

January 8, 1963

**Record of Conversation with Comrade Blas Roca in
the Building of the National Committee**

Citation:

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Summary:

Lösch and Cde. Blas Roca discuss the role of the Soviet Union and its actions in the Cuban crisis and their support of the Cuban revolutionary government.

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Translation - English

Record of Conversation with Comrade Blas Roca in the Building of the National Committee on ___1

I got together with Cde. Blas Roca at the building of the National Committee to pick up from him materials not yet delivered from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to use the opportunity to have a conversation with him. Cde. Blas Roca was very enthusiastic about his stay in the GDR and about the attention that had been paid to him and his wife, and he expressed thanks for the great help that the GDR had given him personally, and explained that he would convey his thanks personally in a letter to the Central Committee for the hospitality and assistance extended to them.

During our conversation he asked about our state relations, and after I recounted everything that had happened since his departure [from East Berlin to Prague] on the 3rd [of November 1962], he said it had been very impulsive and promised to take care of the matter immediately to settle it.

We then spoke about the Cuban [missile] crisis. Cde. Blas Roca told me that the main problem lies in the as yet unresolved question of why the Soviet Union in the letters from Cde. Khrushchev to Kennedy had offered international inspections, even though Cde. Fidel Castro had previously expressly rejected any international inspections on Cuban territory. This infringement of Cuban sovereignty is a source of concern for all the comrades. If this fact is not taken into account in all [future] actions, it could have a significant adverse impact on Cuba's role for developments in Latin America and potentially deal a blow to the revolutionary process in Latin America.

Cde. Blas Roca said that the [Anastas] Mikoyan visit [to Cuba in November 1962] had produced no satisfactory results for the Cuban National Committee and the Cuban government because he offered no explanation for the problem of why Khrushchev had offered inspections in his letters to Kennedy.² Cde. Blas Roca described how when he attended the party congresses in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy he had tried to receive such an explanation from the Soviet comrades who were present there, [Otto] Kuusinen and [Leonid] Brezhnev.³ These comrades had replied evasively, offering no explanation for Soviet behavior and implying that the Cuban friends overestimated the [revolutionary] process in Latin America.

Cde. Blas Roca said that the National Committee must no longer spend time on discussions of secondary problems, and he repeatedly came back to what he himself believed (and the other comrades even more so) was the main question to be clarified, namely, why the Soviet Union had offered no explanation for the procedure it had agreed to. Whether it was because of an error in diplomatic practice or because of time pressure or some other motives, they had a right to be informed by the Soviet comrades about it.

I had the impression that Cde. Blas Roca properly understands and evaluates the role of the Soviet Union in preserving the peace during those critical days. He did not criticize the removal of the missiles and [Il-28] bombers or link it to the question still outstanding. The damage that in his view has been done by the Soviet Union to [Cuba's] sovereignty is - both for him and for the other comrades - the one problem that must be satisfactorily explained by the Soviet Union to the Cuban side.

Berlin, 8 January 1963

□

Lösch [signed]

¹ Translator's Note: No date was filled in here, but the conversation seems to have taken place in mid- to late December 1962.

2 Translator's Note: This is referring to the visit by Anastas Mikoyan, a member of the Soviet Presidium and one of Nikita Khrushchev's closest aides, to Cuba on 3-26 November 1962 in an unsuccessful bid to mend relations between the two countries. Serious tension in the Soviet-Cuban alliance had emerged after the Soviet Union affirmed its willingness to permit international inspections of the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. For translations of Soviet transcripts and reports from Mikoyan's visit, along with a perceptive introduction by Vladislav M. Zubok, see CWIHP Bulletin, No. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 59, 89-109, 159. For a full Soviet record of Mikoyan's mission to Cuba, including exchanges both with the Cubans (and others in Havana) and with Khrushchev in Moscow, see Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Wilson Center Press, Stanford University Press, 2012).

3Translator's Note: The 8th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party was held on 8-14 November 1962; the 8th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party took place on 20-25 November 1962; and the 10th Congress of the Italian Communist Party was held on 2-8 December 1962.