The day-to-day operations of the PUWP party apparatus in the 1980s.

Selected examples

The article combines two perspectives; it is dedicated both to the operations of the party instances, dependent on the ad-hoc guidelines of the leadership, and to the specific issues of private life which affected PUPW activists. The collective central character of the article is the party apparatus sensu largo, not only the 20 000-strong group of full-time PUPW functionaries, but also the several thousand-strong community involved in the ‘inner party’ life, which was referred to in the Communist system historiography as the new governing class or the party bureaucracy.

The analysis is focused on issues such as the autotelic mobilisation of the party, manifested in incessant meetings and conferences, the involving of activists in the organisation of state celebrations, the supervision of the party apparatus over the state administration and, last not least, the activists’ behaviour deemed by the PUWP leadership to be pathological; taking bribes, abuse of position and attendance at religious observances. The primary part of the source base consists of the materials of the Central Party Control Commission, including the files for specific cases undertaken against party members, as well as a collection of transcribed phone messages passed on by the province party committees to the Organisational Department of the Central Committee.