

Memorandum

TO : W. C. Sullivan

FROM : W. R. Wannall

SUBJECT: FAIR PLAY FOR CUBA COMMITTEE
REGISTRATION ACT - CUBA

DATE: November 23, 1963

SECRET

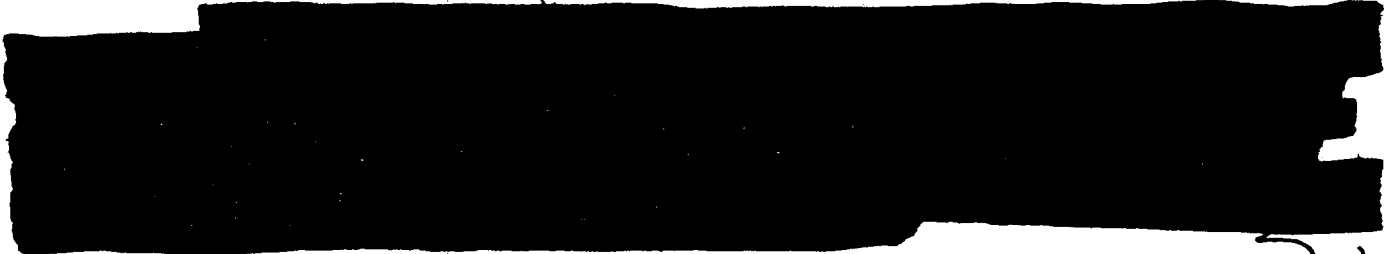
1 - Belmont
1 - Mohr
1 - DeLoach
1 - Evans
1 - Rosen
1 - Sullivan

1 - D.E. Moore
1 - Wannall
1 - Mullins

Tolson
DeLoach
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Bishop
Casper
Callahan
Conrad
Felt
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Sullivan
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Holmes
Gandy

John F. Kennedy

This is in response to the Director's request for a memorandum concerning the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee (FPCC).



Our principal investigative objective at the outset was to corroborate the original information indicating the Cuban Government subsidization of the FPCC with legally admissible evidence. We were able to trace \$3,500 of the money used in paying for "The New York Times" advertisement (totaling \$4,725) to a little-known FPCC member, Dr. Charles Santos Buch. When confronted, Buch was initially evasive and noncooperative, claiming to have obtained the \$3,500 as donations from various friends. However, on 10/28/60 Buch confessed that he had received this money from Raul Roa, Jr., Alternate Cuban Delegate to the United Nations (UN), and that he had thereafter given a check for \$3,500 payable to "The New York Times" to Robert Taber, the Executive Secretary of the FPCC and prime organizer of this group.

Buch had first claimed that no other FPCC member, including Taber, was aware of fact this money had originated with a Cuban official and that he, Buch, had acted independently in soliciting and securing the money from Roa. However, he subsequently revised his story and admitted that Taber did, in fact, have firsthand knowledge of the transaction and indeed, had acted with Buch in soliciting funds from Roa.

On a confidential basis we arranged to have Buch appear before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) in January, 1961. The Committee had been conducting intermittent hearings concerning the FPCC since the previous May. During a public session conducted by the SISS on 1/10/61 Buch recounted his story of the receipt of the money from Raul Roa, Jr., and included the information concerning the involvement of Taber. His testimony was widely publicized in the press.

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Classified by 2040

Exempt from GDS, Category 1

Date of Declassification Indefinite

100-109260 - UNREC.

NOT RECORDED

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Immediately following his testimony, the Registration Section of the Department made arrangements to secure registration of Buch under the provisions of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended. His Registration Statement, dated 1/11/61, listed his foreign principal as the "Revolutionary Provisional Government of Cuba, Habana, Cuba."

The registration of the FPCC itself was also solicited; however, one Stanley Faulkner, an attorney representing the FPCC, advised the Registration Section by letter dated 2/8/61 the organization would not register. Internal Security Division advised it considered the unsupported testimony of Dr. Buch insufficient to warrant prosecution.

Robert Taber, previously mentioned as Executive Secretary of the FPCC, was one of the founders of this group. During the course of SSSS hearings Taber left the country and spent about a year in Cuba and an additional three months in Europe. Upon his return to the U.S. he appeared before a grand jury in Washington, D.C., on 3/21/62 and ostensibly demonstrated a completely cooperative attitude. The main point at issue was whether he was involved in the \$3,500 received from Raul Roa, Jr. Taber was specifically questioned concerning the statements of Buch to the effect that both Buch and Taber knew of this Cuban Government contribution. Taber, according to Mr. Nathan B. Levin, head of Registration Section, categorically denied the truth of Buch's statement. Following his appearance, the Registration Section stated there was a possibility of a perjury charge against either Taber or Buch and in the event any further FBI inquiries in the matter were desired we would be notified. We have received no such requests.

Following its foundation in New York City in the Spring of 1960, the FPCC was successful in establishing chapters, particularly on college campuses, in various states of the union. Richard Gibson, who has acted as national secretary, directed the FPCC after the departure of Robert Taber from the U.S. and claimed in July, 1961, that the FPCC had fraternal ties with groups in Canada, Great Britain, France, the West Indies and Latin America. Our inquiries showed considerable jockeying by the Communist Party, USA, and the Socialist Workers Party to gain control of various chapters. There was much friction among members of these two communist groups. We were able to take advantage of such friction in December, 1961, when we prepared an anonymous pamphlet and mailed it to selected FPCC members throughout the country. The pamphlet was aimed at discrediting FPCC leadership and was written in a manner to create the impression it had been prepared by dissident Socialist Workers Party members of the FPCC. By February, 1962, FPCC chapters existed in about 20 major U.S. cities as opposed to some 27 chapters and 40 student chapters in colleges and universities claimed by Richard Gibson some seven months

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before. As of February, 1962, membership in and activities of the then existing branches of the organization had been greatly curtailed. Several of the chapters appeared on the verge of becoming defunct. A newsletter which originally had been published on a biweekly basis was discontinued in October, 1961, and the group had been unable to muster any substantial support for its various public activities, such as rallies, picketing, et cetera.

To a large measure, the decline in the FPCC was brought about by the aggressive FBI investigation of the organization coupled with an effective campaign of exposure of subversive influences in the group by the public press. In May, 1961, we had made effective use of our news media program to alert reliable news sources to the Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party influences in the FPCC. Thereafter, the press both on a nation-wide and local basis carried out a vigorous barrage of exposure aimed at discrediting this group and revealing it for what it was; namely, a puppet of subversive elements.

Moreover, in the Director's "Annual Report" for 1961, he clearly called attention to the heavy infiltration of the FPCC by the two communist groups and cited results of FBI investigation indicating the group had been organized with the aid of Cuban Government funds.

Vincent Theodore Lee, current National Director of the FPCC, has been involved in pro-Castro activities since January, 1961. He is a U.S. citizen. He is distributor of the magazine, "Revolution," which reportedly contains political propaganda. Lee has indicated in the past that he plans to remain in the U.S. only as long as he can do something for the Cuban revolution. He is designated as a key figure in the Cuban Special Section of the Security Index. In an appearance before the SISS in February, 1962, he answered only questions concerning his background and declined to answer the vast majority of questions put to him on grounds that such answers might incriminate him.

Not only have our investigative results been sent to the Internal Security Division of Department, but we have also regularly kept the Attorney General personally apprised by letter of our investigation of the FPCC and persons connected with it. In December, 1961, the Internal Security Division advised us that it was launching an intensive study of the FPCC to determine the feasibility of initiating early action either under Executive Order 10450 or the Registration Act. The Internal Security Division noted that there were "substantial problems" in these areas and that serious consideration was being given to proceeding through an investigative grand jury.

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At the Department's request, we prepared a 135-page prosecutive summary report dated 2/20/62 and furnished it to the Internal Security Division. While a grand jury did make certain inquiries in the matter, such as taking the testimony of Robert Taber, as mentioned hereinbefore, no prosecutive action has been instituted by the Department. The only action taken under the Registration Act has been the registration of Dr. Charles Santos Buch, as reported hereinbefore. By letter dated 11/13/63 the Internal Security Division informed us that consideration had been given to prosecution of Vincent Theodore Lee for possible violations of the fraud statute, the travel control statute and the Registration Act but that prosecution did not appear feasible under any of these statutes.

REPORTED CONNECTION OF LEE HARVEY OSWALD WITH FPCC:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

ACTION:

For information.

over 10/9/63
Did we advise Dept of these developments?