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**BODY AND POWER IN THE COMMUNIST REGIME.  
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF LENIN'S CULT OF  
PERSONALITY  
(Summary)**

*Keywords:* body, body politic, power, Lenin's Cult.

Studies built around the anthropology of the body (the body as a metaphor or political symbol) are fairly rare within the massive historiography of communism. Unlike Italian fascism or the Nazi regime, which ideologically revolved around the physical body, communism's approach on it is rather subtle. However, the body's occurrence in the communist ideology can be indirectly documented by analyzing the importance it gives to hygiene, health policies and medical assistance in general. Dorinda Outram is perfectly entitled to translate this as a manifestation of an "economical" apprehension concerning the body. It is regarded as an instrument which is not only productive, but also requisite to building a new society. The nutritional and natalist policies are part of the same area, like Tricia Starks wrote, as manifestations of an organicist outlook on society. Its strength should have been developed through complex eugenic policies, exactly like it would have been an individual form of life.

In the communist mindset, the body is yet present from a metaphorical perspective. Whether we take into consideration the ethnic and national community ("the people", "the nation") or the entities called "Party", "proletariat", "class" etc., they were officially regarded as "bodies". They lacked internal hierarchies, "thinking" and "acting" as one. The way they were treated was not different either: just like any other form of life, the integrity of these "bodies" should have been defended not only through removing the "dysfunctional" and "obsolete" "members" or through "cleansing" (in order to dispose of anything that might be harmful), but also through averting the external "enemies" from going in and affect the state of "health".

In the communist mindset, there is another perspective on the body, which is equally important: "the body politic" (the State), shaped through the leader's cult of personality.

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This study's purpose is to emphasize the *corporal*, organic side of the cult in its first historical appearance: Lenin's cult. As a continuation of the Byzantine and Russian political tradition which turned the leader's physical body into a real political symbol, Lenin's *post-mortem* cult was also built on the deceased leader's body. It was meant to assert, through its preservation, not only that "Leninism" is immortal, but also the fact that Lenin himself is. This should have been regarded as belonging also to the "body politic", everlasting through the leader's embalmed body. This continuation of the "body politic", not as a fiction or through a symbol (like the effigy) as it had happened so far, but as a *tangible reality*, was communism's biggest symbolical innovation. This helped the regime become legitimate.