

Abstract

The purpose of the presented dissertation is to analyse the functioning of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Antonín Novotný's period (1953–1967). The dissertation deals with three main themes: the organizational structure of the central apparatus, the staffing and personnel policy (the so-called nomenklatura). The main intention of the study concentrates on the Party elite's mobility and formation and considers patronage (clientelism) as an approach to understanding the political process. From the perspective of the political pluralism it examines coalition building at the central level through an analysis of aggregate biographical career data of over sixty Communist politicians.

During the second half of the 1950s the Communist regime broke with the most brutal aspects of totalitarianism. The abandonment of massive and arbitrary repression was the key policy change from the Stalinist era. In many ways it prompted the transformation into a different type of dictatorship, becoming a modern police state rather than a despotic terror state. Instead of previous large-scale repression as a key means of social control, the Communist regime focused on a so-called cadre policy as the main power authority. As far as economic troubles were concerned, the Czechoslovak Communist leadership under Antonín Novotný proved to be incompetent to make deep political and economic reforms. Since the early 1960s, the significant part of functionaries and experts strove for a democratisation of not only the Czechoslovak Communist Party, but all structures of the Czechoslovak society. Top Party experts were aware of the necessity of fundamental changes of the political and economic system toward greater degree of democracy and openness. Novotný's leadership itself did not make any attempt to abandon its pretensions to govern and control thoroughly the entire society and responded with various degrees of uptight.

Key words

Antonín Novotný; Communism; De-Stalinization; Pluralism; The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia