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(Classification)

937.61/8-3051

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM HABANA

369

August 30, 1951

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, D.C. 2 encs.

Air Pouch

RE HABANA'S 328, August 24, 1951

SUBJECT REAPPEARANCE OF COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER HOY.

SEP

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There are enclosed three copies of the first issue of the Communist newspaper Hoy, which made its reappearance in Cuba on August 26, 1951, almost exactly one year after it had been banned by the Government. Following the last judicial decision in favor of the newspaper (Habana's 107, July 19) the Embassy was informed that the Cuban Government did not intend to take any further action against this Communist mouthpiece.^{1/} Confirming this report, the Minister of Interior told the press on August 23 that the Government would not prevent the re-issuance of the paper, stating that from a strictly legal point of view nothing could be done to prevent its publication.

The Communists have hailed the reappearance of Hoy as, "a great triumph for democracy and peace". Groups of workers have been photographed allegedly celebrating the return of "their voice", and other Communist publications, such as La Ultima Hora have proclaimed its return as a sound defeat for the Government and the imperialistic forces. Hoy has claimed that 123,244 copies were printed of this first issue. A check made on the amount of newsprint used indicates that there actually were at least 112,000 copies printed. This figure is in contrast to the 15,000-20,000 circulation claimed by Hoy before it was banned. It is an indication of the extent to which the Communists have gone to publicize the reappearance of their news organ. Undoubtedly the island has been flooded with free copies of this first issue.

The first two issues do not indicate that there has been any change of policy, as yet, or a lessening of attacks against the United States (Habana's 107, July 19).

^{1/} As previously reported by the Embassy, CTC leader Francisco AGUIRRE told the Labor Reporting Officer some weeks ago (Habana's 234, August 10 and Embassy's memorandum of August 10) that President PRIO had informed the CTC that no further action would be taken against the Communists and Hoy prior to the 1952 elections. Aguirre made it plain that the PRC(A) Party intends to seek the Communist vote in the next elections, and that the Administration therefore does not intend to antagonize the Communists by making further attacks against them in this pre-election period.

HAHoyt:WJN

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PREPARATION TIME

10 PORTER USE

ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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937.61/8-3051

RMC

OCT-5 1951

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The familiar Communist cliches and propaganda items which have been carried on by La Ultima Hora appear in Hoy's columns as before. Anibal ESCALANTE continues as editor, and the paper is being printed at its former shops located at Desagues 108-110.

Meanwhile, it has been announced that La Ultima Hora will now become an evening paper, and that Hoy will resume its position as a morning daily. Thus, the Communists will now have two news organs appearing regularly on local newstands. If any further proof were needed to show the connection between these two papers, one would only have to look at the cartoon, which appeared in La Ultima Hora and which is attached as enclosure No. 2, to see how closely they are interrelated. The Embassy understands that the Communists may eliminate their weekly publication Vanguardia Cubana now that Hoy is again in circulation.

President of the Senate, M. Antonio VARONA, who, as Acting Minister of Labor, was the official principally responsible for Hoy having been banned last August, denounced the paper's return as, "a blasphemy on the Cuban people and all democrats". Varona told newsmen that although the Government lacks the legal means to continue the ban against Hoy, "the Cuban masses can prevent its re-birth". The Communist press immediately launched another attack against Varona, describing him as a "burro", as being in the pay of the "imperialists", and as having initiated the campaign against Hoy last year in order to establish himself favorably with Washington with a view to improving his position as a presidential aspirant. Other newspapers such as Prensa Libre, the Havana Herald and Diario de la Marina have all carried editorials deploring the re-appearance of Hoy, describing it as purely a Communist propaganda sheet working against the best interests of Cuba's democratic form of Government. Prensa Libre also suggested the possibility of a boycott against the paper, pointing out that it could be hurt financially if people refuse to buy it.

Ramon VASCONCELOS in Alerta carried an editorial in which he boasted that the Minister of Interior's statement that there were no legal means to prevent Hoy's publication, is proof that he (Vasconcelos) was justified in having resigned as Minister Without Portfolio last year in protest of the Government's action against Hoy. Alerta also carried for several days the advertisement put out by the Communists to announce the reappearance of Hoy on August 26.

COMMENT:

The principal significance of this whole issue lies in the moral victory gained by the Communists over the Government, and

RESTRICTED

a 3
espatch 369
from Habana

RESTRICTED

the disclosure of the long-suspected fact that the Administration will attempt, in one way or another, to attract the Communist votes in the next elections. Meanwhile, the return of Hoy gives the vociferous opposition another news organ through which it can attack the Prio Government.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:

Henry A. Hoyt

Henry A. Hoyt
Second Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures;

1. 3 copies of Hoy.
2. Cartoon from La Ultima Hora.

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