Skeletons in the Closet

This book tackles three puzzles of pacted transitions to democracy. First, why do autocrats ever step down from power peacefully if they know that they may be held accountable for their involvement in the ancien régime? Second, when does the opposition indeed refrain from meting out punishment to the former autocrats once the transition is complete? Third, why, in some countries, does transitional justice get adopted when successors of former communists hold parliamentary majorities? Monika Nalepa argues that infiltration of the opposition with collaborators of the authoritarian regime can serve as insurance against transitional justice, making their commitments to amnesty credible. This explanation also accounts for the timing of transitional justice across East Central Europe. Nalepa supports her theory using a combination of elite interviews, archival evidence, and statistical analysis of survey experiments in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

Monika Nalepa is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. She is also Faculty Fellow of Notre Dame’s Kellogg Institute for International Studies, the Kroc Institute for Peace Studies, and the Nanovic Institute for European Studies. In 2006–2007 and 2009, she held an appointment as Academy Scholar at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies. Nalepa has guest co-edited a special volume dedicated to transitional justice in the Journal of Conflict Resolution and has contributed articles to the Journal of Conflict Resolution and the Journal of Theoretical Politics and chapters to numerous edited volumes devoted to transitional justice, including NOMOS: Proceedings of the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy.
Tadeuszowi Nalepie,
który pomógł mi zrozumieć że niczego nie muszę
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Continued after the Index.
Advance Praise for *Skeletons in the Closet*

“Monika Nalepa’s *Skeletons in the Closet* offers a groundbreaking analysis of transitional justice and its role in the consolidation of new democracies. Combining rigorous theoretical analysis with an impressive array of qualitative and quantitative evidence – including interviews with elites on both sides of transitions from communist rule in Eastern Europe, as well as original surveys of citizens – this book makes a compelling case for its argument: policies that pursue transitional justice are typically not driven by the demands of voters and citizens. Instead, they must be understood as strategic choices by political elites acting in the fog of an authoritarian legacy, characterized by great uncertainty about past collaboration of resistance leaders with the former regime. This approach allows Nalepa to offer convincing explanations of puzzling aspects of the timing and the scope of transitional justice policies that have largely gone unexplained to date. This book will force scholars to rethink common conceptions about transitional justice, and it should be read not only by those who study post-communist Eastern Europe, but by anyone with an interest in transitions from authoritarianism to democracy.”

Georg Vanberg, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

“Why weren’t former communist elites immediately punished after communism fell? In this excellent book, Monika Nalepa explains why justice was delayed and, paradoxically, why in the end it was the former communists that purged themselves. Through an impressive combination of formal theory, statistical analysis, and primary research in Eastern Europe, Nalepa finds that fears of collaboration within the ranks of non-communist parties drove the timing of punishment. Where such fears were high, these parties were inhibited from enacting such legislation; where they were low, the former communists preempted the passage of harsh measures with milder ones of their own. No one who reads this carefully argued and provocative book will think about transitional justice in quite the same way again.”

Jason Wittenberg, University of California at Berkeley
Skeletons in the Closet

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE
IN POST-COMMUNIST
EUROPE

MONIKA NALEPA

University of Notre Dame
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East Central European Political Organizations

Poland

Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność (AWS): Electoral Action Solidarity
Grupa Krakowska: Kraków Group
Komitet Obrony Robotników (KOR): Laborers’ Defense Committee
Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej (KPN): Confederacy for Independent Poland
Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny (KLD): Liberal Democratic Congress
Liga Polskich Rodzin (LPR): League of Polish Families
Niezależny Związek Studentów (NZS): Independent Student Union
Niezależny Związek Zawodowy “Solidarność”: Independent Trade Union “Solidarity”
Obywatelski Komitet (Koło) Poselski(e) (OKP): Civic Parliamentary Committee
Platforma Obywatelska (PO): Civic Platform
Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (PZPR): Polish United Workers’ Party
Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL): Polish Peoples’ Party
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS): Law and Justice
Ruch Obrony Rzeczpospolitej (RdR): Movement for the Republic
Ruch Odbudowy Polski (ROP): Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland
Ruch Wolność i Pokój (RWP): Movement for Freedom and Peace
Samoobrona (S): Self-Defense
Socjaldemokracja Rzeczpospolitej Polski (SdRP): Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (SLD): Democratic Left Alliance
East Central European Political Organizations

Solidarność ’80 (S’80): Solidarity ’80
Solidarność Walcząca (SW): Fighting Solidarity
Studencki Komitet Solidarności (SKS): Student Committee of Solidarity
Tymczasowa Komisja Koordynacyjna (TKK): Temporary Coordinating Committee
Unia Demokratyczna (UD): Democratic Union
Unia Pracy (UP): Labor Union
Unia Wolności (UW): Freedom Union
Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego (WRON): Military Council of National Salvation

Československá, Czech Republic, and Slovakia
Česká Strana Sociálně Demokratická (ČSSD): Czech Social Democratic Party
Charta 77: Charter 77
Demokratické Levice (DL): Democratic Left (Czech)
Demokratická Strana (DS): Democratic Party (Slovak)
Democratická Únia (DÚDU): Democratic Union (Slovak)
Hnutie za Demokratické Slovensko (HZDS): Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
Hnutí za samosprávnou demokracii – Společnost pro Moravu a Slezsko (HSDSMS): Movement for Autonomous Democracy – Party for Moravia and Silesia
Komunistická Strana Čech a Moravy (KSČM): Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
Komunistická Strana Československa (KSČ): Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
Krestanská a demokratická Unie-Česka Strana Lidová (KDÚ-ČSL): Christian Democratic Union–Czech People’s Party
Krest'anskodemokraticke Hnutie (KDH): Christian Democratic Movement (Slovak)
Levý Blok (LB): Left Bloc (Czech)
Liberálně sociální unie (LSU): Liberal Social Union (Czech)
Občanská Demokratická Strana (ODS): Civic Democratic Party (Czech)
Občanské Forum (OF): Civic Forum (Czech)
Sdružení pro Republiku – Republikánska strana Československa (REP): Union for Republic – Republicans’ Party of Czechoslovakia
Slovenská Demokratická Koalícia (SDK): Slovak Democratic Coalition
East Central European Political Organizations

Slovenská Národná Strana (SNS): Slovak National Party
Strana Demokratickej L’avice (SDL): Party of the Democratic Left (Slovak)
Strana Občanského Porozumění (SOP): Party of Civic Understanding (Slovak)
Strana Zelených na Slovensku (SZS): Green Party of Slovakia
Unie Svobody (US): Freedom Union (Czech)
Združenie Robotníkov Slovenska (ZRS): Association of Slovak Workers

Hungary

Bajcsy Zsilinszky Endre Baráti Társaság (BZSBT): Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Friends’ Association
Ellenzéki Kerekasztal (EKA): Opposition Roundtable
Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége (FiDeSz): Alliance of Young Democrats
Fidesz-Magyar Polgári Párt (Fidesz-MPP): Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party
Független Jógasz Fórum (FJF): Independent Lawyers’ Forum
Független Kisgazdapárt (FKgP): Party of Independent Smallholders
Keresztenydemokrata Néppárt (KDNP): Christian Democratic People’s Party
Magyar Demokrata Fórum (MDF): Hungarian Democratic Forum
Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja (MIÉP): Hungarian Justice and Life Party
Magyar Szocialista Munkás Párt (MSzMP): Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party
Magyar Szocialista Párt (MSzP): Hungarian Socialist Party
Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége (SzDSz): Alliance of Free Democrats