

CUBA

The Cardinal's Forehead

When a nervous regime slaps a rigid censorship on the press, as Fulgencio Batista's government did after July's unsuccessful revolt (TIME, Aug. 10), the normal flow of news slackens and nightmare rumors fly ten times faster. One day last month Batista's propaganda ministry announced cryptically that Manuel Cardinal Arteaga, 73, Archbishop of Havana and Roman Catholic primate of Cuba, had been injured in a fall in his rooms. That was news that Havana's papers and radio stations would normally have reported in detail, but under censorship they gave only the bare bones of the announcement.

Cubans naturally found the official story strange and unconvincing; lurid rumors began to spread. Last week Cuba's leading magazine, *Bohemia*, printed a photograph of Arteaga. Under the picture was the deadpan caption: "The wound suffered by Monsignor Manuel Arteaga on the forehead on the night of the 12th of August in his palace on the Avenida del Puerto. Twenty stitches were necessary to close it, the task being accomplished by Dr. Anido in the operating room of the Centro Médico Quirúrgico."

By saying no more than that, *Bohemia* seemed to be telling the reader that there was actually a great deal more to say. Meanwhile, a circumstantial account of the incident flashed around Cuba and jumped the Straits of Florida to Miami, where exiled opposition leaders keep close tabs on their homeland, only an hour away by airliner. According to this account, detectives of the Cuban Bureau of Investigation swooped down on the cardinal's palace one night shortly after the rebellion

had been suppressed. In the midst of a frenzied city-wide search for anti-Batista plotters, they had picked up a tip that the cardinal was harboring fugitive revolutionaries. Arteaga, who had gone to bed, tried to send them away, but the agents forced their way into his private apartments, and in the scuffle a jittery cop laid the cardinal's forehead open with a gun butt. Finding no fugitives, the police rushed their victim to the hospital and tried to hush up the outrage.

The cardinal, never regarded as a supporter of the opposition, has said nothing,



Bohemia

PRIMATE ARTEAGA

For a nervous regime, two morals.

and the affair had an odd sequel last week when he confirmed President Batista's eldest son. Perhaps it remained only for the President to take his choice of two morals: 1) if the story was true, censorship evidently did not keep Cubans from learning about it; 2) if the story was false, censorship obviously led many Cubans to believe it.