

June 6, 1946

**Record of the Conversation of Comrade I.V. Stalin
with Rasmussen, Denmark Minister of Foreign
Affairs, and Prince Axel, Chief of the [Danish] Trade
Delegation**

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Summary:

Stalin, Rasmussen, and Axel discuss the development of Soviet Danish relations. Topics include economic and political exchanges.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Record of the Conversation of Comrade I.V. Stalin with Rasmussen, Denmark Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Prince Axel, Chief of the [Danish] Trade Delegation

Secret

6 June, 1946 9:00 PM

Present: V.M. Molotov, V.N. Pavlov (USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Axel declares that, first of all, he would like to express his condolences to Generalissimo Stalin concerning the death of M.L. Kalinin, one of the greatest Russians.

Comrade Stalin thanks him.

Comrade Stalin asks if Axel and Rasmussen were able to have a look around Moscow, and if they liked it.

Axel answers that he was able to see a little bit of Moscow, in particular various museum collections. He, Axel, is in Moscow for the first time.

Comrade Stalin says that he was in Copenhagen in 1906, and that Copenhagen is a beautiful and nice city.

Rasmussen expresses the hope that Stalin will once again be in Copenhagen sometime.

Comrade Stalin says that he would like to travel, but that his affairs do not permit him to do this.

Axel declares that he believes that Generalissimo Stalin would receive as good a welcome in Copenhagen as the Danish delegation enjoyed in Moscow.

Axel says the Danish delegation is very satisfied with the progress of the trade negotiations in Moscow.

Comrade Stalin remarks that this is quite good.

Axel says that he hopes that the trade agreements will be structured for mutual interests.

Comrade Stalin says that this is the only way that firm trade links can be forged between both countries.

Comrade Molotov says that now, after the war is over, it is possible to develop widespread trade relations, and that no one can hinder this.

Axel notes that, possibly, the volume of Danish trade with the Soviet Union appears small to [the USSR, while] for Denmark [this volume] is quite large.

Rasmussen notes that before the war the per capita trade turnover between Denmark and other countries was quite substantial. One of the difficulties [experienced by]

Denmark is that it possesses no metal or coal. Nevertheless, Denmark was able to create a quite considerable machine-building industry.

Comrade Stalin notes that if there is meat, fat, and fish, there will be metal, [and] metal will come of its own.

Axel says that bacon is better than money.

Comrade Stalin remarks that bacon is gold.

Comrade Stalin asks whether Denmark maintained extensive trade ties with Germany before the war.

Rasmussen answers that before the war Denmark traded mainly with Germany and Great Britain.

Axel says that Denmark had economic ties with almost all countries. Denmark, in particular, had substantial economic interests in Siam.

Rasmussen says that trade relations between Denmark and the USSR before the war were not as extensive as they should have been.

Comrade Stalin says that now the Soviet Union can maintain parity in trade relations with Denmark [lit. "has the possibility to maintain an equivalent in trade relations with Denmark"]. Before the war there were fewer possibilities for this, but now they will increase.

Axel says that this will be good.

Rasmussen remarks that Denmark is a country with a mechanized agricultural [sector] .

Comrade Stalin says that Denmark is a developed country; that it was, relative to, say, Albania, wealthy, and that it can once again become wealthy.

Comrade Stalin asks if Denmark had economic ties with Sweden.

Rasmussen answers that Denmark traded and [continues to] trade with Sweden, but not to the same degree as with larger countries, since Sweden doesn't need Danish agricultural products. But Denmark builds ships for Sweden and Norway in its shipyards.

Comrade Stalin asks if Denmark builds only civilian ships or if it also builds warships.

Axel answers that Denmark only builds merchant ships for other countries. It only builds warships for itself.

Comrade Stalin remarks that in the past, Denmark had a sufficiently large war fleet.

Rasmussen says that Denmark still has a relatively large merchant fleet, but that it incurred major losses during the war.

Comrade Stalin asks if Denmark's allies returned the Danish fleet that they borrowed [lit. "used"] during the war.

Axel answers that the Allies returned Denmark's fleet, paid for its use, and compensated [Denmark] for its losses. But during the war, Axel says, Denmark succeeded in building several merchant ships. True, their construction was not finished during the German occupation, since the Danish did not want the Germans to utilize these ships.

Comrade Stalin asks if Denmark needs orders for ships from abroad.

Axel answers that Denmark needs such orders, but that it cannot accept them within the next two years.

Rasmussen says that before the war Denmark built ships for Poland and Rumania.

Comrade Stalin asks whether Denmark maintains economic ties with Poland.

Rasmussen answers that Denmark has resumed economic [relations] with Poland, from which it obtains coal. However, economic ties with Poland are still not sufficiently broad.

Comrade Stalin asks if Axel and Rasmussen are convinced that the trade negotiations in Moscow between Denmark and the Soviet Union concluded on a good note [lit. "well"] and will yield results.

Axel answers that the Danish delegation optimistically assesses the negotiations and is trying to do everything possible so that they will be successful. In truth, there were times [lit. "cases"] when the Soviet side asked for more that Denmark is in a position to provide.

Comrade Stalin says that it would be good if the negotiations conclude successfully and asks what are the hindrances to successful trade between Denmark and the Soviet Union.

Axel says that Denmark is a factory in which on one end raw material is received, and from which manufactured products, for example, bacon, come out on the other end. The success of Soviet-Danish trade depends upon the quantity of raw material that Denmark can obtain.

Comrade Stalin asks if the trade obligations that Denmark accepted from England hinder free action.

Rasmussen says that it stands to reason that all obligations limit free action.

Comrade Stalin agrees with this and asks if, however, Denmark has reserves [of raw materials].

Axel answers that Denmark has reserves, but that it is in need of raw materials.

Comrade Stalin asks exactly which raw materials does Denmark need.

Rasmussen answers that Denmark needs oil-cakes and barley more than anything.

Axel says that in the summer of the previous year Denmark was free of all trade obligations, but the Soviet Union was not prepared to renew trade with Denmark then.

Rasmussen expresses the hope that trade linkages between Denmark and the Soviet Union will develop.

Axel says that the Soviet trade organs consider that Denmark needs fewer raw materials than it requires.

Comrade Stalin says that Denmark of course, must judge for itself concerning this.

Axel says that if the Soviet side entirely will fulfill the Danish demand for raw materials, Denmark promises to hand over to the Soviet Union all excess product that can be obtained through processing these raw materials.

Comrade Stalin asks how much oil-cake Denmark needs.

Rasmussen answers that before the war Denmark imported from 600,000 to 700,000 tons of oil-cake. Now certain countries have promised to deliver oil-cakes to Denmark, and Denmark has already obtained 150,000 tons of oil-cake. However, this quantity is insufficient to raise Denmark's agricultural production to a normal level.

Axel says that during the war Denmark did not have the opportunity to import chemical fertilizer from abroad.

Comrade Stalin asks if Denmark needs apatite [a mineral].

Axel and Rasmussen answer in the affirmative.

Comrade Stalin says that the Soviet Union might be able to deliver a certain quantity of apatite. However, the Soviet Union cannot in the next two to three years deliver a considerable quantity of oil-cakes and barley to Denmark. It is necessary, says Comrade Stalin, to foresee the development of Danish-Soviet trade over an extended period, so that both sides can count upon one another.

Rasmussen answers that this viewpoint coincides with [that] of the Danish government.

Comrade Stalin asks if there are Allied military forces in Denmark.

Rasmussen answers that there is still a British force of 500 to 600 men in Denmark. But Denmark has asked the British government to leave a certain number of British military personnel to teach the Danish how to use modern weaponry and radio communications. When the instruction is finished, the British troops will depart from Denmark.

Comrade Stalin asks if the British troops are fed at England's expense.

Rasmussen answers that until November of 1945 the Danish government supplied the British forces with food, but now the English troops live at their own expense.

Rasmussen says that, unfortunately, there are still very many interned Germans from

among the civilian population. He, Rasmussen, spoke about this subject with Molotov. The number of German internees reaches 200,000 people.

Comrade Stalin asks didn't England hand over German prisoners of war to Denmark.

Rasmussen answers that England did not hand over any prisoners of war to Denmark, with the exception of certain Germans of Danish descent.

Comrade Stalin asks who is feeding these German internees in Denmark.

Rasmussen answers that the Danish government is feeding the German internees, spending from 200 to 230 million crowns per year on this.

Comrade Stalin asks if these German internees are of any sort of benefit to Denmark.

Axel and Rasmussen answer in the negative.

Comrade Stalin remarks that, therefore, the Danish government would be happy to be rid [lit. "free"] of these Germans, but, apparently, the matter is that Germany doesn't accept them. Meanwhile, around 2.5 million Germans have gone to Germany from Czechoslovakia and even more from Poland.

Rasmussen says that the Danish government would very much like to follow the example of the Czechoslovakian and Polish governments in this respect. The Danish government pays up to two-fifths of its pre-war budget for these Germans.

Comrade Stalin says that if these German internees were free in Germany, they could provide for themselves better.

Rasmussen says that, of course, it would be better if these Germans were in Germany. The Danish government has addressed the Control Council concerning this matter and, quite recently, the governments of the Soviet Union and United States as well. As regards England, the Danish government conducted negotiations with the English government in this regard.

The English answered that the British zone is overcrowded with German refugees and that they cannot receive German internees from Denmark [typo - original reads "from Germany"] into their zone. A considerable portion of these German internees come from the eastern districts of Germany.

Comrade Stalin says that he thinks that the Soviet [government] could accept half of the German internees from Denmark into the Soviet zone of occupation, under the condition, of course, that the other Allies accept the other half [of the internees] into their zones [of occupation] .

Axel and Rasmussen say that this would be wonderful.

Comrade Stalin says that the democratic parties of Germany are probably interested in taking these Germans to Germany.

Comrade Stalin asks whether these Germans have attempted to flee Denmark for Germany.

Rasmussen answers that the Danish government is feeding them well and, in view of the unattractive conditions in Germany, there has not been a noticeable desire among the interned Germans to flee for Germany.

Comrade Stalin asks how long the Danish government will feed these Germans.

Rasmussen answers probably for as long as the Danish government doesn't suffer a financial collapse.

Comrade Stalin says that, possibly, in the future Germany will have to compensate the Danish government for the upkeep of these Germans.

Rasmussen says that he doesn't know if Germany will be able to do this.

Comrade Stalin says that there can be no doubt of this. Germany will get on its feet. The Germans are a capable and labor-loving people. During the war they invested all of their energy into war. But if they were to put one-tenth of the energy that they expended on the war into the restoration of the economy, then Germany will be quickly rehabilitated.

Comrade Stalin says that, of course, the upkeep of the interned Germans is a heavy burden on Denmark. Poland and Czechoslovakia, says Comrade Stalin, put the Germans in such a condition that, because of their hunger, [they] were ready to flee these countries in all directions.

Rasmussen says that, since Comrade Stalin has paid so much attention to the question of the Germans interned in Denmark, he, Rasmussen, will permit himself to mention other German refugees in areas situated south of the Danish border, outside of Denmark. Nevertheless, the presence of these German refugees arriving there from the eastern districts of Germany is a danger to Denmark. He, Rasmussen, is speaking of South Schleswig. The number of German refugees presently reaches 350,000, that is as many as the native [Danish] population. The Danish government has discussed the matter of removing these German refugees from South Schleswig with the British government over an extended period, but it has produced no results.

Comrade Stalin remarks that therefore this is a matter concerning German territory.

Axel says that this territory has belonged to Germany since 1864.

Comrade Stalin says that it is now as if Denmark is making claims on this territory.

Rasmussen declares that after the Versailles Treaty there was a plebiscite in the northern portion of Schleswig, as a result of which North Schleswig was transferred to Denmark. But in the southern portion of Schleswig there is a Danish minority, and for this reason Denmark is interested in this part of Germany.

Comrade Stalin says that is it too bad that there is no government in Germany. If there was a government there, then it would be possible to settle this matter.

Axel and Rasmussen thank Comrade Stalin for receiving them.

Comrade Stalin thanks Axel and Rasmussen for the conversation, which was for him, Comrade Stalin, beneficial.

Recorded by V. Pavlov (signature).