

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State Letter 7/12/18  
By WJ NARA Date 7/22/18THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OFFICE OF  
AMERICAN REPUBLIC AFFAIRS**RESTRICTED**San Jose, Costa Rica  
July 8, 1949

No. 289

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SUBJECT: The future political status of Vanguardia Popular

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EUR/XThe Honorable,  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OFFICE OF  
AMERICAN REPUBLIC AFFAIRS

JUL 13 1949

F. J. Turner

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's Airgram No. 284 of June 10, 1949, which reported the inclusion by the Constituent Assembly of a provision in the new Constitution, now in the process of enactment, prohibiting the organization or existence of political parties which advocate destruction of the democratic organization of Costa Rica. A translation of the text of this provision, which has now become available, reads as follows:

Article 74. All citizens have the right to associate in parties for the purpose of participating in national politics.

The organization or operation of parties which, through their ideological platforms, means of action or international connections aim to destroy the fundamentals of democratic organization of Costa Rica, or which violate the sovereignty of the country is, however, prohibited. Decision (concerning such parties) to be rendered by the Legislative Assembly by a vote of not less than two-thirds of its members based upon report from the Supreme Tribunal of Elections.

TRANSITORY. For purposes of the elections to be held during the current year, application of the rule contained in the present article shall be the exclusive duty of the Supreme Tribunal of Elections.

Meanwhile, VANGUARDIA POPULAR, at which the foregoing constitutional prohibition was exclusively aimed, has been blasting away at its so-called "undemocratic intent" in its clandestine weekly TRABAJO. It has defiantly stated that it will continue operating, underground if need be. On the other hand, it is taking full advantage of the laxity incident to an administration which is to remain in office but another four months. Since its case has not as yet been placed before the Electoral Tribunal, Vanguardia is proceeding to organize for the forthcoming congressional

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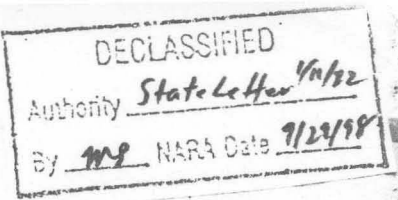
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RETURN TO DOA FILES WITHIN 14 DAYS, WITH A NOTATION OF ACTION TAKEN.

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Despatch No. 289 dated July 8, 1949 from  
American Embassy, San Jose, Costa Rica

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elections. The issue is bound to come to a showdown before long, especially since the press for July 7th announces that Vanguardia is now engaged in securing the required number of signatures for registration as an independent political party under the name of NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (Partido Democrata Nacional).

It is highly probable that any attempt by VANGUARDIA (or whatever its successor may be called), to secure formal recognition as a political party will be contested not only by the Junta, but also by many individuals and parties of varied political hue who suffered last year from the depredations of the Vanguardistas. Memories are still too fresh to warrant a policy of "forget and forgive". In addition to the purely local political aspects of Vanguardia's case, its recent frank admission of communist affiliation (Embassy despatches 266 and 279 of June 21 and July 6 respectively) has opened the eyes of many who in the past perhaps had regarded Vanguardia as a purely local political phenomena.

Respectfully yours,

For the Charge d'Affaires, a. i.:

Alex A. Cohen  
American Vice Consul

cc: American Embassy, Managua  
American Embassy, Tegucigalpa  
American Embassy, Guatemala  
American Embassy, San Salvador

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