wonders whether the general mood may not be more progressive than it is being painted.

The new voice we hear coming from Eastern Europe is essentially that of the professional intelligentsia. Back in 1976 a few Polish intellectuals offered their services to victimized workers and proceeded to show that the intelligentsia can play a historical part if it is linked with a real social movement. Now, however, it is speaking for itself. It does so splendidly as the champion of *glasnost*, defending freedoms that are no less beautiful for being originally bourgeois. It also fights for its own privileges, for greater wage differentials, bigger social advantages and, ultimately, for replacing the apparatchiks in power. But the intelligentsia is not the whole nation, and its pushy, acquisitive members are not the whole intelligentsia, and, anyway, it will not fight in a void, as we were just reminded by the Soviet miners.

To deny the countries of Eastern Europe the title of "socialist" is not to equate them with classical capitalism. They are postrevolutionary societies *sui generis*, and their peculiar features will now play a significant role in the shaping of the future. Thus, the workers still cling to their revolutionary victory, the security of tenure, and the rulers do not yet know how to attack it frontally. The people of the Soviet bloc have a deep belief in social justice and equality, feelings now cursed by economic reformers, whether they call themselves "communist" or not. Last but not least, in all these countries the bulk of industry has been nationalized. Now that the fiction that the factories belong to the workers has been shattered, the question is whether the fiction will be turned into fact or whether other property relations will be evolved, leading ultimately to large-scale privatization. And it is more than a question of ownership.

Democracy is thus at the heart of the battle. It is high time to return to basic principles, to tell fashionable sophists who link freedom with the market that there can be no genuine democracy without socialism, because you cannot put a sign of equality between individuals, social groups or classes that are socially unequal. The reverse, however, is equally true. There can be no socialism without the fullest democracy. The idea is important not only because the Soviet precedent shows that to deprive the people of power, allegedly temporarily and for the best of reasons, is to ask for trouble. It is vital because unless the countries of Eastern Europe now manage to invent new forms of democracy at all levels, starting with the shop floor, they will be unable to introduce genuine overall planning, without which you cannot uproot inequalities, transform society or insert man and society into nature.

It would be pleasant to report that the Western left, responsible for the original sin of Bolshevik isolation, is now making up for it by offering a model for a socialist solution. It isn't, and it won't do that tomorrow. In the meantime, its second best is to tell the people of Eastern Europe about their past before "socialism" (the Russians about the czarist stench and knout, the Hungarians about Admiral Horthy's regime, the Poles about Pilsudski and the colonels) and about our not-so-dazzling present. There remains a final valid objection. Socialism exists nowhere. It has not even been tried in the advanced countries for which it was designed. At this stage in the argument I can reply only rhetorically: The sans-culottes who 200 years ago stormed the Bastille were also venturing into the unknown. They were making history. □

■ FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

The World and The Kurds

JILL HAMBURG

"We're living through hard times," a Kurdish father tells his son in *Yol*, Kurdish-Turkish director Yilmaz Guney's last film, written in prison in Turkey before his death in exile in 1985: "We can't even claim our dead." Indeed—and truer today. Two reports released this year, one by Amnesty International and the other by Physicians for Human Rights, document that the persecution of the Kurdish people of Iran and Iraq by their own governments is steadily worsening in the aftermath of the war.

The war to a certain degree was encouraged by the industrial countries—forty nations supplied arms, ten of those to both sides [see Mansour Farhang, "An Unending War Between Two Despots," *The Nation*, September 20, 1986]. So the U.N.-negotiated cease-fire that ended the fighting last August was a coup for international diplomacy. But now, while Western industry scrambles for reconstruction contracts and populous peacetime markets, unconscionable human rights violations are being carried out with impunity, especially in Iraq. Amnesty's report on Iraq, which was accompanied by unprecedented public appeals, exposes politically motivated torture, imprisonment and executions of hundreds of Kurds, mainly children, in an attempt to force confessions from their families.

Amnesty and others have shown that both during and after the war Iraqi President Saddam Hussein redeployed thousands of troops from the front against civilians, in order to eliminate perceived dissidents, including tens of thousands of Kurds, who have suffered systematic attacks by the military, sometimes using poison gas, and forced relocations to government "security villages." Perhaps as many as two-thirds of Iraq's 5,000 Kurdish villages have already been wiped off the map.

In the wake of the cease-fire Iran, too, has intensified its aggression, carrying out mass executions of approximately 16,000 political prisoners last year, including at least hundreds and perhaps thousands of Kurds. In July, the leader of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan and the party's European representative were assassinated while engaged in peace negotiations in Vienna with the Iranian government (two of Iran's negotiators were arrested as suspects). All told,

Jill Hamburg is a San Francisco-based freelance writer.

thousands of Kurds have been killed since the revolution in a civil struggle almost totally unpublicized in the West.

The Physicians for Human Rights study, conducted among the 50,000 Kurdish refugees in Turkey, concluded that the Iraqi Army used mustard and nerve gases against civilians immediately following last August's cease-fire. This conclusion was based primarily on evidence obtained from eyewitnesses, in videotaped interviews and questionnaires, which was analyzed by chemical warfare experts. The sustained and "catastrophic" attacks against Kurdish civilians and Pesh Merga (military) areas caused thousands of deaths. The number is impossible to confirm because the areas were sealed off; estimates by Kurdish sources range from 10,000 to as many as 100,000 people. Most vulnerable to the indiscriminate attacks were the young, the old and the sick.

Iraq denied the attacks, then justified them as a response to Kurdish guerrillas. But according to Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, director of the Kurdish Program, based in Brooklyn, New York, the local Kurds are peaceable, and inhabited vulnerable, low-lying terrain of no strategic value. They had the misfortune, however, to live along Iraq's economic lifeline: its oil pipeline, main railroad, highway and primary water source. Journalists have described the area as "an open grave," and the town of Halabja as "a modern Pompeii."

Neither U.N. investigations nor last January's 140-nation conference in Paris on chemical weapons adequately addressed these atrocities. Iraq's prominence as a Third World power has impeded international action, and the Hussein government has paid no political or economic price. The Paris conference, reaching a "full consensus by all nations," did not beef up the 1925 Geneva Protocols on chemical weapons and failed to propose export controls or economic sanctions against known violators—in effect granting global approval to Iraq's use of gas against the Kurds. No nation is "willing to sacrifice bilateral relations with Iraq on behalf of a higher cause," chemical weapons expert and policy analyst W. Seth Carus says. Senator Claiborne Pell's September 1988 bill to impose sanctions on Iraq and prevent the genocide was derailed, according to a Foreign Relations Committee staff member, partly as a result of intense lobbying by Iraq's business friends, agribusiness, the oil industry and the chemical manufacturers.

Labyrinthine alliances also complicate the Kurds' future. Recently they were maintained as proxy soldiers in the Iran-Iraq war, with each side arming the other's Kurds. They have been betrayed over the years by other patrons, from the Shah to the Soviet Union to the Central Intelligence Agency. Scattered among several countries by the colonial powers, the Kurdish people are further fractured by class and tradition, and suppressed by militantly nationalistic governments that covet their mountain homelands' rich resources.

But things could change. Iraq, although second only to Saudi Arabia in OPEC exports, is currently more than $50 billion in debt; Iran needs outside aid to rebuild its war-ravaged economy. Monitoring by human rights groups and increased publicity about the atrocities keeps the heat on, and stigmatizes, the perpetrators. The challenge for Washington is to strike at the credit upon which these bankrupt nations desperately depend. Pell will attempt to do this with a second bill.

For their part, the Kurds have united periodically over the decades, most recently in the Iraqi Kurdish Front in 1987. To emerge from the devastation, to claim their dead and begin a new phase of their struggle for justice and autonomy, the Kurds must again meet the challenge of cooperation. □

Fraternity

(Continued From Front Cover)

fraternities and sororities. The college, which was all male until 1970, now has a nearly even split between men and women students. Many of them agree with Marianne Weiss, a sorority member, who says, "We live in a hick town in the middle of nowhere with a bunch of cows. If there were enough alternatives, people wouldn't be going to the Greek system." As it happens, Weiss's sorority was reprimanded last fall for co-sponsoring a "jungle party" with a fraternity, three of whose members attended in blackface. She doesn't defend that, but she also opposes making DKE the campus scapegoat. "I think in the Greek-letter system there are abuses," she says. "Those opinions [in the ledgers] are still common."

Last month, after an investigation, the college suspended DKE for "hazing, blackballing and other infractions" for the 1989-90 academic year. The faculty, witnesses to numerous testosterone-fired outrages on Fraternity Row, voted overwhelmingly in May to abolish all fraternities and sororities by September 1994. However, only the school's board of trustees can impose such a ban; in July, it set up a special committee to review residential life and the role of fraternities and sororities.

The problem posed by Greek-letter organizations, especially fraternities, is not Colgate's alone. Nor is it one that is confined to small, rural campuses. Universities across the country are proclaiming diversity—social, sexual, ethnic, racial, economic and cultural—as the guiding spirit behind their pursuit of academic growth and excellence. At the same time, fraternities—whose members usually select one another on the basis of conformity to homogeneous group standards—are experiencing their highest membership levels ever. As a result, colleges find themselves trying to impart the bias-free goals of the 1990s to students who are clustering, in ever greater numbers, in the exclusionary communities of the 1950s. Those forces are clashing on more and more campuses.

Colgate president Neil Grabois, in his first year, may wish the DKE crisis hadn't happened, but he's not avoiding it. "It's an opportunity to ask what we are and what we ought to be," says Grabois, who was previously provost of Williams College, which eliminated fraternities in the 1960s

Robin Warshaw is a freelance journalist and author of I Never Called It Rape *(Harper & Row).*