

October 1969

Polish-Soviet Talks in Moscow

Citation:

"Polish-Soviet Talks in Moscow", October 1969, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Andrzej Paczkowski, ed. Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR, 1956-1970. London: Aneks Publishers, 1996. Translated by Malgorzata K. Gnoinska.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/112581>

Summary:

Excerpts from Polish-Soviet talks that focus on the China question. Brezhnev posits that the Chinese were the source of ideological divergence, and more specifically that their attitude has progressed to anti-Sovietism and anti-communism. Included is a report from a meeting with Zhou Enlai, who in discussing Czechoslovakia said a "process of bourgeoisie transformation and corruption was taking place over there, which is normal for all of the socialist countries." He attributed the cultural revolution with cutting off the roots of corruption in China.

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

Polish-Soviet Talks in Moscow
October 1 -3, 1969

Secret
[Excerpts regarding China]

...

Brezhnev: China. You know the situation, especially as far as the issue of ideology is concerned. This happened a long time ago, we were not the source of these divergences. First, there were Mao Zedong's ideas, then "flowers," leaps, communes, and finally the pinnacle of it all - the "cultural revolution." All of this was bonded by anti-Sovietism, anti-communism, because they did not attack only our party, but others, as well. The ideological divergences have gone really far. It is difficult for us to think in a Chinese way, but there is one concern - the process of pigheadedness and some kind of an agitation. All of this transformed itself into anti-Sovietism. It is one thing when they write "Soviet revisionists," and it is another when they cause armed provocations on the border, do not accept documents, stop telephone communication, and break trade relations, and so on - all of this signifies that this is a problem at a state level. Our people saw this and we could not help but react in the press and by releasing a government statement on June 13 of this year.

At the plenum and the Moscow conference, we said that we were in favor of continuing the friendship with the Chinese people, with the communist party, and that we hoped that they will return to the principles of building socialism in China. On our side, and I am saying this officially, there was not a single case of provocation, not even a single soldier of ours crossed the border. Although the Chinese did so, they are still throwing accusations in our way.

We decided to pay respects to our friend Ho Chi Minh and to go to Hanoi in order to meet with a new leadership. There was also another reason - we didn't know whether Zou Enlai would come, but if he did come to the funeral, then we wanted to hear what he had to say. Our position: we will hold onto the principal course in order to regulate all fundamental matters. Kosygin will tell you all about his meeting. After various perturbations, the meeting finally took place. And, not in Hanoi, but in Beijing, and not on the way back, as Kosygin left from our territory. We assess this meeting as very useful and we think that such an action [move] was necessary.

Kosygin: After I received a letter expressing their consent to meet, I flew over to meet them. Zhou Enlai, members of the Politburo, deputy foreign minister, and several CC members waited for me, including the appropriate party apparatus member who took notes of our conversations. During the meeting, Zhou was externally very pleasant, he relayed greetings from Mao, as well as asked to pass on greetings for Brezhnev. He came to the meeting with a folder of papers. We were supposed to talk for three hours, but we talked for four. We did not want such talks during which we would reminisce about the past, but he repeatedly tried to throw in something harsh. We posed the issue in such a way, however, that our purpose was to broach three issues which concerned one main issue, that is, that of the border problem...The following aspect from the talks was particularly interesting: When Zhou Enlai was talking about Czechoslovakia, he said that a process of bourgeoisie transformation and corruption was taking place over there, which is normal for all of the socialist countries. I asked: How about your country? He replied: the cultural revolution is cutting all of the roots of corruption. I told him: "In the Soviet Union, we have special institutions, such as people's control, courts, etc. which are in charge of fighting corruption, and so on. Is "the cultural revolution" the only method of fighting corruption in China?" When I pressed him on this, he tried to explain his position with suicidal primitivism that the cultural revolution was unleashed to fight corruption! He was not able to defend his own arguments and continued to present the issue in such a way that he finally changed the topic. He did not try to exacerbate the

conversation. When it comes to Mao's health, he assured that everything was fine. I asked about Lin Biao, since we know him very little. He replied: this is a man who thinks like Mao. I am not sure how to interpret his reply - as an irony or whether he really says what he thinks.

...

Brezhnev: ...We realize that the ideological divergences will not be resolved. The Chinese are talking about 10 thousand years!

Kosygin: In our previous conversation, Mao told me that our divergences would last for 10 thousand years. I asked then whether we could not shorten this period. Now, Zhou Enlai is telling me that we can shorten it by half!

...