

Free Cuba News

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INSIDE CUBA

SOVIETS ARRIVE -- ARE SUPPLIED WITH CUBAN ARMY UNIFORMS

Castro's factories are turning out a daily quota of 1,000 size 46 "campaign uniforms" for Russians, and have been ordered to produce flags of Latin American countries. Added to reports of the imminent arrival of more Soviet and Soviet-Bloc personnel, and the intensified instruction of foreign subversives, this new information fits into an ominous pattern. It means that Khrushchev now regards Cuba as his major base for world-wide Communist activities and that he apparently is moving to protect that base through full Russian occupation (see "Soviet Military Activity Increases in Cuba," and "Soviet Base on Isle of Pines Supports Latin American Subversion," FCN, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 7, 1964).

Until last week, it was difficult to hazard a guess as to how many Soviet and Soviet-Bloc military personnel maintain the camouflage provided by Castro uniforms. The former head seamstress of the San Ambrosio uniform factory just escaped from Cuba and puts the number at many thousands. Here is the testimony of Señora Pérez Cabrera, age 26:

"For three years, until I escaped from Cuba last month, I was head seamstress at the San Ambrosio military post where most military uniforms are manufactured. Just two months before I left, the Cuban General Staff issued an urgent order for us to manufacture 1,000 Cuban uniforms daily. All were size 46, much too large for Cubans, and the order stated openly that they were for Russians, 'who are awaiting their delivery.' The uniforms are olive green in color and identical to those worn by the Cuban armed forces." By Sra. Pérez's calculations, some 20,000 such uniforms were made prior to her escape from Cuba. She believes that some will be allocated, as well, to Africans now undergoing training in Cuba's guerrilla camps.

Sra. Cabrera reported on the production of Latin American flags:

"I was also assigned for a period to the flag department of San Ambrosio to supervise a rush order of flags of Latin American countries. The order for uniforms for the Russians was made simultaneously with that of the flags -- chiefly those of the countries of Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, and other countries bordering on the Caribbean Sea. There certainly was something strange about all this. The employees were all warned to keep quiet, told that our work was confidential, and that we must not talk to anyone about what we were doing. Trucks arrived and took each day's production away under security measures."

Emelina Santos de Godínez, a maid at the Deauville Hotel in Havana states that Soviet troops are arriving and that some already have been quartered in that hotel. More are expected, she adds. "Last month," said Sra. Santos, "129 Russians were installed in the Deauville Hotel. They are young people, and though Castro always refers to the Soviets as 'technicians,' they clearly are military men. Most of them bring their wives and children, with the evident intention of remaining in Cuba for some time. Another shipload of Russians is scheduled to arrive the middle or end of February, and some of them will be put up at the Deauville Hotel. Rooms in the upper floors are being painted and repaired to accommodate them."

The Russian occupiers, as the Cubans call them, know they are despised, and comport themselves accordingly. Says Sra. Santos:

"When the maids clean the rooms of the Russians, one of them is always present who stands silently and watches everything that we do. They do not come to the dining hall, but cook their food in their rooms."

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CZECHS INSTRUCT LATIN AMERICAN SUBVERSIVES -- RUSSIANS SHIP THEM

Referring to "excursionists," on February 5 Radio Progreso of Havana announced that a group of Czechs had arrived. Progreso continued: "Another 12 groups will come to Cuba from Czechoslovakia during the year, along with 16 groups from the Soviet Union."

Raymundo León Valle was a member of Castro's Rebel Army, posted in the Highway Transport Office. He related the innocent-sounding excursionist Czechs to subversive training:

"Czechs are installed in the second floor of the Highway Transport building at 17th St. and O in Vedado. The entire floor has been converted to recording studios where propaganda, orders, and detailed instructions are taped by Latin American subversives under the direction of the Czech Communists. Other foreigners do the same thing at studios in Radio Centro. Right now, however, Soviet and Soviet-Bloc personnel are concentrating mostly on cadres from Latin America. Some are undergoing indoctrination, others are training in guerrilla warfare, while still others take courses in political agitation and terror (used recently in Panama). I can state most emphatically that Cuba is crammed with Latin Americans undergoing training for the overthrow of their governments."

Fisherman Dario Manresa Zayas, age 30, was spokesman for a group of recent escapees from the north coast port of Nuevitas in Camagüey where Russian personnel have been very active:

"Russians either command the coastal patrols themselves or direct the Cubans in patrol activities. They also are assigned to command positions in the Maritime Police in Nuevitas where Latin American subversives are signed on as crew to Cuban merchant vessels. When the ship reaches the home port of a particular subversive, he slips away

to put his training into practice."

Cubans from Nuevitas were sent to special schools and then signed onto the ships. The presumption is that on subsequent voyages they establish contact with the subversives, transmit instructions, and receive reports.

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DOCTORS NOW EMPLOYEES OF STATE -- 'IMPOSSIBLE MEDICAL CONDITIONS'

Prior to Castro, the Cuban medical profession was second only to the United States in modern medical practice in this hemisphere. The rich, the middle class, and the poor subscribed to privately financed medical plans at an average individual cost of \$2.50 a month, with special rates for families. These funds built hundreds of clinics with modern equipment and facilities. The subscriber was entitled to house calls by doctors and received most of his medicines cost-free, as well. If hospitalized, there was no charge for the doctor, and only a token charge assessed for the room. Indigents received equivalent treatment, and the charge was absorbed by the government. Drugs and medical equipment were purchased from the United States and Free World countries, and the profession had access to the latest medical journals. The doctors and dentists contributed to the clinics and maintained private offices. In short, Cubans received first class medical attention, and the medical profession was enabled to prosper in an intelligent balance of social responsibility and private endeavor.

Following the Communist takeover, over one-half of Cuba's more than 6,000 doctors fled to exile. At that time, Cuba was third in the hemisphere in the ratio of doctors to inhabitants - 1 to 1,000. On February 8, Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos stated that Cuba had the same number of doctors in 1963 as in 1958 -- 9 doctors to every 1,000 inhabitants! He also said, however, that doctors are employees of the Communist state.

Here is composite testimony as to how Cuba's excellent medical profession has fared under Communism:

● Doctor Joao B. Aguiar of Brazil and Cuban doctors José Delgado and Leonel Espinosa Adan, find the recent graduates of Cuban medical school at about the proficiency of a practical nurse: "Many courses have been deleted to make graduation easier. Students are permitted to practice during their second year in medical school. Previously, seven years of study preceded a year of internship at a hospital. Eighty-five percent of the medical faculty at the University of Havana have gone into exile. Dentists are equally without technical qualifications. Latin American doctors, who were failures in their profession at home, have been recruited and sent to Cuba. Patients refuse to be treated by them. Hospital orderlies are militiamen and subordinate this work to the political need to be alert against defectors from among the doctors and dentists."

● Drs. Antonio Ballagas, Virginia de Mirabel Quesada, and pharmacist Jorge Falcón discuss medicines and medical equipment in the following composite interview: "Medical supply men from the government know little or nothing about medicines."

Their principal task is, like that of orderlies in the hospitals, to keep doctors under surveillance. They dare not promote the incredibly crude medicines from the Soviets, and instead denigrate the quality of Western medicines, which are as superior to the Russian product as the principle of the wheel is to the stonebolt. All medicines, however crude, have been increased in cost by 5 to 6 times. People who received Pfizer Tetramycin free in pre-Castro clinics, now must pay \$4 for 25 tablets. Russian antibiotics are useless since they are not sterile. This is true of most Soviet medicines. Penicillin causes a most violent reaction, followed by a peculiar poisoning. The result is that 200 out of each 100,000 inhabitants are dying from gastroenteritis, and one out of every three families has a case of infectious hepatitis. Tuberculosis, syphilis, and anemia have reached unheard-of proportions. Incredible to say, malaria, wiped out years ago is again plaguing Cuba."

Composite of comment from doctors from Chile, Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia and Ecuador who have attended medical conferences in Cuba, added to that of Cuban doctors in exile: "Medicines from the Communist Bloc are of the poorest quality. Ether from the bloc is terrible. There are no effective coagulants available. The Bloc actually packages some of their medicines in American labels -- Squibb, for example. When Cuban doctors questioned the crude quality of apparent U.S. -manufactured products, Communist doctors said the United States sent low quality medicines in the Bay of Pigs exchange in a deliberate attempt to kill Cubans. Cuban doctors do not have free access to U.S. and Western medical journals. Cuban medical knowledge has been set back twenty years in just five years of Communism."

The inevitable result: Nationalization of the medical profession. All medical offices are presently undergoing government inventory. Cuba's magnificent clinics are in a state of medical decay. Doctors work one 24-hour stretch each week without pay, and are paid \$200 a month for mandatory work in government hospitals of 4 hours a day, plus "volunteer" work for which they may or may not be reimbursed.

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POPULAR RESISTANCE TRIGGERS CASTRO TERROR

Ibrahim Quintana, an employee of the former Rivero Funeral Home in Havana, provides first-hand testimony of the constant slaughter of Cubans by the Castro regime. The anger and revulsion of the population has reached the point where the government has been forced to resort to the falsification of death certificates. The 28-year-old funeral home attendant provides the details:

"The secret police shoot people in their homes and sometimes on the street for the slightest indication of resistance. The victim is then sent to a government first-aid station, and a mortuary is telephoned to come and remove the body. The aid stations hand over death certificates which state that the dead person was run over by a truck, fell, and was mortally hurt, or some such explanation. The family is not permitted to see the body, and we are not permitted to give the true reason for the death. In 80% of the cases in which the death certificate gives such reasons, we have found that the person died of gunshot wounds.

"In La Cabafia Fortress alone, 30 or more Cubans are shot each month without trial or sentence. A functionary of the city morgue, a Sr. Menéndez, always delivers the body and then accompanies it to the Colón cemetery. A gruesome parade of two cars leaves our mortuary regularly at 6 in the morning. The body is carried on the floor of a passenger car so as not to attract notice. Menéndez precedes it in a car full of secret service officials. The dead have a small piece of paper bearing their names tied to their wrists. This is removed and given to the cemetery office. Few are even put into caskets. Three days after burial, a telegram is sent to the next of kin for them to report to the cemetery where the attendant indicates where the relative has been buried.

"One can imagine the degree of slaughter that goes on in the countryside where the peasants are in open rebellion against the Communists."

Quintana states that the multiplying numbers of graves have become a source of fear and embarrassment to the regime. "Many times," said Quintana, "people manage to slip into the Colón cemetery at night and festoon the graves of Cuban patriots with Cuban flags. This shakes the equanimity of Sr. Menéndez, who rips away the flags in a frenzy and then presses charges against attendants and the militia for permitting Cubans to honor their dead."

There is one detail that precedes the executions in La Cabafia fortress, according to the Cuban Medical Association in Exile. Prior to being shot, the victim is drained of blood for blood banks. Dr. Virginia de Mirabel Quesada, another recent escapee through Mexico, adds an eye-witness report:

"It is absolutely true that just before being shot by firing squad at La Cabafia, Cuban patriots are first taken to a small first-aid room at La Cabafia prison where the Communists take from 1 1/2 to 2 liters of blood." One half of the blood goes to the Soviet Union, the other half remains for Cuban blood banks.

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THE 'GUARDIAN' OF ENGLAND DEFENDS BRITISH-CUBA TRADE

In a recent editorial, the Guardian (formerly the Manchester Guardian) finds that economic sanctions will not drive Castro from power, and that therefore British trade with Cuba is logical and reasonable. Contrary to fact, the Guardian also says that it was the unfriendly policy of the United States towards Cuba that drove Castro into the hands of the Communists.

Unfortunately the editorial treats only with a local dictator, Castro, and not with international Communism which has turned Cuba into a training base for subversive activities being carried out all over the world. John Okello, who spear-headed the Zanzibar coup, was trained in Cuba. It also seems clear that a great deal of the present East African ferment (where former British possessions are threatened with Communist takeovers) was incubated in that same Cuba which the Guardian treats as a local phenomenon.

It may be true that the United States was in grievous error when it agreed to sell wheat to Russia. It may be true, as members of the British House of Commons have recently stated, that this sale is strategic in that it feeds Soviet troops and Communist guerrilla forces throughout the world. The Guardian states: "Keeping buses out of Cuba will do nothing to weaken Castro's hold on the Cubans or his affection for the Russians." In those same strategic terms, then, what does the sale of Leyland buses mean to Cuba? How important is that sale to the Castro-Khrushchev combine? What is the state of that transport on which Cuba's industrial plant depends? This is answered by the Cubans themselves:

● Radio Rebelde, Havana, February 3: "This program of one hour provides a dramatization of the most noteworthy news events of the month of January...." (The sale of Leyland buses to Cuba was ranked in importance above Fidel Castro's speech upon his return from Russia, above the beginning of Cuba's 1964 sugar harvest, above the establishment of diplomatic relations between Paris and Peking, and above the coup in Zanzibar.)

● Radio Progreso, Havana, February 8: "At a meeting held in Havana, a plan was presented by Mario Salazar, Director of the Collegium of Administrators of the Transport Ministry to resolve the problem of transport at night. This night service will be planned in accord with the needs of each industry. Seventy percent of the taxis standing by at night are to be put at the service of workers employed in production tasks at night. The 30% remaining will be ready for urgent needs. The fare charged the workers will be 'popular,' each auto will transport its quota of industrial workers, and the industries must advise what proportion of this transport they need... this service will not bring a profit to the drivers, but will be just enough to cover costs...."

Obviously, the advantage accruing to the Castro-Khrushchev combine with the purchase of Leyland buses outweighs the financial gains which will accrue to England by that sale. There can be little doubt that the transport problem is a serious one that affects the industrial output of Khrushchev's base in the Caribbean (see "Sale of Buses Undermines Cuban Resistance," FCN, Vol. 2, No. 2, January 20, 1964).

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INSIDE LATIN AMERICA

KHRUSHCHEV AND CASTRO ORGANIZE LATIN AMERICAN LABOR

The two faces of the Communist regime of Fidel Castro were visible in separate meetings held in Brasilia the last week of January. The voice of one was that of the rabble rouser; the other, the sweet voice of reason and common sense. Each was occasioned by different circumstances, but the objective is the Communist capture of Latin America.

Over 150 Latin American delegates attended a trade conference to which the out-cast Cubans were invited. They were invited because the purpose of the meeting was to establish a Latin American bloc at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to be held in Geneva in March. Cuba is a member of the United Nations. Under the charter of that organization, Cuba is permitted to attend such meetings and to hold a vote, even though it has been expelled from the Organization of American States. The Cuban delegation reportedly did its in-fighting with the marked tolerance of Brazilian Marxist economic planner Celso Furtado, who chaired the conference. In Foreign Affairs magazine, April, 1963, Furtado stated: "Because of the anachronistic structure of Brazilian agriculture, it has led in many regions to the relative increase in the rent from land, thus rewarding parasitic groups ... Marxism in any of its varieties affords a diagnosis of the social reality and a guide to action... it would not be possible to ascribe more than an instrumental character to the private ownership of means of production - - in short, to private enterprise."

Without fanfare, Cuban Ambassador Bernardo Figueroa, issued completely fabricated reports which painted Cuba, before Castro, as a vastly under-developed country due to the "exploitation by American imperialism." United Nations procedures also permit this report to become a matter of U.N. record when the Latin American position is presented.

The true face of the Khrushchev-Castro conspiracy was clearly revealed at a Latin American Unity Conference being held simultaneously in another part of the city. Communist-supported, Communist-financed, and Communist-attended, the conferees intend to use cadres from Latin American countries to organize a single labor organization. The group was forced to leave the city of Belo Horizonte in the face of determined civic resistance, and found a more hospitable official climate in Brazil's capital city. Its unrelenting purpose is described in a radio broadcast over Havana's Radio Progreso on January 28:

"The Unity Congress of the Workers of Latin America now taking place in Brasilia, has declared itself in permanent session 'to facilitate the organization of a new labor organization and to contribute to the progress of labor unity in each country.' The congress created a Permanent Labor Union Council for Latin America, composed of representatives of all the countries that are in it. It issued a statement calling upon Latin American workers to 'show their opposition to the aggressive plans of the United States against our nation in the Caribbean and in favor of re-establishing diplomatic and trade relations between Latin American countries and Cuba.'"

Apparently Brazil is under consideration as headquarters for the CUTAL, and Brazilian Communist peasant leader Francisco Juliao arrived in Havana February 10 to discuss the Communist Latin American labor movement in relation "to the political situation in Brazil."

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CASTRO-KHRUSHCHEV PANAMA PLAN

Fifty-five Communist leaders in the Panama disturbances have finally been identified. Forty definitely were trained in Cuba; the balance in Red China and Soviet Russia. Their training included political agitation, sabotage, guerrilla warfare, and espionage, and was quickly put to use on January 9.

Communist student leaders, among them Secretary General of the Panamanian Student Federation, Victor Avila, quickly moved into the turmoil created by the flag incident (see "Panama, Castro and Khrushchev," FCN Vo. 2, No. 2, January 20, 1964). They had a plan ready to put into operation, and organized the march on the Canal Zone high school at 4 p.m. Violence was assigned to Carlos Núñez, Floyd Brittan, and Virginia Ramírez. Their cadres -- Cleto Souza, Rubén Darío Souza, Jorge Turner, and César Carrasquilla -- established headquarters for the distribution of arms which had been accumulating in Panama through clandestine shipment from Cuba over a two-year period. Violence was an important ingredient to their aims, and Carrasquilla ordered the killing of Americans by snipers to maintain that state of violence so necessary to their plans.

Thelma King, Castro-supporter and Deputy to the national Congress, handled the task of political agitation and incitement. Spokesman and co-owner of the anti-democratic Radio Tribuna, Deputy King organized a march of 1,000 on National Guard headquarters to keep them occupied while the rioting went on. As violence spread, the Communist minority captured the student following, supplied militants with Molotov cocktails, and exhorted the passers-by, the curious, and the on-lookers to invade the Canal Zone.

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CUBAN EXILE EXPEDITION SEIZED BY U.S. AUTHORITIES

Sixteen Cubans were seized aboard the 54-foot converted tuna boat, "Arroyo," last week by U.S. authorities. Operating under the name of Comandos Auténticos, they planned to join the embattled anti-Castro guerrillas in the Escambray mountains and to supply them with much needed shoes, clothing, arms, and camouflage equipment. They were among those who recently received U.S. military training here. The fighters were apprehended near the Dry Tortugas, giving rise to speculation that the four Cuban fishing craft seized in U.S. waters were spying on U.S. intentions with regard to support of internal anti-Castro guerrillas. This latest U.S. action seems to eliminate the need for Castro and Khrushchev to police the American shoreline.

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