

April 12, 1967
Hungarian Workers Party CC Minutes of Meeting
held on 12 April 1967

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Summary:

Members of the Hungarian Central Committee discuss recent trips to Moscow and Budapest. Those involved debrief the group on discussions at both locations over the domestic situation in China and its possible repercussions for international communism.

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STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL Prepared in 3 copies MINUTES of the Central Committee meeting held on 12 April 1967 Agenda 1. Presentation on international questions Speaker: Comrade Zoltán Komócsin Commenters. Comrades Sándor Nógrádi, István Csáki, István Friss, Gyula Hevesi, Géza Révész, and János Kádár The Central Committee approves the oral presentation by Comrade Zoltán Komócsin on international questions. [Page 8] [...] Dear Comrades! Members of the Central Committee are aware that between 25 February and 1 March, Comrades János Kádár, Béla Biszku and Károly Erdélyi paid a visit to Moscow. The occasion was a direct, open and comradely exchange of ideas with the leaders of the Soviet Party and state, Comrades Brezhnev, Kosygin and Andropov. Similar exchanges took place on 8 and 9 March in Budapest with leading Polish Comrades, Comrades Gomulka and Cyrankiewicz. Both Hungarian-Soviet and Hungarian-Polish discussions concerned the same subject matters, and we hereby inform the Central Committee according to the order of exchanges. [...] [Pages 14-17] Respected Central Committee! An exchange of opinions on the events in China and their international consequences took place at discussions in Moscow and Budapest. Regarding the Chinese situation, the Soviet Comrades said that the political struggle continues. Sending students back to schools, and the mass of calls to stimulate production show that the vehemence of the mass movements will diminish. But there is no sign that Mao Zedong will put an end to his mindless affairs. The new momentum at present is Zhou Enlai's appearance in the forefront. The most recent theoretical articles in Pravda have been useful. They have advanced international understanding of the situation, and at the same time provided support to the anti-Mao forces fighting in China. We must continue to study the processes in the next phase. The Soviets are preparing a draft statement which may, if necessary, be issued by the Central Committee and the government in order to clarify the events in China. Comrade Gomulka said that the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party holds patchy information from China. According to existing knowledge, the debate and later the split within the leadership of the Communist Party of China arose basically in connection with solving questions of internal construction. According to Mao Zedong's concept, the rapid liquidation of China's backwardness, and the creation of modern military potential can only be achieved by means of an artificial restraint on consumption, lasting egalitarianism, emphasizing moral factors and the expansion of military discipline to all the people. Although the details of Mao's opponents' concepts are not known, the source of their opposition may be different concepts of the means of socialist construction. The opposition's attempts clearly include whittling down the extremists, and turning towards applying more realistic political methods. This fundamental opposition is certainly interwoven with personal antipathies as well. From the events of the past few weeks, it has become evident that the direction of the Mao Zedong line has retreated. This is natural. Despite the different character of Chinese tradition and its standard of political and economic development, the people there still want to live better. In the long term, it is inconceivable even in China that the hundreds of millions of people will not be stimulated to achieve great economic goals by the hopes for a better life or by material means, but with an abstract, ascetic approach and egalitarianism. It is possible that due to specific relations, the masses of the people are not yet conscious of this realization. But one part of the Party's leading cadres see clearly that the present methods are not appropriate for the degree to which productive forces are developed, and are restricting China's economic development. These cadres represent Mao Zedong's opponents. The present situation shows that the struggle against opponents has ended up with a split. It appears that the opposition of the Party and state apparatus is stronger than presumed. There are conflicts within the military leadership, the result of earlier dismissals. The anarchy of worrying measures has saturated the life of the country. The events have increased the international isolation of the Communist Party of China, with more Parties turning away from them. These reasons may have compelled Mao Zedong and his milieu to reduce the vehemence of the struggle and seek a compromise solution. Although Mao Zedong's ideas indicate failure, it is too early to speak of defeat. It is impossible to sidestep him while he is alive because of his unquestionable popular authority. It is characteristic that his opponents have not dared take their struggles against him to a personal level, but rather sabotaged the Mao Zedong line. Regarding the future, and as we saw after the failure of the Great Leap Forward of 1958, it seems likely that the slogans will remain the same, but with new content. Comrade Gomulka said that the great deficiency in the work of our like-minded Parties is that we were not able to

resolve the analysis appropriate to the Chinese situation, or inform our Party members and public opinion. Our propaganda dealt with the extremists and sensational elements, and traced events back to one person's subversive thoughts. What is missing is the deeper connections of the events, the introduction and analysis of China's different relations. We must also see that forces opposing the Mao Zedong line cannot automatically be called adherents of friendship with the Soviet Union. However complicated the situation appears, we must still eliminate this deficiency in our communications. We must strive in future to maintain relations and guard existing positions. The conduct of the Soviet Union is exemplary in this regard. At the time of the Peking atrocities, Comrade Brezhnev et. al. proceeded in cold-blood and with great political prudence. The western imperialists and Americans would like the socialist countries to cut their diplomatic relations and retreat from China. We do not want to give our enemies this pleasure. From the world historical perspective, the stake is too great. Comrade Kádár pointed out to the Soviet comrades as well as to the Polish comrades that we held similar information and reached the same conclusions. We too see that the struggle is not yet over, and a dénouement in the near future is unlikely. The unbalanced situation could last for years, and we will need to take into account further surges of internal contradictions, flare ups and restraints. The most recent events represented a great loss of prestige for the Chinese Party not only internationally, but also internally. The people expect from the new socialist social system not only material welfare, but law and order, a secure livelihood, and respect for human dignity. If the cornerstones of social order disappear, this can affect the credence and authority of the system. The defeat of Mao Zedong's concept could disillusion the youth and part of the Party membership not only in their leaders' theories, but also in communism. The development of the Chinese events will in all probability be the great question of our lives and struggle in the forthcoming years. In connection with various international problems we must time and again take into account China's extremist behavior. On the day-to-day level, we must consider that positive steps to improve relations with the Communist Party of China and the People's Republic of China cannot be expected. The Chinese will be absent from the common front for years, they will not have a positive influence over our common struggle, but it is possible that the negative influence of their actions might diminish in the international sphere.[Pages 20-24, Excerpts from the discussion of the China issue]Comrade SÁNDOR NÓGRÁDI:Respected Central Committee!I request to speak mainly to break the silence which has been present at the discussion of international questions during the last meeting of the Central Committee. In the information briefing at the last meeting, Comrade Komócsin raised some very interesting questions and we were informed, perhaps incorrectly, that speeches imparting information do not require a response. This is not the case! In the communist movement, if someone has something to say, he should respond to questions, whether it is a point of information, a proper speech or a normal agenda item, because if we do not speak, then we are not supporting the Political Committee properly. This concerns questions of great importance! We should not become revisionists by not responding to international questions. [...]The second central question of the international situation is, I think, Vietnam, the filthy aggression of American imperialism in Vietnam! Whether the position of the Vietnamese comrades in Hanoi has become more rigid compared to last year is, in my opinion, not a decisive question. Far more decisive is the fact that the American imperialists do not want to give up the position they have secured for themselves in South Vietnam. I think that even if Ho Chi Minh et. al. had wanted to initiate talks in a smarter way with the Americans, they [the Americans] would have thwarted them anyway. And Comrade Komócsin was right when he said that [the Americans] are attempting a military solution. Whether they are successful is another question. They could get entangled in a war in the Far East that lasts for years, and by 1968 it would not end in their favor. But in the background to this is the Chinese question. The Chinese have approximately as much interest in the continuation of the Vietnamese war as the Americans. Whether their thinking is the same is another question. The Chinese have internal problems. This must be borne in mind and not overlooked. The Americans do not have internal problems like the Chinese, they have problems of international policy, problems in the Far East. They want to secure their positions in the Far East. The Chinese question cannot be ignored. I have drawn attention to their internal

problems: problems of food supply and production, and problems with the general mood of the people, and so on. And if Mao et. al. cannot liquidate the opposition that exists and although I would certainly not like to allow a prediction, I do not think that they will liquidate [the opposition], and so this situation will last a long time. And it is also possible that they will not be able to get away without internal civil war. They do not have the traditions of peaceful countries, they have assaulted their own country in the past century, in fact they have a millennial, and other traditions of internal civil war. Let nobody think that if Liu Shaoqi were removed from the position of chairman tomorrow, that he or his followers would give up the fight. Who are his followers? Those who have been sawn off in at least 10-15 provinces. Communist, communists, at least half of them. These are his followers and the masses attached to them. And this is already tens of millions of people, or even hundreds of millions. Liu Shaoqi does not represent a person but a tendency. Liu Shaoqi is the chairman of the Republic, they have not yet been able to unseat him from his position. Deng Xiaoping is the First Secretary of the Party, and then there are others, like Zhu De, a national hero who led the army in the great war of liberation. Imagine that an eighty-year-old man decides to take a stand "against the great Buddha," because it is evident that what Mao is doing is not practical policy or rational policy. It's very interesting, what I read yesterday in the "confidential", which I usually read. The "confidential" states that Liu Shaoqi has been accused I think in Renmin Ribao, the Party paper, of not agreeing with the Party on the question of material interests. Very interesting! Comrade Nemes argued with him at the time, and I also argued with him. He was strongly opposed to material interests – is this true? Now they write that he is in support. This is his point of view. But if he is in support, let us think this through, then it means that he agrees with us on many questions. It's not yet certain that he supports us on all questions, in fact it's certain that he doesn't support us on all questions, but on very many questions. And he does not call the Soviet Union revisionist because it placed material interests in the foreground during the era of constructing socialism and the first years of communist construction. This means that Liu Shaoqi and others, Deng Xiaoping and the others are of the opinion that the standard of living in China must be raised. It is well-known that the standard of living there is very low. However, Mao Zedong and his colleagues are of the opinion that the people must primarily develop ideologically. When we discussed this question with Liu Shaoqi I went so far as to say to him, even though a Foreign Ministry official was there, because he started the discussion, that we committed such errors in the question of material interests that contributed largely to the '56 counter-revolution: in the second Five Year Plan, we promised a 27 or 29 percent increase in the standard of living, which did not produce an increase, but in many categories a drop. This is a fact! And our Party started the consolidation with an increase in wages, by 20 to 16 percent if I remember, 16 percent. During that period, when the workers were disappointed in us because of the standard of living, certain strata wavered, which can be attributed to this. So, Comrades, the essence of all these words is that we must take these people up and support the Chinese opposition. Even if the population is 700 million people, and great masses stand behind them, and even if they are removed from their functions. And this struggle, internal struggle will not cease, they need international support. Let Mao et. al. say in their press, and their propaganda, and whatever other means, "well look, these are the protégés of revisionists." Let them say that, but Party functionaries know even in China that internationalism is a very great force and the international support carries enormous significance. I now ask: are we supporting the opposition in China enough? No! Because we are silent. It has somehow emerged between us, and the other parties that there are two positions, two different lines, tactical lines. One is that of postponement, like the Italians for example, not to mention the others, the Romanians and the Dutch; the other wishes to clarify the situation in the international communist movement. This is our path, mainly with the Soviet Union. But it does not give any kind of perspective. That there will be some statement on the question of European security and a meeting will be convened, I think this seems likely. I think that for us Hungarians, Hungarian communists, we should not join the postponers, but those who wish to clarify the situation. I do not suggest rashness. However robust these movements are in China, they are not developing that quickly. Mao launched – when? one year ago? – the Cultural Revolution. And it is possible that many people have already been killed,

but – I do not predict – they will not be able to resolve the situation, because these problems persist and that suite, the Mao suite, which is aging and sectarian, a dogmatic suite, cannot resolve the problems. They divert their internal difficulties to international policy, to the Vietnamese question and the Soviet Union, and it is possible that they will launch a provocation against the Soviet Union, while there will be civil war there and a military provocation against the Soviet Union. Anything can happen there, everything is different there! It is very difficult to understand the Chinese mentality, it is not straightforward. The people, those simple people, 700 million of them, do not know what is going on, what is happening in the world. A slim stratum, say 25 million, soldiers, mainly army officers, then workers in the state and Party apparatus, they know. However at present, half of them are being decapitated. Can they remain quiet? If someone said to us, a sort of someone, this is of course a hypothesis, that half this body consists of revisionists who must be decapitated, they must be destroyed, would we acquiesce? No, I think we would not. They are the same, it's the same thing there! A communist is a communist! I know a couple of them, they are not the ones who don't dare. They do dare! They take action. Deng Xiaoping for example is a physically strong man, and still young. Does he accept that he is being labeled as enemy of the people? No he doesn't. Liu Shaoqi is the same. So let us support in our international policy and dimension that line which demands holding an international gathering and extends some sort of support to the opposition that is taking shape in China. This is what I wanted to say.[...]