



Cuba's controversial President Grau San Martin, shown here with his family, is trying to save his nation from Communism with a kind of Spanish-language New Deal

# RED HARVEST IN CUBA

BY FRANK GERVASI

**Economic chaos was the thing which gave Communism its start in Cuba. Things are better now and the Red growth has slowed. If chaos comes again, Communism may not be very far behind**

OF ALL the presidents of those twenty bogus and bona-fide republics south of the Rio Grande, none has a tougher job than the tall and Latinly handsome Doctor Ramon Grau San Martin of Cuba. He's trying to build a recognizably democratic house on the rotten stumps of 400 years of Spanish imperialism and nearly 50 years of graft, nepotism and rubber-hose and tommy-gun rule of a succession of dictators.

With his long, narrow, Spanish hidalgo's head, dark eyes, graying black hair brushed slickly back from a high forehead and Ronald Colman mustache, Grau is one of the most photogenic men in Latin American politics. He is also remarkable for his unimpeachable honesty and for the fact that he was elected in June of last year in the only unfettered election in his country's history.

Upon taking office, Grau swore out a list

of his personal property and vowed that when he quits he won't be a centavo wealthier than the million dollars worth of real estate and cash he itemized. Grau inherited some of the million from his substantial, upper middle-class parents. Some he earned in the mortgage and loan business in his spare time, and the rest he made as one of Cuba's best physicians. Grau will need to be every bit as good a politician as he was a doctor, however, if he's to cure Cuba's social, political and economic ills. At the elections, 1,000,000 Cubans voted confidence in his ability to do so, and 800,000 signified that they thought he couldn't.

Grau's friends see in him the architect of a new Cuban society in which the economic underdogs of the feudalism that was inherited from Spain will get a square deal. His enemies damn him as a labor-loving pinko who's fostering class war, undermining free enterprise and flirting with the Kremlin. Jobless soreheads kill Grau's officials, intimidate members of his family, try to overthrow his government and otherwise keep Cuba on the razor edge of revolution.

Whether Grau succeeds or fails in making a brave new Cuba is of paramount importance not only to about 4,700,000 Cubans but also to the United States, which has a larger financial stake in this republic than it has anywhere else in the world. American investments total \$1,500,000,000 to \$2,000,000,000, and only those in Germany before the war

were bigger. The heftiest chunk of that money, some \$785,000,000, is in sugar which to you may be merely a currently scarce commodity to stir into the morning coffee, but to Cubans low and high, it is the marrow in their economic bones.

Most of Grau's troubles originate directly and indirectly in sugar. Probably nowhere else in the world are politics and economics visibly so intimately related. To a larger extent than any other nation, Cuba is a one-crop country.

## Sugar—Cuba's Staff of Life

The sugar industry accounts for 82 per cent of the national wealth of Cuba, employs three and possibly four of every five able-bodied Cubans and sprawls over 7,500,000 of Cuba's 10,000,000 arable acres. Cubans prosper or panhandle, almost literally live or die, depending on whether sugar is up or down. When the stuff's scarce in the world market and the price is high, the country knows prosperity and political peace. When sugar overflows the world's bowls and the price drops, Cubans experience depression and political chaos.

The sensitive relationship between sugar and politics is one of the things Grau must keep uppermost in mind in his unenviable job. Exploitation of sugar workers in less enlightened times, for instance, generated at least two major revolutions, the most recent

of which overthrew the Fascist Gerardo Machado. The same malpractices stimulated one of the best organized and most progressive labor movements in Latin America.

But the disease, poverty and hunger among the cane cutters and peasants who were obliged to work under Machado for 20 and 30 cents a day while planters and mill-owners counted their profits in millions, provided a fertile field for Communism. Cuba's Communists call themselves members of the Partido Socialista Popular, but they're Communists just the same. They constitute a political minority but are well organized and ably led.

They press hard for the eventual expulsion of all foreigners—including Americans—from Cuba's economic life. They frankly admit that they hope ultimately to achieve government control and ownership of major industries and public utilities. For the moment, however, they espouse a program of "Cuba for the Cubans"—a cry reaching into every corner of the island's 44,164 square miles.

Even without socialization, which the leftists admit is "still a distant objective and will be realized only if socialism makes worldwide progress," the nationalistic "Cuba for the Cubans" program would accomplish the disappropriation or outright expropriation of foreign interests. These extend beyond sugar into tobacco, the mining industry, railroads, trolley lines, banking, insurance,

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# JOHN BULL

# *In Washington*

BY GEORGE CREEL and ROBERT DE VORE

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY GOTTSCHO - SCHLEISNER

Few Americans get to know what the Washington embassies are like and what kind of people live in them. This article concerns itself with the "colonial village"—the temporary home of Lord Halifax

though this were one of the crown colonies. It was only a few months before the war that the same Sir Ronald—a very warm man to his intimates but painfully shy in public—uttered the unhappiest words ever to fall from an ambassadorial mouth. Seeking to explain to the only press conference of his ambassadorship why everyone could not be invited to the garden party given by Their Majesties during their 1939 visit, he said, "It's just like heaven. Some are chosen, some are not."

Nothing about the British Embassy today suggests heaven. For one thing, its inhabitants work too hard. For another, it's too easy to get into. When the British Foreign Office awakened, almost too late, to the need to come to terms with the press and public of America, the job of removing the embassy from its rock wool of diplomatic insulation was given to the late Lord Lothian, who had been a member of the newspaper profession and who talked the language of the late Franklin Delano Roosevelt and became his great friend. Lothian died about a year after his appointment.

His successor was a member of Winston

ONLY a few years ago, the big red-brick mansion on Washington's upper Massachusetts Avenue was merely the British Embassy. Now His Britannic Majesty's government maintains a branch office. Before 1940, the embassy often functioned in a vacuum. Now it is the seat of British government in the United States, a kind of substation of British power.

Sir Ronald Lindsay used to call the building "my colonial village," a reference to its varying roof levels. Just as innocently, embassy secretaries used to speak of their assignment to America as being "out here," as

The Earl of Halifax, British ambassador to the United States, poses before a portrait of Victoria. Below, the embassy ballroom. It's been dim since 1939

