Robado del archivo del Dr. Antonio Rafael de la Cova.
http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuba-books.htm
“Cuba under Castro is the Red satellite Russia needs on the very shores of the great American nation,” says Fulgencio Batista, former President of Cuba.

Differences between the United States and any of the nations of the Caribbean region, and of all nations south of the Rio Grande, can be settled by normal diplomatic process, Mr. Batista believes.

But ... “Will solutions through diplomacy on the basis of mutual respect be possible with the pro-Communist regime which Fidel Castro personifies?”

In CUBA BETRAYED, Fulgencio Batista replies to lies which, he charges, were circulated to justify “the terrorist revolution implanted in Cuba by Communism.” And this book was written, its author tells us, “under the weight of slanderous charges which were echoed even by some individuals ... in the United States who were interested in justifying Castro’s conduct and in making him pass for a democrat.”

In words penned long before the recent OAS conference at Punta del Este, Uruguay, the former Cuban President says: “The Russo-Chinese Antilles plan, audaciously accelerated, operates all over the Caribbean region, spreads its influence over all of Latin America, seeking dominion over the entire Western World and beyond. It is a question, therefore, which must be faced by the United Nations and the Organization of American States. ... The largest of the Antilles can easily become the spark which can set off an atomic explosion.”

The UN and the OAS are confronted not with a simple problem of diplomacy but with a great international dilemma, Mr. Batista warns. And, he adds, “Let us hope, as the months or years pass, that we do not have to ask ourselves: ‘Are we on time, or is it already too late?’”

About the Author
Fulgencio Batista, twice President of Cuba; one-time Army Chief; former Prime Minister and Senator; and founder and head of the Progresist party, is now living in exile. CUBA BETRAYED, originally intended as a brief exposition of facts, was expanded into book form in order to clarify its author’s stand.
CUBA BETRAYED

by

FULGENCIO BATISTA

VANTAGE PRESS

NEW YORK • WASHINGTON • HOLLYWOOD

Robado del archivo del Dr. Antonio Rafael de la Cova
http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuba-books.htm
Other Books by the Same Author

PIEDRAS Y LEYES

(STONES AND LAWS)

In Preparation

TRIBUNALES DE SANGRE
(TRIBUNALS OF BLOOD)
MEMORIAS AUTOBIOGRAFICAS
(AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL Memoirs)
DEDICATION

To Cuba, victim of deception;

to the United States and the people of America;

to the women and men who contemplate Cuba’s situation from abroad;

to the soldiers, noncoms and officers who were betrayed by their leaders;

to the widows and orphans, victims of crime and treason;

to the prisoners and persecuted because they fulfilled their duties;

to the workers who were loyal to their class and fought communism;

to the business men who supported the terror and to those who stood firm against the “cancer” of Cuba;

to those who love me and to those who hate me;

to those who do not know and to those who pretend not to know the causes;

to those who were loyal to me and betrayed me and to those who, without wanting to betray, were disloyal through fear;

to the betrayed, to those who render homage to loyalty, to those who have been and to those who are;

to those who guarded the prestige of my government and to those who contributed to its discredit;

to those who enjoyed the “supper” and gave us the kiss of Judas;

go these modest and improvised pages which carry my answer, because in one way or another it affects all of them.

F. B. Z.
“Men are divided into two groups: those who love and build, those who hate and destroy.”

José Martí

“When the causes are completely revealed and the sources and magnitude of the arms traffic are known with certainty, it will be seen to what degree the entire order of the traditional international system broke down. . . .”

Statement of January 1, 1959

F. B. Z.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author gratefully acknowledges the generous permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, the publishers, and Edmund A. Chester, the author, to quote extensively from the latter's book, *A Sergeant Named Batista*. 
# CONTENTS

| Dedication                                      | 15 |
| Introduction                                     |    |
| Part I: Events: Cause and Effect                |    |
| Chapter I. Democratic Plans                      | 25 |
| - Respect for Tenure. Terrorism and Sabotage.   |    |
| - Economic Aggression. Attacks on Schools       |    |
| - Tolerance and Law.                            |    |
| - Work and Credit.                              |    |
| - Constitution and Despotism.                   |    |
| Chapter II. Political Efforts                   | 32 |
| - Electoral Obligations and Constitutional     |    |
| - Unjustified Attack on the "Moncada"           |    |
| - Functioning of the Universities.              |    |
| Chapter III. Propaganda and Its Effects         | 38 |
| - The National Situation.                       |    |
| Chapter IV. Conspiracy of Officers              | 44 |
| - The Submarine Platform, Trujillo, Prio,       |    |
| - Barquín and His Fellow Plotters. "Batista Day"|    |
| - Treacherous Surrender.                        |    |
| Chapter V. Return of Prio and Conspiratorial   | 49 |
| - Activities. New Disturbance in Santiago de    |    |
| - Cuba. Struggle for Peace.                     |    |
| - Contradictory Reports and the Matthews        |    |
| - Interview.                                    |    |
| Chapter VI. Impediments to Normalcy            | 53 |
| - Meeting of Presidents. Tokens and Conciliatory|    |
| - Efforts. Constitutionalism and Terror.        |    |
| Chapter VII. A Terrorist Plan                   | 59 |
| - Personal and Political Preoccupation. Attack  |    |
| - on the Palace.                                |    |
| - The Tragedy and the People. Road of Sorrow.   |    |
| Chapter VIII. Crimes and Revolts                | 66 |
| - Attack on Cienfuegos. Tragic Preparations for  |    |
| - Strike. Method of Supply.                     |    |
| Chapter IX. Increase of Violence and Victims    | 74 |
| - Sugar Mill Operations and Elections. Concili- |    |
| - atory Efforts.                                |    |
Chapter X. Doubts and Changes in Command .......... 80
Chapter XI. Confidential Service ....................... 84
Isolation of the Provinces.
Chapter XII. Inadequacy and Relief of the Command at Camagüey .......... 86
Chapter XIII. The Armored Train and the Last Arms . 88
More Men for Río Chaviano.
Chapter XIV. Meetings, Conversations, and Negotiations 92
Chapter XV. Secret Meeting .......................... 98
Chapter XVI. A Retirement and a New Twin Plan .... 104
Chapter XVII. Tardy Nominations and a Useless Sacrifice 108
Chapter XVIII. Announcement of the Interview ........ 110
Treacherous Order.
Chapter XIX. Cantillo-Castro Details ................. 115
Pact of Defeat.
Chapter XX. Deterioration and an Ill-Advised Interview 120
Chapter XXI. Final Evidence ......................... 123
A Patriotic and Humane Act.
Chapter XXII. Last Reports ............................ 127
Chapter XXIII. A Sad Suggestion ...................... 134
Informing the Family. Jewels and Clothes.
Chapter XXIV. Flying Into Exile ...................... 137
Chapter XXV. Good-bye to Quisqueya ............... 143
The Doomed Invasion. Inept Leadership. Answer to State Department White Paper.

Part II

Historical Reviews

Chapter XXVI. Machado, Re-Election, and Prorogation 185

Chapter XXVII. The Revolution of the Sergeants ........ 191

Chapter XXVIII. The Pentarchy and the New Armed Forces .......... 202

Chapter XXIX. Accomplishments ....................... 207
Difficulties and the War. My Administration and Elections. Voluntary Exile.

Chapter XXX. The Pedraza Plot ....................... 212
The Discharges. Solution Without Bloodshed.

Chapter XXXI. Politics and Gangsterism ............... 217

Chapter XXXII. Agitation and Scandals ............... 223

Chapter XXXIII. Non-Existent or Delayed Evidence ... 228

Chapter XIV. Prío, Communist Students, and International Communism ............... 230
Chapter XXXV. Notification and Conspiracies .............. 233
Chapter XXXVI. The Conspiracy of the President ...... 235
Indirect Messages. A Definite Answer and A Final Attitude.
Chapter XXXVII. The Movement and the Unavoidable
Replacement ........................................... 240
The Guanabacoa Meeting. Fiesta in Matanzas. March 10,
1952.

Part III
Chapter XXXVIII. Propaganda Based on Lies ............. 245
Against the Constitution. Against the Press. Persecution of
Anti-Christian Despotism. Contrasts from Prison. Other For-
midable Lies. Sarcasm and Lies. The Great Lie. The One
Possible Truth.

Appendix
Economic References
Progress and Construction ............................... 270
Consolidation of Transport and Its Fund. Support to the
Subsoil Resources. Income and Tourism. Credit and Economic
Development. Social Security. Social Service. Rural Housing
and Small Proprietors.
Agrarianism and Agrarian Economy ..................... 271
Autonomous Organs of Credit and Production. Dynamic
Plan.
Sugar, Prices, and Markets ............................. 282
Dangerous Surpluses and Regulation. Castro, Sugar, and
Russia.
Interviews and Statements, 1959 ......................... 286
Nuremberg and the Case of Cuba. Suggestions for a Ques-
tionnaire to Be Submitted to Fidel Castro. Facts and Argu-
ments upon Which the Preceding Questions Are Based. Replying
to the Unfortunate Statements of the Governor of Puerto Rico,
Luis Muñoz Marín. Plans for an Interview with THE
NEW YORK TIMES. Interview with NANA. Interview Re-
quested by Lee R. Hall, Staff Correspondent of LIFE.

Final Words
CUBA BETRAYED
INTRODUCTION

When I began to keep an accurate file of data through which I could refer to the unfortunate events in my country, I did not plan to write a book. Living in exile with few sources of material available, I planned a pamphlet that would make clear the workings of the Anarcho-Communist process* which destroyed the tranquillity and the well-being of the Cuban family. Meanwhile, I have continued to accumulate newspapers, magazines, statistical reports, books and pamphlets, with the further aim of publishing a book describing the extensive achievements of my administration. Later on I will publish my memoirs; this could not be done now, as writing about the incidents and historical events intimately connected with an author’s life should be composed in calm and serenity.

What makes the autobiographical genre interesting, apart from the events in which the author has been active, is the relationship between the principal and the idiosyncrasies, morale and human qualities of the men around him. The anecdotes and the incidents stemming from the conduct of these people are other aspects which, upon revealing their personalities, complete the panorama. In the political life of a people, frequently, one finds oddly endowed specimens who jump into the triumphal chariot and enjoy the fruits of their successes, but who manage to find another secure spot at the moment when the eclipse of the sun which gave them warmth seems imminent.

* Anarchy and communism are opposing doctrines, because in the former there exists no authority, and the latter absorbs all authority. Nevertheless, it is not incongruous to use these terms in juxtaposition, because the official terror imposed upon Cuba has kept her in tumult and discord.
Executives who have served several terms of office can point to so-called leaders who, like the tides, stood with them when they came to power, and then declared themselves independents, on any pretext, when the reins of government passed to another.

The book (*Piedras y Leyes*), just published, sets out in perspective the dangerous international situation developing under the Red shadow of Russo-Chinese machinations. It includes an analysis of relations between Cuba and the United States. It traces Cuba’s progress in administration, in construction, in education and health, and above all in the industrial and agricultural development which brought the Cuban people to the height of its prosperity.

The months have passed and at the end of this year I still lack the necessary material, while the malevolent propaganda about events of my governments and my decisions has continued its corrosive course.

The confused judgments drawn from intrigues and calumnies compelled me to begin a pamphlet in the first week of January, 1960. This booklet was to contain summaries or versions of some 30 interviews* which I had given during the past year to the international press, radio and television. While preparing for these interviews, I continued to add my comments. As I was not idle during the twelve months, the material turned out to exceed my estimate for a pamphlet. Realizing that the briefest exposition of facts would not clarify matters, I expanded it to something between a book and a pamphlet.

* The most important interviews were included in the Spanish edition because they contained messages to the Cuban exiles, but have here been reduced in number to those appearing in the Appendix. The Appendix also includes economic citations which demonstrate in summary form the degree of prosperity achieved by the Cuban people during my administration.
INTRODUCTION

In order to depict the true state of affairs and to distinguish the real from the fictitious, the truth from legend, I had to amplify the material with new details. The result was that the pamphlet ended as this book.

The historical action beginning with the appointment of Ambassador Sumner Welles by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in April, 1933 (with emphasis upon the events of Aug. 12 and Sept. 4 of that year), underscores my activities in public life to December, 1958. It includes the intermittent resurgence of terror during the last three decades of Cuba's agitated history, the progress attained, and the friendship enjoyed with the United States after the achievement of full Cuban sovereignty, following the abrogation of the Platt Amendment.

As is publicly recognized, there is no freedom in Cuba. In the chapter "Propaganda Based on Lies," Fidel Castro is shown by his own words and acts to be exercising his despotic one-man government. He has created his own peculiar system of censorship, terrorizing the press into submission by imprisoning or exiling the journalists or even by assassinating them as "counter-revolutionaries."

Communism is the inevitable theme in any discussion of the Castro regime. The system which controls our country is organized by Communists, takes its inspiration from communism, practices its doctrines, is pro-Soviet and hostile to the United States.

Cuba under Castro is the Red Satellite Russia needs on the very shores of the great American nation. The matter has gone
beyond a simple conflict of politics or diplomacy between two friendly nations. It is the problem of East Berlin and the horror of Hungary where Russia has brought about . . . How many? “Twenty thousand deaths?”

In this situation, Fidel Castro’s arrogance and provocations cannot be viewed as ignorance of problems of State, but as the effect of Soviet influence before the astonished, frightened or surprised eyes of Uncle Sam.

. . . . . . . .

The differences between the United States and any of the nations of the Caribbean region, and of all the nations south of the Rio Grande, can be settled by normal diplomatic processes. But . . . will solutions through diplomacy on the basis of mutual respect be possible with the pro-Communist regime which Fidel Castro omnipotently personifies?

Terror was a cancer for Cuba; today, it could be the same, to a higher degree, for the United States. The problem of Europe debating between the Free World and communism is serious; as is that of Indochina, Africa and the Middle and Far East. For the New World, the apparent impotence of the United States in the face of open Communist provocation, launched 90 miles from its coast, is just as serious a problem. The case of the largest of the Antilles can easily become the spark which can set off an atomic explosion.

If the sleeping giant does not awaken, the conflicts of the Cuban regime with Washington will soon involve Russia and her satellites*. But it is not a question of conflicts which affect only the United States and Cuba. The Russo-Chinese-Antillean plan, audaciously accelerated, operates over all the Carib-

* When the Spanish edition was written, Castro still denied his Russian contacts, and Khrushchev had not threatened the United States with his intercontinental missiles.
INTRODUCTION

bean region, spreads its influence over all of Latin America, seeking dominion over the entire Western World and beyond. It is a question, therefore, which must be faced by the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

There can be no intervention in Cuba from the United States, none from Communist China or from Russia and her satellites, who use their henchmen in Cuba to provoke Uncle Sam and plot to gain control of the Panama Canal. They strike at American defenses, cancelling the effectiveness of American bases by the propaganda which seeks the evacuation of American forces. These Communist agents bore into the very entrails of the great democratic power.

The sovereignty of Cuba is not merely threatened, it is mortally wounded by the Red tyranny. The four basic freedoms have been suppressed: personal safety, which includes protection of life; freedom of thought, expressed by the written or spoken word; freedom of assembly, the inalienable right of the citizen; and freedom of the press, crudely harassed at first, now, completely wiped out.

The UN and the OAS are confronted with a great international dilemma, not with some simple problem of diplomacy. Let us hope, as the months or years pass, that we do not have to ask ourselves: Are we on time, or is it too late?

Reality has answered Castro’s repeated lies. The truth and the evidence are weighed against the insidious maneuvers of the enemy and of those of our own people who veered with the wind. The enigma of the military failings has been revealed by the actions of the commanders. My humane feelings are far different from the disloyalty and treason which brought about my resignation. And my statements as to the criminal and Communistic tendencies of Castro’s rule have been proved by the diatribes against the United States by the two cruel brothers who vie for the extremist leadership, as well as by
their agreement with Mikoyan. * From these answers arose the name ANSWER, the title of the Spanish edition of this book.

The book is not meant to be a literary masterpiece. Still less has there been any attempt at stylistic elegance. It is, rather, an exposition of facts, a narration based on memory and notes. **

The writing of this book in Spanish was completed on March 10, 1960. At that time many were not as yet convinced that Fidel Castro was a Communist and that his government was Communist, so much so that some time in mid-1960—in 1960, mind you!—an important personality made an appeal to Castro over the “Voice of America” asking him to carry on with the “true revolution.” ***

Knowing that Castro was a Communist from “way back, and that he was a criminal and an aberrant, I was able to foresee and predict many of his later deeds and their effects on events. I had repeatedly warned that the Cuban problem was not local, but was of vital importance to the United States, to the entire American Continent, and that if Castro succeeded, his regime would be the first positive penetration by Russian and Chinese communism in our Continent. This was espe-

---

* This statement was made when Mr. K’s second-in-command was in Cuba. He publicly declared there should be no change of policy in relations with the United States.

** In order to help recall past events, I have used information from international news agencies, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, books, and even loose leaves dealing with the Cuban tragedy. I have also included personal comments.

*** At a secret hearing before a Subcommittee of the Senate, former Ambassador William D. Pawley said on Sept. 2, 1960, that he had told Roy Rubottom, then Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, and William Wieland, a State Department officer, “If you permit Fidel Castro to come into power, you are going to have more trouble than you have ever seen in your life.”
cially noticeable when, during my administration, a Red flag, Marxist pamphlets, and Chinese and Russian symbols and propaganda material were found in a rebel hiding-place. I had these on my desk for several days and showed them to some diplomats and many newspapermen, both Cuban and foreign, who gave it wide publicity. Unfortunately, however, the revelation was not considered important.

Truthfully, Castro’s irresponsible deeds have developed more rapidly than anyone expected. In less than one year at this writing (January, 1961) he has completely turned over the Republic of Cuba and its economy—lock, stock, and barrel—to the Russian and Chinese Communists.

Castro has openly sided with the Communist bloc in the United Nations, has committed all kinds of overt acts against Western powers, and consistently insults the United States, mistreating and murdering its citizens until that country had no alternative but to break diplomatic relations with Cuba.

At about the time I completed ANSWER, many believed that the firing squads would cease to operate. At that time there were still a very few newspapers in operation that had not been seized by the Communists. Yet the firing squads have continued to operate, and now capital punishment is dealt out to those accused of being anti-Communist. Those who in any manner express themselves as opposed to International Communism or its Cuban satellite have to face firing squads or long sentences in concentration camps at forced labor. The newspapers have been totally snatched and their presses and buildings used in the Communist propaganda machine.

Private property has completely disappeared. Privately owned industries, farm lands or city properties are non-existent. Not even children have escaped the clutches of the totalitarian state. Children 13 years old are taken from their homes and sent to training centers under the brutal control of state organizations supervised by Russian, Chinese and Czechoslovakian
Communists. Labor unions have disappeared, together with the recognized right of laborers to strike or even protest in the mildest and most peaceful manner.

A POSTSCRIPT

Because of the rapid worsening of the Cuban situation in the spring of 1961, caused largely by the disastrous invasion attempt of April 17, I have felt compelled to present my views and interpretation of these ominous events—even though CUBA BETRAYED had been completed at that time. These I have included in a "Postscript" discussing the invasion fiasco and the White Paper issued by the U. S. Department of State in April, 1961. It follows Part I.

F.B.Z.
PART I

EVENTS: CAUSE AND EFFECT.
CHAPTER I

DEMOCRATIC PLANS

In order to assure internal and international confidence, the revolution of the "10th of March," 1952, maintained all the norms, principles and guarantees of the Constitution of 1940, with modifications only in regulatory measures. In accord with these norms and principles, there was no attack on the lives or the property and political rights of citizens. Nor was there political censure for anyone fulfilling the obligations of public office. The government tried to reach an agreement with the opposition for the holding of immediate elections. But most of the leaders of the opposition, realizing that the times were not propitious for their success and, in their own interests, wishing to delay the return to normalcy, refused the offer, and eagerly set out to promote disorder and violence.

Respect for Tenure

At the same time the government gave an example—without precedent in a revolution—of respecting in their positions the officers of all the autonomous bodies which exercise a good share of public power in the Cuban Government. This was our attitude in dealing with the Court of Accounts (Tribunal de Cuentas)—to respect all its justices and subordinates—in dealing with the National Bank of Cuba (Banco Nacional de Cuba), and with the Bank of Agricultural and Industrial Development (Banco de Fomento Agrícola e Industrial), making new appointments only when an office-holder had resigned; in

25
dealing with the Commission of National Development (*Comisión de Fomento Nacional*); with the Cuban Institute for the Stabilization of Sugar (*Instituto Cubano de Estabilización del Azúcar*); with the Commission for Arbitration of the Sugar Industry (*Comisión de Arbitraje Azucarero*), and with all the bodies connected with social security, whether of the laboring or professional classes. Among the bureaucracy of other government departments, where formerly any change in leadership had meant a massive wave of dismissals, the revolutionary government of the “10th of March” created hardly a stir.

**Terrorism and Sabotage**

The purpose of all these acts was to stabilize the country, to create as little upheaval as possible, gaining general confidence by seeking the national unity indispensable to progress, economic liberation and consolidation. But personal ambitions, political passions, and the desire to restore the old order vied with these patriotic objectives. They gave rise with diabolical intensity to the terror which, in the beginning, revealed its presence through bombs and explosives, in streets, parks, theatres, cinemas, restaurants, cabarets and stores. It brought death or mutilation to children, women and men, most of whom were not concerned with politics. Then terror attacked the public services, the aqueducts and the electric works, highways, railways, bridges, telephone networks, telegraph stations, post offices, and industrial and agricultural centers.

**Economic Aggression**

In describing this destructive process one must emphasize the effort made to destroy the economy, not only through the actions summarized above, but also by attempts to obstruct the sugar harvests, and by organizing a campaign of slander through
telephone calls, and propaganda protected by the absolute freedom of the press.* A rumor was spread that “the government planned to seize bank deposits as well as the contents of safe deposit boxes in order to overcome its and the country’s bankruptcy.” After repeated failures of this campaign, public confidence was weakened in April, 1958, when a general strike, which threatened to put important national and foreign banks in a difficult spot, was called without success.

These then were the negative methods of a struggle, which, as we have many times repeated, was directed not against the government but against Cuba.

**Attacks on Schools and Children**

The lawless campaign accentuated its own vile nature when it directed aggressive acts against kindergartens, hurling “Molotov cocktails” and attacking buses carrying boys and girls to their schools.

In the wave of terror and violence which lashed the Island in the last two years, our government repeatedly tried the method of pardon, of forgetting offenses and calling for unity and national concord. What follows is an example of this policy.

Two months before the assassination in Holguín of Col. Fermín Cowley Gallegos, military chief of the zone in which the Castro family resided, the mother of Fidel and Raúl, Mrs. Ruz Castro, addressed herself, with Cowley as intermediary, to the

---

* “We independent journalists who visited Cuba during the first five years of Batista’s second government could never find reasons for criticizing a Batista tyranny, simply because both the first and second governments of the ex-Sergeant were distinguished by a sense of democracy and liberty unsurpassed by any other Latin American country.” (Aldo Baroni—“The Dance of the Hours” “La Danza de las Horas”)—*Excelsior*, Jan. 12, 1960. *Prensa Libre* has continued to republish, in an effort to justify itself to the Castristas, the violent attacks it printed during the Batista “dictatorship.” This fact proves the truth of the quotation.
General Chief of Staff. I was to grant a truce, and through diplomatic safe-conduct or by the withdrawal of our troops from the region, the two could take a plane or a ship out of the country.

There was nothing suspicious about these overtures. Col. Cowley’s job was to protect the Castro Ruz family on the farm where the widowed mother lived with her children, Ramón and Juanita. These two children acted as messengers between the Colonel and Mrs. Ruz Castro.

The Office of the Chief of Staff gave instructions for the withdrawal of the troops and called a halt to all fighting. A six-man patrol of marines and soldiers withdrew to relax on the sea coast. As they were not on duty, they reconnoitered the area and then spent the night in two abandoned huts.

Trustingly, they took no precautions. They fell fast asleep, believing that the truce would be observed. About 4:30 in the morning one of them arose to prepare breakfast. Kindling the fire was to be, unknowingly, the signal for the consequent tragedy. Fidel Castro and a group of villains who accompanied him, making a mockery of his mother’s effort and of the truce, fell “heroically” upon those defenseless troops and slew them with knife and gun.

Tolerance and Law

Five laws of amnesty, one of them so comprehensive as to include the assailants of the “Moncada” barracks in 1953, and their ringleader Castro; wholesale pardons; repeated invitations to exiled leaders to return to the country; respect for the freedom of the press as ordered by the Constitution; and, finally, the inclusion into the Electoral Code of the demands formulated by the opposition, particularly the direct and secret vote—these acts demonstrated the will of any government to maintain peace and advance progress.
If one examines to what extent Cuba advanced, although deep in the sorrow, confusion and uncertainty of this struggle, the conclusion is obvious. If neither sugar*, nor minerals, nor other exports reached high price levels; if agreements could not be reached with foreign enterprise and if world investment capital was adversely influenced; if international opinion turned so hostile to Cuba as to convert Havana embassies into centers of conspiracy; if embargoes against the shipment of arms to the government were established—practically giving the status of belligerents to terrorists who committed every sort of outrage and violated laws, and, even enjoyed advantages in certain countries—then we must ask ourselves: How did Cuba attain such a high level of solvency and economic development at this time and under such circumstances?

We must conclude that world opinion had been led astray by propaganda but that the Cuban Government had the positive support of internal public opinion, because in no other way could the miracle of this economic development**, this height of prosperity and the high standard of living of labor, have been possible.

These heights are not reached with guns. They are achieved through the confidence of businessmen, of investment capital, of

* Ambassador Arthur Gardner, in his depositions before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security said: "...During the course of the time that I was there the economy rose tremendously. The building boom was sensational. If you had been in Havana ten years earlier, as I had, and then saw it the day I left, you would not recognize the city. ...They (Cubans) felt that the time had finally come when they could begin investing money in Cuba, rather than putting their money, as they had in previous years, in banks in Switzerland and New York."

Ambassador Earle E. T. Smith, in his depositions before the same Subcommittee, said: "The year 1957 was the best economic year that Cuba has ever had."

** See Economic References in Appendix.
farmers, of all sectors of the population sharing in the production and commerce of a country*.

Constitution and Despotism

Any suspension of constitutional guarantees was always preceded by national clamor for such action. The people saw how the Legislative Power acted within the framework of the Constitution to modify the messages of the Executive Power, and approved or disapproved measures recommended by the Council of Ministers (Consejo de Ministros). It made its own decisions, without conflicts on questions of party discipline. In the area of Judicial Power not one judge, magistrate, or employee was removed by the revolutionary government. Nor were there any dismissals when the constitutional government came to power after the election of 1954. In accordance with the Constitution, the internal control of the judges and courts was maintained by the Supreme Court (Tribunal Supremo), the majority of whose members had taken their seats under previous administrations.

Intelligent public opinion observed the opposite take place later under Castro; and the world noted it with horror. We have seen assault, pillage and confiscation of newspapers imposing a gag of terror on the press. Those who professed to be defenders of the Constitution, rule without obeying it; nor do they have even their own revolutionary constitution. Those who claimed to respect the Judicial Power, defending Manuel Urrutia against the simple criticisms directed against his lies, destroyed the courts of justice. It must be strange to watch men who proclaimed the independence of civil power—among them the lawyer José Miró Cardona—converted into puppets of the Argentine ("Ché Guevara) who speaks in the name of military power and chieftain Castro. It is easy to observe the

* See Economic References in Appendix.
difference between the two regimes, because the latter has usurped all power, while we worked earnestly in harmony with the other government departments.

There, in constant effort, in respect for laws and property rights, lies the secret of the economic greatness of Cuba.
CHAPTER II

POLITICAL EFFORTS

Immediately after the triumph of the revolutionary movement of March 10, 1952, Constitutional Statutes were promulgated which revived, with slight changes, the Constitution of 1940. To assume Legislative functions there was created, as an urgent stopgap, a Consultive Council (Consejo Consultivo) of 80 members. This body began deliberations April 28, 1952, and ceased functioning January 27, 1955, when the elected Representatives and Senators took office.

All sectors of national life were represented in the Council: The Presidents of the Associations of Sugar Mill and Sugar Plantation Owners (Asociaciones de Hacendados y Colonos); the Secretaries-General of the Cuban Labor Confederation (C.T.C.), of the National Federation of Sugar Workers (F.N.T.A.), and of other federations of workers; the glorious veterans of the War of Independence; lawyers, engineers, physicians, teachers, journalists, agrarian leaders, career politicians and ex-Congressmen, and social, economic and industrial technicians. This body considered 67 bills submitted by the Council of Ministers and 280 initiated by its own members. The Consultive Council was called to session 168 times, and only 10 times failed to deliberate for want of a quorum.

Outstanding among their decrees were those which created the Offices for Construction of Local Highways (Construcción de Caminos Vecinales) in each Municipal District; the Repair and Construction of Rural Housing (Reparación y Construcción de Viviendas Campesinas) and Rehabilitation of Slum Areas (Rehabilitacion de los Barrios de Indigentes) the Ad-
ministration for the Construction of Low Cost and Rent Housing (Régimen de Construcción de Viviendas de Costo y Rentas Reducidos); the National Organization for School Clothing and Meals (Organización Nacional del Ropero y Almuerzo Escolar); the Cuban Bank for Foreign Trade (Banco Cubano del Comercio Exterior) the Fund for the Retirement of Workers in the Shoe Industry (Caja de Retiro de los Trabajadores de la Industria del Calzado) the Cuban Institute of Composers (Instituto Cubano de Autores Musicales); the Social Security for Agronomists (Seguro Social del Ingeniero Agrónomo); the National Finance Corporation of Cuba (Financiera Nacional de Cuba); the Professional Security for the Journalist (Seguro Professional del Periodista); the Varadero Tourist Center (Centro Turístico de Varadero); the National Organization for the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped (Organización Nacional de Rehabilitación de Inválidos); the Cuban National Corporation for the Blind (Corporación Nacional de Ciegos de Cuba); the Juvenile Courts, (Tribunales de Menores); the Fund for the Retirement and Social Assistance of Construction Workers (Caja de Retiro y Asistencia Social de los Obreros de la Construcción); the Organization of Banks for Human Resources (Organización de Bancos de Material Humano); the Retirement Fund for Employees in Cattle Raising (Caja de Retiro del Sector de la Canadería); the Social Security for Civil Engineers (Seguro Social del Ingeniero Civil); the Security for Medical Assistants (Seguro de los Profesionales y Auxiliares de la Medicina); the Hospital Organization (Organización Hospitalaria); the Security of Private School Teachers (Seguro del Maestro de Escuelas Privadas); the Security for the Teaching Profession (Seguro del Pedagogo); the Regulation of the Mining Area (Regulación de la Superficie Minera).

A social welfare program for private employees covering old age, illness, and death was also approved. Commercial treaties were signed and legislation was passed prohibiting discrimi-
nation for reasons of sex, race, color or class, as well as controlling rents.

The Constitutional Statutes called for general elections and all political parties were asked to take part.

Electoral Obligations and Constitutional Fulfillment

When the elections, planned first for 1952 and then for 1953, were challenged, a new electoral code was discussed and approved for the election of Nov. 1, 1954. In order that there should be no presumption of partiality on the part of the Government, all political factions were invited to take part in the deliberations. Those who refused to take part supported, either by omission or commission, the terror which was to be intensified two years later.

Hours before the elections the Presidential candidate of the opposition, Dr. Ramón Grau San Martin, withdrew from the race, foreseeing defeat. This had no effect on results, and Senators and Representatives elected from his party formed the legislative minority.

The Constitution of 1940 was operative. During my term of office the rights of citizens were observed, the formation of political parties was facilitated, and international conventions were honored, especially the right of asylum—of which excessive use was made. Partial elections for 1956 were approved by Congress. This plan went by the board, because of the pressure of terror by the rebels, and general elections were decreed under the Electoral Code of 1943. This was the code under which the Opposition, enjoying ample guarantees, had won the 1944 elections.

At the beginning of 1956, attempts were made to reach a political understanding between Opposition and Government. Participating in the meetings were the "Society of Friends of the Republic" (Sociedad de Amigos de la Republica), the
"Orthodox," the "Priistas," and the "Authentics" of Grau. Presided over by Don Cosme de la Torriente, these efforts became known as the "Civic Dialogues." No definite decision was reached at the meetings because of the demands of the abstaining groups, who wanted no less than the full resignation of the Government. The Government parties did not forbid this possibility, but suggested the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, through which the country could decide this issue before the termination of the Presidential term on Feb. 24, 1959. The more radical groups demanded complete control and called a halt to the "Civic Dialogues." The insurrectionists ordered a wave of riots and terror which had already begun with Dr. Prío's attack on the "Goicuría" camp while taking part in the "Dialogues" under the pretense of wanting a peaceful settlement.

The Unjustified Attack on the "Moncada" Army Camp

Under the protection of the Constitutional Statutes, the country was at peace, public opinion backed the Government, and the people enjoyed complete liberty. The entire population of Santiago de Cuba was enjoying the carnivals of July, 1953. In this atmosphere of tranquillity and joy, the military camp, where the garrison and command of Oriente Province was established, suffered a surprise attack in the dawn of July 26, by a group of agitators who had been studying Communist documents and books.* The attack began with the assassination of several sick men in the hospital clinic bordering the camp, of

* Ambassador Gardner said, in his depositions before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security: "I saw a manifesto that he (Castro) had printed in Mexico, which stated his principles, what he was going to do. He was going to take over the American industries, he was going to nationalize everything...."

In his depositions before the same Subcommittee, Ambassador Smith said: "... Fidel Castro did make a number of statements at Costa Rica and out of Mexico which clearly showed his Marxist line of thinking. He was also an active member, as a student, of a radical group."
several sentinels and of many soldiers asleep in their quarters. There were also casualties among the attackers.

Jules Dubois, rushing to write a favorable account of Fidel Castro, has noted certain useful facts. He states that, coincident with the arrival of Castro, Joaquín Ordoqui, Lázaro Peña and some six other top-ranking leaders of the Popular Socialist Party (Communist) were in Santiago de Cuba. The party was illegal; and its leaders were in hiding or had fled abroad. It was odd to find such important Communist bosses congregated in the eastern capital.

Further evidence that they had gone to Santiago de Cuba in the service of the Party, and with the connivance of Fidel Castro, is the fact that when arrested and accused of participation in the conspiracy, they denied the charges and said that they were in Santiago de Cuba “to celebrate Blas Roca’s birthday.” Blas Roca—who resides not in Santiago, but in Havana—is the Secretary-General of the Party. It is he, together with those previously cited, and Juan Marinello, who are the guiding spirits of communism in Cuba.

Fidel Castro, who organized the attack, did not appear at the tragic scene of the fighting. Hidden near the city, he appeared a few days later under the protection of Monsignor Enrique Pérez Serantes, Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba. Orders were given not to kill him. He was brought to justice and tried in civil courts under judges who had grown gray in their careers and who acted with the independence proper to the Judiciary. Sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment, he received an amnesty in May 1955, barely two years after the bloody events which led to his sentence.*

Now at liberty, the ex-convict availed himself of the broad guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom of movement

---

* R. H. Phillips, in her book “Cuba, Island of Paradox” (page 269) said that in 1955 the government had decreed a general amnesty covering all political prisoners. She adds that this amnesty was the cause of the downfall of the Batista regime, as Fidel Castro was freed from jail.
enjoyed by all citizens. He followed the non-participation tactics of the Party of the Cuban People (*Partido del Pueblo Cubano*), the "*Ortodoxo,*" whose defeated candidate for Representative he had been in 1952. He continued playing with political ideologies which, under the influence of Communist leaders in Mexico, was to bring about a change in his tactics and attitudes. In his letter of Dec. 12, 1953, written to Dr. Luis Conte Agüero while in prison, he stated: "Our triumph would have meant the immediate rise of the *Ortodoxia* to power. . . . So inevitable is this, that, despite the setback, our sacrifice has meant the strengthening of the true ideals of (Eduardo) Chibás. . . . Speak to Dr. Agramonte, show him this letter, express to him our loyal sentiments . . . the masses are ready; they need only be shown the true way. . . ."

Unscrupulous and dissembling, on April 17, 1954, Castro wrote from prison to Melba Hernández, who had used cold steel in the attack on "Moncada": "Use guile and smiles with everyone. Follow the same tactics we followed at the trial: defend our point of view without irritating anyone. There will be more than enough time later to trample all the cockroaches together. Accept any help offered, but remember to trust no one. . . ."

The businessmen, the priests, and the men of good faith who contributed to Castro’s triumph will remember it all their lives; but this hard-learned lesson cannot alleviate the damage done by the Castro tyranny and Red influence.

*Functioning of the Universities*

The universities functioned without interference and the officers of the University Students Federation (*Federación Estudiantil* without any strings attached. That, moreover, he was more determined than ever to overthrow Batista, having gone to Mexico with his brother Raúl. Here they trained under the supervision of Alberto Bayo, a Spanish Communist, with arms paid for by Carlos Prío.
diantil Universitaria) in Havana were elected without government intervention during the two years of the Provisional Government, as well as in the first years of the Constitutional period. This was true until the end of 1956, when the insurgent groups of the FEU, provoking street fighting which resulted in the death and wounding of students and police, compelled the Rector and professors of the University of Havana to close the school.

Many were the plots uncovered and caches of arms seized—arms which had been acquired early with Prío (Dr. Carlos Prío Socarrá) money and delivered to university students for terrorist acts.* Many were the innocent victims of bombings and assassinations, in which student elements participated, some following the “Ortodoxo” line and others the Communist line. All had been supported by Dr. Prío, who was now trying to consolidate his position with governments he had previously fought.**

* The Mexican newspaper Excelsior published an article by Aldo Baroni in which he refers to leftist writer Carleton Beals and his comments directed against Cuban youngsters from teenagers to about 30 years of age, dedicated to acts of terrorism. Mr. Beals wonders if youngsters who have been accustomed to bombing homes, stores and schools would, upon attaining power, listen to any opinions but their own.

** Trujillo sent a special emissary to Miami, who invited Prío to attend a conference with him at New York. Prío accepted this invitation and went to New York and, with Eufemio Fernandez, had a talk with Trujillo. Trujillo offered Prío everything he needed in the line of war materials and men. Jules Dubois in his book Fidel Castro refers to this incident.
CHAPTER III

PROPAGANDA AND ITS EFFECTS

A Massive propaganda campaign led people to believe that the designation of “Communist,” “anti-American,” and “anti-democratic” which we applied to the acts of the “26th of July” movement, were due to our desire to find support for our government. When we pointed concretely to certain comrades of Fidel Castro, and to him, as radical individuals who favored Russia and Communist China against the United States and her allies, our sincerity was doubted.* To our calls to vigilance, they responded with the formidable weapon of their slogans, and the world was soon filled with taunts against our regime, which truly defended the democratic peace of the Continent. We were not—nor are we now—anti-Communist by necessity, as are those who follow the path of nepotism and despotism, contrary to human dignity and the sentiments of the people. Our first aim was to save the country from chaos, and the nation observed with pleasure the fall of the Prío Government, which had disgraced it. Then we wished to set up procedures by which the country could decide its destiny at the polls. Vigorous opposition against the Government of the “10th of March” arose, and the Government respected this opposition. Press, radio and tele-

* All the front-line Communists, such as Blas Roca and Lázaro Peña, have returned to Havana. Communist leader Juan Marinello went to Moscow to inform about the Cuban revolution and discuss future policies. Mrs. Phillips said in her book Cuba, Island of Paradox, as far back as 1959, that it is evident that the Communists belong to the inner circle of the Castro regime and that their infiltration in the labor unions has paid good dividends.

39
vision played important roles in the defense of ideas, in summarizing objections, in criticizing, in expounding reasons and formulating attacks. Liberty was complete, but the money plundered from the Republic was used to initiate terror, and the Communists began to recover from the injury suffered by the expulsion of their Ambassador.

At the beginning of my last two years of government, the campaign of terror and deceitful propaganda was intensified. International Communism, with unheard-of audacity, began more obviously than ever to launch its counterattack throughout the American Continent. It tried to counteract the alertness of the United States, which alone keeps the Russians and the Chinese Reds in line, and which must be softened up by the bloc behind the Iron Curtain.

Nuclei of action were organized by the terrorists in various countries to protest and demonstrate on any excuse. They saw to it that the news agencies reported any incident—a building damaged by a bomb, a worker assassinated because he refused to strike, a child destroyed by a shell burst, a young woman mutilated by an infernal machine; a citizen blown to bits, or a woman and her three children shot to death in their automobile on a highway blockaded by the rebels. This was routine news in a country convulsed by terror. Atrocities were premeditated to represent the Cuban Government, slowly but surely, as a dictatorial and bloody regime. Those who died or were taken prisoners by the forces of order became victims of an implacable “tyranny.”

The City Police and other agents of public order, the Rural Police and the remnants of the Armed Forces, were intimidated and always in danger of death. It did not matter whether or not a uniformed man was on duty. An office worker going home at the end of the day was assassinated while waiting for a bus; a mechanic, a cook, or an orderly, would be shot down on the street while on his way home. If a son or friend ran to his aid,
he would perish also. The terrorists, under their chieftains and Communist leaders, were provoking reprisals by the Government forces.

The instinct of self-preservation and the fulfillment of duty became, naturally, instruments of this perverse plan. The wires would carry tragic news. According to these reports the person involved would not be the policeman or soldier who, in enforcing the laws, was acting to preserve order, to protect the rights of an individual and the security of the family, to guarantee life and property, to defend society or to protect himself; he would be made to appear as a man who used delegated authority to commit a crime. One excess led to another. And for the reading or listening public, these unfortunate events appeared to have taken place under a "dictatorial" and "cruel" regime. Its leader was Batista, and Batista would be presented as a dictator without conscience.

As the crimes and cruelties of the terrorists grew, so did the necessary repressive measures. New excesses would take place, followed by another wave of slogan propaganda. Public sensibility would be offended, and corrective action would be the responsibility of the Batista Government (always in his name) and not that of the provocateurs, bosses who acted as an insatiable Moloch, or the agents who executed their orders. In this way the unscrupulous groups headed by Fidel Castro, who ordered assassinations and massacres, succeeded in being represented as fighters for the liberty which they themselves assailed and mutilated. They made it appear that the tyrants were those who opposed the destruction of Cuba by terror and the attainment by the Communists of psychological advantages and strong positions at the door of the giant who, democratically, remained confident or asleep.*

* "If North American officials could have seen the incidents, they would not have abandoned President Batista in his desperate struggle against the rebels. But Washington under the Republican Administration
The National Situation

At the beginning of autumn, 1958, through negligence, through complicity, for financial gain, or through fear or cowardice, Army units frequently surrendered to rebel groups.* The replacement troops used to leave the main camps with enthusiasm and high morale. There were company or battalion chiefs, like Capt. Adriano Coll Cabrera, fallen at Guisa—who proved the exception—healing the expeditions or skirmishes until they fell dead or wounded; but these were isolated cases.

Oriente Province was incommunicado. The military operations were not efficient for various reasons. The June campaign to destroy the guerrillas in the mountains had been unsuccessful, and its failure demoralized the Army. This failure was attributed to the lack of co-ordination between the General Staff and the Chief of Operations, with headquarters in Bayamo, as well as to the lack of automatic arms and communications equipment refused by Washington. The Cuban Armed Forces had been supplied with arms, munitions and equipment from the United believed sincerely, and in good faith, that Batista represented dictatorship, whereas his opponents symbolized democracy.... Did the United States succeed in changing the government of Cuba?... Unfortunately Fidel Castro’s regime not only uses anti-democratic methods, but its actions injure the interests and dignity of North America.... But there is still more. From the Cuban capital have come calls for the North Americans to rise against their government. They add immediately that the Cuban Government is not Communist.... If, by a miracle, Fidel Castro were to communicate to Nikita Khrushchev his desire to become an open member of the Communist Party, the Kremlin chief would immediately ask him to desist from his intention, because he is of more use in his attitude of neutral.” (“Cuba, Inconvenient Neighbor”—ABC—Sunday, Jan. 16, 1960.)

*“Corzo and Sanchez Mosquera lay the blame for the failure of the Sierra Maestra operation on Cantillo. On the other hand Corzo tells me that Fowler, Quevedo, Montero Duque (exiled in Miami) and other commanders, battalion leaders, were inactive and Fidelistas, and used to meet him in the Sierra Maestra for conspiratorial interviews.” (Letter of Gen. Tabernilla Palmero—April 12, 1959.)
States for training, with a view to defense in case of another war. The prohibition of the sale of arms to the Cuban Government weakened the faith and the will to fight in many of our men.

The effect produced by this measure among the civilian and the military population also favored the rebels who, until that moment, had not commanded enough resources to be considered belligerents.

The calls for general strikes, accompanied by terrific threats, which were launched by the head of the Anarcho-Communist movement, failed. The attitude of organized labor, both as individuals and as corporate bodies (about 2,000,000 members) demonstrated that the rebels lacked popular support. The commercial streets, the expensive and the cheaper shops, the theaters and the movies, the hotels and cabarets were crowded with people from all walks of life. The position taken by the Cuban Confederation of Labor, the Federations of Industries and other associations, as well as the manner in which society went about its business—consuming, spending, and living a normal and happy existence—prove that the Cuban people were not only opposed to subversion, but that they also opposed the violence and terror which, unscrupulously and criminally, were carried out by the Castro group.

* The United States embargo of arms was a great victory for Fidel Castro, says Mrs. Phillips in her book (page 351).
CHAPTER IV
CONSPIRACY OF OFFICERS

The Government did not cease in its efforts to reach an agreement with the Opposition, and redoubled its efforts towards a pact to hold elections. The efforts of the Opposition along the same line were more apparent than real, because while these discussions were taking place, the conspiracy persisted. Public opinion continued to resist calls to sedition. This was demonstrated by the people when public disturbances were planned.

On April 4, 1956, one of these plots in the form of a military conspiracy was revealed. Col. Ramón Barquín López, recently promoted to that rank by Presidential decree, was designated to attend the conference to be held in the Dominican Republic concerning the submarine platform of the Caribbean. He needed personal instructions and, instead of going directly from Washington, went first to Havana. At that time he enjoyed the confidence of the Government, holding the position of Military Attaché, and was the Cuban Representative to the Inter-American Defense Board. He conferred with me in my residence at Ciudad Militar, Camp Columbia.

With urgent matters awaiting my attention, I had to receive him standing out-of-doors. The conversation lasted about half an hour. He did not reveal by gesture or word that he was dissatisfied or that he was involved in any subversive plan. On the contrary, he praised me and my Administration, exclaiming enthusiastically that “never had the Cuban people enjoyed such prosperity and Cuba could not be happier with the impetus we...
were giving to her progress.” He talked of history’s favorable verdict which would surely be granted us, including himself and the Army, while speaking in the first person. As President of the Republic, and warned by years of experience, I assumed my usual attitude of courteous attention and reserve when listening to the eulogies of interested persons, of subalterns or of office seekers.

Col. Barquín departed from the subject of his mission and stressed how useful he could be if he were closer to me. He stated that his devotion, demonstrated from the time he had enlisted and gone to the Military Academy on the recommendations of my aide, Col. Ramón Corvo Barquín, had never faded. He recalled the time when I designated him, together with Capt. Juan Cueto, to take a course at the War College (Escuela Superior de Guerra) in Mexico, on two scholarships. These had been granted to me by the then President of Mexico, my unforgettable friend, Gen. Manuel Avila Camacho, when I visited that country in 1945, on the invitation of the Government.

The Submarine Platform, Trujillo, Prío and Castro

Although no deception surprises me after having experienced so many in my lifetime, I was startled to learn of a conspiracy in which Barquín was involved. He had returned from Santo Domingo and asked for an appointment to inform me of his activities. As I was busy with the study of some plans, he was received by the Joint Chief of Staff, Gen. Tabernilla Dolz, to whom he gave an account of certain activities in Santo Domingo. Speaking also with one of my aides he said that Doctors Prío and Castro were working with Trujillo and that elements of the Caribbean Legion, partisans of ex-President Prío, were receiving military instruction from officers of the Dominican Army, in preparation for an invasion of Cuba from Santo Domingo. He stated that Policarpo Soler, a gangster who had fled
Cuba on March 10, 1952, was an important person in the Dominican Government and had the personal confidence of the “Benefactor,” that he was addressed as “General” even by Army officers; that Policarpo had been entrusted by Trujillo with the administration of internal discipline and organization. He added that Col. Río Chaviano, Military Chief of Oriente Province, was aware of these facts, and was a possible participant in the plan.*

Barquín and His Fellow Plotters

I was attending a meeting of the Council of Ministers when a report from Col. Francisco Tabernilla Palmero and from the chief of Military Intelligence, Col. Antonio Blanco Rico, was brought in. It contained an account of the conspiracy.

That afternoon the following men were arrested with Col. Barquín: Lieut. Col. Manuel Varela Castro, Chief of the Tank Regiment of Ciudad Militar, who had been promoted from Lieutenant, March 10, 1952; Major Enrique Borbonet, recently promoted, and who, with Varela, was Barquín’s chief assistant in the plot; Major José Orihuela of the Military Academy; Ríos Morejón, Commander of La Cabaña Fortress; Captains Hugo Vázquez, Despaigne and Travieso, of the Division of Infantry; Captains Bernal and Villafaña, and Lieutenants Travieso and Michel Yabor, all active pilots of the Air Force; and Lieut. José Fernández, of the Military Academy. There were 30 in the conspiracy. They were court martialed and given various sentences. The court could have applied more severe sentences, but acted mercifully in accord with Government policy—as had

* Jules Dubois says that the well-known mutual dislike between Batista and Trujillo was made even stronger by the murder of a well-known political exile in Havana, and that the press accused Fidel Castro for accepting help from Trujillo for his invasion of Cuba. (Fidel Castro, page 104.)
been done previously in the case of Fidel Castro and his companions.

Barquín declared in an article published in *Bohemia* magazine of Feb. 8, 1959, that other officers who were not tried had been involved in the plot, including Léon Dediot and Lieut. Col. (retired) Vicente Léon, ex-aide to Prío; Dr. Justo Carillo, President of Banfaic during the Prío Administration; Dr. Felipe Pazos, ex-President of the National Bank; ex-Senator Diego Vicente Tejera; Fernando Leyva; Dr. Roberto Agramonte and Raúl Chibás, with whom I had had interviews on various occasions.

**“Batista Day”**

According to his own words to the editor of *Bohemia*, Barquín and his friends had been plotting for some four years, and had failed in other attempts. At the time of my trip to Daytona Beach, Florida, for “Batista Day,”* the entire government assembled at the military airfield of Columbia to bid me goodbye. It was noted that the forces assigned to render the corresponding military honors had been enlarged with armored units—an obsolete custom, as regulations decreed that infantrymen, accompanied by musicians, should participate in ceremonial acts of this nature—under the authority of Lieut. Col. Manuel Varela Castro, second in command of the conspiracy. Upon my return from Daytona Beach, I was greeted by the same troops and chiefs who had participated in the departure ceremonies. We were aware of rumors of a plot to take over the government at the time of my trip and had taken precautions against it, so that the conspirators probably did not have the courage to make the attempt.

---

*The Municipality of Daytona Beach, Florida, declared March 24, 1956, “Batista Day,” as I had been a good member of that community during my previous voluntary exile.*
Treacherous Surrender

Barquín returned to activity after Jan. 1, 1959, upon being released from the Isle of Pines Prison by the officers who had been involved with him in the plot of April 4, 1956. Gen. Cantillo who, according to published reports, was inclined to defend the Provisional Government of Justice Piedra, was pressured by a group of officials into handing over the command of the General Staff to Col. Barquín. Once again Barquín committed a gravely disloyal act by handing over the Army to the horde of bearded outlaws who had never defeated it. Six hundred officers were imprisoned, many of whom were shot or assassinated without any trial whatsoever.* In his statements to Bohemia, Barquín confirms this, praising the chiefs of the "rebel army" who, nevertheless, had removed him from authority within 48 hours.

* An officer of the Army who was able to leave Cuba stated in a letter of June 1, 1959: "It was Barquin's men who took us prisoners on January 2 so that they could ingratiate themselves with the Red chief. If it had not been for Barquín, Varela and company, they would not have caught a single military figure, not Sosa Blanco, nor Grau, etc., etc., because there was more than enough time for the thousand and more executed to hide, flee or go into exile, especially since the Red chief did not enter Havana with his hordes until a week later; this makes Barquín guilty of the thousand and more executions." (Letter of Gen. Tabernilla Palmero.)
CHAPTER V

RETURN OF PRIÓ AND CONSPIRATORIAL ACTIVITIES

Every means was used to create a favorable climate that would facilitate the return of Dr. Prió to Cuba. Juan Amador Rodríguez, journalist and a member of the "Auténtico" Party, traveled repeatedly to Miami and agreed with Prió on a date for his return. A day before the agreed date a large shipment of arms was seized in Havana, together with a group plotting to start an insurrection on Prió’s arrival. A few hours later, a mortar was discovered installed on a roof near the Presidential Palace, to be used to kill the President of the Republic and his family during the revolt. Dr. Prió, informed of the plot’s failure, cancelled his trip.

Nevertheless, the Government held to its guarantees. Prió arrived in Havana early in August, 1955. He settled on his farm on the outskirts of the city. There he received his sympathizers and friends, apparently to set up a political organization but, in reality, to plan an insurrection.

Prió sympathizers and party members participated in the military conspiracy of April 4, 1956. The attack on the “Goicuría” barracks* in the capital of Matanzas Province took place on the 29th.

As proof of this, I note that Prió had already declared over

* A group of seditious friends of ex-President Prió left from the Margot mine near the Matanzas capital in a caravan of automobiles and trucks to make a surprise attack on the Goicuría garrison. Heading this group was the activist Reynold García.
CMQ-TV, a few days after his return under Government protection, that “more than $5,000,000 had been spent to send arms to Cuba for a revolution.” Harassed by the questions of reporters, he said he desired only to re-enter politics and for this reason was conferring with his partisans. Nevertheless, he went on plotting.

Prío was frightened at the failure of the “Goicuría” affair and the possible consequences of his obvious participation in it. When the Chief of Police questioned him, he hurriedly left the country.

Prío continued sending arms and money to Cuba from Miami in order to intensify terror.* One of his bombs was set off by the son of one of his economic advisors, Dr. Felipe Pazos, in the cabaret “Tropicana,” on New Year’s Eve, 1956, when more than a thousand people were there. The explosion ripped off the arm of an adolescent girl and wounded others.

New Disturbance in Santiago de Cuba

Omitting the recital of other bloody deeds and tragic events, we shall see how agitation increased in the capital of Oriente. On Nov. 30, a seditious outbreak again bloodied the city streets. The teachers’ school, the high school, and other buildings near the “Moncada” barracks were seized by student groups and Communist elements. They fired from rooftops and destroyed the police headquarters after assassinating the guards. Again civilians and military died in the three days before order was restored.

*Mr. Dubois, in Fidel Castro (page 121) said that in December 1956 when Castro landed in Cuba, an expeditionary force was being trained at Santo Domingo for the purpose of invading Cuba. He added that the Cubans were recruited in Cuba or at Miami, whence they were flown to Ciudad Trujillo and taken to a training camp, and that at the same time the Dominican radio launched a bitter campaign against Batista; that the Cuban people would have never heeded Trujillo.
The troops were held in the barracks on orders of the Regimental Chief, Gen. Martín Díaz Tamayo. The General Staff, realizing that this officer lacked the fortitude to handle the situation, sent in a well-equipped infantry battalion under the command of Lieut. Col. Pedro Barrera Perez. He assumed direct responsibility for public order in Santiago de Cuba.

**Struggle for Peace**

Two days later Fidel Castro disembarked at Playa Colorada, near Niquero, coincident with the quelling of that uprising. The 82 men who accompanied the chieftain were dispersed by the Rural Guard reinforced with an artillery battalion formed from four companies of riflemen with some automatic weapons. In charge of these men was Maj. Juan Gonzalez, a former aide of Tabernilla Dolz. He limited himself to fortifying his position with sandbags, although one of his units, under the excellent officer Capt. Moreno Bravo, began an efficient and rapid pursuit of the bandits.

Responding to the clamor of various civic groups and religious institutions, pamphlets were scattered from the air, exhorting the rebels to obey the law and promising to send them back to their homes if they would give up. This call had little success, and Col. Barrera was designated to install a command-post in “Las Mercedes” which was, according to the Colonel, a strategic spot from which to direct operations. He received many troops and a large quantity of arms. Except for a few brushes in the first days, for two months there were no signs of any rebels in the surrounding mountain areas. The General Staff was informed that the group headed by Castro had been dissolved. This information brought an invitation to newspapers to send reporters to the zone where Col. Barrera and his troops were stationed. Special planes were put at the disposal of the reporters who, with Army officers, made a broad reconnaissance
of the Sierra Maestra. No trace of the rebels was found, and not one shot was fired. This report induced the General Staff, with Presidential approval, to withdraw the troops.

**Contradictory Reports and the Matthews Interview**

A representative of the United Press, Francis L. McCarthy, reported that Castro was dead and buried. There was no official confirmation of this report, and it was secretly suspected that the rebel leader had taken refuge in the highest mountainous region of the Sierra Maestra.

Gen. Díaz Tamayo, Chief of the military territory, and Col. Barrera, Chief of Operations, helped reinforce the belief of the General Staff that the group which had landed Dec. 2 had given up the struggle.

In this climate of doubt, Herbert L. Matthews, reporter for the *New York Times*, published an interview with Fidel Castro. To prove his statements he produced an unclear photograph of Castro. The military chiefs of the province told the General Staff so emphatically that no such interview had taken place, that the Minister of Defense publicly denied it had occurred. And even I, influenced by the reports of the General Staff, doubted it. The interview had, in fact, taken place and its publication was of considerable propaganda value to the rebels. Castro was to begin his era as a legendary figure, and end as a monster of terror.
CHAPTER VI

IMPEDEMENTS TO NORMALCY

The attack on "Goicuria" was all the more unexpected because the leaders of the abstaining opposition were meeting with representatives of the Government in an effort to find a workable formula. The most elementary understanding of the strength of a military garrison would have prevented the instigator of this adventure from ordering men who trusted his leadership to carry out a suicidal act. Although the responsibility for the affair was never in doubt, Prío himself made it absolutely clear when he later declared in a Fidelista magazine that he instigated this absurd act which cost the life of almost every participant.

Despite all the obstacles preventing the return of normalcy to Cuba, my Government worked ceaselessly toward that goal. The Plan for Economic and Social Development was speeded up, because as the two-year period of political office was nearly over, political activities would take up a great part of our time. While we tried to turn the Republic toward peace and social welfare, we had to give our attention to the problem of public order—under constant threat—and to our international obligations.

Before and after my return from Daytona Beach (from March 23 to March 26) official reports had forewarned me of the plots. A few days after my arrival the April 4 plot failed. As election activities intensified, so did the plotting and, 25 days later, the "Goicuria" attack took place.
Meeting of Presidents

It was known that I had been invited by Dr. Ricardo M. Arias Espinosa, President of Panamá, to participate in the meeting of Presidents called for July 21, 1956. This date marked the 130th anniversary of the first Inter-American Congress headed by Bolívar. The abstaining opposition and the insurrectionists made up their minds that Cuba would not be represented by her President. Their campaign of rumors was aided by terrorist activity. Fortunately, it was controlled by the fast and prudent action of the law enforcement bodies. Before leaving for Panamá, I received reports similar to those preceding my trip to Daytona. My absence from Cuba at the historical meeting was to have been used to spread propaganda abroad and to discredit the elections. But the trip was made and, by being represented at the meeting, Cuba made her voice heard. Also, her official judgments were shared by the other nations assembled there* when her President expressed his ideas on economic and commercial relations.

* The cables and the Cuban press emphasized the importance of that action. Of all that was published, I present here a summary of editorials and articles by independent writers:

“The commission of experts proposed by President Batista would be in a position to get at the real essentials of Cuban-American economic relations, studying them from all points of view; and its recommendations could become the point of departure for the intensification of commerce between Cuba and the United States, to their mutual advantage. The fact that President Eisenhower has approved, in general terms, that idea, as reported by cable, permits us to hope that the Panamá meeting will prove fruitful.” (Editorial in El Mundo.)

“Not in the spirit of censure, but seeking a long-term point of view, Gen. Batista made it understood that in order to create effective cooperation between the United States and Latin America there would have to be ‘a plan which would accelerate the development of the latter’s natural resources,’ which would make the investment of foreign capital more attractive, would modify the tax laws, and would reduce tariffs and the restrictions that hinder a commercial exchange, equitable and beneficial to all!” (Ramón Vasconcelos in Alerta.)
Obstacles were overcome and upon my return to Cuba, we continued in our patriotic task of guiding the country along political and constitutional channels.

**Tokens and Conciliatory Efforts**

The partial elections planned for the end of 1956, with the necessary legislation already approved by Congress, had to be postponed because of new chicanery by the opposition.

The Inter-American Press Society met in Havana in October, 1956. The people were happy in the progress achieved, and liberty seemed secure. To make the situation of the country look critical, acts of violence and terrorist audacity reached new heights with the assassinations of the Chief of Military Intelligence on the 28th and of the Chief of Police on the next day.*

Terror increased; the Executive Mansion was attacked on March 13, 1957, and from then on the campaign of the rebels never abated.

Secret conversations took place between opposition politicians and Government leaders. Some of the non-participants were convinced, others, with the support of the Government, succeeded in setting up a political organization. Some traveled "with expenses paid" through Europe and America. Always mingled with their ambitions was the instinct of self-preservation

*See Chapter VIII.*

"General Batista has won a great triumph, which belongs not to him but to Cuba. Not to acknowledge this because of political antipathy, or envy, or for want of judgment to applaud when called for and condemn when necessary, is to hide a reality which has glittered before the press of the entire Hemisphere. This happy reality, of extraordinary importance, is a golden page in the history of Cuba."—(Gastón Baquero in *Diario de la Marina.* )

"The President of Cuba, Gen. Batista, was explicit in pointing out how the effort to make of America a world happy in the enjoyment of peace and work required, as its base, a solid economic and social structure."—(Editorial in *Avance.* )
and terror until, in the final days of the conflict, they joined the Army of the Sierra; some physically, others in spirit.

The Venerable Episcopate had met and issued some statements to which the Government responded in a conciliatory manner. Princes of the Church, reporters and businessmen met with me in search of solutions.

There was a bloody attempt on April 9, 1958, to force the workers to go on strike, but it failed.

In a final effort, we agreed to meet with a delegation appointed through the help of clergymen close to the Cardinal’s office. The commission was composed of respectable, neutral persons. They wished to establish contacts with the opposition groups interested in having an election, with the leaders of the non-participants, and with the rebels. Members of the commission were Dr. Gustavo Cuervo Rubio, ex-Vice-President of the Republic, a university professor and famous gynecologist; Dr. Raúl de Cárdenas, also a former Vice-President, a member of the Friends of the Republic Society, a lawyer and President of the Center of Urban Property (Centro de la Propiedad Urbana); Victor Pedroso, President of the National Association of Cuban Banks; and the Catholic priest Dr. Pastor González.*

Believing the Government was obligated to answer their questions first, they requested an opportunity to be heard. I received them in the Presidential Palace and promised to put no difficulty in the way of their efforts to solve the national problem by means of the ballot. They explained their intention of going out to the eastern mountains to talk with the chieftain, after talking with factions here.

* Statements of Father Pastor González of the Scolopians of Guanabacoa, Cuba:

“All my life I have believed in the death penalty.”

“All churches believe in capital punishment.”

“No moral treatise based on religious principles opposes it.” (Looking at Cuba—Santiago Rey Perna). It is incredible that a representative of the Catholic Church could make such statements!
Assuming this unilateral responsibility was risky for me, the struggle had intensified and this action could weaken the morals of the troops in the campaign. But it was worth becoming involved in these efforts if there was a chance of a return to normalcy.

The commissioners began their efforts. When the press published the news of some agreement among the various factions, Fidel Castro refused to listen to them, adding inconsistent explanations and false accusations. He did not want elections, and continued with his well-planned schemes against the United States and the adversaries of Soviet Russia. Another noble plan had failed.

*Constitutionalism and Terror*

In the succession of events, words became weapons, vengefully or vindictively misused to achieve the purposes of selfish interests. It was necessary to break down inertia or "conformity" as it was labeled by those who wished to gain control of the Government by any means. It was necessary to inflame minds, inundate the country with rumors and blood, and create an environment of anxiety. "Dictatorship" and "tyranny" were epithets constantly hurled against the official defenders of the democratic system—the Government. "Fighters for civil liberties who were struggling to achieve a freely elected constitutional government" were labels pinned on themselves by the terrorists. They made of this cruel and criminal lie a "truth," just as they did when, upon seizing power, they accused the Government of having caused "twenty thousand deaths" and published photographs with macabre captions of instruments of torture—instruments unheard of in Cuba. In this way, without measuring the cost to the people and the Republic in lives and suffering, they tried to discredit the Administration they were combatting. In their triumph they brought even greater damage, identifying
themselves with the enemies of the West, using the United States as target, as also the press,* which refused to praise the savageries of the Anarcho-Communist movement directed by the most irresponsible and cruel extremist tyrant.

* Mrs. Phillips in *Cuba, Island of Paradox* (page 413), says that Castro censors the press by means of fear. If a newspaper were to publish anything he happened to dislike, he tells the people not to buy the paper or advertise in it; the people obey for fear of the consequences.
CHAPTER VII

A TERRORIST PLAN

On March 11, 1957, as I was leaving a children’s festival in a public school, where I had been handing out the prizes, someone approached me and in a whisper informed me that an attack on the Presidential Palace was planned for the next day. Later this individual told me why they also planned to murder my wife, who was pregnant at the time, and my children: The attack was to sweep away everyone so that “not even the seed of Batista would survive.” The forces of law and order were trying to ascertain more details. At midnight of the 12th, I sent a message to Congressman Cándido Mora through the Chief of the Bureau of Investigations, Col. Orlando Piedra, to please try and dissuade his brother Menelao and the other plotters from going through with their criminal plan. My message showed that we wished to avoid bloodshed.

The night hours were peaceful, but the next afternoon was to be tragic and mournful. I went to bed almost at dawn, as usual. As was also my habit, before turning off the light I read a few pages of a book. This time it was the last chapter of The Day Lincoln Was Shot, by Jim Bishop. The unfortunate resemblance of the plot against my life and the lives of many civilian and military employees in the area to the Lincoln tragedy was significant in that he also was called dictator, attacked by his opponents, and finally assassinated.

The guard had been alerted against possible attack, but the public was still permitted access to the Presidential Administrative offices. Traffic on the streets around the building had
not been halted. Buses, trucks and other vehicles continued moving through the neighborhood.

To the many usual problems confronting the Chief of State, was added the condition of my wife. She was five months pregnant, and our youngest child, 4, was sick and had a high fever, so that he could not be moved. This aggravated his mother’s emotional state. How was she to be warned? She knew that there had been previous plots to kill me at a charity theatre affair and again at the Palace of Fine Arts while we were attending the Biennial Spanish Art Exhibition. I talked with her at about noon. Her duties as First Lady gave her little free time. Also, she personally looked after the children and worked at institutions for the sick, the handicapped, and the needy. The only opportunities for us to speak privately were usually at lunch or in the early morning.

At 10:30, having done my morning exercises and taken my bath, I went to the room of Fulgencito, our son, knowing that she was there with the doctor. When the examination was over, and while she was telling me the results of the doctor’s visit, I guided her affectionately to her private study. Without telling her exactly why she should be cautious, I tried to prepare her for the worst. She told me that the older children were at school and that she would give orders for them to lunch out, adding: “In any case, I shall not leave the Palace today to accompany you.” As much as I tried to soften the impact of my words, I knew she was disturbed and that, as the hours passed, her nervous tension would grow. This heightened my concern and I decided to remain with her in my study rather than to return to my office.

**Personal and Political Preoccupation**

By one o’clock I had not yet received any information regarding the message I had sent Representative Cándido Mora
the previous dawn. I was anxious to have this contact effected. I profoundly desired that our efforts to give permanent democratic direction to our country would materialize. Terror was reaching its height and bombs, set even by minors and students paid to do so, had taken lives, mutilated human beings, and caused irreparable damage.

We were doing everything possible to avoid more bloodshed. In such efforts, the Chief of State would fulfill his duty as President of all the Cubans. If the crime was committed my conscience would be clear.

And the crime was committed. Although the attackers knew the layout of the interior of the Presidential Palace very well—as sketches and plans in their possession proved—they apparently were not well-informed as to how I organized my working hours during the day and most of the night. I generally took my afternoon meal between 2:30 and 4. I always handled more urgent affairs on the third floor and did not descend to the Presidential office and the reception rooms on the second floor until about 5 o'clock. I altered this program only if I had diplomatic conferences or special interviews. That day—the 13th—my wife, the Secretary of the Presidency, Dr. Andrés Domingo, and I lunched alone in my private office. At 3 o'clock I was still helping my wife in a study of children’s clinics, recently established and already functioning in various municipalities, and in the extension of the hospitals of Rehabilitation of the Handicapped (ONRI)—institutions which had received wide acclaim because of the popular benefits they offered.

**Attack on the Palace**

We completed our work on a hospital for the physically and mentally handicapped, and were preparing for lunch, when we heard a shot which we at first took for a tire blow-out. Other shots were heard and I was certain that the barbarity
had begun. My wife somewhat nervously kissed me and said: "I hope it is not what I suspect. May God protect you." She ran to the room of our sick child. As she disappeared through the first door, I took off my coat and tie and put on a sport jacket.

I was alone. I rang for the Adjutant on duty, Major Rams, and ordered him to investigate immediately. Within two minutes he was back with the report that, after killing members of the guard at the gate, one group, shooting and throwing hand grenades, had penetrated the lower floor of the building. The Adjutant held a post at the upper, open end of the corridor. The other reserve aide, Maj. Varas, remained at the other end, in charge of the radio transmitter and in constant communication with military headquarters and police patrol cars. I remained at the telephone, a pistol by my side, in communication with the Chiefs of the Army, Navy and Police, at the same time trying to maintain contact with the Chief of the Palace Military Guard.

The explosions of the grenades and shots created a deafening noise. The telephone operator kept me informed of the action. The shooting had intensified and the explosion of the handgrenades on the second floor could be felt. Here—as I have said—were the office of the President and the Administrative offices. Minister Andrés Domingo and about 100 employees, mostly women, had remained there.

Grenades exploded some 15 feet from my office on the second floor. The assailants had reached that point, certain that I was at my office desk. The guard near by drove them back. This attack on me had been badly managed because had I been there at this hour, the guard would have been much larger.

Simultaneously with the first shots, the telephones in the Palace began to ring without stopping. I thought these calls meant the attack was already known in the ministries and newspaper offices. But this was not so. At this hour many were
listening to a broadcast of a popular radio station, which announced in coarse and insulting words that the President of the Republic had just been assassinated "in his own den" and urged the people on to rebellion.

I was later informed that the regular announcers had been forced out at gun point by the plotters, who had seized the controls and transmitted the false reports. The attackers left the studios quickly, and coming face to face with a patrol car of the National Police fired at it in desperation, or perhaps in the belief that the President was dead and the police about to be deposed. Two of the guards were wounded and José Antonio Echeverría, author of the broadcast, was killed.

*The Tragedy and the People*

By 6:30 P.M. all firing had ceased. The capital was quiet and complete order ruled in the rest of the nation. There were many people at the vast patio of the Presidential Palace. Some wounded soldiers reached out for me. Below were excited and frantic men who had lost their buddies while carrying out their duties. I went out on the balcony and spoke to them. Their acclamation filled me with emotion. The immediate danger had passed. Mine was the responsibility of calming their spirits, and I wished to express my gratitude. A great crowd gathered in the Hall of Mirrors which was filled beyond capacity. I spoke with deep sorrow. I congratulated, and lamented. I expressed my deeply felt appreciation for their support and solidarity.

So much effort spent to create and produce good things for the country did not deserve this unhappy response! Cuba's resources had been mobilized, industrial output had grown, labor opportunities had increased. The workers had fine contracts as a result of the social program, and a policy of high salaries had been established. The number of small enterprises had multiplied as more white-collar men, workers and peasants set up
their own shops. Hospitals, schools, asylums and public nurseries had increased, as had guarantees and incentives for investments and credit. We had determined on elections in which the people could choose their own administration. What had happened was serious; but constitutional guarantees ought to be maintained . . . and would be maintained!

The people expressed their appreciation in words and their presence the following weeks. Industrialists and workers, large and small land owners, bankers and merchants, public and private employees, institutions and societies all came to the Presidential Palace to greet me and show their condemnation of the use of violence to settle problems. These visits were climaxed by a mass demonstration of 300,000 people in front of the Presidential Palace, reiterating their allegiance to the President and protesting against attacks on official centers such as the Palace, where women and children worked and lived.

Road of Sorrow

About 9 o'clock on the night of the 13th I was at my wife's side, explaining the attack and trying to comfort her. She controlled her nerves during the shooting, looked after our children, and visited with me, but she was depressed by this criminal act. Who wouldn't be? It was natural. Not only was she a woman, but she was going to be a mother again. Reporters were waiting for me. I left the room but before I descended to the conference room, the Chiefs of the Army, Navy and Police arrived, together with some ministers and Congressmen. They gave me the entire tragic story of the bloody event.

We did not provoke this slaughter among brothers. On the contrary, we tried to avoid it. God and our friends know it. It was dawn. My wife's eyes overflowed with tears. Our boy's fever had not broken and she wanted to calm him. His innocent imagination had taken wing, and he did not believe our explan-
ation that the tumult was due to the rockets and fireworks of the carnival which the city had still been enjoying the day before. What irony of fate! Carnival season was coming to its end!

The events of this day were another road of sorrow which our efforts, our democratic plans, and our healthy impulses were powerless to avoid.
CHAPTER VIII
CRIMES AND REVOLTS

These wretched deeds did not cease and bombs continued to explode, destroying businesses, property and innocent lives. Near the Almendares River tunnel a cook, enjoying some fresh air after having served dinner, was blown to bits; another bomb tore off the legs of an old man; a torpedo burst in the hands of a boy who, according to his little companion, had been paid $5 by a stranger to hide it in a certain spot; an 8-year-old girl was surprised in the box of a movie house as she was trying to set fire to the fuse of a bomb, after having been promised a bicycle. A woman employee of the “America” theater in Havana was blown to bits by explosives set up in the lavatory.

A branding-iron was used to mark some unfortunates with number “26,” symbol of Castro’s cruelty, because it was believed they knew some Army secret. Others had their stomachs kicked open, or their genitals cut off. The Castro brothers participated personally in these activities. A poor old peasant was the object of the worst and most sadistic savagery: after he had been tortured, he was locked in his hut with his wife and daughter, and the three of them were burned alive.*

Each of these cases is merely one of a series of vandalisms committed, without counting the crimes against citizens,

* Ambassador Smith declared before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security that: “Castro was a revolutionary and a terrorist. From the time that he was a University student, he was a gun-toter. I was informed by a diplomat that he had killed one nun and two priests in Bogotá during the uprising of 1948.”
police and soldiers, who died as a result of these unbelievable atrocities. The reaction of the forces of law and order was inevitable; one act led to another and propaganda was soon spreading that the Administration was unable to achieve normalcy.

Leaving a cabaret with two married couples in the dawn of Oct. 28, 1956, Lieut. Col. Antonio Blanco Rico, unarmed and without a guard, was attacked by gunfire which killed him and seriously wounded Señora Marta Poli, the wife of Air Force Lieut. Col. Marcelo Tabernilla. The next day, Brig. Rafael Salas Cañizares, Chief of the National Police, received a telephone call reporting that the Haitian Embassy was being attacked. He hastened there, accompanied by the Chief of the Bureau of Investigation, Col. Orlando Piedra Negueruela, and other officers. When he asked for the Ambassador, he was informed that the diplomat was out. Suddenly machine-gun fire broke out, several were killed, including the Chief of Police.

A general strike was announced for August 5, 1957. Ten days before, interurban buses had been attacked and burned. In the shooting which ensued, many passengers and employees were wounded or killed. No union showed any sign of answering the call to strike issued by Castro from his safe hiding place in the mountains. The call was accompanied by a long list of threats, from the most “elementary” revolutionary penalties to the killing of any worker who dared to disobey the order. This plan failed.

**Attack at Cienfuegos**

At dawn of September 5, 1957, groups of civilians belonging to the “26 of July” Movement infiltrated the Naval District of Cienfuegos at Cayo Loco. They were aided by the sailors on guard who were in the plot. Naval Capt. Roberto Comensañas,
Chief of the District, and the other officers and enlisted men who would not join the plotters were taken prisoners.

When the Naval post was occupied, arms were distributed among the attacking civilians. They mounted trucks and drove off to police headquarters, and the barracks of the Rural Guard. After heavy gunfire police headquarters fell to the rebels and its Chief, Maj. Ruiz Beltrón, was taken prisoner. Some prisoner sailors that were being carried on a truck were killed and wounded when they tried to join their forces.

In the meantime, the General Staff of the Navy had been informed of the trouble and reinforcements were ordered out. Several planes left Camp Columbia to make reconnaissance over Cienfuegos, flying low over the Naval District. Some of them were hit. It was decided to dispatch troops from Santa Clara under Lieut. Col. Cándido Hernández, who had been wounded at the attack on police headquarters. Among the dead were Lieut. Gregorio Moya Aguila and Lieut. Col. Hernández' son.

To reduce the last points of resistance with the least possible bloodshed, tanks were sent from Ciudad Militar to Cienfuegos. They went to Cayo Loco, which had been abandoned by the rebels before their arrival. The rebels dug in at the School of Arts and Trades, from which they were dislodged with casualties. In this encounter the rebels killed Capt. Luis Seijas Botet, Supervisor of the Maritime Police of Cienfuegos, and other loyal officers and sailors, among them Naval Lieutenants Santos Navarro and Carlos Cuadra Garrote.

Investigations revealed that other members of the Naval Force were involved in the plot, as well as officers of the Army Air Force, who had, while flying, dropped their bombs at sea, far from their objectives. This information made useless the oppositionist propaganda to the effect that Cienfuegos had been bombed.
Tragic Preparations for Strike

When the strike proposed for August 5, 1957, had been rejected by the workers and by public opinion, attacks on factories, businesses, transportation, cultivated land and on individuals was redoubled. Threats were spread by telephone, pamphlets, and by anonymous letters. The circulation of "bolas"*, rumors and malicious whispering campaigns brought fear to business and individual. Sabotage of public services, burning of sugar, aggression against members of the Armed Forces continued. Announcements that workers, employees, and public officials would be attacked and killed unless they agreed to a new strike which was planned, affected the morale of the population. Nevertheless, despite the pressure to boycott business, to refuse to pay dues, and not to frequent places of entertainment, the commercial establishments were doing as much business as ever. The streets were full of people, and Cubans as well as tourists were enthusiastic participants in night life. There was standing-room only in picture shows, cabarets and casinos. Active terrorism was in low gear with its sights on the results of the approaching strike.

The terrorists even created an international scandal to discredit the administration: the "Second Grand Prize of Havana," which I will now describe.

With government planning, a constructive program of sport, physical education and tourist attractions was being developed— including automobile racing. The races of the preceding year had been highly successful and another meet was set for February 24, 1958. All the racing aces of the world were to participate. For days they tested the course. I attended two trial runs, mingling with the enthusiastic crowds. On the eve of the official competition, three persons appeared at the hotel where Juan

---

*In Cuba, a malicious lie circulated by an individual is called a "bola."
Manuel Fangio, Argentine world champion, was staying. He was invited to accompany them, and was kidnapped. The description of the kidnappers' automobile was circulated; the police would not fire on it for fear of wounding the champion. If that were to happen, the scandal would be widely publicized. Fangio was kept hidden for 24 hours; his release was then announced by the Argentine Ambassador. By this time the races were over and the kidnappers' propaganda purposes achieved. World newspapers had given the event front-page headlines, and radio had accorded it special broadcasts.

The kidnapping of Fangio, though it hurt the Government's program of tourist attractions and popular entertainment, was not the only, nor the most serious, occurrence. After the incident, the champion appeared safe and sound.

As part of their program to sabotage the races, the terrorists had poured oil on a curve of the course which passed by the United States Embassy, where a large part of the public was congregated. A car driven by a Cuban skidded and dived into the crowd, causing 6 deaths and more than 50 wounded. This accident brought national consternation.

Agitation and terror grew progressively worse and propaganda, fear and the reaction of the police presented the picture of a real civil war. This was the objective of the Opposition. In mid-March, Castro announced a "total war." This appeared like some dull apéritif to the great bloody supper he later announced, on April 1, when he called a general strike for the 9th—the tenth anniversary of the uprising in Bogotá, Colombia, in which he had participated as one of the principals.

The call was accompanied, as before, by violent threats, this time more emphatic and definite. Besides ordering his gangsters to attack the workers who would not strike, Castro threatened to remove from their positions, and punish in other ways determined by the "law of the jungle," all members of the Armed
Forces, all Justices, judges and other employees of the Judiciary, all public officials who did not resign before the day appointed for the paralysis of all the nation's activities. April 9 was a tragic day, as was the rest of the month as well as the year, although no activity was paralyzed. The Confederation of Cuban Workers, the central labor organization, declared through its Secretary-General, Eusebio Mujal Barniol, and with the backing of all other labor organizations, that the workers would not support a revolutionary or political strike. They asserted that they would fight only for their rights and would remain at their posts that day and every day, not heeding the call to violence.

Bombs exploded in the capital. Two stores were attacked and in the exchange between police and the assailants, three uniformed men were killed and several wounded. Twenty civilians died. On interurban and rural transportation lines, drivers of trucks and buses, as well as automobile passengers, were attacked and killed. When the strike failed, the terrorists sabotaged the electric companies and plants, throwing many rural cities into darkness. For three days a section of Old Havana had no lights. To make repairs more difficult, the aggressors blew up one of the main outlets which used special cables not found in the Cuban market.

**Method of Supply**

The embargo on arms declared by the United States in March, 1958, caught the Armed Forces with obsolete equipment, 1903-model repeating rifles, and cannons and machine guns of the First World War. We had recourse to the Garand rifles which were being discarded by the American Army. But the very first and only shipment of 1950 Garands was seized on the piers of New York. We had made the purchase legally
and had received the proper authorization for shipment. Yet a denouncement by the terrorist groups of the “26 of July” through its active New York delegation brought a statement by a State Department spokesman that the American Government no longer authorized shipments of war supplies to the Cuban Government.* This statement was equivalent to placing the United States in a position of neutrality between the constitutional government and the groups who developed their illegal terrorist plans.**

From the time when the saboteur-guerrillas could be considered a potential army facing the Regular Army—which had to be enlarged in order to cover the broad mountain areas—the indirect support from a few businessmen with interests in the provinces who had been forced to contribute, was augmented to include the surreptitious contributions of representatives of industry and commerce in the very capital of the Republic.

From then on the levies of the terrorists increased and fear was an important ally of the gangsters. They sallied forth to sabotage industry and business, and to assassinate indiscriminately all opposition, especially uniformed men who walked the streets alone.

With the “protection” levy of 15 cents on each 250-pound sack of sugar, which the majority of the planters paid, and with

* Mrs. Phillips says that Lincoln White of the U. S. Department of State had declared that the reason for the embargo of arms was the policy of the Department to refrain from any action which could be construed as interference in another country’s affairs. (Cuba, Island of Paradox, page 351.)

** In a secret Senate Subcommittee hearing, former Ambassador William D. Pawley testified on Sept. 2, 1960, that: “A decision was made, and a very unwise one, and announced to the world, that we, the U. S. Government, would supply no further arms to Batista’s Government nor would we supply them to Castro. . . . That policy condemned the Batista Government to defeat because the entire hemisphere and the world, but more important, the Cuban army and the Cuban people knew that Batista was finished in the eyes of the American Government.”
the funds obtained by force from other producers and businesses, the terrorists collected millions of dollars.* The Government could not even obtain arms through contraband channels; but these groups secured them in abundance, even in the United States and from their allies in Central and South America.

* In an interview by Stanley Ross published by Diario de New York on June 25th, 1959, Rodríguez Tamayo said he had a receipt for three thousand dollars signed by Celia Sánchez. This money had been given to her by a family from Oriente province, and Rodríguez Tamayo said that even though contributions to the rebel cause were "voluntary", a bit of pressure had to be exerted sometimes to make them come through. He added that he did not know what had happened to $4,500,000 of this money that Castro had for the purchase of arms, when the fighting was over.
CHAPTER IX

INCREASE OF VIOLENCE AND VICTIMS

TWO IMPORTANT steps had to be carried out before the completion of my Presidential term and the inauguration of the new government February 24, 1959: holding general elections and harvesting the sugar cane crop. The election machinery had to be set up, and the sugar mill equipment repaired two months before starting operations. Meetings of the party chiefs and Congressional leaders emphasized the need to hold the elections as early as possible. Railroads and highways were increasingly hit by saboteurs, and the Army seemed unable to prevent destruction. Trains were frequently surprised and the engineers and conductors forced to hand them over to the attackers, who then sent the unmanned locomotives hurtling on at full speed. This sabotage caused many accidents and damage, and created panic among the railroad workers who, nevertheless, always tried to complete their runs.

Many farmers, political leaders and workers were killed in their own homes or on their way to work. A few examples among the hundreds of victims are: the candidate for Councilman of Santiago de Cuba, Nicolás Rivero Agüero, brother of the Presidential candidate of the Government parties and brother also of Luis Conte Agüero, one of the insurrectionist leaders; the Secretary of the dock-workers union in the capital of Oriente and Vice President of the National Maritime Federation, Felipe Navea, killed in the presence of his wife at dinner; the candidate for Representative, schoolteacher Aníbal Vega.
INCREASE OF VIOLENCE AND VICTIMS

Vega, at the door of his home in Camagüey; tenant farmer Adolfo Chimeno in Puerto Padre; rancher Rosendo Collazo, cruelly killed before his wife by a group wearing “26 of July” armbands, led by a former foreman of his ranch.

Names and deeds fill black pages with the history of terrorism in Cuba. Incidents taken at random give only an idea of the horrible exploits by which the thugs, through their propaganda, turned against the Government to represent themselves as “heroes of liberty.”

I list here some names of persons killed, torn to bits, or wounded by the Castro terror:

The peasants Urbano Cruz, Ricardo and José Rodríguez Leyva, testified they were cruelly tortured by the rebels of the Holguín region, the number “26” having been branded on their arms with red-hot irons. Isaac Carballo Cruz, seriously injured; farmer Rafael Toscana Cárdenas, wounded; political leader Angel Baró, assassinated; Faustino Flores Socarrás, shot to death; Armando Martínez Ibarrota, seriously wounded; Rafaela Labrada Proenza, seriously wounded by gunfire when riding in a bus; Blanca Pereira, seriously wounded; Mario Aróstegui Recio, killed by a bomb; Enrique Martin Sánchez, killed in a bombing; Magaly Martínez Arrendondo, 17, lost an arm when a bomb went off in the cabaret “Tropicana”; Marta Pino Donoso, 18, wounded; children Atilano, Pablo, Plácido, and Analisia Urbina, killed; Carolina Torrente, wounded; Marino Rosales, killed; Restituto Gómez Paz, killed; Faustino Cancedo, 61, wounded; Luis González García, 12, seriously wounded; José Valdés Castillo, 39, blown up; Luisa Hernández Baraguero, wounded; and hundreds upon hundreds of others.

The Castro brothers boldly ordered the kidnapping of American Navy men stationed at the Guantánamo Naval Base and the seizing of commercial airplanes with their passengers. They kidnapped engineers, technicians, miners, and business repre-
sentatives of United States and Canadian firms. They tried to sabotage the wells that furnished the water supply for American troops and families who live in Caimanera.

The insurgents constructed landing strips in the valleys near the mountains they held. Their location was known; the reports of X-4s* were accurate, but the troops in the field could not search out their hiding places. The officers could not overcome the rebels in extensive areas of Oriente because of their own shortage of armament, men and transportation. The rebel groups captured two airplanes of the Cubana Airlines, for use at their camp.

The terrorists’ lack of conscience, eagerness for publicity, and complete lack of respect for human life led them to force down a “Viscount” plane on an unsuitable landing strip. It had left Miami the afternoon of November 26, 1958, for Varadero, a beach resort in the municipality of Cárdenas, Province of Matanzas, 30 minutes flying time from Havana. The assailants, carrying out orders of Fidel Castro, ignored the presence of women and children among the passengers. They forced the pilot to continue the flight to Oriente Province, a distance which would make a return flight impossible for lack of gasoline. Night caught them without having found the little airfield where they were supposed to land. They attempted a landing at the Preston sugar mill on a field too short for this plane. The machine fell into the bay and sank. The crew of pilot, co-pilot, a stewardess and one other employee, and 10 passengers, among them the wife and four children of a North American, all died. Three passengers and three of the four bandits managed to save themselves. The news caused consternation. Far from being penitent, the Castro brothers and their leaders redoubled their bloody activities. Their vandalism cost Cuba and foreign capital millions of dollars.

* See Chapter XI.
The plantation owners feared desperately that the destroyed communications system would not be re-established in time for the harvest. The tenant farmers reacted in the same way for the same reason; also because many of their farms were being destroyed by fire. Some of the sugar mills were not operating because the cane had been burned, and others because it was believed that, no matter how great the effort, labor crews would not be protected while trying to reconstruct the railways and the bombed-out roads. The ranchers could not transport their steers to the markets—primarily Havana and the provincial capitals—and, in addition, cattle were being continually rustled by the rebels. The coffee harvest faced the same risks, as plantations along the slopes of the mountains were overrun by rebels. A similar situation faced the miners and harvesters of rice, tobacco and other agricultural products.

These conditions brought about greater efforts for a fast settlement, and even hints that the Government yield its power to the rebels. The struggle went on for almost two years, without the army being able to destroy the "cancer" which had spread to the plains and the cities. The rebels were aware of the tragedy which darkened the economic horizon, worsening the national economy.

The general elections were held at great sacrifice. Allied with the Government’s forces were the Acción Progresista, Liberal, Demócrata and Unión Radical parties. The Opposition had the Partido Revolucionario Cubano (Auténtico) with Dr. Ramón Grau San Martín as their Presidential candidate; Partido del Pueblo Libre, whose Presidential candidate was university professor Dr. Carlos Márquez Sterling. The Partido Nacional Cubano was independent and ran as its candidate journalist Alberto Salas Amaro. Dr. Andrés Rivero Agüero was the candidate of the Government coalition.
Despite violence, the attacks on the candidates, sabotage against the polls, the voting took place with the election of President and Vice-President of the Republic, Senators and Congressmen, governors, mayors and councilmen. Dr. Andrés Rivero Agüero received a majority of votes and was to take office three months and three weeks later. The runner-up was Dr. Carlos Márquez Sterling, with the largest number of votes among the Opposition.

Conciliatory Efforts

Voters came to the polls, guarded by police. In some municipalities, from Las Villas to the extreme East, the voting was not as heavy as the Government parties had expected, but neither was it as scant as the insurrectionists had wished. In the bloody struggle which took place throughout the Province of Oriente, the terror made inroads among the election guards and voters which, together with other election irregularities created confusion as to the percentage of those voting.

In any case, these events demonstrated the Administration’s efforts to resolve the Cuban dispute through the will of the people as expressed by the peaceful method of the ballot box, and not through force.

With a President-Elect who was to take office two months after the last conversations between the military chiefs and the rebel leaders, it was worth every effort to insure the constitutional change of administration, and to arrive at formulas which could facilitate agreement among the Government parties, also with the opposition which had taken part in the elections, that which had not participated and, as a patriotic duty, with the rebel groups. Dr. Andrés Rivero Agüero, President-Elect, was working to form a coalition cabinet. He issued statements of this patriotic and democratic plan, despite the fact that Fidel Castro’s terrorists had assassinated his brother.
The good faith of the Government was evident. My decision to retire in order to help solve the grave conflict from which the country was suffering, was clear, the plan of reconciliation of the new Administration was evident. This was emphasized when Rivero Agüero emphatically announced that, if necessary, he, hiding the sorrow caused by his brother’s assassination, would personally go to the Sierra Maestra, if this would give Cuba the peace we wanted.

We believed that, once the new President was installed in his office, with a Cabinet in which all political parties were represented, a new constituent election could be held with authority even to designate a new Government.
CHAPTER X

DOUBTS AND CHANGES IN COMMAND

PANIC WAS GROWING among the commercial interests and, apparently, in several important sectors of the Armed Forces. The leaders seemed enthusiastic, although the political parties appeared skeptical, but all hoped that the immediate danger would pass. When the electoral legislation was promulgated and voting procedures set in motion, commercial classes felt relieved, as did also the workers and the diplomatic world. The plantation owners, ranchers, tenant farmers and others in the agricultural economy, under pressure from the rebels, did not feel easier because they no longer believed in the success of the Armed Forces.

Military affairs went from bad to worse. Within the ranks, rumor went around that order and power would be weakened when the new President took over. It was whispered that, when I retired from the supreme command, the Army would split up and that chaos would ensue. This argument was used by some officers to excuse their disloyalty, stating that they should request that I head a military junta or accept the supreme command of the Joint General Staff. They would not continue fighting for a doomed government. This was clearly only a ruse for conspiracy.

With the elections over, hope vanished that the violence of the terrorists would diminish. Sabotage ran wild, people were slain and wounded by the rebels. Government forces were unable to stop them.

The military operations carried out in the Sierra Maestra and
its valleys dragged along without satisfactory results. The Command and the Chief of Operations were changed several times. Although the troops achieved some partial successes, an effective blow was needed to create the impression that the days of the Sierra affair were numbered.

The delay in fighting the guerrillas with adequate tactics created anxiety in the population. Terrorism, indiscriminately and unscrupulously carried on in the whole country but especially in the capital, was the contagion that became known as “the cancer of the Sierra Maestra.” It was, therefore, necessary to counteract the dangerous impression which threatened to spread.

Gen. Eulogio Cantillo was named Chief of Operations in Oriente, with his command post in Bayamo, in an effort to end the fight. There had been rumors of ineptitude, of the bad conduct of some officers—which lowered the morale of the troops—under Col. Manuel Ugal de Carillo. He had replaced Gen. Alberto del Río Chaviano, deposed for similar accusations. Gen. Cantillo’s plans were discussed by the Joint Chief of Staff and accepted by the President after close examination by the General Staffs and their technical departments.* In the beginning, communications were kept open, and for some time agricultural and industrial zones were successfully protected, although this was done with difficulty and at the cost of losing men on patrol.

New incidents led to more differences between the Joint Chief

* “The President did not tell us to find him a solution to the national problem, and he certainly did not suggest that the possible solution lay in an agreement between the officers of lower rank and the enemy, which was actually what did occur.

“As concerns the operational plans, they were all originated by the General Staff and were then presented to the President, who accepted or modified them in accord with the judgment of all of us . . . .

“I do not remember any plan of operations created by Gen. Cantillo and accepted by the President before being reviewed, accepted or corrected by the General Staff.” (From a letter of Gen. Rodrígues Avila to Col. Estévez Maymir in connection with another from Gen. Tabernilla Dolz, July 12, 1959.)
of Staff and the Chief of Operations. The Chief of the military territory in which the tactical forces were operating, Gen. Río Chaviano, brother-in-law of Gen. Tabernilla Dolz, whose headquarters were in the capital of the Province of Oriente, interfered with the orders of the Chief of Operations. Soon, rivalries and quarrels arose between the two groups. This compelled me to order the Joint Chief of Staff to request the Army Staff to make a distinct division of territories to be covered. Gen. Cantillo was to command, in addition to the troops in operation, the Rural Guard from the Central highway between Bayamo and Palma Soriano westward, over the Sierra Maestra and its valleys as far as Manzanillo and Cabo Cruz. Gen. Río Chaviano was to command the troops in operation and the forces of the Rural Guard from the Central highway and Santiago de Cuba, eastward to Baracoa and Punta de Maisi. In this way the commands would not interfere.

The little progress achieved by Gen. Cantillo as Chief of Operations in his territory led to Army rumors that the Joint Chief of Staff did not give him the necessary cooperation, that he was delaying or sabotaging operations and requests made to the General Staff to vindicate his relative, unsuccessful in his command. This lack of cooperation was also attributed to unfavorable reports which Gen. Río Chaviano was said to have given Gen. Tabernilla Dolz.

During the command of Gen. Río Chaviano in the territory where the guerrillas and the terrorists under Fidel Castro were operating, the latter’s brother Raúl had moved to the East to operate in the Guantánamo, Mayari and Sagua de Tanamó zone, as far as Baracoa. In this zone Gen. Río Chaviano could not contain the rebels, who were now organized into regular guerrillas.

In Las Villas, the so-called “Directorio Revolucionario” groups began to show activity, and Río Chaviano was transferred there. The entire command of the Bayamo and Santiago
de Cuba headquarters was left to Gen. Eulogio Cantillo. The military command was now unified, and we thought that, despite the failure of Gen. Cantillo’s summer campaign, it might now improve.
CHAPTER XI

CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE

We knew of the daring plan to transfer rebel groups from Oriente to Las Villas.

Individuals and even families who served the country generously and patriotically had been victimized because chiefs or agents imprudently mentioned their names in connection with their services. We therefore ordered the commands to omit real names, even in private conversation when referring to their activities or to data obtained from reliable sources. Even the President of the Republic was to receive his report in this new format. For example: X-3 would signify information which was probably true, delivered by someone who could be trusted, but who had not been in direct contact with the facts; X-4 would be genuinely true information. Through these channels we would be informed of the movements and important concentrations of the enemy.

This system greatly reduced the possibility of the enemy learning our sources of information. It permitted our leaders to know those who might sabotage the military and political plans of the Government from inside or out.

The reports coming from X-3 and X-4 made me certain that the groups of saboteurs directed by Fidel Castro's lieutenants were trying to put into effect a plan to destroy communications (highways, roads, railways, telephone and telegraph) in the entire Province of Las Villas. This plan to cut the Island in two was to be put in operation the second half of December and was to be completed in January.
The plan included the isolation of each squadron, company and military post defending the centers of population and the surrounding rural areas. With rebel infiltration to the North and to the South, the movement of our troops would be severely limited.

Isolation of the Provinces

The Joint Chief of Staff called the commander of Las Villas to warn him of the danger to the towns if they were cut off from all communication. When Río Chaviano came to Havana, I personally ratified the orders given by Gen. Tabernilla Dolz.

The section of the Central highway between Santa Clara and Jatibonico joins the main highways which connect the North and the South with the Central area and, at the same time, with the Eastern region through Camagüey and with the Western region, passing through Matanzas and the city of Havana. The extreme section of Pinar del Río Province, west of Havana, would be of little or no importance, if the capital could not communicate with the other provinces. This section of the Central Highway has very important bridges which, once destroyed, would require many days of labor, under heavy guard, to repair.

When the rebels began to destroy the bridges and highways, to cut off Oriente and isolate the capital, the former service of Highway Patrol (Vigilancia de Carreteras) was reorganized. For the highest efficiency, its units were given patrol cars manned by a crew of four, each fully armed. They made their runs in pairs, staying only one kilometer apart and communicating by radio-telephone.

Preference was given to the Eastern Provinces and to Las Villas. The General Staff ordered the cars into service as soon as they were available, for sabotage was increasing.
CHAPTER XII

INADEQUACY AND RELIEF OF THE COMMAND AT CAMAGUEY

The so-called invading columns which had left the Sierra Maestra for Las Villas arrived at Camagüey almost without encountering the regular troops. To go from the Bayamo zone to Jobabo, which formed the boundary of Camagüey with Oriente, the rebels had “acquired” the services of Lieuts. Rodolfo Villamil and Ubineo León who, for money (according to statements of enemy officers), permitted them to cross the area without difficulty.* In one of the “Kangaroo” trials, held like a Roman cir-

* Capt. Humberto Olivera Pérez refers to Maj. Armando Gonzalez Fináles as a double traitor who, for a fee, allowed the Castro guerrillas to pass through territory under his command. When the Castro hordes took over on January 1st, 1959, Gonzalez Fináles was under arrest for his treacherous conduct. He was liberated by Guevara and designated chief of the Army purging commission.

Capt. Rodríguez Tamayo said that he had personally dealt with Lieutenants Rodolfo Villamil and Ubineo León in the purchase of the Charco Redondo Mines Army post in Oriente province. The deal included the arms and ammunitions, as also the soldiers. Rodríguez Tamayo added that Castro congratulated him on the deal and that he personally paid $50,000 to Lieutenants Villamil and León who, thereupon joined the rebel forces with 48 men and all the equipment.

“Through this office in the Department of the Adjutant General, Lieut. Rodolfo Villamil tried more than once to set up a conspiracy. Villamil and another officer, Lieut. León, began to sound out the spirit of the troops, with their eyes on a possible internal conspiracy . . . a letter from Fidel Castro, their old buddy of student days at Belen School and the Alma Mater, found them at their camp in Cerro Pelado.” (Bohemia, Jan. 11, 1959.)
cus, one of the rebel chiefs is said to have declared that it cost the invaders many thousands of dollars to get to Camagüey Province. This was in answer to Col. Víctor Dueñas' statement that he had been sympathetic to their cause.

Upon relieving Col. Dueñas of his command because of inefficiency, the General Staff of the Army appointed Col. Leopoldo Pérez Coujil to replace him. Under his leadership the reinforced troops made contact with the rebel columns that had advanced into Camagüey. The Field Commander of these troops was Armando Suárez Susquet, who kept his men mobile and showed great courage without ruthlessness. He was seriously wounded in action.*

Despite the strategic distribution of the Rural Guard and the reinforcements sent to Camagüey, the rebel columns, supported by a few rural industrialists, penetrated Las Villas Province and took over the military posts, widening their activities into the lowlands and along the inter-urban highways.

It should be noted that certain company officers, like Capt. Abon Lee, were active and loyal and tried to prevent the crossing of the Red-Black groups over the extreme end of Camagüey Province. The tactics used, however, failed.

* Lieut. Col. Armando Suárez Susquet was removed from the military hospital while seriously ill, and brought to Camagüey, where he was shot, almost in a state of unconsciousness, under orders of "Commander Huber Matos, "military chief" of the Province.
CHAPTER XIII

THE ARMORED TRAIN AND THE LAST ARMS

To defeat the groups which the rebels now called "columns," new troops were sent to Las Villas. The squadrons of the Rural Guard, and the infantry units stationed at headquarters, had been reinforced. Some 10 companies, each composed of 100 men, were working to dislodge the rebel infiltrations operating weakly in the mountains of the Central Range, south of Santa Clara. These troops were reinforced by three large battalions, each formed by more than 400 men. This contingent and the new Highway Patrol should have been able to open an efficient attack. Unfortunately, the leadership was inadequate and the operation failed.

In Oriente Province it had taken the rebels almost two years to immobilize the military detachments; in Las Villas, with Río Chaviano as chief of the military district, they succeeded in weeks. The opportune warning of the plan to break the communication lines of Las Villas—given a month and a half previously—had served little purpose. By the beginning of December, important bridges on the Central Highway, designated by the Army Central Staff as those marked by the rebels for destruction, were being attacked and destroyed.

What seemed without basis, or merely rumors, was becoming actual fact, and there was a growing distrust of the guilty chiefs.

To repair the bridges which had been dynamited or destroyed with blow-torches, as well as great stretches of the Central Highway and others, an operation was hurriedly formed which included the Commission of National Development, the Ministry
of Public Works, important sections of the railroads, and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Development Commission made its budgets and arranged for the employment of workers and technicians who would carry out the reconstruction under the protection of numerous mobile squadrons. The Western Railways (*Ferrocarriles Occidentales*) prepared a train with armored cars and coaches, electric plants, and tools. The armored train—as it was called—could move 600 men into the affected areas. To increase the efficiency of this service the last available arms in the main garrisons of Havana were collected. The train would be under the command of the Chief of the Engineer Corps, Col. Florentino Rosell y Leyva, under whose supervision it was armored and equipped. The Chief of the Engineer Corps, was to carry out the plan, which would effect fast reconstruction of the roads.

*More Men for Río Chaviano*

At that time some of our units had been isolated due to the destruction of the roads. Other units had been needlessly surrendered, through the strange conduct of their chiefs who let themselves be cut off so easily.

One midnight, a week before the desertion of Col. Rosell, the Chief of the Joint General Staff, accompanied by Gen. Río Chaviano, military chief of Las Villas, came to see me at Ciudad Militar. Gen. Tabernilla told me that the military chief of Las Villas wanted to inform me personally of the serious situation facing the territory under his command. He read a report outlining the situation and the urgent need for more men and arms, although there were neither reserves of troops nor available arms. Col. Rosell was ordered to organize immediately the train and the 600 men for the road repairs. He was to set out at once and work in combination with Río Chaviano to destroy the enemy and regain the lost zones, and to reconstruct the highway.
and railway wherever possible. The two remained in contact with Gen. Francisco Tabernilla Dolz and informed him the next day that the situation was most serious, that it was too late to do battle in the provinces. This strange statement had been preceded by three weeks of continuous surrender or withdrawal of military groups.

The following night Col. Irenaldo García Báez, Chief of Military Intelligence, visited me at the Presidential Palace. He informed me that the Joint Chief of Staff had held conversations in his office with Gen. Alberto del Río Chaviano and Col. Florentino Rosell before departing on the mission. He said that in his capacity as head of the SIM he had been at the headquarters of the General Staff and had incidentally attended this meeting. Among those present, he said, had been Gen. Eulogio Cantillo, Gen. "Silito" Tabernilla Palmero, Chief of the Infantry Division and Commissioner of the President's Military Office. He reported to me—said Lieut. Col. García Báez—because he was astonished to hear the instructions which the Chief of the Joint General Staff gave to the military leaders who were to fight the rebels and reconstruct ground communications. He added that, in conclusion, Gen. Tabernilla Dolz had told them that "he considered our cause lost," discouraging those who had the tremendous task of fighting for victory."

* "I was not present at the meeting of Gen. Tabernilla Dolz with Generals Cantillo Porras and Río Chaviano, and Col. Rosell y Leyva and the others, in which it was agreed to come to an understanding with the rebels. This meeting took place in the dawn of December 23, and I was at home sick from Sunday, the 21st, through Tuesday. I learned of this meeting later." (Paragraph from a letter of Gen. Rodríguez Avila to Col. Estévez Maymir dealing with a letter from Gen. Tabernilla Dolz, July 12, 1959.)

"I had to tell you, for the first time in many years, that you ought not to have attended the conversations which your father had with chiefs and superior officers. I learned, through channels not the most appropriate, that my Chief of the Joint General Staff had met with military leaders of the Province to discuss a truce with the enemy and, later, surrender and defeat...you know who was there and what opinion was expressed..."
to the two generals to whom the last available arms were given." Letter of General Batista to Gen. "Silito" Tabernilla, Feb. 5, 1959.)

“My presence at the meeting to which you make reference was accidental. There was no talk of contacting the enemy in my presence. I did hear for a few moments the traitor Río Chaviano explain the seriousness of the situation in the Province. Gen. Robaina, Lieut. Col. Irenaldo García Báez and the traitors Río and Rosell were present.” (Letter of Gen. "Silito" Tabernilla to Gen. Batista, Feb. 13, 1959.)
CHAPTER XIV

MEETINGS, CONVERSATIONS, AND NEGOTIATIONS

The nervousness of the Chiefs, the conspiracies of the officers, and the anxiety manifested in the high military command made itself felt also in civil, religious, and economic spheres.

Industry and opportunity for work had expanded with a consequent reduction in unemployment. But the wanton destruction of production centers and communications which facilitated economic and commercial progress was unbelievable.

The Communists were already in action, secretly of course, and were transmitting instructions to the guerrillas. Material seized from the rebels several weeks before contained literature and directives based on the strategies of Mao Tse-tung, as well as Red symbols, including a flag of the Chinese People's Republic. We affirmed that Castro was a Communist, was an ally of communism and that he sympathized with the Soviets. Events have shown him to be a fellow traveler of the type which Mao Tse-tung, following the tactics of the old Bolshevik Party, advises should be used as the occasion arises, calling those used "our men."

I did not rest in seeking a peaceful solution to the problems. But it was difficult to achieve anything in that whirlwind of passion, hate, and selfishness, continually growing through the obstinate persistence of the rebel leader. He was the best advocate of Red tyranny, creating social frictions, enervating institutions, with the unwilling or intentional complicity of many political and social friends, in the deterioration of authority and in the
numerous plots which, on any pretext, took place within the Armed Forces.

Reports came to me that persons representing economy and commerce were meeting to urge me to accept the solution of a provisional government in accord with the rebel plan.

At the Palace and at my farm I received, on four different occasions, some of the highest ecclesiastical figures. We discussed privately and with sincerity the situation of the country. The Church leaders believed that any sacrifice would be worthwhile if it brought an end to terrorism. On a previous occasion—as we have already said—the Venerable Archbishop had issued a call to the Administration and the opposition to solve the conflict with all possible speed.

The Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Industrialists, Ranchers and Farmers also met to discuss the possibilities of a transitional government to bring peace. The Association of Sugar Mill Owners did even more; they decided to appoint a commission to give me their ideas, and since my name was the obstacle preventing a settlement between the rebels and the landed proprietors, I should consider being replaced by a provisional government. The commission did not communicate with me—on the advice of Dr. Jorge Barroso and engineer Amadeo López Castro, the representatives of my Government to the sugar organizations—but these two gave me an account of what had taken place. They alleged that it was said that the Army did not win any engagement with the rebels because many of the officers were accessories to the plot or feared the consequences of their actions and, also, they recognized the attitude of the United States.

The Government was making its last efforts. I thought we could still avoid disaster if the arms we had ordered in Europe arrived and events permitted me to reorganize the Armed Forces.
The Ambassador of the United States

Political and business people also talked with me about the Cuban tragedy and its possible solutions. Ambassador Earle E. T. Smith was among them.

When in March 1958 the North American Government had declared an embargo on arms shipments from the United States, Ambassador Smith met with Minister of State Dr. Gonzalo Güell and with me to give us his Government's reply to our protests.

His words indicated that the prohibition of arms shipments was part of a policy of non-intervention, and that supplying us with equipment and munitions at that time could be construed as favoring our side. "Neutrality, for the decision of your Government has no other meaning"—we told him—"operates against the Constitutional regime of Cuba.* We have been anti-interventionist and we oppose any interference in the sovereign affairs of Cuba. We have fought for the principle of non-intervention, and by our origin—sons of a veteran of the War of Independence honored by the people with the highest office," we added, "by sentiment, by duty, and by patriotism, we would be opposed to any attitude which would imply the violation of these principles. This criterion, nevertheless, far from placing us in a position of complications and reservations, has always led us to be good friends of the American people, as our history and conduct at all times demonstrates. My Government is rec-

* Before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security, Ambassador Smith testified "... Primarily I would say that when we refused to sell arms to the Cuban Government and also by what I termed intervening by innuendo (which was persuading other friendly governments not to sell arms to Cuba) that these actions had a moral, psychological effect upon the Cuban Armed Forces which was demoralizing to the nth degree. The reverse, it built up the morale of the revolutionary forces. Obviously, when we refused to sell to a friendly government, the existing government, the people of Cuba and the Armed Forces knew that the United States no longer would support Batista's Government."
ognized by yours and by all the free governments of the world. We believe that this gives the status of belligerents to extremist groups, proponents of communism, and opponents of the democratic faith. This position operates against this principle which your people and ours respect, and makes it easy for terror to take over power.”

The position adopted by Washington was retained, although there was a courteous explanation that this attitude did not in any manner imply a change in the policy of his Government with respect to ours.

After a few weeks, we met again to talk on the same theme. Bringing up the topic of intervention, we recalled that the Revolution of 1933, which we headed, had been started precisely to throw out of power a government which was the product of the intervention authorized by the Platt Amendment; that the “4th of September” revolution arose to restore total sovereignty; that we directed, planned and carried out that revolution so that neither the United States nor Cuba would be confronted with similar problems in the future; and that, understanding this, the Administration of President Roosevelt had reached an agreement with us to abolish that “amendment” which had been put into the Constitution of 1901 when the Republic was established.

Ambassador Smith appeared convinced that the revolutionary groups under the terrorist command of Castro were infiltrated with communism. But he could do nothing until this was indisputably proved. He might have attempted to have the arms embargo suspended if the Army had shown any effective demonstration of power by winning a decisive battle. But this was a vain hope because, after the failure of the June offensive, the active units could not win even a skirmish.

* In his depositions before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security Laws, Ambassador Smith said: “...We helped to overthrow the Bastista dictatorship which was pro-American, only to install the Castro dictatorship which is pro-Russian.”
Final Effort

Early in December, Ambassador Smith returned from consultations in Washington. A few days later, he called the Minister of State, Dr. Gonzalo Güell, saying he wanted urgently to speak with me. Dr. Güell, who always accompanied me to these interviews, went ahead to receive the Ambassador in the library at my farm. When I arrived, the two had not yet taken up serious matters. The cordial and good-natured attitude of Mr. Smith could not conceal the fact that he was worried. There was not much to say. Disaster was evidently present, with no hope for abrogation of the arms embargo. The Ambassador brought us the unpleasant news of the impressions gathered in Washington.

There remained the hope that the election efforts realized by the regime would bring the desired results; but events did not make it likely that the President-Elect, Dr. Andrés Rivero Agüero, would assume the Presidency in normal fashion, or that he would remain in office. This made recognition by the American Government unlikely.

The reports gathered by Ambassador Smith indicated that the Army would make no show of resistance before February 24, when the President-Elect was to take office.

The end of the conversation contained suggestions which give the answer—in a separate chapter—to the still unanswered question of my journey to the Dominican Republic.

False Accusation by Castro of Support from Washington

As Castro needed only a pretext to attack the United States, he lost no opportunity to state and repeat that it helped my Administration. American investors are persecuted, American enterprises are checked, American property is confiscated and the Government of the United States—for Fidel Castro and his com-
rades—is imperialistic, monopolistic, and the head of the “international oligarchy.” So they said and continued to say that the United States “supported Batista.” It is a pity that this is not true! Had we had that support, Communist newspapers would not now be published in Cuba, investments would be increasing to benefit both countries, there would be no anti-American phobia, and Nikita would not be boasting of having Mikoyan to supply Red arms that point directly at the heart of American democracy.*

* "...So far as I was concerned, in the entire time I was there I never heard anybody use the word 'gringo,' or say 'Get out—Yanqui, get out,' or anything like that.” (Ambassador Gardner, before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security.)
CHAPTER XV

SECRET MEETING

The three top chiefs of the Army and the Navy had to be briefed on the results of the last interview with Ambassador Smith, to prepare them for possible adversities.

In mid-December I brought the Chiefs of the Joint Commands, the Army and Navy to Ciudad Militar. One night I held a conference with them behind closed doors, leaving other responsible chiefs and officers in the anteroom. I warned them that not even the most trusted should be told the gist of our conversation. Because of the touchiness of the situation, aggravated by the progressive decline of the Armed Forces, I gave them my impressions. I told them we should try to change the Administration, that we should meet very frequently and discuss every new event. Until this time I had not known that the Joint Chief of Staff had had discussions with superior officers who were dissatisfied; he had been imprudent in speaking of the difficulty faced by the Army in fighting guerrillas trained in Communist tactics.

Despite the recommendation of secrecy, I was informed the next day that Gen. Tabernilla Dolz had commented on the conversation to other officers. Informed of the meeting held by the Joint Chief of Staff and aware of the mission with which he had entrusted General Cantillo, I summoned him and his son “Silito” to my private office.*

* “I do not remember in any of the meetings or appointments expressly ordered by the President of the Republic, Gen. Batista, that we were asked to find a solution to the serious problem confronting us by his need
The Passive Strike Begun

I told them that they had made me the object of a singular coup d'état. "You could not be the object of a coup d'état, because you are the idol of the Armed Forces and we love you very much." Old Gen. Tabernilla Dolz lamented my interpretations, affirming that he had acted in good faith in the face of an impossible situation, "because the soldiers are tired and the officers do not want to fight. Nothing more can be done."

He added: "Rest assured that I hold you in my highest regard and we can't do anything more." "Nevertheless,"—I answered him—"there has been a coup d'état attempted and I cannot replace my chiefs and reorganize the commands." I bade Gen. Tabernilla Dolz farewell and his son remained with me.

Brig. Gen. Tabernilla Palmero was alarmingly pale. As Chief of the Office of Military Affairs and also my secretary, he had been under obligation to withdraw from the meeting in which they had spoken of communicating with the enemy and inform me immediately thereof. He excused himself, saying that he had been there only a few minutes by accident, and that he was prepared to accompany me even "unto death"; but that in reality the situation was serious and it was useless to fight on. The day before, I had telephoned him because Maj. Manuel Atorresagasti, Adjutant on duty, had told me that Dr. Eduardo Borrell Navarro had informed him that the main entrance to Camp Columbia was locked. The steel shutters were lowered in to abandon the Presidency before his term expired." (Paragraph of a letter from Admiral Rodríguez Calderon to Col. Estévez Maymir, in connection with another letter from Gen. Tabernilla Dolz, July 14, 1959.)

* In a letter written in exile he said: "All I did, I did in good faith, seeking the best solution for you and Cuba under circumstances in which catastrophe was inevitable, due to the errors committed." (Letter from Gen. Francisco Tabernilla Dolz to Gen. Batista, Feb. 5, 1959.)
broad daylight although it was customary to do so only after 11 at night, that is, after taps. This alarmed the garrison, and also people in nearby urban sections. I ordered him to open the gates and hurried to the camp. He justified his action with the argument—this is the truth—that on the order of the General Staff they had withdrawn most of the troops stationed at Columbia, these being the last reserves. He added that all the barracks to the east were completely empty. Ciudad Militar was undefended. To give the impression of security the gates were opened, but this revealed how frightened the Chief of Columbia had become.

It was commented that the Division Chief had ordered the gates closed for his own protection. This belief was also based on the large number of guards placed about his house. No one understood why, in addition to the sentries, a tank was needed in his patio at night, and another in front of the house, reinforced by a machine-gun emplacement in the shrubbery. Such precautions within the military compound appeared unnecessary, in view of the concentration of troops and motorized equipment available.

The Desertion

Two days after the meeting with the Joint Chief of Staff, the Chief of the Army, Gen. Pedro A. Rodríguez Avila, informed me that Col. Florentino Rosell had returned without authorization to Havana, declaring that he had to make urgent reports. The next day I was informed that Col. Rosell had deserted. Some time during the morning he had gone out to sea, probably making for some Florida port.

At the same time Río Chaviano returned to Havana. It was said he had been sent for by the Chief of the Army Staff. An X-4 reported that the armored train with the 600 men and armament, including automatic arms and a cannon, were to be
surrendered, as arranged between Río Chaviano and Rosell and rebel chieftains on the orders of Gen. Tabernilla Dolz.*

*Cantillo, Tabernilla, and Río Chaviano

Gen. Eulogio Cantillo before his last two trips to Oriente told me, in a voice which sounded sincere, that he had been surprised by Río Chaviano’s statement that he should obey only “his” orders. Concealing my feelings, I asked: “What is the reason for this intimacy and confidence, since you two have always been so hostile to each other?” “In truth”—he answered—“it surprised me, and I don’t understand it.”

It seemed to me that he spoke of Río Chaviano with a certain disdain.

Studying Gen. Cantillo’s face, I recalled what Gen. Tabernilla had told me days before, when I called his attention to the meeting he had held at the Joint Command’s Headquarters with Gen. Río Chaviano, Col. Rosell, and others. He said then that he was being loyal in telling me that there wasn’t even a 5 per cent chance of victory, that the Army would not fight, and that the officers with whom he had spoken were of the same opinion; although some “would do their best” until the end.

In a visit to the Executive Mansion, Gen. Tabernilla Dolz said: “Frankly, many believe that you are aware of the facts, but that treating the question as a point of honor or pride, you wish to continue this struggle for a lost cause. I swear, ‘chief,’ that I speak as a loyal man. . . .” He sounded sincere, but it was obvious he was seeking the best way to express his thoughts. “In truth, everyone believes that you expect to resign at the last

* In an interview published in the June 25, 1959, issue of Diario de New York, Captains Rodríguez Tamayo and Olivera told writer Stanley Ross that many of the battles [in reality they were only minor skirmishes] won by the rebels were fought with arms purchased from Army Officers. He specifically refers to Gen. Río Chaviano and Col. Florentino Rosell, who sold an armored train to “Che” Guevara for a very large sum of money.
moment and commit suicide. And that should not be. You would not be doing the Republic or our cause a service if you did such a thing! In all frankness, ‘chief,’ the officers with whom I have spoken believe you are finished. To prolong the situation,” he continued, “would cost rivers of blood and we would die uselessly.”

I had been told of the conversations to which Tabernilla Dolz referred, and I let him go on speaking to determine the truth of the reports I had received. I told him I knew of these ideas, that I did not plan “suicide,” that our responsibility was very great and, aware of the gravity of the situation, it was his duty as Joint Chief of Staff to inspire confidence and faith in his men.

Visit of the Three Chiefs

As I had to end the conversation, I told him to see me that night with the Chiefs of the Army and the Navy, Gen. Rodríguez Avila and Admiral Rodríguez Calderón, to give them an opportunity of speaking frankly. I asked absolute discretion about this conversation. At the appointed time the three Chiefs came to see me in the Presidential office.

The interview between General Cantillo and Fidel Castro had not yet taken place.

We first exchanged generalities, and the conversation revolved about immediate possible measures to prevent the total disintegration of the troops, who were being harassed and had surrendered in various zones. We considered for a moment the situation of the Armed Forces and the conduct of some officers and civilian leaders; but we did not discuss the topic which Gen. Tabernilla Dolz had broached that morning. They explained their problems and told me how strange it was that military units were being continually surrendered without combat to an enemy who, in numbers and military capacity, could not possibly possess the strength necessary to immobilize the Army.
The meeting lasted about an hour, and I did not want to raise the question of giving up. I thought there was nothing to gain by forcing the hands of these Chiefs, who should speak to me of the matter.

Upon taking leave with the promise to continue the conversation at another opportunity, I noticed that they were very thoughtful. This moved me to speak encouragingly, and I recommended that they transmit orders to their commands to remain firm and on the alert. The next day Gen. Tabernilla told me that they had hoped I would bring up the subject of giving up the fight, but Admiral Rodríguez Calderón and Gen. Rodríguez Avila later informed me that they had no idea what the Joint Chief of Staff had in mind.
I ordered the Chief of the Army to relieve Gen. Río Chaviano of the command of Las Villas and decreed his immediate retirement. Later, when I was aware of the talks which had taken place, I discussed the ethics of his conduct with the Joint Chief of Staff and admonished him for his actions. Gen. Tabernilla Dolz told me that Gen. Río Chaviano and Col. Rosell had actually talked with some rebel leaders. He added emphatically, with a violent tirade against his brother-in-law, that he had known nothing about it; if he had known, he would have informed me.\*

\* "... the old man acted in good faith. I also believe this is true, because he himself told me, before you ordered the retirement of Río Chaviano, that the latter was a traitor and a scoundrel, because he had surrendered the Province. (Wrote his son in a letter dated below.)

"You must have received his letter in which he explains that he acted in good faith, seeking an honorable solution in view of the direction events had taken: Oriente, with the whole countryside and many towns in the hands of the rebels, and Santiago de Cuba, Bayamo and Holguín seriously threatened; fighting on several fronts in Camagüey and the Chief of the regiment pleading for reinforcements; Las Villas, with many towns in the hands of the enemy after the surrender of most of the garrisons without a shot fired, obeying, surely, the order of their traitorous commander. At the end, we fought in Santa Clara against an enemy superior in numbers and morale and with the decisive support of the civil population. In Matanzas some rebel groups had infiltrated. Rebels appeared in the slopes of Madruga, in the Province of Havana, and bandits were active in Pinar del Río. The rest of the island each day more isolated from Havana, the main bridges blown up by saboteurs, railway and highway transportation practically paralyzed, fuel and provisions in low supply in the towns, and the sugar harvest about to begin, with very
I, however, had other information. Col. Florentino Rosell had spoken extensively with various officers, as had others. One of them, who had become an X-4, told me that an agreement had been reached on a military junta, that Rosell was very active, and that Río Chaviano was prepared to surrender the command. Cantillo would take over Oriente, leaving the command of Santiago de Cuba to Col. Rego Rubido and Commodore Carnero, Chief of the Naval District, and with another superior officer whose name they concealed, would constitute a high command. The military junta would comprise Cantillo as chief, with Río Chaviano, Rosell and ex-Col. Ramón Barquín. To neutralize “Ché” Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos, and other guerrilla leaders in their zones of operation, Col. Barquín would take charge of Las Villas. He was to turn over this command to some responsible officer as soon as possible, in order to assume his post at the military junta. The command of Columbia would be given to one of the officers who had been imprisoned with Barquín. Those officers would be freed for service the moment the President was seized or slipped out of the country.

As proof that Col. Barquín, prisoner on the Isle of Pinos, had accepted, he had sent them his graduation ring. Once in possession of the commands, and with the President of the Republic out of the way, they would take in the chiefs of Camagüey and Holguín—territorial commands between Las Villas and little possibility that it would, and with taxes previously imposed by the rebels.

“Our Army, tired and decimated by two years of a prolonged campaign, without relief, had completely lost its combat power. Desertions to the enemy increased daily. We lacked reserves and a great part of the officers conspired in the barracks, without desire to fight or in contact with the enemy, and faced with the prospect of your withdrawal from power on Feb. 24, without having heard a solemn affirmation from you that you would continue in command, influenced, in addition, by the impact of the enemy’s campaign on your ranks, the whole system began to collapse after the election of Nov. 1.” (Letter of Gen. “Silito” Tabernilla, Feb. 13, 1959.)
Oriente—Colonels Leopoldo Pérez Coujil and Manuel Ugalde Carillo. The last two would be summoned to Havana, to be arrested or killed if they refused to join. The Joint Chief of Staff, the Chiefs of the Army and Navy, and other military leaders would be simultaneously arrested, and killed or forced to leave the country. The President of the Republic would give them and the new military junta a free hand.*

* Lieut. Col. Irenaldo García Baez, ex-Chief of Military Intelligence, on a visit to Hotel Jaragua, Santo Domingo, June 22, 1959, said before a group which included Doctors Andrés Domingo, and Florencio Guerra, Maj. Manuel Atorresagasti, Capt. Arsenio Labrada, and Lieutenants César Noble and Rogelio González: “After going into exile, I was able, through the depositions of Gen. “Silito” Tabernilla and Col. Rosell, to fill in the knowledge I had of a conspiracy hatched by Gen. Cantillo. Gen. Río Chaviano, Col. Rosell, and other officers to effect a coup d’état and join the rebel terrorists. The plan consisted of the following: Col. Rego Rubido was to surrender Oriente Province, with the exception of Holguín, with whose chief they had not spoken; Col. Pérez Coujil was to lay down his arms in Camagüey; in Santa Clara Gen. Río Chaviano was already surrendering military posts; Matanzas would be surrendered by Brig. Carlos Cantillo in agreement with his brother. All these troops joined with the rebels were to advance upon Havana, to exert pressure on the remaining loyal forces. In the meantime, Gen. “Silito” Tabernilla was to surrender the Division of Infantry to Gen. Eulogio Cantillo, and from Santa Clara, ex-Col. Ramón Barquín, taken by plane from Isle of Pines, as Chief of Las Villas, would communicate with Gen. Batista, compelling him to vacate the Presidency and go abroad with his allies.”

In conclusion, Lieut. Col. García Baez thought Gen. “Silito” Tabernilla had been informed of all these plans by Col. Rosell.

“I gave Rosell the opportunity to explain his acts and what he told me left me horrified: that their plan (Cantillo, Río Chaviano, and he) had been worked out jointly with Barquín and the officers imprisoned on Isle of Pines. Barquín had sent them his graduation ring as seal of his acceptance. The plan consisted in removing the officer-prisoners from Isle of Pines in two planes and transferring Barquín to Santa Clara where Río would hand over the command to him. Cantillo was to defect in Oriente and force Ugalde and Perez Coujil to limp along. With the island in this situation, they were to send you an ultimatum to surrender the government to a military junta and abandon the country. The plan failed because when everything was ready, after having spoken with Cantillo for
A RETIREMENT AND A NEW TWIN PLAN

The report of X-4 added that the plot was broken up by the desertion of Col. Rosell and the abandonment of Las Villas by Gen. Río Chaviano upon his return to Havana for an interview with the Joint Chief of Staff. The informant thought that the failure was due to the fact that—coinciding with Gen. Cantillo's trip to Oriente for conversations with Fidel Castro in accordance with the instructions of Gen. Tabernilla Dolz—the former (Cantillo) sent them a message stating that this was not the plan to follow. Apparently the other plan was to be put into practice, that is, the one now developing with the meeting with Fidel Castro in Oriente and with the rebel leaders in Las Villas.

Col. Rosell returned really frightened the night before his desertion. In a running conversation with Brigadier Generals Tabernilla Palmero and Fernández Miranda, he informed them that the situation in the Province was practically a rout. He believed that all were in revolt, that the soldiers did not fire upon the rebels, and that their leaders had forbidden them to fire—facts which he was able to perceive in the hours spent at the camp in Santa Clara. According to his ideas, the propaganda which Fidel Castro persistently circulated with the theme "We do not fight against the Army, but against Batista" had won over the Army.*

four hours, the latter notified him that 'he believed it preferable to follow the orders of General Batista.' Afterwards, he went to Santa Clara and returned in 48 hours . . . he told Roberto and me that the situation in Las Villas was very bad and that he had removed his troops from the Regiment to keep them from being contaminated, because he believed the Regiment was practically in a state of revolt. They saw the rebels and didn't even fire upon them.” (Letter of Gen. Tabernilla Palmero, April 12, 1959.)

* Corzo and I told him how mistaken the majority of the Army officers were in accepting Fidel Castro's slogan that "We do not fight against the Army, but against Batista." By now they have seen the result. They have all been kept out of power, including Castro Rojas, Díaz Tamayo, and all the rest. (Letter of Gen. Tabernilla Palmero, April 12, 1959.)
WITH RIO CHAVIANO withdrawn, I decided to replace him with Col. José Eleuterio Pedraza. The latter, in retirement, had been promoted to the rank of Major-General by a law passed by Congress promoting to that rank all who had served in the past as Chief of Staff.

The nomination of Pedraza displeased many, including Gen. Tabernilla who, understandably, had not forgotten that the latter had threatened his life in the conspiracy of 1941.* But his son had been among the victims of the strike of April 9. His son had been a man of 25, hard-working, friendly, sympathetic, and healthy. He was shot to death on his way home on leaving the garage which he owned and operated. Gen. Pedraza, having demonstrated his desire to fight in the Army against the murderers of his son—although he had not accepted three months earlier—was called to active service as Military Chief of Las Villas, a territory almost entirely in the hands of the enemy.

In those last moments we thought of leaving the substitute in charge of the Las Villas headquarters and with forces transported by plane from Oriente unite with whatever troops were available in Havana and Matanzas, and advance through Cienfuegos to the south of Santa Clara. We could thus reinforce that command, practically the only one resisting the rebels.

Guantánamo was considered lost, and orders were given to Gen. Cantillo, days before the unfortunate interview, to transfer the forces under Lieut. Col. Arcadio Casillas Lumpuy through

* See Chapter XXXVIII.

108
Caimanera to Santiago de Cuba and from there to Cienfuegos; but Gen. Cantillo announced that this could not be done.

Gen. Tabernilla Dolz mentioned Col. Joaquín Casillas Lumpuy, brother of the above, who was in charge of the prison at Isle of Pines, as possible chief of Las Villas. We decided against this, as Gen. Pedraza was to be called back into service for this purpose. With the return of Pedraza, the Joint Chief of Staff informed me that Col. Casillas had been summoned by him and had been ordered to take the Las Villas command. I gave instructions to Gen. Rodríguez Avila to delay Casillas' departure; but the latter had already left to carry out the order.

In view of this change, it was decided to leave Pedraza in Havana helping the Joint Chief of Staff. Gen. Pedraza used the communications of the Aviation Service to maintain contact with Col. Joaquín Casillas, who faced with extraordinary courage the impossible task of reconstructing the military command of Las Villas.

Fighting in what could be called the last redoubt belonging to the Army—for Havana lacked men and armament—the heroic efforts of Col. Casillas Lumpuy and the sacrifice of his life were futile.
CHAPTER XVIII

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE INTERVIEW

One day, as I was lunching, an aide informed me that he had overheard an officer saying that Gen. Eulogio Cantillo had been ordered by the Joint Chief of Staff to hold an interview with the rebel leader Fidel Castro.* At this time, Gen. Cantillo was chief of a vast territory, the most vital and strategic, Oriente Province. He was in command of more than 15,000 men with the best armament available and most of the Army's armored units. His headquarters were in the eastern capital and Naval land forces and sea units were also under his control.

The same afternoon I had a visit from my son Rubén. He told me that Lieut. Col. José Martínez Suárez was anxious to speak to me about an important problem. I made an appointment for 8 that night.

Martínez Suárez informed me that Gen. Cantillo had left for Oriente that day on orders of Gen. Tabernilla Dolz. When Cantillo came to the offices of the Joint Command in Havana, he

* On Dec. 22, 1958, at a meeting between several generals and colonels at the headquarters of the Joint Command, it was agreed to establish contact with the terrorist rebels to hear plans for a truce and then submit them, as they said, to the consideration of Gen. Batista. Later, already in exile in Miami, Gen. "Silito" Tabernilla told me that the order was issued by his father, Gen. Francisco Tabernilla Dolz, anxious to achieve a settlement. (Words of Lieut. Col. Irenaldo García Báez, ex-Chief of the S.I.M. on June 22, 1959, on a visit to the Hotel Jaragua, Santo Domingo, when he spoke to a group of people which included Doctors Andrés Domingo and Florencio Guerra, Maj. Manuel Torresagasti, Capt. Arsenio Labrada, and Lieutenants César Noble and Rogelio González.)
never returned to his command without seeing me, and I expressed my surprise to Lieut. Col. Martínez Suárez. "He could not see you, Mr. President. His orders were to leave immediately and they placed a helicopter at his disposal in Santiago to take him to Castro for the interview."

"In this case," I had to say it, "if what you say is true, I shall remove the commanders of the Army this very night."

"I am certain that Gen. Cantillo has left for Oriente to carry out these instructions. You know that in all the commands, from Las Villas to Oriente, the units which have not been surrounded or surrendered are crippled or isolated. I beg you," Martínez Suárez said, "not to mention my name, because it could cost me my life; but I spoke to Gen. Cantillo before he left for Santiago de Cuba. I believe, Mr. President," he continued, "that it is a little late, because a truce has been ordered by the Chief of the Armed Forces at Santiago de Cuba, Col. Rego Rubido, and the Chief of the Naval District, Commodore Carnero, so that an agreement can be reached with Fidel Castro."

I immediately telephoned the Chief of the Army General Staff, Gen. Pedro Rodríguez Avila, to determine whether Gen. Cantillo had really gone to Oriente. He confirmed it, stating that the Joint Chief of Staff had issued the order, and added that the Chief of the Air Force, Brig. Carlos Tabernilla, was hurriedly repairing a helicopter to be dispatched without delay to Santiago de Cuba for the use of the General. Upon asking him the reason for the urgent departure, he answered that he did not know. I told him I would call Gen. Tabernilla Dolz on another phone, but would not tell him what I had learned. I made the call and the Joint Chief of Staff stammered out that he had authorized the departure of Gen. Cantillo because the latter had said it was necessary to regroup his command immediately, due to the very bad situation in the Province. I ordered him to make an appointment
with Gen. Rodríguez Avila and the Chief of the Navy, Admiral José Rodríguez Calderón, to meet at my residence in Columbia at midnight, three hours later.*

* "Gen. Francisco Tabernilla Dolz was never authorized to obtain a truce with the enemy, and much less to come to an agreement with them, for I remember that when Gen. Batista became aware of the interview authorized by Gen. Tabernilla Dolz between Gen. Eulogio Cantillo and Fidel Castro, the former was harshly castigated in our presence by the President of the Republic, alleging all the while that he had acted in good faith and had never wanted to betray him. Later he fell into the serious error of soliciting and obtaining a conference with the Ambassador of the United States in Cuba, Mr. Earle Smith; this time, also, without the knowledge of the President; he admitted his indiscretion again, but maintained there was no breach of loyalty in his act." (From a letter from Admiral Rodríguez Calderón to Col. Estévez Maymir, in connection with another letter from Gen. Tabernilla Dolz, July 14, 1959.)
a priest who was in contact with Fidel Castro* and for that reason had wanted to go to Santiago de Cuba; but that he—Tabernilla—had not authorized any meeting. In his presence, I gave direct orders to the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Pedro Rodríguez Avila, to send a radio message in code to Gen. Cantillo immediately, ordering him to suspend any appointment he had made, directly or indirectly, with the rebel leaders, and to appear at once at headquarters.

Gen. Cantillo did not reply to the dispatch, nor did he return the next day. I ordered Gen. Rodríguez Avila to investigate and be on the alert for the return of Cantillo. Forty-eight hours after I had sent the radio message, the Army Chief of Staff informed me that Cantillo had left Santiago de Cuba. I posted an aide at the airport, with instructions to bring him to my private house at my farm before communicating with anyone.

I received Gen. Cantillo in the library behind closed doors. When I asked him why he had gone to Oriente without seeing me, he answered that when he had informed the Joint Chief of Staff of the problems of his command, Gen. Tabernilla had insisted that he contact Fidel Castro. He then remembered that a priest, Father Guzmán, had sent him a message to the effect that he could serve as intermediary for a meeting with the rebel leader. Gen. Tabernilla had ordered him to set out immediately, make contact with the priest and arrange a personal interview with Fidel Castro to determine "what he wanted."**

* "We wrote to Gen. Cantillo through Father Guzmán. We did not receive a reply. In a few days, he and Fidel met at the Oriente sugar mill. Maj. Francisco Sierra Talavera and I participated in the conversation." (Statement of Maj. José Quevedo to Bohemia magazine, Jan. 18, 1959)

** In the hospice of "El Cobre," in the Sanctuary of the Patroness of Cuba, in Oriente, where Fidel Castro had one of his provisional headquarters, the revolutionary chief held a council with his commanders. Something was amiss. He had a foreboding of what had happened and feared the worst.
“The attack on Santiago de Cuba, planned for Dec. 28, had been deferred because of a solemn promise given by Gen. Cantillo at a secret meeting with him.

“This history of Gen. Eulogio Cantillo’s treachery goes back to a recent date, Dec. 24, when the interview took place at Oriente Sugar Mill, at Palma Soriano, between the military chief, who arrived in a helicopter, and the top rebel leader.

“Cantillo spoke in the name of the Army, whose determination to fight had been merely an illusion for some time. They spoke for four hours. A Catholic priest and several officers, worn with worry for the peace of Cuba, were present at the historical discussion. After considering all essential points, they arrived at an agreement to realize a synchronized revolutionary military movement.” (Bohemia magazine, Jan. 11, 1959.)
My frame of mind would not let me consider routine problems. I could not imagine a frivolous attitude in a staff officer, nor could I imagine a line officer, subject to the other's authority, working with his superior in a spirit of rancor and reserve. The suspicions existing between the two generals broke into the open again as the result of a serious incident. This occurred after the personal surrender of Maj. Quevedo's 18th Battalion to Fidel Castro, and the failure of the planned offensive, with the encirclement, surrender, or withdrawal of all the units in operation. At that time the Joint Chief of Staff had called him to account and blamed him for the defeat.

I learned afterwards that Gen. Cantillo disobeyed his superior officer's order to sit down and make a report, that he stood rigidly at attention and demanded to be retired from active duty, and permission to withdraw.

I asked him how he could execute an order of such importance, issued by the Joint Chief of Staff, without having consulted me. Gen. Cantillo answered that he had supposed the order emanated from the President, and he had fulfilled it without delay.

The conduct of this line officer, who had always been so prudent, seemed affected by the failure of the offensive he had planned and defended with such ardor, as well as by the surrender, treason and desertion of a large number of unit commanders.*

* "Fidel and I had a conference on Oct. 27. We sent conspiratorial letters to Army officers. They answered with statements that they were
Contemplating now the precipitous manner in which the dangerous interview had been effected, I recalled how differently Cantillo had acted five months earlier, when Castro had asked for talks. Maj. José Quevedo with his entire battalion, Capt. Duran Batista and his company of infantry, Capt. Victorino Gomez Oquendo with a tank section from his Regiment, and other units commanded by line officers had surrendered or defected to the outlaw chieftain.** The maneuver was effected in the heart of the Sierra Maestra and neither the Air Force nor the other battalions in the mountainous area could do anything effective even to stop new blockades or encirclements.

Two battalions commanded by Lieut. Col. Angel Sánchez Mosquera, one commanded by Maj. Corzo Izaguirre, and other strategically situated companies could not advance and were surrounded by rebel guerrillas. To save these last units it was necessary to use planes, infantry and tanks. There was a fierce struggle and Lieut. Col. Sánchez Mosquera received a head wound. This was a decisive blow to the Army division commanded by Gen. Eulogio Cantillo, because a chief who had preparing a conspiracy. Later we got Capt. Durán, Capt. Oquendo, and other officers who were imprisoned in Jibacoa to join Fidel. We made approaches to responsible officers. We succeeded in bringing over to our side two platoons under the commands of Lieutenants Villamil and Ubino León. We held conversations in Mafío and other places with various officers. We obtained the surrender of Palma Soriano and the support of the Navy.

"In Palma Soriano loud-speakers had been set up and the rebel philosophy broadcast. Then, in complete agreement, the officers went up to Sierra Maestra and laid down their arms." (Statement of Maj. José Quevedo to Bohemia magazine, Jan. 11, 1959.)


"Months later, on Oct. 27, Quevedo, together with Captains Carlos M. Durán Batista and Victorino Gómez Oquendo asked to be admitted into the "26 of July" movement. They were assigned to the General Staff." (Bohemia, Jan. 11, 1959.)
done most for the morale of the troops, running equal risks with them, and providing for their rations and health, had fallen gravely wounded. Nevertheless, Sánchez Mosquera, lying on a litter, continued to direct his officers and soldiers. In the end, though suffering numerous losses, the rest of this operational Army was saved. But its morale was to become very low.

Fidel Castro was encouraged and sent a message to Gen. Cantillo to arrange for a meeting. This request for an interview created illusions in the mind of the chief of the harassed forces. I was at Varadero beach when Headquarters sent me a note asking me to see Cantillo. He flew in that night with his pilot, Lieut. Izquierdo, and said he thought Castro would accept an arrangement equivalent to a surrender, or an end to the conflict through compromises. I convinced him, however, that having obtained defectors, surrenders, prisoners, and great quantities of arms in these last operations, the rebels would hardly surrender to an army practically defeated. I added that he was not to agree to a meeting and that if he believed it would serve the Government to learn Castro’s true intentions he could delegate one of his officers to see the rebel chief; as a personal interview under present circumstances could create suspicions and hurt discipline.

Our conversation was really an exchange of impressions, and he accepted my thesis. In accordance with my instructions, the Army Chief of Staff authorized Lieut. Col. Fernando Neugart to carry out the order of Gen. Cantillo. Lieut. Col. Neugart carried out the mission, listening to the rebels, without having the right to speak for the General. The result was nil; the rebels did not even make proposals of a local nature.

I was inclined to believe that Gen. Cantillo, victim of his failure, tired by the long operations with no triumph in sight, disoriented by events and involved in conspiracies, took advantage of the order of the Joint Chief of Staff to try to attain some of his own objectives.
The Pact of the Defeat

Gen. Cantillo confessed that he had held the interview with Fidel Castro. He began to excuse himself, but I stopped him with a gesture. The damage was done; the very fact that there had been a meeting meant more than just a defeatist attitude; it meant defeat itself. If he had gone to see the rebel chief, the enemy of the forces he commanded, to ask him "What do you want?" the conclusion was obvious. I ordered him not to mention the interview to Gen. Tabernilla Dolz or anyone else.

I was concerned that the final catastrophe could be precipitated by the panic which, according to all symptoms, had taken possession of the Joint Chief of Staff, his sons occupying key positions, and of the chiefs who were close to them in kinship, friendship, or fear. I thought of the people, trusting and happy in this Christmas season despite the bombs and the "Molotov cocktails," and of the men who would not return, of the officers and soldiers still fighting who would be the victims of that disloyal maneuver.

When I asked him if the commanding officers of the Army and Navy in Santiago de Cuba knew of the interview, he answered in the affirmative; adding that if they had not been forewarned, they might have believed he was going over to the enemy. I said what I was later to repeat to the Joint Chief of Staff in front of the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Navy, whose behavior was unwavering: "When an Army loses all its battles and skirmishes, one after the other, when it has been unable to repel an unorganized enemy, when not a day passes without some of its men surrendering—to seek out the chief of such groups and ask him what do you want in exchange for a cease-fire is equivalent to a surrender."

When I inquired about the code message in which I had forbidden him to establish any contact with enemy leaders, he
answered that he had not received it because he had already started out for the Oriente Sugar Mill.

I ordered Gen. Cantillo to set out the following day to try to prevent the entrance of Fidel Castro into Santiago de Cuba, and then to return to Havana as soon as possible.
CHAPTER XX

DETERIORATION AND AN ILL-ADvised INTERVIEW

While trying to set matters straight again, we halted two or three conspiracies uncovered at Camp Columbia. In one it was planned to advance upon the President’s residence at night on Sunday, Dec. 27, four days before I, as fate had it, was to turn over the Government. The plotters knew that we were accustomed to dine with the principal chiefs and ministers and Congressmen between 10 and 11 o’clock. They would take us prisoners. That Sunday afternoon they met to consider what to do with us. The conspirators split into two camps; one wanted to ship us out of the country that same night and the other wanted to shoot us in order to forestall future influence by my Presidential authority.*

Since mid-November I had been fulfilling my Presidential duties under very precarious conditions. The unstable environment and constant secrecy brought to an end a responsible and democratic government and paved the way for a bloody tyranny.

In the afternoon of the 29th, the Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Rodríguez Avila, told me that an X-4 had just informed him that Gen. Tabernilla Dolz, his son Carlos, Chief of the

* At Columbia, this plot was called the “Conspiracy of Cowards.” It was planned by a half-dozen officers who had become “sick” in the presence of the enemy and had been observed by their men running away or hiding in the underbrush. One of them was the nephew of the wife of a Government minister, and he had deserted his wife, and the wife of Lieut. Col. Marcelo Tabernilla—all of whom had been wounded, when Lieut. Col. Blanco Rico was murdered one night as they were all leaving a Havana night club together. Others were the son of a former Presidential aide and the son of an ex-minister. They all had similar backgrounds.
DETERIORATION AND AN ILL-ADVISED INTERVIEW

Cuban Air Force, and his brother-in-law Rfo Chaviano, had gone to see Ambassador Smith. The X-4 had called him from a spot near the American Embassy to tell him Tabernilla, his son, and another officer had gone into the building.*

About 11 o’clock that night, at a meeting with the chiefs of the Army and Navy General Staffs, I asked him whether the report was true. He answered nervously and weakly, in monosyllables, without being able to deny it. I rebuked him in the presence of the other two officers, condemning the imprudent step he had taken. He asked permission to sit down in a corner of the hall where we had assembled and appeared visibly crushed.**

Fifteen minutes later, Gen. Tabernilla asked me to hear him privately. In my office I told him: “Explain yourself, for you

* Before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security, Ambassador Smith said: “I believe it was the day after Christmas, Dec. 26, 1958, I received word from the military attaché that Gen. Tabernilla, who was in charge of all the Armed Forces of Cuba, and his son, Gen. Carlos Tabernilla, who was in charge of the Air Force, and Gen. del Rio Chaviano, who had formerly been in charge of the forces in Oriente Province, wanted to have an interview. So it was arranged at the American Embassy.... At the time, Gen. Tabernilla said that the Cuban soldiers would not fight any longer and that the Cuban Government, per se, would not be able to last.... He said he wanted to form a military junta comprised of himself, I believe the names were Gen. Cantillo, Gen. Sosa Quesada, Col. Casares, and an officer of the Navy. He said that they wanted to give Batista safe convoy out of the country, wanted to know whether I would support such a junta.... I said to him: ‘If we answer you directly it would be undermining Gen. Batista, and I can only do business with Batista because I am accredited to him.’ Gen. Tabernilla asked me what suggestions I had to make. I said: ‘Have you mentioned this visit to me to Batista?’ And he said: ‘No, I have not.’”

** “I had to reprimand severely the Joint Chief of Staff in the presence of Gen. Rodríguez Avila, Chief of the Army and Admiral Rodríguez Calderón, Chief of the Navy, on several occasions, for not only had he issued orders to contact the rebels and hear what they had to say, but he had interviewed an Ambassador from another country, without my authorization.” (Letter from Gen. Batista to Gen. ‘Silito’ Tabernilla, dated Feb. 5, 1959.)
must know that the only persons authorized to discuss official government matters with an Ambassador are the President, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or officials whom they authorize. I know that you were not authorized to see the American Ambassador."

"That's true, 'Chief,' pardon me . . . but wishing to help you, I have made this grievous mistake . . . ."

"What could you have said to the Ambassador, and what could he have said to you, if he has not the power to settle, not even in the name of his Government, problems which are our concern alone?"

"I went to see him, as I told you, and dared to ask him if he could help us obtain a settlement . . . ."

"You asked him that? You have committed an act of incredible irresponsibility," I replied, "and he could not have answered you without committing a serious blunder himself, even if he had first consulted his government."

"He told me he could do nothing; he treated me very kindly, but nothing more."

At this visit he had informed the Ambassador of the United States that the Cuban Government was destroyed and that the Armed Forces were no longer able to support it.*

* "I was once in the offices of the Joint Commands when I saw Gen. Tabernilla Dolz, Gen. Río Chaviano, and Brig. ‘Winsky’ Tabernilla leave together. I learned later that they had gone to visit the United States Ambassador, with whom they had a conversation more or less on these lines: Gen. Tabernilla Dolz told the Ambassador that ‘they had agreed to depose the President of the Republic and replace him with a military junta.’ The Ambassador asked him if he ‘could preside over the junta.’ Gen. Tabernilla answered no, that ‘it would probably be Gen. Cantillo.’ The Ambassador’s reply was that ‘he could not give an opinion, but in any case, he would consult his government.’ (Words of Lieut. Col. Irenaldo García Báez, ex-Chief of Military Intelligence, June 22, 1959, on a visit to Hotel Jaragua, Santo Domingo, before a group of people which included Doctors Andrés Domingo and Florencio Guerra, Maj. Manuel Atoresagasti, Capt. Arsenio Labrada and Lieutenants César Noble and Rogelio González.)"
CHAPTER XXI

FINAL EVIDENCE

December 31 was almost here. It was midnight of the 30th. Cantillo had gone to Oriente on the 28th, and we had no news of his activities. I was at Camp Columbia with the Chiefs of the General Staff, receiving the reports of the operations. In Las Villas there were practically no troops and only in Santa Clara was there any resistance by the fractions of the remaining units, commanded by Col. Joaquín Casillas Lumpuy and Col. Cornelio Rojas of the Police. The latter was immobilized in headquarters, being surrounded and attacked by the rebels and soon to be their prisoner.

Differences had arisen between Col. Casillas and Lieut. Col. Cecilio Fernández Suero. The former commanded the entire provincial territory; the latter was chief of operations of the active units. As there were no more mobile troops in action, Fernández Suero fell back upon headquarters to carry on his command from there. The last times we spoke to them by telephone, their words practically unintelligible, they had become hoarse with yelling to make their orders understood above the tumult. The noise made by the undisciplined personnel and the purposeless shooting added to the difficulties of the heroic defender of this redoubt. There was interference in his communications caused by the shortwave transmitter which had fallen into the hands of the enemy. This created confusion in the orders coming from headquarters. The last reports were about the frankly seditious acts of Maj. Suárez Fowler, who urged the combatants to lay down their arms. The Major was arrested, and was still being held when the rebels occupied the camp.
The Chief of the Army announced the reports as they came in. All towns, ports, sugar plantations, and mills were cut off from communication and in the Central and Eastern Provinces, where available troops had been concentrated, every small detachment had disappeared.

A patrol from Camagüey helped relieve one company and the personnel of the Sancti Spiritus Squadron under the command of Capt. Manuel Casallas; and Capt. Abon Lee, in Yaguajay, resisted the bestiality of the emboldened rebels with his exhausted troops until the garrison which he had converted into a fortress was blown up. A railroad coach, loaded with dynamite and pushed by a tractor, exploded in the patio.

Columbia, which could be called the ranking camp, was not asleep. Nor was its Chief. The signs of artificial courage were increasing. Gen. "Silito" Tabernilla continued to be the thermometer of his father, the Joint Chief of Staff. He was always saying he would give his life for the cause. He kept repeating "... if there's nothing else to do, we had better go, the sooner the better" (the last phrase always in English). When he was asked to stop repeating the phrase, he replied with agitation: "If the President wishes, I shall struggle unto death, but if there is no more hope, if we cannot win, we must fly ... the sooner the better."

At dawn, walking through the artillery range, "Silito" said, "We cannot count on those who remained in the camp and, of the few officers available for service, the majority will offer only passive resistance or are involved in the plot. The soldiers no longer want to fight." Yes, surely he was animated by "loyal sentiment," but his weak spirit drove him to convince me, unnecessarily, of a reality which echoed the opinion of the Joint Chief of Staff. It was that all was lost, that the garrison officers did not want to go to the fighting fronts, and that the soldiers had no will to fight. He lamented in desperation that he could not wait for the last "suicide shot."
The final blow was announced, but we had to make our last efforts. Cantillo would return that night. The rebels expected the surrender of the Army in Oriente—the remnant which still had artillery, transportation, and automatic arms—in the afternoon of this last day of the year.

I decided to risk waiting for Gen. Cantillo with the news that either the commands had rallied or that they had been surrendered to Castro. If only Oriente could be saved! Even so . . . only great sacrifices could halt the March of Destruction.

We believed that some of the detachments in Santiago de Cuba could be transferred to Las Villas. Army Headquarters had the remote hope of regrouping and strengthening the units for the defense of the Central region. In the last analysis, it was only the desire to save the last Constitutional remnants from the Communist clutches, in the face of the certainty that the Republic was about to fall into the vortex of terror.

These expectations, based on fatal and definitive events, had not been understood, and as a result the country might fall into uncontrollable anarchy. Now more than ever I had to keep calm. After a few hours of rest in the Presidential Palace, I lunched in our private quarters with my wife. I did not want to keep her completely in the dark; neither did I want to give her cause for alarm. As I was accustomed to go to my country estate two or three times a week to work more at ease, I told her I was going to the library to do some work; that she should go to Columbia with the children. We would meet there that night to drink a toast to the New Year. As she looked worried, I told her that the situation was really serious, but that we were working very hard to settle it with the final stand in Las Villas.

Thinking that the reconstruction of the commands would be a very difficult task, that Gen. Cantillo might not return and that the surrender of Oriente might be effected this afternoon, bring-
ing complete collapse, two ideas kept revolving in my mind: how to control the commands necessary to keep away suffering from the homes and chaos from the nation; and how, if the worst occurred, to take care of my wife and children with the least possible danger. Taking care that my profound uneasiness should not show, I controlled my feeling both as a Chief of State and as a father.
ABOUT 9 THAT night the Army Chief of Staff reported to me that we could not hold Las Villas, for even the seat of the military command of the Province was surrounded by the rebels. He said that Lieut. Col. Carlos San Martín Fresneda had arrived from Santa Clara, having made a miraculous escape at the moment the rebels had seized the airport, their guns firing at his military plane.

At 10, Gen. Eulogio Cantillo Porras returned and went to "Kuquine," my farm, to report to me. Nothing could be done to recover Oriente and much less to transfer forces to Las Villas. Fidel Castro insisted that the Army and Navy forces in Santiago mutiny, or, if that failed, that Cantillo surrender to him the forces under the command of Col. José Rego Rubido of the Army and Commodore Manuel Carnero of the Navy . . . "The situation is serious, Mr. President, and we must make a quick decision." He added that Fidel Castro would enter Santiago de Cuba in a matter of hours, knowing that the troops would surrender when the report had spread. . . .*

* "On Jan. 1, at a meeting in Cespedes Park in Santiago de Cuba, Fidel Castro said: "The agreement with Cantillo was for a mutiny on the 31st, at 3 in the afternoon, with the preliminary cooperation of the rebel troops, unconditionally supported by the Army. At the moment of the mutiny of the Santiago de Cuba garrison, several rebel columns would enter the city and fraternize with the people. The tanks found in Santiago would be surrendered to Castro, not for combat purposes, but in anticipation of the chance that the movement would fail in Havana and make it necessary to place vanguards as close as possible to the capital. He related details of the very different conduct of Col. Rego Rubido. "Col.
There was little to discuss and no authority could be exercised to apply disciplinary procedures against the Chiefs who figured that all was lost. I had to meet with the highest echelons with basic commands, so I ordered them to assemble, although the main leaders would surely be in the Executive Mansion of Columbia to greet me in the last hours of the year 1958. I expected the President-Elect, the Vice-President of the Republic, and the chairmen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives. At 11:30 the Adjutant on duty and the Army Chief of Staff were still making calls. Other officers were calling the leaders of the Government political parties and the Congressional leaders.

I told Gen. Cantillo to wait for me at Columbia, as he had to attend the meeting of the military chiefs to determine the best plan.

**Reflections**

While an automobile was taking me to my residence at Camp Columbia, I pondered on how to solve the situation without bringing chaos. I thought of the men who were still fighting and of the wounded in the hospitals; of so many women and men in the Government departments, the hundreds of widows and orphans for whom we were setting up homes, pensions through the ministries, and education in great centers which, like the Civic Military Institute, lodged in comfort the children of sol-

Rego Rubido, chief of the Santiago de Cuba redoubt, was as surprised as I by the Columbia coup d'état, which was completely separate from the agreement.’” *(Bohemia, Jan. 11, 1959.)*

“Fidel suspected even more of Cantillo when the latter admitted that Gen. Francisco Tabernilla knew the plans. During the interview Cantillo said that the ‘26 of July’ Movement did not have the confidence of the United States Embassy, which made him believe that there were contacts with the North American diplomats.” *(Raúl Chibás to Herbert Matthews—*Bohemia*, Jan. 11, 1959.)*
diers, workers and peasants who had died doing their duty. Images and ideas passed rapidly through my mind: those guilty through negligence or disloyalty, through fear or greed; Oriente, Las Villas and the infamy of those who had sold out our soldiers and surrendered their Provinces, and the valor of those who had defended it without any hope of success. . . .

The duty of a ruler, in such grave circumstances, is to make decisions for the best interests of the nation. In short, the people and history will judge the statesman more harshly than the father.

**Personal Attendance and Forced Discretion**

The upstairs living-room of the house at Columbia was full. Relatives, military figures, friends and politicians were there. Many ladies, also, had come to greet my wife. I arrived at 12 on the dot and greeted my wife’s friends and spent a few minutes talking with each one. While waiting for those who had been delayed, I spoke separately with Admiral José Rodríguez Calderón; with the Joint Chief of Staff, Gen. Tabernilla Dolz; with the Chief of the Army, Gen. Pedro Rodríguez Avila; with Gen. Roberto Fernández Miranda, Chief of the Military District of La Cabaña; with the Chief of the Infantry Division, Gen. Francisco Tabernilla Palmero (“Silito”); and with the Chiefs of Operations of the Army Staff, of the Air Force, of the General Army Administration, and officers of lesser commands.

The general impression was the same as Cantillo’s, although some were disposed to fight and to die if necessary. I dispatched my aides, Lieut. Col. Cosme Varas and Maj. Atorresagasti, to summon the chiefs to my office on the first floor.

At this point Gen. Rodríguez Avila told me that a Dominican mission had come to Havana to discuss military cooperation. I asked him who had summoned this mission and with whom
they were in contact. He knew only that the three men who made up this unknown commission had been having talks with the Joint Chief of Staff and with Pedraza; he did not know their origin or why they were in Cuba. I showed my displeasure over such contacts, ordered that the three delegates of the Dominican Government be sent to the camp and asked to leave tonight for their country. Pedraza and Rodríguez Avila were appointed to take care of this.

Representing the political groups, we had the President of the Progressive Action Party (Acción Progresista) and the Mayor of Havana, Justo Luis Pozo, accompanied by his son, Dr. Rolando Pozo, and Senator Jorge García Montes; for the Democratic Party there were Senators Santiago Rey and Guillermo Aguilera; the President-Elect Andrés Rivero Agüero; Chairman of the Senate, Anselmo Allegro, and Chairman of the House of Representatives, Gastón Godoy, who had been elected Vice-President of the Republic.

They went to the dining-room, where I waited. I told them to remain until I had finished an interview. I referred, without letting on, to my meeting with the military chiefs.

Some relatives and friends were leaving, and I had not yet had the opportunity to tell them of the serious situation. When I told my wife I would be right down, she asked me if something was wrong. I answered quickly that we ought to be prepared to leave, without indicating whether it was to the Palace or "Kuquine." I had been gradually preparing her for the worst for, if the result of the meeting were unfavorable, I did not propose to continue in power and provoke any needless spilling of blood. Yet we had to make one last supreme effort. If we could resist two months, until the end of my Administration, the Republic could avoid a violent change of government with its unfortunate consequences.
The Decisive Meeting

The room where we met was cramped. It was 2 in the morning. The Chiefs talked for a few moments and all agreed that it was impossible to continue the struggle.

The Chief of the Infantry Division gave a résumé of his report of the exhausted condition of his command and the inability of most of his officers to urge a small group of tired men into battle. The Chief of the District of La Cabaña explained that the fortress and the camp could count on no more than the minimum of troops necessary to keep them going; that his men were ready to sacrifice themselves, but that there were no reserves, and he was faced with the same problem as Columbia.

The Navy was more sound, although its ground units and personnel were working without relief. The Chief was of the same opinion as the others. Pedraza suggested that a reinforcement might be possible with Dominicans, as Trujillo’s unknown delegates had proposed . . . but he himself maintained the same opinion.

In conclusion, after the disloyalties, surrenders, and treacheries, with only a scrap of the Army left, there was only the prospect of a mountain of bodies, with the Red Horsemen of the Apocalypse seizing the remains of the Republic.

Resignation and Provisional Government

The resignation and surrender of the Government to a military junta was recommended. I preferred a constitutional form. If the obstacle was Batista, if they desired a comparable government which would declare an end to the civil war and rule under the Constitution of 1940 without suspension of guarantees or use of extraordinary measures, if the rebel chieftain pro-
claimed that his groups were not fighting the Army but Batista, and if they were truly patriots fighting for freedom and democracy—a provisional constitutional government was the correct solution to the conflict.

When we summoned the political leaders and officials who were asked to wait in the first-floor salon, some had already departed.

The Vice-President of the Republic, Mayor-elect of Havana, and President of the Liberal Party, Rafael Guás Inclán, could not be located. He would have been next in line of succession, but he was not present and had thus yielded his right. Therefore, the President of the Senate, Anselmo Alliegro, was designated to pass on the Presidency to the oldest justice of the Supreme Court. Thus the Provisional Government was formed in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and with Gen. Eulogio Cantillo as Chief of the Army.*

The military leaders and civilians witnessed my resignation. I was answering the appeal to my patriotism which had once been made by the Church, the industrialists, and the merchants, and was now being made by the military chiefs because they could not restore order.

In the document I implored God's favor to light the way for the Cubans and to grant them the grace of living in peace and

* "Justice Piedra agreed to assume the Presidency, with Cantillo as Army Chief of Staff. They decreed a halt in the operations of the Army, inviting the rebels to do the same. At 10 a.m., when the reporters left the Provisional President, they said: 'Justice Piedra was accompanied by his colleagues Alvarez Tabío and Moré Benítez, physicians Cuervo Rubio and Núñez Portuondo and Dr. Raúl de Cárdenas. Piedra read a speech addressed to the people of Cuba which stated that he had given the cease fire order and hoped that those who 'invoking the principles of liberty and the Constitution had taken up arms' would now adopt the same measure.' Fidel Castro refused to accept the cease fire order on the designation of Justice Piedra as Provisional President." (Bohemia, Jan. 11, 1959.)
harmony. In handing over the Government to my successor, I begged the people to be on their best behavior so that he would not be a victim of the hatreds and passions which had disgraced the Cuban family. In the same way I urged all members of the Armed Forces and the agents of law and order to obey their leaders under the authority of the new Government.
CHAPTER XXIII

A SAD SUGGESTION

It was believed that my resignation would bring peace. The soldiers would return to their barracks and blood would no longer flow between brothers; commerce and industry would be relieved; individuals, political parties, and the press would enjoy greater freedom with the cessation of hostilities. In short, Cuba would be happy.

Members of the social "elite," as also merchants, industrialists, journalists, priests, and even those favored by the dying regime, had no doubts that the legalization of the terrorists who "fought for our freedom" would result in peace and the free exercise of opinion. These were sad suggestions.

The country was to continue to function under a constitutional formula without me. I was told I should leave the country to guarantee the cease-fire and the pacification of the country. There was no need for the Chiefs of the military districts of the Provinces of Havana and Matanzas to do the same. They would not have any difficulties, it was said, and could cooperate with the new Government.*

* General Cantillo called a meeting of the staff of the armed forces before dawn of the 1st January, 1959 and told them: "The great responsibility of serving the country and putting an end to this civil war that has cost so many lives, has fallen on my shoulders as well as yours. "In an effort to stop bloodshed, the President has resigned. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Dr. Carlos M. Piedra, has been designated President of the Republic.

"The President has left the country. The Chief of the Joint Commands, the Chief of Staff of the Navy, the Chief of the National Police, have also left the country. The Chairman of the Senate, the Vice President of the Republic, and some high ranking officers of the armed forces, have resigned. Thus, I have assumed command of the armed forces."

134

Robado del archivo del Dr. Antonio Rafael de la Cova
http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuba-books.htm
Informing the Family

From the place where we were assembled, I sent a communication to my wife. She came down with Jorge, Fulgencito and Martha María (16, 5, and 1 year old). Carlos Manuel and Robertico, 3 and 10 years—their schools closed for the Christmas vacations—were in the United States. I kissed her and told her we were going abroad. “But aren’t we going to Palacio...? The children’s clothes and mine. . . .” My answer was another kiss, and pressing her arm lightly, I indicated that she bring over the children. My children were informed.

We were to meet at the military airport, where planes were being prepared for the trip. The Chief of the Air Force had previously been told to prepare them for the new General Staff. The Presidential aides, the officers of the President’s office, and Gen. Tabernilla Palmero were to inform Congressmen, labor leaders, ministers, and political figures of what had occurred. Police officials were informed through Col. Orlando Piedra, and the Military Intelligence through Lieut. Col. Irenaldo García.

Jewels and Clothes

Nothing was prepared for our departure, as has been fallaciously said by the euphoric “victors”—those vultures or crows cackling over pools of blood. In the Palacio, we left the suits, the dresses, the children’s toys, the trophies won by the eldest at horse shows, the expensive gifts made to the children on their birthdays, pictures and works of art, jewels and ornaments of the First Lady, my personal possessions, acquired or presented to me from the 1930’s on.

Nothing was touched in “Kuquine,” our private dwelling. My beloved library, where I spent the last hours before the decisive meeting, remained intact. Here were the tender books of my
boyhood, those which recalled my adolescence, and those which were my teachers in my maturity; the encyclopedias, the hundreds of picture albums, the relics and keepsakes collected in the rooms which the "invaders," blind from ignorance, called "a storage bin in the form of a library."

The stocks, bonds, securities, and cash which represented the basic fortune of the family and the wills which disposed of them in case of death were left in the banks.*

Those suits and dresses, the jewels, the securities, and cash could have been transferred days before, as others did, or they could have been taken with me; for if I had been planning, not for days, but for hours, the end of my term as President, who could have prevented it? In the chapter which discusses the lies published by Castro's morbidity, I mention the millions, by hundreds or by tens—according to the imagination of each—which I am supposed to have.

* The Havana newspapers published accounts of the contents of the opened safety deposit boxes; of the jewels and possessions of the family; they even printed photographs showing people wearing similar things.
CHAPTER XXIV

FLYING INTO EXILE

With me in the plane were my wife and our son Jorge; Mr. and Mrs. Güell; Doctors Andrés Domingo and Andrés Rivero Agüero; Dr. Gastón Godoy, his wife and son; Gen. Pedro Rodríguez Avila and his wife; Admiral José A. Rodríguez Calderón; Gen. Juan Rojas and his wife and three children; Gen. Roberto Fernández Miranda; Col. Orlando Piedra; aides; members of the guard and others.

To all my troubles was added the concern for the fate of my other children. I did not know what route the others had taken, nor was I certain that my recommendations had been followed to bring the younger ones to Daytona Beach in my Presidential plane.

We were in the air some 20 minutes when one of the pilots, Lieut. Col. Antonio Soto, informed me that we were about to leave the jurisdictional waters of Cuba, en route to Florida. I thought a moment and, remembering a conversation which Minister of State Gonzalo Güell and I had held with United States Ambassador Smith, said: "Turn around and head for the Dominican Republic." There was an exclamation of surprise, the aides near me shook their heads. A moment later, pilot D’Abrigeón, the captain of the ship, came back to confirm the order. I answered in the affirmative and someone commented "To go to the Dominican Republic we have to fly over the length of Cuba and we ought to take advantage of the distance we have gone and continue to your home in Daytona." In my mind revolved something I thought of as an obligation
and I repeated my proposal to fly to the historic city of Santo Domingo.

A Question Which Is Repeated

Looking through the windows I saw for the first time the exhausted land of L'Ouverture and Christophe as it joined the glorious soil of Enriquilla, Duarte, and Máximo Gómez. Here is the famous Montecristi of Martí's memorable manifesto.

I had spent the trip thinking about the causes which, with the abrupt termination of my Administration, placed in imminent danger the extraordinary progress we had given Cuba. I recalled my former unjust exile which political pressure had cut short, negating the personal plans I had made upon leaving the Presidency in 1944.

I thought of my last interview with Ambassador Smith. He had told me with warm sincerity, and in the good faith by which he said he was moved, that he saw no solution for my Administration.* I believed he was speaking in the name of the State oil

* In his depositions before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security, Ambassador Smith said: "... Upon instructions I spent 2 hours and 35 minutes on Dec. 17, 1958, with Batista, and I told him that the United States or rather certain influential people in the United States believed that he could no longer maintain effective control in Cuba, and that they believed it would avoid a great deal of further bloodshed if he were to retire."

In the secret hearing of the Senate Subcommittee held on Sept. 2, 1960, J. G. Sourwine, Committee Counsel, asked former Ambassador William D. Pawley: "Did you know that six days after you saw Batista on the 9th of December, the American Ambassador saw him and told him that the U.S. Government had lost confidence in his ability to keep peace and that to avoid bloodshed the best thing that could happen would be for him to leave the country?" And Pawley stated: "No, I did not know that, and had I been privy to that, I would have done what I could to have prevented that from happening that way, because the only possible results of that would be that Fidel Castro would have immediately come into power, and I am convinced that there was enough noise made in the meetings in the Department of State and in the CIA for enough people to be convinced that Castro could bring us nothing but disaster."
Department and his suggestions left no doubt of this: “If you are unable to finish the weeks that remain before your term of office expires,” he more or less said, “and you decide to transfer power to a Provisional Government, your family could go to your home in Daytona Beach and you could come there later, after three or four months. You could go to Spain and return later to join your family in the United States. Naturally you may go directly to Daytona, if you so desire; but it seems more convenient for you to spend those first months in Spain, for example, so as to avoid the attacks which could doubtless arise, were you to go to the United States immediately.”

Those were the words which motivated the change of direction of the plane that was now taking me to the Dominican Republic. I believed I would have no difficulty in obtaining passage and realizing my old dream of seeing the Mother Country, where my grandparents had been born.

In the first days, the Dominican Government was courteous to me. I was grateful for such attentiveness and made use of the opportunity to use the telephone to learn the true situation in Cuba.* After two weeks, Dr. Güell requested visas for Spain. The answer was delayed. Time and again the Spanish Embassy was evasive and gave him the run-around. Ambassador Alfredo Sánchez Bello was polite at all moments, as were the officials and employees of the Spanish Diplomatic Mission; but correct form was not the answer to the urgent necessity to terminate these transactions successfully.

*Diplomatic Impropriety*

The reports we were receiving began to make us uneasy. From Florida we learned that Ambassador Lojendio was op-

*Jules Dubois said in *Fidel Castro* (page 122) that on several occasions Batista had refused Trujillo’s friendly approaches and that the Dominican dictator has a long memory for vengeance.*
posed to the authorization of our trip. We know that a diplomat cannot, in certain instances, act on the basis of friendship, but we could not understand that our request should be denied.

Ex-Presidents Doctors Ramón Grau and Carlos Prío had not wished to re-establish relations with the Spanish Government. In 1952 my Administration, solely occupied with the reconstruction of Cuba, morally degraded and plundered by the two previous administrations, re-established the Embassy in Madrid; Spain designated as her ambassador Don Juan Pablo Lojendio, Marquis de Vellisca, who received the considerations due his high position. Aware of a certain amount of ill-will existing in some areas through the persistent propaganda of my predecessors, the First Lady and I, as well as the Cabinet ministers, went out of our way to publicly demonstrate our approval of the Spanish ambassador. As a result, this political suspicion had begun to disappear.

If my Government had not objected to the Spanish Ambassador for granting asylum, during the unfortunate events of Cuba, to known terrorists and perpetrators of repugnant acts of violence, then we saw no reason for their not giving us the same consideration.

The Bohemia magazine, which has treated, and still treats with insolence all non-Leftist governments, and which is particularly venomous against Gen. Franco’s Government, said on Jan. 11, 1959: “The Spanish Embassy in Havana is receiving the gratitude of the revolution. More than a hundred ardent fighters for freedom found asylum in its quarters. . . .” It added: “Mr. Jaime Caldevilla, chief of the office of diplomatic information of the Spanish Embassy, relates that: With Alejandro Vergara, Chancellor of the Embassy, he saved the lives of countless revolutionary youths, with the encouragement of the Ambassador,” adding, “to cooperate in this humanitarian task, we set up a triple service: (1) Official asylum granted to more than a hundred; (2) Transportation to the airport for those who
FLYING INTO EXILE

were in danger and had not yet received safe-conduct; and (3) Information Service. Difficult and sad work.” And, in addition, Bohemia states: “Don Pablo de Lojendio protected and gave asylum on numerous occasions to important revolutionaries without having been compelled to do so by any covenant.”

Well, I do not believe there were so many cases, nor do I believe that the Ambassador and Caldevilla and Vergara went so far as to establish “information services” and transfer criminals in such numbers in conspiratorial fashion.

In any event, my Government respected the right of asylum and permitted even those Embassies which did not have such authority to grant it anyway.

All this justified our astonishment over the fact that the Ambassador, who was our friend, should put obstacles in the path of our benevolent efforts.

We consider the circumstances of this denial of a visa a rumor, because, in truth, we do not believe that his Excellency, Ambassador Lojendio, would obstruct this desire of the family of the Chief of State, who was a respectful friend of his Government.

Answer to a Score of Questions

In the first eight months of my exile, there was not a single international correspondent who did not ask me in confidence: “Why did you come to the Dominican Republic?” Cubans, except for our close friends in the country, did the same. Even an occasional Dominican discreetly asked me the question when he saw our efforts to obtain a Spanish or United States visa so that I could join my wife and children.

The question is answered. I thought I would go to Spain and my aim was frustrated. After six months of exile, I believed I could enter the United States, a country to whom I always spoke frankly and cordially.
Statement of Hopes

My first words upon alighting on Dominican soil expressed my feelings: "My greatest desire is that peace and harmony reign in Cuba. I have the satisfaction of having carried on a good Administration during which my country enjoyed the greatest prosperity in its history.

"The rebels had unsuspected allies and were abundantly supplied with arms, resources, and equipment. When the causes are completely revealed and the sources and magnitude of the traffic of arms are known with certainty, it will be seen to what degree the entire order of the traditional international system broke down."

Additional Commentary

As I finish this chapter, unpleasant news arrived from Cuba. When does it not? The AP, the UPI, and Reuters all carried news of a serious incident between the Spanish Ambassador and Premier Fidel Castro: "I have been defamed and vilified," exclaimed the Marquis de Vellisca. What the tyrant said is not fit to be read or heard. The adjectives are all-inclusive. "Cuba officially notified Spain today that the Ambassador of General Franco in Havana has ceased to be persona grata in this country. . . . You have 24 hours to leave Cuba. You are not in Spain, but in the Republic of Cuba." Such beautiful diplomatic language!
CHAPTER XXV

GOOD-BYE TO QUISQUEYA

Weeks and months passed while I waited for admittance into Spain or the United States, the initial objectives of my journey into exile. We were in mid-summer and the climate resembled that of my own country. In search of fresh air, I would take long walks along the avenue which borders a beautiful part of this side of the Caribbean, covered with palm trees which were not as tall, green, or majestic as the royal palms which decorate the unforgettable fields of Cuba. These walks covered 4 or 5 miles, sometimes in the direction of the buildings constructed for an International Fair held in January 1957, and other times into the open countryside. These walks gave rise to a legend which was not too strange, considering the circumstances, and to new difficulties.

One day I was surprised by the news—although I should not have been surprised—printed in newspapers of different countries and supplied by one of the international agencies, that I had planned to leave Dominican territory clandestinely and enter the United States in a similar manner. I received cables and telephone calls from friends and from my wife. They informed me that it was a report emanating from the Dominican capital.

What was the origin of this false information? That was not difficult to deduce: it had originated from official sources.

On another occasion, the rumor was repeated in a different form: the dispatch sent abroad stated that ex-President Batista had been surprised when he was trying to board a plane, and
warned by the Government that if he tried it again, he could be the victim of a "collision." The reporter did not indicate whether this "accident" would occur on land or in the air. Although the "news" was not true in either case, the warning certainly was.

This "warning" was preceded by another which Pedraza brought me from Policarpo Soler—the contact between him and the Government—that I ought not to leave the hotel, for I could be assassinated.*

Because the newspapers had published other reports about me, which I could not refute owing to their origin and nature, I made several statements to the AP and the UPI on May 30, saying that I maintained the fixed policy of neither refuting nor referring to newspaper stories which were concerned with my stay in the Dominican Republic, but because of the two false stories published, I wished to declare once and for all, that those reports were absolutely false.

I shall never forget the smiles and tears of those who came to see us off and the tender kisses of the little ones of the Swiss couple, the little boy and the little girl who reminded me daily, with their peculiar and sweet language, of my own absent little ones.

In 13 hours of flight we were in Santa Maria in the Azores. The night passed quickly on the journey; at 3 in the morning the sun's rays coming through the windows kept me from sleeping. At 8 Lisbon time, the enormous machine renewed its journey. Three hours later we were looking down at the waters of the Tajo and the widespread arms of the Christ King which rises in Almada, giving a welcome and a blessing to all those who arrive by sea or air at the beautiful city of the seven hills and old palaces.

* See Chapter IV.
GOOD-BYE TO QUISQUEYA

The cordial reception given us in Lisbon reflected the traditional Portuguese good manners and respect.

A new stage of this exile was beginning, and my stay would not be idle. Reporters, soldiers of the Information Service, here as everywhere, and in every epoch, moved into action.

The Portuguese press interviewed me at the hotel after I had made a tour of the city in company with some friends. Among those present were the Diario de Noticias, the Diario de Lisboa, the Diario Ilustrado, O Seculo, and the Diario Popular, as well as radio and television stations.

Marginal Commentaries

At the end of the interview the journalists formed small groups, conversing among themselves or with my companions. One of those present approached me and asked to see me again. Before I left for Funchal, I spoke with him. Speaking privately, apart from his function as a reporter, he wanted to know what I had seen and what had most impressed me.

If I had not already known—I told him—of the courtesy and the human qualities of the Portuguese, I would say that is what I most admire of all the things I have observed during my stay. The contrast between the old and the modern city and the two together with the gardens and woods of the hills which surround them, has been a pleasant surprise. What seems most strange, however, is the small number of statues in proportion to the numerous monuments, many centuries old. These, in my eyes, are among the richest treasure of the Portuguese nation. The palaces of Cintra, Pena, Queluz, Ajuda, precious and magnificent; those of Mafra and San Benito; the Museum of Carriages; the Cathedral; monasteries like that of the Jéronimos and Batalha; the convents, like that of San Vicente de Fora and Our Lady of Carmo; and the old seminaries, are history in stone
which speaks of the centuries. The statues of the heroes and leaders and those of other eponymous figures contrast with the lack of marble and bronze which could immortalize contemporary leaders.

In answer to another question, I told the inquisitive interviewer: “Upon my arrival in Portugal I was able to appreciate the sobriety which is an outstanding characteristic of its government officials.”

In Cuba, the people are different in that they erect statues to living people and I, in my long public life, had to oppose several attempts to erect one of me.

One of those projects succeeded, despite my reluctance. It happened when we were celebrating a banquet in 1957, on the anniversary of the “10 of March” Movement which brought us to power. Gen. Aristides Sosa de Quesada, speaking in the name of Gen. Tabernilla Dolz and the officer corps of the Army, said that a statue of me should be raised in Camp Columbia. I opposed the idea courteously, trying not to offend the 500 guests. They insisted and the statue was raised.

I let a month go by, and then informed both generals that on any pretext, such as having it moved to another spot, they must take the statue down. After several weeks with no action, I wrote a personal letter to Gen. Tabernilla in which I also mentioned Sosa de Quesada, requesting the removal of the statue without delay.

When several more weeks passed without its removal, I changed the recommendation to an order, and it was carried out in the presence of the troop with the explanation that some changes had to be made on the statue.
POSTSCRIPT—1961

The Invasion Fiasco

This book, translated from the Spanish, was ready to go to press on April 17, 1961. On that day the ill-fated invasion of Cuba’s Bay of Cochinos and the Zapata swamps was launched, with its painful loss of so many fighting for freedom and democracy.

Many contradictory opinions have been given regarding this operation. Only one thing is certain—the troops fought courageously.

When the vigorous “call to arms” was issued to all Cubans “without exception” by Dr. José Miró Cardona, Chairman of the Board of the Revolutionary Council, supported by the so-called Democratic Revolutionary Front, it was taken for granted that he was in full control of the situation. Judging by his warlike communiqués issued the day after the invasion, to the effect that the landing was only the initial phase and that decisive action was yet to start, it was presumed that he was fully aware of all developments. But when news of the defeat began filtering through and he asserted that most of the invaders were on their way to the Escambray mountains, those who knew the nature and location of the beachhead—surrounded by impassable swampland and jungle—began to have doubts. And in accordance with the statements of survivors and of U.S. officials, the only conclusion to be drawn was that the leader did not know whether the operation was by guerrillas trying to support the fighters in the mountains, or by a strong military group powerful enough to invade Cuba.

147
These comments are based on reports of the local press and U.S. newspapers, but everything points to an extreme lack of responsibility and a dismal neglect of duties by those so-called leaders.

—The Old B-26’s—

It seems now that only 1,400 men took part in the heroic attack. For three days they fought a losing battle without the promised air support and reinforcements, against the mighty military machine of the Communist International. When the liberation troops landed, the Communists were waiting for them in ambush with tanks, artillery, and light automatic weapons. The few heavy, lumbering B-26’s were shot down by Castro’s airmen. Although the destruction of Castro’s air force had been promised, it nevertheless comprised enough planes to destroy the old bombers and sink ancient ships ferrying the ammunition and communications equipment.

Two young pilots, Chirrino Piedra and Raúl Vianelo, 24 and 27 years old, refused to give ground to the fast modern fighters and fought against impossible odds. They had knocked down two or three planes when they were ordered to make their getaway. Chirrino Piedra answered that they would fight to the end. The brave boys went down fighting.

—Reinforcements Coming—

A survivor reported that when they were surrounded by enemy infantry, one of the liberation forces leaders tried desperately to establish radio contact asking for air support. His call, made in English, was also answered in English in these words: “Don’t worry, support is on the way. Keep fighting.” But no help was received by air or by sea. And then: the end.
Hundreds of dead and prisoners, and the strengthening of the Communist beachhead in America.

--United in Sacrifice--

The uniting of the various Cuban factions, with powerful backing from neighbors cooperating in the venture, could have brought about the complete victory of the liberating forces. But the actions of a highly partisan group, as demonstrated by the reply to the U.S. White Paper*, divided the Cubans even more.

Many friends who had worked with us, or relatives of ex-officials of our government, did not mind the unjust references to non-existent blots on their past. They had the opportunity of trading their liberty or even their lives for the freedom of their country and there was no holding them back. Among many, Raúl García Menocal and Carlos Guás Decal died for their country. They were both grandchildren of Generals of the Cuban war of independence from Spain. One was the grandson of Gen. Mario García Menocal, ex-President of Cuba, and the other, grandson of Gen. Carlos Guás Paguera. Dr. Rafael Guás Inclán, father of one of these deceased patriots, had been Vice-President under my administration and Dr. Raúl G. Menocal, the father of the other, had been Minister of Commerce. The list of dead patriots is, unfortunately, long, but among those now closer to Our Lord is Dr. José García Montes. He was Cuban Minister to Japan during our administration. These, with all others representing various political factions, organizations, and religions, together with ex-members of the rebel army and the professional armed forces, consecrated the unity of purpose in sacrifice and death.

Nevertheless, Dr. José Miró Cardona later condemned those glorious losses in statements trying to justify the fiasco by blaming it on what he termed the “ignoble past” of some of the troops. He himself was the one with the most “ignoble” past; the one who, as Castro’s Prime Minister, fostered the retroactivity of penal laws, at the same time re-establishing the death penalty and abolishing the writ of Habeas Corpus. He also abolished the right of asylum with the promulgation of the “Urrutia Doctrine.”

—— A Historic Letter——

Dr. Rafael Guás Inclán answered Dr. Miró Cardona’s remarks in a long and moving letter:

“I have read your last statements,” he said, “and I would be insincere should I not express the disappointment and sorrow they have caused me. . . .

“. . . I have felt the sting deeply, at one of the saddest and harshest moments of my life, 25 days after my boy went ashore at Playa Girón, not knowing for sure to this day whether he is dead, a prisoner, or still fighting in an effort to break through surrounding troops.”

(The beloved son who had believed in the “call to all Cubans” was dead. A witness saw him go down under machine-gun fire and bleed to death without anyone to assist him.)

In another paragraph he said: “I believed that the setback at the Bay of Cochinos, sending 1,000 boys, some of them with not more than a week’s training, some with less, without the indispensable support of an efficient air force, with only a few old obsolete B-26’s and for transports some old slow merchant vessels that were sent back to sea when the battle started, leaving the troops with scarcely 100 rounds of ammunition per man,
while the aircraft carriers, the destroyers, the jet fighters looked on with a smile as the troops were decimated on land—the whole disastrous operation that should put the leaders to shame—would hardly serve to review past errors or undertake further operations on a firmer footing.

"... the statements made by you, your discrimination against certain factions, your desire to divide, hurt, and sadden those of us who have lost our boys to the cause. . . ."

Dr. Guás Inclán went on to say, "... I tried to make myself believe that all the decrees that established a retroactive death penalty, that created courts made up of illiterates who meted out death penalties so freely, all the laws created first by the dictatorship and later by the tyranny, were not of your making. . . ."

"... I must confess, probably because today I feel the loss of my son more deeply due to the pain caused by your last statement, which is more painful than your past conduct as a Prime Minister, and more so than your other statements, showing a hatred I had never seen in you during the Batista regime, when you used to hide in the venerable shadow of Cosme de la Torriente, whom Batista always respected.

"... Your statement falls on the pain caused by this sad truth: The Bay of Cochinos (Bay of Pigs)—some names turn out to be symbolic—has made Castro stronger than ever, has destroyed the underground. . . ."

His letter goes on to say: "My supreme sorrow is to have lost my only son in a cause he believed noble and just, that turned out dirty, cheap, and stupid because of ambitions and discriminations. . . .

"I thought you would have resigned—I would have as soon as I heard the statements of the deceived prisoners—I find that when you must pick on somebody you pick again on ‘those of the ignoble past,’ as if the real ignoble past were not the one that brought about Castro, communism, the firing squads, Rus-
sia, your office of Prime Minister, and the laws made up by you, that Fidel still uses to rape Cuba.”

Miro Cardona should have refrained from making such untimely remarks, and thus avoided having to hear such painful truths.

—Proof?—

The CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) was involved in this confusion, so painful for Cuba, for the United States, and for the whole Western Hemisphere. The CIA has been accused by members of my administration of having agents in close contact with the rebels.

Drew Pearson, in his column of May 23, 1961—one month after the ill-fated invasion—offered some comments and specific cases.

He said that persistent rumors in the diplomatic corps indicated that the CIA had been helping for years to put Castro in power. The rumors had further stated that CIA agents, in their efforts to get rid of President Batista, had supplied arms to Castro during his guerrilla war in the mountains.

An investigation of this story was started by the United States Senate Sub-Committee on Foreign Relations. On May 23 it was said that the Senate Committee had been informed that the CIA had spent $45 million in training and fitting out 1,500 guerrillas.

Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, is reported to have testified before the above-mentioned subcommittee that he gave an informal approval of military arrangements for the attempt to land the 1,500 men where they could join guerrillas operating in the mountains. Some members of the committee said he had clearly specified that the attempt could be successful only if certain conditions were met. These conditions included the destruction of Castro’s
air force, plus realization of the CIA's prediction that anti-Castro groups would rally to help the invaders escape to the mountains. It was reported that the objective was to avoid establishing contact with the Cuban army whenever possible, and to consolidate the forces that could harass Castro and provide cover for possible further landings.

Instead, almost everything went wrong. The invaders' old B-26 bombers did not bomb the airfields, he said, and in fact they arrived at Cuba in full daylight, when Castro's armed T-33 trainers were in the air. He added that Castro had advance knowledge of the exact place where the landing would be attempted, and had massed his forces there, equipped with tanks and artillery. His modern planes shot down several of the World War II bombers, leaving the anti-Castro troops without air cover.

The final disaster was the sinking of an old Liberty ship that carried most of the communications equipment and the ammunition, he concluded.

Were Miró Cardona and the other members of the so-called Revolutionary Democratic Front aware of the details?

At any rate, it was unfortunate that United States agencies became involved in this ill-fated action, on account of the repercussions that came in so useful for Soviet propaganda and anti-American activities. A Washington correspondent of the New York Herald Tribune made the statement, on May 1, to the effect that the assistance from a government agency was not enough to oust Castro, although it was sufficient to make the United States share the responsibility before the eyes of the world.

Castro felt so strong that he indulged in ridicule in the days when these notes were being exchanged. After he had declared that Cuba was a Socialist Republic, with his characteristic disregard for human sentiments, he sent a committee of prisoners to the United States to negotiate the exchange of their fellow-
soldiers for tractors. He stated that he would reserve the right to pick those who would be executed and offered to exchange some of the others for Puerto Rican Nationalist leader Albisu Campos and for one Molina (a) "The Hook" convicted for the slaying of a 9-year-old Venezuelan girl, Magdalena Urdaneta, visiting New York with her parents.

Naturally, the Government of the United States rejected the offer, but later it said that it would not stand in the way if a committee headed by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Dr. Milton Eisenhower, and Walter Reuther, President of the Auto Workers' Union, was able to make a deal for the tractors. During World War II Adolf Eichmann had allegedly proposed the exchange of 1,000,000 Jews for 10,000 trucks. In those days millions of Hebrews and thousands of children were exterminated in the gas chambers at Auschwitz. Fidel Castro could not be outdone, especially with the support of his Russian Fuehrer!

And now the patriots are anxiously awaiting what to do in view of the disaster that has destroyed their immediate hopes. What will the despairing prisoners held captive in their homeland count on for help, as also the exiles impatiently waiting for a chance to liberate their country from the foreign Red devil that has enslaved it? The whole thing is disastrous and tragic, not only for Cuba, but for all of us. It constitutes an actual menace for the United States and the other American countries. With all this danger floating over this hemisphere, threatening the security and freedom of the whole American continent, there is no doubt that its consequences must be felt throughout the rest of the Free World.

Several thousand more prisoners have been added to the thousands already suffering the horrors of Cuban prisons before the 17th of April, 1961. The thousands of deaths brought about by the abominable regime have been increased many times, and continue to multiply every day, while the Red satel-
lite just 90 miles off the American coastline is becoming more powerful day by day.

In the face of the anxieties of the relatives of the prisoners and exiles, President Kennedy promised not to abandon Cuba to communism. That promise acted like a ray of sunshine in the darkened spirits of all those anxiously awaiting a ray of hope.

In the meantime, communism went ahead in Cuba with the international organizations inactive in the astounding Cuban case. Castro would take advantage of the inactive situation propitiated by the tractors deal, to become even stronger.

There is no doubt that the United States cannot solve this problem all by themselves, and it is a pity that they were goaded into action with such unpreparedness or that they fell so short of solving the situation for good once they were in it. What has the Organization of American States done? What can it do in the face of such a grave problem? The answer is to be found in the very charter of that organization, as also in the last half dozen conferences it has held. This is the most critical and dangerous problem the organization has had to face, but by the same token it is the most clearly defined situation, where it may act without the pretext of the complexes that the extremist doctrines have planted in its very core. Never did the phrases "now or never" or "to be or not to be" seem so timely and necessary.

Dr. Gaston Godoy, former President of the Havana Bar Association, analyzes the legal structure of the OAS and its dangerous uselessness in his book The Cuban Case and the Organization of the American States. In the book, Dr. Godoy says:

"...no one can erase now from the records of the Inter-American Conference at Caracas the agreement contained in the 'Declaration of solidarity for the preservation of political integrity of the American States, against the intervention of
international communism'. It stipulates that the control of the political institutions of an American State by international communism risks the peace of America and threatens the sovereignty and the political independence of the American States, and it is agreed that in such an event the consulting organization is under obligation to call a meeting, with full powers to apply all the necessary controlling measures."

In other paragraphs, Dr. Godoy says in this book:

"In the face of these violations of all the rules, the OAS has remained inoperative, with the exception of two unimportant measures...

"The first one was the meeting of the Consulting Organism, held at Santiago de Chile the 12th of August, 1959...

"The only thing that meeting accomplished was to outline the basic characteristics of representative democracies. It was unnecessary to make the foreign ministers travel so far just for that...

"The Cuban regime was really proud of that resolution, saying it fitted them perfectly.

"We will now quote Don Andrés Sepúlveda, professor of the Mexican National University, who said: ‘Interamericanism is going through a great crisis nowadays, due to the Santiago Consulting Conference of August 12-17, 1959, where a small imbalance in the Caribbean showed up the whole system and proved the inefficiency of the so-called pan-American solidarity.’

"...And, what happened in San José in connection with our case? The name of Cuba does not appear in any of the resolutions. There is only a mild reference to the Russian-Chinese bloc.

"He was not saved by the talks coming from Havana classifying as American Judases all those who signed the Declaration, nor was he saved from the attacks of Mr. Gromyko, when he declared at Moscow that what had taken place at Costa Rica was only coarse American intervention.

"The San José Agreement is a slippery and irresponsible document. Nevertheless: ‘The American delegation held firm in their defence of the Caribbean situation insisting, through their spokesman Mr. Herter, on the necessity of getting the interamerican legal order into working condition.’
"Thus the Havana command obtained triple immunity to its unlawful activities against the peace of the continent. That is why San José is a regretful chapter in the history of the OAS."

—Indispensable Explanation—

I really wish I were not obliged to refer to this sad incident, but so many requests from news agencies and newspapermen urging me to reply to questions and allusions have impelled me to state that neither directly nor indirectly, even by advice nor insinuations, did I have any part in the ill-fated venture. Two very powerful reasons restrain me from any patriotic impulses that could involve me in political activities: a firm resolution to retire from public life—as I have repeatedly declared—and my special situation as an exile.

—Reply to the Unjust White Paper—

As these last pages were written I received an important document signed and sealed at Miami, Florida, by several prominent figures in Cuban political circles—persons who had held important offices during our administration. Even though the progress of our administration in the fields of education, economics, social work, public health, and eradication of illiteracy have been covered in this book, we have decided to include this document in this section in view of its truthfulness, sobriety,

* It is now timely to quote Sir Charles Stirling, ex-British Ambassador to Portugal in his statements to The Times in connection with Angola:

"LONDON—To insist that we must vote with all the groups that exert pressure on the United Nations, in an effort of not being overcome by the Russians, seems to be like a desperate defense. "We cannot compete indefinitely in the encouragement of lies, envy and hate. To give in to this blackmail could have terrible consequences."
and the precise manner in which it replies to the White Paper. The statement condenses and clarifies the real facts as they have been revealed in this book, without bitterness toward my opponents and with sincere friendship to the United States.

—Negative Reaction—

The unfortunate and untimely Paper that gives rise to the respectful reply by some high officials of my administration serves as a basis to the premise—unfortunately, unusual—that my administration "made a popular violent reaction almost unavoidable."*

*Former U. S. Ambassador to Cuba (1944) Mr. Spruille Braden said recently in a speech: "Ambassadors Gardner and Smith testified some months ago that they had reported to the Department of State as to what was happening in Cuba. Their advices were ignored. I myself declared before the Senate Sub-Committee on Internal Security on the 17th of July, 1959, and maybe even went too far on the 4th of October, 1957, when I warned high ranking officials of the State Department that if they persisted on their policies they would turn Cuba over to Castro, communism, and chaos. I was assured that my warning had reached the very top. But a month later, the 6th of November, 1957, the Secretary of State declared in a press interview that he did not deem Communist activities in Latin America important enough to worry about. Who then, concealed the true facts from the Secretary of State? Was it simple stupidity or was it done with malice aforethought?

"The State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency surely must have been better informed than I regarding Castro and his Communist background, his record and his probable future line of action, current events and their outcome. If they did not know the answers to these questions, why didn't they? We know for a fact that they were given plenty of warning. Why then did they turn their backs on the United States and on the other hand, went all out to help and protect Castro and the Communists?

"That overwhelming ignorance of the Cuban situation still persists in Washington. This is made quite evident by the so-called 'White Paper' published by the State Department on the 3rd of April, 1961. "The Department of State, with a false history of Castro's revolu-
POSTSCRIPT—1961

History will tell—and this document summarizes it very well—that popular reaction was quite different. The repeated calls to a general strike were insufficient to undermine the unity of labor. Neither did the attacks on the Goicuria Barracks on April 29, 1956, nor the attack on the Presidential Palace on March 13, 1957. These were not supported by the minutest portion of the population. On the contrary, hundreds of thousands of people paraded before the Palace as an apology to the Chief of State and his family. Many civic and business groups and organization, some half truths and many errors, ignores the fact that the 26th of July movement was an offspring of the Caribbean Bureau, created by the Comintern. The Department keeps repeating its silly fantasy that Fidel is a ‘traitor’ to the revolution! His revolution was created and inspired by Communists since the very beginning; he betrayed God and his country, but never his lords nor their Communist doctrines. He condemns Batista as a tyrant and slings all kinds of mud at his honor and his reputation. He implies that all Cuba suffered from hunger, lack of medical attention, housing and other necessities ‘until Castro arrived’.

“Another shameful aspect of the ‘White Paper’ is that it ignores, as unimportant, the seizure of one billion dollars’ worth of property of United States citizens and the loss of at least six or seven billion dollars’ worth of properties of Cuban citizens. The United States has never even hinted that it would insist on restitution to its citizens.

“Naturally there always was poverty, corruption and illiteracy; and there was always the slack time between sugar cane crops. But in the island of Manhattan itself, not to mention the rest of the city of New York, there are similar situations of poverty, illiteracy, and lawlessness. And a trip through West Virginia, Kentucky and the Tennessee mountains would prove enlightening as to rural poverty.

“The ‘White Paper’ is one of the most indefensible documents ever to be published by a supposedly responsible foreign office. The most favourable comment that could be made about it is that it denotes such an abysmal ignorance and lack of understanding that it largely accounts for the tragic, inexcusable blunder of the Bay of Pigs.”

Note: As this book is being published, Fidel Castro has confessed to the world that he is, and always will be, a Communist, a Marxist-Leninist.
tions visited me at the Palace to express their condemnation of such an act.*

* Among others, the following representative groups visited the Presidential Palace on the dates mentioned, to express their condemnation of the attack and congratulate the President and his family for having come through unscathed. High Catholic hierarchs were among the first to attend the Palace, then:

March 27—**National Association of Sugar Mill Owners**—A representative committee headed by its President, Francisco Pando.

March 28—**National Association of Sugar Cane Planters**—President Joaquín Calcines, Committees and Delegations.

March 29—**Cuban Confederation of Labor**—Secretary General Eusebio Mujal Barniol and Unions.

March 29—**Widows, Children, and Descendants of Veterans of the War of Independence**—Luis Varona and members.

March 29—**National Council of Veterans of the War of Independence**—President Gen., Dr. Daniel Gispert García, Territorial Councils and Delegations.

April 1—**Cuban National Bank**—Pres., Dr. Joaquín Martínez Saénz and semi-State institutions.

April 1—**Association of Savings and Capitalization Banks**—Pres. Alex M. Roberts and Committees.

April 1—**Havana Clearing House**—Pres. José I. de la Cámara and associates.

April 1—**Cuban Banks Association**—Pres. Víctor Pedroso and associates.

April 1—**Representatives of the Civic Military Institute.**

April 1—**Representatives of the Rural Schools and Educational Missions.**

April 1—**Technological Schools, Professors, and Students.**

April 1—**Delegates of the Jose Martí, Holguín, and Camaguey Universities.**

April 2—**Textile Manufacturers’ Association**—Orestes Berard, who read the cabled message sent by James D. Hedges, Pres.

April 2—**Association of National Insurance Companies**—Julio Dumas, Pres., and Associates.

April 2—**Havana Stock Market**—Oscar Fernández Trevejo, Pres., and members.

April 2—**National Industrialists’ Association**—Abel Mestre, Pres., and committees of Cuban industrialists.

April 2—**National Winemakers’ Union; National Association of Wooden Furniture Manufacturers; National Union of
Neither the embargo on arms that had been officially bought by my country from the United States; nor the non-delivery of the training planes already bought and fully paid for, kept at a

**Grocery Distributors**—Dr. José R. Garcia and representative committees.

**April 3**—**Cuban Chamber of Commerce**—Antonio Vargas Rodríguez, Representative, and members.

**April 3**—**Businessmen and Industrial Association of the Vedado Section**—Francisco del Cueto, Pres. and members.

**April 3**—**La Rampa Businessmen Association and Union of Businessmen and Industrials of Luyano**—Alberto Fuentevilla, executive representative, and others.

**April 3**—**Chinese Chamber of Commerce**—Nicolás Fernández Chontan, Pres., and other members.

**April 3**—**American Chamber of Commerce**—Paul Heilman, Pres., and members.

**April 3**—**Joint Business Streets**—Camilo López, Pres., and representative members.

**April 3**—**Association of Property Owners, Merchants and Industries of Cerro and Villanueva**—Agustín Fernández Malдонado, Pres., and committees.

**April 3**—**Cuban Federation of Retailers**—Ramón del Moral, Pres., and delegations.

**April 3**—**Automotive Chamber**—Armando Nuñes Acuña and other members.

**April 3**—**Greater Cuban Chamber of Commerce**—Roberto Suero, Pres., and committees.

**April 4**—**Association of Cattle Breeders**—Celso González Hierro, Pres., and committees.

**April 4**—**Association of Coffee Warehouses**—Francisco López Lastra, Pres., and Committees.

**April 4**—**National Association of Coffee Growers**—Claudio Benedí, Secretary General, and representatives.

**April 4**—**Oil Well Drilling Companies**—Antonio Iglesias and other representatives.

**April 4**—**Association of Coffee Toasters**—Juan Madiedo Lavander, Pres., and committees.

**April 4**—**Spanish Chamber of Commerce**—Enrique Gancedo, Pres.

**April 4**—**Chicken Breeders, Cattle Food Manufacturers, and Incubation Plants**—Manuel Castrillo and representatives.

**April 4**—**National Cattlemen's Association**—Lorenzo Lamadrid,

**April 4**—**National Association of Rice Growers**—Leopoldo Aguiler, Pres., and committees.
Florida port waiting—we were told—for the release of the civilians and sailors of the Guantánamo Naval Base kidnapped by

April 5—FREIGHT AND PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION—Amado Gemeil, Pres., and committees.
April 5—NATIONAL FISHING INSTITUTE—Manuel Soto Fraga, Pres., and committees.
April 5—NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CIGARETTE MANUFACTURERS—Dr. Tulio Díaz Rivera and representatives of the cigarette industry.
April 5—ASSOCIATION OF AIR CARRIERS—Juan M. Pallí, Pres., and Committees.
April 5—NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FISHING SHIPOWNERS—Dr. Osvaldo Jiménez Pages, speaking for Thorwald Sanchez Culmell, Pres., and committees.
April 5—EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF REGIONAL CLUBS—Ángel Pérez Cosme, Pres., and commissioners.
April 5—NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CUBAN CLUBS—Dr. José Federico Tamayo and representatives.
April 5—EMPLOYERS’ FEDERATION OF CUBA—Gaspar Vizoso, Pres., and committees.
April 5—CUBANA DE AVIACION; INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS CORP.; PANAMERICAN FREIGHT TERMINAL; INTERAMERICAN AIR EXPRESS AND AIR CARGO—José López Vilaboy and representatives.
April 5—NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF MECHANIC TECHNICIANS—Oscar Aruca, Pres., and committees.
April 5—NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TOBACCO GROWERS—Leoncio Pérez Flores, Pres., and committees.
April 5—AUTOMOTIVE CONFEDERATION OF CUBA—Bartolomé Quiñones and committees.
April 5—MATCH MANUFACTURERS—José López Vilaboy and committees.
April 5—ASSOCIATION OF CIGAR MANUFACTURERS AND EXPORTERS—Bernardo Caramés and committees.
April 5—CIGAR MANUFACTURERS’ UNION—José Ley de Rosa, speaking for Ricardo Méndez Suárez, Pres., and committees.
April 5—CUBAN ASSOCIATION OF TOBACCO GROWERS AND WAREHOUSEMEN—Mardonio Santiago and committees.
April 5—CUBAN PRESS BLOC—Cristóbal Díaz, Pres., and associates; M.D.’s, lawyers, newspapermen, nurses, teachers, etc.

NOTE:—Many other names could be mentioned, but we feel it is enough to mention most of those who requested an audience, omitting the numerous popular committees. In each case we only admitted enough people to fill the big reception hall.
Castro; nor the prohibition to sell us arms; nor actions that implied that the United States gave the rebels the status of belligerents; nor the terror imposed on the population by the communists, who murdered workers, professionals, and politicians who refused to take orders, none of these acts, sufficient to weaken a government, resulted in the "violent popular reaction," the phrase with which the White Paper begins its admonition to Fidel Castro and his comrades.

—The Communist Minister and I—

Referring to communism, the so-called White Paper says that "in 1943 Batista appointed to his Cabinet the first party Communist who ever held such office in any Latin-American country." So it is. This was during World War II, when the United States was so closely allied with Communists; at the time when President Roosevelt—to whom I and all Cubans will always be grateful for his non-intervention and Good Neighbor policy—after hearing Stalin in the meeting he and Churchill had with him (Stalin) at Casablanca, declared that to end the war it was necessary that the Germans surrender unconditionally; of this, Russia took advantage. We were allies of the United States and never hesitated to accept the U.S. as the leader in conflict, following its policies and cooperating in the defense of the continent. The Communists, therefore, were given two appointments to office, not one, but mostly symbolically, without administrative or executive powers.

Nevertheless, can anyone mention one single measure, one statement, or any single development that would in any way relate my administration with Russian totalitarianism or the Soviet political system?

As President of the Republic did I ever make any statement, then or now, opposing Pan-Americanism, praising communism,
or opposing the Western powers or the United States? If the untimely reference was made in that sense, would it not be right to make it in this other sense too?

It would be regrettable, indeed, if this vague statement should make suspect a man who repeatedly gave such proof of his friendship to the United States.

—Social Conditions—

The “Reply to the White Paper” answers the unfounded charges that our administration did not foster public education, health and working conditions. Yet, it is an undeniable fact that our working class received THE HIGHEST WAGES IN THIS HEMISPHERE, if we take into account the country’s wealth, its population, and wage scale.

Our ports were known as the most expensive in the world, and there is no country on earth, not even socialist countries, having better social laws or workman’s conditions than we had in Cuba. So much so that prospective investors, upon becoming aware of our social legislation, told our government that unless the rights of the workers were curtailed, they would not invest in our country.

It is regrettable that the same individuals making those remarks as to workmen’s conditions under my administration should then have said that the conditions prevailing in Cuba at that time were bound to cause a revolution.

Also regrettable were those references that did not contribute anything towards the mutual understanding of Latin American countries. Dr. Gaston Godoy refers to it in his book The Cuban Case, regretting that the indictment sought by the “White Paper” was not given more importance:

“It is sad to note,” says Dr. Godoy, “the lack of foresight and the inexplicable deviation from the problem of the violations (of greatest importance to the American order of Peace),”
and goes on to consider eminently an alleged and remote deviation of the Cuban dictator and his colleagues, and to examine the political past of Cuba in terms he did not dare use until now with the infamous Red tyranny of Cuba. The most astonishing part is that the names of good men are cited side by side with those of the makers of the present chaos. This is not the time to go into such matters, but let it be said that it is a first class contribution to the dispersion of the forces of Cuban nationality and a handicap to the solidarity of those fighting for justice, law and order.

It is hoped that as time goes by and our timely warnings as to the Communist origin of Castro’s revolution become more and more apparent [they have now been confirmed by Castro himself]—groups within or outside Cuba who helped Castro—not the Reds or fellow travellers—will, gradually at least, realize the error of their ways. The Cuban masses are not to be included here for while we were in power they never heeded any of the calls for a general strike issued by the bearded leader.
REPLY TO THE WHITE PAPER

"We Have Remained Silent to Avoid Dissension

"For more than two years we have remained silent in order not to create dissension among those who should be dedicated to the eradication of communism which has become entrenched in Cuba. The tragedy of our country was too dramatic for any action which might be misconstrued as political ambition, on our part, for a return to power. However, when an official document of the United States of America, addressed to the world at large, condemns the government of which we were members, our silence could be interpreted as an acquiescence or acceptance of such accusations.

"We Warned that the Castro Revolution Was Communist

"We foresaw that if the Castro revolution were to succeed, it would bring the establishment of a communistic regime. This was emphasized officially on numerous occasions, particularly in public statements of high officials of our government and in reports of the Agency created specifically to combat communism in Cuba—BUREAU FOR THE REPRESSION OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES (BRAC). This information was made available through official channels to the United States Government and in conversations with officers of the American Embassy at Havana. Ambassador Smith and Counselor Braddock were informed directly by members of the Batista administration that Castro was a pawn of International communism. The White Paper of the State Department admits that the Government of
the United States had had doubts as to whether Fidel Castro intended, from the very first, to deliver the country to International communism. These doubts may have arisen from their knowledge of the 'Red' backgrounds of Raúl Castro and 'Ché' Guevara, recognized by the White Paper, or by the measures taken by the Government from its very beginning.*

"Ambassador Smith Suggested to Batista that He Resign"

"We were the vanguard against communism in Cuba but we realized our efforts were futile when we were informed that the Government elected on Nov. 3, 1958 would not be recognized by the United States, and that Ambassador Smith had suggested to President Batista that he resign. (See depositions of Ambassador Smith before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security). It was to forestall the evils confronting us today, rather than political ambitions, that we made overtures to the revolutionary opposition and even sought the aid and support of Ambassador Smith towards reaching a peaceful and harmonious solution.**

"An Inaccurate and Unfair Judgment"

"To our repeated demonstrations of friendship towards the people of the United States and our dedication to avoid the victory of communism in Cuba, the State Department has responded with the most inexact and unfair pronouncements that can be made of a government which had been recognized by the Truman Administration and the succeeding Republican Ad-

---

* With the firm resolution to solve our problems by means of the polls, maximum guarantees were given to the opposition political parties.
** Fidel Castro himself has declared that he made a deal with Communists in 1958. In other words, he made an official agreement with them before attaining power. This was ratified by him in December 1961.
administration to such an extent that an official visit to Cuba by the Vice President of the United States took place in 1955.

"The Majority of the Members of Our Government Live Modestly in Exile

"The first accusation hurled at us is that our government was corrupt and its leaders rapacious. Our defense to that accusation is to point out the way the majority of the members of our government are living in exile. Many eke out a livelihood doing manual labor, living modestly at best, and often enduring hardships, as evidenced by the lives led by numerous ex-government officials and ex-congressmen at present. Should the State Department wish to challenge this statement, we offer our wholehearted cooperation in any investigation it may wish to undertake.* We do not deny that there was grafting in our administration, as there was too in previous administrations and just as, unfortunately, there is everywhere else. (One need only read the press reports from the entire world to realize the truthfulness of this statement.) Nevertheless, the greater majority of the men who supported the Batista government during its seven-year regime are a living demonstration that they did not participate in any of the reprehensible acts which are ascribed to the regime.

* During that time, United States business interests and industries operated businesses and made investments worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Their executives could reply for us: The Cuban Power Company, the Cuban Telephone Company, the Standard Oil and Texaco Oil refineries, the nickel, chrome and cobalt refineries at Nicaro and Moa, the ones that invested in living accommodations and new industries; the owners of sugar mills, of business establishments and assorted factories ... Let them, the United States corporate and natural persons that invested so heavily in Cuba, as also the English, such as Shell, Ferrocarriles Unidos de La Habana, bought out by our Government through model transactions, insurance companies, or any other for that matter, say if the Government ever demanded anything from them.
"Police brutality is another accusation made against us. We must clarify that from the very beginning, in 1952, our government, the government that had been recognized by all countries with the exception of the Communist bloc of nations, faced an opposition dedicated to its overthrow by force. One need only read the statements of former President Carlos Prío upon his return to Cuba in 1955 protected by an amnesty law that freed all revolutionaries and conspirators of all responsibility (including Fidel Castro and his accomplices in the murderous attack on the Moncada barracks), bragging about his revolutionary activities and the millions of dollars he had spent to overthrow the government of President Batista, to convince the most incredulous of the truth of our statement, further confirmed by what was printed in Cuba after the downfall of our government.

"The regime of President Batista governed the country from 1952 until December, 1956 (when Castro disembarked in the Oriente Province) with complete constitutional guarantees. The only exception was the suspension of said guarantees for a very brief period after the attack on the Moncada and Goicuría barracks. Normal constitutional government was reestablished until the attempted revolutionary general strike of April 9, 1958* called for more drastic measures, provided by the Constitution, to prevent widespread violence. As an example, for the sake of comparison, the Betancourt administration of Venezuela, cited by the Department of State as a model of democratic government in America, has been forced to suspend constitutional guarantees in order to cope with the violence of its political opponents. As a matter of fact, the constitutional guarantees have been suspended in Venezuela for many months.

* This call to a general strike failed because workers did not support it. Just for that, Castro concentrated on his terror campaign, with the help of those who refused to go to the polls.
"How many people died violently in Cuba during the seven years that Batista's government lasted? The United States Department of State recognizes that the weekly magazine Bohemia was an enemy of our regime. It would also be well to mention at this point that the document of the State Department recognizes that the publication 'freely' fought the Batista government and that neither the weekly nor its publisher suffered the slightest harm. This same magazine, Bohemia, in its first extraordinary edition immediately following the downfall of our government listed in great detail the names of persons who had died in the struggle. Counting deaths of members of the opposition and attacks carried out by the revolutionists, it listed 869 persons, a far cry from the 20,000 claimed by Castro's Communist propaganda, which served to impress and even convince high authorities of this country.

"What must be understood is that from December, 1956 until the fall of the Batista regime, a civil war existed in Cuba with all the natural violent excesses that occur under such circumstances; recently it was Spain, today it is Algiers, following the same pattern of what occurred in Cuba from 1956 through 1958. However, the events of the first days of the Communist revolution of Castro, which continue today, are comparable only to the atrocities committed by the Communist-dominated countries. It is noteworthy that all those who formed part of the government of Fidel Castro—with the one exception of 'Che' Guevara—were arrested by the police of the Batista administration. However, please take note that they are all alive and in excellent health.

"Public Health During the Batista Regime

"The White Paper of the Department of State further accuses our regime of failing in our obligations in the field of public health. This we emphatically deny, and affirm that more hos-
pitals and clinics were built during our regime than during any other era of government since the founding of the Republic in 1902. The record will show that our regime built and inaugurated the following hospitals: Anti-Tuberculosis Hospital at Topes de Collantes in Las Villas Province, recognized as A-No. 1 in all Latin America; Invalids’ Rehabilitation Hospital of Habana, one of the very best of its kind in the world; Maternity Hospital at Santiago de Cuba, Capital of Oriente Province; Anti-Tuberculosis ‘Luis Ortega’ in Havana; three magnificent hospitals built by the Infantile Dispensary Organization in Havana, Santiago de Cuba and Santa Clara, and twenty seven Dispensary-Hospitals throughout the entire Republic; Guanajay Hospital, National Nurses’ Hospital and Annexed Clinic, ‘Cristo de Limpias’ Hospital, Matanzas Hospital, Cardenas Hospital, Trinidad Hospital, Manzanillo Hospital, Victoria de las Tunas Hospital, Gilbara Hospital, Palma Soriano Hospital, Baracoa Hospital and Our Lady of Mercy Hospital in Havana. We constructed and were about to inaugurate the National Hospital, the Hospital of Oriente in Santiago de Cuba, the Naval Hospital, an Annex to the Hope Sanitarium for Tuberculosis in Havana, the Yateras and Moron Hospitals, the Anti-Tuberculosis and Civil Hospital of Camagüey, the Cienfuegos and Sagua de Tánamo Hospitals—all of them fully equipped.* To this we must add the magnificent work rendered by all the Mayors of the Republic hospital-wise, and especially the Hospital Clinico-Quirurgico, a model of its type, built by the Mayor of Havana, Justo Luis del Pozo.

“All of this more than doubled the former public health service in Cuba. We challenge any other Latin American country to match these efforts in the field of public health.

* All the scientific equipment, furniture and implements had been ordered, and the millions of dollars to pay for them remained in the banks or in the Treasury. In 1955 the National Organization for the Administration of State Hospitals was created. When Castro took over, this organization had $10 million on hand.
"A further proof is the fact that Cuba was perhaps the only country in Latin America from which people entering the United States were not subjected to medical check.

"What has the Communist government of Castro done in this field that is so worthy of the praise of the State Department and its White Paper?

"Social Justice—Cuba Ranked First in America

"The White Paper of the State Department states that until Fidel Castro came into power the Cuban governments ignored social justice and did not offer economic opportunities to the people. The first to challenge this allegation would be the executives of American corporations doing business in Cuba, particularly the banking fraternity. They often claimed that our labor laws were too advanced and that they discriminated against the employer. Furthermore, this accusation is so vague that it is extremely difficult to understand its intent.

"To begin with, our administration upheld the precepts of the Constitution of 1940. Accordingly, we must ask if it were contrary to social justice to uphold labor legislation which guarantees the right to strike (as was frequently done by the workers), which forbade management to dismiss an employee without just cause, subject to final decision of the highest courts of Cuban justice? Was social justice ignored by the strict observance of an eight-hour day, a minimum wage, one month's paid vacation annually, the payment of a 48-hour weekly salary for 44 hours of work, nine days' sick leave with pay, total and compulsory labor insurance paid by management, three months' maternity leave, which included free medical care and hospitalization by the State? These benefits are given to the worker by our Constitution and were strictly enforced by the regime of President Batista.

"Herein we must call the reader's attention to the Retirement
Fund institutions, which protected workers and employees of practically all the then existing industries in the nation, specifically the sugar industry in its agricultural and industrial aspects and the professional men as well. It should be observed that these institutions handled hundreds of millions of dollars and paid out monthly pensions amounting to several millions. The richer institutions were precisely those protecting workers, such as the Sugar Retirement Fund, for example.*

"Under our government, Cuba had the most powerful and best organized free labor organizations in Latin America. They were frequently consulted by the CIO and AFL in its fight against Communist infiltration in the labor movement South of the Rio Grande. Thanks to the efforts of labor organizations and to the sympathy with which our government cared for the best interests of our working classes, the amounts paid to workers and employees in 1957 surpassed the sum of $1,445,000,000, or more than 50% of the gross national income.

"We frequently hear nowadays of underdeveloped countries. Certainly we must include among such countries Cuba, destroyed and ruined by the Communist government which came to power January 1st, 1959, but not the Cuba that we left on January 1st, 1959, whose total national gross income had reached the figure of $2,834,000,000.** In 1958 the Clearing House compensations reached the sum of $6,908,000,000 and the per capita income was higher than in any other coun-

* The advantages attained by laborers and the high standard of living they enjoyed were outstanding and numerous. Labor organizations were represented in all official and semi-official organizations that could in any way affect them. Among the wealthiest retirement funds were those for laborers and for professionals. These two were entirely autonomous.

** We repeat that Cuba has a population of only 6,000,000 people in an area of 114,500 square kilometers, including adjacent keys and Isle of Pines. This shows the ratio between the national income and the surface of the island.
try in Latin America. The national budget was $400,000,000; the level of food consumption, and particularly that of meat, was the highest in Latin America; investments in home and buildings in Havana alone reached an annual average of $62,000,000 from 1952 through 1958. There was a radio for each 5 inhabitants, a TV set for each 18, and an automobile for each 39 inhabitants in a country whose population was just over 6,000,000. All this was accomplished without the necessity of foreign loans.

"During our administration, 200 new industries were founded with a higher wage scale than in any other country in Latin America, with the exception of the United States. Further, the improvement in the breed and the increase of both beef and dairy cattle made this industry one of the most prosperous and valuable of all Latin America, and one of the chief sources of national income.

"Since we address ourselves to the people of the United States, for whom we feel the most profound respect, we assure them that this data may be verified in every respect, as it has been compiled from official statistics in Cuba and in the United States.*

**What Are the Beneficial Measures of Castro?**

"The State Department's document maintains that the measures adopted in the early days of the Fidel Castro Communist government were good and should be reinstated by any new government established in Cuba. Predicated on this, the White Paper lists many persons who helped Castro in his rise to power, many of whom shared the responsibility of government over a

* All those statistics, as all others outlined in this book, have been obtained from the records of the Cuban National Bank, the United States Department of Commerce, the International Currency Fund, and other national and foreign sources.
long period of time.

“Since the State Department fails to enumerate these beneficial measures, may we ask: Could it be the suppression of the invocation of God in the so-called Magna Carta approved in January, 1959, as well as in the oaths taken by the members of the judiciary? Could it be the retroactive application of penal laws which permitted the executions en masse carried out since the inception of the Fidel Castro Communist government? Or perhaps the executions without trial perpetrated by Raúl Castro in Oriente Province the first days of January, 1959.* Or could the State Department be referring to the reiterated declarations of Fidel Castro that elections were unnecessary? Incidentally, these pronouncements did not raise a murmur of protest from those in his government. Or the Agrarian Reform, clearly Communist inspired, which stripped Cubans and North Americans of their properties with no thought whatsoever of indemnification? Perhaps it refers to the campaign of vilest slander and insults hurled against the United States generally, which started with the demand for the ousting of the North American Military Mission, branding it as incompetent and inefficient?

“The Collaborators of Castro and the Cuban Press in Exile

“We do not contest the right of the State Department to

* Besides similar cases in which several bodies were buried in ditches opened with bulldozers, Miró Cardona and his so-called Cabinet fostered the retroactivity of penal laws and the restitution of the death penalty, abolished in Cuba by the Constitution of 1940. Castro created courts to suit his purposes, formed of persons who had nothing in common with the judiciary system. These courts committed unprecedented atrocities, such as recalling the 20-year sentence passed on Lieut. Fernández Riquer to sentence him to death and shoot him. Also, the 43 pilots who, after having been acquitted were tried again and sentenced to imprisonment and forced labor. The presiding judge of the court that first acquitted the pilots paid for this with his life. (See pages 290-1, 303.)
select its friends, but it is our duty as Cubans to oppose those men who shared the responsibility of government with Fidel Castro during the period of these events, and who are not the proper persons to lead the fight against communism or the re-establishment of democracy in Cuba and the traditional cordial relations with the United States, as affirmed in a recent editorial of the *News and Courier* of Charleston, South Carolina.

"The White Paper of the State Department mentions only the magazine *Bohemia* among all the periodicals forced to seek refuge on the hospitable Florida soil. In all justice, we must mention also *Prensa Libre, El Mundo, Información, Avance, Times of Havana, Havana Post*, newspapers confiscated without indemnity after January 1, 1959, and above all, the *Diario de la Marina* and its courageous editor, José Ignacio Rivero, the first to combat the Communist monster in our country."

"After these clarifications we endorse without reserve the document of the State Department in its condemnation of the Communist government which enslaves our nation and denounces to the world the systematic destruction, morally and materially, of our homeland and the horrors of which the Cuban populace is victim. Likewise, we wholeheartedly support its accusation that the Fidelo-Communist regime constitutes a sinister menace to the inter-American system, as does the traitorous surrender of our country to the international Communist yoke imposed by Russia and China.

"The American people and its government will find us ready at all times to fulfill our duty as Cubans, and without personal ambitions, to rescue our beloved country from the claws of International Communism.

* Newspapers and magazines *El País, El Crisol, Información, Carteles, Mañana, Alerta, Pueblo, Atajá and Tiempo* at Havana, and 20 other newspapers throughout the Island, as also the radio and TV stations were all finally seized by Castro's regime who, in turn, authorized Communist newspapers to circulate immediately. (See page 248 ff.)
"The Batista Regime's Role in Education"

"Here again the regime of President Batista is accused, without evidence, of neglect in public education. A superficial survey of the efforts of the government to improve and expand education facilities in all fields, reveals: (1) The Aeronautical Technical School for Aviation Mechanics, considered a model in Latin America, was constructed at San Julián, Pinar del Rio Province, in cooperation with the U. S. Point IV Program; (2) Sixty School centers in urban districts throughout the country were built, each one containing from four to twenty classrooms, fully equipped; (3) Over a thousand rural schools were built and fully equipped; (4) Five hundred new teachers were appointed to work in new schools in rural districts; (5) Sixty-two pre-vocational primary schools and ten educational missions were founded to reach the rural population, provided with medical doctors and dentists;* (6) During our regime, the various technical schools created during the first Batista administration (1940-44) were completely reorganized; (7) Upon the fall of our government 4,200 orphans of workers, farmers, government employees and members of the Armed Forces were being educated, fed and clothed in these Technological Centers; (8) The model library 'José Maria García Montes,' for elementary school children, was created in coordination with the UNESCO. It was one of the first in our continent.

"In addition, our regime built and organized the Museum of Fine Arts and the National Library.** The National Theatre had been built and was ready to be inaugurated. Ironically, it

* Each Rural Education Mission included beside the teacher, laboratory technicians, nurses and specialists to look after the health of the rural population: MDs, dentists and graduate midwives, as also trade teachers, home economy teachers and veterinarians, to prepare the housewife and the farm laborer.

** As extensions of the library system, Mobile and Popular Libraries were organized and distributed throughout the country.
was inaugurated by Communist Castro, not with a Cuban production written by a Cuban author—of which we have many—but with a theatrical production written by the radical French author Jean Paul Sartre.*

“At this point it should be clearly noted that no coercion was exercised upon teachers and professors in their teachings. Private religious universities and schools were allowed to function without restrictions. On the other hand, the present Communist regime prides itself in the Communist indoctrination of children, as well as the elimination of all private and religious educational institutions.

**Public Housing**

“Our government is accused in the White Paper of neglecting low-cost housing projects for the poor. Obviously no effort has been made to obtain evidence in support of this and other accusations. To demonstrate the fallacy of such an accusation, we submit these salient examples of our efforts to improve housing for people in all walks of life. During our regime the FHA of Cuba was founded, an autonomous organization, independent of all political influences. Under the FHA, 11,000 homes were built on easy installment plans, the great majority having been built by people of modest means. Furthermore, refinancing was accorded to 13,000 other home owners, on easier terms. The credit rating of the FHA was so well thought of in Cuba

---

* Upon visiting Cuba as Castro’s guest, this existentialist also repeated that everybody complained about education, and said that Batista had kept the University of Havana closed during the last few years. Everyone knows it’s the other way around: That Batista and his Cabinet made great efforts in order that this University—whose autonomy he had recognized—would not yield to the pressure exerted by law-breaking groups to stop classes. All the other universities, whether Catholic, laic or Masonic continued to operate.
that $150,000,000 of FHA bonds were sold to Cuban investors, permitting the organization to function free of financial problems.

"During our administration the National Housing Commission was formed. In cooperation with the Mayors throughout the country, the homes of 40,000 farmers were repaired and reconditioned, and 12,000 homes were built and turned over to farmers without charge. At the time of the fall of our Government, a $50 million low-cost housing construction plan had been approved and $10 million had been allocated and deposited in the National Bank of Cuba by the American corporation financing the plan. Unfortunately this plan could not be put into operation and the $10 million was in the National Bank when the Government fell. Many must remember the troubles of the American creditor in his efforts to recover that money when Castro came to power.

"Public Works During Our Administration

"For the benefit of the American public, we would like all to know (considering that the territorial extension of the Island of Cuba is only 114,000 square kilometers) that our government built 16,000 kilometers of dirt roads; that the National Development Commission constructed 1,443 kilometers of excellent main roads, among them the Pan-American Highway whose pre-reinforced bridge over the Cuyagueateje River was then the largest in America, and the main road from the city of Sancti Spiritus to Trinidad whose bridge over the Agabama River was one kilometer long. Furthermore, it built a cold storage warehouse with capacity for 100,000 quintales (5,000 tons) which, of course, was of the greatest help to agricultural production and the small farm owners.

"Apart from extensive road building throughout the Repub-
lic, our National Development Commission repaired and constructed 473 kilometers of then existing roads, as well as our Central Highway.

"The Ministry of Public Works constructed more than 2,000 kilometers of main roads and 500,000 square meters of first-rate streets.

"To demonstrate our point more effectively, we cite just one more example. Of the many public buildings constructed by our Government, of which any country could be proud, we especially mention the Palace of Justice, that houses the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals of Havana and other civil and criminal Courts; the Court of Appeals of Holguin, in Oriente Province, and fifty other courthouses throughout the Island. The Palace of Justice is the largest of its kind in all Latin America. However, this building is obsolete in Communist Cuba where there is no law, for Castro is THE LAW.

"Be it known that on the twelfth day of May of the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty-One, before me, PETER M. LOPEZ, a Notary Public in and for the State of Florida, duly commissioned and sworn, personally came and appeared: Dr. Rafael Guás Inclán, former Vice President of the Republic of Cuba; Dr. Anselmo Alieegro Milá, former President of the Senate of Cuba; Dr. Abelardo Valdes Astolfí, former Vice President of the House of Representatives of Cuba; Mr. Justo Luis del Pozo, former Mayor of the City of Havana; Dr. Jorge García Montes, Dr. Ricardo Equilio, Dr. Marino López Blanco, Dr. Arsenio González, Dr. Carlos Salas Humara, Dra. Maria Gómez Carbonell, Dr. Zoila Mulet, Dr. Ramón Hermida, Ramón Jiménez Maceda, Dr. Ramón Pérez Magarino, Dr. César Camacho Covani, Ing. A. Carvajal, Dr. Santiago Rey Pernas, Dr. Vicente Cauce, Dr. Ramiro Oñate, Dr. Raúl G. Menocal, Dr. Santiago Verdeja, Dr. Manuel Ampudia, and Dr. Mario Cobas Reyes, former members of the
Cabinet; all of them to me known, and In Testimony whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my seal of office the day and year last above written:


Robado del archivo del Dr. Antonio Rafael de la Cova
http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuba-books.htm
PART II

HISTORICAL REVIEWS
CHAPTER XXVI

MACHADO, RE-ELECTION, AND PROROGATION

President Gerardo Machado y Morales, General of the War of Independence, was deposed August 12, 1933. Highly popular during the term to which he was elected in 1924, he was re-elected after he had announced he would not run again—and, furthermore, he accepted a prorogation of powers. The scanty revenues of the nation, due to the low price of sugar, compelled him to reduce the budget to 45 millions, part of which had to be applied to the public debt. The country was in a constant state of anxiety, and popular opinion turned against him. Finally, President Roosevelt’s Administration became antagonistic, and this added pressure overthrew his regime.

In April 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt decided to send Sumner Welles as Ambassador to Cuba. When Welles was appointed, Secretary of State Cordell Hull issued several statements explaining the attitude of the North American Government regarding the Cuban problem. After saying that the United States “was compelled to look upon the situation existing in Cuba with the greatest concern,” Mr. Hull instructed Welles to “point out to President Machado in the most forceful terms that, in the opinion of your Government, no general improvement of conditions in Cuba can be expected until there is a definite cessation of that state of terrorism which has existed for so long a period throughout Cuba and particularly in Havana.”

In the same directive, Hull told Welles to offer the good offices of the United States in an effort to mediate the quarrel between Machado and his Opposition. From the day Welles
presented his credentials, May 11, until August 12, 1933, when Machado was forced to surrender the Presidency and flee the country and for several months thereafter, Welles was the axis around which whirled the most violent political hurricane in the history of the Caribbean.

**Mediation**

When Welles arrived in Cuba, he met with political and revolutionary leaders and offered his services as mediator. By early July most political factions, including the Machado Administration, had accepted his offer, and negotiations were begun. These continued for a month without getting anywhere. Every time a solution seemed likely, something would turn up and Machado would withdraw. Finally, on August 12, having lost the support of the Army, he surrendered the Presidency to Gen. Alberto Herrera, a member of his Cabinet. According to a prearranged plan the latter handed it over to Dr. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes.

**Junta of Factions**

When the Army, which supported Gen. Machado, became aware that the Representative of the President of the United States had enough power to decree armed intervention, it became uneasy. The officers split and the conspiracy spread. Knowing that the President of Cuba no longer had the support of Washington, other groups joined the fight against the regime. These included various factions, of the student groups, and the middle class. Finally, the entire population was caught up by the threat of intervention, and the leaders of a military clique asked Gen. Machado to resign.

The representatives of the various groups recommended Carlos Manuel de Céspedes as President. The Provisional Presi-
dent was unable to halt the disorders, and neither could the Army. Rioting started in the streets, and discipline left the barracks.

This was the crisis for the sovereignty of Cuba as well as for the "Good Neighbor" policy proclaimed by President Roosevelt. The Platt Amendment, appended to the Cuban Constitution of 1901, could be applied now "for the preservation of Cuban independence and the maintenance of a government adequate to guarantee the life, property, and liberty of the individual." Terms which limited national sovereignty won on the battlefield, with the support of the United States.

Right of Intervention

The influence of the United States over the destinies of Cuba had its origin in the victorious war with Spain. In April 1898, the Senate and House of Representatives declared in a Joint Resolution that "the people of Cuba were and had a right to be free and independent." Cuban patriots had been fighting for the Republic against Spain (Cuba had been a Spanish colony) for more than 30 years. In war after war they had kept the Spanish Government on edge; indeed, the conspiracies dated back to the beginning of the XIXth century.

When the Cuban insurrectionists took up arms in their last battle for freedom, the declaration of war by the United States made certain that Cuba would become a member of the free nations. The treaty signed at Paris, December 10, 1898, recognized this. The independence of Cuba was secured, and the United States was converted into a powerful guardian against anyone who posed a threat to her sovereignty.*

* This relationship with the United States, which both illuminates and obscures the history of Cuba for more than a hundred years, is not founded solely on proximity. Had not the Island been threatened with violence and betrayal for three hundred years at the hands of England and France, thousands of miles away, who plotted her conquest or
Appendix to the Constitution

Despite the overwhelming defeat of the Spanish Government and the achievement of independence, the Republic was born under a cloud. The introduction of an amendment bearing the name of the author, Senator Orville H. Platt, in a bill approved by the Congress of the United States, which was included as an appendix to the Constitution of 1901, left Cuban sovereignty incomplete. Did the United States wish to forestall a possible crack-up of the newly born Republic? The illustrious Cuban patriots were obliged to assume the responsibility of accepting the Platt Amendment—which gave the United States the right to interfere in Cuba’s internal affairs—in order to avoid greater risks to the Republic of their dreams, just achieved at the cost of prodigious sacrifices.

Interventionist Acts

Already in 1906, as the result of an armed struggle which forced the resignation of President Tomás Estrada Palma, President Theodore Roosevelt, who had fought in Cuba as chief of the “Rough Riders,” had to decree, despite efforts to avoid it, United States intervention in Cuba, which lasted to 1909. Another Roosevelt now had to make the decision whether the United States would assume the grave responsibility of preventing the Cubans from settling their own problems, especially after he had enunciated the “Good Neighbor Policy.”

After August 12 no government existed, really; anarchy had purchase, and had occasionally even occupied her? Through her position and qualities as an island, Cuba had been involved more than any other part of America in international problems. . . .

“Indeed, the first war message of the President of the United States to Congress was based on the hypothesis that ‘since neither of the belligerent parties in Cuba can win, peace should be achieved from abroad.’” (Emil Ludwig, Biography of an Island, pp. 212 and 311.)
taken over. Ships of the American Navy appeared off the coast of the largest of the Antilles and surrounded the Island. Lives, property, industry, business, all were threatened. It seemed that intervention would be decreed at any moment.

The symptoms were very similar to those preceding the intervention of 1906. Similar action had also been taken then. Secretary of War William Howard Taft and Under-Secretary of State Robert Bacon had been appointed mediators. Their efforts failed.

Intervention was made more likely by the provocative attitude of the Communists who had taken possession of the sugar mills and infiltrated other businesses, while their cohorts spread slogans through the streets and waterfront and swayed the crowds with their attack on “Yankee Imperialism.” The “comrades” took advantage of the reigning spirit of nationalism and the fervor with which the people expressed the hope that the Platt Amendment would be abrogated. Between the hopes of the nation and the desperate leaders—among whom were many opportunists—the Red agitators stood out under what appeared to be a beautiful, patriotic banner.

Factions and Anarchy

In the face of this desperate situation, without peace or work, without law or order, with misery, primitive cruelty and mounting death, with the country on the brink of chaos and foreign intervention, immediate, constructive action was vital. In the last days of Gen. Machado’s Administration some half-dozen revolutionary factions had been acting clandestinely. Most significant had been the ABC secret organization, composed mainly of professionals and middle class persons; the Student Directorate (Directorio Estudiantil), which embraced the National University and high school students from all the provinces; the Communist Party, which directed the general strike; the
Organization of Radical Revolutionary Cells (Organización Celular Radical Revolucionaria); and the Radical ABC. During the period of mediation new groups arose, with other leaders seeking a chance to participate in the new administration.

The situation resembled closely the effects of a tornado which lifts and scatters lifeless objects in a cloud of dust. How, when, in what manner, and through whom could salvation appear? With the exception of ex-President Mario G. Menocal, General of the War of Independence, and his friends who had fought against the long regime, and of the Student Directory, the hundred or so leaders impatiently accepted mediation. The weak Provisional Government of Céspedes was the result. Its leader deserved public respect, personal considerations apart, because of the historical significance of his name. He was the son of the well-named "Father of the Country," the heroic patriot who had been chief of the "Ten Years' War." With Francisco Vicente Aguilera he had been the guiding genius of the revolution of October 10, 1868, and had been named President of the Republic in Arms.
CHAPTER XXVII

THE REVOLUTION OF THE SERGEANTS

"...ALL MILITARY OFFICERS have been removed and a Sergeant named Batista has been installed as Chief of Staff. . . ." was the surprising message the Department of State in Washington received from its Ambassador in Havana at 8 a.m., September 5, 1933.

Edmund A. Chester, in his book A Sergeant Named Batista, has said:

"For some months before the downfall of Machado, the Sergeant was a very busy young man. He continued to act as court stenographer at the military trials of the Machado opposition and, being a good observer and revolutionary, he was disturbed by what he saw and heard in these sessions."

"Sgt. Batista had a personal economic problem in those days of depression. He handled a few real estate transactions and he became a small business man in fruits and vegetables and the manager of a farm. He took a job teaching nights at an academy in Havana, and he earned extra income from tutoring the children of Army officers. He also taught some commercial subjects at the Milanés School.

* The quotations in this chapter are used to avoid first-person statements, as they were taken from my originals. I cite them with the commentaries of the author to relate this part of the history.

** "Shorthand was precisely the technical beginning of his independent career, for just as many employees have become directors by first being stenographers, which brought them close to intellectual activities, Batista, through his work as a stenographer, came into contact with national problems at a very early age." (Emil Ludwig, Biography of an Island, pp. 337 and 339.)
"In spite of all those tasks, Batista joined the ABC Secret Society, which had become one of the strongest of the revolutionary factions. At first his contacts were confined to passing information, but in a short time he began to participate actively in the conspiracies."

Some biographers, like Emil Ludwig, have agreed with Edmund Chester in outlining those historical events in which I played the principal role. The account which follows is factual.

Carlos Manuel de Céspedes and the "4th of September."

"...Batista did not believe the problems of Cuba were completely solved by the overthrow of Machado. He knew that the Céspedes Government lacked the strength needed to restore public order, and he began to lay the groundwork for a movement which would take the power away from the discredited Army officers who had done nothing to restore public order throughout the country. He worked among the noncommissioned officers and found supporters. Little by little, he gained adherents to his plan.

"Prior to mid-August Batista had kept his revolutionary plans hidden. But on August 15, six days after the downfall of Machado, he made the first and only tactical error of his career as a revolutionary. It happened at a funeral, and he attributes the slip-up to the emotional strain of the occasion.

"Batista and a buddy drove his car to a point close to the cemetery. Thousands of persons were in the area and at the moment he arrived he heard heavy rifle firing. The crowd had given way to its emotions, and people were screaming and shouting. There was no authority in the Government, and large groups of students and revolutionaries roamed the streets hunting and killing the remnants of the Machado Secret Police. Property of the officials of the deposed Government was sacked and burned by
these groups, many of whom were not true revolutionaries and had had no real part in overthrowing the Machado Government.

"Batista and his men met at the grave of the martyred Sgt. Miguel Angel Hernández. They asked him to deliver the funeral oration, and Batista, deeply moved, agreed. Carried away by his emotion, he declared that the noncommissioned officers would lead the revolution, along patriotic channels, toward a nationalist, democratic government. Once he had made the mistake of being indiscreet, he had to move fast. Batista's declaration was followed next day by a meeting of enlisted men and noncommissioned officers of the Army and Navy under his chairmanship. Here it was resolved to organize an enlisted men's society, ostensibly to protect the enlisted men's rights, actually to support Batista's revolutionary scheme.

"Immediately thereafter Batista met with his cell leaders and submitted his revolutionary scheme. But the ABC refused its support. The Supreme Council asserted that such a movement would achieve little more than the disruption of Armed Forces' discipline without achieving its high ideals. Batista replied that discipline in the Armed Forces and authority in its officers were non-existent.

"After being rejected by the ABC, Batista continued to seek nonmilitary supporters and finally found a small group of civilian revolutionaries who agreed to go along with him. He kept busy, moving from cell to cell and spreading his message all over the 44,000 square miles of national territory with admirable discretion and surprising speed.

"... 'The most unhappy part of the situation,' Batista later told me, 'was that the political parties and the groups of revolutionaries who had fought the Machado regime were not prepared to take over the authority, once they had achieved their immediate purpose. The ideals of those who previously had aspired to interpret the will of the people became nothing more
than an avalanche of anarchic impulses after the Government was overthrown!

"As soon as he had established contacts, and without waiting for replies, Batista summoned the Junta of Sergeants and Corporals to an 11 o'clock meeting on the morning of Sept. 4 in the Enlisted Men's Club in Camp Columbia. For the purpose of avoiding suspicion, Batista announced that the meeting would consider routine matters of the club and that plans would be discussed for increasing the recreational activities of the organization.

What Arms?

"As he moved toward Camp Columbia, one of Batista's associates asked him whether he really meant to start a revolution. 'Certainly,' replied Batista. 'And with what arms are you going to fight this revolution?' asked the partner. Batista answered without hesitation, 'With the arms in Columbia.' As a matter of fact, Batista could count on enough basic elements, and not believing there was enough time to worry about arms, he had not given much attention to the problem. The party reached Camp Columbia on the outskirts of Havana after nightfall. Now it was too late for a second thought about the course he had taken, and he commended his fate and that of his friends to God.

"Years later he told me that he felt as if he were sitting on the edge of a volcano. The tension throughout the ranks heightened, and Batista had to move from sector to sector to keep spirits from falling and urging the men to be patient. On the night of September 3, Batista decided he had better not sleep in his own house. He knew that his house was being watched by Military Intelligence and the Secret Police, who were suspicious of his activities, so he spent the night in the house of a friend."

Robado del archivo del Dr. Antonio Rafael de la Cova
http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuba-books.htm
Interview with the Aide to the Army Chief of Staff

“The meeting ‘to discuss the enlisted men’s club improvements’ was scheduled for 11 the next morning, September 4, and a fellow-Sergeant was to pick up Batista and take him to Columbia. The leader arrived somewhat early and waited at the Quartermaster Depot. A group of fellow conspirators ran up to tell him that Capt. Mario Torres Menier, Aide to Army Chief of Staff Brigadier Sanguily, was waiting for him on the porch of the enlisted men’s club. The men were ready to rebel, Batista was told, but the appearance of this high officer indicated the plotters were in for trouble.

“Fearful that the whole revolutionary scheme might fail at this point, Batista decided that the only thing he could do was to meet the Captain and depend upon his own ability to talk the officer down. Every man in the group was talking at the same time. Finally, Batista asked if any of the men in the group knew how Torres Menier had found out about the meeting. One of them told him that Cpl. Capote had naively invited the Captain to join the conspiracy. Batista asked that Cpl. Capote be brought before him. When Capote neared Batista he stopped, saluted nervously, and stood at attention. He explained that he had tried to enlist the support of the Captain because he felt that he could be helpful in winning the support of the Air Corps. Capt. Torres Menier, in addition to his duties as aide to the Chief of Staff, was commanding officer of the Air Corps.

“After explaining his reasons for approaching the officer, Cpl. Capote* removed his pistol from the holster and handed it to Batista. ‘Major,’ (Batista was a Sergeant Major) he said, ‘if

---

*Cpl. Juan M. Capote Fiallo was made a Second Lieutenant on Sept. 8, 1933, and was successively promoted to the rank of Captain, a position he held until March 1952. He became a Major and was appointed Chief of the Prison, at Isle of Pines. In this capacity he was in charge of Fidel Castro and those who were later condemned and pardoned with him. He was a just officer, at times bending backwards to be generous
you think I am a traitor, take this pistol and shoot me.' Capote shook with emotion as he awaited Batista's decision. Batista passed the pistol back to Capote and said: ‘Your death would achieve nothing, though you probably have jeopardized many with your honorable intentions. These moments are full of danger and only God knows what will happen to us now. Come with me and let your conscience be your guide. If you have done evil, you ought to shoot yourself or suffer remorse. But, I would rather trust you.’

‘Batista knew that he had to face the officer sooner or later and it might just as well be sooner, he thought. Before starting to walk over to the enlisted men’s club, a block or two away, Batista spoke again to his companions. He instructed them to follow close behind him. He said he would try to lure the Captain, who was pacing the porch in front of the club, into the club room. If he succeeded, his colleagues were to move in behind him close enough to hear the conversation between Batista and Torres Menier and be ready for anything. The group fanned out and started to march to the club. This was the most dangerous and decisive moment Batista had lived in his 32 years. Had he done well? Was he marching toward victory? Was he contributing to the regeneration of the soldier-slave, of the man-thing, to the total independence of his country or would it sink deeper into the abyss?

‘Batista kept up his courage by repeating to himself these phrases: ‘My steps mark the path of victory for the humble; we are moving toward our objective which will convert our dreams into realities; this is the realization of an ideal which will lift the soldier from the sad conditions under which he has lived in the with the inmates. Fidel Castro made use of his generosity and even managed to conduct a clandestine correspondence and have extensive contacts with friends and relatives. Capote had been retired from the Army when he had indicated that his health and spirits were not up to the rigors of a campaign. Castro, victim of God knows what complexes, had him tried and executed when he attained power.
past; this is the straight road to the restoration of the sovereignty of a people whose independence has been threatened by the imposition of a regime of "mediation" by a foreigner who exercised a right which must be destroyed.'

"When Batista mentioned the 'regime of mediation,' he was referring, of course, to the Cáspedes Government which was nothing more than the intervention of the United States in Cuba affairs. His reference to 'a right which must be destroyed' indicated his desire to see the abrogation of the Platt Amendment through which a government had been imposed on Cuba.

"Upon reaching the porch of the Enlisted Men's Club, Cpl. Capote nervously introduced Batista to Capt. Torres Menier. Batista saluted and asked the officer if he wanted to see him. The Captain wanted to know the purpose of the meeting. At this point Batista made his move. He had to get the Captain inside the club room in order to carry out his plan. He suggested that they move inside to discuss the matter. Capt. Torres Menier followed Batista's suggestion and entered the club. Meanwhile, Batista's aides had alerted their men throughout the units. The Batista nucleus in each post was told to come to Camp Columbia with as many armed followers as they could muster. This was the showdown and the Revolt of the Sergeants was under way.

"Once inside the club room, Batista asked the Captain's permission to permit other Sergeants to join him. The officer assented and in doing so he snapped the lock on the trap into which he had been lured by the Sergeant. Little did the Captain realize that when he left the club room he would be relieved of all authority by a group of rebellious Sergeants. Batista then took the time to introduce each of his partners personally to the Captain as though the meeting were a social affair. Batista was playing for time to allow the soldiers from the other posts to arrive. And they came, filling the windows and doors and blocking the morning sunlight. Batista felt more comfortable as he saw
more and more of his friends moving into the club room. The entire camp of almost 1,000 men were there. It was the principal garrison in Cuba and the others were already committed to the top Sergeants.

*Decisive Conversation*

“Finally, the conversation between the two principals began. It was a dialogue between a representative of the old Army and a representative of the new. Batista opened the conversation. ‘Captain, will you please tell all of us the purpose of your mission?’ With the Captain's permission, he sat down. Capt. Torres Menier said that he was disturbed by the fact that a great deal of propaganda had been passed among the enlisted men, baseless stories that enlisted men’s salaries were to be reduced, for example. He said the Chief of Staff was particularly interested in increasing the clothing and rations allowances of enlisted men and that action toward improving conditions would be taken when Brigadier Sanguily, Army Chief of Staff, recovered from the illness which had hospitalized him. Torres Menier said that Secretary of War Horacio Ferrer had issued a circular denying the truth of the rumors running through the ranks. These rumors, the officer, said, were designed solely to destroy discipline.

“Batista realized that Capt. Torres Menier had not told all he knew. He was certain that the officer had information about the plans for the Revolt of the Sergeants. Perhaps the Captain’s reticence was induced by the presence of so many hostile enlisted men. The real purpose of his visit undoubtedly was to have a showdown with Batista, and, perhaps to demand an explanation of his efforts to incite revolution. When the Captain concluded, Batista asked for the floor to speak for the enlisted men.

“Batista explained that the enlisted men demanded that they be given the same considerations as any other citizen. The soldier, he said, was duty-bound to sacrifice his life, if necessary,
to protect the nation. The speakers’ emotions were building, and he raised his voice. The Captain realized that Batista’s words were exciting the soldiers, and he tried to stop the speaker. ‘If you continue to talk in such a strain, you will incite the soldiers to insubordination,’ shouted the officer.

“The Captain was right and Batista knew it. But he kept up the harangue. By that time Batista’s self-confidence was increasing. He was delivering an oration. His purpose was to impress the soldiers, and he was doing it well. ‘If we consider the soldier as a man,’ said Batista, ‘then we must grant him the dignity to which every man is entitled.’

“Capt. Torres Menier must have wondered what all this oratory meant. ‘This dignity,’ Batista went on, ‘does not lessen the soldier’s obligation and discipline. In fact, by the very nature of his obligations, the soldier has a double responsibility. Although a soldier’s freedom of action may be limited, even at moments when there is a lack of authority in the nation, it is an offense to every man in uniform to call the mere announcement of a desire for readjustment an act of insubordination.’

“Batista was addressing these words to the Captain, but not because he thought they would have any effect on the officer. He simply wanted the enlisted men to hear and assimilate what he was saying.*

“When Batista finished his discourse, the place was up in arms. Enlisted men were shouting, ‘Viva Batista! Viva Batista!’ and the movement ceased to be a mere break in discipline. It was an outright revolution! Batista turned to Capt. Torres Menier and offered an explanation. He had nothing against any officer, nothing against him.

“With his unexpected visit Capt. Torres Menier had precipitated the series of events which were running in Batista’s favor anyway.

* “Although he is a good speaker, Batista is no charlatan, and he asks few questions. He stops for questions or provokes them, and his replies
The Revolution on the March

“Meanwhile, several other officers came into the club. But they arrived too late. The revolution was on the go, and nothing could stop it. The Chief of the Military District of Columbia counseled prudence, and warned Sgt. Batista of the tremendous responsibility he was assuming. Batista spoke to the enlisted men again. Discipline had collapsed and order had to be restored. He succeeded in calming his companions. In a desperate effort to save the day, Torres Menier suggested that the Chief of Staff be permitted to solve the problems presented by Sgt. Batista. They were not difficult problems, the Captain explained. It was a simple play for time and it was rejected. As they prepared to leave the room, the officers made a final appeal to the men, saying they would return that evening with a definite proposal.

“Batista called for a meeting at 8 that night. The extraordinary assembly took place in the motion-picture theatre of the camp. There was a great crowd. The officers began to arrive when Batista was distributing the commands, after having secured the defenses of the garrison. Two of them sought to speak and Batista invited them to come on the stage with him. The vivas mingled with the curses and protests occasioned by the presence of the officers. ‘We have scores to settle,’ was heard from some who spoke for comrades who had been harassed and destroyed by the officers who were being deposed. Here the intentions of the Sergeant-Leader were put to the test. He spoke again, with the entire hall silent:

‘We are staging a revolution for Cuba. Let there be an end of hatred and let tolerance and brotherhood reign among all are fast or slow, but always precise. Despite the fact that he always had a smile on his face, he seldom laughs, and I find this attractive in a man. When I told him that I had also been a stenographer and wished to wager I could defeat him in a contest of speed, he laughed uproariously; but we did not make the wager because he said he was afraid he could beat me.” (Emil Ludwig, Biography of an Island, pp. 337, 339.)
Cubans who love decency and order. The deposed officers,’ he stated with an emphasis which made it an order, ‘deserve more respect than before, more respect than some of them gave us as soldiers. Each of our men will be responsible for the physical well-being of those officers who have, until today, been our chiefs. Nor are their families or possessions to be touched. We wish to put an end to anarchy and bloodshed, and the Republic, I am sure, will be proud of its men in uniform who have so perfectly fulfilled their duty.’

“Batista knew that the first phase of the revolutionary movement had succeeded. Then and there he took command. He paid his respects to the bewildered officers, closed the meeting, and went into the company streets to talk to the soldiers. He had to solidify his triumph and to re-establish discipline.

“At dawn, a civilian government was constituted, including professors, students, intellectuals and economists. A revolution had been effected without bloodshed.”
CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PENTARCHY AND THE NEW ARMED FORCES

When a government was being formed at the Officers' Club of the camp, we ran into difficulties. Prof. Carlos de la Torre, whom we wanted to head the provisional regime, could not accept the offer for reasons of family and health. In his place, Dr. Ramón Grau San Martín, a physician and university professor, was designated.

Political and military leaders who had distinguished themselves in the struggle against Gen. Machado's Government were potential candidates for the nation's highest office. These included Gen. Mario García Menocal, ex-President of the Republic and a veteran of the War of Independence, and Colonel of the Army of Liberation Carlos Mendieta Montefur. To keep the triumphant revolution from appearing partisan, I, as the chief of the revolutionary movement, recommended that as neutral a figure as possible be selected. At dawn, it was decided to form a pentarchy. I refused to take part in this when offered the post of Minister of War. I told them that I preferred to remain in the Armed Forces and reorganize them, since all the officers of the Army, Navy, and the Police had been turned out. I became Chief of the Army and recommended a technical expert from the Naval Corps as Chief of the Navy.

The Government of the Pentarchy consisted of journalist Sergio Carbó, economist Porfirio Franca, professor and lawyer Guillermo Portela, financial expert José M. Irizarri, and Grau San Martín. The latter became Provisional President six days after the Presidential form of government was adopted for, as
we had foreseen, a group form of government was subject to ru­mors and confusions at a time of crisis when the Communists continued to take over the sugar mills and villages.

_A Sergeant Named Batista_

In the book _A Sergeant Named Batista_, written in English, the course of the Revolution is fully described, the incidents, the sudden shifts, the various governments, so that I am limiting myself here to the essentials necessary to portray the course of events leading to the Constitution of 1940.

_**Colonel Mendieta, Menocal, and Miguel Mariano**_

The make-shift air Grau gave the Government and his in­ability to win national and international support resulted in the failure of his Administration to earn recognition from the ma­jority of American countries. On January 15, 1934, he was re­placed by Col. Carlos Mendieta, and within a few days his Government was recognized by the United States and the other nations of the Hemisphere. Under his Administration the “Platt Amendment” was finally abrogated and a new treaty with the Administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt became ef­fective.

For the first few months, Col. Mendieta had the support of all segments of the population, but he was soon confronted with serious public disturbances. A general strike was called in March 1935, preceded and followed by a wave of terrorism. We worked hard to re-establish normalcy with the least possible injury to industry, commerce, labor, and even the participants. The strike was political in nature, and was led principally by Communists and allies of Grau, as well as by some members of the ABC, the powerful secret organization which had withdrawn its support from President Mendieta some weeks earlier.
Mendieta resigned the Presidency in 1935, complying with the demands of opposition leader, Gen. Menocal, who insisted on this before agreeing to take part in general elections. The candidates for the office of President in these elections were Dr. Miguel Mariano Gómez, former Mayor of Havana and son of ex-President José Miguel Gómez, veteran of the War of Independence, and Gen. Mario García Monocal. Gómez won and succeeded Provisional President José A. Barnet on May 20, 1936.

**Opposition of Grau and the Communists**

The campaign to choose a democratically elected President to succeed the Provisional Government of Col. Mendieta was secretly opposed by Grau San Martín and the Communist Party. Our goals for peace, the development of the national economy, the reorganization of public institutions, the elevation of the workers' standard of living, the progressive industrialization of the country—all demanded the democratic and constitutional operation of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Powers. Congress was to call elections to choose delegates to a Constituent Assembly.

The Communist Party waved the banner of “Constituent Assembly first and elections afterwards!” Fortunately for Cuba, their tactics received support only in the revolutionary agitation of Grau “the patriot,” “the liberator,” the man of “Cuba for the Cubans,” “the most honest.”*

One is struck by the similarity of these epithets, mottoes, and demagogic lies to the slogans and adjectives employed 20 years later to present Fidel Castro as ‘honest,” “democratic,” and the “liberator of the oppressed.” Grau’s Administration, 1944-1948, was the most unscrupulous seen in Cuba, and can only be compared with that of his godson, Dr. Carlos Prio Socarrás, who succeeded him.

* See Chapter XXXI.
A month after Miguel Mariano Gómez had assumed the Presidency, he found himself in serious difficulties with Congress, and the inevitable conflict between the two powers came to a head.

Political plans were under discussion and parties were being organized, and the civil administration was engaged in a program of reforms. I had secured support in a plan to give an effective permanent organization to labor, guarantees to capital investment, and improvement in living conditions in urban and rural areas. I was permitted to establish the Civic-Military Institute (Instituto Cívico Militar) which became the most brilliant educational institution of the Continent, for housing and educating the orphans of workers, soldiers, professionals, and peasants—an institution in which the relatives of the boys and girls could take pride, with optimism for the future.

Our work was intensive and rewarding. The struggle against tuberculosis and parasitical diseases was intensified with the formation of the Corporative Council of Education, Health, and Welfare (Consejo Corporativo de Educación, Sanidad y Beneficencia) to which the National Council of Tuberculosis was subordinated. The National Corporation of Public Assistance (Corporación Nacional de Asistencia Pública) organized establishments for the shelter of women and the indigent aged, and gave economic and technical assistance to all the asylums in the country. The Technical Institute of Rural Health (Instituto Técnico de Salubridad Rural) and the Civic Rural Schools (Escuelas Cívico Rurales) with their fully trained teachers of domestic science, agriculture, office techniques, hygiene, and animal husbandry, carried the campaign against illiteracy to the most inaccessible areas of the country, and prepared the men and women of the rural areas for a better and healthier life.

The Farm Children’s Home (Hogar Infantil Campesino) was complementary to the Rural Schools. The latter were divided
into 40 zones and, with other educational institutions, were strategically distributed throughout the country. The most promising children were sent to the Farm Children’s Homes, where they received special instruction from 14 to 18 years of age.

To finance the Rural Schools, Congress was discussing a bill to levy a tax of 9 cents on each 325-pound bag of sugar. It was approved by the Senate and came before the House of Representatives. A friend of President Gómez informed reporters that the bill would be vetoed. The result was that impeachment proceedings were lodged against Miguel Mariano Gómez and he was removed from office by a joint resolution of Congress. The Vice President, Dr. Federico Laredo Brú, a Colonel of the War of Independence, replaced him, taking his oath of office before the Supreme Court.

**Constituent Elections**

Important measures were carried out under the new government, but the most important were political. Dr. Grau had abandoned his insurrectionary activities and had joined the struggle for civic improvement. All leaders, from Dr. Miguel Mariano Gómez, Gen. Mario García Menocal, and Dr. Joaquín Martínez Saénz on the extreme Right, to Dr. Juan Marinello and Blas Roca on the extreme Left, agreed on the holding of elections. This culminated in the meeting of the Constituent Assembly and the formulation of a new Magna Carta to become effective October 10, 1940.

These elections were applauded by the entire population and were completely honest.

President Laredo Brú, the Army, and I were congratulated by all the political leaders, including the opposition. I resigned as head of the Army in order to take up political activity. This brought me to the Presidency of the Republic on October 10, 1940.
CHAPTER XXIX

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The election of June 1, 1940, which I won, was open. All the legal safeguards were observed. Although my Administration was carried on under the enormous difficulties engendered by World War II, the political parties and the press enjoyed complete freedom. Income was poor, hardly covering a national budget of $85 million, but capital investment was stimulated, the national economy was sound and salaries were high. Labor and industry were not harassed and the Republic fulfilled its international obligations as a nation at war with the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis.

Difficulties and the War

My Administration was faced with four years of constant internal threats as well as by espionage. We had to solve the problem of many important shortages, make up the deficit of a sharply reduced harvest, and create new sources of employment. At the beginning of February, the Chiefs of the 3 branches of the Armed Forces attempted a military coup against me on the pretext that a civil administration could not resolve the economic crisis.* On September 3, 1939, the British Empire had declared war in the face of the mounting Hitler aggression and the European power and part of Asia were involved in the fight. It seemed very probable that the conflict would extend to the American Continent and a network of Axis espionage deve-

* See Chapter XXX.
oped Cuba, 90 miles from the United States, became a center for such activities. Her industries, business, and agriculture became targets of sabotage.

A harvest of 1,800,000 tons for a sugar-producing country like Cuba, which could produce 5,000,000 tons, spelled a desperate situation. The mills could not possibly cover their expenses and the planters could not maintain their fields. The cane surpluses would be so enormous that the losses would not allow payment of the laborers. We conferred with the planters and mill owners and worked out a system to finance them, with the industry itself as security. We agreed to produce 400,000 additional tons, even though the United States did not offer to take it, and we had no market for it. The operation was effected with the aid of the Import and Export Bank. To our satisfaction, both the principal and the interest were repaid before maturity.

The unexpected Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, without a declaration of war on the United States, placed greater obstacles in the path of my Administration; food, commodities, transportation, construction, all brought vast problems. The Commission of National Development (Comisión de Fomento Nacional) was established to develop centers for the production of new articles, to diversify agriculture, to develop mining, to build refrigeration plants for meats and agricultural products, and to build roads linking the rural production areas with the marketing centers. To complete this program we borrowed $25 million from the Import and Export Bank. This was repaid with interest before the expiration of my term of office.

**My Administration and Elections**

Measures had to be taken to prevent the development of large scale black-market operations due to restrictions imposed on imports. Rationing could not be avoided, and the difficulties
it occasioned produced bitter criticism in the press. Government officials were accused of speculation. To prevent such a contingency I sought Congressional authorization for the creation of an independent agency to supervise the rationing of scarce items, principally imported rice. To avoid criticism I obtained the designation of a member of the opposition, engineer Carlos Hevia, to head the Office for the Regulation of Prices and Supplies, the ORPA (Oficina Regulatora de Precios y Abastecimientos).

Cuba suffered great losses owing to a shortage of boats brought about by attacks of enemy submarines in the Gulf. These obstacles cost thousands of man hours that could have been put to constructive use. Surpluses could not be exported. Four boats of the budding Cuban merchant marine were sunk with the loss of their crews.

During my term in the Presidency, elections were held, which, like those of 1939, were the cleanest in the nation’s history and outstanding in the politics of the Western Hemisphere.*

The Sergeants’ revolution of September 4, 1933, was the

* The Pearl of the Antilles has set a good example. After many decades, it was precisely Cuba where elections were held in 1944 of a type not common in these republics. “These elections represented the true will of the people, there were no disorders, and the winner was the opposition candidate.

“I do not know whether Cuba will be a paradise again, or blow up with bombings and killings; but now that there are no more political prisoners, persecuted and exiled leaders, now that labor is organized and free enterprise flourishes, it seems to me that Cuba is well on the road to that happy state...

“As a foreigner, I who was unacquainted with Grau San Martín or with Carlos Saladrigas, Batista’s friend and former Premier, maintained a neutral position. I was in no position to determine which candidate would better serve the country. By the afternoon of the second day, it was all over. Batista had forbidden any fraud in the voting, and thereby came away with a moral victory. Cuba’s reputation had never been higher and European opinion of Latin American elections had undergone a fundamental change.” (Emil Ludwig, Biography of an Island, pp. 213-214, 343.)
culmination of many years of struggle to achieve complete sovereignty and to stabilize public institutions, with modifications in the law and the Armed Forces, which would insure the normal growth of democracy in the Cuban Republic.

When I handed over the Presidency to my opponent, who had won the election over the government candidate by a narrow margin, I left Cuba enjoying internal peace. The national economy was rising, no political figures were in prison or in exile, there was no censorship of the press, and no abridgement of the rights of labor. With the triumph of the opposition we had won a great victory—although triumph does not always lie in winning.

*Voluntary Exile*

Upon the expiration of my Presidential term on Oct. 10, 1944, I left the country to visit the South American countries, on their invitations.

During the four months of my trip, I received enthusiastic receptions from all segments of society, from government officials, labor organizations, and business interests. On my return, I made a short visit to Mexico and then established my home in the United States, first in New York and then in Daytona Beach, Florida.

While I was living in the United States, President Grau’s Government tried to prevent my return to Cuba, despite the universal recognition that Grau—violently opposed to my policies—was secure in his office because of the fair position assumed by my Administration. I declared myself in “voluntary” exile, using this term to avoid saddling my country with the shame of ostracizing a man who had given his people absolute freedom, and the President they had elected absolute guarantees.

The hope that the Republic would proceed on an even keel, with elections held as provided by the Constitution, began to
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

fade under the policies of this so-called "Auténtico" Administration.

Grau's term of office was passed in intra-party disputes and administration scandals which were equalled only by those of the Administration of Dr. Carlos Prío Socarrás. Criminal activities and assassinations, were even more prevalent under the Presidency of the disciple who succeeded him.
CHAPTER XXX

THE PEDRAZA PLOT

At the time of the revolution of September 4, 1933, José Eleuterio Pedraza was the First Sergeant of an infantry company. When I invited him to join the movement I headed, he accepted and acted with great decisiveness. By successive promotions he moved from Captain to Colonel. He carried out his duties capably, and though he sometimes acted too hastily, he was always faithful... until one day....

I had retired from the Army in 1939. When I assumed the Presidency on October 10, 1940, I appointed Pedraza as Chief of the Army General Staff and Col. Angel Aurelio González as Chief of the Navy.

At Col. Pedraza’s request Col. Bernardo García was made Chief of the National Police. For administrative reasons I had had to dismiss the former Chief of Police, his conduct having hurt the Government’s reputation.

My Administration had hardly been four months in office, when the three Chiefs, with Col. Pedraza as the ringleader, became involved in a plot to overthrow the regime. As a pretext they claimed that the Government could not fulfill the economic obligations or balance the national budget. But the real reasons lay in unnecessary acts of violence and in the shady transactions of the Chief of Police.

To avoid speaking in the first person, I turn again to Edmund Chester’s book A Sergeant Named Batista.

“At the beginning of 1941, a competent observer might have
stated, with a great deal of justification, that after Batista, the three most important figures in the Batista regime were Col. José E. Pedraza, Chief of the Army, Col. Angel A. González, Chief of the Navy, and Col. Bernardo García, Chief of the National Police, and therefore a subordinate of Pedraza. Two of these men, Pedraza and González, had been friends of Batista from the first days of his military career, which had culminated in the revolution of September 4, 1933.

“The Batista of 1941 was a mature statesman who had been elected to the Presidency of the Republic in a constitutional manner, in the fairest elections that had taken place since Cuba attained freedom. This was a former soldier living up to his promise to give the people a civilian government, a government in which the Army would be the servant and not the master.”

The Discharges

“At that time certain departments, such as the Maritime Police, Lighthouses, and the Port Authorities were under the control of the Navy. Batista ordered these functions returned to civil authority, under the Ministry of the Treasury. A decree ordering the changes was signed by the President, Prime Minister Carlos Saladrigas, and Defense Minister Domingo F. Ramos on January 23, 1941. This action did not, of course, please the Chief of the Navy, who had used these departments to cover his business activities.

“For the good of the service, Batista discharged Bernardo García. This did not suit Col. Pedraza, and he committed his first overt act of defiance by refusing to allow Col. Manuel Benítez, García’s successor, to take command of the National Police. Pedraza called all the high officers of the National Police to headquarters and told them that from that moment on, he, Pedraza, would command the National Police as well as the
Army. This defiance irked Batista, but he was even more disturbed when he learned that Benítez, in order to avoid a conflict with Pedraza, had offered to resign to Pedraza.

"...Shortly after talking to the police officials, Pedraza went to Camp Columbia. He called all high Army, Navy, and Police officers before him and proposed the unseating of Batista. He asserted that the latter had insulted the Armed Forces by returning certain governmental functions to the civil authorities and that the economic situation made it impossible for his Government to continue. Benítez put himself under Pedraza's command and the high ranking officers signed a document of agreement with Pedraza.

"A group of the officers went straight to Batista with the document in their hands. Batista read it calmly, took a match and burned it. The officers came to attention and President Batista ordered them to be ready to obey him."

"On the night the Chief of Police was called to the Palace, Batista sent for the Chief of the Navy also. González came accompanied by two Lieutenant Colonels of the Army. When he left he was alone. Though he refused to make any statement to the press, the rumor spread that he had been removed from his post, but he refused to surrender his command, and serious trouble was expected.

"When Pedraza went to the Palace on the afternoon of Feb. 2, he was accompanied by several officers and 30 carloads of bodyguards armed with sub-machine guns, who stationed themselves in strategic positions outside the Palace. During the time Batista was talking with Pedraza, one of the officers who had accompanied the Chief of the Army remained on the balcony of the Palace and kept in touch with the machine gunners in the street.

"Pedraza stated that it was his intention to command all the Armed Forces of Cuba, and he implied that it might be wise for Batista to confine his activities to affairs of State. Pedraza was
sure of himself, with his forces surrounding the Palace, ready to move on his signal.

"Batista answered him: 'I want you to think about what you have just said for 24 hours. Meanwhile, I'll sleep on your proposition.'

"From the third floor of the Palace, Batista saw gunboats maneuvering offshore. These vessels were waiting for orders from Col. González, who was directing operations from La Punta. The cannon of the fortress, usually trained on the harbor entrance, were now pointing at the Palace.

"As night fell and the moment of the showdown was at hand, word was received that the entire National Police force had been armed with machine guns and rifles, and that it was this force which would attack the Palace after it had been bombarded from La Punta."

**Solution Without Bloodshed**

"Suddenly there was the sound of an automobile leaving the Palace. Benítez was driving, and in the back seat was Batista, wearing a tourist cap, sun glasses, a sport shirt with an open collar, and a leather jacket. Galíndez sat with him. It was a little after 9, and they were heading for Camp Columbia. Galíndez was Chief of the Camp Columbia military post and Batista knew that the guards at the camp’s gates would pass any car in which Galíndez was a passenger without examining it. When Batista called Galíndez and Benítez to the Presidential Palace they did not know what Batista had in mind. He had picked Benítez as the driver of the car so that he could keep him under surveillance. He had not forgotten that a day or two before Benítez had shown a willingness to submit to Pedraza’s orders.

"Once inside Camp Columbia, Batista acted quickly. After giving his picked guards time to station themselves at exits and entrances, he ordered ‘General Assembly’ sounded."
"Batista spoke to the soldiers. He told them that because of disaffections among the military chiefs he, as Supreme Chief, was taking over command of all the Armed Forces. His brief talk was received with cheers. It was the end of the rebellion. Pedraza was placed under house arrest. González and García were taken into custody and left the next day for Miami.

"Batista had met another dangerous incident of his life without bloodshed, just as he had on Sept. 4, 1933.

"The three seditious chiefs all returned to Cuba a short time later. García, an inveterate gambler, spent the last days of his life playing poker with his friends at Varadero. González lives peacefully in Havana. Pedraza operates a cattle ranch in Las Villas. None of the three were active thereafter in political affairs."

* "Batista had many friends, but they were not all disinterested. Some of the men whom he trusted most and whom he raised to unmerited positions, grew rich on his back and betrayed him on more than one occasion." (Emil Ludwig, Biography of an Island, p. 340.)

Note: He seems to have been writing for the future.

Robado del archivo del Dr. Antonio Rafael de la Cova
http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuba-books.htm
CHAPTER XXXI
POLITICS AND GANGSTERISM

By the end of 1948 Cuban politics had been the source of many acts of violence. One of Dr. Grau's supporters aspired to the Presidency and organized a new party, demagogic in nature, which obtained strong popular support by disclosing the immoral and criminal nature of the Administration from which he had just seceded. This turncoat was Eduardo R. Chibás, who took his new stand when he realized he would not be Dr. Grau's candidate. For the President and leader of the "Auténticos" had decided to support another disciple, politically inferior to Chibás.

Dr. Pío Elizalde, in his book *The Tragedy of Cuba*, asserts that Prío's election "was based on the action of the so-called BAGA, letters which survive in Cuban political history to signify an official instrument of corruption and blackmail for the attainment of an election objective."

The letters represented the political combination of Grau and the Minister of Education José Manuel Alemán, whom the President permitted to rifle the Cuban Treasury at will. In his schemes for re-election, Grau authorized the use of the initials. Elizalde goes on to say, "The Bloc of Alemán-Grau-Alsina-BAGA which took shape in the last days of the Grau Administration was the culmination of the thievery, tyranny and mismanagement characteristic of those men. When Grau failed in his bid for re-election, being unable to modify the Constitution so that he could run again, he gave his support to the former President of the Student Directorate, Dr. Prío, in opposition to both Chibás and Miguel Suárez Fernandez."
The Administration and its Opposition

The national assembly of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Cubano) as the “Auténticos” were officially known, did not give a majority vote to Carlos Prío Socarrás, recommended by President Grau. He sought some method of forcing Prío upon them and made use of a cheap trick to do this. Quorum is the minimum majority required for a decision to be reached by an assembly or committee. Since Prío had no majority, Grau obtained a modification of the law so that a “functional majority,” a majority of those present at the meeting, were able to designate the candidate.

Public opinion was openly opposed to the Administration and divided its sympathies between the dissident leader, Eduardo Chibás, President of the Cuban People’s Party (the “Ortodoxos”) and Dr. Ricardo Nuñez Portuondo, who had the support of the Liberal and Democratic parties. The latter belonged to the coalition that had elected me President in the summer of 1940.

Decision to Retire from Politics

I had decided to withdraw from politics. I had worked very hard since September 4, 1933, not counting my previous clandestine activities, until October 10, 1944. I was determined to remain firm in my resolution.

I had made my contributions to a critical era. On the patriotic level, I had removed the last restraint from Cuban sovereignty; on the personal level, I had elevated the dignity of the Cuban soldier; on the social level, I had raised the standard of living of the working class; on the educational level, I had created rural schools and reduced illiteracy; on the cultural level, I had created museums, libraries, archives and academies; on the economic level, I had made Cuba a center of international
commerce, and sped diversified industrialization. I had converted dependent tenants into independent proprietors; in the political area, I had made every effort to give Cuba a democratic constitution.

Furthermore, I had seen Cuba successfully through World War II and insured civil peace with elections in which dignity and civil rights had triumphed over political and personal interests.

I thought it best to let history judge my achievements. There were many capable and patriotic Cubans able to serve the nation without me.

*A Reluctant Candidate*

As the elections drew near, I received many telephone calls and visitors to my home in Daytona Beach, urging me to re-enter politics. I refused several times, but everyone insisted that my name ought to appear on the ballot, so that my adherents could unite in opposition to the Administration and support the candidates of the Liberal and Democratic parties. Among those who overwhelmed me with their insistence were the coalition leader himself, the distinguished professor and surgeon, Dr. Ricardo Nuñez Portuondo; Dr. Carlos Saladrígas Zayas, Francisco Batista, brothers Pedro and Antonio Martínez Fraga, all leaders of the Democratic Party; among the leaders of the Liberal Party were Prof. Aurelio Fernández Concheso and Senator Eduardo Suárez Rívas. In addition, labor and business leaders were after me all the time.

There was nothing else to do but enter my name as a candidate for Senator from Las Villas Province. With gangsterism running riot in Cuba, the coalition leaders believed I should not personally appear on the Island. When I insisted that I would not accept the nomination unless I could campaign personally, they warned me that an attempt on my life would give the Gov-
ernment a solid excuse to suspend the elections. So certain was public opinion that Grau's candidate could not triumph, and that our distinguished physician would be elected, that their fears were well-founded.

The Election

The election was held June 1, 1948. The opposition offered two Presidential candidates, and the Government the protégé of Dr. Grau, supported by the "Auténticos" and the Republican Party. The campaign was extremely violent, and the anti-Administration forces were subjected to physical violence by gangsters. Despite the split in the opposition, it seemed that Núñez Portuondo would win. But the tally showed Grau's candidate the victor, though he had received less than 45% of the vote.

Among the six opposition candidates for the Senate in the Central Province, I received the largest number of votes. My victory demanded my return to Cuba. On November 19, 1948, I was acclaimed by a tremendous crowd at the "José Martí" international airport and was accompanied by a procession on foot and in automobiles on the trip to "Kuquine," my home near the capital.

Political Activities

After my arrival there was no more rest. Members of political parties called on me at all hours. I was asked to take a more active part in politics. The Liberal and Democratic parties were in complete disorder after their unexpected defeat in the general election. Since the Social-Democratic coalition had helped me secure the Presidency in 1940 and a seat in the Senate in 1948, it seemed logical that I would take my stand officially with one of the two parties. A few weeks after my arrival Prio began a
campaign to win their support for himself and thus isolate me completely. Nor did he halt at terrorizing my adherents.

The electorate demanded that I appear in Las Villas. Elected Senator without having campaigned in the area, I was now under obligation to personally thank the people who had elected me. Upon announcing my visit to the Provincial capital, I received both advice and threats not to make a public appearance there. The youths who had organized my reception were beaten and it was certain that an attempt would be made on my life. But I had never failed to fulfill an engagement with the people, and I would not change my custom now.*

In spite of the announcement that any gathering would be dispersed, the crowd extended from the outskirts of Santa Clara for one kilometer in anticipation of my arrival. Standing in an open jeep, surrounded by men and women, we went through the streets and held the meeting in the park. It was an emotional and enthusiastic reception, despite some slight incidents. On our way back to the highway we had to disarm some groups sent out by Havana gangs.

Prío inherited Grau’s gangs, and the security of his Government depended upon them. They were used for what were no longer mysterious bloody actions. Teenagers went around with pistols. They walked the streets with arrogance and murdered their rivals in broad daylight.

The estate on which I lived with my wife and children was surrounded by secret agents and soldiers a few days after my return from Las Villas. Some yards from the entrance to the villa the friends who came to see me for political or social rea

---

* "Batista attended the inauguration of a Martí memorial. No platform had been raised nor had the area been roped off, so the people were able to come very close to him. In the middle of the crowd, without guards, he felt completely safe, even though it would have been easy for any of the youths standing on the rise to fire down upon him.” (Emil Ludwig, *Biography of an Island*, p. 337.)
sons were halted. They were questioned and searched. My friends reported to me the threats made against any public appearance on my part.

As the months went by, their aggressive behavior became more obvious. Mortars were set up not far from my home, always ready to fire directly upon us.
CHAPTER XXXII

AGITATION AND SCANDALS

The Liberal and Democratic parties were identified with President Prio’s Administration. But a large part of their membership split off and, joining forces with neutral groups, formed the United Action Party (Partido Acción Unitaria) under my leadership. No sooner was this party organized than Prio began to threaten the members and their families. His persecution grew daily in violence. I visited every municipality and was always received by thousands. But we always had to fight and disarm the hoodlums who tried to intimidate the people.

In this atmosphere of agitation and violence provoked by armed bands,* of discontent created by the revelation of Administration scandals and the criticism of the opposition, the political situation grew more and more disturbed. Finally the Government found itself in a hopeless position when it was time to select the candidates for Mayor of Havana. The Minister of Finance was the President’s brother, which was his only qualification for the position. The National Treasury had been scandalously plundered; receipts were openly embezzled. This was public knowledge. Eduardo Chibás and his “Ortodoxos” had become the terror of Prio with their daily crude denunciations of his immorality. The “Ortodoxo” leader had left many

---

* Mrs. Phillips has said that a gang of Prio’s thugs assaulted the court that had jurisdiction of the proceedings against former President Ramón Grau San Martín for embezzlement of $174,000,000 on July 4, 1950, and took all the records on the case. No one was ever arrested for this, nor were the documents ever recovered. (Cuba, Island of Paradox, p. 432.)
friends in the Administration who kept him well-informed, when he left the “Auténticos.” He made use of this information in a peculiarly demagogic fashion which awakened much indignation. The attacks on the men and women of my party, on the labor leaders and the youths who followed me, and our revelations of the evils of the Administration created an exceedingly hostile atmosphere for the “Auténtico” candidates.

**Acts of Aggression Against My Party**

President Prío ignored popular rejection and, moving against public opinion, launched the candidacy of his brother Antonio, Minister of Finance, for Mayor of Havana. My party, the United Action Party, and the “Ortodoxo” Party also had candidates for this office. Our experience in the election of 1948, when the split in the opposition had thrown the election to Prío, made us cautious. We had to unite on one candidate if we were to carry the day. Our party decided to go along with Nicolás Castellanos, and set up a coalition with his party.

The aggressive acts of the Government against our party increased with our selection of Castellanos. My automobile was twice fired upon, and our party workers were continually manhandled. Three days before the nominating convention five of our delegates were kidnapped and three others were bribed. By the day before the scheduled convention, kidnapping and bribery had reduced the number to just one more than half of the total delegation. Our leaders succeeded in rounding up the remaining delegates during the night. They were brought to my villa, and the next day we proceeded to the hall where we nominated our candidate for Mayor of Havana.

Nicolás Castellanos triumphed over the President’s brother. Coinciding with our victory, administration scandals increased and the terrorist activities of the Government-controlled political gangs became more violent.
AGITATION AND SCANDALS

The Tragedy of Cuba states succinctly that “by tradition and loyalties, the Liberal and Democratic parties, which had been allies of Batista throughout his regime and had supported Ricardo Nuñez Portuondo, were expected to become part of the opposition against Prío. But this was not so. They were captured by him, as were the ‘Nacional Cubano’ and the ‘Cubanidad’ parties. And on the eve of March 10, 1952, the United Action Party faced the same fate. Isolated and persecuted, it had little opportunity to participate meaningfully in the Presidential elections of that year.”

The Cuban National Party under Dr. Guillermo Alonso Pujol and Mayor Nicolás Castellanos, who were committed to support me for President, also sold out to Dr. Prío.

This collection of parties, like a collection of worthless items in a catalogue, did not add strength to the Administration but discredited the tumbling regime even further. Otherwise how does one explain the fact that it was replaced in two hours without a single cry heard in the streets? The author of the book previously cited has asked: “Why did the power fall so easily into the hands of the ex-President? Was his influence in the Army enough to bring this about? Was Batista a miracle worker? Why, despite the existence of numerous organizations, was nothing done to avoid the fall of Prío and the enthroning of Batista?”

The national conscience demanded an end to the existing state of affairs with its apocalyptic threats which seemed so close to becoming reality.

Embezzlement and Corruption

With the approach of the Presidential campaign and its accompanying reorganization of political parties, the rifling of the National Treasury by the Government reached its peak. Assas-
Assassinations

The atmosphere was one of complete immorality. Actual events proved worse than the rumors. The Armed Forces were immobilized and the Police were helpless before the murderous political groups. A few months before the end of the Presidential term, Paniagua and Cossío del Pino, two distinguished public figures, were assassinated within a few weeks of each other. This heralded the beginning of a dangerous anarchy which President Prío feared would reach its height with the triumph of the opposition, principally through the terror which the "Ortodoxos" inspired in him. Paniagua and Cossío del Pino had been the last victims of the gangsters.
The press, radio, and television continued to be used by all factions. The Administration could not conceal the series of frauds and the daily looting, nor was it possible to hold back the wave of crime in which the top Police officials were implicated. The President's favorites were involved in smuggling. All this went on openly. From the Minister of Finance all the way down the line, no attempt was made to conceal the transactions. Extortion and immorality had become the normal state of affairs.
CHAPTER XXXIII

NON-EXISTENT OR DELAYED EVIDENCE

CMQ, the most important radio and television station, was the main attraction in the country whenever Eduardo Chibás, chief of the “Ortodoxos,” was on the air. He continued his vociferous denunciations, backed with facts and figures. The Government tried hard to cast doubt on his revelations.

Nothing was too preposterous. The scandals were so evident that the truth could be mixed with lies without changing the validity of the statements. It was said that President Prío had flown to Merida for discussions with the Caribbean Legion. This proved untrue; yet a short time later Prío did fly to Guatemala.

The frequent exchange of visits among the Communists and Leftists made political trips from Havana to Central America very commonplace. Prío and his group were almost as well known in Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala as they were in their own country. Economic transactions resulting from these contacts had never been made public knowledge and Chibás revealed them sharply and fully.

It was rumored that Aureliano Sánchez Arango, founder of the Communist cell at the University—which included Julio Antonio Mella and Rubén Martínez Villena, Minister of Education in Carlos Prío’s Administration—had acquired great forest tracts in Central America and was making a fortune in the lumber trade. Shipments of lumber were smuggled in through the port of Batabanó and others on the Pinar del Río coast. On the eastern coast smuggling activities were led by the Babun brothers. The lumber included mahogany and cedar as well as the more common varieties.

Eduardo Chibás denounced Sánchez Arango as the front for Prío in his shady deals and as the proprietor of extensive
holdings in Central America. The latter denied the truth of the "Ortodoxo" claims and demanded proof. In successive broadcasts and counter-replies, Sánchez Arango insisted that Chibás, employing his usual methods of propaganda, ought to present detailed data, giving dates, places, and names. Chibás promised to do this, and there was a brief suspension of the attacks.

One afternoon Chibás went to CMQ followed by a large crowd protesting certain coercive administration acts. In an exchange of gunfire between the police and the demonstrators, two of Chibás’ friends were killed. His speech was more violent than usual, his followers were highly agitated, and rioting followed.

On another night Chibás announced that he would appear on his next CMQ broadcast with a caseful of proofs of Sánchez Arango’s shady dealings. The latter demanded to see them, and Chibás promised to show his proof at the Ministry of Education. Chibás never did get around to produce them.

Rumors cropped up that other leaders of the “Ortodoxo” Party were counseling their chief to follow a more moderate course and there was even talk of removing him as party leader. This appeared to be only a difference in judgment which could not diminish his authority, for his leadership rested on the support of the vast majority of the party’s membership.

The popularity of Chibás broadcasts was further increased by his debates with Sánchez Arango and his differences with other party leaders. His last performance, on August 5, 1951, was most spectacular. Either because Chibás could not produce his promised proof or because the actions of some of his companions had been a deep blow to him, he opened his talk with the declaration that he hoped the sacrifice of his life would serve to awaken the conscience of the nation. And before anyone could prevent it, he whipped out a gun and fired a bullet into his body.

Chibás’ death, 11 days later, caused deep consternation. It was recalled at that time that, when he was a favorite of Grau, he had tried to commit suicide in the same manner.
CHAPTER XXXIV

Prio, Communist Students, and International Communism

Because of World War II and the cooperation between the Allies and Soviet Russia, the Popular Socialist Party supported my previous Administration. This was true in most countries which fought the Nazi-Fascist aggression. As leader of the Opposition, Grau had fought the Communists, but as soon as he became President he made an alliance with them. It was Carlos Prio who later got into a quarrel with the Communists. This was the result of an intra-party quarrel rather than an ideological difference.

The labor section of the "Auténtico" Party, composed of activists as skillful as the "comrades" in the labor struggle, was strengthened by Grau's triumph. But it could not gain control of the workers for two main reasons. The first lay in the need for the new Administration to control Congress, having won the Presidency by a very small majority; the Congressional majority corresponded to the coalition and my Administration controlled both Legislative bodies. The second lay in the fact that the victory had been unexpected and had caught "Auténtico" labor unprepared to fight the Communists for labor leadership. But they set up their organization and there was an open struggle for control of the Cuban Confederation of Labor. The battle grew in intensity and finally the "Auténticos," led by a tireless and intelligent fighter, carried the day. The battle between the Communist Lázaro Peña and the "Auténtico" Eusebio Mujal was decided in favor of the tougher one, who raised the banner of anti-Communism and had the support of the leaders. Prio

230
then sided with his party.

On the other hand, the Caribbean Legion, composed of Leftists, demagogues, adventurers, and Communist agitators whose mission was to carry out international assignments for the Soviet Union, had the enthusiastic support of President Prío. The Russian Embassy in Havana was the propaganda center for the entire Caribbean region and the Gulf of Mexico. Russian agents came and went carrying printed material from Mexico to Cuba, and vice versa. With the blessings of the President and his Administration, Communist travelers and Havana University students met in the Embassy to conspire against Western democracy.

Guatemala’s Arbenz’ hatred of the United States and its people was shared by Prío and his Administration. One of the most serious incidents I faced as a member of the opposition was due to my reaction upon learning that the President had left Cuban soil without the permission of Congress. He was so sympathetic to the Communist regime of Guatemala that he had secretly flown there to discuss the activities of the Caribbean Legion with Arbenz.

At that time several officers called on me in an effort to convince me that I ought to take over command of the Armed Forces before the Republic fell into complete chaos. I pointed out that the election was near, and that the crisis created by Prío’s Government ought to be resolved by the ballot. Through them I learned that the President was actually in Guatemala. They thought that this was the opportune moment to depose him.

President Prío aided Communist activities while he seemed to be combatting them. This duplicity was not new to him. Through the positions he had occupied in the Grau Administration and as a Presidential candidate he was aware of the contacts of Frances Demon and Fidel Castro with the Russian Embassy, before Castro had gone first to Panamá and later to Colombia.
He also was aware of the orders to the Minister of State and to the Chief of the Air Force. The latter was to send a military plane to Bogotá, and the former was to instruct the Cuban Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Guillermo Belt, who was at the Pan-American Conference on April 9, 1948, to protect Fidel Castro and the other Latin-American youths who participated in the Bogotá riots. Through this direct authorization of the Grau Administration, Fidel Castro and his companions were able to return to Cuba under official protection. He reported this to the Communist newspaper Hoy, which was published during Prío's Administration.*

* After the attack on the Moncada Barracks by the Fidelistas, a book on communism was seized. It was dedicated to Abel Santamaría, one of the dead attackers.
CHAPTER XXXV

NOTIFICATION AND CONSPIRACIES

The redoubled persecution of my partisans by men directly under the Chief of the Army compelled us to send Dr. Andrés Domingo y Morales del Castillo with a message to Col. Aristides Sosa de Quesada explaining our reasons for censuring the Prío Government as violator of the rights to which we, as political figures and citizens, were entitled. Gen. Ruperto Cabrera refused to accept the message, and we then sent him a letter setting forth the offensive actions of the Government and the methods by which we had to defend ourselves. To demonstrate how far irresponsibility had progressed we mentioned the unauthorized trip President Prío had taken to Guatemala. The guards at the Presidential Palace related how Cabrera arrived there, hatless and in peasant costume to report the contents of the letter to his Commander-in-Chief.

The weeks that followed were full of torment for me and the members of the United Action Party. The guard over my home and the harassment of my visitors increased. Gangs attacked the party offices and the automobiles that distributed party literature.

At that time various conspiratorial groups were at work among the Armed Forces, and the agitators of the "Ortodoxo" Party were continually threatening a Saint Bartholomew's night upon their triumph. They were sure of victory.

For about two and half years a conspiratorial organization of officers had been functioning. They had already failed twice in their attempt to overthrow the Government. Their main at-
tempt occurred on the night of the overthrow of Gen. Genovevo Pérez, who had helped Prío to attain the Presidency. The two were business associates and owned adjoining villas in Pinar del Río, with a private airport. Business difficulties alienated them, and the President suddenly replaced the General on the morning of August 24, 1949. Taking advantage of Pérez Dámera's absence at one of his farms in Camagüey, Prío showed up with an escort at the Chief of Staff's offices. They were deserted and the President ran no risk.

A large group of officers, including Maj. Ramón Barquín, Captains Cabaña Batista, Camino Garmendía, Monteagudo Fleitas, and Valdés Jimenez, and Lieutenants Orihuela and Borbonet had learned that the President planned a secret visit to General Headquarters that night. At dusk, the officers surrounded the building with a company from the Military Academy under the command of Capt. Monteagudo with another company from the Infantry Regiment under Lieut. Borbonet. They were reinforced by the Tank Company of Columbia under Capt. Cabaña Batista and the company from La Cabaña, under Capt. Valdes Jimenez. Some of these officers had been students at the War College under Dr. Roberto Agramonte, who had replaced Chibás as head of the "Ortodoxo" Party and candidate for the Presidency. Because of this relationship and through contacts with other "Ortodoxo" professors, many favored the naming of Agramonte. They argued with those who favored me because they believed that my good relations with the troops would facilitate the replacement of Prío without creating any disturbance.

The time passed without reaching an agreement and Prío left the building without realizing what had been taking place.
The air was full of rumors, and the "Ortodoxos" continued announcing that on inauguration day Prió would go from the Palace to La Cabana, the old Spanish fortress, to answer for the acts of vandalism committed by his Administration. He was threatened with the confiscation of all his wealth, and his relatives and collaborators were to be tried before a people's court. Chibás' death gave the Priistas some measure of hope. The upper echelon of the Government felt that things were going their way, believing that the "Ortodoxo" Party would fall apart without its leader. The board of the Party of the Cuban People acted swiftly but, as several candidates to the chairmanship appeared, confusion ensued. Dr. Agramonte boldly declared himself the heir of the dead leader. He argued that he had a secret agreement with Chibás and was the depository of his program. The party finally backed him, and he was proclaimed the Presidential candidate.

The atmosphere was again one of great agitation and as the campaign proceeded, action became more violent and threats increased.

One day in February I was informed by one of the officers of the group whom I had previously dissuaded from revolt that Prió had held a meeting with the Chief of the Army and other officers at Camp Columbia, to discuss a plan to prevent the holding of the national elections. He had explained the national situation and his tactics for immobilizing my candidacy. And he had tried to convince them that a victory by my party would
plunge the country into a civil war—if one considered the pro-
vocative campaign being waged by the “Ortodoxo” Party and
their plan to unite with the “Auténtico” Party, provided I won
the election. However, if the political situation did not change,
he foresaw no possibility of my election. But he also doubted
that his candidate, engineer Carlos Hevia, could, with his unap-
pealing personality, muster enough strength to win. A victory
by the “Ortodoxos” would be used by those fanatics to destroy
Cuban institutions and the established order. An agreement was
reached to wait until the end of April, and if by that time his
candidate did not seem the likely victor, the Army would carry
out a coup d’état and halt the elections.

Indirect Messages

One morning I received an unannounced visit from Dr. An-
selmo Alliegro, President of the United Action Party in Ori-
ente Province. Alarmed by what he had heard from Dr. Prío’s
own lips, he had come to report it to me. The two had met at
a cattle fair. The President had greeted him quite affectionately.
Dr. Alliegro was surprised by this display of friendliness, be-
cause even though they had known each other for many years,
it did not seem wise for political opponents to be so thick in
public. He suspected that this was an attempt to win him over
from me and to get his support for Hevia.

While I listened, I thought that this was actually the case.
Just the night before Dr. Ramón Hermida had told me that Dr.
Fernando Sirgo had tried to make a deal with him and had
asked him to convince me that an “Ortodoxo” triumph would
ruin the country.

Alliegro went on to say that he had been invited to La
Chata, the villa where Prío resided with his family. Over cof-
fee, he painted the dramatic situation of the moment and the
tragedy of his efforts to find a way out of the black vista that stretched before him. Prio spoke of tapped telephone conversations in which “Ortodoxo” leaders and their ladies had expressed their thoughts of vengeance. He showed Alliegro copies of those conversations in order to convince him.

The elections were to be held on June 1, and the new President was to be inaugurated October 10. One conversation was to the effect that the day after their expected victory, the “Ortodoxos” planned to arouse the populace and in the confusion drive out all Prio’s collaborators and make off with his wife’s jewels. Prio added that he thought it stupid to try this the day after the elections, but that it might work at the time of the inauguration. Alliegro answered that “if matters stood thus, why were his partisans working so hard to prevent Batista’s election? It would be better for the President and for Cuba if he stopped harassing Batista.”

Prio asserted that he saw no possibility of our triumph and that, on the contrary, it was our party which ought to facilitate the election of Hevia. “If this added support does not gain victory for Hevia,” added the President, “there is nothing else for me to try but a coup d’état.”

I told Alliegro my thoughts on the matter in a few words: that this news had hurt me very much, but that I appreciated his coming to tell me. Prio was leading the country to the brink of ruin, and he would destroy it if he persisted in carrying on his mistaken policy.

A Definite Answer and a Final Attitude

With frightening continuity, reports came to me confirming President Prio’s state of mind. Early one morning, a telephone call from my daughter Mirtha awakened me. She told me that Dr. Juan J. Remos urgently wished to see me. I asked her why
and she said that she did not know, but that it seemed very important. I made the appointment for 6 in the evening at her home.

What Remos told me would have worried me deeply if I had not already figured out the situation by myself. He had been speaking with Prío in the Presidential Palace and had noticed how upset he was. Prío spoke of his situation as if he were in a blind alley. He saw no possibility of success for his candidate, who had made progress neither with the public nor with his own party. If April came without a chance for victory for Hevia, he would have to carry out a coup d'état. And he had repeated his sentiments regarding the danger of the "Ortodoxos."

I asked Remos to listen to me as an ordinary citizen and not as an opposition leader or Presidential candidate. I wanted him to carry my ideas to President Prío. It seemed to me that the Administration did not have the support of the people and that it remained in power only through its constitutional legitimacy. When Prío's term ended, he would no longer have the support of the Armed Forces, even if the military leaders carried out the coup. I explained the gravity of the situation and the violence of the political campaign which was growing progressively worse. If the President carried out a coup d'état, the people would rise and the Armed Forces would split. The Chiefs upon whom he depended would not command attention in such a crisis. The Army and the Navy would split into factions, and collapse. The Chiefs would back up Prío, but without forces or authority. The other officers inclined toward the "Ortodoxos" or toward me, and there were even a handful who favored the Communist Party. For patriotic reasons, for the welfare of all concerned, I would, as a private citizen, advise President Prío not to commit this stupidity which could only result in a wave of bloodshed and even in the loss of his own life.
Why were these messages carried to me personally? The only reason that occurred to me was that I might surrender to his wishes, as had some of my men. If the threats of Prío’s gangs and their attempts to break up our meetings had compelled me to announce through the press that I preferred physical death to moral death, how could Prío persist in thinking that he might succeed?

I asked Remos to get in touch with me after giving Prío my opinion. Three days later, he gave me the answer: “President Prío has not changed his mind.”
CHAPTER XXXVII

THE MOVEMENT AND THE UNAVOIDABLE REPLACEMENT

On the night of March 4, the officers again met with me. It was to be the penultimate joint meeting. The last was held on the 7th. About that time there had been a plot to attack my home. The day before, threatened over radio and by the press, I attended a meeting at Guanabacoa organized by the youth, women, and labor boards of my party. Government gangs tried to incite an attack upon us that night. Jorge Quintana, a member of a press organization and sympathetic to Prío, declared that I must not be allowed to return alive from that meeting. The threats proved an asset to the meeting. Three blocks from the plaza where the meeting was to take place, a crowd of 30,000 people assembled. Men and women came prepared to defend us, including police, soldiers, and sailors dressed in civilian clothes.

The political fiesta was full of enthusiasm, a forerunner of the one tendered me on Sunday, the 9th, by the women of Matanzas Province. At 2:43 A.M. of March 10, 1952, I entered gate No. 4 of Camp Columbia to take command of the Armed Forces. Automobiles and carts covered with ribbons and confetti were still circulating in celebration of the sad little carnival season (the following Sunday the carnival would be celebrated with far more joy).

President Prío was at his estate, recovering from a party that night. His chief collaborators were enjoying the music and shows of the cabarets.

240
The Chiefs of the Army, Columbia, the Police, and the Navy, and of the districts and garrisons of Havana, were all arrested. They were detained at various homes for a few hours. Gen. Cabrera, General Chief of Staff, Minister Sánchez Arango, and some other high officers were kept at my mother-in-law's home, where she treated them like distinguished visitors.

At 9 A.M. I was informed that there was shooting at the Presidential Palace. I ordered the units surrounding it to hold their fire. President Prío, informed of events, had left his home and rushed to the Palace. One of his aides had become nervous and had ordered his men to fire upon Lieut. Negret, a Police officer, who had come there to announce that I had taken over military control. Thereupon President Prío sought political asylum in the Mexican Embassy, and soon left for Mexico accompanied by his relatives.

I assumed the office of Prime Minister, to allow time for the designation of a Provisional President. Three days later, when no appointment had been made, I became the President of the Republic.

The revolution of March 10 had triumphed without one shot and without the spilling of a drop of blood. President Prío's Government fell without any public protest and business went on as usual, soon to be stimulated by the measures of the Plan for Economic and Social Development which brought the Republic to the heights of prosperity.*

* Mrs. Phillips said that within two or three hours after his coup d'état on March 10, 1952, Batista had full control of the island. She adds that he addressed the people of Cuba and declared that he had been forced to act for the good of his people and he asked for their cooperation in bringing about peace and prosperity. She says that he promised to uphold all international agreements and obligations, especially those with the U.S.A., and that if the United States should have to go to war with the Soviet Union, Cuba would back the former. Also, that he promised full protection to investments and capital. (Cuba, Island of Paradox, p. 259.)
PART III

LIES AND ANSWERS
CHAPTER XXXVIII

PROPAGANDA BASED ON LIES

It can be said without fear of exaggeration that there are few people occupying responsible positions in the world, so addicted to lying as Fidel Castro. It is not tendentious to make this statement. His own words speak for him and show him lying constantly.

In this manner Marxism expanded and the Russian Revolution triumphed. In the same way Nazism and Fascism convinced millions of people. The repetition of the lie was born from materialistic cynicism; Stalin and Hitler used it masterfully. The system has been maintained by Mao and Nikita and their satellites until, like a sputnik, it has reached the other side of the world.

We heard Fidel Castro, a bold and unsuccessful disciple, as well as Mikoyan while he was in Cuba, slipping into smooth diplomatic ways and announcing their desire for better relations between the United States and the U.S.S.R. because it did not suit Russia to have Fidel Castro precipitate a break in relations between Cuba and its powerful neighbor.

The following statements were made by Castro:

Against the Constitution.

Statement: At the signing of the “Pact of Caracas,” he bound himself, among other things, to maintain the Constitution of 1940; to establish a coalition government until the holding of elections within one year; at the same time he announced that he was fighting against Batista and not against the Army.

245
In the manifesto issued from the Sierra Maestra July 12, 1957, Castro promised, among other measures:

The formation of a civil-revolutionary front with a common strategy.

That the civil-revolutionary front would keep the Army separate from politics and guarantee the inviolability of the Armed Forces.

Gave a formal promise that the Provisional Government would hold general elections for all national, provincial and municipal offices as per the framework of the 1940 Constitution and the Electoral Code of 1943, within one year, and turn over the Administration immediately to the elected officials.

Rebuttal: After Jan. 1, 1959, Castro took sole possession of the government (speech of January 8 at Camp Columbia); supplanted the Constitution of 1940 by decree (Official Gazette of February 7) which the “Revolutionary Cabinet” transforms, modifies, changes, or substitutes (speech of March 13th at the Presidential Palace); he has not appointed a day for elections (speech at the Alameda on April 9th): “Revolution first, elections later.” And he has dissolved the Army.

Statement: The right of Habeas Corpus will be restored before the expiration of the 90-day period for which it was suspended, said the Premier. “This means that the Government will be unable to keep persons indefinitely imprisoned without formulating charges or holding trials.” (The New York Times, May 12, 1959.)

Rebuttal: Hundreds of persons have been imprisoned for years without charges.

In the notes for my interview with The New York Times, included in the Appendix, I have listed other lies under “Constitutional Contracts.”
Against the Press.

Statement: Castro denounced the newspaper El País for having protested before the IPS the demand of its employees to determine the editorial policy. “We understand that the editorial policy is the private concern of the company, and that the employees have no rights in this matter.” (New York Times, May 12, 1959, Ruby Hart Phillips.)

Rebuttal: The newspapers which are not his partisans are practically seized by the “employees” who add a tailpiece of comment to every news item, article, and editorial.

Statement: On January 7th he said: “We grant complete freedom to journalists because therein lies freedom of the press.”

Rebuttal: In all opposition newspapers the censorship of the printing guilds appears under the editorials, articles and news items with the following “Statement”: “This article is published by the free choice of this newspaper, in the legitimate use of freedom of the press which exists in Cuba, but the reporters and printers also exercise this right to state that the content of this article does not conform to the truth or to the most elementary journalistic ethics.”

Statement: Dr. Osvaldo Dorticós, “President of the Republic” by order of Castro, and former secretary to Dr. Juan Mari­nello, chief of the Communists and frequent visitor to Moscow, said on January 25: “We shall never limit freedom of the press.”

Rebuttal: The journalists who do not defend the administration are “reactionaries,” “imperialists,” and “counter-revolutionaries.” As such they are persecuted, imprisoned, or exiled. The confiscation of newspapers and the insults to independent
journalists are part of the punishment. The "tailpieces" of the newspaper employees constitute an oppression, in addition to a censorship. They are accused of being part of the "international yellow press," as Fidel Castro's organ printed on Nov. 6, 1959: —finding themselves "in a happy marriage with the IPS, Dubois, the AP, the UPI, Time, and Life, the impoverished brothers of the Falangist Avance, with their Fifth Columnists and disruptive forces, proceed in their attempts to unleash the stupid criticism against the revolution."

Persecution of Journalists.

Statement: On April 2, over CMQ-TV, Castro said: "When one newspaper is shut down, no newspaper can feel safe, and when the first man is persecuted for his political ideas, no one can feel safe."

Rebuttal: The next day he closed the newspaper El Camagüeyano, founded in 1902. Before that he had confiscated Alerta, Mañana, Pueblo, Ataja, Gente, in Havana; El Comercio in Cienfuegos; and La Voz del Cauto and Diario de Cuba in Santiago de Cuba. Later he seized Avance through its employees and editors. He seized the stock of Cristobal Díaz, co-owner of El País and confiscated El Mundo, about which the AP says: "Havana, Feb. 23:—Early today the government of Prime Minister Castro seized El Mundo, one of the most important independent newspapers in Cuba, and its television station, the property of industrialist Amadeo Barletta, of Italian origin.

"Barletta is under house arrest and there are rumors that he has sought asylum in the Italian Embassy.

"Upon telephoning the residence of Amadeo Jr., the phone was answered by someone who identified himself as a member of the Cuban Armed Forces and said that young Barletta was at the Army Investigation Department."
"El Mundo was one of four surviving independent newspapers in Cuba."

All radio and TV stations have been confiscated. Many reporters are being persecuted or are in exile; many are in prison, like Alberto Salas Amaro of Ataja, Ernesto de la Fé, Otto Meruelo, Fernando Miranda, and 27 others, condemned to 20 or 30 years at forced labor for their political ideals.

The news agencies UPI and ANI issued the following bulletin on Feb. 6, 1960: "Havana.—A military court today sentenced photographer Sergio Leal Gamboa to a year in prison for having photographed a group of Fidel Castro's followers giving the Communist salute. The trial took place at La Cabaña Fortress, and the court found Leal Gamboa guilty of having photographed a group of peasants, who had been brought to Havana for a vacation at the beach, for counter-revolutionary purposes."

Statement: The organ of the revolution, one of Fidel Castro's newspapers, says under the same date that "the millionaire owner of La Prensa of Buenos Aires and the ex-president of the IPS, Alberto Gainza Paz, has just declared in Caracas—to the UPI, naturally—that Cuban journalists live in fear and under constant threat, and that freedom of the press is thus under attack. Fear of attack? Attack by whom? Does the opulent owner of La Prensa know any Cuban journalist who has been threatened? Are there not in Cuba, organs of the old reactionary tradition like La Marina and the new counter-revolutionary associates like Avance which publish daily attacks against the revolutionary government or echo the attacks of the foreign agencies?"

* While this book was in the presses the government also seized the Diario de la Marina and its director sought diplomatic asylum. A few days later Prensa Libre and the others were taken over so that every news organ is now in the hands of the Reds in Cuba. All TV and radio stations have also been seized.
Rebuttal: And the journalists in prison? And the exiles, and the “tail-pieces” and the plants and presses of seized newspapers?

**Opinions Against Attacks on the Press**

Jules Dubois, who defended Castro during the civil war because he believed what the latter said, was accorded this “freedom of the press.”

In the Chicago *Tribune*, issue of October 29, 1959, he told how he had been violently driven out of Cuba, after he had been attacked by a mob at the offices of the American Cable and Radio Company while he was sending a wire to his principals.

The Mexican newspaper *Excelsior* editorialized on January 21, 1960: “Although we do not wish to interfere in the internal affairs in Cuba, whom we respect highly, we feel compelled to say that the abuse of which the Cuban newspapers are now victims, is only evidence of a juvenile mentality, but is also a threat to freedom of the press in our Continent; because it places newspapers in the capricious hands of minor employees who have no other standards than violence and the arbitrariness of their leaders.

“The fact that the employees and reporters of a newspaper, in line with the methods of the Cuban dictatorship, contradict and disprove the officials of a newspaper in the very columns of that paper, has gone beyond the old systems of censorship and has established a dangerous precedent; that of the seizure of editorial policy, which is more dangerous than the seizure of editorial property because this official or fraction encroachment is effected without any responsibility, thereby destroying the moral synthesis which gives order and value to journalism.”

Believing in the liberty of the press proclaimed by Fidel Castro, James Buchanan, who also defended him as democratic and
honorable, went to Cuba to report. He was arrested and sentenced to 14 years imprisonment for interviewing an escaped political prisoner. His sentence was suspended due to internal and external pressures, and he was expelled from the country, with the warning that were he ever to return he would have to serve his sentence.

Buchanan reported his disenchantment to the press.

He said that he saw Cubans imprisoned for no reason other than that they had expressed an unfavorable opinion of Castro or the tactics of his government. Many had lost all their worldly possessions because some neighbor or envious person had made unsubstantiated accusations against them.

Buchanan’s experience and observations reveal the institution in Cuba of that most despicable of the practices of Communist dictators: the spying of neighbors and even relatives on the persons who trust them.

**More Lies**

**Statement:** *Fidel Castro told more than 200 journalists from all over the world, gathered at a press conference on January 22, 1959: “The Cuban press has been allowed to follow its own course. For we have simply told the journalists: Write what you wish, you may write against us and criticize us, if that pleases you.”*

**Rebuttal:** On Dec. 4, 1959, at the Plaza de la Soledad in Camagüey, issues of *Life* magazine, *Diario de la Marina, Avance,* and *Prensa Libre* newspapers were burned. In the group of incendiaries there were women with armbands marked “URF.”

Dec. 8, 1959. Jaime Genesca reported from Corralillo that Carlos Rodrígues Diaz seized a pack of the *Diario* newspaper on December 7th and burned them.
Dec. 11, 1959. Correspondent Borges reported from Cienfuegos of leaflets scattered over Las Villas asking the people not to buy *Diario de la Marina, Prensa Libre, Avance*, and *Crisol*, and the North American magazines *Life, Time*, and *Fortune*.

On Dec. 24, 1959, the *Diario de la Marina* noted the illicit and coercive campaign carried on by some groups against the independent press of Cuba, which they are trying to isolate. It calls attention to the agreement of a federation of sugar employees of Bahia, Honda, not to permit the entry into the sugar mill of a single copy of the papers they call “counter-revolutionary,” because the latter use independent judgment without submissiveness or servility.

On Dec. 26, 1959, the Communist paper *Hoy* reported on “the burial of the liberals,” an act organized in San Antonio de los Baños by the Secretary of the PSP (Communist Party), Roberto de la Osa, and others. Said “liberals” are *Avance, Prensa Libre*, and *Diario de la Marina* of Havana, and *Time* and *Life* magazines of New York.

On Jan. 19, 1960, Vicente Treto reported from Caibarién of the “symbolic burial” of the newspapers *Diario de la Marina, Prensa Libre, Avance*, and *Life* magazine. They were carried in a coffin from the Parque de la Libertad to Parque de la Güira, and burned after a number of speeches.

*Anti-Christian Despotism*

In 1957, Fidel Castro stated that the program of his “provisional” government included absolute freedom for all news media.

Rebuttal: Arbitrary censorship of journalistic enterprises which are unsympathetic to their cause.

—He stated further his intention to grant all citizens the political rights of our Constitution. . . .
Rebuttal: The Constitution has been supplanted by a decree which can be modified at the whim of the Council of Ministers.

—to eliminate corruption from Cuban public life.

Rebuttal: The Department of Investigations of the Police demanded payment for exit visas. Government officials occupy the homes of others without paying rent, taking the furniture, clothing, and jewels of the real owners. Fidel Castro controls the millions collected by INRA without obligation to render an accounting.

—to sponsor an intensive campaign against illiteracy.

Rebuttal: Castro established the militia of students, workers, and peasants. He made the students (male and female) go on marches through the Sierra Maestra, taking them away from their classrooms.

—he would favor agrarian reform laws regulating the uncertain relations between landlord and tenant. Nevertheless, he would support no agrarian reform law which does not give just compensation to the expropriated proprietors.

Rebuttal: The National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) operates capriciously in the seizure of property, without any compensation. The peasants are not given title to land, and in practice they are slavets of the regime.

—he would support the rapid industrialization of our national economy and the elevation of standards of employment. It was not planned to seize or nationalize foreign investments in Cuba. Personally, he had come to believe that nationalization is, at best, troublesome. It does not appear to make the State stronger, and weakens private enterprise. Foreign investments would always be welcome and safe in Cuba. The state did not need to resort to expropriation to help economic development.
Rebuttal: “Ché” Guevara, President of the National Bank of Cuba, stated on a television program that in order to achieve rapid industrialization of the country, employees would be given a share in management. All private enterprises have already been confiscated, expropriated, or occupied by the government before being nationalized. Many foreign capitalists are demanding of the Cuban Government just payment for their seized property, and those who abandon the country do not believe their capital guaranteed. Unemployment has grown with loss of confidence.

—Progress toward political stability will come rapidly under representative government which is truly democratic. That is, in brief, for what Cubans are struggling, he said.

Rebuttal: There is no political stability; there is no representative or democratic government, there is only anarchy, tyranny, communism and death.

—Immediate freedom for all political prisoners, civilian as well as military was planned.

Rebuttal: The prisons are filled with thousands of political prisoners, mistreated and harassed along with their relatives.

In a letter from the penitentiary, which was written on September 24, 1959, Ernesto de la Fé states: “... In order to see us for one hour, in addition to a long and expensive journey, our relatives and wives are made to wait since 3 in the morning. No consideration is given to women, and they are frequently molested. Standing while they wait, they have to endure the sun and the rain. Many are in a state of nervous exhaustion.

“The mental torture to which we are subjected is without limit. The food is bad. Rats have been found in the stew. The rice is wormy. The limited water supply is muddy and causes
the skin to break out in sores. In addition, there are no medicines and medical service is of the worst. Some work in their bare feet. We have no light. They stir up the ordinary prisoners against us. Old and hardened criminals oversee us in our forced labor. The flies choke us and there is no sanitation. We are continually threatened with being shot down.”

In a letter dated Jan. 11, 1960, to the editor of *Avance*, the relatives of the political prisoners in Isla de Pinos say: “...We wish to make public, in the first place: that we protest the offensive and humiliating treatment given us, which grew worse during the Christmas and New Year holidays. We were not permitted to see our imprisoned relatives and received the worst insults from the officers and other authorities of the penitentiary.

“...Today, because of protests made by a large group of us as relatives of political prisoners, we suffer the sorrow of knowing that our loved ones are held in solitary confinement. They are not permitted to send us letters or telegrams, nor can they be told of the condition of their sick children. The telegrams we send them do not reach them. A prisoner whose close relative died is still unaware of the fact. Our letters are not delivered, nor are the food packages which we send them every week, depriving ourselves in order that they do not go hungry. The same is true of the clean clothing we bring them; the packages have been rotting on the road to the penitentiary since Dec. 26th and no one has had the decency to deliver them so that the prisoners may keep clean....”

We asked political prisoners of our Administration the following questions:

1) “Did they make you work in the quarries, fields, excavations, etc., in the penitentiary?

2) “If you were not brought beds, clothing, shoes, etc., would you have to sleep on the ground, or go barefoot and practically nude?
3) "Were you threatened day after day that the place would be dynamited if the government were endangered?
4) "Did they make you share with the common prisoners the food brought to you by your relatives?
5) "Were you forbidden visitors on Christmas, New Year, etc.?
6) "Did you have to receive your relatives and friends in the filthy cellars of the penitentiary while the regular reception rooms were allotted to the common prisoners?
7) "Were visits restricted to 15 minutes after your relatives had made such long and expensive trips at such sacrifice on their parts?
8) "Were you awakened at dawn to be inspected, harassed, insulted, etc.?
9) "Were you ever visited by General Batista in order to incite the common prisoners against you, and were they promised arms to finish off the political prisoners when the order would be given?
10) "Were you sent to the Isle of Pines penitentiary without proper trial and sentence?
11) "Were you insulted in the press, by being called assassins and war criminals whenever you were mentioned?
12) "Were you cooped up in groups of thousands, deprived of water, light, and the most elementary sanitation?
13) "Were your wives, mothers, daughters, and other relatives forced to undress in groups of five or more, and jump around so that anything concealed on their bodies might be found?
14) "Did they make your wives, mothers, daughters, and other relatives remove items of feminine hygiene?
15) "Were your relatives compelled to wait in line from dawn, without moving from the spot assigned them, under penalty of having the visit cancelled? [This waiting lasts as much as 10 hours and includes women with children in their arms.]
16) "Did the soldiers and officers insult, flirt with, harass, and persecute your wives and daughters?

17) "Were your relatives refused lodgings in the hotels because of threats against the proprietors?

18) "Were your relatives refused passage on boats or planes with statements by the companies (actually under Government pressure) that they were following Government orders. Were they asked, when trying to make reservations, whether they were relatives of political prisoners and then told they could not buy tickets?

19) "Did your relatives have to present an identity card when wishing to go to the Isle of Pines, without which they were not allowed to depart?

20) "Were they searched upon leaving or entering the airports of Havana and Nueva Gerona?

21) "Were they given cards, after a soldier had noted their names and addresses, and the age and name of the prisoner they wished to visit, with the warning that the bearer of the card would be arrested if it were not returned upon departure?

22) "Were your relatives prohibited to wear any jewelry such as earrings, rings, watches, bracelets, necklaces, etc.?

23) "Were your relatives forbidden to carry cigarettes, combs, handkerchiefs, pictures of children, etc.?

24) "Were your relatives harassed by the knowledge that whoever they visited would be persecuted and insulted?

25) "Were your wives constantly tortured by the threats of the penitentiary officials that they would be widowed?"

The preceding questions are all answered in the negative because these horrors were never known in Cuban prisons until Fidel Castro ordered the infernal measures which are denounced in this letter of the wives and mothers, fathers and children. The United Nations is authorized and obliged to act in cases of violation of human rights. The International Red Cross, which was
unjustly condemned by the terrorists and treated with due consideration by my Government, ought to hear these charges and fulfill its humanitarian obligations with all speed. And the OAS ought not to remain passive in the face of these horrible facts.

And though the whole repellent truth about Cuban political prisons under the Castro yoke has not yet been published, it is known that forced labor in swamps and quarries is part of the ignominy. The following is a tragic note smuggled out of the Isle of Pines prison by the wife of a pilot serving time there. It is addressed to Col. Fred Hook, ex-chief of the North American Air Mission in Cuba:

"... Please do something. We can endure no more. We are slaves working in the marble quarries. The food is full of worms. ... We cannot believe that the United States Air Force, to whose reserves, in a manner of speaking, we were attached, has abandoned us. Protest! Lay claim to us . . . ransom us . . . anything, but do not leave us here to die a thousand deaths. Help...!

Contrasts from Prison*

In his letters from the Model Prison, Fidel Castro wrote:

In June, 1954, he said: "... there are times when I spend hours struggling against the desire to explode in rage, to declare myself on a hunger strike and not touch a mouthful of food until they take me out of this cell or kill me. . . .

"... many others may find themselves in a like situation; to set a precedent would be a guarantee for all. . . ."

* No political prisoner during my Administration—even the criminals and terrorists—can say that he received the treatment denounced by the relatives of Castro's prisoners. Castro himself can vouch for the treatment he received.
In another letter of July, 1954, he says: "I am a prisoner and cannot defend myself, not even to prove, as I could, my complete innocence in this matter."

"... understanding that the only occasion where there is no excuse or pardon for humiliating a man is precisely when he cannot defend himself, and much less from attacks on his family; the Cuban people are very noble and detest such actions with all their soul."

To his sister Lidia, in a letter dated Oct. 25, 1954: "... We received the things you left us on your last visit.

"... You ask me to inform you what food interests us. Anything. Everything we get is eaten, nothing is wasted. . . ."

In the first case Castro confesses that he spends whole hours in boredom, because he is not compelled to do anything in prison. Suffering from his confinement despite the good treatment, he egotistically thinks that no one else should have the same experience. In the second, he complains that he cannot defend his family because he is in prison. Not because of mistreatment, but because the Minister of the Interior had given his wife a job and someone had commented upon the impropriety of granting her favors. In this letter he mentions Maj. Capote, the then chief of the prison who, although no longer in service, was imprisoned after January 1, 1959 and shot. In citing the conversation with the Minister, he says the latter told him: "Batista is a man of great equanimity and in 20 years I have never seen him be rude to anyone, nor even raise his voice. . . ." Adding that the Major interrupted at that moment to say: "whenever I see the President he asks about the political prisoners and says: 'Major, treat them like gentlemen. . . .'"

In the letter to his sister Lidia he acknowledges tacitly that he could obtain whatever he wanted in prison and that his relatives were treated courteously.
Other Formidable Lies

Statement: *At the press conference held at the Hotel Habana Riviera on Jan. 22, he said: “I do not believe that the number of those sentenced to death will be more than 400. And that is less than 5% of the 20,000 Cuban lives taken by the tyranny.”*

Rebuttal: Nevertheless, there were no 20,000 deaths, and Castro passed the 400 mark on official executions long ago. He made this statement to justify deaths in time of peace. There were not even 1,000 deaths (not 20,444) not even combining those suffered by the two groups. In its first 1959 issue, *Bohemia* offers a list which does not even include the dead and wounded of various attacks, including that on the Bank of Sagua, where the victims were all members of the Army. The breakdown is as follows: homicides: of the rebels 429, of the Government 153; in skirmishes: by the Government 18, by the rebels 85; of unknown origin 24; by terrorist bombs 25; executed by the “26 of July,” 12. Total 746.

To this list should be added the civilians and soldiers killed July 26, 1953, in Santiago de Cuba to the number of 48; Sept. 5, 1957, in Cienfuegos, 62; in the attack on the “Goicuría” barracks, 12; and in the attack on the Palace, 30. A total of 898 civilians and soldiers.

The number of those officially executed by Castro is about 900; but actually it exceeds 2,000, and not a week goes by without executions based on the pretexts of conspiratorial meetings and “attempted escapes.”

Statement: *On May 31, 1959, Castro said on CMQ-TV: “It gives us great satisfaction to be able to say that this revolution did not have to make use of terror or massive executions.”*

Rebuttal: *Carteles* magazine announced the execution of 71 persons in one day by Raúl Castro. There is no record in our history of such massive executions. Is this not terror?
Statement: *At the press conference of Jan. 22nd in the Habana Riviera Hotel he said that “the executions would terminate by the end of February or the beginning of March.”*

Rebuttal: At the end of 1959 the executions were still taking place.* Commander Lara and Sergeant Morfi are examples. And the blood courts are still imposing capital punishment.

Statement: *On April 24, 1959, in New York City’s Central Park, Castro said: “We shall punish the criminals, but their relatives and children will receive the attention they require, same as the children of the soldiers who died fighting us are being cared for.”*

Rebuttal: However, by this date he had already promulgated Law No. 162, which abolished pensions to relatives of executed men, suspended the pensions given by my Administration to the widows of soldiers, and expelled from school the children of slain soldiers who had been granted scholarships. He has driven the wives and children of the slain and imprisoned from their homes. Recently, by Law 151 of 1959 of the “Ministry for the Recovery of Embezzled Property,” he seized the property of the heirs of the executed and of political figures long dead. Such was the case of Dr. Carlos Saladrígas who died in 1956 and took no part in public conflicts.*

Statement: *On April 24, 1959, in New York’s Central Park he said: “The Revolution is generous.”*

Rebuttal: On April 2 he had said over CMQ-TV: “There will be no consideration for anyone who does not collaborate with the revolution.”

* Executions are still almost daily occurrences in 1961.
* While property has been stolen from people who inherited it from their grandparents and great-grandparents, on the pretext of “expropriation on grounds of being sympathizers of Batista” Dr. Prio and his accomplices in the gangster government which the Prio brothers headed continue to enjoy their ill-gotten property. (Aldo Baroni, “The Dance of the Hours,” Excelsior, Jan. 12, 1960.)
Statement: *He promised respect for religion, boasting of his Catholicism, and the members of his “army” proclaimed their devoutness with a display of rosaries and religious symbols on their “uniforms.”*

Rebuttal: He removed the word GOD from the preamble to the Constitution and the oath taken by political officials and members of the Armed Forces; he has conducted himself so as to mock, profane and violate all Christian commandments.

At Christmas, 1959, Castro said: “Let us replace foreign symbols with the Cuban Christmas.” To which some priests answered: Christmas, yes; the Christian Christmas.

He prohibited Christmas trees and the traditional ornaments with which Cuban homes were accustomed to celebrate the coming of Jesus.

Catholics, priests, nuns and other religious are persecuted. Priests, brothers and sisters are forbidden to teach unless they are graduates of one of the State teachers’ colleges. Furthermore only those text books that are approved by the State can be used in the Catholic schools. Thus even the acts prohibited and condemned by Catholicism will form part of the curriculum of the religious schools. Naturally there is the threat that the State will prohibit the teaching of religion, even in religious schools.

Statement: *He promised charity and mercy.*

Rebuttal: He practices vengeance and plants hatred in the Cuban family.

Statement: *He promised better conditions and better salaries for labor.*

Rebuttal: Among his acts of vengeance which he practices with refinement is his treatment of labor. Castro controls them through the Communist administration he has imposed over them. By this they are prevented from protesting or presenting demands and are compelled to contribute to his cause. As he
could not shoot, imprison, or exile 2,000,000 workers in reprisal for not having responded to his calls for a general strike, chiefly those of Aug. 5, 1957, and April 9, 1958, he revoked the sugar differential which they had received under my Administration at the end of each harvest. This differential amounted to millions of dollars.

Keeping in mind the contributions which are forced from working-class families, each peso has been reduced to less than one-fourth.

Statement: On Feb. 10th, at the National Federation of Sugar Workers, he said: “This is the harvest of sacrifice.”

Rebuttal: Not only was it “the harvest of sacrifice,” but in 1960 salaries of sugar workers were lowered by 4% to help industrial development; by 3% for the right-to-work tax; by 1% for the labor federation; by 4% for the purchase of arms and planes; by one peso per month for the CTC treasury; and by 5% for the sugar workers’ retirement fund.

Mrs. Phillips says in Cuba, Island of Paradox, that Castro’s statements that no piece of land is worth more than four pesos per yard, caused great concern not only among the wealthy, but also among the middle-class proprietors. In Havana, where prices are higher, lots sell from 10 pesos per yard on the outskirts to 500 pesos in the city.

She adds that he figured that these drastic measures would incite the investment of money in industry rather than in real estate, thus eliminating unemployment. The measure was effective, says Mrs. Phillips, as all real estate operations were paralyzed, including the flourishing construction industry. Thus thousands of these workers were left without work. Consequently, the American cement factory “El Morro” at Mariel closed down.

Rebuttal: He spends great sums on the purchase of arms, among them 27,000 rifles and 2,000,000 rounds of ammunition from Belgium. He tried to buy 15 planes from England and made public collections for them. A boat loaded with arms exploded in Havana harbor on March 4, 1960.

Statement: On January 13, at the Lions Club, he declared that the Armed Forces would be reduced as much as possible.

Rebuttal: Nevertheless, he has increased the size of the Armed Forces and created the people’s militia.


Rebuttal: On April 21, Raúl Castro, and on April 22, the Military Chief of Santiago de Cuba, denied any attempt to halt the expeditions being prepared to invade other countries. In Panamá a group of Cubans landed and were seized.

Statement: At the same association, Castro said that “Nobody is persecuted in Cuba. Ministers, Senators, and representatives of Batista’s Government walk the streets.”

Rebuttal: The Ministers, Senators, and Representatives of my Administration are imprisoned, exiled, and persecuted, and all their properties have been confiscated.

Statement: In the same speech he affirmed: “We shall be on the side of the Western powers in the event of a world war.

Rebuttal: In his speech of April 2, carried over CMQ-TV, he said: “We shall be neutral.”

* Castro now openly calls the United States his enemy and the Soviet countries his friends. As we have noted, he recently said, “I am a Marxist-Leninist, and will be until I die.”
Statement: On the occasion of his speech before the association of Editors of American Newspapers he stated: “Legal guarantees exist in Cuba.”

Rebuttal: On May 8th in the Plaza Cívica he said. “We do not have to violate any law, because we make the laws.”

Sarcasm and Lies

Statement: On April 2, 1959, he said over CMQ-TV that “the National Savings and Housing Institute would solve the construction problem.”

Rebuttal: There is complete paralysis in this area; thousands have lost their jobs and are unable to find any employment.

Statement: In his speech at the Shell Refinery on February 7th he said: “I do not seek any office; offices are of no importance to me.”

Rebuttal: He is Prime Minister, President of the National Institute of Tourism and of the INRA,* the only bodies not even checked by the Court of Accounts.**

Statement: On the same occasion he said: “We shall relinquish power if we do not have the majority of public opinion.”

Rebuttal: On March 25, over TV Channel 7, he said: “Why fear? Afraid of what? Worse than the revolution is an earthquake. He who does not adapt himself to it must perish. We shall impose the revolution even if we are left completely alone.”

Statement: On February 6th, he boasted: “What citizen feels insecure in this country? I do not threaten; I do not threaten because my temperament and my profound humane convictions make me detest the use of force. . . . However revolutionary the

* He was recently replaced in this office by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez.
** He also took over the post of Minister of Education when the Minister went on an extended tour of Communist countries.
laws that we propose may be, they will not violate a single right, they will not suppress a single freedom, they will not use physical violence..."

Rebuttal: ...! The opposite is true. The citizen feels threatened. Castro himself insults and persecutes. He violates the rights of the individual, of property and of family. The only "freedom" is that of submission and that of "not being beaten." He prefers psychological torture ... and killing ... in addition to beatings....

And to close the "twenty thousand lies," we gather some accurate paragraphs of a veteran journalist who pinpoints them in:

The Great Lie

The so-called "revolution" which was to be the Trojan Horse of Communism in America made the great discovery of the Castro brothers: Fidel—vain, overbearing, and ambitious; Raúl—treacherous, butchering, cunning, and sadistic. There was a group of bloody international criminals destined to "save Cuba." Men and women mired in sentimentality, hysteria, and opportunism, joined the chorus and repeated these diabolical lies and slanders over and over.

That of the "twenty thousand deaths" left the most terrible impression. Twenty thousand deaths. To justify his abominable crimes, they repeated: Twenty thousand! To diminish the horror of his assassinations, they repeated: Twenty thousand! To silence the horror of the "suicides," they cried, Twenty thousand! And to conceal the fact that Cuba is today a prison surrounded by cemeteries, they repeat again and again: Twenty thousand deaths!

It is the macabre arithmetic of Fidel Castro. It is the number of broken skulls which will form the pedestal of the monument

Robado del archivo del Dr. Antonio Rafael de la Cova
http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuba-books.htm
which will perpetuate the most ferocious assassin a people have ever suffered. For, counting the terrorists who fell under police actions; counting those of both sides who fell in attacks on barracks; counting those who died of natural causes; counting those of both sides who died in the mountains; and counting the assassinations by Fidelistas masquerading in uniforms of soldiers and police, never, I repeat, never, has the total reached 1,000.

And it seems that to carry on his macabre arithmetic, Castro is creating tuberculosis among the men in his prisons; he is making paupers of them; he is killing them with cold and hunger; and he has terrorized those who are outside his prison walls with menacing threats of the firing squad. As if he wished to add to those he has already buried the number necessary to bring the total to TWENTY THOUSAND.

Aldo Baroni in “The Dance of the Hours,” Excelsior, Jan. 12, 1960, says: “Castroism, after having enjoyed the hospitality of all pulpits, from the Church to the great international news agencies, is now aware that its lies have proved a ‘boomerang’ striking back at those who launched it. A monster of publicity, Castroism feels that the advance of truth is destroying it. Thus it thrashes about, provokes incidents, and spends hundreds of thousands of dollars which it has stolen from the Cuban economy.”

The One Possible Truth!

During a rural meeting in Guines on May 10, 1959, Castro said: “Not even a puppet will remain here with the head on its shoulders; there will not be as much as a hitching post left standing; no one will be saved!”
Despite a period in which troubles were accumulating, Cuba experienced economic growth, thanks to the internal policy of the Administration, without any outside help. Bank deposits more than doubled, reaching 12,486 million dollars; bank payments reached 6,745 millions in 1957, surpassing those of 1952 by more than 2,000 millions; national income rose to 2,311 millions; foreign trade to 1,576 millions; domestic sales passed 2,778 millions; checks cashed were about 12,500 millions; and wages, which had reached the total of 5,924 millions in the five-year period 1946-1951, were 7,792 millions in the period 1952-1957.

In 1952 construction was almost paralyzed but, stimulated by Development of Guaranteed Mortgages, the Law of Horizontal Property and the Law of Constructions and Demolitions, annual investments in this field reached almost 80 million dollars in 1956 and rose much higher in 1957 and 1958.

This growth in construction, with all that it meant in the mobilization of wealth as an enormous source of employment, and in the development and creation of collateral industries, also solved the housing problem. This problem was so acute in 1952 that it became necessary to pass a severe rent-ceiling law. Not only private capital, spurred by the aforementioned legislation, took part in the housing development, but the government and autonomous groups were also active, building homes for peasants and workers.
All transportation was crippled and in a state of bankruptcy when the “10th of March” regime came to power. In the cities, the bus companies were insolvent, especially the Autobuses Modernos enterprise, which needed many state subsidies to maintain the fare. The same conditions held for interurban transportation, both freight and passenger, railway and highway.

Reorganization of the bus companies, coordination of freight rates, settlement of a labor dispute in one of the American companies, financing and conversion of the run-down Ferrocarriles Unidos (bought from an English company and nationalized) into a mixed enterprise, made these organizations solvent and put them in a position to give efficient, first-class service with a reasonable profit. All these measures were complemented by the reorganization, financing, and consolidation of the Retirement Fund of Employees of the Railways, Highway, and Similar Transportation (Caja de Retiro de los Obreros del Transporte Ferroviario, por Carretera y Similares). This social security organization could then not only handle the necessary pensions and retirements, but also absorb the surplus labor resulting from the reorganization.

Support to the Merchant Marine

By 1952 the Republic had reached an untenable position in its maritime transportation system. The Cuban Shipping Company (Compañía Naviera de Cuba)—the most important—was in complete collapse, under government supervision, and maintained only by enormous subsidies. The leasing of the company’s ships and piers, the promulgation of the Naval Mortgage Law, the repeal of the law prohibiting reregistration of boats registered in Cuba, the supervision, reorganization, and reparation of the Maritime Retirement Fund—in a scandalous state—and the coop-
eration of para-governmental credit agencies in the acquisition of new ships, relieved the situation and gave the country important Merchant Marine tonnage, and a dry-dock in Havana and docks under construction at Mariel.

**Aviation, Roads, and Highways**

In air transportation, the Cuban Aviation Company was put under government supervision, reorganized, and financed. It was made into a strong enterprise with modern planes and new routes to important places of the world.

Although I shall treat the subject separately, I should point out here that to put urban and interurban transportation on a sound basis and give it opportunity for development, the rundown streets of the capital were solidly reconstructed. In other cities thousands of kilometers of streets were built; the Central Highway was almost completely reconstructed, as it had suffered through neglect and an excessive load of transportation. Thousands of kilometers of new highways and approximately 18,000 kilometers of local roads completed the network. This communications system has had a decisive influence not only on industry and transportation, but on the economic development of the whole country.

The system devised and the quality of construction facilitated the shipment of agricultural and industrial products to freezing plants, stores, centers of consumption, and ports of embarkation.

**Fishery**

The creation of the National Institute of Fishing and organizations of technical research and preparation represent, from 1952 to 1958, a progressive and enormous increase in figures for utilization of fish, shellfish, and other ocean fauna. The resulting progress in the preservation industries increased exports.
in 1957 to more than $3,400,000. This industry expanded to give employment to about 140,000 Cubans.

Subsoil Resources

Since 1952 there had been large investments of Cuban and foreign private capital in the mining industry for the exploration of chromium, nickel, manganese, iron, petroleum, and other rich materials. The value of these exports increased by more than 125 million dollars.

Income and Tourism

A vast program to promote tourism included: construction of hotels which compare with the best in the world, like the Havana Hilton, the Riviera, the Capri, the Saint John, the Comodore, the Havana Deauville; the rehabilitation of the Hotel Nacional, the Internacional of Varadero, and motels; smaller hotels in Havana and the Provinces; on the Isle of Pines, the Mineral Springs; the Green River Motel on the banks of the Las Casas River; and in Santa Fé the Annex motel and the Barlovento tourist center in Havana. There were also the northern and southern circuits, with highways from Pinar del Río to the center of the Island, and interprovincial roads as far as Oriente; urbanization of Varadero; dredging and channeling of the lagoon of Paso Malo, construction of the yacht basin and maritime club, and the navigable connection of the lagoon with both seas; construction of the drawbridge; great modern constructions for lodgings and inns in this area; completion of the Vía Blanca, which communicates with East Havana, and of the Avenida del Tunel, which joins East Havana to Old Havana; attractions of Trinidad; baths of San Diego de los Baños; and wide roads which lead to these places. In addition there is the completion of the Pan-American highway at the west end of the Island.
and legislation which stimulated the building of motels for national and international tourism at various key points.

Below are statistics showing the numbers of travelers, as proof that the tourist industry increased as a result of the treatment of visitors, the attractions offered them, and the provisions made for their comfort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Travelers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>218,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>220,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>230,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>237,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>285,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>379,954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The income collected from the tourist traffic in 1953 reached $20 millions. The stimulation of tourism raised this amount to $43 million in 1957.

**Credit and Economic Development**

The National Financier, the Bank of Economic and Social Development, the Bank of Foreign Trade, the Fund of Guaranteed Mortgages, and the reorganization of the Bank of Agricultural and Industrial Development have contributed to the economic development of the country, as have the commercial banks. Through the system of loans and productive investment by the State, industries flourished, associations of rural credit were established, and the number of home owners increased by thousands.

More than 200 industries with an investment in excess of 600 million dollars were organized for the manufacture of pottery, sanitary equipment, nails, tires, cement, fertilizer, paper, cartons, glass, yeast, textiles, chemicals, plastics, canned foods, concrete
blocks, paint, doors and windows; prefabricated construction units, phonograph records, treatment of corn and its extracts for candy, fabrics, adhesives, beer plants, nitrogen plants, hydraulic utilities, etc., etc.

The figures detailed below, aside from the income from the tourist traffic, sum up the progress of the national economy to the end of our Administration on the last day of 1958:

(In millions of dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1954</th>
<th>1957</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal tender in circulation</td>
<td>436.5</td>
<td>491.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Deposits</td>
<td>719.0</td>
<td>1106.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of payments</td>
<td>918.6</td>
<td>1136.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated bank assets</td>
<td>861.8</td>
<td>1210.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National income (In 1951 = 1943.7)</td>
<td>2311.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The customs established all time collection records:

- 1951-1952: 122,373,536
- 1956-1957: 132,146,033
- 1957-1958: 134,781,149

Automobiles registered:

- 1954: 158,699
- 1957: 264,451

These economic notes are only quick references. They give an idea of the level of prosperity reached under the Government resulting from the March revolution.

Social Security

No group of workers was without security, except for pilots and, to some extent, artists, whose funds were approved by one
of the two bodies of Congress when my Administration came to an end. Not only were numerous institutions of social security for workers and professionals established during this tenure but almost all those already in existence were modified and re-organized at the request of the groups affected, in order to save them from crises.

Social Service, Rural Housing, and Small Proprietors

The State, in the last four years of my Presidency, constructed more hospitals, dispensaries, rural housing, and schools than in all the preceding years of the Republic; and, in addition, more social services and welfare foundations were created than ever before; at the same time assistance was given to all the existing organizations. The number of small home-owners increased to about 20% of the population.
AGRA\\RIANISM AND AGRARIAN ECONOMY

WHEN THE "10th of March" Movement came to power, economic reconstruction was imperative, and the agrarian question was especially pressing.

The democratic-revolutionary program of my previous Administration had established bases for diversified production and improved living standards for the farmer. We had made an effective distribution of land, equipment, poultry, cattle, and pigs. Rural schools were established to educate the peasant families and through them we launched the greatest campaign of the century against illiteracy and the endemic and parasitic diseases which were decimating the rural population.

The 1953 census counted a population of 6,000,000, of which 2,500,000 were rural, dependent on the industry which made Cuba a one-crop country. Since sugar was the Number 1 export, my first Administration had granted the permanent use of the land for the cultivation of sugar cane to 40,000 tenant farmers. Previously, these tenants had leased the land from individual owners or from sugar companies, and had been shifted from plot to plot at the discretion of the proprietors. Their share in the income from the harvests was based on the market price of sugar. Their rights were secured by a law of Congress, called the "Sugar Coordination" law because it fixed the obligations and the share in the profits of the proprietors, tenants and workers.

For democracy to survive, it must present a sound economic program within its political system. As an example, I offer the achievements of our national production during my Adminis-

277
tion, especially in the area of agriculture. Here democratic processes led to positive agrarian reforms without changing the free operation of republican institutions and without injury to foreign rights or to private property.

**Autonomous Organs of Credit and Production**

Parallel to the para-governmental institutions of credit already mentioned (Bank of Agricultural and Industrial Development of Cuba, BANFAIC; Bank of Economic and Social Development, BANDES; Cuban Bank of Foreign Trade, National Financier, and Fund for Guaranteed Mortgages, FHA), which functioned under the supervision of the National Bank, autonomous organs like CENPLUC (National Executive Council of Local Urban and Rural Foundations), the National Commission of Housing, and CENCAM (National Executive Commission of Agricultural and Mining Cooperatives) were created. These organs linked by a network of roads all the rural zones in production or fit for production, through foundations established by the producers or peasants themselves. They rehabilitated workers' and peasants' homes; they founded agricultural and mining cooperatives for the stimulation of domestic industries and the exploitation of underground resources.

**Dynamic Plan**

Rural education was revised to direct the peasant toward the practical development of his activities as a small-scale farmer.

A network of highways and local roads were constructed throughout the Island to give agricultural products easy access to centers of consumption and distribution.

State lands and land acquired from private individuals were distributed at moderate prices and on convenient terms among those who cultivated them, with full ownership rights.
A plan of agricultural cooperatives was developed over the whole country.

Sugar-cane workers or sub-tenants were raised to the category of tenants. This measure increased to 60,000 the number of cane planters with permanent rights to the use of the land.

More than 100,000 squatters received rights to their land.

Practically the entire tobacco crop of 1952 was destroyed because of the excessive production under Prío, who favored the planters. Through these actions and by discarding poorer qualities of leaf, we maintained the price of tobacco, preventing a collapse on the markets.

Thousands of homes for peasants were constructed, as well as schools in the most isolated rural zones.

The quality and quantity of coffee production was so increased that we again exported 10 years after our coffee had been withdrawn from the international market. Such organs as the Administration for the Purchase and Sale of Coffee revitalized the Cuban Institute for the Stabilization of Coffee. The results are expressed in the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Export</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>0,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>3,966,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-1957</td>
<td>20,828,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The requirements of a growing population made necessary an immediate increase in national agrarian production, in order to reduce the escape of funds and to develop the national economy.

The cultivation of rice was begun in my previous Administration and halted when I left the Government. Nothing was
done from 1944 to 1952. The enormous consumption of rice by Cubans is an important factor of the national economy. When I returned to power, the Administration for the Stabilization of Rice was created, and measures were taken to develop the industry through the importation of equipment, which would guarantee the planter a good price. Laboratories were established for the treatment and eradication of rice diseases, such as the “white spot” which threatened the entire crop. The Economic Rice Commission was formed to provide economic and technical assistance as well as instruction for the planters.

The cattle industry developed rapidly, and easily fulfilled national requirements. Improvement of pasture land, increased production of fodder and fertilizers, importation of cattle for crossbreeding, the higher quality of the meat and milk, the development of various milk products, and the export of meat and cattle—resulted from laborious programs and plans developed by my regime.

The plan for the improvement of small-scale farming and a better standard of living for the peasant included the following points:

Development of food production.
Establishment of rural information and marketing centers. Peasants could use these centers for direct technical and economic assistance.
Instruction of the peasants in methods of improving production and their homes, with the spread of agricultural extension services to the whole Republic. This was in accord with the norms of Project 39 of the OAS, as developed in the municipal district of Bejucal.
Development of agricultural production cooperatives on a national scale.
Revision of rural education to teach rural children their future role of small farmers; to develop in them a spirit of cooperation and a desire for a better life.
Construction of local roads, which facilitated the transportation of agricultural products to the markets.

Improved village sanitation.

Reduction of the coefficient of illiteracy in the rural population to a figure equal to that of any nation, and the guidance of the rural woman, as daughter, wife, and mother, in the achievement of an ever better home life.
SUGAR—PRICES AND MARKETS

The country hovered on the brink of ruin in 1952, because of the unjustifiable harvest surpluses of that year. To avoid economic disaster it was necessary to study and apply drastic measures.

The maintenance of a policy of adjustment of production to the needs of the markets and to the principles embodied in the International Sugar Agreement, rescued the industry from its unfortunate position and kept it flourishing. This explains the homage given me, as President of the Republic, by the three branches of the sugar industry (workers, tenants, and proprietors) through their national assemblies when the Five-Year Plan was ended in complete success. The Sugar Coordination Law, passed years ago through my efforts, had already given the tenant farmers a fairer share of the income and the right to remain on the land and cultivate it without risk of removal by the plantation owners. Now my Administration increased the percentage they were entitled to receive from the sugar mill and passed the Law of Sub-Tenants and Partners. This law gives them the status of full tenants and places the field workers in the category of sub-tenants, each with his own small tract.

Dangerous Surpluses and Regulation

The lack of foresight and laissez-faire policy of President Prio resulted in more than 7,200,000 long tons in the sugar-cane harvest of 1951-1952, and it would have been even larger if the "10th of March" regime had not come to power.

If one keeps in mind that the markets (American, world, and
SUGAR, PRICES, AND MARKETS

domestic) could not absorb more than 5,500,000 tons, then one can understand the social and economic situation that might result from the partial paralysis of the sugar industry. Sugar is not only our main industry, but it is the basis of our national economy and our main source of income.

Up to 1952 the price of sugar was more than satisfactory, due to the demand. By storing 1,750,000 tons of this harvest—despite the announcement of the extraordinary over-production—it reached an average of 4.73 cents per pound.

The 1,750,000 tons stored were to be distributed to the United States over a five-year period, making for a decrease in the production quota for that country of 350,000 tons. Realizing the effect of this surplus on the market, we took urgent measures to forestall it through official internal regulations and at the London sugar conferences and their resultant agreements.

In order to see to what point the price would have fallen, I have made an analysis of prices in the three following harvests: from 4.73 cents per pound in 1952, despite the sugar agreement, it had fallen to 3.46 in 1953; 3.31 in 1954; 3.29 in 1955; and 3.25 in 1956.

Nevertheless, the economy expanded, improving so astonishingly that in 1957 it had reached the highest peak in the history of the country. The Plan of Economic and Social Development, which we studied unceasingly, permitted the Government to develop the exploitation of underground resources, public works, and new industries. The storage of the 1,750,000 tons of sugar was financed by local banks through the National Bank. The financing cost 120 million dollars and was amortized in less time than had been thought possible.

Castro, Sugar, and Russia

Folly or incompetence, animated by a senseless desire for revenge and hostility against the United States, has led
Fidel Castro to sign a commercial agreement with Russia. In return for its sugar, Cuba is to receive one-fifth cash and the remainder in products of questionable quality and adaptability to Cuban production. The anomaly is increased with the announcement that Russia will furnish war equipment in return for sugar.

Apart from the threat to the Free World and especially to the United States posed by the identity of interests of the Anarcho-Communist Cuban regime and Soviet Russia, the blow to the Cuban economy and resultant decline in the standard of living is obvious. As proof, I present the irrefutable analysis which the Cuban-North American Sugar Council (Consejo Azúcarero Cubano-Norteamericano) has made:

### Soviet Union Sugar Purchases from Cuba

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average tons sold</th>
<th>Price per lb. in cents</th>
<th>Average per ton in dollars</th>
<th>Total import in dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>537,760</td>
<td>3.087</td>
<td>61.754</td>
<td>33,205,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>224,000</td>
<td>3.094</td>
<td>61.893</td>
<td>13,664,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>392,000</td>
<td>5.965</td>
<td>119.314</td>
<td>46,771,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>210,560</td>
<td>3.426</td>
<td>69.535</td>
<td>14,641,536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>560,000</td>
<td>2.794</td>
<td>55.89</td>
<td>31,298,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) The statistical table reveals that the Soviet Union has bought from Cuba from 1955 to 1959 inclusive, without any agreement, 1,924,320 tons of sugar for $139,581,096, or an annual cash income of more than $27 million.

2) Under the Russo-Cuban agreement, the Soviet Union will pay Cuba in dollars for only 200,000 tons per year, at approximately 3.25 cents per pound or $75 per ton, with an income of $15,000,000 per annum, or $75,000,000 for five years.

Robado del archivo del Dr. Antonio Rafael de la Cova
http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuba-books.htm
3) Since Russia paid Cuba $139 million in the last five years and will pay only $75 million in the next five years, this “splendid” agreement means a loss to Cuba of $64 million. As an added aggravation, the experts claim that the U.S.S.R. would have bought the same or a similar amount of sugar in the years to come without any agreement. This is because the higher standard of living demanded by the Russian people and the paternal support given by Russia to Red China and her satellites leaves her no alternative.

4) If, moreover, we calculate the same price of 3.25 cents per pound and $75 per ton for the remaining 800,000 per annum, we obtain a figure of $60 million per annum and $300 million in five years. Cuba has obligated herself to receive this astronomical total in Soviet products. This means that the Soviet Union has found an important new market for her products while Cuba, in exchange for her vital sugar, has to accept machinery and equipment of doubtful quality and utility from the other end of the world. Although these prices include transportation and insurance costs, the amounts are to be added to the value of the merchandise, making it far more expensive than any products bought in countries near Cuba.

5) When the Russo-Cuban agreement was announced, the immediate reaction was an eighteen-point increase in the price of sugar on the world market. Since most of Cuba’s sugar has already been allocated, our principal competitors will receive the benefit of this increase.

6) It is absurd to believe that the United States must pay Cuba more than two cents per pound above the world price of sugar in order to maintain its high level of production.

And those who say that the United States had a magnificent source of supply in Cuba during the war, when the latter could have obtained better prices elsewhere, should ask: To whom was Cuba going to sell her sugar, without available ships and with the Seven Seas infested with submarines?
"Nuremberg and the Case of Cuba."

Reply to Keith Thompson

Any attempt to compare the International Court of Nuremberg, its motives, structure and conduct, with the slaughter now taking place in Cuba can only confuse world opinion. More than 2,000 women and men were assassinated in the first days of the Cuban revolt without any pretense of a trial. But since the comparison is being made, opinions on "Nuremberg" expressed by me at this time would be drawn from present conditions and would mistakenly link two entirely dissimilar situations.

Thus, I would rather leave to a better occasion the commentary you so graciously asked of me on the Nuremberg Court and its trials, which do not in any way resemble the organized massacre from which Cuba is suffering.

Even if we were critical of "Nuremberg" and favored the thesis of the liberal Spanish professor, Jimenez de Asua, who states that "the Nuremberg trial will pass into history as philosophically and judicially wrong and politically absurd," we would have to admit that international clauses, agreements and pacts, and the Russian attitude, created the grand error.

But we repeat that only bad faith and a vindictive purpose could permit a comparison of these trials with the Cuban situation. In the latter, penal laws and procedures, stemming from a capricious and criminal will, have been applied to supposed crimes committed within national confines.

These procedures cannot be called courts. They have made inoperative the ordinary courts and judges, and are conducted...
by biased groups and guerrilla chiefs. They carry out wholesale executions in all the towns of the Island. Nor can they be called courts when the chief insurgent, still without an official grant of executive power but ominously availing himself of all powers, intimidates their members by announcing he will shoot them if they acquit this or that defendant. In addition, one cannot speak of a trial or of due process of law if the whole case is aired in a matter of hours before pseudo-courts composed of biased and vindictive terrorists. The “trials” take place and the victims are executed in a Roman circus atmosphere, and amid the screams and curses of a mob incited from the same Presidential Palace which indoctrinates the people in blood and slaughter.

Some revolutionaries protested against the constitutional and legal authority of the ordinary courts to hold trials in the judicial proceedings of my Government, when public order and the safety of the accused made it advisable. Now, those persons in whose names the protests had been made, occupy high positions in the de facto government. They preside over and arrange cases, “trials,” and shootings without pre-established laws, in sport stadia or similar spots, with radio and television accompaniment to degrade the conscience of the people.

The Constitution of 1940, obtained at the cost of so much blood, prohibits the death penalty. These men have modified it fundamentally, denying the rights of the individual and reinstating capital punishment. The Constitution prohibits the retroactive effect of penal law which does not work to the advantage of the guilty. Such a ruling illustrates a basic precept of civilized political entities, but these men declare that the death penalty must be imposed retroactively. Judicial principles, allegedly defended by today’s tyrannical government, have been shamelessly violated and continue to be violated by decree.

These arbitrary courts and so-called laws are products of passion and vengeance.
The case of Cuba is like that which would have resulted if World War II had been won by Hitler, and is worse and more cruel than the regime of Russia in Hungary.

The only thing that can be said to compare the Nuremberg Trials with the continuous butchery in Cuba is what North American judges have said on various occasions: that this trial indicates the certain fate of the United States, or of any other state of the Free World, if defeated in a future war. If the concept were accepted as legitimate by world opinion, every defeated national leader and his ministers, his collaborators, and military chiefs and subordinates, would be considered as “war criminals.”

In conclusion, to accept savagery as a principle would mean a return to the Law of the Talión, pushing civilization back to the time of the cave man.
"QUESTIONS FOR CASTRO"

April 10

SUGGESTIONS FOR A questionnaire to be submitted to Fidel Castro.

1) Why do you think José Figueres (ex-President of Costa Rica) was wrong in suggesting that Latin-American countries cooperate with the United States in case of war?

2) You have said that in case of war between the United States and Russia, Cuba would be neutral. Do you not believe that this attitude would react in Russia's favor?

3) Some of the journalistic establishments seized by the Government have been handed over to other entrepreneurs who are not the legitimate owners. The Communist newspaper Hoy is being published in one of them. Did the Government buy it and then sell it; or is it being rented to Communists?

4) The people of the United States have always been friendly to the Cuban people. When you said you were prepared to kill 200,000 "Gringos," in case of a landing to protect American property and lives, did you mean that you would kill 200,000 Americans? Don't you believe this statement was unnecessary, since the United States has never threatened a landing?

5) You said on the program "Meet the Press" (Ante La Prensa) on April 2nd that during your visit to the United States you would expose to the American people the lies and slanders of their information agencies, newspapers, and magazines. To what agencies, newspapers, and magazines did you refer?

6) Is it not a fact that unemployment is growing, in private construction, in public works, and in some departments, as well as in education, where 2,500 teachers were recently discharged?
7) You fought to overthrow a “dictatorship” and establish a “democratic” regime. During the dictatorship the courts functioned with justices and judges who had been members of the Judiciary for many years, and had obtained their positions through examinations. Upon your triumph your revolutionary followers were made members of courts which apply laws promulgated after the commission of the alleged crime, imposing, with your support, even death sentences. Do you not believe that public opinion is justified in criticizing this procedure?

8) On the supposition that you were fighting for democracy, do you not believe that giving orders to courts, or suggesting sentences or executions, is in conflict with democratic principles and human rights?

9) There are many who sincerely believe that outrages and crimes were committed under the “Batista dictatorship,” and that by fighting this system you gained deserved sympathy. They also believe that those who commit crimes ought to be judged and sentenced. However, the indefinite imprisonment of the accused and the exceptional proceedings which cost the lives of hundreds of condemned make them now think they condoned irreparable wrongs. Do you not believe that your revolutionary regime can thus destroy every basic democratic principle and the judicial norms which must guarantee the rights of man?

10) The many executions have provoked much criticism, but there are four alarming cases which merit explanation. First, it is said that Lieut. José Castaño Quevedo did not take part in questions of public or revolutionary order, and that he was solely an anti-Communist investigator. Yet he was shot on trumped-up charges, according to rumors, because he was considered a living file. Have you had time to ascertain or not this execution was as repulsive a crime as it has been pictured?

11) The second case is that of Lieut. Fernández Riquer,
INTERVIEWS AND STATEMENTS, 1959

sentenced to 20 years in the province of Pinar del Rio. The sentence was considered light, and the members of this court were accused of being “counter-revolutionary” because they had not demanded the death penalty. Fernández Riquer was tried again, resentedenced to death, and shot. Can Premier Castro tell us whether this information is correct?

12) The third concerns a justice imprisoned for months with other suspects, without recourse to a writ of Habeas Corpus, later shot on the basis of an accusation that he had once condemned a rebel. Can you tell us whether the present laws of Cuba permit the indefinite imprisonment of an individual without the authority who holds him in prison incurring serious charges? And was Judge Aristides Pérez fulfilling his judicial duties when he committed the crime of which he was accused?

13) Another significant case is that of the 43 pilots tried in Santiago de Cuba. Is it true that they were acquitted and that because you were disgusted with the verdict, the lawyers, among them, one who had defended you—were expelled from the court, harassed and arrested. That on your order a new court was formed under the supervision of your brother Raúl, Chief of the Armed Forces and, as prosecutor, the Minister of Defense, who called the lawyers “hatchetmen of Dictator Batista” because they had fulfilled their sacred duty of acting on behalf of their clients? Is it true that the acquitted defendants were tried again and finally condemned to various sentences, the majority to 30 years’ imprisonment at hard labor?

14) During the dictatorship which you fought, the Embassies had no difficulty in transporting those who had sought asylum with them. Your mother, Mrs. Lina Ruz, widow of Castro, has declared that under Batista’s Government she not only had guarantees, but protection for her home and family properties. Since that is irrefutable, there are many who believe there is a sharp contrast between that protective attitude and the cases of hundreds of fathers, wives, and children, relatives of
Batista collaborators, who can neither move about freely nor leave Cuba, or have been imprisoned. Don't you believe this shows a lack of reciprocity?

15) You said the number shot would not exceed 400. It exceeds 2,000, with more than 5,000 awaiting trial. Do you not believe that the continued executions will give rise to the suspicion that you kill for vengeance and will provoke deep anxiety in your country and strong reactions in other countries?

16) All the journalistic establishments have been seized, and many journalists are in exile, in flight, or hidden, yet there are also some very distinguished writers who have been prisoners for several months without knowing when and how they will be tried. For example: Dr. Francisco Ichaso, free-lance contributor, practicing intellectual, member of the Pen Club of Cuba, several times representative at the Inter-American Press Association and UNESCO; Ernesto de la Fé, collaborator on several newspapers and magazines, anti-Communist fighter and Secretary-General of the Inter-American Confederation for the Defense of the Continent; Juan Luis Martín, noted commentator, versatile specialist in investigations of communism and its dangers. Others imprisoned under the same conditions are Doctors Emeterio S. Santovenia, austere author, President of the Academy of History and a biographer of Bolívar, Martí, and Lincoln; and Joaquín Martínez Saénz, a man of solid prestige, author, member of the Academy of History and specialist in economic matters. The last two are President of the Bank of Agricultural and Industrial Development of Cuba (BANFAIC) and President of the National Bank of Cuba, respectively.

Do you not believe accusations against such men, not proved in competent courts, can lower the prestige of a revolution made in the name of liberty and justice?

17) In the earlier Administration of Batista, as in the later one, there were in the organized trade unions and the Confederation of Cuban Workers some 2,000,000 officially recognized
workers. You called a general strike on at least two occasions, Aug. 5, 1957, and April 9, 1958, and threatened that on these days the workers who went to their jobs would be shot. On neither occasion, nor in the interval between the calls, did the workers respond to your call to strike. Does not this attitude and the attendance of the public at the cabarets, in the squares, theatres and movie houses, prove that the majority of the people did not support your revolution?

You could answer that the “dictatorship” had made the population submissive through terror. Did not the attempt to impose the strike and to enforce non-attendance at public events by the use of bombs and assassinations constitute equal terror?

18) You asked the American Government to withdraw its military, naval, and air missions in January; you insisted and the American Government withdrew them. Afterwards you said on a television program of CMQ on February 19 that you should have imprisoned the officers of those missions “because in all wars the conquering army considers the instructors of the conquered army to be its prisoners.” Although these missions did not give military instruction to the “conquered army,” you said that you did not want them. Later, it was said that you have the Leftist Spaniard “General” Bayo as instructor in Cuba, and that you would prefer military men from other countries. Do you believe that the American Army does not have enough technical knowledge to give instruction in new arms and in modern tactics to the Cuban Army?
FACTS AND ARGUMENTS upon which the Preceding Questions are based.

1) On March 22 Fidel Castro addressed a gathering of workers at Avenida de las Misiones, in front of the Presidential Palace with José Figueres, ex-President of Costa Rica, as guest of honor of the Cuban Government. In a long speech he spoke with acrimony of a statement by ex-President Figueres that “the Communist who is first and foremost a Cuban or a Latin American does not worry me. What is bad is to see one of us led by his ideology, or that of an outside power, into choosing the side of a distant power (Russia), a power on whose side we have no reason to be, in the event of war, or even in the cold war.”

Voices interrupted the speaker, saying: “Neither should we be on the side of the Americans, who are crushing us now!” And another voice said: “You are right, you are right!” And the first continued: “I believe that Cuba has no reason to take part if a war breaks out. What we have to defend is our sovereignty, freedom, and true democracy!” During this speech there was a chorus of voices, some saying: “Oh, oh, oh, our friend is right!” and others: “He wants us to pull his chestnuts out of the fire!”

In another part of the speech Figueres added: “And you will excuse me if I touch upon an awkward topic, for I also am wounded, I also have a score to settle. I very much disagree with the attitude of the United States in respect to the Caribbean dictatorships. I am in complete disagreement, I have a score to settle. . . .”
2) On the same occasion, Fidel Castro repeated several times that Cuba had been abandoned, that she was a little nation without shelters against atomic bombs—referring to the danger the Island ran in maintaining an American Naval base. In one of his references he said: “We, who have a base here, do not have one shelter in which to hide in case of attack. . . . Why not say that while they play with the dangers of war, we are defenseless, prisoners . . .? Why not say, furthermore, that we took part in every war, and when the wars were over, they took away their sugar quotas and trampled us . . .? Why not say that in the name of solidarity they armed the tyrant Batista . . .? That when Costa Rica was invaded by Somoza’s hatchet-men, the United States sold them planes for a dollar, and that here they did the opposite and sent tanks and planes to Batista, also at a dollar, to fight the people?”

To give his words more force, he said that “Cuba would be neutral” in the event of a war between the United States and Russia.

3) Before he became Prime Minister, Castro decreed, through President Urrutia, the seizure of some papers and the control of others, some of which had shown independence during the administration of General Batista. Among those seized were Pueblo, Alerta, Ataja, Gente, Réplica, the National Broadcasting System (Cadena Nacional de Radio) and TV Channel 12. Their plants and equipment were used for special purposes without compensation to their owners. The Communist newspaper Hoy, official organ of the Popular Socialist Party—the Communist Party of Cuba—is being published in the plant of the newspaper Tiempo, also seized by the Government.

Communist influence must be very great for the government to have taken over a private property and placed it at the service of the Soviets, through the newspaper Hoy.

4) Castro, leaving the Havana Hilton Hotel, where he lives with numerous revolutionaries at a cost of some $3,000 per
day, made an unfortunate statement which went out over the wires of the news agencies. Answering a group of reporters, he said that "if the United States intervened to protect its capitalist companies or with the pretext of guaranteeing the lives of American families resident in Cuba, he was prepared to kill 200,000 'gringos.'" The epithet was used in a tone indicating disrespect for the citizens of the United States.

5) Castro has often referred to the newspapers and news agencies of the United States as gratuitous slanderers who injure him without reason. Recently, on April 2, in a presentation of "Meet the Press", a television program, he referred in a bitter and contemptuous manner to what he called false reports published in *Time* and the *Miami Herald* and by some news agencies. He said that "the news agencies try to put a different interpretation on my words; particularly *Time* Magazine, the *Miami Herald*, and others. I shall explain to the people of the United States the policies of this magazine and newspaper; their reactionary politics, their campaign against Cuba . . . they print real indecencies . . . the thousands of families exploited by United Fruit and other companies mean nothing to them . . . . I am going to answer *Time* and all those newspapers . . . because there are capitalists here who become frightened when they read those articles, and the publications play the game of groups who bring misery to the people of Latin America."

6) There is now in Cuba an economic recession due principally to government intervention in all the national banks and in the branches of foreign banks in the country. The Government controls safe deposits, checking accounts, and savings accounts and limits all banking operations. It seizes urban property and fixes infamous prices for vacant lots, in some cases 90 per cent less than their value. It lowers rents from 30 to 50 per cent and sets up limitations on new construction by imposing prohibitive measures on investment capital. As a consequence of these measures, construction has been paralyzed,
leaving 200,000 people unemployed, and many more affected because of the relation of construction to commerce and business in general.

The development of cattle-raising and other agricultural pursuits has lagged to a great degree because of seizures, interference or the threat of interference, in pastures, farms, and fields. The Government has argued that not even heirs have a right to their property, because the lands were given to the colonists from the kings of Spain, after having been snatched from the legitimate owners—the Indians or original inhabitants of the Island. Since the entrance and exit of money is subject to the most exacting scrutiny, the industrialists, investors, bankers, and merchants cannot operate in accord with the requirements of business, and the circulation of money has become limited. These, then, are some of the measures which prevent the healthy and natural economic development of the nation.

7) In the regime which was overthrown on Jan. 1, 1959, courts and trials functioned independently of the Legislative and Executive. Entrance to a judicial career was by examination, and the members of the Courts of Examination were selected by the Supreme Court. Those justices were the ones who passed judgment on infringements of the Constitution and laws, and on the deeds of terrorists ruled by Fidel Castro and communism.

When the insurrectionists won they dictated laws to be applied against those who had fought them in defense of the Government, making crimes out of acts accomplished before the new laws went into effect, laws applied in a spirit of vindictiveness rather than justice. They selected the “judges,” men without knowledge of law and prejudiced against those to be judged. Since they were the criminals of yesterday, they believed that every member of the Judiciary, or of any institution obligated by the Constitution and law to fulfill its duties, ought to be sentenced to prison, property confiscation, or death. They
obeyed only the orders of their insurrectionary chief in every trial and verdict.

8) The preceding section is a valid analysis of this situation. In most cases the courts passed sentences in accordance with the orders they had, as exemplified by the executions and verdicts listed in questions 10, 11, 12, and 13.

9) There are thousands of prisoners who do not know the nature of their crimes or when they will come to trial.

10), 11), and 13) are self-explanatory.

12) A writ of Habeas Corpus prevents citizens from being unlawfully deprived of their liberty. The official holding an individual cannot, under any circumstances, ignore the writ, and must show cause for the individual's detention. Furthermore, the Law of Criminal Procedure rules that any one detained must be presented to judicial authority within 24 hours of his arrest, and the judge must indict him, with or without bond, within 72 hours, or set him free.

According to the Constitution, these precepts are always in force, unless individual guarantees have been suspended. The Law of Suspension of Guarantees can be exercised only with the consent of the Executive and must be ratified by Congress.

The Government of Cuba emphatically affirms that guarantees have not been suspended; consequently there either exists no law for the protection of the citizen, or procedure is arbitrary.

14) During the Administration of ex-President Batista, the right of asylum was rigidly respected. In some cases that right was abused, and the government permitted it, to forestall false propaganda, even when no agreement on the right of asylum had been made. Cases in point are those of Dr. Aureliano Sánchez Arango, who twice sought asylum; and that of some of the assassins of Lieut. Col. Antonio Blanco Rico.

Mrs. Lina Ruz Castro told journalist Enrique Grau-Esteban, Editor of Diario de la Marina, on January 10th of this year in reply to his question as to whether she had been molested by
the authorities of the deposed Batista regime, that "they never bothered me. They rather looked after me. I will say this no matter where I am, because it is the truth."

She and her children, Juanita and Ramón, went freely about their business of operating their farms. When Fidel Castro triumphed, Hermelindo Batista, brother of the ex-President, was arrested, forced to don a "26th of July" arm-band and was thus photographed. The picture appeared in some newspapers in the capital and in the rotogravure section of the Diario de la Marina on Jan. 9, 1960. It should be noted that Hermelindo Batista, a Congressman, was a sick man who did not take part in administrative, civil, or police matters. Departures from the Island are today so restricted that women have been arrested for attempting to leave, solely because they were relatives or friends of members of the deposed regime.

15) Fidel Castro has repeated on various occasions, as the butchery which his brother Raúl had begun in Oriente continued (100 were buried in a single pit), that the number of those shot would not exceed 400. He made this statement to the United Press on Jan. 22: "Despite the short trials, legal procedures are and will be carefully observed. I do not believe the number of those condemned to death will exceed 400."

Castro had apparently already decided who were going to die. He knew the identity of those who had opposed his attempt to seize power through terror. Thus Maj. Jesús Sosa Blanco was executed because Castro said that the members of the court deserved to be shot if they did not sentence him to death. In the same fashion, Camilo Cienfuegos, Chief of the Army and deputy of the Castros, said—as the United Press International sensationaly reported on Jan. 26—that Morejón must be sentenced to death. The UPI transmitted the report in this manner: "The court seated the accused between two others of similar size, who were also dressed in blue prison garb. The three witnesses selected the wrong man." Inside, 300 spectators were
seated and as many others listened outside through the loudspeakers. "When Capt. Pedro Morejón Valdés was declared innocent, Camilo Cienfuegos pointed his finger at the accused and said: 'I have promised myself that if Morejón is not executed I shall put a bullet through myself.'" The so-called court, fearing that he would carry out his promise, or that they might suffer "suicide," voted the death penalty for Morejón; and he was shot.

After three months of this revolution, more than 500 have been shot, in addition to the 2,000 who were immediately killed and the others who are committing suicide in the prisons and police stations. Among the latter was René Ray, brother of the Minister of Public Works, who put a bullet in his stomach. Others threw themselves from the roofs of police and military buildings.

16) The motives are explained in the question and in that of number 3).

17) Organized labor was not intimidated by Castro's threats. The 2,000,000 workers associated with the CTC belonged to different political groups. The working classes were respected by the Government, which carried out its policy of high salaries and its program of improvements in living standards, in labor contracts resulting from independent agreements between business and labor.

The attempt to impose a strike by terror resulted in the deaths of workers, men and women, blown to bits or riddled by bullets. Neither the assassinations, nor the destruction of property, nor the attacks on industries and businesses succeeded in paralyzing the country.

18) Fidel Castro, at a press conference on Jan. 9th at Cienfuegos, said of the Military Mission of the United States that "nothing they taught the Cuban Army had any value and the deficiencies of North American military instruction insured the triumph of the revolution." The military missions were con-
tracted for by the Government of Carlos Prío in 1950 and ratified by the Government of President Batista in 1952. At the beginning of January there was Communist clamor for the withdrawal of the missions, followed later by emphatic statements from Fidel Castro attacking the North American military support of the Batista "dictatorship" and calling for arrangements with a different military mission. In this way Castro destroyed a system aimed at the standardization of arms, munitions, and tactics in case another world war should compel Cuba to move against Russia together with the United States and her allies.

On Jan. 22nd, Major "Ché" Guevara, guerrilla of international communism and Fidel Castro's head man, ratified the plan to contract for another military mission to replace that of the United States.

It must be made clear that the members of the North American Military Mission took no part in the plans for the campaign, trained no Cuban personnel for that purpose, and were not present in the zone of operations.
REPLYING TO THE UNFORTUNATE STATEMENTS OF THE GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO, MR. LUIS MUNOZ MARIN, ON APRIL 30, 1959.

United Press-International
New York

Not knowing the address of Governor Muñoz Marín, who yesterday made statements in Boston via that agency, I beg you to forward the following telegram-letter to him:

Upon reading statements made by you and transmitted by the UPI, many people will deplore your incitement to further bloodshed in Cuba, caused by your approval of hundreds of executions ordered by Fidel Castro, in addition to thousands of assassinations without legal procedure. Your statement that “nothing is said of those who are not executed” is horrible. According to this opinion, thousands ought to be executed, considering the millions who are members of political parties that supported my Government, and the officials and representatives connected with it. And if you refer only to members of the Armed Forces and Police, then thousands would be executed through caprice or vengeance. You said that “the military courts were working conscientiously.”

Let me prove your grave error by reviewing a few of the fantastic and cruel cases produced by Castro: in the case of Maj. Sosa Blanco, Castro said that if they did not condemn him to death, the members of the court ought to be shot, and, of course, Maj. Sosa Blanco was executed. In the case of Morejón, one of them said if Morejón was not shot, he would shoot himself. The members of the court understood that the bullet would be meant for them, and Morejón was shot. When Lieut. Fernández was sentenced to 20 years, the members of the court were accused of being counter-revolutionaries and Fernández Riquer was shot. Forty-three flyers were acquitted in Santiago de Cuba; Castro publicly insulted the court that acquitted them,
and the lawyers for the defense were expelled. A new trial was held under the supervision of Raúl the Cruel, and the Minister of Defense, and the flyers were sentenced to 30 years at hard labor. Lieut. José Castaño, anti-Communist investigator, was never involved in repressive actions; he spoke several languages and was a living file. There was a trumped up charge, some representatives interceded, but despite a promise to save him, he was shot. A serious charge was invented against an American citizen, Allan Nye; he was condemned to death. However, because the trial coincided with Fidel Castro's visit to Washington, Nye was given 48 hours to get out of Cuba.

These executions, Mr. Governor, and this surprising leniency to the man condemned to death, are products of criminal caprice and not of "conscientious" courts.

As for the statement that little was heard about "the cruelty of the Batista dictatorship," you are repeating the theme of Castro and his comrades, that the news agencies had remained quiet, but that now they are publishing the horrible crimes of the Castro tyranny. I do not defend my Government, because my country and history will do that, but it is painful to see the infamous shootings applauded and further murder in a brother country incited by the government of another country.

You say that Castro is "not remotely a Communist."* But please note: Castaño was shot by him because the Communists wished it. Castro legalized the Communist Party and dissolved the BRAC, the official organization designed to prevent the spread of International Communism. He took possession of the records of the Secretary General of the Inter-American Confederation for the Defense of the Continent, and those of the World Anti-Communist Office. He transferred the presses of a private newspaper to the Communist mouthpiece Hoy. His principal military chiefs are Communists and the cultural cen-

* On the 1st December, 1961 Castro admitted to the world that he is a Communist, has always been one and will continue to be until he dies.
ters and labor federations have been infiltrated by Communists. Castro's official organ, the newspaper REVOLUCION, is directed by a Communist.

The journalist Ernesto de la Fé has been given an indefinite prison sentence because he is an anti-Communist leader. Juan Luis Marín, writer, commentator, and linguist, has been arrested for writing against communism. The right of Habeas Corpus does not exist in Cuba. And such distinguished anti-Communist intellectuals as Dr. Joaquín Martínez Saénz, ex-President of the National Bank, Dr. Emeterio Santovenia, President of the Academy of History and a respected author, and Francisco Ichaso, member of UNESCO, have been arrested. Castro and the Communist declared from the Presidential Palace on March 22nd that, in case of war between the United States and Russia, Cuba would be neutral. He refers to the United States as the head of the "international oligarchy" and symbol of "monopoly" in America.

Castro attacks the Organization of American States at every opportunity. If the OAS is to intervene in Cuba in accordance with its charter, it has to do so without delay in order to protect human rights here. It must condemn the invasion plan which Castro's madness has organized, whose intended victim is Panamá—although he denies this now.

Do not repeat, Mr. Governor, that Castro does well to kill and to continue killing. You, too, have been influenced by his ignoble propaganda. If there were freedom in my country today, I would suggest publication of the lists of the victims of the conflict, of the widows, the orphans, and the parents of those who have died at the hands of Castro's horrible thugs. You would then see a vast expanse covered by a river of tears. Look to your own country and see to it that it is not divided by so-called patriotic or good causes; but, by God, do not hoist again the flag of blood and mourning to swell the misfortune of Cuba.

Sincerely,
Fulgencio Batista.
PLANS FOR AN INTERVIEW FOR
THE NEW YORK TIMES

At 9:45 A.M. of May 9, 1959, I received the following cablegram from New York:

President Fulgencio Batista
Hotel Jaragua, Dominican Republic.

TIMES desires complete and extensive interview with you for exclusive publication in THE NEW YORK TIMES and in newspapers in various parts of the U.S. and the world associated with its syndicate. (Stop) We would send reporter Will Lissner to the Dominican Republic. (Stop) We would cover events of your Administration and your successors, criticisms of your opponents, your analysis of national and international politics, your future plans, etcetera, including photos for illustration. (Stop) Dominican laws affecting the material will be taken into account. (Stop) Lissner will fly Tuesday night. (Stop) Cable reply at your earliest convenience.

E. R. Freeman, Foreign Editor

To this dispatch I replied:

E. R. Freeman, Foreign Editor
NEW YORK TIMES
New York

In connection with your message, I shall receive your reporter next Wednesday at 3 P.M.

Fulgencio Batista
On the afternoon of May 12 another cablegram from New York was received at the Hotel Jaragua, cancelling the appointment. It read as follows:

In view of the interview with NANA which we are publishing today, I request you to cancel my appointment for 3 P.M. Wednesday.

Will Lissner, NEW YORK TIMES

The Interview with NANA.

A few weeks before the foreign editor of THE NEW YORK TIMES requested an interview, I had had a chance conversation with Mrs. Julia Edwards of the Research Institute of America which, according to her description, was “the largest business survey service in the country.” She was also on the staff of the NORTH AMERICAN NEWSPAPER ALLIANCE, described as “an agency dedicated to the study of economic problems of the Caribbean.”

The reporter made a summary of our exchange of impressions at that time and sent it in 320 words to THE NEW YORK TIMES. I do not reproduce it here because it comprises material repeated in other chapters of this book.

When I received the notice that the interview requested by the NEW YORK TIMES had been cancelled, I had already made up my Spanish notes which I meant to use in the “complete and extensive interview.”

Notes Meant to Serve as a Basis for the Interview

Demagoguery, terrorist action, and communism comprised violent propaganda which presented me as a cruel dictator. Castro, on the other hand, was called democratic—and he still says he is. These appellations have been repeated so often that many people are convinced that I was a “dictator” and a “tyrant,” and that Castro is “democratic” and a “humanitarian.”
For this reason I am glad to have the opportunity to define logically the concepts of democracy, dictatorship, tyranny, and demagoguery.

A democratic regime is one in which the three traditional powers function to govern the nation and serve the people. In such a regime, freedom and order rest on law. Justice is administered by independent, established courts, and the functions of the government are exercised through a representative system based on popular vote.

A dictatorial regime is one in which one person exercises absolute power, based, however, on law.

A tyrannical regime* is one imposed by an unjust and cruel will, absolute and despotic, in violation of the law.

Dictatorship and tyranny are achieved through force or demagoguery, or by both.

Demagoguery is the policy which inflames the passions of the masses, and is based on promises which will not be kept.

Events of the last two years favored the development of this propaganda. The intensification of terrorism stiffened the forces of order, but while my Government prided itself on getting legislation passed so that elections could be held, bombs were destroying human bodies, businesses, amusement, and industrial centers, and means of communication.

Constitutional Government and the Courts

The government of Cuba rested upon the three constitutional powers, the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial, each functioning independently. Many of my proposals were modified

* More than a century ago, President Madison declared in The Federalist: "The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judicial, in the same hands, be it of one, of few, or of many; and were it by inheritance, by self-designation, or by election, could be called the true definition of tyranny."
or defeated by Congress, and it can almost be said that the Judiciary was hostile to me. The Supreme Court, the Superior Courts, and the Courts of Common Pleas went freely about their business, acquitting, condemning, making individual decisions, all in accord with the Organic Law.

Those charged with terrorism, sabotage, and even homicide or assassination committed in insurrectionary activities, were judged by established courts, composed of justices and judges, experienced through many years of service. In Castro’s Government the justices and judges are under severe pressure, victims of an implacable persecution. They are purged, expelled, or accused, as the case may be, by capricious judgments. A justice of the Superior Court of Pinar del Río, Dr. Aristides Pérez Andreu, was shot because he had carried out his duty and sentenced some terrorists to prison. Writs of Habeas Corpus were honored in my Administration, and continued to be honored even when Constitutional guarantees were suspended. This is not so today; citizens remain imprisoned for indefinite periods, not knowing by whom or of what they are accused. Thousands have been incarcerated and still do not know when they will come to trial.

**Despotic Regime**

The only law is the tyrannical will which orders that arbitrary measures be applied as though they were law. Castro acts through primitive emotions. He decides who should be condemned. He threatens with death the members of the “kangaroo” courts he himself appointed, if they do not order the death penalty when he has asked for it. Many scandalous examples of such actions are well known, so I limit myself to a few. First, that of the 20-year prison term which the so-called court had to change to the death penalty: the case of Lieut. Fernández Riquer in Pinar del Río. Next, the case of the 43 pilots who
were first acquitted in Santiago de Cuba and then condemned to as much as 30 years at hard labor upon Castro's orders. Another man sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment came before a "Court of Appeals" and instead of having his sentence reduced was, on Castro's order, condemned to be shot: Lt. Juan Roselló Pando. . . . Dr. Olga Herrera was victim of the vengeance of her former husband, who accused her of having informed the police on some high-placed revolutionary; she was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Civil lawyers have been insulted by the newly titled judges; a military lawyer, appointed to defend Jesús Sosa Blanco and the pilots, was arrested and later discharged from the Army. Revolutionary Maj. Felix Lugerio Peña, who had presided at the trial of the pilots when they were acquitted, answered Fidel Castro's insults by saying that he had followed his conscience. A short time later he was assassinated in an automobile. A list of injustices would be endless.

If there is no Congress or substituted body to balance the Council of Ministers; if there are no ordinary courts to pass sentence on the basis of investigation and proof; if judges and courts are not permitted to reach independent decisions; and if the citizen does not even have the right of Habeas Corpus—it is certain that a despotic regime rules Cuba. Liberty does not exist; and where liberty and justice do not exist, not the slightest sign of democratic government can be found.

Even more horrible procedures can be found within this tyrannical regime. A universal principle holds that the penal laws can be applied retroactively only to the advantage of the defendant. Under my Administration no court or judge applied a law which had not been promulgated before the commission of the crime. No judge was involved in a case in which he might be prejudiced against the accused. Under Castro's tyranny, laws and measures have been formulated—permitting even the death penalty—after a supposed crime had been committed.
Administration and Public Confidence

Propaganda has also been used against the administrative functions of my Government. Naturally, I cannot expect the opposition to applaud, but their accusations seem absurd. We cannot say that administrative transactions were completely without error but, generally speaking, the Administration was efficient. Revenues increased. At times we operated under a deficit budget—as has been the case of the United States and in other countries with an orderly Administration. The previous Government established the Court of Accounts but did not submit to it. National expenditures—of the ministries and autonomous bodies—of my Government were verified by this Court, and payments for public works, hospitals, and schools, international and internal obligations, and supplies were properly regulated.

With the continuous pressure of conspiracies, revolts, and terrorist attacks, of a constant campaign against public and private credit, economic institutions and the security of homes, the insurrectionists did not succeed in destroying public confidence or impeding the development of the economy and the rising standard of living.

The campaign of defamation went so far as to spread the lie that my Government planned to take possession of bank deposits and security boxes. It was afterwards proved to be a frontal attack on the economy of the country; but the propaganda had its effect on the credulous and many withdrew their funds. The difficulty which they created gave us the opportunity, nevertheless, to prove the economic strength and the honest intent of the regime. The National Bank and all the other banks of Cuba returned their deposits to as many as wished it. Incidents occurred which influenced depositors to return their funds to the banks; some homes were robbed, and money which had previously been safe passed into the hands of the insurrectionists.
During my Presidential term bank deposits exceeded previous limits by more than a THOUSAND million dollars;* bank payments approached SEVEN THOUSAND millions, exceeding those of 1952 by TWO THOUSAND FORTY-FIVE MILLIONS. Private construction increased extraordinarily, attaining an annual investment of EIGHTY million dollars, in addition to those of the governmental provinces and municipalities. The volume of urban construction and the creation of thousands of new proprietors was due to the Development of Guaranteed Mortgages (Fomento de Hipotecas Aseguradas), the Law of Horizontal Property (cooperative buildings), and the Law of Constructions and Demolitions.

It would take a long time to summarize all that was accomplished in roads, highways, homes, hospitals, schools, nurseries, social security, and retirement, credit institutions, and industrial development.

Marxist Practice and Tactics Against the Economy

The plans of Castro and his allies, the Communists, were aimed at the destruction of the national economy, by the paralysis of investments, the destruction of the sources of production and by placing the blame for Cuba's misfortunes—brought about by themselves—on the North Americans. We warned that this movement was inspired by communism, which made anti-Americanism the symbol in its fight against the West. Both Fidel Castro's sympathizers and his critics have often said that he may not be a Communist, but his Government is infiltrated with Soviet agents and fellow travelers.

The belief that it is necessary to be a member of the Communist Party to be associated with the Soviet or to serve communism is a wide-spread fallacy. Castro not a Communist is more dangerous than Castro as a Communist. The pattern of his

* The Cuban peso was quoted at par with the dollar.
tactics, his orientation, his acts, would be followed if the Communist Party had total power. "By their acts you shall know them," says the Bible. Castro will say that he is anti-capitalist only if capital is monopolistic; but when he attacks investors, he attacks capitalism at its source. Castro uses the word "monopolist" when he refers to the capital most needed in Cuba—that coming from the United States. His exploitation of the words "colonialism" and "nationalism" also identify him with Russia.

In Europe, in Asia, in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, governments modeled on that of Russia have been established by force. Attempts at liberation have been crushed by brutal repressions. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, etc., are governed by the same system. Today, the Government of Cuba differs from that system only in that it is often more cruel.

Communist practice is symbolized in the attitudes and contradictions of Fidel Castro, his capacity to shift positions being equal to, or greater than, that of the Russian bosses. Neutralism is another flag he waves when it is a question of possible conflict between Russia and her satellites and the United States.

Communism knows how to exploit democratic fairness and a people's love of liberty. These sentiments are being used by known leaders and anonymous agents to incite the Latin American countries, especially those of the Caribbean region, against the United States.

The names of proven Communists have been established, those of "our men" who serve without joining (Castro was one of them), of "fellow travelers," of pro-Communists, of anti-Americans, and of Leftist accomplices who occupy vital positions in the Red-Black regime. The people of the United States and of Latin America have read many such lists.

Stuart Novins of CBS, after spending two months in Cuba, wrote a formidable report, citing irrefutable facts which revealed
Fidel Castro and his Government as engaged in unmistakably pro-Communist action.

Note the tone of Castro’s speeches, his halting or confused answers to questions on the United States and Russia, on neutralism, and on Communist activities in Cuba. His answers would not be vague if he were a friend of the United States or an anti-Communist.

The cry of unity which comes from the multitude around Castro serves to strengthen the hegemony which the Popular Republic that Castro and his “comrades” seek to establish in Cuba would have over society.

Castro’s trip to Buenos Aires to attend the Economic Conference of the 21 had two purposes: to show himself off and to create hostility between the countries represented there and the United States by suggesting that the North Americans ought to give THIRTY THOUSAND million dollars to the Latin American republics. When he stated in New York that his Government was “Cuban,” Castro dodged saying that it was not Communist.* In Montevideo, he haughtily admonished the reporters who were questioning him about his neutralism with the disdainful reply: “Is this a press conference or a meeting at the Pentagon?”

Of the newspaper establishments seized, why did Castro’s government give one to the Communist paper HOY, and another to REVOLUCION, managed by the ex-proofreader of HOY, the Communist Franquiz? Radio stations, cultural organizations, publications which were but no longer are, clandestine, like CARTA SEMANAL, MELLA, PREGUNTAS Y RESPUESTAS and FUNDAMENTOS are all Communist. Among other important public organizations, the Confederation of Cuban Workers is under Red leadership. Communist

* Now, Castro has fully admitted to the Communization of Cuba.
indoctrination and anti-American propaganda is strong even in artistic circles. A group of prominent Cuban artists issued a protest because the Argentine Pedro Asquini, countryman of "Ché" Guevara, called a meeting at the Palacio de los Trabajadores to give them directives regarding theatre programs which, he said, "from now on are to be limited to attacks on Yankee Imperialism."

To understand how Castro and his Government have been working for communism, read the cables sent to the CTC last May, revealing that "Victor Chrishin, President of the Central Council of Soviet Labor Federations, and Russian labor leaders Eremeev Timofei and Ivan Arapov" would come to Havana at the invitation of the Secretary General of the CTC.

*Cooperation and Reciprocity, Not Grants or Assistance*

The Caribbean nations ought to be on the alert despite Castro's declarations in the United States. His Government either ordered, or acquiesced in, the invasion of Panamá. Within two months of his rise to power he had made solid promises to give not only asylum but economic and military support as well to all exiled conspiratorial groups.

What does the Cuban Government wish to conceal when its Minister of Foreign Relations stands before the OAS and demands that Panamá surrender the Cuban adventurers? At the same time, Fidel Castro declared that they would be tried in Cuba with leniency, and added the sarcastic remark that Panamá ought to be ashamed to seek the protection of the OAS against 90 men.

Latin America needs to raise the standard of living of its people; but as we declared at the meeting of the Presidents in Panamá in July 1956, this serious problem cannot be solved by grants and loans or by plans which depend on the United States exclusively. The solution of the economic problems of the
American Continent must be founded on a state of mutual understanding between the United States and the Latin American countries. Agreement on minimal aims would facilitate the solution of basic problems.*

The United States could help Latin America by suspending, for example, double taxation. This measure would facilitate the investment of American capital in those countries which offered the necessary guarantees. The possibility of establishing a permanent quota for basic products, the exchange of surpluses, closely supervised to prevent dumping, the financing of development projects to mobilize natural resources and promote agricultural growth and progressive industrialization, would also help. The Inter-American Development Bank could be the appropriate organ for such actions.

A Mistaken Attitude and a Terrible Solution

The collapse of my Administration had its origin in various causes: the intense propaganda which presented Fidel Castro as the democratic avenger of injustice and my regime as a dictatorship without respect for Constitution, law, or human rights. The machinery of Communist terror worked efficiently and its threats were effective in the rural production areas, especially among the sugar interests whose mills and plantations were subjected to destructive raids from rebel groups. We fought incessantly, as was our duty, to save the Republic from great danger, but the racket of the bombs was more effective, and propaganda crushed us. Many business men, especially the sugar entrepreneurs, acting from fear or exhaustion, contributed millions of dollars to the rebel cause.

* In his depositions before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security Laws, Ambassador Arthur Gardner said: "... Batista had always leaned towards the United States. I don't think we ever had a better friend."
The Anarcho-Communists, as the rebels can be called, did not have the support of the people. The failure of the general strikes called by Castro proved this, even though the calls were accompanied by threats of death for workers who would not support them.

There was a rumor, later verified, that the United States had confiscated guns acquired by us through proper channels. The number of guns seized in the boat was of little importance, but the revelation was ruinous. The Army continued to deteriorate. The prolonged campaign without success was discouraging. Everything went wrong: complicity, fear, disloyalty, surrender, lack of arms.

Before Christmas the landed proprietors sent me a message to the effect that their position was no longer tenable and a fast solution had to be achieved. They believed the answer lay in my resignation. Frightened business interests came to the same conclusion. Everyone was a victim of mounting terror and seemed to believe that Castro would bring peace, even though his criminal tendencies were well known.

Neutral religious and diplomatic elements pressed me privately with the urgent need to find a solution to the conflict. They observed that while sabotage and terrorism were increasing, the Armed Forces had not won a single battle and could not even prevent the burning of sugar cane, the destruction of roads, the armed robberies. Each clash between the rebels and the Armed Forces made the public more uneasy.

Self-Defeat

Companies, battalions, and armored regiments accompanied Castro into Havana. It was not that the Army had surrendered; it had simply stopped fighting and placed its confidence in the rebel chief who had won power through terror and Communist propaganda.
The military chiefs and officers who gave up their arms to him and placed themselves under his orders, including those in Camagüey, Las Villas, and Matanzas who were waiting to do the same, were hoodwinked by a man who knows only the law of the jungle.

Now a time of agony was to begin in Cuba. “All those who have had economic, social, or moral relations with the ‘tyranny’”—thus one of the bloodiest tyrants America has known labeled our government—“will have to pay the penalty.” And after an orgy of blood throughout the Republic, Castro began to fill the prisons. The officers, the soldiers, the citizens who had acknowledged his authority and ceased fighting were now subjected to cruelty and infamy. They were shot, their possessions carried off, and even modest little homes which had cost humble couples years of sacrifice were confiscated. The widows, the parents, the orphans of those who were murdered were forced out of their homes. Social security and pension rights were annulled despite years of contribution.

To top it all, the insurrectionists labeled the military men and civilians who had fought them “war criminals.” A new wave of propaganda flared up, endlessly repeating the theme that the government was responsible for 20,000 deaths. Yet the top figure for fatalities on both sides in the two years of conflict did not exceed 1,000. Terror resulted in repression, and the vicious circle brought excesses. What will be the total number of Castro’s victims? Most of the fatalities of the two-year conflict were the result of his action. More than 600 have been shot in cold blood and more than 2,000 murdered without benefit of “trial” since January 1.

Triumphs Without Bloodshed

Yes, it is true that I have led two revolutions. But I carried them out and triumphed without spilling a single drop of blood.
My adversaries and their families were protected. In the revolution of September 4, 1933, I forbade looting and manhunts. My opponents called me dictator. Communism was always involved in this program of defamation. In the last months of 1933, many industries were subjected to Communist attack. The mills of Oriente and Camagüey were occupied by Soviet commissars. There must still exist some significant documents in the archives of the General Staff and the offices of the sugar companies. I remember, among these papers, “passes” signed by the commissars of the mills of the United Fruit Company, at Mabay and at Jaronu, which granted the military leaders who could no longer preserve order, permission to leave the areas. As it was necessary to begin the repair of the mill and cutting equipment, Army personnel were sent out to speak with the workers. We gave them protection and they themselves helped to expel the Communists.

Immediately there were propaganda reports that “Batista has said there will be a harvest or there will be blood.” I never had the bad taste to say anything like that—unlike Fidel Castro, who seems to take pleasure in repeating the expression *kill and shoot*. But “there will be a harvest or there will be blood” was repeated in all the pamphlets and meetings of the “comrades.” After that they did not have another chance to act until World War II. Russia joined the United States, England, and the other allied powers. Cuba was no exception.

On the 10th of March, 1952, the Russian Embassy in Havana was the central propaganda office for the entire Caribbean region. We broke with Russia and strengthened our relations with the United States. Russian propaganda penetrated Cuba and the United States to such an extent that Castro and his fellow travelers obtained extensive ideological, political, and economic support from the Communists. Their argument that Cuba must be delivered from the “dictatorship” into the hands of “democracy”—which the terrorists claimed to represent—found
wide acceptance. As a result sympathetic support was given not to us but to the rebel groups, even in the United States.*

_Neither Constitution nor Law: A Tyrannical Will_

Despite the tragedy into which the Anarcho-Communist terror had plunged her, Cuba was governed under the Constitution of 1940, the most liberal and just of her history as a republic, until the last day of 1958.

The year 1959 will always be remembered for the Red-Black stain which destroyed the Constitution of the Cuban people, making caprice, hate, and death the only law, "the law of the jungle" which believes not in God, country, nor man.

_Contrasting Constitutions_

On February 7, 1959, a constitution was decreed which deprived the Cuban people of any voice in the destiny of the nation and handed over the entire country to the sickly will of the tyrant of the Sierra Maestra.

The Constitution of 1940 was formulated by a Constituent Assembly composed of delegates freely elected by the people. The constitution-by-decree is a creation of Castro in which the will of the people is never expressed. On the contrary, it deprives them of any right to participate in the political, economic, and social life of the nation.

It violates all human principles and destroys the precept of equality, making slaves of those who were members of the

* In his deposition before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security Laws, Ambassador Arthur Gardner said: "... I felt that Batista had proved a great friend of this country, and his administration had proved a great ability to develop the country itself, and develop the friendship with us."
preceding government or in any way connected with it, destroying their basic rights of self-defense, liberty, and livelihood. The right to question the constitutionality of an act and the right of Habeas Corpus are denied. The mere accusation that a citizen was a collaborator of the preceding government, the suspicion that he is a conspirator or a "counter-revolutionary"—this is cause enough to deprive him of his property and to accuse, try, and condemn him.

Atheist State

The preamble of the Constitution of 1940 invokes the grace of God, symbol of the Christian faith which has always characterized the Cuban people. The constitution of 1959, in accord with Communist and atheist standards, omits all mention of God.

Article 21 of the Constitution of 1940 specified that penal laws shall be retroactive only in favor of the accused, except in three specific instances; but never against the accused, for even under those specified exceptions the guilty must be sentenced in accordance with the law operative at the time the crime was committed.

The constitution-by-decree of 1959 specifies that the accused can be tried under laws passed subsequent to the crime if the cases involve "collaborators" or "counter-revolutionaries."

Article 25 of the Constitution of 1940 eliminates the death penalty except against members of the Armed Forces for crimes of a military nature and against persons guilty of treason or espionage in time of war—necessary to national security.

The same article of the constitution-by-decree of 1959 specifically adds that the death penalty is applicable to "members of the Armed Forces, repressive bodies of the tyranny deposed Dec. 31, 1958, auxiliary groups organized by that government, private groups organized to defend it, informers, etc."
No Liberty and No Property

Articles 27, 29, 174, and 175 of Castro’s constitution, copied from the Constitution of 1940, were made temporarily ineffective by executive order. The first two require that persons arrested be presented before a competent judge within 24 hours of their detention and that the said judge settle the status within 72 hours. The others are concerned with the right of Habeas Corpus, the right of citizens to be tried by civil courts and the illegality of special courts.

Article 24 of the Constitution of 1940, prohibiting the confiscation of property, has also been modified; confiscation is now specifically permitted without recourse to law.*

Powers of the State

Article 118, and those following, of the Constitution of 1940 established that the State shall carry out its functions through the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches.

* This extraordinary decree permits the greatest irregularities, destroys the fundamental bases of property, and weakens the legitimate right of the individual to keep and enjoy his possessions.

My opinion was later justified by the measure decreed by the so-called Ministry for the Recovery of Property (Ministerio de Recuperación de Bienes). It appeared in the Cuban press with the following comment: “The confiscatory resolution states that ‘the absence from the country because of exile or for any other abnormal reason is an admission of the validity of the charges.’”

The account goes on to state that the law authorizes “the total confiscation of the property of all persons, natives of Cuba or under Cuban jurisdiction, responsible for crimes against the national economy or the Public Treasury, of those persons who acquired wealth . . . who committed crimes which are counter-revolutionary by law, or who abandoned the country to evade the action of the revolutionary courts, or who, having abandoned the country, plot abroad against the revolutionary government.”

It goes on to explain that “those persons are equally liable who, though not directly involved in the illegal acquisition of wealth or malfeasance, have been beneficiaries of those crimes against the nation.”
The constitution-by-decree of 1959 specifically eliminated the Legislative branch by suppressing Congress and investing the Council of Ministers (Executive) with all the powers of the former. Since the constitution is in the form of a decree it can be amended whenever Castro so desires.

As for the Executive, besides being invested with all the Legislative powers, the President of the Republic is named by the Council of Ministers (Executive) which, of course, names its own ministers. Who, then, represents absolute power? The Executive. And who controls the Executive? The Prime Minister who heads it. And who is the Prime Minister? There is no doubt that he is the despot and the tyrant.

As for the Judicial branch, it is enough to say that by an amendment of the Council of Ministers to the Constitution of 1940, published in the special edition of the Official Gazette for Jan. 13, 1959 (before the promulgation of the constitution-by-decree of 1959), the tenure of the members of this branch, including Justices of the Supreme Court, was made inoperative for 30 days. As will be recalled, a short time later a member of the Superior Court of Pinar del Río was shot for the simple act of carrying out his duty—sentencing to prison terms thieves and terrorists found guilty by courts of competent jurisdiction.
INTERVIEW REQUESTED BY LEE B. HALL, STAFF CORRESPONDENT OF LIFE.

After 30 years in the highest positions in the Cuban Government, you must think that the present Government has committed serious errors. Can you tell me which, in your opinion, are the most serious and will have the most enduring effect on your country?

Before answering the main point of the question, let me give you a little factual information: I began my public life 25 years ago. When Gen. Machado fell, the country was in a state of anarchy, with hundreds dead in the streets, homes and businesses looted, and centers of employment, especially the sugar mills, occupied by Communists. I headed a revolution which triumphed without bloodshed, just as my Revolution of March 10, 1952, triumphed without the shedding of a drop of blood. The deposed officials, their families and their property were protected. Of these 25 years, I have spent four in exile in the United States, after holding the fairest elections in Cuba’s history under my Presidency. During my absence I was elected Senator, and when I returned to Cuba I organized an opposition party which I directed for another four years.

In answer to your question, there is no doubt that Castro has committed and continues to commit fundamental errors. They are so many and so serious that they comprise practically every action undertaken by his Administration. Among Castro’s biggest mistakes are his assumption of complete command of the country, with control of the three powers of the state, so that he has become at one stroke, a dictator, a tyrant, and a despot. The officials he has named, from President of the Republic...
through Administration leaders and minor office-holders, come from his coterie and are changed at his command.

If Castro were patriotic and democratic the country would be at peace, but he wanted power at any price, and he came to it over a mountain of corpses. His first act was to designate "judges" who were selected from his followers, and to create "courts" which were obligated to sentence to death or to forced labor the members of the Army who had surrendered, and all those who had been connected with my Government. There are many examples of "courts" changing their decisions under pressure from him and condemning individuals who had been previously acquitted.

Congress has not been replaced by a body able to study the problems of the country so that it might issue wise and logical decrees. It has been completely eliminated. The Executive Power is Castro; the Judicial Power does not exist. Members of the Judiciary were shot for condemning terrorists to prison. The Constitution has been modified by decree to legalize the death penalty, to make the force of their so-called laws retroactive, to eliminate Habeas Corpus, and to permit the confiscation of property. If a citizen commits an act that Castro believes contrary to his aims, a new law is decreed, the man's property is confiscated, and he is condemned to prison or death.

The appointment of adventurer "Ché" Guevara to high posts through which he can harass, dispossess, expel, persecute, imprison, and even kill any Cuban in his own land is another serious blunder, equivalent to high treason. Castro in his paranoia has decreed the highest judgeship in the land for him. The presence in Cuba of "Ché" Guevara, Castro's Communist adviser, who has a long history of bloodshed, offends the founders of the country and the heroes of Cuban independence.

Castro threatens the stability of the nation. He attacks the basic structure of Cuba by destroying its economic system with aggression against private property, investment capital, banks
and credit institutions; with the illegal confiscation of property and bank deposit vaults, the freezing of assets, limitations on the circulation of currency, devaluation of real estate, and seizure of lands under cultivation without indemnification.

On the international level Castro’s immaturity, his growing inferiority complex, his Communist leanings, and his obvious disorientation pose a threat to adjacent, and even to distant countries. His obvious hatred of the United States and his attempt to create a climate of suspicion between Latin American countries and North America are just as threatening.

*According to the press, there are many Cubans who do not agree with the policies of the present regime. This means, of course, that they are still in sympathy with your cause. Can you tell me whether you are thinking of using this support to return to the leadership of Cuba?*

I do not claim this support, nor do I believe that the majority of those who oppose Castro are on my side. I know that I have many friends, and they will act only to help Cuba. I have worked unceasingly for my country, and I brought her to unexpected heights of prosperity. I hold no personal ambitions and do not intend to take part in any future administration, even if I am offered the opportunity. Men will have to appear to govern and revive my country, and Cuba will recover, despite the setback it has received from the Castro despotism.

*Do you have any message for the Cubans who fluctuate between the new regime and yours?*

I am anguished by the Cuban tragedy. The destruction she is suffering and the dangerous antagonisms among our people alarms me. The anxieties which disturb family life, the insecurity of the citizen, the situation in which my friends find themselves, do not allow me to be indifferent; but this in no way means that I shall return to active political life.
With your many years of experience, do you believe that communism constitutes a serious threat in Cuba at the present time? If this is so, can you explain the sudden upsurge of communism in your country?

I believe that communism constitutes not only a possible danger, but a real danger. The greatest danger lies in its mimetic nature, that ability possessed by Soviet realists to adapt themselves to situations and systems, which permits it to infiltrate and infect various levels of society. Communist influence has grown rapidly in Cuba because of the freedom it has been given and the stimuli offered by the Castro Government to develop its activities.

It should not be forgotten that within the Red scheme, Castro is more useful to the Russians and International Communism as he is than if he were a member of the Communist Party.

Do you note the rise of new forces which might influence or change the political direction of the nation (as for example, communism, referred to in the preceding question)?

The great harm caused—and being caused—by Fidel Castro, is his refusal to permit the formation of political parties in Cuba. Such political forces would not favor the anarchy which Communist activities create. If two or more parties could be formed in Cuba, and if the party which organized the Government refused an alliance with the Communist Party, Communist influence would be wiped out. But this is not possible because Castro himself is its best instrument of agitation. If political parties are not organized, the Communist plans, for reasons I have already explained, will threaten, with a good chance of success, the security of the countries near Cuba.

Can you analyze for LIFE readers the frequent political changes which have occurred in South America since the death
INTERVIEWS AND STATEMENTS, 1959

of Getulio Vargas in 1954, explaining why there have been such drastic changes in so short a time?

I have already referred to the mimetic nature of Communist tactics. Not all changes in government since 1954 have been influenced by Leftist or pro-Russian tendencies; but this does not change the aim set by the Communist International. I believe its agents have been highly successful. They have managed successfully enough to turn certain Latin American areas against the United States. Their agents provocateurs have served as a powerful weapon, even in the United States. Certain Americans have fallen in with their plans without intending to. Political agitation in Central and South American countries has grown acute, making headway, especially among workers and students.

On the other hand, the labor organizations of my country resisted every assault of the Communists and of those apparent non-Communists, who spoke as revolutionaries in the name of democracy. Castro spread terror in the ranks of labor, threatening their leaders with death and actually assassinating some of them, but he did not secure their cooperation.

Today the Cuban federations are under Communist influence, as is the entire Government. If we were to examine the political map of the Americas, we would see how the Leftists are on the move, busily presenting the United States in an unfriendly light. Who is interested in enmity between neighbors? There is no doubt that it can only suit Russia; because the United States and Latin America can and should reach agreements of reciprocal benefit without embittering or jeopardizing their good relations. In conclusion, Communists and their allies are trying in the Western Hemisphere to surround the United States with pro-Russian governments.

Do you have any message for the people of Cuba and North America which we could transmit through the pages of LIFE?
In the face of the propaganda that presented me as an implacable dictator, I want to record for Cuba, for the United States, and for the people of Latin America, that I came to public life as leader of a revolution which triumphed without bloodshed on September 4, 1933. This revolution laid the basis for social progress and created the new institutions which achieved total sovereignty for the nation and prosperity for its people. I want to record also that in 1939 the people selected the delegates of the Constituent Assembly in a free election. This Assembly had sovereign powers and our political opponents attained majorities in the committees. I was Chief of the Army at that time, but I resigned my position and the people elected me President the following year.

When the Presidential term of 1940-1944 came to an end, I handed over the Presidency to my worst political enemy, who won the position in the fairest elections ever held in Cuba. My action resulted in a four-year exile in the United States. Eight years after I left the Presidency, at a time when I was a Senator and leader of an opposition party, the country found itself faced with a serious crisis. I headed a bloodless revolution, as I had before, and none of the deposed officials suffered harm; their families, their lives, their homes, their property were respected.

I take advantage of this opportunity that LIFE offers me to tell my people that the best I desire for Cuba is that she enjoy as much prosperity as she attained under my Administration, and that she may one day live in peace under Constitution and law.

To the American people I say that despite the interpretation given to my public life, my friendship for them has never faltered; and that I am interpreting the wish of my people when I consider that, with mutual respect for each other's rights, we should join in an alliance to defend ourselves from the common enemy.
TODAY, AS I CLOSE the last pages of ANSWER (the original Spanish edition of this book) with these words, the date is March 10th, a date which will appear bloodless in the history of revolutions, as will that of September 4, 1933. Terror, insidious propaganda, lies, have tried to bury it under avalanches of mud.

The Castro Bohemia has extended its corrosive interest to the land where Columbus lived before the discovery of Cuba. Two days ago we completed six months on this island of dreams (Madeira), which a magazine describes as devastated by the winds of Africa without woods or cultivation, with transportation limited to oxen and “inhabited by a primitive population descended from 90,000 African Negroes whom the Marquis de Pombal imported when the earthquake of 1775 destroyed a large part of old Lisbon.” All this is untrue, nor is the ethnic statement credible, although there is no racial discrimination in the Madeiras or in continental Portugal.

Dawn of September 8th caught us navigating the waters around Porto Santo, one of the islands, which, with the Desertas, the Salvagem, and Madeira, make up the archipelago. A sunlit noon permitted us to contemplate the spectacle of the green mountains in all their splendor. When we doubled Cape Garajau, dominated by the image of the Redeemer, the sight of a beautiful garden city took us by surprise. It was the small capital, Funchal, with its active commerce, populous streets paved with stones polished by the sea, and with a heavy traffic of shiny buses and modern taxis imported from Europe. The inhabitants, mostly white Portuguese and a small English colony, are very
friendly and courteous. The mountains are impressive; Pico Ruivo and Pico de Areeiro have elevations of 6,056 and 5,899 feet. And although the island is of volcanic origin, the spacious mountains and their valleys are covered by vineyards, caves, and wide forests of pine, eucalyptus, and cedar, and fruit trees such as apple, peach, banana, and chestnut. The island has 300,000 inhabitants and most of them live by agriculture—a difficult livelihood because of the nature of the terrain. Each peasant sets an extraordinary example of human effort.

The slander about me reached Madeira. Subhuman feelings are like this; complexes and hates violate frontiers, leap over seas and assault even the stones. I could fill thousands of pages with the lies of anarcho-communism. This book gives only a few of them, so improbable that it is difficult to believe them. But God rules, and as justice and good conquer injustice and evil, truth will prevail over iniquity and falsehood.

For those who suffer in our land and in exile, like those who suffer in Poland and Hungary, in memory of those who died defending freedom, law, and order, and for the great cause of Cuba, I write this book.

The evil, crime, injustice, ingratitude, disloyalty, treason, and selfish machinations described in CUBA BETRAYED—a process that has brought the Republic to the edge of chaos—can be attributed to those who contributed by their acts or omissions to a situation that finds a prosperous, democratic, and friendly country drowning in blood and being converted into an instrument of foreign war.*

FULGENCIO BATISTA ZALDIVAR

In Funchal, Madeira Island, Portugal.

* Events have proven beyond any doubt that Cuba is 100 per cent Communist under the Castro-Guevara regime.

In a UPI dispatch of Jan. 24, 1961, it was stated that “Ché” Guevara
considers Cuba within the Communist Sphere and that he hopes the Cuban-American conflict will find its solution together with the set-up between the East and the West, rather than within the inter-American system. It goes on to say that the Cuban Government clearly indicated that it would accept negotiations with the United States if President Kennedy's new government accepts the alliance between Cuba and the countries of the Communist bloc. Mr. Guevara, Director of the Cuban National bank, expressed these views in a speech before the militia from Cabanías, Province of Pinar del Río. Referring to Mr. Kennedy's inaugural speech—twisting its meaning to suit his own purposes—he remarked that by admitting the existence of a pacific struggle between the two blocs, Mr. Kennedy accepted the existence of a part of the world that does not want to have anything to do with the American way of living. He added that he attributes the "bloodless victory" over the (American) invasion that did not materialize to the total unity of the Socialist nations.

Mr. Guevara went on to say that imperialism is still strong, but that there are other forces in the world that have just begun to awaken to their capacity to struggle against it. He added that slowly but surely the peoples of the world are understanding that, united for the great goal of freedom, they can prevail against the arms that used to conquer, crush, and massacre them one at a time and then absorb them. In behalf of the Castro Government of Cuba, he defined the United States as "the great maker of wars, the great enemy of peace, and the great enemy of the sovereignty of the peoples of the world." By these words he intended to praise Russia and Communist China, classifying them as the saviors of the world.

NOTE:—At last, at last Castro is a Communist!

Hoping that the English edition of this book would have been published at the beginning of 1961, we have endeavored—uselessly, it would appear—to show that Fidel Castro is a Communist and that his regime has been Communist from the start, as he finally admitted to the world on Dec. 1, 1961. There was so much proof of this before he and his comrades attained power that it seemed obviously unnecessary to bring further evidence of the fact. But those that helped create the Red satellite at the very doorstep of the great North American country insisted that Castro's government was not Communist. Nevertheless, the continuous flow to Havana of Russians, Chinese followers, of Mao, Czechs and other Soviet subordinates, and the visits of Castro's Cubans to the Soviet countries, prevailed over the set purpose of continuing to present Castro as a peace-loving democrat, deviated from his course by the evil influence of "Ché" Guevara and his own brother Raúl. For those who wish to be fooled, Castro was, and is, an unfortunate victim of Marxism. Neither his extensive criminal record nor his statements and
repeated insults directed at the United States, without the slightest hint ever of even an unfriendly word directed at Soviet Russia since the days when the people of Cuba were friends of the American people and he opposed them with terror and constant lies, nor even his own confession that he had officially covenanted with the Communist party since the latter part of 1958, were reason enough to convince those who, from within or from outside Cuba, willingly or not, helped him attain power. And, in the manner of a life-raft, the idea of the "betrayed revolution" was born; a new weapon wielded by those who wish to wash out their shameful adherence to the Communist cause or failed in their ambitions of sharing the miserable glories of a native communism.

At last, on May 1st, 1961, Castro personally proclaimed Cuba a socialist republic. Ten days later, some voices were heard from Washington accepting that Castro's government was deemed Communist.

This was the insulting manner in which Castro chose to reply to the repeated invitation of the "White Paper" to break away from international communism. This was the method he used to reject the plea of scarcely a month before, that he return to the interamerican system he had forsaken...

United States Ambassador to Mexico, Mr. Robert Hill, repeatedly warned the State Department since as far back as 1957—more than a year before Castro's rise to power—that Fidel Castro was a Communist. Mr. Hill repeated his warning at the Ambassadors' Conference, held at El Salvador in April, 1959, four months after the Castro terror had seized power. Ambassador Hill's statements have not been quoted in this book because they were not available to the author.