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SECURITY INFORMATION
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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA 1002
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. enc.
REF : Despatch 688, Oct. 24, 1951.
SUBJECT: The Cuban Electoral Campaign

December 19, 1951
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The party affiliation period *October 8 to 21*, 1951 ended with the government PRC(A) well ahead of all other parties 1/. The opposition Ortodoxos were second, Batista's PAU, third. Of the nine political groups to qualify as legal parties authorized to participate in the June 1, 1952 elections, the Communist PSP was a weak eighth. The government sector of the divided Republicano group barely qualified 2/ in last place.

The party re-organization period commenced November 25 with primary party elections at the ward level. These elections are the basis for the organization of the respective parties at successively higher levels--municipal, provincial and national. The provincial party organizations are now being completed. Most national party assemblies will meet in January 1952 at which time the various candidates for public office will probably be announced officially. The deadline for presentation of certificates of candidacy for President and Vice President is March 20, 1952 and prior to that date in the case of lesser offices.

The current period is one of intense political activity in Cuba not only as regards party re-organizations, but also in the formation of party coalitions and the struggle among politicians for nomination as candidates.

In the affiliations the government four-party coalition, consisting of the PRC(A), Demócratas, Liberals and Republicanos, obtained 1,163,134 3/ affiliates. The Ortodoxos obtained 358,120 affiliates.

- 1/ A table showing the party affiliation returns is enclosed.
- 2/ In order to qualify, a political group must register - or affiliate - two percent (47,850) of the total registered vote (2,392,511).
- 3/ All affiliation figures are still subject to minor corrections.

ETC Grain:WJN
REPORTER(S)

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The four remaining parties (Batista's PAU, ALONSO Pujol and CASTELLANOS' PNC, GRAU 1/ and Miguel SUAREZ Fernández' Cubanidad and the Communist PSP), which are not united, obtained a reported 576,638 affiliates.

On the basis of the affiliations the government group would appear assured of victory in the 1952 elections and this may prove to be the case. The Ortodoxos nevertheless feel that the affiliations mean little and that their party will be triumphant. They point to a recent Bohemia poll, or survey (published December 16 and discussed later in this report) showing their candidate, Dr. Roberto AGRAMONTE, well in the lead over all other aspirants, as proof of their prospective victory.

Only the elections will decide whether the Ortodoxo claims have any solid basis. The refusal, so far, of the Ortodoxos to accept political pacts with other parties has tended to set them apart from all other groups. On the other hand, this political "purity" has given the Ortodoxos at least a temporary lead over Batista, their principal rival in the opposition, and their candidate a commanding lead over all individual candidates in the latest Bohemia poll. The two philosophies - whether to maintain a lone stand or to accept pacts with other parties - is a matter of constant and intense debate within the party and may lead to eventual schisms should it finally become evident the Ortodoxos cannot hope to win without assistance from other groups. Should the party gather strength in the next few months the current isolationist policy will undoubtedly prevail.

The other opposition parties are in a very difficult position and many changes are expected to occur in these groups prior to the elections. Some may disappear altogether. The PAU, which came out third in the affiliations, looks to the PNC under Castellanos and Alonso Pujol to live up to its pact with the PAU whereby the party with the least affiliates would support the other in the elections. So far, the PNC has not honored the pact and is not expected to do so unless it appears that such a step would be in its best interests. Should the PNC honor its pact, Batista's chances would be improved accordingly, particularly since other opposition parties might then join forces with him. However, Batista does not seem to be entering the fray with all the energy and resources at his command. This lack of drive, coupled with rumors, malicious or otherwise,

1/ Grau's political strength has decreased greatly in recent months. His Cubanidad group qualified as a legal party only through the efforts of Suárez Fernández.

that Batista might settle for re-election as Senator or throw in the sponge and retire to Miami does not inspire confidence in his prospective allies. His supporters nevertheless insist that "he is the man" ["ese es el hombre"] and it is not impossible that they may be right, although his chances now do not look too promising.

Both Castellanos and the Communists have issued separate invitations to all opposition parties to join in a united front against the government coalition. The only ones to accept Castellanos' invitation were the Communists. The only party to accept the Communist invitation was the Cubanidad under Grau and, particularly, SUAREZ Fernández, the de facto leader of this small and dismembered group.^{1/} In both cases the talks have bogged down due to the general lack of response.

In view of the failure of the opposition to unite, there is a tendency on the part of its various sectors to drift towards the stronger political organizations. This tendency may become more pronounced as individual leaders, in their present weak organizations, see their chances for political survival lessening ^{2/}. This applies particularly to leaders such as Alonso Pujol and Castellanos of the PNC and to Miguel Suárez Fernández, Grau, Inocente ALVAREZ, "Pepe" SAN MARTIN, Santiago REY and others in the Cubanidad.

The PNC; under the intellectual direction of Alonso Pujol, will probably continue the time-honored strategy of holding out, until the last moment, for the highest bidder. Castellanos reportedly prefers to join with the Ortodoxos, but is stopped by their refusal, so far, to accept him as other than an individual party member. Alonso Pujol reportedly favors an eventual deal with the government coalition apparently feeling that the best chance for victory and greatest opportunity for

^{1/} On December 12, 1951 "Pepe" San Martin, Grau's former candidate for the presidency, left the Cubanidad with his group of followers and is now angling for incorporation into some other party, possibly the PRC(A).

^{2/} Probably one of the biggest stumbling blocks to the formation of a "third front" was the rivalry among leaders of the various factions for the available Senate seats.

personal profit lie in that direction 1/. The Cubanidad group has less to offer and the move to one party or another will more likely be accomplished on the basis of individual defections and transfers.

The Communists may be expected to continue efforts to form and participate in a "united opposition". Failing this they would probably seek local, unofficial agreements in an effort to elect some of their people to office or, at worst, to support candidates least likely in their opinion to damage their organization or interests.

The Bohemia Survey

The latest Bohemia survey 2/ as published in that weekly news magazine's issue for December 16, 1951, gave the following ratings among presidential aspirants:

		Survey of <u>Dec. 16, 1951</u>	Survey of <u>May 18, 1951</u>
Agramonte	(PPC(O))	29.29	29.70 <u>3/</u>
Hevia	(PRC(A))	17.53	2.59
Batista	(PAU)	14.21	19.03
Lancís	(PRC(A))	6.29	-
Varona	(PRC(A))	4.01	2.20
Castellanos	(PNC)	3.85	3.91
Suárez Fernández (Cub.)		1.33	6.84

Bohemia posed a number of queries, the replies to which, according to Bohemia, lead to the following conclusions:

1. There are more people who think the Prío Administration is bad than there are who think it good. But the adverse opinion is less than it was in previous surveys indicating some improvement in the public's opinion of the

1/ Alonso Pujol reportedly stated on December 17 that the "third front" had failed to materialize and that only the government coalition and the Ortodoxos remained in the running. He hinted that he favored re-entering the government coalition, but stated the PNC was in no hurry; that Castellanos still had two years in office as Mayor of Habana while he (Alonso Pujol) could always bide his time in private life. Previously, Alonso Pujol had considered Carlos SALADRIGAS (supported by Batista and defeated in the 1944 presidential elections) as a possible rallying point for the opposition (Embassy despatch 636 October 16, 1951 - page two, note 4).

2/ Enclosed.

3/ This figure applied to Chibás who, on his death, was succeeded by Agramonte.

Government.

2. The principal adverse factors in the above opinions were given as a) the economic situation, b) poor administration, and c) gangsterism 1/. The principal favorable factors were a) the public works program 2/, b) labor legislation, and c) banking policy.

3. Agramonte is the strongest of the prospective presidential candidates whether of the government or opposition. He maintains, almost without variation, the same strength as that of Chibás shortly before the latter's death.

4. Batista is the only other opposition candidate to show any strength and his support has dropped since the last survey.

5. Of the possible government candidates Hevia is head and shoulders above the rest although Lancís and Varona improved their positions in comparison to previous surveys.

6. The great majority of Ortodoxos desire neither pacts nor admissions (presumably of other political leaders as contrasted to rank and file voters). Among those favoring admissions (of party leaders) only Castellanos is acceptable.

Embassy Comment on Bohemia Survey

Although Agramonte leads in the survey it is noted that the Ortodoxos have receded from Chibás' high water mark of popularity in May 1951. Hevia, on the other hand, appears to be rising rapidly in popularity and this trend is accentuated as other PRC(A) aspirants drop out of the running, not only leaving the field open to him, but urging their followers to support him 3/. The first to drop out and

1/ The recent escape of Policarpo SOLER from Príncipe Prison made a deep impression on public opinion (Despatch 856, Nov. 26, '51).

2/ Administered chiefly by Hevia as head of the National Development Board.

3/ In this poll the PRC(A) strength is divided among several aspirants. Their total ratings do not equal that of Agramonte. Had Bohemia added even one more PRC(A) aspirant, Minister of Public Works CASERO, for example, the PRC(A) total would have exceeded Agramonte's rating. While this stratagem is clear to political observers, it tends to confuse the man in the street.

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the first to urge support of Hevia was Minister of Defense Rubén de LEON. The latest was President of the Senate and PRC(A) leader in Camagüey Province, Dr. Antonio Varona. Hevia's only apparent rival left in the PRC(A), and running a poor second in the survey, is Senator Lancís 1/. As these men leave the field to Hevia it is almost inevitable that his stock should continue to rise. It is extremely suspicious that Bohemia should have timed its survey before these factors could take full effect and before the meeting of the PRC(A) National Assembly, scheduled for January, which is now expected officially to nominate Hevia by acclamation.

Embassy Comment

As stated above, all signs now point to Hevia's nomination as the PRC(A) candidate for President. Moreover, his chances of attaining the presidency are now considered good enough to warrant greatly increased interest in the vice-presidential nomination. The Liberals are understood to have been promised the nomination as part of the agreement in connection with their entry into the government coalition. The Demócratas, who were indifferent when the government forces were at lowest ebb some three months ago, now claim right to the vice-presidency by virtue of the fact that they obtained more affiliations than did the Liberals in the October affiliation period. This office may, however, be held open for some other candidate now in the opposition who might be persuaded thereby to join forces with the government coalition.

Hevia has worked hard to live down the impression that he is pesado and not simpático. In this he has had some success. Efforts along this line include campaign posters invariably depicting Hevia with a wide flashing smile. Another point in his favor is the fact that Agramonte, his principal opponent (at the moment), is, in the popular mind, at least as pesado and little simpático as is Hevia (actually Hevia is a most pleasant, friendly, cultured person).

Another very important point in Hevia's favor is his work, as head of the National Development Board, in the construction of public works. Adding to his prestige is the fact that several important projects (such as the major bridge substantially shortening the distance between Habana and Varadero Beach) have actually been completed.

A final point in Hevia's favor is the very careful

1/ Also Minister of Education and former Prime Minister.

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handling of his campaign from the point of view of favoritism on the part of President PRIO. Although it has long been assumed that the President preferred Hevia (possibly because his reputation for honesty would counteract Ortodoxo charges of PRC(A) corruption) the campaign has been conducted in such a way as to dispel any possible charges that Hevia is a candidate "imposed" on the people by the President.

Conclusion

As matters now stand, the Government, in the Embassy's opinion, appears to have a good chance to win the 1952 elections. This is a virtual reversal of the situation as it existed three months ago.

Batista appears, at least temporarily, to be off his pace. This makes it impossible to judge whether he will recover lost ground or whether he will definitely drop out of the race. At the moment he appears likely to settle for a senatorship (thus continuing his congressional immunity).

Batista's apparent decline favors the Ortodoxos who emerge as the leading contender in the opposition. The Ortodoxo problem of whether or not to accept political pacts is, to them, a very serious one. On the one hand they must consider that no Cuban party has ever single-handedly won an election. On the other hand they realize their principal strength comes from their professed abhorrence of graft and corruption and refusal to have truck with parties not sharing these ideals (i.e., all other parties). They also must take into consideration the fact that the political gyrations of practically all the other parties and the movements of leaders from one party to another on purely opportunistic grounds have left many independent voters 1) confused and disgusted with those parties and men, and 2) inclined to go along with the Ortodoxos as the one unchanging group that acts as if it knows where it is going. Should the Ortodoxos now pact with parties they had previously branded as corrupt they would undoubtedly lose many independent votes.

The other opposition groups appear to be losing ground in establishing any unified front or cohesive force. As a result of the efforts of individual politicians to obtain power some groups, particularly the Cubanidad, appear to be disintegrating altogether. However, it is still not impossible that the various opposition forces, possibly under the leadership of Batista, or even Alonso Pujol, may unite under an as yet unnamed dark horse - possibly SALADRIGAS. Such a step would create a new set of conditions that might or might not affect the final outcome.

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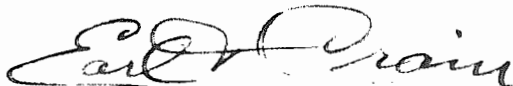
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The Communists appeared for a time to be making headway in their plan for a united opposition in which they could participate. So far, they have not succeeded and, at the moment, appear to be losing ground. Suárez Fernández, who agreed to discuss an opposition front with the Communists, now appears to have struck bottom in so far as his presidential aspirations are concerned and would probably be more than glad to settle for a Senate seat. Other candidates - even Castellanos - appear to be shying away from the Communists probably on the ground that they are more of a liability than an asset. This situation can, of course, change, but there now appears little likelihood of the Communists obtaining any great success in their hope to participate in a true "united opposition front".

They are nevertheless gloating over the Cubanidad's acceptance of their invitation to enter into unity talks. This elation derives from their reasoning that with Senators such as Suárez Fernández, Santiago Rey and Inocente Alvarez of the Cubanidad now more or less committed in their favor, any possibility that may have existed that the party would be outlawed has now disappeared, at least until after the elections.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures:

- ✓1. Party affiliation table.
- ✓2. Bohemia poll.

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CUBAN PARTY AFFILIATIONS
October 1951

<u>Party</u>	<u>Affiliations</u>
PRC(A)	689,818
PPC(O)	358,120
PAU	227,454
PD	215,179
PL	208,745
PNC	195,024
PC	94,260
PSP (Communist)	59,900
PR	<u>49,392</u>
	2,097,892

The government coalition, composed of the PRC(A), PD, PL and PR totals 1,163,134 affiliates. To date, all opposition parties are divided.

The full names of the various political parties, listed above by their initials, are as follows:

PRC(A) - Partido Revolucionario Cubano (Auténtico)
PPC(O) - Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo)
PAU - Partido Acción Unitaria
PD - Partido Demócrata
PL - Partido Liberal
PNC - Partido Nacional Cubano
PC - Partido de la Cubanidad
PSP - Partido Socialista Popular
PR - Partido Republicano

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : MID - Mr. Rubottom
- Mr. Nutter
ARA - Mr. Mann

FROM : MID - Mr. Wellman

DATE: December 29, 1951

SUBJECT: Review of Cuban Electoral Situation

737.00/12-1951

Reference: Embassy Habana Despatch no. 1002 of December 19, 1951

According to Embassy Habana the prospects for a victory of the Administration (Auténtico) candidate for President in 1952 are good as a result of recent developments. This represents a virtual reversal of the situation of three months ago.

The opposition to the Government has been unable to agree on any single candidate and various opposition groups are disintegrating. Batista has suffered a decline in popularity and has been unable to unite opposition groups. The single strongest opposition party, the Ortodoxos, maintains its refusal to enter into an anti-Government coalition.

There are indications that the adverse popular opinion of the Prío Administration is abating somewhat.

Several candidates for the Auténtico nomination have withdrawn in favor of Hevia. Although the situation is subject to change prior to the deadline, March 20, for the nomination of candidates, it appears almost certain now that Hevia will be nominated for President by the Auténtico coalition and likely that he will be elected. The Government parties have 55 percent of the voters who registered their party affiliations in October 1951.

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA 1120

DATE January 10, 1952

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. enc.

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REF : Despatch 1002, December 19, 1951

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SUBJECT: Final Party Affiliation Totals Released by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal. Electoral Censuses to be Taken in 1953.

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The Supreme Electoral Tribunal has now completed its work of reviewing and verifying the party affiliation registrations and has announced the official results as follows:

PRC	689,894	28.80%	of the electors photographed
PFC	358,118	14.96%	" " " "
PAU	227,457	9.46%	" " " "
PD	215,170	8.99%	" " " "
PL	208,745	8.72%	" " " "
PAC	195,021	8.15%	" " " "
PC	90,257	3.77%	" " " "
PSP	59,900	2.54%	" " " "
FR	49,388	2.08%	" " " "

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It will be seen that the figures for all of the parties, with the exception of Cubanidad, have been revised slightly upward over the preliminary totals set forth in the Embassy's despatch 638 of October 24, 1951. These final figures give the government coalition a total of 48.57%, the Orthodoxes 14.96%, and the remaining opposition 23.92% of the total electors photographed as of October 21, 1951.

In making its report the Electoral Board announced that the total number registered is 75% of the total eligible voters in the country. It also reported that as of October 21, 2,392,624 voters had been photographed in compliance with the new regulation requiring that electoral carnets contain a picture of the voter.

1/ A last-minute attempt by the PAU delegate on the board to have the legality of the Republican party nullified, was defeated. It was claimed that the Party had obtained the required 2% of the voters only because the calculation was made on the basis of electors who had been photographed and not on the total electoral strength of the country, as provided by Article 47 of the Electoral Code. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal, however, upheld its previous decision to base the percentage on photographed electors and on January 9 ratified the legal existence of the Republican party.

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In addition, The Electoral Board announced that a new electoral census will be taken in 1953, commencing on January 28. This census will be effected in accordance with Article 147 of the Electoral Code and Article 194 of the Constitution which provide that a census will be taken every ten years commencing with 1943. The new census will undoubtedly change the distribution of Congressional seats, but will, of course, have no bearing on this year's elections.

For the Ambassador:

Henry A. Hoyt

Henry A. Hoyt
Second Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure: (14)

✓ Newspaper clippings.

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