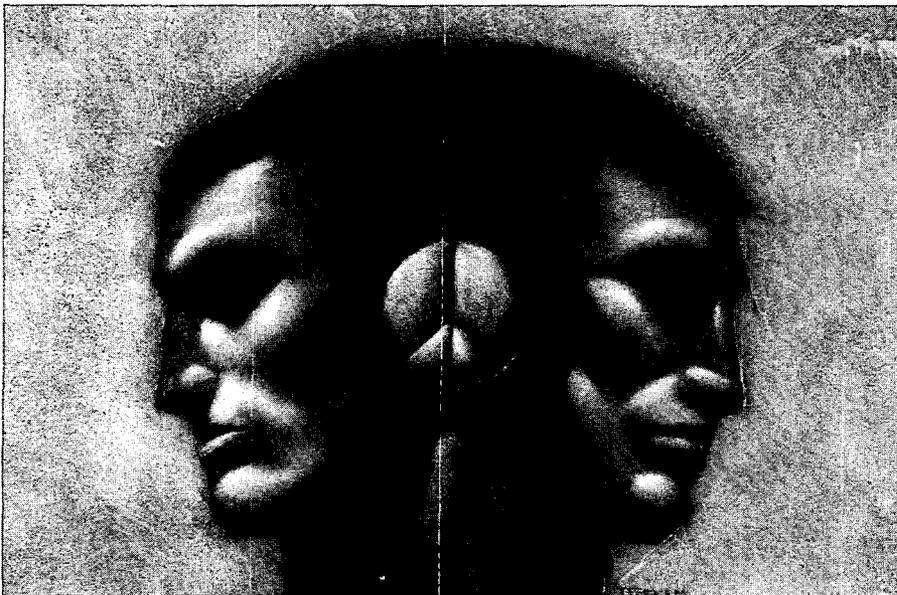


Cloaking Device

BY JULIANA GERAN PILON

In Search of Civil Society: Independent Peace Movements in the Soviet Bloc, edited by Vladimir Tismaneanu, New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, 193 pages, \$35.00



To understand the phoenix-like emergence of civil society in the former Soviet Bloc, one must appreciate the imaginative ways that individuals have found to circumvent the limits imposed by totalitarian governments. Vladimir Tismaneanu, a Romanian by birth and education who was recently named associate director of the Center for the Study of Post-Communist Societies at the University of Maryland, is eminently equipped to explore this theme. His examination of independent peace movements, which includes excellent analyses by Central-Eastern European scholars and activists, sheds light on the project of reconstruction after the fall of communism.

Peace movements offered an unusual opportunity for dissidents within the Soviet empire to escape the rigidity of the totalitarian system. Since "peace" was,

after all, the domain of official communist rhetoric, its traditionally anti-Western and anticapitalist overtones served to mask, at least temporarily, the true objectives of the independent movements. Thus, Tismaneanu writes, "single issues of broad social significance—human rights, peace, conscientious objection, ecology, preservation of historical monuments, and so on—are embraced and promoted by independent activists in the attempt to further their agenda for change without granting the government a rationale for overall repression."

The underlying goals of the independent peace movements in the Soviet Bloc distinguished them from their Western counterparts. The two sets of movements had different motivations, interests, and philosophical principles. The Eastern dissidents not only consistently

opposed the communist system in which they lived, they tended to identify with the capitalist and classical-liberal ideology to which the Western movements were hostile. This is not to deny, however, that in many areas the two sets of groups have cooperated, allowing the Eastern movements not only to survive but often to provide seeds for other organizations—the beginnings of a genuine civil society.

The independent movements are more than a decade old, dating at least as far back as the Charter 77 initiative in Czechoslovakia, whose main inspiration was profound opposition to Soviet occupation. The following year, the East German Evangelical Church signed a concordat with the ruling Socialist Union Party to try to temper East Germany's militaristic course. Futile as that particular initiative may have been, efforts within the GDR continued into the early 1980s, when a group called Social Service for Peace called for a civilian-service alternative to the draft.

Pacifism emerged even in the USSR, where 11 Moscow intellectuals founded the Group to Establish Trust between East and West. In May 1983, the group declared that true détente cannot exist until "international cooperation and contacts become part of the day-to-day existence of the average citizen."

In Poland, the birthplace of Central European anticommunist activism, pacifism took over by storm in the spring of 1985. A group of Polish independent pacifists formed the organization Freedom and Peace in response to the trial of Marek Adamkiewicz, a young draftee sentenced to a stiff prison term for refusing to take the military oath. A year later, the Chernobyl accident provoked a brush fire of pacifist actions throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Later that year, the supranational aspect of the movements became evident:

In November 1986, independent activists from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the GDR, the USSR, and Yugoslavia signed an appeal to the signatories of the Helsinki Accords emphasizing the interdependence of the three "baskets" of the Helsinki Final Act. Contrary to the official Communist line, the independent activists rejected any attempt to trade genuine freedom for peace.

This stand led to friction with Western peaceniks. In his chapter on Czechoslovakia, diplomatic historian Milan Hauner describes an exchange of letters in the early 1980s between "Vaclav Racek," the pseudonym for a Czechoslovakian critic of the Western peace movements, and E.P. Thompson, a British social historian and member of European Nuclear Disarmament (END). Speaking on behalf of the East Europeans, Racek refused to subordinate human rights to "peace."

He added that Thompson's aim of a nuclear-free Europe was naive and impracticable. Indeed, Racek implied that had it not been for the NATO nuclear deterrent, the Soviet totalitarian system would have crushed the liberal freedoms of the West long ago. He told Thompson that his "identification of both blocs with 'Exterminism' is unacceptable." Racek charged that END, far from being a force for freedom, was rather "an unconscious analogy of the appeasement of the Thirties."

Hauner also cites a fascinating clandestine survey conducted in 1985 that indicates a Czechoslovakian attitude toward Western peace movements very different from the line pushed by the official propaganda machine. Commenting on that survey, analyst Zdenek Strmiska notes that "among the strongest supporters of Western pacifist movements there are those who are pro-Soviet and refuse to designate the USSR as an imperialist power."

Polish historian Christopher Lazarski's study of his country's independent peace movement makes a similar point in connection with Freedom and Peace, whose strong libertarian proclivities would place it more on the

right than on the left of the political spectrum. In July 1985, for example, the Polish pacifists declared that "a man ready to fulfill any order threatens peace more than the neutron bomb." They asked the Fourth European Nuclear Disarmament Convention in Amsterdam to "permanently include justice and civic freedoms in the notion of peace and to treat the struggle against totalitarian systems as equal to the efforts toward disarmament."

Freedom and Peace has differed sharply with Western peaceniks. For example, the group opposed the idea of

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unilateral disarmament, which it perceived as playing into the hands of Soviet militarism. In an open letter to American peace activist Joanne Landy in 1987, Polish pacifist Piotr Mienczyk expressed his concern that Western peace movements might become "a tool of Soviet policy and propaganda."

The Trust Group, a quasi-independent peace organization in the Soviet Union, was also at odds with Western peaceniks. In his analysis of the peace movement in the USSR, former Soviet dissident Eduard Kuznetsov quotes from a 1987 article by Trust Group member Aleksei Myasnikov: "Some of the Western peace activists complain that Trust Group members who wind up in the West join up with the 'right-wingers'....What does 'right-wingers' mean? Western peace activists call 'right-wingers' adherents of the strategy of nuclear deterrence or disarmament on the basis of parity. But what

do the 'left-wingers' propose—unilateral disarmament?....The success of pacifism in one of the superpowers could lead to a heavy defeat."

And thus the ideological fault lines were drawn. Unlike Western peaceniks, activists in totalitarian countries perceived that a commitment to "peace" is also a commitment to liberty.

The path to both is plotted in a chapter by Miklos Haraszti, a well-known human rights activist who represents the opposition Alliance of Free Democrats in the Hungarian parliament. Haraszti describes the three stages, or "eras," that he believes necessary for any communist nation in transition to democratic capitalism.

The first era is post-Stalinist, its essential feature the rise of independent initiatives. The second, which he calls post-totalitarian, involves democratization and the development of an embryonic civil society; the authoritarian regime, at this point, is on the defensive. The third phase, post-communism proper, involves the emergence of true democracy, "which builds on the forms, energies, experiences, and pluralization that were already given shape in civil society."

Implicitly skeptical of the Gorbachev approach of reform from above, Haraszti believes that the third stage cannot take place without the other two. The civil society cannot be manipulated; it must create itself. This requires time and a certain logical sequence of events; their absence in Romania explains the current chaos in that country.

This book will be helpful to anyone seeking to understand the nature of the anticommunist revolution and the direction of change in the former Soviet Bloc. While there is much reason for hope, a great deal of philosophical and practical work must be done before observers of those traumatized nations can speak not only of monochromatic "peoples" but of vigorous, pluralistic societies.

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Japanese Agent Man

BY BRINK LINDSEY

Agents of Influence, by Pat Choate, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 295 pages, \$22.95

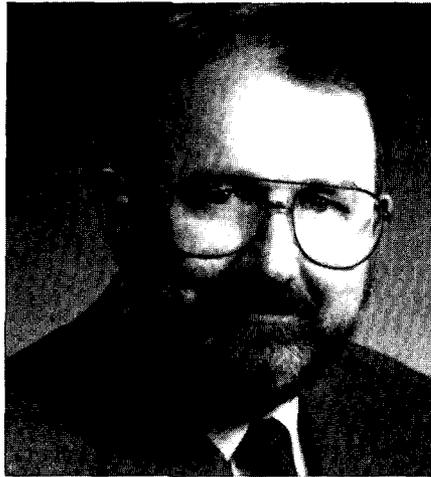
In *Agents of Influence*, Pat Choate adds an embellishment to the Japanophobia that characterizes so much of current protectionist rhetoric. The Japanese are no longer just destroying our economy; now, as a means to that goal, they are subverting the integrity of our political system as well. The book points fingers and names names, and as a result it has stirred up a fair amount of controversy. But like most conspiracy theories, Choate's thesis doesn't hold up under scrutiny.

Choate was until recently a policy analyst at TRW and is a longtime advocate of protectionist policies. He claims that the Japanese now spend \$400 million a year in this country on lawyers, lobbyists, and public relations, manipulating political processes and public opinion to favor Japanese over American economic interests. This massive infiltration campaign, says Choate, "threatens our national sovereignty."

But the villains in this book aren't so much the Japanese themselves, who after all merely play the American game of influence buying as they find it. The real bad guys are the American "agents of influence" who choose to represent Japanese interests. Choate heaps particular scorn on former U.S. officials who now argue the free-trade position for Japanese and other foreign clients and "have supported the progressive cheapening—even the fundamental corruption—of the value of national service that used to guide the conduct of our public life."

In the first place, Choate completely mischaracterizes the nature and effectiveness of Japanese influence. He gives the impression that the 1980s were a time when the United States, under the spell of foreign-paid lobbyists, tore down its trade barriers, while meekly refusing to criticize the protectionist policies of Japan and other trading partners.

In fact, precisely the opposite oc-



Pat Choate offers a new club with which to bash the Japanese.

curred. The last decade marked a sharp increase in U.S. protectionism, as well as a growing intolerance of obstacles that hindered U.S. exports to other countries' markets. From 1980 to 1988, the percentage of imports into the United States subject to substantial trade restrictions rose from 12 percent to 23 percent. Washington aimed many of these restrictions specifically at Japan. During the '80s, the United States forced Japan into imposing export limits on automobiles, steel, and machine tools. Over the same period, the United States also levied special "antidumping" duties on dozens of different Japanese products. In addition, the threat of antidumping liability forced price increases on an untold number of other Japanese goods.

At the same time, the United States hammered away relentlessly at real and perceived market barriers in the Japanese economy. Most notably, Washington named Japan an "unfair trader" under "Super 301" and threatened it with sanctions unless it removed trade barriers on supercomputers, satellites, and forest products. As an adjunct to the Super 301 process, the United States and Japan held

shotgun negotiations pursuant to the so-called Structural Impediments Initiative. In these talks the United States called for changes in such purely domestic policies as antitrust enforcement, public works spending, and regulation of the distribution system, on the ground that these policies indirectly impeded U.S. exports. This subjection to Super 301 is a telling comment on the relative clout of Japanese influence. The European Community, with which the United States has as many trade disputes as it does with Japan, escaped targeting under Super 301, simply because the E.C. never would have tolerated such browbeating.

The truth, then, is that the Japanese presence in American politics has been essentially a defensive one, aimed at countering the move toward greater protectionism. There have been a few tactical successes in this effort, but the general pattern has been one of steady reverses.

All of this raises a deeper objection to Choate's thesis: namely, that the Japanese political presence, considered on the whole, has been beneficial rather than harmful. For the United States to maintain open markets helps Japanese and other foreign exporters, to be sure. But more important, it helps American consumers by giving them the freedom to buy the best products at the best prices; it also helps American industry by promoting greater productivity and efficiency under the spur of foreign competition. On matters of trade policy, then, there is a congruence between foreign "special interests" and America's long-term general interest.

Until recently, there was very little organized private lobbying in favor of free trade. The main identifiable beneficiaries of open markets—consumers—are far too dispersed to make an effective lobbying force. Free trade has therefore had to depend on ideology and foreign-policy concerns for its support. By contrast, those who stand to gain from high import barriers—industries facing foreign competition—know who they are and can easily organize to apply concerted political pressure. Accordingly, in the game of insider politics, the protec-