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THE USSR AND THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1989–90: QUESTIONS OF CAUSALITY

This chapter represents an attempt to provide an answer to a two-part question. Did Soviet perestroika stir revolutionary tendencies in the nations of the “Eastern bloc” at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, and to what extent did the intensity of these tendencies lead to the upheavals that occurred in the USSR? How did the interaction between these two phenomena twenty years ago result in the profound changes that have taken place in the political map of Europe?

Before answering these questions, a frame of reference must be established. Perestroika as it is commonly understood began in the USSR in June and July of 1988 on the occasion of the debate and approval of a resolution by the nineteenth party conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Perestroika ended with the breakup of the USSR in December of 1991. Within this period of history the fundamental revolutionary events in the European nations of the “socialist commonwealth” took place. The year of 1989 was pivotal and represents the transitional stage within the cited dates. This timeframe, during which revolutionary changes were taking place in Eastern Europe, coincides precisely with the period when analogous upheavals were taking place in the Soviet Union. To borrow a metaphor, these could be seen, as it were, as a smaller doll in a larger set of nesting (*matryoshka*) dolls.

Looking back it is clear that just as the processes of perestroika drove the revolutionary changes in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, at the same time these changes had an influence on the character of the processes taking place in the birthplace of perestroika: it was a situation of mutual conditionality. Hence the entire process of transition that was transpiring over the vast distance from Berlin to Vladivostok can be considered one of cause and effect.¹

Thus, with the support of extant sources, the concept of cause and effect is essential for accurately determining the direction and fundamental nature of the factors involved in the revolutions referred to above in the nations of the “Eastern bloc” or in the “socialist commonwealth” (in Soviet parlance, part of the “international socialist system” to which, as is generally understood, also belonged countries in Asia and the Americas).

¹ It should be noted that the Russian expression used here for cause and effect, or causality, is “reciprocity” (*retsiproknost*), a term rarely applied in Russian historiography and almost never used in scholarly Russian historical texts.

It is important to place the parameters of the causality in question into a historical context. Although it may be difficult to posit a single universal, unambiguous description of these factors, one can reasonably assume that two elements held a key role: the removal of the monopoly of one party, and the transformation (both as a process and an end result) of governmental and state structures. The most radical of these took place in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

An important push behind the upheavals in the socialist-communist European countries came with the resolution of the first congress of the people's deputies of the USSR on 25 May 1989. While this congress largely represented a continuation of the policies formulated at the aforementioned nineteenth party conference one year earlier, it was at this May congress that irrevocable reforms of the political system of the USSR were acknowledged as being inevitable. In the course of executing these reforms, institutional structures opposed to the status quo were formed, leading ultimately to the dismantling of the leadership of the USSR.

At about the same time—beginning in the spring of 1989—in the nations of the “socialist commonwealth,” internal opposition was forming with the aim of grasping significant power from the current governments: in Hungary within the governing party and in Poland in the form of external opposition. At the same time the oppositional forces that were forming in the USSR were being influenced by the similar efforts in its neighboring countries. What is more, some members of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—most notably its head Mikhail S. Gorbachev—agreed with these reform movements, although they were unaware of the potential consequences they might have.

Clearly the countenance of these political reforms (with the frigid Kremlin winds rapidly subsiding) led to a further sharp intensification of the activities of the oppositional forces in the socialist nations of Europe. This is in turn evidence of the causality of the dynamics involved in the developing processes in all of the European nations of the “socialist commonwealth” as well as of the clear direction they were taking.

It is important to note that on 26 March 1989, the first round of elections for the USSR Congress of People's Deputies took place (with voter participation around 90 percent). A second round was held on 14 May. These secret-ballot elections were in part competitive. Yet the CPSU intended to retain its power, reserving one third of the seats for the party and its societal organizations. It was planned to merge the posts of the chairpersons of the soviets at all levels with those of the respective party secretaries, under the condition of their being elected into the soviets. In many ways the Soviet elections influenced the organization of the elections in Poland, although there, hopes were much lower than among the party elites in the USSR that the elections would be able to save socialism.

In June of 1989, as a result of the round table talks that had begun in April, elections under new precepts took place in Poland and brought the victory of “Solidarity.” These elections can be seen as the starting point for a wave of fundamental transformations that were then to take place in the countries of the region, basically proceeding from north to south. While the forms these transformations assumed were different, there was no question about the direction they were taking.

In Hungary, from 22 March to 18 September rounds of talks between the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party and a united opposition discussed various possibilities for reforming the state authority. In the end, the pro-Soviet powers resigned and on 23 October, the Hungarian People’s Republic was renamed the Republic of Hungary. The Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party became the Hungarian Socialist Party, with a clearly delineated social democratic agenda. The elimination of the modifiers “workers” and “people’s” was a bold step, and a significant segment of the population did not let this go by unnoticed.

Similar processes were taking place in the parties and regimes in many other countries of the region. On 9 November the Berlin Wall was breached, and with its fall the power structures of the German Democratic Republic also collapsed. In less than a year, on 3 October 1990, the two Germanys were united. It should be noted that today the complex issue of the transformation of the GDR is no longer a research focal point, at least among Russian experts: The dominating postulate of the inevitability of the GDR’s reunion with the Federal Republic of Germany has obscured many issues and given rise to a number of contradictions. For instance, the claims at the time in the discussions about the German Question that there would be a transformation of the Warsaw Pact and NATO after German reunification have been insufficiently analyzed.

A similar idea was put forward, in fact, by Václav Havel, speaking during talks with Gorbachev on 26 February 1990 in Moscow:

It is imperative to eliminate the schism in Europe and embrace a new security plan that will replace the present mutually competing structures, even if it requires finding successors to the Warsaw Pact and NATO [...] This is the only basis for dealing with the fate of the Warsaw Pact. The Warsaw Pact and NATO as military alliances shall become political affiliations and ultimately represent a single system of general European security. In a word it is necessary to finally call an end to the Second World War and eliminate the situation in which Europe became a powerful arsenal of modern weaponry. This would be a victory for peace, not a setback for the USA or the USSR.²

On 17 November 1989 the “Velvet Revolution” in Czechoslovakia began with vigorous student demonstrations. Its course and the outcome have been illuminated with all due comprehensiveness. The English historian Timothy Garton Ash has referred to the “Velvet Revolution” as a “peaceful, theatrical, negotiated re-

² Quoted in Grigorii Sevostyanov, *Revolutsii 1989 goda v stranakh Tzentralnoi Evropy. Vzglad cherez desyatletie* (Moscow: Nauka, 2001), 66.

gime change in a small Central European state.” The term itself was introduced by Ash’s Western colleagues, only to have the term adopted by Václav Havel. The oppositional Slovak leaders use the similar term “gentle.”³ While the expression “Velvet Revolution” is today usually used to refer to the ten days of events in November 1989 in former Czechoslovakia, it is possible to use the term in a broader context to characterize the changes that occurred during 1989 in the other countries in the East European region that can be defined as Central Europe.⁴

In Bulgaria, the process of removing Todor Zhivkov from all his posts and eventually ousting him began in November of the same year at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. On 18 November a one-hundred-thousand strong demonstration of the opposition took place in the center of Sofia. After this event, most of the pre-World War II political parties were reestablished.

On 22 December 1989 the insurgent populace in Romania toppled the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu. A party belonging to the Front for National Liberation advanced to power and on 29 December, the Socialist Republic of Romania became simply Romania. This however was not achieved without bloodshed. In accordance with the last proclamation of the leader of the National Liberation Front at the time, ex-communist Ion Iliescu, it was unavoidable “to institute an emergency revolutionary court to try the Ceaușescu spouses. And, in fact, as soon as the death sentence was executed on 25 December, the guns fell silent.”⁵ According to a statement by the United States, “they had no opposition to a military intervention on the part of the USSR to restore order in Romania” or to support

³ Timothy Garton Ash, “Velvet Revolution: The Prospects,” *New York Times Review of Books*, no. 19 (3 December 2009), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2009/dec/03/velvet-revolution-the-prospects/> (accessed 30 June 2013).

⁴ The term “Central Europe” derives from a historical geographical metaphor that is based on a geopolitical perception. It encompasses a range of nations stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea that share similar historical characteristics and a convergence of common perspectives. At the end of the last decade of the twentieth century, Central Europe emerged as a certain geopolitical formation distinct from the western European region and the states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (the former USSR), i.e. Eastern Europe. Among its main characteristics, a new regional identity has gradually developed which presumes that there is “a consciousness of belonging to a recognized entity as well as a similarity of common goals that form the basis of this identity of peoples and governments.” “Problemy regional’noi identichnosti tsentral’noevropeiskikh stran (“Kruglyi stol”)” *Slavyanovedenie* 3 (1997): 3–27; Yurii Novopashin, *Tsentral’naia Evropa v poiskakh novej regional’noj identichnosti* (Moscow: Institut slavyanovedeniya, 2000), 140–62; E. G. Zadorozhnyuk, “Lyubov’yu ili zhelezom dostigaetsya edinenie obshchestva?” *Vestnik Rossiiskoj Akademii nauk* 63, no. 12 (1993): 1103–8; idem, *Sotsial-demokratiya v Tsentral’noj Evrope* (Moscow: Akademiya, 2000); “Politicheskie protsessy v Tsentral’noi Evrope i stanovlenie novoi regional’noi identichnosti,” *Rossiia i sovremennyi mir*, no. 3 (2000): 104–24.

⁵ *Vremya novostei*, 22 December 2009; *Chicago Tribune*, 25 December 1989, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1989-12-25/news/8903200733_1_warsaw-pact-soviet-troops-nicolae-ceausescu (accessed 10 July 2013).

pro-democracy forces in their struggle against troops loyal to Ceaușescu. As for the USSR, it adhered to its principal doctrine of not interfering in the affairs of a socialist nation.

Finally, beginning in the spring of 1990 communists suffered continuing losses at the polls in the republics of Yugoslavia, whereby here, to a lesser extent, there were similar waves of insurgency from north to south, from Slovenia and Croatia to Serbia and Macedonia.

An analysis of the progress of events in all of these countries is replete with speculation and questions that cannot be answered. Which resident of Prague was the first to take a bunch of keys out of his pocket and rattle them so loudly that his gesture caught the attention of more than 300,000 denizens of the city? Whose actions finally led to the shots in Bucharest? How was it possible that the confrontations with the law enforcement bodies in Leipzig in October 1989 and in Berlin in November remained peaceful, despite the fact that it seemed inevitable that they would become bloody?

Looking from “below” reveals a large number of riddles. But the view from “above” also leads to a great deal of ambiguity. Some twenty years down the road, these two perspectives yield insights only if they are both used to view the events, that is, when the events are not only seen on the basis of protocols of the political parties, of the governments or of the opposition, but also by means of other sources of information such as videos or first-hand accounts of participants.

It must be emphasized that the phenomenon of the power of monopolistic communist parties being removed came about in the various countries through different means: 1) in Poland, Czechoslovakia and, to a lesser extent, in Bulgaria, in the course of a dialog between the communist party and new political forces; 2) in Hungary, in the course of different leanings within the party itself, resulting in fractions that formed opposition parties; 3) in Yugoslavia, due to a general disaffection with the party; and finally 4) the active overthrow of party authority as occurred in Romania and to a lesser extent in the GDR.⁶

In general—presuming the principle of causality—the following postulate obtains: After accommodating the principles of political renewal issuing from the

⁶ Yurii Novopashin et al., eds., *Vostochnaya Evropa na istoricheskom perelome (Ocherki revolyutsionnykh preobrazovaniy 1989–1990)* (Moscow: Institut slavyanovedeniya, 1991); G. N. Sevost'yanov et al., eds., *Revolyutsii 1989 goda v stranakh Tsentral'noi i Yugo-Vostochnoi Evropy: Vzgl'yad cherez desyatiletie* (Moscow: Nauka, 2001); E. Yu. Gus'kova, *Istoriya yugoslavskogo krizisa (1990–2000)* (Moscow: Russkoe pravo, 2001); *Strany Tsentral'no-Vostochnoi Evropy vo vtoroj polovone XX veka*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 2002); *Vlast'—obshchestvo—reformy. Tsentral'naya i Yugo-Vostochnaya Evropa: Vtoraya polovina XX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 2006); Yurii Novopashin et al., eds., *Istoriya antikommunisticheskikh revolyutsii kontsa XX veka: Tsentral'naya i Yugo-Vostochnaya Evropa* (Moscow: Nauka, 2007); Konstantin Nikiforov et al., eds., *Revolyutsii i reformy v stranakh Tsentral'noi i Yugo-Vostochnoi Evropy: 20 let spustya* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011).

USSR, the countries in question were able to find various ways of resolving the issue of monopolistic communistic parties—both at home and in the USSR. In effect this is also how the process of reform proceeded under perestroika in the country where it was born.

Thus in many crucial ways, the change in the standing of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the amendment to the sixth article of the constitution of the USSR at the third congress of the people's deputies in March of 1990 came about, at least to some degree, as a reaction to similar developments in the various countries of Central Europe. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the demise of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was a result of powerful forces from within. It was not patterned on any of the courses of action taken in the countries of the region to dissolve the single party monopoly. In fact, the Party gave up a significant part of its legitimacy to the Supreme Soviet by amending the respective section of the constitution of the USSR, which greatly weakened the Party's position.

This decision in turn hastened the constitutional reforms in the Central European countries, each in its own way introducing new laws to reform their governmental structures.

In August 1991 an attempted return to the pre-perestroika power structures in the USSR ended in failure. By this time all of the former socialist countries west of Brest had divested themselves of their socialist moniker and—applying the principle of causality for fundamental political reforms—had rendered the dissolution of party monopoly a moot point.

Already in the course of the manifestations of change a new phenomenon was emerging—the radical reform of state structures, including the downfall of socialist federations. It must be noted that the many crises and the ultimate collapse of socialism were accompanied by a number of critical ethnic conflicts. The severe consequences of such conflicts became most evident in the impact on the federal structures of Yugoslavia, which in the overview had been the weakest link in the “socialist commonwealth.” As the independence movements and the nationalist forces in the various Yugoslavian republics were pursuing their agendas, the republican communist parties progressively distanced themselves from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. At the same time, in Serbia aggressive nationalist forces were forming under the banner of an “anti-bureaucratic revolution” (remarkably similar to a campaign underway in the USSR) that aimed at rescinding the autonomy of not only of Kosovo and Vojvodina at the end of 1988, but even that of the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Disintegrative processes in the USSR proceeded almost simultaneously: Among them, at the end of 1988 the People's Front in the Baltic states began to raise the issue of independence from the USSR for Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and on 9 April 1989 the People's Front of Georgia organized a mass demonstration that was broken up with military force. Earlier, bloody skirmishes had taken

place within individual republics (Fergana) and between them (Karabakh), but these could be subdued.

These kinds of conflicts were instigated by party structures that were capable of sustaining them. As a result, a “parade of sovereignty” began. At the beginning of September 1991 the USSR recognized the independence of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and on 8 December the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, Boris Yeltsin, Leonid Kravchuk and Stanislav Shushkevich, signed the Belavezha accords, which declared the USSR dissolved. In its place the Commonwealth of Independent States was established. Just as in the ethnic conflicts, these constitutional reforms can be seen as causal links between the events in the USSR and in the countries of Central Europe.

Regarding a more fortunate outcome, namely that of the two federal socialistic republics of Czechoslovakia, the years 1988 to 1989 saw the beginning of a similar process of secession, albeit as a result of a complex process of diverse breakups both within the federal party structure and the opposition movement.

In January 1990 the fourteenth extraordinary congress of the League of Yugoslavian Communists took place, which also turned out to be its last. First the Slovene delegation and then the Croatian left the congress because their call for a reorganization of the party on the basis of a confederation was denied. This event in Yugoslavia was one of the first incidences in a process of disintegration that was taking place over an area reaching from Prague to Vladivostok. In Yugoslavia it soon became clear that this was only the first step on the path to the breakup of the federal state, whereby ethnic factors did not merely figure in the agreements but actually hastened them. On 23 December 1990, 88.5 percent of the Slovenian populace voted for independence, Croatia followed. On 25 June 1991 Slovenia and Croatia declared independence as sovereign states. On 17 November 1991, Macedonia adopted a constitution that declared its full independence, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina also declaring its independence on 6 April 1992. On 27 April 1992, Serbia and Montenegro declared their continuity with the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and founded the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

All of these steps were accompanied by declarations from the international community of nations that either supported or declined to acknowledge these states (as was also the case when Kosovo declared its independence in the new millennium). Understanding the evolution of these five national entities is a daunting task. Indeed, to appreciate some of conflicts in southeastern Europe, it might be important to remember that some people find it useful to have one or more boiling pots on their stove so that the soup can be poured onto the feet of their neighbors at an opportune moment.⁷

⁷ E. G. Zadorozhnyuk, “Balkanskii “klin”: novye vyzovy ili rostki stabil’nosti,” *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, no. 10 (2008): 121–27.

The independence of these and subsequently other states in the territory of Yugoslavia was generally sanctioned by practically all countries of Europe (including Germany, despite the fact that there the opposite took place: its unification on 3 October 1990).

The breakup of these socialistic federations bore the following pattern: the emergence and rapid escalation of ethnic movements, the development of ruling parties with nationalist tendencies—focused on their “own” republics and the formation of a union or federation. The progression of events made it apparent that what had seemed at first secondary (the postulate of “all or nothing” regarding the cultural autonomy of ethnic groups in Yugoslavia and of demagogical claims of inflated “investments” in this or that federal republic, similar to conflicts in the USSR, not to mention the “battle of the hyphen” in Czecho-Slovakia) emerged as a first priority in the context of the rapidly spreading turmoil.

The next stage of events in the posited algorithm took place in the USSR. Applying the concept of causality, of cause and effect, might be considered self-evident with regard to the experience of Yugoslavia, which was characterized by bloody military conflicts, ethnic cleansing, efforts to erect totalitarian regimes and the creation of unrecognized republics.

This was taken into account on the territory of the former USSR, where it aimed at avoiding bloody conflicts—an aim that was not reached entirely. In many ways the conflicts that occurred were akin to a smoldering peat bog, where flames are not visible on the surface but sudden flashes appear unpredictably at completely different places. Monitoring the course of these events and evaluating the data in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States is much more difficult than analyzing the events in the countries (republics) of the former Yugoslavia.

Under the prevailing conditions in the USSR from 1989 to August of 1991, what caused the various conflicts to break out? Perplexing is that fact that conflicts emerged whose intensity was unpredictable. The ethnic massacres of Azeris against Armenians in Sumgait in February 1988 and of Uzbeks against Meskhetian Turks in Fergana in June 1989 demonstrated that fierce outbursts of national protest cannot be predicted, nor are they subject to any form of regulation. At exactly the same time, sweeping government reform processes were developing in the Baltic republics.

In the given context it can be shown that the ethnic conflicts and the resulting destruction of established borders between republics and even within republics, following the pattern of the disintegration algorithm, each had their own unique dynamics. Even apparently analogous situations cannot serve as models. In Yugoslavia forces emerged that were focused on exploiting the breakup of the government to the maximum. In the USSR the crumbling of the government was accepted as a matter of course, however high the price.

Regarding Czechoslovakia, the “velvet” breakup of the country was essentially the result of confrontational and manipulative actions on the part of a political

elite of Czechs and Slovaks rather than an expression of the reformative will of two nations. Even though the situation in Yugoslavia proceeded in a different direction, it still affected the chain of events in the USSR, and the example of these two countries directly determined the character of many aspects in the breakup of Czechoslovakia. In an attempt to avoid unnecessary conflict as far as possible, almost no blood was shed in a region stretching from Prague to Vladivostok. In general it might be said that the circumstances of the breakup of the USSR represent a kind of halfway point between the circumstances that prevailed in Yugoslavia and in Czechoslovakia. The breakup of these three federations is testimony to the shared human desire of a people to actively form their own unique states—a desire that can only be thwarted by the formation of larger political entities. At least in the European Union it is somewhat easier to resist the demands of extremists.

If an attempt is made to formulate two parameters of the causality described at the beginning of this chapter, the following picture emerges: In north-central Europe the revolutionary processes usually took place against a backdrop of negotiations that avoided bloodshed. In the southern parts of the region it was necessary to resort to greater force to achieve the overthrow of their governments. In the course of the sweeping changes in the USSR the picture was similar: In the reform processes, negotiations were more actively pursued in the north than in the south.

There used to be a popularly held notion that a wave of stability had arrived on the European continent.⁸ In many analyses in Central Europe this notion prevailed from the end of the 1980s, just as it did in Western Europe. The course of the revolutionary changes in Central Europe and their consequences tells us that this understanding of events also holds for Eastern Europe where the former republics of the USSR are located.

In 2002, I launched the hypothesis of this “wave of stability”:

The wave of stability moved inevitably from the north to the south, to France after the loss of Algeria, Italy after the “Red Brigades,” the late-Franquist Spain, Salazar’s Portugal, where in 1974 a democratic anti-Fascist revolution took place [...], to Greece after the “Black Colonels”: they were islands of instability then, even if not to the same extent as the Balkans today. Yet, the wave of stability solved many of the most pressing problems in Western Europe. The next are Central Europe and the bleeding Balkans [...].⁹

The financial and economic crisis of the early twenty-first century showed that one must speak of “waves” rather than of one wave of stability. Stabilization processes follow various patterns: from economic confusion (e.g. Greece and

⁸ E.G. Zadorozhnyuk, “Stanovlenie novykh regional’nykh identichnostei v Evrope: itogi per’vogo desyatiletia 1989–1999 i perspektivy,” in Vladimir Bol’shakov, ed., *Rossiia. Planetarnye protsessy* (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo Univerziteteta, 2002), 510–11, 517.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 527–28.

Cyprus) to ethnic and confessional conflicts (e.g. the Kosovization, i.e. demands of political independence raised by small political entities).

The beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century has been characterized by new developments. The entry of new members into the European Union (Croatia in 2013) has not solved all their problems. Moreover, some sort of curtain still exists between the “old” and “new” members, albeit not an “iron” one. Within the former USSR, impulses for integration have increased through the creation of a customs union and, by 2015, of the Eurasian Economic Union. Ukraine is in a difficult situation, confronted with having to choose between European integration and the Eurasian Union.¹⁰ The intensification of integration impulses can be treated as part of the model of mutual conditionality or causality.

In applying the concept of causality the question arises of whether the principle of such waves of stability can be applied to the countries of Eastern Europe? An unambiguous answer would have to be based on a series of complex phenomena, especially if one considers that since the Baltic nations have become members of NATO and the EU they are now part of Central Europe.

For instance, the stability of Belarus is provided by a structure that is not considered democratic. Nevertheless the arrangement is accepted by a large majority of Belorussians and is even acceptable to a majority of citizens of Russia.

In this context, Ukraine has by any measure an extremely unstable government for two reasons: its declared intention to generate an image of democracy competing with fierce internal struggles for ownership in formerly public enterprises.

While the secession of Kazakhstan from the USSR went relatively smoothly, from time to time other former Central Asian and Transcaucasian nations exhibit alarming levels of instability.

The expression “revolutions of the year 1989” intuitively triggers a search for the causal nature and the influences between the events in the USSR and the European members of the “socialist commonwealth.” It can be argued that the revolutions could not have succeeded without the changes in the USSR, nor could the sequence of events in the USSR have remained uninfluenced by these revolutions—a mutual series of causes and effects that ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet model of socialism in a region reaching from Berlin to Vladivostok.

This process was accompanied by a desire to preserve order in international relations across a huge area: from Brest (in France, not Belarus) to Vladivostok—or even from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Expressions of hope, such as the vision of a “Common European Home” turned out in many ways to be utopian, but they have not been dispelled to this day. The ideas engendered by this twenty-year period of history have not lost their attractiveness. Moreover, the appeal to return to the basic tenants of socialist reform has taken on a new meaning as the world

¹⁰ E.G. Zadorozhnyuk, “Ukraine 2013: Vybor novykh neopredelennosti,” http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=1396#top (accessed 30 July 2013).

searches for a means to mobilize the resources of all nations to master the crises affecting the globe. It is likely that such aspirations will reflect the principle of cause and effect as is already evidenced by thinkers searching for new solutions.

Conclusion

To conclude, when examining the political events that occurred from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s in the USSR and the other the countries considered here, primary attention should be given to the causal interaction between these events, that is, the fact that one event was usually the consequence of another. Once the political winds of reform blowing in the USSR were felt, the countries under discussion began to contemplate possible solutions to their problems of single-party authority. In turn, these political trends carried over to the USSR. Over time they assumed common features.

The final result was a transformation of all the European members of the so-called “socialist commonwealth.” These former socialist entities returned, at least in some respects, to the fold of nations in the Central European region and not to the countries of Eastern Europe, especially Russia. This, however, is a topic for another discourse, one that will certainly require the principles of causality set forth here.

This chapter has attempted to provide an answer to a two-part question: Did Soviet perestroika stir revolutionary tendencies in the nations of the Eastern bloc in the years 1989 to 1990? And to what extent did the intensity of these tendencies lead to the ultimate consequences of perestroika in the USSR? It is clear that the links between the given events were of a causal nature: After becoming aware of the political renewal stirring in the USSR, the countries in question were able to contemplate various ways of resolving the issue of monopolistic communistic parties. In turn many of these options were adopted in the USSR. In the end, all of the members of the “socialist commonwealth” in Europe underwent processes of transformation, processes that even included the breakup of some former federative systems contained within them.

