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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 24 for State, Army, Navy and Air Departments from SANA.

(UNCLASSIFIED) EX-NAVAL OFFICER KILLED BY AUTHORITIES. During the evening of June 9th, Jorge AGOSTINI Villanueva, ex-naval officer and former chief of the presidential palace secret police under PRIO, was shot to death by agents of the Naval Intelligence Service and the Bureau of Investigations of the National Police. The official version of the slaying is that the authorities had knowledge that Agostini was conspiring with others in a residence in the Vedado section of Havana and on the evening in question had thrown a cordon around the block in which the residence is located in an effort to apprehend him. When the officers entered the residence, the official version continues, Agostini fled and in the course of his flight, opened fire with a pistol which provoked return fire that killed him. He received a dozen or more wounds from the head to the waist.

Another version of what happened is offered by the University Student Federation (FEU). This has it that Agostini was taken alive, knocked to the ground, and murdered while lying helpless.

The killing has aroused a storm of protest from all sectors of the opposition and provoked strong demands for an investigation. The officer in charge of the naval intelligence detachment involved is openly accused of murdering Agostini.

The funeral services for Agostini were made the occasion of denunciations of the circumstances surrounding his death. One report had some 300 people accompanying the body through the streets to the cemetery and singing the national anthem. It is said that a wreath from PRIO was inscribed "Your friends will follow your example".

(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) Comment. The FEU version of the killing is essentially the same as the story told by Mrs. Agostini. She is convinced that the authorities knew from an informer that Agostini was to be at the Vedado residence and had paid well for the information. She says that there was a witness at the nearby Anglo-American Hospital who saw what actually occurred. Her version is that Agostini made good his escape from the residence but was seized in the street; that he was held in a police car until the arrival of the naval

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intelligence officer; that he was then dragged from the car and held while smashed in the face with the butt of a submachine gun (she avers that the autopsy revealed face injuries consistent with this); and that he was shot while lying on the ground. According to her, the pistol and two hand grenades alleged by the authorities to have been in Agostini's possession were a plant. She declared that she has been warned that she and her children will be faced with conspiracy charges if she makes trouble.

There is little or no doubt that Agostini had been engaged in conspiratorial activities for a long time, most likely with retired naval officers ousted after the March 10 coup and susceptible to promises of reinstatement once Batista should be overthrown. It is almost equally sure that the authorities have been out to "get" Agostini for just as long.

It is an interesting point that none of the government agents involved in the Agostini shooting were reported to have been hurt. Agostini was a good marksman and had fighting experience in the Spanish civil war. If it is true that he opened a gun battle that resulted in his death, it is surprising that with the pistol and grenades alleged to be at his disposition he could inflict no damage whatever despite his skill and experience.

This case has been described in some detail since it is another in which the official version is open to the gravest suspicion. The name of Agostini is added to the list of those who many Cubans are convinced were brutally and callously murdered by the authorities. This list already included Mario FORTUNY, prisoners taken in the Santiago de Cuba uprising in July 1953, and two extortionists who just the other day after a running gun fight with the police, were killed but whose bodies appeared to exhibit the peculiarity of having been shot from in front.

The repetition of cases of this kind indicates an unchecked disregard on the part of many officers of the armed forces of fundamental rights, whether of political opponents or of common criminals, and shows that force and brutality are not being eliminated as a means of combatting opposition or punishing lawbreakers. It is highly unlikely that Batista personally orders the application of such repressive measures in particular cases but the fact remains that he has done nothing when circumstances have been suspicious to punish responsible officers or even to investigate the charges against them.

An Agostini case adds fuel to the opposition to Batista and is fully utilized by them to show that the recent political amnesty, the claim to constitutional government, and Batista's expression of his desire for domestic "peace and harmony" are belied by the activities of the latter's trigger-happy followers.

(UNCLASSIFIED) MORE BOMBS. On June 9 six small bombs were placed in as many movie theaters in Havana. Four were discovered

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unexploded while two went off in rest rooms doing minor damage and hurting nobody.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. Everyone deplores the series of indiscriminate and pointless bombings of which this is the latest manifestation. One or two opposition writers point out that the bombing of theaters, stores and similar illogical targets is an ineffective and puerile method of combatting the regime. They suggest, although admittedly without evidence, that the government itself is responsible for the outrages in an endeavor to maintain an atmosphere of tension and insecurity favorable to the continuance of its repressive measures. In the absence of any other evidence, the Embassy is inclined to attribute these bombings to terrorism not intelligent enough to realize that it defeats its own ends.

(UNCLASSIFIED) PERIOD FOR SURRENDER OF ILLEGALLY HELD ARMS EXPIRES. On June 7 there expired the period of 30 days which the political amnesty law granted for the surrender without criminal liability of illegally held arms (see Weeka No. 19).

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. The Embassy has received no reports that this period of grace resulted in any significant surrender of clandestine arms.

(UNCLASSIFIED) ARMS DISPLAY IN SENATE. During a meeting one day last week of the Auténtico Senators in the Capitol, pistols were drawn by Senators Eduardo SUAREZ Rivas and Gilberto LEYVA Hernández, both representing Las Villas Province. The reason for the display was the rancor resulting from the fact that the former had just displaced the latter as president of the Auténtico assembly of their province. Anything more serious than a display was averted by their colleagues, although one interposing Senator was said to have had his finger caught by the hammer of one of the pistols.

(UNCLASSIFIED) GOVERNMENT DECISION ON CONSOLIDATED RAILROAD CASE; CONSEQUENT STRIKING. Acting on the report of the Accounts Tribunal, which has not been made public, the Government announced its decision in the case of the Consolidated Railroads.

Last November Consolidated had tried to lay off about 1,200 workers, alleging it was losing money. The government has now authorized a reduction of eight percent in salaries and wages and the retirement of all personnel eligible for pensions from the Land Transport Retirement Fund. Wages are to be paid only for time actually worked. The company instead of paying certain taxes, will turn their amount over to the Land Transport Retirement Fund to the extent of \$600,000 a year. Recommendations for the revision of existing collective labor agreements, which are suspended, are to be made in 90 days by a tripartite committee. A ministerial

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commission is to report within six months on the entire transport system.

The announcement of the government's decision has set off strikes throughout the Consolidated system. There have been at least two cases of derailments, without personal injury, through sabotage; and the authorities have issued strong warnings. The Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) has stated the strikes are unauthorized but is making representations to the government for the modification of its decision.

(OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Comment. The government's decision is much like what responsible labor leaders had earlier told the Embassy would be a reasonable solution of the Consolidated problem. CTC Secretary-General MUJAL now informs the Embassy that labor is concerned that collective labor contracts are suspended and may not be reintroduced on a fair basis. He alleges also that the Accounts Tribunal report found the company guilty of "doctoring" its books in some instances and says this should be made public. The government decision in fact justifies the railroad's charging preferential rates to some customers and states this has been done in accordance with the law.

(UNCLASSIFIED) RICE AGREEMENT CONCLUDED. The rice agreement between Cuba and the United States, replacing that of December 17, 1952, was signed at the Cuban Ministry of State on June 13, 1955. This new agreement provides (1) that the basic quota of 3,250,000 quintals shall begin to enter Cuba on July 1 of each year; (2) that a deficit quota, if any, shall be announced by Cuba not later than February 15 for entry not later than April 1 of each year; (3) that all basic and deficit quota rice from the United States will pay the low tariff duty of \$1.85 per 100 kilograms; and (4) that either party to the agreement may request a reopening of negotiations to modify it. (See Weeka No. 22).

(UNCLASSIFIED) EUROPE. Cuban newspapers considered the Soviet invitation to Chancellor Adenauer as a clever effort by the USSR to win by diplomacy what she failed to gain by intimidation: neutralization of Western Germany. Most papers, confident of Adenauer's loyalty to the West, gave the Russian move but scant chance of success. Diario Nacional best reflected the editorial tone of the Cuban press in saying that the Soviets, defeated in their efforts to impede German rearmament and integration into the Western Europe defense alliance, have embarked suddenly on a campaign to win friends and influence people, a plan conceived audaciously in the eleventh hour to break up the unity of the NATO alliance. The paper said the USSR would like the world to think she has renounced her plans for conquest, but that the new strategy is only a change of pace aimed at immediate objectives. Diario de la Marina likened the latest Soviet moves to a stage magician pulling surprises out of a hat and said nobody should lose

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Page 5 of 12
Desp. No. 1249
From HABANA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
(Classification)

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

sight of the fact that it is all trickery and that the Russians aim to keep Germany neutral at all cost. Alerta was amused at the Soviet contradiction of approaching Adenauer now after saying she would not negotiate with Germany if rearmament were approved.

Army. Navy. Air

Negative.


Carlos C. Hall
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

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