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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

MAY 31 1957

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DESP. NO.

FROM : AmEmbassy, Havana

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

May 31, 1957

DATE

REF : Voluntary Labor Report

20 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION ARA-3 REC'D 6/1	DEPT. I N F O R M A T I O N O T H E R LAB-5	REP-2	OLI-8	ICA-10	IO-4	ARMY-2	NAVY-3	USIA-10
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SUBJECT: COFIÑO CALLS OFF STRIKE

Angel Cofiño, deposed Secretary General of the Labor Federation of Electric, Gas and Water Plants, publicly instructed all workers who had not already done so, to return to work on May 27.

This date coincided with the final date set by Lt. Colonel José Figarola Infante, the recently-appointed military supervisor of the Cuban Electric Company. Originally Colonel Figarola had given the workers who were on strike twenty-four hours to return to work or be dismissed. Later, at the request of Oscar Samalea, who heads the anti-Cofiño faction, Colonel Figarola extended his back-to-work order to the morning of May 27. By that time, however, an overwhelming majority were back on the job.

A translation of Cofiño's instructions to his followers, which appeared in the Cuban press, is attached.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

JUN 4 - 1957

For the Ambassador:

John F. Correll
Labor Attaché

This document released to
public per COC/Hanson 4/28/80

Enclosure: As stated

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REPORTER

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From Habana

F800004-1482

Translation of ~~Enfermo~~ Cofino's Instruction

The great demonstration of unity expressed by all the electrical workers in their protest against the CTC and those who for so long have suffered in our ranks, has given a measure of the militancy and of their love for the collectivity of the thousands of men and women who form the legion of our Federation.

The support and the hopes of the Cuban people who see in this fight of ours the beginning of our union rebellion against the impositions of the CTC and the Government against the workers who do not submit to the inquisitorial regime established by Mujal in the CTC which invalidates the large masses of workers from their aspiration for union freedom and democracy, still exists and is the great hope of the electrical workers.

Only the unexpected action of a few poor in spirit who rather than respond to the feelings of the members they represented and fearful of the repression that might affect them in a personal order, made impossible the culmination of this action in the most beautiful of all the victories that the organized labor movement of our country would have gained.

The confusion produced by these elements at the time a military supervisor was appointed in the Company, establishing drastic and threatening measures to soften our unity, misled our valorous colleagues who were without knowledge and lacking contacts with the leaders of the movement. And at the precise moment of natural hesitancy some chose against their wishes not to be the victims of the reprisals put into practice by all the factors that were banded against our rights and our reason.

Our Federation is very proud in this first stage of its struggle of the behaviour of its members. Those, who expected unworthy submission without resistance, those who expected to find a docile herd without moral strength, to reach their evil purposes disregarded human freedom and rights and they did nothing other than appeal to the drastic measures of a military intervention. That is why we are sending everyone this message to recognition for their show of strength and decency.

We were sure that our fellow members at Las Villas, Matanzas and Camaguey who were misled by the weakness of their representatives, would respond to the requests of the Federation with the same love they had shown for so many years. They are there to answer present at the call of dignity, as they are in Oriente, Habana and Pinar del Rio. For these reasons and more convinced than ever before that the future depends on us ourselves, we ask all our fellow comrades who have not gone back to work to do so today, Monday the 27th, carrying in their hearts the same breath of hope that caused them to maintain their combative position.

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Our fellow workers who are still in prison have asked us to express to all of you their unbreakable faith in the destinies of the Federation and the assurance that the sacrifices they have endured will not be useless.

Each one to his post; those of us who remain do not stand alone.

Translation: Dr. Gonzalez