

In Latin America, once dominated by dictatorships, democratic elections are becoming the rule. Debt is becoming to be addressed. A UN Observer Force, which Canada helped fashion, is in Central America, helping the five Presidents pursue their common plan for peace.

Western Europe, cautiously but steadily, is heading toward economic union, and in 1992 will become the largest single market in the world.

Japan is emerging not only as an economic superpower but perhaps as the economic superpower of the next centuries. So startling is the burst of power of the Pacific economic miracle that Americans, when polled, now identify Japan as a greater threat to the long term security of the United States than the Soviet Union.

That startling perception of the American population illustrates not only their changing view of the Soviet threat. It also indicates the effect of economic change on political reality.

And that, of course, is the lesson of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

While many of the changes there have a political face, they almost all have an economic base.

Karl Marx was correct in pointing to the pervasive effect of economic reality on political systems. He was profoundly wrong in suggesting the direction his influence would leave the world.

The reality is the Soviet citizen, sick of perpetual promises of prosperity unfulfilled, unwilling any longer to sacrifice his life for a utopia in which he no longer believes - and in which he knows he will not participate.

The reality is the Polish worker, unable to feed his family, discarding the slogans of a failed ideology, and embracing the alternative of freedom.

The reality is the Romanian peasant, suffering decades of brutal repression and deprevation, rising with his fellow citizens in a brave popular revolt.