

November 19, 1945

TASS Reports Distributed to Cdes. I.V. Stalin, V.M. Molotov, A.I. Mikoyan, L.P. Beria, G.M. Malenkov, and A. Ya. Vyshinsky

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Summary:

TASS reports on French news stories about Stalin, including stories on his illness, three groups that have formed in the Politburo in his absence, and the possibility of Zhdanov or Molotov succeeding him.

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NEW ARTICLE ABOUT COMRADE STALIN IN THE FRENCH NEWSPAPER "PARIS-PRESSE"

PARIS, 16 November (TASS). Delbars continues to publish a series of articles about Stalin in Paris-Presse. In a 16 November article under the headline, "There is no 'dauphin' in the USSR. Stalin has several successors", he writes:

"In the Kremlin they firmly hope that Stalin will attend the 21 November meeting of the Politburo, where important decisions will be made as a consequence of Truman's meeting with Attlee. This meeting will be an important stage of the domestic evolution which has already notably changed the political situation in the country.

World public opinion, blinded by the 'psychosis of a secret' begun in the years of the USSR's isolation, is deciding not to analyze this evolution and, on the contrary, takes on faith every anecdotal and fragmentary report without a critique, even those which clearly contradict reality.

Thus, since the time of Stalin's departure for Sochi, foreign telegrams have repeatedly appointed his successor. Zhdanov is named especially often. However, Zhdanov not only did not head the celebration of the anniversary but wasn't even in Moscow on 7 November, in spite of predictions.

To ascribe to Stalin the idea of a single successor is absurd if one considers the current political situation in the USSR. Stalin's success will not be a single person, but a collective".

Repeating the previous assertions about the existence of "three groups" in the Politburo, Delbars writes, "Molotov has personal friends among the bureaucrats. However, he is more inclined toward the military, who have a tendency to propose a bolder and more adventurous foreign policy than Stalin's policy however, Voroshilov is called upon to restrain this policy.

Stalin's absence in Moscow has provoked numerous attempts at reconciliation with the opinion of the absent boss by several members of the "three groups". This is explained by the trips back and forth between Sochi and the capital by Voroshilov, Zhdanov, Kalinin, Malenkov, and Zhukov.

But the differences were not settled and they touch on serious questions.

Finally, Stalin categorically refused to come to Moscow on the advice of doctors and despite the insistence of the Politburo.

Demarches continue.

This situation, new for the USSR, is being clarified and confirmed by numerous reports and indicates a large change in the country's political situation, a change which could be defined in one word: there is no one-man dictatorship; even the dictatorship of Stalin with his enormous authority cannot henceforward operate in Russia because several groups of leaders have obtained too great an influence.

At one time, during times of a revolutionary or transitional period, the struggle of factions could end in purges. At the present time, after efforts made together in war, the three groups gained such weight and such strength that it makes it impossible to eliminate any of them. And Stalin himself, being a great psychologist, considers it necessary to find the necessary *modus vivendi*. He thus shows the USSR its new path: the path of democratized management, which will not be connected with the prestige of one person anymore.

Coming to such conclusions, Stalin could not fail to determine his thoughts and specify his advice in a ceremonial document. His presence in the Caucasus allowed him to draft this historic document and he has been in Moscow in the Politburo since 6 November. This is his political testament of which we speak in our next article”.

The yellow weekly *Samedi Soir* published “Private Telegram from Moscow” on 16 November under the headline: “Stalin was photographed on the veranda of his villa in Sochi. During his absence 15 people represent the highest Soviet authority”. This “telegram from Moscow” evidently belongs to the pen of the same Delbars since it again develops the theme of the three groups.

THE NEWSPAPER “RESISTANCE” ABOUT AN ILLNESS OF COMRADE STALIN

PARIS, 17 November (TASS). The newspaper “Resistance” (one of the YuDSR [Democratic and Social Union of the Resistance] newspapers) published an article by one Mirko Svoboda on 17 November under the headline “The silence of the Kremlin. Struck a month ago by a serious heart attack, Stalin is slowly recovering”.

The article is introduced by the following comment: “One of the highest figures in the international arena who has written his name forever in the history of his country, was in Paris. He told his French friends about a secret which has disturbed the world for an entire month: about the silence of Marshal Stalin”.

Mirko Svoboda writes: “The Generalissimo of the USSR was ill for several weeks already when on about 15 October his health unexpectedly worsened. This became known in Moscow as a consequence of the fact that the meeting of an ambassador of one Allied country with Molotov was postponed, who was urgently summoned to the ill Marshal. Zhdanov, Kaganovich, his sister (the wife of Stalin), and also several military people were already there. It is not known whether Marshal Zhukov was present at the conference or he came to Moscow only on another day. Stalin informed them in an absolutely calm tone that he would have a small operation which would force him to possibly remain in bed for several days.

He charged Molotov with temporarily replacing him, promising to give other instructions the next day or the day after. Complaining of a quite strong pain, he asked his colleagues to leave for several minutes and return the same day to resolve some current issues. He repeated to them that his illness was not serious and that he would undoubtedly receive them in 48 hours and get up from bed in eight days. Those present sadly left the room, not knowing what they were to believe, the cold-blooded and approving words of Stalin or their bad premonitions. After two days of silence Kaganovich informed them that the operation had not yielded the expected results., that Stalin continued to be ill and heroically endure the suffering. Foreign journalists found out about the events and the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs was bombarded with questions and inquiries. They were told that the Commissariat knew nothing and the latter refused to even publish a bulletin about the state of [his] health or even some refutation. The same evening the loose tongue of a doctor allowed one Anglo-Saxon journalist to find out that Stalin had left Moscow “for the South”. Finally, one semi-official person declared to several diplomats that “the overwork of recent months had forced Marshal Stalin to take an extended vacation”.

However, it was not permitted to send a single telegram about this. Stalin's recovery, at the start of which he received the US Ambassador, besides several others, was replaced the second week by a sharp worsening of [his] health. This time the most contradictory and alarming rumors circulated in Moscow again. How and why did the foreign press, and especially the Anglo-Saxon [press] hasten with such persistence to report on "the hopeless condition", then about the death of Stalin? The fault for this lies mostly on the Russians themselves, who for reasons of domestic policy have refused to admit the illness of their boss, limiting themselves to the publication of several laconic and unconvincing communiqués.

At the present time Stalin is slowly recovering and he will probably soon be able to return to his activities. In his entourage they are afraid that this first onset of illness will be repeated. Information and opinions about the exact nature of his illness are contradictory".

THE REPEATED TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE SOVIET UNION BY THE REUTERS AGENCY

LONDON, 18 November. At 1630 18 November the Reuters Agency again sent under the same headline ("Restructuring") information of its political columnist Robert Lloyd about the political situation in the Soviet Union. The first time this information was sent on Morse [Code] sheets for 15 November. For technical reasons the TASS radio station received this information on 15 November without the last paragraph, which reads "The point of view that Zhdanov will be Stalin's political successor is based on his position and his personal biography. In 1934 Stalin chose Zhdanov as the successor of the murdered Kirov to the post of Secretary of the Leningrad Party organization. During the War he was a brilliant civilian leader of Leningrad. He signed the armistice with Finland and since that time has observed its observance as Soviet representative in Finland".

A REPORT OF THE NEWSPAPER "LE PAYS"

PARIS, 15 November (TASS). In addition to the telegram from Paris about the publication of an article concerning the meeting of Truman and Attlee on board the steamship Sequoia in the newspaper Le Pays, we report that the authors of this article, as indicated in the newspaper, is Marcel [Gro], an official of the AEP Agency. (The telegram was sent to six addressees on 17 November 1945 - TASS).

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[handwritten: PR]