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6.2(d)

HUNGARY: Leadership Proposes Sweeping Reforms

The Hungarian Politburo this week made several decisions that, if adopted by the Central Committee next month, will reduce the party's ability to control the political and economic systems. The Politburo voted to give up party control of appointments to important nonparty posts, including government ministries. The leaders also decided to shift the focus of the party's local activities from enterprises to neighborhoods, arguing that the party should be engaged in politics, not production management. The Politburo apparently handed General Secretary Grosz a personal defeat by refusing to back his public opposition to formal ties among "reform circles" in party organizations—that is, the supporters of his rivals Imre Pozsgay and Rezső Nyers.

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Comment: The proposed changes directly attack the power and prerogatives of the party's hidebound apparatus. Grosz's principal source of support. Opponents of reform are sure to put pressure on the Central Committee to defeat or water down the proposals, but concerns that reformers might bolt the party and take with them a majority of its members will be a strong counterweight. The Politburo's decisions suggest that some of Grosz's former supporters recognize that momentum is with Pozsgay, Nyers, and the reform camp.

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