

E.T. Long - ARA - 9/20/78
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FROM AMEMBASSY, HABANA

155
DESP. NO.

F780011-0180

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. - 2 Encs. July 24, 1953

REF Dept's Letter of June 29, 1953, to Representative Lantaff

24 For Dept. Use Only 845	ACTION ARA*	DEPT. I N F O	OLI H R EUR/X SY I IFI ND	INTEGRAL AMERICAN AFFAIRS JUL 29 1953
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SUBJECT: Publication in Cuba of Dept's Letter Re Pro-Communist Charges Against Batista

The Habana press gave wide publicity to United Press and Associated Press reports, datelined July 18 and 20, respectively, from Washington, which quoted from the Department's letter of June 29, 1953, to Representative William C. LANTAFF, regarding charges against President BATISTA of pro-Communism and the evidence available to the Department that does not support such charges.

The UP despatch quoted only the 13 items of evidence enumerated in the Department's letter but did so with deletions and summarizations and with at least one substantive error when it translated the words "left out" in item 13 as "expulsados". The AP report quoted much more extensively and more accurately from the Department's letter. There are enclosed clippings giving the UP story as it appeared in Diario de la Marina and the AP despatch as published by El Mundo.

The first reaction to the publication of the Department's letter came from the Partido Acción Unitaria (PAU) which was described in item 13 of the letter as having been organized by former and alleged Communists of the old PAU who had been left out of its successor, the Partido Acción Progresista (PAP). Rafael Angel AGUIRRE Rencurrel, president of the PAU National Organizing Committee (Comité Gestor Nacional), and Primitivo RAMIREZ Medina, a member of the PAU Executive Committee, called at the Embassy to deny that the PAU was formed by "many former Communists and alleged Communists" who had been "expelled" from the old PAU. The use of the word "expelled" was, of course, based on the UP version of the Department's letter.

There are enclosed copies of memoranda prepared by the Embassy officer who received Aguirre and Ramirez. It will be noted that they claimed that the PAU included few, if any, ex-Communists and no outright Communists; that the organization of the new PAU was due to internal problems involved in the

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transition of the old PAU into the PAP; that the new PAU sympathized with and supported the Batista regime; that its members had not been expelled from the PAP; and that they themselves held government jobs and were well and favorably known to Batista.

Except for Guillermo PEREZ Lamy, who is the Recording Secretary (Secretario de Actas) of the PAU National Organizing Committee and who is indicated by information available to the Embassy to be a Communist or a Communist sympathizer, none of the persons who registered the PAU and comprise its National Organizing Committee and Executive Committee are known to the Embassy to be Communists, former Communists, Communist sympathizers or fellow travelers.

Various CAS reports (the latest of which was transmitted to the Department by despatch No. 96 of July 14, 1953) have indicated that the PAU registered by Aguirre and others is a front organization which the Communist Partido Socialista Popular (PSP) will utilize for its own purposes as developments in the political situation may require. Under such circumstances an investigation such as that demanded by Aguirre and Ramirez (see enclosed memoranda) might possibly uncover no derogatory information regarding the organizers of the PAU but still leave the party in the position of a "stooge" set up as a Communist vehicle. It is the Embassy's understanding that the new PAU was registered by the Communists, utilizing for that purpose obscure and little-known persons whose Communist connections are well concealed.

It may be observed that item 4 of the Department's letter to Representative Lantaff might well be construed by the not-too-well-informed reader as meaning that the break in diplomatic relations with the USSR was deliberately engineered by Cuba. Actually, as reported in despatch No. 1643 of April 4, 1952, Russia broke off relations and it is the Embassy's understanding that the Cuban refusal to permit Soviet diplomatic couriers to enter the country was not designed to precipitate a break, any more than breaks were planned with other countries to which normal facilities were refused pending recognition of the Batista regime. The breaking of relations by Russia following the courier incident was unforeseen by the Cuban Government. In conversation with the Ambassador a Ministry of State official described the break as "Batista luck".

The Communist press has represented the Department's letter to Representative Lantaff as being Washington's "admission, confirmation and ratification" of Communist charges that every act of Batista's government mentioned in the letter was "dictated" by Washington. It ascribed the letter to a desire to have it known that Washington is protecting "its" government in Cuba and described it as a "slap in the face" for Prio and other opposition leaders who were

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trying to outdo Batista in currying favor in Washington. The Communists declared that the letter was proof that the United States supported the Cuban Government's refusal to restore the 1940 Constitution and the 1943 Electoral Code and its "repressive and anti-democratic measures". A clipping from Hoy is enclosed of an editorial on the subject by the Communist newspaper's director.

The non-Communist press has not commented extensively on the letter. Avance condemned the charges of Eliseo RIERA Gomez that gave rise to the letter as a "maneuver against our sovereignty" that was "intended to open the door to foreign intervention" and set the "State Department against the Cuban Government". Pueblo regarded the letter as "consolidating Batista's position abroad" and as a blow to Batista's opposition. It took advantage of the opportunity to criticize the United States for supporting strong regimes that are anti-Communistic but at the same time being unmindful of the reaction of Latin American people to U. S. countenancing the "horrors of Santo Domingo, Honduras, Nicaragua and other countries".

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Enclosures:

- No. 1 - Press clippings
- No. 2 - Copies of Memoranda

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F730011-0183

MEMORANDUM

July 20, 1953

To: The Ambassador
From: J. Canter
Subject: PAU Leaders Protest Allegation that Party is
Pro-Communist

I received the visit this morning of Dr. Rafael A. Aguirre Roncurrell, who claimed that he was the President of the Partido Acción Unitaria (PAU), and Mr. Primitivo Ramirez Medina, who said he was a member of the Executive Committee of that party. Mr. Cushing was present during the interview.

Aguirre and Ramirez stated that the purpose of their visit was to deny the allegation that the PAU was made up of "many ex-Communists and presumed Communists" who were expelled from Batista's PAU when the party was reorganized in December 1952 as the Partido de Acción Progresista (PAP). (A statement to this effect had appeared in the UP story of July 18 out of Washington quoting a letter from the Department of State to Representative William C. Lantaff of Miami Springs, Florida. This story appeared prominently in Habana newspapers on July 19.)

According to Aguirre and Ramirez, the PAU had few, if any, ex-Communists on its rolls and certainly no outright Communists. If the PAU preferred to remain as a separate entity and did not join forces with the PAP, this was due entirely to internal problems which had arisen at the time of the reorganization of the original PAU into the PAP. There was never any question of the new PAU being made up of expelled members of the original PAU. Indeed, they declared, the PAU was in sympathy with and gave support to the Batista regime and, actually, both men occupied positions in the government--Aguirre as a "letrado conciliador asesor" of the Ministry of Labor, and Ramirez as a postal inspector in the Ministry of Communications, as well as auditor of the Bolsas Nacionales de Confecciones, an organization associated with the Ministry of Labor. The two men further declared that they were well and favorably known to President Batista.

Aguirre said that his political views were conservative in nature, and that he was a graduate of the Colegio de Belén (Jesuit) and a member of the Agrupación Católica Universitaria. He stated that he was the youngest political leader in Cuba

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(28 years old) and that his political future would be ruined if the PAU were tainted as a pro-Communist party. He offered to bring to the Embassy a complete list of all members of the Executive Committee of the PAU.

Aguirre and Ramirez requested that a thorough investigation be made of the political leanings of the PAU and that after the investigation the Department of State should issue a declaration concerning the results.

I told the men that I would bring the matter to the attention of the political section of the Embassy.

JCanter:ep

cc: Mr. Crain

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MEMORANDUM

July 22, 1953

TO: E. T. Crain

FROM: J. Canter

SUBJECT: Visit of Rafael A. Aguirre

REFERENCE: My Memorandum of July 20, 1953

Dr. AGUIRRE came in this afternoon to leave with me a list of the principal officers of the Partido Acción Unitaria, as he had offered during our conversation of July 20. I attach the list.

Dr. Aguirre said that he considered it quite necessary that an investigation by the Department of State of the political color of the PAU be made as soon as possible, since the interests of the party were being damaged by the allegation that it was composed of Communist elements. He further said that the PAU had been hoping to enter the government at some time in the not-too-distant future and that without a clarification of its ideology, the possibility of its doing so was remote.

In any case, he added, the party was going to issue a statement denying the pro-Communist allegation. It had occurred to him that perhaps the notion that the PAU was Communist resulted from a statement to that effect which had been published some time ago by La Campaña, a newspaper he characterized as existing entirely on blackmail.

JCanter:rc

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Desestimó la Cancillería de E. U. unas acusaciones contra Batista

**"El Gobierno de Cuba—dice en una carta—ha
demostrado su posición frente al comunismo"**

WASHINGTON, julio 18. (United)—El representante a la Cámara William C. Lantaff, de Miami Springs, Florida, facilitó hoy a la United Press una carta del Departamento de Estado en la cual se rechazan los alegatos formulados por un residente en la Florida, relativos a que el Presidente de Cuba, mayor general Fulgencio Batista, es procomunista.

La carta, fechada el 29 de junio, fué dirigida a Lantaff después que éste envió al Departamento una colección de artículos en los que se critica al Gobierno de Batista, firmados por Eliseo Riera Gómez, quien dijo que residía en Coral Gables, Florida, lugar enclavado en el distrito congresional de Lantaff.

El legislador envió a la Cancillería copias mimeografiadas de los artículos, después que Riera Gómez se los remitió y le pidió que le contestara.

La carta del Departamento de Estado está firmada por Thurston B. Morton, secretario auxiliar de Relaciones Congresionales.

El documento incluye trece razones por las cuales la Cancillería rechazó los alegatos contra el Primer Magistrado cubano.

He aquí esas trece razones:

"Primera.—El régimen de Batista ha formulado satisfactorias declaraciones públicas y privadas respecto a sus propósitos de adoptar medidas para el control del comunismo internacional en Cuba antes de su

reconocimiento por los Estados Unidos el 27 de marzo de 1952.

"Segunda.—Desde esa fecha, Batista ha continuado demostrando una posición anticomunista en sus manifestaciones públicas.

"Tercera.—El Representante cubano en las Naciones Unidas consistentemente ha colocado a su país en forma sólida al lado de los Estados Unidos contra los ataques comunistas, y se ha destacado en sus refutaciones de numerosos alegatos rojos.

"Cuarta.—La ruptura de las relaciones con la U. R. S. S. el 4 de abril de 1952, fué precipitada por la administración de Batista al negarse a permitir a un correo diplomático de la U. R. S. S. entrar en Cuba con valijas diplomáticas el día 21 de marzo de 1952, fecha en que la U. R. S. S. aún no había extendido su reconocimiento a la administración de Batista.

"Quinta.—Una legislación para establecer una comisión investigadora de las actividades comunistas en Cuba fué presentada en la primera sesión celebrada por el Consejo Consultivo, el 22 de mayo de 1952. En febrero de 1953, una comisión de tres miembros del Consejo de Ministros cubano fué designada para redactar un proyecto de ley conducente al control del comunismo en Cuba. Se tiene entendido que esa legislación ha sido redactada y se

encuentra ahora bajo la consideración del Gabinete.

"Sexta.—La Administración ha alterado el Código Electoral de tal manera que será difícil al Partido Comunista llenar los requisitos exigidos para presentarse en las elecciones señaladas para el primero de junio de 1954.

"Séptima.—Desde el 14 de marzo de 1952, la administración de Batista y la dirigencia anticomunista mediante de la Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba se han prestado apoyo mutuo.

"Octava.—En la fecha del golpe, publicaciones comunistas de Cuba atacaron violentamente a Batista, llamándole "litere fascista del imperialismo yanqui" entre otras cosas, y esas publicaciones han continuado en la misma actitud desde entonces.

"Novena.—Los principales dirigentes del Partido Socialista Popular, tales como Blas Roca, han atacado a Batista pública y repetidamente. Se han encaminado, hasta el presente sin éxito, a formar un "frente unido de masas" en la oposición.

"Décima.—Las Oficinas del Partido Comunista y establecimientos editoriales de la misma filiación han sido repetidamente asaltados y dañados en algunos casos.

"Onceña.—Comunistas y simpatizadores de los comunistas han sido arrestados repetidamente para ser interrogados por las autoridades.

"Décimosegunda.—Mitines de comunistas y de comunistas infiltrados han sido disueltos, y han sido denegados permisos para celebrar actos de ese tipo.

"Decimotercera.—Muchos ex comunistas y comunistas que se han afiliado a la Acción Unitaria de Cuba particularmente en la división social del Partido, fueron expulsados cuando el Partido fué reconocido en diciembre de 1952 como el partido de acción progresiva. Este grupo, desde entonces, organizó otro Partido de Acción Unitaria en mayo de 1953, separándose de ese modo de la Administración.