

Natural history of Communism

I. Pliability of human beings and immutability of human nature

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Summary

Communism can be conceived of as a large experiment, in which a number of fundamental hypotheses on human nature and on social dynamics have been subjected to test and eventually falsified. The theoretical basis of Communism, Marxism, had been a logical outgrowth of European thought, building upon traditions of both rationalism and romanticism. The evolutionary trajectory of Communism resulted from its Marxist initial premises. It proceeded through two distinct stages, the orthototalitarian and the paratotalitarian ones. The post-Communist transition may be considered as the third, the highest stage of Communism. By reducing cultural polymorphism and destroying evolutionary arisen institutions Communism peeled off cultural layers and denuded humans to their biological core. The very pressure to change humans had an opposite effect – some universal features of human nature, its primordials, have been “squeezed out” and have come to the fore: Humans are mythophilic, group-confined, fearful and hyperemotional animals. Along with features shared with other mammals, human nature encompasses abstract, rather syntactic “cultural loci” which get semantics by being filled in with locus-specific memes. Their alleles are being picked out of the meme pool, which represents culture and its institutions. Upon reducing polymorphism of culture the meme pool gets impoverished offering but few alleles to a locus

and leaving some loci vacant. Humans sank down to a quasi-animal level. The monstrosity of Communism resulted from its institutions, not from its actors. The post-Communist situation seems to justify a conclusion that what human individuals, the surviving guinea-pigs of the Communist laboratory, have deserved, offenders, victims, and bystanders alike, is boundless compassion.

Introduction

Communism is not a closed chapter of human history. Thirteen years after the Implosion of Communist regimes in Europe it continues to exist in at least three different forms: (1) In post-Communist countries as behavioral stereotypes of actors of the transition period, and as nostalgia in minds of a sizeable portion of population. (2) As a political system in a few other countries, which would be a matter of minor importance were not one of them China, a country of 1.2 billion inhabitants aspiring to become a political, economic and military superpower. (3) As a backlash, as its own negative copy, in the worldwide upsurge of ultraliberalism (paraliberalism) in economy and postmodernism in philosophy.

This persistence of Communism is a puzzling phenomenon taking into account the high toll paid in the living standard, suffering and deaths by those who lived under the Communist rule. No less puzzling is the fact the Communism, which, *a posteriori*, appears to be widely judged as a mass delusion of unprecedented size and power, was thriving and expanding in the twentieth century in parallel with the equally unprecedented expansion of science.

The two puzzles of Communism deserve a particularly urgent attention. Humankind may witness the „end of ideology“ (Bell 1962) in one part of the world, but it should not overlook the appeal, and the imminence, of the old and of new mass delusions in other corners. The present study aims at analyzing the puzzles of Communism as a problem of cognitive biology. Its first part, presented in this communication, focuses on individual human behavior under Communism; the autonomous dynamics of memes and institutions will be the subject of a subsequent publication.

The scope of this study transgresses the rigor which natural sciences self-impose on choice and analysis of simple phenomena. The phenomenon subjected to the analysis in this study is a complex one. It has been pointed out in another paper on Communism that its analysis necessarily encompasses both natural and cultural sciences, and also a specific

branch of inquiry that has been named “humanistics” (Kováč 2002b). Accordingly, the term “essays” may better apply to these two communications, which comes from the French word “essai” meaning “attempt”. The formulation “one of the causes” will be used repeatedly in the description, with an implicit proviso that it is impossible, at least at the present stage of knowledge, to grasp and enumerate the causes in their totality. Some of the concepts elaborated here may later turn out to be as fancy as had been the concepts of “phlogiston” and “caloric” in chemistry two centuries ago. Yet, it should be kept in mind that without such concepts chemistry would not have reached the present mature stage of understanding of its specific field of inquiry. The study ensues from a program of bridging the widening gap separating natural and cultural sciences (Kováč 2002a).

Elaboration of conceptions

1. Politics and cognitive biology

History of science may be pictured as a process of detachment of individual scientific disciplines from their common ancestor, philosophy. Physics, chemistry, biology have long reached their independent status, and anthropology, psychology, sociology are evolving fast to assume full autonomy soon. Epistemology, which has been traditionally a major branch of philosophy, is also being transformed into a natural science, due to progress in cognitive and computer sciences, and in molecular and evolutionary biology. One of the programs to “naturalize” epistemology, grounded in molecular and evolutionary biology and considered as an outgrowth of bioenergetics, has been called **cognitive biology** (Kováč 1987). Fundamental principles of cognitive biology have been recently outlined (Kováč 2000).

Cognitive biology aims at a synthesis of data of various scientific disciplines within a single frame of conceiving life as epistemic unfolding of the universe (**the epistemic principle**). Biological and cultural evolutions are two stages of a progressing process of accumulation of knowledge. The knowledge acquired in biological evolution is embodied in constructions of organisms, and the structural complexity of those constructions that carry embodied knowledge corresponds to their epistemic complexity. By extension, the same applies to cultural evolution: institutions are constructions embodying knowledge generated in the course of evolution. Political phenomena emerged in cultural evolution when the size of

human groups was exceeding its natural, biological dimension that had been appropriate for life in the savanna. Political power is a capacity of two kinds of action: First, to impose constraints on behavior of the individual in a group of the over-biological size with respect to freedom of movement and to intervention into interests of other members of the group, in particular concerning their property. Second, to enforce individual's contribution to common interests of the group: defense, intragroup peace, and redistribution of wealth and enjoyment. Politics is the struggle for political power and, once having been seized, for its retention.

Hence, politics is not biology. By implication, the same applies to political science: political science is not biology. Yet, politics, and political science, have biology as the groundwork. The evolutionary acquired knowledge, unintended, unconscious and unconceptualized – carried both in genomes and in institutions – is no less important, and its size is incomparably larger, than is the knowledge embodied in concepts. Communism has provided a dramatic proof of this basic tenet of cognitive biology. In fact, the very idea of cognitive biology was initiated and developed in a social setting molded by Communism. Along with bioenergetics, Communism has its share in the conception of this branch of epistemology.

2. Communism: a large-scale social experiment

Modern science has begun in the 16th century with the birth of the experimental method. Many contemporary scientists may adhere to Popper's view that progress of science proceeds in distinct steps, each of them consisting in formulating a hypothesis, in its falsification, and in its superseding by a new hypothesis. Popper emphasized the importance of criticism in falsification of hypotheses – hence the name “critical rationalism” for his doctrine (Popper 1976, p. 116). However, the criticism alone does not bring about a straightforward falsification of a hypothesis. What is needed is experiment. It compels a scientist to frame a hypothesis in the form of experimentally assailable questions. Experimentation, the elementary form of which is selective, targeted observation, is the only way of how to falsify scientific hypotheses. In the course of evolution of science, hypotheses, ever more and more refractory to falsification, have demanded ever more sophisticated experiments and the latter have presupposed ever more complex instruments. The instruments, machines which represent embodied, evolutionary acquired knowledge, are determining, in a feed-back loop,

the nature of hypotheses: the **epistemic machines** – human exosomatic senses and organs – single out of the world that what can be observed and researched.

Galileo's experiments falsified Aristotle's hypothesis on the nature of physical motion that had been surviving for almost two thousand years. A hypothesis close and obvious to human intuition – but false. It was the start of an imposing expansion of natural sciences. On the other hand, cultural (*i. e.* human and social) sciences up to now miss almost entirely experiments (Kováč 2002a). It may be the reason why their evolution is so slow. In fact, their progress is also being accomplished essentially by experimental falsification of hypotheses. Trials and failures are virtually the single way anywhere of how to proceed forwards. As long as cultural sciences lack their own consistent experimental methods, a cultural scientist should take social events for series of experiments. Seen consequentially in this way we ascertain that in cultural sciences no less than in natural sciences experiments do falsify most of what appears to human mind as self-evident and true. Nicolo Machiavelli, who may have been the first scholar having adopted this view, remains, with his new insight into political behavior, an outstanding support of this assertion. When cultural sciences will have reached “experimental” maturity, our posterity may be amazed by the naïveté and fallacies of our present intuitive theories of humans and society.

Communism may be conceived of as a **large social experiment**. An experiment in which some fundamental hypotheses of human nature, of social dynamics, of direction of history have been subjected to tests. It has been an awfully expensive experiment: it was paid by possibly one hundred million human deaths (Courtois *et al.* 1997). At such a price, most of the hypotheses have been falsified. The experiment has not been terminated yet. “*The change to market economies provides a natural experiment to look at the impact of rapid social change on health*”, stated demographer Virginia Cain at a recent conference on Eastern Europe's epidemic of heart disease, one of the causes of premature deaths in the region (Stone 2000).

A posteriori scientific analysis of the Communist experiment is, unfortunately, impeded by the fact that available data, however numerous they may be, are mainly qualitative and anecdotal. Under conditions in which human and social sciences were mainly servants of the ruling ideology collection of representative quantitative data (for instance by public opinion polls) was virtually impossible. Officially produced statistical data, even in such an “innocuous” field as economy, may have been to a large extent fabricated to conform to the wishes of the rulers. We have to rely on personal experience, on individual case studies and “oral histories”, and to take recourse to guesses, comparisons and analogies. Restrictions on

free research have been removed in the post-Communist stage of Communism. As already stated (Kováč 2002b), it would be most regrettable if massive free collection of representative data were neglected in this stage, which continues to be a unique experimental situation for humankind.

3. Marxism: a logical outgrowth of European thought

Communism has been based on the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels done around the middle of the 19th century. The system of thought created by Marx and Engels has been named “Marxism” (Manale 1974). (In this paper, Leninism and Maoism, as variants of Marxism, are not specifically considered. On the other hand, the term Stalinism is not ascribed to idiosyncrasies of Stalin’s thought but used as a shorthand name for the first stage of Communism.)

The ambition of Marx and Engels was to top European philosophical rationalism by transforming philosophy itself into science. Their followers have considered their accomplishment comparable to that of Galileo or Darwin, as stated by one of them, the British scientist John Bernal (1954).

It is not difficult to understand the logic of Marx’s and Engels’ reasoning. In the first half of the 19th century, mechanics was a queen of science. Pierre Laplace and William Hamilton showed that its entire construction could be derived by deduction from a few principles. Mechanics has provided an exact description of processes in nature, enabling to predict, from their present state, their future states. Newton’s celestial mechanics was a paradigm of such a conception. The idea of Laplace’s demon was born: of a being which, having capacity of possessing, at a single moment, a complete knowledge of positions and impulses of all particles of the universe, should be able to predict all successive positions and impulses and thus to describe the future trajectory of the universe. It was logical to transfer this consideration upon society: knowledge of the laws of society should allow the deductive description of society and, consequently, its rational control. Even though Marx and Engels declared themselves as critics of “mechanical” materialism and opposed to it their “dialectical” materialism, and admitted the role of chance in history, their theories in substance followed the Laplace’s line. In his work Marx aimed, according to Marx’s own words, “to lay bare the economic law of motion of society” (Marx, 1). This should be

sufficient, because, according to his theory, economy, the material productive forces and the relations of people to the means of production are the basis which determines the whole “superstructure”: political and juridical forms, morals, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views. In analogy with Laplace’s demon (and Maxwell’s demon) it is appropriate to visualize another creature, **Marx’s demon** (Kováč 1991) – a creature which, knowing the “laws of history”, can predict the future of humankind and organize “scientific management of society”.

It has been a common deficiency in characterizing European culture – and the deficiency has become even more conspicuous after the demise of Nazism and Communism – to stress its rationalism and individualism and to underrate or even overlook its romantic stream. Yet, what characterizes European culture is not its rationalism and also not its reference to the individual as a supreme value, but rather its exuberant **polymorphism**, which includes persistence in it of Platonian dichotomies (Kováč 1999). Irrationalism, romanticism, collectivism have had their share. Marxism itself was not a coherent outcome of rationalism, as has been often claimed and as it may be also implied from the preceding paragraph. In Bertrand Russell’s view, Marx has nothing to do with romanticism, since he was always declaring his intention to be scientific (Russell 1946, p. 749). That, of course, proves nothing. Roger Garaudy (1964), himself still a Marxist when he was writing his book on Marx, has justly pointed out in the book that **German romanticism**, and in particular, Fichte’s views, was another source of Marxism, in parallel with German rationalism.

According to Garaudy, Fichte, with his claim that humans are that what they make of themselves, has for the first time in philosophy put into doubt the idea of human nature, of immutable substance, of either religious or anthropologic predetermination of humans. The idea was taken over by Marx and Engels. The famous sentence from the sixth thesis to Feuerbach by Marx stipulates that “*the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations*” (Marx, 5). And, at another place: “*It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness*” (Marx, 6). The fact that the legacy of Marx and Engels is rather poor in explicit statements on human nature has annoyed their disciples. As stated by one of them, “*one of the most controversial areas of Marxist scholarship is whether Marx had a theory of human nature in his later work and, if so, whether it is significantly different from his earlier one*” (Holmstrom 1984). Indeed, Marx’s philosophical *Eintopf* must inevitably carry some inconsistency by its very mixture of romanticism and rationalism. An additional complication arises from the fact that the

proportion of romantic to rationalistic ingredients is much higher in the dish of the “young” Marx than in the dish of the “mature” Marx. The “young” Marx postulated the “essence” of man as a sort of miraculously free and self-determining agent; man, however, became “alienated” from this true essence under capitalism because of the division of labor and the system of private property (Bottomore 1963). Communism should make man free again, removing the division of labor and allowing man’s self-fulfillment. Internal contradictions in Marxism were analyzed by Gouldner (1980). To save consistency, Soviet Marxologists generally preferred to skip Marx’s early writings and considered those scholars who were sticking too eagerly to Marx’s youthful speculations as revisionists. The difficulty notwithstanding, the subject has been treated by many Western followers and its comprehensive account can be found in the books of Norman Geras (1983) and Sean Sayers (1998). They all concur with the view that human nature is a phenomenon of human history. It is work that plays the essential role in human lives and it determines human fulfillment. According to Paul Baran (1966), the claims that human nature is unchangeable represent “*metaphysic obscurantism*”. In the words of Adam Schaff (1962), the discovery of the social genesis and social essence of the human individual is one of the greatest discoveries of Marxism. He virtually echoed Antonio Gramsci (1957, p. 140), who had considered the “proof” that immutable, fix human nature does not exist and that it is a totality of historically determined social relations as the fundamental innovation introduced by Marxism into the sciences of politics and history.

What probably all those writers have left unnoticed is a sentence of Friedrich Engels from his notes on mathematics in his *Dialectics of nature* which may be the **very clue** to the essence of Marxist conception of human nature: “*By recognizing the inheritance of acquired characters, modern science enlarges the subject of experience from the individual to the species; it need no longer be a particular individual to make an experience, individual experience can to a certain extent be substituted by the results of experience of the ancestors*” (Engels, 1). It is in this light that we should understand Feuerbach’s description of humans, which Engels cited with an apparent approval: “*Man, who originated from the womb of Nature, was also a mere natural being and not man. Man has been the product of man, of culture, of history*” (Engels, 2). Even sexual love is for Engels a cultural product which first appeared in the Middle Ages and it was unknown to humans before (Engels, 3).

The belief in inheritance of acquired characters, a creed often blind and passionate, has been a salient argument for backing the Marxist social utopia. A number of Marxist biologists, including some prominent ones, have been anxious to prove it. It was the official

doctrine of science in the Soviet Union during and after the Second World War, decreed by the Central committee of the Communist Party. It virtually ruined Soviet biology. On the other hand, a monopoly of Pavlov's theory of conditioned reflexes was enforced upon psychology: the Soviet government expected, as noticed by B. F. Skinner (1969, p. 55) that the Pavlovian principles should be instrumental in changing the world and humans in it. How the Marxist concept was accepted and elaborated by Soviet psychologists, has been appropriately and extensively presented by in Russian by Yaroshevsky (1974) and in English by Bauer (1952).

Nothing that human individuals have acquired in their individual life, with the exception of random mutations, can be inherited by their offspring to enrich or modify human nature. Human nature, embodied in genes, has been molded in the course of billions of years of biological evolution and its most prominent features arose in the last million years by selection among human predecessors who were living in small groups of hunters and gatherers in the savanna. Human nature has remained virtually unchanged in the course of a few ten thousand years of pervasive cultural evolution – it has been too short a time to leave any noticeable traces in our genome. This is how he summed up his observations a man who himself had been a guinea-pig of the Communist experiment, Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1973): *“Human nature, if it changes at all, does not change any faster than does the geological shape of Earth”*.

It has been customary among Marxists to compare Marx to Darwin, referring often to Friedrich Engels who had declaimed at Marx's funeral that, as Darwin had discovered the law of organic evolution in natural history, so Marx had discovered the law of evolution in human history. On the other hand, many scholars on evolution have refused such a comparison. It has been argued that Karl Marx had offered to dedicate one of the volumes of his magnum opus, *Das Kapital*, to Darwin, but Darwin politely declined it. The story of dedication and its refusal appears not to be true, but something of a myth (Carter 2002). What seems to be proven is that Darwin never read Marx's book (which he had got as a personally inscribed copy from Marx), as the vast majority of pages remained uncut in his library. There is little doubt that Darwin, the staunch English empiricist, would not concur with Marx, the German apriorist, in characterizing human essence as the ensemble of social relations.

Incidentally, the views on human nature of many contemporary social scientists, criticized by Tooby and Cosmides (1992) as the “Standard Social Science Model” (SSSM), come close to the views of Marx and Engels. Except that, for the former, there are not economic factors, but cultural and social elements that mold the individual. *“The mind did not*

create them; they created the mind” – this is how Tooby and Cosmides (1992) have characterized the SSSM.

4. The first stage of Communism: orthototalitarianism

In the orthodox Marxist classification, Communism is the final stage of a number of successive stages of history. It is preceded by socialism, which, in turn, is a lawful succession of capitalism (Marx, 2). Up to the collapse of European Communist regimes it was claimed there that Communism had not yet been attained in any country but that, in the Soviet Union and the associated countries, socialism was a real, fully achieved historical stage. After the Implosion, it has become customary to use the term Communism in a different sense: as a name for the political system, and for its economic, social, and philosophical doctrine, which has been in power in the countries where the Communist Party has been ruling. The term „Communism“ is used in this paper in this sense.

Communism was a totalitarian system. It carried all typical signs of totalitarianism in the sense of Arendt (1951). This study, and the subsequent one, attempt to prove that Communism remained totalitarian up to its very end. In its evolution, from its rise to power down to its demise, two rather distinct stages can be discerned: an orthototalitarian and a paratotalitarian ones. In addition, the complex post-Communist transition may be considered as the third stage.

The first stage, which lasted from seizing of power by the Communist Party until the death of Joseph Stalin and was then slowly and loosely passing over to the second stage, has been usually known as Stalinism. It has been analyzed in a number of papers and books, probably the most extensively in the Black book of Communism (Courtois *et al.* 1997). The orthototalitarian phase may have been backed by Stalin’s doctrine that as socialism goes from triumph to triumph, the class struggle intensifies, as the enemy becomes more and more desperate.

The Stalinist phase has often been labeled by the Marxist term the „**dictatorship of the proletariat**“. Its role should have been the „liquidation“ of the class of bourgeoisie and, in the course of transition to the class-less society, formation of „new, Communist human beings“. As summed up by Barry (1989, p. 26), *“it is orthodox Marxist doctrine that change of self coincides with change of circumstance so that the replacement of the capitalist mode of production – based on the extensive social division of labor, private property and the money*

economy – by a socialist and ultimately Communist economic system characterized by social ownership and the abolition of both money and the social division of labor would entail the replacement of the egoistic man of capitalism by a cooperative, altruistic personality”. The first task was successfully accomplished (including physical liquidation of enemies), the second completely failed. The ideas of both an automatic adjustment of the „superstructure“ (which should include human thought and behavior) to the economic basis and of unlimited malleability of human beings have been falsified.

Human behavior, of course, is not rigidly controlled by genes. Claiming that each behavioral trait has its genetic counterpart would be no less queer than would be the “one gene-one morphological trait” hypothesis. Even though the latter has in fact not been advanced by anybody, it has served as a favorite scapegoat of all brands of antineo-Darwinists and biological structuralists (Kováč 2000). Even the most obstinate opponents of the causative role of genes in shaping and constraining human thought and behavior do acknowledge the existence of some predispositions, but only in the form of *„few useful instincts, fewer recognizable sentiments, and no intellect“* (Geertz 1973, p. 49). (Incidentally, Marxists would agree.) If they admitted a role of genes, they would be genes for physiological functions and something that provides the „capacity for culture“, perhaps a single „gene for culture“, implying an almost infinite „cultural malleability“ of humans. Such a view has been convincingly refuted by evolutionary psychologists (see *e.g.* Tooby and Cosmides 1992). It can be inferred from the Communist experiment, supporting observations from other areas, that, instead of such a single „gene for culture“, there must be a number of genetically determined „**cultural loci**“, each of them domain-specific and „fulfillment seeking“, until being filled in by a locus-specific meme (Kováč 1999). Each locus is being occupied by one allele from a number (sometimes quite large) of locus-specific meme’s alleles picked up from the common meme pool.

Memes themselves have their own autonomous dynamics, not always compatible with human individual’s desires, imposing upon humans an additional, new kind of behavior – meme-enforced behavior (Kováč 2000). Some memes need not necessarily be advantageous for the individual, some others may not be advantageous for social groups, yet, altogether, they build up social institutions, which give stability to a society.

One of the most devastating theses of Marx has been the assertion that the revolution should not take over the existing State institutions but should smash them up (Marx, 3, 4). Legislative and executive power should be united in a single organization (Marx, 3). Marxism has thus negated all political knowledge that has been accumulating in Europe by

evolutionary learning over centuries. By conceiving philosophy, morals, culture in general as the dependent variables of economy, it has equally negated the results of the autonomous long-termed evolution of European culture. What Communism has accomplished has not been creating a new culture and new institutions but peeling off cultural layers and denuding humans to their biological core. The meme pool was degraded, deformed and impoverished to such an extent that some cultural loci could not be filled in at all. The very pressure to change humans has had an opposite effect: some universal features of human nature, its primitives, **primordials**, have been “squeezed out” and have come to the fore:

(1) **Human beings are mythophils.**

Although this human primordial may be rooted in the universality of biological “fanaticism” (Kováč 2000), it had being selected as an important adaptive trait of human ancestors in the savanna. The environment, in which human main mental dispositions have been shaped by selection, did not favor fitness of individuals who were irresolute, hesitating, tolerant, amazed at the complexity of the world and susceptible to cognitive chaos and existential anxiety. A myth, an unmovable, indisputable, all-encompassing and omniscient explication of the world satisfies one of the most powerful human needs and provides strong emotional satisfaction.

Marxism has perfectly complied with this human need of total explication of the world. Nothing substantial remained unexplained. It has “revealed” the meaning of the universe and of history. The most importantly, it has given a meaning to life of the individual. Since, according to Engels, “*freedom is recognized inevitability*”, Marxism has given the feeling of freedom to everybody who believed in historical inevitableness of Communism. It has done away with moral dilemmas: “*Moral is everything that serves the cause of Communism*” – such simple has been **Lenin’s “categorical imperative”**.

The Marxist myth has had a great power of attraction because it sanctions the human properties which European culture is repressing and condemning as vices: envy and hate. Envy of rich has become a welcome drive in the battle for social equality and class-less society. To hate class enemy has been a virtue. Marxism has offered specific justifications for revenge against the “oppressors”. As other ideologies that attach blame to an enemy, Marxism has been attractive to those who are inclined to feel guilty: what a relief when the guilt is transformed into hatred!

As the proletariat has been considered to be the most progressive class, one would expect that Marxism attracted mostly uneducated people. The more so since Marxism could explain and justify their hatred against well-educated fellows. Yet, many simple-minded

people retained, at least in the virulent stage of Communism, their simple myths inherited from predecessors. Though Marx declared religion for the “*opium of the people*”, the opium continued for quite a time to persist just among common people. Marxism became the “**opium of intellectuals**” (Aron 1955) – also because they were the main group upon which it was being enforced. The English meaning of the word “intellectuals” does not grasp well this category of people; “**affectuals**” seems to be a more appropriate term. They are people with a strong emotional drive to have a universal explanation of the world, to be strongly bound to the explanation and to impose emphatically their ideas upon others, usually by intermediary of mass media. Also, in English the word “intelligentsia” is rather unfamiliar, especially in its original Russian meaning. The participation of affectuals, or of intelligentsia, on instituting Communism and on the character of its first orthototalitarian stage is so substantial that rather than the “dictatorship of the proletariat” this first stage may be called the “dictatorship of intelligentsia” (or, in the languages in which the term “intelligentsia” has a broader meaning, the “**dictatorship of affectuals**”). The Polish poet Czeslaw Miłosz (1990) provided a masterly description of intellectuals of the incipient period of Communism.

As will be analyzed in the second part of this study, stability of human groups, once they had exceeded their biological size, has been maintained by two kinds of power within a group. The one has been represented by the **chieftain**, the other by the **shaman**. The former holds political power, the latter spiritual power. The two have always been different, if not contradictory psychological types; the former – realist and pragmatist, the latter – affectual. In modern societies there are intellectuals (affectuals) who fulfill the role of shamans. By breaking down the traditional political institutions and negating the traditional conception of politics, Communism created, in its first stage, conditions for a new, unique form of political power. Affectuals no longer needed hold only their traditional, spiritual, power; access to political power was opened to them. Two **incompatible functions** got united into one. To legitimate their political power in the Proletarian State, they also took on to power some “real” proletarians, mostly uneducated and also of inferior intelligence. This, however, was opening the door to the third category of people: to individuals with pathological ambitions for whom the power over others was the idiosyncratic form of mythophilia; they were often psychopathic personalities. The rulers became puppets of the organization that may be rightfully called **Lenin’s infernal invention**: the Communist Party. The three extreme personality types, enslaved by the institution, gave the first stage of Communism its monstrous character.

This has brought to the fore the second human characteristic:

(2) *Homo sapiens* is a hypersocial, yet strictly group-confined, animal.

Hypersociality is determined mostly by the fact that the absolute majority of human selfish needs can only be satisfied socially. It starts with food collection, sex, all forms of grooming (including vocal communication), it continues through market exchanges and through memes as alleles for cultural loci, up to mythophilia. Human natural groups have been small non-anonymous groups of hunters and gatherers. In addition to their other functions, myths have functioned as the most efficient group “glues”, making of a group a powerful unit and exacerbating intergroup competition (Kováč 1999). Cultural evolution has been enlarging human identification groups, exploiting human capacity for abstraction and symbolization. However large social groups may be nowadays, human group stratification has not disappeared: belonging to group(s) is one of human primordial, insuppressible needs. Ideologies serve now as a new form of myths, thus group “glues”, to stabilize the large groups and to legitimate the unavoidable intragroup hierarchies.

Marx labeled ideology as “*false consciousness*”, and considered his theory of society not as an ideology, but as science. A science for all – with the exception of class enemies. Once the enemies are “liquidated”, the class-less society will need no ideology: the Marxist “scientific worldview” will do. As, however, all kinds of groups, with their specific values, interests, point of views and myths, continued to exist after the Communist Party had seized power, and the propaganda did not work, violence became the only means of how to enforce the Marxist “science” to the entire population.

It is well known from studies of ethnologists (*e. g.* Lévi-Strauss 1962) that social groups of savage people do often not consider, not even linguistically, member of alien groups as humans. Konrad Lorenz (1966, p. 67) has named this phenomenon human **pseudo-speciation**, referring to Erik Erikson who had invented the term. This human natural proclivity became expedient for Communists in peak times of violence. The powerful human emotional trait, empathy, may place some restrictions to actions even against an enemy as long as he/she is seen as a human being. It was necessary to change an enemy into a criminal and later into a non-human monster to get rid of any inhibition. Terminology of Communists, including many noble-minded writers, was rich in names of animals when applied to the class enemies: lice, worms, rats, dogs, wolves, hyenas. “*The barbarian rite of purges, the operation of the extermination machinery at full speed do not differ in words and practice from animalization of the Other, from reducing the imaginary and real enemies to the level of animals*” (Brossat 1997, p. 265). This is how Eugenia Ginsburg, herself a victim of the Gulag, has characterized one of her torturers: “*He was not a sadist. He drew no pleasure from our*

suffering. He simply did not see us, because he frankly did not consider us as human beings.” (Cited in Révault d’Allonnes 1995, p. 51).

Enforcing social homogeneity runs counter human nature. Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1957), the unequalled observer of human behavior, has already noticed that *“in addition to the lack of freedom and the forced labor there was still another torment in the forced-labor camp perhaps harder than all the others. It was the enforced living together”*. Human hypersociality is group sociality. Communism, in its all-or-none totalitarian view of the world, was enforcing extreme social and cultural homogeneity. In the economy of planning and scarcity, the apartment of a surgeon was just as spacious (or rather as small), as equipped, as comfortable (or rather as sober) as was the apartment of a a clerk or of a workman. They had no choice but to watch the same State television. Why not, if they all were employees of the State and should have been adherents of the same State ideology? At a finer graining one could, of course, notice a number of small groups. Many of them, however, as for instance groups of employees at the workplace, were afar from the soundness of small biological groups: the alpha individuals had reached their positions not by selection for quality, but, however inferior they may have been, by the nomination by the Party.

In addition to the division of labor, the group mentality is due to the extreme human mental and behavioral **polymorphism**, conditioned by both genetic endowment and contingencies of psychic ontogeny. Traits are distributed in the population and when a society is getting simplified and forced to homogeneity, there is selection of individuals with appropriate traits. One strict stratification was however enacted from the very beginning of the Communist rule: a division of the society into two parts – members and non-members of the Communist Party. This made of the ruling system of the Party, officially named “democratic centralism”, a unique kind of a **neo-czarism**: along with the “czar”, which was the secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, there were hundreds and thousands of “miniczars” at all levels, Party chiefs and secretaries, down to communities, workplaces, and sometimes, informally, perhaps even to families.

In contrast to the social pathology of small groups, such a structure would have possibly not contradicted human nature, had there been enough time to accomplish consistent selection: they are power-seeking humans but they are also those who find fulfillment in dependence and submission. Communism even more than Nazism has proven how people exposed to uncertainty and menace could be longing for a leader, a Führer. This became apparent not only in the first stage of Communism (Stalin during the Second World War), but also in its second stage (Dubček in 1968 and 1969, after the Soviet intervention in

Czechoslovakia; the morbid character of the subsequent “normalization” may have been triggered by his failing to meet people’s expectations), and, for that matter, in its third stage, in the post-Communist transition (Klaus, Mečiar, Putin).

Power is never static, however stable it may seem to be. Along with the inherent dynamics of memes and institutions, human nature imposes upon power a fatal course: first rise to the peak and then unavoidable descent to breakdown. Since the Communist system has no rational rejuvenation and replacement mechanisms, the path was necessarily from young affectuals, through the “cult of personality” down to gerontocracy. Political power, if possessed for too long time, must corrupt any individual. It makes too many rewards too easily accessible and it is much skewed with respect to types of negative reinforcers. That is why it should be studied as a small-scale model of what may happen to humankind as a whole once too easy availability of all sorts of pleasure will get common: Skinner (1986) has brought out a convincing warning. A keen observer, Henry Kissinger, noticed that power is a most powerful aphrodisiac. Decay of idealism, loss of moral principles, unbridled vanity – the subject of many artistic works – have their simple explication in the **reinforcement intricacies** of the human brain, themselves attributes of human nature. It is intriguing that not just the long-term possession of power, but apparently the very access to power induces immediately a selective vision in the afflicted subject, which appears to continually degenerate down to almost complete “power blindness”. It will be shown below how fear of losing power may have been an important factor in shaping behavior of Communist rulers. The idiosyncrasies of power under Communism led to manners of power struggle that had been long thought overcome by cultural evolution: sham lawsuits, tortures, murders.

The monstrous lawsuits under Communism, typified by the trials in the Soviet Union in 1936-1938, have been vividly described by Alexander Solzhenicyn (1973). Their institutional aspects will be analyzed in the second part of this study. Psychological aspects of the Communist trials can be inferred from the first-hand reports of two survivors of the trial with the “leaders of the treasonous conspiratory center headed by Rudolf Slánský” in Czechoslovakia in 1952 (Löbl 1968; London 1986). Before the trial – in the course of which the prosecutors read the questions prepared in advance, the accused recited the answers learned by heart in which they plaid guilty of “crimes” they never committed – it had been necessary to break down the personality of the accused. Methods of medieval physical torture were applied less often than it is usually assumed. New methods proved to be more effective than those used in the Middle Ages or by the Nazis. The accused were exposed to long-lasting sleep deprivation. The methods of psychological pressure used can probably be reduced to

techniques of instrumental conditioning by punishment and reward. Their comprehensive analysis remains a challenge for psychologists. It is amazing that it is not known yet as to what extent the interrogators learned the procedures by themselves by trial and error – which is highly unlikely - and to what extent they had been taught them by the Soviet “advisors”. In particular, the essential question has also remained unanswered: whether the originators of the procedures had been some Soviet scientists, inspired by techniques of conditioning worked out on experimental animals by Pavlov and Skinner.

However it may be, Skinner’s doctrine got in the Stalinist trials, at least in those of Czechoslovakia, one of the most convincing confirmations. The grim prison in Prague-Ruzyně served as a huge Skinner box for experiments on humans. Men who had been fanatic Communists under conditions of the democratic republic, who had carried heavy risk under Nazism and had been ready to sacrifice their life for the idea, were losing their personal integrity on being exposed to the techniques of long-term instrumental conditioning. Human freedom and dignity, the subject of Skinner’s (1972) critical theoretical analysis, was subjected to unintended experimental testing and the results seem to support Skinner’s postulates. The concept of a developmental ratchet, which will be treated in the second part of this study, may be applied to account for individual differences in the resistance against the procedures used and in the lasting effects by which these procedures have marked the miserable human “guinea-pigs”.

It may have been a general trait of the leading Communists, but it became conspicuous in the period of Stalinist trials: the deeper was moral corruption and eagerness to keep power, the stronger was sticking to the Party as the absolute reference group. In some known cases, in addition to the standard methods of extorting confessions, the appeal on rendering a service to the interests of the Party had been instrumental in getting an accused ready to recite self-accusation. It has been sometimes hypothesized that the confessors valued the membership in the group more than their own life (Koestler 1968; Kriegl 1972; Solzhenicyn 1973). This reminds of behavior of individuals in groups of some savage people: the expulsion from a group is so stressful that it causes death of the person (the well-known “voodoo” death observed by Canon, see Hiebsch and Vorweg 1972).

This particular explanation has a more general validity. It points to a pivotal role of **self-deception** in human thinking and behavior. Self-deception was an important constituent of both compliance and resistance to ideological pressure in “normal” life under Communism. Those who gave up did rarely admit, in themselves no less than for those around them, the true reasons: they could not know them. Ideologists were the more persuasive in their

attempts to influence others the more they themselves believed the delusion. The importance of human self-deception had already been noticed by Adam Smith and Charles Darwin and its extensive treatment by Richard Alexander (1979) calls for another expansion of the concept and for its generalization. It gives Hegel's "cunning of Reason" an evolutionary explanation. "Cunning of Reason", as manifested in self-deception, so powerful and efficient in human feats and probably indispensable for smooth running of the human social machinery, may be renamed to "cunning of Evolution".

Self-deception, part of human hypersociality, is also involved in another human characteristic:

(3) **Humans are timid, fearful, frightened animals.**

This trait has been inherited from the ancestors living in the savanna, and (as inferred from behavior of chimpanzees) perhaps even from their predecessors who were living in the branches of the tropical forest. It may appear odd to deduce such a trait as perhaps the most prominent, species-specific, characteristic of humans from the analysis of the Communist legacy. One would be tempted to ascribe all its atrocities, tortures, massacres to an exceedingly aggressive animal, a miscarried beast, a spoiled work of evolution, a monster. In fact, however, fear may be the key notion for understanding the totalitarian perversion. Fearfulness, an adaptive quality of an individual in a small group facing uncertainty and menace of the natural environment, has gotten disproportional dimensions in huge anonymous megasocieties. Mythophilia, power drive, abuse of power, pliability, veneration of the leader, group cohesion, envy and hate, self-deception, they all may have become so exuberant and exaggerated under Communism just because of omnipresent fear. Fearfulness became an excellent nutrition medium for spreading of new kinds of virulent memes, enslaving humans in a singular manner. Fear had in grip everybody, oppressors no less than oppressed. Stalin's paranoia, with its horrible consequences, is the case in point.

Human rationality has a peculiar feature that may be designated by formal rationalists as irrational: it is biased by fear. A trait highly advantageous, adaptive in the savanna, a cause of nuisance mentioned above and perhaps – directly or indirectly – of a majority of contemporary problems, it preserves its adaptive qualification in one feature of human behavior, of **vital importance** for a society: in individual's observance of morals and law. Fear, subconscious and embellished by self-deception, prevents individuals from actions that may be attractors for human biological predilections and/or for which humans have no efficient biological bridle. It is culture that imposes upon them the insurmountable taboos. It was a life-long preoccupation of Dostoyevsky to find out what happens to a person once

he/she trespasses such a taboo. Murder is one of such taboos. After killing another human being, a person may *“lose any judgment. He would be able to kill anybody who may cross his path, to kill for pleasure, for a word, for a view. He would be like drunk, like in trance. As if he would find now, once having crossed the fatal border, enjoyment from the very fact that nothing more is sacred to him; as if something would push him to care of no law and power and to enjoy the most unbridled and unlimited freedom, to enjoy how his heart is seized by terror, which he certainly feels before himself”* (Dostoyevsky 1957).

It seems appropriate to use the term **“Dostoyevsky’s barriers”** for the barriers that the culture has erected and made insurmountable. Under Communism, too many people have transgressed these barriers and their irreversible metamorphosis, the internalized Kain’s sign that they may never be able to efface, is probably the heaviest burden carried over from the Communist past. It is also one of the most important parts of the lesson: Humans need avoid even approaching the Dostoyevsky’s barriers; some of them may be like the most pernicious drug – a single try would entail life-long dependence.

As already hinted at, fear may have functioned as an important factor forming and deforming those people who had acceded to political power. Transformation of devoted, idealist revolutionaries into immoral, corrupted persons, ready to any perfidy, may here have its main cause. In a democratic system, loss of power is institutionally implemented and any holder of power takes this fact for granted. After loosing power, a democratic politician has the opportunity to contend legitimately for power again. The situation was quite different in Communism. Loss of power was usually irreversible, linked to loss of many privileges, to insecurity and jeopardizing family. Fear of the loss of power was probably becoming the dominating emotion of Communist rulers, even if not always experienced consciously. Otherwise it would be hard to account for behavior of prominent leaders, as for example members of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia during the Stalinist purges. The same people who had been, in the most difficult time under Nazism, most helpful to their comrades, up to risking their own life for them, in a different time, when they reached power and felt endangered to lose it, were able to renounce their closest friends and to consent not only to their imprisonment but also to their execution. Not just consent – order them! The situation did not change even in the “benign” era of paratotalitarian Communism. In Czechoslovakia, Gustáv Husák, who, as a victim of a Stalinist trial, had been let down by his friends, later, under paratotalitarian “normalization”, when he became President and the first secretary of the Party, did not hesitate to imprison even those who had been loyal to him. Paranoia was apparently a common trait of those politicians who kept power for a long time.

If Stalin's paranoia had reached clinical dimensions, it had not been necessarily due to his endogenous predisposition, but rather been provoked by his exceptional position in power hierarchy.

Obviously, fear induces the search for safety and security. It has been already pointed out (Kováč 2002b) that the need of security, derived from human fearfulness, is one of the most elementary, and also most intense, human needs. Exposing individuals to omnipresent fear, Communism has been exacerbating this need, mutilating a need of freedom and autonomy, and making of people humble and devoted servants of those who were able to protect them and give them feelings of security, however illusory. In the era of post-Communist uncertainty this specific deformation continues to thrive and the failure of frail institutions to ensure safety seems to be the main threat to the arising labile democracies.

Fear is part of still another human characteristic:

(4) Humans are hyperemotional creatures.

It has been proposed that human self-consciousness has evolved in parallel, even inseparably, with hyperemotionality. Self-consciousness and the capacity of strong emotions may be the end products of a singular run-away process in human evolution, so that they widely exceed adaptive qualification (Kováč 2000). Emotions have become the most powerful motor of paraadaptive, **expressive behavior**. It includes a drive for playing and the faculty of humor.

Obviously, all the human predilections, listed above, are achieving their prominence by carrying a strong emotional charge. Provided that it is not fear that dominates, other emotions hold sway. On the other hand, fear can suppress and frustrate all other emotions.

Simplification of the spiritual sphere under Communism, ensuing from attempts at managing it rationally, did not concern cogitation only, but emotions as well. The arts, an important source of "aesthetic memes", were tied up by the primitive doctrine of "socialist realism". Independent artists were silenced and persecuted. But it was this very oppression, in combination with dullness of the ordinary days and with the absence of exciting stimuli offered elsewhere to consumers by capitalism that induced a singular phenomenon: predilection for the arts flourished, people were amply reading classic works, they appreciated and eagerly searched for officially unrecognized and prohibited fine arts of the West. The arts were compensating the shabbiness and platitude of life.

Transcending human biological determination does also belong to human nature. Hyperemotionality has substantially widened the repertory of human needs and created their hierarchy, from basic ones, which humans have common with non-human animals, up to

those specifically human. The experience of Communism lends support to Maslow's (1971) thesis that *"the full definition of the person or of human nature must then include intrinsic values, as part of human nature. (...) These intrinsic values are instinctoid in nature, i.e. they are needed (a) to avoid illness and (b) to achieve fullest humanness or growth"* (p. 304). Maslow has listed a number of such intrinsic values. What they have in common is their capacity to transcend biological selfishness: *"The psychological self can obviously be bigger than its own body (...) The value-life (spiritual, religious, philosophical, axiological, etc.) is an aspect of human biology and is on the same continuum with the "lower" animal life (rather than being in separated, dichotomized, or mutually exclusive realms). It is probably therefore species-wide, supracultural even though it must be actualized by culture in order to exist"*(p. 313).

The capacity, and the need, of human transcendence may be one of the explanations why the majority of population did not accommodate to the Communist system in its first, orthototalitarian stage. Another reason may have been blatant inconsistencies of life under Communism that will be described in the second part of this study. They were undoubtedly defying aesthetic feelings of sensitive individuals. Shabbiness and ugliness of everyday existence were also contributing to aesthetic uneasiness. It would not be much exaggerated to claim that aesthetic aversion might have been playing a role in serenity coupled to apparently "irrational" behaviors of those who could not easily comply. It has been discovered recently that disgust is a specific emotion with its specific neuronal correlates and it has been proposed that, in natural setting, "disgust is important for basic survival like fear" (Calder *et al.* 2000).

The simplest explanation is, of course, the inertia of culture and the resistance of individual's habits, views, values and preferences to a change. A detailed scrutiny of variations in readiness, facility, time delay, genuineness of the process of accommodation to Communism of individual persons provides a valuable insight into the mechanisms of building up human cognitive idiosyncrasy. It has been in part this scrutiny that has allowed to picture human cognitive ontogenesis as a ratchet-like process of laying down successive layers of habits, concepts and ideas, the earliest ones receding deeper and deeper and becoming more and more resistant to any subsequent change (Kováč 2000). Imprinting in the first years after birth should be of prime importance. It has been pointed out that Konrad Lorenz's "**second imprinting**" in puberty and shortly after puberty may be no less important (Kováč 1999). According to Lorenz (1966, p. 231) it is a period of abstract symbolic object-fixation, taking place just once in an individual's life. It strongly binds a person to symbolic

objects on the basis of phylogenetically evolved behavioral predisposition that Lorenz has proposed to call **militant enthusiasm**.

Militant enthusiasm is part of the human mythophilia. It played a major role in establishing Communism. (For a more recent example recall orgies of the Chinese youth in time of the “Cultural Revolution”, 1966-1976.) In contrast to easy make-believe of adults, it has a most important property: it is incompatible with lie (except for self-deception, in which it abounds), and thus with opportunism and dissimulation. It aspires to moral genuineness and moral integrity. It is associated with something that may be called **idealophilia**. Humans need ideals; the continuing and thriving Platonian tradition in European thought witnesses it. Ideal is an attractor in working of human mind. Devotion to an ideal is a source of wishful thinking: it was widespread among affectuals in enthusiastic days of early Communism. Idealophilia has made of the youth itself the most ardent opponents of the Communist system once conscious lies have become commonplace. (Again, recall the Chinese events at the Square Tian’anmen in June 1989.)

The sudden collapse of Communism came as a surprise even to professional experts. It was not unusual to forecast centuries of its persistence. Had he/she acknowledged the forecast, what would have done a rational *Homo economicus* as a citizen in a country possessed by the mature, post-irrational Communism? Accept the inevitable, of course. Calculate gains and losses. Accommodate. The experience shows, however (what a pity that no polls had been allowed and none had been done clandestinely!), that most of highly intelligent and highly educated people did not accommodate to Communism. Even upon admitting its perennality. They had to compromise with the system in order to survive and to protect their family, but internally they remained resisting and refusing. It does not mean that Communism, after its spell had faded, became a refuge for inferiors. But those intelligent and smart people who had no internal problems in accepting Communism with both its theory and practice could hardly be appraised as strong, integral personalities.

We are led to an inevitable conclusion: By the Communist experiment, the hypothesis of the *Homo economicus* as a paradigm of “truly” rational, that is biologically and culturally relevant, human behavior has been falsified.

5. The second stage of Communism: paratotalitarianism

Political systems resemble, with a single exception, a multicellular organism at least in one respect: they grow old and eventually pass away. The single exception is democracy – it has built in lasting rejuvenation mechanisms. Democracy resembles more a biological species than a single organism: it maintains its steady-state permanence by alternating generations and thus, instead of deteriorating by aging, it undergoes progression by the evolutionary method of trials and errors, by variations and selection.

Had Communism been invented and implemented in the Middle Ages it would have surely lasted for centuries. Variations within the system were rare and selection was “unnatural” – mainly negative. As, however, history is accelerating, due to the exponential growth of science and technology, less than a century was enough to mark its lifetime from a wanton youngster to a decrepit ghost. The first malignant stage was continuously passing over to the more benign second stage. For this second stage, the name “post-totalitarianism” was devised by Juan J. Linz in the 1970s (Siegel 1998) and later used by many observers. The designation appears not to be quite appropriate since all the main traits of totalitarianism, hegemony of the Party-state, omnipresence of secret police, monopoly of the orthodox ideology, absolute State control over economy, culture, education and mass media continued to persist, however faulty and full of leaks. In line with the “ideal type” methodology, adopted in the analysis of this study, two differentiating terms, orthototalitarianism and paratotalitarianism, are being used to distinguish the first and the second stage of Communism, respectively.

Demolishing traditional institutions, with their **embodied evolutionary knowledge** achieved by trials and errors did not lead to the establishment of new stable institutions. Attempts at rational design of new institutions brought forth simplified primitive institutions and a regress almost to the social level of the savanna. Economic and technological forces were in steady contradiction with these institutions and were making them inefficient and unstable. The other way around, the inefficient institutions were dragging economy and technology down to deterioration and decay. A new social environment was emerging with new pressure toward a new kind of adaptation.

How did the behavioral primordials respond to the aging of the system?

(1) Memes of the utopian phantasmagoria were being continuously diluted out. Fanaticism essentially disappeared. Internal identification with the ideology was no longer required, external make-believe was enough. An oppressive web of dissimulation and lie was

spreading over the society. Affectuals fell off power, political as well as spiritual. Some of them became passionate anti-Communists, with little influence upon the events. Orwell's "newspeak" gained prominence: it fostered self-deception of those at power, it demoralized intellectuals who were fabricating it, but most importantly, disoriented the rest of the population. People were aware that everything was different but lacked the appropriate language to express it. Political jokes may have been the best form of how to grasp the situation. Even the members of power groups lost ardor so that their internal struggles became benign and boring. There was little opportunity for transcendence to be positively reinforced. Peak experiences, intrinsic pleasure, worthwhile achievements may be "intrinsic reinforcers", as Maslow (1971, p. 297) has assumed, but they surely need at least a minimally favorable social setting to occur. The social setting, permeated with lie, dissimulation and indifference, was generally poor in positive reinforcement. The programs of behavior, built up in the past, were slowly undergoing extinction.

The resulting apathy was amplified by a widespread phenomenon, verging on psychopathology – **learned helplessness**. It had originated in the first stage of Communism where rewards and punishments had been often delivered with almost no regards to the deeds and with no logic. In the second stage, most deeds – if not transgressing limits – were simply met with indifference, arousing in the actors feelings of futility and senselessness.

An experience, at first sight contradictory, the Prague spring of 1968, does not defy the statement. It has been usually interpreted as an attempt of genuine Communists, and of enlightened affectuals, with mass support of the population, to reform Communism and create a "Socialism with the human face". In fact, however, it was a process ignited by a rather benign power struggle at the head of the Party, and it carried, in a condensed form, all the features of the paratotalitarian Communism. No matter that the purges, which set in upon the Russian military intervention, had serious psychological and professional consequences for hundred thousands of people and were personal tragedies for many of them. But the purges were no more work of passionate fanatics. They were openly dominated by malice, envy, complexes of inferiority and there were driven by autonomous, monstrous, inhuman bureaucratic machinery. It has been corroborated what Karl Marx had written of revolutions which repeat themselves, with no foreboding that it would apply to work of his followers: "*History never repeats. If, then as a farce.*"

What happened to mythophilia? As a need, it did not disappear. If not satisfied by traditional myths, which started to be tolerated by the senile power, it was getting, more a more, a character of a primitive philosophy: **cynicism** as a world-view. Self-deception, the

excellent human evolutionary acquisition, was no longer indispensable: the need of dignity and self-esteem was fading out. But the complete loss of self-esteem is almost like a loss of the instinct of self-preservation.

(2) The only social homogeneity that had been achieved was the equality in poverty. Otherwise the society got atomized: it disintegrated into small groups perhaps no larger than those of the savanna. But people mainly shut to their families. Professional groups continued to be headed by Party members, mostly professionally inferior to their subordinates.

The single domain that, even if deteriorating as well, did not tolerate the full arbitrariness in hierarchies, was economy. The national enterprises were no longer managed by revolutionaries devoted to the Party, but by technocrats. Evolutionary knowledge, embodied in machines, is much harder to be destroyed than is the knowledge accumulated in social institutions. The managers were also the only kind of people who were undergoing, to a large extent, positive selection. But its component was necessarily the selection for easy accommodation. People were selected who did not need suffer from deep and difficult make-believe: they were “**ontological pragmatists**”. In contrast to cynics, they were at least positively oriented in the sphere of their interests.

(3) Fear lessened considerably. By this, the mobilizing power of fearfulness lessened as well. Upon destruction of traditional institutions, liquidation of traditional law, **anomie** was spreading over: loss of respect of rules of morals, law, and even of etiquette. Pillage of the “national” property became common, officially tolerated, if not sanctioned. Similarly, bribery and corruption became something that did no longer need be concealed, but was almost considered to be norms, if not virtues.

It has been shown above of how the Communist experience gives substance to Maslow’s idea that “intrinsic values”, which one strives to achieve, are important for a full unfolding of human nature. Among such values Maslow listed a joy of work. An activity for itself, rather than as a means to ends outside the work. Vocation-loving individuals tend to identify with their work; it becomes part of the self. People in the paratotalitarian society did not lose this capacity; but in the declining economy and decaying social system there was less and less occasion for any such work. To give again the word to the virtuoso of human analysis, Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1957): “*It came once upon me that if one wishes to completely tread down and ruin a person, to inflict upon him the most horrible penalty, which would scare even the most terrible murderer, it would be enough to give his work a character of total uselessness and senselessness*”. Large areas of gardens with cottages, perhaps the most typical image of the suburban landscape in the post-Communist countries, remain the

memorials of individuals' escape from and of compensations of the dullness of work under Communism. Representing the single opportunity for meaningful "self-actualization", they may be given support to both Dostoyevsky's and Maslow's hypotheses.

Nevertheless, this stage of Communism has reopened a crucial question (Arendt 1958; Weil 1973): do humans really need work to be satisfied, is it the main prerequisite for human fulfillment, for the meaning of life? (Or for that matter, does work create a human being, as postulated by Marxism?) Is not devotion to work, diligence and industry, an invention of modern times, of capitalism? Should we not reconsider in a new light the report of ethnologists that savage people are happy by doing nothing, just playing, grooming and chatting? The paratotalitarian stage of Communism lasted too short to allow the unambiguous answer. It is surely a relevant question for humans of the postindustrial society at the threshold of the Millennium. At any case, what Communism has taught us is the fact that laziness, once established and even incorporated into newly emerging social norms, may be much more refractory to change than habits of work implemented by centuries. It was easy to break down the habits; it may be much more difficult to bring them back. Laziness may be rooted in human hyperemotionality, in human predilection for play and entertainment. Bertrand Russell (Russell 1938, p. 98) had noticed ingeniously – and with clairvoyance – already half a century ago, inspecting life in totalitarian countries: “...*What is more to be desired is a gradual increase in the sense of security, leading to a lessening of zeal, and giving an opening for laziness – the greatest of all virtues in the ruler of a totalitarian State, with the sole exception of non-existence*”.

A joy of work, personal satisfaction as a result of working should be distinguished from the employment as a medium of human existence. Communism with its inefficient economy, absence of competition and its squandering has secured full employment for everybody, highly educated specialists and unskilled workers alike. In fact, shortage of manpower was a characteristic feature of Communism up to its infamous decease. Communism may have been the first economic system that made of work and workplace two separate categories. This offers a unique opportunity to appreciate independently their respective roles. A workplace was not necessarily a place for doing work. It was often a place for social entertainment, for chatting at a cup of coffee or a bottle of heavy drink (to make it “decent”, sale of spirits was forbidden until 10 a. m.), for spending leisure time in a company of equals, with unpleasant, but bearable, interruptions due to trade-union meetings or political trainings. Everyday presence at the workplace and observance of working hours, which was controlled by signing in at the entrance of by activating a recording machine, qualified every employee for

collecting once or twice a month his/her salary. To recover from such a “heavy burden”, sundry relaxation activities were organized for the employees, exchange visits of fellow offices or factories, collective participations at cinema and theatre performances, sports and games under the guise of civil defense days. Holidays could be spent at trade-union recreation facilities, with board and lodging almost for nothing.

The outbreak of unemployment was probably the greatest shock provoked by the fall of Communism. It may also be the main reason of nostalgia for the Communist past. Not because the social benefits for the unemployed are some lower than had been the Communist salaries. But because unemployment means the loss of social status, exclusion from familiar groups, reduction of communication possibilities. The experience of Communism may question one of the main theses of Marxism that work is the formative essence of humans. But another implication seems to be beyond doubt: that the workplace, independently of its economic function (and even if it may become, in the era of Internet, more and more virtual), is in our times the main entrance gate into the network of social relations, without which the individual human life would miss sense. In the imminent era of mass unemployment, in which machines will more and more displace humans from productive work, in which the place of the former proletariat is going to be taken over by a new social class, the “**superfluate**” (people who will be plainly redundant, superfluous), is this lesson of Communism most important and provoking.

The specific character of many workplaces, combined with the decline of the ethos of work, created a most favorable setting for gossiping. Gossiping is a common form of social grooming in humans (Barkow 1992; Dunbar 1996). Although no research data are apparently available, there is no doubt that exuberant gossiping, along with the political jokes, became a social norm in paratotalitarian societies. In fact, **hypertrophy of gossiping** – of the biological trait that is at least partly suppressed and publicly disvalued and disowned in European culture – may be considered as an outstanding indicator of cultural decay under Communism.

Another, no less important question posed by Communism is the question of freedom. Is freedom the supreme human need and supreme virtue, or is it more an invention of European (including American) liberalism? How about the no less pressing need of belonging, of sharing, of depending, of worshipping? The most important conclusion we may draw from life under totalitarianism is the following one: We use a single name for a number of items, not necessarily compatible with each other, and this causes confusion and inconsistencies. Individual freedom as the absolute value surely fits neither hypersociality nor

hyperemotionality as features of human nature. It is most urgent to come up with a new terminology – by necessity artificial – rather than continuing to play with the **noble but fuzzy term**. Unless this is done the results of the Communist experiment may escape interpretation of this domain of inquiry.

Another intriguing question, left unanswered, challenging a sacred tenet of classical liberalism, is the question of the “**naturalness**” of **private property**. Enforced collectivization of land property was paid by millions of human lives in the Soviet Union and caused much suffering to peasants in other countries. And yet, a few decades after its institutionalization, the peasants, changed-over into collective farm workers, became satisfied with their new positions to such an extent that, after the fall of Communism, they have been indifferent, if not reluctant, to get their private property back. Has the loss of an “instinct of private property” been traded off for comfort of laxness and irresponsibility, corroborating human proclivity for laziness? Or, more likely, does it not rather prove that the “instinct of property” may easily turn into “**extended selfishness**”, provided that a really tight identification with a group grants to an individual the same satisfaction from the group ownership as if he/she were the only owner? Does not a noticeably different relation to collective property in cooperative farms when compared with the relation to “all-people” property in State enterprises provide a strong evidence of human group-type sociality? Since the problem could not have been researched under Communism, why not to approach it now in that post-Communist countries in which collective farms are tenaciously surviving?

These are not purely theoretical questions. Right answers may have bearing upon the interpretation of the contemporary economy in which property of means of production is becoming more and more diffuse. In fact, Hayek (1990) preferred the term “separate property”, coined by H. S. Maine, to the term “private property” to designate the essential precondition of the “spontaneous social order”. He already made the point that the “extended order” of modern market economy may be “unnatural” in the sense that it does not adapt itself to the biological outfit of humans. Hayek’s conception contrasts with the view of Ardrey (1966) on the “animal origins of property and nations”, but it appears to get strong support from memetics (Blackmore 1999).

(4) Atomization affected the arts as well. Lip service to “Socialist realism” did not prevent existence of different styles, but the artistic landscape in its entirety was thorn apart with discontinuities because the censorship was preventing free communication and interaction. By easing all sorts of tension, consumerism of Western type was spreading out – preparing the ground for its hypertrophy in the post-Communist stage.

A sort of **infantilism** became apparent: consumers' worries in the economy of scarcity were not a simple deal, and so any favors from the State as a caretaker were appreciated. Slow, but continuous and unavoidable was the accommodation. The majority of populations may have been satisfied with the situation, especially in the Soviet Union, where the information about the living standard of people in the Western countries was sparse. But even in countries in which such information were rather easily accessible and common they may have been not motivating enough for active opposition: the price paid for the higher living standard – hard work, social uncertainty, unemployment, stratification of the society into rich and poor – may have been deterrent enough. (It is regrettable that no objective opinion surveys were possible. Those done shortly after the Implosion are of little explanatory value since they have been skewed by unrealistic expectations. Tentative extrapolations can only been done from recent polls.)

Has habituation been achieved? “*Man is a creature, which habituates to everything and this, is probably his best definition*” – this is how Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1957) has summed up his watching of the fellow-convicts in a Siberian forced-labor camp. But he could also watch decay of human (and humane) qualities of the convicts, which was the necessary price of such a habituation. The paratotalitarian Communism was surely not a forced-labor camp. Yet, it has been compared, by a number of watchers as well as insiders, to a spacious prison, in which the inmates have their assured bed and board and even some minimal comfort, need not even to work, and the only reciprocal service required from them is obedience, calm and gratitude (pretended? – doesn't matter!). The fee paid by those who complied, even if not as high, was not much different from that paid by Dostoyevky's convicts: cultural degradation, unrepressed selfishness, loss of transcendence.

This description is **not normative**. People living a shallow, trivial life, selfish and narrow-minded, need not be either less or more satisfied and happy than those boasting with their transcendence. The “**waning of humanness**” (Lorenz 1987) has not even been specific for paratotalitarian Communism and in different settings may have different forms. Two important implications can be drawn:

(1) Human hyperemotionality creates a huge potential of needs, perhaps of hierarchy described by Maslow (1971). The most elementary needs must be satisfied at any price: humans must respire and eat. Those a bit higher, like sex, allow already some flexibility. If culture is being degraded continually but slowly, the highest needs may remain out of the play without making a person unhappy or frustrated: they are expressive, hence redundant.

Satisfaction of Maslow's needs is probably not linked to a simple, animal-like pleasure, it comes closer to Kant's sublimity – it contains admixture of sorrow and dolor.

(2) The complex modern civilization loses stability when the higher levels of human needs generally disappear. This should be so, since this civilization itself is a product of human expressivity, achieved and maintained by evolutionary ratchets. Once the asymmetrically skewed teeth of the ratchets are broken out the wheels turn quickly backwards and the accumulated evolutionary wisdom gets lost. General importance of the concept of evolutionary ratchets to account for social dynamics will be treated in more detail in the second part of this study.

There exists a datum that may affect the interpretation of paratotalitarian Communism in an essential manner. At least the interpretation of the form it had in “normalized” Czechoslovakia after the military suppression of the “Prague spring”. According to a newspaper report of a specialist from the Federal bureau of statistics, published in 1983 (Aleš 1983), life expectancy in Czechoslovakia in 1980 was 70.5 years, the same as in 1960, while it had been continuously rising in Western Europe. From a prominent position in 1960, the country fell down almost to the bottom in Europe. Amazingly, the figure was due to the rise of mortality of men only: From 1000 men of the age of 40-49 years, 34 per cent more died in 1980 than in 1960 and, in the age span of 50-59 years, 33 per cent more. The difference between men and women in life expectancy was in 1980 7.2 years, one of the highest in Europe. The main cause of deaths was disorders of the cardiovascular system. It is hard to escape a hypothesis that these premature deaths reflect personal tragedies of thousands of people, men in the prime of their capacities, who could not execute their true vocation, who suffered from permanent stress and frustration. Incidentally, data on selectively higher mortality of middle-aged men in the post-Communist times, presented below, give an independent support to this hypothesis.

The statistical report from Czechoslovakia calls for a comprehensive analysis of demographic situation and mortality in other countries during the paratotalitarian Communism. If they resembled the Czechoslovak ones they would tentatively pose a question that, by its antiintuitiveness, has escaped analysts. In contrast to the orthototalitarian phase, there were hardly any executions in the paratotalitarian phase. And yet, may not the higher mortality of men in their primes be in fact understood as a manifestation of drawn-out executions?

6. Post-Communist transition as the highest stage of Communism

With capital exhausted to the very bottom, demoralized, paralyzed by anomie, Communist societies could not obviously be stable. One fine day, they went to pieces. And yet, the sudden peaceful Implosion of Communism in Eastern and Central Europe have been a puzzle and may remain so until human knowledge of some basic issues of social dynamics progress enough. It does not have a precedent in history (Fejtő and Kulesza-Mietkowski 1992).

It has become commonplace among political scientists to consider the post-Communist transition akin to those transitions that took place in Spain, Portugal, or countries of Latin America after the abolishment of dictatorships (Linz and Stefan 1996). As has been argued in another publication, it is a misplaced comparison (Kováč 2002b). Communism has remained firmly entrenched in the society. Lenin called imperialism the highest stage of capitalism. To paraphrase him, with a bitter irony, it seems to be appropriate to consider the period of eradication of the Communist legacy the highest stage of Communism. The comparison with other transitions disregards three fundamental differences:

(1) In contrast to the other ones, the post-Communist transition is characterized by **changes of ownership** so extensive and so fast that they have no match in all human history. This has created a unique, unprecedented social environment, which may survive for some time even after the privatization will have been completed. The weight of economy in the social network has become dominant. In this very unique moment of history, the relations of people to the means of production are affecting political and social institutions and individual and group behavior in a decisive manner. Certainly more than in the time when Karl Marx came up with the claim that these relations are universally the determinants of all social and spiritual life.

Regarding its extent, the post-Communist privatization is probably one of the most **iniquitous redistribution** of affluence and penury in history. Except for wars and violent pillage, the process of accumulation of personal and family wealth in the pre-Communist times, however unjust it may have been, was spread over decades or centuries. In the days of the wild capitalism in Europe and America, hard work, intelligence, social skill were usually prerequisite for an individual to become rich. Capitalism may have had Protestant ethics as a driving force, but the very ethics was taming it by empathy, fear, remorse and ostracism. No such virtues have been inherited from Communism. Privatization of the State

property cannot be fair and equitable even in principle. In the best case – and it is actually pity that this option has not been instituted in any post-Communist country – **lottery** would have been the most impartial procedure. Privatization has been accomplished in the situation when the gross national product has not been growing. The total wealth has been simply redistributed in a **rude zero-sum game**: some could get rich at the expense of those that get poor. Occasionally, the process of “restitution” has rendered the property back to the original owners. Yet, it belongs to the paradox of post-Communist transition that those who have most profited from reprivatization have been people who had before been privileged as members of the Communist “Nomenklatura” or even had been originators and beneficiaries of the colossal plunder of expropriation that had been dubbed “Socialist nationalization”.

(2) Features of human behavior and reasoning, which have been established during the first and second stages of Communism upon effacing cultural layers and uncovering primordial predilections and practices, have not disappeared and may even be reinforced by the contingencies of the social environment. Old organizations can be relatively easily and quickly replaced by new ones; institutions are recalcitrant toward rational design and their readjustment may require decades of spontaneous dynamics; behavioral stereotypes, even observance of simple rules of etiquette, may await several generations to become fully rectified.

Even laziness, which, in accord with the appraisal of Russell (1938), was an anti-totalitarian virtue in the first and the second stage, keeps unabated despite the restoration of capitalism: witness the low work productivity and the corresponding salaries.

Social stratification has been inevitable and may be desirable, but it represents a heavy psychological burden. People are no longer members of a single community, equal in poverty, which had been the case as a result of the two **standing equalizers**: inefficient economy and ideology. In parallel with processes inherent to capitalism, a feature cannot be overlooked: the shift from enforced and artificial equality to excesses of a primitive, pirate capitalism. The nouveaux riches are also only too often rich in vulgar manners of unrefined power and offensive vanity. In the other strata of society, nostalgia for the past, suppressed rage, despair, multiple sadness are combined with vicious gossip. As a Western observer maintains, “*pathological envy is the driving force of post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe*”. In the situation of a struggle with, as the author puts it, slightly exaggerating, “*survival of the thieftest*” (Vaknin 1999).

(3) Politics has also its unique character. It is rooted in the unique manner of the demise of the previous system: Communism as a political and economic system ended by self-

implosion and not through a violent blow of its opponents. “Power lay in the street”, was a saying: it became freely available to the first-comings. Which may have been either naive affectuals (sometimes with such queer ideas of the politics as “politics as applied ethics”, “non-political politics”, and even “anti-politics”) or ancient Communists, quickly converted to democrats. These visible political actors notwithstanding, the revolution, if any, was in substance the “**revolution of managers**”, as the keenest observers noticed. Those “ontological pragmatists”, who had thriven in the paratotalitarian Communism, became the real beneficiaries of the illusory “victory” over Communism, carrying over with them the whole stuff of pragmatism and opportunism. In the situation in which economy is shaping all life of the society, it is only understandable that they are the real rulers of the transition. The logic of capitalism will make of these smart people respectable citizens. Does it prove that they were right all their life long deriding all those who preach high principles, integrity and transcendence? What an intricate question to all moralists! Or, as will be evident later, to rationalists.

During the Stalinist stage of Communism, a proverb was in use among Communists both in the Soviet Union and the West to apologize for suffering, terror and massacres: “You can’t make an omelet without braking eggs” (Grossman 1984; Courtois *et al.* 1997). After the Implosion the proverb has acquired a different use: the task of reestablishing democracy and market economy has been compared to the task of reconstituting an intact egg from the omelet. The reverse process from omelet to egg is producing new injustice, new distress, new suffering, new deaths. There is no revocation, no reversibility – and also **no mathematics of suffering**.

The tremendous difficulties facing the post-Communist countries may be epitomized by the “**Impossibility Theorem**”, put forward by Jon Elster (1993). In analyzing distinct premises required for the triple transition of these countries (to constitutional democracy, competent markets and welfare State) Elster, a specialist on rationality, reached the conclusion that any possible regime that would be minimally satisfactory in light of the three transitions is unattainable. He mainly considered institutional contradictions, but he included the lack of elementary norms of honesty and trust among additional difficulties. As he put it, in societies where “*hypocrisy and distrust have been indispensable for survival, these values will not emerge overnight*”. He relates the complaints of Soviet legal scholars that they have excellent laws but do not know how to get people to obey them and adds somehow ironically: “*It would have been tempting to answer, ‘Wait a few hundred years’.*”

It is not hard to make up a similar “Impossibility Theorem”, originally devised in order to picture institutional difficulties, to human behavior. Absence of appropriate institutions that would enforce almost automatically “decent” behavior to anybody, independently of the damage he/she is carrying over from Communism, would demand “decent” people to introduce such institutions. A vicious circle? There seems to be a solution, a way out: a passage through the “vale of tears” (Dahrendorf 1991), an irrational path, unforeseeable, incalculable, inconsistent, contradictions. And ruthless and iniquitous, of course (Kováč 2002b).

If the post-Communist transition is without historical precedent as far as economic and political transformation is concerned, it has also no precedent in the psychological burden imposed upon the population. Human Pleistocene ancestors maintained their reference groups and values constant for generations. Accordingly, humans have not been selected to have the capability to accommodate to abrupt changes in group identity and in value systems. In history, transitions were either spread over centuries to allow adjustment or, if too fast, may have entailed extinction of communities and cultures. The French Revolution of 1789 may have also required a revolutionary change in status and values, but its ardor lasted for **less than 10 years**, and it took just 25 years to inaugurate the Restoration. Compare it with the original expectations that it may take but a few years to return to a normal society after 70 years of painful adjustments to Communism in the Soviet Union and 45 years in other European countries. In addition, in Central European countries a single generation has been exposed up to seven different political regimes in its lifetime, mostly totalitarian ones, and each of them enforcing conformity and obedience to completely different values and ideologies.

How psychologically difficult is this transition has been indicated by a recent report on death rates in post-Communist countries (Stone 2000). After the Implosion, life expectation has plummeted. Even more conspicuous is the fact that the groups experiencing the highest rates of premature death are young and middle-aged men. As it has been indicated above, it is the same group that had been most afflicted in the “normalization” period of Communism in Czechoslovakia. Traditional risk factors such as bad diet, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and infectious diseases claim a share of the rising mortality, but a major factor may be psychosocial stress. According to analysts, life has become like walking a tightrope with no social safety net. Disillusionment has led to stress and depression, and depression has been a harbinger of death.

We have in front of us a unique laboratory, perhaps even more challenging than those of the first and the second stage of Communism. In contrast to the latter, the access into it is free and instruments are available. In addition, seeing post-Communist transition in this perspective, rather than as a boring repetition of the path that other countries have behind them, may alleviate distress and curb apathy of intellectuals in the afflicted countries. What we may be lacking are appropriate hypotheses.

Discussion

In 1949, subsequent to the Second World War, when the atrocities of Nazism had become notorious, Theodor Adorno exclaimed that after Oswienczim poetry could no longer be written so as before (Adorno 1967). It seems now appropriate to paraphrase Adorno by saying: After the Gulags and Lao-kay, after the experience of Communism, cultural (i.e. human and social) sciences **should not be the same** as before (Kováč 2002a). The immutability of human nature, its embodiment in the hardware of the human brain and thus determined by genes and rooted in the human evolutionary past, its constraining of what humans can know and what they can do, should be the most fundamental principle of cultural sciences. The “Standard Social Science Model”, essentially Durkheimian, criticized by evolutionists (e. g. Tooby and Cosmides 1992; Wilson 1998), should be abandoned. Existentialists’ tenet that “*the existence precedes the essence*” (Sartre 1943), which had been approved as corresponding to the Marxist conception as well (Schaff 1962; Garaudy 1964), should be relegated to the repository of falsified hypotheses. This also applies to the views of the biologists of Marxist creed insisting that it is ideological to claim that human character and ability could be innate to any significant extent (Lewontin *et al.* 1984).

This lesson has a prime bearing upon political science. It has been already stated by a number of political scientists that defining human nature correctly is the key to political science (e. g. Somit 1981; Masters 1989; Miller 1993). Incidentally, Roger D. Masters and James Q. Wilson have already considered (as referred to in Arnhart 1995) “*the collapse of Marxist socialism in the Soviet Union as historical evidence against the cultural determinist belief that human beings are infinitely malleable through social learning*”.

Accepting human nature as a species-specific constant has substantial implications for appraisal of both behavior of human individuals and social dynamics. The notions “normal”

and “abnormal” get objective meaning. They make of the formulations of the form “if... then” a specific type of statements that has been called “stipulative statements” (Kováč 2002b) and may be placed at the intersection of descriptive and normative statements. Indeed, many assertions of this study as well as of its second part that use the word “should” have stipulative character. Weber’s question on the relationship of science and values and Hume’s problem of “naturalistic fallacy” appear in a new light. This subject has been already approached in another publication on Communism (Kováč 2002b) and will be extensively treated later.

As has been already pointed out, Communist experience calls for a new reading of the American behaviorist B. F. Skinner. Even though ample literature has been created describing human behavior under conditions of Nazi concentration camps, including books written by professional psychologists and psychiatrists, it is amazing to recognize how little have these reports affected academic psychology and anthropology. It seems advisable not to repeat the same error again. The outcomes of specific conditioning of humans who had been subjected to the totalitarian rule persist in the post-Communist era and remain amenable to analysis and generalization. Quite specifically, the cruel lesson of the Stalinist sham trials, the methods of breaking human integrity that had preceded the trials, and universal fear that the trials enforced upon the entire population should not be neglected and forgotten. They should serve both as a memorial, as the main symbol of the Communist period and, more importantly, as a warning that our knowledge of human potentials for Good and Evil remains precariously deficient.

Along with immutability of human nature, the experience of Communism has accentuated the **inseparable coupling** between humans and culture. Human nature encompasses abstract, rather syntactic “cultural loci” that get semantics by being filled in with locus-specific memes. Their alleles are being picked out of the meme pool, which represents culture. The more polymorphous a culture is, the richer is the meme pool, the larger are possibilities of recombinations between the alleles. Upon reducing polymorphism of culture, in the limit reducing it to a single “scientific world view”, the meme pool gets impoverished, offering but a few alleles to a locus and leaving some loci vacant. Humans, equipped, due to the run-away evolution to hyperemotionality, by innumerable potential needs, sink down to a quasi-animal level. Not only violence and terror, the absence of positive reinforcement alone is enough to entail extinction of culturally acquired programs. The experience from the second stage of Communism implies that such degraded people need not necessarily be unhappy and experience frustration.

“Real” Communism, established in Eastern and Central Europe, was not an aberration, a distortion of Marx’s conception of ideal society. Marx himself invented the “dictatorship of the proletariat” as the first step toward class-less society. Lenin and Stalin may have been psychopaths, but it had been built in the logic of Marxism that Communist dictatorships must have been headed, in their incipient phase, by eccentric personalities. Such was a logic of power: from affectuals (including lunatics), through opportunists down to ontological pragmatists. The same logic dictated the path from viewing another person first as an enemy, then a criminal down to a monster that should be “liquidated”. According to Kolakowski, who had known well the Marxist ravings from his personal experience, totalitarian thinking – the principle of all or none - is the very essence of Marx’s doctrine (Kolakowski 1985, p. 22).

Communism was expelled from the European ground. What has remained is the necessity to exorcise Marx’s demon from the European head. It is not an easy task, since the embryo of Marx’s demon had been conceived long ago in the Greek Antiquity. It resides in the conception that has trailed all along the history of European thought: that *Logos* of the human mind is isomorphous with *Logos* of Nature and with *Logos* of History. It is one of the most persistent, but also of the most pernicious, human mythologies; the more so as its origin has been equated with the origin of scientific thought. Human longing for unifying principles, enforced by human very nature, has committed here a most serious fallacy. The only item that these three different spheres have in common, is the universal principle of evolutionary dynamics: uncorrelated variations and persistence of those entities that are stable.

Human mind, mainly due to science, has been able to penetrate partially into these three disparate spheres, and the partial isomorphy so achieved represents human knowledge. Only when enough knowledge has been accumulated in a particular domain can humans try some rational design, emulating the evolutionary process. But so far humankind is barely capable of some rational design in simple domains, designing chemicals, machines, houses, perhaps also the simplest works of art. The project of the “scientifically managed society” was blasphemy.

Memes, the carriers of semantics for human abstract syntactic “cultural loci”, are not randomly dispersed like molecules of ideal gas in a cylinder or beans in a bag. They locally associate and the associations self-organize to build up institutions. If “survival” of individual memes depends primarily on the available “cultural loci”, institutions exhibit, to a considerable extent, their own autonomous, independent dynamics. This will be analyzed extensively in the second part of this study. Just as do genes restrict human behavior, institutions impose to it a new kind of restriction and control. Institutions remain “reasonable”, provided that they have been formed by evolutionary selection. Communism

has provided a most dramatic demonstration how odd and inhumane can be those institutions that do not carry any evolutionary knowledge. The horrors of Communism in their entirety, the whole immensity of human suffering and senseless deaths, **were due to the monstrosity of institutions** and not to “the beast”, as has been sometimes called, quite erroneously, the fearful, mythophilic, gregarious, self-deceiving creature that is the human animal.

This does not imply that those people who had, under Communism, violated law, who had ordered persecutions, tortures and executions, but also those who had executed the criminal orders should have been exempted and not tried. The most striking feature of the post-Communist scene is the fact that no such trials have taken place. Does it mean that everybody, who had lived under Communism, is innocent? Or, alternatively, that everybody had had his/her personal deal of responsibility and thus everybody is guilty? And where all are guilty, none is?

Whatever it may mean, it defies, as many other events of post-Communism, human longing for justice and consistency. Contemplating the post-Communist present with no less amazement than the Communist past we are left with a sobering conclusion: What human individuals, the surviving guinea-pigs of the Communist laboratory, have deserved, offenders, victims, and bystanders alike, is boundless **compassion**.

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