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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

*File - WCR*

DATE: June 18, 1953

SUBJECT: Presentation of Memorandum from Cuban Confederation of Labor

PARTICIPANTS: Señor Luis Alberto Monge, Secretary-general of ORIT  
Señor José Luis MARTINEZ, Secretary-general of the National Sugar Workers Union  
Señor Domingo LAMADRIZ, Secretary-general of the Habana Bank Employees Union  
Señor Sergio PONS Rivera, Finance Secretary of the National

COPIES TO: Maritime Workers Union  
Mr. Serafino Romualdi, Latin American Representative of the AFL  
Mr. Ernst Schwarz, Exec. Sec., Latin Amer. Affairs Committee, CIO  
Mr. Robert F. Woodward, Deputy Asst. Sec. Bureau of Inter-Amer. Affairs  
Mr. John T. Fishburn, Labor Adviser, ARA

COPIES TO: ARA (2); MID; DRA; E/L  
American Embassy, Habana

Arrangements had been made through the AFL for Eusebio MUJAL, Secretary-general of the Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC), to meet with Assistant Secretary Cabot in order to discuss some views which MUJAL had stated that he wished the Department to consider regarding its policies toward Latin America. In the interval between the original arrangements for the meeting and the meeting itself, Mr. MUJAL released an official CTC statement which was discourteous of the Department and unfriendly in tone. Mr. MUJAL also found that at the last minute he could not come to the U.S., according to a letter of apology which he sent Mr. Cabot through Mr. LAMADRIZ. (It seems fairly clear that he did not intend to come from the beginning, since he never applied for a visa). It is possible that his discourteous public statement and refusal to attend the conference may have been an attempt to have the Department cancel the interview, which could then have been utilized as an indication of our unwillingness to meet with them to discuss the issues. As a result of the public statement by MUJAL and his absence, it was decided to have the Cubans see Mr. Woodward, Mr. Cabot's Deputy, rather than the latter.

Mr. LAMADRIZ presented to Mr. Woodward a letter from Mr. MUJAL which he stated expressed the latter's regret at his inability to attend because of urgent business which had developed at the last minute and which also stated Mr. MUJAL's hope that Mr. Cabot would be able to see him at a future date. He also presented a memorandum which he stated covered the views which the CTC wished to have the Department consider. Mr. Woodward expressed his appreciation for the letter, his regret that Mr. MUJAL could not attend the meeting and stated that the contents of the memorandum would receive our most serious consideration. He added that naturally in view of its length, the memorandum would have to be studied carefully.

The visitors opened the interview with a statement by Mr. Monge, who stated that although ORIT is interested in the same subjects covered by the

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Cuban memorandum, it had not in any way considered the memorandum and that the memorandum could not therefore be regarded as coming from the organization as such. He indicated that ORIT is naturally interested in any subject in which its affiliates, especially one as important and powerful as the Cuban CTC, wish to present and believes that the subjects raised in the memorandum merit thorough consideration. Mr. Romualdi on behalf of the AFL and then Mr. Schwarz on behalf of the CIO then indicated that their organizations had not officially considered the memorandum and that it should not be regarded as representing their organizations' views. Nevertheless both added that the subjects raised in the memorandum are of considerable interest to their organizations and indicated that they merit serious consideration.

Mr. LAMADRIZ indicated that the CTC wished to present the memorandum as an outline of its suggestions for improving the foreign policy of the U.S. with respect to Latin America. He added that the CTC was activated by the common objective of opposing the development of communism and imperialism in Latin America and indicated that the ideas expressed in the memorandum were presented in order that there might be a frank exchange with the Department on them and in order that the Department might know the CTC's views regarding the best ways of achieving our common goal.

Various specific subjects mentioned in the memorandum were then discussed by the visitors such as the problem of overproduction of Cuban sugar which was outlined in some detail, U.S. purchases of Bolivian tin, and U.S. countervailing duties upon imports of Uruguayan wool tops. The relations of the Department to governments which the Cuban labor movement regards as dictatorial in nature were likewise mentioned briefly. With respect to dictatorial governments, Mr. Monge indicated that regardless of the Department's relations with them, ORIT would continue to oppose them consistently.

It was suggested that Dr. Eisenhower consider the problems covered by the CTC memorandum. Mr. Romualdi thereupon proposed the inclusion of labor representatives among the officials accompanying him on his forthcoming trip to South America. Mr. Schwarz indicated the concurrence of the CIO with Mr. Romualdi's proposal.

The entire discussion was amicable and courteous. Following the meeting Mr. LAMADRIZ expressed his informal views that Mr. Woodward had been very friendly and indicated his appreciation that the Department was already concerned with the problems raised by them. In interviews with representatives of the AP and UP, which had been arranged by the AFL, following the meeting with Mr. Woodward, the Cubans indicated their entire satisfaction with the meeting and their pleasure at having participated in it.

Following the interview with the representatives of the press services, the Cubans remained in Mr. Fishburn's office until approximately 5:30 discussing in more detail specific problems. They were given an outline of the Department's views on Bolivian tin purchases and countervailing duties upon Uruguayan wool tops which are exported to this country, as indications of our government's serious attempts to promote the welfare of Latin America in as helpful a manner as possible. They expressed appreciation for the information which they appeared not to have had previously.

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