Polish-Soviet relations at the breakthrough of 1988 and 1989, in the context of the preparations for, and the deliberations and the consequences of, the Round Table

The article attempts to describe Polish-Soviet relationships in the first months of 1989 in the context of the preparations for, and the deliberations and consequences of the Round Table. It presents the genesis of the events in the USSR and in Poland which led to the PPR’s authorities’ talks with Solidarity, as well as mutual, Polish-Soviet relations from the election of Michail Gorbachev as the Soviet leader onward. The Soviet expert analyses of the events in Poland are described, as are the reactions of the representatives of the Soviet authorities to the decisions of the PPR leadership on undertaking negotiations with the opposition. The article also signals the assessments, on the part of the former, of the situation in Poland. It attempts to answer a query in respect of the state of the knowledge held by the Soviet decision-makers regarding the Polish opposition and the way USSR was perceived by the leading activists of Solidarność. An endeavour is made to describe Moscow’s reaction to both the course and the finale of the Round Table talks. The tactics of General Jaruzelski’s team, consisting in the frustration of potential attempts on the part of the Solidarność opposition to establish contact with the representatives of the USRR authorities are described and some publications regarding Poland which appeared in the Soviet Press are presented, as are some from the Polish opposition press on relations with the USSR.