

Air Pouch
PRIORITY

RESTRICTED
(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

737.00/6-2353

Center
Files

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
REF : Embassy D-1973, June 18, 1953

2012
DESP. NO.

June 23, 1953
DATE

10 For Dept. Use Only mlr	ACTION ARA*	DEPT. OIA UIA IES EUR/X
	REC'D JUN 24	IN F O OTHER

SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH PRIO ON AUTENTICO-ORTODOXO MONTREAL MEETING.

This Document Is Being Returned To

737.00/6-2353

LWC

Pueblo of June 16, 1953 published what it claimed was an exclusive interview with ex-President Carlos PRIO Socarras in Miami. The interview was devoted mainly to the Autentico-Ortodoxo agreement made public after the Montreal meeting of the chiefs of the Prío and Ochoa factions of those parties. Prío described the Montreal agreement as a union to defeat Batista and not a political coalition. He refused to elaborate on this description. He offered the suggestive theory that he had the right to occupy the presidency for the unserved balance of his term of office. He once again rejected any elections held under Batista and explained the exclusion of the Communist party from participation in the Montreal agreement. He proclaimed that Batista must go as soon as possible.

Prío's statements as reported by Pueblo are summarized in greater detail below.

The ex-President said that "Montreal is the strongest step toward the unity of the active opposition in Cuba".

With respect to the unconstitutionality appeal lodged against the Constitutional Statute of April 4, 1952, Prío said that he would respect the decision of the Tribunal of Constitutional and Social Guarantees if such decision were favorable to the appeal and respected by the armed forces. "It is to be feared, however, that Batista would not permit such a solution. Fortunately, it is not the only one!"

Reference was made to the recent activities of Cosme DE LA TORRIENTE who, in much the same fashion as the Cuban Press Bloc in connection with its "Patriotic Appeal", has been acting as a sort of clearing-house to receive the minimum demands of various opposition groups in an effort to achieve what has been called "programmatic unity". Parenthetically, it can be reported that no concrete results of de la Torriente's efforts have been published and it now appears that they have been suspended, ~~at least~~

FCFornes, Jr.:ep
REPORTER

RESTRICTED

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF REGIONAL
AMERICAN AFFAIRS

RESTRICTED
(Classification)

Page _____ of
Encl. No. _____
Desp. No. _____
From _____

temporarily, on the plea of his illness but probably also because of the adverse effect of the Montreal agreement on the sought-for "programmatic unity". In the Pueblo interview Prío was quoted as saying with regard to Cosme de la Torriente that "mere coincidence of aspirations" was not enough but that "unity in every form of activity" was required.

In explaining that the Montreal agreement was not a political coalition, Prío said that Auténticos, Ortodoxos and others to be invited to join are uniting "in order to defeat Batista which is equivalent to restoring to Cuba its institutions, liberty and welfare. Not to exercise power. Political pacts suppose the union of forces in order to put into practice in government a previously agreed upon program. Here that is not involved!" When asked what then was involved, Prío replied that he could not say.

Prío did not think that Roberto AGRAMONTE would join an opposition front but had hopes that Ramón GRAU San Martín would.

In response to a question, Prío replied that his own restoration to power was not agreed upon at Montreal, "in spite of doubtless having the only legitimate right to occupy the presidency for the balance of my term", an opinion with which his followers present apparently agreed. Prío insisted that the Montreal agreement envisaged a "plan of national solutions", as the reporter had put it. He declared he was above personal ambitions and would, if the 1940 Constitution were restored, respect its provisions regarding eligibility of a former President for re-election. These statements seemed to suggest that if the allies should be successful in their aims, Prío might be installed as President for a period of time corresponding to the unserved balance of his term that began in 1948 and might be the supervisor of elections.

Prío repeated the statement of the Montreal agreement that under Batista no honorable elections were possible and declared that therefore the Auténtico party could not participate in any election presided over by Batista.

With reference to the Communist party, Prío said that in Cuba and everywhere else, "the Communist party is fighting to destroy democracy and the way of life in which we were born and brought up. To include it in a 'unity front' would be to pervert the Montreal postulates. The Communists are a worthy ally of Batista!"

Asked what he would do in Batista's place, Prío answered, after describing the difficulty of imagining himself in such a situation: "GET OUT! Batista must go as soon as possible!!"

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED
(Classification)

The interview closed with Prío criticizing the "economic crisis created by the lack of confidence in the usurper regime" and observing that "the economic policy of Batista can be summed up in the famous phrase of Louis XV: 'After me, the deluge'".

A press clipping of this interview is enclosed.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Enclosure *WA*

Pueblo, clipping, June 16

PMW

RESTRICTED