

SECURITY : CONFIDENTIAL

PRIORITY:

AIR POUCH

For Dept use only.

TO : Department of State

*MEZ/E*

REC'D  
DEC 29

FROM : HABANA 1274 DECEMBER 14, 1950

937.61/12-1450

*File HAW*

ARA

REF : -

SUBJECT : NEW COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER, LA ULTIMA HORA, APPEARS IN HABANA

DCR  
OLI  
IB  
HUR/X  
SA/M

The Embassy wishes to report that a new daily newspaper, La Ultima Hora, made its appearance in Habana on December 12, 1950, and that this publication appears to be under the control of several of the individuals who formerly edited the communist daily Hoy. Former President Fulgencio BATISTA is also said to have an interest in the new publication. (Hoy was closed by the Cuban Government on August 24, 1950. See Embassy's confidential despatch 455, of August 28, 1950.)

SEM

La Ultima Hora is being published at "Universal Grafica, S.A.", which is the property of Batista and relatives, and which also prints the newspaper Pueblo. It is understood that the heads of the Partido Socialista Popular had been seeking to obtain the services of a large printing shop to publish a new daily and Universal Grafica, S.A. is the only one that agreed to assist in this labor. It is understood that this shop has rented its facilities for \$850.00 per week. La Ultima Hora reportedly began printing on a stock of paper which was on hand at the time Hoy was closed and is now purchasing paper from Pueblo, which has reduced its size. It is understood that participants in the agreement which facilitated publication of this new daily included Batista; PEREZ BENITO, who appears as president of Universal Grafica, S.A.; Humberto RUBIO, director of Pueblo; Juan MARINELLO, president of the PSP; Carlos Rafael RODRIGUEZ, one of the former policy makers for Hoy; and Julio VELIS Lopez, one of the owners of La Correspondencia of Cienfuegos and now listed as director-administrator of La Ultima Hora. The Embassy is uncertain about the motives which may have impelled Velis to join the staff. He is not known to have associated previously with any communist group. It was possible he was duped into joining and is being used as a figure-head by the communists.

DC/R Central Files

937.61/12-1450

Confidential File

La Ultima Hora has already published material with the by-lines of Jacinto TORRAS and Oscar TEMES, both of whom were formerly on Hoy's staff, and it is almost a certainty that others who were with that paper are now working for the new one. The Embassy has learned that since the suspension of Hoy, most of its reporters have continued to receive some financial assistance from the Partido Socialista Popular and that they have also retained the subsidies, or "botellas", which they had been receiving from various Cuban Government

RCSalvatierra/mfd

CONFIDENTIAL

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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

agencies. (It is through such subsidies that most newspaper reporters in Cuba earn their living.)

La Ultima Hora has appeared with exactly the same format that was used by Hoy. However, in its first editions, the newspaper has avoided giving the appearance that it follows the communist line. There are several items in the first two editions, nevertheless, which give an indication as to the paper's policies. For example, in an editorial carried on December 12th, the newspaper spoke of the efforts being made by the Indian delegate to the United Nations to find a peaceful solution to the Korean situation. The editorial did not mention Soviet obstructionism. It merely stated that: "... Only bungling idiots can wish to thrust humanity into the depths of a new world war... There are still men and women in all countries who have not lost their mind, who want international understanding and a pacific settlement of all disputes..." On the front page of that same issue it published a so-called roundup of Latin American opinion and developments which sought to give the impression that the other American Republics were not too concerned about the Korean conflict. The closing paragraph of the story declared: "To summarize, the peoples of the new world, many of whom have given theoretic backing to Uncle Sam, were still waiting to find out what the United States proposes to do in Asia before taking action on a matter which does not yet concern them."

On December 13th, La Ultima Hora published on its front page an article in which Blas ROCA, secretary-general of the PSP, denounced individuals who, he said, had been mistreating certain members of the Party. Among those whom Blas Roca singled out as having been mistreated were persons who had protested against plans to send Cuban soldiers to Korea.

Although the newspaper appears to be avoiding any appearance of being pro-communist, the Embassy does not believe it will be long before it takes a stronger, more defined line in its editorials, as well as in its news stories. It is believed that from 3,000 to 5,000 copies of the newspaper are being printed daily.

For the Ambassador:



Richard C. Salvatierra  
Information Officer

RCS/mfd

CONFIDENTIAL