

*Handwritten notes at top left*

SECRET

*Handwritten notes at top right*  
3144 0700



# INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH PROJECT

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| PROJECT NO. <u>100</u>                 | DATE <u>20 May 1951</u> |
| NAME, GRADE, DIVISION OF SPECIAL AGENT |                         |
| CONFIDENTIAL                           |                         |

**RECORDED**

INTELLIGENCE DIVISION  
G. S. U. S. A.

SECRET

*Handwritten signature*

SECRET

Project 1000  
by [unclear]  
[unclear]

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD, WASHINGTON, APRIL 1962

1. The information regarding activities received directly from the assassination team on 7 April 1962 of Jorge Eliecer GAITAN, Chief of the Liberal Party of Colombia. Though the evidence for the assassination may never be definitively established (owing to the immediate looting of the assassin, Juan Luis Garza), no reliable evidence has been produced to date to indicate the manner was prompted by anything other than personal motives of vengeance. There is no reliable indication that the assassin was employed by any political party or group or that any party, including the Communist, had prior knowledge of the deed.

2. That the assassination resulted off state of such proportion may be attributed to three major causes: (a) The general political situation was already highly strained as a result of months of friction between the Conservative and Liberal Parties which had caused previous minor outbreaks of violence; (b) GAITAN was a demagogic leader who had attracted a large personal following, particularly among lower class groups, and his assassination aroused the indignant followers to fanatical violence against the incumbent Government; and (c) In addition to this largely spontaneous reaction, certain political groups (particularly the Communist, the Communist-dominated national Confederation of Labor, and the left-wing and highly vocal student groups) had been preparing to oppose the incumbent Government by demonstration, strikes and disorders, and the assassination provided them the opportunity to act.

-4-

SECRET

APR 19 1962  
200-200000  
U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

4. There is abundant evidence that the Communists had considered various methods of disrupting the conference, including mass demonstrations, a general strike, incitement of the student group, and possibly sabotage. While there is no doubt that they were well prepared to make advantage of the situation, and did so, it is unlikely that they would have been able to locate more than a few saboteurs (which could probably have been controlled by the police) had it not been for the spontaneous reaction of the League crew following the murder. The Communist Party in Columbia is numerically small (about 5000 to 6000), politically weak and split by internal differences, but it has over the past few years had substantial success in organized labor.

5. The following are in answer to the specific questions set forth in the requests:

a. It is believed, though not proved, that only the Communist Party was involved in the plot to murder the worker. Doubts as to the organizational direction of the subsequent riots, especially the principal groups involved were: Liberal Party followers at McGill; the Communist-dominated Labor Action League which called its members out on striking students of the National University; and Communist Party leaders and sympathizers.

b. There is no accurate estimate of the numbers of persons actually participating in the riots, other than that thousands were involved. The dead numbered approximately 1,000. Estimated participants in League riots were a lower class mob, organized by several thousand individuals who had been released from jail by the police. The numbers of the Labor Action League matter about 100,000, but not all went on strike.



a. 100 b.

4. The following appear to have been the principal activities of central and communication employees: a group of students of the National University promptly advised the national radio station to broadcast a message against the Executive Government, and to adviseable broadcasts called on all workers and liberal forces, the Committee and the forces of labor (particularly the national Confederation of labor) to unite in the revolution, join in a general strike, and attack and destroy the national ministries. Through these and other radio stations aimed by the rebels the populace was instructed to remain calm by any means and to lock business stores for support, and orders were issued to kill leading Conservatives. Principal Communist Party leaders also participated in these broadcasts, particularly leading labor leaders and to support the "liberal revolution." At least one Communist leader, however, attempted unsuccessfully to direct the radio from London and to organize an orderly march against the government. The national general strike was called within one hour after GATTI's death and lasted for approximately one week (with only partial effectiveness). Burning and looting of public buildings and stores in major and other cities was initiated within minutes after the announcement of GATTI's death. That some of the destruction showed evidence of planning and organization is in part attributable to the fact that the Committee, through their labor organization, had previously laid plans for the burning and looting of stores during mass demonstrations against high prices which were to be called in an effort to disrupt the Post American Conference. Communist Party members are known to have been instructed on 3 April (two days before the revolt) to carry out this plan. The Committee had also, before the revolt, attempted



to stir up the populace through the publication of manifestoes calling for a revolution and attacking the United States. Manifestoes (some of which were issued after the outbreak of the revolt, calling for a re-  
-establishment of the status and in at least one instance blaming the United States for the death of GARCIA.

2. The following installations were destroyed (burned or bombed or both) in large and apparently without any significant impact or pattern of accomplishment:

Government buildings: including the Government Palace, the Post Office, the Foreign Office, the Bureau of Navigation, the Capital, and the National Bank. Records destroyed in the process included court records, the country's diplomatic records, and public records of ministers and Deputies.

Communications: Traffic was suffered extensive destruction in the early stages of the revolt. Radio stations appear to have been either better than destroyed. There appears to have been no successful effort to either seize or destroy circuits or personnel.

Private buildings: Records and storages suffered extensive damage; the Conservative newspaper was destroyed; and almost all stores in the main municipalities were ransacked or burned.

In several other locations, newspapers, storages and public buildings were also destroyed.

The principal although unsuccessful attempts at industrial sabotage were apparently in the oilfields, notably at Barrancas, where (Crispian oil Company), where a revolutionary force controlled by the Spanish arrested several individuals to dismantle a plot to dynamite the installations. All principal oil installations are reported to have escaped damage, however.



# SECRET

In general it may be said that the destruction in England and other states appears to have been directed mainly towards the accomplishment of a Marshal revolution (with Communist assistance) and the improvement and disruption of the Pan American Conference rather than towards the accomplishment of widespread industrial sabotage. Though unusually violent, the events were more typical of a Latin American revolution, largely spontaneous in nature, than of planned sabotage of a key industrial area. It is probable that had the Communist not participated in any way in the events, the violence of Internal Party opposition to the Conservative government, spurred by the assassination of their leader, would have resulted in such the same pattern of destruction.