

DEATH SENTENCE AROUSES CUBANS

**First Civilian Convicted by a
Military Court to Face a
Firing Squad Tomorrow.**

DENIES HAVING EXPLOSIVES

**Manuel Fonseca Lays Charge to
Personal Vengeance—Bomb
Explodes Near Palace.**

Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

HAVANA, March 28.—Manuel Fonseca, a 45-year-old widower with two sons, gave no sign of emotion as a court-martial sentence of death on a charge of possessing explosives was read to him at Cabana Fortress this morning. He signed with a steady hand the warrant condemning him to die before a firing squad at 6 o'clock Saturday morning.

But the emotion Señor Fonseca failed to display was manifest throughout Cuba. It had been understood that the execution of condemned political prisoners, including many adherents of the late Machado régime, would be deferred until a government elected by the people had taken office.

"I am absolutely innocent of the charge on which I have been convicted," Señor Fonseca told this correspondent. "I cannot understand how the soldiers can claim they found explosives at my residence, because I had none there.

"I think this is a case of personal vengeance. I do not belong to any political party. I have never been arrested or fined, even for the smallest offense. The people of Santiago de las Vegas, where I live, can tell you I am a hard-working man endeavoring to make a living and that I have no interest in politics.

"Before my arrest, I was trying to establish a mill for grinding wheat flour in my home town."

Details of the charges against Señor Fonseca, a former employe of the municipality of Santiago de las Vegas, have not been made public. A recent Presidential decree provided for trial by court-martial of persons accused of terroristic activities and for the death penalty for those found to possess arms or explosives. Señor Fonseca is the first civilian so convicted.

A soldier and two other passengers were wounded this morning when a bomb exploded in a street-car on Chacon Street, opposite the Presidential palace.

The government today was besieged with petitions asking clemency for Señor Fonseca from prominent personages and organizations of all countries of the Western Hemisphere. It is reported the diplomatic corps resident in Havana will join in the plea.