

W. H. [unclear]
RETURN TO CIA
Background Use Only
Do Not Reproduce

Jose PUENTE Planco

During his university days, Jose, who is now RAI's Secretary for Student Youth, was a well known Cuban student leader, who was later to become the first president of the FEU after Castro came to power.

As a student leader in 1953 PUENTE was elected president of the Hava University Student Union. At that time he and his brother, Roberto got into trouble with Batista, so in 1955, when Batista closed the university, PUENTE continued to conspire against Batista and eventually had to escape to Venezuela in order to save his neck. He subsequently came to the U. S. In 58 he left the US and found his way into the Escambray mountains where he joined anti-Batista forces, not necessarily Castro forces, for there were many anti-Batista groups in the mountain at that time. He did, however, join Castro forces as the campaign ~~neared~~ neared its climax.

After the successful revolt, PUENTE ~~returned~~ returned to Hava University to continue his Law studies. He was elected the FEU president in a close election against students backed by Castro.

After graduation PUENTE worked with INIT, a Cuban Tourist Commission, but in late 1959 he became convinced that the Castro movement was "not for him" and soon began to conspire against Castro.

In early 1960 PUENTE went underground and reportedly stayed sub rosa until the Bay of Pigs invasion at which time he came out to assist in the uprising. However, in the ensuing ~~roundup~~ roundup of opposition groups, Jose and his brother, Roberto, were caught and imprisoned. According to PUENTE, he tried to escape twice and was caught both times.

After nearly nine months in prison, Jose and his brother, Roberto were released by Castro as the result of direct intervention of Felicia King, Deputy to the Panamanian National Assembly and extraordinarily pro-Castro, who was approached by Puente's mother in Panama and asked to try to get her sons free. In March 1960, ~~the~~ the boys were released and immediately returned to with ~~the~~ the FEU in Havana.

It is a known fact that Jose PUENTE, brother of ~~the~~ the brother of Jose's sister ~~working~~ working for James F. [unclear], the ~~of~~ of [unclear], and is ~~involved~~ involved in [unclear].

(Richard [unclear]) 03

27. [unclear]

1/90

Comments:

One could probably and perhaps properly INFER that Jose is a Castro agent, but aside from the episode dealing with his release, at the behest of Thelma King, and the report that he carried with him, after his release from prison, 150 scholarships, which appears to have some significance, there is no conclusive evidence pointing toward Jose's involvement, in past or present, with Castro's security apparatus.

There is, however, considerably more evidence that he is not an agent of Castro's. For examples:

1. He has fought against Castro and was imprisoned by him.
2. ~~That~~ He has reportedly denounced Thelma King openly.
3. ~~That~~ He does not get along with his brother Jorge, who is tied in with Piniero.
4. He has broadcasted anti-Castro and anti-Batista propaganda from Radio CIENMIL, a panamanian station.
5. ~~That~~ ^{claiming to be} he is anti-Castro, Anti-Communist and pro-democratic and that his actions, according to Jose, since 1953 should speak for themselves, including his actions and propaganda work against Castro since his arrival in the United States.

I don't believe I'm that naive to think that Jose's actions to date could not be part of a pre-arranged plan, but the evidence available points in the other direction.

I do suggest ~~two~~ two possible alternatives, the first of which I prefer:

1. Apprise Ray of this information and let him determine Puente's bona fides; caution him to be discreet with his future plans and avoid telling PUENTE.
2. Let us determine PUENTE's bona fides by re-tracing, including Bureau checks and ~~AK/T~~ files. Determine his relationship with Jorge in Cuba and attempt to ascertain whether he is ^{and plausible} corresponding with him. If desired, we could ~~xxx~~ begin a mail intercept. In line with your thoughts re not being an intell unit for RAY, I ~~xxxxxx~~ suggest the former proposal.