

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

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AGENCY INFORMATION

AGENCY : SSCIA
RECORD NUMBER : 157-10004-10241

RECORDS SERIES :
CABLE

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 109-12-210

Released under the John F. Kennedy
Assassination Records Collection
Act of 1992 (44 USC 2107 Note).
Case#:NW 54653 Date: 10-23-2017

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

ORIGINATOR : FBI
FROM : SAC, MIAMI
TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

TITLE :
FOREIGN POLITICAL MATTERS - CUBA

DATE : 04/06/64
PAGES : 9

SUBJECTS :
FOREIGN POLITICAL MATTERS - CUBA
CUBA EXILES
HUMBOLDT INCIDENT #7

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION : U
RESTRICTIONS : 1B, 2, 4, DONOR REST., REFERRED
CURRENT STATUS : X
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 09/01/94

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS :

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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Memorandum

TO : Director, FBI (109-12-210)

DATE: APR 6 1964

FROM : SAC, Miami (105-17) (P)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN POLITICAL MATTERS - CUBA

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Handwritten: A. Lando O. Cabello

Transmitted herewith are 9 copies of LHM dated and captioned as above.

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MM T-1 is *Source* ON *8/23/94*

MM T-2 is *Source* RELEASE IN FULL RELEASE IN PART

MM T-3 is *Source* TOTAL DENIAL

Source advised SA EDWIN L. SWEET that he was at Humboldt #7 at the time the attempt was made to arrest the young revolutionaries, and that all of them were armed and were firing on the police when they were killed.

This information and memo are submitted to the Bureau at this time because in addition to constant broadcasts from Cuba and news reports appearing in the Cuban newspapers coming out of Cuba, the local Miami papers are offering numerous possible objectives of the trial and the matter of the trial is a main diet of conversation in the Cuban exile colony in Miami. It is felt that an analysis at this time of the possible outcome of the trial, as viewed by three Cuban experts on the matter, may be of interest to the Bureau and to other branches of the United States government.

Copies are disseminated locally due to the interest of INS and CIA.

- 2 - Bureau (Encls. 9) (RM) *id*
- 6 - Miami (2-105-1747)
- (1- *[redacted]*) *id*
- (1- *[redacted]*) *id*
- (1-100-13077) *id*

ENCLOSURE

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105-77667 (C-81A)

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Date 1-15-64



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No. 105-1747

Miami, Florida

APR 6 1964

RE: FOREIGN POLITICAL MATTERS - CUBA
(Humboldt #7 Incident)

Present Publicity

Radio broadcasts emanating from Havana, Cuba, heard clearly in Miami, Florida, and Cuban newspapers "Revolucion" and "Hoy", both under the direction and control of the Cuban Government, have been devoting lengthy newscasts and news reports to a trial presently being conducted in Havana, Cuba.

The trial involves the events leading up to the police action at Calle Humboldt #7, Havana, on April 20, 1957, which resulted in the deaths of Fructuoso Rodriguez, Joe Westbrook, Juan Pedro Carbo Servia, and Jose Machado Rodriguez, during which period Fulgencio Batista was President of Cuba.

All Cuban newspapers in Cuba, since Fidel Castro's advent to power on January 1, 1959, refer to this matter as the "assassination of the students" by gunmen in the employ of Esteban Ventura Novo, then Chief of Police. There are Cuban police sources, some of whom actually participated in the action at Humboldt #7, who stoutly maintain that those killed were wild radicals, all armed, who refused to surrender to the police upon demand. There were, and continue to be, many charges and counter-charges regarding the identity of the informant or informants who told the police that the students were hiding at Humboldt #7.

Castro's Interest is Not Justice

Knowledgeable Cubans, identified below, declare that Fidel Castro has no interest in justice, or in the merits of the case at all; that as a matter of fact, the four student

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revolutionaries killed were not in favor of Castro as a leader and he either held them in very low estimate or actually regarded them as rivals for favor and publicity.

It appears further, according to these sources, undoubtedly to be true that Castro loaths and despises Major Rolando Cubela, the first leader of the Federacion de Estudiantes Universitarios (Federation of University Students - FEU) and Faure Chomon, Castro's former Ambassador to Russia, now Minister of Communications; however, Castro now allegedly sees a chance to use Chomon to direct attention to himself, grow still stronger in the ranks of the Communist Party (CP), and uphold his popularity with his Cuban supporters.

Stage Setting for Retrial of Informant

MM T-1, [REDACTED] furnished a copy of the newspaper "Hoy" for March 17, 1964. Page one announces that the death penalty was given to Marcos Rodriguez Alfonso for informing on his comrades on April 20, 1957. He allegedly confessed he had notified "Batistan" Esteban Ventura Novo that the revolutionaries were meeting at Humboldt #7, and in the ensuing raid the above four young revolutionaries were killed.

One of the most important witnesses for the prosecution was Faure Chomon, who told the court about the low moral character of the defendant and agreed with other witnesses that the defendant had long been suspected of being the informer.

Radio Progreso in its newscast of March 21, 1964, quoted a letter from Prime Minister Fidel Castro to Blas Roca, one of the "old guard" leaders of the CP, and presently

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Director of "Hoy", which has long been the official organ of the Cuban CP. In this letter Castro pointed out there is some confusion concerning the trial of Marcos Rodriguez, and some "intriguers" who are trying to make capital of it. He stated some people are "so brazen as to insinuate that the revolution is afraid to make the whole trial public." He said the statement of Comrade Faure Chomon at the trial did not appear in its entirety, but only sketchy parts of it, and this has delighted certain elements who do not have the slightest concern for truth themselves, elements described by Castro as not being "honest revolutionaries".

Castro concluded the letter by instructing Blas Roca to publish Faure Chomon's whole testimony, and declared he was ordering the trial to be reopened and to be made public.

Radio Rebelde at 1:00 P.M. on the same date, March 21, 1964, gave a detailed summary of Faure Chomon's testimony at the trial.

Chomon pointed out that Rodriguez had long been a suspect, that he had large sums of money, and had paid for his own trip to Brazil and Costa Rica. Chomon noted that that Marcos Rodriguez had succeeded in getting a scholarship to go to Prague, where he was arrested and returned to Cuba as a possible agent of CIA, and it was after this that Marcos Rodriguez confessed his guilt.

Chomon read a letter which the defendant sent to Joaquin Ordoqui, in which he explained that his mission was to do intelligence work for the Revolutionary Directory. cub

Ordoqui also long has been an "old guard" member and leader of the CP. He is supposedly in charge of the

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training of the military and guerilla tactics in the militia under the present set-up of the Cuban CP which is known as the PURS (United Party of the Socialist Revolution).

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AIP (Agencia de Informaciones Periodisticas - Agency of Newspaper Reporters) for March 16, 1964, noted that there had been considerable discussion about the difficulties between Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Minister of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Minister of Industries. AIP noted that on March 6, 1964, at a meeting in the Palace, Castro stated "Che" deserved the very high title of "Worker of the Vanguard", a statement interpreted to mean a pat on the back for the Argentine communist and an indication of which side Fidel Castro favors.

AIP further noted that the creation of the Ministry of Industries, and the appointment of "Che" to direct it, took away some of the power of INRA, headed by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez.

Possible Consequences of the Trial

MM T-1 stated on March 27, 1964, that since Fidel Castro is not actually interested in justice or in who informed on whom in the matter of the Humboldt #7 affair, he believes a power struggle is in order in Cuba which may not have any great significance, or which may touch off a large-scale removal from power of certain old line communist members.

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MM T-2, who is acquainted with persons high up in the Cuban Government, and with several leaders of the Cuban Communist Party, reported in late October, 1963, that Raul Roa Kouri, Cuban Ambassador to Brazil, and son of Cuba's Minister of Foreign Relations,

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Raul Roa Garcia, had stated that a movement would begin in Cuba in the not too distant future which would not be an actual purge in the sense of putting leading old line members of the CP to death, but which would remove them from posts of responsibility and gradually reduce them to positions of less and less importance.

MM T-2 stated on March 30, 1964, that Castro's action in demanding this retrial cannot be imagined by anyone familiar with Castro or with Cuban politics, as being evidence of an interest in justice. MM T-2 stated that Castro actually loaths and despises Faure Chomon.

~~MM T-2~~ he recalled that Faure Chomon withheld from the new Castro government a large amount of ammunition and guns immediately after January 1, 1959. It was his possession of these weapons which led to Castro's now famous slogan, "Armas, para que?" (Arms, for what?) He made Chomon turn in his arms and allegedly sent him to Moscow for two reasons. One reason was that he had promised Chomon, when fighting in the mountains, that if and when Cuba established relations with Russia, Chomon would be Cuba's first Ambassador to Russia. The second reason allegedly was to get rid of Chomon.

MM T-2 stated that Castro also has nothing but disdain and contempt for Major Rolando Cubela. It is, of course, a matter of common knowledge that Chomon and Cubela are widely regarded, by Cubans in a position to know them well, as perverts and as having no real moral or political scruples.

MM T-2 stated Ordoqui has been naming some of his political cronies to important positions in the PURS, which would correspond to Commissars in the Soviet Union. While he is only an old man, MM T-2 stated that Ordoqui has been growing in stature, to the annoyance of Fidel Castro.

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MM T-2 concluded that Ordoqui may now be reduced greatly in importance. Fidel Castro may use the trial as a springboard to show that other people guessed wrong and that the "old guard" of the CP, including Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, made some serious mistakes, since the informer, Marcos Rodriguez, admittedly was a member of the Cuban Communist Youth Movement for many years and even enjoyed a position of confidence among old Cuban Communist leaders. MM T-2 stated Carlos Rafael Rodriguez may again be reduced in importance, as well as Edith Buchaca, also a Communist Party Cuba leader, former wife of Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, who is presently married to communist leader Joaquin Ordoqui.

MM T-2 said that no American observer should be illuded that this indicates any kind of break between Fidel Castro and the CP. It is merely to show: (1) that Fidel Castro is still the "maximum leader" of the Cuban revolution and the Cuban people; and (2) that while those downgraded are communists, he will direct all of his energies and speeches to showing they are bad communists who have made serious mistakes and errors in judgment. MM T-2 concluded that in all probability those downgraded for mistakes and errors in judgment, since they are in no position to defy Fidel Castro, can-expect no backing from their Russian masters.

MM T-3, ~~also a former Cuban police investigator,~~
~~and one of those present at Machado's trial,~~ stated on March 30, 1964, that it is a well known fact that Faure Chomon and Rolando Cubela, both fast friends and degenerate perverts, were part-time informers of the Cuban police. According to his information, they each received part of the money which was paid to Marcos Armando Rodriguez Alfonso, the one who allegedly gave the information directly to Ventura Novo.

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According to MM T-3, it is not even a secret, but is generally known, especially to Cuban revolutionary leaders like Fidel Castro, that Chomon and Cubela were unscrupulous, conniving informers, who many times played both sides against the middle. He therefore agreed with the other Cuban sources above to the extent that Castro is not interested in the cause of justice, but is interested in turning this case into a powerful political weapon for his personal aggrandizement, and in order to weed out certain individuals he considers to be a hindrance to his progress and to his control over the many new members of the Cuban CP. He does not expect, however, for repercussions to be far-reaching at this time, and does not expect executions of old line CP members who "have erred in their judgment in the past".

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Miami, Florida

APR 8 1964

Title FOREIGN POLITICAL MATTERS - CUBA

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Reference memo dated and captioned as above.

All sources (except any listed below) whose identities are concealed in referenced communication have furnished reliable information in the past.

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