COMMUNIST SUCCESSOR PARTIES IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE: THE CASES OF POLAND AND HUNGARY

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation titled ""**COMMUNIST SUCCESSOR PARTIES IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE: THE CASES OF POLAND AND HUNGARY**", submitted by **VIKAS DATTA** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university. This is his own dissertation.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Dr. SHASHIKANT JHA
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Dedicated to
The glory of Hazrat Ali
(The remover of difficulties)

("Kab kisi benava se kahta hoon,baat Sher-i-Khuda se kahta hoon
door ho jo nazar se ai mushqil,varna Mushqil-Kusha se kahta hoon")

"aequam memento rebus in ardus servare mentem"

CONTENTS

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CHAPTER I

TYPOLOGY AND FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN A DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

When in 1989, the East European countries overthrew communist rule and adopted multi party competitive democracy they faced a formidable challenge from the mass proliferation of political parties.

Initially broad fronts of anti communist opposition had exerted pressure against the communist regimes. These were programmatically vague, ideologically not very clear and organizationally fragile.[1] Once the communist regime renounced its monopoly on power and free elections were held, these fronts fragmented giving rise to a great multiplicity of political parties.

But, a significant mass of these parties were no more than factions in pursuit of rather singular political objectives. As most of the East European countries had no experience of multiparty competitive politics, It will be worthwhile to go into a discussion on what parties are, how they can be classified and what functions they are meant to achieve.

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1 Shashikant Jha, 'Democracy Parties and Politics in Hungary', *International Studies,* Vol.36, No.3,1999,p.278.

I NATURE OF PARTIES

Parties are an essential ingredient of modern political life. They are to be found throughout the political spectrum. Their functions and nature only differ in the sort of conditions obtaining in a particular polity.

It is an accepted axiom that modern representative governments cannot function without political parties. However, surprisingly as it may turn out, full-fledged party systems are more recent than is realized. History does mention 'oligarchic' and 'democratic' parties in the Greek city-states of classical antiquity, the Guelphs and Ghibellines in late Middle Age Italy. But such formations – factions seems a more appropriate term for them – lacked the apparatus of modern political parties. As Austin Ranney points out, "Until well into the 19th century, the terms, 'party', 'faction', and 'interest' were used interchangeably to mean any kind of identifiable current of opinion or set of goals, organized or unorganized... bearing on public authorities."[2]

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[2] Austin Ranney, The Concept of Party in O. Garceau(ed), *Political Research and Political Theory*(Cambridge,Harvard University Press,1968), p.146.

McIver, has identified, with some degree of certitude, the genesis of parties, as we understand them now- 'It was only when the logic of parliamentary government brought it about that a dispute between the ministry and the representatives was decided by an appeal to the country, involving the retirement of the ministry if defeated (the first clear case being that of Sir Robert Peel in 1835) or when an unpopular government found it expedient to resign, that the importance of parties emerged, and they began to assume a new status'.[3]

There is another point to be realized with bearing on the existence of parties. As said earlier, parties are present throughout the political spectrum, but it is only in a formal democracy that they attain significance. It is here the responsibility for decisions regulating government personnel and policy is ultimately rested in the citizens. The rights of free speech and assembly coupled with the practice of universal adult franchise made it mandatory to mobilise voting strength and win elections for the control of the government. This can be concretely expressed as that with the introduction of mass suffrage, the struggle for political power is institutionalised in the operation of political parties.

[3] McIver, *The Modern State*, p.74

There are, of course, many other political actors than the political parties, but none of them is so pervasive as to take over the raison d'etre of political parties.

II DEFINITION

There is little consensus on what a political party really is. Some analysts prefer to call all those groups 'parties' which consider themselves to be one. A problem that arises with this operational definition is that many political parties, especially French ones, did reject the term 'party' in favour of terms like 'rally', 'union', 'movement' and 'section'.

Among non-operational definitions of party, there are two main trends: one based on ideology, the other on power. Basing a definition on Edmund Burke, hailing from an idealistic era, who stressed principles, and Max Weber, representing a more utilitarian age, who stressed power, a party can be defined as 'an association formed to influence the content and conduct of public policy in favour of some set of ideological principles and/or interests either through direct exercise of power or by participation in elections'.[4]

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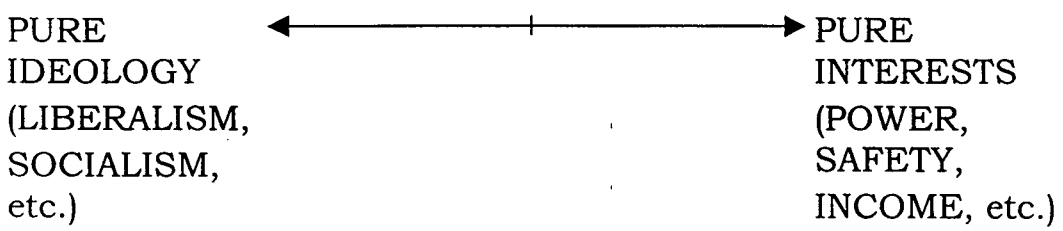
[4] Hagopian, Mark N., *Regimes, Movements and Ideologies: A Comparative Introduction to Political Science*, Longman, New York and London, 1984.

This rather cumbersome definition encompasses minor, 'splinter' parties that do not seriously crave power and excludes more interest groups that exert political influence in more oblique ways. Political parties wish to influence public policy: the major parties, through the direct exercise of power involved in actually taking part in government; minor parties through participation in elections, influencing the public and the policy-makers.

In reality, a continuum of motivation may be discerned with some parties learning towards ideology, others favouring interests, and some in between, as the following figure attempts to show.



Duverger, whose work on political parties, despite many justified criticisms raised against it, remains one of the most significant and enduring canons of politics defines a party as 'a community with a particular structure'.[5] He tended to distinguish present day parties more on the nature of their organization than

[5] Duverger, Maurice – *Political Parties*, New York, Wilers, 1963.

their programme or class of members. He postulated the following classification of party structure.

a) CAUCUS

This raised on a small restricted membership, with emphasis on quality than quantity. It remained virtually inactive between elections and its main purpose was to engage in electoral activities. This form suffered decline with extending franchise and expanding mass use.

b) BRANCH

This emerged with the franchise extension. It intended to enroll as many members as possible. Its activities covered a wide range and were not confined to election periods only. It had a centralised party structure with its basic units being situated geographically in space.

c) CELL

This was a communist invention comprising of all party members working in the same place. This basis was occupational rather than geographical.

d) MILITIA

This was a fascist characteristic, being a private army, recruited and organized on military lines, with members not permanently mobilized or maintained by the organization, but to be ready to be at the disposal of the party leaders.

Factually, no party was ever formed exclusively on this basis. Duverger did point out that these were ideal types, not being present in reality, in their pure forms. Parties in actual formation, would always be having mixed structures.

TYPOLOGY OF PARTIES

Literature on political parties has tended to divide them into two to four types. Duverger spoke of two on the basis of membership.[6]

(1) The elitist or traditional parties (however, having a differentiation between the European or the American types).

(2) The mass party (socialist, communist, fascist or prevalent in underdeveloped countries, democratic parties were also mass parties).

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[6] Ibid, p.51

As mentioned earlier, Duverger's works on parties had been subjected to a good deal of criticism. For all his intellectual grasp and articulate presentation, Duverger clearly lacked real knowledge of the countries on which he drew for alleged proof – with the result that country experts were amazed at his evident misrepresentations. Major faults of methodology have been laid as well.

However, his classification has not been rejected, but expanded. Katz and Mair[7] recently offered a fresh scheme, of which the most important criteria was the location of parties on the continuum between state and society:

(1) Elite party (19th century, under conditions of restricted suffrage).

(2) Mass Party (1880-1960).

(3) Catchall Party (1945-)

(4) Cartel Party (1970-)

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7 Katz, Richard and Peter Mair, 'Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy. The Emergence of the Cartel Party, *Party Politics*, 1995, pp.5-28.

This is to be taken in relation to the four waves of democratization in Europe:

(1) After the end of World War I, when constitutional monarchies like Hohenzollern Germany, Habsburg Austria or Tsarist Russia were democratized in republican forms.

(2) The democratization of defeated fascist systems after 1945 (the end of the second World War).

(3) The redemocratization of certain southern European systems in the 1970's (Greece, Spain, Portugal).

(4) The democratization of ex-Communist regimes (1989 onwards).

IV FUNCTIONS OF PARTIES

Political parties perform a variety of functions that contribute to the stability and effectiveness of political systems. These functions do not imply that (1) all parties perform them all (2) that all parties perform them uniformly well (3) that 'no functional alternatives' could take the place of parties. The functions often discussed are listed below. Some may seem to overlap.

1) Mobilization of Voters

While many people vote from a general sense of duty and others as an act of protest, political parties push some people over the line between abstention and voting. Parties constantly ask and even cajole people to vote. Party platforms, policies and candidates are selected with a view to maximising votes. In countries where non-voting is high, parties search for strategies to mobilize non-voters on behalf of their candidates.

2) Education of the Public

The pronouncements of party leaders, articles in the party press or elsewhere, as well as more informal methods of spreading ideas, help to raise the general public's level of information. This is true despite the partisan and biased nature of much of this information. In a competitive system there is a chance for counter-information or rebuttal.

3) Political Socialization:

This differs from the educational role because it involves more the inculcation of the fundamental values and norms of the system. Though it is a controversial aspect, many social theorists consider

a certain minimal consensus on values essential to the survival of any society. Parties, especially those basically supportive of the system, play a considerable role in maintaining, if not creating, that consensus.

4) Policy-making

The parties when in the government or in governing coalitions, formulate policy in light of their own ideology or the manifesto and promises that they have been elected upon.

5) Interest aggregation

In any complex society, if all the possible interest groups deluged the government with all their possible demands, the political system would be most likely to overload and break down. Parties, specially the catchall parties, are able to lighten this problem somewhat by combining, coordinating and refining demands before they reach the formal political institutions.

6) Political Recruitment

Political systems need leaders. Almost all legislators and most cabinet officers in constitutional systems are from the ranks of political parties.

7) System Integration

Parties, atleast the 'pro-system' parties, serve the function of integration by managing conflict and mobilizing support. In the first case, they provide a forum for certain conflicts of interest and principle. The course of social integration is served by counteracting class divisions. Secondly, by supporting a pro-system party, the citizen affirms indirect support to the system as a whole.

8) Communication conduit

Communication is involved at all stages and in all aspects of the political process. Political parties can, and do, serve as a two channel conduit of communication.

V POLITICAL PARTIES IN COMMUNIST SYSTEMS

Here it must be clear that these above typologies and functions are related to parties in democratic environments, where political competition is prevalent. In order to test their application to newly democratizing countries such as the ex-communist states, we must first examine the role of the Communist Party, that ruled Eastern Europe for almost five decades ever since the end of the

Second World War. Furthermore, another fact that must be taken into account is that none of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe ever had any experience of democratic governance since their creation or independence after the end of the First World War, with the sole exception of Czechoslovakia (1919-38; 1945-47) and possibly, Hungary (1945-47). Poland and Hungary were authoritarian dictatorships, Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria were authoritarian monarchies.

These countries had long existing communist parties with the exception of Bulgaria, whose party history had been closely tied with that of the Russian movement since the 1890's, the others originated in the years 1918-23 (the Hungarian (HCP) in 1918; the Bulgarian (BCP), German (KPD) and Yugoslav (KCP) in 1919; and the Czechoslovak (KSC), Romanian (RCP) and Polish (CPP) in 1921.

The victory of the Russian Bolshevik Party in 1917 and the founding of the Third International in 1919, brought greater orthodoxy to the international communist movement. Parties wishing to affiliate to the Comintern had to subscribe to the Twenty one conditions of membership approved at the Second Comintern Congress in 1920. These endorsed the model of party

organisation and activity developed by the Bolshevik party since its own founding, and drew principally on Lenin's book 'What is to be done' (1902) which advocated the 'vanguard' party comprising of highly committed and trained members', working in an organisation of democratic centralism.

These parties founded in the early 1920's, were subject to the tension between 'Russian' and 'Austro-German' Marxism. The formation of the Comintern was as much an attempt to exclude the latter influence as to endorse the Soviet Success. The emphasis of the 'Austro-German' tendencies upon a parliamentary road to socialism, a strong base in the trade union movement, and the adoption of a looser mass party structure, were rejected by the Third International. These aspects formed the difference with the Social Democratic parties.

Thus the communist parties of East Europe, following, the lead of the Soviet Communists, followed a near totalitarian political control. The six point Friedrich-Brzezinski totalitarian syndrome comprising of.[8]

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[8] Carl J Frederick & Zbigniew Brzezinski '*Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*' (New York, Praeger, 1956).

1) An official ideology

2) A single, elite directed mass party

3) A system of terroristic police control

4) A near-complete monopoly of control over the media of mass communication

5) A party-dominated monopolistic control over all means of 'effective armed combat'

6) A centrally controlled and directed economy

Though considerable criticism has been made of this formation, the fact remains that some of these features were present in communist system, with certain exceptions. Barring the fifth feature, which almost all modern states possess and the second which was present in Eastern European Communist systems. Unlike the Soviet Union, the East European Countries were not mono-party systems. Apart from Hungary and Romania, all other state of East Europe did permit existence of other parties, but with severe restrictions on their autonomy. These had to conform to the general line of the major party (the Communist Party). Differences of degree could be tolerated but not of kind.

Thus, in East Europe, independent political initiative was not tolerated, and even when it did form, it was suppressed. Nor was there any historical memory of such, except for the brief exceptions listed above or if the brief revolts against the established communist system and their Soviet masters (East Germany, 1953; Hungary, 1956; Czechoslovakia, 1969; Poland, 1981-82) are taken into account.

Democratization and party formation in the new democratic states of East Central Europe had to take this legacy of their past into consideration.

CONCLUSION

Here in this chapter, we have attempted to examine the nature, classification and functions of a political party in conditions of a multiparty competitive polity. The role of the communist party in a communist system has also been dealt with.

Now, it is time to study the conditions that ultimately caused the decline and fall of the communist systems in the entire area of Eastern Europe.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND: THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION

INTRODUCTION

Each East European country negotiating the transition from communism, followed its own unique path. At one end was the change brought about by a violent upsurge (Romania). This was an extreme case, though conditions perilously close to this, did crop up elsewhere as well. The more common mode of change was that initiated by popular protests (Czechoslovakia) or a palace coup (Bulgaria) or a combination of both (The German Democratic Republic). However, Poland and Hungary did not only lead in initiating change, but in both these countries, it was the ruling communist parties that flagged off the process.

It is definitely a matter of abiding academic interest, to know how regimes ostensibly monolithic, could have fallen from grace so fast, and in the two cases under review here, themselves began the process which inevitably led to their demise.

I. CRISES UNDERPINNING THE REGIMES

In the past, East Central European state socialist regimes experienced often surprising political instability (East Germany,1953; Poland 1956, 1970, 1980; Hungary, 1956; Czechoslavakia, 1968) but, as

Ekiert puts it[1], it would be markedly erroneous to characterize the social unrest, collective protest, and political instability in the area, in the aftermath of the second world war, and even later, as an inexorable and cumulative process of change leading to democracy.[2] Ekiert holds that despite many similarities, these instances do not necessarily form a single, consistent historical pattern cases of political instability during the transition to and within the post- Stalinist period can be described as a 'crisis in state socialism'. After the 1970's, countries of the region, entered a radically new stage of development, which was undoubtably, a manifestation of a 'crisis of state socialism' itself.

The new transitory phase was shaped by six distinct, but well interconnected processes .[3]

1) A profound identity crisis within the party and the collapse of the Marxist-Leninist 'State Idea' (The state idea, according to Abrams, not only giving direction to the state's policies and influencing the institutional design of the state, but also serving as a tool of legitimization for ruling elites)[4]. This was reflected in the corruption of the ethos of the party [5], the disintegration of official party discourse,

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1 Grzegorz Ekiert, 'Democratization processes in East Central Europe: A Theoretical Reconsideration'; *The British Journal of Political Science'*, 1991, pp. 285-313.

2 Ibid, p. 286.

3 Ibid., p.287

4 P. Abrams, 'Notes on the Difficulties of studying the state', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1 (1988), 58-90, pg 79, cited in Ekiert, pp 287-88.

5 K. Jowitt, 'Soviet Neotraditionalism: The Political Corruption of a Leninist regime', *Soviet Studies* 35, (1983), pp. 275-98, cited in Ekiert, pp. 286-87.

and the transition from claims of Legitimization based on Marxist-Leninist ideology to those based on a pseudoreapolit1ik with strong undercurrents of nationalism.

2) The gradual disintegration of the auxiliary institutions of the party state, such as official trade unions, as well as the professional and youth organisations which had constituted the 'organizational weapons' of state socialism, serving as 'transmission belts' closing down or restricting political space and ensuring political stability. (Solidarity in Poland, and the FIDESz in Hungary, are two of the most notable illustrations of this trend.

3) The failure of centrally planned economies, economic stagnation, the collapse of the consumer market and severe financial crisis.

4) The emancipation of a vigorous second economy reflected in the explosive growth of the black market and semi-legal and legal private enterprises.

5) The formation of a distinct political society comprising a wide variety of independent social and political movements and organizations.

6) The relaxation of geopolitical constraints and the granting of increased autonomy so the party states in the region by the Soviet Union, which was itself being plagued by debilitating economic and political crisis.

The six processes are evidently those which both possess internal and external aspects. The first five odd, though indicative of a strong

imperative for reform, or, in any case, its inevitability were powerless before the external aspect – the attitude of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

II. THE SOVIET ATTITUDE

The Soviet response to any attempt at reform in the past had been swift- and brutal. The military intervention to quash the 1956 uprising in Hungary, and the joint Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, in response to the 'Prague Spring' in 1968, were still remembered. In fact, Brezhnev had even formulated a rationale for such measures, in the often quoted doctrine, made in November 1968, which bore his name. It clearly warned that 'if there was a "threat to socialism", the Soviet Union and its other socialist allies would fulfil their "internationalist obligation" to intervene'.

The situation in Poland in 1980-81 would have led to another invasion, if it were not for the efforts of General Jaruzelski and the Polish army, which itself took stock of a steadily deteriorating situation, and imposed martial law, in order to forestall the foreign (Soviet) invasion.

But, the Brezhnev doctrine itself laid the grounds for the eventual demise of communism as an ideology, though it was not apparent at that time. This ensured that whatever attraction communism still possessed as an ideology were irreplaceably destroyed. Communists were, from that

time on, career communists, not convinced ones. [6] (Most had always been the latter category than the former, but now all doubts were dispelled). Czechoslovakia marked a watershed, in the sense, that the communist system slid into terminal decay. Whatever idealism had hereto existed was now reduced to opportunism.

However, one seeming exception must be considered. The Hungarian party in the late 1980s showed strong reformist tendencies. But the radical reformers in the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party took a diametrically opposed path – not one leading to socialism, but one away from it – and in a fully conscious manner. Their goal was social democracy. The Hungarians were trying to have the best of both worlds – trying to transform the party's philosophy and system of values and, at the same time, trying to retain its power and material base. It was certainly a most ingenious way to keep up with the prevailing times. But as the first free post-communist elections in 1990 showed, where the rechristened party crashed to a resounding defeat; it enjoyed a deplorable lack of conviction and credibility.

Even, the Polish case proved another tenet. It firmly signaled that from now on, pressure for change would not originate from the system, but from the outside from the common masses on the streets, and the workers in the factories, from the ranks of the increasingly dissatisfied

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6 J.F. Brown, *Surge to Freedom : The End of Communist Rule in Eastern Europe*, (Admantine Press, London 1991) p. 25.

intellectuals. Their aims would also be different. A reform of the system, would no longer palliate them, and even it were accomplished, it would be treated as a transitory phase to full blown democracy.

The Soviet Union was extremely reluctant to countenance any change in Eastern Europe and chary of any developments, that tended to disturb the existing equilibrium. In pursuit of this, it had already carried out two full blown aimed interventions (Hungary, 1956; Czechoslovakia, 1968), and had dangled out the prospect of one(Poland,1981), which made the local regime and its adjuncts scurry about trying to put their house in order. It generally had exerted its influence on regimes to make them act in desired ways (pressure on Kadar's Hungary to wind up the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) which they disproved of).

To know the rationale for such an attitude that operated in such a covert and overt manner, it will be well worth to know the premises and the purpose of Soviet policy till the advent of Mikhail Sergeivich Gorbachev- the man, who can be said to have been trying to chart a new policy approach, that unleashed the pent-up deluge .The Soviet Union saw Eastern Europe as [7] :

1) A defensive glacis – Through this perception mainly applied in the realm of military strategy, but it also had an ideological aspect in that this region was also considered as protection for the Soviet Union against western liberalism.

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7 Ibid., pp.45-46.

2) A basis for an offensive strategy:

This function had three aspects:

i) Ideological: Eastern Europe was considered both the vanguard and first fruits of the world communist movement.

ii) Military: For the purpose of intimidation or aggression, Eastern Europe was an essential forward base.

iii) Political: This region was suitable for initiatives designed to manipulate Western Europe, (especially West Germany)

3) The nucleus of an international bloc of political and diplomatic support in world politics:

The building and expansion of an ostensibly allied grouping of states was absolutely essential if the Soviet Union was to be considered the equivalent of the United States of America.

4) A source of Soviet political and ideological legitimization:

This closely and continuously interacted with the preceding perceptions. There was an abiding Soviet conviction that the continuing allegiance of Eastern Europe, and the preservation there of a system basically similar to its own was necessary, not only for the domestic legitimacy of the Soviet system, but for its overall standing and reputation. Thus the ignominy incurred from periodic repression there was viewed as less damaging than basic changes in the system that could make such repression unnecessary.

5) A source, originally, of economic exploitation:

This was historical. East Europe was no longer the abundant reservoir of loot it had been in Stalin's time. But upto 1954 roughly, it played a considerable role in the post- war reconstruction and recovery of the Soviet Union.

6) A vital part of the Soviet heroic mythology:

This was the base from where the Nazi legions had invaded the Soviet Union. But, more importantly, it had been the last region to be liberated before the final defeat of Nazi Germany. As evinced in Brezhnev's emotional outburst to the Czechoslovak leaders in August 1968, (as reported by the Czech politician, Zdennek Mlynnar),[8] most Russians regarded the lives expended here as giving them, an inalienable interest in Eastern Europe. It was an emotional factor, rooted in the Russian psyche, and one not to be taken lightly at all.

These were the major elements of Soviet perceptions of the importance of Eastern Europe, which helped formulate their position for about forty years. That is till the accession of a leader in the Kremlin, who was not of the World War Two generation. These perceptions did not carry the same weight, nor did they maintain the same importance were never mutually exclusive; in fact, they were in a constant stage of interaction.

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8 Zdennek Mlynnar, *Nightfrost in Prague* (New York: Karz Publishers, 1980), p.158.

III. GORBACHEV"S POLICY

At the time of Gorbachev's accession, Soviet- East European relations had touched an all time low. The condition of Comecon was deplorable and leading to increasingly bitter recriminations among the members. Moscow was also getting peeved at the perceived disadvantages to itself of the existing trade structure – it was exporting valuable raw materials and getting East European 'junk' in return. The prevailing attitude was to make the East Europeans pay. On the other hand, the East Europeans – the Hungarian and the Poles especially – complained that a commercial organization, Comecon, still operating on the barter system, was unworthy of the second part of the 20th century – or of the 20th century at all.

Political relations were also turbulent. The deployment of American intermediate nuclear forces on West German territory had led the Kremlin to freeze relations with Bonn. However, the GDR, one of the most faithful and servile Soviet satellites, in a most uncharacteristic manner, refused to accept this freeze applying to itself. This was in view of its inceasingly profitable rèlations with the Federal Republic. Hungary and Romania also supported this stand, and even Bulgaria evinced signs of sympathy. After a few weeks of this defiance, the 'rebellion', easily detectable in the official media organs of these countries, petered out. An impending visit by Erich Honecker to the FRG was put off, obviously at Soviet insistence.

This occurred just a few months before Gorbachev's succession. It was keenly symptomatic of the decay the alliance had fallen into, and Gorbachev's early actions seemed to indicate a desire to reinvigorate the alliance. Gorbachev's accession led to a variety of responses among the extant East European leadership.

Curiosity seemed to be main reaction, along with some hope, and also a certain apprehensiveness. He had been too long a member of the top leadership to be unknown, but not long enough for his characteristics to be clearly known. His youth and vigour, (relative by Soviet standards) were known, and his attitude was expected to reflect these attributes. After the stagnation of the past decade and the seeming uncertainly after Brezhnev, as two leadership successions occurred in rapid intervals, the prospect of firmness and movement were to be welcomed – even by the rather conservative leaders. But what most feared were developments with personal as well as policy implications. Barring the special case of Poland's Jaruzelski, most of the long reigning rulers feared their close identification with Brezhnev and their advancing years would disadvantage them with this perceived impatient (and young) General Secretary.

They need not have been unduly concerned. In retrospect, Gorhachev's tenure, in relation to Eastern Europe, can be considered to have three phases.

The first phase was not symptomatic of any far reaching change. It can be held to be a period of 'education', in which he realized the nature and dimensions of the problems. He appeared a moderniser - a reformer but in the 'in system' sense.[9] At the end of this phase, he understood that any efforts to modernize a ramshackle Soviet Union, or Eastern Europe, for that matter, would be futile and self-defeating. This ensured the emergence of Gorbachev, in the form he will be remembered by history, that of the 'radical reformer', as reflected by his famous Central Committee speech of January 1987. Thus began the second phase.

In regards to the Eastern Europe, this phase was characterized by a laissez faire approach, and as revolutionary as his changes in the domestic policy. It marked the first time since the end of the Second World War, that Moscow, while not cutting the link tying Eastern Europe with itself, was so extending it that the connection lost virtually its former significance. The basic reform being undertaken by the Soviets was now sought to be recommended for their satellites as well. But it was not mandatory. The prevailing sentiment was that East Europeans should fend for themselves. This policy was not a casual after thought. it was taken by a series of top level Soviet and alliance leadership meetings throughout the autumn of 1986 and set for implementation, in a gradual manner, during the following year. It resulted, in different responses all through Eastern Europe, and these led, in turn, to differences among the

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9 Brown, p.53

East European states to become more marked than ever. It was henceforth, Poland and Hungary, each in its own way and in quite different circumstances, embarked on the course of the reforms that were to lead to the overthrow of the system.

The GDR, cited freedom of choice and their own successes, in refusing to follow suit. The Czechs were still traumatised by memories of the 'Prague Spring'. The Bulgars under Zhivkov, as their wont, made lot of gestures, which did not amount to much. The Romanians sat idle, as their conditions worsened.

The effort of Gorbachev percolated down to the masses as well. Curiosity, hope and enthusiasm even, overcame their initial suspicion of anything good coming out of the Soviet Union. He became the inspiration for reform movements and growing descent. Moscow was not considered an impediment to change any longer, but a catalyst. Gorbachev's criticism of conditions in the USSR and his call for radical reform automatically legitimized criticism of existing regimes and policies in Eastern Europe. Even if he did not press for change, his example indirectly unleashed significant pressures there. The limit of Soviet tolerance remained undefined, but the previous different factor was now gone.

Though Gorbachev did envisage change in Eastern Europe, he never gauged accurately its speed and character, and most certainly did not foresee the revolutions it engendered. He might have been prepared

to expect change in Eastern Europe to be different, may be more radical and reflecting national characteristics, but well within the socialist system. He never could have anticipated that the measures, he initiated in order to strengthen socialism, led ultimately to its destruction. The reinvigorated socialism that he sought was too little and too late. As said earlier, East Europeans now wanted full democracy, not 'socialist democracy', the West, no longer the East.

Gorbachev's policy resulted in precisely what he had not wanted: not the transformation or redefinition of socialism, but its rejection. The major communist reformers had said all along that a basically new socialism would be needed. They were firmly convinced that the Soviet Union was no longer willing or able to provide substantive political and economic assistance and could no longer be relied upon to come to the aid of any of these regimes in a future crisis.

The non-communist opposition, as well, currently taking over or sharing power in Poland and Hungary, had also developed new theories for political renewal based on western concepts. Lech Walesa, admirably conveyed the sceptism concerning reformability of communism, along with sympathy for Gorbachev. In an interview, he said, "I wish Gorbachev and his reforms all the best. But we still don't know what communism in its final form will look like. In contrast, we know very well which political and economic models in Europe and the world have passed the rest of

time, and it is to these models that we must turn as opposed to attempting to 'reform' failed ideologies and concepts".[10]

Such statements reflected two crucial differences between the USSR and Eastern Europe that emerged now. First, while Gorbachev could point back to and seek legitimacy on an ostensibly 'healthy' pre-Stalinist communism, (however disputed this claim was), this option did not exist for East Europe where the advent of communist rule was irrevocably intertwined with the excesses of Stalinism. Secondly, the countries of Eastern Europe, some more than the others, were historically far more integrated in western traditions of political, economic and cultural life. And these had survived more than four decades of Soviet influence. The obvious failure of Soviet rule strengthened this yearning to reintegrate into the west.

IV. INTERNAL DECLINE AND FALL

Thus, we may now begin to comprehend the breakdown of the communist order. It had rotted internally, and now bereft of its outside support, it was now a matter of time only. The ruling elites were the pillar of the governing system.[11] They could be divided into five separate sub-elites: political, economic, cultural, professional and military. Of these the political sub-elite was one of the strongest with its base in the party bureaucracy and furnishing the party leadership. They had the

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10 Die Welt (Hamburg) April 24, 1989, cited in Brown, p.56.

11 Brown , p. 34.

strongest stake in the system and were most dependent on it. Its members, exceptions considered, had nowhere to go, without or outside the party.

The economic sub-elite grew in importance with industrialization and modernization. By the end of the 1970's, the older generation had yielded its place to the new breed of technocrat-manager, well-trained and loyal to the regime. But when economic difficulties cropped up, and non-responsiveness characterized the regime attitude, their loyalty wavered and most went over to the opposition.

The cultural sub-elite covered an extensive gamut of varied pursuits- teachers, those in the creative and performing arts, journalists etc. Most of them were party members – not very model ones, it may be said, but generally obedient. It was the honourable exceptions – Havel of Czechoslovakia, Michnik of Poland, Corneu in Romania and Christa Wolf of the GDR that helped prepare the grounds for 1989.

The professional elites were composed of doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. – not to mention the pampered athletes. They provided essential services and were well rewarded. But many opposed the system, first carefully, but then overtly. Some were major centres of resistance, and later figured, prominently in successor governments.

Finally, the officer corps. The question of their loyalty in conflict was the focus of much western speculation and Soviet concern. It was generally materially privileged and thus obedient e.g., Polish officers

during December 1981. A generalization may be that the senior officers were pro-regime and the junior officers" sympathy was uncertain. Most Polish junior officers seemed to have voted for solidarity in the Polish elections of June 1989. In the Romanian uprising, it was the support of the officers that made its success possible. The same was the case in Bulgaria, where it was the support of the veteran Defence Minister. Gen Dobri Dzhurrov, which made the removal of Zhinvkov possible. An illuminating description of the system, worth quoting in full was provided by Valtr Komarek[12], a Czech economist, who served as vice-premier in the first democratic government.

KOMAREK: This system was based on a clear division which worked for almost half a century: at one side was a power mafia consisting of 200,000 to 500,000 members of the party apparatus, security services, officers and the leading people in the enterprise and local administrations; on the other side, there were 15 million citizens, who were kept at bay by the power mafia, but otherwise largely led normal lives.

DER SPIEGEL: This was possible?

KOMAREK: Yes. We did our research, the actors played their parts on the stages, the doctors treated the people, who slept with each other, had children, and died....

DER SPIEGEL: And what about ideology?

KOMAREK: There was something like an unwritten social contract between the regime and the people. The people were prepared for cheers at official events, while the regime did not further intervene in their lives – of course, as long as they did not openly long us they did not openly oppose the system. It went without saying that the people were kept under surveillance by the state security services,

12 Der Spiegel, (Hamburg), December 25, 1989, cited in Brown, p.36

but this was also part of the contract, as well as the fact that the regime did not demand to much of them.

DER SPIEGEL: But why did it break down so quickly in the end?

KOMAREK: The power mafia only worked as long as long as it was able to use the Brechnev system as its basis. When it broke down and Gorbachov introduced Perestroyka, the abnormality of the system became apparent. The people took a breath, started to walk more upright again, the power mafia was forced on to the defensive, became nervous and started to make mistakes.

This apathy concisely summarises the state of affairs that prevailed in Eastern Europe and now it collapsed.

The year 1989 may be seen as the third phase of Gorbachev"s reign-the policy of non-intervention which had marked the second phase led to some serious consequences. He had gambled that any change in Eastern Europe, no matter how radical, could not be on any foundation other than socialism. This was a fallacy, as Walesa's statement quoted earlier showed. The defeat of the Polish communists in the June 1989 elections and the formation of the Solidarity government, and the gradual dismantling of socialism in Hungary were pointers to this regard.

However serious the situation for communism, it was not still irreversible. Even upto the middle of 1989, the year of upheaval, the reformist circles in East Europe practiced prudence, unsure of the precise line marking Soviet permissiveness. The Solidarity government, mindful of this, gave the crucial defence and interior ministries to communists, and did not object to Jaruzelski as president East

Europeans as well as Western observers seemed to infer a new doctrine – the 'Gorbachev doctrine' comprising of three provisions:

1) The East European states should abide by the existing bilateral and multilateral treaty obligations.
2) A non-communist government could come out of the new framework of multiparty systems, the crucial ministries of defence and interior should be with communists or their trusted allies.
3) However much 'bourgeous-democratic' any state may become, its nature, character and content should remain socialist.

This was seen as replacing the Brezhnev doctrine. But this doctrine was not implemented and when the Soviets were asked on the degree of Moscow's permissiveness, the foreign ministry spokesman, Gennady Gerasimov expounded the most startling 'Sinatra Doctrine', [13] based on the singer's famous song '(I did it) My Way' and meant to imply that the East Europeans were free to follow any course they desired.

And they did the examples of Poland and Hungary have already been cited. The other regimes also followed suit, in more dynamic ways and here in the third phase, Gorbachev was trying to recall his first phase – that of intervention. But it was to no avail. His last-minute warnings went unheeded. Within the month of East Germany's 40th anniversary celebrations in October 1989, Erich Honecker, with a

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[13] Interview in Italy to Italian News Agency, ANSA, Sep.8, 1989, cited in Brown, p.62.

sizeable chunk of East German leadership, was out. His successor, Egon Krenz, tried hard, and made major concessions, but could not stem the ride. Similarly, in Czechoslovakia, unofficial warnings to the hardline Czech leadership, General Secretary Milos Jakes specially, as popular protests mounted were not considered. By December 1989, despite the efforts of Czech reform communists, Ladislav Adamec etc., Czechoslovakia had also renounced communism. And in Bulgaria, there are strong grounds for believing that Gorbachev connived in the palace coup that dislodged the long-serving Todor Zhivkov. Petur Mladenov, the force behind the coup was reported to be in touch with Moscow, before the fateful meeting which marked the removal of Zhivkov. Thus by the end of 1989, the entire socialist order in Eastern Europe had disappeared.

CONCLUSION

The communist order in Eastern Europe disappeared in a series of spectacular events spread throughout 1989. But as shown here,this was not spontaneous-there were forces, external as well as internal that helped to precipitate this collapse.

It is now time to focus on the two countries that began this trend, and focus with greater depth on their processes of transition and political activities after the fall of communism, focussing mainly on their communist parties, before, during and after the transformation.

CHAPTER III

POLAND

INTRODUCTION

Communist rule in Poland displayed the most distinct patterns any where in the Soviet bloc: Stalin had very aptly termed communism in Poland as resembling 'a saddle on a cow'[1] However most of the Polish leadership, apart from those of the Stalinist era, would have preferred to modify the saddle than the cow. Unfortunately, both history and geography militated against their attempts. An independent Poland had always been anathema to Russian interests in Eastern Europe. In the 18th century, Tsarist Russia had participated in three partitions of Poland. In 1920, Lenin had tried and failed to reduce it to the status of a Soviet republic. Finally, in 1939, the Molotov –Ribbentrop pact had again ensured the disappearance of Poland from the map of Europe.

The Poland that emerged after the war was a product of Soviet thinking - the geographic configuration of the country, its political and economic system, its ethnic composition were all shaped by Moscow, traditionally hostile to Poland's view of itself as a pro-Western, catholic

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1. Norman Davies , *God"s Playground : A History of Poland*, Vol II (1795-Present) (Clarendon Press, Oxford,1981) p. 553.

and democratic state. The Sovietization of Poland was an attempt so de-Europeanize Polish political culture.[2]

Poland was the keystone of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, all the more reason why a pro-Moscow regime had to be installed. Uniquely, it was the Soviet bloc country having the Red Army on both its sides ! (in the form of Soviet Union on the East, and GDR on the west).

Given the reluctance of the Poles to the imposition of Soviet type Marxism had, created a market political cleavage between the nation and the 'top' (the party-government-security apparatus). Over the coming years, this artificially contrived polarisation generated a period of cyclical revolts-as evinced in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980. And in all these, the pattern was the same revolt, promises to correct past mistakes, followed by a return to centralized bureaucratic practices, engendering yet another revolt. Though these were interspersed by periods of fairly, long stability, many western political scientists considered the PZPR's (Polish Communist Party) main task to survive in power was crisis management; Poland's 'entire history from 1944 onwards was one long procrastinating crisis.' However, the crises in Poland were 'functional'. They were the main way in which the system has unblocked and renewed itself.[3]

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2. Arthur R. Rachwald, 'Poland : Quo Vadis.", *Current History*, Nov 1982, p. 372.
3. J.T. Gross, 'Thity years of Crisis Management in Poland' in T. Rakowska – Harmstone (ed.) , *Perspectives for change in communist societies* (Westview press, Boulder, 1979), p. 148-50, cited in George Sanford, *Polish Communism in Crisis* (Croom Helm, London, 1983) p.14.

It will be useful at this point to acquaint ourselves with the periodic crises in Poland, in order to know the political development of the country and Polish communism.

I. THE CRISES IN POLAND: 1945-80

The 1956 crisis can be considered as Poland's de-Stalinization crisis. It began with demonstrations by workers, which were rapidly and ruthlessly repressed, but the general political situation kept on deteriorating. Growing tensions and pressures were coming from several quarters, even from the ranks of the Communist party and its front organizations. Pressures for internal democratization and a change of leadership mounted. The transition crisis culminated in two plenary meetings of the Central Committee during July and October which set the stage for a gradual and controlled turnover within the ruling elite. The latter, occurring within the context of great political activism in the country, made a symbolic break with the past and constituted the beginning of Poland's post –Stalinist regime.

Wladyslaw Gomulka, who came to power as a result of these developments, appeased the populace with his idea of a 'Polish road to socialism'. Many concessions were made during this period, leading to the institutional structure of the Polish party – State becoming more pluralistic than any other state socialist Country. However, within the next six months, a policy of rollback was instituted. Simmering

discontent over the reneging of promises and increase in food prices led to the revolt of the intellectuals (1968) and of the workers in 1970.

The regime, ever since 1956 had tried so break the growing nexus between intellectuals, students and workers and this bore fruit in these two revolts. The workers were mobilized to stage protest meetings against 'trouble makers' and 'ungrateful' students and intellectuals who lived at the expense of the worker's state. This ploy of 1968 had its unfortunate repercussion in 1970, when the intellectuals stood aloof from revolt began by the workers on the Baltic coast against price rises.

The 1968 events signified the defeat of those groups and forces that had secured the most concessions in 1956 - the intellectuals and reform elements within the party. The revolt of 1968 ensured that the "liberal and revisionist elements within the PZPR were eliminated from significant positions. More important the revisionists, disillusioned by the attack on the intellectual community, ceased to believe that one could reform the system from within. They saw the 1968 attacks as evidence that the party cared exclusively about power, and that no meaningful political change was possible"[4]

The 1970 revolts that followed, due to an announcement of increase in food prices, ended Gomulka's career. He was demoted and his four closest associates were removed from the Politburo. The new

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4. Jack Bielarsiak, 'The Party : Permanent Crisis,' in Abraham Brumberg, (ed.) *Poland : Genesis of a Revolution*(Random House, New York, 1983) p. 15.

party leader, Edward Gierek, calmed the nation with promises of 'socialist democracy' and 'socialist welfare' (consumerism)[5]. But like his predecessor, Gierek did precious little to eliminate the bureaucratic inefficiency of the Communist system. His economic policies, based on a massive influx of western loans, but without any serious attempt at reforming Polish economic institutions, gave birth to another crises in 1976. This one was also provoked by yet another price rise, occassioned by a government attempt at restructuring food and consumer goods prices. This revolt was significant in the sense that it institutionalized the growing alliance between the workers and the intellectuals in the shape of the KOR (Committee for Defence of Workers) set up during this time.

The economic crises which engulfed Poland throughout this decade affected all branches of the economy and eroded the official power structure. The growing moral and intellectual decay affected the entire institutional structure of the regime. The Marxist-Leninist ideology, which for years had supplied political imagination and self justification for the party elite, crumbled. The stage was set for the most defining moment of the communist rule in Poland the 1980 revolt and the rise of the Solidarnosc (Solidarity).

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5. Witold Morawski, "O zrodlach I Naturze Kryzysu 1980-81 w Polsce, *Literatura* Sep 24, 1981, cited in Rachwald, "Poland : Quo Vadis?" p.372

II. THE 1980 REVOLT, THE EMERGENCE OF SOLIDARITY AND THE DECLINE OF COMMUNIST HEGEMONY

The 1980 revolt also began with an increase in food prices. It immediately triggered off a wave of strikes that only abated after regime representatives promised 15 to 20 percent wage increases. But the zenith was at Gdansk where 17,000 workers laid down their tools and took over the Lenin shipyard on August 14, in an occupation strike. They issued a list of 21 demands, among which the prominent were (1) The right so establish free trade unions (2) The right to strike (3) the abolition of privileges and special shops for the elite, etc.

The 1980 revolt can be considered as the death-knell of the Polish party-state and the communist party. Its claim to be the party of working class people was severely undermined by a overwhelming majority of the workers refusing to accept this image. Faced with such a mass mobilization and unprecedented level of strikes, the regime capitulated. It signed the Gdansk Accords, accepting the demands. The Solidarity Trade Union that emerged as the spearhead of the agitation, was soon registered as the first independent trade union in the communist world. It was followed by more independent organizations of other social groups that were unable to join the union.

Another feature of this crisis was that it brought an 'unprecedented expansion and politcization of worker's demands. Instead of pressing only for material security, strikers asked for institutional

change and were in the forefront of the struggle for civil liberties'.[6] Other demands of the workers had included release of political prisoners, freedom of expression and abolition of censorship on discussion of reforms, et al.

The party was faced with a difficult situation with the establishment of Solidarity. The new organization could boast of a membership of about 10 million, while the Communist party had only a membership of 3 million of which one-third held membership of Solidarity as well. There was a rapid, serious and permanent, shrinking of party ranks. Two basic processes were responsible: a decline in number of new candidates and much more dramatic-those who returned their cards. There were two other smaller processes as well : expulsions because of activities and attitudes contrary of that of the party line and removal from lists because of lack of activity, non payment of dues, etc.

In the ten years from 1978 to 1988, over a million members left the party-35% of all those who belonged to it prior to the 1980 crises. The following table gives the complete figures.

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6 . Alex Pravda, "The Workers" in Brumberg: *Poland : Genesis of a Revolution*, p.68

Table 1: Changes in Numbers of the PZPR, 1978-88[7]
(in Thousands)

	1978	1979	1980		1981		1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
			i-vi	vii-xii	i-vi	vii-xii							
No. of Members at end of year	2929	3079		3092	2825	2691	2327	2186	2117	2115	2129	2949	2132
No. of candidates admitted			106.3	28.6		1.2	7.5	17.0	35.1	63.0	74.0	76.0	
No. of members who left of whom:			26.3	308.6		780.5							
Expelled			2.8	6.1		39.6							

The party was fast losing its control over society; Gierek had been replaced by Stanislaw Kania; the PZPR leadership had agreed to the Gdansk agreement because it thought it could restrict this trend, and maintain its official unions. But this movement grew to national proportions. The 1980 revolt did what all the previous ones had never been able to: force the party to attempt to renew itself. The attempt to produce a new reformed and democratized political framework safeguarding a rejuvanated PZPR's' leading role was bound to be a difficult and delicate exercise calling for much political judgement and restraint. Kania, though well meaning, was largely ineffectual in this. Apart from the entrenched hardline interests, there was the ever present Soviet pressure which could look askance at any move to change the institutional structure, as well as Poland's hardline neighbours, the GDR

7 Antoni Sulek, 'The Polish United Worker's Party: From Mobilization to Non-Representation', *Soviet Studies*, Vol.42, No.3, July 1990, p.499.

and Czechoslovakia who feared ideological contamination and the fillip it would give to their own dissidents and reform communists.

The crisis festered on throughout 1980 and 1981, through various party plena and the Ninth Congress. Kania made a most earnest attempt to reform the party and recapture the political initiative. The Congress was significant, in the sense, that it genuinely considered democratisation and renewal of the party. The old leadership was all swept aside . But the time when the party, even with a fresh leadership and a democratised structure could introduce a reform programme and pacify society, was past.

The reformers were caught between three uncompromising forces- the hard-liners, the Soviets and an increasing radical Solidarity. In October, Kania was replaced by Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, hitherto the Premier and Minister of Defence. This signalled a hardening of the regime's intentions. Jaruzelski piloted through the Sejm a law banning strikes. Solidarity threatened a general strike. To control the situation and forestall Soviet intervention, now a distinct possibility, Jaruzelski imposed martial law on 13 December 1981, outlawed Solidarity and cracked down on the opposition. Though martial law was suspended on December 1982 and formally lifted in July 1983 and an amnesty proclaimed, Jaruzelski made it clear that a repeat of 1980-81 period would not be tolerated. For some years, there was relative social peace. Though the imposition of martial law had destroyed organized opposition

and liberated the ruling elite from constant political pressure and threats, it did nothing to improve the party-state's capacity to deal with Poland's economic crisis. Also it became increasingly clear that the initial success in crushing independent organizations was not followed by strategies to make the communist party again emerge as the unchalleged political force in the country. The party had lost its raison d'etre in the events of 1980-81. Its leading role was gone, and were it not for the military intervention, it would have disintegrated. The communist Party daily 'Trybuna Ludu' admitted that the 'Polish community is pluralistic'[8]

III. THE START OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

Jaruzelski found his going tough. The task of preserving the communist regime required the simultaneous suppression and promotion of reforms. This contradiction produced a political immobilization that frustrated attempts to overcome the crisis. A referendum held in November 1987 proposing (1) an economic reform programme and (2) limited political liberalization and decentralization proved an embarrassment for the regime when it got less then the 50 per cent minimum support of the total electorate it had deemed necessary.

In August 1988, another wave of strikes erupted, paralyzing Poland. The regime now suddenly realized that that it had no choice but

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8. *Trybuna ludu*, Oct 10, 1986, cited in Arthur B. Rachwald, 'The Polish Road to the Abyss', *Current History*, Nov. 1987, p.370.

to begin talks with the opposition. The geopolitical constraints had also eased with the accession of Gorbachev in the Kremlin, and his espousal of 'perestroika'. The regime started preparations for a 'Round Table' with the opposition, to discuss the future of Polish polity. The Polish government spokesman, Jerzy Urban in his press conference said that 'the country's authorities have stopped being motivated in politics by excessive caution.'[9]

An unprecedented debate had been aired recently on television between Lech Walesa and the head of the official trade union, Alfred Midowicz. Urban in his next conference, conceeded that the statements' of Walesa were significant in moving forward the issue of agreement and consolidating the chance of the Round Table.[10]

Gen. Jaruzelski opening the debate in the 10th Central Committee meeting on 20th December 1988 said that 'since the second half of the 1980's, we have been treading the path of socialist renewal'[11] The said the time for more comprehensive and fundamental changes had come and the 10th plenum was devoted, above all, to the 'subject of the party in transformations and the transformations in the party.[12]

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9. Government Spokesman's Press Conference, PAP 6 Dec 88, in Summary of World Broadcasts, BBC, Part II, EE/0329,8 Dec 88,B/1
10. Government spokesman's Press Conference, PAP, 13 Dec. 88, in SWB, Pt II, EE/0335, 15 Dec 88,B/3
11. Plenum of PZPR Central Committee, Warsaw home service, 20 Dec 88 in SWB Pt II,EE/0342, 23 Dec 88,B/1
12. Ibid,C/1

The basis of the discussion was the report presented by central committee secretary, Marian Orzechowski titled 'The Reform of the party as a Condition for the Success of the Strategy of Renewal and Reforms' in which he said three problem areas should be critically reevaluated. Firstly the 'main landmark defining the ideological and political identity of the party.' Secondly, the place and the role of the party in the state and society in conditions of far reaching reforms of the system of order as well as great changes in production relations, and thirdly, inside the party, the structures and methods of its functioning.'[13]

He ended with firm endorsement, 'The question is often asked about the limits of reforms, about the permissible extent of transformations. We reply: in the political and socio-economic system of the people's republic there is nothing inviolable and final when it comes to reforming and modernizing, apart from the fundamental social objectives of socialism, apart from the Polish raison d'etat'[14]

It was in this strongly reformist mood that the Polish state and the party entered the epoch making year 1989.

In the second part of 10th Plenum (January 1989), the resolution adopted said 'the continuation of the renewal of socialism demands the deep reform of the PZPR'![15] It sought 'The shaping in Poland of a socio-

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13. Speech delivered by Marian Orzechowski, Warsaw home service, 20 Dec 88 in SWB, Pt 2, EE/0342, C/3, 23 Dec.88.
14. Ibid, C/9.
15. Resolution, Plenum of PZPR Central Committee, Polish TV, 18 Jan 89, in SWB Pt 2, EE/0363, 20 Jan 89, C/1.

political system whose basis is a socialist parliamentary democratic state and also a civil society'[16] A document on political and trade union pluralism was released.

Round Table talks began in Warsaw involving the party, Solidarity the church representatives, official organs including the OPZZ Trade Union (6 February, 1989). They concluded on 5th April with a pack of historic agreements – Partially free multiparty elections and free elections by 1993, the relegalisation of Solidarity, constitutional changes, Including press freedom and economic reforms. Finally, on 17 April, Solidarity was legalised.

IV. THE 1989 ELECTIONS

The elections held on 4 and 18 June 1989, on the basis of partial freedom (65% of seats in the Sejm to be reserved for the communist party and its allies the PSL and the SD, while 35 percent were to be freely contested. In the Senate, all were to be freely contested) proved a debacle for the Communists, since it could not win any of the freely contested seats. The results were.

16 . Ibid, C/1.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
JUNE 1989[17]

	Seats	Percent of vote
PZPR	173	37.5
PSL	76	16.5
SD	27	6.0
Non-party (catholic activists)	23	5.0
Solidarity	161	35.0
Total	460	100.0

In the first round, Solidarity had won 160 of the 161 seats allotted to them in the Sejm and 92 of the 100 in the Senate. Even where the Communist were unopposed, the electorate denied them seats by abstaining or crossing out their names. In the second round on 18 June, Solidarity won seven more seats in the Senate and one more remaining seat in the Sejm.

Premier Rakowski, one of the prominent leaders who failed to get 50% of the vote to get elected, attributed the debacle to 'the public reaction to the faults in the method of governing, dissatisfaction with standard of living and disillusionment about many unfulfilled promises of the authorities.'[18]

Gen Jaruzelski was elected President on 19 July 1989. He proposed General Czeslaw Kiszczak as the Premier, but Kiszczak could not muster a coalition because the PZPR's formerly allied parties, the PSL

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17. *Trybuna ludu*, June 21, 1989, p. 3-7, cited in Richard F. Staar 'Poland : Renewal or stagnation' ,*Current History*,Nov. 1989, p. 375.
18. Premier Rakowski on the Elections, Polish TV, 15 Jun 89, in SWB Pt II, EE/0485, 17 Jun 89, B/2.

and the SD, were now discussing a possible coalition with Solidarity. The deadlock was broken with the appointment of a Solidarity coalition government headed by Solidarity activist Tadeusz Mazowiecki- the first non communist government in Eastern Europe. The PZPR agreed to join the government provided it was given the key portfolios of defence, internal affairs, transportation and foreign economic co-operation.

V. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PZPR

However, more important for the PZPR was its refashioning. The party recognized that it had to change radically to survive as a factor in a competitive polity. Throughout the year, party tacticians worked on this Mieczyslaw Rakowski, the former premier, who succeded Gen. Jaruzelski as the General Secretary, said in an interview that he 'favoured an indepth restructuring of the PZPR and can only head the process'[19] He favoured 'a party representing the socialism of the future. The PZPR should support economic reforms in their possibly most radical variant, a party providing momentum for the most modern economic and social solutions.'[20]

He foresaw that 'a party of the modern left, a party of realists, a party of business- like people of action has a future ahead. We must create such a party'.[21]

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19. M. Rakowski on Changing the PZPR, PAP 1 Sep 89, in SWB Pt II, EE/0552, 4 Sep 89, B/8.
20. Ibid,B/8
21. Ibid, B/8.

The party's stand to Mazowiecki's government was positive. Orzechowski said 'the PZPR with its political cadre, organisational and intellectual potential will support all the initiatives and actions taken by the government of Mazowiecki.....In its attitude to the government's work, my party will be guided by the criterion of protecting the welfare and economic interests of the workers and all working people, having in mind the values and goals connected with humanistic and democratic socialism in accordance with the principles formulated at the 10th plenum of our party's Central Committee. Meanwhile, the attempts to carry out reform continued.[22] Slawomen Wiatr, secretary of the Central Committee told a PAP reporter that the adoption of a law on political parties proposed by the PZPR Floor Group 'was in essence a normative act, which would create a legal basis for creation of and functioning of political parties.[23] They wanted 'to confirm our desire to resign from the privileged position of the party.[24] This would be served by deleting the paragraph in the constitution on the leading role of the PZPR. Mleczyslaw Rakowoki further continued the intention of far- reaching change when he desired the main direction of the party's activity as that of restoring society's confidence in it. He spoke of making the PZPR, or the party that emerged at the coming 11th Congress, a political force which would

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22. PZPR Reaction to the new government:Speech by Marian Orzechowski,Polish TV,12 Sep 89 in SWB,Pt 2,EE/0561,14 Sep 89,C/8
22. The future of the PZPR : no privileged role, says Central Committee Secretary, Warsaw home service, 14 Sep 89, SWB pt2, EE/ 0564, 18 sep 89, B/10.
24. Ibid, B/10.

continue to determine the socialist development of Poland. The main problem today was to find the answer to the question how the weakened party and its authority could be strengthened. He held that the party would remain "in the future, as it was in the past, loyal to the ideas and aims of socialism.[25] The only question was the meaning with which the concept of socialism was invested. "Without doubt, a dismantling is taking place of the sort of socialism that dominated for a long time, and received the name 'Stalinist'"[26] But this was not a dismantling of the ideals of socialism,but ridding of those ideas that had little in common with socialism.

A course was mooted in the PZPR daily 'Trybuna ludu' on 13th October, when a declaration of the "8th July" movement was published. This proclaimed that 'The PZPR has used up its ability to exert effective influence on society's life and state's functioning. A time has come to choose between inertia and activity, between neo-Stalinism and democratic socialism, a hopeless striving for party's final fall, and a necessity to form a new party of the democratic left wing."[27] It called for the 11th Congress to 'close down the PZPR activity and transform itself in a founding congress of a party of democratic socialism'[28] It professed support for ' the market economy that links effectiveness with state's

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25. Mieczyslaw Rakowski comments on future role of the PZPR, Rude Pravo interview, 25 Sep 89, in SWB, pt Z, EE/0572, 27 Sept 89, B/6.
26. Ibid, B/10- B/11.
27. PZ PR "has used up its ability", PAP, 13th Oct 89, in SWB, Pt2, EE/ 0589, 17 Oct 89, B/4.
28. Ibid.

social responsibility'[29] It favoured 'particularly close co-operation within the European left including socialist and social democratic parties.[30]

On the other hand, Jerzy Pyrgala, Secretary of the PZPR factory organization in the Polish Academy of Sciences, presented a plan-"On the basis of party's basic organisations in big industrial enterprises in Warsaw"-that would be an alternative to the '8th July Initiative' .The movement is to strive to transform the PZPR into a party with a clearly leftist programme."[31]

The PZPR Parliamentary Floor Group also strove to project a new modified image. They issued an open letter appealing to the society, stating in part that "it has become essential for a new party to be created to meet the real needs and aspirations of the working people" [32] They signalled their willingness to 'be open to all forms of parliamentary coalition and problem agreements of a permanent or ad hoc nature. We want to strive to achieve understanding and support or our reasoning and arguments, regardless of the divisions and mistrust upto now."[33]

On the physical aspect as well, PZPR was in trouble. In Gorzow, the executive of Municipal PZPR committee, in its meeting on 25th October 'decided to move the headquarters of the municipal committee from its premises at No.10 Strzelecka street to the provincial committee

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29. Ibid, B/4.
30. Ibid, B/4
31. PAP, 14 Oct 89, in SWB, pt 2, EE/0589, 17 Oct. 89, B/4.
32. PZPR group's open letter to 'society,' Warsaw home service, in SWB pt 2 EE/0601, 31st Oct. 89, B/6
33. Ibid, B/6.

building on Sikorsi street'[34] This decision was 'based on the evident decrease in the number of party employees in the town and province, and by the need to lower the maintenance costs of party buildings.....,[35]

In some places, party members initiated several innovative ways to raise funds. 'If someone in Legnica wishes to one's wedding or christening in a comfortable 'Polonez' (car), one can phone the PZPR provincial committee. Because it is here that one can hire a car as well as an operator with a VHS camera who will film the family occasion. The committee, struggling with serious financial trouble, wants to earn money for the upkeep of the party in this way'[36]

'The Sabrina restaurant is located in the Lublin PZPR Municipal Committee building. The party has created an enterprise of economic initiatives and wants to earn money for politics. Besides the restaurant there is a fast food kiosk and a department store'[37]

All was to be decided at the 11th Congress. The second part of the 15th plenum of the PZPR begun on 3rd October 1989 set the date for the Congress on 27th January 1990. A decisive majority expressed themselves in favour of the opportunity to choose delegates directly for the Congress, and of the transformation of the PZPR into a new party,

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34. Reduced membership forces PZPR move into Smaller premises, *Zielona Gora*, 25 Oct 89 in SWB, p+2, EE/0601, 31st Oct 89, B/6.
35. ibid,B/6
36. Polish TV, 14 Nov. 89, in SWB, pt2, EE/0617, 18 Nov. 89, B/15.
37. Polish TV, 14 Nov. 89, in SWB, pt2, EE/ 0617 18 Nov. 89, B/15.

with a change of statute and programme.[38] A significant statement was made by Stefan Paterek, Central Committee member and First Secretary of PZPR factory committee in 'Victory" colliery in Walbrzych. He proposed to 'unequivocally define class and worker's character of the PZPR, which should no longer to claim a right to represent the whole of the Polish left".[39] A representative of the '8th July' movement, Kazimierz Kir, stated that the 'party should be first made reliable for its own members, only then could it gain social reliability."[40] Another representative of this movement, Tomasz Nalecz, expressed the conviction that at the 11th Congress, 'the PZPR should make self-critical assessment of its whole activity and close it in a respectable manner'[41]

In the 17th plenum, held on 6th January 1990, the meeting aimed to adopt a report and programmatic documents for the 11th Congress. Rakowski said that one should do his best 'so that the Congress should not become an arena of quarrels or squabbles, so that one party of working people capable of organizing the Polish left wing could emerge from the Congress despite programmatic differences."[42]

Politburo member, and Central Committee Secretary, Leszek Miller presented a report on the preparations for the Congress. He said that

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38. PZPR Central Committee Plenum, Warsaw home service, 3 Oct 89, in SWB, Pt2, EE/ 0579, 5 Oct 89, C/1.
39. Ibid, C/1.
40. Ibid, C/1.
41. Ibid, C/1.
42. 17th Plenum of the PZPR Central Committee, PAP, 6 Jan 90, in SWB, Part II, EE/0660, 12 Jan. 90, C1/1.

only 10% of PZPR members had been estimated not to have taken an interest in the preparations for the Congress. A total of 1473 delegates were elected, out of which two thirds were under 45 years of age. The 163 members of the PZPR Sejm deputy floor group would be delegates as well."[43]

Miller told the plenum about an intention to close the 11th Congress on the first day of the debates. The founding Congress of the new party, capable of representing the interests of the working people under conditions of parliamentary democracy, would debate for the next two days.[44]

The chairman of the programmatic team of the Central Congress Commission, Tadeusz Fiszbach, presented a draft of the programmatic declaration. Its 20 points referred to the roots and functioning of party in the past and defined new values the new party wanted to serve. The draft emphatically held Poland to be the "supreme value" and the will expressed in free and democratic elections to be the source of this power. The declaration rejected "violence as the source and method of wielding power, dictatorship at the proletariat primitively understood collectivism coupled with disrepect for personal freedoms, the doctrine and practice of limited sovereignty in the name of falsely understood internationalism"[45] -in short a complete break with the Marxist past. The

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43. ibid C1/1
44. Ibid. C1/1
45. Ibid, C1/1.

document stressed that Poland's future should not be linked to capitalism but democratic socialism.

The assumptions of the party's provisional status were discussed by the chairman of the organizational and statutory team of the Central Congress Commission, Aleksander Kwasniewski. The statute envisaged that one could join the party after filing a declaration in any of its cells. Rights of party members included freedom to voice their views, to criticize other members, organizations and party authorities. The document proposed a two-level structure of the party based on the administrative divisions of the state-local organizations set up in the place of residence would be the main form of association. Besides, millieux organisations affiliating party members according to their professions and factory organizations were envisaged.

The Congress, to be convened every fourth year, would be the party's supreme authority. This would elect the chairman of the Supreme Council the General Secretary and the Supreme Council. The latter should elect the Central Executive Committee whose work was to be run by the General Secretary. Annual party conventions were envisaged.[46]

At the end of the debates, Rakowski said the new party would have to be built with great toil. It would not be a post-PZPR party. It would have a new structure and a new programme. There was no danger that it

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46 . 17th Plenum of the PZPR Central Committee, PAP 6 Jan 90, in SWB pt 2, EE/0660, 12 Jan 90 C1/2 – C1/2.

would be dominated by the former party apparatus, as this was being reduced substantially.[47] In an interview, Rakowski reiterated that the new party would have so be built totally from the foundations. It would not be a post – PZPR party. 'The PZPR was a party that was considered a communist party'[48] and the new party would be a socialist party.' He hoped that no fragmentation would take place.

VI. THE 11th CONGRESS AND THE BIRTH OF THE SdRP

The 11th PZPR Congress opened on 27th January 1990, with a speech by First secretary Rakowski. He made a reasoned evaluation of the past of the PZPR. A significant revelation he shared, in justification for the half- hearted reforms 'whereas what was needed was a fundamental change in the way of thinking and seeing reality'[49] He conceded though the reforms were half-hearted, the polish reformers were in the period 1982-89 were much more courageous than their neighbours. Recalling a conversation with Egon Krenz (The East German Communist leader following the removal of Honecker) in Moscow, he told that Krenz had turned to him and said 'you know if we had not ridiculed you for all these years and not accused you of opportunism and evasion and being soft, if we had simply followed you then perhaps the

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47. Ibid, C1/2.

48. Interview with Mieczyslaw Rakowski, Warsaw home service, 6 Jan 90 in SWB, Pt2, EE/0660, 12 Jan 90, C1/2.

49. PZPR Congress, Speech by First Secretary Rakowski, 27 Jan 90, in SWB, Pt 2, EE/0675, 30 Jan 90, C1/3.

development of events in the GDR would today be going in another direction'.[50] He also recalled a conversation, with the Czech General Secretary, Milos Jakes. Jakes did complain of some ideas 'percolating from Poland, but said that as long they were in control of prices and wages, as long as there was food on the shelves, there was nothing to worry about. It transpired that soon after the masses demonstrated against this philosophy. It transpired that democracy and democratic freedoms were much more important in many cases than the full shelves or a good Pilsener.[51]

He admitted that the 'PZPR wielding power for decades, in a monopolistic manner and therefore fully responsible for economic policy failed to cope with the challenge of the epoch and that is why they had to lose.'[52] He called for the construction of the new party of the left 'which should have the ambition to become the strongest political group among the other structures active on the left.[53] He believed that the new party would reject any thought of a monopolistic position and be honestly and permanently linked to the principles of pluralist democracy.'[54]

After the speech and acceptance of the new officebearers, a debate ensued. After nine hours of discussion, ending just before midnight, the

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50. Ibid, C1/3.
51. Ibid, C1/3
52. Speech by Rakowski at XIth PZPR Congress, Warsaw home Service, 27 Jan 90, in SWB Pt 2, EE/ 0675, 30 Jan 90, C1/3.
53 Ibid, C1/3
54. Ibid, C1/3.

delegates decided to suspend the Congress and inaugurate the founding Congress of the new party of the Polish Left. This took place the next day.

A split emerged. A minority group under Tadeusz Fiszbach created the Social Democratic Union (USD) with the support of some 100 delegates. A discussion ensued on the programme declaration which was accepted. After this, Kwasniewski proposed discussion on the name of the new party. This resulted in the new party being named 'The Social Democracy of the Polish Republic ' (SdRP).

The PZPR was dissolved and the SdRP was to be the successor party. Following the disbanding of the former on 28th January, the founding Congress of the SdRP continued to deal with personnel matters (29th January).

Elections were held and Alexander Kwasniewski was elected party Chairman gaining 1,049 of the possible 1,196 votes and Leszek Miller was elected General Secretary getting 926 votes.

The Sd RP was now formally constituted. The proceedings closed on the third day with a speech by Kwasnieski.

VII. THE SdRP IN ELECTORAL POLITICS

The new party faced a chequered future in the new Polish polity Local elections held in May 90, resulted in the new party winning less than 1% of the vote. This emboldened the Solidarity government to announce the 'resignation' of three of the four Communist ministers in the Cabinet.

But the Solidarity domination did not last long. It had two glaring weaknesses. First, what seemed paradoxical given the top heavy intellectual talent of Solidarity, was that it failed to develop even the semblance of a coherent socio-economic programme. To put it simply, the solidarity grand coalition was above all an anti-communist movement whose key objective was to ultimately abolish the Communist system.[55] Secondly, it lacked an adequate middle- range professional cadre, capable of replacing the nomenklatura and running the statist apparatus. The only alternative to chaos was to depend on the inherited bureaucratic managerial apparatus of doubtful loyalty.

The SdRP was in a precarious condition. Throughout the first half of 1990, the party found itself politically isolated, virtually shunned and the object of popular condemnation and ridicule. Had the Solidarity coalition organised a fully democratic parliamentary election in the spring of 1990, rather than in autumn 1991, with some kind of a qualifying threshold, then the SdRP would probably not have qualified for parliamentary seats and gone into oblivion.

However, in 1990, the Solidarity Coalition, a heterogeneous mixture of liberal, Christian democratic, nationalist, labour and social democratic factions split into right and left wings. This split was begun by Walesa, who harboured ambitions of taking over as the president.

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55 . Voytek Zubek,"The Phoenix out of the ashes; The rise to power of Poland"s post-communist SdRP",*Communist and Post communist studies,* vol 28,no. 3,1995,p.279

This 'war at the top' (his own phase) against the post-Solidarity left-wing's political domination proved a godsend to the SdRP. The competition between the two factions became so intense that it quickly degenerated into a vicious, unprincipled struggle dominated by personal attack. During the lengthy and brutal presidential campaign of 1990, the SdRP began to develop a political approach that it gradually brought to perfection, that of dignified restraint.[56] In fact, it developed a very interesting policy for achieving 'respectability'. Namely, while Parliament became the arena where the post-Solidarity left and right clashed, the SdRP assumed the position of the quiet, seemingly uninvited, but none the less steady and dependable supporter of the Post-solidarity left.[57]

This new found aloof, dignified statesman-like stand, allowed the SdRP to dramatically reverse its electoral fortunes. After two defeats (June 89 and May 90) – The candidate of the SdRP led coalition SLD (Democratic Left Alliance), Wlodzimerz Cimoszewiecz gained a respectable 10% of the vote in the November 1990 Presidential election During this campaign, the SdRP began to advance its electoral strategy of coalition formation. It created the electoral vehicle of the post-communist left- the SLD coalition (the Union of Democratic Left) that included itself and the labour Union OPZZ.

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56. Voytek Zubek, 'The Phoenix out of the Ashes..... : p. 290
57. Voytek Zubek, "The reassertion of the left in post-communist Poland ,*Europe-Asia Studies*,vol.46,no.5,1994,p.817

The shift in political domination from the post-Solidarity left wing to the Walesa faction created a new phase in Polish party politics. The defeated Solidarity left wing formed a new political party, the Democratic Union to regain political dominance. But it staunchly denied its leftist orientation in order to prevent itself from being ideologically appealable, to a section of the electorate only. This decision meant that the left camp was now the virtual exclusive preserve of the SdRP. This became its back door entrance to the political mainstream. It achieved position as an accepted mainstream party of the left.

VIII. THE 1991 ELECTIONS

Parliamentary elections were called in October 1991. The Polish State was the first to install a non-communist government, but the parliament remained the one elected in the partially free elections of 1990. This was a most ambiguous position and pressure mounted from the rapidly proliferating parties on the right.

The parliamentary election of October 1991 were preceded by a fierce battle between President Walesa and the Sejm on the form of the electoral law. A compromise was agreed on, and a highly complex system of modified proportioned representation, designed to limit the number of independent deputies, through not of contesting parties and blocs, was adopted. The 100 Senate seats were to be elected in 47 two member constituencies and two three member countries (Warsaw and Katowice). Of the 460 seats in the Sejm, 69 were elected on the basis of votes cast

for party national lists and 391 were allocated to 37 multimember electoral countries. Voters cast ballots for individually named party representatives, but in each electoral country, their vote was counted towards an aggregate total for the candidate's parties. Seats were then allotted to each party proportionately but parties were required to award seats among their candidates in order of their candidates in order of their popularity in the ballot.

There was a low turnout in the elections (43.2 percent) and a highly fragmented legislature comprising of 29 parties resulted (Appendix-A)

The SdRP campaigned on the basis of very vague assertions and represented itself as the standard bearer of the reformist traditions of people's Poland. Moreover, in face of the extreme infighting among the Post-Solidarity parties, the SdRP. claimed it was an oasis of pragmatic and professional. purpose, and promised it would continue the socio-economic transformation of Poland. In fact it eschewed Marxist economics and clearly stated it could not see the alternative to a capitalistic, entrepreneurial economy, while retaining allegiance to the ideals of a Scandinavian type social democracy.

It did fairly well in the elections emerging as the second largest party in the Sejm, (60 seats, with about 12% of the vote).

The SdRP followed the role of a constructive opposition in the Sejm. It gave informal support to governments headed by Olszewski and

Suchocka. In return, the UD protected it from rightist attacks. The SdRP knew it would be frozen out of all government coalitions because of its past. It could only gain power by 'electoral appeal, not by playing the coalition game in parliament'.[58]

Support for the SdRP was chiefly coming from two basic groups that had abandoned the Communist party during its decline and fall. The first comprised of retirees who had previously gained under the communist regime. This group, seeing little space for themselves in the mainstream of post communist reality, began to rally around the SdRP, a move that was intensified by growing bitterness against negating socio-economic achievements of the People's Republic, together with, more significantly, the government policy of reviewing and reducing their generous retirement benefits.[59] The nature of the second group was more sophisticated, but also in the long run, contributed much more to the stunning revival of the SdRP. This was the former nomenklatura and their close professional and personal associates. For many of these nomenklatura turned capitalists the political presence of the SdRP became an implicit guarantor of the legality of their new gains and the continuation of the process.[60] With its new identity, the SdRP began to attract many new independent entrepreneurs whose support boosted the

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58. Zubek ,"The reassertion.....",p.824

59. Raymond Taras, 'Voters, Parties, and leaders' in Richard F. Staar (ed.), *Transition to Democracy in Poland*, Macmillan, 1998 (2nd end.) p. 63.

60. Zubek, 'The Phoenix of out the Ashes.....' pg 283.

party's material and organizational resources that were in any case the best. Paradoxically, then it was this post-communist party that began to enjoy the greatest and most consistent support from the business community.[61]

Another act of the government that benefitted the SdRP, was the significant alteration in the electoral rules. The system of unrestricted proportionality was abandoned, and a very severe 5 per cent threshold for single parties and 8 percent for party coalitions was imposed. Moreover, the system assigning seats to parties that cleared the 5 percent thereshold disproportionately favoured the parties that gained most of the votes and was designed to boost their parliamentary strength well beyond the actual percentage of the votes they won Evidently, the parties of the right and the Christian democratic center did not believe the polls which pointed to a precipitous decline of their support, while indicating a substantial growth of the SdRP and the PSL [62]

The full account of the dramatic intrigues that led to the fall of Suchocka government are too tangled to be recounted here, but the SdRP also figured in the conspiracy.

IX. THE 1993 ELECTIONS : SdRP COMES TO POWER

The stage was now set for the 1993 elections. During the campaign the concept of SLD as a broad electoral vehicle received another success,

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61. ibid,p. 283.
62. Ibid, p. 292.

when the Polish socialist Party (PPS) led by Piotr Ikonowicz joined it. The PPS was Poland's premier social democratic party.[63] Though not much benefit would accrue from it electorally, nevertheless the PPS was a true off-shoot of the late Solidarity's left wing. It had been staunchly anti-communist since the 1980's, its entrance into the SLD amounted to a serious ideological success for the post communist left.

The SdRP's 1993 campaign slogan was 'We don't have to go on like this'[64] It promoted its image of professionalism, responsibility, politeness experience, and merit. It promised to 'alleviate all the socio-economic hardships that the Solidarity-led transition had imposed on society, without, however, altering the basic directions of the reform'[65] It also received an indirect endorsement from President Walesa, when in response to a question about the left's projected win, he said, 'It (the left's victory) was dangerous when the Soviet Union existed, when decisions were made in Moscow. The contemporary left is different, there is a lot of young people there.'[66]

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63. Michael Dauderstadt and Stephen Watts, 'Prospects of Social Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe in B. Vivekanandan (ed.) *Building on solidarity : Social Democracy and the New Millenium* (Lancer Books, New Delhi, 2000) p. 283.

64. Alison Mahr and John Nagle, Resurrection of the successor parties and democratization in East-Central Europe, *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, Vol. 28, No.4, 1995 pg 401

65. Zubek, Ibid.

66. President Walesa interviewed on consequences of election victory for the left,PAP,7 Sep 93,in SWB,pt 2,EE/1790,10 sep 93,A/7

The election brought a stupendous success to the post-communist left. Its key players doubled their vote (SLD from 12 percent to 20.5 percent and the PSL from 8 percent to 15.5 percent) The SLD got 171 seats and the PSL, 132, a two-thirds-majority.

The SdRP showed much maturity in their victory. They signalled that only certain policy adjustments would be made, and the basic thrust of reforms would be left unchanged. Foreign diplomats were gathered and assured that the foreign policy direction undertaken after the fall of communism would continue.[67] On the political stage as well, their attempts to seek coalition agreements with the U.P. and the UD clearly indicated their ultimate goal lay in the formation of a permanent left / social democratic coalition that would seek to establish itself as a politically dominant force.[68] But both these negotiations failed.

A SLD-PSL government took office with Waldemar Pawlak of the PSL as the Premier. The SLD put firmly to rest fears that it sought to return to the era preceeding political reforms. Josef Oleksy head of SLD's economic policy section, said in an interview, 'We dissolved the communist party, why should we want to form it anew"[69] Kwasniewski also emphasised that his camp 'does not want to holdup reforms' and 'communism was finished once and for all' [70]

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67. SLD meets Warsaw diplomatic corps : coalition with PSL, promarket policy, TV Polonia satellite service, 24 Sept 93, in SWB Pt2, EE/1804, 27 Sep 93, A/10.
68. Zubek, 'The Phoenix.....', p. 300.
69. Leading SLD members questioned on Policies by Hungarian news agency, MTI, 22 Sep 93, in SWB, Pt2 EE/1081, 23 Sept 93, A/13.
70. Ibid, A/13.

He further reiterated this stand claiming 'The main elements of change in Poland are permanent and we cannot even make a step back from them, not even a step sideways'[71] These included 'democracy, free market, ownership transformations which increase economic efficiency....'[72] The left wing governments would 'not finish but rather continue what solidarity started'[73]

It would be rather out of place here, to given an account of the SLD-PSL government, 1993-97. It would suffice to say that they remained true to their refurbished image. They achieved success in the 1995 Presidential elections, when Aleksander Kwasniewski narrowly beat Lech Walesa in the runoff. Walesa had alienated most of the polity and the populace by his markedly authoritarian tendencies and behaviour. In October 1994, the Sejm had passed a resolution requesting him so cease activities which could threaten or destabilize democracy.

Kwasniewski resigned from the SLD after being elected, citing the non-partisan nature of the post. His successor was SLD chairman Jozef Oleksy.

The record of the SLD government was fairly summed up by President Kwasniewski, in his address to the nation, before the commencement of voting in the 1997 elections.

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71. Communism is finished once and for all, SLD chairman tells 'Der spiegel' PAP, 27 Sep 93 in SWB, Pt2, EE/1806, 29 Sep 93, A/7.
72. Ibid, A/7.
73. Ibid, A/7.

> Polish democracy is stronger. We have a new constitution ..... Poland has better laws. In the recent four years, a new labour, civil, penal codes and customs law have been adopted..... A system of negotiated pay scales in the economy has been introduced.....Reform of the government administration has been completed. Civilian control over the armed forces and parliamentary control over the special services have been introduced.'[74]

Apart from this the foreign achievements included 'invitation to join NATO' and talks next year 'about our entry into the EU'[75] Economic achievements included economic growth, a three fold decrease in inflation, increase of real pay in the national economy, increase in disability and old age pensions, and one million lesser unemployed.

He mentioned difficulties and shortcomings as well. These included poverty, lack of jobs, shortage of housing, etc.

X. THE 1997 ELECTIONS

The SLD faced a more effective opponent this time around. The right, determined not to be shut out of parliament this time constituted under the leadership of the Solidarity trade Union leader Marian Krzaklewski, a coalition of 37 parties and movements with 'ideologies ranging from catholic nationalism to Thatcherite economic liberalism'[76] (See Appendix B) – The Solidarity Action Front (AWS).

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74. President"s pre-election address,Warsaw home service,19 Sep 97 in SWB,Pt 2,EE/3030,22 Sep 97,C/8

75. Ibid ,C/8.

76. Poland :An AW Some future? *The Economist*, May 31, 1997.

AWS quickly emerged as the front runner in the election, along with the SLD. The last pre-election opinion poll showed them running neck to neck[77] (The SLD with 26% and the AWS with 27%).

The SLD expected to win the elections and then seek to form a coalition with those groupings that had helped in the passing of the new constitution. Oleksy, Chairman of SLD pointed to a programme convergence between the SLD, the UW (The recast UD) and Union of Labour.[78]

He described the current coalition with the Polish Peasant party (PSL) as difficult and came out against a two party coalition after the elections. He accused the PSL of 'doing nothing but trying to defend the status quo', and 'lack of imagination'[79] as regards European challenges towards agriculture.

Oleksy mentioned social and health insurance reform, state decentralization, combating poverty, launching housing and construction funds and preparation for negotiations with EU as their priority tasks.[80]

Jerzy Szmajdzinski, parliamentary floor group leader of the SLD, pointed out that the economic scheme designed by UW leader Balcerowicz ' was convergent with the economic assumptions supported

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77. Latest polls show two groups in the lead, Polish TV, 9 Sep 97, in SWB, P+2, EE/3021, 11 Sept. 97, C/8
78. Ruling party to seek coalition with proconstitution parties, PAP, 11 Sep. 97, in SWB Pt2, EE/3022, 12 Sep 97, C/11.
79. Ibid,C/11
80. Ibid, C/11.

by his own party'[81] However, the UW rebuffed the SLD with UW leader, Balcerowicz declaring his party's intention to seek a coalition with the AWS.[82]

The election result proved upset for some parties. The SLD increased it vote share to 27% winning 164 seats in the Sejm. Its erstwhile partner, the PSL saw its vote decline to 7.3 and its seats to 27 (from 132). The AWS picked up 33.8% and 201 seats, while the UW got 13.8 percent and 60 seats. These two groups formed the government with Jerzy Buzek of the AWS as Premier, and Balcerowiecz (UW) as Deputy Premier.

The SLD settled in the role of the opposition. Party leader Oleksy emphasized that 'as responsible opposition, the SLD would appraise any actions that could divide society'[83]

The AWS-UW government under Buzek did not prove very stable. Barely an year into its existence, it saw the alliance falling apart. Defections eroded its representation in the Sejm from 201 to 187, dropping the government majority from 31 to 17. It was never being easy to hold so together the AWS's 'ragtag collection of workers, populists, nationalists and catholics, let alone win them over to the free market

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81. Left leader points out similarities in economic plans, PAP, 10 Sep. 97 in SWB, Pt 2, EE/3022, 12 Sep.

82. Freedom Union leader hopes for coalition with AWS, Polish Radio, 9 Sep . 97, in SWB, P+2, EE/3021, 11Sep. 97, C/9.

83. Social Democrats expect Solidarity to abide by democratic rules, Polish radio, 24 Sep 97, in SWB, Pt2, 26 Sep 97, EE/3034, C/9.

economics promoted by the Freedom Union.[84] It was dogged by crisis all through its term and saw its popularity decline steadily. In August 99 an opinion poll indicated that only 19% would vote for it, as opposed to 35% for the SLD.[85] A poll in September reported that 52% of Poles wanted it to quit.[86]

Later in September another poll showed its decreasing popularity with 74% of respondents assessing it negatively.[87] Support for the SLD was 40% while only 19% preferred the AWS and 12% the UW[88] An October poll indicated the Premier's activities were disproved by 58%, with 65% disproving of the entire government[89]

XI. THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE SDRP

The SLD meanwhile, continued its strategy of opposition. In March 1999, it announced the creation of an opposition forum, which would include all the groupings, social organizations and associations without their own representation in Poland, which do not accept the policy of the government of Jerzy Buzek.[90]

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84. Poland : Cracking up' , *The Economist*, Aug 8, 1998 Pg 41.
85. Who would Poles vote for it elections were held in August?, *Super Express*, Warsaw, 24 Aug 99, p.92 in in SWB, P+2, 26 Aug 99, EE/3623, C/6.
86. Poll puts government popularity at record low levels PAP, 12 Sept.99, in SWB, P+2,. EE/3639, 14 Sep 99, C/17.
87. Government and premier becoming more unpopular: poll, PAP, 20 Sept 99, in SWB P+2, EE/3646, 22 Sep. 99, C/6.
88. Poll shows record support for opposition party, PAP, 20 Sept. 99, in SWB P+2, EE/3646, 22 Sep. 99, C/6.
89. Prime Minister's ratings drop to record low, PAP 21st October, in SWB, P+2, EE/3673, 23 Oct 99, C/5.
90. Opoosition Party announces new 'opposition forum' TV Polonia Satellite service, 27 Mar 99 in SWB, Pt2, EE/3495, 29 Mar 99, C/4.

In April 1999, the SLD underwent a metamorphosis. It decided to transform itself into a party called the SLD, since the new constitution only allowed political parties and coalitions to compete in parliamentary elections. The SLD, herethro, had been a loose grouping of over 30 parties and associations (see Appendix C). This took place at its fourth and final congress in Warsaw (June 99). Speaking on the occasion SdRP leader, Leszek Miller said it was in the first time in decades, a party of the Polish left ending its activity need not negate its experiences and achievements.[91]

275 delegates voted in favour of dissolution, one opposed and two abstained. The foundation grouping was not signed by five groupings including the representative of the Polish Socialist Party. Leszek Miller, pointed out that the SLD wanted to win the 2001 elections, since, "the government is ever more frequently forgetting about the problems of ordinary people and the SLD will concern itself precisely with them."[92]

In total, 179 deputies out of 192 of the SLD parliamentary group joined the party. Leszek Miller was elected the leader : The SLD waited in the wings, capitalising on the mistakes of the AWS-UW government. Miller, in an interview, explained that the SLD had got more votes, but the gap in relation to the AWS was clear, later this gap narrowed and

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91. Main left-wing political formation undergoes formal reorganization, TV Polonia Satellite Service, 16 Jun 99, in SWB, Pt 2, EE /3564, 18 Jun 99, C/4.
92. Ibid, C/4.

'now, they had a clear lead over the AWS.....'[93] Later, outlining the political tasks of the new party, he spoke of giving attention to the 'needs of a man in the street', because the situation in the country was deteriorating.[94] The SLD would definitely attend to this after its victory.

The SLD also reaffirmed its commitment to parliamentary democracy, market economy and Poland's foreign policy, but said its ' policy would be an alternative to the policy of the present government"[95]

2000 was an eventful year, as well for Polish politics. The junior partner in the government coalition, the Freedom Union (UW) walked out leaving the AWS in the lurch. The AWS also faced fragmentation. The surprise runner up in the Presidential elections of 2000, Andrej Olechowski formed the Civic Platform along with the Speakers of the Senate, and Sejm, Donald Tusk and Maciej Plazynski in January 2001. This aimed to attract the centrist AWS votes. In March the Conservative People's Party (SKL) one of the main parties of the AWS, left the grouping to cooperate with the new party. With the departure of the centrist SKL, the AWS seemed to become a much less attractive option in the guise of a more nationalist and more clerical party, thus narrowing its electorate.

In October 2000, Aleksander Kwasniewski comfortably won reelection as the President. He received 53.9 of the vote, while his nearest

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93 . Interview with Leszek Miller, Polish Radio 1, 21 Sept 99, in SWB, Pt2 EE/3647, 23 Sep.99, in SWB, P+2, EE/3647, 23 Sep. 99, C/6.

94 . Opposition leader calls for contract with ruling coalition, PAP, 10 Oct. 99, in SWB Pt2, EE 3663, 12 Oct 99, C/7.

95 . ibid,C/7

competitor, the independent Olechowski, got 17.3 per cent. This was a victory as well for his political backers, the SLD, whose reelection in 2001 now appeared assured.

CONCLUSION

The SLD has come a long way since its resurrection as a Socialist Democratic Party out of the ashes of the Polish Communist Party. It steadily moved from a party, ostracised politically, to become a key player in Polish politics. It successfully cast itself as a social democrat party, time and again, refuting allegations of returning to its communist past. As a July 97 survey showed, it drew support from a wide section of socio-economic groups. (See table on next page). The SLD cleverly and consistently capitalised on the mistakes of the right, especially its failure in presenting a coherent policy and maintaining a united party, having objectives other than to remove the communists (in 1989) and their successors, the SdRP (in 1997). Once this was accomplished, the right tended to splinter into fragment parties, appealing to sectional interests. It was this failure of the right to formulate a durable grouping and the skill of the SLD in presenting an image of moderate pragmatism, competence and representing the interests of all social groups that underscored its success.

Table 2: Parties and Groupings Best Representing Socio-economic Groups, (July 1997)[96]

	AWS	SLD	UW	PSL	UP	Don't know
Workers	40	14	--	--	16	20
Farmers	--	--	--	72	--	16
Retired	4	7	--	--	2	18
Budgetary sphere	9	21	17	--	--	36
Intelligentsia	--	12	33	--	--	32
Young people	10	16	11	--	--	46
Women	10	16	8	--	9	46
Unemployed	22	10	--	--	18	35
Religious believers	22	--	--	--	--	20
Political elites	--	28	13	--	--	39
Ordinary people	15	25	--	--	--	31
Small businesses	6	9	15	--	7	45
Large businesses	--	14	19	--	--	47
State firm directors	--	26	9	--	--	52
Large foreign firms	--	16	13	--	--	58

Note : The figures in respect of the retired and religious believers are distorted by the temporary emergence of the electoral insignificant National Party of Pensioners and retires, and the non – party bloc for the support of reforms – Christian National Democratic 'Bloc for Poland (BBWR-ChDn'BdP')

The SLD is thus one of the most successful examples of a communist successor party, in Eastern Europe. It looks certain to maintain its prominent role in Polish politics.

96 OBOP, Czye intersy reprezentuja partie polityczne?(Warsaw,July 1997;sample size,1077) cited in Aleks Szcerbiak,Interests and Values:Polish Parties and their Electorates,*Europe-Asia Studies*,vol 51,no. 8,p.1417

CHAPTER-IV

HUNGARY

INTRODUCTION

The Hungarian polity, both under the communist regime, and even subsequently in the post communist phase to some extent, was markedly influenced by four factors. These were their strong identification as a part of the west; their toleration of foreign domination or influence necessitated by their geostrategic location; an abiding concern for, the survival of the state; and promotion of the welfare of the Hungarian diaspora.[1]

Communism in Hungary, was first instituted by Bela Kun's short lived regime in the aftermath of the First World War. This was followed by more than two decades of right wing, authoritarian rule under Admiral Horthy. This period ended with Hungarian involvement in the Second World War on the side of the Axis powers, and its defeat which laid the foundations of more lasting communist rule, under the presence of the Soviet Army. As in other parts of Eastern Europe, the patterns were similar. The notorious 'salami' tactics removed all other non-communist political

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1. Karen Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform : The Great Challenge*, (Cambridge University Press, 1990 ,2nd ed.) p.58.

contenders. A period of hard line Stalinist leadership ensued, till the advent of Khruschrev and his policy of 'de-Stalinization'. The 20th Party Congress of 1956 was the start of this process. The effects of this were manifested most significantly in those countries that seemed to be the most oriented towards the west. But, whereas, in Poland, the political upheaval of de-Stalinization produced leadership changes and granting of concessions, in Hungary, the outcome was tragically different.

I. THE 1956 REVOLT

Imre Nagy, who initially acceded to power with tacit backing of the Soviet leadership, proposed changes that were almost revolutionary – a multi-party, albeit socialist democracy and Hungarian withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. These struck at the very foundations of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe, and there was no way in which the Kremlin would have accepted them. The Soviets only option was armed intervention and they did take recourse to this measure. The west was powerless to intervene, and anyway it was preoccupied with the Suez crisis. The Soviets did however need the presence of a local leader, who enjoyed some standing in the eyes of the populace and it found one in the person of Janos Kadar. Kadar was initially with Nagy- he had been one of

those seven who had redrawn the Hungarian communist Party during the short –lived Nagy government. But now, he rapidly changed sides, and after the Red Army crushed the revolt, he was the new general Secretary.

The period after the revolt saw the systematic repression of all remnants of opposition. Nagy was lured out of the Yugoslav embassy, where he had taken refuge, with three of his colleagues, arrested by Soviet security agents and taken to be imprisoned in Romania. Initially, Kadar had indicated that they would be pardoned, but they were tried and executed in 1958.

II. KADAR IN POWER

Kadar, however was no diehard Stalinist. As soon as he judged that the situation was under control, he switched over to a policy of reconciliation. The New Year's message of 1962 was the start in this direction. He proclaimed that 'he who is not against us is with us'. This meant that the regime was prepared to tolerate dissent, so long as it did not accumulate to such levels as could threaten the existence of the state structure. In the same year, Matyas Rakosi, his successor, Erno Gero and twenty-three other Stalinists were expelled from the HSWP.

Kadar, successfully and skillfully, pursued a precarous course between the demands of the Soviets and the aspirations of the Hungarian. The 1956 revolt had taught both sides two lessons. The first was that a country like Hungary, situated in the ambit of Soviet influence, had to respect vital Soviet interests. The other was that the new Hungarian leadership should pursue policies that would reflect Hungarian interests, as well, in order to prevent such outbreaks of public discontent recurring in the future. Kadar managed to reconcile these two disparate strands. He became, thus, a bridgehead between the two sides. He promised Moscow a stable and loyal Hungary in exchange for Soviet tolerance for a measure of Hungarian autonomy. Implicit in this was a threat: Should Moscow refuse to grant Hungary a modicum of autonomy, ' '1956'- another anti Soviet uprising might occur again. Kadar then promised the Hungarian people a moderate political and economic environment in exchange for popular acceptance of Hungarian solidarity with Moscow. Implicit in this was another threat : should the people reject bloc solidarity, '1956' – another Soviet intervention might occur again.[2]

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2. Charles Gati,Reforming Communist Systems : Lessons from the Hungarian Experience', in W.E. Griffith (Ed)., *Central and Eastern Europe : The opening Curtain*(Westivew Press, Boulder, 1989) p.220.

This compromise formula eventually found expression in his reformist course. In the late 1960's, Hungary embarked on a course called the 'New Economic Mechanism' or NEM in short. This did away with most of the unnecessary central organization and direction of the economy; it introduced elements of a more national pricing system; it allowed the market to play a role creating an equilibrium between demand and supply. The underlying motive was political. By allowing the Hungarian population to prosper, the reformers hoped, to produce a consumer oriented society, a socialist society with a bourgeois face. The party tried to achieve legitimacy by going the population economic benefits in exchange for acceptance of the party's rule[3]

The NEM ran afoul of the Soviet leadership who exerted pressure on the Hungarian leadership to abandon it and between 1972-74, the Hungarians succumbed. This led to the resignation of one of the brains behind the NEM, Rezso Nyers from the Central Committee followed next year by the pro-reform premier, Jeno Fock. Years of stagnation followed, till 1978, when the Hungarian politburo decided to resurrect the NEM.

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3. Ivan Volgyes, The Kadar Years in Hungary, *Current History*, April 1981, p.159.

But the 'alliance' policy followed by the regime, chiefly characterized by the total 'depoliticization of Hungarian life, the permission to discuss any thing or make any decision that did not challenge the concept of party rule, and the conscious incalculation of lack of options for the better, created a politically stable situation.[4] But as the 1980's came, all was not well with Hungarian society. There were problems in economic spheres, political difficulties and growing social discontent. By the mid 1980' the situation had reacted a critical point. The Communist Party was in disarray and the state apparatus was unable to effect any changes, The ruling elite sat back awaiting disaster unwilling to make any moves. The people were grumbling, dissatisfied by the continually worsening standards of living. And the 'Ommiscient leader', was desperately holding on to power, hoping somehow to ride out the gathering storm[5]

The consensus that had characterized the Kadar era seemed all but gone.

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4. Ivan Volgyes, 'Kadar's Hungary in the Twilight Era, *Current History*, Nov. 1984, p. 361-62.
5. Ivan Volgyes, 'Hungary : Before the Storm Breaks', *Current History* , Nov. 1987, p. 363.

III. THE REMOVAL OF KADAR

Responsibility for this state of affairs lay on the General Secretary, Janos Kadar as well. He was now in his mid 70's and appeared to be fast losing his group on the situation. A man who had adroitly manipulated the Soviets to achieve unheard of concessions, was now an enfeebled man no longer in control. In 1968, just three days before the Warsaw pact intervention, that had brought to end the 'Prague spring', he had asked Aleksander Dubcek 'Do you really not know the kind of people you are dealing with?'[6] By the 1980's he had lost touch with the Soviet leadership Gone was the easy convivial relations of the Brezhnev era when concessions were made by the Kremlin, during Brezhnev's vacations in the Crimea. The new leader Gorbachev was helpful, but insisted that requests be made officially. Kadar in the 1980's, was removed from his reformist past and in 1983, had asserted that there would be 'no reform of the reforms".

His leadership was now being assailed. This role as the guarantor of the '1956' compromise had ended. The policy of consumerism in return for political passivity of the populace, 'goulash communism as Khruschrev had termed it, foundered on

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6. Zdennek Mlynar, *Night frost in Prague*, (Karz, New York, 1980) p. 157.

an increasing set of problems. A Hungarian journalist captured this predicament of the communist system, 'First there is no goulash, and then no Marx either?[7] Jokes on the political situation, and at Kadar began appearing. In the popular New Year's Eve political cabaret, the host (Janos Bery) discussed a possibility of Belgium offering Hungary a bank loan. The exchange was sharply representative of the current state of Hungarian polity.

Bery; .....Let us have a serious ideological justification. Maria (Pestik), economist.

Pestik : I very firmly believe that we must take this step. It will give rise to several advantages. For example in this case, we shall know what regime we live under. We became rather uncertain about this in the wake of the Central Committee's ideological session. Then we shall also know who the king is. Nor is it a matter of little consequence that we would also know who is next in line for the throne.[8]

Also this exchange, a thinly disguised dig at Kadar[9]

Verebes : And now, Tibor Koltai, as Comrade Authoritative-------

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7. New Year's Eve Political Cabaret, Budapest home service, 31 December 87 in SWB Pt2, EE/0041 6 January 88, B/3.
8. Ibid, B/4.
9. ibid, B/4.

Koltai : Well, comrades, I must leave this. I have done by best up to now; I have helped, we were together, hand in hand, we were together, hand in hand, we went ahead, we are at the summit, now let others take over. I stop now. Let the new old ones come, or whoever. I had enough.

Verebes : You are not serious, Comrade?

Koltai : I am most serious.

Verebes : Forgine me, I get the compression from what you have said that you are perhaps thinking of growing up your position, returning or taking on another state task?

Koltai: I do not know what I want. I would like something I am not my own master altogether any more. Some time I am told things which are not what I want to say. Or in reverse. I am still full of energy, only there is no direction for this energy, no meaning in it any more. .....

Koltai : .....I shall not leave you orphans. I have ensured a replacement. Over many years I have

trained the expert whom you can trust, who will carry the cause forward.

Verebes : if it is not a secret, who will follow you?

Koltai : Who comes after me? Comrade Flood.

In fact, moves had already begun to replace Kadar. The 'coup of the apparat,' that ultimately dethroned him can be held to have taken place in five overlapping phases. It began with the collapse of the Kadarist center (April 1984-Nov. 1986), the ascendancy of the bureaucrats and the technocrats (December 1986-June 1987), 'The Grosz campaign' (July 1987-March 1988). The conservative counter mobilization (Nov. 1987-Mar 1988), and finally, the negotiated succession (April –May 1988).[10]

The second phase may be taken to have commenced after the November meeting of the Central Committee, where political responsibility for economic failures was taken up. During the next five month, a radical rejuvenation of the CC's economic apparat took place with younger experts being appointed to lead important party and government posts. These included the 38 year old Miklos Nemeth as head of the CC's Economic Policy Department, and 44

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10. Rudolf L. Tokes, *Hungary's negoitated revolution : Economic Reform, Social change and Political succession* , (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996)p.272.

year old Peter Medgyessy as Finance Minister. An action program was prepared and circulated to various organizations and government agencies.

In the first open rebellion Kadar faced in his tenure, during the June 1987 CC meeting, ex-Premier Fock asked Kadar to become the party Chairman and relinquish the party leadership to someone else. Kadar turned down these demands. This meeting also agreed to the appointment of Karoly Grosz as the Prime Minister.

Grosz steadily kept up his campaign to replace Kadar. He became the obvious alternative to Kadar when both delivered nationally televised speeches at the Parliament in September 1987. Grosz's speech was candid and realistic, promising no early or easy solution to Hungarian problems. Kadar, in contrast made a rambling, defensive and self serving speech.

By the end of 1987, there was increased pressure on Kadar. The Soviet Communist Party's call for an extraordinary party conference in the summer of 1988 generated pressures for a similar emergency session in Hungary. In December 1987, the party centre reluctantly decided to set May 1988 as the date for the conference.

This was perceived as the deadline for setting its house in order and acting on the issue of overdue leadership change.

The main components of this phase included the November 87 CC meeting on ideology, the inter-party debate on ideology and party renewal and Grosz's declaration of his candidacy.

All this political maneuvering was done surreptitiously. Kadar denied his intention to resign. In an interview just a week before the Start of the conference , he obliquely remarked on this point. 'If it is the evaluation, of my own and of those who dispose in this matter, that I would perform a better service by handing over the work, then I shall do so with a great sense of relief. But I am only interested in the cause and not in the function.[11]

The May conference, first of its kind since June1957, had been carefully prepared by Grosz, and his supporters. However, Kadar spoiled the original scenario. Instead of making a graceful exit, he made a defiant statement of ideological orthodoxy. This had an adverse effect on the majority of the delegates. Grosz and his allies capitalised on these sentiments to change an earlier agreement on the makeup of the new Politburo. They managed to deny five Kadar support reelection to the reconstituted body.

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[11] . Janos Kadar's Interview with US Television, Hungarian TV, 12 May 88, in SWB PT2, EE/ 0152, 16 May 88, B/1.

The Conference witnessed several calls for reform. Albert Antaloczy, First Secretary of the Komarom County Party Committee, said that emphasis on democratic centralism should now be placed on expanding democracy and autonomy.[12] Ferenc Kovalits, first Secretary of County Zala party Committee, held the responsibility for increasing problems rested heavily on the leaders.[13] Lajos Menyhart, Secretary of Debrecen party committee, in a strong pitch for reform said, 'The modernisation of the system of political institutions cannot be postponed any longer. The direction of this modernisation can only be democratisation, both within the party, and in the entire system of relations of the system of institution.....'[14]

In all, the mood of most delegates at the Conference was pre-reformist. However, Grosz proved incapable of acting on these sentiments to revitalise the party and the polity. In a 1993 interview, he admitted that 'we rejected that which existed, but did not know what else might come to replace it.'[15] However, he agreed

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12. National Conference of the HSWP, 20 May 88, in SWB, PT 2, EE/0159, 24 May 88, C/1.
13. Ibid, C/1.
14. Ibid, C/1.
15. Cited in Tokes, Hungary's Negotiated Revolution ....., p.285.

at that time, that the Conference had given a mandate for effecting comprehensive and radical changes to the party's new leadership.[16]

IV THE LAST STAND OF THE OLD GUARD

A start was no doubt made. The new leadership's reform strategies and policy priorities were discussed in a June meeting of the politburo. Four major task forces were launched: for drafting of new statutes under Janos Lukacs, for the economy under Miklos Nemeth, for review of the party's activities in the previous three decades under Imre Pozsgay , and for development of a new network of expert advisory groups to convey views of various social constituencies to to the party leadership under Reszoe Nyers. All told, the politburo set into motion 29 projects for the over haul of the party, its internal organization, and assorted aspects of its working, right down from the Politburo to local party cells. Formal implementation of the May 1988 party insurgent's vague notions about the institutionalization of 'socialist pluralism' was also an issue.

Having issued a vast number of resolutions, decisions and political instructions to the party, the government, and policy

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16 . Karoly Grosz's Television Interview, Hungarian TV, 22 May 88, in SWB PT2, EE/0160, 25 May 88, C/16.

lobbies, new leadership left for vacations and trips abroad. However none of the measures were seen as positive responses to widespread public expectations of immediate results.

For the next eighteen months, before the curtain finally came down on communist rule, the new leadership's agenda was limited to creating for themselves, a personal political power base for the inevitable next round of leadership contest. The public was treated as an object of manipulation rather than as politically empowered participants in 'renewal', 'transformation' and 'democratization'[17]

And to this end, all the key players Grosz, Berecz, Pozsgay, Nyers and Nemeth kept on giving speeches and interviews and going on record with their interpretations of the tasks and priorities of the tasks and priorities facing the regime. This singular lack of unanimity on fundamental policy issues, occasioned the CC's notice, which found that the top leadership held diametrically opposed views that neither party members nor the general public could reconcile with what they read in the editorials of the party newspaper.

The main division was between Poszgay and the reformers, and Grosz. Grosz was widely believed to initiate meanigful reforms

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17 . Cited in Tokes , Hungary's Negotiated Revolution--------,p 291.

(57% believed so in a Sept 87 poll.[18] But by November, trust in him declined as his actions and statements showed that he represented a 'neo-conservative agenda.'[19]

V THE PASSING AWAY OF THE OLD ORDER

The apparent fall of the regime towards public confrontations among the leaders and political chaos was temporarily halted by the CC meeting in November. This discussed theses on 'the internal political situation and the party's tasks'. This document categorically spoke of 'eroding legitimacy of the party and the government' and considered the real problem to be the escalation of reform rhetoric without structural change', while the party was still captive to 'extreme centralization' and conservative resistance to internal reforms.

The proposed remedy which the CC endorsed was the acceptance of the inevitable. The CC accepted the defacto rebirth of political pluralism, the lifting of censorship and the party's surrender of all but a few unspecified components of its political privileges to the government.

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18. Sandor Agocs, "The Collapse of Communist Ideology in Hungary-Nov. 1988 to Feb 1989; *East European Quarterly* ,Vol.XXVII, No2, pg 188.

19. Ibid. p. 189.

However, on November 29, a date which saw the formation of the HSWP's first 'reform circle' announced by a group of party intellectuals in Szeged, Grosz gave a major two hour policy speech at a mass rally of the Budapest party organization. His main point was that the reform process had gotten out of hand, and there was a threat of 'white terror.' Although a week earlier, he had conceded to his politburo colleagues that a one-party system was untenable, Grosz here assured his listeners that the one party system, albeit in a somewhat 'pluralistic form' was there to stay.

This speech was the last highpoint of the communist regime in Hungary. From here to Febraury 1989, a ten week period, the communist ideology in Hungary collapsed completely. A slow erosion which had been going on for years accelerated during this period to the point of becoming a landslide.

Grosz's declaration was wishful thinking . Pozsgay launched a major counterattack in Jan 1989. Appearing on Hungarian radio's popular program '168 Hours', he made several provocative statements, especially the two which shook the very foundations of the regime. He termed '1956' as a popular uprising. Furthermore, In reply to a question, ' will the HSWP try to co-exist with another party", he replied that they should learn to coexist with two or

several parties, not just one. The HSWP could not, and did not wish to dictate the nature of such partnership for the opposition that would emerge among those not inclined to join a coalition.

The public rejection of the regime's two most core legitimating principles forced Grosz's hand. Foregoing the option of expelling Pozsgay or taking recourse to martial law, for which support among his colleagues was uncertain, the issue was taken to the February meeting of the Central Committee. This meet was another epoch marking event. The communiqué released afterwards, held it 'a pressing task for the HSWP to take an initiating role to overcome the economic –political and moral crisis'.[20] It acknowledged the need for existence of political pluralism 'it is the firm intention of the Central committee that the profound reform of the system of political institutions should continue. Its conviction is that pluralisation of the political system-in the given domestic situation –can be realised in the framework of the multiparty system. On the basis of historical experiences, this can create a better guarantee to control government work, and against the possibility of abusing power'.[21] It censured Pozsgay, by holding his act of making public

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20. Communique : Session of the HSWP Central Committee, MTI, 12 Feb 89, in EE/ 0334, 14 Feb 89, C/1.
21. ibid,' C/1

the result of the historical sub-committee 'premature', but 'ensured Comrade Imre Pozsgay of its confidence'[22]

Grosz's giving way on this point of multiparty pluralism was again made the butt of humour. In the programme 'Radio Cabaret', aired on 6 March 1989 his position was lampooned in the following manner. Drawing on his earlier interview to the 'Week' and '168 hours', it purported to add to the interview :

Mester (leading reporter of News Background): In our interview in February, we asked you whether the party takes cognisance of the process of transition to the multiparty system or whether it also supports it.

'Grosz' : I remember

Mester : You replied that it does not only support it, does not only take cognisance of it, but initiates it.

'Grosz' : Correct

Mester : In November (88), on the other hand when you were asked whether you plural were going to initiate the transition to the multi-party system,

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22 . Ibid, C/2.

you said : Come off it, what ruling party would initiate such a thing.

'Grosz' : Correct.

Mester : Do you not percieve a certain contradiction in your replies?

'Grosz' : I do not. Because in November I asked myself what ruling party would initiate such a thing.Well, in February I replied : The party is the HSWP.[23]

The Central Committee also accepted the leadership's view of interpreting the resolution of the May conference on 'socialist pluralism' as a political mandate for the development of a multiparty political system. The Politburo recommended the party take the lead in effecting a 'controlled division of power' with the non communist political forces on two conditions: acceptance of socialism by all by a dominant ideological paradigm, and Hungary's continued adherence to the military alliance system (the Warsaw Pact.) For this the Central Committee commissioned a work group to prepare bi- and multilateral negotiation with various political social organisations.

VI THE 'TRANSFORMATION' OF THE HSWP?

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[23]. Radio Cabaret, Budapest home service, 6 Mar 89, in SWB Pt2, EE/ 0412, 18 Mar 89, B/1.

1989 was a water shed year for East European countries. Its effects werekeenly felt in Hungary as well,in fact,Hungary led all these regimes in effecting changes. But the reform minded communists here as well as in Poland, shared one thing in common with their unenlightened brethren elsewhere, an unawareness of how rapid the regime collapse would be.

In Hungary, the process was began by the February"s CC session mentioned above. In May, Hungary began dismantling the fences along the Austrian border, the first step in tearing down the 'Iron Curtain'. In July, Imre Nagy was accorded legal rehabilitation. This followed his ceremonial reburial in June. In July only, a joint opposition candidate won the parliamentary by- election, and the death of Kadar marked the passing away of the old order. A National Round Table, convened in June ended on 18 September, with agreement on the framework for introducing multiparty democracy. The Hungarian Democratic Forum, founded in September 87, signed this whereas the more radical opposition comprising of the SzDSz and FIDESz (the Alliance of the Free Democrats, and the League of the Young Democrats respectively) refused. In October, Parliament approved the introduction of multiparty democracy and renounced 'People's Republic" status.

And on 21st December 89, Parliament voted to dissolve itself in March 90 to make way for multi-party elections.

In this period, the HSWP under went many changes as well. After the February CC meeting, which effectively renounced the party's monopoly on power, it began refashioning itself for competitive politics. A CC session in March 1989, discussed the party's action programme, 'What are the aims of the HSWP?' : Janos Berecz, the author of the report, in a speech recalled that the standpoint of the May party conference had formulated the historical necessity for the turnabout, and decided its political direction, but there had not been enough time then to work out the details.[24]

He spoke on the universal values which give national direction pointer- freedom, justice and solidarity. There was only one way of turning these values into reality : democracy.[25]It was their conviction that these conceptions could be perfected with the development of socialism.[26] The party placed in the centre of its political programme "the development of a political system expressing the will of the people; the constitutional state ; the

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24 . Janos Berez's speech on the Aims of the HSWP, Budapest home service, 7 Mar 89, in still B, PT2, EE/0404, a Mar 89, C/1.

25 . ibid, C/1.

26 . Ibid, C/1.

security of the individual and the community ; a modern efficient economy uncorporating Europe and the World'[27]

The HSWP had to 'break with the remants of the distorted political model, which has been proved to be one-sided, and with the fact that in the declaration of continuity, ultimately inertia and apolitical behaviour have become a programme.'[28]

Reszoe Nyers, emphasized that the party must spread out to the whole of society and expand its activity to the whole political sphere of society; it is only via this that it can become a political party.[29]

The programme was made public in March. It was titled-"For our future : upswing –democracy-socialism" and subtitled 'what are the aims of the HSWP ?'. It recognized the need for radical changes, and broke with the "political-economic structure of the past that has proven distorted and erroneous, and disassociates itself from the errors of the earlier leadership, from subjectivism from politicking that excludes the participation of the members."[30]

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27 . Ibid, C/1.
28 . Ibid, C/1.
29 . Reszoe Nyers on party reform, Budapest home service 7 March 89, in SWB, Pt2, EE/0404, 9 March 89, C/1.
30 . New Party Programme, MTI, 10 Mar 89, in SWB PT2, EE/0408, 14 March 89, B/9.

The HSWP saw itself as the 'united party of the two determining tendencies- communist and social democratic –of the working class movement, which is a reform party of Marxist spirit, that expresses the interests of the working, creative people, going beyond class aspects'[31]

Grosz was convinced that the HSWP would continue to play a determining role, together with the appearance of new forces in political life. However, the "leading role of the HSWP should be created, not with administrative means but with a modern working style and with leaders worthy of respect".[32]

Grosz was however being sidelined more and more, with Pozsgay and Nyers increasingly setting the agenda for the party. It was Nyers who was repeatedly interviewed on reform communism and party reform. Both, Pozsgay and Nyers attended a meeting of the HSWP's Reform Circles in Kecskemet where Pozsgay did point that although a split in the party could not be an aim, preserving the old structure could be even more dangerous than a split. than a split.[33] Nyers said that if the HSWP wanted to become a reform

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31. New Party Programme, MTI, 10 March 89, in SWB, Pt2, EE/0408, 14 March 89, B/10.
32. Karoly Grosz on the party's need to win respect, MTI, 7 Mar 89, in SWB, Pt2, EE/0408, 14 March 89; B/11.
33. HSWP Reform Circles' Meeting in Kecskement, MTI, 15 April 89, in SWB, Pt2, EE/0438, 19 April 89, B/3.

party, then the reform wing must be joined by the center. A party split, the formation of a new independent reform communist party would not strengthen the restructuring . The conservative minority should remain a so called internal party opposition as the "living conscience" of the party.[34]

The first National Conference of the HSWP Reform Circles was held in May 89. Reformers called for converting the HSWP from a cadre party into a Marxist and leftist collective party, 'borrowing from the values of socialist movements and bourgeous progress of the 20th century. It must break away from democratic centralism and build on total party democracy.'[35]The section of the conference called "What kind of party we want' said the HSWP is not a party at present, as it lacked both a national programme and a leadership ready for action. Therefore, it should be turned into a real party.'[36] They held the reform wing that carried the potential of renewal, and called for a party Congress before the autumn. They did not call for a split, yet did not exclude the possibility A split would not come at the right time now, since the 'fundamentalist group of a beheaded party would be left holding all the means of power.' [37]

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34 . Ibid, B/3.
35 . ibid,B/4
36 . Ibid, B/4.
37 . Ibid, B/4

Grosz's declining position was brought to focus in the June Central Committee session. This elected Rezsoe Nyers as the Chairman, and set up a four man Presidium to 'strengthen the leadership.'[38]This included besides Grosz, Nyers, Pozsgay and Nemeth. It convened a Congress for October 1989.

But before the end of September the grave internal divisions in the party had come out in the open and begun shaping into distinct policy platforms. The most important was the Reform Alliance. This consisted of young professsionals,lower-level party officials; particularly from the ideological and cultural apparat, and in Budapest, sizeable number of reforms intellectuals from all walks of life.

However owing to poor coordination, resistance by the apparat and the apathy of rank and file membership, the RA reached the limit of its strength and could not become the dominant strength in October. This failure to effect a political breakthrough provides a key to explain the HSWP's hoped for rebirth as a socialist party did not come about,so soon. The very idea of drastic reforms, institutional restructuring and abandonment of power facted to win the support of the HSWP's

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38. Proceedings of HSWP Central Committee Session, Budapest Home Service, 24 June 89, in SWB, PT2, EE/0493, 27 Jun 89, C1/1.

passive and apprehensive majority. Nyers and his band of cautious progressives recruited the the service of the People's Democratic platform (PD) to keep the RA at bay.

The party membership also declined before the Congress. That year (1989) 78,000 members left the HSWP and only 2600 new comers joined the ranks. The membership now stood at 725,000[39]

VII THE 1989 CONGRESS

On the first day of the Congress, 6th October, Nyers spoke on the need of the Hungarian Socialist movement for a 'new type of party which will be successor, but not simply the political continuation, of the HSWP'.[40]

Presenting the Central Committee's report Karoly Grosz spoke about the character and unity of the party. He stressed that in the reborn party, their 'social commitment, the primary political representation of employees cannot be weakened'[41] The party had not been a purely worker's party for a long time, but they could not

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39. HSWP membership down, MTI, 3rd October 89, in SWB, Pt2, EE/0579, 5 October 89, B/10.
40. Fourteepth Congress of the HSWP, Editorial Report, in SWB, Pt2, EE/0582, 9 October 89, C1/1.
41. Fourteenth Congress of the HSWP, Speeches by Party leaders, Hungarian TV, , 6th Oct 89, in SWB, Pt2, EE/0582, 9 October 89, C1/3.

reject the workers either 'openly or covertly hidden in misty misleading formulations'[42]

Attila Agh of the Reform Alliance Platform, said that 'in the process of democratization, our party only has a political future in Hungary as a radical reform party. For the radical renewal of the party, for the creation of ultimately, an organizationally new party too, the radical restructuring of the leaders and the decision making bodies is needed, too.'[43]

The next day's proceedings began within an immediate recess called by three platforms to rally delegates. The Reform Alliance made public its draft theses on the new Hungarian Socialist party.

The People's Democratic platform expressed itself in agreement with the Reform Alliance on some issues, such as the foundation of the Hungarian Socialist party, but it did not consider the name change to be vital.

After the recess, the plenary session of the nature of the party got underway. The PD platform's spokesman, Janos Goenczi called for sorting out 'lines of rupture, as whether the successor party

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42. Ibid, C1/3.
43. Ibid, C1/5.

should be alliance of platforms and who should be the future leaders. He said his group supported Nyers and party Chairman[44]

Ivan Vitanyi spoke on the behalf of the Reform Alliance. The said that the Congress had arrived at a turning point with agreement among the delegates that a new party was needed.[45]

The debate on the party's aims ended before lunch break. After the break, both the above platforms put before the whole Congress a proposal for setting up a new party, the Hungarian Socialist party. Nyers opened the debate referring to the proposal as 'an acceptable compromise surtable for the rebirth of the party as a new style left wing socialist party which distanced itself from the Stalinist remanants in the HSWP while inheriting its progressive reform endeavours.'[46]

After further debate, a vote was held, and the draft document was accepted by an over whelming majority of 1202 with only 159 votes against and 38 abstentions. After the vote, the Chairman, Gyula Horn announced the formation of the Hungarian Socialist Party.

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44. Fourteenth Congress of the HSWP, Editorial Report on Second Day's Procedures, SWB, Pt2, EE/0583, 10th October 89, C1/1.
45. Ibid, C1/1.
46. Ibid, C1/1.

The document entitled 'Position on the nature of the party' spoke on the new party facing 'the past of its predecessor with merciless sincerity. It distanced itself from 'the crimes, and the principles and methods that had proven erroneous and incorrect'[47] It broke with the system of the bureaucratic party state and the principle of democratic centralism. At the same time it considered itself 'as the heir to the reform efforts within the HSWP' [48]. It fully accepted the 'Universal values of human development, humanism, freedom, democracy and respect for work that brings about values. It continues the lasting traditions of the Socialist and communist movement, and 'professes the principle of solidarity and social justice as its own".[49] At the same time, it held that the ideas of social justice and human freedoms cannot be opposed to each other.

The HSP announced that its would be registered after the Congress. It called for convening the basic organisations by 21st October 1989. Those who approved the statutes and basic theses of the party's manifesto and authenticated this by their signatures, would become members of the HSP.

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47. Ibid, C1/2.
48. Ibid, C1/2.
49. Ibid, C1/2.

The third and the fourth day of the Congress was devoted to intense politicking between Nyers and Pozsgay concerning the selection of the Executive of the HSP. The negotiations from the RA and PD platforms were present but none from other platforms were present but more from other platforms. Finally agreement was reached on 24 names, (16 belonging to the RA).

The leaders- Nyers, Pozsgay, Nemeth and Horn-remained the same. Grosz and Berecz disappeared, but reemerged two months later as founding members of the new –old Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

The establishment of the HSP on October 7, 1989 was historic step that marked the end of one-party dictatorship in Hungary.[50] The new party discharged hundreds of thousands of its nominal members internal fellow travelers and true believers alike. Under its heterogeneous leadership, the HSP was a disunited party, and in terms of capacity to become a major electoral contender, it was severely handicapped. The HSP was disunited because the RA-PD compromise left the rest of the policy platforms out. Each of these, specially 'countryside', 'food and agriculture' and 'youth' had been emerging components of genuine political pluralism in the defunct

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50 . Rudolf Tokes, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*....., Pg 355.

HSWP. As far they were concerned, they had been dismissed by a handful of self-serving politicians from a yet to be born democratic socialist movement.[51]

The party was also disunited because it lacked a dynamic leaders with a credible program and broad national appeal Nyers had neither. Pozsgay also failed to rise upto expectations. His precogressional compaign had promised a radical break with the past, but instead of delivering on this, he had caved in and abandoned his followers to the mercy of Nyers and the unrepentant apparat.[52] In the end, however much he tried he could not recast his political image from that of a 'in house communist rebel' to that of a socialist stateman.[53]

VIII THE HSP'S DEBUT IN ELECTORAL POLITICS: THE 1990 ELECTIONS.

For the process of pluralistic transformation, the electoral system is of key significance. The new law was the subject of heated disagreements since 1987. While the 1983 Electoral law, applied to the 1985 elections was an experiment allowing limited voter input in one-party system, complete reform was needed for multi party

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51. Ibid, p. 355.
52 Ibid, p.355
53. Ibid, p. 356.

purposes. The government prepared draft of early 1988 was predominantly regressive. In 1989 political debate over the electoral system began in earnest. The National Round Table Committee, after long and heated debates, adopted the new law in September 1989. Conflicting political pressures resulted in an extremely complex electoral law beyond the comprehension of average voters. Each voter (a Hungarian citizen 18 years or over) had two votes, one for individual candidates and one for country lists (also called territorial lists), each sending respectively 176 and 152 representatives to the legislative. Parliament was to comprise of 386 elected members, 328 from these two lists and the remaining 58 national list seats coming from fragment votes. In individual lists, the minimum participation ratio was 50% +1 and an absolute majority was needed to win. The same ratio was valid for country list and mandates were distributed proportionately."

At the time of formal opening of the campaign for the 1990 elections on 26 February, there were 28 parties with candidates, but only 6 obtained presence in legislature on account of the thresh hold of 4 percent vote nationally.

The main parties included, apart from the HSP, the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz) founded in 1988, the Alliance of Young

Democrats (FIDESz), the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP), the Hungarian Democratic forum (MDF), the winner of the election and the oldest opposition force and the Independent Smallholders and Citizen Party (FKGP). Apart from these, two parties which emerged as major forces, but failed to cross the 4 percent hurdle were the Hungarian Social Democratic Party (MSZDP) and the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, recreated by the old leaders, after the socialists split off in wake of the 1989 Congress.

The 1990 election was a memorable experience. From the beginning of campaigning on 26 Feb, to the campaign moratorium on 23rd March, the competition for votes gradually built up to a crescendo. The tone of the campaign style gradually became more vicious, and the number of undemocratic incidents, including break-ins at party offices, personal intimidation, mail and telephone threats', defiling of posters and physical aggression against politicians and candidates increased. The SzDSz and the MSzP (HSP) were more frequent targets, leading to suspicion of anti-semitism and right wing extremism, playing a part.[54]

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From the beginning, election results showed a trend that remained steady upto the final results after 8 April. The MDF took the lead right away but was neck to neck with the SzDSz for some time, and the left socialist parties suffered a serious setback: the Social Democrats and the Communist headed for disaster while the HSP hung on, but in a much weaker position than expected. The Small holders gained less than forecast and the Christian Democrats more, and only 6 parties (including FIDESz) were able to pass the 4% threshhold. Most of the seats were undecided, leaving them for later decision by the second round on 8 April.

The left did not suffer a 'decisive defeat'[55], for if all the data regarding voting are added up. It may have shown weakness in terms of parliamentary representation under the electoral law, its potential political strength was not negligible.

Before the second round, the campaign atmosphere deteriorated further and was marred by hostile and extreme manifestations. The two leading parties attacked each other without any restraint. Ultimately the six major parties had to issue a communiqué calling for strict observation of the 'election ethics' and abstention from extremist inflammatory statements.

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55 . Barnabas Racz, Political Pluralisation in Hungary : the 1990 Elections, *Soviet Studies*, Vol 43, No.1, 1991, p.124.

The HSP did fairly in the elections. It got 10.9 of the vote and 33 seats, coming fourth. Support for it came from a wide cross section of all age and educational groups as the following table shows.[56]

MSZ (HSP) VOTERS ACCORDING TO AGE AND EDUCATION

Age	18-33	34-49	50-65	66-	
(%)	10	37	30	23	
Education	Below 8 yrs.	8 years	Technical trade school	High School	Higher
(%)	21	22	15	20	22

This showed most supporters belonged to the older and educated groups who were part of the economic and governmental bureaucracy, but there was also strong support in the lower educational groups, the weak representation of the younger generation being a serious problem.

The real weakness of the party stemmed from its origins.[57] The October 1989 Congress did not result in a convincing separation from the communist party and its status remained unclear. The Congress Communiqué had referred to Marxist

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56. Public Opinion Research Institute, Magyar Hirlap, 28 March 1990, cited in Racz, political pluralisation in Hungary....., p.126.
57. ibid,p.126.

traditions as well as to a combination of democratic socialist and western welfare principles, thus keeping it a 'Janus-faced' formation.[58] Apart from the split, internal divisions in the new party between the 'leftist socialist' and people's democratic platform' remained strong. After the elections, the HSP had to come to grips with this dilemma to clarify its ideological position and /or possibly face another party crisis.

The party's election strategy choices were limited. An aggressive campaign would have resulted in more hostile attacks, therefore, it went for a passive defensive position. The HSP campaign style took a low-key sophisticated posture and refrained from personal attacks and arrogance, exercising restraint in political opinions and taking a stand against extreme manifestation of any kind.

However, the party leadership was criticised for the 'inefficiency of the campaign management'[59] and in the aftermath of the elections a rethinking of the political philosophy and a renewal of the leadership was proposed.[60]

IX THE COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION

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58 . Ibid, p 127.
59 . ibid. p.127.
60 . Ibid, P. 127.

The party drew realistic conditions from the elections about its potential future status. The Party Congress of 28 May 1990 identified its position as a leftist 'Social democratic -Socialist' party without dogmatic commitment to Marxism.[61] The Congress became a belated watershed in the separation of the HSP from the former communist party.[62] The communique released pointed to a political position between conservatism and liberalism and a 'constructive oppositional role in the interests of systematic transformation from collectivism to democracy'. A leadership change was also carried out ; Reszoe Nyers being replaced by Gyula Horn, as were others by younger politicians.

The gradual shift towards a social democratic platform however did not fully eliminate intra party dissent. Two major groups could be identified, at the time of the Second Congress. The leftist socialists advocating a more active policy toward labour and other grass-roots organisation/ activities and the People's Democratic platform calling for more aggressive postures, especially in Parliament. This internal ferment notwithstanding, the socialist held together and followed a moderate oppositional line in 1990-91.

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61. Party Communique, Nepszabadsag, 11 and 26 April 1990, cited in Barnabas Racz, The Socialist –left Opposition in Post –Communist Hungary, *Europe- Asia Studies,* Vol.45, No.4, 1993, p650.

62. Racz The Socialist left Opposition...., p.651.

They criticised the MDF-SzDSz pact, which was 'legal and constitutional' but 'still the first step in restriction of parliamentary democracy.[63]

The part presence in the legislative never could change the dominant majority opinion, but still it could claim of a respectable record in presenting a leftist alternative position.[64] Critically active behaviour was observable on most key issues of domestic policy, while in the economic sphere, social concern for the workers and / or lower socio-economic strata was forcefully pursued.

The HSP also tried to build up co-operation with other left wing formations. In February 1991, a joint meeting of social democratic movements/ parties pledged political co-ordination but not unification. The HSP held a parliamentary meeting with the social democrats but not the communists. There were obstacles to ties with the HSWP, but changes improved after this party softened its post communist image and changed its home to Worker's Party.

The HSP as the only socialist –left party in Parliament showed both strengths and weakness. Its key weakness was its incomplete separation from its part; nonetheless the party progressed

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63. Pozsgay at HSP Congress, Budapest home service, 26 May 90, in SWB, Pt2, EE/0777, 30 may 90, B/6.

64. Nepszabadsag, 18 November 91, cited in Racz, The Socialist left Opposition....., p.652.

gradually at subsequent party Congresses and achieved a authentic social democratic orientation.[65]

This manifested itself in the declared programmes of the party but the transition difficulties and oppositional status made it understandably hard to project specific programme points, yet a broad outline of intended directions was visible. This included an acceptance of the market with social network constraints, development of employees participation in privatisation, promotion of worker shares and the separation of economic and state spheres, rejection to improvisation in economic policies and attention to the possibilities of alternatives based on Hungary's geopolitical and developmental status.[66]

The decision of the Socialist International at its Congress in September 1992 to award observer status to the HSP, considerably improved its international and domestic status and legitimacy.

The 'leader of the left' role was only moderately fulfilled by the parliamentary factors in the new pluralist legislature. Out voted and isolated, socialist politics were confined to a modest circumspect strategy at first but became more articulate in subsequent practice. A line of carefully orchestrated maneuvers

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65. Racz, The Socialist left Opposition....., p.660.
66. Ibid, p 661.

was followed in 1990-91 The party articulated its position on selected major issues forcefully but fell back flexibly to a qualified cooperation rendering major/minor support to bill proposals and exercised reservations on others.[67]

Parliamentary politics was by and large and only visible role of the party and connection with grassroots organisations was limited. Recognising the urgent need to rectify this, the national party organisation and the parliamentary factions intensified their efforts through regional meetings and conferences on the country and local levels. A positive change in the support was indicated by public opinions polls after 1992. Inspite of some fluctuations in voter support, socialist sympathizers represented a steady if not growing trend.

X THE 1994 ELECTIONS

The HSP became a strong contender for power in 1994. It consistently pursued a sophisticated and cautious but increasingly more articulate opposition rule and built ties to liberal parties.[68] The grassroots organisations were strengthened and the party genuinely reached out for the indigent and dispossessed working-

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67. Racz, The Socialist left opposition....., p.661.
68. B.Racz and Istvan Kukorelli, The 'second-generation' Post-Communist elections in Hungary in 1994, *Europe Asia Studies,* Vol. 47, NO.2, 1995, p.261.

class elements and established various platforms/factions accommodating religious, ethnic and other elements and even forged an electoral alliance with the largest labour organisation, the National federation of Hungarian Unions.[69]

By the end of 1993, there was steady growth in voter support, culminating, by the first few months of 1994 to the position of top contender (16% in 1993 to 33% in 1994).

Horn indicated that they would be satisfied with about 40%[70] He also spoke, on the possibility of forming a coalition, but stressed this would not be with the parties currently in the government, because 'a vast majority of people wanted a change of government' and they would 'be cheated if parties from the present coalition returned to the government'[71]

The HDF led Coalition had all but self destructed. It faced increasing economic and political problems. The 1992 split in its Coalition partner, the Smallholders, resulted in the weakening of the Coalition's parliamentary basis and the friction with the right wing populist Istvan Czurka group in the HDF, further divided the Forum and its voter support in 1993. From then on, its popularity

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69. Ibid, p. 261.
70. Socialist's Chairman Horn outlines HSP programme; views failure of right wing, *Mlada fronta dnes* (Prague), 2 May 94 in SWB, Pt2, EE/1990, 6 May 94, A/3.
71. Ibid, A/3.

progressively diminished. The death of the Prime Minister Antall, the blatant seizure of the control of the media just prior to the campaign and consistent indifference towards the spreading social misery and unemployment (13.6%) sealed the HDF's fate.[72]

The election programme of the HSP on the other hand was a pragmatic balance between efforts to improve the economy and caution against unrealistic expectations.

The HSP established a commanding position from the first round itself. Horn currently in hospital , being treated for a car accident during the campaign, held the preliminary results to be 'very good' and to exceed expectations'[73] He said that nobody should have doubts about the continuance of reforms – "it is completely certain them reform will continue. The essence here is that we must tackle the task more wisely in a good number of spheres.'[74] He nevertheless stressed that one thing must never be forgotten: that it is not the people who are guinea pigs. It is necessary to work in a manner so that the people live better, so that they secure a normal life for themselves and their children'[75]

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72 . Racz and Kukorelli, The 'second generation' post Communist elections------, p. 260.

73 . Socialist leader : election results for HSP better than expected, Duna TV satellite Service, Budapest, 9 May 94 in SWB, Pt2, EE/1993, 10 May 94 A/3.

74 . Ibid, A/4.

75 . Ibid, A/4.

Imre Szekeres, the executive deputy chairman of the HSP, also reiterated this stand – '... such a reversal is not threatening the country, no matter which party wins, because no one in this country wants a reversal; neither the [76] electorate nor nay democratic political party. He said any coalition negotiations would be undertaken after the second round, with 'the parties whose programmes are close to that of the socialist party'[77]. He indicated the SzDSz and FIDESz as such parties.

The HSP announced that its guidelines would be 'to preserve, to renew and to surpass'.[78] It would preserve the values of the past four years and make them up with what the pervious government forgot to accomplish.

The party again reiterated its earlier stand that even if they obtained an absolute majority, they would consider it necessary to have as broad a coalition government as possible.[79]

In the period before the second round of elections, the HSP started informal negotiations with the SzDSz. Gabor Kuncze, head of the SzDSz appeared in a television interview, along with Horn to

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76. Socialists' deputy chairman: democracy irreversible in Hungary, Duna TV satellite service, 8 May 94, in SWB, Pt2, EE/1993, 10 May 94, A/44.
77. Ibid, A/5.
78. HSP intends to preserve and supplement past values ,Hungarian Radio, Budapest , 9 May 94, in SWB, Pt2, EE/1994, 11 May 94, A/4.
79. Socialist want braod coalition even if they gain absolute majority, Hungarian Radio, 10 May 94, in SWB, PT2, EE/ 1995, 12 May 94, A/7.

discuss post elections tasks.[80] He spoke for the need of the new government to draw up a very detailed coalition agreement.

The final results showed a over whelming victory for the HSP.

ELECTIONS; 1994[81]

Party	% of votes	No. of Mandates	%
HSP	32.99	209	54.14
SzDSz	19.74	70	17.87
HDF	11.74	37	9.84
ISP	8.82	26	6.74
CDPP	7.03	22	5.70
FIDESZ	7.02	20	5.18

Gyula Horn, in his speech after the election victory, said the HSP, 'supported by almost two million voters, has become a genuine catch all party embracing left wing ideals and capable of laying the foundations of a new social consensus Hungary badly needs.'[82] He announced, 'the HSP wishes to pave the way for reconciliation and cooperation, and wants to work together will all sober forces and people prepared to do so'[83]

He said the SzDSz, the runner up in the elections could be a natural coalition partner for them. The HSP Congress to be held the

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80. HSP and Free Democrats' leaders discuss post-election tasks, Hungarian TV 1, 25 May 94, in SWB, Pt2, EE/2007, 27 May 94, A/6.
81. Cited in Racz and Kukoreli, The 'Second generation -------
82. "We have won the elections" : HSP's Gyula Horn to seek a new social consensus, MTI News Agency 29 May 94, in SWB, Pt2, EE/2010, 31 May 94, A/9.
83. Ibid, A/9.

next weekend would decide whom to invite for a possible governing coalition and who the nominee for the premier would be.

The HSP Congress met on 4th Jun 94. It nominated Horn as its Prime Ministerial candidate fairly unanimously (431 out of 450 delegates). It also unanimously called for starting coalition negotiations with the SzDSz. In his closing speech, Horn, among other things, said the party would have to maintain its current profile; 'the HSP should remain a people's party's- the party of Auntie Mary and Uncle Joe.'[84]

The SzDSz, in its party convention on 5th June, decided in favour of coalition negotiations, after a long and arduous internal debate. 562 delegates were in favour and 187 against.

Tough negotiations followed and in a relatively short time, detailed agreement was reacted on three sets of issues (1) acceptance of the basic directions of policy (2) creation of a conciliation mechanism both in the administration and the legislature (3) a pragmatic agreement regarding sharing of government posts and parliamentary committee positions.

The agreement was endorsed on 26th June 94 by the HSP Congress (428 out of 436) and on 27th June by the SzDSz Delegates

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84. Horn says HSP should remain party of "Auntie Mary and Uncle Joe", Hungarian Radio, 4 June 94, in SWB, Pt2, EE/2015, 6 Jun 94, A/8.

Convention by 479 to 106. The SzDSz took four posts in the government, but an effective veto on government decisions.

XI THE HSP IN POWER, 1994-98

The HSP's record in government was mixed. Horn held that his government had 'restored the economy, stabilized financial affairs and shifted the country from a state of indebtedness to course of development'[85] But in its tenure, fierce controversies had risen. The Finance Minister, Bekesi had resigned in January 95, following disagreements with Horm regarding the economic reform programme. The next incumbent, Dr. Bokros resigned in February 1996, after the constitutional count ruled in June 95 (and further in September and November 1995) that certain elements of the austerity programme announced in March 95 were unconstitutional . Peter Medgyessy became the new Finance Minister. In October 1995, the Labour Minister resigned in protest against the adverse social consequences of the austerity programme. There were allegations of corruption and mismanagement in privatization issues.

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85 . Premier addresses socialists' election compaign rally, Hungarian radio, 16th April in SWB, Pt2, EE/ 3204, 18 April 98, C/4.

In July 1997 Hungary was invited to enter into discussions regarding its application for NATO membership. A referendum in November 1997, approved of Hungary's accession to NATO by 85.3% of votes cast (The total turnout was about 49%).

XII THE 1998 ELECTIONS

The HSP was reasonably confident of retaining power. Nevertheless by the time of the 1998 elections, it faced a serious challenge from a FIDESz led coalition, including the HDF and the Hongarian Christian Democratic Forum, a newly formed association of the break away members of the CDPP. Also worrying was the rise of the right wing Hungarian Justice and life party (MIEP) formed by former (expelled) HDF member, Istvan Czurka.

The HSP led in the first round but later the FIDESz grouping surged ahead. The government parties (HSP and SzDz) concluded agreement to co-operate in the second round. The HSP rejected an electoral bargain proposed by the non-parliamentary Workers party[86] whereas the Agrarian Federation announced it would help the HSP in the second round[87]

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86. Socialists reject electoral pact with workers Party, MTI, 13 May 98, in SWB, Pt2, EE/3227, 15 May 98, C/5.

87. Agrarian Federation to help Socialists in second round of elections, MTI, 13 May 98, in SWB, Pt2, EE/3227, 15 May 98,. C/5.

However, all this did not help much. In the new parliament, the HSP got 134 seats and the SzDSz 24. The winner was the FIDESz-Hungarian Civic Party with 147. The Small holders got 48, the MDF, 18 and the MIEP 14, and there was one independent.

A government was formed by the FIDESz – Hungarian Civic Party in coalition with the MDF and the Smallholders. Viktor Orban of the FIDESz became Prime Minister.

The HSP's defeat was attributed to discontent with social and economic conditions, and the increasing rate of crime (there had been a bomb attack on the private residence of the Smallholders"s leader in March 1998), and one on the residence of the deputy Chairman of FIDESz, just prior to the election).

Horn sharply attacked his party's campaign. He said that it was restrained, 'that their compaign was not ear shatteringly loud has not been a bad thing'[88] But 'no answers had been a formulated to a number of statements, slanders and other issues raised by the opposition'.[89]He also announced that he would not seek re-election as party chairman.[90]

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88. Premier slams party's Campaign, doesn't rule out resigning as party chairman, Hungarian TV 20 May 98 in SWB, Pt 2, EE/3234, 23 May 98, C/3.
89. Ibid, C/3.
90. Socialists" chairman to resign,Hungarian radio,2 June 98,in SWB Pt 2,EE/3244,4 June 98,c/6

However, the HSP leadership announced that it would be a "strong, constructive opposition."[91] It would exert utmost efforts in order for the economic results achieved over the last four years not to change unfavourably, "for the sacrifices accepted not to have been in vain....."[92] The impatience of those who lost out in the stabilization process, the poor performance of the SzDSz and the hostility of the Workers Party were considered reasons for affecting the election performance of the HSP.[93]

In the next Congress, former Foreign Minster, and Parliamentary floor group leader, Laszlo Kovacs was elected Chairman of the HSP. He received 384 votes, while the other contender, Sandor Nagy got 144.[94]

XIII. THE FUTURE OF THE HSP

The HSP, in opposition did not remain passive. Even since its defeat in 1998, it has had a strong presence in all subsequent elections, even leading past FIDESz. The FIDESz government also faced a tough time in power. Its coalition ally the Smallholders was

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91. Socialists to be "strong constructive opposition" –leader,MTI News Agency,25 May 98,in SWB Pt 2,EE/3237,27 May 98,c/6

92 Ibid,C/7

93 Ibid,C/8

94. Laszlo Kovacs elected Party chairman,Hungarian radio,5 sep 98,in SWB Pt 2,EE/3237,C/6

wrecked by corruption scandals. The HSP made strong efforts to itself. It spoke of 'thoroughly analyzing West European experiences in preparing its long range program."[95] It would pick out what could be introduced from either that "third way" model of the British Labour Party of the German Social Democratic Party.

However, in its strategy for the 2002 elections, the HSP picked a new candidate: Peter Medgyessy, the Finance Minister in latter years of the HSP ruling coalition (1994-98) to take this post[96]. Initially there was talk of the last Prime Minister of the Communist regime, Miklos Nemeth returning to take this challenge (he had been at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in London since 1991).

Some internal bickering in the party aside, the HSP seemed all set to mount a formidable challenge to FIDESz in the 2002 general elections. The Smallholders, as said, were wrecked by corruption scandals. The HDf and the SzDSz were both in the poor shape,[97] the former since the death of its charismatic leader, Antall,

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[95] Socialists to analyse Labour Party"s "third way model",MTI News Agency,1 Mar 99,in SWB Pt 2,EE/3473,3 Mar 99,C/2

[96] Pre-1990 Socialist Premier to decide on date of return next year,MTI News Agency,28 Nov 99 in SWB Pt 2,EE/3705,3 Nov 99,C/5

[97] The Economist, June 23,2001,p.54

had ceased to be a serious force. The only other party seemed to be the ultranationalist MIEP ((Hungarian Justice and Life party).

Conclusion

The HSP has travelled a long way since its restructuring out of the HSWP in October 1989. However, this was not considered a real break with its past. This took place at its 2nd Congress in 1990, in the aftermath of 1990 elections when it formulated its ideological moorings with more clarity and installed a more credible leadership.

Since then, it increasingly represented itself as a true social democratic party. This image paid dividends when it won the 1994 elections and came to power. Even at this stage, it demonstrated its maturity in striving to organize a broad coalition despite the fact that it had an absolute majority. Its record in office, if not very exceptional, was not too bad, either. Its did lose the 1998 election but not by such a margin as to indicate its political oblivion.

The HSP has, most successfully carved out an enduring niche for itself in Hungarian politics and looks assured to be an important player in the coming times.

CHAPTER V

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: POLAND AND HUNGARY

INTRODUCTION

Having examined the course of political development of Poland and Hungary, in all three phases-communist, 'reform-communist", and post-communist, it is now apt to analyze the findings.

The states of Eastern Europe, under communist regimes precluded the existence of 'civil society'. Civil society is taken to mean public space situated between the dominant official political sphere, and that of private and/or communal life, occupied by a range of associations, organizaitons, parties, movements, etc., that could autonomously organize themselves here and compel the state through political struggles to recognize and respect their existence.[1] Over time, this autonomy from the state helped to institutionalize influence over the political sphere and radically alter it.

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1 Michael Bernhard, 'Civil Society and Democratic Transition in East Central Europe' *Political Science Quarterly*,Vol.108, No.2, 1993,p.308.

THE POLITICAL TRANSITION

As expected, there was a wide gap between the dictates of Marxist theory and the ground situation in Eastern Europe, particularly, Poland and Hungary. Communist rule in both these countries was strongly influenced by certain events- the 1956 revolt in case of Hungary and the various revolts(1956,1968,1970,1976 and 1981) in the case of Poland. These had the effect of significantly curtailing the authority and influence of the communist ideology over many spheres of both society and polity.

The Polish party state had already granted significant autonomy to the Roman Catholic Church and the intellectuals, in wake of the 1956 disturbances, (through later, many of these were later rolled back). Later on, in the 1970s , formations like the committee for the Defence of Workers(KOR) and the movement for Defence of Human and Civil Rights(ROPCiO), to mention the most notable, sprang up. Naturally the regime did not approve of these and harassed them but made no systematic efforts to crush them. The formation of Solidarity in 1980-81, was another significant event totally without precedent in the entire history of communist power. Its existence meant the party, ostensibly based on the premise of representing the proletariat, allowed the existence of

another organization which substantially abridged this premise. The martial law period was, then, only an interval, caused by external compulsions, and after its suspension, a similar situation persisted.

In Hungary, as well, Kadar's long tenure was also based on somewhat similar assumptions. Citizens were assured of significant autonomy to the extent they did not question the presence of communist rule, openly at least.

Having ceded so much authority to the nascent civil society, the regimes found it hard, in the late 1980's, to tackle the myriad problems playing them. There was, indeed a marked lack of political will[2], but as recounted above, voluntary retreat from so many spheres of society retarded their capacity to evolve effective solutions to these problems, solutions which could enjoy a wide legitimacy.

Gorbachev's policy shift undermined the last vestige of the rationale that was the basis of the existence- the ever-present Soviet threat to intervene in case of any radical change in the status quo. Kadar's rule was based on a tacit promise of

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2 Stephen R. Bowers, 'The East European Revolution', *East European Quarterly* Vol.XXV,, No.2, June 1991.

forestalling another Soviet intervention, and Jaruzelski had imposed Martial Law on this basis only.

In 1988, when this policy shift became apparent, changes took place in both these countries. Kadar and some of the older, more ossified hardliners were eased out, and the new leadership indicated reforms were in the offing. In Poland, as well, the 10th Party Plenum in December 1988 -January 1989, focussed on revitalizing the party as a first step for the revitalization of the polity, and also agreed on the desirability or the inevitability of holding talks with the opposition. The relegalisation of Solidarity was also held as an eventuality.

The regime directed negotiated transition in these two countries can be traced to this state of affairs. The leadership in both states realized that the only way out of the torpor of stagnation, was through dismantling the one party authoritarian system and ushering in a multiparty competitive polity.

Pluralism already existed. It just had to be acknowledged officially.

II THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

With the acceptance of political pluralism, and competitive politics, the communist parties in these two countries realized that

they needed to radically change themselves, to survive as factors in the new polity. Reformers, a significant proportion of both parties(the PZPR and the HSWP) had been calling for such changes for a while now; it was only now that their views began to receive due attention.

The Hungarians took the lead. Ever since the May 1988 party conference, attempts to reform the party had commenced. In March 1989, an action programme titled 'What are the aims of the HSWP' was released. This held the 'HSWP to be an 'united party of two determining tendencies-communist and social democratic'.[3] In April, the Politburo debated further on reforming the organisational structure. Further reform was placed for the Party Congress scheduled for autumn 1989. The HSWP Central Control Commission, in May 1989, formulated positions on the emerging nature of the party.[4] It called for the HSWP to become an organised, mass party representing the national interests. It wanted enforcement of a new type, generally approved organisational and operational order. This should take into consideration that 'creation and clashing of platform is a natural state of the party' [5]- a

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3 New Party Programme, MTI, 10 March 89 in SWB, Pt.2,EE/0408,14 March 89,B/10.

4 Session of Party Central Control Commission, MTI, 18 May 89, in SWB Pt.2, EE/0463,22 May 89,B/1.

5 Ibid. B/1.

reference to the 'Reform Circles' being set up since November 1988. It further landed these saying 'they launch healthy processes'[6], and that the main points of their efforts coincide with the party's guidelines.

Still there was a conflict over the future ideology of the party. Pozsgay said he envisaged a new type of party not based on a reformed communist party, but on thoughts of European socialism and social democracy.[7] However, Grosz representing the residual orthodox wing held the party must return to its Marxist sources. He mentioned that the programme, 'What does the HSWP want?' contained the assertion that the HSWP is a party of Marxist mentality and 'this is what it wants to be in the future too'.[8]

This ambiguity found expression when the new Hungarian Socialist Party that emerged from the Party Congress in October 1989, did not clearly renounce its connection to the philosophical basis of the HSWP and unequivocally move away from communism. This affected its chances in the 1990 General Elections.

On the other hand the Polish Communist Party only carried out a comprehensive reform, after the 1989 elections conclusively

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6 Ibid. B/1.

7 Hungarian Official on 'Unreformable communism' Hungarian TV, 28 May 89,in SWB, Pt.2, EE/0469,30 May 89.

8 Interview with Karoly Grosz, Hungarian TV,30 May 89, in SWB, Pt.2, EE/0472, 2 June 89,B/5.

showed how marginalised it would be in a competitive polity. Reform efforts had started here, as well, towards the end of 1988,the 10th Plenum of Central Committee being the commencement of the process. Marian Orzechowski delivered a report entitled 'The Reform of the Party as a Condition for the Success of the Strategy of Renewal and Reforms."[9] This spoke of the necessity of fundamental changes in the PZPR. These had three major aspects- the ideological and political identity of the party, the place and role of the party in the state and society, and inside the party, the structures and methods of its functioning.

This report was discussed here and in the second part of the Plenum (January 1989). The resolution passed said 'the continuation of the renewal of socialism demands the deep reform of the PZPR" and 'the Central Committee will decisively act in favour of such changes in the tasks, structure and method of work of the party to ensure that it effectively fulfills its role in a pluralist society and in conditions of a socialist market economy."[10] This could only be met by a party with a 'clear ideological identity and political orientation', a party 'that is homogenous on fundamental

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9 Plenum of the PZPR Central Committee, PAP, 20 December 88, in SWB, Pt.2, EE/)544,23 December 88,B/5.

10 Resolution : Plenum of PZPR Central Committee, Polish TV, 18 January 89, in SWB, Pt.2, EE/0363, 20 January 89,C/1.

matters, a mass party, internally democratic and effective in its activity'.[11] The third theoretical and ideological conference of the PZPR in February 1989, constituted a study team under the co-chairmanship of Zygmunt Czarzasty and Leszek Miller, to examine the transformation of the party in the process of socialist renewal.

The 1989 elections when the PZPR could not win even one freely contested seat accelerated efforts to revamp the party. Rakowski, the first secretary of the PZPR said he favoured 'a party representing socialism of the future.'[12] This formation would be 'completely deprived of the Stalinist legacy, will be able to win elections, to develop and rationalise democracy', and significantly, it could not be 'only the heir of the orientations forming the present PZPR'.[13] It had to be open to 'an alliance with forces of similar aspirations which are also active in the hitherto opposition'.[14]

The run up to the 11th Congress,was set by the Central Committee plenum of October 1989. This intended to hold discussions prior to the Congress on the future shape of socialism in Poland,the model of the party and programmatic goals. The 17th

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11 Ibid. C/1.

12 Mieczyslaw Rakowski on changing the PZPR, PAP, 1 September 89, in SWB,Pt.2, EE/0552, 4 September 89,B/8.

13 Ibid. B/9.

14 Ibid. B/9.

plenum in January 1990 discussed the programmatic declaration of the new party to be set up. This made a clean break with the communist ideals and linked its future to democratic socialism.

The Congress was held towards the end of January 1990. On the first day after a long debate on the new party,the delegates decided to suspend the Congress and inaugurate debates for the founding congress of the new party of the Polish left. The new party,that emerged out of the Congress was the "Social Democracy of the Polish Republic"(SdRP).This new party avoided all references to Marxism playing any role in its ideology, but instead plumped for the ideals of Scandinavian type social democracy.

III THE SUCCESSOR PARTIES IN ELECTORAL POLITICS (1989/1990-2000)

The successor parties in both countries were, in the beginning, insignificant players in democratic politics. Poland's party did come second in the 1991 elections, but in a badly fragmented legislature. The Hungarians after their below average showing in the 1990 elections realized they had not jettisoned their Marxist past convincingly. This was remedied in the May 1990 party Congress, when it identified its position as a leftist 'social

democratic-socialist' party without any dogmatic commitment to Marxism.

After the first democratic elections in both countries(1990 in case of Hungary and 1991 in Poland) the successor parties in both countries slowly climbed back into the reckoning. In Poland in the 1991 elections the absence of any qualifying limit had resolved in a badly fragmented legislature (29 parties, with 14 first possessing one seat apiece). Any government formed would not very stable. Earlier, in 1990, the Solidarity grand coalition had disintegrated into 'right' and 'left' components of the polity. President Walesa's increasing meddling in the government was yet another factor that caused instability. Communism had been overthrown by broad coalitions that virtually included every group except the secret police.[15] Coalitions this broad would be unlikely to survive long in the best of circumstances. Governments formed by these coalitions widened income distributions while trying to improve efficiency. In Poland, everybody became worse off (average incomes declined 26% by middle of 1991).[16]

This hit the industrial wage earners and private farmers particularly hard -two of the most important members of the 'anti-

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15 Survey:Eastern Europe, *The Economist*, 13 March 1993,p.5.

16 Ibid.p.5.

Communist" coalitions. Kuron, minister in the Mazowiecki government wryly pointed out the 'historical paradox that those who brought communism down also brought themselves down'.[17]

In Hungary, as well though the sort of fragmentation prevalent in Poland was not present, still the Antall led HDF government could not be an unqualified success. The task of effecting a dual breakthrough of democratization and rapid economic transformation while preserving elite consensus on the adverse social consequences of this process was a tough proposition. To bridge the gap between budgetary resources and public expectations, the HDF opted for nationalist ideologies and the revival of the country's cultural hegemony in the region. Those failed to impress the public or the intellectuals. The next was the attempt and selective rehabilitation of features of Horthy's regime and Christian values.

The split in the HDF, with the expulsion of the ultra nationalist Istvan Czurka as well as in its coalition partner, the Smallholders, the death of Antall boded the way for the government's defeat in the 1994 elections. The opposition accused them of 'their backward, looking nature, social indifference,

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[17] Ibid.p.5.

corruption, economic crisis, unemployment and lack of expertise in professional politics."[18]

The SdRP in Poland, and the HSP in Hungary, capitalised on the weaknesses of the first post-communist governments. They studiously cultivated the image of being pragmatic professionals, helping the government of the day in tasks of national development, but being aloof from recriminations and political tussles within the ruling coalition. And even when they were attacked, they faced the situation with quiet dignity rather than descending to invective themselves. The results showed. In Poland, the SdRP won the 1993 elections, and the HSP, the 1994 Hungarian elections. Even in victory, they strove to get a broad coalition, the SdPR tied up with the Polish Peasants party and the HSP entered into an alliance with the Alliance of Free Democrats(SzDSz). Both the suceesor parties had captured the traditional constituency of social democratic parties in their countries. In fact they laid claim to this constituency as their own. Social democratic parties did exist in both countries, but were marginalized electorally. Both the SdRP and the HSP had applied to

[18] Barnabas Racz and Istvan Kukorelli, The 'Second-generation' post-communist Elecitons in Hungary in 1994, *Europe Asia Studies*, Vol.47, No.2, 1995,p.263.

join the Socialist International and their applications were seriously considered, a further indication of the legitimacy they enjoyed.

The record of both governments in power seemed to dispel any fears of a communist revival. Infact, both had promised to carry forward reform, and were in agreement on most measures, but only questioned the methods. Horn, leader of the HSP, had stated his intention of tackling it more 'wisely'[19] after his party did well in the first round of the 1994 election and even Kwasniewski, head of the SdRP voiced similar sentiments in 1993.[20]

Though both the governments were voted out in the next elections (Poland, 1997: Hungary, 1998), it was not their defeat. In most cases, they retained their vote percentage or even increased it, but it was the dismal electoral performance of their coalition allies that led to their exit (the Peasant Party in Poland, came down to 27 seats from 132 won in 1993, and in Hungary, the SzDSz got 24 whereas in 1994, they had 70).

Their defeat was more in the nature of the rotation of power, seen in parliamentary democracies, than a crushing defeat. In opposition both the parties, revitalized themselves for the next

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19 Socialist leader : Election results for HSP better than expected, Duna TV Satellite Service, Budapest , 9 May 94 in SWB, Pt.2, EE/1993,10 May,94A/3.

20 SdRP leader interviewed about left-wing in Poland and government, Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 30 Dec 93, in SWB, Pt. 2, EE/1885, 3 Jan 94, A/7

election, and if the preliminary situation is anything to go by, both appear set for a return to power. In Poland, the AWS-UW coalition came adrift, with the UW walking out and the AWS getting increasingly unpopular. In Hungary all is not well with the FIDESz led coalition, too.

CONCLUSION

A number of similarities can be discerned between the Hungarian and Polish experiences. The transition in both was negotiated and regime-driven, and in advance of an overt threat to the regime.

By the end of 1980's, reform elements in the party had seized ascendancy and began moving both party and state toward reform. In both places, transition in the polity took place before comprehensive reform of the party but this was by no means neglected. This overdue step was also accomplished as fast as possible- the Poles managing to do this in one go in January 1990 whereas the Hungarian process begun in October 1989 only reached culmination after the 1990 elections, when the party leadership realized they were still in an ambiguous position.

Once both successor parties had successfully cast off the burden of the past, they again became important players in the

political landscape, as evinced by their return to power, as a part of as broad a coalition they could muster.

Both the successor parties, the Polish SdRP and the Hungarian HSP, have successfully transformed themselves into European style social democratic parties, and have carved out durable positions in the new polities of their respective countries.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have examined the transformation of the political systems in Poland and Hungary. They focussed particularly on the communist parties in these countries, and the successor parties that emerged out of them once communism was dislodged from the position of the dominant ideology. As the last chapter shows both these cases had quite a few similarities. It will not be out of place here to add a few more observations on these successor parties in the reconstituted polity.

These successor parties had to compete in elections now. Hence they were faced with the necessity of changing themselves from essentially instruments of social, political and economic control to electorally competitive parties. The Poles and the Hungarians did not have to strive very hard as far as the first condition was concerned. The preceding decades had already seen a considerable diminution of such control.

As far as their new character was concerned, Huntington argues that three principal groups existed within the former governing parties during the course of democratic transition. He terms these groups as the 'standpatters', 'liberal reformers', and

'democratic reformers'. The key to electoral success depends heavily on the liberal and democratic reformer's ability to tend off the antidemocratic standpatters.

The main issue within the party, once decision to take part in the electoral process had been made, was the extent to which the party was willing to break with the part and compromise on the programmatic goals and ideology to remain politically competitive.The first two categories were less willing to do this than the democratic reformers. The liberals were usually those holding top positions in the former communist regimes, whereas the democratic reformers, were usually middle level leaders, many of whom joined the party only towards the end of communist rule. They sought a complete break with the past, and fully embraced internal pluralism and attempted to broaden the party's social and political base for beyond the traditional confines of workers' and peasants' interests.

A key reason underlining the success of the Polish and Hungarian parties was the predominance of the democratic reformers in the newly reconstituted parties. The Polish achieved this right away in the founding congress of the successor party, the SdRP in January 1990, while the Hungarians though having

created the successor party in earlier, in October 1989, only achieved this after its poor showing in the 1990 general elections

Thus these parties repudiated most of their past, and adopted flexibility in their ideology and party programmes. They attempted to express themselves as 'social democratic' parties and succeeded in this, given the political marginalization of the existing traditional social democratic parties. The successor parties, often the only representation in the new legislative, of the traditional 'left wing' of the electorate (workers,peasants, etc.) demonstrated bytheir voting record and behaviour their commitment to positions consistent with social democratic values.

The successor parties effectively filled the socio-political niche expected to be occupied by social democratic parties. By embracing democracy and a market economy, the successor parties became ideologically viable political parties in the new political climate. More importantly, they managed to create an apparently credible image as parties possessing more political professionalism, and capable of providing more security during the economic transition. To this, they were helped by the profound political instability, present in a marked degree in Poland's first freely elected Sejm (1991-93) and the earlier disintegration of Solidarity coalition. In

Hungary too, though the HDF led coalition did last out its term, it was also riven by factionalism and instability, though not comparable to Polish levels. The problems resulting from the economic transitions, as well, be it the Polish 'shock therapy' approach or the Hungarian 'gradual economic transformation', all these resulted in the people facing much dislocation and insecurity. The successor parties did agree on the basic direction of reforms, but promised to alleviate social misery by promising to carry these out in a more reasonable and 'humane' manner.

The successor parties demonstrated further proof of their democratic credentials on coming back to power. Though having a impressive share of the vote and tally of seats, they tried to increase their acceptability by entering into a coalition.

As demonstrated, the communist successor parties of both Poland and Hungary have fully adapted themselves for democratic politics. They have become an integral pat of the political landscape in both countries and set assured to maintain their presence in times to come.

APPENDIX- A

POLISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, 1991-97
SEJM RESULTS
(% OF VOTES; SEATS)

	1991	1993	1997
1. Democratic/Freedom Union(UD)	12.3;62	10.6;74	13.4;60
2. Democratic Left Alliance(SLD)	12.0,60	20.4,171	27.1,164
3. Catholic Election Action(WAK)	8.7;49	6.4;0	with 30
4. Centre Alliance	8.7;44	4.4;0	with 30
5. Polish Peasant Party	8.7;48	15.5,132	7.3;27
6. Confederation for Independent Poland(KPN)	7.5;46	5.8;22	with 30
7. Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD)	7.5;37	4.0;0	-
8. Peasant Alliance	5.5;28	2.4;0	with 30
9. Solidarity	5.1;27	4.9;0	with 30
10. Polish Friends of Beer	3.3;16	0.1;0	-
11. German Minority	1.2;7	0.7;4	0.4;2
12. Christian Democracy	3.5;5	-	with 30
13. Polish Western Union	0.2;4	-	with 30
14. Party of Christian Democrats	1.1;4	-	-
15. Union of Labour/Labour Solidarity	2.1;4	7.3;41	4.7;0
16. Union of Political Realism	2.3;3	3.2;0	2.0;0
17.Party X	0.5;3	2.7;0	-
18.Movement for Silesian Autonomy	0.4;2	0.2;0	-
19. Democratic Party(SD)	1.4;1	-	-
20. Democratic Social Movement	0.5;1	-	-
21. Union of Great Poles	;1	-	-
22. Peasant Unity	;1	-	-
23. Great Poland and Poland	;1	-	-
24.Solidarity 80	;1	-	-
25. Piast Peasant Election Alliance 9.6	;1	-	-
26. Electoral Committee of Orthodox Believers	;1	-	-
27. Krackow Coalition of Solidarity with the President	;1	-	-
28. Union of Podhale	;1	-	-
29. Alliance of Women against Life's Hardships	;1	-	-
30. Solidarity Electoral Alliance (AWS)	-	-	33.8;201
31. Non party Reform Bloc(BBWR)	-	5.4;16	with 30
32. Lepper's Self Defence	-	2.8;0	-
33. Movement for Reconstruction of Poland	-	-	5.6;6
34. National Pensioner's party	-	-	2.2;0
35. National Alliance of Pensioners	-	-	1.6;0
36. National Christian Bloc	-	-	1.4;0

APPENDIX-B

PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SOLIDARITY ELECTORAL ACTION (AWS) (March 1997)

Solidarity Trade Union

Centre Agreement
Christian National Union
Confedration for an Independent Poland-Patriotic Camp
Polish Federation of Catholic Families
Movement of One Hundred
Conservative Peasant Party
Confederation for an Independent Poland
Solidarity Electoral Action Youth Committee
Polish Peasant Party-Peasant Alliance
National League
Party of Christian Democrats
Movement for the Republic-Patriotic Camp
Lech Walesa Institute
'Solid in the Elections' Movement
Non-party Bloc for the Support of Reforms
Party of Polish Democracy
Christian Democratic-Labour party
New Poland
'Kontra' Trade Union
Conservative Coalition
Polish Borderlands Party
Confederation of Republicans
Centre Agreement-Integration initiative
Polish Unity
National Right
Party of Real Politics
Polish Western Union
Polish Forum
Polish Ecological Party of Greens
'Rola' movement of Peasant-Agrarian Options
Safe Poland Foundation
Polish Patriotic Forum
Party of the National Alliance
Catholic Laity Union
'Victoria'party
National Conference of Citizen's Committees
Solidarity Individual Farmers Union-Agreement for Soldiraty Electoral Action

APPENDIX C

PARTIES AND ORGANISATIONS IN THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT ALLIANCE (SLD) (MAY 1997)

Bielarusian Socio-Cultural Fellowship

Democratic Union of Women

Federation of Metal,Electrical and Machine Industry Workplace Union Organisations

Federation of Polish Higher and Scientific Schools Teaching Unions

Federation of Health Service Employees' Trade Unions

Federation of Polish State Railways Employees' Trade Unions

Federation of Light Industry Employees' Trade Unions

National Council of Left-wing Veterans

National Representation of Retirees and Pensioners

Supreme Co-Operative council

New Democracy

All-Poland Agreement of Trade Unions

Labour Party

Polish Socialist Party

Polish Green Party

Polish Union of Retirees, Pensioners and Invalids

Movement of Working People

Independent European Initiative "NIE'

Social Democracy of the Polish Republic

'Generations' Association

Association of Poles injured by the Third Reich

'Watchtower'Polish Home Association

Secular Culture Fellowship

Fellowship of the Friends of Social Sciences

Christian-Social Union

Polish Students' Association

Polish Teachers' Association

Union of Polish Socialist Union

'Builders' Trade Union

Trade Union of Miners in Poland

Copper Industry Employees Trade Union

Trade Union of Farming Workers in the Republic of Poland

Polish People's Army Trade Union

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