



Introduction

COMMUNIST PARTIES REVISITED

Sociocultural Approaches to Party Rule
in the Soviet Bloc, 1956–1991

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The communist ruling parties (CPs) of Eastern and East Central Europe after 1945 were among the most powerful political organizations of the twentieth century. They possessed unique political, societal, and cultural shaping powers; for several decades they mobilized significant parts of their particular societies. They drove the socialist transformations forward, and they claimed to put utopian societal models into practice. They efficiently determined millions of their members' biographies and were able to bind them to their basic organizations, despite their erosion and demise in the late 1980s.

However, their treatment by historiography is still remarkably one-sided. Historians have overwhelmingly, if not at all, tended to limit them to their functions of passing on and carrying out the politburos' orders and offering their members career progression in exchange for good conduct. They are seldom recognized as separate organizations and dealt with as elements of an all-encompassing socialist statehood. In addition, their capacities as social and cultural communities have largely remained unnoticed. Their members and functionaries are rarely interpreted as genuine historical actors with their own motives and viewpoints. Rather, they are seen as homogenous masses of "believers" that the party leaderships perceived them to be—or pretended to perceive them to be. Even though the term "party state" has become a historiographical key concept, there are at best vague ideas of what the parties' inner life was like *below* the floors of the supposedly almighty politburos.

This book collects contributions that aim to develop new interpretations of both the inner workings of the parties as well as their political practices. The volume begins by asking about the mutual relationships between the CPs and the particular societies, about the inner life of the parties, and about the scope of action of the medium- and lower-level

functionaries. All in all, it strives for a more complex image of the CPs that fits into recent cultural and sociohistorical perspectives. In addition, by collecting contributions about the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the East German Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCS), the book aims to establish comparative viewpoints and, as far as possible, to be a valid base for further research for the whole of the former Eastern bloc.¹

On the State of Research

The neglect of the CPs in recent historiography has resulted from the way post-socialist societies have attempted to come to terms with their pasts. The protagonists of the former liberation movements—many of whom played a role in their countries' politics after 1989—were particularly interested in identifying “perpetrators,” who could be blamed for the crimes and failures of the socialist states. Moreover, they claimed that the liberation movements had overcome totalitarian *power states* (rather than weak, “failing” states), in order to give their own victory more importance.² Consequently, research on communism in the 1990s focused on the communist regimes' use of power and repression. Many researchers adhered to top-down perspectives that were developed in the course of the Cold War,³ even though the now-accessible archives would have enabled them to establish more complex views.

The tendency to perceive the communist regimes primarily as centralized power states became especially strong in the boom of research on Stalinism in the 1990s. Revisionist assumptions of a “Stalinism from below”⁴ were re-revised again as Stalin's personal rule and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs' (NKVD) practice of persecution came to the fore. The CPSU itself receded more into the background and in the role of a subordinated ideological and organizational frame of reference of the “Stalinist civilization,” even though Stalin, as well as his followers (and all those who wanted to survive in Soviet society), had to refer to this “frame” rhetorically.⁵ In addition, while the interpretations of Stalinism became realigned, there was a significant need to come to empirically founded insights about the Soviet party rule's classic principles (democratic centralism, nomenclature principle, etc.) and their change over time. Consequently, political practices of power enforcement and securing power came to the fore, as well as the politburo's operational methods and “turf wars” between hardliners and reformers.⁶ The research on the CPs concerning Eastern and East Central

Europe after 1945 focused on three relatively stable narrative-analytical patterns.

First, the history of the CPs is interpreted primarily as part of the political system's respective histories (or is even identified with it). Thus, the state party and its ideology often form the narrative center of histories of the Soviet Union, Poland, or the German Democratic Republic (GDR) until 1989–91, by being treated as a kind of impersonal collective actor: "The party" was doing this or that.⁷ As far as these narratives differentiate actors within this collective body at all, they stress the power of the party leadership, the interconnections between party and state apparatuses, and they emphasize the fact that anybody with career ambitions was forced to join the party. They leave no room beyond or below the overarching party-state structure that could have given grounds for alternative analytical approaches. There can be no doubt that this pattern has stimulated extensive research about the links between party, state apparatuses, and mass organizations. It has led to quite extensive knowledge about the structures of political rule as well as socio-economic steering principles in Soviet-style societies. However, it also fostered the disregard of the CPs' inner workings, which were indeed influenced not only by the parties' formal structures—their official rules and procedures—but also by internal dynamics. In addition, the interpretative pattern of the "party states" nurtured the neglect of the continuous, "asymmetric" negotiation processes between the parties and the particular societies. In addition, the "mono-organizational institutional design" blurred the surviving distinctions between party and state.

Second, post-1989 Communist studies wrote the history of the CPs as the history of the politburos and their top officials. The will and convictions of these functionaries alone were seemingly effective in shaping their societies' and nations' histories due to the tight hierarchies.⁸ Accordingly, subordinate authorities of party rule—especially the professional employees of the party bureaucracies—were perceived as abstract collective actors and remained hidden within the metaphor "apparatus."⁹ Finally, the grassroots-level comrades remained indistinct members of the "party base," who did not have the slightest chance of influencing the party leaders' agendas. Consequently, as they were no more than the insignificant "mass base," the basic organizations' inner life—their regular assemblies, their rituals and social relations—have remained beyond the scope of researchers.¹⁰ *Third*, the period of the socialist "build-up" of the Soviet satellite states have been studied much more closely than the post-Stalinist decades.¹¹ The former were, and are, considered far more eventful and charged with political and social tensions. Apparently, the course was set for the following post-Stalinist

history of decay and erosion during this period. Therefore, these post-Stalinist decades have been much less attractive objects for historical research as they were equated with “ideology loss” and stagnation, and gave grounds for the patterns of interpretation as “defunct societies” (*stillgelegte Gesellschaften*). For these reasons, subcutaneous mental and social transformations in the communist state parties that took place in the post-Stalinist decades have scarcely been noticed in recent research on communism. However, it is obvious that precisely these subcutaneous transformations were crucial to the tightening of the political situation in the late 1980s.¹² Over the past two decades, international research on communism has become highly differentiated and has opened up to new theoretical and methodological propositions. In this process, the separation between political history and history of society (and history of the everyday)—which has marked the research on communism in the 1990s—has been abrogated. In its place, the presence of government institutions in the everyday and, vice versa, *Eigensinn* (stubbornness) and informal processes within the institutions of the communist dictatorships have become objects of research.¹³

In view of the socialist societies (or, more precisely, in view of certain regions, professions, milieus, and gender aspects), recent research has already been able to show how Communist rule was perceived, how it could become willfully (*eigensinnig*) interpreted, and how it was occasionally undermined.¹⁴ Recently, even the social practice of state institutions of physical violence, such as the military and secret police, has been included in such a perspective¹⁵—yet not the Communist parties themselves. One reason for this could be that they, as intermediate organizations, were positioned between all societal levels, a position that raises the most complex analytical problems.¹⁶ Another reason might lie in the fact that it is more difficult to ascribe the parties’ comrades and functionaries to a certain societal (and moral) role. This is especially true if one compares them with the various Communist secret police services as the latter’s officers and informers can be dealt with much more easily as “perpetrators.” However, is a party functionary a perpetrator per se? Are the millions of rank and file comrades members of Milovan Djilas’s “new class” per se?¹⁷

Perspectives based on history of society and history of the everyday have marked the so-called second wave of research on communism in the 1990s and 2000s (after the first wave of studies in political history).¹⁸ The third wave, in contrast, has become shaped by cultural-historical approaches. The interpretation of political rule as a “rule of discourse”¹⁹ or as “authoritative”²⁰ or “public discourse” has been particularly influential in this field,²¹ although even these discourses could have become

mandatory by means of repression. However, they left open the possibility for the individual to acquire and transform prescribed ways of speaking.

Yet again, these cultural-historical approaches have also primarily focused on certain social groups—on Komsomol members, intellectuals, or environmentalists, for instance. Whether and to what extent party members and functionaries also similarly appropriated, changed, or evaded the “authoritative discourse” is still an open question. Similarly, the extent to which the Stalinist party discipline and practices of repression were replaced by more flexible ways of maintaining the parties’ coherence—for example, by performative practices or by new offers for collective identities,²² including references to the nation or regional identities—also remains unanswered.²³ Cultural-historical approaches may be especially fruitful in addressing these problems, and the analysis of the parties’ members’ “hidden” transcripts and informal patterns of action might contribute to gaining a new, more complex image of the allegedly monolithic parties as well as of the “defunct societies.” Moreover, such an analysis might lead to more multidimensional explanations for “1989,” which emphasized long-term change more than many of the current political historical studies.²⁴

In the last years, the debate about the causes of the decay of the Socialist systems and the CP’s dissolution in the 1980s has indeed intensified, stimulated again by cultural-historical and anthropological perspectives. Recent research has particularly begun, controversially, to discuss the role of perceptions of crisis within the socialist functional elites.²⁵ A systematic analysis of the collective mentalities of party functionaries and party members and how they changed over time, however, is still missing.²⁶

New Perspectives on Party Rule

Starting from this view, the state socialist communist parties cannot be reduced to just one function. The parties were multifunctional organizations²⁷ and not just in charge of political rule or cadre selection.²⁸ They felt also responsible for the societies’ integration and the dissemination of worldviews and collective identities. The principal aim of this volume is to make the multifunctional character of the CPs more visible in the research on communism and thereby give them a more prominent place in historiography.

The volume collects contributions that implement approaches of social and cultural history on the CPs. Their joint starting point is first an

understanding of the CPs that emphasizes their status as independent organizations, with clear borders to state institutions and other mass organizations. Indeed, they never became an integral branch of the “mono-organizational state.”²⁹ Although the merger of government and politburo came to be perceived as the archetypal feature of the Soviet model, even in the CPSU’s case it was limited to the Second World War.³⁰ In its aftermath, the CPSU reestablished its central role and “advised” its “sister parties” in East Central Europe to persist in a similar fashion on certain borders between party and state. These “borders” became even more important as Khrushchev started to “revive” the party and use it as his power base from the Nineteenth Congress onwards.³¹

The decades of post-Stalinism were, consequently, not marked by the “mono-organizational institutional design” that dominates the current historiographical approaches.³² In contrast, the “party states” were actually differentiated by organizational borders: borders most prominently between the state and the party, yet also “between the party’s center (the ‘inner party’) and the ‘outer party’ of regional and local organizations.”³³ The parties’ role was always quintessential, and these boundaries were often blurred, but they constituted important references for the political and societal actors. If one aims to gain an understanding of state socialist political processes that does not stop at the underlying politburo decision, then these boundaries need to be considered.

Historians and political scientists have referred to the “mono-institutional organizational design” primarily when they dealt with the relationship between party and state. In contrast, when they have dealt with party-society relations they usually preferred a very different perspective. Starting from the works of contemporaries who interpreted Communist rule as a new form of class rule—most prominently Milovan Djilas with his *New Class* and Michael S. Voslensky with *Nomenklatura*—they categorically differentiated between the CPs and their societal environment, the parties as power organizations, and the subjugated societies. Again, this interpretation is not shared here. Instead, many of the contributions in this volume—and this is their second joint starting point—are based on an understanding of party-society relations that can be captured using the metaphor of the “metabolism.” The CPs were not isolated “closed organizations” within the state socialist societies. They were integral parts of these societies, and it is only therefore that, for example, the privileges enjoyed by comrades had the potential to become societal conflicts (and cannot just be seen as elements of a contrast between the ruling “new class” and the subjugated people). The CPs were not closed, but reacted to the societal, cultural, and economic changes within their environment in the post-Stalinist

decades. The tightening of their disciplinary regime and repression was one common reaction to societal and inner-party unrest. However, in the post-Stalinist decades they turned more frequently to “softer” methods of rule and to a greater amount of political flexibility.³⁴ Nevertheless, the limits of this change still needed to be evaluated and many of the contributions in this volume directly address this question.

Most of the articles deal with the CPSU and the East German SED, some of them with the Polish PZPR and the Czechoslovakian CPCS. Even though this might be a rather small sample of Soviet-style Communist ruling parties, it nevertheless already illustrates important organizational, political, and cultural differences.³⁵ To exemplify this, the identities of the CPSU and PZPR functionaries, along with their world-views and political agendas, often referred to imperial or national ideas and traditions.³⁶ They also more often legitimized their rule in a way that Max Weber would have called “traditional”: CPSU functionaries in particular were often part of career networks or members of political “clans” that gave support and requested loyalty.³⁷ In the SED or CPCS (after 1968), however, the situation was different: Here, the nation did not play an important role as a frame of reference. In its place, Marxism-Leninism seemed to have shaped the functionaries’ public transcripts and their *habitus* much more strongly (though not necessarily their thinking).

These differences raise the question of whether the category “Soviet-style communist party” has any analytical value that might outweigh its shortfalls. However, another premise of this volume is based on the assumption that the parties *were* indeed connected by certain beliefs and practices—by the shared ideology, the joint orientation towards Moscow as the political and cultural center of the Eastern hemisphere, and the transnational interconnections (through student exchanges within party academies, for example). These connections are seen here as the predominant factors that shaped the collective mentalities as well as the political practices. Therefore, comparative perspectives, which have the potential to highlight the CPs’ similarities as well as their differences, are of particular value. Three such perspectives structure this volume and serve as frames of reference to the particular contributions and are briefly explained in the next paragraph.

Parties and Societies

The first of these three perspectives is based on the obvious fact that all the CPs are to be considered as mass parties. Indeed, they all orga-

nized substantial amounts of the population for decades until the final crisis. Thus, at least nineteen million people belonged to the CPSU in the 1980s (6.5 percent of a total Soviet population of 290 million), 3.5 million to the PZPR 38 million (9.2 percent), 1.7 million to the CPCPS (15.4 percent) and 2.3 to the SED 17 million (12.9 percent). A number of sociological questions therefore urge to be answered: what were the social implications of the integration of up to a fifth of the adult population into the party world as a sphere of meaning and organizational rituals? What consequences did this integration have for the dynamics of social stratification, the rebuilding of classes, and the social distribution of resources?³⁸

Older historiography interpreted this quantitative dimension of the communist state parties first and foremost as a technique of securing power, as an outcome of the evolution of revolutionary cadre parties into “totalitarian parties of mass integration.”³⁹ It showed only limited interest in the social consequences of that integration. However, even in the new social history on everyday life, ordinary party members were dubbed as an unstructured mass, not worthy of more detailed analysis. The starting point for this volume is the counter-hypothesis that party membership was the most important political—and thereby social—distinguishing divide in state socialist societies. This divide substantially contributed to the constitution of new structures of inequality.⁴⁰ All the CPs focused upon here developed into parties of upper state bureaucrats during the post-Stalinist decades. For instance, at least 40 percent of the East German SED was composed of such cadres, following their own internal (and secret) statistics. The CPs were frequently joined by younger and middle-aged males, for whom membership promised access to higher educational degrees and professional careers. Thus, these members had an above-average salary level and, accordingly, a relatively high standard of living. This reproduction of loyalty by reward obviously played an increasingly important role—not least for full-time functionaries within the party apparatus itself.

As was shown for the CPSU as well as the SED, the share of staff expenditures in the party budgets rose continually (and faster than the number of functionaries), while expenditure on ideological work (propaganda meetings, printing of brochures, etc.) decreased.⁴¹ The post-Stalinist CPs, it could be argued, increasingly used the stimulation by material means to keep party functionaries both active and loyal. Lavish salaries and career opportunities for “young potentials” are not be underestimated—opportunities for consumption or vacations in attractive places proved to be more effective in keeping the parties together as mass organizations than the insistence on “criticism

and self-criticism" (given that the latter, at least in the SED, was never dropped and kept its place in the organizational culture).

Nevertheless, it would be inadequate to conclude that the importance of material incentives proves that hundreds of thousands of party members were opportunists following rational decisions to maximize their advantage. The reasons for joining the CPs during the 1970s and 1980s were numerous. Career and an ambition for social advancement played a prominent role, but it should not be forgotten that the majority of young party members in this period had a party family background, with their parents and sometimes grandparents being members. This turned joining the party into a similar function to that of Protestant Confirmation or Catholic First Communion in some rural areas of Central Europe: at least in some milieus, it was an obvious step in coming of age.⁴²

Apparatuses and Policies

The second perspective in this volume focuses on the concrete functions of the CPs and their apparatuses within their societies. Again, it is necessary to gain some distance from the self-image of the parties (and the images of their Western opponents), presenting them as not only wholly responsible for the repression of the secret police, but also for the empty shelves in the supermarkets. Beyond these images, some confined fields of action came into view, all of them primarily directed to the goal of maintaining power.

The first field of action was to legitimize the power of the CPs by the *production and distribution of ideology*. From the perspective of a history of society, this production remains somewhat enigmatic: on the one hand, it was obviously extremely important for the CPs to enforce their philosophy as compulsory in the public sphere. The CPs had their own departments for agitation and propaganda, party schools, etc., with thousands of employees. Substantial resources were spent on disseminating exclusive party information bulletins on sensitive issues,⁴³ teaching Marxism-Leninism and, of course, controlling media coverage.⁴⁴

On the other hand, broader layers of the population and at least some party members were aware of the fictional character of ideology. "Trust by faith" in Marxism-Leninism in the strict sense played a role only for a minority of party members.⁴⁵ The majority did not measure the party by its charismatic ideas, but rather by its practical qualities: standards of living, future prospects, and material and immaterial achievements of the sociopolitical order. Therefore, the CPs did not practice their claim for conviction and inner education in real life. In-

stead, they limited themselves to installing their doctrinal system in all public situations as an obligatory authoritative discourse. Beyond the public sphere, in private or semi-public life (in the workplace, on the streets), it was secondary or even totally negligible whether one was convinced by it or just paid it lip service.⁴⁶

The key question resulting from this contradiction is about the real status of "ideology" for the stability of socialist systems.⁴⁷ If the significance of ideology for the rank-and-file party members was low, what was the attitude of higher functionaries: do they have to be imagined as "true believers," convinced by the theory of stages of lawfully ascending formations of society? Or is it more appropriate that with de-Stalinization, the ideological "cement" also crumbled in the upper echelons? Do we therefore have to deal with a pragmatic power elite occupied with intrigues, turf battles, and practices of corruption, as suggested in interviews with former Polish party officials?⁴⁸ Was the production of ideology and enforcement of authoritative discourse therefore just a power technique, recognized by all participants as fictional? Or did it hint at something more substantial, such as the specific organizational culture of the CPs with their rituals of militancy and self-devotion? While the practical relevance of this organizational culture did decrease, it was obviously not possible to question it openly without paying the price of self-demolition, as shown in Gorbachev's perestroika and the beginnings of social democratization of the Polish PZPR.⁴⁹

The second area of the CPs' activity was securing power through either the threat or the actual practice of *physical violence*. Indeed, this area did not lose its relevance for any of the parties focused on here even in the post-Stalinist era. Of course, mass terror as an instrument of policy faded after 1953. After the period of establishing the Communist system, party functionaries only acted as "professional revolutionaries" on rare occasions, agitating against farmers or stirring up "class hatred." However, even after 1953, it was part of the political practice of top party officials in Poznan or Magnitogorsk, Halle or Prague, to exchange information with their secret police heads about dissidents, nationalist or religious milieus, etc., or, as in East Germany, about people who wanted to leave the country. Only in a few cases did the secret police dare to observe, arrest, or psychologically "decompose" without the explicit permission of the respective party heads.

It was, however, part of the style of these post-Stalinist decades that despite individual cases of hardship, attempts at finding implicit solutions came to the fore. In fact, all Communist parties after 1953 sought a new mode of dictatorial rule. This mode can be characterized by the term "reliability of expectations," but it included not only the channel-

ing and retraction of direct repression; it was also designed to achieve acceptance in other fields and for other party roles,⁵⁰ such as the caring “troubleshooter,” which (in contrast to the “cold” state administration) took the concerns of ordinary people seriously and made bureaucrats take action.

With the revisionist current of social history and the history of everyday life in so-called new Communist studies, it has become more and more clear that the CPs did more than just instruct the secret police and indoctrinate the population. Considerable portions of their activities were devoted to a third field that can be summarized as “management of society.” This field proved to be particularly important because it rapidly became clear to the party leadership that consent, loyalty, and willingness in the population depended first and foremost on issues of practical quality of life. Particularly at the district, county and local levels, countless examples can be found of party secretaries diverting investment funds for the benefit of their own territory, procuring workers for enterprises lacking a workforce, and, conversely, informal bargaining with local companies to support their plans for leisure attractions. The East German town of Brandenburg/Havel, for example, showed that in 1969 local party officials even managed to finance and build a whole public swimming pool that had never appeared in the planned state budget.⁵¹

It is remarkable that this unlawful political practice was by no means limited to the lower spheres of society—those levels for which the historiography of everyday life stated the importance of “Eigensinn” (stubbornness), colorful informal networks of mutual support, and a “grey” economy. CPSU and SED district party secretaries acted first and foremost as lobbyists for their territory, gaining symbolic capital by organizing its economic success.⁵² Even the departments of the central committee (CC) apparatus developed to some extent into intermediary organizations: in addition to executing politburo resolutions, in particular those of the economic departments in the 1970s and 1980s, they cooperated in a somewhat flexible manner with their respective partner ministries for industrial branches, in some cases even including alliances against competing CC departments and “their” ministries.⁵³

It is important to acknowledge that these “network improvisations”⁵⁴ cannot be interpreted as phenomena of demise. Networking and informal arrangements within the party and state bureaucracy had been gaining strength since the sixties. This was part of a homogenization of the functional elite, at least in East Central Europe, overcoming the former social and political conflicts between party and state cadres. To summarize, state socialism—apart from periods of war and the violent

implementation of power—was reliant not only on an informal “secondary economy,” but also on a “secondary policy” for its existence.

Internal Workings and Leadership Styles

A third perspective in this volume deals with the parties as political organizations that differentiated themselves from the outside world using the membership criterion and enforcing specific conditions and interpretations of reality for those members. At the same time, the parties were subject to change by the cohorts of members and functionaries, even though that change took place at a remarkably slower pace than its societal environment. From this perspective, different levels within the parties come into focus and show specific patterns of thought, speech, and action. These different levels can be defined as partial cultures within the party.

The party leaderships, for which only a few biographies of top functionaries are at hand despite a relatively strong interest in this level of party life,⁵⁵ are still as important as ever. One of the most striking research requirements is the very limited knowledge about concrete decision-making both within and outside the politburo meetings, which at least in the later decades often consisted only of rubber-stamping preformulated agendas and resolutions. The answers to questions of who, how, and when the power centers initiated political procedures, what defined political success, and the influence of informal relations is still quite unclear for East Central European CPs. The inner workings of the outwardly homogenous party apparatuses were more communicative and more dynamic and contained more areas of conflict than had been formerly recognized.

For instance, Leonid Brezhnev, of all people the ideal “apparatchik,” maintained a quite cooperative leadership style and consulted experts with diverging opinions.⁵⁶ Moreover, the foreign policy-making process was shaped by persistent turf battles by a number of actors.⁵⁷ The seemingly monolithic CC apparatus of the SED was characterized, from the sixties onwards, by a substantial division between “technocrats” and “ideologues,”⁵⁸ and top officials in the PZPR openly followed their personal interests, be they political or material.⁵⁹

The political style in the upper echelons of the parties was characterized by the particular style of individual party leaders. In contrast, grassroots party life in the thousands of party groups and cells was shaped much more by the experiences, attitudes, and expectations of “ordinary” comrades. One can observe a limited openness to external

influences. The CPs responded to changes in societal norms, attitudes, and values—even if these responses were at odds with the respective party and organizational cultures of earlier decades of Stalinism or even the founding period of the parties.

An example of the conflict between organizational culture and the changing social framework can be seen in the attempts of the CPSU leadership in the Khrushchev era to strengthen the party's role as an agency for education and discipline.⁶⁰ During this period of the early sixties, “socialist morals” were at the center of inner-party discourses, and issues such as discipline at work, restrained consumption of alcohol, and marital fidelity were prominent at party meetings. However, at the same time, the number of party disciplinary sentences for exactly these kinds of misbehavior decreased to an all-time low: such values could still be propagated by the party, but were actually no longer enforced. The East German SED also did not rely on coercion or punishment until revisiting this option in the seventies and eighties.⁶¹ Even this in some respects most Stalinist party in the Eastern bloc offered integration, and basic organizations functioned not only as instruments of discipline, but also as social environments enabling a variety of social exchanges that had little to do with Marxism-Leninism.

The time frame for this collection is limited by the basic transformation that took place after Stalin's death and gained more strength after 1956. For the Soviet Union, this decisive moment was the starting point for a renaissance of the Communist Party as the central institution of power, from which a rearrangement of institutions and societal policy in post-Stalinism was initiated and negotiated in conflicts. In the Communist dictatorships of East Central Europe, this transformation coincided with the establishment of a hegemonic position through the suppression of the bourgeois elites, the collectivization of agriculture and industry, as well as the creation of a resilient and loyal socialist service class. As mentioned above, in the medium-term, the paths of the individual parties separated—towards the Prague Spring, towards a state of conservative ultra-stability (as in the Soviet Union and GDR), or towards partial economic and social reforms (as in Poland and Hungary), but the basic patterns of the parties remained similar enough to be useful as common ground for questions about variations and cultural differences.

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tral Committee and Performative Communist Party Rule,” in *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 4 (2012): 793–811; and *Im Generalstab der Partei. Organisationskultur und Herrschaftspraxis in der SED-Zentrale (1946–1989)* (2017).

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Notes

1. Due to the inconsistent usage of abbreviations, we stick to the most common versions for the respective Communist parties, which in some cases is the English version, such as CPSU, but in some cases is the original version, such as SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands) and PZPR (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza).
2. Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, *Endspiel: die Revolution von 1989 in der DDR* [Endgame. The revolution of 1989 in the GDR] (Munich, 2009); Andrzej Paczkowski, *The Spring Will Be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom* (University Park, PA, 2003).
3. Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (New York, 1960); Hermann Weber, *Die Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands 1946–1971* [The Socialist Unity Party of Germany 1946–1971] (Hannover, 1971).
4. Sheila Fitzpatrick, “New Perspectives on Stalinism,” *Russian Review* 45 (1986): 357–373.
5. See, e.g., Jörg Baberowski, *Der rote Terror. Die Geschichte des Stalinismus* [Red terror. The history of Stalinism] (Munich, 2003); id., *Scorched Earth: Stalin’s Reign of Terror* (New Haven, 2015); Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995).
6. Oleg Khlevniuk, *Das Politbüro. Mechanismen der politischen Macht in der Sowjetunion der dreißiger Jahre. Aus dem Russ. von Ruth und Heinz Deutschland* [The politburo. Mechanisms of political power in the Soviet Union of the 1930s] (Hamburg, 1998).
7. Martin Malia, *Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York, 1995); Paczkowski, *The Spring Will Be Ours*; Klaus Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat: Partei, Staat und Gesellschaft 1949–1990* [The SED state: Party, state, and society 1949–1990] (Munich, 1998); for an overview, Robert Service, *Comrades! A History of World Communism* (Cambridge, MA, 2007); and David Priestland, *The Red Flag: A History of Communism* (New York 2009).

8. Yoram Gorlitzki and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945–53* (Oxford, 2004); Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (London, 2004); Andreas Malycha and Peter Jochen Winters, *Die SED: Geschichte einer deutschen Partei* [The SED: History of a German party] (Munich, 2009); Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography* (Cambridge, MA, 2000); id., *Stalin: A Biography* (London, 2004); William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York, 2003).
9. However, see for oral history approaches Lutz Niethammer, Alexander von Plato, and Dorothee Wierling, *Die volkseigene Erfahrung: eine Archäologie des Lebens in der Industrieprovinz der DDR. 30 biographische Eröffnungen* [The nationally-owned experience: An archeology of life in GDR's industrial province. 30 biographic revelations] (Berlin, 1991); Donald J. Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation* (Oxford, 2012); Dorothee Wierling, *Geboren im Jahr Eins: der Jahrgang 1949 in der DDR. Versuch einer Kollektivbiographie* [Born in year one: The age-group 1949 in the GDR. Attempt at a collective biography] (Berlin, 2002).
10. But see the intensive debate on identity formation in Stalinism, starting with Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (London, 2009); and Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*.
11. See, e.g., Piotr Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza. Droga do władzy (1941–1944)* [The Polish Workers Party. The road to power] (Warsaw, 2006); Gorlitzki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*; Malycha, *Die SED*.
12. Approaches in Sigrid Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft: zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR 1945–1989* [Legitimacy and party rule: On the paradox of stability and revolution in the GDR 1945–1989] (Frankfurt a.M., 1992); Stephen Kotkin and Jan Tomasz Gross, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York, 2009).
13. For the Eigensinn concept see Thomas Lindenberger, "Die Diktatur der Grenzen. Zur Einleitung" [The dictatorship of borders. To the introduction], in *Herrschaftsstrukturen und Erfahrungsdimensionen der DDR-Geschichte* [Structures of rule and dimensions of experience in the history of the GDR] (Cologne, 1999), 13–44; Thomas Lindenberger, "Eigen-Sinn, Domination and No Resistance," *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, 3 August 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.14765/zzf.dok.2.646.v1>; Alf Lüdtke, *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, 1995); Sandrine Kott, *Communism Day-To-Day: State Enterprises in East German Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014).
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 17. Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (San Diego, 1957).
 18. See, e.g., Andrew I. Port, "The Banalities of East German Historiography," in *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler*, ed. M. Fulbrook and A. I. Port (New York, 2013), 1–30, esp. 3.
 19. Martin Sabrow, "Einleitung: Geschichtsdiskurs und Doktringesellschaft" [Introduction: Historical discourse and society of doctrines], in *Geschichte als Herrschaftsdiskurs. Der Umgang mit der Vergangenheit in der DDR* [History as discourse of power. Dealing with the past in the GDR], ed. M. Sabrow (Cologne, 2000), 9–35.
 20. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*.
 21. Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation*.
 22. Martin Sabrow, "Sozialismus als Sinnwelt. Diktatorische Herrschaft in kulturhistorischer Perspektive" [Socialism as world of meaning. Dictatorial rule in perspective of cultural history], *Potsdamer Bulletin für Zeithistorische Studien* 40–41 (2007): 9–23.
 23. For first reflections, see Rüdiger Bergien, "'Parteiarbeiter.' Die hauptamtlichen Funktionäre der SED" ["Party workers." The full-time staff of the SED], in *SED-Geschichte*, ed. Gieseke and Wentker, 164–186; id., "Activating the 'Apparatchik': Brigade Deployment in the SED Central Committee and Performative Communist Party Rule," *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 4 (2012): 793–811; Michel Christian, "Ausschließen und disziplinieren. Kontrollpraxis in den kommunistischen Parteien der DDR und der Tschechoslowakei" [Expulsion and discipline. Control practices in the Communist parties of the GDR and Czechoslovakia], in *Die ostdeutsche Gesellschaft: eine transnationale Perspektive* [The East German society: A transnational perspective], ed. S. Kott and E. Droit (Berlin, 2006), 53–70.
 24. Christoph Boyer, "'1989' und die Wege dorthin" [The paths to "1989"], *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 59, no. 1 (2011): 101–118.
 25. Jörg Baberowski, "Criticism as Crisis, or Why the Soviet Union Still Collapsed," *Journal of Modern European History* 9 (2011): 148–165; Manfred Hildermeier, "'Well Said Is Half a Lie': Observations on Jörg Baberowski's 'Criticism as Crisis, or why the Soviet Union Still Collapsed,'" *Journal of Modern European History* 9, no. 3 (2011): 289–297.
 26. However, first see approaches in Kotkin and Gross, *Uncivil Society*; furthermore, see the contributions in Martin Sabrow, ed., *1989 und die Rolle der Gewalt* [1989 and the role of violence] (Göttingen, 2012).
 27. Eugenia Belova and Valery Lazarev, *Funding Loyalty: The Economics of the Communist Party* (New Haven, 2013), 13–14.
 28. See Michael Voslensky, *Nomenklatura: Anatomy of the Soviet Ruling Class* (London, 1984).
 29. Belova and Lazarev, *Funding Loyalty*, 7.

30. Gorlitzki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*.
31. Yoram Gorlitzki, "Party Revivalism and the Death of Stalin," *Slavic Review* 54 (1995): 1–22; Alexander Titov, "The Central Committee Apparatus under Khrushchev," in *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: Policy and Government in the Soviet Union 1953–64*, ed. J. Smith and M. Ilic (London, 2011), 41–60.
32. This domination is noteworthy especially since this concept can be traced back to the idea of a "unity between party and people," which was developed and firmly supported by the CPs themselves.
33. Belova and Lazarev, *Funding Loyalty*, 5. For the differentiation between the "inner" and "outer" party as early as in George Orwell, 1984, see Voslensky, *Nomenklatura*, 30.
34. Boyer, "1989."
35. For different types of CPs and their particular "path dependencies," see Christopher Boyer's contribution in this volume.
36. While Polish party leaders and functionaries understand themselves more and more as patriots and representatives of the Polish nation, in the CPSU the classic imperial self-understanding played a crucial role. The first secretary of the Soviet Republic, for example, always originated from the titular nation, while the second secretary was regularly a Russian from the Moscow party headquarters. Saulius Grybkauskas, "The Role of the Second Party Secretary in the 'Election' of the First: The Political Mechanism for the Appointment of the Head of Soviet Lithuania in 1974," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 14 (2013): 343–366.; Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymacja, nacjonalizm. Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce* [Communism, legitimacy, nationalism. Nationalist legitimacy of Communist rule in Poland] (Warsaw, 2001).
37. Jan Pakulski, "Bureaucracy and the Soviet System," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 19, no. 2 (1986): 1–3; Yoram Gorlitzki, "Too Much Trust: Regional Party Leaders and Local Political Networks under Brezhnev," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 3 (2010): 676–700.
38. Cf. T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the U.S.S.R. 1917–1967* (Princeton, 1968).
39. Wolfram Adolphi, "Kaderpartei. Skizze für ein HKWM-Stichwort" (Cadre party. Sketch of a reference for the historical-critical dictionary of Marxism), *Utopie kreativ* 193 (2006): 982–994, see 983.
40. This hypothesis of course refers to "new-class" theories by Trockij and Djilas, as well as Stephen Kotkin, who dubbed the socialist upper class as the "uncivil society," i.e., a caste of profiteers of the system, who let the system go to rack and ruin due to their immobility and personal interests in 1989–91. Kotkin, *Uncivil Society*.
41. Belova and Lazarev, *Funding Loyalty*.
42. In reference to the CPCS, see the contribution of Michael Christian in this volume.
43. See the contribution of Sabine Pannen in this volume.
44. Anke Fiedler, *Medienlenkung in der DDR* [Controlling the media in the GDR] (Cologne, 2014).
45. Concerning the topic of communism being a "political religion" and the interpretation of the party as holder of "charisma" in the sense of Max We-

- ber's "Herrschaftsformenlehre," see Martin Sabrow, "Das Charisma des Kommunismus. Überlegungen zur Anwendung des Weberschen Herrschaftstypus auf die DDR" [Charisma of Communism. Thoughts about the application of Max Weber's typology of power], in *ZeitRäume. Potsdamer Almanach des Zentrums für Zeithistorische Forschung 2006*, ed. M. Sabrow (Berlin, 2007), 162–174.
46. See Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation*, with his juxtaposition of "public" and "hidden" or "private transcripts," as well as Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*.
 47. For the period of post-Stalinism, see Pavel Kolar, *Der Poststalinismus. Ideologie und Utopie einer Epoche* [The post-Stalinism. Ideology and utopia of an epoch] (Cologne, 2016).
 48. See the contribution of Krzysztof Dąbek in this volume.
 49. See the contributions of Jan C. Behrends and Frédéric Zalewski in this volume.
 50. Jörg Baberowski, "Wege aus der Gewalt. Nikita Chruschtschow und die Entstalinisierung 1953–1964" [Ways out of violence. Nikita Khrushchev and the de-Stalinization 1953–1964], in *Gesellschaft – Gewalt – Vertrauen. Jan Philipp Reemtsma zum 60. Geburtstag (Society – violence – trust. For the 60th birthday of Jan Philipp Reemtsma)*, ed. Ulrich Bielefeld, Heinz Bude, and Bernd Greiner (Hamburg, 2012), 401–437.
 51. See the contribution of Andrea Bahr in this volume.
 52. See the contribution of Jay Rowell in this volume.
 53. See the contribution of Rüdiger Bergien in this volume.
 54. See Annette Schumann, ed., *Vernetzte Improvisationen. Gesellschaftliche Subsysteme in Ostmitteleuropa und in der DDR* [Cross-linked improvisations. Subsystems of societies in Eastern and Central Europe and in the GDR] (Cologne, 2008); Alena Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking, and Informal Exchange* (Cambridge, 1998).
 55. See the contribution of Martin Sabrow in this volume.
 56. See Donald J. Raleigh, "'Soviet Man of Peace.' Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev and His Diaries," *Kritika* 27, no. 4 (2016): 837–868; Susanne Schattenberg, "Trust, Care, and Familiarity in the Politburo: Brezhnev's Scenario of Power," *Kritika* 16, no. 4 (2015): 835–858.
 57. See the contribution of Mark Kramer in this volume.
 58. See the contribution of Rüdiger Bergien in this volume.
 59. See the contribution of Krzysztof Dąbek in this volume.
 60. See the contribution of Edward Cohn in this volume.
 61. See the contribution of Sabine Pannen in this volume.

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