

Air Pouch

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE
837.06/5-552
XR 737.00-MAY DAY

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

1856
DESP. NO.

MAY 6 1952

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. - 1 Enc.

DATE
May 5, 1952

REF : 000183 Labor Developments

20 For Dept. Use Only bs	ACTION AP-A* REC'D MAY 7	DEPT. I N F O OTHER	REP	DCR	OLI	UNA	EUR/X	IFI	TCA
			COMM	FRB	LAB	NSRB			

SUBJECT: May Day Observed Without Major Incident

Organized labor observed May Day throughout Cuba in an orderly manner, with the largest and most important celebration being held in Habana where 5,000 workers jammed the auditorium of the Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC) to hear speeches by the Minister of Labor, Jesús PORTOCARRERO, and various CTC leaders. (Newspaper photograph of meeting enclosed) No significant incidents occurred although the press reported that police dispersed (in one instance, by firing into the air over their heads) several small bands of Communists in Habana said to have been passing out anti-government pamphlets. Business, industry and government slowed to a minimum, all adding up to a calm and enjoyable holiday.

Speeches by CTC Secretary-General Eusebio MUJAL and other CTC leaders were of the traditional variety, citing labor's gains and the need for solidarity so as to continue making gains for the rank and file. Repeated reference was made to the CTC's understanding with President BATISTA, with emphasis on present safeguards for labor and future concessions the labor leaders believe to be stated or implied in that understanding. Batista's name was cheered only when his name was mentioned in this connection. There was no spontaneous ovation that could be interpreted as a general and enthusiastic endorsement of the new regime. The CTC policy of cordiality was evident, however, in the tenor of the speeches, their compliments to the Minister of Labor and their mention of the understanding between labor and Batista. None of the addresses was especially noteworthy. All condemned the Communists. Mujal made much of the fact that the Communists had not been able to interfere with the CTC meeting (apparently they did not try). He offered to resign as Secretary-General if the workers felt it would help labor's relationship with the new government, but this was shouted down by his listeners.

Some 250 demands were handed to the Minister of Labor for the attention of the government. Portocarrero indicated that

ISLippe:rc
REPORTER

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION

ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

DC/R
Central
837.06/5-552

JUN 6 1952

HH

Handwritten signature and initials

Handwritten initials

CONFIDENTIAL

124 of these could be granted but did not say immediately which ones they were. The demands include wage increases in industries that can afford them, raised pension benefits, reduction in cost of living, arrest and prosecution of speculators, elimination of racial discrimination, a fair share in profits of companies for workers, a 40 per cent cut in rents not already frozen and a continuing fight against Communism.

Portocarrero, who represented Batista, assured the workers of the government's determination to maintain all the "conquests" of labor and a policy of cordiality between the employing and working classes for the benefit of both and the nation in general. His remarks resulted in enthusiastic applause. He said that the government would give careful consideration to the demands presented him.

Labor Day can best be described as a "bust" so far as the Communists are concerned. Their newspaper Hoy claims that "dozens" of meetings were held but this appears to be gross exaggeration. Several small Communist groups were reportedly dispersed while passing out pamphlets but there were no disturbances of any consequence. This appears to be true of the entire country. They had been refused permission to parade or meet, since that was granted exclusively to the CTC as the only bonafide organization of labor in Cuba.

COMMENT

Presence of a large police detail, on hand to keep order, may have discouraged expression of anti-Batista sentiments by some CTC affiliates who are known to take a dim view of Mujal's cordial relations with the chief of state.

For the Ambassador:

Irvin S. Lippe
Irvin S. Lippe
Attaché

Enclosure: *1/11/56*
Newspaper photograph



El primero de mayo

Del acto celebrado ayer en el Palacio de los Trabajadores, para conmemorar el Día Internacional del Trabajo se ofrecen dos aspectos. Arriba, la presidencia, donde aparecen, de izquierda a derecha: Ramón León Rentería, Raquel Valladares, Javier H. Bolaños, Jesús A. Portocarrero y Eusebio Mujal. Debajo, aspecto del público asistente. (Foto Aldo).