

1 **So much gained, so much to lose**

2 http://www.economist.com/opinion/displaystory.cfm?story_id=14802240)

3 The destruction of the Iron Curtain on November 9th 1989 is still the most remarkable
4 political event of most people's lifetimes: it set free millions of individuals and it brought
5 to an end a global conflict that threatened nuclear annihilation.

6 Yet the past two decades have seen economic freedom advance further than political
7 freedom. Talk 20 years ago of a peaceful new world order has disappeared. Plenty of
8 countries have been able to run shamelessly repressive authoritarian regimes. When
9 Western leaders visit them they merely mumble about human rights. The presumption
10 has become that such regimes will endure.

11 By contrast, "globalisation", the term for freer movement of goods, capital, people and
12 ideas around the globe, has become the governing principle of commerce. Even after the
13 crisis, the commercial classes assume that the world will become more integrated
14 economically. It is not hard to see why such a presumption should exist. Consider the
15 success of economic liberalism, somewhat under-appreciated at the moment: its role 20
16 years ago. The East Berliners rushing to the West were not just fleeing the Stasi; they
17 also came in search of fridges, jeans and Coca-Cola from supermarkets.

18 Economic and political liberty are linked—not as tightly as people hoped 20 years ago,
19 but still linked. Look forward and China's internet-obsessed emerging middle class will
20 surely have an appetite for liberty beyond the purely economic. Change could happen as
21 unexpectedly as it did in 1989. Then it was Honecker and Ceausescu; tomorrow it might
22 be Castro, Ahmadinejad or Mugabe; one day Chávez or even Hu.

23 Put another way, the presumption that political freedom will never catch up with
24 economic freedom could turn out to be joyously wrong. The problem is that this gap
25 could also be closed another way. Economic freedom could be slowed down, perhaps
26 even reversed, by politics. Therefore, the enormous benefits that capitalism has brought
27 the world since 1989 need to be defended more forcefully than the West's leaders have
28 done thus far. And above all perhaps, they require that nothing be taken for granted.

Questions

- 1) Why have the changes of 1989 been so very important in most people's lives? Do you know what exactly happened on November 9? (line 3) What global conflict was brought to an end then (line 5)?
- 2) What is the gist of the second paragraph (lines 6 to 10)? Why do Western leaders 'mumble' about human rights when they visit authoritarian countries? (line 9)
- 3) 'By contrast' (line 11) is a very useful linking phrase. Linking phrases such as this one are called conjuncts. Can you think of other linking phrases that could possibly replace 'By contrast' in this context?
- 4) What 'crisis' is referred to in line 13?
- 5) What is the general idea given in lines 14 to 17? Do you agree with it? What is the Stasi (line 16)?
- 6) What arguments does the article give to support the proposition that 'Economic and political liberty are linked'? (line 18)
- 7) What are, according to the article, the consequences to be expected of such a link between economy and politics?
- 8) 'The problem is that this gap could also be closed another way' (line 24 to 25). What does this sentence mean? Try to retell the content of the last paragraph using your own words to make sure you understand it.
- 9) Having analyzed all the paragraphs, give a structured summary of the article. You can start like this: '1989 was important because.... (paragraph 1) But (paragraph 2)' Do not forget to use appropriate conjuncts to link the sentences or larger parts of your text!
- 10) What are your memories of 1989? And what do you think about development since 1989?

Vocabulary

bring/come to/be at an end (line 4-5)

run something /a regime/ (line 8)

assume (line 13) /assumption/ presumption (line 9 and 23)

Put another way (line 23)

Přejeme Vám mnoho studijních úspěchů.

Tým jazykové skupiny Spěváček: