

April 5, 1962
**Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 5
April 1962**

Citation:

"Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 5 April 1962", April 5, 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://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/115742>

Summary:

Jelen continues his report on the ORI's decision to exclude Escalante from the leadership.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

Ciphergram No. 4864

Dispatched from Havana on 04.05.1962 at 12:30 and received at 04.06.1962 at 14:17

Came to the Decoding Department at 04.07.1962 at 18:20

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,1 EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JELEN2

The issue of the Escalante affair (see our ciphergram 101 [that is 4098] dated 03.24.1962) is still not entirely clear. Based on the knowledge we have acquired so far, it seems that the issue was broached to the leadership circles by Fidel [Castro] as a result of complaints [he received] regarding the fact that E[scalante] was removing those party members who were the members of the former "26th of July Movement" while staffing the party and state apparatus, as well as the local administration, [with his own people]. Also, the local organizations and institutions of the ORI [Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas]³ included a minimal number of the active party members of the former "26th of July Movement." In practice, E. adopted the line of limiting the authority of the state administration and [strengthening that of] the party apparatus.[As far as] the leadership of the ORI (which has been composed of the entire leadership of the former Popular Socialist Party [PSP] since March 8 of this year, to which eight leading party activists of the former "26th of July Movement" have been added (see our notes 2421/14/61 from July 10, 1961), the entirety of its organizational matters was concentrated in the hands of E. This fact did not seem to bother him. Also, it was not clear among the leaders of the former Popular Socialist Party as to the role of the party and the government in a socialist system. There was no division within the [Cuban] leadership between the members of the former PSP and the "26th of July Movement" regarding the E. affair. [Moreover], the methods adopted by E. were unanimously condemned. However, Fidel [Castro] accused the former leadership of the PSP for their inability to control the work [carried out by] E. and tolerating his methods, even though E.'s methods had been known before. Today, some of the members of the former PSP think that E.'s activities not only caused a great damage in the building of the state and party apparatus, but also influenced the emergence of anti-communist moods in Cuba.

Fidel's presentation of the E. affair in his televised statement on March 26 caused a great shock. In some circles the statement was interpreted as the expression of deep rifts within the leadership between the old communists and the [members of the] former "26th of July Movement." In some local organizations of the ORI, some of the old communists have been removed only because of their membership in the former organization [PSP]. The leadership reacted by announcing the communiqué which was signed by Fidel [Castro] (as the first secretary of the ORI) [and] which made all changes in local organizations impossible unless they were carried out with the permission of the state leadership. The situation became especially difficult for [the province of] Oriente where a commission of the secretariat, including [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos and Blas Roca, had to arrive in order to make organizational changes. There were expected changes in the leadership of the ORI in four provinces, but such changes were only made in two provinces (Oriente and Havana). In both cases, the positions of the first secretaries were appointed from among the combatants of the "26th of July Movement," but those who were also former sympathizers of the ORI. (As far as Havana, Domenech, who was Fidel's former secretary, became the first secretary.) There are some changes, which are expected as far as some positions in the CTC [Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba - The Workers' Central Union of Cuba]. The entire campaign is being carried out under the banner of combating sectarianism and strengthening the revolutionary unity.

Escalante left for Moscow soon after his removal. According to [Soviet Ambassador

Sergei Mikhailovich] Kudryavtsev, the [Cuban] leadership made a decision that E. should leave for one of the socialist countries. He chose the USSR and Fidel was the one who, allegedly, personally put in a request to facilitate E.'s reception by the USSR.

[1] Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

[2] Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

[3] Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas was formed in July 1961 following the Cuban Revolution and the fall of the Fulgencio Batista regime. The ORI was comprised of the members of the revolutionary organization called the "26th of July Movement" of Fidel Castro, the Popular Socialist Party of Blas Roca, and the Revolutionary Directorate of March 13th of Faure Chomón Mediavilla. On March 26, 1962, the ORI was transformed into Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba (PURSC). In 1965, the PURSC was transformed into the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) which exists to this day.