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 **Rival Visions**

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Rival Visions*

Václav Havel (bio), Václav Klaus (bio), and Petr Pithart (bio)

Havel: The era of radical social, political, and economic upheaval — indeed, of fundamental systemic change — is without a doubt drawing to a close. Five years after the revolution, the period of dramatic, hurried

construction of the foundations of our infant state is also coming to an end. At such a moment, two paths lie ahead of us.

On one hand, we could feel satisfied about what has already been completed. We could applaud our achievements and lapse into a state of lethargy while awaiting the results of all the changes. At most, we could engage in minor repairs to the state or make sure that it functions without major complications. In other words, we could sprinkle water only when we think that something is beginning to smolder.

There is also the other path, the better option, which I myself support and recommend. . . . Its underlying principle is to reflect on the meaning of all the changes that we have introduced, on the goals we seek to achieve, and on the future steps that need to be taken. We should do this not by hurrying at a revolutionary pace, but through peaceful contemplation, with insight and depth.

In other words, we find ourselves at an intersection that presses us to consider, once again, the character of the state that we have created. The task for the immediate future is no longer the reconstruction of the **[End Page 12]** fundamental principles, tools, and institutions of democracy and a free-market economy. All of that has already been accomplished. I do not believe that our future goal should be merely the creation of an efficient capitalist democracy.

We need something more: we need to begin a serious discussion about the character of the democracy that we wish to cultivate—its roots, spirit, and direction. With equal seriousness, we should also consider what needs to be done at the different levels of the reconstructed market economy so that its fruit may be enjoyed by the general public. We need, quite simply, a new vision: one that is mindful of the future role of our citizens, local government, and state; one that considers the cultivation of our citizens' lives, our political and economic identity, and our country's position within the European context.

The time has come to describe anew the role that our country is to

play in the international arena. And the time has come to ask openly: Do we want, through our responsibility and solidarity, to be respected, trusted, and welcome members of the international community? Or do we want to be a country that, owing to its conceited and egocentric behavior, is treated with a courteous distance?

The vision that I am speaking of must stem from a clear recognition of the moral and spiritual precepts upon which our young democracy rests. This vision must also stimulate concrete conceptual planning, which in turn will give rise to a body of laws and to practical politics.

(From a speech given on the state holiday of the Czech Republic, 28 October 1994.)

Klaus: The underlying transformation process has two slightly different aspects. One is quite passive, the other active. Both are radical and revolutionary, and both are based on a clear, transparent vision of the future—and on an ability to “sell” both this vision and a pragmatic, rational, and not-so-simple strategy of transformation to the citizens of our country. In understanding the logic of this process, the difference between these two aspects is crucial.

The passive or noninterventionist side of the process is that of radical deregulation and liberalization. The recent change in political systems was entirely in this mode. It was guided by liberalization, by the creation of unlimited access to the “political market.” We soon realized that this change would be enough, that nothing else needed to be forbidden, that the existing political parties did not need to be transformed. Though it may sound simplistic, this conclusion should not be seen as trivial. The artificial vacuum was quickly filled by new political groups, thanks to whom a standard political structure has been created. This structure...



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From opposition to atomization, ganymede integrates household in a row

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