

CHARLES BARTLETT

Cuban CIA Critic Sealing Own Fate

WASHINGTON—Much of the past tragedy, and present disillusionment of the Cuban exile movement is reflected in the angry attack by Manuel Ray, the young liberal leader, upon the Central Intelligence Agency.

Ray, conceded to possess, at 37, a distinctive quality and personal record which mark him as politically promising, has come into the open with a bitter charge that the CIA is intervening once more in Cuban exile politics. He is specifically aroused because he maintains he has been ousted from the leadership of his party, the extremely liberal MRP, through the pressures of CIA agents working in Cuba.



CASTRO

The charge, according to the best information available here, is untrue. The fact is that Ray has lost his standing with the MRP underground in Cuba because he had not been able to deliver the sustenance—money and explosives—on which an underground must feed. He has not been able to make these deliveries because the regular source, the CIA, is simply not in business

for the present.

Basic decisions regarding future policies toward Fidel Castro and future relations with the exiles working to unhorse him are still under study by the Kennedy administra-

Walter Lippmann is on vacation. His column will be resumed on his return. Charles Bartlett is Washington correspondent for the Chattanooga (Tenn.) Times.

tion. While the President is determining the most promising approach to the Castro problem, the nourishment of fifth-column activities has come to a halt.

THE RAY ATTACK is a classical instance of the dissidence that develops among exiled politicians at moments when their fortunes are particularly low.

By kicking at the CIA, obviously in low repute among the Cuban people, he is thrashing against the unpopularity at home that is slowly engulfing all the exiled politicians. But he has further clouded the situation, diminished the prospects

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for return and virtually eliminated the possibility that he will be allowed to serve as a conveyor if the spigot of money and supplies is turned on again. He has, in sum, sealed his own political fate, at least for the present.

The relations between the CIA and Ray have been knotted ever since he emerged in Miami from the Cuban underground last November. He had been Castro's minister of public works prior to their break on the apparent issue of communism, and many charged, as he assumed the leadership of the MRP, that he was a Communist. Ray, troubled by an engineer's imprecision in the formulation of political issues, was not facile in shattering these innuendoes.

HE GOT ALONG BADLY from the start with the top CIA man in Miami, Frank Bender, and rumors began to drift north that Bender was dealing only with conservatives and was determined to install a sharply rightist government in Havana. The MRP bristled particularly with reports, which proved in the end to be true, that some professional soldiers and policemen who served under Batista had been recruited as the core of the exile army.

Ray, claiming that his underground was the most lively on the island, made heavy demands upon the CIA for money and supplies. He was unwilling to submit to the customary checking procedures and a suspicion developed that he was stocking the materials against the day when they would be crucial in a struggle for power within the island. These suspicions deepened after he accepted the assignment of several sabotage targets and failed to perform against any of them.

MUCH OF THE SUBSEQUENT TRAGEDY of Cochinos Bay was implicit in the November-to-April sparring that transpired between Ray and the CIA. Many of the constant criticisms which he and his MRP associates developed against the CIA preparations seem in retrospect to have had validity. Certainly Ray's disinclination to associate his group closely with the venture stands now as sound judgment.



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But this detached approach, with its consequence of newspaper leaks and the shattering of exile unity, was deeply damaging to the anti-Castro cause. To his critics, Ray looked often like a politician who wouldn't play unless he could be president, a liberal who had become lost in the woods of his own issues. He was clearly a force in the gradual reduction of the exile community to a babble of political bickering.

The Ray story projects a deepening conviction among the experts here that the successful initiative against Castro will derive from new leaders, fresh faces who have stayed in Cuba and fought the battle at home. The Miami exiles seem at the moment to hold little promise of powerful leadership.