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TECHNIQUES OF POWER IN THE FINAL HOURS OF THE PARTY STATE
(1987–1990)

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CONTEXT AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

The theme of our dissertation is the analysis of the background of the political decision making institutes and organization of the party state, which mainly examines the last period of the Kádár era directly preceding the regime change by working up of the accessible primary sources.

In the political history dealing with this period the dominant feature is the reconstruction of the process on the basis of the history of the events. Most historians recognize and emphasize the demand for the comprehensive elaboration of the background of the system but its elaborated and basically institute-centred approaches are accessible sporadically, in most cases the memoirs of the contemporary political, public figures or in monographs based on the sources of the state party. In the period preceding the regime change (1987-1988) the political, power crises following 1945 and the most important points of the attempts at the correction of the system are imminent in the decision preparing and making in the activity of the state party. The research formulated the demand for the revelation of the power structure by examining the institutes and decision making mechanism of the power embedded in the events of the regime change and tried to demonstrate the final stage of the party state of Károly Grósz during the process of the correction of the system referring to the motives of the decisive political, power changes in the period following the Second World War.

METHODOLOGY

It makes an attempt to illustrate the importance of the modified relation of the state party, the government and the Parliament from special methodological points of view and by an alternative analysis of the sources. In the analysis of the formation of the power we concentrate on phenomena and circumstances which do not have adequately prominent role in the works dealing with the end of the party state and the regime change. We analyzed the political process leading to the regime change through the steps which modified the power structure.

The formation of power means those technical measures of the party state executed by the communist leadership which can be seen in the formation of the system aiming at socialist constitutionalism.

From the above briefly outlined power structure we can get the conclusion that the operation of the system can be understood from the functioning and working methods of the party. It is possible for example to reconstruct the ways of power practice hidden in democratic centralism. The history of the institutes and organization of the party state is a field of research fundamental for the revelation of its power.

To analyze the power practice it is necessary to separate within the concept of party control the question of party control effecting the state affairs (government, jurisdiction, armed forces etc.) and the control of the party by the leadership of the MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) (the central leading and decision making bodies and the organizationally related machinery).

RESULTS

My research tries to introduce the change of political and power institution system and the way of practising power during the turn of 1987–1989 from this aspect. Of course the former principles were still effective but Károly Grósz had to adopt radical structural changes for their termination or reorganization. Following the decisions of the party meeting really important changes started in the political structure compared with the former period. One of its main motives was the fact that the MSZMP got into the formulating multi-party system. One of the first steps in forming a multi-party system from the socialist one-party system was that the executive power, the government through the person of Károly Grósz got from its secondary role on the same level with the primary decision making position. We can determine the essence of this phenomenon in the fact that after this the MSZMP did not want to exercise its power through the party structure as a state party but as a governing party through the executive power, the government. Which means that the main point (focus) of the power began to get over to the government. New methods had to be found so that the MSZMP would be able to carry out its measures by the government as part of a governmental party policy. In the parliament of the transformed political institutional system, option had to be established for the different social interests, that is for the newly formed parties.

It is necessary to research parallel the documentation and operation of the government for a realistic and well-founded historical reconstruction.

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