

## **Democratization and revival of the multiparty system in Russia and Hungary before the collapse of the Soviet Union**

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Political changes in Central and South-Eastern Europe in the second half of the 1980s, and also in the Soviet Union, led to the transformation of statehood in all countries participating in the Warsaw bloc. The Soviet Union and Hungary played a special role in those processes:

1. The position of the USSR was decisive for the fate of the socialist community.
2. Hungary was the country with the most liberal regime among the Eastern European States, where systemic political changes occurred earlier than in other countries of the Eastern bloc, and the transformation of the state-political system took place in a soft negotiation mode without significant conflicts within the society.

Therefore, a comparative analysis of the processes of democratization and transformation of Russia and Hungary's political systems at the turn of the 80's-90's of the XX. century and the revival of multiparty system in them is interesting not only from a historical point of view, but can also have quite practical value.

Particularly, it allows to understand the patterns and assess of the long-term trends in the political development of our States. Especially since, in the end, both countries (at least at the moment) have come to a similar result in the political sphere – a multi – party system with a dominant party: in the Russian Federation it is "Edinaya Russia", and in Hungary it is the Hungarian civil Union Fides.

If in the USSR the coming to power of moderate-reformist forces led by Gorbachev became possible as a result of the death of the previous Secretary General K.U. Chernenko, who belonged to the older generation of party leaders, in Budapest the change of leadership took place in a systematic coordinated rotation: in May 1988. János Kádár as the Secretary General of the Hungarian socialist working party was replaced by Károly Grósz. At the same time, Kádár was given an honorary ceremonial post as the Chairman of the party, which was established specifically for the former Secretary General. However, a year later, because of health reasons, he was forced to resign and soon died.

Just like Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, Grósz with like-minded individuals tried to lead the process of inevitable change and embarked on reforms in an effort to make socialist democracy more attractive. However, like Gorbachev, Grósz failed to stop the process of democratization unfolded, despite all efforts. The desire of Hungarian society to change and genuine democratization of life was so strong that eventually led to the collapse of the ruling party and the change of the state and political system. It is typical that in Hungary the representatives of the party elite of the new generation made the greatest contribution to the collapse of the existing regime.

In contrast to the Soviet Union at the time of the change of top management in Hungary, social and political activity of informal organizations was already in full raged. This was primarily due to the reaction of the intellectual elite of Hungarian society to the aggravation of social and economic problems. By the early 80-ies, there were definitely the signs of the crisis of kádárovsk's "consumer socialism". The country's leadership artificially continued to maintain a relatively high standard of living at the expense of Western loans, fearing a repetition of the events of 1956. The volume of the country's debt increased rapidly and doubled in the 1980s, reaching the amount of annual national income (\$18 billion) and by 1989 the amount of national income was \$16,7 billion (Izsák 2006: 260). As a result, Hungary according to this indicator in terms of per capita reached

the first place among the socialist countries. As a result it was budget deficit, inflation, decrease in purchasing power of the population, growth of unemployment. Internal problems were exacerbated by the inability of the party elite to resist the infringement of the rights of Transylvanian Hungarians by the Romanian leadership led by Nicolae Ceausescu.

All this caused a crisis of confidence in the leadership and the expansion of civic initiatives in various circles, clubs and societies – such as "club Rakpart" (1982), "College of István Bibó" and "Friends of Sarso" (1983), "Danube circle" (1984), "Friendly society Bajcsy-Zsilinszky" (1985) etc.

The growth of the civil initiative was also promoted by the measures on partial "expansion of socialist democracy" taken by the leadership of the PSOE in the mid-80s. In particular, amendments to the law on elections of deputies of the state Assembly and members of Councils, adopted on December 22, 1983, provided for:

1. mandatory nomination of at least two candidates for elections to the main legislative body and local Councils;

2. introduction of the national list of candidates consisting of several dozens of the most famous public figures, representatives of science, culture and the Church, for which 10% of the seats in the Parliament were reserved;

3. the possibility of revocation of the Deputy subject to the nomination of such a requirement is not less than 10% of citizens (Hungary: on the way of democratization of the electoral system // Arguments and facts. 1986. No. 38. 16 September).

In April 1984, the law "on the establishment of the constitutional legal Council" was adopted, it was elected by the Parliament and monitored the observance of legal norms in the country, including by the government and the Supreme Court.

78 "independent candidates" took part in the 1985 parliamentary elections, 41 of whom were elected to the state Assembly (Izsák 2006: 261). The election was defeated by many apparatchiks of the old school of top and middle managers. Although, in General, three-quarters of the elected deputies were members of the PSOE.

The results of the elections in many aspects reminded the situation with election of people's deputies in the USSR in the spring of 1989., when the vast majority of candidates loyal to the country's leadership were elected, but some parliamentarians (about 12–15%) represented the opposition, which later joined the so-called Interregional Deputy group (Ivanchenko – Lyubarev 2007: 28). But in addition to the parliamentary opposition in the face of members of the Interregional Deputy group, there was an intensive process of formation of new centers and informal opposition organizations, they were Democratic Russia, a Democratic platform in the CPSU, the national Patriotic society "Memory", the liberal group "civil dignity", the neo-Marxist club "Community" and so on.

Similarly, the new socio-political associations took the political space of Hungary in the second half of the 80s. In the autumn of 1987, the Hungarian democratic forum was established, it was a moderate political position of the centrist wing, as well as representing the most radical and openly anti-Communist opposition force, the Union of free Democrats and the Hungarian civil Union Fides. In November 1987, the Party of independent small owners, liquidated in 1949, was revived, and in early 1989 the Hungarian social democratic party and the Christian democratic people's party appeared. At the same time there were other, less noticeable parties.

The appearance on the political arena of opposition movements forced the Parliament to discuss bills that would open the way to a multi-party system, which the government was forced to recognize in the autumn of 1988. However, the existence of a multi-party system did not mean a multi-party political system. To do this, it was necessary to abolish the monopoly of the ruling party, the PSOE.

Like the KPSS of the second half of the 1980s, an intra-party struggle between different groups took place within the VSRP itself.

1. On the one hand, it was fast losing influence and support in the community of the conservatives, among whom the Secretary of the Central Committee was the most conspicuous figure, János Berecz was the famous author of books dealing with the events of 1956 as a "counter-revolutionary rebellion".

2. On the other side, the reformist wing of the VSRP declared itself more strongly, the leaders of the party became the liberal reformers Miklós Németh, Imre Pozsgay and Less of Nyers.

3. Finally, the relative centrist majority of supporters of democratization within the one-party system can be conventionally associated with the head of the Hungarian government and the successor of János Kádár as the party Secretary General Károly Grósz.

At first, Grósz like Gorbachev in the USSR, was perceived by society as a leader of democratization. But very soon, in fact, by the autumn of 1988, he lost "credibility" in the society and in the party. Just as in the case of Gorbachev, this contributed to:

1. the deterioration of the socio-economic situation;
2. the aggravation of national problems;
3. the substitution of a consistent reform policy of maneuvering and half measures;
4. the efforts to curb dissent and neutralize opposition.

In particular, Gross was completely unable to support the Transylvanian Hungarians, he tried to prevent the formation of a multi-party system, resisted the reassessment of the events of 1956 and even ordered to disperse the demonstration for the rehabilitation of Imre Nagy (Jellyzky 2000: 63).

Against this background, the party sharply strengthened the position of radical reformers, one of whose leaders Miklós Németh since November 1988 replaced Grósz as the Prime Minister.

The final victory of the radical wing in the party was secured in May by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the VSPR in 1989, which

1. agreed to independent legal actions of the government;
2. recognized the law on parties approved by Parliament;
3. approved the freedom of platforms in the socialist workers' party and ousted Kádár as the Chairman of the VSRP.

Leading positions in the party were taken by the reformers: the Chairman became Rezső Nyers, and the functions of the Secretary-General were taken by a collective body, the Presidium of Grósz, Pozsgay, Nyers and Németh.

This made possible a direct dialogue with the opposition within the framework of the National round table held in June–September 1989 and ended with an agreement on the conditions of transition from one-party system to the parliamentary democracy.

After it, in early October 1989, it was the last of the XIV. Congress of the socialist workers' party, adopted the decision on the termination of its existence as a state party. After the heated debate, the reformist wing announced the creation of a new party on the social democratic platform—the Hungarian socialist party. The parliamentary elections were held in March–April 1990, they were the first free elections after 1947 and brought success to the right-wing opposition, which replaced socialists in power. Thus, the change of system and political system of Hungary, in fact, took place during the debate between the main socio-political forces and deservedly received the name of "negotiation revolution". As a result, leading political parties have been formed in a few months, which to this day determine the content of the political development of Hungary (Political parties of the world, 2017: 39-41).

As for the Soviet Union, up to the August 1991 within the leadership of the KPSS, the influence of the democratic reformist wing, although it remained significant, but did not reach a decisive advantage. In its turn, the non-Communist opposition was extremely atomized, did not have a broad social and electoral base, and in the public consciousness

rooted rejection of the idea of party membership by analogy with the ruling party. The new head of Russia B. N. Yeltsin, though, he was anti-Communist, inherited not the positive traits of Bolshevism, they are uncompromising and dogmatic, confrontational political culture, intolerance of opposition and, as a consequence, mistrust to such a traditional institution as political parties. Largely for this reason, the party system of Russia for a long time after the collapse of the USSR remained unstable and immature, and later transformed into a model in which the "party in power" actually did not have any serious competitors.

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