

6/19/70 CONFIDENTIAL RE PH 6/12/70 memo on anti-Castro plots. HW
Copy to GRS only.

Because of time pressures, this is all from recollection and may thus be flawed.

I regard this as an important area and the conjectures as reasonable. I also think it should be pursued without haste and with care. The numbers in () are those of the relevant Hoch paragraphs.

(1) Save for the last sentence, this is all in accord with what I have known and understood and, remarkably, with what Gerry Hemming also told me about them, for he also claimed to have been befriended and to have known Sylvia in Cuba.

(2) The thievery may have been for this purpose or, as has not been uncommon in such cases, the alleged purpose was later contrived to justify the thefts. Note the Arcacha parallel. He is said to have stolen about \$40,000 from the Batista government. The rest of this is consistent with what I think I have and may have gotten from HV or HI, in a story from the SF Examiner of 4/12/64. I have a small file on him and Alpha 66.

(4) There has always been a government IDFTU connection. The National Guardian carried long stories on this and the AFL-CIO operation, for the CIA, against Cheddi Jagan, in British Guiana. ICFTU was set up, under official inspiration, when the WFTU got too liberal and admitted eastern reps. ICFTU operated out of Belgium, and Irving Brown dominated it and represented AFL-CIO. He had free access to the diplomatic pouch, for example, to my own knowledge. I have files that may ultimately be relevant to this but cannot now dig them out. I also have two potential excellent sources, one a reporter and the other a professor whose doctoral thesis was altered to include my suggestion for its orientation and was facilitated by contacts I made for the man, who is a friend and son of a friend. Shorthand: the inference and the speculation are approximately correct.

(5) The interesting thing here would be to learn whether Gonzalez was in any way connected with Seruphino Romuãadi, the Latin American Irving Brown (dead).

(7) Bethel also testified before a Congressional committee, I think the Senate Internal Security. His testimony was widely reprinted by rightists.

(8) I have many of Roa's UN speeches along this line, filed with "Tiger to Ride" materials. Some are still available from the UN press office. In the future, when we are farther along, there is another source I think I can tap on this, but the state of our present knowledge and my circumstances now mitigate against doing it now. It has to be done in person. It is possible the end of this and (15) relate to each other.

(9) From one of my confidential sources, a Bay Pigs vet, I think it is a fair inference that the bazooka was a favorite weapon for such plots, one of which almost succeeded. These guys are nutty enough to have tried it from their own residences.

(10) I will consult a source no longer in Washington who was probably the original source here. I expect a visitor tonight who can do it for me. He is trustworthy and because of what I will ask of him I'll give him the relevant paragraphs to make his own notes from. The point is not properly made here. I mean in general reference to G, V, etc., without indication of reason to anyone.

(12) Note similarity to "Cuban Power" actual attack, on UN itself.

(13) I am without doubt of this and regard it as likely understatement.

(14) These pages of CD1546 I do not have and would like very much. I take it this is Mrs. Joanna Rogers, who I was a bit late getting to when I was in Dallas, but who will be interviewed when I can. They met SO's boyfriend Ferre, who asked them to take her in for her convalescence, etc. You have my memos on this. During the time she was with the Rogerses Sylvia got letter from Connell, then in Boston, forgot them, and Joanna gave them to Lt. Butler, and they were never heard of again. Trudi Castorr made the contact, trusting Butler. I should be consulted about anything relevant, for there is much I have not out on paper. Hal should be prompted to contact Brandon again, on those women. He has a list of questions from me.

Relative to Hemming, above, I have this on tape but have never had time to transcribe the tape.

(15) It is likely Flammonde's source was JG. Flammonde had nothing of his own save error. JG's version is that Bobby was made privy to all of this at Guantanamo, hence had to keep his mouth shut. I doubt the Bobby angle, but have no doubt there were such plots without end. Inspiration is likely as conjectured. With Anderson the FBI is a very likely source. He is close to them.

(16) a. I do not have this part of the JG files and would like. I did interview both Guitarts, and the experience, even after knowing Bringuiet, is not easily expressed to those without such contacts. He is incredible and the son is entirely beyond description. Both are fond of and full of respect for Bringuiet, who they think is great and a noble leader of men. I think it entirely reasonable that Guitart was there because of his feelings about Bringuiet as well as his arcane politics. Jr. is also a Havana lawyer, almost as brilliant as Bringuiet.

b. Trucking is only part of the Odio fortune. I suggest that if they were suspected of being part of an assassination plot, their histories would have been entirely different. With that kind of look, would you expect them to have been?

c. That Sylvia mentioned Quiroga is indeed fascinating! Interesting that Liebler had no interest in this, or that there are no relevant FBI reports. I doubt that the JG office could have gotten Guitart to say anything he didn't want to and I take this at face value. Regard it as potentially very significant. Again, remember that two women expected Sylvia to kill herself. Machann still holds some secrets, from Sylvia. Guitart would more likely have learned the other way, as in telling me he didn't know Sylvia's new husband's last name or their Miami address.

d. You might want to add more here. Like Bringuiet's connection with Alpha 66 in N.O., with Geraci, who had a friend in and was possibly himself connected with Alpha 66, which was sought out when he left home, etc. Name: Bretos, then mechanic N.O. Fiat dealership, 1968 one in Miami (service manager). And LHO's report to Vhandler (Vrawford) and Bringuiet's perjuries.

e. Agreed, but also proof that he really was in prison, not just a cover, for he was so used, even irrationally (O in NO).

(18) My 26H still has a marker at this point. Why not try and get this from the CD files or other files?

(19) Sylvia was up tight about this. Bad feelings did develop between her and Connell, and there had to be a reason. I'm not satisfied with the explanations I've been able to get. But doesn't this sound exactly like Bringuiet, who could have believed it? I also lack this page of CD 1546. I have 42; 66-8; maybe 213, but 212-2; 247, and would like anything else.

I will file this under Odio.

6/19/70

Dear John,

If any of this is unclear to you when I give it to you tonight, ask for explanations. I think it better not to tell you why or in what context, the reasons including getting an untainted response.

Please ask Dan Kurzman who his files or notes may show and what his recollections may hold on:

Gonzalez, Reynold and various other spellings approximating this), former Manolo Ray - MRP associate, captured by Castro, former Cuban trade-union leader, whose arrest was protested by International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (from Brussels, 10/24/61). They spelled it "Reinol". He was allegedly anti-Batista, had been with Bank Workers' Union. Paul Bethel (who spells it "Reynol" says he was tortured and forced to talk.

Antonio Veciana, organizer Alpha 66, former Cuban Treasury official.

Plots against Castro immediately following Bay Pigs, esp. for balance of 1961. Raul Roa talked of such plots at UN, including one against Raul Castro.

ICFTU-CIA connections, if any.

Involvement of Irving Brown and Seraphino Romualdi in such activities. He may have this in his Jay Lovestone material. I'd be interested in knowing if he thinks this reporting had anything to do with his leaving Washington (Dan's, that is. Romualdi is dead).

Please also tell Dan that if he is ever down this way, I'd like to see him again. He may then be interested in what is behind this inquiry and I may then be able to tell him.

And give him my thanks and best wishes.

Sincerely.

Paul-no copies distributed. The other source is Henry Berger, Department of History, Washington Univ., St. Louis. He interviewed Romualdi and many others and can spell out the connections that interest you. He is also very busy and has been heavily preoccupied salvaging students from the authorities, in addition to his major preoccupations.

MATTERS POSSIBLY CONNECTING ODIO WITH ANTI-CASTRO GROUPS PLOTTING TO KILL CASTRO

The first two items summarized below were noted by JNS. The rest are random notes and the results of an incomplete check of various sources.

- (1) From CE 3148, pp. 838-9, interview of Manuel Ray, September 8, 1964:
"He said he is personally acquainted with Sylvia Odio ... by virtue of the fact that her parents had assisted him and other members of ... MRP.... He explained that the MRP was the forerunner of ... JURE, and the home of the parents of Sylvia Odio in Havana, and also a small farm of the parents near Havana were frequently utilized by members of the MRP in connection with MRP activities. He said that eventually both parents of Sylvia Odio were arrested and imprisoned by the Castro regime for the help given to the MRP. He stated that at the time of their arrest, MRP leader Reynold Gonzalez was caught by the Castro agents on the Odio farm near Havana."
- (2) From U.S. News & World Report, 10/29/62, p. 40:
"It was back in 1960 that a Cuban accountant named Antonio Veciana began working with other accountants, embezzling Government funds in Havana to finance an anti-Castro underground. That was the beginning of Alpha 66. In the autumn of 1961, Veciana and Reinaldo Gonzales set up an elaborate plot to assassinate Castro. Veciana's mother rented an apartment near the Presidential Palace in Havana, and guns were secreted in the apartment. The plot was to shoot Castro while he was making one of his marathon speeches. This particular plot, uncovered by Castro's secret police, misfired. Gonzalez and two others were captured. (Odio's parents ??-PH) But Veciana and his mother got away, and eventually escaped by boat to Florida...."
- (3) From The New York Times, October 24, 1961, p. ? (sorry!) (In full:)
"Havana, Tuesday, Oct. 24 (AP) - Premier Fidel Castro reported today that the police had thwarted a new plot to assassinate him. In a speech to a meeting of the Young Rebels' Association, he said that a counter-revolutionary group had mounted bazookas in an apartment a block and a half from the Presidential Palace but that the police had discovered them before an attempt was made on his life. It was the second reported plot against Dr. Castro's life this month. Authorities announced earlier that they had uncovered a plan to kill the Premier in front of the Havana sports stadium."
- (4) New York Times, October 22, 1961, p. 10 (in full:)
"Brussels, Belgium, Oct. 21 (Reuters) - The International ~~Free Trade~~ Confederation of Free Trade Unions protested today in a message to Premier Fidel Castro the arrest of Reinol Gonzalez, a trade union leader in Cuba."
(They knew about this pretty early, it seems. Is this ~~is~~ a CIA group?)
- (5) New York Times, October 26, 1961, p. 3 (in full:)
" (no city or agency indicated - PH) The Cuban Government has arrested Reinol Gonzalez, a former Cuban labor leader, according to refugee sources here. Señor Gonzalez had been the head of the anti-Batista wing of the Bank Workers Union. He was one of those named as responsible for an anti-Castro demonstration ~~in~~ last month in Havana,"
- (6) New York Times, October 26, 1961, p. 21: Reuters, Havana, 10/25: The Foreign Ministry denies rumors spreading in the U.S. that Castro had been assassinated.
- (7) From "The Losers," by Paul Bethel (1969) (At U.C. Library), p. 310:
"Its (the MRP's) leader, Reynol Gonzalez, had been captured, tortured, and forced to talk"(before "the early fall of 1961")
- (8) From the speech of Raul Roa at the UN, 10/10/61 (General assembly, ~~meeting~~ meeting 1032, 16th session, vol. 1, p. 369)
"The discovery of the plan to assassinate Major Raul Castro, Minister of the

Armed Forces, which was conceived and planned at the United States military base at Guantanamo, and the recent plot to do away with ... Castro ... are convincing proofs of this sinister intrigue"(by the U.S., the CIA, etc.)

- (9) New York Times, September 14, 1962, p. 13
- (a) AP from San Juan: (paraphrase) Veciana announces that Alpha 66 will make five more raids in the next sixty days. "He said all the planning was done by leaders 'I don't even know' but added that Cubans of all major exile organizations were backing the Alpha 66 efforts financially." He claimed a war chest of \$ 100,000. He read a declaration of war against Castro's regime.
- (b) Special to the NYT (in full), Washington, Sept. 13 - Alpha 66, the Cuban exile group that has taken credit for yesterday's attack on two ships in a Cuban port, is a small, ~~for~~ commando-type organization created about three months ago. It is made up of about fifteen men, mostly former Castro army officers and professionals who were earlier identified with the Peoples Revolutionary Movement, an organization formerly led by Manuel Ray. Alpha's top leader, Antonio Veciana, was the chief of the movement's "action group" in the anti-Castro underground. It was from his apartment facing the Presidential Palace in Havana that the movement attempted to assassinate Premier Castro early this year (sic) by firing a bazooka at him during a rally. The plot failed and Senor Veciana escaped."
- (10) Summary of checks made:
I checked the NYT index for Veciana and Gonzales, 1961-2 only. The Militant, mid-September thru October 1961, had nothing. Castro's speech of 10/24 (Item 3) was not immediately available. The Washington Post had articles on 10/11-12/61 (p. A8, A7 respectively) about Roa's speech and the response. The main emphasis was on an alleged impending invasion, and JFK's denial. Nothing of interest in the Washington Post for 10/21-26/61 and 9/14-15/62. I haven't gone systematically through the Odio-related CD's or the BF file.
- (11) Stories on the Sept. 61 plot. (I was checking this before I figured out that the later one involved Gonzalez. Because of the general similarity of the two incidents, and the Treasury Ministry connection of the leader (another accountant, perhaps), the following is set forth:
- (a) London Times, 9/25/61, p. 12e: (Paraphrase) Twelve men arrested; bazookas and grenades to be used against Fidel captured; direct orders of CIA alleged. Refers to El Mundo, which is, I gather, available only at the Library of Congress!
- (b) NY Times, 9/25/61, p. 12. AP (Paraphrase) Head of plot: Luis Torroella, age 29, a former Treasury Ministry employee. His wife thinks it impossible. The attack was to have been made from a garage across from the Ciudad Deportiva Stadium.
- (c) El Tiempo, 9/25/61. (From the Hispanic Center files at the Hoover Institution. I should check the file for October, but have not done so.) The people arrested are listed as follows: from Havana, Luis Torroella, José Pujals, Jorge Garcia Rubio (student, Catholic University), Alfredo Izaguirre Rivas (formerly of "El Crison"), Octavio Barroso (of Unidad, a counter-revolutionary group); from Oriente Province: José Rosabal (Partido Democ. Chr.), Humberto Ros, Lazarro Ponce de Leon; from Las Villas, Angel Gonzales, Secundo Barges (former governor of the province), Javier Souto Alvarez. (These names are from ny notes and may be misspelled.)
- (12) From BF file, p. 9. The FBI told the Miami police of Sept. 24, 1965 that Veciana was reported to be planning an attack on Cuban delegates to the U.N.
- (13) 11H369, Odio testimony:
" He (Manuel Ray) was a very close friend of my father and mother. He hid in my house several times in Cuba."

(14) CD 1546, p. 191. ~~Mrs.~~ Mrs. Robert Rogers said that Odio and all her brother and sisters were able to get out of Cuba when their parents were arrested. But Odio testified that she left in December of 1960, a year before. (11H368)

(15) The RFK - CIA plot to do in Fidel

(a) I don't have the text of the original Pearson article (3/3/67) handy. As quoted in Flammonde's book (p. 261-3), it appears reasonably certain that at least one such plot was considered at some unspecified time after the Bay of Pigs; it may or may not have been put into effect. Jack Anderson may well be able to provide further information; he has been talked with (BF, pp. 15-7)

(b) The best speculation on this Pearson column has been that it was a CIA leak to keep RFK quiet; that there had been RFK-sponsored plots against Castro but there was no reason to believe that anyone really thought one of them had backfired. It is possible, however, that the CIA was able to connect either Oswald or Odio's visitors with Gonzalez or some other of its anti-Castro operatives.

(16) Statement by Augustin Guitart (BF 602-606)

(a) Are we satisfied that there is nothing odd about Guitart's presence in court with Eringuier and Oswald? This is mentioned but not examined in detail in this statement.

(b) Guitart ~~mentions~~ mentions the length of the sentences given to Odio's parents, and adds that Mr. Odio had a very large (\$ 4-5 million) trucking business which was taken over. Here, as in most other references to the senior Odios, there is no indication that they were other than innocent victims of Castro's eagerness to have political prisoners.

(c) "I was asked if I know Carlos Quiroga. I do not know this man personally and have never met him. However, after the assassination Sylvia, my niece, visited me here in New Orleans and in talking about the events which occurred in Dallas I recall that she mentioned this name but I do ~~not~~ not remember in what connection she mentioned it...." (This must be taken with a grain of salt, since we don't know how much prompting Guitart was being given by JG's office.)

(d) Putting (b) and (c) together: I am not really suggesting a connection between Odio and her circle of exile friends on the one hand, and Quiroga and his on the other. But, it is noted that Odio did know who Eringuier was (11H378). Hmm....

(e) Just out of curiosity, I would like to know why Quiroga's father was in prison in Cuba (26H771, &c).

(17) Comments and speculations welcome. Please do not give this to JG, the FBI, etc.

Paul L. Hoch
June 6, 1970

- - C O N F I D E N T I A L - -

MORE: (18) CE 3147, p. 2, appears to have a deletion at a crucial place. This may be identical to CD 1546, p. 203 or so.

(19) Odio denied telling Mrs. Connell that a Cuban friend of hers had called someone in N.O. about Oswald, and had been advised that Oswald was a double agent attempting to infiltrate Cuban exile groups. (CD 3147, p. 5) Mrs. Connell was quite positive (CD 1546, p. 179).