

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR



Date:

To:

Honorable Adolf A. Berle, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of State

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice

Washington, D. C.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
BY SPECIAL MESSENGER



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From: J. Edgar Hoover, Director - Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject: Communist Activities in Ecuador

As of possible interest to you, there is being transmitted herewith a copy of a report setting forth information regarding Communist activities in Ecuador. You will recall from previous information submitted that Mr. Pedro Saad, residing at Guayaquil, Ecuador, is one of the present leaders of the Communist Party in that country.

This information has been received from a confidential and reliable source, and has been made available to the Military Attache, the Naval Attache, and the American Embassy at Quito, Ecuador.

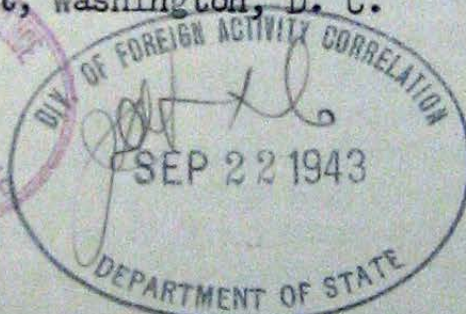
Enclosure

cc - Director of Naval Intelligence
Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

cc - Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2
War Department, Washington, D. C.
Attention: Colonel L. R. Forney



File Jmu
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SEP 21 1949

Re: COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN GUAYAQUIL
Ecuador Subversive Activities - R

The following is the text of a report from a confidential source of Source S-1 concerning Communist activities in Guayaquil:

"The Anti-Nazi-Fascist Committee of Guayaquil, which is dominated and directed mainly by the Communist Party, claims that the coordination office in Guayaquil does not cooperate with them, and that for this reason the efforts of the committee to assist the democratic cause are seriously handicapped. In reality, however, the plans of the Communists are to gain sympathies and prestige among the masses, and especially among the small merchants and middle classes. This they expect to achieve by gaining the confidence of the coordination office. With other words, the coordination office is intended to be used as a factor of prestige and propaganda for the Communists' own aims. At the last confidential meeting of Guayaquil Communists, it was decided to investigate the reasons why the coordination office does not give the Anti-Nazi-Fascist Committee the desired support, and who in that office are the responsible persons for the opposition to the committee. Mr. Pedro SAAD, Guayaquil Communist leader, told me personally that numerous small merchants do not dare assist the committee's meeting because they are afraid that they might be blackmarked by the Americans if they do and that they would willingly assist if the committee could show that the coordination office cooperates with it. Upon my question whether in his opinion (SAAD'S) the Communists would take advantage of the presence of these merchants to propagate Communism, he answered:

"Many of them are already our political friends, but if we have not a 100% pro-democrat face value, and if our reputation to that effect is doubtful, these people worry whether there is not a danger of their inclusion in the black list if they come to our meetings. We therefore need the cooperation of the coordination office with the committee anti-Nazi-Fascists. We also know that the American Consulate General in this city and the coordination office are often in trouble with each other, and we might inform Washington to that effect. What we want is a change of personnel in the coordination office or a more favorable position towards us on the part of the present personnel."

"In continuation, Mr. SAAD stated that the committee anti-Nazi Fascists is composed of the following federations and political parties: Union Sindical (Workers' Union), Students' Federation, Sociedad de Escritores y Artistas Independientes (Society of Independent Writers and Artists), Socialist Party and Communist Party. Upon my question as to whether any of the three aforementioned federations is dominated by the Communist Party, or the Communist Party has a strong influence upon it, he answered:

"The Union Sindical is practically guided and directed by us. It has a membership in the province of Guayas of about 15,000, and is divided into 72 groups. Each group represents the workers of an individual industry. For instance, there is a shoe and leather workers' union, a cement workers' union, an Amazon mine workers' union, et cetera. Of the 72 groups forming the 'union sindical', the directors, secretaries, et cetera, of 53 groups are members of the Communist Party. The remaining groups are in their majority directed by socialists. We have, he continued, also a stronghold among the Students' Federation, although there are few Communist Party members among the students, but many sympathizers. The Society of Independent Writers and Artists is composed of Communists and Socialists."

BY SPECIAL AGENT

"When I asked him how many registered members does the Communist Party have, he said that he did not exactly remember but that in his estimation there are in the city of Guayaquil about 500. He furthermore said that the stronghold of the Party is not so much in the number of registered members as in the number of sympathizers who form about 80% of the total of workers and a considerable percentage of the total middle class and employees. He also gave me to understand that the influence of the Communists is increasing among agricultural workers and among the soldiers, and that it has become evident in recent months that Communism is slowly but surely extending in all Latin American countries. Upon my question as to whether there exists any relations or contacts among the Communists of the different countries, and what such relations or contacts are, he answered:

"It is nominally not the Communist Party which maintains such relations, but there does exist a close contact, and this is maintained by the 'Uniones Sindicales' (workers' unions), which, however, are practically dominated by Communists and to a smaller extent by Socialists. Union leaders, mostly members of the Communist Party, visit neighboring countries frequently and establish on such occasions contacts of close cooperation. It is as a rule not practicable to use the word 'Communist' for visitors, as experience has shown that there is then too much opposition to the traveling on the part of governments. It is more practicable to call a man 'sindicalista' instead of Communist, as a Communist representative will hardly ever be given traveling facilities, whereas as the representative of workers' unions, he mostly will."

Comité Anti-Nazi-Fascista

In the Guayaquil daily newspaper "El Universo" for August 4, 1943, there appeared a write-up of a meeting on the evening of August 2 of the Guayaquil Comité ANTI NAZI-FASCISTA discussing the fall of Benito Mussolini. The meeting was provided over by Enrique Gil Gilbert, General Secretary of the Comité, who has previously been complained of as an active Communist in the Guayaquil area, and author of the novel "Nuestra Paz" currently being published in English in the United States. He is a left-wing intellectual, poet and novelist, and for this reason may have acquired the reputation of being a member of the Communist Party, without actually belonging.

The speakers were J. REAL, Guayaquil University student; Segundo RAMOS, representing the workers' unions; and Vitorio ORVINO, Italian anti-Fascist. ORVINO stated that the Italian people could not be called Fascist since, out of a population of 42 million, only 10,000 are Fascists and although Badoglio is not a Fascist Party member, he subjects himself to the orders of the House of Savoy.

Of these speakers no previous record is available concerning J. REAL. According to Source S-2, however, a Guayaquil University student named Carlos REAL was one of the leaders of a student riot on the evening of July 12, 1943, in favor of replacing the present University's rector, Dr. Teodoro MALDONADO Carbo by Dr. José Vicente TRUJILLO, the affair resulting in the latter's leaving the country for the United States. The speaker, Segundo RAMOS, who resides at Calles Clemente Ballón & Moro, Guayaquil, a barber, is secretary of the Unión Sindical por los Agrarios, and has previously been reported as a member of the Communist Party.

With respect to the third speaker, Viterio ORVISTO, alias Victor ORVISTO, it is known that he is a member of the Italian Anti-Fascist Sociedad Mussini in Guayaquil and is the brother of Dr. Ciro ORVISTO, Apartado 1247, Guayaquil. He is presently being investigated as involved in the Black Market trade in United States dollars in Guayaquil. He has not previously been complained of as having any Communist connections.

Strike in Ambato

According to articles in the Quito papers there was held a textile strike in the "La Europea" mill in Ambato during the first days of August, 1943. The matter was subsequently settled through the intervention of the government and no serious repercussions were felt. It may be noted as a matter of general interest that the Secretary General of the workers' committee in this plant, Carlos E. VIERA, has previously been reported as an active member of the Communist Party, and that Marcos A. BUEBANO, a member of such committee, is likewise a reported Party member.

Source S-3 has advised that the following telegram was sent from Guayaquil under date of August 5, 1943, to the Ministers of Social Provision and of Labor, Quito:

"UNION SINDICAL DEL GUAYAS SUPPORTS THE WORKERS OF AMBATO AND REQUESTS INTERVENTION OF MINISTER OF LABOR FOR FAVORABLE SOLUTION OF CONFLICT. WE BELIEVE NATIONAL PRODUCTION SHOULD NOT BE DISTURBED BUT NEVERTHELESS WORKERS CAN LIVE THANKS TO UNLIMITED EXPLOITATION AND SPECULATION.

YOURS TRULY,
"SECRETARY GENERAL"

This wire was sent by Justo E. BRIONES, Vales 607, Guayaquil, who is likely identical with Victor Hugo BRIONES previously reported as Secretary General of the Union Sindical del Guayas and an organizer of the Comité Antifascista of Guayaquil.

This same source likewise revealed that the following wire was sent from Guayaquil on August 6, 1943:

"SECRETARY GENERAL WORKERS COMMITTEE FACTORY 'EUROPEA' AMBATO

" WORKERS COMMITTEE NATIONAL BAKERY GUAYAQUIL IN PLenary SESSION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAS RESOLVED TO ADHERE TO YOUR JUST AND LEGAL CAUSE AS AN ACT OF CLASS SOLIDARITY, ALSO TO MAKE OUR SINCERE OFFER MATERIAL FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR MOST CHERISHED IDEALS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR TROUBLEING TO ADVISE US OF ALL DATA CONCERNING THE PRESENT CONFLICT IN YOUR ENTERPRISE.

UNITED IN THE STRUGGLE,
"SECRETARY GENERAL
MANUEL CARRION."

Manuel CARRION, Calle Santa Ana Cerro, Guayaquil, employed in the National Bakery, has previously been reported as Secretary General of the Sociedad de Carpinteros and a leading Communist Party member.

Progressive Meetings

Source S-4 has indicated that the Partido Comunista Ecuatoriano is contemplating holding its annual congress some time in the first part of September either in Cayambe or Milagro, the latter town being the most active Communist center on the Coast. No more specific word has been received as yet about this congress.

Source S-1 has indicated that a meeting is to take place in the town of Milagro of agricultural cooperatives (farm laborers who with credits from the Banco Hipotecario rent land and plant rice and sugar on a cooperative basis). The principal members of the cooperatives belong to the Communist Party or are at least sympathizers. They are directed by the Milagro Communist Haptali PACABECO LEON. The motive of the meeting is to protest against the high rents payable for land and the high interests charged on credits by the bank Banco Hipotecario. The cooperatives have invited the Director of the Banco Hipotecario, who has accepted the invitation. They will propose to him that the Bank buy two farms located in the Milagro Zone, and on which the cooperatives could then work, instead of renting land from individual land owners. The Guayaquil Communist leader, Pedro Antonio SAAZ, has been invited to the meeting as a guest of honor, so has the communist writer, Enrique GIL GILBERT. The meeting is given the character of a purely economic issue, but Communists direct it. There will be at the meeting about 600 persons, mostly farm laborers from the Milagro Zone. The meeting is expected to take place between the 6th and 8th of September.

Propaganda

Source S-4 has furnished the following list of bookstores in Quito where Communist literature is obtainable:

"LIBRERIA" owned by Party member Cesar MENDIETA G. located in Calle Venezuela opposite Circulo Militar.

"FUENTE DE CULTURA" owned by Carlos BRAYUNALO, delegate of the Communist Party to the Alianza Democrática Ecuatoriana, located in Calle Chile.

"BAZAR LULU" owned by Gustavo REYES, Secretary General of the Communist Party, and his wife, likewise a Communist, located in Calle Manabí between Vargas and Venezuela.

"AGENCIA GENERAL DE PUBLICACIONES" owned by Jorge IGARRA, Prominent Ecuadorian writer and member of the Socialist Party, store often frequented by Primitivo BARRATO, a director of the Unión Sindical del Pichincha and leading member of the Communist Party.

"CLARIDAD" owned by Miguel CRUZ TOCCANO, former sailor, member of Socialist Party, located in Calle Guayaquil near San Blas Market.

This same source indicated that it had been possible to purchase at the "FUENTE DE CULTURA" a cloth-bound 430 page book in Spanish entitled "Historia del Partido Comunista Bolchevique de la URSS" at a cost of only ten sucres (\$0.73) which was printed in Russia and apparently distributed below cost. It was pointed out by S-4 that the Communists of Ecuador as a Party are too impoverished to subsidize such sales and that in all likelihood the Soviet government is backing the

distribution of the publication. Volumes of similar size and quality sell for from 15 to 30 sucres in Quito. The volume states it was printed in Moscow in 1940 by "Ediciones en Lenguas Extranjeras" and is a "Compendio Redactado por una Comision del Comité Central del P.C. (b) de la U.R.S.S., aprobado por el Comité Central del P. C. (B) de la U.R.S.S. 1938." The book also bears a stamp on the fly leaf stating "EDITORIAL 'PAGINAS', EDICIONES SOCIALES, O'REILLY 505-Tel. A-6264, Apartado 2213, HABANA, CUBA," through which source it was apparently distributed.

The MOVIMIENTO ANTIFASCISTA DEL ECUADOR under the guidance of Raymond MERINO continues to publish the small tabloid "ANTINAZI" printed by EDITORIAL FERNANDEZ, Quito. Inspection of the issue for August 17, 1943, reveals that it contains a pro-United States article on the Monroe Doctrine, contrasting the Good Neighbor Policy with that of Theodore Roosevelt which it considers was Fascist in nature. There is an article entitled "Mussolini in the anti-chamber of Hell" and an editorial called "We Want to Win the War but We Don't Want to Lose the Peace" advocating annihilation of those responsible for starting the war. The pamphlet includes a reprint of the full text in Spanish of Stalin's famous "Order of the Day" of the first of May, 1943, and an article violently attacking the Sunday afternoon paper "Domingo 5 PM" published in Quito, for its criticism of De Gaulle, Giroud, the U.S.S.R., the Free German Committee in Moscow, etc.

As an indication of the interest taken by "ANTINAZI" in communist affairs it may be noted that the full text of a letter from Joseph Stalin to Harold King, Reuters Correspondent in Moscow, explaining the meaning of the dissolution of the Comintern is set out. This letter ends: "It appears to me that the dissolution of the Communist International is completely opportune because it is exactly now when the Fascist beast is exhausting his last forces that it is necessary to organize the common assault of all liberty-loving people to finish this beast and liberate the people from Fascist oppression." (Translated from the Spanish).

The final article in this issue of "ANTINAZI" is a dissertation by Jaime CASTELLANOS P. on the "Necessity for a Second Front" concluding, "Would be to God that the dawn of peace is near. When the first Allied soldier has placed his foot on European soil, he will have sounded the stroke which will indicate to the civilized world that the hour has come."

"ANTINAZI" indicates that there will be held a regional meeting in Quito on September 4 and 5, 1943, of the "Movimiento Antifascista del Ecuador" to which all organizations of an anti-Fascist character are invited.

Miscellaneous

Members of the Communist Party have been taking an active part in the campaign of the laboring elements to block any plans of the National Congress, now in session, to change the Ecuadoran Labor Code which they regard as one of the great achievements of labor in this country. For example, there appeared a letter to the editor in the Quito daily newspaper "El Dia" for August 25, 1943, signed by José MALLAS F., Secretary General and Olmedo MORALES M., Recording and Corresponding Secretary, of the Sindicato de Trabajadores of the mill "Le Industrial Algodonera" of Ambato. This communication solicited the newspaper to use its influence in opposing any change in the labor code.

As has been previously reported, RUALES has been complained of from a reliable source as an active member of the Communist Party in Ambato. There is no previous record for MOSCOSO to indicate any connection with the Party.

In the Quito paper "El Comercio" there is a lengthy article for August 25, 1943, indicating that, among others, Alberto TORRES VERA of Guayaquil was a delegate on a labor committee which interviewed President ARROYO DEL RIO in person petitioning that no changes be made in the Labor Code. The President stated that none would be made. TORRES VERA, it will be recalled, was on the reception committee for Vicente LOMBARDI TOLEDO when the latter came to Ecuador and has since corresponded with him concerning the Workers Congress. He has been stated to be an active member of the Communist Party.

With respect to the current political campaign, the Partido Comunista Ecuatoriano has continued to support the political coalition known as Alianza Democratica Ecuatoriana. This Alianza issued a statement to the nation in "El Dia" for August 25, 1943, expressing satisfaction over the manifestations of interest on the part of the people in the coming presidential elections. It was noted that to the name of Gustavo DEGENRA as delegate from the PCN to the Alianza had been added that of Carlos BRAVONALO already mentioned above in connection with the book shop "FUNDIA DE CULTURA".

With regard to student activities, the Universities not being in session there has not been a great deal to report. According to "El Dia" for August 26, 1943, C. Guillermo LASSO P., President of the Federación de Estudiantes del Ecuador, and Alejandro SMOVIA will soon make a trip to Santiago de Chile as representatives of the students of the Universidad Central of Quito. No specific allegations have been received indicating Party membership on the part of LASSO, but the Federación has been reported as Communist-controlled. He has been involved in a number of anti-government demonstrations. No indication has been received concerning the sympathies of SMOVIA.

"El Dia" for August 28 indicates that LASSO will attend a student conference in Santiago beginning September 13 at which the following topics will be taken up (1) The Part of American youth in aiding the triumph of Democracy; (2) The part of youth in the post-war world; (3) Reform of universities and their adaptation to the present needs of the Continent; (4) Bases for a permanent Pan-American student union with North, Central, and South American subdivisions.