

THE "SECOND SOCIETY":
IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL MODEL EMERGING IN HUNGARY?

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Hungary is one of those countries which, starting from a semi-peripheral position, have for centuries tried to catch up with the West. And it is a country which has failed at it again and again. Its elites have drawn up and tried to implement program after program. They have devised new economic and social models, failing again and again.

The first program was launched by the reform generation of the 1830s and 1840s, and defeated in 1849 by the Austrian and Russian armies. The liberal experiment which began in 1867 achieved some important results and considerably narrowed the gap between Hungary and the developed world, but it was derailed in the early years of the twentieth century and ran into the disaster of the First World War. The conservative experiment of the 1920s followed two short-lived attempts at revolution, but ran ashore in the world economic crisis of the 1930s. The populist and technocratic-bureaucratic experiment of the late 1930s and early 1940s was halted by the German invasion and the fascist take-over. The democratic experiment after the war came to a halt in 1948 when the communists took power. The Stalinist program faltered already in 1954, and crashed in 1956. The post-totalitarian experimentation with an enlightened, pragmatic, and paternalistic authoritarianism was the most successful East European model in 1965-75, but it began to dysfunction in the late 1970s, and in the 1980s has headed toward a general crisis.

But there is one more item: the emergence of an "alternative society" in Hungary since the 1950s. What do we mean by an "alternative society"? Or a "second society"? Does one really exist? And if it does, what is it like? What are its origins? What role has it played? How does it relate to the official, "first society"? What are the prospects for its further development? These are the questions that I will attempt to answer in this paper.

THE FIRST HYPOTHESIS

In the course of the 1960s and '70s, social and political scientists in Hungary became increasingly conscious of the existence and growing importance of a latent, second sphere of

socio-economic existence, of a cleavage and interaction between the "first," official, society, and a "second," informal, and latent society. Exploration of this field began in the late '60s, but for a decade remained occasional, sporadic, and latent itself. Since the late 1970s research has gathered momentum and references to this "latent" and "hidden" sphere (Bruszt 1984), "hidden dimension" (Bogár 1983), "shadow society," "second Hungary" (Forintos 1982), "disguised political platforms" (Pokol 1983), or large social strata "living beneath the level of the political system" (Gombár 1983) have multiplied. In the last few years serious research has been devoted to the study of informal interest mediation, the latent conflict potential of various social groups, informal decision-making and decision-implementing processes, behind-the-scenes interest-group politics, and latent political articulation (Bauer 1981, Bihari 1985, Gábor and Galasi 1981, Galasi and Sziráczki 1985, Laky 1980, Pokol 1980). A similar process of discovering this latent sphere has taken place in other East European countries as well as in East European studies (See writings by Benda, Vaculik, Havel, Kundera, Michnik, Kuroń, Konrád, and Kiss; Arató 1981, Aslund 1985, Connor and Gitelman 1977, Curry 1983, Grossman 1987, Brown 1984a and b, Brown and Gray 1979, Janos et al. 1979, Skilling 1976, 1981, forthcoming, Tokes 1979). But have all these studies proved that the various latent and informal actions and interactions constitute a specific sphere of social existence that can be distinguished from a "first" society as a separate sphere consistent in itself and having its own basic characteristics, one that is governed by organizational principles different from those of the first society? Not necessarily. The "second society" requires further scrutiny.

The study of this field began in the early 1980s. The term "second society" was suggested by the analogy of the "second economy," a term well established in East European economics and sociology for more than a decade. The new studies were particularly important in that they sought to describe the basic characteristics of the second economy. In one of his papers, István R. Gábor gave a long list of definitions relating to the second economy (Gábor 1983), and in Table I (page 3), I present some of the characteristics that can be deduced from these definitions. Some of these characteristics may help us to distinguish also between the first and the hypothetical second society. But for our present purposes it may be even more important to note that here the second economy is opposed to the first economy in a series of more or less sharply polarized dichotomies. Would this be viable also for our attempt to detect and describe a latent "second society" in this country, if there is one? Perhaps. But embarking on this project, we must keep in mind that this approach has serious weaknesses and may lead to analytical pitfalls. I will begin by formulating some caveats.

Table I

MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SECOND ECONOMY IN HUNGARY

(Based on Gábor 1983.)

The second economy is the sum total of economic activity outside the state sector. It is only loosely integrated into the state sector, and on the continuum from integration to autonomy lies closer to the latter in that:

It is not planned or organized by the state.

It is a more or less "informal" economy; it is only partly affected by the formal systems of regulation that govern and control the first economy.

It is not linked to the dominant form of ownership, that is, state ownership.

It is not linked to the dominant form of management, that is, large enterprises. It is centered in small-scale cooperative enterprises of 5-10 members, mainly family enterprises.

In contrast to the first economy, it has "hard budget barriers," is cost-sensitive, and lies outside the state's investment policies.

It is less affected by the hierarchical structures characteristic of the country as a whole than the first economy.

It is an important but not a dominant activity within the national economy: it is complementary and auxiliary.

It is an "invisible" or less visible economy producing incomes that cannot be or are only partly registered by the tax office.

On the continuum from political and ideological acceptance (legitimacy) to rejection (illegitimacy), it lies closer to the latter; its political and ideological assessment by the authorities is precarious and ambivalent.

First, I will describe the basic organizational principles of the first society. Second, I will examine other organizational principles which govern interactions and processes that do not fit into the normal operation of the first society. And third, to make the picture clearer, I will juxtapose the second society to the first society. One of the difficulties here is the vagueness of the second society, which may be due to the fact that the second society must develop organizational principles, steering mechanisms, and networks in the hidden informal sphere of social space. This fuzziness and openness make it difficult to draw a sharp dividing line between the first and second societies.

Another problem stems from the coexistence of what we might call the "ideological" versus the "actual" first society, in other words, the coexistence of a) what the ruling elite presents as the goal to be achieved or as the state of affairs already attained, and b) the actual organizational principles and social practices as they exist and operate in the everyday reality. These two models overlap, but are by no means identical. On the one hand, there are elements in the ideological model that have never materialized but, being basic and indispensable parts of this ideology, may play an important role as instruments of social mobilization or barriers to social change. On the other hand, there are elements in the actual social practice that do not fit into the official ideology and often contradict it. I propose to regard as belonging to the first society all actually existing features of the model sanctioned by ideology. In other words, in this first attempt to distinguish between the first and the second societies, I will not regard as belonging to the first society that which has not been realized of the model (such as broad popular representation) or that which exists and operates but does not fit into the official model (such as corruption).

The task is further complicated by the processes of change which the Hungarian society, like most contemporary societies, has been experiencing in the past four decades. This includes important changes in the ways the country has been governed, such as political liberalization and economic reform. There are two options: We can use a movable frame of reference and oppose a changing second society to a changing first society. Or we can compose our frame of reference only out of the basic characteristics of the first society that have not changed in these four decades. I have chosen the second option.

And finally, let us keep in mind and stress once again that a logical bias is built into this instrument of analysis. It is comfortable and tempting to assume that the would-be second society is governed by a set of organizational and operational principles which are the exact opposites of those of the first society. We must not forget, however, that this procedure rests on a hypothesis which may help us to spot and clearly delineate

some differences between the two social spheres but may blur the fact that instead of being situated at opposite poles, the two social spheres in question may reach deep into the middle field of a continuum and overlap or even intertwine.

CRITERIA

On the basis of earlier findings as well as everyday experience, the following dichotomized criteria are the most promising to discriminate between the first and the second societies in Hungary today.

1. The Criterion of Homogeneity versus Differentiation and Integration

First society:	Homogeneity, diffuseness, atomization
Second society:	Differentiation, integration

In 1948, the Hungarian communist party launched a sweeping program of modernization. In a few years, if not months, it attempted to destroy the internal structures of the previous society and to liquidate virtually its entire system of institutions, replacing them with new institutions which would prevent or at least slow down the spontaneous re-articulation of society. The rationale behind this strategy was that the far-reaching goals set by the party could be reached sooner and political power could be consolidated more easily if society was atomized. In the economy, a radical program of modernization was announced, which at the time was understood to mean rapid and extensive industrialization. This led to some economic differentiation and to the development of more advanced forms of the division of labor. The process of differentiation was obstructed, however, by the counteraction of central planning and rigorous central control, which penetrated and streamlined the entire economy. Individual economic actors were isolated, their relationships with each other were cut off, and the entire economy was pushed into a state of centralized diffuseness.

Some scholars believe that this process of centralization and homogenization is in itself a kind of modernization, especially in developing countries. Others regard it as a blind alley or at least a costly detour of modernization and contend that social development in general and genuine modernization in particular are interactive processes of differentiation and integration. Without entering into this controversy, let us take the "differentiation cum integration" model as the opposite of what has been the case in the first society in Hungary and consider this double principle of differentiation and integration as part of the second paradigm. In this we will consider as belonging to the second society everything that is capable of differentiating and at the same time integrating the various economic, social, and political functions, social interests, and world views.

2. The Criterion of Vertical versus Horizontal Organization

First Economy: Vertical organization
Second Economy: Horizontal organization

Since 1948, and to some extent even earlier, vertical organization and the predominance of hierarchic relationships of subordination and superordination have been typical of Hungarian society. Interest relations and power are organized in a strictly hierarchic order, and information and resources flow almost exclusively along vertical lines. The workers of two workshops can coordinate their interests only through the management, enterprises settle their differences through the mediation of central agencies, two neighboring cities through the county authorities, two neighboring counties through the mediation of the government or the party's politburo. This verticality is such an essential feature of the first society, and has been considered so all-important by the political elite, that any attempt at spontaneous and horizontal organization among people who share interests provoked immediate angry countermeasures in the 1950s, was curbed by more sophisticated policies in the '70s, and is still watched with suspicion.

Nevertheless, horizontal links have emerged and continue to re-emerge, and horizontal relationships that do not fit into the vertical patterns continue to come into being. It seems justified, therefore, to consider horizontality as one of the major operational characteristics of the second paradigm.

3. The Criterion of Descendance versus Ascendance

First society: Downward flow of power and influence, bureaucratic dominance
Second society: Upward flow of power and influence, representative institutions

Descendance means that power flows downward. Each level of leadership receives its power from above and the decisions made at the top of the hierarchy spread downward, determining and regulating people's lives. The opposite would be a pattern in which power accumulates from below and flows upward, so that all levels of leadership receive their mandates from below and must represent their constituencies. This principle is at work, for instance, in the processes of "repoliticization" and "resocialization" from below on the lower echelons of state agencies (Bruszt 1984).

4. The Criterion of Statization versus Non-Statization

First society: Predominance of state ownership
Second society: Predominance of non-state ownership

In 1948, the process of systematic statization began. Constitutionally and rhetorically it was a process of "nationalization" or "socialization," in which party and state

bureaucracies were to act only as administrators of social property. But in fact they had the mixed identities of owners and trustees. They exercised total and uncontrolled power over decisions as if they were owners, but legally and directly they could not alienate the surplus value on their own behalf and acted only as trustees. They practically viewed the whole country as their property or as property at their disposal: not only the forces of production, but also cities, buildings, the educational, health, and political systems, mass communications, all key positions in the political, economic, and social hierarchies, and -- in the worst years -- even people's life goals, thoughts, and lives. Since the mid-1960s, the balance between the identities of owner and trustee has tipped somewhat toward the latter. But it is only the spheres of the hypothetical second society that may not be pervaded by the spirit of bureaucratic-oligarchic state ownership.

5. The Criterion of Centralization versus Non-Centralization

First society:	Total centralization of all spheres of social existence
Second society:	Moderate centralization, growing autonomy of economic and social actors

The central organization and control of everything ranging from the economy to artistic production and individuals' feelings and thoughts, from decisions on important investments to the most minute details of everyday life, was a key objective and a key instrument of domination in the 1950s. Later, when the serious dysfunctions of this centralizing fervor became evident, repeated attempts were made to decentralize, with some results. But central control belongs to the essence of the system and combines strongly with the interests of the elite that campaigns of decentralization have always been followed by open or disguised re-centralization and the structures and institutions of primary political importance have to this day remained strictly centralized. The so-called relative autonomies that people, groups, and institutions can seek and win are extremely fragile and may at any time fall victim to the next round of re-centralization.

6. The Criterion of Political versus Socio-Economic Dominance

First society:	Political intentions and interests prevail over socio-economic factors
Second society:	Priority of socio-economic factors

In the 1950s and early '60s everything in Hungary was subordinated to the political programs of the communist party. Turning the Marxist model upside down, politics determined -- or at least were intended to determine -- the economy and the relationships of production. In this period, the relative economic, and to a lesser extent social, autonomy was acknowledged more easily, and government policy was increasingly

coordinated with spontaneous economic and social processes. The primacy of politics was, however, never relinquished. The first society remains under the domination of politics, albeit much more pragmatically and flexibly. Policy makers try as much as possible to avoid clashes with economic and social forces. The second society, on the contrary, is or could be a sphere of social existence where spontaneous economic and social forces play the leading role.

7. The Criterion of Ideology versus No Ideology

First Society:	Saturated with official ideology
Second Society:	The non-ideological sphere and the sphere of alternative ideologies

Beginning in the late '40s, the chronic "belatedness" or "backwardness" of modernization (Janos 1982) in the countries of Eastern Europe prompted their communist parties to implement programs of accelerated modernization. The leaderships were certain that they held the key to the situation, that they knew the model society which it was necessary, possible, and worthwhile to achieve, and that they knew how to create this ideal society. And they were also convinced that they needed to control society because the spontaneous social and economic forces were not moving and would not automatically move in the direction they thought correct. This discrepancy of voluntaristic objectives and actual social processes enhanced the importance of ideology by demonstrating the scientific correctness of the program and legitimated the leading role of the party. Moreover, the dominant ideology also had the task of discrediting all other ideologies as erroneous.

In the '50s in Hungary, the monopolistic ideology was waterproof and peremptory. It persecuted other ideologies as remnants of the past or as dangerous deviations from the correct line. But in the '60s and '70s it was relaxed, and the monopoly softened to become a hegemony. Official ideology no longer saw itself as the only possible world view, but only as the dominant one. This positive change was not followed, however, by the development of a public sphere where world views and ideologies could openly interact and compete. Alternative ideologies have been contained within a sphere of semi-legality and semi-legitimacy and viewed by the authorities as barely tolerated alien bodies within the social system.

I would like to add here two more criteria, which differ from the preceding ones in that they do not refer to substantive properties of the first versus the second societies but only characterize the elite's attitudes toward these societies.

8. The Criterion of Visibility versus Invisibility

First society:	The sphere of social reality of which the elite has a more or less clear view; and/or the sphere reflected by the "first public" (<u>erste Öffentlichkeit</u>)
Second society:	The invisible or only partly visible field of social reality; unreflected, or reflected only in a fragmentary and distorted way by the "first public"

The first society is not fully visible to the elite and the mass media, while the second society is partly visible to them. The first is closer to the pole of visibility, and the second closer to the pole of invisibility. The second society is invisible because:

a. The leading elite fails to perceive, sometimes for years or decades at a time, signs of the emergence of a new paradigm, at times perceives it too late to handle it by political means. This socio-political blindness is a characteristic feature of anciens régimes in pre-revolutionary periods.

b. The elite sees new phenomena but because of its ideology has a flawed understanding of them and the motivating forces behind them. Its countermeasures are therefore doomed to fail. This happened in Hungary in the '60s when the party attempted to handle emerging youth sub-cultures as a deviance. Or:

c. The elite perceives and understands the new phenomena but tries to ignore them. It attempts to keep them out of the public sphere, believing that whatever is made public becomes real and gathers social and political weight. Keeping things outside the public sphere is a big ambition of authoritarian political systems. Many issues are declared "untouchable," and the concepts used to describe them are banned. Instead, redundant terminologies are developed on the basis of vague and spurious concepts that obscure the real issues (Graciarena and Francisco 1978 analyze this phenomenon in the South American context). But this does not mean that if something is invisible it necessarily belongs to the second society. State secrets, behind-the-scenes economic bargaining, hidden privileges, and old-boy (or new-boy) networks are not reflected in the officially promoted and controlled public opinion, which I call "the first public sphere" or "erste Öffentlichkeit," but are, of course, integral parts of the first society.

9. The Criterion of Acceptance versus Non-Acceptance

First society:	Legitimate, ideologically and politically accepted sphere
Second society:	Ambiguous legitimacy or illegitimacy

We must begin by qualifying the concept of legitimacy.

First, by a strange reversal of the normal order of things, the political elites in strong statist systems have some success in convincing people that it is they, the people, who must prove their legitimacy instead of questioning the elite's legitimacy. For analytical purposes, let us accept the concept of legitimacy to mean the elite's ideological and political acceptance of people and social processes. Second, let us distinguish the concept of legitimacy from the concept of legality, that is, conformity to the positive law of the country. If we counterpose these two concepts, the second society can be placed in the dimension of legitimacy and illegitimacy rather than of legality and illegality. There may be much that does not offend the law, but which the ideological and political praxis of the political elite is unable to accommodate or is uncertain whether to accept it. This hesitancy and ambiguity are typical of the attitude of those leaders who do not immediately suppress everything that deviates, however slightly, from official ideology and official policies.

The leading elite may have various strategies for handling the emerging second society. For a time, they may ignore signs of change, but sooner or later this will prove dangerous. They may try to co-opt new phenomena into the first society, as has happened in Hungary with the second economy (or at least with its segments), and then neutralize them ideologically and politically. They may try to seal off other phenomena, such as religious sects, and tolerate them as small enclaves within the first society. If this does not work, they may resort to more direct methods, tactics such as "deviation" or "criminalization." In other words, phenomena incompatible with the first paradigm can be branded as deviant or criminal, as symptoms of a disease that must be cured, or as illegal acts that must be punished. Thereby, elements foreign to the system can be identified, dealt with, and fitted as opposite poles into the first society.

Here then are some of the criteria that help to make a distinction between the first and a hypothetical second society in contemporary Hungary. The question now is whether there are indeed two things between which a distinction can be made. Are there social phenomena and processes that can be identified and classified consistently as belonging to this would-be second society? Before we start working with this dual concept of a first versus a second society, however, a caveat is needed: It must be stressed that this dichotomy does not divide society into two groups, they are merely two dimensions of social existence governed by two different sets of organizational principles. Most Hungarians belong to and move about in both dimensions.

AREAS OF THE SECOND SOCIETY

A latent dimension may evolve in practically every area of social life. Alternative, "system-foreign" organizational principles may emerge in economic as well as public life

(Öffentlichkeit), in culture, social consciousness, or social and political interaction. Let us document this emergence with some examples taken from principal areas of social life (For a more detailed survey of these informal spheres, see the longer version of this paper, Hankiss 1986a, and the rich literature, some of which I will quote here).

The Second Economy

The existence of a second economy in Hungary, as in most countries, has been accepted and analyzed by many economists and social scientists (Aslund 1985, Bauer 1982, Gábor 1978, 1983, 1985, 1986, Gábor and Galasi 1981, Galasi and Sziráczki 1985, Grossman 1987, Juhász 1978, 1981, Kemény 1982, 1984, 1987, Kornai 1980, Laky, 1980, 1982, Nove 1977, Pető and Szakacs 1985-87, Rupp 1983, Sable and Stark 1982, Simis 1982, Stark 1986, Szelényi forthcoming, Zsille 1980). It is relatively easy to demonstrate that this second economy fits into the framework of a second society as I defined it above. In the 1950s and early '60s, most manifestations of the second economy were banned, persecuted, and branded as unlawful. Even though later it was increasingly admitted into the legal sphere, its ideological and political acceptance has remained uncertain to this day. Today it is an indispensable part of the economic system, and is therefore reluctantly accepted and to a certain extent even supported by the party and government. Yet at the same time it is still a clear and significant example of the counter-paradigm: it is not planned and organized by the state, it is not vertically articulated, it is not centralized, it is not permeated by party control and ideology, and it is a mixture of subsistence and market economy, and not of a redistributive economy. Consequently, fitting it into the socialist model is an intricate task that has not yet been completed. Its status is ambivalent: because it is legal it belongs to the first society; because of its organizational principles and its lack of ideological legitimation it is relegated to the second society.

The Second Public

In authoritarian regimes, the first public functions according to Benthamian principles: the state strives to be "the invisible all-seer" which remains within the central turret of Bentham's Panoptikon, where it is not seen and whence it tries to see and control every member of the society (Foucault 1975). But it never fully succeeds. Since people respond to the "arcana imperii," to the "legitimate and honest deceptions" and "secrecy" of the government, to the paternalistic "noble lies" of Plato's monarch (Bobbio 1982, 47), to the state power hiding behind empty rhetoric and the "mobilization of bias" (Martin 1977, 166; Simmel 1960; Mueller 1973; Bernstein 1973; Graciarena and Francisco 1978; Jowitt 1983) by becoming secretive themselves, by opposing deception with deception, by protecting themselves from lies by lying, and by warding off empty rhetoric with empty rhetoric. "Invisible power and invisible counter-rule are two sides of the

same coin" (Bobbio 1982, 48).

In contemporary Hungary the contrast is more muted. Since the mid-1960s, both the state and society have become more open. In recent years, substantially more information has been exchanged between the two spheres than ever before. This does not mean that there is no more secrecy in the society. Or that there are no more spontaneous tendencies to generate and regenerate a second system of communication where genuine news circulates, rumors and gossip are exchanged, the infinitesimal information contained in the manipulated news and empty rhetoric is extracted and decoded, government and party policies are discussed and analyzed as they are in a quasi-Habermasian "Öffentlichkeit," and a Hirschmanian "horizontal voice" is generated in opposition to the official "vertical" voice (For similar phenomena in other East European countries and the Soviet Union, see Smith 1976, Connor and Gitelman 1977, Havel 1985, Sampson 1984). Where, symbolically extending the sphere of the second public and trespassing on the grounds of the first, people openly discuss important issues, even sacrosanct taboos, in an allegorical and allusive language whose usage and understanding have become a social game and a refined art (Hankiss 1982, 153-205). The growing body of samizdat has become, in most of Eastern Europe, a genuinely alternative public sphere (Rupnik 1979, Tokes 1979, Skilling and Precan 1981, Schöpflin 1983, Cohen, Stephen 1982, Curry 1983, Alexeeva 1985, Skilling forthcoming).

The Second Culture

The proliferation of subcultures and the unrelenting succession of countercultures and, recently, of alternative cultures have restated the problems of social integration and lack of integration throughout the world. Steering clear of this complex and much debated issue, let us raise only the question of whether opposing culture to countercultures and dominant culture to subcultures or alternative cultures has anything to do with the dichotomy of first society vs. second society. The answer is: not necessarily. In a pluralistic society, subcultures, countercultures, and alternative cultures may become integral parts of that society's culture. But in non-pluralistic societies, and not only under authoritarian regimes, the dominant culture, being unable to integrate these other cultures, refuses to accord them legitimacy and considers them to be alien elements in the body social, vehicles of a dangerous anti-paradigm.

This was, and to some extent still is, the case in Hungary, and in other East European countries. The government and the party have had serious difficulties with the prewar middle-class and peasant cultures. They were stigmatized and after 1945 or 1948 became countercultures on the defensive: the traditional working-class culture went underground and became passive resistance in the early fifties; the successive waves of youth

subcultures and countercultures in the '60s and '70s (the hippies, the flower generation, the pop, the folk and punk music, the jazz movement), religious revivals and strengthening religious identities (András and Morel 1982, Michel 1987, Tomka 1983, 1986, Wildmann 1983), and the nationalistic and populist versus "cosmopolitan" or "urbanite" subcultures (Skilling forthcoming, see also Starr 1983, Ramet 1985). These subcultures are part of the second society, since they are not centralized, not hierarchically structured, not operated or organized by the state or the party, immune to the influence of official ideology, either altogether lack or have a questionable legitimacy, and their visibility is limited. They seem to satisfy most of the criteria of the second paradigm as defined above.

The Second Social Consciousness

A growing body of research supports the view that dominant ideologies, even the strongest among them, have only a limited influence. There are scholars, for instance, who believe that the hectic changes in the history of social and ideological trends, movements, and socio-political events pass over the sphere of everyday life which is hardly touched and at best only very slowly changed by them. Braudel has devoted three important volumes to the study of the slowly changing foundations of European (French) history ("histoire matérielle," "une histoire quasi immobile") underlying the rough-and-tumble surface of social and political history ("histoire sociale," "histoire événementielle") (Braudel 1980). Like many others, Abercrombie and his co-authors have found evidence pointing to the way that even medieval Christianity, one of the strongest and presumably most successful ideologies of all times, served mainly as an instrument for integrating and controlling the ruling elites and was much less successful than is usually supposed at penetrating and permeating the consciousness of the large masses of illiterate feudal peasantry. The population, which lived in communities separated from one another and from the centers of power and dominant culture by geographic, linguistic, legal, and cultural barriers nursed pagan or pre-modern traditions until the nineteenth century (Abercrombie et al. 1980). The same has been argued in connection with nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century bourgeois or middle class ideologies which did fulfill their "social integrative functions" but failed to socialize thoroughly the working classes in their norms and values. (Habermas 1973, 38ff, Martin 1977, 166-67). And again, the same has been said about views of history. In the minds of peoples who have lost or are fighting for their independence there frequently exists a counter-history which runs parallel to the histories of the victors, the Church, the nation, the party, and the state (Ferro 1981).

In the case of Hungary, the so-called double or split consciousness was a common phenomenon in the 1950s and early 1960s. These concepts refer to people who had two minds or two

souls: one for the daylight and their official lives in it and the other which was activated when they moved about in the second society or in their families. There were those among them who cynically switched their respective consciousnesses on and off as they moved to and fro between these spheres. Others suffered from this split personality which had been forced on them, while others still sank into apathy and depression and neither wanted nor were able to face the world and themselves.

This was a kind of "negative" second consciousness, that of a person for whom the official social consciousness has ceased to have any meaning, but who could not confront it with his or her own consciousness. As for a hypothetical "positive" second consciousness, reliable information on it is rather scarce. Apart from some opinion polls and social surveys (Kulcsár and Lázár 1973, Kolosi et al. 1980, Lázár 1983, Hankiss, Manchin, Füstös, and Szokolczai 1986), what we know about it is based mainly on personal experience, everyday evidence, analyses of documents, and conjectures circulating in the informal networks of the second public. Yet even in the absence of reliable large-scale empirical research, there have been some important attempts at locating the major sets of beliefs, systems of values, and world views that have survived or are being generated, in the latent or semi-latent dimensions of social consciousness (Bozóki 1987, Körösnéyi 1987, Krémer 1986, Lengyel 1985, Manchin 1987, Medyesy 1981, Monori 1985, Sükösd 1987). There are scholars who speak of the survival of the "bourgeois citizen," "Roman Catholic and humanist," and "populist" traditions (Huszár n. d.). Hegedüs identified four basic trends: "religious," "populist," "revisionist-reformist," and "Western European type socialist" (1983, 69). In an earlier book, I distinguished the following latent and semi-latent world views in Hungary:

- Religious world views
- European lay humanism
- Conservative middle-class world view
- Conservative left-wing, dogmatic world view
- Reformist, revisionist, Eurocommunist world view
- European-style liberalism
- Social democratic world view
- Evolutionist-technocratic world view
- Populistic-nationalistic world view (Hankiss 1977, 339-73, see also sub-section on political articulation below).

In the absence of large-scale polls one can only guess the range of influence of these sets of ideas. But it is beyond doubt that they play an important part in contemporary Hungary. Their real importance would only show itself if they could emerge from their latency and, interacting with one another and with the official ideology of the first society, formulate themselves clearly.

The Second Sphere of Socio-Political Interaction

The sphere of latent social and political interaction is so broad, its networks and mechanisms so complex, that it is impossible even to survey it here, however briefly. I would like to refer readers to the rich literature exploring the "parallel society," "parallel polis," "parallel polity," or "second polity"; the emergence of civil society; "independent society" and "independent polity"; "alternative systems" or "contra-systems" within East European societies; "pre-political" or "anti-political activities," anti-political politics," or "antipolitics"; "informal, non-bureaucratic, dynamic and open communities"; tendencies toward "independent social self-organization," citizens' initiatives, independent publishing, flying universities, discussion groups, clubs, collective protests, conscientious objectors, dissident movements and opposition; "independent spiritual, social and political life of society" (Skilling forthcoming, Chapters 7, 8, and 9, Agh 1986, Arato 1981, 1981-82, Arato and Cohen 1986, Benda 1979, Bihari 1985, Bogár 1983, Brown 1984a and b, Brown and Gray 1979, Bruszt 1986, Cohen, Jean L. 1983, Curry 1983, Gitelman 1984, Gombár 1983, Hankiss 1986a, Havel et al. 1985, Hegedüs 1977, Héthy and Makó 1978, Janos 1970, 1976, 1979, 1982, Janos et al. 1979, Keane 1988, Kemeny 1987, Konrád 1984, Körösiényi 1987, Liehm 1983, Michnik 1985, Molnár 1982, 1985, Morton and Tokes eds. 1974, Pelczynski 1984, Pokol 1980, Sable and Stark 1982; Sharlet 1983, 1984, Skilling 1976, 1981, Staniszkis 1984, forthcoming, Tokes 1979, Triska 1977, Vági 1982, Völgyes 1986, Wedel 1986, Zsille 1981).

The re-emergence of micro-networks. Following the communist takeover in 1948, in order to facilitate the complete centralization and "statization" of the country, Hungarian society was systematically disintegrated and atomized. Traditional social networks, local, professional, cultural, religious, and to some extent even family networks were destroyed by sword and fire. But in spite of this inquisitional fervor, fragments of some of these networks survived in a state of semi-latency and semi-legitimacy and, in the mid-1960s, the slow regeneration of the "life world" of social networks began and persevered despite the renewed efforts of the party, mainly of local oligarchies, to thwart it.

In the past few years, this process of regeneration has been accelerating, and social scientists have increasingly turned to it. One of the most ambitious surveys of this field has outlined the following classification of the main types of youth associations and movements:

Cultural

- a) Literary and artistic groups
- b) Movements for alternative ways of life

Religious

- a) Groups within the established churches
- b) Groups within religious sects

Political

- a) Single-issue movements
- b) Peace and environmental movements
- c) Political and social-sciences clubs
- d) University and college clubs
- e) Populist movements: A/ Conservative, nationalistic
B/ Democratic
- f) Urbanite/Europeanizing movements: A/Liberal-socialist B/ Liberal democratic

(Sükösd 1987, see also Jobb and Kiss 1984, Szabó 1986, Bozóki 1987). In spite of bureaucratic resistance, these movements have been increasingly active.

The regeneration of local communities. This is a very slow process which has been gathering momentum in recent years. A 1985 law on local public administration established the legal framework within which local self-government can evolve. Unfortunately, the economic crisis has deprived the local communities of the means which would enable them to take advantage of these new possibilities (Bánlaky and Varga 1979, Enyedi 1980, Vági 1982, Böhm and Pal 1983).

Improving chances of interest mediation. A fast growing literature has proved in recent years that since the late 1960s people's chances of realizing their interests have improved slightly (See for instance Héthy and Makó 1972, 1978, Szalai 1980, Simó 1982, Sandor 1982, Tölgyessy 1984, Voszka 1984, Tellér 1984, Fekete 1987, Bruszt 1987). The party-state has somewhat relaxed its dictatorial control, exchanging its revolutionary-chiliastic ideology (Janos 1979, 10-13) for a more pragmatic type of governance, realizing that it could not govern the country without some cooperation and consensus from society. The people's room for maneuver has slowly widened. The channels or institutions of interest-mediation have become slightly more active and efficient. (Table II on page 17 lists some of these channels.)

None of these networks constitutionally guarantee the realization of interests, however. Most of them switch interests coming "from below" into the vertical system of institutions of the first society and consequently strengthen the hierarchical power structures of the regime. But legal protection has improved slightly and the public sphere has strengthened its position as a kind of "social consciousness" and as an instrument of social control. Community networks and helping systems, working in the border zone between the formal and the informal spheres, the first and second societies, have also become more active in these years. But most important from the point of view of my argument is the great number of interest-mediating networks

TABLE II
CHANNELS OF INTEREST REALIZATION

Channel	Title by which you can claim help	Currency in which you are supposed to pay for the help
state bureaucracy	rights as citizen	deferential behavior
party bureaucracy	party membership, rights as citizen	political loyalty deferential behavior
clientelistic/ paternalistic networks		loyalty, conformity, return services
corporatist networks	membership	loyalty to corporate oligarchy
legal networks	rights as citizen	
nepotism reciprocity	family ties	return services,
old-boy and "new-boy" networks	membership	return services, reciprocity
networks of corruption and bribery		money, connections, influence
the public sphere (mass media)	being a "harmless" victim of local bureaucracy. This harmlessness means that your case does not question the system's overall legitimacy and does not threaten higher party or oligarchic interests.	
community networks, networks of mutual help	participation	mutual help
"bargaining" mechanisms	membership in bargaining group	solidarity

operating in Hungary. Their parallel functioning, their interaction and interference, create a chaotic situation, a state of opacity and confusion, a society in which an important part of social interaction has become submerged in the sphere of latency and informality, escaping the control of the ruling elite. This, from the point of view of society, is a better situation than transparent and well-organized despotism. But on the other hand, it is a far cry from a transparent and well-functioning democracy. We shall come back to the question of how far this latent sphere can be considered part of the "second society."

The resocialization of state and party institutions from below. In the 1950s, all institutions were regarded as "transmission belts" for the intentions of the central power. In the '60s and '70s, institutions were cautiously encouraged also to fulfill some functions of interest mediation. In practice this meant that they began to fight, more openly and consistently than before, for their functional interests -- the ministry of agriculture, for instance, for agricultural interests such as increased investment funds, better prices -- or for their inner bureaucratic and oligarchic interests. But on the other hand, in order to meet their plans they needed to gain the cooperation of their subjects and partners. With this in view, they allowed their bureaucratic relationships to be transformed into a clientelistic network and, as patrons to their clients, they began to represent, if only arbitrarily and modestly, direct social (mainly local) interests. This, of course, is an inefficient and hybrid way of mediating social interests. But it is an important phenomenon because in it, social and political influence gathers from below instead of expanding downward from above. In other words, this process contradicts one of the major criteria of the dominant paradigm. And it opens up informal channels of interest mediation and increases, albeit within narrow limits, the potential for conflict of some economic and social actors (Bruszt 1986, see also Rigby 1964, Friedgut 1979, Whyte, Gardner, and Schöpflin 1982 chapters 2, 5, and 6, Potichnyj and Zacek 1983, Brown 1984a).

Political articulation. In the late 1940s and early '50s, the new ruling elite systematically destroyed the political articulation of society. It liquidated the multiparty system and the whole network of interest groups and associations, enforced its ideological and political dominance, and banned and severely punished even the slightest attempts at developing alternative political views and programs. The elite has been anxious ever since to keep society in this politically diffuse and passive state. Yet despite these efforts, the latent political re-articulation of society began already in the 1960s. Gombár, one of Hungary's outstanding political scientists, discerned already in the early 1970s a whole gamut of latent political attitudes and convictions:

- Sectarian communists; the old guard
- Centrists, or Kádárist
- Progressives within the party who believe that a dynamic economic reform program and a new type of East European integration can and will resolve the country's problems
- "Italian-type" communists, or Eurocommunists
- Modern syndicalists
- Radical new left
- Populists with an agrarian orientation
- Managers with a latent technocratic ideology (Gombár 1983, written in 1973).

Recently, several attempts have been made to describe the emerging political articulation of the Hungarian society. Kőrösnéyi mapped the following groups and directions before the reform process accelerated in late 1987, possibly triggering off some restructuring of the political landscape.

On the level of the political elite:

- The Kádárist center
- The "law and order" faction within the party
- The trade union leadership with an anti-reform program
- The economic leadership with a pragmatic approach to politics
- The agrarian lobby
- The democratic reform faction on the periphery of the ruling elite

On the level of the intelligentsia:

- The nationalist-populist camp
- The democratic-urbanite group
- The reform economists with a market orientation
- The social-policy lobby with a program of socially controlled and balanced reforms
- Humanities-oriented intellectuals with an anti-reform penchant
- Orthodox Marxists, etatists
- Neo-Marxists under the influence of Trotsky, Bukharin, Luxemburg, Bloch, the Frankfurt School
- Technocrats, the heavy industry lobby
- The greens

On the level of society:

- The loyalists who believe in the good king, profit from the second economy
- The agrarians who view Scandinavian cooperatives as models
- The reform party, the new middle class, the new entrepreneurial class
- The conservatives and the anti-reform party who believe in egalitarianism, are oriented toward security.

People who live from their positions and use their privileges, people who have no access to the second economy (Kőrösenyi 1987, see also Bozoki 1987 and Sükösd 1987).

Two sources of indirect evidence. To conclude this section, let me introduce two pieces of indirect evidence supporting the hypothesis that there may be a latent dimension of social existence in Hungary, a kind of "second society," which is governed by organizational principles different from those of the manifest "first" society. First, there is the rich variety and contradictory character of definitions proposed in connection with the basic nature of East European societies. No other social formation has been described in many different ways, and the heterogeneity of views on this issue is exceptional. The same socio-political system, or a small group of closely related systems, has been labelled and analyzed as "totalitarian" (H. Arendt, C. J. Friedrich), "praetorian" (A. C. Janos), "oligarchic" (D. P. Hammer), or "autocratic" (S. White). It has been studied as "Leninist monism" (P. C. Schmitter), "mono-organizational society" (T. H. Rigby), or "mono-archy" (W. Brus); "bureaucratic" or "legal-rational authoritarianism" (A. C. Janos), "participatory bureaucracy" (R. V. Daniels), or bureaucratic "state capitalism" (A. G. Meyer, M. Djilas); a socio-political system with "corporatist" (Schmitter and Lehmbruch), "neo-corporatist" (Bruszt 1984), "enlightened absolutist," "neo-feudal," or "paternalistic" (Hankiss 1982; Fehér, Heller, Markus 1983) traits; and as a kind of "incipient pluralism" (H. G. Skilling), "bureaucratic pluralism" (Hammer and Taubmann), "institutional" or "institutionalized pluralism" (J. F. Hough), "centralized pluralism" (A. Nove), "one-party pluralism" (G. Sartori). (For a survey of this literature see Brown 1984a, Harding 1984, Janos et al. 1979.) How to account for this diversity of views? One could argue that they differ because they refer to similar but not identical societies, because they refer to societies going through a process of change, or because they were developed on the basis of insufficient evidence. These are relevant answers, but they still leave some important questions unanswered. To mention only one of them: how to explain the proliferation of contradictory and self-contradictory definitions in this field? How can a society be interpreted as both totalitarian and pluralistic? Oligarchic and corporatist? Bureaucratic and participatory? Monistic, centralized, and pluralistic? Are these real or quasi-contradictions not due to the fact that these definitions must suffice to describe societies which are characterized by a deep duality, are organized and governed not by a single but by two basic sets of organizational principles or paradigms? Is the presence of so many contradictory, or at least different, phenomena in these societies -- leading to contradictory definitions -- not as a result of the interference of two contradictory, or at least incompatible, paradigms? In other

words, I believe that the contradictory and self-contradictory character of definitions relating to the East European societies, or at least to contemporary Hungary, is indirect evidence of a second paradigm at work in them.

A second relatively easy way to prove, or at least to establish the probability of, the existence of a latent second paradigm is to compare the discrepancies between policy inputs and policy outputs. I have analyzed these discrepancies, the constant deviation and abortion of policy intentions, in another paper (Hankiss 1986b). I found that contemporary Hungarian society, or at least major spheres of it, behaves like a black box: it responds in ways and produces outcomes that are not anticipated by policy makers. This happens so dramatically and systematically that it seems justified to assume the existence and operation of another, latent paradigm, one that differs from and interferes with the other paradigm operating in the manifest sphere of society, which policy makers use to design their strategies.

But of course neither of these pieces of indirect evidence proves that a second paradigm exists and operates in contemporary Hungarian society or, if this paradigm does exist, that it is the same one that I have attempted to describe with the set of dichotomized criteria. In any case, it is time to take stock to see if I have succeeded in delineating a second dimension of social existence, a "second society" with the help of these criteria. The answer is: not necessarily.

THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS: THE FIRST-VS.-SECOND SOCIETY DICHOTOMY RECONSIDERED

Using the set of criteria defined at the beginning of this paper, I have outlined some of the spheres of social existence in which, I assumed, a second configuration of organizational principles, a second paradigm, was at work: a second economy, a second public, a second culture, a second social consciousness, and a second sphere of socio-political interaction. On closer examination, however, the phenomena and processes located in these would-be second spheres do not satisfy the criteria in a systematic and consistent way. (Table III on page 22 sums up the relevance of the criteria in the various spheres.)

The picture is further complicated by what I would call the "negativity" of these criteria, in other words, the fact that the majority of the second spheres are characterized more by the absence of the dominant features of the first, official, society (as defined by the first poles of the dichotomized criteria) than by the positive functioning of the opposite principles (the other poles of the criteria). For instance, these spheres are less dependent on vertical structures but have hardly been able to develop their own, horizontal networks; they are not penetrated by official ideology but have been unable to develop their own

TABLE III

RELEVANCE OF CRITERIA IN THE "SECOND SPHERES" OF THE SOCIAL REALM

(Relevance: +; Irrelevance: -

Slight relevance: /+ /)

				Differentiation cum integration	/+ /	-	/+ /	/+ /
				Horizontal organization	/+ /	/+ /	/+ /	/+ /
				Upward flow of power	/+ /	-	/+ /	/+ /
				Non-state ownership	+	+	+	+
				Decentralization: relative autonomies	+	/+ /	+	/+ /
				Priority of socio-economic factors over political ones	+	+	+	+
				Sphere not saturated with official ideology	+	+	+	+
				Invisibility	/+ /	/+ /	/+ /	/+ /
				Lack of legitimacy	/+ /	+	/+ /	/+ /
Second economy					/+ /			
Second culture					/+ /			
Second public					-			
Second sphere of social interactions					/+ /			

alternative ideology. The second economy is not nationalized, centralized, politicized, or hierarchical, but it is still not an autonomous alternative economy, only a complementary economy. The two economies encroach on each other in an inextricable and mutually parasitic way. The same is true of the second public sphere, which is merely the distorted counterpart of the secretive official first public whose secrecy does not even pave the way for a different kind of public communication characterized by openness and transparency on both sides. The latent vegetation of alternative world views in the second social consciousness has little in common with the open articulation of well developed, autonomous world views. The resocialization of the lower echelons of state agencies and state-sponsored mass organizations may be important processes within the second society, but they have not even begun to transform those agencies and organizations into truly representative institutions. Instead of differentiation and integration, diffuseness prevails here, too, almost as much as in the first society.

All this means that my set of criteria outlines a hypothetical alternative society opposed to the now dominant first society and that the "second society" lies somewhere between the two as an intermediate sphere:

first society second society an alternative society

Whereas the first society is characterized by vertical organization, downward flow of power, state ownership, centralization, political dominance, saturation with the official ideology, diffuseness, visibility, and legitimacy, the second society is characterized mainly by the absence of these features and sporadically by the timid emergence of some opposite characteristics. And the hypothetical alternative society would be characterized by the fully developed opposite characteristics: horizontal organization, upward flow of power, predominance of non-state ownership, autonomy of social and economic actors, and differentiation cum integration.

Furthermore, there are transactions and processes that satisfy some of the criteria defining the first society but not others. Transactions and processes such as corruption, the functioning of nepotistic and oligarchic networks, or behind-the-scenes bargaining between party-state agencies and dependent economic and social actors satisfy the criteria of verticality, downward flow of power, statization, and centralization but not those of visibility, legitimacy, and saturation with ideology. But in spite of their invisibility, lack of legitimacy, and immunity to ideology, it would be unwise to consider them to belong to the second society. Not only because the other criteria of the first society apply to them, but also because they play an important, if not indispensable, role in the

strengthening of the first society and its existing power structures. They can best be handled as operating in a separate sphere within the first society, a sphere bordering on, and partly intertwined with, the second society. But if I do this, the definition of the first society given at the beginning of this paper must be reformulated. There I considered as belonging to the first society "all that has been actually realized of its ideologically sanctioned model," and outlined the sphere thus defined with a set of criteria. I now relax the rigor of this definition and regard as belonging to the first society, though to a separate sphere within it, also those transactions and processes, that satisfy only some of these criteria.

PROSPECTS AND ALTERNATIVES

There are several hypotheses about the role and prospects of the social sphere which I proposed to call "second society." In conclusion, let us briefly survey three of them.

Relative Failure

The second society has failed to develop into an autonomous sphere of social existence, an alternative society governed by organizational principles different from those of the first society. It is a no-man's-land, in which the governing principles and the rules of the game of the first society do not work but where principles and rules of a different type of social existence have only barely emerged. They have not yet clustered into a consistent new configuration.

It is not difficult to identify the causes of this relative failure. One needs only to translate well-known processes into the terminology of this paper. The ruling elite, realizing as early as the 1950s that its social model (the "first society") was struggling with critical dysfunctions, tacitly allowed a latent dimension of socio-economic interactions to develop within its own power framework. This complementary sphere of the first society, with its specific, but -- as it turned out -- system-compatible organizational principles and networks (nepotism, oligarchy, administrative market) strengthened the existing power structure, helped the system work, and channeled further resources toward the elite. But because of the ambiguity of its ideological and moral status this sphere had to be hidden or at least semi-secret.

At the same time, the elite systematically hindered the emergence of "system-alien" factors and organizational principles and, even more, their combination into a consistent configuration, a second paradigm. In the past two or three decades the elite has not been in an easy position, needing the human and material resources generated in the second sphere and the people's goodwill and readiness to reach a consensus. Therefore, the elite could not block with bureaucratic measures even the slightest spontaneous social and economic processes. To

control them, it had to develop a wide range of articulate strategies, some of which I describe in another paper (1986b). These strategies have been quite successful. This is not to say that the second dimension of social existence has no significance in present-day Hungary:

a) The second society has already become an indispensable safety valve, a socio-economic domain which compensates for the dysfunctions of the first society. It helps to balance the country's economic account; it brings some flexibility to the rigid economic and social structures; and it closes gaps and eliminates shortages that are being produced and reproduced by the first economy and first society. It provides those services and non-material goods -- such as meaningful life goals, freedom of choice, control over one's life strategies, independence, dignity -- that are not being provided and are actually destroyed by the first economy and first society.

b) The second society, and within it the second economy, develops or may develop, some human skills and qualities indispensable to the process of social regeneration: the spirit of enterprise and know-how, the sense of responsibility, good organization, cooperation and compromise, protection of one's interests, partnership instead of a cliental relationship, and the behavior of citizens instead of subjects.

c) The second society is or may become a testing ground for new forms of social interaction, processes, and organizational principles before they are introduced into the first society. The relatively peaceful development of the network of spontaneous social groups who fight for the conservation of traditional cityscapes and monuments, which, after some years of strong opposition on the part of local bureaucracies, was more or less accepted and legitimated by the central bureaucracy is one example. The rude stamping out of the more militant ecologist groups that followed a period of flirtation is the example of a, so far, unsuccessful test.

Stalemate and Hybridization

The first and second societies are closely interrelated and intertwined, and one could not exist without the other. But at the same time they impede each other's development. For instance, the first economy, with its hierarchical structures, redistributive mechanisms, and monopolies, obstructs the development of the second economy into a free and efficient market economy. The existence and success of the second economy, on the other hand, have allowed the country's elite to postpone indefinitely the long-overdue transformation and restructuring of the first economy. The second economy siphons off vital resources, which the first economy would otherwise inevitably waste, but is prevented by the first society from using these resources efficiently. The confused symbiosis of the first and

second societies has produced vicious hybrids, low-efficiency mixes, and "quasi" phenomena, in all spheres of society: "quasi-pluralism," "centralized pluralism," "quasi-corporatism," a "quasi-market," and the "administrative market." These are wasteful and dysfunctioning social and economic mechanisms.

In this situation of stalemate, the interests of all social groups, including the elite, are hurt. But because many people in both the elite and the rest of society (mainly those who have a stake in the present forms of the second economy) profit from it, they obstruct the process of disentanglement.

"New Evolutionism" or the "Social Contract" Scenario

The emergence of an alternative society is a slow process. Despite serious setbacks, important changes have occurred not only in Poland and Hungary but also in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. In this process people regenerate their moral integrity, spiritual freedom, dignity and autonomy; they recreate communities and social networks, fight for their rights in every sphere of life by non-violent means, build up, step by step, their informal interest associations, work on the consolidation and further development of neo-corporatist and proto-pluralistic mechanisms and institutions that have emerged in the last decade or two, and are prepared to conclude a "social contract" with the ruling elite in which the two sides would establish the basic rules of cooperation in the form of a new constitution binding for both the population and the ruling elite, reducing the prerogative of the latter to an ultimate right of veto in cases where the "cause of socialism" would be at stake. According to the proponents of this scenario (Michnik, Kuroń, Havel, Benda, Konrád, Kis, most of the Solidarity and post-Solidarity groups, Charter 77), the success of this process, the emergence of alternative, independent, autonomous societies within the official, first societies with the potential of ultimately transforming and democratizing these first societies, is the only hope for Eastern Europe.

I believe that each of these three assessments, or scenarios, deserves serious consideration. The first two resemble diagnoses, while the third is more of a program. The first is right in stating that the second society has not (yet) developed the organizational principles, structures, and institutions of a truly autonomous alternative society; at the same time, it may be too pessimistic about the prospects for such a development.

The second scenario is in all probability correct in its assessment that the enmeshment of the first and second societies and the hybridization of many spheres and elements of society as a whole may obstruct the development of East European systems toward democracy and greater efficiency.

And the third scenario is right to state that the emergence of a civil society has gathered momentum in recent years, mainly in Poland and Hungary but also in most of the other East European countries. This process is the only hope for Eastern Europe. The authors of this scenario know as well as we do, of course, that there are other important processes under way in Eastern Europe such as "embourgeoisement," the emergence and strengthening of ethnic and national identities, the restratification of societies, or the slow transformation of the elites, which may, and probably will, play an important role in shaping the future course of these societies, even if this role is not as unequivocally positive as that of an emerging "second society."

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Comments by

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From "Second Society" to "Civil Society: Evidence,
Inference, and Conceptualization

INTRODUCTION

It is a challenging task to comment on Elemér Hankiss' bold, original, and conceptually rich guided tour into the hitherto hidden "second" dimension of Hungary's and Eastern Europe's social dynamics of the last fifteen-twenty years. The issue at hand is the exploration and identification of the inner working and the unintended social, political, and ideological consequences of a massive effort by the Soviet Union and the ruling communist parties of Eastern Europe to destroy and then reshape the pre-communist social order to fit the mold of a Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist scenario for building socialism in this part of Europe.

Hankiss focuses on Hungary, but many components of his conceptual apparatus may be applied more broadly to study people-regime interaction elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Poland and Czechoslovakia are the first to come to mind, though the possible usefulness of Dr. Hankiss' explanatory devices for Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria are not to be excluded either. (The German Democratic Republic is something of a puzzle in this regard and I, for one, do not consider the East German society particularly relevant to a better understanding of the social dynamics of the rest of Eastern Europe.) In any event, a case for the area-wide usefulness of the dichotomies between the "first" and "second" societies of post-totalitarian Eastern Europe can be further buttressed by calling attention to the empirical verifiability of most of Hankiss' propositions from widely available statistical, economic, and -- in Hungary's and Poland's cases -- ample survey data.

In the past two decades most of the East European societies have become more open to field research by Western social scientists. Hankiss makes excellent use of their findings and partial analyses, but the credit for integrating such fragmentary data and analytical insights into a complex synthesis of social action is his. With this credit, however, also comes the burden -- or at least the exception of fellow social scientists laboring in the "comparative" vineyards of East European studies -- of sorting out the indigenous, and possibly uniquely Hungarian, data

and interpretation from those which may have area-wide salience. On second thought, this may be an unreasonable expectation which would call for prodigious language skills and access to East European archives to make convincing across-the-board comparisons among several distinctly different societies. In any event, Hankiss' primary concern is Hungary, and he makes no claims for the general applicability of the Hungarian case. This may disappoint those who hope to extract analytical leverage from the "Hungarian model" to predict the future course and societal consequences of economic reforms elsewhere in the communist bloc. As I will try to show below, in the "macro sense" the Hungarian example is just that rather than a blueprint for restructuring the bankrupt social and political institutions of Eastern Europe in the 1980s.

TWO SOCIETIES: A TWO-PLAYER OR A ZERO-SUM GAME?

Hankiss' point of departure is that of the 150-year-long history of attempts by various generations of Hungarian reformist intellectuals to overcome the burden of their country's social, economic, and political backwardness to rejoin the community of European nations of which Hungary had once been an integral part. The record, as shown by Hankiss, speaks for itself but only hints at the full dimensions of the Hungarian intellectuals' reform agenda. The case in point -- to use the Polish analogy -- has been the reformers' divided loyalty between "organic work," patiently laboring for incremental changes from within, and bold revolutionary action (often with the expectation of help from abroad) as ways of affecting desired changes such as economic modernization, political liberties, and societal autonomy.

The most recent of these emancipatory undertakings, which Hankiss calls "the alternative-society experiment," was born within the bowels of an anti-European radical "counter-reform experiment" in the early 1950s. By labeling the coercive imposition of the Stalinist system-building model on Hungary and the rest of Eastern Europe as "anti-European," I place emphasis on the "ruralizing" and "leveling" thrust of the Stalinist strategy of social integration, as well as on the instinctive societal defense mechanism that this brutal process evoked in Eastern Europe. The torturous path of the "socially atomized" denizens of the Stalinist East European "village" to a quasi-autonomous existence as citizens in pseudo-European "towns" thirty years later has been marked by uprisings, confrontations, false starts, and tentative outcomes. Throughout, the people were caught between the "pull" of an increasingly prosperous and politically free Western Europe and the eastward "push," in the form of bitter rear guard action of frightened communist party elites, to reshape Eastern Europe into an unspecified "existing" or, if they must, Soviet-style socialism.

When placed in this context, it can be argued that the Hungarians had been "luckier" than their East European neighbors.

The case in point are the dimensions and the "chronological fit" of the Hungarian October. The Revolution was many things for many people, but the shared experience was that of national rebirth, psychological emancipation, and the rediscovery of the nation's European identity. Compared to these, the communist party's total loss of authority, the collapse of the planned economy, and the demonstrated irrelevance of the Soviet model for Hungary were secondary issues, necessary but not sufficient preconditions for a new post-totalitarian modus vivendi between the rulers and the ruled in Hungary. As I see it, the identification of the political-psychological context helps cross the t's and dot the i's of Dr. Hankiss' reconstruction of the origins of the "alternative" or "second" society in Hungary. In other words, without the collective trauma of the Revolution, there still would be some kind of a second society in Hungary thirty years later, but surely not the one which Dr. Hankiss so brilliantly dissects and analyzes in his paper.

What is the "second society"? The analogy drawn between the "second economy" (a cluster of economic, quasi-market transactions among citizens which the authorities tolerate to make up for the inefficiencies of the "first" economy) and the second society (a sphere of privacy and personal autonomy in which citizens interact without reference to the regime's official ideologies and political preferences) is highly suggestive. It is also incomplete insofar as it fails to address the causality between the two spheres and, in doing so, goes only part of the way in sorting out the possible range of permutations between the economic and civic-political roles that citizens may play in the 1980s. As modern liberal democratic political theories have it, collective personal autonomy was born when the individual's right to private property acquired unconditional legal protection and became the material guarantee for the substantive exercise of the rights vested in all citizens. With this also came the citizens' right to self-defense against the encroachment of the powers that be in charge of the "first society" -- to which the thus protected citizens also belonged, as members of lobbies, interest groups, and political parties.

At issue here is the relationship of the citizens of existing socialist states to -- to use the Marxist parlance -- the "means of production." Lenin's hostility toward private enterprise and his unerring instinct for the eradication of private property, particularly in the countryside, demonstrated his keen understanding of the political potentials of nexus between autonomous economic activity and political autonomy and the kind of threat it posed to the power of the one-party communist state over its citizens. For this reason, the birth and subsequent quasi-institutionalization of the second economy in a post-totalitarian socialist state is not merely an analogue, but an indispensable precondition for the creation, entrenchment, and growth of an "alternative," or "second," social existence.

The transformation of wage-earning employees to consumers -- and in Hungary's case in the late 1980s income-tax payers -- has also been a process of psychological emancipation from the status of expropriated political subjects to that of semi-autonomous economic actors with a political will of their own.

Hungary's path has been unique in communist Eastern Europe. Attempts at economic reform have been made almost everywhere--most entailing the rebirth of the private, or "second," economy -- but only in Hungary has there been a sustained political commitment to change and adaptation through economic reforms since 1968. Thus far only in Hungary has the wage-earner consumer-tax payer scenario been played out by the human subjects of that regime's rescue plan for political survival through consumerism, marketization, and economic decentralization. This is not to suggest that the kinds of personal, political, economic, and religious autonomy enjoyed by substantial segments of the Polish society today are qualitatively different from the Spielraum available to an average Hungarian. After all, the legacy of Poland's road from the Gdańsk agreement to the declaration of martial law has helped to "de-authorize" the regime and psychologically liberate the Polish people. The Hungarian revolution of 1956 achieved the very same result, albeit twenty-five years earlier. The point is that the Kádár regime's thirty-year record, though far from crisis-free, does provide virtual "laboratory conditions" for studying the origins and evolution of the interaction between regime and society over time -- perhaps more than anywhere else in Eastern Europe.

When discussing the difference between the first and second societies Hankiss very sensibly leaves the boundaries of each unspecified and allows for a considerable overlap between the two. The question is whether his nine dichotomous criteria do, in fact, distinguish between the operative characteristics of the two societies. As one goes down the list, the contrasting properties of each sphere seem to make sense as reasonable, though necessarily abstract, characterizations of two aspects of the same phenomenon.

It is quite true that the "first" is homogeneous and the second "differentiated," and that the first is "vertical" and the second "horizontal," and so on. The problem, and Hankiss is the first to admit it, is that these labels only make sense if one of the two variables, that is the "first" sphere, is seen as the constant and the second as the variable factor which changes over time. But the fact is that both change, in terms of mutual accommodation and in the sense of refining each sphere's boundary-protective mechanism from the other. What is clearly at work here are two complementary adaption strategies of the regime and of the people as both seek to protect, recapture, and expand their spheres of autonomy.

Hankiss is undoubtedly right to suggest that in recent years the "second" realm has gained considerable ground at the expense of the "first." I would submit, however, that the interaction of the two spheres is a two-player, rather than a zero-sum game, and small freedoms "won" by the second society need not be seen as "losses" incurred by the regime. This line of reasoning seeks to transcend the "either-or" dialectical kind of underpinnings of Hankiss' scheme and to call attention to the enormous importance of the "common ground" jointly occupied by the regime and the people. My point is that in the post-totalitarian period the political regime is not homogeneous; that the ruling elite is increasingly fragmented according to age, educational background, and place in the occupational hierarchy; that the enthralled bargaining process often results in horizontal integration and lateral flows of influence; that the primacy of politics frequently devolves into a series of pragmatic and anti-ideological administrative fire-fighting measures; that the "first public" is becoming fog-bound and even internally impenetrable as the elites shift their allegiances and redefine their roles in the policy process; and that the matter of systemic legitimacy can, as it has in Poland and Hungary, become bereft of any foundation but that of the incumbents' de facto control of the coercive resources of the state.

By turning the argument around, one can see ample evidence of the penetration of the "first" society's ruling style, language, authoritarian values, and illiberal proclivities into the "second." In other words, involvement in the second economy, though it places people in a "horizontal" and "non-structured" milieu where market principles and the profit motive dominate, tells us little about such economic actors' political beliefs, or about their capacity to stand up for their tenuous autonomy--let alone the political actions they might contemplate in defense of their interests.

According to surveys conducted in the early 1980s, small Hungarian entrepreneurs, though arguably the prime beneficiaries of economic reforms, were vehemently opposed to the idea of "reforms" of any kind. There is, of course, nothing unusual about the fear of the unknown, except the fact that according to sound evidence from surveys, over eighty percent of the Hungarian population tend to associate "reforms" with price rises, inflation, and, most recently, unemployment rather than with a long-term opportunity for economic and possibly political self-determination for all members of the community.

The 1985 "compulsory two-candidate" elections provided yet another indication of how people act in politically "semi-autonomous" conditions. Of the 352 districts where the voters could make a "choice" between two regime-approved candidates for the National Assembly the winners were as follows: in "man-to-man" contests, the older and more prestigious, and members of the

party; in "man-versus-woman" contests, with one exception, the male candidates. What kind of a choice did these "deferential voters" make? Was "political infantilism" or change-resistant "conservatism" the principal motivation?

"Devil's-advocate" arguments of this kind can do no more than point to anomalous instances of personal autonomy in action and prove nothing about the political values of the second society. Still, the question remains: is the second society a "good thing," or is it merely a short-hand label for the results of the citizens' massive escape (economic, cultural, and political) from the barren stockades of the first society into the greener and privatized pastures of illusory personal autonomy? The answer to this question may lie in a closer examination of Hankiss' "five areas" of the second society.

TWO SOCIETIES: ACCOMMODATION AND COEXISTENCE

It is axiomatic that everything -- the economy, politics, culture -- in the second society is parallel to the once presumably monolithic ideological-organizational paradigm of the Stalinist model and is "system-alien." If the system proper is, however, seen as capable (with whatever delay, ideological equivocation, and political foot-dragging) of evolutionary adaptation to a changing social environment, the notion of "alienness" requires periodic re-examination. By the 1980s there is sufficient accumulated evidence on the East European regimes' reactive adaptation strategies to societal pressures from below. What seems central to the entire process is the virtually infinite elasticity (the Soviets used to call it "unprincipled opportunism") of some East European regimes' ideological and policy responses to public pressure for change, enhanced personal and group autonomy, and consumer sovereignty. This may be a case of calling the bottle "half-full" rather than "half-empty," but in recent years at least in Poland and Hungary both the peoples and the regimes seem to be edging closer to a kind of post-mobilization normalcy and a new "steady-state" relationship.

The principal instrument to ease the interaction between the two social, economic, ideological, and institutional spheres has been a regime-sponsored ideological artifact which has been referred to as a "social contract," "all people's consensus," and even "socialist democracy." On the regime's side this legally unenforceable contract consists of new legitimating slogans ("he who is not against us is with us"), the toleration -- but no more than that -- of the surfacing of a whole array of "second-society" phenomena, and a leadership style of "apparatchiks with a human face" which is always open to respectful suggestions for change from below. The society's responses, as the specifics of Hankiss' "five areas" so well demonstrate, may be described as increasingly bold assertions of consumer and citizen interests and an astonishing capacity to fill any void that the regimes,

either by design or by default, leave open.

It is probably too early to make a balanced assessment about the "Gorbachev revolution" and its impact on Eastern Europe. Of its components, glasnost, perestroika, and uskorenje, the first is likely to have the greatest immediate influence on the "second" public, culture, and consciousness. Unlike samizdat, which is more widespread in Poland than in Hungary, it is the new candor, pragmatic tone, and diminished number of taboo subjects in the official media that seem to have the greatest potential for redrawing the traditional boundaries between the official and "alternative" spheres of communication and culture.

Let us take the case of glasnost and the "second public." In Hungary today about two dozen national and regional newspapers, several hundred periodicals, and thousands of work-place newspapers and newsletters are published. These, in combination with the daily broadcasting output of the domestic radio and television, add up to a substantial amount of information that is available to the public. Moreover, seventy-five percent of the population has access to foreign TV programs, including the Austrian and other West European satellite TV program. When we add to these the similarly uncensored Western Hungarian-language news and information programs (there is no jamming in Hungary) the result is a massive information overload. People, as members of either "society," cannot possibly absorb and process the flood of news, information, and trivia reaching them every day.

In a society where three fourths of the working-age population invest several hours (in some cases as many as 120 per month) in the second economy, in addition to their full-time jobs, the benefits of glasnost and uncensored information tend to be marginal at best. Therefore, it is the cultural elites, university students and the educated urban and provincial middle class, rather than the common people who are the real inhabitants of Hankiss' politically conscious and culturally aware second society. This distinction, which should have been made, is crucial as it drastically reduces the number of "reform-relevant" actors and, with them, the dimensions of the counterforce that the regime must reckon with when contemplating its news and information-management policies.

The semi-visible world of "second culture" -- as Hankiss explains it very convincingly -- may be seen as the breeding ground, as well as an indispensable first step toward the birth of a second, "positive" kind of social consciousness. The overall process between the totalitarian destruction of the rich fabric of the society's subcultures and the Phoenix-like rise of counter-ideologies thirty to forty years later is immensely complex. Of great interest here is what one might call the "cultural-ideological learning curve" of the society between then and now. By this I refer to the way in which the system's

evolution, particularly economic modernization, the secularization of traditional values, and the entry of new generations as active participants into public affairs, have helped to reshape the form and content of citizens' aspirations for intellectual fulfillment and cultural self-expression.

From the foregoing it can be argued that various segments of society tended to internalize the collective and personal "lesion" of the preceding decades in different ways. From this it also follows that the articulation of citizens' aspirations may be classified by attaching, as Hankiss does, political-ideological labels as shorthand explanatory devices for the underlying psychological motivations behind such views and beliefs. Indeed, Hankiss is probably on the right track with his list of "latent" and "semi-latent" world views in Hungary today. One wonders, however, whether apart from the empirical unverifiability of the inventory of political ideologies, with the exception of nationalism -- "populist," or not -- he is actually describing the intelligentsia's ideologies and not those of the entire society. Moreover, what Hankiss calls "left-wing dogmatic world view" could just as plausibly be labeled "working-class Tory," anti-modernizer "neo-Luddite" or, in its uglier manifestation, "social Fascist" ideologies among the unskilled blue-collar and lumpen elements of the society. These are all there in Hungary and some, such as nationalism and varieties of "left-wing conservatism," are also shared by a significant percentage of the communist party's membership.

TWO NETWORKS: COMPETITION OR CONVERGENCE?

The transformation of "latent world views" into programs, platforms, and, in general, collective demands on the state's resources is another complex process. In the public sphere there are many traditional "transmission belt" and, more recently, several new regime-sponsored associations for the "disciplined" articulation of group interests. The language and the programmatic content of such officially sanctioned inputs into the policy process do, as a rule, adhere to the norms of the first society. But this is not always the case. As the published evidence on the so-called public discussions about reform policy options in Hungary indicates, there is a growing cleavage between the "constituency-specific" interests of the Trade Union Federation, the Association of Agricultural cooperatives, the Writers' Union, the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce (speaking for the enterprise managers) and those of the political leadership. The visible splintering of these "macro networks" into conservative, middle-of-the-road, and reformist factions could be seen as signs of the gradual disintegration of the first sphere's steering mechanism over these core components of the political system.

The rise and exponential growth in the numbers of "micro networks" in Hungary in the 1980s deserve scrutiny. Are they--

as the regime intended them to be -- politically low-risk safety valves for the disaggregation of pent-up social tensions or -- as the reformers hope -- potential building blocks for an alternative society? That the regime is frightened of any new lobby or interest group became painfully evident by the publicity generated around the formation of such politically innocuous entities as the proposed Association for the Physically Handicapped. That the society is full of latent, and sometimes widely shared interests seeking to define their identity and become recognized components of the first society, is richly documented by Hankiss.

The evidence at hand is open to several interpretations. The regime would prefer to ignore them, while the reformers tend to view grass-roots "micro-networks" as a kind of mythical master key for unlocking the cell doors of the penal institution cum insane asylum called "existing socialism." Let us address the issue with some basic Western political-science tools of analysis.

In the case of "micro-networks" one's first inclination is to focus on such groups and organizations which might presently have the capacity to exercise control (or power) over specific areas of the political system. By "control" we understand the ability to mobilize groups of individuals, or clusters of such groups; to take overt action for the articulation and possible realization of shared interests. The "action" in question must, by definition, be aimed at the diminution or total relinquishment of state control over objects of value. These could be the state's handing over (rather than "redistribution") of "political," "social," or "welfare" enticements and conceding exclusive jurisdiction over such matters to autonomous citizens' groups. The state's communications monopoly and censorship are two examples that come to mind in this connection.

One could go on describing the necessary attributes of what we might, for want of a better term, call a "political action group" (PAC?) under conditions of "existing socialism." The sobering fact is that apart from small groups of courageous dissidents, confrontation-oriented environmentalists, and conscientious objectors, the activities of the rest of the "micro-networks" belong to the realm of pseudo-politics. This is not to suggest that pseudo-political "channels of interest realization" are devoid of power relationships of a political nature. Quite the contrary: all these channels are about the acquisition of desired "objects of value" of one kind or another. Still, most interactions between the "micro-networks" and the regime must be seen as quasi-feudal relationships between the weak and the strong rather than those of fair and legally, or contractually, regulated transactions between autonomous citizens and publicly accountable wielders of political power.

In Eastern Europe today, the regime and the peoples must coexist. The alternative to long-term coexistence have been revolutions. Soviet intervention, mass repression, or normalization -- Husak- or Jaruzelski-style. The modalities of coexistence differ from country to country and change over time, but common to them has been the regimes' "going native" by way, as Hankiss puts it, of "resocialization from below." As I argue above, "resocialization," or the interpenetration of the public and the private spheres is a two-player game, and it is a sobering reminder of people's propensity for mutual corruption with the powers-that-be for the sake of short-term accommodation and long-term common survival.

Cynics and Western observers with no psychological stake in the outcome have called this process of mutual accommodation the "Balkanization of socialism." It is probably that, yet it is much more than a kind of parasitic symbiosis that the term implies. In any event, the Bolsheviks' way of putting the matter in terms of "kto kogo?" has the merit of simplicity which cuts through the haze surrounding the regime-people relationship in a communist polity. Although the analogy leaves something to be desired, it is useful to keep in mind that it had been the Han Chinese who absorbed the Mongol invaders, rather than the other way around; and in Hungary it took less than thirty, rather than three hundred years for society to reassert its European identity and to "corrupt" the nation's inept eastern conquerors. When matters are thus reduced to the political-ideological essentials, the long list of explanatory devices of Western social science from "totalitarianism" to "one-party pluralism" seem rather trite -- mainly, one suspects, because such heuristic abstracts seek to impose "value-free" order on a value-rich social reality that is contemporary Eastern Europe.

THE ROAD TO CIVIL SOCIETY: RESOURCES, STRATEGIES, AND OUTCOMES

The crisis of post-totalitarian polity, economy, and society is a fact -- and so is the growing awareness by the Soviet and East European political elites of this menacing reality. From Gorbachev down to middle-level East European party officials, the communist world's political elites are faced with the threat of political immobilism, economic stagnation, and social tensions. The gap between official recognition and open admission of the underlying malaise, on the one hand, and the political will to do something about it, on the other, can be very big -- perhaps too big for the current generation of political incumbents to fill and still remain in power.

Some would argue that Gorbachev's initiative of "openness," "transformation," and "acceleration" is either a fraud, or totally unrealistic given the deeply entrenched forces of opposition to drastic change among the power elites of the communist world. This may well be partly true, but prognoses of this kind tend to underestimate many factors that Dr. Hankiss so

well analyzed in his study. Some of these are: (a) the party elites' collective survival instincts; (b) the massive inertia and substantial immunity of the post-totalitarian society to remobilization of any kind, be it for the return to Stalinism or the rapid transition toward democracy; and (c) the elites' political, economic, and cultural capacity for policy improvisation and power-sharing with the top leadership and the institutions of the "first polity."

To be sure, the forces of democracy and meaningful reforms are not without resources to advance their cause. To use Harry Eckstein's classic terminology, predictions about the outcome of a showdown between the "incumbent" and the "insurgents" must take into account the preconditions and the precipitant of such an open conflict, as well as the resources that are available to each side to implement the postulated engagement. Because we are mainly interested in Hungary, let us consider the "internal war" model and its applicability for that country.

Perhaps the most fundamental "precondition" of the Hungarian scene is the chronic illegitimacy of the "first system": its alien origins, official ideologies, ruling methods, and the regime's demonstrated inability to deliver on its part of the "social contract." As Hankiss has shown, the system's lingering illegitimacy need not, in itself, precipitate open conflict between the political regime and the society. The very existence of a second society and its increasingly complex networks have served, though not necessarily by conscious design by either side, as compensatory mechanisms which have thus far helped avert open conflict between the two sides. Indeed, when put in this context, "glasnost," "perestroika," and the rest of Gorbachev's crisis-prevention devices should be seen as concessions to intermittently articulated demands made by a latent second society for systemic change.

Hungary's situation is quite different from the Soviet Union's. In Hungary, regime-sponsored reforms have been in place for twenty years, and the kinds of self-critical policy statements for which Yeltsin was expelled from the Soviet leadership have been routinely made by Hungarian regime spokesmen since the early 1980s. The point here is that in terms of official experimentation with reforms and associated compensatory mechanisms, Hungary is out of sync with the USSR and, with the exception of Poland, with the rest of Eastern Europe as well. Being a "path breaker" -- however much it may have been warranted by domestic policy imperatives -- also carries the risk of political isolation and vulnerability to anti-reform pressures from abroad. This is what happened in 1971-75 and it might happen again if Gorbachev stumbles and a "new Suslov" gains the upper hand.

A related consideration, which in Hungary's case has had a

vital bearing on preventing de-legitimizing "preconditions" from becoming the "precipitants" of a crisis, is that of political leadership. Since 1956, the Soviet people have had five leaders, but Hungary, in the person of János Kádár, only one. From this it may be argued, without succumbing to the nonsense of a "Kádár mystique," that the continuity of leadership in Hungary has provided the indispensable element of manifest stability with which neither a full-fledged second society, nor the intermeshing of the official and the private spheres would have come about. But with the continuity of leadership have also come inertia, ideological atrophy, the calcification of political steering mechanisms and, with these, a significantly reduced systemic capacity for policy innovations and further reforms.

In the spring of 1988 the Kádár leadership is at the end (perhaps in the last few months) of its road. The outcome of the leadership succession will be the supreme test of many things in Hungary and, above all, of the interaction between the "first" and "second" spheres. The central issue will be the stability of the correlation of forces between Kádár's successors and the people on the other side of the invisible barricade which separates -- their "common ground" notwithstanding -- the political "haves" and the political "have-nots" in Hungary.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude this commentary, let us assume that Gorbachev will not stumble and that Kádár's retirement will not cause a crisis of confidence in the Hungarian regime. What happens next? Hankiss offers three scenarios, though he is quick to explain that the "second-society experiment," because it is still in progress, has not been a failure. He also makes it clear that an "alternative," or "civil," society is no more than a hopeful possibility which might materialize sometime in the future. This leaves us with the "stalemate and hybridization" scenario. As I see it, Hankiss' taxonomy of regime strategies to control the emergence of "system-alien" organizational principles is an accurate summary of the regime's reactions to current "second-society" pressures for change, rather than a prediction of things to come.

If the present situation is seen as a "stalemate two-player game," the question is how far and how long a hitherto "defensive" or, at any rate politically non-assertive, second society defer to the authority of a political regime which is on the brink of economic disaster, as the Hungarian one is in 1988. An answer might be found in a closer examination of the "give-and-take" and "hybridization" components of Hankiss' scheme. The record of the last three years shows that the regime is finding it increasingly difficult to "take back" what it "gave" the public. The regime "gave" the people "contested" elections in 1985 and now it finds itself stuck with an increasingly assertive National Assembly that actually wants to make laws rather than

serve as a rubber stamp for the party's decrees. The government enacts tough new press and official-secrets laws, but yields its right to control the new influx of Western TV programs. One could go on by citing many examples of the regime's unilateral surrender of its traditional privileges to the public.

The "hybridization" process is full of potentially revolutionary possibilities. The most important of these are the long-term consequences of the restructuring of political institutions and the stripping the communist party of its traditional "hands-on" management powers over the government, the economy, and the society. The party -- the ultimate "macro-network" -- is in the process of evaluating its structure and functions. Though it would be unrealistic to expect this latter-day conspiratorial society to surrender peacefully its privileges, it may, indeed it must, open up its internal workings to public scrutiny -- and criticism as well. The party's internal restructuring might yield an end to "democratic centralism" and stimulate the rebirth of the free articulation of the views of its members both as individuals and as members of policy caucuses. Indeed, what seemed unthinkable a few years ago might be possible in the not too distant future.

A last word: I feel privileged to have the opportunity to join Elemér Hankiss' "guided tour" of the rocky road from totalitarianism to the foothills of a "civil society" in Eastern Europe. The journey was well worth it: the landscape is still barren, but the spring rains might be coming -- much sooner than one dared hope a few years ago.