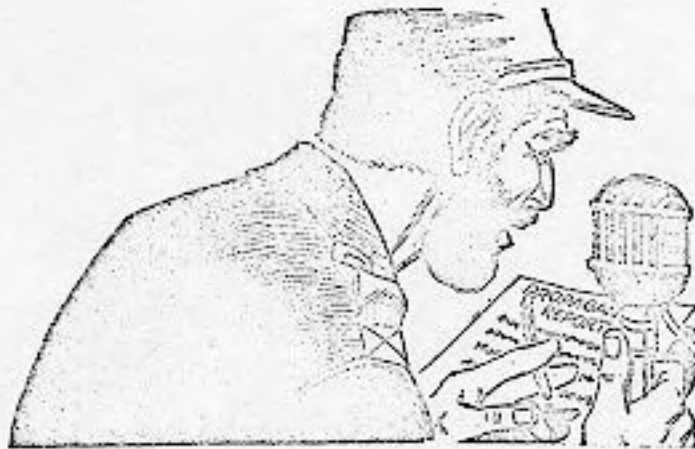


CLANDESTINE RADIO OPERATIONS IN THE CUBAN  
REVOLUTIONARY AND COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY  
MOVEMENT 1953-1965

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PART I

Revolutionary (pro-Castro) Radio Activities

BY

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DXplorer Radio Association

The history of clandestine radio broadcasting is long and interesting. While accurate information concerning early transmissions by unauthorized, secret, or semi-secret stations is difficult to obtain, it seems certain that clandestine broadcasters were in operation at least by the middle 1920's. Japanese military operations in China and the Italian campaign in Ethiopia probably sparked the establishment of the very early secret radio broadcasting stations. The best known and the oldest one in terms of continuous operation is probably Radio Espana Independente.

This station came into being about the time of the Spanish Civil War and continued broadcasting after the defeat of the Republican forces by the troops of Generalissimo Franco. Its location probably was somewhere within Russian territory and it still may be in the U.S.S.R., although there are recent reports that the Radio Espana Independente transmitter is now located near Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Clandestine radio operations expanded tremendously during the Second World War with hidden and semi-secret transmitters operated by both the Allied and Axis governments for propaganda purposes, speaking to the troops and citizens of the opposing side, as well as to listeners in the occupied countries.

In the post-war era, with nationalistic struggles breaking out all over the globe, illicit broadcasting stations continued to flourish wherever a group of rebels opposed the existing government. Such stations sprang up in the Middle East, North Africa, Southeast Asia and in Latin America.

This study will investigate the clandestine broadcasting activities of the revolutionary, and later the counter-revolutionary groups in Cuba. Due to the proximity to the United States, which made many of these transmissions audible to listeners in this country despite their low power, and the fascinating complexity of the many organizations operating such stations, this subject has proven to be an interesting research project.

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The first abortive attempt to broadcast clandestinely in Cuba occurred on

July 26, 1953 at Santiago de Cuba, some 600 miles east of Havana. Early that morning, 125 armed students and clerks, led by a 26-year-old attorney from Oriente Province, Fidel Castro Ruz, attacked the government Army barracks known as Cuartel Moncada.

Castro was a recent law graduate of the University of Havana and with other young men and women, opposed the regime of ex-dictator Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar, who had just swept back into power in 1952 in a coup d'etat when it appeared he could not win a popular election.

The attack on the Moncada Barracks had been brewing as a general plan for nearly a year before the actual event took place. Moncada was selected, rather than the more important Camp Columbia near Havana, because of its location in Oriente Province, the cradle of all Cuban wars of independence, and also because it was Castro's home area. He felt he was "sure" of its will to resist Batista. The revolt nearly was "pulled off" by the pitifully small impromptu army of students and government workers.

The assault was set for 5:15 a.m., when twenty automobiles were to approach a little used gate on the side street called Calle Moncada, guarded by a few army sentries. Castro's plan was to capture the armory, with its automatic weapons, ammunition and grenades, and the military radio station. It was carnival week and only 500 of the regular garrison of 1,200 troops were in Santiago de Cuba. (A)

Author, Robert Tabor, describes the action that followed.

"The first assault car had by now reached Moncada's Gate 3. The driver, Renato Guitart, curbed the car carefully, so as not to block the entrance. Fidel Castro, driving the second car, held back the remainder of the column.

Guitart, Jesus Montane and Ramiro Valdes scrambled out of the front seat of the "suicide" car and approached the gate. While the sentries eyed them lazily, Valdes abruptly seized the heavy chain hanging across the roadway, and deftly disconnected it. At the same moment, Guitart and Montane cried sharply;

"Attention! The general is coming!"

"The ruse was successful. Before the sentries could recover from their surprise, pistols were thrust against their bellies, their weapons were snatched from their hands. Inside the gate, the sergeant of the guard moved toward the alarm button in the sentry box. A shot sounded. The sergeant hit the alarm button as he fell, and the heavy clangor of the bell began to signal the opening of the attack.

"The assault had not yet failed. There was this instance of success. The gate was taken. Guitart dashed inside and headed for the nearest building, seeking the radio station to broadcast the report that Moncada had fallen and to read a proclamation announcing the purposes of the revolution." (A)

However there was a fatal delay and the rest of the attacking column was confronted by an army patrol jeep before it got to the gate. Rifle and automatic fire had begun to come from the walls and turrets of Moncada itself. The battle was underway and for nearly two hours the firing continued.

As the attackers fell back under the pressure of the troops, Renato Guitart lay dead at the door of the radio station, having failed to reach his objective.

Total rebel casualties at Moncada totaled five dead and four wounded. The army lost 22 dead and 57 wounded. In the subsequent retaliation by the Batista government, at least 70 of the rebels who were later captured or surrendered were tortured and executed.

After several weeks of hiding in the mountains around Santiago de Cuba, Fidel Castro and a number of his followers surrendered when Monsignor Enrique Perez Serantes, archbishop of Santiago, intervened with the military to end the slaughter.

On the last day of his trial, October 16, 1953, Castro made his now famous speech in his own defense, which later became known by its concluding phrase, "History will absolve me!"

According to their version of that trial, Radio Havana Cuba (B) this year reported that Castro testified he had prepared copy prior to the attack to broadcast

from the captured radio transmitter, urging the people to rise up against Batista. This broadcast was to include stirring patriotic poems of a previous Cuban martyr. Fidel claimed he decided not to use this radio copy at the last minute in order to prevent further bloodshed which would have resulted if the city's population attempted to revolt.

Thus failed the first attempt to use a clandestine propaganda broadcast to spark a Cuban revolt.

Fidel Castro was sentenced to 15 years at the Isle of Pines prison, but was released in a general amnesty on May 15, 1955. He flew into exile, first in New York, then Miami and finally to Mexico. There he founded his revolutionary group, known as the Movimiento Revolucionario 26 de Julio, after the date of the Moncada assault.

He and his followers organized and trained on a rented Mexican ranch preparing to launch an expeditionary force against Batista's government.

On the night of November 25, 1956, the real revolt began as Castro and 81 men boarded a 64-foot diesel motor yacht and sailed from the state of Vera Cruz in Mexico to invade Cuba.

The battered motor cruiser ran aground eight days later in a swampy area of the southeast coast of Cuba near Niquero. Most of the group's equipment and ammunition was lost and within days, army troops and aircraft had killed all but a dozen of the invaders. The survivors, including Fidel and Raul Castro, and the Argentine doctor, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, escaped into the wild rugged mountains of the Sierra Maestra in Oriente Province.

According to the Radio Havana Cuba broadcast, the fighting in the Sierra Maestra mountains lasted two years and one month. During the first half year there was just the one guerrilla column headed by Fidel which grew in size from the original dozen invaders. This column of rebels lived from hand to mouth and had no radio communications. (B)

However, following the landing of Castro's men, another futile and bloody uprising occurred which involved a clandestine radio broadcast.

About 3½ months after the landing at Niquero, the urban elements of the Movimiento Revolucionario 26 de Julio (MR-26-7) underground, together with the separate university student revolutionary group, Federacion Estudiantes Universidades (FEU), decided upon a bold plan to assassinate Batista in his presidential palace on March 13, 1957.

A group of students attacked the palace. Four managed to fight their way past Batista's guards almost to the second floor study where he had been working.

One by one the attacking students were cut down by the soldiers and the assault was beaten off. The usual retaliation and execution of those suspected of being involved in the plot followed the attack.

Simultaneously with the assault on the presidential palace, another group of young rebels, lead by Jose Antonio Echevarria, head of the FEU, launched another daring raid.

Echevarria led the group of students in four automobiles to the broadcasting station of Radio Reloj in the Havana suburb of Vedado. Radio Reloj (ie. Radio Clock) was a commercial time and news station operating as CMCB, 1330 kcs., with 1,000 watts. (C)

The assault team was to "seize the station and broadcast the announcement that the presidential palace had fallen and that Batista was dead. Volunteers were to be asked to assemble at the university, where they would be given arms with which to carry out further instructions." (A)

Taber writes of the incident as follows: "Radio Reloj reporting... Radio Reloj reporting...At this moment, armed civilians are attacking the presidential palace! Radio Reloj reporting...President Batista has been struck down by bullets in the presidential palace!"

Taber continues, "The time: 3:25 p.m. The date: March 13, 1957.

The radio announcement, preceded by the clatter of a telegraph key and delivered in the dramatic, bulletin style of Havana's familiar news-and-time channel, carried a note of urgency that sent a shiver of apprehension through the capital. Traffic slowed on the broad Malecon as drivers, hearing it, reached to turn up the volume of their automobile radios. An unaccustomed ripple of excitement interrupted the drowsy afternoon routine of banks and business offices, halted the chatter in bars and cafes along the Prado, quickened the pulse of police precinct commanders and aging army staff officers at Camp Columbia.

"The voice of another announcer cut in, reporting that General Francisco Tabernilla, the chief of staff, had been relieved of command and was under arrest, along with other high ranking officers of the regime. The announcer introduced a third speaker. The voice that was heard after a moment's hesitation, beginning a formal proclamation, was that of Jose Antonio Echevarria, president of the FEU and head of its revolutionary directory: "People of Havana! The Revolution is in progress. The presidential palace has been taken by our forces and the dictator has been executed in his den..."

"The voice was abruptly cut off, as a switch was thrown in the radio transmitting plant.

"A moment later, a fusillade of pistol shots smashed the central control panel in the Radio Center building in Vedado and the three students who had seized the Radio Reloj studio hurried out of the building, pushing one of the announcers ahead of them (The announcer was Floreal Chaumont, a brother of Faure Chaumont, one of the leaders of the conspiracy. While not actually a party to the plot, Floreal had known something of it, and it was thought best to get him out of the building before police arrived. He went into hiding, two months later took refuge in the El Salvador Embassy, and left the country under a safe conduct. The two students who seized Radio Reloj with Echevarria were Jose Westbrook, propaganda secretary of the FEU, and Fructuoso Rodriguez, for a time

secretary-general of the cityshoot organization which assumed the name of Directorio Revolucionario. Both survived the events of March 13th only to be killed by police a week later). The station announcer, apparently a hostage, was pushed away and told to continue walking down the street.

"The two cars sped away, heading in the direction of the University, even as sirens began to sound and the first of the police vehicles that were already converging on the area came into sight. An automobile was intercepted. There was a roar of automatic fire. The students scattered, on foot. One of them was left behind: Echevarria.

"The FEU leader had kept his part of a pact signed with Fidel Castro, eight months before, in Mexico. For him the revolution was over. He lay dead in the gutter...."

Ultimately it was estimated that between 75 and 80 died during and in the days that followed as a result of the assassination attempt.

According to Radio Havana Cuba, a tape recording of the proclamation read over Radio Reloj by Echevarria is still in existence. (B) Needless to say, there was no public response to this rash act since the assassination attempt failed.

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The military strength of the MR-26-7 rebel forces in the Sierra Maestra continued to grow as small engagements were fought with government troops and weapons were captured. Contingents of recruits, both from the cities and from the rural areas of Oriente Province joined. With the peasants on his side, Castro soon was virtually controlling areas of the countryside, with the army troops more or less isolated in garrison towns in the province.

As the guerrillas grew in strength and their existence became less precarious, they began to get their revolutionary message across to the Cuban people who lived outside the combat zone. Much of this early success in propaganda came as a result of the U.S. reporters and broadcasters who gave Castro considerable coverage



in the American press.

Toward the end of 1957, the MR-26-7 leadership gave more thought to the use of radio broadcasting to reach the Cuban people with their message.

The units in the field had short range military communications, partly captured equipment, but also several new shortwave transmitters and twenty small portable "walkie-talkie" units, which had been smuggled in from the United States with the aid of an official of the Havana public works department. (A) But there had been no propaganda type broadcasts to a general audience, mainly because the guerrilla forces were constantly on the move in the roughest sort of mountain territory and a broadcasting service was impractical.

A low-power portable transmitter, broadcasting rebel news and speeches at about this time, purportedly from the Sierra Maestra heights, actually was located in Santiago de Cuba under the noses of Batista's forces. This station was not powerful enough to cover the entire island and regular transmissions were not possible.

After 14 months of fighting, the major clandestine broadcasting station of the Movimiento Revolucionario 26 de Julio finally went on the air. (B) According to "Che" Guevara, who was there, the first attempt to broadcast from the hidden encampment in the Sierra Maestra was something of a flop.

Early in February, 1958, the first test of the transmitter, likely a revamped amateur station, was conducted and was so weak there were only two listeners. One was a farmer who lived across the road from the transmitter site, Guevara said. The other was Fidel Castro himself, who had the only radio receiver in the camp.

On February 23, 1958, underground members of MR-26-7 in Havana kidnapped race driver Juan Fangio to publicize the activities of the rebels. Fangio was released unharmed several days later after the movement had received the publicity it sought.

On the same evening Fongie was abducted, a more important development was afoot in the mountainous country of Oriente Province. Transmission lines had been worked out and the first rebel radio broadcast went out directly from the Sierra Maestra.

Crackling across the shortwave 40-meter band from Oriente to Pinar del Rio went the message, "Aquí Radio Rebelde! Aquí Radio Rebelde! Transmitiondo desde la Sierra Maestra en territorio libre de Cuba." (A)

On March 10th, a small column left the Sierra Maestra and crossed the Central Highway to the other side of the island. The long discussed second front was opened in the highlands of northern Oriente, in the Sierra Cristal range. This column was led by Fidel's brother, Raul Castro.

He soon controlled seven municipalities in this area, in which he set up civil government, schools and courts. In the Sierra Cristal area he set up two portable broadcasting transmitters and eleven fixed ones in a "freedom" network. This network was known as "La Gran Cadena de Libertad," a chain that apparently continued after the successful conclusion of the revolution. These stations under Raul Castro's control were reportedly heard as far away as Mexico and Venezuela. (B)

The guerrillas continued to use conventional broadcasting stations located in towns within their loosely controlled territory when it was possible, but continuous regular use of these stations was not possible due to the state of the war. On March 9, for example, in a letter broadcast over CMKC, Santiago de Cuba, Fidel called upon the clergy to clarify an earlier statement by Manuel Cardinal Arteaga urging a "restoration to normal political life."

In the months that followed, the broadcasts of Radio Rebelde and the other sporadic broadcasters became more popular with the Cuban people, particularly after censorship of the normal channels of communication was instituted by Batista. There was a general blackout of news of the insurrection.

on the stations controlled by the government.

Rebel programs were regularly relayed by commercials in Veracruz, particularly XVL, Radio Continente, 5,030 kcs. and YVLA, Radio Rumbos, 4,970 kcs., in Caracas. However, within a short time Fidel increased the power of his Radio Rebelde so that it was regularly and clearly heard in Havana and all of Cuba.

New York Times reporter, Ruby Hart Phillips, in Havana, recalls, "The government interfered many times, but we taped the broadcasts and then played them over and over to get the information. In Havana, radio dealers were selling all the shortwave radios they had. Everyone wanted to hear the rebel broadcasts...The police ordered all radio dealers to report the name and address of everyone who purchased a radio. They arrested a number of people when they found listening to the rebel radio." (D)

Apparently in July 1958, and perhaps later, Radio Rebelde was still using a mobile radio unit, which the guerrillas moved from place to place to prevent location of their headquarters. A number of frequencies began to be reported by listeners in the United States. Listeners in Pennsylvania and Indiana reported hearing clandestine broadcasts during the mid to late evening hours on frequencies that included 15,320 and 14,240 kcs. The latter frequency in particular seemed to indicate amateur radio equipment was still being used by the rebel forces for their propaganda broadcasts.

During that summer, commercial stations in other parts of Cuba continued to operate as normally as possible, but ignoring news of the revolution going on in the eastern province. CQQ, the Circuito CMC shortwave outlet on 9,670 kcs., was regularly heard in the United States with popular musical and sports programs. (E)

There were many dramatic moments in the Radio Rebelde programs. On August 18 and 19, 1958, Fidel Castro spoke to the people of Cuba and Latin America concerning the major battle then underway between his forces and a reported 14 battalions of government army troops, naming units, casualties and the details

of the battles.

The rebels had increased their attacks in Oriente Province. One army detachment was surrounded near La Plata on the south coast. Batista's air force planes failed to do any damage to guerrilla forces in their bombing runs. Finally the commander, Major Jose Guevado surrendered his troops to Castro. (D)

In these battles, considered the turning point of the revolution, Radio Rebelde reported, "hundreds of soldiers have been killed and wounded" and 442 wounded government troops were released to the Cuban Red Cross by Castro.

Due to the news blackout, the population turned to Radio Rebelde for news of the combat in Oriente.

In early September, the rebel radio announced that Fidel Castro was going to begin an offensive. It announced he was going to send six columns out of the Sierra Maestra to defeat the Batista army. Two of these columns, commanded by Major Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Major Camilo Cienfuegos marched across Camagney Province to help the Directorio Revolucionario in the Escambray Mountains. The student DR had been fighting as a small separate unit in the Escambray region for many months. Fidel's idea was to reinforce the existing guerrillas and then to cut the island in two, stopping all transportation between Havana and the three eastern provinces.

That autumn, Radio Rebelde announced that all candidates for office in the scheduled November elections would be disqualified from running again for the next thirty years. He gave the candidates ten days to withdraw from the race. Two government candidates running for seats in the legislature withdrew their candidacies.

Raul Castro, in command of the rebels in the Sierra Cristal Mountains and eastward around Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo, decided he needed an airplane. His men had constructed two secret airports using confiscated road building machinery and trucks.

Early on the morning of October 22, 1958, a Cubana Airlines DC-3 was hijacked on a flight from Santiago de Cuba. En route it simply vanished and search planes from Guantánamo and Havana were unable to locate it.

Shortly, a broadcast from one of the stations in Raul's "Freedom" network announced that soon after the plane took off from the Cayo Mambi airport, two MR-26-7 members aboard pulled revolvers from their pockets and forced the pilot to land at the hidden rebel field. (D)

But Batista's troubles were not confined to the eastern end of the island. The Cuban revolution had spread from end to end of the lengthy island country. Guerrilla forces were fighting on the outskirts of the city of Camagüey. An active underground was wrecking communications in Matanzas and Cardenas.

The fidelista force in Pinar del Rio in western Cuba was growing and its powerful shortwave transmitter, one of more than a score in operation by then, was speaking nightly to the people of Havana, reporting the developments which Batista sought to conceal, instructing the MR-26-7 militia units, preparing them for action.

In Las Villas the rebel forces under Guevara and Cienfuegos were growing in size and importance. The city of Sancti Spiritus fell on Christmas Eve and the radio station there was used to broadcast the news that the area was now part of the growing free territory of Cuba. (A) The revolution was almost complete.

The Cuban people awoke on the first day of 1959 to learn that Batista had fled the country to the Dominican Republic.

Radio Rebelde, now the most listened to station in Cuba (B), announced the arrival of Dr. Manuel Urrutia, Castro's choice for provisional president, from exile in the United States.

Fidelistas moved into Havana to take over the government. The headquarters of the patrolling militia was established at the CMQ radio station and the station was used to broadcast orders to the local guerrilla troops. The rebels occupied all

radio stations. Only news of rebel activities was broadcast. All regular programs were suspended. Fidel Castro made numerous broadcasts and telecasts to the Cuban people in the days following the end of the fighting. All rebel leaders appeared on television, all day long in Havana. Newscasts were reported to be more complete on television than on radio.

It was called a television revolution. In fact, for a time, as far as its effect on the Cuban people was concerned, radio took a back seat.

But during the preceding months it was all radio! Radio Rebelde and the other revolutionary stations had had a tremendous effect on the population. In evaluating the efforts of the Cuban revolutionary clandestine stations, Radio Havana Cuba recently reported the government now considers Radio Rebelde was a great morale factor to those who were anti-dictatorship. Propaganda broadcasts never won battles, but then the revolution itself was not won simply by force of arms either. Radio was considered a supporting weapon and in the overall picture of the revolt, an important consideration. (B)

In the months that followed the flight of Batista and the establishment of the new government in Havana, there were numerous attempts to export the fruits of the revolution to other countries in Latin America.

Unsuccessful invasions, backed by Cuba, were launched against several countries, including Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Radio transmitters supported these attacks and in general tried to encourage the peoples of the other Latin American nations to overthrow their governments. Presumably most of these clandestine transmitters were located within Cuba. In some instances, frequencies which had been used to speak to the Cuban people during the preceding months were converted to clandestine operations directed at other lands, merely by changing the call slogan.

Radio Rebelde continued to use that famous call and reportedly broadcast to Nicaragua on 5,910; 6,310; 6,450; 7,005 and 14,350 kcs. A station announcing as La Vos Dominicain Libre on 7,040 kcs. and another known as La Vos de La Libertad,

transmitting on a frequency which varied between 14,000 and 14,500 kc., sent inflammatory calls to revolt across the Windward Passage to the Dominican Republic. La Voz de la Revolucion allegedly broadcast to El Salvador on 6,300 kc., with a modest power of 300 watts. Still another station on 6,130 kc. called itself Radio Libre and supposedly had a general Central American target area.

Two stations, on 14,100 and 14,250 kcs., known as La Voz del Movimiento de 14 de Mayo, reportedly directed to the population of Paraguay, were heard by listeners. (F)

On December 20, 1959, President Alfredo Stroessner of Paraguay, accused Cuba of having supported the rebel invaders who started an uprising against his government on December 11. The Paraguayan government charged that the Castro regime had furnished the rebels with between \$100,000 and \$200,000 in support of the attempted coup d'etat.

President Romulo Betancourt of Venezuela, who was one of Castro's staunchest supporters during the Cuban revolution, broke off diplomatic relations in 1960, charging violence in his country was being instigated by extremist elements to overthrow his government and "establish a regime here like that of Cuba." (G)

The growing Communist influence in Cuba led to broadcast attacks against the formerly friendly Betancourt government. But elsewhere in the Caribbean, the extreme right also had it in for the Venezuelan leader. From Ciudad Trujillo, later renamed Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic, came a station calling itself Radio Liberacion de Venezuela, or sometimes just Radio Liberacion.

This station broadcast anti-Betancourt speeches at various times between January and July 1960 on a number of channels, including 6,088; 9,505 and 9,810 kc. (E)

Shortly after the attempted assassination of Betancourt that year, Radio Liberacion's frequencies were taken over by HIX, Radio Nacional. The Organization of American States expelled Dominican dictator Trujillo for complicity in the

attempt. Trujillo, himself, was gunned down several years later outside his capital city.

HIX was relatively short-lived and on July 24, 1960, became Radio Caribe, which added certain equipment to bolster the existing broadcasting operation. Still later Radio Caribe turned into Radio Santo Domingo Television, an outlet now used by many anti-Castro Cuban exile groups to beam broadcasts to their home island.

In 1959, the proclaimed Year of the Revolution, and in 1960 as well, a more or less normal broadcasting pattern was resumed by the older established stations. The additional transmitters added during and after the fighting, of course, could no longer be considered clandestine operations since they were by that time functioning with the sanction of the newly formed government. All stations, however, were under government control. When Castro came to power, there were about 1,300,000 radio sets on the island.

In July 1959, a Pennsylvania listener questioned the disappearance of Radio Reloj from 5,085 and 11,750 kc. A station on the latter frequency, announcing as Circuito Nacional Cubano, was assumed to be the former well-known news and time station in new dress. However, most stations continued to announce their old call letters and slogans, i.e. Radio Mambi, Radio Progreso, etc. In April 1960, Radio Progreso, COBS, 9,362 kc., was still verifying reports independently under that slogan and call. (E)

On May 25, 1960, the government announced the opening of a radio campaign in Latin America against the United States and in defense of the Cuban revolution. Although all radio and television stations were under strict government control, the operators had formed what they called the Association of Independent and Free Radio Stations (FIEL), and Cuba was proclaimed "the free territory of the Americas" every time a station identification was given. The FIEL said that within



fifteen days the campaign would be extended to the entire world. The big CMQ station was to be used to broadcast Castro's speeches and other programs by shortwave to Latin America, where supposedly 50 stations would rebroadcast in their respective countries by medium wave. Apparently these arrangements with the foreign stations never got off the ground, though cooperation was received from 11 stations in Central America and one in Brazil.

Fidel Castro, recognizing the importance of a propaganda network, both abroad and at home, simply appropriated private broadcasting stations and frequencies as needed.

When Castro took over the Cuban government, he established an agency known as the Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria, or INRA. This agency, under the direction of Antonio Nunez Jimenez, was to carry out the government's land reform program. In practice, however, this often included the confiscation of other properties such as business firms and broadcasting stations.

In October 1960, one of these stations, CMBN, now called La Voz del INRA, became the hub for a new propaganda network. The station occupied a frequency of 1160 kc., formerly used by the 500 watt, CMJK, La Voz del Camagueyano. Apparently one of the aims of the government in using this channel for their key station was to jam the signals from the anti-regime newcomer, Radio Swan, which operated on the same wavelength.

As the key station in the INRA network of stations, CMBN was located in Calbarien, in Las Villas province in central Cuba. Curiously, the call letters had been "borrowed" from a former outlet operating from the Isla de Pinos, a tourist resort area.

La Voz del INRA, under the direction of Adrian Garcia Hernandez, never seemed to be as outspokenly militant as some of the other stations in Cuba at the time, notably Radio Mambi. The INRA chain generally steered clear of the most blatant propaganda broadcasts heard on other stations. The network carried an abundance of popular Cuban music, news, plays, and even commercials

for products produced by government seized firms.

Other Cuban stations linked with the INRA network were CMBL, Radio Asopuerto, 860 kc., located at Havana's Jose Marti airport, and CMBQ, Radio Continental on 1150 kc. A long-time government station, CMZ, owned originally by the former regime's Ministry of Education, took over CMBQ's old 1010 kc. spot, but operated independently of the INRA chain.

CMBQ provided the news coverage for CMEN, CMBL and the seven smaller transmitters operated by INRA. Of this latter group, only CMGS, Radio Veradero, 1580 kc., was audible in parts of eastern United States. (S)

In retrospect, the importance of this network as a potential internal propaganda medium, for one reason or another, never seemed to be fully realized. Other stations and networks established in Cuba seemed to divide the important propaganda chores.

An interesting propaganda operation directed at a specific overseas audience, until a short time ago, was a program known as Radio Free Dixie. This program, broadcast from Havana on 690 kc., was in English and was directed to Negroes in the southern U.S. It was heard Friday nights from 11 p.m. to midnight; Monday mornings from midnight to 1 a.m.; and Wednesday mornings during the same midnight to 1 a.m. period, Eastern Standard Time. According to listeners, the operation verified with an aerogramme letter.

The programs were produced and announced by an American Negro, Robert F. Williams, Jr. who was dismissed in 1959 as president of the Union County, N.C., chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, after he called for violence by Negroes. Williams was subsequently indicted on charges of having kidnapped a white couple in North Carolina. Escaping from justice, Williams fled to Havana where he was granted political asylum. Shortly afterward he began broadcasting for Castro's radio, however the Radio Free Dixie programs were reported to be ineffective as a propaganda effort.

Williams has been a frequent visitor to Red China, recently

was "lent" by Cuba to North Vietnamese authorities to supervise and improve the broadcasts from Hanoi radio directed at U.S. servicemen in South Vietnam. At present, the twice-daily half-hour programs aimed at our GI's consist mostly of dull talks and wild Vietnamese music. The voices heard on these programs are those of an unidentified male Vietnamese announcer and two women, Thu Huong and Thu Mai, better known to the U.S. troops as Hanoi Hattie and Hanoi Hannah. The arrangements for Williams' services in the Far East were arranged by Mauro Garcia Triana, the Cuban diplomatic representative in Hanoi.)

While confiscated stations did provide Castro with propaganda outlets, it soon became apparent that what was really needed was a powerful international shortwave voice. New stations had to be built, for prior to the revolution, no shortwave transmitter in the country exceeded 5,000 watts in power. (C)

In February 1961, American press sources in Havana learned a secret new transmitter complex was being constructed at Cayo La Rosa, land formerly owned by a textile factory, near the town of Banta, 23 miles west of Havana. (G)(U)

The shortwave installation, the most powerful in Latin America, consisted of six transmitters, five of them 100,000 watt units, purchased by Cuba from Brown, Boveri and Co., Ltd., Baden, Switzerland. The new broadcasting center also included quantities of Czech equipment. The total cost of the shortwave complex was estimated at \$35 million. Construction and equipment installation was completed by the end of March with the technical assistance of Czech engineers.

Reporters receive information that daily programs would be beamed to Latin America urging the people to overthrow their governments following the example of the Cuban revolution and "throw off the yoke of Yankee imperialism." (G)

Head of the powerful new broadcasting voice was a former TV comedy script writer, Marcos Bohemara, now 36, a long-time Communist. English announcers included the previously mentioned Robert Williams; Robert Taber, an ex-CBS newsmen, and a 27-year-old New Jersey woman, Barbara Collins, later referred to by the

press as "Beardless Barbara."

Listeners in North America first reported the signals of the new Cuban transmitter in late April 1961. A station announcing as "Aqui La Onda Corta Experimental Cubana," was heard on 21,630 kc., and possibly also on 15,340 kc., though the station on that frequency was not fully identified.

The official inauguration of the station occurred on May Day, when Fidel announced the new transmitters would bring his "truths to the four corners of the world." (U)

Immediately, the transmitters began bombarding Central and South America with 106 hours a week of propaganda in Spanish, Portuguese, English, French and even the Quechua dialect spoken by 14 million Indians in the Andes. Castro was making good his boast, "Our small fatherland today represents interests which go far beyond our borders...We have been given a glorious destiny. We will be a light which will become more brilliant and its rays will extend farther each day over... fraternal Latin America." (U)

Special weekly broadcasts aimed to audiences in Peru, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic were scheduled. At 7 p.m. Sunday evenings, the Peruvian Anti-Imperialist Struggle Movement, based in Havana, goes on the air. On Mondays and Thursdays, the Nicaraguan Unity Front broadcasts the "Voices of the Nicaraguan Revolution." The former president of Guatemala, 52-year-old Jacobo Arbenz, broadcasts half-hour revolutionary programs on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

By mid-summer 1961, the powerful voice of Fidelismo was announcing as "Radio Internacional Havana," and operated in the vicinity of 15,305 kc., with some variance in frequency. (X) Soon the new Cuban shortwave station adopted its present slogan, "Radio Habana Cuba," which now is heard on a number of frequencies throughout the shortwave spectrum.