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**Report of András Szobek to the Hungarian Foreign
Ministry About His Meeting With Mao Zedong on 20
April 1954**

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Summary:

Szobek reports on a meeting with Mao Zedong in which they discussed developments in Hungary.

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

Translation - English

Comrade Mao Zedong summoned me for April 30th, 5.10 PM. He received me in his study in the Government Palace. As is known from the press report as well, Minister of Finance Deng Xiaoping, the vice-chair of the Administrative Council of the Central People's Government, and Deputy Foreign Minister Wu Xiuquan, were present at the reception. At the request of the Foreign Ministry, I was accompanied by Comrade [Károly] Csatorday, who translated the conversation.

I asked for the meeting so as to hand over the published Hungarian edition of the 2nd volume of Mao Zedong's works. This also enabled me to pay an introductory visit, for at the time when I had presented my credentials, Comrade Mao Zedong was on holiday. Comrade Mao Zedong said thanks for the decoratively bound book. I must note that the decorative leather cover and the box were titled "Volume I" in Chinese. It is obvious that the printing plates used for Volume I were used again to produce the same cover and box, though it would have been possible to correct this [error] at home. Before our departure for the Government Palace, I showed the book to Comrade Csatorday, who noticed the error, but it was no longer possible to correct it. I request that in the next volume, one should ensure that the printing be accurate on the book cover, too.

At the start of the conversation, I expressed my pleasure over that I could see Comrade Mao Zedong again in such good health, and mentioned that we had already met each other in Moscow on several occasions. He also expressed pleasure, then remarked that at the time when I had presented my credentials, he could not be present, for he was just on holiday. He told me that during his holiday, he was working on the constitution. By now, its Russian translation has been completed, and it will be sent to our legation.

Comrade Mao Zedong inquired about the Hungarian situation, such as the development of industry and agriculture, in a very detailed way. He was glad to hear that we had made substantial progress since the [announcement of the] government program aimed at correcting [the previous] errors. He emphasized that Hungary was already highly developed in the field of industry, while China was backward, and one had to make up much leeway. Nevertheless, China is developing at a rapid pace, for it was able to shake off the rule of the regime that had oppressed the people. For the time being, however, China is very underdeveloped in an economic and cultural sense.

He inquired about the well-being and work of Comrade Rákosi in an informal manner. He said that he highly appreciated the political knowledge and work of Comrade Rákosi. When I told him that he was currently doing Party work but he also exercised a guiding influence over the work of the government, [Mao] jokingly remarked that he would readily show to Comrade Rákosi how he provided guidance to both the government and the party without any difficulty. In the field of the government, executive work is being done by Comrade Zhou Enlai.

I remarked that I would strive to solidify the relations between our two peoples by my work, to which he promised to provide full support, and asked if we received sufficient assistance from the Foreign Ministry. He jokingly encouraged me that if this assistance was insufficient, we should not hesitate to prod Comrade Wu Xiuquan, for his duty was to support us. I mentioned that I would like to become more familiar with China, which was not easy due to the large size of the country. At first I will travel to Canton [Guangzhou] and Hankou, and I will also visit the village of Shaoshan, the birthplace of Comrade Mao Zedong. He approved my plan, then remarked with a laugh that there was little to see in the latter place [Shaoshan]. While saying farewell, he asked me to forward his warm greetings to the leaders of the Hungarian Workers' Party and the Hungarian government.

Comrade Mao Zedong seemed to be completely fresh both physically and mentally,

his appearance was quite youthful. When I had seen him in Moscow in 1950, he appeared to be far more tired. He conversed with me in a very informal and friendly manner. He spoke in the Hunanese dialect that Comrade Csatorday sometimes found hard to understand; on such occasions, Comrade Wu Xiuquan assisted him in the translation process. When we departed after the conversation, which lasted half an hour, Comrade Mao Zedong showed us the presents displayed in the saloon of the Government Palace, which had been given by a 400-member Korean delegation visiting China on this very day. Several photos were taken about our meeting, but we have not received any to date.

András Szobek

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary