

October 26, 1956

**Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC
Presidium on 26 October 1956**

Citation:

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Summary:

Liu Shaoqi of the CPC CC tells the CPSU Presidium that the Rokossowski issue is central in Poland. The Presidium considers incoming information sent by Mikoyan and Suslov from Budapest. It is recommended that Hungarians studying in Moscow be instructed and sent back to Budapest to end the "vacillations" within the CC. Presidium members are critical of Mikoyan and call for a firm line with Hungary. Khrushchev commits to sending three more Presidium members to Hungary, contacting ousted Prime Minister Andras Hegedus, and reinforcing the troops.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on 26 October 1956 Those Taking Part: Bulganin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Molotov, Saburov, Brezhnev, Khrushchev, Zhukov, Shvernik, Furtseva, Pospelov, Yudin. From the CPC CC—Cdes. Liu Shaoqi,(1) Exchange of Opinions about the Situation in Poland and Hungary The point about Rokossowski is the central question.(2)(Cde. Liu Shaoqi). Gomulka is taking this to extremes. Continuation of the session of 26/X at 8:00 p.m.(3) Review of the information from Cdes. Mikoyan and Suslov.(4) Cdes. Shepilov, Brezhnev, and Furtseva are to study it. Hungarian party workers (126 cdes.) are studying at the Higher Party School.(5) We should provide information to them. Instruct them, carry out work. We mustn't turn them against the Directory and CC, but should say there are vacillations within the CC.(6) Convene a meeting with them with participation of the Hungarian ambassador and military officers (in the school), and then send them back there (to Hungary). Hold a meeting with the students and inform them (at the colleges) perhaps with the ambassador present.(7) Perform the work. Three copies for Cdes. Brezhnev, Shepilov, Furtseva.(8) On the Situation in Hungary(9) Cde. Bulganin—Cde. Mikoyan is maintaining an improper and ill-defined position, and is not helping the Hungarian leaders put an end to their flip-flops. A firm line must be maintained.(10) Cde. Molotov—endorses Cde. Bulganin's view. We must set certain limits and instruct Cde. Mikoyan how to act. Cde. Kaganovich—the real correlation of forces is such that it does not support the conclusions of Cde. Mikoyan. We must adopt a firm position. A Military-Revolutionary Committee must be set up.(11) Cde. Malenkov—we sent in troops, and the adversary began to recover. We should tell Cde. Mikoyan that he must firmly press Nagy to restore order. Cde. Zhukov—Cde. Mikoyan is acting improperly, he's pushing us toward capitulation. We must insist on a firm position. Cde. Shepilov—the step was extreme, but correct. Real power is with the troops. To make further concessions would be regarded as weakness. Cde. Furtseva—Cde. Mikoyan, apparently, is mistaken about Nagy. They released 1,000 who had been arrested.(12) Cde. Khrushchev—Mikoyan is acting as he said he would. Cde. Mikoyan supported a position of nonintervention, but our troops are there. A new stage—we don't agree with the government. We should send reinforcements—Molotov, Zhukov, Malenkov. Contact should be established with both Hegedus and the others.(13) We must write an appeal to our troops. Prepare a flight. Reinforce the troops. Cdes. Molotov, Zhukov, and Malenkov are to fly off.(14) Later we can say definitively. Regarding Cde. Mikoyan's trip to Austria— it should be deferred.(15) Translator's Notes

1 The notes provide no further names of members of the Chinese delegation, who were in Moscow for consultations between 23 and 31 October. The delegation, headed by Liu Shaoqi, included the CPC General Secretary, Deng Xiaoping, as well as three lower-ranking officials: Wang Jiaying, Hu Qiaomu, and Shi Zhe. Soviet leaders conferred with them several times about the events in Poland and Hungary.

2 By this point, Rokossowski already had been removed from the PZPR CC Politburo. The only remaining question was whether he would be kept as Polish national defense minister.

3 For the continuation of the session, see the portion below and the explanation in Note 33 infra.

4 On 26 October, Mikoyan and Suslov sent four emergency messages via secure telephone to the CPSU Presidium. See the longest and most important of these messages, "Telefonogramma," 26 October 1956 (Top Secret—Deliver Immediately), in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 483, Ll. 123-129.

5 The reference here is slightly awry. The number given in parentheses (126) refers to the total number of Hungarians studying in Moscow, including party workers, military officers, state security officials, and others. See "Zapis' besedy s poslom Vengerskoi Narodnoi Respubliki tov. Yanoshem Boldotskim, 26 oktyabrya 1956 g.," Cable No. 597/AR (Secret) from A. A. Gromyko, Soviet deputy foreign minister, to the CPSU Presidium, 26 October 1956, in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 484, Ll. 116-117. Malin's notes imply that the figure includes only HWP officials studying at the Higher Party School.

6 A "Directory," which served as the highest HWP organ, had been created by this point under Soviet auspices, but its existence had not yet been officially announced. The existence of the Directory was acknowledged for the first time on 28 October (three days after it had been set up), when it was renamed the HWP Presidium and was formally granted supreme power by the HWP Central Committee.

7 The reference here is to young people from Hungary studying in the Soviet Union, who would not have been included in the 126 mentioned above.

8 This annotation was in the bottom left-hand margin of Malin's notes. It refers to copies of the messages from Mikoyan and Suslov.

9 According to Khrushchev's remarks above, the session on 26 October was to be reconvened at 8 p.m. to consider the latest information from Mikoyan and

Suslov. The double-sided page of handwritten notes pertaining to the continuation of the session, which is provided here, was out of sequence in File 1005. In the earlier published versions of Malin's notes (the Hungarian translation and the original Russian), this fragment is incorrectly placed at the end of the 28 October session. Close analysis of the text reveals that the fragment must have come before, not after, the portions on the 28th. The fact that the 26 October session was due to be reconvened suggests that this is precisely what the fragment covers, rather than being part of a separate meeting on the 27th. (There is no evidence that the Presidium met on the 27th to discuss the situation in Hungary.)¹⁰ Bulganin is complaining about the long telegrams and secure phone messages that Mikoyan and Suslova had been sending to Moscow on 25 and 26 October. See Note 28 supra. See also "Shifrtelgramma," 25 October 1956 (Strictly Secret—Special Attention), in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 4, P. 6, D. 5, Ll. 8-11. ¹¹ On 30 October a Revolutionary Military Council was set up within the Hungarian army, but it was not the type of body that Kaganovich had in mind. He was referring to an armed organization that would suppress the uprising, whereas the Revolutionary Military Council did just the opposite, expressing strong support for the resistance and demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary.¹² Actually, of those who had been detained since the start of the uprising, more than 8,000 had been released by this time.¹³ Khrushchev evidently means that they should confer with the recently ousted prime minister Andras Hegedus and other Hungarian officials who had been removed from high-level party and state positions after 23 October.¹⁴ This trip never occurred, presumably because of time constraints as events in Hungary gathered pace.¹⁵ Mikoyan had planned to travel to Austria at the very end of October 1956, but his trip ended up being postponed until April 1957.