

**April 13, 1964**  
**Note of Polish-Soviet Talks in Moscow on 13-15**  
**April 1964**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Excerpts from a Polish-Soviet talk in Moscow in April 1964 that are about the Cuban issue. Specifically, they are about each country's sugar trade values with Cuba.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

Polish

**Contents:**

Translation - English

## Secret of Special Significance

Participants from the Polish side: Comrade(s) Władysław Gomułka, Józef Cyrankiewicz, Zenon Kliszko, Stefan Jędrychowski, Adam Rapacki, Edmund Pszczółkowski, Roman Fidelski, Marian Dmochowski, Henryk Różański, Manfred Lachs and Tadeusz Findziński

Participants from the Soviet side: Comrades N. K. Khrushchev, A.N.Kosygin, A. I. Mikoyan, N. V. Podgorny, J. V. Andropov, M.A. Lesechko, P. F. Lomako, A.A.Gromyko, A B. Aristov, M.R. Kuzhmin, N.P. Fiurbin, and B. P. Miroshnichenko

[Excerpts regarding Cuba]

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Gomułka: How much sugar is Cuba going to provide?<sup>1</sup>

Khrushchev: The agreement amounts to 10 million tons annually.

Gomułka: Our people didn't believe it.

Khrushchev: I am not going to lie. I am not a Turk.

Jędrychowski: This is impossible.

Khrushchev: Don't say these things. Cuba possesses ideal conditions for sugar production. They want to have a monopoly [in this area]. Last year, [they sent] 2, 600 thousand [i.e., 2.6 million] tons of sugar. They are going to increase it gradually every year and by 1968 they will have provided 10 million [tons of sugar].

Gomułka: With my hand on my heart: I don't believe it.

Khrushchev: I trust Fidel's estimates. He came to us recently [in January 1964] as a totally different person. He was [like] the Flying Dutchman before.<sup>2</sup> He was even like that on 1 May, but now I was pleasantly surprised. He thinks practically and [sees] that his own people are being subjective. Some of our comrades also share your attitude, but I am of a different opinion. We proposed to him [Fidel] that we would increase the mechanization of sugarcane planting and harvesting. We designed a combine-harvester which works well.

Gomułka: [Ernesto Che] Guevara said that mechanization [of agriculture] does not always work under Cuban conditions. They ran out of workers and they were late with their harvest that was [to constitute sugar deliveries] to Chile.

Khrushchev: This is because they only had two such combine-harvesters for a trial period, but they will receive 500 [such machines from us] next year. The only thing, though, is that they need to be tested for one season and the Cubans do not want to wait. They are asking us to produce more such combine-harvesters according to the same model. They are also saying that they would not lodge any complaints towards us in the future if these machines don't work properly. [Sugarcane] is such a plant that easily submits to mechanization. Our machines are not complicated at all - [they are] planters. We even have machines that can plant forests. They have been technically tested fifteen years ago back in the Urals. Castro asked for such machines. We will continue to mechanize their agriculture. What we have left now is [to mechanize their] transport and sugar refineries. The production ability of their sugar refineries is higher. However, there has been a decrease in the production of

sugar. Until 1970, we will produce on our own 9 million tons of sugar for our own needs. Besides, we will receive sugar from Castro. He forced us to agree to accept yet 10 million tons at 6 cents per English pound. It is more expensive and we are going to incur losses, [but all of this is to] help Castro [See below, Khrushchev's letter to Gomułka regarding Soviet assistance to Cuba.]

Gomułka: Will you export that sugar?

Khrushchev: We cannot because we should not compete with Castro. If we decide to export that sugar, we will do so in our traditional markets. However, we will not go on the market as Castro's competitors. Sugar will cost us more than our own production, but the price will be more beneficial to the people. The several millions [that we will lose on] sugar are aimed at aiding the world revolution. He [Fidel] asked us to give him a permanent price, [but], these are temporary prices. [Fidel], however, counts on the fact that he will be able to maintain the prices at this level.

Gomułka: Other countries are developing their [sugar] production. Latin America is building [sugar] refineries, as is France, and so on.

Khrushchev: To be sure, we signed an agreement [with Cuba], but we will also develop our own production because, as the saying goes, you can count on God, but it is better to count on yourself. Castro told us that if we did not agree to these prices, then he did not know how he could show up back in Cuba.

Gomułka: I don't think that there is much danger of him providing you with the 10 million [tons of sugar which he promised].

Khrushchev: I believe that he will, because sugarcane is the kind of plant which easily submits to mechanization. The [Cuban] workers will make very good wages and they will cherish their professions.

Gomułka: But, the production of sugar in Cuba has been going down for the past three years now.

Khrushchev: You should not believe in what they are writing. This information is only for you. They are decreasing the numbers on purpose. The floods have not destroyed anything. Castro told me this himself. This year, they have carried out their obligations towards us very well. And, after all, this was the hardest year. Castro is buying ready[-to-use] production from America and Japan. The Cuban issue is the issue of sugar. I counted on our Kuban.<sup>3</sup> I thought that it was going to provide us with sugar.

Gomułka: When it comes to sugar, there is never enough of it.

Khrushchev: We have 25 sugar refineries. We get a lot of sugar [from them]. I would do things differently. I would build [refineries] in Siberia. And I would leave the Kuban lands for growing wheat. We get 300-400 quintals of sugar. Even if we were to get between 200 to 150 of Siberian sugar, then we would not have to transport it. Kuban is a wheat country. There isn't a better region to grow wheat than Kuban. Maybe we will change machines in the sugar refineries in Kuban...

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[1] Fidel Castro unexpectedly came to Moscow in mid-January 1964 and extended the [Soviet-Cuban] agreement regarding sugar deliveries.

[2] A legendary ghost ship that can never make port, doomed to sail the oceans

forever. It probably originates from 17th-century nautical folklore.

[3] Kuban is a geographic region of Southern Russia on the Black Sea between the Don Steppe, Volga Delta, and the Caucasus.