

SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

30 April 1981

Cde. L. I. BREZHNEV presiding.

Also taking part: Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov, M. S. Gorbachev, V. V. Grishin,  
A. A. Gromyko, M. A. Suslov, N. A. Tikhonov,  
D. F. Ustinov, K. U. Chernenko, P. N. Demichev,  
V. V. Kuznetsov, B. N. Ponomarev, M. S. Solomentsev,  
I. V. Kapitonov, V. I. Dolgikh, M. V. Zimyanin,  
K. V. Rusakov

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2. On the Results of Negotiations Between a CPSU Delegation and the PZPR  
Leadership

BREZHNEV. As you know, in accordance with our decision, Cdes. Suslov and Rusakov traveled to Warsaw several days ago.<sup>1</sup> The USSR ambassador in Poland, Cde. Aristov, also was in the delegation.

In accordance with our instructions, the CPSU delegation held a discussion in which members and candidate members of the PZPR Politburo and members of the PZPR Secretariat took part for the Polish side.

I think the first conclusion that emerges from the comrades' information is that we were right in sending such a delegation to Warsaw at this time, when the Polish comrades are preparing for a plenum and congress.

I think that in the future, too, we should not exclude the possibility that individual members of the Politburo or a group of members of the Politburo might travel there, or have a meeting somewhere outside Warsaw and outside Moscow as Cdes. Andropov and Ustinov did. The benefit of such measures is indisputable.

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<sup>1</sup> Translator's Note: The visit took place on 23-24 April. See Kania's detailed comments about his first round of talks with Suslov and Rusakov, as well as the remarks by other Polish leaders, in "Protokol Nr. 89 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 23 kwietnia 1981 r.," 23 April 1981 (Secret), in Wlodek, ed., *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego*, pp. 347-350. For another useful summary of these talks, as conveyed by Soviet leaders to the SED Politburo, see "Information uber die Gespräche der Delegation der KPdSU mit der Führung der PVAP in Warschau, 23./24.4.1981" (Top Secret), 6 May 1981, in SAPMDB, ZPA, J IV 2/202-505.

And now let's give the floor to Cde. M. A. Suslov, who will inform us about the results of the discussion with the Polish comrades.

SUSLOV. Our negotiations with the PZPR leadership showed that the Politburo's decision regarding our delegation's trip to Poland was very beneficial and timely. L. I. Brezhnev's discussions with Kania played a big role in helping to stabilize the situation in Poland, as did the discussions that Cdes. Andropov and Ustinov had during their meeting with Kania and Jaruzelski in Brest.<sup>2</sup> For our part, we sharply criticized the actions of the Polish leadership vis-a-vis Solidarity and the antisocialist elements. We attacked their indecisiveness and their efforts somehow to smooth over the situation without confronting the main questions. We also expressed criticism of the so-called "horizontal structures."<sup>3</sup> We especially emphasized the necessity of a resolute struggle against Solidarity and its reactionary right wing headed by KOR, which openly wants to convert Solidarity into a political party.

ANDROPOV. The Polish friends, in particular Cde. Kania, support the "horizontal structures," and this is leading, as you know, to the disintegration of the party.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Translator's Note: See Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 9 April 1981 and Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 16 April 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Translator's Note: The reference here is to the "horizontal movement" within the PZPR, which wanted to make the structure and procedures of the Party more democratic. The movement had its main origins in the city of Torun, where the first secretary of the Party committee at the Towimor marine engineering plant, Zbigniew Iwanow, established a coordinating commission with other primary Party organizations in early September 1980. This horizontal structure was set up without any approval from higher Party authorities, thus breaking with the entrenched Leninist norm of "democratic centralism" (a euphemism for the highly centralized and rigidly hierarchical procedures of the Communist Party). Iwanow and his partners called for sweeping changes in the Party statutes that would allow them to decide their own affairs without waiting for directives from above and would permit free and open elections for all Party offices. The horizontal movement quickly spread to other cities and regions, despite stiff resistance by top PZPR officials. An attempt to expel Iwanow from the PZPR failed when the Towimor Party committee voted to retain him as first secretary. In mid-April 1981—two weeks before this CPSU Politburo meeting—some 750 members of the horizontal movement from 14 of Poland's 49 provinces gathered at a major conference in Torun, co-sponsored by the Towimor plant and Torun University. This meeting, or "Forum for Party Accord" as it was called, marked the high point of the horizontal movement. Over the next several months the movement gradually petered out—in part because most members of Solidarity wanted nothing to do with the Party (even with the horizontal structures), and in part because the PZPR leadership did its best to coopt the message of the horizontalists.

<sup>4</sup> Translator's Note: The CPSU Politburo's Commission on Poland had warned in mid-April that the horizontal movement was inspired by "opposition forces who, having realized that Poland's geopolitical situation prevents them from obstructing the country's participation in the Warsaw Treaty Organization or encroaching on the principle of the leading role of the Communist party, have clearly decided to undermine the PZPR from within." Quoted from "O razvitii obstanovki v Pol'she i nekotorykh shagakh s nashei storony," Ll. 1-8. Over the next several months, high-ranking Soviet officials continued to emphasize the "severe damage" caused by the horizontal movement. In their view, the PZPR leadership had "made an immense concession to counterrevolutionary forces by letting the activities of the so-called horizontal movement go unpunished." They insisted that "the change of procedures for party elections," notably during the Ninth Congress in July, had allowed "people with immature ideologies and . . . even alien views" to gain ascendance in the PZPR. See "Polozhenie v PORP posle IX S"ezda," Cable No. 857 (Top Secret), 4 November 1981 from B. Aristov to the CPSU Secretariat, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 596, Ll. 35-53, esp. 37.

SUSLOV. Unquestionably, the “horizontal structures” are creating total disorder in the organizational structure of the PZPR and are completely at odds with Leninist organizational principles for the structure of a Marxist-Leninist party. Taking part in the discussions were Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski, members of the Politburo, and also the secretaries of the Gdansk and Katowice provincial committees. All of them thanked the CPSU CC and especially L. I. Brezhnev for their constant concern and assistance.

BREZHNEV. Their plenum, as far as I know, is now under way.

SUSLOV. Their plenum ended today — early this morning.<sup>5</sup> With regard to our advice that that they not exclude Olszowski, Grabski, and other comrades from the plenum, they heeded it. Our criticism is having a definite influence on the Polish leadership, particularly on matters connected with preparations for the congress and on other matters.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the Polish leadership must have a distinct degree of trust in us, and we, too, must have a certain degree of trust in them. To be sure, it's impossible to have much faith in what they promise they'll do, but even so we must somehow, on certain matters, support and encourage them.

BREZHNEV. In general there can be little trust in them because even though they listen to us, they don't do what we recommend.

RUSAKOV. I must say that L. I. Brezhnev's meeting with the Polish friends was of exceptionally great importance. Likewise, the meeting and discussions involving Cdes. Andropov and Ustinov played a big role, as did the series of telephone conversations with Kania. All of these played a positive role. I'm certain that the situation in Poland would be significantly worse if these discussions had not taken place. Their plenum finished today at 5:00 a.m. Very harsh criticism was directed at the leadership, in particular at Cde. Kania. After the plenum, at a conference of provincial committee secretaries, Cde. Kania was subject to further harsh criticism.

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<sup>5</sup> Translator's Note: Suslov is referring to the PZPR Central Committee's Tenth Plenum, which began the previous day (29 April). The plenum set a date of 14 July for the opening of the PZPR's Extraordinary Ninth Congress. In addition, two workers—Zygmunt Wronski and Gerard Gabrys —were appointed to the PZPR Politburo.

<sup>6</sup> Translator's Note: Soviet efforts to shape the nature of the PZPR's Ninth Congress took more direct forms as well. On 23 April 1981 the CPSU Politburo approved the Suslov Commission's recommendations to "dispatch a working group from the CPSU Organizational-Party Work Department to Poland in May and June 1981 for consultations on matters concerning preparations for the PZPR's Extraordinary Ninth Congress" and to order three CPSU Central Committee departments to "analyze the draft theses for the PZPR Congress, the draft PZPR statutes, and the drafts of other [Polish] documents, as well as the status of organizational preparations for the Congress, and relay appropriate recommendations [about these matters] to the CPSU Central Committee." The CPSU Politburo also approved the Commission's recommendation to bring a large number of Polish officials to the Soviet Union in the spring of 1981 for further consultations and "joint work" in the leadup to the PZPR Congress. See "Plan meropriyatii po okazaniyu rukovodstvu PORP v organizatsionnom i ideologicheskom ukreplenii partii," LI. 9-11. Evidently, Soviet leaders wanted to establish tighter control over the PZPR by reviewing (and, if necessary, modifying or rewriting) all key documents for the party congress and other activities. Their intention presumably was to devise an arrangement similar to the planning for martial law in Poland, which was being closely monitored and supervised by high-ranking Soviet officials.

BREZHNEV. If the comrades have no other proposals, it should be possible to adopt the following proposals.

First, to approve our delegation's activities during its visit in Warsaw.

Second, to instruct the Commission on Poland to continue actively following events in the PPR and occasionally to inform the CC Politburo. If necessary, the Commission should submit appropriate recommendations on these events.<sup>7</sup>

Third, Cdes. Suslov and Rusakov recommend that we support the request by Cde. Kania and Cde. Jaruzelski to employ the unutilized capacity of PPR enterprises. I think we should instruct the USSR Council of Ministers to examine this question.

And finally it is suggested that we inform leaders of the fraternal parties of the countries of the socialist commonwealth about the negotiations that were held in Warsaw and prepare an informational update for the party aktiv of the CPSU.<sup>8</sup>

EVERYONE. Agreed.

The decree is adopted.

[*Source: TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 42*]

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<sup>7</sup> Translator's Note: Further recommendations by the Suslov Commission were intended as follow-ups to the two reports submitted to the CPSU Politburo on 16 April 1981 and approved by the Politburo a week later (see annotation in Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 16 April 1981).

<sup>8</sup> Translator's Note: This report, "Informatsiya TsK KPSS o sobytiyakh v Pol'she," 2 May 1981 (Top Secret), is covered in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 77, D. 107.