

April 01, 1964
Record of Conversation between Former Ambassador to Poland Wang Bingnan and Władysław Gomułka

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Summary:

Wang Bingnan and Władysław Gomułka discuss the Sino-Soviet split.

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**Record of Conversation between Former Ambassador to Poland Wang Bingnan and
[Władysław] Gomułka**

Chinese Side: Ambassador Wang

Polish Side: Gomułka

Time: 7 April 1964

Location: Party Central Committee

Translator/Recorder: Gao Peiyu

A month and a half ago, [Polish communist leader Władysław] Gomułka received [Wang Bingnan] me for a meeting. Afterward, I announced Comrade Gomułka's ideas to the CCP Central Committee; the party paid great attention to these ideas. On 29 February, the Central Committee sent a letter to the Soviet Central Committee, responding to their letter of 29 November of last year. This was as Gomułka had wished. In the letter, the Party brought up four recommendations connected to ending the open discussion of military action. Later on, the representative committee from the Romanian Communist Party visited Beijing, and their views were basically in line with those of Gomułka. After a consultation, the CCP General Secretary, Comrade Deng Xiaoping, introduced himself to the Polish ambassador to China, Comrade [Jerzy] Knote, with an eye toward later communications. The party expressed appreciation for some of Comrade Gomułka's ideas, for example the idea to develop relations between the two countries and parties. Moreover it responded in the affirmative that our party had some aspirations as well. In our party's letter of 29 February in reply to the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, we brought up the list of more than 50 brother nations who had attacked our party. We do not know if Gomułka noticed, but some parties were not mentioned, including the Polish Communist Party and the Romanian Communist Party.

I had come today to say my goodbyes. During my time in Poland, I had met with Gomułka on several occasions, which had all been helpful to me. Under Comrade Gomułka's leadership, relations between our two countries and parties are presently developing. I give thanks for your help in my work. In our previous meeting, Gomułka had brought up Polish people's friendliness toward the Chinese people. I have been a witness to this for nine years. I can also guarantee to you that the Chinese people also have an enormous bond and a deep friendship with the people of Poland. This is the outcome of the friendly policies implemented by both parties.

"I agree with the ambassador's remarks on the situation of our past discussion," said Gomułka. "Ambassador Knote has already sent me Comrade Deng Xiaoping's remarks toward from last time, as well as the general situation of his remarks. I already know the contents of the CCP Central Committee's response of 29 February to the Soviet Communist Party's letter of 29 November, which was sent to me by the ambassador. I also know that the Soviet Communist Party has recommended that I meet immediately with the CCP, and to prepare to hold an international meeting of communist party representatives. But now the situation has changed, for which we can only express our deep regrets. The diligence of our efforts connected with ending the open discussion of military action has not achieved results. After our last discussion, the CCP published another new document attacking the Soviet Communist Party. Recently, the Soviet Union has put out [Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Soviet Union Mikhail] Suslov's announcement, again sparking argument. We are very worried about this situation; we do not know

where it will lead. Without a doubt, this argument will weaken the international communist movement. All of socialism's enemies, along with imperialism, will use this to their advantage. It will weaken socialism's infantry, [including] us, all nations. Now there is a question raised before communist party members, workers, and members of the working class: to wit, what is socialism? This word 'socialism' originally represented brotherhood, friendly sharing and cooperation. Now, two large states are not only engaging in an argument, but a political argument. It is hard to reckon what the outcome will be.

"I often come across this saying of the CCP's, that it did not start the argument. I do not wish to go into details here, or to say that the Soviet Communist Party has never made a mistake. But in recent times, the Soviet Communist Party has expressed decent aspirations. They desperately seek an end to open discussion of military action. CCP documents that attack the Soviet Communist Party indeed take a hostile tone. The CCP believes that there are advantages to openly discussing military action now and that they should continue their struggle. We have great difficulty agreeing with this point. If the arguments are carried out with civility, in that case there might still be room for agreement. But that course has long since been abandoned. Both sides make their arguments on impermissible grounds. I do not know you have noticed, Comrade Ambassador, but yesterday when we published the abstract of Suslov's announcement, we deleted those sharp and unnecessary words, phrases and criticisms. I must express that I do not understand why the CCP brought up those dishonest and impermissible allegations, such as saying that the Soviet Union and imperialism were colluding against China the power of people's liberation, saying that capitalism had been restored to the Soviet Union. Nobody could seriously respond to these views. For the CCP to make such ridiculous allegations against the Soviet Communist Party was a serious mistake. That capitalism would be restored in the Soviet Union is inconceivable and not worthy of debate.

"Then as now, we wish to distance ourselves as much as possible from this argument. We do not participate in these arguments, as we have always believed that they could only do us harm. For many years, this has been our attitude on a whole score of issues. This present climate has made it necessary for us to express our position.

"In our last discussion I explained to the Ambassador that, as the comrades in the CCP Central Committee know, we disagree with the CCP on a series of points, particularly the 'Twenty Major Criticisms of the Soviet Union.' The Soviet Communist Party certainly did not compel us to accept twenty major pronouncements—this is how our party felt then as now. In addition, as far as an understanding of peaceful coexistence, our party is in accord with the Soviet Communist Party—the CCP may well have other views, in which case they could debate matters calmly and in a comradely fashion. Under complicated circumstances, an appropriate strategy could be formulated. But this can only be done by internal, calm debate. These present tactics do not work.

"Now the CCP has brought these recent ultimatum-like conditions against the Soviet Communist Party, the Party's only option for stopping the argument was to denounce those 20 or 22 positions. This is unreal—not only does it involve the Soviet Communist Party, but also other parties who have had to accept these conditions. These demands and policies of the CCP's can only lead directly to fragmentation.

"Due to all of the above reasons, our party is compelled to express make our position clear yet again, even though we are extremely opposed to a completely open argument.

"We are the kind of people that communist parties need, the kind that is satisfied with both China's internal infrastructure and its international successes. If the People's Republic of China supports the struggles of people from other nations to achieve victory, we believe that this is a victory for all of us. This is our opinion—past, present and future. The domestic and international achievements of the Soviet Communist Party and all socialist countries are also, we believe, all of our achievements. These achievements can strengthen our struggle against imperialism, making us more powerful. But the kind of mutual vilification and unacceptable behavior can only weaken all

of those states, including Poland, and bring positive benefits to imperialism and our enemies. Therefore, we find it very hard to agree with the arguments contained in the CCP's letter, as does our party. We believe that in the past, it was a wicked thing to openly debate the past; now, it is acceptable. In the past, it was not good to argue out in the open; it is still not good to do so. It is my deep belief that the CCP Central Committee is in error on this point. This is not a good thing, but a wicked thing.

"As for relations between the People's Republic of Poland and the People's Republic of China, between the Polish people and the Chinese people, and between the Polish Communist Party and the CCP, I still believe that these are normal and brotherly. I do not believe that there is anything obstructing these types of relations. Although the situations are complicated, and the argumentation is hot, we support these relations, as communists should within the socialist and internationalist sphere.

"I must thank the Ambassador for all that this comrade has done to strengthen friendship between the peoples of Poland and China. We have diligently performed our duty to express our appreciation. Although the situation is complicated, the Ambassador has not created any trouble. We have also avoided making things more troublesome to the best of our ability. Even though in the past there has been some interference, we have not paid it any mind. We are satisfied with the Ambassador efforts and behavior in this regard. We wish you success in your new post. We hope that the Ambassador will still remember our country after his return, and that soon he will become a defender of the strengthening of the two countries' friendship."

"We are all longtime party members," the Ambassador said. "There are two things that we had never imagined in the past: 1) That after seizing power, nation-building would not be an easy task for the proletariat. This is an arduous and complex task. 2) We originally thought that communists the world over were also internationalists. We never thought that an abnormal situation like the present one would emerge.

"First of all, concerning argumentation, our party has expressed more than once that we were opposed to open argumentation. Second of all, concerning the relations between brother parties, we have always advocated the pursuit of comradely cooperation, but the Soviet Communist Party has summarily neglected this reasoning. Third of all, if Comrade Gomułka looked closely at the Soviet documents, he would see that their language is absolutely not comradely in nature, but rather consists of innumerable malicious attacks. They were the ones to foment open argumentation, so they should be the ones to find a fair and reasonable solution. Lastly, Comrade Gomułka in his conversation touched on other issues. The reply we sent to the Soviet Communist Party on 29 February, along with Deng Xiaoping's conversation with Ambassador Knot, clearly expressed our party's position relative to these issues. As far as whether the present argument is a good thing or a bad thing, actual practice will determine the proof.

"I thank Comrade Gomułka for his criticism of my work. It is rare for one to remain at a position for nine years. Since our countries' peoples share many common points in their histories, it has been easy for us to understand each other. As I leave Poland, I feel friendly sentiments and a pleasant impression. As for Comrade Gomułka's wish that I will continue to strive as a protector of friendliness between the peoples of Poland and China, that can hardly be doubted."

As he approached the moment of the handshake, Gomułka said: "Please forward my proletarian respects to Comrade Mao Zedong, Comrade Liu Shaoqi, and the CCP's other leaders. I hope the CCP will, to the fullest extent possible, give some consideration to my ideas. We are the protectors of harmony. Please help us, CCP!