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The impact of Communism on the twentieth century was massive, equal to that of the two world wars. Until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, historians knew relatively little about the secretive world of communist states and parties. Since then, the opening of state, party, and diplomatic archives of the former Eastern Bloc has released a flood of new documentation. The thirty-five essays in this *Handbook*, written by an international team of scholars, draw on this new material to offer a global history of communism in the twentieth century.

In contrast to many histories that concentrate on the Soviet Union, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism* is genuinely global in its coverage, paying particular attention to the Chinese Revolution. It is 'global', too, in the sense that the essays seek to integrate history 'from above' and 'from below', to trace the complex mediations between state and society, and to explore the social and cultural as well as the political and economic realities that shaped the lives of citizens fated to live under communist rule. The essays reflect on the similarities and differences between communist states in order to situate them in their socio-political and cultural contexts and to capture their changing nature over time. Where appropriate, they also reflect on how the fortunes of international communism were shaped by the wider economic, political, and cultural forces of the capitalist world. The *Handbook* provides an informative introduction for those new to the field and a comprehensive overview of the current state of scholarship for those seeking to deepen their understanding.

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