

*The Role of Communication in Engineering  
Political, Economic, and Social Institutions*SARAH SANDERSON KING  
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History has recorded many great clashes of political and economic doctrines, but few have had the duration, scope, and intensity of the conflict between communism and capitalism. Nor has history recorded a clash of political and economic doctrines that ended so suddenly and decisively with the relatively peaceful collapse of one of the combatants—communism. Not only have the people of East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and the USSR rejected communism; they are suddenly and unquestioningly embracing their former foe—democratic capitalism. We have both the *privilege* and *responsibility* of living through this political, economic, and social revolution. We have the privilege of observing firsthand the events and actors in one of the greatest communication-induced transformations in modern history. We have the responsibility of understanding the underlying features of this revolution and constructively influencing the outcome of this transformation for the benefit of humankind. In responding to this privilege and responsibility we will (1) present an overview of the main political, economic, and social features of this revolution; (2) explore briefly the role communication is playing in this revolution; (3) justify the selection of four case studies as the primary data for inquiry regarding this revolution; (4) justify and develop

a communication perspective for guiding our inquiry; and (5) introduce the remaining chapters in this book.

### Political, Economic, and Social Features of the Revolution

Three main features appear to underlie this political, economic, and social revolution.

*First, it is aimed at rejecting communism as a practical political philosophy and central government control of the economy as a practical economic policy.* A system of government, communism, that proved to be corrupt and incompetent was at last overturned. For the people involved there was no question of ever going back, and they knew what they wanted in its place.

*Second, it is aimed at embracing multiparty democracy as an operational political philosophy and market-force capitalism as an operational economic policy.* Only recently have the political and economic leaders in these former communist countries begun to realize the implications of moving from a communist to a democratic-capitalist society. Policy makers are just now beginning to draw a clear distinction between the different forms of political and economic institutions found in Western nations and the effects these institutions have on political and economic performance.

*Third, the goals of this revolution are (a) to place political responsibility back into the hands of the people and their elected representatives in open competition between political philosophies, and (b) to create a better standard of living for people through the open play of market economic forces.* However, in most cases these nations have little or no experience with the democratic political institutions and capitalistic economic institutions capable of bringing about these goals. Therefore, they must engineer their own political and economic institutions based on limited experience, led by intellectuals and artists who were former communist dissidents and employing former government officials who held middle management positions within the ousted Communist regime.

### Significance of Communication in the Revolution

It would be hard to exaggerate the significant role that communication has played, is playing, and must continue to play if this revolution is to remain

peaceful and to achieve its stated goals. Communication has, is, and shows promise of continuing to play a significant role in this revolution in three ways.

*First, it was through communication that the benefits of multiparty democracy and market capitalism became known in the socialist world.* In Eastern Europe and the People's Republic of China the Communist party had succeeded over forty years ago in putting in place a wall to seal out Western-capitalist influence and to allow the unchallenged claims of a single party system and central planned economy. These claims pictured communist socialism as humane and progressive and grounded in the people; Western democracy as morally and politically bankrupt; and Western capitalism as ruthless and self-defeating. However, in the last ten years, in particular with increased interpersonal communication due to more frequent international travel, increased organizational communication due to more frequent exchange of international goods and services, and increased mass communication due to the information and communication technology revolution, external communication with increasing frequency began to penetrate these communist enclaves. This communication portrayed Western democracy and Western capitalism in a manner discrepant from the picture presented to the people by their Communist governments.

Internally, the last ten years witnessed an increase in political movements critical of the prevailing communist governments. In Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and China, indigenous political movements emerged, calling for a liberalization of the Communist government policies. In each and every case, these movements were met with the imposition of martial law, confrontation by indigenous and sometimes foreign troops, and the jailing of leaders of the political movements. It is ironic, in retrospect, to realize that when the political and economic revolution finally came, it was for the most part peaceful, and that many of those jailed protesters would become the leaders of new governments in Eastern Europe in the 1990s.

*Second, it is through communication that the leadership in the Soviet Union began its accommodation with the West, its disengagement from Eastern Europe, and its renegotiation with its own citizens on the structure of the new Soviet Union.* In retrospect, perhaps the most significant communication event in this transformational process was the appearance in 1985 of a new and articulate political leader in the USSR—a leader who

two years later shocked the world by seeking rapprochement with the West and the political, economic, and military transformation of the socialist bloc. The year 1987 was significant in Europe. Enthusiasm was growing for the 1992 emergence of the European Economic Community as a united political and economic force in the world—a force capable of challenging the United States and Japan. It was that year when Mikhail Gorbachev asked the EEC for Russia and its Communist satellites to be included as new members in “The Common House of Europe, a Europe extending from the Atlantic to the Urals in which walls could be moved, partitions brought down, and there would be unity.”

[Realizing] the common roots of such a multi-form but essentially common European civilization, I felt with growing acuteness the artificiality and temporariness of the bloc-to-bloc confrontation and the archaic nature of the “iron curtain.” . . . Europe is indeed a common home where geography and history have closely interwoven the destinies of dozens of countries and nations. Therefore, developing the metaphor, one may say: the home is common, that is true, but each family has its own apartment, and there are different entrances too. (Gorbachev, 1987, quoted in Stern 1989)

Americans and Europeans were stunned. They did not know how to answer nor did they understand the far-reaching nature of that claim. Later, much later, after reading Gorbachev’s political and economic game plan in his book on *perestroika* and *glasnost* and witnessing the rapidly unfolding events in Eastern Europe, the West began to comprehend the vast change—the revolution underway.

*Third, it is through communication that the new governments in these formerly Communist countries are renegotiating with their citizens the political, economic, and social structures that will become the basis for multiparty democracy and a market-focus capitalism.* The relative openness of Russia’s internal and external politics accompanying *glasnost* and *perestroika* revealed to the Soviet people, the East Europeans, and the outside world, Russia’s recognition of very serious weaknesses in the Communist political system and the centrally planned economy. Gorbachev recom-

mended drastic measures in an effort to correct these weaknesses. He freed the European bloc from the domination of a single party system and the threat of Soviet intervention. He began political changes at home that gave rise to a multiparty system and moved toward a market-driven economy.

Then Gorbachev, along with the leader of each of the Eastern European nations, turned to the West for advice and assistance in transforming their nation's political institutions into multiparty democracies and their economic institutions into market capitalism. *The communication processes involved in this transformation are the focus of this book. More specifically, we shall explore the interactions that take place between a nation's citizens, their governmental leadership, and external advisors as they attempt to reengineer their political, economic, and social institutions.* On the success of these communication processes rests the hope of the world for a peaceful and successful transition. On the success of these communication processes rests the hope of Eastern Europeans for (a) placing political responsibility back into the hands of the people and their elected representations in the open competition between political philosophies, and (b) creating a better standard of living for their people through the open play of market economic focus.

### Justifying the Case Studies to the Employed

Although it is not possible in a single book to explore all aspects of this revolution and the underlying communication processes involved in each, it will be the purpose of this book to focus on four case studies that explore in some detail four segments of this transformation. More specifically, we shall provide case studies of the attempts at transformation in Poland, Yugoslavia, Armenia, and the People's Republic of China. Each of these cases was selected to reflect the diversity of roles communication is playing in these societies and the diversity of outcomes anticipated.

*Poland* was selected because its citizens and leaders have decided to pursue what may be considered the most complete, rapid, and radical transformation of a society's political, economic, and social institutions from a communist to a democratic capitalist society. *Yugoslavia* was

selected because it is a multiethnic society without a strong central government and thus provides a strong test of democratic capitalism ability to deal effectively with cultural diversity in forging national political and economic institutions. *Armenia* was selected because of its unique position within Russia. Armenia requires strong military protection from its neighbors within the Soviet Republics and strong economic ties with the Soviet government for survival. However, at the same time the Armenian people want political independence and self-governance within the Soviet Union. The *People's Republic of China* was selected because this government alone has repelled attempts at democratic and capitalistic reform and now stands as a strong defender of Communist political and economic institutions. *Poland, Yugoslavia, Armenia, and the People's Republic of China represent the hard cases: the most interesting, and at times the most awkward tests, of the role communication must play in this revolution.*

### Justifying the Communication Perspective

Human communication processes can and have been examined from a variety of equally insightful perspectives. We have chosen a theatrical metaphor as the primary perspective from which to explore the interaction of citizens, government, and outside advisors in Poland, Yugoslavia, Armenia, and the People's Republic of China. Our rationale is straightforward. It is our belief that in each of these cases communication is proceeding according to a specific type of dramatic form, involving actors who know their roles, and involving publics who have been brought into these plays as audiences, but audiences limited by the type of play being performed. In each case the dramatic form is different, but particularly well suited to the audience involved. Each dramatic form will last only so long as the actors can persuade the audience that their expectations and aspirations are best met by the roles and plots unfolding before them.

What is most appropriate about a theatrical metaphor for providing a perspective on the human communication process is that (1) it involves both actors and audience in an interactive sequence; (2) it can employ a wide array of divergent forms, each of which sets up expectations in the audience and then attempts to fulfill those expectations; and (3) the per-

spective remains insightful only so long as the plot does not vary too much from expectations, the actors perform their roles credibly, and the audience believes their expectations are being met.

More specifically, we shall argue that interaction between the government and the public in Poland is taking the dramatic form of a *passion play*; in Yugoslavia, the dramatic form of multiple simultaneous *ethnic dramas*; in Armenia, the dramatic form of an *epic poem*; and in China, the dramatic form of a *Japanese Bunraku puppet show*. These are illustrated in Table 1.1. Let us explore the events and actors that warrant these selections.

### *Poland*

We selected Poland as our first case study because it was the first Communist bloc country to break away from Russia and has taken the most radical steps to transform its political and economic life. The communication model that best reflects the interaction between the public and the government officials is the theatrical metaphor of a *passion play*. The passion play focuses on the death and resurrection of a leader and his or her value system. A passion play is based on a plot that is always predictable but contains surprising and at times fascinating variations. Each time it is played and replayed, the script contains new elements to be explored, new variations to be savored on an old theme. The plot that unfolds results in death of an old set of ideas and beliefs, which are then resurrected in a new form to support the new ideal that both the actors and the audience demand. These new values, and this new way of thinking and acting, is a way of life that demands new sacrifices on the part of all those involved. However, these sacrifices are perceived as necessary but transitory steps to a permanent, more elevated way of life. The death and rebirth are grounded in a tension created by betrayal and relived in a mystical resurrection.

Poland is an intensely nationalistic and Catholic country that for centuries has had a compulsive drive to seek the freedom to manage its own destiny. For forty years the Communist party had ruled Poland. Ten years ago an indigenous political party, called *Solidarity*, began to challenge Communist rule. Lech Walesa, the leader of *Solidarity*, was jailed in

**TABLE 1.1**

Characteristics of the Theatrical Modes

	Passion Play	Ethnic Dramas	Epic Poem: Greek Tragedy	Bunraku
Script	Predictable, lofty ideals in conflict with base values	Cultural myths that tell and retell the importance of core values	Epic poem/lyric song	A two-level development: public and behind the scenes
Plot	A sacrificial revolution; death and rebirth	Ritualized values; continuity	Tension between heroism and inevitable death	Tension between diverse camps resolved in public consensus
Roles	Betrayal and betrayed; resurrection	Well-known myths regarding ethnic purists	Radiant hero and conqueror	Puppet and puppeteer
Audience Involvement	A willingness to assent to new values and to discard old	Willingness to relive core values	Individual action bound up with destiny of others who are fervent believers and those who oppose them	The public is willing to accept at face value; never questioning what is behind the scenes
Conflict/Tension	Betrayer/betrayed	In group and out group	Between events and passionate human beings	Public and private face



1982. By 1988 the Communist party was faced with an economy in total disarray. The inflation rate approaching 700 percent, there were acute shortages of food and consumer necessities, declining agricultural and industrial output, and a restless labor force. The Communist government released Lech Walesa and began talks with Solidarity to hold open elections in June 1985, in which Solidarity candidates would be allowed to run, along with Communists, for office. The Polish people in that election handed the Communist party a stunning defeat, winning 160 of 161 seats in the Sejm and all 100 seats in the Senate. The Communist party was stunned by such a smashing defeat and, at its next Party Congress in January 1990 voted not to mount a slate of candidates in the upcoming local elections but instead to disband the party. Two new socialist parties were founded—the Social Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Union Party.

Following the election, a new coalition government was formed between Solidarity and the Communist party. The Communists were to hold the presidency under General Wojciech Jaruzelski and the Interior and Defense Ministries. Solidarity was to hold the Prime Ministry under Tadeusz Mazowiecki and the Finance and Foreign Affairs Ministries. Waiting in the wings was Lech Walesa, the Solidarity leader, who was predicted by many people to become the next president.

The new Solidarity-led government and Mr. Mazowiecki, the first non-Communist prime minister in forty years, took over in September of 1989, committed to sweeping democratic and economic reforms. The Solidarity-led government would revise the constitution and bill of rights and present them for a vote in 1991. Local elections were to be held in the Spring of 1990 and a general election for the remaining government positions by 1993.

Poland's finance minister, Leszak Balcarovicz, following the advice of Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs, began "shock therapy," by pushing through a harsh legislative reform package similar to the one that had stabilized the Bolivian economy one year earlier. On January 1, 1990, Poland's currency was made convertible, pegged to international demand; prices were free floating; government subsidies to consumers and public-owned organizations and agricultural units were halted; bankruptcies allowed; and strict wage controls implemented. Unemployment, which was

9,000 in December 1989, went to 400,000 by April 1990. Food prices rose by 75 percent, real income plunged 35 percent, agricultural sales plunged 27 percent, leaving the agriculture and banking segment of the economy in disarray. However, not all the news was bad. Inflation dropped from 80 percent in January to 3 percent in April, a positive trade balance of \$800 million appeared, absenteeism at work dropped 40 percent, and many employees sought to purchase their formerly government-owned corporations. In addition the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund initiated \$2.5 billion loans, and the United States and Western nations contributed \$1 billion to stabilize Poland's currency, with over 800 foreign corporations forming joint ventures with Polish corporations. Poland continues to be the biggest market in Eastern Europe (Sachs, 1991).

For longer than most Poles can remember, their country has been in crisis. It still is, but this crisis is of their own making. This death of one-party Communist rule and a planned economy has given rise to the resurrection of multiparty democracy and a market-driven capitalist economy. The sacrifices will be great, but the promise of redemption looms on the horizon. As long as the script remains true, the plot clear, and the central actors faithful to their roles, the public appears ready to provide the audience for this passion play, to interactively enter into this new vision of what Poland can become. It is upon this claim to the death of an old, and rebirth of a new, vision that the stability of the Polish government depends.

### *Yugoslavia*

We selected Yugoslavia as our second case study because it is a multiethnic society without a strong central government and therefore provides a strong test of the ability of democratic capitalism to deal with the issue of diversity. The theatric metaphor most appropriate for providing a communication perspective on the interaction processes between citizens, their government leaders, and outside advisors is that of *multiple, simultaneous, ethnic dramas*. Ethnic dramas are indigenous to a group of people who share the beliefs that their core values are unique and more appropriate for them than any others. The rituals, myths, and social dramas that make up the script are ethnic-group specific and well known to all from early child-

hood. The actors need little direction, as their scripts, plots, and roles are as ritualized as their values. There is an element of the passion play in the playing out of these myths. A tension is created whenever a core value is challenged, but in the case of the ethnic dramas, the sacrifices the actors are willing to make are rooted in an unquestioned belief in the correctness of the core values. Each member of the group will always place the core values of the ethnic community over individual or outgroup interests.

Yugoslavia has a governmental structure that reflects a unique cultural configuration and history. Yugoslavia consists of eight ethnic groups—Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Slovenians, Macedonians, Montenegrans, Hungarians, and Albanians—that are quite different in size, economic power, and religious tradition (see figure 1.1). This translates into a very diverse set of cultures within Yugoslavia's national boundaries. Since 1948, Yugoslavia, although communist in ideology, has considered itself independent of Soviet influence. The only national party, which was a loose confederation of local ethnic parties, was termed the *Yugoslavian League of Communists*. This loose confederation had as its center several core values—self-management socialism as its political ideology, non-alignment as a foreign policy, and independence and equality for its diverse cultural groups as a social anthropology.

Yugoslavia's national government consists of a collective presidency of eight members representing the six republics—Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Bosnia Herzegovina—and two autonomous provinces—Kosovo and Vojvodina. The collective presidency elects one elite member annually to serve as president of the Federal Republic. The Federal Assembly consists of the Chamber of Republics and Autonomous Provinces with 88 delegates and the Federal Chamber of 220 delegates representing self-managed organizations, social-political organizations, and committees. The League of Communists was the political party at the federal level with a constitutional guarantee of political primacy.

Each of the six republics and two autonomous regions has a three-chamber assembly with its own language, values, and customs based on the dominant ethnic groups involved, with some regions having two languages reflecting the presence of ethnic minorities. This non-melting pot approach to ethnic diversity creates a national government that is a very



Figure 1.1. Yugoslavia: Shifting Borders  
 Map modeled after map in *The New York Times*, Sunday, April 1, 1990.

loose confederation of autonomous republics and autonomous regions with more power and cultural similarity than the national government. Since 1974, the leaders of the republics have each run their regions like independent competing nations within the Yugoslavian system. Each republic holds the right to veto federal decisions. Such a system has its own inequities. This system means that Montenegro, with 20 percent of the population has the same federal weight as Serbia with 36 percent of the population. The Serbian population feels this is a diabolical system aimed at keeping the Serbs down. Whereas the six republics have equal rights, they have deeply unequal levels of economic development, creating further divisions between the ethnic groups.

Forty-five years of communism has done little to strengthen Yugoslavia's federal government or to soften the deep divisions in Yugoslavia's unmelted pot of cultural, ethnic, and religious groups. These differences remained so deep and decisive that they tended to further erode federal control. For example, in recent years the leadership of Serbia had gained wide support within its own republic by stirring up Serbian nationalism. This nationalism argued for reestablishing Serbian control over the two autonomous provinces of Kosova and Voguodinia and for the deportation of their Albanian ethnic minority to Albania. The ethnic problem comes into focus when one realizes that such increases in nationalistic tendencies within Serbia causes similar activities in the republic of Croatia.

With the fresh winds of democracy and capitalism sweeping through Eastern Europe, the flames of nationalism began to soar in Yugoslavia. There was pressure for the League of Communists to renounce its monopoly on power, which had been building for some time in the two northern republics of Slovenia and Croatia. In 1989 both republics accepted the principles of a multiparty system. With a national political stalemate developing, in December 1989 the national government supported a proposal to relinquish the monopoly power of the Communist party. Ethnic-specific parties immediately arose in each republic denouncing the national Communist party. As the entrenched national Communist party apparatus ground to a halt, the focus shifted to economic reform. The federal government passed economic reforms allowing for 100 percent foreign ownership of businesses, 99 percent ownership of banks, and liberalization of imports and the repatriation of profits. In addition it is debating how to

privatize the large government cooperatives and is for the first time allowing bankruptcies of government-owned collectives.

The federal government was thrown into chaos in January 1990, when the National Convention of the League of Communists parties ended with the Slovenian delegation walking out over the issue of a republic's right to secede from the federation. The party congress ended in disarray without a national program. Slovenia headed for a collision with the Yugoslavian federal authorities, saying it would resist any emergency measures designed to curb its autonomy. The federal crises worsened when the Spring elections in Serbia and Croatia brought the federal government more bad news. Both elections put in power strong nationalistic groups pledged to further reduce federal control over republic affairs. Fuanjo Tudjman, who had denounced the Yugoslavian Communist government, came to power in Croatia. He planned to reshape Croatia's relationship with Yugoslavia and perhaps Yugoslavia itself. He argued: "If Yugoslavia is to exist, it can exist only as an alliance, a confederation of independent states . . . We have had enough experience to show us that no other form of government can exist here because Serbs and Croats belong not only to two different nationalities, but to two different cultural spheres" (Tudjman, 1990).

Mr. Tudjman insisted, to the Serbs dismay, that Bosnia and Herzegovina are historically, geographically, and economically linked to Croatia and that many of Bosnia's Muslim Slavs are ethnically Croats. According to Mr. Tudjman, "The first order of business will be to reinforce Croatia's sovereignty in a new constitution, insisting that Croatia is rich enough to solve its economic woes on its own" (Tudjman, 1990).

With the disintegration of the League of Communists, Yugoslavia has no federal political party. With the resurgence of nationalism in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and among the Albanian minority, Yugoslavia is in a race, a race to find some way of providing the federal government with a reason for existing. In May 1990 hardline communist Bovisav Jovic of Serbia began his one year term as head of Yugoslavia's collective presidency and denounced democratic reforms in Croatia and Slovenia. Yugoslavia is wrapped in political and ethnic tensions, which Jovic said has brought Yugoslavia to the brink of civil war and breakup. *In the end the people of Yugoslavia's six republics and two autonomous provinces will*

*decide whether these diverse ethnic dramas will create a patchwork of small nation states or a loose confederation called Yugoslavia.*

### *Armenia*

We selected Armenia as our third case study because of its unique position in the Soviet Union in the struggle for self-determination, democracy, and social justice. The communication model of tragedy in the form of *heroic song or an epic poem* best reflects the interaction between the Azerbaijanis and the Turks whose cultures are diametrically opposed to that of the Armenians and the struggle against the machinations of Moscow and Baku and the entrenched Armenian Communist party. Tragedy in this sense means the "fateful course of certain human lives which have a special depth of meaning" relevant to the world in which we live (Lesky, 1967). The influence of the epic on the development of tragedy was more in the inner tone and spirit of the drama than in its outward form (Haigh, 1968).

Lucig Danielian has presented the dilemma of Armenia most succinctly in her analysis (Chapter 4).

The two and a half years since those days of the first real practice of *glasnost* in the Soviet Union have been even more incredible. These years have been filled with epic and heroic episodes from the creation, and imprisonment, of the Karabagh Committee (a leadership that grew out of the people's will to work toward the goals of self-determination in Nagorno-Karabagh and Armenia) to their successes and failures in struggling against the antidemocratic forces in Moscow, Baku, and Armenia itself and the indifference of the West, to the human-made horrors of pogroms and blockades and the tragedy of a devastating earthquake.

The epic poem of the Armenians can be best illustrated by the "declaration" of the first Armenian National Movement (ANM), a passionate plea for independence in decision making in the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of life; for basic inalienable rights to individual freedom and the pursuit of happiness; and for a call to all Armenians and

believers in democracy, self-determination, and social justice to join the struggle. And at that point in time, the ANM, having touched a responsive chord of a number of the republics in the Soviet Union, was joined by representatives from other national democratic movements. The ANM "statement of aims" with its six founding principles contains within it the heroic elements of independence and self-determination, but the tragic realization is very clear that such an autonomy is not possible or even desirable until the economic, political, and social infrastructures have been established.

The attempt to retain an identity for this small republic of 3 million people has gone on for the past 2000 years. Their most recent heroic figures have been Gorbachev, who has since lost this image; General Aramian, an Armenian legendary figure; and most of all the Karabagh Committee, which has been a source of inspiration and organization to the movement. The modes of communication utilized by the movement have changed from impassioned pleas most firmly exemplified by mass demonstrations, to an attempt to become more technologically sophisticated (live broadcasts and even telex). The script, a chain of events dictated by economic, political, and natural disasters such as the recent earthquake, recalls what Lesky (1967) would determine as "the well-known cliché of the epic stream," with its sequence of links or events that thwart the heroic movement at each turn. The West could be the source of a *deus ex machina*, a breaking of the chain of events, but as Danielian so clearly illustrates, the West has been less helpful or involved in such an action. Whether it should interfere in another country's internal struggles is another issue that we will not address in this analysis.

The tale of Armenia is not well known by the rest of the world. Coverage by media of events in the country have not been complete because of the inability of foreign journalists to travel to Armenia, the censorship imposed in Moscow of news coming out of Armenia, and the sense of near apathy by journalists toward what appears to be just another movement of discontent by still another republic, a rather small one, in what has been the more significant movement of the transformation of the Soviet Union toward rejecting communism, embracing democracy and market-force capitalism, and decentralizing decision-making in an attempt to improve the quality of life force through political responsibility of the people them-



selves. Armenia is a small stanza in the midst of this unbelievable significant epic.

The Armenians of Karabagh believed in *glasnost* and *perestroika* and embraced these concepts as catalysts to pursue their case in going directly to the general public. A formal request was sent to Moscow in 1988 for some measure of independence and support. A ground swell from the people of Armenia resulted in nearly one million demonstrators, young and old, supporting the democratic movement through speeches and mass meetings. The Karabagh Committee was formed, which founded and led the Armenian national movement. The eleven members of this committee were academicians, scientists, and journalists and most of the original members still remain active leaders.

Azerbaijanis protested, staging pogroms, burning, and looting. Soviet troops were sent in to quell the riots. The formal request sent to Moscow was finally answered. Although the decision outlined a seven year plan of development in Armenia and permission for transmission of Armenian television programming, no border changes were to be permitted without Azerbaijani consent. The Karabagh Committee was declared illegal.

Mass demonstrations resulted, and the movement this time was for Karabagh to withdraw from Azerbaijan to rejoin the country of Armenia. The tug of war continued between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the latter not recognizing the Karabagh Committee nor any of the decisions of the ANM. New pogroms were started. The Karabagh Committee although not legally sanctioned took on the tasks of organizing the refugee movements resulting from the attacks on Armenians who fled from their homes in other parts of Russia to take refuge in Armenia.

In the midst of these crises, a devastating earthquake hit Armenia. As devastating as the earthquake though was the arrest and imprisonment of the Karabagh Committee, the heroic figures in the Armenian struggle for autonomy. Several of these prisoners were nominated as candidates for the Armenian legislature in an attempt to demonstrate solidarity and support for the Karabagh Committee. The government attempted to block these nominations, and the lowest voter turnouts in the history of the country ensued. Strikes were renewed and, in the face of military threats, a mass demonstration resulted with the flag of the brief days of Armenian independence in prominence. Both the Communists and the democratic

movement were forging links that would call for the recognition of the flag and the release of the prisoners, of which the latter did occur.

The discord continued, resulting in more demonstrations, more military action, and more demands on both sides. Military action in April 1990 brought government violence that was condemned by the world. Although the movement's struggle had brought the Armenian people closer to democratic participation than the seventy years preceding, the state of the union treaty that won a majority vote in the elections in April 1991 did so over dire predictions of its downfall.

The likelihood that such a treaty will be accepted is slight, regardless of the referendum's result. Mr. Yeltsin has rejected the draft as "a document imposed on us." The Ukraine had refused to sign anything until it has adopted its own constitution, which will take all year. Six republics—the Baltic three, Georgia, Armenia, Moldavia—have refused to sign under any conditions (and refused to take part in the referendum). Mr. Gorbachev's chances of saving the union remain in doubt. (Gumbel, 1991)

For all these doubts, Mr. Gorbachev's treaty was accepted in election by the majority of the people in the Soviet Union. The future of Armenia as an independent state is far from a reality. The 2000 year struggle continues, a fateful heroic course of action with the inner tone and spirit of a tragedy.

## *China*

We selected the People's Republic of China as our fourth case study because it has chosen the path of defending Stalinistic Communist rule and central government control over the economy against the challenge of Western multiparty democracy and market capitalism. The best-fit theatrical metaphor for explaining the interaction of citizens, government, and outside forces in China is the *Japanese Bunraku puppet play*. On stage are three puppeteers, a "reader," and the various puppets involved in the play. In the Japanese form of Bunraku, each puppet, half-life size, is manipulated by three puppeteers who appear on stage dressed entirely in black

and wearing translucent black hoods as they seek to separately influence and collectively control the movements of the heads, arms, and legs of the puppet (Viner, 1987; Doctorow, 1981). These figures in black "disappear" as the action unfolds and the audience concern shifts to the puppets. However, each puppet's actions represent the influence of at least three, somewhat diverse, "shadow" puppeteers. They manipulate the actions from the sidelines, leaving the impression of a consensual performance or public face to the puppets. The tension between the "shadow puppeteers," the "observable action of the puppets," and the "interpretation of the action" is resolved in the story told by the reader. The audience then constructs a coherent interpretation of the play by interacting with each other regarding the meanings of the public action of the puppets, their inferred knowledge of the puppeteers, their interpretations of the story told by the reader. It is out of such discussions among the audience members that a group consensus on the meaning of the play is manufactured.

Japanese Bunraku is the only theater in which a puppet is controlled by more than one puppeteer. The tension created by different puppeteers pulling limbs in different or sometimes complementary directions gives the vibrancy of life to the puppets. The public face of the puppets is the result of a consensus achieved through the balanced resolution of opposing forces. China today, as always, is a balance of competing forces, which in recent years has led the country to appear to take one step forward and two steps back with each change in government control. The Cultural Revolution of Mao, the reenlightenment of the Gang of Four, and the liberalization of Deng, each began as giant steps forward, but as the shadow puppeteers began to disagree on the appropriate ends of each movement, the nation moved dramatically backward in progress. The most recent instance of this behind the scene's puppeteering and public face was the events in May 1989 in Tiananmen Square.

Three shadow puppeteers were at work. First, there was Deng Xiaoping, the aging but still powerful leader of the Communist party and the chief architect of China's economic and political liberalization programs. Second, there was Chen Yun, the aging, but still powerful chairman of the Advisory Committee to the Communist party Central Committee, a strong advocate of political conservatism and a central planned economy and Deng's lifelong competitor for power. Third, there

was the faculty and students who made up the Autonomous Student Union of Beijing University and Colleges, which was set up to mobilize and guide the student movement.

The puppets in this Japanese Bunraku play were Premier Li Peng, a conservative and close ally of Chen Yun, Communist party leader; Zhao Ziang, a liberal and heir opponent to Deng's throne; the military who were divided in their belief that force should be used on the students; and the student liberalization movement, the chief action arm of the Autonomous Student Union.

The readers for this play were the Chinese and foreign press corps. The Chinese press consistently presented the Communist party's interpretation of these events, which at first praised the movement as a legitimate expression of public concern and then condemned the movement as dominated by outside forces and destructive of social cohesion. The foreign press corps presented diverse and sometimes conflicting views of those events, but in general praised the boldness and defiance of the movement and applauded its democratic values.

The audience for this play was a small portion of the Chinese people and a larger foreign audience. The Chinese audience consisted of the small portion of the population who witnessed those events and a larger but still small portion of the population who had access to the story told by the readers. The foreign audience was somewhat larger due to press coverage given these events by members of the foreign press corps sent to cover the Gorbachev state visit. Let us recall briefly some of the major events in this play.

By Spring 1989, the reform programs of the Four Modernizations under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping had been ten years in the making, and problems were mounting. Population growth was not being checked, enterprises in agriculture were working in some areas but not in others, the reforms in industries were uneven and getting mixed results, provinces and local leadership no longer under centralized party control were investing funds in consumer goods and ignoring social and infrastructure needs. In addition, the five special economic zones had created a combination of market prices and government-controlled commodity prices that encouraged corruption by government officials. Inflation had grown to 30 percent and was climbing. Divisions had developed among the members of