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35 years from the fall of the Berlin Wall: consequences and modern tendencies

Abstract: The paper examines modern processes in Europe three and a half decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The time distance offers more favourable conditions for perceiving the Berlin wall and its role, as well as the causes of the fall of real socialism and the ensuing processes by using the historical and comparative method, and also the synthetic-analytical method. The paper is divided into three segments: the first one deals with the demystification of the Berlin Wall and its historical role from the time of its construction to its destruction; the second segment deals with the analysis of direct and long-term consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall, while the third one is dedicated to the forms of changes and their tendencies in Europe. The conclusion of the paper synthesizes the findings from all three chapters and gives a critical review of today's state of affairs on the European continent.

Keywords: Berlin Wall, unification of Germany, fall of socialism, transition, geopolitics

Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 was indisputably one of the most important world events of the 20th century – the culmination of the crisis of the East European real-socialist system which ended by the collapse of its federal states and the beginning of transitioning processes due to which these territories were gradually joined to the semiperiphery of the world's capitalist system. Left

without its Cold War rival, the West entered the state of its zenith, the “unipolar moment” reflected in the domination of the USA in international relations and world economic processes with unquestionably imposed solutions in line with the Washington consensus, i.e., the neoliberal agenda.

The destruction of the Berlin Wall, which had huge symbolic and real-political significance, has been raised to the mythical level in the past three and a half decades – by projecting binary

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oppositions between Western liberalism and Soviet command economy, liberalism and authoritarianism, multiparty and one-party regimes, with the aim of glorifying the triumph of the former, allegedly positive, and fully denigrating the latter, historically unsuccessful and allegedly negative. Of course, this is a Manichaeian simplification which hides rather than reveals the true social and political processes that followed.

The Berlin Wall from its beginning to its fall

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The division of Berlin was a direct consequence of the Second World War results and the beginning of the Cold War rivalry of the two opposed blocs. Just as whole Germany, its capital Berlin was occupied at the end of the war and divided into four allied occupation zones: three Western (American, British and French) and one Eastern (Soviet). Through the unification of its occupation zones into the capitalist Federal Republic of Germany, this country was included first in the Marshall plan (1948) of the economic recovery of Western Europe (see Hogan, 1989) and then in the NATO (4 April 1949). The Soviet reaction followed in the form of establishing the German Democratic Republic (7 October 1949) and, subsequently, of the socialist military alliance – the Warsaw Pact. A similar situation occurred in the city of Berlin.

The beginning of the conflict related to West Berlin referred to the so-called “Berlin Airlift”, by which the Western countries avoided not only the control of everything entering (and leaving) Berlin, but also maintained the army’s presence in “their

part” of Berlin. Moreover, maintaining the existing status quo preventing reaching any permanent peace solution regarding Germany’s position in Europe. The pro-Western “Berlin enclave” was a thorn in the tissue of the Eastern interest sphere: it set an example of successful Western market society and represented a specific springboard for a mass exodus of East German population to the West.

The causes of this situation were multiple: the western part of Germany had already been economically more developed and territorially much larger than its eastern part. In addition, the western part suffered less in the war devastation in 1944–1945, while it also received a disproportionately larger aid during the Marshall plan. In the same period, the eastern part of Germany was treated as an occupied region from which the Soviets initially took away goods in order to compensate for the damage inflicted on them in the German invasion of the USSR.

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union never actually intended to attack the Western capitalist part of Europe (Gaddis, 2005b, pp. 61–83). Despite the great military power, the Soviet leaders and their East European satellites could clearly see the extent to which their countries lagged economically and socially behind the leading Western countries. For those reasons, all the belligerent rhetoric and rattling of weapons from the East had in fact a defensive character. In the last stage of his reign, Stalin offered a deal to the West about the unification of two Germanys and becoming an armed, neutral state between the two ideologically confronted military blocs (Kissinger, 1999, p. 441). His proposal was rejected by the Americans who did not

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want the devaluation of their efforts in integrating West Europe in their military and political camp (Kissinger, 1999, pp. 438–439). Closing the borders and isolation of West Berlin was only a form of a threat shown by the Soviets in order to force the West to return to the negotiations. In fact, as early as 1953, the Soviets rudely refused the request of the East German communist leadership to close the borders between the two parts of Berlin. The Kremlin warned its German party comrades that

such a step was politically unacceptable, urging them to implement on their own “as liberal policies as possible”, embodied in the so-called new course (in June 1953), the consequence of which would be a much better living standard of the population in East Germany, strengthening them in their intention to stay in their country. The Soviet recommendations did not encounter approval of the East German political leadership (Brzezinski, 1967, pp. 101–120).



The Berlin Wall (Berliner Mauer) in the Tiergarten district of Berlin, October 1988.

Photo: Shutterstock

Khrushchev began giving in to the requests of the German Democratic Republic only at the beginning of the 1960s, after the unsuccessful negotiations with Kennedy at the Vienna summit in June 1961 (Kempe, 2011, p. 247). At that time he was forced to resort to a new and undesirable defensive strategy, into which he was pushed by the East German allies. In the end, Khrushchev let the East Germans build the Berlin Wall and thus prevent passage of its population towards the western part of Berlin (Hope, 2003, pp. 9–10).

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The construction of the wall began at midnight, on 13 August 1961, after the East German army units closed all border crossings and demolished the streets, and then started putting barbed wire and fence in the length of 156 kilometres and, in the later stages, raised a concrete wall instead of it. The true effect of the wall became clear in the very first days of its existence: due to its construction, a large majority of East Germany citizens could no longer (without a complex legal procedure) enter West Berlin and migrate further to the West. Despite all this, during 28-year-long existence of the Berlin Wall, about 100,000 East Germans tried to cross it and flee to the West, about 5,000 of whom succeeded in it (www.chronik-der-mauer.de).

The situation remained more or less unchanged in the following two and a half decades. During the 1980s, it became evident that the entire Eastern bloc and its political and economic system were affected by a deep crisis. Simply, the practical visible life was deeply opposed to the proclaimed ideals whose achievement lacked real beliefs and morals. The West used the occasion to support and help the spontaneously emerging protest movements against the ruling regimes in those countries, whose

main impetus was mostly not pro-capitalist and multiparty-parliamentary, but primarily national, and even nationalist. It was only later that the reformist-nationalist movements here and there transformed into specific advocates of Western liberalism, mostly for the reasons of profitability of acquiring direct aid from the only remaining superpower (see Klingemann et al., 2006, pp. 9–10).

The year of 1989 witnessed a whole series of revolutionary events in East European socialist countries, first of all in Poland and Hungary. Like a chain reaction, they were also spread into East Germany, the staunchest Soviet satellite. During the summer months, Hungary turned into a “flow boiler” through which, after the opening of the borders, the refugees from other Eastern bloc countries hurried to the West, primarily those from Romania and East Germany, where the situation was the most difficult both in political and economic terms. This was soon followed by mass anti-regime demonstrations led by church dignitaries; they spread all over East Germany during September and grew into the so-called “peaceful revolution” during the autumn of 1989. Faced with the dissatisfaction that could not be stopped by repression, the long-term leader of East Germany, Erich Honecker, resigned on 18 October and was replaced by much more moderate Egon Krenz. By the beginning of November 1989, the protest movement reached its culmination in the demonstrations in Berlin’s Alexanderplatz, where about half a million people gathered. When the pressure of the refugees on Czech and Hungarian borders became unbearable, Krenz’s government opened East German border crossings towards West Germany, including those in Berlin itself (see Rottman et al., 2008).

At 10.45 pm on 9 November, the border authorities opened the passage for the crowds which were, on the other side of the wall, joined by many citizens of West Berlin. During that evening, young people from both sides of the wall began climbing and destroying it. Thus, the night of 9 November became “the night when the Berlin Wall fell down” (German *Mauerfall*). On 22 December, the Brandenburg Gate on the Berlin Wall was opened, and West Germany’s Chancellor *Helmut* Kohl was the first to pass through it on his way to meet his East Germany’s counterpart, Prime Minister Hans Modrow. The following day, the no-visa regime was agreed about between the two parts of Berlin. During the spring of 1990, East Germany’s army completely destroyed the Berlin Wall in the length of 156 kilometres. Only its six segments were left to stand as monuments of one epoch. The whole process was completed in November 1991, when two Germanys were already unified.

Direct and long-term consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall

It transpired that the destruction of the Berlin Wall and the unification of two Germanys were only the first stage of the total collapse of the Eastern bloc. The dissolution was marked by a number of dramatic events, interethnic disputes and conflicts within the Soviet Union during which some of the federation members declared their independence from Moscow. Federal Czechoslovakia was gradually divided into two states – the Czech Republic and Slovakia (the peaceful separation agreement was signed in Bratislava on 23 July 1992). Socialist

Yugoslavia, although it did not belong to the Eastern bloc, but played an inter-bloc role, was dissolved from the autumn of 1991 to the spring of 1992 in the bloody civil war between the secessionist republics and those members which wanted to preserve the federation. Unified Germany played an important role in the collapse of Yugoslavia because it supported the positions of the secessionist republics and rushed to recognize their independence (forcing the newly-formed EU into it by conditioning the Maastricht Treaty with the support to the division of Yugoslavia) (see Baun, 1996). As early as January 1990, the European Economic Community (the predecessor of the EU) established the PHARE program of aid to democratic transition in the eastern part of Europe, which was available chiefly in Poland and Hungary. This was one of the first big steps of the future EU on the international scene.

The biggest direct consequence of the fall of the Berlin Wall was the creation of the unified German state in the centre of Europe. Unified Germany immediately started playing the key role on the old continent and assumed the leadership within the EU institutions, gradually directing it towards the achievement of its priority interests (see Hofhansel, 2005).

Germany persistently used other methods to achieve the majority of its goals which it had not achieved by force in the first half of the 20th century: to create an autonomous geopolitical pan-area with Germany itself in its political, economic and cultural centre, surrounded by a belt of weak and dependent states into whose territory it would be able to place its products and from which it would, in turn, be able to receive enough favourable resources it lacked. The main obstacle in the way of German

plans to peacefully achieve its strategic interests is the US hegemony in Europe, i.e., its geostrategic approach aimed at simultaneous “restraining” (see Gaddis, 2005) through “the implementation of the strategy of geopolitical separation, i.e., preventing continental integrations past America between the eastern part of Europe and the Eurasian Heartland, on one side, and its peripheral, highly developed but resource-poor western part on the other side. The slogan reflecting this geopolitical vision is: *Keep Germany down, Europe in. and Russia out*” (Gajić, 2010, p. 4).

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The fall of the Berlin Wall and the destruction of the real-socialist bloc enabled the USA, through the processes of transition and Euro-integrations, attract in geopolitical terms former socialist countries into its orbit, to spread the NATO eastwards, to the very borders of Russia, and then to push such reformed countries into the EU so as to have a multiple role – to constitute a burden resisting to German hegemony in the EU and causing it constant problems, while also becoming a new “sanitary cordon” that prevents contact and any coming closer between unified Germany and consolidated Russia. The EU expansion process was realized in geopolitical terms by using it to implement the construction of the internal regional balance of power in the contours of modernized Spykman’s R-H doctrine (Spykman, 1942). Layne (Layne, 2003, p. 17), for example, directly points to the fact that this strategy is based on 1): intimidating all other Germans, which should make American presence be accepted as necessary; 2) preventing every separate, authentic common external and security EU policy (“second pillar obstruction”); 3) encouraging “over-expansion” of the EU for the sake of watering

down and preventing the creation of a unique and efficient policy and bringing divisions that reduce the strength of the EU.

In the past three decades, Germany succeeded on the largest scale in reintegrating the eastern part into a unique legal, political and economic order: the high mortality rate in the territory of former East Germany was reduced to the level close to that in the western part of the country; the economic growth rates in this period were higher in the eastern than in the western part of the country. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate in the east remained much higher than in the rest of the country, except for two regions (but only after 2006). The territory of former East Germany is still less integrated in international markets than the western parts of the country. Foreign direct investment is far lower, as well as the share in the country’s exports. Moreover, the share of immigrants in the total population in the east of Germany (about 2%) is substantially lower than in the west (9%). As for the unification of the living standard, the best results were achieved. On average, the nominal GDP per capita in the east of Germany amounted to about 20,000 Euros in 2005 as compared to 29,000 Euros in the west (Buch, Toubal, 2007, p. 5).

The greatest success was achieved in the sphere of social integration: inhabitants’ pensions were unified by fully recognizing the work experience to all those who had acquired it in former East Germany; earnings in the eastern part of Germany amount to about 98% of identical earnings in the west; legal systems, just as all forms of social assistance were unified, while huge efforts were invested into uniform investments in infrastructure, environmental protection and healthcare. However, a whole set of

problems remained: young, highly-educated population from the east of the country still migrated to the western parts of the country; although the birth rate increased in comparison to the beginning of the 1990s, it is still not good. The legacy of socialism in the east of Germany is still visible, particularly in the resistance to the abrupt social stratification into the excessively rich minority and the majority that somehow makes ends meet, then in less pronounced tendencies towards being involved in entrepreneurship and preference for being employed in public services, stronger requests for social justice and egalitarianism than it is the case in the western part of the country.

Forms of changes and their tendencies in East Europe during the past 35 years

Numerous social and political processes occurred in the territory of Central and East Europe during the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the “velvet revolution” which led to the end of the real-socialist system. Contrary to the euphoric predictions about the “end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992), the following three and a half decades showed that history had other courses than the predicted ones, with new and deep divisions in different spheres of European life.

The European Union is divided into the countries within the unique monetary territory and outside it; into the developed north and the undeveloped south; into non-religious and partly re-traditionalized part; into “old” and “new” Europe; into Europe with sovereigntist authorities and

Europe inclined towards bureaucratic Bruxelles; Europe in which populist movements of left and right options arise, and Europe with still prevailing the system, liberal and anti-populist agenda; those antagonistically disposed towards Russia and those that want to recover and keep as good relations as possible with it.

After the escalation of the Ukrainian crisis, Russian military interventions and the sanctions against Russia imposed by the EU and the USA, a new “iron curtain” fell over Europe, this time in the West. In its modified form, it aspires to repeat the Cold War antagonism from the past. Russia is trying to parry it by protecting its vital strategic interests. Former socialist countries of Central and East Europe have remained behind the line of this division, in the Western interest sphere or on its margin (e.g., Ukraine), most of them as the members of the EU and the NATO, and some with the status of membership candidates. All of them also have different roles in internal divisions and rivalries within the Western institutional structures, trying to keep part of their sovereignty and to defend national interests before they see in what direction the territories of Europe will further be taken by the ongoing historical processes.

Looking from outside, former countries of real socialism do not essentially differ from West European countries by their political and social organization. They are considered democratic states due to the degree of achieved civil rights and political freedoms, due to the general voting right for all adult citizens, due to the multiparty political system with periodic electoral cycles, due to the possibility of accessing the public sphere through media for all forms of political association etc. However,

the degree of the population's participation in democratic elections shows significant differences between West European countries and former socialist countries. While in the west of Europe, average voter turnout is 40–50% of the electorate, during the first decade after the introduction of the multiparty system in the east of the old continent, voter turnout was much higher, accounting for about 65% of the electorate. This turnout began dropping during the first decades of the 21st century and went down to about 55% (European Commission, 2014, p. 30). The main reason for it lies in the increasing degree of apathy and the belief that elections cannot substantially affect social and political processes, i.e., social elites initiating and implementing them. Most former socialist countries are considered “consolidated democracies” today, while only a small number of them are considered “semi-consolidated democracies” (Romania and Bulgaria) (see Ágh, 2019). According to some attitudes, in certain democratic systems, stable until yesterday, there is a reverse process due to the populist disruption of division and mutual control of the branches of power, and these countries once again start being seen as “semi-consolidated democracies” (Hungary, Slovakia, Poland) (Ágh, 2019, p. 12). In reality, the transition of the former real-socialist countries into multiparty democracies and market economies turned them into specific “hybrid regimes” with different forms of society transformation, in which legacies of socialism and etatism are intertwined with national sovereignism and (neo)liberal influences. Only in the countries of special strategic interest to the USA (e.g., Poland and some Baltic states) it is allowed not to privatize strategic industries, but to recapitalize and keep them in the state's majority ownership. In other

countries, brutal privatization and “shock therapy” as prescribed by Jeffrey Sachs were conducted, in line with the principles of Washington consensus (Gore, 2000). It was only ten or more years after the collapse of the “old order” and numerous transitioning troubles that the privatized economy of these countries began coming closer to the level of the economies in these countries before their deep system crisis of the 1980s. However, the redistribution of these funds is different now because of the increasingly pronounced degree of inequality and social divisions into the rich minority and the more and more impoverished majority, with the weakening of the middle class which has been halved or on the verge of disappearance (Baldassarri et al., 1993, pp. 49–61).

The biggest changes are definitely those in the economic sphere. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the whole former real-socialist bloc turned to market economy in its liberal or socio-market form (Poland, Hungary). This system is characterized by the withdrawal of the state and political decision-making from economy, decentralization of decision-making and opening the market for free competition, particularly for the participation of foreign companies in economic activities. All these countries were included in the world's capitalist system as its semiperiphery (see Wallerstein, 2004), with new accompanying forms of inequality and the increased unemployment rate. On the other hand, there are no longer chronic shortages of certain consumer goods, so characteristic for the previous economic system, due to the strong influx of imported goods.

In the period from the end of the 1990s to 2009, the economic gap between the old, West-

ern members of the EU and the newly-received, former socialist countries gradually decreased, but still remained large. The convergence process was caused by foreign direct investment and open trade relationships, i.e., by including former socialist countries into a broader unique market and customs territory. The quality of production was significantly raised as the main form of profitable economic activity, but also the level of services in the tertiary sector (see Rapacki et al., 2009). In a new position of well-being for the post-socialist territory were direct foreign investment and licenced transfer of technologies. These investments and transfers arrived in the former socialist countries mostly from Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. The biggest receivers of direct foreign investment were Poland (as many as 36% of all investments in comparison to 10 countries admitted into the EU in 2004), the Czech Republic (19%) and Hungary (14%) (EU Commission, 2014, p. 43). During and after the world economic crisis, foreign investments started decreasing abruptly, which bears witness to the structural weakness of some of the “pumped-up” economies of the newly-received EU members (first of all, Baltic countries, but also Romania, Hungary etc.) (Götz, 2016, pp. 15–33). During the second decade of the 21st century, economies of these countries begin to recover, although the level of their economic development is still far below the levels recorded before 2008.

Three and a half decades after the beginning of transition and the introduction of the multiparty system, and more than two decades of the membership in the European Union, in post-socialist countries there is an evident series of problems: widespread system corruption, political intolerance,

discrimination against ethnic minorities and the adoption of formal, “façade” democracy as an instrument of manipulating the electorate. Moreover, there is a specific resistance of former Soviet satellites towards forms of supra-national connecting. In fact, the collapse of real-socialism was seen by the inhabitants of these countries as an opportunity for recovering national states, with traditional, historical identities and all the characteristic of sovereignty. Quite naturally, post-socialist countries are not delighted by the idea of sacrificing their newly-acquired sovereignty for the sake of new supra-national integrations, particularly because these integrations bring more and more problems similar to those survived by these countries as part of the former eastern camp. In the circumstances when in the territories of the West there are ongoing processes of deconstruction of traditional and collective identities simultaneously with the thriving of other, alternative identities, their adoption and promotion in the seats of supra-national edifice only causes an increasing resistance in the newly-received member-states.

There are other controversial processes as well, while the most pronounced one refers to the mass migration of younger population to economically developed countries in the territory of the old continent (e.g., Poland, Baltic countries, Romania and Bulgaria). Although life expectancy in these countries has been extended by as many as three years due to the improvement of general living conditions as compared to the last years of the socialist system – mass migration further aggravated negative demographic trends in these countries (see Liikanen et al., 2016). Disbalances in the working-age structure of the population threaten both economy and

pension systems of the former socialist countries in the long run, facing their political elites with the problems equal to solving the “squaring the circle”.

Final considerations

Historical distance offers us more favourable conditions to perceive more realistically and critically the Berlin Wall and its real role in the Cold War period, as well as the causes of the collapse of real-socialism and the ensuing processes.

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At first sight, it is clear that the Berlin Wall, its construction and role were not the consequence of different ideological worldviews and essential features of the two opposed social systems, but, first of all, the forced tactical decision due to the impossibility of reaching a compromise between the superpowers at the time. The Soviets supported the construction of the wall only when no other option was available. To declare a forced, partitioning fortification-type system for a symbolic feature of a socio-economic order, opposed by its social antipode in every aspect, is a rough simplification and mystification. Both parties, on both sides of the wall, were mutually closed, in the Cold War guard and military readiness, while open for cooperating with ideologically close countries or Third World countries (although on different foundations) (McMahon, 2003).

Moreover, today it is becoming clearer and clearer that the claim about the triumph of the capitalist and individualist West over the socialist and collectivist East owing to the fall of the Berlin Wall is rather problematic. The eastern real-socialist system collapsed from within, on its own,

due to its weaknesses and rigidity. However, the West performed subversive operations of the wide range, but they had second-class significance for turning the back to the outdated socialist regimes. Additionally, the thesis is completely unsustainable about Regan’s investing in the armament race (the “Star War” project) having exhausted the budget of the Soviet military superpower, forcing it to invest more funds in keeping the military balance, while in other segments, primarily those referring to the production of consumer goods, the Eastern bloc was lagging behind on a large scale. All the plans about military investments in the USSR in the 1990s had been made much earlier, in the first half of the 1970s, and they could not be affected by the fear from Regan’s “Star War” – namely because this program began much later. As for the media influence and openness of the West, it is true that the Eastern bloc could no longer maintain the negative picture of the opponent among its own population. Nevertheless, faced with cruel capitalism in which they found themselves quite soon – most of the recently socialist countries and their citizens immediately opted for the permitted socio-market concepts (that is why in the majority of these countries, reformed communists in the socialist or socio-democratic versions returned to power in the 1990s). The problem was that, with the disappearance of the so-called communist threat, West European social-market state itself was disassembled, while the territory of the most developed European countries was also gradually subjected to the neoliberal agenda which adamantly crushed the legacy of the “welfare state” (see Wahl, 2011). In the final outcome, the damage from the collapse of socialism was borne not only by the

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east, but, to a large extent, the west of Europe as well (Gajić, 2011, pp. 11–13).

Today's confrontations and divisions into antagonized camps also show us that the territory of Europe has not become the territory of peace and wellbeing. The old strategy of “eastward penetration” in a new guise, along with Eurointegrations, has led to dangerous expansion of the NATO into

the depth of the Eurasian continent. It caused the Russian reaction, particularly after the idea about the construction of the “nuclear shield” in the territory of East Europe which was intended by the NATO to neutralize the danger of the potential Russian nuclear “backlash”. Step by step, new antagonism led to the total isolation of Russia from the larger part of Europe and ostracism of all those



Berlin sharing during the Cold War, map at Mauermuseum Check point Charlie
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European political subjects advocating reconciliation and an attempt of achieving new forms of cooperation. Former countries of the real-socialist camp are subordinated to the trans-Atlantic hegemon and forced, to, willingly or unwillingly, play the allotted role in new forms of continental confrontations.

In the meantime, the territory of entire Europe became exposed to new (mostly negative) trends, post-ideological influences and social processes: aging and decreasing number of inhabitants, cultural and identity decadence, caused mostly by hedonistic culture of the West with its egocentric determinations; mass migration from the Third World territories; terrorist activities, as well as the thriving of alternative identities and their post-ideological agendas whose goals are undoubtedly disputable in the long run for the survival of modern societies and all forms of community. Faced with these challenges, the east of Europe is proving more resistant and vital than its western part, which has delved deeply into the spaces of scepticism, apathy and desperate grasping of small, most personal material privileges. In the territories of former socialist countries, it turns out that historical identities and religious beliefs are stronger than in the west of Europe. It is

evident that during the Cold War and the existence of the Berlin Wall, under proclaimed atheism and communist internationalism, the layers of traditional values, religious beliefs and national-collective determinations remained conserved, while nihilistic processes in the West deeply cut into these identity layers, so that today these “open societies” appear unable to cope with modern challenges.

In any case, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world did not become better, more peaceful and safer; on the contrary, today the Cold War balance of power is seen as the time of stability, while the political and social circumstances of the time are considered much more favourable than those today. In the period following its fall, it transpired that the Berlin Wall and real socialism were not the greatest danger pressurizing European nations and pushing them into unnecessary and dangerous mutual confrontations. The awareness emerged of a much more dangerous wall standing and determining the destiny of the world’s nations – “Wall Street”, and that only its fall might lead to partial fulfilment of the wishes which used to be (and it can be seen now, too early) awakened by the fall of the less important and substantially less ominous one – the Berlin Wall.

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