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TO : Department of State

FROM : HABANA 2486 June 18, 1951

REF : 000183, Labor Developments

SUBJECT : CTC LEADERS PRESENT WORKERS' DEMANDS TO PRESIDENT PRIO

837-06/6-1851
 JUN 20 1951
 FOREIGN AFFAIRS
 JUN 20 1951

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The Executive Committee of the Cuban Confederation of Workers recently called on President PRIO to present the following list of labor's demands, based on Resolutions approved in the final plenary session of the Seventh National Congress of the CTC.

1. To have the Executive order the freezing of prices of articles of prime necessity before the 30% increase in salaries.
2. To demand a 30% increase in the salaries of all workers throughout the country.

Comment

The CTC has based its demands for a general wage increase on the high cost of living, allegedly due to the Government's failure to curb upward trend in prices and eliminate black market operations in essential food stuffs.

3. That whoever has the authority to do so order the reorganization of the Provincial Labor Offices since the persons who work therein are in full accord with the employers, the CTC believing that this attitude on the part of Government officials in the Labor Offices is in conflict with the social policies of the President of the Republic.

Comment

Although the workers may have a point here the Embassy has heard similar comments from management which feels that Provincial Labor Offices are merely following orders of the Central Government, having no real authority of their own. In any case, important decisions are rarely made by Provincial Offices, the Minister of Labor or the President almost invariably being called upon to settle all but minor labor disputes.

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4. To congratulate the President of the Republic for having extended the benefits of the "Labor Maternity Law" to farm mothers and having asked Congress to give the decree the force of a law including the formula to include farm mothers.
5. Likewise to congratulate the President for the nationalization of Autobuses Modernos; for the solution given to the matter of the Railroad Retirement Fund; for the increase in the salaries of maritime workers; for the policy of subsidies which has solved serious conflicts which might have brought about fatal consequences and for all the measures in favor of the working classes.
6. To establish by decree a deduction of 1% in the salaries of the workers of different industries as has been done in the sugar industry.

Comment

This is probably the most controversial of the entire list of demands. The request is based on the fact that sugar workers were granted a one percent union dues check-off, to be paid by the employer. Whereas the prosperous situation prevailing in the sugar industry permits the employer to support this burden, it is felt that many smaller industries may not be in a position to pay the one percent, especially if a general wage increase is granted. However, according to a prominent leader of the Maritime Federation, a solution has been suggested which would tie the one percent check-off in with the wage increase. For example, if the employees in a specific industry should be granted a twenty percent wage increase, the Minister of Labor could issue a resolution directing the employer to increase wages by twenty-one percent. Twenty percent to go to the worker and one percent to the union. The belief being that there would be less opposition to an extra one percent wage increase than to a direct order to pay the workers' union dues.

7. That until the distribution of land is made to the farm comrades, the Executive issue orders so that every cane plantation will give a lot of land to each worker in order that they may raise their own food during the dead season.

8. That the Congress of the Republic be asked to enact a law making it compulsory for employers to give each worker a month's salary as a Christmas present, the same to be paid on December 22 of each year.

Comment

This request is based on the fact that Government employees have been granted a Christmas bonus (see Embassy Despatch 1083, November 16, 1950).

9. To request the Executive or Congress for a decree or law providing that claims made by workers at the Provincial Labor Offices or at the Ministry of Labor be decided within six months after the claim has been established.
10. That the right to strike be fully established and that Decree No. 3 and other decrees, resolutions and laws which limit the democratic rights of the classes and which are against compulsory arbitration also be revoked.

Comment

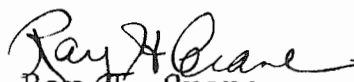
It is believed that labor will interpret the above to mean the removal of all restrictions against strikes, since the right to strike exists under present legislation, thus eliminating charges of illegal strikes by employers.

11. That Congress be asked to enact all retirement laws that are now pending.
12. That the Executive be asked to take steps to nationalize the United Railways of Havana.
13. That the Executive ask Congress to amend the present Workmen's Compensation Law taking into consideration the suggestions which will be made in due course by the CTC.
14. That the National Transportation Commission be dissolved.
15. The general coordination of transportation after a hearing granted to CTC.
16. To request the Executive for a broad amnesty law which will return our comrades imprisoned for their anti-Communist syndical activities to their homes and wipe out the threat of imprisonment which is hanging over hundreds of our comrades.

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17. To demand the delivery of the buildings constructed at the Barrio Obrero at Luyano within a short time, with the intervention of a delegate of the CTC which will suggest the rules to be applied.
18. To request the President to amend the present Labor Maternity Law as regards social welfare feature, the creation of provincial clinics and changing the present method of contributing to the fund.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim


Ray H. Crane
Assistant Attaché