

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

I was able to observe that the opposition and independent Press outsells the government papers anywhere from eight to ten, to one. It seemed to me that a very large number were sold, especially of Impacto and El Espectador. During the time of my visit a cyclist exhibition was being held in the main plaza of the town, directly in front of the National Congress. There was always a crowd present watching to see a young Colombian go around the plaza for three days without stopping. Consequently I was able to talk to many people in different strata of life and received varied impressions. One: now things were better than they were, the worker can protest bad treatment, long hours and ineufficient pay. At the other extreme ~~some~~ gentlemen who said exactly the opposite, and said that they would be willing to jump in the middle of anything that started. However, the over-all impression taken from about thirty one-minute interviews was that none, either at one extreme or the other, or in the middle, expected that anything would happen. Not once did I meet anyone who definitely thought that any thought of physical revolt against the present regime was forthcoming. All seemed to be concerned about the fact that so much was being written about their country in the international press. As a result of these interviews, this reporter feels that the national character, in contrast to many Latin characters, is one of placidity. For example, during the student manifestations many large and very loud firecrackers were shot in the streets, but no one bothered with them at all, ~~and~~ and no one looked out of apartment windows. It seems that this placidity of the citizens would even extend to a time of crisis, and thus it should be considered that the number-one objective at any such time would be creating the impression that one side or the other had actually taken over, or had the situation well in hand. At this time, presumably, people might go out into the streets, join groups, but according to everything I was able to deduct here, they are not the sort of people who will, on their own, run out to take part in proceedings; rather, they would be more inclined to sit tight and not make any move until they thought they were going to make a move on the winning side.

Extracted from informal report by Paul D. Langevin, covering period from 23 March to 27 March, 1953 - Publication - New Report []

Paul D. Langevin

10.3