

EIGHT

Cognitive Cartography in a European Wasteland

Multinational Capital and Greens Vie for Village Allegiance

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Between my case and me it was a love at first "site." This occurred in 1993 when I first read of the Garé dump in a Hungarian weekly. The case, to put it simply, is a controversy over the siting of a hazardous waste incinerator that would burn the wastes dumped in Garé since 1978. It immediately struck me as such a fascinating combination of elements familiar from Western cases of environmental racism and of distinctly postsocialist economic and political issues, yet a case that violated so many of our assumptions about how environmental destruction occurred in former socialist countries, that I soon decided to make this study an entry point into the history of the concepts of waste in Hungary—a dissertation topic I had already settled on.

Since the case had already generated much hostility among villages and primarily between those villages that opposed the incinerator and the chemical firm that proposed to build it, I knew that I had to tread a fine line. Even before I actually started my year of fieldwork I made a point of hanging out with villagers and partaking in their routine afternoon chat on the wooden benches outside their houses, talking about everyday issues with them on the crowded buses they took to and from the nearest large town. I felt I needed to gain more confidence from my subjects than ordinary ethnographic topics would require, because soon they would see me in company with leaders they did not necessarily agree with, or even feared, and with their opponents on the incinerator

issue. However, the most painful thing for me was not gaining their trust but keeping my views on the incinerator to myself. On occasions when women with children would approach me and, whispering, ask for my opinion on the incinerator's health effects, about which I was by no means an expert, I felt truly torn between my roles, on the one hand, as an observer worried about biasing the responses in my interviews, anxious not to encourage the rumor that I was there to "subvert," and, on the other hand, as a mother myself, conscious of environmental effects on children's health.

It was one thing to gain the confidence of villagers and another to gain that of the chemical firm's management, of village leaders, and of the Greens. My greatest fear was that either side would think of me as a spy for the opponents or as interested in only a very biased account of the conflict, which would have cut me off from important sources of information. That is why from the very beginning I made myself very visible and open to both sides, and made sure that on public occasions, such as public hearings, I spent about equal amounts of time with both parties. Although I was successful inasmuch as I found open doors everywhere, I still found myself charged with being an American spy and publicly threatened to be killed by one of my interviewees if I revealed his name.

While I was preoccupied with gaining entry, maintaining my trustworthiness, and staying alive, my fieldwork did not stop posing serious methodological questions. It became clear that this case had so many links with the past and with near and distant locations that my research would not be able to rely on a simple traditional type of ethnography. If I was to understand the conflict over the meaning of the piece of land on which the dump was created, it was imperative to go beyond observing in the present. In addition to observing this conflict in its most obvious forms on occasions such as environmental public hearings and press conferences, and in addition to relying on interviews about the conflict itself, I had to apply the ethnographic method to data available from the past. What that meant is that I had to locate this case in a broader social, political, economic, and ethnic history of this region because villagers' collective memory, often manipulated by leaders, significantly affected the terms of the debate in the present. Applying the ethnographic method to this history required that, instead of synthesizing the complex accounts of villagers and enterprise managers into one history,

I unpack the meanings of that piece of land and the attitudes of certain social actors toward others from archival documents and from interviews I conducted with people with firsthand knowledge of these histories.

As a result, I ended up relying more on what the Comaroffs call "historical imagination" than on "hard" participant observation data from the ethnographic present. This shift to historical sources, however, was still ethnographic, inasmuch as I made it following my informants' explicit or, at times, implicit suggestions. Having concluded my ethnohistorical research, I am convinced that crossing ethnography's forbidden borders of time and space allowed me to give a more comprehensive and "inside" account of this case (because it is written from the viewpoints of many insiders). Long after the first sight my love for the site endures.

In the periodical publication of a Hungarian activist group that concentrates on waste issues, a photo cartoon portrays a donkey stumbling toward an "EU" (European Union) sign. The donkey pulls a trash can from which piles of Coca-Cola cans and bottles have spilled; the caption reads: "We're heading to Europe. We are taking all we have." This cartoon ridicules the belief that one can become European/Western by accepting and generating Western waste.

By illustrating the Western perspective that Hungary has nothing to offer but waste, the cartoon also speaks to an enduring representation of Eastern Europe as a wasteland. State socialism, as it existed, was commonly described as a wasteland both figuratively and literally. In the figurative sense, socialist countries were characterized as a dull region of out-of-date, faulty, awkward, and unappealing products. They were portrayed as a gray, gloomy landscape populated by inefficient people leading squalid lives. In literal terms, mostly Western observers have made much of the fact that planned economies produced much higher amounts of waste per Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a much higher percentage of rejects than did market economies.¹ The image of Eastern Europe as a figurative and literal wasteland still holds firm, but now the juxtaposition of that image with images of the neatness, naturalness, and purity of capitalism creates the impression that Westernization—that is, the "rationalization" of the economy—will reduce the amount of waste and thus benefit both the economy and the environment.² My case study, on the contrary, shows that certain Western agents help reinforce the old image by exporting toxic wastes as well as toxic waste treatment facilities to Eastern Europe. The revival of certain local identities and histories plays a crucial role in perpetuating the region as a literal wasteland.

To understand this role, my story will largely be told from a local, or, more precisely, from several local perspectives. There are, however, some other pressing reasons to assume such a focus. Many scholars have feared that, as globalization proceeds, "social meaning evaporates from places" and only returns in the form of regressive politics.³ Students of the transition in Eastern Europe have been speaking in especially alarming terms about the future of political identity in formerly socialist countries. Scholars argue that political actions are limited to "symbolic gestures" without "directly acting on the behavior of institutions,"⁴ that they lack real (economic) interests,⁵ that they are grounded in residual—that is, religious and ethnic—conflicts, and, as such, are somehow irrational.⁶ There are fears of the returning left,⁷ fears of "movements of rage,"⁸ and warnings that there may be too much remembering going on in those countries, which is also deemed dangerous.⁹ Overall, observers tend to limit the outcome of competing political identities to two choices: nationalist totalitarianism and cosmopolitan democracy. In terms of geographical identities, the alternatives translate respectively into a closure to the West or an openness to it.

In contrast, localities, with newly found independence from the state and with new struggles for resources, face choices that are far more complicated and that do not map easily onto these mega-scenarios and mega-identities. Furthermore, it is often Western agents who foment discourses and political actions that fit the negative characterization of postsocialist politics quoted and characterized above. Through a case study of a siting controversy around a toxic waste incinerator, I will show how the postsocialist transition, as well as the insertion of former socialist countries into global economic, political, and cultural fields, dovetails with local identities and with the wasteland image of the region.

Beginning in 1978, the Budapest Chemical Works dumped about 17,500 tons of tetra-chlorobenzene—a highly toxic substance generated in pesticide production—in the vicinity of Garé, a small agricultural village in Baranya county, a relatively underdeveloped and multiethnic region of southern Hungary. For decades, residents complained that the dump caused cancers in villagers, contaminated groundwater and soil, caused excessive numbers of diseases and deaths among domestic animals, and produced a constant foul odor. As the leaking toxic waste started to threaten the nearby spring and the health and livelihood of an entire region, the Budapest Chemical Works was ordered to eliminate this dump site. The company made plans to do this by incinerating the accumulated waste in a facility that would also be built in Garé, the imminent construction of which has, however, sharpened divisions among the surrounding villages. Many fear that the facility would be perilous to their health. The incinerator would be financed with mostly French capital and thus many also worry that it would soon begin to burn toxic wastes imported from abroad. As I write this, in 1999, it has been seven years since the controversy began its

path through numerous public hearings, demonstrations, petitions, resignations, and lawsuits. The siting controversy has become Hungary's most publicized and most divisive environmental pollution case.

I will, first, introduce the key global player in this case, namely, the global incinerator industry; then I will show the industry's dependence on local histories and identities as well as on certain discourses about the economic and political transition taking place in Hungary. Then I will delve into the local-global connections being forged and the cognitive maps that are made in challenging this global force. Finally, I will reflect upon the connection of local identities and images of Eastern Europe as a wasteland.

THE GLOBAL WASTE INCINERATION INDUSTRY

The world produces an estimated 338 million tons of hazardous waste per year. Experts argue that between 180 and 250 million tons are generated in the United States, between 30 and 45 million by European OECD countries, between 25 and 30 million by the former Soviet Union, and about six million by Central and Eastern Europe. This amount keeps increasing: the European OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries alone add an additional 3 percent, that is about 9 million tons, to their industrial waste output each year. Most hazardous wastes are still landfilled; in the European Community countries about 70 percent, while 10 percent are recovered, 10 percent treated, and 8 percent incinerated.¹⁰ But due to rising public resistance to landfilling and subsequent tightening of environmental regulation, there was a major shift toward incineration of hazardous wastes in the 1980s. (This is also the trend for municipal waste,¹¹ of which 19 percent in OECD countries is incinerated.)¹² In the United States, the quantity of hazardous waste burned increased by at least 20 percent in 1988 and 1989.¹³ Individual records of chemical plants also suggest a turn toward incineration.

The increase of incinerator capacity led to a slower rate of cost increase for incineration relative to that for other waste treatment methods, primarily landfilling, which provided further incentive to burn. Incineration is now a highly profitable business. With charges of \$1,500 for burning one ton of hazardous waste, a medium-sized facility (50,000 tons per year) can earn its investment costs (about \$50 or \$60 million) within a year. In 1988, in the United States, revenues from the manufacture and sale of incineration equipment were estimated "at \$1.6 billion, while income from 'incineration services' was estimated at \$370 million."¹⁴ Between 1977 and 1988 the growth in each of these two sectors' revenue averaged more than 30 percent per year, while projected growth through 1993 was 20 percent per year for both sectors.¹⁵

Costs, however, are not universal; they depend on the stringency of emis-

sion standards in individual countries—hence the geographical element in the tug-of-war between the waste incinerator business and environmental regulation. Wastes are transported for treatment to those countries that have the loosest emission standards, until the regulations "catch up" with those of others.¹⁶ The gap in regulatory standards is a key cause of hazardous waste exports from Western Europe to developing countries and to Eastern Europe.¹⁷ The flipside of capital's increasing mobility is the mobility of hazardous waste.

Incineration of wastes, despite the alleged constant increase in safety, is still a menace to public health and the environment. Incinerators decrease the volume of waste (some by only 60 percent), but whether they actually reduce its toxicity depends on the composition of the burned wastes. Incineration itself has its waste products (such as bottom ash and fly ash), which are still considered toxic and which thus have to be screened from the air and landfilled. Incinerator emissions of dioxins and furans, the most toxic substances ever known, account for 80 percent of all such emissions in industrialized countries. Health impacts of incineration have triggered resistance to incinerators in Western countries, forcing the state to raise emission standards but ultimately also making it practically impossible to site new facilities.¹⁸

With West European incinerators facing a saturated and environmentally more conscious domestic market, a surplus capacity of incinerator manufacturing facilities and know-how has been built up, which forces investors to create a demand outside Western countries. What better market than Central and Eastern Europe, a main producer of hazardous wastes (see data above), which had practically no domestic incinerator capacity until the end of the 1980s.¹⁹ According to the Greens, however, the facilities built by Western investors, such as that proposed for Garé, would burn not only domestic wastes but also wastes imported from the West. Central and Eastern Europe is attractive to Western Europe and the United States because it is lagging behind both in the regulation of emissions and in incineration capacity. The relative scarcity of existing facilities makes it possible to keep incineration costs high, so that even if Western exporters have to grant soft loans to Eastern Europeans for the purchase of their technology, the region's market still promises great profitability. Western exporters can also rely on the economic desperation of both the state and local communities, as well as on the weakness of newly formed democratic institutions. Transition aid packages as well as an explicit policy of the European Union encourage the movement of waste-to-energy facilities to the Eastern half of the continent.²⁰

Since 1988, there has been an estimated annual minimum of 18 million tons of incinerator capacity proposed just in Russia, the Baltics, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, with about 93 percent of that

offered for export by Western countries.²¹ Put another way, by 1996 about 187 facilities had been proposed in the region. Germany is leading the way with participation in 30 projects, Austria in 29, Denmark in 14, and the United States in 10.

It would be easy to argue that the Western incineration industry is simply seeking to annex Central and Eastern Europe; however, there is more to this trend than is implied by the data and arguments above. The incinerator industry is being fought all the way, and in this battle its potential victims have successfully appealed to another global force, the international environmental movement. In the past few years, seventy waste incinerator projects have been stopped by Greens and affected residents or have been withdrawn by their proponents before realization²²—a magnitude suggesting that the doom and gloom observations that civil society is dying in post-socialist countries should be revised in light of local political actions. The expansion of this industry across national and regional borders depends on and takes the form of local struggles, which grow out of local histories and which mobilize local identities. This is what I address next.

PRELUDE TO THE ENTRY OF THE GLOBAL INCINERATOR INDUSTRY

In this section, I will analyze the global, national, and local contexts of the Garé dump. The history of the dump did not start when the first barrels arrived in Garé's woods. First, this waste had to be produced, and, second, Garé had to emerge as a possible repository for this waste.

In order to understand the global context of producing this waste, we must understand that the manufacturing of tetrachlorobenzene (TCB) has a high waste-to-final-product ratio. The amount of waste produced is almost equal to the amount of the intended final product (45 percent). It was exactly for this reason, according to a former high-ranking employee of Budapest Chemical Works (BCW), that by the 1970s most West European countries ceased the production of TCB and passed its production down to less developed ones.²³ Austria secured a barter deal with its neighbor Hungary.

Hungary, however, besides its proximity, had other reasons for being a good candidate. It was a key pesticide supplier for COMECON, the agency for economic integration among socialist countries, even though its domestic production did not cover its own rapidly growing needs for agricultural chemicals. This role and the shortage of hard currency compelled Hungary, first, to find barter deals in which such articles could be imported without spending hard currency; and, second, to increase its leverage with its socialist trading partners by demonstrating its ability to trade and compete with Western chemical producers.

BCW has been a prominent chemical manufacturer in Hungary since the

early 1960s, known both for its products, which filled a large portion of Hungary's pesticide and artificial fertilizer needs, and for its top managers, who maintained an unorthodox attitude toward production organization and foreign trade. The firm's longtime reform-minded president earned little support in the most influential party circles: BCW was denied the extra funds and loans that other large socialist enterprises acquired on a regular basis. This created a further incentive for the management to search for foreign cooperation.

Among the first such deals between a Hungarian and a Western firm (the first involving chemical companies) was the one BCW struck with the Austrian firm ÖSW in 1967. BCW delivered paradichlorobenzene and tetrachlorobenzene (TCB) in exchange for Trifanox (a herbicide made out of the compounds BCW delivered) and pesticides that BCW sold to Hungarian agriculture in forints, nonconvertible Hungarian currency. The Austrian firm paid with hard currency for the difference in value between the Hungarian TCB and the Austrian products. The low price to BCW of the raw materials (chlorine and benzene) made the deal look very advantageous; however, a few middle-level managers in the company warned against the deal because of the high ratio of waste to final product. The pressures on the company to sustain itself relatively independently and to bring in hard currency for the country won out, leaving the waste problems unresolved for a decade after production started.

While the Hungarian state reaped most of the benefits of this deal, when it came to assisting BCW in solving its waste problems, the state threw up its hands. BCW started its quest for a way to reuse or to safely dispose of the toxic byproduct in the year it signed the contract with the Austrian firm. By 1969, that is, within a year of signing the contract, BCW had approached two ministerial departments, seven land- and water-use and public health authorities, three scientific institutes, and five state-owned enterprises.²⁴ BCW also suggested that the ministry work out an action plan to deal with the wastes of the entire chemical industry. While these efforts resulted in several concrete proposals for reuse and disposal, they all met with obstacles, which forced BCW to resort to delivering the waste barrels for storage to its newly acquired branch plant in Baranya county. In the long run, this proved to be convenient because it allowed BCW to present its waste as if it were produced locally, in the Baranya branch plant, entitling BCW to dump its barrels in a nearby dump that was being established in the mid-seventies.²⁵ This was the dump at Garé.

Why Garé? Long before Garé became a literal wasteland, it became a figurative one, and the processes leading to that point must be sought in the policies of socialist regional development.

In the earlier decades, the Party's development policy aimed at the "emaciation" (elsorvasztás) of small settlements, by neglecting their infrastruc-

tural development, in hopes of encouraging rural populations to migrate to the cities, where they could relieve the labor shortage. Later, the government's policy was to fuse agricultural cooperatives, withdrawing their lands from production and finally merging the villages themselves. These mergers implied a joint administrative body (the council), with funds effectively under the control of the dominant villages.

Baranya's villages were not merged at a greater rate than those of other counties, but, because of the area's historical pattern of small but densely located settlements, the amalgamations had a particularly emaciating effect in Baranya.²⁶ By the end of 1978, a meager 4 percent of all the villages in Baranya county had their own councils, while the national average (of nineteen counties) was 32 percent. Only the neighboring Zala and Somogy counties had a lower ratio. From the beginning of state socialism, Baranya's tiny settlements were regarded as bastions of small-scale production, which did not conform to the utopia of large-scale collectivized and nationalized farming. Indeed, the performance of the region's agricultural collectives lagged behind others, partly for geographic and demographic (aging population) reasons. The aging of Baranya's villages was intensified by the state's unwillingness to develop industry so close to Yugoslavia, and possibly also by the ethnic heterogeneity of the county. In the 1960s, plans were drawn up to harmonize the geographic distribution of industry and infrastructure with what policy-makers called the intensive path of development. These policies, under the slogans of efficiency and rationality, led to the termination of cultivation on lands that were not fit for mechanization, such as the hilly plots in Baranya county, and to the fusing of agricultural cooperatives. The loss of economic autonomy, even though it had been relative, justified and was quickly followed by the loss of administrative autonomy as well.

The socialist history of Garé, now a village of 340 inhabitants, is typical in many respects. But Garé had not always been a victim of history. Because its soil was good, Garé used to house the richest landlords; in fact, it was a religious and cultural center (a substantial town in the fifteenth century), with both a Protestant and a Catholic church. Garé's nobility employed the peasants of surrounding villages, primarily those of Szalánta, who could not own land because of their Croatian origin. Garé, according to the local teacher and chronicler, was in a leading position ("it was a trendy place") until the formation of the agricultural cooperative in 1960. That was when the peasants of Szalánta, Garé's former cotters, started their ascendancy to become its masters, and when Garé's distinguished historical path merged with the typical paths of other small villages of the region, outlined above: the path to a figurative wasteland. Garé's agricultural cooperative was fused with that of Szalánta in 1975; its council was closed and its administration was put in the hands of Szalánta in 1978.

Garéans lost their veterinarian and their bank office; most of the small

businesses closed, construction permits were banned, and infrastructural development came to a halt. Garéans also suffered discrimination in the now fused cooperative, in terms of labor tasks and remuneration. Similar circumstances in other villages in Baranya led to their becoming completely deserted. After becoming a figurative wasteland in this way, Garé greatly improved its chances, of course unknown to its residents, of becoming a literal wasteland.

Garéans thought they had seen the worst, and slowly resigned themselves to having their lives managed by Szalánta. When an unfamiliar bad odor began entering their gardens and their houses in the early eighties, they started wondering whether their fate was governed from further away than the neighboring village. As it turned out, in 1979, the councils of the county and Szalánta had struck a deal with the Budapest Chemical Works in which BCW had been given a permit to establish a toxic waste dump in Garé's borderlands in return for extra funds channeled to the councils.

In fact, many other villages had achieved this "literal wasteland" status. Baranya is one of those counties whose small villages have been very popular as destinations for various kinds of waste consignments. In Ófalu, about twenty kilometers away, for example, the state planned the country's first radioactive waste dump. In 1986, there were sixty-two industrial waste dump sites registered in Baranya county; among these, twenty-seven were storing industrial hazardous wastes. In comparison, the two neighboring counties, Tolna and Somogy, housed six and one hazardous toxic waste dumps, respectively.²⁷ Given that Baranya is very densely populated, the rationality behind such a specialization is rather questionable. Scientists might point to the county's extensive bed of clay that, due to its supposed impermeability, was believed to prevent toxins from seeping into the groundwater. However, the claybed in Garé did not prevent the leaking of TCB waste to deeper layers of the soil.

Why has Baranya been such a likely destination of industrial wastes, given that clay can be found in abundance elsewhere in the country? The answer lies partially in the fact that decision-makers had the most data available from test drills for this region because Baranya was the only place in Hungary where uranium had been found. The sheer abundance of geological data and the region's huge geological research apparatus thus made Baranya a very likely target for waste, especially given the fact that it was known to have the necessary clay soil conditions.

Beyond these scientific-institutional factors, however, social reasons were just as important, such as Baranya's relative underdevelopment, its aging and ethnically heterogeneous population, and the relatively large number of administratively paralyzed settlements such as Garé. The direct interests involved in the Garé dump are difficult to decipher. According to a local resident, when the president of the joint council protested the idea of the

dump sites, he was threatened. Many interviewees report that the money Szalánta received in return for accommodating the dump helped that village to build its new road. In addition to this carrot and stick operation, certain informal relations must also have contributed to the making of the deal. For no apparent reason, Garé and Szalánta were switched to the administrative district (consisting of about ten villages) of Pécs, the county seat, just for the short period (from April 1, 1977, to December 31, 1978) in which the permits were issued not just for BCW but for two other firms in Pécs.²⁸ They were subsequently returned to the jurisdiction of the Siklós district, where they had always belonged.

Thus, Garé as a wasteland has to be seen as the sour fruit partly of Hungary's position in the international division of labor structured by the country's political dependence on its socialist trading partners and partly of its economic dependence on the West.²⁹ While BCW also benefited from this division of labor, especially by externalizing and passing on the ecological costs of its TCB production to an unknowing rural population, its choices were very limited by the state. The state's imperative of "produce-and-dump or be punished," which in BCW's case was a real threat, and its ignorance of BCW's plea for an action plan to deal with the wastes of the entire chemical sector have to be seen as entries in the dictionary with which global political and economic forces were translated into Hungarian. The state's agility, however, did not exhaust itself in generating the 63,000 barrels of toxic waste; as we have seen, its ideology and practice of regional development also played a key, although less direct, role in making it possible for this waste to be dumped in Garé. The global context of my case study is thus best characterized by the East-West politics of Cold War and détente and by core-semiperiphery economic relations mediated by a state that owned and controlled the means of production and that was free from democratic restraint. For the state, for BCW, and especially for the village where the material by-products of these international politics spoiled the quality of life irreversibly, this global context appeared very much like an external, out-of-reach, impinging force. The leaking toxic waste contaminated the soil in a large radius around the dump, making animals and people sick, making it very difficult for Garéans to sell their produce on the market, and considerably reducing real estate value in the village.³⁰

THE GLOBAL INCINERATOR INDUSTRY FROM BELOW

Garé could be deprived of its own cooperative, of its council, its small businesses, its bank, its veterinarian, even its clean environment, but it could never be deprived of the collective memory of its "good old days." The landmarks of its two churches served as constant reminders, helping to maintain the villagers' sense of pride, especially vis-à-vis Szalánta, which never had a church, and whose residents were forced to keep coming to Garé for wed-

dings, baptisms, funeral services, and religious holidays. The mistreatment Garé's residents had to suffer while under Szalánta's domination is a key ingredient of this collective memory. When Garé regained its autonomy in 1990, the first thing the village did was to take the dump business and, with it, the village's fate into its own hands. In the ensuing debates about the incinerator, village leaders have cleverly mobilized this collective memory.

Garéans wanted a cleanup, but the state had been unable to force BCW to do anything other than paying fines for delaying cleanup. What's more, under the general amnesty of 1989, the state had dropped criminal charges against BCW for polluting the environment and endangering public health, a decision which the still joint council of Szalánta had appealed with no success. Garé's new and independent leadership did not fail to draw the lesson: relying on the state to get the waste out of their backyards was futile. The new local government approached BCW and invited it to build the incinerator in the dump's location. The management of BCW had already been thinking in terms of incineration because its profits offered the only likely source to cover the dump's cleanup costs. However, there were two problems: 1) BCW did not have money to invest in a new facility, and 2) everywhere in the country communities were banning dumps and incinerators one after the other. Garé's and BCW's interests now matched as they never had before: they both wanted to survive in an increasingly volatile economic situation *and* get the cleanup done. Fortuitously, there existed a third party the goals of which were not only the same, but which also had the capital and the technology to achieve them—the French state firm, EMC Services. BCW formed a joint venture with EMC, called Hungaroproc.³¹

The novelty of this triumvirate resides not so much in its unlikelihood (a victim with its victimizer—the village with its polluter) as in its direct, unmediated relations between a village and an industrial firm, on the one hand, and between a small, disempowered village and a relatively powerful Western company, on the other. It is in stark contrast to the past in which the state held the remote control of Garé's life. Garé had not known of BCW. The councils of Szalánta and of the county, and other agents of the party-state, stood between them. For a decade after the dump was put in operation, Garéans had no direct contact with anyone from BCW: for them, the company's presence was limited to the odor its waste barrels perspired in the heat of the summer. To make sense out of the smell and the slowly leaking pieces of information about the dump and its dangers, the villagers conjured up this absent Other. When animals died, BCW had killed them; when red snow fell, BCW had colored it; when Szalánta got a new road, BCW had paid for it; when trees dried out, BCW had desiccated them; when fruit tasted badly, BCW's poison had spoiled it; when the candle went out in the basement, BCW's gases had put it out. After 1990, in contrast, the residents of Garé could reach BCW for comment without having to go through Szalánta or other extralocal representatives, and the company, the absent

cause of their miseries, suddenly materialized; it was brought near to them, and its representatives sat down to negotiate with them. Since then, its presence has been made permanent by an office maintained for its French joint venture, Hungaropec, in the town hall. Adding further weight to its presence, Hungaropec has organized exhibitions with the aim of popularizing the idea of the incinerator and has been publishing a locally circulated (in ten villages) paper whose title, *Between Ourselves*, expresses rather clearly the intent of BCW and Hungaropec to portray themselves as "one of the villagers."³² The void created by the state's disappearance from Garé's life, both in financial and administrative terms, was quickly filled by global forces and discourses that the new elite successfully utilized in its own interests under the slogan of cleanup. Such a direct connection between local and global could not have emerged under socialism, as the state's umbrella shielded localities from global weathers, rain or shine.

If Garé and BCW were to successfully deploy the global incineration industry in their own survival struggles, they first had to sell the idea of "cleanup-via-incineration" to authorities and, most importantly, to those other villages that now, thanks to democratization, had a say in such investments. Interestingly, the pro-incinerator language typically applied in the West was much less utilized in this case. In its place was a customized discourse about Garé's "insertion into the bloodstream of Europe." The public relations campaign has thus drafted a "cognitive map" that located Hungary and Garé in particular ways vis-à-vis Western Europe.³³ The best visual representation of this cognitive map is the photo on the cover page of the brochure of Hungaropec Ltd. In the top portion you have a close-up of the problem: the barrels—filling, through the technique of photomontage, the map of the district. In the bottom, partially superimposed on the upper photo, you see a bird's-eye view of one of EMC's plants, the incinerator in Saint Vulbas, France. You could not find a more didactic illustration for the story that the Budapest Chemical Works wants to tell, which is "We have a global solution for a local problem."

The narrative part of the eight-page brochure elaborates on this theme: the first paragraph talks about "the present situation," the second about the "experiences from abroad," and the third simply draws the obvious conclusion that the solution consists in the application of experiences from abroad to the present, local situation. The first paragraph ignores the history of the dump, fails to identify its creator, and underestimates its ecological dangers, thereby wiping out any traces of the past controversy between Garé and BCW.

In the vicinity of Garé, there was a significant amount of industrial waste deposited in accordance with the designation of location and prescriptions of the authorities. The long-term presence of these wastes *may endanger* the soil, the flora and fauna, agricultural production, the ground- and drinking-water supplies, and indirectly people's health. For this reason it is justified and nec-

essary to eliminate and neutralize the wastes stored here, and to re-establish the cleanliness of the environment in the long run.³⁴

The next paragraph, anticipating the reader's sense of something missing, imaginatively substitutes global histories for the missing local history, and immediately suggests the progressive nature of the solution to be offered in the third paragraph.

Hungary, like her Eastern neighbors, was characterized by the dumping of the hazardous by-products of industry, that is by "sweeping the problem under the rug" due to the incorrect industrial policy of the past decades, while in Western European countries with a developed industry and with an ever higher concern about the environment the *most widely accepted solution* has become the *utilization* of industrial wastes *by incineration*, which is already applied in numerous densely populated areas of Western Europe (Switzerland, the Ruhr, the vicinity of Lyon, Strasbourg, etc.).³⁵

The third paragraph makes two unsupported claims: that incineration of the wastes in Garé is the only technologically rational solution and that the solution must be "entrepreneurial."³⁶ The paragraph concludes by saying that Hungaropec Ltd. offers a solution that satisfies both of the above rational requirements, the technological and the economical.

In the East/West dichotomy applied in Hungaropec's cognitive map, the "East" is synonymous with the past; it is a wasteland that produces so much waste that it threatens residents with "suffocating in garbage," but it is not even credited with having a developed industry.³⁷ According to Hungaropec's brochure, all the East has is an "incorrect industrial policy," industrial by-products (the two thus tacitly connected in a causal relation), and authorities who designate locations and prescribe the technological parameters of waste treatment. What emerges from this portrayal is more than just the invitation to the "European" road, the staple of postcommunist ideology: it implicitly portrays BCW as a victim at the hands of socialist state authorities when dumping, and as a hero when burning the waste that it produced, a hero that will thus take Garé to Europe. Indeed, in 1993, Hungaropec literally took villagers, environmentalists, and journalists for a visit to model plants in Western Europe. Autobiographies told in the form of similar conversions from victim to hero have been the key source of moral and political capital in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989.³⁸

THE GLOBAL INCINERATOR INDUSTRY CHALLENGED: THE GREEN PERSPECTIVE

Building moral capital on either side of the case has been a critical strategy. The incinerator is viewed by most Garéans as an opportunity for revenge against Szalánta. Garéans think that, since administration was in Szalánta's hands at the time the permit was issued for the dump, and since it was

Szalánta that reaped all of its benefits, Szalánta's residents, more or less collectively, are responsible for the present situation. As a consequence, Garéans believe Szalántans have no moral right to have a say in the decision about the incinerator. Szalánta, however, has been quite successful in presenting itself as the guardian of the district's physical and moral health. In doing so, it has been able to redefine the terms of its leadership in the vicinity, which was shaken first by the 1990 decentralization, and then by Hungaropéc's plan to build the incinerator, a project that would make Garé economically the most powerful settlement in the district.

In resisting the incinerator, local villages, under the leadership of Szalánta, have mobilized surrounding towns, whose existence depends on thermal-water-related tourism and wine production, and whose reputations might easily be ruined by the incinerator. They have recruited a competing Swiss-Hungarian joint venture and a French incinerator in Dorog into their ranks by positing them as alternatives to the incinerator in Garé.³⁹ In addition, they have formed an alliance with Hungarian Greens, who provide the villages with information, contacts, suggestions for action, equipment, and publicity.

There are two environmentalist entities active in the case. One, which has advocated against the incinerator since 1989, is the main Green group in the county seat, the Green Circle of Pécs. The Green Alternative Party (GAP), based in Budapest, was established in 1993, and for them the Garé case was a formative issue. Szalánta needed their resources—contacts, information, techniques of political action—and in return, GAP needed Garé as a salient issue around which it could rally publicity before the 1994 elections. Both Green Circle and GAP suggest various alternatives to the Garé incinerator. Most villagers outside Garé support burning the barrels in the already existing incinerator at Dorog; other residents and environmentalists would go along with a mobile incinerator that could be disassembled and moved elsewhere after cleanup is completed; still others talk about trying the biodegradation method; and a few people, such as members of Green Circle, might even prefer the Swiss-Hungarian incinerator planned nearby, for reasons given below.

Both Green organizations cultivate extensive relations with foreign environmental movements and organizations. Several of their members had attended the Rio Summit in 1992; they often travel to meetings in other countries and host environmentalists from abroad. GAP and Green Circle ask for information and assistance from Greens in other countries, including the Green fraction of the European Parliament and Greenpeace. The former provided them with updates on the European Union's incinerator policy and arranged a showing in several villages of the video on incinerators made by Greenpeace. Green Circle received United States Peace Corps volunteers, who enriched their technical repertoire and made English-language grants more accessible, one of which, a Dutch grant, the Greens in

Pécs used specifically for organizing around Garé. The Austrian Greens are often invited by both environmental organizations to talks on the Garé incinerator, both as experts and as fellow-countrymen of ÖSW (the partner of BCW in the TCB contract). The Environmental Management and Law Association (EMLA), which is the Hungarian affiliate of a United States nonprofit environmental law consulting agency, has been gratuitously managing several of the lawsuits that have emerged from this case, and has kept the Green alliance up to date on the legal tactics foreign corporations use against environmental activists. In sum, the Hungarian anti-incinerator agents have been very successful in inserting themselves into and benefiting from the international environmental movement, which is a key pillar of what some call the global civil society.⁴⁰

Under socialism, environmental issues functioned as a relatively safe terrain for expressing political dissent, and in many countries (especially in Hungary and Lithuania) the environmental movements were instrumental in bringing down the system. While these fledgling groups and initiatives were certainly informed by Western environmental movements, they developed without much of their assistance until the late 1980s. After 1989, even though environmentalism was losing its appeal as a political agenda, various Western agencies became more active in building cooperation and providing help in many forms to postsocialist environmental organizations.⁴¹

However, it is not only funds, people, and information that cross borders in this greening civil society, but also discourses. The Green alliance thus draws on one mainstream, global, environmental discourse—NIMBY-ism—and other, less mainstream, but still global, discourses—namely, those of ecological colonization and environmental racism. The charge of environmental racism is raised primarily in relation to the entire district, if not the whole county, which has an ethnically very heterogeneous population, consisting primarily of Croats, Germans, and Romanis (Gypsies). This charge gains particular significance in relation to Bosta, the village that is, after Garé, second-closest to the dump and the incinerator site. Bosta has a population that is 80 percent Romani and has historically been one of the most disadvantaged villages in the county; like Garé, it also used to be economically and administratively fused with Szalánta. Initially, Bosta took Garé's side in the incinerator-siting debate, but when in 1994 the present mayor took her seat, a referendum quickly revealed that the large majority of Bosta's residents opposed the incinerator.

The Greens' insistent efforts to educate Bosta's residents and government played a major role in this change, as did economic and social pressures by Szalánta. During the past decades, Bosta's livelihood had grown so dependent on this larger village that the prospect of Szalánta's severing its links because of Bosta's support for the incinerator had an impact on Bosta's residents. They told me of hostile exchanges, including Szalántans' refusal to continue lending agricultural machines to them.

In 1995, Hungaropec published a social-economic impact assessment study, as part of a general environmental impact study.⁴² The racist undertones of this document were taken by Bosta's residents as demeaning and helped renew their alliance with Szalánta.

The impact study tries to scare the small villages into approval. It argues that their populations have consistently decreased since 1949 and that they will be "Gypsified" ("elcigányosodnak") unless there is a boost to their economic development, such as the incinerator at Garé would provide. The analysis ignores Romani immigration and thus suggests that Bosta, as well as other villages, face extinction. The report treats the Romanis not as a population that can keep the village alive but as yet another force rushing the village to its demise. The report's deceptive language and use of statistics were powerfully confronted in the 1995 Bosta public hearing. The villagers said that, first, eight new families had moved in since the prior year; second, that it was not their fault that they had not developed and grown; and third, that they were all one people—Hungarian, whether Gypsy or not. While the impact study views the incinerator as a way to "keep Gypsies out" of the district, the Romani Civil Rights Foundation credits the large Romani population with attracting such dubious investments.

By treating the Garé case in terms of economic and ethnic relations, with their claims about ecological colonization and environmental racism, the Greens offer a global cognitive map that presents quite a different picture of the West from that advanced by the incinerator's supporters. They go to great efforts to discredit the "expert systems" in Hungaropec's references, such as the EU or the Basel Convention, exposing them as players in the toxic waste export game.⁴³ They argue that the EU, however high the environmental standards it may have for itself, encourages the transfer of waste-to-energy facilities to the Eastern half of Europe. They also point out that the Basel Convention simply requires that toxic wastes be imported and exported with the mutual agreement of both countries, which, they imply, is not likely to be an obstacle in BCW's case.

The villagers and some Greens think especially badly of France, partly because of its alleged competition with the famous Villányi wine produced nearby, and because of France's bad historical record in Hungary's past. A speaker at a public hearing on the incinerator said:

We have not received anything especially good from the French since Rákóczi's war of independence.⁴⁴ Until they regain their credit, I don't feel [we can believe them], since so far they only helped to sever two-thirds of our country's territory.⁴⁵ Let them leave at least our air for us, and let us live in peace in this country in a manner suitable to a Hungarian.⁴⁶

What about the Greens' image of the East or the past? Opponents of the incinerator try to expose Hungaropec and BCW as representing not a break with, but rather a continuation of socialism. Greens like to point out that

the decision to have a permanent dump in Garé was made under socialism. As one pamphlet said, "a decision made by the State Committee of Planning in 1980 cannot be put into effect against the will of the region's taxpaying citizens."⁴⁷ They also see a parallel between the process of decision-making about the waste dump and that about the incinerator. "Once already there was a bad decision made without us; let's not let another bad decision be made again. . . . I hope . . . we can make a decision based on consensus."⁴⁸

Democracy and especially local autonomy are the key arguments of the Greens in the debate; furthermore, such values represent the only positive connotation of "Europe" that they acknowledge. This value preference is so strong that it may even take precedence over their environmental principles. Some Greens, for example, would welcome the rival Swiss-Hungarian incinerator in nearby Kőkény because that would be built at least partially with local capital and it would incinerate only local (county-wide) wastes. One activist stressed to me her opinion that the head of the plant in Switzerland that served as the model for this incinerator was a lot more "open and more democratic" in his dealings with the local population than were Garé's local leaders and the management of BCW and Hungaropec.

Locals are also listening closely to the undertone of Hungaropec's self-praise, which celebrates industrialization. As a participant in the Szalánta public hearing exclaimed, "Socialism is over, and it's not clear that we should be a chemical superpower." This is a tacit reference to the Hungarian communist slogan of the 1960s, "Let's chemicalize!" which came, in turn, after the failure of the 1950s strategy celebrated in the prophecy "We will be the country of iron and steel." Most Hungarian Greens do not reject industrialization in itself, but they do so when it is planned in primarily agricultural areas and otherwise still relatively clean natural environments. They see Garé's incinerator as the implicit continuation of socialist regional development policy that favored distributing industry more or less equally throughout the country in the name of geographical and social equality.⁴⁹

In sum, the Greens' cognitive map shows a different picture: rather than transporting Garé and its region to a paradise-like Europe, Western firms propose to bring Europe to the local backyards, but this Europe is different—it embodies regressive and even criminal forces. For the opponents of the incinerator, Western European firms do not export solutions to local problems but export their wastes and *their* local problems—in particular, the lack of domestic demand for their waste-treatment technologies—and thus make these problems global. This is the counter-vision so expressively illustrated in the cartoon described in my opening vignette. The same group, criticizing Western products for causing so much waste, writes:

The strategy of the [Coca-Cola] company is thus summarized by the chief of Coca-Cola Corp., Roberto Goizueta: "By the year 2000 we'll establish a distri-

bution network in which all the six billion inhabitants of the Earth will simply need to reach out their hands if they want a taste of Coca-Cola." In the Third World countries of the Earth there are already many hundreds of millions of people reaching out their hands. It's as if there were more and more in the Hungarian suburbs, as well. We're not sure that what they desire is exactly Coke. . . .⁵⁰

So, according to the Greens, becoming European or Western, in the dictionary of agents like EMC and Hungaropec, does not mean cleaning up; it means importing waste in the form of Western, high waste-ratio goods and in the form of actual waste to be treated in state-of-the-art Western facilities. Having an ample supply of waste treatment facilities, which usually means incinerators, has indeed been treated as a condition of joining the European Union. As an American banker investing in the export of waste treatment facilities says: "If they [East Europeans] want to become part of the greater European community, I don't see they have much of a choice."⁵¹ Hungarians might tacitly agree that they live in a wasteland in need of a cleanup, but by accepting Western waste in order to run the incinerator facilities bought from the West for the benefit of Western investors, they really end up, as one local doctor put it, as "the cesspool of Europe," and thus reinforce their wasteland image. This Catch-22, endorsing development-via-waste-treatment and joining-Europe-via-waste-incineration, is thus exposed by the Greens as a false transition consciousness.

LOCAL VISIONS OF THE TRANSITION

Rather than being about "joining Europe," whose positive meaning is uncontested, this debate is about local transitions, about the future path of local development. Garé sees the incinerator as a way back into its trend-setting historical path, derailed sometime under socialism. As its leaders say, Garé could become a "little Paradise," or "a model village," where Westerners would come to study the incinerator and its effects at the site of EMC Services' most up-to-date plant. They argue that Garé's population has changed, that there is no hope for developing agriculture on a private small-scale basis, because nobody has domestic animals, or machines to cultivate the land, the elderly are not capable of working enough, and youth do not have enough experience to make that happen. Indeed, most people I talked to who had owned land before collectivization have left their plot in the cooperative or rented it back to the cooperative. Garéans feel that if they are to survive and rid their village of its roles as literal and figurative wasteland, they simply have no choice other than what their opponents call "building a castle out of shit."⁵²

Let's see what this castle looks like. Garé, like all other communities since 1990, receives a budget from the state based on its population size, which has to be spent on maintaining infrastructure and institutions, such as

schools or clubs, and on organizing local events. This amount, which is derived in part from personal income taxes paid by local residents, is about 7.2 million forints (about \$48,000) per year.⁵³ For health services Garé receives 2.9 million fts (\$19,300) from social security funds, and it raises about 2.3 million (\$15,300) from interests, rent, and service fees.⁵⁴ Thus, the basic annual budget of the village is about 12 to 13 million fts (\$80,000 to \$87,000), compared to which Hungaropec has offered 80 million fts (\$530,000)—that is, about six years' budget—in compensation for the land-use permit, an amount that certainly appeals to the local elite and, in fact, to all local residents. In 1994, Garé's government requested, and received, an advance of 40 percent of that amount to pay for infrastructural developments. By postponing some of the development, the village government was able to distribute a total of 2.6 million fts (\$17,000) to individual households just before the 1994 November elections, which led to accusations of vote-buying.

If supporting the cause of the incinerator seemed financially advantageous even before starting construction, the long-term benefits after incineration starts promise to be even greater. Garé will receive a share of the plant's profits. Villagers anticipate building new houses and creating new infrastructural developments; construction promises an ample demand for physical labor to be recruited from the village's unemployed. It is hoped that these developments, besides lowering or canceling local taxes, will also spur local entrepreneurial activity.

A handful of the local elite has benefited greatly from their cooperation with Hungaropec. They have used the compensation for maintaining their political power, in part, as villagers told me, by distributing local development contracts to "their people." They also seek to influence the siting of the incinerator so that Hungaropec will have to buy the land from them. The village's increased leverage over other villages and its government's good bargaining position with a Western company have enabled the elite to silence dissent and thus diminish public control over issues other than the incinerator, as well. No wonder that those interviewees who fall outside the circle of the local government's beneficiaries complained about abuses which, according to them, were unheard of under socialism.

While Garé searches in the realm of novel economic activities for a viable economic road, Szalánta's path of transition relies on the development of more traditional economic activities, primarily agriculture. Szalánta's rate of individual entrepreneurs is hardly higher (8 percent of the population) than Garé's (7 percent), but entrepreneurs in Garé tend to be less able to make a living from agriculture (4.5 percent against 7 percent in Szalánta). In Garé, only 29 percent of the employed work in agriculture, while in Szalánta 37 percent do. With the latter figures, Garé is the second lowest in the district, while Szalánta is the first.⁵⁵

Greens and especially the villagers who are against the Garé incinerator

are not anticapitalist; they simply reject the "to-the-future-via-waste-business" path of transition. As the mayor of Szalánta said of his position in the public hearing, "I am a capitalist, too, but not to the disadvantage of others." Others likened the waste industry to prostitution: "Here Hungarian men will only be good for pushing trashcans, and women can go . . . tie a red light on their backs." They clearly consider incineration a dirty business, and they regard this dirtiness not only and not even primarily in the sense of environmental pollution: they reject what they consider its moral dirtiness. They compare bringing in waste to their backyards for profit to individual citizens throwing garbage over into their neighbors' yards, and they question the cleanliness of the money from the revenues of incineration or waste treatment in general. Several people opposing the incinerator told me that what repelled them the most was the compensation offered by Hungaroproc, which they defined as bribery, and they found it offensive that after Garé was "bribed," Garé's elite and Hungaroproc would think that other villagers, including them, could be bought off as well. An industry that is willing to pay them "for nothing" can only be evil.

This sensitivity around money-related issues triggers charges, on an almost daily basis and on both sides, that people have been bribed or are not acting according to professional etiquette. The charges have resulted in a couple of libel suits already. The roots of what might be called the ethical problem, however, reach beyond the district's boundaries. Hungary is a country where corruption is routine, where it is difficult to get anything done without bribes or connections; but it is also a country that desperately wants to get rid of its "socialist legacy" and become "European." To become European in Hungary has become synonymous with national self-purification. Thus, consorting with a European firm that not only pollutes nature but itself perpetuates corruption is, as the opponents of the incinerator see it, equivalent to telling a four-year-old that Santa Claus does not really exist. The disappointment with this "European road" has encouraged calls for a separate path of transition, based on local needs and resources, such as village tourism, agriculture, and thermal-water tourism, possibilities that the Greens have been active in exploring along with plans for helping the district modernize its infrastructure in order to boost local development. It is important to note, however, that this seeming closure to the West still holds dear a certain, idealized, meaning of Europeaness, its democratic values, its "environmentalism," and its resistance to any form of racism.

There has never been a debate about the future of the country on the national level. As a consequence, the discussion got pushed back to the local level, where, due to the small-scale nature of the issues that bring it forth, it inevitably turns into a nasty, name-calling quarrel, ultimately, in the eyes of many citizens, discrediting democracy. People on both sides speak very dubiously about the gains of democracy. In general, they agree that democratization has made it possible to talk about the dump and its dangers for

the first time, but they also complain that the public hearings and other deliberation processes have grown way too long and complicated. Thus, ironically, some people in Garé have found themselves nostalgic for the past, because, they suggest, if state socialism had not collapsed the state would by now have built the incinerator and completed the cleanup. Citing Edward Teller as his source, a local intellectual even argued that "democracy is dangerous because in democracy a few clever individuals have to convince a lot of stupid ones." Those in Szalánta also cast the discussion in terms of expertise and democracy, but they draw a different conclusion. Although they feel they have educated themselves in order to enter the debate fully informed, they are determined to enforce their majority view through actions. As the former mayor of Szalánta said, "neither I nor the members of the local government can decide what is more dangerous: this [waste] staying here without treatment or the incinerator. . . . But one thing is clear. The citizens [of Szalánta] have declared that, if necessary, they will lie down on the highway and will not let this incinerator be built."

In its new global context, the situation in Garé is the story of global forces that are less constraining and more enabling than they once were, a story in which the local actors can use their imaginations to put those global forces to work on their behalf. There are four factors that have the potential for liberating their political imagination and hijacking global forces, the last three of which are entirely ignored in the literature about the prodigious transformations under way in Eastern Europe: 1) the disappearance of an omnipresent state; 2) a powerful sense of local history; 3) the immediate connections between localities and global forces; and 4) the nature of the issue, namely, environmental destruction.

In Hungary in general, and in Garé in particular, the national government has not only ceased to be the most important economic and political agent, but has practically dropped out of the picture altogether. Various state authorities keep waffling on the incinerator issue, suggesting that the state is only following the lead of others—the residents, the firms, the environmentalists.⁵⁶ According to many of my interviewees, public officials still influence the outcome of this controversy on both sides, but only to advance their own interests and not to represent the interests of the state *per se*.⁵⁷ Neither do they claim to do so. Instead they present their arguments in terms of local needs, privatization, democracy, or environmental protection. In this light, the focus of the bulk of the transition literature on the state, the often repeated argument of a "weak civil society," and the reprimand of the public for placing an "excessive faith . . . in what can be achieved by the state"⁵⁸ is baffling.⁵⁹

The strong sense of local history is also related to the disappearance of the state. The one-party state suppressed local identities in the name of socialist equality and attempted to force the realization of its utopia of a "New Man." Especially those villages that suffered a lot as a result of regional

development policies and that have now regained their autonomy, such as Garé, find that they need to revive their local identities in order to establish and legitimate new local governments.

Globalization, with the collapse of the state as a mediating force, allows localities to have independent access to the outside world (the West) and to consider carefully which of its features to embrace and which to reject. As we have seen, both the global incinerator industry and the global environmental movement are prepared to work very closely with the villages.

Finally, the cause of the environment, which has always functioned as a veiled social critique in Central and Eastern Europe, and which has achieved such a discursive salience in economic and political decision-making practically all over the world, now allows the questioning of certain authorities and certain development visions.

Taken together, these four factors have the effect of expanding space for local action even in the face of globalization that might otherwise have made that space contract.

POLITICAL REGENERATION OR DEGENERATION?

I have described how both sides of the siting controversy use or try to use global forces as resources. Garé or, more precisely, its elite tries to ally with the global incinerator industry and take advantage of what Greenpeace calls the global "rush to burn" trend. Opponents of the incinerator ally themselves with Western Greens, using their information and discourses. I have also argued that it is only by reference to the future path of development of the region, as well as to its local history, that either side can use the global as a resource, and I have referred to this practice as "cognitive cartography." Defining the opposing agents as "cognitive mapmakers" emphasizes the fact that both sides wage their struggles with distinct images of the world and with categorical views of the global and the local in their minds. Furthermore, this approach has the effect of emphasizing the role of the citizens as agents, rather than that of the discourses imported from the respective global contexts, locating the necessary imagination and "mapmaking" right in the center of political action.

This conflict is thus in large part a debate about the postsocialist transition: it is about who has the power to define the economic value of a region, and who has the power to determine the meaning of powerful symbols in the transition discourse, such as "Europe" and "democracy." Pro-incinerator actors promote an image of Hungary as a wasteland that needs cleanup; only after achieving certain standards of cleanliness can she be welcome into the European family. Greens and villagers who are against the incinerator in Garé, in contrast, seem to care more about the lack of moral cleanliness that is implied in such toxic-waste-for-money swaps between the

Western and the Eastern parts of Europe, and what they appreciate in Europe are not its alleged standards of state-of-the-art-cleanliness but rather its assumed democratic, civic, antiracist, and environmentalist values. The choice is not between rejecting the West or following it. "Openness to the West" and adopting the model of market democracies have different, if not contradictory, meanings to actors on opposite sides of the siting controversy.

On the surface this controversy appears as symbolic politics obsessed with purity and pollution, not reflecting economic interests and with no impact on institutions. A more historical and sociological analysis, however, reveals that this is indeed a struggle for resources that could ensure a viable economic future for the region. Local actors were able not only to put the economic issues on the agenda but were also able to affect various authorities without the state's assistance. It was the Western partner that initiated this symbolic politics by branding the state socialist past as dirty, morally and physically, and marking the West as clean and pure. Thus, the heightened concern about the physical and moral cleanliness of the Hungarian people that manifests itself in this struggle cannot simply be brushed aside as irrational symbolic politics, as a mere legacy of state socialism.⁶⁰ Garé's story is about the regeneration of politics, especially about the regeneration of politics on the local level. The degeneration of politics, that is, the failure of new environmental politics to solve the problem of Garé's dump, even as of the end of 1999, however, has more to do with certain Western agendas than with the East's legacy.

NOTES

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1. Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Social Regime in Russia"; Marshall I. Goldman, *The Spoils of Progress: Environmental Pollution in the Soviet Union*; Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialization: The Formation of Modern Soviet Production Relations and Soviet Workers and De-Stalinization: The Consolidation of the Modern System of Soviet Production Relations 1953-1964*; János Kornai, *Economics of Shortage*; Roger Manser, *The Squandered Dividend: The Free Market and the Environment in Eastern Europe*; Alec Nove, *The Soviet Economic System*; Róbert Reiniger, "Veszélyes hulladékok" [Hazardous Wastes]; Mihály Simai, "Környezetbarát fejlődésünk" (Our Environment-Friendly Development); János Szlávik, "Piacosítható-e a környezetvédelem?" [Is Environ-

mental Protection Marketable?]; Hillel Ticktin, "The Contradictions of Soviet Society and Professor Bettelheim" and *Origins of the Crisis in the USSR: Essays on the Political Economy of a Disintegrating System*.

2. Roger Manser, *The Squandered Dividend*, and János Szilávik, "Piacosítható-e a környezetvédelem?"

3. Manuel Castells, *The Informational City*, p. 349.

4. George Schöpfung, "Post-Communism: A Profile."

5. Valerie Bunce and Mária Csanádi, "Uncertainty in the Transition: Post-Communism in Hungary"; Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Dynamics of the Breakthrough in Eastern Europe: The Polish Experience*.

6. George Schöpfung, "Post-Communism: A Profile."

7. Martin Malia, "Leninist Endgame."

8. Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction*.

9. Tony Judt, "The Past Is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe."

10. David Stanners and Philippe Bourdeau, *Europe's Environment: The Dobris Assessment*.

11. Matthew Gandy, *Recycling and the Politics of Urban Waste*.

12. David Stanners and Philippe Bourdeau, *Europe's Environment: The Dobris Assessment*.

13. Pat Costner and Joe Thornton, *Playing with Fire: Hazardous Waste Incineration*, p. 46.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. This is why, for example, the eighties saw a massive increase in hazardous waste imports to the United Kingdom, where standards were less stringent than in other West European countries.

17. The reported amount exported to developing countries was 120,000 tons annually in the early 1990s, but according to the Dobris Assessment, a study by the European Environment Agency, there is "increasing evidence that the magnitude of these transfrontier movements is far larger than recorded" (David Stanners and Philippe Bourdeau, *Europe's Environment: The Dobris Assessment*, p. 352). No data exist for the total amount exported to Eastern Europe, but the fact that Western Europe exported 1 million tons of hazardous wastes just to the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in 1988 gives some idea of the magnitude.

18. In 1993, in the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) actually put an eighteen-month moratorium on incinerator construction, partly because of resistance, partly because an overcapacity had been created.

19. In 1993, in Europe, France and Germany led in incinerator capacity, with an annual 9.5 and 8.7 million tons respectively; the United States had an annual capacity of about 3.9 billion tons; while four reported East European countries had a combined annual capacity of little over 2 million tons (Stanners and Bourdeau).

20. Letter from Gérard Monnier-Besombes, member of the French delegation of the Green fraction of the European Parliament, to Zöld Kör (Green Circle), June 10, 1993, p. 3, archives of Zöld Kör, Pécs.

21. My calculation is based on Greenpeace data from Pawel Gluszynski and Iza Kruszezwska, *Western Pyromania Moves East: A Case Study in Hazardous Technology Transfer*.

22. Ibid.

23. Data on the production of individual chemical compounds are incredibly scarce. I have not found data for European countries; but according to United States government data, which rely on voluntary reporting, the United States did not produce TCB after 1982, five years before BCW itself terminated the production of TCB.

24. Archives of Budapest Chemical Works (Letter, April 4, 1968, from President of Budapest Chemical Works to Ministry of Heavy Industries, p. 1; Minutes, Operative Meeting of Management—June 12, 1968; August 7, 1972; and July 14, 1975).

25. Similar requests of other companies from outside Baranya were turned down by the county council on the grounds that their wastes were not locally produced (letter by Baranya Megyei KÖJÁL, March 14, 1978).

26. Mostly due to its hilliness, but maybe also due to its ethnic heterogeneity, Baranya had developed small but closely located settlements and farms, rather than larger and more distant ones more characteristic of the rest of Hungary. Baranya had a large proportion of Croats and Germans for a long time, and the socialist state's efforts to solve the "Gypsy problem" by settling Romanis in abandoned village houses further colored the ethnic palette.

27. In 1986 there were nineteen counties in Hungary, of which only three, each with much higher industrial activity than Baranya, had more industrial waste dumps (MTESZ-MÁFI, *Waste Dump Survey*; data from three counties were missing or were compiled in a way that precludes comparison).

28. BCW actually got its permit in 1979, but the first negotiation was held in Szálanta in June 1978.

29. Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Ontology of Socialism*; József Böröcz, "Dual Dependency and Property Vacuum: Social Change on the State Socialist Semiperiphery."

30. Of course, there is no agreement on what sicknesses are caused by the dump and there are no surveys that would show a connection.

31. BCW's share in Hungaropec's capital stock is 26 percent; this is the minimum allowable, according to Hungarian laws, for BCW to retain a say in the increase of the capital stock.

32. The importance of the paper is enhanced by the fact that this district never had its own newspaper, and that nowadays very few people can afford to buy the large-circulation regional daily that covers issues in their villages.

33. My use of the term "cognitive map" is closest to Fredric Jameson's (*Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*). He argues that political action requires cognitive mapping—"nam[ing] the system" (p. 418), that is, a spatial imagining of the self in relation to an increasingly globalized social reality.

34. Hungaropec, *Tájékoztató a Garében tervezett ipari hulladékégetőről* [Information on the Incinerator Planned in Garé], p. 1. Emphasis in the original. All translations are the author's.

35. Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

36. The term "entrepreneur" (vállalkozó) had a very positive connotation in the years immediately preceding and following the collapse of state socialism. Its primary meaning was not "business for profit" as much as "working on one's own initiative," independently from the state. This positive connotation is here exploited to hide the fact that the proposal is actually about a profit-making venture.

37. The quoted phrase is from a 1995 study of the social impact of the proposed incinerator (Fact Betéti-társaság, *A Garé térségében építendő hulladékégető társadalmi hatástanulmánya*).

38. Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?*

39. The Swiss-Hungarian joint venture is building an incinerator just a few kilometers away, while the Dorog incinerator is an already functioning facility about two hundred kilometers north, much closer to Budapest.

40. I am referring to Lipschutz's use of the term (Ronnie D. Lipschutz with Judith Mayer, *Global Civil Society and Global Environmental Governance: The Politics of Nature from Place to Planet*). The estimated number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), as well as their financial resources, has been steadily increasing since the 1970s, with a real take-off in the 1980s. It is practically impossible to know the exact number of environmental NGOs, partly because environmental and developmental or other issues are often tackled together in the same organizations and partly because of their independence. Some NGOs are not accounted for in registries, such as those maintained by the United Nations or other international associations, partly because of their often temporary existence—that is, because they transform themselves with relative ease as projects dictate. We know that there were five thousand NGOs registered at the Rio Summit in 1992, but the United Nations reports that just in India there were twelve thousand such organizations at the beginning of the nineties, which should help us imagine their magnitude and salience.

41. Ibid.

42. Fact Betéti-társaság, *A Garé*. . .

43. "Expert systems" is Anthony Giddens's term. In *The Consequences of Modernity*, he claims that in the age of global "disembedding," expert systems, institutions that produce and "guarantee" knowledge, provide a key link for individuals to distant sources of knowledge.

44. In this long war for Hungarian independence from Austria (1703–1711), the French king Louis XIV failed to establish formal diplomatic relations with the new Hungarian government, which badly needed to overcome its international isolation, although he had a tacit alliance with Rákóczi, the Hungarian leader.

45. Reference to the peace treaty of Trianon in 1920.

46. Speaker at the Baranya county public hearing on the Garé incinerator, Pécs, June 1996.

47. Pécsi Zöld Kör Environmental Affairs Team, *A király meztelen* [The Emperor Has No Clothes], p. 4. In fact, a plan from 1988 went beyond building a regional toxic waste dump in Garé and proposed an incinerator.

48. Ibid., p. 5.

49. One key aim was to undermine peasant majorities in rural areas.

50. Hulladék Munkaszövetség, No title, p. 19.

51. John Schwartz, Carla Koehl, and Karen Breslau, "Cleaning Up by Cleaning Up," p. 41.

52. This refers to a traditional Hungarian saying: "One cannot build a castle out of shit."

53. Data, as provided by the mayor of Garé, and currency rate from 1996.

54. Garé could afford not to collect local taxes for the past few years, thanks to

the compensation (more precisely the interest on it) it received from Hungaropec. This would have been a meager amount anyway (120,000 fts).

55. Data from the economic-social impact study (Fact Betéti-társaság, *A Garé* . . .).

56. The first decision, made by the regional environmental authority, denied the permission; the second, made at the national level, gave the permit; and the third, which was the result of a successful civil lawsuit charging the national authority with endangering the public health and the environment, obliged the previous authorities to start the process of impact studies and public hearings all over. Presently, this decision is being appealed.

57. The fact that a prominent employee of the regional environmental authority resigned the day the permit was denied to Hungaropec, and the fact that the head of the national authority resigned a few days after giving the permit raised suspicions that these decisions represented more individual, or at the most departmental, interests.

58. George Schöpflin, "Post-Communism: A Profile," p. 65.

59. Zygmunt Bauman, "Hol az osztályérdek mostanában?" [Where Is Class Interest These Days?]; Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction*.

60. George Schöpflin, "Post-Communism: A Profile."