

was obligated to make that teaching clear and apprehensible. In the latter undertaking, however, he has fallen short. His discussion of natural law, for example, is thin and unconvincing. (That Socrates refers to such a law does not demonstrate its application to today's abortion issue.) A weak presentation of a contested concept only further erodes its usefulness.

Ever since last November when the USCC issued a statement on abortion, reminding public officials and others that "No Catholic can responsibly take a 'prochoice' stand" (*Origins*, November 16, 1989), various bishops have sought to clarify and apply it with mixed results. Nonetheless, as Cardinal Joseph Bernardin wrote compellingly in these pages (April 20, 1990) concerning the church's proper course following the *Webster* decision: "To grasp the opportunity of a post-*Webster* period, we need to join firm conviction... with a capacity to build a consensus at the legal level that will significantly reduce the number of abortions." Building that consensus is a critical and long-term task which, realistically, may take decades. In 1990, threatening anathemas is almost certainly the surest way to undermine the process and to insure the church's views will not reach those who need to hear them the most, those Americans (about 60 percent) who are unhappy with the present legal status of abortion.

NELSON MANDELA

In a time of sound bites, he speaks in paragraphs. Engaged in a life-and-death struggle in which some of his opponents represent the darkest aspects of human nature, he avoids labels, incitement, polemics. A champion of democracy and of the oppressed, he brings to the hustings a courtly, even regal bearing. Nelson Mandela's record compels admiration and his presence commands respect: responses that, in an era of small expectations from public figures, easily turn into something warmer.

What may be most impressive about Mandela, however, is his refusal to pander. During his U.S. tour he never forgot (or let anyone else forget) his objectives: to "keep the pressure on" the white minority government of South Africa, to raise money for the African National Congress. Equally, he never downplayed his history or his principles to evade questions others might have found awkward. In the American context, for example, why acknowledge Fidel Castro as a "comrade-in-arms"? Why declare solidarity with the PLO? Since President F. W. de Klerk has committed himself to negotiations on the future of South Africa, why does the ANC not renounce the use of violence? Mandela replied forthrightly:

The enemies of the U.S. are not necessarily the enemies of black South Africans. Decades ago, when agents of the ANC first sought international support, the U.S. would not give them the time of day, while Cuba gave instant encouragement and practical help. The Palestinians, like Mandela's people, are not free citizens in their own land, and the government of Israel has seen fit to cooperate with the government of South Africa in ways that serve apartheid. As for violence: It is the South

African government that sets the terms of engagement; it has neither abjured the use of illegal violence by its own forces nor taken irreversible steps to end apartheid.

On violence, Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. would have answered differently; but Mandela defends an understanding of revolution and violence closer to the politics of Sam Adams—or George Washington—and his view is compatible with just war ethics. On other issues—the ANC's alliances outside and within South Africa, its economic program, the depth of its commitment to basic liberties and to pluralism—there may be cause for uncertainty, as there is about the real intentions of the white minority.

But none of this gives reason for questioning the stature and integrity of Nelson Mandela. By his words, his demeanor, his life, he earned the welcome he received and set a standard worthy of emulation.

REPORT FROM POLAND

AFTERMATH OF CORRUPTION OLD HABITS DIE HARD



On May 27, Lublin poll workers, reporting early to their precincts for Poland's first fully free elections since World War II, were confronted with a problem. The ballots they were expected to hand out were oversized sheets of paper on which the candidates for local offices had been reduced to fine print in cramped, narrow columns. Boxes to check were next to the names, but the small typeface and lack of margins made it difficult to discern which box went with which candidate. The confusing layout was particularly nettlesome because Communist functionaries running for reelection were placed side-by-side with the overwhelmingly more popular Solidarity slate. Indignant election volunteers spent the morning painstakingly penciling in lines to mark the distinctions.

Whether the ballot was the work of an inept printer or a sly, last-gasp attempt at deception by the dying regime, it was just one more affront to Poles who for forty-five years have been at the mercy of clumsy and contemptuous bureaucrats. In Lublin and throughout Poland, voters threw out the Communist officials to reinstate autonomous local governments. But the excitement of the revolution in Poland and throughout the former East Bloc has now given way to the mundane routine of making it work, even in the small task of making a ballot readable.

Poles are tired of cleaning up the mess left by communism. Their hopes that life would improve under democracy have been tempered with the reality of mounting unemployment, ever rising prices, and a decline in real wages. When asked when it will get better, some reply with sarcasm: "It already was." Registering their fatigue and frustration with the general condition of their country, they stayed away in droves from May's local elections.

In fact, as election day neared Lech Walesa had been sent scrambling to avert a crippling strike by rail workers.

Given the country's obviously inefficient and environmentally disastrous industries, no one, including the aggrieved rail workers, questions the need for a radical restructuring of the Polish economy. What remains to be seen, however, is who will control this process. Adam Michnik, editor of Poland's first independent daily and a member of Parliament, says that while the old order no longer exists, the new order does not exist. "In other words, our lot now is freedom, but democracy is not yet our lot."

Election day in Lublin was one stop on our Polish pilgrimage, a twelve-day tour retracing our steps from a similar journey two years ago, working on a research project on the nature of hope. Hope has been emblematic of Poland's history and inextricably linked to the past decade. It inspired Walesa to subtitle his autobiography "A Way of Hope," and the Gdansk shipyard workers to memorialize their murdered colleagues with anchors affixed to crosses—hope crucified. Hope is one of many characteristically Polish paradoxes.

Take the image of Poland as a garden. From Gdansk to Lublin to Poznan, the countryside was a field in flower in the first true "Polish spring." Every small village and wayside was adorned with beribboned shrines to the Virgin Mary, the icon of Polish Catholicism. Horse-drawn carts lumbered along the byways and farmers toiled with hand scythes. Notwithstanding serious concerns about pollution, it appears that abundant Poland could feed itself until one recalls that a third of the 38 million Poles live "in areas of ecological disorder," with some soils so contaminated that authorities have banned vegetable farming.

The newly unfettered market has also created an image of Poland as one wild garage sale. Everything from car parts to produce to family heirlooms is peddled by entrepreneurs who spread out a blanket and open shop. Those open-air markets are not new; technically illegal, they were nonetheless tolerated under the old system. But capitalism has supplied a new vigor. Today one can stroll in the shadow of Warsaw's garish Palace of Culture, a monument to Stalin's bad taste, to buy a bottle of milk here, a pork chop there. Poles reportedly now purchase half their food from impresarios doing business from the backs of pickups.

The apex of the entrepreneurial fever sweeping Poland is found at Warsaw's sparkling new Marriott Hotel. When we visited, an international business conference was taking place. We heard American, British, and German accents mingled with Polish ones as executives "networked" new business opportunities. Westerners on expense accounts are accustomed to the cost of upscale accommodations, but at \$160, a night in the Marriott is equivalent to three months' salary for the average Pole.

Some critics, including Walesa, have said the collapse of the Communist system and Poland's rush to create a private market economy have spawned a new nomenclature of the wealthy elite, a kind of hybrid of the former privileged bureaucracy and the budding entrepreneurs. Others fear the creation of a new "capital-friendly" economy will encourage German designs on Poland's western boundaries. One Polish friend told us, "The German economic invasion has already begun."

In keeping with *Commonweal's* usual summer schedule, only one issue is published each month during July and August. The next issue will be dated August 10.

Life in Poland hasn't changed that much, insisted some old friends and new acquaintances. They reminded us that the Polish press, literature, and theater have been far freer than their counterparts in the Soviet Union or the rest of Central Europe. But from our admittedly narrow Western perspective, we sensed a difference. Gone were the surly shop assistants and apathetic waiters. Political posters were plastered everywhere. Most of all, we felt the absence of uncertainty, the equivocal atmosphere that two years ago seemed saturated with fear and danger.

Now there is MTV on the television and kiwi fruit in the market stalls, albeit at prices not many can afford. Heated political debates, which can extend far into the night, now include jovial arguments about whether the Solidarity press spokeswoman is too biased or whether Jacek Kuron, the founding father of Polish dissent, should button up his shirt to look more professional.

In Fabryka Samochodow, where sixty orange Zuk trucks roll off the assembly every day, there was obvious pride in the changes. Solidarity maintains its own suite of offices in the factory, which now produces trucks according to market analysis rather than meaningless government quotas. Employees who drink on the job will be sacked immediately. As we watched the workers tool auto parts with outmoded equipment, our trade-union guide told us anyone can make trucks with the technology available in the West. "With Polish machines it is an art," he said.

At the Polish Aviation Works in Swidnik, we puzzled over the decor of another Solidarity office, which displayed a crucifix and photo of Pope John Paul II on one wall and a *Playboy*-style pinup calendar on another. When the Communists held sway, it was much easier to define where Solidarity stood. Walesa writes that there was always a religious relevance to the struggle for democracy since the union never advanced an economic or institutional theory. It simply sought human dignity. Bogdan Borusewicz, chairman of Solidarity in the Gdansk region, described the new challenge for the trade union as twofold: "To get control of the economy and to defend the weakest." Asked whether Solidarity wishes to be a union or a political party, he told us the only issue is for it to remain a political force. Borusewicz insisted that Solidarity does not take directions from the church. It listens but takes its own course, he said.

We watched Zbigniew Brzezinski, dressed in medieval garb, accept an honorary doctorate from the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL). Said to be the third most popular Polish personality, after Walesa and the pope, the former U.S. national security advisor called for a new moral framework to undergird the restructured society. There is no place for hatred or bias, he said, because "mutual profits are more valuable than former prejudices." He advised the church not to expend its energy in issuing orders or setting restrictions but in educating and encouraging the public.

Joachim Kondziela, chairman of the Department of Social Sciences at KUL, elaborated by discussing two issues being

fiercely debated within Polish society, issues that reflect the wide range of personal beliefs. One is an attempt to introduce Catholic religious education in the public schools. The other is abortion.

Regarding Catholic instruction in schools, Kondziela said he feared it would cause “a new ideological isolation of non-believers.” Abortion, relied upon in this overwhelmingly Catholic nation at a rate similar to that of the United States, is an incendiary issue in Poland as well. Kondziela said he feared a protracted debate would result in a “polarization of attitudes” that might destroy the public consensus needed to achieve economic and social reforms. In a democratic state, this priest observed, there is no need for the church to mediate between state and society. It must assume a new role, he said, helping people learn to integrate the sometimes conflicting spheres of national and everyday values. KUL is stepping up to that task, launching new courses in the ethics of entrepreneurship, marketing, and banking.

Blaming one's predecessors is an old political trick. In Poland, it has been elevated to an art form. What isn't openly acknowledged is Czechoslovakian President Havel's persistent theme that Eastern Europeans shared responsibility for maintaining totalitarianism, if only by outwardly giving in to conformity and hypocrisy. As Havel puts it, “The main pillar of the system [was] living a lie.” Living such a lie, according to Michnik, means basing all relations on pretense. “It means I look a person in the eye while actually watching his hands. It means that I assume him capable of cheating. It also means that I have the

same opinion of humanity in general and of myself.”

A tangible result of Communist oppression is that Poles have learned to compartmentalize their public and private lives. Public lives, which included jobs or any interaction with the government, were conducted relative to the corrupt system. Private lives were the universe of family and friends. Two different moralities existed, side by side, so that what might be legal might not be considered moral; and what was illegal might often be considered moral. When people find it necessary to subvert a system in order to survive, the borders between the moral and amoral are understandably hazy.

Several days into our stay, one of us asked our host for assistance in placing an international phone call. Given Poland's creaky communications systems, such a call is a tedious process that involves making a reservation hours in advance. In no special hurry, the caller was amazed when our Polish friend lied to the operator: the call must be connected immediately because the caller's infant son was ill.

It was a small thing: telling a tiny “white lie” so that a phone call could be placed more quickly. But it surprised us; until we recalled that in the past we had praised and laughed at our host's cunning ways of outwitting the system, a shrewd skill that, to our minds, now no longer seemed necessary.

MARY ROTHSCHILD & EDWARD SCHAU

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OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

WHO'S ON FIRST AND WHAT'S ON DECK

In the mid-1960s Charles de Gaulle, then president of France, remarked that the United States had won the cold war but didn't realize it: his point being that the war in Vietnam was unnecessary from the point of view of American interests.

Well, whether or not we had won the cold war as early as twenty-five years ago, there is no question that we have won it now. The collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe means that the United States and its allies have prevailed in the protracted struggle between Communist East and anti-Communist West that began in the aftermath of World War II. The winner is liberalism—liberal democracy in government, an economy largely free enterprise in nature, and a soci-

ety based on equal rights and individual freedom. The liberal ideal was set in motion in the eighteenth century, made great progress during the nineteenth, then went off the rails in August 1914. Next came Bolshevism, fascism, nazism; then World War II and the cold war. For much of the twentieth century it looked as if liberalism was destined to be little more than a brief historical interlude, with no long-term future except possibly in one corner of the globe. Then came 1989, the year of revolutions in Eastern Europe. After a seventy-five-year interruption, liberalism is once more on the move, stronger than ever, destined once again, it seems, to be what its nineteenth-century enthusiasts always said it would be, namely, the ultimate future of the entire human race.

This is a plausible scenario; it is even an attractive scenario. But there is of course no science of the human future, something many of our nineteenth-century forebears did not realize when they optimistically predicted the shape of things to come. Just to remind ourselves that we never know what the future will be, let me indicate two other possible scenarios.

In recent centuries there have been three great ideologies of modernization. Protestantism, liberalism, and socialism. Not all three were self-consciously proponents of modernization. Quite the contrary. Protestantism was an attempt to react against what it regarded as the corruptions of the then-modern age, an attempt to return to the spirit of the primitive Christian church. Liberalism eventually became a self-conscious champion of modernization, but in its early stages—in the age of Jefferson, for example—it wasn't clear whether its goal was to recover an idealized past, to move toward an idealized future, or to achieve a transhistorical ideal of virtue and happiness. Socialism alone of the three was always deliberately and self-consciously modernizing in nature. But all