

## DOCUMENT NO. 11

### **Romanian and Czech Minutes on the Meeting of Five East European States' Leaders in Budapest (with Attached Final Communiqué), January 1-4, 1957**

*The following three documents deal with an extremely important Warsaw Pact summit meeting that had been called on very short notice to deal mainly with Hungary's internal situation. Despite the fact that it was originally proposed by the HSWP (see Document No. 106), and then insisted upon by Moscow (for different reasons), no Hungarian or Soviet minutes have yet been found. Nevertheless, the Czechoslovak memorandum and Romanian abstract presented below make it possible to reconstruct most of the issues that were discussed. (The latter memo was written in 1960 on the basis of a contemporary Romanian document.) As indicated above, the Kremlin's main reason for convening the summit was to discuss a forthcoming public declaration by the Kádár government, which alarmed Moscow because it contained a provision that would allow non-Communist parties a role, albeit a sharply limited one, in Hungary. Kádár had sent a draft version of the proposal to Moscow for approval, but had been ambiguous about this key passage which had become a political issue of some importance inside the Hungarian party (See Document No. 107). As these internal documents indicate, the Soviets and their colleagues at the meeting were insistent that the provision be struck before the declaration was due to be made public on January 5-6. Interestingly, the final communiqué made no mention of the multi-party issue. Another major topic discussed at the session--and the reason for Kádár's original request that it be convened--was the fate of the Imre Nagy group. While even these documents do not reveal the actual positions taken by the participants, it is clear that the meeting yielded crucial decisions, which opened the way for the trial and ultimately execution of the former prime minister. One of the most important points about this meeting was that it may have been the first time that the members of the Warsaw Pact<sup>120</sup> jointly and directly intervened into the internal politics of another member state. In this way, it recalls the later attempts by the Warsaw Pact--not just the Soviet Union alone--to put an end to the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968.*

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#### **[Romanian Memorandum]**

Participants of the Conference among the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.<sup>121</sup>

##### I. First session:

1. Information [provided] by comrade Kádár:
  - The situation of the party.

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<sup>120</sup> Poland, the GDR and Albania were not invited to the session, at least partly because of the ad hoc nature of the meeting. In the case of Poland, there was also serious political mistrust of the Gomułka regime and a general intent to strengthen the "orthodox" communist line.

<sup>121</sup> Although omitted from this list, representatives from Czechoslovakia also participated in the meeting.

- ca. 100,000 people were recruited.
- The party has organizations in ca. 42 percent of the villages.
- The lower party activists are more homogenous and active concerning the events and Nagy.
- There is no unity within the Central Committee - 3-4 members have undesirable views:<sup>122</sup>
  - a) There is no consolidation without Nagy
  - b) The government must be enlarged
  - c) The principal enemy is Rákosi
    - They are talking of Rákosism and Stalinism
  - d) They are supported by the Yugoslavs.
- The above-mentioned 3-4 are rushing the enlargement of the government and pushing the new government to make a statement. This opinion is shared by others from the outside as well.
- Comrade Kádár maintains that the government in its present form should issue a statement.
- [The government] should convoke the parliament.
- Representatives should be co-opted.
- The presidium should be strengthened.<sup>123</sup>

2. The issue of the formation of two more parties is raised: the National Peasant Party and the Independent Peasant Party.<sup>124</sup>

- The formation of the Patriotic National Front,<sup>125</sup> with whom [the Party] could go together to the elections. (Some people would have liked to have the elections in May this year.)
- 20-25 percent more candidates should be nominated for the elections.
- The formation of the Peasant Union was proposed in the Central Committee; this was refused by saying that the party has organizations in only 42 percent of the villages.<sup>126</sup>

- There were attempts to activate the trade unions.
- The Social democrats will not openly take a stand against the government, but they are present in the trade unions in order to collect friends.
- They [the Politburo members] propose to organize the workers' councils along professional or occupational lines.

3. They will propose the restoration of constitutional activity [sic.] in the sense of setting up courts of law.

- There is no common standpoint concerning the fight against counterrevolution.
- They are not taking firm measures; they want unanimity (Münnich)<sup>127</sup>
- Some believe the principal danger to be Rákosi and "Rákosism"

4. Some economic problems:

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<sup>122</sup> Five officials within the Hungarian leadership at this time represented a more liberal policy line: József Köböl, György Aczél, Lajos Fehér, Antal Gyenes and Sándor Nógrádi.

<sup>123</sup> This probably refers to the HSWP Provisional Executive Committee, the equivalent of the Political Committee.

<sup>124</sup> The accurate name of the party referred to is: Független Kisgazdapárt (Independent Smallholders' Party).

<sup>125</sup> More accurately, the Patriotic People's Front.

<sup>126</sup> The Provisional Central Committee dealt with this issue at its December 28 session.

<sup>127</sup> This comment was probably added by Ferenc Münnich.

- There is a shortage of commodities in the Public supply (in September they had commodities in the value of 13 billion, today they have only in the value of 3 billion and further 8 billion is needed).
- During the strikes, they gave 30 percent extra salaries.
- They have a 200 billion dollar debt to the West.<sup>128</sup>
- They propose the reexamination of the arms orders.
- There is a danger of inflation and unemployment.

## II. Second session. (discussion concerning the program communiqué)<sup>129</sup>

- There are many improvements compared to the previous draft.
- Our comments and proposals.
  - a) There should be an introductory part with the analysis of the past activities of Rákosi and Nagy; the perspectives and the tasks have to be outlined clearly.
  - b) It is not clear what kind of organizational forms they want, and why is it necessary to organize the workers' councils according professional or occupational lines.
  - c) The notion that culture should be national in form and content is incorrect.
  - d) University autonomy:
    - The peasant problem
    - The problem of small producers and tradesmen.
    - The problem of the multiparty [system]
    - The Nagy group.

### 5. The opinion of the rest of the delegates.

#### 6. - Consultations outside of the session.

- Trials of [Mihály] Farkas, Maléter, [János] Szabó, Dudás.
- The question of the return of the Nagy group.

#### Conclusion:

- The Hungarian comrades' evaluation of the conference.
- The perfecting of the proposed declaration.
- The Nagy case will be investigated.<sup>130</sup>
- They will send a delegate to speak with the Nagy group and they will answer to our government.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> This is obviously an error; Hungary's debt to Western countries never reached this amount. They probably meant to say 200 million.

<sup>129</sup> This refers to the detailed discussion of the Hungarian government declaration published in Népszabadság on January 6, 1957.

<sup>130</sup> See the way this point appears in the Czechoslovak document: "The responsibility and accountability of Imre Nagy and others in the Hungarian events, and their legal consequences." Since the Hungarian sources currently available make no reference to any previous plan to put Nagy and his accomplices on trial, it seems very likely that the Hungarian leadership made this crucial decision during the summit, probably under pressure from the other communist parties.

<sup>131</sup> In January 1957, Kádár sent Gyula Kállai to Bucharest with a plan to divide the Nagy group and induce them, more than anything else, to practice self-criticism. While in Bucharest, Kállai also consulted with Romanian and Soviet leaders.

- Their opinion on Szántó and Lukács.
- The Soviet comrades' conversations with the leadership of the Hungarian Party.<sup>132</sup>

#### 8. Other problems:

- The cooperation between the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.
- Questions concerning Stalin.
- The Bulgarian comrades propose a conference between the two governments and the release of a joint statement.<sup>133</sup>

[Source: *Archiva Biroalului Politic al CC al PMR, Nr. 2/56, 1956. Document obtained by Mihai Retegan. Translated by József Litkei and István Török.*]

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#### **[Czechoslovak Memorandum<sup>134</sup>]**

Prompted by comrade Khrushchev, a meeting of party delegations was held in Budapest, between January 1 and 3, 1957.

Cde. Kádár asked the CPSU CC for a consultation about some problems of future development in Hungary.

Moscow and Bucharest were both suggested for hosting the meeting. On the proposal of the Soviet comrades, the meeting was held in Budapest with representatives of the following parties:

Bulgaria, Romania, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Delegates present: comrades Zhivkov, Damyanov, Dej, Borilă, Moghioroș, Khrushchev, Malenkov, Novotný, Siroký, Kádár and Münnich.

Agenda:

1. Kádár provides information about the situation in Hungary.
2. Questions and problems concerning the election (prohlašení) of the government of the Hungarian People's Republic.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> No document on bilateral Hungarian-Soviet talks during the summit has yet been found.

<sup>133</sup> The two governments concerned are most likely Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, which did indeed issue a joint declaration on February 20, 1957.

<sup>134</sup> Although the Czechoslovak memorandum indicates that negotiations occurred between January 1 and 3, the joint communiqué issued after the meeting lists the dates as January 1-4.

<sup>135</sup> This probably refers to the uncertain legality of the Kádár government's formation, which took place in Moscow on November 3, outside the provisions of the constitution. Although the new cabinet was sworn in on November 7 before István Dobi, president of the Presidential Council, the Presidential Council as a body never discussed the matter beforehand. News that the Presidential Council had

3. The responsibility and accountability of Imre Nagy and others in the Hungarian events, and their legal consequences. (zákonné závery)
4. Returning of some members of the Nagy-group to Hungary. (Szántó-Lukács)<sup>136</sup>
5. The Soviet comrades' information about Yugoslavia:
  - a. the answer to Tito's letter<sup>137</sup>
  - b. problems of the Soviet aid
  - c. Yugoslav influence in Hungarian events.
6. Soviet information on the plenary session of the CC in December 1956.
7. Information about the negotiations with Poland.

[Hand-written notes, hardly legible, possibly by Sirokó].

[by the name of Zoltán Szántó:]

“dopis - ninal ?”

Chief Secretary

(concerning the 2nd point of the agenda)

on convoking the parl[iament]

decreasing state administration with 35%<sup>138</sup>

about workers' councils

Party and people's front

3 parties — ours

smallholders' party

christian dem[ocratic] party<sup>139</sup>

reforms — permitting small-scale industry, peasant problem

autonomy of universities

crimes of Rákosi and others

crimes of the Nagy-group

signature: S. [Širokó?]

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dismissed the Nagy government and, with Decision No. 28, appointed the Kádár government in its place did not appear in the Hungarian Bulletin until November 12. From the perspective of the legitimacy of the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government, Prime Minister Nagy and State Minister Losonczy's official resignations would therefore have been critically important.

<sup>136</sup> György Lukács and Zoltán Szántó were part of the group that sought asylum at the Yugoslav Embassy. They were forcibly taken to Romania, from where Lukács was allowed to return to Hungary in April 1957 and Szántó in 1958.

<sup>137</sup> This most probably refers to Tito's letter to Khrushchev on December 3, 1956, which the Soviet leader answered only on January 10, 1957. See Document No. 103.

<sup>138</sup> In December 1956, the Kádár government passed a decree that eliminated or merged certain ministries and organs with country-wide authority. It also made the decision to reduce the state apparatus by one-third during 1957.

<sup>139</sup> In all probability, Kádár is referring here to the National Peasant Party, which appears in the text as third after the HSWP and the Smallholders' party. The Christian Democratic Party was not even a member of the governing coalition between 1945 and 1948, and in December 1956 and at the beginning of 1957 it was by no means considered at the level of a negotiating partner by the Kádár government.

[Source: AÚV KSC, F. 07/16. Document obtained by Tibor Hajdú. Translated by Csaba Farkas.]

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## **Communiqué on the Meeting of Representatives of the Governments and the Communist and Workers' Parties of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and the Soviet Union**

Budapest, January 6, 1957.

Invited by the leadership of the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Comrades Zhivkov and Damyanov representing the Bulgarian Communist Party and the government of the Bulgarian People's Republic; Comrades Novotný and Široký representing the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the government of the Czechoslovak Republic; Comrades Gheorghiu-Dej, Moghioroş and Borilă representing the Romanian Workers' Party and the government of the Romanian People's Republic; and Comrades Khrushchev and Malenkov representing the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the government of the Soviet Union arrived in Budapest on January 1, 1957.

Between January 1-4 of this year, the representatives of the governments and parties of the above-mentioned nations conducted negotiations attended by Comrades Zhivkov and Damyanov (Bulgaria), Comrades Novotný and Široký (Czechoslovakia), Comrades Kádár and Münnich (Hungary), Comrades Gheorghiu-Dej, Moghioroş and Borilă (Romania) and Comrades Khrushchev and Malenkov (Soviet Union).

The participants conducted friendly and comradely negotiations on a number of political and economic issues of mutual interest as well as on questions concerning the situation of the parties and current international problems.

The meetings' participants each informed the others on the situation of their respective countries and parties.

The participants expressed their contentment with the fact that Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Romania and the Soviet Union, just as all the other socialist countries, had achieved new and great successes in building socialism and communism. The Hungarian economy had made successful [sic] progress on the socialist road of development. It was this development that was thwarted by the attack of the counterrevolutionary forces. At the moment, after having repressed the counterrevolution, the socialist economy of the Hungarian People's Republic has started developing again and is showing clear signs of strength. In the past few years the countries of the socialist camp have fulfilled the economic plans with success and achieved new results in enhancing the welfare of their people; there are clear signs of development in culture, science and technology. Under the mighty banner of Marxism-Leninism the peoples of these countries have further strengthened their unity with their communist and workers' parties and with their governments.

The participants of the meeting unanimously concluded that as a result of the efforts of the Hungarian workers, with the leadership of the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers' and

Peasants' Government and with the support of the Soviet army, the attempts to eliminate the socialist achievements of the Hungarian people and their people's democratic system were successfully prevented. The danger of establishing a fascist dictatorship in Hungary was eliminated, and [the people] prevented the aggressive imperialist and counterrevolutionary circles from turning Hungary into the storm-center of a new war in Europe. They firmly shattered any attempts on the part of the imperialist circles to break the unity of the socialist camp.

The representatives of the communist and workers' parties and the governments participating at the meeting all expressed their satisfaction with the normalization of the Hungarian political situation and economic life. All the healthy and democratic forces of the country, led by the working class, are making united efforts to support the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, support the policy and the economic course of the government and the party, and take an active and strong line against the anti-popular elements which, following the guidance of imperialist propaganda, conduct provocative and disruptive activities among the population. The Hungarian peasantry continues to work calmly, having rejected any attempt to be misled by the provocations of the imperialist and counterrevolutionary propaganda and having given an adequate response in the Hungarian villages to the attempts at restoring the land-owning system. Those Hungarian workers who were misled by the demagogic, provocative and nationalist slogans of the counterrevolution are becoming more and more convinced that they have been fooled, and they realize that for all this deception, for all of the counterrevolutionary activities [the country] now must pay with the blood of the best men, of the people who fell victim to the terror of the counterrevolutionary gangs. The working people of Hungary are realizing more and more how fatal the route was down which the adversary forces opposing the cause of socialism and the socialist system wanted to lead them.

The Hungarian working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia can assess very well the situation of the country and the objectives set for the Hungarian people and the Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government. The Hungarian workers understand more and more now that the increase in the standard of living and the strengthening of the people's democratic system can only be insured by restoring the normal economic situation and production, by the development of the economy of the country, by enhancing productivity in industry and agriculture, by decreasing the costs of production and by socialist accumulation.

In the course of exchanging ideas, the participants of the meeting have established that the Hungarian communists are beginning to realign their forces and are ready to make every effort to strengthen the people's democratic system and the achievements of socialism in Hungary and to further develop solid and friendly relations with all the countries of the socialist camp.

The representatives of Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union have insured the Hungarian comrades that the peoples of their respective countries will give all possible support and help to the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party so that they can strengthen the sovereignty and security of the country and the people's democratic state against the intrigues of the imperialist forces.

The participants of the meeting exchanged their views on the announcement of the Soviet government issued on October 30, 1956,<sup>140</sup> and have expressed their uniform conviction that this

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<sup>140</sup> See Document No. 50.

declaration of the Soviet government fully corresponds to the interests of the socialist countries in strengthening their friendly relations based on respect for the interests and the equal rights of all peoples, and on the Leninist principles of non-interference and proletarian internationalism.

The representatives of the participating countries have established that the objectives issued in the declaration are being accomplished in the mutual relations of the socialist countries, further contributing in this way to the unity of the socialist camp, to the future success of these countries in developing the economy and culture of the socialist countries, to the reinforcement of friendly relations between the peoples of these countries and the broadening of mutual brotherly assistance.

After discussing current issues of the international situation, the participants of the meeting have established that the international situation has recently become more and more tense. This was largely due to the activities of the aggressive circles of the Western countries which intend to turn the world back to a state of cold war. This behavior is well reflected both in the English-French-Israeli aggression against Egypt and in the activities of the imperialist circles in Hungary.

The other reason for the increase in international tension can be seen in the activities of the United States, which has again launched a large-scale mission in order to subdue the states of the Middle East. These attempts at colonization are expressed in the so-called "Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine". An organic part of this "doctrine" is a special authorization for the president of the United States to use American armed forces in the Middle East at his own discretion.<sup>141</sup> The aggressive interference of American monopolist capital and its militarist circles into the matters of the Middle Eastern states would result in serious tensions in the region which recently became a military theater after the aggression on Egypt.<sup>142</sup>

In this situation all responsibility for the tensions in the Middle East and the ensuing consequences rests with the United States. The interests of the Middle Eastern peoples and the assurance of peace and stability in the region demand that every state make efforts to eliminate the consequences of the aggression against Egypt, to prevent any kind of external intervention into the affairs of the Middle Eastern countries and to insure the sovereignty and independence of these states.

The countries of the socialist camp, constantly protecting the cause of peace between nations, make every effort to prevent the world from returning to the cold war. These countries are determined to make use of the strength and power of the socialist system to counteract any attempt by aggressive circles to further increase international tensions, to widen the arms race and to inflame war fever. These countries are firmly convinced that the opportunities to improve relations between states and to insure genuine security for the nations are by no means being exploited fully. Under the present circumstances it would be especially important to take steps to reduce the armaments of the different states and to ban such weapons of mass destruction as the nuclear and the hydrogen bomb. The establishment of a collective European security system would correspond to the interests of all European nations and all countries of the world.

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<sup>141</sup> The "Eisenhower doctrine" was promulgated in a presidential message to Congress on January 5, 1957. It promised military or economic assistance to countries in the Middle East facing "Communist aggression," noting that "there is imperative need that any lack of power in the area should be made good."

<sup>142</sup> Israel, in collusion with Great Britain and France, invaded the Sinai Peninsula on October 29; the other two states then attacked Egypt directly on October 31.

All participants at the meeting have expressed their firm resolution that the socialist countries will unite forces even more than before, protect their unbreakable unity and give a worthy response to any attempt at eliminating or weakening the socialist camp.

[Source: Népszabadság, *January 6, 1957. Translated by András Bocz.*]