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Revisions of the Soviet-type system of *nomenklatura* in the 1960s: Brezhnev's responses to East-German and Czechoslovak modernization projects

Who governed in Soviet-type regimes? Voslensky's outstanding treatise on Soviet *nomenklatura* may be an avenue to answering this question, "only an outside observer could suppose all power in the Soviet Union to be in the hands of the Politburo or, more naively still, in those of the Central Committee of the CPSU as a whole" (cf. Voslensky 1984, p. 71).

Voslensky defined *nomenklatura* as "(1) list of key positions, appointments to which are made by higher authorities in the party; and (2) lists of persons appointed to those positions or held in reserve for them" (Ibid, p. 75). In fact, Voslensky filled a void in "Sovietological" literature. With some exceptions, experts on the Soviet system omitted this area. There have been rare attempts to conceive cadres policy as a core power instrument of the Soviet-type rule. The power of organs of communist parties (at all levels – from the top to the regional units) rested primarily on their claim and authority to appoint all important positions in political system, economy, army and societal organizations.

Soviet-type system of *nomenklatura* became an integral component of the "democratic centralism" in virtually all states in the Eastern Bloc. Yet, in the 1960s the rigid cadres policy became a barrier to modernization attempts in some communist countries. In the German Democratic Republic, leaders of the ruling party (SED) were well aware of the fact that Ulbricht's calling for "professionalization" of personnel in political and economic institutions was incongruent with basically uncompetitive system of appointments directed by SED organs. After the Party Congress in 1963, the Politburo took a step towards transition from the "territorial principle" of Party administration to the "production principle".

Decentralization of the Party structure at the central and regional level was necessarily accompanied by decentralization of the cadres policy. In Czechoslovakia, debates on economic reform started in 1964. Similarly to the GDR, the vogue of the discourses of scientific-technical revolution influenced debates about the social composition of the Party apparatus and economic institutions. In 1966, the Presidium of the Czechoslovak ruling Party approved the new *nomenklatura* of the Central Committee. In connection with the decentralization of the economy, the concept of the list underwent appreciable change: There was a reduction of its scope; more than 38 % of economic positions disappeared from the list. In 1968, Czechoslovak system of *nomenklatura* collapsed.

The aim of the paper is to present my findings from archival research and analyse Brezhnev's responses to the above mentioned technocratic reforms and changes in the system of *nomenklatura*. In the GDR, the Soviet leadership enforced a modification of the reform in the mid-1960s. After the military invasion to Czechoslovakia in 1968, the CPSU enjoined to restore the pre-1968 rigid system.