

A History of Eastern Europe

CRISIS AND CHANGE

ROUTLEDGE

Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries

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London and New York

For our parents

First published 1998

by Routledge

11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Reprinted 1999

© 1998 Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries

Typeset in Times by Keystroke, Jacaranda Lodge, Wolverhampton

Printed in Great Britain by T.J. International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Bideleux, Robert.

A history of eastern Europe : crisis and change / Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Europe, Eastern—History. I. Jeffries, Ian. II. Title.

DJK38.B53 1997

947—dc21

97-12358

CIP

ISBN 0-415-16111-8

0-415-16112-6 (pbk)

A history of Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe has been divided from the West by much more than the relatively ephemeral experience of communist rule and Soviet domination, and the major problems and challenges confronting post-communist Eastern Europe are as much political, social and cultural as they are economic.

In *A history of Eastern Europe: Crisis and change*, Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries examine the problems that have bedevilled this troubled region during its imperial past, in the interwar period, under fascism, under communism and since 1989. The book provides a thematic historical survey and analysis of the formative processes of political, social and economic change which have played the paramount roles in shaping the development of the region. This is the most ambitious and wide-ranging history of the 'lands between', the lands which have lain between Germany, Italy and the Tsarist and Soviet empires.

While mainly concentrating on the modern era and on the effects of ethnic nationalism, fascism and communism, the book also offers original, striking and revisionist coverage of:

- ancient and medieval times
- the Hussite Revolution, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Counter-Revolution
- the legacies of Byzantium, the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire
- the rise and decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth
- the impact of the region's powerful Russian and Germanic neighbours
- rival concepts of 'Central' and 'Eastern Europe'
- the 1920s land reforms and the 1930s Depression
- democratization and the 'Return to Europe'

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Preface

The central purpose of this book is to provide a thematic historical survey and analysis of the formative processes of political, social and economic change which (in our judgement) have played the paramount roles in shaping the development of East Central and South-eastern Europe: regions which in recent times have had the great misfortune of lying between the former Tsarist and Soviet empires, on the one side, and Germany and Italy, on the other.

The book is the result of nearly a decade of fruitful collaboration between two authors who have shared a long-standing interest in East Central and South-eastern Europe, a staunch belief in civic values and tolerance, and a strong commitment to interdisciplinary approaches to academic study. It was originally envisaged that this thematic historical survey and analysis of the region as a whole would be complemented by separate chapters on the evolution of its individual states during the twentieth century, all within a single volume. A natural division of labour recommended itself from the outset: Robert Bideleux would mainly provide the thematic and historical perspectives, analyses and narratives, while Ian Jeffries would mainly provide more detailed accounts and analyses of recent economic and political changes in individual countries. However, as we became more and more aware of the bearing of the imperial past and of the inter-war years on the complex problems of the post-communist present, the project far outgrew the confines of a single book. Hence we have had to reorganize our material into two volumes, the first of which has been largely written by Robert Bideleux, albeit with indispensable inputs from Ian Jeffries at every stage. This should be seen as the first part of a joint two-volume project. The second book, which is well under way, will provide more detailed treatment of individual states during the twentieth century, paying particular attention to their transition to democracy and the market economy during the 1990s. Nevertheless, we believe that the present work can be read as a coherent and self-contained thematic survey and interpretation of the political, social and economic evolution of East Central and South-eastern Europe from late antiquity to the mid-1990s.

Even in a book of this magnitude, it is impossible to cover every conceivable angle. One has to be judiciously selective. We took an early decision to minimize the space devoted to the more ephemeral forms of military and diplomatic activity, partly because these have already received abundant attention from military and diplomatic historians, but mainly because we believe that in the long run the huffing and puffing of soldiers and diplomats has been of less consequence than the interaction of broader and more persistent political, social, cultural and economic processes. Of course we have endeavoured to outline and discuss major military and diplomatic actions and events which have had

enduring effects on Eastern Europe, especially the Mongol incursions (1240–41, 1259, 1287), the medieval Crusades, the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), the devastating Ottoman and Swedish invasions, the successive partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795), the Congress of Vienna (1815), the Berlin Congress of 1878, the two world wars, the peace settlements of 1919–20 and the notorious 'percentages agreement' between Churchill and Stalin in October 1944. On the whole, however, we find ourselves in agreement with the well-known British historian of Poland, Norman Davies: 'Very few, if any, of the diplomatic memoranda concerning Poland's future ever exerted a decisive influence on the course of events. Many of them . . . remained a dead letter . . . Others were simply ignored. The most important of them did nothing but express the pious aspirations of their authors or confirm the details of political settlements already accomplished . . . At . . . critical moments, matters were decided not at the conference table, but by the situation on the ground and by the men who held the reins of practical power. At moments of less importance, diplomatic action counted for even less . . . The Polish nation grew from infancy to maturity regardless of the diplomats, and it owes them no debt of gratitude' (Davies 1982: 15).

Similarly, we have had to keep to a minimum the attention devoted to significant external actors, e.g. Bismarck. Although figures such as Bismarck loom very large in the writings of some diplomatic historians, we would humbly submit that the Iron Chancellor had rather less impact on the history of *Zwischeneuropa* than did several other 'off stage' actors, among whom Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Gorbachev, Christ, Calvin, Mussolini, Hitler and Ghengis Khan most readily spring to mind! But one has to draw a line somewhere.

Much more regrettable is the fact that we have had to confine ourselves to passing references to many important cultural and intellectual developments. To have given them proper coverage would have doubled or trebled the size of the book. However, we have managed to pay some attention to such crucial matters as the impact of Christianity, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the Enlightenment, nationalism and Marxism, albeit in highly summarized form. Half a loaf is better than none!

Over the past twenty-five years or more, we have digested large quantities of English-language secondary sources on East European history, politics, society, culture and economic development, much of it written by East Europeans. Far from there being a shortage of such material, there is enough to occupy several lifetimes. While we fully acknowledge the great importance of more specialized and narrowly focused research monographs and articles based upon foreign-language and primary sources, we contend that there is also a crucial role for grand syntheses drawing on a much wider range of secondary sources. We could not have devoured and digested nearly as many ideas, interpretations and findings as we have done (across a very wide front) if we had been reading such material in foreign languages, even though we are conversant with several European languages ranging from Portuguese to Russian. We also decided early on to omit the accents from East European names and words, since these unfamiliar signs tend to leave most Western readers even less certain about pronunciation.

It is also necessary to say a few preliminary words about the extent and nomenclature of the region(s) covered by this book. The naming and demarcation of European regions will always be fraught with political and cultural controversy and loaded with implicit and/or contentious claims and connotations. Fortunately, there is fairly widespread agreement that South-eastern Europe is synonymous with the Balkan peninsula and that

East Central Europe comprises Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. However, there have been long disputes as to where exactly the northern Balkans end and where East Central Europe begins. In terms of physical geography and ethnicity, for example, Slovenia, Croatia and Transylvania are usually included in the Balkans (i.e. South-eastern Europe). Yet for centuries Slovenia was an integral and strongly assimilated part of the Austrian Habsburg domains (longer, indeed, than Bohemia and Moravia), while for similarly long stretches of history Croatia and Transylvania were key components of the kingdom of Hungary. Moreover, all these areas have long been part of Western (Catholic) Christendom rather than the Eastern Orthodox world. Should they therefore be included in East Central Europe? It is not just a matter of geography. Nor is it merely an academic question. It directly influences international perceptions of their standing in the European 'pecking order'. It will even affect the speed with which Slovenia, Croatia and Romania may be admitted into the European Union (EU) and/or NATO. Since this book is more attuned to historical than to geographical criteria, we consider that these areas were in many respects borderlands of East Central Europe up to the First World War, but that after that their destinies were primarily determined by their inclusion in the new or expanded Balkan states. Yet we do not accept that this should automatically consign Slovenia, Croatia or Romania to lower positions in the queue for EU and/or NATO membership. Notwithstanding the very negative images generated by the Ceausescu and Iliescu regimes, the 1991–95 Yugoslav conflict and the widespread poverty and corruption in the Balkans, it is clear that the alleged 'superiority' of East Central Europe has been exaggerated by those who conveniently forget that the latter has been a crucible of racial hatreds, National Socialism and the Kafkaesque state during the twentieth century. It is untenable simply to contrast Balkan vices with sanitized and idealized visions of East Central European virtue.

Unfortunately, the English language lacks an appropriate and widely acceptable collective name for these two regions. In German they have been aptly named *Zwischen-europa* ('in-between Europe'). This has the advantage of encapsulating their fundamental predicament, that of 'living between East and West, or between Germany and Russia, or, in early modern times, between Turks and Habsburgs' (Burke 1985: 2). But there is no similarly apt English name. The nearest equivalent is 'the lands between', but it has never passed into common usage.

Of course we realize that it has become fashionable to refer to these regions as Central Europe. But, for reasons set out more fully in the Introduction, we have resisted the temptation to follow suit. For most citizens of the European Union, the term 'Central Europe' primarily applies to Germany and Austria (the former 'Central Powers'). It still has connotations of *Mitteleuropa* and of Austrian and German imperialism. Moreover, the inclusion of 'the land between' within an expanded conception of Central Europe implicitly (often deliberately) overstates the degree to which they have been part of the European mainstream ('at the heart of Europe'). It overlooks the major extent to which they have been part of the European 'periphery' in medieval times and again since the later seventeenth century. Even more crucially, it (implicitly) understates the magnitude of the political and cultural reorientations as well as the economic and social changes which these post-communist states will have to undergo if they really want to consummate their 'return to Europe'.

Therefore, *faute de mieux*, we have continued to refer to these regions as Eastern Europe, the name by which they were generally known during the 1945–89 East–West

partition of Europe. This is done, not in order to impugn or belittle their 'Europeanness', but rather to distinguish them from both Central Europe (Germany and Austria) and the former Soviet Republics, including the three Baltic states (of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). We have no wish to slight the peoples of *Zwischeneuropa*, whose European credentials are amply endorsed in this book. Nor do we wish to give any offence to the Baltic states, which understandably demand to be treated on a par with Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Admittedly, some books on Eastern Europe have dealt with the Baltic states alongside Poland, Hungary and former Czechoslovakia, i.e. as part of East Central Europe, on the grounds that they formally achieved independent statehood within the eastern zone of Europe from 1918 to 1940 and that their forebears were (to varying degrees) united with Poland from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries (see, for example, Rothschild 1974 and Crampton 1994). However, we have two overriding reasons for excluding the Baltic states and their forebears from the present book. Firstly, the territories which have emerged as the Baltic states from 1918 to 1914 and again since 1990 were from the eighteenth century to 1991 (with relatively brief interruptions) integral parts of the Tsarist and Soviet empires rather than 'the lands between'. Thus it would make little sense to include them in a work dealing specifically with the latter. Secondly, since the late eighteenth century the political, social, cultural and economic affairs of the territories that have become the Baltic states have been much more strongly intertwined with those of Russia, the Soviet Union and Scandinavia than with those of Poland, the Czech Lands or Hungary.

We would like to thank Dr Eleanor Breuning, Dr Gareth Pritchard, Professor George Blazycha and Professor Jack Morrison for their copious and constructive comments on the manuscript, which prompted many corrections and clarifications. In recent years Robert Bideleux has also benefited from many stimulating discussions with Dr Bruce Haddock. We take full responsibility for any remaining errors and controversial or questionable judgements, especially as we have not shied away from controversy. When necessary, we have been prepared to challenge or even reject the conventional wisdom.

We also greatly appreciate the support and assistance we have received from Heather McCallum at Routledge. Our desk editor, Ian Critchley, was a big help during the final stages of the production of the book. Finally, Robert Bideleux would like to offer heartfelt thanks to Ian Jeffries for maintaining both his faith in the project and the patience of Job while the book outgrew its much more modest original intentions, as well as to Alison, Chantal and Kieran Bideleux for their forbearance over the past few years. Dr Alison Bideleux also provided much appreciated books and comments on the Byzantine Empire and on certain aspects of the Renaissance. Without these the volume might have been somewhat shorter, but it would also have been much the poorer. We hope that the prolonged gestation period has resulted in a deeper, sounder and more probing book.

MAPS

We gratefully acknowledge permission to reproduce Maps 6, 15, 31 and 42 from *A Concise Historical Atlas of Eastern Europe* by Dennis P. Hupchick and Harold E. Cox, copyright © D. Hupchick and H. Cox (St. Martin's Press, Incorporated, and Macmillan Ltd 1996).

Abbreviations

CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Area
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMEA	Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon)
COCOM	Co-ordinating Committee for Multilateral Trade Controls
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EEN	Eastern Europe Newsletter
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EPU	European Payments Union
EU	European Union
FT	<i>Financial Times</i>
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
G7	Group of Seven
G24	Group of Twenty-Four
IHT	<i>International Herald Tribune</i>
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KOR	Committee for Workers' Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Co-operation
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PHARE	Pologne, Hongrie: activité pour la restructuration économique
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TEMPUS	Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies
WEU	Western European Union
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Introduction

Crisis and change in East Central and South-eastern Europe

This book offers a largely thematic historical survey and analysis of the processes of political, social, cultural and economic change that have shaped the lands which lie between Germany, Italy and the former Tsarist and Soviet empires. German writers used to refer to this area as *Zwischeneuropa*. Unfortunately, this apt term has no such neat equivalent in English. The closest approximation is 'the lands between', as used in the titles of several major books and articles on the region (e.g. Palmer 1970 and Croan 1989). It has the virtue of encapsulating the region's essential misfortune in modern times, that of being sandwiched between overwhelmingly powerful empires: Germanic on the one side and Ottoman, Tsarist or Soviet on the other. In the words of the Czechoslovak dissident Milan Simecka: 'We live in the awareness that our unhappy situation on the borders of two civilizations absolves us from the outset from any responsibility for the nation's fate. Try as we may, there is nothing we can do to help ourselves' (Simecka 1985: 159). Indeed, as relatively small and vulnerable 'latecomers' to a Europe of sovereign nation-states, the peoples of East Central and South-eastern Europe acquired their modern national identities, territories and statehood at least partly through the grace and favour of Europe's Great Powers. Acute awareness of this uncomfortable predicament has helped to perpetuate widespread 'national insecurity'. It has also encouraged fatalistic assumptions that the peoples of the region would usually be acted upon, rather than act, and that external powers would make territorial dispositions to suit themselves, as indeed they did (most notably through the peace treaties of 1648, 1713, 1815, 1878 and 1918–19, the successive partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793 and 1795, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in 1938–39 and the Yalta and Potsdam agreements of 1945). These were self-fulfilling expectations.

More than this, the medieval and early modern history of these marchlands was blighted by persistent warfare against marauders and interlopers from both East and West: Avars, Huns, Magyars, Bulgars, Mongols and Turks from Asia; German colonists, Venetian traders and Catholic Crusaders from the West. Indeed, the battle lines between Roman Catholicism and Byzantine Orthodoxy and, to a lesser degree, between Christianity and Islam shuttled back and forth across the Balkans and East Central Europe. Viewed in an even longer perspective, the peoples of *Zwischeneuropa* acted as 'a buffer between the West and Asia, allowing the Western nations to develop in comparative security their own civilization, while the fury of the Asiatic whirlwinds spent itself on their backs. And throughout these centuries their powerful neighbours in the West exploited their weakness to encroach on their territory and ruin their economic life' (Seton-Watson 1945: 21–2). Moreover, successive strata of conquerors, colonists

2 *Introduction*

and indigenous peoples have settled in the area. Many of them have at one time or another built up states of their own at the expense of their neighbours, and 'the rise and fall of these short-lived states has left many disputed frontier regions and several inextricably mixed populations' (pp. 11, 74). The onslaughts from the West were generally motivated by a desire to conquer, to colonize or to convert, whereas the major Asiatic incursions seem to have been precipitated by occurrences on the distant northern frontiers of China. When Central Asian nomadic peoples made periodic (and usually unsuccessful) attempts to overrun the opulent Chinese 'middle kingdom', their leaders were sometimes deflected westwards across the open Eurasian steppes in search of fresh pastures and plunder to support their tribal hordes.

Thus Eastern Europeans have often faced hazards on two fronts, as well as cultural and colonial penetration from both East and West. The eminent Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz once mused: 'What is Poland? A country between East and West, where Europe somehow all but comes to an end, a transitional country where East and West mutually weaken each other. But . . . our country is a little bit of a parody of the East and of the West. . . . Our "superficiality", our "carefreeness" are essentially aspects of an irresponsible infantile relationship to culture and life, our lack of faith in reality. The origin of this may be that we are neither properly Europe or Asia' (quoted by Kiss 1987: 130, 135–6).

Besides setting out the structure of the book, this introduction examines the important debate as to whether 'the lands between' should be considered to be 'Central' or 'Eastern' Europe. In the process, we explain why we continue to use the term 'Eastern Europe' (contrary to the wishes of many of the region's inhabitants) and why we distinguish the value-laden political and cultural use of the terms 'Eastern' and 'Western' from the more neutral geographical terms 'eastern' and 'western'. Next, in further justification of our preferred usage, we offer a preliminary historical overview of the causes and consequences of Europe's East–West divergences. Finally, we outline our views on the uses and abuses of history as a means of illuminating the present and on the ways in which the present inevitably influences perceptions of the past.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Part I The 'Balkanization' of South-eastern Europe

Part I endeavours to explain how South-eastern Europe, which was in many respects the cradle of European civilization and has in the past comprised some of Europe's strongest and most highly developed states, became 'Balkanized', a byword for acutely debilitating fragmentation, inter-ethnic conflict, underdevelopment and loss of political and economic autonomy. In particular, we join the ranks of those who challenge the widely accepted view that the main responsibility for Balkan decline and disunity can be laid at the door of the 'alien' and sometimes stultifying and oppressive Ottoman Empire, a view still propagated in the Balkan media, schools, universities and 'official' or nationalist history books. The latter tend to be more concerned with national myth-making, the 'justification' of territorial claims and the nursing of ancient grievances than with the search for historical truth. Or, to put it another way, their conceptions of 'truth' are quite shamelessly self-interested. This is not to deny that similar practices are employed in many other parts of the world, only to alert readers to the pernicious and often

anachronistic uses and abuses of history by modern nationalist as well as communist historians. Thus modern 'national' histories of Serbia and Bulgaria, for example, have unfortunately tended to portray the medieval Serbian and Bulgarian kingdoms as embryonic nation-states whose glorious national development was brutally cut short by alien conquerors and subsequently stifled by several centuries of Ottoman imperial rule. Furthermore, they have often taken the maximum territorial extensions of those far from 'national' medieval kingdoms as being indicative of the 'natural' or 'historic' boundaries of their countries (and during the twentieth century historical 'memories' of these aggressive medieval polities have metamorphosed into modern nationalist programmes of territorial aggrandisement and 'ethnic cleansing'). In reality, however, there were already various symptoms or portents of decline and political, cultural and economic fragmentation in the Balkans *before* the Ottomans appeared on the scene. Indeed, these problems contributed to the ease with which the Ottomans subjugated the Balkans, and some of them were initially alleviated to varying degrees by Ottoman rule. The early Ottoman rulers can be seen as having tried to make the best of a bad job. Admittedly, the so-called Pax Ottomanica did not last for very long and, eventually, the sclerotic tendencies of the Ottoman system thwarted many efforts to modernize the Balkan economies and education systems, impairing their capacity to adapt or to meet the challenges of a changing world. The Ottomans can also be accused of perpetuating or failing to resolve many of the problems that they inherited in their Balkan domains, even if those problems were not of their own making. In that respect, however, they were no more 'culpable' than their Christian predecessors.

Nevertheless, by greatly delaying the development of independent nation-states, liberalism and the rule of law, the dogged persistence of the Ottoman imperial polity was also conducive to the emergence of exclusive and illiberal 'ethnic' conceptions and definitions of 'the nation', rather than more inclusive and liberal ones. 'Ethnic' nationalism elevates the rights of collectivities above those of individuals, even those of the individual members of ethnic majorities. The terrible 'ethnic purification' or 'ethnic cleansing' undertaken in parts of the Balkans during and immediately after the two World Wars and again in the first half of the 1990s can be seen as the logical culmination of the exclusive and illiberal conceptions and definitions of nationhood that developed mainly as a result of the late survival of supranational imperial polities in the region and the weak development of the rule of law. The 'activist' forms of nationalism and radicalism fostered by the French Revolution had a similarly intolerant and even murderous potential, especially in the hands of a Robespierre or a Saint-Just. But in Western Europe, fortunately, this was counteracted and held in check by the relatively strong development of the rule of law, the separation of powers, liberalism and concepts of limited government. Western European political communities have been governed and held together by common bodies of law, with a clear distinction between the public and private domains and strong constitutional restraints on the acquisition and use of power within specific historically determined jurisdictions and territories. By contrast, 'activist' forms of politics substitute ideology and a shared sense of mission or purpose for law as the basis of the political community, have scant regard for constitutional restraints on the acquisition and use of power, subordinate individuals to an all-embracing and all-intrusive political order and refuse to regard existing frontiers and jurisdictions as inviolable (O'Sullivan 1983: 35–7). Unfortunately, there have been fewer checks and safeguards against illiberal 'activist' doctrines, movements and states in eastern than in

4 Introduction

western Europe. Consequently, it is sometimes argued that this, rather than the prevalence of illiberal 'ethnic' nationalism, has been the most crucial respect in which eastern Europe has differed from western Europe in modern times. However, if limited government and the rule of law were adequate safeguards against ethnic excesses, it would be difficult to explain the triumph of Nazism in Weimar Germany, a country that prided itself on having a *Rechtsstaat* (in contrast to the Balkans and the Russian domains). It was precisely the fact that the German nation and national state were conceived and defined in ethnic rather than historic territorial terms that led successive generations of pan-German nationalists (culminating in Nazism) to try to unite all Germans in a single German superstate, with ultimately disastrous consequences for both Europe and Germany. Thus the triumph of Nazism among the Germans (who, like the peoples of eastern Europe, defined themselves as an 'ethnic' nation) seems to confirm that the prevalence of 'ethnic' nationalism was more important than any weakness of legal and constitutional safeguards in explaining the widespread occurrence of 'ethnic' excesses in twentieth-century Central and Eastern Europe.

The Serbs and the Croats have not been the only ones in the Balkans to have committed 'ethnic' atrocities at one time or another during the twentieth century. Nor has such barbarism been confined to so-called 'Christian' peoples. In adjacent Asia Minor, Moslem Turks have engaged in similar barbarities against Christian Armenians and Greeks and against Moslem Kurds. Yet, rather than pointing the finger of blame at particular religious and ethnic groups who have committed such atrocities at various times and places, we consider that the root cause of this terrible malady has been the 'ethnic' conception and definition of nationhood which arose largely as a result of the predominance of supranational imperial polities in the Balkans and Asia Minor up to the end of the First World War. In this respect the peoples of the Balkans and Anatolia have been to a large extent victims of circumstance, or prisoners of potentially lethal 'received ideas'. They are not, in our view, inherently more vicious or more incapable of living at peace with their neighbours than are the peoples of western Europe. (One could easily cite numerous barbarities committed by western Europeans, not least against Jews, Gypsies, Moslems, Catalans, Basques, Asians, blacks and the Irish.) The 'surgical' creation of several 'ethnically purified' or 'ethnically cleansed' nation-states in the Balkans has been the painful and tragic outcome of the prevalence of exclusive 'ethnic' conceptions of the nation and of the principle of national self-determination (both of which put a high premium on 'ethnic homogeneity' or 'ethnic purity') and of the attendant weakness of liberal values and legal constraints on 'ethnic' excesses. Indeed, in a region where nations are defined in narrowly ethnic terms, the enunciation of the principle of national self-determination is an open invitation to inter-ethnic conflict and 'ethnic cleansing', and the potential for inter-ethnic conflict and human tragedy in the Balkans and Anatolia will continue to be quite horrific until their various peoples either abandon 'ethnic' nationalism or are finally 'resettled' into ethnically 'cleansed' or 'purified' nation-states, carved out of the former ethnic patchworks. (A similarly barbaric logic was responsible for the 'ethnic purification' of Germany, Austria, the Czech Lands, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary during and immediately after the Second World War.) Even that would not be a real solution, however, because inter-ethnic hatreds could still persist between ethnically 'homogenized' states and antisemitism has continued to flourish in countries whose former Jewish minorities have been almost completely eradicated. Furthermore, 'ethnic purification' would leave a country morally, culturally

and technologically stunted and impoverished. Lasting and self-renewing cultural, material and spiritual strengths are to be found in ethnic and cultural diversity, most visibly in the case of the United States, rather than in homogeneity. The only sure escape from the problems caused by 'ethnic nationalism' is to be found in the renunciation of 'ethnic nationalism' in favour of more liberal and inclusive 'civic' forms of identity, allegiance and community, and this should be made an explicit prerequisite for membership of collectivities such as the EU and NATO, which exist to defend liberal 'civic' values.

Part II East Central Europe prior to the Habsburg ascendancy

The main aim of Part II is to examine the various reasons for the rise and decline of the medieval and early modern kingdoms of Poland, Hungary and Bohemia, each of which had at least half a millennium of independent existence before eventually succumbing to imperial control. In addition to outlining their major problems and achievements and the main traditions, values and orientations which they bequeathed to posterity, we pay particular attention to the power, privileges and internal divisions of the East Central European nobilities, the impact of Christianization, the Hussite Revolution and the strengths and weaknesses of the East Central European Renaissance and Reformation.

Part III East Central Europe during the Habsburg ascendancy

Part III, which examines the rise and fall of the Habsburg Monarchy, has three closely interrelated aims: (i) to assess the long-term impact and legacies of the Habsburg Empire in East Central Europe; (ii) to analyse some of the associated divergences between much of the region and western Europe; and (iii) to examine the reasons why most of East Central Europe remained under supranational imperial control during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while the West was steadily evolving towards a system of national states. In the process we endeavour to explain why most of the region fell so far behind most of the national or proto-national states of western Europe as regards urbanization, industrialization, agricultural development and science and technology during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This paves the way for an assessment of the Revolutions of 1848, an analysis of the impressive economic and cultural revivals in Hungary, German Austria and the Czech Lands during the later nineteenth century and a discussion of the precocious development of so-called 'finance capitalism' and 'monopoly capitalism' during the final decades of the Habsburg Empire. (We emphasize that Lenin added remarkably little to Hilferding's path-breaking ideas on the subject.) We also examine the reasons for (and the explosive consequences of) the fact that the development of East Central European nationalism *preceded* the emergence of nation-states, in marked contrast to the western European experience.

Our account of the legacies of the Habsburg Empire highlights the fundamental causes and the catastrophic consequences of the almost 'racial' chasm that opened up between the Austro-Germans and the Austro-Slavs from 1848 onward. The resultant political blind spots, mutual misunderstandings and mutual mistrust encouraged erstwhile Austro-German 'liberals' to sell out to Habsburg neo-absolutism, impaired the potential for healthy social and political co-operation and poisoned the wells of liberalism and democracy for a long time to come. It also sowed the seeds of the racial crimes committed