

SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

31 October 1980

Cde. L. I. BREZHNEV presiding.

Also taking part: Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov, M. S. Gorbachev, V. V. Grishin,
A. A. Gromyko, A. P. Kirilenko, A. Ya. Pel'she,
M. A. Suslov, N. A. Tikhonov, D. F. Ustinov,
K. U. Chernenko, T. Ya. Kiselev, 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 a Visit to the USSR by the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party, Cde. S. Kania, and the Chairman of the PPR Council of Ministers, Cde. J. Pinkowski

BREZHNEV. With full assuredness we can say that our meeting with the new Polish leaders was timely.¹ Events in Poland have deteriorated so far by now that if we let time slip away and do not correct the position of the Polish comrades, we will — before you know it — be faced with a critical situation that will necessitate extraordinary and, one might even say, painful decisions.

The Polish comrades did not conceal their alarm at the stepped-up activity of the antisocialist forces. But when the discussion turned to measures for combatting the counterrevolution, their statements seemed to lack resolve.

¹ Translator's Note: For Kania's own perspective on the visit, as recounted to the PZPR Politburo on the same day as this CPSU Politburo meeting, see "Protokol Nr. 42 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 31 pazdziernika 1980 r.," 31 October 1981 (Secret), reprinted in Wlodek, ed., *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego*, esp. pp. 151-153. Kania gave a generally upbeat assessment of the meeting, though he acknowledged that Soviet leaders were still "deeply concerned" about events in Poland. Kania said he had assured Brezhnev that the Poles could "resolve the situation on [their] own, using [their] own means." He also reported that Brezhnev had promised, on behalf of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries, to give increased economic assistance to Poland. At the same time, Kania acknowledged that Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders had urged him to wage a more vigorous struggle against Solidarity and to retain strict party control over the mass media. This latter "recommendation" (which was not mentioned in Soviet accounts of the talks) was important because it was one of the main issues that Polish prime minister Pinkowski was supposed to be discussing with the leaders of Solidarity at their emergency meeting on 31 October.

They declared that Poland is completely immersed in debt. All imports from the West, which are needed for many enterprises to function as well as for the internal market, are obtained now on credit. The economy of Poland is directly dependent on the West. In such circumstances, the Polish comrades believe, any deterioration of the country's situation might provide a basis for the capitalists to refuse any further extension of credits.² In that case Poland, according to Kania, will be brought to its knees.

We directly asked Kania whether the Party had a plan for an emergency situation in which an open threat would arise to people's rule. He said that there is such a plan, and that they know who should be arrested and how to use the army.³ But judging by everything, they are not yet prepared to take such a step and have put it off until the indefinite future.

I won't rehash the entire content of our discussions. Notes from the talks were sent around, and the comrades can read through these if they haven't done so already.

As we said at the previous session, the goal of the meeting with the Polish comrades was twofold: on the one hand, to help them understand the full depth of the danger and to spur them into taking more decisive actions; and on the other hand, to lift up their spirits and increase their confidence in their strengths and capabilities. I think that the negotiations were useful in both respects.

² Translator's Note: To the extent that Kania was being sincere about this point, it provides intriguing evidence of the leverage that the West gained over Poland's internal affairs from the loans made in the 1970s. Brezhnev raised this issue in an acerbic way with Kania and Jaruzelski later on: "It is essential that everyone in Poland understand that credits provided by Western banks and governments are in no way a gift, but a commercial transaction. For Poland, this amounts to servitude." See Notes from Brezhnev's Meeting with Stanislaw Kania and Wojciech Jaruzelski, 22 August 1981.

³ Translator's Note: Kania's statement, as reported by Brezhnev, is corroborated by newly released documents from the Polish internal affairs ministry archive, which show that planning for mass arrests of Solidarity's leaders and the "isolation" of dissident intellectuals had begun as early as 15 October. Kania's statement is also corroborated by the testimony of Ryszard Kuklinski ("Wojna z narodem widziana od srodka," pp. 17-18), who recalled that the planning for martial law proceeded rapidly after the Polish General Staff began its preparations on 22 October. By early November 1980, the planners had compiled an arrest list of some 4,500 opposition figures who were to be rounded up *en masse* just hours before the imposition of military rule. By late December 1980 the number to be arrested had increased to 12,900, and by late February 1981 it had grown to 13,600. The full list (which was periodically updated) was codified on 26 February 1981 in Directive No. J-0045/81/M, which specified arrest quotas for police forces in each wojewodztwo. From February to September 1981, the mass-arrest operation was codenamed "Wiosna" (Spring). In September, after the Polish authorities learned that Solidarity had somehow found out about the "Wiosna" planning, the codename was changed to "Wrzos" (Heather). In early October 1981 the plans for mass arrests were incorporated into the broader, two-stage "Jodlo" (Pine) operation, which was to begin upon receipt of a signal known as "Brzos-81" (Birch-81). See "Komenda Stooleczna: Plany przedsiwziec dotyczacych drugiego etapu akcji 'Jodla'," October 1981 (Secret), in Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnetrznych (AMSW), Sygn. Spis 156, Pozycja (Poz.) 81, T. IV. That signal was transmitted, and the "Jodlo" operation was launched, on the night of 12-13 December 1981, with remarkable success. By the time the PZPR Politburo met on the morning of 13 December, the arrest operation was more than 70 percent complete. See "Protokol Nr. 19 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 13.XII.1981 r.," 13 December 1981 (Top Secret), in Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), T. 2343, Dok. 8, S. 1.

Kania, as I already said, showed distinct hesitation only on the question of introducing a state of emergency. With regard to the other measures recommended by us, he declared that he agrees with them. We achieved complete understanding also in evaluating the reasons for the crisis and the magnitude of the counterrevolutionary threat.

Kania assured us that upon his return to Warsaw he would convey our point of view to the PZPR CC Politburo.⁴ He carefully took down everything we said. To be sure, Kania expressed reservations about fully informing certain members of the Politburo, since there was a danger that the information would be leaked to the West.⁵ And for the Polish leaders it is essential to forestall any hints that they are acting at the behest of Moscow.⁶

As far as Kania and Pinkowski personally are concerned, they made a good impression on me and evidently on the other comrades who took part in the negotiations. These are serious and thoughtful people. It's clear that they are worth their salts as political leaders; we will judge them only by their deeds.

No doubt, the comrades agree that at present we have done everything on the Polish question that has been demanded of us. But of course we must remain on guard because the situation in Poland is still dangerously explosive.

It would be worth moving quickly to lend all possible economic assistance to enable the Poles to make it through this trying time. No matter how burdensome it will be for us, we should do it. Let's agree that at the next session of the Politburo all necessary recommendations should be presented.

Perhaps Nikolai Aleksandrovich and other comrades wish to add something to what I've said?

If not, let's approve the results of the negotiations.

ANDROPOV, SUSLOV, KIRILENKO, CHERNENKO, and TIKHONOV say that the invitation to the leaders of Poland for a discussion at the CPSU CC was timely and

⁴ Translator's Note: Kania promptly followed through; see my first annotation to this document.

⁵ Translator's Note: This is an extremely important passage because it helps explain why Kania and Jaruzelski were very discreet and reticent in their comments to the PZPR Politburo. They did not want to reveal the full extent of Soviet pressure on them. (This is evident from a perusal of the items in Wlodek, ed., *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego*.) Evidently, Kania suspected that one or more of his Politburo colleagues might leak the information, perhaps to undercut Kania's position. It is not clear which of the Politburo members Kania had in mind, or what the rationale for the disclosure would be. A comment by Yurii Andropov at the CPSU Politburo meeting on 29 October (see Transcript of CPSU Politburo Session, 29 October 1980) implied that concerns existed in Moscow about high-level espionage in Poland, but it seems unlikely that Kania was referring here to the presence of a full-fledged spy. Not until late 1980 did suspicions begin to emerge that a high-ranking official (Kuklinski) was working for U.S. intelligence. (Those suspicions greatly increased in the spring of 1981 when Solidarity began referring publicly to the secret codenames of components of the martial law operation.)

⁶ Translator's Note: See Gromyko's similar comments about this point at the CPSU Politburo meeting on 29 October 1980.

absolutely essential.

BREZHNEV. The proposal is to approve the discussion.

EVERYONE. Correct.

TIKHONOV. The economic situation in Poland is very difficult. They are deeply indebted. They must now pay off debts of roughly 500 million dollars. Moreover, they are now requesting 150 million dollars to be rolled over. We are preparing recommendations.

BREZHNEV. Can you have these recommendations ready for the next session of the Politburo?

TIKHONOV. Fine.

ARKHIPOV. Along with the proposals for lending assistance to Poland, we will also prepare an appeal for your signature, Leonid Il'ich, that will go to the leaders of the other fraternal countries.⁷

BREZHNEV. I think these things shouldn't be linked. The appeal should be sent out sooner.

GROMYKO. I strongly believe they should not be linked. Incidentally, I'll mention several things about the negotiations. During the negotiations, Cdes. Kania and Pinkowski said nothing about the earlier policy, the policy of Gierk. They spoke only about what is going on now and what they must do.

ANDROPOV. Thanks to this discussion, the Polish comrades have begun to understand their own situation better. After arriving back in Warsaw, Cde. Kania said at the airport that he was very satisfied with the meeting with Leonid Il'ich and that Leonid Il'ich displayed exceptional attention to the needs of Poland.

BREZHNEV. They're afraid to use the word "counterrevolutionary." So listen to what Cde. Semyonov reports from Bonn. It so happens that he's reporting on a conversation with one of the Polish officials. Here, as you see, the official is speaking directly about an armed uprising in the PPR. How is it that the Polish comrades cannot understand the simple truth that a counterrevolution is fully under way in their country?

ANDROPOV. This, indeed, is a serious point, and it warrants detailed confirmation.

USTINOV. In any case we will have to be highly vigilant.

CHERNENKO. The discussion with the Polish comrades helped them face up to the true situation in Poland and to give a proper evaluation of the way things develop from

⁷ Translator's Note: See Letter from Leonid Brezhnev to Erich Honecker, 4 November 1980.

the Party's perspective. This will help them, of course, to be more energetic in carrying out measures designed to combat antisocialist elements and protect the gains of the socialist order.

[Source: TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 35]