

June 20, 1967

Telegram from Valeriu Georgescu, Extrordinary Envoy and Plenipotentiary Minister of Romania in Tel Aviv, Regarding the Position of the Israeli Communist Party vis-a-vis the [Israeli] conflict with Arab Nations

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Summary:

S. Mikunis, Secretary General of the Israeli Communist Party, thanks the Romanian envoy for Romania's support during the recent Arab-Israeli War. He compares this to the Soviet position, which he characterizes as aggressively anti-Israel and anti-socialist. He accuses the USSR of instigating Egypt's attack. He also denies the existence of any atrocities against civilians by the Israeli army in the occupied territories.

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On 17 June, at the legation's office, together with Comrade N. Ionescu, I met, at their request, Cdes. S. Mikunis, Secretary General of the Israeli Communist Party [ICP] and I. Drugman, member of the ICP Politburo.

The discussions concerned the present situation and discussions they had with the Soviet Ambassador, before and after the hostilities.

From the very beginning, [the Israelis] conveyed thanks to the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party [PCR—Partidul Comunist Roman] and to Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu personally, for they position and actions they took during the crisis in the Middle East.[1]

[The Israelis] considered that the declarations of our Party and Government were accurate and our standards [were] objective, constructive and taking into account the interests of both sides.

[They] considered the attitude of the CPSU as one-sided, taking the part of the Arab Nations and accusing Israel, going against the socialist countries' policy of maintaining peace and resolution of conflicts through negotiations without use of force.

Ambassador [Stepanovici] Ciuvahin,[2] during a discussion on 6 June with members of the Israeli Communist Party, at which he was given the Resolution of the ICP, adopted immediately after the beginning of combat, suggested that the Arab Countries are right and that the ICP should fight against the government and accuse Israel of being the aggressor.

S. Mikunis replied [to the Soviet Ambassador] that the war was the result of actions undertaken by Nasser for the evacuation of the UN troops, the closing of the Tiran Straits, troop movements at the Israeli border, and war-like declarations by Egyptian leaders.

Israel had to mobilize its entire military force to defend its right to exist.

The Israeli Government made declarations in favor of an immediate cessation of combat actions, in favor of negotiations between the sides involved in the conflict, against territorial annexations, without naming an aggressor. Israel carried out the war to defend the very existence of the state, a war imposed by the Arab Nations.

The Soviet Union, instead of adopting a constructive position to prevent the war and maintain peace, [instead of] having an essential role in this direction, was the catalytic factor which instigated Egypt against Israel.

On 12 June, during a discussion with the Soviet Ambassador, among discussing other problems, [Mikunis] was informed that, in the occupied territories in Jordan, Israeli troops are exterminating the Arab population, are forcing it to leave the cities, and are behaving like Nazis.

Mikunis, which that morning, together with the directors of Israeli and foreign newspapers, visited that region, said he did not see anything like that.

On the contrary, measures were taken for returning to normality, for caring for the wounded, the children and the population [in general].

The Soviet Ambassador admonished him immediately, saying that the actions he mentioned are taking place in Gaza and Sinai, that the war was not over and that it will continue.

The Soviet Union will ship weapons to the Arabs, and take other actions, after which a solution for punishing Israel will be found.

S. Mikunis said that this attitude goes against the socialist ethic, that it is against the principles of marxist-leninism, that it is circumstantial, aids the pan-Arab alliance and Arab nationalism.

The future [in original, life] will show that such a position is detrimental to the Arab world and the USSR. [Mikunis] presented, as an example that should be followed, the correct, objective and based on [socialist] principle position of our country, incident which the Soviet Ambassador disliked.

M. Shen [member of the ICP] advised the Soviet Ambassador that, if the CPSU, after breaking relations with Israel will attack the ICP, the ICP will respond the same way and with the same methods, having sufficient facts and arguments [on its side]. Of the tragic fate of Arab prisoners in the Sinai Desert—said Mikunis—Israel is not alone responsible. Those which are send back across the Suez Canal, are being shot by the Egyptians, for fear that they might negatively influence the moral of the troops they have left. Israel, unable to feed them, decided that they will be returned to Egypt after they are disarmed. This is taking place without delay.

With the first courier, we will forward the Note of Conversation where the problems discussed are being discussed in detail.

Notes

[1] Scanteia [PCR Daily] Year 36, nr. 7368, 11 June 1967—the CC of PCR published an official position vis-à-vis the emerging crisis in the Middle East

[2] Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Soviet Union in Israel beginning with 1964. Previously, Ambassador in Tirana, 1946-52, Montreal, 1953-58, Director in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1959-64.