

H. WATERS

MEMORANDUM

JANUARY 24, 1968

TO: LOUIE IVON, Chief Investigator

FROM: GARY SANDERS, Investigator

RE: DR. ISAAC CASARIEGO
 1017 Andrews St.
 Metairie, La.
 835-6579

Isaac CASARIEGO is a Cuban who was an advisor for the Cuban Revolutionary Council in New Orleans.

I interviewed ISAAC CASARIEGO on January 18, 1968, at 8:30 pm at his home at 1017 Andrews St. in Metairie. Miss JODY DUEK accompanied me, and took notes from which this report is written. Also present at the interview was JORGE ISAAC CASARIEGO, DR. CASARIEGO'S 22 year old son.

ISAAC CASARIEGO was a very successful lawyer for 22 years in Cuba, and for 16 years was a public defender. He also taught at the University of Havana, and has a Doctorate in Philosophy as well as his Law Degree

CASARIEGO came to the United States with his family in July of 1960, with each of them bringing his clothes and \$150.00 per person, as was the then active law. CASARIEGO said that since he was Catholic, he would not pray for the death of CASTRO, but he would not cry however if CASTRO did die. He felt no one would be able to substitute for CASTRO, and that the Communists would have a hard time holding Cuba if CASTRO were to die.

He said that in 1959, 95% of the Cubans believed in CASTRO, they were blinded by him. He went step by step, and had the backing of the majority, until his step was to crush the individual small groups, still keeping the vast majority in the dark. CASARIEGO said he began to doubt CASTRO and his motives in Aug./Sept. of '59. CASTRO had cancelled all the mortgages, and CASARIEGO lost about \$50,000.

He said his first doubts, however, were not then, but when CASTRO began to have problems with the Catholic Nuns and Priests. It was then CASARIEGO became disenchanted with CASTRO, and made plans to leave Cuba.

CASARIEGO said that he had helped in the passive resistance. He was in the upper middle class in Cuba.

He also raised the question of what had happened to CIENFUEGO, a very popular Cuban leader, who disappeared while in a small plane flying to Havana. He felt it was foul play done by CASTRO.

CASARIEGO said that he had a very difficult time when he first came to America. In the beginning he decided to open a dry cleaning establishment, and was able to obtain the help of LOUIS RABEL to do so, since RABEL already had a dry cleaning establishment of his own. He soon found that it would be too expensive to go into on his own, so he scrapped the idea, and bought a gas station on Washington Avenue and Gayoso. He wanted

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CASARIEGO mentioned having met SERGIO ARCACHA SMITH in his service station which he had subsequently begun after the dry cleaning establishment was bad. ARCACHA came to the station a couple of times to buy gas. They were only acquaintances, and he saw him last in about 1961. CASARIEGO said ARCACHA was nice, but that he didn't care for him, and couldn't explain just why.

He found he was losing money on the service station, so he sold it, and went to work selling ladies shoes in a Marcos Isaacs store in Aug. of '61.

He was at this time called by a man from WWL (radio) and asked if he were interested in working on a daily radio show, sponsored by the Cuban Freedom Committee. He was told this was a group of Senators, Congressmen, etc. from Washington, who were sympathetic towards Cubans and had raised funds for this purpose. I feel sure he knows more about this than he admitted.

He tried out for the show, along with a group of other Chbans, whose names he couldn't or wouldn't give us, saying that he didn't know them, although he was nebulous on this point. MRS. MARIA ARENSBERG, Secretary of the Cuban Freedom Committee came to see him, and interviewed him for the show. He was chosen, and the first show was taped Dec. 1, 1961, and broadcast Dec. 11. The show was all in Spanish. 15 minutes was the length of the show, and after one month it was lengthened to a half hour. The exiled Bishop of Havana spoke on Sundays. The program was heard in Cuba. There was also a station in Miami broadcasting the same type of programs to Cuba. In a few months, it went to an hour show, plus a show from midnight to 6 am, which was a two hour tape repeated twice. The program also had a great Cuban comedian who did a satire of Rabinez' book on Communism.

Cubans began jamming the Miami station so they began using the personnel from there on the show here also.

CASARIEGO began substitute teaching at a school on Elysian Fields, and then this last year began teaching at Holy Cross. He is now employed full time as a Spanish teacher. He moved to 3337 La. Pkwy in '60, then moved to 3523 and 3525 La. Pkwy after two years, and lived there until Sept., 67, when he moved to his present address. His phone at both La. Pkwy Addresses was 899-4817.

When he first came here LUIS RABEL NUNEZ was a good friend, he had met him 30 years previously here in New Orleans, and they accidentally met and remembered each other. Since RABEL was in dry cleaning, he tried to help CASARIEGO. He also tried to get CASARIEGO to join his group, but he declined saying that he would help RABEL, but would not join any one group. He was also asked to join RECE (Representacion de Cubanos Exilos) Exiles of Cuban Representation) which was an important group in Miami backed the owners of Bacardi Rum. A lawyer, DR. FREYRE, asked him to join, but he said he'd collect for the group, or give them air time instead.

CASARIEGO knew Dr. MIRO CARDONA in Havana, they had attended college together. He also mentioned knowing a DR. TONY VARCNA.

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CASARIEGO also knew FRANCISCO (FRANK) BARTES by name only in Cuba, but met him in 1965 in the U.S. He thinks highly of BARTES. He said he knew about BARTES' exploits in Africa during the Congo War but would not elaborate further. He knew nothing of the training camps across the lake. He said he did not get mixed up with specific groups. He would back all Cubans when they needed help, if it was for the good of Cuba, but would not join any one group. He would work only for Cuba. He feels that if the Cubans gathered together, the U. S. Govt. should and would do something concrete for them. He feels that although Cuba is under a Communist regime, the Cuban people will never be Communists.

CASARIEGO declined to talk about the Bay of Pigs, he said he did not know what had happened. He felt something very important had happened that day, but he felt he couldn't blame any one, he did not know the reason for what happened, so he felt sorry, but just didn't want to talk about it. He says only history will tell the truth. He said he would have been happy if the Bay of Pigs had succeeded. He can't believe what people say is truth (JFK at fault). He couldn't understand, maybe for the best, maybe for the worst. But he was very loquacious in assuring me that he didn't want to talk about it. Methinks the lady doth protest too much.

CASARIEGO also knows CARLOS BRINGUIER, and thinks he is a "fine boy". He doesn't know him well, but liked him.

CASARIEGO was very pro-KENNEDY (JFK) but doesn't know if OSWALD was the one who pulled the trigger.

He mentioned HAROLD WEISBERG had wanted to see him, but he was sick with a sore throat. He met EDWARD BUTLER some time ago. CASARIEGO had helped INCA with ads, etc., and has met DR. OCHSNER (ALTON?) whom he also described as being very nice. They were both always kind to him, and interested in the Cuban situation. He said the last time he saw BUTLER was at the Roosevelt Hotel when the Cubans gave DR. OCHSNER a plaque. He had also met JUANITA CASTRO, (FIDEL'S sister) who is exiled from Cuba. She sent occasional tapes for CASARIEGO's radio show.

When shown the photographs, he recognized CELSO HERNANDEZ, but said he knew nothing about him. All the other pictures produced negative results, except for BRINGUIER.

He said he will never lose hope that Cuba will be liberated, and that the U.D. Govt. will help as they did in 1898. DR. CASARIEGO's son also agreed with his father, and they both said they felt Mr. Garrison was trying to do his best. They said they would cooperate in the future.

NOTES

Although DR. CASARIEGO was very cooperative I sincerely feel that he is much more educated about the activities of the Cubans in N.O. than he indicated in this interview.

The background of the Cuban Freedom Comm. may prove to be C.I.A. in nature since I don't believe Senators and Congressmen go around spending their personal monies on Free Cuba Radio programming.

GARY SANDERS