

COLD WARS AND HOT ISSUES
(MANAGEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES)
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**COLD WARS AND HOT ISSUES
(management of responsibilities)**

Abstract

HRM research rarely focusses on ethical issues and on moral legacies embedded in employees' cultural software. Ignoring the latter can result in a failure to assess important criteria of strategic HRM policies, which should not stop at the factory door nor at the state borders. Recent HRM problems experienced in the post-communist countries are cases in point. Hidden injuries of cold war include not only the obsolete Russian nuclear submarines waiting for their radioactive spills to enter global food chains. Less visible, but equally dangerous is a moral and an ethical fallout of Stalinism and the failure to de-stalinize. Authoritarian mind-set prevents ex-Soviet citizens from discovering, developing and maintaining civic entrepreneurship. Might (of the state) becomes right (for an individual). Lack of civic entrepreneurship makes redefining collective identity and coming to terms with responsibilities difficult. The emergence of a symbolic cemetery of the Polish officers, prisoners of war murdered on Stalin's orders in 1940, allows us to trace a mechanism for making state violence transparent and for acknowledging collective responsibilities. Is there a lesson to be learned in managing a social learning process in spite of a learned irresponsibility of the "authoritarian personalities"? Can coming to terms with state-controlled genocide provide a starting point for a re-educational campaign and for a coaching of civic virtues? Can management of moral legacies and ethical responsibilities become part and parcel of a future HRM policy for a globally networked world?

Motto

"Workers are not indifferent to the loss of security provided by the social guarantees of the past or to the destruction of the collective institutions of social and welfare provisions. But rather than seeking to build a new relationship between individual and collective in which the workers would take control of their collective institutions, they remain locked into the alienated forms of symbolic collectivism inherited from the past. They treat the collective as a resource imposed from above and seek their salvation in a paternalistic leader who can promise to restore the security of the past (Sarah Ashwin, 1999, 245-6)

Key words

Political trauma, responsibility, ethical fallout, civil entrepreneurship, collective, social learning curve

1. Harvesting political traumas

Paraphrasing Tolstoy, one might say that all post-communist societies are unhappy in their own way. However, they are all unhappy in a different, specific, nation-state bound way. Differences result from a varying degree to which the visible hand of the state managed to crush civil and economic entrepreneurship by eroding social capital (“moral sentiments”). They also stem from a different degree to which civic entrepreneurship either prompted new organizational forms (e.g. the Polish independent trade union “Solidarity” of August 1980) or failed to do so (the Russian case of the miner’s strikes in the 1990ies). Let us for instance ask why none of the post-communist countries can presently be compared to Germany, Italy or Japan twelve years after WWII as far as the economic recovery goes? There are three arguments, whose supporters argue that the post-communist moral traumas are much stronger, hidden injuries of individuals and communities much deeper and reconstruction of a civil society much more difficult than was the case with the post-fascist societies (most of these arguments have been collected and critically discussed in Olson, 2000). They argue, first, that a Russian citizen’s obedience results from seventy five years of a totalitarian, communist training and thus can hardly be compared to a German (1933-1945), Italian or a Japanese one. Second, they claim that it is much too early to tell – the first robust symptoms of a German or Italian economic recovery became obvious in mid-sixties, twenty and not twelve years after the fall of the regime. Third, they claim that a comparison between the post-fascist and post-communist countries is unjustified because the former received a large-scale Marshall aid, while the latter did not (and therefore it is difficult to predict how the former would have performed without it).

None of these arguments is very convincing. Japanese readiness to follow criminal orders (and to give up criticism as a civic virtue) has been forged in an empire, which lasted longer than a cabinet, which led Japan directly to war. Germans had an authoritarian Prussian state, which legitimized itself by playing a major role in unifying German-speaking territories in the XIXth century under an “iron chancellor”(and gave imperial Germany state virtues of “corpse-like obedience”, *Kadavergehorsamkeit*). The long Soviet totalitarian tradition of Russians (1917-1992), has been preceded by an even

longer tradition of an authoritarian tsarist state dominating civil society since the reign of Ivan the Terrible. The argument that one should wait until 2012 to be able to compare the post-fascist and post-communist societies can also be questioned – in 1957 Italian scooters and textiles and German VW “beetles” and Mercedes cars have already testified to the growing competitiveness of reconstructed economies. Russians, however, sell mainly crude oil and minerals (or weapons) in 2001. The third argument appears to carry most weight – could Russia develop more quickly, could Poland or Hungary be on a par with Spain and Portugal now if Marshall plan was available in 1945 and the EU in 1985? However, it is hardly a decisive argument in view of a major disagreement among the economists and political scientists with respect to the impact, which the Marshall plan had on national economies after WWII. According to some economists, the influence of Marshall plan was economically negligible, as the rapid rate of the reconstruction was primarily due to the mobilization of domestic resources of the European capitalist countries after 1945. However, there may be some truth in the Marshall plan argument. Though economically negligible, it may have been psychologically significant. The assistance packages offered to the post-communist countries were much smaller and the opposite was true – aid was conditional and could be offered only if these countries introduced a large-scale privatization and opened their economies to global competitors. No large-scale guarantee fund of the Marshall plan kind was in sight. In view of the fact that their economies could not become competitive under the communist rule, most of the domestic companies were doomed.

Most of the discussions around the differences between the aftermath of fascism and that of communism (understood as state socialism of the stalinist type, gradually softened after Stalin’s death) can be summed up as follows: the fall of fascism did leave much of the market economy militarized and bombed out but functionally well networked, while the fall of communism left much of the economy in shambles, because the networks created by the communist elites could not be sustained without considerable political pressure distorting the economic chains:

“Actors in the post-socialist societies are rebuilding organizations and institutions not *on the ruins* but *with the ruins* of communism as they redeploy available resources in response to their immediate practical dilemmas”(Stark,1997,36)

Perhaps the most interesting and still insufficiently explored argument refers to the ruins of communism understood as hidden moral injuries of a totalitarian collectivism. Stalin has collectivized all social resources and imposed a strict centralized system of state controls on all levels and in all walks of life. Blind obedience was expected of every individual and lack of it (or a display of an independent moral judgement) punished with waves of terror. This system worked in terms of the allocation of resources. Mancur Olson often quoted an example of the difference in ammunition supplies of German and Russian armies in, respectively, WWI and WWII. German soldiers were getting 2,5 times more ammunition in the latter, but Russian ones – 24,5 times more (Olson, 2000, 165). However, centralized control required a periodical random terror to prevent lobbies from forming (by accumulating enough trust in various loci of a tight network of state, army, police and party bureaucracies). Had this system survived intact, a massive unlearning of an individual moral responsibility would have occurred and individuals might have started thinking of themselves as cogs in a machine rolling towards a better future and exonerating them of all possible crimes. The above exoneration would be granted to all accomplices of the program of state genocide had the implementation of policies decided upon by Stalin been automatically regarded as both necessary and desirable. Necessary – because there was no other option and desirable – because it formed a step forward towards a better future for the whole of mankind. Parts of this unlearning did, indeed, occur (children have been known to denounce parents to the authorities for hiding grain during the Ukrainian famine in the 1930ies), but peer networking (among top party officials or army officers) did not stop preventing a complete atomization (and provoking preventive purges of army officers, secret servicemen, biologists, medical doctors, etc.).

This proved to be unfortunate for Stalin. The highest state officials surrounding him on his deathbed in 1953 (and headed by Khrushchev) mustered enough solidarity to let him die before calling for medical assistance and enough courage to strangle his chief of the

secret police, Beria, during the closed meeting of the Political Bureau, thus beginning a slow decline of the Soviet system in its purest, most criminal, stalinist form. This decline made life easier for citizens and consumers within Soviet Union – no large scale terror campaigns have been launched after 1956 and there were no attempts to revert to a large-scale genocide (though limited terror campaigns have been locally initiated after this date and continue to be conducted until the present day).

However, the only moral acts of which Krushtchev was capable of taking over the totalitarian Soviet state, were his speech to the party congress in 1956 and the relaxation of censorship which made it possible for Solzhenitsyn to publish a short story “A Day in Life of Ivan Denisovitch” in a literary journal “Novyj Mir” in 1962. His speech was a confession of guilt and responsibility – but not his or his audience’s. Krushtchev confessed that Stalin was guilty of genocide and so were the party members who executed his orders. Since his revelations came after they had already killed the most responsible person (the tyrant), since this happened after the tyrant got rid of most of his henchmen in subsequent purges, and since the very speech of 1956 was meant as a ritual purge replacing physical terror with a ritual moral admonition, nothing else was done to pursue the traumas of stalinism, to reconcile the victims with the institutions of the state and to determine responsibility (for instance in order to prosecute those who had been guilty of genocide, or to prevent similar abuses of state power in future). Nothing changed in the moral climate of the post-stalinist Soviet Union until the shock of a concentration camp story published by Solzhenitsyn. Most of his readers realized that the shadow universe of concentration camps, traumatically present in the political unconsciousness of a Soviet citizen, has never been properly described, discussed in public, mourned nor morally evaluated. Even Krushtchev’s speech at the party congress has originally been defined as a “secret” one and made available only to the communist party elite. Not a single murderer who kept torturing and killing camp inmates was brought to a court, not a single organization servicing a vast Gulag Archipelago was condemned. The state bureaucracies survived untouched and focussed on advertising the space program rather than coming to terms with moral responsibilities of a citizen of a totalitarian state. One should add that this strange asymmetry between the post-fascist

societies (where genocide accomplices were systematically tracked and punished) and the post-communist ones (where even acknowledged criminals against mankind were not prosecuted) has been much aided by the ideological trench warfare of the Cold War. Fascism was never a great red hope of a major social change and an improvement in the life of the working masses. German racial paradise has never been as attractive to the world's poor as a Soviet (later Chinese) classless paradise. Because of this role of the state socialist system (led by the USSR) in ideological constructions of the western leftist thinkers (who tended to return from carefully orchestrated visits to Russia with the press declarations at hand: "I've seen the future and it works") and because of the skillful global policies of the Russian communists, the question of moral responsibility has never been raised nor systematically pursued. What interests us at present, though, is the answer to the question why these hot ethical issues have not been raised now, after the cold war ended, after Soviet Union fell apart, and civil society started reconstituting itself in the new framework of free elections.

2. Ethical fallout

The breakdown of Soviet Union surprised most of the experts, except for the late Andrei Amalrik (who had been wrong, however, thinking that the empire will obligingly fall apart in 1984, confirming Orwell's bleak anti-utopia) and Emmanuel Todd, who predicted it in 1976 (cf. Todd, 1976, 1990) and a number of left and right critics of stalinism, who understood the absurdity of its economic "base". Surprising was also a lack of immediate soul-searching and self-criticism among Russian intelligentsia. As soon as the institutional form of Soviet Union was abandoned, Russians felt en masse that they are the victims who had been liberated from a prison of many nations. None of them asked about the privileged roles of camp guards and secret police interrogators, none about the former privileged position of ethnic Russians. There was no particular drive towards a rewriting of historical books with less imperial and biased discussion of historical relations with neighbouring countries. Generally speaking, there was a complete lack of ethical issues in public discussions and electoral campaigns. For instance, according to most polls, both the military intervention in Lithuania under

Gorbachev and an indiscriminate killing of civilians in Chechnya under Putin were approved by a majority of the Russians. This willingness to endorse potentially criminal activities of a Russian government (Gorbachev's paratroopers killed Lithuanians defending a TV station in Vilnius, while Putin's soldiers are still decimating the entire Chechnyan population) can be attributed to various factors.

First, one should stress the fact that the state called Soviet Union did not fall apart as a result of a mobilization of a powerful political force within the Russian society. It was therefore not subjected to a principled internal critique in the light of alternative values defended by a genuine Russian political force. When it has been criticised from abroad, there was usually a political capital to be made with an ideological condemnation of "an evil empire", so Russians themselves did not feel an obligation to respond. Charges expressed in the adjective "evil" were explained away as the propaganda accusations of a rival empire. Moreover, Soviet Union was not dismantled by a blueprint. The implosion has been triggered by a power struggle among the members of the party and state power elite trying to save the ruins of an economy, which had been increasingly unable to sustain the state machinery of repression:

"Gorbachev's policies provide a striking example of the paradox that, at least under certain unfavourable conditions and beyond a certain state of disrepair, the most devastating thing one can do to an old regime is to subject it to groundshaking reforms"(Elster et al, 1998, 13)(1)

Since the breakdown of the state was popularly attributed these ruinous attempts to reform, the power elite is also expected to repair the present companies and institutions and to remedy the present malaise. Citizen's initiatives are usually limited. On a shopfloor level they are usually limited to an arrangement between work teams and the foremen or other line managers. On a country level they are limited to the sophisticated intellectual circles of Moscow or St Petersburg who see the necessity of evoking an independent set of values (e.g. within the Helsinki Watch and other Human Rights committees). On the one hand there are thus individualist strategies of survival with the

assistance of family and other personal networks, on the other a faint attempt to present an alternative to the authoritarian values by top intellectual celebrities in the main urban centres. The latter are marginalized and virtually absent from Russian media. In the public sphere a majority thus still look up to the symbolic figurehead representing their interest – a good tsar, a reformist party secretary, a strong president. Figureheads, however, become attractive by virtue of promising a majority of voters a security of a “collective” they identify with and thus further discouraging their emancipation, their social learning, which could lead them towards political organizing and less dependence on powerful figureheads. Accordingly, citizens are forced to choose between the extreme nationalists (who legitimize their program with the pre-communist tradition of Russian state authoritarianism) and the communists, who base their electoral program on a promise of return to a totalitarian welfare state. Winners – Jeltsin or Putin – occupy the middle (“centrist”) ground focussing on the Russian Federation and trying to avoid associations with either the tsarist or bolshevik empires.

None of the major parties – communists, centrists (“statists”) or nationalists – is interested in questions of an ethical fallout of the cold war nor in the ethical inheritance of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Jeltsin has been using the ethical issues of the killing of a tsarist family – but for purely instrumental reasons, i.e. to demonstrate the communists’s lack of respect for the Russian political tradition and to contrast their attitude with his own. Putin has failed to raise any moral issues whatsoever, apart from using a distinctly racist slander (last heard in Europe in the Nazi period) to describe his Chechnyan victims and to blame them for being killed by his troops.

Some political scientists speak of a centrist regime of Jeltsin or Putin as of a lesser evil. A blatantly anti-democratic regime of either communists or nationalists would have been much worse, they claim. Since the lesser evil has its own disadvantages, they label it “a broken-backed democracy”:

“ If there are problems of supply – political elites cannot or will not respect the rule of law, encourage institutions of civil society or act accountably – democracy cannot be

completed, even if free elections are held. Such a regime is called a broken-backed democracy, because it is incapable of dealing with the burdens and responsibilities that it faces. There are many examples of democratic regimes that have lasted for decades or generations without becoming complete and without being overthrown, and they are not confined to post-communist countries. Within the European Union, Greece and Italy are examples. Within the post-communist world, the Russian Federation shows many signs of a prototypical broken-backed democracy.”(Rose et al., 1998, 218)

The fact that a broken-backed democracy emerges in a given country has important consequences for the social learning and the accompanying level of organizing. When choices are reduced to a selection of equally authoritarian symbolic figureheads, the emergence of structural changes – for instance of the independent trade unions and an elaboration of an alternative ideology promoting different values – becomes unlikely:

“Workers’ desire to be defended by strong leaders during the transition period does not manifest itself only at the mine level; it is also apparent in their attitude towards national politics, in particular in the Kuzbass where the support for the communists is strong. Although workers aspire to the security of collectivism, they can only envisage its realization through the benevolence of the line manager, a paternalistic director, or the president of Russia – each of whom personifies the collective at a specific level. This alienated collectivism is exerting a major influence on the development of Russian politics.”(Ashwin, 1999, 268)

Among many consequences of this “alienated collectivism”, the inability to deal with the moral legacy of the Russian and Soviet empires, inability to perform a moral calculus of individual and institutional responsibilities for the crimes of the Soviet state - is crucial. Communist party has never been delegalized in Russia, never compensated its victims and never even discussed an ethical de-contamination campaign (one might called it a de-communication project – after the earlier historical example of “de-nazification”). Nobody held the communist party (as an organization) responsible for genocide and not a single individual was condemned for running ther world’s most extensive network of

concentration camps. Nobody was held responsible for the collaboration with Nazi Germany prior to 1941. There has been no decision of an International Tribunal of Justice in any case of a communist institution and the first communist official to be taken to an international court for crimes against mankind will probably be Slobodan Milosevic, not a Russian veteran manager of the stalinist genocide. There has been no special tribunal for investigating the crimes of communism, nor for a de-contamination of a homo sovieticus.

In a majority of the post-communist countries, the communist parties have either been delegalized or re-named themselves and established social-democratic parties using the former communist party activists, professionals and real estate holdings. Even a thin layer of hypocrisy, a lip service paid to social democracy, is already a manifestation of a moral distancing from stalinism, of a condemnation of it. Not so in Russia – a tacit assumption seems to be that since the party was in power (“might”), it was free to pursue policies as its members saw fit without running the risk of being subjected to a moral judgement (“right”).

This is a kind of an ethical fallout which is much more difficult to deal with than a physical spill-over of the radioactive substances from the rusting submarines in Murmansk. Measurement of the levels of radiation is relatively simple and no amount of secrecy can prevent any major leakage from being detected. However, a widespread indifference to the ethical issues connected to the institutional continuity of a Russian state is not easily detectable and deserves more attention and focussed research. It should be studied if one wants to understand how to assist those social forces and actors which are busy building a Russian market-democracy mix and increase the transparency of the public organizations and institutions. It is far from clear, for instance, what are the communities of reference for major social groups, what is the construction of the boundary between the public and the private (now, that the omnipotent state has allowed private initiative in economic sphere), who constructs codes of civility and of moral evaluation, etc. (cf. Lamont, Thevenot, 2000, 307-327). Should these studies and research programs be launched, one might get valuable instruments for stimulating civic

entrepreneurship and encouraging developments towards a sustainable democracy and a sustainable non-authoritarian set of values (cf. Przeworski, 1995).

3. Civic entrepreneurship

What should be done in order to clean the ethical fallout of the communist system? Generally speaking, collective irresponsibility granted by an omnipresent state should be replaced by an individual responsibility felt and exercised by entrepreneurial citizens. Let us see what has been done so far. Different post-communist societies responded in different ways. East Germans promised all citizens of the former GDR access to their Stasi files and attempted to initiate legal procedures against some of the Stasi employees. The first turned out to be easier than the second. It is an ethical paradox of the totalitarian states that after its breakdown and moral bankruptcy it requires a thorough de-contamination campaign, but the ethical codes and legal procedures of a democratic society prevent this campaign from achieving its goal. What does a de-communization campaign mean? It means that all decent and honest functionaries of the state should be tried for keeping the machinery of the state functioning, and those found guilty of pursuing the most inhuman policies of wronging individuals and communities – should be punished. One may speak of a de-contamination campaign in most of the post-communist countries with the exception of Russia (China, North Korea and Cuba also belong to this category, but communists are still in power there). It is possible that sheer termination of the stalinist terror was enough to pacify Russian population. Every post-stalinist ruler was perceived as much milder, thus meriting less resistance and critique. However, even in those countries where there was a political will and some of the top functionaries of the communist regime had been brought to the court, the punishment meted out by the judiciary has been mild or failed to materialize and the accused were acquitted. Communism has not been as thoroughly criminalized in the post-communist states (and in the eyes of the world's public opinion) as Nazism was in the post-nazi Germany.

Poles, for instance, have reached a round table agreement and the first non-communist Prime Minister gave former communists a chance for a fresh start. He has promised them that a clear red line will be drawn under their doings so far and from that point onwards they will be evaluated according to their present accomplishments, not past sins. Some more radical conservatives were not extremely happy with this solution, but they have managed to modify it only by introducing a law that a candidate for a public position cannot have the past record of collaborating with secret services. The Czechs have simply barred former communists who held party posts from holding public offices in a post-communist Czech republic. Russians did nothing, since all politicians active today are bound to have a communist past. On the other hand, both Jeltsin and Putin have been elected in free elections, in spite of the fact that Putin not only was a communist, but also a career executive of the secret service, KGB, in its foreign operations. While it would have been a restriction on his political chances in Germany, Poland or Czech Republic, it did not matter in Russia. Why did Russian citizens fail to impose anti-communist restrictions on their politicians? Does it testify to their lack of civic entrepreneurship and continuing tacit acknowledgment of the priority of the authoritarian state over civil society? Or is it simply the effect of the lack of appropriate political institutions through which civic entrepreneurship can be manifested and stimulated? Or a mix of both factors?

One could begin by pointing out that in spite of an authoritarian or totalitarian record, no culture is a dogmatic, closed system imposed from above on individual citizens (and thus no culture can be a priori ruled out as the hotbed of civis virtues):

„Anyone who has the slightest understanding of how cultures work knows that defining a culture, saying what it is for members of the culture, is always a major and, even in undemocratic societies, a democratic context. There are canonical authorities to be selected and regularly revised, debated, re-selected or dismissed. There are ideas of good and evil, belonging and not belonging (the same and the different), hierarchies of value to be specified, discussed, re-discussed and settled or not, as the case may be. Moreover, each culture defines its enemies, what stands beyond and threatens it”(Said, 2000, 577).(2)

Therefore developments in Russian cultural life could be monitored from the point of stimulating a regular re-assessment of values in public discussions. In spite of Putin's clamp down on independent media, one could conduct systematic research on „stock exchange” – like transformations in the relative „price” attached to various sets of values by various groups in Russian society. Needless to say, one would be interested in coaching those developments which testified to the birth of entrepreneurship (for instance by providing the emergent institutions catering to a „public spirit” with the network of international contacts). Civic entrepreneurship usually manifests itself in a refusal to accept civil liberties and participatory decision-making at all levels of organizational life as something authorities either allow or ban. One of the main reasons for lack of independent trade unions in the economic and political landscape of Russia after the large wave of coal miners strikes in the late 1990ies is precisely this scarcity of civic entrepreneurship. Rights are still considered something an authoritarian ruler is free to give or take away as he or she wishes. This latter attitude has been expressed in the following way by a brigadier in a Siberian coal mine interviewed by Sarah Ashwin:

„'When perestroika and glasnost began, it was easier to change (the forewoman). Now there isn't any glasnost, there's nothing. Now the managers decide everything again. But before perestroika it was absolutely impossible. Gorbachev gave us some rights... he allowed the collective to decide everything. Now there is very little that is decided by the collective'. What is notable about this account is the passive role it accurately accords to workers in the process: rights are given and taken away rather than fought for or defended.”(Ashwin, 1999, 258)

If a member of a work collective has so little real choice and depends so much on the authoritarian power-holder – how can he or she undertake a much more sophisticated and difficult analysis of his or her cultural identity? How can he or she identify with an ethnic group, if for most of its recorded history it had been managed by an authoritarian or even totalitarian state, responsible for crimes committed in its service? How can he or she explain his or her inability to deal with the willing executioners of the stalinist state?

Defending good name of my ethnic group I have to deal with those responsible for many crimes, for instance for pulling the trigger and shooting twenty thousand of the Polish officers in the backs of their heads in 1940? Stalin thought it convenient to get rid of a selected group under his jurisdiction and he wielded an almost absolute power – doesn't it absolve the executioners who had no choice, either? We tend to think that it does not and that no amount of denial („Ich habe es nicht gewusst”) can exonerate Stalin's willing executioners. But how to convince them and their families, the rest of society and the law enforcement agencies that these individuals should undergo a de-communization or a moral de-contamination process in order to understand that it is wrong not to formulate such questions? How to convince them that a prolonged and consistent pressure exercised by the Polish government and non-governmental organizations to publish historical details of the Katyn massacre, to open the Polish military cemeteries on the sites where the victims had been buried in mass graves, to include data on this act of genocide in historical handbooks – that all of this is a service paid by the Polish civic entrepreneurs (aided by Russian and Byelorussian NGO's) to their Russian fellow-citizens, not an attempt to humiliate them as descendants of slaves and servants of an empire?

This question can only be answered if we are able to outline a social learning curve and find out if crucial questions had been asked and subjected to an open public discussion. Degree of responsibility and degree of acknowledgment of the moral trouble with our cultural legacies can only be measured in an intuitive way. British citizens alive in 2001 cannot be held responsible for crimes committed by the British Army in India in the XIXth century. But they could be held responsible for whitewashing their cultural legacy if Orwell failed to publish „Burmese Days” or V.S. Naipaul had to submit his novels for a state censorship. We should also point out that what gives us – on the other side of the former „iron curtain” – a right to expect cleansing rituals in Russia, i.e. (coming to terms with their genocidal past) is that we are undergoing them ourselves. The reason the so-called „free world” should never feel superior even if Russians are slow in coming to terms with their past is that the so-called „West” is also bogged down in a number of moral dilemmas. There is, for instance, a dilemma of a smooth market with no bounds (formulated as an ideology of „globalization”, which presumably requires „a retreat of

the state”, and imposed on the whole world). However, there is a difference. As some of the critical scholars formulate it:

„The dominating discourse of the global market is represented as the only alternative, as the modern alternative, and other cultural forms are seen as backward. (...) The incomplete and inadequate nature of the individualization produced by the global market could be thus highlighted, and opened up for the emergence of competing discourses that define globalization from multiple perspectives. It is then important to ask oneself what kind of powers are involved in constituting one’s identity and actions in order to begin to challenge the discourse at the individual level. As a result, the discourse of globalization could be challenged by multiple alternative discourses which coexist and blend with each other, bringing the normalizations produced into focus and potentially leading to a transformation to the dominant system of thought.”(Penttinen, 2000, 219)(3)

In this type of a transformation we are usually dealing with a social learning curve as defined by Boisot (Boisot, 1995, 1999).

4. Social learning curve

Not many contemporary social scientists believe in an invisible hand of a market (though transaction cost theory seems to be still a dominant paradigm in economics) and some if not most would agree that a governance structure imposed by a state responsive to civil society should guide this not-so-invisible hand. One of the reasons for the establishment of this governance structure is a necessity to safeguard a shift of resources from loss-making to profit-making undertakings. The more smoothly this shift takes place, the more prosperous a given country becomes. Once we scan the list of the countries which are prosperous – so goes this reasoning - we can notice that their prosperity is proportional to their safeguarding of individual rights and individual’s unequal profits (deviations from this pattern – for instance autocratic countries in south-east Asia, are explained away as local variations on a global theme, with collective security replacing individual freedom as the guiding ideal). Unequal profits of companies are – of course – a powerful generator

of inequalities. If my governance system supplies solid guarantees of individual rights – everybody can be sure that success (and increase in inequality) will not be punished. Such guarantees are not a luxury but a necessity – if one wants general prosperity to grow, unthreatened by either bureaucracies or mafias or even corporate predators eager to establish monopolies and exploit them at the expense of all real and potential competitors.

Safeguarding individual rights is important from the economic point of view – but even more so from the point of a political participation, of civic entrepreneurship and of a social learning process. It becomes all – important if a social learning process has to be reinforced, stimulated and guided. The social learning process involves organizations, and it makes individuals steer their companies between fiefs, bureaucracies, markets and clans. These are Boisot's four major clusters of the most typical organizational forms. They are, in a sense, institutionalized capital and information intensive economic orders (classes of companies and institutions) and they float as schools of fish in Boisot's three dimensional information space. They float in search of an ever changing adaptational advantage, and they continually engage in a dynamic competition. Dynamic competition drives human organizations and whole societies to restructure themselves so as to design new companies and institutions, letting them move between the ideal types of fiefs, bureaucracies, markets, or clans. Boisot's Information Space is characterized by three dimensions: abstraction-concreteness, codification – non-codification and dissemination – non-dissemination. All three dimensions are related to knowledge and information as the main differentiating factors, which decide an organization's competitive advantage. Since the evolution of organizational forms proceeds through the generation of novelty and variety and by a subsequent selection from it, a preservation of a freedom to generate variety is very important. Preserving such freedom – for instance by adhering to the „universal values” and respecting the rights of an individual, societies are keeping the stage set for new dress rehearsals of potentially evolutionarily „profitable” organizational inventions. Boisot claims that an attempt to impose a market economy from above in Russia failed, while the one in China (imposing a capitalist system also from above, but through delegating it to a mid-level of provincial and city government and regional

enterprise management) succeeded. The reason for it should be found not in the authoritarian tradition in itself, but in the fact that:

„economic models that focus centripetally on one transactional form to the exclusion of the others – bureaucracies in the case of mercantilism or Marxism-Leninism, markets in the neoclassical case – perform a premature selection on a necessary institutional variety that is never given opportunity to emerge. (...) The single-minded pursuit of a neoclassical market order in Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet Union, for example, by stifling the institutional variety necessary for social learning to take root, may turn out to inhibit rather than to stimulate capitalist processes. And paradoxically, China, if it succeeds in effectively accomodating embryonic markets in a culture that still remains strongly invested in clans and fiefs, may get closer to successfully operating a social learning curve than post-communist Europe. The Marxist-Leninist proclamations of the ageing Chinese leaders notwithstanding, China will harbour the institutional variety necessary for genuine capitalist evolution.”(Boisot, 1995, 440)(4)

The Russian social learning curve should be monitored especially closely in view of the fact that in spite of the initial impulse of glasnost, the learning process did not result in any durable organizational restructuring preventing illegal or state monopolies, nor in more democratic political and social arrangements for the majority of Russians in their daily environments. The democratization of a formal electoral system has already been introduced, but a profound and broad discussion on the present consequences of the past totalitarian destruction of values still waits for a political owner. No one can democratize social relations and a political system without making his or her party's ideology compatible with the prevalent values and goals. But what should we do if these values and goals reflect the long tradition of enslavement in authoritarian and even totalitarian regimes, as was the case with the Russians (whose XIXth century revolutionaries' predicament has once been dryly described by Joseph Conrad as „senseless despair caused by senseless tyranny”)? Are we then facing the situation in which genuine, embedded cultural values of Russians are those of the „cunning slaves” and if we broaden political participation they will gain the upper hand at the expense of what we consider

„proper” civis virtues? How can we then legitimize imposing them on Russians from above (and thus prolonging vicious circle of authoritarian, top-down modernization cycles in Russian history)? There is no easy answer to this question, but one should draw lessons from various manifestations of genuine, bottom-up, democratic political participation movements (some of which emerged in the course of the Russian revolution and were subsequently destroyed by the Bolsheviks). Can a program of a genuine democratic control of all organizations, companies and institutions (often glimpsed in various guises in western social movements) offer some safeguards against the re-emergence of the ghosts of the past? Can we start with the basic places of socialization – a family, a school and a workplace? (5)

We should, perhaps, develop an international program of cultural and ethical post-totalitarian de-contamination (a suggestion already made by a countercultural young artistic group trying to counter a government propaganda machine in Milosevic’s Serbia,). We should, perhaps, try to have it embedded in networked communities of alternative social movements (thinkers as diverse as Castells, Sen and Melucci have been experimenting with this instrument of egalitarian corrections of the excessive control performed by states and markets). Some movements for the restoration of the cemeteries and mass graves of the victims of stalinism have already achieved a modest degree of success in Russia and other post-stalinist states. They deserve attention and assistance. A visit to the graves of the Polish officers murdered in Katyn in 1940 might be an interesting starting point for the revised history handbooks project (there is a precedent case of the Polish-German joint history handbook and an international know-how on management of such joint commissions). Russian schoolchildren might start learning about their national history from the books which offer a more balanced, less nationalistic point of view. They might start learning that their parents and grandparents occupied both the victims’ and the henchmen’s positions in Soviet social system and that they themselves should rehearse not only proud identification with military victories but also with the responsibility of some of their fathers for state-organized genocide. A visit of school children to the graves of the Polish officers would symbolically reveal the painful, criminal record of the Soviet empire, contrasting with the streamlined propaganda vision

of world war II as the great defensive war for the Soviet motherland, and stimulating independent, individual critical view of national history. A visit to a mausoleum of the victims of the Soviet empire might also mark the beginning of an alternative route for educational travel through the former Soviet Union – a travel which could be recommended not only to a foreign but also to a Russian traveller. The above project selects the school-based beginning – in spite of the fact that family and workplace would be much more effective as platforms on which the removal of ethical fallout of the totalitarian period could be accomplished.

However, families and workplaces are also much more difficult for any democratizing action group to enter, and thus schools might offer a promising starting point for the whole re-educational campaign. The precondition of success is that the Russians themselves decide that they welcome a de-contamination, they want to start a re-education campaign. As of the present writing it is far from certain if this, indeed, is or will be in a foreseeable future, the case. The legacy of the cold war does not seem to be a hot issue adding to the burdens of the new, post-communist Russians. Most of the researchers notice that media refer to the cold war in the context of maintaining the status of a superpower in geopolitical and military sphere, not in the context of the values and their concretization in Soviet policies.

This means that one should hope for a genuine political movement starting a major campaign to increase the Russian awareness of dangers related to the pollution of a moral environment by an unanalysed totalitarian and criminal heritage – not to put the Russians to shame as Russians(6), but to remind them that:

„there is a limited set of deontological values that speak to all people, although in nonfree societies, awareness of these might be suppressed”(Etzioni, 2001, 245)(7)

5. Might, right and nuclear weapons

It remains to be seen if a hot issue can be made out of a dead weight of authoritarian heritage burdening the Russian social life with the ghosts of the cold war. Doubts concerning feasibility of this ethical cleanup campaign arise once we realize that there is another major difference between an accomplished de-nazification project in Germany after 1945 and a potential de-sovietization project in Russia of the turn of the XXIst century, namely, the nuclear weapons. When German Nazis were defeated in 1945, they had to surrender unconditionally and a campaign of de-nazification was imposed on them by the victorious allied governments. When Soviet Union fell apart in 1992, the world's second largest nuclear arsenal remained operational and the political and military elite of the Russian Federation continued to control it. The other governments were more focussed on the quality of this control, less on an ethical fallout campaign. Indeed, it should be of a much higher concern for the citizens of Russian Federation and for the Russian government than for the other societies and governments. Nevertheless, non-Russians can manifest a sympathetic understanding of and support for civic entrepreneurs trying to undermine the authoritarian tradition and demanding a transparent responsibility scheme or a system of checks and balances for public functionaries. Triggering public debates on the ethical fallout of the communist past could be one of the forms of aiding such initiatives.

Triggering a public debate in Russia one could employ many cases. For the purposes of the present paper on a possible global HRM policy based on a post-Soviet de-contamination campaign a case of the Katyn massacre had been as a potential starting point of a genuine, self-reflexive, re-educational campaign. The case – like many similar cases - lends itself to an interesting moral, ethical, political and social analysis. First, victims of stalinist genocide are the Polish military officers who had been taken prisoners of war by the Red Army in the fall of 1939. On September 17, 1939 Stalin met his obligations following a secret clause of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of August 1939 and collaborated with Hitler in partitioning Poland, which had already been fighting superior German forces since September 1st. Embarking on a program of exterminating all Poles who could not be easily sovietized in a future Soviet republic or a satellite state, Stalin decided to murder officers – who had been recruited from professionals necessary to run

a modern state and who would presumably object to the planned sovietization and vassalization of Poland. In 1940 his command had been carried out. Officers and soldiers of the Russian secret service killed ca. 20.000 Polish officers by shooting them in the back of their heads and burying them in mass graves near Katyn. The massacre of the Polish POW's was not an extraordinary undertaking - large groups of Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians or Lithuanians have also been executed and their bodies buried in mass graves by Stalin's secret services. However, what made it different was first of all a determinate campaign of the victims' families to reconstruct their fate and the fact that after Hitler's break with Stalin and his invasion of Soviet Union the mass graves have been found and bodies of the victims identified. Soviet authorities dismissed this discovery claiming that it was a Nazi propaganda and Germans killed officers themselves. When this lie was unmasked by the independent experts from Swedish Red Cross, Soviet authorities forced the allied governments to keep silent about this crime – claiming that Russian contribution to the war effort was more important than honouring victims of genocide. After the fall of the Soviet Union the case has been thoroughly investigated, documents from KGB archives recovered (with Stalin's hand written command), graves unearthed and researched, Polish military cemeteries and monuments built and opened on the sites of the massacre. Invited by the Polish government, Putin declined. Generally speaking, there is little effort on the Russian part to come to terms with either this or a more general ethical legacy of the Soviet past expressed in Brzezinski's brief indictment:

„Communism will be remembered largely as the twentieth century's most extraordinary political and intellectual aberration”.(Brzezinski, 1989, 1)(8)

Or in Malia's bitter diagnosis of the ethical fallout of the Soviet period;

„The most debilitating and antimodern aspect of Sovietism has been its effect on the population's mentality: it left behind an envious egalitarianism, a suspicion that entrepreneurship is speculation, the reflex of responding to administrative commands rather than to market incentives, and the dulling pall cast by Marxist-Leninist dogma

over habits of critical thought. To these must be added the depressing awareness that boundless sacrifices had only produced national failure, and that the country had wasted, in the folk phrase, 'seventy years on the road to nowhere'." (Malia, 1994, 510)(9)

In view of the above statement and against the background of global networking of states, markets and other agencies, a cultural de-contamination program suggested above could form part and parcel of strategic HRM policies pursued by the supranational organizations. Such policies could not stop at the factory door, neither should they stop in front of a nation-state border. State cynicism of the Soviet power elite has been tempered with the loss of the superpower status and the growth of the European Union - oriented and NATO – focussed community of the post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe. It has not disappeared because the access to the nuclear arms means a rough parity with the US in terms of the mutually assured destruction, but it has diminished because the Russian elite understood the importance of international networking for maintenance of its position (lifting of „Kursk” by Dutch specialists is the case in point). However, the cynicism of the ordinary Russians, subjects of the past „evil empire”, has not been weakened by the de-sovietization campaigns, which are slow in emerging (though they do emerge in spite of the aura of hostile indifference). Let us hope that the ghosts of the cold war (once rekindled during the brief period of Kosovo intervention) will not emerge as hot mobilization issues reinforcing the grip of the authoritarian state on the post-communist Russians and dismantling the de-contamination efforts of an emergent civil society. An attempt at the formulating of a global HRM policy manifested in the Helsinki agreement of the Committee of the European Security and Cooperation (the human rights clause) could then become a stepping stone towards a more global and more systematically pursued HRM policy for a networked global society.

Notes:

- (1) Or, as another author puts it: „Had the consequences of Gorbachev’s reform initiatives been known in advance, it would have encouraged such bunker mentality that no change would have been attempted. Differently put, Gorbachev destroyed state socialism perfectly because he was blind” (Hall, 1995, 34)
- (2) In a different essay in the same volume, reviewing Hobsbawm’s overview of the XXth century – „The Age of Extremes” – Said makes a final moral judgement. He writes that: „Missing from the panorama Hobsbawm presents is the underlying drive or thrust of a particular era. I assume that this is because he thinks impersonal or large scale forces are more important, but I wonder whether witnesses, militants, activists, partisans and ordinary people are somehow of less value in the construction of a full-scale history of the twentieth century.(...) The twentieth century after all is a great age of resistance, and that has not completely been silenced.”(op.cit.,pp.481-483)
- (3) The editors of the volume write in an epilogue printed behind Penttinen’s contribution: „Understanding the dynamics of power in different practices, particularly in multilevel governance, requires knowledge of the exercise of power, structural power and systemic power. The analysis of contemporary power in the international system, which often functions as a context for individuals, organizations, networks of private and public actors, and states, has produced a great variety of continuities and discontinuities.(...) Empirical events are changing rapidly; we do not know if the nation-state will survive, if there will be a global governance, if neoliberalism can remain a dominant discourse or if the future lies in the direction of American hegemony.”(op.cit.pp. 221-222)
- (4) Boisot has, of course, a slightly different view of capitalism as a global system than a neoclassical, market-focussed one. Thus he writes: „It is the flow of data along the three dimensions of the I-space which, by activating the social learning curve and promoting social learning, makes it difficult to durably associate a particular level of governance with a particular institution or set of institutions. Social learning is a creative destruction at work. It is the essence of capitalism as described by

Schumpeter and as understood by Marx. The neoclassical orthodoxy by equating capitalism with markets, a single staging post along the social learning curve, ignores its evolutionary character. Dynamic competition brings about irreversible transformations which are not captured by equilibrium models. Indeed, Fernand Braudel, studying capitalism from a historical perspective, presents it as an antithesis of efficient markets. His whole thesis is that capitalism cannot be reduced to a market order tout court, that it is an ancient, multifaceted phenomenon that effectively coexisted with various modes of production, sometimes working in harmony with them and at others not. Pelikan describes capitalism as a class of regimes taking a regime as a set of institutional constraints on the decision-making of agents. Braudel cites the case of Imperial China to show that the existence of markets may be a necessary but hardly a sufficient condition for the emergence of capitalism - a thesis that the current Chinese leadership would doubtless warmly applaud.”(op.cit., pp. 439-440)

- (5) A similar suggestion has been made in a different context by Ian Shapiro, who wanted to probe into a family and a workplace in order to find a compromise between liberalism and communitarianism and to outline the principles of democratic justice (Shapiro, 1999) Incidentally, Shapiro opens his study with a quote from the Polish poet, Zbigniew Herbert. Herbert’s poem, „The Knocker”, merits attention in view of the discussion of moral responsibility and the most opportune ways of re-educating a post-communist society with a de-contamination purpose in mind:

There are those who grow
Gardens in their heads
Paths that lead from their hair to sunny and white cities

it’s easy for them to write
They close their eyes
Immediately schools of images
Stream down from their foreheads

My imagination
Is a piece of board
My sole instrument
Is a wooden stick

I strike the board
It answers me
Yes-yes
No-no
(ibid.)

- (6) cf. Etzioni, (Etzioni,2001), who claims that shaming may be a preferred alternative to jailing and offers, half-seriously, the following advice: „Young drug dealers, caught for the first time peddling, should be sent home with their heads shaved and without their pants instead of being jailed”.(op.cit.,p.37). However, the collective shaming in case of Russia (or China for that matter) may easily deteriorate into a manifestation of a western superiority, which will certainly fail to trigger a self-analysis among the new Russians.
- (7) Etzioni does realize that the most important values are inherited from a community we are embedded in and not from a state we are subjected to – hence a family or a workplace might offer better starting points for a de-contamination (re-education in civic entrepreneurship and re-habilitation of civic virtues) of the post-communist Russians than a school, a handbook and a formal, state-controlled educational process. However, bureaucratically controlled schools are a manageable starting point and hopefully children will bring their handbooks to discuss them with parents at home, while parents in turn will discuss them with their colleagues at work.
- (8) Brzezinski clearly demonstrates numerous parallels between the Nazis and the bolsheviks, but does not analyze the reasons for a perfect asymmetry with which Nazi and Bolshevik genocide had been treated so far: „Philosophically, Lenin and Hitler were both advocates of ideologies that called for social engineering on a vast scale, that arrogated to themselves the role of arbiters of truth, and that subordinated

society to an ideological morality, one based on class warfare and the other on racial supremacy, and that justified any action that advanced their chosen historical missions. Hitler was a careful student of the Bolshevik concept of the militarized vanguard party and of the Leninist concept of tactical accommodation in the service of ultimate strategic victory, both in seizing power and in remolding society. Institutionally, Hitler learned from Lenin how to construct a state based on terror, complete with its elaborate secret police apparatus, its reliance on the concept of group culpability in dispensing justice, and its orchestrated show trials.(...) In fact, it is no exaggeration to assert that Hitler was as much a Leninist as Stalin was a Nazi. (...) Both tyrants justified the imposition of total control by the State by the openly proclaimed objective of reconstructing society from top to bottom, in keeping with a dogmatic but otherwise vague notion of a new utopian order.”(op.cit.,pp.7-8) What Brzezinski does not say is that while the nazi ideal of racially pure society was hardly attractive to anyone outside of Germany (although some segments of French, British and Scandinavian elites seemed to have been temporarily attracted to it), the ideal of a classless society was shared by a very large number of social movements inspired by Marxian writings and working class protests. Thus Stalin was able to legitimize his genocide for a much longer time in many more social settings, which made the moral condemnation of the „left” genocide much more difficult than the one perpetrated by the „right”. Even today, terrorist actions of right wing militias in the USA are condemned more easily than terrorist excesses of the anti-globalization protesters (who tend to be associated with the „left”).

- (9) What Malia says about Russia is echoed by Berend speaking of the central European post-communist states: „After a century of revolts against peripheral backwardness, after several, though different types of, revolutions and four decades of desperate experiment, in the end always ended up where they had started. After its long detour, Central and Eastern Europe was still languishing on the periphery of Europe.”(Berend, 1998, XVI)

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