

October 18, 1960

REPORT ON ESCAMBRAY

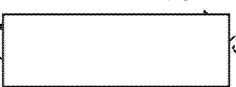
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The following information, secured by [redacted] during the past 30 days, is from his conversations with Guillermo, Dr. Ojeda, Jesus, Fernando, Valentín, Graciela, Pancho, Pacho, Alba, etc. and is presented to you for appreciation of latest happening and present situation in Escambray.

History: Please check previous reports for accuracy. Rise was the first one to take up arms in Escambray against Castro shortly after his taking over the country. As time went on, other groups took arms and started to operate in different zones throughout the Escambray. Some of these groups were Sinecio, Benive, Duque, Alba, Ramirez, etc. etc. as reported. Guillermo, who is well known and liked in that zone as the one responsible for the II Front of Escambray in the fight against Batista, went to the zone from Havana, probably in the first quarter of 1960 to organize his own group and operate a clandestine radio station. Guillermo had a radio station hidden and left from the previous fight against Batista, as well as some arms and flags hidden in the zone. Guillermo did not take up arms at the time. His group was getting organized and working under cover when he and others were surprised sometime in June/60 ~~xxx~~ therabouts. At that time some of Guillermo's group were taken prisoner but Guillermo got away and came to Havana where he remained hidden ~~xx~~, awaiting contact from the Company. The Company had evidently promised him and his brother definite support, probably at the time Guillermo, Pancho and others in the O/A made public their stand against communism sometime in 1959. Finally [redacted] contacted Guillermo there when instructions were given to get him out of town. He was then trained by the Company and specific plans of action and premises were evidently agreed on. Guillermo was sent back sometime in latter part of July or beginning of August 1960, with the obvious instructions to organize action in Havana and then proceed to Escambray to coordinate and open up a front there. Up to that time the groups in Escambray were in contact with each other but there was no common objectives and cooperation. Each group was fighting on his own and each leader, specially Sinecio because of his personal arrogance, wanted to be the military leader of the Escambray. In September Guillermo left for Escambray with Jesus and Benny. In "La Keza" they joined a Capt. Keza, a doctor and others that were also to Sinecio's camp in Pico del Tuerte. The party left "La Keza" on September 27, with a 24 hours delay because Jesus and Benny did not make contact in Bienfuegos as planned with Guillermo and returned to Havana under Jesus's insistence and fears. On the way the party met some milicianos from a cooperative near by and Benny was taken prisoner. At midnight Sept. 27-28 radio contact was made as scheduled with the base but Jesus did NOT received the base in his net. In the belief that they did not make contact at all with the base, the group proceed to the last stop before Sinecio's camp, which is 1 hour walk from said camp in Pico del Tuerte. Sinecio was surrounded by troops and the party could not proceed and awaited there until a breach could be made. While there the party heard of the drop in Manabanilla. Not being able to backtrack to Sinecio's camp, Guillermo, the doctor and Jesus decided to continue and reach Sinecio's camp. Guillermo with the doctor and Jesus returned to "La Keza" after buying their equipment in the last stop before returning (Fernandez's farm), under a tree behind the house. There was no one in "La Keza" and Guillermo with the doctor took a car for hire (betero) from "La Keza" to Cumanayagua. Jesus followed two or three hours later, taking another car for hire a couple of miles down the road. Guillermo and the doctor were caught in Cumanayagua while having a drink in town. A miliciano asked them questions and arrested them when they were not able to fully identify themselves or perhaps they were recognized. The doctor had about 7000 pesos hidden in his socks and Guillermo about 3000 pesos in his socks, a picture of his wife and of the children and a piece of paper to remind him how to put the maps together but with no relation to it. This paper was covering the pictures, and the picture of his daughter was stamped on the back "Friede" or "Pete-ralla Friede", which happens to be the name of the plete-man who took the picture in Havana. Nothing else was found on them and the arrest was a simple pick up. Jesus heard of the arrest when arriving to Cumanayagua and proceed to Las Cruces and to Havana. Jesus was stopped in Las Cruces by a miliciano for questioning and allowed to proceed to the next town where he claimed he could identify himself and where he gave up his I.D. card supplied by the Company (not the one from the Ministerio de Agricultura which Jesus left in Havana, but the other one with a black and red stripe). Jesus claims that he was followed by two cars from Las Cruces to the next town and from there to Havana by the person that headed the bus with him, and when he lost

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somewhere in Havana near his house. During the ^{trial} everyone was presented as caught with Sinecio's group up in arms in the Escambray, and that Guillermo was caught when running away. Actually, some of them never arrived to Sinecio's camp. Some reports state that Sinecio's group fought off the attack until they ran out of ammunition and then surrendered. Other reports say that there was not much fighting because apparently the camp was covered with a gas that rendered them useless, that a dog was then let loose to track them down and all of them were arrested without much of a resistance. Also, some reports state that Sinecio killed Benvides before during an argument over the arms that were dropped and which Sinecio claimed were for him. It seems there was more than just one drop, since the drop on Sept. 29 which was secured by the militia in "La Campana", and that subsequent drops have been received by Rise and Duques's groups. During the ~~trial~~ a communist goon squad was organized and sent on October 11 to cry "Pardon", but the people in general from Santa Clara ~~was~~ definitely with the prisoners, and on October 12 started a mass concentration to ask for mercy and commutation of the death sentence, but the same communist goon squads cornered the open concentration into a church and did not allow them to proceed. It is not clear whether information on the Escambray and Guillermo leaked out before or after the trial, but evidently much of it has leaked out and everybody is afraid and under cover, waiting to see how deep infiltration has been accomplished. There has been a tremendous demoralization among the groups connected with the Escambray action and the people in general, but it has consolidated the counter-revolutionary groups at least in that sense. It seems that the groups up in arms in Escambray: Rise, best organized, Duque, and others are together and coordinating their efforts. That there has been more fighting in Escambray since the trial, and the militia and/or army has not been able to take over these groups, who are fighting back indicating a coordinated action and possession of arms and ammunition which they did not seem to have before, assumed received from subsequent successful drops.

Observation: Guillermo never did accomplish his mission as he never did arrive to the groups up in arms in the Escambray as Military Coordinator for the Company. However, his death has achieved the unification of that front, and a general awakening of the people in general, especially in Santa Clara. Of all the people sentenced to death, Guillermo was the only one with a clear vision of his place in history and a common objective. The others did not have any idealism and were simple group leaders. Guillermo did not talk during the trial and did not offer any comments for or against. The prisoners were not tortured or even abused, except by word of mouth. The tribunal postponed the death sentence three times on October 12, despite the fact that there was an evident personal reason for killing Guillermo in particular who had always opposed and stood in front of Fidel Castro and against communism since their university days. Evidently, the jury was skeptical of the political consequences such death sentences would create among the Cuban people in general, especially when Guillermo and some of the other ones were actually framed and made appear to be up in arms with Sinecio. Before the firing squad Guillermo stated that "I have trust in God and in the people". They were executed with automatic guns and Guillermo and several others had an instant death at 9:00 p.m. on October 12, a little distance from "La Campana" Hq. The bodies were returned to Santa Clara cemetery, but it is not yet known if they have been returned to the family.

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