

November 16, 1989

Transcript of the Plenum Session of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party

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Summary:

Transcript of the Plenum Session of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party regarding dismissals from government posts, changes in the Communist party structure and criticism of Todor Zhivkov

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Transcript of the Plenum Session of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, 16 November 1989

INFORMATION

about the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party [CC of the BCP], held on 16 November 1989 [...]

[...] The Secretary General of the CC of the BCP, Petar Mladenov, was given the floor:

“The Politburo of the CC of the BCP proposes that the Plenum discuss certain changes in the membership of the Central Committee of the Party, the State Council, and the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

Regarding the Central Committee of the Party:

1. The following comrades are to be dismissed from their positions as members of the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Party, and to be removed from the membership of the Central Committee: Milko Balev,¹⁶ Grisha Philipov, Dimitar Stoyanov.¹⁷ They are to be retired with a pension.

Comrades Milko Balev and Grisha Philipov [are to be dismissed] because they lack the necessary qualities and they undermine the prestige of the Party and its leadership with their behavior and actions. Strong negative attitudes have accumulated against them in society.

As Secretary of the CC of the BCP responsible for organizational issues and managing the work of the Secretariat of the Central Committee and that of the Council for Coordinating the Activities in Connection with the Situation in the Country, comrade Dimitar Stoyanov made glaring blunders, which contributed to increased tensions in the country.

2. Petko Danchev ¹⁸ is to be dismissed as a candidate-member of the Politburo and removed from the membership of the Central Committee of the Party.

Cde. Danchev lacks the necessary political and moral qualities. Ever since he was appointed to office in the Council of Ministers, he has failed to handle even a single serious problem.

3. Cde. Stoyan Ovcharov ¹⁹ is to be dismissed as a candidate-member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Party.

Resentment has developed against Cde. Ovcharov among the public and among economic managers due to the fact that he did not manage to master the work entrusted to him.

4. Cdes. Vassil Tzanev and Hristo Hristov ²⁰ are to be dismissed as Secretaries of the Central Committee of the Party and to be retired with a pension.

5. Vladimir Zhivkov,²¹ Nikola Stefanov,²² and Hristo Maleev ²³ are to be expeditiously removed from the membership of the CC of the BCP.

6. The Plenum of the Central Committee is to revoke its resolutions of July and December 1988 to remove from the membership of the Central Committee of the

Party comrades Stoyan Mihaylov 24 and Svetlin Rusev,25 and to reinstate them as members of the CC of the BCP.

7. The following candidate-members are to be promoted to full membership of the CC of the BCP: Vassil Nedev—chief director of the firm “Metalokeramika”—Sofia; Georgi Pirinski—Deputy-Minister of Foreign Trade; Gospodin Yordanov— brigade leader of the electricians' brigade at the Nuclear Power Plant—Kozloduy; Dichka Slavova— chairwoman of the agricultural collective in the village of Nicolaevka, Varna region; Rumen Serbezov—chief advisor to the Council of Ministers.

8. Comrade Nacho Papazov 26 is to be promoted to member of the Central Committee of the Party. He is presently chairman of the Party's Central Control Commission.

9. The following comrades are to be elected as members of the Politburo and Secretaries of the Central Committee of the Party: Andrei Lukanov—candidate-member of the Politburo of the CC of the BCP, and Nacho Papazov—chairman of the Central Control Commission of the BCP.

10. The following comrades are to be elected as members of the Politburo of the Central Committee: Panteley Pachov—first secretary of the Regional Committee of the BCP in Plovdiv, and Mincho Yovchev—first secretary of the Regional Committee of the Party in Haskovo.

11. Comrade Jordan Jotov 27 —member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Party, is to be dismissed from his position as Secretary of the Central Committee.

12. The following comrades are to be elected as candidate-members of the Politburo of the Central Committee: Dimitar Stanishev 28 —Secretary of the Central Committee, and Ivan Stanev—brigade leader of an assembly brigade in the construction department at Kremikovtzi.

13. Comrade Prodan Stoyanov—director of the Personnel Department of the Central Committee of the BCP is to be elected as Secretary of the Central Committee ~~

Regarding certain changes in the State Council. ~~

The following changes in the State Council and the leadership of the permanent committees of the People's Assembly are to be proposed:

1. Comrade Yaroslav Radev 29 is to be dismissed as deputy chairman of the State Council, as chairman of the Council on Legislation, and as chairman of the Legislative Commission of the People's Assembly.

I would like to tell you, comrades, that we do not have any particular objections against comrade Radev personally. He has worked in this office for 18 years. It is deemed that a certain renewal should occur in the State Council and that there should be some rejuvenation.

2. Comrades Grisha Philipov, Dimitar Stoyanov, Milko Balev, and Andrey Bundgulov 30 are to be dismissed as members of the State Council.

3. The following comrades are to be removed from the leadership of the permanent commissions of the People's Assembly: Grisha Philipov—chairman of the Commission on Socio-Economic Development; Milko Balev—chairman of the Commission on

Foreign Policy; Emil Hristov 31 —chairman of the Commission on Social Policy; Vassil Tzanov 32 —deputy-chairman of the Commission on Preservation and Restoration of the Environment.

4. Comrade Todor Zhivkov is to be dismissed from his position as chairman of the Commission for Preparing a Draft Proposal for Changing the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

5. Comrades Andrey Lukanov and Nacho Papazov 33 are to be elected members of the State Council. ~~~~These are the proposals. [...].

I would also like to tell you, Comrades, in connection with these proposals, that I was handed the following letter from Cde. Milko Balev yesterday evening. I would like to familiarize you with it. ~~~~“To Cde. Petar Mladenov—Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Party ~~Esteemed Comrade Mladenov,

Through you, I direct a request to the Politburo to propose at the upcoming Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party that I be relieved from my position as member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee of the BCP.

After the session of the Politburo and the November Plenum, I made a serious self-critical analysis of my work and of my personal responsibility for the present situation of the Party and the country. I hope you do not have doubts that I have worked honestly for the cause of the Party.

I ask you to believe me that I accept the November Plenum resolutions with deep awareness, and that I will do everything within my abilities for the realization of the new course of the party. This is my deep communist conviction. ~~~~With respect—Milko Balev ~14 November 1989" ~~

Because this is a resignation request, the Politburo familiarized itself with it and deemed it advisable that [the request] be reported at the Plenum. Simultaneously with this, the Politburo insists on its proposals, which were just reported [...]

Then, comrade Pencho Kubadinski 34 proposed on behalf of the Politburo to the session of the People's Assembly, which took place in November this year, to nominate Cde. Petar Mladenov as Chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. He pointed out that the combination of the two positions is extremely necessary at the present moment. It will allow better coordination in the activities of the Central Committee and that of the State Council during the period of reconstruction and in preparations for the Fourteenth Congress of the BCP. [...]

Then the speeches started. Comrade Nicolay Zhishev 35 took the floor first. [...].

The main conclusion that could be reached, said cde. Zhishev, is that during the last few decades there has not been such an outstanding political event to have excited communists and all classes of the population so deeply and spontaneously. Life convincingly proves that all-round analysis and objective assessment of the situation as well as correct conclusions for the future work and active practical actions regarding reconstruction of the work of the party, state, economic, and public organs and organiza-tions are necessary. [...]

After him spoke Cde. Hristo Hristov who supported the proposals for cadre changes and pointed out that the November Plenum held earlier this month, its resolutions, as well as comrade Petar Mladenov's speech, were received by the Party and the people as the long-awaited word of the BCP. The results of the Plenum found over-whelming

approval, support, and a readiness for an upsurge, for a truly revolutionary revival of the fatherland. [...]

The cadre turnover in the Council of Ministers since 1987 turned out to be unsuccessful, continued comrade Hristov. Intrigues and struggles for political supremacy occurred. Attempts were made to create authority and social prestige through bombastic phraseologies and promises. The last two years were a hard period for the work of the Council of Ministers. Comrade [Georgi] Atanasov made tremendous efforts to achieve the [desired] results but it was very difficult for him when his deputies informed him after their visits to the building of the CC of the BCP that the decisions had already been made. It was obvious that everything was pointing against the authority of the head of the government.[...]

I listened to the proposals and I cannot believe, said Slavcho Transky,³⁶ who took the floor later, that such significant changes can be made during such a short period of time. And I keep wondering about the degree of deformation in the previous bureaucratic course. I also wonder about certain people who remained in the Politburo for 15, 20, or more years, and who could not find the moral strength to leave with dignity, but had to be dismissed in such a disgraceful way now.

He supported the proposals put forward, and noted that there were few people with economic specialization in the Politburo and recommended that more economists be included in the future.

Later on, cde. Transky emphasized that the people received with satisfaction Todor Zhivkov's dismissal and Petar Mladenov's election, and stated that the change was imperative, because socialism in our country was in crisis.

Then he pointed out that with the beginning of reconstruction in our country a new socialist model has begun to be discussed. He noted that while we [the partisans] were struggling for freedom and independence, we had no idea or awareness that socialism could have various models and could assume whatever one we desired. He called for modesty in our choice of concepts, such as accelerated development, mature socialism, realistic socialism and the statement that we had built two Bulgarias [made originally by Todor Zhivkov]. Afterwards he drew the conclusion that we needed to break away from voluntarism and conformism as soon as possible [...]

The speaker made the following suggestions:

1. We should think objectively and calmly once more about the next Congress—should we hold it in 1990, or should we postpone it until 1991 taking into account the impoverished market, the discouraging report of the [Central Statistical Agency] for the first nine months of this year, the state of the economy, and the particularly bad labor discipline[?]

2. The persecution of people who are not enemies of the state, but just think differently than we, should be terminated. Now that we have taken up a responsible mission, we especially need different opinions and pluralism.

3. We should determine if Politburo members, with the exception of the Secretary General and the head of state, if the two positions are to be separated, need personal guards. Perhaps we need to reduce the number of militia officers who guard [industrial] objects and replace them with civil guards; the regular militia should concentrate on maintaining domestic order and controlling the highways in order to decrease the number of car accidents. [...] ~~

Later, cde. Nacho Papasov took the floor. [...]

While cadre issues are being raised now, [he said] I would like to make several comments on them. It is not a secret that there was a crude violation of the collective style and method of management in our government, that there was a lack of principles in our cadre policy, as well as an instability in the structures, which cde. Slavcho Transky just discussed. And I would say that in Bulgaria a "nonstop reorganization" syndrome was created, a syndrome that made us the laughing-stock not only in this country but also abroad. The prestige of the government has gone downhill, most of all that of Todor Zhivkov. During the past 10 to 15 years comrade Zhivkov praised himself through incessant rambling memoranda, reports, commentaries, speeches and so on, all full of pseudo-scientific phrases, but poor in terms of content. [...]

Now, stated cde. Papasov further, we are reaping the fruits of a policy that led Bulgaria into a degree of isolation that the country had not experienced before. [...]

The floor was given to cde. Niko Yahiel.³⁷

Having emphasized the crucial importance of this period for the Party and the people, and expressed his genuine joy about the onset of changes, he stated: I will not conceal that after long and joyless self-critical reflections on the decades spent mostly in cde. Todor Zhivkov's cabinet, I decided I ought to speak out not only to express my fervent support for a course which I personally deem only as life-saving and decent, but also to share my thoughts about things which in my opinion could restrict or threaten this course [of action].

The first steps taken after 10 November are decisive and strongly promising. They have already ensured the Party its first credit of confidence. However, public opinion is extremely strained and sensitive, more than I can remember since the [Stalin] era of the cult of the personal-ity. [...]

Comrade Yahiel stressed that it was only natural for a number of things to occur in this new situation that would surprise and even startle us with their unusual obviousness. Pessimists, anti- and pseudo-restructurers, demagogues, and self-made innovators would emerge or simply people who would try to take advantage of the situation to make personal profit. Such occurrences will certainly create problems, not necessarily easy ones. However, all of this is inevitable in the course of a powerful democratic process and should not discourage and confuse us, or encourage us to take rash actions. We should protect this new course of development particularly strenuously from the leprosy of political demagogy. The drastic difference between promises and actions, typical of the style of the former Secretary General of the Central Committee, has already once before robbed us of the people's trust.

Later comrade Yahiel said that public opinion in the country is presently united on the issue of the economy's dire situation.

The key question now is overcoming the constantly rising market deficit. He suggested that the measures for change be determined not by a narrow circle of people, traditionally working in anonymity, but be worked out by parallel and competing teams of widely recruited scientists and specialists, who will offer alternative opinions on ways out of the crisis and on the economic future of the country. No more instances of gross interference should no longer be permitted in the work of the Council of Ministers.

Everything indicates, continued comrade Yahiel, that in the upcoming months and years life will neither be simple nor easy for Bulgarians. This requires open and honest communication [between the people and their government]. We should at last

start considering the study of the public as a guide to a more sensible and effective political and state governance.

In connection with this, the establishment of new relations between the Party and the mass media is highly imperative. We should cease patronizing and constantly instructing professionally and politically literate people on how to do their job. Humanity has not yet invented a more massive and effective means of dialogue between the people and its leaders [than the mass media]. The mass media is not just a tribune, but a daily People's Assembly which debates real life, reflects and, simultaneously, shapes public opinion. This is why we should treat it as a re-spected partner. [...]

Next to speak out was comrade Georgi Milushev 38 who said he had taken the floor because he had held the position of director of the Department of Safety and Defense (DSD), as a result of the Party's decision, for three years and one month. It was specific work, [he said,] in a department with clearly defined activities. This was a period of great suspicion and immense lack of trust. Only one person was trusted there who also played a part in resolving a number of cadre issues.

I believe, said cde. Milushev, that the Department of Safety and Defense [DSD] should take into consideration the decisions of the Politburo and the Secretary General, but it is actually a sub-department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The one-person management of such a significant and specialized sub-department should be avoided.

In response to a question from the audience to provide the name of the person who was trusted at the DSD, cde. G. Milushev replied that the person's name is Ani Mladenova. She is registered in the DSD as an officer, a major, and holds the position of chief inspector and senior medical nurse, with an impressive number of [special] privileges.

We have put forward, said cde. Milushev, various motions, taking into consideration the specific character of the administration's work in the spirit of reconstruction, democratization, and glasnost. This is a department which is directly relevant to our high-level political and state management, and every action or inaction on our part has repercussions because the DSD is a living organism with clearly defined political functions.

At the second session at 3 p.m., the first to speak was Vassil Mrachkov 39 who expressed support for the proposed cadre changes in the Politburo, and classified them not so much as cadre changes, because we have experienced many such changes before, but as the first real step towards changing the work and policy of society's governance.

As a party member, a citizen, and a professional, stated cde. Mrachkov, I am concerned with the problems of our legislation in the conditions of reconstruction. Shortly after the July Plenum, a new political directive was developed by the Central Committee, concerning the decrees adopted by the People's Assembly. Two such examples are the decree for the self-government of municipalities and one for committing socialist property to the care of labor collectives. These decrees replace the Constitution and various other laws, and act as a "mini Constitution." The decrees were also announced at the eighth session of the Ninth People's Assembly on 28 July 1988. Politburo members and Secretaries of the Central Committee of the Party repeated these decrees at crowded gatherings of the party and state activists. These decrees did considerable damage to the rule of law in the country, created confusion among the cadres, and restricted the activities of the law-enforcing institutions because they were dictated "from above." This led to legalistic nihilism and voluntarism manifested in the contemptuous attitude toward the laws and toward the

supremacy of the People's Assembly that adopts them.

My second comment, continued Cde. Mrachkov, concerns some crude legal violations as well as the trampling on the morality and human virtues in whose name the Party came to power. We have ceased appreciating them. People's waning confidence in us results from immoral displays and from certain leaders taking advantage of their official state and party positions to enrich themselves. Last but not least, [people's waning confidence] comes from our attitude toward the people with whom we work and govern. It seems to me that all of us gathered in this hall stand in need of exercising greater morality in our exercise of power, and more glasnost in our professional and public work. And I would also add that we need more glasnost in our behavior as citizens.

Cde. Mrachkov's final comment referred to the current social situation, to the accumulated dissatisfaction and tensions, to the pluralism in opinions and the necessity of greater freedom and legal guarantees for ensuring the right to citizens' assembly.

In his statement, comrade Pavel Matev pointed out that the time for naming things by their real names had come, because we had had enough deformations and had lost our credibility before the people. Social tensions had built up and the main responsibility lay with the person who spoke against the monopolization of power the most, but hurt the feelings of numerous people, including many artists. He did not care about the gifted people of Bulgaria. He engaged in writing books perhaps as a way of having a rest so that nobody could deny his efficiency, said cde. Matev. He was writing on all possible topics, about all sciences and all the arts, including literature. [...]

Comrade Konstantin Atanasov stated in his speech that despite the considerable tensions in various social sectors, efficiency had always been low, so low as to fall below zero. The only reason behind this is the anti-party and vicious style of party rule which was quickly transformed from collective, into ostensibly collective and finally became solely totalitarian during the past few decades.

Under the initiative of cde. Zhivkov's personal retinue, everything possible was tried to promote all of his family members, relatives and friends to the highest-level positions, said comrade Atanasov. Of course, not all of them lacked abilities, but having found themselves in such a [favorable] position, they were quickly corrupted.

Ljudmila [Zhivkova] was not only promoted to the Politburo, but her exaltation began during her second year [in the Politburo]. It was hinted in various forms that she should succeed her father as head of the Party. True, Ljudmila had certain leadership qualities and contributed considerably to the popularization of our culture abroad, nevertheless, her talents were rather modest [for the exalted position of head of the Party]. She had not matured ideologically, or, to put it more precisely, she was confused and lacked the necessary experience.

Especially striking is the case of Vladimir [Zhivkov's] promotion as a member of the Central Committee. At the most inappropriate time [he was promoted as] director of the Department of "Culture" at the Central Committee with the prospect of becoming a member of the Politburo. All those acquainted with him could say with a clear conscience that he lacks both the experience and qualities required for party work, let alone the question of his educational degrees which are undisputably subject to re-evaluation.

We all know that Milko Balev lay at the bottom of all these initiatives. Evidently, he had numerous helpers; however, he best knows who they are.

Comrade Balev published a book on Ljudmila in which he infused so many inaccurate appraisals and exaltations that if Ljudmila had been alive to read it, she would have felt embarrassed.

Comrade Balev went to an extraordinary amount of trouble to present a number of party documents and reports as Todor Zhivkov's personal work. Why was this all necessary? [...] He did not accidentally remain indispensable for over 30 years nor was he accidentally promoted to become a member of the Politburo. After comrade Lilov was dismissed, [Balev] did not lack in ambitions to even become a Deputy Secretary General.

If we should discuss cde. Balev's performance as a leader, cde. Atanasov proceeded after citing several examples, it could be said that his principal obligation consisted of strengthening Todor Zhivkov's position by all means possible. In his direct work he pretended to work and in effect blocked the work of the International Department. The commission he ran has not put forward a single substantial motion before the Politburo.

[I would like to introduce] a case to illustrate how far he had gone in his initiatives to strengthen Todor Zhivkov's position. Perhaps only few know that secret negotiations were conducted even with kings to make Todor Zhivkov a laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize. This was really a shameful conspiracy that took place in Europe.

Milko Balev was the sole Politburo member whom the Communist Party of the Soviet Union did not invite nor receive.

In order to create a truly calm atmosphere within the party, comrade Atanasov pointed out that it is imperative that [we] dispel the psychosis that spying devices have been installed in the offices of all party and state leaders. [The use of such devices] not only paralyzes the cadres' abilities, but also places the MIA [Ministry of Internal Affairs] above the Party and inevitably leads to legal deformations and to totalitarian methods of government.

To decisively overcome this [paralyzing] atmosphere, I suggest that the Plenum charge the Politburo to assign members of the Central Committee to a commission. [The latter] should conduct an inspection in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in certain subdepartments and units which may eventually need to be disbanded. This does not mean that the loyalty and dedication of the MIA cadres will be questioned, but that the above-stated units and methods of work should be re-evaluated. [...]

Comrade Krastju Trichkov said that he was taking the floor in order to express his approval of the recently undertaken measures, and to support the motion for cadre changes.

We were too slow in dismissing some comrades, he said. I mean first of all the dismissal of Grisha Philipov and Milko Balev as well as the removal of Vladimir Zhivkov and Petko Danchev. We should not allow any more instances of promotion on the basis of kinship in our party. Those who signed such resolutions in the past also bear responsibility.

At last year's meeting with students, Todor Zhivkov stated: ["] The Ministry of Economics and Planning suggests a 12 % increase in the commodity funds. ["] (While, in truth, we had discussed this option in the People's Assembly and found it unfeasible.) ["] We, ["] Zhivkov said, ["] decided in the Politburo to increase them by 20 %.["] Let Todor Zhivkov come forward now and explain the meaning of the word "illusion"! Where is this 20 % increase in commodity funds? Irresponsible job! Irresponsible. I worked for five years as his first Deputy in the State Council. He had

one saying. When we advised him against various decisions, he used to say: [“] Only God is above us. Whatever course we decide to take, it is correct.[“] He had gone that far.

I read, continued cde. Trichkov, the transcripts of comrade Mladenov's meeting with representatives of the intelligentsia, and here also several comrades posed the question about the Bulgarians connected with Islam. We hear voices demanding a reversal, even the recognition of a Turkish minority and the restoration of [Muslim] names. These are serious questions and we no longer have the right to resolve such an issue according to political motives and considerations. We have erred enough. The government forced many of us to register as Macedonians according to similar political considerations on the Macedonian question. Even today certain individuals are pressuring us to betray history. There are no minorities in Bulgaria. We made a mistake, but it was a mistake in our approach—we violated the principle of pursuing cooperation in our work with them [the Muslims], the political approach.

I believe it only fair, cde. Trichkov stated in conclusion, that each of us should perceive his or her own guilt for the fact that during the period of 35 years we tolerated as head of the party and the state a person who managed to manifest himself as a cult and to monopolize power for himself. We should not run away from our guilt. We are responsible people. Each of us is responsible for alienating the people from the party. Everyone should make a self-evaluation in order to purge himself, and understand his own responsibility for the present situation. [...] Otherwise, we will be mistaken if we consider that one person is solely responsible for everything. We are all guilty and everyone should see his or her own guilt. Of course, some are guilty to a much greater degree [...]

Next to take the floor was comrade Andrey Lukanov who stated that he did not intend to make a speech because he had already participated in the Politburo session and fully supported the proposals presented. He only wanted to share several thoughts in connection with comrade Dimitar Stoyanov's speech (not from a personal perspective). He expressed his enthusiasm for what was happening at the Plenum. [He was also glad] that the roots connecting us to the most glorious moments of the Bulgarian Communist Party's historic course were not destroyed. I am satisfied, said comrade Lukanov, with [Stoyanov's] self-critical spirit, with his declaration of loyalty to the Party cause, loyalty that I do not doubt because of his rapidly evolving position. Nevertheless, this speech requires a commentary. It is not that I want to put comrade Stoyanov in a more distressing situation, I would certainly not wish anyone to feel the way he is feeling now. In my opinion, the main problem here is that despite his self-criticism, comrade Stoyanov failed to comprehend the major issue in question—that, voluntarily or not, he became the voice and vehicle of a failed administrative system, of a historically rejected style of political governance. Under his direct leadership and with his active participation, the merger of the staff of the CC of the BCP with certain specialized structures in the National Security Services rapidly approached realization. This symbiosis, rarely seen in the practice of the fraternal communist parties for several decades, was pursued to guarantee the affirmation and perpetuation of the regime.” [...]

After 28 people had spoken, comrade Peter Mladenov suggested that the word be given to comrade Yotov, comrade Todorov, and comrade Philipov, as all of them had expressed a desire to speak. [He also] suggested that the rest of the people who wanted to speak take the floor at the upcoming December Plenum.

Comrade Jordan Jotov said that he wanted to clarify some issues but not because of a desire to be acquitted or have his responsibility and guilt reduced:

First, regarding the article against cde. Stoyan Mihaylov: I have not taken part in initiating this article nor in developing it, he said. It was worked out in another cabinet

and you can guess yourself to which cabinet I am referring.

Second, regarding cde. Vladimir Zhivkov's promotion: I bear responsibility and, naturally, guilt in this case. What actually happened? For a year or so, the Ministry of Culture, Science and Education had a Minister, but it was not a Ministry in practice. As agreed upon between the two of us, comrade Georgy Yordanov had drawn up several proposals and projects for developing such a Ministry, and suggested different structures, and so forth. All were rejected. Why? I could not comprehend. The Department of Ideological Policy [of the CC of the BCP], which was previously managed by cde. Stoyan Mihailov, remained at a standstill for a year.

During this period, conversations with me were conducted on different occasions, but one question was always present: how do you, comrade Jotov, see my son's situation? I said once during the first or second such conversation: "Comrade Vladimir Zhivkov has one major disadvantage—that he is your son and therefore his promotion... [would seem inappropriate]." But the conversations continued and eventually I yielded. When I proposed him [for promotion], I must admit that in the subsequent procedures the idea of splitting the Department of Ideological Policy was conceived. When I recommended comrade Vladimir Zhivkov as director of this department in the Politburo, comrade Dobri Dgurov objected categorically. Because comrade Zhivkov was absent from the conference room at that moment, [Dgurov] asked me to relate his objections to the proposal. I did so but, as you all saw, they were not heeded.

I would also like to say two words on the question of the informal groups. In our work in this respect, we committed many mistakes. We reacted to individual cases, but did not make the effort to analyze or study the entire phenomenon. We used to reduce everything to a common denominator. This was our [major] mistake. [...]

What is the way out of the situation? The way out is through a change in the present system. The system could give birth not only to one, but to two, three, five, or even a hundred Todor Zhivkovs. The only way out is to reform the system.

Comrade Grisha Philipov turned down the offer to take the floor.

Comrade Stanko Todorov announced that he was taking the floor in connection with the proposal for him to be included in the membership of the Politburo. This proposal was put forward by Ivan Pramov 40 , Kalajdgiev, and Radoslav Radev. After he thanked them for appreciating his work, he asked them to withdraw their proposal.

The story with my resignation in July of last year is well-known, he said. There is no point in delving into it once again. Then, as you know, I posed the request to be relieved from my post in the People's Assembly. After the [July] plenum, I asked the chairman of our Party's Parliamentary Commission—comrade [Pencho] Kubadinski 41 —to approach the Secretary General [with this question] and to choose with him a candidate for the chairperson's position in the People's Assembly and to propose him or her for nomination at the next session. Kubadinski went to the Secretary General, came back and told me: "The Secretary General does not agree to accept your resignation. We both want to recommend that you stop creating problems for the Party by trying to resign from the People's Assembly. You have to remain at work there." I said: "If I am creating problems for the Party [by wanting to resign], then I will endure." After this [episode], however, things remained unchanged at the People's Assembly: the Politburo and the State Council continued to completely ignore and deprive the People's Assembly of authority. Apparently, all comrades have felt this, as indicated from the speeches on this question made by many comrades here.

I was compelled to write a letter to the Politburo on 14 December of this year, in

which I raised the question that the violations of the Constitution should be ended and the authority of the highest organ should be restored as it has lost prestige in the eyes of our society. The legislative work is not up to the level required to carry out the July Plan and neither is the control work. In fact, presently there is no legislative work because the country is governed lately by decrees. As to the control activities, the head of the government has not accounted for his work for eight consecutive years, although the People's Assembly annually includes in its agenda a provision for such a report. At the Secretary General's order, and of course with the cooperation of the head of the government, this report invariably came to be meaningless.

In addition, two years have already passed since the Commission on Changes in the Constitution was appointed. The chairman of this commission, Todor Zhivkov, failed to find time to gather the commission and begin work on a draft proposal for changing the Constitution.

What was the reaction to my letter? I remember that I was called on 14 September by comrades Dimitar Stoyanov and Pencho Kubadiniski who informed me that the Politburo had discussed my letter. [The Politburo had] rejected my critical comments on the grounds that things were not this way, that the People's Assembly was developing well, that the parliamentary commissions were working well, and so on. I stated before the two comrades that I had nothing to change in what I had already written in my letter. With this, the question was closed.

I believe, Cde. Todorov finished his speech, there is no need for me to be included in the Politburo. If the comrades from the Central Committee feel that I can remain chairman of the People's Assembly until the end of this mandate, I will continue to perform this duty without being a member of the Politburo. In a month's time I am turning 69 and beginning my 70th year. The prospect to develop further is nonexistent for me. It is only appropriate that we give the new Secretary General the opportunity to select young and promising cadres for the Politburo.

I was rather hoping that the example of my resignation would be followed by some of my colleagues, but, unfortunately, my hopes were not realized.

Comrade Petar Mladenov said in conclusion:

"Comrades, I suggest that we draw the speeches to a close. I am well aware that the things I will say here should be brief and, therefore, they would not be considered as a concluding speech to the discussion that took place. I want to touch on only a few proposals.

In my opinion, this Plenum proved to be a natural continuation of the memorable 10 November Plenum. Moreover, I think we need to acknowledge that it turned out to be something of a purgatory, a purgatory for all of us. Earlier I shared this opinion with others in the corridor and cde. Elena Lagadinova understood it correctly. I call it a purgatory for the Party, a purgatory for the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party, because many things were said and many bitter truths were revealed here.

Was there another way? No, because such a Plenum would not have happened or it would not have followed the spirit of the resolutions adopted on 10 November. Nor would it have been held in the spirit of this new political line, this new political course which we have undertaken.

I believe that the Plenum deserves high marks. I am deeply convinced that if the rest of the comrades, who signed to speak, had had their word, they would have contributed additionally to this high mark. I regret that we needed to put an end to the speeches. We have, however, come to the agreement that those comrades will

have the opportunity to speak first at the next Plenum [...]

The last point I want to make concerns the proposal for my candidacy for Chairman of the State Council. I would like to tell you, comrades, and let this remain here in the Central Committee, that I am deeply convinced that the two positions [Chairman of the State Council and Secretary General of the BCP] should not be held by the same person. And if I gave my consent for putting forward my candidacy before the Politburo plenum, I did so only because it was deemed that the present political moment necessitates such a combination of duties. I believe it is advisable that the Commission on Preparing a Draft Proposal for Changing the Constitution be gathered during the upcoming week. Its work should be examined, evaluated and voted upon. The above-discussed question should be generally resolved through changes in the Constitution and its new version. This is the only appropriate course of action. I mention it so that you will be aware that I have some reservations when you cast your votes [on the proposals].

After comrade Petar Mladenov's speech, the Central Committee proceeded to vote on the Politburo's proposals. The results from this voting were published.

The Plenum closed at 7:50 p.m.

16 Head of Todor Zhivkov's office at CC BCP (1956- 1986), member of Politburo (1982-1989).

17 Member of Politburo (1981-1989) and Secretary of CC BCP (1988-1989), Minister of Interior (1974-1988).

18 Minister (1987-1989); Deputy Prime Minister (July-Nov. 1989).

19 Minister of Economy (1987-1989).

20 Minister of Foreign Trade.

21 Son of Todor Zhivkov; head of Department in CC BCP (1988-1989)

22 Head of Education Department CC BCP (1973-1986); Head of Todor Zhivkov's Office (1986-1989)

23 Relative of Todor Zhivkov; Deputy Head of International Department CC BCP; Ambassador in Spain.

24 Secretary CC BCP (1978-1988); removed from CC BCP 1988.

25 Head of Union of Bulgarian Painters (1973-1985); Deputy Minister of Culture (1982-1984); removed from CC BCP 1988.

26 Secretary of CC BCP (1962-1966); Chairman of Party Control Commission (1986-1989); Minister of Education (1959-1962); ambassador to Japan (1967-1971); Chairman of State Committee for Science & Technical Progress (1972- 1984).

27 Director of Party Newspaper "Rabotnichesko Delo" (1977-1981); Secretary of CC BCP and Member Politburo (1981-1990).

28 Head of International Department CC BCP (1976- 1989), Secretary of CC BCP (1977-1990)

29 Deputy Chairman, State Council of Bulgaria (1981- 1989).

30 Associate Professor of Sociology in Sofia University; First Secretary of Communist Youth Organization (1986-1989).

31 Secretary CC BCP (1986-1988).

32 Secretary CC BCP for Agriculture in 1980s.

33 Secretary of CC BCP (1962-1966); Chairman of Party Control Commission (1986-1989); Minister of Education (1959-1962); Ambassador to Japan (1967-1971); Chairman of State Committee for Science & Technical Progress (1972- 1984).

34 Member of Politburo (1966-1989); Deputy Prime Minister (1962-1974); President of the Fatherland Front organization (1974-1989).

35 First Secretary of Burgas District of BCP and member CC BCP in the 1980s.

36 Repressed as Yugoslav and British spy 1950-1951; Deputy Minister of Defense (1962-1981); Chairman of the Committee of Solidarity with Asia, Africa and Latin

America (1982-1989); Member CC BCP until 1991.

37 Adviser of Todor Zhivkov (1950-1988); Member of Board International Sociological Association (1972-1986); President of Bulgarian Sociological Association (1982-1988).

38 Former head of Politburo Guard B Security & Guard Department at the Ministry of the Interior (1986-1989).

39 Former General Prosecutor of Bulgaria; Member of Parliament (1990-1991).

40 Minister of Agriculture (1957-1962); Secretary of CC BCP (1962-1978).

41 Member of Politburo (1966-1989); Deputy Prime Minister (1962-1974); President of the Fatherland Front organization (1974-1989).