

Air Priority
PRIORITY

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737.00(W)/4-3053

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
REF :

1697

DESP. NO.

Action Assigned to *Vincelli*

Action Taken *noted*

April 30, 1953
DATE

Date of Action *5-5-53*

Action Office Symbol *AP*

Name of Officer *Vincelli*

Direction to DC/R *PL*

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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 18 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments
from SANA

Part I

Political

(CONFIDENTIAL) While the Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC) prepared for its meeting to commemorate the May First Labor Day in Habana and other cities throughout the island (see Weeka No. 17), students and other dissident groups persisted in their plan to hold an independent rally at the University despite the governing Council's appeal not to do so because of the possible danger of violence and jeopardizing of University autonomy.

President BATISTA and his Cabinet have been invited to the CTC meeting in Habana, and a declaration addressed "to the people of Cuba" in the April 26 press makes it seem likely that CTC leadership at the meeting will demand that government and capital develop new industries to provide more jobs. Significantly, one slogan for May Day will be "no wage cuts", and not "higher wages" as in past years.

The University Student Federation (FEU) has let it be known that Prio Autenticos, Ochoa Ortodoxos and Communists will participate in the rally at the University. The Communist party is reported to have promised to have 10,000 Communists at the rally. A Government spokesman has announced that no unauthorized demonstrations, meaning the University rally, would be permitted. One rumor has it that after the University rally, the participants would march on the CTC meeting in order to break it up.

The potentialities of the FEU-sponsored rally for trouble are obvious. It is opposed not only by the University Council but by considerable numbers of the students themselves. At the very least it would, if held in spite of the Government prohibition, seriously harm the traditional

FCForbes, Jr.:rc
REPORTER

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student reputation for political independence. At worst it could result in grave disturbances, with many hurt and possibly killed.

(RESTRICTED) The trial of Professor Rafael GARCIA Bárcena and others who were arrested on Easter Sunday on charges of conspiring to overthrow the Government (see Weeka No. 15), finally began on Monday before the Urgency Court. All the defendants denied participation in any conspiracy or plan to attack Camp Columbia, the military headquarters, and many of them complained of beatings and ill-treatment at the hands of the Military Intelligence Service (SIM). Evidence thus far on the other side has been by SIM and police officers who have reiterated the charges and told how the alleged conspiracy was uncovered through surveillance of García Bárcena and other defendants. Because of the large number of defendants and lawyers, proceedings have not been entirely orderly. There has been comment to the effect that the trial and especially the charges of mistreatment are a saddening and disheartening spectacle.

(UNCLASSIFIED) It was reported that Tony VARONA and other Autentico followers of ex-President Prio were meeting in Miami. It was variously speculated that the object of the meeting was to discuss the possible formation of a new party composed of various opposition elements, a reconciliation with the GRAU Autenticos, or the creation of a "united front" opposition group. A former cabinet officer under Prio, interviewed on Tuesday on the "Meet the Press" program, said he knew of no plans to form a new party. He believed that a "united front" opposition, definitely excluding the Communists, is necessary to avoid chaos if Batista should suddenly step down. Whatever the object of the Miami meeting, there are those who believe that it involves a conclusion by the Prio Autenticos that insurrection is impracticable because of the mood of the people and the preparedness of the Government, and that a way should be sought to achieve their objectives through peaceful political means. The press has published reports that the Prio group is now leaning more toward the idea of participation in elections, particularly if further guarantees were forthcoming.

(UNCLASSIFIED) Mr. Humberto DEL PINO Pereira presented his credentials yesterday as Chilean Ambassador to Cuba.

Psychological

(UNCLASSIFIED) Communist propaganda hailed the reply of

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Pravda to the "arrogant speech" of President Eisenhower who "on the level of a thundering Jupiter, dispenser of favors, presented demands to the USSR in ultimatum form". To demonstrate how completely Pravda proved the Russian will to peace and the inadequacy of the President's proposals, Hoy carried the full text in Spanish of the Pravda article.

The Communist press also played up the acceptance by the USSR and Red China of the invitation of the World Peace Council to enter into a "Big Five Peace Pact", and condemned in editorials and cartoons the failure of the other powers, especially the United States, to agree to the proposal.

Neither of these propaganda lines produced any sympathetic reaction among non-Communist commentators.

(UNCLASSIFIED) The Communist-sponsored "Habana Municipal Council of Committees of the United Front of the Masses" (see Weeka No. 17) has been actively at work. During the week it delivered letters to the University Student Federation (FEU), José PARDO Llado and others, inviting them to designate a representative on the Council. It was successful in having El Mundo run a news item regarding it which, far from indicating its Communist sponsorship, actually tended to give the Council the appearance of being organized and supported by a variety of groups of different political complexions.

Army, Navy, Air

Negative.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
Acting Counselor of Embassy

Participants:

ETCrain, JCanter, FCFornes, Jr., ETerrell,
BRCrooks, Elmore (MA), Rakow (NA), Mason (AA)

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Amembassies Ciudad Trujillo, Port-au-Prince

MA (4) for USARCARIB and USARFANT
AA (1)
NA (3) for Guantánamo