

AIR POUCH

PRIORITY

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

## FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA

211

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

September 14, 1955

DATE

REF : - 7

RM/R-2

P-1 SEP 15 1955

25 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION Cia-3	DEPT. a/Rep-2	OL-6	ICA-10	20-4
	REC'D 9-17	IN Lab-5	FO Cia-5	Com-4	USIA-10

SUBJECT: MIAMI HERALD Article on Cuban Labor Situation.

Army-2 Navy-2

micro

There are enclosed three clippings of an article that appeared in the Miami Herald for September 12 dealing with the Cuban labor movement. The principal point of the article is that Eusebio MUJAL is tottering as Secretary-General of the CTC. The recent Bank Workers and state telegraphists strikes are seen as evidences of Mujal's weakness. Those most likely to succeed Mujal, in the eyes of the writer, Ruth McCARTHY, wife of the U.P. correspondent in Habana, are apparently Marco HIRIGOYEN, Pablo BALBUENA, and Pascasio LINERAS (not Linares as in the article), all Auténtico and Prísta labor leaders.

Articles in the Miami Herald about Cuba are frequently reprinted or widely commented upon by the Habana press. So far there has been no mention in it of the article here reported upon.

This article is full of factual errors. The CTC claims to represent more than 1,200,000 workers, not 500,000. There are 33 not 42 federations (the 42 votes were made up of the 33 secretaries of the industrial federations, plus the nine members of the Bureau of Direction). All strikes in Cuba are illegal unless the steps prescribed by law are first taken, which they never are. The state telegraphists are not in the CTC (no public employees are) and Mujal was not "forced into supporting the telegraphers' strike." In fact, the CTC merely attempted mediation, and while President Batista made an unkind reference in the papers to the strike's not being the CTC's business, it is probable that Mujal had some influence with the strike leaders when they called for a return to work.

As to the Bank Workers' strike, the last word has yet to be said. Things could still come out in such a way (for example, by the sound defeat of AGUILERA in new elections in the Habana union) as to constitute a triumph for Mujal. It should be observed, also, in commenting on the Herald article, that intervention of the Habana union was precipitated by a slowdown (hardly distinguishable in this case from a strike) called by Aguilera.

Hirigoyen and Lineras have labor followings of some strength; the

JdeZengotita:mbw

REPORTER

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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

837.062/9-1455

LWC

Page 2 of  
Desp. No. 211  
From HABANA

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

(Classification)

Page \_\_\_\_\_ of  
Encl. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Desp. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_

first among the workers of Omnibuses Modernos and among other groups that are attracted to his leadership, the second among the textile and henequen workers. Balbuena was recently declared to be the Prío labor group's candidate for Secretary-General of the CTC at the IX Congress, now set for April, 1956. However, while once Secretary of Organization of the CTC, Balbuena has very little base following of any kind. Hirigoyen is already on the CTC Bureau of Direction and consequently could not form an "addition" to it.

The fact is that none of these three men stands a chance of becoming head of the CTC so long as the present government stays in power. Were Prío or an associate of his to come to power, their standing would of course be radically altered. But for the time being Hirigoyen, Lineras and Balbuena must remain well down on the list of labor leaders likely to succeed Mujal, whether as friends or as enemies of his.

For the Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

  
Juan de Zengotita  
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure: *att.*

3 clippings.

OCT 15 1956

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

1 9/14/55 211

with yd



**EUSEBIO MUJAL**  
... crown totters



**MARCO HIRIGOYEN**  
... seeks scepter

## Cuba's Labor King Meets Opposition

By RUTH MCCARTHY  
Special To The Herald

HAVANA, Cuba—Eusebio Mujal, king of Cuba's labor movement, is balancing a tottering crown.

As a result of a union battle just terminated, Mujal will hold sway over his labor empire for the next year. But after that his subjects may want a new head of state.

EUSEBIO MUJAL  
... crown totters

MARCO HIRIGOYEN  
... seeks scepter

# Cuba's Labor King Meets Opposition

By RUTH MCCARTHY  
Special To The Herald

HAVANA, Cuba—Eusebio Mujal, king of Cuba's labor movement, is balancing a tottering crown.

As a result of a union battle just terminated, Mujal will hold sway over his labor empire for the next year. But after that his subjects may want a new head of state.

This became apparent when the labor czar was unable to control the two biggest strikes that have occurred since the Batista government took over, walkouts of state telegraphers and bank workers.

Mujal's loss of complete control over the party apparently stems from the first serious opposition in years to his leadership.

Two new strong men are after the labor crown — Marco Antonio Hirigoyen and Pablo Balbuena — representatives of the political opposition to Batista. Mujal has strung along with the government since 1952.

The union conflict in the CTC, which claims to represent over 500,000 workers, dealt with arbitrary postponement of the National Worker's Congress scheduled in May of alternate years. It is the congress which elects the CTC's executive officers.

Mujal, however, gained another year's breathing spell when he talked the executive board of the CTC into postponing the national congress until next April on grounds that local unions should first hold elections for new officers.

Although some 39 out of 42 federations approved Mujal's proposal, which had the effect of extending his term of office another year, two of the country's biggest strikes have occurred since then.

In the first, hundreds of state telegraphers went out on strike calling for restitution of a 10 per cent wage cut of the year before, and did not return to work despite police pressure until the government agreed that the pay slash would be returned to "take-home" pay this month.

The CTC under Mujal literally was forced into supporting the telegraphers' strike, first branded "illegal."

This week bank workers have badly crippled the economic activities of the nation with a general walkout in Havana's institutions. More than



PABLO BALBUENA  
... back from exile

## Wayward AF Balloon Shot Down

FOWLER, Ind. — (AP) — A wayward Air Force research balloon launched five days ago at Denver was shot down Sunday over Northwestern Indiana, and two airmen who parachuted to earth beside the falling bag said "electrical impulse guns" were used to bring it down.

The chutists, Donald R. Smith and Dell Craig, both airmen second class of Donaldson Air Force Base, Greenville, S. C., said the eastward course of the balloon had been traced by radio signals it transmitted. They indicated an automatic release which should have deflated the balloon after it had reached an elevation of approximately 80,000 feet had failed to function.

Neither Smith nor Craig would speak further about the "electrical impulse guns," pending the arrival at the scene of



# Cuba's Labor Leader Faces New Enemies

Continued from Page 1

75 per cent of the nation's banking activities are centered in Havana.

The bank strike was precipitated by Mujal's effort to arbitrarily change the local union's leadership. Government men took control of the Bank Worker's Union, at Mujal's request, but union members defied the action and struck in demand that their union be returned to them.

Although the bank strike also has been declared "illegal," negotiations are now in progress between Mujal and the local's leadership for a "compromise" settlement of the general walk-out which would involve release of all arrested workers, an 11 per cent wage hike and return of all but one of the local's executive officers to their original union positions.

Principal opponents to Mujal within the labor movement are Hirigoyen, a transport worker union leader and Balbuena, who comes from the graphic arts field. Another fairly strong opponent is Pascasio Linares, textile leader.

Curiously both Hirigoyen and Linares returned only recently to Cuba from exile under terms of the amnesty law which enabled ex-President Prio to come home.

Of the present nine-man "directive bureau" which runs the CTC, two are openly anti-government with a third member, a nominal independent. Addition of Hirigoyen and Balbuena or Hirigoyen and Linares to the top leadership would present the government with a labor movement which conceivably could be controlled by anti-Batista forces.

# Extortionists Blamed in Suicide Try

STREATOR, Ill. —(AP)—A Geneva, Ill., woman, survivor of what she said was a suicide pact with her husband, told LaSalle county authorities Sunday demands of hoodlum extortionists drove them to the attempt to end their lives together.

The woman, Mrs. Ruth Craine, 49, told her story to State Attorney Harlan Warren after her husband, Leon, 52, was found dead Saturday night in their car at Indian Acres, an amusement park north of Streator.

Ironically, Warren said, the husband was not asphyxiated by exhaust fumes piped into the interior of the car. An autopsy showed, Warren said, Craine died of heart disease.

Mrs. Craine survived because the car engine quit running.

Warren said Mrs. Craine told of being threatened by persons whose names she did not know since she and her husband were charged with arson following the burning of their resort on Lake Bruce near Kewanee, Ind. She said she and her husband have been free on \$2,500 bonds each awaiting trial in October on charges brought by a fire marshal in connection with the resort blaze in July.

At their last contact with the extortionists in Springfield, Ill., on Sept. 4, she told Warren, the Craines were told they must raise \$15,000 or die. But they were told, she said, if they raised the money the arson case "would be fixed."

Warren said Mrs. Craine told him several slot machines were destroyed in the resort fire. She said they were operated on a percentage basis and she attributed the extortion demands to "the syndicate's" attempt to recover the cost of the machines.