
MEMORANDUM OF DISCUSSIONS

To: Comrade GHEORGHE SAULESCU, Director

OFFICE OF TREATIES

On 20 February 1969, Corneliu Manescu, the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Socialist Republic Romania (SRR), hosted at his lodgings a buffet-dinner party in honour of Marshal of the Soviet Union I.I. Jakubovsky, supreme commander of the United Armed Forces of the Warsaw Treaty, and of V.V. Kuznetsov, first deputy of the Foreign Affairs Minister of the USSR. Colonel General Ion Ionita, Armed Forces Minister of the SRR, Mircea Malita and Vasile Sandru, deputies of the Foreign Affairs Minister, Vasile Ionel, deputy of the Armed Forces Minister, as well as A.V. Basov, ambassador of the USSR at Bucharest, were also attending.

During the dinner party, which took place in a close, friendly atmosphere, a conversation took place, where some issues were approached which gave the Soviet interlocutors the opportunity to express points of view and to make declarations of interest.

1. In the context of a discussion about the activity of the UN, V.V. Kuznetsov appreciated the way the Romanian Foreign Affairs Minister chaired, in his quality as president of the General Assembly of the UN, the proceedings of the 18th session of this forum. He pointed out that the Western powers long opposed the appointment to this position of a representative of the socialist countries, claiming that these countries – “where people are still wearing opincas [type of primitive leather shoes worn by peasants]” – cannot propose a personality capable of chairing the proceedings of the General Assembly of the UN. The activity of the Romanian Foreign Affairs Minister, in his capacity as president of this forum, proved however not only that the communist president was able to chair an especially difficult session of the UN General Assembly but also performed this “in a brilliant manner, as no other president had succeeded in doing before him”. V.V. Kuznetsov attributed this highly significant result to the “personal qualities of the Romanian minister, to the government that guided him, and to the party to which he belonged”.

In this connection, Corneliu Manescu emphasized the importance of the political battle fought by the socialist countries at the UN and highlighted two significant moments in his activity as president of the General Assembly of UNO for the affirmation of the role of these countries in international life: for the first time in the UN’s history, in the speech made by the president of the General Assembly on the opening of the session, it was clearly and firmly pointed out that without the participation of the socialist countries no important issue concerning humanity can be solved; in addition, for the first time in the UN’s history and as a consequence of the persevering political work performed with the main Western delegations, success was achieved in organizing a special meeting of the General Assembly devoted to the celebration of the Great October Revolution, a meeting where more than fifty delegations took the rostrum to salute the Soviet Union. Obviously, this activity must be looked upon as not only having the approval of the party and state leadership but also as being conducted under the direct guidance of the relevant fora.

The Foreign Minister asked Marshal Jakubovsky whether he knew these things concretely and how he appreciated their importance. The Soviet Marshal, somewhat confused by the direct question and clearly

proving that he did not either know or understand what the Romanian minister had told him, answered that – “by and large” – he knew what it was all about and thought that the celebration at the UN of the Great October Socialist Revolution certainly was a very important and positive fact. However, he listened with interest and approval the explanations that were given to him, which V.V. Kuznetsov emphasized by affirmations and gestures of approval.

2. Both I.I. Jakubovsky and V.V. Kuznetsov stated their conviction that any differences of opinions or of appreciations between the socialist countries – which, in their opinion, were transitory – could be overcome by sincere discussions which would gradually bring the points of view closer together. At the same time, they persistently emphasized the necessity of strengthening the unity and cohesion of the community of socialist countries and of their international solidarity, in accordance with the principle “All for one, and one for all.”, especially in the present conditions, when the aggressive plots of imperialism strongly intensified. A highly significant role in this respect was the collaboration between the socialist countries in the military field for the purpose of increasing their capacity of acting in common with maximum efficiency to defend the achievements of socialism.

Corneliu Manescu singled out the existence and development of close friendship and collaboration links between Romania and the Soviet Union, the fact that their destinies as socialist countries were determined by a multitude of objective factors – the community of ideology, economic and social system, their belonging to the same alliance – which could not be modified by the action of subjective attitudes or momentary episodes. For these reasons, it was inconceivable that between socialist countries there might appear situations of tension or even conflict, which would contravene the very nature of the relationships between them.

[Marshal] I.I. Jakubovsky promptly reacted with such exclamations as: “Only a crackpot could think of attacking Romania!”, “It is impossible that things should come to a conflict between fraternal countries!”.

In his reply, Corneliu Manescu emphasized that it was not a question of fear, but of reaffirming the well-known principle of discussing all the problems in a comradely and constructive spirit, with the sincere wish of overcoming difficulties, to find rational and equitable solutions. The Romanian CP had very often expressed its view that the settling of existing problems could be achieved by direct discussions, leadership to leadership, under conditions of equality and mutual respect, in the interest of the collaboration and unity of the whole communist and workers’ movement. In addition, he pointed to the irrefutable fact that in its entire activity the RCP promoted the internationalist ideals of the working class, educated the Romanian people in the spirit of love and respect for the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

In connection with Corneliu Manescu’s statement, I.I. Jakubovsky mentioned that he observed, during the various travels to Romania, when – on the occasion of military training exercises or working visits – he had passed through towns, villages and other localities, that people had a friendly attitude to the representatives of the armies of the fraternal countries, that the Romanian population had sentiments of genuine esteem and love towards the Soviet Union. Similar appreciations were made by V.V. Kuznetsov and the ambassador A.V. Bashov.

In connection with the comments made by the guests, Corneliu Manescu again laid emphasis on the fact that this attitude of the Romanian people did not come out of the blue but was the fruit of the persevering activity of the RCP headed by its leaders.

3. The Soviet interlocutors noticed the obvious concern [of the Romanian party] to avoid addressing controversial issues, to emphasize – in discussions – the issues and aspects on which the appreciations made by the two parties coincided or were close.

The fact that the dinner party took place in the private lodgings of comrade Corneliu Manescu conferred a note of intimacy on the meeting, thus contributing towards the creation of a relaxed, close atmosphere.

March, 1969

*[Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, secretariat, no.12/00234, file 231, 9v3, 1969.DR, vol.1, pp. 423-26.
Translated for the PHP by Viorel Buta]*