

July 4, 1963

Transcript of Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CC of Romanian Worker's Party

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Summary:

The conversation focuses on whether or not to publish declarations made by the Chinese Communist Party and those made by the CPSU. The Romanians are concerned how the people will react to tension between the two communist countries.

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Contents:

Translation - English

TRANSCRIPT

of the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party

4 July 1963

Participants : comrades Emil Bodnaras, Petre Borila, Chivu Stoica, Alexandru Draghici, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, Alexandru Moghioros, Dumitru Coliu, Leonte Rautu, and Stefan Voitec.

Comrade Leonte Rautu :

Comrades, in a nutshell, the problem in question is the following: as you know, on 1 July a declaration of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party was issued in connection with the negotiations that are to take place, in which the composition of the PCC delegation, and the stand they had taken were announced. We have published the composition of the delegation, and a sentence in which the position of the Chinese was presented.

Today the "Pravda" newspaper published a declaration of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; I propose to have it read now (the declaration is being read).

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

What about the Chinese declaration of 1 July, to which this [Soviet] declaration refers?

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

We can read that declaration, too, to refresh the memory of it (the declaration of 1 July is being read). These are the two materials.

In connection with this declaration we have published the fact that the "New China" News Agency transmitted a declaration of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party announcing the composition of the PCC delegation, as well as a sentence showing that the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party nurtures the hope that the talks will be held with a unanimity of views.

Cde. Alexandru Draghici :

Let us do the same thing with [the declaration of 1 July].

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

Tomorrow a brief note [about the declaration of July 1] should also be published.

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

I thought that it would be better for us to consider all of the possibilities, and afterwards to make a decision. There are two possible alternatives: either to impart information about the composition of this delegation and the fact that it will strive to enable the two parties to reach a better understanding or to publish both declarations in their entirety.

What is the problem with the first alternative and with the second one? The problem with the second alternative is that we [will be criticized for] offering the pages of our press for the publication of a polemic, and we must say that we will not be able to

avoid this.

The problem with the first alternative is that a hell of a dispute will be sparked off about this debate in the whole world press and that all of the broadcast stations will air the situation, and our readers will learn from "Radio Free Europe" what the Chinese and the Soviet said.

Cde. Petre Borila :

We have already issued a short communiqué.

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

At the time, it was the stance of a single party, but now we have the views of both parties.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

Has "Pravda" published the declaration of the "New China" Press Agency?

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

No, not a word. Not even the composition of the delegation. No "sovereign" country published even an iota about this.

Cde. Chivu Stoica :

The press in the other socialist countries published only the Soviet declarations and documents.

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

The Plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU issued a declaration in connection with this topic, which we reproduced, where the delegation is assigned the task of defending the standpoints of the Congresses of the CPSU and those in the Moscow declarations.

Cde. Chivu Stoica :

The letter of the Chinese CP was also published by all of the parties. We likewise reproduced it

Cde. Alexandru Draghici :

The first time we published only an abstract, but now - as it is the view of both parties - it is good to publish the whole thing because this cannot be covered up. The press will cry at the top of its voice about this issue for several days running. We would be making a mistake if we did not publish it. We hope that they will come to understand each other.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

This has a big disadvantage. If we choose to take this path, we will have to always publish everything said by one side or the other.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

Our position is in disagreement with both some of the Chinese viewpoints and some of the Soviet stances. We do not wholly agree with either of the sides. To reproduce only certain points of view means to leave the impression that we have no stance.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

It means publishing a volume of materials without the certainty that everybody will

read them.

Cde. Alexandru Draghici :

I think that by publishing both declarations we are showing what the situation is when the negotiations start.

Cde. Alexandru Moghioros :

We can issue an internal communiqué showing what our stance is.

Cde. Alexandru Draghici :

But why do we not publish [our position] in the "Scântea" newspaper? We do not agree with either side, with their exaggerations and the practices they resort to, and then - by publishing this in an objective manner - we reserve the right to make comments, too.

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

Sandu [Alexandru Draghici] is right. Now a new craze will appear: that the Romanians, after they published the [Chinese] declaration with twenty-five points, did not publish the Soviet declaration as well. We are the only country in the whole socialist camp that reproduced the Chinese letter and up to now the whole press has been howling.

Cde. Alexandru Draghici :

Or, by publishing both declarations, we stand in the middle.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

But the question arises: what is our contribution to the education of our people if we publish such dirt because they swear at each other and call each other names. People trust that, actually, a reconciliation is intended or solutions are sought for. But by disapproving these [?] we do not agree and we tell the Chinese and the Soviets what we do not agree with. The party is not an information bureau, it is the political leader, and it provides the information, too, but [the information] must serve the purpose of politically orienting the people.

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

All of these are valid in principle, and - especially - they are valid in the current situation, where - whether we like it or not - public opinion has not been kept fully informed.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

But people did not even set about working. Let them work first.

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

At this moment, there are people in our country who know this. We cannot permit their being informed about these relations by "Radio Free Europe". We do not help in any way with their education, but neither can we go on hiding this thing.

Cde. Chivu Stoica :

We must keep everything that contributes to the improvement of relations, and not publish everything that causes them to drift apart or poisons them. We must imagine that things have only just started, that the discussions have only just begun, and we

do not know when these discussions between them are going to finish. They agreed with the proposal that an end should be put to the polemic, and we backed this proposal ourselves. What is our party's contribution to the ending of the polemic if it has this material, where the polemic is continued, published? One must either retain what brings things [people] closer or publish everything in the press.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

Did anybody get ruffled because we did not publish the Chinese communiqué of 1 July ?

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

No, they did not. But wait and see what discussions this issue will spark off. More heated than the discussions on 20 April.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

The issue is that an analysis of both these things will show that either solution has only disadvantages. Surely, you have to weigh and see on which side there are less disadvantages because you cannot speak about any advantages here. Not to mention the fact that by publishing both of them the only thing you do is to create a certain atmosphere. People may say that you are informing public opinion. It is difficult to express a viewpoint since this would require so many explanations that it would become necessary to issue a theoretical journal dealing with this issue only. The trouble is that if we choose to present both materials, we will create a precedent for the future. And these discussions will not stop here.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

It is very likely that the Chinese will issue a further declaration as a response to this declaration of TASS.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

At any rate, there are a series of letters from both sides. We have insinuated ourselves into this affair by publishing from the letters of both sides only the parts we deemed worthy of publishing, for the purpose of both imparting certain information and not turning our press organs into a rostrum for this polemic. It is true that people may say that this way our people had to get information from a different source about the remainder. Yes, this is true.

My most serious fear at present is that if we now publish the unabridged versions of the Chinese communiqué and of the Soviet one, tomorrow the Soviets or the Chinese will send a letter, which we will again have to publish in its complete form.

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

Up to now, we have never published - in its entirety - any material from anybody.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

Maybe it is reasonable for us not to abandon this standpoint. It is true that many people in the West speculate about this. They said that we had published the Chinese letter. In actual fact, we did not publish it. They said that we had published the Soviet letter as well. This is only partially true since we did not publish the entire letter, but only an abstract. Let us not renounce this procedure so that we avoid being blamed for not publishing everything.

The Chinese were very happy that we had not published everything.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

This communiqué does not contain any new elements. It refers to something that was also said before. The new aspects are that they want to turn the disagreement between the parties into a divergence between the states. My view on this is the same: we are to publish only the composition of the [Soviet] delegation, that is to say exactly what we have published regarding the Chinese [delegation].

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

Maybe we made a mistake when we reproduced only part of the Chinese letter. We have only mentioned the composition of the delegation, and a sentence, where it was said that they were going to try to bring [the points of view] closer together. This may give the wrong impression that everything is being ironed out for an understanding to be reached. We may choose to give only an account, in which we say that the communiqué tackles a number of issues, that is to say to show in a roundabout way that there is more [in the communiqué] than meets the eye.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

If we publish both communiqués, it will be very difficult for us in future to choose what we are not going to publish.

Cde. Alexandru Moghioros :

Up to now we have taken a consistent stand so that we should not do a favor to our enemies. I think that the most reasonable and most wise thing to do would be to maintain this attitude. As regards conveying the information to the party, I think we have other means at our disposal. We can publish material with explanations, we can show the party members what the stand taken by our party is since we have taken a stand before. The party organizations know the stance of our party. We do not want to contribute in any way to the worsening of relationships between the communist parties.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

The argument used last time is very good: if we, seven parties, gather together here and take a stand, the Chinese can any time gather together seven parties and take a stand as well. Then, apart from the fact that there are divergences, from the organizational standpoint we create a number of centers. Maybe a moment will come when we will have to take a stand within the framework of an article so that everybody can have a clear picture of this thing.

Maybe the best thing for us to do would be to provide an account in this respect as well.

Cde. Alexandru Moghioros :

I can remember a moment in the history of our party, it was in 1931, when the representatives of the two factions came to Brasov to us and asked us whose side we were on. I was a worker at the time, and I asked each party what it was they wanted. And the representative of Luximin began to present the issue. We withdrew to the adjoining room, and when we came out we said that we were on the side of the ComIntern. In a month, things clarified.

I told you all this in connection with the fact that if we commit ourselves to supporting one side or the other, without the shadow of a doubt it is we who will be in the wrong. If we have not published anything so far, we cannot start publishing now. We have means of informing the party.

Cde. Dumitru Coliu :

Surely, the problem is what stand we are to take, and the question arises what the Western press, and all of this army that cries at the top of their voices to the right

and to the left in relation to our stance will say. However, we cannot disregard the fact that they say: after all, the Romanians are not on the side of the Chinese either, they have something of their own.

I think it would be a dereliction or a retreat from the position of principle that we adopted, because we are for the ending of the polemic, for negotiations and understanding. I am also of the opinion that we must try and do everything possible not to strain the relationships and stir up feelings in order not to contribute towards the aggravation of divergences. We do not agree with lots of things the Chinese say, but we do not agree with certain methods and stances of the Soviets, either. To date, we have never published a document in its entirety. We have published only what we believed could contribute to removing these divergences. What has happened now to make us want to publish the Soviet document in its entirety when two days ago we did not publish the Chinese communiqué?

I think that we should go on in this direction, that is to say "This is our point of view", and we have always the possibility to tell both sides that we have not agreed with their standpoint, that we took our own stand that we are putting forward now, and feel that in this way we will contribute to the two sides getting closer and not splitting up.

Let us find a form of giving an account of the Soviet communiqué. As regards what the people will say, there are means and possibilities. Party members trust our party because they have always been informed correctly. Let us find a way of informing the party active and the party members.

You see that the Soviets say that the Chinese reserve the right to publish. [the communiqué]. What are we going to do if we publish the communiqué?

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

Especially as these [?] do not occur simultaneously. One comes first, and after a while the other does.

Cde. Dumitru Coliu :

Let us adopt the same position we have adopted before, and go to the end. We cannot but win from this point of view.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

We have the advantage of being able to always justify this stance. If we are asked: why did not you publish, we will answer them that we only published what we thought would be useful.

We summoned the Chinese ambassador and called his attention to the fact that we did not agree. We also told him why we did not agree. We are entitled to criticize both the Chinese and the Soviets for such procedures.

Cde. Petre Borila :

We have discussed these issues many times, and it took us long to discuss them because they are very big, very important issues outside the framework of relationships between two parties, consequently they are related to the interests of the whole international communist movement. Having adopted a certain line, namely to fight with all our strength to do away with the divergences by means of comradely discussions and to preserve unity, we stated this thing lots of times, and it was also reflected in our communiqués, in the declarations we made on various occasions in connection with the polemics between the CPSU and the CCP. We have to stick by this stance in the future, and people must understand what our opinion is. Actually,

this fact is known by both our friends and our enemies.

Those who want to speculate saying: "You are on so-and-so's side", will keep speculating. We must not let ourselves be provoked by such speculation. The main thing is the unity of the international communist movement, of our camp.

If we accept the integral publication of the two declarations, it is not our actual position that will be perceived, but a middle-of-the-road one. It might be understood that this is our position, but we do not want such a position to be looked upon as being our real position. We are for the unity of the international communist movement. If we publish the short communiqué, as it was proposed in one of the alternatives, our position will be readily apparent.

The question arises: why should we publish integrally all of the communiqués in the form of communiqués full of divergences of a political or other nature? Why should we let ourselves be drawn into such polemics? We cannot fully agree either with one side or the other.

Cde. Chivu Stoica :

You will have noticed that a memo exists showing that our Czechoslovak comrades drew up a statement to be discussed by the local party organizations in relation to the Chinese stance. You can imagine [the embarrassing situation that would appear] if our press were to publish everything the Czechoslovaks said.

Cde. Petre Borila :

The Chinese and the Soviets stated their points of view, and said they wanted to meet each other. This is something we should not publish. [The Chinese and the Soviets] must first meet and discuss. If they have already published [their respective communiqués], this will deepen the divergences between the two parties even more.

The [Soviet] communiqué in question shows the composition of the CPSU delegation. We can publish a short report, as in the case of the [Chinese communiqué]. What is there in this communiqué? We must extract from it what is the main thing for us. In our view, the main part is not the second [part]. We are most interested in the meeting, where [the two sides] can discuss and understand each other. This is the main point of interest. This is what we must publish in [our] communiqué. Thus people will see what our position is. What is it that we want? We want discussions, understanding, and the elimination of divergences in our movement.

Cde. Stefan Voitec :

In my opinion, for us to be consistent with our position, we should publish a short version with the gist of the Soviet communiqué, just as we published a short version of the Chinese communiqué. As to the radio, few people listen into London Radio..

Besides, if we published both communiqués, it would mean that this was to the advantage of the Chinese since we have already published a short version of the Chinese communiqué.

Cde. Alexandru Draghici :

I agree with this; since we published a short version of the Chinese declaration, let us publish a short version of the Soviet declaration as well, with a sentence saying that we hope they reach an understanding because, at any rate, there will surely be a row over this issue. The Soviets will say, "Ah, Romania censors the Soviet declaration". I promise this will be the consequence. If we publish the Soviet declaration, then - naturally - we will have to publish the Chinese declaration, too.

If we choose this line of action, since we published this part of the Chinese

declaration, let us also publish the composition of the Chinese delegation, and express the hope that the [two sides] will reach an understanding. I agree with this.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

If there are people who want to analyze the Soviet stance deeper, they must see what we published from the Chinese communiqué; they will find that from this communiqué we published only a part. They will also find that from the Soviet communiqué we published only a part as well. For these people, Romania's stance will be clearly apparent. Of course, there will be people who will try to blow things out of proportion.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

In the event of the Soviets asking us, we will tell them that we did not publish anything. We have only welcomed the meeting in our capacity as members of the great socialist community in the world, and we take an interest in the meetings between [them and the Chinese], not in the preparatory polemic.

Cde. Dumitru Coliu :

If it is not opportune for us to reaffirm in the press, after we publish this short text from the Soviet communiqué, that - on the eve of the meeting between the two sides - our party hoped that the differences will be eliminated, let us reaffirm this standpoint in the sense that - in the interest of the sides getting closer and holding friendly discussions - they should hold back from...

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

People will say: the Soviets published a communiqué, the Chinese issued a communiqué, and the Romanians issued a communiqué.

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

After this exchange of ideas, I reached the conclusion that the only solution we had was to publish in relation to the Soviet declaration what we had published in respect of the Chinese declaration, in other words to issue a short note with the same title. [In the short note about the Chinese declaration] there was the title "Delegation of the Chinese Communist Party" and a sentence which stated that in the declaration it was said that the delegation would strive to achieve an understanding between their parties, in the interest of the international communist movement.

I take the following view. We really are in a difficult situation: since we do not want to involve ourselves in the polemic, we feel it is too early for us to take a certain stance and, on that score, we have a different point of view, namely the declaration of the position of the communist parties should be made in an appropriate framework. However, the fact that we are publishing both communiqués shows that we are purposely excluding everything that was of a polemical nature, and in this respect we will be able to give an answer to everybody and maybe it would not be a bad idea for all of our ambassadors to be briefed accordingly. They should declare that we published only the composition of the delegations, as well as the affirmation of our wish that an understanding be reached because we are against polemics and against any action that would bring about a worsening of the relationships.

In respect of our party members, I would propose for us to take the following measure. After we publish this [?], we should inform the party active - via the operative links with the party organs - that a Chinese declaration and a Soviet one are going to be published; we have published, very succinctly, only the composition of the delegations, the reason being that both declarations contain polemics and we did not publish them since we feel that this would be detrimental to the understanding prior to the meeting. If our party members learn that these declarations also include other things, they will be able to understand why we did not

publish them. We reserve the right to wait until we can express our opinion in a detailed manner.

Cde. Dumitru Coliu :

Actually, over dinner comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej said that we cannot affirm that everything the Chinese stated was bad.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :

Then let us publish only a short note.

Cde. Leonte Rautu :

We can produce a text for our party members so that they know [what it is all about], and not create the impression that both parties come to this conference with an open heart and the wish that an understanding be reached.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

We have to disapprove of this attitude of theirs.

Cde. Chivu Stoica :

Consequently, we all agree with the issue of a short communiqué.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras :

I think it necessary that comrade Chivu Stoica inform comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej about our opinion on the matter.