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**From the Journal of A.I. Alekseyev, 'Record of a
Conversation with Fidel Castro Ruz, Prime Minister
of the Republic of Cuba, 25 March 1963'**

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Summary:

Fidel Castro reflects on inflammatory articles recently published by Claude Julien and responds to reports of delays in Cuban ports and a question regarding Soviet aircraft sales.

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from the journal of
A. I. ALEKSEYEV

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION

with Fidel CASTRO RUZ, Prime Minister
of the Republic of Cuba

25 March 1963

Fidel Castro came to me tonight at [my] apartment and talked with him about an hour and a half. At his own initiative he immediately touched on the question of the articles by Claude Julien which appeared in the French newspaper "Le Monde", and began to persuade me that the fabrications of the author were the most critical places in these articles. Castro said further how he had gotten to know Julien. He met him in an apartment at [Franca]'s, the editor of the newspaper Revolution. The latter introduced Julien as a friend of the Cuban revolution from Sartre's group. There were many other Cubans during the meeting at [Franca]'s, and [?in time? - so vremya - SIC] the conversation with those present was on the most varied subjects. Castro did not talk with Julien individually and did not give him any interview.

Castro said that he considers Julien a con man [prokhodimets] and an irresponsible person who attributed to him the thoughts of people like [Franca], possibly when he was doing so, basing [them] in some measure on his statements made at the beginning of the Caribbean Crisis. Julien does not know Spanish, and the translations were made to him from time to time, and therefore he clearly did not understand some statements or consciously distorted [them].

Castro said, during the meeting I told a joke of N. S. Khrushchev which Rodriguez brought from Moscow. The essence of the joke was that N. S. Khrushchev supposedly said that if he went to Havana himself, and not A. I. Mikoyan, he probably would not have quarreled with the Cubans once. Julien misrepresented these words and ascribed them to Castro himself.

Pursuing the goal of driving a wedge in Soviet-Cuban relations, Julien completely distorted Castro's words that he initially understood the matter such that the USSR, in sending missiles to Cuba, was proceeding first of all from the interests of defending the entire socialist camp, and not just the Cuban revolution; however, this misconception stayed with the Cubans even until the moment when A. I. Mikoyan arrived in Havana.

In his articles Julien left out all Castro's statements on the question of abstract art in which he supported N. S. Khrushchev's statement against the abstractionists in the USSR, and said that the ideology of the abstractionists is foreign to a socialist society and therefore only realistic art is taught in the art schools of Cuba, and explained that there is no need yet in Cuba to raise this problem in order not to alienate the part of the intelligentsia which inherited the disease of bourgeois society.

Castro said, the case with Julien shows that the petit bourgeoisie supporters of the Cuban revolution can cause it harm consciously or unconsciously. In striving to show

their originality and "independence" of views they deny the applicability to Cuba of the Marxist-Leninist positions common to all countries. Castro further stressed that all those who are trying to drive a wedge in the friendship between the Soviet Union and Cuba and to isolate Cuba from the socialist camp are enemies of the Cuban revolution, even if they also lavish praise on the Cuban leaders.

Castro asked that assurances of his sincere friendship be passed to N. S. Khrushchev and the Soviet leaders and to tell them that the articles of Julien are false.

I replied to Castro in order that he not worry about this inasmuch as our leaders are well familiar with the habits of the bourgeois press and never draw conclusions about their friends on the basis of the articles of bourgeois journalists. The fact that they didn't ask me from Moscow about the articles of Julien is evidence of this in particular.

Castro admitted that the case with Julien is another lesson for him which he ought to take into account for the future. He commented on [Franca] and his newspaper, *Revolution*, very sharply, saying that he will go to the editor's office right now to have a serious talk with him about his mistakes.

In the course of further conversation I passed Fidel Castro a report from Moscow [Tsent] about the delays of our and foreign ships in the ports of Cuba. Castro was surprised and tried to find out what Cuban organizations were guilty of this.

I told Fidel I wasn't familiar with the details of this matter, but most likely the delay in the processing of the ships is a consequence of the insufficient organization of the loading and unloading work, the lack of the necessary quantity of transport and warehouse accommodations, and the limited time of the stevedores' work. I asked him what kind of help our organizations could give in organizing the resolution of these questions.

Castro replied that he would take on the solution of this problem personally and try to correct the situation quickly since he understands all the damage which such a practice of unloading ships causes Cuba. He asked that he be informed in the future about all delays of ships which occur through the fault of the Cubans.

I presented Castro with a memorandum of Trade Representative Cde. Sakun about the delays of steamships in Cuban ports during the first two months of this year.

Then I touched on the question of the three IL-18 aircraft we sold Cuba, and asked Fidel how this question was finally solved, explaining when doing so that we will not object to any decision of the Cuban government inasmuch as if it considers it necessary to refuse the aircraft we can use them on our own [air]lines without damage.

In reply Castro characterized the letter of Minister of Transport O. Fernandez as irresponsible and childish behavior [vykhodka]. He said that he had given instructions to JUCEPLAN to look into this question and report to him about the results, and added that he personally favors the aircraft coming to Cuba, even in the event that permissions are not received for them to land from several capitalist countries. He noted, sooner or later Cuban pilots will have to switch to Soviet aircraft and therefore they ought to master the IL-18, even if this type of aircraft also does not meet all the necessary conditions for long-range flights. He said in conclusion that he would give a final answer after a detailed study of the question and familiarization with the opinions of the "supporters" and "opponents" of these aircraft; however, right now he already anticipates that the decision will be favorable.

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