



# **The Party That Came Out of the Cold War: The Party of Democratic Socialism in United Germany**

*Franz Oswald*

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The Party of Democratic Socialism is wrongly stigmatized as polarizing German politics on the left. In fact, Oswald argues, the PDS is East Germany's contribution to the regionalized pluralism of united Germany's party system. Although initially marginalized as the successor of East Germany's SED, the PDS legitimized itself by combining eastern regionalism, a left-socialist identity, and political ambition. The PDS has become an acceptable partner in center-left parties in eastern state governments, in stark contrast to its continuing irrelevance in West Germany. While its earlier exclusion was justified by portraying the PDS as crypto-communist, the integration strategies of the late 1990s were supported by modernization theorists recognizing the party's contribution to the integration of post-unification Germany.

An executive summary of the first decade of post-unification German politics, Oswald's book offers a precise interpretation of the learning processes within the PDS. It also provides a close analysis of the disputes within the PDS characterizing the party as a political subculture in which East Germans could come to terms with the ruptures of their history and their biographies while at the same time finding a role in the politics and society of united Germany.

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