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AGENCIA INFORMATIVA LATINOAMERICANA

(PRENSA LATINA)

Prensa Latina (PL) was inaugurated in June 1959 as a wire service devoted primarily to coverage of Latin American news. It is reported that Fidel CASTRO, in an attempt to propogandize his revolution through means other than the U. S. news services, which he believes are very biased, provided \$800,000 financial backing to get the PL started. He is now subsidizing PL out of Government funds. The central administrative office is located in Mexico City, (to give the impression that this is an independent news service), but the editorial offices are in Havana.

The Director General of PL, and the man who controls the editorial policies of the service, is Ricardo Masetti, an Argentine who was the former head of Peron's Agencia Latina, and a close friend of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, head of the Cuban National Bank. Heads of PL outside of Cuba include the following:

- a. Hermann Konche---Uruguayan---Prensa Latina representative in Rio de Janeiro. Konche is a close personal friend of Ricardo Masetti.
- b. Rogelio Garcia Lupo---heads the Prensa Latina office in Santiago de Chile---Argentine friend of Masetti.
- c. Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza---leftist liberal with commie connections---heads the Prensa Latina office in Bogota, Colombia.
- d. Carlos Enrique Aguirre---Argentine---head of Prensa Latina office in Montevideo.
- e. Oscar Edmundo Palma---a Communist attorney---heads the Prensa Latina office in Guatemala.
- f. Ernesto Giachetti---An Argentine---heads Prensa Latina in Lima.

*Che Guevara to Masetti
via Argentinians*

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g. Efraim Rodriguez Venegas---serves as Prensa Latina agent in San Jose. He is a former Nicaraguan citizen and is reputed to be a member of the Costa Rican Communist Party.

Prensa Latina maintains offices in the following cities, with stringers in many others: Washington, New York, Havana, Guatemala City, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, La Paz, Rio de Janeiro, and probably Sao Paulo, Santiago (Chile), Bogota, San Salvador, San Jose (Costa Rica), Lima, Montevideo, and Caracas. PL is also attempting to open offices in Europe and Asia.

Prensa Latina's coverage of Latin American news is far better than any other service, and the material reported is usually objective and factual. The news carried is not openly propagandistic in nature, nor does it reflect the trademark of the Communist line. However, PL's anti-American slant is shown by the selection of news rather than by editorializing or distorting. It generally reports overt Communist activity in LA much like any other routine news and without an "anti" slant. Any news which is anti-Commie or Anti-CASTRO is either completely ignored or given very little coverage, whereas statements which are anti-American or pro-Communist receive widespread distribution. For example, a statement by a government official of a Latin American country which is pro-Soviet or anti-American is reported widely, and in such a way that it appears that such is the popular view of the Government in that country. U. S. military movements in the Caribbean are widely publicized, as in the case of the shore leave of Marines in the Dominican Republic, which was construed as a pro-Trujillo show of force.

Since the PL news service is free to using newspapers, radio, and TV stations (except in Venezuela), many small papers and left-wing papers use PL material heavily. Up to now, the large newspapers use the service only occasionally, and

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then with reservation. However, since PL has no competitor in its coverage of Latin American events, the number of subscribers is growing rapidly.

For non-LA news PL has used the services of TASS and New China News Agency (which occupies the same building as PL in Havana), as well as the Czech news service CETEKA, with which it maintains teletype service. Radio Peking has used PL stories in its broadcasts. At a news agency conference held in Havana from 12 - 30 January, which was sponsored by Frensa Latina, representatives of the following bloc news services were in attendance and later signed bi-lateral pacts with PL: TASS, CETEKA, Hsin Hua (MCNA), Tanjug of Yugoslavia, Polish Press Agency (PAP), and Agence Telegraphic Bulgare of Bulgaria. This conference stimulated many resignations from PL employees who could see the Communist orientation of PL.

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Attached is a rundown on Prensa Latina
as per our telephone conversation of
12 April.



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