

Box 23
Folder 24
#30

Must
be returned
to CIA room COB 10/25

October 24, 1978

Dearest Chris,

Funny you should have written me asking if I had ever heard about Manuel Rey -- he has been of interest to me in my work for nearly a year -- so here is all you ever wanted to know but were afraid to ask.

Manuel Ray Rivero was born in Cuba in 1924.¹ He has been described as softspoken, unassuming, almost humble -- a natural leader of the highest intellect, ~~deepest~~ sincerity and conviction.² In 1947, because of his outstanding performance as a civil engineer, he was granted a scholarship by the Cuban Ministry of Public Works to pursue graduate studies in engineering at the University of Utah.³ Ray was in the United States for two years but did not complete his work for a Masters Degree.⁴ ~~(AMSHOT) story. 5-10-7~~
When he returned to Cuba, he held various positions in the engineering field, one of which was Project Manager for the construction of the Havana Hilton Hotel.^{5 10}

Insert #1

In May 1957 he organized the Civic Resistance Movement, which supervised sabotage and acts of terrorism against the Batista regime. ^{11 (HSCA 009005 Interview)} Fidel Castro appointed him Minister of Public Works in February 1959 ^{12 (ibid) 10/25} but Ray broke with Castro ~~because of his Communist connections.~~ ¹³ In November 1959, Ray was ~~arrested and relieved of his official position.~~ He then founded the anti-Castro Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo and served as its Chief. Other individuals completing the leadership of the MRP were: Raul Chibas, Special Assistant to Ray; Juan Esteves Ramires, Secretary; Ramon Barquin, Military Intelligence Matters; and Rogelio Cisneros, Chief of MRP in Cuba.

Insert #2

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In the Summer of 1960, while still in Cuba, Ray was actively recruited by the CIA to become a member of the FRD. His background was questioned by the State Department and the Miami CIA office. Despite their objections, Ray was granted Provisional Operational Approval by the CIA on October 25, 1960 and, with the aid of the CIA, he was brought clandestinely into the United States on November 10, 1960. DETAIL

Ray's personnel papers at the CIA contain the following assessment: "Subject has definite political action potential, is a pro-democratic official of government who is not in sympathy with aims of international Communism and is interested in strengthening ties between Cuba and U.S."

Not everyone in the CIA (who knew Ray) were in agreement with this assessment. In a Memo for Record, dated 11/21/60, it was reported that, "... Ray did not politically represent anything to cheer about." Another CIA officer who met privately with him in November 1960 stated that his political posture was doubtful as far as U.S. Government acceptance was concerned. Still another/assessment of Ray stated that his action all seemed directed toward making him the future power in Cuba rather than overthrowing Castro. It was believed that Ray was so far "left" in his thinking that he would be as dangerous (or more so in the long run) to U.S. interests as Castro, if he ever got to be a power in Cuba.

Ray made his political position very clear during a private meeting with a CIA officer on November 15, 1960 - five days after his arrival in the U.S. He said that the MRP did not wish to reinstate the 1940 Cuban Constitution/that the

Castro laws passed at the beginning of his regime would be continued. Ray further stated that he believed the State should regulate private investments and ^{that} utilities should be nationalized. Charges of "Fidelismo without Fidel" were made against Ray's group, the MRP, because of these "leftist" ideologies.

Negative information about Ray was also voiced by the Cuban exile community and came to the attention of the CIA. He was described by one exile as highly dangerous because of his ambition to play a prominent role in the Cuban government after Castro's overthrow. ^{who he} Miro Cardona was opposed to him on the grounds that his program was too Marxist and further stated that Ray was bitterly anti-American as well as probably totalitarian in his thinking. Manuel Artime ^{was he} said the MRP was opposed to banning the Communist Party and in favor of "nationalizing everything."

Although aware of his controversial political philosophy, the CIA actively recruited Ray to join the FRD. ^{Deems?} The White House and State Department pushed for his inclusion. CIA

Ray received full/operational approval as a "political asset" on February 7, 1961 and accepted appointment to the CRC in March. He himself had resisted joining the CRC because he felt the members were too restrained and he did not want to become a part of a situation in which someone else was running the show for the exiles. Within a week after agreeing to join, Ray met with a CIA officer and complained ^{what commitment?} that Miro was backing away from his commitments and was not willing to give Ray any voice in the Council. He recalled

the events of this period to HSCA investigators in 1978,
stating that certain influential and wealthy Americans,
among them William Pawley, opposed him and a lot of heavy
propaganda was circulated at this time accusing him of being
a Communist.

*more
stated
a quote*

(Recent)

Carlos Zarraga, JURE Chief of Support (CIA/DDO
Carlos Zarraga Martinez - Cable dtd 2/28/64) brought
the members of his group, Cuba Libre, into
the JURE in Jan 1964 (^{CIA/DDO Ray Vol. III - memo for Record 2/12/64} ~~at that time - biographical info~~),
~~but~~ He was of operational interest to the CIA. (Ibid,
Personality File Request 10 Aug 1964). & 1972 (Ibid -
~~General Info~~). Zarraga was responsible for a great
deal of ^{JURE} arms & an enormous supply of explosives
in Miami & Puerto Rico. Zarraga resigned from
JURE in Sept. 1964. (Ibid ~~Field Info Report 9/23/64~~).
CIA/DDO Zarraga - Field Info Report 9/23/64)

from 1964

Insert #1
(AMSHOT/11)
story

During this period, it has been alleged that Ray was friendly with members of the Puerto Rican group which plotted to assassinate President Truman. ⁵ ^{Secret} (CIA/PDO Loose Documents, Dispatch to Deputy Chief, WHSA from COS JMWAVE, 4/14/64, Mexico, D.F. — From an undercover source with cryptonym (AMSHOT/11)^{one} Upon receipt of this info., Ray's Case Officer questioned the reliability of the information. HSCA researcher endeavored to identify source & was told (AMSHOT/11) was still a current asset in 1978) and a good friend of (Puerto Rican Communist Pedro Albizu Campos).⁶ (Ibid) It was further alleged that Ray was in frequent contact with Puerto Ricans who were working on the renovation of the White House.⁷ (Ibid) The assassination attempt of Pres. Truman occurred at Blair House, across the street from the W.H., ~~during the time~~ ^{the} the Trumans were using this home as an official residence until such time as the White House renovation was completed. This rather bizarre story surfaced in 1964 and the information was disseminated to the Secret Service⁸ (HSCA ^{Item 3} 008290) and the FBI⁹ (HSCA 006468, Item 5)

His actual accomplishments were seriously questioned ^{by the} within the CIA. Within the Western Hemisphere division, he was assessed as notorious for claiming assets or operations several days after some other group had already set them up or claimed them and his accomplishments towards the effort to overthrow Castro negligible. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. V, Memo for Record, May 5, 1961, from Calvin Hecker, Subj: Manolo Ray - Comments on his Anti-Castro Activities) His easy access to the White House and State Dept. made some within the Agency hesitant to support him outside the umbrella of the CRC for fear that he would discuss ~~the~~ his arrangements with the CIA and, in a matter of time, the whole Cuban exile community would know where Ray was getting his support. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. V, Memo for Record, June 2, 1961, (from James A. Noel) Subj: Relations with Manolo Ray & the MRP)

Ray continued to ~~be~~ closely associated with the CIA as evidenced ~~by~~ ~~continuous~~ files on him from 1960 - 1966 indicating he was of operational interest to them. No documentation is available to ascertain financial outlays for the MRP, as

The MRP did not wish to renounce the 1940 Cuban Constitution and the 1959 Revolution passed by Castro at the beginning of his regime. They favored the regulation of private utilities as nationalization of all utilities. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol II, Cable to Director from MASH)

Insert #2 - He told two anti-Castro Cubans in April 1959 that he recognized the symptoms of Communism in the Castro regime but was not prepared to conspire against "El Lider Maximo" (Give us this Day - p 91) Ray was relieved of his official position in Nov. 7 1959 (HSCA 005990, p. 2, FBI Correlation Study, Manolo Ray file # 97-4546, Ser 1.) but continued to permit his name to be associated with the Castro regime (Give us this Day - p. 92) until ~~the~~ he formed the Revolutionary Movement of the People (MRP) around May 1960 (HSCA 009005). This anti-Castro

~~Associated~~ organization believed that the ideas and aims of the democratic left best suited the needs & aspirations of the Cuban people. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol. II, 9 June 1962 study of program for liberation of Cuba submitted by Ray) Associated with Ray in this underground organization were Raul Chibas, Ramon Barquin, Rogelio Benneros (CIA/DDO Ray Vol II, Organization of MRP) Rufio Lopez Fresquet and Elise Pazos (Give us this Day p 92)

Ray was ~~criticized~~ criticized as a tary adherent to the anti-Castro movement. (Give us this Day p 92) and charges of "Fidelism sin Fidel" were made against him and the MRP because of their leftist ideologies. (CIA/DDO Ray Vol II Contact Report from (Wallace Parlett) 10/17/60. Subj: Meeting with (Juan Estevez & Jorge Beruff.) 10/13/60.)