

May 23, 1944

**Stalin, Molotov, and Zhukov Meet Marian Spychalski
and the People's Home Counsel (KRN) Delegation at
the Kremlin**

Citation:

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Summary:

The People's Home Counsel (KRN) meets with Stalin, Zhukov, and Molotov at the Kremlin to discuss Polish politics and military.

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Transcript - Polish

The KRN's Delegation to the Kremlin

□During our first meeting, the comrades from the ZPP [Trans. Note: Association of Polish Patriots, Związek Patriotów Polskich] informed us that a CBKP [Trans. Note: Central Bureau of Polish Communists, Centralne Biuro Komunistów Polskich] is active in Moscow, and that it had vetted many members of the old KPP [Trans. Note: Communist Party of Poland, Komunistyczna Partia Polski]. According to them, a connection needed to be built between the PPR [Trans. Note: Polish Workers' Party, Polska Partia Robotnicza] and the organ that is the party center of Polish communists and provides party and political leadership for the ZPP activity and the organization of the Polish Army in the USSR.

[...]

□Georgii Zhukov, major general of USSR state security and government plenipotentiary in charge of the foreign military formations being created in the Soviet Union, came to see us. Right after we moved to Barvicha, Gen. Zhukov paid us a get-acquainted visit. He was also charged with Polish issues and, as I could see during our meetings, he was well-oriented. He presently announced that we were going to the Kremlin and would most likely be received by Stalin. We had wished that this would happen, yet this sudden and great recognition gave rise to anxiety in us, of the kind that overwhelms people before a public appearance. We asked the general whether someone from the ZPP would be coming with us, since during our visit we were also to bring up questions of interest to that organization. It turned out that Wasilewska would be our companion for this visit. This news reduced our nervousness and gave us self-confidence. We agreed on who would bring up which issue.

We entered the Kremlin through the Borovitskaya Vrata. The soldiers presented rifles with sparking bayonets. We drove along the Kremlin's façade, then turned left. We went up little steps into one of the buildings and found ourselves in a long corridor lined with red carpet. One of the officers stationed there led us to a room where we were greeted by a man in civilian dress. Wanda Wasilewska was already there, and seeing her heartened us.

We went through probably two large rooms in a row, and in the third we were greeted by Stalin's personal secretary. He asked us to go farther. In the long, brightly-lit room we saw the Supreme High Commander of the Soviet Armed Forces of the USSR and Premier Joseph Stalin. He wore a uniform with a gold five-point star. He approached us and shook hands with each one of us. The People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov, stood behind him smiling slightly.

□Stalin sat down at the head of the long, light-colored table with two rows of massive chairs with leather-covered seats along its sides. A desk with numerous telephones stood at the far wall of the room. The telephones were noticeable for their colors: there were black ones, red ones, and one white one. Molotov sat across from us.

We extended our thanks for the reception and introduced ourselves, listing our functions in the KRN, [Trans. Note: People's Home Council, Krajowa Rada Narodowa] the party, and the military. We gave our names and noted that we officially use pseudonyms because of the possibility that we would return to Poland and the related question of security of our families. For Hitlerites take revenge on activists' families if they find their personal information.

We began to present our political positions. We spoke about the creation of the KRN as a democratic, leftist representative of the fighting nation. Our people's patriotic forces have decided to change their state authorities because the émigré government in London and its representatives in Poland are leading us onto a road of political adventurism. As the true government of fighting Poland, we are making an offer to establish relations with other countries of the anti-Hitler coalition and are asking the Soviet authorities to help us in this matter. We then brought up the question of the

most proper and just settlement of the borders of postwar Poland. Our country, which since the memorable September has been incurring exceptionally great suffering and losses under the Hitlerite occupation, should win conditions for a quick reconstruction of the destruction caused by the occupant. We adhere to the principle of the self-determination of nations and recognize the indispensability of taking into account the strivings of the Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Lithuanians. At the same time, we can see the need to return to Poland the territories in the west that historically belong to it. We did not go into the details of the western borders in this first conversation, but only mentioned that, from a historical perspective, Poland stretched as far as the Oder and Neisse Rivers. The Germanic pressure had deprived us of those territories, just as it had swallowed up East Prussia. We described the Polish people's desire for Poland to be strong and able to resist the constant German drive to the east.

□Then Stalin declared: "We are for the creation of a strong Poland that will be our ally."

□Next, we raised the question of the democratic, multiparty political forms in which we wish to build the new Polish people's government.

□Stalin stated then that democracy is a strong and broadly supported government.

□During the remainder of the meeting we expressed our regret that General Anders had taken the Polish army outside the territory of the USSR at a time that was the most difficult for the Russians since they were struggling with Hitler's armies. It would have been more in Poland's interest if General Sikorski's agreement with the Soviet government had been adhered to, since then our soldiers would have taken the shortest route to their liberated homeland. We are very happy that the ZPP was able to organize regular Polish Armed Forces [Trans. Note: Polskie Siły Zbrojne] with the help of the Soviet Union, which proved their will to fight jointly with the Red Army by participating in the Battle of Lenino, where they treated their mission with full responsibility. On behalf of the KRN, we thanked the Soviet government for its ample assistance and expressed the hope that the Polish units in the USSR will continue to develop, making a military contribution to a speedier victory over the common enemy.

□At this point, Stalin noted that the Russians had been counting on the armed participation of Polish units since 1941. Despite the great difficulty that the Soviet Union had with equipping its own armies, it did not skimp on arming the Poles. It had been thought that General Anders would be the commander on the front in the battles with Hitler's armies. But then the turmoil began. The Poles asked to take their armies out of the USSR. The English began to intervene in this matter. "And so we said," spoke Stalin, "let them go! The fat woman is off the cart, life will be easier for the horses." [\[1\]](#)

□We then changed the topic to the armed struggle in occupied Poland. We talked about our partisan units and about the forms of struggle we use against the Germans. Comrade Stalin was informed that we had won popularity, and that people are flocking to us. We could increase our partisan ranks if we had more arms. I added that "London" has been organizing drops, through which it furnishes arms to the units it commands. We, on the other hand, are forced to obtain equipment for our units in battle. As the lawful Polish government after the war, we will be in a position to regulate our debts for any assistance, which we are treating as a loan.

□Stalin's response: "We will give you weapons, we won't take payment for them. You are giving blood, and we are giving arms."

□Then he turned to Gen. Bulganin, who was sitting across the table. The general took out a note pad and wrote down the quantities and kinds of equipment we needed. We did not expect such a rapid and direct response to our plea for weapons for the AL [Trans. Note: People's Army, Armia Ludowa]. We heard Stalin's decision with the greatest appreciation.

□When it came to the question of our establishing relations with the other countries of the anti-Hitlerite coalition in Moscow, Stalin turned to Molotov. The latter responded briefly that he would take on this issue.

□Then we mentioned our intention to return to Poland, where people are waiting for us. Stalin was of a different opinion. He stated that in the current phase of the war we should ask the leading activists in Poland to move to the liberated territories. The Soviet Union would provide the means to transfer them. In connection with this, we mentioned the need to transfer the AL commander Gen. Żymierski, as well as the SL [Trans. Note: People's Party, Stronnictwo Ludowe] and other party activists working with him, across the front line.

□In this connection Stalin mentioned his short, illegal stay in Poland, and remembered PPS [Trans. Note: Polish Socialist Party, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna] activists, of whom he mentioned Ignacy Daszyński.

1[orig. note] Generals Sikorski and Anders made the first offer to evacuate the Polish armies from the USSR on December 3, 1941, during their visit to Stalin. Their plan included the evacuation of 25,000 soldiers to Iran with the goals of replenishing their equipment and training them further.

□As a result of the political pressure from the English and Polish governments, the Soviet Union agreed to the evacuation of a surplus of the Polish armed forces to Iran (beginning on March 20, 1942, the government of the USSR gave 44,000 food rations to the Polish armies, and the actual number of the troops and civilians was 73,415 in February 1942). A certain number of civilians were evacuated with the soldiers.

□Altogether some 114,000 people, including the entire Polish Army under the command of Gen. Anders, left the USSR in two phases (March 25-April 1 and August 20-September 1, 1942)

□In the course of this conversation, Wanda Wasilewska, on her own initiative, expressed the view that it would be advisable for the KRN to take on the supervision of the activities of the ZPP and the Polish Army in the USSR. Stalin noted that this is basically our task, yet this formal solution is correct. He turned to Wasilewska with the query: "Do you believe that it is right to show this army of yours to the KRN delegation?"

□Our first, quite lengthy, conversation in the Kremlin ended with this. Stalin, together with Molotov, escorted us to the door of the office and said good-bye to us.

□We left the Kremlin powerfully affected by these exciting experiences. We were overtaken by the unexpressed joy that the issues of greatest importance to the fate of our nation and country had been resolved. We had discussed these matters with the Soviet leaders, whose decisions were of key importance to the course of World War II and to international politics.

□Wanda Wasilewska beamed with happiness as she congratulated us for the exceptionally quick and fruitful course and outcome of the talks. She said that even though she had had opportunities to discuss matters of great weight in the Kremlin many times, she had never before witnessed such a fortunate turning point in attempts made by leftist revolutionaries and democrats to resolve Polish issues. She

commented vivaciously on the whole course of the visit and on its friendly mood.

□ We for our part were immeasurably grateful to Wanda for her assistance and her sisterly, unceasing care of the delegation. The setting up of these talks and their lofty outcome were her great achievements. I will add that Wasilewska and the members of the CBKP firmly held the view, with which they had acquainted us during our first meeting, that Poland is the most important question. And we had initially supposed that winning the recognition of this principle would not be very easy.

□

Stalin, Molotov, and Zhukov Meet Marian Spychalski and the People's Home Counsel (KRN) Delegation at the Kremlin.

24 May 1944

The next day we went to one of Moscow's theaters. During the show, someone suddenly covered my view of the stage. In the dark, I recognized Gen. Zhukov, who excitedly asked me to go outside with him. There, he communicated to me that we are to go to Stalin immediately because of an urgent matter. We rushed by car at full speed. In the Kremlin we almost ran, passing rooms through which yesterday we had been escorted solemnly. I entered Stalin's office alone. Molotov and Wasilewska were there, and she handed the premier a draft communiqué about our delegation's stay, which was intended for the evening radio news and tomorrow's press editions. The office of the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs had proposed that a communiqué be published.

□ After Molotov read the draft, Stalin took the sheet of paper from him, looked at it carefully, and suggested changes. He expressed his wish that we work together on a draft in the next room. Molotov wrote, and Wanda and I performed advisory functions. The communiqué was very laconic, announcing the arrival in Moscow of the delegates of the KRN, which is the underground democratic parliament of Poland. It listed the composition of the delegation, but here a problem arose. At the time I was still convinced that after we fulfilled our mission we would go back to Poland, leaving behind in Moscow Jan Haneman, whose pseudonym was "Morawski," a member of our delegation. Osóbka's pseudonym at the time was "Tadeusz." He also used other pseudonyms and conspiratorial last names, but I did not remember them. I also had many last names in the underground, and I used them according to contacts with different milieux; for example Turski, Pawłowski, Sokołowski, or Zieliński. I had fictitious documents with those names, made by our "passport office."

□ Stalin was of the opinion that the communiqué should include any name that will later be listed next to a person's real one, when at the appropriate time we reveal it publicly. Since we had at most 20 minutes to write the communiqué, I dictated that Osóbka, who headed the delegation, appear in the communiqué as "Morawski." And this is how it would stay. When I announced this to Osóbka, he was pleased, and since then he has been using the two-part name Osóbka-Morawski. Haneman, on the other hand, was less pleased with this change.

□ After our visit with Stalin and after the publication of the communiqué, the members of the CBKP reached the conclusion that the time had come when the issue of our official political activity in the Soviet Union has become topical. The Polish press in the USSR and the Soviet press began to give more information about our delegation and about the political-military situation in occupied Poland. A woman journalist who, if I can remember right, was the editor in chief of some periodical that would later be renamed New Times, came to Barvicha. She conducted interviews with us and suggested that we write articles on specific topics. My article, which was signed T, comprised concise information about the genesis of the AL, its development, and its battles with the occupiers. Osóbka-Morawski, in consultation and collaboration with

us, recounted how the KRN had been created, described the characteristics of its social-party composition and its ideological declaration, as well as the goals of our delegation's trip to Moscow.

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