

**Dilemma '89: My father was a communist**  
**Budapest, 29 September 2009, Colegium Hungaricum**

In the first debate in the series, which took place in Budapest in September 2009, the Slovak author and journalist Martin M. Simecka and Hungarian architect and former samizdat publisher László Rajk discussed the still unanswered questions surrounding the involvement of their fathers' generation in post-war communism. The two talkers were not only former dissidents of the younger generation, but also the sons of well-known persecuted communists. László Rajk sr. was the most prominent victim of the Rákosi show trials of 1948; the writer Milan Simecka began his career in the Czechoslovak Communist Party and became a dissident after 1968. Martin Simecka suffered directly for his father's 'crime' and was excluded from higher education, while Rajk jr. spent the first five years of his life in an orphanage. In the debate they discussed the still unanswered questions surrounding the involvement of their fathers' generation in post-war communism, and the failings of today's debate about the past in the former communist countries. The talk was moderated by Eva Karadi, editor of *Magyar Lettre Internationale*.

**Breaking the bonds of national mythology. Memory and European citizenship**  
**Warsaw, 27 October 2009, University Of Warsaw**

The second Eurozine debate took place in October of the same year, in the beautiful city of Warsaw. Swedish editor and journalist Anne Ruth and Danuta Glondys, director of the Villa Decius Association in Kraków and a consultant on cultural management and civil society development, discussed post-war nationhood and the myths that have built it. The discussion was chaired by Wojciech Przybylski (Res Publica Nowa). In many European countries, post-war nationhood has been built on myths of general resistance against fascism, often combined with a nationally framed approach to history that clash with that of neighbouring states. Politics of memory is at play in conflicts between fellow EU states such as Poland and Germany, but also countries like Sweden and Switzerland have yet to come to terms with their recent history. Using the examples of Sweden and Norway, Anne Ruth showed how criticism from outside can help nations break with the myths of neutrality and resistance and instead pave the way for admissions of responsibility for injustices committed in the past. Glondys focused on the question of remembrance of atrocities and stressed that in order to find a way to peaceful co-existence it would be sometimes necessary to forget the past.

**Economy and ethics in crisis. A new-old east-west divide?**  
**Bucharest, 31 March 2010, Romanian Cultural Institute**

Bucharest was the next city to host the third Eurozine debate in March 2010. Speakers Robert Misik, Austrian author and journalist, and Daniel Daianu, Romanian economist, had a lively debate on the financial crisis and its impact in Europe. When the financial crisis made clear the extent of western banks' involvement in eastern European economies, concerns surfaced about the effects on western economies, re-awakening perceptions of the East as unruly and unpredictable. In the East, meanwhile, suspicions were reinforced that the West was interested in the new EU member states only insofar as they provided an opportunity to expand existing markets. Thus the two speakers had to talk about difficult hot topics like the possible end of neoliberal politics, the European integration problems and the new-old east-

west divide. Daianu disputed that the financial crisis had added a new East-West divide to the North-South divide in Europe, which could lead to a complete breakdown of the European Union as a whole. The debate was chaired by Mircea Vasilescu (Dilema veche).

**The critical divide. Marxism: radical alternative or totalitarian relic?  
Brno, 18 May 2010, The Brno House of Arts**

Another divide was the topic of the debate that took place in Brno, in May 2010. Londoner Benedict Seymour, writer, filmmaker and a contributing editor of *Mute* magazine, and Jirí Pehe, Director of New York University in Prague, tried to discuss the evergreen Marxist theory as applied in different parts of Europe. While a historical-materialist approach to both culture and society has strong critical potential in Western Europe, many eastern European intellectuals regard it sceptically. After 1989, Marxist ideas and theories were tainted by their connection to state socialism, and are still linked with totalitarianism. “Does Marxism – or even leftist politics – mean one thing in the West and another in the East?” was a question of great importance. While Seymour spoke of a “rendezvous with Marxism as it was not in the ‘communist countries’”, Pehe argued that Marx’s language of class was updated and that “global civil society” can save liberal democracy against capitalism. The Brno debate provided the opportunity for a dialogue between western and eastern European intellectual traditions, at the same time challenging exactly these stereotypes. It was chaired by Marek Seckar (HOST).

**Multiculturalism at its limits? Managing diversity in the new Europe  
Bratislava, 30 September 2010, Zichy Palace**

Multiculturalism is back on the international discourse arenas. After the recent developments in Europe, it is certainly an issue of great importance. Attitudes towards immigration typically associated with the nationalist Right have become political mainstream. Minorities are turned into problems as migration makes cultural diversity ever more visible and national cultural identity is perceived as being under threat. These topics were discussed in Zichy palace, which hosted the two high-profile guests Kenan Malik and Fero Sebej as well as the notable chair of the debate, Samuel Abrahám from Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts. British writer, lecturer and broadcaster Kenan Malik, himself an example of multiculturalism, is known for his criticism of the same. Nevertheless he is for an open and diverse society. His fellow debater, Slovak politician and writer Fero Sebej, could give a vivid account of the slightly different situation in Eastern Europe, especially in Slovakia, where the so-called Roma problem is more present than the much-discussed immigration and cultural diversity in Western Europe.

**Democracy live. Media, politics and the tyranny of the opinion poll  
Sofia, 6 December 2010, The Red House**

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