In *The Political Economy of State-Society Relations in Hungary and Poland*, Anna Seleny contends that the profound transformations that preceded the downfall of communism originated in Poland and Hungary but played out in strikingly different ways – Hungary led through economic reform, Poland through open political struggle.

Seleny’s analysis of these transformational variants yields important insights into systemic change, marketization, and democratization. She shows how these changes were possible in authoritarian regimes as, over time, state and society became mutually vulnerable, neither fully able to dictate the terms of engagement. For Poland this meant principled confrontation; for Hungary, innovative accommodation.

The book argues that different conceptual frameworks and strategies of persuasion account for these divergences in nearly identical institutional settings. Seleny traces the different political-institutional residues that, in both Hungary and Poland, now function as constraining or enabling legacies. In particular, she demonstrates that state-socialist legacies account for salient differences between these two new capitalist democracies, and they now condition their prospects in the European Union.

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To my parents and Marika, who saw the beginning
To Moni, who never got to see
and to Alex, who is free of its legacy
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Hungary

FIDESZ  Alliance of Young Democrats (now FIDESZ – Hungarian Civic Party)
GYOSZ  National Association of (private, large) Factory Owners
HSP  Hungarian Socialist Party (post-1989)
HSWP  Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (pre-1989)
IPOSZ  National Association of Manufacturers
KIOSZ  National Association of Small Manufacturers
KISOSZ  National Association of Small Retailers
MGTSZ  State Agricultural Cooperatives
NEM  New Economic Mechanism
OKISZ  National Association of Small Industrial Cooperatives
SZDSZ  Alliance of Free Democrats
SZOT  National Council of Trade Unions
TOT  National Association of Agricultural Cooperatives
VOSZ  National Association of Entrepreneurs

Poland

CRZZ  Central Council of Trade Unions
KKP  Solidarity National Coordinating Commission
KOR  Committee for the Defense of the Workers
KOR-KSS  Committee for Social Self-Defense
KOS  Committees for Social Resistance
KPN  Confederation of Independent Poland
MKZ  Regional Solidarity Inter-Factory Strike Committee
NSZZ  Independent Self-Governing Trade Union (Solidarity)
PUWP  Polish United Workers Party (pre-1989)
ROPCiO  Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights
List of Abbreviations

SLD  Alliance of the Democratic Left (Social Democratic Party, whose original membership drew mostly on the PUWP)
TKN  Flying University
WRON Military Council of National Salvation
In researching and writing this book, I have incurred more than the usual debts of gratitude across three countries and four disciplines, over the course of nearly a decade.

Among the earliest and most enduring of these debts are those owed to exemplary friends and mentors János Kornai and István Gábor, from whom I learned so much about the political economy of state-socialist systems; and Suzanne Berger and Donald Blackmer, whose guidance and support were indispensable at the earliest stages of my academic career. My deepest debt of all is to Consuelo Cruz, who challenged and inspired me both directly and by example, and without whose help and encouragement this book would never have been completed.

At Princeton University and at professional gatherings, many colleagues helped to clarify my thinking about the significance of my research findings for the field of comparative politics. Several offered helpful comments on earlier drafts of this manuscript or on articles on which I drew for the final version. I am especially grateful to Sheri Berman, Nancy Bermeo, Stephen Cohen, Elizabeth Kiss, Atul Kohli, Minxin Pei, and John Waterbury. I am also thankful to Princeton’s Center of International Studies for financial support in the transcription of taped interviews and to the university’s Committee on Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences for research support. Jan Kubik and Jakub Grygiel helped me to disentangle Polish politics and to think more deeply about a number of the theoretical issues that arise in the comparisons of Poland and Hungary, the two countries that form the empirical backbone of the book. During a year spent at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, I benefited from discussions with Clifford Geertz and Albert Hirschman, both of whom also offered comments on work that would ultimately inform the concluding chapter of this book.

Other scholars on this side of the Atlantic shaped my work through their own research, challenging discussions at conferences, or by commenting on parts of the manuscript. Some – David Bartlett, Michael Bernhard, Tomasz
Inglot, Jeffrey Kopstein, Ákos Róna-Tas, Alfred Stepan, Iván Szelenyi, and Ding Xeuliang – graciously did all three. Still others helped me through thought-provoking exchanges and comments on related work: Andrew Arato, Zoltán Bárány, Valerie Bunce, Dan Chirot, Grzegorz Ekiert, Peter Hall, Susan Gál, Andrew C. János, Michael Kennedy, Gail Kligman, Andrei Markovitz, Kazimierz Poznański, Gideon Rose, Andreas Ryll, James Scott, Ben Slay, Vladimir Tismaneanu, Katherine Verdery, Andrew Walder, and Jason Wittenberg.

In Eastern Europe, I benefited from the assistance of more people than I can name here, but even an abbreviated list includes many remarkable scholars, entrepreneurs and government officials. In Hungary, I must thank the late Rudolf Andorka, Kati Balog, László Egyed, Judit Fekete, Péter Futó the entrepreneur, as well as the eponymous Péter Futó, researcher and journalist; Péter Gerő, István Hetényi, Tamás Hofer, Mihály Laki, Teréz Laky, György Lengyel, Kati Lorschy, Mária Kovács, György Kövári, Iván Pető, Endre Sik, Zsuzsa Szántó, Péter Szirácki, Tamás Szabó, Anna Székács, and János Timár. Many others at the Institute of International Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences gave me essential intellectual advice, among them Tamás Bauer, Mária Lackó, and Aladár Sipos. Scholars and policymakers at a variety of other research institutes and universities helped me to clarify confusing data and to sharpen interpretations, in particular László Antal, István Bretter, László Bruszt, Ildikó Ékes, Gábor Halmai, Tibor Kuczi, János Palotás, András Sajó, Tamás Sárközy, Péter Tölgvessy, István Tóth, and Agnes Vajda.

In Poland, too, many researchers and scholars gave generously of their time. Among them I must thank, first and foremost, Agnieszka Julita Rybczynska, for untiring research assistance, careful interpretation of statistical data, and sharp analytical critiques. Mira Marody shared her own research in progress and helped elucidate many of the subtleties of Polish political life. Beata Chaikowska helped with translation and logistics. I am grateful for in-depth discussions with Marek Bednarski, Tomasz Bichta, Tomasz Charanżkisñki, Zbigniew Holda, Ryszard Kokoszczyński, Jacek Kochoanowicz, Lena Kolarska-Bobinska, Ireneusz Krzeminski, the late Jacek Kurón, Janusz Levandowski, Jan Rutkowski, Andrzej Rychard, Jacek Tarkowski, and Jacek Wasilewski, Miroslav Zeliński, and Marek Zmigrodzki. The late Czesław Miłosz influenced the book through his own classic works and also through illuminating discussions on the links between post-socialist Polish politics and Polish history.

I owe debts of gratitude elsewhere in Eastern Europe as well. Jozef Kotrba and Martin Palous; Zora Butórova and Martin Butora; and Daniel Daianu each helped me to sort out the relevance of my research findings for the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania, respectively.

I also want to thank Jason Parker and the American Council of Learned Societies, the German Marshall Fund, the MacArthur Foundation, IREX, and the Fulbright Commission for their support of my research in Eastern Europe. At the Fletcher School at Tufts, I am particularly grateful to Tamás Kovács, who read the manuscript for errors and deftly corrected many while offering
extremely useful comments. Ioli Christopholu ably assisted me in gathering material on Eastern Europe and the European Union. At Princeton, Andrew Barnes and Robert Cronin skillfully assembled data for the tables.

Finally, there are my editors. At Cambridge University Press, Senior Acquisitions Editor Lewis Bateman’s keen intellect, patience, and kindness made the manuscript possible, and better. Manuscript editor Ronald Cohen’s marvelous precision, sharp eye for detail, and fine sensibility for language and structure improved the manuscript tremendously. No author could be more fortunate.
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*From Communism to the European Union*