

## COLD WAR CRISES

### POLAND, 1956

#### Khrushchev, Gomulka, and the "Polish October"

by L.W. Gluchowski

Eastern Europe was central to Soviet foreign and defence policy throughout the Cold War. After World War II, and especially from 1947 onward, the Soviet military and security forces, together with local communist elites, constructed the most integrated alliance system of the Cold War period. Soviet state institutions of control also helped to reconstruct the military and security forces of states devastated by World War II. Their aim was to secure communist regimes in postwar Eastern Europe dedicated to defend the Soviet Union's western frontier. To ensure loyalty, uniformity, and quality, Soviet military and security officers were recruited to staff or to advise the East European military and security forces.<sup>1</sup> This pattern applied in particular to

*continued on page 38*

**SUDOPLATOV RESPONDS:  
The Authors of *Special Tasks*  
Reply to Critics— see page 155**

### KOREA, 1949-50

#### To Attack, or Not to Attack? Stalin, Kim Il Sung, and the Prelude to War

by Kathryn Weathersby

The historical record of the Korean War has recently been greatly enriched by Russian President Boris Yeltsin's presentation to President Kim Young-Sam of South Korea, during the latter's visit to Moscow in June 1994, of 216 previously classified high level Soviet documents on the war from Russian archives. The collection totals 548 pages and includes documents from the period 1949-1953. Most of the documents are ciphered telegrams between

*continued on page 2*

### POLAND, 1980-81

#### Soviet Policy During the Polish Crisis

by Mark Kramer

The prolonged crisis in Poland in 1980-81 was one of the most intriguing episodes of the Cold War, but until very recently almost no primary sources relating to the crisis were available. That problem has greatly diminished over the past few years. This article will draw on new archival materials and memoirs from Russia,

Poland, Germany, and Czechoslovakia to provide a reassessment of the Soviet Union's role in the Polish crisis. The article will begin with a brief review of some of the most important new sources, and will then analyze the decision-making calculus in Moscow in 1980-81. The third part will take up the controversial question of whether, and under what circumstances, the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies might have invaded Poland in December 1981.

The discussion here is based in part on a longer chapter about the Polish crisis in my forthcoming book on Soviet policy in Eastern Europe, 1945-1991. Further coverage of the

*continued on page 116*

### HUNGARY AND POLAND, 1956

#### Khrushchev's CPSU CC Presidium Meeting on East European Crises, 24 October 1956

#### Introduction, Translation, and Annotation by Mark Kramer

The document below has been translated from a 19-page Czech manuscript entitled "*Zpráva o jednání na UV KSSS 24. října 1956 k situaci v Polsku a Maďarsku*" ("Account of a Meeting at the CPSU CC, 24 October 1956, on the Situation in Poland and Hungary"). The manuscript, which is stored in Fond 07/16, Svazek 3, at the Central State Archive in Prague (Statni ustredni archiv, or SUA), is one of many items in the Czech archives that shed valuable new light on the Soviet Union's response to the crises in Poland and Hungary in

*continued on page 50*

### CUBA, 1962

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

by Philip Brenner and James G. Blight

On 25 and 26 January 1968, Cuban leader Fidel Castro gave an extraordinary 12-hour speech before the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party on the history of Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union. It is well known that the relationship in the six years after the Cuban Missile Crisis was turbulent. But the disclosure of this speech, kept secret at the time, helps clarify how important the Missile Crisis was in setting the stage for the turbulence.

The Cuban government recently declassified

*continued on page 81*

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

1953 GDR Uprising	10
1956 Hungarian Crisis	22
The Yeltsin Dossier	22
Imre Nagy Reassessed	23
1962 Cuban Missile Crisis	58
KGB Documents	58
Diplomatic Cables	58
Soviet-Cuban Talks	59
Warsaw Pact "Lessons"	59
1980-81 Polish Crisis	116
Soviet Documents	116
Honecker's Appeal	124
Carter-Brezhnev	
Correspondence	140
Response	155

**KOREAN WAR***continued from page 1*

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

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

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

Document #1, the minutes of a conversation between Stalin and Kim Il Sung in Moscow on 5 March 1949, sets the stage, revealing in a most intimate way the nature of the relationship between Kim's newly created state, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and its Soviet patron. The conversation recorded in this report was the first and only formal discussion between Stalin and the official North Korean delegation that travelled to Moscow in March 1949 to conclude the DPRK's initial agreements with the USSR.<sup>4</sup> This rare and intriguing glimpse of Stalin handling a petitioning vassal shows, above all, the importance to both leaders of matters of economic development and material supply. As is shown in exhaustive detail in the thousands of pages of documents on post-war Korea in the Russian Foreign Ministry archive, in the years prior to and during the Korean War, North Korea was utterly dependent economically on the Soviet Union. As a result of the collapse of the Japanese empire, Soviet occupation policy, and the civil war in China, North Korea was cut off from its former economic ties with southern Korea, Japan and Manchuria. Except for very limited trade with Hong Kong and two Manchurian ports, in the period prior to and during the Korean War the Soviet Union was the only source of supply and the only market for North Korean goods.

Furthermore, to an unusual degree, North Korea was dependent on the Soviet Union for technical expertise.<sup>5</sup> Japanese colonial policy had permitted only a small number of Koreans to gain higher education or management experience, and the politics of the occupation from 1945-48 prompted most northerners who possessed such skills to flee to the South. With regard to questions of the origin of the Korean War, these economic and demographic circumstances meant that, for the most basic and profound reasons, in the years prior to and during the 1950-53 war, North Korea was simply unable to take any significant action without Soviet approval, regardless of the nationalist inclinations of the DPRK leadership.<sup>6</sup>

Document #1 also reveals that in March 1949 Stalin had a strong interest in the balance of military forces between North and South Korea, but was far from approving a military campaign against the South. The North Korean military was still quite undeveloped; the discussion was instead on basic

questions of military formation and supply. From Kim's statement in Document #6 presented below, recording a conversation in Pyongyang nine months later, it appears that during another conversation between Stalin and Kim in March 1949, which may have occurred during a dinner or reception, Kim asked Stalin about the possibility of attacking South Korea and was rebuffed. According to Kim's account in January 1950, Stalin had said that it was "not necessary" to attack the South, that North Korean forces could cross the 38th parallel only as a counterattack to an assault by South Korean forces. In March 1949, American troops were still in South Korea and the Chinese civil war was still not resolved, which led Stalin to reject for the time being any military adventure on the Korean peninsula.

Document #3 (a ciphered telegram from then-Deputy Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko to the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang on 11 September 1949) indicates that on 12 August 1949, Kim Il Sung again raised the question of a military campaign against South Korea, this time in conversation with a Soviet official in Pyongyang, most likely Ambassador Shtykov. Document #2 (a ciphered telegram of 3 September 1949 from the Soviet ambassador to North Korea to Soviet Foreign Minister A. Vyshinsky) reveals that on September 3 Kim again requested permission to attack, this time claiming that South Korea was preparing to attack DPRK territory. He requested permission to make a roughly equivalent counterattack and then added that "if the international situation permits," which was no doubt a reference to possible American reactions, they could easily seize control of the remainder of the peninsula.

It is interesting that the Soviet ambassador confirms the interception of South Korean attack orders but notes that no attack occurred. Other documents in this collection show that through June 1950, North Korean leaders repeatedly claimed to have intercepted offensive orders from the South, even though the attacks did not materialize. Some of these interceptions could well have been genuine, since South Korean leaders in the months before the war often expressed their desire and intention to reunify the country through military means. However, if Stalin had made an attack from the South a necessary precondition for a North Korean military action, the steady stream of such

reports is more easily understood.

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

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

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

should devote their efforts to strengthening the partisan movement in the South in order to prepare to unify the country through an armed uprising in South Korea. Had this strategy been followed skillfully, given the extreme unpopularity of the Syngman Rhee regime, it may well have succeeded.<sup>7</sup>

On 4 October 1949, Shtykov reported to Stalin that he had fulfilled the Politburo directive of September 24 and that Kim and Pak Hon-yong had received his report "in a reserved manner." Kim was clearly disappointed, responding only "very well," but Pak was more expressive, stating that the decision was correct, that they must develop the partisan movement more widely. Shtykov added that Kim and Pak had subsequently reported to him that they had sent around 800 persons to the South to lead the partisans and the movement was growing.<sup>8</sup>

The Politburo decision of September 24 ended the discussion of a military campaign in Korea for the remainder of 1949, but as Document #6 (a ciphered telegram from the Soviet ambassador in Pyongyang dated 19 January 1950) vividly records, on 17 January 1950, Kim again raised the issue, this time with increased urgency. The communist victory in the Chinese civil war had made it intolerable to Kim that Korean communists were not allowed similarly to liberate the rest of their country. Referring to Mao's promise of May 1949 to help the Koreans once the fighting in China ended, Kim fervently entreated Shtykov to allow him to go to Moscow to discuss with Stalin the possibility of launching an attack on South Korea. This account of Kim's conversation with Soviet and Chinese representatives in Pyongyang makes it perfectly clear that Kim Il Sung considered himself unable to take such action without Stalin's approval.

The final document presented below is Stalin's telegram to Shtykov on 30 January 1950, giving his reply to Kim Il Sung's latest entreaties. This is one of the most interesting documents of the entire collection because it reveals so bluntly Stalin's strategic thinking and his mode of operation with subordinate rulers. Stalin cautiously stated that he was "ready to help" Kim but that the matter "needs large preparation" and "must be organized so that there would not be too great a risk." He then, in perfect mafioso style, "requested" that Kim provide the Soviet Union with at least 25,000 tons of lead per year, maintaining the fiction of Kim's inde-

pendence by stating that he hopes "Kim Il Sung will not refuse us in this." Stalin's crude calculation of material advantage to the Soviet Union was characteristic of his dealings with the Chinese communists as well and it produced bitter resentment among both Korean and Chinese communist leaders, just as it had earlier helped provoke the split with Yugoslavia.

The approval Stalin communicated on January 30 paved the way for Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong to go to Moscow in April 1950 to make specific preparations for the attack on South Korea, and to argue their case to Stalin in person. Following those deliberations in Moscow, a new group of Soviet military advisors was sent to Pyongyang to plan the campaign and huge shipments of weapons and supplies were sent to North Korea. Stalin insisted that Kim secure the approval of Mao Zedong before the final preparations could be made. Kim accordingly travelled to Beijing in mid-May and obtained Mao's consent.<sup>9</sup>

To conclude this brief discussion, the documents presented to South Korea flesh out and substantiate the account given in the 1966 report published earlier in the *CWIHP Bulletin*. They show that the initiative for the North Korean attack on South Korea on 25 June 1950 was clearly Kim Il Sung's. Kim requested Stalin's approval several times in 1949 before the Soviet leader finally agreed in early 1950 to support a North Korean offensive. These documents vividly reveal Kim Il Sung's dependence on the Soviet Union and at the same time his ability to propose actions that he desired. They raise questions about the idea some have advanced that Soviet officials formulated all of Kim's statements, saying through him whatever they thought Stalin wanted to hear.<sup>10</sup> Instead, it appears that despite the significant restrictions on his ability to act, and the considerable doubts that were sometimes expressed by Soviet officials regarding his proposals, Kim was nonetheless an important, if not entirely independent, historical actor in his own right.

Of course, Stalin did not approve Kim's plan in 1950 simply because Kim was persistent and fervent in his appeals. Stalin based his decision on his own calculations of relative cost and benefit to the Soviet Union, as he did in 1949 when he rejected Kim's appeals. The question that then remains is what made Stalin change his mind in Janu-

ary 1950 about the advisability of a military offensive on the Korean peninsula. Unfortunately, the documentary record available thus far does not answer that question clearly; it reveals only that Stalin considered it possible in early 1950 to support Kim's plan because of the "changed international situation."<sup>11</sup>

We have then to deduce from the mass of evidence what Stalin meant by "changed international situation." We can note first of all from the documents presented here that calculations of the likelihood of U.S. intervention were at every point a key factor in Soviet deliberations about whether to approve a military campaign against South Korea. The timing of Stalin's approval—late January 1950—must therefore have been at least in part a response to the new defense policy announced by Secretary of State Dean Acheson on January 12, that placed South Korea outside the American defense perimeter in the Pacific. The documents presented below, when combined with the record of Stalin's actions in June 1950,<sup>12</sup> suggest the conclusion that if the United States had made it clear that it would defend South Korea, Stalin would never have approved the North Korean attack.

The second most salient component of the "changed international situation" in January 1950 was the formation, then underway in Moscow, of an alliance between the Soviet Union and the newly established People's Republic of China. As Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue Litai have shown so convincingly,<sup>13</sup> Stalin's relations with Mao Zedong were extremely delicate and fraught with potential disasters for the Soviet leader. Given the close ties between North Korea and China, Stalin's concerns about the new communist regime in Beijing must have figured prominently in his decision to approve a military campaign against South Korea. We see from the documents released thus far that Stalin was careful to draw Mao into the final decision-making on the Korean venture. New Chinese sources also indicate that Stalin and Mao discussed the proposed Korean campaign while Mao was in Moscow.<sup>14</sup> It may well be that Stalin calculated that a war in Korea would be beneficial to the Soviet Union because it would tie the PRC more firmly to Moscow by making it less likely that the Chinese communists would be able to turn to the United States for the economic support they

so badly needed. In terms of the Cold War, Stalin's reasoning in approving the attack is the most intriguing question about the outbreak of the Korean War. To answer this question definitively, however, we must wait for the release of the remainder of the top level Soviet documents from 1950.

**Document I:  
Stalin's Meeting with Kim Il Sung,  
Moscow, 5 March 1949**

5 March 1949. Notes of the conversation between Stalin and a governmental delegation from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea headed by Kim Il Sung. The meeting began at 8:00 p.m. Present were A.Ia. Vyshinsky,<sup>15</sup> T.F. Shtykov,<sup>16</sup> Kim I.M. (Translator). On the Korean side: Pak Hon-yong,<sup>17</sup> Hong Myong-hui,<sup>18</sup> Chong Chuntaek,<sup>19</sup> Chang Shi-u,<sup>20</sup> Paek Nam Un,<sup>21</sup> Kim Chong-ju,<sup>22</sup> the Korean ambassador to the USSR Chu Yong-ha, Mun Il (Translator).

Stalin asks the members of the delegation how their trip was, was it difficult on the journey?

Kim Il Sung thanks the Soviet Government for its attention to them and says that they arrived safely.

Stalin asks how they travelled—by railroad or by air.

Kim Il Sung answers that they came by railroad.

Stalin asks whether they became ill on the way.

Kim Il Sung answers that they were healthy.

Stalin suggests that they proceed to business and asks what will be the questions.

Kim Il Sung says that after the liberation of Korea by Soviet troops, the Soviet Government and the Soviet Army rendered aid to Korea in the matter of economic development, in the matter of the development of Korea along the democratic path, and that the Korean government understands that without further economic and cultural aid from the Soviet Union it will be difficult for the DPRK to restore and develop its national economy and culture. The assistance of the Soviet Union is required for the further development of the Korean economy and culture.

Stalin asks what kind of aid.

Kim Il Sung answers—economic and cultural.

Stalin asks what precisely is needed.

Kim Il Sung says that they have confirmed a two year plan for the restoration and development of the national economy. They need economic assistance to fulfill this plan and to strengthen the foundation of the economy. They need machines, equipment and spare parts for industry, communications, transport and also for other branches of the national economy. They also need technical assistance: sending Soviet specialists to Korea,

drafting plans for the construction of new objects (factories and plants), conducting geological exploratory work.

Stalin asks what kind of objects?

Kim answers, e.g., irrigation structures [at] Anju, the construction of which they have now moved toward, but they do not have enough specialists, and also the restoration and completion of the Seisin metallurgical plant, repair of the Sufun hydroelectric plant and others.

Stalin asks if there is iron ore in Korea.

Kim answers that there is very much iron ore in Korea.

Stalin says that it is possible to render this assistance, and it is also possible to provide specialists.

Kim indicates that until now trade between the two countries has been conducted successfully, but in the future, for the fulfillment of the two year plan, they need to import from the Soviet Union equipment, steam engines, electric locomotives, spare parts and equipment for the textile industry. But exports from Korea will not cover the imports, therefore they need credit from the Soviet government.

Stalin says "Fine" and asks in what amount they need credit.

Kim answers from 40 to 50 million American dollars.

Stalin—fine, what else?

Kim Il Sung answers that for convenient transport and for strengthening the economic ties between our countries it is necessary to build a railroad from Aoji to Kraskino.

Stalin asks where this is and how many kilometers is the distance of this railroad.

Shtykov reports that this railroad should be built from the station at Kraskino (Soviet territory) to the station at Aoji (Korean territory) for a total distance of 58 km, of which 10 km is on the territory of Korea and 48 km is on the territory of the USSR.

Stalin says that we will think about it and asks if there are some more questions.

Kim Il Sung indicates the necessity of establishing air communications between Korea and USSR and says that they do not yet have their own transport planes and no pilots, but an air link is needed.

Stalin asks aren't there Russian planes in Korea.

Kim answers that after the withdrawal of Soviet troops Soviet aviation units and planes were not left in Korea. He indicates that they now have begun the preparation of their own pilots.

Stalin asks if they have their own planes.

Shtykov reports that they have their own training aviation regiment and they have training and military planes, but they do not have transport planes.

Stalin asks how many planes they have.

Shtykov answers that they have 48 military and 19 training planes.

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

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

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

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

Stalin indicates that it is possible to do this, but [sending] specialists and students will be difficult, since they do not know the language.

Kim Il Sung says that instruction in Russian language has been organized in all schools and institutions of higher education in Korea. It is necessary to send teachers to Korea from the Soviet Union.

Stalin says that it will be difficult for them because of not knowing the Korean language.

Kim Il Sung indicates that there is not a sufficient number of qualified teachers in Korea, that Soviet teachers are already working in Korea and that they have translators, through whom it is possible to conduct pedagogical work.

Stalin answers that it is possible to send teachers.

Kim says that it is necessary to conclude an agreement on all the above-indicated questions, specifically about economic cooperation and the broadening of trade, a trade agreement, an agreement about technical assistance from the Soviet Union and about cultural ties.

Stalin asks if Kim has thought about credit or a loan.

Kim answers that he has thought about it and that they want to receive credit.

Stalin answers that it is possible to do that and asks for what period they wish to receive credit.

Kim answers that if credit will be given in the amount of 50 million dollars, then it will be paid back from 1951 until 1954.

Stalin asks when will credit be paid.

Kim answers that [it will be paid] beginning with 1951 to 1954.

Stalin asks how they want to receive credit, at one time or in installments over the course of 1949, 1950, 1951.

Kim answers that they wish to receive credit in 1949. If this is not possible for some reason, then in the course of 1949 and the first half of 1950.

Stalin indicates that we cannot do this. You need machines, but machines must be ordered and manufactured. This requires time.

Kim indicates that they need automobiles, steam engines, equipment for the textile industry, and oil, and that it is hoped that they would receive this during this year.

Stalin answers that in one year it is not possible to do this and asks in what currency they wish to receive credit.

Kim answers in American dollars.

Stalin answers that we do not now calculate in dollars but we calculate in rubles and indicated that soon one dollar will equal 5 rubles. Stalin proposed to present equipment and machines in credit in the course of three years in equal portions and indicated that during these three years they will not pay credit, but in the course of the following three years they must produce payment, also in equal portions. For example: credit is given in 1949, 1950, 1951, and perhaps 1952, and payment of credit will begin from the fourth year in equal portions. In such a way, credit will be given out over 6 years. We render assistance to the countries of the peoples' democracies according to these principles. We take the following percentages for the credit received: 2% yearly, if the state has recovered [from the war], and 1% if the state has still not recovered. Moreover, close trade in goods between the countries will be continued without credit. This order will be established by agreement. Stalin asked if they have any people who can begin work on drafting these agreements.

Kim answers that they have such people.

Stalin indicates that we can give credit in the sum of 200 million rubles, i.e. 40 million dollars. We would give more, but now we are not able.

Kim says that they agree.

Stalin asks if they have any automobiles.

Kim answers that they do not have their own cars, they would like to acquire them in the Soviet Union.

Stalin says that it is possible to provide cars. It is possible also to provide planes.

Shtykov says that the Korean Government wants to receive not only planes, but also to have a joint share aviation society and to build a railroad.

Stalin answers that it is possible to do this. As concerns the construction of the railroad, we will review this question, but there is not a sufficient work force in the Soviet Union for the construction of a railroad, and asks if they have a work force among Koreans.

Kim answers that they do have a work force among Koreans.

Kim says that in the south of Korea there are still American troops and that intrigues against North Korea by the reactionaries are increasing, that they have infantry troops but sea defense almost does not exist. The help of the Soviet Union is needed in this.

Stalin asks how many American troops are in South Korea.

Kim answers that there are up to 20,000 men.

Shtykov—approximately 15-20 thousand men.

Stalin asks if there is a national Korean army in the south.

Kim answers that there is, the number is around 60,000 men.

Stalin asks if this number includes only regular army or also police.

Kim answers that it includes only regular army.

Stalin (joking) asks, and you are afraid of them?

Kim—No, we are not afraid, but we would like to have naval units.

Stalin asks which army is stronger—north or south.

Pak Hon-yong answers that the northern army is stronger.

Stalin asks if there are dry docks in Korea left by the Japanese, for example, in Seisin or in other places of Korea.

Kim answers that there are none.

Shtykov reports that there are dry docks, but only small ones.

Stalin says that it is possible to render assistance in this, and that Korea needs to have military planes.

Stalin asks are they penetrating into the South Korean army, do they have their own people there?

Pak Hon-yong answers that they are penetrating, but so far they are not revealing themselves there.

Stalin says that this is correct, that it is not necessary to reveal themselves now and indicates that the southerners also, apparently, are sending their people into the army of the north and that they need [to exercise] caution.

Stalin asks what has happened along the 38th parallel. Is it true that several points have fallen to the southerners and have been seized, and then these points were taken back?

Kim answers that they are taking into account that the southerners can send their own people into the [North Korean] army, and that they are taking the necessary measures. Kim reported that there was a clash with the southerners in Kangwon province at the 38th parallel. Their police were not sufficiently armed at that time. When regular units approached, the southerners retreated.

Stalin asks—did they drive away the southerners or did they leave themselves.

Kim answers that as a result of the battle they drove away the southerners, threw them across the border of the country.

Stalin asks if they have a military school.

Kim answers that they do.

Stalin asks if there is a pilot school.

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

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

Pak Hon-yong confirms this.

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

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

Stalin asks wasn't there such permission.

Kim answers that there was not.

Stalin says that it is possible to permit it.

Kim says that they do not have any more questions.

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

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

Stalin asks where the Koreans get cotton.

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

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

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

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

Stalin asks—and what about with other countries?

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

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

Kim II Sung answers that such a society exists. This society conducts trade in the main with Hong Kong, with the city of Dalny<sup>23</sup> and with China.

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

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

Vyshinsky answers that he doesn't have any.

Hong Myong-hui thanks Comrade Stalin

for the reception.

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

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

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

On September 3 the personal secretary of Kim II Sung, Mun Il (a Soviet Korean<sup>24</sup>), came to me and at the commission of Kim II Sung reported that they had received reliable information that in the near future the southerners intend to seize the part of the Ongjin peninsula<sup>25</sup> which is located to the north of the 38th parallel, and also to bombard the cement plant in the city of Kaisiu.<sup>26</sup>

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

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

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

Kim II Sung will probably raise this question again soon.

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

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

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

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

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

#### Document III: Ciphred telegram from Gromyko<sup>28</sup> to Tunkin at the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, 11 September 1949

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Immediately telegraph the results of the conversation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. With regard to the question of how the population will regard the fact that the northerners will begin a civil war, Kim Il Sung oscillates. During the conversation on September 12 he definitely stated that if the northerners begin military actions, this will produce a negative impression in the people and that it is politically disadvantageous to them to begin it. In connection with this he recollected that during the conversation between Mao Zedong and the Korean representative Kim Il<sup>29</sup> in the spring of this year Mao stated that in his opinion the northerners should not begin military action now, since in the first place, it is politically disadvantageous and in the second place, the Chinese friends are occupied at home and cannot give them serious help. The thinking of Kim Il Sung amounts to waiting until the conclusion of the main [military] operations in China.

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

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

4. According to official data, there are 500 American military advisers and instructors in South Korea. According to secret service information, which needs confirmation, there are 900 American military advisers and instructors and 1500 soldiers and security officers in South Korea. In case of a civil war in Korea, the Americans, in the opinion of Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong, can: send Japanese and Chinese [soldiers] to the aid of the southerners<sup>32</sup>; support [the South Koreans] from the sea and air with their own means; American instructors will take immediate part in organizing military actions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our formulations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Document V:

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

Copies to Malenkov,<sup>34</sup> Molotov,<sup>35</sup> Gromyko, Shtykov, Beria,<sup>36</sup> Mikoyan,<sup>37</sup> Kaganovich,<sup>38</sup> Bulganin<sup>39</sup>.

Commission Comrade Shtykov to meet with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong and, strictly adhering to the text given below, to declare the following:

In connection with the questions raised by you in conversation with me on August 12 of this year, I received an order to transmit to you the opinion of Moscow on the questions touched on by you. Your proposal to begin an attack by the Korean Peoples' Army on the south calls forth the necessity of giving a precise evaluation of the military as well as the political sides of this question.

From the military side it is impossible to consider that the Peoples' Army is prepared for such an attack. If not prepared for in the necessary manner, the attack can turn into a prolonged military operation, which not only will not lead to the defeat of the enemy but will also create significant political and economic difficulties for North Korea, which, finally, cannot be permitted. Since at present North Korea does not have the necessary superiority of military forces in comparison with South Korea, it is impossible to acknowledge that a military attack on the south is now completely prepared for and therefore from the military point of view it is not allowed.

From the political side, a military attack on the south by you is also not prepared for. We, of course, agree with you that the people are waiting for the unification of the country and in the south they, moreover, are waiting for liberation from

the yoke of the reactionary regime. However, until now very little has been done to raise the broad masses of South Korea to an active struggle, to develop the partisan movement in all of South Korea, to create there liberated regions and to organize forces for a general uprising. Meanwhile, only in conditions of a peoples' uprising which has begun and is truly developing, which is undermining the foundations of the reactionary regime, could a military attack on the south play a decisive role in the overthrow of the South Korean reactionaries and provide the realization of the task of the unification of all Korea into a single democratic state. Since at present very little has been done to develop the partisan movement and prepare for a general uprising in South Korea, it is also impossible to acknowledge that from a political side an attack by you on the south has been prepared.

As concerns a partial operation to seize Ongjin peninsula and the region of Kaesong, as a result of which the borders of North Korea would be moved almost to Seoul itself, it is impossible to view this operation other than as the beginning of a war between North and South Korea, for which North Korea is not prepared either militarily or politically, as has been indicated above.

Moreover, it is necessary to consider that if military actions begin at the initiative of the North and acquire a prolonged character, then this can give to the Americans cause for any kind of interference in Korean affairs.

In view of all that has been stated it is necessary to acknowledge that at present the tasks of the struggle for the unification of Korea demand a concentration of maximum effort, in the first place, to the development of the partisan movement, the creation of liberated regions and the preparation of a general armed uprising in South Korea in order to overthrow the reactionary regime and successfully resolve the task of unifying all Korea, and secondly, to further strengthen in every way the Peoples' Army of Korea.

[Source: AVP RF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, listy 75-77.]

#### Document VI:

#### Ciphered Telegram from Shtykov to Vyshinsky, 19 January 1950

Strictly secret. I report about the frame of mind expressed by Kim Il Sung during a luncheon at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK. On January 17 the minister of foreign affairs of the DPRK Pak Hon-yong held a lunch attended by a small circle of persons, on the occasion of the departure of the Korean ambassador Yi Chu-Yon to the Chinese Peoples Republic. At the luncheon from the Korean side were Kim Tu-bong, Kim Il Sung, Pak Hon-yong, deputy min-

ister of foreign affairs Pak Chong-jo,<sup>40</sup> Yi Chu-Yon. The trade representative of the PRC Vyn Shi Chzhen<sup>41</sup> attended the luncheon. On our side in attendance were myself and the advisers of the embassy Ignatiev and Pelishenko. The luncheon took place in a friendly, warm atmosphere. Kim Il Sung, Pak Hon-yong and also the Chinese trade representative in their toasts expressed a feeling of love and gratitude toward the Soviet Union and personally toward Comrade Stalin for the liberation [of Korea from Japanese rule] and for the selfless assistance to both the Korean and Chinese people.

Kim Tu-bong shared his impressions of his trip to the USSR for the 70th birthday of Comrade Stalin. In his account he repeatedly underscored the great interest of the Soviet people in Korea and the numerous wishes for quick unification of the country.

During the luncheon Kim Il Sung and the Chinese trade representative, who was sitting next to him, many times enthusiastically conversed with each other in Chinese. From individual phrases it was possible to understand that they were speaking about the victory in China and about the situation in Korea. After the luncheon, in the reception room Kim Il Sung gave advice and orders to his ambassador to China Yi Chu-Yon about his work in China, and moreover, while speaking in Korean, Kim several times said phrases in Russian about how Yi would act boldly in China, since Mao Zedong is his friend and will always help Korea.

Then, after Yi Chu-Yon left, Kim, addressing the advisers Ignatiev and Pelishenko in an excited manner, began to speak about how now, when China is completing its liberation, the liberation of the Korean people in the south of the country is next in line. In connection with this he said:

"The people of the southern portion of Korea trust me and rely on our armed might. Partisans will not decide the question. The people of the south know that we have a good army. Lately I do not sleep at night, thinking about how to resolve the question of the unification of the whole country. If the matter of the liberation of the people of the southern portion of Korea and the unification of the country is drawn out, then I can lose the trust of the people of Korea." Further Kim stated that when he was in Moscow, Comrade Stalin said to him that it was not necessary to attack the south, in case of an attack on the north of the country by the army of Rhee Syngmann, then it is possible to go on the counteroffensive to the south of Korea. But since Rhee Syngmann is still not instigating an attack, it means that the liberation of the people of the southern part of the country and the unification of the country are being drawn out, that he (Kim Il Sung) thinks that he needs again to visit Comrade Stalin and receive an order and permission for offensive action by the Peoples' Army for the purpose of the liberation of the people of

Southern Korea. Further Kim said that he himself cannot begin an attack, because he is a communist, a disciplined person and for him the order of Comrade Stalin is law. Then he stated that if it is now possible to meet with Comrade Stalin, then he will try to meet with Mao Zedong, after his return from Moscow. Kim underscored that Mao Zedong promised to render him assistance after the conclusion of the war in China. (Apparently Kim Il Sung has in mind the conversation of his representative Kim Il with Mao Zedong in June 1949, about which I reported by ciphered telegram.) Kim said that he also has other questions for Mao Zedong, in particular the question of the possibility of the creation of an eastern bureau of the Cominform. He further stated that on all these questions he will try to meet with Comrade Shtykov and to secure through him a meeting with Comrade Stalin.

The advisers of the embassy Ignatiev and Pelishenko, avoiding discussing these questions, tried to switch the discussion to a general theme, then Kim Il Sung came toward me, took me aside and began the following conversation: can he meet with Comrade Stalin and discuss the question of the position in the south and the question of aggressive actions against the army of Rhee Syngmann, that their people's army now is significantly stronger than the army of Rhee Syngmann. Here he stated that if it is impossible to meet with Comrade Stalin, then he wants to meet with Mao Zedong, since Mao after his visit to Moscow will have orders on all questions.

Then Kim Il Sung placed before me the question, why don't I allow him to attack the Ongjin peninsula, which the People's Army could take in three days, and with a general attack the People's Army could be in Seoul in several days.

I answered Kim that he has not raised the question of a meeting with Comrade Stalin and if he raises such a question, then it is possible that Comrade Stalin will receive him. On the question of an attack on the Ongjin peninsula I answered him that it is impossible to do this. Then I tried to conclude the conversation on these questions and, alluding to a later time, proposed to go home. With that the conversation was concluded.

After the luncheon Kim Il Sung was in a mood of some intoxication. It was obvious that he began this conversation not accidentally, but had thought it out earlier, with the goal of laying out his frame of mind and elucidating our attitude to these questions.

In the process of this conversation Kim Il Sung repeatedly underscored his wish to get the advice of Comrade Stalin on the question of the situation in the south of Korea, since [Kim Il Sung] is constantly nurturing his idea about an attack.

[Source: AVP RF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, listy 87-91.]

## Document VII:

Ciphred telegram from Stalin to Shtykov,  
30 January 1950

1. I received your report. I understand the dissatisfaction of Comrade Kim Il Sung, but he must understand that such a large matter in regard to South Korea such as he wants to undertake needs large preparation. The matter must be organized so that there would not be too great a risk. If he wants to discuss this matter with me, then I will always be ready to receive him and discuss with him. Transmit all this to Kim Il Sung and tell him that I am ready to help him in this matter.

2. I have a request for Comrade Kim Il Sung. The Soviet Union is experiencing a great insufficiency in lead. We would like to receive from Korea a yearly minimum of 25,000 tons of lead. Korea would render us a great assistance if it could yearly send to the Soviet Union the indicated amount of lead. I hope that Kim Il Sung will not refuse us in this. It is possible that Kim Il Sung needs our technical assistance and some number of Soviet specialists. We are ready to render this assistance. Transmit this request of mine to comrade Kim Il Sung and ask him for me, to communicate to me his consideration on this matter.

[Source: AVP RF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, list 92.]

1. Gen. Dmitrii Volkogonov published excerpts from several of these documents in "Sleduyet li etogo boyat'sia?" (Should we fear this?), *Ogonyok* (Small Flame) 26 (June 1993), 28-29. A portion of this collection was also released in the spring of 1993 for publication in the Russian journal *Istochnik*, with commentary by the present author. *Istochnik* has not yet published the intended article, but some of the documents were presented in full translation in K. Weathersby, "The Soviet Role in the Early Phase of the Korean War: New Documentary Evidence," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 2:4 (Winter 1993), 425-458.

2. At the Foreign Ministry archive in Moscow these documents are catalogued as Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Papka 11, Dela 3,4 and 5.

3. Foreign Ministry report, "On the Korean War, 1950-1953, and the Armistice Negotiations," 9 August 1966, Storage Center for Contemporary Documentation (SCCD), Moscow, Fond 5, Opis 58, Delo 266, Listy 122-131, in Kathryn Weathersby, trans. and intro., "New Findings on the Korean War," *CWIHP Bulletin* 3 (Fall 1993), 1, 14-18.

4. Eleven agreements were signed in March 1949. They concerned economic and cultural cooperation, technical assistance and extension of credit to the DPRK, commodity exchange and payments, the establishment of a Soviet trade representative in the DPRK, conditions for the work of Soviet specialists sent to North Korea and North Korean specialists sent to the USSR for practical training in industrial/technical work, the temporary stationing of a Soviet naval unit at a North Korean port, the construction of a railway line linking a Soviet rail line to North Korean railroads, and the establishment of regular air links between the USSR

and DPRK.

5. A major portion of the records on Korea in the Foreign Ministry archive in Moscow are requests from North Korea for assistance in training workers in virtually every branch of economic and cultural activity and Soviet arrangements for fulfilling these requests. The level of technological dependency of North Korea is one of the most significant ways in which DPRK relations with Moscow differed from Soviet relations with its satellite states in Eastern Europe.

6. One of the main arguments of "revisionist" accounts of the war is that North Korea could have acted on its own in attacking South Korea because it was only loosely tied to the Soviet Union. See, e.g., Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, vol. 2, The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 325-349, 445-448.

7. As a former senior South Korean officer remarked many years after the war, "if Kim really wanted to get the South, by far his best course would have been to do nothing. His biggest mistake was to attack us." Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 56. For a detailed account of politics in the South, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vols. 1 and 2.

8. Ciphred telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 4 October 1949, AVP RF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, list 78.

9. The documents in this collection include the itinerary for Kim Il Sung's trip to Moscow in April 1950 but not notes of the conversations. They do, however, include a report of Kim's conversation with Mao Zedong in May, and communications between Mao and Stalin at the time of Kim's visit to Beijing, in which Mao asked for and received confirmation of Kim's report of Stalin's position with regard to the proposed offensive action. See the exchange of 13-14 May 1950 published in *CWIHP Bulletin* 4 (Fall 1994), 60-61.

10. This is the interpretation of the Russian military historian Gavril Korotkov. See, e.g., "Secrets of the Korean War," *U.S. News & World Report*, 9 August 1993, and his statements in the documentary recently aired on PBS, "Messengers from Moscow," Part II ("The East is Red"). Since Korotkov has not made public the documents on which he bases his analysis, it is impossible to evaluate their contents.

11. Ciphred telegram from Vyshinsky to the Soviet Ambassador in Beijing, sending the text of a message from Stalin to Mao Zedong, 14 May 1950 (AVP RF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Papka 11, Delo 3, list 106), translation in *CWIHP Bulletin* 4 (Fall 1994), 61.

12. See Weathersby, "The Soviet Role in the Early Phase of the Korean War: New Documentary Evidence."

13. Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).

14. See the account of Mao's interpreter cited in Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 85-91.

15. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

16. Soviet Ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

17. Foreign Minister of the DPRK.

18. Vice Premier of the DPRK.

19. Chairman of the National Planning Commission of the DPRK.

20. Minister of Commerce of the DPRK.

21. Minister of Education of the DPRK.

22. Minister of Communications of the DPRK.

23. The major trading port in Manchuria northeast of

Port Arthur, also called by its Japanese name, Dairen. 24. A Soviet citizen of Korean nationality. Over a hundred "Soviet Koreans" were sent to North Korea 1945-47 to assist the Soviet occupation command. In addition to serving as translators, several occupied high positions in the government of the newly created North Korean state.

25. A peninsula on the western coast of Korea, the southernmost portion of which lies below the 38th parallel and consequently was part of the Republic of Korea in 1949.

26. Transliteration of the Russian spelling of the Korean place name.

27. Grigorii Ivanovich Tunkin, charge d'affaires of the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang, formerly chief of the 1st Far Eastern Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

28. In 1949 A.A. Gromyko was first deputy minister of foreign affairs of the USSR.

29. Kim Il was Chief of the Political Administration of the North Korean army. He travelled to Beijing in May 1949 as a representative of the Central Committee of the Labor Party of Korea (the communist party) for the purpose of establishing contact with the Central Committee of the Chinese communist party and conducting negotiations about the possible return to North Korea of Korean divisions in the People's Liberation Army.

30. The communist party of North Korea.

31. Echoing the words of Mao to Kim Il in May 1949.

32. Japanese military forces were completely demobilized following World War II, but in 1947 the U.S. Department of Defense began to consider rearming Japan in order to buttress the military forces arrayed against the Soviet Pacific border. The Soviet Union was aware of these discussions and did everything possible to obstruct the adoption of such policies through its representative in the Far Eastern Commission. Two weeks after the North Korean attack on South Korea MacArthur ordered the Japanese prime minister to create a "National Police Reserve" of 75,000 men, some of whom were, in fact, deployed to Korea. Between October 2 and December 10, 1950, forty-six minesweepers with 1,200 Japanese military personnel were dispatched to the eastern coast of North Korea to clear the way for an amphibious assault by UN forces. See Meirion and Susie Harries, *Sheathing the Sword: The Demilitarization of Japan* (London: Hamish Hamilton), 228-42.

33. President of the Republic of Korea.

34. In 1949 G.M. Malenkov was deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and in party matters second in importance only to Stalin.

35. In 1949 V.M. Molotov was removed from his post as minister of foreign affairs of the USSR but remained a member of the Politburo and was Stalin's deputy in the Council of Ministers.

36. L.A. Beria was chairman of the Council of Ministers.

37. A.I. Mikoyan was minister of foreign trade and deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers.

38. L.M. Kaganovich was deputy premier of the USSR.

39. N.A. Bulganin was deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers.

40. Transliteration of the Russian spelling of the name.

41. Transliteration of the Russian spelling of the name.

Kathryn Weathersby, currently a visiting scholar at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, is writing a study of Soviet policy and the Korean War. An assistant professor at Florida State University in Tallahassee, she previously presented new Russian archival evidence on that subject in *CWIHP Bulletin* 3 (Fall 1993) and Working Paper 8.

## NEW DOCUMENTS ON THE EAST GERMAN UPRISING OF 1953

### Introduction and commentary by Christian Ostermann

The two documents excerpted below, recently found in the archives of, respectively, the Russian Foreign Ministry and the East German Socialist Unity Party (SED)—a 24 June 1953 report<sup>1</sup> by senior Soviet officials V. Sokolovskii,<sup>2</sup> V. Semyenov,<sup>3</sup> and P. Yudin<sup>4</sup> to USSR Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov and Defense Minister N. A. Bulganin, and a 20 July 1953 report<sup>5</sup> by the SED Central Committee Department “Principal Organs of the Party and Mass Organizations”—provide glimpses at the internal Soviet and East German evaluations of the 16-17 June 1953 uprising in the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

This article presents background and context helpful for understanding these two reports, as well as additional findings on the 1953 uprising in the GDR based on recent research by the author and others in the SED archives. The origins of the 1953 uprising date back to July 1952, when the SED Second Party Convention adopted a policy of forced socialization and militarization of the GDR. In the immediate postwar years, the Soviet Union had managed to install and consolidate in power in its occupation zone in Germany a brutal communist dictator-

ship which denied political liberty and the most basic civil rights to its citizens. By 1952, the SED had won over most of the governmental, political, and economic “commanding heights” including a rapidly expanding and pervasive apparatus of repression.<sup>6</sup> At the same time the Soviets and their East German client regime had maintained an appearance of moderation out of consideration for their all-German objectives.

Following the Western rejection of the March 1952 “Stalin note” and the signing of the Bonn and European Defense Community (Paris) Treaties in May 1952, the SED regime closed off the zonal border (“demarcation line”) to Western Germany. The establishment of a “prohibited zone” along the hitherto permeable demarcation line—“Operation Ungeziefer” [Operation Weed]—which entailed the brutal deportation of hundreds of zonal residents and put a halt to the growing flow of refugees, foreshadowed an end to the priority that all-German concerns had enjoyed.<sup>7</sup>

Abandoning any pretense of moderation and claiming that “the political and economic conditions as well as the consciousness of the working-class and the ma-

jority of workers [had] developed far enough,” the Second SED Party Convention affirmed the Soviet-decreed “Construction of Socialism” as the “main task” of party and government in the GDR.<sup>8</sup> Economically, the policy of “Construction of Socialism” in the GDR, closely identified with the leadership of SED General Secretary Walter Ulbricht, called for the construction and expansion of heavy industry at the expense of the production of consumer goods and for a hike in productivity through increased work norms. The SED regime also inaugurated a ruthless collectivization drive, coercing independent farmers into so-called “agricultural production cooperatives” (LPGs). Those who refused to join were subjected to exorbitant state-enforced delivery quotas, causing many to leave for the West. As a result of the disruption of the agricultural system, severe food shortages occurred throughout East Germany in the spring of 1953. Finally, the forced “Construction of Socialism” prescribed a campaign against the private sector in trade and industry, spearheaded by prohibitive taxes for private enterprises. By April 1953, small business owners had been precluded from receiving

#### The Report to the Soviet Leadership

Top Secret  
Copy no. 1

To Comrade V.M. Molotov  
To Comrade N.A. Bulganin

#### On the events of 17-19 June 1953 in Berlin and GDR and certain conclusions from these events.

The following memorandum is a preliminary report on the events of 17-19 June in eastern Berlin and the GDR, on the reasons behind the disorders, and on several practical conclusions that can be drawn from the given events. As of yet, we have not been able to come to a thorough understanding of the underlying problems, since the investigation of the arrested participants of the disturbances is still at the beginning stage. The question of the events of 17 June, which constitute a great international provocation, prepared in advance by three Western states and their accomplices within the West German monopolistic capital, has not been thoroughly ana-

lyzed in this memorandum, partly as a result of a lack of factual material at the current time, and also due to the fact that the given issues have been already widely publicized in general terms in the Soviet press.

In any case, it is clear that 17 June was the so-called “X-day”, that is, the day of open aggression against the democratic sector in GDR, by fascist and other organizations, working primarily under the leadership of American intelligence.

The setting of “X-day” for 17 June as the day of aggression by the fascist elements was, it seems, due to the following reasons: a/the announcement by the CC SEPG [Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, known by the German acronym SED; hereafter, SED] Politburo on 9 June of this year, of the new political and economic direction of GDR, the enactment of which would have foiled any chances of the somewhat significant support for the fascist aggression by the populace of the GDR; b/ the American effort to stave off further growth, within a broad range of social circles in Western Europe, of opposition to the aggressive policies of USA, and its effort to stem the rise in Western Europe of a consensus with the Soviet Union and the accompanying movement towards peace on the basis of

recognizing the Soviet Union’s dominating influence in countries of people’s democracy, including in the GDR. This is demonstrated by the coinciding aggression in both Czechoslovakia and GDR on the eve of the Bermuda conference of three Western states; c/ the Americans and the Adenauer-Ollenhauer clique took into account the disenchantment among the workers and other laborers with the situation in GDR, stemming from the errors made by the CC SED and the SCC [Soviet Control Commission] during their implementation of the policy of so-called “accelerated construction of socialism.” Adenauer intended to exploit this disenchantment to strengthen his position before the upcoming Bundestag elections in August-September of this year; d/ clearly, the provocation of June 17 by the Western states and the government of Adenauer was intended to turn the Soviet Union away from its present course in its relations with GDR.

This memorandum contains three main parts: I. The course of events in the GDR on 17-19 June; II. The Economic problems facing the GDR in light of the events of 17-19 June; III. A few conclusions and recommendations.

*continued on page 17*

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

“The power of the State,” Ulbricht had triumphantly declared at the convention, would be the main instrument in enforcing the “Construction of Socialism.”<sup>10</sup> In particular, an extremely brutal system of criminal justice—climaxing in the “Law for the Protection of People’s Property” in October 1952—intensified the “class struggle” to an unprecedented degree. Even minor violations of the law, such as anti-regime statements (“agitation for boycott”) or economic “crimes” like black market purchases, were punished with prolonged imprisonment and led to 7,775 arrests just in the first three months of 1953.<sup>11</sup> Even several prominent SED members fell victim to the regime’s search for scapegoats for the mounting economic crisis. In December 1952, Dr. Karl Hamann, minister for Trade and Procurement, was arrested, followed by Foreign Minister Georg Dertinger a month later; purges within the SED also led to the arrest of politburo member Paul Merker and other prominent East German communists. Concurrently with an increase of political re-

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

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

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

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

### The Report to the SED Central Committee

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

##### I. Short Summary Estimate

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

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

Supported by their spy centers existing in the GDR and by those groups of agents smuggled in during the uprising, and under the pretext of dissatisfaction among the population resulting from the mistakes of the Party and regime, they temporarily managed to engage broad segments of workers and employees, in particular in Berlin and Central Germany, for their criminal objectives. On 17 and 18 June 1953 it was frequently possible only after the intervention of Soviet units to reestablish law and order and to resume work. In a number of cases, strikes and demonstrations in some plants could be prevented by the decisive appearance of party members and officials in agreement, and, in part, workers’ defense units were established.

Generally, however, the Party, which was

completely taken by surprise by the provocation, failed to mobilize broad segments of the working class for a unified and offensive appearance against the provocation and for suppression of the coup on the 17th and 18th. Because the mass of plants already resumed work on the 19th, the strikes, especially in the construction industry, where many workers simply went home, continued until 22 June 1953.

##### II. Scope, Expansion, and Main Points of the Coup Attempt

##### 1. The hostile action in Berlin as the Catalyst of the Actions in the Republic

The hostile action in Berlin began on 6/16 with the strike of the construction workers and their demonstration march to the “House of Ministries”.

The rallying points were the construction sites: Friedrichshain Hospital and Stalinallee.

The strike and the ensuing provocations were finally organized during a steam ship cruise on 13 June 1953. Hostile organizers of the action on June 16th and 17th from the Greater Berlin

*continued on page 21*

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

Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership was united in its concern over the deteriorating situation in the GDR. A June 2 communiqué by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow, entitled "On measures for the recovery of the political situation in the German Democratic Republic," acknowledged that the mass exodus to the West of East Germans of all professions and backgrounds created "a serious danger for the continued political existence of the German Democratic Republic," and called for an end to forced collectivization and the war on private enterprise, for the revision of the heavy industry plan, and for the relaxation of political-judicial controls and regimentation. It ordered the termination of the coercive measures against the Protestant Church and denounced the "cold exercise of power" by the Ulbricht regime. Significantly, though, it did not explicitly demand an abrogation of the controversial raised work norms. Reflecting the influence of KGB head Beria, who had apparently favored a more drastic reversal in Moscow's German policy, the resolution expressed the necessity to "put the tasks of the political battle for national reunification and the conclusion of a peace treaty at the center of attention of the German people," and stipulated that "in the future the determination of the entire political situation for this or that time period has to take into consideration the real conditions within the GDR as well as the situation in Germany as a whole and the international situation."<sup>17</sup>

The resolution was handed to SED leaders Ulbricht and Otto Grotewohl during a three-day trip to Moscow (2-4 June 1953) where, as Grotewohl noted, the Soviet leaders expressed their "grave concern about the situation in the GDR."<sup>18</sup> At the same time, they received promises of substantial aid and relief in reparation payments which complemented the replacement of the old Soviet Central Commission (SCC) by a new Soviet High Commission for German affairs. After having made "a bad impression in Moscow"<sup>19</sup> (Grotewohl), and following several days of intense discussion with the East German leadership in Berlin (5-9 June 1953), the SED politburo, on 11 June, published the famous communiqué announcing the "New Course."<sup>20</sup> In addition to the

changes indicated in the 2 June 1953 resolution, the New Course included a general amnesty for all East German refugees, assistance to small and medium-size private enterprises, more liberal policies on interzonal travel and residence permits, an easing of the campaign against the Protestant Church, and the re-issuance of ration cards to the middle classes. Paradoxically, the only segment of the population which seemed to have been excluded from the concessions of the "New Course" was the working class: the arbitrarily-imposed higher work norms remained in force.

The sudden announcement of the "New Course" shocked party members and the East German population. Reports from local party officials to the SED Central Committee Department "Principal Organs of Party and Mass Organizations" under Karl Schirdewan reveal with great candor the widespread disappointment and disbelief, the utter confusion and unrest, among both party members and the public. Contrary to the politburo's expectations, to many in and out of the party, the communiqué signaled the SED's final bankruptcy and the beginning of its demise.<sup>21</sup> Many party functionaries who had committed themselves to the "Construction of Socialism" could "not comprehend that the party leadership had made such decisive mistakes which necessitated this decision,"<sup>22</sup> felt betrayed and "panicky;"<sup>23</sup> others called for Ulbricht's resignation; many simply left the party.<sup>24</sup>

The popular reaction, as it shines through these reports, was even less ambiguous. Thus, for example, local SED officials from the township Seehausen reported that "the entire village is in the bar, drinking to the health of [West German Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer."<sup>25</sup> Many East Germans viewed the communiqué not only as a defeat for the Ulbricht regime, but clearly as a result of Western pressure.<sup>26</sup> With the regime's authority eroding by the hour, the SED leadership was particularly alarmed by the precarious situation in the rural areas. Expecting the return of large landowners who had fled to the West and misinterpreting the halt to the most extreme excesses of collectivization, collectivized farmers displayed "signs of unrest," and many felt that "the LPGs would be abandoned and hence their work would serve no purpose."<sup>27</sup> Within a few days, the LPG system was on the verge of complete collapse, causing the party headquarters to

focus attention on the countryside, crucially neglecting the worsening situation in the large industrial cities.

The most revealing aspect of the reaction among urban labor as reflected in the newly accessible SED documents is the unequivocal and almost immediate politicization of the workers' demands. The new documents bear out an integral connection between political and economic demands: Reporting the reception of the New Course among workers, the SED-dominated "Free German Federation of Unions" confidentially informed the politburo three days before the uprising that the "negative discussions" [i.e. the workers' demands] were not limited to a revocation of the norm increase; they included demands for the resignation and punishment of those responsible for the mistakes; to many, the SED had gone bankrupt and the Central Committee and regime had proved incapable of leadership. Many discussions evidenced such slogans as "Get rid of the SED bosses" and "Get rid of socialism."<sup>28</sup>

Despite signs of unrest and sporadic strikes in early June, SED headquarters remained steadfast. Underestimating the resentment throughout the country, the SED politburo confirmed the controversial norm increases on 13 June 1953, fueling labor dissatisfaction. By then, however, the protests had developed their own dynamic. As a report from the files of the former Ministry for State Security (Stasi) details, that same day, during a routine plant retreat cruise on the Müggel lakes in the southeast of Berlin, workers of the construction site "Bettenhaus Friedrichshain" discussed their grievances and decided to get together within a couple of days with representatives of other construction sites in order to take the unusual step of putting forward a resolution to Grotewohl, a fact alluded to in the July 20 SED report. The resolution (which can be found in the Grotewohl Papers) decried the 10 percent norm increase as "a great hardship" for the workers. Comparing themselves to the large-estate farmers and private entrepreneurs whose possessions would be restored, the workers called for a repeal of the norm increase on the construction site. Ending on a threatening note, the workers demanded that "in view of the highly charged mood of the entire workforce [Belegschaft]" Grotewohl was "to respond to these grave issues immediately in a satisfactory man-

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

Headed by the plant’s union representative, Feltling, the four-man delegation marched to Grotewohl’s office where they handed the resolution to Grotewohl aides Ambreé and Plaschke who, while accommodating some of their grievances, tried their best to convince the workers that the norm increase was necessary. Later, informing Grotewohl’s personal aides, Tzschorn and Eisermann, they pointed out that some responsibility lay with the “dictatorial enforcement” of the norm increase by SED Berlin district official Baum, a well-known hard-liner who “underestimated the situation” and “merely portrayed it as work of the enemy, without recognizing that his not acknowledging the workers’ justified demands only amplified the enemy’s opportunities for action.” Tzschorn related to Grotewohl that the workers would go on strike if he did not respond satisfactorily, by 7 a.m. Adding in short-hand to his memo to Grotewohl, Tzschorn, however, noted that according to Baum, “this was a larger operation apparently controlled from West-Berlin. Strikes have taken place today already on several construction sites. In doing so, they again and again demand a decision by prime minister Grotewohl.” Underestimating the explosiveness of the situation and misleading Grotewohl on the true origins of the workers’ dissatisfaction, Tzschorn advised Grotewohl against personally speaking to the workers.<sup>30</sup>

Instead of a high government official, a union leader and fifteen agitators appeared at the Friedrichshain construction site in the early hours of 16 June 1953, apparently sent to persuade the workers to accept the norm increase. In this highly charged atmosphere, the hospital director ordered the gates closed, leading the workers to believe—probably mistakenly—that they would be arrested. Within a short time, the news had spread to the Block 40 construction site in the Stalin allee (a major avenue in the heart of East Berlin), where workers organized a demonstration in support of their fellow workers. After breaking down the hospital gates, a few hundred workers marched downtown, picking up in number as they passed through the streets of Berlin. Apparently, the marchers managed to take over two soundtrucks on the way, allowing them to disseminate their calls for a general strike and a demon-

stration at the Strausberger Platz at 7 a.m. the next day. Just a few hours later, several thousand demonstrators were protesting in front of the “Haus der Ministerien,” the GDR government headquarters in the Wilhelmsstraße. Posing a more immediate threat to the regime, others headed for the party headquarters in the Wilhelm-Pieck Street.<sup>31</sup>

There the politburo had gathered for its regular Tuesday meeting. It is still unclear how well-informed the politburo was about the developments in the streets of Berlin. Under pressure from the marchers, the politburo, after hours of deliberations, decided to revoke the forced norm increase, blaming the developments on the cold-blooded manner in which individual ministries had implemented the measure and on hostile provocateurs who had sowed confusion into the ranks of the workers. An increase in productivity was to be only voluntary. The revocation of the forced norm increase, however, came too late to satisfy the protesters’ demands. So did the earlier appearance of Minister Fritz Selbmann and Professor Robert Havemann, who had tried in vain to calm the crowds in front of the government headquarters. Only in the early afternoon did the demonstration slowly disperse, with a large crowd heading back to the Stalinallee. Clashes and demonstrations, however, persisted until late evening.<sup>32</sup>

Later that night, the Berlin “Parteiaktiv” (the most trusted Berlin SED party members and activists) met in the Friedrichsstadtpalast. Demonstrating unity and determination, the entire politburo, headed by Grotewohl and Ulbricht, appeared before the group of nearly 3,000 people. Responding to the day’s events, Grotewohl and Ulbricht acknowledged mistakes by the party leadership and criticized the “cold administering” and police measures. Despite these insights, the SED leadership continued to gravely miscalculate the situation: “Yes, mistakes were made,” Ulbricht told the Berlin party members, but now the task was to “take to heart correctly and draw the right conclusions from the lesson which we received today. Tomorrow even deeper into the masses! (...) we are moving to the mobilization of the entire party, up to the last member! (...) We are now getting to the point that tomorrow morning all party organizations in the plants, in the residential areas, in the institutions will start to work in time and that one is watchful

everywhere: Where are the West Berlin provocateurs?”<sup>33</sup> Based on the myth of an external provocation, the SED leadership expected that a massive propaganda drive was enough to cope with the crisis.

Throughout the night of June 16 and the early morning of June 17, the news of the Berlin strikes and demonstrations spread like a wildfire throughout the GDR. Early in the morning of June 17, workers’ assemblies in most East Berlin workshops decided to go on strike and march downtown. From all East Berlin districts and surrounding suburbs, crowds were marching on the “Haus der Ministerien.” By 8 a.m., the number of protesters in front of the building had apparently reached 15,000; by 9 a.m., the number had increased to more than 25,000. According to estimates by West Berlin police, by 9:40 a.m. 60,000 people were crowding the streets, headed in the direction of the ministries. The few People’s Police officers which the regime had ordered to the scene were soon overcome. Between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m., 80 to 100 demonstrators apparently managed to break the security barriers for the first time and enter the government buildings, visibly demonstrating that the People’s Police, State Security, and army had been overpowered and put on the defensive. Events in East Berlin were mirrored by developments throughout the GDR: According to a recent estimate, more than 500,000 people in over 350 East German cities and towns marched in defiance of the regime, in some cases raiding prisons and party offices.<sup>34</sup>

The Sokolovskii-Semyenov-Yudin and SED reports provide interesting numbers for the June 17 demonstrations. Generally coinciding with the numbers in the SED report and Western accounts, the Soviets estimated that by 9 a.m. about 30,000 people (SED report: 25,000) were demonstrating outside the GDR government buildings. Overall participation in the demonstrations was estimated at 66,000 people. According to Soviet accounts, 80,000 out of 200,000 workers went on strike that day.

Despite the growing signs of unrest, the SED leadership was completely taken by surprise by the degree of opposition apparent throughout the GDR. Faced by the threat of a general strike, (East) Berlin police head Waldemar Schmidt had asked, in vain, for Soviet military support as early as June 16. Ulbricht apparently secretly conferred with State Security (Stasi) chief Wilhelm Zaisser

and the head of the East German military forces (Kasernierte Volkspolizei [KVP]), Heinz Hoffman, in the early morning hours of June 17 about the deployment of KVP units. Since their reliability and preparation was questionable, this was held out as a last resort. About 10 a.m., the politburo met in the party headquarters "House of Unity" but were, by 10:30 a.m. ordered by Soviet High Commissioner Semyenov, who had effectively assumed control of government power, to proceed to the Soviet headquarters in Karlshorst. Precluded from the decision-making process, politburo members were finally sent out to major cities in an effort to restore political control. Ulbricht, Grotewohl, Zaisser, and Herrnsstadt remained in the Soviet High Commission headquarters. According to the Herrnsstadt papers, Semyenov at one point confronted them with the news that "RIAS is broadcasting that there is no government any more within the GDR." Sitting down with his Soviet comrades, Semyenov allegedly remarked that "well, it is almost true." A few hours

later, the SED leaders were informed that Moscow had ordered the declaration of martial law in East Berlin as of 1 p.m. Eventually, martial law was declared in about 167 (of 217) urban and rural districts.<sup>35</sup>

According to eyewitness accounts, Soviet tanks had entered East Berlin's outskirts in the early morning hours of June 17, initially without making any moves to protect government buildings. Not until shortly before noon did Soviet military vehicles close in on government headquarters. Within an hour, the Soviet tanks managed to reestablish control around the government headquarters, not without committing a massacre among the demonstrators on the nearby Potsdamer Platz. Despite the declaration of martial law, the demonstrations and riots continued into the night, and, in fact, for several days.

The Sokolovskii-Semyenov-Yudin report of June 24 reflects the Soviets' sense of exasperation and frustration with the SED leadership, which they severely blamed for misreading and mishandling the situation.

The report confirms that GDR state security organs had been informed as early as June 14 of plans for strikes against the norm increases. Despite warnings by the Soviets about the "seemingly serious nature of the disorders that had taken place in the city" and the necessity "to be highly prepared" during a meeting with politburo members on the evening of June 16, the SED leadership "did not believe the situation to be so serious" as to warrant serious measures and "evaluated the situation in the GDR rather optimistically." While Karlshorst had allegedly alerted its regional military authorities during the day, Ulbricht "could not think of anything better" than to call the first regional party secretaries to Berlin "for instruction," leaving the regional party organization without leadership in the critical hours of June 17. According to the Sokolovskii-Semyenov-Yudin report, the Soviets also informed Ulbricht, Grotewohl, Herrnsstadt and Zaisser during the June 16 meeting of their decision to send troops into Berlin which, however, they opposed. This ac-

#### **COLD WAR "FLASHPOINTS": THE NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVE**

One of the more unusual resources available to scholars of the Cold War is the National Security Archive, a non-governmental, non-profit library and publisher of declassified documents based in Washington. Now in its 10th year, the Archive has built a reputation as the world's largest repository of declassified records obtained under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). These materials, covering topics in contemporary U.S. foreign and national security policy ranging from the Berlin and Cuban Missile Crises to the Iran-Contra Affair to non-proliferation and intelligence policies, are published on microfiche and other formats, and are also available in the Archive's reading room.

With the end of the Cold War, the Archive initiated the Openness in Russia and Eastern Europe project to provide assistance on issues of documentary access in the former Soviet bloc countries. A subset of the project, the "Flashpoints" collection, is currently gathering new materials on several crises of the Cold War in Eastern Europe: the East German uprising of 1953, the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czecho-

slovakia, in 1956 and 1968, respectively, the rise of and crackdown on Solidarity in Poland in 1980-81, and the revolutions of 1989.

Each of these topics will be the focus of an international conference organized in collaboration with local institutions. The first of these, looking back at the Prague Spring, took place in the Czech capital in April 1994. Co-sponsored by the Institute of International Relations (IIR) in Prague and the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), the conference drew over 90 scholars and former officials from a dozen countries. One of the key publications emerging from the conference will be an English-language documentary reader featuring a number of the most important documents compiled and edited by members and associates of the former Czechoslovak government commission originally appointed in 1990 to analyze the events of 1967-1970, and published by The New Press/W.W. Norton. (Previous NSA/New Press anthologies of declassified documents and interpretive essays have examined the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Iran-Contra Affair, and U.S. policy toward Southern Africa.) Two of the editors, Drs. Vaclav Kural and Jaromir Navratil, both of the IIR, were major organizers of the conference and are the authors of a volume in Czech on the

Prague Spring. NSA, working closely with CWIHP, plans similar conferences in Germany, Poland and Hungary in 1995-1996.

The Archive, in a project supported by CWIHP, is also overseeing the creation of an electronic database of declassified documents released from the former Soviet bloc. Incorporating bibliographic data and brief synopses in English of each document, the database is intended to keep researchers up-to-date on what is currently available from the "other side" of the Cold War. Information from the database, as well as other NSA and CWIHP materials, will soon be featured on the Archive's World Wide Web site on the Internet, due to go on-line later this year.

For further information on the Archive and its projects, contact:

Malcolm Byrne  
Director of Analysis  
The National Security Archive  
The Gelman Library, Suite 701  
2130 H Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20037  
(202) 994-7000 (voice)  
(202) 994-7005 (fax)  
MBYRNE@GWIS2.CIRC.GWU.EDU.

count contradicts evidence according to which the East Germans had asked for Soviet military support earlier that day—a request which the Soviets initially refused.<sup>36</sup> Sokolovskii and Semyenov might have been trying to cover up their own inadequacies in handling the situation.

To a lesser extent, naturally, the criticism of Berlin's handling of the demonstrations is also reflected in the July 20 SED report. The SED, the report argued, was "completely taken by surprise by the provocation," a circumstance which was ascribed to the "widespread euphemistic reporting" on popular dissatisfaction by local party officials and the fact that "the Central Committee did not immediately react to the events on June 16 and thus left the Party unprepared." Consequently, "until the afternoon hours of the 17th, the district leadership was by and large left to its own devices."

Given the initial perception by Grotewohl and his advisers that the strikes and demonstration had been "controlled from the West," it is not surprising that the Soviet representatives in Germany (who were largely dependent on their SED sources) and the politburo suspected that the popular uprising was a "counter-revolutionary coup" inspired by the West. Ulbricht had announced the line in his speech before the "Parteiaktiv" on the night of June 16, and certainly the almost parallel flaring up of riots and demonstrations throughout the country tended to create the impression (or confirm SED-leaders in their ideological preconceptions) that this could only be a systematically prepared action by the West. There is evidence that Semyenov and Marshall Sokolovskii, Chairman of the Soviet Chiefs of Staff and deputy defense minister who had been sent to the Soviet army headquarters in Karlshorst on June 17, accepted (and passed on to Moscow) GDR Interior Ministry reports which alleged a "very active organizational role of the American military in the disorders in Berlin." As Semyenov and Sokolovskii put it in a June 19 cable to Moscow, "[t]he people arrested testify that American officers personally selected and gathered residents of West Berlin in large groups and gave them instructions to organize disorders in East Berlin, the arson of buildings etc. As a reward, the American officers promised money, and for the people who were the most active—a three month vacation in a vacation home, etc. American military people

personally gave instructions from cars with loudspeakers to the participants in the disorders near the home of the GDR government on the border of the Soviet sector. There is also information from the GDR provinces of American agents from West Berlin and West Germany sent there."<sup>37</sup>

This perception is reflected in the report Semyenov, Sokolovskii and Yudin sent to Molotov and Bulganin on June 24. According to the report, the uprising was "prepared by [the] three Western states and their accomplices within the West German monopol-capitalistic capital," by "fascist" and other organizations "working primarily under the leadership of American intelligence." On June 17, it stated, "American planes appeared over various parts of the Soviet sector of Berlin, from which leaflets were dropped calling on the population to participate in the strikes and the unrest, and to work to overthrow the Government of the GDR." In the same vein, the SED report argued that the uprising "under the direct participation and leadership of American agencies" was an attempt at a "fascist" coup d'etat.

Yet the Sokolovskii-Semyenov-Yudin report, written only a few days after the height of the demonstrations, reveals that the Soviet representatives realized that the SED's policy of "accelerating the construction of Socialism" as adopted at the Second Party Conference and the ensuing supply shortages had caused growing dissatisfaction among the working middle class and constituted the "prime causes of the disorders." Even the SED report acknowledged, in conformity with the "New Course," that dissatisfaction among the population had resulted from the "mistakes of Party and Government."

No evidence, indeed, has so far emerged which would support the allegation of Western instigation of the uprising. Contrary to the Eisenhower Administration's "roll-back" rhetoric and its interest in "psychological warfare," neither the United States nor any other western government was prepared for or actively working toward an uprising in East Germany or a major intervention behind the Iron Curtain. Although the American radio station in Berlin, Radio In the American Sector (RIAS), was waging an effective propaganda campaign against the SED regime and was later credited with helping to spread the uprising from East Berlin throughout the country, U.S. officials

remained cautious when developments came to a head in Berlin on June 16-17. While generally supportive of the popular demands and reporting on the protests in a very sympathetic manner, RIAS did not issue a call for a general strike as demanded by a workers' delegation. Indeed, the Sokolovskii-Semyenov-Yudin report confirmed that "RIAS in its broadcasts recommended that the insurgents submit to the orders of Soviet officials and not to clash with Soviet forces." According to internal SED analyses at the height of the uprising, RIAS broadcasts during the first days of the crisis were "very general," and SED officials took satisfaction in the fact that "the enemy is still lacking detailed information."<sup>38</sup> The radio station's initial emphasis on caution and restraint, contributing to a large degree to the relaxation of the tense situation in the city, was clearly recognized by GDR authorities.<sup>39</sup> Only later did an internal SED study on "The Role of the Hostile Broadcasting during the Events in Berlin" blame RIAS broadcasts for creating the "impression" that "the strikes of the construction workers [in East Berlin] were becoming a broad movement among the entire population."<sup>40</sup>

RIAS' cautious policy during the uprising was indicative of the overall response by the Eisenhower Administration. At a meeting of the National Security Council on June 18, CIA director Allen W. Dulles pointed out that, "the United States had nothing whatsoever to do with inciting these riots."<sup>41</sup> While acknowledging that the brutal suppression of the popular uprising by Soviet military might afforded the United States an "excellent propaganda opportunity"<sup>42</sup> and could be viewed as a "sign of real promise," the Eisenhower Administration initially took no steps to escalate the crisis. Faced with disappointment and resentment throughout Germany about the weak western response, the U.S. government later, in July and August, initiated a large western aid program which exacerbated tensions in the GDR and displayed Western sympathy for the plight of the East Germans.<sup>43</sup> The uprising, an internal U.S. government memorandum later judged, "began as spontaneous manifestations of dissatisfaction... [I]t is generally agreed that the American-controlled radio station RIAS played an important role in spreading the riots from East Berlin into the zone and that these riots were then further stimulated by the American food pro-

gram.”<sup>44</sup>

Charges of Western involvement notwithstanding, within the SED the party politburo, and especially Ulbricht, were widely blamed for misreading the depth of the crisis and the popular reaction to the policy of the “Construction of Socialism.” The self-criticism and the climate of openness which accompanied the SED espousal of the “New Course” and which had many East Germans demanding the resignation of the government, also inspired challenges to Ulbricht’s leadership within the Central Committee. At the 14th Central Committee Plenum, quickly summoned for a midnight session on June 21, criticism of Ulbricht’s leadership erupted. “In some ways, what we have let happen is worse than some severe defeats which the working-class has suffered at the hands of its enemies,” Central Committee member Anton Ackermann lamented. Led by Stasi head Zaisser and Rudolf Herrnstadt, the editor of the party organ “Neues Deutschland,” the opposition group sought to oust Ulbricht from his position as head of the powerful party secretariat. The opposition to Ulbricht within the politburo took the form of a commission, formally established to prepare the basic documents for the 15th CC Plenum. In its report, the commission called for a restructuring of the leadership.

The Sokolovskii-Semyenov-Yudin report reveals the degree to which Ulbricht’s position was challenged between mid-June and mid-July, not only by his intra-party rivals but also by his Soviet protectors. It is possible, yet still uncertain, that their indictment of the SED leader reflected the balance of power in Moscow at that moment or at least the strong influence of those forces around Beria who opposed Ulbricht and the policy he represented. Ulbricht, the report explicitly stated, was the “initiator and the primary author” of the policy of “the construction of socialism, regardless of any difficulties,” which, as the reports observes, was implemented “without the accompaniment of corresponding organizational and technical measures and political work among [the] workers.” By implication, it was Ulbricht who was blamed by the Soviets for failing to pay attention to the dissatisfaction and sporadic strikes, for “sloppily” and reluctantly implementing the Soviet-decreed course reversal, thereby causing the announcement of the New Course to fall “on

deaf ears.” Consequently, Sokolovskii, Semyenov, and Yudin recommended “to relieve comr. Ulbricht of his duties as deputy prime minister of the GDR” and “to liquidate the currently existing position of General Secretary of the CC SED, replacing it with several CC secretariat posts.”

Developments within the SED politburo came to a head on July 8 when the final draft commission report was considered. By now, politburo members Heinrich Rau, Elli Schmidt, Ackermann and East Berlin mayor Friedrich Ebert had joined the ranks of Herrnstadt and Zaisser. During the controversial session, Zaisser supported a replacement of Ulbricht by Herrnstadt. According to the handwritten minutes of the meeting in the Grotewohl papers, Zaisser argued that Ulbricht “had to be kept out of the party apparatus. The apparatus in the hands of W.U. is a catastrophe for the party.” Ulbricht apparently managed to avoid immediate steps against him. Arguing that “I don’t think I have to be the first secretary,” Ulbricht promised to reveal his views at the next CC Plenum. Crucially, the final adoption of the commission report was postponed.<sup>45</sup>

The next day, Grotewohl flew to Moscow at Soviet orders. There, he and other Communist party leaders were informed of Beria’s arrest, signaling a shift in the correlation of forces in favor of the hard-liners around Molotov and Gromyko. This proved to be of momentous significance for the German situation, for Beria’s fall undermined the position of Zaisser, Ulbricht’s most powerful challenger. Once again assured of Soviet support, Ulbricht went on the offensive at the July 14 politburo meeting when he fired the Minister of Justice, Max Fechner, who had advocated a more lenient treatment of the popular opposition. On July 18, Ulbricht forced Zaisser to resign as head of the Stasi. Five days later, Herrnstadt and Ackermann were expelled from the politburo. Signifying his increasing power, Ulbricht had the 15th CC Plenum restore him to the position of “First Secretary” of the SED a few days later. By mid-July, as the SED report indicates, Ulbricht had survived the leadership crisis.

Both documents thus constitute significant new evidence on the Soviet and East German perspective of the 1953 crisis, and, given their different origins and dates, illuminate the evolution of the crisis which clearly—as both documents show—was not

limited to June 17 or to East Berlin.<sup>46</sup>

1. The report is located in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow; it was obtained by Vladislav M. Zubok of the National Security Archive and translated by Danny Rozas. The archival reference is Fund 06, Opis 12a, Papka 51, Delo 301, Listy 1-51.
2. Marshall V.D. Sokolovskii, since 1949 Chief of the Soviet General Staff and since 1952 Deputy Defense Minister, had arrived in Berlin at the height of the June 1953 crisis.
3. Vladimir Semyonovich Semyenov, since 1946 Political Adviser to the Soviet Military Administration in Germany; since 1953 head of the Soviet High Commission in Germany, located in Berlin-Karlshorst.
4. Pavel A. Yudin had replaced Semyenov as Chairman of the Soviet Control Commission (SCC) on 21 April 1953; named Deputy Soviet High Commissioner in June 1953.
5. Abt. Leitende Organe der Partei und der Massenorganisationen, “Analyse über die Vorbereitung, den Ausbruch und die Niederschlagung des faschistischen Abenteuers vom 16.-22.6. 1953” [Study of the Instigation, Outbreak and Crushing of the Fascist Adventure of 16-22 June 1953], 20 July 1953, Stiftung “Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR” im Bundesarchiv [Foundation “Archives of the Parties and Mass Organizations of the Former GDR], henceforth SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/202/15. Obtained from the SED archives in Berlin by Christian Ostermann and translated by Helen Christakos.
6. On the establishment of the security apparatus in the GDR see now Norman M. Naimark, *To Know Everything and To Report Everything Worth Knowing’: Building the East German Police State, 1945-1949* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Working Paper No. 10, 1994).
7. Armin Mitter and Stefan Wolle, *Untergang auf Raten. Unbekannte Kapitel der DDR-Geschichte* [Decline in Installments. Unknown Chapters of GDR History] (München: Bertelsmann, 1993), 30.
8. Beschluß der 2. Parteikonferenz [Decision of the Second Party Conference], *Dokumente der sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands* [Documents of the Socialist Unity Party], vol. 4 (Berlin: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1954), 73.
9. On the latter point, see Torsten Diedrich, *Der 17. Juni 1953 in der DDR. Bewaffnete Gewalt gegen das Volk* [The 17 June 1953 in the GDR. Military Might Against the Populace] (Berlin: Dietz, 1991)
10. See footnote 8.
11. Mitter and Wolle, *Untergang*, 47.
12. The best account of the refugee problem is Helge Heidemeyer, *Flucht und Zuwanderung aus der SBZ/DDR 1945/1949-1961. Die Flüchtlingspolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland bis zum Bau der Berliner Mauer* [Flight and Immigration from the Soviet Zone/GDR 1945/1949-1961] (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1993); but also see Valur Ingimundarson, “Cold War Misperceptions: The Communist and Western Responses to the East German Refugee Crisis in 1953,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 29:3 (1994), 463-81
13. Quoted in Mitter and Wolle, *Untergang*, 35.
14. *Ibid.*, 42.
15. Editor’s note 12, stenographic protocol, CPSU CC Plenum, 2-7 July 1953, “Delo Beria,” *Izvestia TsK KPSS* 2 (1991), 144, quoted in Hope M. Harrison, *The Bargaining Power of Weaker Allies in Bipolarity and Crisis: The Dynamics of Soviet-East German Rela-*

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

16. Harrison, *The Bargaining Power*, 48-52, James Richter, *Reexamining Soviet Policy Towards Germany During the Beria Interregnum*, Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Working Paper No. 3 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1992), 13-22; Vladislav M. Zubok, *Soviet Intelligence and the Cold War: The "Small" Committee of Information, 1952-53*, CWIHP Working Paper No. 4 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1992), 16-17; Gerhard Wettig, "Sowjetische Wiedervereinigungsbemühungen im ausgehenden Frühjahr 1953? Neue Aufschlüsse über ein altes Problem" [Soviet Reunification Efforts in Late Spring 1953? New Evidence on an Old Problem], *Deutschland Archiv* 25:9 (1992), 943-58; Gerhard Wettig, "Zum Stand der Forschung über Berijas Deutschlandpolitik im Frühjahr 1953" [On the State of Research on Beria's German Policy in the Spring of 1953], *Deutschland Archiv* 26:6 (1993), 674-82.

17. The decree, "Über die Maßnahmen zur Gesundung der politischen Lage in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," released in 1989, is printed in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 32:5 (1990), 651-54.

18. Quoted in Rolf Stöckigt, "Ein Dokument von großer historischer Bedeutung vom Mai 1953" [A Document of Great Historical Importance of May 1953], *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 32:5 (1990), 649.

19. Ibid.

20. Wilfriede Ott, "Dokumente zur Auseinandersetzung in der SED 1953," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 32:5 (1990), 655-67; Nadja Stulz-Herrnstadt, ed., *Rudolf Herrnstadt. Das Herrnstadt-Dokument. Das Politbüro der SED und die Geschichte des 17. Juni 1953* [Rudolf Herrnstadt: The Herrnstadt File. The SED Politburo and the History of 17 June 1953] (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990), 62-81. See also Helmut Müller-Enbergs, *Der Fall Rudolf Herrnstadt. Tauwetterpolitik vor dem 17. Juni* [The Herrnstadt Case. Thaw Policy before 17 June] (Berlin: Linksdruck, 1991); Wettig, "Sowjetische Wiedervereinigungsbemühungen," 947-50; Wilfried Loth, *Stalins ungeliebtes Kind. Warum Moskau die DDR nicht wollte* [Stalin's Unwanted Child. Why Moscow Did Not Want the GDR] (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1994), 209ff.

21. Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen [Department "Principal Organs of Party and Mass Organizations"], Stellungnahmen der Parteiorgane nach dem 9. bzw. 11. 6. 1953: Analyse der SED Kreisleitung Wernigerode, 11.6.1953 [Reports of Party Organs after June 9 resp. 11 June 1953: Analysis of the SED District Leadership, 6 June 1953], SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/5/526.

22. Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen [Department "Principal Organs of Party and Mass Organizations"], Stellungnahmen der Parteiorgrane nach dem 9. bzw. 11. 6. 1953: [Bericht]: K[reis]L[eitung]Wanzleben, 12.6.1953 [Reports of the Party Organs after June 9 resp. 11 June 1953: Report, District leadership Wanzleben, 12 June 1953], SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/5/526.

23. Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen, Stellungnahmen der Parteiorgrane nach dem 9. bzw. 11. 6. 1953: Stimmungsbericht aus Magdeburg, 12.6.1953, SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/5/526.

24. See, e.g., Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen, Tagesbericht Nr. VI [Daily Re

## SOVIET REPORT

*continued from page 10*

### I. The course of events in the GDR on 17-19 June.

#### 1. On the eve of aggression.

Soon after the SED Party conference /July 1952/ and as a result of the new direction adopted at this conference towards "accelerating the construction of socialism" in the GDR, there began to arise in GDR serious and ever-increasing interruptions in the supply of goods of basic necessity, and in particular fat, meat, and sugar; in winter 1952-53 there were also serious interruptions in the supply of heat and electricity to the cities. This led to the rise of dissatisfaction, most notably within the less well-to-do sectors of the populace. In December and January-February 1952 there were isolated incidents of small and short-lived workers' strikes within a few enterprises; these, however, did not catch the attention of CC SED and SCC organs. In January-March 1953, as a part of the new "austerity regime" a number of privileges and preferential treatments, enjoyed by German workers since 1945, and in many cases earlier, were revoked with the active participation of SCC /the revocation of railroad passes, the changes in sick leave policy; the revocation of additional vacation time for sanatorium stays; the cut-backs in disability insurance for working women turned housewives and so on/. Further decreases in prices of consumer goods did not take place since spring of 1952. On the contrary, ration coupon prices for meat were increased by 10-15% under the pretext that the quality of meat products had increased. All this, as well as the increase in the price of jam and artificial honey /a product used widely by low-paid workers/, brought about dissatisfaction among workers, which was further aggravated by the party's and government's failure, following the 2nd SED conference, to take any steps to improve the situation of the bulk of workers, with the exception of the July 1952 wage increases for ITR, as well as for qualified workers in the five main branches of industry.

This was joined by the measures taken by the CC SED, as part of their mistaken policy of liquidating the petit and middle bourgeoisie of both city and country, which in some places took the rather ugly forms of insular administrative planning and mass repressions directed also at workers. In addition, the petit-bourgeoisie's deprivation of ration coupons for fat, meat and sugar was particularly hurtful, given the absence of these products in the consumer market.

Functionaries of the SED and of the State apparatus, under the influence of the decision that emerged from the 2nd conference of the SED "on the construction of socialism, regardless of any difficulties," started to lose contact with the bulk

of the populace and increasingly often to rely on management and administrative methods vis-a-vis members of SED, using the harmful methods widely employed within the CC SED Secretariat as a guide. In a number of instances, SED district and regional committees completely supplanted government organs, bringing under their authority police operations, arrests, the day-to-day administration of enterprises, etc.

All these, as well as other unhealthy developments, mentioned in the Soviet Government resolution of 6 June, were the prime causes of the disorders and agitations that took place in the GDR on 17-19 June.

Already, long before 17 June, in certain areas in the GDR there were sporadic worker strikes within a few enterprises, directed against increases in output norms, which were being instituted in accordance with government and isolated GDR ministries' directives, without the accompaniment of corresponding organizational and technical measures and political work among workers. The initiator and the primary author of the policy to increase output norms was [SED General Secretary Walter] Ulbricht, who, in a number of public speeches, rather actively stressed the importance of these measures. The CC SED did not pay attention to these short-lived strikes and only under heavy pressure from SCC announced, on 8 June, sloppily formulated directives on the inadmissibility of overreaching during the course of the campaign to raise output norms; this, however, was not accompanied by any organizational measures on the part of the party CC, and the announcement, for the most part, fell on deaf ears.

#### 2. Events in Berlin on 16-19 June

On 14 June the state security organs of the GDR and the SED city committee of Berlin received information on plans to strike against the increase of productivity norms for construction workers in Berlin, in particular, on the Stalinallee construction site. However, they did not deem this information to be of any importance and did not report of this to the leadership of CC SED and SCC. The events that followed were completely unexpected to the leadership of GDR.

In the evening of 15 June the construction workers in Berlin announced categorical demands to repeal the increase in the productivity norms, of which they [the workers] were informed without any prior explanations through a withholding of corresponding sums from their paychecks. The Berlin organization of SED and the magistrate of East Berlin did not react in any way to these demands.

As came to be known later, agents from West Berlin and as yet unknown traitors from the GDR trade unions were actively involved in inciting the ranks of the workers.

In the morning of 16 June, two thousand out

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

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

During the day of 16 June, there was a marked increase in the activity of small groups of provocateurs in various parts of East Berlin, carrying out anti-democratic agitation amongst the populace. In a number of enterprises in East Berlin and in GDR a slogan was sent forth from West Berlin calling for an immediate strike in solidarity with the construction workers of Berlin, as well as a slogan calling for a general strike on 17 June. In the evening of 16 June an extra edition of the evening paper "Dernabend" was published in West Berlin, with calls for a general strike in the Eastern zone of Germany. Solidarity strikes started to spread throughout a number of enterprises towards the day's end on 16 June.

In the evening of 16 June the situation in

Berlin became more difficult. At 20.00 an extraordinary session of the most active members of the Berlin SED organizations was held, where, in the presence of the entire CC SED Politburo, Ulbricht and Grotewohl gave speeches on the new political course of the party and government. The mood of the active party members, according to members of the Politburo, was good. However, the GDR leadership said not a word of the strikes that were taking place in the city, and gave no indication as to what course the active party members ought to take in the near future. During this time crowds of West Berliners, consisting mostly of youth, began to arrive on city railcars and other means of transportation as well as on foot. A crowd of some 4-5 thousand people moved in the direction of the Friedrichstadtpalast where a session of the active members of the party was taking place, thus creating a possible danger that the members of the CC SED Politburo could become hostages. At the same time, in the centre of the city at Stalinallee, a crowd of West Berliners numbering some 2 thousand began throwing rocks at the monument of comr. Stalin, and calling for the overthrow of the GDR government. There were also shouts by isolated provocateurs, calling for the killing of Russians.

The GDR police, acting on their instructions, did not actively intervene in these events. The measures that we undertook (the dispatch of police reserves to the Friedrichstadtpalast), were enough to disperse the crowd that was moving in the direction of Friedrichstadtpalast, as well as the mob at Stalinallee. Following this, various groups of provocateurs and bandits, principally from West Berlin, took to rioting in various places in the Soviet sector of Berlin, overturning automobiles, looting shops and apartments of SED activists on Stalinallee, stopping street traffic, trying to break into the [natural] gas plant and other important city enterprises. These acts of outrage were carried out by groups that together numbered approximately 1.5-2 thousand people.

Late in the evening of 16 June, we met with the leadership of CC SED (Grotewohl, Ulbricht, [secret police chief Wilhelm] Zaisser, [SED Politburo member Rudolf] Herrnstadt). We turned their attention to the seemingly serious nature of the disorders that had taken place in the city, pointing out that the slogans thrown out by the provocateurs at the end of the day calling for a general strike were finding a positive response within the enterprises of East Berlin and in some other places in GDR, and also pointing out that it is necessary to take the most decisive measures to maintain order in the city on 17 June, since one could expect a massive influx into East Berlin of provocateur bands from West Berlin. We informed our friends of our decision to send Soviet forces into Berlin. Our friends announced that they did not believe the situation so serious as to warrant such extraordinary measures, and that, in their opinion, one should not expect serious unrest

in the city on 17 June, though they did not rule out the possibility of a slight increase in unrest as compared to 16 June. They evaluated the situation in GDR rather optimistically. We pointed out to the GDR leadership that it is necessary to be highly prepared and we proposed that detachments of German barracks-based police from Potsdam and Oranienburg be called out, which they did by the morning of 17 June.

During the day of 16 June we sent a warning telegram to our regional representatives informing them of the unrest in Berlin and recommending that they take urgent preventive and preparatory steps to tackle unrest in the regions of GDR. We advised the friends/Ulbricht/ to also warn the regions about this through CC SED channels, but they could not think of anything better than to call the first secretaries of regional committees to Berlin on 17 June "for instruction," and as a result, during the unrest of 17 June the regions were left with practically no top party leaders.

At about 7 o'clock in the morning of 17 June, in East Berlin and in many cities in the western and southern parts of GDR, there took place simultaneous mass strikes that turned into demonstrations, which, in a number of cities / Berlin, Magdeburg, Herlitz, and others/, in turn became riots.

The provocateurs were not able to call out a general strike in Berlin. However, according to preliminary figures, on 17 June 80 thousand workers, out of a total number of 200 thousand, did strike. In addition, the largest enterprises participated in the strike: the Stalin electrical machinery factory, the "Bergman-Borzig" factory, the Soviet enterprises of "Siemens-Planya," cable factories, and others.

After stopping work, many workers proceeded in columns towards the city centre to Straussbergerplatz, where, the day before, the provocateurs called a general city meeting. At 7:30 about 10 thousand people gathered at this plaza, who proceeded in separate columns towards the GDR Statehouse, carrying banners "Down with the government," "We demand a decrease of norms," "We demand a decrease of prices at KhO by 40%," "We demand free elections."

At 9 in the morning a crowd of 30 thousand people gathered outside the GDR Statehouse, a significant part of which was made up of West Berlin residents, who were the main organizers of the provocations.

The insurgents were able to break through the line of steadfast policemen, who did not use weapons during this time, and after throwing rocks at them, they broke into the Statehouse where a pogrom was committed. The police security force of the Statehouse was reinforced, and at the time of the attack numbered 500 men. The Statehouse was recaptured only upon the arrival of the Soviet forces, in concert with which, by the way, the German police, having been

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

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

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

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

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

The crowds of insurgents moved through the city, chanting hostile slogans and singing fascist songs. Numerous groups of provocateurs penetrated through to the city enterprises, to call workers to strike. Most importantly, they tried to stop the main city electrostation Klingenberg, as well as a second large electrostation Rummelsburg and a [natural] gas plant. However, the workers of these enterprises showed a high degree of consciousness and organization, having established their picket lines around the plant buildings, thus not allowing the provocateurs through.

Detachments of the people's police tried everywhere to put up resistance against the bandits and the hooligans, however, as a result of their small numbers and inadequate weapons, they were to a great extent overrun and dispersed.

The number of police in Berlin on hand was completely inadequate for putting down more or less serious unrest (a total of 4,940 men, not counting the border police). An analogous situation took place in other large cities in GDR.

During the course of the day, reinforcements from Potsdam, Frankfurt-on-Oder and other population centers of the Republic, numbering two thousand men in total, were brought into Berlin. In addition, certain units of the German barracks-based police, numbering 2,200 men, were also brought in. Of all of these, 3,660 were stationed along the border with West Berlin, the crossing of which was prohibited for both vehicles and pedestrians by the order of Soviet military commanders.

While our forces were not undertaking any active steps to stop the unrest, the demonstrators were able to resist the people's and the barracks-

based police, which created a threat of a takeover of government buildings and other important places by the insurgents. In view of this, at around 10:30 a.m. we evacuated the members of the CC SED Politburo and several members of the GDR government to the buildings of the Supreme Commissar of the USSR in Germany, located in Karlshorst.

In view of the unrest that had taken place in Berlin, in the morning of 17 June the city committee of SED showed confusion. The city committee showed practically no leadership to the regional committees. At 10 o'clock in the morning the members of the SED city committee secretariat, including the first secretary Endretsky, headed for the most important city enterprises so as to prevent any strikes from taking place there. The staff of the Central Soviet of the SNM [Union of German Youth], the regional party committees and 200 members of the city party school were also sent to the city enterprises. Although the active members were able to avert strikes in a number of enterprises, their expedition to the enterprises during the time of the unfolding of street unrest, as well as their failure to call on the party members to go to the streets in order to defend the democratic government, resulted in [a situation such] that the central streets of the city were essentially in the hands of the better organized opposition. While, it is true that in a number of places SED activists bravely joined in hand-to-hand skirmishes with the insurgents, they were beaten by the mob.

Due to these reasons, the control of the situation in the city was essentially passed to the hands of Soviet organs. The second-rank members remaining in the SED city committee were, for the most part, occupied in gathering information by request of the CC.

In the SED city committee, the channels of receiving communiqués from places were badly organized, as a result of which, the city committee was not informed of the actual situation in the enterprises. At 12 o'clock the members of the secretariat of the city committee returned to the city committee building and until 3 o'clock were busy with "formulating arguments" of propaganda for the populace. In addition, the city committee took the necessary measures to insure the continuous operation of the electrostation, water supply, city transport, [natural] gas plants, and the trade network.

The Presidium of the people's police of Berlin (V. Schmidt) managed rather effectively the people's police, which functioned smoothly.

The main role in the dispersion of the demonstrations and in the liquidation of street unrest in Berlin was played by the Soviet forces. It should be noted that in the beginning the insurgents acted rather provocatively against our troops—they climbed on top of tanks, threw rocks at the troops, and so on. At the Polizeipresidium building our forces opened fire

against the insurgents. This seemed to have a highly sobering effect, after which unrest in the city quickly abated. By the evening order was established in the city.

Overall, approximately 66 thousand people, including some 10 thousand West Berliners, took part in the street demonstrations in East Berlin on 17 June. In addition to the workers, the demonstration included artisans, merchants, and other members of the petit bourgeoisie.

During the course of the day on 17 June, there appeared over various parts of the Soviet sector of Berlin American planes, from which were dropped leaflets containing calls to the population to participate in the strikes and the unrest, and to work to overthrow the Government of GDR. On the sector border mobile loudspeakers appeared on several occasions over which the insurgents were given orders. After the deployment of guards on the sector border, several large groups of provocateurs and hooligans from West Berlin broke through to the Soviet sector. In the streets Braunekstrasse and Bernauerstrasse, these bands started an exchange of fire with the German police, as a result of which there were casualties.

In the evening of 17 June, the American radio station RIAS in its transmissions recommended that the insurgents submit to the orders of Soviet officials, and not clash with Soviet forces.

On 18 June in Berlin, under the presence of the military situation, many factories continued to strike. In a number of places there were attempts to resume the demonstrations and to form picket lines of strikers, which were suppressed by the decisive actions of the German police and, in part, by the Soviet forces, which secured all points of importance in the eastern part of the city. In the relations between the populace and the Soviet military there was [a] significant feeling of alienation; in fact, not until 22 June did the party organize any campaign to reestablish friendly ties between the populace and our military.

By 19-20 June the strikes in Berlin began to decline sharply and normalcy was established. However, amidst the striking workers in the enterprises there could be observed a feeling of bitterness. There were numerous instances of enemy agents and provocateurs working in the enterprises. SED and SNM continued to act irresolutely and weakly, mostly making use of lower functionaries. The SED city committee, as well as the CC SED, began to send its staff to the factories on a large scale on 19 June, though even on that day, in accordance with the directives of Ulbricht, they limited themselves to holding small meetings, afraid that in large worker meetings the party functionaries would encounter opposition and would be whistled [booed]. On 19 June we called the entire SED city committee of Berlin to meet with us, and in no uncertain terms made clear to them that there must be an immediate and

unswerving move to send all party forces on hand in Berlin to the factories, so as to assure a corresponding change in the mood of the workers.

[Ed. note: Other sections of Part I of the report examined "The situation in other cities in GDR on 17-19 June"; "The demonstrators' and strikers' slogans and demands"; "The workers' mood"; "The behavior of other groups of people. The Intelligentsia. The Rural Areas. The Church"; and "The Party. Party apparatus. Party bloc. Social Organizations." Part II examined "The Economic Problems Facing the GDR in Light of the Events of 17-19 June."]

### III. A few conclusions and recommendations

With regard to the above-stated, we think it appropriate to undertake the following measures in order to correct the situation in the GDR:

1. To firmly and consistently carry out the new political course, as outlined in the Soviet Government Resolutions of 6 June 1953 on the normalization of the political situation in the GDR.

2. To undertake immediate steps to radically improve the food supply for the population of the GDR by providing it with corresponding aid from Soviet Union and other people's democratic countries. With regard to this, one should bear in mind that so far the forms of assistance, including the additional shipments ordered by the Soviet Government on 24 June, have been limited to food rations and to minimal commercial trade in the "KhO" stores during the 3rd quarter of this year.

3. In order to create a stable economy in the Republic and to improve the standard of living of the citizens of the GDR so as to match that of the citizens of West Germany, to examine the question of discontinuing the shipment of goods in the form of reparations to the Soviet Union and Poland and discontinuing the shipment of goods to USSR as payment for currently operating Soviet enterprises in the GDR, as of the second half of 1953, so as to use these goods to improve GDR foreign trade and to provide for the domestic needs of the Republic.

To continue the reparation payments in [deutsch]marks, in amounts that would ensure a normal activity of A/O "Vismut".

4. To examine the question of sharply reducing the GDR's financial responsibility in the maintenance of Soviet occupation forces in Germany.

5. To transfer, on favorable terms, the ownership of all remaining Soviet industrial, trade and transport enterprises, including the bank and the Black Sea-Baltic Insurance Company, to the GDR, using the payment received for these enterprises primarily as future expenditures made

by the Soviet Union through A/O "Vismut".

6. To determine the exchange rate between the GDR mark and the ruble in financial dealings between the USSR and GDR, so as to reflect the actual buying power of the mark and the ruble.

7. To make it the primary goal of CC SED and the Government of the GDR to seriously improve the living standards of workers in public and private enterprises of the GDR, as well as to undertake wide-ranging political action among workers, focusing on improving their relations with the party.

8. In light of the recent misdirection of CC SED in their methods of governing by taking over government and administrative organs, [it is necessary] clearly to separate the functions of the Government of the GDR and the CC SED, giving the CC SED the power of oversight on solely the most important questions of the State and its citizenry. To focus the attention of CC SED on carrying out political campaigns among the populace and on smoothening out intra-party operations by introducing broader intra-party democracy, criticism, and self-criticism from top to bottom.

Correspondingly, it is necessary:

a) to reorganize the Government of the GDR with the goal of strengthening and reducing the size of government apparatus both centrally and at its branches, by consolidating a number of scattered ministries and departments into larger ministries and departments;

b) to liquidate the Ministry of State Security [KGB] of the the GDR, by merging into the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the GDR;

c) to relieve comr. Ulbricht of his duties as deputy prime minister of the GDR, so as to enable him to concentrate his attention on work within the CC SED;

d) to elevate the role of the Chamber of the People to that of an active Parliament of the Republic, that would debate and legislate the laws of the Republic, establish commissions, debate inquiries and demands voiced by its deputies, etc.

To forbid the passage of any resolutions, that are in effect laws, bypassing the Chamber of the People of the GDR;

e) to call an extraordinary session of the Chamber of the People of the GDR, as a vehicle for the Government of the GDR to report on its work as well as on its past mistakes, and afterward reorganizing the ranks of the Government, letting go the less capable and less popular ministers, and bringing in the more popular persons to ministerial positions, drawing more widely from among representatives of other parties.

9. To restrict the functions of the Secretariat of CC SED to tasks such as the supervision of the execution of CC Politburo decisions, organizational questions, selection of personnel, placement and education of personnel, as well as to questions of party related political campaigns among the masses. To reorganize the Secretariat

CC with the goal of bringing into its ranks new personnel, including the intelligentsia. To reduce the number of Secretariat members from 11 persons to 5 persons.

To liquidate the currently existing position of General Secretary of CC SED, replacing it with several CC Secretarial posts.

10. To hold the IV Party Convention of SED in the next 3-4 months, in which the questions of the party's role in the establishment of the new direction would be discussed. During this convention to seriously renew the ranks of the CC, so as to include a greater number of younger personnel, who have excelled in their work with the working classes, working peasants, as well as the intelligencia. To radically renew the ranks of the CC SED Politburo, purging it of members who do not demonstrate the necessary capabilities required of leaders of the party and of the State in these times.

11. To carry out a special investigation of the work of the professional unions and to make decisive changes in the ranks of the leaders of corresponding organs, as well as to introduce new regulations that would radically change the role of the professional unions in step with the requirements of the new direction.

12. To reexamine the ranks, the organization and the distribution of the people's police of the GDR, to arm it with modern weapons, including armored transports and armored vehicles, and with communications equipment, as well as to create, drawing from the ranks of current detachments of barracks-based police, mobile detachments of sufficient readiness and strength as to be able to maintain order and peace in the Republic without the help of the Soviet military.

To reorganize the currently existing army corps of the GDR into a national guard-type army, along the lines of the one existing in Western Germany.

13. To give the SNM organization the character of a broad-based non-party organization of youth, using the experience of earlier German youth organizations. To make changes in the leadership ranks of the Central Soviet of the Union of German Youth (SNM).

14. To change the character of the diplomatic delegation in the Soviet Union from the GDR, and their assignments. To strengthen cultural and technical ties between the GDR and the Soviet Union. To reduce vacations and sanatorium trips of SED functionaries to the Soviet Union and other countries, and increase the vacations and sanatorium trips of prominent members of German intelligencia, workers, members of other parties, as well as tourists.

15. In order to raise the international prestige of the GDR and the authority of the GDR government in the eyes of the German populace, to have the new government, chosen by the Chamber of the People, make an official visit to Moscow.

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

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

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

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

24 June 1953  
iskh st-0024

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

## SED REPORT

from page 11

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

by **Janos M. Rainer**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*continued on page 24*

**SOVIET DOCUMENTS ON  
24 OCTOBER -**

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

SPECIAL FOLDER  
Top Secret

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

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

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

\* \* \* \* \*

**2. Mikoyan-Suslov Report, 24 October 1956**

Top secret  
Making Copies Prohibited

## IMRE NAGY, HESITANT REVOLUTIONARY

by Johanna Granville

In the beginning stages of the Hungarian revolt of 23 October–4 November 1956, Imre Nagy's behavior was oddly hesitant. Having written several times to Moscow in the summer and early fall of 1956 to be readmitted into the Hungarian Workers' Party, he was loathe at first to break ranks completely with the Soviet Communist Party and to declare Hungary's neutrality. The documents below have been selected to convey the confusion of the time, particularly from the perspective of Soviet Minister of Defense Marshal Georgii Zhukov and KGB Chief Ivan Serov in trying to restore order under firm communist control. Fighting, begun on the night of 23–24 October 1956, continued until October 30, two days after Nagy announced a cease-fire. At 6:15 a.m. on November 4, the second, more massive, Soviet intervention was launched. The pace of events seems to have prodded Imre Nagy

forward. He did not immediately go over to the side of the revolution.

There were several key moments of hesitation on Nagy's part. Why, for example, did Nagy forbid the Hungarian Army to resist the Soviet tanks on October 23–24? Why wasn't Nagy as bold as Polish leader Wladislaw Gomulka, who days earlier had told Khrushchev frankly: Turn your tanks around now, or we'll fight you. Even when Nagy finally confronted Andropov on November 1 at a 7 p.m. session of the Hungarian Council of Ministers, he was jittery and unsure of his own authority. In a telegram to Moscow, Andropov wrote: "Nagy in a rather nervous tone informed all those present that earlier that morning he asked the Soviet Ambassador why Soviet troops had crossed the Hungarian border and were penetrating Hungarian territory. Nagy 'demanded' an explanation of this. He spoke as if he were calling me to witness the fact that he was registering a protest. During this time he kept looking at Zoltan Tildy as if wishing to receive his support."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, three days earlier, as the second document reprinted

below reveals, Nagy actually had a slight heart attack from nervous exhaustion; Suslov gave him some medicine.<sup>2</sup>

And why, on October 23, did Nagy wait so long to go out and address the crowds who were calling his name? Why couldn't he give a more stirring speech on that critical night of October 23–24? He had no microphone, it's true, but the words themselves were hopelessly out of touch with the temper of the rowdy crowd. "Elvtársak!" [Comrades!] he called them.<sup>3</sup> We will continue "the June way" (the "New Course" reforms promulgated by the communist government in 1953).<sup>4</sup>

Why didn't Nagy protest when Erno Gero, then First Secretary of the Hungarian Workers' Party, invited in Soviet troops

(the "Special Corps" ["Osobii Korpus"]) already stationed in Hungary under General Lashchenko) on October 23? To be sure, he didn't sign the actual letter of invitation, but two days later (October 25), Nagy himself was reported to have "requested an increase in Soviet troops operating in Budapest."<sup>5</sup>

One possible explanation is that Nagy was still dependent on Soviet tutelage. He didn't want to upset the Russians again, after they had readmitted him into the party and the Politburo. His friend Imre Mezo, the Budapest Party Secretary who was killed on October 25, had told him that Erno Gero, still First Secretary, wanted to goad him into some premature move, and then slap him down for good.<sup>6</sup> He didn't really start to break away until October 28, the day he issued an amnesty to any street fighters who would peacefully surrender their weapons.<sup>7</sup> In the document below, Serov describes with some relief on October 29: "After the announcement of the government declaration on the radio, about amnesty to the students who had participated in the demonstration, the armed started to lay down their weapons."<sup>8</sup>

Nagy also edged only cautiously to expand the government to include non-communists. On October 26, Malenkov asked Nagy, "What kinds of parties do you want to have participate in the new government?" Nagy replied, "We are not talking about parties as such; we are talking about individual candidates to represent the People's Democracy." And he presented the proposal of bringing in non-Communists as the "only alternative"; any other policy would result in a "loss of contact with the workers and students."<sup>9</sup>

In fact, Khrushchev actually thought it possible that he and Tito (supposedly the national communist independent of Soviet influence) could "work on" Nagy, and persuade him to support the new Kadar government after the November 4 intervention. Perhaps if everything had gone according to the plan worked out between Khrushchev and Tito at Brioni on November 2, from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m., the Soviet leadership would never have felt compelled to deport Nagy to Rumania, put him on trial, and eventually execute him (in June 1958). This secret agreement between Khrushchev and Tito was not known until the Yugoslav and Soviet Communist Party archives were opened after the collapse of the Soviet Union in

## THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION, 4 NOVEMBER 1956

### CIPHERED TELEGRAM

FROM BUDAPEST

OUT OF SEQUENCE

We arrived at the scene after some delay; due to weather conditions, we were unable to land at the airport near Budapest. We landed 90 kilometers to the north. We stopped by the corps headquarters for orientation, and from there, in an armored personnel carrier with comrades [KGB chief Ivan] Serov and [Gen. Mikhail S.] Malinin, we set off for the city. We were accompanied by tanks, because there was shooting in Budapest at this time and casualties on both sides, including Soviet soldiers and officers.

In Buda small groups of people watched the movement of our column calmly; some looked anxious, others greeted it with a smile. The roads approaching the city and in the city were full of Soviet tanks and other materiel.

On the streets together with the Soviet troops were Hungarian patrols. In contrast to Buda, where it was calm, there was continuous shooting in Pest between isolated groups of provocators and individuals and our machine-guns, beginning at the bridge and extending to the Ministry of Defense building, as well as toward the Central Committee building. Our men did more of the shooting; to solitary shots we replied with salvos.

In the Ministry of Defense we met the ministers of defense and state security, as well as a group of Central Committee members—[Istvan] Kovacs, Zoltan Vas, and others, who were authorized to

*continued on page 29*

*continued on page 27*

**YELTSIN DOSSIER***contributed from page 22*

ment describes the discussions, participants, contributors, and differences of opinion at the Presidium meetings. Instead, one repeatedly encounters such euphemistic phraseology as “V szootvetsztvii sz obmenom mnyenyijami”, “sz ucsotom obmena mnyenyijami”, “na osznove szosztajascevszja obmena mnyenyijami” —“in accordance with,” “in regard to,” and “based on” the discussion.<sup>4</sup> Yet we have no real data on debates, no minutes of the deliberations of the top Soviet leaders.<sup>5</sup>

By contrast, among the declassified U.S. government records on the Hungarian crisis, both published and in archives, researchers readily find numerous documents describing policy debates, including detailed minutes of National Security Council discussions, as well as serious analytical papers prepared by the NSC and various intelligence agencies.<sup>6</sup> Whether comparable documentation exists on the Soviet side, but remains off-limits, or whether such items of Presidium transcripts on the crisis do not exist, was not clarified in the materials delivered by Yeltsin. In any event, the result is that the crucial factors which determine top-level decision-making can be analyzed only by inference.

An additional problem is that the Soviet documents only treat the Hungarian issue in a very narrow sense—the context of the international situation makes but a dim appearance. Important issues like the Suez crisis, U.S. behavior, the problems of the East-Central European allies, barely receive mention.

Still, while all these issues require further thorough research, even the selected documents permit an illuminating exploration of the thinking, terminology, priorities, and particular style of conduct between the leadership of the Soviet empire and Moscow’s East European satellites at this juncture of the Cold War, as well as of the Soviet style of information gathering and crisis management. In “normal circumstances,” the Soviet leadership gathered information on the satellites through two inner official channels:

a. The higher level, represented by the ambassador, whose scope of authority included keeping in touch with top local party leaders. The Soviet ambassador was at the same time the local

representative of the CPSU CC from the mid-’50s. Beside gathering information he occasionally made recommendations too, and in crisis situations his reports reached the party Presidium. Between 29 April 1956 and 14 October 1956 only four out of Ambassador Andropov’s ten known reports got there. At the end of September 1956, Andrei Gromyko, the deputy minister of foreign affairs, had to summarize Andropov’s communications to the Presidium, when the crisis was becoming apparent.<sup>7</sup> Otherwise, Andropov prepared his reports for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the “Department” of the Central Committee (meaning the division responsible for contact with the foreign Communist parties).<sup>8</sup>

b. Other embassy personnel worked on the lower level, gathering information on special areas of interest to the leadership and maintaining personal contacts with other sources (primarily with party figures who had been in Moscow but were not part of the top leadership), and their reports usually reached the medium level only.

In crisis situations intelligence was elevated to a special level, and on such occasions the party Presidium sent its own members as plenipotentiary envoys to the place of crisis to conduct personal inspections, assessments, and, on occasion, negotiations. Usually they attempted to maintain secrecy. The envoys contacted local leaders first and collected information. Then they made recommendations for decision to Moscow and sometimes had the right to take local action, evidently on the basis of consultation with the center. Four such extraordinary delegations visited Hungary between the summer of 1956 and the end of that year:

1. Mikhail Suslov, 7-14 June 1956 (1 report);
2. Anastas Mikoyan, 13-21 July 1956 (6 reports);
3. Mikoyan, Suslov, Serov, and Gen. Mikhail Malinin (Deputy Chief of Staff of the Soviet Army, who might have arrived earlier), 24-31 October 1956 (10 reports);
4. Suslov, Boris Aristov, Georgi Malenkov and Serov (who was probably on location continuously from October 24), and Marshal I.S. Koniev (Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw

Pact, who commanded the invasion force from November 1) (11 reports).

These are the most important of the Soviet documents: 28 reports in which the members of the party’s top leadership or their “special subordinates” observe, analyze, act, and negotiate. True, they did so “only” in Budapest, but at least they are shown in action. Moreover, some key aspects of the second and third missions can be cross-checked with the wealth of Hungarian party and state documents released in recent years.<sup>9</sup>

The normal and extraordinary political decision-making levels of the party leadership received supplementary information from other parts of the intertwined party-state organs, most importantly autonomous organs of force such as the army and KGB.

The reports of the extraordinary level contain numerous errors, mistakes, and faults, especially during and immediately after the Revolution. Persons and locations cropped up which remained in obscurity for the Soviet leaders. They received the biased and/or panic stricken information above all on street atrocities written by the usual Hungarian informants, especially Hungarian state security officers.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand the Soviets also manipulated the news, Andropov, Serov, and Zhukov in particular. The last-named, for example, made no distinction between the fighting civilian insurgents and the Hungarian army—which never fought in mass—when describing resistance to the second Soviet intervention after November 4. This exaggeration of the true proportions of resistance was used to justify the immense scale of the Soviet intervention.

Thus, the Soviet documents must be handled with great circumspection as far as facts are concerned. Contemporary readers will be astounded by the raw, coarse nature of the reports, which were frequently written in primitive party jargon. Hardly camouflaged orders and instructions are confusingly intermingled with niceties, “comradely” good advice, and partylike statements. Mikoyan obviously differed in this sense from Malenkov and Serov, not to mention Andropov. One finds hardly any trace of contrary opinions from the Hungarian side concerning important questions, with the exception of Imre Nagy during the Revolution. While differing Hungarian views were noted in the phase of Soviet informa-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Though popular demands and sentiments were of basic interest for Nagy, they did not fit into the thinking of the empire. On October 29 and 30, the reports of Moscow's observers implied the collapse of the institutional system in Hungary vital to Soviet interests.<sup>19</sup> Simultaneously, the outbreak of the Suez war and the fact that the Americans gave clear signals of non-intervention<sup>20</sup> gave the preparation of a second intervention an external green light. On October 30, the Mikoyan group explicitly referred to a political and military decision to be taken soon, in relation to which "comrade Konev"—the Soviet Marshal who commanded the Warsaw Pact unified forces—"will have to proceed to Hungary without delay."<sup>21</sup> The following day Mikoyan and Suslov returned to Moscow.

10. The Moscow evaluation is shown clearly by the CPSU CC Presidium's telegram to the Italian communist party leader, Palmiro Togliatti, on October 31: "We agree with your assessment that the Hungarian situation is moving towards a reactionary direction. We are informed that Nagy is playing a double game and is under the increasing influence of reactionary forces.

For the time being we shall not make an open move against Nagy, but the reactionary turn will not receive our acquiescence."<sup>22</sup>

11. Although the CPSU CC Presidium's resolutions are very terse, the three-fold method of implementing the basic political decision is clearly outlined.<sup>23</sup> Military measures were above all Zhukov's responsibility, and then the task of Marshal Konev, who came to Hungary after November 1. International preparation, such as informing the allies was undertaken by Khrushchev himself, as well as by Malenkov and Molotov (the details of these consultations, including the negotiations with the Chinese in Moscow, with the Poles in Brest, and with Tito in Brioni, are available<sup>24</sup>).

And finally, the establishment of a new political center in Hungary required the most participants. Four members of the Secretariat began to draft and assemble the necessary documents on October 31, most importantly, a declaration of the new Hungarian government (prepared in Moscow).<sup>25</sup> Only Brezhnev remained of this team at the November 1 meeting of the Presidium, but there is a mention of Serov, who stayed in Budapest.<sup>26</sup> It was his job (along with Andropov) to secure the personnel for the new local political center and to deliver the key people to Moscow. The key person was Janos Kadar, but this is an entirely different story.

1. The following two volumes published the Soviet documents related to 1956: Eva Gal, Andras B. Hegedus, Gyorgy Litvan, and Janos M. Rainer, eds., *A "Jelcin dosszie." Szovjet dokumentumok 1956-rol.* (Budapest: Szazadveg Kiado-1956-os Intezet, 1993). [*The Yeltsin Dossier*"]; *Soviet documents on 1956*; hereafter: *The Yeltsin Dossier*]; and Vjacseszlav Szereda and Alekszandr Sztikalin, eds., *Hianyzo lapok 1956 tortenetebol: Dokumentumok a volt SZKP KB Leveltarabol* (Budapest: Mora Ferenc Konyvkiado, 1993). (Zenit konyvek) [*Missing pages from the history of 1956. Documents from the archives of the old Central Committee of the Communist Party*; hereafter: *Missing pages*]. See also Janos M. Rainer, "1956—The Other Side of the Story. Five Documents From the Yeltsin File," *The Hungarian Quarterly* 34:129 (Spring 1993), 100-114. The *Bulletin* thanks Rainer for granting permission to draw on that article.

For further information on new publications and sources related to the events in question, contact the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, which publishes an annual compendium/yearbook (1956: *Evkonyv*) and serves as a center for scholarly research activities in Budapest:

As 1956-os Magyar Forradalom  
Tortenetenek Dokumentacios es Kutatointezete  
H-1074 Budapest, Dohany u. 74.  
Hungary  
Tel.: 322-3620, 322-4026, 322-5228

Fax: 322-3084

2. [Ed. note: See documents in Fond 89 in the Tsentr Khranenia Sovremennoi Dokumentatsii (TsKhSD) [Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documents] and Fund 059a in the Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossijskoi Federatsii (AVP RF) [Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation] in Moscow.]

3. Arthur J. Alexander, "Modeling Soviet Decisionmaking," in Jiri Valenta and William Potter, eds., *Soviet Decisionmaking for National Security* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 9-22.

4. E.g., the 31 October 1956 Resolution of the CC CPSU, document no. II/12., *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 70, 72.

5. Based on the experience and documents of the Hungarian leadership it is possible that records like minutes were not made. According to Soviet experts, the head of Department of the General Department of the CC CPSU prepared short summaries about the participants, contributors and the opinion voiced at Presidium meetings.

6. For a representative collection of declassified U.S. government documents on the 1956 crisis, see U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1955-1957*, vol. 25, *Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1990), esp. 259-581.

7. Gromyko summary of 17 September 1956, attached to CPSU CC protocol P43 of 27 September 1956, *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 42-44.

8. *Missing pages*, 28-29, n. 7.

9. From the time of the second mission, see Mikoyan's speech at the meeting of the Hungarian Workers' Party (HWP) Central Committee, 18 July 1956. Magyar Orszagos Leveltar (Hungarian National Archives - Mol) MDP-MSZMP Iratok Gyujtemenye (Collection of Papers of the HWP and the HSWP) 276/52/35 o.e. pp. 17-28; and Mikoyan's report, 18 July 1956, *Missing pages*, 59-65. From the time of the third mission see the records of the October 26 meeting of the HWP Central Committee (excerpt) and the record of the October 27-28 meeting of the HWP Political Committee, "From the documents of the leading organs of the party and the government 23 October 1956-4 November 1956," published by Ferenc Glatz, *Historia* 4-5 (1989), 32-40. Mikoyan and Suslov were not present at the Central Committee meeting, but reported about it. See Mikoyan to CC CPSU, n.d., and Mikoyan and Suslov to CC CPSU, 26 October 1956, *Missing pages*, 106-113. Mikoyan took part in the Political Committee meeting, but there are no such documents among those we received.

10. See, e.g., Serov's reports of 28 and 29 October 1956, *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 54-55, 62-64, or the discussion of lieutenant-colonel Strarovtoi with AV (State Security) Major Vig, report dated 31 October 1956, *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 76-81.

11. See Mikoyan to CC CPSU, 14 July 1956, *Missing pages*, 40.

12. The 24 October 1956 Moscow meeting, published by Tibor Hajdu in *Az 1956-os Magyar Forradalom Tortenetenek Akademiai Dokumentacios es Kutatointezete Evkonyv I. 1992*. [*The Yearbook of the Documentation and History Institute of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution*] (Budapest: 1956-os Intezet, 1992), 153. [Ed. note: See the English translation by Mark Kramer in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.]

13. The 24 October 1956 Moscow meeting, *ibid.*, 155.

14. Mikoyan-Suslov to CC CPSU, 26 October 1956, *Missing pages*, 109-110.

15. *Ibid.*, 112-13.

16. *Ibid.*, 112.

17. *Historia* 4-5 (1989), 37.

18. Mikoyan-Suslov report, 29 October 1956, *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 60-61; Mikoyan-Suslov report, 30 October 1956, *Missing pages*, 125-126.
19. Serov to Mikoyan and Suslov, 29 October 1956, *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 62-64.
20. See telegram from State Department to U.S. Embassy in Moscow, 29 October 1956, *FRUS, 1955-57*, vol 25, 328.
21. Mikoyan-Suslov report, 30 October 1956, *Missing pages*, 126.
22. Telegram to Soviet ambassador in Rome for Togliatti, 31 October 1956, *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 69.
23. 31 October 1956 resolution, CC CPSU, *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 70, 72.
24. See Janos Tischler, "Reports by the Polish Ambassador and the telegrams to the Polish Embassy in Budapest during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution," in *Tortenelemi Szemle* 10 (1992), 73; *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), 461-64; see also Veljko Micunovic, *Tito kovete voltam, Moszkva 1956-58* [I was Tito's Ambassador. Moscow, 1956-1958] (Budapest: Interart, 1990), 128-37.
25. Kadar government declaration, 4 November 1956, *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 87-93, esp. editor's note on 92-93.
26. CPSU CC resolution, protocol P50/I, 1 November 1956, *The Yeltsin Dossier*, 76.

Janos M. Rainer, a scholar at the Institute for the History and Documentation of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in Budapest, has published numerous works on the 1956 events and is working on a biography of Imre Nagy.

### IMRE NAGY

*continued from page 23*

1991. On November 4, after Nagy and twelve other Hungarian leaders took refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy, the Soviet Ambassador in Belgrade, N. P. Firiubin, sent a telegram to Moscow at 4:30 p.m.:

Kaldelj [a reference to Yugoslav Vice Premier and leading official of the Yugoslav CP Edward Kardelj] reported that they contacted Imre Nagy *as it had been agreed with Khrushchev ...* It is still not clear whether or not Imre Nagy made the declaration [about Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact] in the name of the government in Budapest. If he made this declaration, then they, the Yugoslavs, will try to have him announce publicly that he made this declaration under the pressure of the reaction. They also intend to *negotiate with Nagy, to get him to make an announcement that he supports the government headed by Kadar in Szolnok.*<sup>10</sup> [emphases added]

(Szolnok is a city 65 miles southeast of Budapest, where Kadar's "Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government" was

temporarily located. It was from Szolnok that Kadar's associate Ferenc Munnich announced the establishment of the new government at 5 a.m. on November 4. This was the final clue to Imre Nagy that he had been betrayed; he fled to the Yugoslav Embassy an hour later. Kadar did not actually return to Budapest until November 7 at 6:10 a.m.)<sup>11</sup>

Two months later, on 11 January 1957, Tito told Firiubin that during the Hungarian "events" the "reaction raised its head" in Yugoslavia, "especially in Croatia, where the reactionary elements openly incited members of Yugoslav security organs to violence." He said, "I didn't want to complicate our [Yugoslav-Soviet] relations in any way."<sup>12</sup> And Kadar told Andropov on 8 November 1956, "I noticed that the Yugoslavs are trying to save Nagy not because they need him, but because of their fear that through Nagy some undesirable things for them can occur."<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the writer and Nagy supporter, Tamas Aczel, wrote that Nagy, after conversations with the Yugoslavs in their embassy, apparently sketched out a declaration of his resignation as prime minister and his pledge to support the Kadar government, but the other members of his entourage would not support his intentions.<sup>14</sup>

This suggests that the Soviet leaders thought Nagy was basically malleable, and could be persuaded to support them. The documents from the CPSU Central Committee archive are full of statements about Nagy's essential loyalty to Moscow and the communist cause. Erno Gero told Ambassador Andropov on 12 October 1956 that he was "firmly convinced that Nagy was not exploiting those forces which sought to rip Hungary away from the USSR and from the entire socialist camp," since he was not an "enemy of the people"; he simply had "dangerous ideas."<sup>15</sup> Zoltan Vas, Rakosi's close friend and Politburo member, said: "Nagy is not an anti-Soviet person, but he wants to build socialism in his own way, the Hungarian way."<sup>16</sup>

Khrushchev's decision—with Kadar's full support—to execute Nagy came only later, as Nagy's obstinacy in captivity grew, and as Malenkov joined forces with Molotov and other Stalinists to try to oust Khrushchev in 1957.

Perhaps as a credit to Soviet propaganda, many people, some scholars included, mistakenly believe it was Nagy's bold declaration that he would withdraw Hungary

from the Warsaw Pact that caused the Soviet Union to intervene for the second time, on 4 November 1956. But Imre Nagy was too hesitant to make such a bold move without warrant. Clearly, Nagy only broke ranks with the USSR in this way after it was obvious that additional Soviet troops were entering Hungary, not just departing.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, the documents suggest that Soviet leaders most familiar with the Hungarian situation (e.g. Mikoyan, Suslov, Zhukov, Aristov) had begun to conclude that Nagy—however loyal he was to them—was losing control of the population. As early as October 27, KGB chief Ivan Serov wrote to Moscow from Budapest: "It is significant that proclamations have appeared around town, in which *Imre Nagy is declared a traitor* and [rehabilitated non-communist politician] Bela Kovacs named as a candidate for Prime Minister. It is being suggested that demonstrations be organized in Kovacs' honor."<sup>18</sup> [emphasis added]

Three days later, Mikoyan and Suslov sent a telegram to Moscow which reveals their doubt in Nagy's ability even to control his own armed forces. They wrote: "the peaceful liquidation of this hotbed [of insurgents] is almost out of the question [*pochti iskliuchena*]. We are going to achieve the liquidation of it by the Hungarian armed forces. There is only one fear: the Hungarian army has taken on a wait-and-see attitude. [*zanimala vyzhidatel'nyiu pozitsiiu*] Our military advisers say that relations of the Hungarian officers and generals with Soviet officers in the past few days has deteriorated further. There isn't the same kind of trust as there used to be. It might happen that Hungarian units sent to put down the insurgents will unite with them, and then it will be necessary for Soviet armed forces to once again undertake military operations..."<sup>19</sup>

Later in this same telegram, Mikoyan and Suslov disclose their assumption that they could deceive Nagy as to their own wait-and-see attitude: "We intend to declare [*predpologuem zaiavit*'] today to Imre Nagy that the troops are leaving according to our agreement, that for now we do not intend to bring in any more troops on account of the fact that the Nagy government is dealing with the situation in Hungary. We intend to give instructions to the Minister of Defense to cease sending troops into Hungary, continuing to concentrate them on Soviet territory. As long as the Hungarian troops occupy a nonhostile position, these troops will

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

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

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

attack on the street fighters that had been planned by the Hungarian Defense Ministry and the military sub-committee of the Hungarian Central Committee. Daniel F. Calhoun, *Hungary and Suez, 1956: An Exploration of Who Makes History* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 331. Zoltan Tildy, formerly President of the Hungarian Republic and Secretary General of the Smallholders Party, had been named deputy prime minister by Nagy on October 27 after Tildy was released after eight years of detention in May 1956.

2. Information from Mikoyan in Budapest, 27 October 1956, Tsentr Khraneniia Sovremennoi Dokumentatsii (TsKhSD) [Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documents], f. 89, per. 45, dok 9, l. 3.

3. Calhoun, *Hungary and Suez, 1956*, 229.

4. Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986), 141.

5. Information of Mikoyan and Suslov from Budapest, 25 October 1956, AVP RF, f. 059a, op. 4, p. 6, d. 5, l. 9.

6. Calhoun, *Hungary and Suez, 1956*, 229.

7. Aleksander Stykalin and Elena Orekhova, “Vengerskie Sobytiia 1956 Goda I Pozitsiia SSSR (Po Materialam TsKhSD)” Slavianovedenie: Otdelnyi Ottisk (Moscow, Russia, 1994). Charles Gati also pinpoints October 28 as “Nagy’s first turning point.” *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc*, 128.

8. Information of Serov about the situation in Hungary on 29 October 1956, TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 45, dok. 11, l. 1.

9. Information of Mikoyan from Budapest to the CC CPSU, 26 October 1956, TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 2, l. 98.

10. Telegram from Firiubin in Belgrade, 4 November

1956, #1059-1060, TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 45, dok. 25.

11. Information from Zhukov to the CC CPSU, TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 3, l. 27.

12. Information from Fiubin in Belgrade, 11 January 1957, TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 4, l. 43.

13. Information from Andropov in Budapest, 8 November 1956, TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 3, ll. 1-3.

14. Valerii Musatov, “SSSR I Vengerskie Sobytiia 1956 g.: Novye Akhivnye Materialy,” *Novaia Noveishaia Istoriia* 1 (Jan. 1993), 18.

15. Information from Andropov in Budapest, 12 October 1956, TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 2, l. 76.

16. Information of Andropov from Budapest, 14 October 1956, TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 2, l. 89.

17. Ciphred telegram from Yu. V. Andropov in Budapest, 1 November 1956, AVP RF, f. 059a, op. 4, p. 6, d. 5, ll. 17-19.

18. Information from Serov in Budapest, 27 October 1956, TsKhSD, f. 89, op. 2, d. 2, l. 132. Kovacs, the former Secretary General of the Smallholder Party, had been rehabilitated in August 1956 and appointed Minister of Agriculture by Nagy on October 27.

19. Information of Mikoyan and Suslov, 30 October 1956, TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 45, dok. 12, l. 3.

20. *Ibid.*

*Johanna Granville is asst. professor of political science at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA. Currently a Fulbright Scholar (1994-95), she is conducting research in the Communist Party and Foreign Ministry archives in Moscow.*

## IMRE NAGY, aka “VOLODYA”— A DENT IN THE MARTYR’S HALO?

by Johanna Granville

When Nikita Khrushchev dropped the other shoe with his “Secret Speech” at the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956, not only did he expose Stalin’s crimes, he also created a public image of himself as a patron of “different paths to socialism” that would later prove hard to uphold.<sup>1</sup> All over Eastern Europe, the “little Stalins”—Matyas Rakosi in Hungary, Antonin Novotny in Czechoslovakia, Boleslaw Bierut in Poland, and their like<sup>2</sup>—watched fearfully, wondering how far de-Stalinization would go. Meanwhile, their opponents, who had criticized Stalinist policies, suddenly rose in popularity and stature.

The Hungarian leader Imre Nagy was one such critic. Having served briefly as Hungary’s prime minister (July 1953-March 1955), Imre Nagy had become famous for his censure of the pace of collectivization, his expertise in agrarian reform, and advocacy of greater production of consumer goods. These were, of course, the same policies that Khrushchev advocated, having

adopted them from Malenkov, after the latter was safely ousted from the prime ministership. Nagy, author of the 1953 “New Course,” was Khrushchev’s political kinsman, the epitome of communist new thinking for his time.

In Western history texts, Nagy has become a genuine hero and tragic figure. As former KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov wrote bitterly, Nagy acquired in death a “martyr’s halo.” A professor of agricultural economy and long-time member of the Hungarian Academy of Science, Nagy, we know, was something of a “bookworm,” an idealist mixed up with ruthless politicians of Matyas Rakosi’s ilk. Although ostensibly a harmless theorist, Nagy was repeatedly the victim of Moscow power plays.<sup>3</sup> In 1955, in connection with the new anti-Malenkov coalition, he lost the prime ministership and was accused of “right-wing deviationism.” His shining moment came when he led a reformist communist surge to power and regained the prime minister’s post, and still more briefly, after some hesitation, became the leader of a doomed popular nationalist revolt against the Soviet Union, during the two-week span of the Hungarian Revolution, from October 23 to November 4, 1956. On

4 November 1956, Nagy was forced out of power by a massive Soviet intervention, and ultimately, at 5 a.m. on 16 June 1958, after a secretly-staged show trial, Khrushchev had him executed, to show other East European leaders just how far he would permit liberal reforms in the Soviet bloc to go. But Imre Nagy, it was said, despite the political setbacks it would bring him, was always ready to speak the truth, to refuse to perform self-criticism (“*samokritika*”).

Indeed, Machiavelli’s admonition seemed to address Nagy perfectly: “The man who neglects the real to study the ideal will learn how to accomplish his ruin, not his salvation. Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good.”<sup>4</sup>

To be sure, Nagy’s refusal to recant did not always bring him ruin—not at first. It earned him the respect of his people, especially the members of the Petofi Circle, a literary-intellectual group with strong nationalist leanings.<sup>5</sup> As KGB Chairman Ivan Serov reported to Moscow from Budapest three months before the Hungarian revolt, “The young people in the Petofi Circle say that Petofisti are also communists, but they

*continued on page 34*

## DOCUMENTS ON HUNGARY

*continued from page 23*

lead the operation for liquidating the riots in the city. There is a field headquarters there, which works in contact with the Hungarians. It should be noted that during a telephone conversation with Gero from the corps headquarters, in reply to our question about the situation, he answered that there is both an improvement and deterioration in the situation, and that the arrival of Soviet troops in the city has a negative effect on the disposition of the inhabitants, including the workers.

After a conversation with military personnel, during which we heard the preliminary reports of the Soviet military command and the command of the Hungarian armed forces, which—after closer familiarization—turned out to be rather exaggerated in a pessimistic way, we stopped by the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party, where we conversed with [Erno] Gero, Imre Nagy, Zoltan Santo, and [Andras] Hegedus, who informed us about the situation in the city and the measures they had taken to liquidate the riots.

We had the impression that Gero especially, but the other comrades as well, are exaggerating the strength of the opponent and underestimating their own strength. At five o'clock Moscow time the situation in the city was as follows:

All the hotbeds of the insurgents have been crushed; liquidation of the main hotbed, at the radio station, where about 4,000 people are concentrated, is still going on. They raised a white flag, but when the representatives of the Hungarian authorities appeared, they presented as a condition of surrender the removal of Gero from his post, which of course was rejected. Our command is setting for itself the task of liquidating this hotbed tonight. It is significant that the Hungarian workers here, above all the state security personnel, put up a violent resistance to the insurgents and tolerated defeat here only due to the exhaustion of ammunition and the attack on them by a fresh battalion of Hungarian troops who mutinied.

The comrades express the opinion that the Hungarian army conducted itself poorly, although the Debrecen division performed well. The Hungarian sailors, who patrolled the banks of the Dunai [Danube] River, also performed well, especially, as already noted, state security troops and employees.

Arrests of the instigators and organizers of the disturbances, more than 450 people, are being carried out. The exposure and arrest of the instigators continues.

The task has been set to complete the liquidation of the remaining individual groups hiding in buildings. Due to the fact that a turning point in the events has occurred, it has been decided to use more boldly the Hungarian units for patrolling, for detaining suspicious elements and people violating the introduction of a state of emer-

gency, and for guarding important installations (railroad stations, roads, etc).

The Hungarian comrades, especially Imre Nagy, approved of the use of more Hungarian military units, militia, and state security units for the purpose of lightening the burden of the Soviet troops and to emphasize the role of the Hungarians themselves in the liquidation of the riots. The majority of the workers did not participate in the riots, and it is even said that the workers in Chepel, who had no weapons, drove off the provocators, who wanted to incite them to riot. However, some of the workers, especially young ones, did take part in the disturbances.

One of the most serious mistakes of the Hungarian comrades was the fact that that, before 12 midnight last night, they did not permit anyone to shoot at the participants in the riots.

The Hungarians themselves are taking measures, and we gave them additional advice with respect to the organization of workers' fighting squads at the factories and in the regional committees of the party and about the arming of such squads.

They had already made such a decision, but they didn't carry it out, because they couldn't deliver weapons at the factories, fearing that the opponent would intercept them. Measures were taken to provide for the delivery of weapons today with the help of our armored personnel carriers. Radio addresses by prominent party and government leaders, as well as other public leaders, were organized. Gero, Imre Nagy, and Zoltan Tildy have already spoken. Istvan Dobi, Hegedus, Sakasics, Kadar, Zoltan Santo, Marosan, and Ronai will be speaking. Appeals by the Womens', Youth, and Trades Unions will be published.

Today not a single newspaper was published, only a bulletin. It has been arranged to have at least one newspaper published tomorrow. It has also been arranged to announce to the public that all citizens who fail to surrender weapons within the next 24 hours will be accused of a criminal offense.

We are not broadcasting the information about the changes in the leadership of the party and government, since the embassy has already reported it. While conversing with the Hungarian comrades, we did not touch on that issue. One gets the feeling that these events are facilitating the unity of the Central Committee and Politburo. When we asked Imre Nagy when and how he joined in the struggle with the opponents of the party, he replied that he started to take action in the struggle yesterday at six o'clock in the evening, not by the summons of the Central Committee, but because the youth in the meeting demanded that he go there and speak to them, which he did.

He thinks the majority of the crowd of almost a hundred thousand people approved of his appeals, but many groups of fascist elements hollered, whistled, and screamed, when he said that it was necessary to work together with the

party. Fights took place in the square between the fascist and democratic elements. The whole crowd dispersed peaceably, but then began to regroup in various places in the city and the events well-known to you began.

During Imre Nagy's reply, Gero retorted that they were looking for Imre Nagy before the meeting and couldn't find him. Nagy said that if they had appeared before the crowd earlier and announced the changes in the leadership before or during the meeting, then the events would not have grown complicated. The other comrades met this assertion of Imre Nagy's with silence.

To our question: is there unity in the Central Committee and Politburo in the face of the events that have taken place? Everyone answered in the affirmative, however Gero made a remark that more voices are being heard against his election as first secretary of the Central Committee, thinking that he is responsible for this whole thing. To this remark, Imre Nagy said that it is necessary to make a correction; this concerns neither the Politburo, neither the Central Committee members. Such voices, rather, are being heard from below. He cited the letter received from the secretary of one of the factory party committees, protesting the choice of Gero as first secretary. To our question, may we report to our Central Committee that the Hungarian comrades are mastering the situation and are confident that they will deal with it, they answered in the affirmative.

Gero announced that he hadn't slept for two nights; the other comrades: one night. We prearranged to meet with these same comrades at eight o'clock in the evening. We have the impression that all the Central Committee members with whom we met related well, in a friendly manner, to our appearance at such a time. We said the purpose of our arrival was to lend assistance to the Hungarian leadership in such a way as to be without friction and for the public benefit, referring especially to the participation of Soviet troops in liquidating the riots. The Hungarian citizens, especially Imre Nagy, related to this with approval.

A. MIKOYAN  
M. SUSLOV

[Source: *Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVP RF) F. 059a, Opis 4, Papka 6, Delo 5, Listy 1-7; translation by Johanna Granville.*]

\* \* \* \* \*

### 3. Mikoyan-Suslov Report, 27 October 1956

Today we participated for more than three hours in a Politburo meeting, where we discussed government appointments and the present situation. [Antal] Apro was chosen to be the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and, in

actuality, he will be the first chairman because all the rest of the deputies are "non-party people" and less strong. Apro was a member of the Directory, a member of the Military Commission, and has behaved himself very well these past few days.

The candidacy of [Iosef] Siladi for the post of Minister of Internal Affairs was turned down, because politically he was not very reliable, and Munnich was chosen instead. For the post of Minister of Defense the former deputy minister of rear units Janza Karoi was chosen. He is a communist, reliable, and a worker.

The candidacy of Laszlo Kardas for the post of Minister of Culture was also turned down. Chosen instead was [Gyorgy] Lukacs, who is a famous philosopher, and although he makes a lot of mistakes in philosophy, is very reliable politically and authoritative among the intelligentsia.

In order to strengthen the government from anti-party elements, Zoltan Tildy was chosen to be Minister without Portfolio. Zoltan is a famous public leader. Comrade Imre Nagy suggested that Zoltan Tildy not be selected because he doesn't get along well with Bela Kovacs. However, that was not acceptable.

Characteristically, at night there appeared proclamations in the city, in which Nagy was declared the chairman and Bela Kovacs was recommended as Premier. There was a summons to hold a demonstration in their honor.

As instructed by the Central Committee, Nagy called Bela Kovacs who lives outside the city, and asked him: would he join the government? Kovacs accepted, and said that he was invited to the meeting, but if he attended, he would speak out against the demonstrators for the government.

The Minister of State Farms is the non-party specialist Ryabinskii.

Characteristically all of these candidates were voted on unanimously and Nagy did not object to the replacement of individual candidates.

The Hungarian comrades in conversations with us declared, that they consider the new government appropriate and politically capable of working. Imre Nagy especially emphasized this.

The formation of this government was announced on local radio at 12 noon Hungarian time.

We had the impression that as a whole the new government is reliable and in the social sense more authoritative.

Comrade [Antal] Apro gave a paper about the military situation in assured tones. He informed everyone, by the way, that in the hospital are about three thousand injured Hungarians, and of those 250 people died. The figure of others killed or wounded is unknown.

In connection to the unpeaceful situation in the provinces, comrade Kadar asked the ques-

tion: can we increase the number of Soviet troops?

We declared that we had reserves, and however many troops were needed, we would provide them. The Hungarian comrades were very glad to hear this.

Apro suggested taking a number of actions in order to organize the further struggle and for bringing the city back to order. Apro informed us, that a significant "surrender" of weapons had begun; "700 rifles have been accepted." Apro also informed us that on the periphery, the situation was already stabilizing, but Kadar and Hegedus looked skeptical.

The Hungarian comrades started to arm the party core [*aktiv*]. It was decided to draw the armed party members into the staff of the city police. It was also decided to assign the military sensors to the radios and newspapers. It was suggested to the ministers that they ensure that the ministries and enterprises function smoothly.

Comrade Kadar informed us that the new candidate to the Politburo [Geza] Losonczy and the new secretary to the Central Committee, [Ferenc] Donath, who spoke yesterday in a capitulationist manner at the Politburo meeting, announced his disagreement with the Central Committee's policies and announced his resignation. Several members of the Central Committee [CC] called Donath a traitor of the working class.

Imre Nagy was not at this meeting, because he was busy with negotiations with the assigned ministers, and also because of "acute overexertion" he had a heart attack. Nagy was in a faint state in his office, and the Hungarian doctor didn't know what to do, so Suslov gave him medicine ["validol"] which brought Nagy back to normal. Nagy thanked him.

Considering that Losonczy and Donath were closely associated with Nagy, and since Nagy was not at the meeting, the Politburo decided to postpone making a final decision, and for the time being move on to work outside of the CC.

We invited Kadar and Nagy to have a heart-to-heart talk with us this evening in an unofficial capacity.

(Signed) Mikoyan and Suslov

Oct. 27, 1956

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok. 9; translation by Johanna Granville.*]

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 4. Andropov Report, 28 October 1956:

Budapest, October 28, 1956

In code

Sent from Budapest

Top Secret

Not to be copied

Urgent

I hereby forward a letter from the Hungarian Government to:

"The Council of Ministers of the Soviet Socialist Republics

Moscow

On behalf of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Hungary I appeal to the Government of the Soviet Union to send Soviet troops in order to put an end to the riots that have broken out in Budapest, to restore order as soon as possible, and to guarantee the conditions for peaceful and creative work.

24 October 1956

Budapest

Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Hungary Andras Hegedus"

28.X.56 [28 October 1956] Andropov

[Source: *AVP RF, f. 059a, op. 4, p. 6, d. 5, l. 12; translation from The Hungarian Quarterly 34 (Spring 1993), 104.*]

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 5. KGB Chief Serov Report, 28 October 1956

Send to the CC CPSU

A. Mikoyan

To Comrade Mikoyan, A.I.

I am reporting about the situation on 28 October 1956.

1. From the network of agents, which has contact with the insurgents, doubt is arising about whether to continue the struggle. The more active part of the opposition wants to continue fighting, but says, however: if we do stop for a while, we must still keep our weapons in order to attack again at an auspicious moment.

2. On 27 October, an agent of friends of the writer [Ivan] Boldizsar [a journalist member of the democratic opposition—J.G.] met with the leaders of the opposition group. The agent sounded the alarm about the meeting that was going on in connection with the street fighting. The other participants at the meeting decided to support the new government and expressed their intention of calling the insurgents and persuading them to stop the fighting.

3. In many regions local organs and party workers dispersed, and then established various "revolutionary" national and other committees, which are beginning their "activities" disarming the security organs. For example, the revolution-

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

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

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

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

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

SEROV

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

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

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 6. KGB Chief Serov, Report, 29 October 1956

Send to CC CPSU  
A. Mikoyan

M. Suslov  
29.X-1956

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

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

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

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

The Soviet military command is taking action to liquidate them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the morale of the operative staff declined.

On the evening, 28.X [28 October], the MVD held a meeting. [Ferenc] Munnich called the anti-government demonstration "a meeting of workers for the satisfaction of their justified demands." Fascist elements joined this movement and tried to use it for the overthrow of the government. He said the employees of the security organs honestly did their duty in the struggle with the hostile elements. Then he informed them that an extraordinary court would be organized, whereby those responsible for hanging communists and attacking government and social institutions would be tried.

After this meeting morale declined drastically. Several employees left work and never came back.

In the city a leaflet appeared of names of the "revolutionary committee of students" with a summons to kill the employees of the security organs.

The police on duty are stimulating this mood, declaring that there are traitors in the security organs, and they are angry that the employees of the security organs have started to wear police uniforms.

The Dep[uty], Minister of Internal Affairs Hars came to our adviser, wept, and stated that the employees of the security organs are considered traitors, and the insurgents are considered revolutionaries. He conversed with Comrade Kadar on this issue. However, he did not get a comforting answer.

The leader of the internal troops of the MVD Orban told our adviser that he will collect the officers and will break through to the USSR. The former deputy of the MVD Dekan stated that the provocateurs are arranging the massacre of the employees of the security organs and their families. The bandits are ascertaining the addresses of the employees. Dekan intends to create a brigade composed of the employees and with weapons advance to the Soviet border. If they don't get that far, then they will fight underground as partisans and beat the enemies.

The employees of the central apparatus stopped work and went home, declaring that they are undisciplined and do not have the right to meet with the agency. On the periphery the security organs also stopped working, since the local powers dismissed them.

The regional administration in the city of Sobolcs (40 employees) left for Rumania. The employees of the Debrecen regional administration went to the Soviet border in the region of Uzhgorod and asked the border guards to let them into the USSR. On the border with Czechoslovakia a large group of employees have gathered, waiting for a permit to enter that country.

In connection with the situation created in the MVD in the evening, I intend to call a meeting with Munnich to elucidate his opinion in relation to the further sojourn of our employees, in the

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

SEROV

29.X.56

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

\* \* \* \* \*

### 7. Mikoyan-Suslov Report, 30 October 1956

The political situation in the country is not getting better; it is getting worse. This is expressed in the following: in the leading organs of the party organs there is a feeling of helplessness. The party organizations are in the process of collapse. Hooligan elements have become more insolent, seizing regional party committees, killing communists. The organization of party volunteer squads is going slowly. The factories are stalled. The people are sitting at home. The railroads are not working. The hooligan students and other resistance elements have changed their tactics and are displaying greater activity. Now not all them are shooting, but instead are seizing institutions. For example, last night the printing office of the central party newspaper was seized.

The new Minister of Internal Affairs sent 100 fighters who accosted more than 200 people, but did not open fire, because the CC advised not to spill blood. That was late at night. Imre Nagy was sleeping in his apartment, and they, apparently did not want complications with Nagy, fearing that opening fire without his knowledge would be an occasion for the weakening of the leadership.

They [the "hooligan elements"—J.G.] occupied the regional telephone station. The radio station is working, but it does not reflect the opinion of the CC, since in fact it is located in other peoples' hands.

The anti-revolutionary newspaper did not come out, because there were counterrevolutionary articles in it and the printing office refused to print it.

An opposition group in the region around the Corwin theater had negotiations with Nagy for the peaceful surrendering of their weapons. However, as of the present moment the weapons have not been surrendered, except for a few hundred rifles. The insurgents declare that they will not give them up until the Soviet troops leave Hungary. Thus the peaceful liquidation of this hotbed is impossible. We will achieve the liquidation of these armed Hungarian forces. But there is just one fear: the Hungarian army has occupied a wait-and-see position. Our military advisors say that relations between the Hungarian officers and generals and Soviet officers in the past few days has deteriorated. There is no trust as there was earlier. It could happen, that the

Hungarian units sent against the insurgents could join these other Hungarians, and then it will be necessary for the Soviet forces to once more undertake military operations.

Last night by the instructions of Imre Nagy, Andropov was summoned. Nagy asked him: is it true that new Soviet military units are continuing to enter Hungary from the USSR. If yes, then what is their goal? We did not negotiate this.

Our opinion on this issue: we suspect that this could be a turning point in the change in Hungarian policy in the [UN] Security Council. We intend to declare today to Imre Nagy that the troops are leaving according to our agreement, that for now we do not intend to bring in any more troops on account of the fact that the Nagy government is dealing with the situation in Hungary.

We intend to give instructions to the Minister of Defense to cease sending troops into Hungary, continuing to concentrate them on Soviet territory. As long as the Hungarian troops occupy a nonhostile position, these troops will be sufficient. If the situation further deteriorates, then, of course, it will be necessary to reexamine the whole issue in its entirety. We do not yet have a final opinion of the situation—how sharply it has deteriorated. After the session today at 11 o'clock Moscow time, the situation in the Central Committee will become clear and we will inform you. We think it is essential that Comrade Konev come to Hungary immediately.

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 89, Per 45, Dok. 12; translation by Johanna Granville.*]

\* \* \* \* \*

### 8. "Resolution of the Presidium of the Central Committee About the Situation in Hungary" (Protocol 49) of 31 October 1956

Workers of the World, Unite! Strictly secret  
Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Extract from Minutes No. 49/VI taken on the October 31, 1956 meeting of the Presidium of the CC

#### About the situation in Hungary

1. In accord with the exchange of opinions at the session of the Presidium of the CC CPSU, Comrs. Khrushchev, Molotov, and Malenkov are empowered to conduct negotiations with the representatives of the CC of the U[nited] W[orkers'] P[arty] of P[oland].

2. Confirmed is the text of the telegram to the Soviet Ambassador in Belgrade for Comr. Tito (Enclosed). In the event of an affirmative reply, Comrs. Khrushchev and Malenkov are autho-

rized to conduct negotiations with Comr. Tito.

3. Provide Comr. Zhukov with an account of the exchange of opinions at the Presidium of the CC CPSU session, [instruct him] to prepare a plan of measures [*plan meropriatii*], in connection to the events in Hungary, and to inform the CC CPSU.

4. Inform Comrs. Shepilov, Brezhnev, Furtseva, and Pospelov on the basis of the exchange of opinions at the CC Presidium to prepare essential documents and submit them to the CC CPSU for review.

SECRETARY OF THE CC

\*\*\*\*\*

To point VI of protocol 49  
Top Secret  
Special Folder, Extraordinary

To the Soviet Ambassador in Belgrade

Quickly visit Comrade Tito and relay the following:

"In connection with the created situation in Hungary we would like to have a meeting with you incognito on the night of November 1 or on the morning of November 2. We agree to come to Belgrade for this purpose or another point in Yugoslavia or Soviet territory according to your wishes. Our delegation will consist of Comrs. Khrushchev and Malenkov. We await your reply via Comr. Firiubin.

N. KHRUSHCHEV"

If Tito is not in Belgrade, then give Comr. [Eduard] Kardelj [Deputy Head of the Yugoslav Government] or [Aleksandar] Rankovic [Yugoslav Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister] the original text for immediate transferral.

Send a report on the carrying out of your task.

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok. 15; translation by Johanna Granville.*]

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Draft telegram to Italian Communist Leader Palmiro Togliatti on the question of the situation in Hungary," 31 October 1956, CPSU CC Protocol 49**

Workers of the World, Unite!  
Top Secret  
Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
No P 49/69

To Comrade Shepilov (M[inistry] of F[oreign] A[ffairs]) and to Comrade Vinogradov  
Extract from Minutes No. 49, taken at the October 31, 1956 meeting of the Presidium of the CC

Draft of a telegram to be sent to Comrade Togliatti

The CC approves the attached text of a telegram to be sent to Comrade Togliatti in connection with the Hungarian situation.

Secretary of the CC

\*\*\*\*\*

To Paragraph 69 of Minutes No. 49  
Top Secret

ROME

For Comrade TOGLIATTI

In your evaluation of the situation in Hungary and of the tendencies of development of the Hungarian Government toward a reactionary development, we are in agreement with you. According to our information, Nagy is occupying a two-faced position and is falling more and more under the influence of the reactionary forces. For the time being we are not speaking out openly against Nagy, but we will not reconcile ourselves with the turn of events toward a reactionary debauché.

Your friendly warnings regarding the possibility of the weakening of the unity of the collective leadership of our party have no basis. We can firmly assure you that in the complex international situation our collective leadership unanimously [*yedinodushno*] evaluates the situation and unanimously takes appropriate decisions.

CC CPSU

[Source: *TsKhSD*, F. 89, Per. 45, Dok. 14; translation by Johanna Granville, Mark Doctoroff, and in *The Hungarian Quarterly* 34 (Spring 1993), 107.]

\*\*\*\*\*

### 9. Andropov Report, 1 November 1956

CODED TELEGRAM

Top Secret  
Not to be copied

From Budapest  
Priority

Today, on November 1, at 7 p.m. I received

an invitation to the inner cabinet meeting of the Council of Ministers of the H[ungarian] P[ople's] R[epublic]. Imre Nagy, who chaired the meeting, informed the participants in a rather nervous tone that in the morning he had addressed the Soviet Ambassador in connection with the Soviet troops crossing the Hungarian border and advancing towards the heart of the country. Nagy "demanded" an explanation in that matter. The way Nagy said all this suggested that he expected me to affirm that he had really expressed his protests to me. Also, he kept looking at Zoltan Tildy all along, as if expecting support.

Tildy behaved with dignity. He spoke immediately after Imre Nagy, in a tone that was much friendlier and calmer. He said that if the Soviet troops continued their advance on Budapest, there would be a scandal and the Government would be forced to resign. Tildy would like to prevent the workers' anger turning against the Soviet Union.

Tildy said that he insisted that the Soviet troops—at least those which are not stationed in Hungary under the terms of the Warsaw Pact—be withdrawn without delay.

Kadar supported Nagy; Haraszti and Ferenc Erdei spoke very nervously and in a manner unfriendly to us. Dobi remained silent.

After they spoke I offered my views—in keeping with the instructions I had received. Nagy immediately replied that although he accepted that my statement was good, it did not answer the Hungarian Government's question.

Nagy proposed that, since the Soviet Government had not stopped the advance of the Soviet troops, nor had it given a satisfactory explanation of its actions, they confirm the motion passed that morning regarding Hungary's giving notice of cessation of Warsaw Pact membership, a declaration of neutrality, and an appeal to the United Nations for the guarantee of Hungary's neutrality by the Four Great Powers. In the event that the Soviet Government stopped the advance of the Soviet troops and withdrew them beyond its own borders with immediate effect, (the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic will form a judgment on compliance on the basis of the reports of its own armed forces) the Hungarian Government would withdraw its request to the United Nations, but Hungary would still remain neutral. Erdei and Losonczy strongly supported this reply by Nagy. Tildy's response was affirmative but more reserved, while Kadar's reaction was reluctant. Dobi remained silent.

One hour later the Embassy received the note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, declaring that since a strong Soviet Army force had crossed the border that day and had entered Hungarian territory against the firm protest of the Hungarian Government, the Government was leaving the Warsaw Pact with immediate effect. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked the Embassy to notify the Soviet Government of this

decision immediately. They sent notes with a similar content to every embassy and diplomatic mission in Budapest.

Note: we have information that, at the instigation of the Social Democrats, the workers of all the enterprises in Hungary have declared a two-week strike, demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. 1.11.56

Andropov

[Source: *AVP RF*, f. 059a, op. 4, p. 6, d. 5, ll. 17-19, translation from *The Hungarian Quarterly* 34 (Spring 1993), 108-110.]

\*\*\*\*\*

### 10. Zhukov report on the situation in Hungary as of 12 noon, 4 November 1956

At 6:15 on Nov 4, Soviet troops began to conduct the operation for restoring order and rehabilitating the government of the People's Democracy of Hungary. Acting according to an earlier thought-out plan, our units mastered the most stubborn points of the reaction in the provinces, as they existed in Dier, Miskolc, Debrecen, and even in other regional centers in Hungary.

In the course of the operation Soviet troops occupied the most important communication centers, including the powerful, radio broadcasting station in Solnok, the depots of military supplies and weapons, and other important military objectives.

The Soviet troops operating in Budapest, having broken the resistance of the insurgents, occupied the Parliament building, the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers Party, and even the radio station in the region near the Parliament building. Also seized were three bridges across the Dunai [Danube] River, joining the eastern and western parts of the city, and the arsenal of weapons and military supplies.

The whole staff of the counterrevolutionary government of Imre Nagy was in hiding. Searches are being conducted.

One large hotbed of resistance of the insurgents remains in Budapest around the Corwin Theater in the southern-eastern part of the city. The insurgents defending this stubborn point were presented with an ultimatum to capitulate. In connection with the refusal of the resisters to surrender, the troops began an assault on them.

The main garrisons of the Hungarian troops were blockaded. Many of them gave up their weapons without a serious fight. Instructions were given to our troops to return the captured insurgents to the command of Hungarian officers and to arrest the officers who were assigned to replace the captured ones.

With the objective of not allowing the penetration of Hungary by the hostile agency and the

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

G. ZHUKOV

4 November 1956

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

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

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

"ANNALS OF COMMUNISM" SERIES  
PUBLISHES FIRST TWO BOOKS

The first two books in a Yale University Press series ("Annals of Communism") based on newly-accessible Russian archives have appeared: Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov, *The Secret World of American Communism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); and Lars T. Lih, Oleg V. Naumov, and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, eds., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925-1936* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

The series is based in large measure on documents from the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History (RTsKhIDNI), headed by K.M. Anderson, formerly known as the Central Party Archives and site of most records of the CPSU CC through 1952. According to Yale University Press (where the executive editor of the project is Jonathan Brent), the series is currently envisioned to run at least 18 volumes, including the following titles (and authors/editors): *Anti-Government Opposition under Khrushchev and Brezhnev* (Sheila Fitzpatrick, V.A. Kozlov); *History of the Soviet GULAG System, 1920-1989* (S.V. Mironenko, V.A. Kozlov, American editor to be announced); *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933-1949* (Ivo Banac, F.I. Firsov); *The Katyn Massacre* (Anna M. Cienciala, N.S. Lebedeva); *Georgi Dimitrov's Letters to Stalin, 1933-1945* (F.I. Firsov, American editor to be announced); *Lenin's "Secret" Archive* (Richard Pipes, Y.I. Buranov); *The Assassination of Sergei Kirov* (V.P. Naumov, American editor to be announced); *Soviet Politics and Repression in the 1930s* (J. Arch Getty, O.V. Naumov); *The Communist International during the Repression of the 1930s* (William Chase, F.I. Firsov); *Soviet Social Life in the 1930s* (Lewis Siegelbaum, A.K. Sokolov); *Voice of the People: Peasants, Workers, and the Soviet State, 1918-1932* (Jeffrey Burds, A.K. Sokolov); *The Church, the People, and the Bolsheviks in Soviet Russia, 1917-1932* (Gregory Freeze, Leonid Vaintraub); *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1918* (Mark Steinberg, Daniel Orlovsky, G.Z. Ioffe); *The Last Days of the Romanovs* (Mark Steinberg, V.M. Khrustal'ov); *The Last Diary of Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna* (Robert Massie, V.A. Kozlov).

For further information contact Yale University Press, POB 209040, New Haven, CT 06520-9040.

"VOLODYA"

continued from page 28

don't want to copy Russian methods....If we Petofists are 'Martovsists' [March people] (of the 1848 revolution), then Imre Nagy is our new Lajos Kossuth."<sup>6</sup> Even Rakosi, who was shipped off to Moscow for "treatment" in July 1956 (he remained in the USSR until his death in 1971), acknowledged Nagy's popularity. Intending to discredit him after his arrest by Soviet forces, Rakosi wrote to the CPSU Politburo: "Nagy at the present time is undoubtedly the most popular [figure]. The whole imperialist camp supports him, as well as the influential Yugoslavians. All the Hungarian anti-socialist forces stand behind him."<sup>7</sup>

And yet, certain puzzles in the history of Nagy's career have remained. For one thing, Matyas Rakosi, who was the most powerful man in postwar Hungary, could not stand him. Rakosi was responsible for Nagy's complete expulsion from the Hungarian Workers' Party (HWP) in November 1955—not the Russians (an example of the East European "tail" wagging the Soviet "dog").<sup>8</sup> Rakosi, dubbed "Stalin's best disciple," and by others the "Bald Murderer," or even less reverently, "Asshead," had so effectively created his own cult of personality in Hungary that he could shake his little finger and that person would be no more.

Given Rakosi's hatred of Nagy, why wasn't Nagy—rather than Laszlo Rajk—branded the first Hungarian "Titoist agent" in Stalin's sanguinary witch-hunt that swept Eastern Europe from 1949 to 1952, and cost the lives of Traicho Kostov (Bulgaria), Rudolf Slansky and V. Clementis (Czechoslovakia), and the freedom of Wladislaw Gomulka (Poland)? Why was Nagy not chosen, who was too gentle for the post of Minister of the Interior, rather than Rajk, who did occupy that post?

Or why, for that matter, was Imre Nagy, whom Rakosi called a milquetoast ("miagkotelyi"), even offered such plum jobs as Minister of the Interior or Minister of Administrative Organs?

Obviously, it appears, someone was protecting him "at the center" (in Moscow). The translated Russian archival documents printed below suggest one possible explanation—that Imre Nagy, codename "Volodya," had actually volunteered to become an informer for the Soviet secret police—the OGPU (Unified State Political Directorate)—

NKVD (Commissariat of Internal Affairs)—in 1933 and continued in that capacity until 1941. Having emigrated to the USSR in 1929, Nagy established contacts among the Hungarian émigré community, encouraging them to speak candidly with him. One of the documents below states that in 1939 Nagy provided the names of 38 Hungarian political émigrés for "cultivation" ("razrabotka"), and in another document, he listed 150 names—not just Hungarians, but also Austrians, Germans, Poles, Bulgarians, and Russians. Of the total number of people upon whom Nagy is reported to have informed, 15 were "liquidated" (shot) or died in prison, according to KGB archivists' calculations.<sup>9</sup> "Volodya," his NKVD superiors wrote, is a "qualified agent" who shows great "initiative" and "an ability to approach people."

The story of how these materials came to light is a story that has more to do with Soviet, Hungarian, and communist party politics amidst the revolutionary upheavals of the late 1980s and early 1990s than with historical or scholarly investigation.

Three of the documents printed below were found in late 1988 in the KGB archives. Of course, as in many cases when KGB materials are released, it was for a concrete, political purpose. KGB head Kryuchkov had sent the incriminating Nagy dossier to Gorbachev on Friday, 16 June 1989—a date that is, as party ideologues were wont to say, no coincidence. On that same day, several hundred thousand Hungarians gathered in Heroes' Square in downtown Budapest, and many more watched on nationwide television, as Nagy and several other leaders of the 1956 revolt who had been tried and executed by Moscow were praised (and the 1956 revolution, previously branded officially as a "counterrevolutionary uprising," lauded as a whole) and given a martyrs' reburial in a daylong ceremony that was the highpoint of what would turn out to be Hungary's rush away from communist rule.

In his letter, Kryuchkov made his intentions clear: Let's publish these documents about Nagy's sordid NKVD intrigues—it might defuse the Nagy rehabilitation campaign and the Hungarian reform movement in general. In fact, the hardline Kryuchkov, who was later one of the soberer and shrewder of the August 1991 coup plotters, correctly perceived the developments in Hungary as a threat to communist rule and to Hungary's status as a Warsaw Pact ally. (And there is

another, more personal twist: Kryuchkov had himself served as Third Secretary in the Soviet Embassy in Budapest in October–November 1956, and had personally witnessed what he undoubtedly considered Nagy’s treachery to the Soviet and communist cause—perhaps he still carried a grudge, or at least a vivid sense of Nagy’s importance as a historical symbol.)

Since these archival documents, albeit authentic, were selected specifically to discredit Nagy and undermine political trends in Hungary in 1989, scholars should certainly be cautious in evaluating them, and it is possible that with fuller access to the archives additional research by scholars—not archivists or bureaucrats—may yield a more balanced assessment of Nagy’s NKVD activities.

Ironically, the initial search for Soviet archival materials on Nagy may have been triggered by a 1988 inquiry from Hungarian reformist political figures, who had requested that all documents pertaining to Nagy’s sentence and his activities while in the Soviet Union be declassified. But it was a complicated endeavor; Imre Nagy was a Soviet citizen. There is no sign in the archives that he ever lost his Soviet citizenship, although, of course, he had to have had Hungarian citizenship as well.

Evidently Gorbachev opted not to unilaterally disclose the Nagy file, and just as Kryuchkov and other Soviet hardliners expected, the Hungarian leaders were loathe to disclose the explosive information. When the documents were unveiled during an inter-party consultation in the summer of 1989, and the topic of Nagy’s NKVD connections was raised, R. Nyers, then the chairman of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (HSWP), demanded that the issue be dropped.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, Karoly Grosz, the HSWP General Secretary, broke the news to a plenum of the HSWP Central Committee, which endorsed Grosz’s proposal that the facts not be published.

Only in February 1993, when Kryuchkov’s secret 1989 letter to Gorbachev was published in the Italian paper *La Stampa*, did Gros agree to give an interview to the Hungarian newspaper *Nepszabadsag* the following month, confirming the authenticity of the documents, that Nagy did indeed inform on his comrades in the 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>11</sup>

Additional damaging materials on Nagy

were declassified in Moscow in May 1992, in particular a comprehensive “reference” (“*spravka*”) on Nagy compiled by I. Zamchevskii (Director of the 5th European Division of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs) a month after the Hungarian “events,” perhaps partly in preparation for a probable trial of Nagy, although at the time efforts continued—through Yugoslav, and later Rumanian officials, among others—to persuade Nagy to support the Kadar government. This material contains further details about Nagy’s actions that were considered compromising or dubious. To give one example, when Nagy left Hungary in late 1929 for the USSR to attend the Second Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party as a delegate, he brought with him his assistant, identified as an agent-provocateur named Tirier. He introduced Tirier to his Russian colleagues as “the most trustworthy party man” (“*partiets*”). But upon his return to Hungary, Tirier betrayed to the Hungarian police all the Hungarian delegates who had attended that Congress (except for Nagy, who—luckily in this case—ended up staying in Moscow for fifteen years). When Tirier was caught, Nagy tried to defend him, taking his side against the other Hungarian communists.<sup>12</sup>

Other compromises Nagy made tend to be forgotten. In 1949, Nagy twice appealed to the Hungarian Central Committee, criticizing the party’s position on the “peasant question” and advocating the delay (“*zatiagivanie*”) of collectivization. For this Nagy was expelled from the Politburo temporarily, until early 1951. This time he did not hesitate to perform “*samokritika*” in order to be readmitted. He was also placed in charge of crop collection briefly, thus agreeing to carry out the exact policies to which he objected.<sup>13</sup> Also in 1951, Nagy—along with other Politburo members—with others—signed the note proposing Janos Kadar’s arrest, thus authorizing extremely brutal beatings.<sup>14</sup>

So, Imre Nagy, “Agent Volodya,” also had “his hands soaked in blood,” to some extent, had “given false information,” and [helped to] “sentence innocent men to death,” as Tito had said of Matyas Rakosi and his henchmen.

While the extent of Nagy’s past activities as a “chekist” is surprising, given the “martyr’s halo” he acquired after his deposing and death, one must interpret this new

information in historical context. Rumors had circulated about Imre Nagy among the émigré community even in the 1930s and ’40s. V.N. Merkulov, the deputy director of the People’s Committee of State Security (Zamnarkom GB), who was shot in 1953 in connection with the Beria affair, had sent information about Nagy’s NKVD work to Malenkov in 1941 (see document below). In 1985, Janos Kadar told Gorbachev that Nagy had been “Beria’s man.” Someone in Hungary must have known of Nagy’s connections.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, given the “*kto koro?*” [who from whom?; who wins, who loses?—ed.] atmosphere of the 1930s in the Soviet bloc, with arrests and executions occurring in concentric spirals, one was almost compelled to inform on others for survival, although even that didn’t guarantee one’s safety. Foreigners were especially vulnerable, because they were, as Russians say, “not ours” (“*ne nashi*”). So for a foreign Comintern member, to be an NKVD agent was a mark of prestige and trustworthiness. One’s loyalty to communism was measured by the number of people one either recruited (“*zaverboval*”) or informed on (“*donosil*”). Many Comintern members had close ties with the NKVD or the GRU (“*Glavrazvedupr*,” or Main Intelligence Administration) of the General Staff of the Comintern. At the time, there was nothing unusual in this; it was almost a given.

Twenty years later, East European leaders, even in their home countries, were still vulnerable, especially as the de-Stalinization process came to an end. When he did shift his loyalties and struggled on the same side as the Hungarian insurgents in October–November 1956, Imre Nagy took a heroic step indeed. In the end, in June 1958, Nagy did not compromise. He died for his beliefs. As two of his countrymen, Miklos Molnar and Laszlo Nagy, put it: “If his life was a question mark, his death was an answer.”<sup>16</sup>

1. Stalin’s death in March 1953, of course, was the beginning of “de-Stalinization.” Khrushchev’s February 1956 Secret Speech to the 20th CPSU Congress was, in a sense, the beginning of the end of that process. Expression drawn from Adam Ulam, *The Rivals* (NY: Penguin Books, 1971), 245.

2. The Polish Communist leader Bierut dropped dead from a heart attack soon after Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech.”

3. One Soviet diplomat called Nagy a “malicious muddlehead” (“*zlomamerennyi putanik*”). I. Zamchevskii, “About Imre Nagy and his Politics with

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. Ibid.

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

13. Ibid.; also Calhoun, *Hungary and Suez*, 62, and Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986), 129.

14. Musatov, "Tragediia Nadia," 169; also Calhoun, *Hungary and Suez*, 61-2.

15. Valerii Musatov, "SSSR I Vengerskie Sobytiia 1956 g.: Novye Akhivnye Materialy," *Novaiia Noveishaia Istorii* 1 (Jan. 1993), 5.

16. Miklos Molnar and Laszlo Nagy, *Imre Nagy: Reformateur ou Revolutionnaire* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1959), 217-18.

*Johanna Granville is assistant professor of political science at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA. Currently a Fulbright Scholar (1994-95), she is conducting research in the Communist Party and Foreign Ministry archives in Moscow.*

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

Documents provided and translated by  
Johanna Granville

KGB Chief Kryuchkov's Report, 16 June 1989

SPECIAL FILE  
Of Special Importance

To the CC CPSU

Committee of State Security KGB of the USSR  
June 16, 1989

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

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

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

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

press.

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

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

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

Chairman of the KGB V. KRYUCHKOV

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

\* \* \* \* \*

**Nagy's OGPU Enlistment, 4 September 1930**

## OBLIGATIONS

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

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

Signature: Nagy Imre Iosofovich  
4 September 1930

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

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

\* \* \* \* \*

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

## REFERENCE

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

## "VOLODYA"

"Volodya" Nagy Vladimir Iosofovich, born in Hungary in 1896, by nationality Hungarian was excluded from the HCP (Hungarian Communist Party) (Imre Nagy); the case under investigation at KPK and KPV has been in service since 1918, works as a non-salaried employee of the Hungarian journal "Uj Hang" [New Sound]. He was recruited on January 17, 1933. He has cultivated mostly Hungarian political émigrés.

1. According to "Volodya's" data, a group of 4 people was exposed and liquidated. MANUEL, BAROS, KRAMMER, and others who underwent the case of the "Incorrigibles."

2. At the present time he is cultivating a counterrevolutionary group of Hungarians, composed of: VARGA E., GABOR F.I, SLOSSER K., BOLGAR E., VARGA S.E., GERREL, LUKACS and others who underwent the intelligence case of the "Restorers."

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

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

## II.

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

## R E P O R T

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

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

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

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

I report this information by your orders.

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

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

\* \* \* \* \*

**Information on Agent "Volodya," June 1941**

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

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

Vladimir Iosifovich.

Enclosed: the abovementioned

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

(Signed) MERKULOV

## II.

## R E F E R E N C E

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Signed) Sverdlov

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

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

## POLISH OCTOBER

*continued from page 1*

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

The transformation of the Soviet system after Stalin's death affected the satellite states of East Europe in different ways. The Kremlin, Nikita S. Khrushchev in particular, followed and attempted to influence the pace and nature of the changes throughout the region with varying degrees of success. By October 1956, the de-Stalinization debate in Poland focused on the potential return of Wladyslaw Gomulka<sup>3</sup> to the leadership of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). However, Gomulka, who had spent the summer of 1956 securing his place on the Politburo by gaining the confidence of almost all the Central Committee members, as well as the Soviets, made his return to the PUWP conditional. He stubbornly insisted that Khrushchev complete what he had begun in 1954: the withdrawal of Soviet officers and advisers from the Polish Armed Forces and security apparatus. Gomulka also demanded the removal of Soviet Marshal Konstanty Rokossowski<sup>4</sup> from the PUWP Politburo.

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

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

At the Politburo meeting of October 8 and 10, in preparation for Gomulka's appearance at the next Politburo meeting, the leadership outlined four reasons for the crisis in the PUWP: 1) "a lack of unity in the Politburo"; 2) "a lack of connections between the leadership and the Party activists"; 3) "a lack of authority among the leadership"; and 4) "With regard to the spreading of anti-Soviet tendencies there is, aside from the propaganda of the enemy, an unfair situation in the relations between the PPR [Polish People's Republic] and USSR (such as the question concerning the price of coal, the highest officer cadres in the army often do not know the Polish language, do not have Polish citizenship, and the Soviet ambassador<sup>8</sup> interferes in the internal affairs of the country)." The leadership also decided: "To turn to the USSR and to the relevant generals who hold positions in the army with a proposition that they adopt Polish citizenship. Soviet officers who do not speak Polish [are] to become advisers, and in their place promote Polish officers. Comrade Rokossowski will conduct talks with them and announce the result."<sup>9</sup>

Gomulka decided to attend the next Politburo meeting, which was held on October 12. It was his first Politburo meeting since the campaign against the "rightist-nationalist deviation" of 1948-1949. He told the leadership, among other things, that the Party continued to experience difficulties because of "errors committed in the past" and as a result of the "strong pressure exerted by hostile and alien tendencies" in the PUWP. Gomulka stressed that the problem of Soviet advisers in Poland's security apparatus needed to be "untangled" and that the Soviet control of the Polish military was

"not an example of normal relations." He argued that "Polish-Soviet relations is a great problem" which had to be "normalized" in order to "forestall anti-Soviet manifestations." Gomulka stressed that the "Polish *raison d'être* as well as the fact that we are also building socialism demanded that...future relations [with the Kremlin] be devoid of conflicts."

At this point, Gomulka clashed with Rokossowski over the Soviet-Polish relationship under Stalin. Gomulka added that, "today no one questions that in the past these relations were unfair...Why did we in fact pay reparations for the Germans[?] It was explained that a certain section of German territory went to Poland, but we were not in fact allies of the Germans during the war...Our government representatives at the time signed such an agreement. I would never have signed such an agreement and I would never have agreed to this...Comrade Rokossowski knows about this...(Comrade Rokossowski: No one has returned to this matter, except you)."

Gomulka also called for the majority of the Politburo to unite under his leadership. On the existence of factions in the Party, Gomulka stated: "I do not see these factions or splinter groups. Party members and, above all, those in the leadership simply cannot voice their views, especially if those views differ with other Party leaders. A 'group' must have its own distinctive platform...Where are those anonymous groups? Since when have Communists adopted such a stance? If you want to lead a Party of one and a half million members...[you must realize that] there comes a time when the differences within the leadership may divide the Party. We must approach the Party organizations with our differences and have a genuine debate about them."

Gomulka concluded his remarks to the Politburo with the following admonition: "Comrades, you have failed to notice the climate prevailing among the working class and the nation...Everything that has so far been done...was wrong...It is possible to rule a nation without enjoying its trust, but such rule can only be maintained with bayonets. Whoever chooses that option also chooses the path of universal calamity. We cannot return to the old methods. Our current difficulties stem from the Party's weakness, from our inconsistency."

He invited the leadership to recommend

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

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

The Politburo then ordered that a press release be issued for October 16 to announce publicly the planned return of Gomulka to the leadership, and October 19 as the date for the 8th Plenum. Finally, the Politburo decided to hold elections at the next meeting to decide the Politburo and Secretariat membership that would be presented to the 8th Plenum. The debate in the Politburo was heated. Rokossowski and three of his allies in the Politburo—Witold Józwiak,<sup>11</sup> Zenon Nowak,<sup>12</sup> and Władysław Dworakowski<sup>13</sup>—attacked the other voting members of the Politburo for trying to exclude them from the leadership. Shortly before the meeting ended, Rokossowski warned: "I view the holding of elections in this situation as desertion."<sup>14</sup>

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

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

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

Panteleimon K. Ponomarenko, the Soviet ambassador in Warsaw, informed Ochab on the evening of October 18 that the CPSU Politburo had decided to send a delegation to Warsaw in order to discuss the situation in the PUWP and the country. Ponomarenko added that Moscow was alarmed by the growing anti-Soviet manifestations in Poland. Ochab immediately gathered the Politburo to meet with Ponomarenko at the Central Committee. They suggested to Ponomarenko that the Soviet delegation arrive during the second or the third day of the Plenum. Only Rokossowski was of the opinion that the Soviet delegation should be met before the Plenum. Ponomarenko agreed with Rokossowski and informed the Polish leaders that a Soviet delegation, headed by Khrushchev, would arrive in Warsaw shortly before the 8th Plenum was to begin on the morning of October 19.<sup>21</sup>

The CPSU delegation, which included Khrushchev, Lazar Kaganovich,

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

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

#### DOCUMENT NO. 1

##### Protocol No. 129

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

Plenum)

The Politburo agrees to the following press communiqué:

On 19 October at 10:00 am the proceedings of the VIII Plenum began. After the meeting was opened by comrade Ochab, and the agenda accepted, comrades Wladyslaw Gomulka, Marian Spychalski, Zenon Kliszko, and Loga-Sowinski were added to the Central Committee so that they could take part in the discussions as fully fledged members.

Comrade Wieslaw [Wladyslaw Gomulka's wartime pseudonym] informed the Politburo about the meeting at the airport with the Soviet delegation. "Talks like this I have never held with party comrades. It was beyond comprehension. How can you take such a tone and, with such epitaphs, turn on people who in good faith turned to you? Khrushchev first greeted, above all, comrade Rokossowski and the generals; underlining—these are people on whom I depend. Turning to us, he said [in Russian]: 'The treacherous activity of Comrade Ochab has become evident, this number won't pass here!' You needed a lot of patience not to react to such talk. The entire discussion was carried out in this loud tone, such that everyone at the airport, even the chauffeurs, heard it.

I proposed that we drive with them to Belvedere Palace and speak calmly. I told them that above all else we had to open the Plenum. They would not agree to this. At Belvedere Palace the talks had a similar tone. They told us that we actually spat in their faces because we did not agree to meet with the delegation before the Plenum. They are upset with us because the Politburo Commission proposed a new list of members to the Politburo without a number of comrades who are supporters of a Polish-Soviet union; namely, comrades Rokossowski, [Zenon] Nowak, Mazur, Jozwiak. I explained to them that we don't have such tendencies. We do not want to break the alliance with the Soviet Union. It came to a clash. Comrade Khrushchev said [in Russian]: 'That number won't pass here. We are ready for active intervention.'

[Here Gomulka quotes his own remarks to Khrushchev:] I understand that it is possible to talk in an aggressive tone, but if you talk with a revolver on the table you don't have an even-handed discussion. I cannot continue the discussions under these conditions. I am ill and I cannot fill such a function in my condition. We can listen to the complaints of the Soviet comrades, but if decisions are to be made under the threat of physical force I am not up to it. My first step in Party work, which I am taking after a long break, must be interrupted.

I don't want to break off Polish-Soviet friendship. I believe what we propose will strengthen the friendship. Any other form of

resolution to these affairs will only strengthen the anti-Soviet campaign. I would like for the comrades to voice their views on this matter: intervention or the conditions under which to continue the talks."

Comrade Zawadzki: Comrade Wieslaw's position is correct. We do not see our situation, including the personnel decision taken by the Politburo, as a menacing upheaval in the country leading to a break in Polish-Soviet relations. Yet the decision not to change the position of the Politburo has to be taken with certain cautions in order not to intensify the situation. I also propose, in connection with the situation in Warsaw, to issue an appeal, signed by the Politburo and comrade Wieslaw, to the Enterprise Council, to students, about the arrival of the Soviet delegation in the common interest of the state and nation.

Comrade Zambrowski: The situation in the country is tense. I am on the side of what was said by comrade Wieslaw. Do not make any changes in the Politburo's propositions. I am opposed to the issuing of an appeal. Let the Plenum decide.

Comrade Rokossowski: Comrade Wieslaw gave us an objective assessment, but you can see that there are reasons why the Soviet comrades talk like this, and why comrade Khrushchev vehemently exploded. I am of the opinion that four comrades should go to the discussions and listen to the arguments of the Soviet comrades. More cold bloodedness. It is unnecessary to aggravate the situation.

Comrade Witold [Jozwiak]: I am of the opinion that we should leave the Politburo in its old composition and co-opt only comrades Wieslaw and Loga-Sowinski.

Comrade Gierek: I am of the opinion that the decisions of the Politburo are correct and we cannot overturn them. It is not pleasant to listen to such malicious language.

Comrade [Zenon] Nowak: I agree with comrade Gomulka. Let the Soviet comrades calmly explain what they want.

Comrades Nowak, Roman: I support in full the resolutions of the Politburo.

Comrade Rapacki: We cannot continue talks under the threat of intervention and under the charge that we are less worthy than those comrades from the old leadership who were not selected to form the new composition. I am for maintaining the decisions of the Politburo.

Comrade Dworakowski: We have to do everything so as not to disturb our friendship with the Soviet Union and we have to concede.

Comrade [Eugeniusz] Stawinski: We have always directed ourselves with great affection towards the Soviet Union, but to achieve a complete consolidation with the country we cannot accept concessions.

Comrade Jedrychowski: All concessions will be interpreted to mean that the CC [Central Committee] of our Party does not operate freely and that the changes are dictated by the Soviet delegation.

Comrade [Hilary] Chelchowski: I am of the opinion that it was incorrect for the Politburo to remove comrades [Zenon] Nowak and Rokossowski. Let us think of what we are doing.

Comrade Ochab: It was very painful to hear comrade Khrushchev. I did not deserve such treatment. I would also like comrade Rokossowski to explain the situation in the army.

Comrade Rokossowski: I feel that there are certain insinuations being directed at me. I do not feel any guilt. I did not give the army any alarm signals. I simply ordered, in any case with the agreement of comrade Ochab, that one military battalion from Legionowo be put on alert in order to ensure the security, from possible enemy provocation, for the unexpected arrival of the Soviet delegation.<sup>23</sup>

[Source: AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 12, teczka 46a, str. 66-68; translated from the Polish by L.W. Gluchowski.]

The long-awaited 8th Plenum began at 10 a.m. Ochab opened the gathering with a brief statement and added: "I shall limit myself in this introduction to a report on the latest decisions of the Politburo." He announced that the Politburo had decided to include Gomulka, Spychalski, Kliszko, and Loga-Sowinski in the Central Committee. Ochab continued: "the Politburo proposes serious changes to its composition, for the number of its members to be limited to nine in order to secure unity and greater efficiency, and proposes the election of Comrade Wladyslaw Gomulka for the post of First Secretary."<sup>24</sup>

Ochab appealed to the Plenum for "responsibility and wisdom" and declared: "We are meeting here in a difficult political situation." He told the delegates: "I would also like to inform you, Comrades, that a delegation of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU, composed of Comrades Khrushchev, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, and Molotov arrived in Warsaw this morning.

The delegation wishes to conduct talks with our Politburo.” Ochab suggested that the Plenum accept Gomulka and his colleagues into the Central Committee and that the proceedings be delayed until 6 p.m.<sup>25</sup>

A number of the Central Committee members demanded to know more details. Helena Jaworska interjected and demanded to know why it was necessary to adjourn the Plenum. Ochab quickly explained: “It arises out of the necessity to conduct talks with the delegation of the Presidium of the CPSU, which is already in Warsaw.” Michalina Tatarkówna-Majkowska wanted to know who would represent the Polish delegation during the discussions with the Soviets and proposed that a new Politburo be elected to take part in the talks. Her motion was rejected. Romana Granas asked Ochab to outline the agenda of the Politburo’s meeting with the Soviets. Ochab abruptly replied, “Soviet-Polish relations,” and called for an immediate vote on the Politburo’s decision to readmit Gomulka and the others to the Central Committee.<sup>26</sup> The Plenum unanimously accepted Ochab’s proposition. The old Politburo and Gomulka were also empowered to conduct talks with the CPSU delegation. The debate barely lasted half an hour before the Plenum was adjourned. The Polish delegation returned to the Belvedere Palace to meet again with the Soviets.<sup>27</sup>

While the 8th Plenum met to debate Gomulka’s return to the Central Committee, Khrushchev held a meeting with his generals at the Soviet embassy. The CPSU First Secretary stated in his memoirs: “Marshal Konev and I held separate consultations with Comrade Rokossowski, who was more obedient to us but had less authority than the other Polish leaders.<sup>28</sup> He told us that anti-Soviet, nationalistic, and reactionary forces were growing in strength, and that if it were necessary to arrest the growth of these counterrevolutionary elements by force of arms, he was at our disposal; we could rely on him to do whatever was necessary to preserve Poland’s socialist gains and to assure Poland’s continuing fidelity and friendship. That was all very well and good, but as we began to analyze the problem in more detail and calculate which Polish regiments we could count on to obey Rokossowski, the situation began to look somewhat bleak. Of course, our own armed strength far exceeded that of Poland, but we didn’t want to resort to the use of our own troops.”<sup>29</sup>

After the first Soviet encounter with Gomulka, Khrushchev must have been reassured that the newly proposed PUWP First Secretary was not hostile to the Soviet Union. Khrushchev used the occasion to gauge Gomulka’s views on a variety of matters. As he later put it: “our embassy informed us that a genuine revolt was on the verge of breaking out in Warsaw. For the most part these demonstrations were being organized in support of the new leadership headed by Gomulka, which we too were prepared to support, but the demonstrations also had a dangerously anti-Soviet character.” The Soviet leader added that Gomulka held “a position which was most advantageous for us. Here was a man who had come to power on the crest of an anti-Soviet wave, yet who could now speak forcefully about the need to preserve Poland’s friendly relations with the Soviet Union and the Soviet Communist Party.”<sup>30</sup>

Ochab confirmed that Khrushchev manifested a sympathetic attitude towards Gomulka: “Basically our Soviet friends wanted to make Gomulka First Secretary.” He continued: “At one point Khrushchev said to [Gomulka]: we bring you greetings. Presumably they thought Gomulka would put the country in order and was the one to stake their bets on...But Gomulka...displayed considerable toughness of character during those difficult talks.”<sup>31</sup>

The turning point came when “Gomulka made an anxious but sincere declaration,” as Khrushchev characterized it. The CPSU First Secretary added that Gomulka acknowledged: “Poland needs friendship with the Soviet Union more than the Soviet Union needs friendship with Poland. Can it be that we failed to understand our situation? Without the Soviet Union we cannot maintain our borders with the West. We are dealing with our internal problems, our relations with the Soviet Union will remain unchanged. We will still be friends and allies.” According to Khrushchev, Gomulka “said all this with such intensity and such sincerity that I believed his words...I said to our delegation, ‘I think there is no reason not to believe Comrade Gomulka.’”<sup>32</sup> The Soviet leader added: “We believed him when he said he realized we faced a common enemy, Western imperialism...We took his word as a promissory note from a man whose good faith we believed in.”<sup>33</sup>

The next contentious point concerned

Rokossowski’s exclusion from the new Politburo. Gomulka continued to call for Rokossowski’s return to the Soviet Union. The Soviets continued to press Gomulka on the Rokossowski issue, but the Poles would not budge. Khrushchev later argued: “The people of Warsaw had been prepared to defend themselves and resist Soviet troops entering the city... A clash would have been good for no one but our enemies. It would be a fatal conflict, with grave consequences that would have been felt for many years to come.”<sup>34</sup> He added: “With Poland in particular, I always tried to be sympathetic to flare-ups of anti-Soviet sentiment. Sympathetic in the sense that you have to remember history and that czarist Russia was a party to Poland being carved up among the Germans, the Austrians, and the Russians. That left its stamp on the Polish soul.”<sup>35</sup>

The Soviet-Polish talks at the Belvedere Palace began at about 11 a.m. on October 19 and ended at 3 a.m. on October 20. The talks included Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Molotov, and Kaganovich on the Soviet side, and Gomulka, with fourteen members of the PUWP Politburo, on the Polish side.<sup>36</sup> Three separate documentary accounts of the talks between the CPSU-PUWP delegates at the Belvedere Palace are presented here.

The first two accounts of the Soviet-Polish confrontation are extraordinary. Documents No. 2 and No. 3 below are the recently discovered notes of the October 19-20 meeting taken by two Polish participants: Gomulka and Zawadzki.<sup>37</sup> These are rough notes, but they give us the fullest account to date on the range of topics discussed by the Soviets and the Poles at the Belvedere Palace. Gomulka appears to have been interested in only keeping a short record of the Soviet comments. Zawadzki, on the other hand, made more detailed notes and endeavored to include comments made by a wider range of participants on both sides.

## DOCUMENT NO. 2

### Wladyslaw Gomulka’s Notes<sup>38</sup>

1/ Ochab opens the meeting—[then] Gomulka—[then] Mikoyan [outlines Soviet concerns]. [Mikoyan speaks:] [Poland is a] neighbouring country—[there is] a tradition of meetings, [and Soviets are sensitive about the] international situation. Our [Polish] tone in rejecting a reception for the Soviet delegation. Sounded a great alarm for them. Alliance between states is a matter for their [Soviet] concern,

Warsaw Pact—NATO Pact. On what do they [Soviets] base the difficulty of our situation, they're not exactly sure. Ochab did not inform them about the situation in Poland. American radio: he [Mikoyan] cites [apparently from American news reports].<sup>39</sup> Well then [Mikoyan adds]: are these reports true [and] are there objective issues which could divide us? Economic discussion. From Poland they need nothing. [On the] question of coal reparations. They [Soviets] agreed to decrease the quota of coal [from Poland]. From 1959, [they will] not take Polish coal for their commodities. Letter from [Otto] Grotewohl<sup>40</sup> regarding the quota of coal. Spring economic conference [in Soviet Union]—resolutions [were] not kept. They [Soviets] will not have enough ore and cotton for Poland.

Iron ore works in Poland.<sup>41</sup> They decided to deliver it to Poland, no reply as yet [from the Poles]. Factory—credits of 2,200 million rubles for the investment. They will deliver all their secret wartime production [methods], patents, licenses. [And] Brand new airplanes with Soviet licenses.<sup>42</sup>

They could come to an arrangement so that we did not have to supply ships. They would be satisfied. [On the Polish] Army—Soviet officers made it [a] high calibre [force]. [On the Polish] Press, [concerning] what it wrote about Khrushchev's meeting [with the PUWP Central Committee in March 1956]—Jewish matter.<sup>43</sup> Their [Soviet] appointments in the Republics. Cites my [Gomulka's] letter to Stalin.<sup>44</sup> What do they [Soviets] want—friendship.

1/ war—dangerous,

2/ to isolate Polish reactionaries,

3/ we belong to a common socialist camp—no one would forgive us if we broke apart.

[There is a] Wide-spread threat to the [Polish] government. [Stanislaw] Mikolajczyk.<sup>45</sup> We [Poles] do not appreciate the dangerousness of the situation. Reading from my [Gomulka's] article of 1948 [on Soviet-Polish unity].<sup>46</sup> Will a wedge not be forced between Poland and the Soviet Union today? Do we support this [wedge] in our [current] position? Why do we tolerate anti-Soviet propaganda [in Poland]?

In Yugoslavia there are no voices in the press against Soviet Union. [The] Voices from our press [read:]—Stalinism is fascism. Let the dogs bark.

What frightens them [Soviets]? It's not [about] insults, as much as the threat of us [Poles] losing power. The article by [Jerszy] Putrament<sup>47</sup> [for example] about the amoral position of the USSR.<sup>48</sup> The Poles are beginning what the Yugoslavs have repudiated. They [Soviets] have anxiety for these reasons. The slogan of the youth: away with Rokossowski, is a blow against the army. How are we to reconcile [Soviet-Polish] friendship with the demand to recall officers, Soviet officers[?] They can't be

thrown out all of the sudden. Do Soviet officers imperil [Polish] sovereignty? If you consider the Warsaw Pact unnecessary—tell us. Anti-Soviet propaganda does not meet any resistance [in Poland].

People who are guilty of nothing continue to be removed from the [PUWP] leadership—how [are the Soviets] to understand this? Does this not mean that it [changes in the PUWP Politburo] is levelled against the Polish-Soviet friendship[?] How will the removal of Rokossowski be understood by the [Polish] nation, how will this be interpreted abroad? Everyone will understand it as a blow to the alliance.

Is what Comrade Gomulka says, true, or is it just words? I [Gomulka] am returning to work under an anti-Soviet slogan. They [Soviets] do not criticize us—[Jerzy] Morawski, [Wladyslaw] Matwin [are main targets].<sup>49</sup> [For the Soviets] The question is not about people, but what kind of politics is hiding [behind the proposed] personnel changes. The atmosphere [in Poland] is anti-Soviet and the organizational decisions are anti-Soviet. Poland is not a Bulgaria or Hungary—together with us [USSR] it's the most important [country in the region]. In what way does the Soviet Union infringe on [Poland's] sovereignty? In Khrushchev's discussions [with] Tito about the satellites [of Eastern Europe]—Tito banned the [Yugoslav] press from writing on the People's Democracies as [if they were] satellites. Without us [Poland] it is not possible to organize a defense against imperialism.

[Source: *Gomulka Family Private Papers; translated from the Polish by L.W. Gluchowski*]

### DOCUMENT NO. 3

#### Aleksander Zawadzki's Notes<sup>50</sup>

Meeting with Comrades Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Molotov, Kaganovich on 19 X 56.

Comrade Mikoyan [says] that the [PUWP] Politburo has shown itself to be inhospitable in [its] dealings with the Soviet side. Standing issues include relations between the parties, about the boundaries of the [socialist] camp, and issues between our states.

Our countries are allies, against [whom]? NATO. From our [PUWP] Party they [Soviets] do not have the real information. Ochab says that the situation is complicated, but he does not say what the problem is. American Radio is providing details about the situation in the [PUWP] Party leadership—(Mikoyan reads [apparently from American radio reports]). What can separate us? 1) Economic issues. We [Soviets] need nothing from Poland. The Polish side is also unilaterally presenting [the arguments of] the Soviet side without the facts—[such as the] issue of coal quotas. From 1959, they [Soviets] are ending

their orders for coal from Poland to the USSR. Issue of uranium mining—as of Spring we [Poles] have not responded.<sup>51</sup> The Soviet Union experienced [economic] losses no smaller than Poland. The Soviet Union passed on to Poland major military secrets, which included a lot of expenditures on education, and so on. [All] for the taking. He [Mikoyan] cites Comrade Gomulka's letter to Stalin from 1948.<sup>52</sup> About the excess amount of Jews in high positions, [and] that national nihilism characterizes some Jewish comrades. That he [Mikoyan] considers it correct to decrease the congestion [of Jews in the PUWP]. [Mikoyan adds] That now he [Gomulka] will be pulled to the top by the Jews and then again they will drop him.<sup>53</sup> He [Mikoyan] cites an article by Gomulka from September 1948 on the matter of the Polish-Soviet alliance.<sup>54</sup> Are we [Poles] holding to that [correct] line? No. Today anyone can write anything they want about the Soviet Union. Even in capitalist countries the government finds a way to ensure that the press does not offend a friendly state. Today, the Poles are starting what the Yugoslavs have finished. About the unrestricted [Polish press] campaign against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union does not deprive Poland of its sovereignty. Maybe the Warsaw defense pact is unnecessary? Then we [Poles] should discuss this matter.

Issue of the abrupt removal of a group of comrades from the [PUWP] Politburo, who are seen in the eyes of the [Polish] nation as supporters of the friendship with the Soviet Union. The issue of Comrade Rokossowski—[is a] major political issue.

[For the Soviets] There remain only some minor unresolved differences with Tito. With the Chinese, we [Soviets] have complete understanding on every issue. Comrade Ochab said that at this [Eighth] Plenum, Comrades Morawski and Matwin will be removed [from the PUWP Secretariat], but now they are being put forward [to join the leadership]. (Ochab interrupted and said that he too is being removed [from the post of First Secretary]). The NATO camp wants us [Poles] to argue with the Soviet Union, [to] divide [us]. Tell us [Soviets], where are the differences between us—what do you [Poles] want[?]

2) Comrade Ochab—that he believes Comrades Morawski and Matwin are good, etc. and is for keeping them [Zawadzki leaves space here, possibly to add something later].

3) Comrade Gomulka—He said to himself that he would never return to Party work. Now he sees that he must. The issue of [Poland's continued] friendship [with the Soviet Union] is [also] the opinion of the entire [PUWP] collective [leadership]. [But] that which now exists in the [PUWP] Politburo cannot continue. The [old] Politburo was not in the position to take control of the situation [in Poland]. The resolutions of the Seventh Plenum [of July 1956] were in fact correct — [but] a section of the Politburo mem-

bership understands it differently. [Especially] The issue of democratization.<sup>55</sup> Some [PUWP] comrades took the position to just wait [and do nothing].

He [Gomulka] believes that a Politburo composed of 9 persons will be sufficient. But, even with this new composition [it may not be enough]—Comrade Ochab represents opinion calling for harsh measures against the [Polish] press and this [too] will not help... The root of the problem [is] in the material condition of the working class, but there are other [causes as well]. As to Comrade Molotov's question [apparently about the attacks on Stalin in Poland], he [Gomulka] replies: and "you too"—[reminding Molotov of] Khrushchev's [secret] report [to the Twentieth CPSU Congress] on Stalin. [On] the issue of coal [Gomulka says]—there are many questions and we [the Poles] have not answered them all. Other matters [include]: irregularities in the [Polish] organs of security. Many innocent people were arrested, tormented. The issue of [Soviet] advisers attached to the [Polish] security [apparatus] and their recall [to the Soviet Union]. The issue of the [Soviet] Advisers and their responsibility [while in Poland]. And, that Zawadzki told me [Gomulka]: how can we [Poles] make them [Soviet advisers] accept responsibility [for their actions]. I [Zawadzki] had apparently told this to Comrade Gomulka this [past] May.<sup>56</sup> That the Soviet comrades should not fear that [our] planned changes would weaken the friendship [between the Soviet Union and Poland]... In their reply to the Soviet comrades, the Yugoslav comrades were right, in 1948, in answering to the letter by Stalin and Molotov, that they knew their [own] people well, and that experience has shown that they had, and they continue to have today, the support of the [Yugoslav] nation. In a letter they [Yugoslavs] stated... [again Zawadzki leaves some space]

4) Comrade Zambrowski. That the Soviet comrades have introduced discord among us in the Politburo.<sup>57</sup>

5) Zawadzki (attached points). [It is not clear what he means here]

6) Comrade Jozwiak—Here [in Poland] one can feel [the presence of] an enemy, who acts cunningly and [is] deeply [rooted]. That there is no one in the Politburo who is opposed to democracy. But that hostile elements are active [in the Party]. He agrees that our leadership was not leadership at all. The issue of Soviet officers—he [Jozwiak] told the First Secretary [Ochab] why we want to send them [Soviet officers] back. That at a Politburo meeting four comrades, O[chab], G[omulka], Z[awadzki], C[yrankiewicz], were asked [to select the new Politburo], they proposed the obvious Politburo members. He [Jozwiak] was opposed [to the new Politburo], and so was one more comrade. He mostly means Comrade Rokossowski.

7) Comrade Zenon Nowak—The nature of

the situation—it is about a struggle for power [inside the PUWP]. The work [of those engaged in the struggle] went along the lines of a critique, to smear everything and everyone [opposed to them].<sup>58</sup> We excluded one person from the Party and there was uproar.<sup>59</sup> The mood in the country [Poland] is being organized. About the list with the composition of the new [PUWP] Politburo—it was made public without the Politburo's decision (Ochab explains that he gave permission...). He [Nowak] does not think that the new list of Politburo members will solve the situation.

8) Comrade Cyrankiewicz—He declares his position toward the USSR. —To remove everything that adversely impacts the issue of [the Soviet-Polish] friendship. —That the greeting today at the airport is contradictory to everything that was settled at the July [1955] Plenum of the CPSU<sup>60</sup> about the mutual relations between our countries. That we have to deal with the issue of strengthening the Party and the leadership. [Cyrankiewicz is] Against Comrade Rokossowski, for banging his fist on the table. —(Comrade Khrushchev: where are you headed with this? You are either naive, or you pretend to be...). At this point, 9:00 [p.m.], Comrade Gomulka vehemently protests against the movement of Soviet and Polish tanks—[which brings about] sharp clashes with the Soviet comrades. Comrade Khrushchev—that in Germany [there is] a huge Soviet army... Comrade Mikoyan—go ahead, do it, but you will assume a great responsibility in front of the Party, the nation and the brother countries! (directed at Gomulka).<sup>61</sup> Again, about the list of new Politburo [members]...[and its] distribution in Warsaw.

9) Comrade Khrushchev. 1) regarding the [Soviet] advisers—that rather reluctantly they will give it to us [Soviets will concede]. That he [Khrushchev] feels pained by the position of Comrade Gomulka on the issue of the advisers. That the Soviet Union saw it as its duty [to send advisers to Poland]. He [Khrushchev] admits that they [Soviets] travelled here with the purpose of telling us their views, interpretations, and to influence us... But we [the Poles] will not entertain anything. Very determined concerning the issue of Comrade Rokossowski. [Soviets concerned] That this is how Gomulka has come [to join] the leadership of the [Polish] Party, with such a position.

10) Comrade Molotov, that we [the Poles] of course have to take responsibility [for our problems], but that they [the Soviets] have to take responsibility for the larger issue of the [socialist] camp.

11) Rokossowski, what kind of circumstances do I find myself in.

12) Comrade Ochab. There are social forces, which are active... That all the comrades in the Politburo are good. [It's] just that we [in the Polish Party] did not want to hinder Comrade Gomulka [in his role] as the First Secretary.

Rejoinder by Soviet comrades, that the [PUWP] Politburo should not remove itself from the desires of the First Secretary.

[Source: *Zawadzki Papers*, AAN, KC PZPR; translated from the Polish by L.W. Gluchowski with Jan Grabowski]

Another account of the October 19-20 Soviet-Polish meeting was presented by Gomulka to the Chinese on 11 January 1957. It is a refined version of the Soviet-Polish confrontation of October 1956, exclusively from the Polish perspective. Document No. 4 below allowed Gomulka to make his case, albeit to a private audience, that the Soviet-Polish confrontation of October 1956 was his—and therefore a Polish—victory. This document also provides us with a glimpse of the Chinese reaction to the October events in Poland, especially to Zhou Enlai's understanding of the Soviet Union's place in the international communist movement.<sup>62</sup>

#### DOCUMENT NO. 4<sup>63</sup>

Secret [Handwritten]

#### NOTES

from the completed discussions of 11 and 12 January 1957 between the delegates of the Chinese People's Republic [ChPR] and Poland.

The Chinese side in the discussions included: Comrades Zhou Enlai, He Long, Wang Dongxing, and the ambassador of the ChPR in Poland, Wang Pinga.

From the Polish side participants included: Comrades Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz, Zawadzki, Ochab, Zambrowski, Rapacki, [Stefan] Naszkowski, and Poland's ambassador to the Chinese People's Republic, [Stanislaw] Kiryluk.

First sitting on day 11.I.1957 at 1500 hrs.

[Comrade Gomulka]

(...)

Fundamentally correct resolutions had been accepted at our VII Plenum [of July 1956], but they remained unfulfilled because our leadership and many lower structures in the Party were paralyzed. The primary deficiency of the VII Plenum, however, was its inability to steer the Polish-Soviet relationship back to a position of equality and sovereignty. This deeply preyed on the country. Many comrades in the Party leadership came to the conclusion, in order to avoid a dangerous situation in the country, that it was time to regulate Polish-Soviet relations. This situation was well known to the CPSU leadership, but the Soviet comrades decided firmly at the time to oppose actively this tendency. The result was

that on the day before the VIII Plenum opened, the Soviet embassy communicated to us that a delegation, which did in fact arrive, will present itself in Poland on the very day the Plenum opens. The Soviet comrades also turned to the then First Secretary, comrade Ochab, to comrade Cyrankiewicz, and to me, even though I was not a CC member at the time, to demand that we clearly state our views on his matter. With one voice we asked the Soviet comrades not to come and not to meet with us on the day the VIII Plenum opened; maybe later, on the next day, or even later, so that it would not make our work more difficult. Despite our position, the Soviet comrades told us through their ambassador that they will arrive on the day of the Plenum and that they expect Party and Government leaders to greet them at the airport. We understood this to be a dictate and a threat to us personally. Not wanting to aggravate this delicate situation, the whole PUWP Politburo decided to greet the CPSU delegation. And here came the incidents that weighed very heavily on the subsequent course of events and the work of the Plenum. The Soviet comrades, especially comrade Khrushchev, immediately caused a scene at the airport. There were many Soviet generals who served in the Polish Army, as well as Marshal Konev, at the airport. Khrushchev first greeted the Soviet generals and Marshal Rokossowski, completely ignoring members of the PUWP Politburo and the Government. Next, he approached the Polish delegation. He gestured his finger to comrade Ochab like a lout and began to threaten [in Russian]: "That number won't pass here." We accepted all of this very calmly. We did not want the Soviet generals and their chauffeurs to see any public display because we knew the harm that this could bring. The Soviet comrades, right there at the airport, demanded a postponement of the Plenum. This was exactly at the moment when every CC member waited for the Plenum to open. We asked the Soviet comrades if they would come to the Belvedere Palace, where we resumed the discussions.

Khrushchev's first words were as follows: "We have decided to intervene brutally in your affairs and we will not allow you to realize your plans." We immediately thought that if someone puts a revolver on the table we will not talk. We asked if they wanted to arrest us. Khrushchev explained that he did not say anything of the sort, only that the CPSU had decided to intervene. Since the comrades were waiting in the hall for the Plenum to begin, we explained that we cannot agree to postpone the Plenum, but after the official opening of the Plenum we will return to the talks with them. The Soviet comrades eventually agreed. After we opened the Plenum, and added certain members to the CC, we gave no indication about the atmosphere at the meeting, adding only that we are going to continue our talks with the Soviet comrades.

The subsequent talks were somewhat calmer. Comrade Mikoyan reported the perspective of the Soviet delegation. He said that the Soviet Union has certain military forces on GDR [German Democratic Republic] territory and is concerned that changes by us after the VIII Plenum might lead to a difficult situation, with a loss of communications to those military forces, especially if Poland wants to break away from the bloc uniting our states. We explained to the Soviet comrades that the changes would allow for the strengthening of our cooperation and not to its weakening (about which they were well informed; and that no one alive among us wants to break away). The Soviet comrades were threatening a brutal response because they concluded we should not make changes to the CC PUWP Politburo, except to include comrade Gomulka. The Soviet comrades pointed out that there are real communists in Poland, who take a correct position, and therefore we are obliged to support them. It was an attempt to split the Party leadership into groups.

At this time, we received reports that the Soviet army stationed in Poland began to march on Warsaw. As to our question about what this means, the Soviet comrades explained that it was part of some military exercise planned a long time ago. We explained to the Soviet comrades that, notwithstanding the facts, in the eyes of Polish society this military exercise will be understood as an attempt to put pressure on the Government and Party. We demanded the return of the Soviet armored units to their bases. The Soviet comrades told Marshal Rokossowski, who was taking part in the discussions, to transmit to Marshal Konev the wishes of the PUWP Politburo, to halt the military exercises, which of course did not happen. Smaller units of the Polish armed forces were also moved in the direction of Warsaw, on the orders of Marshal Rokossowski, who, when asked, admitted: "I wanted to secure selected positions in Warsaw." Of course, Rokossowski did not inform the PUWP Politburo about his orders, merely confirming, after we asked about it, that he had given the orders.

The talks with the Soviet delegation went on for the whole day. The atmosphere was very unpleasant, inhospitable. Our side was calm but determined. Near the end of the talks, now calmly, comrade Khrushchev explained: "It doesn't matter what you want, our view is such that we will have to restart the intervention." We again assured the Soviet comrades that their fears concerning Poland's departure from the bloc of socialist states was groundless. We will respect the wishes of the Party and we will build socialism according to our will.

We were given further information concerning the continued advance of the Soviet army in the direction of Warsaw; Soviet tanks ran over a number of people. Soviet warships also entered our territorial waters. Again, we tried to intervene, but the Soviet comrades did not listen.

On the next day, the Soviet delegation flew back to Moscow. This time, the farewell at the airport was more normal. The news of the Soviet delegation's visit to Poland, including the incident at the airport, spread throughout Warsaw with the speed of light. It was said that the Soviet comrades argued with our Politburo. This raised the level of tensions in an already tense atmosphere. Rumors also spread, even before the Soviet delegation had arrived, that there were plans to seize the state. Workers at their enterprises were mobilized and put on a state of readiness by the Warsaw Provincial Party Committee. Rumors spread to the effect that Rokossowski's army was planning, together with the Soviet army, to fight the Internal Security Corps, etc. The above examples weighed heavily on the subsequent resolution of the situation in the Party and in Poland. The PUWP Politburo decided to inform the Plenum about the better half of the results of the talks with the Soviet delegation. We put the whole affair this way: the Soviet comrades were very concerned to ensure that their communications with their army in the GDR were not damaged. The Politburo was able to convince the Soviet comrades that nothing will stand in the way of their cooperation with us and the GDR. In response to the many questions put to us by workers at different enterprises, we tried to justify the trip made by the Soviet comrades, we tried to defend their position, and we will continue to keep secret our talks. Shortly after this came the first incidents from Hungary, which added to the causes of our internal difficulties. (...)

Comrade Zhou Enlai thanks comrade Gomulka for his extensive information about the situation in Poland. It appears that the position taken by the PUWP during the October events was correct. Its correctness is based on the fact that the Polish comrades resorted to Marxist-Leninist principles in their work. The Communist Party of China [CPCh] supported the decision of the Polish Party from the beginning, when the VIII Plenum made its decision. The main decision was taken by the Polish comrades. The CPCh simply played a stabilizing role. The relations between fraternal parties, Zhou Enlai said, ought to be based on Marxism-Leninism. Relations between socialist countries ought to be based on equal rights.

The Soviet Union, in its declaration of 30 October [1956], recognized that cooperation must be based on equality. The CPCh supported this position and we have always tried to work in support of it. As Marxists we ought to know how to learn from mistakes. In the Polish-Soviet relationship in the past there was a lot of inequality. Now this has been corrected. We are of the opinion that the PUWP should avoid public discussion of the situation which transpired with the CPSU because it could damage our camp. It is also correct that the PUWP did not ignite nation-

alist sentiments. Your tactics allowed for the regulation of difficult problems without a public discussion, of which the imperialists could have taken advantage. In our declaration of 29 December [1956] we underlined that antagonistic and non-antagonistic disputes should be resolved by various methods. I support the position of comrade Gomulka, Zhou Enlai said, about equality and sovereignty, but the leading role of the Soviet Union must be remembered. The leading role of the Soviet Union is the main point, while equality and errors are points of less value. Comrade Mao Zedong in his talks with comrade Kiryluk correctly underlined that relations between our countries ought to be like relations between brothers, and not like the relations between a father and a son, like the past the relations between the USSR and Poland. For our part, we told the CPSU that their position regarding the relations with fraternal parties is not always correct. But we do not believe this ought to be spoken of in public, so we do not weaken the USSR. It is not necessary to return to the errors. The main point at this time is the leading role of the CPSU and to unite again against our enemies.

(...)

Warsaw, 16.I.1957

Protocols by: Kiryluk St.

Krazarz K.

7 copies

[Source: AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 107, tom 5, str. 83, 85-88, 93-95; translated from the Polish by L.W. Gluchowski.]

The Soviet delegation decided to let the PUWP Central Committee deal with Rokossowski and his future status in the Polish Party. The Soviet-Polish confrontation of October 1956 ended peacefully. The Polish delegation was given permission to continue with the 8th Plenum. The unity of Polish society against Soviet armed intervention, as well as its overwhelming support for a communist leader who gained Khrushchev's trust, ensured that sanity prevailed. The Poles had thereby managed to avoid the tragic fate that would soon befall the Hungarians. The joint Soviet-Polish communiqué of 20 October 1956 declared: "The debates were held in an atmosphere of Party-like and friendly sincerity. It was agreed that a delegation of the PUWP Politburo would go to Moscow in the nearest future to discuss with the Presidium of the CPSU problems of further strengthening the political and economic cooperation between the PPR and the Soviet Union, and to further consolidating the fraternal friendship and coexistence of the PUWP and the CPSU."<sup>64</sup>

The entire Soviet delegation returned to Moscow at 6:45 a.m. on October 20.

The 8th Plenum resumed proceedings at 11 a.m. that same day. The details of the debates have been available since 1956 and it is not necessary to relate them here. Gomulka's long speech to the Plenum, broadcast to the nation on state radio, set the tone of the debate. He uncompromisingly condemned Stalinism and its political and economic consequences in Poland. The substance of Gomulka's speech was not significantly different from the programme he had outlined to the Politburo on October 12.<sup>65</sup> He attacked the attempts to blame imperialist forces for the Poznan revolt and demanded that the Party learn from the bitter lesson taught by the working class.<sup>66</sup> Gomulka also demanded an investigation into the illegal activities of the security apparatus. Gomulka's "Polish road to socialism" called for relations between the PUWP and CPSU to be based on equality, but also assumed that the Polish People's Republic could not weaken its formal ties to the Soviets.

The controversy over Rokossowski was the most animated part of the debate at the 8th Plenum. The Marshal explained his position thus: "The army has not received any decision from the leadership that there should be no movements of units and even if such a decision were received it would take several days to implement it. Comrades are aware that this is the time when the army conducts tactical exercises...Indeed Soviet forces were moving. They were conducting autumn maneuvers...They were moving in the direction of Łódź and Bydgoszcz...I asked Marshal Konev...that the eastward movement of the [Soviet] Northern [Army] Group should stop and the units return to their bases...That is all I know."<sup>67</sup> The Party leaders remained sensitive to Khrushchev's accusations of anti-Soviet passions in Poland and shielded Rokossowski from mounting attacks at the Plenum.

The elections to the Politburo at the 8th Plenum began at 5:30 p.m on October 20. Ochab attempted to soften the blow over Rokossowski's removal from the Politburo with the following statement: "I would just like to point out briefly that not to nominate someone does not by any means indicate a lack of confidence...Comrade Rokossowski's case is simply one of the many personnel matters."<sup>68</sup> The following

were elected to the Politburo by the Central Committee in a secret ballot: Cyrankiewicz (73 votes of 75 votes); Gomulka (74); Jedrychowski (72); Loga-Sowinski (74); Morawski (56); Ochab (75); Rapacki (72); Zambrowski (56); and Zawadzki (68). Rokossowski only received 23 votes and failed to get elected. The following were elected to the Secretariat: Albrecht (73); Gierek (75); Gomulka (74); Jarosinski (74); Matwin (68); Ochab (75); and Zambrowski (57). In an open ballot, the CC unanimously, and without a show of hands, elected Gomulka to the post of First Secretary.<sup>69</sup>

Polish state radio ceased its normal programming on October 21 at 10:27 p.m. and broadcast the election results to the nation. The Warsaw press immediately issued an extra edition and distributed the announcement to the thousands of workers and students who waited in anticipation of the results of the 8th Plenum. The front page of *Trybuna Ludu* declared: "Today we have a leadership capable of implementing the programme worked out after the 7 and 8 Plenum. This leadership is capable of getting the support of the toiling masses of the whole country."<sup>70</sup> Within the next few days an almost endless stream of letters poured into the Central Committee from individual Party activists as well as from Party-directed institutions. The overwhelming majority of the Party rank-and-file approved of the decisions taken by the Plenum and wrote approvingly of Gomulka's election to the post of First Secretary.

On October 22 Ponomarenko handed Gomulka a short letter from the CPSU First Secretary. Document No. 5 below is Khrushchev's written response to Gomulka's request that Soviet officers be removed from the Polish Army. Khrushchev also agreed to found a new institution attached to the Polish Committee for Public Security to represent the KGB.

#### DOCUMENT NO. 5

##### SECRETARY CENTRAL COMMITTEE PUWP

Comrade W. GOMULKA

1. During comrade Ochab's stay in Moscow, on his way to China, comrade Ochab, in his 11 September [1956] conversation with the Central Committee of the CPSU, transmitted the view of the CC PUWP that it was now time to abolish the institution of Soviet advisers attached to the Committee for Public Security of the PPR.<sup>71</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECRETARY CENTRAL COMMITTEE CPSU

N. KHRUSHCHEV

22 October 1956

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

[Source: AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 112, tom 26, s. 176-177; translated from the Russian by L.W. Gluchowski.]

Gomulka held his victory speech on October 24 outside the Palace of Culture in Warsaw. Over 300,000 people gathered to hear the First Secretary, the largest meeting of its kind in Poland until the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1979. No other First Secretary in the history of the PUWP ever received such an outpouring of popular support. Gomulka appeared on the balcony, surrounded by the new Politburo.

More important, Khrushchev put the Polish question to rest in Europe for almost 25 years, until the rise of "Solidarity" in 1980-81. The significance of the "Polish October" for Soviet international politics, and for the Khrushchev years in particular, was overshadowed by the thaw in East-West relations following Stalin's death and eclipsed by the tragedy of Budapest in November 1956. The Soviet invasion of Hungary and the ruthless suppression of the popular uprising permanently stained Khrushchev's post-Stalin achievements. Previous research on Poland's de-Stalinization crisis tended to emphasize Polish domestic politics.<sup>76</sup> But Khrushchev's intervention in October 1956 may come to be viewed as the most significant foreign policy victory of the Khrushchev years. The PUWP was the first ruling Party in the former Soviet bloc to undergo an extensive de-Stalinization campaign. Khrushchev thus helped to guide the first transformation of the modern Polish state. In spite of the PUWP's subsequent neglect of ideological matters over the next thirty-three years, it was still able to implement some of the most extensive political reforms of any socialist state in the region. And Poland's negotiated transition to multi-party democracy in 1989 was one of the smoothest in central Europe. If the second and current transition succeeds in consolidating democratic governance in Poland, Khrushchev may have to be given some of the credit for the role he played in establishing the parameters for the consolidation of a stable, workable, and strategically secure Polish state between Germany and Russia. The "Polish October" was also "Khrushchev's October."

The most striking common feature of the documents presented here is the degree to which many issues of public policy are also articulated as conflicts between human beings.<sup>77</sup> There appears to have been little interest in the structural causes of conflict among the communist leaders of this period. Conflict between communist states, and especially conflict between fraternal communist parties, is often discussed as if it were a struggle between individual leaders, who made correct or incorrect policy choices. The discussions outlined in these documents, about the need to reconstitute dramatically the exploitative relationship between the Soviet Union and its Soviet bloc allies, mirrored the style and the tone perfected by Stalin, who often personalized pub-

lic policy disputes and presented their resolution in dramatic form.<sup>78</sup> The discussions, as reflected in the documents, either by the Polish, Soviet, or Chinese leaders, indicate that Stalin's influence over the international communist movement continued to resonate long after his death.

1. See the excellent study on the repression of the Polish officer corps by Jerzy Poksinski, "TUN" Tatar-Utmik-Nowicki: *Represje wobec oficerów Wojska Polskiego w latach 1949-1956* [Repression against officers of the Polish Army, 1949-1956] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo 'Bellona' ['Bellona' Publishers], 1992). See also a collection of documents on the Polish military counter-intelligence agency: Zbigniew Palski, ed., *Agentura Informacji Wojskowej w latach 1945-1956* [The Military Information Agency, 1945-1956] (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk [Institute for Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences], 1992). On the Polish security apparatus see Andrzej Paczkowski, "Aparat bezpieczeństwa w latach odwilży: *causae Polski*" [The Security Apparatus During the Thaw: *Polish Casus*] (Mimeographed).

2. The total number of Soviet officers remaining in the Polish Army as of 1 May 1956 was 76,28 of whom were generals, 32 colonels, 13 lieutenant colonels, 2 majors, and 1 captain. This was a considerable decline from the 712 Soviet officers who served in the Polish Army between July 1952 and March 1953 (67% to 73% of the total number of colonels and lieutenant colonels respectively in the Polish Army, which included 41 general officers). Yet Soviet officers (excluding Rokossowski) continued to occupy many of the leading military positions, including deputy minister of defence and Chief of the General Staff. For details see the documentary study by Edward Jan Nalepa, *Oficerowie Radzieccy w Wojsku Polskim w latach 1943-1968* (studium historyczno-wojskowe), *Część I i II (załączniki)* [Soviet Officers in the Polish Army, 1943-1968 (A Military History Study), Part I and II (Appendices)] (Warsaw: Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny [Military History Institute], 1992). I am preparing a working paper on Soviet military policy in Poland between 1943-1959 for the Stalin Archives Project of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Toronto.

3. Communist Party of Poland (CPP) member and union activist from 1926; thrice arrested and twice sentenced for communist activity. Studied at the Lenin International School in Moscow 1933-36; imprisoned in Poland 1936-39, thus escaping the Great Purge and the liquidation of the CPP by the Comintern in 1938; joined the Polish Workers Party (PWP) in 1942; PWP General Secretary 1943; deputy premier of the Provisional Government and of the Government of National Unity, and Minister of the Recovered Territories until January 1949. Dismissed from the Politburo at the August-September 1948 Plenum, when he was accused of "rightist-nationalist deviationism," but still elected to the CC at the First PUWP (Unification) Congress in December 1949; expelled from the PUWP in 1949; arrested in 1951; released in 1954; PUWP First Secretary from October 1956 to December 1970.

4. Marshal of the Soviet Union. Evacuated to Russia in 1915; took part in the Bolshevik revolution; military officer arrested during the Great Purge; released in 1941 and appointed to rank of general; promoted to Marshal in the Red Army during World War II; sent to Poland by Stalin after the war. On 5 November 1949 he

was made a citizen of Poland, Marshal of Poland, Minister of National Defense, and member of the CC PUWP; joined the Politburo in May 1950; deputy premier in 1952. Expelled from the Politburo and CC in October 1956; recalled to the USSR on 13 November 1956, where he served as a deputy minister of national defense.

5. 1949-50 first deputy defense minister and chief political officer of the Polish Armed Forces; 1950-56 Secretary PUWP; March-October 1956 First Secretary PUWP.

6. Ochab travelled to Beijing via Moscow in September to attend the Eighth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. In Moscow, Ochab informed Khrushchev that Gomulka would be joining the leadership. Ochab also told the Soviets that the PUWP Central Committee wanted the Soviet advisers attached to the Committee for Public Security to leave Poland. In China, Ochab sought Beijing's support in the event the CPSU and PUWP could not come to an agreement. For further details see his interview with Teresa Toranska, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets*, trans. by Agnieszka Kolakowska (London: Collins, Harvill, 1987), 66-72; and Andrzej Werblan, "Czy Chinczycy uratowali Gomulka? [Did the Chinese Rescue Gomulka?]" *Polityka* 26 October 1991.

7. "Protokół z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego z dnia 1 12 X 1956 r., nr. 122," Archiwum Akt Nowych [Archive of Modern Records] (AAN), Warsaw, KC PZPR, paczka 15, tom 58, str. 167-169.

8. Panteleimon Kondrat'evich Ponomarenko was Extraordinary Ambassador of the USSR to Poland from 7 May 1955 to 28 September 1957. He joined the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)] in 1925; worked with Malenkov in the CC apparatus 1938; First Secretary of the Belorussian Communist Party; member CC VKP(b) and CC CPSU 1939-61.

9. "Protokół z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego z dnia 8 i 10 X 1956 r., nr. 124," AAN, KC PZPR [CC PUWP], paczka 15, tom 58, str. 172-174.

10. "Nieautoryzowane Wystąpienie tow. Wiesława na posiedzeniu Biura Politycznego w dniu 12 października 1956 r.," AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 12, teczka 46a, str. 29-36; and "Protokół z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego z dnia 12 X 1956 r., nr. 125," AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 15, tom 58, str. 187-188. The full text of Gomulka's presentation to the Politburo on 12 October has been reprinted in an important collection of documents by Jakub Andrzejewski [Andrzej Paczkowski], ed., *Gomulka i inni: Dokumenty z archiwum KC 1948-1982 [Gomulka and Others: Documents from the CC Archives, 1948-1982]* [hereafter *Gomulka i inni*] (London: 'Aneks', 1987), 89-96.

11. CPP member before the war; during the war chief of staff of the People's Army. The People's Army was trained by the Soviets and modelled after the Soviet partisan brigades. 1945 commander of the Polish militia; 1945-48 member of the PWP Politburo; 1948-59 member of the PUWP Central Committee; 1948-56 member of the PUWP Politburo and head of the Central Commission of Party Control; 1955-56 deputy premier; 1949-52 president of the Chief Board of Supervision and member of the State Council; 1952-55 minister of State Control.

12. 1924-38 CPP functionary and Central Committee member from 1932; 1942 arrested by the Nazis and sent to a labour camp; 1945 liberated and joined the Soviet army. Returns to Poland in 1947; PWP Provincial Committee Second Secretary in Poznan then Provincial Committee First Secretary in Katowice; 1947-48 head of the PWP Central Committee cadres department;

1948-80 member PUWP Central Committee; 1950-54 PUWP Secretary; 1950-56 member of the PUWP Politburo; 1952-68 deputy premier; 1964-71 head of the Central Committee of Party Control; 1969-71 head of the Chief Board of Supervision; 1971-77 ambassador to Moscow.

13. 1948-59 member of the PUWP Central Committee; 1952-56 member of the PUWP Politburo; 7 July 1944 to 7 December 1954 Minister of Public Security; 1954-56 Minister of State Farms.

14. "Protokół z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego z dnia 15 X 1956 r., nr. 126," AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 12, teczka 46a, s. 37-56; and "Protokół z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego z dnia 12 X 1956 r., nr. 126," AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 15, tom 58, str. 189.

15. Member of the Polish Socialist Party (PSP); during the war a member of the resistance movement supported by the London government-in-exile; arrested by the Nazis in 1941 and sent to Auschwitz. 1945-48 PSP general secretary; supported the union of PSP with PWP; 1948-75 member of PUWP Central Committee; 1948-71 member PUWP Politburo; 1947-52 Prime Minister; 1952-54 deputy premier; 1954-70 Prime Minister; 1971-72 head of the Council of State (head of state); 1972 until his death in 1989 head of the Polish National Peace Council.

16. CCCP member from 1922; in the USSR during the war, where he was one of the organizers of the Union of Polish Patriots (UPP). The UPP was founded in Moscow in 1943; it marked the beginning of the future communist government in Poland. 1943-44 deputy chief political officer in the Polish Army; member of the Politburo from 1943; 1949-51 head of the Central Council of Trade Unions; 1951-52 deputy premier; head of the Council of State from 1952 until his death in 1964.

17. Secretary of the Łódź CPP Committee before the war; spent the war in the USSR, where he was member of the UPP and a political officer in the Polish Army. 1944-48 Secretary of the PWP Central Committee; 1948-64 member of the PUWP Central Committee; 1948-63 member of the PUWP Politburo; 1947-54 and 1956-63 Secretary of the PUWP; 1947-55 member of the Council of State; 1955-56 minister of State Control; 1963-68 vice-president of the Chief Board of Supervision. Accused of revisionism in 1963 and removed from Party posts; expelled from the PUWP during the anti-Jewish and anti-intellectual purges of March 1968.

18. I am preparing a complete translation of the proceedings of the PUWP's Sixth Plenum of March 1956 (including Khrushchev's long presentation to the Plenum) for a discussion of Soviet cadre policies in Poland from 1954 to 1956. It will be the subject of a forthcoming CWIHP Working Paper.

19. 1915-30 in Russia and the Soviet Union; took part in the Russian revolution and Civil War; VCP(b) member; 1930 sent to Poland, where he was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment; spent World War II in the Soviet Union; 1945-59 member of the PWP and PUWP Central Committees; 1948-51 deputy member of the PUWP Politburo; 1950-56 PUWP Secretary; 1951-56 member of the PUWP Politburo; 1957-65 ambassador to Prague.

20. "Protokół z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego z dnia 17 X 1956 r., nr. 127," AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 12, teczka 46a, str. 57-65; and "Protokół z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego z dnia 17 X 1956 r., nr. 127," AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 15, tom 58, str. 190.

21. "Protokół z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego z dnia 18 X 1956 r., nr. 128," AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 15, tom 58, str. 192.

22. Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* [hereafter *The Last Testament*], trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1974), 199-200.

23. The Soviet Northern Army Group was situation in some 35 garrisons in northern and western Poland. They were part of two armored and mechanized divisions located near Borno-Sulinowo in Western Pomerania and Swietoszów in Lower Silesia, and included a number of tactical air force groups stationed throughout Poland. In October 1956, the Northern Army Group was commanded by General S. Galicki (who had served in the Polish Army from 1943 to 1946) and, his chief of staff, General Stognev.

Information passed on to the PUWP Central Committee from October 19 to 26 indicated that on October 19 many units of the Northern Army Group had left their garrisons and were moving in several columns towards Warsaw. General Galicki had already moved his headquarters to Leczyca near the city of Łódź. Soviet air force units, spotted at various military airports in Poland, and Soviet naval units at their base in Swinojskie as well as those near Gdansk were put on alert. Furthermore, from October 18 to 21, the Polish coastline was patrolled by Soviet aircraft. General I. Turkiel, the Soviet commander of the Polish Air Force (returned to the Soviet Union in November 1956), also gave an order to halt all flights by Polish warplanes and the Aerial Club. The Soviets, on the other hand, were granted an unlimited right to conduct flights over Polish airspace. It was also reported that Soviet units in the Belorussian and Kiev regions were placed on a state of military readiness.

During the afternoon of October 19, Khrushchev, after he was pressed by Gomulka, gave Rokossowski the authority to issue instructions to Marshal Konev to halt the movement of the Northern Army Group toward Warsaw. However, Soviet units were reported moving as late as October 23. Smaller, more specialized units, were brought to Warsaw in secret to protect strategic installations. This included officer cadets from the Liaison Officer School in Zegrze, who were stationed on October 19 in the garages on Klonowa street, opposite the Belvedere Palace. These troops were probably part of the system set up by Rokossowski to protect the Soviet delegation in Warsaw.

For further details on the movement of Soviet military forces in Poland at this time see Jerzy Poksinski, "Wojsko Polskie w 1956 r. — problemy polityczne (1) i (2) [The Polish Army in 1956 — Political Problems (1) and (2)]" (Mimeographed); and "Wojskowe aspekty października 1956 r. [Military aspects of October 1956]" *Polska Zbrojna [Armed Poland]*, 203 (18-20 October 1991).

24. Quotations from the 8th Plenum are taken from the extensive report of the proceedings published in a special issue of the PUWP's theoretical journal, *Nowe Drogi [New Roads]* 10 (October 1956), 14.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*, 15-16.

27. Ochab again returned to the Plenum at 6 p.m. on October 19 and presented a brief report to the Central Committee: "I would like to inform you, Comrades, that conversations between our Politburo and the Soviets, which were conducted in a forthright manner, have lasted several hours. They concern the most fundamental problems of the relations between our countries and our Parties...Since our Soviet comrades unexpectedly had to take the decision to fly to Warsaw and they are anxious to return as soon as possible, we would like to continue our talks tonight and the Politburo recom-

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

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

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

30. *Ibid.*, 205.

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

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

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

34. *Ibid.*, 203.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

43. This is a reference to articles by Leszek Kolakowski, "Antysemici—Piec tez nienowych I przestroga [Anti-Semitism—Five old theses and admonition]," *Po Prostu [Plain Speaking]*, 22 (27 May 1956), and especially Edda Werfel (her husband, Roman Werfel, was editor-in-chief of *Nowe Drogi [New Paths]* from 1952 to 1959, the leading organ of the PUWP Central Committee; he was also editor of *Trybuna Ludu [People's Tribune]* for two months in March 1956), "Skąd i dlaczego nastroje antyinteligencje [From where and why the anti-intellectual mood]?" *Po Prostu*, 25 (17 June 1956). Edda Werfel attacked the call in the PUWP, supported by Khrushchev at the Sixth Plenum of March 1956, to "promote new [read: Polish] cadres" at the expense of Jews.

44. Gomulka's letter to Stalin was written on 14 December 1948, after his December 9 meeting with Stalin, Molotov and Beria. The letter was recently published in Poland. See "Ostatni spór Gomulki ze Stalinem [Gomulka's last dispute with Stalin]," ed. by Andrzej Werblan, *Dzisiaj*, 6 (1993).

45. Reference to the "threat" posed by the former premier of the Polish government in London during the war. In 1945 he signed a pact with the communist government in Poland, resulting in the Provisional Government of National Unity. Faced with arrest after the rigged elections of 1947, he escaped to the West.

46. See Gomulka, "Na fundamentach jedności stanie gmach socjalizmu" [On the foundations of unity stands the structure of socialism], *Głos Ludu [The People's Voice]* 328 (28 November 1948).

47. Writer and editor, prominent advocate of socialist realism in literature. 1945-50 Polish ambassador to Paris. In 1956 he was a member of the PUWP Central Committee and Secretary of the Party organization at the Polish Union of Writers. During the Sixth Plenum of March 1956 he made a passionate appeal against anti-Semitism.

48. Putrament wrote in Warsaw's largest daily, "Sedno sprawy" [The essence of the matter], *Zycie Warszawy [Warsaw Life]* (19 October 1956), that "the decisive, nodical problem for People's Poland" concerns the future of the self-governing workers' councils: "all those who will not agree in Poland either to counter-revolution, nor to a return to an 'exceptional state' [Stalinism], must know: socialism in Poland will be founded either by the working class or not at all." In *Pravda*, on October 20, the Soviet correspondent in Warsaw wrote, under the title "Anti-socialist performances in the columns of the Polish press," the following: "Over the last few days in the Polish press an ever increasing number of articles have been published which sound off about the repudiation of the road to socialism." Putrament's article is one of the two mentioned in the *Pravda* piece.

49. At the PUWP Secretariat meeting of 21 March 1956, Ochab took control of the Organization department and the central Party *aktiv*. Mazur retained control of the territorial *apparat*. Matwin acquired the Party's youth organization. Control of the industrial sector was transferred to Gierek. The departments of Education, Party History, and Social Services went to Albrecht, including responsibility for *Nowe Drogi, Trybuna Ludu*, and the Party commission which supervised the *Sejm* (Parlia-

ment). Morawski was to oversee the departments of Propaganda, Press and Radio, and Culture and Science. He also gained control of the All-Polish Committee of the National Unity Front, the Party commission responsible for education, and the editorial board of *Zycia Partii [Party Life]*. Matwin, Morawski and Albrecht—the so-called "Young Secretaries"—thus acquired the daily management of Party propaganda, ideology, culture, education, and the youth-wing of the Party. "Protokół z posiedzenia Sekretariatu KC w dn. 21 III 1956 r., nr. 96," AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 15, tom 58, str. 50-51.

50. The commentaries in the text and the notes are mine. The original document can be found among the Zawadzki papers, AAN, KC PZPR.

51. "Notatka z rozmowy polsko-radzieckich z 22 października 1956 r w sprawie eksploatacji rudy uranowej — i Zalaczniki," AAN, KC PZPR paczka 112, tom 26, str. 643-661.

52. See "Ostatni spór Gomulki ze Stalinem [Gomulka's last dispute with Stalin]," ed. by Andrzej Werblan, *Dzisiaj* 6 (1993).

53. Reference to Zambrowski, who, as a leading member of the so-called "Pulawy" group (the reformers) in the PUWP, is largely credited with ensuring Gomulka's entry into the Politburo by withdrawing his support for Ochab.

54. See "Ostatni spór Gomulki ze Stalinem," ed. by Werblan, *Dzisiaj* 6 (1993).

55. For details see chapter eleven (on the Seventh Plenum) of my Ph.D. dissertation, "The Collapse of Stalinist Rule in Poland: The Polish United Worker's Party from the XX CPSU Congress to the VIII CC PUWP Plenum, February-October 1956" (McMaster University, 1994), especially the section on "The Democratization Campaign," pp. 150-152. See also "Stenogram VII Plenum KC PZPR z dni 18-20, 23-25 I 26-28 VIII 1956 r.," AAN, KC PZPR, paczka 70, tom. 25-27, str. 498-1471.

56. The PUWP Politburo delegated Zenon Nowak and Mazur to meet with Gomulka on 9 May 1956. On the next day, Gomulka held talks with Mazur and Zawadzki.

57. For further details see Zambrowski's account of the meeting in his "Dziennik [Journal]," ed. by Antoni Zambrowski, *Krytyka [Criticism]*, 6 (1980), 72-73. Mikoyan and Kaganovich attempted to split the PUWP leadership by focusing the blame for past "errors" during the Stalin years in Poland on the Jews in the Polish leadership.

58. Nowak, a leader of the so-called "Natolin" group (hardliners) in the PUWP, is making reference to the attacks against him at the Seventh Plenum, where some of his comments were struck from the record because they were deemed anti-Semitic.

59. This is a reference to the dismissal of Jakub Berman from the Politburo.

60. An account of the Soviet July Plenum of 1955 can be found in testimony of Seweryn Bialer, *Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, Second Session, on the Scope of Soviet Activity in the United States*, pt. 29, pp. 1561-63 and 1573.

61. Dmitri Volkogonov recently wrote: "The Soviet ambassador to Poland, Ponomarenko, reported in May [1956] of that year that, since the Twentieth Party [CPSU] Congress of 1956, the Polish [United] Workers' Party had been 'seething'. Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Bulganin, Molotov and Kaganovic decide to fly to Warsaw on the eve of the Polish party's Central Committee plenum. Ochab, Gomulka and other Polish leaders protested, but Khrushchev and the others re-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

68. *Ibid.*, 149.

69. *Ibid.*, 157-158.

70. *Trybuna Ludu*, 21 October 1956.

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

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

On 10 January 1945 the PWP Politburo decided to ask Moscow to send advisors to Poland, which was the beginning of the preparations for the construction of a security apparatus west of the River Wisla. On 20 February 1945 the USSR State Defence Committee (GOKO) issued order no. 7558ss to comply with the request.

Gen. I.A. Serov was officially appointed on 1 March 1945 to be the NKVD advisor to the Ministry of Public Security (MPS). The appointment was a formality since Serov had been the GOKO special plenipotentiary for the Polish territories since the summer of 1944 (working behind the front which was at the Wisla).

At the same time, an "Advisers Aparat" (Aparat Doradcy) was opened. This Aparat was made up of Soviet officers attached to the MBP, the Provincial Bureau(s) of Public Security (PBPS) and District Bureau(s) of Public Security (DBPS). Their exact numbers are not known, but it is likely that it exceeded 300 persons. Advisers at the MPS—called the Senior Adviser—were subordinated to the NKVD formations stationed in Poland. This included above all the 64th Rifle Division of the NKVD Internal Security Corps, established in October 1944 and stationed in Poland until spring 1947.

After 1947 the situation "normalized". The NKVD military units were withdrawn and only the Adviser with his officers and technical staff remained. Around 1950 the advisers at the DBPS levels were pulled out and only those at the MPS and PBPS (1 to 2 advisers each) levels remained. In 1953 there were a total of approximately 30 advisers at the MPS and about 25-30 at the PBPS levels. In September 1956 the CC PUWP Politburo decided to ask Moscow for the advisers to return to the Soviet Union, which occurred after Gomulka came to power.

Soviet Advisers (Head, at the Ministry of Public Security) after Serov were: Gen. N.N. Selivanovskii (27 April 1945 to 1946); Col. S.M. Davidov (1946 to 17 March 1950); Col. M.S. Bezborodov (17 March 1950 to 10 April 1953); Gen. N.K. Kovalchuk (10 April to 20 July 1953); Col. S.N. Lialin (20 July 1953 to September 1954); Col. G.S. Ievdokimenko (September 1954 to April 1959); Ievdokimenko became adviser to the Committee for Public Security after the MPS was dissolved on 7 December 1954 and finally disbanded on 13 November 1956). The preceding list of Soviet advisers in Poland comes from Nikita V. Petrov of the "Memorial" group in Moscow.

72. As of June 1956 six Soviet colonels remained in the Polish Committee for Public Security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

73. Until October 1956 Soviet advisers in the Polish Army totalled about 50 (51 in May and 50 in July 1956). After October 1956 the Soviet advisers were renamed "Military Consultants". In January 1957 some 29 Soviet Military Consultants remained in the Polish Army. This figure was reduced to 12 by the end of the year. In 1958 the figure dropped to 6 Soviet Military Consultants (2 at the General Staff, 1 in the Artillery, 1 in the Air Force, and 2 at the Military Technical Academy). However, the Chief Soviet Military Adviser (Lieutenant General Sergei Chernisev) also continued to func-

tion in Poland until early 1959 with a staff of 3 Soviet officers.

74. In 1957 some 23 Soviet officers remained in the Polish Army, including 13 generals. This figure dropped to 9 in 1958 (5 generals) and to 2 in 1959, including a General and Brigadier General. Two Soviet officers remained in Poland until 1968: General Jerzy Bordzilowski, who was Chief of the General Staff and deputy minister of defense from 1954 to March 1968; and Lieutenant General Michal Owczynnikiw, who commanded the Military Technical Academy from 1954 to 1957 until he became the deputy of the Main Inspectorate of Schools attached to the Higher Officer School until March 1958. Between November 1956 and November 1957 some 56 Soviet officers, including 28 generals, left the Polish Army.

75. The meeting took place on 18 November 1956.

76. A noteworthy exception is the study by Marcin Kula, *Paryz, Londyn, i Waszyngton patrzy na Późniok 1956 r. w Polsce* [Paris, London, and Washington look at the Polish October] (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1992), based on Western diplomatic archives. See also Robert Los, "Późniok 1956 roku w perspektywie stosunków polsko-radzieckich [October 1956 From the Perspective of Polish-Soviet Relations]" (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Łódź, 1993). Two important Polish language studies are Zbysław Rykowski and Wiesław Władysław, *Polska próba: Późniok '56* [The Polish Attempt: October '56] (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie [Literary Publishers], 1989); and a splendid social history by Paweł Machcewicz, *Polski Rok 1956* [The Polish Year 1956] (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza "Mówia Wiek" [The Printing House "Mówia Wiek"], 1993), based on the archives of Poland's ministry of internal affairs.

77. Archival documents covering this period that have been published include *Gomulka i inni*; and Andrzej Garlicki, *Z Tajnych Archiwów* [From the Secret Archives] (Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza "BGW" [The Polish Printing House "BGW"], 1993).

78. Cf. Lars T. Lih, Oleg V. Naumov, and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, eds., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925-1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

---

*L.W. Gluchowski completed his Ph.D. in 1992 at King's College, University of Cambridge. He is currently Assistant Professor in the Peace and Conflict Studies Programme and the Department of Political Science, and Research Fellow at the Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Toronto. Dr. Gluchowski is completing a book-length manuscript on the Polish crisis of October 1956, based in part on his dissertation, "The Collapse of Stalinist Rule in Poland: The Polish United Worker's Party through the XX CPSU Congress to the VIII CC PUWP Plenum, February-October 1956," and recent research conducted at the Archive of Modern Records (AAN [Archiwum Akt Nowych]) in Warsaw and the Central Military Archives (CAW [Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe]) in Rembartów, Poland.*

**KHRUSHCHEV'S MEETING***continued from page 1*

1956. A shorter version was originally discovered by Tibor Hajdu of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest and published in Hungarian in 1992.<sup>1</sup> Although the document below is the most important item to emerge thus far, other materials in Prague are also well worth consulting. In addition to files left from the top organs of the former Czechoslovak Communist Party (*Komunistická strana Československa*, or KSC), which are all now housed at the Central State Archive, numerous items pertaining to the military aspects of the 1956 crises can be found in the Czech Military-Historical Archive (*Vojenský historický archiv*).<sup>2</sup>

The summary report below was presented by the KSC leader, Antonín Novotný, to the other members of the KSC Politburo on 25 October 1956.<sup>3</sup> The report is undated, but it must have been drafted and hastily revised in the late night/early morning hours of October 24–25 by Jan Svoboda, a top aide to Novotný. Svoboda was responsible for composing many of Novotný's speeches and reports in the mid-1950s.

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

At the Presidium meeting on October 24 (and later in his memoirs), Khrushchev described how the Soviet Union actively tried to prevent Gomułka from regaining his leadership post.<sup>5</sup> On October 19, as the 8th Plenum of the PZPR Central Committee was getting under way, a delegation of top Soviet officials paid a surprise visit to Warsaw. The delegation included Khrushchev, Vyacheslav Molotov, Nikolai Bulganin, Lazar Kaganovich, and Anastas Mikoyan, as well as the commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact, Marshal Ivan Konev, and 11 other high-ranking Soviet military officers. In a hastily-arranged meeting with Gomułka and other Polish leaders, the CPSU delegates expressed anxiety about upcoming personnel changes in the PZPR and urged the Poles to strengthen their political, economic, and military ties with the Soviet Union. For their part, Gomułka and his colleagues sought clarification of the status of Soviet troops in Poland and demanded that Soviet officials pledge not to interfere in Poland's internal affairs.<sup>6</sup> Gomułka repeatedly emphasized that Poland "will not permit its independence to be taken away." He called for the withdrawal of all or most of the Soviet Union's 50 "advisers" in Poland and insisted that Marshal Konstantin Rokossovskii, the Polish-born Soviet officer who had been installed as Poland's national defense minister in November 1949, be removed along with other top Soviet officers who were serving in the Polish army. The Soviet delegation responded by accusing the Poles of seeking to get rid of "old, trustworthy revolutionaries who are loyal to the cause of socialism" and of "turning toward the West against the Soviet Union."<sup>7</sup>

During the heated exchanges that ensued, Gomułka was suddenly informed by one of his aides that Soviet tank and infantry units were advancing toward Warsaw. The Polish leader immediately requested that the Soviet forces be pulled back, and Khrushchev, after some hesitation, complied with the request, ordering Konev to halt all troop movements. Although Khrushchev assured Gomułka that the deployments had simply been in preparation for upcoming military exercises, the intended message was plain enough, especially in light of other recent developments. The existence of Soviet "plans to protect the most important state facilities" in Poland, including military garrisons and lines of communication, had been deliber-

ately leaked to Polish officials earlier in the day; and Soviet naval vessels had begun holding conspicuous maneuvers in waters near Gdansk.<sup>8</sup> Despite these various forms of pressure, the Polish authorities stood their ground, and the meeting ended without any firm agreement. The official communique merely indicated that talks had taken place and that Polish leaders would be visiting Moscow sometime "in the near future."<sup>9</sup> In every respect, then, the negotiations proved less than satisfactory from the Soviet standpoint.

After the Soviet delegation returned to Moscow on October 20, the PZPR Central Committee reconvened and promptly elected Gomułka first secretary and dropped Rokossovskii and several other neo-Stalinist officials from the PZPR Politburo. That same day, an editorial in the CPSU daily *Pravda* accused the Polish media of waging a "filthy anti-Soviet campaign" and of trying to "undermine socialism in Poland."<sup>10</sup> These charges prompted vigorous rebuttals from Polish commentators. Strains between the two countries increased still further as tens of thousands of Poles took part in pro-Gomułka rallies in Gdansk, Szczecin, and other cities on October 22. Even larger demonstrations, involving up to 100,000 people each, were organized the following day in Poznań, Lublin, Łódź, Bydgoszcz, Kielce, and elsewhere. In the meantime, joint meetings of workers and students were being held all around Poland, culminating in a vast rally in Warsaw on October 24 attended by as many as 500,000 people. Although these events were intended mainly as a display of unified national support for the new Polish leadership in the face of external pressure, some of the speakers expressed open hostility toward the Soviet Union. The growing anti-Soviet mood was especially noticeable at a large rally in Wrocław on October 23, which nearly spun out of control.

As tension continued to mount, Soviet leaders began to contemplate a variety of economic sanctions and military options. None of these options seemed the least bit attractive, however, as Khrushchev emphasized to his colleagues during the meeting on October 24: "Finding a reason for an armed conflict [with Poland] now would be very easy, but finding a way to put an end to such a conflict later on would be very hard." Rokossovskii had warned Soviet leaders at

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

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

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

convince Hungarian officials that far-reaching 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>13</sup> As a result, the violent upheavals on October 23 quickly overwhelmed the Hungarian police and security forces and caused widespread panic and near-paralysis among senior Hungarian officials.

The subsequent course of events on the evening of October 23-24 has long been obscure, but the confusion is partly cleared up by Novotny’s report and a few other new sources.<sup>14</sup> It is now known, for example, that despite the growing turmoil in Budapest, the Hungarian Communist party leader, Erno Gero, did not even mention what was going on when he spoke by phone with Khrushchev late in the afternoon on October 23. Gero’s evasiveness during that conversation was especially peculiar because he had already transmitted an appeal for urgent military assistance to the military attache at the Soviet embassy. The Soviet ambassador, Yurii Andropov, immediately telephoned the commander of Soviet troops in Hungary, General Pyotr Lashchenko, and relayed the appeal; but Lashchenko responded that he could not comply with the request without explicit authorization from Moscow.<sup>15</sup> Andropov then cabled Gero’s plea directly to Moscow and followed up with an emergency phone call warning that the situation had turned desperate. Andropov’s intervention, as Novotny reports, prompted Khrushchev to contact Gero by phone for the second time that evening. Khrushchev urged Gero to send a written request for help to the CPSU Presidium, but the Soviet leader soon realized, after the brief conversation ended, that events in Budapest were moving too fast for him to wait until he received a formal Hungarian request (which, incidentally, did not arrive until five days later).<sup>16</sup> On behalf of the full CPSU Presidium and Soviet government, Khrushchev, according to Novotny, authorized the Soviet defense minister, Marshal Georgii Zhukov, to “redeploy Soviet units into Budapest to assist Hungarian troops and state security forces in the restoration of public order.” Khrushchev’s directive was promptly transmitted to Lashchenko by the

chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal Vasilii Sokolovskii, who specified that the bulk of the Soviet troops in Hungary were to be used in “establishing control over the most important sites in the capital and in restoring order,” while others were to “seal off Hungary’s border with Austria.”<sup>17</sup>

Having finally received due authorization, Lashchenko was able to set to work almost immediately. The troops under his command had been preparing since early June to undertake large-scale operations aimed at “upholding and restoring public order” in Hungary.<sup>18</sup> In accordance with a plan code-named “Kompas,” the Soviet forces in Hungary had been placed on increased alert in mid-October, and were brought to full combat alert on October 22-23 at the behest of the Soviet General Staff. Hence, when the mobilization orders arrived from Moscow on the night of the 23rd, the response on the ground was swift, despite dense fog that hampered troop movements. By the early morning hours of the 24th, thousands of soldiers from the USSR’s two mechanized divisions in Hungary (the so-called “special corps”) had entered Budapest, and they were soon joined by thousands more Soviet troops from a mechanized division based in Romania and two divisions (one mechanized, one rifle) from the Transcarpathian Military District in Ukraine.<sup>19</sup> 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 array of firepower was inadequate. The intervention of the Soviet Army proved almost wholly ineffectual and even counterproductive. Gero himself acknowledged, in a phone conversation with Soviet leaders on October 24, that “the arrival of Soviet troops into the city has had a negative effect on the mood of the residents.”<sup>20</sup> Soviet armored vehicles and artillery were sent into the clogged streets of Budapest without adequate infantry pro-

tection, 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. 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 Soviet observers in Budapest 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>21</sup>

The events of October 23-24 were still very much under way as the CPSU Presidium convened. These events marked the start of a full-fledged revolution in Hungary that culminated in a much larger and more effective intervention by the Soviet Army on November 4.

\* \* \* \*

Not surprisingly, the turmoil in Eastern Europe dominated all other issues when Soviet leaders gathered on October 24. Unlike at regular meetings of the CPSU Presidium, which involved only Soviet participants, Khrushchev invited the leaders of the “fraternal” East European Communist parties (other than the Polish) to attend the session on October 24. As things turned out, only Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany were actually represented at the meeting. Along with Novotny, Viliam Siroky and Antonin Zapotocky attended from Czechoslovakia. A complete list of the Bulgarian and East German participants is provided in Novotny’s report. The full and candidate members of the CPSU Presidium and members of the CPSU Secretariat who took part included Kaganovich, Molotov, Bulganin, Aleksei Kirichenko, Georgii Malenkov, Maksim Saburov, Leonid Brezhnev, Nikolai Shvernik, Elena Furtseva, Dmitrii Shepilov, Pyotr Pospelov,

and of course Khrushchev. They were later joined by the defense minister, Marshal Georgii Zhukov, by the Soviet ambassador to Poland, Pantaleimon Ponomarenko, by a leading CPSU ideologist, Pavel Yudin, and by a senior Chinese official, Liu Xiaohui. The only members of the Soviet Presidium who were absent on October 24 were Anastas Mikoyan and Mikhail Suslov, both of whom had traveled to Budapest earlier that day to monitor the situation first-hand. Their top-

cover the situation there at even greater length than he did with Poland.

Novotny’s report, as will become evident below, was composed hastily and was intended merely as a detailed summary of the meeting rather than a polished, minute-by-minute transcript. For clarity’s sake, the translation in some places is slightly smoother than the original document, which is often rough and ungrammatical; but overall, the translation seeks to capture the flavor and style of the original. The original manuscript is full of misspelled surnames and titles, which have been corrected in the translated text. In the few instances in which these mistakes are especially glaring, they have been mentioned in the annotations. The annotations serve two more important functions as well: (1) to identify acronyms, terms, and proper names that may not be familiar to some readers, and (2) to elaborate on and provide greater context for certain issues to which Novotny adverts.

This introduction has already touched upon the most significant points in Novotny’s report, but it is worth briefly mentioning a few other items in the document that are of particular interest.

First, the report implies that Khrushchev’s order to use Soviet troops against the demonstrators in central Budapest on October 23-24, though issued on behalf of the whole CPSU Presidium, was made by Khrushchev himself, perhaps in consultation

with one or two others. Nothing in Novotny’s report suggests that the Presidium actually met on the 23rd to decide what to do. If Khrushchev did indeed feel free to act on behalf of the whole Presidium himself, this may suggest that his political authority was more firmly consolidated at the time than has usually been thought.

Second, the document reveals that Khrushchev recommended that the Hungarian authorities lie about the timing of the Hungarian Central Committee plenum on October 23-24. He urged them to claim that the plenum was held after Soviet troops entered Budapest, whereas of course the

### Hungarian Scholar’s Comments

Tibor Hajdu of the Institute of History in Budapest, who, like Mark Kramer, found the record of the 24 October 1956 Moscow meeting in the Prague archives, contributed the following comment to the *CWIHP Bulletin*:

*Unfortunately, the official Soviet record of the meeting was not available—though it was first mentioned in a series of articles by retired Soviet ambassador V. Musatov—so I sought and located a copy in the Prague archives. The minutes by Jan Svoboda, Novotny’s secretary (who accompanied his boss to Moscow as the latter didn’t understand enough Russian to follow a conversation), focus on the long speech by Khrushchev and don’t reveal whether the others were merely listening to him or made at least some signs of agreement. We may presume the lack of real debate as Khrushchev refers only to the sole dissenting opinion Ulbricht thought he could afford. (Notably Ulbricht was severely criticized not only by Khrushchev but at home also at the following session of the SED CC.)*

*What makes Khrushchev’s speech particularly interesting is the sharp distinction between his commitment here to avoid if at all possible the use of Soviet military power in Poland and Hungary, and all his later public announcements, including his memoirs. He lays the blame on Gero and Andropov for the military intervention, citing their heavy responsibility. Yet, after only a few days, he became in full agreement with Ulbricht and Andropov about the necessity for a Soviet military crackdown—well-known events compelled him to change his mind.*

secret dispatches from the scene, which were declassified by the Russian government in November 1992, make an invaluable complement to Novotny’s report.<sup>22</sup>

The CPSU Presidium meeting, according to Novotny, provoked relatively little bickering or disagreement. Khrushchev used the occasion to inform his East German, Czechoslovak, and Bulgarian counterparts about recent developments in both Poland and Hungary. Although the meeting initially was designed to forge a common position vis-a-vis Gomulka and other Polish leaders who had been defying Moscow, the pressure of events in Hungary forced Khrushchev to

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

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

Finally, it is worth reemphasizing that the report confirms what has long been suspected about the Polish crisis, namely, that the likelihood of encountering widespread armed resistance was one of the major factors that deterred Soviet military intervention. Khrushchev acknowledged this in his memoirs, and Novotny's account amply bears it out.<sup>23</sup>

\* \* \* \*

Account of a Meeting at the CPSU CC,  
24 October 1956,  
on the Situation in Poland and Hungary

On 24 Oct. 1956 I [Novotny] attended a meeting of the Presidium of the CC CPSU. Comrades from the MSP Central Committee, the SED Central Committee, the BKS Central Committee, and the RDS Central Committee also were invited to take part.<sup>24</sup> But the only ones who were actually present were the comrades from Germany, namely Ulbricht, Grotewohl, and Stoph, and the comrades from Bulgaria—Zhivkov, Yugov, and Damyanov.<sup>25</sup>

Comrade Khrushchev began by informing everyone about the situation in Poland and Hungary. He said that originally the Presidium of the CC CPSU wanted to inform the fraternal parties about the situation in Poland and about the outcome of the negotiations between the CPSU CC and the PZPR CC.<sup>26</sup> But in the meantime important events had happened in Hungary. That is why he deemed it necessary to inform us about the situation there as well.

In essence, this is what he said:

When serious reports came in from Poland that far-reaching changes were expected in the top party posts of the PZPR, the CC CPSU decided to send a delegation to Poland.

The delegation negotiated mainly with Comrades Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz, Jedrychowski, Ochab, and the foreign minister.<sup>27</sup>

All these comrades, especially Gomulka, sought to defend everything that was happening in Poland. They assured the Soviet delegation

that the measures being taken would not have an adverse effect on Poland's relations with the Soviet Union and the CPSU. On the question of why so many changes occurred in the [PZPR] Politburo, Comrade Gomulka said that the comrades who had not been reelected to the Politburo had lost the confidence of the party masses. The Soviet comrades are very worried because the [Polish] comrades who were removed from the Politburo were known to the Soviet party as old, trustworthy revolutionaries who were faithful to the cause of socialism. Among them is also Comrade Rokossovskii, who is of Polish origin but never gave up his Soviet citizenship.<sup>28</sup>

While the CPSU CC delegation was in Poland, certain maneuvers of the Soviet Army took place on Polish territory, which displeased Comrade Gomulka. The discussions between the delegations ranged from being very warm to rude. Gomulka several times emphasized that they would not permit their independence to be taken away and would not allow anyone to interfere in Poland's internal affairs. He said that if he were leader of the country, he could restore order very promptly. The representatives of the PZPR explained the arguments and factors that had led to the current situation in Poland. These were very unpersuasive and seemed to be outright fabrications. For example, Comrade Gomulka tried to convince the Soviet delegation that most of the blame should be placed on the presence of 50 Soviet security advisers in Poland and of many generals and other senior officers in the Polish army who still hold Soviet citizenship.

In addition, [Gomulka] said that Poland's obligation to supply coal to the USSR at excessively low prices had caused the difficult economic situation. Comrade Khrushchev emphasized to the Polish comrades, referring to several concrete examples, that on various occasions in the past, this had not been true.

After the CPSU CC delegation returned to Moscow, an official letter was dispatched to the PZPR CC from the CPSU CC saying that it was up to the Polish side to decide whether to send the Soviet advisers and the generals with Soviet citizenship immediately back to the USSR.

A delegation from the PZPR was invited to meetings in the USSR along party lines [*po stranicke linii*]. On 23 Oct. 1956 Comrade Gomulka told the CPSU CC that he would accept the invitation and that he would arrive after 11 Nov. 1956. Comrade Gomulka also asked Comrade Khrushchev to have the Soviet forces return to their camps, as he had been promised.<sup>29</sup> From the telephone conversation between Comrade Gomulka and Comrade Khrushchev, Comrade Khrushchev got the impression that Comrade Gomulka was attempting to earn the confidence of the CPSU CC.

On this occasion the two sides arranged that a long-planned exchange of delegations between *Trybuna Ludu* and *Pravda* would take place in the

near future.<sup>30</sup>

Typically, at plenary sessions of the PZPR CC the majority of speakers would express their wish for friendship with the USSR and other states of people's democracies.

The opinion of the CPSU CC is that in the case of Poland it is necessary to avoid nervousness and haste. It is necessary to help the Polish comrades straighten out the party line and do everything to reinforce the union among Poland, the USSR, and the other people's democracies.

Poland is in a catastrophic economic situation. There is a shortfall of 900,000 tons of grain. Coal mining is in very bad shape also. After the 20th CPSU Congress, Poland adopted the same social measures as in the USSR, but did not have sufficient means to carry them out. That is why Comrade Ochab turned to the CPSU CC delegation with a request for a loan. When Comrade Khrushchev remarked that perhaps the USA would give them a loan, [Ochab] answered that Poland would ask for a loan from the USA but he doubts that the USA would give them one. Comrade Khrushchev surmised that Comrade Ochab was answering hastily on the spur of the moment.

Comrade Khrushchev said that the GDR and CSR had asked the CPSU CC to resolve the problem with Polish coal at the highest level. But [Khrushchev] believes it would be inappropriate to do that at this time because it would unnecessarily exacerbate the affair and lead to disputes and polemics between fraternal parties about this matter, which the Poles, even with the best of intentions, cannot do much about.

Comrade Gomulka's speech will not be published in the USSR because it would have to be accompanied by commentaries that would lead, in turn, to further disputes and polemics, which would be highly undesirable. It is necessary to help Poland. The USSR is willing to provide the necessary grain. All possible measures will be taken to ensure that by 1958, or at the very latest by 1959, the USSR will no longer be dependent on Polish coal. Most likely the USSR will also agree to the loan request.

Later on, before the meeting ended and after the main discussions, Comrade Ponomarenko delivered a report about a political rally today by workers in Warsaw. Comrade Gomulka gave a speech there.<sup>31</sup> There were more than 150,000 people.

Among other things, Comrade Gomulka said that the PZPR CC had received a letter from the CPSU CC which stated that it was up to the Polish side how to resolve the matter of the Soviet security advisers. He expressed his view that the presence of the Soviet advisers in Poland at this time was in Poland's interests.<sup>32</sup> This was greeted with wide and loud applause.

He further emphasized that the presence of Soviet troops on Polish territory was necessary because of the existence of NATO and the presence of American troops in West Germany.<sup>33</sup>

And this view, too, was greeted with loud and long applause.

He condemned all those who want, by means of demagogic talk, to undermine trust in the Polish army, which is under the exclusive command of the Polish government and the PZPR CC.<sup>34</sup> He appealed to the crowd to finish the rally and commit themselves to work for the good of the Polish people.

It was the view of Comrade Khrushchev that this speech by Comrade Gomulka gives hope that Poland has now adopted a course that will eliminate the unpleasant state of affairs. He said that finding a reason for an armed conflict now would be very easy, but finding a way to put an end to such a conflict would be very hard.

### On the Situation in Hungary

Comrade Khrushchev said he does not understand what Comrades Gero, Hegedus, and others are doing.<sup>35</sup> There were signs that the situation in Hungary is extremely serious. That did not prevent Comrades Gero and Hegedus from continuing to spend time by the sea. And as soon as they returned home they left on a "trip" to Yugoslavia.

When Comrade Khrushchev talked by phone on 23 Oct. 1956 with Comrade Gero, whom he summoned for a consultation, Comrade Gero told him that the situation in Budapest is bad and for that reason he cannot come to Moscow.

As soon as the conversation was over, Comrade Zhukov informed [Khrushchev] that Gero had asked the military attaché at the Soviet embassy in Budapest to dispatch Soviet troops to suppress a demonstration that was reaching an ever greater and unprecedented scale. The Presidium of the CC CPSU did not give its approval for such an intervention because it was not requested by the highest Hungarian officials, even when Comrade Gero had been speaking earlier with Comrade Khrushchev.

Shortly thereafter, a call came through from the Soviet embassy in Budapest saying that the situation is extremely dangerous and that the intervention of Soviet troops is necessary. The Presidium authorized Comrade Khrushchev to discuss this matter by phone with Comrade Gero.<sup>36</sup>

As it turned out, Comrade Khrushchev informed Comrade Gero that his request will be met when the government of the HPR [Hungarian People's Republic] makes the request in writing. Gero responded that he is not able to convene a meeting of the government. Comrade Khrushchev then recommended that Hegedus call such a meeting in his capacity as chairman of the Council of Ministers. Although that had not happened as of today, the situation developed in such a way that Comrade Zhukov was given orders to occupy Budapest with Soviet military units located on Hungarian territory and in

Uzhgorod.<sup>37</sup> The redeployment of the units was slow and difficult because of dense fog. In an effort to protect at least Comrade Gero, an armored car was sent to Budapest. The vehicle passed right through Budapest without the slightest resistance. The other troop formations of the Soviet army did not arrive until 24 Oct. 1956 at 4:00 a.m., when the sessions of the MSP CC plenum were already over in Budapest.

Comrade Khrushchev recommended to Comrade Gero that he tell everyone that the plenum of the MSP CC had not taken place before the demonstration was suppressed. It turned out that this did not happen. As was expected, a new politburo was elected at the plenum. It included some members from the previous politburo: Apro, Hegedus, Gero, and Kadar.<sup>38</sup> It also had new members: Imre Nagy, Kobol (the head of the 1st department of the CC MSP, who recently spoke out strongly and sharply against the politburo), Gaspar, Szanto (the head of the institute for cultural ties with foreigners), Marosan (a persecuted but good comrade), Kiss (the chairman of the KSK), and Kallai (the head of the department of culture of the CC MSP).<sup>39</sup> Selected as candidates were: Losonczy (a journalist who was very active in campaigning against the leadership of the party) and Ronai (chairman of the NS).<sup>40</sup>

In the new politburo there are three people who were persecuted in the past and have now been rehabilitated. Among the old members not elected [to the new body] are: Hidas, Szalai, Mekis, Kovacs, Revai, Acs, Bata (a candidate), and Piros (also a candidate).<sup>41</sup>

Those elected to the secretariat were: Gero (1st secretary), Kadar, Donath (director of the Institute of Economics), Kobol, and Kallai.<sup>42</sup> Among them are three persecuted comrades. Of the old members of the secretariat, those who were dismissed were: Szalai, Egri, Veg, and Kovacs.<sup>43</sup>

Within the government, Nagy has been selected as chairman of the Council of Ministers and Hegedus as first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers.

There were no longer any demonstrations in Budapest on the evening of 24 Oct. 1956. Near the Danube there were several groups of bandits. These consisted of groups of 15-20 people armed with pistols and weapons seized from soldiers. Resistance is still occurring on certain street corners, roofs, and balconies. On several streets there were barricades. The bandits temporarily occupied two railway stations and one of the two radio stations. The bandits wanted to tear down the statue of Stalin. But when they were unsuccessful in this task, they seized a welder's torch and cut the statue to pieces, and then disposed of the whole thing.

The Hungarian internal security forces performed very well, but suffered most of the casualties from among the 25 dead and 50 wounded.<sup>44</sup> Also, one Soviet officer was killed and 12 soldiers

were wounded. The unrest has been confined to Budapest so far. Everywhere else, in the cities and the villages, there is calm. The workers from the Csepel factory defended themselves with bare hands against armed bandits.

In Hungary after a decision by the government, an "action group" of five [*akcni petka*] was set up to suppress the uprising. It consists of Bata, Piros, Kovacs, Emerich, and Zoltan Vas, who in the past spoke out very strongly against the MSP leadership and now is centrally involved in organizing the fight against the bandits.<sup>45</sup> The group consists entirely of people who were not elected to the [Hungarian] Politburo.

On the morning of 24 Oct. 1956, Nagy spoke on the radio.<sup>46</sup> He called for order, and he signed a decree establishing a military tribunal which is authorized to pass immediate sentence on anyone who puts up resistance. Generally, the bandits are spreading the word that Nagy has betrayed the uprising.

He spoke again later on in a similar vein. He also mentioned that the Hungarian government had asked Soviet troops to enter Budapest.

In his third speech on the radio today, he said that the positive thing the students had begun was being abused by the bandits to foment turmoil and shoot people. He appealed for order and urged people to give up their arms by 1:00 p.m.

A delegation from the CPSU CC Presidium was sent to Hungary this morning; it included Mikoyan, Suslov, and Serov.<sup>47</sup>

During the meeting of the [Soviet] Presidium, those comrades informed the Presidium by telephone about the situation [in Hungary]. They said that Comrades Mikoyan and Suslov had attended the [Hungarian] Central Committee meeting. The situation, in their view, is not as dire as the Hungarian comrades and the Soviet ambassador have portrayed it. Budapest itself is more or less calm. Resistance is limited to certain rooftops and house balconies, from which the enemy is shooting. The internal security forces respond quite freely to each of their shots, which creates the impression of a battle. One can expect that by morning there will be total calm. The Soviet embassy let itself be encircled and protected by 30 tanks.

Among the Hungarian leadership, both in the party and in the state, there is an absolute unity of views.

There is no doubt that Nagy is acting courageously, emphasizing at every opportunity the identity of his and Gero's views. Gero himself had told the Soviet comrades that protests against his election as 1st secretary were occurring. But Nagy had emphasized and reemphasized that those protesting against him did not include even a single member of the Central Committee. Only certain individuals were behaving that way.

In Budapest roughly 450 people have been arrested. In response to a question from Comrade Ulbricht about whether it is known who is leading

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

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

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

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

Comrade Khrushchev recommended that they think about the problems in greater depth. We must realize that we are not living as we were during the CI [Communist International], when only one party was in power. If we wanted to operate by command today, we would inevitably create chaos. It is necessary to conduct propaganda work in each party, but we cannot permit this to turn into polemics between fraternal parties because this would lead to polemics between nations. The plenum of the CPSU CC in December will discuss ideological questions and, a bit later, the question of how to raise living standards, particularly the faster construction of apartments as one of the basic prerequisites for boosting living standards. The extent to which patience is required can be seen from the recent case in Zaporozhe.<sup>48</sup> Here 200 people refused to work because those responsible for guiding the work of the factories, including party functionaries, union leaders, and the top manager, did not do anything to induce the employees to work to the limit. Did they refuse to work because some ideological matters were unclear to them or because they were opposed to the Soviet regime? No, they refused because basic economic and social issues had not been resolved. Ideological work itself will be of no avail if we do not ensure that living standards rise. It is no accident that the unrest occurred in Hungary and Poland and not in Czechoslovakia. This is because the standard of living in Czechoslovakia is incomparably higher. In the USSR more than 10,000 members of the CPSU were rehabilitated and more than a million were released from prison. These people are not angry at us [in Czechoslovakia] because they see we have done a lot to raise the standard of living in our country. In our country they also listen to the BBC and Radio Free Europe. But when they

have full stomachs, the listening is not so bad.

It is necessary to improve ideological and propaganda work and to bolster the quality of the work of the party and state apparatus geared toward managing the economy.

1. Tibor Hajdu, "Az 1956. október 24-i moszkvai értekezlet" [The 24 October 1956 Moscow meeting], in *Az 1956-os Magyar Forradalom Történetének Akadémiai Dokumentációs és Kutatóintézete Evkonyv I.* 1992. [The Yearbook of the Institute for the History and Documentation of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution] (Budapest: 1956-os Intezet, 1992), 149-56.

2. Among many examples of the latter are "Zabezpečeni klidu na uzemi CSR a statnich hranic s Mad'arskem," Report from Col.-General Vaclav Kratochvil, chief of the Czechoslovak General Staff, and Lieut.-General Jaroslav Dockal, chief of operations, 29 October 1956 (Top Secret), in VHA Praha, Fond Ministra narodni obrany (MNO) CSR, 1956, Operacni sprava Generalniho stabu cs. armady (GS/OS), 2/8-39b; "Souhrn hlaseni operacniho dostojnika Generalniho stabu cs. armady," Notes from Col.-General Vaclav Kratochvil, chief of the Czechoslovak General Staff, to the KSC Central Committee (Top Secret), 27 October 1956, in VHA Praha, F. MNO, 1956, GS/OS, 2/8-49b; "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; and "Rozkaz k provedeni vojenskych 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. Another very useful document on military issues is "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 Praha, Archiv Ustredniho Vyboru (Arch. UV) KSC, Fond (F.) 100/3 — Mezinarodni oddeleni UV KSC 1954-1962, Sv. 110, Archivna jednotka (A.j.) 371

3. "Projednani zpravy A. Novotneho o jednani na UV KSSS na mimoradne schuzi politickeho byra UV KSC," 25 October 1956, in SUA Praha, Arch. UV KSC, F. 02/2 — Politicke Byro UV KSC 1954-1962, Sv. 120, A.j. 150.

4. The events of 1956 in Poland have been covered extensively, though often unevenly, by Polish historians and scholars. For a sample of the literature as well as official reports, see Zbyslaw Rykowski and Wieslaw Wladyka, *Polska proba Pazdziernik '56* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989); *Sprawozdanie z prac Komisii KC PZPR powolanej dla wyjasnienia przyczyn i przebiegu konfliktow spolecznych 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); Jan Ptasinski, *Wydarzenia poznanskie czerwiec 1956* (Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 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), 80-114. For a brief but useful account of the crisis by a Russian historian, see Aleksandr Orekhov, "Obschestvenno-politicheski krizis 1956 goda v Pol'she (genezis i razvitie sobytii)," in Yu. S. Novopashin, ed., *Politicheskie krizisy i konflikty 50-60-kh godov v Vostochnoi Evrope: Sbornik stat'ei* (Moscow: Institute of Slavonic and Balkan Studies, 1993), 10-55.

5. Further details about these efforts are available from numerous other sources in both Poland and Russia. See, e.g., Rykowski and Wladyka, *Polska proba*, 232-234. Additional citations are provided below and in the article by Leo Gluchowski in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

6. "Zapis' besedy N. S. Khrushcheva v Varshave," No. 233 (Special Dossier — Strictly Secret), October 1956, in Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii/Osobaya papka. The rest of this paragraph is based both on this source and on Novotny's report.

7. *Ibid.*

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

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

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

11. Jacek Kuron, *Wiara i wina: Do i od komunizmu* (Warsaw: BGW, 1990), 119. See also Wlodzimierz Mus, "Czy grozila interwencja zbrojna? Spor generalow o Pazdziernik 1956," *Polityka* (Warsaw) 42 (20 October 1990), 14.

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

13. Lieut.-General E. I. Malashenko, "Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshta" (Part 1), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* 10 (October 1993), 24-25.

14. Two other new sources that help dispel some of the confusion about what happened on the night of 23-24 October are: Malashenko, "Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshta" (Part 1), pp. 22-30; and "TsK KPSS," Memorandum from Marshal Georgii Zhukov, Soviet minister of defense, and Marshal Vasilii Sokolovskii, chief of the Soviet General Staff, 24 October 1956 (STRICTLY SECRET — SPECIAL DOSSIER) to the CPSU Presidium, in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 484, Ll. 85-87.

15. Malashenko, "Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshta" (Part 1), p. 25.

16. The written request, dated 24 October 1956 and signed by then-prime minister Andras Hegedus, was transmitted by Andropov in a ciphered telegram on 28 October. See "Shifrtelgramma" (Strictly Secret — URGENT), 28 October 1956, from Yu. V. Andropov, in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 4, P. 6, D. 5, L. 12.

17. Malashenko, "Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshta" (Part 1), 27.

18. *Ibid.*, 24-25.

19. "TsK KPSS," Memorandum from Marshal Georgii Zhukov, Soviet minister of defense, and Marshal Vasilii Sokolovskii, chief of the Soviet General Staff, 24 October 1956 (STRICTLY SECRET — SPECIAL DOSSIER) to the CPSU Presidium, in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 484, Ll. 85-87. This memorandum lays out in detail the complex and assignments of the Soviet ground and air forces.

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

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

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

23. The relevant passage in Khrushchev's memoirs is N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya*, 5 vols. (typescript, Moscow, 1965-1970), Vol. IV: *Vzaimootnosheniya s sotsialisticheskimi stranami*, "O Pol'she," pp. 20-28.

24. MSP, SED, BKS, and RDS are the Czech acronyms (as of October 1956) of the Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Romanian Communist parties, respectively. SED is the German acronym for the East German Communist party. It is interesting that Hungarian Communist leaders were invited, even though they did not end up taking part.

25. Svoboda here misspells the name of two of the East German officials: Willi Stoph, writing it as Stopf; and Otto Grotewohl, writing it as Grotewohl. Walter Ulbricht, the third East German official, was then head of the SED; Grotewohl was prime minister; and Stoph was defense minister. The three Bulgarian officials were: the Communist party leader, Todor Zhivkov; the prime minister, Anton Yugov; and the president, Georgi Damyanov.

26. PZPR is the Polish acronym for the Polish United Workers' Party.

27. Gomulka, Jozef Cyrankiewicz, Stefan Jedrychowski, and Edward Ochab were top Polish Communist party officials; the Polish foreign minister at the time was Adam Rapacki, who later became known for the so-called Rapacki Plan for conventional arms control in central Europe. Here, as elsewhere, Svoboda misspells the names of both Jedrychowski and Cyrankiewicz, using a hybrid of Czech and Polish spellings.

28. The reference here is to Konstantin Rokossovski, who attained the rank of Marshal of the USSR in the Soviet Army. As noted in the introduction above, Rokossovski had been installed as defense minister and commander-in-chief in Poland in 1949 while retaining his status as a top Soviet officer. The resentment that many Poles felt toward Rokossovski (and toward other Soviet officers who served in high-level command posts in the Polish army) led to the Soviet marshal's ouster at the 8th PZPR plenum.

29. According to Gomulka's speech on October 24 ("Przemowienie towarzysza Wladyslawa Gomulki," 1), the pull-back of the Soviet forces was to be completed within two days, that is, by the 25th.

30. *Trybuna Ludu* was the main daily newspaper of the Polish Communist party, and of course *Pravda* was the main daily of the CPSU.

31. For the text of this speech, see "Przemowienie towarzysza Wladyslawa Gomulki," 1.

32. This is not quite what Gomulka said, though it is not inconsistent. He stated that "the question of whether we need Soviet specialists, and for how long we will need their help, will be for us to decide alone."

33. Actually, what Gomulka said was that the continued presence of Soviet troops on *East German* territory would be in accord with Poland's vital interests.

34. This statement was a reply by Gomulka to those in Poland and elsewhere who argued—accurately, as new evidence has confirmed—that real command of the Polish army at the time lay with Moscow not with Warsaw.

35. At the time Erno Gero was the first secretary of the Hungarian Communist party, and Andras Hegedus was the Hungarian prime minister.

36. At this point, the report begins misspelling Gero's name as Gore and continues to write it that way through the rest of the document.

37. Uzhgorod is the Ukrainian town along the border with Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

38. Antal Apro was the deputy prime minister; Janos Kadar succeeded Gero a few days later as head of the Hungarian Workers' Party.

39. New names mentioned here include Jozsef Kobol, whose surname is misspelled in two different ways in this report; Sandor Gaspar, who was a close ally of Nagy; Zoltan Szanto, who was a close friend of, and senior official under, Nagy (Szanto fled with Nagy to the Yugoslav embassy in November 1956); Gyorgy Marosán, who was a close friend of Kadar (the two were in prison together) and a Party secretary; Karoly Kiss, who was the head of the Party Control Commission (KSK is the Czech acronym); and Gyula Kallai, who was foreign minister from 1949 to 1951, when he was arrested (and subsequently was in prison with Kadar).

40. The references here are to Geza Losonczy, a leading critic of the Rakosi regime; and Sandor Ronai, a former Social Democratic leader.

41. All those mentioned here had been close allies of Rakosi: Istvan Hidas was deputy prime minister; Bela Szalai was director of central planning; Jozsef Mekis was an economic policy adviser; Istvan Kovacs was the Budapest party secretary; Jozsef Revai was the chief party ideologist; Lajos Acs was a party functionary; Col.-General Istvan Bata was minister of national defense until October 27; and Laszlo Piros was minister of internal affairs. (Piros's surname is misspelled "Byros," and Mekis's is misspelled "Mikes.")

42. The only new name mentioned here is Ferenc Donath, a close friend of Nagy who had been persecuted under Rakosi.

43. The only new names mentioned here are Gyula Egri (misspelled as Egre) and Bela Veg, who had also been a candidate member of the politburo.

44. These casualty figures include only Hungarian troops and security forces; they do not refer to deaths and injuries among the protesters. See Malashenko, "Osobyi korpus v ogne Budapeshta" (Part 1), p. 29.

45. Zoltan Vas (whose name is misspelled as Vess Zolt) was another close ally of Nagy; like Zoltan Szanto, Vas fled with Nagy to the Yugoslav embassy in November 1956.

46. For the text, see "Discours de Imre Nagy du 24 octobre 1956," in *La Revolution Hongroise vue par les Partis Communistes de l'Europe de l'Est: Presentation Quotidienne par les Organes Officiels* (23 octobre-15

novembre 1956) (Paris: Centre d'Etudes Avancees du College de l'Europe Libre, 1957), 265-266.

47. Unlike Mikoyan and Suslov, Ivan Serov was not a member of the CPSU Presidium. At the time he was the head of the State Security Service (KGB).

48. Zaporozhe is an industrial city on the Dniepr River in southeastern Ukraine.

*Mark Kramer, a researcher at the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University and the Russian Research Center at Harvard University, is a frequent contributor to the CWHIP Bulletin.*

## RESEARCH IN MOSCOW

Scholars needing research performed in the Russian archives may contract with students at the Research Center "Archival Conversion" at the Historical Archives Institute (HAI) of the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow. For further information please direct inquiries to:

Prof. Alexander B. Bezborodov  
Historical Archives Institute (HAI)  
Russian State University for the  
Humanities

FAX: (7-095) 432-2506 or  
(7-095) 964-3534

Telephone: (7-095) 921-4169 or  
(7-095) 925-5019

Scholars may also address inquiries regarding possible collaboration for research in Russian archives to the:

Institute of Universal History  
Leninsky prospekt 32-a  
117334, Moscow, Russia  
FAX: (7-095) 938-2288  
Telephone: (7-095) 938-1009

## 1953 EAST GERMAN UPRISING

*continued from page 17*

- port No. 6], 14 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, NL 90/435.
25. Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen, Tagesbericht Nr. VI [Daily Report No. 6], 14 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/5/526.
26. Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen, Stellungnahmen der Parteiorgane nach dem 9. bzw. 11. 6. 1953: Bericht über die Aufnahme des Kommuniqués der Sitzung des Politbüros des ZK der SED v. 9.6.1953" [Reports of the Party Organs after June 9 resp. 11 June 1953: Report on the reception of the communiqué of the politburo session of the SED CC of 9 June 1953], SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/5/526.
27. Abteilung Leitende Organe der Partei und Massenorganisationen, Stellungnahmen der Parteiorgane nach dem 9. bzw. 11. 6. 1953: Durchsage der Kreisleitung Seehausen [Reports of the Party Organs after June 9 resp. 11 June 1953: Report of the District Leadership in Seehausen, 11 June 1953,] SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/5/526.
28. FDGB-Bundesvorstand, Vertrauliche Information Nr. 21, 13.6.1953, SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/5/543.
29. [Resolution], VEB.-Industriebau, Baustelle: Bettenhaus Friedrichshain, SAPMO-BArch NL 90/437
30. "Notiz" [Memorandum] by Tzschorn, 15 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch NL 90/437; "Betrifft: Empfang einer Delegation von Bauarbeitern aus der Stalinallee durch die Genossen Plaschke und Tzschorn" [Re: Reception of a Delegation of the Construction Workers from the Stalinallee by the Comrades Plaschke and Comrade Ambreé on 15 June 1953], 25 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch NL 90/437.
31. Mitter and Wolle, *Untergang*, 90-91.
32. Hagen, *DDR*, 53.
33. Hagen, *DDR*, 55-56.

34. Mitter and Wolle, *Untergang*, 105.
35. Hagen, *DDR*, 772-73; Mitter and Wolle, *Untergang*, 104.
36. Hagen, *DDR*, 106.
37. Semyenov and Sololovskii, telegram to Molotov and Bulganin, 19 June 1953, quoted in Harrison, *The Bargaining Power*, 85.
38. Abteilung Presse und Rundfunk, "Zweite Analyse über die Sendungen von RIAS und NWDR am 18. 6. 1953" [Second Analysis of the Broadcasts of RIAS and NWDR], 18 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, J IV 2/202/14.
39. "Über die Lage am 17.6.1953 in Groß-Berlin und der DDR," 17 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, J IV 2/202/14.
40. "Die Rolle des feindlichen Rundfunks bei den Ereignissen in Berlin" [The Role of Hostile Broadcasts During the Events in Berlin], 21 June 1953, SAPMO-BArch, NL 90/437.
41. Memorandum of Discussion at the 150th Meeting of the National Security Council, 18 June 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, VII, 1587. This view is corroborated by a telegram from HICOG Berlin to the Secretary of State, 17 June 1953. Reporting on the day's events the cable concluded that "to best our knowledge, no American involved." 762B.00/6-1753, Record Group 59, National Archives. "American observers," however, "mingled freely" among the rioters. See CIA "Comment on East Berlin Uprising," 17 June 1953, Box 3, C.D. Jackson Records, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS. Officers of HICOG Berlin's Eastern Affairs Division "mingled with groups" of demonstrators and "talked to bystanders" during a brief visit (3-4:30 PM). No attempt was made by East German police to "keep persons obviously American away from discussion groups." HICOG Berlin to Secretary of State, 16 June 1953, 762B.00/6-1653, RG59, NA. One of these observers was the sister of CIA chief Allen Dulles, Eleanor Dulles, who was

- officially visiting Berlin at the time. See Eleanor L. Dulles, *Berlin: The Wall is Not Forever* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 14-17.
42. State Department to HICOG Bonn, 17 June 1953, 762B.00/6-1753, RG 59, NA.
43. See Christian Ostermann, *The United States, The East German Uprising of 1953, and the Limits of Rollback*, Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 11.
44. Lewis Merchant, 9 November 1953, NA, RG 59, Lot 55D371, Box 8.
45. Handschriftliche Aufzeichnungen in Anlage zum Sitzungsprotokoll 49/53 [Handwritten notes enclosed with minutes of Politburo session No. 49/53], 8 July 1953, SAMPO-BArch DY 30J IV 2/2/303.
46. Indeed, one of the most interesting findings is the fact that riots, demonstrations and strikes continued for at least four weeks following June 17.

*Christian F. Ostermann (National Security Archive), recipient of the 1995 Harry S. Truman Institute Dissertation Year Fellowship, has done research in U.S. and German archives and is currently completing a dissertation on U.S.-GDR relations. The author thanks Norbert Finzsch, Thomas A. Schwartz and John L. Gaddis for their support.*

## ADDENDUM

*The previous issue of the CWIHP Bulletin (Issue #4, Fall 1994), inadvertently omitted the name of the translator of the KGB documents concerning Niels Bohr published on pages 50-51, 57-59. It was Mark H. Doctoroff. The Bulletin regrets the omission.*

## YELTSIN DECREE ON DECLASSIFICATION OF SOVIET NUCLEAR HISTORY DOCUMENTS

Ukaz of the President of the Russian Federation:

On the Preparation and Publication of an Official Collection of Archival Documents on the History of the Creation of Nuclear Arms in the USSR

With the goal of recreating an objective picture of the establishment of a domestic atomic industry and of the history of the creation of nuclear weapons in the USSR, I DECREE:

1. The acceptance of the suggestion of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the State Archival Service of Russia, sup-

ported by the Russian Federation's Ministry for Atomic Energy, Ministry of Defense, Federal Counter-Intelligence Service, Foreign Intelligence Service, and the State Technical Commission under the President of the Russian Federation, on the publication of an official collection of archival documents on the history of the creation of nuclear arms in the USSR over the period up to 1954 and the declassification of the corresponding archival documents.

2. That the Government of the Russian Federation is:

—within one month to form a working group of the Governmental Commission for the Joint [kompleksnomu] Solution of Problems of Nuclear Arms for the study of archival documents connected with the history of the creation of nuclear arms in the USSR, and the development of a proposal for their declassification.

—to provide for the preparation and

publication of an official collection of archival documents on the history of the creation of nuclear arms in the USSR over the period up to 1954.

3. Control over the fulfillment of the present ukaz is entrusted to the Governmental Commission for the Joint Solution of Problems of Nuclear Arms.

4. The current ukaz comes into effect from the day of its publication.

President of the Russian Federation B. Yel'tsin  
Moscow, the Kremlin  
17 February 1995  
# 160

[From *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 1 March 1995, p. 14; item provided and translated by David Russel Stone, Yale University]