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Comment. The following report covering the activities of Spanish Republicans in Venezuela from October 1947 through November 1948 was prepared for the Provisional President of Venezuela, Carlos Delgado Chalbaud. After reading the document, Delgado Chalbaud stated that it verified previous information he had received.)

1. On 2 October 1947, the U. S. Army Transport GENERAL STURGIS, which had been chartered by the IRO, docked in Puerto Cabello. It carried 820 immigrants to Venezuela from the U. S. and British zones of Austria and a group of 170 Spanish refugees, most of whom were a badge (printed in English) of the "Friends of Venezuela Society". They held a political meeting on board ship prior to landing, during which there were frequent shouts of "Viva la Republica Espanola", "Viva Venezuela", and "Viva la Accion Democratica". At that time it was noted that many of the Spaniards spoke very poor Spanish, although they had Spanish names and carried Spanish Republican papers. During the voyage, the commander of the transport had received numerous reports from the other passengers to the effect that there were many subversive agents in the Spanish group.
2. After landing, the Spaniards moved to El Trompillo. Subsequent reports stated that there were many Poles, Russians, Yugoslavs, Czechs, and others in the group and that their conversations indicated that the men had been members of the Communist International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. After the group had been at the camp about a week, there was trouble between them, the other immigrants, and the camp administration. This caused them to be moved to San Mateo, from where the ITIC dispersed them throughout Venezuela by finding jobs for them. The apparent leader of the Spanish group was Henrique Pratz, aged 35, from Barcelona.
3. Similar groups arrived on the GENERAL STEWART and the GENERAL BLACK on 12 December 1947 and 17 February 1948, respectively. The commanders of the ships reported on arrival that they had been informed of the presence of many subversive agents among the Spaniards, but that none was identified. Some of the subversive agents were reported to have received special training in Yugoslavia and the USSR Zone of Austria. The agents supposedly infiltrated the British and American Zones of Austria and secured passage from there to Venezuela.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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4. Most of the Spanish Republican immigrants to Venezuela originated in France, Portugal, French North Africa, and Italy. The Venezuelan official responsible for granting visas to the immigrants is Jose Padron Irazabal, the Chief of the Venezuelan Mission in France. He works closely with Andrew Cordova, Chief of the Latin American Section of the IRO in Geneva, who arranges for the movements. The number of Spanish immigrants scheduled to leave France in December 1948 reached the figure of 1600. Padron was selecting them and providing them with visas, while Cordova arranged to secure two ships. The plans were temporarily suspended in November because the rapid influx of immigrants in past months had proved to be impossible for the country to absorb. The collapse of the Government's land colonization program was a contributing factor.
5. The PORTUGAL, the LUGANO, the CABOT, the KATCOMBA, the CAIRO, and the KOMINOS are ships which arrive in Venezuela every month from European ports. Each one has carried from 50 to 100 Spanish Republican refugees who were legally authorized to enter the country. The CAIRO and the KOMINOS, flying the Panamanian flag, are operated by the Zarati Steamship Company, and were carrying illegal Jewish immigrants to Palestine under the name of Oriental Transports Company until recently. It is somewhat striking that these ships have been diverted from the Palestine to the Venezuela run. Aside from legal immigrants, all the ships carried certain numbers of stowaways, most of whom were Spaniards.
6. Eleven Spanish stowaways were known to have arrived on the KOMINOS in October 1948. Other immigrants on the ship reported that it stopped at night off the Venezuelan coast to unload contraband and possibly men into small boats which came alongside. Three stowaways are known to have entered Venezuela illegally from the CAIRO in November. Those three, who have not been identified, were reported to have been prominent terrorists who had failed to obtain visas in France, but had managed to board the ship with the assistance of other Spanish immigrants aboard.
7. It would appear that the Spanish Republican movement to Venezuela is well organized in the form of a secret organization of an international character with considerable financial backing. Societies like the "Friends of Venezuela" are organized in the same way as the "Friends of Spain", which operated in Europe during and after the Spanish Civil War. The organization is believed to be of Communist origin.
8. Although the IRO office in Caracas is visited daily by dozens of immigrants of various nationalities seeking assistance, advice, and employment, there has not been one case on record for over a year of a Spanish refugee requesting aid.
9. Until quite recently, prominent Spanish Republicans like Senor Ulloa, Chief of Colonization, and Senor Casals, Chief of Investigation, held key positions within the Immigration Institute. Other immigrants have reported that both these men had records in Spain indicating that they were prominent Communists.

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