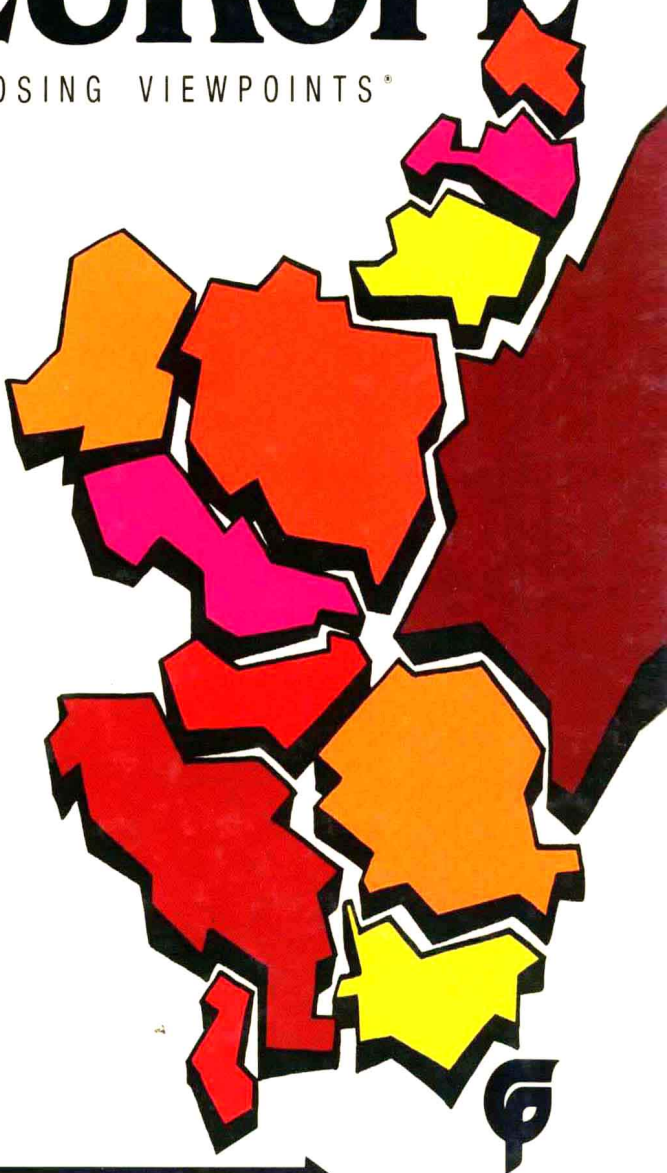


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EASTERN EUROPE

OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS

David Bender & Bruno Leone, *Series Editors*

Janelle Rohr, *Book Editor*

OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS SERIES ®



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or of the press."

First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

The basic foundation of our democracy is the first amendment guarantee of freedom of expression. The Opposing Viewpoints Series is dedicated to the concept of this basic freedom and the idea that it is more important to practice it than to enshrine it.

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Why Consider Opposing Viewpoints?

"It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it."

Joseph Joubert (1754-1824)

The Importance of Examining Opposing Viewpoints

The purpose of the Opposing Viewpoints Series, and this book in particular, is to present balanced, and often difficult to find, opposing points of view on complex and sensitive issues.

Probably the best way to become informed is to analyze the positions of those who are regarded as experts and well studied on issues. It is important to consider every variety of opinion in an attempt to determine the truth. Opinions from the mainstream of society should be examined. But also important are opinions that are considered radical, reactionary, or minority as well as those stigmatized by some other uncomplimentary label. An important lesson of history is the eventual acceptance of many unpopular and even despised opinions. The ideas of Socrates, Jesus, and Galileo are good examples of this.

Readers will approach this book with their own opinions on the issues debated within it. However, to have a good grasp of one's own viewpoint, it is necessary to understand the arguments of those with whom one disagrees. It can be said that those who do not completely understand their adversary's point of view do not fully understand their own.

A persuasive case for considering opposing viewpoints has been presented by John Stuart Mill in his work *On Liberty*. When examining controversial issues it may be helpful to reflect on this suggestion:

The only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this.

Analyzing Sources of Information

The Opposing Viewpoints Series includes diverse materials taken from magazines, journals, books, and newspapers, as well as statements and position papers from a wide range of individuals, organizations, and governments. This broad spectrum of sources helps to develop patterns of thinking which are open to the consideration of a variety of opinions.

Pitfalls to Avoid

A pitfall to avoid in considering opposing points of view is that of regarding one's own opinion as being common sense and the most rational stance, and the point of view of others as being only opinion and naturally wrong. It may be that another's opinion is correct and one's own is in error.

Another pitfall to avoid is that of closing one's mind to the opinions of those with whom one disagrees. The best way to approach a dialogue is to make one's primary purpose that of understanding the mind and arguments of the other person and not that of enlightening him or her with one's own solutions. More can be learned by listening than speaking.

It is my hope that after reading this book the reader will have a deeper understanding of the issues debated and will appreciate the complexity of even seemingly simple issues on which good and honest people disagree. This awareness is particularly important in a democratic society such as ours where people enter into public debate to determine the common good. Those with whom one disagrees should not necessarily be regarded as enemies, but perhaps simply as people who suggest different paths to a common goal.

Developing Basic Reading and Thinking Skills

In this book, carefully edited opposing viewpoints are purposely placed back to back to create a running debate; each viewpoint is preceded by a short quotation that best expresses the author's main argument. This format instantly plunges the reader into the midst of a controversial issue and greatly aids that reader in mastering the basic skill of recognizing an author's point of view.

A number of basic skills for critical thinking are practiced in the activities that appear throughout the books in the series. Some of the skills are:

Evaluating Sources of Information. The ability to choose from among alternative sources the most reliable and accurate source in relation to a given subject.

Separating Fact from Opinion. The ability to make the basic distinction between factual statements (those that can be demonstrated or verified empirically) and statements of opinion (those that are beliefs or attitudes that cannot be proved).

Identifying Stereotypes. The ability to identify oversimplified, exaggerated descriptions (favorable or unfavorable) about people and insulting statements about racial, religious, or national groups, based upon misinformation or lack of information.

Recognizing Ethnocentrism. The ability to recognize attitudes or opinions that express the view that one's own race, culture, or group is inherently superior, or those attitudes that judge another culture or group in terms of one's own.

It is important to consider opposing viewpoints and equally important to be able to critically analyze those viewpoints. The activities in this book are designed to help the reader master these thinking skills. Statements are taken from the book's viewpoints and the reader is asked to analyze them. This technique aids the reader in developing skills that not only can be applied to the viewpoints in this book, but also to situations where opinionated spokespersons comment on controversial issues. Although the activities are helpful to the solitary reader, they are most useful when the reader can benefit from the interaction of group discussion.

Using this book and others in the series should help readers develop basic reading and thinking skills. These skills should improve the reader's ability to understand what is read. Readers should be better able to separate fact from opinion, substance from rhetoric, and become better consumers of information in our media-centered culture.

This volume of the Opposing Viewpoints Series does not advocate a particular point of view. Quite the contrary! The very nature of the book leaves it to the reader to formulate the opinions he or she finds most suitable. My purpose as publisher is to see that this is made possible by offering a wide range of viewpoints that are fairly presented.

David L. Bender
Publisher

Introduction

"The most difficult questions, the great unknowns, lie in the eastern rather than the western half of the old continent."

Timothy Garton Ash, *The Spectator*, January 6, 1990.

In 1989, when first the Poles, then the Hungarians, the East Germans, the Czechs, the Bulgarians, and finally the Romanians deposed Communist rulers in their countries, many people around the world rejoiced. Five of the six revolutions were peacefully accomplished with little or no bloodshed. The peoples of Eastern Europe, long subjugated by mightier nations, at last seemed to be seizing the right to determine their own futures. One of the lessons many drew from these revolutions was the power of nationalism—the yearning for national independence among peoples ruled by foreign powers.

Nationalism has more often been a force for conflict than for peace and stability. Nationalism, for example, was a prime catalyst sparking World War I. Some observers have now begun to suggest that the same tensions which at the century's beginning embroiled Europe in that long and destructive war are again present at century's end in Eastern Europe.

At the beginning of the century, much of Eastern Europe was dominated by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a sprawling territory that included the present-day nations of Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and parts of Poland, the Soviet Union, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Italy. There were over fifty million people in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, less than half of whom were either Austrian or Hungarian. The others, representing a variety of ethnic backgrounds, had one thing in common: They resented and resisted Austro-Hungarian control. World War I began when a Serbian nationalist assassinated the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary.

When World War I ended, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dissolved. Diplomats met at the French palace of Versailles to agree on a peace treaty. The goal of some diplomats was to grant self-determination to ethnic groups when possible. The Versailles participants redrew the map of Europe. They joined the Czechs and Slovaks into one nation; granted the Poles self-rule; and joined several ethnic groups, including the Serbians, to form the new country of Yugoslavia. In some regions, however, a settle-

ment satisfactory to most people was impossible. Transylvania, for example, had long been populated and contested by both ethnic Hungarians and Romanians. It was impossible to definitively answer who had the greater claim to the land, according to author Robert R. King. In this situation, Transylvania was given to the Romanians, rather than the Hungarians, because Romania had been on the winning side of the war.

Robert D. Kaplan, an author and journalist, argues that now, at century's end, Europe is haunted by historic nationalist conflicts never effectively addressed. During the 1980s, Kaplan states, ethnic Hungarians fled Transylvania, complaining that the Romanians mistreated them. Yugoslavia suffers from frequent ethnic riots, often between Serbians and the Albanian minority in the region of Kosovo. And for several years, Bulgaria has forced its Turkish minority to either drop their Turkish identity and take Bulgarian names or be deported. American Enterprise Institute researcher Benjamin Frankel fears that Europe may become "a continent again awash in conflict, populated by mistrustful nations, long on memories, short on forgiving and forgetting." He and other observers argue that Eastern Europe lacks a tradition of tolerating others, thus making future nationalist struggles likely.

Historian Gaddis Smith is one of many, however, who points to important differences between Eastern Europe at the turn of the century and Eastern Europe today. First, at the turn of the century there was no Poland, Czechoslovakia, independent Hungary, or Yugoslavia, and the borders of Romania and Bulgaria were in flux. "Conditions now are less volatile," Smith argues, because the borders have been stable for decades. This makes it less likely that any of these countries would fight over regional borders. Second, the statements of Eastern European leaders such as Czech president Vaclav Havel offer reason for optimism. Havel hopes that Europe will become "a community of many different but equal people who will . . . show empathy and tolerance to all other communities." Such statements have led many people to believe that Eastern Europe has at last transcended the legacy of its violent past.

While many argue that it is pivotal, nationalism is just one issue that makes the study of Eastern Europe important. The viewpoints in *Eastern Europe: Opposing Viewpoints* address many significant topics. The questions debated are Historical Chapter: What Led to the Division of Europe? Do Eastern European Revolutions Signal the Demise of Communism? What Economic Policies Should Eastern Europe Adopt? How Will a United Germany Affect Europe? Is European Unification Possible? Whether the national yearnings of Eastern Europeans can at last be satisfied without the bitterness and discord of earlier decades in this century is a topic that will inspire continued debate and reflection.

1 CHAPTER

Historical Debate: What Led to the Division of Europe?

**EASTERN
EUROPE**

Chapter Preface

Although the nations of Eastern Europe contain diverse peoples and traditions, these countries share a common experience: they have often been subject to the will of larger, more powerful countries.

World War II had a devastating impact on Eastern Europe because this region was directly in the path of two ambitious countries—Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Nazi ruler Adolf Hitler began to encroach on Eastern Europe in 1938 when he demanded and got the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia. He later established control of the country as a whole. In 1939, Hitler's troops overran Poland, thus beginning World War II. Hitler continued to pressure other Eastern European countries until they signed alliances with him. His troops invaded those that resisted. By the spring of 1941, Eastern Europe was completely subject to German rule—Hitler's troops controlled all the land between Germany and the Soviet border. At this point, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union. Although German armies advanced deep into the Soviet Union, the invasion was ultimately repulsed. By 1945, Eastern Europe had been liberated from Nazi control but was now subject to Soviet control.

Eastern Europe's fate was discussed at the February 1945 Yalta conference. U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt, British prime minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet ruler Josef Stalin agreed upon "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." These leaders jointly declared that they would help "the peoples liberated from the domination of Nazi Germany, and the peoples of the former Axis satellite States of Europe to solve by democratic means their pressing political and economic problems." But this declaration set up no specific plan to ensure self-determination for Eastern Europe. The presence of Stalin's troops, not the vague Yalta agreement, determined the region's future.

The viewpoints in the following chapter address events occurring shortly after the end of World War II. They help to explain why, after suffering six brutal years of war, Eastern Europe once again was subject to the control of a powerful nation.