

INDEX

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
(Classification)

during this time, negotiating a final settlement to the Bank Workers' demands, pressing for an early date and favorable conditions for sugar mill repairs, and trying to settle the Rayonera Cubana difficulties. He was also frequently out of the city. The labor officer, however, several times discussed the Guantánamo situation with Mujal's secretary and with his lieutenant Jesus ARTIGAS.

On October 26, under the impression that Mujal was shortly to leave for Oriente, where he might be able to acquaint himself with the current Base situation first hand, the labor officer called him on the telephone. Mujal said that he was just back from Oriente, that the labor officer's messages regarding the situation at Guantánamo had been duly relayed to him by his secretary and Artigas, and that at Santiago he had discussed the situation with leaders of the Base Union. He seemed optimistic and reported that he had been told that the Union's Secretary-General, Dr. Humberto VILLALON, had left Base employment and would be replaced in the December elections by one FERRER, a reliable and sound man. It developed, however, that Mujal had not known that the Union had taken up a collection for Calzado and Repilado, and he seemed taken aback at this piece of information.

Through the Naval Attaché the Embassy informed the Base of the conversation with Mujal and requested its opinion of the possible election of Ferrer. The Base replied that while Ferrer was a perfectly good man, he was not a very forceful personality, and it feared that he would merely serve as a figurehead, behind whom other union officers, such as one POVEDA, might continue to agitate in favor of Calzado and Repilado.

The Base had already reported to the Embassy that Poveda, the Union Delegate Before Official and Employer Bodies (a standard position in Cuban unions), had printed a flysheet strongly attacking Mujal. The Embassy had requested a copy of this flysheet, which arrived at about the same time as the Base's reply regarding Ferrer and Poveda.

On November 8 the Embassy's labor officer called on Mujal, gave him copies of the Union's Boletín Informativo reporting on the collection for Calzado and Repilado and of Poveda's flysheet and communicated to him the Base's view on Ferrer's prospective election as the Union's Secretary-General. Mujal seemed much impressed with the Poveda flysheet (which he said he thought was financed by Senator Masferrer, thus perhaps confirming reports received at the Base of Masferrer's financing of the Calzado-Repilado campaign.) He spoke quite some time on the situation in the base union, saying that while there were lots of good men among the workers there, we were probably right in thinking that none of them seemed to have the necessary strength of character to step out and manage the union properly and stand up to the Calzado-Repilado people.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
(Classification)

Mujal said that many workers at the Base were so content with their jobs that they wanted nothing to do with union activities. Also, the trip from the Base to Guantánamo was so long that the workers did not feel they had any time left for union activity. He said also that there were quite a few Trotskyites at the Base, who, while anti-Communist, always had a militant view in labor affairs. He mentioned one FRAGA as a Trotskyite employed at the Base and repeated that Repilado was a Trotskyite also.

Mujal said he was going to get in touch with PEREIRA, the Secretary-General of Guantánamo Regional Labor Federation, about the situation at the Base. While, in the conversation of October 29 with the labor officer Mujal had expressed doubts as to whether it would be feasible to intervene the Union again, in this conversation he was apparently sufficiently concerned about the situation to refer to possible intervention or government action to correct the situation. However, he was obviously at a loss for a person who might head the Base Union.

The Embassy has communicated the substance of its latest interview with Mujal to the Base through the Naval Attaché. It has recommended that the situation be followed closely for possible developments flowing from Mujal's talk with Pereira, since with the elections in the Union so near what action may be required may be required quickly.

Regarding the Embassy's talk with the Minister of Interior reported upon in the despatch under reference the Embassy may report that the Minister has kept his promises to the Embassy and kept it informed, also, of what he has been doing.

The Minister talked to the Mayor of Guantánamo about Calzado-Repilado and the Mayor's support of their hunger strike. He was sure that in the future the Mayor would give no aid of any kind to the two men.

At the Minister's instance the Lorenzo SALOMON Deer case was called by the Supreme Court for October 24. The judge in charge of the case had told the Minister that the appellants would not be granted more than a month's delay if they requested a delay. On October 24, however, no lawyers presented themselves for Salomon Deer, and in accordance with law the court appointed a public attorney to take his case. Under this procedure the case will come up again sometime before December 20. The Embassy does not know yet whether that will be before or after the union elections, but in any case the Salomon Deer case as such does not seem to be under much discussion within the union at present and perhaps when it is decided will not really be a factor in the election.

Vinton Chapin
Vinton Chapin
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

cc: Guantánamo Naval Base through Naval Attaché.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

2001 8 8 1004