

The DRE newsletter (June - August 1963)

Garrick Alder



Above: the masthead of *The Cuban Report*, as it appeared in Summer 1963.

June 1963 was a pivotal month in the history of covert US action against Fidel Castro's Cuba. On June 19th, US President John Kennedy signed the executive version of a blank cheque, by approving covert CIA funding for what were referred to opaquely as 'autonomous groups'. The groups in question were marauding bands of Cubans living in Miami, estranged from their homeland by Fidel Castro's regime. They had been launching attacks on Cuba for two years, previously under the auspices of the CIA's Cuban Project, Operation Mongoose. That project was slowly being wound down in the early months of 1963, as Kennedy pursued an overt policy of reaching accommodation with communist Cuba. The precise date that Operation Mongoose really ended is still unclear. Judging by Kennedy's change of course on improving relations with Cuba, it probably began winding down in January 1963. In that month the issuance of NSAM 213 reorganised the Kennedy administration's handling of Cuban relations. A White House memo dated 4 March, written by national security advisor Gordon Chase, records Kennedy instructing staff to 'start thinking along more flexible lines'.¹

What Kennedy was approving was something slightly, but significantly,

¹ For NSAM 213 see <<https://irp.fas.org/offdocs/nsam-jfk/nsam213.jpg>> For the later White House memo see <<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB103/630304.pdf>>

Wherever possible, URLs cited in this essay have been preserved in the Internet Archive and can be retrieved by searching www.archive.org.

different to Operation Mongoose: a covert programme of harassment and sabotage, approved by Kennedy, supported by the CIA, and conducted ad lib at the sole discretion of the Cuban exiles – but it would be launched from *outside* the US and directed at Cuban targets only. The near-apocalypse of the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962) had made the Kennedy White House shy of taking any more potshots at the Soviet troops stationed 90 miles off Florida. On the other hand, whatever escapades the Cuban exiles cooked up, the White House could truthfully disavow knowledge of them, and categorically rebut suggestions that attacks had been launched from US soil. Kennedy was playing both ends against the middle, making overtures to Castro while turning a blind eye to anti-Castro terrorists.

It was a risky game, because Miami's Cuban exile community was a simmering cauldron of revolutionary zealots and bloodthirsty militants. Nowhere were the two characteristics combined more effectively than in the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil (in English, the Student Revolutionary Directorate) or DRE for short, which also had seemingly-limitless reserves of youthful energy. The DRE had been established by the CIA in 1960, originally as a combined outlet and amplifier for anti-Castro propaganda and other psychological operations. There was direct liaison with the CIA via JMWAVE, the Agency's sprawling Miami station, which was effectively the general headquarters of nearly all anti-Castro activism in the USA.²

The DRE rapidly turned itself into a paramilitary organisation, which didn't seem to bother the CIA much, and in any case suited the greater aims of Operation Mongoose. It was only in December 1962, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, that the DRE's CIA funding began to slowly dwindle as the US government stealthily backed away from another confrontation with the Soviet Union. To the DRE, Cuba was simply a puppet of the Soviet Union and the two were therefore coterminous. Being insatiable insurrectionists, and with their CIA money drying up, the DRE began clamouring about being betrayed by America as well as Cuba. Many career CIA officers had similar beliefs, due to Kennedy's perceived abandonment of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, which had led to numerous personnel being killed or captured. The JMWAVE offices on the south campus of Miami University harboured an increasingly toxic symbiosis.

The DRE newsletter, *The Cuban Report*, was typed, photostatted, and mailed to paying subscribers throughout America, usually on a weekly basis.

The 21 June 1963 edition led with a memorable story, which began:

² For CIA creation of DRE see <<https://tinyurl.com/CIAmemoDRE>> or <<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=13958#relPageId=1>>.

* In the dawn of June 12, a group of Cuban exile raiders attacked a Government controlled refinery in Cardenas, Matanzas, wounding and killing several militiamen.
The raiders left for Cuba in two small boats, a 17-footer and a 22-footer, from a secret base in the Caribbean. After the raid, the group went to Cayo Blanco, a small island off the North Cuban coast, where they were intercepted by the Cuban Navy and militia units.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 1), 21 June 1963

Why had the DRE sat on this dramatic story for nine days? The apparent answer is that it had been held over until Kennedy had authorised his covert action plan on 19 June. The giveaway is in the second paragraph of the *Report's* story. The attack had been massaged to fit into the restrictions imposed by the President's orders. The *Report* claimed that the raid had been staged from 'a secret base in the Caribbean'. Which was true insofar as (a) Florida is in the Caribbean and (b) the fact that the base was in Florida was being kept secret by *The Cuban Report*. To be precise, the 'secret base' was the Dinner Key Yacht Basin, a marina in downtown Miami.

The ringleader of the 12 June raid, Manuel Quiza [Docal]³ had managed to evade the US ban on such activities by telling the local US Customs Service office that his boat wasn't fit to sail and needed repairs. The Customs Service obligingly reduced surveillance on Quiza's vessel on 6 June and, of course, the raiding party immediately set off for Cuba. Naturally, the Customs office was 'upset and embarrassed by the disappearance of the boat' – or so the FBI was told by the CIA, who in turn had received their information from the US Coastguard Intelligence Service. Since the ban on anti-Cuban covert action had been imposed by the US federal government and was being enforced through the State Department, the possibility that the Coastguard Intelligence Service and the CIA had somehow remained totally unaware of the planned action can be dismissed.⁴ The idea that the JMWAVE station didn't notice until after the raid (and then relied on information from other agencies) is similarly far-fetched. Based on this set of circumstances alone, it already looks as though the CIA was assisting this raid, perhaps even controlling it – from a safely-deniable distance. This may have extended to misinforming the Customs office about the impounded vessel's seaworthiness, thus relaxing the Customs office's surveillance and allowing the raiding party to escape. It is safe to say that no Customs official in their right mind would have taken the unsupported word of the boat's owner on something so crucial.

³ Cuban surnames follow the Spanish pattern. An individual's surname is their father's surname followed by their mother's maiden surname. For the sake of clarity, only the father's surname is generally used in this essay, with the mother's surname given in square brackets on first mention.

⁴ <<https://www.archives.gov/files/research/jfk/releases/docid-32327723.pdf>>

Further evidence of *The Cuban Report* bending the truth can be seen by comparing its coverage of the 12 June raid and coverage of the same raid in US establishment media. The *New York Times* (NYT) reported the attack in its 13 June 1963 edition, datelined 'Miami' and attributing its information to 'exile sources here'.⁵ The DRE's coverage (published eight days later) included some details given in the *NYT* story, and some that were not. One of the details omitted by *The Cuban Report* is an unmissable confirmation of CIA involvement in the 12 June raid.

The 12 June raiding party included one Ricardo Morales [Navarrete]. His significance was not apparent to the *NYT* at the time, or indeed to almost anyone else. Morales was a member of Operation 40, the CIA's off-the-books hit squad formed in 1959. After his death in 1982, Morales' sons would recount tales he told them which suggested he was on the periphery of an assassination plot against President Kennedy. These included the claim that he had trained Lee Harvey Oswald, Kennedy's supposed assassin, in rifle marksmanship.⁶

The *Report's* version of the 12 June raid had simply erased Morales from the story. Perhaps the editorial staff figured that since the *Report* had greater credibility among Miami's Cubans, the *NYT's* naming of Morales would be quickly forgotten. In view of Morales' career, it does not take much imagination to understand why he slipped so quickly away from public view. The *Report* had mounted a coverup, albeit a very limited and specific coverup.

A further indication that this was a CIA-sponsored operation can be seen from the political allegiance of the boat owner, the aforementioned Manuel Quiza. Per the *New York Times* story, Quiza was taken into US custody on his return to Florida on 12 June. By September, Quiza had renounced his own exile brigade, the *Cubanos Libre*, and had thrown in his lot with JURE – another anti-Castro group, whose founder was distinctly suspicious of the CIA. The natural reading is that Quiza had expected CIA protection when he returned to the US after the June 1963 raid but had found himself at the mercy of law enforcement officials. The whole experience must have served him as a nasty reminder of the 1961 betrayal at the Bay of Pigs.⁷

⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/NYT13June1963>> or <<http://jfk.hood.edu/Collection/Weisberg%20Subject%20Index%20Files/C%20Disk/Cuba%20Clips%204-63/Item%2043.pdf>>.

⁶ Oswald, in Morales' opinion, was not a good enough sniper to have pulled off the assassination. See <<https://tinyurl.com/MiamiHerald30Oct2021>> or <<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article255356661.html>>

⁷ <<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=32442#relPageId=1>>

But in joining JURE, Quiza was unwittingly becoming even more entangled with the CIA. Since June 1963, JURE had been under the leadership of Rogelio 'Eugenio' Cisneros, a CIA asset with the cryptonym AMBANG. In the first month of his leadership, Cisneros had flown to Dallas, where a JURE chapter had been recently established. There he met with anti-Castro activist Sylvia Odio, to discuss a possible meeting with someone in Dallas to buy weapons and munitions for use by JURE back in Miami.⁸ Nothing seemingly came of this meeting, but in September Odio would receive a visit from two different men, also claiming to be from JURE, accompanied by a third individual whom Odio later came to believe was Lee Harvey Oswald.

Any lingering doubts about CIA involvement must surely be resolved by the raiders' designated target, the 'Government controlled refinery in Cardenas, Matanzas'. It was Cuba's main oil-processing plant, and just months after the 12 June incident, the CIA was attempting to put it out of operation once and for all. The first mission had failed due to its improvised nature, so a more professional attack was needed. The operation was all set to go when President Kennedy was assassinated. It was called off by his successor, President Lyndon Johnson, who might have been acting at the suggestion of his abundant contacts in America's petrochemical industries.⁹

Among the other propaganda exclusives in the 21 June issue of *The Cuban Report* was an exposé of an apparent passport-forging scheme under way in Honduras. The *Report* listed 12 men, all 'Cuban communists, supposed members of Cuba's G-2 secret police', who had obtained Honduran passports and then used them to travel to Mexico. To the ever vigilant staff of the *Report*, this suggested 'a possible network of makers of false documents – including passports – of which the Communists are making good use to get their subversive plans under way.' The visas on which the Cuban officers had entered Honduras were all granted by the local Minister of Foreign Affairs, which in turn indicates that the passports granted to the 12 men were in fact authentic.

The quality of the information in *The Cuban Report* suggests that its sources were not (as it claimed) Cuban exiles in Honduras, but individuals connected with intelligence agencies. The *Report* printed the names of all 12 men; the fact that their visas were signed off by the Honduran Foreign Minister

⁸ <<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=11342#relPageId=4>>

⁹ This did not become public knowledge until it was revealed by *Washington Post* columnist Jack Anderson in 1971. See <<https://tinyurl.com/WashPost17Apr1971>> or <<http://jfk.hood.edu/Collection/Weisberg%20Subject%20Index%20Files/C%20Disk/Cuba%20Raids%20On/Item%2003.pdf>>.

himself; and identified three more Cubans who were purportedly sent via Honduras to become active communist agents in other Latin American countries. This seems unlikely to be information freely available to everyday citizens, but it very strongly resembles an intelligence 'product'.

The so-called 'G-2 Secret Police' was the nickname of Cuba's *Dirección General de Inteligencia* (DGI), and their furtive manoeuvres now sound recognisably like part of Operation Manuel, a Cuban-Czech collaboration that began in 1962. This would not have been clear to readers at the time, and perhaps not even to the CIA. Operation Manuel was a Soviet-bloc 'work-around' to circumvent the obstacle presented when air travel between Cuba and the South American continent was banned. Would-be revolutionaries were shuttled back and forth across the Atlantic, from Cuba to Europe, and thence back to Latin American countries, the aim being to obfuscate the Cuban connection from the eyes of the CIA. During their sojourns in Prague, the aspiring guerrillas had their Cuban passports and visas confiscated, and were issued with Czech visas with a false 'stamp' timeline that concealed any time spent in Cuba.

In June 1963, the month of *The Cuban Report's* story, 16 Operation Manuel participants were processed through Czechoslovakia and departed with new personal histories. Sometimes, a double-detour was taken, with a stopover in another European country during the return leg, so as to make the trail even more bamboozling. Before it concluded in 1969, Operation Manuel effectively smuggled nearly 1,000 men into South America. Mexico was a popular destination for the undercover freedom fighters, and Mexico City in particular.¹⁰ It is quite feasible, therefore, that the mysterious trip described in *The Cuban Report* was another counter-surveillance double-detour run as part of Operation Manuel. In this scenario, the DCI officers had recently travelled from Prague to Mexico, and from there to Honduras, where their forged Czech documents were replaced with genuine Honduran passports. The sheer scale of this international chicanery, to say nothing of its extreme sensitivity, would indicate that the *Report* was being used to surface CIA-originated material.

The 21 June 1963 *Report* also carried a hair-raising account of Soviet activities in the Caribbean. On 13 June (readers were told) a family of eight had arrived in Miami, seeking asylum. The father, Jose Manuel [Machado], was described by the *Report* as a 'well-informed fisherman'. He was not only well-informed, but seemed very keen to talk about deception being carried on under the cover of modernising the Cuban fishing industry. 'The Russians,'

¹⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/OpManuel17Nov1967>> or <<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112656.pdf?v=6a70684a51c999e499738f0727160aef>>

Manuel reportedly declared, 'are not the least interested in teaching us how to fish, nor do they know anything about fishing in our seas. They have not given any Cuban fisherman a single lesson.'

have not given any Cuban fisherman a single lesson. They are devoted to sounding, measuring the currents, getting to know the depths; in other words, learning all the Island's secrets. It is assured that these stories are for the establishment of submarine bases all over."

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 3), 21 June 1963

The circumstances in which a desperate fisherman, his wife, and six children, took to the seas are not touched upon. Nor are the (no doubt miserable) conditions they endured in Cuba. Unusually, the *Report* doesn't play on the patriotic sympathies of its readers. Nor does it promote the Manuel family as victims of communism. Mr Manuel is simply a source of highly-specific information. The conspicuous segregation of his personal knowledge about fishing indicates that it was obtained by direct questioning on that subject.

The overall feel of the *Report's* story is that the Manuel family had been thoroughly debriefed upon their arrival in Miami, and that this fresh intelligence material had been surfaced by the *Report*. Any and all Cuban refugees arriving in Florida were routinely interviewed and new information was passed to JMWAVE. The CIA station would naturally want to interview the most valuable arrivals itself. The exotic nature of Mr Manuel's information is suspicious. Would a poor Cuban fisherman have any reliable information about deep-sea Soviet exploration? Or did he just wildly exaggerate and fabricate, hoping to please officials of his prospective homeland? If Mr Manuel had invented this submarine warfare yarn, and the CIA had allowed such raw material to be taken at face value by the *Report*, then this was a fumble that – deliberately or otherwise – would have far-reaching consequences (described below).

Another example of *The Cuban Report* massaging its stories, although this time for emotional reasons, can be found in the same issue. The *Report* laments the death of 'Ricardo Olmedo, 45 years old, [who] was secretly judged and shot at La Cabana Fortress [. . .] As coordinator of an anti-Castro organisation, he was arrested on March 13. The action was taken by the Cuban Communist Regime without informing his family or allowing him a lawyer for the defence.' This seems a bit less outrageous in light of the fact that Olmedo had in fact attempted to overthrow the Cuban government and assassinate Fidel Castro the previous year, in the unimaginatively-named August 30th Plot (*Conspiración del 30 de Agosto*). Olmedo was offered a reprieve if he would denounce the plot and make a confession on Cuban television. Olmedo replied simply: 'I am not an entertainer', and so he was summarily executed instead. The *Report* neglected to explain any of this.

By far the most dynamic part of the 21 June *Report* is a lengthy editorial, covering a page and a half of A4 paper, denouncing the 'Communist world conspiracy'. As one might expect, this diatribe is full of hot words and extravagant claims, and focuses upon the 'peaceful coexistence' policy promoted by Soviet premier Nikita Krushchev. The *Report* was having none of it, and warned readers:

There are also students of international affairs who will declare that the dangers of Communist conspiracies no longer exist and that Cuba will now reduce its labor to its own country and not poison the rest of Latin America. Those who believe this, will have fallen innocently into the Communist trap. Those who believe this are ignoring Communist strategy. Those who believe this, ignore the ulterior motives of International Communism and the basic doctrine of Marxism-Leninism.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 6), 21 June 1963

The *Report* unsubtly plays up similarities between Cuba and the Soviet Union, while studiously avoiding their very real ideological differences and policy divergences. At the same time, the editorial points up the growing Sino-Soviet split as evidence that the Soviet Union and Cuba are somehow in cahoots with this 'peaceful coexistence' ploy. To the *Report*, it didn't matter what communist nations did. They were all just communists, and therefore every action was part of their scheme for world domination. In the closing stretch of this editorial, things begin to take on a distinctly ominous tone:

It would be absurd to think that Communist Cuba is limited to building a Marxist paradise on its own soil. It would be absurd to think that Fidel Castro has been "neutralized". It would be to ignore those actual circumstances and the sabotages which daily are carried out throughout Latin America in order to defeat constitutional governments, and to weaken all democratic institutions in each country. And whence come the instructions for all these acts of sabotage? Where are the agents trained who subvert the Americas? Which is the operation base for Communist conspiracy? Those who dare not answer these questions, really do not deserve to live in a Democracy whose benefits they are going to enjoy only for a little more time. We fear anything that means war and yet we ignore the danger

Of course, the responsibility for the disappearance of our way of life will fall on the shoulders of those who today remain impassive at the advance of Communism. It will also fall on the shoulders of those irresponsible men who ignoring the dangers of peaceful coexistence, devote their efforts to suppressing all attempts at liberation. It will equally fall on the

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 6, abridged), 21 June 1963

The *Report's* readership would have known exactly what this editorial was driving at and, if anyone had any doubts, then the words 'suppressing all attempts at liberation' would have definitively clarified the situation. The *Report's* fulminating editorial was a figurative shot across the bows of President John F. Kennedy. He had not only scuppered the CIA's Operation Mongoose, but had ordered the Cuban exiles to concentrate on sabotage and subversion, rather than deposing Castro. The *Report's* readership would have

been well aware of remarks made by Kennedy in his 'American Universities' speech, delivered just eleven days before the *Report's* dateline.

'[L]et us re-examine our attitude towards the Soviet Union [. . .] No government or social system is so evil that its people must be considered as lacking in virtue. As Americans, we find Communism profoundly repugnant as a negation of personal freedom and dignity. But we can still hail the Russian people for their many achievements—in science and space, in economic and industrial growth, in culture, in acts of courage [. . .] So let us not be blind to our differences, but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be resolved. And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's futures. And we are all mortal.' ¹¹

No wonder the *Report* was so intemperate. Seen through the distorting lens of the DRE's fanatical anti-Castroism, Kennedy was preaching the same subversive 'peaceful coexistence' fantasies as Krushchev. What further proof could anyone need that international communism was emerging triumphant, facilitated by a duplicitous and fickle US government? The *Report's* stance on all this was crystal clear: 'We Cubans absolutely do not understand anything to do with peaceful coexistence with the Communists [. . .]'

A week later, on 28 June 1963, a single-sheet edition of *The Cuban Report* arrived in the mailboxes of its subscribers. Headlined 'SPECIAL REPORT', the newsletter seemed to have discovered a trove of shocking new information concerning the Caribbean machinations of international Communism. First and foremost of these was the assertion

1.- That Colonel Alexander Rumianzev, supposed Russian technician, expert in hydraulics, has been in Cuba since the beginning of May with the specific mission of planning new defense works which are being carried out on the Island by Soviet technicians, including the construction of new missile bases. These missiles are still in Cuba and run the risk of being effectively detected by U-2's.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 1), 28 June 1963

To spell it out: *The Cuban Report* was claiming that the Soviet Union's apparent climbdown during the Cuban Missile Crisis had been a hoax, and it was in fact

¹¹ Full transcript at <<https://tinyurl.com/JFKspeech10June1963>> or <https://static.pbslearningmedia.org/media/media_files/9293556c-4cd5-453b-bb32-8e74d867db87/cf32706c-6478-4460-a691-d00ae06778c4.pdf>

secretly *increasing* the number of missiles in Cuba. The bit about the possibility of these phantom missiles being spotted by U-2 overflights was a calculating nod toward the fact that the USA was openly carrying out aerial surveillance of Cuba. No suspicious activity had been detected by these monitoring aircraft, according to official US Government statements. The *Report's* readers would know better than to be duped by the insidious Communist influence that was casting its spell upon the leadership of the free world. The 'Special Report' concluded by hammering home an upper-case condemnation of 'THE CONFIRMED PRESENCE IN CUBA OF WEAPONS THAT ENDANGER HEMISPHERIC PEACE AND SECURITY', and more specifically:

THE CONFIRMED PRESENCE IN CUBA OF AGENTS OF A FOREIGN POWER WHO VIOLATE THE CLAUSES OF THE RIO DE JANEIRO TREATY, THE DECLARATION OF BOGOTA, AND THE DECLARATION OF SAN JOSE. WE IMPUGN THE INTERVENTION OF AN EXTRACONTINENTAL POWER IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AND WE DECLARE THAT THE REAL INTENTIONS OF SOVIET IMPERIALISM ARE TO REMAIN PERMANENTLY ON THE ISLAND OF CUBA REGARDLESS OF ANY TYPE OF AGREEMENT OR PACT WHICH IMPLIES IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWL OF THEIR MILITARY FORCE.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 2), 28 June 1963

It was all a pack of lies, and was clearly intended to create and inflame international tensions. A bold aim for a typed and photostatted newsletter, perhaps, but *The Cuban Report* had some influential readers. Among them was evidently US Senator John G. Tower (1925-1991), a Texas Republican. Tower repeated most of these missile-related claims during a recorded interview syndicated across Texan radio stations a fortnight later, on 16 July.¹² The crux of the Senator's interview was:

'It is obvious that the Russians intend to make Cuba as near-impregnable as possible, and use the area as a military threat to the United States, thereby tying down forces of our own that might be needed elsewhere, and as a staging ground for subversion and intrigue throughout the western hemisphere.'

Tower claimed that he had 'various sources of information. They are independent sources, some old, reliable and proven sources, others relatively new.' The specificity of referring to 'relatively new' sources already points a finger in the general direction of *The Cuban Report*. What decisively identifies the newsletter as the basis of Tower's claims is that Tower names the phantom 'Colonel Alexander Rumianzev' and explicitly describes him as a 'Russian

¹² This was not an unfamiliar media environment to Tower. Before entering politics, Tower had worked as an announcer on Texan country music radio station KTAE. Later, he worked closely with Don Pierson to establish North Sea pirate radio stations Radio London, Radio England, and Britain Radio.

expert in hydraulics'.¹³ The same 'Colonel Alexander Rumianzev' was named by two Cuban emigrés who addressed a meeting in California in late July. These Cubans explicitly identified their source as *The Cuban Report*.¹⁴ This propaganda offensive fizzled out almost as soon as it had begun, and the DRE's attempt to reignite the Cuban Missile Crisis came to nothing.

The next edition of *The Cuban Report* (datelined 5 July 1963) appeared immediately after President Kennedy's return from a brief tour of Europe, the stop best-remembered today being his West Berlin engagement.¹⁵ The DRE was watching closely, and Kennedy can barely have sat down at his desk again before the *Report's* editor had begun clattering out a ringing condemnation. 'It would be unjust for the Cubans to fail to joyfully recognize Europe is protected by the power of the United States. President Kennedy has so declared it, and leaders of the West join him in promises to defend Democracy and preserve Freedom throughout the World.' But . . .

But we Cubans look on sceptically in the light of the disappointments in the struggle, promises made to us and repeatedly unkept. From the first moment when John F. Kennedy assumed the Administration of the United States his words were always of encouragement and entire sympathy with Cubans fighting Communist tyranny set up in Cuba in flagrant violation of the Hemispheric treaties and agreements which govern all member countries of OAS. After the defeat suffered on April 17th at Bay of Pigs the President himself assumed responsibility for the debacle and addressing the people of Cuba promised them that the UNITED STATES WOULD NEVER ABANDON CUBA. These same words were repeated at the Miami Orange Bowl Stadium, when President Kennedy addressed 50,000 Cubans who had gathered there to hear him speak.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 2), 5 July 1963

The *Report* was indulging in wishful thinking at best. In his speech of 20 April 1961, Kennedy had referred to a Cuban commander in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion who had refused to be evacuated by saying: 'I will never leave this country.' Having stirred up the appropriate patriotic emotions, Kennedy's supposed 'promise' was far less robust than the Cubans' fond memories of what they thought he had said. It would have been a stretch to call Kennedy's remarks any kind of promise at all.

'[That commander] has gone now to join in the mountains countless other guerrilla fighters, who are equally determined that the dedication of those

¹³ <<https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/AA/00/06/15/88/02143/07-16-1963.pdf>>

¹⁴ <<https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=WPJ19630725.2.3&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-----1>>

¹⁵ Kennedy's itinerary took him to West Germany between 23 June and 26 June. From there, he flew to Ireland (26-29 June); then to the UK (29-30 June); and finally to Italy (1-2 July), which included an excursion to Vatican City for an audience with Pope Paul VI.

who gave their lives shall not be forgotten, and that Cuba must not be abandoned to the Communists. *And we do not intend to abandon it either.*¹⁶ (Emphasis supplied.)

Similarly, the *Report's* claim about the Orange Bowl speech was a gross distortion of the facts. Kennedy made no such promise, although the tone of his speech was so conciliatory that it doubtless gave that impression to a good many present. The Miami stadium engagement was at the end of December 1962, with the Cuban Missile Crisis barely over. His audience consisted of Cubans taken prisoner during the Bay of Pigs, who had been released and allowed to return to the US as part of a post-Missile Crisis deal. December 1962 was also precisely the time that the Kennedy administration began trying to quell the various Cuba Libre operations that were constantly bubbling up in Florida. In short, Kennedy was trying to finesse his way out of a dilemma.

Professor Kevin W. Dean identifies and contrasts Kennedy's rhetorical techniques of consensus and transcendence. Transcendence (Prof Dean argues) can unify a divided audience by 'the use of a term or concept that supersedes the points of contention existing within differing factions. Through transcendence, both sides necessarily recognize that they must compromise their stance for the greater good of the whole'.¹⁷ This immediately brings into focus the strategy employed by Kennedy in his American Universities speech (discussed above), an almost literal piece of transcendence. It probably marked the first time that the average American newspaper reader had been presented with the idea that the preservation of the biosphere was more important than the Cold War. Turning from transcendence, Professor Dean describes Kennedy's other option as follows:

'Alternatively, consensus as a rhetorical technique does not require the introduction of a transcendent concept but relies on the positioning of issues as they exist in the status quo. If handled effectively, individuals on either side of an issue can feel that their needs/concerns have been met without compromising their position. Consensus rhetoric is an effective tactic with heterogeneous groups, since individuals with positions on either side of a given rhetorical issue [. . .] are granted something they desire. Concurrently, opposing sides are not forced to admit that they are

¹⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/JFKSpeech20April1961>> or <<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-before-the-american-society-newspaper-editors>>

¹⁷ Prof. Dean concentrates on Kennedy's rhetorical strategies in relation to the Berlin Wall standoff, with observations that apply to Kennedy's thinking when considered in toto.

giving something up.’¹⁸

As 1962 faded and 1963 unfolded, Kennedy was raising his figurative sword to inspire Florida-based marauders, and then using it to cut down olive branches for use in international diplomacy. This was bound to enrage, rather than pacify, the Cuban exiles, who (as the *Report* was keen to emphasise) ‘cannot hear any more about promises, because they all have been loudly made and applauded. Now it remains to see them fulfilled.’ Kennedy was invoking transcendence as a way of seeking public approval for accommodation with the Soviet Union. But consensus was not simultaneously possible with the US-based Cuban extremists. These were domestic terrorists, who believed Castro to be totally subservient to the Soviets, in which case Kennedy was an active threat to their counter-revolutionary dreams.¹⁹

Our verdict today must be that Kennedy never succeeded in escaping the strategic contradictions of his consensus-building rhetoric.²⁰ He was trying to reconcile the irreconcilable. Nothing short of a full scale invasion and the capture of Fidel Castro would have quietened the Cuban exiles, and after the Missile Crisis fresh military action was simply not going to happen. Moreover, the DRE itself had initially supported Castro’s 1959 revolution against Batista, but promptly turned against Castro once he was in office. It is hard not to suspect, therefore, that the DRE would have found a new reason to continue agitating even if Castro were overthrown and replaced by a non-communist leader. The Cuban problem did not look like it had any solution at all.²¹

The *Report*’s 5 July 1963 editorial even contained one last-ditch attempt to plant its fictions about Cuban-based Soviet missiles. In doing so, it invited readers to infer dark motives behind America’s post-Crisis handling of relations with the Soviet Union. The *Report*’s monomaniacal logic ran (roughly) as follows: ‘Communism is an international conspiracy. The US President is negotiating with Communists. Therefore the US President is tacitly allowing

¹⁸ Dean, K. W. (1991), ‘“We Seek Peace, But We Shall Not Surrender”: JFK’s Use of Juxtaposition for Rhetorical Success in the Berlin Crisis’, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 21(3), 531–544. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27550771>> (Free sign-up for access)

¹⁹ Transcendence was not even offered to the Cuban militants in the first place, and it is hard to imagine that even Kennedy’s vision of protecting the biosphere would have won them over.

²⁰ Whether he would have succeeded if he had not been murdered is another matter. Depending on one’s view of Cuban involvement in the Dallas shooting, it’s plausible that the construction of a Cuban consensus was the unmet pre-requisite for Kennedy’s survival rather than vice-versa.

²¹ The full text of Kennedy’s Orange Bowl speech can be read at <<https://tinyurl.com/JFKSpeech29Dec1962>> or <<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-miami-the-presentation-the-flag-the-cuban-invasion-brigade>>.

Castro to stay in power.' It is hard to decide whether the *Report* actually believed such a childish oversimplification, or was just feeding into the worst fears of its readership. The *Report's* repeated and very detailed protestations of incomprehension certainly read like a deliberate attempt to get readers to participate by 'filling in the blanks.'

The Government of the United States has never hesitated in expressing itself in terms of complete solidarity with the cause of Cuban freedom, but at the same time, we regretfully declare, we have never seen a serious and responsible determination on its part to overthrow the communist regime. Promises of help to defeat tyranny have never once actively turned into those effective measures which Cubans exact. Even during the moving days of the blockade decreed on October 22nd, 1962, Cubans sadly watched manouvres of the Russians to fool the United States by a supposed withdrawal from the Island which soon turned into a stronger and bolder occupation than ever before. We also do not understand how the United States negotiates directly with Moscow ignoring the wishes, sovereignty, and firm will of the Cuban people, regarding the freedom and destiny of their country. We Cubans do not understand how the United States can undertake to keep such commitments in Europe when 90 miles from its own shores there is a communist regime maintained and supported by the whole Communist bloc. We Cubans do not understand how the promise of Freedom and Help can be addressed with words of sincere stimulus to Eastern Germany, when those Cubans who fight communism are persecuted, not only by Castro, but also by forces of the Western World. We are at a loss to understand and so, apparently, we will remain.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 2), 5 July 1963

The 'forces of the Western World' needed no further identification. By 16 August, its hopes of a new Missile Crisis scotched, the *Report* was back into its stride, leading with its 'REPORT ON THE CREATION OF A NEW FLEET BY THE FIDEL CASTRO'S GOVERNMENT' (sic)

For the past few months the Castro's regime has been developing intense activities devoted to the construction of a fleet capable of serving the Cuban Communist regime as protection against commando raids, and as means of transporting men and military equipment to different points of Latin America. In January, 1963, a delegation from the North Korean Republic, entirely composed of "fishing experts", arrived in Cuba. The purpose of the visit was to assess the Cuban personnel which was to build some new boats, of Russian design, which were to become part of the defensive and offensive system of the country.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 1), 16 August 1963

This was nonsense, and the *Report* knew it. The USSR-Cuba fisheries agreement had been signed in September 1962, to modernise the island's trawling operations in the Caribbean and Atlantic. Prior to this venture, Cuban fishing was a patchwork and threadbare trade, reliant on privately-owned boats and experienced but untrained crews. The Soviet deal was not some shady backroom fix. On the contrary, it had been finalised during a very high-profile three-day visit to Cuba by the Soviet Minister of Fisheries, which

concluded with a reception dinner hosted by the Soviet Union's local Ambassador. As Radio Havana informed listeners on 27 September: 'Everyone attending the reception was urged by Prime Minister Fidel Castro to eat herring, one of the courses served at the reception. As a matter of fact, the main courses of the dinner consisted chiefly of fish.'

The next day plentiful pickled herring would be on sale at 30 shops – and it would not be rationed. These shops had been newly-opened to circulate the bumper harvests brought in by Soviet boats, which were supporting Cuba's fishing industry until the island's new boats were operational.²² There was, so to speak, nothing fishy going on. Nor would this cooperation have come as a complete surprise to the USA. At the start of the Minister's visit, on 25 September, Castro had informed his country that:

'Recently we read an article by a U.S. newspaperman who was in fact alarmed by the progress made by the Soviet fishing fleet. The newspaperman said that . . . the Soviet fishermen are going to leave the U.S. fishermen further and further behind. We understand that the capitalist system will never be able to shorten the distance because the possibilities available to a certain number of fish producers or companies in fierce competition with one another are not the same as those available to a system that practices the rational use of all the country's resources for the same end . . .'²³

The *Report*, however, was wise to this sinister development, warning its readers: 'Apparently, they [the new Cuban boats] are inoffensive fishing crafts, but if we examine their structural characteristics more carefully, as well as their operational qualities, we will be convinced that they are something else.' The *Report* proceeded to describe in great detail the construction of one class of Cuba's new boats, while making sure to avoid mentioning fish in any way.

Characteristics of the Lambda-75 type are as follows: It has a radius of action of 3,600 nautical miles, which allows them to cover a great extension of the sea. It is equipped with the most modern equipment which gives a maximum safety guarantee to the crew, such as radar, sonar, and radio-telephone. It has a 250 bhp motor endowing it with high speed. It can be loaded with 29.5 tons of cargo when carrying 13.5 tons of fuel. The basic normal crew is of eleven men equipped with light infantry weapons. And the boat is built so that several heavy machine-guns or even some conventional light artillery can be set up.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 2), 16 August 1963

To recap: at the time of the *Report's* August 1963 exposé, Soviet vessels were already assisting Cuba's ramshackle fishing industry; the Soviet Union's

²² <<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1962/19620927.html>>

²³ <<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1962/19620925-1.html>>

modernisation of its own fleet had been so dramatically effective that it had been reported in North American media; the Soviet Union had made a deal to help Cuba modernise its trawling operations; this deal had been widely publicised in Cuba and throughout the Americas; and the Soviet Fisheries Minister had visited Cuba in September 1962 to publicly celebrate the formal conclusion of the deal.

For the *Report*, all these developments could only mean one thing: 'The Cuban Student Directorate wants to denounce the construction of this "Fishing Fleet" which is only aimed by the Cuban Government to export communist revolution to Latin America by every violent means at its disposal.' The *Report* couldn't possibly have believed its own words, but it wanted its readers to treat such hokum with the utmost gravity. No-one in American politics seems to have taken the *Report's* bait.

The remainder of the 16 August issue was given over to highlights from speeches that had been made at a conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 26 July. The conference had been organised by the DRE itself, meaning that the DRE had essentially procured authoritative quotes to print in support of its usual arguments and aims. The conference's star speaker was Carlos Lacerda, a Red-baiting Brazilian politician who was obviously in good standing with the Cuban exiles.²⁴ One lengthy extract from Lacerda's speech, concerning the Cuban Missile Crisis, was shared below the DRE's blunt opinion that 'KENNEDY HESITATED AT THE TIME OF THE BLOCKADE'.

Another mistake is that the blockade imposed by President Kennedy was an act of violence and of imperialistic authoritarianism. Nothing could be falser than this, and I would almost say ii was unfortunate, for one of the big misfortunes of the world today is that the spirit of Munich, which once prevailed to deliver the world to Hitler, now prevails to deliver it to Khrushchev (applause). For fear of atomic warfare the world

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 6), 16 August 1963

Here, the report noted, the assembly broke into applause. This was strong stuff, and it was aimed at President Kennedy both politically, as an alleged appeaser of tyrants, and personally, since the wartime scandal of his father, Joe Kennedy Sr, was still well-remembered.²⁵ There was more. Since President Kennedy's advisor Chester Bowles had (in early October 1962) sought to play down what became the Cuban Missile Crisis, Lacerda claimed that 'The spirit of Munich hovers over the waters of the Potomac River'. The truth, Lacerda declared, was that Kennedy had 'only recognized the need for a blockade, after

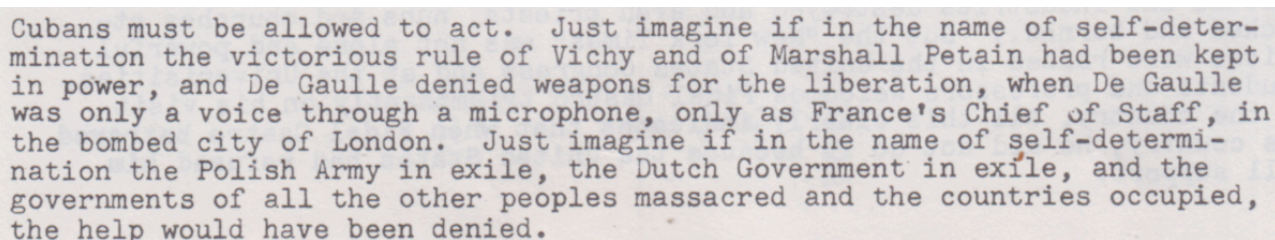
²⁴ 1914–1977; Governor of Guanabara State, Rio de Janeiro, 1960–1965

²⁵ Joe Kennedy Sr was the USA's Ambassador to the UK from 1938 until 1940, when he resigned over his public remarks about what he saw as the UK's inevitable defeat.

brave Cuban freedom fighters had denounced [sic] the presence of atomic weapons and missiles on Cuban soil.'

Furthermore, Lacerda asserted, Kennedy had only been moved to action on 22 October because Congressional mid-term elections were to be held on 6 November, meaning 'it became clear [to Kennedy] that the [Democratic] Party would lose the elections if the blockade against Fidel Castro were not decreed'. The increasing intensity of the DRE's anti-Kennedy fixation had led it to propose that the most dangerous moment in the history of human civilisation was really a domestic electoral matter involving voters' perceptions of Fidel Castro. By 22 October 1962, most Americans were not even confident that they would live to see November, never mind vote.²⁶

Having established that Kennedy was an arch-appeaser who only acted because of the DRE's revelations, Lacerda then set out an absolutely incendiary proposal:



Cubans must be allowed to act. Just imagine if in the name of self-determination the victorious rule of Vichy and of Marshall Petain had been kept in power, and De Gaulle denied weapons for the liberation, when De Gaulle was only a voice through a microphone, only as France's Chief of Staff, in the bombed city of London. Just imagine if in the name of self-determination the Polish Army in exile, the Dutch Government in exile, and the governments of all the other peoples massacred and the countries occupied, the help would have been denied.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 6), 16 August 1963

From his Rio de Janeiro platform, with *The Cuban Report* as his megaphone, Lacerda was telling Miami's Cubans that they should be allowed to over-rule the US Government. Lacerda was no stranger to revolutionary ideas. By 1963, he had used a newspaper he owned to conduct successful propaganda campaigns against two elected Brazilian governments. One American expert on Brazilian politics sums up Lacerda's crusading zeal with the remark: 'He had the distinction in his lifetime of destroying three presidential careers: Vargas, Quadros, and Goulart. Quite a record.'²⁷ Not coincidentally, all three presidents had been left-wingers, whom Lacerda accused of being crypto-communists.

In 1954, Lacerda had stirred up such controversy against President Getúlio Vargas²⁸ that one of Vargas's inner circle tried to murder Lacerda. Three weeks later, with the scandal closing in on him, Vargas committed

²⁶ In the event, Kennedy's Democrats lost four seats in the House and gained four seats in the Senate, one of those new Senators being the President's younger brother Edward M. Kennedy.

²⁷ <<https://library.brown.edu/collections/skidmore/portraits/carlosLacerda.html>>

²⁸ 1882-1954; presidency 1951-1954

suicide. In 1961, Lacerda watched with concern as President Jânio Quadros²⁹ made overtures to the communist world that included bestowing a distinguished decoration upon Che Guevara. Lacerda had launched a new propaganda onslaught and Quadro resigned in mysterious circumstances eight months after taking office. In 1964, Lacerda would mount yet another propaganda blitz, this time against Quadros's successor, President João Goulart.³⁰ Lacerda soon became personally involved in the military coup of 31 March, which was supported by the CIA.³¹ Lacerda, then, was no saloon-bar braggart or armchair general, but a seasoned agitator, propagandist, and activist with genuine accomplishments to his name.³²

Lacerda was succeeded on the podium by Juan Manuel [Salvat], described by *The Cuban Report* as one of the eight DRE executives in Latin America (in fact, he was also one of the founders of the DRE itself). Juan Manuel told his audience:

And today many great nations. like the USA, keep a guilty silence in front of all what is happening. For despite being democratically governed it has hampered our efforts to redeem our country. But the truth is that we Cubans do not have to ask anybody's permission to free our country. The truth is that the Cubans regardless of the foreign weapons that rule our country today, regardless of any handicaps presented to us, will fight and will reconquer Cuba and destroy one by one every Soviet soldier that has dared stomp the sacred American land.

If we want that combat to exist, if we want to return to our country with weapons in our hands, we must ask the same help from our American brothers as we did during our War of Independence. Then, men like Jose Marti, Zambrana, Maximo Gomez, and Maceo went to Latin America asking for weapons to liberate their beloved country, and received it from the cayous hands of American workers; those American workers who with their sweat helped by the Cuban Independence at the cost of Cuba's blood.

Above: *The Cuban Report* (page 8, abridged), 16 August 1963

The unfamiliar word 'cayous', in the third last line above, sticks out like a

²⁹ 1917–1992; presidency January–August 1961

³⁰ 1918–1976; presidency 1961–1964

³¹ <<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB118/index.htm>>

³² Whether or not Carlos Lacerda had any CIA connections, it was probably not coincidental that Clare Boothe Luce and William Pawley had each been appointed US Ambassador to Brazil. Pawley's tenure ran from 1946 to 1948. Luce's tenure lasted four days – from Senate approval on 28 April to her resignation on 1 May 1959. Her nomination had created determined congressional opposition, and Luce off-handedly told reporters that her chief foe had been a constant trouble-maker ever since he was kicked in the head by a horse. This allowed Luce's enemies to destroy her credibility by persuasively arguing that she was undiplomatic. The collaborative anti-Castro activism of Luce and Pawley is touched upon in 'The Lincoln-Kennedy Psyop' at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster81/lob81-lincoln-kennedy-psyop.pdf>>.

sore thumb, and since the word was prepared and delivered by a DRE executive and then reprinted in a DRE newsletter, we can be sure it is not an accident. From the terminal '-ous' one might easily imagine that 'cayous' is an adjective, perhaps meaning something like 'calloused' and intended to emphasise the honest toil of the American workers who supplied weapons.

'Cayous' means nothing of the sort. It is a variant spelling of the name of Sir Kay (Latin: Caius), a key figure in the English legend of King Arthur.³³ There are many differing versions of the story of King Arthur, but Sir Kay is always King Arthur's foster brother, and the two heroes are in frequent conflict. In one telling, Sir Kay tried to supplant Arthur as rightful King of the Britons. There is no way that the *Report* could have expected its readers to recognise such an esoteric word. Using it was an open invitation for curious readers to consult an encyclopedia and check what it meant. Anyone who did so would have spotted the hidden connection at once.

The received wisdom about the Kennedy administration's nickname 'Camelot' is that it was all the doing of his bereaved wife, Jackie, in an emotional interview given just a week after his murder. In this, she cited Broadway lyrics to describe the unfinished presidency: 'Don't let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot.' It's true that this interview introduced the 'Kennedy Camelot' concept to the public.³⁴ But the received wisdom is only superficially correct. Jacqueline Kennedy was a woman in grief and shock, and she reached for the *Camelot* lyrics because they had great private significance.

As Jackie Kennedy related, the musical *Camelot* had been one of her husband's favourites, and sometimes, before going to bed, they would listen to a recording of the original cast soundtrack. John F Kennedy and *Camelot* lyricist Alan Jay Lerner had been classmates at Harvard, and knew each other as friends, not least because they had belonged to the same university club.³⁵ Their friendship extended well into Kennedy's presidency. In May 1963, to mark Kennedy's 46th birthday, Lerner directed an evening of musical

³³ < <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095556617>>

³⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/WashPost21May1995>> or <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1995/05/21/how-camelot-lived-happily-ever-after/2c25303f-9e83-41e4-b55e-124af636b7a7/>>

Mrs Kennedy appointed her own interviewer, a journalist who was an old and trusted friend of the family. This was Theodore Harold White, professionally known as T. H. White. The musical *Camelot* was based on a book by another writer known as T. H. White (see page 20 of the present work). Mrs Kennedy's deliberate choice of interviewer was a subtle way of underscoring the Camelot connection.

³⁵ <<https://www.hastypudding.org/alumni/>>

entertainment for the President, at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York.³⁶

There were deeper, more personal attachments. A sickly child, John Kennedy had grown up as a voracious book reader, and his mother later recalled that his favourite book was probably about King Arthur.³⁷ It was another book about King Arthur, published in 1958, that inspired the musical adaptation by Lerner and Frederick Loewe. That book was *The Once and Future King*, by Terence Hanbury (T. H.) White, and was a broad parody of Malory's 1485 romance *Le Morte D'Arthur*. White's version is flippant and light-hearted, stuffed full of contemporary references and topical jokes. Notably, White has his Mediaeval characters make anachronistic denunciations of 'communists' and 'red propaganda'. This aspect of White's story didn't make it into Alan Lerner's script or libretto, but he can't have been unaware of the subtext of the work he was rearranging. It seems unlikely that Lerner never mentioned any of this to Kennedy.

By the time that Kennedy was elected president, on 8 November 1960, the 'Camelot' musical was preparing to open on Broadway the next month. (The opening night was 3 December 1960.) Lerner and Loewe appeared together on the front cover of *Time* magazine on 14 November.³⁸ 48 hours after that edition of *Time* appeared on the nation's newsstands, *Time* put out an 'Election Extra' edition with president-elect Kennedy's face on the cover, which effectively encouraged readers to make a link between the new president and the new musical.³⁹

The Kennedy-Lerner-*Camelot* connection may run even deeper than that. Musicologist Professor William Everett, of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, has pointed to two Lerner-penned lines that might have made their way, thinly-disguised, into Kennedy's inaugural address.⁴⁰ Lerner's King Arthur had pronounced: 'This is the time of King Arthur, and we reach for the stars! This is the time of King Arthur, and violence is not strength and compassion is not weakness.' Professor Everett sees these words reflected in Kennedy's speech as 'Together let us explore the stars' and 'civility is not a sign of weakness'. To these, can be added a third. Lerner's Merlin began an instruction to the King's men with: 'I hereby proclaim from this time henceforth . . .' Kennedy's speech

³⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/JFKbirthdayGala1963>> or <<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-new-york-birthday-salute-the-president>>

³⁷ <<https://www.wbur.org/news/2013/11/01/jfk-son-of-massachusetts>>

³⁸ <<http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19601114,00.html>>

³⁹ <<http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19601116,00.html>>

⁴⁰ <<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-2>>

included a very similar mock-archaic phrase: 'Let the word go forth from this time and place . . . !'.

The strange synchronisation continued when, within 24 hours of Kennedy's inauguration in Washington DC, the musical 'Camelot' opened in that city. Perhaps the Camelot associations even explain the Secret Service codenames for President Kennedy and his White House, respectively Lancer ('one who bears a lance',⁴¹ thus meaning a knight on horseback) and Crown.⁴² Jackie may have been the first to make it explicit, but the Kennedy-Camelot link had been clearly established by Jack himself, and there was almost certainly an element of collaboration with his friend Alan J. Lerner.

The idea that working-class Cuban militants would be familiar with these cultural resonances can be safely dismissed. On the other hand, the Arthurian mythos is something that would have been known about in detail by upper-class Americans of white European descent who had attended prestigious universities like Yale or Harvard. In the early 1960s, a typical CIA officer would have fitted that description to a tee.

There is another connection tucked away in all this. Carlos Lacerda, the DRE's hired rabble-rouser, was not only a journalist and politician, he was a major figure in Brazil's musical culture and renowned for his translations of Broadway productions into Brazilian Portuguese. As the DRE's conference met in Rio de Janeiro (26 July 1963), the city was preparing to host a month-long and prestigious international music festival, with attendees such as Aaron Copeland, Sir John Barbirolli, and Igor Stravinsky. Carlos Lacerda had personally initiated the event in his capacity as Governor of Guanabara.⁴³ More importantly, the Rio de Janeiro international music festival (then in its third year) had been continuously funded by the CIA's front organisation, the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Even if the DRE delegates had not previously known about these connections it would hardly have been possible to ignore them.

What *The Cuban Report* was suggesting, when it gratuitously invoked a cluster of associations involving Arthurian legend, is unclear. The main implication seems to be that King Arthur (read: President Kennedy) would not be coming to the rescue of the Cuban struggle, and that the American worker was the DRE's 'brother' instead. Attempting to go further than that leads only

⁴¹ <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lancer>>

⁴² <<https://tinyurl.com/JFKcodenames>> or <<https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/life-of-john-f-kennedy/fast-facts-john-f-kennedy/code-names>>

⁴³ *Billboard*, 8 June 1963

to very speculative observations.

The historical legend concludes with Arthur's battlefield death at the hands of Mordred, whose name has been associated with treason throughout history. (Just as the name of Judas Iscariot is forever associated with betrayal.) One 20th-Century folklorist studying the myths associated with Kennedy was alert to possible Arthurian parallels and reminded readers that conspiracy theories about treason against Kennedy were neatly mirrored by the fact that King Arthur's assassin was 'that arch-traitor Mordred'.⁴⁴

Was the *Report*, therefore, trying to nudge its readers toward thinking about treason? That possibility is very tenuous – but it was definitely real. Whether any of the *Report's* readers actually tried to find out the meaning of such a strange and unfamiliar word (and then interpreted the connected Arthurian mythos) is unknown. It may have been taken by CIA readers as a dark hint at something going on. But it is also quite possible that the Arthurian anomaly had a private meaning among DRE members, which they never committed to paper. *The Cuban Report's* deliberate reference to Arthurian legend remains an enigma.

⁴⁴ Rosenberg, Bruce A., 'Kennedy in Camelot: The Arthurian Legend in America', *Western Folklore*, vol. 35, no. 1, Western States Folklore Society, 1976, pp. 52–59, at <<https://doi.org/10.2307/1499154>>.