



The Left Transformed in Post-Communist Societies: The Cases of East-Central Europe, Russia, and Ukraine

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One of the most unexpected outcomes of the Soviet bloc's transition out of communism has been the divergent but important paths followed by once ruling communist parties. In Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania those parties transformed themselves into pro-Western free market center leftists who have won elections and formed governing coalitions periodically since the early 1990s. The result has been former communists leading their countries into NATO and the EU even as their conservative opponents continue to condemn them for their communist past. No less surprising has been the ability of anti-Western neo-Leninist communist parties in Russia and Ukraine to win sizable pluralities of votes in free competitive elections. Their very strength has contributed to blocking genuine democratic alternation of power.

By employing a unique cross-regional comparative framework *The Left Transformed* explores the divergent trajectories of ex-ruling communist parties in key countries of the former Soviet Empire. In-depth interviews, party presses and primary documents, and national election data provide a foundation for the most up-to-date examination of party transition, organization, ideology, and electoral fortunes through late 2002. This book is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in contemporary history, political parties, or comparative government in Eastern Europe and Russia.

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