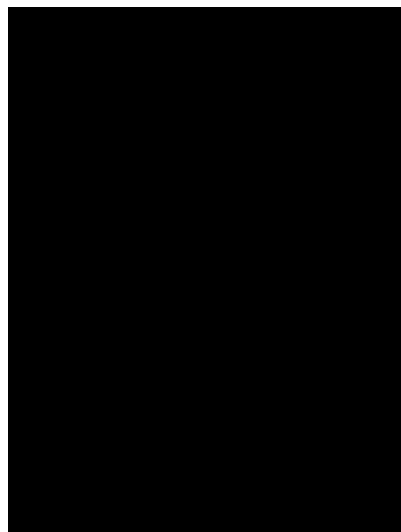
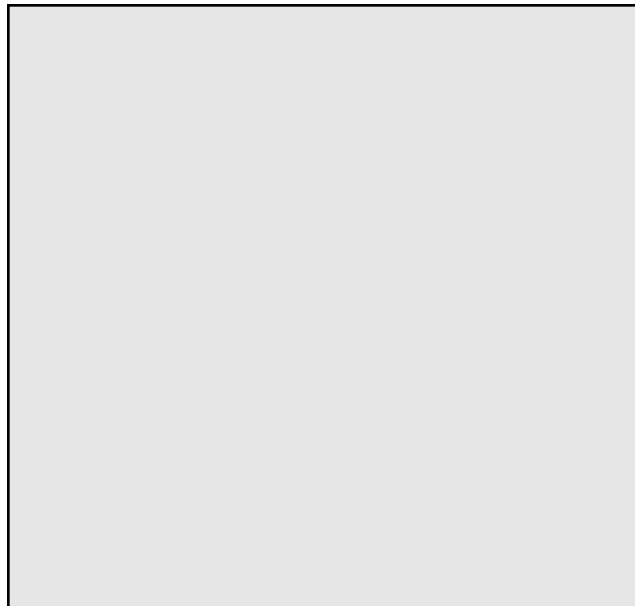


COLD WAR CRISES



**The Crisis and Cuban-Soviet Relations:
Fidel Castro's Secret 1968 Speech**

by Philip Brenner and James G. Blight

On 25 and 26 January 1968, Cuban leader Fidel Castro gave an extraordinary 12-hour speech before the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party on the history of Cuba's

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Moscow and Pyongyang, and between Moscow and Beijing. The collection also includes notes of conversations among key figures in North Korea, the USSR, and China; letters from Kim Il Sung to Stalin; and resolutions of the Soviet Politburo and Council of Ministers. All of the documents are from either the Presidential Archive or the Foreign Ministry archives and, with a few exceptions,¹ were unavailable to scholars prior to their presentation to South Korea. In July 1994, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea released Korean translations of these documents and in November 1994 the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVP RF) began granting permission to scholars to read photocopies of the collection.²

Unfortunately, these records represent only a portion of the top level documents on the war in Soviet archives, several of which (such as the KGB and Defense Ministry archives) remain largely inaccessible to scholars. The narrative of events we can construct from these materials still has significant gaps, especially for the several months immediately preceding the North Korean attack on 25 June 1950. Nonetheless, these new sources reveal a great deal more than has previously been known about the relationship between the Soviet Union and North Korea, the decision-making surrounding the attack on South Korea, the role of Mao Zedong in all stages of the war, the formulation of the communist positions at the armistice negotiations, and the role of Stalin's death in bringing the war to an end.

These documents, when examined together with the larger body of records declassified in recent years by Russian archives, thus shed light on several questions central to the history of the Cold War (e.g., the efficacy of American threats to use nuclear weapons in Korea) and a full analysis of them requires a full-length study. This essay will offer a small sample of these new sources, presenting translations of and brief commentaries on seven documents from 1949 and 1950 that illuminate with significantly greater specificity than the 1966 Soviet Foreign Ministry background report presented in an earlier *Bulletin*³ the question of when, how, and by whom the decision was made to launch a military assault on South Korea.

reports is more easily understood.

Document #3 also suggests that by 11 September 1949, following the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea in June, Stalin had warmed to the idea of a military campaign in Korea, at least on a limited scale. The Soviet leadership was now ready to entertain Kim's request and asked him for specific military and political information with which to make a decision. Document #4 (a ciphered telegram to Moscow from the Soviet charge d'affaires in Pyongyang dated 14 September 1949) reports Kim Il Sung's rather unconvincing response to the Kremlin's questions. It also conveys the opinion of the USSR embassy in Pyongyang that the limited offensive operation outlined by Kim was inadvisable at that time. Since the DPRK army was not sufficiently strong, such an operation would probably turn into a prolonged civil war, which would be disadvantageous both militarily and politically. Moreover, as the embassy quite correctly forecast, a "drawn out civil war" initiated by an attack from the North would give the United States an opportunity to intervene effectively, "more decisively than they did in China," and in general to agitate against the Soviet Union. Under existing conditions, the embassy concluded, an attack on the South would be "correct" only if the North Koreans could be certain that the war would end quickly.

Although the record of deliberations in April, May, and June 1950 is still quite fragmentary, it appears that the idea that the war must be won quickly became the basis for planning the eventual attack of June 25. It is tragically ironic that Soviet insistence on a quick victory led them to devise a strategy which, by giving the appearance of the kind of massive tank-led assault the Western allies so feared would happen in Europe, prompted the United States to respond with precisely the intervention in Korea that Moscow wanted above all to avoid.

Document #5, the Politburo decision of 24 September 1949, confirmed the response Shtykov was ordered to make to Kim Il Sung's reply for an offensive military action. One should note that the Soviet leadership did not question the goal of bringing the rest of Korea under DPRK control; the issue was only whether the attempt to do so would bring disadvantageous results. They concluded that at present the North Koreans

should devote their efforts to strengthening

Stalin indicates that we now have fewer planes in a regiment, that we have lowered the number of planes in a regiment and asks what other questions they have.

Kim Il Sung indicates the necessity of cultural ties with the USSR. It is hoped, for example, that Soviet teachers could be sent to Korea for work in Korean institutions of higher education, that Korean students could be sent to the Soviet Union for study, that Korean specialists could be sent to the USSR for practical work in production technology, that teaching programs and literature for institutions of higher education and technical schools could be sent to Korea and that there be exchanges of cultural and artistic figures.

Stalin asks if there is an agreement with the Soviet Union on these questions.

Kim indicates that earlier there was such an agreement. Now, after the formation of the government, there is no such agreement.

Shtykov reports that they have a training-military aviation regiment.

Stalin remembers that the last time two came to Moscow, and asks, appealing to Pak Hon-yong, if he was the second.

Pak Hon-yong confirms this.

Stalin says that Kim and Pak have both filled out and that it is difficult to recognize them now.

Kim says that they have a military school, but no military academy and that among the officer corps of the Korean army there is no one who has completed a military academy. He asks permission to send Korean officers to the Military Academy of the USSR for training.

Stalin asks wasn't there such permission.

Kim answers that there was not.

Stalin says that it is possible to permit it.

Kim says that they do not have any more questions.

Chong Chun-taek asks if it will be possible to send Soviet specialists to Korea and Korean specialists for practical training in production technology to the USSR.

Stalin answers that they have already spoken on that question. Soviet specialists may be sent to Korea and Korean specialists may be received in the USSR.

Stalin asks where the Koreans get cotton.

Kim answers that they want to receive cotton from the Soviet Union. Last year they received already 3,000 tons.

Stalin says, joking, that we ourselves want to receive cotton from Korea.

Stalin asks if they have trade relations with other countries: with Japan, China, Philippines.

Kim answers that they have such relations with China, but China is at war and therefore they cannot conduct regular trade [with China].

Stalin asks—and what about with other countries?

Kim answers that they have not traded with other countries. They conduct trade with Hong Kong, but unofficially and on a case by case basis.

Stalin asks aren't there trading societies among them of their own traders.

Kim II Sung answers that such a society exists. This society conducts trade in the main with Hong Kong, with the city of Dalny²³ and with China.

Stalin says that it is necessary to have such a society, there is nothing wrong with it. The national bourgeoisie exists; among the bourgeoisie there are, apparently, also good people, it is necessary to help them. Let them trade and deliver goods, there is nothing bad in this. I do not have questions.

Stalin, turning to Vyshinsky, asks if he has questions.

Vyshinsky answers that he doesn't have any.

Hong Myong-hui thanks Comrade Stalin

for the reception.

Stalin in his turn thanks the delegation for coming and for the conversation. The conversation lasted for an hour and 15 minutes. Shtykov and translator Kim I.M. took notes.

[Source: *Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, (hereafter AVP RF), Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, listy 10-20; all translations by Kathryn Weathersby.*]

Document II: Ciphred Telegram from Shtykov to Vyshinsky, 3 September 1949

On September 3 the personal secretary of Kim II Sung, Mun Il (a Soviet Korean²⁴), came to me and at the commission of Kim II Sung reported that they had received reliable information that in the near future the southerners intend to seize the part of the Ongjin peninsula²⁵ which is located to the north of the 38th parallel, and also to bombard the cement plant in the city of Kaisiu.²⁶

In connection with this, Mun Il said, Kim II Sung asks permission to begin military operations against the south, with the goal of seizing the Ongjin peninsula and part of the territory of South Korea to the east of the Ongjin peninsula, approximately to Kaesong, so as to shorten the line of defense.

Kim II Sung considers, Mun said, that if the international situation permits, they are ready to move further to the south. Kim II Sung is convinced that they are in a position to seize South Korea in the course of two weeks, maximum 2 months.

I asked [Mun] to transmit to Kim II Sung that this question is very large and serious, it is necessary to think it through carefully and that I therefore urgently recommend to Kim II Sung not to be in a hurry and not to take [any measures] while there is no decision on this question.

Kim II Sung will probably raise this question again soon.

It has been established that the [North] Koreans truly did seize an order to the commander of troops on the Ongjin peninsula to begin artillery fire on the cement plant in Kaisiu on September 2 at 8:00 and to destroy it. From the order it is clear that the southerners consider this plant to be military. The period indicated in the order has past but so far there has been no shelling. The northerners have taken the necessary measures in case of firing on the plant.

Regarding the intentions of the southerners to seize part of the Ongjin peninsula to the north of the 38th parallel, we have only indications [of this] from deserters from the south.

There have not been any serious incidents at the 38th parallel since August 15. Small exchanges of fire have taken place, [there have been] instances of artillery firing on the territory of North Korea on the Ongjin peninsula, trespassing

of the parallel. The southerners are carrying out defensive work at the 38th parallel at a faster tempo. I ask your order. Tunkin.²⁷

[Source: *AVP RF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 4, papka 11, listy 136-138.*]

Document III: Ciphred telegram from Gromyko²⁸ to Tunkin at the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, 11 September 1949

You must meet with Kim II Sung as soon as possible and try to illuminate from him the following additional questions:

1. How do they evaluate the South Korean army, [its] numbers, arms and fighting capacity?

2. The condition of the partisan movement in the south of Korea and what real help they think they will receive from the partisans.

3. How do the society and people regard the fact that northerners will be the first to begin an attack? What kind of real aid can be given by the population of the south to the army of the north?

4. Are there American troops in the south of Korea? What kind of measures, in the opinion of Kim II Sung, can the Americans take in case of an attack by the northerners?

5. How do the northerners evaluate their possibilities, i.e. the condition of the army, its supplies and fighting capacity?

6. Give your evaluation of the situation and of how real and advisable is the proposal of our friends.

Clarifications are demanded in connection with the questions they raised in conversations on August 12 and September 3, 1949.

Immediately telegraph the results of the conversation.

[Source: *AVP RF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, list 45.*]

Document IV: Ciphred telegram from Tunkin to Soviet Foreign Ministry (in reply to telegram of September 11), 14 September 1949

[He reports that he had meetings with Kim II Sung and Pak Hon-yong on September 12 and 13 about the questions raised in the telegram of September 11 and gives their response--K.W.]

1. [Information about South Korean army, providing many figures--K.W.]

2. [Information about partisan units in South Korea, numbering 1,500-2,000 men--K.W.] Kim thinks they should not count on substantial help from the partisans, but Pak Hon-yong has a different opinion. He thinks the help [from partisans] will be significant. At any rate, they hope that the partisans will help in actions against the communications of the enemy and that they will occupy the main ports of South Korea, though

they will not be able to do this at the beginning of the campaign, maybe later.

3. With regard to the question of how the population will regard the fact that the northerners will begin a civil war, Kim Il Sung oscillates. During the conversation on September 12 he definitely stated that if the northerners begin military actions, this will produce a negative impression in the people and that it is politically disadvantageous to them to begin it. In connection with this he recollected that during the conversation between Mao Zedong and the Korean representative Kim Il²⁹ in the spring of this year Mao stated that in his opinion the northerners should not begin military action now, since in the first place, it is politically disadvantageous and in the second place, the Chinese friends are occupied at home and cannot give them serious help. The thinking of Kim Il Sung amounts to waiting until the conclusion of the main [military] operations in China.

In the conversation on September 13 Kim Il Sung, under the clear influence of Ho Ka-i (a Soviet Korean, secretary of the Central Committee of the Labor Party,³⁰ who participated in the second conversation in order to translate), declared that the people will welcome an armed attack by the northerners and that if they begin military actions they will not lose politically because of this. Later in the course of the conversation Kim Il Sung stated that if a civil war is drawn out, then they will be in a politically disadvantageous position.³¹ And since under present conditions it is impossible to count on a rapid victory, he does not propose to begin a civil war, but only to secure the Ongjin peninsula and a portion of the territory of South Korea to the east of this peninsula, for example to Kaidzio.

They consider that in case of a civil war the population of South Korea will be sympathetic toward the northern army and will help it. In the case of successful military actions they hope to organize a number of uprisings in South Korea.

4. According to official data, there are 500 American military advisers and instructors in South Korea. According to secret service information, which needs confirmation, there are 900 American military advisers and instructors and 1500 soldiers and security officers in South Korea. In case of a civil war in Korea, the Americans, in the opinion of Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong, can: send Japanese and Chinese [soldiers] to the aid of the southerners³²; support [the South Koreans] from the sea and air with their own means; American instructors will take immediate part in organizing military actions.

5. The North Korean army numbers 97,500 men (including the air force and coastal defense units). The army has 64 tanks, 59 armored cars, 75 airplanes. The police force in the north numbers 23,200 men. Kim considers that the northern army is superior to the southern army in its technical equipment (tanks, artillery, planes), its

discipline, the training of the officers and troops, and also in its moral-political relations.

In the northern army there are a number of insufficiencies: insufficient number and weak preparation of pilots, insufficient number of ships, large caliber arms are unprepared for military operations, insufficient military supplies.

The proposal of Kim Il Sung amounts to the following: at the beginning to strike the South Korean army on the Ongjin peninsula, to destroy the two regiments located there, to occupy the territory of the peninsula and the territory to the east of it, for example to Kaidzio, and then to see what to do further. After this blow the South Korean army may become demoralized. In this case move further to the south. If the South Korean army is not demoralized as a result of the Ongjin operation, to seal the borders seized, to shorten in that way the line of defense approximately by one third.

It is not possible to hurry with the operation on the Ongjin peninsula. [It is necessary] to wait until additional arms arrive from the Soviet Union. Meanwhile [we must] consolidate the defenses on the remaining portions of the 38th parallel.

Kim Il Sung admits the possibility of the Ongjin operation turning into a civil war, but he hopes that this does not happen, since the southerners, in his opinion, do not dare to attack other portions of the 38th parallel.

Our formulations.

The partial operation outlined by Kim Il Sung can and will probably turn into a civil war between north and south. There are more than a few supporters of civil war in the leading circles of both the north and the south. Therefore, in beginning this partial operation it is necessary to calculate that it might be the beginning of a civil war. Is it advisable to the north to begin a civil war now? We propose that this is not advisable.

The northern army is insufficiently strong to carry out successful and rapid operations against the south. Even taking into account the help which will be rendered to the northern army by the partisans and the population of South Korea it is impossible to count on a rapid victory. Moreover, a drawn out civil war is disadvantageous for the north both militarily and politically. In the first place, a drawn out war gives the possibility to the Americans to render corresponding aid to Syngmann Rhee. After their lack of success in China, the Americans probably will intervene in Korean affairs more decisively than they did in China and, it goes without saying, apply all their strength to save Syngmann Rhee.³³ Further, in case of a drawn out civil war the military casualties, suffering and adversity may elicit in the population a negative mood toward the one who began the war.

Moreover, a drawn out war in Korea could be used by the Americans for purposes of agitation against the Soviet Union and for further inflaming war hysteria. Therefore, it is inadvis-

able that the north begin a civil war now. Given the present internal and external situation a decision about an attack on the south would be correct only in such case as the northerners could count on ending the war quickly; the preconditions for it are not there.

But if the indicated partial operation were crowned with success and did not lead to civil war, then in this case the northerners, while having won strategically, would lose politically in many regards. Such an operation would be used to accuse the northerners of trying to inflame a fratricidal war. It would also be used for the purpose of further increasing American and international interference in Korean affairs in the interests of the south.

We propose that under the indicated conditions to begin the partial operation conceived by Kim Il Sung is inadvisable.

[Source: AVP RF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, listy 46-53.]

Document V:

Politburo decision to confirm the following directive to the Soviet ambassador in Korea, 24 September 1949

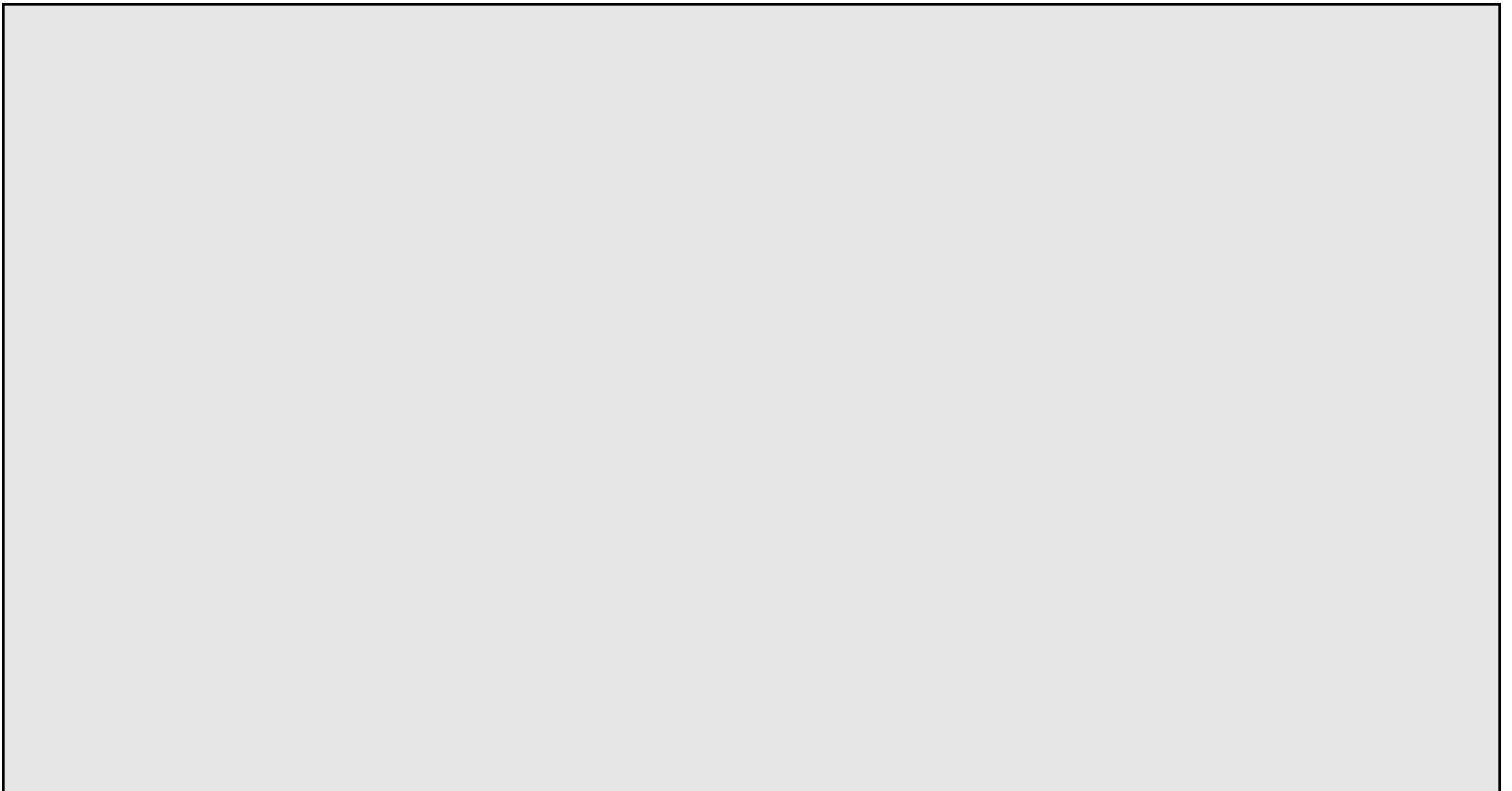
Copies to Malenkov,³⁴ Molotov,³⁵ Gromyko, Shtykov, Beria,³⁶ Mikoyan,³⁷ Kaganovich,³⁸ Bulablye -1.22-2.389 11, listy 46-53aka 11

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Document VII:
Ciphered telegram from Stalin to Shtykov,
30 January 1950

1. I received your report. I understand the dissatisfaction of Comrade Kim Il Sung, but he must understand that such a large matter in regard to South Korea such as he wants to undertake needs large preparation. The matter must be organized so that there would not be too great a

The two documents excerpted below,
recently found in the archives of, respec-



ration cards, forcing them to buy food at the overpriced state stores. Adding to the strains on the socio-economic fabric of the GDR, reparations and Soviet-decreed militarization put a heavy financial burden on the East German economy.⁹

“The power of the State,” Ulbricht had triumphantly declared at the convention, would be the main instrument in enforcing the “Construction of Socialism.”¹⁰ In particular, an extremely brutal system of criminal justice—climaxing in the “Law for the Protection of People’s Property” in October 1952—intensified the “class struggle” to an unprecedented degree. Even minor violations of the law, such as anti-regime statements (“agitation for boycott”) or economic “crimes” like black market purchases, were punished with prolonged imprisonment and led to 7,775 arrests just in the first three months of 1953.¹¹ Even several prominent SED members fell victim to the regime’s search for scapegoats for the mounting economic crisis. In December 1952, Dr. Karl Hamann, minister for Trade and Procurement, was arrested, followed by Foreign Minister Georg Dertinger a month later; purges within the SED also led to the arrest of politburo member Paul Merker and other prominent East German communists. Concurrently with an increase of political re-

pression, the regime embarked on an intensified battle against the churches which by and large had remained bastions of oppositional thinking.

By early 1953, the situation within the GDR was in many ways approaching a state of “civil war.” Despite sealing off the demarcation line, East Germans were fleeing the country by the tens of thousands, 15,000 to 25,000 per month. All over the country, symptoms of dissatisfaction, protests and strikes were apparent in larger industrial plants as well as in the “bourgeois” parties.¹² Yet the SED leadership remained obstinately committed to the “Construction of Socialism,” reacting to the growing crisis by self-delusion and fanaticism: a politburo commission on the refugee problem, established in September 1952, argued that the problem could be overcome by “measures in the ideological field.”¹³ Economic sabotage and, “enemy operations” were blamed for the increasing economic difficulties, and if anything, prompted even harsher repression on the part of the regime. By February 1953, a SED Central Committee working group which had reviewed the policy of “Construction of Socialism” acknowledged certain difficulties but called for an intensification of existing policies.¹⁴ Underestimating the growing crisis, the Government height-

ened its confrontation with the churches and, on May 28, decreed a raise in industrial work norms by 10 percent.

The deteriorating political and economic situation and the ruthless repression in East Germany, however, ran counter to the “peace offensive” propagated by the new Soviet leadership in the wake of Stalin’s death on 5 March 1953 and occasioned an intense internal debate in Moscow over German policy in late April and May 1953. Disagreements came to the fore at the May 27 session of the Presidium of the Soviet Council of Ministers, which attempted to “analyze the causes which had led to the mass exodus of Germans from the GDR to West Germany and to discuss measures to correct the unfavorable political and economic situation existing in the GDR.”¹⁵ At the meeting, according to still fragmentary evidence, secret police chief Lavrenti Beria, seconded by Premier Georgi M. Malenkov, is said to have opposed the further development of socialism in the GDR, which was reportedly favored by Nikita S. Khrushchev, Molotov, and Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. Possibly better informed through intelligence channels on the grave situation in East Germany, and most certainly with an eye to challenge Molotov in his own domain, Beria appears to have argued in favor of a united, neutral,

The Report to the SED Central Committee

ANALYSIS OF THE PREPARATION, THE OUTBREAK AND THE SUPPRESSION OF THE ‘FASCIST ADVENTURE’ FROM 16.-22.6.53

I. Short Summary Estimate

In order to prevent the implementation of the “New Course” of the Party and Government and to counter the relaxation of the international situation, and in order to make Berlin and the German Democratic Republic the starting point of war in Europe, hostile forces, with direct support and under the leadership of American agencies and the peoples’ enemy and the warmongers in Bonn, organized an attempt for a fascist coup in the GDR in the period from 16 June 1953 to 22 June 1953. Besides the long-standing efforts of their agencies and contacts in the GDR and their daily propaganda attacks by radio, leaflets and printed press, etc., [these hostile forces] increased their subversive activities following the death of Comrade Stalin and they especially attempted to shatter the confidence in the Soviet Union and in the correctness

of their policy and to revive again the anti-Soviet feelings among the population. With the publication of the politburo communique of 9 June 1953, the enemies multiplied their subversive efforts and they succeeded in developing the opinion among broad segments of the workers that the communiqué was a sign of weakness or even bankruptcy of Party and Government, and in winning quite a few adherents for the demand for the punishment of the regime.

Supported by their spy centers existing in the GDR and by those groups of agents smuggled in during the uprising, and under the pretext of dissatisfaction among the population resulting from the mistakes of the Party and regime, they temporarily managed to engage broad segments of workers and employees, in pw (snsu91.167 T TDmune lutral,)Tj /ehrusTiesocAe br1.1322New Cournd thei

democratic and bourgeois German state, although evidence on his precise views at this point remains sketchy.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership was united in its concern over the deteriorating situation in the GDR. A June 2 communiqué by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow, entitled “On measures for the recovery of the political situation in the Ger-

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ner” and they “expected your statement no later than at noon tomorrow.”²⁹

Headed by the plant’s union representative, Feltling, the four-man delegation marched to Grotewohl’s office where they handed the resolution to Grotewohl aides Ambreé and Plaschke who, while accommodating some of their grievances, tried their best to convince the workers that the norm increase was necessary. Later, informing Grotewohl’s personal aides, Tzschorn and Eisermann, they pointed out that some responsibility lay with the “dictatorial enforcement” of the norm increase by SED Berlin district official Baum, a well-known hard-liner who “underestimated the situation” and “merely portrayed it as work of the enemy, without recognizing that his not acknowledging the workers’ justified demands only amplified the enemy’s opportunities for action.” Tzschorn related to Grotewohl that the workers would go on strike if he did not respond satisfactorily, by 7 a.m. Adding in short-hand to his memo to

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gram.”⁴⁴

Charges of Western involvement notwithstanding, within the SED the party politburo, and especially Ulbricht, were widely blamed for misreading the depth of the crisis and the popular reaction to the policy of the “Construction of Socialism.” The self-criticism and the climate of openness which accompanied the SED espousal of the “New Course” and which had many East Germans demanding the resignation of the government, also inspired challenges to Ulbricht’s leadership within the Central Committee. At the 14th Central Committee Plenum, quickly summoned for a midnight session on June 21, criticism of Ulbricht’s leadership erupted. “In some ways, what we have let happen is worse than some severe defeats which the working-class has suffered at the hands of its enemies,” Central Committee member Anton Ackermann lamented. Led by Stasi head Zaisser and Rudolf Herrnstadt, the editor of the party

tions, 1953-1961 (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1994), 48.

16. Harrison, *The Bargaining Power*, 48-52, James Richter, *Reexamining Soviet Policy Towards Germany During the Beria Interregnum*, Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Working Paper No. 3 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1992), 13-22; Vladislav M. Zubok, *Soviet Intelligence and the Cold War: The "Small" Committee of Information, 1952-53*, CWIHP Working Paper No. 4 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1992), 16-17; Gerhard Wettig, "Sowjetische Wiedervereinigungsbemühungen im Nachkriegsdeutschland", *Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Politik*, 1991, 11-21. Ibid., 11-21.

of a total of 35-40 thousand construction workers in Berlin struck in the city centre. They had a strike committee, which maintained ties with West Berlin. The construction workers decided to march to the GDR Statehouse, located on Leipzigerstrasse, right on the border between the Soviet sector and the Western sector of Berlin. The construction workers were joined on the way by large groups of West Berlin provocateurs, carrying placards directed against the government, with demands for the resignation of the GDR government that had made mistakes, as well as with demands for the lowering of prices by 40% in the commercial stores of KhO [Konsum-Handels-Organisation]. Crowds of onlookers also joined the demonstration, so that there were gathered some 5 thousand people at the GDR Statehouse.

Having learned of the demonstration and of the workers' demands, the CC SED Politburo decided, at a session that was taking place at the time, to repeal the increase in the productivity norms and sent the CC Politburo member [Heinrich] Rau to meet with the workers. However, Rau and other government members were not allowed to speak by the provocateurs, who drowned them out with shouts that [GDR Premier Otto] Grotewohl or [GDR President Wilhelm] Pieck should speak to the workers. The announcement concerning the repeal of the productivity norm increase was made over a loud-speaker. Upon hearing this announcement, the construction workers began to disperse, but the West Berlin provocateurs began to agitate them that they should not settle for simply a repeal of the increase in norms, but should demand a decrease in the old norms, as well as lower of prices in KhO, the resignation of the GDR government and the holding of all-German elections. The majority of construction workers were not taken up by these provocations and, after a short period of time, dispersed from the Statehouse. A small number of construction workers was led by the West Berlin provocateurs to nearby pubs and restaurants where they were served vodka while being encouraged towards new actions.

During the day of 16 June, there was a marked increase in the activity of small groups of provocateurs in various parts of East Berlin, carrying out anti-democratic agitation amongst

partially beaten by the crowd, actively participated in the reestablishment of order.

At the same time, in the region of Aleksandrplatz (the centre of Berlin) large columns of demonstrators came together from the regions of Pankov, Vaisensee, and Köpenich (the Soviet sector of Berlin).

The crowds of demonstrators, with the active participation of provocateurs, besieged the CC SED building, the Berlin Polizeipresidium, the main telegraph, the city trade-union administration and other buildings. At the Aleksandrplatz and in the Pankow region, the demonstrators built barricades and obstructions. Windows were smashed in a number of GDR government buildings.

At Potsdamerplatz, on the sector border, the insurgents had an exchange of fire with the people's police and 7 policemen were disarmed.

The provocateurs also organized a pogrom of the bookstore "International book" and of the central department store "KhO" on Aleksandrplatz, set fire to the already half-empty department store Kolumbushaus on Potsdamerplatz, looted the cinema "Defa" and a number of other public buildings. There was also looting of stores in other parts of the city.

The crowds of insurgents moved through the city, chanting hostile slogans and singing fascist songs. Numerous groups of provocateurs penetrated through to the city enterprises, to call workers to strike. Most importantly, they tried to stop the main city electrostation Klingenberg, as well as a second large electrostation Rummelsburg and a [natural] gas plant. However, the workers of these enterprises showed a heroic resistance.

They destroyed the plant building, the provocateurs through the people's police tried

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the meetings in the SED city committee records, f

16. After the changes in the military situation in East Berlin, to hold it unwise to continue to maintain the border of East Berlin with West Berlin open, until the commandants of West Berlin take the necessary steps to guarantee that agents and provocateurs, who carry out subversive activities against GDR in East Berlin, are no longer sent from West Berlin.

With regard to this, to establish, in the immediate future, a system of permanent and temporary visas to allow the crossing of the border between East and West Berlin, however, making sure not to create unnecessary difficulties and, in general, considering the interests of the German population.

17. To entrust the Commanding Group of Soviet occupational forces in Germany to improve the distribution of Soviet forces, keeping in mind the lessons learned during the events of 17 June, and, in particular, to see that the necessary number of tank detachments are quartered in Berlin.

[signature] [signature] [signature]
(V.Sokolovskii) (V.Semyenov) (P.Yudin)

24 June 1953
iskh st-0024

[Source: *Fund 06, Opis 12a, Papka 5, Delo 301, Listy 1-51, Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow; document obtained and provided by Vladislav M. Zubok, National Security Archive; translated by Danny Rozas.*]

SED REPORT

from page 11

construction sites, especially from the Stalinallee, participated in it. The Party and labor union organizations did not know anything about this. The agitation for the strike built on the dissatisfaction existing among the workers (schematic, administrative norm increase, bad organization of work, shortages in professional uniforms, tools, etc.).

The signal given on 6/15 for the planned strikes was underestimated by the Party and the union, and was not responded to with sufficient determination. Thus, on 6/16, developed the strike of the construction workers, beginning at the hospital construction site, and quickly spreading to other construction sites by the sending out of delegations and groups of provocateurs.

The hostile slogans: "Resignation of the Government", "General Strike", "Free Elections", (so-called "Berlin demands") were carried into the demonstration by West Berlin instigation groups which were coming in by large numbers; in many plants, however, the strike and the demonstrations on the 17th had already begun with these slogans. At the same time, the instigators organized delegations to the other plants which appealed to the workers' solidarity and called for the support of the strikers. The riots on Tuesday 6/16 by fascist rowdy groups on the Stalinallee, on the Alexanderplatz, and in front of the government buildings and the clashes between participants of party conventions [*Parteitaktiv-tagungen*] in Friedrichstadtpalast with these groups, at the intersection of Friedrichs Street—"Unter den Linden" and at the other places, were not recognized as signals for the prepared fascist riots on Wednesday [June 17], and their spreading throughout the Republic.

In a number of Berlin districts, certain plants operated as organizational centers of the strike. In Lichtenberg, it was "Fortschritt I," in Köpenich the dockyard and the cable-manufacturing plant, in Weissensee the plant "7 October," and in Treptow the EAW. These centers drew in the other plants into the movement, by sending delegations there and threatening the workers who were willing to keep on working.

In KWO [Kraftwerk ost], the strike emanated from the copper press shop. What elements took on the leadership in the action, is proven by an example from the H7 Köpenich, where the former SS-Obersturmbannführer Hülse stood out.

A part of the plants went on strike under the pressure of the fascist provocateurs. Thus, West Berlin provocateurs invaded the RFT Stern and terrorized the workers.

Already by 8:20 am on 17.6 [17 June], 8,000 demonstrators were in front of the House of Ministries, and broke through the barriers of the VP [Peoples' Police]. Because of the continuous incoming flow from the districts, the number

grew to 25,000 by 8:40 am. By 10:45 am, parts of the VP were disarmed at the Potsdamer Platz. On the Marx-Engels Platz various figures revolted, calling for fascist violence. Nothing was done by even those participants in the demonstration, who had gone along in the belief that they had to put pressure behind their economic demands, to the burning of red flags, the raiding of HO-shops [state-owned Handels-Organisation shops—ed.], and the destruction of cars as well as the beating up of FDJ members [Free Democratic Youth—ed.]. The resolute action by the Soviet units suppressed the fascist provocation and brought the people off the streets. A part of the demonstrators realized the great danger for peace [that] had been caused by the fascist provocation. With the declaration of martial law, panic-buying, provoked by the enemy, began in all districts of Berlin.

While in almost all large plants, with few exceptions, at least a part of the workers had set down their work, the administrations continued to work. Serious occurrences only happened in the requisition office. Thus, for example, the entire requisition office in Friedrichshain went on strike on 6/17 and 6/18. The strike leadership consisted of seven workers. In the center district of the city, 121 people at the city council did not go to work on 6/18, 87 alone from the requisition office. In a number of plants, the workers refused to start working on 6/18, unless the arrested had been set free, and the Soviet tanks had been withdrawn. The resumption of work in many plants was made dependent on whether those plants were working again which had initiated the strike. This was particularly evident in Weissensee, in the plant "October 7"; this also became evident in the queries of a number of plants about the situation in the Stalinallee.

[Ed. note: Additional sections of Part II of the report discuss events in other regions and cities of the GDR, outside Berlin, during the revolt. Part III covers statistical evidence on the strike's impact in various areas of the economy. Part IV examines the causes of the revolt, and the conduct of various organizations, classes, and government and party organs during the events.]

[Source: *Stiftung "Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR" im Bundesarchiv (Foundation "Archives of the Parties and Mass Organizations of the Former GDR), Berlin, DY 30 J IV 2/202/15; document obtained and provided by Christian Ostermann, Hamburg University and National Security Archive; translation by Helen Christakos.*]

**THE YELTSIN DOSSIER:
SOVIET DOCUMENTS
ON HUNGARY, 1956**

by **Janos M. Rainer**

During a November 1992 visit to Budapest, Russian President Boris Yeltsin handed to Hungarian President Arpad Goncz a dossier of Soviet archival materials related to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. The documents contained in the file, consisting of 299 pages, have now been published in Hungarian translation in two volumes,¹ and also made available in Russian archives.²

For Hungarians as well as for scholars worldwide, these materials have tremendous significance—quite aside from their political import as a Russian gesture toward creating a new relationship between Moscow and Budapest after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Until the 1990s, Soviet political history could be studied only with the sophisticated analytical tools of Kremlinology and oral history. Now, however, at least a minor, and perhaps a growing, portion of this history can be analyzed using traditional historical methods.

Still, one must acknowledge that although these materials answer many questions posed by historians and the interested public over the years, they have not radically altered the general picture of 1956; none of the documents contains anything that could be called a sensation. The Yeltsin dossier does, however, provide some new information, enhance our understanding of several important aspects of the events, confirm some earlier unverified assumptions or hypotheses, and help to clarify a number of details. Certainly they are significantly more useful than the previously published documentation in providing a window into the minds of key Soviet officials, and insights into how they functioned, in the midst of a serious crisis.

Since the Soviet documents transferred by Yeltsin were chosen in an unclear manner, in the absence of thorough research in and full access to the Moscow archives there is no way of knowing whether the selection contains the most important ones. The quantity is unquestionably considerable—115 documents—as they cover events of only one-and-a-half years, from April 1956 until July 1957, and also high-level, with the majority originating from the top

leadership, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU). About one-fifth are resolutions passed by the party Presidium, and about a third are reports, recommendations, and memoranda, made by the members of the Presidium and the Secretariat; more than two-thirds of the documents actually reached the Presidium. Close to 40 percent of the Soviet documents emanated from the Foreign Ministry, and three-fourths of these consist of reports from the Soviet embassy in Budapest.

One striking feature of the documents is that they hint at how conspicuously concentrated power and decision-making were, especially in some key areas, at the highest levels of the Soviet system during the crisis. It is quite characteristic that a discussion between the counselor of the Soviet embassy in Budapest and a vacationing head of department of the Hungarian Communist Party appeared on the agenda of a Presidium meeting in Moscow. (True, it was agenda item 32 only and also, the head of department in question was a personal friend of Kadar's.)

Among the Soviet documents are eight reports sent by the head of the KGB, General Ivan Serov, to Presidium of the CPSU CC after the revolt erupted on October 23, and 11 accounts on the crushing of the Revolution and the fighting after the Soviet invasion on November 4 transmitted by the Minister of Defense, Marshal Gyorgi Zhukov. Perhaps because of their urgency and because they were prepared for the Presidium on short notice, they are very short.

This review of the types of materials contained in the Yeltsin package points, alas, to one of their shortcomings: the lack of documentation of the process of decision-making at the highest level in Moscow. Two basic features of the documents emerge when one seeks to use them to decipher the

Soviet political-military decision making process. Usually, models of decision-making processes distinguish between senior and junior actors: lower-level actors collect information, make recommendations, prepare analyses, implement decisions, while authority rests at the higher level, where decision-makers ostensibly have an overview over often conflicting information and interests.³

The 1956 Soviet documents primarily concern the functioning of the higher level (party presidium, secretariat, government), but rather one-sidedly. Some 80 percent of the documents are inputs: primary, to a large extent “unprocessed” information—local reports, analyses made on the lower level or outside the decision-making mechanism. Consequently, the direct mechanism of higher level decision-making cannot be evaluated. The collections contain the major party Presidium resolutions on Hungary, but these resolutions, unfortunately, are merely authoritative instructions given to subordinate executive organs. Not one docu

continued on page 24

**SOVIET DOCUMENTS ON
24 OCTOBER -**

**1. Report from Soviet Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs
Perevertkin, 24 October 1956**

SPECIAL FOLDER
Top Secret

The Ministry of Internal Affairs reports on the situation on the Soviet-Hungarian border as of 8:00 a.m. In accordance with the decision of the Minister of Defense Marshal Zhukov, Soviet troops crossed the Hungarian border. In all there were 128 rifle divisions and 39 mechanized divisions, which began to enter Hungary at 2:15 at the points Csop, Beregovo, and Vylok. Separate units gave necessary help to the Soviet Army. The whole border was guarded in order to permit us to violate state borders with impunity. The crossing of troops over the border continues. There have been no incidents on the border. [...]

(Signed) Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR
Perevertkin

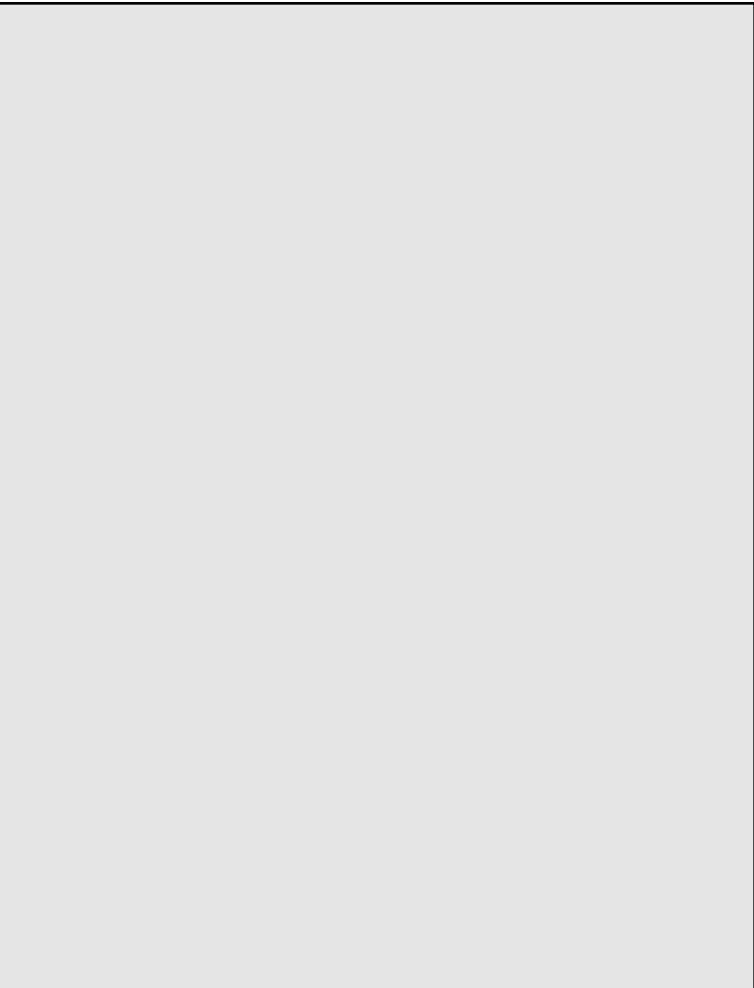
(Source: Fond 89, Perechen 45, Dokument 7, Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD), Moscow; translation by Johanna Granville.)

* * * * *

2. Mikoyan-Suslov Report, 24 October 1956

Top secret
Making Copies Prohibited

**IMRE NAGY,
HESITANT REVOLUTIONARY**



tion gathering, once decisions were taken Moscow's representatives paid little attention to them.

The above caveats and limitations notwithstanding, the following observations can be offered regarding Soviet decisions and the Hungarian Revolution, based on the documents provided by Yeltsin:

1. Since the summer of 1956, as the anti-Stalinist opposition gained strength, the Soviet leadership observed the Hungarian crisis with great worry. They saw the solution to the crisis in leadership changes (Rakosi's dismissal) and reserved forceful oppressive measures as a last resort only. In July 1956, Soviet representative Mikoyan reported that "as a result of the Hungarian situation there is an atmosphere of uneasiness prevailing in our Central Committee and in the ranks of the Socialist camp, which is due to the fact, that it cannot be permitted for something unexpected, unpleasant to happen in Hungary. If the Hungarian comrades need it, our Central Committee is ready to give them a helping hand by giving advice or else, in order to put things right."¹¹

2. Although the Soviet leaders received serious signals about the further exacerbation of tensions in Hungary, they were distracted by crises in other locations (Poland, Suez). Evidently, in assessing the Hungarian situation, they did not think in terms of social movements, but only in the context of more or less narrow political factions (party leadership vs. enemy/opposition). A Political Committee, authorized on the highest level, was functioning in Budapest, and it was expected to "resist" any threat to communist rule. Khrushchev's comments on the Hungarian events at the October 24 Presidium meeting in Moscow reflect this attitude. The day before, there had been a mass demonstration of hundreds of thousands in the streets of Budapest and an armed uprising had broken out. But Khrushchev said he "does not understand what comrade Gero, comrade Hegedus and the others are doing."¹²

3. The first extraordinary Soviet on-site report during the decisive stage of the crisis gave a remarkably optimistic evaluation of the situation, judging that the size of the October 23 demonstration and the armed uprising which erupted that night had been "overestimated" by the Hungarians. In Moscow, where attention was still focused on resolving the Polish party crisis, the situa-

tion initially appeared manageable. It was obvious from the Mikoyan group's report that Erno Gero, the Stalinist Hungarian party leader, was at odds with the reformer Imre Nagy, who had been recently included in the leadership. Yet on October 24, Khrushchev informed the leaders of other Warsaw Pact allies in Eastern Europe that there was a "total unity of opinion" within the Hungarian leadership.¹³

4. The Soviets looked upon the Hungarian leadership, especially Imre Nagy, with distrust from the very beginning of the crisis. The Hungarian party leaders simply did not wait for Moscow when they reshuffled personnel on October 23, even though there was an expressed demand for this. This is how Imre Nagy became prime minister. Later, party leader Gero was dismissed by the Soviets, but the new government list was compiled by the Nagy group, although Suslov and Mikoyan were present. The Soviets demanded adherence to the "norms of the empire" even in crisis situations.

5. The Soviet documents suggest that October 26 was a turning point. On one hand, this is when Imre Nagy's policy of searching for a political solution was formulated. Earlier, it was thought that Nagy "hesitated" right until October 28, when he declared the armistice. He decided that a new political, conciliatory line was needed by October 26. He gained support for this from popular pressure coming from below and the actions of the party opposition. This change was supported by Kadar with some reservations.¹⁴

6. Mikoyan and Suslov recommended that the Presidium accept the Imre Nagy line. Instead of military measures, they thought that concessions were needed to "win over the workers' masses" and approved reshuffling the government by including "a certain number of petty bourgeois democrat" ministers (meaning persons from the previous coalition parties). The only thing they reported on the Hungarian leadership was that the "majority" of it was solid and "non-capitulationist." However, they reported on "Imre Nagy's vacillations who because of his opportunistic nature doesn't know where to stop in giving concessions."¹⁵

Although there is no direct evidence for this conclusion, it is conceivable that this analysis might have triggered the preparations in Moscow for a second military intervention. A final, unambiguous political

decision however, could hardly have been made by this point. Yet, Mikoyan signaled the limits of compromise: "From our part we warned them that no further concessions can be made, otherwise it will lead to the fall of the system...the withdrawal of Soviet army will lead inevitably to the American troops marching in. Just like earlier we still think it possible that the Soviet soldiers will return to their bases shortly after law and order will have been restored."¹⁶

7. The Soviets' short-term interest was to quell the exceedingly tense Hungarian situation. So long as they saw a hope for this, they countenanced political concessions which were earlier considered to be serious right wing deviations. Perhaps they feared unintended or unclear consequences of an outright invasion, or an escalation of fighting that might lead to the involvement of American troops. On October 28, the Soviets agreed to an armistice and the withdrawal of their military units from Budapest without the military elimination of the centers of armed insurgents. They accepted a sentence in Imre Nagy's draft program which proposed negotiations for the later withdrawal of Soviet troops, contingent upon "the Soviet Union's exclusive decision."¹⁷ Yet, no far-reaching formal agreement was concluded with Imre Nagy. At the most, there was an informal accord along the lines of the October 26 "principles." There was no mention in them about a multi-party system (only the inclusion of politicians from other parties in the government), no mention about the troop withdrawal or about Hungary's renunciation of the Warsaw Pact.

8. The Soviet Union's readiness for compromise was related to long-term interests as well. After 1945, and particularly after the outbreak of Cold War tensions, it was Moscow's fundamental interest to have politically and militarily loyal and stable leaderships in the neighboring countries. The limits of these alignments were sometimes wider, sometimes tighter. In 1956, at the time of de-Stalinization, they momentarily seemed to expand. The Soviets saw their long-range interests secured in three institutions: First, an undivided, potent Communist party leadership or other political centre; second, a strong and firm state security service; and third, a loyal and disciplined military leadership. The shaking of even one of the three could provoke Soviet political meddling, and if the symptoms ap-

peared simultaneously this could produce Moscow's radical military intervention. The October 26-28 compromise did not directly contradict Moscow's long-range interests (only the initiation of negotiations was mentioned rather than actual Soviet troop withdrawal), which could momentarily reinforce structures in charge of securing Soviet interests (especially the most important one from the Soviet perspective, the party leadership).

9. Nagy probably well understood this. But he could not and did not want to think entirely in the terms of the neighboring superpower. Thus he tried to consolidate the aforementioned institutions on the basis of popular demands, but the pressure of the revolutionary masses and his own personality made him transgress this boundary. On October 29 and 30 the Soviet envoys saw a Hungarian party leadership which appeared to be falling apart and losing control of events. The other functioning center, the government, did not interest them. Nagy had a key position there and he was not trusted unconditionally, and the inclusion (on October 27) of "petty bourgeois elements" (i.e., a multiparty coalition) in the government only strengthened this impression.¹⁸

Though popular demands and sentiments were of basic interest for Nagy, they did not fit into the thinking of the empire. On October 29 and 30, the reports of Moscow's observers implied the collapse of the institutional system in Hungary vital to Soviet interests.¹⁹ Simultaneously, the outbreak of the Suez war and the fact that the Americans gave clear signals of non-intervention²⁰ gave the preparation of a second intervention an external green light. On October 30, the Mikoyan group explicitly referred to a political and military decision to be taken soon, in relation to which "comrade Konev"—the Soviet Marshal who commanded the Warsaw Pact unified forces—"will have to proceed to Hungary without delay."²¹ The following day Mikoyan and Suslov returned to Moscow.

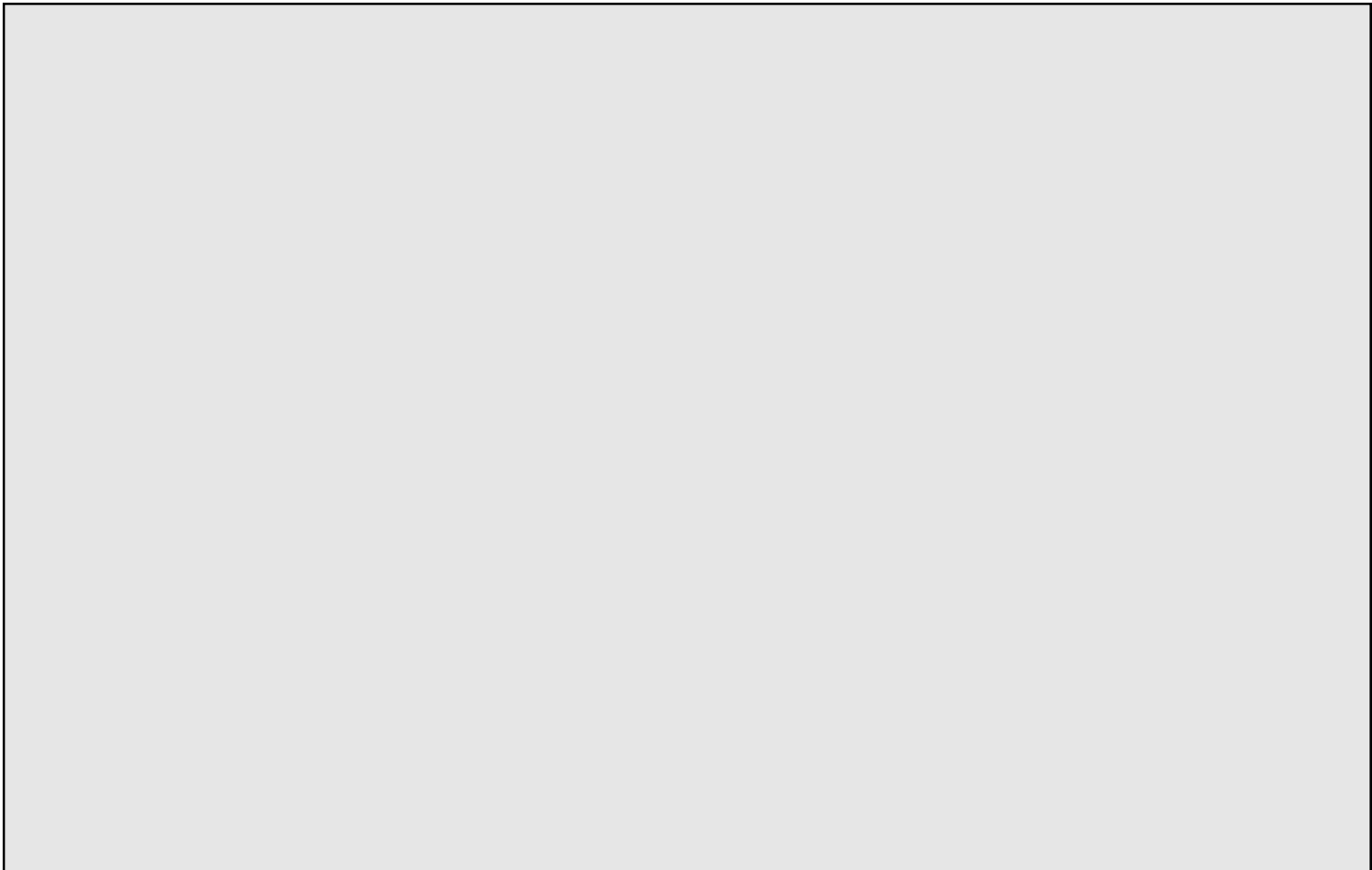
10. The Moscow evaluation is shown clearly by the CPSU CC Presidium's tele-
(o31:n

be sufficient. If the situation further deteriorates, then, of course, it will be necessary to reexamine the whole issue in its entirety. We do not have yet a final opinion of the situation—how sharply it has deteriorated. After the session today at 11 o'clock Moscow time, the situation in the Central Committee will become clear and we will inform you. We think the swift arrival of Comrade Konev is essential.”²⁰ Marshal I.S. Konev was the Soviet commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact’s armed forces, who would lead the invasion of Hungary days after that message was sent.

Once Imre Nagy realized the Soviet leaders’ deception, he did break ranks entirely, declaring Hungary’s neutrality and withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact—something no other East European leader had the courage to do.

1. Ciphred telegram from Yu. V. Andropov in Budapest, 1 November 1956, Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (AVP RF) [Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation], fond [f.] 059a, opis [op.]. 4, papka [p.]. 6, delo [d.] 5, list [l.] 17-19. Later, it is true, on October 28, at 5:30 a.m. Nagy called off an

attack on the street fighters that had been planned by the



ary committee in Miskolc organized a meeting in front of the building of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and they forced the workers to lay down their arms and they tortured those who protested. On the same day, a battalion of internal troops was disbanded and spread out among the buildings by this revolutionary committee. In the town of Zalaegerseg, the revolutionary committee disarmed the security organs, and the officials were driven out of the regional limits. These facts apply to other regions as well. There are also examples of actions to the contrary. For example, in some regions, a national militia comprised of students, youth, and private soldiers of the national army are restoring back order in the cities.

4. In the city of Budapest after yesterday's meeting of the new Ministry of Internal Affairs, regional apparatuses of security and police began to renew their work. To avoid provocation the employees of the security organs are dressed in police uniforms.

5. An organized observation of the American embassy confirms that the employees of the embassy are leaving the city with their things. The Americans Olivart and West in a conversation with one of the agents of our friends said if the uprising is not liquidated in the shortest possible time, the UN troops will move in at the proposal of the USA and a second Korea will take place.

6. This morning on Budapest radio there was a speech by an active participant in [Joseph] Ertovi's group of criminals, who was arrested in the military editorial board who said that he is summoning the youth to lay down their weapons, since the new government under Nagy is a guarantee of the fulfillment of the people's demands. They asked Ertovi why he wrote on a leaflet "Temporary Revolutionary Government"? To that Ertovi replied that it was because at that time they had not recognized the government, but that now he wouldn't sign it that way, because the present government is legitimate.

In the city of Budapest today everything is peaceful, except isolated strongholds of streetfighters. However, there are three hotbeds, where insurgents have dug in positions.

SEROV

Transmitted by special line
28.X.56 [28 October 1956]

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok 10; translation by Johanna Granville with Mark Doctoroff.*]

* * * * *

6. KGB Chief Serov, Report, 29 October 1956

Send to CC CPSU
A. Mikoyan

M. Suslov
29.X-1956

To Comrade MIKOYAN, A.I.
To Comrade SUSLOV, M.A.

I am reporting about the situation according to the circumstances on 29 October.

1. There were negotiations during the night with the groups fighting in the region round the Corwin theater, Zsigmund street, Sen Square and Moscow Square to surrender their weapons. Toward evening agreement was reached.

Some small armed groups that had come to Budapest from other cities were identified.

The Soviet military command is taking action to liquidate them.

2. According to information from the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs], on 27-28 October in several cities prisoners were freed from prisons, including criminals, around 8,000 people in all. Some of these prisoners are armed with weapons taken from the security guards. The ammunition was obtained by attacking military depots.

After the government declaration was made on the radio about amnesty to students who participated in the demonstration, the armed groups started to lay down their weapons.

3. The situation in several cities can be characterized in the following way: the population is stimulated against the communists. In several regions the armed people search in the apartments of communists and shoot them down.

In the factory town of Csepel (near Budapest) there were 18 communists killed. When in buses travelling between cities, the bandits do checks and prominent communists are taken out and shot.

In the town of Debrecen the regional committee went underground, contacted the military unit and asked for support. This data is confirmed by telegrams that arrived at the Council of Ministers from the leaders of the "revolutionary committees." The workers' council in Miskolc suggested that the employees of the security organs lay down their weapons and go away. Three employees, including the Deputy Director of the department, Mayor Gati, would not comply with the demands. The employees of the security organs were all hanged as a group. In the town of Keskemet, a crowd decided to punish a communist in the square. The commander of the Hungarian military unit went up in an airplane and with a machine gun dispersed the crowd.

The commander of the Hungarian troops stationed in the town of Gyor alerted a regiment in order to restore order in the city. When order was restored he moved to the neighboring city with the same objective. When he returned to Dier, he had to restore order once again.

4. In connection with the decision of the government to abolish the state security organs,

the morale of the operative staff declined.

On the evening, 28.X [28 October], the MVD held a meeting. [Ferenc] Munnich called the anti-government demonstration "a meeting of workers for the satisfaction of their juiilitary unit went

light of the dispersal of the security organs and the further coordination of our work.

SEROV

29.X.56

[Source: TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok. 11; translation by Johanna Granville.]

* * * * *

7. Mikoyan-Suslov Report, 30 October 1956

The political situation in the country is not getting better; it is getting worse. This is expressed in the following: in the leading organs of the party organs there is a feeling of helplessness.

escape of the resistance leaders from Hungary, our troops have occupied the Hungarian airports and solidly closed off all the roads on the Austro-Hungarian border. The troops, continuing to fulfill the assignment, are purging the territory of Hungary of insurgents.

G. ZHUKOV

4 November 1956

Sent to Khrushchev, Bulganin, Malenkov, Suslov, etc.

[Source: TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok. 23; translation by Johanna Granville.]

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS
"ANNALS OF COMMUNISM" SERIES
PUBLISHES FIRST TWO BOOKS

The first two books in a Yale University Press series ("Annals of Communism") based on newly-accessible Russian archives have appeared: Harvey
Be ic2.2.938B

were declassified in Moscow in May 1992, in particular a comprehensive “reference” (“*spravka*”) on Nagy compiled by I. Zamchevskii (Director of the 5th European Division of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs) a month after the Hung in 1 i 0 J 0 j 4S by I.

the Yugoslav Leaders," Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (AVP RF) [Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation], fond [f.] 077, opis [op.] 37, papka [p.] 191, delo [d.] 39, list [l.] 86. Also Daniel F. Calhoun, *Hungary and Suez, 1956: An Exploration of Who Makes History* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 57.

4. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chap. 15.

5. The Petofi Circle was an organization of Hungarian communist intellectuals founded in 1955. Sandor Petofi was a revolutionary poet during the 1848 revolt against Austria. (Lajos Kossuth was the Hungarian revolutionary leader in the 1848 uprising.)

6. "Notes of Ivan Serov," 26 July 1956, Tsentr Khranenia Sovremennoi Dokumentatsii (TsKhSD) [Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documents], f. 89, per. 45, dok. 4, l. 2.

7. Letter of Rakosi to Khrushchev, 15 December 1956, TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 3, l. 80.

8. "Expressed opinions at the Hungarian Politburo Session, July 13, 1956," TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 45, dok. 3. "There were 13 Hungarian comrades present—Politburo members and candidate members, as well as comrade Mikoyan A. N. On July 13, 1956 at 3 p.m...he participated in the Politburo session, which continued for four hours....About Nagy, Mikoyan said it was a mistake to expel him from the party, even though he deserved it, given his behavior. If he were in the party, he could be forced to be expedient. *The Hungarian comrades made their work harder on themselves....*" [emphasis added]

9. Most of these documents are still classified. They are located in the personal files for Imre Nagy in the KGB archive and among the Comintern documents kept at RTsKhIDNI (Russian Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documents). See Valerii Musatov, "Tragediia Nadia," *Novaiia Noveishaia Istoriia* 1 (Jan. 1994), 167. Also Kuz'minev, "If We Do Not Close Our Eyes" ["Yesli Ne Zakryvat' Glaza"], *Literaturnaia Rossiia* 51:1507 (20 December 1991), 22-23.

10. Musatov, "Tragediia," op. cit., 166.

11. Ibid.

12. I. Zamchevskii, "About Imre Nagy and his Politics with the Yugoslav Leaders," 4 December 1956, AVP RF, f. 077, o. 37, p. 191, d. 39, l. 82.

13. Ibid.; also Calhoun, *Hungary and Suez*, 62, and Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc*

REPORTS ON AGENT "VOLODYA": RUSSIAN DOCUMENTS ON IMRE NAGY

Documents provided and translated by
Johanna Granville

KGB Chief Kryuchkov's Report, 16 June 1989

SPECIAL FILE
Of Special Importance

To the CC CPSU
Committee of State Security KGB of the USSR
June 16, 1989

"About the Archive Materials Pertaining to Imre Nagy's Activities in the USSR"

The data we received show that the full-scale campaign of the opposition forces in Hungary connected with the rehabilitation of Imre Nagy, the former leader of the Hungarian government during the period of the 1956 events, is aimed at discrediting the whole path traversed by the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), undermining the party's authority and present leadership, and stirring up unfriendly feelings toward the USSR among the Hungarian people.

The opposition organizations demand a full rehabilitation of Imre Nagy. He has acquired the halo of a martyr, of an exceptionally honest and principled person. Special emphasis in all this uproar about Imre Nagy is placed on the fact that he was a "consistent champion against Stalinism," "an advocate of democracy and the fundamental restoration of socialism." In a whole series of publications in the Hungarian press, one is made to think that Nagy, [solely] as a result of Soviet pressure, was accused of counterrevolutionary activities, sentenced to death, and executed. The opposition is trying to raise Nagy on a pedestal and make him a symbol of the "struggle for democracy, progress, and the genuine independence of Hungary."

In the HSWP leadership, there is no united opinion as to the extent Imre Nagy should be rehabilitated. Deciding above all to strengthen their influence in the party and society, I. Pozsgai, M. Sjures, and I. Horvat sometimes openly flirt with the opposition in praising the services and dignity of Imre Nagy. K. Grosz, R. Nyers, M. Jasso and others, in advocating his legal rehabilitation, believe that this full-scale campaign of unrestrained praise for Nagy will strike at the HSWP and at Soviet-Hungarian relations. There are many mid-level and especially senior Hungarian communists who are very critical of such a campaign. Widespread among them is the opinion, founded on the stories of several party veterans, that the behavior of Imre Nagy in the 1920-30s in Hungary and the USSR was not as irreproachable, as is being suggested to the Hungarian population, which is under the control of the opposition's

press.

In the course of the KGB's work on archival materials dealing with the repression in the USSR in the second half of the thirties to the beginning of the 1950s, documents were uncovered that shed a light on the earlier, not well-known activities of Nagy in our country. From the indicated documents it follows that, having emigrated to the USSR in 1929, Nagy from the very beginning, of his own initiative, sought out contact with the security organs and in 1933 volunteered to become an agent (a secret informer) of the Main Administration of the security organs of the NKVD. He worked under the pseudonym "Volodya." He actively used Hungarian and other political emigres—as well as Soviet citizens—for the purpose of collecting data about the people who, for one reason or another, came to the attention of the NKVD. We have the document that proves that in 1939 Nagy offered to the NKVD for "cultivation" 38 Hungarian political emigres, including Ferenc Munnich. In another list he named 150 Hungarians, Bulgarians, Russians, Germans, and Italians that he knew personally, and with whom in case of necessity, he could "work." On the basis of the reports by Nagy—"Volodya"—several groups of political émigrés, consisting of members of Hungarian, German, and other Communist parties, were sentenced. They were all accused of "anti-communist," "terrorist," and "counterrevolutionary" activities (the cases of the "Agrarians," "Incorrigibles," "The Agony of the Doomed," and so on). In one of the documents (June 1940) it is indicated that Nagy "gave material" on 15 arrested "enemies of the people," who had worked in the International Agrarian Institute, the Comintern, and the All-Union Radio Committee. The activities of "Volodya" led to the arrest of the well-known scholar E. Varga, and of a whole series of Hungarian Communist Party leaders (B. Varga-Vago, G. Farkas, E. Neiman, F. Gabor, and others). A part of these were shot, a part were sentenced to various terms in prison and exile. Many in 1954-1963 were rehabilitated.

From the archival materials it does not follow that Nagy was an employee of the NKVD by force. Moreover, in the documents it is directly indicated that "Volodya" displayed considerable "interest and initiative in his work and was a qualified agent."

Taking into account the nature and direction of the wide-scale propagandistic campaign in Hungary, it would probably be expedient to report to the General Secretary of the Hungarian HSWP and K. Grosz about the documents that we have and advise them about their possible use.

Chairman of the KGB V. KRYUCHKOV

[Source: TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok. 82.]

* * * * *

Nagy's OGPU Enlistment, 4 September 1930

OBLIGATIONS

I, the undersigned, employee of the Department of the OGPU (last name) Nagy (first name) Imre (patronymic) Iosofovich in the course of service, or after being discharged, presently commit myself to keep in the strictest secret all information and data about the work of the OGPU and its organs, not to divulge it in any form nor to share it even with my closest relatives and friends. I will be held accountable for any failure to carry out my responsibilities according to Article 121 of the Criminal Code.

Order of the OGPU of April 3, 1923, No. 133, etc. RVS USSR of July 19, 1927 has been declared to me.

Signature: Nagy Imre Iosofovich
4 September 1930

NOTE: The present document must be kept in the personal file of the employee.

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok 79.*]

* * * * *

**Report on Nagy's Arrest by the NKVD,
10 March 1938**

REFERENCE

About the intelligence work of the agent of the 1st division of the 4th Department of the First Administration.

"VOLODYA"

In his work "Volodya" shows great interest and initiative, a qualified agent. Through "Volodya" the counterrevolutionary group the "Agrarians" was exposed and liquidated.

(Signed) MATUSOV,
Deputy Director of the 1st Dept, 4th Dept, 1st Administration, Captain of State Security

II.

From the Deputy Director of the 4th Dept GUGB of the NKVD USSR
to the Commissar of State Security 3 rank,
Comrade Karutskii

R E P O R T

I report that on the night of the 4-5th of March of 1938 the agent of the second division "Volodya" Nagy, Vladimir Iosifovich was arrested by the 11th Dept of the UNKVD of the Moscow region.

"Volodya" was recruited on 17 January 1933 and during all that time gave valuable material about the anti-Soviet activities of a number of people from the Hungarian political émigré community.

Recently "Volodya" actively cultivated the fundamental objective of the intelligence case "The Incurables" including: BAROS V., MANUELS., MADZSAR, TEGDAS, and a number of others.

Volodya was recruited without a preliminary check in the 8th department of the GUGB, and remained under arrest for 4 days. When we asked on what grounds was "Volodya" arrested, they freed him on 8 March of this year.

I report this information by your orders.

Director of the 2nd Division of the 4th Department of the GUGB
Captain of State Security
(Signed) ALTMAN
10 March 1938

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 89, Per 45, Dok 80, 2.*]

* * * * *

Information on Agent "Volodya," June 1941

To the CC Hungarian Communist Party (HCP)
To Comrade Malenkov

Upon the inquiry of the Administration of Cadres of the CC of the (HCP) of 19 April 1940, No. 275/c we are sending reference material about Nagy

Vladimir Iosifovich.

Enclosed: the abovementioned

Deputy of the People's Committee of Internal Affairs of the USSR

(Signed) MERKULOV

II.

R E F E R E N C E

about the agent of the 1st Division of the 3rd Administration of the NKGB USSR "Volodya"

_____, born in 1896, in the town of Kaposvar (Hungary), Hungarian by nationality, a citizen of the USSR, member of the HCP (b) since 1918. At present he works in the All Union Radio Committee. He was recruited as an agent in 1933. In 1936 during the inspection of his party documents "Volodya" was expelled from the HCP, and in 1939 again readmitted. In readmitting him to the party by the Party Board KPK of the CC HCP, he was reprimanded for the fact that he did not get the Comintern's consent for his wife's trip to Hungary in 1935.

In the journal "Uj Hang" [New Sound] in Hungarian No. 2 for the year 1939, "Volodya" in his article expressed doubt that the Hungarian proletariat at the present time was faithful to the socialist cause.

In 1937-1938 "Volodya" gave a number of materials about the anti-Soviet activities of FARKAS and VAGO. In subsequent materials about "Volodya" the following people were arrested and convicted: MANUEL, LUBARSZKII, DUBROVSZKII, BARON, KRAMER, and MADZSAR.

"Volodya" also informed us about the anti-Soviet activities of the people presently arrested: STEINBERG, STUKKE, SUGAR, POLLACSEK, KARISKAS, FRIEDMAN.

At present "Volodya" is cultivating a group of anti-Soviet-minded former Hungarian political emigres.

Director of the 1st Division of the 3rd Administration of the USSR First Lieutenant of State Security

(Signed) Sverdlov

" " June 1941 [day of the month left blank]

[Source: *TsKhSD, F 89, Per. 45, Dok 81,.*]

Poland, a critical link in the Kremlin's post-war security scheme in Europe. By October 1956, Soviet cadres, many chosen because of their Polish background, dominated the senior levels of the Polish Armed Forces.²

The transformation of the Soviet system after Stalin's death affected the satellite states of East Europe in different ways. The Kremlin, Nikita S. Khrushchev in particular, followed and attempted to influence the pace and nature of the changes throughout the region with varying degrees of success. By October 1956, the de-Stalinization debate in Poland focused on the potential return of Wladyslaw Gomulka³ to the leadership of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). However, Gomulka, who had spent the summer of 1956 securing his place on the Politburo by gaining the confidence of almost all the Central Committee members, as well as the Soviets, made his return to the PUWP conditional. He stubbornly insisted that Khrushchev complete what he had begun in 1954: the withdrawal of Soviet officers and advisers from the Polish Armed Forces and security apparatus. Gomulka also demanded the removal of Soviet Marshal Konstanty Rokossowski⁴ from the PUWP Politburo.

Three days in October 1956 resolved four outstanding and interrelated conflicts of the de-Stalinization period in Poland. First, the bitter and divisive struggle for political power within the PUWP Central Committee was settled. The fractured Central Committee was nearly unanimous in selecting Gomulka First Secretary of the PUWP. Second, the Soviet threat to intervene militarily in the affairs of the Polish Party ended with a compromise agreement on the part of the CPSU leadership and the PUWP leadership. Third, the new PUWP leadership managed to mobilize significant elements of Polish society to rally in support of Gomulka, if not the PUWP, and thus frustrate the growing animosity directed by segments of Polish society against the party-state. Finally, all the factions in the PUWP used the Soviet threat to rally their supporters and Polish society. The discourse of nationalism thus confirmed the demographic transformation of the PUWP throughout Poland and ended the tight grip on the leadership of the PUWP held by the former Communist Party of Poland (CPP) cadres.

The PUWP leadership reassessed the political situation in the country at the Politburo meeting of 1 and 2 October 1956, shortly after the First Secretary, Edward Ochab,⁵ returned from a visit to China.⁶ The agenda of this meeting included concerns about Gomulka's views on the developing crisis. The leadership asked First Secretary Ochab to meet with Gomulka and to invite the former leader of the wartime Polish Workers Party (PWP) to a Politburo meeting.⁷ The decision had been unavoidable and the logical continuation of Gomulka's long series of official and secret talks with individual Politburo members since April 1956.

At the Politburo meeting of October 8 and 10, in preparation for Gomulka's appearance at the next Politburo meeting, the leadership outlined four reasons for the crisis in the PUWP: 1) "a lack of unity in the Politburo"; 2) "a lack of connections between the leadership and the Party activists"; 3) "a lack of authority among the leadership"; and 4) "With regard to the spreading of anti-Soviet tendencies there is, aside from the propaganda of the enemy, an unfair situation in the relations between the PPR [Polish People's Republic] and USSR (such as the question concerning the price of coal, the highest officer cadres in the army often do not know the Polish language, do not have Polish citizenship, and the Soviet ambassador⁸ interferes in the internal affairs of the country)." The leadership also decided: "To turn to the USSR and to the relevant generals who hold positions in the army with a proposition that they adopt Polish citizenship. Soviet officers who do not speak

to the Central Committee his appointment to the PUWP Politburo: "I do not have enough strength to take up the challenges of active work and present conditions do not encourage one to do so. However, a peculiar political situation has arisen and one simply cannot escape its consequences. This is why I shall not refrain from political activities...Until now you have prevented me from doing so, but should you change your minds today I will not say no. I would like to emphasize that...I consider my views to be correct and I will not retreat. I will be appealing to the Party leadership and even to Party organizations throughout the country. I will make my doubts known. I am a stubborn person. I would like you to know this."¹⁰ Ochab agreed to nominate Gomulka as well as some of his closest political allies for membership in the Politburo at the 8th PUWP Plenum, which was set to take place on October 17.

The debate over the 8th Plenum continued at the Politburo meeting of October 15. The leadership concluded that "there would be no keynote speech and Comrade Ochab's introductory remarks would merely present the situation within the Politburo." They also decided to hold another Politburo meeting and to postpone the 8th Plenum until October 19. More important, the Politburo agreed to add Gomulka and his allies, Marian Spychalski, Zenon Kliszko, and Ignacy Loga-Sowinski, to the leadership.

The Politburo then ordered that a press release be issued for October 16 to announce publicly the planned return of Gomulka to the leadership, and October 19 as the date for the 8th Plenum. Finally, the Politburo decided to hold elections at the next meeting to decide the Politburo and Secretariat membership that would be presented to the 8th Plenum. The debate in the Politburo was heated. Rokossowski and three of his allies in the Politburo—Witold Józwiak,¹¹ Zenon Nowak,¹² and Władysław Dworakowski¹³—attacked the other voting members of the Politburo for trying to exclude them from the leadership. Shortly before the meeting ended, Rokossowski warned: "I view the holding of elections in this situation as desertion."¹⁴

At the Politburo meeting on October 17, a "leadership-search" commission was established. It included Gomulka and three other senior Politburo members: Józef Cyrankiewicz,¹⁵ Aleksander Zawadzki,¹⁶

and Ochab. The mandate of the special commission, which excluded the leading hardliners, was to prepare a list of candidates for the new PUWP Politburo, Secretariat, and Presidium of the Council of Ministers. The special commission met during the break.

When the Politburo meeting resumed, Ochab announced the decisions that had been taken: 1) the Politburo would be limited to nine members; 2) the new Politburo would include Gomulka, Zawadzki, Cyrankiewicz, Loga-Sowinski, Roman Zambrowski,¹⁷ Adam Rapacki, Jerzy Morawski, Stefan Jedrychowski, and Ochab; 3) the Secretariat would include Gomulka, Zambrowski (who was removed from the Secretariat by Khrushchev at the 6th PUWP Plenum of March 1956,¹⁸) Edward Gierek, Witold Jarosinski, and Ochab. Fourteen members voted for the first proposal, with only Rokossowski and Józwiak opposed. Thirteen members voted on the second proposal, which was opposed by Rokossowski, Józwiak, and Zenon Nowak. During the discussions concerning the elections to the Secretariat, it was also decided to add Jerzy Albrecht and Władysław Matwin to the list of candidates. Józwiak opposed Matwin, and Rokossowski opposed Matwin and Albrecht. The commission excluded from the Politburo and Secretariat those persons most closely associated with the Soviets, namely, Józwiak, Franciszek Mazur,¹⁹ Zenon Nowak, and Rokossowski.²⁰

Panteleimon K. Ponomarenko, the Soviet ambassador in Warsaw, informed Ochab on the evening of October 18 that the CPSU Politburo had decided to send a delegation to Warsaw in order to discuss the situation in the PUWP and the country. Ponomarenko added that Moscow was alarmed by the growing anti-Soviet manifestations in Poland. Ochab immediately gathered the Politburo to meet with Ponomarenko at the Central Committee. They suggested to Ponomarenko that the Soviet delegation arrive during the second or the third day of the Plenum. Only Rokossowski was of the opinion that the Soviet delegation should be met before the Plenum. Ponomarenko agreed with Rokossowski and informed the Polish leaders that a Soviet delegation, headed by Khrushchev, would arrive in Warsaw shortly before the 8th Plenum was to begin on the morning of October 19.²¹

The CPSU delegation, which included Khrushchev, Lazar Kaganovich,

Anastas Mikoyan, Molotov, Defense Minister, Marshal I.S. Zhukov, the commander of the Warsaw Pact, Marshal Konev, and the Chief of the Soviet General Staff, General Antonov, arrived in Warsaw at about 7 a.m. on the 19th. Khrushchev later recalled in his memoirs: "We learned from our ambassador [in Warsaw] that the tensions which had been building up had boiled over...Some Poles were criticizing Soviet policy toward Poland, saying that the treaty signed was unequal and that the Soviet Union was taking unfair advantage of Poland...We had further reason to worry when certain elements began to protest the fact that the Commander in Chief of the Polish Army was Marshal Rokossowski...The situation was such [that] we had to be ready to resort to arms." The Soviet leader added: "the Soviet Union was being reviled with abusive language and the [Polish] government was close to being overthrown. The people rising to the top were those whose mood was anti-Soviet. This might threaten our lines of communication and access to Germany through Poland. Therefore, we decided to take certain measures to maintain contact with our troops in the German Democratic Republic...We decided to send a delegation to Poland and have a talk with the Polish leadership. They recommended that we not come. Their reluctance to meet with us heightened our concern even more. So we decided to go there in a large delegation."²²

Khrushchev's dramatic encounter with Ochab, Cyrankiewicz, Zawadzki, Zambrowski, and Gomulka at Warsaw airport, began on an angry note. Document No. 1 below provides the fullest and earliest account to date of the events that transpired on the tarmac of Warsaw's military airport: Gomulka's briefing to the PUWP Politburo some two hours after the CPSU and PUWP delegations met. The first meeting with the Soviets had lasted until about 9 a.m. The Poles and the Soviets agreed that the 8th Plenum would begin that morning in order for Gomulka and the others to be elected to the Central Committee, but that no further decisions would be taken by the Plenum until the meeting with the Soviets had ended.

DOCUMENT NO. 1

Protocol No. 129

Meeting of the Politburo on 19, 20 and 21
October 1956
(during a pause in proceedings at the VIII

Plenum)

The Politburo agrees to the following press communiqué:

On 19 October at 10:00 am the proceedings of the VIII Plenum began. After the meeting was opened by comrade Ochab, and the agenda was

Warsaw Pact—NATO Pact. On what do they [Soviets] base the difficulty of our situation, they're not exactly sure. Ochab did not inform them about the situation in Poland. American radio: he [Mikoyan] cites [apparently from American news reports] Well then [Mikoyan

the reports true [and] are there which could divide us? session. From Poland they need [the] question of coal reparations. [they] agreed to decrease the quota of [and]. From 1959, [they will] nottake Polish coal for their commodities. Letter [regarding the quota of Soviet They [So- tton forPoland.Iron ore works in Poland] They decided to

49 [For the Soviets]

The question is not about people, but what kind of politics is hiding [behind the proposed] personnelchanges. The atmosphere [in Poland] is anti-Soviet and the organizational decisions are anti-Soviet. Poland is not a Bulgaria or Hungary— together with us [USSR] it's the most important[country in the region]. In what way does the Soviet Union infringe on [Poland's] sovereignty?

42

They could come to an arrangement so that [the kids] could have discussions [with] [The] about [to] be satisfied. [On the Polish] Army—Soviet officers [of Eastern Europe]—Tito banned the [Yugoslav] press from writing on the People's Democracies as [made it [a] high calibre [force]. [On the Polish] [led from the Polish by L.W. Gluchowski] Press, [concerning] what it wrote about Khrushchev's meeting [with the PUWP Central

friendship.1/ war—dangerous,2/ to isolate Polish reactionaries,3/ we belong to a common socialist camp—noone would forgive us if we broke apart.

DOCUMENT NO. 3

45 Aleksander Zawadzki's Notes. Comrades Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Molotov, Kaganovich, and Mikoyan [says] the

[t a v t e r s] P h e r t i o n s i t u a t i o n i n c l u d e r e l a t i o n s b e t w e e n t h e p a r t i e s , a b o u t t h e b o u n d a r i e s o f t h e [s o c i a l i s t] c a m p , a n d i s s u e s b e t w e e n o u r s t a t e s . O u r c o u n t r i e s a r e a l l i e s , a g a i n s t [w h o m] ? N A T O J F r o m o u r [P U W P] P a r t y t h e y [S o v i e t s] d o n o t h a v e t h e r e a l i n f o r m a t i o n . O c h a b s a y s t h a t t h e o s i t u a t i o n i s c o m p l i c a t e d , b u t h e d o e s n o t s a y w h a t t h e p r o b l e m i s . A m e r i c a n R a d i o i s p r o v i d i n g d e t a i l s a b o u t t h e s i t u a t i o n i n t h e [P U W P] P a r t y l e a d e r s h i p — (M i k o y a n r e a d s [a p p a r e n t l y f r o m A m e r i c a n r a d i o r e p o r t s]) . i W h a t c a n s e p a r a t e u s ? 1) E c o n o m i c i s s u e s . W e [S o v i e t s] n e e d n o t h i n g f r o m P o l a n d . T h e P o l i s h s i d e i s a l s o u n i l a t e r a l l y p r e s e n t i n g [t h e a r g u m e n t s o f] t h e S o v i e t s i d e w i t h o u t t h e f a c t s — [s u c h a s t h e] i s s u e o f c o a l q u o t a s . F r o m 1 9 5 9 , t h e y [S o v i e t s] a r e e n d i n g

example] about the amoral position of the U 4 S Y a n y a [r] u g u o S g x i u a o c S o n e t h i n g i n t e r e s t i n g a n d e v e r y t h i n g

At the same time, comrade Mikoyan told comrade Ochab that the position of the Polish comrades corresponds with the main line of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

In connection with this, the Presidium of the CC CPSU has decided to recall all Soviet advisers that have been sent, at the time at the request of the Polish Government, to assist the work of the PPR organs of security.⁷²

During the same conversation, comrade Ochab transmitted the view of the CC PUWP about the need, after the institution of Soviet advisers is abolished, to create new forms of collaboration between the organs of security of the USSR and Poland, with the aim to create a new representative office of the USSR Committee for State Security attached to the PPR Committee for Public Security.⁷³

The CC CPSU, in principle, agrees with such a position and is ready to consider this question when concrete proposals are received from the CC PUWP.

2. According to the requests made by the Polish Government, and in accordance with agreements between our governments, there is a certain number of Soviet officers and general officers still posted together with personnel of the Polish Army.

The CC CPSU believes that if in the opinion of the CC PUWP there is no longer a need for the remaining Soviet officers and general officers on the staff of the Polish Army, then we agree in advance on their being recalled.⁷⁴ We ask you to prepare the proposals about how this could be solved when the delegation from the Politburo of the CC PUWP arrives in Moscow.⁷⁵

SECRETARY CENTRAL COMMITTEE CPSU

N. KHRUSHCHEV

22 October 1956

[Unsigned. Above the date and handwritten in Polish it reads: "*Handed to me personally by C[omrade] Ponomarenko*" and initialled by

mends that the Plenum be adjourned till tomorrow morning.” *Ibid.*, 16.

28. Molotov described Rokossowski’s appointment thus: “Before appointing Rokossovsky to Poland I went there and told the Poles we would give them one of our experienced generals as minister of defense. And we decided to give them one of the best—Rokossowski. He was good-natured, polite, a tiny bit Polish, and a talented general. True, he spoke Polish badly, stressing the wrong syllables. He wasn’t happy about going there, but it was very important for us that he be there, that he put everything in order. After all, we knew nothing about them.” See Albert Resis, ed., *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics. Conversations with Felix Chuev* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), 54.

29. Khrushchev, *The Last Testament*, 203.

30. *Ibid.*, 205.

31. Ochab in Toranska, *Oni*, 77-78.

32. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* [hereafter *The Glasnost Tapes*], trans. and ed. by Jerrold L. Schecter with Vyacheslav W. Luchkov (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1990), 115.

33. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), 205.

34. *Ibid.*, 203.

35. Khrushchev, *The Glasnost Tapes*, 116.

36. The following PUWP Politburo members missed the Soviet-Polish meeting: Hilary Minc, who resigned from the Politburo on 9 October 1956; Dworakowski, who was apparently ill; and Mazur, who was on vacation in the Soviet Union. Mazur flew to Moscow on October 13 and did not return to Poland until November 6. It has been suggested that Mazur went to the Soviet Union to play the role of Hungary’s János Kádár in the event the Soviets decided to “invade” Poland. See also the comments by Jakub Berman (the second highest ranking member of the PUWP Politburo during the Stalin years who resigned his posts in May 1956 and was expelled from the Party in 1957) on Mazur in Toranska, *Oni*, 263-264; and the interview with Antoni Skulbaszewski (the second highest ranking Soviet officer in Polish military counter-intelligence until 1954) in Michal Komar and Krzysztof Lang, “Mysmy juz o tym mówili, prosze Pana... [We have already talked about this, sir...],” *Zeszyty Historyczne [Historical Papers]* 91 (1990), 182, fn. no. 5.

37. I would like to express my gratitude to Andrzej Werblan and the editorial board of *Dzis [Today]* for allowing me to include both documents in this article. The original Polish texts, with an introduction by Werblan, will be published in the April 1995 edition of *Dzis*. The Gomulka text was edited by Werblan and the Zawadzki text was edited by Józef Stepnia. The original texts used many abbreviations.

38. The commentaries in the text and the notes are mine. The original document was made available by Gomulka’s son, Ryszard Strzelecki-Gomulka, and belongs to the family.

39. On the role of Radio Free Europe and the foreign correspondents in Warsaw who reported on the October events to the West see Jan Nowak-Jezioranski, *Wojna w Eterze [War on the Air]*, Tom 1 [Vol. 1] (London: Odnova [Restoration], 1986), ch. 15.

40. 1949-1964 President of the German Democratic Republic.

41. Gomulka is not clear, but he is probably referring to the Soviet offer to help build a factory in Poland to enrich uranium ore. See “Notatka z rozmowy polskoradzieckich z 22 pazdziernika 1956 r w sprawie

eksploatacji rudy uranowej — i Zalaczniki,” AAN, KC PZPR paczka 112, tom 26, str. 643-661.

42. See [in Russian] “Pismo N. Chruszczowa do Wl. Gomulki z 13 kwietnia 1957 r. Dot. Uzbrojenia Wojsa Polskiego i produkcji nowoczesnej broni w Polsce oraz naruszenia tajemnej produkcji broni w Polsce,” AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 112, tom 26, str. 223-225.

43. This is a reference to articles by Leszek Kolakowski, “Antysemita—Piec tez nienowych I przestroga [Anti-Semitism—Five old theses and admonition],” *Po Prostu [Plain Speaking]*, 22 (27 May 1956), and especially Edda Werfel (her husband, Roman Werfel, was editor-in-chief of *Nowe Drogi [New Paths]* from 1952 to 1959, the leading organ of the PUWP Central Committee; he was also editor of *Trybuna Ludu [People’s Tribune]* for two months in March 1956), “Skad i dlaczego nastroje antyinteligencjne [From where and why the anti-intellectual mood]?” *Po Prostu*, 25 (17 June 1956). Edda

solved to go nevertheless. According to the notes Mikoyan kept, the discussion at a meeting in the Belvedere Palace following the plenum was stormy. Gomulka and the other Polish leaders wanted non-interference in their party's affairs, a definition of the status of Soviet troops in Poland, a reduction in the number of Soviet advisers, and the recall of Soviet Marshal Rokossowski as Polish Minister of Defence.

Khrushchev, Bulganin and Molotov responded belligerently, shouting "you want to turn your faces to the West and your backs to us...you've forgotten that we have our enormous army in Germany." Emotions grew heated. Mikoyan's notes continue: "During this conversation one of the Polish comrades handed Gomulka a note. Gomulka requested that they be ordered back to their stations. We exchanged glances and Khrushchev ordered Konev to stop the tanks and send them back to their stations'."

The citation for Mikoyan's notes reads: "APRF [Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii], 'Special File,' Notes of Khrushchev's conversation in Warsaw, May 1960, No. 233." See Volkogonov, *Lenin: A New Biography*, trans. and ed. by Harold Shukman (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 48-482 and 509 endnote no. 13.

62. Khrushchev met with leaders of the Soviet bloc (excluding Poland and Hungary) on 24 October 1956 to discuss the situation in Poland and Hungary. Khrushchev's report on the Polish events and the Soviet-Polish confrontation at the Belvedere Palace was recorded by Jan Svoboda, secretary to A. Novotny, First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. I am grateful to Professor Tibor Hajdu, Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, for sending me a copy of the document (written in Czech), which he found in the Prague archives (Archiv UV KSC, 07/16). According to Professor Hajdu (letter dated 10 March 1995), Svoboda accompanied Novotny because the Czech First Secretary did not understand Russian. The document does not mention who attended the meeting, but a former Russian diplomat who first wrote about this matter mentioned that Liu-Sao-Tsi of China was there, Hajdu wrote.

The Chinese thus heard both versions of the Belvedere Palace meeting. When Gomulka was presenting his version of events to the Chinese, however, he did not know that Khrushchev's version, which portrayed the Soviets as the victors, had already been reported to Beijing.

63. I would like to thank János Tischler, Research Fellow, Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Budapest, for bringing this document to my attention.

64. Text of the communiqué in the PUWP daily, *Trybuna Ludu* (20 October 1956).

65. *Nowe Drogi* 10 (October 1956), 21-46.

66. On the Poznan revolt see Jaroslaw Maciejewski and Zofia Trojanowicz, eds., *Poznanski Czerwiec 1956 [Poznan's June 1956]* (Poznan: Wydawnictwo Poznanskie [Poznan Publishers], 1990); and Maciej Roman Bombicki, *Poznan '56* (Poznan: Polski Dom Wydawniczy "Lawica" [The Polish Publishing House "Lawica"], 1992).

67. *Nowe Drogi* 10 (October 1956) 20.

68. *Ibid.*, 149.

69. *Ibid.*, 157-158.

70. *Trybuna Ludu*, 21 October 1956.

71. Andrzej Paczkowski, Institute of Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences, who has conducted extensive research in the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs archives, provided me (in a letter dated 10

January 1995) with the following information concerning Soviet NKVD/KGB advisers in Poland in 1945-1959: NKVD officers worked with the Polish security apparatus from its inception in July 1944, but their official status at that time is still unclear. It is apparent that there had been connections between the NKVD (and SMERSH) and Poland's Bureau of Public Security (BPS).

On 10 January 1945 the PWP Politburo decided to ask Moscow to send advisors to Poland, which was the beginning of the preparations for the construction of a security apparatus west of the River Wisla. On 20

1956. A shorter version was originally discovered by Tibor Hajdu of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest and published in Hungarian in 1992.¹ Although the document below is the most important item to emerge thus far, other materials in Prague are also well worth consulting. In addition to files left from the top organs of the former Czechoslovak Communist Party (*Komunistická strana Československa*, or KSC), which are all now housed at the Central State Archive, numerous items pertaining to the military aspects of the 1956 crises can be found in the Czech Military-Historical Archive (*Vojenský historický archiv*).²

The summary report below was presented by the KSC leader, Antonín Novotný, to the other members of the KSC Politburo on 25 October 1956.³ The report is undated, but it must have been drafted and hastily revised in the late night/early morning hours of October 24–25 by Jan Svoboda, a top aide to Novotný. Svoboda was responsible for composing many of Novotný's speeches and reports in the mid-1950s.

The document recounts a meeting of top Soviet officials who belonged to the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) Presidium, as the Politburo was then known. The session was convened at Nikita Khrushchev's initiative on the evening of 24 October 1956, at a time of acute tension with (and within) both Poland and Hungary. Until a day or two before the meeting, Khrushchev's concerns about Eastern Europe focused primarily on Poland, where a series of events beginning with the June 1956 clashes in Poznań, which left 53 dead and hundreds wounded, had provoked anxiety in Moscow about growing instability and rebellion.⁴ In early October one of the most prominent victims of the Stalinist purges in Poland in the late 1940s, Władysław Gomułka, had triumphantly regained his membership in the Polish Communist party (PZPR) and seemed on the verge of reclaiming his position as party leader. Khrushchev and his colleagues feared that if Gomułka took control in Warsaw and removed the most orthodox (and pro-Soviet) members of the Polish leadership, Poland might then seek a more independent (i.e., Titoist) course in foreign policy.

At the Presidium meeting on October 24 (and later in his memoirs), Khrushchev described how the Soviet Union actively tried to prevent Gomułka from regaining his leadership post.⁵ On October 19, as the 8th Plenum of the PZPR Central Committee was getting under way, a delegation of top Soviet officials paid a surprise visit to Warsaw. The delegation included Khrushchev, Vyacheslav Molotov, Nikolai Bulganin, Lazar Kaganovich, and Anastas Mikoyan, as well as the commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact, Marshal Ivan Konev, and 11 other high-ranking Soviet military officers. In a hastily-arranged meeting with Gomułka and other Polish leaders, the CPSU delegates expressed anxiety about upcoming personnel changes in the PZPR and urged the Poles to strengthen their political, economic, and military ties with the Soviet Union. For their part, Gomułka and his colleagues sought clarification of the status of Soviet troops in Poland and demanded that Soviet officials pledge not to interfere in Poland's internal affairs.⁶ Gomułka repeatedly emphasized that Poland "will not permit its independence to be taken away." He called for the withdrawal of all or most of the Soviet Union's 50 "advisers" in Poland and insisted that Marshal Konstantin Rokossovskii, the Polish-born Soviet officer who had been installed as Poland's national defense minister in November 1949, be removed along with other top Soviet officers who were e mdvs begi7eT* 0.02bw (-)Tarmyris v

the outset of the crisis that the Polish army would almost certainly put up stiff resistance against outside intervention. Moreover, Khrushchev and his colleagues were aware that Polish officials had begun distributing firearms to “workers’ militia” units who could help defend the capital, and that Gomulka had ordered troops from the Polish internal affairs ministry to seal off all areas in Warsaw that might be used as entry routes by Soviet forces.¹¹

Khrushchev’s reluctance to pursue a military solution under such inauspicious circumstances induced him to seek a *modus vivendi* with Gomulka whereby Poland would have greater leeway to follow its own “road to socialism.” By the time the CPSU Presidium meeting opened on October 24, the prospects for a solution of this sort appeared much brighter than they had just a day or two earlier. At the mass rally in Warsaw on the 24th, as Novotny mentions in his report, Gomulka adopted a far more conciliatory tone in his keynote speech. The Polish leader emphasized the need for strengthened political and military ties with the Soviet Union, and he condemned those who were trying to steer Poland away from the Warsaw Pact.¹² He also urged Poles to return to their daily work and to refrain from holding any further rallies or demonstrations. This speech gave Khrushchev greater reason to hope that a lasting compromise with Gomulka would be feasible. Although no one in Moscow could yet be confident that the strains with Poland were over, the worst of the crisis evidently had passed.

Yet even as the situation in Poland finally seemed to be improving (from Moscow’s perspective), events in Hungary had taken an unexpected and dramatic turn for the worse. On October 23, the day before the CPSU Presidium met, a huge demonstration was organized in downtown Budapest by students from the Budapest polytechnical university who wanted to express approval of the recent developments in Poland and to demand similar changes in their own country. By late afternoon the rally had turned violent, as the protesters and Hungarian security forces exchanged fire near the city’s main radio station. The shootings precipitated a chaotic rebellion, which was much too large for the Hungarian state security organs to handle on their own. Soviet “ad-

tection, and thus became easy targets for youths wielding grenades and Molotov cocktails. Although Hungarian soldiers were supposed to operate alongside Soviet units,

opposite was the case. For unexplained reasons, however, the Hungarian leadership did not succeed in making this claim until several days later.

Third, the document indicates that leaders in Moscow were well aware that Mikoyan's and Suslov's views of the situation in Hungary were much less alarmist than the reports they had been receiving from Andropov. This divergence is obvious when one compares the recently declassified cables (see the reference above), but it is interesting that Soviet leaders themselves

the uprising, Comrade Khrushchev said that according to reports the insurgents had set up their headquarters in the Hotel Astoria. This had been captured by Soviet troops. It appears that the groundwork for preparing a coup was organized by writers and was supported by students. The population as a whole has reacted passively to everything, but has not been hostile toward the USSR.

Comrade Khrushchev recommends that we not cover the situation in Hungary in our press until the causes of everything have been well clarified.

The representatives of the fraternal parties who were present joined the discussion. All of them expressed support for the stance of the CPSU CC Presidium.

Comrade Ulbricht emphasized in his speech that in his view the situation had arisen because we did not act in time to expose all the incorrect opinions that had emerged in Poland and Hungary. He assumed that it would behoove each party to give a response in the press to certain incorrect opinions.

Comrade Khrushchev recommended that they think about the problems in greater depth. We must realize that we are not living as we were during the CI [Communist International], when only one party was in power. If we wanted to operate by command today, we would inevitably create chaos. It is necessary to conduct propaganda work in each party, but we cannot permit this to turn into polemics between fraternal parties because this would lead to polemics between nations. The plenum of the CPSU CC in December will discuss ideological questions and, a 8 TD -0.it1.222 TD 0.156 Tw ((captu(l par,SU CCns and, CPShoworts acau as we wof t--0.065 Tw [gandc Tw (2

20. "Shifrtelgramma iz Budapeshta," Cable from A. Mikoyan and M. Suslov to the CPSU Presidium, 24 October 1956 (STRICTLY SECRET), in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 4, Pap. 6, D. 5, L. 2.

21. "Shifrtelgramma iz Budapeshta," Cable from A. Mikoyan and M. Suslov to the CPSU Presidium, 25 October 1956 (STRICTLY SECRET), in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 4, Pap. 6, D. 5, L. 8.

22. These documents have been published in both Hungarian and the original Russian. See the two-volume Hungarian collection *Jelcin-dosszie Szoviet dokumentumok 1956 rol.* (Budapest: Dohany, 1993); and *Hianyzo Lapok: 1956 tortenetebol: Dokumentumok a volt SZKP KP Leveltarabol* (Budapest: Zenit Konyvek, 1993). A few of the documents had already been published in Russian in "O sobytyakh 1956 goda v Vengrii," *Diplomaticeskii vestnik* (Moscow) 19-20 (15-31 October 1992), 52-56. Subsequently, most of the others were published in Russian with detailed annotations in a three-part series: "Vengriya, aprel'-oktyabr' 1956 goda: Informatsiya Yu. V. Andropova, A. I. Mikoyana i M. A. Suslova iz Budapeshta"; "Vengriya, oktyabr'-noyabr' 1956 goda: Iz arkhiva TsK KPSS"; and "Vengriya, noyabr' 1956-avgust 1957 g.," all in *Istoricheskii arkhiv* (Moscow) 4, 5, and 6 (1993), 103-142, 132-160, and 131-144, respectively.

23. The relevant passage in Khrushchev's memoirs is N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya*, 5 vols. (typescript, Moscow, 1965-1970), Vol. IV: *Vzaimootnosheniya s* *heh.hTTj -13.5632957*

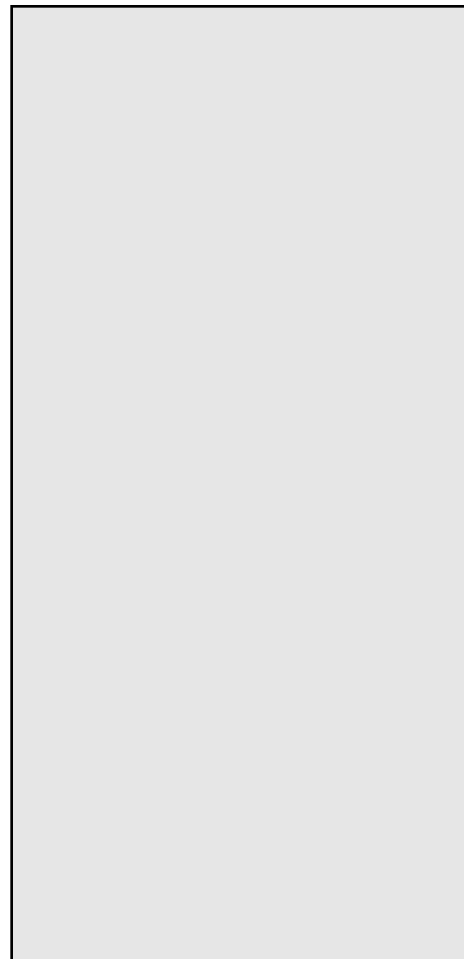
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port No. 6], 14 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, NL 90/435.
 25. Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen, Tagesbericht Nr. VI [Daily Report No. 6], 14 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/5/526.

26. Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen, Stellungnahmen der Parteiorgane nach dem 9. bzw. 11. 6. 1953: Bericht über die Aufnahme des Kommuniqués der Sitzung des Politbüros des ZK der SED v. 9.6.1953" [Reports of the Party Organs after June 9 resp. 11 June 1953: Report on the reception of the communiqué of the politburo session of the SED CC of 9 June 1953], SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/5/526.

27. Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen, Stellungnahmen der Parteiorgane nach dem 9. bzw. 11. 6. 1953: Durchsage der Kreisleitung Seehausen [Reports of the Party Organs after June 9 resp. 11 June 1953: Report of the District Leadership in Seehausen, 11 June 1953], SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/5/526.

28. FDGB-Bundesvorstand, Vertrauliche Information Nr. 21, 13.6.1953, SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/5/543.

29. [Resolution], VEB.-Industriebau, Baustelle: Bettenhaus Friedrichshain, SAPMO-BArch NL 90/437

30. "Notiz" [Memorandum] by Tzschorn, 15 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch NL 90/437; "Betrifft: Empfang einer Delegation von Bauarbeitern aus der Stalinallee durch die Genossen Plaschke und Tzschorn" [Re: Reception of a Delegation of the Construction Workers from the Stalinallee by the Comrades Plaschke and Comrade Ambreé on 15 June 1953], 25 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch NL 90/437.

31. Mitter and Wolle, *Untergang*, 90-91.

32. Hagen, *DDR*, 53.

33. Hagen, *DDR*, 55-56.

34. Mitter and Wolle, *Untergang*, 105.

35. Hagen, *DDR*, 772-73; Mitter and Wolle, *Untergang*, 104.

36. Hagen, *DDR*, 106.

37. Semyenov and Sololovskii, telegram to Molotov and Bulganin, 19 June 1953, quoted in Harrison, *The Bargaining Power*, 85.

38. Abteilung Presse und Rundfunk, "Zweite Analyse über die Sendungen von RIAS und NWDR am 18. 6. 1953" [Second Analysis of the Broadcasts of RIAS and NWDR], 18 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, J IV 2/202/14.

39. "Über die Lage am 17.6.1953 in Groß-Berlin und der DDR," 17 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, J IV 2/202/14.

40. "Die Rolle des feindlichen Rundfunks bei den Ereignissen in Berlin" [The Role of Hostile Broadcasts During the Events in Berlin], 21 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, NL 90/437.

41. Memorandum of Discussion at the 150th Meeting of the National Security Council, 18 June 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, VII, 1587. This view is corroborated by a telegram from HICOG Berlin to the Secretary of State, 17 June 1953.

Reporting on the day's events the cable concluded that "to best our knowledge, no American involved." 762B.00/6-1753, Record Group 59, National Archives. "American observers," however, "mingled freely" among the rioters. See CIA "Comment on East Berlin Uprising," 17 June 1953, Box 3, C.D. Jackson Records, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS. Officers of HICOG Berlin's Eastern Affairs Division "mingled with groups" of demonstrators and "talked to bystanders" during a brief visit (3-4:30 PM). No attempt was made by East German police to "keep persons obviously American away from discussion groups." HICOG Berlin to Secretary of State, 16 June 1953, 762B.00/6-1653, RG59, NA. One of these observers was the sister of CIA chief Allen Dulles, Eleanor Dulles, who was