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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

1973  
DESP. NO.

June 18, 1953

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF : Emb. D-1910, June 5, 1953

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SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES OF CUBAN OPPOSITION LEADERS FOLLOWING MONTREAL MEETING. LOCAL REACTION.

In reporting the meeting of Cuban opposition leaders held at New York subsequent to the recent Montreal meeting, the Cuban press stated it was "sponsored by Acción Civica Cubana and the 'New York Ortodoxo Committee.'" The meeting was reportedly attended by "Tony" VARONA, "Millo" OCHOA, José PARDO LLADA, Dr. RUBIO Padilla, Raúl de JUAN 1/, Javier LESCANO, Aracelio AZCUY, Antonio SANTIAGO, Dr. ALONSO PUJOL ("who represented Nicolás CASTELLANOS at Montreal"), Nicolás Castellanos and others. The purpose of the meeting is not known: possibly a continuation of the "war of nerves"; possibly an effort to belie reports that the Montreal meeting was held there rather than in the U.S. due 1) to U.S. opposition, or 2) to the inability of opposition leaders to enter the U.S. One apparent result of the New York meeting was the adherence of Castellanos' PNC group (Partido Nacional Cubano) to the Montreal opposition elements.

Llano MONTES, columnist for the rejuvenated Habana newspaper Pueblo, published an item on June 15 as follows: "Exclusive! Two important persons of the opposition were called to Washington. It appears that the U.S. Government is interested in learning of things in Cuba through the mouths of opposition leaders." The same column mentions an encounter between ex-Vice President Alonso Pujol and Ramiro ARANGO, commenting that "Arango forgot his place" (which is definitely in the lower political echelons).

Despite earlier reports that the Government would "make it hot" for returning opposition leaders, the individuals concerned were not molested on their return. If the Government originally intended to harrass these men, it is clear that it changed its mind. In the interim, the Government has issued few pronouncements, preferring to let opposition elements bicker among themselves. The recent arrest of the Ortodoxo leader Pelayo CUERVO had the effect of increasing his stature to the point where, he may well be the next Ortodoxo presidential candidate. This has led Roberto AGRAMONTE, leader of another Ortodoxo faction, to 1/ Accused by the "Partido Aprista" in Habana as having participated in the Montreal meeting to propose inclusion of the Communists in

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"The National Opposition Front."

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assert indignantly that he, Agramonte, has been arrested more times than any other Ortodoxo. The Agramonte faction is "ex-communicating" all Ortodoxos who negotiated with the man (Prfo) "responsible for the death of Chibás." Ex-President GRAU is stepping up his feud with other Auténtico groups (Grau considering himself the essence of Autenticismo). Persons and organizations in Cuba are lining up for or against the Montreal "manifesto." The tendency to fritter away unity through bickering strengthens the Government and weakens the opposition.

The talk and press speculation as to whether the Montreal manifesto may not be a cover for a counter-revolutionary attempt (See D-1910 of June 5, 1953) continues. The statement of the "Ochoaista", Isidro FIGUEROA, on his return from Montreal, that Batista would not accept the opposition program "by peaceful means" (has been taken by some as an indication that more violent measures are envisaged.

Whether or not there exists a serious plan to resort to arms, the Embassy is unable to judge. In the absence of more concrete information 1/ it is considered probable that opposition plans, at least up to the present, do not go beyond a "war of nerves." In this connection, the Cuban Army Liaison Officer today told the Army Attaché, Col. Elmore, that the Army considers that the rumors of invasion attempts put into circulation by the opposition are "fabricated" as part of the "cold war" and for the purpose of discouraging investors and depressing the national economy.

Pertinent press clippings are enclosed.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain  
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Enclosures *(Handwritten mark)*

Press clippings

1/ See CAS report of June 11, 1953 (B-3) entitled "Opposition to Batista."

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PUEBLO

June 15, 1953

PUEBLO — June 15, 1953

# EN POCAS PALABRAS

— Por Llano Montes

↓ ¡Exclusiva!... Dos importantes personajes de la oposición fueron llamados a Washington. Parece que al Gobierno norteamericano le interesa conocer las cosas de Cuba por boca de líderes de la oposición. \*\*\* Bayamo, Monumento Nacional, necesita urgente atención por parte de Obras Públicas. Sus calles están en pésimo estado. \*\*\* Algunas personas han interpretado torcidamente, la nota publicada en esta sección donde hablábamos del encuentro entre el Dr. Guillermo Alonso Pujol y Ramiro Arango. El Dr. Guillermo Alonso Pujol, alejándonos de la cuestión política, es uno de los hombres públicos más caballerosos y correctos en su trato con periodistas y políticos. En ningún momento tuvimos intención de molestarlo con nuestra nota. Vimos la parte graciosa de ese encuentro en Montreal. Si algo hay de censurable, es para nuestro amigo Ramiro Arango, que olvidó la jerarquía. \*\*\* El viernes por la noche, el automóvil número 7,340, tiraba por el Malecón unos volantes atacando a Pardo Llada y Millo Ochoa. Los volantes iban firmados por la Juventud Revolucionaria Ortodoxa y los que los tiraban eran jóvenes paristas. Roberto Agramonte y su grupo deben aclarar esto rápidamente, pues se puede interpretar de muchas maneras. \*\*\*