

25 mei 1959

U 5127/15898-59 - C 46 - P1/PS9.

1-49709/17
GENEIM

Land: Cuba.

Onderwerp: Review of Communist activities in Cuba since ouster of Fulgencio BATISTA on 1 January 1959.

Referenties:

Datum van waarneming: Januari/april 1959.

Bron: Van bevriende zijde.

Opmerkingen:

Verzonden aan: de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken.

Aan Zijne Excellentie Prof. Dr. J.E. de QUAY
Minister-President

Plein 1813 no.4

's-GRAVENHAGE.

GEHEIM

Cuba

REVIEW OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN CUBA SINCE OUSTER
OF FULGENCIO BATISTA ON 1 JANUARY 1959.

Since the overthrow of the regime of Fulgencio BATISTA on 1 January 1959 the Communists have made certain advances in Cuba. The Partido Socialista Popular (PSP - Cuban Communist Party) has obtained a semi-legal status and probably will become completely legal when registration of all political parties is effected. At least 3000 new members have been recruited for the PSP and the Juventud Socialista (JS - Cuban Communist Youth). The Communists have established a daily newspaper, Hoy, as well as several magazines. A drive to raise 150,000 pesos for Hoy is nearing success. They have a daily radio program and now are trying to buy a radio station. The PSP has opened offices in all parts of Habana and in most of the interior towns as well.

In the military field, the Communists have taken advantage of the reorganization of the armed forces to infiltrate them. There are three majors, as well as 14 captains, who are known Communists.¹⁾ The PSP is ordering young Communists to enlist in the Cuban Army and in the National Police. La Cabana Fortress in Habana is a center of Communist activity. The persons responsible for this infiltration are Ernesto "Che" GUEVARA Serna, commander of La Cabana Fortress, and Captain Antonio NUNEZ Jimenez. NUNEZ is revising the texts used in the training of new soldiers. These new texts are Communist slanted.²⁾

Civilian Communists responsible for penetration of the armed forces are Luis FAJARDO Escalona and Fidel DOMENECH Benitez, both of whom have free ac-

cess to La Cabana Fortress.³⁾

The military police of La Cabana Fortress are commanded by Captain Pablo RIBALTA, Communist, and approximately 80% of the police are Communists. The Communists, therefore, can engineer the arrest of any person on trumped-up war criminal charges. One anti-Communist has been executed as a result of such action.⁴⁾

With regard to Communist activity in the field of government, the Communists have achieved some medium-level penetration. Examples of this are: Vicentina ANTUNA Tabio is director of the National Institute of Culture; Eduardo CORONA Zayas is director of the 26 of July Purge Commission; and Arnaldo ESCALONA Almeida and Jose PEREZ Lamy are lawyers in the Supreme Court.⁵⁾

In the field of labor, the Communists lost ground at the top level when the Frente Obrero Nacional Unido (FONU - United National Labor Front) was abolished.⁶⁾ The Communists have retained and strengthened, however, their positions on the union and federation levels. Because of their organizational ability, Communist labor leaders head numerous unions in which the majority of the members are not Communists. In this respect they are especially strong in the provinces of Las Villas and Oriente.

Many former Cuban labor leaders now are in hiding because they fear arrest instigated by the Communists and on trumped-up Communist charges. Union elections are to be held in the near future. The Communists stand a chance of improving their present position by electing Party members to federation and CTC levels which now are in the hands of the 26 of July Movement.

The Communists have been very successful in associating their objectives with the rebel program in the minds of many politically naive people. They have been able to equate anti-Communism and pro-United States sentiments with counter revolutionary activity. As a result of this, few newspapers or persons have the courage to speak against the Communists because such criticism would bring a blast from the Communist press claiming that the critic is either an imperialist or a BATISTA agent. These tactics have kept any possible opposition from organizing. The Communists, therefore, although in the minority, can completely intimidate their enemies.

Comments:

- 1) Major is the highest rank in the new Cuban Army. Undoubtedly there are other Communists who are officers who have not yet been identified.
- 2) NUNEZ is next in command to GUEVARA at La Cabana Fortress. There have been numerous reports in the past on NUNEZ' Communist activities. In August 1957 he attended the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students for Peace and Friendship held in Moscow.
- 3) Both FAJARDO and DOMENECH have been active in Communist activities in Cuba for several years. FAJARDO has been described as a Party professional and DOMENECH as a specialist in sabotage. DOMENECH attended the Fifth World Festival of Youth and Students held in Warsaw in August 1955. In November 1958 it was reported that he was head of the PSP in Oriente Province.

Comments:

- 4) RIBALTA undoubtedly is identical with Pablo RIVALTA Perez who has been described as an active Communist in the Santa Clara area.
- 5) ANTUNA has been described as a leftist professor of the University of Habana who was active in many PSP front groups. CORONA, ESCALONA, and PEREZ all have been described in the past as Communist lawyers and PSP members.
- 6) The FONU took over the Confederacion de Trabajadores Cubanos (CTC - Confederation of Cuban Workers) a few hours after the collapse of the BATISTA regime on 1 January. The Communists were represented in the FONU. On 22 January, however, the Provisional Government issued a decree establishing a non-Communist nine-member national directorate for the CTC for the purpose of eliminating Communists from directive positions.
- 7) The PSP has been so successful in identifying itself with the 26 of July Movement that it is almost impossible to distinguish between Communism and 26 of July nationalism. It is believed that PSP policy is formulated by top Party leaders, but it also is influenced by GUEVARA, NUNEZ, and Raul CASTRO, all of whom are in close contact with the PSP. Although the Communists do not dominate the government, police, or military forces, they have infiltrated them to a certain degree. The 26 of July government leaders refuse to recognize the danger of this infiltration, however, so it is unlikely that the situation will improve in the near future.