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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

736
DESP. NO.

NOV 13 1952
[Handwritten initials]

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON - 1

Enc. November 12 1952

REF : 000183 Labor Developments
Embdespatch 162 of July 30, 1952

BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
[Handwritten: WEDTC]

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| 5 For Dept. Use Only kp | ACTION ARA | DEPT. I N V O | REP | OLI | IBS | IFI | TCA | UNA | NOV 14 1952 | <i>[Handwritten: AAAL]</i> |
| | REC'D NOV 14 | OTHER | COMM | FRB | LAB | NSRB | | | | |

SUBJECT: ORIT Official Indicates Dissatisfaction with Aguirre's Leadership

In a recent conversation with the Embassy's labor reporting officer, Angel BRAVO, office manager of the Interamerican Organization of Labor (ORIT), expressed extreme pessimism regarding the effectiveness and future of ORIT. He was particularly disgusted with the leadership of Francisco AGUIRRE, secretary-general. His remarks are interesting in view of the forthcoming ORIT conference in Rio de Janeiro.

Bravo also commented on certain aspects of the Cuban labor situation, particularly the Cuban Confederation of Labor's (CTC) leadership which he believes to be of very low caliber.

A memorandum covering this conversation is enclosed.

For the Ambassador:

[Handwritten signature: Irvin S. Lippe]

Irvin S. Lippe
Attaché

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NOV 14 AM 10 03

Enclosure: *[Handwritten: 1]*
Memorandum of conversation

ISLippe:rc
REPORTER

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Page _____ of
Desp. No. _____
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Page 1 of _____
Encl. No. 1
Desp. No. 736
From HABANA

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

November 7, 1952

Participants:

Angel Bravo
I. S. Lippe

Bravo was extremely pessimistic regarding the activities of ORIT. He said that in addition to not having enough money to operate successfully the organization was going to pot under the weak and inefficient leadership of Aguirre. Bravo said that Aguirre had not been in the ORIT office in the CTC for 46 days. Aguirre, he said, was spending all of his time at the Gastronómico retirement fund headquarters. He is President of that caja. Bravo felt that BATISTA had not removed Aguirre from that post because it was felt that this would be interpreted as a blow to ORIT which is believed to have the support of the United States. Bravo said that he wanted to let ROMUALDI and SCHWARZ, of the AFL and CIO respectively, know his feelings about the deterioration of ORIT under Aguirre but he did not want to put these sentiments into a letter which might later get him into trouble for mixing in ORIT politics. He said there was some talk of moving ORIT headquarters to Puerto Rico but that he preferred moving to Miami. He said that notwithstanding the criticism that might come from the rest of Latin America that United States labor was dominating ORIT, he felt that it would be good for the organization to work from the United States. It was his feeling that it was perfectly all right for ORIT to be under the domination of American labor since, as he put it, the American unions are honest and understand the long-range objectives of the organization. He did not know whether he would be one of those selected to attend the ORIT meeting in Rio in December.

Regarding Communist activity in Cuban labor, Bravo said that he understood that two sindicatos of the Tobacco Workers' Union had fallen into Communist leadership. He said that he would give me further information on Communist activities next week.

Bravo felt that the Argentine labor attaché was making considerable progress within the CTC. He reports having seen this labor attaché frequently at CTC headquarters and having seen considerable Peronista literature over there. He said that he would furnish me with some copies of this propaganda next week.

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He reported a conversation with José Luis MARTINEZ, secretary-general of the Sugar Workers' Federation, in which the sugar labor leader expressed in very warm terms his belief in a federation of Latin American labor as opposed to ORIT. Martinez seemed to think it was inevitable. Bravo also said that he had heard considerable talk like this in recent weeks.

Bravo was extremely candid regarding his opinion of Cuban labor leadership. He said that in all his experience he had never witnessed such blatant venality as he found in the unions affiliated with the CTC. He said that while many of the leaders had been quite sincere and honest in the beginning they were using their offices now to enrich themselves. He cited José Luis Martinez, the sugar labor leader, as an example. Before Martinez became secretary-general of the sugar workers Bravo said he was a hard working and poor union delegate. He said that now he was known to have a large bank account and other evidences of sudden wealth. When asked how this was possible, Bravo said that many of the unions did not account for their funds at all and that they would charge up individual travel expenses at tremendous figures which it was impossible to spend on the alleged trips. Bravo said, however, that many of the local union or sindicato officials are extremely honest and sincere but the Cuban mood was to get rich quick and that this seemed to overtake labor leaders when they assumed great power. He said that MUJAL rarely came to the CTC headquarters these days and was usually found at his political office downtown on the Prado. He said that Mujal was closer to Batista than he had ever been to PRIO and that there was considerable resentment in labor's ranks because of this.

Among the labor leaders Bravo thinks are honest and sincere are GOLIATH, RENTERIA (Paupista) and PONS of the maritime workers, RUBIERA of the telephone workers and COFIÑO of the electric plant workers.

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