

# Hijacked Ideas

## Human Rights, Peace, and Environmentalism in Czechoslovak and Polish Dissident Discourses

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Central European dissidents, although in many ways constrained by their post-totalitarian regimes, were nevertheless taking part in a transnational circulation of ideas. This article is inspired by contemporary studies of cultural (g)localization and links them to the research on dissent to show that the dissident intellectuals in Central Europe (the particular contexts of Czechoslovakia and Poland are investigated) were not only the receivers, but also retransmitters and “generators,” of “universal” ideas. To grasp their role and to understand the nature of “universal” ideas, it is necessary to look into domestic contexts to see how internationally functioning ideas are localized—that is, recontextualized and translated. What is more, locally altered meanings can influence the international “originals” so that a new meaning can be renegotiated. Central European opposition found a firm foundation and a source of empowerment in the internationally recognized discourse of human rights. However, with time, dissident groups in the Eastern Bloc struggled to reinterpret these ideas and extend their mobilizing effect onto other issues. Certain themes present in Western debates were taken up in Central Europe and merged with human rights issues. The two analyzed here are pacifism and environmentalism, ideas that were metaphorically “hijacked” and used by the dissidents. The article shows how the translation and renegotiation of these ideas proceeded and to what extent they were successful both locally and transnationally.

**Keywords:** *dissidents; human rights; peace movement; environmentalism; glocalization; framing*

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Although a plethora of studies have been dedicated to the analysis of Central-Eastern European opposition movements under Communism, some important elements have been hitherto underestimated or overlooked. One is the role of ideas and cultural processes in shaping the sociopolitical realities of Communist states in relation to parallel processes taking place in the West. While factual accounts and ideational histories of particular Communist societies and dissident movements have already been written, the importance of the transnational aspect in the way these histories evolved is still underresearched. Building on a specific vision on the role of the “dissidents” in transnational ideational exchanges and in domestic politics—emphasizing transnational recognition as a vital source of power and authority—this article proposes to look closer at one story of such transboundary communication.

The most important theme of this communication was the notion of human rights. However, with time, dissident groups in the Eastern Bloc were struggling to reinterpret that idea and extend its mobilizing effect onto other issues. In the 1980s, certain themes present in Western societal and intellectual debates were transplanted to the context of Central Europe and merged with human rights issues. The two most interesting are pacifism, or peace more broadly, and environmentalism. Why were these discourses chosen? How were they translated and recontextualized? To what extent was this translation successful, and what was its resonance? What was the reception of the altered discourses in their original context, and how was their link to human rights presented? This article shows how these discourses were metaphorically *hijacked* and used domestically to undermine the Communist system. This discursive *hijacking* impacted on the actual contents of these debates—not only because of their translation into a Communist context, but also in a feedback mechanism, when they were confronted again with the “original” discourses in Western Europe.

To analyze these processes, the discourse theoretic concepts of *localization* and *glocalization*, adjusted to fit the specific situation of “dissidents,” are used. *Localization* is understood as the translation of an idea and its fitting into the domestic discursive landscape. Such “translated” notions can then “feed back” outside and add to the universality of the general discourse. This feedback and the second renegotiation of meaning between the Eastern local context and the Western international one is termed *glocalization*. To show how these mechanisms functioned, the transnational circulation and negotiation of ideas is traced through the analysis of samizdat, tamizdat, and exilic literature, as well as through interviews with key dissidents. The research design, even though two country “cases” are selected, should not be perceived as comparative. While some comparisons between Czechoslovakia and Poland are made, the transboundary interconnectedness of Central European dissent since 1976 is strongly emphasized.

The aim of the article is first to show how the meaning of supposedly “universal” ideas is negotiated between local contexts. Second, the transnational dimension of dissent—both within the Eastern Bloc (Czechoslovak-Polish) as well as across the Iron Curtain (East-West)—is underlined. Third, the text provides a story on the evolution

of human rights, pacifist, and environmentalist discourses in the rhetoric and practice of Central European dissident movements.

I begin with a brief review of literature on the role of human rights in the demise of Communism. I then present the theoretical background of studying “localization” and “glocalization” as semiotic processes, as well as the four elements that need to be taken into account in such analyses. I later move on to the empirical analysis, going through the actual processes of localization and “translation” of human rights discourses, a set of “peace issues” and environmentalism, showing a feedback mechanism through which meaning is transmitted, and sum up the argument in the conclusion.

### **Dissent and Human Rights in Eastern Europe**

A considerable number of works in history and the social sciences acknowledge and explore the role of societal factors in the gradual demise of Communism in Eastern Europe, often working with the concept of the “civil society,” and emphasizing the importance of domestic actors, such as dissident intellectuals.<sup>1</sup> Despite an interest in the democratic opposition movements as carriers of certain ideas, much more attention is paid to the political struggle between the authorities and the dissenters than to the actual content of these ideas and to the role of human rights ideas in dismantling the Communist dictatorships.<sup>2</sup>

Legal scholars have investigated the evolution of human rights norms but to a much lesser extent their actual social impact in the region of our interest.<sup>3</sup> Historians writing about the development of democratic opposition traditionally acknowledge the importance of human rights but have less to say about the mechanisms through which these were made to function “at home.”<sup>4</sup> The Helsinki Accords of 1975, and more precisely the so called “Third Basket” on social and civil issues, are at the center of attention since the “CSCE Final Act brought a new level to the exercise of these rules [human and civil rights]”;<sup>5</sup> however, the reflection of these works remains only on a technical level. Since many of these studies are written by authors originating from Central Europe, the exact relationship between local contexts and external influences is often taken for granted. The dominant metaphor of a “return to Europe” or to “the West,” borrowed from dissident writings, illustrates this attitude.

Much interesting work on human rights norms, their diffusion, and the role of transnational activism in this process comes from the field of international relations (IR). The mainstream IR literature needed time to acknowledge the role of norms and ideas in shaping international political life and their role in groundbreaking events such as the end of the Cold War.<sup>6</sup> The “constructivist turn” in the discipline, introducing a novel, social *as well as* material ontology, spawned a considerable corpus of works on norms, values, and their diffusion. The “typical” situation is that of spreading certain “universally acknowledged” norms in non-Western settings, often through the “socialization” of “pariah states” or, alternatively, norms promoted by a

“transnational civil society” or “norm entrepreneurs,” trying to convince “critical states” (important global powers) about the necessity to adopt certain rules. In this strand of scholarship, several authors have dealt with norms in the Communist context.<sup>7</sup> Patricia Chilton tries to answer what impact social movements (mostly inspired by human rights and using the Final Act to “legitimize their demands”) had in dismantling Communist rule.<sup>8</sup> She points to two important explanatory variables: domestic civil society and its transnational contacts. The latter factor is especially salient, and deserves much attention in a study of localization processes, but Chilton only explores it to the extent that transnational contacts may enhance civil society formation and influence regime transition. As she points out, the most important function of transnational coalitions was “to give people who could not be heard a voice.”<sup>9</sup> That is of course true, but it would be interesting to know what is being communicated through such outlets and why.

The most important work on the relationship of human rights and dissent comes from Daniel C. Thomas, who presents the Helsinki Accords as a foundation for “more organized challenges to Communist hegemony in the years that followed.”<sup>10</sup> He goes on to claim that “understanding the expansion of organized opposition in the late 1970s is crucial to understand the emergence of ‘Solidarity’ in 1980, the grassroots reaction to Gorbachev’s reforms in the mid to late 1980s, and finally the nature of the political transition across the region in 1989-1990,”<sup>11</sup> taking the Helsinki Accords as the key explanatory factor of much of Central European history. This is very much in line with the dominant regional historical discourse, but it does not yet provide an answer as to why that is the case. Because Thomas uses the Final Act as the only benchmark, he is mostly interested in behavioral evidence of state compliance with the norms it prescribed.

Using the concept of *framing*, Thomas analyzes the various interpretations of the Final Act in various contexts. Social constructivist scholars understand the *frame* as “a persuasive device”<sup>12</sup> that is used to “fix meanings, organize experience, alert others that their interests and possibly their identities are at stake, and propose solutions to ongoing problems.”<sup>13</sup> Thomas, therefore, points to the importance of some form of *localization*—making the document understandable and making it function within a given discourse. However, he does not look into the already existing discourses and traditions, with which supposedly “external” human rights norms could “resonate.” He only mentions these in passing, claiming for example that “for a *variety of historical reasons*, the Polish constitution was relatively liberal and protective of human rights.”<sup>14</sup> While such a mental shortcut can be understandable, claiming that “ideas of human rights have a long pedigree in Enlightenment and liberal thought, but did not become salient within the countries of the Communist bloc . . . until the 1970s”<sup>15</sup> is simply not true, even if it allows for a more simplified analysis. The relation between established (even if muted) traditions—or as Thomas puts it, “historical reasons”—and the human rights discourse is precisely what I want to focus on. While Thomas treats these as a fixed and objective entity, I ask which human and civil

rights were emphasized at different points in time and what was subsumed under the category of human rights; in other words, I try to look into the content behind the label “human rights.”

Thomas clearly presents human rights norms as coming from the top down—“embedded in European institutions and disseminated . . . by a transnational network of human rights activists and dissidents”;<sup>16</sup> as a set of rules developed on the international level and pretending to universality. It also suggests that human rights were a novelty to be introduced. Thomas mentions a “deepening respect for human rights” but does not ask what happened to the respect for at least certain basic freedoms that was in place prior to Communist rule. This leads to overlooking their links to robust ideational tradition of Central Europe. Because traditions and local contexts are not the subject of Thomas’s analysis, human rights discourse is depicted as fixed and non-negotiable. Archival sources, however, show a more complex picture, in which a struggle not only for the “framing” of international treaties, but the meaning and role of human rights themselves, is visible.<sup>17</sup> Is it then possible to reverse the analysis and claim that human rights were universal not because they were institutionalized in international treaties and enforced by Western democracies, but also (or perhaps primarily) because they were presented as universal through local discourses, and thus their globality was produced through local agency? And additionally, is it possible to show the dynamics of human rights interpretation, negotiation, and stretching onto fields that were previously not covered by that notion?

### **The Sociolinguistic Foundations: Theorizing the International-Domestic Interplay**

The analysis presented in this article is based on the concepts of “localization” and “glocalization” developed in the sociological studies of globalization processes.<sup>18</sup> These studies explored the implications of globalizing tendencies not only from a socioeconomic but also a cultural perspective. Norman Faircrough argues that since knowledge is produced and circulated as discourse, transformations of societies are to a great extent semiotic and linguistic.<sup>19</sup> Ash Amin suggests that “to think of the global as flows of dominance and transformation and the local as fixities of tradition and community is to miss the point, because it denies the interaction between the two as well as the evolutionary logics of both.”<sup>20</sup> “Localization” and “glocalization” can therefore be understood as processes in which “global” discourses are translated or renegotiated. Bessie Mitsikopoulou defines “glocalization” as “the negotiation between the global and the local [which] involves exploring the effects of globalizing tendencies in local contexts (e.g., tensions and conflicts in discursive practices).” The most important issues are therefore the “appropriation of global discourses, strategies and techniques; re-contextualizations of global discourses and emergence of new discursive practices; legitimation of practices in the process of localizing the global as well as globalizing the local.”<sup>21</sup>

Within this article, “localization” is defined as a discursive practice through which a seemingly universal discourse (related to a certain idea, norm, or value) is rephrased and reconstructed in such a way as to fit the landscape of the local setting and make these discourses meaningful and legitimate to the given culture. These “translated” notions can then become “glocalized”—they can “feed back” outside and add to the universality of the general discourse. The transnational dimension is crucial here. In the localization process, an internationally functioning discourse is “picked up” and consciously grafted on to existing domestic discourses (recontextualized), in such a way that it acquires meanings it previously did not have but that are related to some discursive structures and traditions present on the local level. As a modified concept or idea, the translated “universal” notion can then be presented to the “global.” Then another renegotiation of meaning occurs, through which the seemingly “universal” concept and its localized translation can again be merged into one. In the case of Central Europe, this is associated with continuous communication between the local (Eastern) actors and their Western counterparts, in which the “dissidents” play a metaphorical two-level game. Human rights can be perceived as an example of how the specific position the “dissidents” were in and their role as metaphorical “bridges” between “East” and “West” were used to translate or localize values usually considered universal. The “dissidents” were attempting to bridge this semantic gap all along,<sup>22</sup> from the establishment of wider intellectual dissent in the mid-1970s through 1989 and beyond.

At the first stage (*localization*), the key observable implications of the mechanism in play are references made by actors that call up traditions (or what is perceived as traditional) and established discourses not only to argue for a certain issue but to make sense of the concept at stake. At the second stage (*glocalization*), the visible implications are related to a change in the “universal” or “global” meaning that are the effect of a struggle with the proponents of the local understanding. Localization is a process directed towards the domestic setting; that is why it is mostly the narratives produced in communication on that level that matter. Glocalization, however, operates on two levels—it therefore requires the analysis of both domestic and transnational communication.

I propose to consider four elements that provide a context for political debates and in relation to which (g)localization of discourses occurs. All these need to be taken into account if such practices are to be understood:

- *The inherent content of political concepts* (translocal/historic)—although meaning is created in use, previous usages create a certain “heritage” of a concept, which does have meanings independent of the debate in which it is evoked. That is, human rights as an idea has a history that goes far beyond the proclamation of the Helsinki Accords in 1975 or even the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.
- *Dominant political ideology* (local/transient)—providing immediate recognition and legitimization of claims made. This “layer” cannot be ignored for the issue to be recognized in a “public debate.”

- *Local “traditions”* (local/historic)—discursive structures operating locally, providing deeper and firmer foundations for claims made in debates.
- *The “international” sphere* (translocal/transient)—understood in relational terms, not as something fixed, but rather as the (subjective) representation of those transnational or international actors and their discourses that have an impact on the debate in question. In the case of human rights as a foundation for opposition, the “Western perspective” should not be read as an essentialization of a “West” but rather the outcome of an interplay of forces and discourses represented by the most important actors—governments, international institutions (e.g., United Nations), transnational activists (e.g., Amnesty International), and intellectuals.

An important issue to be addressed is the relation of *localization* versus *framing* and *resonating*, as the key concepts borrowed from sociology and used by social constructivist scholars in IR to describe and analyze the way human rights and other issues were represented in order to become “important” for various actors. While framing is a struggle to interpret a given and already existing entity, document, or issue, localization goes beyond that. It is not only about making links and drawing parallels. It is about defining, and filling with content, about giving meaning to what was either prior to that meaningless, or was understood rather differently. In the case of human rights, to give an illustrative example, framing is an activity through which a set of fixed (written-down) prescriptions is presented in relation to certain problems and behaviors (i.e., police mistreatment or the lack of alternatives to compulsory military service becoming issues of human rights abuse). Human rights, when localized, are taken up as an (not entirely) empty container and filled with certain meaning. It is not the associations, but the concepts themselves, that are questioned and modified in the process of localization. The dissidents were active in both fields; however, I try to show examples of the latter, more complex process.

### **Localizing the Universal: Human Rights and Central European Dissent, 1975–1983**

From the four elements that provide different anchoring points when an idea is localized in a given context, I will mostly focus on two, due to the limited scope of this article. I leave aside the lengthy pedigree of human rights—dating back at least to the Enlightenment, with some roots going as far as the late Middle Ages.<sup>23</sup> In the following sections I will emphasize the efforts made to reconcile the internationally functioning discourses with local “traditions” and the political ideology of state socialism. Once that recontextualization and localization becomes graspable, I will move on to discuss the way these transformed ideas were confronted again with the internationally functioning “original.”



Although human rights became an internationally mobilizing issue as late as in the mid-1970s, references to the ideas behind this vague label were made by the Czechoslovak and Polish political opposition since its symbolic initiation in 1968.<sup>24</sup> Whereas the 1960s can be seen as the high tide of reformism and the radical left, both the Prague Spring and the student upheaval in Poland carried elements of human-rights-based critique, in the Czechoslovak case calling up the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The post-1968 wave of political migration from Central Europe greatly enhanced the possible diffusion of information and ideas, first across the Iron Curtain, and later also within the Bloc.<sup>25</sup> That is why the CSCE Final Act (though not instantly) was understood as a political opportunity, rather than an inspiring set of ideas. The Helsinki Accords<sup>26</sup> revived human rights as a popular issue and turned them into a universal idiom—a platform of social communication between the two Blocs, transcending state borders and ideological barriers. The same was true domestically. Charter 77 spokeswoman Petruška Šustrová points out, “We knew very well that if it wasn’t for human rights, we would have nothing at all in common.”<sup>27</sup> Prior to that, opposition to Communism in Central Europe was understood on a different transnational “platform”—Marxist ideology. Those who opposed the Party’s political line were then either “anti-Communists” (remaining outside the ideological sphere of the Party) or “reformists” (heretical insiders). The original religious meaning of the term “dissident” refers to the latter. The human rights discourse stripped the term “dissident” of the remaining traces of that original meaning and widened it to encompass all those who advocate for a “common” understanding and practice of human rights (later to be transposed to other values recognized by the West).

What was then necessary for the dissidents? First: to make the human rights discourse digestible and eventually inspiring for the local populaces; second: to find a way to translate their local struggles into this new “Esperanto of détente.” The first task required tuning an abstract and dry legalistic notion with some locally functioning tradition or myth—a powerful and inspiring story.<sup>28</sup> The internal tension present in the human rights idea allowed this semantic transformation. On a very fundamental level, human rights can either emphasize the relation between an individual and the authorities (state), and be uttered in the language of constitutionalism and rule of law; or they can put more emphasis on human dignity in the interaction with the Other, perceiving humanity as indivisible.<sup>29</sup> The first interpretation was used in the struggle with the Communist authorities, while on the latter the dissident philosophy was constructed.

The localization of human rights, however, had slightly different flavors in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and even between the Czech and Slovak societies. In Czechoslovakia two important traditions were merged to form the foundations for a human rights oriented civic dissident discourse, personified respectively by the iconic figures of T. G. Masaryk and Jan Hus. The first was the self-conception, especially strong among the Czechs, of the nation’s democratic experience.<sup>30</sup> As Ladislav



Holy notes, in the Czech lands “totalitarianism has not created a tradition. It is the democratic tradition which is constantly being acknowledged and invoked.”<sup>31</sup> A major document produced by a later dissident initiative is a good illustration, as it explicitly states, “democracy is our tradition” and calls up “Masaryk’s epochal democratic revolution.”<sup>32</sup> However idealized the Czech recollections of the philosopher-president Masaryk’s Czechoslovakia may be, their existence and paramount place in the civic or social “shared” memory is undeniable.<sup>33</sup> The second, “Hussite” myth invoked to anchor the humanist aspect of human rights is that of the dissident ideal of *parrhesia*: “telling truth to power,” despite the immediate danger this may cause.<sup>34</sup> The idea that “truth shall prevail” in its abstract but morally powerful tone constituted the ethical foundations of Charter 77 and Václav Havel’s call to “live in truth.”<sup>35</sup> Human rights were thus portrayed as the guarding principles of a “life in truth”—telling the truth (the basic freedom of speech, press, religion, and conscience) as well as “living full lives” in accordance with human dignity, which the regime obviously denied.<sup>36</sup> This way of retelling human rights at home, on the one hand, made the Czechoslovak dissident discourse fairly “universalist” from the start, but on the other hand, it can partially explain the elitist edge to domestic dissent visible until the end of the 1980s.

This rhetoric, however, had less resonance in Slovakia. It is often noted that the Charter had only a handful of signatories in Bratislava,<sup>37</sup> and the strong anchoring in Czech tradition may account for this fact to some extent.<sup>38</sup> Civic self-organization was of course important to the Slovaks, but so was national self-rule within the federation governed from Prague.<sup>39</sup> While the goals of the Czech dissident movement were often acknowledged and shared, the priorities and strategies of the nascent Slovak opposition were different.<sup>40</sup> Much more emphasis was put on the link between human rights and Catholicism, especially the freedoms of conscience and religious practice.<sup>41</sup> That is why many Slovak dissenters were acute observers of the development of Polish opposition, which attempted to localize human rights in ways closer to Slovak traditions.<sup>42</sup>

In the Polish case, the surest way to reach the society and to infiltrate it with the idea of human rights was through reconciling an emphasis on human-to-human relations with the teachings of the Catholic Church (compare: Brier’s contribution in this issue<sup>43</sup>). As a firm oppositionist close to the Church and the Helsinki movement notes,

Taking part in common action we can choose certain accents, which one finds especially important. We simply notice how important community is for people. Christianity stresses this aspect; that is why this question is raised more often, while in the pan-humanist perspective there is more emphasis on the rights of the individual. But one does not contradict the other, as for a community to exist, the rights of the individual need to be protected.<sup>44</sup>

The necessary foundations for a dialogue between the (very often) left-wing opposition and the Catholic circles, one that made it possible to fully tune the human rights discourse with the Christian traditions locally, were constructed by the key figures of the Workers' Defense Committee (KOR), most importantly Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuroń, as well as the reformist Catholic intellectuals of the Catholic Intelligentsia Club (KIK) and others.<sup>45</sup> This amalgam of revisionist socialism, liberal thought, and progressive Christianity made it possible to anchor the human rights discourse both in the parlance of the official ideology and in the deeply rooted and lively societal tradition. It was itself constructed on a revived tradition of the defiant but united "intelligentsia," a word devalued by state socialism, brought back to life by Bohdan Cywiński's *Lineages of the Defiant (Rodowody niepokornych)*. This exchange bore fruit. Already in 1976 Adam Michnik, noticing the importance of the Catholic tradition, saw a shift in the standpoint of the Church itself, where "tirades against 'godless atheists' are being replaced by documents that call up the Declaration of Human Rights" and that by "consequently resisting state pressures, the Church, defending the norms of Christian ethics and the norms of the Declaration of Human Rights is nolens volens a centre empowering non-conformism and the defense of dignity," making it "an important factor stimulating the growing movements to broaden civic freedoms."<sup>46</sup> This shows how the localized discourse of human rights was able to play the role of a unifying platform not only transnationally, but also domestically.

What was common for the three national contexts described above was the second factor influencing localization practices: domestic political ideology of "state socialism" or "Communism." Advocates of human rights could not avoid references to what was often perceived as a watered-down and "post-totalitarian" version of Marxism-Leninism. It was important because only by anchoring their argument in socialist discourse were they able to engage in a legitimate (in the immediate sense) repression and dialogue, to which the authorities could reply either by discursive means or by repression and violence (thus reducing their own legitimacy, at least on moral grounds). Depicting human rights ideas and Communism as "enemies," as is often done, does not give a full picture. Human rights and socialism are part and parcel of the same radical family and are fruit of the Enlightenment. In socialism, however, the individual is supposed to fully develop as part of the collective. For that a certain level of life standards is required. And so human rights understood as liberties, but also obligations, were replaced by mere welfare demands—"paternalistically granted basic entitlements, which are granted to people at the cost of political assimilation, economic conformity, and legal declarations by the respective party elite to secure their own sphere of power."<sup>47</sup> In real existing socialist societies, the emancipation of the people was replaced by this paternalistic, state-led system of welfare entitlements, dressed in egalitarian slogans. As human rights proper were making claims on a completely different level, they did not fit the state socialist framework. And in that lay their power to destroy the system, or at least to provide a coherent ideational narrative for the opposition, which would partly de-legitimize

the official ideology. Jiří Hájek suggests that repressive reactions to claims made from a perspective which has so much common ground with what the Communists preached, ridiculed the system and its ideology: “when this is done by the regime describing itself as socialist it is a disservice, to say the least, to the cause of socialism, its democratic and humanizing mission and, thus, to social progress itself.”<sup>48</sup> This way human rights replaced the reformist ideas as the set of prescribed elements the system needs to incorporate for the socialist or “democratic” ideal to be realized. The dissidents put themselves in the role of teachers, providing advice for the regime.<sup>49</sup> And the regimes in Central Europe seemingly declared themselves ready to learn: Hájek notes that the whole perspective changed the moment that a regime imposing on its citizens a restrictive or even repressive interpretation of democracy, rights, and freedoms indicates in other circumstances its readiness to accept (or at least tolerate) other interpretations,<sup>50</sup> such as those present in the Helsinki Accords.

The civic movements could thus hold the governments accountable for their “pledges,” the dead letter of the domestic law, and the even more visibly dead ideals of the preached socialism. That is a strategy that was used by most opposition groups from 1976 onwards, and until 1990. The role of the dissidents as mediators was to take an internationally recognized issue, put it on the domestic agenda using both the existing traditions and laws, as well as international obligations, and then to feed the description of their struggles back to the international community in such a way that the transboundary saliency of the issue would be immediately recognized.

Making Central European struggles understandable and digestible for the West did not occur automatically. It required channels of communication. There were several such channels. First, the émigré circles were “used” for these purposes. The Czechoslovak and Polish diaspora was quite varied, and only parts of it were actually paying attention to what was happening in their homelands. As Aleksander Smolar points out, the post-1968 migration was crucial, because it was not only most aware of the communist realities, but also had close private links to the nascent opposition “at home” and was at the same time able to quickly reach prominent and visible positions in Western societies (to name only such figures as Leszek Kołakowski, Krzysztof Pomian, Josef Škvorecký, or Milan Kundera).<sup>51</sup> From this milieu grew the most important media institutions, focused on retransmitting and to some extent translating the dissident message to the international public: A. and E. Smolars’ fortnightly news bulletin, which later became the *Uncensored Poland News Bulletin* and, together with Jan Kavan’s “Palach Press,” the foundations for the *East European Reporter*; to a lesser extent also Jiří Pelikan’s *Listy* (several issues translated into Western languages).<sup>52</sup> The other channel was the direct contact of the “dissidents” (as by then they came to be called) with the Western public opinion: through open letters and appeals,<sup>53</sup> articles and essays for major newspapers (*Der Spiegel*, *Le Monde*, *The Guardian*, etc.), interviews for foreign media, or rare face-to-face contacts.<sup>54</sup> An additional opportunity for spreading the dissident message were the “parallel conferences” on human rights, organized by Central European exiled dissenters and Western human

rights activists (i.e., Helsinki Watch, Amnesty International, the Citizens Committee, etc.), like the one in Madrid in 1980.<sup>55</sup> Through these channels Central European oppositionists could engage in a dialogue with the West and both translate their aims into the language of human rights and attempt some renegotiation of the concept altogether.

And so—the happenings in Czechoslovakia and Poland had to be made understandable for Westerners. Bortnowska recalls, “In the beginning . . . the most important issue was to find some foundations, the possibility to call upon laws seen as binding within the international community, to something that would persuade others to take our side.”<sup>56</sup> At some point, making something understandable and acceptable in the eyes of Western public opinion was balancing on the edge of tearing it from its original meaning altogether. The toughest of such “translations” relates to the “Solidarity” itself. “The [Western] Left was not able to understand how an authentic grass-root workers’ movement could draw inspiration and strength from its contacts with the Catholic Church.”<sup>57</sup> While the mass movement in 1980 and 1981 employed a Catholic and national symbolic, and later on certain far-right, nationalist, anti-intellectual, and even anti-Semite tendencies were becoming visible, it was still possible to sustain the image of the movement as first of all a trade union (emphasizing its labor traits) and a human rights revolt. Because nationalist threads did not fit into the universal human rights discourse, their representatives did not benefit from the transnational empowerment human rights activists gained, which in turn helped to sustain their domestic marginality. A KOR and “Solidarity” member, Andrzej Celiński, suggests that this process of localization and then retranslation (feeding back) of local meanings to the global (or at least Western European) level was a process that had long-term consequences even after 1990: “Once president Kwaśniewski told me that it is thanks to us, to my circle [the “dissidents” from KOR] that Europe and the world believed that ‘Solidarity’ is like us. . . . That was not a true picture, but very positive for Polish aspirations to freedom.”<sup>58</sup>

At the same time, “Solidarity” and its link to human rights were pronounced in much more abstract and ethical terms. Bronisław Geremek described the movement as “giving words back their real value,” claiming that “the truth of language made possible the community of people.”<sup>59</sup> Such a universalist narrative of the social process that at the same time resulted from and in “Solidarity” was appealing to a whole specter of political audiences. The same was true—and as already mentioned at the beginning of this section, perhaps to a much greater extent—of Charter 77 and its moral, strongly universalist rhetoric. As Jiří Gruntorád points out, “Because of the internal pluralism of the movement, and the fact that its message was a result of negotiations between the three ‘currents,’ everyone was able to find something appealing for themselves.”<sup>60</sup> This had a rather surprising and indirect impact on the political debates in Western Europe and the United States, as support for the Charter (or Polish dissent) brought together politicians and intellectuals who normally would not speak to each other.

Although human rights were internationally acknowledged, their priority in international politics was largely questioned. The “moral” story that the Central European dissidents used to localize the human rights discourse “at home” could also be used to convince certain groups within the West that human rights should always come first—even before state sovereignty and definitely before “realist” considerations. As the nestor of the Czech civil movement Jan Patočka put it, “Morality is not for a society to function, it is simply for a human being to be human.” He goes on to say, “It occurs to me that the very notion of a ‘pact on human rights’ contains in itself the idea that states and social formations subsume themselves to the sovereignty of a moral sentiment and that they acknowledge something unconditional . . . to which they want to serve.”<sup>61</sup> Owing to the immense moral authority of the (by then often imprisoned) dissidents, such arguments were appealing and hard to dismiss, at least in public.<sup>62</sup> And so the two levels on which a renegotiation of ideas took place were the struggle over the meaning of human rights (i.e., “Solidarity’s” attempt to merge human and labor rights in one), their priorities and reach, as well as the relation of human rights and the political “left” and “right” in the face of an actual struggle in Eastern Europe.

### **The Transnational War over Peace: Human Rights, Pacifism, and Disarmament, 1983–1990**

In the 1980s, human rights were already a firmly established notion, and while they still had a strong appeal, there was a whole new agenda emerging. With Ronald Reagan’s “negotiating from strength” and the “nuclear crisis” in Europe, the new buzzwords were “disarmament” and “peace.” The Western peace movement was growing in numbers and visibility, a fact that did not escape the attention of the communist regimes. Western pacifists were perceived, if not as potential allies (in a somewhat reverse situation as the human rights dissent in the East was from a Western perspective), then at least as a brilliant propaganda tool for a critique of NATO and Western powers in general. In both roles, the peace movement was highly problematic for Central European dissenters. And something had to be done about it. From the beginning of the 1980s, the dissidents were gradually taking on the “peace question,”<sup>63</sup> engaging in a dialogue with their Western activist counterparts (most notably those united in the European Nuclear Disarmament—END), and in this dialogue attempting to alter certain previously unquestioned notions—ending up metaphorically “hijacking” the idea of “peace” and “peace movement” and transforming it into an extension of the human rights discourse. In this section, I will discuss how this idea was taken up, how it circulated in Central Europe, how it was tuned to the existing domestic discourses (an example of a somewhat incomplete localization), and how it was renegotiated again with the initial “users.”

In Eastern Europe, *peace* was a highly “contaminated” word. It was, for decades, one of the favorite notions in Communist propaganda.<sup>64</sup> Stalin was, after all, the “great bearer of the standard of peace.” Talking about “peace” meant the risk of falling into the regime’s newspeak. The idea was firmly set into the dominant political ideology in Central Europe. When the issue was taken up, the opposition was challenging the regime on its home turf, but potential attacks could no longer (as was the case with human rights) be dismissed as “bourgeois.” “Peace” was the fixed element, and the struggle was now over proving who really cared about it. Additionally, Western “pacifists” were initially viewed with hostility, as “Moscow’s agents.”<sup>65</sup> Among the Western pacifists there was indeed “a tendency to articulate the conflict with the regimes in the East cautiously, in the light of the ultimate goal of peace.”<sup>66</sup>

But *peace issues* were too important and too visible to put aside. There were several strands of issues, which were tied to the general notion of “peace,” especially for the purpose of a dialogue with Western peace activists (see Table 1). The first was the *definition of peace* and the argument over the means of achieving it. The second was *disarmament*, as the most important goal of the peace movement and the declared goal of some national governments. The third was the question of *conscientious objectors* and of an alternative to military service. The fourth was the notion of the *demilitarization* of the society. The fifth was the call to *dismantle the bipolar system* and the two military alliances (NATO and the Warsaw Pact). The last question—present in Poland—was the *resistance to a military oath* that demanded loyalty to the USSR.<sup>67</sup> All these nuances add to the complexity of the notion of a “peace movement” in Central Europe and its role in the localization and later attempted glocalization.

The first direct reference to the Western peace movement is made by Charter 77 in 1981.<sup>68</sup> Addressing the question of “peace,” the Czechoslovak dissidents are, however, reluctant to resign from the language of human rights. Some months later Chartists write, “Although we grasp the particularity of the current threat . . . we are bound not to leave the principal issue of human rights”;<sup>69</sup> and they refer to a “human right to live in just peace.”<sup>70</sup> Here the notion of “indivisible peace” appears for the first time in dissident discourse, along with a clear reference to the naïveté of pure pacifism.<sup>71</sup> This is the first moment when the renegotiation of the meaning of “peace” becomes visible.

The Chartists were first to engage in a dialogue with the Western pacifists, but the first real recontextualization of the idea of a peace *movement* took place in Poland.<sup>72</sup> In the localization of the idea of “peace” and the reformulation of a “peace movement” to Central European realities, the common thread, especially for Poles and Czechs, was the distance they kept from the term “pacifism” and people associated with it—resulting from historic experiences of the failure of appeasement policy.

The creation of the first “peace movement” in Poland, Freedom and Peace (WiP), was a conscious maneuver, at the same time creating a real partner to talk with Western pacifists and a means to fight the communist propaganda at home.<sup>73</sup> In November

**Table 1**  
**Localization and Glocalization of Peace Issues**

Thread	Local Reception	Translocal Reception
“Peace”	Generally accepted, dangerously close to Communist propaganda, supported by Christian rhetoric (Poland), linked to democratization	Since 1982 negotiation of the meaning of peace; between “peace as the lack of war” (West) and “international peace as the result of domestic peace” (East); “indivisible peace” (human rights and democratization)—successful renegotiation
Disarmament	Dominated by official propaganda discourse; perceived as a secondary issue (Poland), anti-Soviet edge (Czechoslovakia)	Lip service paid by Eastern movements, attempted glocalization of a “constructivist” perspective
Conscientious objectors	Difficulties in gaining local support; in Poland the campaign for changing the military oath used to empower the issue; strong link to human rights	Publicized to gain Western peace movement solidarity with Eastern activists; used domestically as counterpropaganda
Antimilitarism	Strong resonance in Czechoslovakia (link to the 1968 invasion); difficulty in overcoming the “heroic military” discourse in Poland	A firm common platform of societal critique, no renegotiation needed
Dismantling military alliances	Domestically linking peace issues with the dissident political mainstream; perceived as a bold and radical rhetoric in Poland	No understanding for the issue among some Western activists (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament—CND), foundation for a dynamic transnational coalition (European Nuclear Disarmament—END); glocalized on the basis of reciprocity (no NATO, no Warsaw Pact)

1984, a young oppositionist was sentenced to prison for refusing to take the military oath.<sup>74</sup> The issue was framed both as a protest in the name of civil rights and as one relating to peace. This was a novelty. There were similar protests already earlier—the first case taken up by the Czechoslovak Committee for the Defense of Unjustly Persecuted (VONS) was one of conscientious objection. However, it was then only perceived as an human rights case, and the localization of an idea of “peace movement” was needed for the issue to acquire a new meaning.

WiP was empowered domestically by the general disobedient attitude of the society and the new “tradition” of the “Solidarity”—an immediate reference point for its actions. However, the greatest challenge was to inscribe the peace movement and some antimilitarist ideas in a “society that is, seemingly, not very pacifistic.”<sup>75</sup> Many activists failed to realize “how deep is the misunderstanding of their intentions towards the army and the society, especially among the elderly” and how strong “the charm of uniforms and sables is. . . . All that is meticulously separated from the thoughts of



peace and security, and creeps over WiP's social acceptance."<sup>76</sup> Although the Martial Law had a strong impact on the way Poles perceived the army, and the percentage of men supporting obligatory military service fell from some 90 percent in 1974 to 47 percent in 1984, the discursive construct of military heroism prevailed.<sup>77</sup> And so, while WiP could find a niche for itself, it could hardly change the ideational landscape of the society significantly.<sup>78</sup> Whereas for the Czech and Slovak history did not have to be only about wars and battles, the Polish society was much more attached to "national armed efforts." While the socialist propaganda was full of references to "peace," the domestic practice was that of a militaristic authoritarian state, and "patriotism" was constructed on the commemoration of glorious victories and heroic defeats. The peace movement had to be navigated between the empty word "peace" and "national martyrdom." And so the anchoring of the "peace movement" idea was only partly successful. The issue of conscientious objectors was especially difficult to push through and made the movement vulnerable to accusations of "propagating cowardice" and "diminishing the defensive capacity of the state."<sup>79</sup> To overcome this misinterpretation, the question of the military oath was used—spelled out in a patriotic and in fact quite militaristic rhetoric, the issue attracted many conservative supporters to the pluralist movement.<sup>80</sup>

WiP struggled to secure acceptance (and so legitimacy) for pacifist ideas among the various centers of authority. Despite the atheist views of many members, "the fact that [WiP's] ideas were accepted by the Church hierarchy was taken as very positive."<sup>81</sup> For pragmatic as well as religious reasons, WiP's founders began their Foundational Declaration with a direct reference to John Paul II.<sup>82</sup>

Divergent meanings of "peace issues" collided on many occasions, but especially during reciprocal visits within the transnational coalition of pacifists that were not uncommon in the second half of the 1980s. The question of disarmament was a bone of contention, because for many Central European activists "the threat from the Soviet Union remained real . . . , so we absolutely couldn't disarm" and so the initial standpoints "were very different and detached."<sup>83</sup> The situation was somewhat different in Czechoslovakia, where nuclear disarmament (or protests against the deployment of Soviet SS-20 missiles in the mid-1980s) was the first organized "pacifist" initiative and later paved the way for a local peace movement.<sup>84</sup> Some Western activists were speaking of a one-sided disarmament on the part of NATO, and this was rational within their understanding of arms as means of war—getting rid of them would diminish the risk of conflict (as long as one believed in the benevolence of the USSR). The "Easterners," however, insisted that wars and militarism are forced upon societies even though they are irrational—it is human rights and democratization that bring peace. They were closer to conservative Western politicians in claiming that no one has the right to demand that others are denied the right of self-defense and protection of the values they hold dear, and in this fact lay the risk of their marginalization within the global movement.<sup>85</sup> Table 1 illustrates the way localization and glocalization of the various "peace issues" proceeded.

Eastern oppositionists tried to reformulate both the understanding of what peace was and what its implications were.<sup>86</sup> First, peace was seen not as a value in itself, but rather the outcome of specific domestic and societal conditions—rule of law, democracy, and the respect for human rights and civil freedoms. “The main threat to peace is not in arms, but in the division into irreconcilable political systems” claimed the WiP-ist Jacek Czaputowicz,<sup>87</sup> thus questioning the political idea of peaceful coexistence and *détente* that formed the base for disarmament movements. The statement WiP produced for the END meeting in Coventry made it clear that “a situation, where in some state the basic needs and aspirations of citizens are suppressed by force cannot be called *Peace*.”<sup>88</sup> Very similar views were expressed by the peace movements created in Czechoslovakia after 1987—especially the Independent Peace Movement (NMS). On the other hand some Western activists criticized WiP for the belief in “democratic peace,” suggesting that “democracy will not have an impact on peace in Europe.”<sup>89</sup>

On the whole, however, Central European dissidents achieved their goals. They took up the idea of “peace,” towards the second half of the 1980s regained the initiative in domestic debates over “peace,” and turned Western pacifists from tools of Communist propaganda into important allies. They were also able to subsume the hijacked ideas of “peace” under the human rights discourse and convince a large part of the Western public that human rights should come first also in considerations over peace. A key figure in the END later acknowledged that the East-West contacts and debates “were a form of education, a learning process. The thinking of many individuals was profoundly influenced by these discussions,” and these influences constitute an important, however overlooked, input of Central European dissident thought to global politics.<sup>90</sup> The dissidents’ voice was necessary in a pan-European peace movement, and even if they were not able to fully persuade their interlocutors, their perspective was impossible to discard, and thus impacted on the international understanding of the aims of peace movements.

### **Localizing Environmentalism: Central European Greens, 1986–1990**

In the 1980s, alongside the growing peace movement, the “greens” were gaining enormous popularity. The possible use of such societal movements as propaganda material for the Communists was limited, but so was the attention grassroots activists were ready to pay to the problems of the Eastern Bloc.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, environmental problems united activists within the Bloc, especially on Slovak-Hungarian, Czech-Polish, and Czech-German lines. Again, the first group to notice the problem and react with clear statements was Charter 77. Environmental action was later taken up by the Polish WiP and Czechoslovak NMS, but this time the real popular movement appeared in Slovakia.<sup>92</sup> As a WiP member recalls, “Environmentalism entered the

scene . . . because it was such an obvious idea, popular among young people, close to the hearts of many. . . . We saw images of huge western demonstrations, where people would appear with their kids, it looked like a big picnic, and here, in this grey communist reality, we longed for something as amazing."<sup>93</sup> The choice was, however, not entirely strategic, since both Czechoslovakia and Poland faced an environmental catastrophe that in many regions (i.e., Northern Bohemia or Silesia) was not a threat of the future, but an actual problem there and then. And so, environmental problems mattered for the society. That was their dissident potential.

The key difference between "peace" and human rights on the one hand and environmentalism on the other is the degree to which the meaning of the ideas could be subjected to any local reinterpretation. After the Chernobyl catastrophe, and bearing in mind the grave state of many areas, activists framed the issue of environmental degradation in terms of human health rather than eco-centric ideas, thus making it apolitical politics (demanding action, changes in policy, transparency, and access to information, under the protective mask of "concrete problems").<sup>94</sup> Patriotic (national and local) discourses were also called up to support environmental claims. On a deeper level, the Western and Eastern movements diverged on the basic understandings of nature and the attitudes towards the environment. While Western European activists often represented an eco-centric perspective, defending the intrinsic values of nature, in Central Europe the dominant perspective was far more conservative and instrumental. As in the case of "peace," some true environmentalists noticed the superficiality of the dissident green discourse. Ivan Dejmal, a leader of the Czech ecologists, wrote that "it is time that we stop writing and talking about the problems of the natural environment in ways as opportunist and confused as the Charter 77 does."<sup>95</sup> And so Czech activism had also a radically environmental side, defending nature for its own sake.<sup>96</sup>

In localizing environmentalism, the most important element was its destructive power in the face of the dominant political ideology. Even if presented only in terms of health and the instrumental quality of the environment, ecological dissent challenges the utopian pretensions of socialism. Combined with the dramatic state of Eastern European economies in the 1980s, it leads to a conclusion that "socialism had delivered neither a higher standard of living nor a healthier and longer life." At the same time, no discourse "openly voicing moral or existential anxieties would have been tolerated."<sup>97</sup> While no renegotiation of environmental values was attempted, the localization of environmentalism as an idea had important political consequences domestically. Additionally, the dissidents once again tried to stretch the successful and powerful human rights discourse and pacifism to cover environmental issues: "Ecology is inseparable from peace efforts: the health of the natural environment is also one of the foundations of a full and dignified life" (Petr Kužvart).<sup>98</sup> Kužvart also notes that the right to a clean and healthy environment is a fundamental human right.<sup>99</sup> The most obvious link was made to freedom of speech and the right to information. That was the human rights edge of the famous Slovak independent

ecological report “Bratislava—Nahlas,” which contained a modest but well-grounded critique of the information policy in the CSSR. In these ways environmental considerations were used both as another point of anchoring for the human rights discourse and as a direct challenge to the domestic political discourse—and this was their important local twist.

## Conclusion

There are certainly “universal” ideas, but there is no universal discursive sphere in which they could function. Hence it is necessary to look into domestic contexts to grasp how internationally functioning ideas are localized—recontextualized and translated. However, locally altered meanings can influence the international “originals,” and a new meaning can be renegotiated. Central European dissidents found a firm foundation and a source of empowerment in the internationally recognized discourse of human rights. Voicing its priority, they took up the popular issues of peace and disarmament and tried, with some visible success, to alter the meaning of “peace” and the goals of the pan-European peace movement, so that it clearly acknowledged the “Eastern” perspective. They were, however, much less successful in finding powerful narratives to counter the strongly militaristic visions of patriotism functioning locally—this was especially the case of Poland. In the second half of the 1980s, a similar hijacking of an idea was conducted on environmentalism. While the green movement gained much popularity and showed great mobilizing power, the localization of environmental values and thinking was fairly superficial. The movements lost their wider appeal after 1990, showing up again only in 2007 in Poland’s Rospuda Valley controversy—this time in an attempt at real ideational change on the domestic level.<sup>100</sup>

## Notes

1. On civil society, see for example, John Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994); John Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society* (London: Verso, 1988); Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, “Vicissitudes of Ethical Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 20:1(2007): 30–43. On the role of intellectuals, see András Bozóki, ed., *Intellectuals and Politics in Central Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 1998); Barbara J. Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe. Citizen Intellectuals and Philosopher Kings* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2003). A more general work applying a similar perspective is John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War* (London: Penguin, 2007).

2. Cf. Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution. Central Europe 1989* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2002), as well as 1989: *Democratic Revolutions at the Cold War’s End. A Brief History with Documents* (Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009); see also Andrzej Korboński, “Dissent in Poland 1956–76,” in Jane Leftwich Curry, ed., *Dissent in Eastern Europe* (New York: Praeger, 1983); Tomasz Krawczyk, *Stosunki między rządem i opozycją* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2005); Oldřich Tůma, “Upadek systemu komunistycznego w Czechosłowacji,” In Paweł Machcewicz, ed.,

*Polska 1986-1989: Koniec systemu. Materiały międzynarodowej konferencji. Miedzeszyn 21-23 X 1999. Tom I: Referaty* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio i ISP PAN, 2002).

3. E.g., Agnieszka Bieńczyk, "Ludzki wymiar w działalności misji KBWE/OBWE." *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, October-December (2000): 87–117; and Roman Kuźniar, *Prawa Człowieka. Prawo, instytucje, stosunki międzynarodowe* (Warszawa: WSP, 2000).

4. The most interesting of such historical works concerning Poland is Andrzej Friszke, *Przystosowanie i opór. Studia z Dziejów PRL* (Warszawa: Więź, 2006).

5. Wojciech Roszkowski, *Najnowsza historia Polski 1945-1980 t.2* (Warszawa: Świat Książki, 2003).

6. For an overview, see Hans Peter Schmitz and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Human Rights," in Thomas Risse, Beth A. Simmons, and Walter Carlsnaes, eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage, 2002), 517–37. Also: Martha Finnemore, "Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism," *International Organization* 50:2(1996): 325–47; and Andrew Hurrell, "Norms and Ethics in International Relations," in *ibid.*, 137–54.

7. Cf. Thomas Risse, Stephen Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999); Richard Price, "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines," *International Organization* 52:3(1998): 613–44; and Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52:4(1998): 887–917. For empirical applications in Eastern Europe, see Mathew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces. The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); and Daniel C. Thomas, "The Helsinki Accords and Political Change in Eastern Europe," in Risse et al., *The Power of Human Rights*.

8. Patricia Chilton, "Mechanics of Change. Social Movements, Transnational Coalitions, and the Transformation Processes in Eastern Europe," In Thomas Risse-Kappen, ed., *Bringing Transnational Relations back in. Non-state Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 189–226.

9. *Ibid.*, 212; cf. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1998), introducing the "boomerang effect" of transnational mobilization around human rights violations.

10. Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect. International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton: Univ. Press, 2001), 92.

11. *Ibid.*, 160.

12. Rodger Payne, "Persuasion, Frames and Norm Construction," *European Journal of International Relations* 7 (2001): 37–62, at 39.

13. Michael Barnett, "Culture, Strategy and Foreign Policy Change: Israel's Road to Oslo," *European Journal of International Relations* 5:1(1999): 5–36, at 25.

14. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect*, 103, emphasis added.

15. Daniel C. Thomas, "Human Rights Ideas, the Demise of Soviet Communism, and the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7:2(2005): 110–41, at 117; cf. Jacek M. Kurczewski, *The Resurrection of Rights in Poland* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993).

16. Thomas, "Human Rights Ideas," 110.

17. Cf. Arista Maria Cirtautas, *The Polish Solidarity Movement. Revolution, Democracy and Natural Rights* (London: Routledge, 1997).

18. Main publications in this strand include Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, eds., *Global Modernities* (London: Sage, 1995); Michael Burawoy et al., eds., *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections and Imaginations* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2000). For a review, see Ulrike Schuerkens, "The Sociological and Anthropological Study of Globalization and Localization," *Current Sociology* 51:3–4(2003): 209–22.

19. Norman Fairclough, "Language in the New Capitalism," *Discourse and Society* 13:2(2002): 163–66.

20. Ash Amin, "Placing Globalization," *Theory, Culture and Society* 14 (1997): 123–37.

21. Bessie Mitsikopoulou, "Introduction. The Branding of Political Entities as Discursive Practice," *Journal of Language and Politics* 7:3(2008): 353–71, at 353.

22. Making use of the position they gained through the *performative* function of the "dissident" as a label. For more on this cultural approach to the "dissidents," see Kacper Szulecki, "Smashing concrete with words. The Central European 'dissidents,' their representations and discourses," in Sabine Fischer and Heiko Pleines, eds., *Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe before and after the End of Socialism* (Bremen: Ibidem Verlag, 2010).

23. Cf. Stanisław Grzybowski, "Dzieje swobód ludzkich." *Znak*, December (2008): 29–41; Michael Ignatieff, *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001). For a lengthier discussion of these historic issues, see Kacper Szulecki, "Human Rights the Central European Way: Investigating Localization Strategies and Practices of Opposition Movements 1975–90" (Paper presented at the conference "Recasting the Peaceful Revolution of '89. Roots and Legacies," Stockholm, October 2009).

24. On the vagueness of human rights, see Cornelia Vismann, "Menschenrechte: Instanz des Sprachens—Instrument der Politik," in Hauke Brunkhorst, ed., *Demokratischer Experimentalismus. Politik in der komplexen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1998).

25. Eugeniusz Smolar, "Samizdat, Tamizdat and . . . Radio. The Circle of Hope" (Paper presented at the conference "From Samizdat to Tamizdat. Dissident Media Crossing Borders before and after 1989," IWM, Vienna, September 2006).

26. Together with the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was signed in 1966 but entered into force in 1976, and was also called up by the dissidents.

27. Interview with P. Šustrová, Prague, 18 May 2010.

28. I understand traditions as "myths" and elements of national self-conception. As such, even if they are not directly prescribing rules of behavior, they are crucial for the legitimization of claims in political debates, providing a "sense of empowerment for those who invoke it, making it possible for them temporarily to occupy the moral high ground." Ladislav Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation. National Identity and the Post-communist Social Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 85–86, see also 77–82.

29. Halina Bortnowska, "Potrzebna jest asymetria." Interview by Ewa Zbiegieni, *Znak*, December (2008): 43–52.

30. Traditions and realities do not necessarily meet. In cases of divergence, however, tradition can still be reinforced, even if reality does not abide by the prescribed ideal. The democratic experience of prewar Czechoslovakia and elements of democracy in Poland (as well as the older sociopolitical "traditions" of these nations) are constantly invoked in the debates during state socialism, especially on occasions of mass upheaval (1956, 1968, 1980, 1989, etc.).

31. Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, 79.

32. *Hnutí za občanskou svobodu, Demokracii pro všechny. Manifest Hnutí za občanskou svobodu* (Praha-Brno-Bratislava: Samizdat, 1988). All translations from Czech, Polish, and Slovak are by the author.

33. This is close to Thompson's notion of "perceived experience." See Edward P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London: Merlin Press, 1978).

34. The concept of *parrhesia* is discussed in Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001).

35. Václav Havel, "Power of the Powerless," in Vaclav Havel et al., *Power of the Powerless. Citizens against the State in Central-Eastern Europe* (London: Hutchinson, 1985).

36. Jiří Hájek, "The Human Rights Movement and Social Progress," in Havel et al., *Power of the Powerless*.

37. An example of this typical narrative can be found in Jiří Gruntorád, *Niezależne inicjatywy w Czechosłowacji* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Grup Oporu "Solidarni," 1989), 6.



38. As does the different nature of the “normalization” process. Petr Pospichal argues, however, that this narrative, dominant in the Czech Republic, is inherently Prague-centric. From the point of view of his native Brno, Bratislava appeared as a scene of very interesting dissident action all along. Interview with P. Pospichal, Čelákovice, 18 May 2010.

39. See Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution*; Juraj Podoba, “Rejecting Green Velvet: Transition, Environment and Nationalism in Slovakia,” *Environmental Politics* 7 (1998): 128–44. The national question was a primary topic even for socialist intellectuals. See *Myšlienka a čin. Časopis SOS a ROSA* (Bratislava: Samizdat, 1989, Libri Prohibiti Archive, Prague).

40. Ivan Laluha, *Alexander Dubček. Politik a jeho doba* (Bratislava: Nová, 2000), 98.

41. See *Altamira* (Bratislava: Samizdat, 1983, Libri Prohibiti Archive, Prague).

42. This is not to say that Christian values were absent from the discourse of Charter 77. On the contrary, the movement was built on a partnership of liberal, socialist as well as Christian traditions, represented by such key figures as V. Benda or V. Malý. As one Chartist notes, “The Charter 77 is an expression of belief in human beings, which for a Christian is of course related to the belief in God.” Josef Zvěřina, “Nežít v nenávisti,” in Vilém Prečan, ed., *Charta 77 1977-1989. Od morální k demokratické revoluci. Dokumentace* (1990), 72–81, at 73. Scheinfeld et al.: ČSAV & ARCHA, 1990.

43. See Robert Brier’s contribution in this issue, “Adam Michnik’s Understanding of Totalitarianism and the West European Left: A Historical and Transnational Approach to Dissident Political Thought,” *East European Politics and Societies* 25: 197–218.

44. Bortnowska interview, 46.

45. Adam Michnik, *Kościół. Lewica. Dialog* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Gazety Wyborczej, 1977/2009); Jacek Kuroń, “Lewica—Prawica. Bóg,” in Jacek Kuroń, *Autobiografia* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 1989/2009). On KIK, see Andrzej Friszke, *Oaza na Kopernika. Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej 1956-89* (Warszawa: Wiąz, 1997).

46. Adam Michnik, “Nowy ewolucjonizm,” in Adam Michnik, *Szanse polskiej demokracji* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Gazety Wyborczej, 1978/2009), 112–13.

47. Georg Lohman, “A Missed Opportunity: The Communist Manifesto and Human Rights” (Paper presented at the conference “Capitalism and Beyond? The Communist Manifesto after 150 Years,” New York, 1998), <http://www.uni-magdeburg.de/iphil/gl/Missed.html>.

48. Hájek, “The Human Rights Movement and Social Progress,” 140.

49. It is interesting to compare the “Open Letter to the Party” and the Charter 77 Declaration from this perspective. See Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski, “List Otwarty do Partii,” in *Dojrzwianie. Pisma polityczne 1964-1968* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 1965/2010).

50. Hájek, “The Human Rights Movement and Social Progress,” 135.

51. Interview with A. Smolar, Warsaw, 18 Mar. 2010.

52. The cultural centers of the older emigration were also important: Pavel Tigrid’s *Svědectví* and Jerzy Gierdoyć’s *Kultura* in Paris were major intellectual strongholds, also for the opposition, but they were only marginally interested in a communication with the Western public—they were mostly acting as “tamizdat” (cf. Smolar, “Samizdat, Tamizdat and . . . Radio”).

53. Either simply the translations of documents issued domestically, like the Charter 77 Declaration, appeals to the international public, or texts addressed directly to key intellectuals and politicians in the West. Most important examples are Kuroń’s letter to Enrico Berlinguer (Friszke, *Przystosowanie i opór*, 276–83).

54. A rather unique early example of the latter is Adam Michnik’s tour of Western Europe in 1976. Cf. Jerzy Giedroyc and Krzysztof Pomian, *Autobiografia na cztery ręce* (Warszawa: Inwestycje, 2006); Cyril Bouyeure, *Adam Michnik, biografia. Wymyślić to, co polityczne* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2009). In the early 1980s, such contacts were maintained by the “envoys” of “Solidarity,” like Seweryn Blumsztajn, who during the Martial Law established a whole “foreign ministry” of the trade union. Interview with S. Blumsztajn, Warsaw, 24 Mar. 2010; see also Idesbald Goddeeris, “Ministerstwo Spraw



Zagranicznych Solidarności. Zagraniczna Placówka Koordynacyjna NSZZ Solidarność, 1982-1989. Cz. 1,” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 5:2(2006-2007).

55. *Kultura* (1981): 201-4. Interview with B. Toruńczyk, Warsaw, 30 Mar. 2010.

56. Bortnowska interview, 46.

57. P.M.K., “Solidarność oczyma Brytyjczyka,” *Krytyka* 18 (1984): 223-25, at 223.

58. Andrzej Celiński, “Moje kłopoty z ‘Solidarnością.’” Interview by K. Lubczyński, *Trybuna*, 4 June 2009, 7.

59. Bronisław Geremek, “Pokój a prawa człowieka” (Speech at the International Peace Seminar in Warsaw, 7-9 Sept. 1987; Reprinted in *Czas przyszły* [September 1987]: 4-8, KARTA Archive, Warsaw).

60. Interview with J. Gruntorád, Prague, 11 May 2010.

61. Jan Patočka, “O povinnosti bránit se proti bezpráví,” in Prečan, *Charta 77 1977-1989*, 31-34, at 32.

62. Cf. Willy Brandt’s statement at the tenth anniversary of Charter 77, in comparison to his general political line of clear respect for the Yalta division of Europe. Willy Brandt, “K 10. výročí Charty 77. 26. prosince 1986,” in Prečan, *Charta 77 1977-1989*, 154-55.

63. Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution*, 91 *passim*.

64. Cf. Václav Havel, “Anatomy of Reticence,” in Václav Havel, *Open Letters: Selected Prose, 1965-1990* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991).

65. The links between Western (leftist) peace initiatives and USSR intelligence dated back to the late 1940s. Some of the détente movements were indeed accepting money, directly or indirectly, from the Soviets. This was, however, not the case with END. Interview with J. Kavan, Prague, 20 Apr. 2010.

66. H.J. Schädlich in Po dwóch stronach muru. Rozmowa z J. Fuchsem, H.J. Schädlichem i J. Strasserem, *Krytyka* 25 (1987): 206, KARTA Archive, Warsaw.

67. One could also mention the role of nonviolence as a philosophy and strategy of action. However, within this article I chose not to discuss the question of nonviolence, seeing it as a certain morally grounded strategic option, and not an idea subject to semantic renegotiation.

68. O míru a mírovém hnutí (16. XI 1981), in Prečan, *Charta 77 1977-1989*, 234-35.

69. O nedělitelnosti míru 13/82 (29. I 1982), in *ibid.*, 236-37, at 237.

70. Poselství solidarity mírovému hnutí v NDR’ 18/82 (21. IV 1982), in *ibid.*, 238.

71. The notion comes from the Czechoslovak president E. Beneš and the time of the Munich Agreement.

72. The first real peace movement in Eastern Europe was formed in the GDR, though. In the first half of the 1980s it is difficult to speak of a wider localization of pacifist ideas in Czechoslovakia mostly because the dissident discourse reached “not even a percentile, a permil” of the populace, in the words of Gruntorád. (see n. 60)

73. Interview with J. Czaputowicz, Warsaw, 16 Mar. 2010.

74. A concise history of the *Freedom and Peace* movement can be found in Jarosław Podsiadło, *Krótki kurs historii Ruchu Wolność i Pokój* (Gdańsk: Maszoperia Literacka, 2010).

75. J. Żuro in Padraic Kenney, *Wrocławskie zadymy* (Wrocław: ATUT, 2007): 141; cf. Adam Bota, Trzeci ruch okrężny. *A-Capella* 12 (1989), KARTA Archive, Warsaw.

76. Wojsko? Tak! Ale Jakie? *Ad Vocem* (22 Dec. 1987): 9, KARTA Archive, Warsaw.

77. John Rensenbrink, *Poland Challenges a Divided World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1988), 124.

78. Although a campaign for the demilitarization of the society was launched, the single visible results were the organized protests and petitions against military toys and the promilitary discourse of children’s books. See Po co nam P.O.? *Dublin* 3 (November 1988), KARTA Archive, Warsaw.

79. Tadeusz Rzepecki, “Pacyfiści,” *Żołnierz Wolności*, 3 Dec. 1987.

80. The instrumentality of the use of peace was noted by some “true” pacifists both in Poland and Czechoslovakia. See Anonymous, “Dopis adresovaný aktivistům NMS,” *Bulletin NMS* 7 (1989), Libri Prohibiti Archive, Prague.

81. Żurko, in Kenney, *Wrocławskie zadymy*, 147.
82. WiP, *Deklaracja założycielska Ruchu "Wolność i Pokój"* (Kraków: WiP [samizdat], 1985), <http://www.ruchwip.org/index.pl?pid=64> (accessed 20 June 2010). Cf. Stanisława Grabska, Spotkanie na ogólnopolskim komitecie pokoju. Dyskurs (June 1988), KARTA Archive, Warsaw.
83. A. Gawlik, in Kenney, *Wrocławskie zadymy*, 159
84. Interview with P. Pospichal, Čelákovice, 18 May 2010.
85. Compare Franz Josef Strauß, "Peace and Freedom Are Our Mission," *Bayern Kurier*, 20 Oct. 1983; Witold Trółka, Polska alternatywa? *FA. Kwartalnik Ruchu Wolność i Pokój. Region Śląski* 1 (1988): 46, KARTA Archive, Warsaw.
86. Mary Kaldor, "Bringing Peace and Human Rights Together" (Public Lecture no. 9 at the Centre for the Study of Global Governance, LSE, London, UK, 1999).
87. Jacek Czaputowicz, Wolność i pokój są niepodzielne, *Czas przyszły* (September 1987): 9–15, KARTA Archive, Warsaw.
88. WiP, "Stanowisko 'WiP' na konwencję END w Coventry," *Czas przyszły* (September 1987): 27–28. Compare this argumentation with the liberal tradition (Kant) and the "democratic peace theory."
89. Joanne Landy, "Odpowiedź na list P. Niemczyka wraz z uwagami o tekście K. Orłosa," *Czas przyszły* (September 1987): 62–67. Divergences at points were impossible to transcend—an example often given is Jan Rokita's speech during the Peace Seminar in Warsaw, which some foreign activists found unacceptable if not offensive. Compare Jan Maria Rokita, "Wolność i pokój, czyli jak zwiększyć szanse pokoju w Europie," *Czas przyszły* (December 1987).
90. Kaldor, "Bringing Peace and Human Rights Together," 8.
91. Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution*, 95.
92. Podoba, "Rejecting Green Velvet." Due to common interests, the Slovak movement was strongly linked to similar initiatives in Hungary.
93. L. Budrewicz, in Kenney, *Wrocławskie zadymy*, 122.
94. Some underground commentators claimed that apolitical environmentalism is impossible, as "in this whole stagnation everything becomes political."
95. Ivan Dejmal, K řeci o ekologii, *Ekologický bulletin* 1 (1987): 2, Libri Prohibiti Archive, Prague.
96. As the leader of two such initiatives, Petr Kužvart notices that what was often needed was only a pretext to voice a protest—the ultimate goal was far less important, and environmental issues were an easy source of mobilization. Interview with P. Kužvart, Prague, 9 May 2010.
97. Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, 171.
98. NMS, *Bulletin NMS* 4 (1988): 18, Libri Prohibiti Archive, Prague.
99. Interview with P. Kužvart, Prague, 9 May 2010.
100. Julia Ziemińska and Kacper Szulecki, "Tracing the Process of Norm Empowerment in the 'New EU': Rhetoric, Activism and the Political Controversy over the Rospuda River Valley in Poland" (ESPRi Working Paper 1, Wrocław, ESPRi, 2010).

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