that those qualities which resulted in his exclusion from the modernist canon are the
same ones that make him an attractive subject for postmodern analysis. Burkhardt’s
essay may be the most insightful one in the entire collection. It is well worth reading.

The most troubling aspects of this otherwise commendable selection of essays is
the tendency of all the authors to emphasize the indigenous, atavistic, Slovenian qual-
ities of Plečnik’s approach to architecture. This may well reflect the renewed emphasis
on ethnic identity which accompanied the collapse of the communist regimes in east-
ern Europe as much as it responds to what, without question, was one of Plečnik’s
concerns. Still, too often it seems as if the writers are decontextualizing Plečnik by
removing him from consideration within a broader picture of modernist architectural
developments in order to emphasize both his independence from it and his distinctly
Slavic characteristics. Admittedly, the construction of personal identity is very complex
and speculations about an individual’s intersection with his/her personal ethnic ethos
at different points in his/her personal history are always problematic. In Plečnik’s case,
etnicity may well be complicated by the architect’s historical location within the final
years of the Habsburg Empire when problems of national identity surfaced with a
marked centrality. Nevertheless, none of the authors adequately reconcile Plečnik’s
love of Slavism with the degree to which, architecturally, Plečnik is strongly situated
in fin-de-siècle Vienna. Consequently, the authors’ repeated emphasis on Plečnik’s
essential Slovenian ethos and their efforts to make a case for Plečnik as an unrecog-
nized indigenous Slovenian genius seem misplaced, and their arguments suffer from
a lack of probing of the thorny problem of connecting regional developments or
permutations with more central and trans-national manifestations.

This is a book which provides some fascinating insights into the sensibility of a
rather unknown architect who, according to the authors, should not have been for-
gotten. It will, of course, prove valuable to many art and architectural historians who
want a more detailed understanding of the different directions modernist architecture
has taken. The material contained within it is certainly new to the west where it has
previously been inaccessible. Now that Plečnik has been more fully introduced to
western audiences, it is certain that he will receive further exploration. He de-
serves it.

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The Reemergence of Civil Society in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Ed. Zbigniew

Of all the concepts which re-emerged in the 1970s in the context of processes of
democratization worldwide—east and west, north and south—the category of “civil
society” has proven to be simultaneously the most illuminating and the most elusive.
Both as a self-defining concept developed by social actors engaged in democratic
projects and as an analytical category used by social scientific observers, the category
has turned equivocal. On the one hand, it has served to illuminate some of the most
remarkable and distinguishing characteristics of contemporary processes of democ-
ratization shared by many of the so-called “transitions” from authoritarian to demo-
cratic regimes, as well as by the eastern European “self-limiting” revolutions. On the
other hand, however, “civil society” has assumed very different, at times contradictory
meanings, something perhaps not surprising given the long and tortuous semantic
history of the concept in western political thought and the extent to which, in its
contemporary usage, the concept is made up of empirical-analytical and normative-
ideational components.

The collection of essays edited by Zbigniew Rau illustrates perfectly these ambi-
guities. Four of the essays (by Zbigniew Rau, Peter Andras Heltai and Zbigniew Rau,
John Gray, and Andrew Arato) are theoretical-analytical in nature. They are excellent,
largely successful attempts to show the relevance of the category of civil society for
an understanding of the radical transformations of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. When read together, however, they reveal very different analytical uses of the term and even more different and conflictive normative visions of a projected triumph and institutionalization of civil society in the region. The other four essays (by Krzysztof Podemski, Juri Luik, Sabrije Seutova and Mykola Ryabchuk) offer four very different case studies of the re-emergence of civil society in the region.

The four case studies, while individually illuminating, do not add up to a coherent or comprehensive picture of the dynamics of civil-society formation in the political restructuring of the region. Seutova’s discussion of the Crimean Tatar National Movement offers a convincing celebratory account of the power of collective memory, transmitted and reproduced by domestic oral traditions and by written literature, to protect group solidarity, collective identity and symbolic attachment to the ancestral native land in the face of the brutal attempts of a homogenizing Soviet state power to eradicate Tatar culture through forced physical dispersion and through the rewriting of history. What the essay celebrates is the triumph of the national spirit over imperial power. A similar triumph, this time that of national resistance against a foreign occupying power, is celebrated in Luik’s discussion of the role of intellectuals in restoring civil society in Estonia. The essay reconstructs the seemingly paradoxical development whereby that which, at least from the perspective of Estonian national unity, appeared to be two unfortunately divergent paths taken by Estonian intellectuals in response to the reality of foreign Soviet occupation reveals itself at the end as an eufunctional division of labor which contributed to the recovery of Estonian independence. The analysis of the dynamic tension between idealism and realism as alternative responses to foreign occupation, while descriptively informative in the Estonian case, adds very little to the well known discussions of the same phenomenon in Polish history. The most important contribution of Podemski’s analysis of “the nature of society and social conflict as depicted in the Polish Press in 1981” may be to offer evidence for the argument that in 1981 there were already in place some of the necessary conditions for a negotiated transition from authoritarian rule, namely the differentiation between “hardliners” and “softliners” within the regime, and between moderates and radicals within the opposition, that facilitate the kind of centrifugal movement towards either implicit pacts or explicit “roundtable discussions” which makes a negotiated, legal transition possible. Rather than drawing this conclusion, however, Podemski offers the less clear or convincing conclusion that there existed in Poland at the time “three separate orientations”: humanistic, economy-oriented and totalitarian. One suspects that the dominant vision of a unified civil society confronting a totalitarian state power, conceived too readily in the traditional image of a homogeneous Polish nation confronting a foreign occupying state, left little room for even imagining the possibility of compromise. One should add, however, that the truly necessary condition for a negotiated transition, a condition not yet given in 1981, was external to any of the national civil societies, namely, the transformation at the center of the Soviet system of power. Only Ryabchuk’s analysis of “civil society and national emancipation” in Ukraine pays sufficient attention to the crucial intersecting dynamics of transformation in the Soviet center and the re-emergence of civil society. Indeed Ryabchuk’s perceptive study of the Ukrainian case throws light upon the practically inevitable dissolution of the Soviet Union that took so many Soviet experts by surprise. To reform, certainly to democratize the Soviet Union, was from the beginning an ill-conceived enterprise because there never emerged a Soviet civil society with which the Soviet state could negotiate its transformation. Glasnost’ made possible the emergence of at least as many civil societies as there were republics in the Soviet Union. It was Ivan Drach, the leader of Rukh, who already in April 1990 in his appeal to Russian democrats anticipated the path which would lead to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. “A free Ukraine is impossible without a free Russia. . . . The responsibility of Russia is to secede first from the Union and help others. . . .” Yeltsin’s Russia’s recognition of Ukraine’s declaration of independence, at a time when most western powers were rather hesitant, sealed the fate of the Union. For that reason, even more than the absence of studies of the re-emergence of civil society in...
Poland and Hungary, the truly missing case study in this collection is that of the re-emergence of civil society in Russia.

But the strength of this collection lies in the theoretical-analytical discussions of civil society which one finds in the other four essays. Both in the introduction and in “Human Nature, Social Engineering, and the Reemergence of Civil Society” Rau analyzes the great transformation as “the triumph of civil society over the Marxist-Leninist System.” Against the evidence gathered in the case studies, however, Rau conceives civil society too narrowly in liberal terms as an association of rational and moral individuals. The re-emergence of civil society is understood, therefore, as the triumph of individualism over state collectivism, as the triumph of the Lockean over the Hegelian project. This simple dichotomous conception of civil society in confrontation with the state certainly fails to do justice to Rau’s own more nuanced discussion of Hegel’s complex concept of civil society. An even more radically liberal and simplified conception is to be found in Gray’s discussion of civil society. Civil society is reduced to economic society and defined solely as contractual market capitalism protected by the rule of law. The crucial opposition here is that between economic liberalism and democracy. The normative telos of radical libertarian capitalism requires, in Gray’s view, the authoritarian restriction of democracy and political liberties. Post-totalitarian eastern European societies should look for a model not in the west but rather in “the authoritarian civil societies of east Asia.” Heltai and Rau add complexity to the discussion by analyzing the inevitable tension between nation and civil society. The logic of the fusion of national emancipation and civil society described by Ryabchuk is explained here teleologically as a transitional phase. “Given the relative weakness of the liberal democratic tradition in the region, the Soviet-type system could be defeated only by mass movements which organized themselves around nationalistic rhetoric.”

Once this phase has been accomplished, however, what is required is a new shift from nationalism to liberal oriented civil society based on tolerance. Only Arato’s discussion breaks with these dualistic oppositions by offering a vision of an autonomous and self-democratizing civil society as a sphere which is equally differentiated from the administrative state and from economic society. The normative telos here is that of a differentiated and pluralist civil society in tension both with a self-regulated economic society and with an inevitably elitist political society. The institutionalization of an organized civil society is presented simultaneously as an antidote against nationalism, against authoritarian states and against the collusion of elite democracy and economic liberalism. Paradoxically, in an analysis too complex to be summarized here, this apparently utopian project is convincingly defended as the most appropriate path to insure the simultaneous success of the two tasks of the post-totalitarian transition, democratization and market reform.

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Nigel Swain’s prodigiously documented and well argued book carries the double task of making sense of the historical experience of socialism in Hungary and of drawing the proper lessons for leftist social criticism. Initially, he tells us, his intention was to write a book about the success of Hungarian goulash communism and why it was a vast improvement over the earlier, orthodox version of central planning. But with the fall of Kadar’s market socialism, he acquired the additional chore of explaining why even the most feasible form of socialism is not feasible enough.

Swain’s fluent narrative draws on the riches of the exceptionally high quality scholarship that has been done by Hungarian economic historians, economists and sociologists. He gives an excellent overview of Hungarian history since 1945. Describ-