
ABSTRACTS

KENDE, PÉTER:

TURNING AWAY FROM POLITICS AS A CHALLENGE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The starting point of the author is that the interpretation of turning away from politics is only possible in democratic systems. He states that signs of increasingly turning away are manifest at the end of the century, indicated among others by a decreasing voter turnout and party membership, by the political and party organs and products of the press being pushed into the background, by a decreasing civilian political activity. After having identified the facts, the author isolates four explanations by analysing the possible causes of these phenomena. He mentions in the first place the increasingly vigorous realisation of the individual ideal of life, a disillusionment in the functioning of democracy in the second, which has different reasons in Western Europe and in the Central and East European new democracies, in the third place he stresses the effects of the processes of globalisation, which, in his view, devalue faith in the importance of national democratic politics. Finally, in the fourth place, he mentions the narrowing of political alternatives as a cause.

The final part of the paper discusses how far turning away from politics represents a challenge for modern societies.

BÉNDEK, PÉTER:

THE ROLE OF THE NATION-STATE IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The starting point of the paper is the situation in which the European Union is such a developing political community the future of which is uncertain for the time being. The member-

states themselves do not exactly know what they want. However, integration has been progressing rather along conflict treatment and not along social engineering, hence it is expedient to handle it accordingly. The research of the author is focused on one of the most obvious conflicts, the one between the nation-states and the Union, and it tries to survey the characteristic features of that conflict.

At the same time it is visible that at present an autonomous scientific terminology and set of norms, adjusted to the radically new conditions, are not available. The conceptualisation of the European processes mostly continues to be done along the most consolidated patterns of the nation-state. The genetic terminology has become void and incoherent. The problems of functional approach are highlighted by the issue of legitimation, profoundly discussed by the paper, as symbolic elements cannot be left out of legitimation, which, in their turn, cannot be activated under the aegis of functionalism. As the acknowledgement of efficiency cannot be made an exclusive factor of legitimation, the advocates of a closer integration are increasingly pressed for a reevaluation of the possibilities of the traditional legitimation of the EU. It is highly unlikely that functionalism as an autonomous language would again appear on the agenda. It is more probable that it would slip into the genetic concept.

At any rate, with the strengthening of a demand for a European policy of identity a serious adversary of national identities and nation-states has emerged. But even at a first sight it is obvious that it is the nation-states based on ethnic identity among them, the adjustment of which may be accompanied by the greatest difficulties, and citizen identity of the citizen-type may more easily overcome the hurdles.

The author agrees with calling the EU a 'contested polity' and that measuring the legitimacy of the supra-state disregards a few factors (such as the gradual incorporation of the EU into the practice of the nation-state which makes specific reflections impossible to compare; or the indirect nature of the set of EU institutions which invalidates direct taking to task along the pattern of the nation-state) beyond the distorting ones when the traditional means of the nation-state are used (public opinion polls and the study of the 'democratic deficit').

The paper draws the conclusion that the legitimation of the EU strongly depends on winning over the political institutions of the nation-state. The ruling national parties and their governments strongly influence the decision-making of the Union, even by their shaken support at home. Thus the European and national policies of the parties cannot be studied independently of each other, when they belong to the rare class of political actors who happen to be present in both venues

simultaneously. On this basis perhaps our assumption is justified that they are one of the most important actors of the legitimation of the EU, and are important mediators of its legitimacy. The (national) political parties play a constructive role from the angle of the legitimacy of the EU, and the growing competency of the EU does not weaken, but, on the contrary, may strengthen them.

SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET:

THE END OF POLITICAL EXCEPTIONALISM?

The United States, as noted by Alexis de Tocqueville and Friedrich Engels, among many other visitors to America, is an "exceptional" country. The term "American Exceptionalism", first formulated by Tocqueville in the 1930s, and since used in general comparative analyses, became widely applied after World War I in efforts to account for the weakness of working class radicalism in the United States. The American system has always placed a lesser emphasis on class awareness and organization than the Old World.

Has anything recently changed? Lipset argues that the United States is no longer exceptional politically, because the Old World left is becoming more like American. As European countries reached new heights of affluence and mass consumption, they began to resemble the United States., socially less stratified, less status bound and much better educated.

America, however, still remains an outlier at one end of many international indices of behavior and values. Americans still lean more to the libertarian side, Europeans to the egalitarian. Americans prefer a competitive, libertarian society with an effective but weak government. The United States is no longer as exceptional politically, though it still remains more unique socially.

JUDIT HAMBERGER-IMRE SZILÁGYI:

COLLAPSE OF FEDERATIONS. TWO CASE STUDIES: CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND YUGOSLAVIA

At the beginning of the 90's collapsed two such East-Central-European countries which were established partly as a result of domestic demand and partly due to foreign pressure. The then established states aspired to unite different nations with

strong cultural and national identity, with significant differences in economics and cultural traditions, and create a new and homogeneous nation: the Czechoslovak and the Yugoslav nation. This concept was widely supported by the nations in leading role (the Czech and the Serbians respectively) while the smaller ones rather tried to preserve their own culture and reach equality of status. They believed to be able to achieve this within the federative system of the state. However the federation established during communism failed to fulfill their expectations. The discontent with this system of political law turned conspicuous when they realized the crisis of the economics and legitimacy of the system. The tremendous differences in the opinions of the representatives of the federated nations, as they were forced to realize when trying to find new solutions to the situation, made it absolutely impossible for the federation to be supported any longer. The smaller nations kept claiming guaranties which would have given way only to a loose federation and pointed toward the creation of independent national states. This means that the deepest cleavages were right between the nations. The collapse was much harder in Yugoslavia because there were no clear dividing lines between the nations as there was between the Czech and the Slovaks. These disintegrations were contemporary with the European integration and were regarded by smaller nations as the precondition and first phase of their integration to Europe.

TOTH, CSABA:

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LIBERAL PARTIES

The study presents a comparative analysis of twelve West-European and two Hungarian liberal parties. The aim of the analysis is to find the common characteristics of liberal parties; to describe what role they play in present-day European political systems. The parties are compared with regards to electoral support, party profile and role within the party system.

The results of the analysis suggest a classification of liberal parties into two categories. Parties belonging to the first category advocate right-wing, neo-liberal economic policy, form coalitions with conservative and Christian parties and typically gain approximately 20% of the votes on national elections. These parties form the right pole of their party systems. Parties of the second category play a centrist role within the party system; they pole only about 5-10% of the

votes, participate in coalitions less frequently and often focus on post-materialist issues.

An additional typology of liberal parties can be created, based primarily on regional differences. Continental liberal parties are secular and urban, considering both their electorate and their program. The composition of the Scandinavian liberal electorate, on the other hand, shows no deviation from the national average in terms of religion, and Scandinavian liberal parties draw more support from rural than from urban regions.

As far as Hungarian liberal parties are concerned, the SZDSZ clearly belongs to the group of centrist liberals, while the evaluation of the Fidesz-MPP is more problematic and exceeds the limits of this study.

TÓTH, ANDRÁS:

HUNGARIAN TRADE UNIONS IN THE STORM OF POLITICS AND ECONOMY

In his paper the author deals with the situation and role of the Hungarian trade unions. As a starting point he takes up Valenzuela's theory according to which the ability of the trade unions to exercise pressure is jointly determined by two dimensions, namely by organisational strength and by political influence. On this basis there are three types of trade unions: social democratic, competitive and business types. The paper states about the development of Hungarian trade unions that it has rapidly left behind the phase of the competitive model and adjustment to the European model has begun. However, this process has suffered a break because the trade unions had been unable to exercise sufficient political pressure on the political system in the interest of simultaneously taken steps for the development of a tripartite conciliation of interests and for the consolidation and strengthening of the system of collective bargain.

NAGY, ÁDÁM:

CIVILIAN IN THE PITCH? STRUCTURES IF THE SET OF YOUTH INSTITUTION AFTER THE SYSTEMIC CHANGE: CIVILIAN PARTICIPATION

In the age of mass and electoral parties it is the civil organisations, delivering information, which link and interweave society and further social problems and issues

deserving support. The paper tries to present examples of such a neo-corporatist co-operation (between governmental and civil organisations dealing with youth), of their chances of operation and disharmonies, as reflected by the reigning governments of the day and of their ideas. At the same time it is totally indifferent from the angle of the interests of youth who is controlling the area, the essence, beyond a structure being under a uniform governmental control and functioning along a transparent vision, of the thing is that the administration should not be interested in red tape and squaring matters among ministries, but in actual work.

The paper surveys the set of youth organisations incorporating civil agents in its operation, the social embeddedness of youth organisations, but it does not study its sociological dimensions, which is undoubtedly a shortcoming of the analysis, hence it may slightly resemble a 'Potemkin village'. Yet, hopefully, it may offer some contributions to drawing the conclusion, worded many times, long ago in theory, namely that efficiency is not more important than results, the service of good objectives. As a result of the foundations of governmental functioning the state administrators of youth policy are often lost in the trap of efficiency.

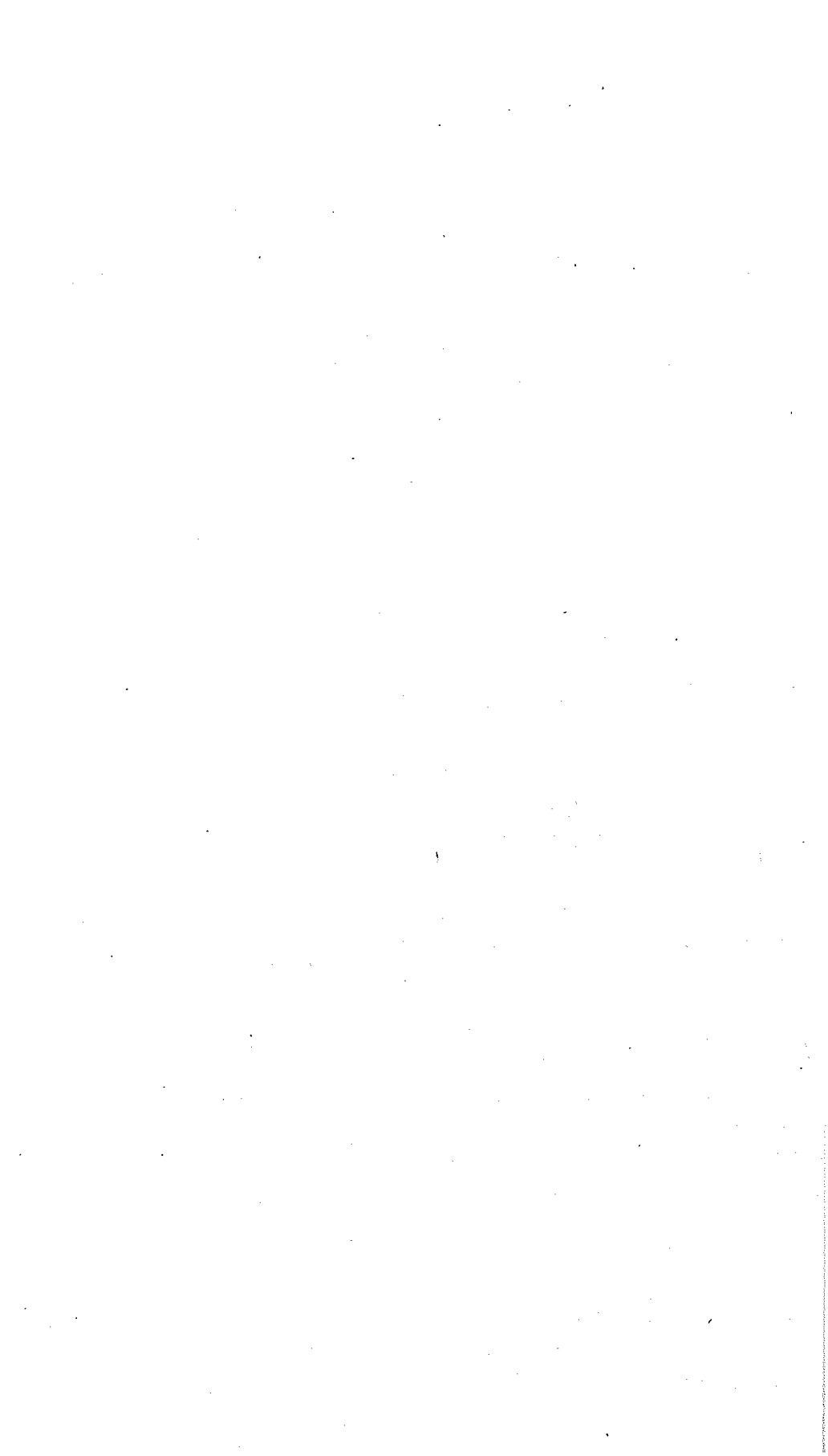
FRICZ, TAMÁS:

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE PARTIES?

In his paper the author tries to find an answer to the question what role, task and function are awaiting political parties in the modern sense of the term in the twenty-first century. The author expounds that there is growing criticism of the activities of parties in developed democracies in public, in public discourse as well as in the literature of political science, in this respect the academic as well as non-academic views are similar. On the other hand, and almost parallel to the former one, there have been changes in the functioning of parties considered 'classical', certain well-known functions of parties are being pushed into the background, while different, hitherto less known functions gradually come into the foreground, moreover, they begin to play a central role. Thus crisis as well as a change of function are taking place almost simultaneously, in close interrelationship, raising basic issues. These are the following: will the parties survive in the long run in the democracies of the twenty-first century? If they survive, how can they overcome their crisis symptoms and what kind of changes will that cause in their political and institutional roles?

If there is to be a change of function how radical it is going to be, and what will be its political and systemic significance?

The paper attempts to study these issues. Basically its area of study is Europe, and mostly the world of developed democracies, however, it is at least as exciting an issue how the new parties of the East-Central, and Central European new democracies would enter the age bringing along crisis symptoms and potential changes of function of modern parties.



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