

October 16, 1962

**Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on
Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella's visit to Cuba**

Citation:

"Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella's visit to Cuba", October 16, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/116782>

Summary:

Chargé d'Affaires ad Interim Erzsébet Görög reports on Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella's visit to Havana. Before Ben Bella's arrival, Cuban press highlighted the common experiences of Algerian and Cuban national independence. Görög describes Ben Bella's reception at the airport and speeches given by Castro and Ben Bella. For example, Castro used clear Marxist terminology in his remarks while Ben Bella spoke of social progress and the common.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

Translation - English

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest.

Havana, 16 October 1962
386/1962/top secret
Top Secret!
Written: in four copies
three copies to Center
one copy to Archives of Embassy

Subject: The visit of Algerian Prime
Minister Ben Bella to Cuba.

At midday on the day of courier dispatch, 16 October, Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella arrived in Havana on the plane of the revolutionary Cuban government sent for him.[1]

After returning from the airport, I wish to report briefly on Ben Bella's reception, which was grandiose. The press has been releasing articles for days about the visit of the Algerian Prime Minister, underlining the common features of the fight of the Algerian and the Cuban people for national independence.

At the airport, headed by President [Osvaldo] Dorticos and Prime Minister Fidel Castro, the Cuban military and political leaders, the heads of diplomatic missions (with the exception of the French and Belgian ambassadors, I could see all the others were present) were meeting the Algerian Prime Minister and the car of Ben Bella, sitting with Dorticos and Fidel Castro, was hailed by immense crowds on the road leading from the airport to the town and decorated by signs with the picture of Ben Bella.

At the airport Fidel Castro gave a quite warm speech, in which he stressed how much he appreciated the heroic armed fight of the Cuban people and the Algerian people for their independence and the personal courage of Prime Minister Ben Bella, who was making his first official visit abroad to Cuba, which was threatened by blockade and American aggression.

Prime Minister Ben Bella replied to the welcome speech, also translated into French, in Spanish, for which he received special applause. He emphasized how happy he was to have been able to come to Cuba, to the country he had wanted to get to know so much and he said that the heroic fight, the victory at Playa Giron [i.e., the Bay of Pigs] was viewed as their own, national affair by the Algerian people.

Ben Bella underlined that by the victory of the Algerian people, the exploitation of man by man would cease and never return to his country.

Apart from this term, Ben Bella-in contrast with Fidel Castro-did not use any Marxist terminology, he talked about social progress but not socialism.

I was standing between the papal legate and the Chilean charge d'affaires in the line when Ben Bella and his suite got off the plane, the legate-with whom we had a really friendly conversation-remarked, "Look, there is a priest in Ben Bella's entourage too." To which the Chilean charge d'affaires replied: "Of course, Ben Bella is a clever man!" The Cuban deputy protocol chief-who was standing near us-said that the priest was

one of the ministers of Ben Bella's government.

I will report on the further events of the visit and its evaluation in my next report.

Erzsébet Görög
chargé d'affaires ad interim

[1] Just before coming to Cuba, Ben Bella had stopped in Washington and met with US President Kennedy-ed.