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Manuel Ray Rivero

HSCA # 009 005 memo to
G.R. [unclear] dtel 6/28/78
Interview w/ Manolo
Ray Rivero from
Fonzi/gonzalez

Ray was born in Cuba in 1924. Because of his outstanding performance as a Civil Engineer he was granted a scholarship in 1947 by the Cuban Ministry of Public Works to study at the University of Utah. Ray was in the U.S. for two years but did not complete his work for a Masters degree. He held various positions in the engineering field, one of which involved was Project Manager for the construction of the Havana Hilton Hotel. In May 1957 he organized the Civic Resistance Movement which supervised sabotage & acts of terrorism against the Batista regime. Fidel Castro appointed him Minister of Public Works in February 1959. In November 1959 he was arrested and relieved of his position [FBI Correlation Study, Ray file, # 97-4546, Sec. 1, HSCA 005990, P 27] Ray deserted Castro because of his Communist connections. He founded the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo (MRP) in 1960, serving as its Chief with the following individuals completing the leadership; Raul Chibas, Special Assistant to Ray; Juan Esteves Ramirez, Secretary; Ramon Berguin, Military Intelligence Matters; and Rogelio Cisneros, Chief of MRP in Cuba. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol II)

006466, p 9, (Rev 8)

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In the summer of 1960, Ray was being

Admunt - Another CIA officer, who met privately with Ray in Nov 1960, stated that his political posture was doubtful as far as U.S. Government acceptance is concerned. (CIA/DDO-Ray Vol II, Cable to Director from MASH, 11/17/60)

actively recruited by the CIA to become a member of the FRD, (CIA/DDO approaches being made through Raul Chelas. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol I) Rays background was questioned by the State Department (CIA/DDO Ray Vol I memo to WH/4 Chief from Acting Chief, WH. 27 Sept 1960. Subject: State approval to include Manuel Ray Rivers into the FRD Complex) and by the Miami CIA office (CIA/DDO Ray Vol I, Cable from MASH to WH9, Sept 29, 1960) but he was granted Provisional Operational Approval by the CIA on 25 Oct 1960 (CIA/DDO Ray Vol I - POA form). His personnel papers contain the following assessment: "Subject has definite political action potential, is a pro-democratic official of government who is not in sympathy with aims of international Communism and who is interested in strengthening ties between Cuba & U.S." (CIA/DDO Ray Vol I, (FRQ Part 2) Sec. VI)

Not everyone in the CIA who had dealings with Ray were in agreement with this assessment. In a memo for Record dated 11/21/60, it was reported that, "... Ray did not politically represent anything to cheer about." (CIA/DDO Ray Vol II, memo for Record 11/21/60 Subj: meeting with King and Esterline on subject of handling MRF.) *^{Admunt} Another later memo for Record states that Ray's ~~so~~ actions all seemed directed toward making him the future

power in Cuba rather than overthrowing Castro.
 (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. V, Memo for Record, 2 June 1961,
 Subj: Relations w/ Manolo Ray + the MRP from (James A. Noel))
 The memo further pointed out that it was
 believed Ray was so far "left" in his thinking
 that he would be as dangerous (or more so in the
 long run) to U.S. interests as Castro, if he ever
 got to be a power in Cuba. (Ibid) ~~Ray~~^{Ray}
 submitted a detailed study of a general program
 to attain the liberation of Cuba whose general
 thesis stated that the MRP believed the best way
 to represent the aims of the Cuban people
 is offered by the democratic left. (CIA/DDO
 Ray Vol. VI, 9 June 1961, general program study)

Ray made his political position very
 clear during a private meeting with ~~two~~
 CIA officers on Nov. 15, 1960 (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. II,
 Cable to Director from MASH) He said the MRP
 did not wish to reinstate the 1940 Cuban
 Constitution and that the Castro laws passed at
 the beginning of his regime would be
 promulgated. (Ibid) Ray ~~has~~ further ~~stated~~
 informed the CIA officers that he believed
 the state should regulate private investments
 and utilities should be nationalized. (Ibid)
 Charges of "Fidelismo without Fidel" were made
 against Ray's MRP. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. II, Contact report
 from (Wallace A. Parlett) 10/17/60, Subj: Meeting w/ Juan Estavez

Ray had resisted joining the CLC because he felt the members were too restrained and he did not want to become a part of a situation in which someone else was running the show for the epiles. (HSCA # - Interview of Harold Ray-Rivas, 6/28/78) epile

The CIA received ^{negative} information about Ray from prominent epiled Cubans. Ray was described ^{by} as highly dangerous because of his ambition to play a prominent role in the Cuban government after Castro's overthrow. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol II, memo for Record - John D. Peters, 11/8/60, Subj: Contact report on meeting with Rogelio Gonzalez). Mario Cardona was opposed to Ray, believing his program was too Marxist (CIA/DDO Ray, Vol III, Information Report from U.S. citizen, free-lance writer + part-time sugar broker, 12/22/60) and also said Ray was bitterly anti-American as well as probably totalitarian in his thinking. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol IV, memo to S- ^{Dr} Bule from ARA, ^{Philip W. Bonsal} March 16, 1961, Subj: Recent Cuban Developments) Manuel Artime advised that the ~~MPP~~ Ray's group, MRP, was opposed to banning the Communist Party and in favor of "nationalizing everything" (CIA/DDO Ray Vol IV, Cable to Bell from JMWAVE, March 1, 1961) Although aware of his controversial stands, Ray was actively recruited to join the FRD by the CIA. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol II, Cable to Director from MASH, 11/17/60) Ray was described as "a natural leader of highest intellect, deepest sincerity and conviction." by his recruiter (Ibid) Ray received full operational approval as a political asset on 7 Feb. 1961 (CIA/DDO Ray Vol IV) and accepted appointment to the CRC on 27 March 1961 (CIA/DDO Ray Vol IV, memo for Record, 27 Mar 1961, by Gerald Droller, Subj: Ray accepts appointment to Council...)

He has stated to HSCA investigators that certain influential & wealthy Americans, among them William Buckley, opposed him and a lot of heavy propaganda was being circulated accusing him of being Communist. (HSCA #09005 P.4 - interview w/ Manolo Ray Reado, 6/28/78 by Forzi & Gorgalbe)

memo to Mr. Rost. Basing

Within a week, Ray met with a CIA officer and complained that Miro was backing away from his commitments & was not willing to give Ray any voice in the Council. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol V, Cable ~~from~~ ^{from} JMWAVE ~~from~~ ^{to} Bell, Apr. ~~2~~ ³, 1961) Ray withdrew from the CRC/FRO shortly after the Bay of Pigs invasion and requested the CIA to give him support independent of ~~the~~ that organization. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. II, memo for Record, 2 June 1961, Subj: Relations with Manolo Ray & the MRP, signed (James A. Noel))

In October of 1961, the Puerto Rican Planning Board announced that Ray had accepted a position as consultant to that Board & would be residing in P.R. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. VI, memo for Chief/WH Division, 10 Oct 1961 to [redacted] Subj: General - Cuban matters; Specific - Manuel (Manolo) Ray) Ray was looked upon with great favor by the Puerto Rican government. (CIA/DDO Vol VII, cable dtd 2 July 1962 to Director from (San Juan))

Manuel Ray became actively engaged in recruitment of Castro defectors in the summer of 1962. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol VII, cable dated 25 July 1962) His efforts were directed toward the (Cuban Ambassador in Mexico) (CIA/DDO Ray Vol VII, cable to (Mexico City) fr. Director, 23 Aug 1962) ~~and~~ ^{later,} Cuban officials in Paris and Brussels (CIA/DDO, Ray file Vol II cable to Director (from Paris), 19 June 1962, # 7272). File reviews failed to ascertain if any of his endeavors were fruitful.

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In the two months preceding the assassination of JFK, Ray was travelling in Latin America - Honduras ~~in October~~ ^{late Sept} 1963 (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. XI - Field Info Report dtd 1 Oct 1963) & Costa Rica ~~in~~ in late Sept 1963 (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. XI Dispatched to Chief/WHD from (CS/Panama) dtd 3 Oct 63), and Venezuela in October (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. XI, memo for Record 2 Oct 1963, fr. Alfonso Rodriguez) devoting his full time to JURE (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. XI, Draft, dtd 4 Oct 63 by Rodriguez, Subj: Manuel Ray Rivers)

On Nov. 1, he met with a CIA agent ~~out~~ on St. Thomas Island to discuss JURE plans to begin operations inside Cuba by the end of December. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. XI - memo for Record from Alfonso Rodriguez, Subj: Meeting w/ Ray in St. Thomas, 31 Oct & ~~Nov~~ (Nov 1963))

JURE was to be involved in an infiltration plan, known as Operation Bola, (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. XI, Cable to JMWAVE fr. Director dtd 3 Dec 1963) to commence when the CIA cached materials for JURE on 25 Nov. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. XI, Cable to JMWAVE fr. Dir. 3 Dec 1963: 18 Nov 1963).

Ray told HSCA investigators that he was in Caracas on Nov. 22, 1963 with Rogelio Cisneros and could not recall the dates the CIA/JURE operation was to have taken place. (HSCA # 009005, ^{6/28/78 memo to G. Robert BERRY,} Interview w. Manolo Ray Rivero, ~~6/7/78~~ ^{PP 6-7} by Tonzi & Gonzalez). The JURE ship failed to pick up the cached materials on 25 Nov. 1963 and Ray ^{gave the CIA} had no full explanation for ~~his~~ this failure (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. XI, memo for Record: 13 Dec 1963, from Alfonso Rodriguez)

In April of 1964, word was received by the WH division at the CIA that Ray had been closely associated with a known Puerto Rican Communist, ~~and~~ ~~he~~ was friendly with ^{the} Puerto Ricans who were working on the renovation of the White House & the group that tried to assassinate Truman.

(Note: Truman resided at Blair House during the renovation of the White House & assassination attempt was made at Blair House - date?)

(CIA/DDO, Ray - assorted documents - Dispatch to Deputy Chief, WH/SA from Chief of Station, SJWAVE, dtd 14 Apr 1964 in Mexico, D.F.)

The source of this information was referred to by cryptonym and when HSCA researcher asked ^{in 1978} for the identity of the individual, word was received that he was a "current asset" of the CIA so his identity could not be revealed. This information was disseminated to the Secret Service (HSCA 008290, Item 3 - Secret Service Administrative Profile, 3/27/75 on Manuel Ray Rivero, Case # CO2 3315, Subj. #00311) and the FBI (HSCA #006468, Item 5, P. 1, FBI # 97-4546, memo from San Juan) (SECRET) dtd Oct 12, 1964. Re: JURE)

Ray's primary activities the first half of 1964 involved infiltration plans into Cuba and are discussed in the JURE section. The failure of the attempt brought Ray's prestige to a ~~low~~ near absolute low point among the Cuban spies (CIA/DDO Ray Vol XV, Cable to Director from SJWAVE, 6/10/64.) In an effort to enable JURE to move its activities from U.S. territory, the CIA made a final payment

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To Raip group of \$75,000 for the period of 1 Oct - 31 Dec
1964. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol XVII, Autonomous Operations -
Operating Plan.)