

element in this sequence of changes. The wider society democratized; but the party, which had initiated *perestroika*, lagged behind it and then divided, with some of its members supporting the attempted coup and others joining the Yeltsin government. Why did the party collapse so quickly? And could it have reformed itself, as parties did elsewhere in Eastern Europe? Graeme Gill's new study is the most sustained and satisfying attempt that presently exists to answer these and other questions. It is full of empirical detail, but focusses directly on the nature of a single ruling party and the dynamics of a system of the Soviet type. The party, Gill suggests, 'could adjust neither its organizational structure nor its culture to cope with its changed environment'; it 'meandered into a dead end of indecision, ultimately becoming irrelevant to the course of political development'. It was the party's inflexibility that limited its ability to adapt, and this in turn was crucial to the collapse of communist rule itself. This is an interpretation that some may find determinist, or at least insufficient as it stands. It certainly neglects the reforms that took place at the 1990 Congress, with religious believers admitted and organized groups allowed to operate within party ranks, or the adoption of a new and virtually social democratic programme in 1991. There is rather less about members than about party officials, and there is nothing from memoirs or from the recently-opened party archives. But this is a book that is rooted in much larger questions, including the development of party systems and organizational change; and it harnesses these concerns to the fullest account that is available of the last years of communist rule in its country of origin. It is a compulsory read, and not just for Sovietologists.

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Jeffrey A. Hart, *Rival Capitalists: International Competitiveness in the United States, Japan, and Western Europe* (Ithaca NY, Cornell University Press, 1992), x+305 pp., ISBN 0 8014 2649 9, pbk ISBN 0 8014 9949 6.

The relationship between international competitiveness and domestic political and economic structures is the main focus of contemporary political economy. Hart's thorough treatment of this issue in five leading industrial nations up to the end of the 1980s – Japan, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States – makes this a compulsory teaching and reference book for courses from IPE to public policy. Its strength lies in its detailed survey of industrial policy and state-industry relations in each country, with close attention to state, business and labour institutions. Each country chapter also includes a survey of sector-specific policies towards steel, automobiles and semiconductors. There are significant flaws, however. Hart proposes a synthesizing analytical framework based on 'state-societal arrangements' – in contrast to macro-economic, culturalist, statist, corporatist and coalitional explanations. Different national SSAs are said to engender different capacities for technological diffusion and thus for competitiveness. But this framework is oversimplified, and is overwhelmed by descriptive material in the country chapters. The author neither distinguishes between the capacities of different SSAs to diffuse different technologies, nor examines how transnational market structures in technologically or organizationally dissimilar sectors constrain states differentially. His nationalist methodology too often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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Christopher Hood and B. Guy Peters (eds), *Rewards at the Top: a Comparative Study of High Public Office* (London, Sage, 1994), xiv+242 pp., £40.00 ISBN 0 8039 7742 5.

The authors strike an engaging and debated vein with their new publication. This 13-chapter anthology deals with how the top layers of public life are rewarded. The most