

Stephen Holmes

## Manifold Lessons



Born in St. Louis in 1948, Stephen Holmes received his Ph.D. from Yale University in 1976. After a year at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (1978-79), he began teaching in the Government Department at Harvard University, where he remained until 1985. In that year he moved to the University of Chicago where he currently holds a joint professorship in political science and law. His books include *Benjamin Constant and the Making of Modern Liberalism* (Yale University Press, 1984) and *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism* (Harvard University Press, 1993). He is currently co-director of Chicago's Center for the Study of Constitutionalism in Eastern Europe.

After a few weeks back in Chicago (which I dearly love), I began sorely to miss Berlin. The year was unforgettable. Like most fellows, I took shameless advantage of the opportunity provided by the Kolleg for mixing work and recreation. During the course of my stay, I completed and mailed away a book manuscript on non-marxist criticisms of liberal politics (to be published next fall by Harvard University Press). I also completed the first draft of a book on constitutionalism and democracy. At the same time, I kept close tabs on political and legal changes occurring in the countries of the former East Bloc. From Berlin, I travelled to Moscow, Kiev, Kalininograd, Prague, Budapest, Sofia, and Vilnius, always for short information-gathering trips. In discussions with my fellow fellows, Claus Offe, Bruce Ackerman, Laszlo Bruszt, and Andrei Plep, I considerably deepened my understanding of the turbulence in the postcommunist world. Visits by my friends Jon Elster, Wiktor Osiatynski, Rumyana Kolarova, and Benjamin Barber added to both the levity and the gravity of our ongoing conversations. The two-month stay by another friend, Albert Hirschman, capped the year.

On March 19 —20, Offe and I hosted a small conference on party-formation in postcommunist states which turned out to be a great success. Seven of the eighteen participants came from Central and Eastern Europe. The first day of the workshop was spent discussing the current situation in each country represented; the second was devoted to comparative analysis. Among the topics discussed were the dissolution or transformation of

former communist parties and the fate of their assets, both material and nonmaterial (especially control of secret archives); the role of parties based on ethnicity; how the choice between presidentialism and parliamentarism affects party development; the consequences of electoral laws; constitutional provisions prohibiting anticonstitutional parties; laws controlling access to the mass media; constitutional provisions prohibiting certain public officials (especially judges, but also civil servants, and even presidents) from belonging to any political party; and the regulation of party financing. Plans are being made for a collectively authored volume based upon this workshop held at the Kolleg.

Among my fellow fellows, I remain especially indebted to Horst ("Sport hilft Denken") Bredekamp — and not only for showing me all the bars in Schöneberg, for consistently losing at ping-pong after 2 a.m., and for emboldening our informal "Schwerpunktgruppe" to swim naked. Bredekamp's peculiar fusion of stoic self-abnegation and a limitless appetite for chocolate provided a model that I am trying to copy in my own life even now. From others, of course, I also learned massively. For example, Amos Elon taught me to respect social science. Bruce Ackerman taught me how to shuffle and swagger at the same time. Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey taught me that the best seats at the theater are reserved for the blind and the deaf. Ian Buruma taught me to arrive early at Wallotstrasse so that I could get hold of the *Herald Tribune* before he did. Hinderk Emrich taught me how to blow up balloons at Fasching without embarrassment. Patrizia Pinotti taught me to forget the meaning of several Italian phrases. Herbert Hrachovec taught me to appreciate America. And Amos Hetz taught me to feel guilty for not going to movement class.