

VOX POP Newsletter

of Political Organizations and Parties

An official section of the American Political Science Association
Produced by the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron

***ISSUE THEME: NEW POLITICAL PARTIES**

NEW POLITICAL PARTIES IN EASTERN EUROPE: BUILDING A RESEARCH AGENDA

Alexander C. Pacek • Texas A&M University

The emergence of new political parties in the wake of the 1989 upheavals in Eastern Europe is unprecedented in modern history. On average, roughly 35-40 parties competed in the first-round 1990 democratic elections, with as many as 82 participating in Romania. The pendulum has shifted dramatically from one-party hegemony to multi-party competition, and the momentum behind the emergence of new parties is not over yet. Unfortunately, this explosion has not been matched by a similar upswing in interest among researchers, and a dearth of systematic analyses on these new party systems needs to be overcome.

One reason for this is the fact that East Europe's new party systems represent something of a "moving target"; new parties disappear almost as soon as they are organized in many instances. The situation is extremely fluid in terms of the electoral stability of the new organizations. In Poland, for example, the powerful Solidarity movement which swept the 1989 parliamentary elections, has now splintered into five distinct political parties, none of which received a solid majority in the October 1992 elections. On the other hand, many of the smaller, disparate political parties of Romania are in the process of building a coalition movement after their poor showing against the dominant ruling National Salvation Front during the May 1990 general and presidential elections.

In the third year of the post-authoritarian transition, East European political parties appear to fall into several distinct categories. The first of these are the "post-communist communist" parties, which are very much a part of the political process today. However, they bear little resemblance to the politically and geographically hegemonic organizations prior to the 1989 events. In Hungary, the old ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers Party has

divided into hardline and moderate "spinoff" parties, while the formerly disbanded Polish Communist Party has re-organized as the Democratic Left Alliance, placing second in the 1991 parliamentary elections. Czechoslovakia's communist party, ousted from power in November 1989, remains the second strongest party in that country's Federal Assembly. Bulgaria and Romania's Communist parties evolved into the Bulgarian Socialist Party and National Salvation Front, respectively, and were catapulted back into office through landslide victories in the 1990 elections. As long as economic conditions continue to worsen across the region, a future is assured for the communist parties in spite of their historical legacy.

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*FROM HEADQUARTERS

Dear Colleagues:

At the POP business meeting at the APSA, the Section supported the concept of an annual scholarly publication and mandated the officers to determine financial feasibility. I'm pleased to report that such an annual volume does appear feasible, and two respected publishers have submitted formal proposals. I have called a special meeting of the Executive Committee at the Midwest convention to decide the issue. Thoughts, questions and suggestions would be welcome from any member of the Section.

The two possibilities are publication through Transaction Publishers, located at Rutgers, or through the *Mid-South Political Science Journal*, located at the University of Central Arkansas. The alternatives are rather different in concept. In both cases there would be an annual volume, concentrating on a single theme in the area of political organizations and parties. With Transaction, POP would be essentially an independent contractor, paying Transaction for its services, and in return receiving hundreds of copies of the annual volume mailed to the membership. With *Mid-South*, POP would be a semi-official partner, providing some up-front money, and in return knowing that a volume would be produced and available to the membership annually. The financial involvement would also differ. With Transaction, POP would need to provide up-front money of \$5,000 (plus mailing). This would use up the entire treasury or would require grants of a dues increase of at least \$10 per member, for the 500 nominal Section members. The expenditure would buy a 250-page volume, with small royalties to POP. Future volumes would require the same expenditure. We would have full control of editorial content, and the advantages of a worldwide publishing consortium.

With the *Mid-South Journal*, POP would provide a one-time grant of about \$4,500. The cost could be recovered by a dues increase, but this would be optional. Instead, the volume of 200-pages, could be sold to interested parties

at a personal cost of \$10-\$12, including mailing. After that the Journal would commit an annual issue to POP, without further cost to the Section itself. POP would be closely consulted on the choice of topics and editors, but the Journal would retain editorial control. We would receive no royalties, but would promote the growth of a developing and ambitious journal.

Let me know your opinions and preferences before the Midwest meetings. I'd particularly like to know how many of you would expect to purchase the annual volume, your attitudes on a dues increase, and what topics (and persons) you would suggest.

I think we're close to realizing a long-held goal of the Section, a distinct publication. I look forward to that, and to seeing many of you in Chicago.

POP has been invited to sponsor a panel at the Northeast Political Science Association meetings in November in Providence. I've appointed Joyce Gelb of CUNY to organize such a panel, and I support the idea of close ties to the regional associations.

As recommended by the Section, Mark Wattier of Murray State University has been selected by APSA as the 1993 program chair for the panels on Political Organizations and Parties.

Finally, I have appointed a nominating committee of Bill Crotty, Northwestern, chair; Denise Baer, The University of Akron; and Neil Cotter, retired in California. The committee will nominate a Secretary-Treasurer and four members of the executive committee. Suggestions are welcome.

Best Wishes,

Gerald Pomper

ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENT

1992 POP-APSA WORKSHOP

"Representing Interests and Interest Representation"

A workshop of scholars and practitioners on how to study interest groups.

Wednesday, September 2, 1992

For further details, contact Ruth Jones, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 82587, phone (602) 965-6551.

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND!

Activities and Maintenance Strategies of Interest Groups in the United States, 1980 and 1985 (ICRSR 9601)

SUMMARY: This data collection was designed to study the organization and maintenance strategies of voluntary membership organizations with offices in Washington, D.C. Major areas of investigation include how groups overcome funding hurdles when first created, benefits provided to entice members to join a group, types of lobbying efforts engaged in, and characteristics of the organization's membership and structure. Class III.

UNIVERSE: Voluntary membership organizations listed in the Congressional Quarterly's Washington Information Directory, 1979, 1984 supplemented with groups in the Encyclopedia of Associations.

SAMPLING: Census, mail survey. A complete description of the sampling design and methodology can be found in Walker, Jack L., Jr., *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1991.

Project on Historical Congressional Statistics *

Frustrated by the current lack of long-range data on Congress? We would like your help on a project that would redress this need.

Our project will provide individual and aggregate level data, from about 1789 to the 1950s where possible, on the congressional dimensions listed below. Although most data will be collected and automated for the first time, the project would also include substantial revisions of existing ICPSR databases. Data on the different dimensions will be structured to allow merging. We will archive the database with ICPSR, and produce a book of summary data.

What data would be collected? To make that decision, we need your input. While each of us plans to use this data in research projects, we are also interested in how others might apply it. In addition, please let us know if you have collected data you might like to see incorporated in the project.

The following is a brief outline of our tentative collection plans and the individuals coordinating the effort. For general information, contact Elaine K. Swift at the Department of Political Science, UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3265; phone (919) 942-8335; BITNET: ESWIFT@UNC. For additional information, we also invite you to a 1992 APSA roundtable on the project.

CAREERS: Using the new *Biographical Directory* (1989), we will correct the party IDs and other substantial errors in ICPSR 7803. Contact John Hibbing, Department of Political Science, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588; phone: (402) 472-2341; BITNET: PSCI0003@UNLVM

COMMITTEES: Data will be gathered on the number and type of committees, reports, hearings, and chairs, and individual and aggregate level data on committee assignments. Contact David T. Canon, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 110

North Hall, Madison, WI 53706; phone (608) 263-2283; BITNET: DCANON@WISCGPS.BITNET

ELECTIONS: Data on elections will correct the party IDs on ICPSR 0079 and 0001 on elections. To ICPSR 0001, we also plan to add data on Senate elections by state legislatures. We would especially appreciate input on the latter. Contact Kenneth C. Martis, Department of Geology and Geography, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506; phone (304) 293-5603.

EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS: In addition to data on vetoes, oversight hearings, civilian nominations, treaties, and executive agreements, we would like to create a historical equivalent of CQ's Presidential Support Scores and/or Box Scores. Ideas on the latter would be particularly welcomed. Contact Michael J. Malbin, Center for Legislative Studies, Rockefeller Institute of Government, 411 State Street, Albany, NY 12203; phone (518) 443-5256.

PARTIES AND ROLE CALL VOTING: Howard Rosenthal and Keith Poole of Carnegie Mellon will mainly correct the party IDs and numerous factual errors on ICPSR 0004, Congressional Roll Call Voting Records. Contact Keith Poole, on leave at the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences 228-77, Cal. Tech., Pasadena, CA 91125; phone (818) 356-4569 BITNET: Poole@Romeo.CalTech.EDU

WORKLOAD: In addition to the type, number and disposition of public and private bills, petitions, and commemorative, we will also collect data on rules changes and their dispositions. We specifically request input on classifying commemorative and rules changes. Contact Evelyn Fink or Brian Humes, Department of Political Science, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588; phone: (402) 472-3224 or 8854; BITNET: PSCI036@UNLVM or PSCI024@UNLVM

New Parties of the Right in Western Europe

Robert Harmel • Texas A&M University

From LePen's anti-immigration Front National to the regionalist Lega Lombarda of Italy and the anti-tax Progress parties of Denmark and Norway, the rise of new far right-wing parties has become a common occurrence, affecting ten western European countries since 1970. Though many of these parties were contemporaries of their new left-libertarian counterparts, the right-wing parties were not greeted with anything like the scholarly attention given to the greens and other new parties of the left. While many of the left-leaning parties were immediately seen as exciting, post-materialist vehicles for value change, the right-wing parties tended to be viewed as reactionary protest vehicles, harking back to an earlier time rather than projecting the future. The commonly held assumption that right-wing protests tend to pass quickly may have added to the ease with which the new right-wing parties could be dismissed as important objects of study.

But with the growing numbers of new right-wing parties, the electoral strength and media attention attracted by some, and the proven durability of those that have lasted 20 years or more, the time has clearly come for serious efforts at both explaining the rise of the new right-wing parties and assessing their impact. Making this job more difficult and at the same time more interesting, though, is the growing awareness from the pioneering works in this area that these parties may be as variant as they are similar. If there is one thing that can already be established from the young but growing literature on new right-wing parties, it is that they are not all alike, whether in their issue profiles, organizational propensities, bases of support, levels of electoral success, or what they portend for their systems. Hence the search for a single explanation for all of them may be largely misdirected.

All of the new right-wing parties share a desire for reduction in the level of government involvement in the economy. Though not all of them began with an anti-immigration position and some still place less emphasis on the issue than others, most have come to oppose immigration of at least some groups. Aside from those few commonalities, there is little else of much importance that can be said of all of the new right-wing parties.

Some of the new right-wing parties (such as the Republikaner and the Dutch Center Party) began as nationalistic parties, stressing opposition to immigration, and they continue to be mostly identified with that particular issue; for others, the anti-immigration stance became a less prominent addition to a broader, existing issue profile. Some of the parties (like the Progress parties

in Denmark and Norway) began as anti-tax protest vehicles, and since have been broadened to be seen today as more generally anti-establishment. The new party in Sweden, New Democracy, began in 1991 with a platform that was already broadly anti-establishment. Still others of the new parties of the right (such as Italy's Lega Lombarda and Belgium's Flemish Bloc) are primarily regionalistic. Some of the parties (including the British Nationalist Party and the Front National) clearly deserve to be labeled—as most right-wing parties have been in the past—as conservative, authoritarian, and reactionary. However, others (like the Progress parties and New Democracy) may be better described as change-oriented, libertarian, and proactionary. With such diversity in the parties' profiles, it would indeed be amazing if the same factors could explain the birth and performance of all of them.

The puzzle in explaining these parties is to search out the factors that may have contributed to all, while not losing sight of equally or more important factors that are peculiar to particular subsets, and which help explain the diversity among the population of new right-wing parties. The search for the grand generalizations—still a worthwhile goal—should not be allowed to mislead us from what might now be a more fruitful search for middle-range explanations with far more meaning in particular contexts.

Nor should giving significant attention to the more specific questions in the explanation of these new parties' rise and impact deter us from the broader, central question of what these parties mean for their systems and their societies. And again, it is highly unlikely that the same answer will be found to apply for all situations. While some of the new parties—in their particular contexts—may indeed reflect a longing for the past by those who fear change, others—in their contexts—may themselves indicate a new issue dimension that will help shape the politics of the future. The latter could be the case, for instance, for the new right-wing parties in the Scandinavian social democracies.

Though it is still not possible to find, in the existing literature, completely satisfactory answers to any of the most important questions about these new parties of the West European right, very important ground breaking work has been done in recent years. These works have not only been informative, but also have set important directions for future research.

For serious students of the recently formed right-wing parties, a "must reading" list has to include recent work by Hans Georg Betz ("Political Conflict in the Postmodern

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SCHOLARLY PRECINCTS *(continued from page 4)*

Age: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Europe." *Current Politics and Economics of Europe*, 1990), Klaus von Beyme ("Right-Wing Extremism in Post-War Europe." *West European Politics*, 1988), Lars Svasand ("The Progress Party in Norway." In H.J. Veen, editor, *Christlich-Demokratische und Konservative Parteien in Westeuropa*. Conrad Adenauer Stiftung.), Karlheinz Reif and Oskar Neidermayer ("Supporters of Extremist Right Parties in Western Europe: Social Structure and Political Orientations." Presented at the APSA, 1990), Jorgen Andersen and Tor Bjorklund ("Structural Changes and New Cleavages: the Progress Parties in Denmark and Norway," *Acta Sociological*, 1990),

Robert Harmel and Rachel Gibson ("Right-Libertarian Parties and the "New Values:" A Re-examination." Presented at the APSA, 1991), and Lars Svasand, Robert Harmel and Rachel Gibson ("New Parties on the Far Right: Variations in Type and Explanation." MPSA, 1992) along with the contributions to a special issue of *West European Politics* on "Right-wing Extremism in Western Europe" (1988). More recently, a set of very interesting papers was prepared for the conference on the Radical Right in Western Europe, sponsored by the Western European Studies Center at the University of Minnesota (1991).

NEW POLITICAL PARTIES *(continued from page 1)*

The opposition coalitions that formed before and during the 1989 upheavals represent a second distinct category. The regional pacesetter, Poland's Solidarity movement, has already disintegrated into five distinct smaller political parties (Democratic Union, Liberal Democratic Congress, Center Citizens' Alliance, Solidarity, Labor Solidarity) less than two years after its 1989 election victory. The two dominant parties in Hungary's government, the center-right Hungarian Democratic Forum and the center-left Alliance of Free Democrats were established in 1987-88 to unite disparate anti-communist forces. Bulgaria's Union of Democratic Forces, an umbrella organization of labor, environmental, and human rights groups, recently displaced its communist adversary in the October 1991 parliamentary elections. In Czechoslovakia, former dissident playwright Vaclav Havel's Civic Forum/Public Against Violence coalition held a commanding majority in both the Czech and Slovak wings of parliament after the 1990 general elections. In 1991, however, the coalition split apart in both the Czech and Slovak republics. What remained was the right-of-center Civic Democratic Party and left-of-center Civic Movement in the Czech republic, and the right-of-center Movement for a Democratic Slovakia in the Slovak republic. Given the differences that exist among the various groups in all these coalitions, eventual disintegration in the fashion of Solidarity cannot be ruled out.

Survivors from Eastern Europe's chaotic inter-war multiparty systems (1918-48) fit neatly into the third category of "historical" parties. The agrarian Hungarian Independent Smallholders Party, winners of the 1945 democratic election, returned to the political scene on a program of returning confiscated land to its rightful heirs. Similar claims are echoed by the Polish Peasants' Party and Romania's National Peasants' Party, both dominant prior to the communist advent to power in the late 1940s. None

of these, or other historical parties, did well in their efforts to stage an electoral comeback; the legacy of their inter-war activities apparently held little appeal for post-communist voters.

One unforeseen consequence of the collapse of one-party communist rule was a new awareness of Eastern Europe's multi-ethnic nature, and a concomitant rise in inter-ethnic tensions. The emergence of decidedly ethnic political parties is one reflection of this. In relatively homogenous Poland and Hungary, even numerically small minorities have organized into locally significant parties. Poland's German Minority Party captured legislative seats in several constituencies in the 1991 general election. Where ethnic minorities are widespread and locally dominant, as in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Romania, ethnic parties tend to be well-organized and adept at winning seats. Bulgaria's Movement for Rights and Freedoms, representing that country's large Turkish minority, increased its vote share from five percent to more than seven percent in the 1991 general election. The Hungarian Democratic Union in Romania, while well below the ruling National Salvation Front in parliamentary representation, is still the second largest party in the legislature. As ethnic tensions continue to escalate in the region, ethnic-based political parties are increasingly successful at mobilizing their constituents.

The re-emergence of ethnic awareness in Eastern Europe gave rise to the organization of nationalist parties as well, in part a response to ethnic minorities' associations. In Czechoslovakia, demands for political autonomy are represented by the Czech Association for Moravia and Silesia, and the Slovak National Party. The strong showing of the Hungarian Democratic Forum in Romania's elections was followed by the emergence of the Vatra Romanescu nationalist party, which claims to defend

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The Democratic Charter Movement, 1972-1974: A Reform Move Stymied

Lawrence D. Longley • Lawrence University

National political party organizations in the United States have long been derided as inherently weak and lacking political authority—and even as somewhat electorally irrelevant. In a political system in which elections are conducted exclusively on the state and local level—congressional contests and presidential campaigns for state-by-state blocs of electoral votes being no exception—national party organizations have, at best, a weak claim of electoral centrality. In a separation of powers constitutional system in which the political bases of presidents and congressional leaders are independently developed and retained through the skills of individual political entrepreneurs, national parties are limited further in role and purpose. Finally, in a federal political system, national parties suffer in comparison with the electorally directly-engaged state parties. For all of these reasons, national political party organizations have traditionally been seen not as summits of power in American politics, but as side-show arenas for the playing out of personal, parochial, and localized political intrigue. As implied by the title of the classic study of the two parties' national committees published nearly 30 years ago, what is most characteristic of national party organizations is "politics without power."

In the early 1970s, a party reform movement emerged within the national Democratic Party devoted to the reconstitution and revitalization of the national party. This loose group of intellectuals and progressive activists, prominent among them James MacGregor Burns and, in a far lesser role, this author, came to be known as the Democratic Charter Movement. The original impetus for this reform effort came from the realization that the national Democratic Party had no formal written constitution or set of Bylaws. Throughout its long existence, it had operated on the basis of various understandings (not always, however, understood by everyone), resolutions adopted by national conventions (often haphazardly and late in convention sessions), and case-by-case actions taken by the National Committee providing in various ways for its own governance. In light of the internal party upheavals in the 1968 and 1972 election periods, such a lack of generally available structural definition and statement of rules, procedures, and lines of authority seemed to accord undue power to political insiders at the cost of insurgents. Thus, the initial goal of the party reform movement was a simple one (and in these terms relatively uncontroversial): to write a party constitution (or charter) which would outline the structures and procedures of the national party.

Soon, however, many of those in the party Charter

Movement began to define a more ambitious goal: utilization of the creation of a National Democratic Party Charter to strengthen the political independence of the national Democratic Party and its officers. As their thinking evolved through a flurry of position papers and draft documents during 1973, what party reformers envisioned was a Democratic Charter which would enshrine national Democratic party organization, and especially the Democratic National Committee, as a relatively independent "central office." This national party element would be able to articulate and promote national policy initiatives and political strategies while remaining insulated from undue influence from congressional leaders, the party's nominee for president, or even the party's president. Party officers, and possibly National Committee members, for example, would be elected for a four-year term at some point removed from the presidential election cycle—perhaps at a mid-term date—and would be expected to serve through election year events, independent and fair to all yet actively engaged in the policy debates of the day. Under this conception, the national party would not be the handmaiden of elected officials, presidential nominee, or president but, rather would have its own separate basis independent of the political passions and personal ambitions of office holders and candidates. In short, the national Democratic Party would speak for the continuing ideological (and presumably progressive) values of the party and provide much needed programmatic continuity.

The vision of the Democratic Charter Movement, then, called for the creation of a policy-oriented, progressive, and independent national Democratic party—one led at the national center by an independent organizational core of party strategists and policy-articulating leaders. In many ways, this conception of national party leadership corresponds to the model of the institutionalized national party. According to this construct, political parties become institutionalized through, as Cotter and Bibby put it "the development of the national party headquarters as agencies that have sufficient autonomy to enable them to define and pursue their own programs with assurance that their continued existence does not depend upon the whim of a presidential candidate or party." Events in the real political world, however, would stymie this process of party institutionization—at least in the 1970s.

Congressional leaders in general, along with many traditional party leaders, were appalled at the proposals of the Democratic Charter activists. An ideologically charged

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SPECIAL INTERESTS *(continued from page 6)*

and independent central party element, they feared, would become a prime target for McCarthy, McGovern, and anti-war activists who, once ensconced in national party positions, would be free to turn the party organization to their own extreme ends. The electoral consequences of such a development to Democratic officeholders or candidates might be disastrous if voters were bombarded with competing claims as to what the Democratic Party stood for—statements, on the one hand, from a possible run-away national party, and statements, on the other, from local congressional candidates burdened with policy pronouncements antithetical to their constituencies. Efforts were set in motion to blunt the more sweeping goals of the Charter Movement.

Clearly, some manner of a written charter for the party would have to be adopted; the lack of any formal party constitution or bylaws seemed indefensible. In order to produce a “responsible” document, a Democratic Party Charter Commission was created, headed by former North Carolina Governor (and more recently U.S. Senator) Terry Sanford. By requirement of the 1972 Democratic Convention, the work of this Commission would itself be subject to review and approval at a special mid-term Democratic National Party Convention which was mandated to be held in 1974.

The work of the Democratic Charter Commission was marked by controversy and divisiveness as leaders of the Charter Movement fought to keep their potentially far-reaching proposals from being diluted and, in many cases, discarded by the party regulars amply represented on the Commission. The final meeting of the Commission, in mid-August 1974, wrote David Broder, disintegrated into “bitterness and confusion . . . when blacks and liberal members walked out to protest what one of them called ‘the Sunday afternoon massacre’ of many of their long-sought reforms.”

The official approval of the national Democratic Charter would, however, rest with the special 1974 mini-convention of the Democratic Party—the first such gathering in U.S. history. By the time the 1600 delegates, together with (not by accident) over 800 public and party officials, met from December 6-8, 1974, in Kansas City, most of the fight had gone out of the Charter Movement and innovation out of the proposed Charter text. The final draft document prepared for the convention delegates, “The Common Thread: A Democratic Party Charter,” embodied few of the sweeping ideas and proposals which were designed to establish an independent and programmatic national Democratic Party. Rather, the mini-convention, ironically called “The 1974 Conference on Democratic Party Organization and Policy,” was asked to approve a charter sharply limiting any new political and policy independence of the national party organization. Instead of institutionalizing the national party, the Democratic Party Charter, as eventually approved with remarkably little dissent in Kansas City, essentially legitimized existing party practice. The Democratic Charter Movement had ended by producing not a lion, but at most a rather diminutive mouse. It would not be for another decade and more that some, but by no means most, of the goals of the party charter leaders in the early 1970s would be realized gradually through a slow and partial institutionalization of the national Democratic Party.

(For a useful overview of the Democratic Charter Movement of 1972-1974, its proposals, and their demise in 1974, see Crotty *Party Reform* (New York Longman, 1983):110-114. Also see, David S. Broder, “Rift Ends Charter Session,” *The Washington Post*, August 19, 1974, and Michael J. Malbin, “Controversy Over Charter Reflects Democratic Party Division,” *National Journal*, September 21, 1974, pp. 1407-17.)

NEW POLITICAL PARTIES *(continued from page 5)*

Romanian interests in regions with large Hungarian populations. Similarly, Bulgaria’s Committee for the Defense of National Interests was founded to counter the activities of the Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms.

Finally, there is a sixth possible category that characterizes the vast majority of East European parties, that of single-issue or “fringe” parties. These tend to be organizations that are either unwilling or unable to join coalitions, or alternately, broke away from opposition coalitions. Green parties such as Bulgaria’s Ecoglasnost, Czechoslovakia’s Green Party, and the Romanian Ecological Party, all gained seats in the 1990 elections, reflecting the regions catastrophic environmental problems. In Poland one can

find the anti-Semitic “Party X” of former presidential candidate Stanislaw Tyminski as well as the Polish Beer-Lovers’ Party. Of the 120 parties which registered for Poland’s 1991 general election, most fall into this category.

Of Eastern Europe’s party systems, the only thing that can be said with any certainty is that only a fraction of these new parties will stabilize and survive for the long term. While such fluidity makes for a difficult research target, the many questions these developments raise necessitate a comprehensive research agenda to tackle them. Such an agenda might address the following issues:

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NEW POLITICAL PARTIES *(continued from page 7)*

- How does the electoral strength of these new parties translate into legislative representation? The specific electoral laws in these countries are the products of many factors, ranging from negotiation among opposition groups, to the preferences of the dominant political force(s).

- To what extent do party cleavages reflect those of the inter-war multi-party era, or fundamental changes that occurred under communist rule? While traditions tend to be enduring in this part of the world, important developments such as urbanization, changes in occupation status and education, dispersal of information, and so forth, undoubtedly will have had a profound impact.

- What kind of ideological continuum might exist in these new party systems? In Hungary, for example, the generally conservative ruling Hungarian Democratic

Forum has called for slowing down the pace of free-market reforms, which its liberal adversary, the Free Democrats, opposes.

- How are party elites recruited, and what is the nature of their relationship with the parties' mass constituencies? A whole host of questions concerning citizen-elite relations under the new party systems can be raised.

This brief survey does not do justice to the complexity of this new situation. However, the opportunity is clearly there to test old assumptions about the nature of party systems in a new setting, and perhaps raise some new ones. With most of the old restrictions on access to data in Eastern Europe now removed, there is ample information available to conduct innovative, systematic research in an area long forgotten or overlooked.

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