

**March 29, 1989**

**Memorandum of Conversation between M.S.  
Gorbachev and HSWP General Secretary Károly  
Grósz, 14, Moscow**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Memorandum of Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and HSWP General Secretary Károly Grósz, discussing how to define the events of 1956 and the extent of political transition in Hungary

**Original Language:**

Hungarian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

(EXCERPT)

HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE

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REPORT

for members of the Political Committee

[29 March 1989]

(...)

Comrade Grósz informed the negotiators about the Hungarian situation. He said that the events in Hungary have accelerated lately. Their direction is according to our intentions, while their pace is somewhat disconcerting. Comrade Grósz emphasized that we wish to retain political power and find a solution to our problems by political means, avoiding armed conflict.

We have a good chance for reaching our goals. People are afraid of a possible armed conflict. 15 Workers, peasants and professionals want to work and live in peace and security, safeguarding their property. (...)

Another major concern is the history of the last thirty years. We have to face our past, hard and painful as it is, as the acting participants are still alive. On the other hand, by drawing the necessary conclusions, we might dishearten certain layers of our policy's active supporters from the Party. Lack of self-confidence is palpable enough in the Party anyway. (...)

Comrade Gorbachev agreed that the Western world does not want instability in Eastern Europe, including Hungary as well, because in the present situation it would be adverse to its interests. Nonetheless, it is quite apparent that they [the Western countries] intend to facilitate the realization and strengthening of a development that suits their own political ideas.

Comrade Gorbachev emphasized: "The estimation of the 1956 events is entirely up to you." You have to stand on a firm ground; you have to examine what really happened then and there. The Soviet leadership has recently analyzed the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia, and they continue to maintain that what happened there was a counter-revolution, with all the idiosyncratic traits of such an event. There were different periods within the Czechoslovak events, but the Dubèek regime was unable to prevent openly counter-revolutionary forces from gaining ground through them. (...)

Comrade Gorbachev emphasized that we clearly have to draw boundaries, thinking about others and ourselves at the same time. Democracy is much needed, and interests have to be harmonized. The limit, however, is the safekeeping of socialism and assurance of stability.

Comrade Grósz emphasized that when referring to 1956, we adhere to the original evaluation that the Party endorsed in December 1956. The process is described in three consecutive words: student protest, [people's] uprising, and counter-revolution.

Comrade Gorbachev agreed with the above. He emphasized that today we have to preclude the possibility of repeated foreign intervention into the internal affairs of socialist countries. (...)