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JCA DRE

28 August 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Anti-Castro Cuban Activities at the Eighth World Youth Festival

1. This memorandum will outline the activities of the anti-Castro Cuban delegation that CIA sent to Helsinki for the Eighth World Youth Festival, 29 July - 6 August 1962.

2. The delegation was sponsored overtly by the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil (DRE) and consisted of nine members. Its mission was to nullify the effect of the Castroite Cuban delegation to the festival and to seek to persuade likely defectors from that delegation.

3. On the opening day of the festival, as delegations paraded through the streets to the stadium, five DRE delegates unfurled a banner in front of the Cuban delegation demanding that Castro free his thousands of political prisoners. (Reports vary on the actual text of the banner.) The Cuban delegation broke ranks from the parade and attacked the DRE members, pushing them backward into a crowd of Finnish spectators. The Finns rallied to the aid of the DRE members and a General Melee followed, much to the later embarrassment of the Cuban delegation and the festival sponsors.

4. This incident was unrelated to the Finnish rioting that followed for three days after the festival opened. But it is likely that the incident helped to exacerbate the anti-communist tension that caused the rioting. Apparently with this view, Finnish police picked up two of the DRE members and questioned them. After releasing them, the police sought the two again. Unfortunately, the two DRE members happened to be riding in a car that collided with a police car on the night of 1 August. The two were jailed overnight and released the next day with the suggestion that they leave Finland as soon as they could. Accordingly, the whole DRE delegation left on 2 August to go to Germany to attend a Christian Democratic youth meeting.

5. CIA Station in ¹⁴⁻¹ [redacted] reported that the DRE group's presence at the festival was effective.

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