Communist Political Systems

Communist Political Systems

An Introduction

Second Edition

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Preface to the Second Edition

Communist states account for about a third of the world's population, for up to 40 per cent of its industrial production, and for a large proportion of its military might. Above all, from the point of view of the political scientist, they represent one of the world's most important and distinctive types of political system, one that is not only different from but profoundly antagonistic towards the liberal-democratic systems of the capitalist West. In the second edition of this book, as in its predecessor, we have sought to provide a reliable and up-to-date introduction to political systems of this type, combining both a reasonably full account of their institutional features with, we hope, some indication of the problems of analysis and interpretation that arise in this connection. We begin with a discussion of the development of the communist states and of some of the major 'models' that have been applied to them by political scientists. We then move on to consider the distinctive political cultures of these states, their governmental structures, and the organisation and roles of their ruling communist parties. Further chapters deal with the policy process in these states and with the question of democracy and human rights, and a final chapter considers the performance of the communist states in a number of respects with that of some of the major states of the non-communist world. Each chapter concludes with a list of items

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of recommended further reading, full details of which are given in the bibliography at the end of the book. This second edition, like the first, reflects the experience of teaching and lecturing on communist politics at Glasgow, Manchester, London and elsewhere over the past decade or so; we hope that future generations of students will gain as much from it as its authors have gained from the questions and comments of their predecessors over this period.

STEPHEN WHITE
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Abbreviations

ASSR	autonomous soviet socialist republic
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMEA/Comecon	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
Cominform	Communist Information Bureau
Comintern	Communist Third International
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GNP	gross national product
LCY	League of Communists in Yugoslavia
NEM	New Economic Mechanism (Hungary)
NEP	New Economic Policy (USSR)
NKVD	People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (security police in USSR, later KGB)
NPC	National People's Congress (China)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLA	People's Liberation Army (China)
PPF	People's Patriotic Front (Hungary)
PRC	People's Republic of China
RSFSR	Russian Republic
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	Warsaw Treaty Organisation