

Havana tonight is a shambles. Scenes of havoc and wanton destruction - such as follow the rioting of mobs. The flight of strong man Batista, today, was the signal - for outbreaks all over the Cuban metropolis. The trouble beginning at prisons where political ~~prisoners~~ captives were held. The prisoners - rioting inside. Crowds on the outside, threatening to storm the ~~ga~~ jails.

The disturbances then spread quickly as adherents of the rebels ^{ched} ~~marked~~ in huge demonstrations. ^{The} Rough and tough joining in. Along the Prado the main street of Havana, crowds broke into stores and hotels. Especially those palatial Havana hotels for tourists, where they looted the bars, - and then drunkenness was added to the crazy violence.

Everywhere the red and black flag was flown - the colors of Fidel Castro's twenty-sixth of July movement. As Havana waited for the arrival of the revolutionary chieftain - who was expected

to arrive in triumph.

Fidel Castro - who in Nineteen Fifty Three lead an abortive revolt. He and his fellow revolutionaries - failing miserably on an attack on an army barracks. The date - July twenty-six - which gave the revolutionary movement its name.

Fidel Castro went to jail - and then ~~fr~~ from failure to failure. Until he landed in the Oriente Province in Nineteen Fifty Six, and launched a guerilla campaign in the mountains. Which, today, won the victory.

Castro - demanding full control for his twenty-sixth of July movement.

Jan. 1st, 59,

I doubt if, in all history, there was ever ^{a much more} ~~such a~~ exciting beginning of a new year as in Havana today. As Nineteen Fifty Nine came in - a sudden break of tense, dramatic events.

In the very first hours of the New Year, President Batista called a meeting of the top commanders of the Cuban army - assembling at Camp Colombia, Cuban Army headquarters. There, he told them of his decision. He was leaving the country, going at once. Explaining that he wanted - an end of the revolutionary bloodshed. In effect, Strong-Man Batista was running away - leaving Cuba to ~~the~~ Fidel Castro's insurgents.

This was ^{not} really unexpected - since it was evident that Batista's government was tottering, under the pressure of the long rebellion and the recent insurgent successes. Evening before last we heard of Batista children - sent out of Cuba to the United States. Which seemed a tell-tale

sign - that Batista, himself, might soon go.

Nevertheless, his decision at the break of the new year was a surprise. Apparently Batista made up his mind suddenly - because Castro's insurrectos were capturing the city of Santa Clara. For days we've heard about the battle for that vital place - in the Province of Las Villas. We noted that, if the rebels got control of the province, which is at the waist-line of the island, it would cut Cuba in two. Santa Clara - only half a dozen hours by automobile from Havana. So the issue of that battle seems to have been the decisive event in the Cuban Civil War. The capture of Santa Clara persuading Batista - that the game was up.

In the meeting at Camp Colombia, Batista and his top officers decided - a military hunta ~~xxxx~~ would not ^w take control. Headed - by General Cantillo, commander of the principal army forces opposing the rebels. But the military hunta would assume

constitutional forms, and act in accordance with law. The Cuban ^{constitution} ~~constitution~~ provides that, if the Presidency becomes vacant the senior member of the supreme court shall assume top office.

So at three-thirty a.m. this morning, three men arrived at the Havana residence of Supreme Court Justice Piedra. Routing him out of bed, and informing him - that he was President of Cuba. Whereupon the Senior Justice was taken to military headquarters and sworn in as President, For what promised surely, to be - one of the shortest administrations in the history of any republic. ~~However~~ The insurgents made it clear - they wouldn't accept the military hunta left by Batista - or the new President. They insisted on their own candidate, Dr. Manuel Urrutia, a ~~and~~ former magistrate, who ~~just~~ joined the Castro rebels. Dr. Urrutia they said, must be installed as President.

In the face of this, the military junta called for peace negotiations, entering into communication with Castro's rebels, To arrange - the terms of a settlement.

Meanwhile, Batista was on his way - fleeing into exile. Batista, who as a mere sergeant rose to power in a revolution of the early thirties. Since then, ~~the~~ strong man - in and out of the Presidency. He took a military plane, to the Dominican Republic seeking refuge there.

Accompanying him - Aguero, who had been elected President of Cuba some weeks ago. Hand picked by Batista - and denounced by the rebels as a stooge. They called the election - a farce. So now President elect Aguero accompanied Batista into exile - without ever having had a chance to take the office of President.

There was a wholesale exodus of top

officials of the fallen regime - scores of them.

Batista was accompanied by some forty.

Two other big planes carried batches of exiles - including members of Batista's family. One - flying to Jacksonville, Florida. The other - to New Orleans. At U S airports, the exiles got a hostile reception from Cuban supporters of Fidel Castro - the winner.

MIKOYAN

Word from London - that Mikoyan will try to promote a personal meeting between President Eisenhower and Khrushchev, in the spring. This emanates from Communist diplomats in the British capital, who say - that the visit of the Moscow deputy premier to Washington has broad international meanings.

Austensibly, Mikoyan will be in the United States on a private mission but ~~we~~ we've been hearing that ^{he will} ~~he will~~ have talks with ~~the~~ State Department officials - on the subject of the Berlin crisis. Today's dispatch expands that - with intimations that Mikoyan will take with him an omnibus peace plan covering the entire cold war.

According to the Communist diplomats in London, Mikoyan will seek, first of all - to bring a relaxation of the tension between Soviet Russia and the United States. ~~Hence the project - of an Eisenhower-Khrushchev meeting. If such person to person talks cannot be arranged, Mikoyan~~

CAIRO

In Egypt - a sudden crackdown on the Communists. Police raids - at midnight of the New Year. More than one hundred Communists arrested. Including top leaders. Three publishing houses distributing Red literature, raided and closed.

Nasser's Arab republic - striking at the Communists in Egypt. The report adding ^{S, Don,} ~~ing~~ - ₁ that the crack-down is extending to Syria.

ROME

Rome began the new year - with forty-one people in the hospital. From injuries -- incurred while ringing in the new.

The Eternal City has a special New Year's custom of its own - dating back to the days of long ago. At midnight, people not only cheer and sing and blow horns - but they also ~~through~~ throw things out of windows. In homes, out go useless household items - wine bottles, discarded pots and pans, dishes, pottery. Even - chunks of worn out furniture.

So you can imagine what it's like in the streets - especially when the barrage descends from upper stories. Any number of passers-by - konked. Forty-one hurt badly enough - to be taken to the hospital.

It sure was - a Roman holiday.