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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA 968  
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.  
REF : Dept's A-195, Nov. 14, 1951.  
SUBJECT: The Partido Republicano Now a Government Party

December 13, 1951  
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In October 1949 the Partido Republicano under its then leader, Vice President Guillermo ALONSO Pujol, formally supported the Government PRC(A) to secure congressional authorization to concert a loan for the execution of a national development program. The Party issued an official announcement that such support was natural in view of its membership in the government alliance.

Shortly thereafter the PRC(A) began to show increasing indifference to the Republicanos in the distribution of patronage. This resulted in a marked cooling of relations and the formal entry of the Republicanos, in February 1950, into the opposition.

Alonso Pujol took steps to join forces with ex-President GRAU and for a time it appeared his efforts would be successful. However, both Alonso Pujol and Grau were more interested in strengthening their personal political followings than in cooperating with each other. Disagreement as to candidates to be put forward in the 1952 elections, as well as inroads into each other's forces finally put an end to negotiations for a formal political pact.

The struggle ended in November 1950 with Grau 1) backing "Pepe" SAN MARTIN as his candidate for the presidency in 1952 and, 2) in control (through Senator Santiago REY) of Alonso Pujol's Republicano Party. At this time Alonso Pujol 1) declared the Republicano Party dissolved and, 2) announced the organization of a new party to be known as the Partido Nacional Cubano (PNC) with Mayor of Habana Nicolás CASTELLANOS as its President and presidential candidate.

Santiago Rey upheld the thesis, which eventually prevailed, that Alonso Pujol could not dissolve the Party and that since Alonso Pujol had deserted the Party presidency, he (Rey), as Vice President, automatically became Party President.

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The situation of the Republicano Party remained relatively unchanged until the approach of the October 1951 affiliation period for the 1952 elections. At that time Santiago Rey's Republicanos joined forces with Grau in a new political entity known as Cubanidad. With this step the Republicano party disappeared, to all intents and purposes, as a political party.

In the 1949 party affiliations the Republicanos ended up as the No. 3 party with 253,939 affiliates. However, when Alonso Pujol left the government alliance a sizable Republicano group cast its lot with the PRC(A). When Alonso Pujol finally left the Party he took with him another sizable group leaving only a fragment which, as stated above, was absorbed into Grau's Cubanidad. It is the first of these groups - the one that elected to stay in the government coalition - that decided to try to re-organize the Republicano Party for its own purposes. <sup>(mm)</sup>

As reported in Embassy despatch No. 688 of October 24, 1951, it was rumored at the time that the government PRC(A) was assisting the Republicanos in securing sufficient affiliates (2% of the total registered vote) to qualify as a party. It was not clear then just why the PRC(A) would render this assistance. The theory was advanced that perhaps this was a move to strengthen Grau preparatory to his re-entry into - or collaboration with - the Government. <sup>737.00/10-2451 ARA JHI EUR/X</sup>

It is now clear that the PRC(A) assisted not the Grau group, but those Republicanos who had refused to leave the government coalition 1/. These Republicanos are under the leadership of the pro-government Republicano Senator from Oriente, Dr. José ALBERNI y Yance and the Republicano Minister of Justice Dr. Jorge CASUSO y Díaz Albertini. Alberni is the new party president and Casuso the vice-president. Casuso is, in addition, President of the Republicano Habana Provincial Assembly.

This group almost failed in its efforts to qualify as a party legally entitled to participate in the 1952 elections. In fact, it failed to achieve the required 2% of the total registered vote. It was saved only by a special ruling 2/ of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal that only voters to whose electoral carnets photographs had

- 1/ This was confirmed to the reporting officer on December 9, 1951 by the President of the Senate, Dr. Antonio VARONA.  
2/ This ruling is considered by many as arbitrary and has been protested by Nicolás CASTELLANOS before the Court of Constitutional Guarantees.

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been affixed would be counted in computing the total registered vote. The Republicanos, who boasted 253,939 affiliates in 1949, secured only 49,392 in 1951. Since, by the above-mentioned ruling, the total registered vote was calculated at 2,392,511, two percent thereof amounted to 47,850 which meant that the Republicanos with 49,392 affiliates had qualified as a national party.

The value of the Republican Party to the government coalition is chiefly psychological. It adds another party, the fourth, to the government group thereby increasing the impression of a broad electoral base. To its leaders the Republican Party is indispensable since without some sort of political instrument they probably could not remain in office. It is difficult to assess the Party's value, if any, to its rank and file members.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain  
First Secretary of Embassy

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