

June 13, 1962

Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 13 June 1962

Citation:

"Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 13 June 1962", June 13, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University). <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/115749>

Summary:

Rapacki reports on a meeting with the ORI [Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas], including: Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, [President Osvaldo] Dorticos [Torrado], Blas Roca, [and Emilio] Aragonés [Navarro]. They discussed general issues of coordinating sugar trade, agricultural policy, policies toward the church, diplomatic visits, and the most current topic of the Escalante affair.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

Ciphergam No. 8822

Dispatched from Havana on 06.13.1962 at 22:20 and received at 06.14 at 04:53

Came to the Decoding Department at 06.14 at 10:00

To: [First Secretary of Polish United Workers' Party Wladyslaw] GOMULKA, Immediate, Eyes Only

From: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

[This report is based on] the meeting with the Secretariat of ORI [Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas].¹ [The following] were present: Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, [President Osvaldo] Dorticos [Torrado], Blas Roca, [and Emilio] Aragones [Navarro]. [Che] Guevara is out of town.

In the manner of warmhearted honesty, [Fidel] Castro complained about a certain [level of] cooling in our mutual relations. He thinks that we do not appreciate the specificity [of] their [situation]. He expressed his warmest wishes to strengthen [our] contacts. I thanked him for his honesty and said that indeed we also sensed their cool attitude towards us. I did my best to explain things (given that I had no concrete facts). I agreed that our relations should be strengthened so we can get to know each other better.

He broached the general issues of coordinating sugar trade and very extensive plans to expand the[ir] fishing industry. I said that I would look into the possibilities of offering our assistance, especially in the area of providing specialists. He was interested in the details of our policy toward the church.

He talked about their agricultural policy: at the moment the most important thing is production, the pacification of rich peasants, they are carrying out collectivization progressively, but very carefully; state farms are buying out lands in exchange for old-age pensions. They are also sporadically organizing their cooperatives. I have presented briefly our own experience in this area.

[Questions like] "Can and should the party replace the state apparatus" were [clearly] the allusions to the most current topic of the Escalante affair² [which is on their minds]. I presented our experience, which confirmed Castro's position and that of a non-dogmatic faction of the former Communist Party.

While saying goodbye, I also reiterated that I hoped that the situation in Cuba would improve in the near future and that he [Fidel Castro] will be able to take advantage of your [Gomulka's] invitation to Poland.

We established that we would only have a short mention in the press [of our visit to Cuba]. After a few hours, Blas Roca (a former member of the Communist Party) arrived and presented the content of their communique to be included in the press. We will send the text via claris through the Polish Press Agency; here are our observations based on the knowledge we acquired here:

They are using our experience³ as an example [in resolving] the conflict with the proponents of Escalante.

The pacification of the peasantry [is taking place in Cuba].

They are publicly emphasizing the rapprochement with our party as the most palatable [lit. "digestable"], especially in Latin America.

I did not think that it was necessary to introduce any corrections to their text, which was, after all, treated as "unilateral" information for the press. They are releasing it immediately. I think that we should also publish it extensively. I am sending my proposition via PAP [Polish Press Agency].

Received by: [...]4

[1] This political group was formed in July 1961. The group consolidated the 26 July Movement of Fidel Castro, the Socialist Party of Blas Roca, and the Revolutionary Directorate of March 13 of Faure Chomon. The ORI was dissolved on March 26, 1962 when it was replaced by the Partido Unido de la Revolucion (PURSC) de Cuba. Given that ORI was dissolved in March 1962, it is curious why Poland's authorities continued to refer to the Cuban leadership as ORI and not PURSC. On October 3, 1965, PURSC was replaced by El Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) - the Communist Party of Cuba.

[2] In early 1962, Fidel Castro openly denounced Anibal Escalante - First Secretary of the Communist Party.

[3] Reference here is most likely to the 1956 events in Poland, known as the Polish October, in which the Polish United Workers' Party went through a crisis (brought about by poor economic conditions in Poland, Khrushchev's Secret Speech, destalinization, etc.), which resulted in the reinstatement of a moderate Wladyslaw Gomulka as first Secretary and a compromise between the proponents of Stalinism and those wanting more political and economic liberalization.

[4] Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Winiewicz, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki.