

November 6, 1956
**Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC
Presidium on 6 November 1956**

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Summary:

Debate occurs at this CC session between Molotov, who opposes approving the appeal written by the Provisional CC of the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party, and the other members of the CC who desire approving the document. Molotov is concerned about the unknown composition of the CC of the HSWP, the condemnations of former Hungarian Worker's Party (HWP) politicians, the issue of renaming the HWP, and the risk that Hungary will become the next Yugoslavia. Khrushchev states that Molotov is "clung to the cult of Stalin" and that Molotov is considering bringing back Rakosi and Hegedus.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on 6 November 1956
(Re: Protocol No. 53)

Those Taking Part: Bulganin, Malenkov, Mikoyan, Molotov, Kaganovich, Pervukhin, Saburov, Suslov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Zhukov, Shepilov, Shvernik, Furtseva, Aristov, Belyaev, Pospelov(1)

I. On the Appeal of the Provisional CC of the Hungarian Socialist (Workers') Party(2)
(The text is read aloud by Cde. Malenkov.)

Cde. Mikoyan—overall it should be adopted.

Cde. Molotov—in whose name is the document being issued (from the CC)? The composition of the CC is still unknown. It is unclear what entity is supporting democratization if there is still a CC of the HWP. In actuality, the dissolution of the party is being proposed. A new party will be created on an unknown basis. Where will it lead? In April 1956 there was an appeal from the CPSU CC. We sent greetings to the HWP CC (we acknowledged their services).(3) They're talking about acknowledgment of Marxism-Leninism, but in reality everything can be acknowledged. So far we have concurred in not resolving the question of the renaming of the party. We should not use the expression "the Rakosi clique."(4)

Cde. Suslov—the draft of the appeal is correct— no one is talking about the dissolution of the HWP. The party's basic principles are being preserved. We must support it. On the "clique"—the issue is not the name, but the mistakes that were made. The Hungarian comrades again will have suspicions; let's dispel them.

Cde. Kaganovich: This is a step forward. Having discreet influence on Kadar. Overall it should be adopted. We should try to suggest not changing the name of the party. We should suggest they speak about friendship with the USSR. We should suggest they decline mentioning both the name and the Rakosi clique.

Cde. Bulganin—The Declaration is fine. Cde. Mikoyan's changes are correct. As for the statements by Cdes. Molotov and Kaganovich: no one is talking about the dissolution of the HWP. That's a misleading argument. There is no principled basis for Cde. Molotov to couch the matter that way. On friendship with the USSR, we shouldn't mention it. Leave it as they propose (spoken about friendship).

Cde. Pervukhin—a proper document. The HWP CC collapsed. It's not true that if we call something a "clique," we're condemning the whole party.

Cde. Malenkov—without harsh criticism of Rakosi we won't be able to strengthen the [Hungarian] leadership. They're setting forth their own program. A CC plenum should not be convened (since Nagy is also a member of the CC).(5)

Cde. Zhukov—we must decisively support Cde. Kadar. Otherwise they won't understand us. Rakosi conducted an inapprop. policy, which must be condemned.

Cde. Saburov—I support Cde. Mikoyan.

Cde. Molotov—we must not forget that a change of names is a change of character. What's going on is the creation of a new Yugoslavia. We are responsible for Hungary (without Stalin). I vehemently object.

Cde. Furtseva—raises the question: where were the leaders? The people fully support them.

Cde. Brezhnev: The Declaration is appropriate. It's pointless to theorize about it.

Cde. Saburov: Cdes. Molotov and Kaganovich are simplistically and dogmatically approaching the question. The party will be better.

Cde. Mikoyan—Cde. Molotov is completely ignoring the concrete situation— Cde. Molotov is dragging us backward. Speak about Nagy.

Cde. Voroshilov—Cde. Molotov's statements are fundamentally correct. But in this case it's impossible to adopt.

Cde. Aristov—we must endorse and support Cde. Kadar. The statements by Cdes. Molotov and Kaganovich—they clung to the cult of Stalin, and they're still clinging to it.

Cde. Shvernik—Cde. Molotov is incorrect. How can we not say something if Rakosi caused a great deal of harm?

Cde. Shepilov—the document is appropriate. Say—a condemnation of Nagy. On the “clique”: we will leave a stain on the socialist past.

Cde. Khrushchev—a good draft. We should make changes. Indicate which group is presenting it. If the CC is convened, it should be said then that we have faith in Kadar.(6) For Cde. Molotov this is logical (Cde. Molotov doesn't come out and say it, but he's thinking of bringing back both Hegedus and Rakosi). Rakosi caused enormous damage, and for this he must be held accountable. He must be excluded from the party.(7)

Cde. Khrushchev: Cde. Kaganovich, when will you mend your ways and stop all your toadying? Holding to some sort of hardened position. What Cde. Molotov and Kaganovich are proposing is the line of screeching and face-slapping. Speak about Nagy. About Losonczy and Donath. Cdes. Mikoyan, Suslov, and Brezhnev are to transmit our changes and requests in a tactful manner.

II. Ciph. Tel. No. . . . from (Zhukov, Shepilov)(8) Affirm as an unfortunate event.(9)

Translator's Notes

1 Voroshilov's name is not listed among the participants, but the notes below indicate that he actively took part.

2 Other documents recently declassified by the Russian government shed light on what occurred at this meeting. On 5 November an official from the CPSU CC international department, Vladimir Baikov, who had been sent to Budapest the previous day to maintain liaison with Kadar, sent a secure, high-frequency message back to Moscow along with the draft text of a statement prepared by Kadar. Baikov's message reads as follows: “At the request of Cde. Kadar, I am conveying the translation from Hungarian of an Appeal by the Provisional Central Committee of the

Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party 'To Hungarian Communists! To Loyal Members of the Hungarian Workers' Party!' Cde. Kadar requested that I transmit the views and observations of the Soviet comrades regarding the text of the Appeal by 10:00 a.m. on 6 November." (See "Po VCh," APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 485, L. 132.) The draft went to Mikoyan, who prepared a number of changes and suggestions before the Presidium meeting began. The most significant change was the addition of a reference to the "treacherous" activities of a "group of Imre Nagy, Losonczy, and Donath" after the condemnation of the "Rakosi clique." (See the marked-up draft in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 485, L. 136.) Kadar incorporated this change, though he dropped the mention of Ferenc Donath, referring simply to the "Nagy-Losonczy group," which he claimed had committed "treason" and inspired the "counterrevolution." Other proposed changes also were included. The final text was released as a leaflet in Hungary on 6 November. It was published in the Szolnok newspaper Szabad Nep on 7 November and in Russian translation in the CPSU daily Pravda that same day. On 8 November it was published in Nepszabadsag. This was the first major programmatic statement by Kadar's government.

3 This is the same telegram that Kadar mentioned earlier. See Note 159 supra.

4 The draft statement pledged that the HSWP would "make a decisive break with the harmful policy and criminal methods of the Rakosi clique, which shook the faith of the broad popular masses in our party." This was preserved in the final text along with other condemnations of "past mistakes."

5 Malenkov obviously is referring to a CC plenum of the HWP, not of the CPSU.

6 Again, the reference is to a CC plenum of the HWP, not of the CPSU.

7 From exile in Moscow, Rakosi had made overtures about his possible readmission into the Hungarian Communist party.

8 The topic discussed here was a telegram received on 5 November 1956 from the Soviet ambassador in Yugoslavia, Nikolai Firyubin, transmitting a formal protest by the Yugoslav government about the death of Milenko Milovanov, a Yugoslav embassy employee in Budapest who was struck by shots fired from a Soviet tank. The Yugoslav foreign minister, Koca Popovic, accused the Soviet tank of having deliberately opened fire on the embassy even though the compound was clearly marked and "the Soviet government had been informed by the Yugoslav side of who, other than Yugoslav diplomatic personnel, is in the Yugoslav embassy compound in Budapest." See "Shifrtelogramma," 5 November 1956 (Strictly Secret), in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 485, Ll. 143- 144. To reinforce Popovic's complaint, a similar protest was delivered by the Yugoslav ambassador in Budapest, Dalibor Soldatic, to the Soviet ambassador in Budapest, Yurii Andropov. Soldatic requested that the Soviet military unit alongside the Yugoslav embassy be pulled back. Andropov relayed this message by telephone to the Soviet deputy foreign minister Valerian Zorin, warning that "the demand for the withdrawal of the Soviet military unit from the building of the mission is of a suspicious nature." See "Telefogramma," 5 November 1956, in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 485, L. 130. These messages were discussed at the Presidium meeting not only by Zhukov and Shepilov (as indicated by Malin), but also by Khrushchev, who presented the draft of a cable intended for the Yugoslav government. Subsequently, the cable was transmitted via Firyubin to Popovic.

9 The formal protocol for this session ("Vypiska iz Protokola No. 53 zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS ot 6 noyabrya 1956 g.," in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 485, L. 141) indicates that the Presidium "affirmed the draft response to the Yugoslavs in connection with the unfortunate case of an employee at the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest." The telegram, signed by foreign minister Dmitrii Shepilov, was sent to the Yugoslav foreign minister, Koca Popovic, via the Yugoslav ambassador in Budapest,

Veljko Micunovic. It stated that the Soviet military commander in Hungary had been ordered to make a careful study of how the incident happened. The telegram also conveyed the Soviet government's "deep condolences" regarding the death of Milenko Milovanov, and promised assistance in transporting Milanov's body to Yugoslavia. The telegram said that the Soviet military government would take "all necessary measures" to safeguard the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest, and in a follow-on conversation with Micunovic, Shepilov indicated that the Soviet military command would comply with the Yugoslav request to "pull back the military unit next to the [Yugoslav] embassy compound." See "O besede s poslom Jugoslavii v SSSR Michunovichem," No. 486 (Secret), from D. T.

Shepilov to the CPSU Presidium, 7 November 1956, in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 45, D. 29, Ll. 1-3. The investigation into the incident was completed by mid-day on 7 November. It concluded that the Soviet tank had come under fire from a house alongside the Yugoslav embassy. When the tank responded by firing back, one of the shots had strayed into the embassy, killing Milovanov. It is unclear whether this version of events is more accurate than the original Yugoslav account, but whatever the case may have been, steps were taken to prevent further "unfortunate incidents."