

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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AIR POUCH

HUL-A- 936

~~SECRET~~
PBSUCCESS/RYBAT

26 MAY 1954

LINCOLN []

KUGOWN
El Obrero Libre, # 1.

INFO: PBSUCCESS, Headquarters
Acting Chief of Station,
[]
Acting Under of Station,
Guatemala

REF: A. [] J. 1815
B. HUL-A- 763

1. We are sending you herewith a two page analysis of subject newspaper. We realize of course that it is rarely fair to derive final conclusions from only the first issue of a periodical. Nevertheless, certain of the points made in the attached analysis deserve your attention and require possible action.
2. Villatoro's attitude towards Communism appears to be completely acceptable with the possible exception of his describing the communists as "eternal opportunists" (page 2, paragraph 3, attachment). In Latin America where virtually all politicians seem to be opportunists the term appears to be a recommendation rather than a reproach; moreover it is entirely unjustified to describe the communists as "opportunists" -- they are actually fanatics, doctrinaires, conspirators, etc. It might be a good idea to put Villatoro straight on this point.
3. We reserve judgement as to the effectiveness of the paper's policy and labor line. If Villatoro and his paper are capable of undermining communist leadership in the unions and capable of developing^{ing} anti-communist movement, the limitations of his political concepts to union and related labor matters seems immediately justified. It remains to be seen however whether he and his paper can make a tangible contribution in this direction.
4. We remain awaiting a reply to reference B,

[]
JEROME V. DUNBAR

Enclosure as noted
JCD/ Elmer F. Lukety/ sgw
26 May 1954

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All with enclosure

El Obrero Libre, Mexico City, # 1, May 1954.
Responsible: Ruben VILLATORO

Judging by the editorials and the editorial comment on Guatemala's recent history for which Ruben VILLATORO claims the responsibility, he is a left of center union organizer in the traditional socialist mould. He defines, for example, the activities of the union in the following manner:

1. To negotiate collective work contracts, to guarantee their fulfillment on the part of their membership, and to exercise the rights and actions which are born of such contracts.
2. To collaborate with governmental organizations for Labor and for Social Security.
3. To represent its members in all the conflicts which may present themselves.
4. To strive for an understanding between labor and management on the basis of justice and mutual respect.
5. To supply union culture to its affiliates. . .
6. To aid its affiliates in misfortune (illness, death, invalid, etc.)
7. To defend the economic interests of its affiliates and to have confidence in the solidarity with other union institutions.
8. To collaborate in the legislation of social laws and in their constant improvement.

Villatoro is more interested in the rights of the workers than in the plight of his own country and he is well versed in the labor movements of the Western Hemisphere, probably as a result of his ORIT affiliations. He is bitterly denunciatory of international communism which he characterizes as imperialistic and opportunistic and he is equally vehement in criticizing Trujillo and Somoza although he is kinder to Peron who pretends to a concern for the working man than to Somoza who does not.

Villatoro maintains an independent position in viewing Guatemala's recent events. The dictators -- Rufino Barrios, Estrada Cabrera and Ubico -- have blocked the country's progress:

Dictatorships have signified the turbulent pacification of the opinions of a nation which has, therefore, not been able to achieve a political education.

*Attachment to:
7421A-936*

Villatoro affirms that the Revolution of October was a movement of the whole citizenry which during the presidency of Dr. Juan Jose AREVALO made great social progress --

"the monetary-banking reform, a regime of democratic liberty, a Working Man's Code, the industrialization of the country, the fight for a more elevated standard of living for city and country workers, the Agrarian Reform, etc."

This movement, he declares, was seized upon and manipulated by

"a totalitarian Party, a group of greedy bureaucrats, or false revolutionaries -- multi-millionaires, today -- who have capitalized for themselves on our Revolution."

"The Communists," declares Villatoro, "are the eternal opportunists."

"The Communists are the sons of the guarantees granted by the political organization of the citizenry; they neither carried a weapon on their shoulder the day of 20 October 1944 nor did they draw up the structural laws of the new Guatemala."

Villatoro outlines the specific steps by which the Communists maneuvered into a controlling position: the consolidation of union power through a "false 'unifying' machination" within the CGTU and its counterpart on the political front through the device of the Frente Democratico Electoral. He pictures for the UNTL a lonely role in fighting against these moves and the consequent persecution of the union.

"We cannot and we must not protect a regime born of the heat of popular aspirations which has fallen into the same errors as other dictatorships and still less into the oppression which it practices by imposing a doctrine which is the anti-thesis of democracy, and where the unions, still nascent, pass over into being mere appendices of a totalitarian State, manipulated by extra-continental watchwords."

Villatoro appears to be, considering him to be sincere and to the extent to which he can be judged by this paper, a lonely independent who refuses the easy political extremes of right or left to accomplish his goals of democracy and improved standards of living; but beyond the diffuse goals of literacy and free unions he has nothing to offer.

Attachment to:
H 212A - 936