

GF *DM* *GF*

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

DATE February 7, 1945

TO : CCA - Mr. ~~Coonan~~ *GF*
 : ~~ARA - Mr. Lockwood~~

FROM : CCA - Mr. Scherer

SUBJECT : Nationalistic Education Bill in Cuba

According to despatch 8692 of January 30 from Habana Dr. Marinello, the Communist leader, has presented to the Cuban National Council of Education and Culture a bill which would require teachers in all private schools in Cuba to be Cubans by birth or naturalization.

The Embassy indicates that, while the proposed bill has little chance of congressional approval, it does represent a further indication of the trend toward nationalism in Cuba. The Embassy requests the Department's comments as to possible action by it. It has taken no steps with the Cuban Government as was done in 1941, largely because of the internal political situation surrounding the measure.

If it appears desirable to ~~you~~ you and other divisions of the Department I will be glad to draft an instruction to Habana indicating that it should continue its present "hands off" policy. It may be wise also to mention that the Embassy should miss no opportunity to call attention in general to the need today for removal of nationalistic barriers.

Good
me

GF

CCA:GF Scherer:DVH



Handwritten: 2/11/45
 DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL POLICY
 MAY 11 1945
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 Habana, January

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 OFFICE OF AMERICAN REPUBLIC AFFAIRS
 FEB 8 1945

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RESTRICTED

No. 8692

Subject: Proposed Law Requiring Cuban Nationality for all Teachers in Private Schools

Handwritten: 2/11/45, March 19, 1945

Handwritten: file
 DIVISION OF AMERICAN COOPERATION
 FEB 21 1945
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 MAR 2 1945
 LANSING OFFICE

The Honorable The Secretary of State, Washington.

Sir

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With reference to the Embassy's despatch No. 2981 of November 22, 1941 and to other communications concerning the efforts of certain groups to ban foreigners from teaching positions in Cuban private schools, I have the honor to report that Dr. Juan Marinello, President of the Partido Socialista Popular (Communist), has recently presented to the National Council of Education and Culture (an agency of the Ministry of Education) a project of law which would, among other provisions, require teachers in all private schools in Cuba to be Cuban citizens by birth or naturalization.

The projected law, which is understood to be under consideration at present by the Council, would also specify strict government standards of physical equipment and buildings to be met by private schools, as well as close control by the Government of the qualifications of teaching personnel and textbooks. Ministry of Education inspectors would be responsible for enforcing the provisions of the decree.

This move has two aspects possessing general importance beyond the purely educational question involved. In the first place it is one more example of the increasingly evident extreme nationalism in Cuba, which has been so frequently reported in recent months by the Embassy. It is, furthermore, a phase of the long-standing struggle between the Leftist elements and the conservative, Catholic group, which has been accentuated in Cuba by the presence of such a large element of anti-liberal Spanish supporters of the Franco Government, including many members of the Spanish teaching clergy. The background facts of this struggle, outlined in despatch No. 2981, are still after three years entirely pertinent to the present situation. Dr. Marinello for many years has been an open foe of the

Recording Desk
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 APR 20 1945
 DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR SOCIAL AND HEALTH AFFAIRS - LIT

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OBJECT SENT TO DCR/O

conservative influence of the Spanish clergy in Cuba - which he labels as Fascist in ideology - and it is obvious that the principal aim of the bill under discussion is to prevent Cuban students from receiving instruction from Spanish clergymen using reactionary and, according to the Communists, even pro-Fascist textbooks.

The presentation of the projected law has precipitated a battle of some proportions which is almost daily reflected in the conservative Diario de la Marina and the Communist-controlled Hoy. The tactics of the bill's opponents, who have protested as the National Association of Parents, may be summarized as follows:

- 1) The measure is purely political, having no real justification in the educational situation.
- 2) It is a Leftist attempt to place obstacles in the way of the Grau Government.
- 3) Previous attempts to pass such a bill have rightly failed after full discussion, and it is stupid to reopen the matter.
- 4) It violates the constitutional guarantee of freedom of education and otherwise is at variance with constitutional provisions.
- 5) In practice, it would close many small and much-needed schools, which are at present doing excellent work.

In rebuttal the editors of Hoy make the following points:

- 1) Liberty of education does not mean freedom to indoctrinate the youth with textbooks which praise Fascist dictators.
- 2) The measure simply implements constitutional provisions (Articles 47 and 51) and carries out their spirit.
- 3) The provision for Cuban nationality is not oppressive or unreasonable, since it provides a period of grace of three years to enable foreigners to acquire Cuban citizenship.
- 4) It is significant that the leaders of the National Association of Parents - Dr. José Joaquín Espinó and Dr. Julio H. Smith - are also leaders of the "Catholic, Franquista-Nazi movement".

A further interesting phase of the situation is the fact that a "National Federation of Cuban Private Schools", headed by an educator, María Corominas, who is not usually regarded as a Leftist, has been campaigning for the

"nationalization"

"nationalization" of Cuban schools and advocating that all teachers be native-born Cubans - a step more radical than Marinello's measure. It is believed that this Federation is largely organized and supported by the many graduates of Cuban Normal Schools who are perhaps looking with hungry eyes on the good positions now occupied by foreigners in private schools.

In the midst of this controversy, which is essentially political, there appears to be no recognition in the press of the important fact that the proposed decree, if put into effect, would strike a heavy blow at over twenty American private schools in Cuba, which employ an estimated 175 teachers of American nationality. Reference is made to the Embassy's despatch No. 7760 of August 24, 1944 for a list and discussion of these schools. Interviews with directors of several of the schools indicate that the proposed law would have a crippling effect particularly on the teaching of English and the programs of American-type high school studies. There is a plan afoot to crystallize opposition from American schools to the proposed bill through organized protests.

The Embassy has not to date presented any expression of views to the Cuban Government concerning the measure, as was done in November, 1941, largely because it is not thought wise to become involved in the internal political situation surrounding the measure. Furthermore, informed observers are of the opinion that the proposed bill will not be made law in the face of the powerful opposition. The Department's comments regarding the Embassy's attitude would be appreciated.

Respectfully yours,



John J. Muccio,
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

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Original and hectograph
to the Department.

Despatch No. 2981, November 22, 1941 - "With reference to recent efforts on the part of certain groups in Cuba to prevent the use of teachers in the public and private schools who are not Cuban citizens."

Despatch No. 7760 / August 24, 1944 - "Teaching of English in Cuba."

March 19, 1945

RESTRICTED

No. 52

The Honorable
Spruille Braden,
American Ambassador,
Habana.

Sir:

Reference is made to the Embassy's despatch no. 8692 of January 30 1945, reviewing the project of law presented by Juan Marinello which would require that teachers in all private schools in Cuba must be Cuban citizens by birth or naturalization.

Your constructive comment on the political factors surrounding the project are of much interest to the Department which agrees that it would be unwise to take any positive steps in connection with this proposed legislation at the present time. However, the Department trusts that you and the members of your staff will continue to emphasize, on every appropriate occasion, the need for closer association between nations and for avoidance of measures directed against foreigners that tend toward excessive nationalism.

If, as the Embassy states, the principal aim of the bill is to prevent Cuban students from receiving instruction from pro-Fascist teachers and pro-Fascist textbooks, it would seem that such a result could be brought about by methods other than the exclusion of all foreigners.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:

A. M. WARREN

837.42/1-3045

A true copy of the signed original.

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Cat. *MM*

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MAR 14 1945 P.M.
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FEB 28 1945
EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Habana, February 9, 1945

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS

UNRESTRICTED

No. 8765

Subject: Further Developments Concerning
Proposed Law to Control Private
Schools.

DIVISION OF CULTURAL COOPERATION
MAR 13 1945
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEAR

4/5/45
C.A. [unclear]; [unclear]; [unclear]
[unclear]; C.A.

CCA
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J.P.F.

For Distribution
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J.P.F.
APR 6 1945

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch no. 8692 of January 30, 1945 entitled "Proposed Law Requiring Cuban Nationality for all Teachers in Private Schools", and to report certain further developments concerning this situation.

In a report of an exclusive interview published in the Habana paper, "El Mundo", February 4, 1945, President Grau is quoted as giving high praise to private schools in Cuba and declaring himself in favor of freedom of instruction. According to the interviewer, the President said in part: "Our Constitution is clear on the point: teaching is free. The state regulates it through its laws, but it cannot violate the principle of fundamental liberty guaranteed by the Constitution. The existence of private schools has done great good to Cuba. Such initiative, which tends to encourage learning and culture, is restricted in no civilized country in the world. ...Our policy, which we have already announced, must be directed to increasing the number of schools, not to limiting it." Pointing out that Cuba does not have enough schools for its children, the President referred to the United States as an example of a country where private schools flourish to the great benefit of the nation's cultural level.

While President Grau did not refer specifically to the decree proposed by Senator Juan Marinello, his words may easily be interpreted as supporting the opponents of the proposed law.

Meanwhile the controversy concerning Marinello's plan continues unabated in the press. "El Mundo" has entered the tourney, and recently printed a lengthy opinion by Dr. Alberto Blanco, Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Habana, which cast doubt on the constitutionality and general desirability of the

measure.

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measure. His views were emphatically rebutted by Senator Marinello in a published letter, and the latter's point of view has been echoed in a manifesto issued by the National Federation of Cuban Private Schools. The latter can now be definitely identified as being constituted mainly by Cuban teachers, graduates of local education schools.

Respectfully yours,

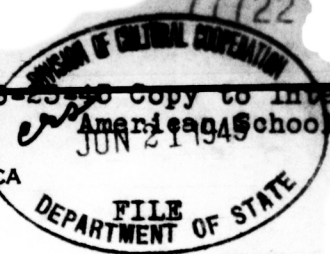

John F. Muccio,
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

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Original and hectograph
to Department.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Copy to Inter-American Schools Service
JUN 21 1945

UNRESTRICTED

AMERICAN EMBASSY

AIR MAIL

Habana, May 29, 1945

No. 9428

Subject: With Further Reference to the Proposed Law Concerning the Control of Private Schools in Cuba.

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DIVISION OF
GENERAL INVESTIGATIONS

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The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

JUL 1 1945
Department of State

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Sir:

Supplementing the Embassy's despatch no. 8765 of February 9, 1945 ("Further Developments Concerning Proposed Law to Control Private Schools") and previous correspondence on the subject, I have the honor to report that Senator Marinello's bill has not yet been reported to the Senate by the Committee on Culture and Education, to which it was referred, and that in view of the anticipated adjournment of Congress at the end of the current month it is believed unlikely that any action will be taken by that body on the proposed law during its current session.

While the possibility that Congress may be called into special session this summer is being mentioned, there are no indications that Senator Marinello's project in question would be considered at that session, although it is probable that some action will be taken on the project when Congress reconvenes in September.

In the meantime, Republican Senator José R. Andreu of Las Villas, a member of the Committee on Culture and Education, has submitted a report to the Committee calling for rejection of the Marinello bill and approval of a substitute bill, which has been named the Andreu Bill. The latter seeks to implement the Constitutional provisions regarding Government inspection and supervision of private instruction, but contains none of the controversial features of the Marinello bill, such as the requirement that all teachers in private schools be Cuban citizens.

The controversy concerning the Marinello bill has continued with undiminished intensity and has evoked an unusually wide measure of public interest. Most Habana newspapers, led by the DIARIO DE LA MARINA, have joined in the

opposition

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opposition to the proposed law. The Communist HOY has maintained its vigorous defense and as part of its campaign has reproduced on its front page extracts from history textbooks now being used in the Jesuit Colegio de Belén in Habana, in which the accomplishments of Franco, Mussolini and Hitler are extolled and mention is made of Japan's need for additional living space. HOY cites this "Fascist propaganda" as a compelling reason for the enactment of the Marinello bill.

Principals and proprietors of American and British private schools in Habana have addressed a memorandum to President Grau, which has been published in the Habana newspapers, in which they have set forth their position with regard to Marinello's proposed law. The following are the salient points of the memorandum:

1. Pan Americanism. The present tendency toward mutual Pan American understanding is aided particularly by the study and knowledge of the language and culture of the countries of this hemisphere. In the United States there has been an extraordinary increase in the study of Spanish, and hundreds of Spanish and Latin American professors are engaged in the teaching of the language there.

2. American reciprocity. While thousands of positions are open for Spanish teachers in the United States, there are hardly one hundred American and English teachers employed in private schools in Cuba.

3. Good Neighbor Policy. Nationalization of private instruction is contrary to the Good Neighbor Policy advocated by President Roosevelt since 1933.

4. Importance of the study of English in Cuba. Future commercial relations with the United States and Great Britain indicate the importance and necessity of studying English by attending schools where this language is taught several hours a day.

5. Free establishment of English-speaking schools in Cuba. The Cuban Constitution requires that teachers of Spanish, History, Geography and Civics be Cuban citizens, but freely authorizes the creation of English-speaking schools.

6. Cultivation of Cuban patriotism. Freedom of instruction encourages patriotism and respect for local institutions. If no English-speaking schools existed in Cuba, many students would be compelled to study in the United States and after many years of study abroad would return to this country as virtual strangers.

7. American technology in the service of Cuba. English-speaking schools are able to furnish direct access to American technical publications and English and American textbooks which are produced in large numbers at low cost.

8. Intolerance is contrary to democracy and cultural progress.

9. The Government's right of supervision and inspection. The State is under obligation to inspect and regulate private instruction and to establish capacity qualifications for teachers, but a period of six or eight years should be given to university and secondary school teachers to establish their qualifications. The teaching of foreign languages is a highly specialized field and preparation therefor requires many years of study in the country of origin. It is desirable that the teaching of English should be in the hands of American or English professors, just as instruction in Spanish should be conducted by native teachers.

10. Credit for foreign studies. The Ministry of Education might establish a commission to study the credits given by foreign educational institutions and to validate the degrees or diplomas granted by such institutions to persons who wish to occupy positions as teachers in Cuba.

Senator Marinello replied to this memorandum in an article entitled "Education and Good Neighborliness", published in the newspaper HOY. His reply was featured by a tone of moderation which is a far cry from the invectives which are usually hurled at the "Fascist" opponents of the bill. Marinello stated that he considered the objections set forth by the Anglo-American schools to have been made in good faith, although they revealed, in his opinion, a mistaken interpretation of the nature and purposes of his bill. He asserted that his project did not seek to exclude all foreign teachers, which would admittedly be prejudicial to Cuban culture and weaken the bonds of unity between the American countries. He said that his project was designed instead to afford the opportunity for duly qualified Cuban teachers to occupy positions in private schools and to assist in raising the level of national education. "But," he continued, "that does not mean that in special studies such as languages the services of non-Cuban teachers should not be utilized. An inflexible rule would be so ridiculous that it would nullify itself."

Marinello agreed on the importance of the study of English and expressed the desire that it should be stimulated and expanded, but he felt that this object could be attained by specialized language instruction by foreign teachers, rather than by a wholly-English curriculum in certain private schools. He remarked that many Cuban students had found, upon graduation from such schools, that while their knowledge of English was good, their knowledge of Spanish, their own language, was imperfect.

The Senator's argument that his proposed law would not exclude foreign teachers would seem to be negated, however, by the clear text of the bill, which would require that all teachers in private schools be Cuban citizens. Nevertheless,

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his reply is of particular interest in that it lends weight to the opinion that the project is aimed principally at excluding the Spanish clergy as teachers in private schools.

The Board of Aldermen of the City of Habana, in a recent resolution, condemned the Marinello project and recommended the enactment by Congress of the Andreu bill. It is significant that in the voting on this resolution, the Auténticos joined the Communists in the opposition minority. Vice President Raul de Cárdenas, however, in a recent public statement vigorously condemned Senator Marinello's proposal.

The Embassy will inform the Department of important further developments in this matter.

Respectfully yours,


James H. Wright
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

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Original and hectograph
to Department