generation. It is tempting to see this as exactly the way Ulbricht had planned it: Since
the 1930s he had skillfully used the Stalinist system (as well as benefited from Stalin's
own purges of prominent German Communists) to eliminate colleagues who were
capable of someday threatening his control. As a result, by the 1950s he had to deal
only with fainthearted officials such as Wilhelm Zaisser, Rudolf Herrnstadt, and Karl
Schirdewan, who were no match for him.

In this sense Ulbricht was one of Stalin's clones in the Communist movement.
But it is also clear from Frank's account that Ulbricht became a representative for the
Communist leaders who after 1953 acted rather independently, to the point of defy-
ing Moscow on certain issues. This defiance Frank calls one of the biggest mistakes of
Ulbricht's career, and he is correct in viewing it as a major cause of the East German
leader's removal from power in 1971. Despite repeated warnings that the GDR would
not be allowed to take the lead in responding to West Germany's new Ostpolitik,
Ulbricht persisted in his semi-independent stance, giving Honecker and a growing
number of SED Politbüro members the opportunity to present themselves to Moscow
as a docile and altogether preferable alternative.

Frank does not try to force his own ideas on the reader. He seeks neither to indict
nor to exonerate his subject. One could quibble over whether he gives the ideological
and moral issues so central to Communism's history in the twentieth century enough
attention, but it is refreshing to read an account that does not try to fight old battles as
if they were still with us today.

In light of what Frank's book tries to be, it succeeds very well and is also emi-
nently readable. Given sufficient time, resources, and archival access, some future
scholar may be able to go beyond this book's achievements, but until then Frank's bi-
ography will stand as the most complete and up-to-date study of Walter Ulbricht.

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Jonathan Grix, The Role of the Masses in the Collapse of the GDR. New York: St. Mar-

Reviewed by Peter C. Caldwell, Rice University

The East German revolution of 1989 began with the mass flight of East German citi-
zens to West Germany and escalated when vast numbers of other East Germans
poured into the streets in open protest against the regime of the Socialist Unity Party
(SED). Jonathan Grix's study successfully places the East German masses at the center
of the revolutionary story. Most important, he argues that the attempt by many East
Germans to leave their country for the West was itself a political act and part of the
revolution.

The first two chapters of Grix's volume explore the way the options of “exit” and
“voice,” taken from Albert Hirschman's well-known model, were distorted in a period
when neither option could be exercised without adverse consequences. “Loyalty” was
only conditional, and lasted only as long as the state suppressed criticism and provided
consumer goods. Grix’s manipulations of the “exit-voice-loyalty” model provide some insight into the nature of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), but the concrete details of the revolution that he presents are in the end more interesting.

Grix focuses on the northern city of Schwerin, which has not usually been associated with revolutionary activity in 1989. Using a number of unpublished sources, he traces the changing mood of the population. Stasi reports on “oppositional” and “hostile” activities in Schwerin; unpublished letters to the editor of the local newspaper; reports of local party organizations in a factory and a hospital; and petitions as well as reports summarizing petitions submitted to local and national party leaders all show a clear shift in tone from the mid-1980s on. People commented with ever greater frequency about the signs of economic deterioration: the lack of spare parts, the shortage of nurses, the time required to purchase consumer goods. At the same time, people became more aware of the gap between reality and what the state-controlled media reported. When the GDR banned the lively Soviet journal *Sputnik* in 1988, hundreds of petitions protested the ban, and workers openly expressed their disagreement in factories. People increasingly understood that the news media were treating them as immature subjects rather than as citizens. More and more people were willing to submit petitions to the government, and the tone of the petitions changed. The number of citizens who threatened to withhold their votes in the next elections, for example, increased by more than threefold from 1986 to 1989. The number of citizens requesting the right to emigrate likewise soared. Private grumbling about conditions of life and emigration turned into open criticism of the East German state. By September 1989, citizens seeking to emigrate gave political reasons for doing so, occasionally even in open letters to the local newspaper (which remained, of course, unpublished). These were not just consumers on the lookout for a better deal in the West; these were political protesters.

As Grix shows, those seeking to leave East Germany posed a problem for the country’s dissident intellectuals. Many dissidents were angered when would-be emigrants took part in protests mainly so they would be expelled from the country. At the same time, those demanding to leave brought a new power to the demonstrations and indeed were part of the general movement to overthrow the East German state. Under extraordinary circumstances those demanding “exit” and those demanding “voice” came together to declare the end of their conditional loyalty to the state. Grix provides an excellent, convincing account of this process in the supposedly quiescent province of Mecklenburg.

On the basis of his research Grix argues that the masses rather than the dissidents were the real revolutionaries. He writes that “any ‘movement’ [for revolution] in 1989 belonged wholly to the citizens and not to the intellectuals, SED Party members or the marginalized groups” (p. 156). Grix’s annoyance with accounts of 1989 that focus solely on dissident intellectuals is partly justified. Without the masses there would have been no revolution. But does that warrant grouping the dissidents with the SED? It is not surprising that many of the dissidents before the revolution wanted a socialist GDR, a position that does not necessarily represent a moral failing. Socialism was always more than Marxism-Leninism. The 1989 revolution, like those of 1789 and
1848, blew apart the apparent unity of the dissidents, who ended up moving into all the major parties (aside from the Party of Democratic Socialism). Socialism before November 1989 was the language of republican self-determination and was part of, though not identical to, the revolution itself—just as the Greek republicanism of American revolutionary intellectuals was part of the American Revolution. The dissident groups that formed during the 1980s were more than mere filters for the masses; they enabled collective speech acts to emerge in a clear and articulate manner (as Grix himself states well on p. 122). Finally, could one not say that certain members of the masses, by deciding to form groups, to express their opinions as part of a social collective, and to create a new, nonstate public sphere, actually became dissident intellectuals in their own right? The distinction is not as stark as Grix suggests.

This book, with its bottom-up approach, does a great job of rectifying the excessive focus on dissident intellectuals and structural causes of the revolution. It brings the people back in. Clearly written, well-argued, and employing a variety of interesting and original sources, the book is useful for scholars as well as for teaching.


Reviewed by Mary Ellen Fischer, Skidmore College

This book must be read by anyone interested in Romanian Communism or relations between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the middle third of the twentieth century, the period preceding the years covered by Dennis Deletant's earlier, widely praised study, *Ceaușescu and the Securitate, 1965–1989* (London: Hurst, 1995). In this latest book Deletant makes extensive use of memoirs and secondary sources published after 1989, declassified Romanian security service documents and Foreign Ministry records, and interviews he conducted in the 1990s.

In the first chapter Deletant fills some gaps in our knowledge of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) before 1930, most notably by providing details on party leaders such as Boris Ștefanov and Marcel Pauker. The second chapter brings the story up to 1944, focusing on leadership struggles within the RCP and Josif Stalin’s interference through the Comintern. Deletant includes much new information on individual RCP leaders in both the “Soviet” and the “home” factions of the party, analyzing the split in the latter group between those in prison (including Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceaușescu) and those who managed to avoid arrest (such as Ștefan Foriș and Lucrețiu Pâtrașcanu). He describes in detail how Gheorghiu-Dej managed to remove Foriș as party leader and have him murdered, actions that began “a decade-long, mafia-like struggle for power within the party” (p. 33).

The third chapter focuses on the coup of 23 August 1944, demonstrating the crucial role of King Michael in dismissing Marshal Ion Antonescu and changing sides