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## CONFERENCES IN BUDAPEST, POTSDAM SPOTLIGHT COLD WAR FLASHPOINTS

In the autumn of 1996, the Cold War Oral History Project and the National Security Archive, along with European partner institutions, co-sponsored and jointly organized two major international scholarly conferences at which scholars presented and debated new evidence from both Eastern and Western archives and sources concerning two major Cold War episodes in Europe: the 1953 East German Uprising (and the post-Stalin succession struggle in Moscow), and the 1956 Polish and Hungarian crises.

The conference, "Hungary and the World, 1956: The New Archival Evidence," took place in Budapest on 26-

29 September 1996, and was hosted by the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The international symposium on "The Crisis Year 1953 and The Cold War in Europe" convened in Potsdam, Germany, on 10-12 November 1996, and was hosted by the Center for Contemporary History Research (Zentrum für Zeitgeschichtliche Forschung).

Both conferences grew out of the "Cold War Flashpoints" Project of the National Security Archive, a non-governmental research institute and declassified documents repository based at George Washington University. Previous activities of the Project, undertaken by the Archive in close cooperation with CWIHP and Czech and Polish partners, included the holding of a major international conference in Prague in April 1994 on new evidence on the 1968 Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and a scholarly workshop in Warsaw in August 1995 on new sources on the 1980-81 Polish Crisis, as well as meetings with scholars in Bucharest and Sofia in October 1996 on possibilities for collaborative research in Romanian and Bulgarian archives on Cold War topics.

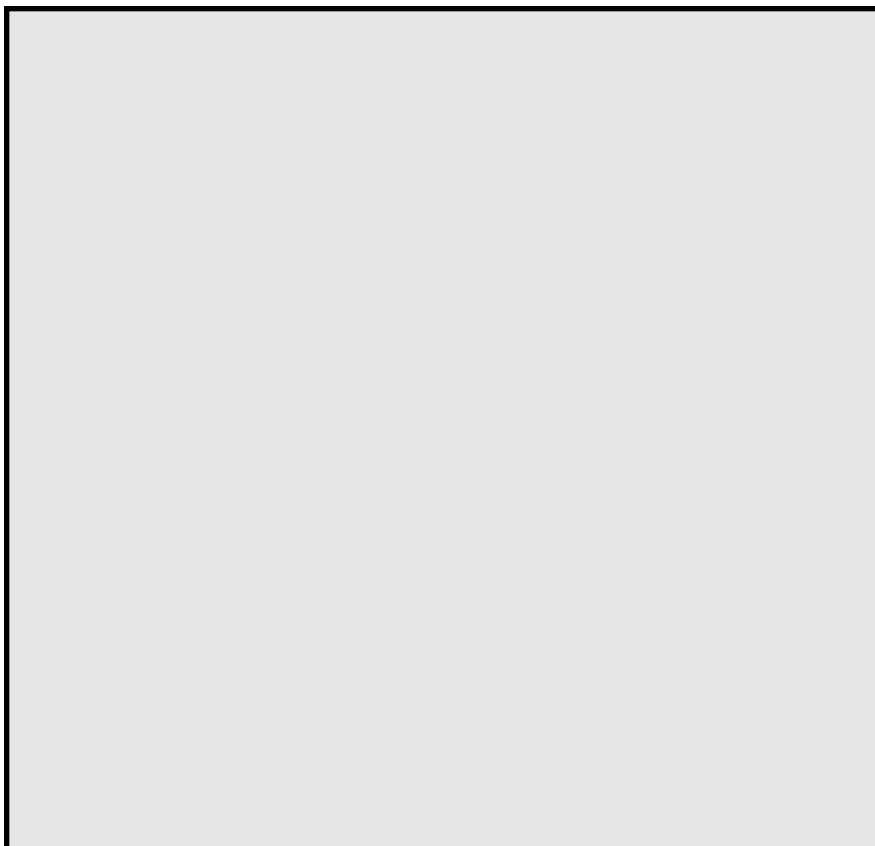
Future meetings are also scheduled. In June 1997, the "Flashpoints" Project plans to hold an oral history conference in Poland on the 1980-81 crisis, gathering key participants, scholars, and sources from Poland, Russia, the United States, and elsewhere, and the Project is also working with various scholars, archives, and scholarly institutions and projects toward the holding of a series of meetings to present new evidence on the End of the Cold War, including the 1989 revolutions in Europe, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the transfor-

mation in U.S.-Soviet relations.

The Budapest and Potsdam conferences, like others in the "Flashpoints" series, offered a venue for dozens of American, Russian, Central-East European, and other scholars to present new evidence from Western and Eastern archives, and in some cases for former participants in the events to recall their experiences. Key topics covered at Budapest included the Polish upheavals, which immediately preceded the Hungary invasion; Soviet policy toward

both crises; the impact of the invasion on Eastern Europe; the Western response; China's shifting position on the crises; and Radio Free Europe's controversial role. A number of participants in the uprising itself spoke either as panelists or as members of the audience, and several witnesses to the revolution led a "walking tour of revolutionary Budapest" to scenes of the street battles 40 years earlier.

Among the most noteworthy findings of the Hungary Conference were presentations and analyses of notes from Soviet Presidium meetings in fall 1956 taken by V.N. Malin, head of the CPSU General Department. These notes constitute the only known contemporaneous record of the key sessions of late October and early November at which Kremlin leaders went back and

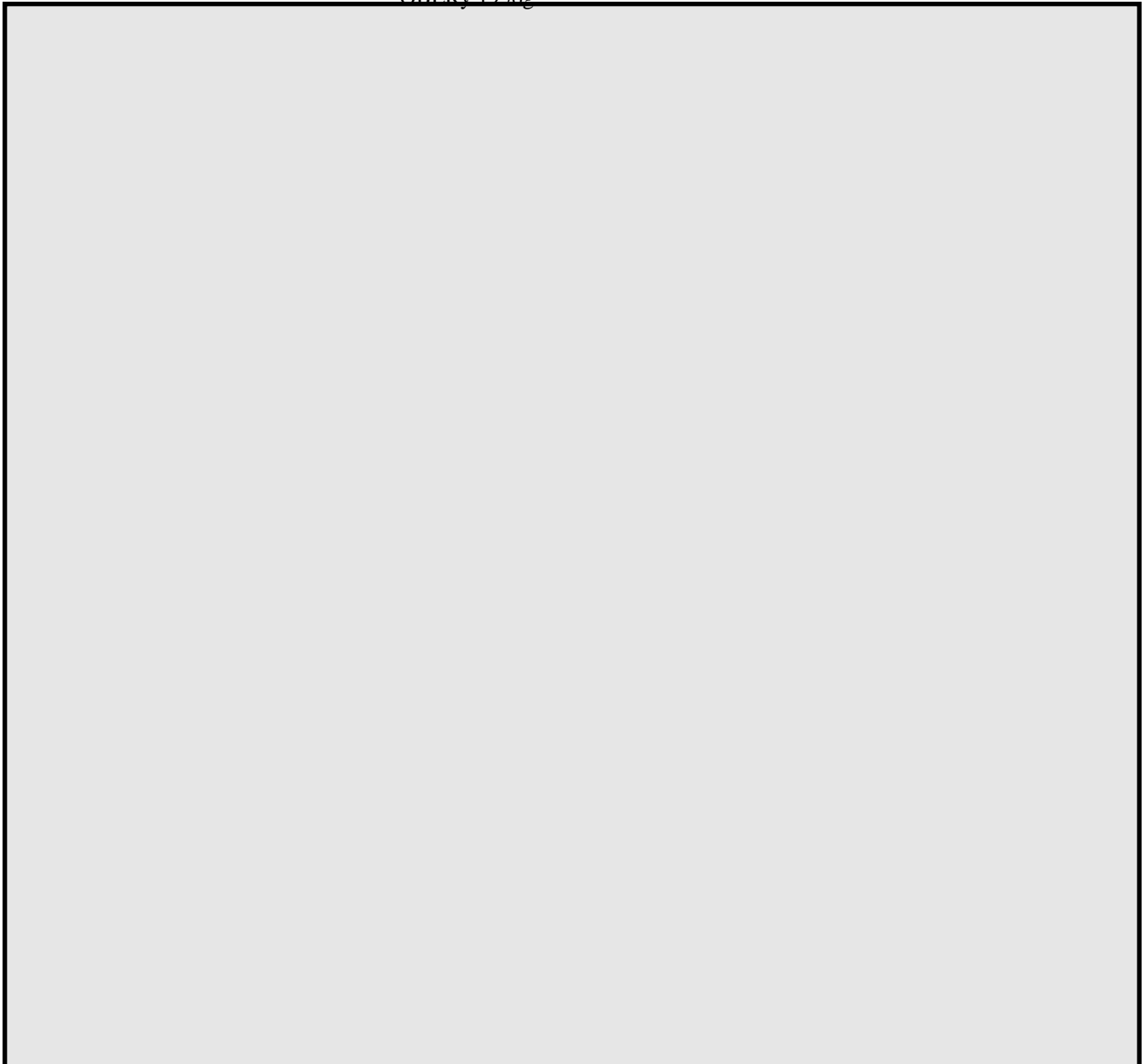


War Flashpoints” Project is to gather new archival materials from all sides of the events, the conference organizers prepared “briefing books” of recently declassified U.S., Russian, and European documents for both conferences: Christian F. Ostermann, ed., *The Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and the 17 June 1953 Uprising in East Germany: The Hidden History—Declassified Documents from U.S., Russian, and Other European Archives* (Washington, D.C.: CWIHP/National Security Archive); and Csaba Bekes, Malcolm Byrne, and Christian F. Ostermann, ed. and comp., *The Hidden History of Hungary 1956: A Compendium of Declassified Documents* (Washington, D.C.:

National Security Archive, 1996).

These briefing books, in turn, accelerated the process toward the ultimate preparation and publication by the conference organizers of edited volumes of papers and documents emerging from both the Potsdam and Budapest meetings. In addition, the Cold War International History Project, which has previously published East-bloc documents on all of the major “Flashpoint” crises, plans to publish selected materials from both the Potsdam and Budapest gatherings in forthcoming *Bulletins*, Working

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# *SPECIAL FEATURE:*

## NEW EVIDENCE ON SOVIET DECISION-MAKING AND THE 1956 POLISH AND HUNGARIAN CRISES

*by Mark Kramer*

The overlapping crises in Hungary and Poland in the autumn of 1956 posed a severe challenge for the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU). After a tense standoff with Poland, the CPSU Presidium (as the Politburo was then called) decided to refrain from military intervention and to seek a political compromise. The crisis in Hungary was far less easily defused. For a brief moment it appeared that Hungary might be able to break away from the Communist bloc, but the Soviet Army put an end to all such hopes. Soviet troops crushed the Hungarian revolution, and a degree of order returned to the Soviet camp.

Newly released documents from Russia and Eastern Europe shed valuable light on the events of 1956, permitting a much clearer and more nuanced understanding of Soviet reactions. This article will begin by discussing the way official versions of the 1956 invasion changed—and formerly secret documents became available—during the late Soviet period and after the Soviet Union disintegrated. It will then highlight some of the most important findings from new archival sources and memoirs. The article relies especially heavily on the so-called Malin notes, which are provided in annotated translation below, and on new materials from Eastern Europe. Both the article and the documents will show that far-reaching modifications are needed in existing Western accounts of the 1956 crises.

### OFFICIAL REASSESSMENTS BEFORE AND AFTER 1991

The advent of glasnost and “new

political thinking” in the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev led to sweeping reassessments of postwar Soviet ties with Eastern Europe. As early as 1987, an unofficial reappraisal began in Moscow of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Initially, these reassessments of the 1968 crisis did not have Gorbachev’s overt endorsement, but the process gained an official stamp in late 1989 once Communism had dissolved in Eastern Europe. Soon after the “velvet revolution” engulfed Czechoslovakia in November 1989, the five states that took part in the 1968 invasion—the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and Bulgaria—issued a collective statement denouncing the invasion and repudiating the Brezhnev Doctrine. In addition, the Soviet Union released its own declaration of regret over the “erroneous” decision to intervene in 1968.<sup>1</sup>

Curiously, though, Gorbachev was much less willing to proceed with a reevaluation of the Soviet invasion of Hungary in November 1956. Not until October 1991, two months after the aborted coup in Moscow had severely weakened the Soviet regime, did Gorbachev finally provide an official apology for the 1956 invasion.<sup>2</sup> Until that time, official judgments about Soviet actions in 1956 had been left primarily to Soviet military officers, who routinely glorified the invasion of Hungary as an example of “the international defense of socialist gains” and of “transforming socialist internationalism into action.”<sup>3</sup> A senior officer on the Soviet General Staff argued in 1987 that the “suppression of counterrevolutionary rebellion,” as in Hungary in 1956, should still be among the chief military

missions of the Warsaw Pact.<sup>4</sup> The same theme was expressed the following year in a Soviet book about the “Military Policy of the CPSU,” which received admiring reviews in Soviet military journals and newspapers.<sup>5</sup>

When political reforms began to sweep through Hungary and Poland in late 1988 and 1989, signs of unease soon cropped up in Soviet military writings. In September 1989, a prominent article by one of the top Soviet commanders in Hungary in October-November 1956, Army-General Pyotr Lashchenko, offered extravagant praise for the Soviet invasion.<sup>6</sup> Very few articles devoted solely to the Hungarian crisis had ever appeared in Soviet military journals (particularly after “normalization” began in Hungary in the late 1950s), so there was no doubt that the publication of Lashchenko’s analysis had been carefully timed. Several months before the article went to press, Imre Pozsgay and other top officials in the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party had publicly declared that the events of 1956 were a “popular uprising against an oligarchical regime that was humiliating the nation.”<sup>7</sup> By contrast, Lashchenko still insisted that the events of 1956 were merely a “counterrevolutionary rebellion that was actively supported by the most reactionary forces of international imperialism.” This harsh assessment was clearly intended to help prevent the political changes in Hungary from endangering the *raison d’être* of Soviet military deployments in Eastern Europe.

Unease within the Soviet military regarding the 1956 invasion continued even after the upheavals of late 1989. In contrast to the official Soviet state-

ment condemning the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, no such statement was issued about the intervention in Hungary. Although numerous Soviet officials, such as deputy foreign minister Anatolii Kovalev, later denounced the invasion of Hungary, the Soviet High Command apparently blocked efforts to release a statement about 1956 comparable to the one about 1968. Moreover, in August 1990, the same journal that had published Lashchenko's 1989 article featured another essay, by a Hungarian lieutenant-colonel, that was even more scathing in its assessment of the "counterrevolution" of 1956; the journal's editors highly recommended the article to their readers. Although senior officials on the CPSU Central Committee staff were secretly ordered in November 1990 to begin studying archival materials from 1956 and preparing an assessment for the CPSU leadership, this effort was intended mainly to find ways of deflecting pressure from the Hungarian government, and no public Soviet statements resulted.<sup>8</sup> Even when the last Soviet troops were pulled out of Hungary in June 1991, Gorbachev still declined to condemn the 1956 intervention.

The Soviet leader's belated apology in October 1991 was soon overtaken by the collapse of the Soviet regime. The new government in Russia under President Boris Yeltsin proved far more willing to reevaluate and condemn controversial episodes in Soviet relations with Eastern Europe. As a result, a large quantity of Soviet documentation about the 1956 Hungarian crisis and Moscow's response has recently become available. Yeltsin turned over a preliminary collection of declassified materials to the Hungarian government in November 1992, which are now stored at the Institute for the Study of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in Budapest. These documents were all published in Hungarian translation in 1993 as a two-volume collection.<sup>9</sup> A few of the items had appeared earlier in the original Russian,<sup>10</sup> and in 1993 most of the others were published in Russian with detailed annotations in a three-part series.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently, a few additional Soviet documents were re-

leased, most of which are now available in Fond 89 (the declassified collection) of the Center for Storage of Contemporary Documentation in Moscow, the former archive of the CPSU Central Committee. As valuable as these initial items were, they provided only a few tantalizing details about Soviet decision-making in 1956. Some aspects of Soviet decision-making had been revealed in memoirs by Nikita Khrushchev and other former officials, but in the absence of primary documentation it was difficult to know how accurate the memoirs were.<sup>12</sup>

Fortunately, that gap in the historical record has now been at least partly closed. In mid-1995, the Russian archival service finally released the "Malin notes" from the October-November 1956 crisis. Verbatim transcripts of CPSU Presidium meetings were not kept in the 1950s, but Vladimir Malin, the head of the CPSU CC General Department during the entire Khrushchev period, took extensive notes of all Presidium meetings. His handwritten notes, stored in the former

#### THE MALIN NOTES: AN ELECTRONIC SYMPOSIUM

Readers interested in further analyses and commentary on the notes by V. Malin on Kremlin decision-making on the 1956 Polish and Hungarian crises can find them on the Internet: the Cold War International History Project and the National Security Archive, U.S. co-sponsors and organizers of the September 1996 Budapest Conference on

Politburo archive (which is now under Yeltsin's direct control), were all supposed to be declassified by the end of 1996, but regrettably only the ones pertaining to the Hungarian and Polish crises of 1956 have been released so far.<sup>13</sup> The initial batch of Malin notes were provided to a Russian historian, Vyacheslav Sereda, and to researchers at the 1956 Institute in Budapest, who had exclusive access to the materials until the spring of 1996, when the full set were published in Hungarian translation.<sup>14</sup> Since then, other scholars—both Russians and foreigners—have been permitted to study the original documents. Malin's notes about the Hungarian crisis were published in Russian in the summer and fall of 1996, and the notes about the October 1956 crisis in Poland were published in Moscow at the end of 1996.<sup>15</sup> (The portions about Poland had already appeared in the Hungarian translation.)

For an understanding of Soviet policy during the crises in Hungary and Poland, the Malin notes are by far the most valuable items that have surfaced. Although other important documents about the events of 1956 may eventually be released from the Russian Presidential Archive, the former KGB archives, and the Russian military archives, the Malin notes are enough to shed extremely interesting light on Soviet decision-making during the crisis. Moreover, the Malin notes can be supplemented with a vast number of recently declassified materials from the East European archives as well as new first-hand accounts. Of the East European documents, an especially noteworthy item is the handwritten Czech notes from a Soviet Presidium meeting on 24 October 1956, as the crisis in Hungary was getting under way.<sup>16</sup> Of the new memoirs, perhaps the most valuable is an account published in serial form in late 1993 and early 1994 by a high-ranking Soviet military officer, Evgenii Malashenko, who helped command the operation in Hungary in 1956.<sup>17</sup> Together, all these materials permit a much better understanding of why and how the Soviet Union responded with military force in one case but not in the other.

## NEW FINDINGS

One of the intriguing things about the new evidence is that it tends to bear out much of Khrushchev's brief accounts of the Hungarian and Polish crises. Khrushchev's reminiscences were tendentious (as most memoirs are) and he was confused about a number of points, but overall his account, including many of the details, holds up remarkably well. At the same time, the new documentation provides insight about many items that Khrushchev failed to discuss, and it also allows numerous mistakes in the record to be set right. Although it is impossible in a brief article to provide a comprehensive review of the latest findings, it is worth highlighting several points that cast new light not only on the events of 1956, but on the whole nature of Soviet-East European relations.

### **Soviet Responses to the Polish Crisis**

New evidence from the Russian and East-Central European archives helps explain why the Soviet Union decided to accept a peaceful solution in Poland but not in Hungary. Poland was the initial focus of Soviet concerns. A series of events starting in June 1956 had provoked unease in Moscow about growing instability and rebellion. The Poznan riots, on 28-29 June, came as a particular shock. Workers from the ZISPO locomotive factory and other heavy industrial plants in Poznan staged a large protest rally on 28 June, which soon turned violent. The Polish army and security forces managed to subdue the protests, but the two days of clashes left 53 dead and many hundreds

up strategic positions all around Warsaw and called in reinforcements as Soviet columns were reported to be

Gomulka reciprocated by again assuring Khrushchev that Poland would remain a loyal ally and member of the Warsaw Pact. The Polish leader demonstrated the credibility of his promises by ordering Polish officers to cease considering the prospect of a complete withdrawal of the Soviet Northern Group of Forces from Poland.<sup>36</sup> (On 21 October, as the crisis with Moscow began to abate, a number of Polish commanders, led by General Waclaw Komar of the Internal Army and General Wlodzimierz Mus of the KBW, had thought it was the right moment to press for a total Soviet withdrawal, and they started drafting plans to that effect. Gomulka put an immediate end to their activities.) Gomulka also adopted a far more conciliatory line in public, as reflected in his keynote speech at the rally in Warsaw on 24 October.<sup>37</sup> The Polish leader not only called for stronger political and military ties with the Soviet Union and condemned those who were trying to steer Poland away from the Warsaw Pact, but also urged his fellow Poles to return to their daily work and to refrain from holding any additional rallies or demonstrations.

Over the next few days, Soviet leaders became annoyed when Gomulka insisted that Rokossowski be removed from the national defense min-





against “hostile” and “anti-socialist” forces. This marked a reversal of his approach over the previous few months, when he had grudgingly put up with a limited thaw in the wake of the 20th CPSU Congress. At a meeting of the Budapest party *aktiv* on 18 May, Rakosi had even reluctantly acknowledged his part in the “unjust repressions” of the Stalin era. These concessions, limited though they were, raised public expectations in Hungary; but the increased defiance of the Petofi Circle and the riots in Poznan spurred Rakosi to try to reassert an “iron hand.” Within the HWP, however, this move was far from universally welcomed. A large number of officials, especially in the HWP Central Leadership, concluded that the real problem in Hungary was not the opposition forces or the Petofi Circle, but Rakosi himself.

The mounting disaffection with Rakosi was duly noted by Andropov in a cable to the CPSU Presidium on 9 July.<sup>54</sup> Andropov reported that “hostile elements and the intra-HWP opposition have embarked on an open and intensive struggle” against Rakosi. He emphasized that some prominent opposition figures had begun calling for an “independent national policy” and a “national Communist movement,” which would “permit the Hungarians to resolve their own affairs independently, rather than on the basis of Soviet interference.” Andropov also noted that Gero saw “few ways, unfortunately, to overcome the situation that has emerged.” Although Gero believed that the HWP Central Leadership plenum on 18 July might “restore solid unity” at the top levels of the party, he was concerned that “severe complications could emerge unexpectedly” at the plenum. In this connection, Andropov reported that the former head of state security in Hungary, Gabor Peter, had written a letter from prison accusing Rakosi of direct personal complicity in the Rajk trial. Andropov warned that “if this letter is read out at the plenum, Cde. Rakosi’s plight will be enormously aggravated.” Andropov underscored Gero’s hope of receiving “concrete advice from the CPSU CC,” and he added that “Cde. Gero’s alarm about the situ-

ation is fully understandable.” The ambassador expressed misgivings of his own about the “indecisiveness, feeble actions, and inadequate vigilance of the Hungarian comrades in the struggle against hostile influences within the party and among workers,” and he recommended that the CPSU leadership issue a clear-cut endorsement of the HWP resolution of 30 June “as well as of all the measures needed to strengthen the [Hungarian] party’s unity and to intensify the struggle against hostile forces.”

Andropov’s cable served as the basis for a CPSU Presidium meeting on 12 July 1956, which focused on the latest events in both Hungary and Poland. Malin’s notes from the meeting show that Khrushchev and his colleagues still did not want to come to grips with the underlying sources of political unrest in Hungary.<sup>55</sup> To be sure, the events in Poznan had provoked “alarm [in Moscow] about the fate of Hungary” as well as of Poland: “After the lessons of Poznan we wouldn’t want something similar to happen in Hungary.”<sup>56</sup> Soviet leaders went so far as to characterize the discussions of the Petofi Circle on 27 June as “an ideological Poznan, without the gunshots.”<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, they displayed little understanding of the pressures that had given rise to such incidents. Khrushchev attributed the recent turmoil in Hungary (and Poland) exclusively to “the subversive activities of the imperialists,” who, he claimed, “want to foment disunity” within the socialist camp and “destroy the socialist countries one by one.”<sup>58</sup> The Presidium ordered that a lengthy editorial be published in *Pravda* reaffirming Moscow’s “internationalist solidarity with efforts to rebuff the enemy.”<sup>59</sup> The appearance of this article on 16 July was intended as a warning that the CPSU leadership would “not permit the dissolution of the unity of the socialist camp under the pretext of respect for national particularities or the extension of democracy.”<sup>60</sup>

The Soviet Presidium also designated one of its members, Anastas Mikoyan, to visit Hungary for a first-hand assessment of the disarray within the Hungarian leadership and the grow-

ing ferment in Hungarian society. Upon his arrival in Budapest on 13 July, Mikoyan met with Rakosi and three other senior Hungarian officials (Erno Gero, Andras Hegedus, and Bela Veg). These preliminary talks convinced Mikoyan that the situation would improve only if Rakosi stepped down. Having been authorized by the CPSU Presidium to do whatever was necessary to “restore unity in the HWP leadership,” Mikoyan bluntly informed Rakosi that it would be best if someone else took over as HWP First Secretary.<sup>61</sup> Rakosi had been hoping to gain

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manders of all Soviet forces in Eastern Europe had been ordered by the CPSU leadership to devise appropriate plans for anti-riot and counterinsurgency operations.) When this omission was reported to Soviet defense minister Marshal Georgii Zhukov, he ordered that the requisite documents be compiled immediately. The visiting Soviet generals helped the commander of Soviet forces in Hungary, General Lashchenko, put together a “Plan of Operations for the Special Corps to Restore Public Order on the Territory of Hungary,” which was signed on 20 July.<sup>65</sup> This plan, codenamed “Volna” (Wave), envisaged the use of tens of thousands of Soviet troops at very short notice (within three to six hours) to “uphold and restore public order” in Hungary. The plan required a special signal (known as “Kompas”) to be put into effect, but the formulation of “Volna” at this stage indicates that Soviet leaders wanted a reliable fall-back option in case their attempts to bolster political stability in Hungary did not pan out.

The growing reservations in Moscow about Hungary’s political future turned out to be far more justified than Soviet leaders had hoped. Although the ouster of Rakosi eliminated the most exigent problem in Hungary, it was hardly sufficient to put more than a temporary check on the growth of social discontent. Gero was widely perceived to be of the same mold as Rakosi. Nor was the situation helped any by the “comradely advice” that Gero received from his Soviet counterparts when he took office:

statue of Stalin in the center of Budapest was torn down. Similar rallies were held in other Hungarian cities, where thousands of protesters called on the government to resign. Faced by this growing wave of unrest, Gero desperately tried to regain control of the situation, but the protests continued to mount.

Gero's plight was made immeasurably worse later in the evening when Hungarian state security (AVH) forces, acting without authorization, opened fire on unarmed demonstrators outside the main radio station in Budapest who were seeking to enter the building to broadcast their demands. The shootings precipitated a chaotic rebellion, which was much too large for the Hungarian state security organs to handle on their own. Soviet "advisers" and military commanders in Hungary had been trying since early October to convince Hungarian officials that stringent security precautions were needed to cope with growing unrest; but, as one of the top Soviet officers later reported, "the leaders of the [Hungarian] party and members of the [Hungarian] government did not adopt the measures called for by the urgency of the situation. Many of them were simply incapable of evaluating the state of things realistically."<sup>72</sup> As a result, the violent upheavals on the evening of 23 October quickly overwhelmed the Hungarian police and security forces and caused widespread panic and near-paralysis among senior Hungarian officials.

### **The Initial Soviet Intervention in Hungary**

Until very recently, nothing was known about decision-making in Moscow on the evening of 23 October 1956, when the first reports came in about the Hungarian revolution. Some gaps in the story persist, but a reasonable account can be pieced together on the basis of new sources, including the Malin notes.<sup>73</sup> It is now known that despite the growing turmoil in Budapest, Gero did not even mention what was going on when he spoke by phone with Khrushchev on the evening of the 23rd. Gero's evasiveness during that conver-

sation is hard to explain. By that point he had already transmitted an appeal for urgent military assistance to the military attache at the Soviet embassy, so it is unclear why he would not want to raise the matter directly with Khrushchev. Gero's behavior in the two months prior to the revolution, when he chose to be out of the country at critical moments, was odd in itself; but his re-

“emergency operational group” of some 80 high-ranking officers from the Soviet General Staff and the main staffs of the Soviet ground and air forces. All told, some 31,500 Soviet troops, 1,130 tanks and self-propelled artillery, 380 armored personnel carriers, 185 air defense guns, and numerous other weapons were redeployed at short notice to Budapest and other major cities as well as along the Austrian-Hungarian border. Two Soviet fighter divisions, totaling 159 planes, were ordered to perform close air-support missions for the ground forces; and two Soviet bomber divisions, with a total of 122 aircraft, were placed on full alert at airfields in Hungary and the Transcarpathian Military District.

For the task at hand, however, this massive array of firepower was largely irrelevant. The intervention of the Soviet Army proved almost wholly ineffectual and even counterproductive. Gero himself acknowledged, in a phone conversation with Soviet leaders on 24 October, that “the arrival of Soviet troops into the city has had a negative effect on the mood of the residents.”<sup>80</sup> Soviet armored vehicles and artillery were sent into the clogged streets of Budapest without adequate infantry protection, and thus became easy targets for youths wielding grenades and Molotov cocktails. Although Hungarian soldiers were supposed to operate alongside Soviet units, troops from the Hungarian state security forces, police, and army proved incapable of offering necessary support, and some defected to the side of the rebels.<sup>81</sup> As a result, the fighting merely escalated. By mid-afternoon on the 24th, at least 25 protesters had been killed and more than 200 had been wounded. The mounting violence, as Mikoyan and Suslov reported back to Moscow, “caused further panic among senior Hungarian officials, many of whom fled into underground bunkers that were unsuitable for any work.”<sup>82</sup>

### **Early Rifts Within the Soviet Leadership**

The Malin notes confirm that the post-Stalin succession struggle in Mos-

cow, which was not decisively resolved until June 1957, had a strong effect on Soviet policy toward Hungary. As the Hungarian crisis escalated, splits within the Soviet leadership came to the sur-



Suslov had been predicting.

Concerns about the internal situation in Hungary were reinforced by the latest news about international developments, particularly the start of French and British military operations in the Middle East and the increasing signs that unrest in Hungary was spilling over into other Warsaw Pact countries. Each of these factors is important enough to warrant a separate discussion below. Not only were the Suez Crisis and the fears of a spillover crucial in their own right; they also magnified the importance of Hungary's status in the Warsaw Pact. The prospect of an "imperialist" victory in the Middle East and of growing ferment within the bloc made it all the more essential to keep Hungary within the Soviet camp; but on this score, too, there seemed increasing grounds for pessimism. By late October it was clear that momentum for Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact was rapidly building. One of the members of Nagy's new "inner cabinet," Bela Kovacs, explicitly called for a "neutral Hungary" and the end of Hungary's "ties to military blocs" in a speech he delivered on 30 October.<sup>92</sup> That same day, Nagy himself endorsed the goal of leaving the Warsaw Pact, and he opened talks about the matter (and about the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Hungary) with Mikoyan and Suslov, who promptly informed their colleagues in Moscow about the discussions.<sup>93</sup> It seems likely that Nagy's expressed desire to renounce Hungarian membership in the Warsaw Pact was one of the factors that induced the CPSU Presidium on 31 October to reverse its decision of the previous day. To be sure, Nagy had spoken many times in earlier years (especially after he was abruptly removed from power in 1955) about the desirability of Hungarian neutrality, but his decision to raise the issue with Mikoyan and Suslov at this delicate stage must have come as a jolt in Moscow.<sup>94</sup> Once Soviet leaders were confronted by the stark prospect of Hungary's departure from the Warsaw Pact, they realized how much their influence in Hungary had waned.

The confluence of all these circum-

stances was bound to spur a reassessment of Moscow's non-interventionist stance. Khrushchev later recalled that he regretted the 30 October decision almost as soon as the Presidium adopted it.<sup>95</sup> At short notice on 31 October, he convened another emergency meeting of the Presidium to reconsider the whole matter.<sup>96</sup> The notes from the meeting reveal that Khrushchev was not the only one who had misgivings about the previous day's decision. With one exception, all the participants strongly endorsed Khrushchev's view that "we must revise our assessment and must not withdraw our troops from Hungary and Budapest. We must take the initiative in restoring order in Hungary." The only dissenting voice was Maksim Saburov, who argued that "after yesterday's session this discussion is all pointless. [Full-scale intervention] will merely vindicate NATO." His assertions were disputed by Molotov and numerous others, who insisted (not entirely convincingly) that the previous day's decision had been "only a compromise." After further persuasion, Saburov finally came around to support the interventionist position.

With that, the Presidium unanimously approved the full-scale use of military force "to help the working class in Hungary rebuff the counterrevolution."<sup>97</sup> This action brought an end to the long period of indecision and wavering in Soviet policy.

Even so, the reversal on 31 October should not detract from the importance of the consensus on the 30th. The Malin notes suggest there was a chance, if only a very slender one, that the events of 1989 could actually have occurred 33 years earlier.

### **The Effect of the Suez Crisis**

On 26 July 1956 the new Egyptian leader, Gamel Abdel Nasser, announced that he was nationalizing the Suez Canal Company. Over the next few months the British, French, and U.S. governments tried to persuade (and then compel) Nasser to reverse his decision,





traordinary powers, including the right to issue shoot-to-kill orders and to declare a state of emergency.<sup>112</sup> The command staff was successful in its task, but the very fact that this sort of measure was needed was a disconcerting reminder to Soviet leaders that the events in Hungary, if left unchecked, could prove contagious.

Equally disturbing reports flowed into Moscow from Czechoslovakia about student demonstrations in Bratislava and other cities amidst growing “hostility and mistrust toward the Soviet Union.”<sup>113</sup> The Czechoslovak authorities denied most of these reports, but they acknowledged that the events in Hungary were having “deleterious psychological effects” and creating a “hostile, anti-socialist mood” among some of the Czechoslovak troops who had been sent to reinforce the 560-km border with Hungary.<sup>114</sup> Senior Czechoslovak military officials warned that the confusion might even “tempt the counterrevolutionary forces [in Hungary] to penetrate into our country and stir up a rebellion in Slovak territory,” especially in the southern areas inhabited mainly by ethnic Hungarians.<sup>115</sup> They also warned that the danger would increase “if Soviet and Hungarian units are withdrawn” from northern Hungary, since “it is unlikely that [Czechoslovakia’s] existing combat forces will be enough to prevent incursions by counterrevolutionary groups.”<sup>116</sup> The risk of a spillover into Czechoslovakia was explicitly cited by Soviet leaders when they approved a full-scale invasion: “If we don’t embark on a decisive path, things in Czechoslovakia will collapse.”<sup>117</sup> It is unclear whether the actual danger was as great as they feared, but the important thing at the time was the perception in both Moscow and Prague that a failure to act would have ominous consequences.

The growing concerns about a spillover were shared in East European countries further away from Hungary, notably East Germany. Initially, the East German leader, Walter Ulbricht, mainly feared that the return of Nagy might presage a similar turn of events in the GDR.<sup>118</sup> Once the Hungarian

revolution broke out, apprehension in East Berlin rapidly increased. A top East German official, Otto Grotewohl, warned that “the events in Hungary and Poland show that the enemy looks for weak spots in the socialist camp, seeking to break it apart.”<sup>119</sup> He and other East German leaders were acutely aware that the GDR itself was one of these “weak spots.” Soviet officials, too, were worried that developments in Hungary could undermine their position in East Germany, which by this point was closely tied to Ulbricht. Soviet foreign minister Dmitrii Shepilov warned that certain elements in East Germany might exploit the crisis to launch a campaign against the “Ulbricht clique.”<sup>120</sup>

Quite apart from the threat of a spillover into Eastern Europe, Soviet leaders were aware of serious problems in the USSR itself. The inception of de-Stalinization had spawned numerous instances of public disorder and unrest. Mass disturbances erupted in Tbilisi and other Georgian cities in early March 1956, as students, workers, and intellectuals joined together to protest the growing criticism of “our great leader Stalin.”<sup>121</sup> These demonstrations marked the first time that “anti-Soviet activities” had occurred in Georgia since Communist rule was established, and Soviet leaders responded by imposing martial law.<sup>122</sup> Very different challenges arose elsewhere in the Soviet Union, where intellectuals and some other groups took advantage of the opportunity to voice long-suppressed grievances. Criticism of Stalin and of the “cult of personality” opened the way for broader complaints about the nature of the Soviet regime itself. Soviet leaders tried to regain control of the de-Stalinization campaign by issuing a decree that specified what was permissible and what was not, but this document failed to put an end to dissidents’ activities.<sup>123</sup> Thus, when the revolution began in Hungary, Khrushchev and



acterized the whole uprising as no more than a “counterrevolution” instigated and supported by the West.

One other surprising aspect of Kadar’s remarks is that he made little effort to gloss over his own actions or to downplay the negative influence of Soviet policy. He gave a detailed account of the meetings of the Hungarian “inner cabinet” on 1 November, noting that he “was a supporter of the view that no sorts of steps should be taken without having spoken with Andropov.” This position, however, did not really distinguish Kadar from Nagy, who himself had summoned Andropov to the evening session for urgent consultations about Soviet troop movements.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, Kadar acknowledged that when the consultations were over, he joined the other members of Nagy’s cabinet in voting for the declaration of neutrality, the appeal to the United Nations, and the resolution demanding an immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. On both the 2nd and 3rd of November, Kadar spoke harshly about past Soviet “mistakes” in Hungary, and was far more critical about Rakosi than about Nagy. His comments on this topic were echoed by Munnich, who argued that the fundamental “source of anti-Soviet sentiments” in Hungary was the population’s “certainty that the [Communist] regime exists and is preserved only through the support of the USSR.”

None of this is to imply that Kadar’s stance in early November was greatly beneficial to Hungary. Kadar was hardly naive, and the fact that he was willing to come to Moscow suggests that he advocated more forceful Soviet action. Nevertheless, the Malin notes do not bear out the notion that Kadar was a quisling from the very start. He took on that function after 4 November, but it was not the role he wanted or envisaged when he arrived in Moscow.

### The Invasion

The CPSU Presidium’s abrupt shift in favor of all-out intervention on 31 October, after more than a week of vacillation, left many political and military tasks to be carried out. Shortly before

the Presidium meeting, Khrushchev had spoken by phone with Gomulka, and the two men had arranged to meet the next day (1 November) in Brest, along the Soviet-Polish border. The Presidium designated Malenkov and Molotov to accompany Khrushchev to Brest. The Presidium also authorized Khrushchev and Malenkov to hold negotiations with Tito so they could try to gain at least tacit support from the Yugoslav leader. In addition, the Presidium approved Khrushchev’s suggestion that they “inform the Chinese comrades, the Czechs, the Romanians, and the Bulgarians” about the upcoming invasion.<sup>140</sup>

When the Presidium meeting adjourned, Khrushchev first contacted Liu Shaoqi and other senior Chinese officials who had been in Moscow for consultations since 23 October. The members of the Chinese delegation, who had kept in close touch with Mao Zedong during their visit, were getting set to return to Beijing on the 31st. Khrushchev wanted to inform them immediately about the new decision, rather than having them find out about it second-hand back in China. The entire CPSU Presidium traveled to Vnukovo Airport on the 31st to meet with the departing Chinese officials and smooth over any ruffled feathers.<sup>141</sup> Khrushchev was concerned that Liu Shaoqi might be upset when he learned about the sudden change in Soviet policy. During consultations with the Soviet leadership over the previous week, Liu Shaoqi had consistently expressed Mao’s view that the “working class of Hungary” must be permitted to “regain control of the situation and put down the uprising on its own,” without further Soviet interference. As late as 30 October, the Chinese delegates had called for Soviet relations with all other socialist states, including Hungary, to be based on the five principles of Pancha Shila: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression; non-interference in internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence.<sup>142</sup> The Soviet decision on 30 October seemed to be in full conformity with these principles, but the *volte-face* on 31 October raised doubts about Chinese reactions.

It turned out, however, that the talks with Liu Shaoqi were much less onerous than expected. After Khrushchev explained why the Soviet leadership had reversed its position, the Chinese delegates condoned the change and promised to go over the matter carefully with Mao. Even before the delegation returned to China, Mao’s own view of the situation was gradually changing as a result of intelligence reports and diplomatic cables flowing into Beijing. It is unclear precisely when Mao shifted unambiguously in favor of the invasion, but the last-minute consultations at Vnukovo Airport may well have been decisive in allowing the Soviet Union to gain strong Chinese backing.<sup>143</sup>

With that task accomplished, Khrushchev and Malenkov were able to set off a few hours later for their rapid series of top-secret meetings with leaders of the other Warsaw Pact countries.<sup>144</sup> At the first such meeting, in Brest, Khrushchev and Malenkov were joined by Molotov for talks with a Polish delegation consisting of Gomulka, Jozef Cyrankiewicz, and Edward Ochab. This meeting was regarded as particularly sensitive and unpredictable because the political situation in Poland was still so turbulent. The three Soviet negotiators hoped to defuse most of Gomulka’s objections, but their efforts in this regard were largely unsuccessful. Although the Polish leader agreed that the “counterrevolution” in Hungary had to be suppressed, he strongly objected to the use of Soviet military force. Khrushchev soon realized that he would not be able to convince Gomulka that direct intervention was necessary, and the Soviet leader was not even sure by the end of the meeting whether Gomulka would refrain from publicly criticizing the action.<sup>145</sup>

Khrushchev’s concerns were not entirely unfounded. Shortly after Gomulka and his colleagues returned to Warsaw, they convened an emergency session of the PZPR Politburo, which “expressed opposition to the USSR’s armed intervention in Hungary.”<sup>146</sup> The Polish Politburo also endorsed the publication of a statement affirming that the crisis should be resolved “by the

Hungarian people alone and not by foreign intervention.” This statement appeared (in slightly modified form) in the PZPR newspaper *Trybuna Ludu* the following day.<sup>147</sup> Moreover, on 2 November, Gomulka publicly offered Warsaw as a forum for Soviet-Hungarian negotiations, which he (and Imre Nagy) hoped would “lead to the settlement of problems in bilateral relations.”<sup>148</sup> When Gomulka’s last-ditch efforts

exclusively by Soviet troops. Although one might have thought that Marshal Konev, as commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact, would have preferred a joint operation with the East European armies, he in fact was among those who recommended that the task be left to the Soviet Union alone.

To ensure that mistakes made during the initial Soviet intervention in late October would not be repeated, Konev met with General Lashchenko and other Soviet officers who had been in Hungary from the outset.<sup>161</sup> For a variety of reasons, as one of Lashchenko's aides later explained, the Soviet Union's chances of success were much greater during the second intervention:

In November our combat operations took place under more auspicious circumstances than at the end of October. Budapest was already under martial LETIN

(Hegedus had been prime minister in the government that immediately preceded Nagy's return to power in October 1956.) Molotov averred that Janos Kadar was still a furtive supporter of Nagy and should not be given any top post. Although Molotov eventually backed down on this issue, he continued to insist that it was improper for Kadar's new government to condemn the "Rakosi-Gero clique" and to give a new name to the revived Hungarian Communist party. These differences produced a number of acerbic exchanges with Khrushchev and other Presidium members. On 4 November, Khrushchev declared that he "simply cannot understand Cde. Molotov; he always comes up with the most pernicious [*vredneishie*] ideas." Molotov responded by telling Khrushchev that he "should keep quiet and stop being so overbearing."<sup>173</sup>

The exchanges became even more acrimonious at the session on 6 November, where Molotov brought a flood of criticism upon himself by declaring his "vehement objection" to Khrushchev's ideas about the regime that Janos Kadar was establishing in Hungary. Maksim Saburov accused Molotov and Kaganovich of being "rigid and dogmatic," and Mikoyan insisted that "Cde. Molotov is completely ignoring the concrete situation and is dragging us backward." Averki Aristov noted that "Cdes. Molotov and Kaganovich were always transfixed by Stalin's cult, and they are still transfixed by it." Severest of all

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countries” would be “crucial to the process of normalization” in both Poland and Hungary.<sup>180</sup> Although Kadar was eventually able to redress some of the most acute economic grievances in Hungary through the adoption of a New Economic Mechanism in 1968 and other reforms in subsequent years, his retention of state ownership and centralized economic management thwarted any hope of genuine prosperity. This was even more the case in Poland, where, despite some leeway granted for private activity (especially in agriculture, retail trade, and light industry), the economic policies under Gomulka and his successors spawned periodic outbreaks of widespread public unrest. No matter how often the Polish authorities claimed that they would pursue drastic economic improvements, they always proved unwilling to accept the political price that such improvements would have necessitated.

From a purely military standpoint, the invasion in November 1956 achieved its immediate goals, but in the longer term it exacted significant costs. When the revolution was crushed by Soviet troops, the morale and fighting elan of the Hungarian armed forces were bound to dissolve as well. The remains of the Hungarian army were regarded by Soviet commanders (and by Kadar) as politically and militarily unreliable. More than 8,000 officers, including a large number who had attended Soviet military colleges and academies, were forced out of the Hungarian armed forces in late 1956 and 1957.<sup>181</sup> The country’s army thus essentially disintegrated and had to be rebuilt almost from scratch, leaving a gap in Warsaw Pact military planning and combat preparations for many years thereafter.

From a diplomatic standpoint as well, the invasion entailed significant costs, at least in the short term. The

reveals unknown events. Disagreements about how to interpret the past will persist even if all the archives are someday open, but the new documentation is enabling scholars to achieve a far more accurate and complete understanding not only of specific episodes (e.g., the Soviet Union's responses to the Polish and Hungarian crises) but of the entire course of the Cold War.

<sup>1</sup> "Zayavlenie rukovoditelei Bolgarii, Vengrii, GDR, Pol'shi, i Sovetskogo Soyuz" and "Zayavlenie Sovetskogo Soyuz," both in *Pravda* (Moscow), 5 December 1989, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> F. Luk'yanov, "Vengriya privetsvuet zayavlenie Moskvu," *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 24 October 1991, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Army-General A.D. Lizichev, "Oktyabr' i Leninskoe uchenie o zashchite revolyutsii," *Kommunist* (Moscow), No. 3 (February 1987), p. 96; Admiral A. I. Sorokin, ed., *Sovetskie vooruzhenye sily na strazhe mira i sotsializma* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), p. 254; V. V. Semin, ed., *Voенно-politicheskoe sotrudnichestvo sotsialisticheskikh stran* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), esp. pp. 127-141, 181-220; and the interview with Army-General V. N. Lobov in "I tol'ko pravda ko dvoru," *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 8 May 1989, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Colonel I.A. Klimov, "KPSS ob ukreplenii edinstva i boevogo sotrudnichestva vooruzhenykh sil sotsialisticheskikh stran," *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal* (Moscow), No. 5 (May 1987), p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> V.F. Khalipov, *Voennaya politika KPSS* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1988), esp. pp. 256-257.

<sup>6</sup> Army-General P. I. Lashchenko, "Vengriya, 1956 god," *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal* (Mos



Roman Bombicki, *Poznan '56* (Poznan: Lawica, 1992).

19 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 9 i 12 iyulya 1956 g.," 12 July 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1005, Ll. 2-2ob.

20 "Pol'skii narod kleimit organizatorov provokatsii," *Pravda* (Moscow), 1 July 1956, p. 6.

21 The best overview of the events in Poland in 1956 is Pawel Machcewicz, *Polski rok 1956* (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1993). Leszek Gluchowski has done excellent work on the Soviet-Polish crisis; see, for example, his "Poland, 1956: Khrushchev, Gomulka, and the 'Polish October'," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 1, 38-49. See also Jerzy Pokinski, "Wojsko Polskie w 1956 r. — problemy polityczne (1) i (2)," *Wojsko i Wychowanie* (Warsaw), Nos. 1-2 (1992), pp. 40-78; and Robert Los, *Pazdziernik 1956 roku w perspektywie stosunkow polsko-radzieckich*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Lodz, 1993. For a sample of other perspectives on the 1956 Polish crisis, see Zbyslaw Rykowski and Wieslaw Wladyka, *Polska proba Pazdziernik '56* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989), pp. 232-234; *Sprawozdanie z prac Komisii KC PZPR powolanej dla wyjasnienia przyczyn i przebiegu konfliktow spolecznuch w dziejach Polski Ludowej*, special issue of *Nowe Drogi* (Warsaw), September 1983, see esp. pp. 21-32; Benon Dymek, ed., *Pazdziernik 1956: Szkice historyczne* (Warsaw: Akademia Nauk Spolecznych, 1989); Bogdan Hillebrandt, ed., *Ideowopolityczne kontrowersje i konflikty lat 1956-1970* (Warsaw: Akademia Nauk Spolecznych, 1986); Grzegorz Matuszak, *Kryzysy spoleczno-polityczne w procesie budowy socjalizmu w Polsce Ludowej* (Warsaw: Akademia Nauk Spolecznych PZPR, 1986); and Antoni Czubinski, "Kryzys polityczny 1956 roku w Polsce," in Antoni Czubinski, ed., *Kryzysy spoleczno-polityczne w Polsce Ludowej* (Warsaw: Instytut Podstawowych Problemow Marksizmu-Leninizmu, 1983), pp. 80-114.

22 "Zapis' besedy N. S. Khrushcheva v Varshave," No. 233 (Special Dossier — Strictly Secret), notes by A. Mikoyan, 19-20 October 1956, in Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (APRF), F. 3, Op. 65, D. 2, Ll. 1-14. Further details about this meeting are contained in "Zprava o jednani na UV KSSS 24. rijna 1956," Ll. 1-4.

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.* and "Zapis' besedy N. S. Khrushcheva v Varshave," L. 4.

25 At the time, there were still 79 Soviet officers, including 28 generals, serving in the Polish army. See Edward Jan Nalepa, *Oficerowie Radziecky w Wojsku Polskim w latach 1943-1968: Studium historyczno-wojskowe* (Warsaw: Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny, 1992), p. 43. For a valuable discussion of the military confrontation, see "Wojskowe aspekty pazdziernika 1956 r.," *Polska Zbrojna* (Warsaw), 18-20 October 1991, p. 3.

26 This account is based on documents recently declassified at the Internal Military Service Archive (*Archiwum Wojskowej Sluzby Wewnetrznej*, or AWSW) and the Central Military Archive (*Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe*, or CAW) in Warsaw, which were provided to the author by Leszek Gluchowski. See, in particular, the two reports compiled by Major Witold Osinski, deputy chief of the 2nd Section of the KBW's Military Counterintelligence Directorate, in AWSW, sygn. 2859/20/K and CAW, sygn. 1812/92/8. See also the invaluable first-hand account by Wlodzimierz Mus, the KBW commander at the time, "Spor generalow o Pazdziernik 1956: Czy grozila interwencja zbrojna?" *Polityka* (Warsaw), No. 42 (20 October 1990), p. 14.

27 "Zapis' besedy N. S. Khrushcheve v Varshave," L. 4.

28 Comments by Stefan Staszewski, former PZPR CC Secretary, in Teresa Toranska, ed., *Oni* (London: Aneks, 1985), p. 148.

29 "Komunikat o naradach Biura Politycznego KC PZPR i delegacji KC KPZR w Warszawie," *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 20 October 1956, p. 1.

30 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 20 oktyabrya 1956 g.," 20 October 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1005, Ll. 49-50.

31 This was evident, for example, when Ochab stopped in Moscow in September 1956 on his way back from Beijing. See "Priem Posla Pol'skoi Narodnoi Respubliki v SSSR tov. V. Levikovskogo, 10 sentyabrya 1956 g.," 11 September 1956 (Secret), memorandum from N. Patolichev, Soviet deputy foreign minister, in Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (AVPRF), F. Referentura po Pol'she, Op. 38, Por. 9, Papka, 126, D. 031, L. 1.

32 "Antisovetskaya kampaniya v pol'skoi presse," *Pravda* (Moscow), 20 October 1956, p. 1.

33 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 21 oktyabrya 1956 g.," 21 October 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, L. 2.

34 "Zprava o jednani na UV KSSS 24. rijna 1956," L. 8.

35 Jacek Kuron, *Wiara i wina: Do i od*

*komunizmu* (Warsaw: BGW, 1990), p. 119.

36 Mus, "Czy grozila interwencja zbrojna?" p. 14.

37 "Przemowienie towarzysza Wladyslawa Gomulki," *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 25 October 1956, p. 1, which appeared under the banner headline "Ponad 300 tysiecy warszawiakow na spotkaniu z nowym kierownictwem partii."

38 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 26 oktyabrya 1956 g.," 26 October 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1005, L. 53.

39 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 21 oktyabrya 1956 g.," L. 2.

40 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 23 oktyabrya 1956 g.," 23 October 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 4-4ob.

41 Compare Khrushchev's account in "Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva" with Molotov's less favorable reminiscences in Feliks Chuev, ed., *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym* (Moscow: Terra, 1991), p. 113.

42 Khrushchev's comments, as recorded in Micunovic, *Moscow Diary*, p. 139.

43 "Telefogramma po VCh," 15 November 1956 (Top Secret), from I. Maslennikov of the Soviet embassy in Warsaw, in AVPRF, F. Referentura po Pol'she, Op. 38, Por. 20, Pap. 127, D. 178, Ll. 32-33.

44 Quotations are from "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 23 oktyabrya 1956 g.," L. 4; and "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 28 oktyabrya 1956 g.," 28 October 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1005, L. 58.

45 For the full transcript of these sessions, see "Jegyzokonyv a Szovjet es a Magyar part-es allami vezetok targyalasairol," 13-16 June 1953 (Top Secret), in Magyar Orszagos Leveltar, 276, F. 102/65, oe. The document was declassified in 1991 and published the following year in the Hungarian journal *Multunk*. A preliminary translation by Monika Borbely was included in Christian F. Ostermann, ed., *The Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and the 17 June Uprising in East Germany: The Hidden History*, a compendium of documents prepared by the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) and the National Security Archive for a November 1996 international conference (hosted by the Center for Contemporary History Research in Potsdam) on "The Crisis Year 1953 and the Cold War in Europe."

46 "Plenum TsK KPSS — XIX Sozyv: Stenogramma chetyrnadsatogo zasedaniya 12 iyulya 1955 g. (utrennego)," July 1955 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 176, L. 143.



gents was recently declassified at the main Russian military archive, TsAMO, F. 32, Op. 701291, D. 17, Ll. 33-48.

<sup>82</sup> "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.

<sup>83</sup> Important samples of these messages, declassified in 1992, are available in "Vengriya, oktyabr'-noyabr' 1956 goda: Iz arkhiva TsK KPSS," *Istoricheskii arkhiv* (Moscow), No. 5 (1993), pp. 132-141.

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1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, L. 22.

118 Wilfried Otto, ed., "Ernst Wollweber: Aus Erinnerungen — Ein Portraet Walter Ulbrichts," *Beitraege zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* (Berlin), No. 3 (1990), pp. 365-367.

119 Speech by Grotewohl to the CC plenum of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), 13 November 1956, in Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen im Bundesarchiv, Zentrales Parteiarchiv (Berlin), DY 30/IV 2/1/166, p. 247.

120 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 4 noyabrya 1956 g.," L. 35ob. For illuminating analyses of the impact of the 1956 events on the East German authorities, see Hope M. Harrison, "The Effect of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising on the East German Leadership," and Christian F. Ostermann, "East Germany and the Hungarian Revolution, 1956," both presented at the "Conference on Hungary and the World, 1956."

121 For a detailed, top-secret account of the disorders, see "Zakrytoe pis'mo," 12 March 1956 (Top Secret), from S. Statnikov, Tbilisi correspondent for *Trud*, to the CPSU Central Committee, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 30, D. 140, Ll. 53-67.

122 "Prikaz No. 14 Nachal'nika Tbilisskogo garnizona," from Major-General Gladkov, commander of the Tbilisi garrison, 9 March 1956, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 30, D. 140, L. 68.

123 "O kul'te lichnosti i preodolenii ego posledstvii," in *KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK*, 8th ed. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1978), Vol. 7, p. 212.

124 For a cogent analysis of this matter based on newly declassified materials, see M. R. Zezina, "Shokovaya terapiya: Ot 1953-go k 1956 godu," *Otechestvennaya istoriya* (Moscow), No. 2 (1995), esp. pp. 129-133.

125 See the first-hand account by the former KGB deputy director, Filipp Bobkov, *KGB i vlast'* (Moscow: Veteran MP, 1995), pp. 144-145.

126 "TsK KPSS: Informatsiya," 7 November 1956 (Top Secret), from regional KGB stations to the CPSU Presidium, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 30, D. 141, L. 67.

127 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 4 noyabrya 1956 g.," 4 November 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, L. 36ob.

128 Bobkov, *KGB i vlast'*, p. 145. On the new arrests, see Zezina, "Shokovaya terapiya," p. 130.

129 Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc*, p. 153.

130 Khrushchev, "Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," p. 76.

131 *Ibid.*

132 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 1 noyabrya 1956 g.," 1 November 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 19-22.

133 See, for example, Mikoyan's comments during the secret proceedings of the June 1957 CPSU CC plenum (which removed the Anti-Party Group), in "Plenum TsK KPSS, iyun' 1957 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet," No. P2500 (Strictly Secret), 22-29 June 1957, in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 259, Ll. 27ob-28ob.

134 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 2 noyabrya 1956 g.," 2 November 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 23-29; and "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 3 noyabrya 1956 g.," 3 November 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 31-33ob.

135 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 2 noyabrya 1956 g.," L. 24ob.

136 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 3 noyabrya 1956 g.," L. 32.

137 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 2 noyabrya 1956 g.," L. 29.

138 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 3 noyabrya 1956 g.," Ll. 31-33.

139 In addition to Kadar's account in "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 2 noyabrya 1956 g.," see the cable sent to Moscow by Andropov on 1 November—"Shifrtelgramma," 1 November 1956 (Strictly Secret), in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 4, P. 6, D. 5, Ll. 17-19—which provides valuable corroboration of Kadar's remarks.

140 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 31 oktyabrya 1956 g.," Ll. 15-18ob.

141 Khrushchev, "Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," pp. 74-75.

142 "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 30 oktyabrya 1956 g.," in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 6-14. The principles of Pancha Shila were endorsed in a joint statement by Chinese prime minister Zhou Enlai and Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru in New Delhi on 28 June 1954. The five principles were intended to "guide relations between the two countries" as well as "relations with other countries in Asia and in other parts of the world." For the full text of the statement, see G. V. Ambekar and V. D. Divekar, eds., *Documents on China's Relations with South and South-East Asia (1949-1962)* (New York: Allied Publishers, 1964), pp. 7-8.

143 In addition to Khrushchev's account of the airport meeting, see the contemporary observations recorded by Micunovic in *Moscow Diary*,

pp. 132 and 138, which fully bear out Khrushchev's version. Unfortunately, all Chinese archives that might shed greater light on China's role in the 1956 events are still closed. For an assessment based on Chinese-language evidence that has surfaced to date—largely memoirs (whose reliability is questionable) and published compilations of documents selected and edited by Chinese authorities—see Chen Jian, "Beijing and the Hungarian Crisis of 1956," presented at the "Conference on Hungary and the World, 1956." Chen Jian and other scholars are seeking additional evidence on this matter, and their findings will appear in future CWIHP publications.

144 First-hand accounts of the meetings are available in Khrushchev, "Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," pp. 75-77, which have been well corroborated by other sources, including Khrushchev's observations at the time, as recorded in Micunovic, *Moscow Diary*, pp. 135, 138-139. Newly declassified documents pertaining to the meetings are cited below.

145 See "Zapis' telefonogrammy," c. 1 November 1956, in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1005, L. 66.

146 "Protokol Nr. 135 posiedzenia Biura Politycznego w dn. 1.XI.1956 r.," 1 November 1956 (Top Secret), in Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), Warsaw, Archiwum Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej (Arch. KC PZPR), Paczka (Pa.) 15, Tom (T.) 58, Dokument (Dok.) 134. This protocol is included in the valuable collection of declassified Polish documents edited by Janos Tischler, *Rewolucja węgierska 1956 w polskich dokumentach*, Dokumenty do dziejow PRL No.

UV KSC, F. 02/2—Politické byro UV KSC 1954-1962, Sv. 120, A.j. 151.

152 Khrushchev's account of this meeting tallies well with the much more detailed first-hand account in Micunovic, *Moscow Diary*, pp. 131-141. Micunovic's account is based on notes he compiled right after the negotiations, but unfortunately those notes have not yet turned up in the Yugoslav archives. (Another document in the former Yugoslav Central Committee archive refers to the notes, so it is possible that they still exist somewhere; but the location has not yet been pinpointed.) Newly declassified correspondence between Tito and Khrushchev in early 1957, now stored in the former CPSU Central Committee archive, bears out Khrushchev's and Micunovic's memoirs very well, but it also shows that the memoirs omit a few key details, which are mentioned below. See "Pis'mo Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza ot 10 yanvarya 1957 goda Tsentral'nomu Komitetu Soyuza Kommunistov Yugoslavii/Pis'mo Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Soyuza Kommunistov Yugoslavii ot 7 fevralya 1957 goda Tsentral'nomu Komitetu Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza," No. P295 (Top Secret), February 1957, in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 45, D. 83, Ll. 1-12 and D. 84, Ll. 1-18. John Lampe, the director of the East European Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, reported at the "Conference on Hungary and the World, 1956," that he had recently obtained an official summary of the Brioni meeting from a colleague who had found it in the papers of Tito's biographer, the late Vladimir Dedijer, among materials evidently intended for a fourth, never-completed volume. An English translation of this Yugoslav record of the Brioni talks, with Lampe's commentary, is slated for publication in the next issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

153 For a very useful collection of newly declassified materials tracing Yugoslav-Hungarian relations in late October and early November 1956, see Jozsef Kiss, Zoltan Ripp, and Istvan Vida, eds., *Magyar-Jugoszlav Kapcsolatok 1956: Dokumentumok* (Budapest: MTA Jelenkor-kutato Bizottsag, 1995), esp. pp. 125 ff.

154 Until recently, this arrangement had not been disclosed, apart from a few vague references in Micunovic's memoirs (*Moscow Diary*, pp. 137-138). The first direct revelation of the deal came in the early 1990s when the top-secret correspondence between Tito and Khrushchev from early 1957 was declassified. See "Pis'mo Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza ot 10 yanvarya 1957 goda Tsentral'nomu Komitetu Soyuza

Kommunistov Yugoslavii," L. 4.

155 For Tito's explanation of why the promise could not be fulfilled, see "Pis'mo Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Soyuza Kommunistov Yugoslavii ot 7 fevralya 1957 goda Tsentral'nomu Komitetu Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza," Ll. 17-18.

156 Khrushchev, "Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," p. 75.

157 See Imre Horvath's handwritten summary (in Hungarian) of Khrushchev's remarks, in Magyar Orszagos Leveltar, XIX J-1-K Horvath Imre kulugyminiszter iratai, 55, doboz. For some reason, Malin did not record Khrushchev's speech in the notes from the full session ("Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 3 noyabrya 1956 g.," Ll. 31-33ob).

158 A detailed first-hand account of the military operations can be found in Malashenko, "Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshta" (Part 3), pp. 33-37 and (Part 4), pp. 30-36.

159 See, e.g., "Zprava o opatrenich k zesileni bojove pohotovosti vojsk," Report from Col.-General Vaclav Kratochvil, chief of the Czechoslovak General Staff, and Lieut.-General Evzen Chlad, chief of the Main Logistical Directorate, to the MNO Collegium (Top Secret), 31 October 1956, in VHA Praha, F. MNO, 1956, GS/OS 2/8-49b. See also "Rozkaz k provedeni vojenskykh opatreni na hranicich s Mad'arskem," from Col.-General Vaclav Kratochvil, chief of the Czechoslovak General Staff, to the 2nd Military District in Trencin (Strictly Secret), 28 October 1956, in VHA Praha, F. MNO, 1956, GS/OS, 2/8-2b.

160 "Usneseni 151 schuze politickeho byra UV KSC k bodu 1," pt. 1.

161 Malashenko, "Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshte" (Part 3), p. 33.

162 Malashenko, "Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshta" (Part 4), pp. 32-33.

163 Nagy's cable to UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold can be found in UN Doc. A/3251. The appeal and declaration of neutrality were broadcast on Budapest radio on the evening of 1 November. According to Kadar's detailed explanation at a CPSU Presidium meeting on 2 November, Zoltan Tildy was the one who came up with the idea of a declaration of neutrality. All the members of the Hungarian cabinet ultimately voted in favor of it. See "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 2 noyabrya 1956 g.," Ll. 23-29.

164 Micunovic, *Moscow Diary*, p. 156.

165 "Stav Mad'arske lidove armady a priciny jejeho rozkladu," Report compiled by KSC CC Department No. 14 for the KSC CC Politburo, 9 April 1957, in SUA, Arch. UV KSC, F. 100/3 —

172 Quotations here and in the following paragraph are from "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 4 noyabrya 1956 g.," Ll. 34-36ob; and "Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, 6 noyabrya 1956 g.," 6 November 1956 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 41-45ob. This bickering was first described by Khrushchev in his memoirs ("Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," pp. 77-78), and a few additional details (not mentioned in Malin's notes) came to light in the recently declassified transcript of the June 1957 CPSU Central Committee plenum ("Plenum TsK KPSS, iyun' 1957 goda," Ll. 27ob-28ob). The Malin notes confirm and add a great deal to these earlier sources.

173 The Russian phrase that Molotov used (*odernut' nado, chtoby ne komandoval*) is slightly awkward in the original, but it can be roughly translated as it is here.

174 See "Plenum TsK KPSS, iyun' 1957 goda," Ll. 2, 25. The charge of "dangerous zigzags" was leveled by Molotov at a CPSU Presidium meet-

ing a few days before the Central Committee plenum.

175 Micunovic, *Moscow Diary*, p. 156.

176 "Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence to the President," 20 November 1956 (Secret), in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, Vol. XXV: *Eastern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), pp. 473, 475. This *FRUS* volume contains a large number of documents essential for understanding the U.S. government's response to the events in Poland and Hungary in 1956, although many other materials have since been declassified through the Freedom of Information Act. A collection of newly declassified materials is available to researchers at the National Security Archive in the Gelman Library of the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

177 Data on Hungarian and Soviet casualties come, respectively, from Peter Gosztonyi, "Az 1956-os forradalom szamokban," *Nepszabadsag* (Budapest), 3 November 1990, p. 3; and

"Sobytiya v Vengrii 1956 g.," in Col.-General G. A. Krivosheev, ed., *Grif sekretnosti snyat: Poteri vooruzhenykh sil SSSR v voynakh, boevykh deistviyakh i voennykh konfliktakh: Statisticheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1993), p. 397. The number of Soviet deaths was 720, the number of Soviet wounded was 1,540. The number of Hungarian deaths was 2,502, and the number of Hungarian wounded was 19,226.

178 Attila Szokolczai, "A forradalmat koveto megtorlas soran kivegzettekrol," in *Evkonyv*, Vol. 3 (Budapest: 1956-os Intezet, 1994), pp. 237-256. Szokolczai provides a considerably lower figure (229) for the number of executions. The figure of 600 comes from Maria Ormos, "A konszolidacio problemai 1956 es 1958 kozott," *Tarsadalmi Szemle*, Vol. 44, Nos. 8-9 (1989), pp. 48-65. See also Janos Balassa et al., eds., *Halottaink*, 2 vols. (Budapest: Katalizator, 1989).

179 "Zprava o jednani na UV KSSS 24. rijna 1956," L. 12.

180 Khrushchev, "Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," p. 81.

181 Testimony of former national defense minister Lajos Czinege in Magyar Orszaggyules, *A Honvedelmi Bizottsag 1989 oktoberi ulesszakan letrhozott vizsgalobizottsag 1989 december 11-i, 1990 januar 3-i, 1990 januar 15-i, 1990 februar 6-i ulese jegyzokonyvenek nyilt reszlete*, 5 vols. (1994), Vol. 1, p. 261.

182 "Tov. Orlovu A.L.," Memorandum No. 1869/2 (Top Secret), 28 December 1956, transmitting a report prepared by I. Tugarinov, deputy head of the Foreign Ministry's Information Committee, in AVPRF, F. Referentura po Vengrii, Op.36, Por.9, Pap.47a, D.110, Ll.11-18. An English translation of this document, as well as an insightful commentary by James Hershberg, can be found in the *Cold War International History Bulletin*, Issue No.4 (Fall 1994), pp.61-64.

183 Micunovic, *Moscow Diary*, p. 134.

184 Khrushchev, "Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," pp. 80-82.

185 The notion of a tradeoff between "cohesion" and "viability" is well presented in James F. Brown, *Relations Between the Soviet Union and Its East European Allies: A Survey*, R-1742-PR (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1975).

# THE “MALIN NOTES” ON THE CRISES IN HUNGARY AND POLAND, 1956

*Translated and Annotated by Mark Kramer*

## TRANSLATOR’S NOTE:

The translated items below are in chronological order. They include Vladimir Malin’s notes of CPSU Presidium meetings that dealt with the events in Hungary and Poland in 1956. The notes are supplemented by several other newly released documents that shed direct light on portions of the notes. Most of the documents, including Malin’s notes, were translated from Russian, but two documents (both from the Hungarian National Archive) were translated from Hungarian.

Extensive annotations have been included because of the idiosyncratic style of the notes and the large number of references (to events, individuals, etc.) that may not be familiar to most readers. Rather than putting in separate annotations to identify specific persons, I have compiled an identification list of all individuals mentioned in the notes. This list and a list of abbreviations precede the notes and should be consulted whenever unfamiliar names or abbreviations turn up.

As best as possible, the flavor and style of the original have been preserved in the English translation, but in a few cases I have expanded Russian and Hungarian abbreviations and acronyms to avoid confusion. For example, there is no equivalent in English for the Russian abbreviation “m.b.,” short for *mozhet byt’*, meaning “perhaps” or “maybe.” Hence, in this particular instance the English word has been written out in full. In most cases, the translation seeks to replicate abbreviations and acronyms, but they have been used only when it does not cause confusion.

The English translation is not identical to the published Hungarian and Russian compilations of the Malin notes. Both of these earlier publications contain several errors, including a few that substantially alter the meaning of the original. The fact that mistakes cropped up is mainly a reflection of how difficult it is to work with the handwritten originals, which, aside from problems of legibility, are occasionally out of sequence in the archival folders. In some cases the mispagination is easy to correct, but in a few instances the reordering of pages necessitates very close textual analysis. I have corrected all these mistakes in the English translation, and have included details about the corrections in the annotations.

--Mark Kramer

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APRF = *Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Archive of the President of the Russian Federation), Moscow  
 AVH = *Allam-Vedelmi Hatóság* (State Security Authority; name of Hungarian secret police agency after 1949)  
 AVO = *Allam-Vedelmi Osztály* (State Security Department; name of Hungarian secret police agency until 1949)  
 AVPRF = *Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation), Moscow  
 CC = Central Committee  
 Cde. = Comrade  
 CPC = Communist Party of China  
 CPSU = Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
 GS/OS = General Staff/Operational Directorate  
 HCP = Hungarian Communist Party  
 HL/HM = *Hadtortenelmi Levéltár, Honvedelmi Minisztérium* (Hungarian Mili-

tary History Archive), Budapest  
 HWP = Hungarian Workers’ Party  
 HSWP = Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party  
 KGB = Committee for State Security  
 KSC = *Komunistická strana Československa* (Czechoslovak Communist Party)  
 MVD = Ministry of Internal Affairs  
 PKK = Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact  
 PZPR = *Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza* (Polish United Workers’ Party)  
 SUA = *Statni ustredni archiv* (Central State Archive), Prague  
 TsAMO = *Tsentrāl’nyi arkhiv Ministerstva oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense, Russian Federation)  
 TsKhSD = *Tsentr Khraneniya Sovremennoi Dokumentatsii* (Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation), Moscow  
 UV = Central Committee (of the KSC)  
 VHA = *Vojensky historicky archiv* (Military-Historical Archive), Prague

## INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED IN THE MALIN NOTES

Three points are worth mentioning about this list:

First, unless otherwise indicated, the positions listed for each person are those held during the 1956 crises.

Second, the entries for some Hungarian Communist party officials include as many as three titles for the party. The Communist party in Hungary was called the Hungarian Communist Party (*Magyar Kommunista Part*) until June 1948, when it compelled the Hungarian Social Democratic Party (*Magyar Szocial-Demokrata Part*) to merge with it. The combined party was renamed the Hungarian Workers’ Party (*Magyar Dolgozók Partja*). The Hungarian Workers’ Party was dissolved at the end of October 1956, and a new Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (*Magyar Szocialista Munkaspart*) was formed on 1 November 1956. The acronyms HCP, HWP, and





October 1956; appointed to the Revolutionary Defense Committee on 31 October 1956; appointed commander of the National Guard on 3 November 1956; one of the leaders of the armed resistance to the Soviet invasion

**KISS**, Karoly: member of the HWP Presidium from 28 October 1956; member of the HSWP Provisional Executive Committee after 4 November 1956; member of the HSWP Politburo from 1957 to 1962

**KONEV**, Marshal Ivan: commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact Joint Armed Forces

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## THE MALIN NOTES

## DOCUMENT No. 1

**Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on 9 and 12 July 1956****(Re: Point IV of Protocol No. 28)**<sup>1</sup>

Those Taking Part: Bulganin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Molotov, Pervukhin, Khrushchev, Shepilov, Belyaev, Pospelov, Brezhnev, Zhukov

**Ciph. Teleg. No. . . . from Budapest**<sup>2</sup>(Khrushchev, Voroshilov, Zhukov, Ponomarev)<sup>3</sup>

We should call Cde. Mikoyan so that he'll go take a vacation on Lake Balaton.<sup>4</sup>

An article should be prepared in our press about internationalist solidarity to rebuff the enemy.

The subversive activities of the imperialists—in Poznan and Hungary. They want to weaken internationalist ties; and in the name of independence of paths, they want to foment disunity and destroy [the socialist countries] one by one.

To Cdes. Pospelov, Shepilov, and Ponomarev.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the Italian cdes. could publish something in the press.

Perhaps Cde. Togliatti will write an article.<sup>6</sup>

On the Rajk affair<sup>7</sup>—there must be an easing of the situation

Rakosi<sup>8</sup>

(Malenkov, Khrushchev, Voroshilov).<sup>9</sup>

Cde. Mikoyan should confer with Kovacs, and he should speak firmly.<sup>10</sup>

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1005, Ll. 2-2ob, compiled by V. N. Malin.*]

## DOCUMENT No. 2

**Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on 20 October 1956**

Those Taking Part: Bulganin, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Mikoyan, Molotov, Pervukhin, Saburov, Suslov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Zhukov, Shepilov, Furtseva, Pospelov, Serov.

**I. Briefing from the CPSU Delegation about the Trip to Warsaw.**<sup>11</sup>

(Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Molotov, Kaganovich, Konev, Zhukov)

1. There's only one way out—put an end to what is in Poland.

If Rokossowski is kept, we won't have to press things for a while.<sup>12</sup>

Maneuvers.

Prepare a document.

Form a committee.<sup>13</sup>

2. The ambassador, Cde. Ponomarenko, was grossly mistaken in his assessment of Ochab and Gomulka.<sup>14</sup>

3. We should invite to Moscow representatives from the Communist parties of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, the GDR, and Bulgaria.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps we should send CC officials to China for informational purposes.<sup>16</sup>

4. Send information. Take notice of information. Think through the questions that have been raised.

**II. On Hungary.**

We need to think it over, perhaps send Cde. Mikoyan.<sup>17</sup>

Cdes. Mikoyan and Zhukov must consider recalling soldiers to their units.<sup>18</sup>

Cde. Mikoyan is to draft information for the v014 TcORakosi

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 4-4ob, compiled by V. N. Malin.*]

#### DOCUMENT No. 5

##### Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on 26 October 1956

Those Taking Part: Bulganin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Molotov, Saburov, Brezhnev, Khrushchev, Zhukov, Shvernik, Furtseva, Pospelov, Yudin.  
From the CPC CC—Cdes. Liu Shaoqi,<sup>25</sup>

##### Exchange of Opinions about the Situation in Poland and Hungary

The point about Rokossowski is the central question.<sup>26</sup>  
(Cde. Liu Shaoqi).  
Gomulka is taking this to extremes.

Continuation of the session of 26/X at 8:00 p.m.<sup>27</sup>  
Review of the information from Cdes. Mikoyan and Suslov.<sup>28</sup>

Cdes. Shepilov, Brezhnev, and Furtseva are to study it.

Hungarian party workers (126 cdes.) are studying at the Higher Party School.<sup>29</sup>  
We should provide information to them.  
Instruct them, carry out work. We mustn't turn them against the Directory and CC, but should say there are vacillations within the CC.<sup>30</sup>  
Convene a meeting with them with participation of the Hungarian ambassador and military officers (in the school), and then send them back there (to Hungary).  
Hold a meeting with the students and inform them (at the colleges) perhaps with the ambassador present.<sup>31</sup>  
Perform the work.

Three copies  
for Cdes. Brezhnev,  
Shepilov,  
Furtseva.<sup>32</sup>

##### On the Situation in Hungary<sup>33</sup>

**Cde. Bulganin**—Cde. Mikoyan is maintaining an improper and ill-defined position, and is not helping the Hungarian leaders put an end to their flip-flops.  
A firm line must be maintained.<sup>34</sup>

**Cde. Molotov**—endorses Cde. Bulganin's view.  
We must set certain limits and instruct Cde.

Mikoyan how to act.

**Cde. Kaganovich**—the real correlation of forces is such that it does not support the conclusions of Cde. Mikoyan.  
We must adopt a firm position.  
A Military-Revol. Com'tee must be set up.<sup>35</sup>

**Cde. Malenkov**—we sent in troops, and the adversary began to recover.  
We should tell Cde. Mikoyan that he must firmly press Nagy to restore order.

**Cde. Zhukov**—Cde. Mikoyan is acting improperly, he's pushing us toward capitulation.  
We must insist on a firm position.

**Cde. Shepilov**—the step was extreme, but correct.  
Real power is with the troops.  
To make further concessions would be regarded as weakness.

**Cde. Furtseva**—Cde. Mikoyan, apparently, is mistaken about Nagy. They released 1,000 who had been arrested.<sup>36</sup>

**Cde. Khrushchev**—Mikoyan is acting as he said he would.  
Cde. Mikoyan supported a position of non-intervention, but our troops are there.

A new stage—we don't agree with the government.

We should send reinforcements—Molotov, Zhukov, Malenkov.

Contact should be established with both Hegedus and the others.<sup>37</sup>

We must write an appeal to our troops.

Prepare a flight.  
Reinforce the troops.  
Cdes. Molotov, Zhukov, and Malenkov are to fly off.<sup>38</sup>

Later we can say definitively.

Regarding Cde. Mikoyan's trip to Austria—it should be deferred.<sup>39</sup>

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1005, Ll. 53-53ob, 62-62ob, compiled by V. N. Malin.*]

#### DOCUMENT No. 6

##### Working Notes from the S09863(,)JTJ 0 -1.167 TDay

Those Taking Part: Voroshilov, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Molotov, Saburov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Zhukov, Shvernik, Shepilov, Furtseva, Pospelov, Zorin

**On the Situation in Hungary**

(Khrushchev)

**Cde. Khrushchev**—the matter is becoming more complicated.

They're planning a demonstration.<sup>41</sup>

Kadar is leaning toward holding negotiations with the centers of resistance.

We must set Sobolev right at the UN.<sup>42</sup>

The workers are supporting the uprising (therefore they want to reclassify it as something other than a "counterrevolutionary uprising").

**Cde. Zhukov** provides information.

They would refrain from stamping out one of the centers of resistance.<sup>43</sup>

An order was given not to permit a demonstration.

They're dismantling the railroad tracks in a number of localities.

In Debrecen power has passed to our troops.<sup>44</sup>

**Cde. Khrushchev** provides information.

The situation is complicated.

Cde. Suslov is to fly back to Tw (Cde. Khrushchev)Tj /F4444 -1.lcTj -19rushch 0 7 is coA DisedtoryTj 0 on-Cde. Suslov i 7 6orkers are suppyon.Tj In I

We must draw the right conclusion: In Budapest there are forces that want to get rid of Nagy's and Kadar's government. We should adopt a position of support for the current government.

Otherwise we'll have to undertake an occupation.

This will drag us into a dubious venture.

**Cde. Kaganovich:** Regarding the sending of troops, we acted properly in sending them.

There is no reason to attack Mikoyan and Suslov.

They acted properly. It's unfair to lay the blame on them.

If we don't offer support, there'll be an occupation of the country.

That will take us far afield.

We should do what is needed to support the gov't.

Changes shouldn't be made in the declaration regarding the withdrawal of troops.<sup>55</sup>

So that they speak about friendship.

The question is how to strengthen the party.

We don't need to send additional people there.

**Malenkov:**<sup>56</sup> The actions that were taken were correct.

There is no point at all in condemning Cdes. Mikoyan and Suslov.

We should support the new gov't.

We should keep troops there with the approval of the gov't.

**Cde. Malenkov:** So many people were involved there that there'll have to be a guarantee of an amnesty.

**Cde. Molotov:** We acted properly when we sent in troops. The initial messages from Cdes. Mikoyan and Suslov were reassuring about their view of the government.

The influence of the party on the masses is weak.

With regard to the new government, we should support it.

But regarding friendship with the USSR, they're talking about the withdrawal of troops. We must act cautiously.

**Cde. Zhukov:** We must support the new gov't.

The question of a troop withdrawal from Hungary—this question must be considered by the entire socialist camp.

The authority of the HWP CC must be raised.

We should appeal to the fraternal parties so that they, in turn, will issue appeals to the Hungarians.

In Budapest, we should pull troops off the streets in certain regions.

Perhaps we should release a statement from the military command.

With regard to the assessment of Cdes. Mikoyan and Suslov, it's inappropriate to say the things that Cde. Voroshilov did.

**Cde. Saburov:** We must support this gov't. The authority of the gov't must be increased in the eyes of the people.

We shouldn't protest their assessments of events, and we shouldn't protest about the withdrawal of troops, albeit not an immediate withdrawal.

**Cde. Khrushchev:** Agrees with the cdes.

We must support this gov't.

We must devise our tactics.

We must speak with Kadar and Nagy: We support you; the declaration—you evidently are not able to do more.<sup>57</sup>

We will declare a ceasefire.

We are ready to withdraw troops from Budapest.

We must make this conditional on a ceasefire by the centers of resistance.

**Cde. Molotov:** Second, we must look after the Hungarian Communists.<sup>58</sup>

**Cde. Bulganin**—the regime of people's democracy in the country has collapsed.

The HWP leadership no longer exists.

Power has been gained by . . .<sup>59</sup>

**Cde. Kaganovich**—we're not talking here about concessions, but about a war for the people.

The declaration must be adopted.<sup>60</sup>

A troop withdrawal from Budapest.

**Cde. Voroshilov:** If only a group could be formed there, we could leave our troops in place.

There's no one to rely on.

Otherwise there's war.

**Cde. Khrushchev**—I support the declaration.

Politically this is beneficial for us.<sup>61</sup>

The English and French are in a real mess in Egypt. We shouldn't get caught in the same company.<sup>62</sup>

But we must not foster illusions.

We are saving face.

Fundamentally, the declaration must be adopted.

But adopt it with corrections.<sup>63</sup>

Life in the city must be put right.

An appeal from the fraternal parties.<sup>64</sup>  
A ciphered cable to Yugoslavia.<sup>65</sup>

Cde. Pospelov is to be included in preparations of the report for 6.XI.56

If there is to be a leaflet from the military command, let . . .<sup>66</sup>

Hegedus

Gero

Piros

them to Bulgaria.<sup>67</sup>

### **On the Situation in Hungary**<sup>68</sup>

(Cde. Suslov)

**Cde. Suslov:** The situation is complicated. On 23 Oct. our troops entered.<sup>69</sup>

On 25 Oct. only one pocket of resistance was left; we found out about it on 26 Oct. It was in the "Corvin" cinema, a group headed by a colonel from the Horthyite army.<sup>70</sup>

Single gunshots are heard (often).

They're beating officers.

3,000 wounded, 350 dead (Hungarians).

Our losses are 600 dead.

The popular view of our troops now is bad (and has gotten worse). The reason is the dispersal of the demonstration on 24 Oct.

56.<sup>71</sup> Shooting began. 70 ordinary citizens were killed. Many flags were hung up on the sidewalk.

Workers are leaving their enterprises.

Councils are being formed (spontaneously) at enterprises (around various cities).<sup>72</sup>

There is an anti-Soviet trend in the demonstrations.

How can we regain control of the situation?

The establishment of a relatively strong gov't.

Our line is not to protest the inclusion of several democrats in the gov't.

Yesterday a government was formed.

On the morning of 28 Oct., at 5:00, Kadar arrived and pointed out that the trade unions had demanded a reassessment of the insurgents, reclassifying the events as a national-democratic uprising.<sup>73</sup>

They want to classify it according to the example of the Poznan events.

Kadar reported that he had succeeded in agreeing with the trade unions to eliminate the formula of a national-democratic movement and about the organs of state security.

In his address, Nagy inserted a point about the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

They're also insisting on a ceasefire.









The weak link is the HWP; it has ceased to exist: some have been killed (workers), some were saved.

The leaders of 1/3 of the obkoms are taking part in revolutionary committees (for the region and province).  
Local bodies have been destroyed.

On 1 Nov. at noon—the point of view in the government is that it's necessary to hold discussions with the Soviet gov't and to have the troops withdrawn by a certain time.  
But this isn't accurate.<sup>137</sup>

The coalition parties don't want counterrev. Tildy and other cdes. are afraid of Ferenc Nagy.<sup>138</sup>

Those in the emigre community: they're afraid of them.

Tildy is afraid of Kovacs, but he's better than Tildy and is a smart man.

Kovacs gave a speech in Pecs:<sup>139</sup> we are creating a Smallholders party, but we can't struggle on the basis of the old program.  
He is against the return of the landowners and capitalists.

But they aren't putting forth demands that are popular in the nation.

Hour by hour the situation is moving rightward.

2 questions:

- 1) the gov't's decision about neutrality,
- 2) the party.

How did the decision about neutrality emerge?

The strong impression is that there's an organized departure of troops.

The Declaration—a good impression and a reassuring gesture.

But the masses are very stirred-up and are reacting harshly.

There were movements of Sov. troops, which alarmed the gov't and masses.<sup>140</sup>

The gov't is doing one thing, and the troops another.

They reported that Soviet troops had crossed the border in transport vehicles. Hungarian formations are entrenched.

What should be done—to shoot or not to shoot?

They summoned Andropov. Andropov said that these are railroad workers.

Hungarians at the border sent back telegrams saying that these definitely are not railroad workers.

Then they reported that Soviet tanks are

moving into Szolnok.

This was at noon. The government has been thrown into a nervous state.

They summoned Andropov. He responded: the withdrawal of wounded soldiers.

Nagy was convinced that a strike against Budapest is being prepared. Tildy requested that Hungarian tanks approach the parliament.

In the army—a Rev. Council, Maleter, Kovacs,<sup>141</sup> and Kiraly are not subordinate to the gov't.

They don't want bad ministers.

The whole gov't was inclined to the view that if the troops move toward Budapest, the city must be defended.

In this atmosphere the idea of neutrality

I was a witness when a Hungarian unit opened fire on Soviet troops.

The Soviets didn't respond. Further such restraint couldn't be expected from even the most disciplined army.

Whether deliberately or not, the gov't is laying the groundwork for a confrontation of Soviet and Hungarian troops.

Order must be restored through a military dictatorship.

Change the policy of the government.

*[Source: TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 23-29, compiled by V. N. Malin.]*

**DOCUMENT No. 13**

**Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on 2 November 1956 (Re: point IV of Protocol No. 50)<sup>146</sup>**

**On the Plan for Measures Concerning**





Hegedus and Rakosi).

Rakosi caused enormous damage, and for this he must be held accountable. He must be excluded from the party.<sup>184</sup>

**Cde. Khrushchev:**

Cde. Kaganovich, when will you mend your ways and stop all your toadying? Holding to some sort of hardened position. What Cde. Molotov and Kaganovich are proposing is the line of screeching and face-slapping. Speak about Nagy. About Losonczy and Donath.

Cdes. Mikoyan, Suslov, and Brezhnev are to transmit our changes and requests in a tactful manner.

**II. Ciph. Tel. No. . . . from . . . .**

(Zhukov, Shepilov)<sup>185</sup>

Affirm as an unfortunate event.<sup>186</sup>

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 41-45ob, compiled by V. N. Malin.*]

**DOCUMENT No. 20**

**Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on 27 November 1956**

**(Re: Protocol No. 60)**<sup>187</sup>

**I. From Bucharest.**

(Khr., Vorosh., Kagan., Mik., Mol., Perv., Bulg., Sab., Zhuk., Grom.)

It's not advisable.<sup>188</sup>

We should inform Dej that this is not to our advantage, and is not to the advantage of Hungary.

Cde. Bulg. is to negotiate with Cde. Dej.<sup>189</sup>

**Zhukov**—we should state our view of the position of the Yugoslavs.

**Khr.**—we don't need to enter into correspondence with Tito about Imre Nagy; that's a matter for Hungary to handle. It was a mistake for our officer to go into the bus.<sup>190</sup>

**II.**<sup>191</sup>

Instructions to:

The Foreign Ministry

KGB, and

On the discrediting of Imre.<sup>192</sup>

Konev

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, L. 52, compiled by V. N. Chernukha.*]

**TRANSLATOR'S NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Protocol No. 28 was the formal protocol drafted for this session, which is now stored in *Tsentralnaya Khraneniya Sovremennoi Dokumentatsii*

ber 1956, an event that contributed to the growing social unrest in Hungary.

<sup>8</sup> This passage in Malin's notes is ambiguous because Rakosi's surname, like other foreign surnames that end in vowels other than "a," does not decline in Russian. Most likely, Khrushchev was saying that "we must alleviate Rakosi's situation." It is possible, however, that Khrushchev was saying that "Rakosi must alleviate the situation," which would imply the need for Rakosi to step down. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine which of these two, very different interpretations is correct. The Hungarian edition of the Malin notes fails to take account of this ambiguity. See Vyacheslav Sereda and Janos M. Rainer, eds., *Donies a Kremben, 1956: A szovjet partelnokseg vitai Magyarorszagrol* (Budapest: 1956-os Intezet, 1996), p. 19. Sereda and Rainer opt for the former interpretation ("we must alleviate Rakosi's situation") without even considering the latter.

<sup>9</sup> Here and elsewhere in Malin's notes, the inclusion of surnames in parentheses after a statement or proposal means that these individuals supported the statement or proposal.

<sup>10</sup> The formal protocol for this session (see citation in Note 1 *supra*) contained the following point on this matter: "Instruct Cde. Mikoyan to travel to Hungary for discussions with the leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party." The reference here is to Istvan Kovacs, a top Hungarian Communist official who fled to Moscow at the end of October 1956, not to Bela Kovacs, the former Secretary General of the Independent Smallholders' Party. Soviet leaders knew that Istvan Kovacs had long been dissatisfied with Rakosi's performance. See "Telefogramma v TsK KPSS," from M. A. Suslov to the CPSU Presidium and Secretariat, 13 June 1956 (Top Secret), in APRF, F. 3, Op. 6, D. 483, Ll. 146-149.

<sup>11</sup> On 19 October 1956, the day before this Presidium meeting, Khrushchev led a top-level Soviet delegation on an unannounced visit to Warsaw. The Soviet delegates held tense negotiations with the Polish leader, Wladyslaw Gomulka, in an effort to prevent the removal of Marshal Konstantin Rokossowski and other officials from the Politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). The Soviet delegates were unsuccessful in their task, despite exerting strong military and political pressure on Gomulka. For a fuller account of the meeting, see the notes by one of the participants, Anastas Mikoyan, in "Zapis' besedy N. S. Khrushcheva v Varshave," October 1956, No. 233 (Strictly Secret—Special Dossier), in APRF, Osobaya papka, F. 3, Op. 65, D. 2, Ll. 1-14.

<sup>12</sup> Marshal Konstantin Rokossowski, a Polish-born officer who had lived most of his life in the Soviet Union and was a marshal in the Soviet army, was installed as defense minister and commander-in-chief in Poland in December 1949. He also was a full member of the PZPR Politburo. He was one of hundreds of high-ranking Soviet officers who were brought into the Polish army in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Not surprisingly, their presence caused widespread resentment. For a detailed account of this phenomenon, see Edward Jan Nalepa, *Oficerowie Radziecky w Wojsku Polskim w latach 1943-1968: Studium historyczno-wojskowe* (Warsaw: Wojskowy

Instytut Historyczny, 1992). Here and elsewhere in Malin's notes, Rokossowski's surname is misspelled as "Rokkosowski." The spelling has been corrected in the translation.

<sup>13</sup> It is not entirely clear from these brief points what the Soviet Presidium was intending to do. Most evidence suggests, however, that they planned to hold new military exercises in Poland and to form a "provisional revolutionary committee" of pro-Soviet Polish officials, who would then be installed in place of Gomulka. This is roughly what occurred with Hungary in early November, when a "revolutionary workers' and peasants' government" was formed in Moscow, with Janos Kadar and Ferenc Munnich at its head. Kadar's government was installed when Soviet troops moved in on 4 November.

<sup>14</sup> Khrushchev declined to mention that he himself—and the rest of the Soviet leadership—had "grossly" misjudged the situation in Poland over the previous few months. This was evident, for example, when Ochab stopped in Moscow in September 1956 on his way back from Beijing. See "Priem Posla Pol'skoi Narodnoi Respubliki v SSSR tov. V. Levikovskogo, 10 sentyabrya 1956 g.," 11 September 1956 (Secret), memorandum from N. Patolichev, Soviet deputy foreign minister, in Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (AVPRF), F. Referentura po Pol'she, Op. 38, Por. 9, Papka, 126, D. 031, L. 1.

<sup>15</sup> This session of the CPSU CC Presidium was held on 24 October. See the assessment of the meeting and translation of handwritten Czech notes by Mark Kramer, "Hungary and Poland, 1956: Khrushchev's CPSU CC Presidium Meeting on East European Crises, 24 October 1956," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 1, 50-56.

<sup>16</sup> As it turned out, Khrushchev phoned Mao, and the Chinese leader decided to send a high-level delegation to Moscow for consultations. The delegation, led by Liu Shaoqi, arrived on 23 October and stayed until the 31st.

<sup>17</sup> Not until three days later would the uprising in Hungary begin, but Andropov's telegrams from Budapest on 12 and 14 October had kept the CPSU leadership apprised of the rapidly mounting crisis within the HWP and Hungarian society. The two telegrams were declassified in 1992 and published in "Vengriya, aprel'-oktyabr' 1956 g.," pp. 110-128.

<sup>18</sup> The reference here is to the large number of Soviet officers who were busy at the time helping out with the harvest. Although the uprising in Hungary had not yet begun, Soviet troops in that country had been preparing since mid-July to undertake large-scale operations aimed at "upholding and restoring public order." A full "Plan of Operations for the Special Corps to Restore Public Order on the Territory of Hungary," which received the codename "Volna" (Wave), was approved on 20 July 1956 by General Pyotr Lashchenko. See "Plan deistvii Osobogo korpusa po vosstanovleniyu obshchestvennogo poryadka na territorii Vengrii," in Tsentral'nyi arkhiv Ministerstva oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii (TsAMO), F. 32, Op. 701291, D. 15, Ll. 130-131. See also the account by Lieut.-General E. I. Malashenko, "Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshta" (Part 1), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No 10 (October 1993), pp. 24-25. The proposal to re-

call Soviet troops from their agricultural work was part of the "Volna" plan, which placed Soviet forces on increased alert in mid-October and brought them to full combat alert by 20-21 October at the behest of the Soviet General Staff. The full plan was due to be put into effect when a signal known as "Kompas" was received.

<sup>19</sup> No such informational report had actually been prepared by 21 October, when a meeting of East-bloc leaders was hastily arranged. But by the time the meeting was held on 24 October, the start of the uprising in Hungary on 23 October forced Khrushchev to cover the events in Hungary in some detail. See Kramer, "Hungary and Poland, 1956," pp. 1, 50-56.

<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, only a small fragment of this session has been found. It is possible that missing pages will turn up in other parts of the Malin collection, but for now the brief (but important) section below is all that is available.

<sup>21</sup> The formal protocol for this session (Protocol No. 48) did not list the Hungarian question among the twelve other matters considered here. The most likely reason is that Mikoyan was opposed to the use of Soviet troops in 0 July 190 02 Tc -0.06s.gP.0229(av,d

<sup>24</sup> Mikoyan, Suslov, Malinin, and Serov arrived somewhat late in Budapest because inclement weather forced Mikoyan's and Suslov's plane to be diverted to an airport 90 kilometers north of the capital. A Soviet armored personnel carrier, accompanied by tanks, brought the four into Budapest, where they promptly began sending reports back to Moscow. See "Shifrtelgramma" from Mikoyan and Suslov to the CPSU Presidium, 24 October 1956 (Strictly Secret), in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 4, P. 6, D. 5, Ll. 1-7. A retrospective account of Mikoyan's and Suslov's arrival in Budapest, by Vladimir Kryuchkov, who was a senior aide to Andropov in 1956 and who later followed in Andropov's footsteps at the KGB, claims that Mikoyan's and Suslov's plane was diverted northward because it came under fire and was struck by a machine gun. Kryuchkov also asserts that Mikoyan and the others had to walk for more than two hours to reach the embassy. See Vladimir Kryuchkov, *Lichnoe delo*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Olimp, 1996), vol. 1, p. 58. There is no evidence whatsoever to back up Kryuchkov's assertions. On the contrary, Mikoyan's and Suslov's contemporaneous report seems far more reliable than Kryuchkov's tendentious memoir.

<sup>25</sup> The notes provide no further names of members of the Chinese delegation, who were in Moscow for consultations between 23 and 31 October. The delegation, headed by Liu Shaoqi, included the CPC General Secretary, Deng Xiaoping, as well as three lower-ranking officials: Wang Jiaying, Hu Qiaomu, and Shi Zhe. Soviet leaders conferred with them several times about the events in Poland and Hungary.

<sup>26</sup> By this point, Rokossowski already had been removed from the PZPR CC Politburo. The only remaining question was whether he would be kept as Polish national defense minister.

<sup>27</sup> For the continuation of the session, see the portion below and the explanation in Note 33 *infra*.

<sup>28</sup> On 26 October, Mikoyan and Suslov sent four emergency messages via secure telephone to the CPSU Presidium. See the longest and most important of these messages, "Telefonogramma," 26 October 1956 (Top Secret—Deliver Immediately), in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 483, Ll. 123-129.

<sup>29</sup> The reference here is slightly awry. The number given in parentheses (126) refers to the total number of Hungarians studying in Moscow, including party workers, military officers, state security officials, and others. See "Zapis' besedy s poslom Vengerskoi Narodnoi Respubliki tov. Yanoshem Boldotskim, 26 oktyabrya 1956 g.," Cable No. 597/AR (Secret) from A. A. Gromyko, Soviet deputy foreign minister, to the CPSU Presidium, 26 October 1956, in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 484, Ll. 116-117. Malin's notes imply that the figure includes only HWP officials studying at the Higher Party School.

<sup>30</sup> A "Directory," which served as the highest HWP organ, had been created by this point under Soviet auspices, but its existence had not yet been



in Russian. The final word in the fragment, translated here as “directly,” is *samim*, which literally means “by itself” or “by himself.” The antecedent might be either the HWP Politburo or Mikoyan, or perhaps something or someone else. The ambiguity cannot be fully conveyed in English (which has separate words for “itself” and “himself”), but the translation tries to do so as best as possible.

<sup>48</sup> Here again, Zhukov is referring to the center of resistance around the Corvin cinema.

<sup>49</sup> Khrushchev is referring here to the coalition government that was formed (or actually reorganized) on 27 October. This government included, on an informal basis, representatives of parties from the pre-Communist era: Bela Kovacs, the former General Secretary of the Smallholders Party; Zoltan Tildy, the former leader of the Smallholders Party; and Ferenc Erdei, the former leader of the National Peasant Party. Not until 30 October, however, did Nagy announce the formal restoration of a multi-party state, with full participation by the Smallholders, the National Peasant Party (renamed the Petofi Party on 1 November), and the Social Democratic Party as well as the Communists. (Other non-Communist parties soon sprang up as well, including the Hungarian Independence Party, the People’s Democratic Party, the Catholic People’s Party, and the Catholic National Association.)

<sup>50</sup> Scattered defections of Hungarian troops to the insurgents had begun on the first day of the uprising, but Khrushchev was concerned that the whole army would switch sides. In later years, official Soviet accounts of the 1956 uprising acknowledged that “during the most trying days,” a substantial number of “soldiers and officers from the Hungarian People’s Army” had joined the insurgents in fighting “against Soviet soldiers who had been called in to help.” See P. A. Zhilin, ed., *Stroitel'stvo armii evropeiskikh stran sotsialisticheskogo sodruzhestva, 1949-1980* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), p. 93. Formerly secret documents in the main Russian military archive (TsAMO, F. 32, Op. 701291, D. 17, Ll. 33-48) include the Soviet defense ministry’s complete list of Hungarian army units that took the side of the insurgents. Many other valuable documents about the role of the Hungarian army are now available in the 1956 Collection (*1956-os Gyujtemeny*) of the Hungarian Military History Archive, *Hadtortenelmi Leveltar, Honvedelmi Miniszterium* (HL/HM). For a useful volume drawing on these documents, see Miklos Horvath, *1956 katonai kronologiaja* (Budapest: Magyar Honvedseg Oktatasi es Kulturális Anyagellátó Központ, 1993). For an equally valuable survey of the Hungarian army’s role in 1956 based on archival sources, see Imre Okvath, “Magyar tisztiakar a hideghaboru idoszakaban, 1945-1956,” *Uj Honvedsegi szemle* (Budapest), No. 1 (1994), pp. 14-27. See also Bela Kiraly, “Hungary’s Army: Its Part in the Revolt,” *East Europe*, Vol. 7, No. 6 (June 1958), pp. 3-16.

<sup>51</sup> This sentence is incomplete in the original.

<sup>52</sup> This refers to the new Hungarian government’s declaration on 28 October, which Nagy would read over the radio at 5:20 p.m. that same afternoon. Among other things, the declaration called for the dissolution of the state security organs, amnesties for those involved in the uprising, the

the morning of 24 October, Maleter had been ordered by the then-defense minister Istvan Bata to move with five tanks against the insurgents in Budapest's 8th and 9th Districts, providing relief for the Kilian Barracks in the 9th District. When Maleter and his tank unit arrived on the scene, they decided to support the rebels' cause instead. Maleter then assumed command of insurgent forces in the Kilian barracks.

<sup>71</sup> The original reads the 24th, but this incident actually occurred on the 25th. A peaceful demonstration of some 25,000 people was held on 25 October outside the Parliament Building (where Nagy's office was located, though Nagy was not inside). The precise sequence of events cannot be conclusively determined, but most evidence suggests that Hungarian state security (AVH) forces suddenly opened fire on the unarmed crowd, with additional shots being fired by Soviet tanks deployed around the building. Roughly 200 people were killed and many more were injured. As news of the incident spread around Budapest, the reported scale of the bloodshed quickly became exaggerated and most of the blame for the deaths was attributed—erroneously, it seems—to the Soviet tanks. No Soviet or Hungarian officials were held accountable for the deaths, but Suslov's statement indicates that CPSU leaders were aware that their own troops were believed to be culpable.

<sup>72</sup> The last few parenthetical words of this sen-

ernment and in the interests of the [East German] government and people.”

<sup>91</sup> The final Declaration noted that “Soviet units are in the Hungarian and Romanian republics in accordance with the Warsaw Treaty and governmental agreements. Soviet military units are in the Polish republic on the basis of the Potsdam four-power agreement and the Warsaw Treaty.” The Declaration then claimed that “Soviet military units are not in the other people’s democracies,” omitting any mention of the hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops in East Germany.

<sup>92</sup> Khrushchev presumably is referring here to both the military advisers and the state security (KGB) advisers.

<sup>93</sup> When this editing was completed, the Presidium formally adopted Resolution No. P49/1 (“Vypiska iz protokola No. 49 zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK ot 30 oktyabrya 1956 g.: O polozhenii v Vengrii,” 30 October 1956, in APRE, F.3, Op. 64, D.484, Ll. 25-30) stating that it would “approve the text, with changes made at the CPSU CC Presidium session, of a Declaration by the Government of the USSR on the foundations of development and the further strengthening of friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.” The resolution ordered that the “text of the Declaration be broadcast on radio on 30 October and published in the press on 31 October 1956.” For the published text, see “Deklaratsiya o printsipakh razvitiya i dal’neishem ukreplenii druzhby i sotrudnichestva mezhdru SSSR i drugimi sotsialisticheskimi stranami,” *Pravda* (Moscow), 31 October 1956, p. 1.

<sup>94</sup> It is unclear precisely when the Chinese changed their position from non-interventionist to pro-intervention. The statement recorded here, if correctly transcribed, would suggest that the change occurred before the final Soviet decision on 31 October, but almost all other evidence (including subsequent Presidium meetings recorded by Malin) suggests that it came *after*, not before, the Soviet decision. In any case, if the change did occur before, it did not have any discernible effect on the Soviet decision at this meeting to eschew intervention.

<sup>95</sup> Molotov is referring here to major developments in Hungary. On 30 October, at 2:30 p.m. Budapest time, Nagy announced the formal restoration of a multi-party state and the establishment of an “inner cabinet” of the national government. The new cabinet consisted of Nagy, Zoltan Tildy, Bela Kovacs, Ferenc Erdei, Janos Kadar, Geza Losonczy, and Anna Kethly (from the Social Democratic Party). That same day, a “revolutionary national defense council” of the Hungarian armed forces was set up, which supported the demands of “the revolutionary councils of the working youth and intellectuals,” and called for the “immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Budapest and their withdrawal from the entire territory of Hungary within the shortest possible time.” The new Council also promised to disarm all agents from Hungary’s disbanded state security forces (AVH), who had been notorious agents of repression during the Stalin era. A Revolutionary Armed Forces Committee also was formed on 31 October, and it was empowered by the government to create a new army.

<sup>96</sup> These are five of the seven members of Nagy’s

new “inner cabinet.” Anna Kethly’s name is not listed here because she had not yet been appointed. (Nagy mentioned in his speech on 30 October that “a person to be nominated by the Social Democratic Party” would be in the inner cabinet, and Kethly later turned out to be that person.) It is unclear why Malin did not list Ferenc Erdei’s name here.

<sup>97</sup> The pages for this session were in reverse order in the archival file. They have been put into correct order in the translation.

<sup>98</sup> In the formal protocol of this session (cited in Note 77 *suprab82revolutiOviet dei23 a mulry*. Old be(1 Tf 15.625 0 3.(after)TjOe tlozhenii v5 -1.135 TD 0.003

Zinner, ed., *National Communism and Popular Revolt in Eastern Europe: A Selection of Documents on Events in Poland and Hungary, February–November 1956* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 473–481.

<sup>109</sup> For the final text of this order, see “Prikaz Glavnokomanduyushchego Ob”edinennymi vooruzhennymi silami No. 1, 4 noyabrya 1956 goda,” reproduced in Lieut.-General E. I. Malashenko, “Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshta” (Part 3), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* (Moscow), No. 12 (December 1993), p. 86.

<sup>110</sup> It is unclear what “group,” if any, was actually sent. Presumably, the reference here is to a group of Presidium members.

<sup>111</sup> The three former Hungarian officials listed here—Rakosi, Hegedus, and Gero—had fled to the Soviet Union within the past few days. No doubt, Khrushchev had solicited their views beforehand about the proper course to pursue in Hungary. It is also possible that the three were asked to take part in this phase of the CPSU Presidium meeting, and that they offered their views directly.

<sup>112</sup> The five Hungarian officials listed here were among those who were slated to take part in a forthcoming “provisional revolutionary government.” The first three were still in Budapest (though Kadar was spirited out the next evening), Boldoczki was in Moscow (in his ambassadorial post), and Horvath, the foreign minister in Nagy’s government, was on his way to a UN General Assembly session, but was delayed in Prague.

<sup>113</sup> Kiss’s name is incorrectly rendered in Malin’s notes as Kisskar.

<sup>114</sup> The formal protocol for this session (cited in Note 77 *supra*) “affirms the text of the telegram to the Soviet ambassador in Belgrade for Cde. Tito.” A copy of the telegram is attached to the protocol, which further notes that “if the answer [from the Yugoslav side] is positive, Cdes. Khrushchev and Malenkov are authorized to hold negotiations with Cde. Tito.” For the Yugoslav response to the Soviet telegram, see Document No. 9 *infra*.

<sup>115</sup> See Document No. 10 *infra*.

<sup>116</sup> This telephone message is unattributed and undated. Presumably, the message came from Molotov just before he returned to Moscow from Brest on 1 November. It had been arranged beforehand that while Khrushchev and Malenkov would continue on to meet with other East European leaders, Molotov would return to Moscow and brief the CPSU Presidium on Gomulka’s position.

<sup>117</sup> Protocol No. 50 (in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 484, L. 58) contains directives from the sessions on both 1 and 2 November (see Note 146 *infra*).

<sup>118</sup> On the evening of 31 October–1 November, Mikoyan and Suslov returned to Moscow, presumably accompanied by Serov. This was the first Presidium meeting in which Mikoyan had taken part since 23 October. In Khrushchev’s absence, Bulganin presided over this session.

<sup>119</sup> Other than Mikoyan and Suslov, who were still in Budapest, all the Presidium members took part in the 31 October decision and the subsequent discussions with the Chinese delegation. Hence, Bulganin provided this information for the benefit of Mikoyan and Suslov.

<sup>120</sup> It is not entirely clear what Bulganin is refer-

ring to here, but he probably had in mind one or more of several developments: Hungary’s withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and demand for the removal of all Soviet troops from Hungary; the commencement of French and British military operations against Egypt (see Note 101 *supra*); China’s sudden decision to support rather than oppose Soviet military intervention in Hungary; new intelligence about the West’s position vis-à-vis Hungary; and the warnings coming in from neighboring East European countries, particularly Czechoslovakia (see below) and Romania.

<sup>121</sup> Kaganovich uses a word here, *obsuzhdenie*, that is normally translated as “discussion,” but it could also mean “deliberations” in this context. Presumably, he is referring to the meeting that Soviet leaders had on 31 October with the Chinese delegation after the CPSU Presidium approved a full-scale invasion of Hungary.

<sup>122</sup> This is how the sentence reads in the text. Presumably, Malin meant to say that “we are *not* attacking.”

<sup>123</sup> It is unclear precisely who was “worried that we’re giving away Hungary.” Furtseva may have been referring to one of several groups: orthodox Hungarian Communists who had sought refuge in Moscow; neighboring East European (especially Czechoslovak and Romanian) leaders; Chinese officials; members of the CPSU Central Committee and the heads of union-republic Communist parties and of regional and local CPSU organizations; and employees of the Soviet embassy in Budapest. By this point in the crisis, all of these groups had expressed concerns very similar to the ones that Furtseva mentions.

<sup>124</sup> Presumably this refers to the decision at the end of October to evacuate the families of Soviet embassy employees to the USSR. For a brief account of the evacuation, see the highly tendentious but occasionally useful memoir by Vladimir Kryuchkov, *Lichnoe delo*

of the other rebel leaders, but he was insistent on the need for far-reaching changes. Angyal was executed in November 1958. See Laszlo Eorsi, ed., "Angyal Istvan sajt kezü vallomasai, 1956 december," *Multunk* (Budapest), Vol. 40, No. 4 (1995), pp. 133-182.

134 The references here are to the Soviet declaration of 30 October and to the declaration of neutrality adopted by the Hungarian government on the evening of 1 November. Nagy announced the declaration in a nationwide radio address.

135 On 3 November, Anna Kethly was named as the Social Democratic representative in the government. See Note 96 *supra*.

136 On 31 October the Hungarian government announced that, on the previous evening, Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty had been freed from house arrest in Felsopeteny. He had been detained there for some 15 months after his release from prison. As the Primate of the Hungarian Catholic Church, Mindszenty had been sentenced to life imprisonment during an anti-religious campaign in February 1949. Mindszenty's statements in the autumn of 1956 were restrained, but clearly supportive of the revolution. When Soviet troops intervened on 4 November, he sought refuge in the U.S. legation in Budapest. Subsequently, Kadar's government prohibited Mindszenty from performing clerical duties of any sort from the legation.

137 It is unclear precisely what Kadar was saying here. (Malin inadvertently may have omitted some comments just before this line.) At the noontime meeting, the Hungarian government reached no final decision on whether to demand the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops and whether to issue the declaration of neutrality. Those decisions were not approved until the evening session, as Kadar explains below.

138 Ferenc Nagy, one of the former leaders of the Independent Smallholders' Party who had been living in exile in the United States, came to Vienna in late October to display solidarity with the insurgents. On 31 October, however, the Austrian authorities forced him to leave the country on the grounds that his presence might be deemed incompatible with Austria's neutral status.

139 Bela Kovacs had been recuperating in Pecs from his nine years of imprisonment. The government's evening session on 1 November was the first activity in which he took part in Budapest.

140 On the alarm generated by the Soviet troop movements, see Andropov's ciphered telegrams from 30 October, 1 November, and 2 November in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 4, P. 6, D. 5, Ll. 15-16, 17-19, and 20-22, respectively.

141 The name "Kovacs" here refers to General Istvan Kovacs, not Bela Kovacs. General Kovacs had become chief of the Hungarian General Staff on 31 October and was also a member of the Revolutionary Defense Committee. He was arrested on 3 November along with the other members of the Hungarian delegation that were negotiating the withdrawal of Soviet troops. He was not released from prison until 1960.

142 Andropov's own account of his attendance at the inner cabinet's evening session, which tallies very well with Kadar's version, is in 059a, Op. 4, P5347(.0)( 6, D6 5, Lr-)]TJ 0 -1.187 T [(17-us.)Tj 0 -0.875 TD 0.014 Tc 4342 i.e.ng, thassdveation os Stahe nt twalwevee

Hungarian press in illuminating the results of the XX CPSU Congress has been totally inadequate.”

See “I. O. Zaveduyushchego Evropeiskim Otdelom MID SSSR tov. Levyckinu K. D.,”

Cable No. 141 (Secret) from Yu. Andropov, 2 May 1956, in AVPRF, F. Referentura o Vengrii, Op.



