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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUREAU OF  
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS  
APR 1 1951  
837.06/4-351

TO : Department of State  
FROM : HABANA 2008 April 3, 1951  
REF: 000183 Labor Developments  
SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF ORIT MEETS IN HABANA

The Executive Committee of the Regional Organization of the ICFTU (ORIT) met in Habana on March 27-28, 1951, with the following members in attendance: President Arturo SABOROSO; Secretary General Francisco AGUIRRE; George P. DELANEY and Serafino ROMUALDI of the AFL; John BUCKMASTER and Ernst SCHWARZ of the CIO; John OWENS of the UMW; Henry MIDDLETON from Belize, British Honduras; Eusebio MUJAL and Emilio SURI CASTILLO of Cuba; and Manuel RIVERA of Mexico.

The more important items on the agenda included the following: (a) the IAM meeting in Washington and the recommendations of the ORIT to the IAM delegates; (b) discussion of a proposal drafted by Aguirre (see below for details of proposal); (c) fixation of annual dues; (d) discussion of organizational plans; and (e) a discussion of economic and social problems facing the workers in the Americas.

This report on the meeting has been delayed in the hope of obtaining a copy of the final document containing complete information on all resolutions passed at the meeting. Since a copy has not yet been received, the following preliminary information based on conversations with delegates to the meeting and press reports is being forwarded. A copy of the final document will be forwarded to the Department immediately upon receipt.

Recommendations to the IAM:

The Committee issued a statement which can be summarized as follows. There are millions of workers in the Americas who are vitally interested in the IAM Conference because it refers specifically to military and economic problems. "We favor the adoption of measures to neutralize the activities of the fifth columns and prevent sabotage, but are concerned over the possibility of these measures not being surrounded by sufficient guarantees and being used abusively by totalitarian governments against the democracies and the workers."

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The Committee recommends the strengthening of internal security in the American Republics by means not constituting any "repudiation of the basic principles of the Charter of the OAS".

The Committee requests the reestablishment of constitutional guarantees in those countries which have suspended democratic regimes as well as the release of labor leaders who have been imprisoned. It further recommends that American governments should comply with commitments made in various Inter-American Conferences by which they are obliged to respect political and syndical liberties; to hold democratic elections, and to function as governments elected by popular vote.

The Committee recommends the reestablishment of the Committee of Political Defense which functioned in Montevideo during World War II, making it responsible for combating Soviet infiltration in the Hemisphere and to urge the compliance of the governments with Inter-American pacts and conventions designed to strengthen democracy.

With respect to military cooperation, the Committee stated, "The free world should prepare itself so that it can sustain any Russian act of aggression. Each and every American country should contribute to the defense of the Panama Canal and the protection of the coasts as well as contribute to the military forces of the United Nations."

The Committee recommends an urgent program of social and economic reforms, stating that the development of a stable economy in Latin America is as important, in the opinion of the workers, as the development of military power, adding that an economic crisis would aid the communist aggressors as much as a state of military weakness.

In order to insure labor's cooperation in the mutual defense effort, the Committee made the following requests: (1) that all labor contracts made during the present emergency situation shall include specific clauses guaranteeing adequate salaries and uniform and fair working conditions, at least equal to those established in international conventions which have been approved by the ILO; (2) to extend the system of compulsory social security; (3) to establish guarantees to migratory agricultural workers, assuring them of high living and working standards; (4) to improve the facilities for professional training; (5) to extend the right to organize to small property owners; assist them in obtaining more land; facilitate credit for the purchase of machinery and other agricultural requirements; and assist them in the creating of cooperatives; (6) to increase the exchange of workers among

the American countries and establish sufficient funds to permit the increased use of training grants; and (7) to develop a more extensive program of public sanitation and health.

#### Committee Condemns Seizure of La Prensa

The first official act of the Committee was the passing of a resolution condemning the seizure of the Buenos Aires newspaper La Prensa by the Argentine government.

The resolution pledges the ORIT to support any efforts which may be made by the United Nations or Organization of American States to achieve the restoration of La Prensa as a free and independent news organ.

#### Organizational Plans

An organizational plan presented by Francisco Aguirre was the subject of prolonged discussions. It was finally agreed to present the plan at the next Congress of the ICFTU. Aguirre's plan is directly concerned with the development of labor organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean area, especially in those countries which do not have strong democratic labor organizations at the present time. Aguirre proposed the creation of a special fund of several million dollars to be used in intensifying the work of organizing labor throughout the world with special emphasis on Latin America.

The situation of the miners in Chile and Bolivia was discussed and it was agreed to send Aguirre to those countries at the earliest possible date for the purpose of setting up and effective plan of action. It was also agreed that Aguirre should visit El Salvador and Honduras at an early date while Serafino Romualdi should visit Haiti and Puerto Rico. It was further agreed to step up a drive to organize the banana workers of Central America, to which end the cooperation of American longshoremen's and seamen's unions, which already have labor contracts with the United Fruit Company, will be sought with a view to obtaining similar contracts for the banana workers.

The Committee also discussed the resolution of the ICFTU to accept the invitation of the Santo Domingo Workers Confederation to send a commission to that country to study the labor situation, accepting the decision of the Executive Committee of the ICFTU to make up the commission of Latin American and United States labor representatives and authorizing the Secretary General of the ORIT to designate the components of the Commission.

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Tentative Date Set for Next Meeting of Executive Committee

It was agreed to set the month of October 1951 as a tentative date for the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

Press Coverage and Reaction

Cuban press reaction to the meeting has been favorable, with the exception of the communist organ La Ultima Hora. Although no editorials were written on the meeting, coverage was adequate and restricted to factual reporting. La Ultima Hora published only one small item in connection with the meeting which stated, "The ORIT provided with ample funds by the governments of its leaders, especially the United States, passed two resolutions: (1) to press and support the campaign to send young Latin Americans to Korea; and (2) to imbibe numerous cocktails.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:

  
Ray H. Crane,  
Assistant Attaché.

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