

## Preface

In 1993 I published a book — *The End of Communist Power: Anti-corruption Campaigns and Legitimation Crisis* — that focused on the relationship between corruption and legitimation crises in the communist world, and on the role of both in the collapse of communist power. At the time of completing that book (late 1991), I had intended to move away from the study of corruption and legitimation crises. But I soon changed my mind, for two reasons. First, various people who knew the book invited me to present seminars that would update my research, and analyze corruption and legitimation in the early phases of post-communism. Second, the issue of corruption appeared to be becoming far more salient not only in that part of the world which I had spent most of my life studying, but also in the part in which I lived, the West. It would have been perverse to abandon the study of corruption just at the moment when it was becoming one of the hottest topics in social science. Moreover, so many regimes in so many types of system were being brought down during the 1990s at least partly because of corruption-related scandals that I began to wonder whether the legitimation crisis that some believed had emerged in the West during the 1970s, and then in the communist world in the late 1980s, might be an early symptom of a general crisis of *any* type of state. Hence I decided to continue my research into corruption, and to relate it once again to notions of political legitimacy and crisis. This book is the largest fruit of that research and deliberation.

The focus here is on what can still be called, for want of a better term, the post-communist world<sup>1</sup> — primarily Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), although for reasons elaborated below there is also more on the People's Republic of China (PRC) than on many other countries.<sup>2</sup> But a number of comparisons with countries in other parts of the world and with different

systems are also drawn at appropriate junctures. The arguments about the legitimacy problems of the state, and about the connections between corruption and neoliberalism, are offered as *general* ones, for others to test with reference to countries and regions about which they know far more than I.

Since theorizing is usually of limited value unless based on and applicable to empirical findings, I have focused in particular on four countries in which I have conducted original research for this study—Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and Russia. Because there is also more material on the PRC than on most CEE and CIS states, it is appropriate to argue that there are in effect four and a half case studies. Between 1996 and 2004 I visited all five states—the choice of which is justified in chapter 1—to conduct interviews and gather crime statistics. In the three CEE states and Russia, I also organized surveys and gathered data from others' surveys; unfortunately the Chinese authorities would not permit me to perform the same exercise in the PRC.

At this point it is important—for the sake of something frequently mentioned in this book, transparency—to acknowledge my own limitations. While my knowledge of both spoken and written Russian is reasonable, my command of Polish and Bulgarian is weaker. My knowledge of Mandarin is slight, and is only of the spoken language. I have no knowledge of Hungarian, and usually use German or English when I visit Hungary and conduct interviews. Despite these weaknesses, I have during the course of this research visited all of these countries several times, for reasonably lengthy periods (several weeks) in Russia, China, and Poland; my trips to Bulgaria and Hungary have been shorter, though I do maintain regular contact with both (mainly through e-mail and through meeting Bulgarian and Hungarian colleagues in third countries). I have visited most but not all of the countries referred to in this book. While I would have preferred to visit them all, the book is ultimately comparative, and I make no claims to being a specialist on any particular country.

Another limitation arises from the time it has taken me to complete this work. As mentioned above, I have received a large number of invitations in recent years to present seminar and conference papers based on my research, and to produce articles, book chapters, and reports. I have usually accepted these invitations, since they often result in more responses to my research and arguments, and an opportunity to increase

my knowledge of others' work in the field. But they have had the disadvantage of delaying completion of this book, with the result that some of the ideas and research findings included here have already appeared elsewhere. Parts of this book overlap heavily in particular with L. Holmes 1997a, L. Holmes 1997c, L. Holmes 1999, and a report on corruption in CEE and the CIS that I produced in early 2000 for the World Bank. However, the second of these items is not widely accessible outside Poland, the third is no longer available on line, while the last is not publicly available at all. I wish to thank the World Bank for permission to use parts of my report here.

My thanks also go to a large number of other people and organizations which helped me in a range of ways. Much of the basic research for the project was conducted by my principal research assistant, Dr. Yuri Tsyganov, who was a model of efficient, trouble-free collaboration; his knowledge of Slavic languages and Mandarin was invaluable. Dr. Tsyganov's salary was paid for out of a research grant generously awarded to me by the Australian Research Council (Grant No. A79930728); I wish publicly to express my gratitude to the Australian Research Council for this funding. For critiques of my arguments, I am grateful to the many academics, students, and practitioners — too numerous to name individually — who made comments at seminars and conferences in Berlin, Brisbane, Budapest, Canberra, Dublin, Florence, Grenoble, Hobart, Oxford, Salford, Seoul, Singapore, Sofia, Swansea, Tampere, Uppsala, Warsaw, and Wellington between 1996 and 2004. I also thank my numerous postgraduate students in Bologna, Melbourne, and Warsaw, whose questions forced me to refine and occasionally even change my arguments, and who provided me with additional material and insights.

One person I wish to single out for particularly detailed, insightful, and constructive criticism, who helped me far more than she realizes, is Helen Sutch of the World Bank. For assistance in arranging interviews and obtaining data I wish to thank Antoaneta Dimitrova, Ivan Krastev, and Alexander Stoyanov in Sofia; Zolna Berki, Gábor Tóka, and András Sajó in Budapest; Jiang Tingyao and Michael Dutton in Beijing; Ewa Balcerek, John Fells, and Ryszard Zelichowski in Warsaw; and Slava Amirov, Donald Bowser, Boris Demidov, Bobo Lo, and Elena Panfilova in Moscow. Some of these people also helped me with more mundane but crucial administrative assistance during my travels, like obtaining access to e-mail, fax machines, and photocopiers; for this kind of help I

wish also to thank Marianne Möller and Natalja Eisenblätter in Berlin; Zsolt Enyedi in Budapest; Monique Cavallari in Florence; and Jackie Wilcox in Oxford.

At various points the book refers to the results of four opinion surveys that I commissioned during 2000. For their helpfulness and efficiency in organizing these I am grateful to Alexander Stoyanov of Vitosha Research (Bulgaria), Kata Csizér of TÁRKI Social Research Centre (Hungary), Krzysztof Zagórski of CBOS (Poland), and Yuri Levada and Alexander Grazhdankin of VTSIOM (Russia). I am indebted to Ewa Karafilowska for technical assistance in reprocessing some of the survey data to make them directly comparable.

I also wish to thank the numerous interviewees in several countries (not just the five on which I concentrated), without whose time and helpfulness this book would have been much poorer. There are so many that it would be impracticable to list them all (though several are referred to in the text, when I thank them for particular contributions), and several asked not to be identified. Even some interviewees who did not seek anonymity have had to be granted it because of much stricter ethics regulations in my university since the early days of the research for this project; I have been unable to track down some of these people in their new positions. My thanks also to the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript, whose suggestions helped me tighten the argument at various points, alerted me to additional sources, and updated my information. Of course I am solely responsible for remaining ambiguities in the argument, omissions, outdated information, and errors.

Finally, at Duke University Press I would like to thank two people in particular. The first is Fred Kameny, whose thorough and thoughtful copy editing substantially reduced the number of ambiguities in my text, and rendered it more user-friendly. The second is Valerie Millholland—for her encouragement of this project, for appreciating the reasons why I did not want to sign a contract before I had a full-length draft manuscript completed, and for being so tolerant and polite when I delivered the final manuscript late; if only all publishers were as understanding.

## Rotten States?

