

Machine Guns and Dynamite Shatter Venezuela Peace

By DAVID KNOTT
United Press International
 Caracas, Venezuela — (UPI) — In this un-bright, oil-rich and politically turbulent country, it is becoming increasingly common for a peaceful day or night to be shattered by machine-gunning and dynamite.

The terrorism is directed at the government of President Romulo Betancourt and, amazingly, it seems to be guided by a former Venezuelan naval captain who is locked up in Caracas' fo-bidding San Carlos military prison.

Broadcasts and messages in the name of Capt. Manuel Ponte Rodriguez, addressed to Congress, political leaders and to the nation as a whole, claim credit for the series of guerrilla raids, dynamiting of public buildings and side-street gun fights. In his last message, published in the national press several days ago, Capt. Rodriguez offered the nation a two-week moratorium on terrorism while peace talks are held.

Directs Army

Just how this former Navy officer, who is serving a 16-year sentence for directing an anti-government Marine uprising, directs a "national army of liberation" from his prison cell is not known. But the "troops" of his armed forces of national liberation (FALN) make their presence abundantly clear.

It boasts its responsibility for acts of terrorism and in their wake, the letters "FALN" are scrawled on walls from Maracaibo, in the west, to the Orinoco river.

When a congressional committee investigating conditions of political prisoners visited the desert island of Orchila off the coast last month, the 26 guerrillas interned there appeared in smart khaki, black ties and FALN armbands.

When a Venezuelan freighter was high-jacked a few weeks ago, it sailed into a Brazilian port with its nine-man pirate crew in the same uniform, plus neat blue berets of the type worn by Cuban Premier Fidel Castro in his

Moscow May day appearance with Khrushchev.

Until the beginning of this year, it was automatic to lay responsibility for all terrorist activity at the door of Venezuela's Communist party and the Communists did nothing to disavow it. Communists made no bones about sponsoring an aggressive, well-trained military operation, consisting of roving guerrillas, tactical combat units (urban guerrillas) and saboteurs.

Now, Communists tends to back away from the bloodshed and sabotage and ascribe the blame, publicly at least, to the FALN. The government claims this turn by the Communists is a "patently phony peace offer, part of the Red campaign against the decree, last October, suspending them from public political activity."

Wherever the truth lies, the FALN-claimed toll of death and destruction is mounting. In one recent week, four police and two passersby were shot dead, five police and two civilians were wounded, two

police kidnapped, two radio stations were attacked, two schools raided and a fire did \$340,000 damage to a U.S.-owned printing plant. There also were two long and noisy gun battles which caused no casualties but further alarmed the citizens of this capital city.

It was not a particularly remarkable week. Since January, four U.S.-connected businesses have been burned with damage totalling \$3 million, three pipelines have been dynamited, a freighter was seized on the high seas and a \$600,000 collection of French impressionist paintings was

heisted in broad daylight. There has been a virtually uninterrupted series of attacks on police and armed forces personnel.

Basically, the long-term objectives proclaimed by the FALN are these:

- "A revolutionary, nationalist and democratic government." (Their meaning of "democratic" is unclear since the present government was chosen by the people in free and honest elections.)
- "Political and economic independence for Venezuela." (That is a catch-all phrase tra-

ditionally used by far leftists in Latin America to exploit nationalist sentiment.)

- "Development of the country's resources for the benefit of all the people."
- "Reorganization of the armed forces to meet the threats to national sovereignty which would follow the total liberation of the country." (This presumably means to stand ready to repel any U.S. intervention, which the FALN expects in the event of seizure of huge U.S. investments in Venezuela.)

The FALN claims it represents every shade of opinion from Catholic to Marxist, united only in deadly opposition to the present government, and every economic class, from peasant worker to the affluent. (It should be noted that Betancourt's strongest source of power is the 1,200,000-member Venezuelan labor federation.)

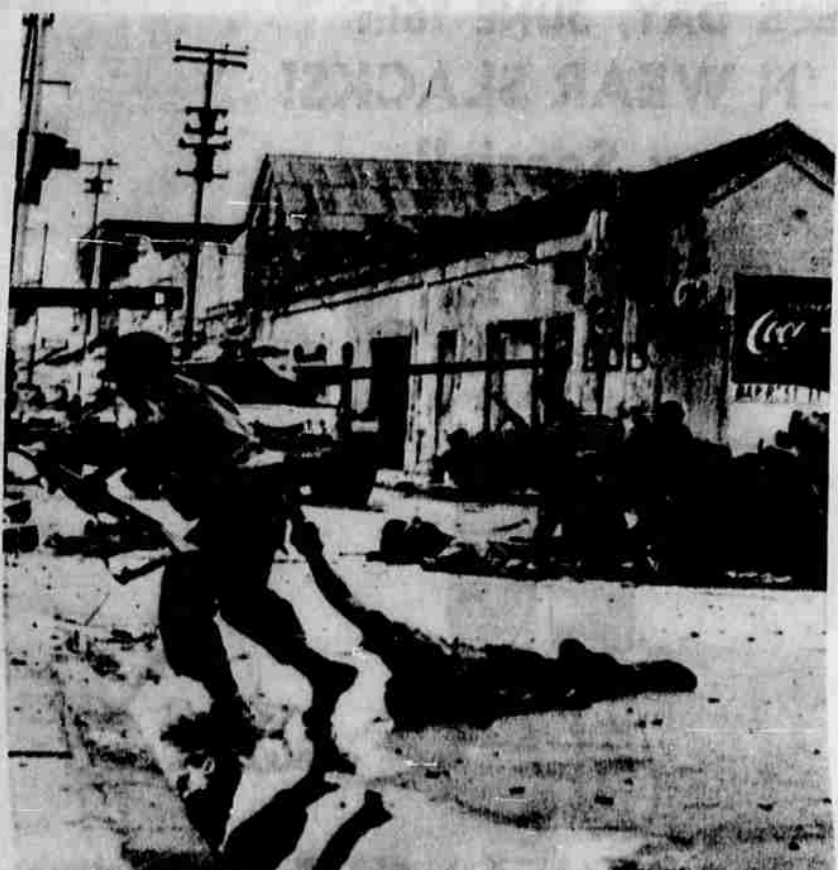
About its connection with the Communists, the FALN's manifesto states emphatically that it owes no allegiance to any political party. Dr. Gustavo Machado, Communist

party boss, said, "Certainly there are members of the party in the FALN but we have no control whatever over it."

The cement which holds together this diversity of opinion is nationalism. It is nationalism of the South American ilk—deeply rooted and extremely touchy. The FALN, if it overthrows Betancourt or not, sees itself as a watchdog in the years to come, lying dormant when a government heads in the direction it desires and sweeping the country with bombs and bullets when the government fails to

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OPPOSE COMMUNISTS—A loyalist soldier drags a dead companion from the fighting during uprising in northern Venezuela in a Puerto Cabello street during military action against Communist-backed rebels in this photo. (UPI)

Tax Collecting More Civilized, Says Curator

Bitburg, Germany — (UPI) — If it's any consolation to anybody, people have had to pay taxes for at least 4,000 years, according to Dr. Alfons Pausch.

Pausch ought to know. The Bitburg tax official is director of Germany's only tax museum.

The museum started as a private collection of the average taxpayer's constant cause of grumbles.

Last fall when Pausch was transferred to Bitburg, his private museum moved with him to find a new home in the former Benedictine Abbey of this town near Bonn. It now is appropriately lodged in the former tax barn of the Abbey.

Pausch proudly shows his collection. The oldest documentation of tax-paying is a replica of a bas-relief dating back to 2,300 B.C. It shows the tomb of ancient Egyptian Vizier Mereruka in Sakkura near Memphis, with two men kneeling before the tax collector, while a third man, who refused to pay, is being clobbered by the tax collector's aides.

"You must agree that our methods have become more civil with the years of experience," said tax collector Pausch.

Among other documents, Advertisement

Pausch also displays a tax list of the medieval city of Trier, listing the inhabitants of Engels-gasse (Angels Street) in 1363 A.D.

Another document proves tax exemption also was known for ages, although it was harder to get. The document states that fathers of 12 legitimate children were granted an exemption in 1628 A.D.

A tax declaration form of 1764 undoubtedly would delight today's taxpayer. The form listed only four questions.

The museum also shows a picture of the last tax soldier of the Black Forest city of Freudenstadt. The grim-faced,

moustached warrior used to pause at inns while making the rounds of the city's tardy taxpayers, thundering at them: "Do not booze, go pay your taxes!"

Pausch's collection, now kept up by the government at a cost of \$25,000 a year to taxpayers, has items which do not please curator Pausch.

"This is the black sheep in my collection," Pausch said, pointing at the photograph of a Roman sculpture, showing Emperor Trajan announcing that the people of ancient Rome are tax-free.

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Nashville Is Burl Ives' Hollywood

Hollywood — (UPI) — While some singers select their numbers in Hollywood or New York, Burl Ives credits much of his success to using Nashville, Tenn., as his one-a-year headquarters.

Ives considers Nashville the capital of country music. Each year he sets up shop in a hotel suite and listens to the wares of song writers, new and old. He selects about 12 songs he likes and records them in Nashville, then heads to the Bahamas for a round of fishing.

EXECUTIVE WORK

New York — (UPI) — Top executives of manufacturing concerns spend an average of one-fourth their time in sales and marketing activities, according to a survey by the National Industrial Conference board.

LATEST MEDICAL ADVANCE:



Babies for Barren Marriages

At least one out of 10 married couples in the U.S. have difficulty in having children. To these 8,000,000 people, infertility, and miscarriages, are baffling and heartbreaking deprivation.

Now a new hormone pill permits one out of three couples who seem to be "permanently" childless to have youngsters of their own.

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