

April 07, 1946

Bierut's Telephone Conversation with Stalin

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Summary:

Bierut and Stalin discuss the economic needs of post-war Poland in regards to grain and coal.
Internal Polish politics are also discussed.

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

- English Translation

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on 7 April 1946, at 6 p.m.

Stalin: I have been told that you wanted to talk with me yesterday?

Bierut: Yes, Comrade Stalin. I have sent to you [*ya pereslal na Vasheh imya*] a telegram relating to two matters very important for us.

Stalin: Please, tell me what are these matters.

Bierut: The first one – is our request to you to help us once again in overcoming our difficult food situation. We have a deficit of 300 tons of grain till the new crops. The UNRRA refuses to provide us the agreed quantities of grain. This refusal puts us in an exceptionally difficult situation. We have no choice, but to ask you for assistance.

Stalin: I understand you. How much grain would you like to receive and of what kind?

B.: We are short of 300 thousand tons. As far as the types are concerned, we will send you a specification [*zayavku*].

St.: You see, com. Bierut, I should explain to you what difficulties we have in meeting your demand. If your demand had come earlier, we would have been able to satisfy you fully. But a few days ago we made a commitment and concluded an agreement with France. French communists called on us with a request, as they have a difficult situation with supplies. The Americans and British don't want to give them; they are attempting to put pressure on them to force them to submission. The British don't have food for themselves. But they would like to undermine the present system in France. We have decided to give the French 500 thousand tons of grain to support them. That's why we have concluded an agreement with them. We are going to assist you too, but we may be having difficulties in meeting your request to that extent. We will try to give you up to 200 thousand tons. We are mainly short of wheat. Please specify for us what kind of grain you want. Perhaps when the situation clarifies itself in July we can give you more – we will add, but now we cannot commit ourselves.

B.: We are deeply grateful to you, com. Stalin for this assistance. The demand regarding specifications we are going to send right away.

St.: What to thank for? We consider it our duty to assist you. What is your other question?

B.: The second question relates to the supplies of our coal. We have calculated that we won't be able in the current year, i.e. till 1 April 1947 to supply you more than 9 million tons. But 113 of that quantity we would like to ship within the trade agreement, since we are unable to do without Soviet imports.

St.: Yes, Molotov told me about this. How much should you deliver till that date?

B.: According to the agreements we should deliver 12 million tons, but we won't be able to do this. Based on the norms of the present deliveries we can guarantee only 9 million tons.

St.: Well, if you cannot do more, we won't insist. But you have allegedly raised the question that we ship you products from Germany. Have you really made such demand?

B.: We presented the question of compensation for coal deliveries on the basis of an agreement from August 1945. We have in mind machinery, equipment and industrial goods from Germany – all what we can obtain at present as war reparations, because otherwise coal deliveries without the corresponding compensations would create a strenuous situation in our national economy.

St.: We will try to give it.

B.: I have one more thing, corn. Stalin. We need certain types of military equipment for the army. For example, rifle and artillery bullets.

St.: Bullets?

B.: Yes, shells and rifle bullets, some parts for the air force and other military equipment, which we are short of. Couldn't you extend us credit for imports of this equipment from the USSR, since we would not be able to pay for it now?

St.: Good. We will give you credit. Send in your order for what you need. Is it all?

B.: If you can spare for me a few more minutes, I would take advantage of it to inform you about our internal questions.

St.: Please, I will be glad to.

B.: So, we have decided to hold a referendum in June. All parties have supported this decision.

St.: Except for Mikołajczyk?

B.: No, Mikołajczyk has accepted too. He just insisted on earlier elections to the parliament. He would like to hold it in early fall, we are for mid- or late fall, but not later than November. His agreement with respect to the referendum can be explained by the fact that a policy of splitting the electoral bloc would cause discontent among the lower echelons and a break-up of smaller groups. As a matter of fact, for the time being these groups are not headed by outstanding leaders, with the exception of Upper Silesia, where Mikołajczyk's policies are being opposed by one of the more distinguished activists. In any case one can say that rather wide circles of the Mikołajczyk's party are dissatisfied with the break-up of the electoral bloc.

St.: In the lower echelons?

B.: Yes, in the last days there was a meeting of the Main Council of PPS. At that meeting a decision was taken on the question of relations with the Zulawski group. Based on an agreement concluded earlier between the PPS leadership and that group – 12 members of the Zulawski group were to be elected to the Main Council. Under our pressure the PPS leadership decided to reduce that number to 6, including also Zulawski. The latter one has refused and if he stands by this refusal, it would be an important step in the direction of cleansing the leadership bodies of PPS from the influence of right-wingers.

St.: Is your connection and relationship with the PPS strengthening or deteriorating?

B.: Undoubtedly, in the recent period they have strengthened in connection with our fight with the Mikołajczyk party.

St.: Well, it's very good. Thank you for your information. I wish you a success.