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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : ARA - Mr. Arzac *AA*

FROM : DRA - Mrs. Hymann *sh*

SUBJECT: Communism in Cuba

DATE: July 8, 1954

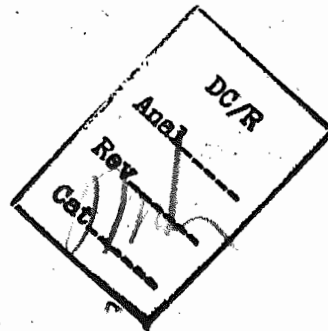
oc/R

Attached is the article entitled "Dictator Batista of Cuba and Communism", by Eliseo Riera-Gomez, on which you requested comment.

The article's references to President Batista's association with Communists, particularly during his previous regime, are in many cases factually correct; nevertheless the article presents a highly exaggerated picture and is not a fair evaluation of Batista's present attitude toward Communism. For example, in the discussion of Communist penetration in the government (page 6), the article states that Batista "is leaning heavily upon men of Communist extraction" in his government. While some former Communists have been employed by the Batista government, the number is not great and no proof is available that these persons have not renounced their former Communist ideology. Furthermore, there has been no evidence of Communist influence upon Cuban domestic or foreign policies. The recent law-decree declaring Communist activity "incompatible" with government service, although still untested, may provide some further indication of the government's attitude.

In regard to the last sentence of the article, DRA has no information that President Batista has "supported" the growth of Communism since March 1952. The President and members of his government have repeatedly declared the regime to be anti-Communist, and have implemented these declarations by certain positive measures both at home and abroad. If the measures have not been effective, they have at least not furthered the Communist cause. The over-all position of the Communists in Cuba appears to have definitely worsened rather than improved since the coup of March 1952, largely as a result of government action.

Attachment



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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : ARA - Mr. Arzac ✓

FROM : DRA - Mr. Burgin *WB*

SUBJECT: Communism in Cuba

DATE: July 16, 1954 *OC/R file*

Attached is an evaluation of the article "Dictator Batista of Cuba and Communism", by Eliseo Riera-Gomez, requested by you.

Attachment

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"Dictator Batista of Cuba and Communism"

The article "Dictator Batista of Cuba and Communism", by Eliseo Riera-Gomez, is in many instances factually correct, although it presents a highly exaggerated picture and is not a fair evaluation of Batista's present attitude toward Communism. For example, in the discussion of Communist penetration in the government (page 6), the article states that Batista "is leaning heavily upon men of Communist extraction" in his government. While some former Communists have been employed by the Batista government, the number is not great and no proof is available that these persons have not renounced their former Communist ideology. Furthermore, there has been no evidence of Communist influence upon Cuban domestic or foreign policies. The recent law-decree declaring Communist activity "incompatible" with government service, although still untested, may provide some further indication of the government's attitude.

In regard to the last sentence of the article, no information is available that President Batista has "supported" the growth of Communism since March 1952. The President and members of his government have repeatedly declared the regime to be anti-Communist, and have implemented these declarations by certain positive measures both at home and abroad. If the measures have not been totally effective, they have at least not furthered the Communist cause. The over-all position of the Communists in Cuba appears to have definitely worsened rather than improved since the coup of March 1952, largely as a result of government action.

DICTATOR BATISTA OF CUBA AND COMMUNISM

By Eliseo Riera-Gomez

After ten years of revolutionary convulsions (1930-1940), Cuba achieved a regime of constitutional and political stability. The 1939 elections gave the people an opportunity to freely elect its representatives to a Constituent Assembly upon which full sovereignty had been vested. All political parties were represented in that Congress, which enacted the new Constitution in effect since October 10, 1940.

Under the above mentioned Constitution, Cuba consolidated its civil and democratic institutions, improved its commercial and industrial ability, heightened its economical and financial progress, and opened new sources of work for the benefit of the working classes. In the political field, Cuba had six elections, in which the citizens' rights were absolutely guaranteed, having been able to cast their votes without duress and with due respect to the national will. At the same time, the Communist Party lost strength, as a result of a social political program developed by the constitutional governments (1944-1948, 1948-1952), which aimed, too, at taking away from the Communist leaders the control of the labor unions.

On March the 10th, 1952, eighty days before the Presidential election that was to be held on June 1st, of that same year, former dictator Batista entered the army headquarters at Camp Columbia at 2 A. M., and by offering to double the pay of soldiers, sailors and policemen, established himself again as a dictator, supported

exclusively by part of the army and against the free will of the people. In so doing, he discarded the Cuban Constitution and assumed the powers of Congress. Batista knew the pattern (it was Lenin's), when by a revolt of the Russian army, the way was paved for the Bolshevic Revolution in 1917. This was the same pattern that he followed in 1933 when he helped to organize a mutiny among soldiers, sailors and policemen against their superior officers; and the Communists, informed beforehand, attempted to use that revolt to Sovietize Cuba. Only through the strong opposition of democratic, nationalistic and anti-Communist Cubans was this Communist attempt foiled; yet Batista remained as the head of the revolting army and ruled Cuba from his army headquarters as a dictator until elected President in 1940.

It was in 1937 that Batista established formal and important contacts with the Communist Party, and during the early days of September, 1938, (about the time of the Munich Pact) he ordered the Governor of Havana to recognize the Communist Party of Cuba as a legal entity and organization, which in its first bylaws registered itself as a subsidiary of the International Communists. The recording of the Communist Party as a legal organization took place on the 13th of September, 1938, in the Provincial Government of Havana.

Already in an intimate relationship with the Communists, Batista immediately moved to place the whole labor movement of Cuba in the hands of the Communists, and after several interviews with Communists Blas Roca, Lazaro Pena and Juan Marinello, the

Cuban Confederation of Labor was placed under the absolute control of Lazaro Pena on January 22nd, 1939, in a gathering which took place under threats and violence supported by Dictator Batista. This is the same Lazaro Pena who just last month left for Moscow from Cuba without being molested by Batista, even though he was wanted by the courts on sedition charges (Miami Herald-March 25, 1954).

After these two steps were taken: recognition of the Communist Party, and the placement of the labor movement in the hands of the Communists, his third step was to bring the Communists into the Government. In March, 1939, the Communist Party and a small Political Party called "Union Revolucionaria" together formed "Union Revolucionaria Comunista", which took part in the elections for the Constitutional Assembly in 1939. Then Batista, a candidate for President at the time, utilized the Communist Party as shock troops in his political campaign. He gave them arms, money and authority to act throughout the country. And it was with the Communist's help, as he was their Presidential candidate in the 1940 election, that he was elected. Batista adopted as part of his campaign platform many basic ideas for which the Communist Party stood, including the famous slogan "Cuba Out of the Imperialistic War". We must remember that at this time Hitler and Stalin were allies, and, therefore, our enemies.

One of the most important Russian agents in Latin America, and no doubt well known to our State Department for his Communist activities in the Caribbean area, was a man who has used the names of Otto Medley, Aaron Sinkowitz, Jose Michelin, Abraham Grobar, and lately Favio Grobar and who was chased out of Cuba in 1950 by actions of the Cuban Government presided by Dr. Carlos Prío Socarras.

Grobar entered Cuba for the first time in 1924. He was a graduate

of the Political University of Moscow and came to Cuba to organize the Communist Party there. He was in Cuba as a Moscow agent and during the Cuban revolution, using Hammer and Sickle banners in some sugar mills and insisting the army to revolt in favor of Soviet Russia. However, this attempt was stopped by the then President of Cuba Grau San Martin. In January, 1935, Favio Grobar registered in the alien Registration Bureau under the name of Jose Michelin, with card No. 153297. He was captured by the police the 23rd of November, 1935, in a secret Communist meeting and was sentenced to six months in prison by the Courts and to be deported, but on the 28th day of April, 1936, and while Batista was ruling Cuba as a dictator, by decree No. 1095, published in the Official Gazette (equivalent to our Congressional Record), the deportation order was revoked.

Citizenship papers were issued to Favio Grobar in November, 1936 under the name of Abraham Grobar. Favio Grobar's Communist activities in Cuba in the period of 1933-1939 were with the knowledge and complete backing of Dictator Batista. He was the foremost leader of Russian Communists in Cuba; he helped organize Marxist Schools, and used his influence to place Lazaro Pena at the head of the Confederation of Labor of Cuba. In January, 1942, Batista being President, the Russian Favio Grobar, delegate in Cuba of the Caribbean Soviet Secretariat, called a meeting of all Communists in the city of Santiago de Cuba in which he read information that he had received, stating that the entrance of the United States in the war had destroyed the campaign against that nation made by Russia and had increased the moral influence of the United States over the people of Latin America; and that it was necessary to start a campaign of defamation against Great Britain and the United States in order to keep public opinion in Latin America

favorable to Russia, so as to have a prepared field when in the post-war commotions, sovietization of Latin America would be attached. After this gathering, the central committee of the Communist Party met in Havana and elected Communist leader Blas Roca to tour Latin America to carry on the plans mentioned above. In the Official Gazette of June 18, Batista as President, signed the decree No. 1625 designating Blas Roca as an official delegate of the Minister of Labor assigned to visit Latin American countries. Thus we have that Grobar, the University of Moscow graduate, was permitted by Batista to remain in Cuba by canceling his deportation orders; let him receive Cuban citizenship papers and later when the Communist Party was legalized, permitting him to act freely in Cuba, organizing the Communists and helping them to control Cuban labor.

Batista as President, elected in 1940, appointed Juan Marinello, President of the Communist Party, as Minister in his Cabinet, and another Communist leader, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, also became a member of the Cabinet. Batista personally helped the Communists to obtain three seats in the Cuban Senate and several in the House of Representatives. The Senators were Juan Marinello, Cesar Villar and Garcia Agüero. In 1943, Batista gave the Communists one of the most important international wave lengths for the Red broadcasting station called "1010". Also he appointed as head of the Cuban war propaganda a well-known Cuban Communist, Vicente Martinez, who was one of the key men of the Communist paper "Rey". Dictator Batista had many meetings with Communist leaders Blas Roca and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez (former member of Batista's Cabinet) before the coup d'etat of 1952. These meetings took place at the farm of his former Minister of War Sosa de Quesada (now a General in the Cuban army and head of legal matters). After the coup d'etat, the Communists observed a very peculiar form of opposition, declaring that they were against any revolution or violence directed against Batista. At the same time they worked very hard to form a popular front, in which they sought to entice other

political parties with the purported aim of seeking "a peaceful, democratic solution" of the situation created by the Batista seizure of power.

Contrary to all of Batista's public statements denouncing Communism in order to gain the support of the United States Government, it could be easily proven by a close examination of Batista's past, by the composition of his present Government, that he is leaning heavily upon men of Communist extraction. Thus we will find that his Minister of Commerce today, Paul Loranzo, was a member of the Communist Secretariat in the Province of Las Villas, 1936-1937, using the pseudonym "Lauro". Arsenio Gonzales, today's Under Secretary of Labor, is a former Communist, as is shown in a judgment of the Supreme Court of Cuba signed on February 18, 1952, and registered under number 503-951. Today's Under Secretary of Education of Cuba, Dr. Augusto Rodriguez Miranda, was a member of the Communist Party of Cuba.

It is indeed worthwhile finding out what secret agreements if any have been made during the three secret trips that Juan J. Arevalo, the Guatemalan leader, has made to Cuba. Furthermore it has been reported that Batista's latest trip to the Isle of Pine in early March, 1954 was for the sole purpose of secretly conferring with the Communist leader Anibal Escalante, editor of the Communist newspaper "Hoy", in regard to the departure of Lazaro Pena for Moscow later on in that same month.

Batista's insidiousness is magnified by his pose against Communism, when he is actually placing large numbers of Communist leaders in important positions in the Government. The Communistic inclinations and indoctrinations of Batista as shown by all his totalitarianistic actions as dictator, his attacks on the freedom of the press, the discarding the Cuban Constitution, his assuming the powers of Congress, and modifying by ukase the laws regulating the judiciary.

through the forced retirement of four Justices of the Supreme Court; by his beatings and torturing of many of the members of the opposition parties; modifying articles of the Constitution by placing in the police and the soldiers out of the jurisdiction of the courts of the land, are dangerous to our own internal security in this country. For under his ruthless anti-Democratic system, the seed of Communism has found a fertile ground in which to grow with the support of this ruthless dictator.