

Once-Popular Fidelito Castro Is Virtually a Prisoner at 17

By CARLOS MARTINEZ
Of Our Latin America Staff

Fidelito, a shy, dark-haired youth, once was the most popular boy in Cuba.

But time and circumstances have brought a change in fortunes for Fidel Castro Jr.

Today, at 17 and living under an assumed name, Fidelito is a forgotten figure and virtual prisoner in the country his father rules.



Fidelito Castro Stands Beside Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow
... son of Fidel Castro was with group of Cuban youths on 1961 tour

Castro aged the boy six years ago after an incident involving Fidelito during a 1961 visit to the Soviet Union with a delegation of Cuban youth.

Fidelito, sent on the tour of Moscow and other East European capitals against his will, broke away from a hospital where he was hospitalized with influenza and boarded the first plane to Havana.

The incident embarrassed Castro — then embarking on a honeymoon with the Russians — and apparently marked Fidelito for oblivion.

When he returned, the boy was restricted to a large mansion in the Country Club suburb of Havana. Orders were issued by Castro that no one, not even his mother, was to see the boy.

TODAY, sources close to the family say Fidelito is quietly enrolled in a boarding school in the Biltmore section of the capital. His name has been changed several times.

It is at the boarding school, according to his exile aunt Juanita Castro, that Fidelito yielded to Communist indoctrination after showing earlier contempt for the doctrine.

At the school, there are

orders that Fidelito is to be treated as the other boys.

The students are sent to the fields periodically to cut sugar cane and harvest coffee. Fidelito, his health impaired by a 1959 auto accident, twice has been seriously ill with pneumonia after spending several nights in the fields.

And Fidel Jr., as the others, must take his turn cleaning the kitchen and scrubbing floors.

One thing, however, sets him apart from fellow students at the Secundaria Basica (basic secondary) school — his two well-armed bodyguards.

They keep a constant vigil over him. Once a week they escort him to Tarara Beach, east of Havana, where he now is allowed to spend weekends with his remarried mother.

CASTRO'S former wife, Mirtha Diaz Balart, married

a Cuban lawyer, Emilio Nuñez Blanco, 11 years ago. The couple has two daughters, aged eight and nine.

It was in Tarara where Fidelito lived much of his early life with his mother. And it was there, also, he gained a reputation as a motorcycleist in the days he was allowed one.

Castro's aloofness from the boy has brought him closer to his mother, a woman in her late 30s who has wanted for a long time to take Fidelito out of Cuba. Castro has said he will never consent to this.

Friends say there is little affection between the boy and his father. Castro once made a habit of refusing to see Mirtha and Fidelito when they came to visit him at the Isle of Pines prison where he was jailed in the early 1950s.

An incident following Fidelito's auto accident in early 1959 is also cited as evidence of Castro's apparent lack of concern for Fidelito.

A few hours after the accident, in which Fidelito was critically injured and for a time hovered between life and death, Castro left the bedside to deliver one of his lengthy political discourses.

The managers of the TV station where Castro was to speak suggested cancelling the program, claiming it was only a routine affair and there were no pressing matters for the Cuban premier to discuss.

Jorge Manach, the moderator, urged Castro several times to cut short his address and return to his son but Castro continued with another of his marathon talks.

BEFORE his father took power in 1959, Fidelito attended school in New York City. His mother sent him to Queens when rumors began of his possible assassination as his father led the guerrilla movement in the Sierra Maestra.

Fidelito returned to Cuba when Castro seized control. Eight months later he was back in the U.S., this time as a sports fan. He had talked his father into letting him watch Cuban athletes compete in the Pan American Games in Chicago.

Those were the days when the shy Fidelito was at the height of popularity, although he did what he could to avoid publicity.

His face would turn red when autograph seekers approached him. At the Rex Theater in downtown Havana, where he watched adventure documentaries, his favorites, he would use a side door to avoid the autograph hunters.

Today, however, the autograph seekers are no more. And even if there were it is doubtful they would recognize Fidelito.

Costa Rica Assembly Bars Return of Private Banking

Compiled by Our Latin America Staff

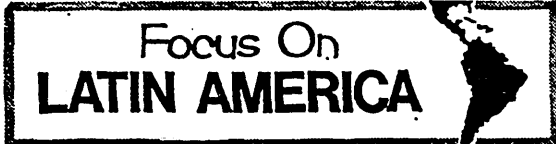
SAN JOSE — Costa Rica's National Assembly has rejected by a 30 to 27 vote a government proposal to reestablish private banking in the Central American country.

Restoration of private banking, abolished in 1948, had been a principal campaign promise of President Jose Joaquin Trejos and his National Unification Party. The party failed, however, to win a majority in Congress.

Rejection of private banking came as the uncalmer Costa Rican Assembly closed its regular session. A special session has been called for the second week in August but the banking bill will not be considered.

Meanwhile, the country apparently has overcome one of the biggest hurdles on the road to recovery from a near disastrous fiscal situation.

The government has sent a "letter of intent," ratifying a new standby loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The agreement increases the Costa



Rican quota from \$11.15 million to \$15.5 million.

The IMF suspended credits last December until greater self-help efforts were forthcoming from Costa Rica. New tax measures were finally approved and went into effect this month, prompting the new IMF agreement.

Stokely Unworried

About His Passport

HAVANA RADIO said Saturday the black power spokesman, Stokely Carmichael, is unconcerned about the possibility of U.S. action against him because of his unauthorized visit to Cuba.

The broadcast monitored in Miami said Carmichael, asked about a report that his passport might be lifted on his return to the U.S., replied:

"I am not interested in any measures taken against me."

The radio said Carmichael is touring Oriente Province and met Friday at Punta Malesi with Labor Minister Jorge Risquet, a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.

Envoy to Nicaragua

Confirmed by Senate

WASHINGTON — The Senate has confirmed the appointment of career Foreign Service Officer Kennedy M. Crockett as U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua. Crockett, now deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica, replaces Aaron Brown in the Nicaraguan post. Brown retired after 30 years in the Foreign Service.

Santa Domingo Bans

Rally for Wessin

SANTO DOMINGO — The government has refused permission for a demonstration by supporters of Dominican Gen. Elias Wessin y Wessin.

Living Cost Doubles

Within Five Years

CARACAS — This Venezuelan capital, already one of the most expensive cities in the world in which to live, has doubled its cost of living index in only five years, according to the Central Bank.

Central Bank figures just released show that, from a base of 100 points in 1962, the index had risen to 195 by March of this year. Steepest rise was for cars and spare parts which from the same 100-point base rose to a spectacular 279. Food and drink were up to 150 and clothing to 153.

Guatemala, Britain

Close Belize Talks

LONDON — Great Britain and Guatemala have concluded a series of discussions here which representatives say have helped reduce their differences in a territorial dispute over Britain's Central American possession of Belize.

The Foreign Ministry said results of the discussions will now be presented to the U.S. which has been mediating the dispute since 1965. Details of the discussions were not disclosed.

Bullet Ends Grim Drama In Harlem

NEW YORK — (AP) — Upon arriving here from India 15 years ago, Gudihi Gulati opened a hardware store in Harlem. He worked hard and the business prospered.

Then, according to police, two men entered and demanded money from Gulati, 52. One of them had a gun.

The owner shouted: "Get out of here! Get out of here!" The startled bandits turned and ran, empty-handed.

Gulati chased them out of the store yelling, "Stop them! Theives! Robbers! Police! Help!" Passersby fled into doorways as they spotted the armed man.

A block from the store the gunman turned and fired once. Gulati slumped to the pavement, fatally wounded in the chest.

The bandits fled.

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