

March 17, 1981

Information regarding the meeting between Karel Hoffmann, President of the Central Unions' Council and Member of the CPCz CC Presidium, and Stanislaw Kania, PUWP CC First Secretary, Warsaw, (excerpt)

Citation:

"Information regarding the meeting between Karel Hoffmann, President of the Central Unions' Council and Member of the CPCz CC Presidium, and Stanislaw Kania, PUWP CC First Secretary, Warsaw, (excerpt)", March 17, 1981, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SUA, A UV KSC, PUV 164/1981, 19 March 1981
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/112628>

Summary:

Information regarding the meeting between Karel Hoffmann, President of the Central Unions' Council and Member of the CPCz CC Presidium, and Stanislaw Kania, PUWP CC First Secretary, Warsaw, (excerpt), criticizing Kania's leadership of the PUWP

Original Language:

Czech

Contents:

Translation - English

17 March 1981.

[...]

Comrade Hoffmann then pointed out that our Party and the public are also increasingly disturbed by the fact that the PUWP has not managed to achieve that which was discussed by Comrade Husák and Comrade Kania and approved by the CC (i.e.—"we shall take the initiative into our own hands," "we are developing an offensive and we shall suppress the anti-socialist forces," "the attitude of party members who have joined Solidarity has not changed," etc.).

Comrade Hoffmann continued with his breakdown of the Czechoslovak experience in the fifties and sixties, and particularly of the crisis years to demonstrate the generally applicable preconditions by which one can determine when, and whether, unions can support the Party. He stated that union members in the "SSR and functionaries in the branch unions do not understand why Solidarity is supported and preferred when it so sharply stands up to the Party. Nor do they understand why there is no support for the class unions (branch unions), which are the only ones actively supporting the Party and fighting for its policies. He emphasized the importance of unity and effective action that a renewal of the class unions' national body in the PPR would have on both the internal and international level (without repressing the specificity of the unions or restricting their activity), and also mentioned the possibility of the unions publishing a daily newspaper, without which branch union activities are considerably restricted. This is particularly important now that Solidarity has been granted permission to put out its own publications.

At the end of his presentation Comrade Hoffmann mentioned that we regard as great mistakes of the "SSR crisis period the fact that we did not call things and phenomena by their real names, that we did not speak specifically about the messengers of right-wing, anti-socialist expressions and tendencies, that we did not isolate enemy forces and, on the other hand, that we did not organize and unite the healthy forces, and that we permitted moral and political terror and the harassment of honest comrades. We were thus unable by means of our own internal forces to forestall the counter-revolutionaries. This experience is also generally applicable.

Comrade Hoffmann expressed once again the support and solidarity of the Czechoslovak Communists and wished the PUWP full success.

During Comrade Hoffmann's remarks one could notice Comrade Kania nervously shifting in his seat, his facial expressions betraying his disagreement and dissatisfaction.

Following Comrade Hoffmann's presentation, Comrade Kania gave the floor to Comrade Grabski, who very briefly and concretely spoke about the current problems, the efforts of the Party, and the question of the unions in the PPR and their international contacts.

Then Comrade Kania spoke. His first reaction was to state that the events in Poland could not be evaluated through Czechoslovak eyes, as the crisis in the "SSR had a completely different character.

According to Comrade Kania, in comparison with that of the "SSR in 1968/69, the Polish situation is worse in only two ways—in the "SSR there had only begun one crisis, whereas in Poland there had been a number of what could be termed mass crises, and further, "in Czechoslovakia the economic situation had been good and in Poland it was bad."

He further stressed that the CPCz CC and the Presidium had adopted opportunistic

slogans, whereas the PUWP had not, that here the CC and the Presidium were united and properly oriented; the PUWP had the media firmly under control; the Polish army and security services held firm, whereas in the "SSR these institutions had fragmented; Czechoslovakia had been helped by the allied armies, while in the PPR we were solving the crisis on our own and we are succeeding in mobilizing the people. We have many allies—we are supported by youth, independent unions, other political parties etc. As proof of the improving situation he pointed out the reduced visibility of Solidarity symbols.

Comrade Kania openly stated that there is no danger that Marxism-Leninism or Russian [classes] will disappear from the universities, as in the agreement signed these aspects are to be decided upon by Faculty Councils (he did not, of course, mention that these Councils are, at the majority of universities, under the influence of Solidarity).

Comrade Kania also reacted rather irately to the comments regarding the unions. He stated that he was trying to get Solidarity to become a union organization, that the branch unions needed a dynamic program and that it was impossible to rush the creation of their central body. He objected to the idea that the unions should have their own daily paper, as they obviously already have *Głos prace*. Comrade Hoffmann stepped forward and asked Comrade Szyszka directly whether the unions really run *Głos prace* or not, and was answered that it had been taken from them and did not serve the class unions at all. Comrade Kania reacted sharply to this and stated that this did not matter as *Głos prace* was run by a department of the PUWP CC, and thus he did not see any reason why the branch unions should have a daily of their own.

Comrade Kania's presentation as outlined here, along with further comments made, testify to the fact that he has been idealizing the situation and made statements which are in total conflict with reality.

From Comrade Kania's remarks and arguments it is obvious that:

- a) he fears Solidarity, and that the party leadership takes account in its actions of how Solidarity will react,
- b) the PUWP leadership is taking into consideration its Western creditors (and has stated openly that we must understand that they are dependent on credit),
- c) there is no real presumption that the present leadership has set out on a resolute course of putting into practice the statements made by Comrade Kania during his conversations with our Soviet Comrades, his discussions with Comrade Husák, his presentations in the CC, in the Congress Commission and so on.

On the basis of the present situation in the PPR, the continuing tendency towards unfavorable development, the verified opinions of a broad Party gathering in the class unions (i.e. the Communists, who are the participants in the daily struggle for Party policy and the defense of socialism and who are being placed under higher and higher psychological pressure) and the conversation with Comrade Kania, it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

a) In both the Party and society of the PPR there are strong forces, which have, even outside of the Party, an organizational foundation (class unions, anti-fascist fighters' organizations). These forces, in the case of active, comprehensive, resolute action by the Party leadership, and gradually by the Party as a whole, are capable of ensuring the socialist evolution of the PPR during the process of bitter political struggle and essential intervention against anti-socialist forces. They need only an urging to the struggle and purposeful leadership of the fight.

b) This kind of stance from the party leadership would quicken the differentiation process in society as well as hasten the departure from Solidarity of honest,

disorientated workers, with an inclination to the class unions (of their 5 million members, nearly 2 million are party members). If however, the party leadership continues in its present indecisive, defensive course of action there is a real danger that the anti-socialist forces will succeed in weakening the unions and other progressive organizations, break up their structure and fully control social life, and the socialist character of the country will come under threat.

c) All of this leads to the conclusion that the leadership of the PUWP under Comrade Kania does not provide the guarantees of resolute action against the counterrevolution and in defense of socialism. The present course of the party leadership threatens the foundation and primary pillar of a socialist society in the PPR. (In private conversations the members of the PUWP —high functionaries of the class unions—term the present PUWP leadership the Dub...ek leadership.)