

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority State Letter 1/1/82  
By W9 NARA Date 9/29/98



No. 919

REC'D  
LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

San José, Costa Rica,  
June 1, 1932.

JUN 8-32

DIVISION OF  
LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS  
JUN 9 1932  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF  
EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
JUN 16 1932  
COPY IN EE  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN COSTA RICA

FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK	YES	NO
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TO ASST. DIR.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TO CHIEF OF BUREAU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TO OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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FILED

JUN 27 1932

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State  
Washington

Sir:

I have the honor to report that a clash occurred between police and communists on Saturday evening, May 28, 1932, in San José, in the course of which the local Chief of Police, Jorge Gonzalez Ulloa, and two policemen were injured, and about 100 "reds" arrested.

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1/ The attached memorandum gives the immediate background on the occurrence, which has caused considerable consternation by its novelty in Costa Rica.

The purpose of the series of meetings, as set forth in the memorandum, was ostensibly to mobilize opinion of the working classes in favor of projects establishing a minimum wage and contemplating unemployment relief. The police were given strict instructions that all participants in the meeting scheduled for Saturday night would have to remain inside of the meeting hall, as required by the law which forbids open-air meetings, parades, et cetera, except under special permission from the Government. The administration had declared that it would not countenance any public demonstrations, parades, and the like. Speeches were in progress when some sort of altercation began and the Chief of Police injured by a flying bottle.

According to the police, they were simply obeying orders by keeping the crowd off the street, and enforcing quiet, when they were suddenly set upon. They had also been forced to listen to gratuitous insults from the speakers who made disparaging references to their presence, et cetera. The leader of the communists, Don Manuel Mora Valverde, gave an entirely different story, to the effect that the whole thing had been prearranged between the President and the police, and condemning the brutality

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with which the police had acted, particularly when there had been no necessity for their intervention.

The press has given preferential attention to the episode, and has expressed its hearty approval of the energetic part played by the police force. In interviews published yesterday morning, President Jimenez stated categorically that he would tolerate no disturbance of the public order. It was also announced that any foreigners meddling in such matters (it was reported that Nicaraguans, Chinese, Hungarians, and a Swiss were involved in the Saturday episode) would be summarily ordered out of the country, or jailed. Action against several government employees reported involved was also contemplated.

After forty-eight hours of police grilling, the "reds" arrested were set at liberty, while the leaders, Manuel Mora Valverde, and Jaime Cerdas Mora, were freed on a bail of ₡350.00 (about \$80.00). A third leader, Luis Carballo, escaped in the confusion on Saturday night and has not yet been captured. At the time of his arrest, Señor Mora was quoted as saying that the incident "opens in Costa Rica and seals with blood the struggle in which we are determined to triumph or die."

I still feel, however, that communism offers little real danger to Costa Rica, unless allowed to get out of hand, which is particularly improbable in view of the resolute attitude of President Jimenez

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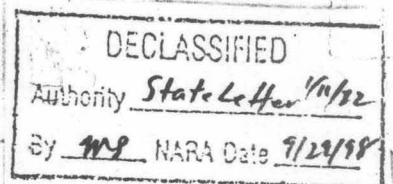
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and his associates. The President is reported to have said "that we will trap this kitten before it has a chance to grow into a tiger." He was quoted as follows in LA TRIBUNA of May 31, 1932, in part:

"Referring to the attitude of the police against the manifestations of the Communists in the streets, I have to confirm the correctness of their procedure which was in accordance with the law. There has been no intention whatsoever to illtreat anybody, but the irrevocable disposition to comply with the laws of the country. There could be no better proof of this than the fact that those injured were the chief of police and one of the officers. Before the police started to clean the street, the chief of police tried to persuade the Communists to do so. Their answer consisted in bottles and stones thrown at him and in this way the consequences may be lamentable. I am not afraid of Communist ideas, nor do I believe that their number will greatly increase in a well organized society like our own. But since Communism preaches revolution and extermination by means of violence, the police is in charge of public order and must proceed accordingly with the right on their side. Not because they are proceeding against the Communists, but because they have to defend the law. I cannot place the Communists outside of the limits of the law just because they are Communists, and for the simple reason that they are Communists I cannot place them above it either. We all know in Costa Rica that in order to hold a public manifestation in the street a permit from the competent authority is necessary. If this law is applied to all parties and all comply with it, I cannot see any reason why Communism should be allowed to do otherwise. If we leave Communism to do what it thinks is best, then we would better do away with the police force altogether; and that is not the case.

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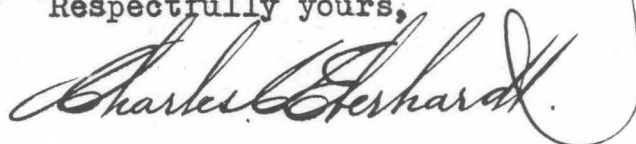
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"All the inhabitants of the Republic have to comply with the law. I said the Communists may meet inside of their localities, and there they can hold their speeches; I said that the Communists can have their papers and publications if they desire. But I said that they could not hold their manifestations in public, and nobody for that matter may do so without a prior permit of the authorities, and all this I shall have to respect and see that it is respected. The laws are there to be complied with and there are no privileged classes."

The best protection here against subversive doctrines consists in the facts that the land is unusually equitably distributed and that unemployment, while existing, is not serious. Such unemployment as has manifested itself can readily be absorbed by the community and the needy cared for.

I am convinced that precautions should not be relaxed, and agree with the expressed determination of local officials that deportation of undesirables should proceed at once. That Soviet agents are directing activities here either directly or indirectly, I am also convinced. The rumor has also circulated that one of the leading organizers of the Salvadorean disorders has recently come here. Local capitalists are receiving frequent warnings in the form of anonymous letters. There is danger, but I believe the present administration can be relied upon to handle the situation.

Respectfully yours,



CHARLES C. EBERHARDT

Enclosure:  
Memo as stated.

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Authority State Letter 1/1/82By WJ NARA Date 7/24/88

Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 919, dated June 1, 1932.

MEMORANDUM ON COMMUNISM

The morning press of May 27, 1932, carried considerable publicity on a meeting of the Communist party of San José held yesterday evening in the party's headquarters facing the Porfirio Brenes School. The crowd in attendance, estimated at 1000 persons, was too large for the meeting room and speeches were made in the street by Guillermo Fernandez, Jaime Cerdas, Luis Carballo and Manuel Mora. The principal purpose of the meeting was to consider two projects which the party hopes to present soon to Congress: the first, a project requiring the fixing by a committee of women of a minimum wage, and the second involving unemployment aid, through funds obtained either by a moratorium on the foreign debt or levies on capital.

The press reported that the party intended to continue evening meetings until sufficient supporters were lined up to organize a large parade through the city advocating these two points of their program. It was also stated that communists from the provinces would be brought in for the occasion to swell the numbers.

A special detail of police maintained order at the meeting held last night, which broke up with the

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singing of the "International" and other revolutionary hymns.

A story in DIARIO DE COSTA RICA today reported a meeting of the League for Social Action (Liga de Acción Social), a local group of undivulged membership organized to combat the spread of communism. A long article of Reverend Rosendo de J. Valenciano, of La Merced Church, was read and publication proposed. It also stated that there are at present eleven Soviet agents in all Latin America whose mission it is to organize sub-agencies, et cetera, for the propagation of Communistic ideas. The League hopes to induce local capitalists to keep their money in circulation through building enterprises, et cetera, so as to reduce the dangers of social unrest from unemployment.

In today's LA TRIBUNA Dr. Calderón Muñoz, physician, member of Congress and late president of Congress, scored the capitalists of Costa Rica for their benighted and inhuman attitude.

"Capital ought to understand that by cooperating to bring about more work it contributes to the greater prosperity of the nation and to the security of its own possessions. But the capitalists do not see it that way and are off on a dangerous course."

He also declared that there was a real "Communism" in this country; not just a state of mind brought on by hunger and unemployment but an ideological communism,

"granddaughter

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"granddaughter of liberalism and legitimate daughter of socialism." The advance of this feeling is abetted by the failure of capitalism to embark on a more unselfish, humane policy.

Dr. Calderón also came out for a moratorium on the foreign debt, stating that "we must live first" and that later on, when the national economy is on a surer footing, the payments can be begun again.

May 27, 1932.

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A group of unemployed workmen announced they would demonstrate on May 31, 1932, but emphasized the fact that they were not Communists and had no connection with the Communist Party.

The President announced that he would permit Communistic meetings but not public demonstrations.

May 28, 1932.

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