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JAN 16 1953

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

1096
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

January 16, 1953
DATE

REF :

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| | REC'D JAN 17 | | ARMY | NAVY | AIR | CIA | OSD | | | |

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 3 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA

Part I

Political

(UNCLASSIFIED) Yesterday morning students at Habana University discovered that a bust erected on University grounds to the memory of an assassinated student had been defiled with paint or tar. A protest manifestation was organized by the FEU, the student organization, and the students sallied forth into the streets about the University. The police endeavored to contain the manifestation and fighting ensued. The students used stones and bottles as weapons, set bonfires in the streets, and hanged BATISTA in effigy with the label of "assassin". There was considerable shooting by the authorities but mostly in the air. Some measure of order was eventually restored and the students retired within the University premises while, on direct orders of the President, the police withdrew from the immediate neighborhood.

Later in the day, supposedly because of some injuries sustained by students during the morning's fracas, the FEU organized a march to the monument in the center of town commemorating the students executed by the Spaniards more than 70 years ago. The march was intercepted by the authorities just short of its objective and was dispersed by fire hoses and additional shooting when the rioters attempted to storm the fire trucks.

The result of the day's disturbances was reported to be 14 wounded, two quite seriously, and many arrested, including Alvaro BARBA, president of the FEU, Emilio OCHOA, president of the Ortodoxo party, and José PARDO Llada. It appears that by an early hour this morning the arrestees had been released.

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Government spokesmen declared that the manifestations had been of Communist and PRIO-instigated inspiration in order to further the campaign to create public disorders. The student, the defiling of whose bust started the trouble, was a Communist described in today's Hoy as a "glorious anti-imperialist leader". The Council of the University condemned the day's violence, condemned the penetration of "elements foreign to the student body" into the University with the purpose of disrupting order, and suspended University activities for three working days.

So far today there has been no sign of renewed demonstrations by the students.

(UNCLASSIFIED) In a meeting of the Partido Acción Progresista, preparatory to filing for registration as a party under the 1952 Electoral Code, President Batista is reported to have announced that he would be the party's candidate for President in the November elections and possibly the candidate of other parties.

At the same time Batista referred to the student demonstrations (see above), warning that Communism "lurks in ambush" and must be combatted as a danger to Cuba. He promised that those responsible for the riots would go before the courts.

(UNCLASSIFIED) The outbreak of gangsterism of last week (see Weeka No. 2) was climaxed by a bomb attack last Sunday night on the home of Ramón VASCONCELOS, director of Alerta. The bomb, a homemade affair of pipe containing explosive, screws, etc., was thrown into the garden of the house where it exploded without injuring anyone and causing only minor damage to walls and windows. This attempt on Vasconcelos evoked universal condemnation and was ascribed by him and members of the Government to the machinations of the "Miami group".

At about the same time another cache of arms and ammunition was uncovered by the authorities on a farm in the Province of Las Villas belonging to relatives of Salvador ESTEVA Lora who was being sought in connection with a previous similar discovery (see Weeka No. 2).

(UNCLASSIFIED) The crisis in the Ortodoxo party, precipitated by the submission by Pardo Llada of a motion contrary to the CHIBAS line of rigid independence, has now become fullblown (see Weeka No. 2). In the party's National Directive Council, Roberto AGRAMONTE was defeated in an

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effort to have prior consideration given to a motion of his strongly reaffirming the Chibás line. If he had been successful in having his motion approved as first order of business, it would automatically have eliminated consideration of the Pardo Llada motion. In view of this setback, Agramonte and his supporters walked out of the Council meeting and boycotted its further deliberations, declaring that by its action the anti-Agramonte faction had ruled itself out of the Ortodoxia of Chibás. At latest report the Agramonte group had established itself as the National Directive Council, and schism in the Ortodoxo party seems to be becoming more and more imminent.

There is now the intriguing spectacle of not only a "genuine" and a "spurious" Auténtico party but, at least as of the present, a "pure" and a "pactist" Ortodoxo party.

(UNCLASSIFIED) José Pardo Llada was reported from Las Villas province to have been arrested there on charges of holding illegal meetings and defying the police. His case was submitted to the local Urgency Tribunal which ordered his provisional release after a couple of days of detention. He returned to Habana in time to participate in the meeting of the Ortodoxo party's National Directive Council (see above) and to be re-arrested during yesterday's rioting.

(UNCLASSIFIED) There have been persistent rumors of impending cabinet changes. These have been based in part on the fact that no meeting of the Council of Ministers has been called so far this year. The rumors are insistent that places in the cabinet, possibly two in number, will be given to members of the Liberal party, the latter having indicated its support of Batista.

(RESTRICTED) The ten retired naval officers taken into custody in December on charges of subversive activities (see Weeka No. 52), have been released. This was presumably done because investigation did not support the charges. Little publicity was given to the release of the men. It is believed that they, like many other retired officers, will be kept under observation.

Psychological

(UNCLASSIFIED) Upon their return to Cuba from attendance at the Congress of the Peoples for Peace in Vienna, Edith GARCIA Buchaca, president of the Communist-dominated FDMC, the poet Nicolás GUILLEN, and ex-Senator Salvador GARCIA Aguero, were detained and interrogated by the SIM. Their

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passports were picked up and apparently have not yet been returned to them. The Communist Hoy in an article published this morning accused the Government of following U. S. tactics in the matter of travel restrictions.

Army, Navy, Air

Negative.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Participants:

ETCrain, FCFornes, Jr., EMTerrell,
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