

A Report On The "Left" In Latin America

By Leopoldo Aragón

(The following is a chapter from a book in progress. The author is Washington's only fulltime Latin American correspondent.)

CIA

CPYRGHT

In January, in Havana, coinciding with the beginning of the 8th year of the Cuban Revolution and the holding of the Tricontinental Congress of Friendship among the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, members of the Chilean delegation invited Fidel Castro to send some representatives to the 40th anniversary-celebrations of the founding of the Chilean Communist Party.

"There isn't much to celebrate in 40 years out of power," replied Fidel. "I'll personally come when you celebrate some anniversary in power."

The chances of Fidel going to Chile or to any other Latin American country to celebrate any anniversary of a Communist government, are very remote indeed. The CIA agrees. In a report written by Agent Willard Matthias and counter-signed by Sherman Kent, Chairman of the Board of National Estimates of the CIA, and recently seen by this writer it is stated that: "The Communist parties in Latin America are in their greater part under Moscow-oriented leaders incapable of overthrowing any regime or to influence them strongly and have proven largely incapable of gaining mass support."

The Matthias Report is realistic in most of its estimates of the "Communist danger" in Latin America, largely in the sense that it fails to find the kind of danger drummed up in public speeches by Administration officials and the neuras-thenic pronouncements of the Organization of American States.

A reading of the periodic reports of the Special Consultative Committee on Security of the OAS, for example, clearly shows to what extreme, a group of men (mostly Latin American military), dedicated, as they say, "to eradicate Communism from the Americas," insnare themselves in their own peculiar ghost.

"The political elements that offer the most serious danger to the existing regimes, being of the traditionalist or progressive character," says the Matthias Report, "are not those that call themselves Communist or Castroites, but those of nationalist left that blame their own difficulties and those of their countries on what they believe is an alliance between foreign capitalism—particularly American—and the landowners, military leaders and native political adventurers."

Nonetheless, Carlos Angulo Rueda, one of the original lights in the Security Committee of the OAS, expressed to this writer the following guideline: "To us, it does not matter whether the elements that advocate a radical change in the Latin American structures call themselves Communists, Marxists, nationalists of the left, or any other label they militate under. All of them threaten constituted authorities and our Christian way of life. All of them must be dealt with vigorously as Communists."

The bitter attacks on the "nationalists of the Left" were started, as I recall during the latter part of Mr. Edwin Martin's tenure as Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs during the Pres-



ident Kennedy's Administration, and continued by Mr. Thomas C. Mann while he held that position, and beyond.

"These forces (says the CIA report), are represented, for instance, by the Peronist tradition in Argentina and Brizola group in Brazil; their program is strongly anti-US, leftist in its ideology and demagogic in method."

To any one following the development of the "hemispheric defenses against the Communist threat," it appears that, no matter the origin or character of the threat, if it is a threat, it is labeled "Communist" under the assumption that it will give the existing regimes a free hand to suppress it by any conceivable means, and have their consciences at ease.

Their rationalization is not very different from that of certain segregationists who mark as "Communist inspired" or "Communist dupes" anyone and any measure taken to change the status quo in the U.S. South.

Juan Bautista de Lavalle, the chairman of the so-called "Lavalle Committee" that created the Special Security Committee of the OAS, recommended a series of measures for a draft Inter-American anti-Communist code, that he