COMMUNIST AND POSTCOMMUNIST POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Communist and Postcommunist Political Systems

An Introduction

Third Edition

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Preface to the Third Edition

This book appears at a time of unprecedented change in the communist world. In the USSR and China, and most dramatically of all in Eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990, an entire generation of leaders has been replaced and a succession of new governments, many of them largely or entirely non-communist, has been elected to take their place. Entering the 1990s, indeed, it is unclear how useful it remains to speak of a 'communist world', and far from clear how the political systems that are emerging, particularly in Eastern Europe, may best be characterised.

The third edition of this book, accordingly, is a very different one from its predecessors. We have a new title, designed to draw attention to the changing nature of the political systems with which we are concerned – 'postcommunist' (although still strongly influenced by Marxism) as well as 'communist'. We have a new set of authors, Tony Saich having joined us in place of the late John Gardner, whose untimely death has been a serious loss to the world of communist scholarship. And, most important of all, the contents of this book are very different indeed from those of the two preceding editions: a new chapter on the leaderships is one such change, but all the other chapters have been substantially – and in some cases almost entirely – rewritten, and the bibliographies and other parts of the book have been thoroughly revised.

It would be idle to pretend that in a single volume of limited dimensions we can exhaust the subject of communist and postcommunist politics, still less that our approach and conclusions will command universal assent. We do, however, hope that like its predecessors, *Communist and Postcommunist Political Systems* will provide a clear, accurate and up-to-date guide to a set of systems that remain central to world politics in the late twentieth century, and we hope also that it will help to identify (if not in every case resolve) some of the controversies with which the study of these systems has always been associated.

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GEORGE SCHÖPFLIN
TONY SAICH

Glossary

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