

February 17, 1948

Record of Conversation between I.V. Stalin and President of Hungary Zoltán Tildy in Moscow

Citation:

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Summary:

Stalin and Hungarian President Zoltán Tildy discuss the draft of the treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance between Hungary and the Soviet Union. They also discuss Hungarian relations with its neighbors, Romania and Czechoslovakia, and the internal situation in Hungary.

Credits:

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Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Record of I.V. Stalin's Conversation with President of Hungary Z. Tildy[1]

Moscow

17 February 1948

19:00

SECRET

Present: V. M. Molotov, Tildy Zoltan, Dines Lajos, Rakosi Mathias, Sakasich Arpad, Molnar Erik, Veres Peter, Dobi Istvan and Sekfiu Diula, Pushkin G. M., and Grigoriev B. Va. (Interpreter)

Comrade Stalin asks how the trip was.

Tildy responds that the trip was good, they had many new impressions.

Comrade Stalin asks what questions the Hungarian delegation has for him.

Dines says that yesterday the Hungarian delegation studied the draft of the treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance, which Minister of Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov handed to Rakosi and Molnar. The Hungarian delegation found the draft acceptable, and is ready to sign the treaty. Dines, however, notes that in accordance with Hungarian law, the treaty could enter into force only after its ratification by the parliament, and, therefore, he asks to introduce corresponding changes in the draft of the treaty.

Comrade Stalin says: good.

Dines addresses comrade Stalin with a request to repatriate the Hungarian prisoners of war, and to begin this repatriation in April, so that it could be completed by the fall of this year.

Comrade Stalin responds: good.

Dines requests the upgrading of the USSR mission in Hungary and the Hungarian mission in the USSR to the level of embassies, and states that this measure would emphasize the close and friendly character of relations between the USSR and Hungary.

Comrade Stalin says: good.

Rakosi says in Russian that they have other questions too, but probably those could be resolved not at this meeting, but through the departments.

Comrade Stalin asks the interpreter to translate Rakosi's words to the delegation. Then comrade Stalin asks, what kind of relations Hungary has with Romania.

Tildy responds that the relations are good, and at the same time he immediately adds that Hungary has one neighbor-Czechoslovakia--with which the Hungarian government would like to establish good neighborly relations. He asks comrade Stalin to help.

Comrade Stalin responds that he believes that the Czechoslovaks would not object to

establishing such relations with Hungary, and promises to help on this issue.

Tildy once again emphasizes that the Hungarians have a burning desire to establish good relations with Czechoslovakia.

Comrade Stalin promises to help, but notes that it is hard to believe that the Czechoslovaks would object to an improvement in relations.

Comrade Molotov adds that both states are interested in good relations.

Comrade Stalin inquires about the internal situation in Hungary.

Tildy responds that the internal situation in Hungary is decisively improving.

Comrade Stalin asks whether the forint is stable and how industry is going.

Tildy responds that the forint is a stable currency, industry is developing, and the peasants are working well.

Comrade Stalin asks whether they experience sabotage in the country.

Tildy does not respond to this question directly, but says that this year the sown area exceeds the sown area of the previous years, and that even though the fall agricultural works were prolonged due to the drought, they were capable to catch up.

Comrade Stalin asks about the peasants' mood.

Tildy responds that the majority of peasants are positively inclined, especially those peasants who received land.

Comrade Stalin notes that those will be able to stand up for themselves.

Then comrade Stalin asks whether the budget is growing.

Rakosi responds that the budget is growing, and states that the budget is a constant concern of the Hungarian government.

Comrade Stalin inquires about the Hungarian army, and asks if the Hungarian government is thinking about abolishing the army.

Dines says that, to the contrary, the government intends to develop the army, to bring it up to 30 thousand men this year. He immediately notes, however, that in connection with the tight budget and the deficit of armaments, it would be difficult to carry it out, and addresses Stalin with the request to provide assistance in the development of the Hungarian democratic army.

Comrade Stalin says: we will help.

Comrade Molotov asks, when they could sign the treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance.

Dines responds that we could sign it tomorrow.

Comrade Stalin asks, how big an army can Hungary have under the peace treaty.

Rakosi responds that Hungary can have 70 thousand men.

Comrade Stalin asks whether the Hungarians could find use for Russian weapons.

Dines responds that they will be able to use them, and at the same time states that Russian weapons are the best weapons.

Comrade Stalin promises to help, and points out that the USSR is interested in Hungary having a solid army, especially after the signing of the treaty.

Comrade Stalin asks if they have other questions.

Comrade Molotov says that the main questions have been discussed, and, because they did not occasion any disagreements, they could be considered decided.

Rakosi says that the Hungarians conducted negotiations with Tito and that Tito was of the opinion that they could agree on certain concessions for Hungary on reparations, in connection with the need to create the Hungarian army, or to provide weapons to Hungary on credit.

Comrade Stalin notes that apparently Tito spoke about his own reparations and his weapons.

Rakosi says that this is exactly how he understood Tito.

Comrade Stalin notes in this connection that it is obvious that the Hungarians have good relations with the Yugoslavs.

The President and the members of the delegation confirm it.

Comrade Stalin says: this is good.

Dines asks what time will they sign the treaty tomorrow.

Molotov suggests signing the treaty at 7 p.m.

Dines says that this is fine for the Hungarian delegation.

The conversation lasted 30 minutes.

Recorded by G. PUSHKIN.

[1] The document is accompanied by the following cover letter: "PERSONALLY. To Comrade A. Ya. Vysbinsky. I am sending you for your information the record of I.V. Stalin's conversation with the Hungarian delegation on February 17. The record of conversation was not edited either by Comrade Stalin or Comrade Molotov. After perusing the text, please return it to me. Podtserob. February 18." The letter bears a note: "Read by A. Vysbinsky. 02.19."