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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

MAY 25 1953

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

1832
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

May 25, 1953
DATE

REF :

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SUBJECT: JOSE MANUEL FIDALGO, STOWAWAY ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK

The local press carried a report on May 22, 1953 that José María FIDALGO had reached New York as a stowaway on a Cuban vessel, thus "clearing up the mystery of his whereabouts." A clipping from Información giving this report is enclosed.

The background of the Fidalgo case can best be given by quoting in full an item that appeared in the Havana Herald (now defunct) for February 1, 1953:

"SCULPTOR SOUGHT AS PRIO AGENT.

"A well-known Cuban sculptor, José Manuel Fidalgo Rodríguez, 41, was being sought by police yesterday after a raid on his workshop turned up some 80 small statues and hundreds of posters deemed subversive in nature.

"Agents of Cuban military intelligence said the statues were of José Martí with subversive inscriptions, and also the posters. They said they found a small printing press in the rear of the shop for which the sculptor had no license.

"Police said that Fidalgo Rodríguez had gone into hiding and could not be located. They accused him of being on the payroll of ex-President Carlos Prío Socarras and Aureliano Sánchez Arango, Minister of State in Prío's cabinet."

It is noted that there is a discrepancy in the name as given in the press reports but it appears that the report from New York is in error. The Embassy granted a transit visa on May 7, 1953, to José Manuel Fidalgo, sculptor, to proceed to Mexico through the United States.

FCFornes, Jr.:ep

REPORTER

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On the same day as the report of Fidalgo's arrival in New York as a stowaway appeared, the Embassy's Public Affairs Officer was approached by Néstor SUAREZ Felid, foreign affairs commentator of Prensa Libre, and Lauro BLANCO, who said he had formerly been internal relations secretary of the Cuban Confederation of Labor, with a request that the Embassy transmit a telegram to the Department asking that Fidalgo be considered a political refugee. The Public Affairs Officer informed his callers that the Embassy could not transmit such a telegram on their behalf. There is enclosed a copy of a memorandum prepared by the Public Affairs Officer regarding his conversation with Suárez and Blanco.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Enclosures:

- ✓ 1. Clipping from Información, 5/22
- ✓ 2. Copy of Memo dated May 22

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

May 22, 1953

Participants: Néstor Suárez Feliú, Lauro Blanco, and
Jacob Canter

Subj: Case of José María Fidalgo

Néstor Suárez Feliú, International Affairs Commentator of Prensa Libre, and Lauro Blanco, who claimed to be the former secretary of internal relations of the CTC, called on me this morning. They said that the purpose of their visit was to determine if I would help them transmit a telegram to Assistant Secretary of State John Moors Cabot in relation to the case of José María Fidalgo, Cuban sculptor, who, according to this morning's press, has been picked up in New York as a stowaway on the ship BAHIA DE MARIEL. The subject of the telegram was to request Assistant Secretary Cabot to consider Fidalgo as a political refugee so that he would not be returned to Cuba where he would face persecution on the part of the Cuban government.

Blanco and Suárez stated that they were among those who had arranged Fidalgo's escape. Aureliano Sánchez Arango also assisted. I asked why they could not send the telegram directly. Their reply was that there was a censorship of telegrams in Cuba and that the authors of any telegram of a political nature would soon be detained by the police and subjected to persecution by the government. I told Suárez and Blanco that the Embassy could not send a message for them but that if they wished, they could provide the Embassy with any information they desired and that the Embassy would take such action, if any, that it considered advisable.

JCanter/fmr

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MAY 22 1953

SOLUCION DE UN
PRESUNTO SECUESTRO**Como polizón**llegó a N. York, el día 19
el escultor J. M. Fidalgo**Desapareció cuando destru-
yeron su estudio... Hizo el
viaje en el "Bahía de Ma-
riel", que zarpó el día 5**

La desaparición del escultor José María Fidalgo, a quien sus familiares consideraban secuestrado, fué aclarada ayer al reportarse que había llegado como polizón a New York, a bordo del vapor cubano "Bahía del Mariel", el día 19 de este mes.

Según se informó, el Director General de Transporte Marítimo, coronel Gaspar Maspons recibió la noticia del Interventor de la Empresa Naviera de Cuba, coronel Braulio Fernández, quien le dirigió un escrito dándole cuenta de que en el vapor de esa compañía "Bahía del Mariel", que zarpó de Nuevitas el día 15, con destino a New York, a donde llegó el día 19, había hecho la travesía, como polizón, el escultor José María Fidalgo.

De acuerdo con lo informado por el capitán del citado buque, éste salió de La Habana el día 5, hacia Cárdenas, de donde continuó viaje a Nuevitas y de allí a New York, estimándose que el señor Fidalgo se introdujo en el barco, ocultándose, cuando éste se encontraba atracado en el puerto habanero.

La desaparición del escultor Fidalgo fué denunciada por sus familiares a raíz de haber sido allanado su estudio por personas desconocidas, que destruyeron numerosos bustos de Martí y maquetas. En aquella ocasión los familiares, atribuyeron el hecho a miembros del SIM, afirmando que habían secuestrado a Fidalgo por las campañas que éste hacía contra el Gobierno.