ABSTRACTS

SCHLETT, ISTVÁN

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY OR A BLIND ALLEY?

An "enlightened" programme of the estates had been emerging since the 1770s within the nobility, which accepted the modernising efforts of Enlightenment, raising the standards, but it wished to realise them within the system of estates.

The two variants of "enlightened politics", namely the enlightened system of estates and enlightened absolutism progressed side by side for some time, mutually strengthening each other. But in the mid-80s - expressing the antagonism of the absolutist trend and that of the estates - a break materialised between the imperial-absolutist and patriotic reformers of the estates. The claim to modernise, which characterised both trends, was unable to bridge the contradictions: thèse royale embodied in absolutism and thèse nobiliare expressing the claim of the estates, of the political sector of the society to power, were incompatible within the paradigm of "enlightened politics".

Thus Josephinism and the Enlightenment of the estates were not separated along the fault line between modernity and traditionalism. The inclination towards reform was linked to the defence of old structures in both cases. However, the elements of the set of ideas of Enlightenment, put into the service of dynastic interests, the protection of serfs turned against the landlords, the rationalist-utilitarian policy of education and culture positioned in contrast to the spiritual and political power of the Church, the assertion of the claims of the state, hurting the privileges and traditions of the nobility, etc. created the impression that the enlightened monarch represented progress in the face of reactionary nobility, whereas he only followed his own statist objectives. On the other hand – as the resistance of the estates was "sanctified" by patriotism – the resistance of the estates unfolding in the face of absolutism primarily appeared to be national self-protection, defence against foreign oppression, particularly when the nobility had already adopted the slogans of the development of national language and culture. But it was these reform objectives inspired by
Enlightenment, which became faded during the course of these transformations in both trends.

Thus it is understandable that the immediate antecedent of one of the dilemmas becoming a decisive one, in the history of modern Hungarian political thinking, namely the question of 'homeland or progress' was born in the dispute of the advocates of Enlightenment.

ILONSZKI, GABRIELLA

THE SELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES IN A THEORETICAL AND PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The article offers an analysis of the candidate selection procedure of four parliamentary parties: the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), and the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) in the 1994 parliamentary elections. Candidate selection is initially put in the general party framework, then more concrete issues of party organization and their interrelatedness with candidate selection are focused on.

As a result of party institutionalization the number of direct as well as list candidates increased in 1994 in comparison to the 1990 general elections. There was a large turnout, however, both among candidates and elected MPs. The majority of incumbents lost their seats, and weak party identification of the electorate, together with weak MP-constituency links caused substantial changes in the parliamentary party framework.

All the four parties, covered in the analysis, sought to run candidates who had close ties with the constituency. Also, a professional background and solid expertise were regarded as advantages. In the selection of direct candidates the constituency party organizations enjoyed a paramount importance, and the whole process was decentralized and relatively well institutionalized, while central party authorities had a larger, although not exclusive, role in the selection of list candidates.

The party leaders considered the selection process an important element of the party's activity. As a contrast, the electorate did not seem to take the characteristics of candidates seriously. Nevertheless, there is a general agreement among party leaderships that the importance of candidate selection will further grow in parallel with the consolidation of the party and political scene. We can conclude that the level of the external and internal institutionalization of the parties have a major effect on the procedure and the intensity of candidate selection.
BALOGH, LÁSZLÓ

THE ROLE OF THE PDS AND THE HSP IN THE PERIOD
OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE

The paper wishes to analyse the role of the PDS and the HSP and their predecessor parties, the SED and the HSWP in the period of systemic change with the means of comparative political and social sciences.

The paper attempts to answer to the following questions.

The political system of the Honecker and Kádár regimes was partly characterised by the common and general features of the Soviet-type totalitarian model (such as a party-centred, monopolistic power mechanism, the excessive weight of the role of the political subsystem, etc.), and partly different features can also be identified, such as the difference between the more decentralised Hungarian and the strictly centralised East German decision-making mechanisms.

In the GDR the position of the power elite was shaken by demonstrations in the street initiated from below and mobilising significant masses, and in this process it was the reform socialist political groups which played the leading role and enjoyed the support of the Christian churches. Subsequently the initiative was gradually taken over by the trade unions, enjoying the support of the political forces of the FRG, during the course of the "round-table conferences". Whereas in Hungary a more peaceful, negotiated transition was launched, during the course of which the reform forces of the HSWP, and later of the HSP had an eminent role until the first free elections. At the same time even if the reform forces got strengthened in the SED as well as PDS in the GDR, their influence was weaker until the 1990 elections.

The parliamentary elections of 1990 proved that the majority of the electorate of both countries blamed the successor parties for the contradictions and mistakes of the totalitarian model. At the same time the social model of the FRG was attractive to the overwhelming majority of the voters of the GDR and most of them voted for the Christian-conservative parties urging radical change. In contrast the majority of the voters in Hungary cast their ballot for MDF – also rooted in the Christian-conservative soil – advocating a moderate and slower transition. The reason of the different voting behaviour can be primarily found in the "goulash-communism" of the Kádár regime and the rigid neo-Stalinist policy of Honecker's system.

The assessment of the results of the parliamentary elections of 1994 has first of all supported the assumption that the ideological-political facet of both parties is heterogeneous and they are by far not characterised as yet by the social base and set of values (democratic socialism) crystallised in the case of the West European social democratic parties.
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