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## **Democratization of party elections in the Soviet Union. Central Committee CPSU Instructions on Elections, 1937-1988**

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59. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
61. *De Volkskrant*, 9 september 1975; *NRC Handelsblad*, 4 oktober 1975.
62. *De Volkskrant*, 6 oktober 1975.
63. Handelingen Tweede Kamer 1975-1976, p. 639, 667 (28 oktober 1975).
64. Tweede Kamer 1975-1976 13600 (Hoofdstuk X (Defensie)), nr. 17 (15 januari 1976).
65. Handelingen Tweede Kamer 1975-1976, p. 667 (28 oktober 1975), 981 (11 november 1975), 1204 (18 november 1975).
66. *NRC Handelsblad*, 15 november 1975.
67. Vgl. *de Volkskrant*, 21 juni 1975.
68. Zo is de ex-diplomaat dr. H.N. Boon van mening dat het aanvaarden van 'optie 3' 'ongetwijfeld een succes voor de vasthoudende diplomatie van de minister' is, hoewel hij overigens een zeer negatieve beoordeling geeft van de wijze waarop (enkele ministers van) het kabinet-Den Uyl het buitenlandse beleid voerden, *Afscheidsaudiëntie. Tien studies over diplomatieke praktijk*. Ad Donker, Rotterdam 1976, p. 299-300.
69. Buteux behandelt de episode van december 1974 ook als een voorbeeld van de wijze waarop nationale preoccupaties mede het beleid van regeringen in het consultatieproces van de NAVO zijn gaan bepalen, *Op. cit.*, p. 145-150.

## Onderzoek

### Democratization of party elections in the Soviet Union

Central Committee CPSU Instructions on elections,  
1937-1988

by John Löwenhardt

In February of 1987, Estonia was one of the first Soviet republics in half a century to experiment with contested elections of local Communist Party secretaries. It did so in response to General Secretary Gorbachëv's appeal at the Central Committee's January Plenum to have real, secret elections. A few weeks later, answering questions from *Pravda* correspondents, the Chief of the Estonian Party Organizational Department made the surprising statement that

'We are acting in violation of the instruction on elections in Party organizations. Paragraph 16 clearly says that secretaries of City and district Party committees are to be elected in an open vote. But then, that is what an experiment is for.'<sup>1</sup>

While testifying to the fact that political practice in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is not always in line with the written rules of the Party's official documents, his statement implied his conviction that if the Party's top political leadership wanted to pursue a policy of democratization, it would eventually have to change the Central Committee's official Instruction on elections.

Twenty-four years ago, Harry Rigby has analyzed changes in Party electoral processes and practices since the October Revolution.<sup>2</sup> Since 1964, little had changed until Gorbachëv shook his Party with the proposals of January 1987. In an earlier article, published five months before the CPSU's 19th Party Conference opened on 28 June 1988, I have analyzed experiments in secret voting on multiple candidates for the function of bureau member or Party committee secretary.<sup>3</sup> In 1987, 120 secretaries of district and city Party committees were elected in such a way<sup>4</sup>; but many more were 'elected' with the traditional manipulative techniques of 'recommendations' from above and votes by a unanimous show of hands. By early 1988, however, it seemed as if the movement for democratization of Party elections had disintegrated.

Expectations were raised in the media discussions leading up to the 19th Party Conference and in the Theses for that conference, accepted by the Central Committee on 23 May 1988, concluding that

'In the light of the experiences since the January (1987) CC CPSU plenum the procedure for forming elective Party organs must be changed. Genuine competition, broad discussion of candidates and the secret vote must become the norm.'<sup>5</sup>

But the Party Conference, in spite of fine sounding statements and resolutions, did not alter the Party Rules or adopt new Instructions. It did not have the authority to do so and the Politburo probably preferred the conference to discuss general trends instead of deciding upon detailed rules. Neither did the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of 29 July adopt new Instructions. But in its resolution 'On reports and elections in Party organizations' it instructed the Politburo 'taking account of the discussions at the plenum, to confirm the Instruction on the election of leading Party organs'. The resolution also said that 'the plenum considered it necessary to implement the principle (*polozhenie*) adopted by the 19th All-Union Party Conference on limiting the tenure in one and the same electoral office to two five-year terms...'

Again, it seemed that the leadership in the Politburo and Secretariat feared decision-making in the Central Committee on such an important subject as internal Party democracy. Instead, they preferred to strike a compromise among themselves.

And so, on 12 August 1988, 15 years after the last change and barely in time for a new round of elections in the Party organizations, a new *Instruction on elections of leading Party bodies* was 'confirmed' by the Central Committee, i.e. adopted by the Politburo or, more likely, by the Secretariat. In the same month it was published in the journal *Partiinaiia Zhizn*.<sup>6</sup>

As I have documented in the article referred to above, the procedure for election of Party secretaries and members of bureaux of Party committees in the provinces, districts and towns has been the subject of a 'democratization' in the past. This took place in 1937 at the February-March plenum of the Central Committee, in the midst of the reign of terror, where Party Secretary Zhdanov delivered a speech in which he criticized the drawing-up behind closed doors of lists of candidates for Party positions and the subsequent public 'voting' on such lists by a show of hands. These undemocratic procedures should be abolished once and for all, Zdanov said half a century ago. His criticism was authoritatively repeated and laid down in a Central Committee resolution dated 27 February 1937. It ordered all Party organizations to stop coopting members of the Party com-

mittees and restore the Statutory principle of electing the leading Party organs; to prohibit election by lists; and to make sure that elections proceeded by secret ballot. These general instructions were subsequently made more precise in a letter 'On the organization of elections of Party organs' dated 20 March 1937 that the Central Committee wrote to all Party organizations.

Although it must be said that the aims and motives for the democratization of 1937 are still a matter of controversy among sovietologists and historians of Stalinism, one of the more acceptable interpretations seems to be that Stalin's democratization was never intended to be more than tactics, i.e. a temporary instrument to stimulate grass-roots Party members to help the top leadership in removing local leadership cliques in the districts, towns and republics of the USSR. The democratic innovations of 1937 were done away with in a matter of four years.

On 29 March 1938, in preparation for a new round of Party elections, the letter of March 1937 was replaced by an Instruction that revoked some of the measures of the previous year. At the 18th Party Congress in 1939 the new procedure for Party elections led to changes in the Party's Rules and on 29 August of the same year new Instructions were again issued, to be followed by new Instructions on 3 April 1941. These 1941 Instructions remained in force up to 29 March 1962 when, following the 22nd Party Congress, new Instructions implemented Khrushchëv's demand for fixed turnover rates in Party organs. The 1962 Instructions had subsequently been amended on 2 July 1966 and 7 August 1973, and the text of 1973 was still in force on 11 August 1988.

In this rather technical article I will first describe the changes in the Instructions on Party elections between 1937 and 1973. Against this background I will present an analysis of the new Instructions of 1988. In doing so, the following four core aspects merit special attention:

1. The procedure for establishing the number of Party committee members to be elected;
2. Turnover provisions in Party organs;
3. The nomination procedures;
4. The voting procedures.

### 1937-1973

#### 1. Size

Art. 3 of the 1937 letter said that prior to the actual election the Party

meeting or conference was to establish the number of members and candidate members to be elected to the Party organ. This was necessary because there was no number fixed for each individual organ. This provision was repeated in the following three Instructions (1938, art. 6; 1939, 1941, art. 9), but the 1941 Instructions added that in small district organizations that would not elect a bureau, the number of district committee members should not be higher than 9. In 1962 this provision was dropped and the formulation was changed to 'Before carrying out elections, the Party meeting, conference or congress in a preliminary open vote shall determine the numerical strength of the Party organ to be elected.' Art. 27 of this Instruction provided for a procedure in case the number of committee members actually elected would not match with the numerical strength determined in advance. Such a procedure had not been in force before 1962 (See section 4e, below).

## 2. Rotation

The rotation principle had for the first time been incorporated in 'Party law' by Nikita Khrushchëv's 22nd. Party Congress in 1961. Art. 25 of new Party Rules adopted by that congress said that:

'The principle of systematic renewal of the composition of Party bodies and of continuity of leadership shall be observed in the election of those bodies.

At each regular election of the CPSU Central Committee and its Presidium, not less than one quarter of the membership shall be newly elected. Members of the Presidium shall not, as a rule, be elected for more than three successive terms. Particular Party officials may, by virtue of their generally recognised prestige and high political, organizational and other qualities, be successively elected to leading bodies for a longer period. In such cases, a candidate is considered elected if not less than three quarters of the votes are cast for him by secret ballot.

The membership of the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of the Union Republics, and of the territorial and provincial Party committees shall be renewed by not less than one-third at each regular election; the membership of the area, city and district Party committees and of the committees and bureaus of primary Party organizations, by one half. Furthermore, members of these leading Party bodies may be elected successively for not more than three terms, and the secretaries of primary Party organizations, for not more than two terms.

A Party meeting, conference or congress may, in consideration of the political and professional qualities of an individual, elect him to a leading body for a longer period. In such cases a candidate is considered elected if not less than

three quarters of the Communists attending vote for him.

Party members not re-elected to a leading Party body due to the expiration of their term may be re-elected in subsequent elections.'

These provisions were subsequently inserted in the Instructions of 29 March 1962 (art. 8-10); however, the specific provision on turnover in the CPSU Central Committee and its Presidium (par. 2) was *not* included in the 1962 Instructions. At the 23rd Party Congress in 1966, the first congress after the removal of Khrushchëv, article 25 was deleted and replaced by a much more general provision in art. 24:

'The principle of the systematic renewal of the composition of Party bodies and of the continuity of leadership shall be observed in the election of all Party bodies - from primary organizations to the CPSU Central Committee.'

This provision was still in force when the Theses, adopted by the Central Committee on 23 May, 1988 in preparation for the 19th Party Conference, re-introduced the idea of limited terms for Party functionaries in the following way:

'Establish for all Party committees, from the district and town level up, one uniform term of 5 years. The occupation of elected functions in the CPSU has to be limited to two electoral terms in a row. Election to a third consecutive term can take place only on the initiative of the communists and requires a preliminary decision on admittance to the election. Such a decision is to be taken in a secret vote with no less than 3/4 of the votes of the Party committee members.'

## 3. Nomination

The 1937 letter said that 'candidates for the new make-up of the Party organ are nominated by the delegates and are individually discussed directly at the Party conference... Lists may not be composed ahead of time or discussed outside the plenary meeting of the Party conference.' The letter explicitly formulated the right of every delegate at an election meeting to oppose any number of candidates during the discussion. It introduced an elective aspect into the nomination phase in that it stipulated that with regard to each individual candidate about whom objections had been raised, the delegates had to decide in an open vote whether or not to include the name of that candidate in the list for the secret ballot, and it added that in this open vote 'it is necessary to count all votes, both those 'for rejection' as well as those 'against rejection.'

The 1938 Instructions then added a procedure (art. 7) for terminating

the nomination phase, i.e. the registration of candidates: in the event of such a proposal being made, it was to be decided upon by the meeting in an open vote. The same procedure was established for terminating the discussion of individual candidacies, and as if such had not been implicit in the 1937 letter, it was now explicitly stated that 'candidacies that have not been challenged are not subjected to an open vote and are included in the list for the closed (secret) vote'. (art. 9) One year later, the provision that it was not allowed to make up lists prior to the election meeting and to discuss them outside the session of the Party conference or meeting (1938, art. 7), was dropped; a new paragraph was added, saying that 'consultations of representatives of delegations' could be called on the initiative of the conference Presidium, 'for the preliminary nomination of candidates', and that candidates nominated in such a way 'are put forward at a session of the Party conference... on behalf of this consultation and are discussed personally in the normal way...' The 1939 Instructions added that this procedure should in no way restrict the rights of delegates to nominate and discuss candidates. These provisions were retained in 1941, 1962 and 1973. The Theses for the 19th Party Conference (1988) proposed a much more compelling formulation:

'At elections in all Party committees communists have the right to nominate more candidates than the number of mandates.'

#### 4. Voting

Since 1962 the voting procedure has been set aside in a separate section of the Instructions and takes up a considerable part of the articles (11 out of 28 in 1962, 11 out of 25 in 1973). It is preceded by a section on the nomination procedure and the discussion of nominees. In the 1941 Instructions, 7 out of 20 articles dealt with voting procedure. Voting procedure is here understood as regulations on the following:

- a. the operation of counting commissions;
- b. open or secret voting;
- c. character of the election session: public or closed;
- d. the ballot paper and how to handle it;
- e. determination of election results;
- f. rules on storage of voting papers etc.

4a. *The Counting Commission* – With regard to the counting commission, the 1937 Instructions provided that it be elected by the meeting before the vote; that the number of members be determined by the meeting

and that before the vote takes place the chairman of the meeting is to explain to the delegates the order of secret voting. The commission was to prepare voting boxes. The 1938 instructions added that the election of the commission was to take place in an open vote and that the commission was to elect its own chairman. In 1941 a paragraph was added to the Instructions, saying that in primary Party organizations with less than ten members, counting commissions were not to be elected and their task was to be fulfilled by the presiding officer or another Party member. No significant changes were made in 1962 (art. 20) or 1973 (art. 17).

4b. *Open or secret voting* – The 1937 letter ordered that delegates of all Party organizations to the meetings, conferences and congresses of higher Party organizations be elected in a secret vote. The same applied to the election of members of committees at all levels by these periodic meetings, conferences and congresses. And finally the secret vote was applied to the election of the inner sanctum at all levels: the secretaries and bureau members of these committees. With the exception of the elections to and within the supreme level of the central Party congress, the 1937 letter in fact addressed all elections in the Party. The all-encompassing nature of the regulation on the vote was made clear by the fact that there was one article (art. 2) listing all elections that were to take place in a secret vote.

This situation lasted only one year. The Instructions issued by the Central Committee on 29 March 1938, referring to the same section of the Central Committee resolution of 27 February 1937 as had the letter of 20 March 1937 ('closed (secret) voting in the election of Party organs'), made a big step back. They included part of the offices in a separate article (art. 3) on open voting: the secretaries of PPO committees and the secretaries and bureau members at all higher levels. These 1938 Instructions added Auditing Commissions to the list of organs to be elected in a secret vote, but they removed the most important positions at all levels – the secretaries and bureau members – from that list. The split was retained in the Instructions of 1939, 1941 and 1962, and has been in force ever since. In the 1962 Instructions as amended in 1973, art. 15 dealt with the closed (secret) vote and art. 16 with open votes. Art. 16 provided that

'The open vote is used in the election of

- a. Secretaries of Party committees, secretaries of the bureaux of primary and shop Party organizations and their deputies, at sessions of the Party committees and of the bureaux of the primary and shop Party organizations;
- b. Secretaries and members (candidate-members) of the bureaux of *raion*, *gorod*, *okrug*, *oblast* and *krai* Party committees and the Central Committees of the communist parties of the union republics, at the plenary meetings of these committees;

c. Chairmen of Auditing commissions, at the meetings of these commissions.'

4c. *Character of the election session: public or closed* – According to art. 8 of the 1937 Instruction the secret vote of Party organs was to take place in a closed session of the Party conference, in the presence of only those delegates with the right to cast a vote. In the 1939 Instructions, a paragraph was added, saying that 'Representatives of higher leading Party organs have the right to be present both at open and at closed sessions of Party conferences, congresses and meetings'. This was repeated in 1941 (art. 15), 1962 (art. 22) and 1973 (art. 19).

4d. *The ballot paper and how to handle it* – The 1937 Instructions said (art. 6) that voting papers 'must not be marked or numbered'. This provision was missing from the 1938 Instructions. Each delegate with the right to cast a vote was to receive a voting paper containing the list of candidates and record was to be kept of those who took part in the vote. Under art. 10 each delegate had the right to cross out the names of individual candidates or to add new candidates for the Party organ. The Instructions of 1938 added (art. 13) – and the 1939, 1941 (art. 17), 1962 (art. 24) and 1973 (art. 21) Instructions repeated – that the crossing out or adding of new names on the voting paper could be done 'independently of the question of the intended numerical size of the Party organ to be elected'. Since 1962 the Instructions say that voters have to receive separate voting papers for members and for candidate members of the body to be elected.

4e. *Determination of election results* – The 1937 Instructions ordered the counting commissions not to leave the building in which the meeting took place until the votes were counted and prohibited anyone but members of the commission to be in the room where the counting took place. They were to open the ballot boxes and count the votes separately for members of Party organs and candidate members of Party organs. The Instructions said that the counting commission 'is to count all votes "for" and "against" each individual candidate' (art. 11). Those candidates were to be considered elected who had received most of the votes ('*bol'shinstvo golosov*'), but no less than half of the votes of the delegates with voting rights (art. 12-2). In 1941 (art. 19) this somewhat vague formulation was improved in the words: 'that have received most votes in relation to the other candidates and more than half of the votes of those present... with voting rights'. In 1962 (art. 26) this was changed into 'more than half the votes of CPSU members... with voting rights'. In 1973 (art. 23) the last

three words were discarded. Subsequently, the commission was to prepare a report on the election results for each individual candidate, to be signed by all members of the commission. The voting results were to be announced on each individual candidate at a plenary session of the conference or meeting.

In 1962 (art. 27) a paragraph was added (retained in 1973, art. 24) for the situation where, as a result of the secret vote (the crossing-out and adding of names on the voting papers), the number of people elected to a Party organ differed from the numerical strength of that body as determined in advance. In such a case, an open vote was to establish whether or not to adapt the numerical strength to the number of people actually elected in the secret vote. If the meeting decided to retain the originally determined numerical strength, the candidates would be discussed again, and a new secret vote would have to take place.

4f. *Rules on storage of voting papers* – The 1937 Instructions said that all papers on secret voting were to be kept and stored by the Party organs as secret documents. The 1941 Instructions added that the voting papers were to be kept until the next elections and were then to be destroyed. This has remained unchanged in subsequent Instructions.

### The 1988 Instructions

The main changes in the 1988 Instructions compared with those of 1962 as amended in 1973 ('1973 Instructions') concern provisions for

- by-elections in the Party;
- a recall procedure for elected Party officials;
- the powers of Party conferences;
- the explicitness of the rotation principle;
- the explicit formulation of cooptation procedures;
- the extension of the secret ballot;
- the organization of the secret ballot;
- the counting procedure, and
- the obligation of higher Party organs to correct violations of voting procedures by lower Party organizations.

The coming into force of a few new provisions has been deferred until the Party Rules are changed, i.e. provisions on the frequency of elections in Party organizations at the district level and above (was twice, now once every five years) and on the power of the All-Union Party Conference to renew the Central Committee's membership by 20 percent. However,

close reading of the new Instructions suggests that even before the Party Rules are changed at the next regular Congress (1991), conferences will be held half-way between congresses at all levels but the All-Union level and that at these forthcoming conferences 20 percent of the membership of the republican Central Committees and lower Party committees may be replaced.

The arrangement of the Instructions has remained unchanged, with sections on General Provisions; Nomination and Discussion of Candidates; and Voting Procedure. The number of articles has been extended from 25 to 35, 14 of them on voting procedure. The Appendix to this article contains cross-references of corresponding articles in the 1988 and 1973 Instructions, showing that the ten new articles are in the general section (6) and in the section on voting procedures (4). The following analysis of the new Instructions will proceed along the lines of my description of changes in the 1937-1973 period:

### 1. Size

The procedures on the number of Party committee members to be elected, and on what to do in case the actual number elected deviates from that number, have remained unchanged (art. 15, 33). There is however a new sentence in art. 15 saying that the preliminary determination of the numerical size of the Party organ does not limit the rights of the participants in the meeting to present any number of candidates for the ballot paper. There is also a new provision (note 2 to art. 33) for a situation where the election of a secretary at district level and above, from two or more candidates, does not result in one of them receiving a majority of the votes. In such a case, nomination, discussion and secret ballot have to be repeated.

### 2. Rotation

The rotation principle has been made explicit by incorporation of some of the ideas of the 1988 Party Conference Theses in articles 1, 2 and 13 of the new Instructions. Thus, as soon as the Party Rules are changed in 1991, the frequency of regular elections at district level and above will be lowered from twice to once every five years. In the meantime, however, there will be conferences at all these levels authorized to change the membership of leading Party organs by 20 percent. A new paragraph has been added to art. 13, saying that from the district Party committee up to

and including the Central Committee of the CPSU a person cannot stay in one and the same elected office for more than two consecutive (5-year) terms. The exception suggested in the Theses but subsequently condemned at the 19th. Party Conference (third term after  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote) was not included in the new Instructions.

It is of some interest to compare this new situation to that created by Khrushchëv in 1961-1962. On the one hand, the new Party Rules of 1961 explicitly formulated the rotation principle for the CPSU Central Committee and its Presidium, fixing a limit of 12 years for membership of the Presidium. This, however, was not included in the 1962 Instructions that addressed all elections *below* the level of the Union. In 1988 the situation is reversed. Although now the Politburo is not explicitly mentioned either in the 1986 Rules nor in the 1988 Instructions, the new Instructions now apply the rotation principle to all levels 'from the district Party Committee up to (*do*) the CPSU Central Committee', whereas the Rules of 1986 contain only a very general provision.

### 3. Nomination

New in the 1988 Instructions is a central article 14 formulating the principles of Party elections-new-style:

'At elections of all leading Party organs - up to the Central Committee of the CPSU - broad discussion of candidates and the secret ballot are guaranteed (*obespechivaiutsia*), as well as the *possibility* that the voting papers contain more candidates than there are mandates.' (Italics mine, J.L.)

New in the General Provisions is also article 8 that allows Party organizations when electing delegates to conferences and congresses to propose candidates for the organs that are in their turn to be elected by those conferences and congresses. Such nomination of candidates for Party organs at a *higher* level is to proceed in an open vote. But except for this, the changes in the nomination procedure are mainly of cosmetic and editorial character.

In the Instructions' section on nomination a general provision has now been included in art. 15 on *all* collective decisions during the nomination and discussion phase, to the effect that they are to take place in an open vote. It replaces a number of parenthetic clauses in the 1973 instructions. As said above, 'meetings of representatives of delegations' may be convened for the purpose of selecting candidates before the actual nomination session of the conference or congress takes place. To this procedure the new

Instructions add that for the same purpose a commission may be formed by the Party meeting, conference or congress. As before, this tested procedure for a small and easily manipulated (or *manipulating*) group of Party leaders to present the election meeting with pre-selected candidates is not supposed to limit the rights of the delegates in nominating candidates at the actual election meeting. The 1988 Instructions, however, are a trickle more explicit than those of 1973 in their wording of this right.

As before, the Instructions say that all nominated candidates are to be discussed individually (*personal'no*), but the 1973 provision that such discussion of candidates has to proceed 'in the sequence in which they are included in the list' has been dropped. If during the discussion objections are raised against any of the nominated candidates, the meeting has to vote on whether or not to include them in the list for the secret ballot; this does not go for candidates that remain unopposed. These provisions have remained unchanged.

What is new in the 1988 Instructions, though, is article 23 on cooptation of members of Party committees. It says that by way of exception individual CPSU members may, if deemed necessary, be recommended by higher Party organs for cooptation in lower Party committees between the levels of district committee and republican Central Committee. In such case, the nomination, discussion and voting by the corresponding conference or congress is circumvented and the members of the committee coopt the proposed candidate in a secret vote by a simple majority. It may be remembered that the Central Committee's resolution of 27 February 1937 specifically prohibited such cooptation.

#### 4. Voting

4a. *The Counting Commission* – Provisions on the counting commission have remained unchanged except for a greatly expanded paragraph (26'') on its task in preparing the secret ballot. The innovations of 1988 are that on the voting papers the names of the candidates have to be listed in *alphabetical order*, and that ballot-boxes have to be placed in such a way 'that the communists (have to) approach them *through a cubicle* (cubicles) for secret voting' (Italics mine, J.L.).

4b. *Open or secret voting* – As shown earlier in this article, in the 1938–1988 period different voting techniques applied to different positions, and there were in fact two separate articles, one (15) on the secret, and one (16) on the open ballot. This has been undone in one of the most important inno-

vations of the 1988 Instructions. One paragraph (15'') now deals with all (open) votes in the nomination and discussion phases, and, as in the 1937–1938 period, one article (22) now deals with the actual (secret) voting into office of all delegates, committee and bureau members and secretaries. Thus, starting from 1988 the leading officials of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are no longer elected by an unanimous show of hands. The secret ballot applies to

- members and candidate-members of all Party committees; of bureaux of Primary and shop organizations and of the corresponding (control-)auditing commissions;
- delegates to all Party meetings, conferences and congresses;
- bureau members and secretaries of all Party committees and chairmen of (control-)auditing commissions.

Moreover, at the election of these secretaries and chairmen 'there *may be* more than one candidate' (Italics mine, J.L.). Exceptions to the secret ballot are made only for the promotion of committee candidate-members to full membership and for the election of officials in the smallest primary Party organizations.

The new art. 5 of the 1988 Instructions allows primary Party organizations to initiate a recall procedure in case one of its members who has been elected to a higher Party organ should 'have compromised himself and have lost the trust of the Party organization'. Art. 25 deals with the implementation of this provision. It says that the Party committee concerned can expel the person in question through a secret vote. Only at the lowest level is the vote open, but there the person is not expelled by the committee or bureau, but recalled by those who have elected him. A two-thirds majority is required.

4c. *Character of the election session: public or closed* – Nothing has changed since 1939: as before representatives of higher Party organs have a right to be present at both open and closed sessions, and the secret ballot is to take place in a closed session. Now that cubicles for secret voting have been introduced, the absence of change in this provision is remarkable – to say the least.

4d. *The ballot paper and how to handle it* – The provision in art. 20 of the 1973 Instructions on registration of participants in the vote at the moment that ballot papers are handed out, is absent from art. 29 of the 1988 Instructions. On the act of voting itself there is a very small difference between the 1973 and 1988 texts:

'Each participant ... in the secret ballot has the right to cross out (1973: individual) names on the ballot paper (1973: or) (1988:) and to add new (names), irrespective of the provisionally established numerical size of the Party organ concerned.'

It seems that there is no devious hidden meaning to these differences but they simply result from a general tendency to edit and streamline the 1988 Instructions in a more rational and precise way.

4e. *Determination of election results* – The provisions that the counting commission may not leave the building in which the voting takes place and that only members of that commission may be present in the room where the count takes place, have been dropped in 1988. New in 1988 is a note on spoiled ballot papers: i.e. those that are not of official form (*neustanovlennoi formy*) and, concerning the election of secretaries of Party committees and chairmen of auditing commissions, ballot papers where two or more names have not been crossed out.

The provision under which candidates are to be considered elected has not been changed; i.e. those for whom more than half of the CPSU members present at the election meeting have voted. The procedure inserted in the 1962 Instructions on the situation where, as a result of the secret vote, the number of people elected to a Party organ differs from the numerical strength of that organ as determined in advance, has remained unaltered. In note 2 to art. 33, however, a provision has been added for the case where in elections of secretaries of Party committees and chairmen of (control-) auditing commissions not one of the candidates receives a majority of votes: again, the whole process of nomination, discussion and secret ballot has to start afresh.

4f. *Rules on the storage of voting papers* – No change.

4g. *Control by higher organs* – A new article (35) has been added to allow Party organs to fight abuse of the Instructions. If the Instructions have been violated

'the (a) higher organ must (*obiazan*) deal with such fact and, if necessary, null and void the results and take a decision on new elections.'

Although the new provision does not say how the higher Party organ is to learn about violation of Instructions at lower levels, one may assume that the steering and monitoring of elections by higher Party organs will continue to allow them to determine when to intervene. After all, in art. 49 the current Party Rules provide that the elections of secretaries at all levels be-

low that of the republican Central Committees have to be *confirmed* by next higher Party committees.

## Conclusion

In spite of a number of important new provisions, the 1988 Instructions do not constitute a radical departure from earlier Instructions on the election of leading Party bodies. For example, as in all former Instructions since those of 1939, the drawing up of lists of candidates prior to the election meeting is not explicitly prohibited and a procedure is formulated for the nomination of candidates by representatives of delegations prior to the election meeting. Calls for radical change notwithstanding, these powerful instruments for manipulating elections have not been done away with. As before, all votes during the nomination phase are open; as before, secret votes are to take place in closed session. It is no surprise that prominent Soviet intellectuals have criticized the new Instructions, claiming that they give little room for rank-and-file communists to influence the results of elections.<sup>8</sup>

The main characteristics of the 1988 Instructions, against the background of those of 1937–1973 and of the present political situation, seem to be twofold: first, they betray a tendency towards streamlining, rationalization and codification of rules and regulations; and second, they appear to be the result of political compromise.

The new Instructions show signs of a general tendency in the Soviet Union of Gorbachëv to codify, streamline and rationalize both existing legislation and unwritten rules. Examples are the new written procedures for recall, cooptation, the treatment of spoiled ballot papers and the responsibility of higher Party organs in cases of violation of the Instructions by lower organizations. The new art. 23 on cooptation, for example, should not be taken to suggest that as of 12 August 1988 cooptation is suddenly allowed again, but simply that the practices of the past decades are now codified. A minor point is that an editor seems to have gone over the Instructions and has produced a streamlined text.

Second, the 1988 Instructions seem to be the result of a compromise struck in the Politburo and Secretariat between their radical and conservative wings. Adopting, for the sake of the argument, a radical point of view on democratization of the Party, one can identify both positive and negative developments. On the positive side are such provisions as the limitation of incumbency to ten years; the firm establishment of the secret ballot in combination both with the alphabetical order of names on the ballot pa-

per and with the use and location of voting cubicles; and the explicit formulation of cooptation, recall and appeal procedures. On the negative side, however, are the fact that the decision whether or not to have multiple candidacies for offices in Party bureaux is left to individual organs and is not imposed on them; that the drawing-up of lists is not explicitly prohibited; and that the open vote is retained for situations where a Party conference or organ has to decide what to do if it has elected more people into office than it has reserved seats for them before the secret ballot. In such an open vote those voters who have diverged from the established list of candidates (for example by writing in new names on their ballot paper) could easily be identified, so that the procedure discourages deviant voting behavior.

The new Instructions seem to stem in part from Gorbachëv's desire to sharpen the instruments that he uses for turning his ossified Party into an efficient and powerful machine. To both the top leadership and to local Party members who are prepared to challenge their local leaders, they provide means for a cleansing of the Party's army of conservative *apparatchiki*. But the new instrument cannot be used everywhere and on all occasions. Five weeks after the new Instructions were adopted, it was reported that in *one third* out of the first 30,000 elections in primary Party organizations new leaders were elected in secret ballots, and that in Krasnoiarsk district forty percent of lower level leaders were replaced.<sup>9</sup> At each and every city, district, province or republican Party organization, it is the political situation of the moment, the both intricate and delicate balance of forces between diligent modernizers and reticent conservatives, that determines to what extent use will be made of the democratizing potential of the new Instructions. We will have to show patience before we can even begin to answer the question whether or not they have helped Gorbachëv in transforming the Party that he inherited from Brezhnev into a determined vanguard of democratically minded communists.

Notes

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Appendix

Central Committee CPSU Instructions on elections  
Cross-reference of articles

1973	1988	1988	1973
<b>General</b>			
1	1	1	1
2	11	2	-
3	3	3	3
4	6	4	-
5	10	5	-
6	9	6	4
7	12	7	-
8	13	8	-
		9	6
		10	5
		11	2
		12	7
		13	8
		14	-
<b>Nomination Procedure</b>			
9	15	15	9
10	16,18	16	10
11	17	17	11
12	19	18	10
13	20	19	12
14	21	20	13
		21	14
<b>Voting Procedure</b>			
15	22	22	15,16
16	22	23	-
17	26	24	-
18	27	25	-
19	28	26	17
20	29	27	18
21	30	28	19
22	31	29	20
23	32	30	21
24	33	31	22
25	34	32	23
		33	24
		34	25
		35	-

Paszowska for editing his English.

1. *Pravda*, 1 March 1987.
2. T.H. Rigby, 'Party Elections in the CPSU'. *The Political Quarterly* 35 (1964), p. 420-443.
3. John Löwenhardt, 'Political reform under Gorbachëv: Towards the defederalization of Soviet Politics?'. *Acta Politica* XXIII (January 1988), p. 3-20.
4. *Partiinaia Zhizn* (1988), 11, p. 15.
5. *Pravda*, 27 May 1988.
6. The issue of *Partiinaia Zhizn* containing the text of the August 12 Instruction also contained the texts of the resolutions adopted by the July plenum of the CC. It's colophon indicated two dates for type-setting (28 July, the day before the Plenum, and 12 August) and one date on which the issue was signed for printing by the censor: 12 August. In combination with the text of the official communique on the Plenum and the lay-out of the journal's issue, this suggests that the Instruction was shown to the Central Committee members but that it was adopted after the Plenum by the Secretariat. There has not been a formal Politburo session on 12 August.
7. *Pravda*, 27 May 1988.
8. *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, RL 412/88, 16 September 1988.
9. *International Herald Tribune*, 22 September 1988.

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## 1. Inleiding

Een belangrijke nieuwe impuls aan de discussie over het 'werking class authoritarianism' (zie bij voorbeeld Lipsiet 1950) is ondanks gegeven door Dekker en Ester (1986). Hun stelling komt er (even in het kort) op neer dat de arbeidersklasse niet of nauwelijks meer autoritair is dan andere klassen... met een 'geoperationeel gefundeerd en niet-zinge zorg geoperationeel begrip van sociale klasse' wordt gehanteerd (Dekker en Ester 1986: 7). Te veel is hun inzicht de these van Lipsiet (1950) bestreden op basis van kritiek op de metingen van autoritarisme (Adorno e.a. 1950; zie Miller en Ricman 1961; Lipsiet 1965; Grubb 1979); te weinig aandacht is volgens hen gegeven aan de meting van het klassebegrip.

Recente conceptualisering van het klassebegrip door Wright (1979, 1985) bieden volgens de auteurs mogelijkheden om de these van Lipsiet dat de arbeidersklasse autoritairder zou zijn dan andere klassen, opnieuw kritisch te bezien vanuit die invalshoek.

Zij zijn van mening dat zij op grond van hun bevindingen de conclusie kunnen trekken dat de arbeidersklasse -mits geoperationeel volgens de conceptualisering van Wright (1979, 1985) - zich geleidelijk systematisch onderscheidt van andere sociale klassen door proportioneel hogere autoritairniveau's. Op geen enkele manier kon worden aangenomen dat de arbeidersklasse het monopolie heeft op autoritaire denkbeelden' (Dekker en Ester 1986: 27).

Afgezien van het feit dat de hypothese dat de arbeidersklasse gemiddeld hogere scores vertoont op metingen voor autoritarisme (en daarmee samenhangende attitudes) dan andere klassen, geleidelijk impliceert dat de arbeidersklasse 'het monopolie zou hebben' op deze opvattingen, willen wij hieronder niettemin nader onderzoeken in welke mate personen welke volgens de conceptualisering van Wright tot de arbeidersklasse moeten worden gerekend, meer autoritair zijn dan personen in andere klassen.

## Commentaar en discussie

### Over het autoritarisme van de arbeidersklasse

C.P. Middendorp en J.D. Meloen

#### 1. Inleiding

Een belangrijke nieuwe impuls aan de discussie over het 'working class authoritarianism' (zie bij voorbeeld Lipset 1959) is onlangs gegeven door Dekker en Ester (1986). Hun stelling komt er (zeer in het kort) op neer dat de arbeidersklasse niet of nauwelijks meer autoritair is dan andere klassen... mits een 'theoretisch gefundeerd en met enige zorg geoperationaliseerd begrip van sociale klasse' wordt gehanteerd (Dekker en Ester 1986: 7). Te veel is huns inziens de these van Lipset (1959) bestreden op basis van kritiek op de metingen van autoritarisme (Adorno e.a. 1950; zie Miller en Riesman 1961; Lipsitz 1965; Grabb 1979); te weinig aandacht is volgens hen gegeven aan de meting van het klassebegrip.

Recente conceptualisering van het klassebegrip door Wright (1979, 1985) bieden volgens de auteurs mogelijkheden om de these van Lipset dat de arbeidersklasse autoritairder zou zijn dan andere klassen, opnieuw kritisch te bezien vanuit die invalshoek.

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