

December 14, 1944

Minutes from a Meeting of the Politburo Held on 14 December 1944

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Summary:

Bierut's account of three conversations with Stalin held between 6 and 14 December 1944. Stalin and Bierut discuss Poland's internal politics. In another meeting, Stalin and Bierut discuss France's attitude toward Poland; Stalin says that France only agreed to support Poland under pressure from the USSR.

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

Bierut's Account of Three Conversations with Stalin
Held between 6 and 14 December 1944
Top secret
Done in 3 copies

Minutes from a Meeting of the Politburo Held on December 14, 1944

in the presence of comrades: Wiesław, Tomasz, Mine, Jakub, with the participation of comrades Wierbłowski and Radkiewicz.

The agenda:

1) Information from Moscow^[1]

The information is provided by com. Tomasz [Bolesław Bierut]. As there is no orderly record of questions raised at different meetings, he is giving information according to the sequence of meetings.

Right after he had arrived in Moscow, he was called up by Bulganin, with whom he went to see Stalin. At the time there was a Politburo meeting going on in the Kremlin. Stalin showed him a great deal of cordiality, being interested first of all in agricultural reform and in the situation in PPS. He was greatly satisfied with the course of agricultural reform.

Com. Tomasz presented the situation in PPS in the light of two currents visible in that party, i.e. a truly democratic trend represented by [Osóbka] Morawski and a WRN trend, represented by Drobner.^[2] There has evolved the following conversation between Stalin and Tomasz on [Osóbka] Morawski:

S.: How is [Osóbka] Morawski doing in the PKWN?

T.: He is sincerely cooperating with us.

S.: Who wrote and approved the articles in "Robotnik" (The Worker)?

T.: [Osóbka] Morawski did, but he was under heavy pressure from the Drobner group.

Stalin invited Tomasz to supper, during which they returned back to the question of PPS.

S.: What do you think of [Osóbka] Morawski?

T.: He is a young man, inexperienced, but of a good will. He stands sincerely on the ground of cooperation with the Soviet Union.

S.: Was [Osóbka] Morawski known before the war to a broader public as a political figure?

T.: No, he was working in the cooperative sector.

S.: And who was known?

T.: Dubois and Barlicki were, but they have been killed by the Germans.

S.: What influence does [Osóbka] Morawski have in the PPS now?

T.: He has a dominant one, larger than Drobner has.

S.: What is his attitude toward the PPR?

T.: Generally it's very correct; one cannot reproach him for anything.

Stalin says that if it's so, then [Osóbka] Morawski may become a communist in the future.

Tomasz shares Stalin's point of view.

Next the talk turned to agricultural reform and Stalin was showing an understanding of the fact that the poor and agricultural workers had received a colossal portion of the land. He was stressing that agricultural reform would tie the masses with the PKWN and would secure durability of our power.

Stalin took a very favorable position towards the Union of Peasants' Self-Assistance. [3] He pointed out that it would not be good if the PPR were to be flooded by the peasant element. PPR has to be based foremost on workers. He was talking slightly of the Peasant Party, which would never become a strong one. It would always be under various influences.

During the supper Tomasz was interlocuting Khrushchev about the behavior of the border guards and authorities at the repatriation of Poles from Ukraine. Khrushchev defended himself against charges, but all the present (Politburo), including Stalin, though in a joking manner, but rather firmly were pressing him and demanded changes towards the repatriating Poles. Tomasz was also intervening with Khrushchev regarding the libraries in Lwów, demanding the Ossolineum and private libraries. Khrushchev stated that on these matters it would be possible to reach an understanding.

Towards the end of the supper Tomasz brought up party matters, i.e. an allotment to the party of 15 automobiles.

S.: We are giving cars to the PKWN. Take it from them.

T.: For us it's not convenient to take it from PKWN. Those autos are at the disposal of [Osóbka] Morawski.

S.: Why have you given these matters into the hands of [Osóbka] Morawski? You should have your own deputy, who would have a say on such matters.

That matter has not been settled then and Stalin was showing dissatisfaction. Later on

Stalin was calling Tomasz, informing him that the question of 10 cars for the PPR would be settled by Malenkov [4] and Shcherbakov, i.e. that the Moscow party organization [VKP(b)] had taken care of us and would meet the needs of our party.

On the third day there was a reception for our whole delegation. Military matters have been settled only partially. Stalin was against the formation of a Polish Front, as the Polish Army was too weak. General Żymierski defended the concept of the Polish Front, conditioning its fighting capacity on supplying it with machinery and tanks.

During the first conversation there took place another talk about Berling. Stalin was talking of him as a provocateur. He said that Wanda [Wasilewska] had had a correct intuition about Berling, though at that time she didn't have arguments against him. Stalin shared the assumption that Berling had been left by Anders on purpose as his agent. In another conversation with Stalin, with the participation of Rola [Żymierski] and Wanda [Wasilewska] it was decided that his wife too should be sent to Moscow. Stalin was of the opinion that if she wouldn't want to go willfully, she should be sent forcefully.

Towards the end of the second meeting a matter of PKWN representation in other countries has been raised. Stalin said that in negotiations with de Gaulle the Soviet Union had raised the question of Polish-French relations. De Gaulle didn't want to establish relations with Poland, arguing that Poland was a secondary state. Stalin called de Gaulle a reactionist. In view of de Gaulle's resistance towards Poland he

directed Molotov to reject all his proposals regarding a Soviet-French pact. Subsequently Stalin called Bierut to inform him that under Soviet pressure de Gaulle had agreed to exchange representatives between France and Poland. For the time being they are not going to be official missions, but official representations.

Stalin was strongly supporting the establishment of PKWN's relations with other countries. He was of the opinion that in Hungary there should be formed a government like our own,[\[5\]](#) if only there should be an agricultural reform like in Poland.

On the question of a Polish Front Stalin has not said his last word, having in mind that perhaps only some section might be assigned to the Polish Army.

Stalin acknowledged with approval a military call-up to officers' corp conducted by the PPR[\[6\]](#), but emphasized the need to select candidates with some education. Bulganin assured us that by the year's end the Polish Army would get 2000 automobiles. And in January it will get the next one thousand.

The third meeting was held with four of us, including Wanda [Wasilewska]. Tomasz had stated already in his previous conversation with Stalin that our intention was to send off Wanda abroad. Stalin had noted that there might be some difficulties; she would be asked who is her husband,[\[7\]](#) what country is she a citizen of, etc. He thinks that Wanda is very undecided as far as her relation to Poland is concerned. In the course of the meeting Stalin asked Wanda why she doesn't accept her work as a Polish citizen. Wanda was opposing very strongly her leaving the Soviet Union. Stalin didn't want to impose on her anything and consented to her staying in the USSR.[\[8\]](#)

A visit to de Gaulle:

It took place in the French legation. Present was the whole delegation and de Gaulle with general Garreau.[\[9\]](#) The interpreter - Modzelewski.

De Gaulle: what's going on in Lublin?

T.: it's a turning point, agricultural reform, that France has done long ago. He touched upon the old Polish-French friendship, which should now be continued, even more so that we have a common enemy - Germany.

d.G. agrees, but requests to take into consideration the difficulties posed by the fact that Poland has two political representations - in London and in Lublin. He wishes the Polish nation to be united.

T.: What kind of representation will there be?

d.G. asks not to put emphasis on the character of representation, which will be decided later. He doesn't agree to make public an exchange of representations.[\[10\]](#)

[Osóbka] Morawski: We want to know who our representatives are going to be, since we cannot agree that they will be treated in a worse manner than the representation of the emigre government. If France cannot afford to recognize the representation, then we can wait.

d.G. pulled out a watch, noted that the time had passed and gave no response.

This conversation and the reception were reported to Molotov. He didn't consider the position taken by [Osóbka] Morawski towards de Gaulle as improper. Later on at a Stalin-de

Gaulle meeting Stalin stated that for the Soviet Union a pact with France was not necessary, while for France it was indispensable. Thus, Stalin put the matter in such terms that he was ready to conclude the pact on condition that France would recognize the PKWN. De Gaulle was forced to agree,[\[11\]](#) since he didn't want to leave Moscow without the pact. At 2 a.m. the pact was still not signed and the French were

to leave in the morning.

During the third conversation Stalin suggested to [Osóbka] Morawski to send off Drobner to Moscow as a PKWN representative.

On military matters Stalin has agreed that Korczyc[12] be nominated as chief of staff, Popławski[13] as commander of the 1 Army, and Świerczewski as commander of the 2 Army.[14]

This has been decided.

After a long discussion on the delivery to Poland of agricultural tractors for post-seed time campaign, Poland has been granted 300 caterpillar tractors.

On the organization of cooperative work in the countryside Stalin was giving examples from the first period in the Soviet Union, recommending ploughing with tractors and harvesting by hand.

With regard to the Internal Forces Stalin recommended first of all to educate the officers' corps, and as it goes on an expansion of the Internal Forces will follow. Provision of the Internal Forces will be done through the Stewardship of the Polish Army.

To a question raised by [Osóbka] Morawski if Poland should join the Soviet-Czechoslovak pact[15], Stalin said there was no need for it, as there is still no pact with the Soviets. Guarantees for Poland's borders by other countries Stalin considered as insulting to Poland. Only bilateral pacts are correct. He expressed himself in favor of establishing official representations between Poland and Ukraine and Belorussia.[16]

Towards the end Stalin returned back to the question of PPS. All were pressing [Osóbka] Morawski, and Stalin suggested to get Drobner out of the Committee. Bulganin claims that Drobner had allegedly spoke at a PKWN meeting against the militarization of railroads.

[Osóbka] Morawski defended Drobner and in that case Bierut noted that ideologically Drobner is departing from us. He also pointed out to a resolution of the PPS Executive Committee, calling on the PPS emigration to return to Poland.

With regard to Mikolajczyk, Stalin thinks that he has made concessions on the advice of Churchill, who would like to have his people in the Lublin government. Since the Soviet Union has evidence that Mikolajczyk has connections with terrorists in Poland, the Soviet Union will not allow Mikolajczyk to enter Poland as long as the Red Army is there.

The Drobner question has not been definitely decided, though Stalin was strongly pressing to send Drobner off even to Kiev as a PKWN representative.

During a ride in a car after the visit, [Osóbka] Morawski blew out at Bierut shouting, "You in your ranks have bandits and the "sanacja" people[17], so you clean up yourselves, not our party!" An unpleasant exchange followed and Bierut left without saying a good-bye to [Osóbka] Morawski.

Done by: Wiesław

Source: Protokoły posiedzeń Biura Politycznego KC PPR 1944-1945, edited by A. Kochański, pp. 71 -77.

Translated by Jan Chowaniec.

Minutes from a Meeting of the Military Division of the CC PPR Relating to Information Provided by Gen. Rola-Żymierski from his Talks with Stalin on Personnel Policy in the Military, Lublin, December 18, 1944
Strictly secret

Participants at the meeting were comrades: Wiesław, Tomasz, gen. Rola, gen. Zawadzki, gen. Świerczewski, Jakub, Mine and Marek.

The agenda:

1. Report by gen. Rola from a visit to Moscow.
2. The question of transfer of com. Marek.
3. Exposé by gen. Rola at a meeting of the KRN.
4. Decorations for January 1st.
5. Salaries for political officers of the Polish Army.
6. Miscellaneous.

Before the agenda was adopted there had evolved a longer discussion on the tactics of the A.K., [whose symptom is] the reporting of Lis[18] to the Security Department and his new proposals submitted to gen. Rola for cooperation.

Com. Wiesław familiarized the gathering with a declaration of AK in the Krasnostaw county and with the content of an "understanding" reached between the AK command for Krasnostaw and "representatives of PKWN", regarding the AK coming into the open and enlisting itself into the Polish Army.

The guidelines for the party towards the new policy of AK have been laid down as follows:

1. Use such tactics as to take over AK weapons and to obtain addresses of all AK members, particularly those of the officers.
2. Do not admit them to the Polish Army and isolate those that have been mobilized.
3. Those guilty of fraternal murders bring up to the courts.

Ad. 1. Gen. Rola informs that the chief of staff of the Red Army, gen. Antonov, has communicated to him that Berling is charging him of supporting AK elements in the Polish Army. This charge is the continuation of a provocative activity of Berling.

In his conversation with Stalin gen. Rola presented to him the situation in the Polish Army as follows:

1. A danger from the AK in the Polish Army has been essentially eliminated. For AK activity, desertion, for organizing hostile and spying activity in the military, military courts during the months of October and November passed sentences to about 500 people, of which about 170 were sentenced to death.
2. The Polish Army is experiencing a severe shortage of automobiles and tanks, and the promised 2000 automobiles have not been delivered so far.
3. The Main Staff of the Polish Armed Forces doesn't have a chief of staff.
4. [Gen. Rola] has intervened with Stalin for the formation of a Polish Front.

With regard to the automobiles he has received assurance that 2000 of them will be delivered by the end of December, and in January another one thousand. The question of tanks looks bad. Probably we won't get them, as even the Red Army is having a shortage of tanks.

Regarding the formation of a Polish Front Stalin was speaking skeptically. Gen. Rola felt that Stalin apparently doesn't agree to the formation of the Polish Front. The reason - the lack of technical means. From the 2nd Polish Army all munitions were taken for the I Belorussian Front. There may also be changes in operational plans, but there may also be a sense of uncertainty regarding the Polish forces.

On the question of a chief of staff Stalin proposed to transfer Korczyc from the 1st Army and make him the chief of staff. Make gen. Popławski commander of the 1st Army and gen. Świerczewski commander of the 2nd Army.

As far as the expansion of Polish armed forces is concerned, gen Rola got an impression there may arise great difficulties due to provision shortages.

From conversation with Bulganin and his instructions it looks that he is now a superior to the chief of staff of the Red Army. In Bulganin we find a very good friend of Poland.

In addition gen. Rola informs that Stalin was in favor of separating the Militia from the Security services in the sense that they must be separate organizations and pointed out to the need for Militia wearing different uniforms than the military.

In accordance with Stalin's proposals the [Military] Division has decided:

- a) transfer gen. Korczyc to the position of chief of staff of the Polish Army,
- b) transfer gen Popławski to the position of commander of the 1st Army,
- c) to nominate gen. Świerczewski commander of the 2nd Army.

Ad. 2. Com. Marek submits a motion to take final decisions regarding his work and to set the date for his transfer to the Army.

It has been decided that the question of transferring com. Marek to the military, consistent with a resolution of the Party CC, should be positively settled in the beginning of January.

Ad. 3. The guidelines for an expose of gen. Rola for a KRN meeting have been discussed and gen. Rola was obliged to work out the text of the expose by 24 December.

Ad. 4. With regard to decorations in connection with the first anniversary of the creation of KRN and setting up the Provisional Government it has been decided that:

About 1,000 people should be awarded, among them about 600 with a Grunwald Cross, 100 with an Order of Poland's Rebirth and 300 with a Cross of Merit. Assign 400 Grunwald Crosses for the country and about 200 for the ZPP (Union of Polish Patriots).

Com. Marek is made responsible for preparing a list of candidates for rewards from the AL (People's Army) and independence activity from the occupation period.

The lists should be ready by December 25, 1944.

The distribution list for the Orders of Rebirth of Poland and Crosses of Merit was decided as follows: PKWN - 50 pieces, the Lublin voivodship - 50, Rzeszów voivodship -

50, Białystok voivodship - 30, Warsaw voivodship - 30, Kielce voivodship - 20, the city of

Lublin - 50, Praga - 70, city of Rzeszów - 20, city of Białystok - 30.

Ad. 5. On the question of salaries for political officers it has been decided that they should be equal to the salaries of fighting officers. Regular posts for political officers have to be equal to the deputy fighting officers in the particular military services. Other matters relating to political-educational work in the Polish Army have been postponed till the next meeting.

Ad. 6. It was decided to return an automobile left by major Wrzos for the disposal of the CC PPR to its rightful owner, i.e. the military recruitment office in Lublin, and gen Rola took it upon himself to give to the CC PPR one Willis automobile.

Done by: Wiesław

AAA, O/VI. 295-VII/25 I, pp. 1-4.

[1] A delegation of KRN and PK WN was in Moscow from 6 to 14 December 1944. See the previous minutes.

[2] Boleslaw Drobner (1883-1968) - then chairman of the Main Council of PPS, chief of the Department of Health and Welfare of PKWN.

[3] Reference here is of a positive attitude to the idea of forming a Union of Peasants' Self-Assistance, set up at the Peasants' Congress in Lublin on December 30-31, 1944.

[4] Georgii M. Malenkov (1902- 1988) - at the time associate member of Politburo and VKP(b) CC Secretary, deputy chairman of the State Committee for Defense of the

USSR.

[5] A Temporary National Government under the leadership of Bella Miklos was formed in Debrechin on December 22, 1944, with the participation of the Smallholders Party, the Communist Party, the Hungarian Social- Democratic Party and the National Peasant Party.

[6] See a circular by the CC PPR of November 22, 1944 relating to a draft of volunteers to the Polish Army. PPR, Rezolucje, odezwy, instrukcje i okólniki KC, VIII 1944-XII 1945, Warszawa 1959, p. 83-85.

[7] Talk is here of Alexander J. Korneichuk (1905-1972), a Soviet writer.

[8] For an account of W. Wasilewska of this conversation see Archiwum Ruchu Robotniczego. Vol. VII, Warszawa 1982, p. 418.

[9] Roger Garreau (born 1891) - the plenipotentiary of the French Government in Moscow. He was not a general, but professional diplomat.

[10] For a communiqué on the exchange of representations see "Rzeczpospolita" 27 Dec. 1944, No. 141, p. 1.

[11] According to an account of de Gaulle, he had not given any concessions to the Soviet side. The pact had been signed when de Gaulle threatened to leave Moscow without signing it. See Ch. De Gaulle: War memoirs, Vol. III. Warsaw 1968, p. 336-341.

[12] Władysław Korczyc (1893-1966) - then a Major-General, commander of the 1 Polish Army, was made chief of staff of the Polish Army on December 22, 1944.

[13] Stanisław Popławski (1902- 1973) - then a Major-General, commander of the 2nd Polish Army.

[14] Consistent with an order of December 19, 1944, S. Popławski and K. Korczyc took over their positions on December 22, 1944.

[15] Concluded on 12 December 1943.

[16] No such representations have been set up.

[17] Translator's note - "sanacja" people refers to Piłsudski's followers after 1926.

[18] Reference is probably made to second lieutenant Edward Michowski during the occupation a commander of a partisan unit of the Peasant Battalions (BCh) in the Lublin region.