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**Sommario/riassunto**

A decade after the collapse of communism, this volume presents a historical reflection on the perplexing nature of the East German dictatorship. In contrast to most political rhetoric, it seeks to establish a middle ground between totalitarianism theory, stressing the repressive features of the SED-regime, and apologetics of the socialist experiment, emphasizing the normality of daily lives. The book transcends the polarization of public debate by stressing the tensions and contradictions within the East German system that combined both aspects by using dictatorial means to achieve its emanci

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